





The central government has made destructive farm laws leading to blackmarketing of essential food items like potato and onion

MAMATA BANERJEE  
WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER

# CM urges PM to reserve 1K ICU beds for Covid patients in Delhi

Kejriwal also seeks Modi's intervention in resolving the stubble burning crisis, saying Delhi's severe air pollution caused by it is playing a major role in aggravating the city's current third Covid wave

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 24 NOVEMBER

**D**elhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal today urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to reserve 1,000 ICU beds for the people of Delhi in the Centre-run hospitals like AIIMS and Safdarjung Hospital amid the raging coronavirus outbreak in the national capital.

Kejriwal highlighted the point that the high severity of the current third Covid-19 wave gripping the national capital is due to, among other factors, its severe air pollution caused by stubble burning in neighbouring states.

During the Covid review meeting of the CMs of eight worst Covid-hit states, held by PM Modi through video conference, the Delhi CM reportedly said that if the central government reserves these 1,000 ICU beds in its hospitals in the city for coronavirus patients amid a surge in Covid cases, "it will be a great support to us".

Kejriwal said Delhi saw the peak of 8,600 coronavirus infections on 10 November during the third wave and since then, the number of cases as well as the positivity rate were decreasing, hoping that this trend would continue in the city. He, however, added that the rising mortality rate in Delhi was a matter of concern



and that the government has to ensure a decrease in it. Kejriwal told Modi that of the total beds reserved for Covid patients in all the government and private hospitals across Delhi, 9,400 beds were occupied while 8,500 beds were vacant.

"We are not concerned about the non-ICU (common) coronavirus beds since we have an adequate number of non-ICU beds. Of the total ICU beds available in Delhi, around 3,500 such beds are occupied and 724 ICU beds are vacant. Home Minister Amit Shah is helping Delhi in increasing ICU beds, but if the Central government decides to

"The pollution from stub-

ble burning in the neighbouring states has been one of the major reasons. The Delhi government has recently introduced a solution to the issue of stubble burning with the help of the Pusa Agricultural Institute. The government has used the bio-decomposer technology developed by Pusa Institute across the farmlands in Delhi, which has converted the straw on the fields into manure," the CM said.

Kejriwal also said that several factors were instrumental in making the third wave of coronavirus in Delhi "more dangerous", adding that increased pollution levels in the city was a major factor among them.

He said, "We want that under your leadership, the

chief ministers of Delhi, Punjab, and Haryana should work together as a team to eliminate stubble burning."

Delhi reportedly logged 4,454 fresh Covid cases yesterday with a positivity rate of 11.94 per cent. It then recorded 121 more Covid-linked fatalities that pushed its death toll due to this infectious, deadly disease to 8,512.

This was the sixth day in 12 days that the daily number of deaths crossed the 100-mark in Delhi. The national capital reported 121 Covid deaths on Sunday, 111 on Saturday, 118 on Friday, 131 on 18 November — the highest till date — and 104 on 12 November.

# Delhi urges air panel to make Pusa solution must for states to check stubble burning

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 24 NOVEMBER

Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai on Tuesday said the Aam Aadmi Party government has submitted a petition before the Air Quality

Management Commission that highlights the "successful implementation" of the Pusa Institute-developed bio-decomposer to check stubble burning.

He said the Delhi government has urged the Commission to take cognisance of the assessment report on the use of the Pusa Institute's bio-decomposer solution and make this process mandatory for all the states like Punjab, Haryana, UP and Rajasthan, which report stubble burning by their farmers every year.

This will end stubble burning and help farmers enhance the quality of farmlands by using the manure produced in the process.

Rai said the COVID-19 situation in the national capital worsened significantly due to massive stubble burning in neighbouring states, which severely affected Delhi's air quality during the past few weeks. The minister said,

"The pollution situation in Delhi has been very critical during the past few days. If we look at the NASA images we will also find that stubble burning in the neighbouring states of Haryana and Punjab has increased signifi-



cantly. We also know that COVID-19 is a kind of disease which mainly affects the lungs of people. In Delhi, the city government in collaboration with the Pusa Institute has developed a bio-decomposer which converts stubble into manure."

We have seen that by using this solution nearly 90 per cent of the stubble got converted into manure."

Rai also said, "We have urged the Commission to take the use of this solution very seriously and to ensure the use of the bio-decomposer

by all the neighbouring states of Delhi. We have also requested the Commission that this technique should become mandatory for all the state governments from the next year.

This year the pollution situation in Delhi worsened very seriously since there was no initiative in the neighbouring states in this regard during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are hopeful that the Commission will take cognizance of our request and ensure that stubble burning ends next year."

## Classified

### LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE COURT OF  
MANUSHA WADHWA  
Additional District Judge-02  
Shahdara District,  
Room No. 52  
Karkardooma Courts, Delhi  
GP-07/2020

Smt. Manju, d/o L. Mahavir Singh, widow of L. Rajiv Kumar, Mother and Natural Guardian of Minor Ojaswi, House No. A-31/104-C, Mata Mandir, Gali No. 1, Maupur, Delhi.

— Petitioner Versus

The State (NCT of Delhi) through its Secretary Chief Minister Secretariat, IP Estate, New Delhi.

— Respondent

CITATION FOR PUBLICATION OF PETITION UNDER SECTION 8 (2) OF HINDU MINORITY AND GUARDIANSHIP ACT, ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER TO SELL THE PROPERTY OF MINOR SON NAMED OJASWI.

Whereas the 20-04-2021 has been fixed for hearing of the case, notice is hereby given that any person having any interest in the said petition concerned may if he/she desire appear in this court of the said 20-04-2021 and see the proceedings.

Given under my hand and the Seal of this Court on this 03-11-2020.

Additional District Judge-02

Shahdara District, Karkardooma Courts, Delhi.

Seal of the Court

IN THE COURT OF  
SH. ARVIND BANSAL  
ACJ/CCJ/ARC-South (East)  
Room No. 203, Second Floor  
Saket Courts, New Delhi  
SS-28/2020

Rakesh Kumar Sikri  
Versus

The State  
Whereas, an application IUS 372 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 has been made by Rakesh Kumar Sikri, successor of Late Tirath Ram Sikri for grant of Succession Certificate in respect of debts/securities of deceased.

And whereas the said applicant shall come for hearing on 05-01-2021 at 10:00 a.m.

Therefore, the public at large is hereby given notice 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 on 18-11-2020.

ACJ/CCJ/ARC-(South East)  
Saket Courts, New Delhi  
Seal of the Court

I, MD. WASIM Akhter, R/o: 64, Topsis Road, Kolkata-700039, P.S.: Tiljala, deposing that my wife Lt. Shagufta Parveen, Lt. Shagufta Parveen and Lt. Shagufta Parveen are the same and identical person, vide affidavit sworn before Notary, Alipore Judges' Court, dated 06.10.2020.

I, MD. AKHTER, R/o: 64, Topsis Road, Kolkata-700039, P.S.: Tiljala, deposing that my son Tabish Akhter and Tabish Akhter are the same and identical person, vide affidavit sworn before Notary, Alipore Judges' Court, dated 06.10.2020.

I, ANIRUDHA Aggarwal, s/o Ashish Aggarwal, r/o A-47, Kalash Colony, Delhi-48, hereby state that I have lost my class 10th pass certificate of year 2011, Certificate No. TZ 70039289 issued by ICSE Board the complaint of which was duly registered under LR No: 737760/2020 dated 17.11.2020.

LOST & FOUND

I HAVE lost my house deed (No. I 643 / dt. 12.2.99). If anybody deposited in any bank or financial company please inform me. Suresh Barman, Ward No.-9, Pachagarh, Mathabhanga M: 6296018804.

TENDERS

JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY  
Notice Inviting Tender for  
"Electrical Work in  
JU Main Campus"

Sealed tender is being invited for:  
Tender Ref. No.: E-02/2020-2021.

Name of the work:  
"Electrical installation work  
for a new sophisticated  
NMR (400 MHz) instrument  
Lab. in the Department of  
Chemistry at Gr. Floor, UG  
Science Building, JU Main  
Campus".

Estimated Cost: Rs.  
1,92,161 plus GST as applicable.

EMD: Rs. 3,900.

Tender Cost: Rs. 500.

Tender issue dates:  
23.11.2020 to 02.12.2020 up  
to 3 p.m.

Last date of submission:

03.12.2020 up to 2 p.m.

For details please refer to  
Jadavpur University  
Website :  
"http://www.jadavpur.edu.in"  
or contact at O/o. the  
University Jadavpur,  
University, Jadavpur,  
Kolkata.

Registrar

e-TENDER NOTICE

NIT No. 10/20-21  
dt. 23.11.20

1 No. build. work & 1  
No. Imp by B/T Road under

different places of Chapra Pan-  
chayat, Total Amount: Rs.  
12,53,784. Last date of documents  
downloading & bid sub.: 30.11.2020 up to  
5-00 p.m. (Other details collect from  
the office and web-site:

<https://wbtenders.gov.in>

Sd/- E.O.  
Chapra Pan. Samity

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 24 NOVEMBER

Schools in the national capital which are closed due to the coronavirus pandemic are unlikely to reopen until a vaccine is available, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said on Tuesday.

Universities and schools across the country were closed on March 16, when the Centre announced a nationwide classroom shutdown as part of measures to contain the novel coronavirus.

"Until we get some vaccine, schools (in Delhi) are not likely to

open, Sisodia, who is also Delhi's Education Minister, told reporters.

He had announced on October 30 that schools will remain closed until further orders, saying parents were not in favour of sending their ward to schools yet.

"We keep getting feedback from parents that they are really concerned about whether it is safe to reopen schools. It is not. Wherever schools have reopened, COVID-19 cases among children have risen. So we have decided that as of now schools in the national capital will not reopen. They will continue to be closed till further orders," Sisodia

had said then.

A nationwide lockdown was imposed on March 25.

While several restrictions have been eased in different 'unlock' phases, educational institutions continue to remain closed.

According to 'Unlock 5' guidelines, states can take a call on reopening schools in phases. Several states also began the process of reopening schools. While some of them announced closure again due to rise in coronavirus cases.

Earlier, schools were allowed to call students from Class 9 to 12 to school on voluntary basis from

September 21. However, the Delhi government decided against it.

Delhi recorded 4,454 fresh COVID-19 cases on Monday and a positivity rate of 11.94 per cent while 121 more fatalities pushed the death toll to 8,512, authorities said.

These relatively low number of fresh cases came out of the 37,307 tests conducted on Sunday, including 18,046 RT-PCR tests, according to the latest bulletin issued by the Delhi health department.

On last Friday, authorities had said that 23,507 RT-PCR tests, the highest till date, were conducted a day before.

Delhi sees dip in number of challans issued for violating Covid norms

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 24 NOVEMBER

Delhi on Tuesday saw a dip in the number of challans issued for not following COVID-19 norms, including not wearing masks, for the second consecutive day after authorities raised the penalty to Rs 2,000 following a surge in coronavirus cases in the city.

The police issued 296 challans to people who were not wearing face masks at public places across the city, officials said. As many as 351 people were challaned on Monday and 1,501 on Sunday for not wearing face masks.

On Thursday, the Delhi government had increased the fine for not wearing masks from Rs 500 to Rs 2,000.

The Delhi Police distributed face masks across various shelter homes and residential areas in the city.

Police also issued 24 challans to people who were found not adhering to social distancing norms. The number was 59 on Monday, they said.

A total of 5,45,677 challans have been issued in the national capital since June 15, they said.

Meanwhile, the police distributed 244 face masks in the city on Tuesday, officials said, adding that 4,06,118 masks have been distributed by the force since June 15.

# PIL in HC to regulate powers of civil defence volunteers

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 24 NOVEMBER

A PIL was moved on Tuesday in the Delhi High Court seeking regulation of the powers delegated to civil defence volunteers in the city and that they be prevented from wearing uniforms similar to that of police.

The petition by a lady advocate claims that the civil defence volunteers are "misusing" the "unbridled" powers given to them under the Delhi Epidemic Diseases (Management of COVID-19) Regulations 2020.

The petitioner -- Amrita Dhawhan -- in her plea, filed through advocate Arpit Bhargava, contends that the Delhi government and the Delhi Disaster Management Authority



(DDMA) have taken no action despite being aware of misuse of powers by the volunteers.

The petition seeks directions to the Delhi government and DDMA to ensure the male volunteers do not take photographs of women in terms of the regulations keeping in view their safety and security. It states that under the Delhi Epidemic Diseases (Management of COVID-19) Regulations 2020 the civil defence volunteers were enrolled and authorised by the Delhi government to take photographs and impose fines on those violating the guidelines regarding quarantine.

However, there have been instances where the volunteers have allegedly engaged in extortion and taking photographs of women at odd hours citing COVID-19 duties, the petition claims.

DDMA has issued 51,600 challans and collected Rs 2.53 crore from people who allegedly flouted the COVID-19 safety rules.

However, there have been instances where the volunteers have allegedly engaged in extortion and taking photographs of women at odd hours citing COVID-19 duties, the petition claims.

The petition also states that according to data shared by Delhi government from June onwards the volunteers have issued 51,600 challans



*It should be recalled here that at the time of Independence of our country, all the banks in India were owned by business houses but none of them came forward to help the government in its planned economic development projects.*

D.RAJA

COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA GENERAL SECRETARY NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 25 NOVEMBER 2020

03

# Covid surge: Haryana limits no. of persons at gatherings

A maximum of 50 persons will be allowed at various gatherings held indoors and 100 persons will be allowed at outdoor events in 6 districts adjoining NCR from 26 Nov, says CM Khattar

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 24 NOVEMBER

Haryana chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Tuesday said that to contain the recent surge in Covid-19 cases in the state, especially in its six districts, the state government has decided to limit the number of persons allowed at social gatherings like marriages and political or religious functions.

While a maximum of 50 persons will be allowed at such events held indoors, 100 persons will be allowed at outdoor events. Khattar said that from 26 November, these restrictions will remain in place in six districts — adjoining the National Capital Region (NCR) — which are witnessing a surge in Covid-

19 cases. These districts include Gurugram, Rewari, Faridabad, Rohtak, Sonipat and Hisar.

However, in the remaining districts of Haryana, people's gathering has been limited to 100 persons for indoor functions and 200 persons for the outdoor events.

This was informed during the video conference of chief ministers of eight worst Covid-hit states on the coronavirus situation, which was presided over by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The other seven states include Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Kerala, Gujarat and Delhi.

Khattar said that the situation of Covid-19 in Haryana remained "satisfactory" in the first and second waves. However, in the third wave of



Haryana CM Manohar Lal Khattar during the video conference of 8 CMs on Covid situation, presided over by PM Narendra Modi. At Chandigarh on Tuesday.

Covid-19, a spurt in number of cases has been witnessed in the past few days, especially in the districts adjoining the NCR. He said that keeping in view the movement of people in the NCR, the state gov-

ernment has ramped up testing in NCR areas so that people found positive could be isolated to keep a check on the further spread of infection.

While referring to various steps being taken by the state

government to effectively combat the Covid-19 situation, the CM said that testing in Haryana has reached 1.24 lakh per million which is much more than the national average of 80,000 per mil-

lion. Khattar said that 32,000 tests per day were currently being conducted in Haryana, which would be further increased in the coming days. Apart from this, special emphasis is being given on the contact tracing of positive Covid cases. He said that at present, the number of positive cases in the state was 6.86 per cent and the fatality rate was only one per cent. Efforts are being made to further reduce the fatality rate to below one per cent, he said.

The CM also said that the state government was fully prepared to deal with any eventuality in the wake of the Covid-19 crisis. An arrangement of 57,000 beds has been made in different hospitals of the state, which is sufficient

keeping in view the number of cases, he added.

Uttarakhand Governor tests Covid+ve; admitted to AIIMS



AIIMS-Rishikesh issued a health bulletin for Governor Baby Rani Maurya on Tuesday and stated that all her tests have been found to be normal. After getting hospitalized, Baby Rani Maurya underwent CT scan, blood and all other necessary tests.

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After getting hospitalized, Baby Rani Maurya underwent CT scan, blood and all other necessary tests.

U.B. Mishra, Dean of the Institute Hospital Affairs Professor at AIIMS-Rishikesh is stable.

A five member team of doctors are monitoring the health of Uttarakhand Governor, who was admitted to the AIIMS-Rishikesh on Monday.

AIIMS-Rishikesh issued a health bulletin for Governor Baby Rani Maurya on Tuesday and stated that all her tests have been found to be normal.

After getting hospitalized, Baby Rani Maurya underwent CT scan, blood and all other necessary tests.

A team of five specialist doctors from AIIMS are regularly monitoring her health."

## ABVP warns Himachal govt of protests if demands not met

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 24 NOVEMBER

Himachal Pradesh Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) on Tuesday urged the state government to resolve various pending issues of students and warned of statewide protests if their demands are not fulfilled.

ABVP State secretary Vishal Verma said there were several issues pertaining to various universities in the state including regular staff and fees but these issues remained as it is despite several representations to the government.

"The state government has backed on its decision and has allowed these institutions to charge fees for the period.

It is a setback for the parents of the students in Covid crisis and the state government should follow its previous decision of charging only tuition fees for the period of lockdown but now the govt

Verma lashed at previous Congress government and present BJP government for not resolving the issue of Central University in Kangra and said the construction work for the university should be started at the earliest.

He also urged all political parties to not to politicize the issue and instead work towards resolving the issues pertaining to the university.

He also raised the issue of restoring the students' union elections in the state and warned the state government of protests if the issues pertaining to the students' community were not resolved at the earliest.

## Himachal govt launches 'Him Suraksha Abhiyan'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 24 NOVEMBER

The Chief Minister said that not only symptomatic patients with probable Covid-19 would be detected through this campaign but patients with other ailments would also be listed through the campaign.

of the people.

He urged the people of the state to provide wholehearted support to the health workers by providing them accurate information about their diseases and health parameters.

This campaign begins in Himachal from 25 November to 27 December, 2020.

Thakur said that about 8000 teams comprising Health, Ayurveda, Women and Child Development, Panchayati Raj Departments, District Administration and NGOs would be involved in this campaign which would ensure door to door data collection of health parameters

The Chief Minister said that not only symptomatic patients with probable Covid-19 would be detected through this campaign but patients with other ailments would also be listed through the campaign.

He said that there was no dearth of essential medicines and equipment like oxygen cylinders and isolation beds in the state.

He said that the main reason for this increase in number could be attributed to social functions and a

bit laxity by the general public.

He urged the people of the state to use face masks in public places and maintain social distancing to keep them away from this virus.

He said that all the social/political/cultural /sports etc. gatherings in open areas have also been restricted to 200 persons with social distancing. Fine of Rs 1000 will be imposed for not wearing a face mask in public places, he added.

He said that all these decisions have been taken to curb this deadly virus.

The Chief Minister also released an awareness poster on the occasion.

Health Minister Dr Rajiv Saizal urged the people to play a proactive role in making this campaign a success.

## Farm laws: Amarinder welcomes Centre's bid to hold talks with farmers' unions

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 24 NOVEMBER

central agricultural laws. It was vital for Punjab's interests that the matter be resolved as soon as possible, said Amarinder, expressing satisfaction at the fact that both, the farmers' unions and the Centre, had shown flexibility and intent to come to an amicable solution to the issue of the farm laws.

He hoped the central government will take into account the long term implications of the farm laws, and the grave repercussions these would have not just for Punjab and its farmers but the entire nation's agriculture sector and food security.

Meanwhile, with supplies of essential commodities finally being restored with the resumption of goods train services in Punjab after about two months, the CM has asked chief secretary Vini Mahajan to coordinate with various departments to ensure

seamless movement of the raw materials to power plants and industry. The stalled

operations at various units should be revived urgently, he has directed Vini, asking her

to ensure that critical supplies are arranged to be delivered on priority to vital units.

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Accident site in UP's Muzaffarnagar district. SNS

**UP road mishap:** A woman was killed while two men went missing after a car from Rishikesh fell into the Ganga canal near Kamhera in UP's Muzaffarnagar district on Tuesday. Another woman was rescued and shifted to a hospital for treatment. They were on way to Delhi to attend a family function.

