



BUDGET 2021:
BOLD AND CLEAN

WEATHER

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

RAINFALL: NIL

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 100% Min: 56%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 23.2°C (0) Min: 6.8°C (-2)

SUN RISES

07:06 hrs

MOON RISES

03:07 hrs

SUN SETS

18:05 hrs

MOON SETS

12:52 hrs

THUMBNAILS



Members of Myanmar refugees communities condemn the military coup in Myanmar on 1 February, demanding immediate release of Aung San Suu Kyi. In the Capital on Friday. SNS

SC grants interim bail to Munawar Faruqui: In a relief to comedian Munawar Faruqui, arrested in a case for allegedly hurting religious sentiments by passing objectionable remarks about Hindu deities during a show, the Supreme Court on Friday released him on an interim bail. The top court also stayed the Madhya Pradesh High Court order of 28 January, which had refused to grant him bail noting that to "promote harmony" is one of the constitutional duties. It also stayed the warrant issued against Faruqui by a trial court in Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh. P5

4G mobile internet services restored in J&K: 4G high-speed mobile internet service was restored in Jammu and Kashmir on Friday, 18 months after it was snapped following scrapping of Article 370 of the Constitution. J&K's official spokesman, Rohit Kansal, tweeted: "4G mobile internet services being restored in entire J&K". Former CM Omar Abdullah responded to the announcement saying: "4G Mubarak! For the first time since Aug 2019 all of J&K will have 4G mobile data. Better late than never".

No blanket permission given for surveillance: Centre to HC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 5 FEBRUARY

The Central government on Friday told the Delhi High Court that no blanket permission has been granted to any agency for interception or monitoring or decryption of any messages or information under the surveillance programmes like the Centralised Monitoring System (CMS), Network Traffic Analysis (NETRA) and National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID).

The government defended the need for the CMS, NETRA and NATGRID surveillance systems saying that "grave threats to the country from terrorism, radicalisation, cybercrime, drug cartels,

etc, cannot be understood or ignored" and it was imperative, therefore, to have a robust mechanism "for speedy collection of actionable intelligence".

The submission was made by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in an affidavit filed before a bench of Chief Justice D N Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh in response to a PIL which has claimed that citizens' right to privacy was being "endangered" by these surveillance programmes.

Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Chetan Sharma, appearing for the MHA, told the court that law enforcement agencies need prior permission of the competent authority - Union Home Secretary -

before carrying out any lawful interception or monitoring or decryption of any message or class of messages or any information stored in any computer resources.

"The lawful interception or monitoring or decryption of any message or class of messages or any information stored in any computer resources, is done by authorised law enforcement agencies having legal and statutory powers and after due approval of each case by the competent authority as per the provisions of the Indian Telegraph Act and the Information Technology Act," the affidavit, filed through central government standing counsel Ajay Digpaul, said. (SEE P3)

Pfizer withdraws emergency use approval request

NEW DELHI, 5 FEBRUARY

Pharma major Pfizer on Friday said it has decided to withdraw its application for Emergency Use Authorisation (EUA) of its Covid-19 vaccine in India.

Pfizer was the first pharmaceutical firm to seek an emergency use authorisation from the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) for its Covid vaccine in the country.

"Pfizer participated in the Subject Expert Committee meeting of the Drug Regulatory Authority of India on 3 February. Based on the deliberations, the company has decided to withdraw its application at this time," a company spokesperson said. PII

5.2 million vaccinated against Covid-19

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI/KOLKATA,
5 FEBRUARY

Over 5 lakh beneficiaries have been inoculated under the country-wide Covid-19 vaccination exercise, even as the active caseload slid further to 1.51 lakh, according to the Union Health Ministry.

As many as 52,90,474 beneficiaries have been vaccinated against the coronavirus as of Friday evening since the mass inoculation drive began on 16 January, according to provisional data provided by the health ministry.

India, meanwhile, reported 12,408 new infections in the last 24 hours, increasing the overall tally to 1,08,02,591, health officials said. As per the Ministry's data, there are

1,51,460 active cases as of 8 a.m. Friday after 15,853 patients were discharged in a day. Till now, 1,04,455 persons have been discharged so far. The recovery rate has increased to 97.16 percent, while the fatality rate is down to 1.43 percent.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare said that there were 120 more Covid-19 fatalities in the last 24 hours, taking the overall death toll to 1,54,823.

The country's daily death count has also remained below the 300-mark for more than a month now, the Ministry data showed. Fourteen states/UTs have reported no deaths in the last 24 hours, the data revealed.

The government also told Parliament on Friday that the country is witnessing a sus-

tained decline in the number of infections reported daily since the peak in mid-September 2020.

"Although high in absolute terms, India has managed to restrict the morbidity to 7,801 cases per million population, which is far lower than other similarly affected countries," Minister of State for Health Ashwini Choubey said in a written reply in the Lok Sabha.

Delhi adds 154 cases, 2 deaths: The national capital today identified 154 fresh coronavirus cases and 2 Covid-linked deaths.

Today's fresh cases were detected out of 59,964 tests conducted across the city, according to the latest health bulletin issued by the Delhi government.

FACT FILE	
TOTAL CASES	1,08,02,591
ACTIVE CASES	1,51,460
NEW CASES	12,408
NEW RECOVERIES	15,853
TOTAL DEATHS	1,54,823

UNION HEALTH MINISTRY FIGURES AS OF 8:00 A.M.
FRIDAY 05 FEBRUARY 2021

(SEE P2)

Agri minister puts up strong defence of farm laws

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 5 FEBRUARY

Union agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar today rejected all objections against the three contentious farm laws as baseless, and said opposition to the laws had come only from one state where farmers have been misled that they could lose their lands.

Intervening in the Rajya Sabha debate on the President's Address, Tomar said he had heard repeatedly during the debate that the laws be repealed. But no one had explained how the laws were against the interest of farmers.

"Where is the provision on taking over of lands, please let us know," he said. Tomar said Prime Minister Narendra Modi was committed to the welfare of farmers and these

laws would bring "revolutionary" changes in the lives of the farmers and take the country forward.

The debate on the President's Address and the farmers' agitation ended today and the Prime Minister will reply to it on Monday.

The agriculture minister said there were contract farming laws in Punjab and Haryana already. In fact, 20 to 22 states have started contract farming. While the Punjab law provided jail for farmers in case of default, and a fine of Rs 5 lakh, there was no such thing in the Central law.

Under the Central farm laws, business firms in contract farming could not get away with defaults easily. There were provisions for bonus payments, he said.

Tomar said the farmers could sell their produce out-

side the traditional mandis and such areas were trade areas, where no Central or State tax would be levied. In the mandis, the farmers had to pay State taxes, he said.

"Should the agitation be against someone who is imposing tax, or against who is not?" he asked. The minister said the

government was fully committed to the farmers.

During the talks with the farmers, the government had told them that the APMC mandis would continue, and that it could consider other suggestions. "We examined their issues and asked them what is wrong, please tell us,"

The Modi government had

given property rights to villagers, increased allocation for MGNREGA and was giving over Rs 1.15 lakh crore as Kisan Samman money to 10.75 crore farmers through the direct benefit mechanism. A large number of eligible farmers were yet to be enrolled in the scheme, including 70 lakh in Bengal where the state government had not accepted the scheme yet.

As the House resumed the debate, the Opposition attacked the government on the farmers' agitation. Shiv Sena member Sanjay Raut said the government was trying to defame the farmers and put 200 of them in jail.

Satish Chandra Misra (BSP) said water and sanitation were cut off at farmers' protest sites on Delhi's borders, ignoring there were women there. More reports on Page 5

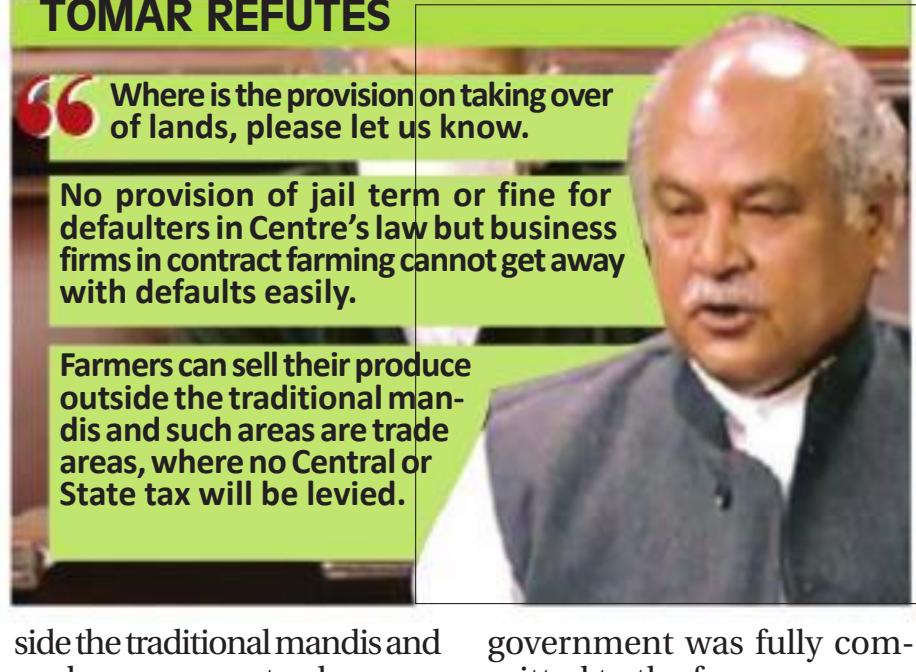
Centre to give extra chance to UPSC aspirants, with a rider

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 5 FEBRUARY

The Centre told the Supreme Court on Friday that it is ready to give 'eligible' UPSC aspirants, who exhausted their last attempt for the civil services examination in October 2020 amidst the Covid-19 pandemic, another shot at clearing the test in 2021.

However, the Centre also made it clear that the relaxation for UPSC candidates shall be a one-time relaxation, and it should not be treated as a precedent. The candidates must be 'eligible', which means they should not be age-barred.

In January this year, the Centre had submitted before the court that giving another chance to last-attempters would be detrimental to the level playing field in the public exami-



TOMAR REFUTES

Where is the provision on taking over of lands, please let us know.
No provision of jail term or fine for defaulters in Centre's law but business firms in contract farming cannot get away with defaults easily.
Farmers can sell their produce outside the traditional mandis and such areas are trade areas, where no Central or State tax will be levied.

BIDEN READY TO REPAIR TIES WITH US ALLIES
SERENA PULLS OUT FROM OZ OPEN TUNEUP





The prime minister will dedicate the GAIL gas pipeline on February 7 which will connect this urea plant and help mitigate the urea crisis in the state.

UNION PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS MINISTER DHARMENDRA PRADHAN
ON GAILS 348 KM LONG DOBHI-DURGAPUR NATURAL GAS PIPELINE

Capital registers 154 new Covid cases, 2 fatalities

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 5 FEBRUARY

The national capital today identified 154 fresh coronavirus cases and 2 Covid-linked deaths.

Today's fresh cases were detected out of 59,964 tests conducted across the city, according to the latest health bulletin issued by the Delhi government. The positivity rate reportedly stood at 0.26 per cent.

The cumulative tally of coronavirus cases in Delhi rose to 6,35,793 now, the

The Covid patients who recovered during the past 24 hours numbered 140, with the cumulative figure of such recoveries in the city going up to 6,23,714. The recovery rate was stated to be 98.10 per cent.

health bulletin said.

The Covid patients who recovered during the past 24 hours numbered 140, with the cumulative figure of such recoveries in the city going up to 6,23,714. The recovery rate was stated to be 98.10 per cent.

Delhi's Covid death toll climbed to 10,873 with two fresh fatalities, the bulletin stat-

ed.

The number of active cases stood at 1,206, with 452 patients being under home isolation.

Those who remained hospitalised numbered 600 in all.

On 1 February, Delhi had recorded 3 Covid deaths, which Delhi health minister



Satyendar Jain termed the "lowest in the city in the last 10 months". On 2 February, this figure dropped to 2.

On 3 and 4 February, the Covid death count in the city was 6 and 7 respectively.

Delhi had yesterday recorded 158 Covid-19 cases detected out of 67,234 tests, with the positivity rate standing at 0.24 per cent.

Classified

LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE COURT OF
SH. AASHISH GUPTA
ACJ/CCJ/ARC-South East)
Saket Courts, New Delhi
SS-105/2020

Shri Vilay Kumar Aggarwal,
s/o Late Shri Arun Prakash Aggarwal, r/o E-186, 2nd Floor, Greater Kailash Part-1, New Delhi-110048. Mobile No. 9999788168

Email: vilayaggarwall@gmail.com

Versus

1. The State Govt. of NCT of Delhi, Through SDM-Hauz Khas,

Address : Office Complex of DM (South), M.B. Road, Saket, New Delhi-110017.

— Respondent No. 1

Whereas, on application U/s 3(1) of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 has been made by Vilay Kumar Aggarwal, successor of Late Neeta Aggarwal for grant of Succession Certificate in respect of debts/securities of deceased.

And whereas the said applicant shall come for hearing on 27-02-2021 at 10:00 a.m.

Therefore, the public at large is hereby given notice that if any person has objection to the grant of Succession Certificate in respect 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 18-01-2021.

ACJ/CCJ/ARC-South East)

Saket Courts, New Delhi

Seal of the Court

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING ATTENDANCE OF DEFENDANT (Order 5, Rule 20 of the Code of Civil Procedure) In the Court of Ms. Neelam Singh

Addl. District Judge-02 South-East District, Room No. 615 Saket Court, New Delhi CS - RCA 19/2018 NOTICE

M/s. Satya Wati Versus SDMC & Ors.

To,

Sh. Mohan Singh, ASI, PS: Badarpur, New Delhi

Sh. Ram Shanker Chhobey, E-70, Molarband Extension Badarpur, New Delhi-110044.

The Defendant above-named.

Whereas you are intentionally evading service of summons, it is hereby notified that if you shall not defend the case on the 18th day of February, 2021, the day fixed for the final disposal, it will be heard and determined ex parte.

Given Under my hand and the Seal of the Court on this 04th day of February, 2021.

Addl. District Judge-02 South-East District, Saket Court, New Delhi

Seal of the Court

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING ATTENDANCE OF DEFENDANT (Order 5, Rule 20 of the Code of Civil Procedure)

In the Court of

Ms. Neelam Singh

Addl. District Judge-02 South-East District, Room No. 615 Saket Court, New Delhi CS - RCA 17/2018 NOTICE

M/s. Satya Wati Versus SDMC & Ors.

To,

Sh. K. Mittal, r/o 60 Ft. Road, Behind KG Kosha Factory, Molarband Extension Badarpur, New Delhi-110044.

Sh. Ram Shanker Chhobey, E-70, Molarband Extension Badarpur, New Delhi-110044.

Sh. Babu Nand, General Secretary, Samaj Kalyan Samiti, Molarband Extension Badarpur, New Delhi-110044.

Sh. Ram Singh Bidhuri, M.L.A., 1, Tuglakabad, New Delhi-110044.

The Defendant above-named.

Whereas you are intentionally evading service of summons, it is hereby notified that if you shall not defend the case on the 18th day of February, 2021, the day fixed for the final disposal, it will be heard and determined ex parte.

Given Under my hand and the Seal of the Court on this 04th day of February, 2021.

Addl. District Judge-02 South-East District, Saket Court, New Delhi

Seal of the Court

BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-II, DELHI 4th Floor, Jeevan Tara Building, Parliament Street, New Delhi-110001.

Notice under Section 19(4) of the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 read with Rule 12 & 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rules) 1993.

In the matter of :

OA No. 345/2020 PNB — Applicant Versus Monika Chopra — Defendants To,

1. Monika Chopra, Prop. of M/s. Vasudavi Technologies, r/o 6942/2 & 6942/2, Jaipura Building, Near Birja School, Ghatna Ghar, Malkaganj, Delhi-110007.

Also at : 19/303, 3rd Floor, Shezada Bagh Industrial Area, Old Rohtak Road, Delhi-110035.

Whereas the abovenamed applicant has instituted a case against you and whereas it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that you have no defence to give you in ordinary way. Therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in the Tribunal on 25-02-2021 at 10:00 a.m.

Take notice that in default of your appearance on the day before the mentioned, the case will be heard and determined in your absence.

By Order of the Tribunal For Registrar DRT-II, Delhi.

Seal

— BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-II, DELHI 4th Floor, Jeevan Tara Building, Parliament Street, New Delhi-110001. OA No. 1062/2019 Date : 29-10-2020 ICICI Bank Ltd. — Applicant Versus Dilip Chhabria Design Pvt. Ltd. & Anr.

— Respondents To,

1. Dilip Chhabria Design Pvt. Ltd. through its Director Khsara No. 22/11/2/II Village Kherki Daula National Highway & Gurgaon Hr.

— Plaintiff

versus

Dilip Chhabria Design Pvt. Ltd. & Anr.

— Defendants To,

1. Dilip Chhabria Design Pvt. Ltd. through its Director Khsara No. 22/11/2/II Village Kherki Daula National Highway & Gurgaon Hr.

— Plaintiff

versus

Dilip Chhabria Design Pvt. Ltd. & Anr.

— Defendants To,

1. Dilip Chhabria Design Pvt. Ltd. through its Director Khsara No. 22/11/2/II Village Kherki Daula National Highway & Gurgaon Hr.

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— Plaintiff

versus



This vital road has today become an accident hot-spot with multiple accidents happening on a weekly basis

RAJU BISTA, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, DARJEELING
ON HIS REQUEST TO ROAD, TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS MINISTER NITIN GADKARI FOR OVERHAULING NH-10

The Statesman
NEW DELHI, SATURDAY 06 FEBRUARY 2021

No blanket surveillance permission given to any agency: Centre to HC

The MHA makes this submission before the Delhi HC in response to a PIL which asserts that citizens' right to privacy is being 'endangered' by surveillance programmes like CMS, NETRA & NATGRID

PTI
NEW DELHI, 5 FEBRUARY

The Central government on Friday told the Delhi High Court that no blanket permission has been granted to any agency for interception or monitoring or decryption of any messages or information under the surveillance programmes like the Centralised Monitoring System (CMS), Network Traffic Analysis (NETRA) and National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID).

The government defended the need for the CMS, NETRA and NATGRID surveillance systems saying that "grave threats to the country from terrorism, radicalisation, cybercrime, drug cartels, etc, cannot be understated or ignored" and it was imperative, therefore, to have a robust mechanism "for speedy collection of actionable intelligence".

The submission was made by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in an affidavit filed before a bench of Chief Justice D N Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh in response to a PIL which has claimed that citizens' right to privacy was being "endangered" by these surveillance programmes.

Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Chetan Sharma, appearing for the MHA, told the court that law enforcement agencies need prior permission of the competent authority -- Union Home Secretary -- before carry-



ing out any lawful interception or monitoring or decryption of any message or class of messages or any information stored in any computer resources.

The lawful interception or monitoring or decryption of any message or class of messages or any information stored in any computer resources, is done by authorised law enforcement agencies having legal and statutory powers and after due approval of each case by the competent authority as per the provisions of the Indian Telegraph Act and the Information Technology Act," the affidavit, filed through central government standing counsel Ajay Digpal, said.

The ASG said no specific instances of violations of privacy have been mentioned in the joint plea by

He told the court the right to privacy of citizens is "balanced out" under these surveillance systems.

Advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for the NGOs, told the court that the affidavit does not state what specific steps have been taken by the government and added that since all kind of personal information, like travel itinerary, purchases, bank transactions, etc, was being intercepted and not just phone calls, therefore, there was a need for a completely new set of regulations for controlling such surveillance.

