



The Statesman

PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION

PROGNOSIS OF
COVID



P6

THE PRE-INA
NETAJI BOSE



P7

CHINA SANCTIONS
POMPEO, KEY
TRUMP OFFICIALS



SIRAJ HEADS
STRAIGHT TO
FATHER'S GRAVE



P10

WEATHER

Mainly clear sky. Moderate to dense fog in the morning. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 23 and 06 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: NIL

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 97% Min: 37%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 28.3°C (+1) Min: 07.4°C (0)

SUN RISES

07:13 hrs

MOON RISES

12:47 hrs

SUN SETS

17:52 hrs

MOON SETS

02:20 hrs

THUMBNAILS



Artists make graffiti on Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose at the National Library ahead of Netaji's birth anniversary, in Kolkata on Thursday. IANS

Army havaldar dead in Pak shelling: An Army havaldar, Nirmal Singh of 10 Jammu and Kashmir Rifles died on Thursday when Pakistani troops resorted to indiscriminate shelling at Indian positions along the Line of Control (LoC) in the Poonch district. An Army spokesman said that Havaldar Singh was critically injured and later succumbed to his injuries. The Indian Army responded strongly to the enemy fire.

SC notice against web series *Mirzapur*: The Supreme Court sought responses from the Centre, Amazon Prime Video and Excel Entertainment Pvt Ltd on a plea which has alleged that web series *Mirzapur* has completely tarnished the historical and cultural image of the place by showing it as a city of goons.

Twin suicide bombings rock central Baghdad: Twin suicide bombings ripped through a busy market in the Iraqi capital on Thursday, killing at least 32 people and wounding dozens. The rare suicide bombing attack hit the Bab al-Sharqi commercial area in central Baghdad amidst heightened political tensions.

5 dead in SII fire; vaccine facility not hit, says CEO

Fire occurred in under-construction building

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PUNE, 21 JANUARY

Five persons died and nine were evacuated from a building in the Serum Institute of India's Manjari premises here after a fire broke out at the facility on Thursday, police said.

Covishield vaccine production won't be hit due to the fire, Serum Institute of India CEO Adar Poonawalla said.

All of the deceased were construction workers whose bodies were recovered by fire brigade personnel from the fifth floor, police said.

The Manjari facility is where the Covishield vaccine used in the nationwide inoculation drive against the pandemic is made.

"I would like to reassure all governments & the public that there would be no loss of #COVISHIELD production due to multiple production buildings that I had kept in reserve to deal with such contingencies," Poonawalla added.

"We have just received some distressing updates; upon further investigation we have learnt that there has unfortunately been some loss of life at the incident. We are deeply saddened and offer our deepest condolences to the fam-



► The Manjari facility is where the Covishield vaccine used in the nationwide inoculation drive against the pandemic is made

► The building where the fire broke out is part of the under-construction site of the Serum facility and is one km from the Covishield manufacturing unit

ily members of the department. we will be offering a compensation of Rs 25 lakh to each of the families, in addition to the mandated amount as per the norms," Poonawalla added.

Maharashtra deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar said the state government has ordered a probe into the blaze. The fire, which broke out at 2.45 p.m. on the fourth and fifth floors of the SEZ3 building in the Serum Institute premises, was brought under control around 4.30 p.m., he said.

"The cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained. Furniture, wiring, cabins were gutted," he said.

"I have instructed officials to carry out a detailed probe into the fire," Ajit Pawar said. "Anguished by the loss of lives due to an unfortunate fire at the Serum Institute, my thoughts are with the families of those who lost their lives," PM Modi tweeted.

Viral visuals from the site showed smoke billowing out from the Serum Institute facility. Chief Fire Officer Prashant Ranpis said cooling work has commenced at the spot and the fire was brought under control around 4.30 p.m., he said.

"The cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained. Furniture, wiring, cabins were gutted," he said.

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This place (Rajgir) is famous for its hot springs. However, in those days this had also resulted in non-availability of cool water for the locals who had sought Guru Nanak's help when he came here

NITISH KUMAR
BIHAR CHIEF MINISTER

5,942 get jabs in Delhi on day four; 24 AEFI cases reported

To encourage people to get Covid vaccine, the Delhi govt enables healthcare workers to get shots ahead of their scheduled vaccination date, says Satyendar Jain; city's positivity rate dips to 0.28 pc

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, 21 JANUARY

Over 5,900 health-care workers received the Covid-19 vaccine in Delhi today, the fourth scheduled day of the immunisation exercise in the national capital, according to official data.

The sharp fall in these numbers came after 1 severe and 50 minor cases of AEFI were reported following the vaccination drive in the city on 16 January.

Delhi's vaccination figure last Monday was 3,598 (44 per cent), while the count on Tuesday was much higher at 4,936 (48 per cent). Today was the fourth scheduled day of vaccination in Delhi.

Various reasons were being attributed to the low turnout in the initial days, including some technical issues and fears related to adverse events.

However, the government has maintained that no case of serious or severe AEFI is attributable to vaccination till date.

Meanwhile, seeking to encourage people to get vaccinated against Covid, the Delhi government has made a provision whereby health-care workers will have an option to get shots at a regular centre ahead of their scheduled day for vaccination.

Asked if Delhi would eventually see zero case of Covid, the minister said that swine flu subsided but cases still



As the number of tests conducted in Delhi to detect Covid crossed the one crore mark, chief minister Arvind Kejriwal hailed the milestone as a "new record" for the city. In a tweet yesterday, he had also asserted that Delhi has "successfully contained the scale and spread" of the infection.

On the low turnout of healthcare workers for vaccination, Jain said they are being encouraged and that they are coming forward now.

"In fact, we have made a provision, whereby a health-care worker will have an option to get a vaccine shot at a registered centre ahead of scheduled day for vaccination. So, if it is scheduled for 15 days later, his or her name can be found from the database so that the jab can be given earlier," he said.

Jain also said that the low number of active Covid cases in Delhi was also "satisfactory".

Asked about the number of new coronavirus strain cases in the city, he said, "Seven were admitted at LNJP Hospital, and all were mild cases". Sources said nearly all of them have been discharged. Till 9 January, only seven such patients were left at the hospital.

Delhi today recorded 227 fresh Covid cases and 8 deaths, even as its positivity rate plunged to 0.28 per cent.

The city's coronavirus caseload climbed to 6,33,276 and its Covid death toll mounted to 10,782, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

Delhi's tally of active coronavirus cases dipped to 2,120, the health bulletin said.

The meeting was also attended by Delhi Urban Development Minister and DUSIB Vice-Chairperson Satyendar Jain along with the Delhi government officials and DUSIB board members.

The DUSIB officials apprised the CM that a total of 9,315 flats are in a ready-

to-move condition for 14 identified JJ clusters. Out of these 9,315 houses, 7,400 houses have been proposed in the Bhalswa Jahangirpur area for seven identified JJ clusters, 1,060 houses in the Sultanpur area for four identified JJ clusters, and 855 houses have been proposed in the Bawana area for three identified JJ clusters.

A total of 19,060 houses have to be constructed under a separate category in the project.

Kejriwal said, "We have to ensure that the construction of the EWS flats for the in-situ rehabilitation of the people is completed in its timeline. This has to be ensured so that we can provide shelter to every poor in Delhi."

A government official said in the previous meetings, it was decided that the construction would be held in

A total of 9,315 house inventory is in a ready-to-move condition for 14 identified JJ clusters. Apart from these, a total of 28,910 flats are being constructed for 73 identified JJ clusters



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 21 JANUARY

CM asks officials to expeditiously allot flats to EWS people, slum-dwellers



two phases, and that the EWS flats would be built on the vacant land of the DUSIB.

The 89,400 houses will be constructed in three phases. In the first phase, 41,400 houses will be constructed by the year 2022. In the second phase, 18,000 houses will be constructed. In the third phase, 30,000 EWS houses will be constructed across Delhi. The houses will be multi-storeyed, and five separate tenders will be called, each in a lot of 8000 houses.

The time-frame for the construction of houses in the first phase is 24 months with a cost of Rs 3,312 crore for 41,400 flats (Rs 8 lakh per flat).

Under the 'Jahan Jhuggi, Wahin Makaan' policy of the Mukhyamantri Awas Yojana, poor families and slum-dwellers will be provided new affordable flats by the Delhi government.

Restaurants, shops to mention about 'halal', 'jhatka' cut meat: South Delhi civic body

PTI

NEW DELHI, 21 JANUARY

24.

A senior official of the SDMC said the House cleared it in its special meeting on Wednesday.

South Delhi has a number of eateries, restaurants and street-side shops selling or serving non-vegetarian food items, prominent places being markers at Defence Colony, Amar Colony, Sarojini Nagar, South Extension, and INA.

Officials said restaurants and meat shops will have to

display clearly and visibly whether they are serving "halal" or "jhatka".

The resolution passed by the SDMC panel had read, "There are thousands of restaurants in 104 wards of four zones falling under South Delhi Municipal Corporation.

Out of these meat is served in about 90 per cent of restaurants but it is not mentioned whether the meat being served by the restaurants is halal or jhatka".

Similarly, the meat shops also do not make the distinction, it had said. The resolution further said, "According to Hinduism and Sikhism, eating halal meat is forbidden and against religion..."

Therefore, the committee resolves that this direction be given to restaurants and meat shops that it should be written mandatorily about the meat being sold and served by them that halal or jhatka meat is available here".

Standing Committee Chairman Rajdutt Gahlot had earlier said, "At present, while getting a licence made, owners take a licence for selling on type of meat, and then start selling the other one too".

Also, the idea was to let a consumer know about the kind of meat being served to him or her and make an informed choice, Gahlot had said.

The resolution in the

Standing Committee was moved by Chhattarpur councillor Anita Tanwar.

Irshad Kureshi, general secretary, Delhi Meat Merchants Association, an umbrella body of 6,000 licensed meat shops in Delhi, on Thursday said, "The move seems like a way of diverting attention from other more important issues".

Meat shops have always been displaying what meat they have been selling, in compliance with the MCD

by-laws of 1957.

The authorities are needlessly making an issue out of this, he said.

"While restaurants don't display it, customers always check if they have a preference... It is like asking a restaurant to display whether they also serve vegetarian food. A vegetarian person will enquire about the menu according to his or her preference," Kureshi rued.

Joy Singh, a partner in Yeti chain of restaurants and co-

founder of Raasta restaurant in south Delhi had termed the move earlier as a very "sad and regressive approach".

In 2017, the SDMC had proposed that meat and its products were not to be displayed in the open, citing that hygiene and "sentiments of people affected by the sight" of meat were the main reasons behind the move. The move was not implemented after protests from shop-owners.

YOU CAN BE... OUR EYES & EARS

Prahari

Shopkeeper

Car Dealer

Parking Attendant

TSR Driver

Telephone Booth / Cyber Cafe Owner

AS WE FIGHT CRIME & TERRORISM

JOIN THE DELHI POLICE "EYES & EARS" SCHEME

CALL 1090 TO REPORT ANYTHING SUSPICIOUS

YOUR IDENTITY WILL BE KEPT SECRET

E-mail to CP, Delhi at: cp.snsrivastava@delhipolice.gov.in

Write to CP, Delhi at P.O. Box No. 171, GPO, New Delhi

FOR IMMEDIATE POLICE HELP CALL 112

TO SHARE INFORMATION CALL 1090

DP/9265/2021

REPUBLIC DAY 2021

DELHI POLICE

SHANTI SEWA NYAYA

Invitees to the Republic Day 2021 function at the Rajpath are requested not to bring the following prohibited items:

आमंत्रित अतिथियों से आनुरोध है कि राजपथ पर गणतंत्र दिवस 2021 के समारोह में निम्नलिखित प्रतिबंधित वस्तुएं साथ में न लाएँ:

Entry strictly through invitation card/ticket only.

प्रवेश सिफ़ आमंत्रण पत्र/टिकट के द्वारा ही होगा।

Prohibited Items		वर्जित वस्तुएं	
Photo/फोटो	Particulars / विवरण	Photo/फोटो	Particulars / विवरण
	Eatables खाने-पीने की चीजें		Cigarettes, Bidies, Lighter सिगरेट, बीड़ी, लाइटर
	Bag, Briefcase थैला, ब्रीफक्स		Alcohol, Perfumes, Spray शराब, इत्र, स्प्रे
	Radio, Transistor, Tape Recorder, CD, DVD, MP3 Players रेडियो, ट्रांजिस्टर, टेपरिकॉर्ड, सीडी, डोबीडी, एम्पी3 प्लेयर		Dagger, Sword, Cutting Material, Sharp/Pointed Edged Material, Screw Drivers नुकीला हथियार, चाकू, चौकड़, चैंबल
	Camera, Binocular, Handycam कैमरा, दूरबीन, हैण्डीकैम		Umbrella, Replica Fire Arms, Toy Gun or Toys छाता, आमंत्रणाव, खिलौना पिस्तौल और खिलौने
	Thermos Flasks, Water Bottles, Cans थर्मस, पानी की बोतल, कैन		Knives, Scissors, Razors, Blades, Wire, Pluckers चाकू, केची, रेजर, चैंबल, तार, एलकर
	Inflammable Items, Match Boxes ज्वलनशील पदार्थ, दियासलाई		Arms & Ammunition, Fireworks, Crackers Explosive etc. हथियार और गोला बारूद, पटाखे आदि
	Various Electronic Gadgets, Devices e.g. I-Pad, I-Pod, Palm Top/Laptop, Computer, Tablets, Power Bank etc. विभिन्न इलेक्ट्रॉनिक उपकरणों जैसे आई-पैड, आई-पॉड, पाम टॉप/लैपटॉप, कॉम्प्यूटर, टैबलेट, पावर बैंक इत्यादि		Avoid keeping Mobile Phones, Remote Controlled Car Keys as it may delay your entry due to checking फोन, रिमोट कंट्रोल कार की जांच के द्वारा ही सकती है।

Any unidentified object, if noticed, may be brought to the notice of the nearest Security Personnel.

यदि, कोई लावारिस वस्तु दिखाई दे, तो निकटम् सुरक्षाकारी के नोटिस में लाएं।

Please co-operate with the police for searching/frisking.

कल्या तलाशी देने में पुलिस के साथ सहयोग करें।

Please be alert to your surroundings.

कल्या अपने आस पास नजर रखें।

Keeping in mind the threat of Covid-19, don't forget to wear face mask/cover and maintain Social Distancing.

कोविड-19 के खतरे के ध्यान में रखते हुए फेस मास्क/कवर पहनना और दूसरों से उचित दूरी बना कर रखना ना भूलें।

E-mail to CP, Delhi at: cp.snsrivastava@delhipolice.gov.in | Write to: CP, Delhi at P.O. Box No. 171, GPO, New Delhi

FOR IMMEDIATE POLICE HELP CALL 112

TO SHARE INFORMATION CALL 1090

DP/9264/2021



We have got information that at some places in Bankura and Habra, central government organisations have put up eviction notices. But our government would not allow any such thing. We will give them (refugees) dalil (official document) in accordance with their merit

MAMATA BANERJEE
WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER

The Statesman
NEW DELHI, FRIDAY 22 JANUARY 2021

HP gears up to celebrate 50 years of statehood

CM Jai Ram Thakur holds a meeting to review the preparations for the golden jubilee celebrations of Himachal Pradesh's statehood, which will be held across the state on 25 January

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 21 JANUARY

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur today directed the Deputy Commissioners (DCs) to organise the golden jubilee celebrations of the HP's statehood on 25 January in a befitting manner at the district as well as sub-divisional levels across the state.

Holding a meeting to review the preparations for the 25 January mega event — marking the 50th anniversary of Himachal Pradesh's statehood — through video conference from here, the CM said all the DCs should ensure the district-level functions at every district headquarters on the theme of HP's statehood golden jubilee. All the SDMs (Sub Divisional Magistrates) will also organise such functions at the sub-division headquarters on the



occasion.

Jai Ram said that such functions in the districts should be organised in such a manner that they conclude by 11 am.

He said that after the functions held at the district and sub-divisional levels, the state-level event to be held at Shimla on the Statehood Day would be telecast live in all these places.

The CM said that prominent persons of the area concerned besides other local achievers could be requested to be chief guests of such functions. The invitation for these events should also be extended to newly-elected representatives of PRIs and Urban Local Bodies of the area. The active participation of Mahila Mandals, Yuval Mandals, Mandals, and other bodies in these celebrations must be ensured.

Jai Ram said that proper seating arrangements should be ensured by maintaining social distance and proper use of face masks in this Covid pandemic time.

He directed all the DCs to coordinate all the programmes to be held in their respective districts.

The DCs gave various suggestions for organising the events in a befitting manner.

