



HYDERABAD
BLUES



LAST-DITCH EFFORT
FOR POST-BREXIT
TRADE PACT

P6



MAKER OF 21ST
CENTURY ASSAM

P10



INDIA WIN
T20 SERIES

P12

WEATHER

Mainly clear sky. Mist/shallow fog in the morning. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 27 and 11 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: Nil

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

| Max: 100% | Min: 46% |
|--------------------|------------------|
| TEMPERATURE | |
| Max: 28.2°C (+4) | Min: 11.4°C (+2) |
| SUN RISES | SUN SETS |
| 07:02 hrs | 17:25 hrs |
| MOON RISES | MOON SETS |
| 23:53 hrs | 13:03 hrs |

THUMBNAILS



Youngsters enjoying themselves on a cold afternoon, in New Delhi on Sunday. SUBRATA DUTTA

Mystery disease: Over 200 people in Eluru, a town in West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh were admitted to hospital since Saturday due to a mysterious illness with symptoms like nausea and foaming at the mouth fainting, mild headaches even muscular pains, prompting chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy to visit the area on Monday after criticism from the Opposition TDP. A total of 292 people were admitted to the hospital including 46 children and 76 women. Around 122 people were discharged after treatment.

Fuel prices hiked for 5th day: Petrol price on Sunday was hiked by 28 paise per litre and diesel by 29 paise, the fifth straight day of increase in rates due to firming international oil prices. Petrol price in Delhi rose to Rs 83.41 per litre from Rs 83.13. Diesel rates went up from Rs 73.32 to Rs 73.61 per litre. Rates crossed Rs 90-mark for petrol and Rs 80 in case of diesel in Mumbai. Kolkata rates were Rs 84.90 a litre for petrol, and Rs 77.18/litre for diesel.

Two brothers arrested in UP over interfaith marriage

MORADABAD, 6 DECEMBER

Police arrested a Muslim man and his brother under Uttar Pradesh's new anti-conversion law when he visited the registrar's office here to record his marriage to a Hindu woman.

A video clip purportedly showed Bajrang Dal activists asking the couple if the woman had given notice to the local district magistrate over her intention to change her religion, a requirement under the new UP ordinance.

Kanth station house officer Ajay Gautam said the two men were arrested Friday on the basis of a complaint by the woman's parents. The woman said she is an adult and married the man a few months ago of her free will. It was not immediately known whether she also changed her religion.

According to reports, Moradabad man Rashid had met the woman from Bijniore when he was working in Dehradun where he was studying.

Police reached the registrar's office after being approached by Bajrang Dal activists. The two men were then produced before a magistrate and sent to prison.

SHO Kanth said it was now up to the court to decide the case.

The recently promulgated Uttar Pradesh's Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Ordinance, 2020 nullifies marriages if they are carried out for the sole purpose of religious conversion. The punishment can extend up to 10 years if a minor is involved.

In recent cases, police in UP have arrested seven people in Sitalpur and stopped an interfaith marriage in Lucknow, citing the new law to check forcible and fraudulent conversions. PTI



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Opp parties extend support to bandh

Farmer unions say their stir has now spread across country



Farmers continuing their Delhi Chalo protest against the new farm laws, at Ghazipur on the Delhi-UP border on Sunday. SNS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI/HYDERABAD/
MUMBAI, 6 DECEMBER

Opposition parties, including many regional outfits, on Sunday came out in strong support of the 'Bharat Bandh' on December 8 called by farmer unions which have been protesting on Delhi's borders for 11 days demanding the repeal of the Centre's new agri-marketing laws.

Prominent leaders including Congress president Sonia Gandhi, NCP leader Sharad Pawar, CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury, DMK chief M K Stalin and PAGD chairman Farooq Abdullah also issued a joint statement backing the proposed day-long strike and pressed the Centre to meet the legitimate demands of the protesters.

Claiming that their agitation has spread across the

nation, farmer leaders welcomed the support and urged all to come forward to make Tuesday's Bharat Bandh a success.

After five rounds of talks between the Centre and the farmer unions failed to end the impasse, the two sides are again set to meet on December 9, a day after the countrywide strike.

"This agitation is not only of Punjab farmers but is of the entire nation. We are going to strengthen our agitation and it has already spread across the nation," farmer leader Baldev Singh Yadav said at a press conference. "Since the government was not able to deal with us properly, we gave a call for Bharat Bandh," he said and appealed to everyone to make sure that the bandh remains peaceful. "We won't let anyone turn it violent and would take strict action against them. We request everyone to be

part of the bandh," he said.

During the bandh, shops and businesses will remain shut. Ambulances and other emergency services will be exempted, farmer leaders said.

The Congress, NCP, Shiv Sena, TRS, DMK, SP and the AAP joined the Trinamul Congress, RJD and the Left parties in supporting the strike call. India's first Olympic medallist in boxing and Congress leader Vijender Singh said he would return his Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna award if the Centre does not withdraw the new farm legislations.

NCP chief and former Union agriculture minister Sharad Pawar warned the Centre that if the deadlock continues, the agitation will not be limited to Delhi and people from across the country will stand by the protesting farmers.

Pawar is scheduled to meet President Ram Nath

Kejriwal on December 9 over the ongoing farmers' protest, his party said.

Expressing the Congress' "wholehearted" support to the strike call, party spokesperson Pawan Khera said it will hold protests that day at all district and state headquarters in solidarity with the demands of the farmers.

