



# The Statesman

PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION



MODI GOVT HAS  
BLOOD ON ITS  
HANDS: JAKHAR



WHAT A BIDEN  
WH MIGHT MEAN  
FOR INDIA



GEORGIA DECISION  
DAY WITH SENATE  
MAJORITY AT STAKE



TOUR ENDS FOR  
RAHUL AFTER  
WRIST INJURY

P3

P7

P10

P12

## WEATHER

Partly cloudy sky. Very light rain/drizzle.  
The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 22 and 12 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: 001.7 Mm

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 100% Min: 75%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 20.8°C (+1) Min: 13.2°C (+6)

SUN RISES

07:15 hrs

MOON RISES

0:53 hrs

17:40 hrs

MOON SETS

12:14 hrs

## THUMBNAILS



A seer takes refuge at the Babughat transit camp, on his way to Gangasagar Mela, in Kolkata on Tuesday. IANS

**Sourav to be discharged today:** BCCI chief and former Team India captain Sourav Ganguly will be discharged from hospital on Wednesday. Sourav, who underwent angioplasty following a mild heart attack, is now stable with no complaint of chest pain or breathing issues, noted cardiologist Dr Devi Shetty said on Tuesday, after monitoring the cricket icon's health. Ganguly was diagnosed with three blocked coronary arteries on Saturday, following which a stent was inserted in one to remove the blockage.

**New British High Commissioner to India:** Alex Ellis, a British strategic expert, will take charge as the new UK High Commissioner to India, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) announced on Tuesday. The 53-year-old civil servant has been serving as Deputy National Security Adviser in the UK Cabinet Office for the government's Integrated Review on diplomacy, development and defence.

## Vaccine rollout likely next week: Govt

Healthcare and frontline workers need not register as their database has been populated on to Co-WIN vaccine delivery system

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 5 JANUARY



### No more bad blood: Serum Institute, Bharat Biotech will work together

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
HYDERABAD, 5 JANUARY

The Health Ministry on Tuesday said it is prepared to roll out Covid-19 vaccine within 10 days from date of emergency use authorisation, which was issued on January 3, but noted that the final decision lies with the government.

Addressing a press briefing, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said healthcare workers and frontline workers need not register themselves as their database has been populated on to the Co-WIN vaccine delivery management system in a bulk manner.

"Based on the feedback of dry-run, the Health Ministry is ready to introduce Covid-19 vaccine within 10 days from date of emergency use authorisation," he said.

However, while responding to a question on rollout, Bhushan said the final decision will be taken by the government.

The country's drugs regulator on Sunday granted restricted emergency use approval to Oxford-AstraZeneca's Covishield and also to indigenously developed Covaxin of Bharat Biotech.

Bhushan said Co-WIN system is made in India and for the world, and whichever country wants to use it, the Indian government will actively help.

NITI Aayog member (Health) Dr V K Paul said an optimistic scenario is emerging with the pandemic situation in India consistently improving in terms of active cases and new deaths declining.

"Let's hope this trend will

continue. In terms of the new UK mutant issue, this mutation has entered this country and 71 have been isolated which shows our capacity to mount that kind of a scientific investigation. But at the same time we have not seen the emergence of any untoward cluster in the country as of now which is reassuring so far," Paul said.

On the two vaccines that have been granted approval for restricted emergency use by the DCGI, Paul reiterated that in granting this permission and authorisation all scientific and statutory requirements have been met and regulatory norms followed.

While healthcare and frontline workers will not be required to register themselves, Bhushan said when they would come to the population priority group, there the provision of registration and editing of data would come.

"In case of an adverse event, to ensure its real time reporting there is a provision in Co-WIN vaccine delivery management system," he said.

Bhushan further said

that Co-WIN has the facility and consider it our duty to the nation and the world at large to ensure a smooth roll out of vaccine. Each of our companies continue their Covid-19 vaccines development activities as planned," read the joint statement.

Mr Adar Poonawala, the chief executive officer of SII and Dr Krishna Ella, chairman and managing director of Bharat Biotech signed off the joint statement saying, "We are fully aware of the importance of vaccines for people and countries alike, we hereby communicate our joint pledge to provide global access for our Covid-19 vaccines."

The public spat had seen Mr Poonawala stat-

ing that only three vaccines (Pfizer, Moderna and AstraZeneca-Oxford) had proven efficacy and the rest were just safe like water. Dr Krishna Ella had hit back questioning the "lousy trial" in UK and asked "where is their Indian data?"

Dr Ella had addressed the media after questions were raised about the lack of phase III clinical trials following the emergency use authorisation granted to it.

Meanwhile, Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) Hyderabad and Institute of Microbial Technology (IMTech) Chandigarh in a collaborative study concluded that corona virus can stay in air for some time.

The Covid-19 active caseload remained below 3 lakh for the 15th consecutive day.

There are 2,31,036 active coronavirus infections in the country which comprises 22.3 percent of the total caseload, the data stated.

India's Covid-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5 and 50 lakh on September 16. It went past 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and surpassed the one-crore mark on December 19.

The number of people who have recovered from the disease surged to 99,75,958, pushing the national recovery rate to 96.32 percent, while the Covid-19 case fatality rate stands at 1.45 percent.

The Covid-19 active caseload remained below 3 lakh for the 15th consecutive day.

There are 2,31,036 active coronavirus infections in the country which comprises 22.3 percent of the total caseload, the data stated.

India's Covid-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5 and 50 lakh on September 16. It went past 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and surpassed the one-crore mark on December 19.

According to the ICMR, 17,65,31,997 samples have been tested up to January 4 with 8,96,236 samples being tested on Monday.

A total of 1,49,850 deaths have been reported so

far in the country. Delhi's positivity rate drops to 0.55 pc. Delhi today recorded 442 fresh coronavirus infections (Covid-19) following 79,777 tests, with the positivity rate plummeting to 0.55 per cent, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

The national capital's coronavirus caseload thus climbed to 6,27,698, the health bulletin said.

The count of Covid-19 patients who got cured and were discharged from different healthcare facilities over the past 24 hours was 557, which raised the cumulative total of such recoveries in the city to 6,12,527, the bulletin stated.

(SEE P2)

## India records lowest daily cases in over six months

SNS & PTI  
NEW DELHI, 5 JANUARY



## No infirmity in approvals, Central Vista Project gets SC nod

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 5 JANUARY

### POWER CORRIDOR



» The new triangular parliament building is the centerpiece of the ₹ 20,000-crore Central Vista project, and will have a seating capacity for 900 to 1,200 MPs

» The project is set to be con-

structed by August, 2022 when the country will be celebrating its 75th Independence Day

» The government had recently held the ground-

ing process and on alleged failure on the part of the authorities in taking prior approval of the HCC for the project.

Since I have reservations with the opinion expressed by my esteemed brother A.M. Khanwilkar, J. on the aspects of public participation on interpretation of the statutory provisions, failure to take prior approval of the Heritage Conservation Committee and the order passed by the Expert Appraisal Committee, I have penned down a separate dissenting judgment, Justice Khanwilkar said.

He concurred however with the majority verdict on the aspects of notice inviting Bid, award of consultancy and the order of the Urban Arts Commission, as a standalone and independent order.

The majority 425-page judgement of Justice Khanwilkar dealt with several aspects and objections raised in as many as 10 petitions including the one filed by Rajeev Suri.

Justice Sanjiv Khanna, the third judge on the bench, wrote a dissenting 179-page judgement on aspects relating to public participation in the decision-making

Delhi, 2016, said Justice Khanwilkar, writing the judgement for himself and Justice Dinesh Maheshwari.

Justice Sanjiv Khanna, the third judge on the bench, wrote a dissenting 179-page judgement on aspects relating to public participation in the decision-making

process and on alleged failure on the part of the authorities in taking prior approval of the HCC for the project.

Since I have reservations with the opinion expressed by my esteemed brother A.M. Khanwilkar, J. on the aspects of public participation on interpretation of the statutory provisions, failure to take prior approval of the Heritage Conservation Committee and the order passed by the Expert Appraisal Committee, I have penned down a separate dissenting judgment, Justice Khanwilkar said.

He concurred however with the majority verdict on the aspects of notice inviting Bid, award of consultancy and the order of the Urban Arts Commission, as a standalone and independent order.

The majority 425-page judgement of Justice Khanwilkar dealt with several aspects and objections raised in as many as 10 petitions including the one filed by Rajeev Suri.

Justice Sanjiv Khanna, the third judge on the bench, wrote a dissenting 179-page judgement on aspects relating to public participation in the decision-making

process and on alleged failure on the part of the authorities in taking prior approval of the HCC for the project.

Since I have reservations with the opinion expressed by my esteemed brother A.M. Khanwilkar, J. on the aspects of public participation on interpretation of the statutory provisions, failure to take prior approval of the Heritage Conservation Committee and the order passed by the Expert Appraisal Committee, I have penned down a separate dissenting judgment, Justice Khanwilkar said.

He concurred however with the majority verdict on the aspects of notice inviting Bid, award of consultancy and the order of the Urban Arts Commission, as a standalone and independent order.

The majority 425-page judgement of Justice Khanwilkar dealt with several aspects and objections raised in as many as 10 petitions including the one filed by Rajeev Suri.

Justice Sanjiv Khanna, the third judge on the bench, wrote a dissenting 179-page judgement on aspects relating to public participation in the decision-making

process and on alleged failure on the part of the authorities in taking prior approval of the HCC for the project.

Since I have reservations with the opinion expressed by my esteemed brother A.M. Khanwilkar, J. on the aspects of public participation on interpretation of the statutory provisions, failure to take prior approval of the Heritage Conservation Committee and the order passed by the Expert Appraisal Committee, I have penned down a separate dissenting judgment, Justice Khanwilkar said.

He concurred however with the majority verdict on the aspects of notice inviting Bid, award of consultancy and the order of the Urban Arts Commission, as a standalone and independent order.

The majority 425-page judgement of Justice Khanwilkar dealt with several aspects and objections raised in as many as 10 petitions including the one filed by Rajeev Suri.

Justice Sanjiv Khanna, the third judge on the bench, wrote a dissenting 179-page judgement on aspects relating to public participation in the decision-making

process and on alleged failure on the part of the authorities in taking prior approval of the HCC for the project.

Since I have reservations with the opinion expressed by my esteemed brother A.M. Khanwilkar, J. on the aspects of public participation on interpretation of the statutory provisions, failure to take prior approval of the Heritage Conservation Committee and the order passed by the Expert Appraisal Committee, I have penned down a separate dissenting judgment, Justice Khanwilkar said.

He concurred however with the majority verdict on the aspects of notice inviting Bid, award of consultancy and the order of the Urban Arts Commission, as a standalone and independent order.

The majority 425-page judgement of Justice Khanwilkar dealt with several aspects and objections raised in as many as 10 petitions including the one filed by Rajeev Suri.

Justice Sanjiv Khanna, the third judge on the bench, wrote a dissenting 179-page judgement on aspects relating to public participation in the decision-making

process and on alleged failure on the part of the authorities in taking prior approval of the HCC for the project.

Since I have reservations with the opinion expressed by my esteemed brother A.M. Khanwilkar, J. on the aspects of public participation on interpretation of the statutory provisions, failure to take prior approval of the Heritage Conservation Committee and the order passed by the Expert Appraisal Committee, I have penned down a separate dissenting judgment, Justice Khanwilkar said.

He concurred however with the majority verdict on the aspects of notice inviting Bid, award of consultancy and the order of the Urban Arts Commission, as a standalone and independent order.

The majority 425-page judgement of Justice Khanwilkar dealt with several aspects and objections raised in as many as 10 petitions including the one filed by Rajeev Suri.

Justice Sanjiv Khanna, the third judge on the bench, wrote a dissenting 179-page judgement on aspects relating to public participation in the decision-making

process and on alleged failure on the part of the authorities in taking prior approval of the HCC for the project.

Since I have reservations with the opinion expressed by my esteemed brother A.M. Khanwilkar, J. on the aspects of public participation on interpretation of the



We will not ask Shukla to join the party. But our door is open for those who want to be part of the Congress family.

BENGAL CONGRESS PRESIDENT ADHIR RANJAN CHOUDHURY

REACTING ON THE RESIGNATION OF LAXMI RATAN SHUKLA

# Capital's Covid positivity rate plunges to 0.55 pc

Delhi sees 442 fresh cases from over 79K tests, logs 12 deaths; active cases drop to 4,562

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 5 JANUARY

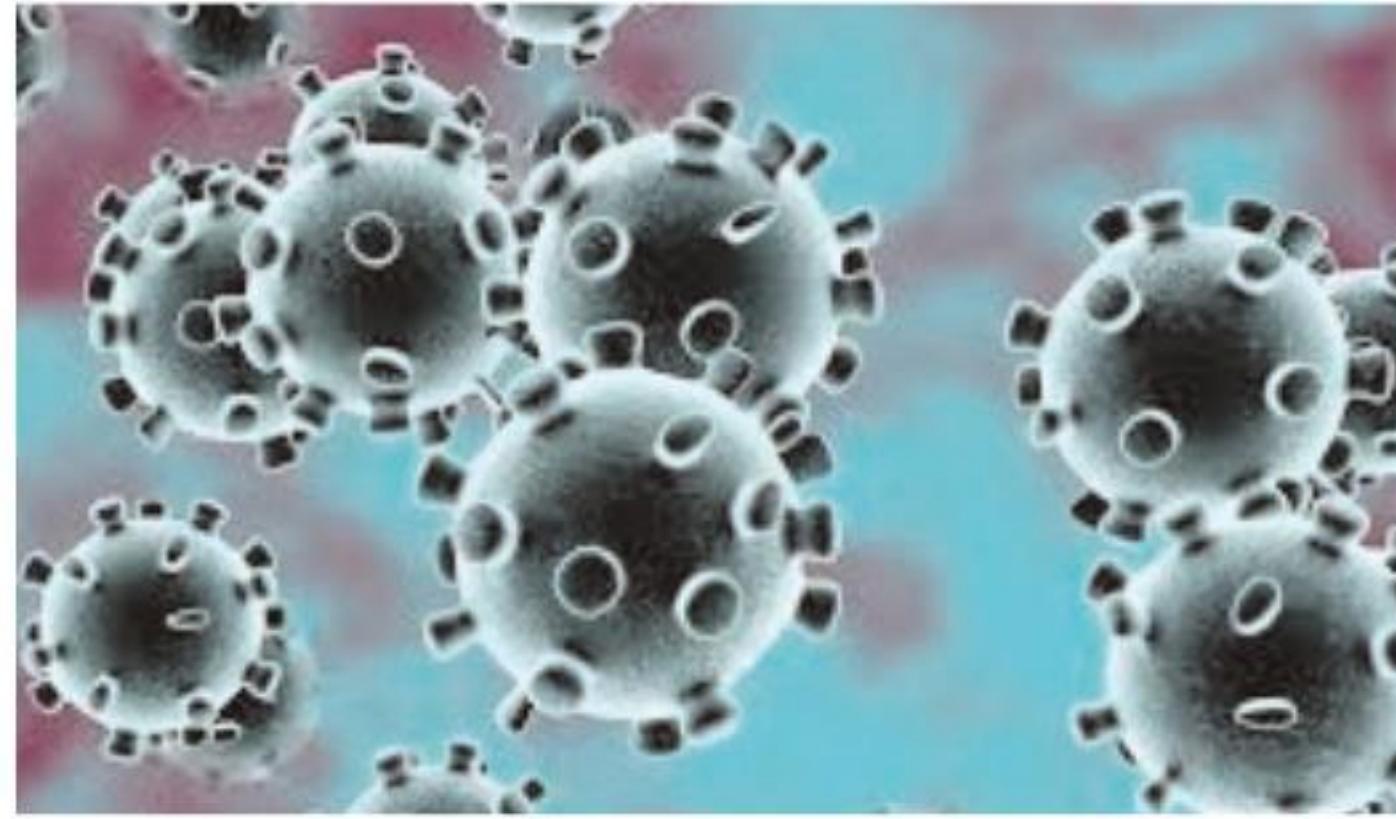
**D**elhi today recorded 442 fresh coronavirus infections (Covid-19) following 79,777 tests, with the positivity rate plummeting to 0.55 per cent, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

The national capital's coronavirus caseload thus climbed to 6,27,698, the health bulletin said.

The count of Covid-19 patients who got cured and were discharged from different healthcare facilities over the past 24 hours was 557, which raised the cumulative total of such recoveries in the city to 6,12,527, the bulletin stated.

Delhi reported 12 fresh Covid-linked deaths, which pushed its coronavirus toll to 10,609. The death rate based on the last 10 days' data was now 3.07 per cent.

Those Covid patients getting treatment under home isolation numbered 2,285,



the bulletin stated. Delhi's active coronavirus cases dropped to 4,562 from yesterday's 4,689.

The number of containment zones (red zones) in the city dipped to 3,400 from yesterday's 3,491, the bulletin added.

Delhi had yesterday reported 384 coronavirus cases —

the lowest in more than seven months — when 50,288 tests were conducted. The city had logged 12 Covid-linked fatalities and the positivity rate had stood at 0.76 per cent.

On 3 January, the single-day figure of infections caused by the contagious, deadly virus in the national capital was 424 and on 2 January it

was logged at 494.

The daily count of Covid cases in Delhi began to decrease to less than 1000 since 21 December when 803 such cases were identified. On 22 December, Delhi reported 939 cases and on 23 December the figure was 871.

There was an exception to

when the cases detected numbered 1,063. On 25 December again, the daily count dropped to 756 and on 26 December, it came down to 655.

On 27 December, the tally of Covid cases fell to 757 while on 28 December, the single-day count was 564. The national capital reported 703 such cases on 29 December and 677 on 30 December. The number of coronavirus cases came down to 574 on 31 December and 585 on 1 January.

The fatalities due to Covid had yesterday dropped to 12 from 3 January's 14. The recovery rate was yesterday 97.56 per cent.

Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain had last Saturday pointed out that the city's positivity rate had been below one per cent for the past 11 days, and new cases were the lowest since 17 May.

The city has been witnessing a consistent dip in fresh coronavirus cases, positivity rate, deaths and active cases tally besides an improvement in the recovery rate for the past few weeks.

The BJP's Delhi unit on Tuesday accused AAP leaders, including Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, of indulging in "political tourism" in poll-bound states and challenged him for a debate on the education model of the Arvind Kejriwal government.

No reaction was immediately available from the ruling Aam Aadmi Party.

Delhi BJP spokespersons Harish Khurana and Pooja Suri, in a joint press conference, said Sisodia and his party leaders are challenging Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand governments for debates on the condition of schools there, while the standard of education in Delhi was "deteriorating".

"The Delhi government's school education standards are fast deteriorating and instead of indulging in political tourism, the Kejriwal government should concentrate on improving it," they said.

Citing Right to Information (RTI) replies, Khurana said that since 2015 when the AAP came to power in Delhi, there has been no increase in the number of government schools in the national capital.

"Out of the 1030 schools (in Delhi) science is taught in only 331 schools, denying students the opportunity to become a doctor or an engineer. The Kejriwal government takes pride in opening 'Excellence Schools' but even those are not new ones but old existing school buildings that are revamped," Khurana claimed.

The AAP government claims that it was running online classes for all school students during the pandemic. But the truth is that hardly 30-

40 per cent students were able to attend online classes, he alleged.

Khurana further alleged that the AAP government "boasts" of good results in class 12 board exams but "hides" the figures of poor results in class 10.