Secretary, GAD, Devesh Kumar welcomed the CM.

Education Minister Gobind Singh Thakur, Director, Tourism, Yunus, Special Secretary Rakesh Kanwar, Deputy Commissioner, Shimla, Aditya Negi, Director, Information and Public Relations, Harbans Singh Bhambhani, Director, LAC, Suneet Sharma, Commissioner, Municipal Corporation, Ashish Kohli, SP, Shimla, Mohit Chawla, Joint Secretary, SAD, Sachin Kanwal, and other senior officers attended the meeting.

Housing for all: Haryana govt seeks to provide affordable flats to slum-dwellers

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 21 JANUARY

To ensure housing for all by 2022, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Thursday directed officials to prepare a comprehensive scheme for the rehabilitation of urban slum-dwellers in the state by providing residential flats to them at affordable prices.

To begin with, Faridabad and Gurugram are proposed to be taken up under the scheme. The CM, who was presiding over a meeting regarding 'housing for all' today, said that subsequently, the scheme would be rolled out in other big cities of the State too.



He said that the state government's goal is to provide affordable housing facilities to the entire slum population residing in urban areas of Haryana. The CM said the rehabilitation scheme would be prepared by the department of 'housing for all'.

He said that under this scheme, it would be ensured that the sites for the construction of flats are suitably located within the city and the slum dwellers are shifted to residential flats with their consent.

The CM added that there are a large number of slum dwellers in the State who are ready to shift in constructed dwelling units. Khattar directed the landholding departments to conduct a survey to assess the area and number of potential beneficiaries for the scheme.

The CM said that the flats to be constructed under the scheme would be given to the slum dwellers on affordable prices which could be paid by them in installments.

He said the state government could also arrange loans through banks so as to facilitate payment by the beneficiaries.

Meanwhile, taking cognisance of the complaints on the CM Window, project director of the Chief Minister's Good Governance Associate Programme, Rakesh Gupta directed the officers to register five FIRs in cases pertaining to negligence in resolving the complaints received on the CM Window.

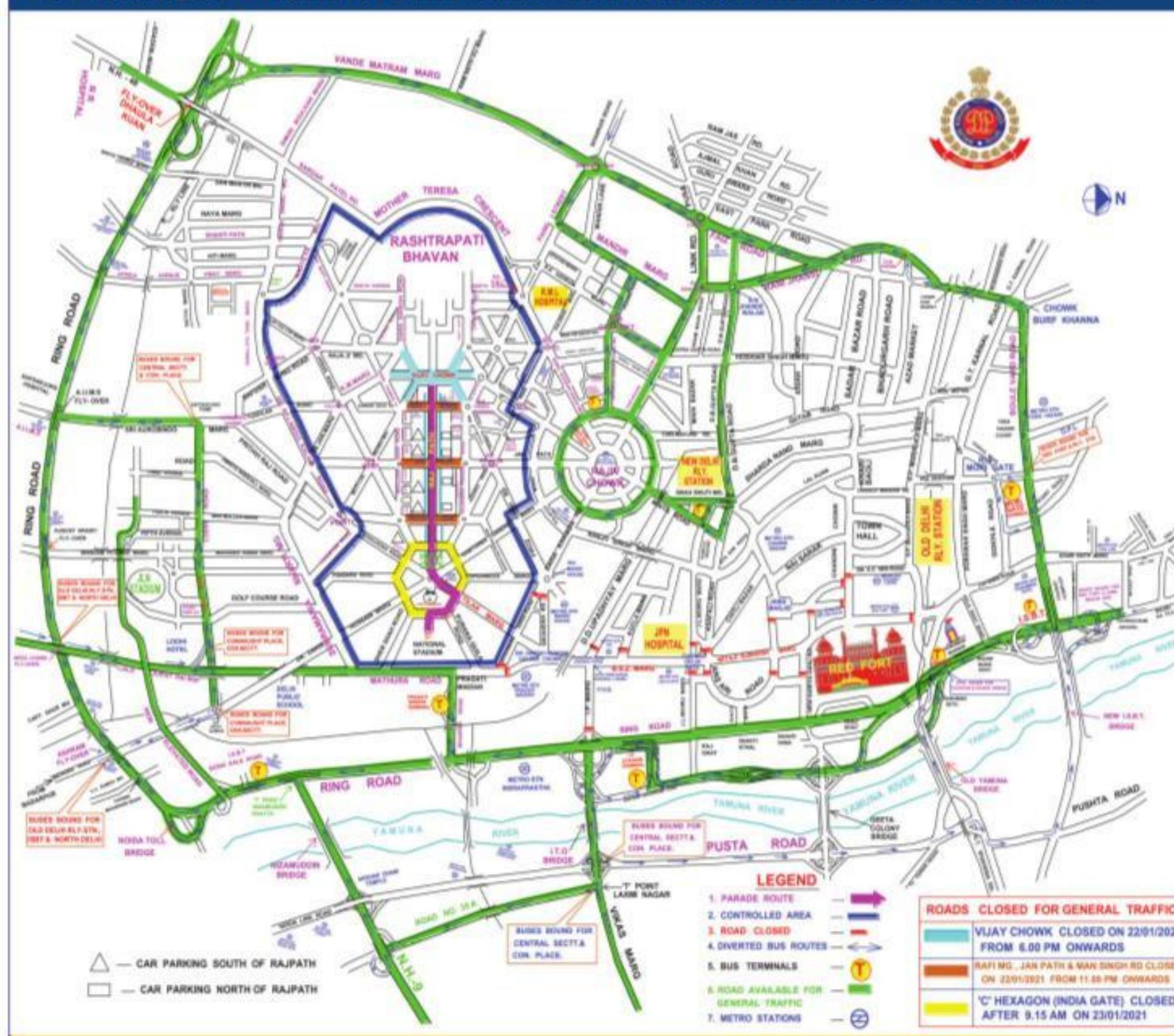
In a complaint pertaining to Bahadurgarh district, instructions were given to register FIR against an officer of the urban local bodies department for withdrawing Rs 88 lakh from a bank account.

In another complaint of Haryana Agro Industries Corporation (HAIC), directions were given to register FIR against four persons regarding disappearance of 50,000 jute bags.

A show cause notice has been issued to four officers, including the secretary (HSVP) for their careless attitude towards handling the complaints received on the CM Window.

TRAFFIC ADVISORY FOR REPUBLIC DAY FULL DRESS REHEARSAL ON 23RD JANUARY, 2021

ROUTE OF PARADE: Vijay Chowk ► Rajpath ► Amar Jawan Jyoti ► India Gate ► R/A Princess Palace ► T/L Tilak Marg Radial Road ► Turn right on "C" Hexagon ► Turn left and enter National Stadium from Gate No. 1.



INSTRUCTIONS TO GENERAL PUBLIC

- In case, any unidentified object or suspicious person is seen, information must be conveyed to the nearest policeman on duty.
- Flying of sub conventional aerial platforms like para-gliders, para motors, hang gliders, UAVs, UASs, microlight aircrafts, remotely piloted aircrafts, hot air balloons, small size powered aircrafts, quadcopters or para jumping from aircraft etc. are prohibited over the jurisdiction of National Capital Territory of Delhi from 20.01.2021 up to 15.02.2021 (both days inclusive).
- General public and motorists are requested to keep patience, observe traffic rules & road discipline and follow directions of traffic personnel deployed at all intersections. People are requested to plan their journey in advance and keep sufficient time in hand to avoid inconvenience.

Be a Traffic Sentinel

Download App from



24 HOURS TRAFFIC HELPLINE 011-25844444/1095

TO SHARE INFORMATION CALL 1090

FOR IMMEDIATE POLICE HELP CALL 112

Danish company invests ₹125 cr in Punjab

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 21 JANUARY

The Denmark-based packaging company Hartmann has invested in Punjab by acquiring Mohan Fibres with an initial investment of Rs 125 crore. The Hartmann Group's president for South America and Asia, Ernesto called upon the chief secretary Punjab Vini Mahajan on Thursday and informed the company has purchased the existing plant of Mohan Fibres in Punjab.

The company also plans to explore the market of fruit and vegetable packaging in the state. Chief Secretary assured that full support will be provided to the company from state government and Invest Punjab.

Hartmann founded in 1917 in Denmark, is the world's leading manufacturer of moulded fibre egg packaging with approximately 2200 employees, the leading manufacturer of fruit packaging in South America under the name Sanovo Green pack, and the world's largest manufacturer of technology for producing moulded fibre packaging.

It sells moulded fibre packaging to the markets all over the world with Europe, South America and North America as its key markets. Hartmann's moulded fibre egg packaging is certified to be compostable in industrial composting plants. It also offers FSC MIX certified and carbon neutral egg packaging. Mohan Fibre Products Limited was a

leading provider of moulded fibre packaging for fruits, poultry and food service industry which was based in SAS Nagar. This acquisition is a strategic move from Hartmann to enter into the very attractive Indian market where the Denmark based company sees a lot of growth and opportunities with plans to expand their current capacity. The company with its plans will add to the value chain in Food Processing sector where Punjab is already a leader. Invest Punjab will facilitate the company in granting all the regulatory clearances under one roof.

STEEL AUTHORITY OF INDIA LIMITED IISCO STEEL PLANT BURNPUR- 713325, Dist.- Burdwan, West Bengal

Public Notice

Advt No./20-21/Estate/16

"One Time Opportunity to Resolve Land Disputes with the Company"

"It has been noted that several plots belonging to SAIL-IISCO Steel Plant are being claimed by local people, leading to dispute with the Company and protracted Court Cases. SAIL-IISCO Steel Plant, therefore, invites all such claimants to submit all their documents for scrutiny and verification so that the disputes about claim are resolved amicably once for all. Claimants are advised to address their application to the GM(Estate) mentioning their Plot Number(CS/RS/LR), Mouza Name, Connecting Deed Numbers, Reasons of Dispute and Contact Details. The application enclosed with attested copies of all supporting documents must be received in the office of the GM(Estate), Town Services Deptt, 1 The Crescent, SAIL-IISCO Steel Plant, Burnpur-713325 by 3.3.2021. Alternatively, a scanned copy of the documents can also be emailed to estate.ip@ail.in. Later, the claimants may have to be physically present along with the original documents, on the date and time intimated to them by Estate Deptt for final verification."

We are taking all necessary COVID 19 Precautionary Measures

BLAZERS SUITS & JACKETS SALE

up to 60% off

Formals & Wedding collection

ARROW Raymond Colorplus LOUIS PHILIPPE PARK AVENUE

- PUNCHKUIAN ROAD, Garwal Bhawan, (Near Jhandewalan, Gole Chkr.)
- WAZIRPUR A-5, Near Richi Rich Banquet (Opp. Shalimar Bagh)
- JANAKPURI B-1/2, Main Najafgarh Road, Opp. Metro Pillar 543
- NOIDA, Nirula's Sec-2, Near Metro Station, Sec-15, Noida, UP
- LAJPAT NAGAR, 49, Main Ring Road, Adj. Haldi Ram, Near Moolchand Crossing

In connection with the Republic Day Celebrations-2021, there will be a Full Dress Rehearsal on 23rd January 2021. The Parade rehearsal will start at 09.50 AM on 23.01.2021 from Vijay Chowk & will proceed to National Stadium. There would be elaborate traffic arrangements and restrictions in place for smooth conduct of the Parade along the route.

TRAFFIC RESTRICTIONS

In order to facilitate smooth passage of the Parade, movement of traffic on certain roads leading to the route of the Parade will be restricted as under:

(1) No traffic will be allowed on Vijay Chowk from 06.00 PM on 22nd Jan, 2021 till the Parade is over on 23rd Jan 2021.

(2) No cross traffic will be allowed on Rajpath intersections from 11.00 PM of 22nd Jan, 2021 at Rafi Marg, Janpath, Man Singh Road till Parade is over.

(3) 'C'-Hexagon-India Gate will be closed for traffic from 09.15 AM on 23.01.2021 till the entire Parade and Tableaux enter National Stadium.

Road users are requested to plan their journey in advance accordingly and avoid the route of Parade, from 0900 hours to 1230 hours, for their own convenience.

SUGGESTED ROUTES

If the journey is unavoidable, the road users are advised to take following routes:-

For New Delhi Railway Station:

- From South Delhi: Dhaula Kuan – Vande Matram Marg – Panchkuin Road – Outer Circle Connaught Place – Chelmsford Road for Paharganj side or Minto Road–Bhavhuti Marg for Ajmeri Gate side.
- From East Delhi: Boulevard Road via ISBT Bridge – Rani Jhansi Flyover – R/A Jhandewalan – D-B. Gupta Road–Sheela Cinema Road–Paharganj Bridge and reach New Delhi Railway Station.

For Old Delhi Railway Station:

- From South Delhi: Ring Road – Ashram Chowk – Sarai Kale Khan – I.P. Flyover – Rajghat – Ring Road – Rajghat – Ring Road – Chowk Yamuna Bazar – S.P. Mukherjee Marg – Chhatta Rail – Kauria Bridge and reach Old Delhi Railway Station.

Though there will be no restriction for people from North Delhi going towards New Delhi Railway Station or Old Delhi Railway Station yet it is advised that they plan their journey in advance and take sufficient extra time to reach their destination to avoid possible delay.

BUS TERMINATING POINTS

Movement of the City Bus Services will be curtailed at the following points;

1. Shivaji Stadium
2. ISBT Sarai Kale Khan

3. R/A Kamla Market.

4. Delhi Sachivalaya (IGI Stadium)

5. Pragati Maidan (Bhairon Road)

6. Hanuman Mandir (Yamuna Bazar)

7. Mori Gate

8. ISBT Kashmiri Gate

INTER STATE BUSES:

(I) Buses from Ghaziabad bound for Shivaji Stadium shall take NH-9 (NH-24), Ring Road and terminate at Bhairon Road.

(II) Buses coming from NH-9 (NH-24) shall take right turn on Road No. 55 and terminate at ISBT Anand Vihar.

METRO SERVICES

Metro Rail Service shall remain available for commuters at all Metro Stations during the Full Dress Rehearsal Ceremony on 23rd Jan, 2021. However, Boarding/Deboarding at the below mentioned station will not be permitted as per schedule given:

Name of Metro Station	Boarding/De-boarding not allowed
Kendriya Sachivalaya-Udyog Bhawan	From 5.00 AM till 12.00 Noon on 23.01.2021.

TSR/TAXIS

No TSR and Taxi will be allowed to enter or ply after 0700 hours on 23.01.2021 in the Area bound by:-

MOTHER TERESA CRESCENT – BABA KHARAK SINGH MARG UPTO R/A GPO – ASHOKA ROAD UPTO R/A PATEL CHOWK – SANSD MARG UPTO TOLSTOY MARG CROSSING – TOLSTOY MARG UPTO KASTURBA GHANDI MARG CROSSING – KASTURBA GHANDI MARG UPTO FEROZESHAB ROAD CROSSING – FEROZSHAB ROAD UPTO R/A MANDI HOUSE – BHAGWAN DASS ROAD UPTO MATHURA ROAD CROSSING – MATHURA ROAD UPTO 0-POINT – A.P.J. ABDUL KALAM MARG – KAMAL ATA TURK MARG – KAUTILYA MARG AND SARDAR PATEL ROAD (PLEASE NOTE ALL THE ROADS MENTIONED ARE EXCLUDED). DP/9206/2021



All leaders of the Grand Alliance will be hitting the streets against farm laws which could reduce our farmers to the status of beggars

GRAND ALLIANCE COALITIONS LEADER TEJASHWI YADAV

ADDRESSING A PRESS CONFERENCE SOON AFTER A MEETING OF RJD MLAs

Support farmers: Trade unions to govt

Joint platform of CTUs denounced Central government for its 'utterly negative and egoistic approach' in the matter



Youth Congress members protest against the rising prices of petrol and diesel outside the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, in New Delhi. IANS

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 21 JANUARY

The joint platform of Central Trade Unions, independent Federations and Associations today asked the government to acknowledge the wide support the farmers' agitation had received and accept their demand for the repeal of the three contentious agri laws.

In a statement, the Joint Platform congratulated the farmers on their struggle for more than 54 days around the borders of Delhi, braving cold, rains and inclement weather and also confronting police atrocities in certain areas.

The Joint Platform of CTUs denounced the Central government for its "utterly negative and egoistic approach in the matter of repealing the draconian farm laws, the Electricity Bill (which is not even a law) and also ensuring a legal guarantee for MSP for all crops along with government procurement."

The Joint Platform said it had condemned the vilification campaign against the struggling farmers and their organisations by the Government branding them as Khalistanis, terrorists etc using media and the Troll Army.

It was heartening that the campaign had no impact at all and everyday more and more people from all over the country are joining the farmers' stay-in brigades around the borders of Delhi, the Platform said.

