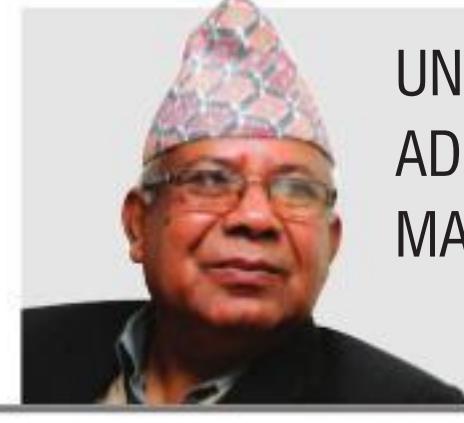


'PREVIOUS GOVTs  
NEGLECTED  
INFRASTRUCTURE'

P5



UNITY ONLY IF OLI  
ADMITS MISTAKE:  
MADHAV NEPAL

P9



SUGA'S WAVE OF  
POPULARITY  
WANES

P9



VICTORY DRIVE  
SPURRED BY  
SWING KING

P12

## WEATHER

Mainly clear sky. Shallow to moderate fog in the morning. Cold wave conditions at isolated places. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 18 and 04 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: NIL

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 94% Min: 47%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 18.1°C (-2) Min: 03.6°C (-3)

SUN RISES

07:14 hrs

MOON RISES

17:46 hrs

SUN SETS

17:35 hrs

MOON SETS

08:11 hrs

THUMBNAILS



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**Gangster stamps:** The Kanpur postal department has ordered an inquiry after stamps featuring underworld don Chhota Rajan and slain gangster Munna Bajrangi were issued by the main post office in the city, officials said on Tuesday. Twelve stamps each of Rajan and Bajrangi were printed under the 'My Stamp' scheme, which was launched by the department a few years back that allowed customers to get stamps printed with photograph of chosen subjects for special occasions. India Post in a statement said customers had violated the norms to get stamps featuring Chhota Rajan and Munna Bajrangi.

## LAC row: India, China military commanders to meet soon

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## Women cops just 10 pc of police force

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The latest "Data on Police Organisations" as on 1st January 2020, released by the Bureau of Police Research & Development (BPR&D), today shows women constitute just 10.30 per cent of the total 20,91,488-strong police force in the country.

The total sanctioned police force for all states and Union Territories, including armed police, is 26,23,225 and there are 5,31,737 vacancies.

The percentage increase of woman police over the previous year is 16.05 per cent. The total number of women police in the country is 2,15,504.

The Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) which include the BSF, CRPF, CISF, ITBP,



and Singapore so far. Meanwhile, the government said that Covid-19 vaccines will work against new variants of the virus and there is no evidence that current vaccines will fail to protect against the SARS-CoV-2 mutants reported from the UK or South Africa.

Addressing a press conference, Principal Scientific Advisor KV Vijay Raghavan also said so far it has not been found that the new variant increases the severity of the disease.

The Morcha further said

by Maharashtra (1.79 lakh). The actual strength of the District Armed Reserve Police is the highest in Bihar (44,341), followed by Jharkhand (33,966).

On the provision of personal protection, the report said that a total number of 19,467 Protected Persons (Ministers, MPs, MLAs, Judges, Bureaucrats, etc.) were provided with Police protection for more than six months, across the country, during 2019.

The number of Police Districts affected by the terrorist/extremist problem, during the last ten years (2010-2019) shows a mixed trend. A slight decrease was noticed from 2010 to 2014 (188 to 170) and, thereafter, a slight increase from 2015-17 (172 to 188), and then again decreased in 2019 (161).

## India wipe the floor with Australia



Hungry for redemption, India recorded a win for the ages under an inspirational Ajinkya Rahane (photo), beating Australia by eight wickets in the second Test to level the four-match series 1-1 at the MCG on Tuesday.

The target of 70 was never a big one but for a team that was bowled out for its all-time lowest score of 36 only 10 days back, one can't fault them if that played at the back of their minds. Shubman Gill (35 not out) and skipper Rahane (27 not out) knocked off the runs in 15.5 overs to complete the victory. This was after the quartet of Jasprit Bumrah (2/54 in 27 overs), debutant Mohammed Siraj (3/37 in 21.3 overs), Ravichandran Ashwin (2/71 in 37.1 overs) and Ravindra Jadeja (2/28 in 14 overs) showed maniacal consistency over a period of 100 overs on the flattest of decks, where extra bounce became their go-to weapon.

"The talk was all about showing attitude, intent and character. One hour took the game away from us in Adelaide, but we still have a lot to learn," Rahane said in the post-match presentation.

"Really proud of all the players, credit to our debutants Gill and Siraj. The way they showed character was amazing," Rahane said. PTI

MATCH REPORT ON PAGE 12

## K'taka LC dy chairman found dead on rail track, suicide suspected

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
BENGALURU, 29 DECEMBER

Karnataka Legislative Council Deputy Chairman S L Dharma Gowda was found dead on a rail track in Chikkamagaluru district of Karnataka in the early hours of Tuesday, with police sources claiming he died by suicide.

The body was found on a rail track near Gunasagara in Kadur taluk, they said.

Dharma Gowda, 64, who was an MLC from JD(S), survived by his wife, son and a daughter. His brother, S L Bhoje Gowda, is also an MLC.

According to sources, Gowda had left his farm-

## Rajinikanth opts out of political entry

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHENNAI, 29 DECEMBER

Actor Rajinikanth, in an anti-climax, announced on Tuesday he was withdrawing his decision to launch a political party and contest the upcoming assembly election in Tamil Nadu, citing his health and the Covid-19 pandemic.

The move gave the Dravidian parties, AIADMK and DMK, an upper hand in Tamil Nadu politics, and the BJP which was considered instrumental in Rajinikanth's earlier decision to enter electoral politics even after doctors advised against it, is seen as having suffered a setback.

Rajinikanth, who was admitted to hospital in Hyderabad on Christmas Day after suffering from severe hypertension and exhaustion, today took to



Twitter with a statement in which he announced that he could not enter politics and start a new political party, giving heartburn to his fans and Rajini Makkal Mandram members. "I regret to inform that I am unable to enter politics and start a political party (ahead of the Assembly elections due in 4-5 months)," he said. Rajinikanth also apologised

to his fans and people who would be disappointed by his decision. "Only I know the pain behind making this announcement," the 70-year-old actor said.

While elaborating on the Covid situation at the site in Hyderabad where he was shooting for a film, Rajini said: "I see this health complication (hospitalisation) as a warning given to me by God."

Recalling his earlier announcement that he would certainly enter politics and start a new political party in January 2021 and that he would unveil his plans on the New Year's Eve, Rajinikanth said he had ignored the doctors' advice and went to Hyderabad for the shooting of his upcoming film *Annathai*, where four of the film crew members had tested positive for coronavirus.

The shooting was stopped

and he underwent Covid tests which returned negative. But he was hospitalised for three days as his blood pressure fluctuated unusually. Rajini, who underwent a kidney transplant a few years ago said there should not be any fluctuations in his blood pressure levels as his transplanted kidney would get severely damaged.

In physical meetings, he would have to meet lakhs of people, he said, adding "I had to be hospitalised for three days after being in a group of 120 and now a new strain of coronavirus has also emerged."

"In these times of pandemic, if anything happens to my health condition while meeting the people and campaigning for the elections, those coming along with me in my political journey will have to face several problems,

both mentally and economically," he said.

"Without entering electoral politics, I'll try my best to do service for the people," he said. "I have never hesitated to speak the truth. Hence I request my fans, Tamil people to accept my decision," he said.

Rajini's party has been in the making for three years, ever since he announced his political entry back on New Year's Eve in 2017. However, while his fan clubs were reorganised as the Rajini Makkal Mandram (RMM), considered the precursor to the party, there was no clarity on the actual party or its launch. After three years keeping his fans and foes guessing, Rajinikanth announced earlier this month that he will launch his political party in January and disclose the specifics by December 31.

# The Statesman

PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION

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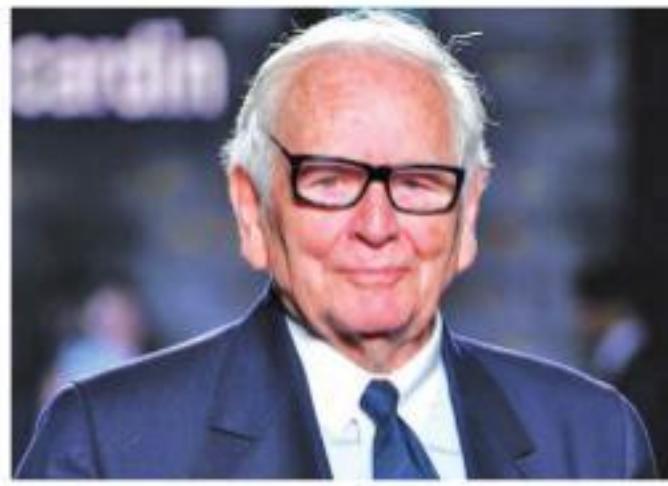
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I feel bad when I see efforts are on to pursue communal politics at Visva-Bharati. The VC there is a BJP man, he is trying to tarnish the heritage of this institution by practising communal politics

MAMATA BANERJEE  
WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER

## Kejriwal distributes ration kits to students under mid-day meal scheme



Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal, accompanied by his deputy Manish Sisodia, gives dry ration kit to the mother of a student at a government school in the Capital on Tuesday.

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 29 DECEMBER

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday distributed dry ration kits to the Delhi government school students studying in 1-8 classes under the mid-day meal scheme. The dry ration kits consisted of wheat, rice, pulses and oil.

Kejriwal said around 94 per cent students in Delhi were taking online classes. People from across the world visit Delhi to witness these government schools.

Addressing the ration kits distribution function at a school in Mandawali, the CM said, "We have gathered here today to start the distribution of dry ration kits

to students. The last nine months have been extremely difficult, and we cannot see an end to this difficulty at this stage. The most distressed in the last nine months have been children. They cannot remain confined to the four walls of their house as they have energy and want to play and go to school."

He said, "During all this while, we tried to provide the corresponding amount of the mid-day meal through the bank accounts of the children's parents. But today we are starting ration distribution at the request of the parents of these students. Each student will be provided adequate ration for a period of six months—July 2020 to December 2020—so that

there is no problem in providing nutrition to children."

Kejriwal said during the lockdown period it was very difficult for daily wagers to afford food. It was a testing period for all the governments to show how responsible they were. The Delhi government provided food to 10 lakh people every day, and all these arrangements were made in all the schools across Delhi, he said.

"We doubled the pension of elders and widows to Rs 5000. We provided Rs 5000 each to construction workers for their livelihood and transferred Rs 5000 each to the bank accounts of taxi and auto drivers every month till the lockdown got opened," the CM

pointed out.  
"Recently, some taxi drivers from Goa were in Delhi and wanted to meet me. Whenever somebody comes to Delhi, they want to meet me and appreciate the work done in Delhi," Kejriwal said.

Deputy CM Manish Sisodia, who was also present on the occasion, said,

"Today, we are so proud to see this impressive school building and

there is a significance to this building. It was during a visit to

this school in Mandawali when chief minister Arvind Kejriwal had directed one of our ministers, Satyendra Jain, to renovate all the school buildings in Delhi."

Sisodia said even if the Covid-19 vaccine is available, it will be difficult to compensate for the learning loss suffered by students. Every day, we pray for the schools to reopen and get re-energised like in pre-Covid times.

He informed that the non-availability of mid-day meals due to the closure of the schools had posed a big challenge. "We first experimented with transferring money directly to the bank accounts of the students' parents. Later it was realised that it was better to distribute dry ration kits rather than transferring money to bank accounts," he added.

## Capital logs 703 new virus infections, 28 fatalities

Delhi's Covid recovery rate climbs to 97.33 per cent; positivity rate dips to 0.83 per cent

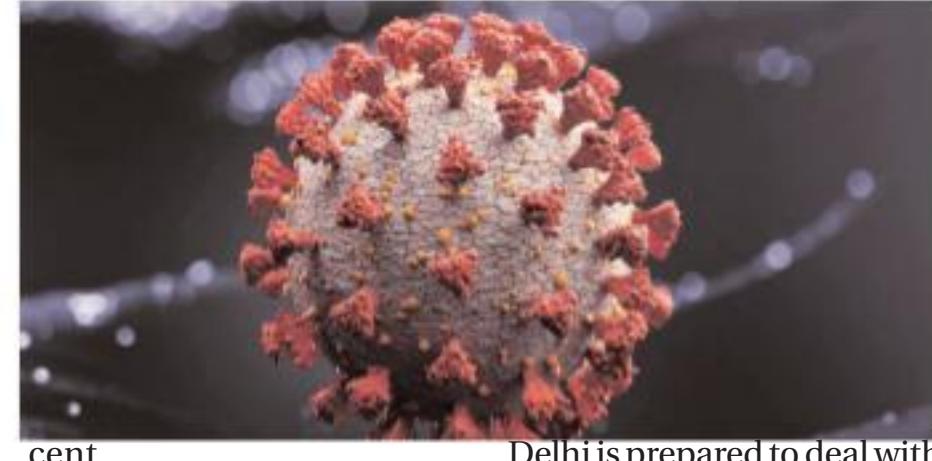
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 29 DECEMBER

**D**elhi today recorded 703 Covid-19 positive cases following 84,889 tests, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

The national capital's Covid caseload thus rose to 6,24,118, the health bulletin said. The positivity rate stood at 0.83 per cent against yesterday's 0.98 per cent.

The count of recovered patients during the past 24 hours stood at 850, which took the city's cumulative tally of such recoveries to 6,07,494, the bulletin stated. The recovery rate climbed to 97.33 per cent.

Delhi reported 28 fresh deaths due to Covid and with this, the cumulative count of such fatalities went up to 10,502 in the city till date. The death rate based on the last 10 days' data was 3.06 per



cent. Delhi is prepared to deal with the new UK mutant strain of the novel coronavirus.

"Delhi has witnessed three waves of coronavirus and the third wave was an intense one when cases went up to 8,500 (in a single day) but we managed to control it. We are fully prepared to deal with it," Kejriwal told reporters in response to a question on preparedness for the new coronavirus strain that was said to have been reported first in the UK.

Delhi had yesterday recorded 564 coronavirus cases—the lowest in seven months

— and 21 more Covid-linked fatalities, even as the positivity rate stood at 0.98 per cent.

The national capital had reported 412 coronavirus cases on 26 May, according to the Delhi health department.

Delhi had reported 757 cases on 27 December, 655 on 26 December, 758 on 25 December, and 1,063 on 24 December.

The highest single-day spike in the city till date—8,593 cases—was reported on 11 November.

Delhi had on 27 December recorded 757 coronavirus infections following 75,210 tests, with the positivity rate standing at 1.01 per cent. The city had then reported 16 Covid fatalities.

On 26 December, the national capital had logged 23 coronavirus-related deaths. On 25 December and 24 December, it had recorded 30 and 37 Covid deaths respectively.

## Delhi shivers under cold wave; mercury drops below 3 deg C in some parts

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 29 DECEMBER

Ayanagar and Lodhi Road recorded a low of 2.6 degrees Celsius and 2.7 degrees Celsius, respectively, it said.

In the plains, the IMD declares a cold wave if the minimum temperature dips to 4 degrees Celsius. A severe cold wave is when the minimum is 2 degrees Celsius or less.

The Safdarjung Observatory, which provides representative data for the city, recorded a minimum of 3.6 degrees Celsius and a maximum of 18.1 degrees Celsius, two notches below normal.

The weather stations at

ing centre of the IMD, said a Western Disturbance led to scattered to fairly widespread snowfall in Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

Cold and dry northerly/northwesterly winds from the western Himalayas have been barreling through the plains, bringing the minimum temperature in north India down, he said.

According to IMD, a cold-wave is also declared when the minimum temperature is 10 degrees Celsius or below and is 4.5 notches less than normal.

A "severe" cold wave is when the minimum temperature dips to two degrees Celsius or the departure is more than 6.4 degrees Celsius.

On December 20, the Safdarjung Observatory recorded a minimum of 3.4 degrees Celsius, the lowest this season so far. Delhi's air quality was recorded in the "poor" category on Tuesday morning.

The city's 24-hour average air quality index was 265 on Tuesday, 253 on Monday, 396 on Sunday, 337 on Saturday, 357 on Friday, 423 on Thursday and 433 on Wednesday.

### Let Your New Year Celebrations Be Happy

**DON'T DRINK & DRIVE**

- Alcohol reduces the ability to see distant objects by 25%
- Look for alternate transportation, call a cab or let the sober drive

**Drunken driving penalty : ₹ 10,000/- or Imprisonment of upto 6 months + Disqualification for 3 months**

**Drive Safe in 2021**

## The Statesman

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delhi@thestatesmangroup.com

### IN THE COURT OF SH. ASHISH GUPTA

ACJ/CCJ/ARC-(South East)  
Saket Courts, New Delhi  
SS-2028

In the matter of:  
Rajesh Mohan, s/o Late Sh.  
Rajinder Mohan, r/o A-37,  
Friends Colony East, Delhi-  
110065.

### Versus

State  
Through SDM, Defence  
Colony, Old Gargi College  
Building Lajpat Nagar-IV, New  
Delhi-110024.

Email : defencesdm@nic.in  
Ph. 26476405

— Respondent No. 1  
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Rajesh Pilot Marg, Udyog  
Bhawan, Delhi-110011.minnieburman@gmail.com  
+91 9810181012

— Respondent No. 2

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Telefax: 0674-2588061

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### SILIGURI

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Centre,

PO. Box No. 10000.

Email:  
siliguri@thestatesmangroup.com

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All other stations in India - Re. 1

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lucknow@thestatesmangroup.com



This (95 proposals amounting to Rs 1,54,937 crore) has made our state the first in the country in terms of investment proposals.

JAGADISH SHETTAR  
KARNATAKA INDUSTRIES MINISTER

The Statesman  
NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 30 DECEMBER 2020

03

# Haryana Police reunites 1,716 missing children with families

Haryana DGP says the missing children, traced and handed over to their families in different parts of the country in 2020, include 771 boys & 945 girls; some of them'd been missing for a long time

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 29 DECEMBER

**H**aryana Police has traced 1716 missing children in 2020 and handed them over to their families in different parts of the country.

Giving this information on Tuesday, Haryana Director General of Police (DGP) Manoj Yadava said that among the traced missing children, 771 are boys and 945 are girls. Some of these children had been missing for a long time.

Haryana Police has also tracked and rescued 1189 child beggars and 1941 child labourers during the year. These children were found to be either working in shops or doing odd jobs for their livelihood.

Yadava said that apart from maintaining law and order and curbing crimes during the hard times of a pandemic year, the officers and jawans of Haryana Police also gave priority to tracing and



reuniting missing children with their families.

Out of the 1716 missing children, 1433 were traced and reunited with their families by Haryana Police's field units and the remaining 283 were traced by the specialised Anti-Human Trafficking Units of its State Crime Branch, who were said to have shown "great dedication to this noble cause".

Explaining the prime objective of this "noble programme", the DGP said that it was started to prevent child trafficking and save the innocent from persons who tried to engage them in begging and other antisocial behaviours.

Under this programme, police visit public places like bus stands, railway stations and religious places besides institutions such as shelter homes to search for children who might have separated from their parents.

Police also visit shelter homes and make an effort to track down the parents of

missing children who are unable to reveal much about their families. "Our personnel screened all the missing children to extract required information from them which helps in reuniting them with their parents," the DGP said.

Haryana Police is conducting this drive to reunite missing children with the support of child welfare councils, non-government organisations and various departments concerned.

Giving details about district-wise figures, the DGP said that police have been able to trace 213 missing children in Panipat, 50 in Panchkula, 40 in Gurugram, 80 each in Faridabad and Rohtak, 55 in Ambala, 98 in Yamunagar, 56 in Kurukshetra, 23 in Karnal, 24 in Kaithal, 97 in Sonipat, 45 in Bhiwani, 39 in Jhajjar, 27 in Charkhi Dadri, 86 each in Sirsa and Hisar, 23 in Hansi, 49 in Jind, 41 in Fatehabad, 72 in Rewari, 122 in Palwal, 6 in Narnaul and 16 in Mewat.

The VC said it has been decided to provide on-the-job training to the existing teaching and non-teaching employees so that they are kept abreast with the changes in the rules, regulations and procedures in the system.

Himachal Pradesh agri varsity to start training programme for new staff

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 29 DECEMBER

Taking a lead, CSK Himachal Pradesh Agriculture University has decided to initiate induction training programmes for its newly recruited staff.

Disclosing it here on Tuesday, Prof HK Chaudhary, Vice-Chancellor told that direction has been issued to organise training programmes for the newly recruited teaching and non-teaching employees to enable them to acquaint them with their job responsibilities so that they may acquire knowledge, understanding and skill in their particular field of expertise.

He asserted that such trainings will make the staff more productive and efficient. Besides interacting on the roles and responsibilities of each employee, expectations of the University from them will also be discussed.

The training programme will create awareness on agricultural education system in India, act and statutes of the university, RTI Act, office procedures, use of ICT tools, media protocol, academic, financial and other service rules in the University.

The VC said it has been

decided to provide on-the-job training to the existing teaching and non-teaching employees so that they are kept abreast with the changes in the rules, regulations and procedures in the system.