**Speakers' conference:** A two-day 80th All India Presiding Officers Conference to facilitate a dialogue between presiding officers of the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha and other legislative bodies, will be held from Wednesday near the 'Statue of Unity' in Gujarat's Narmada district.

## TENDER

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF ENGINEERING SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, SHIBPUR HOWRAH - T11103  
(An Institute of National Importance under MHRD, Govt. of India)  
Date: 20.11.2020  
Advt. No. CH 1630  
E-PROCUREMENT  
Quotations are invited for 'Rotary Evaporator with all necessary components and accessories' in the Department of Chemistry. For details please visit: [www.iies.ac.in](http://www.iies.ac.in) and <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/a>. Last date: 09.12.2020 at 6.00 pm. (A. Code DRC-T012/20-21)

Dean (R&amp;C)

NORTHERN RAILWAY	
E-TENDER NOTICE	
Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer/Traction Distribution, DRM's Office, State Entry Road, New Delhi for & on behalf of President of India, invites open e-tender under single packet system for the under noted work:	
1. Name of Work with its Location	Part-B: Electrification of left out sidings by RE in DL-LOK-BTI section.
2. Approx. Cost of work	Rs. 52,85,892.19
3. Earnest Money Deposit	Rs. 1,05,700/-
4. E-Tender Bid Online Submission Period	03.12.2020 (00.00 Hrs.) to 17.12.2020 (15.00 Hrs.)
5. E-Tender Bid Submission End Date & E-Tender Open Date & Time	17.12.2020 (15.00 hrs.)
6. Fund Allocation	EBR
7. Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen	<a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a>

E-Tender No.: 19-TRD-NDLS-2020-21 Dated 24.11.2020 2630/2020

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

NORTHERN RAILWAY	
TENDER NOTICE	
Invitation of Tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement Systems)	
S.N.	
1	Name of work with its location
2	Approx. Cost of Work
3	Earnest Money
4	Cost of tender
5	Date and time for submission of tender and opening of tender
6	Website particulars notice board location complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where the tender form can be purchased etc.

128-W/280/E.Tender Notice/NIT-28-2020-21/Works Dated: 24.11.2020 2631/2020

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

JAL SHAKTI DEPARTMENT, JAMMU

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER JAL SHAKTI (PHE), DIVISION REASI

Fax: 01991-244323 E-mail: [phe@esi001@gmail.com](mailto:phe@esi001@gmail.com)

Notice inviting e-Tender

e-NIT No. PHERSI/71of 2020-21 Date: - 18/11/2020

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of UT of J&K e-tenders (Two cover System) Item Rate basis are invited from reputed and resourceful Contractors/Firms/Companies/Joint Venture of repute, which should be uploaded on the e-Procurement web portal <http://www.jktenders.gov.in> up to last bidding date: 11-12-2020 up to 16.30 PM for the subject work referred below and as per the details mentioned in this e-tender notice and to whom all the terms and conditions of detailed NIT /Tender Documents/PWD Form No.: 25 double are applicable. The detailed tender document and Specifications etc. can be downloaded on the e-procurement Portal <http://www.jktenders.gov.in>. The cost of tender documents (Non-refundable/ Non-Transferable) should be in the shape of e-challan/Treasury Receipt to be deposited in MH-0215-WSS (Revenue Head) or through RTGS in J&K Bank Branches in J&K Bank Account No. 002901020000829, IFSC code JAKAOREASSI in favour of Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti (PHE), Division REASI

S.N. 1 Name of Work :- A) RETROFITTING AND AUGMENTATION OF WATER SUPPLY SCHEME BISSI KALAKOT UNDER JAL JEEVAN MISSION INCLUDING CIVIL, CONDUCTING COMPLETE NECESSARY SURVEY, SOIL TESTS &amp; DESIGN AS REQUIRED AT SELECTED SITE, AS PER THE PARAMETERS/ SPECIFICATIONS

Adv. Cost of Work (s) in Lacs :- 75.74, Earnest Money In Rs. :- 151480, Class of Contractor :- "A", Cost of Document :- 5000/-, Period of completion :- 6 months, M/H of Account :- JJM

S.N. 2 Name of Work :- B) Operation &amp; Maintenance of critical components as per SBD for a period of three years.

i) 1<sup>st</sup> year, ii) 2<sup>nd</sup> year, iii) 3<sup>rd</sup> year

Adv. Cost of Work (s) in Lacs :- Inclusive in A), Earnest Money In Rs. :- -----, Class of Contractor :- -----, Cost of Document :- -----

Period of completion :- 1<sup>st</sup> year, 2<sup>nd</sup> year, 3<sup>rd</sup> year, M/H of Account :- -----

No. DIPU-J-7521/20 Dated: 23-11-2020

Sd/- Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Division Reasi

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE**  
SILIGURI, 24 NOVEMBER

BJP's national spokesperson and Darjeeling MP Raju Bista, today contested claims made by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee regarding Covid-19 situation in West Bengal.

"Nothing could be further from the truth than the claims made by Trinamul Congress Chief and Chief Minister of West Bengal Mamata Banerjee regarding Covid-19 situation being under control in the state," Mr Bista tweeted. The criticism comes at a time when Miss Banerjee has started work to "recover" her party's position by organising administrative meetings in South Bengal districts, keeping an eye on the approaching Assembly elections, and with a view to outdoing

the BJP.

Mr Bista, however, compared Miss Banerjee's Covid-19 fight with the neighbouring BJP-run state of Assam.

"According to official figures, over 8000 people have died in the state due to Covid-19 so far. The death percentage for West Bengal is much higher than the national average. While death percentage in Bihar is only 0.53 percent, Odisha is 0.52 percent and Assam is 0.46 percent, the death percentages in West Bengal stands at 1.76 percent, which is much higher than in the three neighbouring states," Mr Bista later said in a statement.

"In Bengal, Covid patients declared dead for days are showing up at home. Is this TMC version of 'Corona situation being under control'

Mamata ji?" he added.

According to him, despite having much lesser population than Bengal, Assam, which has a population of 3.5 crore, has conducted 508986 Covid tests till date and recorded positivity of only 4.1 percent, whereas West Bengal, which has a population of 9.9 crore, has conducted only 5301162 tests and has registered 8.3 percent positivity among those tested so far.

"Under an incompetent Trinamul regime, the Covid-19 situation in West Bengal is definitely not under control, but rather it has gone out of control."

Political sources said the BJP plans to further criticise the CM on many issues, "one by one" to the point to showcase

her government's "incompetent role" and by keeping an eye on the elections.

On the other hand, Amit Malviya, the newly-appointed BJP co-observer for Bengal, also tweeted, where he said: "When a health scheme that claims to cover 7.5 crore people actually benefits just 13 lakh, a meager 1.7 percent, it establishes epic failure of Mamata's scheme. High time pishi keeps personal ego aside and implement Ayushman Bharat, which will benefit 100 percent population covered."

**Two die in Siliguri**

Meanwhile, two persons died in the designated hospital for Covid patients at Kawakhali in Siliguri today. A 74-year-old resident of Sukhia Pokhari in Darjeeling and a 70-year-old person from Dhupguri in Jalpaiguri district died there

today, sources said.

**61 fresh cases in Darjeeling district**

Darjeeling district recorded 61 fresh cases of Covid-19 today. Sources said 25 of the new cases are from the Siliguri Municipal Corporation, one from Darjeeling Municipality, five from Kharibari, three from Sukna, nine from Matigara, three from Mirik, eight from Naxalbari, five from Phansidih, one from Pulbazaar/Bijanbari, and one from Sukhia Pokhari.

Fifteen cases were also

separately detected in the Jalpaiguri portion of the SMC.

Also today, 106 Covid patients either ended their home isolation period or were discharged from hospitals, the sources added.

**Dip in Malda continues**

Malda continued to witness

**RUBBISH!**

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE**  
SILIGURI, 24 NOVEMBER

BJP leader Shreerupa Mitra Choudhury has claimed that around 600 women are victimized by 'Love jihad' in the South Malda Parliamentary area every year.

Apart from that, Ms Mitra Choudhury has also demanded enhancement of victim's compensation to be declared by the state and doing the needful in connection with the public demand for NIA investigations into the Sujapur plastic recycle factory explosion that killed six persons recently.

**RUBBISH!**



A garbage heap lies on the roadside in Ward No 18 in Siliguri on Tuesday.

PULAK KARMAKAR

**Ganga snan mela cancelled due to Covid pandemic**

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE**  
MEERUT, 24 NOVEMBER

In the wake of pandemic, the 'Ganga Snan Mela' and 'Deepdaan' festival in Garh Mukteshwar of district Hapur and Hastinapur of Meerut

**During the congregation, the possibility of further spread of the pandemic could not be denied**

that was scheduled from 25 November till 30 November, has been cancelled this year.

Since a large number of people come to the banks of the Ganges during the congregation, the possibility of further spread of the pandemic could not be denied. Hence this decision has been taken by the government. Besides UP, people from surrounding states of Delhi, Haryana and Rajasthan turn up in Garhmukteshwar every year on Kartik Purnima to take a holy dip.

**a dip in the number of daily Covid cases when it recorded only 20 new cases in tests conducted last night. Sources said 15 samples were tested positive at the VRDL in the Malda Medical College and Hospital from among the 997 samples tested, five more cases were detected in rapid antigen tests.**

**One dies in Alipurduar**

In Alipurduar, one Covid-19 patient died in the past 24 hours, taking the death toll in the district to 81, sources said. A total of 37 fresh cases of the virus were recorded in the district in the past 24 hours, sources said, while 43 Covid patients were discharged from the hospital or released from home isolation today. Officials also claimed that the infection rate in the district had gone down.

**2nd Covid-19 wave looms, some parties are busy in protests**



**MAHARASHTRA CHIEF MINISTER UDDHAV THACKERAY**

SAYING THEY SHOULD BE ASKED TO NOT PLAY POLITICS AT THIS CRUCIAL JUNCTURE

# KCR asks Modi to send Covid vaccine samples

Says will determine if there are any side effects before administering



**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE**  
HYDERABAD, 24 NOVEMBER

versity as well as members of Covid-19 experts' committee attended the video conference.

Later the chief minister held a meeting with officials and instructed them to prepare the necessary infrastructure for the vaccine cold chain. Committees should be formed at the state, district and block level to roll out vaccination programme against Covid-19.

The chief minister informed Modi that the state government was ready to distribute and administer the vaccine on a priority basis and has prepared an action plan. He instructed officials to prepare for the cold chain. He reminded that India has various regions with different weather conditions.

"Corona virus did not affect the country in a uniform manner. Vaccine, too, may lead to different side effects in different regions. Hence, initially send a batch of vaccine doses to the states which can be administered to some people. Let us assess the situation after administering the vaccine on these people and then administer it to the rest," said Rao. Apart from the CM, senior officials, vice-chancellor of health uni-

## Rohingya issue: BJP warns of surgical strike in Hyderabad

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE**  
HYDERABAD, 24 NOVEMBER

BJP will conduct a surgical strike in the old city area of Hyderabad, said state president and MP Bandi Sanjay Kumar as party leaders continued to attack AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi on the Rohingya issue though the latter wondered what Union home minister Amit Shah was doing if 30,000 Rohingyas have made to the electoral list.

As Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha president and Bengaluru MP Bandi Sanjay warned BJP will do a surgical strike in Hyderabad old city to evict the Rohingyas

beat chase out the Rohingyas, these sons of Pakistan. We do not want Rohingyas or those from Pakistan or Afghanistan to vote," thundered Bandi Sanjay Kumar who is also the MP from Karimnagar. TRS working president KT Rama Rao was quick to attack the BJP state president for resorting to hate filled speeches for a few votes and seats.

"Has this person gone insane for a few votes and seats? Kishen Reddy Garu You are MoS (minister of state) Home Affairs. Do you condone your colleague MP's reprehensible, hate filled statements?" said Rao.

BJYM president Tejasvi Surya created another controversy after he claimed the police tried to stop him from entering Osmania University college campus and pay respect to martyrs of Telangana struggle. However, he breached the barricades and entered the premises.

## Kerala LDF govt decides to withdraw controversial Police Act amendment

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE**

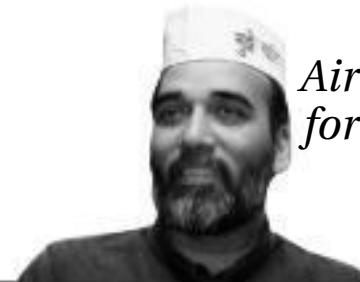
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,  
24 NOVEMBER

The Left Front government in Kerala has decided to withdraw the controversial amendment of Section 118A to Kerala Police Act. A Cabinet meeting held here on Wednesday decided to recommend Governor Arif Mohammed Khan to issue an Ordinance to replace Sec 118-A in Kerala Police Act, which was newly introduced in the Act through an Ordinance on Saturday.

The decision came just a day after chief minister Vijayan said the state government will not go ahead with implementing the amendment.

The introduction of the new Section, which gives the police more powers to prosecute persons who use any kind of mode of communication platforms to slander others, triggered massive outrage, with people from all walks of life, including supporters of the LDF government, criticising it for being unconstitutional.

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Air quality management commission should consider use of bio-decomposer for stubble.

URGING CENTRE'S NEWLY-CONSTITUTED AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION TO CONSIDER SPRAYING THE PUSA BIO-DECOMPOSER

DELHI ENVIRONMENT MINISTER GOPAL RAI

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 25 NOVEMBER 2020

The Statesman

05

THUMBNAILS



Bihar Pro-tem speaker Jitan Ram Manjhi at the State Assembly on the second day of the Winter Session on Tuesday. IANS

**'Fake' TRP scam:** The Mumbai Police on Tuesday filed a charge sheet in a court in Mumbai in the alleged TRP (Television Rating Points) rigging scam. Police has arrested 12 persons, including Republic TV's western region distribution head and owners of two other channels, in connection with the case. PTI

**Kerala actress assault case:** The police on Tuesday arrested the office secretary to MLA K B Ganesh Kumar, for allegedly trying to threaten and influence a witness in the actress sexual assault case, in which popular Malayalam actor Dileep is an accused. Pradeep Kumar(42), was arrested from Pathanamthitta. PTI

**Fake encounter case:** A special CBI court on Tuesday discharged two policemen accused in the 2003 Sadig Jamal alleged fake encounter case, after observing there wasn't sufficient ground to proceed against them. PTI

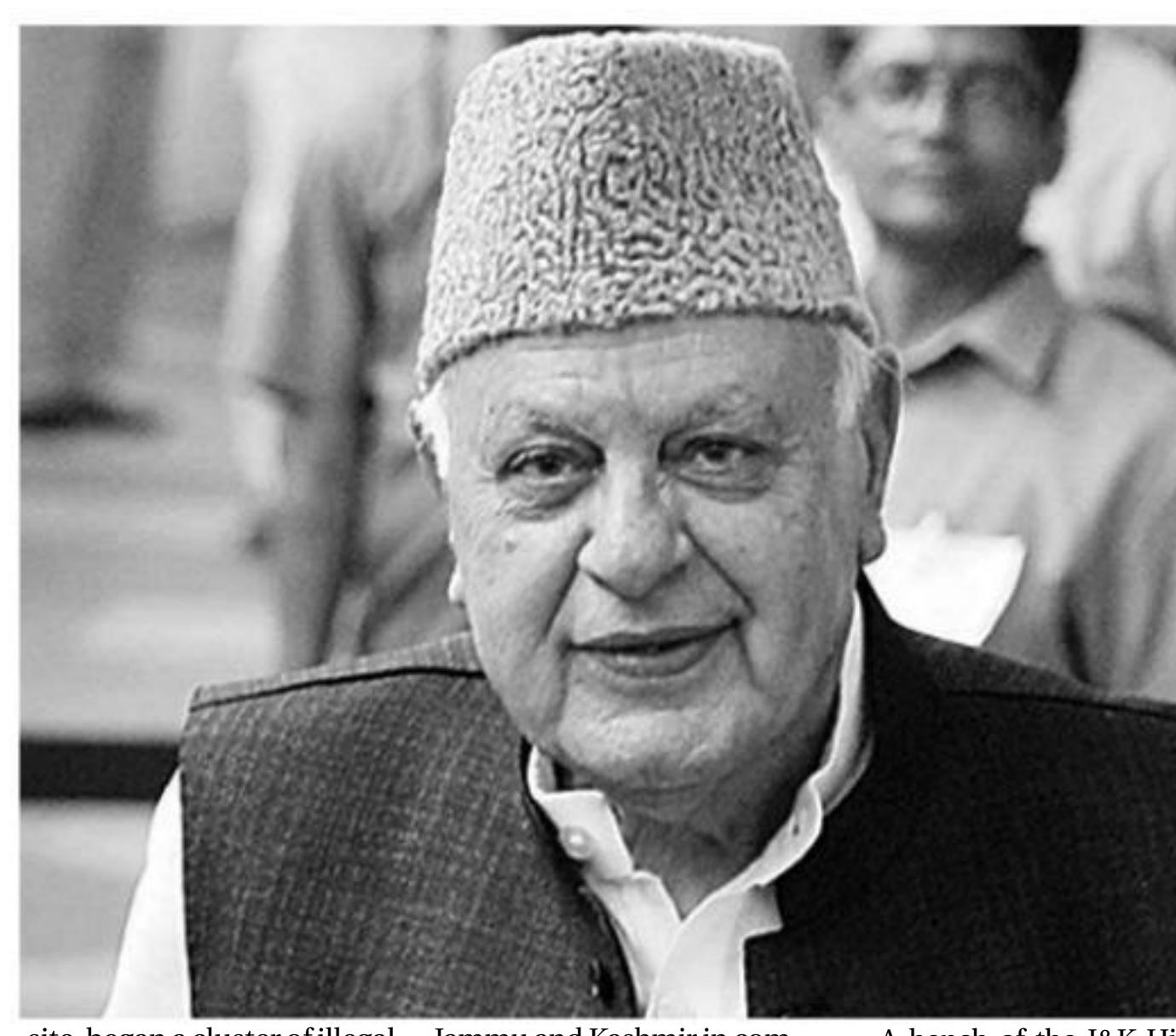
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(An Institute of National Importance under MHRD, Govt. of India)  
Date: 24.11.2020  
Advt. No. CH 1627  
Applications are invited for one Junior Research Fellow (Chemistry) under DST sponsored project. Please visit the website <http://www.iiests.ac.in> (W. Code DRC-004/20-21) under "Employment" for details.  
Dean (R&C)

**INDIAN INSTITUTE OF ENGINEERING SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, SHIBPUR HOWRAH - 711103**  
(An Institute of National Importance under MHRD, Govt. of India)  
Date: 24.11.2020  
Advt. No. CS 1623  
Applications are invited for one Junior Research Fellow (JRF) (Computer Science and Technology) for a SERB-DST Project on IoT Security and Forensics. Please visit the website <http://www.iiests.ac.in> (W. Code DRC-002/20-21) under "Employment" for details.  
Dean (R&C)

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Counseling: 28.11.2020 at 2:00 PM  
FOR MORE DETAILS: 9315156574  
PRINCIPAL

**SEARCH FOR MISSING FEMALE**  
  
General public is here by informed that one female Name: Anju @ Komal, W/o Sarvin, R/o H.No. 677 Tahirpur Sarai, Dilshad Garden, Delhi, Age: 27 years, Height: 157 CM, Complexion: Fair, Face: Long, Built: Thin, Wearing: Red Colour Suit and Yellow Colour Salwar has been missing since 01.11.2020 from her house in the area of PS Seemapuri, Delhi. In this regard a DD No. 01A dated 02.11.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Seemapuri, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this female but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this female kindly inform to the following.  
E-Mail: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in)  
Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>  
Fax: 011-24368639  
Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641  
SHO  
P.S. Seemapuri, Delhi  
Ph. 011-22599397, 7065036030  
DP/271/SHD/2020



# Farooq in govt's 'land grabbers' list

NC chief describes it as BJP govt's strategy to disturb him

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, 24 NOVEMBER

**F**ormer chief minister and National Conference chief Farooq Abdullah's name has surfaced in the list of "encroachers" of government and forest land that is being investigated by the CBI and also the revenue department of the J&K administration. However, Farooq has described it as another strategy of the BJP government to disturb him on the eve of the 8-phase local bodies' election in the Union Territory (UT).