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
MEERUT, 21 JANUARY

Inspite of police vigilance farmers under the aegis of Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU) leaders did successful rehearsal of "Kisan Tractors Parade" in Sambhal district on Thursday.

Inspite of police pressure farmers in Sambhal district rehearsed for the "Kisan Tractor Parade" on Thursday. Bijendra Yadav, State Secretary of BKU informed that 200 tractors and other vehicles participated in the rehearsal for proposed tractor parade on the Republic Day in Delhi.

Hundreds of tractors would participate in the Tractor parade on January 26,

Farmers rehearse tractor parade in Meerut



claimed Yadav. The BKU leader has also charged the police to make futile attempt to house arrest the farmers leaders to prevent this

rehearsal. "The farmers leaders had already left their houses on Wednesday night when police reached there on the day of rehearsals," said Yadav adding that he used a scooter to approach the farmers who were supposed to participate in the rehearsal.

Associations called upon the working class and their unions nationwide to extend active support to the farmers, while asserting their own demands to scrap the Labour Codes.

The Joint Platform deplored the use of NIA, ED, Income tax department and criminal cases to threaten and intimidate the leadership of the kisan agitation and innocent farmers.

The Joint Platform statement was issued by the Central Trade Unions like INTUC, AITUC, HIMS, CITU, AIUTUC, TUCC, SEWA, AICCTU, LPE, UTUC and the Independent Federations and Associations.

Everyone wants removal of farm laws: J'hkhand CM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 21 JANUARY

Raising questions over the Centre's offer to suspend the farm laws instead of repealing them, Jharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren on Thursday said the government is under a "misconception" that only the farmers of Punjab and Haryana are in this "battle" and asserted that tillers across the country want the scrapping of the "repressive" legislations.

He said that if the farmers' agitation is not dealt with empathetically by the government, it will soon spread to different parts of the country.

Soren also said the impasse between the government and the farmers was tarnishing India's image at international forums.

Show manliness by filing cases against Arnab: Sena to BJP

Sena made the remarks in the editorial of its mouthpiece *Saamana* in the wake of purported WhatsApp chats Goswami and ex-BARC CEO Partho Dasgupta

MUMBAI, 21 JANUARY

It is good BJP leaders filed offences against makers of Tandav web series over its content, but they will be truly men if the party registers cases also against journalist Arnab Goswami who insulted martyrdom of Indian soldiers, the Shiv Sena said on Thursday.

The Shiv Sena, which heads the government in Maharashtra, also alleged that the media which creates ruckus even if one is found possessing 100 grams of ganja (cannabis) is not ready to hold national debate on Goswami's alleged act of treason. Sena made the remarks in the editorial of its mouthpiece *Saamana* in the wake of purported WhatsApp chats Goswami and ex-BARC CEO Partho Dasgupta which have been widely reported in the media. PTI

Classified

LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE COURT OF
SH. ROHIT CHAUHAN,
Administrative Civil Judge,
South Circuit,
Saket Courts Complex,
New Delhi
Succ. Petition No. 90/19
NDDO - 22-2021

Rajinder Kaur, w/o Late Shri Kuldip Singh, r/o House No. 295, Faridabad, Sector-31, Amarnagar, Faridabad, Haryana-121003.

— Petitioner Versus

1. State
2. Gurneet Kaur (Daughter), w/o Mr. Vikramdeep Singh, r/o House No. 297, 2nd Floor, Faridabad, Sector-31, Amarnagar, Faridabad, Haryana-121003.

3. Ravinder Kaur (Daughter), w/o Mr. Rahul Bali, H. No. 22A, Iner Road, Dhalawal, Dehradun, Uttarakhand.

4. Sonia Kaur (Daughter), C/o 108/B, JVTS Garden, Chhattarpur Extension, Chatarpur, South Delhi-110034.

5. Ranbir Singh, r/o House No. 295, Faridabad, Sector-31, Amarnagar, Faridabad, Haryana-121003.

6. HDFC Bank Ltd., Through his Officer Concern/Branch Manager, Branch At : E-143, Saket, New Delhi-110017.

To, The State/General Public.

Whereas, an application U/5/272 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 has been made by Smt. Rajinder Kaur, claiming to be successor of Late Sh. Kuldip Singh, for grant of Succession Certificate in respect of debts/securities of said deceased.

And whereas the said applicant shall come for hearing on 22nd of February 2021 at 10:00 a.m.

Therefore, the public at large is hereby given notice if any person has objection to the grant of succession certificate in favour of the said applicant, he may appear and file objections in writing, in person or through duly appointed pleader, on the said date and time.

Given under my hand and Seal of the Court on this 10th day of December, 2020.

Administrative Civil
Court, South District,
Saket Courts Complex,
New Delhi
Seal of the Court

IN THE COURT OF
SH. BRIJESH KUMAR GARG
Addl. District Judge-01
North-East District
Court No. 70, Fifth Floor
Karkardooma Courts, Delhi.
Probate Case 04/2020

Sh. Puran Lal, r/o H. No. C 5/110, Yamuna Vihar, Delhi-110053.

Versus
1. The State Govt. of NCT of Delhi. — Respondent

CITATION UNDER SECTION
283 OF INDIAN SUCCESION
ACT

Whereas an application under the Indian Succession Act, 1925, for grant of probate of Will or for letters of Administration to the estate of Late Smt. Daya Wati and Late Sh. Puran Lal, who expired on 11-01-2019 & 14-01-2003 respectively, absolute owner of a built-up property land area measuring 35Sq. Mtrs. bearing No. C-5/110, (C-5 Block, Plot No. 110), consisting whatsoever thereon according to the size and shape of the right out plan of Yamuna Vihar, under the Ghonda Residential Scheme C-Block, Illaga, Shahdara, Delhi-110053, notice is hereby given that persons having any interest in the administration of the estate of the and concerned may if he/she desire appear in this court of the date 04-02-2021 at 10:00 am and state the proceedings before the court.

Whereas the 04-02-2021 at 10:00 am has been fixed for hearing of the case. Notice is hereby given that any person having any interest in the Administration of the

Estate of the said concerned may if he/she desires to appear in this court the said 04-02-2021 at 10:00 a.m. and see the proceedings before the Grant of Letter of Administration.

Given under my hand and the Seal of this Court on this 18-01-2021.

Addl. District Judge (02)
Seal of the Court

IN THE Court of Sh Ummed Singh Grewal Addl. District Judge-(02), West Delhi Room No. 127, 1st floor, Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi, PC NO.: 2/2021 DR. RENU KHANNA CHOPRA Seal of the Court

IN THE COURT OF SH. UMED SINGH GREWAL Addl. District Judge-(02), West Delhi Room No. 127, 1st Floor, Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi, PC NO.: 2/2021 DR. RENU KHANNA CHOPRA Seal of the Court

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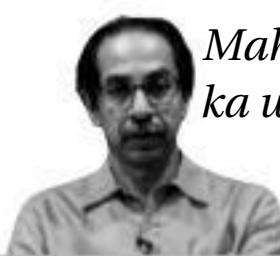
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IN THE COURT OF SH. UMED SINGH GREWAL Add



Maha MPs should meet PM on issues of incorporating into the state areas in Karnataka where Marathi-speaking people are in majority and also the Maratha quota

MAHARASHTRA CHIEF MINISTER UDDHAV THACKERAY
SUGGESTING TO ALL-PARTY MPS DURING A MEETING

Enhancing skills, matching grades with SPG: CRPF DG on VIP security

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 21 JANUARY

The CRPF, that provides protection to more than 60 high-risk people, on Thursday said it is continuously enhancing its skills and "matching standards" with the SPG that protects the Prime Minister.

With movement of VIPs expected to increase ahead of elections in various states, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) Director General A P Maheshwari said the force has taken all steps to "empower" its commandos deployed for security duties of such persons and that they have "plugged the gaps."

"We have improved our VIP security skills. We are following the best security standards... we are working to match our skills with the best standards of the SPG (special protection group)," he told reporters during a press conference here.

The CRPF has at present 62 VIPs under its cover, including prominent political and government personalities such as home minister Amit Shah, BJP president J P Nadda and the first family of the Congress party like its president Sonia Gandhi, her children Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, and former prime minister Manmohan Singh among others.



Singh among others.

As on date, we are updated with the assessment of all the challenges. We have analysed the skill sets required by the people (CRPF commandos) deployed and I can assure that as per the standards laid down for security of a particular category, we have taken all steps to empower soldiers who are into VIP security," the DG said when asked about preparations of the force keeping in mind the upcoming election season.

Assembly polls in Assam, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry are expected to be held in April-May this year. Apart from the CRPF, two other forces -- the CISF and the NSG -- also provide such cover under the central VIP protection charter.

Maheshwari said the CRPF has gone into "past data and trends" to see possible areas where security can weaken, and said they are in touch with all stakeholders involved in this task including the various state police forces.

The CRPF chief said aspects of "upgrading technology for surveillance or assessment or in organising an armed or tactical response" have been worked upon. "I can assure that it is as best as it can be."

Asked about the recent attack on the convoy of Nadda during his visit to Bengal, he said whatever happened in the "outer ring is in the domain of the state government and I believe that the authorities concerned are doing their job."

The TRS MLA from Korutla wondered why the people of Telangana need the Rama from Uttar Pradesh when there are several Rama temples in Telangana.

"The BJP leaders are enacting a new drama in

HYDERABAD, 21 JANUARY

Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) MLA K Vidyasagar Rao waded into controversy when he said that BJP was enacting a fresh drama in the name of collecting donations for the construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya.

Following his remark there was some tension at Metpalli after BJP supporters gathered and entered into ruckus with TRS supporters before the police dispersed them. BJP MLA T Raja Singh, known as a firebrand leader, has sought clarifications from chief minister K Chandrasekhar Rao over the comments made by his own party man.

"We too are devotees of Rama," said the TRS MLA wondering only those wearing tilak on their foreheads were true devotees of Rama. He further said that the Ram Temple should be built in UP with the funds of the state government and central fund while upholding the

instance of Yadadri temple which is being set up the Telangana chief minister with state's own funds. .

Meanwhile, K Chandrasekhar Rao has announced that the state government has decided to implement 10 per cent reservation to the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) in the state.

"There is a need to implement 10 per cent reservation in jobs and education to those economically weaker classes. We have decided to implement 10 per cent reservations to the EWS while continuing the reservations to those who are already enjoying the benefit as it is. As on date in the state 50 per cent reservations are being implemented to the weaker sections. With 10 per cent reservations to the EWS the reservation percentage will be 60 per cent," the chief minister clarified.

The decision came perhaps to woo the graduate electorate of the MLC election.

Andhra HC directs state to conduct gram panchayat elections

HYDERABAD, 21 JANUARY

A divisional bench of Andhra Pradesh High Court today directed the state government to conduct elections for gram panchayats according to the schedule drawn up by the State Election Commission without disturbing the ongoing Covid-19 vaccination programme in the state.

The bench has set aside the stay order issued by the single bench after the state government moved High Court against the SEC's decision. The SEC had decided to hold the elections in four phases between 5, 9, 13 and 17 February. The state government has maintained that it was not conducive to hold elections during the vaccination drive.

Kerala Assembly rejects resolution seeking Speaker's removal from post

Moving the resolution, UDF's Muslim League legislator M Ummer said the Speaker denigrated his office by allegedly supporting a smuggling racket

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
21 JANUARY

The Kerala Assembly on Thursday rejected a resolution moved by the Opposition UDF seeking the removal of Speaker P Sreeramakrishnan from his post alleging his role in the gold smuggling case. Moving the resolution, UDF's Muslim League legislator M Ummer said the Speaker denigrated his office by allegedly supporting a smuggling racket.

"The Speaker represented the honour of the house, but the serious allegations raised against him have dented the Assembly's reputation," Ummer said. Stating that the Speaker was facing serious allegations such as dollar smuggling and proximity to those accused in gold smuggling case, Ummer said it would be ideal for him to keep away from the post till the agency probe is over.

Supporting the resolution, Opposition leader Ramesh Chennithala said the Speaker, who is bound to protect the dignity of the house, has weakened and destroyed the dignity of Kerala Assembly.

CM Pinarayi Vijayan said the motion was politically motivated.

PUBLIC NOTICE
CLIX HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED, (Formerly known as Cliv Housing Finance Private Limited) (CIN: U65999DL2016PLC308791), a company incorporated under the Companies Act, 2013 having NHB Registration No. 08.0157.17 has appointed Mr. Venkataraman Bharatwaj (DIN: 02965798) as Director on its Board as per National Housing Bank Directives and other regulatory requirements. In case of any clarifications, kindly send email to compliance@clix.capital. The Company is having a valid Certificate of Registration dated 18 August 2017, issued by the National Housing Bank (NHB) under Section 29A of the National Housing Bank Act, 1987. However, the NHB does not accept any responsibility or guarantee about the present position as to the financial soundness of the company or for the correctness of any of the statements or representations made or opinion expressed by the company and for repayment of deposits/discharge of liabilities by the company.

IN THE COURT OF SH. SANATAN PRASAD, ADJ-01, EAST, KKD, COURTS DELHI (PC NO. 28/2020)
Sh. Mahesh Kumar Sharma S/o late Sh. R.D. Sharma S/o flat no. 142, Vigyanlok Apartments, Mayur Vihar, Phase-1 extn, Delhi - 110091 | Sh. Kishan Chand Sharma, S/o late Sh. Mool Chand Sharma S/o flat no. 243-B, Pocket-1, Mayur Vihar, Phase-1, Delhi - 110091 | Smt. Rani Sharma w/o Sh. Mahesh Kumar Sharma S/o flat no. 142, Vigyanlok Apartments, Mayur Vihar, Phase-1 extn, Delhi - 110091 | Smt. Veena Sharma w/o Sh. Kishan Chand Sharma, S/o flat no. 243-B, Pocket-1, Mayur Vihar, Phase-1, Delhi - 110091 (PETITIONERS)
VS
CHIEF SECRETARY Govt. of NCT DELHI, PLAYERS BLDG, DELHI SECRETARIAT, NEW DELHI (RESPONDENT).

PETITION UNDER SECTION 276 OF THE INDIAN SUCCESSION ACT FOR THE GRANT OF PROBATE/LETTER OF ADMINISTRATION WITH COPY OF WILL DATED 17.6.2015 ANNEXED.
Whereas an petition under section 276 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 for grant of probate of "WILL" dated 17.06.2015.

Whereas in the above noted petition the applicant/petitioner has applied for probate of the under section 276 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925, in respect of the Flat No. 256-A, Pkt-1, Mayur Vihar Ph-1, Delhi-110091.

In her complaint, the victim, a 23-year-old engineering student, accused the man of repeatedly raping her and bullying her besides threatening her to change her faith to marry him, they said. This is the second case registered in the state under the new law.

Additional District Judge
East, KKD, Delhi

Ram temple collection: TRS MLA says BJP enacting drama

Tension at Metpalli after BJP & TRS supporters enter into ruckus

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD, 21 JANUARY



instance of Yadadri temple which is being set up the Telangana chief minister with state's own funds. .

Meanwhile, K Chandrasekhar Rao has announced that the state government has decided to implement 10 per cent reservation to the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) in the state.

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The decision came perhaps to woo the graduate electorate of the MLC election.

Congress announces grand alliance in Assam

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
GUWAHATI, 21 JANUARY

The grand alliance along with Congress consists of Communist Party of India, CPI (M), CPI (ML) and newly floated regional political party Anchalik Gana Morcha

The Congress in Assam has announced an alliance of five political parties in the forthcoming Assembly elections in April. The State Congress chief Ripun Bora in a formal Press meet in the city recently declared that the alliance would fight vigorously to wipe out Bharatiya Janata Party from Assam.

Naming the grand allies as All India United Democratic Front, Communist Party of India, CPI (M), CPI (ML) and newly floated regional political party Anchalik Gana Morcha, the Congress leader revealed that they would keep doors open for

otherlike-minded regional political parties (read Asom Jatiya Parishad and Rajo Dol) of the state. After days of speculations, Congress came to the conclusion in presence of Chhattisgarh CM Bhupesh Baghel, senior party leader Jitendra Singh Ahwar, former Union minister Mukul Wasnik, MP Ajit Bhuyan and others.

R-DAY MOMENT



Soldiers rehearse for the Beating Retreat Ceremony at Vijay Chowk ahead of Republic Day in New Delhi. ■ LANS

Portfolio changes: K'taka ministers upset

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BENGALURU, 21 JANUARY

ments, while M T B Nagaraj openly said he does not want the excise portfolio given to him. A week after expanding his Cabinet, Yediyurappa on Thursday allocated portfolios to the seven new inductees and also reshuffled some ministers.