He asserted that periodical training will enhance the knowledge of the employees enabling them to imbibe a sense of responsibility in the discharge of their duties and to increase their efficiency in work. Such induction trainings have been made mandatory for the newly recruited staff.

Prof HK Chaudhary informed that the Human Resource Development and Placement Centre will organize a 10 days induction training programme to newly recruited 22 teaching and 23 non-teaching employees shortly.

## Shanta Kumar's wife dies of Covid

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 29 DECEMBER

Former Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Shanta Kumar's wife, Santosh Shailja, died at Dr Rajendra Prasad Medical College Hospital, Tanda in Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh in the wee hours on Tuesday due to Covid-19.

Eighty three year old Shailja was admitted to the hospital along with some other family members, including Shanta Kumar, a few days ago after testing positive for Covid-19.

Chief Minister, Jai Ram Thakur has expressed grief over her demise. In his condolence message, Thakur said that with her death, the state has lost an educationist, writer and social worker, who devoted her whole life for the welfare of vulnerable



HP CM Jai Ram Thakur visits ex-CM Shanta Kumar's house in Palampur on Tuesday to express condolences on his wife's demise.

sections of the society. Former Chief Ministers, Prem Kumar Dhumal and

## Haryana amends property registration manual to check fraudulent sale deeds

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 29 DECEMBER

In a move to protect the rights of property owners by checking fraudulent transfers, the Haryana government has amended the Haryana Registration Manual to empower registering officers to cancel the sale deeds registered fraudulently.

While stating this on Tuesday, additional chief secretary and financial commissioner, revenue and disaster management department, Sanjeev Kaushal said the amendment, by inserting Para 159-A in the Haryana Registration Manual, had been made to ensure that persons with valid titles would not have to seek legal recourse to get the deed

of the fraudulent sale cancelled.

As per the notification issued on 23 December, the amendment would empower registering officers to accept and register cancellation deeds, cancelling the sale deeds earlier registered fraudulently by a person who is not entitled to transfer such property.

If a person has a right in the property and someone else transfers it without his consent, the right in that property still continues to subsist in true owner and the transfer has no effect on such title.

According to the amendment, if a document is registered at the instance of a person not duly empowered to present the same, any person claiming under the document

may, within four months from the date of knowledge that such document is invalid, present such document in such event.

The registering officer, after following the same procedure contemplated under the Registration Act, 1908, can re-register the document, that is, cancellation deed, as if it has not been registered previously.

If a document relating to transfer by way of sale, gift, mortgage, exchange, lease or otherwise, is registered of 'Shamilat Deh' land vested or deemed to have vested in the Panchayat Deh under the Punjab Common Lands (Regulation) Act, 1961, or in Municipalities, including Municipal Corporations, under the

Haryana Municipal Act, 1973, and the Haryana Municipal Corporation Act, 1994, the Block Development Panchayat Officer, Secretary or Executive Officer or Commissioner, Municipal Corporation or District Municipal Commissioner, would get the cancellation deed registered after seeking approval of the Deputy Commissioner or other superior authority.

This parameter would be applicable for 'Shamilat Deh' lands illegally partitioned and alienated in the past without getting the title adjudicated under the relevant statute by the competent authority or court, as applicable.

In addition, there could be an unimaginable number of

circumstances when the executant himself of his own volition comes before the registering officer and desires to cancel the earlier document.

In such cases, the registering officer could re-register that is, cancel the document, totally ignoring the earlier registration, under Section 23A of the Registration Act, 1908. The amendment also mentions that as per Schedule 1A, Article 17, as applicable to Haryana, of the Indian Stamp Act, 1899 and the Indian Stamp (Haryana Amendment) Act, 2018, cancellation deed, with a stamp fee of Rs. 500, is recognised as a legal document in law and a transaction for transfer of immovable property is no exception.

## Jai Ram asks HPTDC to become more professional



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 29 DECEMBER

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur on Tuesday stressed on adopting a more proactive and professional approach to make the Himachal Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (HPTDC) units "profitable and viable" in the state.

Thakur said that the Covid-19 pandemic has adversely affected the tourism industry in the state. He said that the Corporation earned revenue of Rs 18.42 crore between 1 April to 30 November, 2020 as compared to Rs 63.24 crore earned during the corresponding period of last year.

The Corporation also provided its property to the state government for quarantine facilities during the pandemic thereby earning about Rs 70 lakh.

The Chief Minister said that the Corporation should set defined parameters and focused targets for bringing in professionalism in its working. He said that targets of

occupancy and booking must be fixed and to inculcate the spirit of competition, the same could be linked with incentives.

Thakur said that with the opening of Atal Tunnel Rohtang, an unprecedented flow of tourists had been witnessed in Kullu and Lahaul-Spiti districts. He also felt the need to provide better way side facilities to the tourists particularly en route major tourist destinations.

Thakur said that the Corporation had also allowed 40 percent discount in tariff in all its properties till 31 March next year, whereas earlier 25 to 40 percent discount was provided to the tourists.

He said that due to all these initiatives, despite Covid-19 restrictions, the occupancy in properties of the Corporation hotels picked up.

He said that keeping in view the pandemic, the guests were served various immunity boosting dishes.

The chief minister said that the Corporation may consider leasing out few properties incurring losses for years together which would earn additional revenue to the corporation besides services of staff deployed could be utilised elsewhere.

He said that the Chander Bhaga hotel of the Corporation at Keylong should be renovated and expanded for facilitating the tourists. He also felt the need to provide better way side facilities to the tourists particularly en route major tourist destinations.

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Managing Director, HPTDC Kumud Singh conducted the proceedings of the meeting.

Chief Secretary Anil Khatri, Additional Chief Secretary Finance Prabodh Saxena, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister JC Sharma, Director Tourism and Civil Aviation Yunus and other senior officers attended the meeting.

## WINTER MAGIC



A view of the Ridge in Shimla after the city received its winter season's first snowfall on Monday.

LALIT KUMAR

## Free WiFi hotspots to be set up at Singhu for protesting farmers: AAP's Raghav Chadha

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 29 DECEMBER

AAP leader Raghav Chadha on Tuesday said free WiFi hotspots will be set up at Singhu border for the farmers who have been camping there for over a month protesting the three Central farm laws.

Addressing a press conference, he said the decision has been taken by "farmers' sevadar Arvind Kejriwal".

"We want the farmers to stay in touch with their family. We have identified a few spots to install the WiFi hotspots. This is an initiative of (Chief Minister) Arvind Kejriwal and the party," Chadha said.



He said the first hotspot will be installed within a day or two and more such facilities will be set up depending on the demand.

"Each WiFi hotspot will cover a radius of 100 metre. The initiative has been taken after the farmers complained of limited availability of Internet in the area," the AAP leader said.

"We are starting with the Singhu border. But as and when demand arises we will expand it to other border points too (where farmers are protesting) and install more such hotspots," Chadha added.

Farmers from various parts of the country have been camping at different border points of Delhi for over a month now to demand repeal of the three agri laws which were voted through in Parliament in September amid strong protests by opposition parties.

Kejriwal and his Aam Aadmi Party have come out strongly in support of protesting farmers. Earlier this month, he had visited Singhu border sites, and reviewed arrangements made for farmers by the AAP-led city government.



People are reeling under tremendous hardships ...and responsibility is yours to rise up to the occasion and serve masses...

FORMER CHIEF MINISTER MEHBOOBA MUFTI

URGING THE WINNING DDC CANDIDATES TO SERVE THE PEOPLE WITH ALL HONESTY AND INTEGRITY

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## THUMBNAILS



Kangana Ranaut returns to Mumbai on Tuesday. ■ IANS

**Ethi lawyer thrashing case:** The Allahabad High Court Tuesday sought a detailed report from the Ethi Chief Judicial Magistrate taking cognisance of an incident of a lawyer in the district being allegedly dragged out of his house and beaten up by the state police. The court has asked the CJM to file the report by January 8, 2021.

**Ladakh gets its own meteorological centre:** A meteorological centre was inaugurated in the Union Territory of Ladakh on Tuesday which would provide localised weather forecasts thus strengthening weather-related early warning system for the region. At 3,500 metres, this meteorological centre is the highest such facility in India, Union Earth Sciences Minister Harsh Vardhan said at the inauguration of the facility. ■ PTI

## Siliguri surgeon bags IMA award

SILIGURI, 29 DECEMBER

The organising committee of the 95th All-India Medical Conference of the Indian Medical Association (IMA) has conferred the prestigious Dr Jagdeshwar Misra Oration Award on renowned surgeon of north Bengal, Dr Kaushik Bhattacharya, amid a virtual platform during the conference on Sunday evening.

The oration of Dr Bhattacharya, who is currently a specialist in surgery at the Border Security Force Composite Hospital in Kadamtala, dealt with the challenges faced by surgeons and the trauma they underwent during the management of the ongoing Covid pandemic in India.

This is probably for the first time that a doctor from North Bengal has been chosen by the national body of the IMA to deliver the oration. ■ SNS

## Gujarat MP Vasava quits BJP, to quit Lok Sabha too

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BHARUCH, 29 DECEMBER

Gujarat BJP MP and former Union minister Mansukh Vasava on Tuesday quit the party and said he would also resign from Lok Sabha in the budget session of Parliament.

In his resignation letter, Vasava (63) did not specify any reason for quitting the party, but sources said the six-term MP, who is vocal on tribal issues, has been critical of BJP's policies after he was dropped as Union minister in 2016.

Vasava in his letter to Gujarat BJP President C R Paatil said, "I am resigning so that the image of the party is not damaged because of my

## 'Dry run for vaccination successful in four states'

Conducted in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Punjab and Assam

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 29 DECEMBER

A two-day dry run to assess the readiness of the mechanism laid out for the Covid-19 immunisation drive, which is expected to begin soon, was successfully conducted in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Punjab and Assam, the Union Health Ministry said on Tuesday.

The end-to-end exercise was undertaken in Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh, Rajkot and Gandhinagar of Gujarat, Ludhiana and Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar of Punjab, and Sonitpur and Nalbari districts of Assam on Monday and Tuesday.

Specific teams were formed for various tasks by the district administrations and activities like uploading of dummy beneficiary data, session site creation, vaccine allocation, communicating vaccination details to beneficiaries and vaccinators, and beneficiary mobilization were carried out, the health ministry said.

Field feedback on the first day of dry run was reviewed on 29 December through video conferencing with state and district programme officers by the joint secretary (Public Health).

"All the states expressed satisfaction in terms of operational approach and use of IT platform to ensure transparency and effective monitoring of vaccination processes expected to cover a large number of people across the country.

"Additional suggestions on IT platform were also noted for further enhancement of Co-WIN platform. Detailed insights and feedback obtained will help enrich the operational guidelines and IT platform, and will strengthen the Covid vaccination roll out plan," the ministry said.

Backed with the experience of

## 70 per cent of total Covid-19 fatalities registered in men: Govt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 29 DECEMBER

About 45 per cent of all Covid-19 deaths in the country have been reported in those below 60 years of age while 70 per cent of total fatalities from the infection were registered in men, the Health ministry said on Tuesday.

Addressing a press conference, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said 63 per cent of the total cases were reported in males and 37 per cent cases in females. Bhushan further said 45 per cent of the Covid-19 deaths so far have been reported in those below 60 years of age and 70 per cent of total fatalities from the infection were registered in men. About 55 per cent Covid-19 deaths were reported in those aged 60 and above, 33 per cent in the age group of 45 to 60 years, 10 per cent in the age group of 26-44 years and one per cent each in those aged between 18-25 years and in those below 17 years.

rolling out Universal Immunization Programme (UIP) and conducting nationwide multiple wide-range injectable vaccination campaigns such as measles-rubella and adult Japanese Encephalitis campaign, required steps were being undertaken to vaccinate priority population groups such as healthcare and frontline workers, and people above 50 years for Covid-19, it stated.

The exercise tested the Covid-19 vaccination process, including planning and preparations according to operational guidelines; creation of facilities and users



A health worker collects a swab sample for Covid-19 rapid antigen testing in the capital on Tuesday. ■ DEEPAK

according to the data presented by Bhushan.

He said the number of active cases of Covid-19 has been registered at 2.7 lakhs, sliding to a lower six months. The cumulative positivity rate stands at 6.02 per cent while the positivity rate during last week was 2.25 per cent.

"Five states and UTs which account for 60 per cent of total active Covid-19 cases are Maharashtra, Kerala, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Chhattisgarh," he said.

on Co-WIN application, session site creation and mapping of sites, uploading healthcare workers data, receipt of vaccines and their allocation by districts, session planning, deployment of vaccination team, logistics mobilization at session sites, mock drill of conducting the drive, and reporting and review meetings at block, district and state levels.

The objective of the dry run was also to undertake and confirm field implementation of the Co-WIN and guide the way forward prior to its implementation.

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## Farooq attributes victory of NC to resilience of J&K people

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU, 29 DECEMBER



party across Jammu and Kashmir.

While expressing gratitude to the people for their overwhelming support to the National Conference, the party president said the people have done their bid and that now it was the turn of elected members to pay off by rising up to the expectations

of people with pure and simple service motive.

"I am hopeful that the Party's DDC members will devise an all-inclusive strategy to serve people, address their concerns and become a voice for the voiceless. We in our party have always upheld that people are the real source of power; therefore it is more binding for our elected DDC members to keep in touch with their constituents," said Abdullah.

"Unfortunately we have lost half a decade since 2015, now I am hopeful that the newly elected DDC, keeping up with the party agenda will make most of the bottom-up style of development.

"We saw how brazenly the administration discriminated against our contesting

candidates and created hurdles to impede our public outreach by flaunting all democratic norms. The anti-democratic forces will again contrive to rein in and encumber our efforts underway for the restoration of people's rights. However our workers and functionaries withheld all sorts of difficulties on their own with no support coming from any quarter. I am hopeful that the party rank and file will keep up with the resolute behaviour. Unity holds the key to success. In the days our detractor will employ all sorts of enticements, coercion and intimidation to break our unity. We on our behalf have to strengthen our rows against their machination and face the challenges ahead of us resolutely," he added.

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Reiterating the resolve of the people of J&K and PDP to fight for the rights and dignity, she said that that no amount of coercion can force the people into submission. "We will fight for our rights. We are not the ones who will raise white flags despite fatal blows being dealt to our economy and livelihoods," she added.

## Govt sanctions land for ITBP headquarters in Delhi

NEW DELHI, 29 DECEMBER

About four acres of land in south Delhi has been sanctioned by the government for building the new headquarters of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) force that guards the LAC with China, officials said on Tuesday.

The Union housing and urban affairs ministry has recently sanctioned the land, situated near the Delhi Public School on Mathura Road, to the border guarding force that operates out of the CGO complex at Lodhi Road at present.

The ITBP has been given a 3.83 acre land on a permanent basis and an adjacent 4.85 acre land on a temporary basis in south Delhi. The first plot will be used to construct the ITBP headquarters while the adjoining parcel of land will be used for plantation and keeping the area green," a senior officer of the paramilitary force said.

The ITBP, about 90,000 personnel strong and tasked with the primary duty of guarding the 3,488-km long Line of Actual Control with China, is the second central armed police force after the CRPF to get independent land in the national capital for creation of its headquarters.

## Rajya Sabha misses winter session after 36 yrs

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 29 DECEMBER

Rajya Sabha's Winter Session was dispensed with this year after 36 years, and the fourth time in 69 years, after 1984, 1979 and 1975, since inception of the House.

An overview of the Upper House during 2020 revealed that the House passed a total of 39 Bills during the year, including 12 during the Budget Session and 27 during the Monsoon Session.

The major Bills passed include the three Bills related to farm sector reforms, two Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code Amendments Bills, Direct Taxes Vivad Se Vishwas Bill, Bills amending salaries and allowances of Ministers and Members of Parliament, and Bills setting up the National Commissions for Indian Systems of Medicine and Homoeopathy.

The House spent a high of 57 per cent of its functional time on legislative work during the monsoon session this year as against the general average of 28 per cent.

For the first time in the 69 year history of Rajya Sabha, the House functioned from multiple locations (six) with members seated in the Chambers of the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha and the four galleries of Rajya Sabha.

This was due to Covid restrictions mandating social distance. During 2020, the Rajya Sabha held 33 sittings

with both the Budget Session (the 251st Session) and the Monsoon Session (252nd Session) being impacted by the pandemic with each session losing eight sittings.

The Budget Session had 23 sittings as against the Scheduled 31 and the Monsoon Session was held for 10 sittings as against the scheduled 18. Referring to the consistently higher levels of productivity during the last few sessions, Chairman M Venkata Naidu observed in the House that this trend indicates the 'ship of Rajya Sabha sailing through stormy waters being steered.'

For the first time, a notice for removal of Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha was given and the same was rejected by the Chairman giving reasons.

Experts believe that this steady and significant decline in the number of Covid cases could be mainly because a larger segment of the population in India than we currently estimate could have already been infected by Covid-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus.

A renowned medical practitioner of north Bengal, Dr Sekhar Chakraborty, who has been treating and monitoring covid patients in Siliguri since the outbreak of the pandemic in March this year, told this correspondent today that

over 39 Bills passed during the year, including 12 during the Budget Session and 27 during the Monsoon Session.

House spent a high of 57 per cent of its functional time on legislative work during the monsoon session this year as against the general average of 28 per cent

The Rajya Sabha held 33 sittings with both the Budget Session.

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## Mehbooba emphasises on dialogue for restoration of India-Pak peace

JAMMU, 29 DECEMBER

Former chief minister and PDP chief, Mehbooba Mufti on Tuesday emphasised that dialogue is necessary for restoration of lasting peace between India and Pakistan and 'we' will not allow Kashmir to be a battlefield.

Facilitating the PDP winners of the District Development Council (DDC) elections, Mehbooba said we will work relentlessly so that J&K acts as a bridge of peace between India and Pakistan.

Reiterating the resolve of the people of J&K and PDP to fight for the rights and dignity, she said that that no amount of coercion can force the people into submission. "We will fight for our rights. We are not the ones who will raise white flags despite fatal blows being dealt to our economy and livelihoods," she added.

Interestingly, Madhya Pradesh in-charge governor Anandiben Patel would become the governor signing the freedom of religion Bill in two states.

Once she signs the ordinance in MP as the state's acting governor, she would become the Governor to sign the bill in two states. The BJP state government would have to get all the 12 Bills passed

## MP Cabinet clears ordinance on anti-conversion law

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

BHOPAL, 29 DECEMBER

The Madhya Pradesh council of ministers today cleared the 'Freedom of Religion Bill, 2020' in the form of an ordinance. The cabinet also passed 11 other ordinances at its virtual meeting chaired by chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan.

The freedom of religion Bill and other Bills were subsequently sent to the Governor for final approval. Once the governor signs on the ordinances, they would be enacted as laws in just a few days before the scheduled start of the session.

The MP Freedom of Religion Bill, 2020 proposes a fine of up to Rs 1 lakh and jail of up to 10 years to anyone who forcefully or by misrepresentation through marriage abets the religious conversion of a woman, minor or person of Scheduled Caste or Tribe.

The Bill also proposes that if such a marriage gets broken and is legally declared null and void, still the woman would be eligible to receive financial support from the husband. Similarly, children born from such marriages would be legal heirs in the father's property.

Once she signs the ordinance in MP as the state's acting governor, she would become the Governor to sign the bill in two states. The BJP state government would have to get all the 12 Bills passed

not going for a Covid test and are isolating themselves and taking these medicines to cure themselves. As a result, herd immunity has been created more quickly and easily in India than in the European countries, and I am certain that even the new strains of the novel coronavirus will not be able to cause much infection in India," he said.

Dr Chakraborty also suggested that the novel coronavirus might have lost some of its severity because of increased exposure. "Every virus has a certain biological life-span. The novel coronavirus can live on various surfaces from four to 16 hours. If during this period, it does not get any potential genuine host to multiply, it cannot survive. Due to population immunity in India, it is perhaps not finding too many potential hosts, and thus, is losing its virulence. However, there is currently no evidence to prove it and we shall have to wait for the results of the findings of the various researches being conducted on the virus across the world at present," he said.

## SFI questions TMC's support for Amartya Sen

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

SILIGURI, 29 DECEMBER

At a time when the Trinamul Congress has stood by economist Amartya Sen who is embroiled in a Visva-Bharati University "land-grab" controversy, the Jawaharlal Nehru University students' union (JNUSU) president and SFI leader, Aishw Ghosh, today questioned whether the state government had implemented recommendations made by the Nobel laureate.

The Visva-Bharati University authorities have allegedly included Mr Sen among those

## THUMBNAILS



Fresh snowfall on the Sri-nagar Jammu National highway on Tuesday. ■ IANS

**Cattle dragged in river in T'gana:** In an incident of animal cruelty, several cattle were dragged through Krishna river waters in Telangana by some people onboard a coracle reportedly to cut short distance in travelling by road, prompting officials to order an inquiry after a video of it surfaced on Tuesday.

PTI

**Ram Mandir Trust's bank account:** Four people were arrested on Tuesday for allegedly siphoning off Rs 6 lakh from the Ram Mandir Trust's bank account in September, police said. The amount was transferred to PNB in Maharashtra from SBI in Ayodhya using two cloned cheques worth Rs 2.5 lakh and 3.5 lakh with forged signatures of the trustees, Ayodhya DIG Deepak Kumar said.