TRS president and Telangana chief minister K Chandrasekhar Rao said the party rank and file would actively participate in the bandh to ensure it was a success, according to an official statement.

In their joint statement, Sonia Gandhi and other opposition leaders said they extend "solidarity with the ongoing massive struggle by the Indian farmers" and their call for a Bharat Bandh on December 8 demanding the withdrawal of these "retrograde" Agri-laws and the Electricity Amendment Bill.

Also among the signatories were RJD's Tejashwi Yadav, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, CPI general secretary D Raja, general secretary of CPI(ML) Dipankar Bhattacharya, AIFB general secretary Debabrata Biswas and Manoj Bhattacharya, the general secretary of RSP.

These laws "threaten India's food security, destroy Indian agriculture and our farmers, lay the basis for the abolition of the Minimum Support Price (MSP) and mortgage Indian agriculture and our markets to the caprices of multi-national agri-business corporates and domestic corporates", the statement alleged.

RETURN OF THE NATIVE



Gorkha Jan Mukti Morcha leader Bimal Gurung making his first public appearance in Siliguri since he went into hiding three years ago. On Sunday. SNS

Serum Institute, Pfizer seek emergency use nod for vaccines

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 6 DECEMBER

The UK on Wednesday approved the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine against Covid-19. Bahrain has also granted emergency use authorisation for the vaccine

Serum Institute of India has applied to the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) seeking emergency use authorisation for the Oxford Covid-19 vaccine in the country, official sources said on Sunday.

A day earlier, the Indian arm of US pharmaceutical giant Pfizer sought similar approval from India's drug regulator for its own Covid-19 vaccine, after securing clearances in the UK and Bahrain.

The phase-III clinical trial of the Oxford Covid-19 vaccine, Covishield, is being conducted by the Pune-based Serum Institute of India (SII), co-sponsored by Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), in various parts of the country in addition to clinical studies being carried out by Oxford-AstraZeneca in the UK and Brazil.

Based on phase two and three clinical trial results, the SII with the help of the ICMR will pursue early availability of the vaccine for India, the country's apex health research body had said last month.

According to the ICMR, the SII has already manufactured 40 million doses of the vaccine under the at-risk manufacturing and stockpiling licence it obtained from the DCGI.

Official sources, citing the SII application, said the firm has stated that data

from four clinical studies, two in the UK and one each in Brazil and India, shows that Covishield is highly efficacious against symptomatic and most importantly against severe Covid-19 infections. "In terms of safety, Covishield was well tolerated with respect to solicited adverse events and was not associated with an increased number of SAEs and deaths. A majority of solicited reactions were mild in severity and resolved without any sequelae... Therefore, Covishield is safe and well-tolerated and can be used effectively for prevention of Covid-19 in the targeted population," a source said quoting the application.

Earlier, Pfizer India made a similar request for emergency use authorisation for its vaccine. The firm, sought permission to import the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine for sale and distribution in the country, besides waiver of clinical trials on the Indian population in accordance with special provisions under the New Drugs and Clinical Trials Rules, 2019, official sources said.

He sought the resignation of Darjeeling's BJP MP, Raju Bista, who rode high on the support lent by the Morcha (Gurung camp) and other Hill parties and secured a thumping win in the 2019 Parliamentary elections. "I am here to speak against those who used me as a voting machine and later threw me out. I am also here to speak for the one who brought me here again today amid my people, and her name is Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee," Mr Gurung said.

According to him, he was forced to "shake hands" with Miss Banerjee just because the BJP did nothing for the Gorkhas. "I will now give Modi a befitting reply to the BJP by keeping Mamata Banerjee in the forefront," he said.

Bimal back; declares 'war' on BJP

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SILIGURI, 6 DECEMBER

As Gorkha Jan Mukti Morcha chief Bimal Gurung finally returned to the region after three-and-a-half years of hiding from the state police today, he declared a "war" against the BJP, a party that the Morcha and a majority of the Gorkhas had supported in the past three general elections, which saw the party winning the Darjeeling Lok Sabha seat for three consecutive terms.

Addressing a massive rally at the overflowing Indira Gandhi Maidan here today, an emotional Mr Gurung lambasted the BJP for treating the Gorkhas as "pawns" and doing nothing for the Hills, while also heaping praises on Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee for the work she had been doing in the state.

He sought the resignation of Darjeeling's BJP MP, Raju Bista, who rode high on the support lent by the Morcha (Gurung camp) and other Hill parties and secured a thumping win in the 2019 Parliamentary elections. "I am here to speak against those who used me as a voting machine and later threw me out. I am also here to speak for the one who brought me here again today amid my people, and her name is Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee," Mr Gurung said.

According to him, he was forced to "shake hands" with Miss Banerjee just because the BJP did nothing for the Gorkhas. "I will now give Modi a befitting reply to the BJP by keeping Mamata Banerjee in the forefront," he said.

The NHS has a strong record of delivering large scale vaccination programmes from the flu jab, HPV vaccine and life-saving MMR jabs. Hardworking staff will once again rise to the challenge to protect the most vulnerable people from this awful disease, he said.

General practitioners (GPs) and other primary care staff are also being put on standby to start delivering the jab, with a number of them ready from December 14 and more in other parts of the country joining in a phased basis during the coming weeks and months. Vaccination centres treating large numbers of patients in sporting venues and conference centres will subsequently join the drive when further supplies of vaccine come on stream, the DHSC said.