"When AAP came to power in 2015 the class 10 result was 98.81 per cent. But today it has gone down to 82.61 per cent. This year's Delhi government schools class 10 result is second lowest in the CBSE zones of the country," he said, citing an RTI reply from Delhi government.

"The Kejriwal government flaunts its education model claiming (it grants) highest budget for education in the country. But between 2015 and 2020, over 50 per cent of education budget has lapsed. In 2018-19, the lapsed amount was Rs 4,896 crore," he claimed.

Suri said AAP leaders and Sisodia, who is also Delhi's education minister, are touring Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand where the party has plans to contest elections.

"They are trying to fool people in those states by their tall claims but avoiding a debate over their education model in Delhi which shows they are trying to hide their failures," she charged.

## Classified

### LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE COURT OF  
SH. UMED SINGH GREWAL  
Addl. District Judge-01  
North  
Rohini Courts, Delhi  
Probate Case  
No. PC - 25/2020

Sh. Manoj Tyagi — Petitioner  
Versus

— Respondents  
PETITION UNDER SECTION  
276 OF THE INDIAN  
SUCCESSION ACT, 1925

Whereas an application under the Indian Succession Act, 1925, for grant of Probate of the Will or for Letters of Administration to the estate of Late Sh. Peshaur Lal, s/o Sh. Kaka Ram Gakhad, v/o F-56, Rajouri Garden, New Delhi on 23rd August, 1985 at Mumbai, Maharashtra has been made by Sh. Trilochan Lal, s/o Late Sh. Peshaur Lal, r/o C-27, Rajouri Garden, New Delhi-110027.

Whereas the 16th day of March, 2021 has been fixed for hearing of the case. Notice is hereby given that any person having interest in the Administration of the Estate of the said deceased if he/she desires to appear in this court on the above said date and see the proceedings of the Grant of Probate (or for Letters of Administration). Given under my hand and the Seal of this Court on this 24th day of December, 2020.

Addl. District Judge-02  
(West)  
Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi  
Seal of the Court

IN THE COURT OF  
SH. UMED SINGH GREWAL  
Addl. District Judge-02  
(West)

Room No. 127, 1st Floor  
Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi  
PC No. 23/2020

Trilochan Lal & Ors.  
Versus

State CITATION UNDER SECTION  
283(2) OF SUCCESSION  
ACT, 1925

Whereas an application under the Indian Succession Act, 1925, for grant of Probate of the Will or for Letters of Administration to the estate of Late Sh. Peshaur Lal, s/o Sh. Kaka Ram Gakhad, v/o F-56, Rajouri Garden, New Delhi on 23rd August, 1985 at Mumbai, Maharashtra has been made by Sh. Trilochan Lal, s/o Late Sh. Peshaur Lal, r/o C-27, Rajouri Garden, New Delhi-110027.

Whereas the 16th day of March, 2021 has been fixed for hearing of the case. Notice is hereby given that any person having interest in the Administration of the Estate of the said deceased if he/she desires to appear in this court on the above said date and see the proceedings of the Grant of Probate (or for Letters of Administration).

Given under my hand and the Seal of this Court on this 24th day of December, 2020.

Addl. District Judge-02  
(West)  
Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi  
Seal of the Court

PUBLIC NOTICE  
This Is To Inform The  
Public At Large That The  
Immovable Residential  
Property Bearing Municipal  
Number 34, Sunder Nagar,  
New Delhi-110003.  
Belonging To My Client Is  
Being Sold By My Client. If  
Anyone Has Any Kind Of  
Claim Whatsoever With  
Respect To The Above  
Mentioned Property Then  
He / She May Contact The  
Undersigned Within 7 Days  
of the Publication of This  
Notice.

I, SUNIL MAGON, Advocate  
E.No.- D-717/89  
E-403, Greater Kailash-2,  
New Delhi-110048  
Ph - 9818024374

PUBLIC NOTIFICATIONS  
MY CLIENT intends to pur-  
chase Flat No. 6D, 6th Floor,  
Middleton Apartment at No.  
3 Middleton Row, Mukund  
700071 from Mukund  
Khatan. Any person has

I, KAMANA Biswas,  
spouse of Samarendra  
Biswas, resident of Vill:

Betai Rathatal Para, P.O.:  
Betai, Dist.: Nadia, Pin-  
741163 (WB.) have changed  
my name from Kamana to  
Kamana Biswas, vide affi-  
davit dated 14.12.2020  
before the Ld. Judicial  
Magistrate, Nadia, Dist: Nadia

Sukant Dutta  
Advocate  
Hastings Chambers  
Ground Floor  
7C, K.S. Roy Road  
Kolkata-700011

I, RATNA Saha Halder,  
w/o Jaydev Kr. Halder,  
residing at A-2/217, Kalyani-  
741235, Nadia, declaring  
that I Ratna Saha Halder  
have changed my name to  
Ratna Saha from vide Affidavit  
No. 2746 sworn before 1st Class Judicial  
Magistrate, Kalyani Court  
dated 24.11.2020.

I, SABITA, spouse of Bhim  
Chandra Bormon, resident  
of Vill. & P.O.: Debagram,  
Dist.: Nadia, Pin-741163  
(WB.) have changed my  
name from Sabita to Sabita  
Barman, vide affidavit  
dated 22.12.2020 before the  
Judicial Magistrate (1st Class), Krishnagar,  
Dist: Nadia

JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY  
Kolkata - 700 032  
Admission to the M.C.A.  
programme under Faculty  
Council of Engineering &  
Technology (FET) for the  
session 2020-21 will be  
held and application form  
will be available in the  
website from 9th January,  
2021. Interested candidates  
are requested to follow the  
University website ([www.jaduniv.edu.in](http://www.jaduniv.edu.in)) for detailed  
information. Registrar

CHANGE OF NAME  
I, KAMANA Biswas,  
spouse of Samarendra  
Biswas, resident of Vill:

TENDER

SARASWATI PRESS LTD.  
Invites Sealed Offer  
1. Tender No.-SPL-202101-  
0019 — From Actual Card  
Manufacturers for supply of  
approximately 20 lakh pre-  
printed smart card (SCOTCA)  
with minimum 64 KB non-volatile  
rewritable memory chip.

2. Tender No.-SPL-202101-  
0020 — From experienced  
established vendor for  
onsite Enrolment, personal-  
isation & Issuance of Smart  
Cards (SCOTCA) in Block &  
Municipality level at different  
districts of West Bengal.  
Last date of submission of  
sealed offer is 11-01-2021.  
For details/any amendment  
please visit:

[www.saraswatypress.com](http://www.saraswatypress.com)

ITI LIMITED  
(A Govt. of India  
22, Chittaranjan Avenue  
Phone: (033) 2212-  
6532/2212-7600

NIT is uploaded for  
AMC of computers &  
accessories NIT No. 161-  
2021/AMC of computers &  
accessories due date is  
20.01.2021. For details  
please visit [www.itiltd-india.com](http://www.itiltd-india.com) &  
[www.eprocure.gov.in](http://www.eprocure.gov.in)

AGM - MSP (WB & NE)

TENDER

Tenders are hereby  
invited from the eligible  
contractors / suppliers  
for the different works as  
specified in NIT No. 1137 /  
BPM / N-51 / 2020,  
dated: 31.12.2020 & 1138 /  
BPM / N-52 / 2020, dated:  
31.12.2020 (Closing date:  
21.01.2021, 5.30 p.m.) and  
NIT No. 03 / BPM / 2021  
dated: 02.01.2021 (Closing  
date: 09.01.2021, 2.00  
p.m.). Tenders please  
submit to the office of the  
Chairman, Buniadpur  
Municipality, Dakshin  
Dinajpur.

MUMBAI

5, Kasturi Buildings, Jamshedji Tata  
Road, Mumbai-400 020

Ph: (022) 2202 1045,

Email:

[delhistatesman@gmail.com](mailto:delhistatesman@gmail.com)

[mumbaistatesman.com](http://mumbaistatesman.com)

CHENNAI

Fagun Mansion (4th floor), 26, Ethiraj  
Road, Chennai-600 008, Tel: (044)

2827037, 28224800

Email:

[delhistatesman@gmail.com](mailto:delhistatesman@gmail.com)

[chennai.statesmangroup.com](http://chennai.statesmangroup.com)

LUCKNOW

2/2, Butler Palace (Near Jopling Road),  
Lucknow-226 001, Ph: (0522) 2206705

Email:

[lucknow@statesmangroup.com](mailto:lucknow@statesmangroup.com)

RANCHI

11/C, Road#1, Ashoknagar, Ranchi - 834  
002

Fax: (0651) 2247054

Email:

[ranchi@statesmangroup.com](mailto:ranchi@statesmangroup.com)

Chairman  
Buniadpur Municipality

Tel: 0177-2815000

Email:  
[delhistatesman@gmail.com](mailto:delhistatesman@gmail.com)

[shimla.statesmangroup.com](http://shimla.statesmangroup.com)

SHIMLA

Cabin No. 305, P.C. Chambers

Near Jodha Niwas

The Mall Shimla-171001, H.P.

AIR-SURCHARGE: Kathmandu - Rs. 2, Eastern Region - Re. 1

All other stations in India - Re. 1



The government after considering the request has decided to declare January 28 as a public holiday and Thaipusam will be included in the list of public holidays in the coming years.

K PALANISWAMI  
TAMIL NADU CHIEF MINISTER

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 06 JANUARY 2021

03

# Himachal govt lifts night curfew in 4 districts

The HP Cabinet also decides to restore the 6-day week schedule in govt offices in the state

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, 5 JANUARY

The Himachal Pradesh Cabinet on Tuesday decided to lift the night curfew imposed in four districts of the state, which include Shimla, Kangra, Mandi and Kullu. It also decided to restore the usual six-day week schedule in government offices in the state.

The Cabinet, which met here under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur, decided to allow coaching classes in the state with 50 per cent capacity. The state education department would issue Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in this regard.

On the State Election Commission's request, the Jai Ram Cabinet also relaxed the condition of allowing not more than 50 persons in an indoor



meeting so that the Commission could undertake its election related training programme effectively.

In view of the Covid-19 scenario in the state, the Cabinet decided that the makeshift hospitals at Indira Gandhi Medical College (IGMC), Shimla, Community Health Centre (CHC), Nalagarh, and

Dr Rajendra Prasad Government Medical College Tanda would be made functional by outsourcing of Ward Sisters, Staff Nurses and Class-IV staff for the time being, whereas Medical Officers would be arranged through fresh/direct walk-in-interviews and the proposal of HLL would be kept in abeyance

depending upon the future Covid scenario.

The Cabinet thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Government of India for approving the Covid vaccine for use in India by taking a lead amongst the community of nations in this regard. It also thanked the scientists of the country for successful production of the vaccine as part of "Atma Nirbhar Bharat" programme.

The Cabinet also congratulated the Prime Minister for being adjudged — by the American data firm Morning Consult in its recently held survey — as "best and most popular leader" worldwide for "effective handling" of the Covid-19 pandemic in the country.

It also gave approval to start Single Window Empanelment for registration of private hospitals for effective implementation of the

Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, the Him Care Yojana and the Government Medical Reimbursement Scheme in the state. A presentation was made by the Horticulture Department before the Cabinet on a six months target till March 2021 and next one year's target w.e.f. April, 2021 to March, 2022. The Animal Husbandry Department also made presentation on the avian influenza outbreak among migratory birds at a dam in Kangra district.

The Cabinet advised the Department of Health and the Department of Animal Husbandry to ensure adequate availability of medicines specific to this avian flu and PPE kits for staff there. It also advised strict enforcement of restrictions on movement imposed by the Deputy Commissioner, Kangra, in the affected area.

## Protesting farmers' deaths: Modi govt has blood on its hands, says Jakhar

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 5 JANUARY

Attacking the BJP-ruled Centre over the death of 57 farmers during the ongoing farmers' agitation against farm laws, Punjab Congress president Sunil Jakhar on Tuesday said the Narendra Modi government has "blood on its hands".

"The Modi government has blood on its hands," Jakhar said while leading a march of Punjab Congressmen to the martyr memorial in Chandigarh. The participants placed 57 extinguished earthen lamps on ground to highlight the Centre's apathy towards the loss of 57 farmer lives during the ongoing farmer agitation.

The Punjab Congress chief said this march and laying of 57 extinguished lamps by the Congress at befitting martyr memorial in the state capital is to tell the Modi government to rise from its deep slumber and repeal the three black farm laws at the earliest.

"The sacrifice of these farmers will not go in vain. They are martyrs. Punjab and



Haryana farmers have led the battle for the nation from the front. The Centre's insensitivity towards the farmers' cause will not last long," Jakhar said.

The state Congress chief said the agitation has crossed way beyond 100-days with farmers being harassed and facing the bone-chilling winter months out in the open. "If the government's intent was sacrosanct, the several rounds of talks with farmer

representatives would not have remained inconclusive," Jakhar said.

The martyr memorial in Chandigarh, he said, is a tribute to the brave soldiers who laid down their lives for the nation. Inherent in the sacrifice of farmers as well is an element of deep pride that the nation will never forget. The Centre should expeditiously clear the logjam before the situation worsens, he said.

## WINGED GUESTS



Migratory birds at Sukhna lake in Chandigarh on Monday.

PARDEEP SAINI

## SJVN donates ambulance to HP Red Cross



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, 5 JANUARY

The Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam (SJVN) Ltd on Tuesday donated an ambulance to the State Red Cross at a simple function at Raj Bhawan at Shimla in Himachal Pradesh.

The Governor Bandaru Dattatraya received the key of the ambulance from Chairman and Managing Director, SJVN Nand Lal Sharma at Raj Bhawan.

Chairperson, HP Red Cross Hospital Welfare Section Dr Sadhana Thakur was also present on the occasion.

The Governor said that it was a noble gesture, which would facilitate the patients in emergency and would

prove helpful in reaching out maximum needy persons. He said that it would go a long way in strengthening Red Cross activities in the state.

Dattatraya lauded the initiative of SJVN to come forward for a social cause and hoped that more institutions would be inspired by this generous act and would donate liberally to the State Red Cross, which was selflessly serving the poor and underprivileged sections of the society. He appreciated the initiatives of SJVN in tapping the hydro power potential in the state besides performing Corporate Social Responsibility in a big way.

Dr Sadhana Thakur also apprised the Governor about the activities of the section and said that Red Cross activities would be given more momentum in the coming days.

Later, the chairperson also handed over the key of the ambulance to Dr. Sanjay Pathak, Senior Medical Superintendent, Himachal Hospital of Mental Health and Rehabilitation Shimla.

Nand Lal Sharma, meanwhile, apprised the Governor about the progress of various projects of SJVN in India and abroad.

Rakesh Kanwar, Secretary to Governor and General Secretary, State Red Cross, PS Rana, Secretary State Red Cross and other senior officers were also present on the occasion.

## 3K drug peddlers held, 22.5 tonnes of drugs seized in Haryana in 2020

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 5 JANUARY

Haryana Police has seized 22.5 tonnes of narcotic substances and arrested more than 3000 drug peddlers in 2020.

Disclosing this on Tuesday, Director General of Police (DGP), Manoj Yadava said that Police have filed a total of 3024 cases under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act in 2020, as against the 2645 cases registered in 2019.

The quantity of drugs seized also increased by 41.5 per cent in 2020 as compared to the previous year. A total of 22569 kg of opium, charas, sulphur, poppy husk, smack, ganja and heroin were confiscated between January and December 2020.

Giving details about the drug-wise seizure, he said that 225 kilogram (kg) opium, 250 kg charas/sulphur, over 12828 kg poppy husk, eight kg 253 gram smack, over 9223 kg ganja and 33 kg 198 gram heroin was seized.

The DGP said to prevent drug trafficking, police have been working relentlessly to

curb drug menace. "It is because of our team's efforts as well as increased inter-state cooperation for exchange of information that the number of arrests has increased this year compared to last year," he said.

"We have adopted a multi-pronged approach that resulted in seizure of such a large amount of narcotic substances. Our field units including the Special Task Force have dismantled the potential supply of almost all types of narcotics in the state. The crackdown was made in line with the government's commitment to make Haryana a drug-free state," Yadava added.

The maximum cases, 713, under NDPS Act were registered in Sirsa, followed by 326 in Fatehabad, 224 in Gurgaon, 161 in Kaithal, 162 in Hisar, 157 in Rohtak and 131 in Panipat. "There is no place for drugs in our society. We will continue to speed up our operations against drug traffickers and drug cartels to save the people especially youth from drug menace.

Giving details about the drug-wise seizure, he said that 225 kilogram (kg) opium, 250 kg charas/sulphur, over 12828 kg poppy husk, eight kg 253 gram smack, over 9223 kg ganja and 33 kg 198 gram heroin was seized.

The DGP said to prevent drug trafficking, police have been working relentlessly to

curb drug menace. "It is because of our team's efforts as well as increased inter-state cooperation for exchange of information that the number of arrests has increased this year compared to last year," he said.

"We have adopted a multi-pronged approach that resulted in seizure of such a large amount of narcotic substances. Our field units including the Special Task Force have dismantled the potential supply of almost all types of narcotics in the state. The crackdown was made in line with the government's commitment to make Haryana a drug-free state," Yadava added.

The maximum cases, 713, under NDPS Act were registered in Sirsa, followed by 326 in Fatehabad, 224 in Gurgaon, 161 in Kaithal, 162 in Hisar, 157 in Rohtak and 131 in Panipat. "There is no place for drugs in our society. We will continue to speed up our operations against drug traffickers and drug cartels to save the people especially youth from drug menace.

Giving details about the drug-wise seizure, he said that 225 kilogram (kg) opium, 250 kg charas/sulphur, over 12828 kg poppy husk, eight kg 253 gram smack, over 9223 kg ganja and 33 kg 198 gram heroin was seized.

The DGP said to prevent drug trafficking, police have been working relentlessly to

curb drug menace. "It is because of our team's efforts as well as increased inter-state cooperation for exchange of information that the number of arrests has increased this year compared to last year," he said.

"We have adopted a multi-pronged approach that resulted in seizure of such a large amount of narcotic substances. Our field units including the Special Task Force have dismantled the potential supply of almost all types of narcotics in the state. The crackdown was made in line with the government's commitment to make Haryana a drug-free state," Yadava added.

Giving details about the drug-wise seizure, he said that 225 kilogram (kg) opium, 250 kg charas/sulphur, over 12828 kg poppy husk, eight kg 253 gram smack, over 9223 kg ganja and 33 kg 198 gram heroin was seized.

The DGP said to prevent drug trafficking, police have been working relentlessly to

curb drug menace. "It is because of our team's efforts as well as increased inter-state cooperation for exchange of information that the number of arrests has increased this year compared to last year," he said.

"We have adopted a multi-pronged approach that resulted in seizure of such a large amount of narcotic substances. Our field units including the Special Task Force have dismantled the potential supply of almost all types of narcotics in the state. The crackdown was made in line with the government's commitment to make Haryana a drug-free state," Yadava added.

Giving details about the drug-wise seizure, he said that 225 kilogram (kg) opium, 250 kg charas/sulphur, over 12828 kg poppy husk, eight kg 253 gram smack, over 9223 kg ganja and 33 kg 198 gram heroin was seized.

The DGP said to prevent drug trafficking, police have been working relentlessly to

## UHF event offers fruit plants sale and planting advisory to farmers

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, 5 JANUARY

An event on plant sale and planting advisory was organized on Tuesday at the Dr YS Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry (UHF), Nauni in Himachal Pradesh to ensure that the farmers follow the correct scientific advisory while raising new fruit plants.