CM relieved Madhuswamy of Law, Parliamentary affairs, legislation and minor irrigation

portfolios and allocated medical education, Kannada and culture departments.

A few Congress-JD(S) rebels-turned BJP ministers including Nagaraj, K Gopalaiyah, K C Narayana Gowda, met at health minister K Sudhakar's residence and said they will call on the CM to discuss portfolios.

Existing understandings between the two governments in that regard must be strictly observed, it said.

India lodges protest with Lanka over death of fishermen

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 21 JANUARY

India today lodged a strong protest with Sri Lanka over the death of three Indian fishermen following a collision between their vessel and a Lankan naval craft.

"Our strong protest in regard to this incident was conveyed by our High Commissioner to the Sri Lankan foreign minister today. A strong demarche was also made to the Sri Lankan Acting High Commissioner in New Delhi," the External Affairs Ministry said.

Existing understandings between the two governments in that regard must be strictly observed, it said.

Inter-faith couple held, Gujarat HC pulls up cops

SNS & PTI
AHMEDABAD, 21 JANUARY

In a big jolt to the BJP-ruled state's plan to bring in a legislation to prevent what they call 'love jihad', the Gujarat High Court has castigated the police for illegally arresting an inter-faith couple at the behest of the adult woman's father.

Deputy chief minister Nitin Patel had only last week hinted that the Gujarat may introduce a law to prevent 'love jihad', a term used by right wing people to describe Hindu women getting married to Muslim men.

A division bench led by Justice Sonia Gokani has not only ordered immediate release of the couple but has also asked the police to provide protection to the newly-weds for at least four weeks.

The two childhood friends belonging to different faiths had got married through Hindu rituals at a temple in Abu Road in neighbouring Rajasthan on 30 December and left for honeymoon in Kerala soon afterwards.

On the basis of a complaint lodged by the 29-year-old woman's father, the police flew to Kerala to arrest the couple. They were separated and locked up in two different police stations at Palanpur in north Gujarat.

In its order, the High Court has expressed its dismay over the undue fervour shown by the police in arresting the two adults who had married with mutual consent.

The High Court took cognisance of a Habeas Corpus petition filed by brother of the 30-year-old man, a staff at the Regional Transport Office in

Surat. The ruling was passed after the High Court bench spoke to the couple confidentially, separately as well as together.

Bhopal man held under MP's anti-conversion law: Madhya Pradesh police have arrested a 25-year-old mechanic in Bhopal under a new law in the state that penalises religious conversions through fraudulent means, after a woman lodged a complaint against him, officials said on Thursday.

In her complaint, the victim, a 23-year-old engineering student, accused the man of repeatedly raping her and bullying her besides threatening her to change her faith to marry him, they said.

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SPECIAL TRAINS

For the convenience of passengers, Railways have decided to run the following Additional Special Trains as per the schedule given below:-

02455/02456 DELHI SARAI ROHILLA - BIKANER JN - DELHI SARAI ROHILLA SPECIAL TRAIN (Daily)

Train No.: 02455

ARR. DEP.

--- 22:45

DELHI SARAI ROHILLA

07:20 ---

BIKANER JN

16:45

DAYS OF RUN: 02455 from Delhi Sarai Rohilla Daily from 27.01.2021 to till further advice & 02456 from Bikaner Jn Daily from 28.01.2021 to till further advice.

STOPPAGE: Rohtak Jn, Jind Jn, Jhalki Jn, Sangrur, Dhuri Jn, Barnala, Rampura Phul, Bhatinda Jn, Giddarbaha, Malout, Abhara, Shri Ganganganagar, Kesri Singhpur, Shri Karanpur, Gajsinghpur, Rai Singh Nagar, Jaitpur, Suratgarh Jn, Lunkaranpur & Laigarpur Jn Stations.

ACCOMMODATION: 1st AC, AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Second Seating (Reserved).

01073/01074 LOKMANYA TILAK (T) - PARTAPGARH JN LOKMANYA TILAK (T) SUPERFAST SPECIAL TRAIN (Bi-Weekly)

Train No.: 01073

ARR. DEP.

--- 16:25

LOKMANYA TILAK (T)

05:30 ---

PARTAPGARH JN

01:50

DAYS OF RUN: 01073 from Lokmanya Tilak (T) on every Tuesday & Sunday from 31.01.2021 to till further advice & 01074 from Partapgarh Jn on every Thursday &

Next level

Even as India, France and Japan on Tuesday launched a new initiative to further the establishment of a rules-based Indo-Pacific order in the wake of growing Chinese assertiveness in the region and Beijing's methodical steps to match and even overtake the USA, the elephant in the room remains New Delhi's relationship with what is still the world's most powerful country. Paris and Tokyo both have a deep and longstanding relationship with Washington which, despite highs and lows, has remained steadfast post-World War II. New Delhi's engagement with the Americans, on the other hand, is still very much a work in progress despite significant gains over the past two decades. The first signs, however, that the convergence of the Indian and American views on China's game plan, especially but not exclusively in the Indo-Pacific, are beginning to reflect in structural upgrades of the Indo-US defence and security relationship are now visible. The two countries recently expanded their defence cooperation by inking two "foundational defence agreements". The development, which has attracted limited interest in India, is being viewed by the Washington policy establishment as the coming to fruition of a two-decade long effort by the USA to provide a robust legal framework for the operationalisation of coordinated and/or joint defence measures.

But there is no guarantee that this positive trajectory will continue apace. The need to take the Indo-US security-defence relationship to the next level is apparent to sober thinkers in both nations but the obstacles to it are not insignificant. An essay published earlier this month by Joshua T. White, a leading scholar with the Brookings Institution, details the concerns on the American side. President Joe Biden will have to deal with apprehensions about India's fiscal limitations, its ties with Russia, its "ponderous response" to Chinese provocations on its border, and its "drift toward illiberal majoritarian politics". In addition, writes White, the Biden administration will likely seek, for good reason, to rebalance the bilateral relationship away from a disproportionate focus on security issues in order to address a wider array of topics including global health, energy and climate change, and technology cooperation.

On the Indian domestic front, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will have to contend with the long-held view that Democratic administrations are prone to hyphenating India and Pakistan, don't walk the tough talk on China, indulge in rank identity politics which they expect other nations including their allies to emulate, and lecture New Delhi on human rights, liberalism and the environment without accounting for an Indian exceptionalism which has been in the forefront of pushing back against communarian discourses. These are the challenges that both countries have to overcome, respectively, if they are serious about containing the rise and rise of China.

Prognosis of Covid

On the first anniversary of the outbreak of coronavirus, so to speak, the panel of experts commissioned by the World Health Organisation has few bouquets to offer either to the UN entity or to China for their failure to act speedily enough in the wake of the dreadful outbreak of Covid-19. The panel, headed by the former President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, and the former Prime Minister of New Zealand, Helen Clark, has advanced the very pertinent point that the UN's health agency should have labelled the virus as a pandemic sooner than it did. In the event, opportunities to apply what the medical fraternity would call "basic public measures at the earliest opportunity" were lost almost the world over. Indeed, China, where the virus germinated in Wuhan last January ~ if not earlier ~ ought to have applied its efforts more forcefully shortly after Covid-19 afflicted more and more people. As often as not, the global crisis has been attributed to China, and not without reason.

The panel has now underscored the grim reality ~ "Only a minority of countries took full advantage of the information that was available to respond to the evidence of a pandemic". The experts also wondered why WHO did not declare a global health emergency sooner than it did. After the relentless suffering for a year, WHO has conceded that its committee was divided on whether a "global emergency" should be declared. Perhaps it would be no exaggeration to suggest that the UN's World Health Organisation has failed the world, judging by the vital parameter of global health, intrinsically an index of public policy. There were other failures too; for instance, WHO initially declared air travel safe and then reversed itself on the use of face masks.

The panel has posed the very pertinent query as to whether it would have helped if WHO had used the expression, "pandemic" earlier than it did. The UN entity did not refer to the outbreak as a "pandemic" until March 11, i.e. several weeks after the virus had caused what the committee has called "explosive outbreaks" in almost every continent. WHO's experts had even disputed how infectious the virus could be, claiming that it was not as contagious as flu and that people without symptoms only rarely spread the virus.

Scientists have concluded that the virus transmits even faster than the flu and that a significant percentage of the spread "is from people who don't appear to be sick". This echoes the finding that while China has been lauded in public, officials there have privately complained that the government has been loath to share critical information on the dreaded disease. The global controversy over the origins and prognosis of coronavirus persists after a year.

A long time coming

After the Georgia election, whose election of two Democrats likely enflamed the rioters even more, Joe Biden now has a Democratic-controlled Senate and Congress with which to work out a recovery plan. If he fails, his advantage will last as long as Obama's did. Two years. Then comes a smarter, slicker version of Trump, if not the oaf himself again. So why would anyone bother with another coup attempt?



Democracy is fragile, lamented Joe Biden when he was still several nervous days away from inauguration. It's not clear yet if the Capitol Hill rampage was a serious coup attempt or a shambolic, if bloody, circus ~ we think the latter ~ but this political shambles was a long time in the making. It goes way back beyond Donald Trump's petulant charge that he was robbed of re-election. In 2004 ***New York Times*** reporter Ron Suskind interviewed high figures in the George W. Bush White House during the Global War on Terror when things still seemed to be going gangbusters for them. A year before, most well educated people believed, or had swallowed doubts about, the accusation that rabid Saddam Hussein possessed nuclear missiles that were ready to rain anywhere that annoyed him. UK Prime Minister Tony Blair reliably egged things on, claiming an Iraqi missile could strike Britain in 48 minutes flat, while his intelligence officials played along or were forced to keep mum. Iraq was doomed on the basis of cherry-picked information, duly refined to serve determined leaders who were just as sure of their fanciful facts as Trump is of his own. In this painstakingly cultivated atmosphere of fear, an exultant official, believed to be Bush's aide Karl Rove, told Suskind that "we" in the White House "create our own reality" now. The rest of you pathetic mortals ~ OK, he did not say 'pathetic mortals' ~ must stand in awe and behold the realities "we" make and "you will be left to study what we do." What everyone actually was studying were smug political bullies in action, a phenomenon which preceded Trump by a long chalk. The Iraq War, alas, did not work out as these clairvoyant imperialists hoped, but, on the bright side, none ever answered or even apologized for the war and all its costs. They generated torrents of self-serving deceit and got what they wanted in 2003, which was US troops storming Baghdad and, in Trump's case today, red-hatted, flag-waving zealots and fools storming the Capitol Building, utterly convinced that they were preserving

democracy. Flash backward further to the 2000 election when, during a crucial juncture in the stormy recount of Bush versus Gore, the infamous "Brooks Brothers riot" in Miami-Dade County occurred in which a braying gang of Republican Party officials in suits and ties shut down a recount that worryingly was going the Democrat's way. The break-in enabled Bush to take the presidency, with a little head-scratching help later from a friendly Supreme Court. One reckons that the



KURT JACOBSEN
SAYEED HASAN KHAN

The writers are well-known commentators and the authors of *Parables of Permanent War* and *No Clean Hands*, among many other books

clownish right-wing militia figures in the violent forefront of the invasion of the capitol had exactly that same scenario in mind in their effort to shut down certification of Biden's victory, which in this case could not possibly have succeeded.

We heartily agree right off the mark that had the unruly crowd in Washington been A Black Lives Matter or other left-leaning group the security services would have picked off the intruders before they reached the entrance. A blood bath was precisely what some loonies sought in order generate martyrs to their reactionary cause. So we are glad the authorities treated them for the most part, with a restraint that was almost touching, as if they were wayward brothers and sisters. (We likewise are glad for once that the Democrats, as always, passed the bloated Defense Bill, so as not to irritate Generals in a position

to decide whether coups work or not.) The last time one of us joined an anti-war demonstration during the Vietnam War the police joyously clubbed and tear-gassed indiscriminately (attacking many ordinary D.C. employees) and arrested thirteen thousand degenerate longhairs. What the police saw the other day were their own kind, and so many were complicit, taking selfies with invaders, removing barricades, and ignoring the rioters' antics. There were dress rehearsals in Wisconsin and Michigan where armed militia earlier swaggered openly in public spaces, and were unmolested.

The frothing Trumpist mob believed that the dedicated corporate servant, Joe Biden, is a far left socialist, which in their eyes means not universal health care, free education, good jobs, improved environment and better social security benefits but a tyrannical state run by alien creatures who might as well have descended from outer space. Anti-semitism, of which there are not a few ardent fans in the crowd, aptly was called the 'socialism of fools', of dimwits searching for an easy target to blame for all their woes. It costs many billions in media propaganda to mislead people as thoroughly as these deluded people are, and 43 per cent of Republicans approved of them too. One can appreciate the high stakes. What would happen if they realized that conman Trump (and his corporate cronies) was not their good buddy? That instead they were chief reasons for manufacturing jobs being exported, wages frozen or cut, benefits diminished, work hours extended, pensions made flimsier, healthcare more expensive, and the cost of a house for their children prohibitive unless their parents croak and leave one to them? After the Georgia election, whose election of two Democrats likely enflamed the rioters even more, Joe Biden now has a Democratic-controlled Senate and Congress with which to work out a recovery plan. If he fails, his advantage will last as long as Obama's did. Two years. Then comes a smarter, slicker version of Trump, if not the oaf himself again. So why would anyone bother with another coup attempt?



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

Pandemic inflicted economy

SIR, Mr Govind Bhattacharjee's article 'Budget Blues' (20 January) is timely and reflective of the feeling of readers

The Covid-19 pandemic has already inflicted maximum damage to the economy by way of stoppage of economic activities of all sorts. This downside in the economy can hardly be reversed unless the market-demand position is revived and strengthened.

This, in turn, requires money in the consumers' pocket. In the pandemic, the number of jobless youth has increased manifold. The employment scenario in the country is unsatisfactory. How to put money in the

consumers' pocket and how to generate employment even on alternative routes are one of the main concerns of the Govt. Can the corporate houses lend a helping hand to the Govt. in this connection? The Govt. has already placed 20 lac crore stimulus package during the pandemic to revive and rejuvenate activities in different fields of economy. The effects are yet to be seen.

The circumstances have strained the Govt's revenue position. The FM's task in an appropriate budget-preparation has become unenviable as balancing of revenue and expenditure has already become difficult, and the fis-

cal deficit will increase no doubt. As cited by Mr Bhattacharjee quoting the data from the Controller General of Accounts, the fiscal deficit had reached 10.76 lac crore in November last year and the Govt had to resort to Market-borrowing to the extent of 12 lac crore.

In the circumstances, any reduction in the fiscal deficit can possibly be done through imposition of higher doses of indirect taxes particularly on luxury items of consumption as the field of direct taxes like Income Tax is in crying need for rationalization and the huge class of senior citizens merits further reduction of IT on them and other IT rebates

and concessions in these hard times.

The one redeeming feature in this connection is that the GST collection has exceeded the expected target. In the circumstances, the FM may not find favour with the idea of deficit-financing through printing of notes.

Let us look forward to how the FM meets the challenge of a balanced budget for the citizens in the hard times for mitigating the suffering of the common people at the same time rejuvenating the economy with generation of employment.

Yours, etc., Paramananda Pal,

Kolkata, 21 January.

DYNAMIC DEMOCRACY

SIR, Kudos to *The Statesman*

OVERLOADED

SIR, Each and every truck ~ small or big ~ plying on the Indian roads is overloaded. This has been going on unabated and with impunity since independence with full knowledge of the authorities, political leaders and police.

Many of these trucks are owned by political leaders and many political leaders are involved in the transport business.

It is difficult for over-worked drivers to control such overloaded trucks, hence the frequent fatal accidents.

Yours, etc., Tushar Kanti Kar,

Howrah, 21 January.

OVERLOADED



A MEMBER OF THE **ANN**
ASIAN NEWS NETWORK

Uniform application of laws necessary

Besides impacting livelihood and battering the economy, the Covid-19 pandemic had sent many Bhutanese behind bars for coming into conflict with the rules and laws put in place to control the spread of the disease. Some unfortunate ones even received 15 years imprisonment term. Many are yet to be sentenced and some will be taken to court soon. Law practitioners have already questioned the legality and lack of uniformity in the application of laws related to the breach of Covid-19 protocols. What is happening in Gelephu is only aggravating the existing anomalies in the law to the extent that people are questioning the lack of seriousness and the double standard in the application of laws.

With many people questioning the need for the seven-day quarantine when they have to travel to low-risk areas, the Gelephu incident exposed how people 'with connections' could bypass the mandatory quarantine. Without any accountability fixed on officials who helped the businesswoman avail the travel documents without staying in quarantine, is only making matters worse.