PTI

## Owaisi challenges BJP to come up with laws on MSP or employment

**SNS**  
HYDERABAD, 29 DECEMBER

Dubbing the law on 'love jihad' as unconstitutional AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi has challenged the BJP to come up with laws on minimum support price (MSP) or employment.

He was reacting to the Ordinance issued by Madhya Pradesh against religious conversion using misrepresentation, allurement, coercion, marriage or any other fraudulent means.

Owaisi did not mince his words as he attacked the BJP ruled states for misplaced priorities.

"The state has no right to govern anyone's personal life," he reminded.

"Do they at all know criminal law? How can you have provisions of imprisonment for ten years which is more than even in cases of attempted murder," said the

# PM attacks previous govts

For delaying work on dedicated freight corridor project & ignoring modernisation of railways

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
LUCKNOW, 29 DECEMBER

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday accused previous governments of delaying the dedicated freight corridor project and ignoring modernisation of railways, and said politics should be kept away from infrastructure development.

Inaugurating the New Bhaupur-New Khurja section of the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor (EDFC) via video conferencing, he said the "roar" of Bharat and 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' (self-reliant India) were clearly heard as the first freight train operated on the Khurja-Bhaupur freight section, and asserted that the corridor will also help farmers transport their harvest on time.

The prime minister also deprecated the tendency of people to target infrastructure during protests and demonstrations, saying infrastructure does not belong to any leader, political party or government but is that of the country and its citizens.

Stressing that this project was the living example of the work culture of the government at the helm before 2014, Modi said the freight project was given permission in 2006 but it was only made on papers and files as the then government lacked the "seriousness towards modernisation of the

and urgency" with which it had to take it up with the states.

Till 2014 not a single km track of the project was laid and the funds sanctioned could not be spent properly. After 2014, it was restarted and officials asked to take it forward and by then the budget had gone up by 11 times, he noted. The prime minister said on coming to power, he personally monitored the project and held a dialogue with stakeholders and got new technology as a result of which about 1,100-km work would be completed in the next few months.

"Imagine not a single km in eight years and 1,100 km in 6 to 7 years," he said. The 351-km section has been built at a cost of Rs 5,750 crore. The EDFC is 1,840-km-long and extends from Ludhiana in Punjab to Kolkata in West Bengal.

Modi also inaugurated the EDFC's operation centre at Allahabad and flagged off the first 1.5-km-long goods trains. The prime minister said political apathy not just hampered the freight corridor project but also had a bearing on the entire railways system.

Earlier the focus was on increasing number of trains for political benefit in elections but not on the tracks on which the trains were run as there was no investment on it, he said.

There was no seriousness towards modernisation of the



rail network, trains were being run on slow speed and the entire network was full of dangerous unmanned crossings, he said. "We changed this work culture and thinking after 2014 and ended the separate Railway budget, invested in rail tracks, ended unmanned crossings, focussed on broadening and electrification of the network", he said.

In the past few years, reforms have been carried out at all levels and can be seen. Be it cleanliness, better food and other facilities, the changes can be seen, he said.

Past experience tell us that politics should be kept away from infrastructure as it is the path to development of the nation and not means of five years of politics, he said, adding that if political parties need to compete, they should compete on quality, speed, scale of infrastructure.

Modi also slammed the tendency of targeting infrastructure during demonstrations. I also want to stress on

another mentality which we often see during protests and demonstrations. This mentality is of harming infrastructure of the country and its property. We should remember that this infrastructure does not belong to any leader, political party or government but is that of the country and its citizens, he said.

The sweat and money of the poor and middle class taxpayers is harmed by this. While discharging our democratic rights we should also remember our national duty, he stressed. The prime minister noted that how the railways has helped in times of crisis, especially during the coronavirus pandemic.

It brought labourers back to their homes, ferried food-grains and medicines to the corners of the country and it will always be remembered for it, he said. The prime minister noted that India has taken a big leap in 'atmanirbhartha' (self-reliance) in the field of railway-related manufacturing and the country is not just

manufacturing modern trains for its own use but also for export purposes.

The Diesel Locomotive Works in Varanasi has become a big centre for the manufacturing of electric engines and the Rae Bareli rail coach factory has also made over 5,000 coaches in six years and they are also being exported, he said. Speaking on the benefits of the freight corridor, he said it will help farmers transport their harvest on time. It will reduce the logistic cost, influencing the price of goods, he said. The prime minister stressed that infrastructure is the biggest source of any nation's strength.

India is moving fast towards the path of becoming a big economic power and the best connectivity is the priority for the country, he said. The government is focussing on the five wheels of highways, railways, airways, waterways and I-ways.

Modi said as 60 per cent of the corridor falls in UP, it will attract industry to the state. It will increase the ease of doing business and attract greater foreign investment, he said.

UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath, who was also present during the inauguration of the project through video conferencing from Lucknow, said the Indian Railways is setting new records of development due to efforts of the prime minister.

Shiv Sena, which is in power in Maharashtra and is a former ally of the BJP.

He said details regarding this loan transaction had already been submitted to the ED during the correspondence.

Sanjay Raut had alleged that central agencies were being used to "destabilise" the Uddhav Thackeray-led government in Maharashtra.

The ED had filed a PMLA case to probe the alleged loan fraud in the Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative (PMC) Bank in October last year against Housing Development Infrastructure Ltd (HDIL), its promoters Rakesh Kumar Wadhawan, his son Sarang Wadhawan, his former chairman Waryam Singh and ex-managing director Joy Thomas.

It took cognisance of a Mumbai Police economic offences wing FIR against them that charged them for causing "wrongful loss, prima facie to the tune of Rs 4,355 crore to PMC Bank, and corresponding gains to themselves".

Former BJP leader Eknath Khadse who has recently joined Sharad Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), has also been summoned by the ED for questioning on Wednesday in Mumbai in connection with a money laundering case linked to a land deal in Pune's Bhorai area.

## Heart-rending visuals of teenager digging grave for his father shake conscience

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, 29 DECEMBER

Heart-rending visuals of a teenager digging grave for his father in Kerala's Neyyattinkara near Thiruvananthapuram in front of the police have shook the conscience of the people of the state.

Around this time on Monday his younger brother was seen pleading with the police to allow the burial of his father who died while he tried to self-immolate when the police along with authorities tried to evict his house following a court order.

A video of the teenager pleading with police officials to allow him to bury his father has gone viral on social media, triggering outrage in Kerala.

"Sir, my mother is also about to die. You all have killed them. Now you don't want us to even bury them?" the eldest son Rahul is seen in the video asking a police officer with a raised finger.

The boy's emotional outburst came when a team of police present at the spot

opposed digging the grave there saying the body could not be buried in the disputed land. The residents in the area also came forward supporting the boys and finally the body was laid to rest at the disputed land near his house.

Rajan attempted suicide on 22 December before the police and the revenue officials who had arrived at his house to evict his family following a court order. Meanwhile, Rajan poured petrol over his clothes and held a lighter and threatened to set himself ablaze.

His children later said it was only a threat and police officials aggravated the situation and in the scuffle that followed their bodies had suddenly caught fire. Rajan who suffered injuries in his abdomen died on Monday

morning, his wife Ambili who was along with him succumbed to injuries on Monday evening. In the dying declaration, Rajan told a magistrate that he was 'only threatening and police officials were responsible for the accidental fire.' State police chief Loknath Behera ordered a probe into the incident.

Rural SP B Asokan will investigate the case as the two sons of the deceased couple raised serious allegations against Neyyattinkara police that their parents resorted to the extreme step due to the provocation from the police.

Chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan announced assistance to the family and build a house for them immediately.

Meanwhile, the residents way laid the ambulance carrying the body of accident victim Ambili and staged a protest in Neyyattinkara on Tuesday evening.

The ambulance was stopped 100 metres from Ambili's house. The residents have demanded action against the police officers and said that Ambili's body will not be laid to rest until the demands are met.

## BJP will ensure Matua's citizenship rights, says Thakur

**RAJIB CHAKRABORTY**  
KOLKATA, 29 DECEMBER

to Bengal in January will address the issue of citizenship for Matua community. Amidst rumours that Thakur was discontent with BJP over CAA, TMC tried to persuade him to return. Bengal BJP chief and MP Dilip Ghosh also said that the new citizenship act would be soon rolled out. "I believe that CAA will be implemented in West Bengal, irrespective of whether the state supports it or not. CAA will be executed here by the Centre and we are

hopeful regarding Union home minister's Amit Shah's visit in Bengal in January, as he will announce regarding the implementation matter," said Thakur. Sources said Thakur has been anxious as another bigger organisation of the Matua and other dalit community is organising movement across West Bengal and India, under the banner of 'Nikhil Bharat Bengal Samajya Committee' (NBBSC), protesting against delay in CAA implementation.

## EXTENSION OF PERIODICITY OF FESTIVAL SPECIAL TRAINS

This is notified for the information of rail passengers that Railways have decided to extend the periodicity of the run of following Festival Special Trains as under:-

Train No. & Name	Already Notified Up to	Extended Up to
08237 Korba - Amritsar Jn. Express Special	30.12.2020	29.01.2021
08238 Amritsar Jn. - Bilaspur Express Special	01.01.2021	31.01.2021
08215 Durg - Udhampur Express	30.12.2020	27.01.2021
08216 Udhampur - Durg Express	31.12.2020	28.01.2021
02883 Durg - H. Nizamuddin Superfast Festival Spl.	31.12.2020	30.01.2021
02884 H. Nizamuddin - Durg Superfast Festival Spl.	01.01.2021	31.01.2021
02521 Barauni - Ernakulam Festival Special	30.12.2020	27.01.2021
02522 Ernakulam - Barauni Festival Special	03.01.2021	31.01.2021
02397 Gaya - New Delhi Festival Special	31.12.2020	30.01.2021
02398 New Delhi - Gaya Festival Special	01.01.2021	31.01.2021
05251 Darbhanga - Jalandhar City Festival Special	26.12.2020	30.01.2021
05252 Jalandhar City - Darbhanga Festival Special	27.12.2020	31.01.2021
05531 Saharsa - Amritsar Festival Special	27.12.2020	31.01.2021
05532 Amritsar - Saharsa Festival Special	28.12.2020	01.02.2021
05267 Raxaul - Lokmanya Tilak (T) Festival Special	26.12.2020	30.01.2021
05268 Lokmanya Tilak (T) - Raxaul Festival Special	28.12.2020	01.02.2021
05529 Saharsa - Anand Vihar (T) Festival Special	30.12.2020	27.01.2021
05530 Anand Vihar (T) - Saharsa Festival Special	31.12.2020	28.01.2021
02355 Patna - Jammu Tawi Festival Special	29.12.2020	30.01.2021
02356 Jammu Tawi - Patna Festival Special	30.12.2020	31.01.2021
03255 Patliputra - Chandigarh Festival Special	30.12.2020	31.01.2021
03256 Chandigarh - Patliputra Festival Special	31.12.2020	01.02.2021
05211 Darbhanga - Amritsar Festival Special	31.12.2020	29.01.2021
05122 Amritsar - Darbhanga Festival Special	02.01.2021	31.01.2021
05269 Muzaffarpur - Ahmedabad Festival Special	31.12.2020	28.01.2021
05270 Ahmedabad - Muzaffarpur Festival Special	02.01.2021	30.01.2021
02237 Varanasi Jn. - Jammu Tawi Express Special	31.12.2020	31.01.2021
02238 Jammu Tawi - Varanasi Jn. Express Special	01.01.2021	01.02.2021
04041 Delhi Jn. - Dehradun Mussoorie Express Special	31.12.2020	31.01.2021
04042 Dehradun - Delhi Jn. Mussoorie Express Special	01.01.2021	01.02.2021
02231 Lucknow - Chandigarh Express Special	31.12.2020	31.01.2021
02232 Chandigarh - Lucknow Express Special	01.01.2021	01.02.2021
02448 H. Nizamuddin - Manikpur Jn. Special	31.12.2020	31.01.2021
02447 Manikpur Jn. - H. Nizamuddin Special	01.01.2021	01.02.2021
04321 Bareilly - Bhuj Express Special	30.12.2020	31.01.2021
04322 Bhuj - Bareilly Express Special	31.12.2020	31.01.2021
04311 Bareilly - Bhuj Al Hazrat Express Special	31.12.2020	30.01.2021
04312 Bhuj - Bareilly Al Hazrat Express Special	30.12.2020	29.01.2021
02422 Jammu Tawi - Ajmer Superfast Special	31.12.2020	31.01.2021
02421 Ajmer - Jammu Tawi Superfast Special	01.01.2021	01.02.2021

Note: All norms of the State and Central Government regarding COVID-19 including Social distancing, sanitization etc., may be followed in the trains and at the Railway stations.

All other precautions associated with COVID-19 should also be ensured.

## Nitish's gambit

Imran Khan in his avatar as Pakistan's cricket captain had described his team as "cornered tigers" to explain their comeback from the dead in the 1992 World Cup which they went on to win. Some would argue with the characterisation of Bihar chief minister and JD(U) leader Nitish Kumar as a big cat but what is beyond debate is that his ally, the BJP, has been pushing him into a corner for a while now despite its protestations to the contrary. On Sunday, Mr Kumar struck back. In a sudden move, he quit as JD(U) president in favour of Ram Chandra Prasad Singh ~ or RCP as he is widely known ~ thereby marking out clear blue water between the coalition government he heads in Bihar and the JD(U) and BJP as distinct parties. In RCP, Mr Kumar has installed a loyalist to head the party and say what he as CM may not be able to. The JD(U) will now be free to take independent positions on the issues of the day as it deems fit without inviting accusations of going against coalition dharma.

The immediate trigger for Mr Kumar's gambit seems to have been the recent defection of six JD(U) MLAs in Arunachal Pradesh to the BJP. The meeting of the JD(U)'s national executive in which Mr Kumar passed the baton to RCP also passed a resolution against this "grave violation of the spirit of coalition dharma" and a second resolution critical of the BJP's "so-called love-jihad campaign".

The Bihar CM and his closest advisors believe the trust deficit between the two parties dates back to end-2013 when Mr Modi was first announced as the BJP's candidate for PM though the necessity of compromise for both sides to stay in power in Bihar meant that it stayed largely subterranean. But in propping up Chirag Paswan who ran an anti-Nitish campaign in the last Assembly election, foisting two deputy CMs on Mr Kumar without consulting him, and making it clear in actions and words that with 74 MLAs to the JD(U)'s 43 it sees itself as the dominant partner in the Bihar coalition, the BJP has upped the ante.

As a riposte, Mr Kumar has already said apropos of nothing in particular that he "wasn't interested in being CM" and that he accepted the post only because of repeated requests from the BJP leadership; a clear warning shot to his ally that he won't be played for a patsy. JD(U) leaders have openly started speaking of joining a putative national alliance of regional parties while Lalu Prasad's RJD, to add spice to the mix, has hinted it would not be averse to Mr Kumar heading such an alliance for the 2024 Lok Sabha poll. The BJP, in its haste to occupy the dominant national party space vacated by the Congress, has already lost the TDP, Shiv Sena and Akali Dal as allies over the past few years. Can it afford to lose another?

## Seven months after

Seven months after Cyclone Amphan devastated a swathe of West Bengal on May 20 ~ at the peak of the coronavirus pandemic ~ Sunday's report advanced in Britain is explicit on the point that it was the world's "biggest calamity that has been caused by a natural disaster", one that was overshadowed by Covid-19. Till this day, the state government has scarcely been able to assess the extent of the devastation, bogged down as it has been with treating the dreaded illness.

That the two disasters coincided was in itself one of the deepest tragedies that the state contended. Described as the "costliest tropical cyclone of the year", the report has been crafted by Christian Aid, a relief and development agency based in London. It is said to have displaced 4.9 million people across the affected countries in the Bay of Bengal.

The bare facts of the event, that convulsed the state last summer, are mind-boggling. "It was one of the strongest storms on record in the Bay of Bengal, with sustained windspeed of 270 km per hour. It was also one of the costliest tropical cyclones of the year, with losses amounting to more \$13 billion. At least 128 people were killed by the cyclone, which caused great damage in India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Bhutan." Tragically, Cyclone Amphan has been relegated to the footnotes in a fairly large stretch of South Asia.

Coronavirus intensified the fury of nature, and the subtext of the data states that Bengal had to bear the brunt of the economic blight inflicted by Amphan. Not that the Bengal government is yet to calibrate the cost of the damage. It was calculated to be Rs 1 lakh 3000 crore, which is "quite close to the cost mentioned in the international report", going by the response of Bengal's disaster management minister, Javed Khan. The reconstruction still appears to be a long way away and the customary civil that the Centre is yet to advance Rs 1,000 crore will cut no ice, given that the equation between the Trinamul Congress and the BJP has soured considerably in recent weeks. In Bengal alone, 2.7 million houses were partially damaged.

Overall, the report portrays a dismal climate scenario on the fifth anniversary of the Paris conference. On closer reflection, Amphan ranks fourth in the list of climate-related disasters of 2020. Notably, the hurricanes in America and the Caribbean, the crippling floods in China, and forest fires on the west coast of the United States, not to forget the devastation in Brazil that was allegedly facilitated for the emergence of industry. There is a quirky link between climate-change and economic development.

Most particularly, India suffered the highest damage wrought by climate-change ~ the pivotal issue at periodic conferences at the high table, whether in Cancun or Paris.

# Benignly Rebellious

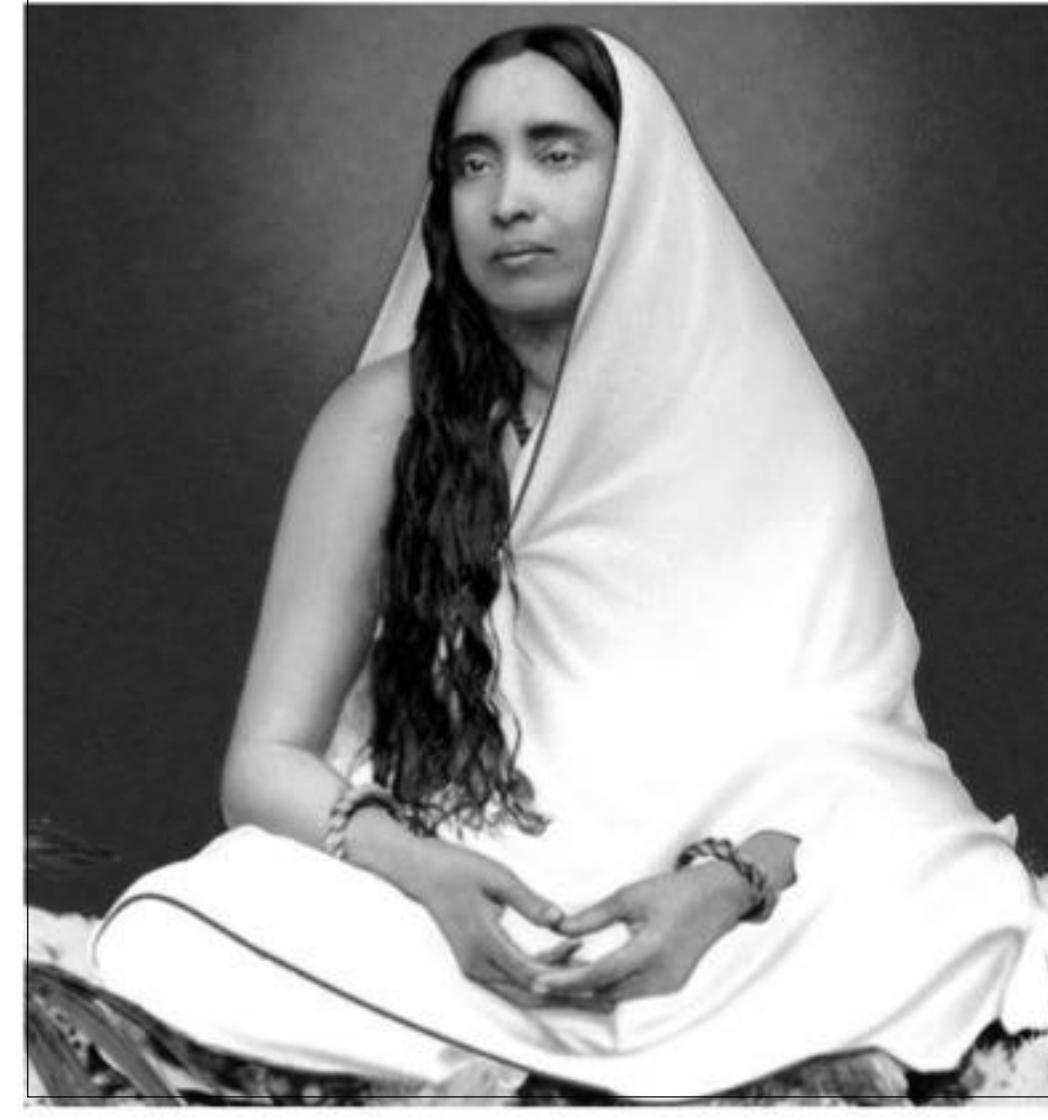
Notwithstanding off-beat saintliness, Sarada Devi was a revolutionary in her attitude, with a sublime beauty and grace. She was conspicuously calm yet dynamic. A celestial love perennially fed into her being, by dint of which she quietly did her job of transforming society.