It is learnt that Farooq's name in the report of the revenue department has surfaced in connection with the "encroachment" on government land at Sunjwan in Jammu where he has built his private residence on the state and forest land. The probe in the government land grabbing by influential politicians, bureaucrats and businessmen was ordered by the J&K High Court.

The report is learnt to have pointed out that in 1998 Farooq bought 3 Kanals of land from different owners, on a private khasra number 21 situated at a different location in village Sunjwan in the outskirts of Jammu. However, instead of taking possession over 3 Kanals of private land he has been accused of encroaching upon more than 7 Kanals of the nearby prime state and forest land.

The market value of the encroached land has been estimated around Rs. 10 crore.

"With Abdullah setting his

site, began a cluster of illegal occupation of government land by influential politicians and businessmen", claimed the report. Another National Conference leader allegedly encroached upon 1 kanal of government land in the same area of Sunjwan. Name of the son of a former judge also figures in the list.

Certain other politicians, bureaucrats and an hotelier are accused of having encroached on 30 kanals of land valuing about Rs.40 crores as per the market rates.

Reacting to his name surfacing in the scam, Farooq said, "Not only my house, there are hundreds of others in the area. I will not react to this as they just want to distract me. Let them do it."

The CBI has registered three separate cases for alleged land grab under the Roshni Act in

Jammu and Kashmir in complicity with government officials, in which a secretary-rank officer at the Centre is also under scanner. The revenue department is separately probing encroachments on government and forest lands.

Minister of state for finance, Anurag Thakur, who is BJP's election incharge for the local bodies' polls, told media persons here that the top politicians of National Conference, PDP, Congress and also their blue eyed businessmen were allowed to systematically grab government land in J&K. People associated with the Gupkar Alliance have robbed J&K for years while in power. This might be the biggest land grab scam in the entire country. In the past 30 to 40 years, a gang of people has been capturing the government lands, he alleged.

A bench of the J&K High Court headed by Chief Justice Gita Mittal not only declared the Roshni Act illegal and unconstitutional but also ordered the J&K revenue authorities to identify and make public all influential persons who have grabbed government land.

Reacting sharply to the allegations against Farooq Abdullah, the National Conference said that, "the news attributing to sources that Dr. Farooq Abdullah is a beneficiary of the Roshni Act is completely false and is being spread with a malicious intent. Dr. Farooq Abdullah has not availed of the Roshni scheme for either his residence in Srinagar or in Jammu and anyone who says otherwise is lying. The fact that they are using sources to plant this story shows that it has no legs to stand on".

## Bihar girl murder case: No evidence after 6 years, CBI files closure report

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
PATNA, 24 NOVEMBER

In a curious development, country's premier investigating agency, the CBI, has filed a closure report in the sensational kidnapping-cum-murder of a 14-year-old Muzaffarpur girl Navruna Chakraborty without coming to the final conclusion. The CBI filed the closure report in the Muzaffarpur court well six years after taking over the case which involved 10 extensions.

Navruna, a grade seven student, had mysteriously gone missing from her ancestral house at Chakraborty lane in Muzaffarpur town some eight years back in September 2012. Some high-profile persons who had their eyes set on Chakraborty's land-wards were alleged to be involved in her murder. Subsequently, the case was investigated by the local district police and the Crime Investigation Department (CID) but with

no progress in the case, it was finally handed over to the CBI. The Central agency began formal investigation in the case by registering an FIR in February 2014.

During the course of investigation, the CBI claimed to have recorded the statements of 66 witnesses and also announced a cash reward of Rs 10 lakh to anyone who provides sufficient information about this case with concrete evidence. Not only that, the agency even conducted lie detector tests, brain mappings and narco tests of several local police officials, ward councillors and other suspects yet it failed to extract evidence.

"Our endeavour of getting some clues in this regard after the announcement has gone in vain as no one turned up before us with any evidence. It has not worked," the CBI reportedly said in the closure report. This is the second time in quick succession that

the CBI has come under fire for failing to come to any conclusion despite taking very long time for investigation.

The agency is still investigating the murder of Brahmeshwar Mukhiya, chief of a private militia who was shot dead by unidentified persons on 1 June 2012 while taking a morning stroll outside his house in Bhojpur district. Here in this case too, the CBI announced Rs 10 lakh reward to persons for getting leads in the case but has failed to unravel the mystery over his killing till date. The CBI has taken over the investigation in July 2013.

A 70-year-old Mukhiya, self-styled chief of Ranvir Sena, a private militia of upper caste Bhumihar landlords, was accused of plotting massacre of some 300 people, mostly Dalits and backwards in its bloody war of attrition with the Maoists. The Sena came into being in 1994.

## HC upholds right to choose partner

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
ALLAHABAD, 24 NOVEMBER

Amid a row over 'love jihad', Allahabad High Court ruled that the right to choose a life partner, irrespective of religion, is intrinsic to the right to life and personal liberty.

The bench contradicted a HC judgment in September and another in 2014 against marriages performed after alleged conversions, saying that the two rulings were not good in law. Justices Pankaj Naqvi and Vivek Agarwal made the observations while quashing an FIR lodged by a man against his daughter's husband, whom she married after conversion to Islam.

Interference in a personal relationship would constitute a serious encroachment into the right to freedom of choice of the two individuals, they said. The ruling comes amid plans by Uttar Pradesh and some other state governments to enact laws to curb alleged conversions in the guise of marriage, which BJP leaders call love jihad.

While allowing the writ petition by Salamat Ansari and Priyanka Kharwar alias Alia of Kushinagar, the judges cited Article 21 of the Constitution on personal liberty.

"To disregard the choice of a person who is of the age of majority would not only be antithetic to the freedom of choice of a grown up individual but would also be a threat to the concept of unity in diversity," they said.

We do not see Priyanka Kharwar and Salamat as Hindu and Muslim, rather as two grown up individuals who out of their own free will and choice are living together peacefully and happily for over a year, the bench said.

Ansari and Priyanka Kharwar alias Alia had sought quashing of an FIR lodged on 25 August, 2019 under several sections of the Indian Penal Code, including illegal confinement and inducing a minor into sex. The FIR had also invoked the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

The petitioners argued that they are adults and competent to choose a person of their choice as their partner. The counsel for the woman's father argued that conversion only for sake of marriage is prohibited and such marriage has no sanctity in law.

## Bengal will work with Centre in Covid vaccination prog: CM



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 24 NOVEMBER

Chief minister Mamata Banerjee today told Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during a video conference, that West Bengal is performing remarkably well in tackling Covid situation compared to other metropolitan cities and offered to work together with the Centre to ensure a speedy vaccination as soon as the vaccine is available.

Ruing that the Centre has not released the pending funds, Miss Banerjee said the state government has already spent around Rs 4,000 crore for Covid management but the Centre has released only Rs 193 crore till now. She reminded Mr Modi that non-payment of Goods and Services Tax (GST) dues amounting to Rs 8,500 crore have

suburban trains, the state has successfully reduced Covid death and positivity rates while increasing the discharge rate. "West Bengal is performing remarkably well compared to other metropolitan areas," she reportedly told.

She lauded the health workers (including Asha and other Covid warriors) in the battle against Covid.

Asha workers have already undertaken 45 crore visits to households in public health campaigns, she informed during the meeting.

Further Miss Banerjee echoed the concern raised by Maharashtra chief minister Uddhab Thackeray saying political gamesmanship, competitive rallies and public health hazards must be averted in the society in the greater public interest, said the official.

Miss Banerjee is learnt to have claimed that despite the festivities during the Durgapuja-Kalipuja-Chath puja season and operation of

**CANCELLATION / PARTIAL CANCELLATION /SHORT TERMINATION/ SHORT ORIGINATION /DIVERSION OF TRAINS**

It is notified for the information of all concerned that Railways have decided to Cancel / Partially Cancel / Short Terminate/Short Originate/Divert following Passengers Special Trains / Festival Special Trains in view of the Kisan Agitation in Punjab:-

CANCELLATION OF MAIL / EXPRESS TRAINS	
Train No. & Name	Date of cancellation (from the Originating Station)
04624 Amritsar-Saharsa Festival Special	25.11.2020
04623 Saharsa-Amritsar Festival Special	26.11.2020
04652 Amritsar-Jaynagar Express Special	25.11.2020
04651 Jaynagar-Amritsar Express Special	27.11.2020
04654 Amritsar-New Jalpaiguri Karmabhoomi Superfast Clone Special	25.11.2020

PARTIAL CANCELLATION OF SPECIAL TRAINS			
Train No. & Name	Short Terminate at/ Short originate from	Partially Cancelled between Stations	Date of cancellation (from the Originating Station)
08237 Korba-Amritsar Spl.	at Ambala Cantt.	Ambala Cantt.-Amritsar	of 24.11.2020
08238 Amritsar-Korba Spl.	from Ambala Cantt.	Amritsar-Ambala Cantt.	26.11.2020
02407 New Jalpaiguri-Amritsar Superfast Special	at Ambala Cantt.	Ambala Cantt.-Amritsar	25.11.2020
02408 Amritsar- New JalpaiguriSuperfast Special	from Ambala Cantt.	Amritsar-Ambala Cantt.	27.11.2020
02357 Kolkata-Amritsar Spl.	at Ambala Cantt.	Ambala Cantt.-Amritsar	of 24.11.2020
02358 Amritsar-Kolkata Spl.	from Ambala Cantt.	Amritsar-Ambala Cantt.	26.11.2020
02715 Nanded-Amritsar Exp.	at New Delhi	New Delhi-Amritsar	of 24.11.2020
02716 Amritsar-Nanded Exp.	from New Delhi	Amritsar-New Delhi	26.11.2020
02925 Bandra Terminus-Amritsar Special Express	at Chandigarh	Chandigarh-Amritsar	of 24.11.2020
02926 Amritsar-Bandra Terminus Special Express	from Chandigarh	Amritsar-Chandigarh	26.11.2020
05933 Dibrugarh-Amritsar Spl.	at Ambala Cantt.	Ambala Cantt.-Amritsar	of 24.11.2020
05934 Amritsar-Dibrugarh Spl.	from Ambala Cantt.	Amritsar-Ambala Cantt.	27.11.2020
04651 Jaynagar-Amritsar Exp.	at Ambala Cantt.	Ambala Cantt.-Amritsar	of 24.11.2020

Train No. & Name	Diverted Via	Date (from the Originating Station)
02904 Amritsar-Mumbai Central Golden Temple Mail	Amritsar-Tarn Taran-Bas	of 24.11.2020
04674/04650 Amritsar-Jaynagar-Amritsar Express	Amritsar-Tarn Taran-Bas	25.11.2020
08215 Durg-Jammu Tawi Festival Spl.	Ludhiana Jn.-Jalandhar Cantt.-Pathankot Cantt.	25.11.2020
08216 Jammu Tawi-Durg Festival Spl.	Pathankot Cantt.-Jalandhar Cantt.-Ludhiana Jn.-	27.11.2020
04673 Jaynagar-Amritsar Express	Beas-Tarn Taran-Amritsar	of 23.11.2020
02903 Mumbai Central-Amritsar Central Golden Temple Mail	Beas-Tarn Taran-Amritsar	25.11.2020
04626 Amritsar-Bandra Terminus Clone Spl.	Amritsar-Tarn Taran-Bas	25.11.2020
02926 Amritsar-Bandra Terminus Express	Amritsar-Tarn Taran-Bas	25.11.2020
02716 Amritsar-Nanded Sachkhand Exp.	Amritsar-Tarn Taran-Bas	25.11.2020

Note : For any kind of information passengers are requested to contact Railway Enquiry No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website [www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in](http://www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in)

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## III-conceived

It is not often that the CPI-M can be complimented but it deserves at least one cheer for prevailing upon its powerful chief minister, Pinarayi Vijayan of Kerala, to announce he would "not implement for now" the state government ordinance signed into law by the Governor which both the Opposition and critics within assert curbs the freedom of expression. The Left Democratic Front (LDF) administration had last week amended the Kerala Police Act which stipulated either imprisonment for up to five years or a fine of up to Rs 10,000 or both for those who produce, publish or disseminate content through any means of communication with an intention to intimidate, insult or defame any person through social media. But why only one cheer and not the full three? First, because despite the CPI-M general secretary reportedly speaking to Vijayan he refused to withdraw the ordinance, only agreeing to issue a statement saying it would not be implemented for now and would be discussed in the next session of the state Assembly before any steps are taken. Second and more important, because the CPI-M, in common with all other political parties functioning in India, seeks to support and promote only group rights via legislation - whether premised on ideological affinity, class, caste, gender, religion or any other. This virtue signalling gives them a get-out-of-jail card despite failing abysmally to implement the law of the land, i.e. the Indian Penal Code.

To that extent, the Chief Minister's justification for the ordinance had some merit - that the government has the responsibility of upholding a citizen's individual freedom and his/her dignity, as enshrined in the Constitution. "The popular idea that one's freedom ends where the other's nose begins needs to be respected. However, there have been instances of this idea being repeatedly violated via defamatory allegations on social media," Vijayan said. Yet, it's not the job of the State to give unbridled powers to an ill-equipped constabulary to prevent cyberattacks targeting individuals even when they are ruinous to the target's professional, social, familial or private life. It is true that the Supreme Court has repealed section 66-A of the IT Act and Section 118 (d) of the Kerala Police Act on the grounds that these were against freedom of expression, while the Centre has not introduced any other legal framework. "In this scenario, the police are unable to deal effectively with crimes committed through social media to tarnish the image of individuals," Vijayan pointed out. Excellent in theory but in practice this would amount to enabling the not-so-friendly neighbourhood cop to file criminal charges against citizens by interpreting any kind of communication as possibly defamatory which police expressly do not have the domain knowledge to do. Under the amended law, police can file charges against any "person of interest" or take suo motu action apart from framing criminal charges based on the complaint of a victim of social media harassment/defamation if the allegation is of "injury to the mind". The potential for misuse is mindboggling.

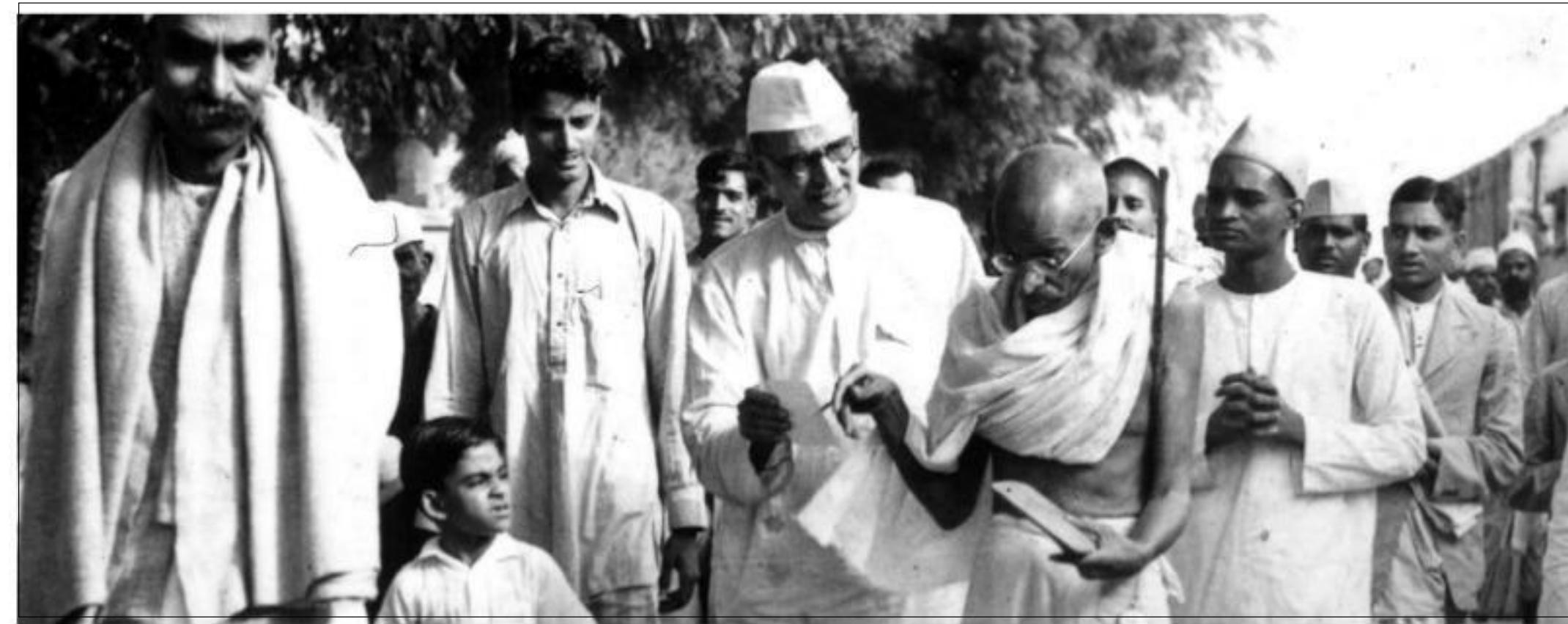
## Grievous wounds

There is so much of the little boy being dragged to school in the manner Donald Trump is coming to terms with his loss in the American presidential election. By allowing the US General Services Administration to begin the transition to President-elect Joe Biden - a process that involves provision of federal funding as well as access to matters of administration - he seems to have given the first indication that he is preparing to hand over power on 20 January to the man who beat him in this month's election. With Michigan having officially certified that Mr Biden won the state - notwithstanding a last-ditch effort by Mr Trump to coerce Republican legislators to hijack the result - the incumbent's fate has been effectively sealed. But even as this development delivered a fatal blow to Mr Trump's political and legal ploys to remain in the White House, the Republican was far from gracious in clearing the transition, claiming in a tweet that his battle continues and hoping "we will prevail". This bravado comes in the face of serial setbacks that Mr Trump has faced in the past few days. A judge in Pennsylvania threw out his challenge to the voting saying it comprised "speculative accusations" that were "unsupported by evidence." With Pennsylvania and Nevada, the third state on which Mr. Trump had pinned his hopes, likely to certify the election this week in Mr Biden's favour, it seems clear that the President's campaign is petering out. Michigan's Board of Canvassers, the official body comprising two Republicans and two Democrats, has certified Mr Biden's victory and the state's secretary of state has said, "the election was fair and secure, and the results accurately reflect the will of the voters."

In refusing to concede with grace, and in seeking to drive American domestic and foreign policy during the period of transition, Mr Trump may have caused incalculable harm to his legacy, as well as damaged his own standing within a party which he ought to have been in control of after securing the support of more than 70 million voters. Nobody likes or respects a sore loser, and Mr Trump has inflicted this tag upon himself with his recalcitrance. This position also has been adopted by those close to him, not the least by Emily Murphy, the head of the GSA, who claimed in a letter to Mr Biden written immediately after Mr Trump gave the green light, that she had acted "independently" and not under pressure from any member of the White House or the Executive Branch. Indicating the bitterness that has entered the discourse, she also claimed that she had received threats to her person, her family and even her pets to make a premature determination. A sad chapter is coming to an end but not without inflicting grievous wounds.

# Myth and Mahatma

The biggest myth about non-violent action is the idea that Gandhi invented it and he is often called 'the father of non-violence'. Well, he did raise ahimsa action to a level never achieved before him, but he was not its author or inventor



The Oxford English Dictionary describes the term myth as "fictitious narrative usually involving supernatural persons, actions, or embodying some popular idea concerning natural or historical phenomenon." Mahatma Gandhi was an exceptional mythology man, terribly intelligent, with tremendous intuition for people, and a great instinct for what was right. He generated stories wherever he went; his arrival at a place was preceded by stories; and invariably, he left behind many more when he departed. There were many comple things that the anecdotes conveyed. When the stories reached the people's ears, they got mutated into something more magical. These mutations have not stopped even in the sesquicentenary year of his birth. However, a perpetual mythmaking took place during his lifetime. This made the Mahatma more fascinating than Gandhi, the actual historical figure.