Lack of transparency on whether lapses were corrected forced people to doubt if the dzongkhag taskforce is serious in its fight against the pandemic.

The incident commander of Sarhang dzongkhag and superintendent of police in Gelephu cannot shy away from the responsibility to inform the people who are waiting and

KUENSEL
watching. People deserve to know why no one is being held accountable and how the lapses are fixed. In times of crisis like this, suspicion should be the last thing in people's mind.

It is important that citizens know how officials ensure such things do not happen again. Fixing accountability has been our biggest weakness and it will cost the nation dear in times of pandemic.

Accountability here would mean holding officials who misused authorities liable for their action. The Prime Minister last night acknowledged that there were lapses and apologized to the nation.

However, the apology was on how systems had failed or couldn't keep up with the needs demanded by the pandemic.

The general public is likely to forget or forgive when it is not known who to blame or who had faltered in their duties. But questions would remain when they know who is accountable and who had failed to do their duty.

This is because people will not forget how some were being penalised for walking to their homes when they did not have anyone to stay with in Thimphu during the lockdown or for trying to help a thirsty son and returning home to not miss school.

racy in India has spread to most regions of the country.

The majority of the political parties in India now seem to have been attacked with the fever of dynasty. Mention may be made of the Akalis in the north, the Samajwadis in UP, the Lalu clan in Bihar and the ruling TMC in WB which appears tormented by the same ailment.

There is no denying the fact that the Congress which dominated the politics of the country has promoted dynastic rule to the disgust of the people. Consequently, the old party is going to be a withering political force.

Yours, etc., Narayan Chandra Ghosh, Nadia, 20 January.





Coal India needs to learn new things for improvement in its future prospects

PRALHAD JOSHI
COAL MINISTER

THUMBNAILS

Softline buys Embee: Embee Software Pvt Ltd, a digital transformation service provider and a Microsoft LSP and cloud solution partner, announced its acquisition by Softline Group, a leading global provider of IT solutions and services. Softline Group's Indian operations will strengthen its pan-India presence and capabilities through Embee's expertise across cloud solutions, workplace modernisation products, system integration services, managed services and app services, said a Press release. SNS

BMW launch: BMW India has launched the new BMW 3 Series Gran Limousine in the country. Locally produced at BMW Group Plant Chennai exclusively for the Indian market, the car is available in both petrol and diesel variants at all BMW India dealerships from today onwards, said a Press release from the company.

Samsung: Samsung has opened pre-booking for Galaxy S21 Series, its latest flagship smartphone. Galaxy S21 Ultra comes with most advanced pro-grade camera system and Samsung's brightest, most intelligent display. With Galaxy S21 Ultra, one can experience S Pen in the Galaxy S series for the first time, said a company statement. SNS

Royal Enfield: Royal Enfield has announced the launch of its pre-owned motorcycle store "Vintage" in Kolkata, a first for the city. With the launch of this new store, Royal Enfield now boasts of 12 such vintage stores across the country, according to a Press release from the company. SNS

Poco sales record: Leading online smartphone brand Poco on Thursday announced that it has sold over one million units of Poco C3. Continuing to delight its customers by bringing in the best-in-class product at affordable prices, Poco C3 features in the list of the top 3 best-selling phones online in the country, the company said in a Press release. SNS

StanChart fined: The Reserve Bank on Thursday imposed a penalty of Rs 2 crore on Standard Chartered Bank India for delays in reporting of frauds to it. The monetary penalty has been imposed on the bank for non-compliance with certain directions contained in the "Reserve Bank of India (Frauds - Classification and Reporting by commercial banks and select FIs) Directions 2016". PTI

Sebi-Vibgyor: The Securities and Exchange Board of India has ordered attachment of bank accounts as well as share and mutual fund holdings of Vibgyor Allied Infrastructure and three individuals to recover dues totalling Rs 61.76 crore. PTI

Sebi, bourses clear Future, Reliance deal with riders

Future Group will have to seek shareholders' nod for the deal as well as get an approval from NCLT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 21 JANUARY

Future Retail's Rs 24,713-crore deal to sell its retail assets to billionaire Mukesh Ambani-led conglomerate Reliance Industries has got approvals from stock exchanges with certain riders.

The indebted group will have to seek shareholders' nod for the deal as well as get an approval from the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT).

However, BSE and NSE, in their separate observation reports, have stated that the comments on the draft scheme of arrangement are "subject to the outcome of any of the ongoing litigations/ arbitration/ legal proceedings involving the draft scheme and/ or the decision by any competent authority/ competent court in this regard".

Markets regulator Sebi has also given a go-ahead to Future Group's scheme of arrangement and sale of assets to Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL). Clearances from the

CONDITIONAL NOD



ahead to Future Group's scheme of arrangement and sale of assets to Reliance Industries Ltd.

► E-commerce major Amazon has opposed the proposed deal.

Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) and bourses are mandatory for the deal to be completed. E-commerce major Amazon has opposed the proposed deal.

"The letters issued by BSE and NSE clearly state that comments of Sebi on the 'draft scheme of arrangement' (proposed transaction) are subject to the outcome of the ongoing arbitration and any other legal pro-

ceedings.

"We will continue to pursue our legal remedies to enforce our rights," an Amazon spokesperson said on Wednesday.

Earlier this month, Future Group founder and CEO Kishore Biyani indicated that it would take around 45 to 60 days to complete the deal after getting approval from Sebi.

The stock exchanges ~ in

their reports dated 20 January ~ have advised Future Group to ensure that the details of the complaints made by Amazon.com NV Investment Holdings LLC (Amazon), the submissions of Future Retail Ltd and the counter submissions of Amazon are brought to the notice of the shareholders of the listed entities involved in the scheme while seeking their approval.

"Further the same shall also be brought to the notice of NCLT while filing the draft scheme for their approval," as per the reports.

According to the reports, companies involved in the scheme are advised that any future disputes, complaints, regulatory actions or proceedings, or orders issued therein involving the draft scheme, if any, shall be brought to the notice of shareholders prior to the approval by NCLT.

The observations of Sebi/ stock exchanges are to be incorporated in the petition to file before NCLT, the reports said.

The stock exchanges have

also asked Future to ensure shareholders are informed that 74.2 per cent of the business value of the Future Enterprises Ltd, post amalgamation of all the transferor companies, is getting transferred to Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd and Reliance Retail and Fashion Lifestyle Ltd and that these two companies would not be seeking listing post the scheme of arrangement.

Amazon had written several letters to Sebi and other regulatory agencies urging them to suspend their review of the Future-RIL deal and to not grant a no-objection certificate on grounds that the matter is under arbitration at the Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC) that had given an interim award in its favour.

In October, SIAC had passed an interim award in favour of Amazon with a single-Judge Bench of VK Rajah barring Future Retail Ltd from taking any step to dispose of or encumber its assets or issue any securities to secure any funding from a restricted party.

Looking forward to working with new US admin: Nasscom

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 21 JANUARY



pations as of 13 January 2021, a 20 per cent increase since May-2020, it added.

The rules announced by the previous administration will worsen this talent gap. Nasscom has been actively engaged with US policymakers on these issues, and we look forward to working together with the new US administration to find solutions to the STEM skills gap, and enable America to be more competitive and create more jobs," the association said.

Nasscom welcomed President Biden's pledge for a new approach on trade and immigration, as well as a renewed and revitalised interest in science and technology.

The association also appreciated Biden's commitment to review and make necessary changes to "harmful regulatory policies put in place by the outgoing administration".

NSE buys market data terminal firm Cogencis

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 21 JANUARY

The Cogencis WorkStation provides data on all asset classes, including foreign exchange, fixed income, equities, commodities as well as macro-economic data, either generated on its own or aggregated through various sources.

As part of the transaction, the news department of Cogencis has been sold to Informist Media Private Ltd.

Cogencis has entered into a five-year exclusive commercial arrangement with Informist Media to source the news for the Cogencis WorkStation. As a result, there will be absolute continuity of service to customers of the Cogencis WorkStation, it said.

Cogencis news will now be known and available as Informist news on the Cogencis WorkStation.

Sebi slaps ₹1 cr fine on HDFC Bank

NEW DELHI, 21 JANUARY

The Securities and Exchange Board of India today imposed a penalty of Rs 1 crore on HDFC Bank for invoking securities pledged by stock broker BRH Wealth Kreators in violation of the regulator's interim directions. In addition, the bank has been directed to transfer Rs 158.68 crore along with 7 per cent interest per annum into an escrow account till the issue of settlement of clients' securities is reconciled, Sebi said in an order.

The instant proceedings have essentially arisen on account of non-conformity by HDFC Bank with the directions contained in the interim order issued by Sebi against BRH Wealth Kreators and other entities on 7 October 2019.

PTI

India within striking distance of attaining positive growth: RBI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 21 JANUARY

India's GDP is within the striking distance of attaining positive growth, the Reserve Bank said observing that the letter "V" in the V-shaped recovery stands for vaccine. The Indian government launched the world's biggest vaccination drive on 16 January to protect people from Covid-19.

"What will 2021 look like? The shape of the recovery will be V-shaped after all and the "V" stands for vaccine," said an article on the "state of economy" in the RBI's January Bulletin.

India has launched the biggest vaccination drive in the world, backed by its comparative advantage of having the largest vaccine manufacturer

ing capacity in the world and a rich experience of mass inoculation drives against polio and measles.

"If successful, it will tilt the balance of risks upwards," said the authors who among others include RBI deputy governor Michael Debabrata Patra. The RBI, however, said the views expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the central bank.

E-commerce and digital technologies will likely be the bright spots in India's recovery in a world in which there will be rebounds for sure, but pre-pandemic levels of output and employment are a long way off, they said.

The article further said: "Recent shifts in the macroeconomic landscape have

ter on account of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The article further said that in the first half of 2021-22, GDP growth will benefit from statistical support and is likely to be mostly consumption-driven.

With rabi sowing surpassing the normal acreage way before the end of the season, bumper agriculture production is expected in 2021.

"India being the global capital for vaccine manufacturing, pharmaceutical exports are expected to receive a big impetus with the start of vaccination drives globally. Agricultural exports remain resilient and under the recent production linked (PLI) scheme, food processing industry has been accorded priority," it said.

JSPL swings into black, posts ₹2,432 crore profit in Dec qtr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 21 JANUARY

It of Rs 2,225.60 crore as against Rs 96.93 crore in the year-ago quarter. Its standalone income during October-December 2020 was at Rs 8,739.37 crore, as against Rs 6,640.26 crore a year ago. Expenses reduced to Rs 5,924.66 crore, from Rs 6,492.64 crore.

In a separate statement, the company said: "The quarter ended on 31 December, showed recovery signs for the entire steel industry in India with both utilisation levels and domestic demand rising month on month. However, the industry continues to struggle with raw material scarcity amplified by exponential rise in domestic and international iron ore prices."

During the quarter, the company's steel production in India was at 1.93 million tons (MT) as against 1.61 MT in year-ago period. The output of

pellet was at 1.85 MT, down from 1.80 MT earlier.

JSPL sold 5.43 MT steel in October-December, compared to 4.76 MT in the corresponding quarter of 2019-20. JSPL further said its subsidiary Jindal Power Ltd (JPL) has been declared the successful bidder for a block of Gare Palma coal mine in Chhattisgarh.

"The ministry of coal has declared JPL as the successful bidder for Gare Palma IV/1 coal mine. JPL won an auction for Gare Palma IV/1 coal mine at 25 per cent bid premium of the representative price.

"The mine has peak rated capacity of approx 6 MTPA. The mine should further strengthen JPL's raw material security and help reduce costs. The company currently awaits the Vesting orders for the mine," it said.

Bajaj Auto PAT jumps 23% to ₹1,556 crore

MUMBAI, 21 JANUARY

Bajaj Auto today reported a 23 per cent jump in profit after tax (PAT) at Rs 1,556 crore for the December 2020 quarter.

The company had posted a profit after tax of Rs 1,262 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous financial year, Bajaj Auto said.

Its sales from operations during October-December 2020 rose 17 per cent to Rs 8,910 crore, compared with Rs 7,640 crore in the year-ago period.

The firm sold a total of 13,06,810 vehicles during the quarter, a rise of 9 per cent as against 12,02,486 units a year ago, it said.

Domestic two-wheeler sales grew eight per cent to 5,85,469 units, from 5,42,978 units a year ago. Commercial vehicle sales declined 65 per cent to 34,230 units, compared with 96,736 units. PTI

Bandhan Bank Q3 profit slips 14% to ₹632.5 crore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 21 JANUARY

Micro loans-focussed Bandhan Bank today reported 14 per cent decline in December quarter net profit to Rs 632.59 crore as provisions more than trebled.

The bank also flagged concerns over the impact of a recent law on MFIs in poll-bound Assam, which constitutes eight per cent of its overall book, saying the loan collections have suffered in the last fortnight and it will be cautious while extending new loans.

The bank's core net interest income grew by 34 per cent to Rs 1,541 crore on the back of a widening in net interest margin to 8.3 per cent from 7.9 per cent and 22.6 per cent growth in loan book. The other income grew hand-

somely to Rs 553.28 crore from Rs 357 crore in the year-ago period. The operating profit registered 51 per cent growth at Rs 1,914 crore during the quarter, but it was the provisions which hit the bottomline.

The total provisions of Rs 1,068 crore (which were 294 crore in the year-ago period) included Rs 1,000 crore regarding the ones related to Covid-19.

Its chief financial officer Sunil Samdani said the overall credit costs due to Covid-19 will come at 5 per cent of the advances as against the earlier estimate of 3.5 per cent, but added that part of the money was already set aside in March 2020 quarter.

It reported gross non-performing assets ratio of 11.1 per cent, but if it were to include loans overdue which

did not get recognised due to the Supreme Court standstill and on a proforma basis, the same number would have been at 7.12 per cent.

The bank, however, said that because of the nature of the business, it is confident of better show.

The bank's managing director C S Ghosh told reporters that the overall collection efficiencies which had risen to 92 per cent as of 31 December, from 88 per cent in September, have gone down to 90 per cent in the last fortnight because of repayment troubles in Assam. He said the demand for loans continues in the north-eastern state but the bank will be conservative about new lending, and added that it feels the situation will be challenging for the next 2-3 months.

Scooters India likely to be shutdown

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 21 JANUARY

cial. The company produces several types of three-wheelers under the Vikram brand.

The government's go-ahead to the closure proposal paves the way for the heavy industry ministry to begin the process of winding up of the firm.

As per the proposed plan presented to the Cabinet, Rs 65.12 crore required for closure of Scooters India Limited is being sought as loan with interest from the Government of India, sources said.

The proposal also entails offering voluntary retirement scheme/voluntary separation scheme (VRS/VSS) to the regular employees rendered as surplus, once sufficient funds are available

WIND-UP PLAN

► As per the proposed plan presented to the Cabinet, Rs 65.12 crore required for closure of Scooters India Limited is being sought as loan with interest from the Government of India, sources said.

► The proposal also entails offering voluntary retirement scheme/voluntary separation scheme (VRS/VSS) to the regular employees rendered as surplus, once sufficient funds are available

has around 100 employees. The employees not opting for VRS/VSS will be retrenched

as per the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, said the official who did not wish to be identified.

tified. Moreover, 147.49 acres of the company's land shall be returned to the Uttar Pradesh State Industrial Development Authority at mutually agreed upon rates. However, this process is expected to take time.

The process of winding up of the company also involves delisting of its shares from the stock exchange under the Companies Act.

The Centre has made several efforts in the past to find buyers for Scooters India and nurse the ailing firm back to health, but they have not yielded results.

In 2018, the government had invited expression of interest (EoI) to sell its entire stake with transfer of management control in loss-mak-

ing Scooters India.



The Chinese government is firmly resolved to defend China's national sovereignty, security and development interests

CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON HUA CHUNYING

DURING A MEDIA BRIEFING

The Statesman
NEW DELHI, FRIDAY 22 JANUARY 2021

09

Baghdad suicide bombings kill 32

No one immediately claimed responsibility, but Iraqi military officials said it was the work of the Islamic State group

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BAGHDAD, 21 JANUARY

Twin suicide bombings ripped through a busy market in the Iraqi capital Thursday, killing at least 32 people and wounding dozens, officials said.

The rare suicide bombing attack hit the Bab al-Sharqi commercial area in central Baghdad amid heightened political tensions over planned early elections and a severe economic crisis. Blood smeared the floors of the busy market amid piles of clothes and shoes as survivors took stock of the disarray in the aftermath.

No one immediately took responsibility for the attack, but Iraqi military officials said



it was the work of the Islamic State group.