The event was held along with the University's annual sale of temperate fruits planting material which began today at

the University's main campus and Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKS) Solan. The event was held online as well as offline.

The farmers, who had reached the University to buy plants, attended the event at three different venues.

Farmers and scientists from KVKS and research stations located in the different districts of the state along with the College of Horticulture and Forestry located at Thunagad were also joined the event virtually.

UHF Vice-Chancellor Prof-



essor Parvinder Kaushal said the farmers hold a lot of trust in the planting material prepared

by the university, and thus there is a huge demand for it from throughout the country.

He said the university too, on its part, has been continuously increasing the number of plants supplied to the farmers.

He added that good-quality planting material was a pre-requisite for ensuring good returns in horticulture. Therefore, it is important that the farmers follow the scientific advisories for planting, crop production and protection," he said.

Director, Extension Education,

Dr PK Mahajan said that the University has been continuously devising new methods to effectively reach the

farmers. He said that this special event on planting advisory will be of immense help to the growers while raising new orchards and protecting them from insects, pests and diseases. Videos on layout and planting of fruit crops, natural farming system for fruit plants, varieties in apple and mango were also played during the event. The first technical session on crop production covered topics like nursery management, location-specific varieties and kiwi fruit production were held.

**The Management & Faculty of  
Kothiwal Dental College & Research Centre**

Proudly congratulate their student



For securing IV<sup>th</sup> Position in All INDIA PG NEET Exam

**Admission for MDS (2021-22)**  
**16<sup>th</sup> Batch of MDS** are invited

Contact No.: 8006426860, 9897031522, 9319082837

Email: kothiwalentalcollege@gmail.com Website: www.kothiwalentalcollege.com



*Janta ke darbaar mein mukhyamantri (CM in the court of the people) will recommence. We are just waiting for the dust to settle on Covid-19*

BIHAR CHIEF MINISTER NITISH KUMAR

SAYING HE WAS PLANNING TO REVIVE HIS PUBLIC INTERACTION PROGRAMME

## THUMBNAILS



AICC leaders with Major Archbishop of Malankara Syriac Church, Cardinal Baselios Cleemis, in Kerala to mollify the Christian community. ■ IANS

**Kochi-Mangaluru GAIL pipeline:** Kerala and Karnataka on Tuesday hailed the completion of the 450-km Kochi-Mangaluru Natural Gas pipeline, calling its inauguration 'historic' while the Centre described the Rs 3,000-crore 'futuristic project' as a great example of cooperative federalism. ■ PTI

**TN govt declares 'Thai Poosam' a public holiday:** Tamil Nadu chief minister K Palaniswami on Tuesday said he has ordered public holiday on 28 January (in 2021) for 'Thai Poosam,' a festival dedicated to worship of Lord Muruga. Palaniswami said during his tour of several districts, people urged him to declare the festival a public holiday and they said in Sri Lanka and Mauritius the day was a holiday. ■ PTI

**Theatre with full capacity: TN Junior doc vents out against govt**

CHENNAI, 5 JANUARY

A junior resident doctor from Puducherry vented out his angst in a Facebook post against Kollywood stars Vijaya, Silambarasan and state government after Tamil Nadu decided to allow full seating capacity in movie halls across the state.

On Monday, Aravindh Srinivas, a junior resident doctor wrote, "The pandemic isn't over and we have people dying till today to the disease. A hundred percent theatre occupancy is a suicidal attempt. Rather homicide, for none of the policy makers or the so called heroes are going to put themselves under the pump, to watch the movie amidst the crowd. This is a blatant barter system, trading lives for money." Earlier actors Vijay, Silambarasan and some producers had met chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami, ahead of their latest movies ready for release. A government order said that the Tamil Theatres and Multiplex Owners Association had placed a request with the government to allow them to increase the capacity from 50 per cent to a full house.

Tamil Nadu on Monday said that movie halls will be permitted to screen movies at full seating capacity. ■ SNS

## TENDER

### NORTHERN RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer/Traction Distribution, DRM's Office, State Entry Road, New Delhi for & on behalf of President of India, invites open e-tender under single packet system for the under noted work:

1 Name of Work with its location	Replacement of failure prone/old Catenary wire (35Km.) 2nd phase over Delhi Division.
2 Approx. Cost of Work	Rs. 72,63,874.80/-
3 Earnest Money Deposit	Rs. 1,45,300/-
4 E-Tender Bid Online Submission Period	18.01.2021 (00.00 Hrs.) to 01.02.2021 (15.00 Hrs.)
5 E-Tender Bid Submission End Date & E-Tender Open Date & Time	01.02.2021 (15.00 hrs.)
6 Fund Allocation	29366203
7 Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen	www.ireps.gov.in

E-Tender No.: 23-TRD-NDLS-2020-21 Dated: 05.01.2021 28/2021  
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

### NORTHERN RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE

The Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager/PS, Northern Railway, Delhi division, New Delhi invites e-tender for the following work:

1 Name of work	Mechanized cleaning and Housekeeping work of Group G stations (Panipat, Sonipat, Rohtak, Gurgaon, Faridabad & Palwal) of Delhi Division for a period of two years.
2 E-tender Notice Number on IREPS	Sanitation02-2021
3 Date of Tender Opening	09/02/2021 upto 1100 hrs
4 Approximate cost of work	As per NIT on ireps.gov.in
5 Cost of Tender document including 18% GST	As per NIT on ireps.gov.in
6 Earnest Money Deposit	As per NIT on ireps.gov.in
7 Website particulars where complete details of tender document can be seen	www.ireps.gov.in

No: C-12/Sanitation/Vetting/Group G/2019 Dated : 05 January 2021 30/2021  
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE



There are 45 candidate vaccines in clinical evaluation & 156 candidate vaccines in pre-clinical evaluation: WHO scientists



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, 5 JANUARY

**I**ndia launches the world's most ambitious and biggest vaccination drive against Covid-19, the country will encounter the formidable challenge of rapidly scaling up distribution of the vaccines to secure immunity for its entire population, two prominent Indian scientists at WHO have said.

This daunting challenge is not only for India but also for all the governments across the globe as they start inoculating their populations to tackle the pandemic, noted Dr Soumya Swaminathan, Chief Scientist of WHO, and Dr Hamsadvani Kuganathan, Consultant, WHO.

On Sunday, the Central Drugs Standard Control Organ-

isation (CDSCO), India's drugs regulator, had approved Oxford vaccine Covishield, manufactured by the Serum Institute of India (SII), and Covaxin of Bharat Biotech for restricted emergency use for the frontline warriors and senior citizens in the country. Currently, there are 45 candidate vaccines in clinical evaluation and 156 candidate vaccines in pre-clinical evaluation, the WHO scientists said.

COVAX, a ground-breaking global collaboration to accelerate the development, production, and equitable access to Covid-19 treatments and vaccines, is jointly led by the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), Gavi (the Vaccine Alliance set up by The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation), and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

### Arrangements being made to vaccinate Haj pilgrims

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, 5 JANUARY

Union Minister for Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi on Tuesday said arrangements are being made to administer coronavirus vaccines to those going from India for the Haj pilgrimage.

He was speaking after chairing a meeting of the Haj Committee of India officials and Haj Group organisers at Haj House in south Mumbai.

The last date for submission of application forms for Haj 2021 is January 10, he

said. Embarkation point estimated cost per Haj pilgrim has been reduced, he added.

Naqvi said around 50 per cent of the total applicants so far are women and over 700 women have so far applied under the without 'mehram' (male companion) category.

Over 2,100 women had applied for Haj 2020 under that category. These women will go to Haj 2021 as the application filled up by them for Haj 2020 is also valid for Haj 2021, a statement from the minister's office said.

"It is the only global initiative that is working with governments and manufacturers to ensure Covid-19 vaccines are available worldwide to both higher-income and lower-income countries," the scientists pointed out.

"The goal of COVAX is to deliver two billion doses of safe, effective vaccines that have passed regulatory approval and/or WHO prequalification, by the end of 2021."

These vaccines will be offered equally to all participating countries, proportional to their

populations, initially prioritizing healthcare workers, then expanding to cover vulnerable groups, such as the elderly and those with pre-existing conditions," the scientists pointed out.

Further doses will then be made available based on a country's need, vulnerability and Covid-19 threat.

"Vaccines will help us achieve herd immunity but, until then we need to keep practicing the non-pharmaceutical measures to prevent infection and spread," said Dr Swaminathan and Dr Kuganathan.

Keeping in view the pandemic situation and feedback from Air India and other agencies, embarkation points for Haj 2021 have been reduced to 10, Naqvi said.

The 10 embarkation points are Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Kochi, Delhi, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Lucknow, Mumbai and Srinagar.

Saudi authorities had announced in June that due to the pandemic, pilgrims from outside the kingdom would not be permitted.

This year the Haj will be in July.

Ch'garh to test preparedness for vaccine

RAIPUR, 5 JANUARY

Chhattisgarh government is all set to test its preparedness for the proposed Covid-19 vaccination drive in 21 districts on 7 and 8 January. The remaining seven districts already had their mock drill recently.

Mock drill for the vaccination for frontliners workers against Covid-19 will be held on 7 January and 8 January in some districts. All the districts which have been fixed to go for a mock drill on the second day are located on the northern and southern borders of Chhattisgarh.

Administration in all the concerned districts has already been instructed to ensure necessary arrangements for the mock drill by 6 and 7 January. Director of National Health Mission, Priyanka Shukla informed.

Preparations for the mock drill include selection of beneficiaries, acquiring Covid-19 vaccine, transporting the vaccine to cold chain points. ■ SNS

Gold smuggling: NIA files charge sheet, Nair turns approver

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, 5 JANUARY

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Tuesday filed a charge sheet in the sensational Thiruvananthapuram airport gold smuggling case before the NIA Special Court in Kochi.

Charge sheet has been filed against 20 of the 21 accused that the agency had arrested, including Swapna Suresh, Sarith, KT Ramees and Rabins K Hameed. Charges have been framed under sections 16, 17 and 18 of the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA)

Sandeep Nair, the fourth the accused in the case, has turned approver and, therefore, his name has not been included in the charge sheet. In September last year, Sandeep Nair filed a submission before the court stating that he was willing to reveal the details of the gold smuggling racket under section 164 (Recording of confessions and statements) of the Code of Criminal Procedure. The court allowed the plea and accordingly his statement was recorded. Subsequently he was made an approver in the case.

The charge sheet has been submitted within six months of making the first arrest in the case. A delay beyond six months would have made the accused eligible for natural bail. This is the first charge sheet submitted in the case. ■ SNS

Woman harassed in Saudi not allowed to board flight to India

BUNDI (RAJ), 5 JANUARY

A 40-year-old woman, who was set to fly back to India after allegedly being held hostage by her employer in Saudi Arabia, has claimed that she was not allowed to board the flight as she could not pay the money for the mandatory coronavirus test.

Reena Gehlod of Harda district in Madhya Pradesh, had appealed for help in a video message in November, following which the Indian Embassy in Saudi Arabia had intervened and made arrangements for her return.

"On Monday evening, around 6 o'clock, I was taken to a Covid test centre where I was asked to pay 850 Riyal (around Rs 17, 000) before departure. When I expressed inability to pay, I was informed that my departure for India would not be possible," Reena says in the messages. ■ PTI

### NEW BEGINNING



People associated with various parties and social organisations, including All India Gurjar Mahasabha, join Aam Aadmi Party, Rajya Sabha MP and UP in-charge Sanjay Singh welcome the new members, in the Capital on Tuesday. ■ SNS

### Bird flu: J&K, K'taka, Tamil Nadu on alert; culling of chickens in Kerala

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 5 JANUARY

Culling of chickens and ducks began on Tuesday in parts of Indore to contain the H5N8 strain of bird flu, while Jammu and Kashmir sounded an alert and started collecting samples from migratory species after Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh reported cases of the avian influenza.

Karnataka and Tamil Nadu have stepped up surveillance and formed guidelines following the outbreak of the viral infection in neighbouring Kerala, where around 1,700

ducks have died due to the flu.

In Madhya Pradesh, officials said that 155 dead crows in Indore have been found with the H5N8 strain since the pathogen was first detected in the city a week back, while in Rajasthan, after Jhalawar, birds in Kota and Baran were found with the infection.

However, no cases have been reported yet in Maharashtra. Officials in Himachal Pradesh on Tuesday surveyed the area around the Pong Dam Lake sanctuary in Kangra district to check the spread of the flu to domestic poultry birds, a day after

samples of dead migratory birds there tested positive for H5N8. Till now, 2,700 migratory birds, mostly bar-headed geese, have been found dead in the lake area and samples have been sent for testing, state animal husbandry officials said.

The operation to cull birds in and around a one-km radius of the affected areas in Alappuzha and Kottayam in Kerala was launched a day after results of samples tested at the National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases in Bhopal confirmed outbreak of the bird flu in two districts.

After fully recovering from coronavirus and completing his home isolation period, Uttarakhand chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat has begun official work from his home in New Delhi on Tuesday.

Chief minister Rawat was recently discharged from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in New Delhi. He was admitted to AIIMS-New Delhi on 28 December after he suffered some lung infection.

Trivendra was tested positive for Coronavirus on 18 December and was in home isolation in Dehradun. But, the CM developed some uneasiness on 24 December and was hospitalized at Doon Hospital. One day later he was admitted to AIIMS-New Delhi due to a lung infection.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
PATNA, 5 JANUARY

Senior Congress leader Shakitsinh Gohil, the AICC in charge for Bihar for close to three years, has sought to be relieved from the cumbersome assignment at the earliest.

Gohil, also one of the party's national spokespersons and a Rajya Sabha member from Gujarat, made the disclosure on his official Twitter handle.

"Due to personal reasons, I have requested our party high command to allocate me lighter work for next few months and to relieve me ASAP as

poor shape in which his party finds itself across the country, more notably so in states like Bihar. Bihar Congress is factionalised and appears unlikely to look up in near future.

The development comes close on the heels of the Congress dismal performance in the Assembly elections. The party had contested 70 seats of the 243-strong Assembly but won only 19 in the October-November polls.

"Gohil must be wary of being made the scapegoat", JD(U) spokesman Rajiv Ranjan Prasad said in a statement. Shakitsinh Gohil's averment is an admission of the

**EAST DELHI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION (ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT)**

Office of the Executive Engineer(M)-III  
Shahdara South, School Block, Shakarpur, Delhi - 110092  
NIT No.: EDMC/E.E.-M-III/Shah.(S)/TC/2020-2021/08 Dated : 04.01.2021

**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**

For online tendering at percentage rate tenders are invited for the execution of the following works by the EDMC from approved and eligible contractor and will be received as per time table.

Last date of Download tender : 18.01.2021 at 12.00 Hours  
Last date of Bid Preparation : 18.01.2021 at 14.00 Hours  
Last date for Close of Bid : 18.01.2021 at 16.00 Hours.  
Date of Re-encryption of Online : 18.01.2021 at 16.01 Hours to 19.01.2021 at 13.00 Hours  
Opening of Financial Bid : 19.01.2021 at 13.01 Hours

S. No. : 1. Name of work : Improvement Development of road from Ryan Public School to Pocket-C, IFC Gajipur Ward No. 006-E (216), Shahdara (South) Zone. Head of account : 91-1257, Tender Amount : Rs. 73,53,608/-, Earnest Money : Rs. 1,47,050/-, Time of Compl. : 03 Months, Cost of Tender : Rs. 1,000/-, Tender No. : 3194



BJP favouring wealthy people over farmers...

SAMAJWADI PARTY CHIEF AKHILESH YADAV  
ON ONGOING FARMERS' PROTEST

Actors Kartik Aaryan &amp; Janhvi Kapoor at the airport in Mumbai on Tuesday. ■ IANS

**Highway crimes:** In a bid to check crime on highways, J&K DGP Dilbag Singh on Tuesday inaugurated CCTV-fitted patrol vehicles with monitoring network with the main police control room at Jammu. Highway patrol vehicles have been deployed at 33 places across Jammu Zone. ■ SNS

**Cheating case:** The CBI has urged Delhi High Court to allow it to examine a foreign national as a witness in a case involving Congress leader Jagdish Tytler and arms dealer Abhishek Verma for allegedly writing a forged letter addressed to then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in 2009. ■ PTI

**BSF admin blocks:** Five recently constructed administrative blocks were inaugurated by the BSF as part of its efforts to provide safe and comfortable living to its personnel serving along the International Border in Jammu, a spokesperson of the border guarding force said on Tuesday. ■ PTI

**Nagpur mayor:** BJP nominee Dayashankar Tiwari was on Tuesday elected as mayor of Nagpur Municipal Corporation, a civic official said. Tiwari bagged 107 votes in NMC election. ■ PTI

**Debt Recovery Tribunal-I, Delhi**  
4th Floor, Jeevan Tara Building,  
Parliament Street, New Delhi-110001

O.A. No. 68 / 2019  
**Corporation Bank**  
Versus      **Applicant**

Sh. Rajdeep Singh & Ors.  
Respondents

To,  
1. Sh. Rajdeep Singh S/o Sh. Sukhbir Singh Flat No. 12, 2nd Floor Rana Market, Opp. H-Block Palam Vihar, Gurugram, Haryana, Also at Road No. 15, Jawahar Nagar Mango Shara City, Plot No. 48 Jamshedpur, Jharkhand, Also at Resident Expert Telecom Contact Midland Credit Management India P.Ltd., Plot No. 28-P Sector-44, Gurugram, Haryana

2. Ms. Maninder Deep Singh S/o Sh. Sukhbir Singh Flat No. 12, 2ND Floor Rana Market, Opp. H-Block Palam Vihar, Gurugram, Haryana, Also at: Road No. 15, Jawahar Nagar Mango Shara City, Plot No. 48 Jamshedpur, Jharkhand

3. White House The Vocational Education Foundation (Builder & Developer) Though Its Managing Directors D-302, Sector-10, Noida, UP, Also at: Plot No. 8, Sector-PI Greater Noida, Gautam Budh Nagar, UP, Also at: A Group of IEC, M-92 Connaught Place, New Delhi-01

Whereas the above named applicant has instituted a case for recovery of Rs. 42,25,587.00 (Rs Forty Two Lacs Twenty Five Thousand Five Hundred Eighty Seven Only) against you and whereas it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance before Ld. Registrar on 16-01-2021 at 10.30 A.M. (for further details kindly visit DRT website www.drtgovt.gov.in) Phone No. 011-23748473

Take notice that in case of your failure to appear on the above mentioned day before this Tribunal, the case will be heard and decided in your absence.

Due to ongoing Pandemic Situation, all the matter will be taken up through Video Conferencing and for that purpose:-

(i) All the Advocates/Litigants shall download the "Cisco Webex" application / Software;

(ii) "Meeting ID" and "Password" for the next date of hearing quo cases to be taken by "Registrar/Recovery Officer-I and Recovery Officer-II shall be available one day prior to the next date at DRT Official Portal i.e. "drt.gov.in" under the Public Notice Head.

(iii) In any exigency quo that, the Advocates/Litigants can contact the concerned official at Ph. No. 011-23748473

Given under my hand and seal of the Tribunal on this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of December, 2020.

by order of this Tribunal  
for Registrar

Respondent may contact under mention phone number for further enquiry.