One of her well known biographers has legitimately described her as "the First Lady of spiritual India". Indeed, there was none to match her in the fact that she could reside in samadhi and samsara (mundane world) with equal ease, unobtrusively switching from the one to the other at will. She was, therefore, a Setu (bridge) between the transcendental and the temporal to those who were spiritually susceptible to her real nature. Sister Nivedita was the one so tuned to be able to assess her typical demeanour rightly in a brief compass. She wrote to Mr. and Mrs. Ratcliffe (the then Editor of The Statesman):

"Oh dear, oh dear! How one is slipping back into this awful belief in life! If I go to prison for a prolonged period, none of my friends need grieve about it ~ for I shall immediately take to meditation and try to climb those wonderful heights on which the Holy Mother (Sarada Devi) lives. Such sweetness and serenity as hers, with such depth of experience and affection, are past all imagining. And how wonderful her life is ~ she lives in the elaborate system of worship spontaneously organized and maintained by others, for the adoration of her own Husband (Sri Ramakrishna), whom she worships as God, but cherishes a deep human tenderness for nevertheless. 'I loved simply to look at Him!' I heard her say the other night! And living so, she seems more and more like a drop of water on a lotus leaf ~ touching the world at all points, yet un-diverted by it ~ un-deluded ~ filled with beatitude. She is of course an abess but so child-like and sweet nevertheless, and with much rigorous standard about marriage! Sometimes it is almost amusing to see how impossible it is to her to condone the desertion of a husband by a wife ~ and this, regardless of the treatment meted out, by the lord and master. She simply doesn't seem to regard that branch of criticism as her province.

"But always that Hindu ideal of perfect wife! Oh how perfect she is ~ and how deeply and wonderfully to be loved!"

Notwithstanding such off-beat saintliness, Sarada Devi was, nonetheless, a revolutionary in her attitude, with a sublime beauty and grace. Remarkably, she, even then, never broke but built and buttressed. She was conspicuously calm yet dynamic. A celestial love perennially fed into her being, by dint of which she quietly did her job of transforming the society around her with a quintessential sense of justice, equanimity and determination. For that, in spite of an imminent threat of being ostracized, she never flinched from going beyond caste and community, though she remained resolutely loyal to social customs of abiding values. However, if she had at all broken anything ever, it was surely the crass dichotomies that divided man from man. This



made her uniquely modern with an unprecedented novelty and traditional in one with an unparalleled ingenuity.

Sarada Devi was benignly rebellious. Still, she was by no means "meek or docile when challenged by injustice or wickedness". Of the sixty-seven years of her life, thirty-seven she spent in a caste and community ridden milieu and had incessantly propped the poor with absolutely no discrimination. Every moment she was consciously engaged there in correcting some or other ills plaguing their rural life. She did so consolidating the power of her universal motherhood, dovetailing herself with their weal and woes. A paragon of virtue, she was, accordingly, the Holy Mother to all and sundry. People could actually feel her holiness under her protective wings. Moslems and Dalits were no exception to it.

People of her neighbouring village were Moslems who used to earn their livelihood by making silk. But their business was ruined because of the competition of the imported silk. For the sake of survival, they eventually indulged in stealing and burglary. Their condition became worse due to a famine. Since they were involved in criminal activities, others were afraid of them. But Sarada Devi empathised with their misery and came forward to assist them. She employed some of them to build a house, keeping no fear, suspicion or prejudice. She even gave one to eat a meal in her residence, paying no heed to the reservations of her kith and kin. She noticed her niece serving him throwing food from a distance, treating him as an untouchable. It was intolerable to her. She immediately took over from her and waited on the

person properly. She didn't stop there. She herself then cleaned the spot where he completed his meal, as she would do with her honoured guests. Giving vent to her displeasure on her niece, she said she made no distinction between him and a monastic disciple (Swami Saradananda, the first General Secretary of Ramakrishna Mission) of Sri Ramakrishna.

Another Moslem villager, likewise, brought some fruits and hesitantly asked her whether she would accept them for worship. "Of course, I will," she replied. She took the fruits from him and assured him she would certainly offer them in Sri Ramakrishna's puja. A woman devotee couldn't bear this and said: "We know he is a thief. How can you offer these things to him?"

Master?" After the man had left, she spoke to the woman, saying, "I know who is good and who is bad." Many such so-called repulsive persons reformed themselves in her safe and serene refuge. There were numerous similar examples by which she taught the close and the communal that humanity was much above caste and community. The fact of winning over a bandit belonging to a lowest caste in her young age is too well known to be repeated. He had at once undergone a change to forget violence by her touching influence of love and respect. She was, as a result, all along an affectionate daughter to him and his wife. It's everyone's guess with what courage and commitment she thus carried out her silent struggle for a cause, resorting to sheer common sense as well as compassion, giving a lie to superstition. Sarada Devi was much ahead of her time. Otherwise what else could explain her highly progressive thinking despite

tame the Dragon just as the former Soviet Union was once pacified by the US-led NATO with the formation of an alliance of democracies against the authoritarian communism. That is why no world war did happen after the second one. China is at the same time authoritative, expansionist and infamous for browbeating small neighbours sans alliance. They are no match for Chinese military and economic might. India, a democracy, is a formidable military and economic power and at the same time a victim of Dragon's aggression in Asia. Like-minded democracies of Asia, in order to remain safe, should follow NATO doctrine

her conservative upbringing as an orthodox Brahmin of a remote village in the nineteenth century? Her endeavours to improve the condition of the indigent in her village were dramatic, in view of its backwardness. She started a primary school, made provision for clean drinking water, tried to bring water from the nearest rivulet for irrigation, etc. The way she did these was unimaginable for a lady like her with no formal education and exposure. It is also incredible that she could so pragmatically focus on three fundamental aspects, namely, education, health and food, for the development of her people.

Sarada Devi's life in Calcutta was equally eventful. All types of people were around her here ~ learned, illiterate, respectable, despicable, rich and poor. None was out of her attention, as everyone had free access to her. Above all, her patronage to social and national causes was exceptional for its nuances. For instance, she ate with the foreigners whom orthodox Brahmins despised as mlechas, giving out the message that they too were dear to her. She compared Nivedita with an exotic flower brought by Swami Vivekananda from abroad for Sri Ramakrishna's worship. She was even ready to part with the company of her upper caste close associates who objected to her liberal behaviour. She was a great advocate of girl education as initiated by Nivedita.

She stood in defence of Nivedita against the communal Hindus who planned to slander her. Most significantly, the freedom fighters believed her blessings were necessary for them to achieve Independence. Nivedita wrote in 1909: "All parties are now united to say, new spirit comes from R.K.V. (Ramakrishna-Vivekananda) and men who have been released (from jail) come to make pranams to Holy Mother. She says 'what fearlessness, only R.K. (Ramakrishna) and Swamiji could have brought about this fearlessness! All their (the British Government) fault!' Isn't she extraordinary?" Impact of her personality was thus wide and deep. From a cobbler to saintly monks, all were her disciples. She spiritually initiated a large number of men and women from across the country, including a British lady of Calcutta.

It is difficult to quantify the regenerative efforts Sarada Devi had applied throughout her life, even at the risk of her being excommunicated from upper caste society. The profundity with which she did her work of uplifting the marginalized had left indelible marks, waiting to be comprehensively studied by scholars for our lessons. The truth that she had contributed astoundingly in principle as well as in practice is reflected in multifarious social and spiritual activities of the Ramakrishna Movement that Swami Vivekananda organised banking on her patronage, wisdom and example. Swamiji was firmly convinced that Sarada Devi was an unsurpassed power born to "revive" India.

A MEMBER OF THE **ANN**  
ASIAN VOICES

## Struggle to sustain livelihood

The year 2020 has been devastating on many fronts, but one of the starkest impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic has been on the livelihoods of Cambodian cyclo drivers, who have struggled to sustain their livelihoods over the past year. Dating back to French Indochina, the three-wheeled bicycle taxi has been a mode of transportation in the Kingdom for the past 80 years. Once a utilitarian mode of transport, it was a means of getting around Phnom Penh, whereby the driver pedaled behind the passenger who is comfortably seated in front in a slow-swing seat between two wheels. In the 70s, the cyclo was memorialised in the rock and roll pop culture by free-spirited rock singer Yous Olarang in his song JisCyclo (Riding Cyclo).

Over the last two decades, however, the iconic cyclo has been on the verge of extinction, faced with the emergence of faster modes of transport like motorbikes and tuk-tuks, and the decline in ridership. These faster moving options coupled with the convenience of ride-sharing apps have largely shuttered the cyclo industry. In 1999, there were more than 1,500 cyclos in Phnom Penh, according to the Cyclo Conservation and Careers Association (CCCA). The number has drastically dropped, with approximately 300 cyclos remaining active.

Left to the status quo, the number of cyclo drivers and cyclos are expected to further decline due to the effects of the pandemic. Within the Kingdom, two organisations are at the forefront of supporting the struggling cyclo industry. Founded in 2009, the CCCA seeks to support cyclo drivers by providing access to basic healthcare, education and housing at no cost. Today, the association supports 280 cyclo drivers between the ages of 32 and 82 in Phnom Penh.

Similarly, Prime Minister Hun Sen launched the Cycle Foundation in 2018, providing cyclo drivers who register with the Foundation access to free medical treatment at public hospitals and a subsidy of \$5.25 to cover rental fees and meals each month.

Serving as the charity's honourable chairman, the prime minister has committed to donating 120 million riel (about \$30,000) annually. Cambodia's cyclo industry has survived at an inflection point. Despite efforts to improve the livelihoods of its drivers through both organisations, the pandemic has exacerbated the challenges facing the cyclo industry.

With the sharp decline in tourism, cyclo drivers earn roughly 10,000 to 20,000 riel per day. For perspective in pre-Covid times, tourism contributed to 70 per cent of Cambodian cyclo drivers' incomes.

Today, cyclo drivers are among the poorest of the urban poor in the capital. With dwindling tourist numbers, their socio-economic status is likely to fall further.

A Millennial Approach Hao Tang, a 20-year-old millennial from Phnom Penh, has kick-started a social media fundraising campaign which has thus far raised close to 19 million riel from more than 350 individuals in support of the CCCA. Through technology, he has been able to raise awareness while raising funds towards supporting the cyclo drivers' livelihoods.

## LIGHT POLLUTION

SIR, A global light pollution map developed by a group of researchers has ranked New Delhi, Bengaluru and Kolkata as three cities with the highest light pollution in India. It should serve to alert us to the looming problem of light pollution about which we are also unaware of. Light pollution refers to the harmful impact of artificial outdoor lighting.

Studies show that brightness from outdoor lights has risen steadily across India over a 20 year period. A 2017 global study revealed that the 'loss of night' due to excessive artificial light at night is increasing three times faster in India than the global average. It is time India woke up to the light pollution problem before it overwhelms us. It is not difficult to tackle the issue. What we need to do is stop excessive use of illumination and floodlighting. Lights must illuminate our streets, not the skies. Use of light for advertisement should be regulated. Could we not ask the advertisers to switch off lights after a certain period of time? But first, we need to realise that we need the dark as much as we need light.

Yours, etc., Shovanlal Chakraborty, Kolkata, 28 December.

## The tussle in Kerala

SIR, This refers to the editorial, 'Conflict in Kerala' (28 December). The Governor of Kerala, Arif Mohammed Khan, has given short shrift to constitutional certitudes; his actions are aimed at pleasing his political bosses. There is little doubt that Khan had stirred communal sensitivities at the Indian History Congress at Kannur in December last year. The scope of discussions on the floor of the Legislative Assembly is regulated by the Speaker. The rules for the same are made by the Legislature of a State through the powers conferred under Article 208 of the Constitution. Moving resolutions and conducting discussions in a Legislative Assembly cannot be regulated by gubernatorial powers.

Though legal experts have cited that the Governor might be bound to give his nod for the special session if the council of ministers met again and made further recommendations in this regard, the government decided to not pursue a collision course with the Governor. It is the prerogative of the house to decide

whether an issue is urgent or not. This is another example of how the governor acts at the behest of the ruling party at the Centre on an issue that clearly falls outside his discretionary power. A Governor must be impartial in his actions.

Yours, etc., SS Paul, Nadia, 28 December.

### NATO ALLIANCE

SIR, Ashok Kapoor in his two-part articles 'China versus India' (25, 26 December) has advanced very pertinent approach through which India, it seems, can

tame the Dragon just as the former Soviet Union was once pacified by the US-led NATO with the formation of an alliance of democracies against the authoritarian communism. That is why no world war did happen after the second one. China is at the same time authoritative, expansionist and infamous for browbeating small neighbours sans alliance. They are no match for Chinese military and economic might. India, a democracy, is a formidable military and economic power and at the same time a victim of Dragon's aggression in Asia. Like-minded democracies of Asia, in order to remain safe, should follow NATO doctrine



'Any attack on any one of us is an attack on us all'. The soul superpower of the globe, being a democracy will undoubtedly stand by the combined strength of Asian democracies. India should lead the Asian pack.

Yours, etc., Aranya Sanyal, Malda, 28 December.

### FOR INDIA'S ECONOMY

SIR, Almost every day we hear that China will overtake USA as the number one economy and India will not be far behind. But since the population of India and China is about five times the population of USA they will still be relatively poor countries compared to USA.

It is the per capita income that matters. England's per capita income is more than twenty times that of India yet India's Gross GDP is equal to that of England. Given total GDP figures is nothing but an attempt to paint a rosy picture about India's economy. India is still a very poor country and not notwithstanding huge wealth of a handful of people, a large number of Indians live in abject poverty.

Yours, etc., Rajkumar Roychoudhury, Kolkata, 28 December.

RICKI LEVI, ABHIROOP CHOWDHURY  
AND ARMIN ROSENCRANZ

**E**xreme weather events caused by climate change were responsible in 2019 for at least 100 billion USD worth of damage. One of the foremost reasons behind climate change is the unsustainable development that has been going on since the industrial revolution. This warrants public participation and movements to compel policy makers to take positive actions and control exploitative forms of development. Gandhian philosophy can be an effective tool to arbitrate the 'environmental degradation' case to indifferent international bodies before the damages becomes irreparable.

The environmental movement in post-independence India started with the 'Chipko Andolan', which means "to embrace" in Hindi, in 1973. The late environmentalist Anil Agarwal observed that the Chipko movement is imbued with "Ahimsa" – one of Gandhi's key ideas. Gandhi argued that Ahimsa is not the absence, negation, or reversal of violence; but rather, compassion, solidarity and the capacity to identify with the other. Ahimsa applies not only to humans but to all-natural systems. Hence "hugging trees" is an act of compassion.

Most of India's natural resources are managed as common and traditional ecological knowledge. Daily interaction between villagers and their natural systems enables an understanding of the ecosystems' laws and their regeneration rate. This concept reflects a relationship in which humans are part of the environmental fabric and subject to its

Indigenous management methods of forests, water resources, and agricultural systems compete with centralized methods of natural resources management. We have come to recognize that modern forest management and industrial agriculture have depleted large amounts of resources. A U.N. Food and Agricultural Organization report of 2020 indicates that global forest cover has been decreasing at a rate of 4.7 million hectares per year. The Indian Space Research Organisation in 2016 reported that 36.7 per cent of India's total arable and non-arable land is steadily degrading.

Gandhi's criticism of the modern economy helps to explain his influence on Indian environmentalists. He

## Gandhism could show way to managing resources



argued that to provide the essential means of subsistence (housing, food and clothing), a decentralized-local model must be applied. It can divide the means of production and capital in a balanced and equitable manner based on a commons-style management method. "Mass production" centralized industrial methods led to the destruction of nature, the loss of village independence, mass unemployment, urban migration, and abject poverty.

Ernest Schumacher, a British neoclassical economist, went to Burma and India in the 1950s and 1960s to advise their governments on implementing new technology. Like Gandhi, he quickly realized that

development in India following the mass production model was destructive. After becoming acquainted with Gandhi's economic ideas, Schumacher observed that environmentally-minded people must promote small-scale, local, low cost and sustainable methods. Gandhi could be considered the "father" of this development concept, and Schumacher one of the founders of the environmental economy. Many modern environmental thinkers of India are promoting "agro-ecological" sustainable agriculture. They fiercely oppose the industrial non-sustainable model. Industrial agriculture produces and sustains socio-economic inequality. The corporate agricultural structure is an

example of centralized economic systems. These systems are "replicated" by globalization and undermine local governmental structures, thereby weakening democratic procedures in many countries. The recent scientific research suggests that traditional agricultural methods are soil friendly and nurtures microbial biodiversity unlike chemically intensive agriculture.

One advocate of the climate change movement is Greta Thunberg, whose highlighting of the crisis and protests is gaining momentum. International bodies are beginning to implement climate friendly policies. In Bristol, UK, 20,000 people recently demonstrated with placards reading "Change

the politics not the climate!" and "the ocean is rising, so are we!"

To promote global climate justice, Gandhian Indian environmentalists argue that decentralized economic practices are necessary to target economic-technological networks, promoting a society founded on solidarity between man and nature. Thus, "environmental Gandhism" has the power to contribute to the sustainable management of natural resources and promote equality and democracy in a global world.

The writers are, respectively, Assistant professors and dean of Jindal School of Environment and Sustainability, Sonipat, Haryana, India

## Imbalance in India-Bangladesh ties

SHAHEDUL ANAM KHAN

**B**angladesh is on the cusp of its 50th anniversary. Come 26 March 2021, it will be 50 years since Bangladesh declared its Independence. We restate our gratefulness to our martyrs and the freedom fighters for their sacrifices. It is also fitting to recognise the contribution of India for its assistance, without whose help it might have taken longer than nine months to throw the Pakistan Army off our soil.

Over the last 50 years, Bangladesh's primary preoccupation in the diplomatic sphere has been to chart a course for a harmonious coexistence with India, which for the greater part of our independent existence has been our "only neighbour" since Bangladesh had hardly bothered to look towards its east, at Myanmar, till the Rohingya problem became a very serious security issue for Bangladesh. If foreign relationships are predicated on three concentric rings, each defining the sphere of our interests, the first two of those have been dominated, and to some extent dictated, by India.

It has been 49 years since India recognised Bangladesh on 6 December 1971, the second country do so after Bhutan, ten days before the surrender of the Pakistanis to the joint Bangladesh-India command. And it is worth taking a look at how the bilateral relationship has panned out in these years. Perhaps a look at the recent virtual summit between the two prime ministers on December 17, and at the compact reached between the two countries, would be a good

starting point to examine the real state of Bangladesh-India relations. And one should mention that official and public perceptions of Bangladesh-India relations are different.

The Bangladesh-India relationship has seen many peaks and troughs in the last five decades. The peaks and troughs were directly related to whether it was the Awami League or BNP that was in power. It must be mentioned that the course of the foreign policy of the nascent state, both in terms of regional and international relationships, was defined by Bangabandhu himself. He made no secret of his intention to acquire for Bangladesh as much diplomatic space for manoeuvre as necessary by a sovereign and self-respecting nation. He asserted firmly the multiple identities of Bangladesh, which couldn't have been lost on those at home and abroad who wanted Bangladesh to be seen as only a singular construct of nationhood. He was cut out in the mould of an idealist - principles rather than realism dominated his foreign policy outlook.

Those who have followed the course of the Bangladesh-India relationship closely must have failed to notice in recent times the reiteration of the excellent state of the relationship between the two countries. Constant restating of the "extraordinary" relationship, which is supposed to be on a very even keel, may convey a different impression to more keen observers.

Indeed, in spite of the official pronouncements, our relationship had come under a degree of strain in

recent times. And that was induced by both the internal and external policies of India. The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), followed immediately by the National Register of Citizenship or NRC 2019, was a major source of concern for Bangladesh. Although our official position is that these are internal matters of India, it nonetheless created flutters in the official circles. The statement of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on the CAA that, "We do not understand why they [the Indian government] did it, it was not necessary," does indeed express the country's concerns about the likely deleterious consequences of the CAA on Bangladesh. The scurrilous and snide comments about Bangladeshis by very senior BJP leaders did not help either.

Strain was also induced by Bangladesh's position on the Belt and Road Initiative and the strategic implication of China's enlarged footprint on South Asia, and indeed on a large swathe of the globe. Bangladesh's disinclination to join the US-led Indo-Pacific bandwagon to counter China's influence demonstrated its resolve to not get involved in an arrangement that may well take the character of a security organisation eventually.

But nothing of these was reflected, understandably, in the 39-point joint statement released after the Hasina-Modi virtual summit, which contained platitudes and reiterations of intent and the excellent state of the mutual relationship thriving in multitude areas of cooperation. There were many substantive issues of permanent interest to both countries that

have been mentioned in the document, such as Border Management and Security Cooperation (one is not sure whether the issue of terrorism really merits inclusion under this issue), and Trade Partnership for Growth (but restrictions remain on import of certain essential items from India—on December 22, Bangladesh demanded the withdrawal of a ban on seed imports from India to boost bilateral cooperation in the agricultural sector).

Then there is the most strategically important issue for India, which has been more than adequately met by Bangladesh - Connectivity for Prosperity. In this regard, it appears that while there have been ample extensions of connectivity between the Indian mainland and its North-East through the Bangladesh-India connectivity programme, sub-regional connectivity is yet to come to full fruition, and the Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal (BBIN) initiative is still waiting to be operationalised. And one would hope that Bangladesh would get the appropriate dividends it deserves by allowing the use of its facilities for transit. Bangladesh happens to be India's biggest trade partner in South Asia and we believe that not only should Bangladesh expand its export basket, but India should also liberalise its import policy vis-a-vis Bangladesh to offset the huge balance of trade deficit.

