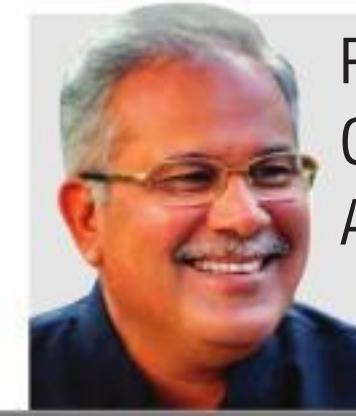


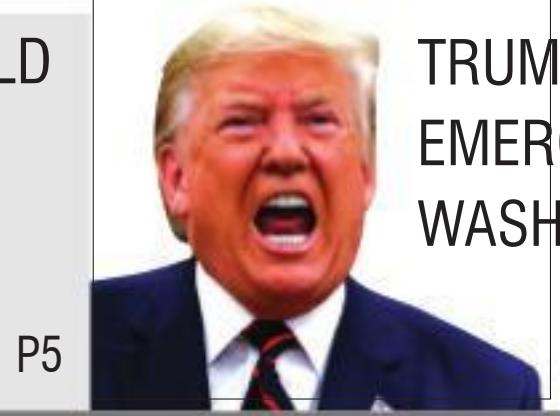


KARNATAKA CABINET
EXPANSION LIKELY
TODAY



PM & CABINET SHOULD
GET JAB FIRST TO
ALLAY FEAR: BAGHEL

P4



TRUMP ISSUES
EMERGENCY IN
WASHINGTON DC

P5

BUMRAH WILL
BE MISSED
IN BRISBANE

P10

PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION



WEATHER

Mainly clear sky. Dense fog in the morning. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 18 and 04 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: Nil

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 100% Min: 62%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 17.6°C (-2) Min: 04.3°C (-3)

SUN RISES

07:15 hrs

MOON RISES

08:15 hrs

SUN SETS

17:45 hrs

MOON SETS

17:53 hrs

THUMBNAILS



Vendors sip tea on a cold afternoon, in the Capital on Tuesday. ■ SUBRATA DUTTA

Trump calls move to impeach him 'ridiculous': President Donald Trump, a Republican under pressure to resign after his supporters carried out a deadly breach of the US Capitol last week, on Tuesday called preparations to impeach him in US Congress "absolutely ridiculous" and said they were causing "tremendous anger." Trump, speaking as he boarded Marine One at the White House for a trip to Texas, called his likely impeachment in the House of Representatives on Wednesday a "continuation of the greatest witch hunt in the history of politics."

Spurious liquor kills 12: About a dozen people died and several became sick in Morena district of Madhya Pradesh on 11 January after consuming liquor, alleged to be spurious. According to police, the incidents took place in villages under jurisdiction of two police stations in the district. A police station in charge has been suspended in the matter. ■ PS

First flight with Covishield lands in Delhi from Pune

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI/PUNE, 12 JANUARY

The first consignment of Covishield vaccines rolled out of the Serum Institute of India facility in Pune early Tuesday and reached Delhi a few hours later, setting in the process a massive pan-India inoculation drive against COVID-19 that begins on January 16.

The vaccine movement has started, Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Twitter. Four airlines will operate nine flights to transport 56.5 lakh doses of the vaccine from Pune to 13 cities across the country on Tuesday. Covishield is developed by Oxford University and British-Swedish company AstraZeneca and manufactured by SII.

The first two flights operated by SpiceJet and GoAir from Pune to Delhi and Chennai have taken off", the minister said. "I

am happy to share that SpiceJet has carried India's first consignment of COVID vaccine today.

The first consignment of Covishield consisting of 34 boxes and weighing 1,088 kg was carried from Pune to Delhi on SpiceJet flight 8937," said Ajay Singh, chairman and managing director, SpiceJet. The SpiceJet flight carrying the vaccines landed at Delhi airport around 10 am. It left for the national capital around 8 am.

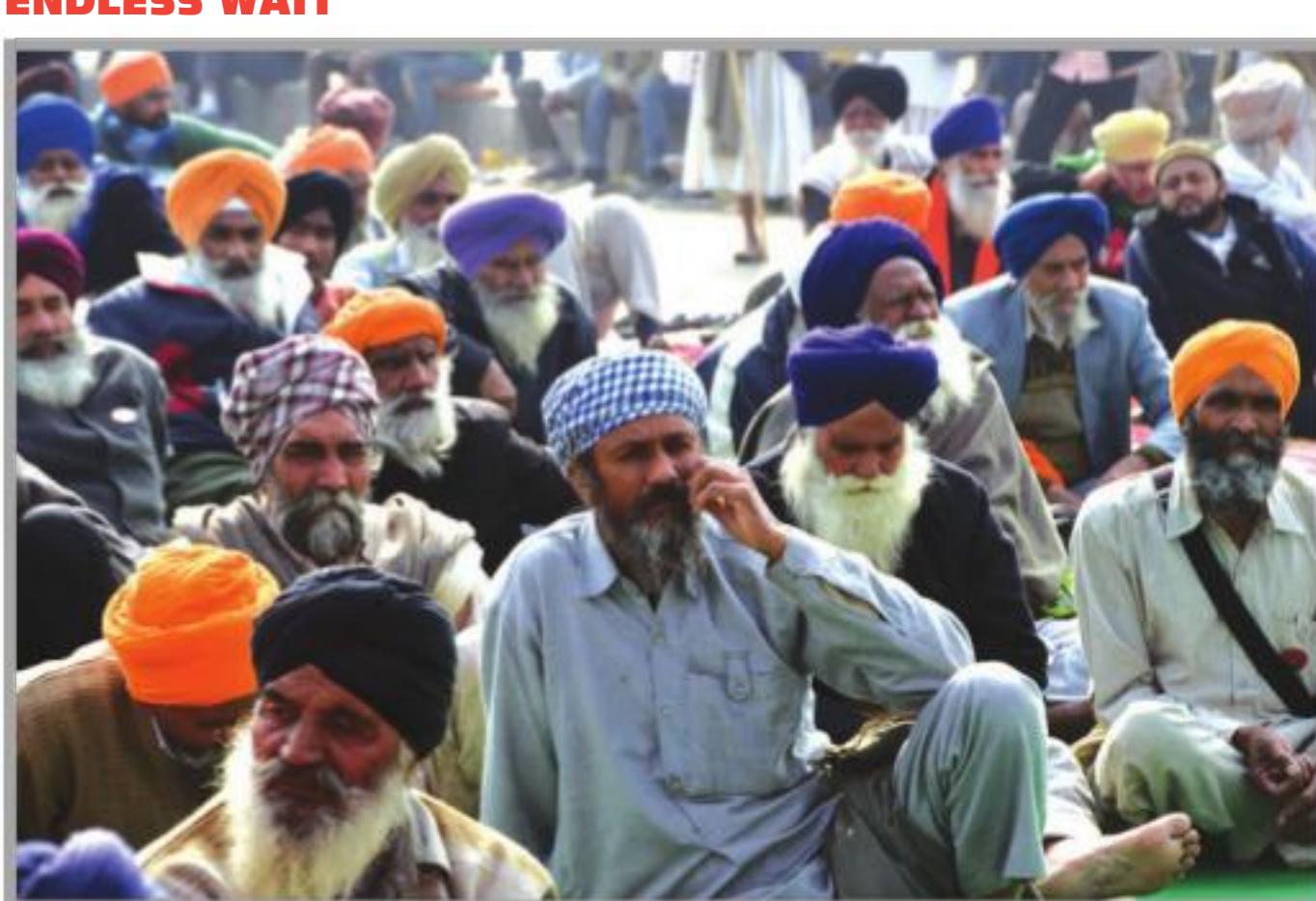
A 'puja' was performed before the three temperature-controlled trucks rolled out of Serum Institute gates shortly before 5 am and moved towards the Pune airport, about 15 km away, from where the vaccines were flown across India.

The "vaccine to kill the disease is being loaded onto the aircraft for distribution all over the country now", Pune airport tweeted.



Workers carrying the first batch of the Covid-19 vaccines at the Rajiv Gandhi Super Specialty Hospital in the Capital on Tuesday. ■ DEEPAK

ENDLESS WAIT



Farmers protest against farm laws at the Singhu Border, in the Capital on Tuesday. ■ SNS

PM Modi hits out at dynastic politics

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 12 JANUARY

Describing dynastic politics as the "biggest enemy of democracy", Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said it has to be rooted out completely and asserted that the fortune of those who have been winning elections on the basis of surnames are now dwindling.

Addressing the valedictory function of the second National Youth Parliament Festival through video conference, Modi exhorted young people to join politics and said the "poison of dynastic politics" will continue to weaken democracy unless they enter it. "The biggest enemy of democracy still exists and

that is dynastic politics. Dynastic politics is such a challenge before the country and it has to be rooted out," Modi said.

"It is true that (in politics) the fortunes of those who have been winning elections on the basis of surnames are dwindling. But in politics, this disease of dynastic politics is not completely finished. There are still people whose politics is aimed at saving their family," he said in an apparent swipe at several

opposition parties, including the Congress.

It is never "nation first" for those practising dynastic politics and it is all about "me and my family" for them, he said.

"Like all sectors, politics also needs youth. Their thinking, energy, enthusiasm is needed by the polities in the country. Earlier there was the sentiment that if any youth used to turn toward politics, then their family used to say that the youth is going astray," Modi said.

Noting that people used to say everything can change but not politics, Modi said today the people of the country have become so aware that they stand with honest people and give them a chance. The people stand res-

olutely with people who come in politics with honesty and are committed to welfare, he noted.

"The awareness that has come in the country has created pressure, those whose legacy was corruption, their corruption has become a burden on them. This is the power of the awareness of the common citizen," Modi said.

Three national winners of the festival also expressed their views during the event in the central hall of Parliament. In his address, Modis also paid rich tributes to Swami Vivekananda, whose birth anniversary fell on Tuesday, and said his ideals have inspired people, including during the freedom struggle, of every generation. ■ SNS

include 40 from Maharashtra, 20 from Kerala, 16 from West Bengal, 15 from Chhattisgarh and 13 from Delhi.

A total of 151327 deaths have been reported so far in the country including 50,101 from Maharashtra followed by 12,228 from Tamil Nadu, 12,144 from Karnataka, 10,691 from Delhi, 9,957 from West Bengal, 8,504 from Uttar Pradesh, 7,131 from Andhra Pradesh and 5,447 from Punjab. Delhi adds 386 cases, 16 deaths: Delhi today identified 386 fresh cases of Covid-19 following 75,913 tests, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin. It recorded 16 Covid deaths, which took its toll to 10,707, the health bulletin said.

The city's cumulative tally of coronavirus infections thus climbed to 6,30,892, with the positivity rate dipping to 0.51 per cent. As many as 545 Covid patients recovered during the past 24 hours, which raised the cumulative number of such recoveries in the national capital to 6,17,006, the bulletin said. (SEE P2)

India logs 12,584 new cases, lowest in seven months

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 12 JANUARY

India recorded 12,584 new cases of coronavirus, the lowest in around seven months, taking the country's COVID-19 caseload to 1,04,79,179, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Tuesday.

The death toll increased to 1,51,327 with 167 daily new fatalities, the data updated at 8 am showed. The number of people who have recovered from the disease surged to 1,01,11,294 pushing the national COVID-19 recovery rate to 96.49 percent, while the COVID-19 case fatality rate stands at 1.44 per cent.

The COVID-19 active caseload remained below 3 lakh.

There are 2,16,558 active coronavirus infections in the country which comprises 2.07 per cent 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, 18,26,52,887 samples have been tested up to January 11 with 8,97,056 samples being tested on Monday. The 167 new fatalities

1.1cr Covishield, 55 lakh Covaxin procured

SNS & AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, 12 JANUARY

There will be a gap of 28 days between two doses of Covid-19 vaccine and its effectiveness will begin 14 days after the second dose, the Health Ministry said on Tuesday.

Addressing a press briefing, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said vaccine effectiveness will be seen only after 14 days.

"So we urge people to keep following COVID appropriate behaviour," he said. Bhushan said there will be a gap of 28 days between two doses of COVID-19 vaccine.

India will launch its COVID-19 vaccination drive from January 16 with priority to be given to nearly three crore healthcare and frontline workers.

India had recently granted emergency use authorisation to two vaccines, Oxford's Covishield being manufactured by Serum Institute of India and Bharat Biotech's Covaxin. Both vaccines, the statement from the Health Ministry said, have established safety and immunogenicity.

Dr V K Paul member, NITI Aayog member, said these two vaccines have been tested in thousands of people, they are the safest and there is no

risk of any significance.

Bhushan said that as said earlier, there will be a sequential rollout of COVID-19 vaccination.

"Healthcare workers (approximately one crore) will be on the top priority, followed by frontline workers (approximately 2 crore) and prioritized age groups (approximately 27 crore). The cost of healthcare workers and frontline workers will be borne by the central government," Bhushan said.

Days before the commencement of the nationwide Covid-19 vaccination drive, the Union Health Ministry said on Tuesday that 1.1 crore Covishield and 55 lakh Covaxin vaccines have been procured at a cost of Rs 200 and Rs 206 per dose, respectively.

"As many as 110 lakh (1.1 crore) doses of Covishield vaccine are being procured from the Serum Institute of India for Rs 200 per dose, excluding taxes. A total of 55 lakh doses of Covaxin vaccine are being procured from Bharat Biotech," Union Health Secretary

"In an apparent reference to the capture of certain strategic heights by the Indian Army along the southern bank of Pangong Lake, the Army chief said his force would hold on to positions in eastern Ladakh based on national interests and goals. The morale of the troops was high and there was no cause for concern on any front.

He said talks with China was an ongoing process. "We will ensure that through the medium of these talks, we reach a solution which would result in disengagement from the friction areas, followed by de-escalation. Once this has been achieved, then an overall de-escalation and a reduction in strength of the troops in forward areas."

On Pakistan, the Army chief said the neighbouring country continued to use terrorism as an instrument of state policy. "We reserve the right to respond to cross-border terrorism at a time of our choosing with precision," he said. Speaking on Jammu and Kashmir, he said the situation has improved, but it has not reached a level in which the Army could contemplate moving troops out of the UT. ■ SNS

Ready for any challenge from China, Pakistan: Army chief



NEW DELHI 12 JANUARY

Even as he expressed hope that the ongoing Sino-Indian military stand-off in eastern Ladakh would be resolved through talks, chief of Army staff, Gen. M M Naravane today made it clear that his force was ready to meet any eventuality along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

On the potential of a two-front threat from China and Pakistan, he asserted that the collusive approach of the two main adversaries of India in both military and non-military spheres was part of his force's strategic calculus and planning.

Addressing a press conference ahead of the Army Day, Gen Naravane noted that the situation along the LAC was the same as it was last year. "There has been no decrease in strength either on their side (China) or on our side as far as the friction points are concerned...theseatus quo continues," he added.

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We welcome to all those who have decided to take a stand against this autocratic party (TMC) and their brand of politics of cut-money, corruption

DARJEELING MP RAJU BISTA
IN A BJP ORGANISED A POLITICAL PROGRAMME AT SILIGURI

1st batch of 2.64L Covishield vaccine doses reaches Delhi

The Delhi govt has identified 89 sites, including 40 govt and 49 pvt hospitals, for the first phase of the immunisation drive for about 3 lakh healthcare workers in the city, which will kick off from 16 Jan

PTI

NEW DELHI, 12 JANUARY

The first batch of Covishield vaccine containing 2.64 lakh doses reached Delhi's central storage facility at Rajiv Gandhi Super Specialty Hospital (RGSSH) on Tuesday amid high security, officials said.

An official at the hospital said 22 boxes, each containing 1,200 vials of the Oxford University COVID-19 vaccine, were delivered to the hospital Tuesday afternoon.

Each vial of 5 milliliters has 10 doses, he said.

A Spicejet flight carrying the vials landed at the Delhi airport around 10 am on Tuesday, four days ahead of the launch of a nationwide drive against the coronavirus. Thereafter, the Delhi Police formed a "green corridor" to safely transport the vaccine to the hospital, the Delhi government's largest COVID-19 facility.

"The truck carrying the vaccine arrived at the hospital around 3:10 pm," a source



Workers carrying the first batch of the Covid-19 vaccines that arrived at Rajiv Gandhi Super Specialty Hospital in the Capital on Tuesday.

DEEPAK

said.

A special cold storage facility has been created at RGSSH to store the vials. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Shahdara) Amit Sharma said, "We have deployed the personnel at the storage area of the Rajiv Gandhi Super Specialty Hospital."

Officials said three-layer security CCTC cameras, Delhi Police and hospital's own security staffs are in place around

the storage facility at RGSSH.

From RGSSH, the vaccine will be transported in a special vehicle under heavy security to the vaccination centres.

The Delhi government has identified 89 sites in the national capital, including 40 government and 49 private hospitals, for the first phase of the

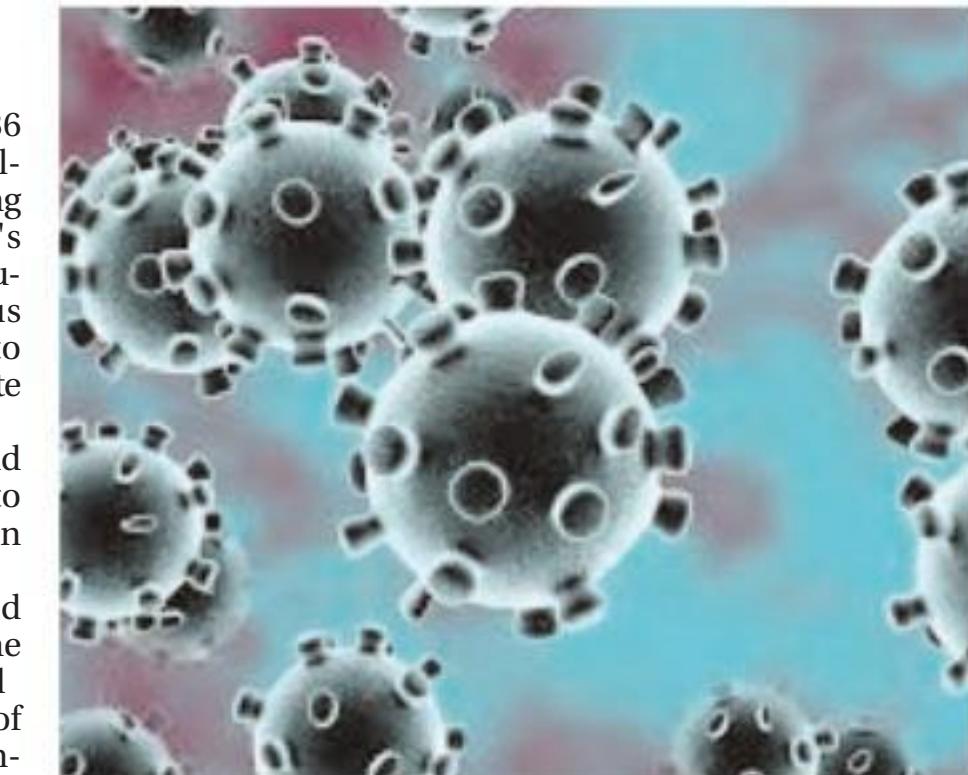
immunisation drive meant for about three lakh healthcare workers.

The All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Sadarjung Hospital, LNJP Hospital, GTB Hospital, Apollo Hospitals and Max Hospital will be among the vaccination centres here.