There are many myths about Mahatma Gandhi. Only a few of them would be mentioned here.

Myth One: One of the most common and dangerous myths about Gandhi is that he was a saint. He was also endowed with the title the Mahatma (means 'Great Soul'). People called him saint since he was considered as a master of meditation. But indeed, there was hardly anything to call him the master of meditation or that he meditated at all - aside from observing a minute of silence at the beginning of his prayer meetings. Gandhi even objected when people called him 'a saint trying to be a politician.' He said he was instead 'a politician trying to be a saint.' Gandhi recognized the supremacy of politics by suggesting that if moral politics is not the basis of society, pure power politics will be the determining force. Indeed, this is what has happened now to the politics of this country. In his Autobiography entitled *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, Gandhi wrote: "My experiments in the political field that are now known, not only to India, but to a certain extent to the 'civilized' world. For me, they have not much value; and the title of 'Mahatma' that they have won for me has, therefore, even less. Often the title has deeply pained me; and there is not a moment I can recall when it may be said to have tickled me."

Myth Two: Most of the myths and misconceptions surrounding Gandhi have to do with non-violence (Ahimsa). The biggest myth about non-violent action is the idea that Gandhi invented it and

he is often called 'the father of non-violence'. Well, he did raise ahimsa action to a level never achieved before him, but he was not its author or inventor. Ahimsa has been part of the Indian religious tradition for centuries - Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist. Gandhi took the religious principles of ahimsa common to Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism and turned it into a non-violent tool ('Satyagraha' which means Truth-Force) for mass action. He used it to fight not only colonial rule but social evils such as racial discrimination and untouchability as well. Gandhi said that he had an innate and natural attraction for truth from his early years, but ahimsa was not an innate trait for him. It was in the pursuit of truth that he discovered ahimsa. His ideas on ahimsa were born later, during the most difficult crises and conflicts of his life.

Sharp of Harvard University in his book, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, cited over 200 cases of mass nonviolent struggle throughout history. Curiously, some of the best earlier examples come from the US, in the years leading up to the American Revolution.

Myth Three: Another myth about Gandhi is the idea that India's political leaders, especially leaders of Indian National Congress (INC) beginning with Nehru, are the inheritors of his tradition and have carried it on. But really, India's leaders have rejected much more of Gandhi than they have adopted. Gandhi began his political career in India by joining INC, instead of trying to build up new institutions for the fulfillment of his aims and objectives. The objective, which he set before himself, was to organize people collectively in terms of non-violence.

But how the INC viewed Gandhi's non-violence is revealed from a statement of the then Congress president Abul Kalam Azad: "Mahatma Gandhi has to give the message of non-violence to the world and, therefore, it is his duty to propagate it; but we have to consider our position as the representatives of the INC. The INC is a political organization pledged to win the political independence of the country. It is not an institution for organizing world peace." On 29 January 1948, the day before his assassination, he advised the INC to go into voluntary liquidation,

form the Lok Sevak Sangh and devote themselves wholly to the education and organization of the masses for Swaraj. But the top leaders of the party were so enamoured of power that they gradually isolated Gandhi who lamented, "I am a spent force."

Myth Four: One of the most common myths is that Gandhi put in efforts, out of all proportion, to appease Muslims and the belligerence of Muslims was the result such appeasement. The allegation is far from true. During the fiftieth anniversary of 1857, way back in 1907 in England, Vir Savarkar had described the Mahomedans in India as one of the hues of the rainbow.

By the Lucknow Pact in 1916 the Muslims were given greater measure of representation in proportion to their population. Gandhi had indeed arrived from South Africa, but he had no share in the Lucknow negotiation. Because he was then a new entrant in the public life of the country. However, sagacious leaders like BG Tilak, Annie Besant and Moham

mmed Ali Jinnah justified the pact. Even Dr Shyamaprasad Mukherjee, after quitting the first Cabinet of Ministers of the first independent Government, did not return to the Hindu Mahasabha, for he thought it improper on the part of any political party not to accommodate Muslims and other communities. Subhash Chandra Bose, too, complained against the inadequate representation of Muslims in the INC. It is quite clear that it was not Gandhi alone who persevered in his efforts to take Muslims along. Other leaders, including the Hindus, were working towards it. So, how could Gandhi alone be accused of appeasement?

Myth Five: Gandhi has been labelled as anti-science by a large section of intelligentsia. It is often assumed that he was against the use of machinery as such, in agriculture as well as in industry. This is an erroneous notion and has caused unnecessary misgivings about Gandhi's economic thought. He did not reject modern science. He would "welcome the machine that lightens the burden of crores of men living in cottages." What he was really against was 'the craze for machinery' and 'its indiscriminate multiplication.' In his words, "Mechaniza-

tion is good, when the hands are too few for the work intended to be accomplished. It is an evil when there are more hands than required for the work, as is the case in India."

Myth Six: It is widely held that Gandhi was responsible for the creation of Pakistan. But close scrutiny of pages of history of the period prove it to be a clever distortion to misguide the gullible. Lord Wavell, the then Viceroy, invited Gandhi and Jinnah for negotiations. Abdul Kalam Azad represented INC. The INC had not subscribed to the two-nation or two-community theory. The question of Gandhi ever conceding it does not arise. He had gone to the extent of saying that that partition could take place only over his dead body. But Jinnah had succeeded in poisoning the minds of a big chunk of Muslims in India. There was a patent hazard. If the political parties failed to arrive at an agreement at the national level, British would exploit the situation and evade independence of India under one pretext or another. Mountbatten announced his plan to quit, leaving India in the lurch.

However, on the morning of 3 June 1947, the day the partition plan was announced, Gandhi had serious doubts pertaining to the wisdom of the decision. He told Rajendra Prasad, "I can see only evil in the plan." In utter frustration he started to speak in an anguished idiom: "O God, please take me away!" He was completely frustrated and broken down. Questions are often raised as to why Gandhi did not resort to a fasting to protest the partition of India. He did not do that simply because partition itself was not the root of the problem. Gandhi once said about himself, "I have been known as a crank, faddist, madman. Evidently the reputation is well deserved. For, wherever I go, I draw to myself cranks, faddists, and madmen." Indeed, Gandhi was a fascinating person. Whether one loves him or hates him or reveres him or studies him, there is no denying that he was one of the most gripping and interesting characters in the history of the last century. Throughout history myths have been used by people all over the world to inspire and draw others into action. Just like we have used Gandhi as the poster boy today to drill in the idea of Swachcha Bharat - Gandhi also turned to popular characters from Indian mythology and narrative whether he needed a poster boy to further his idea of nationalism and independence.

Whether we like it or not, a mythological personality matters!

A MEMBER OF THE **ANN**  
ASIAN VOICES

## Fine over Covid breach

The Jakarta Public Order Agency (Satpol PP) has slapped Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) leader Rizieq Shihab with a 50 million rupiah (\$3,550) fine after finding the controversial cleric guilty of disregarding Covid-19 health protocol when organising a public event that attracted large crowds in the Indonesian capital over the weekend. Jakarta Satpol PP head Arifin said in a letter addressed to Rizieq that the latter had violated physical distancing measures currently in effect to prevent coronavirus transmission among the public. Arifin said Satpol PP held Rizieq, along with the FPI, responsible for not limiting the number of guests attending his daughter's wedding, which also served to commemorate the birthday of Prophet Muhammad, in Tanah Abang, Central Jakarta on Saturday evening. The event, he said, was in violation of Jakarta Gubernatorial Regulation No 79/2020 on the enforcement of health protocols as well as Gubernatorial Regulation No 80/2020 on the imposition of transitional large-scale social restrictions (PSBB). "For such a violation, (Rizieq) is subject to a sanction in the form of an administrative fine amounting to 50 million rupiah," Arifin said in the letter, a copy of which was obtained by The Jakarta Post. "We hope (Rizieq) is willing to cooperate on future events to ensure compliance with health protocols, so that the chain of Covid-19 transmission may be broken."

The firebrand cleric has responded to the sanction, claiming that he had always intended to apply physical distancing measures during the event. However, he said the overwhelming deluge of guests had made it difficult to impose any physical restrictions. "We had actually wanted our [guests] to sit 1m away from one another," Rizieq said in a video uploaded to the

## Jakarta Post

FPI's YouTube channel on Sunday, adding that the large number of crowds had quickly taken over most of the event space, making it hard for even the clerics in attendance to find any available seats. Despite having violated the physical distancing protocol, Rizieq expressed appreciation for his supporters' enthusiasm during the event.

"It's okay, this is what my (supporters') enthusiasm looks like. I hope we will be delivered from any diseases and that Allah will soon eradicate the coronavirus pandemic... Don't forget, everyone has to follow the command of clerics and ulemas," he said. Rizieq returned to Indonesia on November 10 after nearly three years of self-proclaimed exile in Saudi Arabia.

On the day of his return, thousands of his supporters - including FPI members - marched to Soekarno-Hatta International Airport in Tangerang, Banten, to welcome him, causing severe congestion on the road to the airport. Jakarta governor Anies Baswedan reportedly met with Rizieq in the latter's house in Petamburan, Tanah Abang on the same day, purportedly only to "catch up" with each other, according to media reports. Rizieq was a key figure behind a series of sectarian rallies organised by Islamist groups to demand Ahok's imprisonment for blasphemy in the months leading up to election day.

Anies, who was widely seen to have ridden the Islamist wave to win the 2017 gubernatorial election, visited the FPI headquarters and met with Rizieq during his campaign, sparking criticism from both detractors as well as his more progressive supporters. Rizieq was embroiled in several legal cases when he fled the country in 2017, reportedly on umrah (minor hajj) to Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR editor@thestatesman.com**

## Let's prepare for a vaccine

SIR, Apropos your report,



'Oxford AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine 70% effective on average', published today, the joint effort by Oxford University and AstraZeneca to develop a vaccine to combat Covid-19 crossed a milestone with the announcement that it is 70 per cent effective in trials. The update on this vaccine, along with the progress of two other vaccines being developed by Pfizer and Moderna, are encouraging in the backdrop of a surge in infections following the festive season. India cannot afford another lockdown. Therefore, the next phase in the battle should focus on vaccination.

There are about 50 candidate vaccines undergoing trials, based on four technology platforms. Given the differences in the distribution infra-

structure needed and the consequent impact on costs, we need more than one vaccine and multiple pathways to access them. The government also needs to prioritise the beneficiaries as there won't be enough to go around as soon as a vaccine receives regulatory approval.

Covid-19 levels differ-

ences and everyone is potentially a spreader. Therefore, it makes sense to prepare for both a free vaccination drive as well as one that is market linked. The quicker people get vaccinated, the better it will be for the process of economic recovery. The priority must be to cover the largest number in the shortest time. Money on vaccines is money well spent, since it will speed up an economic rebound.

Yours, etc., N Sadasiva Reddy,

Bengaluru, 24 November.

### THE VC'S ROLE

SIR, This refers to the article, 'Targeting VCs' (*The Statesman*, 23 November) by Devennder Singh Aswal that focuses on the role of Vice-Chancellors and their removal for non-compliance with the con-

cerned statutes and regulations. While VCs are appointed by the appropriate authorities with a view to running the university, keeping an eye on the maintenance of academic excellence, healthy atmosphere and efficient administration, some of them are found to be deviating from their brief. The mismanagement and the malpractices committed by erring VCs definitely impact the atmosphere of institutions. It is here that autonomy and academic freedom become questionable and call for review. Transparency is the last word in all the responsibilities assigned, which make the incumbent accountable for his/her activities. A VC, on assuming office, must be conscious of proper discharge of duties.

Yours, etc., Gautam Kumar Mazumder,

Basirhat, 23 November.

### PRIVATE BANKS

SIR, The Internal Working Group (IWG) set up by Reserve Bank of India has recommended, among other things, that the large corporate houses may be allowed to open private banks. As reported by you today, ex-governor of RBI Raghuram Rajan and former deputy governor Viral Acharya, in a joint article have strongly opposed the recommendation. Their main objection seems to be that because these banks will be owned by big corporate houses, they will have easy access to the funds of these banks and it will be difficult for the Controller in cases of default in repayment.

As indicated in your report, the IWG's recommendation appears to be for opening new private banks in addition to the existing nationalised and private banks. Already the private banks are operating profitably. This being so, what harm will be caused to the country's banking sector if a few other private banks owned by corporate houses are allowed to operate in tandem? Yet, Rajan and Acharya being very eminent professional bankers, their strongly worded opposition to the recommendation must have significant meaning that does not meet the eye.

Yours, etc., Sanjith Ghatak,

Narendrapur, 24 November.

Recently, Visva Bharati was on the boil on an issue that is unrelated to what is intrinsically a wall of discord between two rival political parties of West Bengal when behind the lush, green landscape of Santiniketan lurked some rowdy forces that went on a rampage inside the Visva-Bharati campus. The mob directed its ire at the construction site of a boundary wall that was sought to be erected around the venue of the traditional Poush Mela. Even the old gates of the university were bulldozed to the ground.

Even a hard-core optimist would be left to wonder whether anything is still left of Rabindranath Tagore's "Abode of Peace" to fall back upon. The mess suggests that the institution badly needs to be rescued from politicians and henchmen pretending to respect Tagore. The pressures exerted by a consumerist society and politicisation of the academic spirit have left Gurudev's ideals in shambles.

At the heart of the rampage in Visva-Bharati was the long-standing tension prevailing between the local business community and the University. Unable to cope with public health problems arising out of Poush Mela, the University decided not to hold it, but the Centre's logistic support for it could not stop the tension which led to an untoward incident. Moreover, the proposed wall was also a direct consequence of a previous order of the National Green Tribunal that "a barrier needs to be constructed to demarcate the Mela ground from the University and locality".

However, the question remains whether the erection of a wall around the complex was necessary. The site of the wall is integral to Santiniketan's landscape and is not far from the VC's official residence. Or this was symptomatic of the ideological walls that Tagore himself was aware of, that were silently cropping up in the institution of his creation. Nima Sadhan Bose has maintained this in his book Bhagnanir Visva-Bharati (1991) thus: "He refers to these in 1934 but accepts them as part of the natural process. Tagore says, 'When I am not there, whatever emerges from the combined thinking of many minds will be the natural truth. What will be artificial is if any one person imposes his ideas and directives. The prāṇadharma is to embrace all contrarian views and forge ahead'."

Sadly, Tagore's dream of education nursed by the bounties of nature is now almost unrecognisable. The poet-humanist did not have to contend with student indiscipline, indifferent teachers and political interference. Santiniketan is, of late, sub-

## Why Visva-Bharati has its back to the wall



merged in all this and more and with promoters offering new horizons in real estate, the myth of rural Utopia has been badly shaken. Instead of being an institution of excellence, it is in the grip of mediocrity, indiscipline and vested interests.

When social and political tensions, violence and land grabbing by real estate agents have come to be accepted as part of Santiniketan's reality, it is pointless to expect the purity of Gurudev's ideas to prevail.

Sriniketan, too, held enormous talent in handicrafts and in time became a flourishing market for leather and textile products, but courses in textile technology, pottery and ceramics are not in sight. Many other basic features of the environment are rapidly disappearing under contemporary urban pressures without so much as a flicker of resistance. There is tacit acceptance of the fact that Tagore must yield to the transformation.

In fact, Visva-Bharati has limitations in dealing with those flaunting political credentials, especially trade unions who have succeeded in sullying Tagore's objectives. There were

also findings on how a former VC had offered liberal franchises to private unregistered institutions, to run different courses for a price.

Amartya Sen's remark, sometime ago, that the boundary wall around the campus is "enormously big" and is more comparable to "Presidency jail than any other wall I can immediately think of" caused a flutter in the Visva-Bharati roost. The then VC, however, made a strained effort to defend the unsightly construction, even disputing Sen's view that "the wall went against what Tagore had envisioned". The discord, therefore, centred over whether the university had yet again made a travesty of the poet's legacy. It was another affront to the salubrious ambience of Santiniketan that has already suffered on account of real estate activity.

Indeed, a series of travesties over the years, notably, the theft of the Nobel medal from Rabindra Bhavan and a murder in the girls' hostel, could explain the decision to build a prison-like wall. With a wall in place, the university sought to able to depend on its guards. It might be a matter of subjective reflection

whether the wall would run counter to Tagore's vision.

Till the mid-1960s, there was no system of access control in the sprawling area of Santiniketan. Though the buildings were open to visitors at specified hours, the compound was open to all with a handful of security staff. Concern for security was felt after a bomb explosion in 1967-68, when Indira Gandhi as Chancellor was delivering her speech at the annual convocation. The abode of peace started to be drawn into the vortex of political turmoil.

It was during 1970-71 that Santiniketan saw its share of murders and arson and became asantiniketan. The convocation and the Poush Mela were postponed. Suggestions came that fences around the Rabindra Bhavan complex, the Kala Bhavan and Chaitinatala areas be erected. However, it was the belief among some Ashramites that the proposal of access control by police was ruinous to Tagore's ideals of Yatra Visvam Bhatyaika Needam.

Armed guards alone might not create an ambience of security in Santiniketan. Irrespective of the result of

the CBI in finding the stolen memorabilia of Tagore, what was needed was to safeguard the priceless works and artefacts that the poet and his illustrious ancestors bequeathed to Visva-Bharati and the nation. Blatant commercialization of Tagore dealt a body blow to their ideals. Rare and unpublished manuscripts and art works have long been allowed to be taken out of Rabindra Bhavan and elsewhere to help publishing houses, authors and a section of Visva-Bharati's academia reap immense financial benefits.

The killing of Saswati Pal has been a damnation for the institution far more terrible than the outrage at Rabindra Bhavan. Not less terrible was the incident of a girl being dragged to the men's hostel, there to be ragged and sexually assaulted. The university's predicament is direly pathetic.

The recent wall dispute shows that political currents and crosscurrents do vitiate the security ambience by not merely igniting clashes in the campus but sometimes compelling vice-chancellors to join one camp or the other.

In fact, the university in Santiniketan is different from any other in two ways. First, it was conceived by a man who was not an academic either by vocation or training, but who had the novel idea of learning contrary to the established academic values of his times. One does not know whether campus politics figured anyway in his conception of Visva-Bharati as a seat of learning. Secondly, Visva-Bharati has come to represent much more than a university founded by Tagore. It is, generally viewed as a symbol of Bengali culture by virtue of its official guardianship of Tagore's heritage.

Anything that undermines the prestige of the university is an offence done to that heritage and the culture which was fashioned out of it.

But the fact remains that a university today cannot remain an Ashram. It cannot maintain its spirit in a state of innocence or insulate itself from larger socio-political processes. It must face all resistances that jeopardize the integrity of its vision and fight for it, if required.

The writer, a former Associate Professor, Dept of English, Gurudas College, Kolkata, is presently with Rabindra Bharati University.

### 100 YEARS AGO

#### OCCASIONAL NOTE

The tenth Convention of the Young Men's Christian Association which is being held this week in Calcutta is an event of no small interest. The Y.M.C.A. added greatly to its claims upon public support by the splendid work which it did for all our troops during the war-work which will always be remembered to its honour. The presence of the Governor of Bengal, who opened the Convention, was a well-deserved recognition of the services rendered by the Association to the whole community. Lord Ronaldshay, in his opening speech, referred to the progress made by the Indian National Union of the Association during the past decade and to the development of different branches of its work. Mr. Justice Greaves, speaking as chairman of the executive committee of the National Council, bore testimony to the value of work with which he has been closely associated. Sir Arthur Yapp, in the course of a very interesting address, recalled the origin of the Association, with which not everybody is so well acquainted as he supposed. The Y.M.C.A. was started, as Sir Arthur Yapp said, by two young men to whom the idea occurred as they were returning from Divine service, and at first there were only twelve members, assembling in a tiny room in London for which they could only afford to pay a rent of half-a-crown and which formed their headquarters. From that little beginning the movement spread to all parts of the world.

