



PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION



CONFIRMATION
BIAS



XI VOWS MORE
COMMITMENTS TO
BACK CLIMATE ACTION



UK, EU TO GO EXTRA
MILE FOR
POST-BREXIT DEAL



INDIA IS READY
FOR PINK
BALL TEST

P6

P9

P10

P12

WEATHER

Mainly clear sky. Dense fog in the morning. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 21 and 09 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: Nil

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 100% Min: 54%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 20.7°C (-3) Min: 11.1°C (+3)

SUN RISES SUN SETS

07:06 hrs 17:26 hrs

MOON RISES MOON SETS

07:38 hrs 17:10hrs

THUMBNAILS



A hazy afternoon, in New Delhi on Sunday.

SUBRATA DUTTA

Kashmir gunfight: Two Pakistani terrorists were killed and their local associate was captured on Sunday during a gunfight with security forces in the higher reaches of Surankote in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district, officials said. The terrorists are believed to have infiltrated into this side from across the Line of Control (LoC) about three days ago and were heading for south Kashmir's Shopian district when they were intercepted in a snow-bound area along the Mughal Road.

P4

Gandhi statue desecrated: A group of Khalistani separatists desecrated Mahatma Gandhi's statue outside the Indian embassy in Washington DC during a demonstration by Sikh-American youths in support of farmers protesting against the recently enacted agriculture laws in India. Hundreds of Sikhs from in and around the Greater Washington DC area along with many from other states took out a car rally to the Indian embassy where they gathered to express solidarity with the protesting Indian farmers.

BJP leaders protesting outside Kejriwal's house damage CCTV cameras, allege govt sources

NEW DELHI, 13 DECEMBER

BJP leaders holding demonstration outside Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's residence demanding payment of funds due to the party-ruled municipal corporations damaged CCTV cameras at the spot on Sunday evening, alleged Delhi government sources. North Delhi Mayor Jai Prakash, however, said women councillors of the BJP "smashed new CCTV cameras, installed by the AAP government, to protect their privacy". A video of the alleged incident went viral on social media purportedly showing some people gathered outside the CM's residence and one of them smashing a CCTV camera fixed on the boundary wall. A police complaint in this regard has been filed, government sources said.

UDF, BJP cry foul over Kerala CM's free vaccine announcement

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, 13 DECEMBER



A day ahead of the final phase of local body polls in Kerala, the opposition UDF and the BJP on Sunday moved the State Election Commission against Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's announcement of free COVID-19 vaccine, contending it violated the model code of conduct. The ruling CPI(M)-led LDF dismissed the charge as "childish" and said Vijayan (photo) was only answering a question from reporters and also that its manifesto included the free vaccine assurance.

Vijayan had on Saturday said COVID-19 vaccine will be made available free of cost to

almost all of the world's countries pledged to limit global warming to "well below" 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to strive to keep temperatures at 1.5°C by the end of the century as part of the historic Paris Climate Agreement. A landmark report published in 2018 laid out how different the world might look at 1.5°C of global warming versus 2°C, the upper limit on global temperatures agreed upon by countries under the Paris deal. The report, put together by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), found that limiting warming to 1.5°C rather than 2°C could spare more than 10 million people from the impacts of sea level rise, greatly stem further increases to heat extremes and stop tropical coral reefs from disappearing completely.

Five years ago this week,

It's a message that conveys, for some, that limiting global temperature rise to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels by the end of the century, the most optimistic target of the Paris Agreement, is seen as the only acceptable outcome for our planet. This is a view often held by those in developing world countries, who have done the least to cause the climate crisis yet stand to lose the most from its impacts.

However, today, global ave-

rage temperatures are already around 1.2°C above pre-industrial levels. And current policies from world leaders would put us on a path to around 3°C of warming by the end of the century.

"We've long had this very glaring disconnect between the targets of the Paris Agreement and the commitments that countries have made," Dr Zeke Hausfather, a climate

scientist and director of climate and energy at the Breakthrough Institute, an environmental think tank in California, told *The Independent*.

Analysis by Dr Hausfather for the climate website Carbon Brief last week found that, according to projections from the latest models, the world might first exceed 1.5°C between 2026 and 2042 if little is done to tackle emissions,

and between 2026 and 2057 if stringent actions are taken to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement. "If we had to give the best estimate for when the latest models think we will pass 1.5°C, it's probably around 2032," he said.

However, very recent moves from leaders of major economies across the world allow some room for optimism, he added. In the summer of 2019, the then UK prime minister Theresa May pledged that the country would reach net zero emissions by 2050. This was followed by similar pledges from the EU, Japan and South Korea this year.

China, the world's largest emitter, in October announced intentions to reach "carbon neutrality"—at a slightly later date of 2060. And US president-elect Joe Biden has vowed to commit the USA, the world's second emitter, to net-zero

BJP president tests positive for coronavirus

NEW DELHI, 13 DECEMBER

BJP president JP Naddha has tested positive for the novel coronavirus and has gone into home isolation.

In a tweet, he said he had undergone a test after showing symptoms of COVID-19, and was found to be positive.

"My condition is alright and I am following all instructions after going for home isolation on the advice of doctors. I request everyone who got in touch with me in the last few days to isolate themselves and undergo test," he said.

Naddha had been maintaining an active schedule and had visited Uttarakhand and West Bengal recently.

Delhi records 33 fresh deaths, toll tops 10K: Delhi today identified 1,984 positive cases of Covid-19 after testing centres Monday, with an additional 425 sites getting shipments Tuesday, and the remaining 66 on Wednesday. The vaccine, co-developed by German partner BioNTech, is being doled out based on each state's adult population.

The infectious, deadly virus claimed 33 fresh lives in the national capital, which raised its Covid toll to 10,014. The death rate was 2.32 per cent, calculated on the basis of the last 10 days' data.

A total of 391 case fatalities have been reported in a day, taking the total death toll in India due to the pandemic to 1,43,019.

The country reported one of the lowest cases per million population in the world (158) in the last seven days; much lower than many other countries, the ministry underlined. The total recovered cases stand at 93,57,464 as on date.

The ministry said 75.23 per cent of the new recovered cases are contributed by 10 states and Union territories. Kerala leads with 5,268 persons recovering from Covid-19 while Maharashtra recorded 3,949 recoveries. Ten states and union territories - Kerala, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Delhi, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat - contributed 75.71 per cent of the new infections.

India's Covid-19 active caseload continued to follow the downward trajectory it had taken in the past few weeks, falling to 3.62 per cent of the total cases, the Union health ministry said on Sunday.

While 30,254 persons were found to be Covid-19 positive in the country in a span of 24 hours, 33,136 new recoveries were registered during the same period. This has led to a net decline of 3,273 cases from the total active caseload in a day, the ministry said. India's active caseload stands at 3,56,546 while the total case count is 98,57,029.

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India's Covid-1



Mamata Banerjee knows that the land under her feet has slipped and so she is trying to return to power in the state on the strength of violence...

BJP NATIONAL GENERAL SECRETARY KAILASH VIJAYVARGIYA

ASKING FOR IMMEDIATE DEPLOYMENT OF CENTRAL FORCES IN BENGAL

Shun ego and scrap 3 farm laws: Kejriwal to Modi govt

Delhi CM to fast today in solidarity with farmers protesting against the Centre's three controversial agriculture laws, urges AAP activists and people to also fast for the farmers' cause

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 13 DECEMBER

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal today said he will observe a day-long fast tomorrow in response to its call given by farmers protesting against the Narendra Modi government's controversial three new farm laws.

The CM appealed to the BJP-led Centre to shun ego and scrap these contentious legislations.

Addressing a virtual press briefing, Kejriwal also asked the Modi government to bring a Bill to guarantee minimum support price (MSP) for farmers' agricultural produce.

Kejriwal said he will observe a one-day fast tomorrow in response to its call given by the agitating farmers. He also urged his Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) volunteers, supporters as well as the people of the country to join in this fast in solidarity with the protesting farmers.

"I want to appeal to the central government to put an end to their ego. The governments are formed by the public, the public is not formed by the governments. The three farm laws should be imme-



Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal during a virtual press conference in the Capital on Sunday. SNS

dately repealed and a Bill should be brought to guarantee MSP to farmers," Kejriwal said.

He said the Modi government should immediately accept all demands of the farmers who have been protesting on Delhi's borders for the past two weeks.

Kejriwal expressed anguish that some Union ministers and BJP leaders were labelling

protesting farmers as "traitors and anti-nationals".

"I want to ask them, if so many ex-servicemen, national and international sportspersons, singers and celebrities, lawyers and traders supporting and joining them, are all (of them) anti-national?" he questioned.

He said the BJP should not think that only a few farmers from Punjab and Haryana

and only a few people are part of this movement.

Kejriwal compared the "defaming" of the farmers protest with the Anna Hazare's anti-corruption movement of which he was a leader.

"I could not help but reminisce the days of Anna Hazare ji's movement. The Congress government defamed us as anti-nationals. What Congress did to our movement, the

BJP is doing the same to the farmers' protest," Kejriwal said. The CM said that even the middle-upper class people were also against the Centre's farm laws and believed it will lead to price rise.

"Until now, hoarding in this country was a crime, but under the Centre's new farm laws any person can hoard any amount of grains and it is no longer considered a crime.

"This also means that there will be high inflation. People can hoard till the time the inflation rate doubles every year. For instance, the prices of wheat grains will double from Rs 20 this year to Rs 40 next year, and then Rs 80, and then Rs 160, and so on," Kejriwal said. Enacted in September, the Centre's three agriculture laws have been projected by the Modi government as major reforms in the farm sector that will remove middlemen and allow farmers to sell their produce anywhere in the country.

However, the protesting farmers have expressed apprehension that the new laws would pave the way for eliminating the safety cushion of MSP and do away with the mandi system, leaving them at the mercy of big corporates.

Delhi Police recovers 1,700 illegal arms, arrests 2,500 in 6 months



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 13 DECEMBER

bring in criminal syndicates operating in Delhi to book".

Following Delhi Police commissioner S N Shrivastava's directions to work out a concerted action plan to unearth the illegal arms held

by these criminal operatives, "all units of Delhi Police have activated their sources to collect ground level information about these operatives", the statement said.

"Special teams were constituted by Crime Branch, Special Cell and various police stations of Delhi for collection of intelligence and conducting of raids at various places

to recover illegal arms and ammunition from various parts of Delhi," the police stated.

"During the period from 1st June, 2020 to 30th November, 2020, 2431 persons were arrested in 2040 cases registered under the Arms Act in various Police Districts of Delhi.

Total 1702 illegal fire arms including 1493 country made pistols, 195 revolvers / pistols and 14 guns / rifles have been recovered.

In addition to the illegal fire arms, 3198 live cartridges were also recovered," the police statement added.

Vice Prez, PM, Speaker, ministers pay tributes to Parliament attack heroes

PTI
NEW DELHI, 13 DECEMBER

Vice President and Rajya Sabha Chairperson M Venkaiah Naidu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Speaker Om Birla, Union ministers and Opposition leaders on Sunday paid tributes at the Par-

liament complex to those who lost their lives in the 2001 Parliament attack.

Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairperson Harivansh, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Home Minister Amit Shah, Leader of Opposition in the Upper House Ghulam Nabi Azad, Ram Gopal

Yadav of the Samajwadi Party and Rajiv Shukla of the Congress were among those who paid tributes at a brief ceremony held outside the Parliament building.

Those present observed a moment of silence as a mark of respect for the martyrs.

Nineteen years ago on

December 13, terrorists of the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) attacked the Parliament complex and opened fire.

Five Delhi Police personnel, a woman Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) trooper and two Parliament Watch and

Ward Staff died taking on the terrorists. A gardener and a photojournalist also died.

All five terrorists were shot dead by security forces in retaliatory action.

Earlier, President Ram Nath Kovind said the nation gratefully remembers the brave martyrs

who laid down their lives defending Parliament on this day in 2001.

"The nation gratefully remembers the brave martyrs who laid down their lives defending the Parliament on this day in 2001. While commemorating the great sacrifice of those defenders of the temple of our

democracy, we strengthen our resolve to defeat the forces of terror," Kovind tweeted.

Taking to Twitter, PM Modi said India will never forget the cowardly attack on Parliament.

"We will never forget the cowardly attack on our Parliament on this day in 2001. We recall

the valour and sacrifice of those who lost their lives protecting our Parliament. India will always be thankful to them," he said.

The incident led to high level of tension between India and Pakistan and a massive upgrade in the security of the Parliament complex.

Classified



CHANGE
OF NAME

Sajal Dutta, and Kajal Dutta is the one and same identical person.

I, HALENDRA Ray, S/o, Sri Ram, Avtar Ray & Hatindra Pro Yadav, S/o, R A Yadav is the same & one identical person, vide affidavit of the Metropolitan Magistrate (1st Class) at Calcutta on 27.11.20.

LOST & FOUND

"I HAVE lost/misplace the Provisional Eligibility Letter and Allotment Letter with respect to Industrial Plot under Relocation Scheme of DSILDC."

Mahesh Chand Sharma Prop. M/s. Sharma Industries L-2/6A, Shashi Nagar, Delhi-110092.

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ARE CARRIED
FREE OF COST
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OUR WEBSITE

Delhi records 1,984 new Covid cases, 33 deaths; toll tops 10K

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 13 DECEMBER

Delhi today identified 1,984 positive cases of Covid-19 after conducting 72,335 tests across the national capital, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin. The positivity rate stood at 2.74 per cent.

The city's coronavirus case-load mounted to 6,07,454, the health bulletin said.

The infectious, deadly virus claimed 33 fresh lives in the national capital, which raised its Covid toll to 10,014. The death rate was 2.32 per cent, calculated on the basis of the last 10 days' data.

The number of recovered Covid patients over the last 24

hours was 2,539, which took Delhi's cumulative tally of such recoveries to 5,80,655, the bulletin stated. The city's Covid

recovery rate rose to 95.58 per cent.

In all, there were 16,785 active cases of Covid-19 and those patients under home isolation numbered 9,964. Delhi now had 6,388 containment zones, the bulletin added.

As many as 14,361 hospital beds were vacant out of the 18,807 beds meant for Covid-19 patients in the city.

Delhi had yesterday recorded 1,935 fresh coronavirus infections, with the positivity rate dipping to 2.64 per cent.

The national capital's Covid positivity rate had reportedly dropped to 4.96 per cent, 4.78 per cent, 4.2 per cent, 3.68 per cent and 3.15 per cent respectively from 3 December to 7 Decem-

ber.

On 8 December, its positivity rate had risen to 4.23 per cent, falling again to 3.42 per cent on 9 December and 2.46 per cent on 10 December. It had risen to 3.33 per cent on 11 December.

Yesterday's Covid cases were detected out of 73,413 tests, including 32,578 RT-PCR tests. The city had then logged 47 Covid fatalities. The Covid recovery rate was 95.48 pc. Delhi had on 11 December recorded 2,385 positive cases of coronavirus infection, which were detected out of 71,679 tests. The infectious, deadly virus had then claimed 60 more lives in the national capital. The Covid recovery rate was 95.25 per cent.

Dense fog lowers visibility in Delhi



During a cold, hazy afternoon in the Capital. On Sunday. SUBRATA DUTTA

100 metres," Srivastava said and added that "moderate to very dense fog is predicted for the next two days".

"Very dense" fog is when visibility is between zero and 50 metres and "dense" when between 51 and 200 metres. When visibility is between 201 and 500 metres it is "moderate" fog and "shallow" when visibility is between 501 and 1,000 metres, according to the IMD.

Light rains in parts of Delhi under the influence of a Western Disturbance brought the mercury down by a few notches.

On Sunday, the minimum temperature settled at 11.5 degrees Celsius. The mercury is likely to dip below 10 degrees Celsius on

Monday with the wind direction changing to northwesterly. These winds blow from snow-laden western Himalayas towards the plains.

Delhi's air quality was recorded in the "very poor" category on Sunday and is likely to improve due to favourable wind speed, a government forecasting agency said.

The city's air quality index (AQI) was 351 at 9 am. The 24-hour average AQI was 356 on Saturday and 295 on Friday.

An AQI between zero and 50 is considered "good", 51 and 100 "satisfactory", 101 and 200 "moderate", 201 and 300 "poor", 301 and 400 "very poor", and 401 and 500 "severe".

4 AAP MLAs detained on way to protest outside Amit Shah's residence

PTI

NEW DELHI, 13 DECEMBER

Four AAP MLAs, including Raghubir Chadha, were detained on Sunday while on their way to stage a protest outside Home Minister Amit Shah's residence here, a day after the party alleged misappropriation of crores of rupees by the BJP-ruled municipal corporations and demanded a CBI probe into it.

Shortly after their release, the legislators termed their detention "illegal" and alleged that the BJP government at the Centre was "trying to bury the corruption matter using the Delhi

police."

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has alleged misappropriation of over Rs 2,400 crore in the North Delhi and South Delhi municipal corporations and had announced to stage protests outside the residences of Shah and Lieutenant Governor Anil Baijal from Sunday till a probe is ordered.

Chadha, Burari MLA Sanjeev Jha, Kirari MLA Rituraj Jha and Kondli MLA Kuldeep Kumar were detained on Sunday while they were on their way to stage a protest outside Shah's residence.

Atishi and eight others were briefly detained while protest-

ing in front of the Delhi LG's residence.

Addressing a joint press conference shortly after their release, Chadha said, "There was no provision to detain us, when we asked why we are being detained they said it is because section 144 is in place which prevents assembly of more than four people but then we were four people only who were going to protest."

"It is clear that the scam we have unearthed has involvement of the top brass and that is why these attempts are being made to stop us from raising the matter," Atishi said.

Police said the MLAs were

detained as they tried to protest despite being denied permission.

"They had earlier sought permission for a protest, which was rejected by police in view of DDMA (Delhi Disaster Management Authority) guidelines on COVID-19," an official said.

Earlier, in a letter to Chadha, police had said they have been denied permission for the protest in view of the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) guidelines that state that all social, academic, sports, entertainment, cultural, religious and political functions or other gatherings are prohibited up to December 31 throughout the

city to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

Moreover, promulgation of Section 144 CrPC is already in force in the area of New Delhi district," the letter to Chadha from the office of the Deputy Commissioner of Police, New Delhi district, stated. Chadha said they were going to protest against the "biggest scam" by the BJP-led municipal corporations.

"But we were arrested from our residences. Does Amit Shah want to bury this corruption using the Delhi Police," the Rajender Nagar MLA said.

The allegation has been refuted by the BJP.

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Email: b

UNBELIEVABLE BUT TRUE!