The vaccination roll-out is expected to be kicked off from the Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan (LNJP) Hospital On January 16 with a simple ceremony in the presence of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Health Minister Satyendar Jain, sources said.

India's drugs regulator has approved Oxford COVID-19 vaccine Covishield, manufactured by the Serum Institute, and indigenously developed Covaxin of Bharat Biotech for restricted emergency use in the country.

Covishield vaccine doses will be initially shipped to 60 consignee points from where they would be distributed to various vaccination centres across India, official sources said.



tests and the positivity rate was 0.54 per cent.

The national capital had on 10 January reported 399 Covid cases detected out of 77,600 tests. The positivity rate was 0.51 per cent. The city had then logged 12 Covid-linked fatalities.

Today, it was said to be the ninth time when Delhi's count of daily Covid cases stood below the 500-mark in January so far.

The city had on 9 January recorded 519 fresh coronavirus cases and 12 Covid-linked fatalities.

linked deaths. These cases were detected out of 80,275 tests. The city's Covid positivity rate was 0.65 per cent.

As many as 585 coronavirus cases were logged in Delhi on 1 January and 494 cases on 2 January, 424 on 3 January, 384 on 4 January, 442 on 5 January, 654 on 6 January, 486 on 7 January, and 444 on 8 January.

On 29 and 30 December, it had recorded 703 and 677 cases respectively. On 31 December, the city had logged 574 cases.

Classified

LEGAL NOTICES

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

Room No. 127, 1st Floor Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi PC No. 35/2020 Sh. Sudarshan Singh Bawa & Ors.

Versus

STATE CITATION UNDER SECTION 283(2) OF CONNEXION ACT, 1925

Whereas an application under the Indian Succession Act, 1925 for grant of probate of the Will, for Letters of Administration to the estate of Late Smt. Uma Bawa, w/o Sh. Sudarshan Singh Bawa in respect of built up property bearing No. J-5/27, First Floor, Rajouri Garden, Tagore-Delhi-110027 and Plot No. 2924, Sainik Colony, Faridabad, Sector-49, Haryana, died on 31st July 2020, at Delhi has been made by Sh. Sudarshan Singh Bawa, s/o Late Sh. Atma Ram Bawa, w/o Late Sh. Atma Ram Bawa, J-5/27, First Floor, Rajouri Garden, Tagore-Delhi-110027, before Sh. Vijay Kumar, Executive Magistrate, Civil Line, Delhi.

Whereas the 25th day of February, 2021 has been fixed for hearing of the case. Notice is hereby given that any person having any interest in the Administration of the Estate of the said deceased if he/she desires to appear in this court on the above said date and to see the proceeding, may draw a copy of the letter or for Letters of Administration.

Given under my hand and the Seal of this Court on this 07th day of January, 2021.

Addl. District Judge-02 (West)

Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi

Seal of the Court

PUBLIC NOTIFICATIONS

Form No. INC-25A Before the Regional Director, Ministry of Corporate Affairs Eastern Region

In the matter of the Companies Act, 2013, Section 14 of Companies Act, 2013 and Rule 41 of the Companies (Incorporation) Rules, 2014 AND

In the matter of M/s. BENGAL ISHA INFRASTRUCTURE LIMITED having its registered office at 304, Chandan Niketan, 52A, Shakespeare Sarani, Kolkata-700017 —Applicant

Notice is hereby given to the General Public that the Company intending to make an application to the Central Government under Section 14 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with the aforesaid Rules and is desirous of converting into a Private Limited Company in terms of the Special Resolution passed at the Extra-Ordinary General Meeting held on 06/01/2021 to enable the Company to give effect to such conversion. Any person whose interest is likely to be affected by the proposed change in the status of the Company may deliver or cause to be delivered or send by Registered Post, his objections supported by an Affidavit stating the nature of his interest and grounds of opposition to the concerned Regional Director (Nizam Palace II NSO Building 3rd Floor, 234/4 A.J.C. Bose Road Kolkata-700020), within fourteen days from the date of publication of this notice with a copy to the applicant Company at its registered office at the address mentioned below:

For and on behalf of the Applicant

SD/- MAHESH KARNANI Director DIN: 00354068

304, CHANDAN NIKETAN

52A, SHAKESPEARE SARANI,

KOLKATA- 700017 Date: 13.01.2021 Place: Kolkata

CHANGE OF NAME

I, MAHENDER Singh Rawat, s/o Ex-JWO Raghbir Singh Rawat S. No. 286024 G, r/o H. No. D-1/11, Shiv Durga Vihar, Lakkurun, Surajkund, Faridabad, do hereby declare that Mahender Singh Rawat and Mahender Singh is the same and identical person vide affidavit dated 01.01.2021, before Sh. Vijay Kumar, Executive Magistrate, Civil Line, Delhi.

I, GERALDINE Fleming, daughter of Andre Fleming and Sandra Fleming, R/o. 177/2C, Picnic Garden Road, P.O.: Tiljala, P.S.: Tiljala, hereby declare that Geraldine Fleming and Geraldine Joann Fleming is the same and identical person, vide affidavit sworn before the Notary Public of Calcutta dated 12th January, 2021.

I, LIPINKA Bhauamik, widow of late Bindabanan Bhomik, r/o. P.O.: Tilkapatia, P.S.: Tilkapatia, hereby declare that Lipinkha Bhauamik is the same and identical person vide affidavit dated 30.12.2020 before the Lt. Executive Magistrate, 1st Class at Teltala, Dist: Nadia.

I, MADHURIMA Choudhary, D/o. Mukunda Murari Choudhary, residing C-4/2, Kalindi Housing Estate, P.S.: Laketown, Kolkata-700089 have changed my name from Madhurima Choudhary, vide Affidavit No. 3118 dated 14.12.2020 before Lt. Executive Magistrate, 1st Class at Teltala, Dist: Nadia.

I, RAJA Udhav Mansukhani, S/o. late Udhav Mansukhani, R/o. A-4, Middleton Apartments, 3 Middleton Row, Kolkata-700071, do hereby declare that Raja Udhav Mansukhani and R.U. Mansukhani (as mistakenly issued in the Driving License) are the same and identical person, vide affidavit sworn before the Notary Public of Calcutta on 12.01.2021.

I, SMT. Smriti Kanta Mandal, W/o. Shri Jayanta Kumar Mondal shall henceforth be known as Smt. Laxmi Mondal, vide affidavit before the Notary Public at Kolkata on 29.12.2020.

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IT is notified for the information that my Original Qualifying Examination Certificate of Main/Improvement Senior Secondary Examination Year 2015 and Roll No. 9209486 issued by CBSE has been actually lost. Name of the candidate Akhil Kashy Mehra, Full Address Tel. 6, Jagdamba Appartments, Sector 13 Rohini, Delhi-110089. If found please Contact No. 9112045148.

LOST & FOUND

IT is notified for the information that my Original Qualifying Examination Certificate of Main/Improvement Senior Secondary Examination Year 2015 and Roll No. 9209486 issued by CBSE has been actually lost. Name of the candidate Akhil Kashy Mehra, Full Address Tel. 6, Jagdamba Appartments, Sector 13 Rohini, Delhi-110089. If found please Contact No. 9112045148.

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IT is notified for the information that my Original Qual



The BJP has no right to take out any rally remembering Swamiji. They have no right to talk about the great icon. When former US president Donald Trump had wrongly spelt Swami Vivekananda's name our Prime Minister Narendra Modi never protested against that.

ABHISHEK BANERJEE

TRINAMOOL CONGRESS LOK SABHA MP

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 13 JANUARY 2021

03

'H'yanasaves30K girls from being killed in womb in 6 yrs'

The Khattar govt says Haryana's sex ratio has improved and that thanks to 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' programme, about 30,000 girls have been saved in the womb after sex-determination

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, 12 JANUARY

Thanks to the 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' programme, nearly 30,000 girls have been saved in Haryana from being killed in the womb following sex-determination.

Giving details in this regard on Tuesday, Haryana nodal officer of the 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' Programme, Rakesh Gupta, said that while the sex-ratio of the state has increased from 871 girls for every 1,000 boys in the year 2014 to 922 girls in 2020, the state of Haryana has thus protected the lives of 30,000 girl child in these six years, of which 8,000 were saved in 2020.

He said the main objective of the Haryana government is to ensure a visible decline in the incidence of female foeti-



cide, which will result in enhancing the sex-ratio of the state.

Appreciating the "outstanding achievement", Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar said in the past of six years the state government took numerous

steps to curb the menace of female foeticide, such as large scale awareness programmes, formulating teams to identify centres indulging in illegal sex-determination of foetus and illegal abortions, and registering FIRs against the offenders in addition to giv-

ing incentives to those sharing information about violations of the Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act and conducting sting operations along with inter-state and intra-state raids.

Khattar said the state government has set a target to achieve a sex ratio of 935 during 2021 which will be accomplished by continuing the fight against female foeticide.

The nodal officer said this was possible due to regular massive raids being carried out under PC-PNDT/MTP Act against illegal PNDT and MTP Centres operating within and outside the state as well which led to the registration of 100 criminal cases, including around 40 such cases after interstate raids in Delhi, Punjab, UP and Rajasthan. More than 20 FIRs were registered

after inter-state raids with a maximum of 11 FIRs filed in Gazipur in Uttar Pradesh only.

On the district-wise details of the cases registered under the PNDT Act, Gupta said the majority of the districts which had a low sex ratio of below 900 for decades are now better placed at a sex ratio of over 920.

Twenty out of 22 districts of the state are now having 900 or more than 900 as their sex ratio at birth. Elaborating on it further, he said that Sirsa district with 949 as its sex ratio at birth is close to the figure of 950 which, according to experts, is considered as an ideal sex ratio at birth.

Gupta said a total of 5,37,996 births were registered during 2020, which includes 2,79,869 female births and 2,58,127 male births, in the state.

Punjab gets Covid-19 vaccine, all set to roll it out on 16 Jan

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, 12 JANUARY

The Punjab government is all set to begin the vaccination of health care workers (HCWs) against Covid-19 at 110 sites in the state on 16 January.

For this, 20,450 vials were received on Tuesday. Each vial has 10 doses of vaccines which is to be given to the beneficiary in two doses 28 days apart.

Disclosing this, the health minister Balbir Singh Sidhu said after a long wait, first batch of Corona vaccine, Covishield, was received today from Chandigarh Airport. He said this Covishield vaccine was developed by Oxford University with AstraZeneca and now it is being manufactured in India by Serum Institute. Data of Phase III trials is available and it is allowed in emergency authorization use in UK.

The minister said five vaccination sites per district selected for the launch where 100 beneficiaries to be



allocated at each site. He said that two session sites to be live-streamed/webcast with the Centre Government at District Hospital SAS Nagar and GMC Amritsar.

Giving details of 'Cold Chain' preparations made for vaccine, the minister said presently, vaccine has been stored at state vaccine store, Sector-24 Chandigarh and it would be made available at Regional, District and Block vaccine stores.

Sidhu further said that every vaccination session will be managed by a five

member team with defined responsibilities as first vaccination officer at the entrance to ensure only eligible vaccinators enter the site. Second vaccination officer will be for verification of beneficiaries on CoWIN, third vaccinator Officer for giving a vaccine as intramuscular, fourth vaccination officer will be at the observation room to monitor any adverse event following immunization. The fifth vaccination officer would mobilize and assist in crowd control.

SHEET OF FOG



A commuter cycling his way amid early morning fog in Chandigarh on Tuesday.

Infighting in U'khand Cong intensifies

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

DEHRADUN, 12 JANUARY

The move by All India Congress Committee General Secretary and ex-Uttarakhand Chief Minister Harish Rawat to put pressure on the state Congress members to get himself declared as the party's CM face for the 2022 Uttarakhand assembly election seems to have backfired.

A group came out in support of his rival and Uttarakhand Congress president, Pritam Singh, and this has further intensified infighting in the Uttarakhand Congress.

An annoyed Harish Rawat says, "Pritam Singh is the general, the party is requested to make him the CM's face of the Congress. I will even welcome the name of Indira Hirdayesh. I have cleared confusion on my name."

Harish Rawat and his supporters have a typical style of operation. After the ex-Uttarakhand Chief Minister asked Congress to declare CM's face for state polls, on



Senior Uttarakhand Congress leader Harish Rawat with the party's state in-charge Devendra Yadav

Monday, two senior Congress leaders hosted press conferences in the hill state. Senior Congress leaders Pradeep Tamta and Govind Kunjwal demanded making Harish Rawat the face of party for 2022 state assembly election. After the Pritam Singh group countered the pressure politics, the situation of Har

dra Ji for the honour. Please remove me from the list of joint leadership. Sometimes an individual should remain independent also."

The new statement comes one day after Harish Rawat had claimed that Congress should declare a face for Uttarakhand polls and he will accept the person.

Air quality 'very poor' in Ghaziabad, Greater Noida, 'poor' in Faridabad, Gurgaon

PTI
NOIDA (UP), 12 JANUARY

The average air quality was recorded in the "poor" category in Noida, Gurgaon and Faridabad, while it was "very poor" in Greater Noida and Ghaziabad, according to the data issued by a government agency on Tuesday.

The air quality Index (AQI) maintained by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) showed the presence of high levels of pollutants PM2.5 and PM10 in the

air of the five immediate neighbours of Delhi.

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

The average 24-hour AQI at 4 pm on Tuesday was 324 in Ghaziabad, 312 in Greater Noida, 278 in Noida, 260 in Faridabad and 213 in Gurgaon, according to the CPCB's Sameer mobile application.

On Monday, it was 283 in Ghaziabad and Greater

Noida, 264 in Noida, 235 in Faridabad and 200 in Gurgaon. The CPCB states that a "poor" AQI causes breathing discomfort to most people on a prolonged exposure, while a "very poor" AQI may cause respiratory illnesses on a prolonged exposure.

The AQI for each city is based on the average of the readings recorded by the air quality monitoring stations there. Ghaziabad and Gurgaon have three such stations while Noida, Greater Noida and Faridabad have two each, according to the app.

Teams from the department visited many parks and water bodies at Raj Ghat, Balswa and Hauz

Reports of over 50 bird deaths received by Delhi govt, samples sent for testing, say officials

PTI
NEW DELHI, 12 JANUARY

Reports of over 50 bird deaths were received on a helpline number of the Delhi government's animal husbandry unit and 18 samples from different parts of the city were sent for avian flu testing on Tuesday, officials said.

Teams from the department visited many parks and water bodies at Raj Ghat, Balswa and Hauz

Khas to collect samples of dead birds and droppings, they said.

The revenue department has also deployed teams of volunteers at the city's borders to prevent unauthorised entry of livestock, and canned and processed chicken from outside, the officials said.

Testing of samples of crows and ducks had confirmed bird flu cases in the national capital on Mon-

day, prompting the city government to impose a ban on sale of processed and packaged chicken brought from outside the city.

"The report of around 100 samples is still awaited," Dr. Rakesh Singh from the department said on Tuesday.

Officials had earlier said 10 samples from three areas: Mayur Vihar Phase 3, Sanjay Lake and Dwarka Sector 9 tested positive for avian influenza.

A drive to cull ducks was

conducted on Monday at the famous Sanjay Lake, where several ducks were found dead over several days, with 17 reported on Sunday. This had prompted authorities to declare it an "alert zone". Besides, officials said, 91 crows were found dead in 14 DDA parks in the last couple of days.

A few days ago, around 50 crows were found dead in Central Park, Mayur Vihar Phase 3.

Khattar launches registration portal for govt jobs

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE



CHANDIGARH, 12 JANUARY

Seeking to give relief to aspirants of government jobs in Haryana, Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Tuesday launched a one-time registration portal for group C and D category posts and non-gazetted teaching posts in different government departments.

This apart, the CM also announced a common eligibility test (CET) to be conducted by Haryana Staff Selection Commission (HSSC) for filling up different posts of Group C and D. Addressing a Press conference on this occasion, Khattar said that now with the launch of one time registration portal, youth would be required to apply and submit fees on the portal only once which would be Rs 500 for general category candidates and Rs 250 for candidates belonging to reserved categories. He said that this move of the state government would not only bring about more transparency but also speed up the recruitment process. The CM said registration on the portal would commence from today onwards and

HP CM asks officers to give priority to redressal of public grievances

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE



SHIMLA, 12 JANUARY

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur directed the state officers to accord top priority to ensuring redressal of grievances of people at the earliest so that they are not harassed due to unnecessary delay in getting their grievances redressed.

The chief minister was presiding over a review meeting of Mukhya Mantri Sewa Sankalp Helpline-1100 here on Tuesday.

Thakur said the state government had launched 'Mukhya Mantri Sewa Sankalp Helpline-1100' to solve the problems of people at the earliest and easily by saving time and money of the seekers. He said that this Helpline and Jan Manch have been proving boon to the people in redressal of their grievances at their door steps.

Thakur said that as many as 78,975 calls related to 84 departments had been received on Helpline-1100 out of which 15,397 were complaints, 13,682

demand/suggestions and 6,22,104 information/ follow-up calls and 17,946 calls on Officer's Help Desk since its launch. He said that 9,813 complaints were closed after satisfaction of complainants. Thakur said that proper analysis of the complaints must be done so that the concerned departments could get data regarding the main reason of the complaints. He said that this would not only ensure proper redressal of public grievances but also satisfy the seekers. He said that since 10 major departments

viz. Jal Shakti, PWD, Panchayati Raj, Revenue, HPSEBL, Police, Rural Development, HRTC, Forests and Urban Development Departments contributes to 81 percent of the total complaints, therefore, stress should be made for their early redressal.

The chief minister said that although the satisfactory closure rate has increased substantially from last year but efforts should be made to enhance the same. He said that the satisfactory closure percentage of Jal Shakti Vibhag was highest with 72 percent where-

as the overall state level closure percentage was 64 percent.

While expressing concern over the large number of pending cases at L4 stage, Chief Minister said that the administrative secretaries must give special thrust on redressal of grievances and pendency should be viewed seriously. He said that policy should be framed for blocking abusive, irrelevant and frequent callers as this un-necessarily causes embarrassment to the concerned departments.

He also appreciated the functioning of all those working in Helpline.

Thakur said that although the Helpline was meant for redressal of public grievances, demands raised by the general public must also be given due consideration. He said that this would give proper feedback to the government regarding demands of the particular area. He also lauded the efforts of few Deputy Commissioners for their initiatives in the respective districts for early redressal of public grievances.

Information Technology Minister Dr. Ram Lal Markand said that Mukhya Mantri Sewa Sankalp Yojna has proved boon to the common public for early redressal of their grievances. He said that this has proved how information technology could be effectively used for good governance.

Chief Secretary Anil Khachi said that data driven opinion was vital for overall development of the state. He said that all the departments must analyse their own achievements and goals. He also felt the need for redefining attributes and timelines for various departments.

Secretary Information Technology Rajneesh made a detailed presentation on the occasion.

Additional Chief Secretaries Ram Subhag Singh, Sanjay Gupta, Manoj Kumar and RD Dhami, Principal Secretaries JC Sharma, Onkar Sharma and KK Pant, Secretaries Sandeep Bhatnagar, Vikas Labroo and Amitabh Awasthi and other senior officers also attended the meet-

Tibetans fume as self-immolation protest comes to light after 5 years

SHIMLA, 11 JANUARY

The Tibetan government-in-exile on Tuesday expressed dissent against repressive policies of Tibet after a case of self-immolation protest by a 26-year-old man in Nagchu county of the Tibet Autonomous Region came to light after 5 years. A Tibetan government-in-exile official said the man identified as Shurmo had self-immolated himself in 2015 while protesting against China's repressive policies in Tibet. The self-immolation protest took place on 17 September 2015 at around 1 pm local time near a bus station in Shagchukha village in Nagchu county of the Tibet Autonomous Region.