### NEWS ITEMS

#### TOWN PLANNING IN MADRAS

Madras, Nov 24  
The following Resolution was passed at the Local and Municipal Conference: That the location of Government buildings and of residential quarters for Government employees should be treated as an integral part of the general town-planning policy of the Municipality in which they are situated. In carrying out the schemes for the relief of congestion and town extension difficulty is not infrequently experienced in inducing the population to migrate from congested areas in course of development. The select sites for public offices and for the quarters of the Government without carefully considering the development of the town is unsound. The Government accept the principle laid down by the Conference and commend it for the careful consideration of all local bodies.

#### TRAGIC OCCURRENCE

Oorgaum, Nov 24  
A tragic occurrence took place at Robertsonet a mile away from here, between one and two o'clock on the morning of Nov. 10. S. Rozario younger son of George Rozario, carpenter foreman, Champion Reef Mine, is alleged to have fired four shots at his father and step-mother while they were asleep in bed. Both the victims were removed to the Government hospital. The father died on Sunday Nov. 14, and the mother is in a precarious condition as the shots have entered her head and lungs. Accused was placed before the special magistrate on Monday and remanded until Saturday. Accused was also employed at the Champion Reef Mine, and is a widower with one child. The shooting was done through a glass window.

#### BOMBAY STRIKE CHARGES

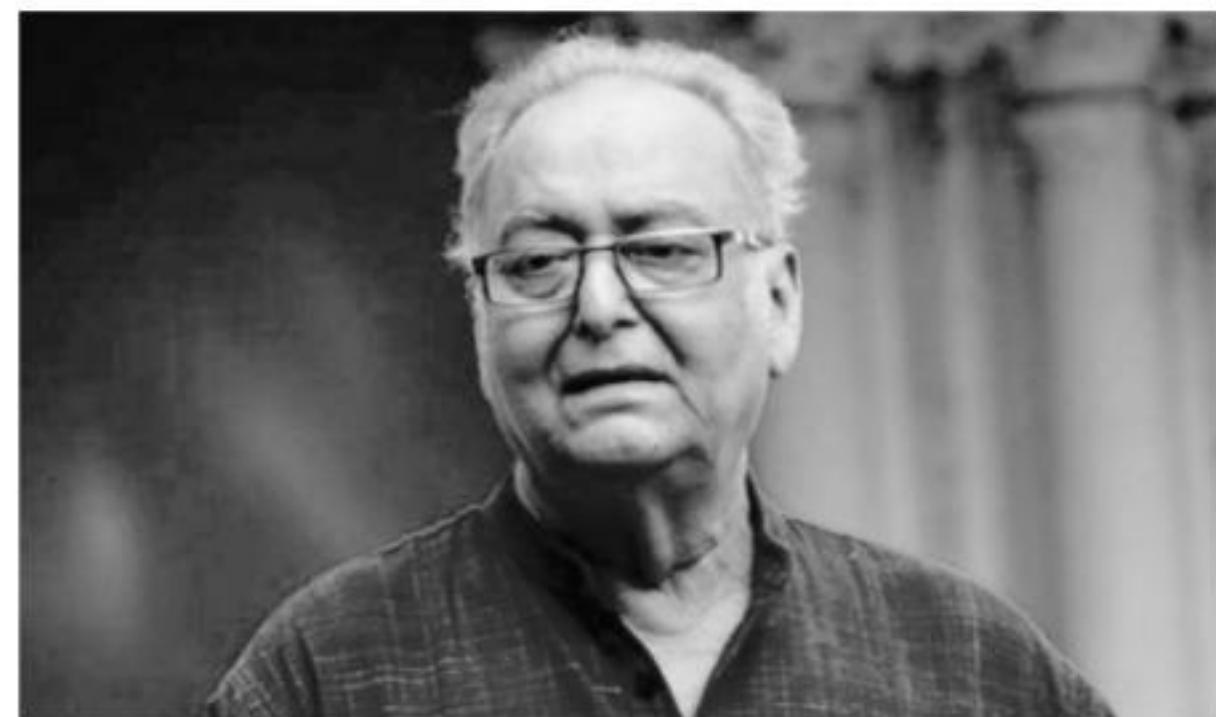
Bombay, Nov 24  
At the Esplanade Police Court Mr. A.H.S. Aston, Chief Presidency Magistrate, resumed the hearing of the case against 37 strikers who had been charged with being members of an unlawful assembly, and not dispersing when ordered to do so on November 15. Mr. Frank Oliveira, the Magistrate who gave the orders to disperse, in cross-examination deposed that the strikers had been assembling on the Maidan for two months before, and November 15 was the only day when the witness was asked to go there in connection with trouble about the trams. When witness found the crowd not obeying the orders to disperse he ordered the Police Commissioner to arrest the men. The crowd was very quiet and respectful, and not defiant. The case was adjourned.

#### EXTENSIVE JUTE STACK FIRE

A disastrous fire broke out in the compound of the Ganges Jute Mills, Shibpur, yesterday afternoon, when two stacks of jute nearly 40 feet high containing several thousand bales caught fire. The Central Fire Brigade with two motors, hastened to the scene of the outbreak. With the help of the Ganges Jute Mills' and the Howrah Jute Mills' appliances, the Brigade in a very short time had concentrated about 40 jets on the burning jute, and as there was a copious supply of water from the tanks of both these mills. The situation was serious as apart from the great height of the stacks, the heat and smoke was unbearable and the possibility of the bales breaking away at any moment. The damage so far is estimated at over two lakhs of rupees.

## As a peasant loves his land

JAWED NAQVI



saying about his embrace of Mumbai.

Being in love with Bengal brought financial loss, and a yawning gap between his economic status and his social status as a cultural icon. "No matter how much people revere me, the harsh truth is at least 1,000 employees in Kolkata's corporate sector earn much more than me. That is why I have to keep working."

The late American-born Indian actor Tom Alter offered another handy insight into Dilip Kumar's acting that would easily apply to Soumitra Chatterjee. Alter, fresh from acting school in Pune, asked Kumar — who would be 98 on December 11 — the secret of his good acting. "Sher o sukhān," Dilip Kumar replied cryptically but earnestly. What he meant was that his

deep love of poetry and literature — which often comes in a package deal together with the art of conversation — enabled him to delve as deeply into a role as any character required of him.

Deep involvement with literature and the arts, packaged with a spontaneous ease of close observation and ability to strike up a conversation in heart-tugging Bengali held Soumitra da in good stead.

"Perhaps no other actor in India was as lucky as me," he told Rediff.com about having worked with the greats like Satyajit Ray, Minal Sen and Tapan Sinha.

It did seem like he lived an actor's dream, wrote author and journalist Sandip Roy in a tribute in The Scroll. A

boy from Krishnanagar, working as an All India Radio announcer, he was rejected for Ray's Aparajito (1956) because Ray felt he was too tall for the adolescent Apu. But Ray kept him in mind and reached out to him when he was making Apur Sansar (1959), the third part of the trilogy. That partnership lasted 14 films and won Chatterjee the Legion d'Honneur, France's highest civilian award just like Ray.

The stories of Chatterjee's diligence rivalled Dilip Kumar's, a mandatory requirement for method actors. He once said: "Having worked with Ray I realised how difficult it is to become great." At the age of 27, at Ray's behest he changed his handwriting for Charulata because his style was deemed too modern, a rounded style that arrived on the cultural scene post-Ray. He learned to play the piano for just one song.

While the trio of Dilip Kumar, Raj Kapoor and Dev Anand dominated the Bombay cinema for decades, Bengali movie audiences were torn between Chatterjee and Uttam Kumar.

Chatterjee once said: "If Uttam Kumar committed a crime and then he gave that smile, I was ready to believe he was innocent." But he also said: "The fact that he wouldn't even consider a different hairstyle for the sake of acting was disappointing."

Unlike 'stars', Soumitra Chatterjee did not keep buttoning his collar, donning a wig and playing romantic heroes opposite women one-third his age, wrote Roy. When Ray's son Sandip revealed he was planning to make with a different actor a Feluda detective film, sequel to the cult char-

acter portrayed by Chatterjee, the thespian reportedly laughed: "This is a very wise decision. I am no more a Feluda. I am a Felu uncle now."

The mourners who walked in their thousands holding flowers and candles on Chatterjee's last journey through the maze of Kolkata streets, once relished his off-screen persona too, which was as absorbing and purposeful as the movies he made. In his daily life, Chatterjee carried and displayed the essence of Bengal's cultural and political renaissance.

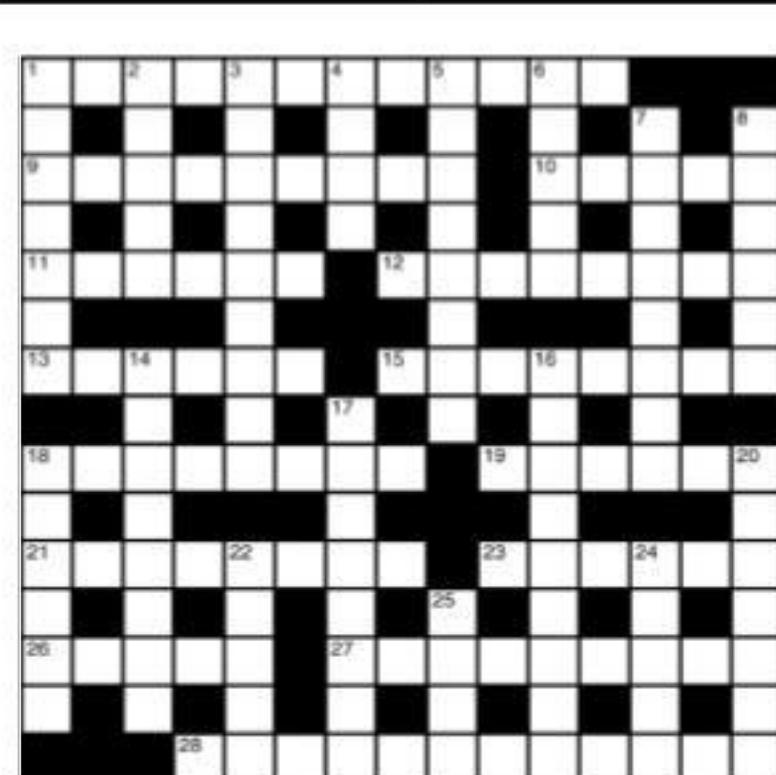
"I am surprised that the man who was in power in Gujarat during the horrific riots of 2002 is now the man on the throne of India. Perhaps people can't see a powerful alternative. Or they are unable to understand the toxic nature of this politics," he told an interviewer shortly after the advent of Prime Minister Modi in 2014. Chatterjee was speaking in an unmistakably partisan tone, using words that are not the staple of movie actors of late, barring notable exceptions. Indian film industry is seeing signs of McCarthyism in the political climate.

Mughal emperors may have discouraged beef-eating as hurtful to Hindus. Chatterjee refused to be generous. "I can't express in words the anger I feel when I see the drama about eating beef... People around the world eat beef. Most important, who is anyone to decide what others can and cannot eat?" Chatterjee's legacy is of a piece with rich Bengal cultural heritage, and it looks primed to defeat the looming illiberal storm threatening to uproot it.

Dawn/ANN.

NO 28145

#### CROSSWORD



#### YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

#### ACROSS

- 1 Caught fungal infection scratching backside, with your pen essentially inserted – that's embarrassing! (12)
- 9 Disorganised figure taking clothes off has problem (9)
- 10 Old-fashioned doorman powerless, on reflection (5)
- 11 As part of Commonwealth day I ran around city (6)
- 12 Titillating at first, star novelist makes waves (8)
- 13 Medic in court blocking entrance (6)
- 15 Make pleasant smell with fragrant plant (8)
- 18 is caused by my repeated depression and 'Special One' going
- 19 Effective place to wee when camping? (6)
- 21 Forward unwise to ignore introduction from referee (8)
- 23 Dotty over young woman (6)
- 26 K Cobain's widow provides spice (5)
- 27 On my way to drink drop of malt – the French blend (9)
- 28 Patriot's song upset supporters (12)

#### DOWN

- 1 That girl in school is stuck (7)
- 2 Suggest, in a feeble manner, going topless (5)
- 3 Organised criminal is impressive (9)
- 4 River sport (4)
- 5 Endures river that is flooding Oxford University (5,3)
- 6 Leading man's new bird (5)
- 7 Male animal in discomfort beginning to emit unpleasant chemical (8)
- 8 Dessert in Finland mostly served up with peel of star-apple (6)
- 14 Cold meat pie with no base concerning Victor (8)
- 16 Love how much fuss one can receive? (9)
- 17 Wooden paneling was hemming in bed (8)
- 18 Evacuated station with long grass (6)
- 20 Bores head back north and get lost regularly (7)
- 22 Gloomy daughter's back (5)
- 24 Artist to prepare air-free environment? (5)
- 25 Sticks up for superior (4)

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



*CEA has confirmed my suspicion that India will end 2020-21 with a current account surplus. But I am puzzled by the tone of his remarks. Is the CEA celebrating a current account surplus?*

P. CHIDAMBARAM  
FORMER FINANCE MINISTER

## THUMBNAILS

XacBank Mongolia selects Infosys Finacle to power its digital transformation: Infosys said on Tuesday XacBank, a leading universal bank in Mongolia, has selected Finacle's core banking, treasury, and corporate banking solution suites to power its digital transformation. The suites would enable the bank to drive all-round business transformation to improve customer engagement, operational excellence, and the flexibility to launch tailored offerings on demand, for continuous innovation and growth, the IT major said in a statement.

Rajasthan Energy Conservation award on 14 Dec, last date for filing application 30 Nov: Entrepreneurs, industries and local bodies will be awarded with the Rajasthan Energy Conservation (RECA) award on December 14, for saving energy by adopting efficient measures or nonconventional sources of energy. Subodh Agarwal, CMD of Rajasthan Renewable Energy Corporation Ltd (RRECL) said that the state government will confer the awards on energy conservation day on December 14, for exemplary energy saving and efficiency activities in different categories like Industries, Buildings, Local Bodies, Offices, individuals and energy Auditors. He said that the last date for filing application is November 30. So far about 50 applications in different categories have been received by RRECL, he said.

Bengaluru-based payments company Cashfree raises \$ 35 million: Bengaluru-based fintech, Cashfree said on Tuesday it has received \$ 35.3 million as part of its Series B raise. The investment was led by growth stage financial services investor, Apis Growth Fund II, with participation from existing investor Y Combinator, it said in a statement. Cashfree, a payments and banking technology company that enables businesses in India to collect payments online was founded

## 'No additional performance security on abnormally low bids'

Relaxation from higher performance security on lower bids now will help contractors

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 24 NOVEMBER

The government has decided not to seek additional performance security on abnormally low bids received on government contracts to provide relief to contractors already facing liquidity issues in the wake of the ongoing pandemic.

The finance ministry has asked all government ministries and departments not to ask for an additional security deposit or bank guarantees in cases of low bids unless there is a compelling reason to do so.

Even in such cases, performance guarantee deposit should be taken only after approval from higher authority and properly assigning reasons, the ministry said in a recent circular on the issue.

Under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan 3.0 announced earlier this month the government has relaxed regulations on earnest money deposit (EMD) and performance security on government tenders and reduced performance security on contracts



to 3 per cent from a level 5-10 per cent now to boost construction and infrastructure development.

The relaxation from higher performance security on lower bids now will help contractors facing acute financial crunch on account of slowdown in economy due to the pandemic and prevent delays in execution of projects.

The industry had earlier represented that higher guar-

antee being sought on low bids may affect the ability of contractors to bid in tenders and hence reduce competition.

The finance ministry has noted that there is no provision of higher security deposit/bank guarantee in general financial rule for procurement by government departments. So, it had said that no provision should be made unless approved by higher authorities.

The ministry has said that its instruction will be applicable for all kinds of procurements viz. Goods, Consultancy, Works, non-consulting Services etc. As per the Manual for Procurement of Goods 2017 issued by the expenditure Department, an Abnormally Low Bid is one in which the bid price, in combination with other elements of the Bid, appears so low that it raises material concerns

as for the capability of the bidder to perform the contract at the offered price.

Procuring Entity in such cases seek written clarifications from the bidder, including detailed price analysis of its bid price in relation to scope, schedule, allocation of risks and responsibilities, and any other requirements of the bids document. If, after evaluating the price analyses, Procuring Entity determines that the bidder has substantially failed to demonstrate its capability to deliver the contract at the offered price, the Procuring Entity may reject the bid/ proposal.

However, the finance ministry has said it would not be advisable to fix a normative percentage below the estimated cost, which would automatically be considered as an abnormally low bid. It has said that due care should be taken while formulating the specifications at the time of preparation of bid document to have a safeguard against the submission of abnormally low bid from the bidder. This would also prevent departments from seeking additional performance security.

## Toyota's Innova Crysta comes in with ₹16.26 lakh



NEW DELHI, 24 NOVEMBER

statement.

The new version also comes with a new and larger infotainment system and connectivity features such as real-time vehicle tracking, geofencing, last parked location among others, it added.

Commenting on the launch, TKM Senior Vice President, Sales and Service, Naveen Soni said the model redefined the segment when it was introduced in India more than 15 years ago as a premium multi purpose vehicle (MPV).

The new version of the model comes with various changes in exterior design and enhanced safety features like front clearance sonar (with MID display) to prevent collisions while parking in tight spaces, TKM said in a

## GlobalLogic acquires UK-based ECS Group

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 24 NOVEMBER

Digital product engineering company GlobalLogic on Tuesday announced acquisition of ECS Group, a move that would help advance its European strategy and financial services footprint as well as add a slew of complementary cloud-centric offerings to its portfolio.

London-headquartered ECS delivers digital solutions that leverage cloud technologies, with a focus on digital engineering, data analytics and customer experience.

The financial and other details of the transaction were not disclosed. Under the agreement, ECS will continue to operate with its existing leadership and staff as a wholly-owned subsidiary of GlobalLogic, according to a statement.

"The company serves multiple industries, with partic-

ular expertise in the banking and financial services sector," GlobalLogic said in a statement announcing the buyout.

The ECS acquisition would enable GlobalLogic to advance its European strategy, while expanding its financial services footprint and adding a host of complementary cloud-centric offerings to its portfolio.

"ECS brings to Global-

Logic a highly-regarded proficiency in cloud architecture and advisory services as well as expertise in leading cloud platforms," the release said.

ECS possesses Amazon Web Services (AWS) capabilities, for which it is an advanced consulting partner and Amazon Connect Service Delivery Partner. Founded in 2008, ECS currently has more than

COVID-19 vaccine: India Aatmanirbhar for syringes, says industry



NEW DELHI, 24 NOVEMBER

An industry body of syringe and needle manufacturers on Tuesday said that it has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi offering an additional capacity of over 350 million syringes per month depending upon the requirements during the vaccination programme against the COVID-19.

This capacity is already built up by the manufacturers taking learning from mask and PPE kits experience India faced in March and April 2020, All India Syringe & Needle Manufacturers Association (AISNMA) said in the letter.

All the members of the association would like to assure the nation that our country is 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' on the availability of syringes and we as a country don't even have to look outside for our coming up requirements," it added.

Since the association members are geographically placed across all over India, they can ensure timely supplies at respective states / locations in a seamless and efficient manner, AISNMA said. "We look forward for an opportunity to serve our country and humanity at this moment of crisis..." it added. AISNMA is the nodal association for syringe manufacturers in India and has 19 members located across the country.

## India's two-wheeler exports to see sustained growth in H2 FY22: Ind-Ra

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 24 NOVEMBER

India's two-wheeler exports will see sustained growth in the second half of next fiscal after witnessing temporary hurdles in the first half this year due to COVID-19 and weakened crude oil prices, hurting the economies of key exporting destinations, according to ratings agency Ind-Ra.

Exports momentum is expected to continue in the remaining part of FY21 and FY22, primarily driven by the exporting countries' lower penetration level, demand for usage as commercial fleet, stability in crude prices, lack of public infrastructure and aversion to public transport amid COVID-19, India Ratings and Research said in a statement.

India exports two-wheel-



ers mainly to African, Asian and Latin American countries, constituting 37.5 per cent, 22.9 per cent and 21.4 per cent, respectively, during the first half of FY21, it added.

"Within this, Nigeria, Colombia, Nepal, Bangladesh and Philippines together accounted for around 50 per

cent of the total exports in FY20 (in terms of value)," the rating agency said.