Iraq's health minister Hassan Mohammed al-Tamimi said at least 32 people were killed and 110 others were wounded in the attack. He said some of the wounded were in serious condition. Iraq's military previously put the number of dead at 28. The Health

bustling market, prompting a crowd to gather around him, and that's when he detonated his explosive belt. The second detonated his belt shortly after, he said.

This is a terrorist act perpetrated by a sleeper cell of the Islamic State, al-Khafaji said. He said IS wanted to prove its existence" after suffering many blows in military operations to root out the militants.

The suicide bombings marked the first in three years to target Baghdad's bustling commercial area. A suicide bomb attack took place in the same area in 2018 shortly after then-Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi declared victory over the Islamic State group.

No one immediately took responsibility for Thursday's

attack, but Iraq has seen assaults perpetrated by both the Islamic State group and militia groups in recent months.

Militias have routinely targeted the American presence in Iraq with rocket and mortar attacks, especially the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone. The pace of those attacks, however, has decreased since an informal truce was declared by Iran-backed armed groups in October.

The style of Thursday's assault was similar to those IS has conducted in the past. But the group has rarely been able to penetrate the capital since being dislodged by Iraqi forces and the U.S.-led coalition in 2017.

IS has shown an ability to

stage increasingly sophisticated attacks across northern Iraq, where it still maintains a presence, three years after Iraq declared victory over the group.

Iraqi security forces are frequently ambushed and targeted with IEDs in rural areas of Kirkuk and Diyala. An increase in attacks was seen last summer as militants took advantage of the government's focus on tackling the coronavirus pandemic.

The twin bombings Thursday came days after Iraq's government unanimously agreed to hold early elections in October. Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi had announced in July that early polls would be held to meet the demands of anti-government protesters.

Talks on new Syria constitution to resume from 25 Jan

ASSOCIATED PRESS
UNITED NATIONS, 21 JANUARY

The United States and several Western allies have accused Syria's President Bashar Assad of deliberately delaying the drafting of a new constitution to waste time until presidential elections this year and avoid UN-supervised voting as called for by the UN Security Council.

by the UN Security Council.

According to Syria's elections law, presidential elections are scheduled to take place between April 16 and May 16, at least 90 days before Assad's seven-year term expires.

A council resolution adopted in December 2015 unanimously endorsed a road map to peace in Syria that was approved in Geneva on June 30, 2012 by representatives of the United Nations, Arab League, European Union, Turkey and all five permanent Security Council members – the US, Russia, China, France and Britain.

It calls for a Syrian-led political process starting with the establishment of a transitional governing body, followed by the drafting of a new constitution and ending with UN-supervised elections.

The resolution says the free and fair elections should meet the highest international standards of transparency and accountability, with all Syrians, including members of the diaspora, eligible to participate.

A 45-member committee known as the Small Body will be holding its fifth meeting starting next week.

South African virus variant may escape antibodies: Scientists

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 21 JANUARY

A lineage of the novel coronavirus, first reported to have emerged in South Africa, escapes neutralisation by antibodies from recovered Covid-19 patients, says a new study which raises questions on the possibility of reinfection by this strain.

According to the yet-to-be peer-reviewed study, published in the preprint platform bioRxiv, the novel lineage of the coronavirus – 501Y.V2 – has mutations in nine parts of its spike protein, which enables it to infect humans.

In the research, the scientists tested the neutralising activity of plasma from patients who recovered from prior infection with other strains of the coronavirus against the 501Y.V2 variant.

"This may reduce some efficacy from S-protein-based vaccine-induced antibodies in some people," Tang said.

However, he added that the study also notes considerable binding to the 501Y.V2 virus by other non-neutralising antibodies, which the virologist believes can still offer some significant protection against this variant.

"The study also acknowledges that it cannot assess the impact of this virus variant on T-cell responses so some additional defense will arise from this, as well as other naturally existing innate components of the immune system in those infected in addition to any residual vaccine protection," Tang said.

Calling the findings are "potentially concerning," Liam Smeeth, Professor of Clinical Epidemiology at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, however said these are laboratory findings, adding that "it would be unwise to extrapolate to clinical effects in humans at this stage."

WAIT ENDS



Indian Covid-19 vaccines arrive in Kathmandu, Nepal on Thursday. ■IANS

Amid crippling sanctions, Iran traders seek lifeline in Iraq

ASSOCIATED PRESS
DOHK, 21 JANUARY

Piles of plush carpets line the floors of a northern Iraq shopping center hosting traders from neighboring Iran who hope the spangle of their ornate handicrafts might offer a lifeline out of poverty.

In their own country, the economy is in tatters amid crippling US sanctions.

Our money is so devalued, so when we come to this side, apart from the cultural exchange that we share from a financial perspective it's more profitable for us, said Iranian Ramiyar Parwiz, the organizer of the exhibition who is originally from Sanandaj. The

money we receive, whether in dollars or dinars, has a higher value on our side and it's worth a lot." At least 24 businesses from 15 Iranian cities set up shop this week in the city of Dohuk in the Kurdish-run northern region of Iraq. From Sanandaj to Bijar, they brought luxurious carpets. From Isfahan, Yazd and Hamadan, precious gems, copper and pottery.

Iran is among Iraq's largest trading partners and this cooperation has deepened since 2018 amid the Trump administration's maximalist policy on Iran that has seen the U.S. pull out of Tehran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers and levy punishing

sanctions on the country.

Tens of thousands of Iranian pilgrims visit holy sites in Najaf and Karbala every year, boosting Iraq's fledgling tourism sector. Over 100 trucks ferry construction materials, food, medicine and appliances into Iraq every day.

The dependence on Iraqi markets has only deepened as economic conditions worsen in Iran. U.S. sanctions bar American companies and foreign firms from dealing with Iran affecting Iran's energy, shipping and financial sectors, causing foreign investment to dry up.

Oil exports have been hardest hit and Iran's economy contracted with dreary forecasts

for the future. Unemployment rose and rural populations were disproportionately affected.

The exhibition of Iranian businesses is typically held every year in the city of Sulaimaniyah, which borders Iran. This is the first year the traders have ventured to Dohuk,

which shares closer economic ties to neighboring Turkey, in hopes of enticing new customers and creating greater demand for Iranian goods.

Parwiz said the Dohuk venture was the result of desperation.

There is huge pressure on people (in Iran), and the cost of living is unimaginably high, he said. We can't afford to buy

anything, we cannot even afford to buy medicine. For Iranian businessmen experiencing difficult times, Iraq has always offered hope for respite.

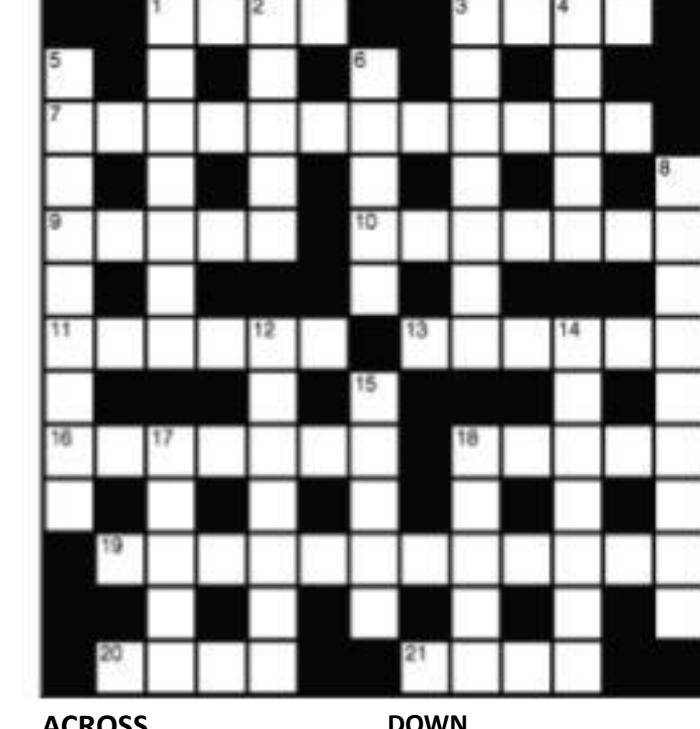
Haji Tousi, a businessman from Mashhad, sells his fine carpets at a lower price than local Iraqi traders. He knows the dollars he takes back home to Iran will keep him afloat. The type of carpet we are selling here is \$200, whereas the same carpet in the market here is sold for \$300-350, he said.

But, to the dismay of many Iranian traders, the impact of Iraq's own economic troubles was in plain sight: The exhibition attracts crowds of visitors but many can't afford the marked-down items. There are many visitors who have warmly welcomed this expo but economic problems have kept them from (purchasing), said Maryam Mradi, a businesswoman from Sanadaj.

Iraq is grappling with an unprecedented liquidity crisis brought on by low oil prices. That has slashed state coffers in half and led the government to borrow from the central bank's foreign currency reserves to make salary payments. Some of the Iranian vendors were skeptical their goods would be well received in Dohuk and other areas of Iraq, where Turkish brands dominate shopping isles.

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



ACROSS
1 Disastrous (4)
3 Woody plant (4)
7 Defect (12)
9 Coral reef (5)
10 Smith who shoes horses (7)
11 Laud (6)
13 Confused (6)
16 Word of opposite meaning (7)
18 Leg bone (5)
19 Army officer (5-7)
20 A long time (informal) (4)
21 Remain (4)

DOWN
1 Academic qualification (7)
2 Rustic (5)
3 Instructed (7)
4 Japanese mushroom (5)
6 Make into a god (5)
8 Little by little (9)
12 Curvy (7)
14 Freedom (7)
15 Mental picture (5)
17 Nasal tone (5)
18 Belief (5)

BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson



DADDY DAZE/John Kovaleski



SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Kerb, 17 Exasperating, 2 In cohorts, 14 Regard, 15 Delete, 19 Indecent, 21 Sire, 23 Niece, 22 Rib-eye, 23 Seem, 24 Take issue,
4 Cling, 19 Indecent, 4 Celery, 16 Cactus, 18 Xenon, 20 Eye.
8 Dice, 22 Niece, 23 Seem, 24 Take issue,
9 Ballyhoo, 10 Exhilarating, 23 Seem, 24 Take issue,
12 Memo, 13 Kerb, 17 Exasperating, 2 In cohorts, 14 Regard, 15 Delete, 19 Indecent, 21 Sire, 23 Niece, 22 Rib-eye, 23 Seem, 24 Take issue,
14 Cling, 19 Indecent, 4 Celery, 16 Cactus, 18 Xenon, 20 Eye.

DOWN
1 Academic qualification (7)
2 Rustic (5)
3 Instructed (7)
4 Japanese mushroom (5)
6 Make into a god (5)
8 Little by little (9)
12 Curvy (7)
14 Freedom (7)
15 Mental picture (5)
17 Nasal tone (5)
18 Belief (5)

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

NEED TO KNOW

HOSPITALS

22586262, 22585007

RAILWAY INQUIRY

General Inquiry 139

• Toll Free Nos. 1800125151

23864470

• U.P. Railways 23868709

ROADWAYS INQUIRY

ISBT (General Inquiry):

23868836, 23865181

• Haryana Roadways 23861262

29958747

• Deen Dayal Upadhyay

25496320, 25494403

• Himachal Roadways

23717473, 23325320

• Guru Tegh Bahadur

23513186; Indigo Airlines Air-

port 011-25671580; Terminal I-2 B 25671576, Palam Road 25671579, 18001803838

• JET AIRWAYS Flight Inquiry

and Reservation 3984111

• EMIRATES Flight Inquiry

and Reservation 3373377

• Air India Flight Inquiry and

Reservation 18001803407

• INDIGO AIRLINES New Delhi

City Office 43513185, Call Ce-

ntre 09910383838;

23466262 (City)

25652294 (Airport)

• Kuwait Airways Flight Inquiry and Reservation 41528181

• By arrangement with The Independent

Figures in parentheses denote the number of letters in the words required

Instructions Make a 2 to 7 letter word from the words given below. Add points of each word, using scoring key. Add the total points of all words. All words get 50 points if they are used as any letter in the Official Scrabble Dictionary (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary) or the Official Scrabble Word List (OSWL).

All words must be in the Official Scrabble Dictionary (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary) or the Official Scrabble Word List (OSWL).

JUDGES TOTAL

PAR SCORE 115-125

FOUR RACK TOTAL

TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

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We look forward to the leadership of the US in accelerating global efforts towards net zero...with ambitious 2030 targets

UN SECRETARY-GENERAL ANTONIO GUTERRES

WELCOMING THE US MOVE TO RE-JOIN THE LANDMARK PARIS CLIMATE ACCORD

WEATHER

CITY	MAX (°C)	MIN (°C)
SINGAPORE	30	24 H
HONG KONG	21	16 H
TOKYO	14	2 H
LONDON	9	4 H
DUBAI	24	17 CL
SAN FRANCISCO	13	7 CL
NEW YORK	6	-3 H
MOSCOW	-8	-17 H

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

THUMBNAILS



A man wearing a protective mask to help curb the spread of the coronavirus rides a bicycle near a banner of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics in Tokyo. The Japanese capital confirmed more than 1400 new coronavirus cases on Thursday. AP

Indonesia ends search: Indonesian authorities on Thursday ended the search for remaining victims and debris from a Sriwijaya Air jet that nose-dived into the Java Sea, killing all 62 people on board. Transportation minister Budi Karya Sumadi said retrieval operations have ended after nearly two weeks, but that a limited search for the missing memory unit from the cockpit voice recorder will continue. AP

Trapped mine worker dies: A worker trapped in a Chinese gold mine for more than a week has died as rescuers try to clear debris and improve ventilation to save 21 others also stuck deep below ground. Rescuers have been in contact with 11 workers trapped in one chamber and have delivered food, medicine and other supplies to them. AP

Biden unveils national Covid strategy

Biden's top medical adviser on Covid-19, Dr Fauci, announced renewed US support for WHO, laying out new commitments to tackle the virus



ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, 21 JANUARY

As the US enters "what may well be the toughest and deadliest period of the virus," President Joe Biden is putting forth a national Covid-19 strategy to ramp up vaccinations and testing, reopen schools and businesses and increase the use of masks, including a requirement that they be worn for travel.

Biden also will address inequities in hard-hit minority communities as he signs 10 pandemic-related executive orders on Thursday, his second day in office.

"We need to ask average Americans to do their part," said Jeff Zients, the White House official directing the national response. "Defeating the virus requires a coordinated nationwide effort."

But Biden officials say they're hampered by lack of cooperation from the Trump administration during the transition. They say they don't have a complete understanding of their predecessors' actions on vaccine distribution. They're also depending on Congress to provide \$1.9 trillion for economic relief and Covid-19 response. And they face a litany of complaints from states that they are not getting enough vaccine even as they are being asked to vaccinate more categories of people.

Biden's top medical adviser on Covid-19, Dr Anthony

Fauci, also announced renewed US support for the World Health Organisation after it faced blistering criticism from the Trump administration, laying out new commitments to tackle the coronavirus and other global health issues. Fauci said early Thursday that the US will join the UN health agency's efforts to bring vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics to people in need, whether in rich or poor countries and will resume full funding and staffing support for WHO.

The US mask order for travel being implemented by Biden will apply to airports and planes, ships, intercity buses, trains and public transportation. Travelers from abroad must furnish a negative Covid-19 test before departing for the US and quarantine upon arrival. Biden has already mandated masks on federal

airlines, Amtrak and other transport providers now require masks. Biden's order makes it a federal mandate, leaving little wiggle room for passengers tempted to argue about their rights. It marks a sharp break with the culture of President Donald Trump's administration, under which masks were optional, and Trump made a point of going maskless and hosting big gatherings of like-minded supporters. Science has shown that masks, properly worn, cut down on coronavirus transmission.

Biden also is seeking to

'Even in dark times, we not only dream, we do'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WASHINGTON, 21 JANUARY

In her first remarks to the nation as US Vice President, Kamala Harris has highlighted "American aspiration" and underlined that President Joe Biden has summoned the people to look beyond crisis and aspire to unite.

"In many ways this moment embodies our character as a nation. It demonstrates who we are, even in dark times. We, not only dream, we do. We not only see what has been, we see what can be."

"We shoot for the moon, and then we plant our flag on it. We are bold, fearless and ambitious. We are undaunted, in belief that we shall overcome, that we will rise up. This is American aspiration," Harris said outside the Lincoln Memorial.

She cited the accomplishments of President Abra-



ham Lincoln during the Civil War, who "saw a better future and built it with land grant colleges, and the transcontinental railroad."

She also highlighted how Martin Luther King Jr fought for racial and economic justice.

"In the middle of the civil rights movement, Dr King fought for racial justice and economic justice. American Aspiration is what drove the women of this nation, throughout history, to demand equal rights, Harris said addressing 'Celebrating America', a prime-time special that wrapped up a busy day of Biden-Harris

inauguration events.