The vaccine is typically delivered by a simple injection in the shoulder but there is a complex and difficult logistical challenge to deliver from the manufacturers Pfizer to patients. It needs to be stored at -70°C before being thawed out and can only be moved four times within that cold chain before being used.

Covid-19 caseload contracts to 4.03L

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 6 DECEMBER

Delhi's 3rd Covid wave on the wane: Kejriwal

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 6 DECEMBER

Delhi today recorded 2,706 fresh coronavirus infections (Covid-19), which took its caseload to 5,92,250. These cases were identified from 73,536 tests, with the positivity rate coming down to 3.68 per cent.

The active cases were 4,02,529 on July 21.

Continuing with the trend of the last nine days, India has reported more daily recoveries than new cases in a span of 24 hours. "The trend of more daily recoveries than the daily cases has led to a continuous contraction of India's Covid-19 active caseload which presently consists of just 4.18 per cent of the total cases," the ministry said.

"The gap between recoveries and active cases is steadily increasing and nearing 87 lakh (86,97,544) as on date," the ministry said. Of the new recoveries, 41,916 new recoveries were registered during the

same period. The new recoveries led to a net decline of 6,441 in the total active cases. New cases per million population in India in the last seven days are 186. It is one of the lowest in the world, the ministry underlined.

Covid-19 recoveries have crossed 91 lakh (91,00,792).

"The national capital logged 69 fresh Covid fatalities, which pushed its toll to 9,643, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin. (SEE P2)

Maharashtra has reported the maximum number of single-day recoveries with 5,834 newly recovered cases. Kerala follows closely with 5,820 new recoveries. Delhi registered 4,916 new recoveries.

Of the new infections, 75,70 per cent are from 10 states and UTs, the ministry said.

Kerala reported the highest daily new cases at 5,848. It is followed by Maharashtra with 4,922 new cases. Delhi recorded

3,419 new cases. A total of 482 case fatalities have been reported in a span of 24 hours.

UNION HEALTH MINISTRY FIGURES AS OF 8.00 A.M.
SUNDAY 06 DECEMBER 2020

TOTAL CASES
96,44,222

ACTIVE CASES
4,03,248

NEW CASES
36,011

NEW RECOVERIES
41,970

TOTAL DEATHS
1,40,182

UNION HEALTH MINISTRY FIGURES AS OF 8.00 A.M.
SUNDAY 06 DE



Delhi's third Covid wave on the wane: Kejriwal

City is emerging 'victorious in war against coronavirus' as it records 2,706 fresh cases from over 73K tests with positivity rate plummeting to 3.68 pc, says Jain

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 6 DECEMBER

Delhi today recorded 2,706 fresh cases of coronavirus infections (Covid-19), which took its caseload to 5,92,250, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

These cases were identified from 73,536 tests, with the positivity rate coming down to 3.68 per cent.

The national capital logged 69 fresh Covid fatalities, which pushed its toll to 9,643, the health bulletin said.

The count of the coronavirus patients who recovered during the last 24 hours in the city was 4,622, which took the cumulative tally of such recoveries to 5,57,914. The recovery rate rose to 94.20 per cent.

There were 24,693 active Covid cases, including 15,276 patients undergoing treatment on home isolation.

The number of containment zones in the city stood at 6,173, the bulletin stated.

In a tweet, Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal said, "I am glad that the third wave also seems to be getting weak. Delhi fought a difficult war against corona."

Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain tweeted, "Positivity rate in Delhi today has fallen further to 3.65 per cent. Delhi is emerging victorious in this war against the virus. I would request you



People wearing masks as preventive measure against coronavirus, in the Capital on Sunday.

SUBRATA DUTTA

all to continue following the three commandments — mask, social distancing and sanitisation! Be safe, Delhi."

The national capital had yesterday recorded 3,419 coronavirus infections, with more than 80,000 tests conducted for the second consecutive day. The city had then logged 77 Covid fatalities, which pushed its death toll to 9,574.

Yesterday's coronavirus cases were reportedly detected out of 81,473 tests, including 35,352 RT-PCR tests. The positivity rate was then 4.20 per cent. The national capital's coronavirus positivity rate last Friday and on Thursday was 4.78 per cent and 4.96 per cent respectively.

Delhi had on Friday

recorded 4,067 coronavirus cases, logging 73 Covid deaths. These cases were detected out of a record 85,003 tests including 40,191 RT-PCR tests — the city's highest in a day so far.

The national capital had on Thursday recorded 3,734 coronavirus infections detected from 75,230 tests. It had recorded 82 Covid fatalities. The positivity rate had then dipped to 4.96 per cent from Wednesday's 5 per cent.

Delhi's Covid positivity rate has sharply decreased over the last several days, dipping from 8.65 per cent on 26 November to 3.68 per cent today. Its positivity rate has been steadily dropping since 26 November, except on 29 November when it

marginally rose to 7.64 per cent as compared to 7.24 per cent on 28 November, as per the official figures released by the Delhi health department.

The city's positivity rate was 8.65 per cent on 26 November when 5,475 fresh cases were recorded, and 8.51 per cent on 27 November when 5,482 cases were reported.

On 30 November, the positivity rate again dropped to 7.35 per cent. It came down to 6.85 per cent on 1 December and 5 per cent on 2 December.

Delhi's positivity rate was 15.26 per cent on 7 November. There has been thus a reduction of 76 per cent in it since then.