He claimed that permis-

sions for surveillance was being granted routinely without any application of mind and sought time to file a response to the affidavit filed by the government.

The bench gave the NGOs time till March 19, the next date of hearing, to file its rejoinder.

The government, in its affidavit, said "There is no blanket permission to any agency for interception or monitoring or decryption as the authorised agencies require permission of the competent authority -- Union Home Secretary -- in each case as per due process of law and justification for interception or monitoring or decryption."

The ASG told the court that the permissions are only given in cases which affect "the sovereignty and integrity of India, defense of the country, security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, etc".

The affidavit further states that the standard operating procedure (SOP) for carrying out surveillance mandates that permission for the same shall be sought only if information required cannot be acquired by any other reasonable means.

The government denied the NGOs' allegation that permissions are granted mechanically and claimed that each proposal is scrutinised by a dedicated unit of the MHA "with strict security and confidentiality"

before it is considered by the Home Secretary for approval.

It contended there is sufficient mechanism of oversight in place in the form of a Review Committee, headed by the Cabinet Secretary at the centre and chief secretary at the state level, which examines if the approval has been given in accordance with the law.

"When the Review Committee is of the opinion that the directions are not in accordance with the provisions, it may set aside the directions and order for destruction of the copies of the intercepted, message or class of messages," the government has said in its affidavit.

The NGOs have claimed that these surveillance systems allow central and state law enforcement agencies to intercept and monitor all telecommunications in bulk which is an infringement of the fundamental right to privacy of individuals.

They contended that under the existing legal framework there is an "insufficient oversight mechanism" to authorise and review the interception and monitoring orders issued by the state agencies.

The NGOs have sought directions to the Centre to "permanently stop the execution and the operation of the surveillance projects, CMS, NETRA and NATGRID, which allows for bulk collection and analysis of personal data."

Haryana govt extends Internet suspension in Sonipat, Jhajjar

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 5 FEBRUARY

The Haryana government has extended the suspension of mobile Internet services and all dingle services etc. provided on mobile networks except the voice calls in two districts, Sonipat and Jhajjar, till 5 p.m. on 6 February.

An official spokesman said this order is issued to prevent any disturbance of peace and public order in the jurisdiction of these districts of Haryana and will be in force with immediate effect.

Any person who will be found guilty of violation of aforesaid order will be liable for legal action under relevant provisions, he said.

The spokesman said that the suspension have been ordered under Rule 2 of Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) Rules, 2017. All telecom service providers of Haryana including the Head of BSNL (Haryana jurisdiction) are hereby directed to ensure the compliance of this order.

The spokesman said the state government has decided to impose this suspension of Internet services in order to stop the spread of disinformation and rumours through various social media platforms, such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, etc on mobile phones and SMS, for facilitation and mobilization of mobs of agitators and demonstrators who can cause serious loss of life and damage to public and private properties by indulging in arson or vandalism and other types of violent activities.

AAP looking for its Uttarakhand faces



The Aam Aadmi Party membership campaign reaches a remote village in Uttarakhand. SNS

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
DEHRADUN, 5 FEBRUARY

The Aam Aadmi Party is looking for prominent faces who could lead the party in Uttarakhand. With an eye on the coming Uttarakhand assembly election, slated early next year, the AAP has launched a membership drive in the hill state. The campaign was launched recently and will continue till mid March.

Creating some mystery on the AAP face leading Uttarakhand polls, Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia used to claim that his party will declare the name soon and it will be familiar and acceptable to all. Manish Sisodia is taking keen interest in Uttarakhand and he has so far conducted three trips to the hill state since December last year.

During his recent tour to Dehradun, the media asked

Sisodia the same question about prominent faces joining the AAP. On this Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said, "Some have joined and many others will join AAP." When he was quizzed further and informed that both Congress and BJP claims that AAP does not have 70 faces for 70 state assembly seats in Uttarakhand. Sisodia replied, "If AAP does not have 70 faces, why are the BJP and Congress worried?" Very recently prominent statehood activist Ravindra Jugran joined the Aam Aadmi Party. But, the party needs big names to win the trust of the public. The past six months witnessed AAP intensifying its activities in Uttarakhand. The party claims that it presently has ten thousand active party members in Uttarakhand and after the 45-day membership drive it will get extended to one Lakh active AAP members.

HP to have 'paperless' Cabinet meetings

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 5 FEBRUARY

Himachal Pradesh is said to have become the first state in the country to make the end-to-end process of the Cabinet meeting 'paperless'. Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur inaugurated the first e-cabinet here on Friday.

An official spokesman here said the entire process from initiation of a Cabinet memo, approval of the Cabinet memo through concerned Secretary, Chief Secretary, concerned Minister and finally by the Chief Minister to placement in the Cabinet has been made online. The date of Cabinet meeting will also be notified through this system after the approval of the Chief Minister.

He said the cabinet proceedings and recording of the cabinet decisions on respective agenda items and further issuance of advice to the concerned departments will also be done through the e-cabinet application.

The Information Technology (IT) application for e-cabinet has been developed in-house by the Department

of Information Technology and is one of the first such electronic platform in the entire country. About 32 cabinet memos were discussed and processed through this application.

The spokesman said the e-cabinet provides for generation of automatic alerts through SMS on real time basis for various stages involved in processing cabinet issues like receipt of cabinet memo, finalization of cabinet meeting, advice received on cabinet memo etc. for various level like Secretaries, Ministers etc. The application helps in removing information asymmetries by providing more efficient process handling in the form of a dashboard to the concerned Secretaries.

The e-cabinet application is also available as a Mobile App on android devices and will be made available on iOS devices soon.

The spokesman said the security of the application has been kept at highest priority and features like giving access to specific users on specific computers, automatic generation of alerts on

attempt of unauthorized access and maintenance of logs if the user tries to take screenshots of the cabinet notes, not allowing cabinet memo to be downloaded or printed and a secure logging using OTP, etc. All the cabinet memos generated through this application will have specific QR code with date & time stamp.

He said the new system will bring greater efficiency in the overall process of conducting a cabinet meeting by removing dependencies which arise due to the physical movement of cabinet memos. It will also bring an added layer of security and confidentiality to cabinet proceedings.

Through this application the cabinet memorandums will have a standard template for the ease of decision makers. The system will create institutional memory by safely storing the cabinet memos/proceeding for future references. It will also be possible to monitor the status of implementation of cabinet decisions more effectively through this application.

SNOWED UP



A view of Shimla after snowfall, on Friday.

LALIT KUMAR

Haryana, Switzerland to share expertise in skill training, tourism, dairying

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 5 FEBRUARY

Haryana and Switzerland have agreed to share their expertise in the fields of skill training, tourism, dairying besides exploring the possibilities of signing memorandums of understanding (MoUs) for the teacher-student and cultural exchange programmes to further strengthen the bilateral ties.

Ambassador of Switzerland to India, Ralf Heckner who called on Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Friday said Haryana is one of the five states in India where the Swiss Companies including Nestle have established their businesses.

He said that 10 per cent business of Swiss Companies is in Haryana and conveyed thanks on behalf of Swiss companies based in Haryana for all the support provided to them and added that the country is looking forward to further expanding its business in Haryana in the time to come.

At present, 34 Swiss companies have set their base in the State providing employment to about 16,600 people, he added. He said that Switzerland with



a population of 8.5 million is one of the biggest investors in India.

The CM said Haryana has a unique locational advantage being adjacent to National Capital Delhi. He said that the state's economy is rising at a rapid pace as compared to other States in the country.

The state government is offering adequate infrastructure facilities including electricity at cheaper rates for the industries to set up their units in Haryana. Apart from this, the State Government has given special

emphasis on ensuring transparency in the allotment of land and approving building plans, he added.

He said that besides being one of the largest food grains and milk producing states in the country, Haryana is also giving special emphasis on providing skill training to the youth so as to make them employable.

Khattar said that the country's first Skill University has been set up at village Dudhial in district Palwal. He said that as Switzerland has made remarkable

HP Assembly's budget session to be convened from 26 Feb to 20 March

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 5 FEBRUARY

The Himachal Pradesh Cabinet on Friday recommended to the Governor to convene the Budget Session of Himachal Pradesh Vidhan Sabha from 26 February to 20 March, 2021. It will have 17 sittings.

In a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur here, the cabinet decided all the government educational institutions in Sarkaghat Sub Division of Mandi district would be opened from 8 February, 2021. An official spokesman said that the cabinet decided that if any teacher/employee or student is found Covid-19 positive in any educational institutions of the state then the institution would be closed for 48 hours and would be opened after sanitization as per protocol.

The cabinet also decided that students of 6th and 7th classes would attend their respective schools for study from 15 February, 2021. The students of 1st to 4th standard would attend the online classes from their home," the spokesman said. He said the cabinet decided to suspend the serving of cooked meals in schools under Mid Day Meal

Scheme till 31 March, 2021.

During this period, dry ration would be provided to students and the cooking cost would be transferred in the accounts of the beneficiary/guardians. The academic session 2021-22 would start from 1st April, 2021. The spokesman said the cabinet okayed to allot 20 kanals and one marla land of Industries department at Tahliwal in Una district in favour of Haroli Industrial

Infrastructure Development Society for the period of 30 years on lease at Rupee one per square meter annually for setting up General Engineering Cluster. The cabinet gave its nod to deploy 30 Home Guards volunteers on daily basis in Baddi District Police for strengthening law, order and traffic system. It also gave its consent for framing off Himachal Pradesh Taxation (on Certain Goods Carried by Road) Rules

2021 by repealing the Himachal Pradesh Taxation (on Certain Goods Carried by Road) Rules, 1993 to make all payments of taxes, demand or any other sum through electronic mode also in addition to manual mode.

The spokesman said the cabinet decided to provide one modern ambulance in every medical college of the state for three months to be operated through M/s GVK EMRI to facilitate the patients.

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



MP is expected to witness more investment, tourists with increasing air connectivity

MADHYA PRADESH CHIEF MINISTER SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUDHARI

AFTER INAUGURATING NEW REGIONAL AIRLINE FLYBIG'S BHOPAL-AHMEDABAD FLIGHT SERVICE

THUMBNAILS



Congress party activists demonstrate against hike in fuel prices, in Bhopal on Friday.

Drug trafficking case: Two women from Uganda and a Nigerian man have been arrested and nine kilograms of narcotics such as heroin and cocaine seized from them as the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) bust a smuggling network, the agency said on Friday. The two had a medical visa for the treatment of Namaganda, the NCB said.

IANS

TN announces ₹12,110 crore farm loan waiver

CM says waiver would pave way for 16.43 lakh farmers to continue cultivation without hassles

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHENNAI, 5 FEBRUARY

A few months ahead of Assembly elections, the AIADMK government in Tamil Nadu on Friday announced waiver of Rs 12,110 crore crop loans availed by 16.43 lakh farmers from cooperative banks.

Making the announcement in the state assembly, chief minister K Palaniswami said the scheme would come into immediate effect and a Government Order shall be issued while the required financial allocation would be made in the interim budget.

Asserting 'I am a farmer too', Palaniswami said it was his first duty to address the grievances of the farming people and ruling party MLAs welcomed his announcement by thumping the desks while the opposition benches were vacant. The principal Opposition party DMK, which staged a walk out ahead of the

DMK staged a walk out ahead of the Governor's address on 2 February, had already announced boycott of the session.

Governor's address on 2 February, had already announced boycott of the session. Assembly elections are likely in April or early May in Tamil Nadu.

The waiver would pave the way for 16.43 lakh farmers to continue cultivation without any hassles, he said.

Targeting the DMK, Palaniswami said the party had promised two acres of land to landless farmers in the run up to 2006 Assembly polls, but they could not fulfill the promise and people knew it and it is the truth.

Similarly, during 2019 Lok Sabha polls, leader of opposition and DMK chief M K Stalin had assured waiver of farmers'

crop loans in cooperative societies. After it won 38 out of 39 constituencies, DMK forgot the promise it made to the people.

"This is the routine they follow during every election," he said, adding the AIADMK was the only party that fulfilled promises. His party gave assurances that could be honoured and also came up with fresh welfare measures, Palaniswami said.

After winning polls and retaining power in 2016, late chief minister J Jayalalithaa had waived Rs 5,318.73 crore farm loans, benefitting 12.02 lakh small and micro farmers. In 2017, his government provided Rs 2,247 crore drought relief to farmers. Farmers faced travails due to Covid, the back to back cyclones Nivar and Burevi last year besides the unseasonal rains that caused heavy damage to crops ready for harvest, he said.

Considering their welfare, crop input assistance of Rs 1,717 crore for 16.43 lakh farmers was ordered and the amount was being credited to their bank accounts directly, he said.

Though this measure would help them, the government wanted to extend further support to help them continue farming. Also, farmers and various farmers associations have been urging the government to waive crop loans considering damage to crops, the chief minister said and announced the crop loan waiver. Ministers and deputy Speaker Pollachi V Jayaraman hailed the Chief Minister for the initiative.

Speaker P Dhanapal lauded the move on behalf of the House and MLAs could be seen walking up to Palaniswami to greet and thank him for the crop loan waiver. Some legislators touched his feet and took his blessings.

AIADMK's allies during the Lok Sabha polls, the PMK and DMDK, welcomed the announcement.

Kerala CM 'takes toddy tapper's son' remarks as an honour'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, 5 FEBRUARY

A day after Congress leader K Sudhakaran's 'toddy tapper's son' remarks against chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan snowballed into a major row in Kerala, he has said that he did not take the Congress leader's statement not as an insult, but as an honour.

Chief minister said he knew Sudhakaran ever since

he joined Brennen College and that he didn't consider his reference to him as a 'toddy tapper's son' as an insult.

While addressing a public meeting in Thalassery on Wednesday, Sudhakaran had said "A toddy tapper's son, now he travels in choppers. He will be the first chief minister from a proletarian party who roams around in helicopters. The leader who stood with red flame and red flag is flying high these days."

On Thursday many Congress leaders came out against Sudhakar's unsavoury comments. Opposition leader Ramesh Chennithala stressed the need to avoid such usage without naming Sudhakaran.

However, on Friday he made a somersault stating that there was nothing wrong in the remarks.

Congress MLA Shanmugam Iusman who was the first to react to the controversy apologized to Sudhakaran.

Centre to re-name govt aided residential schools after Netaji

NEW DELHI, 5 FEBRUARY

In the run-up to the Bengal Assembly Elections, Ministry of Education has decided to name residential schools and hostels funded under Samagra Shiksha as Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose residential schools and hostels.

In an attempt to lay claim to the legacy of the iconic freedom fighter, the government has earlier also named a train after him. Indian railways has named Howrah-Kalka Mail as Netaji

Express. Also, in the same context, the files of Netaji which even RTI activists could not access as they were deemed secret have now been made public. These 'secret' files have been declassified and put on digital display at National Archives of India on the occasion of 119th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose last month.

It is quite apparent that the government is doing this to please the voters in Bengaluru. The occasion of 119th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose last month.

Express. Also, in the same context, the files of Netaji which even RTI activists could not access as they were deemed secret have now been made public. These 'secret' files have been declassified and put on digital display at National Archives of India on the occasion of 119th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose last month.

Mamata places ₹2.99 Lcr interim Budget

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

An annual increment of three per cent and a one-time ex gratia of Rs 3 lakh after retirement have been proposed for para teachers.

Around 45 lakh construction and transport workers will be given Rs 1,000 under social security scheme. A loan provision amounting to Rs 25,000 crore was announced for 10 lakh new self-help groups. These self-help groups will be named as Matribandana and will be given loans from cooperative banks in the next five years.

For farmers, she announced increased financial aid from Rs 2,000 to Rs 6,000 (in two categories - Rs 2,000-Rs 3,000 and Rs 5,000-Rs 6,000) under Krishan Bandhu Scheme. This will cost the

government's exchequer Rs 500 cr.

She announced a training centre for IAS and IPS aspirants wherein 100 students will be trained every year and the government will take care of their boarding and lodging along with a stipend.

Miss Banerjee said nine lakh students were given tabs under "Tarun Swapna" scheme. Proposing extension of this scheme every year to the students appearing for higher secondary exams, Rs 900 crore has been allocated for the next financial year.

Under the "Yashashakti" scheme for employment of youths, 10,000 students will be selected every three years and will get an opportunity to work as interns in different government departments fol-

lowing which they would get preference in different government jobs.

Miss Banerjee said "Duare Sarkar" and "Paray Samadhan" will be conducted twice a year and Swastha Sathi cards can be renewed every three years and anyone can become a member at any time.

The state government will create a common kitchen for low-cost while the existing free ration system will continue till June 2021.

A total of 1.5 lakh refugees will be given land documents in a phase-wise manner and Rs 100 crore has been allotted for this purpose.

Further, 20 lakh houses will be constructed for SC/ST and Rs 1,500 crore has been allocated. A hundred new schools will be constructed for Nepali, Urdu, Kamatipuri and Kurmali languages and Rs 50 crore has been allotted for 500 new schools for Alchiki language wherein 1500 para teachers will be recruited for the state.

The planned expenditure for undertaking the development schemes has increased by 10 times, capital expenditure by 14 times while allocations in the social sector has hiked by 9.15 times, agriculture sector by 9.5 times, physical infrastructure by 5.58 times and health sector by 3.8 times.

Ahead of the Assembly polls, the state government is planning to go in for a major IPS reshuffle with Soumen Mitra likely to be appointed as the new Kolkata police commissioner and incumbent Anuj Sharma may be posted as ADG (CID). Siddhanta Gupta, presently the ADG (CID) may be named as ADG (South Bengal).

The Election Commission had named Mitra as the commissioner of the city police during the 2016 assembly poll in the state replacing the then top cop Rajeev Kumar.

New commissioners will be appointed in Kolkata Police, Howrah, Bidhannagar and Barrackpore with C Sudhakar likely to be appointed as commissioner of Howrah police; Supratim Sarkar likely to be Bidhannagar commissioner replacing

Mukesh and Ajay Nand may be Barrackpore commissioner in place of Manoj Verma.

Javed Shamim may be appointed as ADG (law and order) while Gyanwant Singh may be the ADG (Armed Police).

Meanwhile, the state government today introduced a host of promotion and career advancement opportunities along with pay rules for WBCS services. Several posts will be created to remove stagnation in the existing posts as well

as to provide career opportunities. Along with this, a new career advancement scheme has been drawn up for the WBCS offices of the state. "Currently people who join WBCS services late in their career miss the opportunity of getting promoted in IAS cadre and at times even their salaries are lower than that of their juniors. This is also being looked into," said Alapan Bandopadhyay, state chief secretary.

TENDER

NORTHERN RAILWAY

E - TENDER NOTICE No. ELKS/SRE/T-13 dtd. 08.01.2021

Open tender through E-tendering are invited by Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer/TRS, Electric Loco Shed, Khanalampur Yard, Northern Railway, Saharanpur (Ambedkar Division) for and on behalf of the President of India from the registered tenderer on web site www.ireps.gov.in for the following work upto 11:00 hrs on the date of closing shown against the work and will be opened thereafter.

Open Tender No. ELKS/SRE/T-13

Name of work Annual Maintenance Contract (AMC) of 06 Nos. EOT cranes with standby spare for one years in Electric Loco shed, Saharanpur

Date of Closing/Opening 02.02.2021

Approx. Cost. ₹ 17,25,986.00

Earnest Money ₹ 34,600.00

Completion period 01 Year

Validity period 45 days

Cost of tender form Free of Cost

1. The required Earnest Money will only be accepted through online payment modes available on IREPS portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. upto tender closing date and time i.e. 02.02.2021 at 11:00 hrs. Manual payments through demand draft, bankers Cheque, deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed. Offers which are not received by the closing date and time will be considered invalid.