Harris said a great experiment takes great determination. The will to do the work and then the wisdom to keep refining, keep tinkering, keep perfecting.

The same determination is being realised in America today, she noted.

"I see it in the scientists who are transforming the future. I see it in the parents who are nurturing generations to come and in the innovators, the educators, in everyone, everywhere who is building a better life for themselves, their families and their communities."

"This too is American aspiration. This is what President Joe Biden has called upon us to summon now. The courage to see beyond crisis, to do what is hard, to do what is good, to unite, to believe in ourselves, believe in our country, believe in what we can do together," Harris said.

'Trump wrote a very generous letter before departing WH'

WASHINGTON, 21 JANUARY

US President Joe Biden has said his predecessor Donald Trump has left him a "very generous" letter in the Oval Office before departing the White House.

It is customary for outgoing presidents to write their successors a letter and leave it for them on the Resolute Desk in the Oval Office.

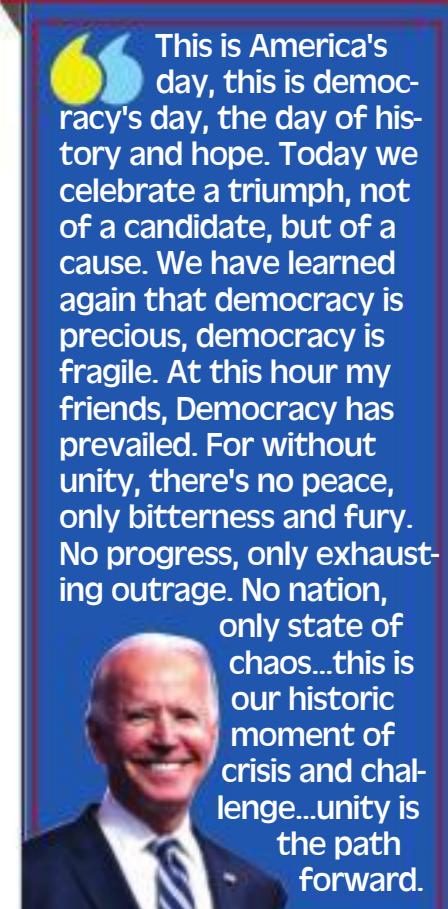
However, given that the former president broke several of the past traditions, including by opting to skip Biden's inauguration ceremony and never formally congratulated him on his election win, it was unclear until Wednesday whether Trump would maintain the tradition of outgoing presidents leaving notes for their successors.

The president said he plans to talk to Trump. PTI



US President Joe Biden's powerful inaugural speech, penned by Vinay Reddy, has received glowing tributes for its meticulous crafting and emphasis on the importance of democracy, unity and hope in the midst of challenging times. Reddy - an Indian-American from Telangana who wrote the speech that outlined Biden's goals for his administration, focusing on healing from the current state of division in national politics - has been praised for his calm and inspiring words.

HERE ARE SOME OF THE MEMORABLE QUOTES FROM BIDEN'S SPEECH



This is America's day, this is democracy's day, the day of history and hope. Today we celebrate a triumph, not of a candidate, but of a cause. We have learned again that democracy is precious, democracy is fragile. At this hour my friends, Democracy has prevailed. For without unity, there's no peace, only bitterness and fury. No progress, only exhausting outrage. No nation, only state of chaos...this is our historic moment of crisis and challenge...unity is the path forward.

vaccine hesitancy is high among African Americans, a problem the administration plans to address through an education campaign.

Sri Lanka reopens to tourists after 10 months



COLOMBO, 21 JANUARY

Sri Lanka reopened to foreign tourists Thursday after a nearly 10-month pandemic closure that cut deeply into the Indian Ocean island nation's lucrative travel industry.

Full operations also resumed Thursday at the island's two international airports, accommodating the commercial flights.

Under new protocols to prevent the spread of COVID-19, tourists must be tested for the virus in their country 72 hours prior to their flight, when they arrive at their hotel in Sri Lanka and again seven days later. They must stay in a travel bubble designated in 14 tourism zones without mixing with the local population. About 180 hotels have been earmarked for tourist accommodations.

The resumption of tourism follows a pilot project that began December 26 in which 1,500 tourists from Ukraine visited Sri Lanka in such a travel bubble.

The government closed the country to tourists last March when an outbreak of the virus surfaced. The international airports were closed except for limited flights for Sri Lankans to return home.

Tourism is a vital economic sector for Sri Lanka, accounting for about 5 per cent of its gross domestic product and employing 250,000 people directly and up to 3 million indirectly. Hotels, other businesses and their employees faced crippling income losses.

Sri Lanka, as of Thursday, has confirmed more than 55,000 cases with 274 fatalities.

Biden sends comprehensive immigration reform Bill to Congress

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WASHINGTON, 21 JANUARY

US President Joe Biden on the day one of his presidency sent a comprehensive immigration bill to Congress which proposes major overhauls to the system.

Called the US Citizenship Act of 2021, the legislation modernises the immigration system, and also proposes to eliminate the per-country cap for employment-based green cards, a move that would benefit thousands of Indian IT professionals whose current wait period for legal permanent residency runs into several decades.

Today President Biden sent an immigration bill to Congress. The US Citizenship Act

According to the White

OVERHAUL

► Called the US Citizenship Act of 2021, the legislation modernises the immigration system, and also proposes to eliminate the per-country cap for employment-based green cards

► According to the White House, the bill clears employment-based visa backlogs, recaptures unused visas, reduces lengthy wait times, and

► The bill provides dependents of H-1B visa holders work authorisation, and children are prevented from aging out of the system

House, the bill clears employment-based visa backlogs, recaptures unused visas,

eliminates per-country visa caps

reduces lengthy wait times, and eliminates per-country visa caps.

It makes it easier for graduates of US universities with advanced degrees, in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) stay in the US; improves access to green cards for workers in lower-wage sectors; and eliminates other unnecessary hurdles for employment-based green cards.

The bill provides dependents of H-1B visa holders work authorisation, and children are prevented from aging out of the system. The bill also creates a pilot programme to stimulate regional economic development, gives DHS the authority to adjust green cards based on macroeconomic conditions, and incentivises higher wages for non-immigrant, high-skilled visas to

prevent unfair competition with American workers.

The Citizenship Act create an earned roadmap to citizenship for undocumented individuals. It allows undocumented individuals to apply for temporary legal status, with the ability to apply for green cards after five years if they pass criminal and national security background checks and pay their taxes.

Lastly, the bill further recognises America as a nation of immigrants by changing the word alien to noncitizen in the immigration laws.

The bill reforms the family-based immigration system by clearing backlogs, recapturing unused visas, eliminating lengthy wait times, and increasing per-country visa caps.

Biden revokes Trump report promoting 'patriotic education'

WASHINGTON, 21 JANUARY

President Joe Biden on Wednesday revoked a recent Trump administration report that aimed to promote patriotic education in schools but that historians mocked and rejected as political propaganda.

In an executive order signed in his first day in office, Biden disbanded Donald Trump's presidential 1776 Commission and withdrew a report it released Monday. Trump established the group in September to rally support from white voters and as a response to *The New York Times' 1619 Project*, which highlights the lasting consequences of slavery in America.

In its report, which Trump hoped would be used in classrooms across the nation, the commission glorifies the country's founders, plays down America's role in slavery, condemns the rise of progressive politics and argues that the civil rights movement ran afoul of the lofty ideals espoused by the Founding Fathers.

The panel, which included no professional historians of the United States, complained of false and fashionable ideologies that depict the country's story as one of oppression and victimhood.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying, known for fiery retorts against the US, welcomed Biden's first moves to join the Paris Climate Accord and the World Health Organisation (WHO) which was trashed by Trump as a puppet of China over its conduct to deal with the Covid-19. "We express congratulations on the inauguration of President Biden. I noted many US media say this is a new day in America. After travelling an extraordinary period, we believe our two peoples deserve to embrace a better future. We hope Biden will be successful in governance," she said.

Trump officials heralded the report as a definitive chronicle of the American founding, but scholars say it disregards the most basic rules of scholarship.

China sanctions Pompeo, key Trump officials

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BEIJING, 21 JANUARY

"These individuals and their immediate family members are prohibited from entering the mainland, Hong Kong and Macao of China. They and companies and institutions associated with them are also restricted from doing business with China," foreign ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said in a press release.

The sanctions were announced immediately after Biden was sworn in as president, ending Trump's regime during which China-US ties touched a new low over various issues, including trade, human rights, the origins of the novel coronavirus pandemic and the communist giant's aggressive military moves in the disputed South China Sea.

The Trump administration had also announced sanctions against a host of Chinese officials responsible for the crackdown in Hong Kong, Tibet and Xinjiang.

"The Chinese government is firmly resolved to defend China's national sovereignty, security and development interests," she said. China particularly targeted Pompeo, a bitter critic of Beijing.

As a new US president takes office, he faces a determined Chinese leadership that could be further emboldened by America's troubles at home.

The disarray in America, from the rampant Covid-19 pandemic to the January 6 riot at the Capitol, gives China's ruling Communist Party a boost as it pursues its long-running quest for national "rejuvenation" ~ a bid to return the country to what it sees as its rightful place as a major nation.

For Joe Biden, sworn in Wednesday as the 46th president, that could make one of his major foreign policy challenges even more difficult as he tries to manage an increasingly contentious relationship between the world's rising power and its established one.

The stakes are high for both countries and the rest of the world. A misstep could spark an accidental conflict in the Western Pacific, where China's growing naval presence is bumping up against America's. The trade war

under President Donald Trump hurt workers and farmers in both countries, though some in Vietnam and elsewhere benefited as companies moved production outside China. On global issues such as climate, it is difficult to make progress if the world's two largest economies aren't talking.

The Chinese government expressed hope Thursday that Biden would return to dialogue and cooperation after the divisiveness under Trump.

"It is normal for China and the United States to have some differences," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said. Countries with different social systems, cultural backgrounds and ideologies should and can coexist ... and work together to achieve peace and stabil-

ity and development in the world."

But Kurt Tong, a former US diplomat in Asia, sees a stalemate in the coming few years in which China keeps doing what it has been doing and the US is not happy about it.

"I think it's going to be a tough patch, it's just going to be more disagreements than agreements and not a lot of breakthroughs," said Tong, now a partner with The Asia Group consultancy in Washington, D.C.

A more confident China may push back harder on issues such as technology, territory and human rights. Analysts draw parallels to the 2008 global financial crisis, from which China emerged relatively unscathed. The country's foreign policy has grown increasingly assertive



since then, from staking out territory in disputed waters in the South China Sea to its more recent use of Twitter to hit back at critics. China's relative success in controlling the pandemic could fuel that trend.

Meanwhile, a visibly relieved China on Thursday warmly congratulated new US President Joe Biden and urged him to heal and rebuild the severely damaged bilateral ties by his predecessor Donald Trump.

Chinese Foreign



The pandemic has been a practice run for the future of human resource management and defining their new normal

MANJULA MUTHUKRISHNAN

The year 2020 has changed the definition of normal for everyone in the world. A couple of weeks into the year, people started keeping a wary eye out on the news of coronavirus, which had been making its way through China at the end of 2019. With no cure on hand and a virus that was rapidly making its way through the respiratory systems of their citizens, countries started calling for indefinite lockdowns. Overnight, offices were shut down, transportation systems came to a standstill, and people were confined to their homes. Obviously, businesses could not just stop operating and so remote working or work from home, which was earlier considered a privilege or rather a measure for extreme scenarios, suddenly became a reality.

Suddenly, the human resource function of businesses was becoming a frontrunner for managing the remote working and still keeping employees engaged. It might have

been easier to manage a talent pool when everyone is working in a single workspace. But how does HR engage people over multiple locations all over the country? Clearly, there was no preparing for such an unforeseen situation. While larger businesses might have had contingency plans in place, small and medium-sized enterprises found themselves crossing bridges as they came. What were the challenges faced by HR personnel across the world?

It is not easy to have hoards of people transition to remote working all at once and the human resource function of businesses worldwide has had to partner with IT to accomplish this humongous transition. Barring the technology vertical, most companies do not encourage remote working. So for most companies, there wasn't a pre-planned strategy to transition to remote working. HR personnel have had to prepare strategies in real-time and ensure that employees have the right infrastructure to continue to be just as productive as they were before the

lockdown. Another challenge for the HR function was adjusting the way they work. It is common for HR to collect data, strategise, plan and execute and such a process has a set timeframe for each stage. However, in a crisis situation, the teams need to be agile and cannot afford to have a slow response system.

Human resources is not limited to just talent acquisition and onboarding of employees. While the lockdown initially seemed like a well-deserved vacation, it took a toll on employee morale after months of being in quarantine. HR personnel around the world have had to deal with increasing mental health issues of employees. Uncertain times may have upped the anxiety levels of employees - from job insecurity and pay cuts to the toll of quarantine - employees have had difficulties coping with the pandemic. It is easier to observe how an employee is doing while interacting with them on face to face basis, but remote working becomes a serious barrier in such a case. HR personnel have had to make

sure they do everything in their power to boost employee morale. These include measures like changing the style of internal communication, making employee communication more interactive, going beyond their realm of responsibilities and checking in on employees etc.

Technology has played a significant role in helping HR manage their employees during the pandemic. Remote working is so much more than just working via video conference; it needs a comprehensive infrastructure plan in place along with the supporting technology. Technology solutions designed for HR functions have helped talent managers interact with employees, get feedback in real-time, assess their performance, determine incentives, engage with employees and even connect with them at a personal level. This pandemic has been an exercise in not just transitioning to a new way of functioning but into what will be the new normal.

With HR becoming heavily dependent on technology to function

and manage talent, there is going to be a dynamic shift from traditional HR operations to technology-based operations. Experts are saying we will witness this shift in the coming decade so much so that there are likely to be new and never heard of HR roles that will gain prominence by 2030. The Harvard Business Review in an article has listed over 20 new HR related roles and responsibilities that are likely to become actual jobs in the near future. Almost all of these jobs have their grassroots in technology including human bias officer, chatbot and human facilitator, human network analyst, business continuity director etc.

This is the beginning of the evolution of HR that is built on a foundation of technology. In the future, technology is going to be playing a far more significant role in HR functions than it is today and it is safe to say that this pandemic has been a practice run for the future of human resource management.

The writer is managing director, Avalara Technologies Private Limited

SYED AABISH HASSAN

The entire business fraternity is rendered indecisive to choose on the road ahead for integrated work. The entire employee base across the world is divided into different groups showing mixed response to the pandemic induced work from home alternative. Some are in favour of remote working, some are wishing for pre Covid work culture to resume, while the rest are desperately awaiting the hybrid model to be incorporated in the business structure.

As estimated by Becker Friedman Institute, post-pandemic 22 per cent of the total workdays will account for work from home. Though the companies have shown great agility in adopting the remote working culture, its side effects were very soon realised by the employees.

For many, staying focused while working from home is a great challenge. Often they were juggling between the household chores and office work. Parents were the worst affected who are under constant pressure to take care of their kids while being present for the untimely meetings.

As a consequence, invoking motivational powers becomes a task altogether, which makes it even more difficult to keep up the spirit while working amidst the interruption.

Only big conglomerates have the leverage to enable work from home. They can afford to support their employees with the entire remote working setup. But for small-sized businesses and start-ups, it can cost them their fortune.

Where they are staggering to cope up with the deadly competition in the market, juggling with acute fund crunch, providing the employees with equipment and facilities to work from home is beyond their scope. Thus, remote working culture can disrupt the ideal ecosystem for start-up growth. This can have an

AWAY FROM THE CHAOS

impeding impact on the economy as India is a hub for budding start-ups.

Moreover, certain job roles like sales, business development and many more require constant brainstorming for which regular and concrete meeting with team is imperative. Though virtual meetings can offer temporary solutions but for the effective realisation of work without communication gap, on-ground exposure is necessary.

Analysing the entire situation judicially, it is perceived that 2021 will witness some reformatory changes in the work culture. The novel coronavirus has taught the companies a major lesson to not disregard the importance of quality workspaces.

Large companies with the backup of resources will highly prefer larger working spaces to ensure social distancing. This will not only give comfortable space to the individuals to carry on uninterrupted work but will also promote personal hygiene.

On the other hand, small scale businesses and start-ups will be in the lookout for co-working spaces as it provides flexibility and cost advantage to the emerging businesses. Where start-ups are continuously working to expand their business across different locations, co-working spaces offer an opportunity deal that doesn't require companies to enter into agreement costs. Additionally, it highly aids in reducing the infrastructural costs.