Delhi was ranked at 62nd place among the world's best cities in a recent listing. The placement did not come as a surprise, and should have caused neither elation nor a sense of disappointment. If the listing had been half-way upwards, at about 30th place, it would have brought genuine joy, particularly to old Delhi's. At 62nd position, none could have much reason to rejoice, unless one likes to grab anything that comes one's way. What with its crawling traffic, made slow-motion by numerous ugly flyovers, an utter lack of civic sense displayed by people in public spaces, a Metro train that keeps the elderly and women out of their seats, and SUVs chasing smaller cars out of their way, and if possible, from all arterial roads, like big fish out to devour small sea life, Delhi continues to be challenging in the ease of living for many. The Vancouver institution that did the "best" cities' listing must have gone by a well laid down criteria. For those who have lived in the city for the past 70 years or more, the tag of "best" could have meant a lot of things. For example, the bus service. After a few initial names, the city's bus service changed from DTU (Delhi Transport Undertaking) to DTC (Delhi Transport Corporation), but without much relief to commuters, whose numbers kept rising each passing year. In the fifties and the sixties, 10 am onwards, one could keep one's neck turned towards the way from where one expected a bus, or any bus, to arrive. It could be one to two hours, or sometimes more, and the neck could start getting a sprain, but there was no sight of a bus. Being at a bus stop at 1 pm could not guarantee watching a 3 pm movie, nine to 10 kilometres away at Connaught Place, from the start. Only at morning hours, thanks to government babus' efforts, one could get a bus at fixed timings for offices or colleges, or locations around them. The buses would not start unless their occupancy was 150 per cent of their capacity. The return journeys were, again, in God's domain. Nothing much has changed in the bus service qualitatively, although the number of buses has gone up. The buses still don't stop when you signal them. It doesn't matter whether you are an old woman or a man. The driver does not look at you. There are no queues. The buses speed up even before you have entered them, and grabbed any steel rod. In the seventies began the talk of the Metro. It came 25 years later and made people delirious with joy. It has grown big, but is yet to cover the whole city, and those dependent on buses continue to suffer their "service". Those who use the Metro regularly see the seats reserved for women, and the old and disabled persons, occupied by the young and strong, every day. To avoid being embarrassed, the young commuters simply ignore whoever approaches them for the seats, either by going in quick sleep, or playing games on their mobiles. That tells us something about the civic sense of people in public spaces. Until the fines came a few years ago, many commuters did not stop spitting on the Metro tracks or the entrance stairs. Connaught Place in the centre of the city too is not free from this evil. Every turn in the upmarket shopping centre is used for spitting by those consuming paan, tobacco or masala. Such a populace could not be expected to stop its fabled city river Yamuna turning into a dirty gutter. Not surprising too in the city is a common sight of people enjoying food cooked and served in the open, by the side of dirty drains, garbage bins and smoky traffic. The city remains unfriendly for the differently-abled. Had it not been for Covid-19, none would have worn a face mask in Delhi. Still it has figured in the list of the "best" cities of the world!

The coronavirus pandemic and the resultant confusion ensured that the golden jubilee of Delhi's Chittaranjan Park, one of the biggest settlements of Bengalis outside Bengal, came and went unnoticed. Conceived by Late Meher Chand Khanna, the then Minister for Rehabilitation, in mid-fifties as a home for displaced persons and refugees from the then East Pakistan, the colony came into existence in the early seventies but not before a two-decade-long struggle by the founding fathers led by the East Pakistan Displaced Persons Association (EPDP). After protracted negotiations, the government agreed to allot around 2150 plots to these displaced persons on a barren hilly tract of land near Kalkaji in South Delhi and the future Chittaranjan Park came into existence. The colony was formally inaugurated 50 years ago by Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister, on 29 December 1970 at the B-Block Puja grounds during the birth centenary celebration of the great patriot, freedom fighter and Congress leader Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das.

The first house at Chittaranjan Park, then known as EPDP Colony, was constructed in April 1970, followed by a few others, but basic civic amenities were non-existent at that time, which included water supply, electricity, public transport, security systems and markets. Life was hard and snakes and huge lizard-monitors made their occasional appearance in a basically uninhabited tract of land lying barren for hundreds of years. Infrastructural improvements took almost a decade to pick up but over the years Chittaranjan Park became the principal hub of Bengali cultural, social, educational and religious activities in the national capital. Landmark institutions like the Bangiya Samaj, Purbosree Mahila Samiti, Kali Mandir Society, Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Memorial Society, Bipin Chandra Pal Memorial Society and the Raisina Bengali School came up during mid-seventies and built their own establishments and auditoriums. No wonder, these cultural centres soon vibrated with music, dance, theatre, poetry-reading, and so on. Some of them established charitable health cen-

tres to provide cheap but efficient medical care to all. Durga Puja started in the year 1970 with a handful of residents, which has now multiplied into twelve mega-pujas which people from all over Delhi throng every year. These Durga Puja celebrations are known for their elaborate pandals and rich cultural programmes, where the leading artistes of Kolkata and Mumbai take part. The triple temple complex, dedicated to Mother Kali, Lord Shiva and Radha-Krishna, was completed around the early nineties atop a small hillock, which has

become the focal point of religious activities of the local residents. Chittaranjan Park is now an affluent upmarket locality with wide tree-lined roads, spacious playfields, a couple of schools and, of course, tastefully built houses. Its residents include government officials, scholars, corporate executives, lawyers, journalists, medical professionals, architects, musicians, painters and businessmen among others.

It is home to one of the city's main markets for fresh water fish, an integral part of Bengali cuisine, as

also four big markets specialising in Bengali sweets (including the favourite 'mishti doi') and numerous stalls selling Kolkata-style street food like 'jhalmuri', 'ghugni', chops, cutlets, rolls and biryani. Famous restaurant brands, jewellers, outlets and ethnic sari and garment stores have also opened shops here in recent years. Chittaranjan Park is now a much sought-after destination for property hunters, especially in the wake of the real estate boom. This has led to the progeny of the first-generation residents selling off their property at astronomical prices or placing them at the hands of the ubiquitous 'developer'. This has, however, resulted in Chittaranjan Park now becoming more cosmopolitan and pan-Indian in nature. On the flip side, old timers are of the opinion that the camaraderie that existed among the residents during the first few decades of the colony's existence has now dissipated considerably among the present generation. Yet, despite these drawbacks, Chittaranjan Park still remains a haven of peaceful living in Delhi, holding promise of an improved quality of life in the coming years.

EDUCATION DISRUPTED

The education system in India has suffered such a huge blow in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic that it will take years to recover from the situation. Most neighbourhood nursery schools have shut down everywhere, rendering teachers and other staff

jobless. The impact has been severe for disadvantaged children and their families, causing interrupted learning, compromised nutrition, childcare problems, and consequent economic costs to families who could not work. For over eight months now, most schools have been imparting education to children online. Neither teachers

nor students are comfortable with classes being conducted online. There are teachers as well as students who cannot afford a laptop or desktop and are forced to use their mobiles for online classes. This has not only affected their eyes but caused other health-related problems too. On top of it, parents are finding it difficult to pay school fees of

their children since many of them have either lost jobs or accepted massive salary cuts to retain jobs. In many schools too, teachers have been forced to accept salary cuts or resign. With the virus continuing to ravage most parts of India, there is hardly any possibility of schools reopening any time soon. In fact, the schools, which had reopened recently in some states, have

again closed following a spike in coronavirus cases. One only hopes 2021 will not be as bad as 2020 for the education system. The future of the next generation is indeed at stake.

TAILPIECE

"Does bandh (lockdown) have any meaning now

after our Covid lockdown experience? Most people are anyway working from home, schools and colleges are closed and just a handful of people venture out to shop as one generally orders online," an elderly gentleman was overheard making the point.

Contributed by: Bhaskar Roy, Deepak Razdan, Ashok Tuteja and Asha Ramachandran

India

As virus cases rise in HP, CM seeks to allay fears

Himachal Pradesh has recorded over 8,000 Covid-19 cases and 162 Covid-linked deaths since 1 December

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 13 DECEMBER

More than 8,000 coronavirus (Covid-19) cases and 162 Covid-related deaths have been logged in Himachal Pradesh since 1 December. Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur on Sunday stepped in to allay fears of Covid patients amid growing panic over further spread of the infectious, deadly viral disease, and called up over two dozen Covid patients to help them cope with mental trauma and also enquired about their well-being.

A state government official said as the Covid-19 pandemic has gripped the entire world community and has cre-

ated panic amongst the people, Himachal too could not remain immune from this global crisis posed by the pandemic.

However, being very sensitive towards the plight of people affected by pandemic, the state government has been playing a "pro-active role in carefully handling and managing the situation", he said.

"The Chief Minister has come forward to help citizens to overcome the fear of Corona and called up over two dozen Covid patients to help them cope with mental trauma and also enquired about their well-being."

He also instructed the CM Helpline staff to be in regu-

lar touch with Covid patients telephonically and assist them to overcome the mental trauma by inquiring about their problems, if any, in Covid Centres, and also those who

are kept under home isolation," the official said.

The official further stated that as per the directions given earlier, the CM Helpline had contacted 1253 patients in the last 7 days, which include 29.6 percent female and 70.4 percent male patients.

"The state government is making efforts to control and prevent the Corona pandemic. Further, Deputy Commissioners, Superintendents of Police, Chief Medical Officers and other senior officers are being given directions on weekly basis for the proper management of Corona," he said.

He added the state government had directed senior medical officers to continu-

ously inspect the Covid wards and to provide free medical treatment to corona positive patients.

In addition, the state government has decided not to organize any political functions in the state till 15 December and people have been asked to maintain adequate social distance in public places and strictly follow the use of face masks. The government has limited the number of people in all social, cultural and political events upto 50 to break the chain," he added.

Himachal Pradesh's tally of Covid cases has increased to 49,151 now from 40,518 on 30 November, with 200 more persons testing coronavirus positive on Sunday.

Court to resume final hearing in MJ Akbar's defamation case

NEW DELHI, 13 DECEMBER

A Delhi court is scheduled to resume on Monday the final hearing in a criminal defamation complaint filed by former Union minister M J Akbar against journalist Priya Ramani for allegedly defaming him by accusing him of sexual misconduct around 20 years ago. Ramani has said that her allegations of sexual misconduct against Akbar, made in the wake of #MeToo movement in 2018, were her truth and were made in public good. On December 10, Ramani had told the court,

"I have spoken my truth. I have said it in good faith and my truth refers to a question of good faith."

HP students' parents body to protest pvt schools' bid to charge hefty fees

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 13 DECEMBER

As parents of school students in Himachal Pradesh receive messages for payment of hefty fees for the Covid lockdown period and afterwards, the Students Parents Forum on Sunday announced to stage protests if the government does not withdraw its order allowing private schools to charge fees over and above tuition fees.

The Students Parents Forum convener Vijender Mehra said the Director, Higher Education on 10 Nov had lifted the restriction imposed on private schools to only charge tuition fees from the students.

"The Director Higher Education in its order stated that they are withdrawing the earlier notification issued in June 2020 regarding charging of only tuition fees from students. The earlier notification

which was not applicable now, had also barred schools from charging building, maintenance, sports funds, computer, extra co-curricular and other annual fees etc," he added.

He further stated that the state government is standing with the management of over 3000 private schools in which over 6 lakh students are enrolled and now their parents are facing the brunt of the government's decision in Covid pandemic.

Now school managements were asking the parents to deposit the pending fees for and after the lockdown period.

They were now being forced to pay hefty fees as the private schools were charging building, maintenance, sports funds, computer, extra co-curricular and other annual fees, he said.

The parents in hill state prefer English medium private schools for their children as the

quality of education imparted to students in government schools is quite poor," he said, adding for this, they have been burdened to pay hefty fees.

He further stated that parents enrolling their wards were not able to raise voice against the monopoly of such school managements owing to the risk of losing the academic future of their children.

Besides, commercialization of such learning institutions

were the new norm as irrespective of party-line, every government in the state always take decisions favourable to private school managements, he alleged.

He said the Forum would stage protests at the State Directorate of Education on 16, 21, 24 and 28 December in the first phase and if the state government didn't withdraw its order, a second phase of protests would be started.



Representational Image

Unless you go through the book and read in full, I don't want to comment.



FORMER UNION MINISTER M VEERAPPA MOILY

ON FORMER PRESIDENT PRANAB MUKHERJEE'S MEMOIR 'THE PRESIDENTIAL YEARS'

India

THUMBNAILS



A girl carries paper cartoon to make fire to beat the cold, in the Capital on Sunday. ■ SUBRATA DUTTA

Voter IDs found dumped: Over 100 voter IDs have been found dumped in the Mhar area of Ulhasnagar in Thane district, officials said on Sunday. The Electors Photo Identity Cards, which seem to be old ones with black-and-white photographs, were found on Saturday. ■ PTI

'Bengal fighting pandemic far better than other states': Dr Santanu Sen, Raja Sabha MP today said as per the Global Health Index, India ranks 155th among 158 countries. Even Pakistan and Bangladesh fared better in the index than India. He said, the Centre expenditure on health care is 1.3 % of our GDP but in West Bengal the budgetary allocation in 2020 is Rs 11,280 crore. In 2010 it was Rs 3442 crore. ■ SNS

BJP dumps its coalition partner BPF in Assam

Student leader-turned politician Pramod Boro new chief of BTC with BJP backing

SNS & PTI
GUWAHATI, 13 DECEMBER

The BJP on Sunday virtually dumped one of its coalition partners in Assam, the BPF, and picked up a newly to gain majority and rule the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), a self-governing body in the Bodo-dominated areas of the state.

The Bodoland People's Front (BPF), which has three ministers in the Sarbananda Sonowal-led coalition government in the state, has emerged as the single-largest party in the just-concluded BTC polls, winning 17 seats in the 40-member body.

BPF president Hagrama Mohilary said his party repeatedly appealed to the BJP to follow the "coalition" norms and help it to form a "government" in the BTC, but the BJP ignored the pleas.

The United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) has won 12 seats, the BJP nine, while the Congress and the Gana Suraksha Party, headed by Lok Sabha MP Naba Sarania, got one each.

Shortly after senior BJP leader and Union home minister Amit Shah congratulated the UPPL for winning 12 seats and termed the party an

NDA committed to serve N-E people: PM

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 13 DECEMBER

With the BJP set to rule BTC with its newly UPPL, Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserted on Sunday that the NDA is committed to serving the people of the Northeast. He wished BPF-UPPL alliance the very best in fulfilling people's aspirations. "I thank the people for placing their faith in the NDA," he tweeted.

"ally" in his tweet, chief minister Sonowal announced that UPPL chief Pramod Boro will be the new chief executive member in the BTC.

Boro, former president of All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU), is expected to take oath as the new council chief on 15 December in Kokrajhar, headquarter of BTC. An important signatory to recently have signed Bodoland Peace Accord, Boro led his party candidates to win 12 seats.

While the BPF and UPPL are considered rivals in the Bodo-dominated areas, there was no pre-poll alliance among



Union home minister Amit Shah and BJP national president Jagat Prakash Nadda separately congratulated the winning candidates of the BTC polls.

other parties as well.

"Since we are part of the state government in Dispur, I appeal to the BJP to help the BPF to form the government in the BTC. We have not broken alliance with BJP and it should follow the coalition," Mohilary, who had been the CEM for the past 17 years, told a Press conference in Kokrajhar, BTC headquarters.

The BJP and BPF, along with the AGP, fought the 2016 Assembly elections together in which BPF got 12 seats, winning all they had contested. Three of its MLAs are still ministers in the Sonowal government.

The Shiv Sena and the Akali Dal have walked out of the NDA in the past one year. ■ PTI

They asserted that the results showed the faith of electorates in the able leadership of PM Modi and pro-people policies of NDA undoubtedly.

They appreciated the hard works of chief minister Sonowal, state minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, saffron party's State president Ranjeet Kr Dass, its national general secretary Dilip Saikia along with UPPL leaders in the electoral battles.

ernment.

BPF's lone Rajya Sabha member Biswajit Daimari, before formally joining the BJP last month, had been supporting the Narendra Modi government on different occasions in the Upper House.

This is the second time that the BJP broke ties with a coalition partner in recent times. In 2018, the saffron party pulled the plug on the Mehbooba Mufti-led PDP-BJP government in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Shiv Sena and the Akali Dal have walked out of the NDA in the past one year. ■ PTI

Miffed BPF ministers keep away from Assam Cabinet meeting

GUWAHATI, 13 DECEMBER

Hours after BJP dumped its ally Bodoland People's Front (BPF) in the Bodoland Territorial Council to join hands with its rival United People's Party Liberal (UPPL), the three BPF ministers on Sunday skipped the Cabinet meet, chaired by chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal, without any intimation.

The BJP-led Assam government has three Cabinet ministers from the BPF-Pramila Rani Brahma, Chandan Brahma and Rihon Daimary.

"The three BPF ministers were absent. We do not know why they did not attend the Cabinet meeting," Parliamentary affairs minister Chandra Mohan Patowary told. The government will "try to know" why the trio were absent in the crucial cabinet meeting, which approved a proposal to close down all government-run Madrassas and Sanskrit Tols in the state, he added.

"The name plates of the three ministers were there in their respective seats. They did not inform us about their absence," said Patowary. The results of the 40-member Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) gave a fractured mandate with BPF becoming the single largest party with 17 seats. ■ PTI

'CM's remarks against Central agencies probing gold scam cry of a culprit'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, 13 DECEMBER

should function as per established norms, were being "misused to destabilise" the state governments ruled by Opposition parties.

Meanwhile, Congress-led Opposition UDF has approached the State Election Commission against the chief minister alleging violation of election code of conduct.

Vijayan had announced in his media briefing on Saturday that Covid-19 vaccine would be made available free of cost. KC Joseph, Congress deputy leader in the state Assembly, filed an online complaint with state election commission. In his complaint, he said that the chief minister's announcement regarding free distribution of Covid-19 vaccine was a violation of poll code.

He said there was no urgency to make the announcement on the vaccine at this juncture when the Northern districts of the state are going to the polls on Monday.

The BJP has also lodged a complaint with the SEC against the chief minister's free vaccine announcement, violating poll code of conduct.

On Saturday, the CM had informed that the LDF government's stance is to give the Covid-19 vaccine free of cost. The quantity of the vaccine that would be earmarked for the state is not yet clear.

Dilip slams Kalyan for writing to ministry



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
HOOGHLY 13 DECEMBER

The state BJP president Dilip Ghosh strongly remarked against the Serampore MP Kalyan Banerjee for writing letters to the home ministry stating that, summoning of the chief secretary and the DGP from West Bengal is unconstitutional.

The Serampore MP in retaliation to the remarks made by Dilip Ghosh have strongly lashed out at Ghosh, stating that Ghosh through his un wanted remarks have only revealed his immaturity not only as a Politician but also as an MP.

Dilip Ghosh then remarked, Kalyan Banerjee is not well aware of the Indian constitution and the administrative powers of the Central government, he should have known that the Central government is empowered to summon the IAS and IPS officers from any state, an MP does not have the right to write a letter to the Home minister. The chief minister or the state chief secretary are the eligible persons who can write to the Home Ministry.

Ghosh made personal remarks about Banerjee that Banerjee as a law practitioner is a total failure, victory in the Singur farmers case is his only achievement in his professional career.

The Serampore MP Kalyan Banerjee strongly condemned the remarks made by Dilip Ghosh, he said Ghosh is no one to issue me a certificate about my performance as an politician or as a law practitioner.

Ghosh may be an MP but he is still too immature as a politician and he is appropriate to the phrase 'little learning is dangerous.'

In my letter to the ministry I have clearly mentioned that I have penned down the letters since the Parliament is not in session, an MP has the right to point out the mistakes committed by the Central government which goes against the constitutional rights and regulations, Banerjee said.

Ravi Shankar Prasad in their 2018 highly appreciated about my depth of knowledge in law, even Narendra Modi once appreciated my capability of carrying a debate over the law matters in the Parliament. Banerjee added that Dilip Ghosh is no better than a trouble maker within his own party, the BJP itself is in a fix since neither the party is in a state to swallow him or to throw him out.