2. Tenderer(s) should have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate to participate in E-Tendering of Works Tenders.

3. Tenderer(s) are required to upload self-attested scanned copies of all related eligibility documents as per conditions.

4. Taxes & Charges will be applicable as per extant rule.

5. For details, please log on IREPS website www.ireps.gov.in

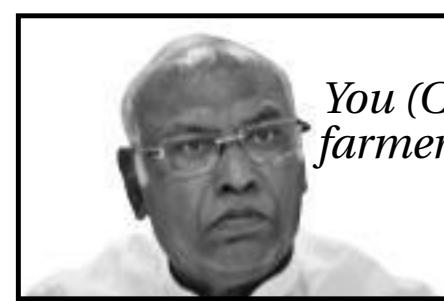
27/2021

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

जनर निगम जयपुर

जनर निगम जयपुर के लिए चारों ओर सुधूर

जनर निगम जयपुर के लिए चारो



You (Centre) have also conspired along with capitalist to capture farmers' land

PARTICIPATING IN THE DISCUSSION ON THE MOTION OF THANKS TO THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER MALLIKARJUN KHARGE

The Statesman

05

NEW DELHI, SATURDAY 06 FEBRUARY 2021

THUMBNAILS



Youngsters on New Delhi roads on Thursday
APP

80-year-old raped in UP: An 80-year-old woman was allegedly raped in a village in Kharela area in Mahoba, police said on Friday. The incident took place on 2 February when the woman was alone in the house as her family members were out attending a religious function, SHO, Kharela, Anil Kumar said. PTI

Minor girl raped & killed: A five-year-old dalit girl of a village in Morena district of Madhya Pradesh was raped and murdered allegedly by a man who had recently come out on bail from jail where he was lodged on charges of molesting the minor's aunt. SNS

JeM OGW worker held: A most wanted overground worker (OGW) of the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) terrorist outfit was arrested on Friday at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi after his deportation from Qatar, police said in Srinagar. PTI

Nadda to launch 'Rath Yatra' today; TMC says 'malicious propaganda'

SNS & PTI

KOLKATA, 5 FEBRUARY

BJP president JP Nadda will launch the party's 'Parivartan Yatra' tomorrow and begin party's campaign for Assembly election. The party said the yatras will be held in five organisational zones and cover every Assembly constituency.

BJP Bengal's-in-charge Kailash Vijayvargiya said home minister Amit Shah will visit the state next week to take part in the yatra.

The rath yatra will commence from Nabadwip, the birthplace of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. The programme is scheduled a day ahead of prime minister Narendra Modi's visit to Haldia in Purba Medinipur district.

The Trinamool Congress on Friday accused the BJP of indulging in "malicious propaganda" over denial of permission to hold its 'rath yatra' in West Bengal, asserting that the ruling party has nothing to do with providing such clearance.

TMC MP Saugata Roy said, "Most people do not even know JP Nadda's name. He is from Himachal and should not come

Before Debts Recovery Tribunal-II, Delhi
4th Floor, Jeevan Tara Building,
Parliament Street, New Delhi-110001

O.A. No. 699/19 Dt. 30-01-2021

STATE BANK OF INDIA

Versus Applicant

Sh. Subodh Kumar & Ors.

Respondent

To,

Defendant

1. Sh. Subodh Kumar S/o Sh. Anil Kumar

Sah, Rd. 1408 Room No. 12, 2nd Floor

Gurudwara Road, New Jain Sweets Kotla

Mubarakpur Lodi Road, New Delhi - 03 Also at:

134, 1st Floor Bhagwan Nagar Ashram

New Delhi - 14 Also at: AS SR. PHP

Developer IT Deptt. Transedge Marketing Services Pvt. Ltd., S-42, 1st Floor Okhla

Phase-II, New Delhi - 20

3. M/s R.K.S. Builders India Pvt. Ltd.,

220, Gram Buraon Opp. Vatmyati Hospital

Delhi - 84

4. M/s Lotus Enterprises C/o K-3 Kavi

Nagar, Ghaziabad, UP - 201001.

Whereas the above named applicant(s)

has / have instituted a case for recovery of

Rs. 19,31,091/- (Rs Nineteen Lacs Thirty

One Thousand and Ninety One Only)

against you and where it has been shown

to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not

possible to serve you in the ordinary way

therefore, this notice is given by

advertisement directing you to make

appearance in the Tribunal on 28-05-2021

at 10:30 A.M.

Take notice that in default of your

appearance on the date before the

mentioned, the case will be heard and

determined in your absence.

By order of the Tribunal

for Registrar

DRT-II, Delhi

No chakka jam in Delhi: Farmers' body

Unions said farmers in other parts of the country will block national & state highways for 3 hrs but in a peaceful way

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 5 FEBRUARY

The Samyukt Kisan Morcha, an umbrella body of the farmer unions protesting the three farm laws, on Friday said there would be no 'chakka jam' in Delhi on 6 February even as it asserted that peasants in other parts of the country will block national and state highways for three hours but in a peaceful way.

In a statement, the SKM said emergency and essential services such as ambulance and school bus will not be stopped during the 'chakka jam' that is proposed to be held between 12 pm and 3 pm on Saturday.

"There will be no chakka jam programme inside Delhi since all the protest sites are already in a chakka jam mode.

All roads for entering into Delhi will remain open except where farmers' protest sites are already located," the statement stated.

Thousands of farmers, mostly from Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh, have been camping at three Delhi border points -- Singhu, Tikri and Ghazipur -- for over 70 days, demanding a complete repeal of three central farm laws.

Darshan Pal, a senior member of Samyukt Kisan Morcha, said that 'chakka jam' will remain completely peaceful and non-violent, adding that protesters have been asked to not indulge in any conflict with government officials or any citizen.

The SKM had earlier this week announced this nationwide chakka jam on Saturday, saying that farmers would

SC-appointed panel holds consultations with state govt & pvt mandi operators

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 5 FEBRUARY

The Supreme Court-appointed committee on Friday said it held consultations with the heads of state marketing boards, private mandi operators and food parks from 10 states including Kerala on the controversial new farm laws against which farmers have been protesting at Delhi's borders for over two months now.

This is the fifth meeting the panel held so far. The three-member committee is holding consultations with stakeholders both online and in person.

In a statement, the committee said it held a detailed discussion "in person" with managing directors, administrators, directors of state marketing boards, private mandi operators and food



Barricading at Singhu border in New Delhi.

parks of different states and union territories.

These officials were from 10 states -- Gujarat, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tripura and Uttar Pradesh.

The committee members requested the participants to

give their views on the three farm laws.

"All the stakeholders gave their valuable views and suggestions..." the statement said. In the previous meetings held on February 3 and 4, the committee said, "Representatives of few farmers' unions participated in the meeting in person".

block national and state highways for three hours in protest against the Internet ban in areas near their agitation sites, harassment allegedly meted out to them by authorities, and other issues.

According to the SKM, the chakka jam will conclude at 3 pm by blowing vehicle horn for one minute, a move that is aimed at expressing support and solidarity with the farmers. Meanwhile, security at Singhu, Tikri and Ghazipur borders has been tightened by deploying extra forces and putting up multi-layered barricades, barbed wires and

nails studded on the roads.

Delhi Police Commissioner S N Shrivastava also held a meeting with the senior officers of the force and reviewed the security arrangements.

The police will also be monitoring content on the social media to keep a watch on those spreading rumours against the force, officials said. Elaborating about the security arrangements for the proposed 'chakka jam', Delhi Police PRO Chinmoy Biswas said in view of the violence that took place on January 26, adequate security arrangements have been put in place

by the Delhi Police at the borders so that miscreants are not able to enter the national capital.

"We are monitoring content on the social media to make sure rumours are not spread against the police. The protestors are camping at the borders of Delhi. We are in touch with the police force of other states also," he added.

A senior police officer said to prevent any kind of law and order situation and disruption of normal life during the 'chakka jam', adequate forces are being deployed across the outer-north district of Delhi Police.

Lok Sabha proceedings hit for fourth consecutive day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 5 FEBRUARY

Lok Sabha proceedings were a virtual washout on Friday as relentless protest by Opposition members against the Centre's three farm laws continued for the fourth consecutive day, even as signs emerged that normal functioning could resume from Monday.

The government has always been ready for discussion and we are hopeful that Lok Sabha will function smoothly from Monday, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi said.

On Friday 3, Locket Chatterjee of the BJP had initiated the discussion on the Motion of Thanks, but she could not complete her speech due to disruptions.

She has not yet resumed her speech.

While demanding repeal of the three laws, Opposition parties are also insisting on a stand alone debate on the farmers' issue. The government has maintained that Opposition can raise the farmers' issue during the debate of the Motion of Thanks.

On Friday, Lok Sabha was adjourned first till 6 pm after Opposition members disrupted the proceedings demanding repeal of the laws and shouted slogans from the Well of the House.

As soon as the House convened at 4 PM, members from the Congress, Left parties

Maratha quota: SC to hear pleas from 8 March in hybrid manner

NEW DELHI, 5 FEBRUARY

The Supreme Court on Friday said it would hear from March 8 in a hybrid manner, a combination of physical and virtual hearings, the pleas pertaining to the 2018 Maharashtra law granting reservation to Marathas in education and jobs. A five-judge constitution bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan said if physical hearing would resume in the apex court then the parties can make arguments physically and if anyone wants to argue virtually, he can do that.

The top court is presently hearing matters through video-conferencing since March last year amid the pandemic and it is likely to resume physical hearing in a hybrid manner soon.

The bench, also comprising justices L Nageswara Rao, S Abdul Nazeer, Hemant Gupta and S Ravindra Bhat, said it would also hear arguments on the issue of whether the landmark verdict in the Indira Sahwney case, also known as the 'Mandal verdict', should be re-looked or not.

The bench, which fixed the schedule for hearing the matter, said it would wrap up the hearing in March itself.

It said that petitioners would argue their case on March 8, 9 and 10 and the state government would thereafter get three days to argue.

The top court said intervenors in the matter would get 17 March to argue their case while Attorney General KK Venugopal would argue on March 18. It said that advocates for the parties should give advance soft copies of their compilations and written submissions.

On January 20, the Maharashtra government had told the bench that a case of this nature should be heard once physical hearing commences.

On December 9 last year, the apex court had said that issues pertaining to the 2018 Maharashtra law, granting reservation to Marathas in education and jobs, requires urgent hearing as the legislation has been stayed and the fruits accrued are not reaching to the people.

The top court had also issued notice to the Attorney General seeking his assistance in the matter.

The apex court on September last year, while referring to a larger bench the batch of pleas challenging the validity of law, had stayed the implementation of the legislation but made it clear that status of those who have availed of the benefits would not be disturbed.

Comedian Munawar granted interim bail

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 5 FEBRUARY



said.

At the outset, advocate Saurabh Kirpal, appearing for Faruqui said, This is a case of victimisation.

He said that allegations made in the FIR are vague in nature and procedure of arrest laid down by the court in its 2014 verdict was not followed.

The bench noted the submission and said, The counsel has pointed out to us that quite apart from the fact that the allegations made in the FIR are vague in nature and procedure of arrest laid down by the court in its 2014 verdict was not followed.

Faruqui and four others were arrested on January 1 following a complaint by a BJP MLA son that alleged objectionable remarks about Hindu deities during a Judgment in Arun Kumar Versus State of Bihar and others has not been followed before arresting the petitioner.

The top court sought response from Madhya Pradesh government on both the pleas filed by Faruqui and from Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and Maharashtra governments on the plea seeking quashing of FIRs lodged for the same alleged offence in different States.

The top court sought response from Madhya Pradesh government on both the pleas filed by Faruqui and from Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and Maharashtra governments on the plea seeking quashing of FIRs lodged for the same alleged offence in different States.

This being the case, we issue notice in both the petitions, and stay the Judgment of the High Court. The petitioner is released on ad-interim bail on conditions to the satisfaction of the trial court.

In the meantime, there shall be stay of the production warrants as well, the bench

STRUGGLING THROUGH



School students walk on a snow covered path after snowfall, in Kullu on Friday.

IANS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BENGALURU, 5 FEBRUARY

President Ram Nath Kovind on Friday said Aero India 2021 is a living proof of India's ever-growing strength in the defence and aerospace sectors at the global level as curtains came down on the three-day event. He said the event will contribute significantly towards strengthening India's self-reliance in the defence sector as well as establishing India as a manufacturer for the world, and it has exhibited that the global confidence in the country's capabilities is growing steadily.

"Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, I am happy that Aero India 2021 has been organised successfully."

Segmented Learning

After the closure that has stretched to close to a year and a wasted academic calendar, the West Bengal government has unwittingly or otherwise consented to segmented learning. Education minister Partha Chatterjee's decision to allow the reopening of schools for classes 9 and 11 is intended to take care of students ahead of the board exams. This appears to be the singular consideration. The bulk of school students have thus been excluded from the scheme of things. A pie-chart would indicate that the interests of only two classes out of 12 would be taken care of. Learning can't be pursued for a fraction of students. Of course, the school authorities are right when they insist on Covid protection protocol and parental consent. Even after a year of the virus affliction, the risk of infection is real. But a schedule for phased reopening could have been worked out before the minister went ahead with his announcement. Mr Chatterjee's meeting on Wednesday with the authorities of universities made no headway as the Vice-Chancellors ruled out the reopening of hostels and insisted on suitably sanitised classrooms. The minister apparently was not in a position to offer a positive assurance on either suggestion. Which would suggest that no concrete steps have been thought of before the gates are reopened. In the net, the state government appears to have acquiesced to four segments of learning. It thus comes about that instruction will only be imparted to those in the school's senior classes and who will write their papers in a public exam. There will be no classes in the immediate perspective, specifically at the under-graduate level, not to mention post-graduate studies and above. On the face of it, the system is quirky. On closer reflection, however, neither the government nor the school authorities can take the risk of yet more afflictions in course of the search of learning. Schools by and large are awaiting the government's guidelines, which have not been announced. It's a sobering thought that schools are taking the initiative, with several private institutions planning to write to the Chief Minister, requesting her to reopen at the earliest schools where shutters have been down since March last year. It is almost a damned-if-you-do and damned-if-you-don't scenario for the authorities of primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities. Small wonder that several hundred private schools are keen on discussing the issue of reopening with the state's department of education. (In Andhra Pradesh and Assam, for instance, schools reopened several weeks back.) It is imperative for the state government to craft a blueprint on the "open sesame" option. With such indecision, the advancement of learning is bound to hit the reefs because of the near-total segmentation. While the hesitant approach may be explained by the risk to public health, Bengal should study models followed in other states before coming up with a comprehensive plan. The uncertainty must end.

Iran's moral victory

By any reckoning, it has been a major moral victory for Iran in the midst of the dispute with the world powers over its nuclear programme. Thursday's ruling by the International Court of Justice to the effect that it can hear Iran's case against the US has been greeted by the Bench itself as a "big victory" for the Islamic Republic. It has been a legal triumph against the United States, one that has prompted President Rouhani to congratulate the nation for the "big victory" the government achieved at The Hague. Mr Rouhani has underlined the fact this is one of several victories that Tehran has achieved against America at the tribunal. The ICJ was suitably emphatic when it ruled that it can hear a case brought by Iran against the United States. Most particularly, the case seeks to end sanctions that the Trump administration had reimposed in 2018 after pulling out of an international agreement aimed at curtailing Tehran's nuclear programme. In equal measure, the ICJ's ruling is tantamount to a moral setback for the United States. It bears recall that Washington had argued last year that the case ought to be "thrown out by the court for lack of jurisdiction and admissibility". Of course, the US has had an uneasy relationship with the ICJ and it does not subject itself to the court's compulsory jurisdiction. Iran had filed the case in July 2018, a few months after the then President, Donald Trump, had said that he was pulling the US out the 2015 international agreement and would reimpose the normally crippling sanctions on Iran. The White House had also threatened other countries with sanctions if they did not cut off Iranian oil imports. To buttress its case, Iran has alleged that the sanctions run counter to the 1955 bilateral agreement, called the Treaty of Amity. It regulates and promotes economic and consular ties between Iran and the United States and it is Iran's case that treaty terms confer jurisdiction on the ICJ. It is significant that the ICJ's ruling coincides with President Biden's attempt to enhance diplomatic ties with Iran. In a preliminary ruling in October 2018, the ICJ had ruled that Washington should remove, by any means of its choosing, any impediments arising out of the reimposition of sanctions to the export to Iran of medicines and medical devices, food and agricultural commodities, spare parts and equipment necessary to ensure the safety of civil aviation. The US sanctions do have what they call specific "carve-outs" for medicine and humanitarian aid to Iran. However, international banks and financial institutions hesitate in effecting transactions with Iran for fear of being fined or barred from the American market. There may be hope yet from The Hague. Wednesday's ruling suggests that the International Court of Justice sees merit in Iran's case. The fact that President Biden seeks to "enhance diplomacy towards Iran" is another favourable factor towards ending the impasse.

Bold and Clean

The unprecedented pandemic has knocked India off its fiscal consolidation path for the next few years and revival of the economy remains the primary concern of the government



In the first budget of this decade presented in the backdrop of an unprecedented 7.7 per cent contraction of the economy battered by a stubborn pandemic, the Finance Minister Ms Nirmala Sitharaman has done a commendable job. True to her pre-budget promise that the government would look beyond fiscal deficit to revive Asia's third-largest economy, she has delivered an almost tax free, investment oriented, clean and transparent budget, preferring economic revival and growth over fiscal prudence and deficits, resisting the temptation of extreme responses usually warranted by extreme circumstances like imposing heavy taxes.

Save a few import duty tweaks to protect the domestic industry with rationalisation of customs duty and an Agriculture Infrastructure and Development Cess on specified goods, there were no new taxes in the budget. To push growth to 11 per cent in the next fiscal as highlighted by the Economic Survey, all that is expected of a prudent FM in the given circumstances has been done, even though the growth expectation seems a tad too optimistic. The stock market cheered it full throttle, with the Sensex surging by 2315 points ~ it has now crossed the 50000 mark.

With deficit for the current fiscal ballooning from the budgeted Rs 7.96 lakh crore or 3.5 per cent of GDP, to Rs 18.5 lakh crore, or 9.5 per cent in the revised estimates (RE), fiscal deficit for 2021-22 is now pegged at Rs 15 lakh crore, or 6.8 per cent of the GDP, to be financed mainly through market borrowings (Rs 9.7 lakh crore) and drawing on the pool of small savings (Rs 3.9 lakh crore). Fearing higher inflation after the expansionary budget, the bond yield has already tightened and the cost of borrowing will certainly go up. The 15th Finance Commission, whose report was also placed in the Parliament along with the budget, has suggested a roadmap according to which by 2025-26, the fiscal deficit should be brought down to 4.5 per cent of GDP which will be a tough task for any government.

Ms Sitharaman must also be commended for a transparent budget by disclosing the off-budget borrowing of Rs 1.26 lakh crore and promising to further bring it down to only Rs 30,000 crore in 2021-22 ~ this is one reason why the fiscal deficit has soared so much. She also promised that the National Small Savings Fund would no longer be used to finance food subsidy bill of FCI in 2021-22. This will restore the fiscal marksmanship hitherto absent in our budgets and restore the confidence of investors and

rating agencies alike. The unprecedented pandemic has knocked India off its fiscal consolidation path for the next few years and revival of the economy remains the primary concern of the government. To jumpstart the revival process, the FM has increased capital expenditure by almost 26 per cent to Rs 5.54 lakh crore. But the proposed increase in capex will be at the expense of revenue expenditure while keeping the aggregate expenditure practically unchanged ~ Rs 34.8 lakh crore in 2021-22 as against Rs 34.5 lakh crore in 2020-21 RE.