As far as Cooperation in Water Resources, Power and Energy is concerned, while the two leaders underscored the need for an early conclusion of the Framework of Interim Agreement on sharing of waters of six

joint rivers, namely, Manu, Muhi, Khawai, Gumti, Dhara and Dudhku-mar, sharing of the Teesta waters was predictably absent. This is what the Bangladesh foreign minister had to say on the question of Teesta—"You know what the barriers to signing the Teesta water-sharing agreement are. The Indian government, multiple times, has promised that they would sign the agreement after solving their internal disputes over the issue. So, there is no reason to create an embarrassing situation by raising this question repeatedly. Rather, you should pose this question to the government and media of West Bengal." So the Teesta remains on the list of promises. And the centre in India has found a good excuse in Mamata Banerjee's intransigence to shelve the Teesta water issue for the time being.

There was a single paragraph in the joint statement on forcibly displaced persons from the Rakhine state of Myanmar, but India's expressed position on the issue is in contrast to their demonstrated position on it. What other impression shall we form when India consistently abstains from voting on the Rohingya issue at the UN?

Since the time Awami League returned to power in 2009, every one of India's security and strategic concerns has been answered by Bangladesh promptly and positively. India's Bangladesh locked North-East is no longer so. Mutual cooperation in dealing with extremism and terrorism has paid dividends. But two of Bangladesh's most pressing concerns remain to be adequately addressed - Teesta water sharing and border killings. Thus, the question we are compelled to ask is, will these issues be satisfactorily addressed, and soon?

The Daily Star/ANN

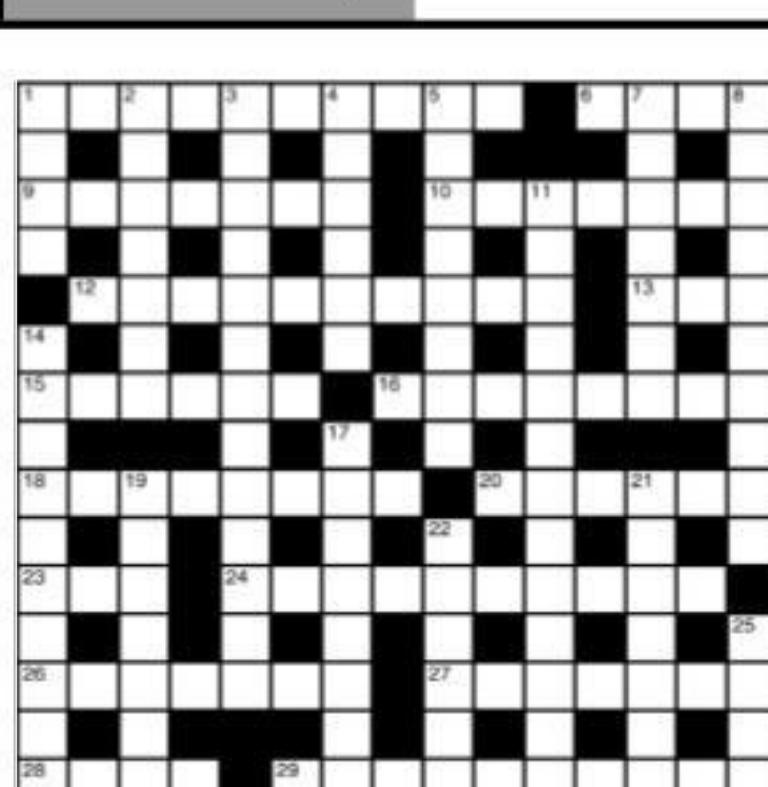
A movement is on foot at Home to assist in restoring the war-shattered life of the townspeople and peasantry of France by arranging that various cities in England and Scotland should adopt certain towns or villages in France as the objects of their care. Edinburgh, for example, has adopted Marguy, a French village facing the Belgian frontier in the forest of Ardenne. The civil population of this village was held responsible for a German officer's death in the early days of the war, and 43 of the inhabitants were shot and two-thirds of the place burned. It was afterwards occupied, and it was only eight days after the Armistice that the French flag was again flying over the ruins. The object of the Edinburgh scheme is not the rebuilding of the village; that will be undertaken by the French Government at the expense, it is hoped, of Germany. What the scheme aims at is to supply house furnishing, cloths, and agricultural tools, to enable the villagers, 340 in number, to make a new start in life, and also to equip the schools. Some Edinburgh citizens think that their city, which has so many historic ties with France, might undertake a much larger scheme, as Glasgow, Manchester, Sheffield, Newcastle, and Wolverhampton have done, but it is intimated that if more money than is required for Marguy is subscribed it will be used for the relief of other villages in the neighbourhood.

Presiding at the Khilafat Conference this morning, Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad declared that the latest revelations had shown that the Khilafat question was only a part of a world struggle for liberty against all Imperialistic nations, headed by Great Britain. The first duty of Khilafat workers therefore was to attain Swaraj for India, and check Imperialistic hands from enslaving the world. Until the liberty of the world was safe, the Khilafat question would remain unsolved. At the meeting Maulana Shaukat Ali announced that Amir Amanullah had sent a message of condolence to India on the death of Sheikul Hind Maulana Mahmud-ul-Hussan. Thereupon it was agreed to send a message of gratitude to the Amir for his sympathy.

Affairs in Arabia have for some little time been attracting a considerable amount of attention. The feature of prime interest is the spread of the Akhwan movement and its bearing on almost all political events in Arabia and on the affairs of the surrounding principalities. The Akhwan is a Bedouin society which exists to promote the spread of religion in the extreme Wahabi sense. They have recently come into conflict with the neighbouring principalities of Hail, under Ibn Rashid and Kuwait. The first trouble arose when some Mutair tribesmen of the Akhwan persuasion, who had encamped at some wells claimed by the Shaikh of Kuwait, were attacked by the Shaikh's forces. On October 10, 1920, an Akhwan force attacked the Shaikh of Kuwait at Jahrah a few miles from Kuwait.

Lord Curzon has replied to M. Krassin's note, stating that the belief of the British Government regarding the aggressive intentions of Soviet submarines is based on an open avowal of the Soviet Minister when launching a submarine in the Black Sea, that he hoped it would sink an Entente vessel. He adds that Government's fears are confirmed by the vague statement contained in Krassin's note, whereby the Soviet submarine commander who desired to torpedo British ships would be provided with the excuse of mistaken identity. Lord Curzon further points out that the Soviet forces in the Black Sea are still engaged in open hostility against British interests, in which submarines may at any time be engaged.

Replying in the House of Commons to Mr. Jesson, who drew attention to the damaging effect on producers in East Africa of the course of exchange with India, Colonel Amery stated that the rupee, for which the florin was being substituted, was stabilised at one-tenth of a pound sterling in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanganyika at the time when the value of the rupee in India was raised to one-tenth of a gold sovereign. He saw no reason to suppose that the value of the Indian rupee would remain permanently below two shillings, and he was not prepared to sacrifice the advantage to East Africa of a stable exchange and definite association with sterling money, because of the temporary depression of the Indian exchange.



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

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NOTE: Figures in parentheses denote the number of letters in the words required. (By arrangement with The Independent, London)



*The turnaround of SAIL from several quarters of losses was one of the most challenging experiences*ANIL KUMAR CHAUDHARY  
CHAIRMAN OF SAIL

## THUMBNAILS

**Tata chief on pandemic:** Tata Group chairman N Chandrasekaran said that the impact of Covid on innovation has been all-pervasive and models of working from home are making all companies rethink the future of work, according to a Press release. Addressing a session on "Inspired India: A Business Leader's Perspective", during Ficci's 93rd annual general meeting, Chandrasekaran said: "My roots that are embedded in technology make me see the Covid pandemic and its impact on India in a very positive frame of mind. The 2020s belong to India."

SNS

**ICICI Bank purchase:** Private sector lender ICICI Bank on Tuesday said it will acquire 9.09 per cent stake in educational technology platform Myclassboard Educational Solutions Pvt Ltd for cash consideration of Rs 4.5 crore. "ICICI Bank has entered into an agreement... in relation to an investment in Myclassboard Educational Solutions Pvt Ltd (MESPL)," the private sector lender said in a regulatory filing. MESPL offers an online school management platform and reported turnover of Rs 12 crore in FY 2020.

PTI

**Titan milestone:** World of Titan, the watch retailer from leading watch maker Titan Company Limited, has opened its 500th store in the country. Located in Newtown, Rajarhat, Kolkata, the store marks a milestone for the brand, the company said in a Press release. Speaking on the development, C K Venkataraman, managing director, Titan Co Ltd, said: "We are very excited to launch our 500th store and further expand our retail footprint in the country."

SNS

**Skoda price hike:** European car manufacturer Skoda on Tuesday said it is looking to hike car prices by up to 2.5 per cent from 1 January 2021 in view of increasing production costs.

PTI

# Future, Amazon continue to fight over former's RIL deal

Amazon and Future write to Sebi with contrasting requests over a ₹24,713-crore buyout of assets

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 29 DECEMBER

Continuing their letter fight, Amazon and Future Group have written to market regulator the Securities and Exchange Board of India with contrasting requests over a ₹24,713-crore buyout of assets of India's second-largest retailer.

Future Group has requested Sebi to expedite the review of the proposed deal and issue a no-objection certificate, while Amazon has urged that the review of the "impugned transaction" be suspended.

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Amazon had dragged Future Group to arbitration at Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC) after an indebted Kishore Biyani group firm signed a pact to sell retail, wholesale, logistics and warehousing units to billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance in August this year.

## DEAL DEADLOCK

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► Future Group firm

zon's right to make representations to statutory authorities against the Future Group-Reliance Retail deal.

However, the court also made several observations indicating that Amazon's attempt to control FRL through a conflation of agreements it has with an unlisted unit of



Future Retail Ltd (FRL) approached Delhi High Court, which earlier this month upheld Amazon's right to make representations to statutory authorities against the Future Group-Reliance Retail deal.

the Indian company will be violative of the FEMA FDI rules.

The court had also given a go-ahead to the regulatory authorities to decide about the deal in accordance with the rules and regulations.

In its letter, dated 23 December, FRL requested

Sebi to decide over the NOC (no objection certificate) required for the sale of its retail and other businesses "as soon as possible" as any delay would cause loss to the company, its stakeholders and investors.

"In view of the judgment of Delhi High Court, it is respectfully prayed that Sebi reviews the application submitted for its NOC/ observations on the scheme to the stock exchanges as soon as possible as any further delay on this count would cause irreparable loss not only to FRL and its stakeholders, including lakhs of small investors, but also to other entities and their respective stakeholders and investors, who are involved in the scheme," it said.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has to issue an NOC after reviewing the scheme of merger of FRL along with other Future Group companies with RIL's Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd and Reliance Retail Fashion Lifestyle Ltd.

In its letter to Sebi chairman Ajay Tyagi on 23 December, FRL requested

Amazon said FRL's request for an injunction against Amazon has been rejected by Delhi High Court, and that the court has held that the interim award by SIAC is valid under Indian law.

"As the interim award is valid under Indian law, it is respectfully submitted that Sebi should decline to approve the impugned transaction on the basis of the findings and directions contained in the interim award," it said in the letter. Amazon added that all findings contained in the interim award, including the finding that FRL is a necessary and proper party to the arbitration proceedings, "continue to be valid".

"The arbitration proceedings thus continue, including against FRL," Amazon said. This is the fifth instance of Amazon writing to Sebi on this matter.

It also urged Sebi to suspend review of the impugned transaction as well as the scheme involving the said transaction, and not grant any no-objection in this matter.



## Former economic affairs secy likely to be next HDFC Bank chairperson

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 29 DECEMBER

Former economic affairs secretary Atanu Chakraborty is likely to be the next chairperson of the country's largest private sector lender HDFC Bank, sources said.

He would replace Shyama Gopinath, who is set to complete her term in January.

According to the sources, the bank has recommended the name of Chakraborty for appointment as the part-time chairperson, subject to the Reserve Bank of India's approval.

Chakraborty, a 1985-batch IAS officer of Gujarat cadre, retired as secretary of department of economic affairs in April 2020. Prior to that, he was secretary of department of investment and public asset management (Dipam). Both departments come under the finance ministry.

The tenure of Gopinath, a former RBI deputy governor, is ending on 1 January 2021. She was appointed as the chairperson in January 2015.

The bank's board, at its meeting held on Monday, decided to recommend the name of Chakraborty and

submitted its recommendation to the RBI for approval under Section 35B of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, the sources said.

Once he is appointed as the chairperson, HDFC Bank will be the second private sector lender after ICICI Bank to have a former bureaucrat in the chairperson post.

**Dhanlaxmi Bank:** Debt-ridden Dhanlaxmi Bank has proposed Shivan JK as its new managing director and chief executive officer (CEO) and has sought shareholders' approval for the same. Shivan retired as chief general manager of State Bank of India and handled various roles, including forex operations.

It has sought the approval from its shareholders to authorise the board to appoint Shivan as MD and CEO of the bank, Dhanlaxmi Bank said in a notice of postal ballot.

## Tata Sons to buy 32.67% more in AirAsia India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, 29 DECEMBER

Tata Sons will increase its stake in budget carrier AirAsia India (AAIL) to 83.67 per cent by acquiring an additional 32.67 per cent for \$37.66 million from AirAsia Investment Ltd (AAIL), according to a regulatory filing.

Currently, AAIAL, which is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Malaysia-based AirAsia, holds 49 per cent stake in the Bengaluru-based AirAsia India.

In a regulatory filing to stock exchange Bursa Malaysia, AirAsia said: "The board of directors of AirAsia wishes to announce that its wholly-owned subsidiary AAIAL and Tata Sons Pvt Ltd, India, on 29 December, entered into a share purchase agreement."

It added that the pact is for disposing of AAIAL's equity interest of 32.67 per cent in AirAsia India to Tata Sons "for a total consideration sum of \$37,660,000 (or MYR 152.58 million)".

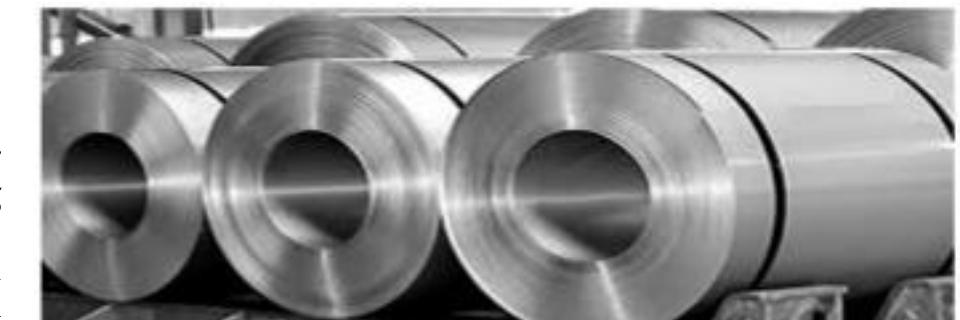
AirAsia India started operations on domestic routes in June 2014 following the then UPA government allowing foreign airlines to invest up to 49 per cent in the Indian

carriers. "The share of losses over the years has resulted in the carrying value of the investment at the date of transaction to be nil," AAIAL said in the filing.

It added that the proposed disposal will, therefore, result in a gain on disposal of \$37,660,000 (equivalent to about 152.58 million Malaysian ringgit) in the fourth quarter of 2020 at both AAIAL and consolidated group level.

The directors of AirAsia also wished to announce that AAIAL has further agreed to waive off unpaid brand licence fees payable by AAIAL to AirAsia Berhad, a company's wholly-owned subsidiary, under an agreement reached in December last year, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it said.

## Steel makers write to PMO defending price hike, seek iron ore export ban

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
KOLKATA, 29 DECEMBER

ISA said in its letter to the PMO.

Hot-rolled coil prices have increased by 46 per cent to Rs 52,000 per ton in November as compared to Rs 37,400 per ton in July this year. Rebar TMT, which is used in the housing and construction sectors, had touched Rs 50,000 a ton, industry sources said.

The Indian Steel Association informed the PMO about the price increase of the metal after Union road transport and highways minister Nitin Gadkari wrote a letter to the Prime Minister on the impact of rising steel prices on infrastructure projects.

"We would like to highlight some of the very serious and compelling reasons which have left the steel industry with no recourse, but to raise prices of steel from time to time," the

He also mentioned that iron ore price has increased more than double from Rs 1,960 to Rs 4,160 per ton in the period of June-December 2020.

"With an increase of Rs 1,000 in iron ore prices, the minimum impact is Rs 2,000 per ton in steel making," Chatterjee said.

Iron ore production in the April-October period of 2020 was at 92.08 million tons, registering sharp degrowth of 30 per cent over the same period last year.

On the other hand, iron ore exports had surged by 70.3 per cent to 29.2 million tons in the first half of the current fiscal.

Explaining why the metal price has been raised, the ISA said Indian crude steel production fell by 19 per cent in the current financial year.

## UN report bets big on Indian economy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
UNHQ, 29 DECEMBER

the total inflows to the sub-region and received \$51 billion in 2019, up 20 per cent from the previous year.

The report, released last week, said the majority of these flows were destined for the information and communications technology (ICT) and the construction sectors.

Regarding the ICT sector, the report said the investment to India has evolved from information technology services for multinational enterprises (MNEs) to the thriving local digital ecosystem where many domestic players, especially in e-commerce, have attracted considerable international investment.

The report added that FDI outflows from South and South-West Asia slightly decreased by 2 per cent in 2019, from \$67 billion in 2018 to \$66 billion in 2019.

The growth, however, was mainly driven by India, which accounted for 77 per cent of

FDI outflows from the sub-region remained uneven, with just two countries (India and Turkey) accounting for the vast majority of outflows in 2019, it said.

As such, the slight increase in outward FDI was predominantly due to an increase in outflows from India, which accounted for 80 per cent of total outward investment from the subregion, the report said, adding that in 2019, India invested \$12.1 billion

abroad, a 10 per cent increase compared with the previous year.

The report noted that in the short term, both inflows and outflows from and to the subregion are expected to decline.

In the first three quarters of 2020, the value of greenfield FDI inflows declined by 43 per cent compared to the same period last year, signaling a reversal of the growth trend in the subregion.

Most of the greenfield flows (87 per cent) were destined for India, although the overall greenfield inflows to the country declined by 29 per cent. Equally, FDI from India is projected to decline in 2020, with the largest MNEs revising their earnings down by 25 per cent in early 2020 due to the impacts of the pandemic.

However, India's economy could prove the most resilient in the subregion over the

long term. FDI inflows have been steadily increasing and positive, albeit lower, economic growth after the pandemic and India's large market will continue to attract market-seeking investment, the report said.

India's fast-growing telecom and digital space, in particular, could see a faster rebound as global venture capital firms and technology companies continue to show interest in the country's market through acquisitions, it said.

It noted that Facebook and Google's investment in Jio Platforms in 2020 worth \$5.7 billion and \$4.5 billion, respectively, were testaments to this trend.

Estimates suggest that by 2025, core digital sectors such as IT and business process management, digital communication services, and electronics manufacturing could double in size.

## ITAT upholds tax-exempt status of three Tata trusts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 29 DECEMBER

Dorabji Tata Trust. It said the March 2019 revision order of the income tax department that sought to cancel tax exemption to the three trusts was "devoid of any legally sustainable merits".

The three trusts collectively hold about 66 per cent in Tata Sons - the holding company of Tata Group.

The commissioner of income tax (exemption) (CIT-E) had threatened to upset the decades-old ownership of Tata Sons by the trusts by alleging that such shareholdings are in violation of the income tax laws. Tata Trusts had appealed to the tribunal, denying the claims of the CIT-E.

The ITAT also came down heavily on Mistry, who it said had indulged in "behaviour unheard of in the corporate world".

Mistry's act of supplying material to the income tax department just weeks after his removal as chairman of Tata Sons and without authorisation from the company cannot be said to be influenced by "call of pure conscience and high grounds of morality", the tribunal observed.

It said the inputs from those engaged in a rivalry with an assessee should be taken with a reasonable degree of circumspection. Mistry was removed as Tata Sons chairman in October 2016.

ITAT said none of the trustees of the trusts had any substantial interest in Tata Sons and the investment in Tata Sons by the trust is not "for the purpose of investment in shares", but "undisputedly for the purpose of sharing the fruits of the success, of the Tata Group, for the benefit of the general public at large".

## Equity benchmarks up for fifth straight session

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, 29 DECEMBER

Nifty marked its all-time record at 13,967.60 points.

Financials helped key indices to close the day well into positive territory with the broader markets seeing demand for gas stocks. The day also witnessed upturns in names that are not usually seen frequently amongst gainers as savvy investors were seen scouting for value in a bull market," S Ranganathan, head of research at LKP Securities, said.

On the Sensex chart, IndusInd Bank, Axis Bank, Tech Mahindra, HDFC, ICICI Bank, HCL Tech, HDFC Bank, SBI and ITC were prominent gainers.

On the other hand, Nestle, NTPC, PowerGrid, Dr Reddy's, Reliance Industries, ONGC and Mahindra & Mahindra were among the losers.