Indian original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) will continue to gain traction for their key offering on the back of their strong market position and robust distribution network, it added.

Indian two-wheeler manufacturers such as Bajaj Auto and TVS Motor Co will benefit from their exports-focused business model, with almost 49 per cent and 26 per cent, respectively, of their total sales volume in the first half of FY21 coming from exports.

## \$ 271 bn consumer spending to shift from cash to cards by 2023 in India: Accenture

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 24 NOVEMBER

About 66.6 billion transactions worth USD 270.7 billion are expected to shift from cash to cards and digital payments by 2023 in India, and further increase to \$ 856.6 billion by 2030, a report by Accenture said on Tuesday. This rapid shift to digital payments due to the COVID-19 pandemic is urgently increasing the need for banks to modernise their payment systems, the report, titled 'Playing the Long Game in Payments Modernisation', said.

The report is based on a survey of 120 payments executives at banks globally regarding the transformation of their payments business, as banks make multi-year investments to compete with non-bank digital payments providers and comply with new regulations.

"In India, 66.6 billion transactions worth \$ 270.7 billion are expected to shift from cash to cards and digital payments by 2023 and increase to \$ 856.6 billion by 2030," it said.

Conducted between July and August this year, the report surveyed markets including Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, India, Norway, Singapore, Thailand, the UK and the US. It noted that the expected drop in cash volume is based on GlobalData and Accenture Research assumptions. Also, the forecast of non-cash transactions in consumer spending is calculated using cash evolution data and MSC rates provided by GlobalData.

The report forecasted that nearly 420 billion transactions worth \$ 7 trillion, globally are expected to shift from cash to cards and digital payments by 2023 and increase to \$ 48 trillion by 2030.

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People of all ethnic groups enjoy the full rights of survival, development, and freedom of religious belief

CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON ZHAO LIJIAN  
CRITICISES POPE OVER COMMENT ON UIGHUR MUSLIM MINORITY

The Statesman

NEW DELHI WEDNESDAY 25 NOVEMBER 2020

09

# Ethiopia says foes surrendering, Tigray forces report battle win

Three-week war has spread to Eritrea, where the Tigrayans have fired rockets, and also affected Somalia

AGENCIES

ADDIS ABABA/NAIROBI,

24 NOVEMBER

**T**he Ethiopian government said on Tuesday that Tigrayan soldiers were surrendering in the face of its advance towards the regional capital, but the local forces reported they were resisting and had destroyed a prestigious army division. Hundreds have died, more than 41,000 refugees have fled to Sudan, and there has been widespread destruction and uprooting of people from homes in the northern Tigray region.

The three-week war has spread to Eritrea, where the Tigrayans have fired rockets, and also affected Somalia where Ethiopia has disarmed several hundred Tigrayans in a peacekeeping force fighting



A general view of Um Rakuba refugee camp in Qadarif, Sudan. ■ AP

al Qaeda-linked militants.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's government said many Tigrayan combatants had responded to an ultimatum to lay down arms before a threatened offensive against Mekelle city, with half a million inhabitants. The deadline expires on Wednesday.

"Using the government's 72-hour period, a large number

Reda said an important army unit - which he termed the 21st mechanised division - was destroyed in an assault at Raya-Wajirat led by a former commander of that unit now fighting for the TPLF.

The prime minister's spokeswoman Billene Seyoum denied that. The US, which regards Ethiopia as a powerful ally in a turbulent region, France and Britain were the latest foreign powers to call for peace. Washington backed African Union mediation efforts "to end this tragic conflict now", while Paris and London warned against ethnic discrimination.

The U.N. Security Council was to hold informal talks later on Tuesday over Tigray, according to a U.N. source and an email. Abiy has said he will not negotiate with the TPLF though he does plan to receive

AU envoys. His predecessor, Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, criticised international mediation efforts by "well-intentioned outsiders" in a piece for Foreign Policy magazine.

"The key problem in the international community's approach to Ethiopia is the assumption of moral equivalence, which leads foreign governments to adopt an attitude of false balance and both-sidesism" between the federal and Tigrayan sides, he said. TPLF leader Debretsim Gebremichael has disputed the government version that Mekelle is encircled at a roughly 50km distance and said the ultimatum was a cover for government forces to regroup after defeats. The conflict threatens to destabilise the vast nation of 115 million people from myriad ethnic groups.

## Japan ex-PM Abe's office investigated over funding scandal

TOKYO, 24 NOVEMBER

Former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe acknowledged Tuesday his office is being investigated for questionable expenses linked to a dinner party his office hosted for his supporters ahead of an annual cherry blossom viewing party, a scandal that has been on the backburner for months.

Abe made the comment in response to reports Monday that the Tokyo District Public Prosecutors' Office has been interviewing his aides over the scandal. None of his aides or supporters have been arrested so far.

Abe, who was in power for nearly eight years as Japan's longest-serving leader, stepped down in mid-September, citing ill health, but some critics have said the scandal might have been a reason. His successor as prime minister, Yoshihide Suga, who served as chief Cabinet secretary in Abe's government, scrapped the cherry blossom viewing party the day he took office.

The scandal involves a 2018 annual dinner party for which Abe's guests paid a 5,000 yen (\$48) fee. Opposition lawmakers have said that the fee was too low for a party at an upscale Tokyo hotel, and that Abe's office allegedly covered the difference without reporting it properly.

### TUSKER TRAIL



Elephants cross lake Kioko in the Amboseli National Park, Kenya. ■ AGENCIES

## Singapore arrests Bangladeshi man for plotting attacks against Hindus, planning to fight in J&K

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
SINGAPORE, 24 NOVEMBER

### Bangladeshi man identified as 26-year-old Ahmed Faysal - has been arrested under the Internal Security Act

A Bangladeshi man, who was plotting attacks against Hindus in his own country and planning to fight in Kashmir, has been arrested by Singapore's security agencies which investigated the suspicious activities of 37 people in Singapore following recent terror strikes in Europe, the government said on Tuesday.

In a statement, the Ministry of Home Affairs said that counter-terrorism investigations into the suspicious activities of 37 people in Singapore have been carried out after most of them posted on social media, inciting violence or stoking communal unrest," the ministry said.

As for the 23 foreigners, 16 of them, including 15 Bangladeshis and one Malaysian have been repatriated, it said. Seven foreigners are still under investi-

gation, it added. One Bangladeshi man under investigation identified as 26-year-old Ahmed Faysal - has been arrested under the Internal Security Act (ISA) following investigations into "terrorism-related activities", the ministry said.

He even bought foldable knives, which he claimed he would use for attacks against Hindus in Bangladesh, it said, adding that he was also willing to travel to Kashmir to fight against "perceived enemies of Islam". Preliminary investigations by the Internal Security Department (ISD) showed that Faysal was radicalised and harboured the intention to "undertake armed violence in support of his religion", the Channel News Asia reported, citing the statement issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). Faysal had been work-

ing as a construction worker in Singapore since early 2017, and became radicalised in 2018 after "imbibing online propaganda on ISIS", the statement said. He was arrested on November 2.

"He was attracted to ISIS' goal of establishing an Islamic caliphate in Syria and wanted to travel there to fight alongside ISIS against the Syrian government. He believed that he would be a martyr if he died while doing so," it said. In mid-2019, Faysal shifted his allegiance to Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham (HTS), another militant group fighting to establish an Islamic caliphate in Syria.

He donated funds to a Syria-based organisation on the understanding that his donations would benefit the HTS' cause in Syria," the ministry said.

## EU, other donors step up with funds to help Afghanistan

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
GENEVA, 24 NOVEMBER

The European Union and other donors offered new funding for Afghanistan on Tuesday, as a U.N. official declared now is "not the time to walk away" from years of hard work in trying to build peace and stability in a poor country where Taliban fighters have made inroads against the internationally-backed government.

A largely virtual, one-day pledging conference in Geneva, co-hosted by Finland, drew representatives from over 70 countries in the first such event in four years. It comes as the COVID-19 crisis has commanded worldwide attention, and the virus outbreak in Afghanistan has compounded persistent ills like corruption and extremist violence.

Countries like Britain, the Netherlands and Canada stepped forward with hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of pledges for Afghanistan as the session got under way, after speeches from top officials like Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who hailed the country's "ambitious agenda for development and reform."

"The United Nations stands with the people of Afghanistan on the path toward peace, development and self-reliance," Guterres said, expressing hope that donor pledges will "translate into real progress and concrete improvements for the people of Afghanistan."

The EU pledged \$1.43 billion in assistance to Afghanistan over the next four years, but like many others made its support conditional on the

Kurdish and Turkey-backed fighters clash in Syria, 11 dead

BEIRUT, 24 NOVEMBER

Clashes between Kurdish fighters and Turkey-backed opposition gunmen in northern Syria left at least 11 fighters dead in some of the most intense fighting in weeks between the two sides, an opposition war monitor and a Kurdish spokesman said Tuesday.

Exchange of fire and shelling between the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces and Turkey-backed opposition gunmen who identify as the Syrian National Army have not been uncommon since Turkish troops invaded parts of northern Syria in October of last year.

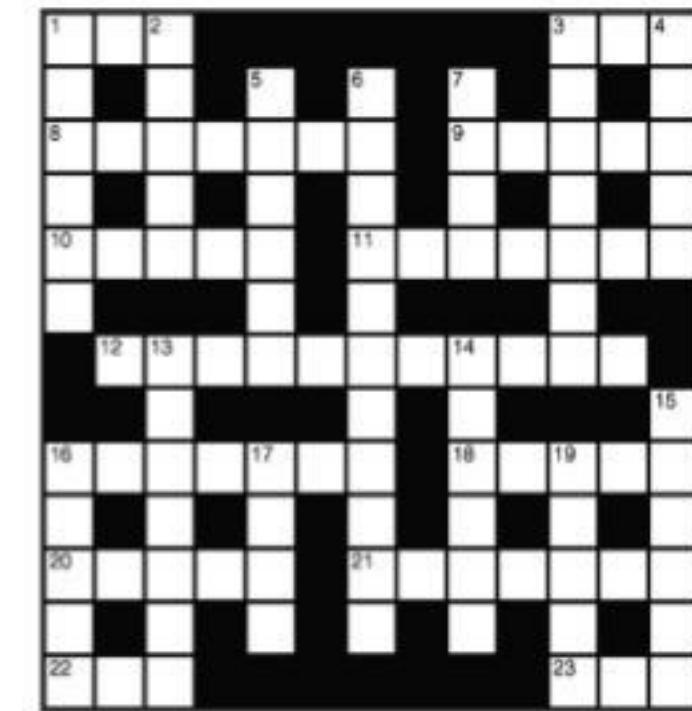
The Monday night clashes near the town of Ein Issa were triggered by an attack by Turkey-backed gunmen on SDF positions, according to the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitor. The Observatory said Turkey-backed fighters lost 11 gunmen in the battle and an unknown number of SDF fighters were also killed or wounded.

An SDF spokesman who goes by the name of Mervan Qamishlo confirmed the clashes, saying that the group's fighters were repelling a Turkey-backed attack. He did not comment on how many SDF gunmen were killed.

A spokesman for the Turkey-backed fighters did not respond to requests for comment. Turkey says Kurdish fighters in Syria are linked to the Kurdish Workers Party. ■ AP

### LEISURE

#### 10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



**ACROSS**  
1 For what reason? (3)  
3 Young child (3)  
8 Ceremonial staff (7)  
9 Poison (5)  
10 Shirt (5)  
11 Type of dog (7)  
12 Colour (6,5)  
16 Chinese filled dumplings (3,4)  
18 Bishop's headdress (5)  
20 Web-footed bird (5)  
21 Form of sugar (7)  
22 Nought (3)  
23 Attempt (3)

**DOWN**  
1 Pungent green paste (6)  
2 Give up (5)  
3 Fabric (7)  
4 Male singer (5)  
5 Thoroughfare (6)  
6 SMS (4,7)  
7 Celestial body (4)  
13 Footballer's mistake (3,4)  
14 Disturbance (6)  
15 Cure (6)  
16 Railway truck (5)  
17 Cooker part (4)  
19 Game fish (5)

**SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD**

**ACROSS**  
1 Flaw, 11 Menu, 18 Back, 13 Compete, 14 Linger, 15 Scary, 17 Lilac, 20 Gnu.  
3 Bored (Floor-board), 7 Foot-path, 18 Bloc, 19 Earl Grey, 21 Creed, 5 Diner, 6 Fauna, 10 Mous-  
es, 9 Nomenclo-  
ture, 22 Huge.

**DOWN**  
1 Founce, 2 Art, 3 Household, 4 Reversible, 5 Diner, 6 Fauna, 10 Gnu.

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

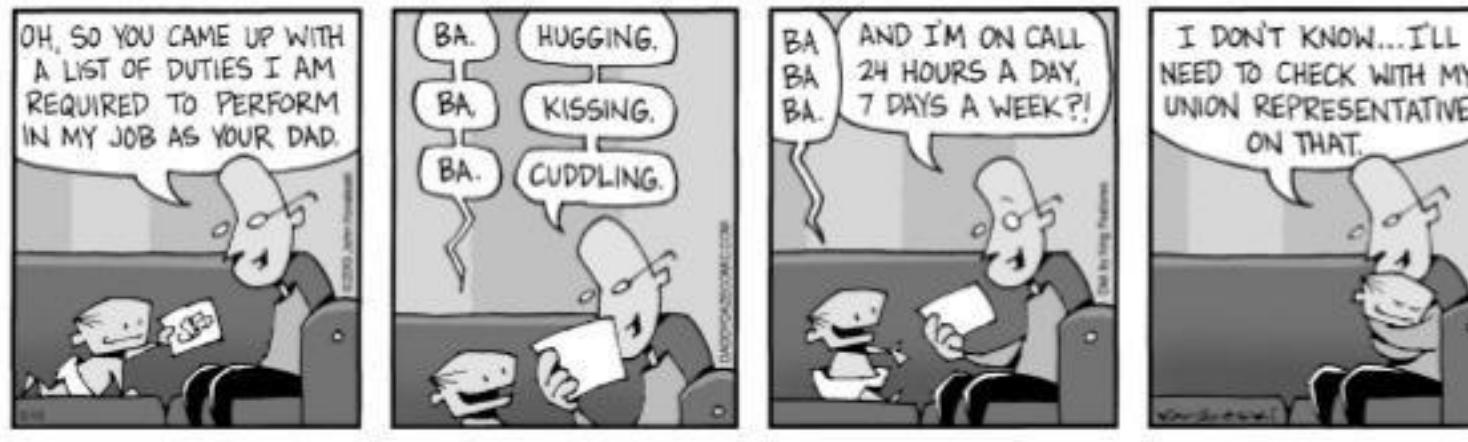
### BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



### RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson



### DADDY DAZE/John Kovaleski



## Pakistan PM okays creation of liaison body for spy agencies

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
ISLAMABAD, 24 NOVEMBER

Imran Khan has approved the setting up of the National Intelligence Coordination Committee, a mechanism to coordinate over two dozen intelligence organisations in the country, to be headed by the ISI chief

Although there have been discussions about the establishment of the coordination forum, its terms of reference and modus operandi would be decided once it formally takes shape, Dawn newspaper quoted a senior security source as saying.

The new body would be led by the director general of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), who would function as its chairman, it said.

The intelligence agencies have had at least two rounds of discussions on the issue after which the proposal was submitted to the prime minister for approval. It is expected that the first meeting of the coordination body could be held as early as next week.

The NICC would serve as a mechanism to coordinate the over two dozen intelligence organisations in the country. National Counter Terrorism Authority would also be part of the new structure.

The move is part of the long-awaited reform of the intelligence apparatus, which aims at clarifying the role of respective agencies, improving their coordination and optimising their capabilities.

### NEED TO KNOW

#### HOSPITALS

22586262, 22585007  
PUNJAB ROADWAYS 23867842, 238605626  
RAJASTHAN ROADWAYS 23671576, 18001803838

JET AIRWAYS Flight Inquiry and Reservation 39841111

EMIRATES Flight Inquiry and Reservation 3373377

U.P. ROADWAYS 23868709

INDIGO AIRLINES New Delhi City Office 435132185, Call Centre 09910383838, Reservation 09910383838, Indigo Airlines 43513186; Indigo Airlines 4351325320

INDIGO AIRLINES Flight Inquiry and Reservation 41528181

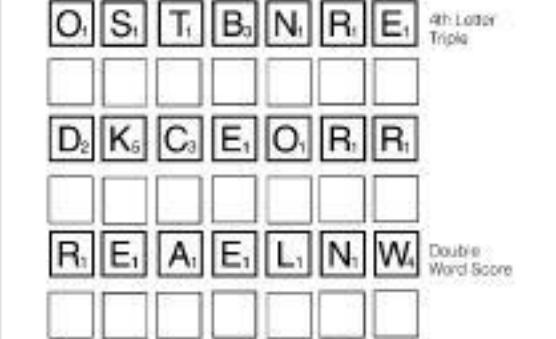
AIR CANADA Flight Inquiry and Reservation 23466212

25656421/25656431 Reservation 41528182 (City)

AIR FRANCE Flight Inquiry and Reservation 2346622 (City)

KUWAIT AIRWAYS Flight Inquiry and Reservation 23354373

SCRABBLE BRAND



#### ROADWAYS INQUIRY

ISBT (General Inquiry): 23868836, 23865181

INDIGO AIRLINES New Delhi City Office 435132185, Call Centre 09910383838, Reservation 09910383838, Indigo Airlines 43513186; Indigo Airlines 4351325320

AIR INDIA Flight Inquiry and Reservation 18001801407

HARYANA ROADWAYS 23861262, 23958747

DEEN DAYAL UPADHYAY 25496320, 25494403

HIMACHAL ROADWAYS 01801803838, Reservation 01801803838, Himachal Roadways 23717473, 23325320

GURU TEGH BHAGAT 01801803838, Gurudeep Singh 01801803838

PORT SCORE 110-120 JUDGES TOTAL 173

FOUR RACK TOTAL TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

SCRABBLE BRAND

2013 Conceptis Puzzles, Inc.

Instructions Make a 2 to 7 letter word from the letters in each rack. Add points of each word, using scoring table below. Add 10 points for each 7-letter word. Add 50 points for each word that uses all the letters in a rack. All judge's words are used as any letter can be used.

All judge's words are used as any letter can be used.

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All judge's words are used as any letter can be used.

All judge's words are used as any letter can be used.</p



Biden has made clear that he wants to repair the trans-Atlantic relationship, and that is urgently necessary,

GERMAN FOREIGN MINISTER HEIKO MAAS

AS EUROPE HOPES FOR RESET, END TO 'DAMAGE CONTROL' UNDER BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

## WEATHER

CITY	MAX	MIN
SINGAPORE	29°C	25°C
HONG KONG	26°C	20°C
TOKYO	18°C	12°C
LONDON	17°C	9°C
DUBAI	30°C	25°C
SAN FRANCISCO	13°C	04°C
NEW YORK	10°C	07°C
MOSCOW	16°C	09°C

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

## THUMBNAILS



The coffin of a Covid victim before being cremated in Girona, Spain. ■ AP

**NYC's first African-American mayor Dinkins dies:** David Dinkins (93), who broke barriers as New York City's first African-American mayor, but was doomed to a single term by a soaring murder rate, stubborn unemployment and his mishandling of a race riot in Brooklyn, has died. ■ AP

**Philippines targets 60 mn for vaccination:** Philippine officials say about 60 million Filipinos are being targeted for vaccination against the coronavirus next year at a cost of more than 73 billion pesos (USD 1.4 billion) to develop considerable immunity among a majority of Filipinos. ■ AP

**Paris cop under fire for forcing migrants from tent camp**

PARIS, 24 NOVEMBER

Paris police are under government orders to explain themselves after officers were filmed tossing migrants out of tents while evacuating a makeshift camp in the French capital.

Aid groups were working Tuesday to find temporary lodging for a few hundred migrants forcibly removed from the short-lived camp on the Place de la République in eastern Paris on Monday night. Some images of the evacuation filmed by journalists and activists shocked even France's tough-talking interior minister, Gerald Darmanin, who tweeted that he ordered the Paris police chief to provide a report Tuesday on what happened.