Budgetary allocations for MNREGS has been cut by more than a third, and expenditure on subsidies has been reduced across the board ~ by almost 60 per cent on fertilisers braving the on-going protests of

the farmers, 50 per cent on petroleum and LPG, and 40 per cent on food ~ to release the required capex funds. Allocations to the welfare for the elderly poor under the National Social Assistance Programme have also been reduced drastically. As a result, the revenue expenditure net of interest payments will in fact decrease by 8.6 per cent compared to the 2020-21 RE. The nominal GDP growth rate has been pegged at 14.4 per cent assuming a moderate inflation, while 17 per cent tax increases have been assumed implying a tax buoyancy of 1.2 per cent which again may be an ambitious target, given the effect of the pandemic from which the economy is recovering in a V-shaped trajectory as per the Economic Survey. While taxes will yield Rs 15.5 lakh crore, proceeds from the disinvestment of public sector undertakings will yield Rs 1.75 lakh crore, less than the current budget estimate (BE) of Rs 2.1 lakh crore against which the actual receipt was only Rs 32,000 crore due to the disruption caused by Covid. Several PSUs will be on the block including BPCL, Air India, Shipping Corporation, Container Corporation, IDBI Bank, Pawan Hans and Neelachal Ispat Nigam which were slated for disinvestments during the current fiscal. The biggest to watch of course will be the IPO of the insurance behemoth LIC. The FM has also promised to privatise two Public Sector Banks and one General Insurance company ~ this indeed will be turning the full circle on the bank nationalisation launched in 1969. She stated emphatically that a 'bare minimum' number of CPSEs will be maintained only on strategic sec-

tors, that is, atomic energy, space and defence, transport and telecommunications, power, petroleum, coal and other minerals, besides banking, insurance and financial services.

In my book "Public Sector Enterprises in India: Evolution, Privatisation and Reforms" (Sage 2020), I have argued that while the number of CPSEs need to be reduced drastically, their de-bureaucratisation and depoliticisation are much more imperative than privatisation for their rejuvenation. Even in the strategic sectors, if we want to reap the benefits from the remaining CPSEs, it would be essential to relax the excessive government controls over them by separating the government's roles as their owner, policymaker and regulator. This can be done by creating an appropriate holding structure, following the example of Temasek Holdings in Singapore. In the present form where they lack real autonomy and are subject to the caprices of the bureaucracy, they will always deliver sub-optimally. On the expenditure side, as expected, health expenditure will get

a 137 per cent hike over last year's BE to improve our badly under-resourced public healthcare system whose weaknesses were severely exposed by the pandemic. To achieve the optimal results, states must also improve their health infrastructure. The hike in health expenditure includes a hike in expenditure for drinking water and sanitation by almost Rs 40000 crore. The outlay for Jal Jeevan Mission for supplying drinking water has also been increased five-fold to Rs 50011 crore.

As the FM has stated, her budget proposals rest primarily on 6 pillars of 'Atma-nirbharata' to steer structural reforms: health, physical and financial infrastructure, inclusive development, human capital, innovation and minimum government. As regards infrastructure, she has announced a number of infrastructure projects covering almost all the important sectors ~ roads, railways and water transport, ports and shipping, urban infrastructure, power, energy etc. Some of these will benefit the election bound states of Assam, West Bengal, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. For financing the infrastructure expenditure, she has promised to set up a Development Financial Institution (DFI) with a capital base of Rs 20000 crore for funding projects worth Rs 5 lakh crore in the next 5 years. With the IFCI, IDBI

and SIDBI, we had already experimented with the idea of DFI without much success, but it is a much-needed measure now when the country is poised for massive infrastructure spending, of course with lessons learnt from our earlier failures. Similarly, her proposal to set up a bad bank in the form of an Asset Management Company (AMC) to absorb the toxic assets of the banking system is also a move forward to manage an expected higher credit demand which calls for a mechanism for maintaining the asset quality. While asset quality will remain the primary focus of the banking system and the RBI, with the banks' balance sheets now becoming much cleaner due to consistent efforts of the past few years, an AMC may provide the necessary support in the long run to deal with stressed assets and release some capital by selling them, though nothing may be expected in the short run. But both the measures boosted the market sentiment as reflected in the Bank Nifty scaling a new high after surging 12.1% on the budget day and then scaling the 35000 mark. It is also imperative that these institutions are given proper autonomy and independence, free from bureaucratic manipulation by their political masters to provide loans that may be politically desirable but financially unviable. The promise of minimum government is nothing more than a cliché in view of the increased empowerment of bureaucracy under the present government, but the FM's promise of a digital census under it deserves commendation. A few developed countries have started using the existing government databases to create the base census records, which cuts the cost and time to less than half. Using our existing Aadhar and voter card databases and a mobile app to capture responses to census questions will enable much faster and efficient data analysis for planning and policy decisions.

No budget can please all, and this budget too has left some areas unaddressed. The decrease in MNREGA allocation will hurt employment estimated at more than 9 per cent. Apart from the promise of a database, a one-nation one-ration card and an affordable rental housing scheme, migrant workers have been left in the cold, and whether the push for infrastructure will create enough jobs for them remains to be seen. As always, the key to success will be implementation. Covid has pushed nearly 85 million people below the poverty line as the migrants had lost their livelihood, and to lift them back will be a priority for the government if another wave of anger is to be avoided.

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

ASIAN VOICES
Between shame and fame, repelling and charming

Recently, we have been watching the fall of our prominent politicians due to their disgraceful acts or fraudulent lives in the past. The irony is that these hypocrites have preached social justice, fairness, and equality, while clandestinely pursuing unfair privileges and unjust advantages, abusing the powers that they were given. To make matters worse, the hypocrites do not hesitate to do evil things under the pretense of good. Obviously, they believe that the end justifies the means. So they think they can sacrifice "lesser" goods for a greater good and they can do evil things as long as they serve la Grande Cause. They say: "If you want to kill a wolf, sometimes you need some sheep." In that sense, they resemble terrorists who do not hesitate to sacrifice innocent lives, claiming that collateral damage is inevitable to accomplish their ideological goals.

Perhaps they do not know the famous phrase, Non faciat malum, ut inde bonum veniat, which means, "Do not do evil in order that good may come," or "You are not to do evil that good may come of it." Indeed, the end can never justify the means. No matter how noble the end is, it will lose nobility if the means to accomplish it is wrong.

There is another saying, "Evil comes in many forms, including 'the Good.'" Indeed, there may be evil politicians who pretend that they are

H The Korea Herald
good people who can bring justice and fairness to our society. Oftentimes, they are nothing but unwise, stubborn ideologists who believe that our past was wrong, so they should straighten it out by punishing anyone who was involved.

However, a maxim says, "You cannot change the past, but you can change the future." Forgetting to heed this advice, our politicians try to change the past through political vendettas, only to fail to change the future.

A beautiful song by Ori illustrates what we should do about the past. The deeply moving lyric goes, "Maybe, maybe, maybe, you slept with someone else in the past. But no one will love you, love you, love you like I do/ 'Cause I will be your last." What we need now is that kind of positive attitude toward the past.

Eventually, those hypocrites will fall down in shame and disgrace. It is a tragedy because life is too valuable to waste in humiliation and dishonor. Therefore, we must always try to live with decency, integrity, and honor. Then, we can protect our reputation and lead a worthy and excellent life. Unfortunately, however, many of us often make a wrong choice and end up disgraced and shamed. In addition, life is short and soon we will retire and fade away. When aged, we will be full of woes and remorse, looking back upon our past lives.

We will regret our wrong choices that have shamed us or ruined us. We may be rueful at our deathbed, but it will be too late because by choosing unwisely, we have irrevocably ruined our reputation and honor already. We cannot turn shame into fame. In his novel "On the Road," Jack Kerouac wrote, "Something, someone, some spirit was pursuing all of us across the desert of life and was bound to catch us before we reached heaven. Death will overtake us before heaven." We will regret our wrong choices that have shamed us or ruined us. We may be rueful at our deathbed, but it will be too late because by choosing unwisely, we have irrevocably ruined our reputation and honor already. We cannot turn shame into fame.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Message of the National Anthem

SIR, Some eminent personalities believe that our national anthem needs to be

of five stanzas; only the first one is adopted. Here we get a view of Rabindranath's



changed. Whether the change will be limited to a name (Sindhu), or the whole song has not been disclosed. The song is, in fact, a long poem

perception of his country and the world. Nowhere in the anthem has he recalled our country's glorious past, or narrated its scenic beauty.

Throughout the poem he has hailed *Bharata bhagya bidhata* or the guiding spirit that has inspired our countrymen to rise above narrow nationalism and treat others as our own. This message of love and brotherhood was first uttered by our ancient sages who addressed the entire humanity as *Amritasya Putra*, or children of "The Immortal One". Their ultimate message was *Basudaiwa Kutimabakam* ~ people of the whole world are our relatives. It is not a religious preaching, but a universal appeal, that attracted many people down the ages who ever came here to carry their trade, or even to conquer their trade, or even to conquer their

loot. Eventually, many of them settled here and were slowly absorbed into our system. This spirit is unique and it is the essence of our 5,000 years of civilisation. Though there existed casteism and hatred towards the low castes and Dalits, humiliated and exploited in an inhuman manner, there were also accounts of the relentless struggle of many to restore sensibility among all. Ultimately, good sense prevails and this multi-cultural, multi-lingual, multi-racial land has become a united whole.

Rabindranath Tagore always believed that it is in our good sense or conscience where exists God himself, and he is the real *Jana gana mana adhinayaka* and *Bhagya bidhata* of the Indi-

CALLOUSNESS POST-MERGER

SIR, I seek to draw your attention to the utter callousness of the Managerial body of the United Bank of India located at Kolkata after the merger of the said Bank with the Punjab National Bank of India. I am a pension-holder having an account at the UBI situated at College Street of Kolkata. Till today (3 February 2021) I have received no information about my pension from this Bank. I am quite perplexed as to how to meet my monthly expenses. Being bereft of information of any kind I am under severe mental stress passing sleepless nights. Considering the plight of the pension-holders may I make an appeal to the respective authority to take up the matter seriously and see to it that the aggrieved individuals find solace.

Yours etc., Tapan Kumar Banerjee, Kolkata, 4 February.

ans. In this song he asks his blessings, so that we Indians can proceed forward overcoming all dangers and obstacles. Our framers of our Constitution, headed by Dr BR Ambedkar; also accorded priority the issues relat-

ed to human rights, justice, liberty, equality and fraternity so that we unitedly constitute India as a sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic.

Yours, etc., Surabhi Sarkar, Kolkata, 27 January.

'Social awareness must in leprosy fight'

Born in Tokyo, **YOHEI SASAKAWA** is the WHO Goodwill Ambassador for Leprosy Elimination and Chairman of The Nippon Foundation, a non-profit foundation established in 1962 for carrying out philanthropic activities using revenue from motorboat racing. Sasakawa is known for bringing an entrepreneurial spirit to his work with entities from the political, governmental, academic, and private sectors in addressing issues in such diverse areas like health, education, food security, and maritime safety. His global fight against leprosy and its accompanying stigma and social discrimination is an issue to which he has remained highly committed for more than 40 years. In an interview with **ASHOK TUTEJA**, Sasakawa shares his thoughts on various issues ranging from leprosy to the Covid-19 pandemic. Excerpts:

Q. You are the Goodwill Ambassador of the World Health Organization (WHO) for leprosy elimination. How do you look at India's efforts to eradicate leprosy?

A. The Indian government is making great efforts to tackle leprosy. Early detection and treatment are of the utmost importance to preventing transmission and the government's national leprosy case detection campaigns (LCDC) in recent years have been very successful in helping more people to access treatment. Moreover, the proportion of new patients with visible (grade-2) disability at time of diagnosis has almost halved in the past five years, which is unprecedented when compared to other countries. However, it remains the case that more than half the world's new leprosy patients are diagnosed in India, and there exist laws that discriminate on the grounds of leprosy that need to be rescinded. So, there is still work to do, and I would like to see the Government of India continue its efforts to tackle leprosy from both the medical and social standpoints.

Q. Can you throw light on cooperation between Nippon Foundation and Sasakawa India Leprosy Foundation to deal with this infectious disease?

A. Sasakawa-India Leprosy Foun-

dation (S-ILF) was established by The Nippon Foundation in 2005 to support India's efforts to tackle leprosy with endowments totaling US\$ 12,000,000 to date. Around the same time, we also helped to found what is now called the Association of People Affected by Leprosy (APAL), a nationwide organisation working to resolve leprosy issues whose efforts I support. In cooperation with APAL, S-ILF is engaged in projects to promote self-reliance, education and awareness-raising projects, mainly in high-endemic states, and undertakes activities that contribute to improving the lives of those living in leprosy colonies while also promoting social integration. So, for the Nippon Foundation, S-ILF and APAL are important partners and we will continue to support them. We would also like to continue to cooperate with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare concerning our activities.

Q. What are the challenges being faced in the eradication of leprosy in the world over?

A. From the 1980s, a new treatment for leprosy in the form of multidrug therapy was gradually introduced around the world and the number of patients began to decrease sharply. In 1991, the WHO set a goal of eliminating leprosy as a public health problem, with elimination defined as a prevalence rate of less than 1 case per 10,000 population, and this galvanised countries to tackle the disease. Unfortunately, now that most countries have achieved this, leprosy has become less of a priority and case numbers have plateaued. My view of this is that once a country achieves the elimination target, people involved worry that numbers will rise again if they keep looking for new cases, and they will be criticised, so they suffer from what I call "elimination trauma". There is also a problem of stigma and discrimination associated with leprosy. Because of lack of knowledge and understanding about leprosy in society, persons affected by leprosy find themselves economically and socially marginalised. Another consequence of discrimination is that people hesitate to seek treatment even if they think they might have symp-



toms, with the result that they may be transmitting the disease to others. Social awareness is so important. Everyone needs to know that leprosy is curable, the drugs are free, and that discrimination is a human rights issue and should never be tolerated.

Q. Tell us more about the launch of the flip chart to help ASHA workers in India do their job better with regards to identification of leprosy cases and promotion of treatment-seeking behaviour amongst infected people?

A. Early symptoms of leprosy are often painless, so many people do not go to hospitals or health centres to be examined. By visiting people's homes and examining them for signs of leprosy, ASHA are making a big contribution to early detection. We collaborated with the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and the WHO to develop a leprosy flip chart to help ASHA communicate correct knowledge of leprosy to households. By 2022, the flip chart will have been distributed to ASHA in six endemic states: Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal and Jharkhand. When we distributed the flip chart to ASHA last year in Gujarat, they told us it would be very helpful. The flip chart uses a lot of drawings and photos and is designed in a way that anyone can understand. In addition, the WHO has produced an explanatory video on

how to use the flip chart, so even if ASHA can't attend training sessions because of the coronavirus pandemic, they can watch the video and learn. We are hopeful that the flip chart will prove effective and lead to as many cases as possible being detected early.

Q. Could you tell us about the work done by S-ILF during the Covid-induced lockdown to provide relief to leprosy-affected people in India?

A. The worldwide outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic unleashed an unprecedented crisis. This has badly impacted the leprosy-affected people living in secluded leprosy colonies. They were left with no means of livelihood. In these times of uncertainty, S-ILF ensured that the relief measures trickled down to those who needed it the most. S-ILF initiated a campaign to provide dry ration & relief material to the persons living in these secluded leprosy colonies. Till date, S-ILF is able to extend support to more than 35,000 people (7,831 households) in 11 states across India. We always have, and always will be committed to supporting and empowering persons affected by leprosy and their families.

Q. How do people living in leprosy colonies fight against Covid-19, and how do you look at it?

A. In addition to working with S-

ILF, The Nippon Foundation of which I am chairman and the Sasakawa Health Foundation have supported the APAL since its founding in 2005. APAL is a nationwide network representing the interests of some 750 leprosy colonies across India and advocates with the central and state governments for the rights of persons affected by leprosy and to improve their quality of life. While India has eliminated leprosy as a public health problem, it continues to see the highest number of leprosy cases in the world while also reporting the second-highest number of Covid-19 cases. Concerning the latter, many people have suffered tremendously over the past year as a result of lockdowns. This is particularly true of leprosy colony residents, who were already in an economically and socially vulnerable position. I have heard reports from around the country of people losing their livelihoods, having trouble finding something to eat, being unable to receive needed health care and suffering a worsening of the aftereffects of leprosy. Faced with this challenge, APAL has begun a new grassroots coronavirus relief initiative in 25 colonies in 6 endemic states: Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand and Gujarat. Young people in the colonies are being taught about the coronavirus and how to protect against it, such as the correct way to wear a mask, and trained how to take temperatures and measure oxygen saturation levels of colony residents, and take them to the hospital if they develop symptoms. From its beginnings, APAL and its members have been actively involved in a sustained effort to detect new cases of leprosy and I have been supporting these activities. They are now able to apply this experience to the coronavirus as well. I think what this new initiative by APAL shows us is that people are conscious of protecting their health and are trying to overcome the coronavirus pandemic by helping each other. My hope is that these activities not only help protect the health of colony residents but become a model for the whole country in protecting against both leprosy and coronavirus alike.

This might be reflecting those dynamics and might be somewhat of a coup internally and his way of maintaining power within the military." Furthermore, the army couldn't risk having the NLD at the helm with an overwhelming majority. There are also reports of rifts between Suu Kyi and the military on internal issues, with the Rohingya issue becoming too weighty, despite the Chinese and Russian support in the UN.

The latest coup has several ramifications internally and externally. Democracy in Myanmar that had existed very tenuously has proved to be fragile and subject to the whims of the military. There is no guarantee of how long the one-year emergency period will actually last and how soon democracy will be restored. Given the military's predilection for power, one suspects the people of Myanmar may not be able to taste its flavour very soon. Myanmar had been emboldened by the unquestioned support of its policies - the Rohingya policy in particular - by China and Russia. This time too, China has blocked a United Nations Security Council statement condemning the military coup.

Going forward, Suu Kyi may not get the kind of international support that she got in the past when she was fighting to establish democracy. She is no longer considered an icon of freedom engaged in restoration of democracy and human rights, but rather someone complicating in the ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya perpetrated by Myanmar military. In fact, in January 2018, former US diplomat Bill Richardson, who was a member of an interna-

tional panel on the Rohingya crisis, had called for her to step aside because of her defence of the atrocities and her failure to promote democratic values.

Myanmar military's faith in China to back it against diplomatic onslaughts has paid off. And it will continue to defy not only internal public opinion but external pressure too. For China, Myanmar is too important a strategic asset to let go of. Given the enhanced strategic importance of the region, India, which shares 1600 km of border, has enormous security stakes in Myanmar, and may resist the urge to bring pressure to bear on the country. On the other hand, an effective sanction on Myanmar is doubtful. Past embarrassments on Myanmar were circumvented, including by many western countries.

As far as the Rohingya and other ethnic minorities are concerned, things might get even worse. Insofar as repatriation of Rohingya refugees is concerned, Bangladesh may consider it effectively shelved. If anyone in Bangladesh had thought that Myanmar was serious about repatriation, they were wrong. In fact, 2017 was the last phase of the Final Solution of the Rohingya issue that was started in 1962 by General Ne Win. The Myanmar military will see through the complete execution of the plan by divesting the Northern Rakhine State of all vestiges and traces of the Rohingya minority. The China wall stands between international pressure and the Myanmar military, and regrettably, the wall will prevail.

The Daily Star/ANN.