Police arrested Shurmo immediately after his self-immolation protest and was taken to a hospital in Shagchukha but he passed away on the same day, he added. He said the police then arrested three of his relatives and till date, there is no information whether the three are still detained, sentenced or released.

THUMBNAILS



Free water scheme launched in Hyderabad.

■ IANS

K'taka Cabinet expansion likely today, says BSY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BENGALURU, 12 JANUARY

Karnataka chief minister BS Yediyurappa on Tuesday said the much-awaited expansion of his Cabinet is likely to take place on 13 January and a list of new ministers to be inducted will be released by the evening.

Though he has indicated that seven new faces will be inducted, the chief minister has maintained suspense over any of the incumbent ministers being dropped from the Cabinet. The names you are speculating on TV channels are far from the truth, unnecessarily don't take names, I will release the list by evening," Yediyurappa said.

Speaking to reporters here, he said with the swearing-in most likely at 4pm tomorrow, those

who will be taking oath will be informed later in the evening today.

Asked if any of the ministers will be dropped from the cabinet, he merely said, "it will be known tomorrow." The CM had on Monday said that the BJP National president JP Nadda and the party General Secretary in charge of state Arun Singh will be invited for the swearing-in.

There are speculations with in the BJP circles, also in the section of media that a couple of ministers are likely to be dropped. Amid such speculations excise minister H Nagesh and women and child development minister Shashikala Jolle had maintained that they had not heard from the chief minister or the party leadership in this regard.

Rubaiya kidnapping case: A special TADA court has framed charges against JKLF chief Mohammad Yasin Malik and nine others in a 31-year-old kidnapping case involving then Union home minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed's daughter Rubaiya. Malik is now lodged in Tihar jail in connection with terror-funding case. PTI

Swamiji's 158th birth anniversary celebrated across Bengal



The birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda being observed at his ancestral house at Simla street in North Kolkata on Tuesday. ■ ANAGHA BANIK

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

KOLKATA, 12 JANUARY

Swami Vivekananda's 158th birth anniversary was celebrated on Tuesday across West Bengal with political leaders and people making a beeline at his ancestral house here to pay tributes to him.

Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya, BJP national general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya and party leader Suvenu Adhikari garlanded the statue of Swami Vivekananda at his north Kolkata residence.

Trinamool Congress MP Sudip Bandopadhyay and state minister Sashi Panja also paid floral tributes to him, whose birth anniversary is celebrated as National Youth Day. Months before the assembly elections, both the BJP and the TMC are involved in a political one-upmanship over claims on Bengal's culture and heritage.

A towering spiritual philosopher, Vivekananda, was born in 1863 in Kolkata and is credited for popularising the Vedantic ideas.

Taking to Twitter, Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar, who is scheduled to visit Swami ji's ancestral house during the day to pay tributes, said, "Youth empowerment is key to Bharat becoming Vishwa Guru (world leader)."

Paying tributes to Swami-

ji, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said, "His message of peace and universal brotherhood is of utmost relevance today and inspires all of us to strive hard in safeguarding these ideals in our beloved nation."

Adu Ranjan Chowdhury, leader of the Congress party in the Lok Sabha, said the spirit that the great saint imparted to the world is eternal.

"The solution of all human problems lies in his noble and divine thoughts," Chowdhury wrote on the microblogging site.

Swamiji's land will never allow BJP's hate politics, says Abhishek

Senior TMC leader Abhishek Banerjee Tuesday mocked the BJP for claiming to be a follower of Swami Vivekananda and said the people of the state will never allow "hate politics" of the saffron camp to triumph in Bengal, where the monk was born in 1863.

The BJP has no right to celebrate Swamiji's birthday, the Trinamool Congress MP from Diamond Harbour said while addressing a rally in south Kolkata.

"West Bengal, which is the birthplace Swami Vivekananda, has no place for hate politics imported from Gujarat," he said.

The 158th birth anniversary of the monk, a key figure who had introduced Indian

philosophies of Vedanta and Yoga to the western world and established the Ramakrishna Math and the Ramakrishna Mission, is being celebrated on Tuesday.

Calling the BJP as "fake Ram Bhakts", he accused the saffron party of "following the principles of Nathuram Godse who had assassinated Mahatma Gandhi".

"They claim to be followers of Lord Ram. They are not followers of Ram, they are followers of Nathuram (Godse). They are followers of divisive politics," he said.

Abhishek Banerjee is Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's nephew.

"I don't want to politicise today's event. But, I must say one thing that a political party is trying to portray itself to be a follower of Swami Vivekananda. I want to tell BJP members that Swamiji never preached hate politics and communalism, which is the basis of the saffron party," he said.

Accusing the BJP of insulting icons of Bengal such as Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Banerjee said, none of them propagated pitting one religion against other, like the BJP.

"The people of Bengal and the land of Vivekananda, which is his birthplace, will reject the hate politics practised by the saffron party."

"The BJP has passed the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) according to which a person will get citizenship based on religion. Did Swamiji ever say that citizenship should be granted after determining one's religion?" the MP asked.

According to the CAA, members of Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi and Christian communities who have come from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan till December 31, 2014 facing religious persecution there will not be treated as illegal immigrants but given Indian citizenship.

DEVELOPMENT OF GOODS CIRCULATING AREA
E-TENDER NOTICE NO. 41-ENGG-RNY-2020-21. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following work:
Tender No.: 1 Brief Description of Item: At Rangiya- Development of goods circulating area near Line No. 9. (A) Improvement to goods circulating area near Lno 9 by release (U/S) PSC Sleepers. (B) Improvement to goods approach road. Tender Value: ₹1,87,01,237.27. Earnest Money: ₹2,43,500.00. E-tenders will be closed at 13:00 hrs. on 04-02-2021 and Opened at 15:00 hrs. on 04-02-2021 at office of the Divisional Railway Manager (Works), Rangiya. The complete information with tender document of above e-tender will be available in website www.inrps.gov.in. DRM (Works), Rangiya
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers with a Smile

TENDER

NORTHERN RAILWAY

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Name of work and its location	30-Elect-34-T-2020-21-E3 Comprehensive annual maintenance contract of D. G. set with AMF panel/control panel working over Delhi Division
Approx. cost of the works in	Rs. 89.60 lacs
Address of the office	Sr. Divl. Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi
Earnest Money	Rs. 1,79,200.00
Date & time of submission of tender	08.02.2021, 12.00 Hrs.
Opening of tender	08.02.2021, 12.00 Hrs.
Website & notice board	www.reps.gov.in & Sr. Divl. Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi 87/2021

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अखिल भारतीय आर्योविज्ञान संस्थान (एस्स), भुजेश्वर
ALL INDIA INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES (AIIMS), BHUBANESWAR
(A Statutory Body under aegis of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of India)
Engineering Branch (Civil), Sijus (Patrapada), Bhubaneswar(Odisha)-751019
www.aiimsbhubaneswar.nic.in

File No. :AIIMS/BBSR/Engg./575/ NIT-025 / 2020-21 Dated : 12th Jan 2021

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Bhubaneswar invites e-Tender for the Work(s) for Annual Maintenance of Civil Works of all the buildings of housing complex for the year of 2020-21 at AIIMS, Bhubaneswar (NIT No. : AIIMS/BBSR/Engg./ 025 /2020-21). The detailed Tender Document along with Last Date & Time of Submission of Tender can be viewed & downloaded from the website www.aiimsbhubaneswar.nic.in, www.tenderwizard.com & AIIMSSBSR & CPP Portal www.eprocure.gov.in.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer(Civil) I/C
AIIMS, Bhubaneswar

We will continue to work with more dedication to strengthen peace and stability in Jammu and Kashmir.

J&K DGP DILBAG SINGH



DURING THE 9TH POLICE MARTYRS MEMORIAL INTER CLUB CRICKET CHAMPIONSHIP AT KATHUA

IMD issues cold wave alert for north Indian plains

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 12 JANUARY

hand during next three days. "Cold wave/severe cold wave conditions at some parts are also very likely over Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh and Delhi and in isolated parts over UP, north MP and Rajasthan during next three days," the IMD said. Dense to very dense fog conditions at isolated places are likely over northwest India.

It has issued an orange alert for Punjab, Haryana, UP from 13 to 16 January.

Orange alert is an indication to be ready for likely extreme conditions, red is a warning to take action to protect life and property from extremely bad weather. Green indicates normal conditions and yellow is for keeping a watch for a deterioration in the weather.

Sovan calls Hakim 'Pakistani' over distorted India map

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

KOLKATA, 12 JANUARY

The former Trinamul heavyweight and KMC mayor Sovan Chatterjee who stepped into the active political arena yesterday for the first time after joining the BJP, made a scathing attack on the present mayor, Firhad Hakim, by calling him a 'Pakistani' in reference to a KMC uploaded map of India last year which did not feature Kashmir.

The rally led by Sovan Chatterjee and Baisakhi Bandopadhyay yesterday could be termed as the first political campaign by Chatterjee who disappeared from politics in 2018 after resigning from the portfolios, he was holding in the Mamata Banerjee government. Chatterjee minced no words in criticising Hakim, saying the latter is desperately trying to now refute people's opinion who regard him as a "Pakistani". Presenting the Indian map without Kashmir talks a lot about his criticisms against the way Hakim handled the preparatory measures before the cyclone hit the city and his allegations were also seconded by Trinamul leader Sadhan Pandey.

The relationship between the one-time fellow party workers grew even bitter with Chatterjee alleging that ever since Hakim took charge as KMC mayor, he has only done damage to it and to the state. It may be noted that post Cyclone Amphan, Sovan was caustic in his criticisms against his allegations were also seconded by Trinamul leader Sadhan Pandey.

However, Mr. Hakim chose to brush aside the allegations and pointed out that "people will judge whether KMC has done a better job under my leadership." Chatterjee stepped down from the post of KMC mayor in November 2018 following which Firhad Hakim took charge as the mayor after eleven days.

The above comment is about a map of India uploaded by KMC last year on its Facebook page as part of Republic Day wishes which paved the way for controversy since it did not feature China occupied Aksai Chin and Pakistan occupied Kashmir. The post was however removed later.

In his rebuttal to Chatterjee's remarks, Hakim said "He is speaking the language of the BJP who only

Kerala HC rejects CBI probe plea in Life Mission project

Says criminal liability can't be extended to pol executive

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
12 JANUARY

In a setback to the LDF government, Kerala High Court on Tuesday dismissed petitions filed by CEO of Life Mission Project of Kerala government and Santhosh Eappen, MD of the contractor company, Unitac, challenging CBI investigation into the case related to alleged Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) violations over funds received from a foreign sponsor for implementation of the Life Mission housing project at Wadakkancherry to Unitac, a construction company, at the behest of M Sivasankar, the then principal secretary of the chief minister in 2019.

Describing the scheme as an intellectual fraud played in furtherance of MoU so as to avoid CAG audit and to get kickbacks and gratifications, the court expressed that the nature of the Memorandum of Understanding entered into between the UAE Consulate and Kerala was substantially a concluded contract.

The single bench of Justice P Somarajan, however, said the criminal liability of the non-political actors in the case cannot be extended to the political executive of the state, just because the crime was done while executing government's policy decision.

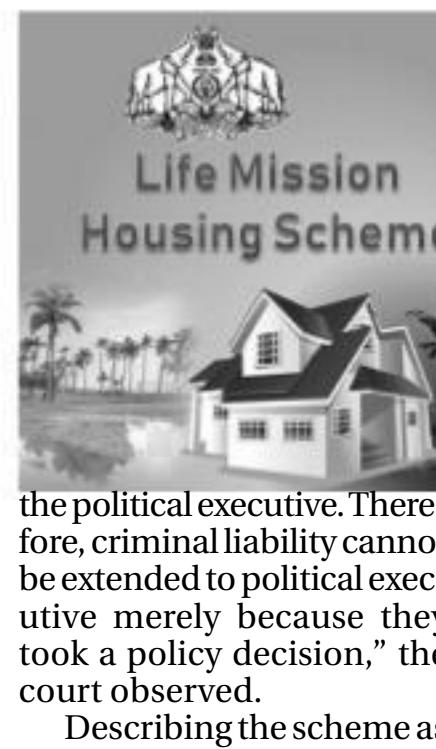
"In the instant case, all these mischiefs were done during the implementation of the LIFE Mission by permanent members of non-political executive attached to the IAS along with Swapna Suresh, Sandeep Nair and other accused. The mere fact that policy decision was taken by the CM and the ministers or the legislature may not be itself a sufficient ground to extend criminal liability for the wrong done by non-political actors and their allies to

rates (UAE) for the construction of housing units for flood victims at a government plot at Wadakkancherry in Thiruvananthapuram district.

The case is related to the Life Mission, the Kerala government's flagship housing project for the homeless, involves a corruption allegation into the award of the contract to construct 144 apartments in Wadakkancherry to Unitac, a construction company, at the behest of M Sivasankar, the then principal secretary of the chief minister in 2019. For this purpose, Dubai-based Red Crescent signed an MoU with the Life Mission to provide financial aid (AED 10 million or Rs 20 crore) to build the dwellings, the contract for which was given to Unitac.

Anil Akkara, MLA filed a complaint stating that the LIFE Mission Project violated Foreign Currency Regulation Act (FCRA) norms. His specific complaint was against the project at his constituency at Wadakkancherry. Pursuant to the complaint, CBI filed an FIR naming Unitac's Santhosh Eappen (another contractor), and unnamed officials of the LIFE Mission project".

Shortly after the CBI's FIR, the LIFE Mission CEO approached Kerala High Court seeking to quash the FIR registered by the CBI alleging violations of the Foreign Contributions Regulation Act over the receipt of foreign contributions from the United Arab Emirates.



the political executive. Therefore, criminal liability cannot be extended to political executive merely because they took a policy decision," the court observed.

Describing the scheme as an intellectual fraud played in furtherance of MoU so as to avoid CAG audit and to get kickbacks and gratifications, the court expressed that the nature of the Memorandum of Understanding entered into between the UAE Consulate and Kerala was substantially a concluded contract.

The single bench of Justice V G Arun, last October, had passed the stay order in the petition filed by U V Jose, CEO of the LIFE Mission Project, seeking to quash the FIR registered by the CBI alleging violations of the Foreign Contributions Regulation Act over the receipt of foreign contributions from the United Arab Emirates.

The court vacated the stay for the probe by CBI while dismissing the petition filed by the CEO of LIFE Mission seeking to quash the FIR against them.

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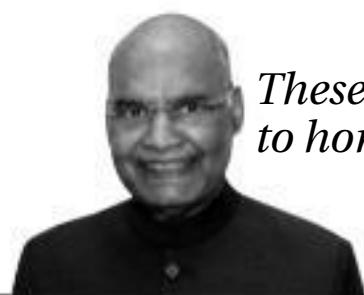
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The court vacated the stay for



These festivals are an opportunity for the countrymen to honour the relentless hard work of our farmers...

PRESIDENT RAM NATH KOVIND

EXTENDING GREETINGS TO FELLOW CITIZENS ON THE EVE OF LOHRI

THUMBNAILS



UP Congress launches 'Naukri Samvad' campaign on Priyanka Gandhi's birthday on Tuesday. ■ IANS

Union minister Shripad Naik stable: If required Union minister Shripad Naik, admitted to a hospital in Goa after he met with an accident, will be shifted to New Delhi for further treatment, defence minister Rajnath Singh said on Tuesday. Singh said the condition of Naik is stable and he is out of danger. Naik received injuries, while his wife Vijaya and an aide died on Monday when their car met with the accident near Ankola in Uttara Kannada, while he was returning to Goa. ■ PTI

Amit Shah to visit 4 states: Union home minister and BJP leader Amit Shah will visit four states, including poll-bound West Bengal and Assam, in the next fortnight during which he will address public rallies and take part in road shows, sources said on Tuesday. ■ PTI

Jawan shoots himself: A CISF jawan on Tuesday allegedly shot himself dead with his service rifle in Rajasthan's Bhilwara district, police said. The jawan belonged to Tamil Nadu, the SHO said. No suicide note was recovered, he added. ■ PTI

Man dies after kite string slits throat: A 20-year-old two-wheeler rider died after the 'manja' string of a kite slit his throat in Jatatarodi area in Nagpur on Tuesday, police said. After Pranay got entangled in the razor-sharp string of a kite which slit his throat, he fell from the motorbike and died due to excessive bleeding before police took him to hospital, police said. ■ PTI

12 dead after consuming suspected spurious liquor in MP

BHOJPAL, 12 JANUARY

About a dozen people died and several became sick in Morena district of Madhya Pradesh on 11 January after consuming liquor, alleged to be spurious.

According to police, the incidents took place in villages under jurisdiction of two police stations in the district.

A police station in charge officer has been suspended in the matter and police have registered cases against four persons, who were reported to be absconding.

The first incident was reported from the Manpur Prithvi village under Bagh Chini police station area.

Villagers Jitendra Yadav, Dhruv Yadav, Kedar Yadav and Dilip Shakya fell sick and later died after consuming the said liquor. Some half-a-dozen more people too fell sick and some of them became critical. They were rushed in serious conditions to Gwalior for treatment.

Meanwhile, in nearby village Pawali under the jurisdiction of Sumawali police station, about four persons were reported to have died after consuming liquor.

Two of the deceased were identified as Jitendra Gurjar and Ramniwas Gurjar.

Police officials of the district said cases had been registered in the matter and investigations were on.

MP Congress chief Kamal Nath accused the Shivraj Singh Chouhan government alleging that all kinds of mafias were operating freely in Madhya Pradesh. Nath charged that the BJP state Government was in cahoots with mafias. ■ SNS

SC stay on farm laws: Farmers to continue stir

Farmers raise doubts over neutrality of panel formed by top court to end impasse; will not participate in SC-ordered committee process

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 12 JANUARY

Farmer leaders on Tuesday said they welcome the Supreme Court order staying the implementation of the three farm laws till further orders, but they will continue to protest till the contentious legislations are repealed and expressed doubts over the neutrality of the panel formed by the top court to end the impasse, a view shared by the Congress.

The agitating farmers also made it clear that they will not participate in the SC-ordered committee process.

Reacting to the SC ruling, the government said the order to stay the implementation of three new farm laws is against its wish but the direction of the apex court is 'sarva-manya' (acceptable to all) and welcomed the composition of an "impartial" committee to resolve the deadlock.

In an interview, minister of state for agriculture Kailash Choudhary made these remarks and also said he is confident that whatever decision is taken by the court, that will be "taken to ensure that the laws are kept the way they are." While Opposition parties like NCP and DMK welcomed the SC order and hoped that it will help in resolving the deadlock, Congress leaders expressed apprehensions over the members chosen for the committee, saying they are known for their support to the three Acts and the agitating farmers.

In a statement, All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee (AIKSCC) said: "It is clear that the court is being misguided by various forces



Farmers protest against new farm laws, at Singhu Border in the Capital on Tuesday. ■ SNS

Amarinder asks AG to examine SC order

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHANDIGARH, 12 JANUARY

Punjab chief minister Amarinder Singh on Tuesday asked the state Advocate General to examine in detail the Supreme Court order staying the new farm laws and called a meeting of his cabinet to discuss it, the CM's media advisor said.

Singh has convened a cabinet meeting on Thursday to discuss the implications of the apex court order.