Kejriwal to address TiE global summit on 9 December

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 6 DECEMBER

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal is going to address the IndUS Entrepreneurs (TiE) Global Summit on 9 December. He will be sharing Delhi's efforts in building a comprehensive framework and turning the city into a global startup destination.

Kejriwal would be the only CM from India who will speak in this virtual summit along with several industry stalwarts, world leaders and Nobel laureates. From entrepreneurship mindset curriculum in schools to a progressive startup policy, the Kejriwal government claims to be on the forefront in making the national capital a global destination for start-ups.

The TiE Global Summit is a virtual conference of world leaders, entrepreneurs, investors and mentors. It is going to be attended by government agencies, angel investors, venture capitalists, PEs, global industry leaders, wealth entrepreneurs, thought leaders, the academia, Nobel laureates, policy makers, and TiE members from global chapters.

In his speech at the summit, Kejriwal is expected to talk about various steps being taken to turn Delhi into a global startup destination ranging from launching a progressive startup policy, providing access to affordable infrastructure for the hi-tech and service industry and providing high-quality skilled manpower through a focus on skilling and building an entrepreneurship mindset right from the school level.

Delhi Police returns ₹ 7.55 cr, 3.8 kg gold to their owners



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 6 DECEMBER

Delhi Police has returned more than Rs 7.55 crore in cash and other valuable case properties such as golden or silver ornaments or articles studded with precious stones to their rightful owners over the last six months, according to a press release issued by Delhi Police here today.

These articles had been lying in the custody of the city police for the past several years.

They were returned to their owners by 15 police districts and their respective police

stations, the release said.

The drive to hand over such case properties to their rightful owners was launched on the direction of Delhi Police commissioner S N Shrivastava with effect from 1 June this year, the release said.

Delhi Police reviewed the process of returning of recovered/seized stolen property to its rightful owners and launched the drive accordingly,

which "yielded noticeable results". It noted with regard to valuable articles that "it was of no use to keep such articles in police custody for years till the trial was over".

"Accordingly, requests were

made by the SHOs to concerned Metropolitan Magistrates under Section 451 Cr.P.C. to hand over the case property to their rightful owners. Similarly, vehicles, mobile phones, laptops, PCs, CCTVs etc. were also returned, after completing the necessary formalities as per law, to their rightful owners," the release added.

During the period from 01st June, 2020 to 05th November, 2020, Rs 7,55,62,133 in cash and gold jewellery approx. 379.12 gms. recovered in different cases was handed over to their rightful owners," the release added.

Classified

LEGAL NOTICES

WARRANT OF SALE OF PROPERTY IN EXECUTION OF A DECREE FOR MONEY (Order, XXI, Rule 66, of the Code of Civil Procedure)

IN THE COURT OF

Sh. Arun Sukhija

Addl. District Judge-07

(Central District)

Room No. 336 IIID Floor

Tis Hazari Courts,

Delhi-110054.

Suit No. 892/2008

Ex. No. 12343/16

Report: 12-03-2021

Sh. Ram Bhaj Bansal, s/o Late Shri Gyani Ram, r/o 2469, Padam Dham Colony, Narela, Delhi.

Versus

Sh. Ram Kumar & Ors. s/o Late Shri Gyani Ram, r/o 2074, IInd Floor, Old Anaj Mandi Narela, Delhi.

To:

Court Auctioneer

Sh. Bakshi Tajeswar Singh,

Advocate C-18 Nizamuddin,

East New Delhi-110013. Mobile No. 9873089690.

Enrollment No. D/933/2004

These are to command you to sell by auction after giving

29-01-2021 day previous notice by affixing the same in this same in this courthouse and after making the proclamation and the warrant issued from this Court dated the 06-11-2020, in execution of a decree in favour of DH Ram Bhaj Bansal in Suit No. 892/2008 or so much of the said property as shall realise the sum of Rs./- being the amount of the said decree and cost still remaining unsatisfied.

You are further commanded to return this warrant on or before 12-03-2021 with an endorsement certifying the manner in which it has been executed, or if it has not been executed.

Given under my hand and Seal of this court on this 03-12-2020.

Addl. District Judge-07 (Central District) Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi-110054.

Seal of the court

District Judge (Commercial-Court) Room No. 502, South-East District Saket Court Complex, New Delhi.

Suit No. CS/COMM/93/19 State Bank of India

Versus Vinay Kumar

Defendant 1. Vijay Kumar, s/o Suresh Sharma, r/o D-34, F/2 DDA Flats, Kalkaji, New Delhi-110019.

2. Ms. Pooja, w/o Sh. Vijay Kumar, r/o D-34, F/2 DDA Flats, Kalkaji, New Delhi-110019.

Also at: M/s. White Express DRY Cleaners, AT: 1770/8, Govindpuri Extension, Near Pobja Masala Store, New Delhi-110019.

Whereas you, are intentionally evading service of summons it is hereby notified that if you shall not defend the case on the 08th day of December, 2020, the day fixed for the final disposal, it will be heard and determined ex parte.

Given under my hand and the Seal of the Court on the 3rd day of December, 2020.

District Judge (Commer-

cial-Court) South East District Saket Court Complex, New Delhi.

Suit No. CS/COMM/93/19 State Bank of India

Versus Vinay Kumar

Plaintiff

Seal of the Court

SITUATION VACANT

WEST BENGAL STATE UNIVERSITY

Burab, Kolkata-700 126

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No. WBSU/Reg/Adv/Officer/

164/2020-21, Date: 07.12.2020

Online applications are invited for the post of Registrar and Inspector of Colleges of the University as per vacancy given on the website "recruitment.wbsu gadmission.com" (that will remain operative from 07.12.2020 to 31.12.2020). Govt. of West Bengal rules as applicable will be followed for appointment. The last date of online filling of application forms along with requisite application fee is 31.12.2020.