OCCASIONAL NOTE

Hitherto, while faith in most German institutions has been destroyed, there has seemed to be no greater reason for doubting the value of German learned societies. The reputation of such bodies as the Weimar Shakespeare Research Society, however, will be forfeited if they are capable of taking seriously so wild a farrago of nonsense as that produced by a lecturer, stated to be a prominent woman professor, named Frau Deventer von Kunow. Francis Bacon has already been made the subject of an attempt to supplant the fame of Shakespeare; his memory is now invoked to take away the character of Good Queen Bess herself. Frau Deventer von Kunow maintains that Queen Elizabeth and Robert Dudley Earl of Leicester were secretly married in the year 1561, and that Bacon was their son; that he was to have been destroyed at birth but was saved by the intercession of Ann Bacon, wife of the Keeper of the Great Seal; that a maid of honour was found to have betrayed the secret of the child's birth, whereupon "she and sixteen others were executed" to prevent the tale from going any further; and that the boy grew up under the name of Francis Bacon, being told of his origin by his foster-parents when he was sixteen years old. As no such document has ever become known to the keepers of the records, the story falls to the ground at once.

NEWS ITEMS

KING AND THE UNEMPLOYED

Their Majesties the King and Queen yesterday paid a surprise visit to Norwich with the object of visiting the relief works for the unemployed. They inspected new roadways under construction and also the Corporation's new house-building scheme. A number of people were presented to their Majesties at the Town Hall including Mr. Freeman, the Socialist Chairman of the Unemployment Committee, who astonished the on-lookers by walking up to the King, and saying "I ask you to appeal to Parliament to do something for unemployed citizens." His Majesty was sympathetic, and cordially replied "you may be sure I shall do everything I possibly can to help. We sympathise with you very much, and hope that the trouble is not going to last very long."

CONFERENCE OF CUSTOMS OFFICIALS

The conference of Customs officials throughout the Empire which should have been held last year, but was delayed owing to the pressure of post-war work, will meet in London at the end of February. The date is not yet fixed, but will probably be some time during the last week. The sole object of the conference is to try and secure uniformity in the multiplicity of certificates which must be signed to meet the requirements of Customs departments throughout the world. Self-governing Dominions will be directly represented, and the Colonies and Dependencies probably by the Colonial Office. The conference is in no way concerned with questions of policy.

RAILWAY COMMITTEE'S TOUR

Karachi, Feb 5
The Daily Gazette of Karachi, commenting on the decision of the Indian Railway Committee not to visit Karachi, says:- It certainly seems an astonishing state of affairs that a Railway Committee investigating the problem of State railway management should deliberately exclude from their personal examination the difficulties of the only great port in India that is served by, and depends directly upon, a State owned and State managed railway. Can it be, then, that the Committee hesitated to make too close an acquaintance with the biggest State managed railway in India. The journey between Karachi and Lahore, is the reverse of pleasant at any time of the year, but is full of uncertainties just now. The public can draw whatever conclusions they please from this strange decision.

THE MESOPOTAMIAN MANDATE

The Philadelphia Public Ledger announces the terms of the British draft of the Mesopotamia mandate which will be submitted to the League of Nations at the next meeting at Geneva on February 22. The Daily Mail regards the conditions as in general onerous to Britain, placing all liabilities upon British shoulders. The chief clauses provide for no discrimination against any foreign State, with a view to placing on an equal footing the trade and oil enterprises of all nations, and equal treatment to all nations with regard to archaeological research. Britain is to be responsible for foreign relations, defence, and maintenance of the present frontiers, and freedom of religion and education.

The China factor in Myanmar

SHAHEDUL ANAM KHAN

Aung San Suu Kyi is back to where she had been used to living during the greater part of her political career (except for a brief interregnum of pseudo-democracy): behind bars. She has been devoured by the tiger that she was riding, or to be exact, appeasing over the last five years. Her deference to the Burmese military by staking her status as a Nobel Laureate, discarding her principles for her political survival, having previously been compelled to accept a constitution that made Myanmar a country with command democracy - dictated by 25 per cent of military-nominated representatives and the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), the military's political proxy - has encouraged the military to act with impunity against its ethnic minorities.

It was the military that was really running the country all along, back-seat-driving the parliament and Suu Kyi, who was made State Counsellor, in other words, prime minister, but who commanded very little space of her own. The real power lay not in the hands of those elected by the people but in the military. The quasi-democracy fooled the world, and the country was accepted in the comity of nations promising political reforms and democracy. Not only had the sanctions on Myanmar been withdrawn in 2011, but as of now, it is also reaping the benefits of a foreign investment that runs to the tune of more than \$30 billion.

Myanmar had never morphed

into a democratic state - it was never intended to, it being run by a constitution that was drafted by the military and validated through a two-phase referendum that was alleged to have been saturated by fraud and cheating, with government officials casting the votes, leaving the voters out of the polling process. The armed forces under the constitution get 25 per cent of the seats in parliament automatically. The 2008 constitution also mandates that the ministries of home affairs, defence and border affairs be headed by serving military men, thereby giving the military control of the three most important ministries.

The latest military coup and the annulment of the election results marked the second instance where Suu Kyi and her NLD party suffered the consequences of military intervention and scrapping of the election results. In 1990, when the newly formed NLD got nearly 80 per cent of seats, the military was quick to annul the results, peddling the familiar line that the country was too beset by internal conflict and discord to be ready for democracy. The 2015 election also went the NLD's way. It survived because its survival was promised by the then army chief, the same person into whose hands the powers of the state have been thrust this time. In September 2015, General Min Aung Hlaing, under US sanctions for human rights abuses against the Rohingyas, had vowed to respect the outcome of the country's November 8 general election, pledging that the

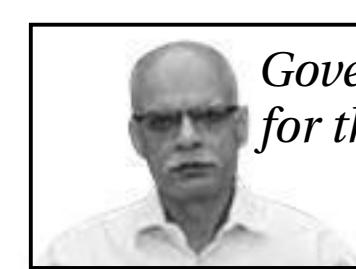
military would not intervene, regardless of the results. This time, the results were too uncomfortable for the military. So they were scrapped and a virtual martial law was declared on February 1.

The constitution empowers the Tatmadaw, the Burmese military, to intervene in case of an emergency. But was there an emergency? Can anyone take seriously the charges of election fraud which were rejected by the election commission itself? The question that everyone is seeking answers to is what made the army go for such a step when everything was seemingly going so well for them. During the last five years, it was Suu Kyi's government that was getting all the flak for their policies. The military atrocities on the Rohingyas - labelled as genocide by the UN, the US and others - have been steadfastly defended by Suu Kyi in all international forums.

Annulling the November 2020 election has to do with both the personal interest of army chief Min Aung Hlaing and the corporate interest of the Myanmar army. Min Aung Hlaing reportedly has been aspiring to become president after his retirement. But that was dependent on the military-backed USDP getting at least 25 per cent of the seats. However, the NLD swept the November election and the USDP did worse than 2015, which put paid to Hlaing's desire of becoming president in the legal way. To quote an expert on Myanmar, "There's internal military politics around that, which is very opaque.

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Government will borrow about Rs 12 lakh crore for the next fiscal year at a reasonable rate

TARUN BAJAJ
ECONOMIC AFFAIRS SECRETARY

THUMBNAILS

PMC Bank resolution: Three investors have submitted their final offers for resolution of crisis-ridden Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative (PMC) Bank and their evaluation is underway. Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das said on Friday. Last month, the bank's administrator A K Dixit had said that three investors were given time till 1 February 2021 for submissions of their final offer. "I have been informed that three final offers have been received. I am given to understand that the PMC bank itself is evaluating the offers," the Governor told reporters after announcing the monetary policy.

PTI

MF sponsor: Capital market watchdog Sebi has notified easier profitability criteria for becoming a mutual fund sponsor to facilitate innovation and expansion in the sector. The move comes after the Sebi board approved a proposal in this regard in December last year. Under the new norms, sponsors that are not fulfilling profitability criteria at the time of making an application would also be considered eligible to sponsor a mutual fund.

PTI

Paypal move: Digital payment solutions provider Paypal on Friday said it will stop offering domestic payment services within India from 1 April. The US-based company will instead focus on enabling more international sales for Indian businesses. "We will continue to invest in product development that enables Indian businesses to reach nearly 350 million PayPal consumers worldwide, increase their sales internationally, and help the Indian economy return to growth," a PayPal spokesperson said.

PTI

Truecaller: Truecaller, in a Press statement, has announced that the company's brand solutions platform has enabled exponential growth for a lot of brands in the vernacular segment, delivering significantly higher engagement compared to industry standards across the country.

SNS

Realme phones: Smart-phone maker Realme on Friday introduced the newest additions to its X series family ~ the realme X7 5G & realme X7 Pro 5G. Both the smartphone are powered by laudable MediaTek chipsets ensuring par-excellence performance and feature bold, futuristic designs, said a Press release from the company.

SNS

TechM CFO: IT services major Tech Mahindra on Friday named Milind Kulkarni as its new chief financial officer (CFO). Kulkarni, whose appointment is effective 2 April 2021, will take over from the current CFO Manoj Bhat, a statement said. Bhat is taking over as the group chief financial officer of M&M Group as part of the leadership rotation strategy, it added.

PTI

Hero MotoCorp reports 14% rise in Q3 profit to ₹1,029 cr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 5 FEBRUARY

The country's largest two-wheeler maker Hero MotoCorp has posted 13.7 per cent increase in its consolidated profit after tax to ₹1,029.17 crore for the third quarter ended 31 December 2020. The company had reported a net profit of ₹905.13 crore in the October-December period of the previous fiscal.

Revenues from operations rose to ₹9,775.77 crore, as against ₹6,996.73 crore in the October-December period of the previous fiscal.

"Our performance in the third-quarter underlines the company's operational strength and ability to perform well despite a challenging and volatile environment," Hero MotoCorp chief financial officer (CFO) Niranjan Gupta said.

The company declared an interim dividend of ₹65 per share (3,250 per cent).

Economic growth will only move upwards: RBI Guv

Shaktikanta Das pegged the GDP growth rate for the next financial year at 10.5 per cent

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 5 FEBRUARY

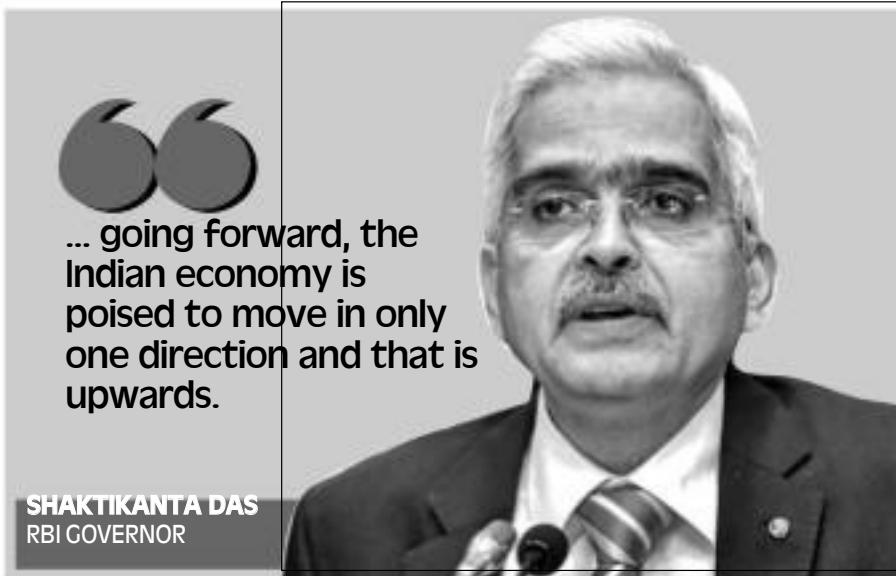
Stressing that economic growth will only move upwards, the Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das today pegged the GDP growth rate for the next financial year at 10.5 per cent, though a tad lower than the government's projection of 11 per cent.

The projection is in line with the estimates in the Union Budget 2021-22 presented in Parliament earlier this week.

The Economic Survey, tabled by the government in Parliament recently, has projected that the economy will grow at 11 per cent, up from an estimated historic decline of 7.7 per cent in 2020-21, on account of the Covid-19 pandemic.

"...going forward, the Indian economy is poised to move in only one direction and that is upwards," Das said while unveiling the bi-monthly monetary policy.

The Governor said the Union Budget 2021-22 has provided a strong impetus for

SHAKTIKANTA DAS
RBI GOVERNOR

revival of sectors such as health and well-being, infrastructure, innovation and research, among others.

This, he said, will have a cascading multiplier effect going forward, particularly in improving the investment climate and reinvigorating domestic demand, income and employment.

Also, the vaccination drive is expected to provide an impetus for the restoration of contact-intensive sectors and a leading edge to the Indian pharma industry in the global market, Das said, while highlighting various aspects

of the economy.

"It is our strong conviction, backed by forecasts, that in 2021-22, we would undo the damage that Covid-19 has inflicted on the economy," he stressed.

The monetary policy statement issued by the RBI said rural demand is likely to remain resilient on good prospects of agriculture. Urban demand and demand for contact-intensive services is expected to strengthen with the substantial fall in Covid-19 cases and the spread of vaccination.

Consumer confidence, it is said, is reviving and business expectations of manufacturing, services and infrastructure remain upbeat.

"The fiscal stimulus under Aatmanirbhar 2.0 and 3.0 schemes of government will likely accelerate public investment, although private investment remains sluggish amidst still low capacity utilisation," it added.

"...real GDP growth is projected at 10.5 per cent in 2021-22 in the range of 26.2 to 8.3 per cent in H1 and 6.0 per cent in Q3," Das said.

After the Budget 2021-22 announcement on Monday, economic affairs secretary Tarun Bajaj had said that real GDP growth would be 10.5 per cent in the next financial year.

"Our revenue figure is under-stated not overstated. We have taken nominal GDP at 14.4 per cent and revenue growth at 16.7 per cent. So, the buoyancy is only 1.16. We are hopeful we will get more than this. We will definitely be within 6.8 per cent and could be lower also," Bajaj had said.

Retail inflation likely to be in 5-5.2% range

MUMBAI, 5 FEBRUARY

The RBI today projected retail inflation to be in 5-5.2 per cent range during the first half of the next fiscal year, expecting further softening of vegetables prices in near term. Also, it has lowered the retail inflation forecast for the current January-March quarter of 2020-21 fiscal to 5.2 percent.

The Governor said the outlook on growth has improved significantly and inflation has returned with-in the tolerance band (of +/- 4 per cent).

Having breached the upper tolerance threshold (over 6 per cent) continuously since June last year, CPI inflation has come below 6 per cent in December for the first time in the post-lockdown period supported by favourable base effects and sharp fall in key vegetable prices, Das said.

Currently, the RBI allows

small investors to buy government bonds via the Gobid platform on BSE and NSE, but it has not gained any traction.

While no country allows a direct retail participation as the RBI has promised now, Britain, Brazil and Hungary allow small investors to buy/sell through third-party controls.

This is the second major step that the RBI is taking to encourage retail investors to enter the gilt market after it had allowed entry through the stock exchanges a few years back but did not elicit the intended result.

Under the new plan, all an investor needs to do is to open a gilt securities account (retail direct) with the RBI.

As part of continuing efforts to increase retail participation in government securities and to improve ease of access, it has been decided to move beyond aggregator model and provide retail investors online access to government securities market, both primary and secondary, along with the facility to open a gilt securities account (retail direct) with the RBI, Governor said.

Production-linked incentives for ACs and LED lights

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 5 FEBRUARY

The expenditure finance committee has approved the proposal of the commerce and industry ministry for providing incentives to ACs and LED lights under the PLI scheme, which aims at boosting domestic manufacturing in the country, according to the DPIIT.

In November, the Union Cabinet had approved Rs 6,238-crore outlay for these two sectors, air conditioners and LED lights, under the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme, which aims at making Indian manufacturers competitive globally.

Based on the recommendations of the committee, the department for promotion of industry and internal

trade (DPIIT) has prepared a draft Cabinet note.

The scheme would extend an incentive of 4 per cent to 6 per cent on incremental sales over the base year 2019-20 of goods manufactured in India and covered under target segments, to eligible companies, subject to fulfilment of threshold conditions of cumulative incremental investment and sales of manufactured goods, for a period of five years.

DPIIT secretary said that all the proposals would be approved by the Union Cabinet and then notified.

"PLI is a game-changer scheme. It will promote global champions in India," he told reporters here. The scheme will be launched on 1 April, and it will be open for applications for six months initially,

which could be extended, if required.

The scheme was launched for 13 sectors with an outlay of Rs 1.97 lakh crore over the next five years. The other sectors include telecom, textile products, food products and advanced chemistry cell battery. The final proposal of the PLI scheme for individual sectors would have to be approved by an empowered finance committee and Union Cabinet. The departments concerned would have to implement the scheme.

The secretary said: "We are actively monitoring more than 1,000 companies in the world which are already in India and thinking of expanding or thinking of entering India. We are carefully and closely monitoring their discussions."

HDFC chief settles matter with Sebi

NEW DELHI, 5 FEBRUARY

Mortgage lender HDFC Ltd's chairman Deepak Parekh has settled with markets regulator Sebi a matter of non-compliance with an erstwhile listing agreement. Parekh has settled the matter by paying Rs 9.37 lakh towards settlement charges without admitting or denying the findings of fact and conclusions of law.

The matter pertains to non-compliance with the erstwhile listing agreement by Parekh with respect to an Inter-Corporate Deposit (ICD) advanced by HDFC Ltd to Gliders Buildcon Realtors Pvt Ltd, a group company of Piramal Realty Pvt Ltd.

According to an examination by Sebi, apart from the ICD, an additional loan facility of Rs 875 crore was approved to Gliders Buildcon in December 2014.

Centre working on new e-commerce policy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 5 FEBRUARY

The commerce and industry ministry is "definitely" working on a new e-commerce policy which will have various features such as those related to data and consumer rights, a senior government official said today.

The other issues which need to be looked upon while formulating the policy are about the problem of counterfeit products, packaging and rules of origin, the official of the department for promotion of industry and internal trade (DPIIT) said.

DPIIT is an arm of the Union ministry of commerce and industry.

"Who should be accountable for counterfeit products sold through an e-commerce

company. Data is an important issue. The entire data will be governed by what actually the data law will be, which is before Parliament. That is why we are not in a hurry to finalise it (the policy)... So, whatever will be the final outcome of that data Bill, it will apply to everybody who will deal with data," the official said, adding a regulator for the sec-

tor may come if required.

The official said that e-commerce sector is not only about foreign direct investment (FDI) in the sector, as a large number of e-commerce firms are outside FDI.

"We are definitely working on the policy," the official said.

The government in 2019 had released a draft national e-commerce policy which had proposed setting up a legal and technological framework for restrictions on cross-border data flow and also laid out conditions for businesses regarding collection or processing of sensitive data locally and storing it abroad.

Several foreign e-commerce firms have time and again raised concerns over some points in the draft pertaining to data.

Industry bodies hail West Bengal budget

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 5 FEBRUARY

merce feels such measures would lead to enhanced economic activity in the state," the chamber president said.

Commenting on the development, Ramesh Kumar Saraogi, president, Bharat Chamber of Commerce, said: "Addressing the social side of the ledger, the chief minister has unveiled a populist and pro-people interim budget."

"The special incentives to fill vacant posts with the proposal of 'Matir Sristi' and other infra projects to create significant employment opportunities is laudable," Saraogi said.

Financial incentive package extended to the tourism sector in the form of loans would certainly boost the morale of the sector which was affected due to the Covid pandemic," Saraogi added.