Punjab CM @capt_amarinder asks AG @AtulhandaAtoprocure copy of today's SC order on #Farm-

Laws & examine it in detail, according to a tweet of the CM's media advisor Raveen Thukral.

Earlier in the day, the top court stayed the implementation of the new agricultural laws till further orders and decided to set up a four-member committee to resolve the impasse over the legislation between the Centre and farmers' unions

protesting at Delhi's borders.

The apex court also stayed the implementation of the three farm laws against which several petitions have been filed challenging their constitutional validity.

Rahul to visit TN for Jallikattu:

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi will visit Tamil Nadu on 14 January, the Pongal day and witness a bull taming event, 'Jallikattu', the party's state president K.S. Alagiri said here on Tuesday.

Gandhi would lend his moral support to farmers protesting against the new farm laws across the country by witnessing the sport at Avaniapuram in Madurai district, he said.

"The bull is a symbol of farmers and part of their lives," the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee president said.

Even in its constitution of a committee, these are people known for their support to the 3 Acts and have actively advo-

cated for the same."

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi also raised questions over the formation of the

committee, asking can justice be expected from people who have given written support to the "anti-agriculture" laws. "This struggle will continue till anti-farmer-worker laws are repealed. Jai Jawan Jai Kisan," he tweeted.

Addressing a Press conference, Congress' chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said the party welcomes the Supreme Court's concern over the farm laws, but the party has issues with the composition of the committee formed by it.

He said the members of the committee have already expressed their views in the past favouring the new laws "so the question arises in our minds that how justice will be done to farmers by their hands".

Asserting that any order of the Supreme Court has to be complied with by all the concerned parties, BJP spokesperson Nalin Kohli attacked the Congress for its criticism of the court-appointed committee.

The Congress' stand and conduct on the agricultural laws is a "classic testimony towards its duplicity and opportunistic politics practised since 2005".

The BJP has said the Congress-led UPA government had supported farm reforms but the opposition party has now taken a U-turn due to political reasons.

While staying the laws, the top court set up a four-member committee to resolve the impasse between the Central government and the farmers' unions protesting over the legislations.

"It is a big relief for farm-

Stay on implementation big relief for farmers: Pawar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 12 JANUARY

ers and I hope that a concrete dialogue between Central government and farmers will be initiated now, keeping the farmers' interests and well-being in mind," he said in another tweet.

Malik said the stay on implementation of the laws is a "welcome and positive step in the right direction to get justice for farmers". The former Union agriculture minister also expressed hope that a concrete dialogue will now be initiated between the Centre and farmers, keeping the latter's interest in mind.

Last month, Pawar met President Ram Nath Kovind and sought a repeat of the three farm laws.

Maharashtra NCP chief Jayant Patil said the Centre should repeal the laws, while party's national spokesperson and state minister Nawab Malik described the SC's order as a step in the right direction to get justice for farmers.

The SC Tuesday stayed the implementation of three new farm laws till further orders and decided to set up a four-member committee to resolve the impasse over them between the Centre and farmers' unions protesting at Delhi borders.

"A welcome decision taken by the Apex Court of India to put on hold the implementation of three farm bills and set up a four member committee to resolve the issues," Pawar tweeted.

"It is a big relief for farm-

BEST FOOT FORWARD



Air Force personnel rehearse for upcoming Republic Day celebration, at Rajpath in New Delhi on Tuesday. ■ IANS

UP deputy CM faces heat from TMC workers

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
HOOGHLY, 12 JANUARY

The Uttar Pradesh deputy chief minister Keshav Chandra Maurya on his way to Kamarpur and then Goghat faced agitation from TMC workers who however did not obstruct his convoy.

Maurya after paying homage to Swami Vivekananda at Kamarpur went towards Bakul tal in Goghat to attend party workers meeting, to hold a Press Conference and then reach out to the villagers to garner support. Trinamul block president Narayan Panja, Goghat I no Panchayat Samity President Manoranjan Pal and other TMC workers with placards protested the visit of Maurya in Goghat.

Maurya while answering media refuted the allegations brought by TMC that BJP is playing dirty politics in the name of Swami Vivekananda. In response to the speculation of Sisir Adhikari joining BJP, Maurya said in the upcoming Assembly election the BJP is going to secure 200 seats hence the BJP has kept its door wide open for anyone who is against the present corrupt government led by the TMC and wants a Sonar Bangla.

Maurya condemned the TMC workers for unnecessary disrupting the movement of convoy of the BJP leaders in the state.

TMC is misusing police to frame false charges against BJP leaders and workers, he said.

First batch of vaccines reach Kolkata

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 12 JANUARY

There was nothing more awaited than the arrival of the first consignment of Covid vaccines in Kolkata today for statewide inoculation bringing respite and bolstering the battle against the virus.

This afternoon, the first consignment of around seven lakh doses of Covishield vaccines landed at the Kolkata airport from the Pune-based Serum Institute of India (SII) unit.

The vaccines were sent to the health department's central medical store at Bagbazar for preservations maintaining temperature between 2 to 8 degree Celsius amidst adequate security and cool chain arrangements from the airport.

According to a senior official of the state health department, all vials would be despatched to different centres in the city and districts for vaccination programme



scheduled on 16 January.

The state government has identified 44,000 vaccinators and more than 4,000 vaccine administration session sites for phase-1 vaccination. Around six lakh government and private healthcare workers have been enrolled.

"We have formed a state level committee headed by the chief secretary, state level task force, district level task forces and block level task forces. All these are meeting regularly to ensure all necessary arrangements for

Covid-19 vaccine administration in a time-bound manner," said another official.

Vaccinations will kick off at three state-run teaching hospitals – SSKM, NRS and Calcutta National Medical College in the city first.

"Around 10,000 employees like doctors, nurses, technicians and others in our hospital will be given Covid-19 vaccines within 20 days from 16 January," Dr Raghunath Mishra, superintendent of SSKM Hospital told The Statesman.

"Every day 600 health workers of our hospital will be administered the vaccine from the Day I in our auditorium centre. A team of about 75 members comprising medical and non-medical personnel has already undergone rigorous training and they will inoculate the vaccine through intra-muscular injection. We are equipped with all preparatory measures as per the Union health ministry guidelines," Dr Mishra said.

APPOINTMENT

Department of Botany
University of Delhi

Advertisement

Applications are invited for the following post, purely on temporary basis (co-terminus with the project) in a National Mission on Himalayan Studies (NMHS) funded project entitled: "Database Development on Diversity and Indigenous Knowledge on Mushrooms towards their cultivation and conservation in Trans Himalayan district of Kargil (GBPN/NMHS-2020-21/MG/SCPI)".

S. No. 1, Post (number): Lab Attendant (one). Minimum qualifications: Should have passed 10th from recognized board. At least two years of experience will be preferred. **Salary:** Rs. 11,000/-

Candidates need to apply within 21 days from the publication of this advertisement on the DU website/ The Statesman newspaper.

To apply, send a complete CV with self-attested copies of relevant documents by e-mail to rupamkapoor.du@gmail.com OR by post to Prof. Rupam Kapoor, Department of Botany, University of Delhi, Delhi-110007. Clearly add "Application for the post of Lab Attendant in the subject line (for e-mail applications).

Only shortlisted candidates will be called for interview.

No TA/DA will be paid for attending the interview.

PM & Cabinet should get vaccinated first to allay fear, advises Baghel

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
RAIPUR, 12 JANUARY

Amid ongoing chaotic misperceptions regarding the efficacy and reliability of the Corona vaccine in India, Chhattisgarh chief minister, Bhupesh Baghel in a veiled attack, has advised Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his cabinet colleagues to get vaccinated first to allay the fears prevalent among the ordinary masses.

Advising the same recipe for the chief ministers and ministers in the states, Baghel said that, similarly, chief ministers and their cabinet peers should also take the vaccines first. This will encourage the people to

vaccinate themselves and their doubts will be effectively cleared, he further stated.

Earlier, on Saturday, Health minister T.S. Singh Deo said that since Bharat Biotech's 'Covaxine' has not completed mandatory three trials, therefore it should not be allowed to be given to the ordinary people. Chhattisgarh government will not allow 'Covaxine' in the state and even will not accept it if the central government sends it to us, he had said.

Baghel, the former minister said, We are waiting for the fulfilment of the promise made to us from the floor of Parliament that the statehood to J-K would be restored.

We want our identity back, Baghel, who was flanked by senior party leaders from both Kashmir and Jammu regions, told reporters here after felicitating party candidates and independents who successfully contested the recently held District Development Council (DDC) elec-

tions.

He said the prime minister made a promise about the restoration of the statehood to the JKAP delegation when they called on him after formation of the party last year.

Criticising the opponents, he said, Our detractors attacked us for our meeting with prime minister and home minister there were some who were thinking that statehood will be restored in due course of time but we know it is a hard battle and we have to work jointly to achieve this.

On August 5, 2019, the central government scrapped the special status of J-K under Article 370 and bifurcated it into union territories.

Referring to the various PILs pending in the Supreme Court challenging the Centre's move, Baghel said they are

expecting a decision from the Supreme Court which is in accordance with the heart-beat of the people of J-K.

Batting for early Assembly elections after the successful conduct of the recently held DDC polls, the JKAP leaders said the people want a popular government so that their problems get solved.

He claimed that the present administration is paralysed and both the regions are facing a lack of developmental work and administration inertia.

Baghel said, We do not expect any development taking place in any of part of the two regions. Development has come to a grinding

Mending fences?

With barely a week to go before Donald Trump leaves the White House, the United States has unveiled a paradigm shift in its relations with Taiwan. Joe Biden, the next occupant of the Oval office, will have to cope with this dramatic change in geostrategy. Going by the announcement of the outgoing Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, restrictions on contacts between US officials and their Chinese counterparts are to be lifted. The apparent change in relations is almost certain to further antagonise China and stoke tensions between Beijing and Washington. Historically, China has claimed that Taiwan, a democratic and separately ruled nation, as its own territory. This rather expansionist diplomacy is of a piece with Beijing's anxiety to test the murky waters of Hong Kong, over which it regained control after Britain's exit in 1997.

Of course, the US, like most countries, has no official equation with Taiwan, let alone diplomatic dealings. However, the Trump administration has given an impetus to its support for the island country with arms sales and laws to help Taiwan deal with pressure from Beijing. After years of ping-pong diplomacy, the US had formally recognised Beijing and withdrawn diplomatic ties with Taiwan in 1979. Pompeo has over the weekend recalled that for several decades the State Department, of which he as Secretary of State was at the helm over the past few years, had created what he called complex internal restrictions on interactions with Taiwanese counterparts by American diplomats, service members and other officials. "The United States took these actions unilaterally in an attempt to appease the Communist regime in Beijing". China's President-for-life, Xi Jinping, is rather unlikely to be impressed with Pompeo's overture. "Today I am announcing that I am lifting all of these self-imposed restrictions," was at the core of the change in stance on 12 January. The State Department hopes that once Biden is in office he will continue to support a "peaceful resolution of cross-strait issues consistent with the wishes and best interests of the people of Taiwan."

While it would be a mite premature to speculate on Biden's response, Taiwan's government, craving recognition but suffocated globally by China's might, has welcomed the move, indeed a remarkable shift in geostrategy. "Decades of discrimination removed. A huge day in our bilateral relationship," is the almost euphoric response of Taiwan's de facto ambassador in Washington, Hsiao Bi-khim. At another remove, China's state-run media has sharply criticised Pompeo, accusing him of "seeking to maliciously inflict a long-lasting scar on bilateral ties".

The long-standing policy has been reversed eleven days before the presidential inaugural and the customary grandstanding. While Pompeo's announcement underscores Trump's tough stance on China, it shall not be easy for the new US administration to cope with Beijing's anger in the aftermath of a largely symbolic deepening of ties with Taiwan.

Glimmer of hope

For a failing state and deeply misogynist society, a beacon, albeit faint, of hope. That, at least, is the message for those still optimistic about the future of India's deeply troubled western neighbour. The cause for this optimism is a recent judgment by Lahore High Court which, extensively citing Indian judicial verdicts, has termed the so-called 'virginity tests' routinely conducted on survivors of rape or sexual assault a 'blatant violation of the dignity of a woman' and held them to be unconstitutional.

Justice Ayesha A. Malik held that the 'two-finger test' and the 'hyphen test' were discriminatory and against the right to life and right to dignity enshrined in Pakistan's Constitution. Referring to a judgment by the Indian Supreme Court (Rajesh & another v State of Haryana) wherein the apex court had held that the two-finger test and its interpretation violates the right of rape survivors to privacy, physical and mental integrity, and dignity, Justice Malik's verdict iterates that virginity tests do not definitively indicate that there was any sexual violence or prove its absence. Quoting various Indian High Court judgments, the judge observed: "These courts have all held there is no scientific or medical basis to carry out two-finger virginity tests or to rely on the status of the hymen (whether it's torn or intact) as it has no relevance to the investigation into an incident of rape or sexual abuse. It is a humiliating practice, which is used to cast suspicion on the victim, as opposed to focusing on the accused and the incident of sexual violence. This in effect amounts to gender-based discrimination as it is neither a medical condition which requires treatment nor does it provide any clinical benefit to the victim."

It is obvious to any thinking person that a rape victim's sexual history is irrelevant to the prosecution of sexual assault charges and this has been settled law in liberal democracies the world over for a while now. But the problem in Pakistan in particular and across South Asia in general is that social practices militate against this basic principle. For example, it is a long-established custom in these parts across communities that a bride's virginity is tested by looking for blood stains on a white sheet after the wedding night. The sheet is checked by the family and the groom has to declare before elders whether the bride was a virgin. It is a small step from placing a premium on the 'purity' of a woman by an overwhelmingly patriarchal social structure to letting a rape victim's previous sexual activity influence the prosecuting, defending or judging of a sexual assault case.

Better Healthcare ~ I

The crying need is for fully-equipped, multidisciplinary hospitals catering to every 2-3 lakh population. But it is realistically not possible for either the Central or most State Governments to develop and maintain such facilities in the foreseeable future due to demands on resources from equally important sectors



The worldwide Covid-19 pandemic raging since the beginning of last year has demanded an urgent relook at the overstrained health infrastructure in developing countries including our own. The moot point is of course the advisability of bringing in structural reforms in the health delivery system within a manageable time span without causing too much disturbance to the existing set-up and putting too much pressure on the already stressed government resources.

The past year has starkly exposed the inadequacies of our government health infrastructure starting from the Primary Health Centres (PHCs) to the large hospitals in the States and the national capital, as well as shortcomings of smart private hospitals some of which used the opportunity to fleece unfortunate patients while others played safe and refused to admit Covid patients.

It is true that this virulently infectious disease had impacted countries across the world as rarely seen in recorded medical history. But most of the developed countries have so far generally managed to avoid the chaos, confusion and heart-rending tragedies that many from poor financial backgrounds had faced in getting patients admitted and treated under professional medical care in our country.

In fact the weaknesses in our health delivery system were already evident when dengue, malaria and similar seasonal viral diseases occasionally overwhelmed the system. But those distress signals were largely ignored by our health planners and politicians. Our legacy of colonial healthcare largely depended on two basic premises - (a) chain of well managed urban centric medical institutions and (b) professionally trained and dedicated individual medical practitioners along with traditional health workers dispensing services in both urban and rural areas often against stupendous odds.

Although this somehow worked in a foreign-occupied, poor and fatalistic society, the system miserably failed to deal with epidemics like malaria, cholera, plague or even common water-borne diseases with millions dying every few years. Awareness or practice of safe and scientific precautionary measures and general level of sanitation were also extremely poor.

After independence, though new infrastructure was set up at lower levels the apex level gradually became weak and static. With exponential demographic growth since Independence compounded by stagnant number of medical colleges the population-doctor ratio in the country became pathetic. Quality of medical education also suffered as many bright students opted for technical degrees as increasing construction activities opened up new avenues and State and national level technical colleges were established without matching developments in the field of medical education.

Thus though new health infrastructure including Block level PHCs and below were created they suffered from acute shortage of qualified health workers. Even the

district hospitals set up by the British and doing generally competent work became poorly manned and unable to cope with increased patient load and tended to refer patients to higher levels at the slightest pretext. With passage of time the second pillar of dedicated team of private medical practitioners dispensing healthcare in rural areas also declined both in number and quality with many of them preferring to set up small private establishments often with an eye to profit and compromised on quality.

In this situation acute lack of beds in the Government-run medical institutions became the order of the day while most private hospitals often used this shortage of beds in public hospitals to fleece patients. Thus the common man had to face the double jeopardy of refusal at Government hospitals and financial ruin in private ones. The recent pandemic has cruelly exposed this sorry state of health infrastructure and reinforced the need for a through revamp.

Our health planners must aim at providing for all citizens of India easy access to world class healthcare facilities as near their location as possible without any discrimination including on grounds of financial incapacity. A vigilant monitoring system ensuring strict maintenance of

standards of treatment and patient care is just as vital. In other words we need to empower all citizens to walk into any registered healthcare facility, prove his identity through online identification and avail suitable treatment for ailments notwithstanding financial disability. The exercise should be coordinated and monitored by an independent statutory authority.

To ensure this we have to address the serious problems of geographic inaccessibility to standard healthcare facilities particularly in rural areas, reduce the pressure on overstretched Government facilities and address complaints about delay, standard of treatment and inflated bills in private healthcare facilities. Therefore the crying need is for fully-equipped, multidisciplinary hospitals catering to every 2-3 lakh population. But it must be admitted it is realistically not possible for either the Central or most State Governments to develop and maintain such facilities in the foreseeable future due to demands on resources from other important sectors.

We must therefore seek private and corporate investments to set up such facilities with government guarantee to meet the costs of treatment including medicines and other allied expenditure preferably on a graded basis. To achieve this within a reasonable time Central/State Governments may invite private/corporate investors to set up modern hospitals at designated locations. The site selection and transfer at market rates should be arranged by respective State Governments. The existing PHCs / BPHCs may also serve as initial locations.

The facilities must conform to detailed specifications laid down by an independent authority for infrastructure, provision for indoor and outdoor treatment and number and quality of health workers deployed. There has to be regular inspection and online surveillance by the independent authority to ensure full compliance. Similarly there must be a transparent and standardized list of hospital expenses for each item of service rendered including bed charges, pathological, radiological or image-based

tests, surgical interventions, replacement of limbs, delivery charges, supply of critical care items like oxygen, ventilation etc. Such charges must be regulated periodically by the designated authority after a process of consultation with all stakeholders as well as recognized medical and financial experts.

Hospitals may also be graduated periodically on a scale above the minimum. The choice of hospitals will of course depend on the individual and family. Thus the top graded hospitals with reputation for dedicated and competent patient care will thrive and those with lesser credibility will suffer. The registered hospitals must compulsorily provide adequate living accommodation for all categories of health workers. Cost of treatment against bills raised by the treating hospital and duly checked and approved online by the independent authority ought to be shared between the patient and the Central Government represented by the independent authority on a graduated scale according to financial position of the patient and his family. It is suggested that at the base level covering all those below the poverty line the sharing may be on a (patient): 90 (independent authority) ratio. The cost should be shared in a 50:50 ratio in the highest income bracket with two more categories in between. In all cases total family income should be the sole criterion and not individual one as each member will become a beneficiary. It may be comparatively easier to determine such family income in case of around 6 crore Indians who pay income tax. But such determination in respect of the rest of the population is expected to be a gigantic, difficult and complex work with most of the families trying to conceal real family income.