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Ambedkar continues to live through his lofty ideals and inspiring thoughts. His efforts to uplift and develop the downtrodden people are immeasurable.

Y S JAGAN MOHAN REDDY
ANDHRA PRADESH CHIEF MINISTER

The Statesman

NEW DELHI, MONDAY 07 DECEMBER 2020

03

Neither spineless nor traitor like you: Capt to Sukhbir

The Punjab CM hits back at the SAD president over his allegation that the former had 'surrendered to the BJP's blackmail' on the issue of farmers protesting against the Centre's farm laws

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 6 DECEMBER

Punjab chief minister Capt Amarinder Singh today hit back at Shrimani Akali Dal (SAD) president Sukhbir Singh Badal, charging that Sukhbir's yesterday remarks against him was "utter buffoonery" and that he was "neither spineless nor a traitor like Badals".

Capt Amarinder's counter-attack came in response to Sukhbir's blistering assault on

him over the ED cases against his family.

The SAD chief had yesterday alleged that the Punjab CM had already "surrendered" to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s "blackmail" over the farmers' issue.

In his sharp reaction, Capt Amarinder alleged that "The Badals, who were totally cornered over their betrayal of the farmers, had clearly pressed all the panic buttons in their desperation to cover up their brazen treachery".



In his statement, Sukhbir had charged that the Punjab CM had been summoned by Union home minister Amit Shah to Delhi recently to be told to choose between facing the

Enforcement Directorate (ED) probe and "betraying the farmers, who have been agitating against the Centre's controversial farm laws in and around the national capital for several days.

"The choice he (Amarinder) made became clear with the first thing he said as soon as he came out of the meeting with Amit Shah (Union home minister) telling the farmers to end their agitation, citing dangers to national security from this peaceful movement," Badal claimed.

Referring to Amarinder's "shocking references" to dangers to national security from the farmers' movement, the SAD president said, "The brave Amarinder merely recited the

script given to him by the BJP High Command. He sang it like a parrot."

He charged that Capt Amarinder's "cowardly surrender" before the ED and Shah may surprise those who take his "hollow bluster and boastfulness" seriously.

Sukhbir alleged: "The fact is that this surrender is nothing new and it is so total and shameful that even an ordinary tehsil-level BJP worker in Punjab can simply barge into Captain's official and personal bungalows

and order him about to get routine things done, while senior Congress leaders and ministers dare not even breathe loudly within 500 yards of this house. Like all bullies, Amarinder is a coward at heart and only needs a bigger bully to expose this cowardice."

Hitting back at the SAD chief, the Punjab CM said, "Such is their level of despair that Sukhbir even stooped to undermining the Pakistani threat to the security of Punjab and the nation."

"Have you and your Shrimani Akali Dal become so power-hungry that you have even closed your eyes to the threat posed by the Pakistanis to our security? Are you saying that all those arms, ammunition and drones our brave security forces have captured along the Punjab border are no danger?" Capt Amarinder asked Sukhbir.

Amarinder also alleged that it seemed Sukhbir had totally "lost it", adding that there was no new ED case against him.

1,675 trafficked children rescued since COVID-19 outbreak: BBA

PTI
NEW DELHI, 6 DECEMBER

Over 1,600 trafficked children were rescued from "situations of exploitation" in the past eight months, Nobel laureate Kailash Satyarthi's NGO Bachpan Bachao Andolan said, noting that there has been a rise in such cases as many parents lost their livelihood due to the COVID-19 pandemic and during the lockdown.

The lockdown was imposed by the central government across the nation from March 25 to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus. However, from June 8, the Centre gradually started easing restrictions under "Unlock".

"One of the biggest worries during the lockdown was the fact that the financial

crisis of families will lead them to take loans unethically. This eventually increased the vulnerability of children and their families of being lured by traffickers with the promise of a better livelihood opportunity," Dhananjay Tingal, an executive director at BBA, said.

Thirteen-year-old Krishna (name changed) was one of the 1,675 children rescued by the child rights organisation between April and November.

Krishna was trafficked from his village in Bihar to work in a garment factory in Gandhinagar in Gujarat, where he toiled for 12 hours a day and stayed in a tiny room that he shared with six others like him, BBA officials said.

Though they were promised payment, they were

never given the promised amount. Besides, this he and the others just got half a day to rest every week and were under tremendous pressure to meet production targets, they said.

Krishna landed up in Gujarat and became a victim of trafficking after his parents, farm labourers, lost their jobs with the outbreak of the coronavirus, the BBA said.

Moreover, his parents had taken a loan of Rs 20,000 before the lockdown to fix the roof of their house, but being unemployed they were unable to pay their lender, the officials said.

It was getting difficult for Krishna's parents to feed a family of 11 and traffickers took advantage of the situation and for Rs 20,000, Krishna was taken to Gujarat to work, they said.

"The advance payment by any trafficker further com-

plicates the issue as it becomes a case of bonded labour," Tingal said.

Khan was rescued along with 15 other children in September while he was being transported in a bus to work at a bangle making factory in Jaipur in Rajasthan. He was rescued by BAA with the help of the anti-human trafficking unit and local police.