UNITED WE STAND



AAP MLA Atishi Marlena joins others in a protest against misappropriation of ₹2,500 crore by BJP-led MCD, outside LG House at Civil Lines in New Delhi on Sunday. ■ IANS

Opp taking advantage of farmers' issue to destabilise country: Yogi

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
MEERUT, 13 DECEMBER

Chief minister Yogi Adityanath during his visit to Meerut on Sunday attacked the Opposition parties for conspiring to destabilise the country taking advantage of the ongoing farmers' movement.

The CM was in Meerut to inaugurate the library of Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel Agriculture University. He laid the foundation of different projects and held a meeting with rank and files of the forthcoming panchayat election in the state.

While addressing the gathering at the agriculture university premises, the chief minister issued an alert to the

agitating farmers against the trap laid by the Opposition parties.

He said the Opposition is irritated as PM Modi has put the country on road to development. The poor and farmers on PM's priority list. The Opposition, on the other hand, doesn't want development of them and the country.

"The government has ensured payment to sugarcane farmers and they are receiving money in their bank accounts. Also the farmers are availing advantage of welfare schemes introduced by our governments, including crop insurance," he claimed. The government has abolished Section 370 in Kashmir and resolved the issue of Ram Temple in Ayodhya.

The middlemen, who used to exploit farmers, have been removed from the system for their betterment, he said and blamed the Opposition for hatching conspiracy against the government.

He charged the Opposition parties of demanding the release of those who had been indulged in anti-national activities taking advantage of farmers' movement.

The CM suggested the farmers resolve the issue through dialogues and not agitation.

The CM's arrival was delayed by several hours due to bad weather. His chopper could not land due to poor visibility and routed to Ghaziabad from where he took the road route. On his arrival he planted a sapling before attending the programme.

Boat carrying journalists, BJP activists capsizes in Dal Lake

JAMMU, 13 DECEMBER

Ashikara (boat) carrying BJP activists and mediapersons on Sunday capsized in Srinagar's Dal Lake during a boat rally organised by the union minister Anurag Thakur.

According to reports, one of the boats carrying several BJP activists and photo journalists capsized near the Chara Chinarey island in the lake. The boat suddenly overturned and those traveling in it fell in the freezing cold waters. They were immediately rescued by police that reached the accident spot in motor-boats. They were provided medical attention. Cameras and electronic equipment of journalists were damaged in the mishap.

The rally was organised to campaign for the ongoing local body elections. ■ SNS

Two terrorists killed in encounter in Poonch

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU 13 DECEMBER

Two terrorists were killed and one arrested on Sunday in an encounter with security forces at Poshana area of Poonch in Jammu division.

The encounter broke out in the morning when a joint team of Army, CRPF and J&K Police cordoned the area following inputs about presence of terrorists. Security forces gave an opportunity to terrorists to surrender but they rejected the offer and opened fire.

The terrorists are believed to have infiltrated into this side from across the Line of Control (LoC) about three days back and were heading for south Kashmir's Shopian district when they were intercepted in a snow-bound area along the Mughal Road in the afternoon, officials said.

They said it was a joint group of Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) terrorists and have been pushed into this side in an apparent attempt to disturb the ongoing district development council (DDC) elections which got a tremen-

dous response from the people, causing frustration to Pakistanis.

The officials said police, assisted by the Army, launched a joint cordon and search operation in remote Chhapani-Dugran village. The terrorists were trapped in a snow-bound area and were asked to surrender but they refused and instead fired indiscriminately on the security forces, they said, adding the security forces retaliated and killed two of the militants. Another terrorist was captured alive. They said both the slain terrorists are suspected to be Pakistani nationals.

Meanwhile, Pakistani troops resorted to unprovoked mortar shelling in the Degewar Sector of Poonch. They said both the slain terrorists are suspected to be Pakistani nationals.

Pak violates ceasefire along IB in J&K's Kathua
Pakistan Rangers opened fire on forward posts and villages along the International Border (IB) in Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said on Sunday. The firing from across the border in Pansar border outpost area in Hiranagar sector started around 10 p.m. on Saturday.

Eastern Command recalls how Indian Army's battle-courage and quick improvisation helped win the 1971 war

SOUMYADIP MULLICK
KOLKATA, 13 DECEMBER

The Bangladesh Liberation War stood witness to the exceptional courage and constant improvisation by the Indian Army in the battlefield to strike back at Pakistani forces with maximum impact.

Hit by an enemy sniper, a Major single-handedly managed to damage Pakistani mortars, allowing the advance of Maratha Light Infantry battalions.

The Eastern Command of Indian Army recalled, by 13 December, the 'Race to Dacca' became a 'race against time' as the army advanced in all sectors while Pakistani army and government forces in both Eastern and Western Pakistan were exchanging frantic battles about their fate and recommending surrender.

Military archives revealed, on 13 December, Major Surinder Vatsa of 59 Engineer Regiment accompanied a column of a battalion of the Maratha Light Infantry that was tasked to raid an enemy locality on the Kamalpur-Bakshigan axis in the Eastern Sector.

The raid was successful and four Pakistani 130 mm mortars were captured.

Apprehending enemy reinforcements, Major Vatsa destroyed two mortars with explosives. It was while preparing the charge for the third

mortar he was shot by an enemy sniper.

Army sources recalled that the sniper attack though dealt a grievous injury, Major Vatsa realising the importance of his mission managed to damage the remaining mortars by exploding grenades in the barrel before succumbing to his injuries.

He was posthumously awarded a Vir Chakra.

In 1971, the Indian Army was far from advanced weapons and had by then switched to semi-automatics from the World War era. .303 Lee Enfield bolt action rifles. The Indian forces were using the 7.62 self-loading rifles manufactured by Ishapore Rifle factory in West Bengal.

With less than advanced weapons, the army relied heavily on improvisation.

Covering the war and commenting on Indian Army's improvisation, the Pulitzer-winning journalist Sydney H. Schanberg of New York Times had written, "Their arms and equipment aren't good but what they had was used with effect and boy could they improvise."

He wrote how after an hour of being pinned down by Pakistani forces, an Indian artillery officer Major Dhillon took position behind a wall, yelling at Pakistani forces to put down their weapons within one minute or face heavy artillery fire. Within a few minutes, a Pakistani officer was seen waving a big white handkerchief.

Bengali short film Tandoori bags Sweden award

KANCHAN SIDDIQUI
BURDWAN, 13 DECEMBER



Tandoori—A Bengali short film based on the much debated carcass meat scam in Kolkata has bagged the best cinematography award from Sweden alongside buying appraisals on best story and outstanding achievement categories from a number of festivals in Pune, Kolkata and has also been selected in the Montreal Independent Film Festival, Canada.

The 32 minute feature film is directed by Biplob Das—an Irrigation department engineer currently posted in Burdwan.



ON PIYUSH GOYAL CLAIMING FARMERS' AGITATION TO BE INFILTRATED BY LEFTIST AND MAOIST ELEMENTS

UNION MINISTER RAMDAS ATHAWALE

The Statesman

05

NEW DELHI, MONDAY 14 DECEMBER 2020

THUMBNAILS



A health official checks the body temperature of 85-year-old Zooni Begum at a polling station in Nowpora Chadoora of Kashmir's Budgam district on Sunday.

■ SNS

Scribe's family beaten up: Eight family members of a journalist were thrashed after his daughter objected to the beating up of cattle by her neighbour in Shantinagar locality of UP's Etah, police said on Sunday. Police said that a case has been registered in this regard. A hunt is on to nab the culprits.

PTI

Lalbaug cylinder blast toll: The death toll in the cylinder blast-fire incident that occurred in Mumbai's Lalbaug area last week grew to six after a man (Vinayak Shinde), succumbed to his injuries in a Mumbai's KEM Hospital, a fire brigade official said on Sunday.

PTI

Kerala PFI student arrested: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested a member of the PFI's student wing, Rauf Sharif, after he was apprehended by authorities at the Thiruvananthapuram airport in Kerala, official sources said. They said Sharif has been placed under arrest under sections of PMLA on Saturday and a Kerala court has sent him to judicial custody.

PTI

Renowned Sanskrit scholar Govindacharya dies at 85: Sanskrit scholar Vidyavachaspati Bannanje Govindacharya died at his residence at Ambalpady in Udupi on Sunday due to age-related illness, family sources said. A propagator of 'Madhwā' ideology and a great orator, Govindacharya had been conferred Padma Shree in 2009.

PTI

'Modi govt to deal sternly with 'Tukde Tukde Gang'

Union minister Prasad claims it is trying to take advantage of farmers' protest



Shashi Tharoor joins protesting Punjab MPs against new farm laws at the Jantar Mantar on Sunday.

PbDIG tenders resignation, supports farmers' protest

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHANDIGARH, 13 DECEMBER

Punjab Deputy Inspector General (Prisons) Lakhminder Singh Jakhar on Sunday said that he has resigned from the service in support of farmers who are protesting against the Centre's three new farm laws.

Jakhar said he tendered his resignation to the state government on Saturday.

In his resignation letter to Principal Secretary (Home), I, Lakhminder Singh Jakhar, DIG, Prisons, would like to inform you of my considered and introspective decision to stand with my farmer brothers who are peacefully protesting against the Farm Ordinances, 2020 which are detrimental to interest of farmers and their future generations.

He wrote that he was himself a farmer. I have always listened to my conscience and now I earnestly feel that I should stand by my brotherhood, he wrote in his resignation letter.

He further wrote that he may be treated as prematurely retired from the service with effect from 12 December.

Earlier, Akali Dal stalwart and former Punjab chief minister Parkash Singh Badal had said that he had returned his Padma Vibhushan award in protest against the farm laws.

SETTLING SCORES



Farmers in a meeting with Union agriculture minister Narendra Tomar in New Delhi on Sunday. ■ IANS

India's rise will evoke its own reactions & responses: Jaishankar



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 13 DECEMBER

India's rise will evoke its own reactions and responses, and there will be attempts to dilute the country's influence and limit its interests, external affairs minister S Jaishankar said on Sunday.

Delivering the second Manohar Parrikar memorial lecture, Jaishankar also said that as India expands its global interests and reaches, there is an even more compelling case to focus on its hard power.

The external affairs minister said the national security challenges being faced by the "rising India" are obviously going to be different and emphasised on having greater integration and convergence between the foreign and military policies.

In veiled reference to Pakistan, Jaishankar said a long-standing political rivalry is today expressed as sustained cross border terrorism by a neighbour even as he enumerated security challenges emanating from long borders as well as large maritime spaces.

"The world is a competitive place and India's rise will

he said. "And over and above these exceptional factors, there are the daily security challenges of long borders and large sea spaces. The thinking and planning of a polity that operates in such an uncertain environment naturally should give primacy to hard security," he said.

Jaishankar further said the era of "unconstrained military conflicts" may be behind us but the reality of limited wars and coercive diplomacy is still very much a fact of life.

Talking about India's growing global stature, Jaishankar said the country's "relationship with the world" cannot be the same as when its ranking was much lower.

"Our stakes in the world have certainly become higher and correspondingly so have the expectations of us. Simply put India matters more and our world view must process that in all its aspects," he said.

He added: "On the big global issues of our times, whether we speak of climate change or trade flows or health concerns or data security, India's positioning has more influence on the eventual outcome."

'Those who give dough can also have pizza'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 13 DECEMBER

A group of five friends set out from Amritsar on a cold Saturday morning. They didn't have much time to organise a regular langar, so they collected 'regular-sized' pizzas from a Haryana mall and set up a stall at the Singh border.

Around 400 pizzas were distributed within minutes as a huge crowd, including the protesting peasants and res-

idents from nearby areas, queued up.

The 'pizza langar' has since hogged headlines and garnered compliments from different quarters, and also brickbats from a certain section.

"The farmers who gave the dough for pizzas can also afford to have one themselves," says Shanbir Singh Sandhu, who organised the 'pizza langar' with his four friends for the peasants protesting at the Delhi-Haryana bor-

der against the contentious agri-marketing laws. "We didn't have much time to organise a regular lentils-chapatti langar... So we came up with this idea," says Sandhu, who is himself a farmer and an Economics student at Guru Nanak Dev University in Amritsar.

The farmers have been protesting at several border points into Delhi for over two weeks over their demands to repeal the new legislations, which they claim would ben-

efit the corporates, and end the traditional wholesale markets and the minimum support price regime.

Sandhu's friend, Shahzad Gill, underscored that people get bored eating the same thing everyday. "We thought we should bring something else to keep their spirits up," he said.

The 21-year-old student of agriculture says this is first time they have organised a 'pizza langar'.

Central forces should be deployed immediately in Bengal: Vijayvargiya

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BOLPUR, 13 DECEMBER

Claiming that Trinamool Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee is 'banking on violence' to return to power, BJP national general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya on Sunday said central forces should be deployed immediately in West Bengal to put an end to the prevailing atmosphere of political violence and terror in the state.

With Assembly polls due in

the state in April-May next year, the BJP Bengal melder appealed to the Election Commission to ensure free and fair elections, saying there should not be any place for fear and violence.

"I urge the Election Commission to deploy central forces from now itself in order to put an end to the prevailing atmosphere of political violence and terror in the state," said Vijayvargiya.

The ruling TMC and the BJP have been engaged in a war of

words over the attack on BJP national president J P Nadda's convoy by alleged TMC supporters when he was travelling to Diamond Harbour in South 24 Parganas district from Kolkata on Thursday.

The Ministry of Home Affairs on Saturday sought central deputation for three IPS officers over the mob attack on Nadda's convoy.

The three officers - Bholanath Pandey (SP, Diamond Harbour), Praveen Tripathi (DIG, Presi-

dency Range) and Rajeev Mishra (ADG, South Bengal) - were responsible for the security of the BJP chief during his 9-10 December visit to the state.

The West Bengal govern-

'MVA govt running away from debate on its failures'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 13 DECEMBER

Leader of the Opposition in the Maharashtra Assembly Devendra Fadnavis on Sunday accused the Uddhav Thackeray-led MahaVikasAghadi (MVA) government of running away from a debate on its "failures on all fronts".

Addressing a press conference here on the eve of the two-day winter session of the state Assembly, Fadnavis claimed it is "actually a one-day session which includes only six hours for the passage of supplementary demands".

Fadnavis said the BJP decided to boycott the government's customary tea party on the eve of the session to protest against the ruling dispensation's "failure" to respond to every strata of the society. The brief session, curtailed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, is being held against the backdrop of the MVA government completing a year in office and its encouraging performance in the just held elections to half-a-dozen seats of the Legislative Council (one of them bypoll).

Fadnavis said the government refused the opposition's demand to hold the winter session for two weeks and also refused to announce that the budget session next year would

DDC elections: 50% polling recorded in 6th phase

JAMMU, 13 DECEMBER

Around 50 per cent polling was recorded on Sunday in the sixth phase of district development committee (DDC) elections across various constituencies of Jammu and Kashmir.

Undeterred by last evening's indiscriminate mortarshelling by Pakistani troops in the civilian areas along the Line of Control (LoC) in the Poonch and Rajouri districts, large number of electorate turned up to cast their vote.

Long queues were also seen outside most of the polling booths in the snow-covered areas of the Kashmir valley. Polling in south Kashmir was lower than that in other areas.

According to official figures, nearly 43 per cent votes were cast till 1 p.m. As per the figures of the State Election Commission, in Kashmir division, Pulwama recorded 6.80 percent voting, Baramulla 26.68 per cent, Kulgam 32.71 per cent, Shopian 3.66 percent, Anantnag 20.95 per cent, Bandipora 40.57 per cent, Ganderbal 45.89 per cent, Kupwara 41.21 per cent and Budgam 27.44 per cent till 1 p.m. ■ SNS

Partha, Kishor meet disgruntled minister Rajib Banerjee

Issues related to Banerjee's grievances and party matters figured in meeting



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 13 DECEMBER

Trinamul Congress secretary general Partha Chatterjee along with poll strategist Prashant Kishor met the party's disgruntled minister Rajib Banerjee at Partha Chatterjee's residence at Naktala.

Party sources said that after talks with Suvendu Adhikary failed, efforts are being made to bridge the gap with Mr Banerjee, the minister in charge for forests.

It was learnt that the meeting lasted for an hour but neither Mr Chatterjee nor Prashant Kishor divulged any details to the Press.

Earlier, Mr Banerjee told

The Statesman that the party's secretary general called him to discuss various issues and about the party's next political steps that to be executed.

Asked if he has many grievances against the party's high command, Mr Banerjee said, "In a democratic party there will be difference of opinion but I feel that the differences can be resolved only by discussion within the party."

He iterated, "I was called for a meeting by the party's secretary general and definitely we talked about some of my grievances and other political matters which obviously I can't divulge to you."

Earlier, Mr Banerjee made some remarks that only flat-

TMC cracks whip on dissidents, Suvendu loyalist expelled

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KOLKATA, 13 DECEMBER

The Trinamul Congress on Sunday expelled a leader of its East Midnapore district unit, Kaniska Panda, considered close to party heavyweight Suvendu Adhikari.

Panda, the general secretary of the district unit, was expelled from TMC for alleged anti-party activities, a party leader said.

"Panda made statements against Abhishek Banerjee, the president of the TMC youth wing, and even ques-

ters are becoming important leaders in the party and a party cannot flourish in that way."

Told that many posters with his photo have been posted in various parts of Howrah and city just like Mr Suvendu Adhikari, he said, "please don't compare me with Mr Adhikari. I don't know who are putting up such posters and I personally never encouraged my workers to put up such banners and

posters. I don't need any such publicity."

Asked whether he was satisfied with the discussion, Mr Banerjee said, "The question of being satisfied or unsatisfied does not arise. We had discussions and in future we are going to have more such discussions if the party calls me."

A party insider said that actually BJP leaders are financing CPI-M cadres in Jadavpur and other parts of the city to

been under serious stress over the past few days despite "speaking the truth".

"I diligently served this party, which threw me out after all these years of working at the grassroot-level. I remain on the side of Suvendu Adhikari. We will continue to serve the people," he told reporters. In the last two weeks, Adhikari loyalists in East Midnapore, his home ground, were either removed from posts or ousted after Banerjee asked the district leadership not to tolerate anti-party activities.

put up posters of Suvendu Adhikari and Rajib Banerjee.

Asked to comment on the present situation, Mr Saugata Roy, Trinamul Congress Dum Dum MP said, "In my 50 years of political life, I've seen three categories of politicians who try to change the party before election. They are either afraid of not getting nomination for the second term, afraid of losing the election or want to bargain as the elections near."

Confirmation bias

The late Pranab Mukherjee has rendered a singular service to contemporary political analysis in the fourth and concluding volume of his memoirs to be published in January, excerpts of which were released to the media last week. In characterising Dr Manmohan Singh's stewardship of UPA-II as being "preoccupied with saving his coalition" and describing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's manner of functioning as "autocratic" in his first term, Mukherjee, critics would say, has only confirmed what many have long suspected. Yet, when a prognosis is confirmed by someone in the thick of it all such as the President of India, it has meaning. Also, Mukherjee was not aware when he was writing the last instalment of his memoirs that they would be published posthumously. So, if anything, he is likely to have held back a bit. And this from who made circumspection the leitmotif of his political life. The arguments that supporters of Dr Singh and Mr Modi will make against these assessments are not difficult to foreshadow. From Dr Singh's dwindling band of supporters will come those hoary chestnuts - Mukherjee always wanted to be Prime Minister himself, he supported Dr Singh's nomination as Congress Legislature Party leader by Ms Sonia Gandhi in 2004 because he had no choice, and his inflated sense of self-importance as the person holding the UPA coalition together politically as a governance instrument comes through because he pointedly refers only to UPA-II as the problem (after he had been kicked upstairs in 2012). Mr Modi's more numerous and aggressive band of followers will be disappointed by Mukherjee's criticism of their supreme leader's evident autocratic tendencies given the latter had been extremely respectful and genuinely fond of the former, so they will most likely justify this perceived betrayal with a *sotto voce* campaign centred around Mukherjee's Congress DNA, et al.