There are, however, some existing data bases which may serve as the starting platform. For example around 14 crore registered MGNREGA beneficiaries may serve to identify population at the base level. Similarly about 4.5 crore EPF and 9 crore ESI members also constitute important data sources. About 45 crore PAN card holders also are potential data sources. Thus the task may not be as daunting as would initially suggest. The existing data from different sources is to be collated and linked to around 122 crore Aadhaar card holders for verification and computation.

(To be Concluded)



VIKRAM
SEN
The writer is a retired Principal Secretary, Govt. of West Bengal and can be reached at sscie@rediffmail.com

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

Cost of the bird flu

SIR, This refers to the front page report, 'Bird flu confirmed in 10 states so far: Govt' (12 January). It is worrying that the outbreak of bird flu has been confirmed in 10 states, namely Kerala, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Uttarakhand and Maharashtra. Given that the proximity of commercially reared birds to wild or migratory ones is what spreads bird flu, the question of safe and hygienic food production raised by Covid-19 is revisited.

The great blessing is that bird flu virus strains rarely jump species. The few cases where humans have been infected involve either direct contact with live birds or infected surfaces. Indeed no human case has been reported in the current outbreak. Of course even as all infected birds are destroyed, it must be ensured that the personnel involved in the exercise have utmost protection.

As birds just cease to travel on land, mere stopping of imports is

not going to protect states. Better disease surveillance leading to better coordination will serve everybody much better. The number of birds that will eventually have to be culled will have a commensurate economic cost. This should not be willfully and cruelly multiplied - such as by a BJP MLA of Rajasthan connecting chicken biryani to a conspiracy to spread bird flu. Misinformation has already taken a brutal toll on several sectors of the economy during the pandemic. This should not

happen again. Well cooked chicken and eggs do not carry the virus. Canards that they do hurt the poultry industry and eateries more than the flu itself.

Yours, etc., NC Ghosh,
Madanpur, 12 January

TANDOORI FLU?

SIR, The statement of the Rajasthani BJP MLA Madan Dilawar that the farm protesters are conspiring to spread Bird Flu by consuming chicken dishes is laughable unless of course, the MLA is privy to some scientific knowledge which is not yet in the public domain.

PRUDENT

SIR, Apropos your report 'Put farm laws on hold or we will: Top court to Centre' (January 12), I would like to comment that the apex court had reason to raise pertinent questions about the logic behind

INQUIRY A MUST

SIR, This refers to your editorial today 'Wail of the infant'. At the beginning of the new year, the death of 10 newborns at a district hospital in Maharashtra has been a gruesome tragedy.

If the cause of the fire is believed to be the fluctuating power in the ward, the hospital authority must answer why maintenance was so shoddy although no reason will ever console grieving mothers. The government must set up a commission of inquiry to examine safety standards in every hospital of the country.

Yours, etc., Dilip Kumar Dutta
Midnapore, 12 January

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

Senate must do its job

The Senate convenes tomorrow as a Committee of the Whole to look into the government's P72.5-billion Covid-19 vaccination plan, even as senators remain divided on its scope: Should it merely focus on the Duterte administration's preparedness to roll out the crucial vaccine program, or should it include other issues such as inoculation of the Presidential Security Group (PSG) with an unregistered vaccine?

President Duterte himself revealed late last month that many Filipinos, including those from the military, were inoculated with the China-made Covid-19 vaccine from Sinopharm, which has yet to clear the local Food and Drug Administration (FDA). AFP spokesperson Maj. Gen. Edgard Arevalo would later disclose that these military men were members of Mr. Duterte's close-in security and that the inoculation was done supposedly to protect the health of the 75-year-old President.

But Arevalo's statement did not address important questions in the public's mind: How did an unregistered vaccine enter the country? Who facilitated its entry?

Who sanctioned the inoculation of the presidential guards (and, per Interior Secretary Eduardo Año, at least one Cabinet member)? Under the guidelines released by the National Task Force Against Covid-19, uniformed personnel, including the PSG, are considered fifth priority for the vaccination program, while Sen. Panfilo Lacson said "the immunization of 110 million Filipinos is more important than focusing on several PSG personnel." However, Lacson also said this does not mean the probe would "brush aside issues that are truly related to the foremost issue."

Ilicit inoculation of the PSG aside, surely these related issues would also include the reported vaccination of some 100,000 Chinese nationals in the country, most of them Pogo workers? Sen. Richard Gordon, chair of the blue ribbon committee, said the Senate should take a look into claims that these Chinese nationals had been vaccinated as early as November, but the vaccinations were only discovered in December after one of those who received the unregistered vaccine shot reportedly caught the virus. "I want to know sino nagpasok (ng smuggled COVID-19 vaccines)? Bakit nila tinatago?" Gordon demanded. And, more importantly: "Are they laying the predicate that these Chinese vaccines are acceptable and to be procured by the government?" The Duterte administration has months ago expressed preference for vaccines from China or Russia, despite the fact that these are more expensive and not as advanced in clinical trials compared to other vaccines.

the continued insistence on implementation of the farm laws when the beneficiaries seriously doubted its positive outcome.

Let me thank the apex court for rightly considering constitution of a committee headed by a former Chief Justice of India to resolve the impasse. In fact, the stubbornness of the Centre suggests it is either running short of ideas to resolve the dispute amicably or wants the laws to be implemented by force. The apex court has shown prudence in seeking to find a way to reach a consensus.

Yours, etc., Arun Gupta,
Kolkata, 12 January.



ALIYA NAZ,
ABHIROOP CHOWDHURY,
ARMIN ROSENCRANZ

Acording to a recent report, India's energy consumption will rise by 156 per cent between 2017 and 2040. India generates more than 80 per cent of its energy from fossil fuels. These fuels - coal, oil and gas - create major greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, causing air pollution, health hazards and harsh climate impacts.

Global fossil fuel dependency is predicted to decrease by 13 per cent by 2040. To fill this gap, nonconventional and sustainable energy generation such as solar power, wind, hydro, geothermal and nuclear energy need to be pushed forward. Nuclear power can be an emerging clean energy source in India. It is a sustainable, environmentally friendly and economically viable option which can replace fossil fuel-derived energy and augment renewable energy sources.

Nuclear power stations are expensive to build but cheap to operate. The economy of power generation is analysed according to "Levelised Cost of Electricity" (LCOE). LCOE accounts for the overall building cost, cost of operation and the cost of waste management in respect to the overall electricity output of the station over its lifetime. As per this analysis, nuclear power plants are the most cost-effective mode of renewable energy generation and have low greenhouse gas emissions. Capital costs account for 60 per cent of nuclear power's LCOE.

Radioactive waste management plays a crucial role in de-popularising nuclear power. Radioactive wastes are classified into three major categories according to their radioactivity. The spent radioactive fuel accounts for 3 per cent of total waste but is responsible for 95 per cent of total radioactivity. There are several methods to 'seal off' this waste and these methods are being used effectively across the globe.

World energy politics revolving around the sale of nuclear fuel and transference of reactor technology makes it difficult for developing countries to set up nuclear power stations. A total of 35 per cent of global GHG emissions are generated from the energy sector. Viewing its economic utility and environmental benefits,

Policy-makers should look at nuclear power option



most of the EU-27 nations are prioritizing nuclear energy. A 2018 report indicates that 28 per cent of EU energy demands are supplied by nuclear energy. A US Energy Information Administration record of 2019 indicated that 19.6 per cent of US energy is generated from nuclear sources.

Uranium-235 is widely used to generate nuclear energy. Uranium is 100 times more common than silver, but the U-235 isotope accounts for only 0.7 per cent of the total available uranium.

Uranium is extracted from Uraninite ore. Then it is processed in enrichment facilities that aim to increase the concentration of U-235 to between 3 and 5 per cent for its consequent commercial use in

nuclear power generation.

One of the foremost constraints in sharing nuclear fissile materials across nations is the fear of its potential use in nuclear warfare. To safeguard against this possibility, experts have proposed nuclear fuel enrichment facilities be constructed under multilateral agreements. This policy can facilitate sharing of nuclear technology as well as minimize its unethical use.

Nuclear power generation started in India in 1948 when the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) was established. By 1963, India had set up four nuclear power reactors. By 2018, India had seven nuclear power plants with 23 nuclear reactors. As of Janu-

ary 2020, India's installed nuclear power capacity is about 1.84 per cent of the total national energy generation capacity of 3,68,690 megawatts. India's nuclear power programme is developed without much international support. India is not a party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

For 34 years, trade bans have restricted the nation's access to U-235, because of India's nuclear weapons programme. The natural reserve of U-235 is limited, so the energy development programme has evolved around thorium, another radioactive mineral. Thorium is extracted from monazite ore, which is relatively abundant and safe compared to uranium.

India's national target is to increase nuclear power generation capability to 22,400 megawatts by 2031. With climate change impacts looming large and most metropolitan cities showing health-deteriorating pollution, clean energy generation is compelling. In comparison with renewable energy systems like solar, wind, hydro, geothermal and biofuels, nuclear energy is more economical as well as sustainable. It should be given high preference by India's energy policy makers.

The writers are, respectively, independent researcher, assistant professor, and dean at Jindal School of Environment and Sustainability, O.P. Jindal Global University, Sonipat, Haryana.

Vaccine diplomacy and Nepal

BIKRAM TIMILSINA

In the contemporary world, the notion that knowledge belongs to humanity has significantly faltered. Instead, scientific innovations such as Covid-19 vaccines have been a part of a country's soft power, not only in the form of vaccine diplomacy as a charm offensive, but also as vaccine nationalism, which has now been perceived as a global threat. Thus, small countries like Nepal need to pursue proactive diplomacy to ensure that their vaccine needs are fulfilled on time.

Covid-19 has been taken as the most challenging crisis since World War II, and it has also been perceived as the death of the liberal world order. Though the developed countries have the capacity to respond to its severe impact, developing nations like Nepal do not have adequate resources to fight the pandemic and its repercussions.

There are some substantial initiatives such as COVAX that manages a global collaboration to guarantee impartial and equitable access of Covid-19 vaccines for each country in the world. It is certainly a great initiative but not adequate. It will be able to provide only enough vaccines for vulnerable groups by the first half of 2021. Thus, Nepal's priority at this stage has to be to look for multiple options to guarantee enough vaccines at the earliest possible.

The vaccine manufacturing countries need millions of doses for their own populations, and they will use the rest to secure their own interests. The United States secretary of health, for instance, recently said that any US vaccines would become available to the rest of the world only after their domestic demand had been met. India and China have repeatedly



said that they are committed to providing vaccines from the time they become ready for use. India alone manufactures about 60 per cent of the global vaccine needs, and is hoping to inoculate about 300 million people by July next year.

India and China are apparently conducting vaccine diplomacy in South Asia. After China offered its vaccines to Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh last month, India also pushed forward its vaccine diplomacy in the neighbourhood. India's foreign

secretary stated in Kathmandu in November that India's closest neighbours like Nepal would get the first priority for Indian vaccines. However, Nepal's relations with India have frayed due to border disputes, and it is uncertain if this is going to affect the vaccine deal.

It is possible that India will make a good gesture by providing some vaccines. India will also need to do this to let China fill the gap, as in the context of the unofficial 2015 border blockade against Nepal.

In this scenario, the Nepal gov-

ernment should also come up with some proactive initiatives to gain India's trust. Some attempts seem to have been made. Newly appointed Health Minister Hridayesh Tripathi, for example, met with the Indian ambassador to Nepal to discuss the purchase of vaccines. Foreign Minister Pradeep Gyawali has also stated that India has given assurances about Nepal's being in the priority list.

It has been reported that Minister Gyawali is likely to ink a pact on medical cooperation including Covid-19 vaccines during his upcoming visit to India.

While the Nepal government has repeatedly stated that it is making much effort to ensure that Nepalis are inoculated at the earliest possible date, there are no results to demonstrate that. Bangladesh, for example, has made an agreement with the Serum Institute of India to get 30 million doses. Sri Lanka is now fully prepared to sign a deal to get vaccines through COVAX. Similarly, Pakistan has decided to purchase 1.2 million doses of Sinopharm vaccines from China. It is distressing to see that Nepal has not made any agreement of this kind.

Nepal should obviously try to get as many doses as possible from India through multi-level engagements. However, looking only at India will not be prudent since its vaccines have global demand and it has extensive interests around the world, which it will try to fulfil through its vaccine diplomacy. Nepal should thus make efforts to secure millions of doses from other sources, such as China and global initiatives like COVAX.

For a country that is located between India and China, it would not be too hard for Nepal to ensure substantial quantities if diplomatic efforts are used proactively. As countries are competing in the region with the tool of pandemic diplomacy, small nations should also try to use both powers to

their benefit. Additionally, India would be interested in vaccinating the Nepali population on a priority basis since the two countries share an open border, and it would be too risky to have unvaccinated people wandering around. However, Nepal cannot afford to wait passively.

The shortcoming on the part of the government is that it did not extensively work out all the possibilities by trying to negotiate with multiple vaccine manufacturing countries. In addition, the recent split in the ruling Nepal Communist Party has kept the leaders and ministers busy in negotiations when they should be focusing on public health issues.

While the vaccines produced in the Western world are likely to be less affordable, those produced in China and India are much cheaper. China has stated that its vaccines are affordable for developing countries and can be stored at higher temperatures (2-8 degrees Celsius), unlike Pfizer's vaccines that need to be stored at minus 70 degrees Celsius. It is thus feasible for Nepal to focus on India and China for the major part of its vaccine requirement. In addition, it should deal with the related authorities to ensure vaccines through the COVAX initiative. If it looks that the vaccines from these sources will not be enough, some portions should also be bought from Western manufacturers.

It would be compassionate of the manufacturing countries to listen to French biologist Louis Pasteur who said that scientific inventions should not belong to a particular country but to the whole of humanity. It will help them to depart, at least slightly, from their absolute use of pandemic diplomacy and be more humanitarian while distributing vaccines around the world, including to small and developing countries like Nepal.

The Kathmandu Post/ANN

NO 28194

The Statesman

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 13 JANUARY 2021

07

100 YEARS AGO

Occasional Note

Whatever divisions may, unfortunately, exist amongst us in Bengal, it can be claimed, at least, that all vanish at the call of humanity. A great calamity like the recent cyclone in Eastern Bengal, or the Midnapore floods, instantly unites all classes in the common effort for the relief of the sufferers; and we do not need to appeal for any foreign aid. Lord Ronaldshay has issued a statement showing what has been done by the Fund opened by His Excellency last August for the aid of the sufferers by the Midnapore deluge; and it is a statement which all concerned, from Lord Ronaldshay himself downwards, may regard with satisfaction. The sum raised by voluntary contributions amounted to Rs 1,78,456. The bulk of the money was devoted to the main object of assisting the rebuilding of houses destroyed by the floods. Smaller amounts were disbursed in gratuitous relief, medical aid, and sanitary work. There remains a balance which has been wisely reserved as a nest-egg to provide against future contingencies. A certain amount, consisting mainly of the balance of the local subscriptions, will remain in the subdivisions of Midnapore as a nucleus for sub-divisional relief funds; while it is intended to amalgamate the remainder with the balance of the Cyclone Relief Fund and thus form a Central Relief Fund, under the trusteeship of the Governor, which will serve to relieve distress in the event of similar widespread calamities occurring in future.

News Items

Students' Boycott

Rangoon, Jan 12

The Local Government as promised make today a pronouncement on the memorandum of concessions in regard to the organisation of the Rangoon University and school education recommended at a public meeting held in Moulmein. The Government states that it has already indicated in clear terms its consciousness that, while the system has been put on a sounder basis and considerable improvement has already been effected, there still remain serious defects in the administration of Anglo-vernacular education which it is desirous of remedying as rapidly as conditions allow. The Local Government is prepared to convene a conference on which there should be substantial unofficial representation. The Local Government defined in clear terms the attitude which it felt it necessary to assume towards pupils taking part in the boycott.

Taxi-drivers on Strike

The taxi-drivers in Calcutta went on strike early yesterday morning and the result of their action has naturally caused a great deal of inconvenience. In the absence of the usual early morning stream of motor traffic conveying business people to office, Charinghee Road and Old Court House Street were quiet thoroughfares. For some time past the men mostly Punjabis, have raised objections to certain rules and regulations issued by the Motor Vehicles Department in connection with their conditions of service. They state that they are unnecessarily harassed by the Police and that at times they spend long hours in court waiting for the decision of magistrates in cases in which they are concerned. Taxi-drivers' Association decided that their grievances failing to receive attention they would go on strike.

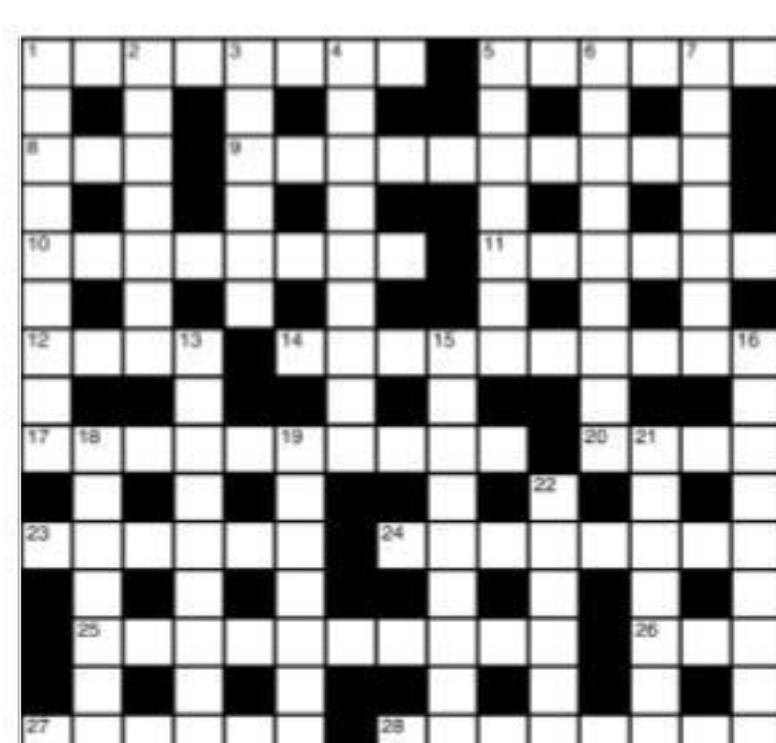
Indians in East Africa

The East African Indian National Congress begs humbly to express satisfaction at the news received from England that the whole Indian question is being reconsidered. The Congress appreciates gratefully that this is the result of His Excellency the Viceroy's intervention on our behalf, and begs humbly and respectfully to express its sense of gratitude to His Excellency for so powerfully espousing our cause. It prays that His Excellency will be pleased to continue his efforts till His Majesty's Government arrives at a just and equitable settlement of this question. I am to assure you that the Government of India will not relax their efforts to secure a just and equitable settlement.

Trade Distress at Home

Politicians, Industrialists and Labourites are concentrating on the problem of trade distress. In addition to a meeting of Ministers on the subject at Downing Street today the Trade Union leaders are holding a preliminary conference to consider their attitude towards the Government's proposals, while the Treasury has convened a Conference of Government Industrial Councils and joint Trade Councils at the Ministry of Labour to consider the question of short time in Government establishments. Other meetings this week include a Conference of London Guardians to urge that the Exchequer should grant relief from the local rates, a meeting of the Parliamentary Trade Union Committee and Labour Executive to discuss the whole question of unemployment.