The child rights NGO said during April to November, 1,675 children rescued from "situations of exploitation" and 107 traffickers were arrested.

"During August and September 2020, 80 vehicles,

including 51 buses and 29 trains were intercepted based on information received from field activists, exclusively deployed to report suspected cases of child trafficking," Tingal said, terming children as the biggest victim of the pandemic.

"There is a dire need of being more vigilant and active in mapping children and families, who are specially at risk and try to stop trafficking at the source."

The immediate measure that we have at hand to prevent this is to rehabilitate rescued bonded labourers, especially by ensuring that they are financially compensated and do not fall back into the cycle of exploitation," he said.

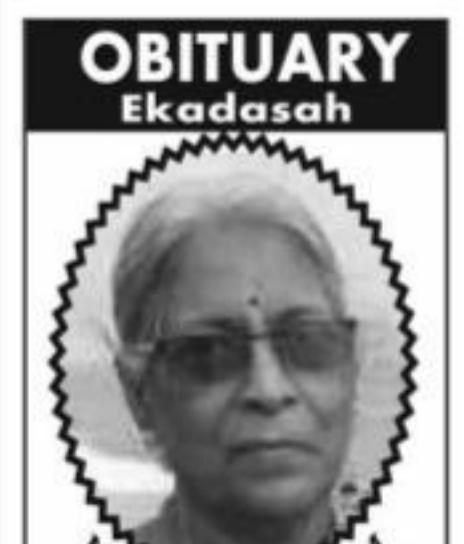
Tingal said that bangle making units of Jaipur have been under the scanner for

over a decade now due to children being employed.

The pandemic temporarily halted production but as soon as restrictions were relaxed, manufacturing resumed, and employers started employing children, he said.

Children are employed primarily for two reasons—first due to cheap labour cost and secondly, due to their small hands which helps in efficiently fitting embellishments on bangles, Tingal said.

"The advent of the pandemic has seriously damaged the work done in the past two decades by child rights organisations in terms of decreasing child labour. BBA has been adapting to the challenges posed by the pandemic in dealing with the steep rise in trafficking," he added.



OBITUARY
Ekadasah
Kumari Banani Dalal
(D/o Late Narendra Nath Dalal)
Abirhaba - 20-05-1947
Tirodhana - 27-11-2020

Your ideal, self-esteem, sacrifice and dedicated life will always be our guide. Let your immortal soul rest in peace at the lotus feet of Lord Shree Jagannath. **Grief stricken : Samir (Brother-in-law) Archana (Daughter-in-law) Suparna (Niece) Subrata (Son-in-law) Debajyoti (Nephew) Mamata (Daughter-in-law) Maitrayee (Niece) Sreenivas (Son-in-law) Rupam, Attri, Ayush, Ishan & Vihaan (Grandsons)**

HPCM pays tribute to Ambedkar



HP CM Jai Ram Thakur paying tribute to B R Ambedkar in Shimla on Sunday.

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 6 DECEMBER

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur on Sunday paid tributes to the chief

thoughts and ideals of Dr Ambedkar continue to guide and give strength to millions of people of the country.

Apart from his stellar contributions towards the country's polity, Dr Ambedkar was also the torchbearer of Dalit activism, he added.

State Urban Development and Law Minister Suresh Bhardwaj, Shimla Municipal Corporation mayor Satya Kondal, Deputy Commissioner Aditya Negi, Superintendent of Police Mohit Chawla and people of all walks of life also paid tributes on the occasion.

architect of the Indian Constitution and the first Law Minister of Independent India, Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar, on his 64th death anniversary in Shimla. Thakur said the

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ZIPPING OFF!



Children have a lively imagination that they care confident could translate into reality, as a member of a housing society managing committee (MC) found, much to her amusement. During the Covid-19 lockdown, the housing society laid down very strict regulations to prevent the pandemic from spreading among the residents. This included a ban on children playing outside in groups. Later, when the lockdown was relaxed slightly, children were allowed to go to the park but accompanied by their parents and with the mandatory masks in place.

They were advised to maintain distance and not indulge in games that involved close interaction or jostling. About a week back, the MC lady member, who had led the campaign against Covid-19, answered her front door bell to find a small group of children, ranging in the age group of 6-8 years. The 'group leader', speaking on behalf of the children, lisped, "Aunty, we know you are something in this society. Our parents don't allow us to go out on our own. Can you please set up a zip-line from our houses to the park so that we can safely go to the park and play?"

India

J&K DDC polls: Over 7 lakh voters to decide fate of 249 candidates

Polling will be held for panchayat bypolls in 50 vacant sarpanch seats, 216 panch seats within DDC constituencies

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
JAMMU, 6 DECEMBER

More than seven lakh voters will decide the fate of 249 candidates contesting in the fourth phase of the District Development Council (DDC) elections in Jammu and Kashmir on Monday.

The polling will be held between 7 AM and 2 PM in 34 constituencies - 17 each in Kashmir and Jammu divisions.

Besides DDC elections, polling will be held for panchayat bypolls in 50 vacant sarpanch seats and 216 vacant panch seats falling within the DDC constituencies, an official spokesman said.

In the 4th phase, he said, 7,17,322 electors are eligible to cast their votes - 3,76,797 men and 3,40,525 women.

Amongst them, 3,50,149 are from Jammu division and 3,67,173 from Kashmir division, the spokesman said.

In view of the Covid-19 pandemic, adequate arrangements have been made to ensure safety of all stakeholders, including voters.