Where Google intimated its employees about the plans to book collaborative places for conducive,



Though working from home sounds lucrative to many, it comes with limiting scope that can have an obstructive impact on the enthusiasm of employees

large team meetings, it has foresighted vision to come up with a place where employees can find isolation to work efficiently away from the chaos at home.

Their proposal to come up with new offices in areas showing less probability of contracting coronavirus reiterates the fact that coming back to physical offices cannot be

ruled out. Humans being social animals cannot isolate themselves from the world for a long time.

To realise their full creative potential and to work with integrated productivity they need to break the monotony of repetitive lifestyle common in work from home. Though working from home sounds lucrative to many but it comes with limiting

scope having an obstructive impact on the enthusiasm of the employees.

Therefore, with the news of vaccine making rounds in the media, the businesses will be ready to come back with full force ready to operate organically from the vicinity of their office but with certain reformatory changes.

The writer is founder and CEO, Eventoss

PLUS POINTS

Pursuing passion



According to a report by SparkLive, women professionals led from the front during the pandemic in 2020 across multiple service categories including, but not limited to, yoga teaching, sewing and embroidery classes, nutrition advice, therapy sessions, digital marketing courses, alternative healing, and dance classes for children and adults.

This survey is a multilingual live online services marketplace for domestic and international users, is based on 200,000 sessions that took place on their platform from March to December 2020.

Over a hundred thousand women took some online class or another, where they could upgrade a life skill like learning sewing to earn some extra income for their family, or learn a calming technique like yoga.

Global opportunities



Lakshmi pat Singhania Education Foundation's (LSEF) and University of Massachusetts-Amherst (UMass) have come up with the LSEF-UMass Scholarship 2021. Students in this programme undertake two years of postgraduate studies, with the first year at the host institution in India- JK Lakshmi pat University, Jaipur and the second year at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, leading to dual degrees.

The applicants need to be Indian citizens who have completed (or will complete before July) a minimum of three years of undergraduate degree in any discipline from an accredited institution in India. The applicant should also need to have studied mathematics as a subject up to a minimum of XII standard or equivalent and also have secured a minimum of 75 per cent marks in their undergraduate degree, X and +2 standards (or equivalent).

Students can apply for one of three programmes - MS in data analytics and computational social science, MS in resource economics, and master of public policy.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited for an aptitude assessment and personal interview with the selection committee comprising of LSEF and UMass Amherst representatives. For details, visit: <https://www.lse.foundation/lsefumass-scholarship>

Restoring positivity



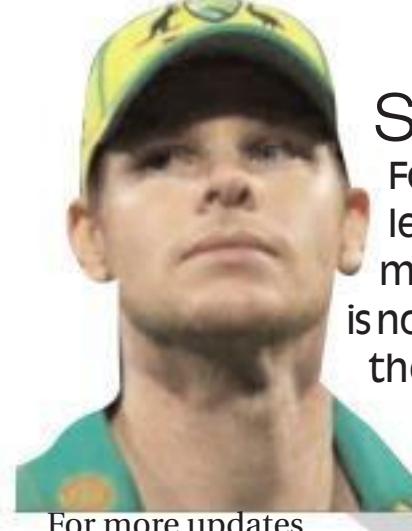
As schools across India remains closed due to Covid-19, CanKidsKidsCan (National Society for Change for Childhood Cancer in India) distributed tabs to 400 cancer affected children across the country in 17 hospitals during the official launch of their online classes, so that they can pursue their education online.

Speaking on the launch of Online Canshala, Meena Abrol, head education at Cankids said, "We have provided tabs with in-built content and applications, other state government educational app and our own non-formal and therapeutic education curriculum, as well as GoogleMeet, Google classroom, Google drive, Zoom video conferencing, MS office and a lot more with one year of internet connectivity."

Bringing the best

Coaching institute Motion Education has launched exclusive rapid JEE/NEET courses. Apart from this classroom course, which generally receives admission from 10+2 students and above, it has also flagged off its residential coaching programme Drona for preparations from classes IX to XII.

The classroom course has been synchronised with the changed paper pattern. Its strength is limited to 35-40 per cent so that everyone gets holistic guidance. A well-trained staff is present at the residential campus to have thermal scanning and regular sanitisation of the visitors and inmates. For details, visit: <https://motion.ac.in/>

**SMITH MIGHT GET CAPTAINCY**

Former skipper Ian Chappell says star batsman Steve Smith (photo, left) might get back the Australia captaincy despite his involvement in the infamous ball-tampering scandal in 2018 if there is no other choice to replace Tim Paine. Paine's performance behind the wicket and his tactics as captain in the just-concluded Test series against India which Australia lost 1-2 were severely criticised by former players.

For more updates

www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

SLC scandal: Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) on Thursday instructed its national team manager to submit a report on allegations of sexual misconduct involving a promising player and a female member of their medical staff.

Zidane under fire: After watching his team collapse late in extra time against third-division club Alcoyano in the Copa del Rey, Zinedine Zidane turned his back on the field and smiled in disbelief. Real Madrid conceded late against its 10-man opponent on Wednesday.

ManU wins: Paul Pogba scored a long-range winner for the second time in a week as Manchester United came from behind to beat Fulham 2-1 and move back to the top of the Premier League. Pogba created space for himself just outside the corner of the penalty area and bent a powerful shot past Fulham goalkeeper Alphonse Areola and into the far corner of the net in the 65th minute.

Psychic Force fancied

GAUTAM BANERJEE

KOLKATA, 21 JANUARY

There are two Graded races in a card of seven framed for tomorrow. The 2,000m Indian Champion Cup (Grade II) is the feature.

Just four runners will face the starter. In what could be a straight contest, Psychic Force is fancied to prevail over Trafalgar.

The 1,400m Indian Champagne Stakes (Grade III) for juveniles may see Jake beating Dandi Satyagraha. Selections:

1.00 p.m.: KILKARRY BRIDGE 1, Gaurish 2, Sullivan 3.

1.30 p.m.: MANZONI 1, Glorious Leaps 2, Atom 3.

2.00 p.m.: NOVA 1, Estrella Star 2, Capricornia 3.

2.30 p.m.: JAIVANT 1, Perpetual Winning 2, Rainbow Trout 3.

3.00 p.m.: JAKE 1, Dandi Satyagraha 2, Mister Moonlight 3.

3.30 p.m.: PSYCHIC FORCE 1, Trafalgar 2, Shivansh 3.

4.00 p.m.: OCCITANIA 1, Om Shanti 2, Ashwamegh 3.

Day's best: Jake.

Red carpet welcome for Rahane; Siraj heads straight to father's grave

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI/NEW

DELHI/HYDERABAD,

21 JANUARY



Chants of 'aala re aala Ajinka aala' headlined a red carpet welcome for Ajinkya Rahane on his triumphant return from Australia with some other teammates but the mood was sombre in Hyderabad as one of his warriors, Mohammed Siraj, headed straight to his father's grave.

The chants (meaning here comes our Ajinka) were heard amid the beating of the traditional dhol tasha and showering of flower petals at Rahane's residential complex.

Besides stand-in captain Rahane, also arriving in Mumbai were coach Ravishankar, star batsman Rohit Sharma, pacer Shardul Thakur and opener Prithvi Shaw, while Brisbane Test hero Rishabh Pant landed in the national capital early this morning.

Siraj, who decided to stay put in Australia with the team and miss his father's last rites, drove straight from Hyderabad's Rajiv Gandhi International Airport to the graveyard and paid his last respects to his departed father Mohammed Ghouse.

It was the end of a two-month long wait for the speedster, who was India's top performer with the ball during the trip.

Siraj's 53-year-old father, who was an auto driver, had died on November 20 due to a lung ailment. This was just a week after his son landed in Australia with the Indian team on his maiden tour.

He was given the option of returning home but he decided otherwise and broke down thinking about him when the national anthem was played before the Sydney Test.

Once he reached his native Chinnappampatti village, Natarajan was accorded a festive welcome, complete with garlands and a chariot ride through the streets where people gathered in good numbers to acknowledge the new star.

The players from Chennai, including veteran off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin, rookie Washington Sundar and bowling coach Bharat Arun are currently in Dubai and are expected to reach the country early morning on Friday.

Rahane was then greeted in a traditional manner as he walked towards the entrance of the building. Dhol tasha is usually played to celebrate special achievements and during joyous occasions.

An injury-ravaged India beat Australia by three wickets in the series-deciding fourth Test in Brisbane on Tuesday to clinch the rubber 2-1 and retain the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

Stepping in after the catastrophe in Adelaide in the absence of Virat Kohli, Rahane led by example with a classic century in the second Test at Melbourne, guiding India to a series-leveling victory.

Rahane also cut a cake to celebrate the team's win. However, more surprises awaited the reticent batsman after he drove straight to his housing society in suburban Matunga, where residents had made elaborate preparations to accord their hero a royal welcome. Rahane was welcomed with the beats of dhol, while others showered the cricketer with flower petals.

Rahane was also joined by his wife and two-year-old daughter in the celebration.

Soaking in the carnival-

like atmosphere, Rahane acknowledged the love and adulation showered on him by the people of the city, many of whom waited for his team at the airport wearing masks amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

In his society, residents and videographers jostled to capture the moments and the unassuming batsman posed happily for them.

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Umpires offered us option to leave Sydney Test after racial abuse: Siraj

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

HYDERABAD, 21 JANUARY

et-taker with 13 scalps during the historic 2-1 series win, said during a press conference after his arrival here.

"The umpires offered us to leave the game but Rahane (bhai) said we won't leave the game. We did no mistake, sowe will play," he recalled about the match that was halted for a few minutes on the fourth day and ended in a thrilling draw.

He said the unruly crowd behaviour acted as a morale-booster for him during his debut Test series.

"The abuses which I faced in Australia made me mentally stronger. I didn't let them affect my game," Siraj said.

Six spectators were expelled from the stadium after play was held up during the match. Cricket Australia has promised to the strongest possible action those found guilty.

Siraj turned out to be one of the architects of India's historic Australia tour and successfully stepped into the shoes of his senior pace colleagues after making his debut in the series-turning second Test in Melbourne.

Stokes, Archer return to England team for first two Tests against India

AGENCIES

LONDON, 21 JANUARY



Explosive all-rounder Ben Stokes (in photo) and pacer Jofra Archer on Thursday returned to a 16-member England squad named for the first two Tests of the upcoming four-match series against India.

The England selectors also named six travelling reserves for the first and second matches, to be held at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai from February 5.

Both Stokes and Archer missed the ongoing two-match Test series in Sri Lanka as part of England's policy to rest all-format players, while Rory Burns was at home for the birth of his first child.

The team will continue to be led by Joe Root.

Surrey's Ollie Pope will travel to India and will be

added to the squad when passed fit. Pope is recovering from a shoulder injury sustained in September during the Test series against Pakistan.

All-rounder Moeen Ali, who was the only cricketer to return COVID-19 positive on arrival in Sri Lanka, has fully recovered and was included in the team.

The national selectors have provided rest to Jonathan Bairstow, Sam Curran and Mark Wood. The three players, who are currently in Sri Lanka, were on Thursday named in

the playing XI for the second Test against the islanders but will head home after that.

"This is consistent with the selection policy of finding a block of rest for all multi-format players at some point during post-Christmas winter schedule," the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) said in a release.

In Wood's absence, Olly Stone has been retained in the squad to provide captain Root with a second genuine pace option after Archer.

With Archer and Stokes returning, and subject to fitness of the rest of the squad, Somerset's Craig Overton will return home after the Sri Lanka series.

The fast bowling department will be spearheaded by veteran James Anderson in the company of his seasoned teammate Stuart Broad, Archer

and Chris Woakes.

English players travelling from Sri Lanka will fly to Chennai on a charter flight after the conclusion of the second Test in Galle.

After Chennai, the action will shift to Ahmedabad's Motera, currently the largest cricket stadium in the world with a capacity of 110,000. The venue will host India's second day-night Test at home after the country's first-ever pink-ball outing in Kolkata.

During their stay in India, England are scheduled to play 4 Tests, 5 T20Is and 3 ODIs against the hosts.

Squad for first two Tests: Joe Root, Jofra Archer, Moeen Ali, James Anderson, Dom Bess, Stuart Broad, Rory Burns, Jos Buttler, Zak Crawley, Ben Foakes, Dan Lawrence, Jack Leach, Ben Stokes, Olly Stone, Chris Woakes.

Draw not an option for England in 2nd test

AGENCIES

GALLE, 21 JANUARY

But it was his second inning run out for one as England slipped to 14-3 chasing a very modest target that he'll be aiming to address when he plays his 99th test starting Friday.

England openers Dominic Sibley and Zak Crawley were each dismissed for single digits in both innings in Galle, but Root has backed his openers to establish a better foundation in the second match.

England is in fourth spot on the ICC Test Championship standings, behind India, New Zealand and Australia. The final will be played in June and to remain in calculations, England needs to win the second test against Sri Lanka and then travel to India and win that series, too.

England hasn't lost a series in Sri Lanka since 2007, having generally countered spin bowling well to find success.

Root was commanding in the first test, scoring 228 in the first innings to set England on course for a seven-wicket win after Sri Lanka was skittled for 135 on day one.

may get a rest. England also could swap Olly Stone for Mark Wood, who provides outright pace, while Chris Woakes and Sam Curran could be competing for the allrounder spot.

England openers Dominic Sibley and Zak Crawley were each dismissed for single digits in both innings in Galle, but Root has backed his openers to establish a better foundation in the second match.

Daniel Lawrence made his test debut batting at No. 5 and after 73 in his first innings, he was composed and added 21 in a 62-run partnership with Jonny Bairstow that ushered England to victory.

England has a few options

and could potentially make some rotations especially fast bowlers - with a four-test tour of India coming up next.

Jimmy Anderson missed

the opening test but could return for the second. Stuart Broad played in the first test but

How regional television's game was lost

PULAKESH MUKHOPADHYAY

KOLKATA, 21 JANUARY

one of them, it was not as if DD's coverage ever equalled the BBC's.

"But it's bad when the Durand Cup or the IFA Shield is bypassed. Here are two great tournaments associated with Indian football's history being ignored because our way of doing things has changed. And in the past, when DD fetched up at a rural or suburban event, people and participants felt immensely encouraged. Now that DD holds itself aloof, they feel let down. Since everyone knows blue-chip television

will never bother to check these things out, certain hopelessness creeps in," said he, insisting on anonymity as a government employee.

Radio, though, is said to be picking up the pieces. Most importantly, Bengali running commentary has been revived. The Durand Cup tournament was gone to and covered.

Problems have had to be coped with, one instance of which was that AIR made do with only two entry passes for a game. It needed more as there were people taking care of the technical aspects of the transmission.

"Radio can do things we can't," said a DD insider, adding: "They're not required to cough up a huge amount of cash to buy their rights to a match or a tournament."

Sameer, Satwik-Ponnappa sail into quarterfinals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BANGKOK, 21 JANUARY

India's Sameer Verma (in photo) continued his impressive run at the Toyota Thailand Open Super 1000 tournament, stunning world no 17 Rasmus Gemke of Denmark in a second round match to advance to the men's singles quarterfinals, here on Thursday.

The world no 31 Indian, who had shocked Malaysia's eighth seed Lee Zii Jia in the opening round, needed just 39 minutes to see off Gemke 21-12 21-9.

This was Sameer's third victory over Gemke. The Indian had defeated the world no 17 Danish shuttler in their previous two clashes.

Sameer will face third seed Anders Antonsen of Denmark, who received a walkover, in the quarterfinals.

"I was very confident before the match. I came prepared. Next up I have Anders Antonsen from Denmark. I'm feeling very confident, so let's see. It will be tough but I will play my best," Sameer said.

The mixed doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Ashwini Ponnappa also made it to the quarterfinals with a stunning 22-20 14-21 21-16 win over world no 17 German duo of Mark Lams-



East Bengal face tall task against Mumbai City

AGENCIES

VASCO, 21 JANUARY

No team has conceded as many goals as them in the second half (13) and only one has conceded more in the last fifteen minutes of the match (5).

SC East Bengal boss Robbie Fowler will, however, be buoyed by the form that his keeper Debjit Majumder has been displaying.

In Mumbai, they face a team well-equipped to take advantage of these flaws. If SCEB is prone to conceding in the second half, Sergio Lobera's side specializes in scoring in the first.

No team has netted more in the first half than the team that Mumbai have managed. They are also now unbeaten in ten games.

Three more and Mumbai will set a league record for the longest unbeaten streak in ISL history, overtaking FC Goa's 12-game run.

"The most important thing is to win a trophy. Obviously, it is a consequence to do a lot of things well. If during the way, we have very good numbers, lots of goals, lots of clean sheets and possession of the ball, you have more possibility of winning the trophy," said Lobera.