Crossword



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

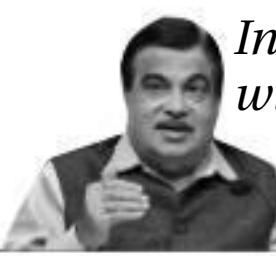
ACROSS

- 1 Commotion as new edition of Chambers left 'hospital' out (8)
- 5 Live on own, and conduct oneself properly (6)
- 8 Staff cross when Oscar is dismissed (3)
- 9 Ignore VAT being fiddled in rally (10)
- 10 Provokes son, which is unnecessary (8)
- 11 Cutting heroin with family from Dallas (6)
- 12 Exclude acoustic covers (4)
- 14 Jacket I am beginning to embellish to get better rate of pay (6,4)
- 17 Make Union pay church to accept introduction of economic strike in recession (3,3,4)
- 20 Tuppence divided up in bank (4)
- 23 Discredited Welsh politician hides (5)
- 24 in outhouse (6)
- 25 Admirer of procrastinator's mantra? (8)
- 26 Crazed idiot's run out in front of lorry (10)
- 27 Devastate German for good (3)
- 28 Working, stopping 11 earning (2,4)
- 29 Maybe undergraduates' exploits overwhelming disheartened debutante (8)
- 30

DOWN

- 1 Addicted and extremely skint, manage to get joints with difficulty (6,3)
- 2 Pay for communist on ship (7)
- 3 Macho to eat head of insect? For the most part (6)
- 4 Install new shed with external bolt for farm animals (9)
- 5 Lay person mostly with bit of lust (6)
- 6 Part of stream from main server is initially lost (9)
- 7 Former soldier welcomes current soldier back in Socialist Republic (7)
- 13 Essentially, stop and reverse French hierarchical system (5,4)
- 15 Desire for Gore statue to be placed outside toilet by Democrat leader in Louisiana (9)
- 16 Perhaps post-Brexit tariffs restricting pub, of course, in Western Asia (9)
- 18 The majority of stupid guards make droning sound, being cruel (7)
- 19 Customer ordered nudes with expression of hesitation (3,4)
- 21 Neat gin? Surprisingly, it can stimulate an immune response (7)
- 22 Got lucky with female Evangelist on date (6)

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



Initiatives such as Khadi Prakritik Paint will strengthen the rural economy

NITIN GADKARI
UNION MINISTER

THUMBNAILS

Morgan Stanley country head: American investment bank Morgan Stanley has appointed Sanjay Shah as the country head for its India business as part of senior-level appointments, officials said on Tuesday. Shah, who has been with the company since 1996, was the co-head since 2013. He held the position with ace i-banker Aisha de Sequeira, who died late last year after a prolonged illness. Sequeira had led marquee deals like investments of Facebook and Google into Reliance Industries' telecom arm Jio Platforms and was widely credited with taking it at the top of the charts.

PTI

Plexconcl chairman: The Plastics Export Promotion Council of India (Plexconcl), the apex trade body for plastics exports, on Tuesday announced the appointment of Arvind Goenka of RMG Polyvinyl India as chairman of its newly constituted committee of administration (COA). Hemant Minocha of Rajiv Plastics has been elected as the vice-chairman of the COA.

PTI

Samsung offer: Samsung has announced the launch of Samsung Big TV Offers on its 55-inch and above premium range of televisions at all leading consumer electronics retailers across the country. Consumers can access unique offers with assured benefits on purchase of large-screen Samsung TVs. Additionally, consumers can avail up to 20 per cent cashback and extended warranty offers coupled with low EMIs. The offers will be valid till 31 January 2021, it said.

SNS

LG launch: With increasing awareness amongst consumers towards health and hygiene, LG Electronics has expanded the LG Tone-free lineup with introduction of its most advanced truly wireless earbuds ~ the HBS-FN7 and HBS-FN6. It is equipped with UV nano technology that eliminates 99.9 per cent bacteria while charging, said a release.

SNS

Karnataka Bank profit: Karnataka Bank on Tuesday reported a 10 per cent increase in net profit at Rs 135.38 crore for the December quarter on account of a decline in bad loans. The Mangalore-headquartered bank had reported a net profit of Rs 123.14 crore in the year-ago period, it said.

PTI

Citroën research: Comfort is an inherent part of everyday life and the same has been revealed in a new research commissioned by Citroën India on where and how Indians seek comfort. Citroën India's "Comfortology" research revealed some insights to Indians' comfort levels at varied stages, with larger weightage to mobility. The research was conducted across 10 cities in India with total of 1801 respondents from diverse ages and genders, said a Press release.

SNS

Spectrum auction: Telcos attend pre-bid conference

Do Tasks telecom operators to submit written queries regarding the rules and processes by 15 Jan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 12 JANUARY

Telecom operators like Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea today participated in pre-bid conference for spectrum auctions, as the telecom department asked telcos to submit written queries regarding the rules and processes by 15 January, according to sources.

During the pre-bid conference, operators raised queries on aspects such as earnest money deposit and roll-out obligations in the bid document, an industry source said.

The department of telecom (DoT) sources said telcos, including Jio, Airtel and Vodafone Idea, attended the pre-bid conference today. The department has now asked the operators to send their written queries on the issues raised at the pre-bid conference by 15 January.

The DoT has already released a notice inviting applications for the spec-

AUCTION TO BEGIN ON 1 MARCH

► The department of telecom has already released a notice inviting applications for the spectrum auctions in seven bands ~ 700, 800, 900, 1800, 2100, 2300 and 2500 MHz bands, and the bidding is scheduled to begin on 1 March.

► Last month, the Union Cabinet had approved a proposal for the auction of 2,251.25 Megahertz (MHz) of spectrum worth Rs 3.92 lakh crore at the base price.

► Telecom operators will need to submit their application by 5 February for participation in the auction.

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ticipation in the auction.

BNP Paribas, last week, had said that spectrum auction in India has turned into a buyer's market, and may see "minimal competition" with operators going after airwaves that yield the best value for money instead of focusing on renewing all expiring spectrum.

With the countdown now on for spectrum auctions, ICICI Securities had said it expects the final prices across spectrums to be equal to the reserve prices due to significant supply of radiowaves, and likely limited demand for expiring radiowaves.

Telecom industry experts believe that the upcoming auction may not see aggressive bidding. It is more to meet the continuity needs of the industry than any major growth, as some spectrum held by Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel

and Vodafone Idea is expiring in 2021. The auction will help replenish the same. Notably, the auction does not include 5G spectrum in the 3300-3600 MHz bands.

Both Bharti Airtel and Reliance Jio are expected to renew their sub-1 GHz holdings and may selectively choose to augment 2300 MHz holdings to build data capacity.

Bharti Airtel has 12 MHz / 47 MHz of spectrum expiring across 900 / 1800 MHz bands. At reserve prices, experts believe, it would cost Bharti Airtel Rs 15,000 crore to renew this spectrum, with upfront payment of Rs 6,700 crore. That said, Airtel may not renew all its expiring spectrum. Airtel, it is expected, may consider buying additional 900 MHz spectrum.

Overall, not much action is expected in the 700 MHz band unless Jio decides to build some capacity for potential 5G roll-out this year, say industry watchers. Also, 1800 and 2500 MHz bands may not receive much interest.

Noted industrialist N Srinivasan today said the South India Cement Manufacturers Association representing the traders from the southern parts of the country was formed in December 2020 with an objective to act as an interface between cement manufacturers and the government.

Srinivasan, also the vice-chairman and managing director of city-based The India

Manufacturers Association, said in the memorandum.

"There is a clear cartel working among builders under the banner of Credai and Builders Association of India who are holding on to prices despite having a margin of more than 100 percent. Unfortunately, no concrete action has been taken by the administration to rein them in the profiteering approach," Srinivasan said in the memorandum.

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The world is in a turbulent time that is unprecedented in the past century. But time and momentum are on our side. This is where we show our conviction and resilience

CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING

ADDRESSING THE LEADING CADRE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF CHINA

The Statesman

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 13 JANUARY 2021

09

WHO experts to visit Wuhan

To probe Covid origins amid virus spike; China had confirmed the arrival of the team on Monday

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BEIJING, 12 JANUARY

A 10-member team of WHO experts assigned to probe the origins of Covid will directly fly from Singapore to the central Chinese city of Wuhan, where the virus first emerged in December 2019, amid a resurgence of the deadly disease in several cities close to Beijing, prompting lockdowns.

"Current plan is that they will fly from Singapore to Wuhan on 14 January," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian told a media briefing here on Tuesday. He, however, said he has no details whether the experts would have to undergo quarantine and what is their itinerary and how long the team would stay in Wuhan and directed the media to the relevant authorities.

Observers say it is significant that the 10-member expert team is commencing their much-delayed probe

China expands lockdowns

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BEIJING, 12 JANUARY

Lockdowns have been expanded and a major political conference postponed in a province next to Beijing that is the scene of China's most serious recent outbreak.

Residents of the city of Gu'an just south of Beijing have been ordered to stay home for seven days starting from Tuesday. Similar measures have been ordered around the country, particularly in the central city of Wuhan where 11 million people were placed under lockdown for 76 days last winter as the pandemic was just beginning. Hebei has

also delayed the meetings of the provincial People's Congress and its advisory body that are usually held in February. It wasn't clear when the meetings would be held.

China last year postponed the holding of the National People's Congress and its advisory body in Beijing from March until May, shortening the sessions and limiting media access in a sign of the seriousness with which the ruling Communist Party was treating the outbreak.

Hebei's provincial health commission on Tuesday reported 40 new confirmed cases, all but one in the provincial capital of Shijiazhuang just south of Beijing

where transport links have been cut and residents told to stay home. Local authorities say several dozen of the more than 300 confirmed cases reported this year in the city appear to be linked to wedding gatherings.

One new case was reported in Beijing, where more than a dozen communities and villages have been put under lockdown, and one in the northeastern province of Heilongjiang, bringing China's reported total to 87,591 with 4,634 deaths. Authorities have called on citizens not to travel, ordered schools to close a week early and conducted testing on a massive scale.

from Wuhan from where Covid emerged in December last year before it became a pandemic, killing over 1,944,750 people worldwide so far.

The World Health Organisation team's visit has become a bone of contention as Beijing, which questions the widely-held view about the

virus' origins in Wuhan, had delayed granting permission to it. China has been proactively questioning the view that the deadly outbreak took

place in a wet market in Wuhan where live animals, birds and reptiles are sold and spread to humans. The market remained closed and sealed since early last year.

China had confirmed the arrival of the WHO team on Monday, ending the uncertainty and delay which drew sharp criticism from the world health body. Monday's confirmation of the expert team's visit came after WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, who is often accused of being pro-China, in a rare instance of criticism, expressed disappointment over Beijing for not finalising the necessary permissions for the experts' team's arrival.

The visit is also taking place when China, which has effectively contained the virus, is experiencing a relapse of the disease in several places in Hebei province close to Beijing. China has reported 55 newly confirmed Covid cases, including 40 in north China's Hebei province and one in the Chinese capital.

Navy divers recover black box from crashed Indonesia plane

ASSOCIATED PRESS

JAKARTA, 12 JANUARY

Indonesian navy divers searching the ocean floor on Tuesday recovered the flight data recorder from a Sriwijaya Air jet that crashed into the Java Sea with 62 people on board.

The device is expected to help investigators determine what caused the Boeing 737-500 plane to nosedive into the ocean in heavy rain shortly after taking off from Jakarta on Saturday. TV stations showed divers on an inflatable vessel with a large white container containing the device heading to a Jakarta port.

Military chief Air Chief Marshal Hadi Tjahjanto said the plane's other black box, the cockpit voice recorder, was also a flight attendant for Sriwijaya Air, shared her grief in a series of posts on social media. My husband is a loving, devout and kind man, she wrote on Instagram. Heaven is your place, dear ... be peaceful there.

Anguished family members



centrating the debris field, rather than spreading it out over a large area as would be seen with a midair event.

The disaster has reignited concerns about safety in Indonesia's aviation industry, which grew fast after the economy was opened following the fall of dictator Suharto in the late 1990s. The United States had banned Indonesian carriers from operating in the country in 2007, lifting the action in 2016, citing improvements in compliance with international aviation standards. The European Union lifted a similar ban in 2018.

In the past year, Indonesian aviation was affected significantly by the coronavirus pandemic that caused travel restrictions and a slump in demand among travelers.

Sriwijaya Air has had only minor safety incidents in the past, though a farmer was killed in 2008 when a plane went off the runway while landing due to a hydraulic issue.

In 2018, a Boeing 737 MAX 8 jet operated by Lion Air crashed, killing 189 people.

Leading human rights group calls Israel an apartheid state

JERUSALEM, 12 JANUARY

A leading Israeli human rights group has begun describing both Israel and its control of the Palestinian territories as a single "apartheid" regime, using an explosive term that the country's leaders and their supporters vehemently reject.

In a report released Tuesday, B'Tselem says that while Palestinians live under different forms of Israeli control in the occupied West Bank, blockaded Gaza, annexed east Jerusalem and within Israel itself, they have fewer rights than Jews in the entire area.

One of the key points in our analysis is that this is a single geopolitical area ruled by one government," said B'Tselem director Hagai El-Ad. This is not democracy plus occupation. This is apartheid between the river and the sea.

That a respected Israeli organization is adopting a term long seen as taboo even by many critics of Israel points to a broader shift in the debate as its half-century occupation of war-won lands drags on and hopes for a two-state solution fade.

Israel has long presented itself as a thriving democracy in which Palestinian citizens, who make up about 20 percent of its population of 9.2 million, have equal rights.

COVID TOLL MOUNTS



Wreaths stand on graves in a cemetery for Covid victims in the northern city of Thessaloniki, Greece. AP

Nepal will not compromise on sovereign equality in its engagement with either India or China: Oli

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

KATHMANDU, 12 JANUARY

to claim the territory of China or India. But we must claim our territory with our friends," said Oli, who had triggered the border row last year after his government came out with a new political map that showed the three Indian territories as part of Nepal.

His remarks came just two days ahead of Nepalese Foreign Minister Pradeep Gyawali's visit to New Delhi on January 14—the senior most political leader from Nepal to visit India after strain in bilateral ties.

"The area (of) Limpiyadhura, Lipulekh and Kalapani is the territory of Nepal, is (a) very sacred part of Nepal," 68-year-old Oli was quoted as saying by the WION news channel. "We are not in position

totered on the border issue.

After Nepal released the map last year, India reacted sharply, calling it a "unilateral act" and cautioning Kathmandu that such "artificial enlargement" of territorial claims will not be accepted by it.

India said that Nepal's action violated an understanding reached between the two countries to resolve the boundary issues through talks. "I believe that 2021 will be the year where we can declare there are no problems between the two countries—Nepal and India," Oli said. He also offered to resolve differ-

ences between India and China.

After Nepal released the map last year, India reacted sharply, calling it a "unilateral act" and cautioning Kathmandu that such "artificial enlargement" of territorial claims will not be accepted by it.

On the domestic political crisis that led him to recommend the dissolution of the House of Representatives, Oli blamed former prime minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' for a split in the ruling Nepal Communist Party. He also defended his decision to dissolve the House, saying his actions were aimed at preventing Nepal from being pushed towards instability and horse-trading.

Afghan Shiite leader in Pak after killings of miners

ISLAMABAD, 12 JANUARY

An influential Afghan Shiite leader is visiting Pakistan where members of the minority sect are still reeling from the brutal killing of 11 Shiite coal miners, nine of whom were Afghan immigrants, earlier this month.

The miners, who were abducted and killed by militants from the Islamic State group in southwestern Baluchistan province, were members of the minority Hazara. They were buried on Saturday, following a week of protests in Pakistan that sought to highlight the community's plight.

The visiting Afghan leader, Karim Khalili is also an ethnic Hazara. Members of the mostly Shiite community live in both Pakistan and Afghanistan and have suffered persecution from the majority Sunni Muslims in both countries.

Emergency imposed in Malaysia over virus

ASSOCIATED PRESS
KUALA LUMPUR, 12 JANUARY

Malaysia's king on Tuesday approved a coronavirus emergency that will suspend parliament at least until August and halt any bids to seek a general election in political reprieve for embattled Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin.

Muhyiddin assured citizens in a televised speech that the emergency was not a military coup and curfew will not be enforced. He said his civilian government will remain in charge during the emergency, that will last until August 1 or earlier depending on the situation.

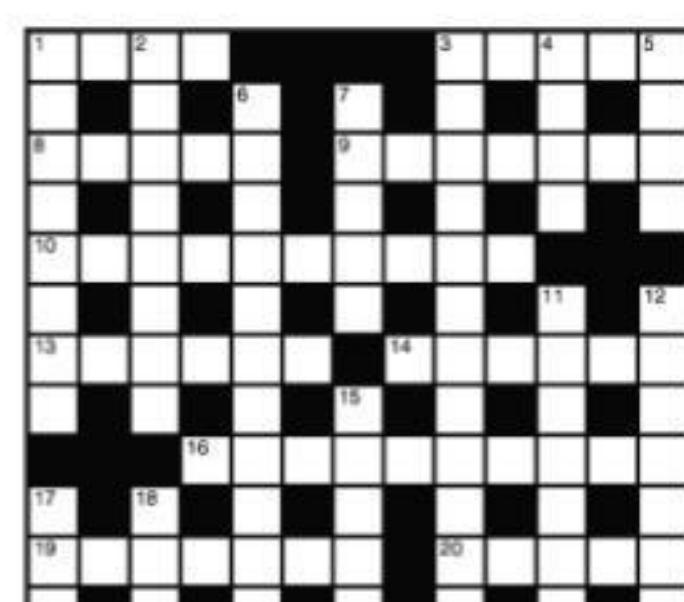
The emergency declaration came as a surprise just a day before millions of people in Malaysia's biggest city Kuala Lumpur, the administrative capital Putrajaya and five high-risk states return to a near-lockdown for two weeks.

It also comes amid threats by the United Malays Nation-

al Organisation, the largest party in the ruling coalition, to withdraw support from Muhyiddin to force an early general election. Many in UMNO are unhappy that the party is playing second fiddle to Muhyiddin's own Malay party. Muhyiddin said the national parliament and state legislatures will be suspended and no election is allowed during the emergency. He pledged to call a general election once the crisis has eased and it is safe to hold polls. Oh Ei Sun, a senior fellow at the Singapore Institute of International Affairs, said most people could understand the need for movement curbs but an emergency declaration appeared overblown as it is unclear how that could help slow the virus spread. It's very clearly a political move from the Muhyiddin side to preempt political challenges from both his rivals in his ruling coalition as well as the opposition," he said.

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1 Tree's protective layer (4)
- 3 Remove by clipping (5)
- 8 Unit of weight (5)
- 9 Clap (7)
- 10 Means of payment (6,4)
- 13 Bay tree (6)
- 14 Savage (6)
- 16 Make easier (10)
- 17 Apparent (7)
- 20 Normal (5)
- 21 Pinny (5)
- 22 Surrend (4)
- 11 Rarely, DOWN 1 Green vegetable (8)
- 2 Second-placed competitor (6-2)
- 3 Dissimilarly superior in manner (12)
- 4 Dutch cheese (4)
- 5 Travel on horseback (4)
- 6 Thoughtful consideration (12)
- 7 Charade (5)
- 11 Living being (8)
- 12 Military sending signal (8)
- 15 Biting insect (5)
- 17 Continent (4)
- 18 Beloved (4)

DOWN

- 1 Green vegetable (8)
- 2 Second-placed competitor (6-2)
- 3 Dissimilarly superior in manner (12)
- 4 Dutch cheese (4)
- 5 Travel on horseback (4)
- 6 Thoughtful consideration (12)
- 7 Charade (5)
- 11 Living being (8)
- 12 Military sending signal (8)
- 15 Biting insect (5)
- 17 Continent (4)
- 18 Beloved (4)

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

- ACROSS 1 Enrage, 13 Enrage, 16 Shyster, 2 Ensue, 3 Put-down, 4 React, 5 Unit trust, 6 Bench, 8 Recessions, 12 Academy, 14 Academy, 15 Bonus, 17 Alien, 18 Bonus.
- DOWN 1 Vie, 3 Purr (Viper), 7 Non-essential, 9 Tense, 10 Chortle, 11 Enrage, 12 Academy, 13 Enrage, 14 Academy, 15 Bonus, 16 Shyster, 17 Alien, 18 Bonus.