Amit K. Dar, Ld. Registrar, DRT-I, New Delhi  
Phone: 011-23748473  
E-mail: registrator-dts@nic.in,  
drt1delhi-dts@nic.in

# WB: Laxmi Ratan quits Cabinet, BJP welcomes him to join

In his letter to CM, Shukla says he wants to 'retire' from politics but has not given up his MLA post

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 5 JANUARY

**I**n the cauldron of those quitting either state Cabinet or Trinamul Congress, former cricketer and a junior minister in the state Cabinet, Laxmi Ratan Shukla today resigned as several TMC leaders switched to BJP.

Shukla sent his resignation letter to chief minister Mamata Banerjee and a copy of it to Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar, sources said.

Former captain of the Bengal Ranji team, Shukla (39) joined Trinamul before the last state election in 2016 and is MLA of Howrah (North) constituency. He is a minister of state for youth services and sports in the state Cabinet and also Trinamul district president of Howrah.

"Anyone can resign. I have received his resignation letter. Laxmi is a good boy and in his letter he has written that he is quitting politics and wants to return to sports. He will continue as MLA till the election and I have recommended to the governor that his resignation should be accepted. There is no place for any misunderstanding. He is a person from the sports field and should devote more time there. He should play well. Please don't take it in a negative way," said Miss Banerjee to reporters after the state Cabinet meeting



in Nabanna.

In his letter to Miss Banerjee, the former cricketer said he wants to "retire" from politics but has said that he is not quitting the MLA post.

Trinamul leader and forest minister Rajib Banerjee has yet again skipped the state Cabinet meeting raising speculation in the political circle though sources said that he has informed the leadership about the reason of absence.

The former cricketer's resignation came almost a fortnight after state transport minister Suvenu Adhikari had left the party and joined BJP. Suvenu's youngest brother, Soumen Adhikari, too, had switched sides and joined the BJP. He was a councillor and chairperson of a municipality

in East Midnapore district. At least a dozen other party councillors joined the BJP with him last week.

Two other members of the Adhikari family are still Trinamul MPs-Suvenu Adhikari's father Sisir and brother Dibyen-dul.

The ruling TMC said Shukla's resignation is unfortunate but it will not affect the party, while the BJP said that the former cricketer is welcome to join the saffron camp.

The Congress claimed that TMC is collapsing and party supremo and chief minister Mamata Banerjee has no remedy for it, while the CPI(M) asked her to explain why the state's ministers one after another are losing faith in her.

"Mamata Banerjee had given

Shukla due respect and even made him a minister. He was inducted as part of our policy to give prominence to people from different walks of life. It is unfortunate if he quit his post, but it won't affect the party," TMC spokesperson Kunal Ghosh said.

Describing Shukla as a good party member, senior TMC MP Sougata Ray expressed hope that he will reconsider his decision.

BJP spokesperson Samik Bhattacharya said that if Shukla wants to join his party, he is welcome.

"The Trinamool Congress has no political ideology, no direction. It was established on anti-CPI(M) plank which is no more relevant now. People at the grassroots level are aware that the TMC's days are numbered. Just wait for some more time," he told reporters.

Bhattacharya did not comment on whether the party had been in touch with Shukla. BJP leader and Union minister Babul Supriyo urged Shukla to leave the TMC and join the BJP.

State Congress president Adhir Ranjan Choudhury claimed the TMC is collapsing and Banerjee does not know how to prevent it.

"We will not ask Shukla to join the party. But our door is open for those who want to be

part of the Congress family, those who can't be with the BJP for ideological reasons," said Choudhury who is also the leader of the Congress in Lok Sabha.

Senior CPI(M) leader Sujan Chakraborty said that Shukla was a sportsman who was made an MLA by the TMC.

"It is not for us to comment on why he resigned as minister. He and his party supremo can explain it better. But the CM should explain why his ministers one after another are losing faith in her," Chakraborty said.

Sources in the TMC said an ongoing fissure in the party's Howrah district leadership might have prompted Laxmi to resign from the government.

Intra-party feud between two groups of state cooperation minister and senior leader Arup Roy and Rajib Banerjee, state forest minister, respectively of DG (Archaeological Survey of India) and National Museum of National History's director among others as its members.

On the other hand, Baishali Dalmia, TMC MLA from Bally in Howrah, has expressed her strong grievances against a section of the party leadership in the district for Laxmi's resignation. "There was little space for him to work for the party because of some bad elements in Trinamul Congress are opposing him," she alleged.

by concerned agencies," an official in the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry said.

Another official said that the outlook of the new building will be similar to the existing one that is why there should be no problem in getting permission from the Heritage Conservation Committee. In September last year, Tata Projects Limited had won the contract to build the new Parliament building. Earlier in the day, the Supreme Court gave a go-ahead to the ambitious project of the Modi government. In the majority verdict, the apex court said that prior permission shall be taken from Heritage Conservation Committee and other relevant authorities before the start of construction at sites.

**Project a case of misplaced priorities, says Cong:**  
Soon after the Supreme Court cleared the deck for the ambitious Central Vista project on Tuesday, the Congress said the project is not a legal issue but a case of misplaced priorities of "an autocrat seeking to etch his name in the annals of history".

The Opposition party also described the project as "a colossal waste of public money" in times of the coronavirus pandemic and an economic recession.

## Central Vista: Work on new Parliament bldg to start after heritage panel's approval

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 5 JANUARY

The Central Public Works Department, which is executing the government's ambitious Central Vista redevelopment project, will soon start the construction work of the new Parliament building once it gets permission from the Heritage Conservation Committee, officials said on Tuesday.

According to the committee's website, a special secretary or additional secretary of the Union housing and urban affairs ministry is the chairman of the CPC. It was set up by incorporating a new Clause 23 in Delhi Building Bylaws 1983 for the protection of heritage buildings, heritage precincts and natural feature areas in the national capital.

The website states that committee has additional direc-

tor general (CPWD), chief town planner (MCD), DDA commissioner (Plng), chief architect (NDMC), representative of DG (Archaeological Survey of India) and National Museum of National History's director among others as its members.

"The CPWD will approach the committee and seek permission before the start of construction work of new Parliament building. Other formalities will also be followed

## SEARCH OF MISSING



General public is hereby informed that one lady (depicted in the photo), **Namely: Rekha Mahto, W/o: Rajesh Mahto, R/o: House of Sham Dutt Sharma, Chilla Village, Delhi, Permanent Address: VIP/O/PS Gusai Gaon, Dist: Kokrajhar, Assam, Aged: 27 years, has been missing from Chilla Village, Delhi since 20.12.2020. In this regard a case vide DD No. 100-A, Dated 21.12.2020, has been lodged at P.S. Mayur Vihar, Delhi. Her physical description is as under:**

**Height: 4 Feet, Complexion: Wheatish, Face: Long, Physique/Built: Medium, Clothing: Brown Colour Sweater, Gold colour Suit-Salwar and Hawa Chappal in her feet.**

Any person is having any information/clue about this missing lady, may inform SHO, P.S. Mayur Vihar, Delhi at E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in or website : http://cbi.nic.in. In Tel No.: 011-24368638 or 24368641

**S.H.O P.S. Mayur Vihar, Delhi DP/322/ED/2020. Ph: 011-22710335, 22711048, 8750870626**

BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL - II, DELHI  
4TH FLOOR JEEVAN TARA BUILDING  
PARLIAMENT STREET NEW DELHI - 110001.

OA NO 169/2020

DATE: 22.12.2020

YES BANK LTD.

APPLICANT

VERSUS

LIGARE AVIATION LTD. & ORS. RESPONDENT

To,

DEFENDANT

1. LIGARE AVIATION LTD. (BORROWER)  
(FORMERLY KNOWN AS RELIGARE AVIATION LTD.)  
(THROUGH ITS MANAGING DIRECTOR)  
G-16, MARINA ARCADE CONNAUGHT CIRCUS NEW DELHI - 01  
ALSO AT: 8/87 MEHRAM NAGAR NEW DELHI - 110010

2. R.S. INFRASTRUCTURE PVT. LTD.  
GROUND FLOOR PLOT NO. A-3, 4 & 5, GAUTAM BUDH NAGAR UP - 201301

3. RHC HOLDING PVT. LTD. (GUARANTOR)  
G-16, MARINA ARCADE CONNAUGHT CIRCUS NEW DELHI - 01  
ALSO AT: 54 JANPATH NEW DELHI - 01

Whereas the above named applicant (s) has / have instituted a case for recovery of Rs. 22,29,68,440/- (RUPEES TWENTY TWO CRORE TWENTY NINE LAKH SIXTY EIGHT THOUSAND FOUR HUNDRED AND FORTY ONLY) against you and where as it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in the ordinary way therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in the Tribunal on 23.04.2021 at 10.30 A.M.

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

BY ORDER OF THE TRIBUNAL

FOR REGISTRAR  
DRT-II, DELHI

## CANCELLATION OF TRAINS

In order to upgrade the infrastructure, Railway will undertake the Electronic Interlocking work in connection with Raj Nandgaon-Kalenna 3rd line of Nagpur Division from 06.01.2021 to 11.01.2021. During this period the following trains will be affected as under:-

### CANCELLATION OF TRAINS

Train No. & Train Name	Date from originating station
08237 Korba - Amritsar Jn. Festival Express Special	06.01.2021 & 08.01.2021
08238 Amritsar Jn. - Bilaspur Festival Express Special	08.01.2021 & 10.01.2021
02887 Visakhapatnam - Hazrat Nizamuddin Samta Exp.	05, 06, 07 & 09.01.2021
02888 Hazrat Nizamuddin - Visakhapatnam Samta Exp.	07, 08, 09 & 11.01.2021

NOTE: All norms of the State and Central Government regarding COVID-19 including Social distancing, sanitization etc., must be followed in the trains and at the Railway stations. All other precautions associated with COVID-19 should also be ensured.

For any kind of information such as detailed Time-Table of stations enroute etc., passengers are requested to contact Railway Enquiry No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in or NTES App.

37/2021

NORTHERN RAILWAY

Your Convenience - Our Concern

Visit us at : www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

## Muslim vote

That the first visit of All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul-Muslimeen (AIMIM) leader and Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi to West Bengal after announcing his party's intention to contest the forthcoming Assembly poll in the state on Sunday was headlined by his meeting with Muslim cleric and 'youth leader' Abbas Siddiqui at Furfura Sharif in Hooghly is significant. Equally so was his comment after the meeting: "We will work with Abbas Siddiqui. We will work behind him and support whatever decision he takes." Leaving the details of whether the AIMIM will form an alliance with Siddiqui (who is considering launching his own party) or if he would be appointed head of the AIMIM in Bengal vague, the impact of Owaisi's presence has made clear that his model of Muslim consolidation politics is beginning to acquire traction, at least in pockets of the country where the community is present in sizeable numbers. West Bengal is not an exception. Much has been written about the possible impact on the Trinamool Congress' minority support base due to the AIMIM's entry. The fact is that with more than a 30 per cent vote share, Muslims are a deciding factor in at least 90 Assembly segments in the state. Owaisi has till now been focussing on building his party organisation, participating in community outreach programmes, and scouting for potential candidates in districts of West Bengal that adjoin the Seemanchal region of Bihar where his party did remarkably well in the Assembly election. His forging of a putative pact with Siddiqui given the cleric draws his support mainly from North and South 24-Parganas shows that the AIMIM supremo is working on a game-plan to match his ambition.

It will not be all smooth sailing for him, naturally. The formidable Mamata Banerjee still commands strong support among the largely conservative Muslim community of the state while the progressive elements within it have traditionally tilted towards the Left Front. The Congress retains some support among a cross-section of Muslims and where it has a strong local leader and a semblance of a party organisation, this is electorally relevant. Which leaves the BJP, which is just not interested in pursuing a Muslim community-specific agenda as it believes it is the politics of minority religious identity which has led to the community's ghettoization and radicalisation. Despite having to fend off constant barbs that the AIMIM is the B-team of the BJP, Owaisi's rise as a contender - though as yet far from power in any meaningful way - has many worried. The concern stems primarily from the consequences of his quasi-religious agenda with exclusivist undertones for not only an economically backward community with its fair share of obscurantism but also for the hardening of anti-Muslim sentiment among Hindus. Forget, for a moment, the electoral dividend or debacle such a development may lead to for the parties in the fray. Think, instead, of how the space for societal inclusiveness, reform, and equality before law would shrink on either side.

## Light & the Eye

The eye, said to be quite the most vital organ, is expected to be treated in a profoundly specialised manner from this week, if Monday's announcement by the West Bengal Chief Minister is any indication. "Chokher Alo" will thus reinforce Swasthya Sathi, the state-sponsored health insurance policy. The latest matrix of Duare Sarkar (government at doorstep) ought to be visible now more than ever and shorn, one hopes, of the intervention of middlemen, and not the least in government health facilities where even admission and OPD priorities are allegedly controlled by touts who strut the complexes. Ergo, it is fervently to be hoped that the outcome will transcend pre-election rhetoric. In terms of public policy, most particularly the parameter of health, the new initiative will be generally welcomed and not merely by those for whom treatment in hospitals, and no less important after-care, can be almost unaffordable. Aside from providing "eye health" to all in West Bengal, the scheme envisages no fewer than 20 lakh cataract surgeries free of cost. Over the next five years, cataract extraction will be coupled with the complimentary distribution of 8.25 lakh spectacles. Well might Mamata Banerjee hope that the scheme will "help us eradicate vision impairment in the state". Theoretically, "Chokher Alo", verily a New Year gift that will be flagged off on Tuesday, should cover a wide cross-section of the populace. Towards that noble end, students of all schools and colleges will undergo free check-up over the next five years and free spectacles will be distributed. Much will of course hinge on execution, the commitment of ophthalmologists, and the cooperation of the patient, which the doctors deem to be as important as the check-up and the medical procedure. To begin with, the scheme will be implemented in 1200 gram panchayats and 120 urban health centres. The eye camps are to be supervised by 300 ophthalmologists who will work in tandem, to quote the Chief Minister.

Altogether, this is a noble endeavour in West Bengal, a state where 11 per cent of the people are blind and where more than 4 per cent make do with what doctors diagnose as "low vision". Indeed, a vision test is the primary prognosis in any eye hospital. It has now been conceded by the health department that the "number of persons with low vision must be much higher as the elderly in remote areas hardly have money and resources to call on an ophthalmologist". "Chokher Alo", therefore, ought to take care of all age-groups, irrespective of economic standing. If it successfully attains fruition, it can well be extended to address common eye problems, notably diabetic retinopathy and glaucoma. A beginning has been made, hopefully to fulfil the Benthamite doctrine of the "greatest good of the greatest number".

# An age of anger

By all indications, the 21st century appears to be an age of rage. We are witnessing extraordinary waves of protests around the world against widening inequality and rising authoritarianism. It is understandable why citizens are angry. But why are political leaders angrier than the citizens?



**H**istory is littered with turning points that never were and fulcrums that failed to move the earth. The French and Russian revolutions were big and successful. But the two failed revolutions - the 1848 revolution and the 1968 revolution - made even greater impact on the world. In 1848 a series of republican revolts against European monarchies took place but all ended in failure and repression. But it was also the year Marx wrote the Manifesto, perhaps the most influential single piece of political writing. The 1968 revolution too was defeated. No one seized power and yet the world changed. The fire of 1968 may have died down but memory and legacy haven't. Today, an array of protests across the world by the youth, students, farmers, migrants, women's groups and climate warriors including 'collapsologists' (those who abandon all hope and are learning to die) is rocking the world.

When the 21st century dawned, some geopolitical sages proclaimed that the future had already been written and that the future had already happened. Celebrated Colombian writer Gabriel García Marquez, however, warned us saying, "expect nothing from the 21st century. It is the 21st century that expects everything from you." We are entering the third decade of the 21st century and we are not even able to define it. Is it the "age of mediocrity" or are we living in the "age of anger?" Have we ushered in a "post-truth world" or are we going through "modern primitivism?" A lot is still unfolding and there is a lot more that we don't know than what we do know.

This month marks the 10th anniversary of the Arab Spring. The movement that apparently failed continues to be a potent force. In fact, a plethora of protests and movements of this decade is already overwhelming the world. As they say, every outburst legitimises the next. Democracy remains alien to the Arab world. And yet, the region has changed. In fact, democracy may be moving in reverse gear across the world but the anger and the spirit of rebellion of the

Arab Spring is pervasive.

Shakespeare in the Merchant of Venice writes, "How far that little candle throws his beams! The Arab Spring indeed threw its beams far and wide. It will be unwise to dismiss the Arab Spring, the Occupy Movement, Podemos and a host of protests globally as failures. As Henry Kissinger told the Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci in 1972, "The history of things that didn't happen" has to be considered before passing a verdict on things that did happen.

This decade began with widespread protests and is closing with even wider upheavals. Even the first decade witnessed strong movements

which ousted several governments in Latin America. The Piqueteros Movement in Argentina gave an innovative slogan, "Nadie nos representa" (No one represents us). It was perhaps the strongest assertion of citizens' power.

By all indications, the 21st century appears to be an age of rage. We are witnessing extraordinary waves of protests around the world against widening inequality and rising authoritarianism. It is understandable why citizens are angry. But why are political leaders angrier than the citizens?

And not just Trump whom The Nation magazine calls a "Merchant of Anger." Xi Jinping, Putin, Erdogan, Bolsonaro, Modi, Orban and many others are all getting angrier by the day as the citizens refuse to bite Marie Antoinette's cake. What is worrying is the growing trend of toxic rhetoric shaping politics. Peddlers of lies and conspiracy theorists are having a field day.

How does one explain what Raul Gallegos, political risk adviser to Fortune 250 companies, calls the "global anger pandemic"? Italian political theorist Paolo Gerbaudo says that 'citizenship' is the defining belief of the new wave of protests. The world is the "angriest it has ever been", according to a recent Gallup Emotions

Report. Christine Lagarde, former managing director of IMF, says that anger is real. She had earlier cautioned that similar conditions preceded many wars. Thanks to the information revolution and the advent of social media, anger has become infectious. The stories and slogans on petitions websites that call for change are enraged people.

Most movements begin as campaigns. And end of campaign is not the end of revolution. Movements need not always be huge. It is not so much their national and global reach but their transformative and organic nature that make them movements. A successful movement rests on the principles of engagement and appeal.

Protest movements may not overpower governments and regimes, but they go a long way in undermining their legitimacy and support base. Not all great movements begin with clearly defined goals. Whether it was the women's suffrage movement, India's freedom movement, civil rights movement, J P movement, colour revolutions, or the Arab Spring, they all began with powerful banding together against the powerful.

Most protests in recent years have been spontaneous. A notable feature of this outburst of anger is its peaceful nature. Harvard professor Erica Chenoweth describes it "a pronounced shift in the global landscape of dissent". Though many non-violent protests are aimed at the end of a policy or a regime, a large majority of them have the objective of bringing about transformative change and influencing governmental policies. Non-violent protest movements don't alienate anyone; they seek to bring everyone on board. They also keep the windows of opportunity open to conversation.