Both sets of supporters would be missing the woods for the trees, of course. It would be far more beneficial to their respective parties if a brave soul or two from among them used this opportunity afforded by the departed leader in his epistle from the great beyond to introspect and, dare one hope, course correct. For, as the 2019 Lok Sabha election and various Assembly - even municipal - polls since have shown, the last thing the Congress needs is further attempts to build yet another disparate, power-seeking coalition instead of focussing on the hard trek to regaining its social base and political relevance. Similarly, it is a moment for the BJP to pause and reflect on why the ongoing farmers' protests or previous anti-government agitations such as those against the CAA and the curbing of free speech have gained traction despite the laws promulgated having been eminently defensible. It is not enough to brush this opposition off as inspired only by political adversaries aided and abetted by radical ideologies though there is, of course, an element of that. Could the autocratic attitude of the dispensation dressed up as decisiveness perhaps also be one of the causes?

The final No

Only the monumental megalomania of Donald Trump can now come in the way of his accepting with grace the latest - and possibly most damaging - rejection of his claim that the US Presidential election was stolen from him. In an emphatic 6-3 ruling, the US Supreme Court - which coincidentally counts six conservatives among its nine judges, three of whom were appointed by Mr Trump - has thrown out an ingenious and seemingly bizarre challenge by the state of Texas to the electoral outcomes of four other states - Georgia, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin - which picked Mr Joe Biden as their choice for President. Mr. Trump had impaled himself as a plaintiff in the action brought by the Texas attorney-general, a steadfast ally of the President, and stated before the verdict that it was "perhaps the most important case in history." The Supreme Court, which many had seen as the last hope for a Presidency that is now comatose, summarily rejected the plaint holding that "Texas has not demonstrated a judicially cognisable interest in the manner in which another state conducts its elections." Texas had taken the plea that changes made by the four states in voting procedures to expand the scope of mail-in voting during the coronavirus epidemic were illegal. It had asked the court to stop the states from using the results to appoint presidential electors to the Electoral College, which will formally pick - and announce - the winner this week. The four states clearly saw Texas as an interloper with Pennsylvania going so far as to characterise the plaint as a "seditious abuse" of the electoral process. The majority view of the Supreme Court held that the motion needed to be denied "for lack of standing under Article III of the Constitution." Even two of the three judges in minority agreed there was no case for grant of any relief, while holding the Court did not have discretion to deny filing of a complaint in a matter that came under its original jurisdiction.

Two aspects of the ruling merit consideration. First, Mr Trump has been told, clearly and emphatically, by the country's highest court to cease the shenanigans that have seen the American electoral system reduced to a joke in the eyes of the world. Whether Mr. Trump will now concede defeat remains to be seen, but nothing about the man should surprise us. And, second, notwithstanding the system of appointment of judges in America, which ought to be judicious but truly speaking is predicated on bias especially in the grip of a man like the President, there is a limit to the partisanship that the Court will indulge in. The ruling will go some way towards telling Americans who were beginning to lose faith in the system that the Court will adjudicate fairly, notwithstanding the prelie-

Resolving NPAs ~ I

Ironically, the inefficient loan recovery system gave promoters tremendous advantage over lenders. Not only could they play one lender off against another by threatening to divert payments to the favoured bank, they could also refuse to pay unless the lender agreed to extend further credit



This article deals with some of the mitigation strategies already rolled out to address the menace of huge NPAs in Indian banking. The authors do not intend to outline any prescriptive actions but choose to reflect on several ideas, initiatives and schemes put out in recent times. To begin with, two important legislative milestones are worth noting. One was the formation of Debt Recovery Tribunals (DRTs) and the second one was the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interests (SARFAESI) Act, 2002.

Ironically, the inefficient loan recovery system gave promoters tremendous advantage over lenders. Not only could they play one lender off against another by threatening to divert payments to the favoured bank, they could also refuse to pay unless the lender agreed to extend further credit. Sometimes promoters offered extremely low one-time settlements knowing that the system would allow banks to collect even secured loans only after years and in certain cases after decades. Effectively, bank loans in such a system become equity, with a tough promoter enjoying the upside in good times, and forcing banks to absorb losses in bad times, even while he holds on to his equity.

As part of empowering banks, RBI took steps to improve the ineffective Corporate Debt Restructuring (CDR). A large loan database (CRILC) was created which included all loans over Rs. 5 crore as an enabler for mutual information sharing among lenders.

Besides, coordination among lenders through a Joint Lenders' Forum (JLF) once such early signals were seen was a groundbreaking measure by the central bank. The JLF was tasked with deciding on an approach for resolution, much as a bankruptcy forum does.

At some point of time even RBI, having become wary of the undesirable practices, stepped in to put an end to ever-greening of projects by banks. This measure was widely welcomed. Even the 5/25 scheme was a well thought out mitigation tool. Another important scheme was Strategic Debt Restructuring (SDR). This enabled conversion of debt to equity on a non-permanent basis and it resonated the idea of banks not owning equity for perpetuity.

Besides, it was observed that risk management processes still need substantial improvement in PSBs. Compliance is still not adequate and lacks in spirit, while cyber risk needs greater attention.

It may be worth note to remember that initiatives such as S4A (Scheme for Sustainable Structuring of Stressed Assets), D-SIB (Domestic Systemic Important Bank), SMA (Special Mention Account), INDRADHANUSH (1.0 & 2.0), NCLT (National Company Law Tribunal), Insolvency and Bankruptcy code (IBC) etc. were intended not just to improve the immunity within but also provide ammunition to the banking eco-system.

Let's now spotlight the note on bank NPAs prepared by Raghuram G. Rajan at the request of the Chairman of the Parliament Estimates Committee, Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi. In his note, Rajan highlighted factors such as over-optimism, slow-growth, government permissions and foot-dragging, loss of promoter and banker interest, malfeasance, fraud etc. as the prime reasons for exponential growth of NPAs. On the redressal front,



The writers are chartered accountants

that is to prevent recurrence, the white paper captured a set of recommendations which probably were the essential motive behind seeking the note from a former RBI governor. His improvement suggestions were in four major buckets.

Firstly, improve governance of public sector banks and distance them from the government. He said that public sector bank boards are still not adequately professionalized, and the government still decides board appointments, with the inevitable politicisation. Eventually strong boards should be entrusted with all decisions but held accountable for them.

Besides, it was observed that risk management processes still need substantial improvement in PSBs. Compliance is still not adequate and lacks in spirit, while cyber risk needs greater attention.

Secondly, improve the process of project evaluation and monitoring to lower the risk of project NPAs. It was suggested that more in-house expertise be brought into project evaluation. Bankers will have to develop industry knowledge in key areas since consultants can be biased.

Significantly it was emphasized that financiers should put in a robust system of project monitoring and appraisal, including real-time monitoring of costs. For example, can project input costs be monitored and compared with comparable inputs elsewhere using IT, so that suspicious transactions suggesting over-invoicing are flagged?

In addition, it was also said that the incentive structure for bankers should be worked out so that they evaluate, design, and monitor projects carefully, and get significant rewards if they work out. IT systems within banks should be able to pull up overall performance records of loans recommended by individual bankers easily, and this should be an input for determining their promotion and pay. Thirdly, strengthen the recovery process further. It was stressed that both the out of court restructuring process and the bankruptcy process needed to be strengthened and made speedier.

The former requires protecting the ability of bankers to make commercial decisions without subjecting them to inquiry. The latter requires steady modifications where necessary to the bankruptcy code so that it is effective, transparent, and not gamed by unscrupulous promoters.

Fourthly, Government should focus on sources of the next crisis, not just the last one. Government should refrain from setting ambitious credit targets or waiving loans. It was mentioned that credit targets are sometimes achieved by abandoning appropriate due diligence, creating the environment for future NPAs. All directed lending, particularly MUDRA loans as well as the Kisan Credit Card, while popular, must be examined more closely for potential credit risk. Lastly, it was called out that loan waivers vitiate the credit culture and stress the budgets of the waiving state or central government and leave few resources for other developmental projects.

Rajan also made a passing reference to the twin balance sheet syndrome, that challenges faced by the banks are linked to that of corporate sector. (To Be Concluded)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

Govt. should seek just settlement

SIR, Both sides unrelenting in their contradictory positions, an agreement between the Union government and the agitating farmers on the question of three controversial Farm Bills appears elusive. With the farmers' calling for a blockade of Delhi's highways to Jaipur and Agra by December 12, tensions may escalate further. After several rounds of talks, the Centre has now offered a written assurance that govt procurement at MSP would remain, along with proposals to amend the laws to deal with farmers' concerns regarding parity between State-run and private mandis, registration of traders, and dispute resolution mechanisms.

These assurances are in response to the concerns being raised by farmers, but they find them inadequate and half-hearted. They have decided to intensify the strike, demanding repeal of the controversial laws. The government has ruled out their repeal, setting the stage for a showdown.

Farmers, howsoever politically empowered they might be in some parts of the country, are at the mercy of market forces and government policy all the time. In this battle of unequal, the government should look at a just settlement, not a political compromise. The underlying



premise of the Centre that farmers will be better off in an open market needs to be qualified. No country serious about food security can leave farming and marketing of produce entirely to market forces.

The Centre must be more cognisant of the fact that farmers and the farm sector are both under its protection, and they cannot be free market actors. They do not have enough leverage to protect their own interest in negotiations with big corporations. There is no point in replacing existing distortions in the agriculture sector with reforms that do not inspire confidence in its earning potential and popularity among tourists.

With this objective, the

top viewing gallery of the gate can be connected with a ropeway to carry passengers to nearby Eco Park, another popular tourist spot. The mini Eiffel Tower deck at Eco Park could perhaps be used as a landing platform. The existing ropeway at Science City, has lost its charm because of the many high-rise buildings in the vicinity. This underused ropeway could be shifted to Kolkata gate/Eco park.

Kolkata Gate and Eco park would become more attractive if souvenir shops selling models of some of the displays at Eco park were provided.

Yours, etc., Kunal Kanti Konar,

Kolkata, 10 December.

INCONVENIENCE

SIR, Apropos your report 'Govt ready to discuss proposals: Tomar' published today, it seems that the farmers' unions have rejected the government's offer for further discussions and threatened to intensify their movement by blocking highways and railway tracks.

This will cause inconvenience to millions of people across the country. Worse, it may cause farmers to lose the moral support of citizens who have been sympathetic to their cause. Perhaps both sides should seek the intervention of the apex court to help them reach a settlement.

Yours, etc., AK Deb Biswas,

Hooghly, 11 December.

NEW TOWN WOES

SIR, It seems everyone is made to believe that all is well at New Town, the greenery, clean roads, no overhead electric lines, uninterrupted power, running of green buses, etc. Indeed New Town is an exception compared to other towns. But it could have been made a much better place had the authorities possessed the will to rein in building contractors who operate with impunity, without any checks and any semblance of concern about the general public even when construction goes on in a thickly populated neighbourhood.

There is a cement godown near my house. Trucks come in the dead of night regularly to discharge stocks and during day these bags are ferried to other godowns. The road is occupied with building materials, heavy loads are emptied without any concern for security and construction pits are always waterlogged to facilitate breeding of mosquitoes. Diesel generators run regularly though contractors can take electric connections. Due to handling of cement and construction dust, residents of nearby buildings cannot open their windows.

This has been going on for the last two years opposite my building, at the crossing of street number 204 and 187. But this is a regular feature with any construction in New Town. One wonders what the authorities do. There is no inspection. All the violations of the contractors have been brought to the attention of NKDA/HIDCO. I have written at least 5-6 mails to the CEO. He has the benefit of technology, these are not to be thrown in dust bins.

The local Residents Association has brought such activities to their attention. But who bothers to disturb the contractors? NKDA has a call line where one can complain. In the face of repeated complaints, some men have come and seen things. But it seems they cannot do anything.

Yours, etc., Amal Kanti Ghosh,
Kolkata, 10 December.

A MEMBER OF THE **NN**
ASIAN VOICES

Fight against Covid must be all for all

The special session of the UN General Assembly, held on December 3-4, came at a timely moment as "the world is looking to the UN for leadership, to step up and take demonstrable action to address the greatest challenge our world is facing today", as the Assembly president, Volkan Bozkir, said at its opening. With representatives from more than 140 countries participating via video conference, the special session not only allowed them to survey the wreckage of the Covid-19 pandemic together, but more importantly provided them with a platform to collectively reflect on the best response and forge a path to the future. With its to-the-point discussions and exchanges, it is good to see that the international community has finally overcome the barriers that hindered global cooperation.

Although, as Bozkir said, no one could have imagined this time last year what was to come, they can have some certainty about what is to come. After so many lives have been lost, about 1.4 million as of December 4 according to the World Health Organisation, and after many lessons have been drawn, countries are now willing to stand together to wipe out the virus' footholds around the world, and the UN will try its best to guarantee all people have access to vaccines. But as UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres reminded everyone, much of the wreckage has not been caused by the pandemic alone, but is the result of the crisis exposing longstanding fragilities, inequalities and injustices.

As such, neither the responses to the pandemic nor the efforts to revive economies, which should be done simultaneously, should ignore addressing these long-standing problems. Otherwise, neither of the tasks will be easy.

In other words, as the UN chief urged, the pandemic has provided the world an opportunity "for change", and it is time for a reset. Although he did not name any specific country, it is clear from the warm response the pro-solidarity special session received from around the world that people are fed up with unilateralism. In a session in September, its leader openly smeared the important role of the WHO, and called on countries to follow his administration's lead, something that has been disastrous at home. There is no doubt, as Chinese President Xi Jinping's special representative Wang Yi, who is also State Councilor and Foreign Minister, said at the meeting, that countries, particularly the big ones, must work with each other to prioritise public health security, improve the public health security governance system and support the WHO playing a decisive leading role. He urged countries to "walk hand in hand, determined and undaunted". This is indeed the only way to get through this difficult time.

ANJALI MEHTA

The coronavirus pandemic has brought in its wake sickness, unemployment, stress and uncertainty. Despite being overwhelmed on multiple fronts, people are struggling valiantly to make the best of a bad situation. The younger generation in particular has shown remarkable forbearance. As my daughter's friend ruefully put it - "I went out to college and excitedly began the process of carving out an independent niche for myself in the world, yet here I am.... back to square one, cocooned in the family nest and confined to the house".

We all think about a better future for our children but how do we go about ensuring that under such trying circumstances? After some 'triaging' what springs foremost to my mind as being of vital importance is: understanding and building up immunity to higher levels, practising kindness and compassion more abundantly, realizing how Mother Earth is suffering along with us, and helping her heal simultaneously.

Nowhere has the role of immunity been highlighted more dramatically than during this pandemic. At one end of the spectrum, it suppresses the infection so efficiently and stealthily that patients are alerted to its presence only if perchance they test positive for Covid. At the other end, our immune system itself can harm our body by over recruitment of immune mediators - the much talked about 'cytokine storm'. Studies of diseases that cause autoimmune microangiopathies (involvement of small blood vessels) or Leprosy, where the type of immune response varies depending on the bacillary load are among those that can help provide valuable insights into treatments.

In his book "Quantum Healing" Deepak Chopra speaks eloquently of the elusive 'switch' which connects an abstract thought to a concrete neurotransmitter molecule and thus translates an idea into tangible action. Somewhere behind this mystery lies the fascinating potential ability to be able to consciously unleash complex immunological cascades in perfect balance. However, till we make this magical evolutionary leap, we can rely on a balanced diet as well as freely and abundantly available resources: sunshine - known to play a mitigating role in seasonal affective disorder-related depression; massages, laughter, playing with pets - all of which release endorphins (natural mood

IT CAME TO MIND | MANISH NANDY

Father and Son – and Sandra

"We will see you then on Friday morning." The call ended. A management consultant, temporarily in Delhi, I seldom received a call in which both father and son expressed a keen desire to have my counsel. Though I had known the son in college and met the father twice over family dinners, the urgency in their tone hinted at brewing tension.

Rahul Sharma worked twelve years in a large chemical corporation in India before he left and started a modest polymer company of his own. He started with two employees, a chemist and an assistant, and ended with twenty before the year was out. His technical knowledge was sound but short, his business knowledge sound and swelling. He was good at turning out ingenious products industry needed; he was even better garnering business from skeptical clients. In ten years, Sharma's company was medium in size and large in profit.

He dreamed, not unlike other entrepreneurs, to turn over the executive functions to his son, who had emerged with laurels from an engineering college, and focus on what he liked most: develop new products and new business. Raj, his son, however, had his own preferences. He wanted to go for higher studies to the US and begged his father to spare him for three years. Rahul couldn't say no to his only child whose ambition had a business angle to boot. Raj went abroad and kept his word. He completed his studies at Caltech on time with distinction and bought a plane ticket for Delhi. He bought, however, two tickets, to keep his word with his coed, Sandra, whom he had been dating for two years.

Following a lavish wedding in Defence Colony and a honeymoon in a palace hotel in Rajasthan, the young couple – yes, both – started work in Rahul's plant. Problems started almost immediately. Raj found most of his father's ideas quaint and old-fashioned. He felt

current practices needed quick change. Though Sandra maintained a discreet silence in discussions, it was clear to Rahul that his son had developed his critique with Sandra's help. More humiliating, they expressed their reservations often in front of Rahul's old employees, saying they wanted greater employee participation.

That is when they agreed to ask for my help. Raj, the son, needed support and sought it in an old acquaintance; Rahul, the father, unaccountably trusted me and doubtless saw me as a way to reach his apparently estranged son. I set non-negotiable ground rules: no disputes or debates, certainly not in public view, and the business had to run on agreed lines until differences were resolved.

In the first phase, I listened long to Rahul, made notes and then conveyed them to Raj. I repeated the process until I was sure Raj realized Rahul's concerns. Then I had solo sessions with Raj and conveyed his ideas to Rahul. When I felt both had been prepped, I brought them together for a guided discussion. I would select only one item for discussion, naturally choosing them in reverse order of their flammability, and firmly exclude all digressions. Both were practical people and they readily ceded to my push for a resolution. In six weeks, we had an agreed agenda and, in ten, the relationship seemed to work.

All this time, Sandra had been on vacation in the Periyar Lake, readily subscribing to my suggestion that the key father-son relationship had to be straightened before her role could be clarified. The tension between her and her father-in-law was evident, and I suggested to their surprise that Sandra work with Rahul on innovations rather than with Raj on operations.

Seven years later I was on a short visit to India and had dinner with Raj. He said the company was doing well and now exporting to Malaysia and seeking collaboration in California. He was the President, but his father, Rahul, continued as a part-time Technical Advisor.

recognition that fair results had been achieved. I heard from all three periodically and the news was good.

My diplomatic work and travel then interrupted my links with them as with many others.