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

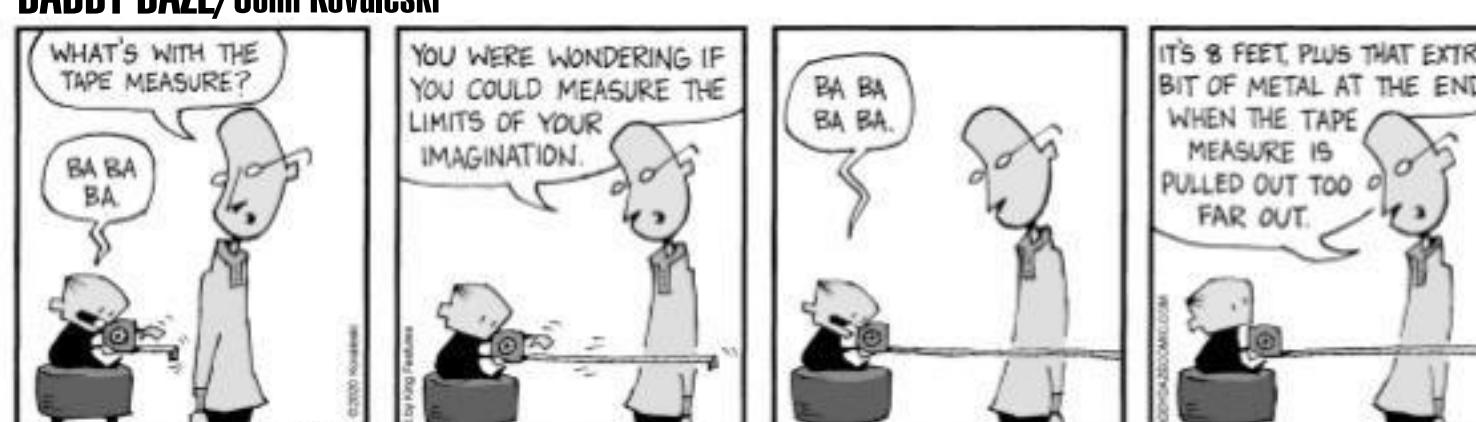
BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson



DADDY DAZE/John Kovaleski



NEED TO KNOW

HOSPITALS

- AIIMS 26588500, 26588900
- Moolchand Medcity (formerly Hospital) 42000000 & 24-hour Chemist Shop 42000047
- 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

- ISBT (General Inquiry): 23868836, 23865181
- Toll Free Nos. 1800112511
- SMS Inquiry Nos. 57886, 54959, 5676747

ROADWAYS INQUIRY

- AIR INDIA Flight Inquiry and Reservation 18001383338, 18001383338, 18001803838, 18001803838, Reservation 43513186; Indigo Airlines Air

FOUR RACK TOTAL TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

Instructions Make a 2 to 7 letter word from the rack letters. Add points of each word, using scoring table. Add up the scores of all words. All words must be 3 letters or longer. All words must be in the Official Scrabble Dictionary (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary).

Scrabble and Scrabble Tiles are registered trademarks. All rights in the game are owned in the U.S.A by Hasbro Inc., and elsewhere by J.W. Spear & Sons Limited, a subsidiary of Mattel, Inc.

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION BY JUDD

RACK 1 = 14

RACK 2 = 10

RACK 3 = 10

RACK 4 = 45

JUDD'S TOTAL = 79

FAR SCORE 45-55

FOUR RACK TOTAL TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

<p



Bifurcate process of impeachment, nominees confirmation and secondly to begin to rebuild the economy

US PRESIDENT-ELECT JOE BIDEN

AS HE URGES CONGRESSIONAL LEADERSHIP TO PASS STIMULUS BILL FIRST

WEATHER

CITY	MAX(°C)	MIN(°C)
SINGAPORE	29	26 R
HONG KONG	33	29 H
TOKYO	03	01 CL
LONDON	07	01 H
DUBAI	42	30 S
SAN FRANCISCO	10	04 H
NEW YORK	02	01 S
MOSCOW	-10	-12 H

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

THUMBNAILS



People wait in cars for vaccination at a new vaccination superstation in San Diego. AP

Pramila Jaypal tests +ve : Indian-American Congresswoman Pramila Jaypal said on Tuesday that she has tested positive after being locked down in a secured room at the US Capitol where several Republican lawmakers recklessly refused to wear masks in the moments after the 6 January attack. PTI

EU warns Iran enrichment moves could imperil N-deal

BRUSSELS, 12 JANUARY

The official supervising the agreement aimed at curbing Iran's nuclear ambitions is warning that Tehran's decision to ramp up uranium enrichment could undermine efforts to keep the deal alive amid diplomatic efforts to bring the United States back on board.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said Iran's intention to enrich uranium up to 20 per cent at the Fordo underground nuclear facility is a very serious development and a matter of deep concern, and has very severe proliferation implications. Last week, Iran began enriching uranium to levels unseen since the deal was struck in 2015. Iran has argued that it is no longer obliged to respect limits laid out in the pact, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, because President Donald Trump violated it first by pulling the US out of the deal in 2018, which resulted in crippling sanctions on Iran's moribund economy.

The deal offers Iran economic incentives in exchange for curbs on its nuclear program, but with the reinstatement of American sanctions, the other signatories China, France, Germany, Russia and the U.K. have struggled to provide Iran the assistance it seeks. Biden has said he hopes to return the US to the deal. AP

Fears of armed protests by Trump backers

Posts on pro-Trump & far-right online networks have called for protest on a number of dates, including armed demonstrations across the country on 17 Jan



US Capitol Hill violence on 6 January. ■ FILE PICTURE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WASHINGTON, 12 JANUARY

The FBI has warned that it has received intelligence that "armed protests" were being planned at all 50 US state capitols and in Washington DC in the run-up to President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration on January 20, leading to fears of more deadly violence by extremists supporting outgoing President Donald Trump.

Posts on pro-Trump and far-right online networks have called for protest action on a number of dates, including armed demonstrations in cities across the country on January 17 and a march in Washington DC on inauguration day itself.

"Armed protests are being planned at all 50 state capitols from January 16 through at least January 20, and at the US Capitol from January 17 through January 20," according to the internal Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) bulletin obtained by CNN and other media outlets. Biden is slated to be sworn in as the 46th President of the United States on January 20, along with Indian-origin Kamala Harris as the Vice President.

On Monday, Biden told reporters he was not afraid to take the oath of office outside of the US Capitol.

Both he and Harris are still expected to be sworn in outside the building, only two weeks after it was the site of a deadly raid by radical supporters of Trump opposing the election result.

Only after the Congressional certification of the November 3 presidential elections last week, the outgoing Republican President Trump reluctantly accepted the election results and promised a smooth transition of power.

But he still believes the presidential elections had massive voters' fraud, an allegation which remains unsubstantiated and have been thrown out of courts dozens of times.

Interestingly, Trump himself has issued an emergency declaration for the national capital here till January 24.

In a statement on Monday, the White House said the President's action authorises the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency to coordinate relief efforts to alleviate the hardship and suffering caused by the emergency on the local population.

President issues emergency declaration in Washington DC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WASHINGTON, 12 JANUARY

US President Donald Trump has issued an emergency declaration for the national capital here ahead of his successor Joe Biden's inauguration on January 20, amidst threat perception to the event by federal agencies.

In a statement on Monday, the White House said the President's action authorises the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to coordinate relief efforts to alleviate the hardship and suffering caused by the emergency on the local population.

The emergency in Washington DC will be effective

from Monday till January 24.

It comes in the wake of last week's violent protest, in which thousands of pro-Trump supporters stormed the Capitol building and clashed with police, interrupting a constitutional process by Congress to affirm the victory of President-elect Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris in the election. Five people, including Capitol Police officer, died in the protests.

According to the White House, the emergency declaration also provides appropriate assistance for required

emergency measures, authorised under Title V of the Stafford Act to save lives and to protect property and public health and safety, and to lessen or avert the threat of a catastrophe in the District of Columbia.

Specifically, the FEMA is authorised to identify, mobilise, and provide at its discretion, equipment and resources necessary to alleviate the impacts of the emergency. Emergency protective measures, limited to direct Federal assistance, will be provided at 100 per cent Federal funding, the White House said.

Thomas J Fargione from the DHS and Pete Gaynor, Administrator, FEMA, are the Federal Coordinating Officers for operations in the affected area.



Preparations take place for President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration on the West Front of the U.S. Capitol in Washington. ■ AP

US House to vote on impeachment today

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WASHINGTON, 12 JANUARY

Law enforcement: We'll be ready for Biden's inauguration

Fb to remove content containing 'stop the steal' phrase

WASHINGTON, 12 JANUARY

The Democratic-controlled House of Representatives would vote on the impeachment of outgoing President Donald Trump on Wednesday on charges of inciting his supporters to carry out a violent attack on the Capitol Hill last week. Co-authored by Congressmen Jamie Raskin, David Cicilline and Ted Lieu, the article of impeachment -- co-sponsored by 211 House members -- was tabled on Monday.

During a conference call with his party colleagues on Monday, House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer said the impeachment vote will be held on Wednesday.

The article of impeachment charges Trump with a count of "incitement of insurrection" for his actions on January 6, when he delivered a speech inciting his supporters to lay siege to the Capitol, an action that temporarily halted the counting of Electoral College votes and resulted in the deaths of five individuals, including an officer of the US Capitol Police.

The Democrats have enough votes to impeach the president in the House, which requires a simple majority. But the Senate, where the Republicans have a razor-thin 51-50 majority -- requires votes of two-thirds of the members to remove the president out of the office.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has said the vote on impeachment in the upper chamber of the US Congress can not happen before the Inauguration Day on January 20.

Later on Monday, Congresswoman Ilhan Omar also introduced two articles of impeachment against Trump. The first article cites Trump's abuse of power for attempting to overturn the 2020 presidential election results in Georgia.

The second article addresses the incitement of violence for orchestrating an attempted coup against our country.

I just introduced my impeachment resolution. The full House will now vote on a measure calling on Vice President (Mike) Pence and the cabinet to remove Trump under the 25th amendment. If Pence does not act, the House will move to impeach this week, Omar said.

Republican Senator Steve Daines rejected calls for impeachment. Now is the time to stand.

This week, the House will vote to impeach Donald Trump for inciting an insurrection against the seat of our democracy, said Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur.

Liberty and the rule of law, though always fragile, are bedrock tenets of our democratic republic, she said.

We've been allowing robust conversations related to the election outcome and that will continue, they said. But with continued attempts to organise events against the outcome of the US presidential election that can lead to violence, the additional step is being taken in the lead up to the inauguration, the Facebook said.

US 're-designates' Cuba as 'state sponsor of terrorism'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WASHINGTON, 12 JANUARY

The Trump administration has re-designated Cuba as a "state sponsor of terrorism", reversing an Obama-era decision days ahead of the inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Monday that the US government had been focused from the start on denying the Castro regime the resources it uses to "oppress its people at home, and countering its malign interference in Venezuela and the rest of the Western Hemisphere".

"The State Department has designated Cuba as a State Sponsor of Terrorism for repeatedly providing support for acts of international terrorism in granting safe harbor to terrorists," Pompeo said.

"With this action, we will once again hold Cuba's government accountable and send a clear message: the Castro regime must end its support for international terrorism and subversion of US jus-

titus.

Cuba returns to the list following its "broken commitment" to stop supporting terrorism as a condition of its removal by the previous administration in 2015.

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tice," he said.

The previous Obama Administration had previously removed from this designation, which subjects Cuba to sanctions that penalise persons and countries engaging in certain trade with it, restricts US foreign assistance, bans defence exports and sales, and imposes certain controls on exports of dual-use items.

Cuba returns to the list following its "broken commitment" to stop supporting terrorism as a condition of its removal by the previous administration in 2015. On May 13, 2020, the State Department notified Congress that it had certified Cuba under Section 40A(a) of the Arms Export Control Act as "not cooperating fully" with US counterterrorism

efforts in 2019.

"The Cuban intelligence and security apparatus has infiltrated Venezuela's security and military forces, assisting Nicolás Maduro to maintain his stranglehold over his people while allowing terrorist organizations to operate. The Cuban government's support for FARC dissidents and the ELN continues beyond Cuba's borders as well, and the regime's support of Maduro has created a permissive environment for international terrorists to live and thrive with in Venezuela," Pompeo said.

According to Pompeo, members of the National Liberation Army a US-designated foreign terrorist organization, travelled to Havana to conduct peace talks with the Colombian government in 2017.

Citing peace negotiation protocols, Cuba has refused Colombia's requests to extradite 10 ELN leaders living in Havana after the group claimed responsibility for the 2019 bombing of a Bogota police academy that, Pompeo said.

ism efforts in 2019.

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S A V A N I T H A N A R A Y A N A M

A technique used to image Earth faults deep underground shows a way to peer into tissue of the human body.

The technique, which is described by Steve Beuve, Samuel Callé, Elise Khoury, Emmanuel Gilles Simon and Jean-Pierre Remenieras, from Université de Tours, Université Bourgogne and the university hospital, Bourgogne, in France, in the journal, *Applied Physics Letters*, relates to the tissue of the thyroid gland. The thyroid gland can be affected by cancer. The current methods of detection of the cancer, however, do not locate the cancer precisely, and the detection of cancer can entail more discomfort than its treatment and cure. The new method, where the patient participates, leads to easier and more accurate detection.

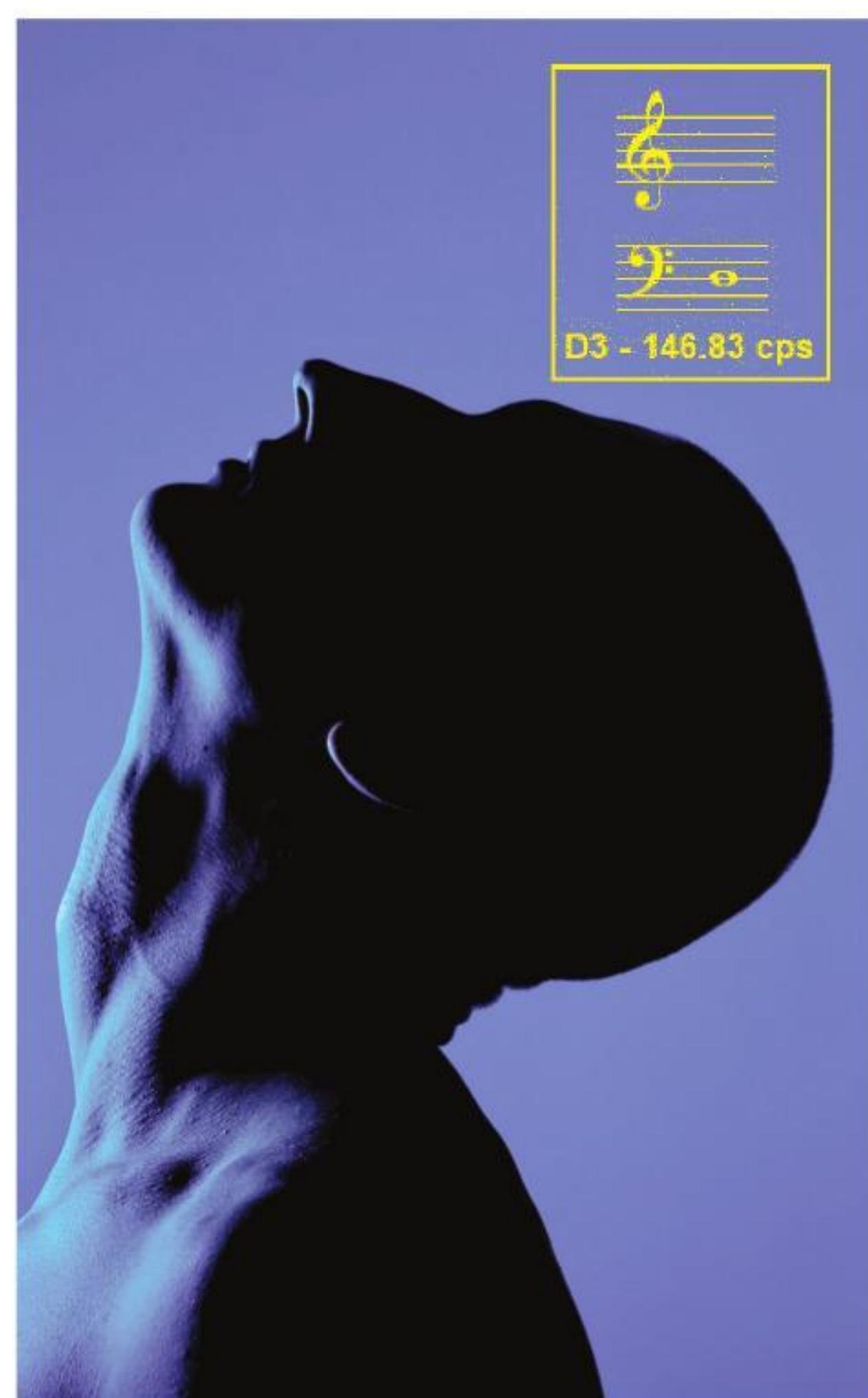
The most common form of cancer of the thyroid gland, especially when detected early, is among the most treatable cancers. Detection is by physically feeling the area of the throat for the harder nodules that form, and with the help of ultrasound or x-rays. If a tumour is found, it must be followed by biopsy, or excision of a bit of the tumour, for lab tests, to see if the cells are malignant.

The excision is done by inserting a fine needle into the nodule and syringing out a sample. The procedure, known as fine needle aspiration, has often to be repeated, as it is only in some five per cent of the trials that the cancer is detected.

A reason for the poor results could be that the ultrasound, or even sophisticated x-ray methods, do not provide any supplementary information about the tissue in the places where they detect tumours. Ultrasound, for instance, does not create the contrast needed to make out live and dead tissue. The CAT scan, which uses x-rays to image an organ in several "slices" and puts together a 3D picture, is sensitive, but does not help make out malignancy.

The method now used to probe what is called soft tissue in the body, in different organs, is shear-wave elastography. Mechanical waves, like sound waves, that pass through media, are compression waves, or longitudinal waves, where the to-and-from motion of material is along the direction of the wave. In the ripples on the surface of a pond, or a violin string that is plucked, in contrast, the motion is at right angles to the direction of the wave. These are called transverse waves. Transverse waves can also arise when the surfaces of bulk materials are exposed to vibration. Here, planes within the material move relative to each other, and these are called shear waves.

The movement of longitudinal and transverse waves through the body of the Earth, and over its surface, is routinely used to make out seismic fault lines, presence of water, or minerals or ores, etc, within the depths of the Earth. In the case of



tremors set off by movements in the Earth's crust, undersea volcanic action, etc, waves which travel, directly and after reflection at discontinuities within the Earth, get detected at observation centres, to locate and assess the severity of the tremor.