This is the greatest strength of the ongoing farmers' movement in India. The state has often handled the farmers' agitations in a myopic way. Farmers were

earlier dismissed as 'kulaks' but never as 'Khalistanis' and 'Naxals'. Blinded by its electoral gains, the ruling dispensation has kept pouring venom on agitating farmers even while holding talks with them. As thinker and cultural activist G N Devy says, "the nation did not create Indian farmers; the farmers created the Indian nation." There is no idea of India without the farming community. Gandhiji understood this reality when he gave a clarion call to "go to the villages, that is India, therein lives the soul of India". Islamophobes, supremacists and toxic nationalists are never tired of stigmatizing the designated others - immigrants, minorities, farmers. Both market and governments promised El Dorado but provided only a Disneyesque beacon of light and fake optimism to the masses. The populists of all hues have used the economic crisis and the pandemic to grab power by perpetuating false narratives and taming the media and civil society. The sense of frustration and powerlessness among the poor and marginalized masses explains the unprecedented rage among the people. Pankaj Mishra in his book, The Age of Anger, talks of a "global civil war" between the elites who enjoy 'modernity's choicest fruits' and the uprooted masses who have been cheated of the same fruits. He cites Nietzsche to illustrate his point that resentment thrives 'where the modern promise of equality collides with massive disparities of power, education, status and property ownership'.

All said, it is too early to say this time it is different. One thing is clear though that the citizens are no longer impressed by political leaders blessed with flawed judgement and impoverished imagination and that they are determined to take back national institutions. It is an exercise in civic renewal. Protest movements for democratic rights, dignity and justice are opening new horizons. Henry A Wallace, the 33rd vice-president of the US, described the 20th century as a "century of the common man" which remained a myth. But the 21st century is turning out to be a "century of empowered citizens", perhaps a century of "angry citizens."

A MEMBER OF THE **ANN**  
ASIAN VOICES

## The year gone by

**I**t was a long year. A year that caught us and many by surprise, a year many are feeling glad it is over. Yes, 2020 is finally over. There were no celebrations to welcome the new year. We stayed home on the eve, and for once, for many, with families as they waited for the clock to strike midnight. We are in 2021 looking forward to a new beginning, hoping for the best. When we look back, what comes first to mind is the disruptions caused by the novel coronavirus pandemic. Children saw schools close on the second day, adults had their professional life disrupted, the economy was hit hard, and therefore, loss of income and livelihood for many. It was a year of having to stay away from families, spending weeks in quarantine and bearing lockdowns. While the general feeling is that the year gone by was good riddance, there were so many lessons 2020 taught us that we could take into the new year and beyond. Covid-19 was a pandemic that threatened the human race. We were better at fighting it. It taught us about leadership in times of crisis. It taught us about the strength of our collective effort, about the advantages of our smallness and togetherness.

We saw how we can control a pandemic with the right leadership, right strategy and the right mindset of the people. We are more prepared and ready to face a third or fourth lockdown and future crisis, health or otherwise. 2020 made us better. If the year gone by is remembered for the pan-

**KUENSEL**  
dem, we should not forget the opportunities it presented to us. While we prevented a catastrophe, it opened our eyes and reminded us of our priorities. As the border gates closed and the economy came to a standstill, we were seriously looking at diversification of our economy, we relooked at the tourism policy, the labour market, streamlining of governance and adopting technology that many always thought was too difficult to adapt. The agriculture sector received much-deserved attention as the pandemic exposed our dependence on imported food.

2020, in many ways, was the turning point. It forced many of us to change our outlook. As many were forced to work remotely, we leveraged technology. We are conducting important meetings and conferences from homes, which once was impossible without a star-rated hotel or travelling to a different dzongkhag or country. The rhetoric of e-services and e-governance suddenly became a reality and is improving every time there is a lockdown. We should keep up the momentum in the new year and beyond, with or without a pandemic. Meanwhile, what we have to be mindful of as we welcome the new year is that it is only the digit that changed. The problems will remain. There is a new variant of the virus spreading and spreading fast. But we know the way ahead. 2020 showed us our potential. We learnt our lessons, grown and sailed together through the year just gone by. Collectively we can fight a second or third wave, as we wait for a vaccine to protect all Bhutanese from the global pandemic. If we are to make a resolution for the new year, staying in the fight together would be the most fruitful one. We can start with wearing face masks, keeping distance and cooperating with authorities and those on the frontlines.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

## Deviation from the script

**SIR,** Once again, veteran Tamil actor Rajinikanth has displayed his unpredictable character by dropping his plan to float a political party in January 2021. His sudden decision has come as an anti-climax to his hyped-up political venture. Even if the reasons, including his unstable health and the threat of a new Covid-19 variant, are obvious, his supporters had the hope that the star actor would provide a genuine third political force in Tamil Nadu, where two political fronts have dominated for over 40 years.

As a blessing in disguise, Rajini's decision is an opportunity for those seeking to build a viable alternative to the Dravidian parties to look beyond the film industry. Cinematic glamour can't make up for the lack of political mindset and ground work. Any political movement will have to be built up by considering public grievances and concerns. Mr. Rajinikanth had nothing to offer other than a vague promise of 'spiritual' politics

and fight against corruption. Although Tamil Nadu is well placed on development graphs, it has many chronic issues like variations in maternal mortality ratio and infant mortality ratio, access to health care, a gap in income and a rising urban population. The pandemic has exposed the vulnerability of the economically weak. These issues could have been the basis for the formation of third front but, evidently, the actor's strategy to take a short cut to power by riding on the back of his fans, was bound to fail.

Mr. Rajinikanth, looking for power to be handed over

to him on a platter, finally realised that his years of filmdom had hardly prepared him for the rough and tough political life where nothing goes as per script. Yours, etc., Sanjay Chopra, Mohali, December 31.

### JUST POLITICS

**SIR,** Is Sourav Ganguly the greatest living icon in cricket? If not, why are Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP's face in West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankar and other BJP leaders lining up not only to wish him a speedy recovery but to suggest that specialists from

other states be involved, as if no one in the world has earlier had a heart attack or an angioplasty? I agree we are blessed to have a PM who takes care of citizens. Thus, while he has rightly shown concern for Ganguly, his party offered no obituaries to legendary sportsmen such as PK Banerjee and Chuni Goswami, or rush in droves to enquire about the health of India's first World Cup winning captain, Kapil Dev when he suffered a similar heart attack a few months ago.

Is it because of the political overtones in Ganguly's case? The Bengal election is knocking at the door, and BJP wants Ganguly to be its chief ministerial face. While I wish Ganguly a speedy recovery, I feel he will be the Rajinikanth of West Bengal, and not take part in active politics.

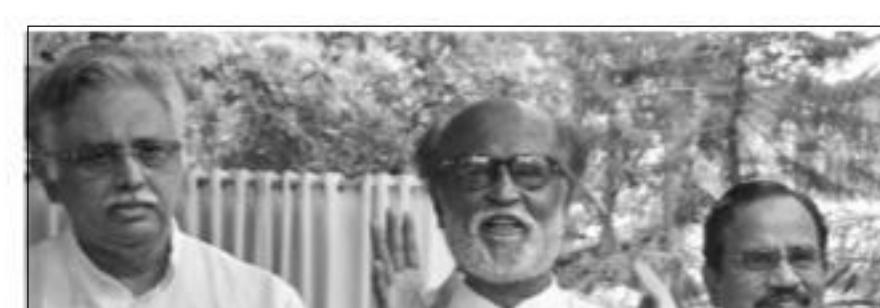
Yours, etc., Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee, Faridabad, 4 January.

**MONITOR HEALTH**

**SIR,** BCCI president and former India captain Sourav Ganguly, who underwent angioplasty after a mild heart attack, is stable and his health parameters are being closely monitored. We, the cricket fans wish for his speedy recovery.

Even active cricketers suffer such mild attacks and it is important to undergo testing every year as a routine to avoid major setbacks. The treadmill test is a dangerous one and should be avoided in border line cases. The aim must be to bring awareness, education and training to the general public in order to increase the likelihood of lives being saved in the event of a heart attack, as the early moments are critical and a trained person on the scene can make the critical difference.

Yours, etc., CKR Nathan, Kolkata, 4 January.



### SHOCKING

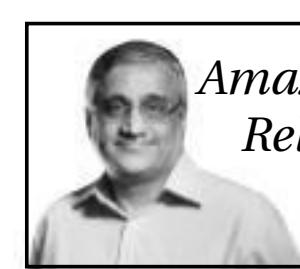
**SIR,** I refer to Valson Thampu's article, "Brides of Jesus?" published today which has exposed the shocking story of sexual exploitation of nuns in Kerala and the apathy of the police administration in taking action against the culprits.

Ordinary people have special regard for the Church being the holy temple and a priest is revered as one having a close spiritual connection with Jesus Christ. As such it gives pain to read about the misdeeds of priests inviting serious criminal charges. This should not have happened in Kerala, a state considered to be the best in India in terms of literacy and culture.

The Kerala government owes an explanation about police inaction despite written complaints from the nuns. It is hoped that after the reported incident in Kerala, the same will not be repeated elsewhere in India to defame the glory of the Church.

Yours, etc., AK Deb Biswas, Hooghly, 5 January





*Amazon was fully aware of his group's talks with Reliance Industries for the sale of retail assets*

KISHORE BIYANI  
FUTURE GROUP CEO

## THUMBNAILS

**PNB offer:** Punjab National Bank has announced the extension of its popular "PNB Festival Bonanza Offer-2020" till 31 March 2021. The promotional scheme has been rechristened now as PNB New Year Bonanza -2021. Under the PNB New Year Bonanza 2021 (during the offer period from 1 January 2021 to 31 March 2021), PNB will offer full waiver of upfront/ processing fees and documentation charges on all fresh housing loans, takeover housing loans, car loans and myProperty loans, according to a Press release. SNS

**SBI ATMs:** CMS Info Systems will set up 3,000 ATMs by March For State Bank of India (SBI) as the country's largest lender looks to expand the out-sourced model. The out-sourced model or Brown Level ATM (BLA) is managed by the service provider on behalf of the bank. Most of these ATMs are offsite ATMs. PTI

**VIP MD quits:** VIP Industries Ltd on Tuesday said its managing director Sudip Ghose has resigned from the company. His resignation will be effective from 31 January, and Anindya Dutta will take over as the new managing director from 1 February. PTI

**Tata Steel-CII pact:** Tata Steel has collaborated with CII Green Business Centre and relevant stakeholders in the Indian steel sector to develop Green-Pro framework for steel rebars, for first time in India. GreenPro Ecolabel enables the end-users to make an informed choice about buying steel having the lowest environment impact, said a release. SNS

**Samsung launch plan:** Samsung's next flagship launch is around the corner, with the company sending out invitations for its Galaxy Unpacked 2021 event, scheduled for 14 January. Samsung will most likely launch its newest Galaxy S Series flagship at the virtual event dubbed as "Everyday Epic", according to a Press release. SNS

**Oppo platform:** Smartphone maker Oppo on Tuesday announced the launch of its community platform to connect and engage with technology enthusiasts and enable multiple touchpoints. This interactive platform will allow users to collaborate, share and learn together keeping informed on the latest updates on all products and services, said a release. SNS

**Housing Edge platform:** Housing.com, a real-estate portal owned by Elara Technologies, has announced the launch of "Housing Edge", a full stack rental and allied services platform, through which the company enables digitisation of multiple services which tenants and landlords can use from the comfort of their homes. SNS

# Nation will be connected with one gas pipeline grid: PM

Modi inaugurates a 450-km natural gas pipeline between Kochi in Kerala to Mangaluru in Karnataka

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 5 JANUARY

**E**nunciating his energy roadmap, Prime Minister Narendra Modi today said the share of natural gas in India's energy basket will be more than doubled, energy sources diversified and the nation will be connected with one gas pipeline grid to help bring affordable fuel to people and industry.

Inaugurating a 450-km natural gas pipeline between Kochi in Kerala to Mangaluru in Karnataka, he said India under his government is seeing unprecedented work on highways, railway, metro, air, water, digital and gas connectivity which will aid economic development.

The government has an "integrated approach to energy planning. Our agenda is all-inclusive," he said.

While on the one hand, the natural gas pipeline network is being doubled to about 32,000 km in 5-6 years, on the other, work on the world's biggest hybrid renewable plant combining wind and solar

## ENERGY ROADMAP

► Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said the share of natural gas in India's energy basket will be more than doubled, energy sources diversified and the nation will be connected with one gas pipeline grid to help bring affordable fuel to people and industry



► The government has an "integrated approach to energy planning. Our energy agenda is all-inclusive," he said.

power has started in Gujarat. Also, the emphasis is being laid on manufacturing biofuels as well as electric mobility, he said.

These measures will help India move away from being highly dependent on polluting coal and liquid fuels for meeting its energy needs.

As much as 58 per cent of all energy consumed in the country currently comes from coal while petroleum and other liquids make up for 26 percent of the energy basket.

Modi said the share of natural gas, which is cleaner and can be transported through pipelines thereby cutting vehicular movements needed for other fuels, is targeted to be raised to 15 per cent by 2030.

By the same time, petrol will be doped with as much as 20 per cent of ethanol extracted from sugarcane and other agro products, he said.

This would help cut reliance on imports for meeting oil needs as well as reduce carbon emissions.

Also, the focus on renewable energy by using abundant energy from the sun and wind to generate electricity and promoting the use of battery-operated electric vehicles will help India meet its COP-21 commitments for cutting carbon emissions.

The Prime Minister said the government is working with a vision to connect the entire nation with one-pipeline grid that will help improve clean energy access as well as also aid in the development of city gas projects.

The new pipeline inaugurated today is part of that plan, he said.

This new line will help the fuel to industries such as petrochemical plants and fertiliser units as well as provide fuel for city gas projects for supply of CNG to automobiles and piped cooking gas to households in cities along the route, he said.

It will also help a 5 million tons a year liquefied natural

gas (LNG) import terminal at Kochi to achieve full capacity. The terminal has been operating at less than 10 per cent of the capacity for last few years as there was no pipeline to take the gas to users.

Outlining the work done by his government in the energy sector, Modi said 900 CNG stations were set up till 2014 from the advent of CNG as fuel for automobiles in the country around 1992. In the last six years, the number of CNG stations has gone up to 1,500 and the target is to take them to 10,000, he said.

Also, 25 lakh households had piped natural gas connections for using the fuel for cooking purposes till 2014 which has risen to 72 lakh now, he said, adding the new pipeline would help add 700 CNG stations and provide 21 lakh piped cooking gas connections in Kerala and Karnataka.

He said his government has doubled the LPG user base in six years by issuing 14 crore connections equivalent to the ones that were issued in six decades prior to it.

# Fiat Chrysler to invest \$250m for production of 4 new Jeep SUVs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 5 JANUARY

SUVs rolling out of Ranjangaon."

He further said: "This investment is in addition to \$450 million we have already committed to our Indian operations over the past five years. We are delighted to announce our exciting new products, coupled with our continued commitment to India in Jeep brand's 80th anniversary year."

Datta said FCA India is determined to increase locally-made componentry in its vehicles which are produced in the joint venture manufacturing facility. "Our plans in India are aimed at increasing the value proposition for customers through our products and services, working hard on customer satisfaction and unlocking business opportunities for our business partners," he added.

Recently FCA had announced \$150 million investment to set up a global digital centre in Hyderabad. The automotive group also expanded its engineering operations recently and had stated that it would be creating at least 1,000 new jobs by the end of 2021.

# World Bank loan to improve inland waterways in Bengal

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 5 JANUARY

The Government of India, the Government of West Bengal and the World Bank today signed a \$105-million project to improve the inland water transport infrastructure in the World Bank.

"The inland waterways are now emerging as a cost-effective and an environment friendly option for passenger and freight movement. This project will help improve the river transport infrastructure in West Bengal and help in the economic development of the state by connecting the hinterland with markets and job centres in Kolkata's metropolitan area," said CS Mohapatra.

The project ~ the West Bengal Inland Water Transport, Logistics and Spatial Development Project ~ will

cover the five most populous districts of southern West Bengal, including its urban agglomeration ~ the Kolkata metropolitan area (KMA) where around 30 million people or one-third of West Bengal's population live.

"This operation will allow the state to invest in Kolkata's economic productivity by making its waterways and ferry services part of an efficient and safe urban mobility strategy," said Junaid Ahmad, World Bank country director in India. "Importantly, given Kolkata's strategic location, the project is also ensuring that the metropolitan area emerges as a transport and logistics hub for the sub-region, leveraging the EDFC and connecting to the North-east and the landlocked countries of Nepal and Bhutan."

Sharing improvement in some of the high-frequency data, the report said the sustained spurt in commercial and industrial activity was fur-

# Economy sees V-shaped recovery

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 5 JANUARY

Approval of the long-awaited Covid-19 vaccine provides strength to the optimism on health and economic fronts, the finance ministry said in its monthly economic report.

"The effective management of Covid-19 spread despite the festive season and onset of the winter season, combined with sustained improvement in high-frequency indicators and V-shaped recovery along with easing of lockdown restrictions distinguishing Indian economy as one riding against the Covid wave," the report said.

The new year, it said, has dawned with the approval of the long-awaited Covid-19 vaccine and initiation of vaccination drives in various countries.

"This gives strength to the optimism on both health and

economic fronts despite continuing surge in global cases and the potential challenge of a mutant strain," the monthly economic review for December said.

India, the report said, "has been successful in bending the Covid curve till now, with reducing weekly daily infections, rising recovery rate (now at around 95 per cent) and one of the world's lowest case fatality rates".

The downside risk, however, remains due to the spread of the UK variant and fatigue from social distancing guidelines, it said, adding the emphasis on continued observation of "Covid appropriate" behaviour with the due exercise of caution and surveillance needs to be sustained.

Sharing improvement in some of the high-frequency data, the report said the sustained spurt in commercial and industrial activity was fur-



ther corroborated by continued growth in PMI manufacturing, power demand, persistent improvement in E-way bills generated and highway toll collection rising above pre-Covid levels.

Monthly GST collections attained their record levels in December.

The gross GST revenue collected in December 2020 was Rs 1,15,174 crore, the highest since the introduction of goods and services tax from 1 July 2017.

The liquidity situation

remains comfortable as the accumulation of dollars along with the growth of currency in circulation are enhancing liquidity in the banking system despite the average daily net absorptions by the RBI rose in December compared to the preceding month, the report said.

The credit growth improved sharply as reflected in strong non-food credit rise and overall credit growth, thanks to the emergency credit line guarantee scheme (ECLGS), which continues to support robust credit disbursements to MSMEs, with Rs 2.05 lakh crore sanctioned to 80.93 lakh borrowers under ECLGS 1.0.

Extension of ECLGS to 26 stressed sectors is a further boost to MSME credit growth. Credit growth is further corroborated by a sharp rise in the incremental credit deposit ratio of banks, as per the report.

# Sensex, Nifty scale fresh peaks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, 5 JANUARY

**INDICES WATCH**

► Despite opening on a negative note, the 30-share BSE index pared all losses and staged a smart recovery to end 260.98 points or 0.54 per cent higher at 48,437.78 points.

► The broader NSE Nifty rose 66.60 points or 0.47 per cent to settle at a new peak of 14,199.50 points.



a record intra-day high of 14,215.60 points.

Axis Bank was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rallying 6.31 per cent, followed by HDFC, IndusInd Bank, TCS, Asian Paints, HCL Tech, Titan and ICICI Bank.

On the other hand, ONGC, Bajaj Finance, NTPC, M&M and Reliance Industries were among the laggards, tumbling up to 2.06 per cent.

"Domestic equities saw a brisk recovery from today's low

mainly led by sharp rebound in banking and IT stocks. Continued improvement in Covid-19 recovery rates along with likely commencement of vaccination drive shortly and sustained improvement in key economic data defied weak global markets.

"IT stocks witnessed strong buying ahead of TCS' 3Q FY21 numbers...Key economic data for Dec'20 have been quite encouraging, which along with likely commencement in

vaccination drive in India have bolstered investors' confidence. Hence, domestic equities are likely to remain in buy on dips mode," said Binod Modi, head strategy at Reliance Securities.