Sectorally, banking index rallied 1.41 per cent, followed by finance (1.06 per cent) and IT (0.65 per cent).

After Nifty ended higher by 59.40 points or 0.43 per cent at a fresh closing high of 13,932.60 points. Intraday, the 50-share Nifty marked its all-time record at 13,967.60 points.

Of the 19 sectoral indices, 12 ended in the red and seven in the green. Among the top losers, BSE metal, power and energy slid up to 1.32 per cent.

events expected in the near-term, the market will focus on the upcoming Q3 earnings and stock-specific updates," Nair said.



Prime Minister Oli's recent move to dissolve the House of Representatives is aimed at killing federalism

FORMER PRIME MINISTER OF NEPAL PUSHPA KAMAL DAHAL PRACHANDA  
ADDRESSING A MASSIVE RALLY AGAINST PARLIAMENT DISSOLUTION IN KATHMANDU

The Statesman  
NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 30 DECEMBER 2020

09

# 'Unity only if PM accepts mistakes'

Madhav Nepal addresses massive protest rally in Kathmandu against the dissolution of Parliament

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
KATHMANDU, 29 DECEMBER

**C**hairman of the ruling Nepal Communist Party's rival faction Madhav Kumar Nepal said on Tuesday that the party could still be united if Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli was willing to accept his mistakes, as thousands of protesters marched through the streets of Kathmandu against the dissolution of Parliament.

Madhav Nepal made the comments while addressing a massive protest rally organised by his faction in Kathmandu, which was attended by former prime ministers Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda and Jhalanath Khanal.

We are ready to forget everything if Oli accepts his mistakes, Madhav Nepal, the former prime minister who has replaced Oli as chairman of the Prachanda-led faction, told the rally. He also accused



Prime Minister Oli of practicing anti-democratic activities by making decisions against the Constitution and the general public.

All the political parties, intellectuals, teachers, students and public are on the streets against the unconstitutional move of the Oli-led government. The lower house will soon be revived, Madhav Nepal was quoted as saying by *My Republica* newspaper.

Nepal plunged into a political crisis on December 20 after Prime Minister Oli, known for his pro-Beijing leanings, in a surprise move, recommended dissolving the 275-member House, amidst a tussle for power with Prachanda.

Acting on the prime minister's recommendation, President Bidya Devi Bhandari dissolved the House the same day and announced fresh elections on April 30 and May 10, sparking protests from a large section of the NCP led by Prachanda, also a co-chair of the ruling party.

Addressing the rally,

Prachanda said that Prime Minister Oli's recent move to dissolve the House of Representatives is aimed at killing federalism and republicanism which were achieved after decades of struggle by the people. "The act of dissolving parliament is totally unconstitutional. It has taken the country toward another round of political instability".

"We did not even imagine that we would be forced to take to the streets against Oli's regressive move. Now, we have to fight collectively against this move," said Prachanda.

"People had given us (the NCP) the mandate to ensure political stability with social justice so that we could move toward achieving a socialism-oriented system, he said, adding that unfortunately, Oli's abrupt decision to dissolve parliament without holding any discussion in the party has only invited politi-

cal chaos. Prachanda said that Oli has attacked the Constitution and republicanism that were achieved after a great struggle.

"I had personally taken initiatives for a merger between the two Communist parties and approached Oli for the same. At that time, he agreed to accept federalism, secularism and republicanism although I was well aware of his political ideology and the fact that he was against federalism and republicanism he started to work against the spirit, ideology, principle and norms of a communist party," he said.

Prachanda said that Oli eventually turned autocratic, imposed hegemony in the party and even did not bother to consult other leaders before blatantly dissolving Parliament. "Oli's tyranny will not last long because the people will firmly protest against

his recent political move," he said. Prachanda said it was not Parliament but the Oli-led government that had actually been dissolved for its wrong political move. He expressed hope that Parliament will be reinstated through the Supreme Court's verdict.

**Chinese delegation meets NC leader Deuba:** Guo Yezhou, a vice-minister of the Communist Party of China, on Tuesday met the main opposition Nepali Congress chief Sher Bahadur Deuba and discussed the latest political developments in the country following the dissolution of Parliament by Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli.

The meeting also focused on relations between Nepal and China. The Kathmandu Post quoted shadow foreign minister Narayan Khadka as saying. They discussed the latest political developments in Kathmandu, the paper said.

## Bangladesh ships take 1,700 Rohingya to isolated island

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
DHAKA, 29 DECEMBER



calls for a halt by human rights groups.

International aid agencies and the U.N. have opposed the relocation since it was first proposed in 2015, expressing fear that a big storm could overwhelm the island and endanger thousands of lives.

The United Nations also voiced concern that refugees be allowed to make a free and informed decision about whether to relocate. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have urged the government to cancel the plan.

An influential Cabinet minister and general secretary of the governing party, Obaidul Quader, said Monday that the Rohingya are being moved to the island because their repatriation to Myanmar has been delayed. He said refugees who were earlier taken to Bhashan Char have expressed satisfaction.

About 700,000 Rohingya Muslims fled from Buddhist-majority Myanmar to Bangladesh after August 2017, when Myanmar's military began a harsh crackdown on the minority group following an attack by insurgents. Security forces have been accused of mass rapes, killings and burning thousands of homes.

Bangladesh has attempted to start sending refugees back to Myanmar under a bilateral agreement, but no one was willing to go.

The Rohingya are not recognised as citizens in Myanmar, rendering them stateless.

## Hong Kongers charged in China plead guilty

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
HONG KONG, 29 DECEMBER

More journalists are being killed outside of war zones, and the overwhelming majority of this year's grim total of at least 50 dead were deliberately targeted, many of them murdered while investigating organized crime, corruption and environmental degradation, Reporters Without Borders said Tuesday.

It's tally of journalists and media workers killed in connection with their work by mid-December was just slightly lower than in 2019, when the press freedom group counted 53 dead, even though many journalists reported less from the field in 2020 because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The group said 68% were killed outside of war zones this year. That confirms a trend noted by the group since 2016, when only four out of 10 deaths were in countries not at war.

Targeted killings of journalists surged in 2020, accounting for 84% of deaths, sharply up from 63% in 2019, the group said.

It again listed Mexico as the deadliest country for media workers, counting at least eight journalists killed there in connection with their work in 2020. Reporters Without Borders also noted an increase in the killings of investigative journalists. AP

## Iran begins first human trial of locally made virus vaccine

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
TEHERAN, 29 DECEMBER

Relatives of the 10 Hong Kongers accused of fleeing the city by speedboat during a government crackdown on dissent say they've been informed that the group pleaded guilty and that the verdicts will be delivered by a court in mainland China on Wednesday.

The families were informed by court-appointed lawyers on Tuesday, according to the 12 Hongkongers Concern Group, which is assisting the families of the detainees.

The 10 defendants all faced charges of illegally

crossing the border, while two of them faced additional charges of organizing the attempt, according to an indictment issued in the southern city of Shenzhen.

The trials began on Monday afternoon, according to a statement issued by the Shenzhen Yantian District court.

Separate hearings were

expected for two minors who

were also aboard the boat that

was apparently heading for Taiwan when it was stopped by the Chinese coast guard on August 23.

The defendants are believed to have feared they would be prosecuted for their past activities in support of Hong Kong's democratic opposition.

about its coronavirus research. Iran has struggled to stem the worst virus outbreak in the region, which has infected over 1.2 million people and killed nearly 55,000.

The study, a Phase 1 clinical trial, will enroll a total of 56 volunteers to receive two shots of the Iranian vaccine within two weeks, according to Hamed Hosseini, a clinical trial manager.

Results are to be announced roughly a month after the second shot. Three people received the first injections on Tuesday in a ceremony at a Tehran hotel attended by the country's health minister. State TV announced that none of the injections had

so far caused any fevers or bodily shocks.

I am happy that the scientific process went ahead in a proper way, said Tayebeh Mokhber, daughter of the Setad Foundation chairman, who was the first to get jabbed. I hope the conclusion will be health for our people.

The Setad Foundation, controlled by the office of Iran's supreme leader, oversees the Bakatoglu conglomerate.

The treatment, dubbed Coviran, is a so-called inactivated vaccine, meaning it is made of a coronavirus that's been weakened or killed by chemicals, similar to how polio immunisations are made.

## Suga's wave of popularity wanes amid virus outbreaks, scandals

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
TOKYO, 29 DECEMBER



Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga came to office on a wave of popularity, pledging to combat the coronavirus and fix Japan's languishing economy. Three months after he took over from his former boss Shinzo Abe, a more charismatic leader from an influential political family, Suga seems to be struggling to find his feet. His support ratings have sunk amid flaring virus outbreaks and scandals within the ruling party, even as the economy appears to be recovering.

ship and poor handling of the pandemic.

One big source of trouble has been the government's GoTo Travel campaign, which provides steep discounts for domestic travel.

The program was launched in the summer, before Suga took office. It was suspended as of Monday, but many Japanese believe it helped spread the virus and should have been halted sooner.

Experts, including Covid task force chief Shigeru Omi, said Suga's insistence on continuing GoTo promotions until recently sent a mud-

died message at a time when the government is urging people to scale back activity.

So did his attendance at an expensive steak dinner for eight, including several celebrities and other political bigwigs, on December 14 just hours after his decision to suspend GoTo Travel. At the time, the government was urging people to avoid wining and dining in groups of more than five, and advising anyone over 65 to stay home if at all possible. Suga is 72.

With coronavirus cases surging about 2,400 new cases on Monday, the government's handling of the pandemic is being called into question. The dinner and other gatherings have drawn criticism from the public and even Suga's own coalition.

On Monday, the government started barring all non-resident foreigners from entering the country to help curb the spread of a more infectious variant of the coronavirus that was recently discovered in Britain.

But for much of the past month, Suga did nothing. Nobuo Gohara, a lawyer and a political commentator, said in an online program. He has

the image of a leader who cannot resolve problems, Gohara said.

Suga

has suggested that a lack of cooperation from the public and businesses has driven the latest big wave of cases. He is now proposing legislation to enable the government to issue binding orders it now can only issue requests to oblige businesses to comply with requests for earlier closures and other precautions.

The son of a strawberry farmer from northern Japan, in mid-September Suga was backed by Liberal Democra-

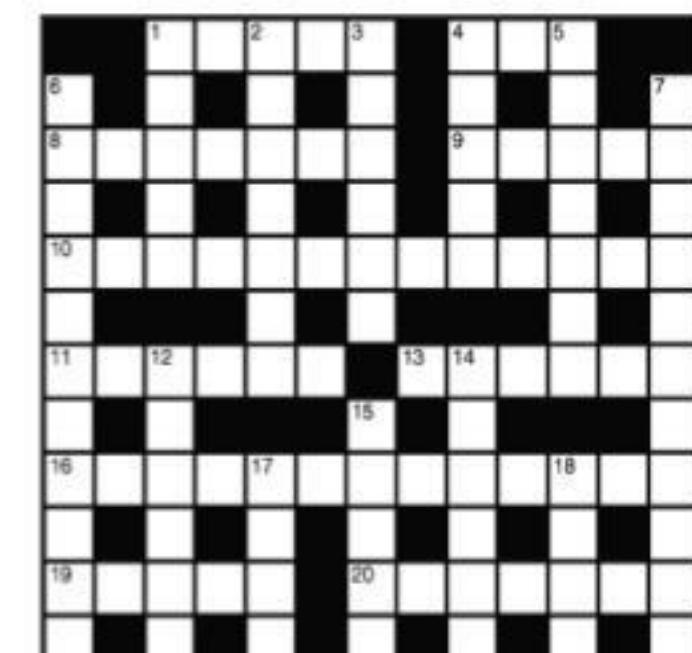
tic Party boss Toshihiro Nikai in a party leadership race to replace Abe, who resigned citing a chronic health problem.

Having served as Abe's chief cabinet secretary for all of his administration, Suga was amply prepared for the job. But he also has inherited scandals left over from Abe's time in office.

Last week, prosecutors declined to indict Abe for illegal book keeping by his office related to dinner receptions for his supporters during Japan's cherry blossom season.

## LEISURE

### 10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



**ACROSS**

- 1 Brink (5)
- 4 Unwell (3)
- 8 Agile entertainer (7)
- 9 Style of jazz (5)
- 10 Green liqueur (5,2,6)
- 11 Cricket extra (3,3)
- 13 Cask (6)
- 16 Equestrian contest (5-3,5)
- 19 Ingenious (5)
- 20 Herb (7)
- 21 Dried grass (3)
- 22 Brief experience (5)

**DOWN**

- 1 Vitality (5)
- 2 Crime (7)
- 3 Meal course (6)
- 4 Permeate (5)
- 5 Edible crustacean (7)
- 6 Selfishly scheming (11)
- 7 Identifying name (11)
- 12 Decorate (food) (7)
- 14 Eternal (7)
- 15 Stew (6)
- 17 Mourning poem (5)
- 18 Sidestep (5)

**SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD**

**ACROSS**

- 12 Parsec, 13 Discus, 15 Compre-hend, 18 As yet, 20 Gras-tful, 21 As yet, 22 Gras-tful, 23 Suddenly, 24 Satisfy-ing.

**DOWN**

- 1 Peak, 2 Locusts, 3 Tic, 4 Cushi-ness, 5 Satis-fying, 6 Partic-ular, 10 Suddenly, 11 Panorama, 14 Sidecar, 16 Piety, 17 Vest, 19 Nit.

**By arrangement with The Independent**  
Figures in parentheses denote the number of letters in the words required

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### BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



### RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson



### DADDY DAZE/John Kovaleski



### NEED TO KNOW

#### HOSPITALS

#### RAILWAY INQUIRY

#### ROADWAYS INQUIRY

#### FIVE RACK TOTAL TIME LIMIT: 25 MIN

#### SCRABBLE BRAND

#### RELIEF AS

#### RELA

#### RELB

#### RELC

#### RELD

#### RELF

#### RELG

#### RELI

#### RELJ

#### RELK

#### RELW

#### RELX

#### RELY

#### RELZ

#### REMA

#### REMB



We will champion liberty and democracy once more.  
We will reclaim our credibility to lead the free world.

US PRESIDENT-ELECT JOE BIDEN

AT A MEETING WITH HIS NATIONAL SECURITY TEAM

## WEATHER

CITY	MAX(°C)	MIN(°C)
SINGAPORE	31	25 H
HONG KONG	23	18 H
TOKYO	11	3 H
LONDON	4	0 H
DUBAI	24	17 CL
SAN FRANCISCO	13	7 CL
NEW YORK	5	-1 S
MOSCOW	-6	-13 H

S=sunny, CL=clear, H=hazy, R=rainy...

## THUMBNAILS



**One dead as quake jolts Croatia:** A strong 6.3 earthquake hit central Croatia on Tuesday, causing major damage to homes and other buildings in a town southeast of the capital. A girl was killed in the quake and a man and a boy were pulled out alive from a car buried in rubble and sent to a hospital. Initial reports said the earthquake caused wide damage, collapsing roofs, building facades and even some entire buildings. AP

**Gaza militants fire rockets:** Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip fired a salvo of rockets into the Mediterranean Sea on Tuesday as part of a self-styled military drill aimed at preparing for a possible war with Israel. AP

**Pak detects new variant:** Pakistan on Tuesday confirmed its first case of the new coronavirus variant found in the UK after it identified the strain that spreads at a much faster pace in three samples taken from passengers who had returned from Britain. The health department in Sindh said the samples of 12 returnees were taken for genotyping, out of which six tested positive. PTI

**Nashville bomber left hints of trouble, but motive elusive**

**NASHVILLE (US), 29 DECEMBER**  
In the days before he detonated a bomb in downtown Nashville on Christmas, Anthony Quinn Warner changed his life in ways that suggest he never intended to survive the blast that killed him and wounded three other people.

Warner, 63, gave away his car, telling the recipient that he had cancer. A month before the bombing, he signed a document that transferred his longtime home in a Nashville suburb to a California woman for nothing in return. The computer consultant told an employer that he was retiring.

But he didn't leave behind a clear digital footprint or any other obvious clues to explain why he set off the explosion in his parked recreational vehicle or played a message warning people to flee before it damaged dozens of buildings and knocked out cellphone service in the area.

While investigators tried to piece together a possible motive for the attack, a neighbor recalled a recent conversation with Warner that seemed ominous only in hindsight.

Rick Laude said that he saw Warner standing at his mailbox less than a week before Christmas and pulled over in his car to talk. After asking how Warner's elderly mother was doing, Laude said he casually asked him, Is Santa going to bring you anything good for Christmas? Warner smiled and said, Oh, yeah, Nashville and the world is never going to forget me, Laude recalled.

Laude said he didn't think much of the remark. AP

# Urgent national action needed, UK warned

Country's health chiefs warned that hospitals were being overwhelmed by a surge in the pandemic, largely driven by a new variant of virus

THE INDEPENDENT  
LONDON, 29 DECEMBER



**U**rgent national action is needed to prevent a "catastrophe" amid rising coronavirus infections, an expert has warned, as England's hospitals deal with more Covid-19 patients than during the April peak of the first wave. The country's health chiefs warned that hospitals were being overwhelmed by a surge in the pandemic, largely driven by a new highly transmissible variant of coronavirus

Professor Andrew Hayward, of the government's New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group (Nervtag), said tighter measures were required to tackle the new variant of the virus, which is the main reason for the increase in cases.

His remarks came as Boris Johnson prepares to review the tiered measures for England, with millions more reportedly set to be plunged into the highest Tier 4 level of restriction.

and we're going to need decisive, early, national action to prevent a catastrophe in January and February."

"A 50 per cent increase in transmissibility means that the previous levels of restrictions that worked before won't work now and so Tier 4 restrictions are likely to necessary or even higher than that."

"If we want to control the new variant we're going to need much tighter restrictions. But I think what we need to remember is that whilst lockdowns work they

tions, which just over 40 per cent of the population are already subject too.

The Ministry of Defence said 1,500 members of the armed forces would be drafted in to make sure coronavirus testing systems were up and running for school and college students ahead of the new academic term.

Plans were announced for weekly Covid-19 rapid tests for secondary school and college staff and daily ones for students and staff identified as close contacts of a positive case from January. The prime minister has not ruled out the prospect of a third national lockdown, a course of action he has previously referred to as the "nuclear" option, but on Monday over 40,000 new infections were recorded in the UK for the first time.

"We need to be able to make people who can't afford to protect themselves and contribute to control to be able

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
BEIJING, 29 DECEMBER

The Chinese city of Wuhan, where the novel coronavirus emerged a year ago before it became a pandemic and upended life across the globe, has started the emergency Covid-19 vaccination on some key groups, a senior health official said on Tuesday, even as China is yet to officially certify its multiple vaccines.

The vaccination, available at 48 designated clinics in 15 districts, began on December 24, targeting certain groups of people aged between 18 and 59 years. He Zhenyu, deputy director of the centre for disease control and prevention in Wuhan, told the media in Wuhan.

Those receiving the vaccine need to take two shots with an interval of four weeks, the state-run Xinhua news agency quoted He as saying.

As per the official Chinese time-line, the first cases of coronavirus emerged in Wuhan, the capital of Hubei province, on December 31 last year. The city of 11 million

people went into lockdown from January 23, followed by the entire Hubei province.

Mass vaccinations in Belarus:

Belarus on Tuesday announced the start of mass coronavirus vaccinations with the Russian-developed Sputnik V shot, becoming the second country after Russia to roll out a vaccine that is still undergoing late-stage studies to ensure its safety and effectiveness.

The first batch of Sputnik V arrived in the former Soviet republic on Tuesday.

it makes a lot of sense to keep schools closed for longer and introduce more stringent testing in them."

"Unfortunately, I think what we've failed to do is address the digital divide among school children such that the opportunity to provide high quality online education for the poorest parts of the community has been lost."

"I think we're going to have to get to schools back, maybe a little bit later, but we're going to have to have increased restrictions in other areas of society to pay for that."

Dr Zubaida Haque, a member of the Independent Sage group and leading social scientist, also told ITV's Good Morning Britain the government had failed to make schools safe despite the worsening Covid-19 situation.

"The key question is are schools safe enough right now? Has the government made schools safer and, in making it safer, can we then keep schools open?" she said.

## Fate of \$2,000 checks now rests with US Senate

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
WASHINGTON, 29 DECEMBER



President Donald Trump's push for \$2,000 Covid-19 relief checks now rests with the Senate after the House voted overwhelmingly to meet the president's demand to increase the \$600 stipend, but Republicans have shown little interest in boosting spending.

The outcome is highly uncertain heading into Tuesday's session. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has declined to publicly address how he plans to handle the issue. But Democrats, sharing a rare priority with Trump, have seized days from his private club in Florida, where he is spending the holidays, dozens of Republicans calculated it was better to link with Democrats to increase the pandemic stipend rather than buck the outgoing president and constituents counting on the money.

As Trump spent days fighting from his private club in Florida, where he is spending the holidays, dozens of Republicans calculated it was better to link with Democrats to increase the pandemic stipend rather than buck the outgoing president.

After bipartisan approval

by the House, Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer warned, "There is no good reason for Senate Republicans to stand in the way."

"There's strong support for these \$2,000 emergency checks from every corner of the country," Schumer said in a statement late Monday. He called on McConnell to make sure the Senate helps "meet

the needs of American workers and families who are crying out for help."