Sanitiser, thermal scanners and face masks have been arranged at the polling stations to ensure that SOPs issued by the authorities



concerned are strictly followed at the polling stations.

Special polling stations at Women College Gandhinagar, Jammu and Girls Higher Secondary School Udhampur have been set up to facilitate physical voting by Kashmiri migrants, the spokesman said.

BJP seeks rejection of Andota's candidature

The BJP approached the poll panel on Sunday and sought rejection of the candidature of Dogra Swabhiman.

Kanta Andota in the District Development Council (DDC) elections in Jammu and Kashmir, alleging that she did not disclose information related to a CBI case against her in the nomination papers.

Andota, wife of Dogra Swabhiman Sangathan nominee Kanta Andota in the District Development Council (DDC) elections in Jammu and Kashmir, demanding the rejection of the candidature of Andota, saying her name figured as an accused in the CBI FIR and accusing her of "misrepresentation and concealing" information in her nomination papers.

a case being probed by the CBI against her educational trust and some government officials over alleged encroachment on a huge tract of government land.

In a letter to the Jammu and Kashmir Chief Electoral Officer, BJP leader Hunar Gupta demanded the rejection of the candidature of Andota, saying her name figured as an accused in the CBI FIR and accusing her of "misrepresentation and concealing" information in her nomination papers.

Mysterious disease: Over 200 admitted to hospital in Eluru

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD, 6 DECEMBER

Over 200 people in Eluru, a town in West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh about 57 km from Vijayawada, were admitted to hospital since Saturday due to a mysterious illness with symptoms like nausea and foaming at the mouth fainting, mild headaches even muscular pains. This has prompted chief minister YS Jagan Mohan

Reddy to visit the area on Monday after criticism from Opposition TDP.

A total of 292 people were admitted to the hospital, including 46 children and 76 women. Around 122 people were discharged after treatment. Five among them have been shifted to Vijayawada government hospital for better treatment. As per health minister AKK Srinivas, he rushed to Eluru to take control of the situation. He said all the

patients who have been admitted are in stable condition and there is no danger to their lives.

The illness may have been caused by water contamination though the patients who complained of dizziness and epileptic symptoms recovered after some time. Water samples were sent for testing but no pollutants have been reported. All the patients turned out to be Covid-19 negative after testing. The blood samples col-

lected from patients were sent to laboratories but no viral infection was detected. Medical camps have been set up in places where more cases have been reported. A door-to-door survey is being conducted to check for water contamination and health concerns of the residents. Epidemiology and microbiology experts are being sent to Eluru from Vijayawada along with psychiatrists and psychologists to counsel the patients suffering from

distress. Opposition TDP has demanded an inquiry. "Floods, cyclones or healthcare the YSRCP government has been caught napping in emergency situations," said TDP chief and Opposition leader N Chandrababu Naidu who slammed the government for failing to provide basic necessity for life - safe and clean drinking water. The chief minister will visit Eluru tomorrow to take stock of the situation.

winter nights, and food stocks to last up to six months. Known for inventing "jugaad," the cheap innovations, the Punjab farmers have turned their tractors into comfortable bedrooms. Community kitchens have been set up for food requirements. The farmers have brought large utensils and tawas to cook vegetables and chapatis. They are keeping themselves engaged watching videos on their mobiles, and singing songs of their struggle. An enterprising young farmer brought a collection of books that could be of interest to the community. There are doctors for emergency situations. Unlike the previous rallies, the current farmers' turnout is enjoying hospitality of locals too. Inspired by how citizens of different cities fed migrant workers walking back to their cities, residents of some localities in Delhi are providing food and other essentials to the farmers. Besides, the rallies in Delhi have always attracted the city's hawkers to offer cheap alternatives to food. While farmers wanting to hear their leaders Chaudhary Charan

Singh and Chaudhary Devi Lal kept pouring in the capital even after they had finished speaking, the current agitation too is witnessing arrival of farmers, including women, on Delhi's borders from different parts of the country every day. Until recently, Delhi's border points such as Singhu, Tikri, Chilla and Ghazipur were known to a few only; now everybody is familiar with these names. For Delhiites, farmers' gatherings have been of much interest. They provide them rare opportunities to see and interact with rural folk from different parts of the country. In a major departure from the earlier rallies, there is no central leader in command of the current gathering of farmers. The farmers are talking of their demands only. Their focus has remained the Centre's controversial farm laws which they want to be withdrawn. While the government has told them the laws would reform the Indian agriculture and empower farmers to sell their produce at their will, the farmers fear they will have nothing in it.

shouted, "Sorry officer," the man said as the doors behind him slid open. But just as he put one foot inside the train, a firm hand gripped his shoulder and he heard the officer whisper into his ears, "And also, I need to ask you about the gun inside the bag."

TAILPIECE

One never ever thought the comment "I won't touch you with a six-foot pole" would become a national policy, but here we are, thanks to the pandemic!

Contributed by: Deepak Razdan, Asha Ramachandran, Nakshatra Pain and Ashok Tuteja

Report: Conservation outlook of Western Ghats grim

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KOCHE, 6 DECEMBER

India's iconic Western Ghats, inscribed by UNESCO in 2012 as a natural world heritage site, is threatened by population pressure, urbanisation and climate change, according to a new report by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

The IUCN World Heritage Outlook 3, published last week, builds on previous reports from 2014 and 2017 to track whether the conservation of the world's 252 natural world heritage sites is sufficient to protect them in the long term.