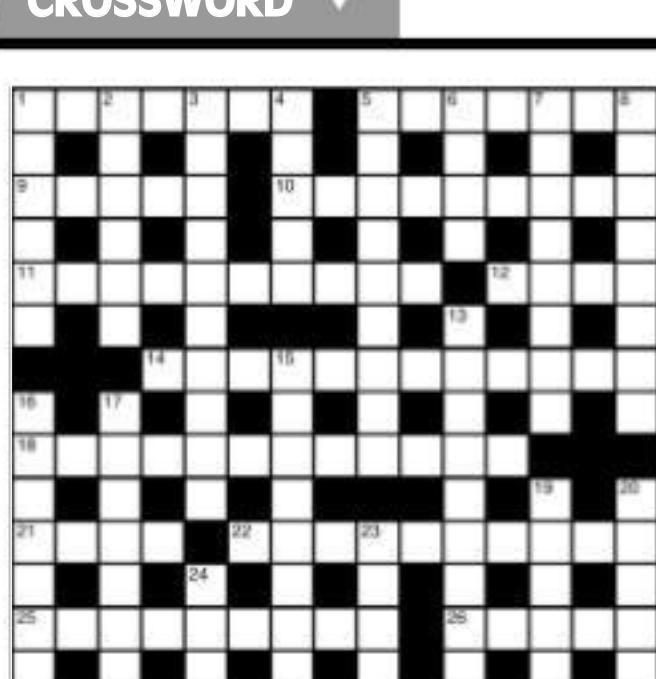
Seven years later I was on a short visit to India and had dinner with Raj. He said the company was doing well and now exporting to Malaysia and seeking collaboration in California. He was the President, but his father, Rahul, continued as a part-time Technical Advisor.

When I asked about Sandra, he hesitated briefly, then said, "We divorced four years ago. She went back to her home in Sacramento. I don't hear from her."

After a long pause, he added, "But Dad can tell you all about her. You know he is a widower. He goes to California each year and, in fact, he stays with her. Yes, he can tell you all her news."

The writer is a Washington-based international development advisor and had worked with the World Bank. He can be reached at mnandy@gmail.com

NO 28164



ACROSS

- 1 Maybe Derby County's beginning to go after Division One (7)
- 5 Person immobilising van occupied by learner (7)
- 9 Check trousers stained at front with sticky substance (5)
- 10 Act on oral treatment for tooth cavity? (4,5)
- 11 Smart outfit? Yes, but smeared with sand (6,4)
- 12 Father Brown entertains sage, possibly (4)
- 14 In sequence (7,5)
- 18 Combatants reeling dazedly,

OVERWHELMED BY BLOWS (12)

- 21 Drive around? No time or opportunity (4)
- 22 Does she demonstrate pet project in stateside gift-giving bash (4,6)
- 25 In love, shown by distracted demeanour (9)
- 26 It's charged by leaders of imperial cavalry and Foot (5)
- 27 More than one song book (7)
- 28 Lure fish over to side away from wind (7)

DOWN

- 1 Anxieties leading to second stroke (6)
- 2 First two characters on trail reported missing (6)
- 3 A Martian's vapoured American exploratory craft (5,5)
- 4 Fruit tree, an energy source briefly retaining oxygen (5)
- 5 Newspaper's against plugging replica enamework (9)
- 6 Records omitting Brunel's section of bridge, perhaps (4)
- 7 Idiots cut up about senior teacher (8)
- 8 These improve vehicle safety,

- 13 except in luxury car (8)
- 13 Coach one boards after pursuit (4,6)
- 15 Strangely, Trump (no politician) has use for this intellectual tome (9)
- 16 President to want Republican backing in East Coast city (8)
- 17 Blast Noel and Pam's unnecessary words (8)
- 19 Welsh girl had new guy round a lot (6)
- 20 Set rate paid, inclusive of grain (6)
- 23 Sound made in Alps, intermittently, by loud bell (5)
- 24 Picked up gardening tools and sprinkler (4)

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

100 YEARS AGO

OCCASIONAL NOTE

It is sincerely to be wished that Mr. Lionel Curtis had been less anxious to score off Sir Michael O'Dwyer, and more careful to weigh his words when he wrote the letter to the Times of which Reuter sends a summary. He now makes offensive a point of his own which, to begin with, was simply silly. He is anxious, apparently, to show that in his book on "Dyarchy" he emphasised the fact that conduct insulting to Indians is not typical of Englishmen in India - for which acquittal Englishmen will be duly grateful - but he goes on to talk about his "fear" that "hundreds of Englishmen consider it their duty to insult Indians whenever occasion arises." More poisonous nonsense has never been written even by Anglophobist prints which make it their business to vilify Englishmen in India. According to Mr. Curtis, he acquired his preposterous idea from a "senior officer in Sir Michael O'Dwyer's service," and it was "endorsed by every other officer with whom Mr. Curtis discussed the matter." With how many officials he discussed the matter he does not say. Sir Michael O'Dwyer knows a good deal more than Mr. Curtis about his former officials, and he has denounced the statement in Mr. Curtis's book as "absolutely contrary to the facts" and a "cruel libel on official and non-official Europeans in India." In one instance complaints of Europeans' behaviour were traced to a single official out of six or seven hundred serving under Sir Michael O'Dwyer.

NEWS ITEMS

LAHORE POSTAL STRIKE

The postal strike continues in Lahore. Notice was served today by the postmaster to all postmen and menials who are on strike, intimating that if they did not return to duty by that day their services would be dispensed with. Those failing to resume duty were directed to return Government property in their possession, otherwise steps would be taken for its recovery. The postmen sent a reply through their President saying they were not willing to come back to work unless and until their grievances were redressed. They still considered themselves as in the service, and until a formal order of dismissal was passed they would continue to so consider themselves. The postal authorities are arranging to fill up the posts, and several new men were engaged today in Lahore General Post Office.

CHARGE AGAINST A SERGEANT

The case in which Sergeant Henry Cartwright, East Yorkshire Regiment is charged with culpable homicide not amounting to murder was resumed in the court of Mr. Barkley Smith, District Magistrate, today. It is alleged that accused assaulted a pork-seller named Sham Lal, with the result that he died from his injuries. Counsel for the accused said that having regard to the grave and sudden provocation given to the accused, the charge of culpable homicide should be altered to one of voluntarily causing hurt on provocation. The Magistrate charged the accused with murder, committed under the influence of a grave and sudden provocation, in that he caused injuries to be inflicted with the intention of causing such bodily injuries as were likely to cause death. Bail was allowed.

THE KANNAMBADI DAM

The Kannambadi Dan Arbitration Committee gave its award in 1914. Since that no arbitration or re-arbitration proceedings have been set on foot, nor has Sir Thomas Ward ever been president of any arbitration or re-arbitration committee during the past year. There have been unofficial conferences between the chief engineers of Madras and Mysore. The object of these conferences has been to discuss informally certain technical aspects of the Kannambadi Dam problem with a view to ascertaining whether it is possible to arrive at terms of settlement that are likely to be agreeable to both Governments. The discussions have not yet concluded, and any conclusions arrived at will not bind either the Government of Madras or the Mysore Durbar unless and until formally adopted and ratified.

RAI SAHEB JAGDAMBA PROSAD

The investiture of Rai Saheb Jagdamba Prosad took place at the Surveyor General's Office, yesterday afternoon, when Colonel C.H.D. Ryder, handed him the Rai Saheb medal on behalf of the Government of India. In doing so, Colonel Ryder congratulated the Rai Saheb on the distinction he had received from the Government of India, which he said had recognised and appreciated his good and meritorious service, which extended over a period of 30 years. He said it afforded him great pleasure in personally handing the decoration to the Rai Saheb, which was not only an honour to the recipient, but also an honour to the department of which he was the head. On his own behalf and on behalf of his colleagues he congratulated the Rai Saheb.

JAPANESE MENACE IN AMERICA

In the House of Representative, Mr. Kaha, of California, Chairman of the Military Committee, referred to the differences between Japan and the United States regarding the immigration of the Japanese into California. He denounced the constant agitation in Japan which instilled a hatred of America in the masses of Japanese. He asked: Are the Japanese trying to bring about a conflict between the white races and the yellow and brown races? The world had recently learned that the United States was not too proud to fight if forced into war. He advocated universal military training as the best preventive against war.



ILLUSTRATION: Debabrata Chakrabarty

CROSSWORD

ANSWER



Next generation 5G technology would have a transformational impact on industries and Indian society

P D VAGHELA
CHAIRMAN, TRAI

THUMBNAILS

IOC refinery: Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOC), the nation's biggest oil firm, has boosted refinery run to 100 per cent of the capacity as reopening of the economy spurred demand for fuel, a company statement said. All the refineries of IOC operated at 100 per cent of the capacity in November, up from 88.1 per cent in the previous October month and 98.6 per cent in the same period last year. This festival season boosted demand for consumer goods, leading to more diesel-run trucks hitting the road to deliver everything from clothes to air conditioners.

PTI

M&M production loss: Mahindra and Mahindra (M&M) is expecting reduction in production and sales volume at its automotive division and in its wholly-owned subsidiary in the last quarter of the current fiscal due to global supply shortage of micro-processors. Mahindra & Mahindra said it is engaging closely with its auto components supplier Bosch and assessing likely production loss.

PTI

Muthoot Finance: Muthoot Finance said it will raise up to Rs 1,000 crore through public issue of bonds to fund its business growth. In its 24th series of public issue of secured redeemable non-convertible debentures, Muthoot Finance will issue bonds of face value of Rs 1,000 each with a base size of Rs 100 crore with an option to retain over-subscription up to Rs 900 crore aggregating up to tranche limit of Rs 1,000 crore, it said in a release.

PTI

Nokia-Voda Idea pact: Telecom gear maker Nokia has said that it has partnered with Vodafone Idea Ltd (VIL) to offer technology solutions to the latter's enterprise division customers. Under the collaboration, Nokia will offer fixed wireless and private wireless technology solutions to Vodafone Idea Ltd's enterprise division customers.

PTI

Passenger vehicle retail sales up 4%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 13 DECEMBER

Automobile dealers' body FADA said passenger vehicle (PV) retail sales in November witnessed a year-on-year increase of 4.17 per cent to 2,91,001 units as Diwali-Dhanteras period led to rise in vehicle registrations.

According to the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA), which collected vehicle registration data from 1,265 out of the 1,472 regional transport offices (RTOs), PV sales stood at 2,79,365 units in November last year.

Two-wheeler sales, however, declined by 21.4 per cent to 14,13,378 units last month, as compared to 17,98,201 units in November 2019.

Commercial vehicle sales also slipped 31.22 per cent to 50,113 units, as against 72,863 units a year ago.

Similarly, three-wheeler

Spectrum bands for 5G to be announced soon: DoT

Govt in talks with defence, department of space and broadcasting ministry over 5G spectrum

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 13 DECEMBER

The government is in discussion with defence, department of space and the broadcasting ministry over 5G spectrum and announcement on availability of the radio waves for the next generation technology will be made shortly, a senior government official has said.

The government has missed the deadline to roll out 5G service in 2020 and telecom players have been demanding that the spectrum be made available at the earliest so that they can start providing the next generation services.

"Because of traditional users - department of space, defence and the broadcasting ministry, they have already some services in these (spectrum identified for 5G) bands. It is very important to sit with them and see which of the services can be shifted and which are the bands that are to be made available for the IMT

TELcos RAISE PRICE ISSUE

► Telecom operators ~ Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea ~ have said 5G spectrum identified by the government for auction is not enough and proposed prices are too high.

► The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) has recommended base price of proposed 5G spectrum in 3,300-3,600 MHz band

(mobile services)," DoT member (technology) K Ramchand said at the India Mobile Congress (IMC) 2020.

"This will take some time but I am sure shortly we will be coming out with band announcements as well as spectrum details," he added.

On the other hand, telecom operators Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea have said 5G spectrum identified by the government for auction is not enough and proposed prices are too high.

Telecom operators joint-



at about Rs 492 crore per MHz unpaired spectrum on all India basis.

ly pushed for starting 5G trials without any further delay.

Vodafone Idea also pitched for connecting more towers with fibres to support the next generation technology that will increase data traffic multi-fold.

Reliance Jio vice-president and head for strategic initiatives, regulatory policy and research Vishakha Saigal at the IMC said India needs to embark on the 5G journey without any further delay.

"Adequate spectrum is very important. Unfortu-

nately, a smaller block of spectrum is not going to help. When we talk about prime mid band which the government has identified for 5G, the current allocated spectrum block is very less and we need at least 80-100 megahertz of contiguous block of spectrum per operator for successful roll-out of 5G," Saigal said.

Saigal said to encourage long-term investments in 5G, it is important to have transparent and unambiguous spectrum policy with clearly defined roadmap of available airwaves for horizon of at least 4-5 years. The department of telecom (DoT) has identified 300 megahertz of spectrum block for 5G services in which defence and department of space have made claims for about 125 MHz leaving only 175 MHz of airwaves for telecom companies.

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) has recommended base price of proposed 5G spectrum in 3,300-3,600 MHz band at about Rs 492 crore per MHz unpaired spectrum on all

India basis.

This comes to around Rs 50,000 crore for 100 megahertz of 5G spectrum required to deliver 5G services.

"Currently, the prescribed prices are grossly inflated and they can seriously impair the ability of the industry and the telecom service providers in the infrastructure," Saigal said.

Bharti Airtel agreed to Jio's demand around spectrum and demanded that the 5G trials should start immediately.

"India is a unique country in terms of challenges and opportunities. We need to embark on 5G trials at the earliest. 5G trials are a must and we should start building ecosystems and use cases which are unique to India."

"For 5G trials, spectrum should be allocated for a full 1 year period and due relaxations for import licences or addition of OEMs (original equipment makers) should be allowed by DoT," Bharti Airtel vice-president for regulatory division Amit Kushwaha said.

TCS' ₹16,000-cr buyback offer to open on 18 Dec

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 13 DECEMBER

India's largest IT services firm Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) said its up to Rs 16,000-crore share buyback programme will commence on 18 December and close on 1 January 2021.

Last month, TCS shareholders had approved a proposal to buy back up to 5,33,33,333 equity shares of the company at Rs 3,000 per scrip for an aggregate amount not exceeding Rs 16,000 crore.

"In accordance with the SEBI (Buy-back of Securities) Regulations, 2018, the Letter of Offer will be dispatched to eligible shareholders on or before 15 December 2020. The record date for this purpose is 28 November 2020..."

TCS said in a regulatory filing.

It included a schedule of activities related to the buyback, which showed date of opening of the buyback offer as 18 December 2020 and closing as 1 January 2021.

The last date of settlement of bids on the stock exchanges is 12 January 2021.

TCS' smaller rival Wipro has



also announced a buyback plan for up to Rs 9,500 crore at Rs 400 per equity share.

TCS chief executive officer and managing director Rajesh Gopinathan had earlier said the company is focused on its policy to return capital to shareholders.

The Mumbai-based company's cash reserves stood at Rs 58,500 crore as of September 2020.

Last year, TCS had offered a special dividend and this time it is undertaking a buyback, he had noted.

In October last year, TCS board had declared a special dividend of Rs 40 per equity share. In 2018, TCS had undertaken a share buyback of about Rs 16,000 crore, while it had conducted a similar share purchase exercise in 2017 also.

Diesel sales decline 7% in Nov, petrol sales up 5%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 13 DECEMBER

India's diesel sales fell 7 per cent year-on-year in November after rising for the first time in eight months in October, industry data showed.

Sale of diesel, the most used fuel in the country, was, however, 8 per cent higher month-on-month.

Diesel consumption in November was 6.23 million tons, down from 6.7 million tons in the same period a year ago. It was, however, higher than 5.7 million tons demand during October.

The fall in consumption in November, after diesel sales had reached pre-Covid levels in September, shows the recovery is fragile, an industry official said.

Petrol sales rose to 2.4

million tons from 2.28 million tons, while cooking gas (LPG) sales were up 4.5 per cent to 2.36 million tons.

Airway turbine fuel (ATF) sales fell 48 per cent year-on-year to 3,46,000 tons, but were 6.3 per cent higher month-on-month.

The total demand for petroleum products rose 2.5 per cent in October to reach 17.77 million tons. While petrol had reached pre-Covid levels in September itself, diesel consumption had returned to normal in October.

Diesel demand had spurted 7.4 per cent year-on-year in October, while petrol sales were up 4.5 per cent at 2.54 million tons.

The growth in diesel consumption was the highest in a year.

Petrol sales rose to 2.4

Amazon Pay's loss widens to ₹1,868 crore

NEW DELHI, 13 DECEMBER

Amazon Pay (India) - the e-commerce giant's payments unit in India - saw its losses widen to Rs 1,868.5 crore in the financial year 2019-20 from Rs 1,160.8 crore in the fiscal ended March 2019, as per regulatory documents.

The company, which competes with players like Paytm, Flipkart's PhonePe and Google Pay, saw its parent pumping in over Rs 2,700 crore investment in financial year 2019-20.

Amazon Pay's total revenue for fiscal 2020 grew over 64 per cent to Rs 1,370 crore over Rs 834.5 crore in fiscal 2019, according to Registrar of Companies filing - shared by market intelligence firm Tofler.

The filing pointed out that Amazon Pay India has received Rs 2,705 crore in financial year 2020 from Amazon Corporate Holdings Private Limited and Amazon.com.incs Limited.

Covid, cyber attacks, data fraud top threats for cos

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 13 DECEMBER

The public health crisis due to the Covid-19 pandemic has emerged as the top threat for Indian corporates, while cyber attacks and data frauds loom equally large, according to a study.

The report titled "Excellence in Risk Management India 2020, Spotlight on Resilience: Risk Management During Covid-19", has been published by global insurance broker Marsh and risk management society RIMS.

While there is great optimism about the ability of organisations to rebound and address future pandemic-related challenges, cyber attacks and data fraud continue to be paramount

concerns for risk professionals in India, as per the survey. Around 63 per cent of the 231 survey respondents - which included C-suite executives and senior risk professionals - identified the continued fallout of Covid-19 among the top three risks facing their organisations.

Cyber attacks (56 per cent), data fraud or theft (36 per cent), failure of critical infrastructure (33 per cent), fiscal crises (31 per cent) and extreme weather events (25 per cent) were highlighted among the other top risks for Indian businesses.

The majority of survey respondents (85 per cent) said the pandemic necessitated a shift to remote work, which has increased the organisations' exposure to potential cyber attacks.

In the light of the pandemic and shutdowns imposed by national and local governments, failure of critical infrastructure climbed the ranks in the 2020 survey as many organisations re-evaluated their risk management priorities.

Despite various extreme weather events, such as cyclones and forest fires, extreme weather dropped from third in 2019 to sixth place in 2020.

"Organisations need to balance their focus between long-standing and emerging risks. While there has long been an awareness of weather-related risks, low-frequency risks generally receive less attention," said Sanjay Kedia, country head and CEO, Marsh India.

Facebook India revenue up 43% in fiscal 2019-20

NEW DELHI, 13 DECEMBER

Social media giant Facebook India's revenues grew by 43 per cent year-on-year to about Rs 1,277.3 crore in financial year 2019-20, while its net profit more than doubled to Rs 135.7 crore, as per regulatory documents.

Its total income was Rs 893.4 crore in the financial year ended 31 March 2019, according to registrar of companies filing - shared by market intelligence firm Tofler.