Police lifted tents with migrants inside, shaking them until they tumbled to the ground, and those who resisted were kicked or beaten with batons, according to the head of Doctors Without Borders in France, Corinne Torre.

Images shared online showed activists and local officials shouting and trying to block police from dislodging the migrants. Torre, who witnessed the evacuation, said several people sought treatment for injuries from her aid group, known by its French acronym MSF.

The Paris police headquarters said the République camp was evacuated because it was illegal and invited the migrants to seek lodging elsewhere offered by the state or aid groups.

Aid groups and Paris legislators said they set up the tents to call attention to the plight of hundreds of migrants who were kicked out of another camp in the shadow of France's national stadium last week and have been sleeping in the streets since then for lack of other options.

Most are from Afghanistan, Somalia and Eritrea. Some have been refused asylum while others are in bureaucratic limbo while they try to apply, Torre said. The rough evacuation came the day before France's parliament is set to vote Tuesday on a draft law meant to expand some police powers and provide greater protection to police. ■ AP

## Thanksgiving could be make-or-break in US virus response

## ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, 24 NOVEMBER

In Pennsylvania, if you're having friends over to socialize, you're supposed to wear a mask and so are your friends. That's the rule, but Barb Chestnut has no intention of following it.

No one is going to tell me what I can or not do in my own home said Chestnut, 60, of Shippensburg. They do not pay my bills and they are not going to tell me what to do.

As governors and mayors grapple with an out-of-control pandemic, they are ratcheting up mask mandates and imposing restrictions on small indoor

gatherings, which have been blamed for accelerating the spread of the coronavirus.

But while such measures carry the weight of law, they are, in practical terms, unenforceable, and officials are banking on voluntary compliance instead. Good luck with that.

While many are undoubtedly heeding public health advice, downsizing Thanksgiving plans, avoiding get-togethers, wearing masks when they're around people who don't live with them

it's inevitable that a segment of the population will blow off new state and local restrictions and socialize anyway. Experts say that could put greater stress on overburdened hospitals and lead to an even bigger spike in sickness and death over the holidays. When this started in early March, we

weren't staring at Thanksgiving and Christmas, and we didn't have the disease reservoir that we have. And that, to me, is the biggest concern in the next few weeks, said Dr. David Rubin, the director of PolicyLab at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. He called the risk of a Thanksgiving spike extremely high. I think you're seeing a lot of resistance here, Rubin said. ■ I can't speculate on what people are going to do, but I can say that to the degree that there isn't a collective buy-in here, it sort of blunts the impact of the measures themselves. The nation is averaging 165,000 new virus cases per day, up over 70% in

AP

## Trump accepts US presidency transition to Biden must begin

Trump did not formally concede the election to Biden, saying he would "continue to fight & will prevail"



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
WASHINGTON, 24 NOVEMBER

**U**S President Donald Trump has finally given a go-ahead to begin the transition process for president-elect Joe Biden after the state of Michigan certified the Democratic leader's victory in the November 3 presidential election, paving the way for a smooth handing over of power after weeks of delay.

President Trump, a Republican, however, did not formally concede the election to Biden, saying he would "continue to fight and will prevail."

He has launched a slew of lawsuits in key states, but has not provided any evidence to back his claims of electoral fraud. Many of the lawsuits have been dismissed by courts.

On Monday, the Administrator of the General Services Administration (GSA) Emily Murphy informed Biden in a letter that the Trump administration is ready to begin the formal transition process.

The letter from Murphy, a Trump appointee, is the first step the administration has taken to acknowledge President Trump's defeat, more than two weeks after Biden was declared the winner.

Taking to Twitter after Murphy wrote to Biden, Trump said that he has asked to begin the transition process in the best interest of the country.

...fight, and I believe we will prevail! Nevertheless, in the best interest of our Country, I am recommending that Emily and her team do what needs to be done with regard to initial protocols, and have told my team to do the same.

What does GSA being allowed to preliminarily work with the Dems have to do with continuing to pursue our various cases on what

## Biden plans to nominate topmost economist Yellen as Treasury Secy

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

WASHINGTON, 24 NOVEMBER

US President-elect Joe Biden is planning to nominate former Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen as his Treasury Secretary to lead his economic response to the raging coronavirus pandemic, which has wreaked havoc on the world's biggest economy and led millions of Americans to lose their jobs.

A formal announcement on 74-year-old Yellen would be made soon, according to The Wall Street Journal and The Washington Post. The Treasury Secretary is fifth in the presidential line of succession. If confirmed by the Senate, Yellen would be the first woman to hold the job.

Currently at the Brookings Institute think-tank, she was Federal Reserve Chair from 2014 to 2018 and was Chair of the White House Council of Economic Advisors from 1997 to 1999.

Ms Yellen, who was the first woman to lead the Fed, would become the first person to have headed the Treasury, the central bank and the White House Council of Economic Advisors.

The Biden-Harris administration, however, did not comment on the potential announcements. The President-elect looks forward to announcing some members of his economic team early next week who will work with

## Biden names climate statesman John Kerry as climate envoy

John Kerry, one of the leading architects of the Paris climate agreement, is getting one more chance to lead the fight against climate change after President-elect Joe Biden named the longtime senator and former secretary of state a climate envoy for national security. Biden's team gave little immediate detail on Monday about how he envisioned Kerry shaping the new job, which many on social media and on all sides of the climate-action spectrum were quick to dub climate czar. But the transition team made clear that it will be a prominent role, with Kerry becoming the first member of the National Security Council to focus exclusively on climate change. It was one of Biden's first steps in making good on campaign pledges to confront climate damage from fossil fuel emissions more broadly and forcefully than any previous US administration.

And it's a sign of how the incoming administration is heeding warnings that natural disasters from global warming will weaken US defence and spur conflicts around the globe. America will soon have a government that treats the climate crisis as the urgent national security threat it is, Kerry tweeted. I'm proud to partner with the President-elect, our allies, and the young leaders of the climate movement to take on this crisis as the President's Climate Envoy. At 76, Kerry has the stature to help him make deals with foreign governments on global climate efforts. But he's up to a half-century or more older than the activists who pushed climate change to the forefront of national politics over the past four years. ■ AP

him to build the economy back better, said Jen Psaki, an advisor to the transition. Her nomination would be one of the early signs that shows Biden plans to lean on experienced Washington veterans to lead the government next year, The Washington Post reported.

The reports of her potential nomination were seen as welcome news by the financial market in New York,

which was reflected in surging stocks. Janet Yellen is an excellent choice. There's a lot to be excited about, but there's a big one: As a former Fed chair, she has great relationships across the globe. She can start repairing the damage in economic diplomacy from the past four years, said Michael R Strain, Director of Economic Policy Studies at American Enterprise think-tank.

at the White House or GSA -- with regard to the substance or timing of my decision. To be clear, I did not receive any direction to delay my determination, Murphy said in her letter as reported by multiple news outlets.

Murphy said she was making USD 6.3 million in funds available to the president-elect for the transition process. Biden is set to be sworn in as the 46th US President on January 20, 2021. Murphy had come under a lot of criticism after she refused to give the

president-elect access to the federal resources required for the transition. Lawmakers from both the Democratic and Republican party had slammed her for this.

"GSA does not dictate the outcome of legal disputes and recounts, nor does it determine whether such proceedings are reasonable or justified," Murphy wrote in her letter.

"These are issues that the Constitution, federal laws, and state laws leave to the election certification process and decisions by courts of com-

petent jurisdiction. I do not think that an agency charged with improving federal procurement and property management should place itself above the constitutionally-based election process. I strongly urge Congress to consider amendments to the Act," Murphy said.

Later, Trump put out two more tweets in which he thanked Murphy for her services. I want to thank Emily Murphy at GSA for her steadfast dedication and loyalty to our Country. She has been harassed, threatened, and abused and I do not want to see this happen to her, her family, or employees of GSA. Our case STRONGLY continues, we will keep up the good fight, and I believe we will prevail! Trump tweeted.

On Monday, the Michigan State Board of Canvassers formally granted Biden the state's 16 electoral votes.

In a statement, Biden-Harris Transition Executive Director Yohannes Abraham said the GSA administrator has ascertained President-elect Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris as the apparent winners of the election, providing the incoming administration with the resources and support necessary to carry out a smooth and peaceful transfer of power.

Today's decision is a needed step to begin tackling the challenges facing our nation, including getting the pandemic under control and our economy back on track, he said.

This final decision is a definitive administrative action to formally begin the transition process with federal agencies. In the days ahead, transition officials will begin meeting with federal officials to discuss the pandemic response, have a full accounting of our national security interests, and gain complete understanding of the Trump administration's efforts to hollow out government agencies, Abraham said.

Sue Gough, Pentagon spokesperson said that the Department of Defence (DoD) has received notice that the GSA Administrator is making certain post-election resources and services available to the Biden-Harris Transition Team.

## 21 GOP senators contemptuous of Trump: Bernstein

## ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK, 24 NOVEMBER

Former Watergate sleuth Carl Bernstein took to Twitter to list the names of 21 Republican senators who he says have repeatedly expressed contempt for Donald Trump and his fitness to be president.

Bernstein's post was condemned Monday by some of those involved. It was an eyebrow-raising modern twist on journalism from the former Washington Post reporter who, with partner Bob Woodward in the 1970s, penned scoops that led to the resignation of President Richard Nixon.

Bernstein said he wasn't violating any confidentially pledges in listing the senators. He said he learned of the politicians' supposed private feelings through conversations with some of their colleagues, staff members, lobbyists and White House aides.

With few exceptions, their craven public silence has helped enable Trump's most grievous conduct, including undermining and discrediting the U.S. electoral system, he tweeted late Sunday.

Bernstein, a CNN political analyst, declined a request to talk about his posts.

Many Washington reporters have talked about lawmakers who have privately expressed reservations about Trump but rarely attached names to their statements.

Bernstein said he believed

several of the Republicans on his list were privately happy about Democrat Joe Biden's victory. Michael Zuna, a spokesperson for Iowa Sen. Chuck Grassley, who was on Bernstein's list, said the characterization was untrue.

Sen. Grassley has been a strong supporter of the president and at the same time has made it no secret when he disagrees with the president, Zuna said. There is no difference between what Sen. Grassley says publicly and privately. Washington journalists might be wise to reconsider trafficking in baseless second- and third-hand rumor. It may restore some lost credibility.

Ohio Sen. Rob Portman has never talked to Mr. Bernstein and we don't know where he's getting his false information, said Emily Benavides, the senator's spokesperson. Portman, in a column written for the Cincinnati Enquirer on Monday, called on Trump to begin cooperating with President-elect Biden on a transition.

There was no article on CNN's website about Bernstein's list on Monday. The veteran reporter appeared on CNN's New Day on Friday and named 15 of the 21 senators he tweeted about two days later.

Roy Guterman, a Syracuse University professor who specializes in journalism law and ethics, said Bernstein's approach was unusual and noted the journalist's frequent criticism of Trump.

## SUPERWOMEN



Mural from the streets of Dallas in the USA. It pays tribute to the nurses, who are the superwomen of the hour. ■ AGENCE

## EU reaches deal for supply of 160 mn doses of Moderna vaccine

## AGENCIES

BRUSSELS, 24 NOVEMBER



The European Union has reached a deal with U.S. biotech firm Moderna for the supply of its Covid vaccine candidate, the head of the European Commission said on Tuesday.

Last week Moderna said its experimental vaccine was 94.5 per cent effective in preventing Covid, based on interim data from a late-stage clinical trial.

I am happy to announce that tomorrow we will approve a new contract to secure another vaccine, Ursula von der Leyen said, adding the deal "allows us to buy up to 160 million doses of a vaccine produced by Moderna."

In August the EU's executive Commission, which leads talks with vaccine makers on behalf of member states, said preliminary talks with Moderna had been concluded with the aim of signing a contract for the supply of 80 million doses of its vaccine, with the option of buying

another 80 million. It is the sixth supply deal the EU has negotiated with vaccine makers to secure Covid shots.

effect on December 15, has been long-awaited by the travel industry, one of the worst-hit sectors during the pandemic. The change will bring the rules governing quarantines in England more in line with other European countries.

Under the new rules, passengers can reduce the 14-day quarantine period by paying for a test from a private firm on or after Day 5 of their arrival at a potential cost of around 100 pounds. Results normally take up to 48 hours but sometimes can come the

same day. The change does not apply to people arriving from other parts of the United Kingdom. Travelers from Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales must continue to self-isolate for 14 days.

Our new testing strategy will allow us to travel more freely, see loved ones and drive international business, Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said. By giving people the choice to test on Day 5, we are also supporting the travel industry as it continues to rebuild out of the pandemic. Since travel was permitted again after the spring lockdown, British tourists have faced an uncertain situation as they leave the country, since the government has been taking countries off its safe list at very short notice. Britain's travel advice to the two most-visited countries, Spain and France, has changed at short notice, forcing many travelers to cut their vacations short and quickly return to the UK to avoid mandatory quarantines.

# Ancestry of the genetic code

**The origin of life is the origin of heredity as well**

S ANANTHANARAYANAN

From 1859 when Charles Darwin proposed the theory of evolution to the discovery of DNA and the genetic code, in the 1950s, the mystery of life and heredity has been laid bare down the centuries. At its core is the code, built of three-letter words, using a four-character alphabet, which helps rebuild millions of proteins, to enable living things to do what sets them apart – to reproduce.

The code is a mathematically elegant construction – it is precise, economical and error-protected – an end product more efficient than any variant that we can suggest. It is universal and unchanged, from the simplest, single-celled organism to the greatest of mammals. By what stages could this code have arisen? Masayori Inouye, Risa Takino, Yojiro Ishida and Keiko Inouye from the Rutgers-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, New Jersey, propose a new look at the question in the journal, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

In the same way that the most inspiring concept of an architect cannot be realised unless she prepares a blueprint, an organism, no matter how efficient, cannot have a second generation unless it contains within itself the blueprint of its own construction. Living things are essentially their cells and the set of proteins, which cells produce and control the way other cells of the organism behave. The cells of all living things hence contain a blueprint, in the form of a long (very long – billions of units long) ticker tape that carries the code for the proteins. The DNA molecule is the tape, and the code for the proteins are bits of DNA, called the genes. And the genes are built up of three-letter words of an alphabet of four kinds of chemical groups, the letters, called the bases.

Now, the structure of proteins has got optimised to consist of a chain, often a very long chain, of components from a set of just 20 different units, called amino acids. Within the DNA, each group of three letters, formed out of the four letters that are available, is called a codon and is the template for creation of an amino acid. The box on this page shows how many three-letter words we can form with four alphabets, and it works out to be 64. If the word had only two letters, there would be only 16 ways that it could be formed, which is not enough to describe 20 amino acids. We hence need at least three letters in the word, and if 64 is a lot more than 20, well, three codons have special uses, but the remaining 61 provide alternate forms for the most frequent amino acids -- as an insurance to avoid errors when the code in the DNA is transcribed!

That living organisms are able to implement this mathematically elegant system, using just chemical combinations within the organisms' cells, shows the great power of the process of evolution and raises a question of how it may have come about. One theory is that the first



amino acids were born from the elements in the stormy and energetic environment of early Earth. Amino acids that have been created in laboratory simulations, and traces found in meteorites, suggest that there may have been 10 amino acids at the start of life, and these grew into 10 more, stabilising at the efficient number of 20. The work done by the authors of the paper, however, finds that there may have been seven amino acids to start with, and more than one route for their development.

The four letters, or chemical groups, which form the codons are – U for uracil, C for cytosine, A for adenine and G for guanine. The picture shows how the 20 amino acids (and three "stop" codons to separate the genes) are formed by combining U, C, A and G. Significantly, we see two amino acids are encoded by only one codon, there are eight coded by two codons, just one coded by three codons, five coded by four codons and three coded by six codons. The number of redundant forms, however, does not generally correspond to the abundance of the amino acids, the paper says. For example, among the three amino acids coded by six codons, (green) arginine and serine are not the most frequently found. It is hence likely that the different forms came about by different processes.

In the case of leucine and arginine, the codons share bases in such a way that one codon can transform to another with a change of only one base. This, however, is not true in the case of serine. Here, we have four codons that start with "UC" and two more that start with

## HOW MANY WORDS CAN WE CREATE?

With four alphabets at our disposal, we can choose the first of the three letters in any of four ways. For each choice that we make, the second letter can again be chosen in four ways. There are hence  $4 \times 4 = 16$  ways to choose the first two letters. Now, for the third letter, again, we have four choices. The total number of three-letter words we can form is thus,  $4 \times 4 \times 4 = 64$ .

"AG". It would hence take a change of two bases for a codon in one group to reach a form in the other. Further, the paper notes, single base changes, in the first or second place, leads to six different amino acids that are unrelated to serine. The authors hence suggest that the origin of the two forms which start with "AG" was different from the origin of forms that start with "UC".

To seek evidence of this suggestion, the authors analyse 4,225 protein coding genes of *E. coli*, a common intestinal bacterium. What they find is that although there are, in serine, theoretically two "AG" codons to four "UC" codons, the occurrence is not in the ratio of 1:2, but is as high as 3:4. The "AG" codons are thus used disproportionately more often, and again, within the "AG" codons, it is more often the "AGC" codon. And then, there are differences in where the two forms of serine occur or are used.

U,C,A,G in the 1st place	C in the 2nd place	A in the 3rd place	G in the 4th place
UUU <b>benzene</b> UUC UUA UUG	UCU <b>serine</b> UCC UCA UCG	UAU <b>tyrosine</b> UAC UAA <b>stop</b> UAG	UGC <b>cysteine</b> UCG UCA UGA <b>tryptophan</b> UGC
CUU CUC CUA CUG	CCC <b>proline</b> CCA CCG	CAU <b>histidine</b> CAC CAA <b>glutamine</b> CAG	CGU <b>arginine</b> CGC CGA CGG
AUU AUC AUU AUG	ACU <b>threonine</b> ACC ACA ACG	AAU <b>asparagine</b> AAC AAA <b>lysine</b> AAG	AGU <b>serine</b> AGC AGA <b>arginine</b> AGG
GUU GUC GUA GUG	GCU <b>valine</b> GCC GCA GCG	GAU <b>aspartic acid</b> GAC GAA <b>glutamic acid</b> GAG	GGU <b>glycine</b> GGC GGA GGG

This fits in, the paper says, with the idea that more analysis brings forward, that "AGC" was evolutionarily one of the most primitive codons for serine, itself having descended from a form for GGC, for glycine. The analysis leads to the hypothesis that the codon for first amino acid had the form "GG" and from this the first seven amino acids arose. The remaining 13 arose from these seven, but the alternate form, "AG" of serine came through an independent route.

More work on the genomes of other bacteria and other life forms, and the roles that the two forms of serine play, could further illuminate the path by which they came to be, the paper says.

The writer can be contacted at response@simplescience.in



SANJAY MISHRA

As the weather cools, the number of infections of the Covid-19 pandemic are rising sharply. Hamstrung by pandemic fatigue, economic constraints and political discord, public health officials have struggled to control the surging pandemic. But now, a rush of interim analyses from pharmaceutical companies Moderna and Pfizer/BioNTech have spurred optimism that a novel type of vaccine made from messenger RNA, known as mRNA, can offer high levels of protection by preventing Covid-19 among people who are vaccinated.

Although unpublished, these preliminary reports have exceeded the expectations of many vaccine experts, including mine. Until early this year, I worked on developing vaccine candidates against Zika and dengue. Now I am coordinating an international effort to collect reports on adult patients with current or previous cancers who have also been diagnosed with Covid-19.

**Promising preliminary results**  
Moderna reported that during the phase three study of its vaccine candidate mRNA-1273, which enrolled 30,000 adult US participants, just five of the 95 Covid-19 cases occurred among the vaccinated, while 90 infections were identified in the placebo group. This corresponds to

an efficacy of 94.5 per cent. None of the infected patients who received the vaccine developed severe Covid-19, while 11 (12 per cent) of those who received the placebo did.

Similarly, the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine candidate, BNT162b2, was 90 per cent effective in preventing infection during the phase three clinical trial, which enrolled 43,538 participants, with 30 per cent in the US and 42 abroad.