BSE bankex, finance, IT, teck, consumer durables and capital goods indices rose up to 1.90 per cent, while metal, energy, realty, oil and gas, basic materials and auto closed lower.

Broader BSE mid-cap and small-cap indices climbed as much as 1.38 per cent.

Global markets were mixed after Britain announced a fresh nationwide coronavirus lockdown, while Wall Street wilted under selling pressure in the overnight session.

Meanwhile, the global oil benchmark Brent crude futures rose 0.69 per cent to \$51.44 per barrel.

The rupee depreciated by 15 paise to finish at 73.17 against the US dollar.

The issue has many firsts,

# Exim Bank sells bonds worth \$1 billion to global investors

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, 5 JANUARY

Rasquinha said, pointing to the lowest coupon (2.25 per cent per annum) ever for a large USD bond offering by a domestic issuer, and is also the first investment-grade dollar bond sale from Asia ex-Japan in 2021 and also the largest from Asia ex-Japan in the year.

Again, this is the first EMBI eligible 144a/RegS bond from Asia ex-Japan in 2021.

Regulation S/144a bonds are issued by foreign issuers in the US debt market and are denominated in US dollars.

I-bankers are expecting higher debt money to come to domestic shores this year given the record low interest rates. Companies will also be raising money to meet the likely capex need or repayment demands as the economy returns to normalcy after the year-long pandemic.

In January 2020, the Exim Bank had raised \$1 billion in 10-year dollar money offering US treasury plus 1.70 bps. Normally, the bank issues 5, 7 and 10-year debt to meet its project export needs.

For Exim Bank, the current issue saw the largest order book and over-subscription (four times) for a RegS issuance.

The Exim Bank, with a substantially dollarised balance sheet, is one of the largest domestic issuers of long-term debt in international debt capital markets and its paper is treated as quasi-sovereign as the bank is fully owned by the government.

The funds from the sale will be used to support project exports, overseas investment by way of long-term credit and its export lines of credit portfolio, the bank said.

# World awaits humble innovators: Out-of-box-thinking R&D

RAJA MURTHY  
MUMBAI, 5 JANUARY

The Global Innovation Index for 2020 ranked India 48 among 131 countries, and India ~ now the world's fifth-largest economy ~ needs to graduate higher up the innovation ladder to ensure its destiny of becoming the planet's leading economy by year 2040.

It will be achieved, with root-level and leadership attitude changes in corporate culture centred on being open to creativity, new ideas and hard work for success.

A decade ago, domestic television marketers were commonly advertising products as "world-class", meaning there is a lower grade

"India class". Not anymore, if honest innovation becomes core of India's economy ~ instead of cut-throat pricing and imported cheap Chinese junk.

India's young generation can ensure the drive for world-leading excellence starts with humility of leadership receptive to ideas. On 22 December, chief executive officer Ankith Harathi of the Boston-based Macro shared online a corporate saga that would be a good Christmas story for boardrooms.

The story was of Richard Montañez who grew up in Cucamonga Valley, south-western San Bernardino County in California, sharing a one-room hut with 14 family members. He dropped out

of school in the 4th grade, took odd jobs to survive. In 1976, he got a job as a janitor (sweeper/cleaner) at the PepsiCo Frito-Lay factory down the road. He got \$4/hour, unheard of riches for him.

His grandfather told him before he left for his first day at work: "Make sure that floor shines. And let them know that a Montañez mopped it".

While Montañez mopped up quality work, his life changed when PepsiCo chief executive officer Roger Enrico walked his talk. In the mid-1980s, when Frito-Lay was struggling to survive, Enrico told all 300,000 employees to work more creatively, efficiently, "just as if they owned the company".

So Montañez invested his



The military must train their officers & soldiers in realistic combat scenarios, place more attention on research about military Op

CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING

ASKS MILITARY TO STEP-UP TRAINING, COMBAT READINESS

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 06 JANUARY 2021

09

## SCorders reconstruction of Hindu temple in Pakistan

Says, the attack has caused 'international embarrassment' to the country

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ISLAMABAD, 5 JANUARY

**P**akistan's Supreme Court on Tuesday ordered the Evacuee Property Trust Board (EPTB) to start reconstruction of a century-old Hindu temple that was vandalised and set on fire by a mob in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province last week, saying the attack has caused "international embarrassment" to the country.

The apex court, which took notice of the attack and ordered the local authorities to appear before the court on January 5, also directed the board to submit in court details of all functional and non-functional temples and gurdwaras across Pakistan, Dawn newspaper reported.

The attack on the temple in Terri village in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's (KP) Karak district on Wednesday by members of radical Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam party (Fazl ur Rehman group) drew strong condemnation from human rights activists and the minority Hindu community leaders.

During the hearing on Tuesday, a three-member bench headed by Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed also directed the EPTB to clear encroachments from temples across the country and take action against officials involved in the encroachments.

Justice Ahmed said that the Karak incident had caused "international embarrassment" to Pakistan.

The EPTB is a statutory board that manages religious properties and shrines of Hindus and Sikhs who had migrated to India following the partition. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief secretary, police chief, and Dr Shoib Suddle, the head



of a commission on minorities' rights, were also present during the hearing.

Suddle, who visited the temple in Karak district and presented a comprehensive report in the case to the Supreme Court on Monday after it asked the one-man commission on the rights of minorities to probe the attack, told the court that the provincial EPTB "did not protect the shrine", the paper said.

Justice Ijazul Ahsan then questioned the police chief on how the attack could have happened when there was a police check post next to the temple. "Where were your intelligence agencies?" the judge asked. The police chief told the court that a protest by the Jamiat-Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) was going on near the site on the day of the incident which was sponsored by Maulana Faizullah.

"Out of the six ulema at the protest, only Maulvi Mohammad Sharif incited the crowd," the police chief said.

The official informed the court that 109 people involved in the attack were arrested while 92 police officials, including the superintendent of police (SP) and deputy superintendent of police (DSP) who were on duty at the time,

were suspended.

Chief Justice Ahmed said that "suspension was not enough". The judge also slammed the EPTB chairman, saying he should "not sit on the chairman's seat with government mentality".

"Your employees are doing business on the land meant for shrines. Arrest them and start the reconstruction of the temple," Justice Ahmed directed.

"Money should be taken from Maulvi Sharif for reconstruction of the shrine," the chief justice remarked.

Justice Ahsan observed that the EPTB "has the money to construct its own buildings but does not have money for Hindus".

The bench directed that details of functional and non-functional shrines, records of disputes on EPTB lands and a report on the performance of the EPTB chairman be submitted to the court in two weeks. It also directed the KP branch of the EPTB to hold discussions with the provincial minorities commission, the paper said.

The apex court said a detailed judgement would be released later and adjourned the hearing for two weeks.

Last week, Khyber-

Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Mahmood Khan said that his government will rebuild the temple. He said the government has issued orders to rebuild the temple.

The temple was attacked by the mob after members of the Hindu community received permission from local authorities to renovate its decades-old building, according to witnesses.

The mob had demolished the newly constructed work alongside the old structure.

Leader of Hindu Community Peshawar Haroon Sarab Diyal said that a samadhi of a Hindu religious leader exists at the temple site and Hindu families from across the country do visit the samadhi on every Thursday.

The Samadhi of Shri Paramhans Ji Maharaj is considered sacred by the Hindu community. It was built where he died in 1919 in Terri village of Karak. The controversy over the samadhi erupted many decades ago. According to the details submitted to the Supreme Court in 2014 in a case about it, the Hindus had been visiting the shrine till 1997 when it was dismantled by the locals.

The apex court in 2014 ordered the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government to restore and reconstruct the Hindu shrine.

The order was issued over a petition of a Hindu lawmaker who had claimed that the shrine had been occupied by an influential cleric of the area. Hindus form the biggest minority community in Pakistan. According to official estimates, 75 lakh Hindus live in Pakistan. However, according to the community, over 90 lakh Hindus are living in the country.

## An 'orchard of bad apples' weighs on new Afghanistan peace talks

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
ISLAMABAD, 5 JANUARY

Afghan negotiators are to resume talks with the Taliban on Tuesday aimed at finding an end to decades of relentless conflict even as hopes wane and frustration and fear grow over a spike in violence across Afghanistan that has combatants on both sides blaming the other.

Torek Farhad, a former Afghan government advisor, said the government and the Taliban are two warring minorities, with the Afghan people caught in between. One says they represent the republic, the other says we want to end foreign occupation and corruption. But the war is (only) about power.

The stop-and-go talks come amid growing doubt over a U.S.-Taliban peace deal brokered by outgoing President Donald Trump.

WHAT CAN BE EXPECTED FROM THE NEXT ROUND

OF TALKS? Expectations are low. The change in the U.S. administration is likely to drag out the opening days of the talks as both sides wait to see whether Biden will stick to the deal brokered by Trump.

Both the Afghan government and Taliban have proposed agenda items. In this round, the two sides will decide which items can be combined as well as how to discuss separate items.

WHAT ARE AFGHANS SAYING? For many, peace seems like a distant dream. A number of people interviewed in Kabul saw their country in a downward spiral, shattered by near-daily explosions and marauding criminal gangs that have made the streets dangerous after dark. A soaring crime rate and relentless attacks have everyone frightened, said Mohammed Sharif, a 38-year-old employee at the Higher Education Ministry.

WHO ARE THE SPOILERS? Escalating violence has all sides pointing the finger at each other. The government blames the Taliban for a series of targeted killings against activists, journalists, judges and lawyers though Taliban have denied some of the attacks.

Niger: Jihadists kill at least 100 in mounting violence

DAKAR (SENEGAL), 5 JANUARY

More than 100 civilians were killed in Niger over the weekend by extremists who attacked two villages, as insurgent violence mounts in the West African nation.

The attacks on the western villages of Tchombangou and Zaroumdarey took place on the same day that Niger announced that presidential elections would go to a second round on February 21.

Niger's Prime Minister Brigi Rafini visited the two villages Sunday.

We came to provide moral support and present the condolences of the president of the republic, the government and the entire Niger nation, he said. The villages in the insecure Tillaberi region were attacked Saturday after residents killed two rebel fighters, local officials said. The attacks are among the deadliest in Niger.

## HK's top judge cautious on calls for judicial reform

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
HONG KONG, 5 JANUARY

Hong Kong employs a common law legal system, and its judiciary often makes judgments public in efforts to be transparent.

Beijing has asserted more control over the city in the past year including implementing a sweeping national security law following months of anti-government protests.

(The) judiciary's position has all along been the same. If there's any room for improvement, we will pursue it. We will consider it, Chief Justice Geoffrey Ma said at a news conference ahead of his retirement on Sunday.

But

it's not particularly

satisfactory

if there's a call for

reforms

simply on the basis

of a result

one doesn't like, he

said. It is certainly not a good

starting point or acceptable

to say 'I want reforms to

ensure that I will always get

the result which I want.'

In recent weeks, Chinese

officials and state-owned

media have accused the

semi-autonomous

city's courts of

misinterpreting Hong Kong's

mini-constitution, the Basic

Law, in rulings relating to

last year's pro-democracy

protests.

Hong Kong employs a common law legal system, and its judiciary often makes judgments public in efforts to be transparent. In contrast, China's opaque justice system has been criticized for being frequently abusive. Hong Kong's freedoms have come under pressure as

### BLACKLISTED



Apple's supplier in China accused of using forced Uyghur labour. ■ IANS

## Zimbabwean teen teaches taekwondo to fight child marriage

ASSOCIATED PRESS

HARARE, 5 JANUARY

and some of Natsiraishe's former schoolmates who are now married, line up on the tiny, dusty yard outside her parents' home in the poor Epworth settlement, about 15 kilometers (9 miles) southeast of the capital, Harare.

They enthusiastically follow her instructions to stretch, kick, strike, punch and spar. After class, they talk about the dangers of child marriage. Holding their babies, the recently married girls took the lead. One after the other, they narrated how their marriages have turned into bondage, including verbal and physical abuse, marital rape, pregnancy-related health complications, and being hungry. Children as young as four

thing called marriage. We are just too young for it, Maritsa told The Associated Press after the session, which she said is a safe space for the girls to share ideas. The role of teen mothers is usually ignored when people campaign against child marriages. Here, I use their voices, their challenges, to discourage those young girls not yet married to stay off early sex, early activity and marriage, said Maritsa. Neither boys nor girls

may legally marry until the age of 18, according to Zimbabwean law enacted after the Constitutional Court in 2016 struck down earlier legislation that allowed girls to marry at 16.

Nonetheless, the practice remains widespread in the economically struggling nation, where an estimated 30 per cent of girls are married before reaching 18, according to the UN Children's Fund.

For some poor families in Zimbabwe, marrying off a young daughter means one less burden, and the bride price paid by the husband is often used by families as a means of survival, according to Girls Not Brides, an organization that campaigns to end child marriages. Some religious sects

encourage girls as young as 10 to marry much older men for spiritual guidance, while some families, to avoid shame, force girls who engage in pre-marital sex to marry their boyfriends, according to the organization. Maritsa, through her association called Vulnerable Underaged People's Auditorium, is hoping to increase the confidence of both the married and single girls through the martial arts lessons and the discussions that follow. Zimbabwe's ban on public gatherings imposed as part of strict lockdown measures last week which have forced Maritsa to suspend the sessions, but she hopes to resume as soon as the lockdown is lifted.

I WISH I WAS TURTLE, HE'S GOT IT MADE. WHY DO YOU SAY THAT? WHEREVER HE GOES HIS HOME GOES WITH HIM. IT MUST DRIVE HIS PAPERBOY CRAZY! BA THAT'S TRUE. IT WOULD BE SAD IF NO ONE WENT TO THE PARK. BA? WOULD THE PARK BENCHES BE LONGELY IF NO ONE SAT ON THEM? I DON'T KNOW... THEY MIGHT BE RELIEVED. ■ 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 Health and Neuro-Sciences 26924300, 26924304
- Batra Hospital & Medical Research Centre 29051280, 29958747
- Deen Dayal Upadhyay 25496320, 25494403
- Guru Tegh Bahadur 23717473, 23325320

#### RAILWAY INQUIRY

- General Inquiry 139
- Toll Free Nos. 1800112511
- SMS Inquiry Nos. 57886, 54959, 5676747

#### ROADWAYS INQUIRY

- ISBT (General Inquiry): 23868836, 23865181
- AIR INDIA Flight Inquiry and Reservation 08001801407
- INDIGO AIRLINES New Delhi City Office 43513185, Call Centre 09910383838, 18001803838, Reservation 43513186; Indigo Airlines Airline 23717473, 23325320

#### FOUR RACK TOTAL TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

#### SCRABBLE BRAND

#### 2nd Letter Triple

#### Triple Word Score

#### G R I E E N

#### Double Word Score

#### N I C T V M

#### PAR SCORE 120-130

#### by JUDD

#### FOUR RACK TOTAL TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

#### SCRABBLE BRAND

#### Official Scrabble Dictionary (Merriam-Webster)

#### Official Scrabble Dictionary Chambers)

#### JUDD's Solution to JUDD's Solution

#### 10/16

port 011-25671580; Terminal I 23860626, 23867842, 23861576, 25671579, 18001803838

• JET AIRWAYS Flight Inquiry and Reservation 39841111

• EMIRATES Flight Inquiry and Reservation 3373377

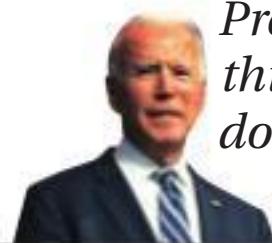
• U.P. Railways 23868709

FLIGHT INQUIRY

• AIR INDIA Flight Inquiry and Reservation 08001801407

• INDIGO AIRLINES New Delhi City Office 43513185, Call Centre 09910383838, 18001803838, Reservation 43513186; Indigo Airlines Airline 23717473, 23325320

• Air Canada Flight Inquiry and Reservation 41528181



*President spends more time whining & complaining than doing something about the problem. I don't know why he still wants the job. He doesn't want to do the work*

US PRESIDENT-ELECT JOE BIDEN  
AT A DRIVE-IN ELECTION RALLY IN GEORGIA

# World

## WEATHER

CITY	MAX	MIN
SINGAPORE	29°C	25°C H
HONG KONG	15°C	10°C CL
TOKYO	18°C	12°C CL
LONDON	04°C	02°C C
DUBAI	21°C	16°C H
SAN FRANCISCO	08°C	03°C C H
NEW YORK	04°C	02°C C H
MOSCOW	-02°C	01°C H

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

## THUMBNAILS



Motorists line up to take a coronavirus test in a parking lot at Dodger Stadium, in Los Angeles. ■ AP

**Israel approves Moderna:** American biotech company Moderna says Israel has approved its vaccine, but the announcement comes as the country faces a rapidly growing outbreak of the disease. At the same time, Israel has already vaccinated over 10 per cent of its population, primarily the elderly and healthcare workers. ■ AP

**Migrants found dead:** Three men died in a boat carrying more than 40 migrants and another died upon reaching shore on Tenerife in Spain's Canary Islands on Tuesday, authorities said. They were the first deaths of migrants arriving in 2021, a spokeswoman for the emergency services said. The migrants were from sub-Saharan African countries. ■ AP

**Brussels attacks case:** Ten people including the lone known surviving suspect in the 2015 deadly Paris attacks have been ordered to stand trial in connection with the suicide bombings which killed 32 people and injured hundreds in the Brussels subway and airport nearly five years ago. ■ AP

**Proud Boys leader held:** Police in the nation's capital on Monday arrested the leader of the Proud Boys, who is accused of burning a Black Lives Matter banner that was torn down from a historic Black church in Washington last month. Henry Enrique Tarrio, 36, was arrested by Metropolitan Police Department officers. ■ AP

**EU says it will redouble efforts to save Iran N-deal**

BRUSSELS, 5 JANUARY

The European Union says it will redouble its efforts to save the Iran nuclear agreement despite what it calls Tehran's important breach of commitments made in the 2015 deal by starting to enrich uranium to new levels. EU spokesman Peter Stano said that Iran's actions will have serious implications when it comes to nuclear non-proliferation.

Stano said it was in everyone's interest to rescue the deal and said the 27-nation bloc will strengthen its attempts to make sure all adhere to the commitments made in the landmark deal.

Iran began enriching uranium to levels unseen since its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers. The decision appeared aimed at increasing Tehran's leverage in the waning days in office for US President, whose unilateral withdrawal from the atomic accord began a series of escalating incidents. Increasing enrichment at its underground Fordo facility puts Tehran a technical step away from weapons-grade levels of 90%. Iran informed the International Atomic Energy Agency of its plans to increase enrichment to 20% last week. ■ AP

## Decision day in Georgia with Senate majority at stake

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
ATLANTA, 5 JANUARY

Georgia voters are set to decide the balance of power in Congress in a pair of high-stakes Senate runoff elections that will help determine President-elect Joe Biden's capacity to enact what may be the most progressive governing agenda in generations.

Republicans are unified against Biden's plans for health care, environmental protection and civil rights, but some fear that outgoing President Donald Trump's brazen attempts to undermine the integrity of the nation's voting systems may discourage voters in Georgia.

At a rally in northwest

Georgia on the eve of Tuesday's runoffs, Trump repeatedly declared that the November elections were plagued by fraud that Republican officials, including his former attorney general and Georgia's elections chief, say did not occur. The president called Georgia's Republican secretary of state "crazy" and vowed to help defeat him in two years. At the same time, Trump encouraged his supporters to show up in force for Georgia's Tuesday contests.