The net profit increased by over 107 per cent to Rs 135.7 crore in FY20 as compared to Rs 65.3 crore in the preceding fiscal, it added.

When contacted, a Facebook spokesperson said India is an important market for the company.

"...we are deeply committed to being an ally in the country's socio-economic transformation. We will continue to invest in our India operations while working with small and large businesses to help in their economic recovery post the pandemic," the spokesperson added.

In November, tech giant Google had made a similar filing that showed its revenues from India had grown 34.8 per cent to about Rs 5,593.8 crore in 2019-20 over the previous financial year. Its net profit was higher by about 23.9 per cent at Rs 586.2 crore in FY20.

Facebook India acts as a non-exclusive reseller of advertising inventory to customers in India. It also provides IT/ITeS, marketing and other support services to the Facebook group.

According to the filing, Facebook's employee benefit expense grew 63.3 per cent to Rs 299.3 crore in FY20 from Rs 183.2 crore in the preceding fiscal.

Equity MFs see ₹12,917 crore outflow in Nov

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 13 DECEMBER

Equity-oriented mutual funds witnessed a massive outflow of Rs 12,917 crore in November, making it the fifth straight month of withdrawal as investors booked profit amid higher market valuations.

"We still believe that there is significant amount of money that can come back to the market in the event of any correction. The medium to long-term potential of the equity markets remain strong," G Pradeepkumar, chief executive officer of Union AMC, said.

Despite the outflow, the assets under management (AUM) of the industry reached a record Rs 30 lakh crore at the end of November from Rs

LARGE-CAP WORST HIT

► Within the equity segment, large-cap was the worst hit with an outflow of Rs 3,289 crore in November, followed by mid-cap (Rs 2,842 crore), value fund (Rs 1,323 crore) and multi-cap (Rs 1,317 crore).

► Contributions in systematic investment plan or SIP too dropped to Rs 7,302 crore last month from Rs 7,800 crore in October.

As per the data, outflow from equity and equity-linked open ended schemes was at Rs 12,917 crore in November compared to Rs 2,725 crore in October.

Overall, the mutual fund

The equity schemes had witnessed an outflow of Rs 734 crore in September, Rs 4,000 crore in August and Rs 2,480 crore in July, which was the first withdrawal in over four years. Such schemes had attracted Rs 240.55 crore in June.

All the equity schemes witnessed



Unless the outbreak can be contained now, it has come to the critical point of considering escalating social-distancing measures to the third level

SOUTH KOREA'S PRESIDENT MOON JAE-IN

WARNING OF MORE STRINGENT CURBS AFTER A 2ND DAY OF RECORD HIKE IN COVID CASES

The Statesman

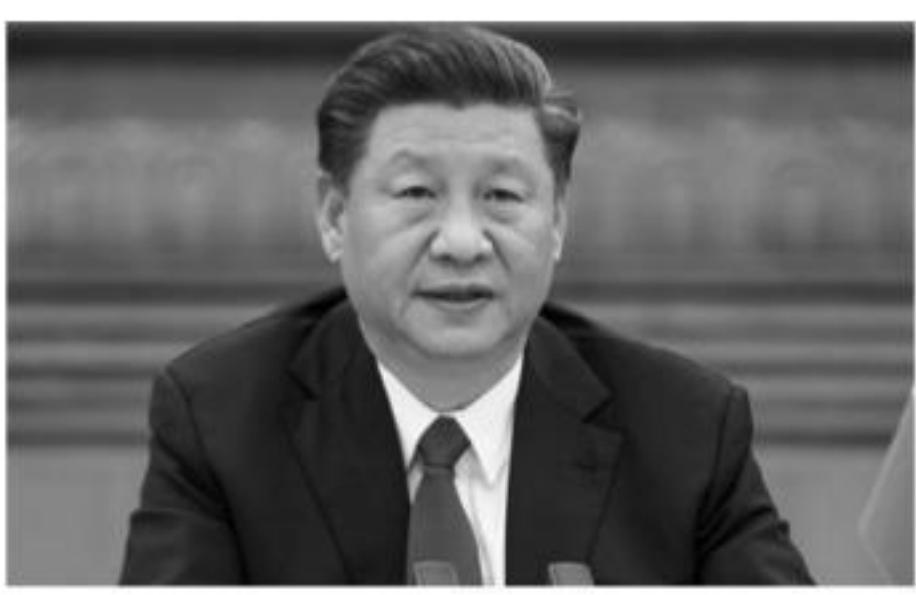
09

NEW DELHI, MONDAY 14 DECEMBER 2020

Xi vows more commitments to back global climate action

China to lower its CO2 emissions per unit of GDP by over 65 per cent from the 2005 level

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BEIJING, 13 DECEMBER



President Xi Jinping has announced further commitments by China for 2030 to contribute more to tackle the global climate challenge and called for a new approach by the international community to climate governance, underscoring the importance of green recovery.

According to the 2030 Climate Target Plan, the European Commission has proposed to cut greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55 per cent by 2030, increasing the European Union's ambition on reducing greenhouse gases and setting Europe on a path to becoming climate neutral by 2050.

Xi, addressing the Climate Ambition Summit on Saturday via video link as the world marked the 5th anniversary of the historic Paris climate agreement aimed at curbing

global warming, said that China has made important contributions to adopting the landmark Paris agreement and active efforts in its implementation.

The summit was co-hosted by the United Nations, the United Kingdom and France in partnership with Chile and Italy, and brought together global climate leaders - across governments, business and civil society - to ramp up climate ambition and help deliver on the Paris Agreement.

Referring to his announcement in September that China would scale up its nationally determined contributions and adopt more vigorous policies and measures, Xi announced China's further commitments for 2030 to tackle the global climate challenge. He said that China will lower its carbon dioxide emissions per unit of GDP by over 65 per cent from the 2005 level, increase the share of non-fossil fuels in primary ener-

gy consumption to around 25 per cent, increase the forest stock volume by 6 billion cubic meters from the 2005 level, and bring its total installed capacity of wind and solar power to over 1.2 billion kilowatts, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

The US and China are the top two polluters of the world.

Chances for the implementation of the Paris Agreement on climate change has brightened after US President-elect Joe Biden promised to implementing the Paris deal on the first day of his presidency, reversing President Donald Trump's decision to pull the US out of it.

The US on November 4 this year formally withdrew from the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change, a decision originally announced by Donald Trump in 2017.

Xi said: We will take solid steps to implement the targets just announced, and contribute even more to tackling

the global climate challenge. China always honours its commitments".

The Chinese President also called on all the parties to close ranks and make new advances in climate governance that features win-win cooperation.

"Only by upholding multilateralism, unity and cooperation can we deliver shared benefits and win-win results for all nations. China welcomes all countries' support for the Paris Agreement and their greater contribution to tackling climate change," he said. He said that following the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, all countries need to maximise actions in light of their respective national circumstances and capabilities.

Xi also stressed that developed countries need to scale up support for developing countries in financing, technology and capacity building adding that all parties to boost confidence.

Pak Opp alliance to stage its final rally in Lahore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LAHORE, 13 DECEMBER

The Pakistan Democratic Movement, an 11-party Opposition alliance seeking the ouster of "puppet" Prime Minister Imran Khan, is set to hold its final rally here on Sunday, despite a ban on the gathering of more than 300 people owing to an increase in Covid-19 cases across the country.

A number of workers of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) have reached Minar-i-Pakistan. They broke the locks of its main gate, placed chairs and have installed lights for Sunday's much-hyped power show of the Opposition.

The rally will be addressed by former prime minister and PML-N supreme leader Nawaz Sharif from London, his daughter Maryam Nawaz, Jamiat Ulema Islam chief and PDM head Maulana Fazlur Rehman and PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

"The government has not given permission to the PDM to hold a rally at Minar-e-Pakistan Lahore because of the rise in Covid-19 cases. Action will be taken against those who will take the law into their hands," Punjab Law Minister Bashir Raja said.

So far, police in Lahore have booked more than 3,000 workers of the Pakistan Muslim

League-Nawaz (PML-N) for violating COVID-19 SOPs during this week's meetings held here by its vice-president Maryam, he said. PDM's Minar-i-Pakistan public meeting will be the last one in its first phase of rallies that had begun over two months ago.

The PDM will announce the 'decisive phase' of its struggle against Prime Minister Khan's government in this public meeting. The alliance has already announced that all Opposition parties will resign from the national and provincial assemblies to pressure the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf government for fresh elections. The long march towards Islamabad is also on the cards for the PDM.

Punjab Chief Minister Usman Buzdar has asked the PDM to delay its Minar-e-Pakistan rally in light of 'terror threat alerts' and the coronavirus situation.

"I ask the Opposition to resolve issues through talks. Discuss their issues through dialogue and not by playing with people's lives," Buzdar said.

"The current coronavirus situation in Lahore is very grave and the positivity rate of coronavirus is more than 46 per cent and the Opposition should realise this," he said. The Lahore police have also alerted Bilawal and Maryam about the threat alerts.

Is the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C target still within reach?

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Climate scientists have spent years trying to understand how "sensitive" the Earth's climate could be to much higher CO2 levels. To do this, researchers have been trying to figure out how much the world will warm in response to a doubling of CO2 levels in the atmosphere, when compared to pre-industrial times. This estimate is known as the "climate sensitivity".

Research suggests that the climate sensitivity lies somewhere between 1.5°C and 4.5°C.

If it is at the lower end, temperature rise by the end of century might be lower than 2.1°C, said Prof Höhne. If it is at

the higher end, warming could be more severe. However, either end of the range would not see current net-zero pledges hold temperatures at 1.5°C. For this to occur, more nations would need to commit to reaching net-zero emissions, said Prof Höhne.

He said: "So 127 countries now

have net-zero goals and they cover two thirds of greenhouse gas emissions. But it means that a third are still missing. That other third would need to come in and reduce their emissions in the same way."

The real challenge for 1.5°C remains getting all countries to increase their ambition in the short term, he added.

Cutting emissions at the pace needed to hit net zero by

2050 will not be an easy task, said Dr Hausfather: "We're not just talking about building a lot of wind and solar, we are talking about decarbonising every single sector of the economy: agriculture, industry, transport, aviation."

The IPCC's report examined the possible pathways that can be taken to limit global warming to 1.5°C by the end of the century. Though some pathways foresee the world getting to 1.5°C through emissions cuts alone, many suggest that the use of techniques to remove CO2 from the atmosphere - may be needed to soak up some of our pollution. The range of these technologies currently available vary in their level of development,

ment, scalability and potential side effects.

A lot of 1.5°C scenarios include the use of a technology called bioenergy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS). This would involve growing crops to absorb CO2 from the atmosphere, burning these crops to produce bio-energy and then capturing the resulting emissions from the air to store in land or under the sea. BECCS has been piloted but has not yet been developed at a large scale.

Using BECCS alone to keep global warming to 1.5°C would require the use of vast amounts of land for the bioenergy crops to be grown, which would compete with space needed for

wildlife and food production.

Other proposed negative emissions techniques, such as tree planting, would also take up space. And some, such as "direct air capture" - the idea of using machines to suck CO2 directly from air - are still far from being a commercial reality.

However, if a range of different negative emissions techniques were deployed alongside stringent emissions cuts, it could give us a fair shot at limiting global warming, said Dr Rogelj. "While the IPCC special report on land highlighted these important risks and trade-offs [for negative emissions], it also shows if you implement best practices, these trade-offs can be avoided."

South Korea, Japan set new daily records, mull steps

TOKYO, 13 DECEMBER

Japan's daily coronavirus cases have exceeded 3,000 for the first time while the government delays stricter measures for fear of hurting the economy ahead of the holiday season. The 3,030 new cases, including 621 in Tokyo, took Japan's national tally to 177,287 with 2,562 deaths, the Health Ministry said.

Experts say serious cases are on the rise around the country, putting burden on hospitals and affecting the daily medical treatment for other patients.

They urged authorities to take measures such as suspending out-of-town trips and requesting stores to close early. Recent media surveys show support ratings for the government of Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga have dropped about 20 points from around 70% during his first three months in office amid public discontent over his coronavirus handling.

Japan issued a non-binding state of emergency in the spring and has survived earlier infection peaks without a lockdown.

South Korea has set another record for its daily coronavirus tally with 1,030, as authorities struggle to suppress the viral spread.

Black Jesus born in burnt Amazon at Brazil church manger

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
RIO DE JANEIRO, 13 DECEMBER

Instead of a manger in Bethlehem, Jesus will arrive this Christmas in a badly burned clearing in the Amazon rainforest as a black baby born to a black virgin with indigenous cherubs looking on.

The symbolically charged nativity scene is already turning heads in Rio de Janeiro's Gloria square, where the nearby Church of the Sacred Heart has a history of using its annual Christmas display to address contemporary issues.

There was a lot to choose from in 2020, but the church

picked two topics that have become particularly pertinent in Brazil since far-right President Jair Bolsonaro took office last year: racism and rampant deforestation in the Amazon.

"This nativity scene is meant to show that people who torch mother nature, people who attack their brothers and sisters because their skin is a different colour, don't have God in their hearts,"

said church spokesman Mauricio Rodrigues dos Santos, 63.

The church has been making mangers with a message for the past decade, taking advantage of its prime location near Gloria square, a busy metro stop in front of the Rio archdiocese headquarters.

Two years ago, the church depicted a bare-breasted Mary nursing her baby, after a series of incidents in which authorities stopped mothers from breast-feeding in public.

The year before, vandals trashed the church's nativity scene, which depicted the fight against corruption.

Last year, priest Wanderson Guedes, who is also the artist behind the installations, decided against doing a nativity scene on Amazon deforestation after receiving threats.

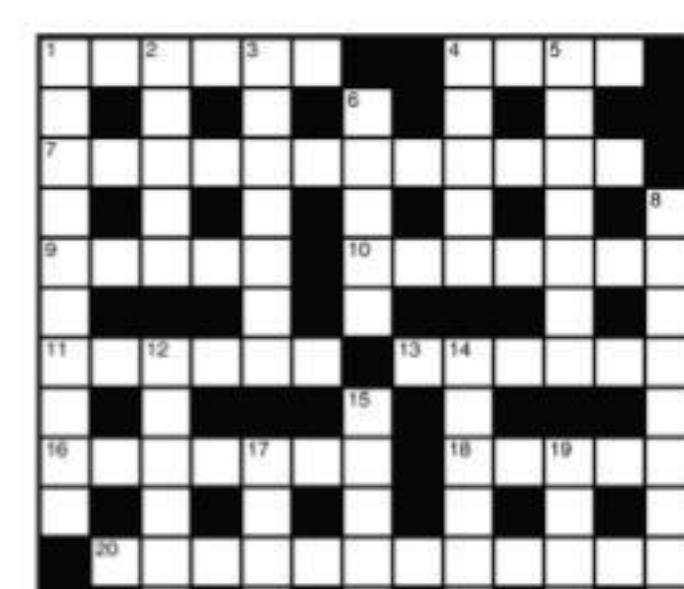
However, the church which constructs the scenes itself using volunteer labour and members' donations - decided to press ahead this year, and add an anti-racism message, as well.

They are salient subjects in Mr Bolsonaro's Brazil.

The far-right leader has presided over a surge of destruction and fires in the world's biggest rainforest.

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1 Criticised severely (Informal) (6)
- 4 Distinctive quality (4)
- 7 Steeplechase (5-2-5)
- 9 Extended period in bed (3-2)
- 10 Inspection chamber (7)
- 11 Hosiery (6)
- 13 Request (3,3)
- 16 Supervise (7)
- 18 Distressed (Informal) (3-2)
- 20 Unseen observer (3,2,3,4)
- 21 Fastening (4)
- 22 Layabouts (6)

DOWN

- 1 Number of inhabitants (10)
- 2 Din (5)
- 3 No longer in existence (7)
- 4 Oak fruit (5)
- 5 End a phone call (4,4)
- 6 Spacious (5)
- 8 Capital city (10)
- 12 Tassel (5)
- 14 Come after (7)
- 15 Basil sauce (5)
- 17 Brief (5)
- 19 Vestige (5)

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

- ACROSS
- 1 Deign, 14 Eager, 15 Erring, 16 Detached, 17 Iffy, 18 Thus, 19 Fees, 20 Geared up,
- DOWN
- 1 Dress, 2 Iterate, 3 Nut hatch, 4 Gaffe, 5 Rifle, 6 Careless, 7 Piece,
- 12 Tassel, 13 Graspe, 14 Gaffe, 15 Thus, 16 Thus, 17 Thus, 18 Thus,
- 19 Vestige, 20 Geared up,

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

BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



DADDY DAZE/John Kovaleski



NEED TO KNOW

HOSPITALS

- AIIMS 26588500, 26588900
- Moolchand Medcity (formerly Hospital) 42000000 & 24-hour Chemist Shop 42000447
- Vidyasagar Institute for Mental and Neuro-Sciences 26924300, 26924304
- Bastra Hospital & Medical Research Centre 29051280, 29958747
- Deen Dayal Upadhyay 25496320, 25494403
- Guru Tegh Bahadur 23717473, 23325320

RAILWAY INQUIRY

- General Inquiry: 139
- Toll Free Nos. 1800125151
- SMS Inquiry Nos. 57886, 54959, 5676747

ROADWAYS INQUIRY

- ISBT (General Inquiry): 23868836, 23865181
- INDIGO AIRLINES New Delhi City Office 43513185, Call Centre 09910383838, 18001803838, Reservation 43513186; Indigo Airlines Airline 25656421/25656431 Reservation 41528187
- AIR INDIA Flight Inquiry and Reservation 018001801407
- Haryana Roadways 23861262
- Himachal Roadways 23717473, 23325320

FLIGHT INQUIRY

- AIR CANADA Flight Inquiry and Reservation 1-800-281-2818
- INDIGO AIRLINES Flight Inquiry and Reservation 23466262 (City)
- AIR FRANCE Flight Inquiry and Reservation 23466262 (City)
- KUWAIT AIRWAYS Flight Inquiry and Reservation 23354373

SCRABBLE® BRAND



SCRABBLE® BRAND
G R A M S I
B T A E O Triple Word Score
T R E M N A Double Word Score
L A F E N L Triple Word Score
O Y I B E S D Double Word Score
PAR SCORE 165-175
by JUDD
FOUR RACK TOTAL
TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN
YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION BY JUDD
C A P I T A L RACK 1 = 64
C R U M B S RACK 2 = 12
T A L K E D RACK 3 = 22
L E C T E R N RACK 4 = 59
PAR SCORE 100-110
JUDD'S TOTAL = 157
Instructions Make a 2 to 7 letter word from the letters in each rack. Add points of each word, using scoring table. If a word contains a letter not in the rack, deduct 25 points. All words must be in the Official Scrabble Dictionary (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th edition).
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We must do all we can for a deal to be made possible.
We must support a good deal

EUROPEAN COUNCIL PRESIDENT CHARLES MICHEL

WELCOMING DECISION OF UK AND EU TO CONTINUE WITH POST-BREXIT NEGOTIATIONS

WEATHER

| CITY | MAX(°C) | MIN(°C) |
|---------------|---------|---------|
| SINGAPORE | 31 | 26 H |
| SINGAPORE | 18 | 11 CL |
| TOKYO | 13 | 06 CL |
| LONDON | 12 | 08 R |
| DUBAI | 27 | 17 S |
| SAN FRANCISCO | 14 | 07 S |
| NEW YORK | 07 | 01 R |
| MOSCOW | -4 | -6 CL |

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

THUMBNAILS



During a protest against a proposed security Bill in Paris on Sunday. AP

Afghan attack: Separate bomb and gun attacks on Sunday left at least three dead in Kabul, local police said, a day after a barrage of mortar shells shook the city. A sticky bomb attached to an armoured vehicle in northern Kabul killed two, and wounded at least two others. An Afghan government prosecutor was shot dead in eastern Kabul PTI

Lanka records highest elephant deaths in world: Sri Lanka has recorded the highest number of elephant deaths in the world due to the human-elephant conflict, according to a media report. The island-nation's Committee on Public Accounts had ordered a special audit into the human-elephant conflict by renowned elephant expert Dr Prithviraj Fernando.