The House tally was a stunning turn of events. Just days ago Republicans blocked Trump's sudden demands for bigger checks during a brief Christmas Eve session as he defiantly refused to sign the broader Covid-19 aid and year-end funding bill into law.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi declared, "Republicans have a choice: Vote for this legislation or vote to deny the American people the bigger paychecks they need."

The showdown could end up as more symbol than substance if Trump's effort fizzles out in the Senate.

The legislative action during the rare holiday week session may do little to change the \$2 trillion-plus Covid-19

relief and federal spending package Trump signed into law Sunday, one of the biggest bills of its kind providing relief for millions of Americans.

That package, \$900 billion in Covid-19 aid and \$1.4 trillion fund government agencies, will deliver long-sought cash to businesses and individuals and avert a federal government shutdown that otherwise would have started Tuesday, in the midst of the public health crisis.

But the outcome will define Trump's GOP, putting a spotlight on the Georgia runoff election January 5 where two Republican senators are in the fight of their political lives against Democrats in a pair of races that will determine which party controls the Senate next year.

The Covid-19 package draws and expands on an earlier effort from Washington. It offers billions of dollars for vaccine purchases and distribution, for virus contact tracing, public health departments, schools, universities, farmers, food pantry programs and other institutions and groups facing hardship in the pandemic.

ly bipartisan vote, the House has upheld our sacred Constitutional responsibility to keep our country and our people safe.

The National Defense Authorization Act has been passed on a bipartisan and bicameral manner for sixty years, and it will become law, despite the president's dangerous sabotage efforts, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said.

Both the House and the Senate, early this month, had voted overwhelmingly to pass the NDAA.

With this overwhelming

## US House overrides Trump's veto of \$741 bn defence Bill

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
WASHINGTON, 29 DECEMBER

The president's reckless veto would have denied our servicemen hazard duty pay; our families paid family leave, child care, housing improvements and health protections; and our veterans their benefits...

The president must end his eleventh-hour campaign of chaos

NANCY PELOSI  
HOUSE SPEAKER

veto would have denied our servicemen hazard duty pay; our families paid family leave, child care, housing improvements and health protections; and our veterans their benefits," she said.

"It would have senselessly deprived our allies and country of key protections for global peace and security, including for cyber-security, following a massive attack on our country," she added.

The president must end his eleventh-hour campaign of chaos, Pelosi said.

House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer said: It is one that will go down in history as one of the final actions of a President who has spent four years denigrating the service of those who wear our nation's uniform."

Trump vetoed the NDAA last week, after warning he would do so if it didn't repeal Section 230 of the 1996 Communications Decency Act, which shields big technology companies from liability for controversial content posted to their websites by third parties.

## Republicans sue Pence to overturn Biden win

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
WASHINGTON, 29 DECEMBER

### SKILL SET



A vendor sells traditional caps on a road in northwest Pakistan's Peshawar. IANS

er. Biden received 306 electoral votes, 36 more than he needed to win, while Trump received 232.

The lawsuit focuses on Pence's role in the January 6 meeting of Congress to count states' electoral votes and finalize Biden's victory over President Trump. The lawsuit challenges the 1887 Electoral Count Act, which dictates the vice president's role in announcing the results as a ceremonial one, The Dallas Morning News reported.

The Republican lawsuit asks a federal judge in Texas to strike down the law as unconstitutional.

The Republican plaintiffs go further: They ask the court to grant Pence the authority on January 6 to effectively overturn Trump's defeat in key battleground states. Election law experts have dismissed the lawsuit's prospects for success.

Electors have already cast their votes two weeks earlier.

They've seen industries demolished.

"What I see instead is the Conservatives pushing through [a narrative of] a white working class that's been left behind, which is where Trump was at about six years ago."

servative party, which is to create more wealth".

But she added: "What they don't see is that, when they talk about the level playing field, they think the level playing field is not level for white people.

"What I'd like them to think about is a formula that brings black working-class people with them as well."

The director also took aim at the Labour Party, under Keir Starmer, suggesting it was "nervous" of challenging the idea that the focus should be on the white working class.

Despite her criticism, Ms Begum said the Runnymede Trust was committed to working with the government and had recently met Mr Johnson's special advisers. A government spokesman

said the new Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities was examining "where inequality exists across the whole of society".

"Both the prime minister and the Commission remain fully committed to tackling racism, and we reject the divisive idea that the government is prioritising one group over another."

"The PM is thrilled to have assembled a group of talented and diverse commissioners, who each bring a wealth of experience from across a range of important sectors."

"The evidence-led commission has been undertaking research and inviting submissions from various stakeholders – with the aim of delivering a positive agenda for change."

flattering the female form, Cardin's designs cast the wearer as a sort of glorified hanger, there to showcase the clothes' sharp shapes and graphic patterns. Destined neither for pragmatists nor for wallflowers, his designs were all about making a big entrance, sometimes very literally.

Gowns and bodysuits in fluorescent spandex were fitted with plastic hoops that stood away from the body at the waist, elbows, wrists and knees. Bubble dresses and capes enveloped their wearers in oversized spheres of fabric. Toques were shaped like flying saucers; bucket hats sheathed the models' entire head, with cutout windshields at the eyes.

"Fashion is always ridiculous, seen from before or after. But in the moment, it's marvelous," Cardin said in a 1970 interview with French television.

Cardin was born on July 7, 1922, in a small town near Venice, Italy, to a modest, working-class family. Along with fellow Frenchman Andre Courreges and Spain's Paco Rabanne, two other Paris-based designers known for their Space Age styles, Cardin revolutionized fashion starting in the early 1950s. At a time when other Paris labels were obsessed with



THE INDEPENDENT  
LONDON, 29 DECEMBER

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson is pursuing a Donald Trump-style agenda to "work up white nationalism" to win the next election, the head of a race equality thinktank says.

In an extraordinary attack, the new director of the Runnymede Trust accused the Prime Minister of neglecting poorer people from ethnic minority groups for political gain.

"I think the government's long-term plan is to work up white nationalism for the next elections," Halima Begum said.

"What we should be saying is that working-class black and white communities have been left behind, because

## Famed French designer Pierre Cardin dies at 98

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
PARIS, 29 DECEMBER

# Greening our future

**Hydrogen energy is clean but how about production?**

S ANANTHANARAYANAN

While the world hesitates to buckle down and use less energy, the quest is on to find the energy we need without the carbon that has always gone with it.

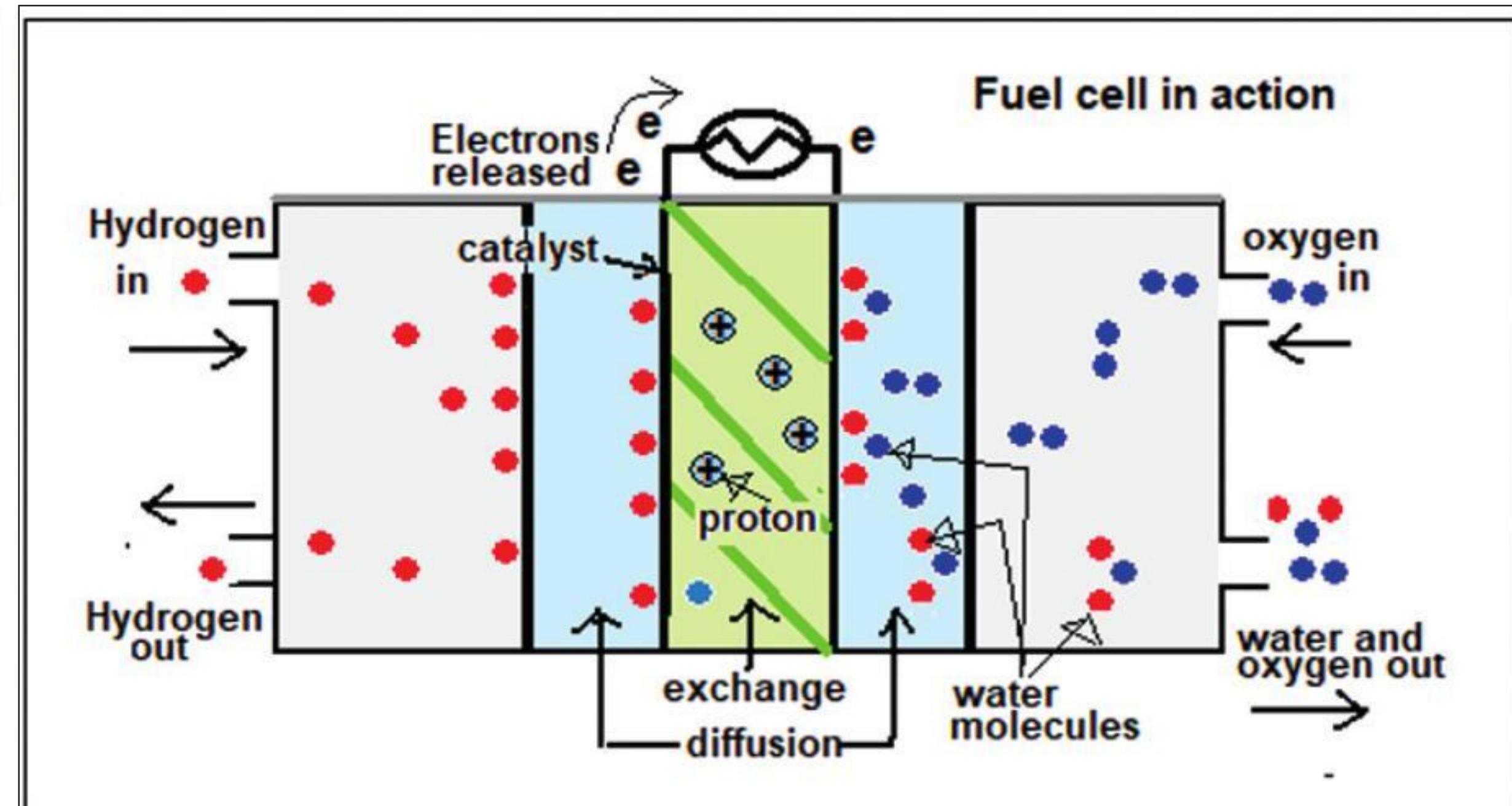
While coal and petroleum are still the main sources, and many questions remain about nuclear power, wind and solar have become important alternatives. Those, however, being intermittent, could do with technology to store power till it is needed. While electricity, where it is produced with low carbon, has become the green propellant in many areas, the storage battery brings in a dark, brown streak. In this context, hydrogen gas is emerging as an acceptable, low pollution intermediary in the transfer of energy.

The hydrogen-based fuel cell, which generates electricity, is being fast adapted for practical uses, and hydrogen has come forward as a lightweight container of energy. While there is a group that has devised a low-cost use of hydrogen to turn carbon dioxide into aviation fuel, there is worldwide interest in hydrogen use, and ways to generate hydrogen with the lightest carbon footprint.

The world's stock of energy is essentially chemical energy, in the form of coal or hydrocarbons, which have accumulated solar energy, captured by photosynthesis, over millennia. We then extract the energy by burning the fuel, to drive the steam engine, petrol engine or by using those engines, the electric generator. There is hence conversion of chemical energy to mechanical energy, and then to electricity. Electricity is then transmitted, to be available where required, usually to be converted to mechanical energy. Needless to say, the carbon dioxide goes back into the atmosphere.

The fuel cell reduces a step in this sequence, by converting chemical energy directly into electricity. While this would eliminate the wastage that arises because each conversion has limited efficiency, the use of hydrogen in the cell also eliminates the emission of carbon dioxide at the stage of the cell.

The principle of electrical cells is that energy is released when chemicals change from one form to another. While this energy could show as "heat released by the conversion", it can also be tapped and used to drive an electric current. In the hydrogen fuel cell, the energy used is what comes off when hydrogen combines with oxygen, to form water. Normally, this



could be explosive, or it could be controlled, as in a flame. What happens in the fuel cell, however, is that the hydrogen fuel is stripped of electrons, with the help of a catalyst, and the electrons travel by a separate path, to re-join the hydrogen and oxygen where they get together, as water.

The fuel cell can thus generate electricity as long as the hydrogen and oxygen, or other fuel substances, are there. The first fuel cell was invented in 1838, and was resurrected, in the hydrogen-oxygen form, in 1932. The hydrogen-oxygen fuel cell now has many applications, a notable one being aboard satellites and space capsules. And even on the ground, the fuel cell electric car runs the same 300 kms on a tank of hydrogen, like a conventional car, but twice as efficiently.

To be considered as a replacement for conventional motive power, to drive vehicles or machinery, however, we need to ask the question: how much carbon dioxide is emitted when we produce the hydrogen? We know that the energy the fuel cell creates is the energy when H and O combine to form water. The energy to have the H, in the first place, is the energy it takes to separate the H and O, from water. As it is evident that the energy economics can never be in favour of the hydrogen fuel cell, the advantage must lie in using new sources of energy or energy that we would otherwise lose.

The cleanest known way to produce hydrogen is by electrolysis, or by splitting the water molecule using electricity. This could make sense if we created hydrogen at a place where we have electricity and carry hydro-

## Aviation fuel from hydrogen

Commercial aircraft may not be able to use hydrogen gas or electrical energy as the means of propulsion. With conventional fuel, however, an iron-manganese-potassium catalyst, however, has resulted in acceptable output of aviation fuel, along with other industrially useful compounds.

A group writing in the journal, *Nature Communications* announces that simple, iron-based catalyst has been found effective in using hydrogen and carbon dioxide to synthesise aviation fuel. Existing methods of synthesising hydrocar-

bons do not include a method to convert carbon dioxide into the jet fuel range, the paper says. Work with an iron-manganese-potassium catalyst, however, has resulted in acceptable output of aviation fuel, along with other industrially useful compounds.

With a sustainable source of hydrogen, this process would represent mopping up the carbon dioxide emission of aviation in the process of generating aviation fuel.

gen to a place where there is no other way. Yes, it could make sense, but if we consider that the bulk of electricity comes from coal-fired generation, using hydrogen to create electricity is finally a source of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

An alternative would be to use electricity from solar plants. Indeed, this is available, but not in quantity, and if we used it to generate hydrogen, it is at the cost of another application, which must now use coal-based electricity. Another green source could be from bioenergy, or burning agri-waste, which qualifies because the carbon dioxide it gives off is what it captured when it grew.

To generate hydrogen in quantity, however, we would need to use methods like cracking methane in natural gas or from coal, by splitting water, in the method to create coal gas. These are established and safe methods, already in use in many parts of the world. But these methods emit carbon dioxide, and traditionally, this

was released into the atmosphere. Now, to create green hydrogen, the carbon dioxide would need to be captured and sequestered. If carbon capture is used with bio-energy, it would be doubly effective, with net reduction of atmospheric carbon dioxide. Brown power, based on fossil fuels, would clearly dominate for decades, but hydrogen, and the hydrogen fuel cell, would enable optimising the mix of methods to keep the atmospheric carbon dioxide down.

While finding means of generating green hydrogen is the key, the use of hydrogen as a means of heating, fuel for transport and for generating electricity has garnered great interest, worldwide. In the field of electrically powered transport, the fuel cell could replace the storage battery, an expensive component with its own carbon footprint. In India, heavy duty road transport is set to treble by 2040. The technology to power trucks by hydrogen fuel cells is now available. The rise in transport needs is a chal-

lenge, but also an opportunity, says a note from the Tata Energy Research Institute.

## Artificial photosynthesis

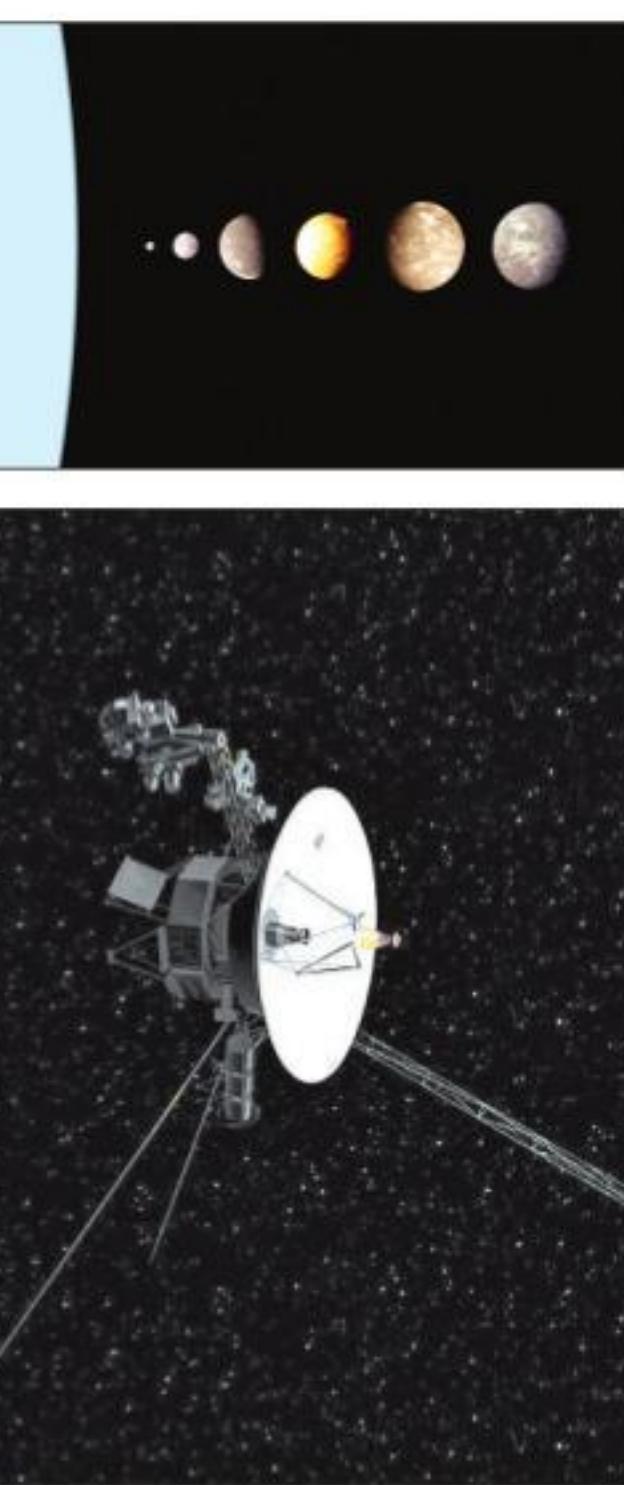
The energy store on Earth arises from solar energy converted and stored by plants and as carbohydrates. The process, of photosynthesis, uses solar energy to separate the hydrogen from water and combine with carbon dioxide in the air, to form carbohydrates, and release oxygen. It is the mechanism that filled the atmosphere with oxygen and led to oxygen-based life, as we know it.

Our current methods to tap solar energy depend on silicon-based solar cells, or indirectly, by harnessing the wind. A group working in the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and the University of California at Berkeley had reported in the journal, *Nano Letters*, their arrangement of nanowires made of silicon and titanium dioxide, to capture photons, and the bacterium, *Sporomusa ovata*, to use the energy to reduce carbon dioxide to useful organic chemicals. The method could, conceivably, be adapted to break water into hydrogen and oxygen, as a truly green source of hydrogen for fuel cells.

The writer can be contacted at response@simplescience.in

## PLUS POINTS

**Promise of alien life?**



Scientists are investigating whether Uranus' moons could have oceans hidden beneath their surfaces, in their quest to find habitable worlds that could have hosted alien life.

Researchers believe that Miranda, Ariel, Umbriel, Titania, and Oberon, the five largest moons of Uranus would be prime candidates for investigation due to their similarities to Europa and Enceladus, the moons of Jupiter and Saturn. Europa has long been seen as a possible candidate to have extra-terrestrial life in our own solar system, but getting through the thick crust of ice on its surface presents a challenge to scientists hoping to reach the ocean and better study it.

These moons show evidence of cryovolcanism, which is when liquid and vapour material that might be trapped under the surface escapes and becomes frozen by hitting the low temperatures of space. Studying images sent from the Voyager 2 spacecraft in 1986, the moons show fresh uncratered material, ridges, valleys, and folds -- all of which could originate from subsurface oceans.

"The big question here is: Where are habitable environments in the solar system?" Benjamin Weiss, a planetary scientist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, said. Europa and Enceladus "make a lot of us wonder whether there are many moons out there that, although they're small, may still be warm."

The scientists calculated the strength of Uranus' magnetic field, and how that would impact any oceans underneath its moons' surfaces -- the same technique that Nasa used to confirm the presence of Europa's ocean and also the one on one of Jupiter's other moons, Callisto. If the moons could detect Uranus' magnetic field, and experience differences in strength and detection due to a moon's movement though said field, it could potentially generate an electrical current.

"If there's liquid water there and it's a little bit salty like ocean water on Earth, then it can be conducting, meaning currents can flow in it," Weiss said. That current then generates its own magnetic field -- known as an induced magnetic field -- and one that would be detectable by spacecraft, distinct from the field of Uranus.

Using models of the moon's fields, researchers suggest that Miranda's moon had the strongest magnetic presence (300 nanoteslas) while Oberon is likely to have the weakest, with a predicted three nanoteslas. As such, scientists predict that subsurface oceans on Miranda, Ariel, Umbriel, and Titania could all be measured, although Oberon's is probably too weak to be noticeable, being on the edge of what's currently detectable.