SENSEX HIT 51K, NIFTY SCALES 15K-LEVEL

NEW CLOSING PEAK

► The 30-share BSE benchmark briefly crossed the 51,000-level, before ending 117.34 points or 0.23 per cent higher at its fresh closing record of 50,731.63 points.

► Similarly, the 50-share NSE Nifty scaled the 15,000-mark during the day but shed some ground to close at its all-time high of 14,924.25 points, up 28.60 points or 0.19 per cent.

► During the week, the

Sensex rallied 4,445.86 points or 9.60 per cent, while the Nifty soared 1,289.65 points or 9.45 per cent.

On the other hand, Axis Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, Maruti and HCL Tech were among the laggards, tumbling up to 3.30 per cent.

Earlier in the day, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) kept interest rates on hold while assuring to maintain support for reflating the econ-

omy by ensuring ample liquidity to manage the government's near-record borrowing.

"Hence, the two cylinder of policy, fiscal and monetary, would be supportive to growth in economy. This is good news for banks and financials along with positive rub off to domestic cyclical sectors. We remain constructive on equity markets and believe that the economy and corporate earnings are at a cusp of a new multi-year upcycle," said Gaurav Dua, SVP, head capital market strategy, Sharekhan by BNP Paribas.

BSE realty, bankex, healthcare, metal, FMCG and finance indices moved up to 0.94 per cent, while telecom, teck, auto, oil and gas and IT ended in the red.

However, broader BSE mid-cap and small-cap indices underperformed benchmarks, ending up to 0.93 per cent

lower. During the week, the Sensex rallied 4,445.86 points or 9.60 per cent, while the Nifty soared 1,289.65 points or 9.45 per cent.

Global shares maintained their upward trajectory on US stimulus hopes and growth optimism.

Elsewhere in Asia, indices in Hong Kong, Seoul and Tokyo ended with gains, while Shanghai was in the red.

Stock exchanges in Europe were also trading on a positive note in mid-session deals.

Meanwhile, the global oil benchmark Brent crude was trading 0.95 per cent higher at \$59.56 per barrel.

The rupee gained 3 paise to settle at 72.93 against the US dollar.

Foreign institutional investors were net buyers in the capital market as they purchased shares worth Rs 1,936.74 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data.

Hero MotoCorp reports 14% rise in Q3 profit to ₹1,029 cr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 5 FEBRUARY

On a standalone basis, the company reported 23.17 per cent increase in its PAT to Rs 1,084.47 crore, as against Rs 880.41 crore in the same period of the previous fiscal.

Revenues from operations rose to Rs 9,775.77 crore, as against Rs 6,996.73 crore in the October-December period of the previous fiscal.

"Our performance in the third-quarter underlines the company's operational strength and ability to perform well despite a challenging and volatile environment," Hero MotoCorp chief financial officer (CFO) Niranjan Gupta said.

The company declared an interim dividend of ₹65 per share (3,250 per cent).

The company has been

able to drive profitable growth through improvement in market shares, acceleration of savings initiatives, continued control on overheads, and cash flow management, he added. "Going forward, we expect input costs to remain under pressure due to the rising prices of

Odisha CM inaugurates projects in Kotia amid poll process by AP

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KORAPUT, 5 FEBRUARY:

Amid the row over Andhra Pradesh conducting panchayat elections in villages under inter-state dispute, Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik reached out to one such panchayat through video conference and inaugurated nine projects worth Rs 19 crore today.

The Kotia panchayat has been under dispute over jurisdiction between the two states since ages. A week ago officials of Andhra Pradesh initiated panchayat election related process in the area and several aspirants filed nomination papers triggering a political uproar in Odisha.

Today, Chief Minister

Naveen Patnaik inaugurated nine completed projects worth Rs.19 crore including a primary health centre, Sub centre, office complex building, Kotia to Madkar road and laid foundation stone for a high level bridge over Madkar Nallah on Kotia Madkar road with an estimated cost of Rs.5.38 crore.

Significantly, he did not utter a word on the inter-state dispute nor did he question the panchayat election related activity undertaken by the Andhra Pradesh government in the same area.

Instead, he addressed the people of Kotia and promised that he will physically visit the place and interact with them soon.

He also recalled that in 2018 he had announced a Rs 150 crore package for the area



and noted that work on the proposed projects was going on in full steam.

Kotia will be developed as a model gram panchayat, he told the people in his speech.

Steps have been taken for development in the field of education, health, communication, drinking water and electricity while emphasis has been given on food security, social security and liveli-

hood of the people, he said.

Minister Handlooms, Textiles and Handicrafts, Ms Padmima Dian, MLAs of Koraput and Patangi who were at the spot also spoke.

Reacting sharply to the event, Opposition Congress and BJP came down heavily on the CM saying he had ignored the gravity of the situation in the bordering village for decades resulting in the cur-

rent problem.

Former MP of Koraput, Jayram Pangi urged the people of Kotia not to cast their vote in the Panchayat elections being held by Andhra Pradesh.

Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan too reacted saying "we have perhaps failed to make a sincere attempt to resolve the dispute by way of discussions".

Pradhan recalled that he had visited Kotia and interacted with people several years ago and requested CM Naveen Patnaik to convene a meeting of all stakeholders to resolve the inter-state dispute.

The Congress leader Narasingha Mishra charged that the CM had failed to protect the people and it clearly shows weak leadership.

Odisha records 70% vaccination turnout

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 5 FEBRUARY:

Odisha has managed to cover 70% healthcare workers under the first phase of the COVID-19 vaccination programme so far while 1,92,437 frontline workers have been registered for receiving vaccines in the second phase of the inoculation drive scheduled to begin on February 6.

Of the targeted 3.38 lakh healthcare workers enlisted for vaccination in the first phase, 2,36,923 health workers were inoculated including 23,577 on Thursday.

The vaccine jab percentage will go up further as the 1st phase of vaccination for all healthcare workers will conclude on 10 February, said health officials.

Meanwhile the State on Friday reported 97 fresh COVID-19 cases and one fatality during the past 24 hours.

The case fatality rate currently stands at 0.56% in Odisha in comparison to national average of 1.43% CFR.

Odisha currently has 894 active cases.

Cuttack admin's 'no Covid jab, no salary' diktat

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 5 FEBRUARY:

The Cuttack district administration has warned the healthcare workers shying away from inoculation of witholding salaries if they do not get vaccinated by 10 February deadline.

Incidentally, the Covid 19 vaccination drive is totally voluntary and therefore the Cuttack administrations' circular is bound to spark a row.

"It is found that a large number of health workers/anganwadi workers who have registered under different establishments are not turning up for COVID-19 vaccination. As the percentage of vaccination of Cuttack district is one of the lowest in the state, it is causing a great embarrassment,"

the Collector stated in a letter to Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) Commissioner, Principal & Dean, SCB Medical College and Hospital, CDM & PHO, Cuttack, and several other concerned officials.

"You are therefore requested to sensitize the health workers/anganwadi workers to come forward for vaccination. Further, you may instruct the persons registered under different establishments under your jurisdiction to take COVID-19 vaccine positively by 10th of February, which is the last date for COVID vaccination of the health workers/anganwadi workers, failing which their salary/remuneration/stipend for the month will not be drawn", the letter added.

Meanwhile two districts Nabarangpur and Kandhamal have become COVID-free with no active cases.

Unique TRTB proposed by

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BALASORE, 5 FEBRUARY:

A proposal for establishment of a Thunderstorm Research Test Bed (TRTB) at Balasore has been submitted by the Indian Meteorological Department. This would be first of its kind in the country.

The proposed establishment would function by IMD with the collaboration, ISRO, DRDO and IIT Bhubaneswar, Kharagpur and other varsities in Odisha and West Bengal. It will help in study, research and forecast of thunderstorms, strong winds, lightning, IMD Director General, Dr. Mrutyunjay Mohapatra informed media persons about the proposal. It may be noted here that earlier, former MP of Balasore, R K Jena had voiced his demand for such a research centre.

Arms & explosives dump unearthed in Koraput

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 5 FEBRUARY:

A security forces unearthed an explosive dump of Maoists and recovered a huge number of arms and ammunition in a forest area of Koraput district. The security forces were on a combing operation in the forest of Kendabori and Atmakonda when they found the arms dump.

The area was cordoned, bomb disposal squads were engaged to dig up the dump. Tiffin bombs, six SBML guns, 205 pipes for making guns, a huge quantity of gelatin sticks, claymore mines, iron splinters etc were found.

The combing operation was stepped up in the area to try and track down the left wing extremists.

Lokayukta notice to govt on alleged inaction in corruption cases

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 5 FEBRUARY:

Odisha Lokayukta has issued show cause notice to the Chief Secretary seeking compliance report on the alleged inaction in according sanction for the prosecution against as many as 69 corrupt officers and employees since the past five years.

The issuance of notice by the Lokayukta comes in the wake of a petition, moved by RTI activist Prasant Kumar

Odisha announces May 3 date for HSC exam

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 5 FEBRUARY:

The annual High School Certificate (HSC) Examination that was delayed this year owing to the pandemic will begin on 3 May, said the Board of Secondary Education (BSE) officials on Friday.

The HSC or the matric examination, widely regarded as the biggest examination process in the State, will be held from 3 May till 12 May. Similarly, examinations for Madhyama Sanskrit and Odisha

has been delayed.

Open School will also be held during the period. Roughly 5.5 lakh to 6 lakh 10th standard students are scheduled to appear for the annual examination.

The State government had earlier announced the waiver of the examination fee of the students keeping in view the Covid health crisis adverse economic effect on guardians and parents.

The HSC examination schedule that usually commences in February-March has been delayed.

Talks are on between the field director of Satkosia Tiger Reserve and his counterpart of Kanha Tiger reserve to shift tigress Sundari from Satkosia as soon as possible.

However no time frame has been finalized so far for translocation of the tigress from STR.

The Chief Wildlife Wardens of both Madhya Pradesh and Odisha had discussed about the move and agreed that the field directors of the two tiger reserves should work out modalities of the transloca-

22 marine fishermen held in Odisha

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KENDRAPARA, 5 FEBRUARY:

Mohapatra, alleging that the general administration and public grievances department has deliberately not accorded sanction to 69 cases relating to corruption against different public servants.

The Lokayukta posted the matter for further hearing on 15 March.

"Since 2015 till the present day, around 70 applications are pending sanction for prosecution with the general administration department", the petition alleged.

They were remanded to judicial custody today, said officials.

The forest personnel have nabbed 22 sea-going fishermen on the charge of carrying out unlawful fishing activity in turtle concentration zones of Odisha's Gahirmatha marine sanctuary.

Two fishing trawls used by the intruders for fishing were seized by the forest patrol teams.

The intruders who were arrested yesterday are the traditional marine fishermen of Jagatsinghpur districts.

process since November 1 enforcement of the sea-fishing ban.

It should be noted here that the state government has clamped a seven month log trawl fishing ban along the 20 km stretch Dhamara-Devi river mouth from 1 November in view of the ensuing mass nesting of endangered Olive Ridley marine turtles.

Around 7.30 lakh olive Ridley turtles had turned up for their annual sojourn for mass nesting in the 2019-20 nesting season.

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"Not only vehicle but also we need some doctors and staff from Kanha to materialize the transportation of the tigress from Satkosia to Kanha", Karat added.

It may be recalled that a male and female - Mahavir and Sundari had been brought from MP to Satkosia in Odisha as India's first ever wild-to-wild tiger relocation project under which six pairs of tigers were to be released in STR. However, the move failed as Mahavir died in the wild of Satkosia and Sundari had to be captured from the wild to be put in an enclosure.

Karat said that he is dependent on Kanha authorities to send Sundari back.

He said Sundari's new location will be at Gorila enclosure of Kanha STR. But already there is tiger there which is under re-wilding process. Until it is over and released to the wild, we cannot put Sundari there.

Karat said that he is dependent on Kanha authorities to send Sundari back.

The administration has taken up the plight of the affected people. They are being brought back to their native villages. Police protection will be provided to them. The Maoists have made a hasty retreat from Swabhimani Anchal after joint camps of BSF and police were set up in their areas of operation.

The act of terrorizing people is nothing but a desperate ploy by the naxals, said an official of Malkangiri district administration.

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Sundari, the tigress has been in an enclosure at the STR since November 2018.

"I had one round of talks with my Kanha counterpart recently and we will discuss again to finalize the modalities", informed field director of STR, Pradeep Raj Karat.

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Maoists threat drives people to jungle

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 5 FEBRUARY:

A large section of villagers in Swabhimani Anchal, earlier known as cut-off area with predominant presence of left wing extremists, have deserted their village for the safety of the jungle after a 'Praja Court' held by the ultras branded them as police informers and asked them to leave their villages for good.

Banished from their place of nativity in Maoist - affect-

ed Jodamba and Panasput gram panchayats in Chitrakonda block of Malkangiri district, they live in the forests

with fear.

"We are peace-loving people. We are being arbitrarily targeted by the ultras.

We have left our villages and are living in forest areas in makeshift houses" said a few of them while speaking

to media persons.

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It is natural that we have differences but our common interests far outweigh our differences. Our cooperation can do big things

CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN WANG WENBIN
REACTING TO US PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN'S VOW TO CONFRONT CHINA

WEATHER

CITY	MAX(°C)	MIN(°C)
SINGAPORE	31	24 H
HONG KONG	23	15 CL
TOKYO	14	4 H
LONDON	10	5 R
DUBAI	26	17 CL
SAN FRANCISCO	15	8 S
NEW YORK	3	-2 S
MOSCOW	-7	-14 H

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

THUMBNAILS



Celebrating Kamala Harris as America's first woman vice president, a glass portrait in her honour was unveiled in front of the historic Lincoln Memorial on Friday.

AGENCIES

UN climate envoy: The United Nations says American billionaire Michael Bloomberg has been reappointed as a special envoy to engage governments and businesses in tackling the threat of global warming. Bloomberg, who has long campaigned on the issue of climate change, was first tapped for the position in 2018.

AP

H-1B policy: The Biden administration has said that it is delaying the H-1B policy of the previous Trump administration on allocation of the foreign work visas by continuing with the lottery system until December 31, 2021, to give the immigration agency more time to implement modifications to the registration system.

PTI

Divided House kicks Greene off committees

WASHINGTON, 5 FEBRUARY

A fiercely divided House has tossed Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene off both her committees, an unprecedented punishment that Democrats said she'd earned by spreading hateful and violent conspiracy theories.

Underscoring the political vise her inflammatory commentary has clamped her party into, nearly all Republicans voted against the Democratic move Thursday but none defended her lengthy history of outrageous social media posts.

Yet in a riveting moment, the freshman Republican from a deep-red corner of Georgia took to the House floor on her own behalf. She offered a mixture of backpedaling and finger-pointing as she wore a dark mask emblazoned with the FREE SPEECH.

The chamber's near-party-line 230-199 vote was the latest instance of conspiracy theories becoming pitched political battlefields, an increasingly familiar occurrence during Donald Trump's presidency. He faces a Senate trial next week for his House impeachment for inciting insurrection after a mob he fueled with his false narrative of a stolen election attacked the Capitol.

Thursday's fight also underscored the uproar and political complexities that Greene, a master of provoking Democrats, promoting herself and raising campaign money, has prompted since becoming a House candidate last year.

Eleven Republicans joined 219 Democrats in backing Greene's ejection from her committees, while 199 GOP lawmakers voted no.

Addressing her colleagues, Greene tried to dissociate herself from her words of the past. Contradicting past social media posts, she said she believes the 9/11 attacks and mass school shootings were real.

AP

'America is back to repair ties with allies'

Biden in first major foreign policy address vows to engage with the world to meet global challenges, from the pandemic to the climate crisis

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WASHINGTON, 5 FEBRUARY

Declaring that "America is back," President Joe Biden has said that his administration will "repair" the country's strained relations with its allies during the previous Trump administration and engage with the world once again.

In his first major foreign policy address as president, Biden said America cannot afford to be absent any longer on the world stage.

"We will compete from a position of strength by building back better at home, working with our allies and partners, renewing our international institutions and reclaiming our credibility and moral authority, much of which has been lost," Biden said on Thursday as he visited the State Department for the first time after being sworn in as the 46th US President on January 20.

"We cannot do it alone," Biden said, putting particular emphasis on the need to rebuild the country's moral standing after four years under his predecessor Donald Trump, who often rebuffed America's traditional alliances.

Diplomacy is back at the centre of our foreign policy," Biden, who was accompanied by Vice President Kamala Harris, said.

"We will repair our alliances and engage with the world once again, not to meet yesterday's challenges, but today's and tomorrow's. American leadership must meet this new moment of advancing democracy and the rule of law, and impose consequences on those responsible.

"Over the past two weeks, I have spoken with the leaders of many of our closest friends, Canada, Mexico, the UK, Germany, France, Nato, Japan, South Korea, Australia, to begin reforming the habits of cooperation and rebuilding the muscle of democratic alliances that have atrophied over the past few years of neglect and, I would argue, abuse," he said.

America's alliances, he asserted are its greatest asset and leading with diplomacy means standing shoulder-to-shoulder with US allies and key partners once again.

"By leading with diplomacy, we must also mean

mate crisis to nuclear proliferation, challenging the will only to be solved by nations working together and in common.

"We must start with diplomacy rooted in America's most cherished democratic values: defending freedom, championing opportunity, upholding universal rights, respecting the rule of law and treating every person with dignity. That is the grounding wire of our global power. That is our inexhaustible source of strength. That is America's abiding advantage," he said.

Though many of these values have come under intense pressure in recent years, even pushed to the brink in the last few weeks, the American people are going to emerge from this moment stronger, more determined and better equipped to unite the world in fighting to defend democracy, because they have fought for it themselves, Biden said.

In his address to the employees of the State Department, the president said he has come to the building to reassure them that his administration is going to empower them to do their jobs, not target or politicise them.

Biden said his administration will work with partners to support restoration of democracy and the rule of law, and impose consequences on those responsible.

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America's alliances, he asserted are its greatest asset and leading with diplomacy means standing shoulder-to-shoulder with US allies and key partners once again.

"By leading with diplomacy, we must also mean

engaging our adversaries and our competitors diplomatically, where it is in our interest, and advance the security of the American people," he said.

On day one of his presidency, Biden said, he signed the paperwork to rejoin the Paris Agreement on climate change.

"We are taking steps led by the example of integrating climate objectives across all of our diplomacy and raise the ambition of our climate tar-

MAJOR SHIFTS



YEMEN: Biden announced the United States was ending support for a grinding five-year Saudi-led military offensive in Yemen that has deepened suffering in the Arabian peninsula's poorest country, calling the move part of restoring a US emphasis on diplomacy, democracy and human rights. The announcement on Yemen fulfils a campaign pledge. But it also shows Biden putting the spotlight on a major humanitarian crisis that the US has helped aggravate. The reversing of policy also comes as a rebuke to Saudi Arabia, a global oil giant and US strategic partner.

GERMANY: President Joe Biden has formally stopped the planned withdrawal of US troops from Germany that was ordered last year by the Trump administration but had never actually begun. Biden said the troop pullout would be halted until Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin does a review of America's troops presence around the globe. Austin, he said, will ensure that "our military footprint is appropriately aligned with our foreign policy and national security priorities".



RUSSIA: Biden said the days of his country rolling over in the face of Russia's aggressive actions are over and warned Moscow that his administration will not hesitate to raise the cost on it. He said he made it clear to President Putin, "in a manner very different from his predecessor", that the days of the United States rolling over in the face of Russia's aggressive actions, interfering with our elections, cyber-attacks, poisoning its citizens, are over. Biden said the politically-motivated jailing of Alexei Navalny and the Russian efforts to suppress freedom of expression and peaceful assemblies are a matter of deep concern to the United States and the international community.