Hundreds of Nigerian students missing after attack on school

LAGOS, 13 DECEMBER

Hundreds of Nigerian students are missing after gunmen attacked a secondary school in the country's north-western Katsina state, police have confirmed.

The Government Science Secondary School in Kankara was attacked Friday night by a large group of bandits who shot with AK 47 rifles, Katsina State police spokesman Gambo Isaah said in a statement.

Police engaged the attackers in a gun duel which gave (some of) the students the opportunity to scale the fence of the school and run for safety, Isaah said.

About 400 students are missing, while 200 are accounted for, Isaah said. The school is believed to have more than 600 students. AP

UK, EU to go extra mile for post-Brexit deal

Both sides hope for an 'eleventh-hour' compromise in order to have arrangements in place before Brexit transition period ends on 31 Dec

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

LONDON, 13 DECEMBER

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen have agreed to go the "extra mile" in their pursuit of a post-Brexit trade agreement after they spoke on Sunday, which was seen a hard deadline for the prolonged UK-EU negotiations.

Both sides are hoping for a last-minute "eleventh-hour" compromise in order to have arrangements in place before the Brexit transition period ends on 31 December.

However, significant divergences over key sticking points on fishing rights and competition rules have so far proved unsurmountable.

"We had a useful phone call this morning. We discussed the major unresolved topics. Our negotiating teams have been working day and night over recent days," Johnson and Von Der Leyen said in a joint statement after their crucial

talk on Sunday afternoon. "And despite the exhaustion after almost a year of negotiations, despite the fact that deadlines have been missed over and over again, we think it is responsible at this point to go the extra mile. We have accordingly mandated our negotiators to continue the talks and to see whether an agreement can even at this late stage be reached," they said.

Johnson has called a meeting of his Cabinet ministers to discuss the latest state of play, which experts hope indicates that some movement is being made possible.

"Even at the eleventh hour, the capacity exists for a deal," urged Michael Martin, the Prime Minister or Taoiseach of Ireland, the country arguably most affected as an EU member-country sharing a border with the UK territory of Northern Ireland.

If the UK and EU are unable to strike a deal, the two sides would be trading on World Trade Organisation (WTO) norms, with considerable barriers to movement of goods as well as people. With the UK no longer signed up to the EU rules, it would also mean travel restrictions for Britons travelling to and from the EU at the end of the Brexit transition period on 31 December.



LAST MINUTE EXTENSION

► Even as both sides miss the hard deadline for the prolonged UK-EU negotiations, significant divergences over key sticking points on fishing rights and competition rules have so far proved unsurmountable



► If the UK and EU are unable to strike a deal, the two sides would be trading on World Trade Organisation (WTO) norms, with considerable barriers to movement of goods as well as people. With the UK no longer signed up to the EU rules, it would also mean travel restrictions for Britons travelling to and from the EU at the end of the Brexit transition period on 31 December

► The central issue in the talks is how close UK should stick to EU economic rules in the future. EU wants to prevent UK from gaining what it sees as an unfair advantage of having tariff-free access to its markets not paying taxes on goods

riers to movement of goods as well as people.

With the UK no longer signed up to the EU rules, it would also mean travel restrictions for Britons travelling to and from the EU at the end of the Brexit transition period on December 31, given the coronavirus pandemic lockdown

rules.

The negotiating teams on both sides have been working through the weekend to try and find a way out of the deadlock but UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said on Sunday morning that the "political will" to clinch a deal remains elusive.

"The bar is quite high for us to be able to keep talking. We would need at a political level a commitment to move on those two key issues," he told the BBC just hours before the all-important phone call between Johnson and Von Der Leyen, which had been scheduled as a point of final

ity in the talks. "Never say never because EU negotiations can often drag and drift. But actually we do need finality and therefore we need at the political level of Ursula von der Leyen that there is clarity the EU will move on those two key issues. If we get that then there are still talks to be processed," he said.

The central issue in the talks is how close UK should stick to EU economic rules in the future.

The EU wants to prevent the UK from gaining what it sees as an unfair advantage of having tariff-free access to its markets not paying taxes on goods

adamant that its stance is that of any sovereign nation and argues that what goes on in its own waters, and its wider business rules, should be under its control once it is no longer a member of the 27-member economic bloc.

The Opposition Labour's Ed Miliband accused the government of being "ideological" over its position in the talks, and warned leaving without a trade deal would be "disastrous for the country".

"[Johnson] has been cavalier with our national interests and is playing Russian roulette with jobs and livelihoods of people up and down the land," he said.

The UK had voted to leave the EU in a referendum in 2016 and under the Withdrawal Agreement, or the so-called divorce pact, they have until December 31 to define their future trading arrangements or part with no deal which would end the current tariff-free and quota-free partnership they share in most sectors of the economy.

Tempers flare as pro-Trump rally backs bid to overturn poll result

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, 13 DECEMBER



Thousands of supporters of President Donald Trump returned to Washington for weekend rallies to back his desperate efforts to subvert the election that he lost to Joe Biden.

Sporadic fights broke out between pro-Trump and anti-Trump demonstrators after sundown Saturday. WRC-TV reported that four people were taken to a hospital with stab wounds, and the Metropolitan Police Department told the station that 23 people were arrested.

The gatherings of mostly unmasked Trump loyalists were intended as a show of force just two days before the Electoral College meets to formally elect Biden as the 46th president. Trump, whose term will end on 20 January, refuses to concede, while clinging to baseless claims of fraud that have been rejected by state and federal courts, and Friday by his in his motorcade en route to his Virginia golf club.

That demonstration, which drew 10,000 to 15,000 people to the capital, ended late in the evening with scattered clashes between Trump's loyalists and local activists near Black Lives Matter Plaza near the White House.

On Saturday, police took more steps to keep the two sides apart, closing a wide swath of downtown to traffic and sealing off Black Lives Matter Plaza, where about 200 anti-Trump demonstrators were rallying.

But while Saturday's rally, including one on Freedom Plaza downtown, were smaller than on 14 November, they drew a larger contingent of the Proud Boys, a neo-fascist group known to incite street violence. Some wore bulletproof vests as they

marched through town. The group saw its profile raised after Trump in September famously told them to stand back and stand by. After the rallies ended, downtown Washington quickly devolved into crowds of hundreds of Proud Boys and combined forces of antifa and local Black activists both sides seeking a confrontation in an area flooded with police officers.

As dusk fell, they faced off on opposite sides of a street, with multiple lines of city police and federal Park Police, some in riot gear, keeping them separated.

One Proud Boy yelled out, "You cops can't be everywhere!" The Proud Boys later dispersed. Antifa activists also were more organized this time, with their own bicycle corps to form bike walls to match those of the police.

Earlier in the day, a group of about 50 men in the Proud Boys' black and yellow circled the perimeter of Black Lives Matter Plaza, where about 200 anti-Trump demonstrators were rallying.

They were apparently under orders not to engage with hecklers.

FESTIVE MOOD



A man wearing a face mask to protect against the spread of coronavirus takes a selfie at Mayor square in downtown Madrid on Sunday. AP

Building a successful Cabinet~ a challenge for Biden

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, 13 DECEMBER

Biden pledged to nominate the most diverse Cabinet in history and restore experience at beleaguered federal agencies. He's seeking to reward loyalists who have stood with him throughout his lengthy career and give opportunities to new voices in the Democratic Party

experience at beleaguered federal agencies. He's seeking to reward loyalists who have stood with him throughout his lengthy career and give opportunities to new voices in the Democratic Party.

That went instead to Tom Vilsack, a 70-year-old white man who already spent eight years in the position during the Obama administration.

Those nominations highlight the competing priorities Biden is facing as he fills out the top ranks of his administration. He's pledged to nominate the most diverse Cabinet in history and restore

such big turnout is that people are eager for change from the Trump years," said Democratic strategist Karen Finney. "That creates a lot of high expectations."

The challenge won't get easier. Biden is facing a decision on attorney general that will come under intense scrutiny from Black leaders, who want someone with a background in civil rights advocacy, and Republicans who are demanding political independence as Biden's son, Hunter, faces a federal investigation into his finances.

Some of those tensions emerged last week during a meeting between Biden and

civil rights leaders who pressed the incoming president to diversify his Cabinet and warned about the Vilsack pick in particular. Vilsack has been criticized for the firing of department official Shirley Sherrod, who is Black, during his last stint at the USDA, a move he later apologized for.

NAACP President Derrick Johnson warned Biden that the Vilsack selection could hurt Black turnout in the critical Georgia contests.

The president-elect has several more Cabinet posts to fill, and has made history with some of his early selections.

He nominated retired Army Gen. Lloyd Austin to be the first Black person to lead the Pentagon, while picking California AG Xavier Becerra to be the first Latino to lead the Health Department.

His nominee for U.S. trade envoy, Katherine Tai, was born in Connecticut to Taiwanese parents.

Germany tightens lockdown over festive period



Most stores shut, tight limits on social contacts, no singing in church and a ban on fireworks sales: Germany is ratcheting up its pandemic restrictions in an effort to cut the stubbornly high rate of coronavirus infections.

Chancellor Angela Merkel said she and the governors of Germany's 16 states agreed Sunday to step up the country's lockdown measures from 16 December to 10 January to stop the exponential rise of Covid-19 cases.

"We are forced to act, and we're acting too," Merkel told reporters in Berlin, noting that existing restrictions imposed in November failed to significantly reduce the number of new infections.

The seven-day rolling average of daily new cases in Germany has risen over the past two weeks from 21,23 new cases per 100,000 people on Nov. 28 to 26 new cases per 100,000 people on 12 December.

Starting Wednesday, schools nationwide will be closed or switch to home schooling; most non-food stores will be shuttered, as will businesses such as hairdressers that have so far been allowed to remain open; restaurant takeout will remain permitted, but consumption on-site - including of alcoholic beverages - will be banned.

With the exception of Christmas, the number of people allowed to meet indoors will remain restricted to five, not including children under 14.

Trucks with first Covid-19 vaccine in US get ready to roll

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, 13 DECEMBER



The first trucks carrying a Covid-19 vaccine for widespread use in the US were set to pull out of a Michigan manufacturing plant Sunday, with the shots that are critical to stopping the nation's coronavirus outbreak destined to reach states a day later.

Shipments of the Pfizer vaccine will set in motion the biggest vaccination effort in American history at a critical juncture of the pandemic that has killed 1.6 million and sickened 71 million worldwide.

Initially, about 3 million doses were expected to be sent out, and the priority is health care workers and nursing home residents as infections, hospitalizations and deaths soar in the U.S.

With numbers likely to get worse over the holidays, the vaccine is offering a bright spot in the fight against the pandemic that's killed nearly 300,000 Americans.

Federal officials say the first shipments of Pfizer's vaccine will be staggered, arriving in 145 distribution centers Monday, with an additional 425 sites getting shipments Tuesday, and the remaining

employees are willing to get the vaccine as soon as it's offered to them. The vaccine is heading to hospitals and other sites that can store it at extremely low temperatures about 94 degrees below zero.

Pfizer is using containers with dry ice and GPS-enabled sensors to ensure each shipment stays colder than the weather in Antarctica. Doses should be delivered to all vaccination sites identified by states, such as local pharmacies, within three weeks, federal officials said.

The 40-hospital Ochsner Health System in Louisiana and Mississippi expects to receive more than 9,000 doses in the coming days, said Dr. Sandra Kemmerly, medical director of hospital quality.

Employees approved for the first round are getting texts and emails directing them to schedule their initial injection, she said. I would say there's enthusiasm, Kemmerly said Saturday. There's that thought that maybe they don't have to be so afraid to come to work if they can be vaccinated and be immune.

The rollout will ensure there is enough vaccine to give people the two doses needed for full protection against Covid-19. That means the government is holding back 3 million doses to give those vac-

cinated in the first round a second shot a few weeks later.

The Food and Drug Administration authorized emergency use of the vaccine Friday, saying it is highly protective and presents no major safety issues. While US regulators worked for months to emphasize the rigor and independence of their review, they faced political pressure until the final stages.

Concerns that a shot was rushed out could undermine vaccination efforts in a country with deeply ingrained skepticism about vaccines.

The head of the FDA said the agency's decision was based on science, not politics, despite a White House threat to fire him if the vaccine wasn't approved before Saturday.

While the vaccine was determined to be safe, regulators in the UK are investigating several severe allergic reactions. The FDA's instructions tell providers not give it to those with a known history of severe allergic reactions to any of its ingredients.

Another vaccine by Moderna will be reviewed by an expert panel this week and soon afterward could be allowed for public use.

conducting late-stage clinical trials in 10 countries. Morocco is gearing up for an ambitious COVID-19 vaccination programme



Post-NRC Assam

PRASENJIT BISWAS

Emotions like remorse, regret and reprisal, all in varied degrees, as a response to the unintended consequences of the National Register of Citizens in Assam is keeping political positions in a flux.

Even after publication of the final NRC on 31 August last year, there has been no closure for both the political and legal processes connected with the exercise. A new set of notices to "D" voters, continuance of Foreigners' Tribunal cases, release from detention camps and constructing the largest detention camp in Agiya of Goalpara, and disclaimers for the proposed museum to showcase Assam's "miya" culture showcase residual "fragments" from the NRC and also mark relocation of issues before the Assembly polls next year. The *mea culpa* politics of identification of "foreigners", "Bangladeshis" or "original inhabitants" is taking a toll on "due process", and often turning Constitutional values and international laws upside down. There is widespread violation of human rights, but justifications are given for such violations by using legal knots and tangles.

However, a few fundamental questions need to be pondered. If liberals in Assam's burgeoning middle class oppose "detention camps" and if the ruling party in its electoral promises pronounced dismantling such camps, why is the largest one nearing completion now at the cost of crores? Why is the NRC list, which was drawn up after spending more than 3,000 crores, unacceptable to its proponents? It shows the limits of ethnonationalist claims of indigeneity, and the politics of othering linguistic and reli-

gious minorities.

Though claims extolling the NRC as a neutral legal determinism was an eyewash, arguments justifying the exclusion of many *bona fide* Indian citizens, belonging to minorities, involve a reference to "origins", which is arbitrarily ascribed to be outside Assam. The reference to origins and drawing a boundary between this and that origin does not fit into the Constitutional notion of people, who originated in "undivided India" and their descendants, irrespective of religion, caste, race, gender and colour, to be treated as Indian citizens in principle. In effect, the NRC procedures of checking ancestry and credentials in order to determine who is a "doubtful citizen" is a kind of "broken window" policing from a not-so-distant past. Can India as a nation afford to create such layers of internal differences to wield a structure of dominance, termed as "prophutto" in Assamese by some leaders?

Interesting works in the social sciences on "statelessness" diagnosed a phenomenon of "enforced statelessness" on internal citizens. Suketu Mehta, in his best-selling book *This Land Is Our Land: An Immigrant's Manifesto* (2019), showed how in the name of tracing "undocumented migrants", surprise checks, restrictions and raids, which have scant probity, are being increasingly applied on refugees, minorities and suspected immigrants based on race or other identity markers. It has vitiated the very notion of citizenship for "insiders". Mehta wrote that *bona fide* "insiders" can now be made suspects and turned wholesale into "aliens" if they do not fit into the "societies structured in dominance" of certain groups.

Post-NRC Assam confuses post-colonial, multicultural communities with post-immigration, such as who is an autochthon with issues of naturalisation, by constructing a legally arbitrary distinction between "original inhabitants" and "non-original inhabitants". The idea of a National Register of Citizens, based on a largely non-existent 1951 Register of Citizens, shows the creation of a legal fiction of updatation, which is the very basis of the exercise. The attempt by the ruling dispensation to convert the NRC list into a captive political constituency has further sharpened the murky scenario of division between native and immigrant, legal and illegal, majority and minority, upper and lower Assam, and many such inherently racist, reverse racist and narrowly ethno-centric categories.

All that without any valid basis that is consistent with part three of the Constitution and yet trying to assume an illicit "force of law". The matter went on a register of unintelligibility by making a retrospective decitizenisation possible for people who lived in Assam since 1971, after four decades of their living in the state! The fact that it might create a deep sense of alienation among minorities, who were slowly integrating themselves into Assam's mainstream, had been ignored.

The impossible task of keeping a huge number of people stateless by depriving them all human rights touches upon the case of the Rohingyas or Uighurs, who are subjected to displacement, forced labour, living in concentration camps and genocides. The *carte blanche* denial of the fundamental human rights of so-called "Bangladeshis" would turn Assam into a place like Rakhine of Myanmar or Xinjiang of China,

The state has got embroiled in legal, moral, Constitutional and political quiddities

which is something that a democracy like India can never afford to be.

The conscious citizenry of Assam, including its enlightened student leaders and other political personae, have never advocated such unintended consequences, but rather sought a resolution of anxieties stemming from the unchecked entry of illegal immigrants through the border with Bangladesh. Therefore, the problem of relapsing into a pre-emptive preventive restraint on supposed illegals inside the territory of Assam and India in a framework of adjudication needs to be balanced against some of the most flagrant violations of human rights and Constitutional values.

A politics of contrition arises from this need for balancing. Assam's health and education minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has often attempted to balance outcomes of the NRC against his brand of politics' propensity for polarisation. When the NRC excluded a large number of Hindus of Bengali and other ethnic origins, an attempt was made to reopen the exercise for border districts, which in itself is a subversion of the meticulous procedure followed during the verification process. The Citizenship Amendment Act failed to negotiate the already polarised division between ethnic and religious identities, especially since citizenship in India cannot be based on a religion-centric "ineligible differentia".

Therefore, post-NRC Assam has got embroiled in legal, moral, constitutional and political quiddities, much of which are shared between those who have been otherwise arraigned against each other in the name of autochthon/nativity by a politics of othering, exclusion and difference. There is a persistent syndrome of social pain, anomie, learned helplessness, shared sacrifice and a politics of contrition to remove the foul smell left by the NRC. In the process, there is a politics of new constructions of the other, notably the Brahmo committee report on land rights, which termed the "non-indigenous Indian" as not qualified to buy land in Assam! In a similar vein, categorising pre-1951 people as Assamese, while those up to 1971 have no right to be equals with pre-1951 people also sound "exceptional" in terms of the Constitution.

Denial of human rights to various categories of people in a spectrum between those who are sent to detention camps to those who are not equal to pre-1951 people of Assam is a politics of exceptionality. Interestingly Giorgio Agamben, an Italian philosopher, defined the sovereign as the one who has the power to make "exceptions". Can India make such exceptions?