"You've got to swarm it tomorrow," Trump told thousands of cheering supporters, downplaying the threat of fraud. Democrats must win both of the state's Senate elections to gain the Senate major-

ity. In that scenario, the Senate would be equally divided 50-50 with Vice President-elect Kamala Harris serving as the tie-breaker for Democrats.

Democrats already secured a narrow House majority and the White House during November's general election.

Even a closely divided Democratic Senate likely won't guarantee Biden everything he wants, given Senate rules that require 60 votes to move most major legislation. But if Democrats lose even one of Tuesday's contests, Biden would have little shot for swift up-or-down votes on his most ambitious plans to expand government-backed health care coverage, strengthen the middle class, address racial inequality and

combat climate change. A Republican-controlled Senate also would create a rougher path for Biden's Cabinet picks and judicial nominees.

"Georgia, the whole nation is looking to you. The power is literally in your hands," Biden charged at his own rally in Atlanta earlier Monday.

"One state can chart the course,

not just for the next four years, but for the next generation."

Georgia's January elections, necessary because no Senate candidates received a majority of the general-election votes, have been unique for many reasons, not least because the contenders essentially ran as teams, even campaigning together sometimes.

One contest features Demo-

crat Raphael Warnock, who serves as the senior pastor of the Atlanta church where slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. grew up and preached. Warnock is facing Republican Sen. Kelly Loeffler, a 50-year-old former businesswoman who was appointed to the Senate less than a year ago by the state's Republican governor. She is only the second woman to represent Georgia in the Senate, although race has emerged as a campaign focus far more than gender.

Loeffler and her allies have seized on some snippets of Warnock's sermons at the historic Black church to cast him as extreme. Dozens of religious and civil rights leaders have pushed back.

**DC mayor calls in National Guard ahead of pro-Trump protests**

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
WASHINGTON, 5 JANUARY

Bracing for possible violence, the nation's capital has mobilized the National Guard ahead of planned protests by President Donald Trump's supporters in connection with the congressional vote expected Wednesday to affirm Joe Biden's election victory.

Trump's supporters are planning to rally Tuesday and Wednesday, seeking to bolster the president's unproven claims of wide-

spread voter fraud.

There are people intent on coming to our city armed, D.C. Acting Police Chief Robert Contee said Monday. A pro-Trump rally in December ended in violence as hundreds of Trump supporters, wearing the signature black and yellow of the Proud Boys faction, sought out confrontations with a collective of local activists attempting to bar them from Black Lives Matter Plaza, an area near the White House.

## UK in tough new lockdown to tackle surging new variant

New rules are expected to stay in place until mid-Feb with a review planned based on vaccine rollout data



A woman wearing a face mask walks past Her Majesty Theatre in London, Britain. ■ IANS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
LONDON, 5 JANUARY

The UK entered a tough new stay-at-home lockdown on Tuesday after Prime Minister Boris Johnson said it has been both frustrating and alarming to see the speed with which the new variant of the coronavirus is spreading in the country are under more pressure from the deadly virus than at any time in the pandemic.

On December 29, more than 80,000 people tested positive for Covid across the UK a new record and the number of deaths is up by 20 per cent over the last week.

While Scotland's new rules, which involve school and business closures become legal from Tuesday, England's rules -- akin to the stringent measures of the first wave of the pandemic in March 2020 -- become law in the early hours of Wednesday. However, Johnson has urged the public to begin following the strict work from home rules right away. The new rules are expected to stay in place until mid-February with a review planned based on vaccine rollout data and infection rates.

The closure of schools, which the UK prime minister said could act as vectors for transmission, causing the virus to spread between households, means remote learning at least until the end of February and students due to sit for their board level exams would be subject to different methods of assessment for the year.

We must therefore go into a national lockdown which is tough enough to contain this variant. That means the government is once again instructing you to stay at home. You may only leave home for limited reasons permitted in law, such as to shop for essentials, to work if you absolutely cannot work from home, to exercise, to seek medical assistance such as getting a COVID test, or to escape domestic abuse, he said. The devolved regions of Wales and Northern Ireland were already under strict lock-

The weeks ahead will be the hardest yet but I really do believe that we are entering the last phase of the struggle. Because with every jab that goes into our arms, we are tilting the odds against Covid and in favour of the British people, said Johnson.

The move followed the advice from the chief medical officers (CMOs) of all four devolved nations of the United Kingdom that the country's coronavirus alert level should

### Rishi Sunak unveils one-off grant for lockdown-hit sectors

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
LONDON, 5 JANUARY

UK Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak on Tuesday announced that businesses in the lockdown-hit sectors such as retail, hospitality and leisure are to receive a one-off grant worth up to 9,000 pounds.

As the UK entered its tough new stay-at-home lockdown due to a surge in infections from a highly-transmissible new variant of coronavirus, the Indian-origin finance minister said he was putting in place the extra measures worth 4 billion pounds in total to help these businesses that would now have to be shut until mid-February.

The new strain of the virus presents us all with a huge challenge and whilst the vaccine is being rolled out, we have needed to tighten restrictions further," said Sunak.

"Throughout the pandemic we've taken swift action to protect lives and livelihoods and today we're announcing a further cash injection to support businesses and jobs until the Spring. This will help businesses to get through the months ahead and crucially it will help sustain jobs, so workers can be ready to return when they are able to reopen," he said.

The extra cash is provided on a per-property

basis to support businesses through the latest restrictions, and is expected to benefit over 600,000 business properties. The one-off top-ups will be granted to closed businesses on the basis of 4,000 pounds for businesses with a rateable value of 15,000 pounds or under; 6,000 pounds for businesses with a rateable value between 15,000 pounds and 51,000 pounds; and 9,000 pounds for businesses with a rateable value of over 51,000 pounds.

The new one-off grants come in addition to billions of existing business support, including grants worth up to 3,000 pounds for closed businesses, and up to 2,100 pounds per month for impacted businesses once they reopen.

The UK Treasury department said that a further 594 million pounds is also being made available for local authorities and the devolved administrations to support other businesses not eligible for the grants, that might be affected by the restrictions.

The government said it has also provided 100 per cent business rates relief for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses, 1.1 billion pounds existing discretionary funding for local authorities, the furlough scheme now extended to April and 100 per cent government-backed loans, extended until March.

move from Level 4 to Level 5, the very highest level of alert indicating that the National Health Service (NHS) is in danger of being overwhelmed by patients. Cases are rising almost everywhere, in much of the country driven by the new more transmissible variant. We are not confident that the NHS can handle a further sustained rise in cases and without further action there is a material risk of the NHS in several areas being overwhelmed over the next 21 days, the CMOs said in a statement.

The House of Commons has been recalled from Christmas recess to allow members of Parliament to vote on England's new restrictions on Wednesday. The Opposition Labour Leader Sir Keir Starmer has said his MPs would "support the package

of measures", saying "we've all got to pull together now to make this work".

**France promises to speed up vaccination process:** France's health minister has promised an exponential acceleration of his country's slow coronavirus vaccination process. After barely 500 people in France were vaccinated in the first six days, Health Minister Olivier Véran defended the government's strategy of giving the vaccines first to residents of nursing homes. But he vowed Tuesday to simplify a bureaucratic consent process blamed in part for France's lagging vaccinations. The EU's medical regulator is also evaluating a vaccine by Moderna.

The country's health minister has repeatedly said that the vaccinations are progressing as expected and that the slow start is because mobile teams are first going to nursing homes to vaccinate the most vulnerable, which takes more time than inviting people to mass vaccination centers.

Still, in a nod to the heavy pressure, Health Minister Jens Spahn said he has asked the country's agency in charge of vaccinations if the second shot of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine could be delayed in order to be able to vaccinate more people right away with a first shot.

### Germany to extend hard lockdown as daily deaths mount

BERLIN, 5 JANUARY

Germany's disease control center on Tuesday reported 944 more Covid deaths, fuelling expectations that Chancellor Angela Merkel and the country's 16 state governors will extend the country's lockdown until the end of the month.

Germany's latest lockdown took effect December 16 after a partial shutdown starting in early November failed to reduce the number of daily new coronavirus infections. It was initially set to expire January 10.

Merkel's meeting with the governors on Tuesday will decide how long the lockdown should go on and to what extent schools will reopen. Another topic high on the agenda will be addressing criticism of the country's vaccination program amid frustrations over its gradual start.

Vaccinations in Germany and the rest of the 27-nation European Union started over a week ago. In Germany, a nation of 83 million, nearly 265,000 vaccinations had been reported by Monday, the Robert Koch Institute said.

Opposition politicians and even some within Germany's governing coalition have criticised the EU's cautious advance ordering of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, the only one so far cleared for use in EU nations. The EU's medical regulator is also evaluating a vaccine by Moderna.

The country's health minister has repeatedly said that the vaccinations are progressing as expected and that the slow start is because mobile teams are first going to nursing homes to vaccinate the most vulnerable, which takes more time than inviting people to mass vaccination centers.

The rules changes come as Democrats hold a bare majority in the House of fewer than a half-dozen seats, significantly smaller than over the past two years.

Also, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., is beginning what promises to be her fourth and final term as leader of the chamber. In Democratic control, House is a key asset for President-elect Joe Biden's agenda, regardless of whether his party wins the Senate after Tuesday's pair of runoff elections in Georgia.

Pelosi announced later Monday that remote voting

would be permitted through February 18.

Understanding the bundle of changes requires a dive into the arcane world of House rules and parliamentary maneuvering. The Democratic-imposed rules continue a years-long trend of eroding the powers of the House minority through revisions enacted every two years.

Of particular concern now to Republicans are two changes: A plan to weaken GOP opportunities for end-stage amendments to bills, and a move to weaken pay-as-you-go rules that make it more difficult to pass legislation bloat the federal deficit.

There are also new rules requiring members of Congress to bear financial responsibility for discrimination lawsuits, requiring gender-inclusive language, and establishing a new Select Committee on Economic Disparity and Fairness in Growth.

Republicans said the hodge-podge of changes is designed to muzzle their party. It is all designed to take away the voice of 48 percent of this House chamber, said Minority Whip Steve Scalise, R-La. Republicans particularly protested a move to gut their ability to offer a so-called motion to recommit. That's a longstanding right of the minority party to, in essence, offer a final amendment to a bill.

## Just 1% of Californians immunized amid slow coronavirus vaccine rollout

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
SACRAMENTO, 5 JANUARY

Distribution hiccups and logistical challenges have slowed the initial coronavirus vaccine rollout in California, setting a pace that's "not good enough," Gov. Gavin Newsom said. The state is trying to execute the massive immunization campaign "with a sense of urgency that is required of this moment and the urgency that people demand," but so far only about 1% of California's 40 million residents have been vaccinated, the Democratic governor said.

Newsom's comments came Monday as the state's death toll topped 26,500 and confirmed cases neared 2.4 million since the pandemic began. Even as he acknowledged the state

must do better, Newsom sought to shift some responsibility for the slow rollout, noting "the vaccines don't arrive magically in some state facility." Dr. Mark Ghaly, secretary of the California Health and Human Services Agency, said the state assigns the number of doses that local health jurisdictions will receive after getting an allocation from the federal government. The vaccine is then shipped directly to entities like hospitals or local public health offices. Pfizer distributes its vaccine directly, while Moderna uses the pharmaceutical company McKesson as an intermediary, which initially led to slow

communication, Newsom said. California is working to expand the list of sites where the vaccine can be distributed to include pharmacies, clinics and dental offices.

**Vaccine dosing debates add to public confusion:** The first Americans vaccinated against Covid are getting their second dose, while Britain has decided to postpone boosters and focus instead on giving more people a first shot. International differences that are adding to public confusion.

Here are some questions and answers about vaccine dosing: **WHAT VACCINES ARE AVAILABLE?** That differs by

country. The US is allowing emergency use of two very similar vaccines, one made by Pfizer and Germany's BioNTech and the other made by Moderna. Britain is using the Pfizer shot and a different type of vaccine made by AstraZeneca that also has been cleared in India. The European Union is rolling out the

S ANANTHANARAYANAN

**T**he *Guardian*, UK, reported on 18 December 2020, that extraterrestrial signals appear to have been detected. The findings are to be published early this year, but the news leak has brought the subject of ET back into focus.

The report is that while monitoring radio-frequency emissions from *Proxima Centauri*, a red dwarf star – the nearest, at 4.2 light years, from the solar system –, scientists at the Parkes Observatory in Australia recorded a persistent signal, at a fixed frequency, repeated many times over a period of a week. Checks and cross checks to eliminate errors or identify sources have led to a suspicion that this may just be what a campaign that was set into motion over 60 years ago has been waiting for!

Speculation about intelligent life in the cosmos was given shape in 1959, in a seminal paper by Giuseppe Cocconi and Philip Morrison, published in the journal, *Nature*. Assuming there was an intelligent community somewhere in the universe interested in communicating with another one, the paper said, the signal it sent out would need to be one that could cover long distances. The writers argued that it must be a radio wave, in the range of one to 10,000 MHz. Within this range, the best place to look would be in the region of the prominent emission of hydrogen, at 1,420 MHz (or a wavelength of 21 cm). And further, to stay clear of background emissions, we should look in directions away from the galactic plane, in spells of observation from minutes to hours, and to look out for streams of pulses that may continue for years before they are repeated.

The very next year, the scheme was taken up by American astronomer, Frank Drake, and he set up a facility with the 26-metre radio telescope in Green Banks, West Virginia. Many others joined and Drake later set up a radio telescope in Puerto Rico. It became the start of the Search for Extra Terrestrial Intelligence or Seti, an international effort, mostly privately funded and including individual exo-planet hunters. And then, in 2015, in a function that celebrates, like Stephen Hawking attended, Russia-born, Silicon Valley billionaire, Yuri Milner launched Milner's Breakthrough Listen, a US\$ 100 million, 10-year programme to push the limits of the search of Seti. "If we do not find something in these 10 years, we will just extend for another 10, and then another 10," Milner said.

The programme purchases stellar observation time in facilities and funds investigation, worldwide, major work being by two of the largest radio telescopes in the world, the Green Banks Telescope in West Virginia and the Parkes Telescope in Australia. Perched, as these two are, on opposite sides of the Earth, they can cover most of the visible sky. And in addition to radio signals, the project has tied up with the Link observatory in



The 64 m radio telescope in Parkes, New South Wales. Pic courtesy Daniel John Reardon

## ARE WE ALONE IN THE UNIVERSE?

"Mankind has a deep need to explore, to learn, to know. We also happen to be sociable creatures. It is important for us to know if we are alone in the dark," said Stephen Hawking, when Milner's Breakthrough Listen was inaugurated. Hawking, however, also cautioned that contact with an alien civilisation may not be all good for Earth. The aliens may have the capability to wipe out the human race. They may not be more considerate to humans than humans often were to creatures or people less capable than themselves, Hawking said.

There have been other studies of

technologically superior humans making contact with greatly different civilisations. In the contact of Europe with the Americas, after Christopher Columbus, humans, ideas, animals, plants, microbes, and diseases were transferred, to the advantage of the Europeans and effective elimination of the original Americans. ET initiatives, however, are limited. The only possible contact, as of now, may be the decoding of a radio message, from light years away. And visits by aliens or alien spacecraft are quite out of sight.

Berkeley. It is both for data analysis, and to watch, using the ultra-sensitive equipment of the Link, for feeble signals sent through optical lasers.

The facilities at hand could thus monitor millions of stars and galaxies. The major thrust, however, has been with red dwarves, which are the most ancient stars, at later stages in their course of evolution. The choice was first of "Sun-like" stars, as being the most likely to host "Earth-like" planets. But then, it was found that conditions could be suitable with near planets of the cooler red dwarves too. And there are a great many more such red dwarves than "Sun-like"

# Intelligent life in the cosmos

Is someone out there sending a message to us?

PLUS POINTS

## Microplastics in placenta



Scientists have described the discovery of microplastics in the placentas of new mothers as "a matter of great concern", after new research identified a range of synthetic substances from relatively small tissue samples.

The women who took part in the study in Italy had no complications with the births of their children, and the effect of the tiny plastic particles is unknown, however, experts have suggested plastics could provide a means for harmful chemicals to damage a developing foetus's immune system.

The researchers from Rome's Fatebenefratelli Hospital, which specialises in paediatrics, and the Politecnico delle Marche University said, "With the presence of plastic in the body, the immune system that self-recognises is disturbed, even what is not organic. It's like having a cyborg baby, no longer composed only of human cells, but a mixture of a biological entity and inorganic entities." Lead author of the study Antonio Ragusa, head of Fatebenefratelli's obstetrics and gynaecology department, said "the mothers were shocked".

The research team found 12 microplastic fragments in four placentas out of six donated by women after the birth of their children. Only three per cent of the tissue from each placenta was sampled, suggesting the total number of microplastic pieces could be much higher. Dr Ragusa, said, "When I saw for the first time microplastics in the placenta, I was astonished."

The research paper said all the plastics were pigmented. "Three were identified as stained polypropylene a thermoplastic polymer, while for the other nine it was possible to identify only the pigments, which were all used for man-made coatings, paints, adhesives, plasters, finger paints, polymers, cosmetics and personal care products."

Inside human cells, microplastics are treated as foreign bodies by the host organism and this can trigger localised immune responses. Microplastics can also act as carriers for other chemicals, including environmental pollutants and plastic additives, which may be released and are known for their harmful effects, the authors said.

In order to ensure the placentas the scientists were studying were not contaminated with plastics after they had left the body, a plastic-free environment was maintained during the entire experiment. Obstetricians and midwives used cotton gloves to assist women in labour. In the delivery room, only cotton towels were used to cover patients' beds, and the umbilical cord was clamped and cut with metal clippers, to avoid contact with plastic material. Pathologists also wore cotton gloves and used metal scalpels.

The authors said, "Due to the crucial role of placentas in supporting the foetus development and in acting as an interface between the latter and the external environment, the presence of exogenous and potentially harmful (plastic) particles is a matter of great concern."

The research is published in the *Environment International* journal.

—THE INDEPENDENT

## Underwater bullies



The first time that Eduardo Sampaio saw an octopus wind up and punch a fish, "I burst out laughing," he said. That was a problem because he was scuba diving in the Red Sea and nearly choked on his diving regulator.

While an octopus curling one of its arms and explosively releasing it into a fish that gets too close has been seen before, the context was new. The octopus that Sampaio observed was hunting for food alongside other marine creatures, and this was the first time anyone had seen an octopus haymaker thrown during such behaviour.

Sampaio and his co-authors published their observations of several octopus bullies in the journal *Ecology*. They hope their research will help reveal the dynamics among these animal groups, which may balance their competing interests through subtle – and less subtle – negotiations.

—THE STRAITS TIMES/ANN

TAPAN KUMAR MAITRA

**R**egulation is an important part of almost every process in nature. Rarely, if ever, is it adequate simply to describe the steps of a process. Instead, it must also ask what turns it on, what turns it off, and what determines its rate.

That is especially true of gene expression. Most genes are not expressed all the time. In some cases, selective gene expression enables cells to be metabolically thrifty, synthesising only those gene products that are of immediate use under the prevailing environmental conditions; this is often the situation with bacteria. In other cases, such as in multicellular organisms, selective gene expression allows cells to fulfill specialised roles.

As one might expect, the first knowledge about the regulation of gene expression came from investigations of prokaryotes. Bacteria are far more amenable to the kinds of

genetic and biochemical manipulations that marked the early studies of gene control mechanisms.