REFUGEES: The President also announced his intention to increase the number of refugees admitted into the United States after years of historical lows under the Trump administration.



LGBTQI: Biden said he would issue a presidential memorandum to agencies "to reinvigorate our leadership on the LGBTQI issues, and do it internationally" as part of an effort "to further repair our moral leadership."

engaging our adversaries and our competitors diplomatically, where it is in our interest, and advance the security of the American people," he said.

On day one of his presidency, Biden said, he will be hosting a climate leaders' summit to address the climate crisis on Earth Day this year.

America must lead in the face of this existential threat. And just as with the pandemic, it requires global cooperation. "We have also re-engaged with the World Health

gets. That way, we can challenge other nations, other major emitters, up the ante on their own commitments," he said, adding that he will be

building better global preparedness to counter Covid-19, as well as detect and prevent future pandemics, because there will be more," he said.

Biden said he would keep US troops in Germany, which Trump had suggested pulling out, and increase the number of refugees the country would accept from the world's trouble spots to 125,000 annually, a figure his predecessor had cut to 18,000.

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Will take on challenges posed by China directly: Biden

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WASHINGTON/BEIJING,
5 FEBRUARY

Describing an "aggressive" China as the "most serious competitor" to the US, President Joe Biden has said that his administration will take on the challenges posed by Beijing directly, but will not hesitate to work with it when it is in America's interest to do so.

Realising that a rising and more assertive China is one of his biggest foreign policy challenges, Biden on Thursday stressed the importance of allies in responding to the strategic competition posed by Beijing.

"We will confront China's economic abuses, counter its aggressive, coercive action to push back on China's attack on human rights, intellectual property and global governance," Biden said in his address to State Department employees at its Foggy Bottom headquarters here.

"We will also take on directly the challenges posed by our prosperity, security, and democratic values by our most serious competitor, China," he said.

The China-US relationship is crucial to both sides, and the world. Tensions have soared in recent times, over trade, espionage and the coronavirus pandemic.

Washington and Beijing have also sparred over espionage, China's military build-up in the South China Sea and the mass detention of Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang.

Biden, a Democrat, said his administration is ready to work with China when it is in America's interest to do so.

"But we are ready to work with Beijing when it is in

China's interest to do so. We will compete from a position of strength by building back better at home, working with our allies and partners, renewing our role in international institutions, and reclaiming our credibility and moral authority, much of which has been lost," he said, giving the glimpse of his administration's policies on China.

In Beijing, the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman gave a muted response Biden's twin policy approach of confrontation with China on challenges posed and cooperation to further American interests, saying both countries achieve "big things" together and their common interests far outweigh their differences.

"As two major countries China and the US share broad common interests and special major responsibilities for upholding world peace stability and prosperity," foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told reporters.

"Our priority is to make sure that we are dealing with China's trade abuses that are harming American jobs and American workers in the United States," he said.

Senate OKs fast-track of Covid aid, Harris casts tie-breaker

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, 5 FEBRUARY

With a rising virus death toll and strained economy, the president's goal is to have Covid-19 relief approved by March, when extra unemployment assistance and other pandemic aid measures expire

of people who were either working or looking for a job in a sign that some people are dropping out of the labor force.

The US economy is about 12 million jobs shy of its pre-pandemic trends.

Biden, who has been meeting with lawmakers in recent days to discuss the package, will talk on Friday at the White House with the House committee chairs who will be assembling the bill under the budget process known as "reconciliation."

Biden also plans to make remarks Friday on the economy as he keeps up the pressure on Congress to "act big" on his relief package.

With a rising virus death toll and strained economy, the president's goal is to have Covid-19 relief approved by March, when extra unemployment assistance and other pandemic aid expires. Money for vaccine distributions, direct payments to households, school reopenings and business aid are at stake.

The marathon Senate session brought test votes on several Democratic priorities, including a \$15 minimum wage. The Senate by voice vote adopted an amendment from Sen. Joni Ernst, R-Iowa, opposed to raising the wage during the pandemic. Ernst said a wage hike at this time would be "devastating" for small businesses.

None of the amendments to the budget are binding on Democrats as they draft their Covid plan, but passage of a wage increase could prove difficult.

The push for stimulus comes amid new signs of a weakening US economy. Employers added just 49,000 jobs in January, after cutting 227,000 jobs in December, the Labor Department said Friday. Restaurants, retailers, manufacturers and even the health care sector shed workers last month, with state and local governments also letting go of non-school employees.

The unemployment rate fell to 6.3% from 6.7%, but there was a decline in the number

Impeachment managers ask Trump to testify in trial

WASHINGTON, 5 FEBRUARY

House impeachment managers asked former US president Donald Trump on Thursday to testify during the Senate impeachment trial about his conduct on January 6. The move was immediately described as a "public relations stunt" by his lawyers.

In a letter, lead impeachment manager Jamie Raskin requested Trump to provide testimony under oath, either before or during the Senate impeachment trial, about his conduct on January 6. The letter comes after Trump's legal team filed an answer to the Article of Impeachment, denying incontroversial facts about the president's conduct on and leading up to January 6 and asserting that "...the 45th president of the United States performed admirably in his role as president, at all times doing what he thought was in the best interests of the American people."

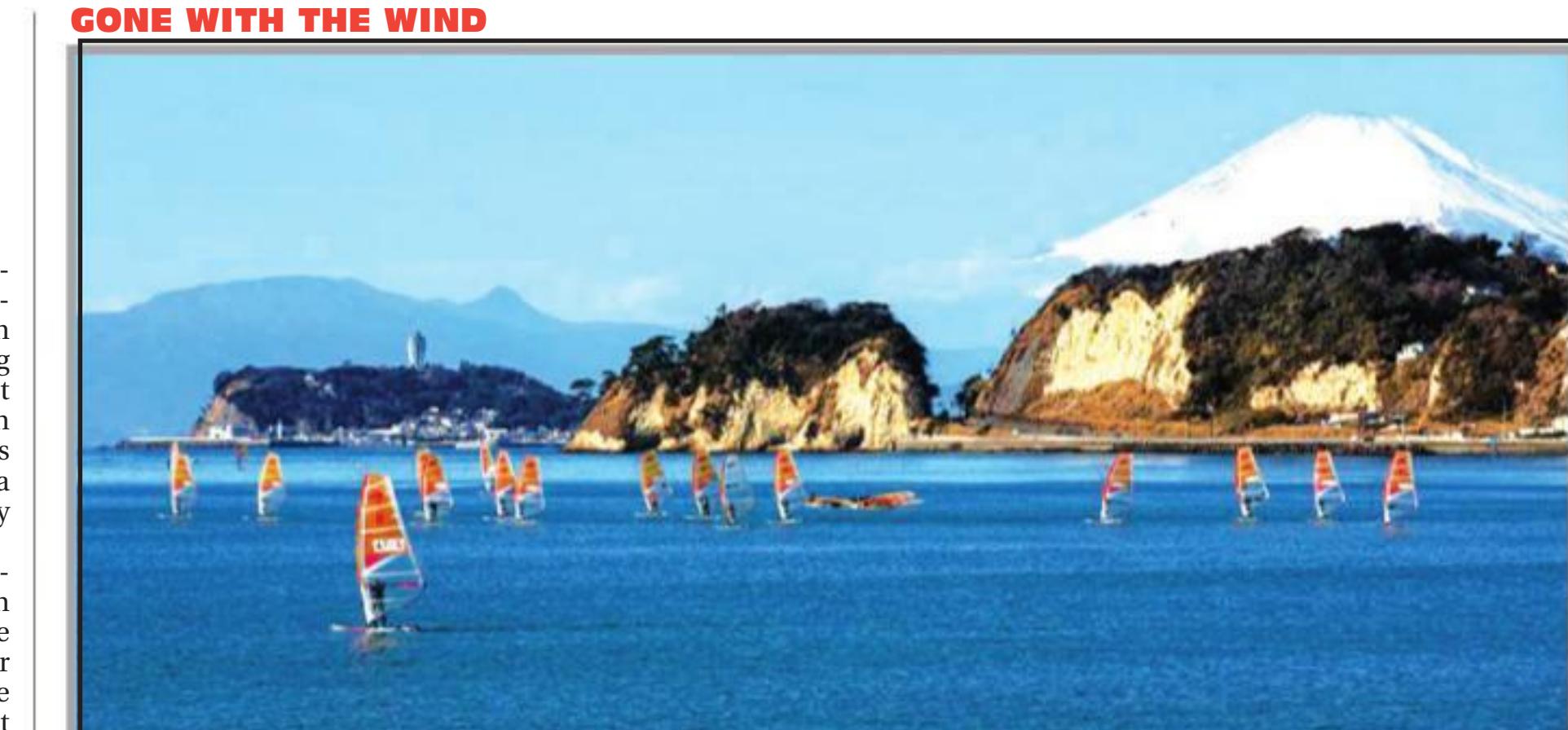
Trump's lawyers Bruce L. Castor and David J. Schoen were quick to decline the ask. "Your letter only confirms what is known to everyone: you cannot prove your allegations against the 45th president of the United States, who is now a private citizen," they wrote back.

"The use of our Constitution to bring a purported impeachment proceeding is much too serious to play these games," it said.

Jason Miller, a senior adviser to the former president, said Trump would not participate. "The president will not testify in an unconstitutional proceeding," he said.

Responding, Raskin said, "Today, we offered President Trump the opportunity to testify about the events of January 6 and he refused to do so. Despite his lawyers' rhetoric, any official accused of inciting armed violence against the government of the United States should welcome the chance to testify openly and honestly—that is, if the official had a defence."

GONE WITH THE WIND



With Enoshima Island and Mount Fuji in the background, windsurfers sail in Sagami Bay where sailing events for the postponed Tokyo 2020 Olympics will be held, on Friday, in Kamakura, west of Tokyo.

AGENCIES

Situation in Tigray extremely alarming: UN

ASSOCIATED PRESS
NAIROBI, 5 FEBRUARY

Life for civilians in Ethiopia's embattled Tigray region has become extremely alarming as hunger grows and fighting remains an obstacle to reaching millions of people with aid, the United Nations says in a new report.

The conflict that has shaken one of Africa's most powerful and populous countries, a key US security ally in the Horn of Africa, has killed thousands of people and is now in its fourth month.

But little is known about the situation for most of Tigray's 6 million people, as journalists are blocked from entering,



Burmese military should relinquish power they have seized, release the advocates, activists and officials they have detained

US PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN
ON THE MYANMAR MILITARY COUP

The Statesman | 11
NEW DELHI, SATURDAY 06 FEBRUARY 2021

THUMBNAILS

Bombing in Pakistan kills 2: A bomb went off near a government office in the southwestern Pakistani city of Quetta on Friday, killing at least two people and wounding five, police said. No one immediately claimed responsibility for the bombing, which took place near the office of the deputy commissioner, said Abdul Ali, a local police officer. He said rescuers transported the bodies and the wounded to a nearby hospital. AP

Mexico arrests ex-governor: Mario Marn, who governed the central state of Puebla from 2005 to 2011 for the Institutional Revolutionary Party, was arrested on Wednesday in Acapulco and transported to a jail in Cancun. He is charged with human rights violations in relation to the illegal arrest and torture of journalist Lydia Cacho, who, in her 2005 book, had detailed the role of other powerful men in a pedophilia ring that preyed on young girls. AP

Swedish govt reshuffle: PM Stefan Lofven tapped a new deputy head of his center-left minority government after the departure of Green Party leader Isabella Lovin. Lofven said Per Bolund would replace Lovin and would also become environment and climate minister after her. PTI

Libyan navy intercepts over 800 EU-bound migrants: The International Organisation for Migration tweeted that more than 1,000 migrants have recently departed from Libya's shores, escaping dire humanitarian conditions. Over 800 of them were stopped by the Libyan coast guard and taken into detention, the IOM said. AP

Palestinian killed in confrontation in West Bank settlement

JERUSALEM, 5 FEBRUARY

The Israeli military said Friday that an unarmed Palestinian man was shot and killed in a West Bank settlement after he tried to break into a home and fought with a guard.

The military referred to the incident as a terror attack, but a spokesman was unable to explain how it came to that conclusion, given that no weapons were found on the suspect or in his car.

The military said the suspect fought with a guard, who was also unarmed, before being shot and killed by another guard and a third individual.

The incident took place in what the military referred to as "Sde Efraim farm," one of several small outposts set up by Jewish settlers in the occupied West Bank.

Radi Abu Fkheideh, the head of the local council in the nearby Palestinian village of Ras Karkar, identified the deceased as Khaled Nofal, 34, the married father of a four-year-old boy.

He said the army stormed Nofal's home in the village early Friday and detained his father. Ras Karkar is located near Ramallah, the headquarters of the Palestinian Authority.

He had no information about the circumstances of Nofal's death, but said the family owned land near the settler outpost.

The Palestinian Authority condemned the killing. Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayeh called it a heinous crime and denounced the terrorism of the occupation and the settlers.

There have been a series of stabbings, shootings and car-ramming attacks against Israelis in recent years, mostly carried out by lone Palestinians with no apparent ties to armed groups.

Israel captured the West Bank in the 1967 war, and the Palestinians want it to form the main part of their future state.

Nearly 500,000 Israeli settlers live in the West Bank, mainly in large, developed settlements. AP

Myanmar coup: Hundreds protest as resistance spreads

Demonstrations seen in several parts of the country, even in the tightly controlled capital city Naypyitaw, as well as abroad

ASSOCIATED PRESS
YANGON, MYANMAR

Hundreds of students and teachers took to Myanmar's streets on Friday to demand the military hand power back to elected politicians, as resistance to a coup swelled with demonstrations in several parts of the country, even in the tightly controlled capital.

In the largest rallies since the takeover, protesters at two universities in Yangon flashed a three-fingered salute, a sign of resistance borrowed from "The Hunger Games" movies, that they adopted from anti-government protesters in neighbouring Thailand. They chanted "Long live Mother Suu" - a reference to ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi, who has been detained - and "We don't want military dictatorship."

"We will never be together with them," lecturer Dr Nwe Thazin said of the military at a protest at the Yangon University of Education. "We want that kind of government to collapse as soon as possible."

Resistance has been gathering steam since the military declared Monday that it would take power for one year - a



shocking setback for the Southeast Asian country that had been making significant, if uneven progress, toward democracy after decades of military rule. The Opposition began with people banging pots and pans outside their windows in Yangon, the country's largest city - under the cover of darkness each evening to avoid being targeted. But now people are beginning to take to the streets, including students and medical workers, some of whom are refusing to work.

Students have been central to previous protest movements against military dictatorship. The military has tried to quash the Opposition with selective arrests and by blocking Facebook to prevent users from organising demonstrations. Facebook is the primary tool for accessing information on the internet for most people in Myanmar, where traditional media is state-controlled or self-censored because of threats of legal action by the state.

There was also at least one demonstration Friday in Naypyitaw - highly unusual for the city, which was purpose-built under the previous military government, has a heavy military presence and lacks the tradition of protest of the former capital, Yangon. Medical staff at the city's biggest hospital gathered behind a big banner condemning the coup. Medical personnel have been at the forefront of the resistance.

Another protest was held in Myanmar's southern Tanintharyi Region, where about 50 chanting people marched, reported the online news agency Dawei Watch.

According to Myanmars Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, at least 133 officials or lawmakers and 14 civil society activists were detained by the military in connection with its takeover, though some have already been released.

The NLD has said Suu Kyi and ousted President Win Myint are being held on minor charges unrelated to their official duties - seen by many as merely providing a legal veneer for the military to detain them. The takeover has been criticised by US President Joe Biden and others internationally who pushed for the elected government to be restored.

The Burmese military should relinquish power they have seized, release the advocates and activists and officials they have detained, lift the restrictions on telecommunications, and refrain from violence," Biden said Thursday at the U.S. State Department in Washington, using Myanmar's former name.

The U.N. Security Council, in its first statement on the matter, "stressed the need to uphold democratic institutions and processes, refrain from violence, and fully respect human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law."

While the U.S. and others have described the military's actions as a coup, the Security Council's unanimous statement did not.

Protests against the coup were also held Friday in India, Indonesia and South Korea, sometimes led by people from Myanmar.

The military seized power shortly before a new session of Parliament was to convene, accusing Suu Kyi's government of refusing to address allegations of voting irregularities in the election her party won in a landslide. The state election commission has said it found no evidence of fraud.

The military assumed all state powers and has formed a new election commission to investigate the fraud allegations. It has said it will hold a new election in a year and turn over power to the winner.

Myanmar was under military rule for five decades after a 1962 coup, and Suu Kyi's five years as leader had been its most democratic period, despite continued use of repressive colonial-era laws.

Myanmar junta arrests senior member of ousted ruling party

ASSOCIATED PRESS
YANGON, 5 FEBRUARY



A senior member of Myanmar's deposed ruling party has become the latest prominent politician arrested as the country's new military government confronts continuing resistance to its seizure of power.

Win Htein, 79, is a long-time confidante of the ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi and had publicly called for civil disobedience in opposition to Monday's coup.

He was arrested at his home in Yangon and taken to the capital Naypyitaw, Kyi Toe, a spokesman for Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy party, said Friday on his Facebook page.

According to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, at least 133 officials or lawmakers and 14 civil society activists had been detained by the military in connection with its takeover.

Win Htein told the Myanmar-language service of Britain's BBC radio in a call early Friday that he was being detained for sedition, which carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment.

They don't like what I've been talking about. They are afraid of what I'm saying, he told the BBC.

The military government on Thursday morning had blocked access to Facebook in an evident effort to thwart protest organising.

EU diplomat: Navalny case a 'low point' in ties with Russia

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MOSCOW, 5 FEBRUARY

The European Union's top diplomat told Russia's foreign minister Friday that the treatment of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny represents a low point in the relations between Brussels and Moscow.

EU foreign affairs chief Josep Borrell met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov several days after Navalny was ordered to serve nearly three years in prison, a ruling that elicited international outrage.

Certainly, our relations are under a severe strain, and the Navalny case is a low point in our relations, Borrell said ahead of his talks with

Lavrov in Moscow. Navalny, 44, an anti-corruption investigator and Russian President Vladimir Putin's most prominent critic, was arrested last month upon returning from Germany, where he spent five months recovering from a nerve-agent poisoning that he blames on the Kremlin. Russian authorities have rejected the accusation.

After the meeting, Borrell said he had relayed to Lavrov his concerns over Navalny's jailing and the arrests of thousands of people who demonstrated on his behalf.

The EU official said he also communicated the bloc's support for Navalny's release and for an investigation of the August poisoning. The Russian

foreign minister, in turn, once again accused European officials of refusing to share evidence of the poisoning. The Kremlin has said it won't listen to Western criticism of Navalny's sentencing and police action against his supporters.

A criminal probe of the politician was opened after he slammed people featured in a video promoting constitutional amendments last year that allowed an extension to President Vladimir Putin's rule. Navalny called the people in the video corrupt stooges, people without conscience and traitors.

Russian authorities maintained that Navalny's comments denigrate the honor and dignity of a World War II veteran featured in the video.

Tens of thousands rally in support of Nepal's embattled PM

ASSOCIATED PRESS
KATHMANDU, 5 FEBRUARY

A splinter faction of Oli's governing Nepal Communist Party and opposition parties have been holding protests against him since he decided to dissolve Parliament on December 20 and hold new elections on 30 April and 10 May. The splinter faction led a nationwide general strike on Thursday, shutting down schools, markets and transportation.

Both Oli and the splinter group claim to control the Nepal Communist Party and the issue is being disputed at the Election Commission. The splinter faction even announced that it had ousted

Oli from the party at a meeting last month.