"The key is that Uranus' field is non-spin symmetric, unlike Saturn's, and it rotates. We know these things, so (the technique) should work," said David Stevenson, a planetary scientist at the California Institute of Technology. "The caveat is magnetospheric effects (of Uranus), which are not yet well characterised but are unlikely to kill the idea."

However, Stevenson notes, the oceans on Uranus' moons are likely to be found deeper than those on Jupiter's moons, as the icy shell is thicker, but such a factor might make them easier to detect. "Getting close enough to one or more of the satellites to see this -- you have to get close, meaning within a satellite radius, roughly -- is unlikely to be a feature of an early... mission to Uranus," which likely wouldn't arrive before 2042, Stevenson also said.

Weiss presented the research on 15 December at the American Geophysical Union's Fall Meeting 2020.

The independent

# Covid-19 2.0

**Here's why it matters that the coronavirus is changing -- and what this means for vaccine effectiveness**

DAVID KENNEDY

A new variant of Sars-CoV-2 is spreading rapidly in a few countries. Sars-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19, generally accumulates mutations slowly over time, but this new variant has accumulated many mutations quickly.

If this new version of the virus is here to stay, as it appears to be, what does that mean? Will this new version of the virus replace the old one? Will it be easier to catch? And, most importantly, will the current vaccines still be effective?

This interests me because I am an evolutionary microbiologist who studies the link between the transmission and evolution of infectious diseases. In particular, I spend a lot of time considering the effects of vaccines on pathogen evolution and the effects of pathogen evolution on the impact of vaccines.

**What is the new Sars-CoV-2 mutant that has emerged?**

The new version of Sars-CoV-2 -- named the B.1.1.7 lineage -- is spreading in the UK and beyond. The differences between the old and new virus include 23 mutations in the virus's genetic code that have altered four viral proteins.

Eight of these 23 mutations affect the spike protein. It matters because the spike protein enables the virus to enter human cells, and it is a key tar-

get of our immune response, both in fighting off the virus during infection and in protecting us from disease following vaccination with the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines.

If the changes to the spike protein help the virus enter human cells more easily, then the virus could be transmitted from person to person more readily.

These mutations may also alter how well the host's immune system combats the virus, potentially reducing the efficacy of the current vaccines.

**What is different about this new version of Sars-CoV-2?**

Samples of the new virus isolated from patients suggest that this variant has been increasing in relative frequency over the last three months.

The increase in frequency is concerning, as it suggests -- but does not prove -- that the B.1.1.7 isolates of Sars-CoV-2 are more transmissible than the original virus. Some have estimated that the new virus may be up to 70 per cent more transmissible than the old virus. While these estimates are consistent with the data, it is entirely too early to make a definitive conclusion.

If this increase in transmissibility is confirmed, it might be due to the mutations in the spike protein allowing it to bind more tightly to the ACE2 receptor, which provides a gateway for the virus to enter human cells.

But it might also be due to any of



the other changes to the virus.

**Is it more dangerous? If so, why?**

If the new version, B.1.1.7, is indeed more transmissible than the old virus, it will be more dangerous in the sense that it will make more people sick.

However, I am not aware of good evidence that there is any difference in severity of disease caused by the new version of this virus compared with the older one. That said, with so few known cases, it may still be too early to say.

**Will the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines still be effective against this new strain?**

Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines work by training our immune systems to recognise a specific version of the viral spike protein. The version of the spike protein used by the vaccines was designed to match

that of the old virus, not that of the B.1.1.7 virus. This means that the vaccines might become less effective than expected should this new virus spread widely.

Vaccine-virus mismatch is an ongoing challenge for scientists charged with developing the seasonal flu vaccine. But even with a virus-vaccine mismatch, the flu vaccine reduces the likelihood, and the severity, of disease.

The question is therefore not whether the vaccines will be effective, but rather how effective they will be. The severity of the mismatch matters, but the only way to determine its impact in this case is through scientific study, and to my knowledge, no data on that has yet been collected. In other words, it's too early to say whether and how this new variant will influence the overall effectiveness of the Pfizer and Moderna vac-

cines.

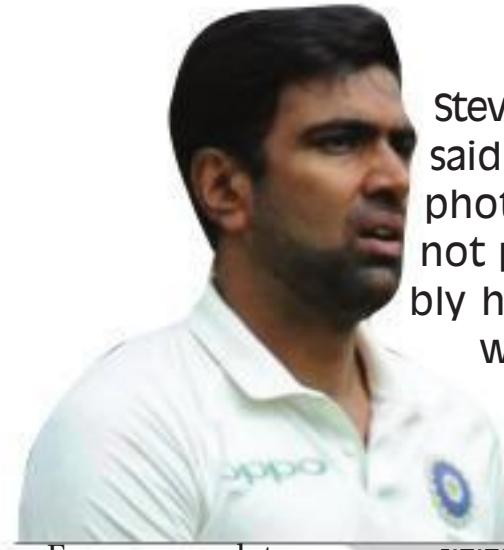
**Should people still get the new mRNA vaccine?**

The appearance of this new B.1.1.7 makes it even more important that people get vaccinated as soon as possible.

If this new version is more transmissible, or if the vaccine is less effective because of a virus-vaccine mismatch, more people will need to be vaccinated to achieve herd immunity and get this disease under control.

Moreover, we now have proof that the spike protein of Sars-CoV-2 can change drastically in a short time, and so it is critical that we get the virus under control to prevent it from evolving further and completely undermining vaccination efforts.

The writer is assistant professor of biology,



## THE WINNER

Steve Smith, enduring a poor run of form, said he had let Ravichandran Ashwin (in photo, left) dictate terms to him and not put him under pressure. "I probably haven't played Ashwin as well as I would've liked. I probably would've liked to have put him under a bit more pressure," Smith said.

For more updates

www.thestatesman.com

## THUMBNAILS

**Wade's plea:** Australia opener Matthew Wade has called for consistency over referrals after Tim Paine's dismissal on the third day of the Boxing Day Test sparked a debate over commentary and social media. Paine was adjudged caught-behind off Ravindra Jadeja.

**Tour talks:** The Bangladesh Cricket Board and Sri Lanka Cricket are in talks to reschedule a twice-postponed tour of Sri Lanka to April next year. The tour was originally scheduled for July-August, 2020 it came to be postponed because of the coronavirus pandemic.

**Century's best:** Juventus forward Cristiano Ronaldo beat Lionel Messi, Ronaldinho and Mohamed Salah to be named Player of the Century at the 2020 Globe Soccer Awards. He was deemed the best player between 2019 and 2020 by votes from fans around the world.

**Chelsea held:** Chelsea, overhauled by coach Frank Lampard after a loss to Arsenal, drew 1-1 at home to Aston Villa on Monday as Oliver Giroud's first-half header was cancelled out shortly after the break by Anwar El Ghazi. Lampard made six changes in the team.

**Drawn game:** Leicester City's Harvey Barnes grabbed a late equaliser to earn his team a 1-1 draw at Crystal Palace on Monday that lifted them up to second in the Premier League table. Leicester should have taken the lead in the 18th minute from the penalty spot.

**Match postponed:** Everton's meeting with Manchester City on Monday night was postponed after further positive coronavirus tests among City's party. Gabriel Jesus, Kyle Walker and two members of City's staff tested positive for the virus last week.

**Cavani soars:** Manchester United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer said striker Edinson Cavani was far too talented permanently to be considered an impact substitute and the 33-year-old was likely to start more frequently as the Premier League season progressed.

**Neymar row:** Neymar is at the centre of a controversy after reports that he is organising a huge New Year's Eve party despite the coronavirus pandemic, a claim his lawyers denied. The O Globo said he was hosting 500 people for a week-long party in Rio.

**Messi's choice:** Lionel Messi has no plans to become a coach when he retires from playing, saying he is more interested in being a director of football than working in the unforgiving world of football management. He has about six months left on his contract with Barcelona.

**Duplantis' goal:** Swedish pole-vaulter Armand Duplantis said his desire to better Sergey Bubka's outdoor mark had kept him motivated in the 2020 season and after clearing 6.15m to eclipse the Ukrainian in September, the 21-year-old was aiming to go higher next year.

**Indian football's 1956 Olympian Nikhil Nadi died**

KOLKATA, 29 DECEMBER

Nikhil Nadi, Indian football's 1956 Olympian, died here today aged 88. As the sporting fraternity recalled the simple, self-effacing and soft-spoken man, Sukumar Samajpati, another stalwart, described him as a never-say-die campaigner with a lot of grit.

"Getting past him was never easy," Samajpati said. Ajit, one of Nandi's brothers, played in the Olympics too, Samajpati said. The Melbourne Games saw India become the first side to figure in an Olympic football semi-final. SNS

Steve Smith, enduring a poor run of form, said he had let Ravichandran Ashwin (in photo, left) dictate terms to him and not put him under pressure. "I probably haven't played Ashwin as well as I would've liked. I probably would've liked to have put him under a bit more pressure," Smith said.

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE**  
MELBOURNE, 29 DECEMBER

**S**tand-in captain Ajinkya Rahane led India to a dominant eight-wicket win over Australia in the second Test today, levelling the series 1-1 and capping an extraordinary turnaround after their record collapse in the opening game. Rahane, deputising during Virat Kohli's paternity leave, hit an unbeaten 27 in Melbourne -- after a century in the first innings -- as India reached the meagre target of 70 for the loss of two wickets.

It capped a remarkable comeback for an Indian team desperate to make amends after losing in Adelaide by eight wickets, when they posted their lowest-ever score of 36 and were widely criticised at home.

And they bounced back without superstar and batting mainstay Kohli, who has returned home for the birth of his first child. Under the mild-mannered Rahane, they battled hard to dismiss Australia for 195 in the first innings and then posted 326 in reply.

Australia resumed their second innings on day four on 133 for six with a two-run lead, and their hopes resting on 21-year-old rookie all-rounder Cameron Green. He made 45 as they battled to 200 before tail-enders Josh Hazlewood and the last man to fall before lunch. Mohammad Siraj, on debut, took 3-37 with Jasprit Bumrah, Ravindra Jadeja and Ravi Ashwin grabbing two each. Rahane and another impressive debutant, Shubman Gill (35) then saw India home, but not before some nervous moments. Mitchell Starc got a nick from the out-of-form Mayank Agarwal (5), which Tim Paine caught, then Pat



Cummins snared Cheteshwar Pujara for three, edged to Green at gully. It left India on 19 for two before they regained their composure to seal the win.

Australia collapsed to 99 for six in the run chase yesterday before Green and Cummins knuckled down to weather 18 overs and steer them to stumps.

Green, who has been on fire with the bat in the domestic Sheffield Shield this season, showed glimpses of his magic, cutting Ashwin and driving Bumrah beautifully for fours,

while also exhibiting patience. But Green, in only his second Test, was undone by Siraj, caught by Jadeja as he looked to find the boundary with a pull shot, ending a 146-ball stay.

Cummins survived chances on 15 and 19, but when Bumrah took the new ball and found more swing and bounce he finally fell, gloving a rising delivery to Agarwal to end a battling 57-run partnership with Green. Starc was unbeaten on 14 with Nathan Lyon caught behind off Siraj for three, and Hazlewood

making 10. Australia's hopes rested with the tail-enders after their top order failed to fire, exposing the fragile nature of their batting in the absence of the injured David Warner. Opener Joe Burns again flopped, out for four, to push his place in the team for the third Test next week at serious risk, while Travis Head (17) also disappointed and Steve Smith's poor run continued, gone to eight. Their troubles came despite India being a bowler down following Umesh Yadav's calf strain yesterday, a further

setback for a team already missing injured regulars Mohammed Shami and Ishant Sharma.

Despite this, India's attack rose to the occasion, with Bumrah at the top of his game and young paceman Siraj impressing, while experienced spinners Jadeja and Ashwin consistently posed problems. Bumrah took 4-46 in Australia's first innings and Ashwin 3-35, but it was Rahane's gritty 112 that ultimately proved match-winning. The third Test is to start on 7 January in Sydney.

## 'Five-bowler ploy will be in use'

**AGENCIES**  
MELBOURNE, 29 DECEMBER

Both India captain Ajinkya Rahane and coach Ravi Shastri said today they would continue with the policy of using five bowlers in the remaining two Test matches of the series. India's fifth bowler, the stand-in captain Ajinkya Rahane (\*\*\* in photo \*\*\*), who played as an all-rounder, came good after paceman Umesh Yadav had limped off the field early in Australia's second innings yesterday. "We were thinking of having an all-rounder and Jadeja has been brilliant for us," said Rahane.

Coach Shastri told the media: "Yes, we will stick to five bowlers. If Umesh Yadav is not fit, there is a possibility that the Indian team management may have to call up either Navdeep Singh or T Natarajan or Shardul Thakur, for the next Test that starts on 7 January. It could also call in chinaman bowler Kuldeep Yadav."

"Jadeja is a genuine all-rounder. That is why he is here. He can bat at No 5, he can bat at No 6. He lends a lot of balance to the side. Also when you

play overseas, there is a chance of one of the bowlers getting injured like you saw with Umesh," Shastri said, adding: "With Jadeja there, it gives balance. It also gives the fast bowlers some respite with Jaddu (Ravindra Jadeja) and Ash (Rashid Khan) doing the bowling."

Batsman Rohit Sharma, who has recovered from a hamstring injury and is in quarantine in Sydney, will join the Indian team in Melbourne tomorrow although there is still no clarity on whether he will play in the third Test, which can be shifted to Melbourne if the Covid-19 situation in Sydney does not improve. Shastri told the media the team management would speak to Sharma about how he feels before taking a call on his availability.

Coach Shastri told the media: "Yes, we will stick to five bowlers. If Umesh Yadav is not fit, there is a possibility that the Indian team management may have to call up either Navdeep Singh or T Natarajan or Shardul Thakur, for the next Test that starts on 7 January. It could also call in chinaman bowler Kuldeep Yadav."

"Jadeja is a genuine all-rounder. That is why he is here. He can bat at No 5, he can bat at No 6. He lends a lot of balance to the side. Also when you

## SCOREBOARD

Australia 1st Innings: 195	Fall of wickets: 1-4, 2-42, 3-71, 4-98, 5-98, 6-99, 7-156, 8-177, 9-185
India 1st Innings: 326	Bowling: Jasprit Bumrah 27-6-54-2
Australia 2nd Innings: (Overnight 133) 6	Umesh Yadav 3-3-0-5-1, Mohammad Siraj 21-3-4-37-3, Ravichandran Ashwin 37-1-6-71-2, Ravindra Jadeja 14-5-28-2.
Matthew Wade lbw b Ravindra Jadeja 40	India 2nd Innings: 70-2 (15.5 Ov)
Joe Burns c Pant b Umesh 4	Mayank Agarwal: Paine b Starc 5
Labuschagne c Rahane b Ashwin 28	Shubman Gill not out 35
Steven Smith b Bumrah 8	Cheteshwar Pujara b Siraj 45
Travis Head c Mayank Agarwal b Siraj 17	Ajinkya Rahane (c) not out 27
Cameron Green c Jadeja b Siraj 45	Total: 70 (2 wkt, 15.5 Ov)
Tim Paine c Pant b Ravindra Jadeja 1	Fall of wickets: 16-1, 19-2
Pat Cummins c Agarwal b Bumrah 22	Bowling: Starc 4-0-20-1, Cummins 5-0-
Mitchell Starc not out 14	22-1, Hazlewood 3-1-14-0, Lyon 2.5-0-5-
Nathan Lyon c Pant b Siraj 3	0, Labuschagne 1-0-9-0.
Josh Hazlewood b Ashwin 10	
Extras: (LB-5, NB-3) 8	
Total (all out in 103.1 overs) 200	

## Among the greatest turnarounds in Test history: Shastri

**AGENCIES**  
MELBOURNE, 29 DECEMBER



result that counts. We were blown away in the second innings in one hour. When you are blown away, you are blown away, there is nothing you can do about it. But to get up and fight, which we did in this second Test, to beat a team like Australia in Australia... there is no point having one good day in Australia, you got to have five good days if you have to beat them.

Stand-in India skipper Ajinkya Rahane (*in photo*) praised the team's debut-makers, opener Shubman Gill

and fast bowler Mohammed Siraj, saying: "Really proud of all the players. Played really well. Want to give credit to Siraj and Gill, the character they showed after the Adelaide loss was great to see. Character was important for us, especially after losing Umesh in the second innings," said Rahane.

Rahane, who had scored a brilliant century in the first innings to lead India's revival after they were reduced to 116/4, said going in with five bowlers had worked well.

"That five-bowler plan

worked well for us nicely. We were thinking of having an all-rounder and Jadeja has been brilliant for us. Shubman, we all know his first-class career and in this game, he has shown the intent to play shots at this level. Showed composure. Siraj has shown that he can bowl with discipline. It is really difficult for debutants to bowl with discipline but that's where I think the first-class experience comes in handy," added Rahane. The 32-year-old, battoning at No 4 since the departure of Kohli, said, "The talk was all about showing the attitude and intent on the field. As I said, character. Adelaide was about one hour that took the game away from us. Lots to learn even now. Australia applied themselves with their last five wickets. Umesh is recovering well, the management and the medical staff will take the call. We're excited about Rohit Sharma coming back. Spoke to him yesterday, he's waiting to join the team."

"That five-bowler plan

## Arindam shines in high-intensity draw between Chennaiyin &amp; ATKMB

**AGENCIES**  
GOA, 29 DECEMBER

Both Chennaiyin FC and ATK Mohun Bagan were left frustrated as they played out a goalless draw in the Hero Indian Super League at the GMC Stadium, here on Tuesday.

Chennaiyin, in particular, had multiple chances to put the game to bed, but a brilliant display from ATKMB goalkeeper Arindam Bhattacharya prevented them from finding a goal.

It was Chennaiyin who were on the attack early on, with Arindam called into action as early as the fifth minute. Chennaiyin captain Rafael Crivellaro, after receiving the ball from Jakub Sylvestr, fired a shot at goal only for Arindam to block it. Minutes later, Lallianzuala Chhangte found himself in a good position but fired wide. ATKMB grew into the game as it progressed, with their main attacking outlet Roy Krishna often finding

himself in the thick of things. In the 19th minute, he supplied Manvir on the right and got into position to receive the ball back, only for the latter to lose it. A minute later, he chased down a deflected ball and nearly scored but was flagged off for offside.

Chennaiyin arguably had the best chance of the half just as it was coming to a close. Memo Moura diverted Crivellaro's free kick into the path of Enes Sipovic, who had a wide target to aim at. However, he only managed to shoot straight at Arindam.

Soon after the restart, Chennaiyin were denied again by the ATKMB goalkeeper. In the 50th minute, Chhangte got on the end of a long ball from Chennaiyin goalkeeper Vishal Kaithe and bore down on goal. His shot looked to be going in but Arindam got a fingertip to it.

Chennaiyin suffered a blow in the 69th minute when the

influential Crivellaro went off with an injury. However, that did not stop them from having the better of the game. In the 80th minute, Arindam had to pull off two saves in quick succession to keep his team level. The first, acrobatically diverting Reagan Singh's shot behind, was his best of the match. Then, off the ensuing corner, he was there to prevent Eli Sabia from heading in.

Antonio Lopez Habas' team has a reputation of scoring late goals and they tried to stay true to that, laying repeat sieges to the Chennaiyin box in the final ten minutes. However, a mixture of their own wastefulness and some solid defending from Chennaiyin meant that they ended up drawing a blank. Chennaiyin had one final chance in injury time, with a free-kick on the edge of the box. However, substitute Fatkhuloo Fatkhuloo blasted it over the bar.

## Sydney confirmed as venue for third India-Australia Test

**AGENCIES**  
SYDNEY, 29 DECEMBER

Cricket Australia on Tuesday decided to retain Sydney as the venue for the third Test against India, ending speculation that the game could move to Melbourne because of stringent COVID-19 border restrictions that would have affected the players' movement for the fourth match in Brisbane.

The third Test is to be held from January 7. The series is currently locked 1-1 after India won the second Test in Melbourne, which was placed on standby in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak in Sydney's northern beaches before Christmas. "Despite the many challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, I am delighted to say Cricket Australia remains on track to deliver the men's international series as scheduled," Cricket Australia's Interim CEO Nick Hockley was quoted as saying by cricket.com.au.

The fourth and final Test is scheduled from January 19 in Brisbane, Queensland, which has placed strict bor-

der restrictions on arrivals from Sydney.

"We have met regularly over the past week to assess the unfolding public health situation in Sydney and gauge its impact on border restrictions around the country," Hockley said. "...To that end, we have made the decision to keep the New Year's Test at the SCG, which has a wonderful recent history of hosting the Pink Test and Jane McGrath Day on the third day of play."

The outbreak had earlier jeopardised the arrangements for the fourth Test at the Gabba with Queensland closing its border for anyone coming from the Greater Sydney area.

"We are confident that both this match, and the fourth Test in Brisbane, will play out in a safe and successful manner..." We are very grateful to the Queensland Government for their willingness to work with us to deliver the series as planned in a manner that places the safety and wellbeing of the players, officials, staff and the wider community as its top priority," Hockley said.

## New Zealanders have Pakistan on the ropes

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE**  
WELLINGTON, 29 DECEMBER



and was caught behind, while Shan Masood was caught at first slip off Southee and Pakistan were two down for no runs after 14 deliveries.

Azhar Ali and Haris Sohail provided some resistance for 15 overs and 3