Of the several thousand genes present in a typical bacterial cell, some are so important to the life of the cell that they are active at all times; their expression is not regulated. Such constitutive genes include, for example, the genes encoding the enzymes of glycolysis. For many other genes, however, expression is regulated so that the amount of the final gene product – protein or RNA – is carefully tuned to the cell's need for that product. A number of these regulated genes encode enzymes for metabolic processes that, unlike glycolysis, are not constantly required.

One way of regulating the intracellular concentrations of such enzymes is by starting and stopping gene transcription in response to cellular needs. Because this control of enzyme-coding genes helps bacterial cells adapt to their environment, it is commonly referred to as adaptive enzyme synthesis.

Bacteria use somewhat different approaches for regulating enzyme synthesis, depending on whether a given enzyme is involved in a catabolic (degradative) or anabolic (synthetic) pathway. The enzymes that catalyse such pathways are often regulated coordinately; that is, the synthesis of all the enzymes involved in a particular pathway is turned on and off together. Here are two well-understood pathways – one catabolic and another anabolic.

Catabolic enzymes exist for the primary purpose of degrading specific substrates, often as a means of obtaining energy. The central step in this pathway is the hydrolysis of lactose into the monosaccharides glucose and galactose, a reaction catalysed by the enzyme beta-galactosidase. However, before lactose can be hydrolysed, it must first be transported into the cell. A protein called galactoside permease is responsible for this transport, and its synthesis is regulated coordinately with beta-galactosidase.

This kind of control is made possible by the ability of the end-product of an anabolic pathway – for example, tryptophan – to somehow repress the further production of the

enzymes involved in its formation. Such reduction in the expression of the enzyme-coding genes is called end-product repression. Most biosynthetic pathways in bacterial cells are regulated in this way. Repression is a general term in molecular genetics, referring to the reduction in expression of any regulated gene.

True genetic repression always has an effect on protein synthesis, and not just on protein activity. The end-products of biosynthetic pathways often have an inhibitory effect on enzyme activity as well. This feedback inhibition differs from repression in both mechanism and result.

In feedback inhibition, molecules of

enzyme are still present, but their catalytic activity is inhibited; in end-product repression, the enzyme molecules are not even made.

One feature common to both induction and repression of enzyme synthesis is that control is exerted at the gene level in both cases. Another shared feature is that control is triggered by small organic molecules present within the cell or in the cell's surroundings.

Geneticists call small organic molecules that function in this way, effectors. For catabolic pathways, effectors are almost always substrates (lactose for example), and they function as inducers of gene expression and, thus, of enzyme synthesis. For anabolic pathways, effectors are usually end-products (tryptophan for example), and they usually lead to the repression of gene expression and thus repression of enzyme synthesis.

The writer is associate professor and head, department of botany, Ananda Mohan College, Kolkata



## AMAZING UNDERDOGS

Leicester have the potential to disrupt the dominance of the Big Six in the Premier League, says Foxes manager Brendan Rodgers (photo, left). The Northern Irishman's side are third in the table now. In 2016, they became the only club from outside the Big Six to win the league title since Blackburn in 1995.

For more updates

www.thestatesman.com

## THUMBNAILS

**Ad alarm:** The makers of a particular brand of rice bran cooking oil have decided not to show advertisements of the product which feature former Indian cricket captain and current board president Sourav Ganguly, who recently suffered a heart attack.

**Dinner scam:** An Indian restaurant in Sydney is left in an uncomfortable position as it fears that over 200 "upset" people will be at its door on Tuesday night after they paid a scammer up to \$550 each for a "non-existent dinner" with the Indian cricket team in Australia.

**Big hope:** VVS Laxman believes Rohit Sharma, who will most likely replace opener Mayank Agarwal in the India XI for the third Test against Australia beginning on Thursday at the Sydney Cricket Ground, can score a big hundred if he can get his eye in.



**Langer optimistic:** Australia coach Justin Langer on Tuesday admitted both David Warner and Steve Smith had not played enough red-ball cricket over the past year but he backed the two to come good in the last two Tests against India by spending time in the middle.

**Leaders upset:** A second-minute lob by Danny Ings against his former club gave Southampton a surprise 1-0 home win over Premier League leaders Liverpool, with the Reds' attack looking rudderless as they were held scoreless for the second game in a row.

**Cavani case:** Uruguayans have accused the English Football Association of racism in sanctioning Manchester United's Edinson Cavani over a social media post which contained the Spanish word "Negrito," calling for his three-match ban to be overturned.

**Formula One:** Formula One's season-opening race in Australia could be delayed after concerns caused by the coronavirus pandemic. The track in Melbourne has become the typical curtain-raiser for the F1 calendar, but the race seems unlikely to go ahead.

**National Games:** Union sports and youth affairs minister Kiren Rijiju on Monday said he was optimistic the National Games, seriously affected by the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic, would be held this year in Goa and in Meghalaya next year all right.

## Mohammedan FC coach back

## STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

KOLKATA, 5 DECEMBER

The technical director of Mohammedan Sporting Club, Sankar Nath Chakraborty, today confirmed that coach Jose Hevia would join practice sessions with the team.

"We are taking things step by step, as the players cannot be in it simultaneously as a few of them are Covid-19 positive. We want to win the I-League and taking calculated steps to prevent any major hurdles. Sudeva FC are a good team and they will definitely want to defeat us or share points but we are ready for everything."

We will miss our fans but we know we have their support", he said.

Printed and published by VINOD KUMAR GUPTA for THE STATESMAN LTD, Statesman House, 148 Barakhamba Road, New Delhi ♦ Editor: RAVINDRA KUMAR ♦ Executive Editor: ARYA RUDRA ♦ Printed at Vibha Publication Pvt Ltd, D-160 B, Sector 7, NOIDA 201301 (UP). © The Statesman Ltd. RNB REG. No. M-8905, RNI No. 507/57

## AMAZING UNDERDOGS

Leicester have the potential to disrupt the dominance of the Big Six in the Premier League, says Foxes manager Brendan Rodgers (photo, left). The Northern Irishman's side are third in the table now. In 2016, they became the only club from outside the Big Six to win the league title since Blackburn in 1995.

www.thestatesman.com

## THUMBNAILS

**Ad alarm:** The makers of a particular brand of rice bran cooking oil have decided not to show advertisements of the product which feature former Indian cricket captain and current board president Sourav Ganguly, who recently suffered a heart attack.

**Dinner scam:** An Indian restaurant in Sydney is left in an uncomfortable position as it fears that over 200 "upset" people will be at its door on Tuesday night after they paid a scammer up to \$550 each for a "non-existent dinner" with the Indian cricket team in Australia.

**Big hope:** VVS Laxman believes Rohit Sharma, who will most likely replace opener Mayank Agarwal in the India XI for the third Test against Australia beginning on Thursday at the Sydney Cricket Ground, can score a big hundred if he can get his eye in.



**Langer optimistic:** Australia coach Justin Langer on Tuesday admitted both David Warner and Steve Smith had not played enough red-ball cricket over the past year but he backed the two to come good in the last two Tests against India by spending time in the middle.

**Leaders upset:** A second-minute lob by Danny Ings against his former club gave Southampton a surprise 1-0 home win over Premier League leaders Liverpool, with the Reds' attack looking rudderless as they were held scoreless for the second game in a row.

**Cavani case:** Uruguayans have accused the English Football Association of racism in sanctioning Manchester United's Edinson Cavani over a social media post which contained the Spanish word "Negrito," calling for his three-match ban to be overturned.

**Formula One:** Formula One's season-opening race in Australia could be delayed after concerns caused by the coronavirus pandemic. The track in Melbourne has become the typical curtain-raiser for the F1 calendar, but the race seems unlikely to go ahead.

**National Games:** Union sports and youth affairs minister Kiren Rijiju on Monday said he was optimistic the National Games, seriously affected by the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic, would be held this year in Goa and in Meghalaya next year all right.

## Wrist injury ends Rahul's Australian tour

## AGENCIES

SYDNEY, 5 JANUARY

**K** L Rahul's (in photo) hopes of featuring in the Test series against Australia were snuffed out today when the India batsman was ruled out of the last two matches with a wrist injury.

Rahul sprained his left wrist while batting in the nets at the MCG during Team India's practice session on Saturday, the Indian cricket board said in a statement, adding: "The wicketkeeper-batsman will not be available for the remaining two Tests of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy as he will need about three weeks' time to recover completely and regain full strength."

Rahul, who can bat at the top as well as in the middle order, played the limited-overs matches against Australia but could not break into the Test squad in the first two

matches. His name was doing the rounds for the third Test in Sydney from Thursday as India, who levelled the series 1-1 in Melbourne, grappled with form and injury issues.

The tourists, missing regular skipper Virat Kohli who is on paternity leave, have already lost the pace duo of Mohammad Shami and Umesh Yadav to injuries.

They replaced an out-of-form Prithvi Shaw with Shubman Gill in Melbourne but continued to fret over Mayank Agarwal's form after the opener managed a total of 31 runs in four innings. Rahul would return home to continue his rehabilitation at the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru, the Board of Control for Cricket in India added.

## Warner 'likely'

Australia coach Justin Langer has all but confirmed David Warner will return for the third Test against India and

said uncapped opener Will Pucovski was available for selection after clearing concussion protocols. Regular opener Warner has been racing to fit for the Sydney Cricket Ground Test after

missing the first two matches in Adelaide and Melbourne with a groin strain.

Warner admitted last week he was unlikely to be fully fit but Langer told reporters today the left-hander was

## The Statesman Sport

Postal Reg. No. DL (ND)-II/6088/2018-19-20

have to decide whether Pucovski should partner Warner at the top of the order or retain Matthew Wade as a makeshift opener.

Pundits have expressed concern about the risks of picking 22-year-old Pucovski, who was unavailable for the first Tests after suffering concussion when struck in the helmet by a short ball in a tour match. Pucovski has a history of concussion problems and India's pace attack, led by the formidable Jasprit Bumrah, pelted the Australians with bouncers in Melbourne, striking specialist batsmen Marnus Labuschagne and Wade on the helmet.

Pucovski's inclusion would likely mean Wade reverting to his usual spot in the middle order and batsman Travis Head being dropped after scores of 38 and 17 in the defeat in Melbourne.

Langer said Head was a "good player" but declined to back his inclusion for Sydney. "He's one of the guys currently in the team. Whether that changes for this game, I can't tell you. We've got some decisions to make ... probably after this afternoon's (training) session."

## 'Protocol breach'

The Indians are under scrutiny by the Australian media following an alleged breach of the bio-secure bubble by five Indian players. A fresh report has alleged a protocol breach by regular captain Virat Kohli and Hardik Pandya who allegedly went shopping before the tour without using their face masks.

## South Africa takes series as Sri Lanka's resistance fades

## AGENCIES

JOHANNESBURG, 5 JANUARY



the innings and collect three wickets.

South Africa gave opportunities to young seamers Sipamla and Wiaan Mulder in the tests alongside Ngidi and Anrich Nortje in a bid to build depth ahead of upcoming series in Pakistan and at home to Australia.

"The four seamers bowled really well," said South Africa captain Quinton de Kock, who was successful in his first series as test skipper.

"Our young lineup, they will get more experience, but good to see them come out hungry."

Sri Lanka tested South Africa in stages but its hopes ultimately faded when captain Dimuth Karunaratne was out at the start of the day and soon after making a century.

Karunaratne led the resistance with his 103 but he went less than five overs into the day's play, and with his exit Sri Lanka lost its last six wickets for 35 runs.

Pace bowler Lungi Ngidi finished with 4-44 for South Africa and was denied the chance of a five-wicket haul when pace partner Lutho Sipamla knocked out Asitha Fernando's off stump to end

the tourists weren't able to do that as Karunaratne fell early trying a pull shot off fast bowler Nortje. He succeeded only in looping a catch to Mulder. His overnight partner Niroshan Dickwella was out four balls later and Sri Lanka's resistance ended.

"We fought hard but lost wickets," Karunaratne said. "Individually, a couple of things we need to highlight, but as a group we have some positives to take out of the series."

The Sri Lankans showed grit in a losing effort after an horrendous run of injuries hampered them on the tour.

They were missing two of their most experienced players before the series and had five players injured during the first test, contributing to their innnings defeat.

Four of those players were ruled out of the second Test. That left the bowling attack especially depleted and Vishwa Fernando, who took five in the first innings, was the attack's most experienced member with just nine test appearances coming into the game.

South Africa's run chase at the end was relatively untroubled.

Markram was given out in the over before lunch to a catch in the slips by Kusal Mendis but that decision was overturned when video replays showed the ball touched the ground as Mendis took it low down.

Markram and Elgar saw it through soon after lunch and South Africa completed a first test series win in two years and since beating Pakistan in early 2019.

A month later, they were shocked to lose 2-0 at home to Sri Lanka, which became the first Asian team to win a test series in South Africa.

Sri Lanka heads home to host England, and South Africa prepares for its first tour of Pakistan in 14 years.

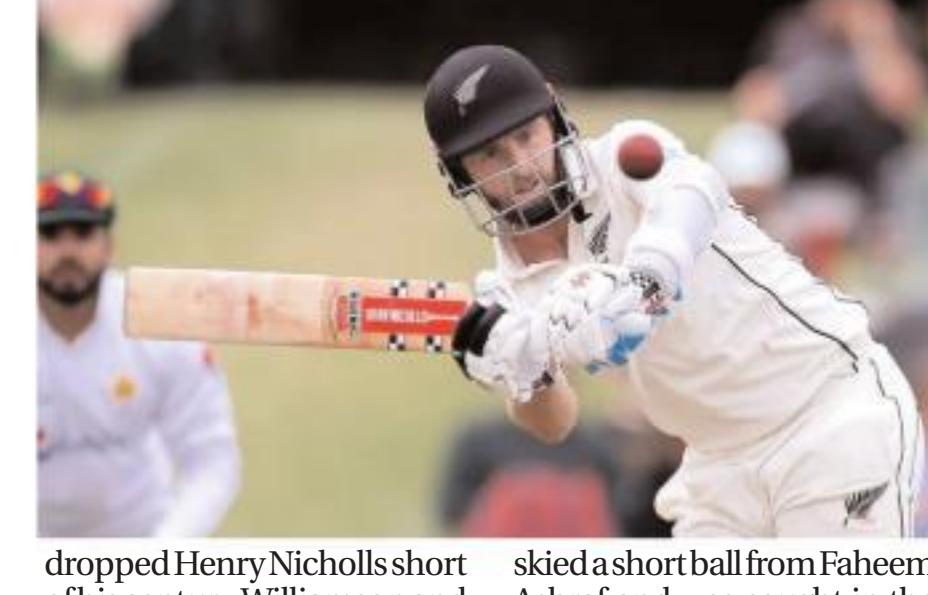
## Brief scores:

Sri Lanka 157 & 211 (Dimuth Karunaratne 103, Niroshan Dickwella 36; Lungi Ngidi 4/44) vs South Africa 302 & 67/0 (Aiden Markram 36 not out, Dean Elgar 31 not out; Asitha Fernando 0/20)

## Pakistan in trouble after Williamson's 238

## AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

CHRISTCHURCH, 5 JANUARY



Kane Williamson (in photo) underscored his ranking as the world's premier batsman with a masterful double century today as New Zealand took control of the second Test against Pakistan. In between the showers at Hagley Oval in Christchurch, Williamson was in classic form, batting for nine hours and 33 minutes for his 238 and leading New Zealand to an imposing 659 for six declared to lead Pakistan by 362.

At stumps, the tourists were already in trouble at one down for eight, with Kyle Jamieson adding to his five-wicket haul in the first innings by removing Shan Masood for a duck.

Should New Zealand win the Test it will confirm their ranking as the number one side in the world for the first time - to go with Williamson's promotion as the number one batsman - and keep alive their chance of making the World Test Championship final.

It was a relentless performance from Williamson who became only the second New Zealander after Brendon McCullum to score four double centuries. He should have been out for 177 on the first ball after the first of two rain stoppages, but as has happened several times in the Test the chance was put down - this time by Azhar Ali, who earlier in the day had

skied a short ball from Faheem Ashraf and was caught in the deep by Masood. In four innings from three Tests in the past month Williamson has scored 251, 129, 21 and 238.

Nicholls, dropped on 92 and 133, was hampered by a calf strain which left him hobbling between the wickets. But he was still able to attack, with boundaries producing 48 of his 68 runs on day three, before he top-edged a short ball from Mohammad Abbas and was caught at deep fine leg. Daryl Mitchell clattered 102 off 112 balls with Williamson delaying the declaration until the all-rounder posted his maiden century.

## Brief scores:

Pakistan 297 and 8/1 at Stumps on Day Three (Abid Ali 7\*, Mohammad Abbas 1\*, Kyle Jamieson 1/1), trail by 354 runs. New Zealand 659/6 dec (Kane Williamson 238, Henry Nicholls 157; Mohammad Abbas 2/98).

## Djokovic, Nadal headline virus-hit ATP Cup



## AGENCIES

MELBOURNE, 5 JANUARY

undergo a mandatory two-week quarantine before the ATP Cup is held alongside two WTA 500 and two ATP 250 events, all in Melbourne in the week leading into the Grand Slam.

Teams' qualified for the ATP Cup based on men's singles rankings, with Austria, Russia, Greece, Germany, Argentina, Italy, Japan, France and Canada also making the grade.

Australia was included as host nation, but without showman Nick Kyrgios, who was not on the team sheet. All of the world's top 10 players will take part, except Roger Federer who has pulled out of the Australian Open for the first time in his career as he continues his recovery from two rounds of knee surgery. ATP Finals champion Daniil Medvedev headlines a strong Russian team along-

side fellow top 10 star Andrey Rublev, while world No 3 Dominic Thiem will try to take Austria to glory.

"The players are looking forward to stepping up and representing their countries again, and the field, including defending champions Serbia and finalists Spain, is strong," said tournament director Tom Larner.

"This is a format that shows off the passion of the players and we're expecting some spectacular tennis action." The 12 teams will be divided into four groups of three with the winners of each group contesting the knock-outs and the four remaining progressing to the semi-finals. Each tie will be comprised of two singles matches and one doubles. The draw will be made on 20 January ahead of the tournament starting on 1 February.

## Saina lashes out at BWF over regulations in Thailand

## INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

BANGKOK, 5 JANUARY

Olympic medalist Saina Nehwal on Tuesday lashed out at the Badminton World Federation for the regulations that were in place ahead of the upcoming Thailand tournaments. The Thailand Open, which starts on January 12 in Bangkok is set to be the first tournament she plays since the All England Open in March last year.

Saina's grievances was chiefly about players allegedly not being allowed to interact with their physios and trainers and the reduced practice and gym timings allowed.

"The physios and trainers cannot meet us during the entire tour after all of us have tested negative?" @bwfmedia @bwf\_ac 4 weeks of this... how is it possible to maintain ourselves. We want to play the tournament in good condition. Please sort this @bwfmedia," said Saina in her first tweet.

"Practice only for an hour everyday for the entire team? Gym timings the same... considering March being the important Olympic qualification period this is not good enough to be in good shape @bwfmedia," she said in her second post.

Saina said that players should have been informed earlier if they are not allowed to interact with their support

staff for the duration of their stay in Thailand.

Singles foreign coaches Agus Dwi Santoso and Park Tae Sang and doubles coach Dwi Kristiawan along with support staff consisting of Kiran Challagundla, Johnson, Evangelina Baddam and M. Srikanth have travelled to Bangkok with the players.