### How does mRNA vaccine work?

Vaccines train the immune system to recognise the disease-causing part of a virus. Vaccines traditionally contain either weakened viruses or purified signature proteins of the virus.

But an mRNA vaccine is different, because rather than having the viral protein injected, a person receives genetic material – mRNA – that encodes the viral protein. When these genetic instructions are injected into the upper arm, the muscle cells translate them to make the viral protein directly in the body.

This approach mimics what the Sars-CoV-2 does in nature – but the vaccine mRNA codes only for the critical fragment of the viral protein. This gives the immune system a preview of what the real virus looks like without causing disease. This preview gives the immune system time to design powerful antibodies that can neutralise the real virus if the individual

is ever infected.

While this synthetic mRNA is genetic material, it cannot be transmitted to the next generation. After an mRNA injection, this molecule guides the protein production inside the muscle cells, which reaches peak levels for 24 to 48 hours and can last for a few more days.

### Why is making an mRNA vaccine so fast?

Traditional vaccine development, although well studied, is very time-consuming and cannot respond instantaneously against novel pandemics such as Covid-19.

For example, for seasonal flu, it takes roughly six months from identification of the circulating influenza virus strain to produce a vaccine. The candidate flu vaccine virus is grown for about three weeks to produce a hybrid virus, which is less dangerous and better able to grow in hens' eggs. The hybrid virus is then injected into a lot of fertilised eggs and incubated for several days to make more copies. Then the fluid containing virus is harvested from eggs, the vaccine viruses are killed, and the viral proteins are purified over several days.

The mRNA vaccines can leapfrog the hurdles of developing traditional vaccines such as producing non-infectious viruses or producing viral proteins at medically demanding levels of purity.

## HOLDS MUCH PROMISE

**Here's how mRNA vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna work, why they're a breakthrough and why they need to be kept so cold**

mRNA vaccines eliminate much of the manufacturing process because rather than having viral proteins injected, the human body uses the instructions to manufacture viral proteins itself. Also, mRNA molecules are far simpler than proteins. For vaccines, mRNA is manufactured by chemical rather than biological synthesis, so it is much quicker than conventional vaccines to be redesigned, scaled up and mass-produced.

In fact, within days of the genetic code of the Sars-CoV-2 virus becoming available, the mRNA code for a candidate vaccine testing was ready. What's most attractive is that once the mRNA vaccine tools become viable, mRNA can be quickly tailored for other future pandemics.

### What are the problems with mRNA?

mRNA technology isn't new. It was shown a while back that when synthetic mRNA is injected into an animal, the cells can produce a desired protein. But the progress remained slow. That's because mRNA is not only notoriously unstable and easy to degrade into smaller components, it is also easily destroyed by the human body's immune defences, which make delivering it to the target very inefficient.

But beginning in 2005, researchers figured out how to stabilise mRNA and package it into small particles to deliver it as a vaccine. The mRNA Covid-19 vaccines are expected to be the first using this technology to be approved by the Food and Drug Administration, US. After a decade of work, the mRNA vaccines are now ready for evaluation. Physicians will

be watching for unintended immune reactions, which can be both helpful and detrimental.

### Why keep mRNA supercold?

The most important challenge for development of a mRNA vaccine remains its inherent instability, because it is more likely to break apart above freezing temperatures.

Modification of the mRNA building blocks and development of the particles that can cocoon it relatively safely have helped the mRNA vaccine candidates. But this new class of vaccine still requires unprecedented freezer conditions for distribution and administration.

### What are the refrigeration requirements?

The Pfizer-BioNTech mRNA vaccine will need to be optimally stored at minus 94 degrees Fahrenheit and will degrade in around five days at normal refrigeration temperatures of slightly above freezing.

In contrast, Moderna claims its vaccine can be maintained at most home or medical freezer temperatures for up to six months for shipping and longer-term storage. Moderna also claims its vaccine can remain stable at standard refrigerated conditions, of 36 to 46 degrees Fahrenheit, for up to 30 days after thawing, within the six-month shelf life.

Not surprisingly, Pfizer is also developing shipping containers using dry ice to address shipping constraints.

The writer is project coordinator and staff scientist, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Vanderbilt University, US. This article first appeared on www.theconversation.com

## PLUS POINTS

**Cosmic brain**



The universe is similar to a huge human brain, scientists have found.

A new study investigated the differences and similarities between two of the most complex systems in existence, though at entirely different scales – the cosmos and its galaxies, and the brain and its neuronal cells.

They found that while the scale is clearly different, the structure is remarkably similar. In some cases, the two systems seemed more alike to each other than they did to the parts that make them up. It suggests that vastly different physical processes can lead to very similar complex and organised structures.

For example, the human brains work because of the network of nearly 10 billion neurons that together make it up. The universe is thought to have at least 100 billion galaxies.

In each system, they are assembled together in a complex web or network, spread out in long filaments and nodes that link them up. Those spreading nodes are familiar to pictures of both the universe and the brain, and account for some of the superficial similarities in images.

But in each system, those threads only make up about 30 per cent of the mass. In each, some 70 per cent of the mass is actually made up of parts that appear to be passive – the brain's water, and the universe's dark energy.

To dig further into those similarities, researchers compared the way those galactic networks form with sections of the brain. They looked to understand how the matter was spread across the two very different networks. "We calculated the spectral density of both systems. This is a technique often employed in cosmology for studying the spatial distribution of galaxies", said Franco Vazza, an astrophysicist at the University of Bologna who worked on the study with University of Verona neurosurgeon Alberto Feletti, "Our analysis showed that the distribution of the fluctuation within the cerebellum neuronal network on a scale from one micrometre to 0.1 millimetres follows the same progression of the distribution of matter in the cosmic web but, of course, on a larger scale that goes from five million to 500 million light-years".

They also examined the ways that the webs of neutrons and galaxies connect up – once again finding noticeable similarities, with the systems seeming more similar to each other than to their component parts. To do so, they compared the average number of connections between each of the nodes, and how they cluster.

"Once again, structural parameters have identified unexpected agreement levels. Probably, the connectivity within the two networks evolves following similar physical principles, despite the striking and obvious difference between the physical powers regulating galaxies and neurons", said Feletti.

A paper describing the findings, "The quantitative comparison between the neuronal network and the cosmic web", is published in the journal *Frontiers of Physics*.

## Farewell Arecibo



The renowned Arecibo telescope in Puerto Rico will be dismantled after 57 years of service due to the rupture of cables that have led to the threat of collapse, the US National Science Foundation announced last Thursday. Two cables supporting the 900-ton instruments for the telescope above a radio dish 1,000 feet in diameter broke on 10 August and 6 November.

Engineers are concerned other cables could also break at any time, making any attempt at repair excessively dangerous. The telescope is one of the largest in the world and has been a tool for many astronomical discoveries. For nearly six decades, the Arecibo Observatory has served as a beacon for breakthrough science and what a partnership with a community can look like. Using the hashtag "WhatAreciboMeansToMe", messages of sadness at the news spread on Twitter from both professional and amateur astronomers who have used the telescope for their work in observing the cosmos for decades.

-THE DAILY STAR/ANN



## THE EVRA STANDARD

Patrice Evra (in photo, left) insists Liverpool cannot be a "great" team until they win three consecutive Premier League titles. The Frenchman won three titles in a row during his time with Manchester United from 2007 to 2009. The Reds won the title last season by 18 points, backing up their Champions League win from the previous year.

For more updates

www.thestatesman.com

## THUMBNAILS

OZ practice: Quarantined ahead of the series against India, Australian players are said to be getting a lot of time for practice as they have to tune up in small groups. The Indian and Australian players, after the Indian Premier League, arrived in Sydney on 12 November.



Carke's warning: Former Australia captain Michael Clarke has said India could be "smoked 4-0" in the Test series if skipper Virat Kohli does not set the tone in the white-ball games before his departure. The 32-year-old Kohli has been granted paternity leave.

Warner's vow: Australian opener David Warner vowed on Monday to keep his temper in check during the series against India, predicting the visitors would try to wind him up with taunts. Warner once reveled in his reputation as Australia's attack dog during clashes.

Springboard series: New Zealand's Twenty20 series against the West Indies starting on Friday should be a springboard for the home side to look to improve their results and build a squad for next year's World Cup, ex-captain Brendon McCullum has said.

Ban order: The head of African football, Ahmad Ahmad, has been banned from football for five years by Fifa following an investigation by world soccer's governing body. Ahmad intended to stand in an election in March in which he would have faced some challengers.

1-1 draw: Wolverhampton Wanderers' Pedro Neto came off the bench to cancel out a Theo Walcott strike for high-flying Southampton as the two sides battled to an entertaining 1-1 draw in their Premier League clash at the Molineux Stadium on Monday.

Positive test: Wilfried Zaha has tested positive for the coronavirus. Roy Hodgson has revealed. Crystal Palace's talisman was left out of the team for Monday evening's trip to Turf Moor after being told to self-isolate. "He has tested positive," Hodgson said.

Fans' return: Premier League clubs will be free to welcome back spectators in highly limited numbers next month for the first time since March, the British government said on Monday. Up to 4,000 people can return to outdoor stadiums in low-risk parts of England.



Koeman's ire: Barca coach Ronald Koeman has joined other managers in criticising the packed European football calendar after resting Lionel Messi for Tuesday's Champions League trip to Dynamo Kyiv. Barca lost Gerard Pique and Sergi Roberto to serious injuries.

Handball law: Acknowledging that interpretation of handball incidents has not always been consistent, the International Football Association Board has said its two specialist advisory groups has asked for more clarity on Monday. There are plans for head injury substitutions.

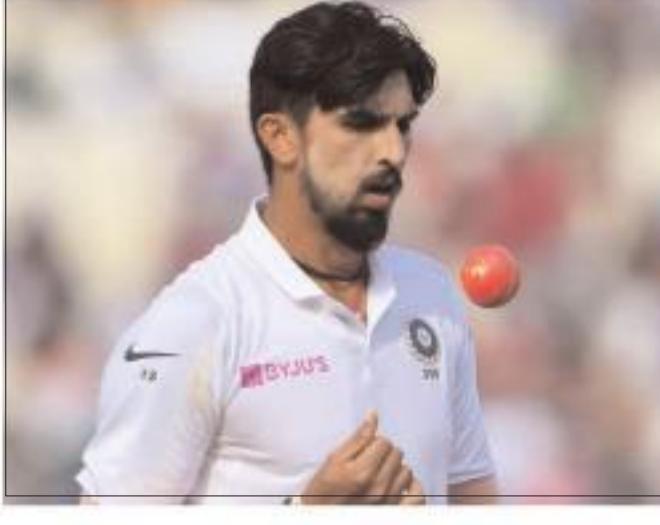
www.thestatesman.com

## Rohit, Ishant to miss first 2 Australia Tests

They are also highly unlikely to be fit in time for the remaining two Tests

## AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, 24 NOVEMBER



India's star opener Rohit Sharma (in photo left) and pacer Ishant Sharma (in photo right) will miss the first two Tests against Australia and are also doubtful for the remaining two after it was conveyed to the BCCI that the duo will require close to a month to be match fit.

The two, who are undergoing rehabilitation at the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru, are already out of contention for the limited-overs leg of the series, which begins with the ODIs on Friday.

They were kept in the Test squad for the series starting on December 17 but tough quarantine rules have made their availability uncertain.

"The NCA has given a report that both Rohit and Ishant will take at least another 3 to 4 weeks to get match fit," a Board source told PTI on Tuesday.

Rohit, while talking to PTI last week, had stated that

he added.

It is learnt that Shreyas Iyer, who is part of the limited-overs squad, could be asked to stay back as cover for Rohit.

The Indian team, which landed here after the IPL earlier this month on a chartered flight, was allowed to train in quarantine as Australia batted a fresh wave of COVID-19 cases.

National coach Ravi Shastri had on Sunday stated that the two cricketers' chances of playing the Test series hinge on whether they are able to board a flight to Australia within this week.

"If you need to play in the

Test series or any red-ball cricket, you've got to be on the flight in the next three or four days. If you aren't, then it's going to be tough," he had said.

The four-Test series, after the day-night opener in Adelaide, will move to Melbourne (December 26 to 30), followed by games in Sydney (January 7 to 11) and Brisbane (January 15 to 19).

India will be without skipper Virat Kohli after the first Test as he will return to the country to be there for the birth of his first child.

The visitors had won the 2018-19 series 2-1.

## ICC nominates Kohli, Ashwin for Men's Player of the Decade Award

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

DUBAI, 24 NOVEMBER

(Australia), Malinga and Chris Gayle (West Indies).

Africa), and Kumar Sangakkara (Sri Lanka).

Kohli has also been nominated in the Men's Test Player of the Decade and ICC Spirit of Cricket Award of the Decade categories.

Besides Kohli, Dhoni also found a place in the ICC Spirit of Cricket Award of the Decade award category.

Kohli, who averages more than 50 in all formats, has already amassed 70 international hundreds and is only behind Ricky Ponting (71) and Sachin Tendulkar (100).

He is third in the list of leading run-scorers of all time with 21,444 runs, behind Ponting (27,483) and Tendulkar (34,357).

In the past decade Kohli has amassed over 7000 runs in Tests while in the shorter formats, the Indian skipper has accumulated more than 11000 runs in ODIs and over 2600 runs in T20s.

The final winners will be decided on the basis of the number of votes a player receives. List of nominations:

Men's player of the decade: Virat Kohli (India) Ravichandran Ashwin (India), Joe Root (England), Kane Williamson (New Zealand), Steve Smith (Australia), AB de Villiers (South Africa), and Kumar Sangakkara (Sri Lanka).

Men's ODI Player of the Decade: Virat Kohli (India), Lasith Malinga (Sri Lanka), Mitchell Starc (Australia), AB de Villiers, Rohit Sharma (India), Mithali Raj (India), and Sarah Taylor (England).

Men's T20I Player of the Decade: Virat Kohli (India), Kane Williamson (New Zealand), Smith, James Anderson (England), Rangana Herath (Sri Lanka), and Yasir Shah (Pakistan).

Men's Test Player of the Decade: Virat Kohli (India), Imran Tahir (South Africa), Aaron Finch (Australia), Lasith Malinga (Sri Lanka), Chris Gayle (West Indies), and Rohit Sharma (India).

## 'Kohli's absence after first Test will not affect CA financially'

## AGENCIES

SYDNEY, 24 NOVEMBER

Cricket Australia on Tuesday asserted that the absence of star India skipper Virat Kohli for a major part of the marquee Test series will not affect the home board financially but admitted the upcoming rubber is of "great importance" to world cricket.

CA turned out to be one of the worst affected cricket boards due to the coronavirus pandemic that forced it to lay off a number of employees and cut down salaries of staffers.

The high-profile series, starting December 17, is expected to stabilise the stream of revenue but with Kohli going back after the opener in Adelaide for the birth of his first child, there have been doubts that it could affect the host nation's cricket board.

"We absolutely respect Virat's decision. We are delighted that he will captain the side in each of the ODIs and the T20s and the first Test," CA's interim chief executive officer Nick Hockley said during a chat facilitated by official broadcaster Sony.

"Virat leading the side here brings competitive leadership that we have seen dur-

ing the last series and we have been accustomed to watching that during India's performances all around the world. (But) no, nothing will have financial bearing."

Asked if CA and BCCI have at any point discussed the easing of quarantine rules for Kohli's return, Hockley said, "Quarantine arrangements are well described. In relation to Virat Kohli's plans close to first test, we have made discussions."

"This series is of great importance to world cricket and Australian cricket. It's a testament to all cricketing nations that we could get international cricket up and running in a safe way. The series will be played in front of large crowds."

Hockley ruled out the possibility of hosting a full series of day-night Tests in near future but said the December 17-21 pink-ball opener has gripped the fans.

"What I can say is that day/night test over last 3-4 seasons has become a much-loved feature of the Australia summer. The anticipation and excitement around this first ever day/night Test against India has taken to a different level, given the rivalry."

## Rabada reveals 'bizarre' S African training regime

## AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

CAPE TOWN, 24 NOVEMBER

Fast bowler Kagiso Rabada (in photo) revealed on Monday that the South African cricket team were training in two groups to minimise the risk of further Covid-19 infections ahead of their series against England.

Two members of the South African squad have tested positive for Covid-19 since the squad assembled last week and two other players had to go into isolation because of their close contact with one of the infected players.

"It's been quite bizarre," Rabada told an online Press conference from the team hotel in Cape Town. "We have to train in groups -- a group of non-contacts and a group of close contacts. It doesn't mean anyone is positive but we have to take that extra precaution."

Rabada did not reveal how many players were in each group but planned intra-squad matches on Saturday and Monday were cancelled, presumably to reduce the risk of infections. He said more Covid-19 tests would be conducted with the players "soon."

Despite the unusual training arrangements, Rabada

## Why A-League footballers are making a beeline for India

## AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

MELBOURNE, 24 NOVEMBER



An influx of footballers to India from Australia has highlighted changing fortunes as the Indian Super League flourishes and the A-League hits lean times during the coronavirus pandemic.

Just two Australians played in the Indian Super League last year, but 10 were among the 11 teams when the competition got under way in a bio-secure bubble in Goa last week.

Non-Australian A-League players have also made the move, including English striker Adam Le Fondre -- last season's second highest goalscorer, with Sydney FC -- along with German defender Matti Steinmann and Aaron Holloway from Wales.

Much of the change is down to money, with the A-League salary cap expected to drop by up to 30 per cent next season following a fall in broadcasting revenue.

It has made the ISL, which previously attracted a smattering of fading stars, a more attractive proposition for Australian-based players. One of the players to head to India is Australian defender Dylan Fox (in photo), 26, who left the Central Coast

sizable Australian presence, alongside its numerous Spaniards and Brazilians and a smattering of Brits, including former Newcastle United defender Steven Taylor.

Australian get-togethers, however, will be off-limits as players are confined to their team hotels in the Goa bubble. "It will be great to see all these familiar faces on the pitch at least," said Fox.

India's interest in Australians is also driven by a requirement that each team signs a player from the Asian Football Confederation.

"For Indian clubs when looking at AFC nations, there seems to be a preference for A-League players," said agent Baljit Singh Rihal of Inventive Sports, which specialises in the ISL.

"Players from Iran and Uzbekistan are also willing to come to India but it is harder for clubs to find information and stats on these players, whereas the A-league is open in this regard and has all the records available."

"Indian clubs know what they are going to get in Australia. It is a known market."

There are other reasons too. Former Liverpool and England striker Robbie Fowler

left his position as head coach of Brisbane Roar in June. After taking over at East Bengal four months later, Fowler quickly signed three players from the A-League.

Defender Erik Paartalu, the longest-serving Australian in India and now into his fourth season with Bengaluru FC, has received plenty of phone calls.

"India provides more stability and things in Australia are a little uncertain," Paartalu said.

"It is definitely more money than the A-League -- not astronomically more but if boys are being told they will only get 70 per cent of their salary then they will want to recoup what they are not getting. Now you are seeing players coming who would not have come in the past."

Paartalu has told his compatriots that Indian teams treat foreign players well, with none of the payment issues that can occur elsewhere in Asia. He said Australian players also provided value for money.

"We integrate well and lend a hand to try and get involved. Maybe there is a connection that comes from cricket and it helps that we speak English," he said.

Free-flowing football on cards in ISL match between FC Goa and Mumbai City FC

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MARGAO, 24 NOVEMBER



dominated the game. But still, we need to improve," he said.

The Mumbai City coach will be without Ahmed Jahouh, arguably his most influential player, but believes his team can compensate for that.

"As a coach, I have good players and I am not scared of missing some of them," Lobera said.

Moroccan Jahouh was sent off with the referee showing a direct red card for his first-half reckless tackle on NorthEast United FC player Khassa Camara in the match on November 21.

For FC Goa coach Juan Fernando, who turned the game around against Bengaluru FC with two brilliant second-half substitutions, worrying about what the opponent can do is a waste of time.

"My focus is on my team and I am not thinking about the opposition," he said.

"The most important thing is to be competitive, and win three points. Against Mumbai or any other team, our mentality will be the same -- win three points."