The Constitution with its spirit of fundamental rights that guarantees political and all other freedoms cannot be contorted to support *Kristallnacht*, surveillance, profiling and punishing "abandoned citizens" in the wastelands of xenophobia and racism. The process of counting who is a citizen needs to be restored to the hallowed constitutional legacy of the post-colonial Republic of India. As Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his election speech in 2019 in Silchar exhorted that all children of Maa Bharati are *Bharatiyo*, the republican spirit of India's inclusiveness cannot be shunned for the NRC or CAA.

The writer is a philosopher and political analyst based in Shillong

PLUS POINTS

Mobile coverage



The Centre has sanctioned a Universal Service Obligation Fund scheme to provide mobile phone coverage in two districts of Assam namely, Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao, and Arunachal Pradesh under the Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for the North Eastern Region, says a report in the Guwahati-based *Assam Tribune*.

A Cabinet meeting, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the proposal. The project envisages mobile phone coverage in 2,374 villages, including 691 in the two districts of Assam and 1,683 in Arunachal Pradesh at an estimated cost of Rs 2,029 crore, including operational expenses for five years. The Usof-sponsored project is targeted to be completed by December 2022. Works related to provision of 4G mobile service in identified uncovered villages will be awarded to parties through open competitive bidding.

The provision of mobile service in remote and difficult areas of Arunachal Pradesh and the two districts of Assam will enhance digital connectivity for self-reliance, facilitate learning, disseminate information and knowledge, and upgrade and develop skills. Disaster management, e-governance, establishment of enterprises and e-commerce facilities, provision of adequate support to educational institutes for knowledge sharing and job opportunities are other benefits that will accrue from the project.

Indoor stadium



Meghalaya chief minister Conrad Sangma laid the foundation stone of a Rs 22-crore indoor stadium at Jongksha in East Khasi Hills district last week, says a report in the *Assam Tribune*.

The proposed stadium will have all modern amenities. During the foundation stone laying ceremony, Sangma stressed the need to groom the sporting talents of the state. He underlined the government's commitment towards welfare of the youth and said it is working in a systematic manner to leverage the sporting infrastructure. The chief minister also felicitated some youths for excelling in regional, state-level and national games during the last few years.

Sangma also announced that the PHC at Jongksha would be upgraded to a CHC and the link road, which has been in a poor shape, would be developed.

Local polls



Altogether 6,266 candidates have been elected unopposed in the two-tier panchayat elections in Arunachal Pradesh, including 98 Zilla Parishad Members and 6,168 Gram Panchayat Members, according to the updated data made available by the state poll panel in Itanagar, says a report in the *Assam Tribune*.

Out of the 242 zilla parishad constituencies, 142 will go for polls as 98 candidates have been elected uncontested after the last date of withdrawal of nomination papers last Monday, the State Election Commission said. Elections to the Vijaynagar ZPM seat (along with 40 GPM constituencies) in Changlang district and the Hwai North ZPM constituency under Anjaw district have been "kept in abeyance". According to the poll panel data, of the 8,175 GPM constituencies, 1,670 will go for polls. Dibang Valley district has registered a 100 per cent win without any contest. The eastern Arunachal district has four ZPM seats and 71 GPM constituencies.

Earlier, the ruling BJP bagged five out of the 20 wards of the Itanagar Municipal Corporation unopposed. Thirty six candidates remain in the fray for the remaining 15 wards. Out of the 36 nominees, 15 are from the BJP, 14 from the Janata Dal (United), four from the National People's Party and three from the Congress Party, as per SEC data.

The polling for the two-tier panchayat bodies and both the civic bodies of Itanagar and Pasighat will be held simultaneously in a single phase on 22 December.

UNDER GREATER PROTECTION

Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary in eastern Assam is going to be upgraded into a national park

NAVAN THAKURIA

This otherwise dismal year has brought some good news for nature lovers as the Assam government prepares to officially declare a new national park by upgrading the Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary in the eastern part of the state.

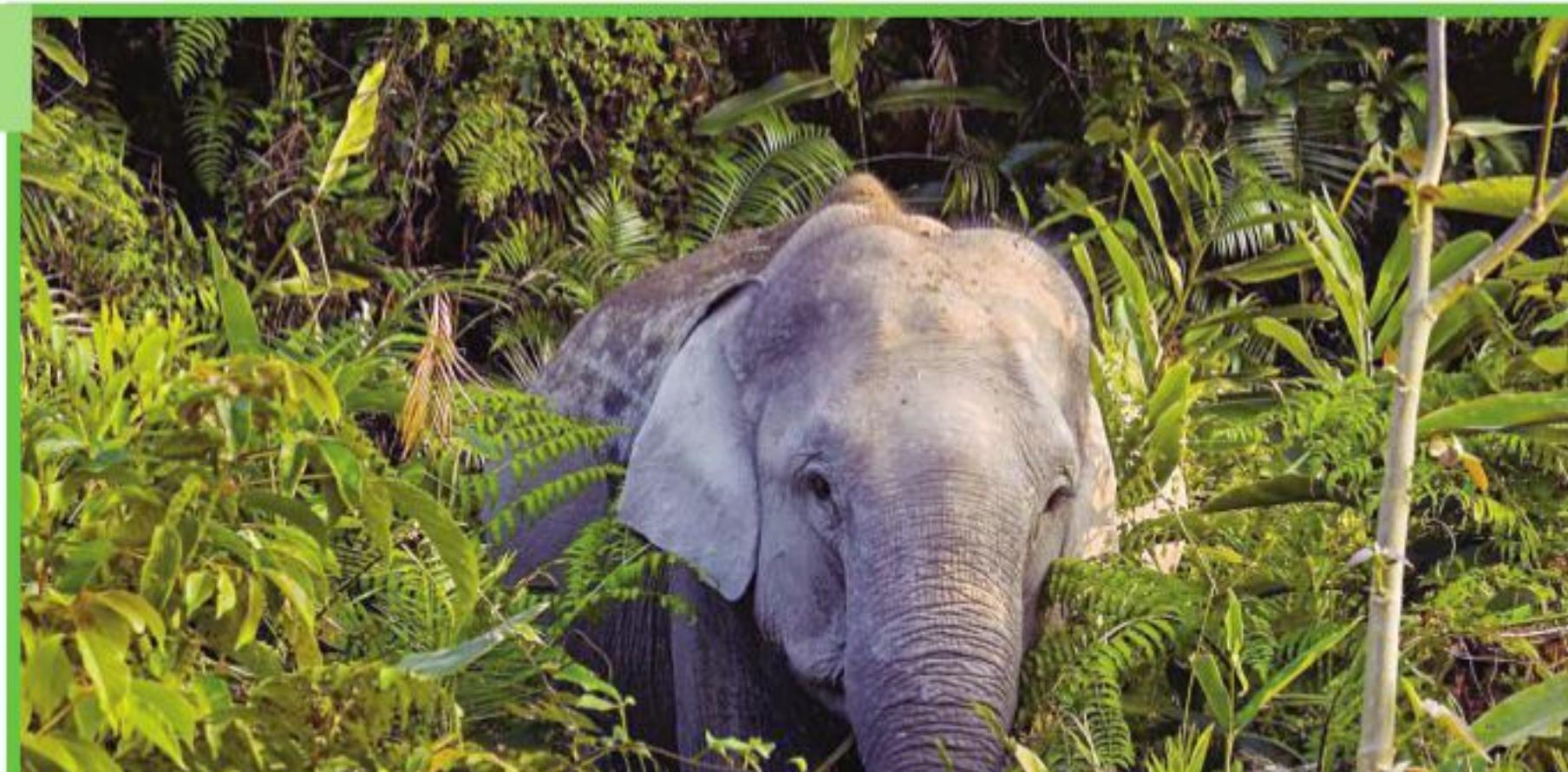
A few months ago, people made their voices heard on social media about the need to conserve the sanctuary from illegal coal miners and finally, the state government in Dispur has decided to resolve the issue permanently. Jagdish Mukhi, Governor of Assam, in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 35(1 & 2) of the Wildlife Protection Act 1972 as amended up-to-date, has already issued a preliminary notification stating that Dispur intends to upgrade Dehing Patkai to a national park. In order to inquire into and determine the existence, nature and extent of rights of any person in or over the land within the determined limits for constituting the national park, the district magistrates of Tinsukia and Dibrugarh have been assigned as collectors under the laws concerned.

Reacting to the public uproar against the alleged approval for open-cast coal mining inside Dehing Patkai, Assam chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal assured people that Dispur would protect the huge area of virgin rainforest lying under the Eastern Himalayas and the Indo-Myanmar global biodiversity hotspot, often termed "Amazon of the East". In fact, a large number of environmental

enthusiasts, celebrities, social activists, media personalities and conscious individuals from Assam and outside the region campaigned on various social media outlets about the sanctuary being in danger because of the proposed mining. They said that it would have a massive negative impact on biodiversity, water and land resources and thereby affect the ethnic communities living around it for centuries.

Soon after voices were raised by the agitating All Assam Students' Union, Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti with many other civilian outfits, Opposition political leaders and even the banned Ulfa (I), a group of 300 citizens from the region wrote to the Centre expressing serious concerns over the development. They said that coal mining inside Dehing Patkai forestland would severely affect the life and livelihood of ethnic groups like the Tai Phake, Khamyang, Khampti, Singpho, Nocte, Ahom, Koirabara, Moran and Motok, tea-tribes, and Burmese and Nepali-speaking people.

However, a non-government conservation group strongly opposed the entire movement during the pandemic and said that it was not based on facts. Nature's Beckon came out with official statements that Dehing Patkai sanctuary was totally safe and there was no mining proposal inside the rainforest. Soumyadeep Datta, who leads the influential group, clarified that the Saleki Proposed Reserve Forest, where conditional mining was approved by the Centre is far away



from Dehing Patkai sanctuary. Later, Dispur also authenticated the information.

The young activist even released a video statement asserting that some motivated elements were misleading people with wrong information about the mining of underground coal inside the sanctuary. Datta pointed out that they played with words while shifting focus from Dehing Patkai sanctuary to Dehing Patkai elephant reserve. Those cunning elements, he asserted, intentionally hid the vital information that coal mining was legal in any elephant reserve as they were not protected by wildlife laws.

Nature's Beckon, at the same time, urged Dispur to declare the entire Dehing Patkai forest reserve as a protected area under the laws concerned with an aim to conserve the pristine rainforest. Various other organisations like the Patriotic People's Front Assam, Indigenous Council Assam, Brihatter Asomiya Mohila Mancha and Sanmilita Sangbadik Mancha also endorsed the demand following which CM Sonowal directed officials to prepare action plans for upgrading the sanctuary to a national park.

Now the group has expressed its appreciation for Sonowal, along with state forest minister Parimal Suklabaidya, and the government officers responsible for the decision to expand the area of Dehing Patkai sanctuary (111.19 to 231.65 square kilometres) and subsequently upgrade it to a national park. Nature's Beckon, which told people about the rare rainforest patch for the first time and started the rainforest conservation movement of Assam in 1994, believes that the area of the national park would be increased subsequently in a phased manner.

In 2004, a small portion of the rainforest was given the status of a wildlife sanctuary by the government in Dispur when former forest minister Pradyut Bordoloi, now a Congress Party Parliamentarian, left most of the forestland under Dehing Patkai elephant reserve for mining coal-oil, maintaining quarries, sand-land cutting and logging. Datta alleged that it was because of the influence of coal and timber lobbies that the Congress Party government did not include the vital Jyoti Reserve Forest under the sanctuary.

Jyoti rainforest alone gives shelter to over 200 elephants and it is an ideal natural habitat for hoolock gibbons, said Datta adding that other notable wildlife species include Slow Loris, gaur, tiger, leopard, clouded leopard, golden cat, fishing cat, marble cat, sambar, hog deer, sloth bear, binturong, spotted linsang, sultant tit, hill myna, green imperial pigeon, mountain hawk eagle, oriental pied hornbill, great hornbill, white winged duck, yellow monitor, Burmese python, et al.

Dehing Patkai National Park, on the south bank of the mighty Brahmaputra, houses over 45 species of mammals, more than 300 species of birds, 25 species of amphibians and reptiles, 205 species of insects, 35 species of wild fish, 50 species of butterfly, 60 varieties of orchids, and 160 species of different plants. It is expected to open doors to the prospect of eco-tourism in the entire locality. It is the immediate task of the authorities now to improve necessary infrastructure inside the park.

The writer is the Guwahati-based Special Representative of *The Statesman*





'END ALL SPECULATIONS'

Former Australia cricketer Adam Gilchrist (*in photo, left*) has urged the national selectors to end all speculations around Steve Smith's captaincy, saying that the ex-skippers should be named vice-captain if they want him back at the top job. "I see no reason why someone shouldn't have a second chance and if part of that is the captaincy for Steve Smith, if he's the right guy and the most obvious candidate, I can't see a reason why he shouldn't be allowed to do it," Gilchrist told Fox Cricket.

For more updates

www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy to begin from 10 Jan: India's domestic season is set to kick off with the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, which is set to take place from January 10 to 31, Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) secretary Jay Shah said in an e-mail to all state units on Sunday. The decision to start the domestic season with the T20 trophy was taken after taking into account suggestions from associations on which tournament they would prefer playing amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Gestures against racism: World Athletics President Sebastian Coe says he is happy to "accommodate" athletes expressing their views against issues like racism but made it clear that such gestures should not infringe on other sportspersons' right to celebrate their moments of glory.

Datta shines in National Racing: Chennai's Ashwin Datta (Dark Don Racing) and Kottayam's Amir Sayeed (MSport) signed off with a double win each in the 23rd JK Tyre - FMSCI National Racing Championship at the Kari Motor Speedway here on Sunday. Datta cashed in on the chances that came his way to seal the top position in two races of the national championship class for Formula LGB4 cars.

2022 U-19 World Cup: The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Sunday announced a rescheduled qualification pathway to the 2022 under-19 men's World Cup in the West Indies during which 33 teams will compete for five spots in the tournament proper.

Ankita Raina wins doubles title: Ankita Raina, India's top singles and doubles tennis player, won the doubles crown at the Al Habtoor Tennis Challenge as alongside Ekaterine Gorgodze of Georgia, she defeated Zadoinov Bolsova and Aliona Juvan in the summit clash. Raina and Gorgodze defeated Bolsova and Juvan 64, 3-6, 10-6 in the final of the \$100,000 hard court event at the Habtoor Grand Beach Resort and Spa on Saturday.

Azam ruled out of T20 series: Pakistan sustained a major injury blow ahead of next week's three-match Twenty20 series against New Zealand when its captain Babar Azam was ruled out because of a fractured thumb. Azam sustained the injury on his right thumb at Queenstown on Sunday during Pakistan team's practice session.

Honda racing team marks its dominance: The curtain went down today at Madras Motor Race Track with final day of 2020 Indian National Motorcycle Racing Championship & IDEMIT-SU Honda India Talent Cup Round 1. Marking their dominance, ENEOS Honda Erula Racing team now leads the ProStock 165cc class of with total 7 podiums including 2 wins.

Today's races saw Mathana Kumar stamping his first victory and a total of 4 podium finish while Rajiv Sethu bagged another podium finish for Honda in PS165cc category.

Verstappen wins from pole in Abu Dhabi: Max Verstappen won the season-ending Abu Dhabi Formula One Grand Prix from pole position for Red Bull on Sunday. Champions Mercedes completed the podium places in a procession race with Valtteri Bottas second and seven times world champion Lewis Hamilton third. Verstappen's success under the Yas Marina floodlights ended a run of six successive Abu Dhabi Grand Prix wins by Mercedes and was the 23-year-old Dutch driver's second victory of the season and 10th of his career.

Ben and Jack shine in drawn game but India end with lot of positives

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SYDNEY, 13 DECEMBER

The Indian cricket team will head into the first day-night Test against Australia with a lot of optimism and happy selection dilemmas, having managed to tick most of the boxes before drawing the three-day pink-ball dress rehearsal against Australia A here on Sunday.

Australia A gave a better account of themselves on an eased out third day track, despite being reduced to 25 for 3, ending on 305 for 4 riding on Ben McDermott and Jack Wildermuth's centuries. Both the batsmen survived a barrage of bouncers under lights from Indian pacers.

The talented McDermott (107 off 167 balls), youngster of Craig McDermott who was India's tormentor during the forgettable 91-92 series, along with his skipper Alex Carey (58, 111 balls) added 117 runs in a counter-attacking fourth-wicket partnership that partially save the game.

The four-Test series gets underway from December 17 in Adelaide. Rookie Wildermuth (111 off 119 balls) also got his ton and added 165 runs with McDermott but Virat Kohli and Ravi Shastri, watching the proceedings from the dugout, will be happy with multiple options that emerged from the game.

In the first hour itself, the probable first Test opening pair of Joe Burns (1) and Marcus Harris (5) was sent back by Mohammed Shami (2/58 in 13 overs). While out-of-form Burns shuffled across to a straight delivery and was caught plumb in front, Harris was set



up nicely with a leg-slip and his flick landed into Prithvi Shaw's hands stationed for that particular shot. The lack of runs from the two openers will certainly increase the Australian team's worries. Shubman Gill's composure and technique opening the innings wouldn't have gone unnoticed compared to Shaw's loose batting during his two knocks in the game.

Similarly, Hanuma Vihari strongly kept himself in the hunt with a hundred that again reflected his patient approach. With his handy off-breaks, one such delivery got rid of Carey, he can be a good option for the sixth specialist batsman's spot in the side. But then there is an extremely stylish KL Rahul, who has been sweating on Mohammed Shami (2/58 in 13 overs). While out-of-form Burns shuffled across to a straight delivery and was caught plumb in front, Harris was set

The fact that he has experience of 36 Test matches won't be lost on the decision-makers when they sit back and pick the playing XI for the Adelaide opener. If the day/night warm-up game is any indicator, then Rishabh Pant, after his 73-ball hundred, is the primary contender for donning the big gloves. The selection will be purely on Pant's ability to turn the game around in a session with his batting, which unfortunately his senior and more accomplished keeper Wriddhiman Saha is not really capable of. As far as bowling is concerned, Jasprit Bumrah and Shami add miles to their legs.

On the third day, both bowled 13 overs each respectively and rightly conserved their energies for the big battle allowing back-up pacers Navdeep Saini (0/87 in 16 overs) and Mohammed Siraj (1/54 in 17 overs) bowl longer spells without much success.

SCOREBOARD

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| India: 194 and 386/4 declared | |
| Australia 1st innings: 108 all out | |
| Australia 2nd innings: | |
| Marcus Harris c Prithvi Shaw b Shami 5 | |
| Joe Burns lbw b Shami 1 | |
| Nic Maddinson c Navdeep Saini b Siraj 14 | |
| Ben McDermott not out 107 | |
| A Carey c K Yadav b Hanuma Vihari 58 | |
| Jack Wildermuth not out 111 | |
| Extras: (b-3, w-3, nb-5) | |
| Total: 307/4 in 75 overs | |
| Fall of wickets: 6-1, 11-2, 25-3, 142-4 | |
| Bowling: Mohammed Shami 13-3-58-2, Prithvi Shaw 13-7-35-0, Navdeep Saini 16-0-87-0, Hanuma Vihari 7-1-14-1, Mayank Agarwal 6-0-30-0, Jasprit Bumrah 3-0-26-0. | |

rah, Mohammed Shami, Umesh Yadav and Ravichandran Ashwin look all set to start the Test match. While Umesh and Ashwin were not played in the second warm-up game. It was more about checking the other pacers and letting Bumrah and Shami add miles to their legs.

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