Waves could also be generated on purpose, usually by explosives, and the timing of detection at different observation points leads to information about the nature of the material at different depths under the Earth's surface.

The use of elastography to probe body tissue is an extension of the same principle. As the movement of shear waves through the body of tissue brings about compression and bending of the material, a shear wave would scatter waves of ultrasound that are passed through the tissue at the same time. If there are spots where the material is of greater stiffness, the shear waves would move faster when they pass through those portions, and it would show up in the

ultrasound scattering pattern. The method is then a sensitive way of discovering non-uniformities, and hence possible malignancy, in soft tissue.

A development of the technique is not to use an external source of vibration of the surface of the tissue, to create the shear wave, but to rely on the body's own physiological distortions, like the beating of the heart, expansion and contraction of blood vessels or respiration. The method is both non-invasive and sensitive, and by probing the tissue under study by ultrasound from different directions, an accurate map of the tissue distribution can be obtained.

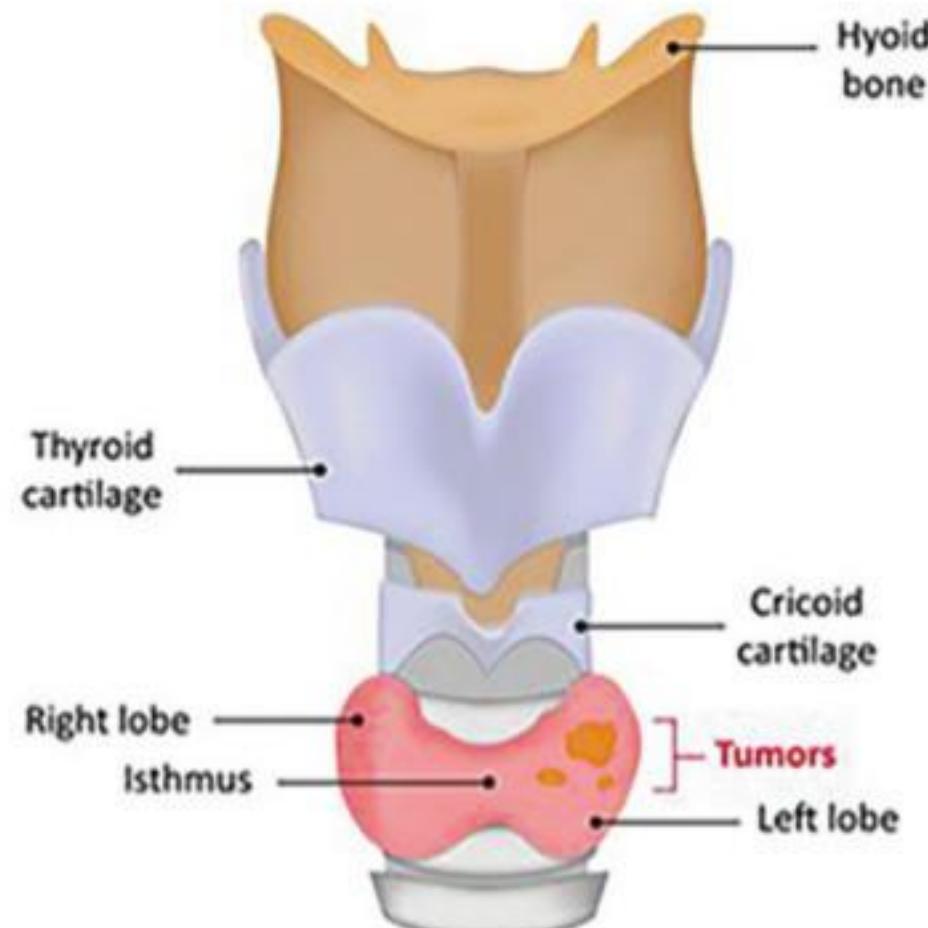
As there is no active source of vibration, the method is called *passive elastography*. The paper in *Applied Physics Letters* says that this technique has been applied to look for tumours in the thyroid, and the main arteries in the neck region are most suitable as sources of shear waves.

A factor that determines how effective this method can be is how

Tenor in the pathology lab

Voice can act as the tissue probe to detect cancer in the thyroid gland

Thyroid Cancer



strong the source of vibration is, in comparison with incidental disturbances, what is called the signal to noise ratio. In *passive elastography*, as the source of vibration is feeble, this could be a limitation. And then, the source of vibration is not what the investigator can control, and the investigation has to make the best of available sources.

The work reported in *Applied Physics Letters* moves forward, halfway in principle, but a lot in results, by harnessing the patient's own voice to work as the source of vibrations. The carotid artery, which is right next to the thyroid gland, the paper says, vibrates at the rate of less than ten beats a second. A higher frequency, which would create shear waves of shorter wavelength, would be more suitable. And a stronger source of waves would improve the signal to noise ratio too.

The paper reports that the vibrations of the vocal tract, when the patient vocalises a tone with a frequency of 150 cycles a second, produces robust shear waves that allow imaging of tissue with fine resolution. A tone at 150 cycles per second corresponds to something like D3, just to the left of the centre of the piano keyboard, an easy tone for a man or a woman to produce. And with this tone, using this method, which the authors call *vocal-passive elastography*, the authors could reach a resolution of 150 microns, or about a sixth of a millimetre. We can see that shear waves at 150 cps would be more than 15 times shorter than the waves at 0-10 cps, which come from sources like heartbeat or the carotid artery.

It is an innovative discovery of a higher frequency vibrator, right at the spot, at the thyroid gland, for accurate identification of where to aspire. Reducing the discomfort of the patient, and involving her in the procedure, with a singing lesson, of holding a note, to boot!

The writer can be contacted at response@simplescience.in

PLUS POINTS

Metals in sharks

"Alarming high levels" of heavy metals have been found in sharks in the Bahamas, a new study has found. Researchers said human activities over the last century had "rapidly accelerated" the influx of metals entering the marine environment. The study found "alarmingly high levels" of a dozen heavy metals -- including mercury -- in large reef and tiger sharks throughout the Bahamas, where sharks live in a marine protected area.

Researchers from Beneath the Waves, a non-profit research institute, looked at muscle tissues of 36 sharks from six different species for the study, published in *Scientific Reports*. They said while the impacts on shark health were unknown, the concentrations of metals found exceeded levels that were considered toxic for human consumption.

The study concluded, "Our findings suggest that sharks residing within relatively pristine ecological environments may possess high levels of potentially harmful metals, which may have public health implications if they are consumed by local human populations."

Austin Gallagher, research co-author, said the study was "another piece of evidence to steer people away from consuming sharks". Sharks are not commonly eaten by people in the Bahamas, the researchers said.

Oliver Shipley, the study's lead author, said, "Understanding how sharks are affected by humans is critical for ongoing conservation efforts of these ecologically and economically important species."

The BTW research associate and postdoctoral researcher at the University of New Mexico said shark abundance was "relatively stable and healthy" in the Bahamas thanks to "effective long-term protection".

-THE INDEPENDENT

Next-gen antibiotics



The World Health Organisation has warned that the world is headed toward a post-antibiotic era if action is not taken to combat the issue of antibiotic resistance.

But one scientist is looking to prevent this by designing the 'next generation of antibiotics'. "The increasing appearance of multi drug-resistant strains of bacteria, together with the negligible number of new antibiotic drugs that are presently undergoing development, is becoming a colossal health threat," 81-year-old Israeli scientist Ada Yonath told *The Straits Times*. She said, "It seems that we will soon revert to the pre-antibiotic era, during which diseases caused by parasites or by simple or severe infections such as pneumonia or wounds were almost untreatable and resulted in frequent deaths."

Yonath won a Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 2009 for her work in studying the structure and functions of the ribosome – becoming the first woman in 45 years to win the coveted prize. The director of the Helen and Milton A Kimmelman Center for Biomolecular Structure and Assembly at the Weizmann Institute of Science said her team's concept for fighting antibiotic resistance is designing the next generation of antibiotics by zooming into ribosomal structures in bacteria.

The ribosome is a protein-making machine in almost all living cells, that strings together molecules called amino acids to form long chains that will eventually become proteins. Proteins in turn carry out many functions that are essential for life. Many antibiotics combat bacterial infections by preventing bacterial ribosomes from working.

But most antibiotics target ribosomes in a broad range of bacteria, which act on non-target bacteria along with the targeted bacteria and can lead to more antibiotic-resistant bacteria strains. Broad-range antibiotics can also cause disruption to native bacteria in the body – akin to throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

Yonath said such antibiotics rely on "traditional antibiotic binding sites" on bacterial ribosomes. So, to develop the next-generation antibiotics, it was key to map out the structure of ribosomes of disease-causing bacteria to identify new potential areas for antibiotics to target. This leads to the next step of designing compounds that match these targets, "thus blocking their function, and eventually killing the pathogen," said Yonath. These antibiotics targeting ribosomes specific to disease-causing bacteria species are called narrow-spectrum antibiotics.

-THE STRAITS TIMES/ANN



FOR RECHARGING GROUNDWATER

Permeability is an important property of soil investigation as an ongoing research project has found

along with flowing water on the downstream side. Removal of soil particles from the foundation of the structure forms tube-like hollow spaces, which progresses in the backward direction with the dislodging of soil particles. This phenomenon is known as "backward erosion piping". If this piping reaches the upstream portion of the hydraulic structure, the structure as a whole is detached from the foundation and is washed away under the water pressure or may fail by subsidence.

Permeability was first determined by a French engineer called Henri Darcy in 1856. He conducted his experiments of flow of water on sand beds, which formed the basis of hydrogeology. Determination of permeability of soil in a vertical direction has been attempted by several researchers but its determination in a horizontal direction lags in comparison. For the determination of permeability in a vertical direction, standard procedures and equipment are available but that is not the case in the horizontal direction. This area needs the attention of scientists and researchers.

Moreover, the determination of permeability of layered soil carries great significance as soil in the Earth's crust is found mostly in layers. Thus, the determination of flow characteristics of water and permeability through layered soil, both in vertical and horizontal directions, are essential to effectively plan the schemes of groundwater recharge and seepage through and below hydraulic structures. The soil investigation of a certain area, with reference to permeability, could act as a basis for the

determination of feasibility of the groundwater recharge scheme in that area.

With growing urbanisation and conversion of open land to built-up areas, the process of groundwater recharge is dwindling. The lowering of groundwater levels is taking place at such an alarming rate that in some districts of Rajasthan, people have left their dwellings and migrated to other areas. Studies have shown that the recharge of ground water is highly influenced by the permeability of the underlying soil. In case the soil is composed of stiff clays, with low permeability, rainwater is not able to find its way to the underground water strata. In such situations, the construction of recharge wells becomes important.

The Centre and state governments are keenly poised to implement groundwater recharge schemes for the survival of flora and fauna. Keeping in view the importance of the subject, the Council of Science and Technology Uttar Pradesh has sanctioned a project entitled "An Experimental Study on Permeability of Layered Soils Parallel to Bedding Plane" to the department of civil engineering at the Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh. The amount sanctioned by UPCST is Rs 6.05 lakh for a span of two years.

Work on the project started with effect from 1 February 2019 under the guidance of Professor Javed Alam, the principal investigator. The outcome is expected to be useful for farmers and scientists.

The writer is co-investigator and associate professor, University Polytechnic, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh

one material to another. The accurate estimation of soil permeability is of utmost importance for the selection of materials for the construction of hydraulic structures and their foundations.

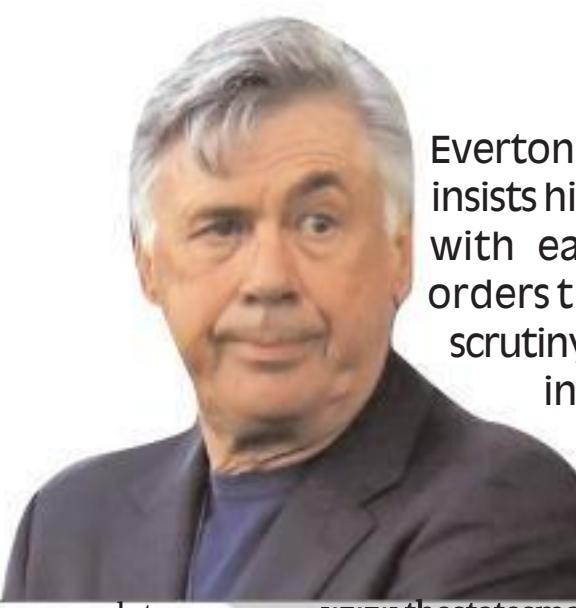
The foundations of such structures are usually composed of porous media which allows the seepage of water into the foundation on the upstream side of the structure. This water, after entering the foundation, tries to escape on the downstream side. Thus, a pressure is created by the trapped water for its escape. This pressure is known as uplift pressure. Sometimes the uplift pressure escalates, and water escapes suddenly from the foundation with large amounts of bed material. This creates a blast-like situation and causes the failure of the structure. The phenomenon is known as "heave piping".

On the other hand, there is a slow process of movement of soil particles

MOHAMMAD KAFI

The excessive use and wastage of water in our country has landed us in a water-deficient zone. The scarcity is assuming such dimensions that more than 50 per cent of the population has no access to safe drinking water. Around 200,000 people die every year due to this reason. The present-day water crisis is the worst in history and India is considered at the centre of the global water calamity and sanitation.

Due to low rainfall and increasing pollution, surface sources are not dependable anymore. Thus, groundwater is the only option left to feed the demand of the population. According to Unesco, India is the largest extractor of groundwater. Fifty-four per cent wells in the country have gone dry and 21 major cities are going to be devoid of groundwater by the end of this year. Therefore,



COME WHAT MAY

Everton manager Carlo Ancelotti (in photo, left) insists his players will continue to celebrate goals with each other until the Premier League orders them to stop. There has been increased scrutiny placed on football in the light of increasing rates of Covid-19 infection across England, with clubs being told to strengthen protocols within stadia and training grounds.

For more updates www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

Match suspended: The second One-Day International between the United Arab Emirates and Ireland, set for Tuesday, was suspended after a fourth player in the hosts' camp tested positive for Covid-19. The decision was made after a new directive was received.

Isner out: John Isner has confirmed he will skip the Australian Open tennis tournament because of the Covid-19 pandemic. He wanted his family to travel together to "make it as much fun as possible" but that would be impossible this year because of the pandemic.

Grand Prix: The Chinese Grand Prix is set to be postponed with Formula One bosses working on a revamped calendar for the new season. The race in Shanghai is pencilled in for 11 April but Covid-19 restrictions will make staging a race virtually impossible.

Eze's error: Crystal Palace winger Eberechi Eze has admitted "an error of judgement" by attending former club Queens Park Rangers' FA Cup tie against Fulham on Saturday in the latest breach of coronavirus regulations by an English Premier League player.

Record rise: The Premier League has confirmed that 40 players or staff have tested positive for coronavirus in the past week's round of testing, representing a record increase in the number of cases. In total, 225 tests were carried out by the Premier League.

Celtic setback: Celtic will be without 13 first-team players for their game against Hibernian after coming into close contact with the sole member of the squad who has tested positive for coronavirus - injured defender Christopher Jullien, now self-isolating at home.

Bengal win: A classy maiden unbeaten century from Vivek Singh in the shortest format of the game ensured full points for Bengal in their second tie of Group B of Syed Mustaq Ali Trophy at Eden Gardens today. Battling first Bengal made 161 for six. Needing 162 to win Jharkhand finished at 145 for 9 giving Bengal a 16 run victory. The home team notched up its second straight win, following a victory over Odisha on the opening day (January 10).

National Karting Championship: Bangalore's young racers dominated the MECO-FMSCI National Karting Championship 2020 (Rotax Max), sweeping all three titles on offer with Arjun Maini, Rishon Rajeev and Ishan Madesh clinching the honours over an action-packed weekend. The championship drew to a close with three rounds being held back to back at the same venue to ensure safety and convenience of all drivers and teams in the middle of a raging pandemic. The weekend also saw India's first Formula 1 driver, Narain Karthikeyan driving in a few races as a guest driver.

Strong show: In a stage that was touted to be the toughest of the 2021 Dakar, and was made even tougher by the weight of the recent past, Hero MotoSports Team Rally paid an emotional tribute to their late teammate Paulo Goncalves by delivering a strong performance in Stage 9 today. It was an emotionally charged day for Hero MotoSports Team Rally, as it marked the first death anniversary of Paulo, who passed away after a crash at the Dakar Rally on the same day last year. Motivated by the mission to dedicate this Dakar to Paulo's memory and driven by his personal resolve to come back and race one more time for Paulo, Joaquin finished the stage in the 13th position.

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AGENCIES
SYDNEY, 12 JANUARY

The injury-ravaged Indian team were dealt another nasty blow today as pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah (in photo) was ruled out of the fourth Test against Australia because of an abdominal strain. As if that was not enough, Mayank Agarwal -- tipped to be Hanuma Vihari's replacement in the playing XI in Brisbane -- sustained a knock on a hand and it could be a hairline fracture.

Making matters worse, Ravichandran Ashwin's back spasms have aggravated after battling for three hours on the final day, leaving India with few options in terms of bench strength. Bumrah's scans reports showed a strain and the Indian team management did not want him to aggravate the injury in view of the forthcoming four-Test series against England. "Bumrah suffered an abdominal strain while fielding in Sydney."

He is going to sit out the Brisbane Test but is expected to be available against England," a source in the Board of Control for Cricket in India said. It is now expected that two Test-old Mohammad Siraj will be leading the Indian attack, assisted by Navdeep Saini, Shardul Thakur and T Natarajan, in the Brisbane Test, starting on 15 January. Unless Bumrah is fielded at the start of the series, risking the

entire England series, Natarajan will make his debut.

After the injured KL Rahul's departure and Hanuma Vihari's grade two tear, there are no back-up middle-order batsmen left among the reserves.

The only two batsmen available are the two out-of-form openers: Prithvi Shaw and Mayank Agarwal.

It remains to be seen if India, knowing their depleted strength and long tail, decide to hit the

conservative route of playing four bowlers and six batsmen with Rishabh Pant as the wicket-keeper. If Agarwal's scans reveal a bruise - and not a fracture - then it could well be Shaw batting at number three followed by Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane and Agarwal himself at number six. If they go in with five bowlers, then collective experience of the pace brigade will be three Test matches and 10 balls.

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Jadeja has already been ruled out of the Gabba Test. "The all-rounder will now consult a hand specialist in Sydney before he returns to India. He will then head to the National Cricket Academy in Bangalore for further management of his injury," said the BCCI.

Saha's role

Word also is that India could draft in Wriddhiman Saha as their wicket-keeper and play Rishabh Pant as a specialist batsman at the Gabba. While there is no doubt that Shubman Gill and Rohit Sharma would continue to open the innings after putting

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CA confirmed that Pucovski suffered a "shoulder subluxation injury," which is a partial dislocation of the shoulder joint, when the ball of the upper arm bone partly comes out of the socket in the shoulder. "He will continue rest and rehabilitation over the next two days before a decision is made on his fitness for the fourth Vodafone Test match," a CA spokesperson was quoted as saying by cricket.com.au. The 22-year-old had hurt his right shoulder after diving for the ball at mid-wicket in the 86th over of India's innings on the fifth day of the drawn Sydney Test on Monday.

After the dive, Pucovski stayed down for a few seconds clutching his shoulder as his teammates came to help him. The youngster left the field at the end of the over and was sent for scans, leaving his participation in the final Test in doubt.

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