Oli became prime minister after the party won elections three years ago. His party and the party of former Maoist rebels had earlier merged to form a unified Communist party.

Tensions, however, have grown between Oli and the leader of the former rebels, Pushpa Kamal Dahal, who is also co-chair of the party. The two had previously agreed that they would split the five-year prime minister's term between them, but Oli has refused to allow Dahal to take over.

New AI tool may help tackle Covid mutations

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WASHINGTON, 5 FEBRUARY

compromising safety," said Paul Bogdan, associate professor at USC.

"Moreover, this can be adapted to help us stay ahead of the coronavirus as it mutates around the world," said Bogdan, the corresponding author of the study. When applied to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19, the computer model quickly eliminated 95 per cent of the compounds that could have possibly treated the pathogen and pinned the best options.

The method, described in the journal *Scientific Reports* on Friday, is easily adaptable to analyse potential mutations of the virus, ensuring the best possible vaccines are quickly identified.

The machine-learning model can accomplish vaccine design cycles that once took months or years in a matter of seconds and minutes, according to the researchers from the University of Southern California (USC) in the US.

This AI framework, applied to the specifics of this virus, can provide vaccine candidates within seconds and move them to clinical trials quickly to achieve preventive mechanisms quickly.

Vaccines target the region or epitope - of the contagion to disrupt the spike protein, neutralising the ability of the virus to replicate. Using the method, engineers can construct a new multi-epitope vaccine for a new virus in less than

a minute and validate its quality within an hour.

By contrast, current processes to control the virus require growing the pathogen in the lab, deactivating it and injecting the virus that caused a disease. The process is time-consuming and takes more than one year; meanwhile, the disease spreads.

The researchers noted that the method is especially useful during this stage of the pandemic as the coronavirus begins to mutate in populations around the world.

Some scientists are concerned that the mutations may minimise the effectiveness of vaccines by Pfizer and Moderna. Recent variants of the virus that have emerged in the UK, South Africa and Brazil seem to spread more easily.

The researchers said that if SARS-CoV-2 becomes uncontrollable by current vaccines, or if new vaccines are needed to deal with other emerging viruses, then their new AI-assisted method can be used to design other preventive mechanisms quickly.

EU's top diplomat hopes Sputnik V vaccine will be approved in bloc

BRUSSELS, 5 FEBRUARY

The European Union's top diplomat expressed hopes on Friday that the Covid-19 vaccine developed by Russia will soon be used across the 27-nation bloc.

During a visit to Moscow, EU foreign affairs chief Josep Borrell said the country's Sputnik V vaccine is good news for the whole mankind.

The vaccine was approved by the Russian government in August and many foreign governments have expressed interest in buying doses.

Russian scientists said it appears safe and effective against COVID-19, according to early results.

AP

Anyone travelling to the UK from a high-risk Covid-19 country, including South Africa and South America, where new variants have been a concern, will be required to quarantine in a government-approved facility for a period of 10 days from 15 February, the UK government confirmed on Friday.

The policy had been announced last month and the government said it has been working "at pace" with the hospitality industry to invite proposals for the measure, to cost travellers around 80 pounds per night.

The rules affect UK residents and Irish nationals travelling from 33 countries on the so-called red list which covers much of South America, southern Africa, the United Arab Emirates and Portugal as feared regions for new coronavirus mutations. Non-UK travellers from these locations are currently banned from entry anyway.

India is not on this list of high-risk countries but a limited travel regime has been in operation within the India-UK corridor since a new highly transmissible variant, called the Kent variant after the south-east England region where it was first discovered, at the end of last year.

It is expected that the enhanced measure will add to the already existing tough restrictions, with only essential travel allowed and fines in place for a breach of the rules under the lockdown rules to keep coronavirus infection rates down.

It is currently illegal to go on holiday, and passengers travelling to the UK must provide proof of a negative test before they travel, and self-isolate on arrival.

With increased police presence at airports and more physical

checks at addresses to make sure people are self-isolating, we are taking decisive action, said a spokesperson for the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC).

We are now working at pace to secure the facilities we need to roll out managed quarantine for British nationals returning home from the most high-risk countries, and are rightly engaging with representatives from the hospitality, maritime and aviation industry, and learning from our friends around the world.

In the face of new variants, it is important that the government continues to take the necessary steps to protect people and save lives, the spokesperson said. Over the past week, the DHSC said it has met with stakeholders from across the aviation, maritime, hotel and hospitality industry, and will now continue to finalise plans to enable implementation.

Turkey's Uighurs fear sellout to China in exchange for vaccine

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BEIJING, 5 FEBRUARY

while, in recent months, Turkish police have raided and detained around 50 Uighurs in deportation centers, lawyers say a sharp uptick from last year.

Although no hard evidence has yet emerged for a quid pro quo, these legislators and the Uighurs fear that Beijing is using the vaccines as leverage to win passage of an extradition treaty. The treaty was signed years ago but suddenly ratified by China in December, and could come before Turkish lawmakers as soon as this month.

Uighurs say the Bill, once law, could bring their ultimate life-threatening nightmare: Deportation back to a country they fled to avoid mass detention. More than a million Uighurs and other largely Muslim minorities have been swept into prisons and detention camps in China, which has infected some 2.5 million and

killed over 26,000.

Such a delay is not normal. We have paid for these vaccines," Kaya said. Is China blackmailing Turkey? Kaya said he formally asked the Turkish government about pressure from China but has not yet received a response.

Suspicion of a deal emerged when the first shipment of Chinese vaccines was held up for weeks in December. Officials blamed permit issues.

But even now, Yildirim Kaya, a legislator from Turkey's main opposition party, said that China has delivered only a third of the 30 million doses it promised by the end of January. Turkey is largely reliant on China's Sinovac vaccine to immunize its population against the virus, which has infected some 2.5 million and

purge and alienated Erdogan from Western governments. Waiting to fill the void was



BUMRAH'S PROBLEM

The ban on saliva turned out to be a handicap for the bowlers since the sweat was not effective to shine the ball, India pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah (photo, left) said on Friday. "The ball did become soft after a while and the wicket is on flatter side with the bounce being less. You are left with limited options (to shine ball). We are trying to figure out what we can do with the limited things in hand, at that time," Bumrah said.

For more updates

www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

IPL auction: As many as 1097 players have registered for the much-awaited IPL auction to be held on February 18 with most entries coming from the West Indies (56) followed by Australia (42) and South Africa (38). The player registration deadline closed on Thursday and the list comprises 207 international players including 21 capped Indians.

Delhi Bulls win: Evin Lewis and Ravi Bopara scored 48 and 37 respectively to help Delhi Bulls snap Qalandars' winning streak with a 9-wicket victory in a Super League match of the Abu Dhabi T10 tournament. Delhi Bulls first restricted Qalandars' formidable batting line-up to 107 for 6 and then overhauled the target with 16 balls to spare.

Munir's allegiance: After two lost appeals at the Court of Arbitration for Sport, Munir El Haddadi was cleared Friday to represent Morocco in international soccer. FIFA confirmed the transfer from Spain was made possible by slightly amending rules passed in September to govern requests by players with dual nationality to change eligibility.

Apsara Star fancied

GAUTAM BANERJEE

KOLKATA, 5 FEBRUARY

The Poker Guru Cup is the feature in a card of six races framed for tomorrow. In what seems to be a match contest between Inca and Apsara Star, the latter is fancied. Y Srinath will partner the J McKeown trained runner.

Selections:
 1.45 p.m.: MARAZZO 1, Houten 2.
 2.15 p.m.: MYSTICWONDER 1, Nandini's Pet 2, Stelvio Pass 3.
 2.45 p.m.: KRISHAA'S CHOICE 1, Court Jester 2, Atom 3.
 3.15 p.m.: EXCELSIOR 2, Daring Heart 2, Whispering Grass 3.
 3.45 p.m.: APSARA STAR 1, Inca 2, Kimaya 3.
 4.15 p.m.: SCARLET WITCH 1, Om Shanti 2, Star Of Hollywood 3.
 Day's best: Apsara Star.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

CHENNAI, 5 FEBRUARY

Skipper Joe Root won the battle of attrition against Indian spinners with a classy century in his 100th Test as England reached a comfortable 263 for three at stumps on the opening day of the first match here on Friday.

A modern-day great, Root (128 batting, 197 balls) showed his mastery over slow bowlers during his 20th hundred and third in as many Tests, becoming the ninth player in the history of the game to score a ton on his 100th appearance.

He also admirably guided young opener Dom Sibley (87 off 286 balls), who showed commendable game awareness and enormous doggedness during their 200-run partnership for the third wicket before Jasprit Bumrah (2/40) got him in the final over of the day.

Root's innings was an exhibition of how to construct an innings on a low, slow track while countering a hostile post-lunch spell from Ishant Sharma (15-3-27-0) where he got the ball to reverse swing.



Root's speciality, the sweep shot, was also brought out of the closet once Indian spinners started altering the length.

There were full-blooded slog sweep in front of the square, conventional sweep towards square, the paddle sweep behind the square and also switch-hit sweep where

he changed the grip against Shahbaz Nadeem.

And towards the end, first six of the match, was also a slog sweep off Ashwin. This was after he had almost lost five litres of fluid in sapping Chennai heat.

Root and Sibley knew that they had to tire Ishant, Ravichandran Ashwin (1/56) and Bumrah out as Virat Kohli at some point would have to pay the price for Washington Sundar and Nadeem's relative inexperience.

With no purchase from the track, it became easier for Root and Sibley to use their feet and big stride to dominate the two spinners, who looked clueless.

Unlike a lot of batsmen, who in a pre-meditated fashion, come down the track, Root and Sibley waited for the Indian spinners to toss up the ball before they took the plunge.

An on-drive off Ashwin and a pull shot when he dropped one short along with a late cut off Nadeem were for the keeps. There were 14 boundaries in all and each one aesthetically brilliant.

Nadeem and Sundar for most part couldn't hit the right length and the abrasive surface of the track meant that the Red SG test ball, which as per media reports was supposed to retain its hardness and seam for a longer duration, got soft and scuffed up by the 40th over.

The softness meant that both England batsmen got extra time to adjust their foot-work against both spin and pace.

Sibley in particular would shuffle towards off-stump to cover the line of the deliveries while waiting for the loose ones. Burns was ready to tuck anything on his pads as there was no juice in the track to assist the new ball bowlers.

It was a moment's indiscretion on the part of Burns that brought about his downfall.

Burns tried a non-existent reverse sweep which lobbed off his gloves for Pant to complete the formalities after having dropped him down the leg-side.

As Sachin Tendulkar had predicted, there was reverse swing on offer as early as first session with Bumrah getting the shiny side to dart in, trapping Dan Lawrence (0) plumb.

But things turned for worse

during the next two sessions as Indian bowlers with three spinners in their line-up bowled as many as 11 no-balls.

SCOREBOARD

ENGLAND 1ST INNINGS		
R Burns c Pant b Ashwin	33	
D Sibley lbw b Bumrah	87	
D Lawrence lbw b Bumrah	0	
Joe Root (c) not out	128	
Extras: (lb 4, nb 11)	15	
TOTAL: (89.3 Ov, RR: 2.93)	263/3	
Fall of wickets: 1-63 (Rory Burns; 23.5 ov), 2-63 (Dan Lawrence, 25.4 ov), 3-263 (Dom Sibley, 89.3 ov)		
BOWLING: I-Sharma 15-3-27-0, R Ashwin 24.68, 1 S Nadeem 20.3, 69.0, W Sundar 12.0, 55.0		

'Ranji Trophy return next season likely'

PULAKESH MUKHOPADHYAY

KOLKATA, 5 FEBRUARY

given that it featured some 36 teams split into so many groups. The risk inherent in going ahead with such an exercise would have been enormous," Shetty said.

Told that the BCCI had already held the Syed Mushtaq Ali tournament of Twenty20 matches in spite of the scary situation and was all set to get the 50-over-each-way Vijay Hazare competition going, Shetty pointed it out that limited-over contests in bio-secure bubbles were easier to organise. "They don't really call for the extended care-taking in a terribly taxing situation that a tournament of four-day games with brief inter-regnum thrown in does," he said.

"I happen to be quite optimistic. It was, of course, quite unfortunate that it couldn't be held in 2020-21 but it was a decision the BCCI would have taken extremely unhappily, its hand forced by the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic across the world, affecting India seriously. There was no way it could have been staged,

the end of this year.

We shall have achieved greater control over everything by, perhaps, September and then we can set the ball rolling again. Whether or not bio-secure bubbles will be needed yet could hinge on how things pan out but it's been so far, so good.

Yes, it's sad that the Ranji Trophy got scuppered this year by Covid-19, and this was the first time it couldn't be held since its inception. But given its centrality in our domestic scheme of things, the Ranji Trophy can be counted on to make a glorious return sooner rather than later, the overall situation permitting."

Reminded that even the rescheduled Olympic Games included no plans for security bubbles - an impossibility, considering there will be 11,000 athletes and an equally impressive number of officials - Shetty said that the BCCI would have explored all its options before shelving the Ranji Trophy for the current season and would surely consider everything before taking its decision later this year.

According to him, he personally felt very optimistic as sport in the country was being opened up in a carefully calibrated way at two levels, state and Central. "Things today are not quite as bad as they used to be," he said, adding: "I think we can hope, reasonably enough, for a home season with the Ranji Trophy in it as usual towards

the end of this year.

In the last time the two teams met earlier this season, a goal from Roy Krishna proved to be the difference despite Odisha carving out multiple opportunities and threatening Bagan.

ATKMB coach Antonio Lopez Habab is aware Odisha will be even hungrier this time, as they prepare for life without Baxter.

Club captain Steven Taylor

South Africa trails Pakistan by 166 runs

AGENCIES

RAWALPINDI, 5 FEBRUARY

South Africa's top order stumbled to 106-4 at stumps after Faheem Ashraf's second successive half-century had rallied Pakistan's first innings to 272 in the second test on Friday.

South Africa trails Pakistan by 166 runs in a match it must win to draw the series.

Pakistan fast bowler Hasan Ali (2-29) grabbed his wickets off successive deliveries and Ashraf had Faf du Plessis (17) caught behind to leave South Africa struggling in its first innings on day 2.

Left-arm spinner Nauman Ali (1-19), who bagged seven wickets in his debut test at Karachi last week at the age of 34, got the key wicket of Aiden Markram (32) with South Africa troubled by both pace and spin.

Tembu Bavuma survived a dropped catch and remained unbeaten on 15. Captain Quinton de Kock struck three successive boundaries off Yasir Shah for his unbeaten 24 off 11 balls.

Earlier, pacer Anrich Nortje (in photo) picked up 5-56 to bowl out Pakistan half an hour before tea.

Nortje bowled with menacing pace on a wicket which has eased considerably for Bavuma to bag his fifth five-wicket haul in his 10th test match.

He claimed two wickets in the first session, including Babar's off the second ball of the day after Pakistan resumed on 145-3. Azam played a loose cutshot and du Plessis held onto



a head-high catch at second slip.

Babar couldn't add to his overnight 77. He had helped to revive Pakistan's innings from 22-3 with Fawad Alam on the first day before rain and a wet outfield wiped out the last session on Thursday.

Ashraf showed lot of patience in his more than 3-1/2 hour knock. He prolonged Pakistan's resistance after lunch, adding 30 runs with Yasir (8) and 21 with Nauman Ali (8) before Nortje claimed the last two wickets on the second new ball.

Nortje tested Rizwan with a short-pitched delivery and the top-edged pull went straight to Kagiso Rabada's hands at fine leg before Ashraf raised his fourth 50 in his eighth test match.

Ashraf completed his half century off 97 balls with a straight-driven boundary off Babar just before lunch and two balls later pulled the fast bowler to midwicket for his ninth boundary.

Ashraf survived an early lbw IV referral against the left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj (3-90), and he also needed brief treatment after Rabada's short-pitched delivery with the second new ball struck the left-hander's right arm.

Ashraf showed lot of patience in his more than 3-1/2 hour knock. He prolonged Pakistan's resistance after lunch, adding 30 runs with Yasir (8) and 21 with Nauman Ali (8) before Nortje claimed the last two wickets in three balls.

Hasan, returning to test cricket in this series after a two-year absence, had Dean Elgar (15) caught behind in the last over before tea and then followed it up by uprooting Rassie van der Dussen's off stump in the next delivery.

Pakistan leads the two-match series 1-0 after beating the Proteas in the first test by seven wickets at Karachi.

Brief scores: Pakistan 272 all out (Faheem Ashraf 78 not out, Babar Azam 77; Anrich Nortje 5/56) South Africa 106/4 (Aiden Markram 32, Quinton de Kock 24 batting; Hasan Ali 2/29)

'Do-or-die' game for Odisha against mighty Bagan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BAMBOOLIM, 5 FEBRUARY

Their coach sacked after an unsavoury comment, bottom-placed Odisha FC will look to regroup and get their campaign back on track when they take on ATK Mohan Bagan in a must-win Indian Super League game here on Saturday.

Rooted at the bottom of the table after 14 games with just eight points, Odisha have struggled all season. They have won just one match besides con-

ceding 21 goals, which is the second-worst record in the league.

The attackers haven't been clinical enough. Barring own goals, Odisha have netted just 11 -- the joint-least by a team.

On top of it, their head coach Stuart Baxter was booted out for making a comment on the team's loss to Jamshedpur FC on Monday.

There will be additional pressure on the team as it looks to snap a winless run of five games under the guidance of

Gerald Peyton, who took the charge on an interim basis.

"In the last six games, we're going to show a positive attitude, a determination to win as many games as possible and take the club forward," said Peyton.

"If you look at nearly all the games we've played, we've been a fraction away (from getting results). It's been one goal in every game and finding that combination to go and win games, I'm sure we are going to find that," Peyton added.

Club captain Steven Taylor

will remain suspended for the game as Odisha will be desperate for a turnaround, while second-placed Bagan will look to close in the gap on leaders Mumbai City FC.

The last time the two teams met earlier this season, a goal from Roy Krishna proved to be the difference despite Odisha carving out multiple opportunities and threatening Bagan.

ATKMB coach Antonio Lopez Habab is aware Odisha will be even hungrier this time, as they prepare for life without Baxter.

Earlier, pacer Anrich Nortje

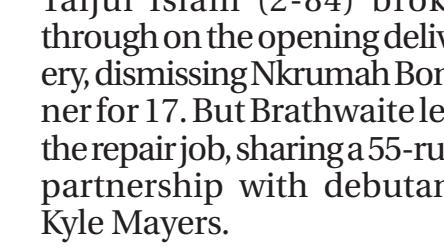
(in photo) was bowled out by a dropped catch at second slip.

Mehidy Hasan followed up his first test century with 4-58 as Bangladesh stayed in control of the first test against West Indies on Friday.

Bangladesh reached 47-3 in its second innings at stumps on day 3, stretching its lead to 218 on an increasingly deteriorating pitch.

Captain Mominul Haque (31) and Mushfiqur Rahim (10) are at the crease.

West Indies was bowled out



for 259 in its first innings in reply to Bangladesh's 430, giving the hosts a 171-run lead.

Skipper Kraigg Brathwaite led the charge with 76 after West Indies resumed on 75-2.

The captain's innings was vital in resisting Bangladesh's spinners.

Left-arm spinner Taijul Islam (2-84) broke through on the opening delivery, dismissing Nkrumah Bonner for 17. Brathwaite led the repair job, sharing a 55-run partnership with debutant Kyle Mayers.

Shakib was playing this test after recovering from a groin injury.

At 154-5, West Indies was

in trouble but Jermaine Blackwood (68) and wicketkeeper Joshua Da Silva (42) shared