According to the 2020 report, the conservation outlook of the mountain chain of the Western Ghats, one of the world's eight hotspots of biological diversity, is of significant concern.

If a site's conservation outlook is of significant concern, its values are considered to be threatened by a number of current and/or potential threats with significant additional conservation measures being required to preserve these values over the medium to long term.

The report said while the state of world heritage values in the property was considered as good at the time of inscription and appears to remain so, there is some concern regarding threats from outside the site. Noting that a number of flagship mammals, including parts of the single largest population of globally threatened landscape species occur in the property, the report said fragmentation caused by development pressure in the Western Ghats are shrinking the availability of wildlife corridors and suitable habitats outside protected areas. "The fact that so much biodiversity remains in the Western Ghats given the tremendous population pressure both within and surrounding the property is extraordinary. A large number of threats, which severely threaten the outstanding universal value of the world heritage property, exist and require coordinated conservation responses at all levels, including political, sociological and biological," the report said.

It said the ongoing pressure for development such as new road construction and broadening of existing roads, and power production would continue to place the property under threat.

"Urbanisation together with agricultural expansion, livestock grazing and



forest fragmentation are also posing serious threats to the species and habitats of the Western Ghats. Climate change will probably exacerbate a system already under pressure and has the potential to impact on the large-scale monsoonal processes, which influence the Western Ghats," the latest assessment said. "Politically, the entire Western Ghats is extremely difficult to protect and manage given the large number of different stakeholders operating in the area, the complexity of governance arrangements and the fact that 40 per cent of the original forests have already been destroyed," the report said.

It said functional corridors that assure wildlife movement between protected areas are required and this is a great lacuna in the conservation scenario in Western Ghats and India as a whole. Older than the Himalaya mountains, the mountain chain of the Western Ghats represents geomorphic features of immense importance with unique biophysical and ecological processes. The sites' high montane forest ecosystems influence the Indian monsoon weather pattern. Moderating the tropical climate of the region, the site presents one of the best examples of the monsoon system on the planet.

According to the UNESCO, the forests of the site include some of the best representatives of non-equatorial tropical evergreen forests anywhere and are home to at least 325 globally threatened flora, fauna, bird, amphibian, reptile and fish species. This property was inscribed in 2012 amid some controversy given the difficulty to decide how best to represent the extraordinary biological richness of the Western Ghats.

The IUCN World Heritage Outlook provides a global assessment of natural world heritage based on data from conservation outlook assessments for every natural site on the world heritage list.





I hope wisdom dawns on the government and it takes cognisance to resolve the issue.

NCP CHIEF SHARAD PAWAR

ASKING CENTRE TO TAKE FARMERS' AGITATION SERIOUSLY

NEW DELHI, MONDAY 07 DECEMBER 2020

THUMBNAILS



Traffic jam due to repair work of water pipe, near Akshardham, NH 24, in the Capital on Sunday. ■ AFP

Delhi BJP Yuva Morcha spokesman killed in accident: A spokesperson of Delhi BJP Yuva Morcha and his wife were killed and five others injured when their car was hit by a truck on the Expressway in Kannauj on Sunday, police said. ■ PTI

Guj HC, other courts to remain shut today: Gujarat High Court and subordinate courts in the state will remain closed on Monday on account of the death of Justice G R Udhwanvi, HC said on Sunday. Udhwanvi (59), tested Covid positive and died in Ahmedabad on Sunday. ■ PTI

Teen's body found buried: The body of an unidentified teenager was found buried at a plot near an apartment in Greater Noida (West) and it is suspected that she died due to some disease, police said on Sunday. ■ PTI

Policeman, civilian injured in Srinagar terror attack

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU, 6 DECEMBER

A policeman and a civilian were injured on Sunday when terrorists opened fire at a police checkpoint in the Srinagar's downtown.

Police said the attack came in the Saqgarpora area of Hawal in the old city.

Police said that terrorists fired indiscriminately upon a police party at Saqgarpora, Hawal, in which one police personnel, Farooq Ahmad Chopan and a civilian, Muneeb Ahmad got injured. They were shifted to the hospital.

The area was immediately cordoned off by security forces. Condition of the injured is stated to be stable in the medical institute.

This is the second terrorist attack during the ongoing local body elections across Jammu and Kashmir. Terrorists had earlier infiltrated from Pakistan through a cross-border tunnel to disrupt the elections but were killed in an encounter at a toll plaza near Jammu.

Pakistan shells villages in Poonch, Kathua: Pakistani troops opened fire and shelled mortars at forward posts and villages along the Line of Control (LoC) and International Border (IB) in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch and Kathua districts, officials

Take farmers' protest seriously, end deadlock: Pawar to Centre

NCP chief says if deadlock continues, people from across the country will stand by protesting farmers



Farmers prepare meals during a protest at Singhu Border. ■ IANS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI, 6 DECEMBER

NCP chief Sharad Pawar on Sunday asked the Centre to take serious cognisance of the ongoing farmers' protest and said if the deadlock continues, the agitation will not be limited to Delhi and people from across the country will stand by the protesting cultivators.

Pawar said when the farmers are protesting on the streets, it should be taken seriously. "But, unfortunately, that is not happening," the former Union agriculture minister said. "Hope wisdom dawns on the government and it takes cognisance to resolve the

issue. If this stalemate continues, the protest will not be limited to Delhi, but people from nook and corner of the country will stand by the protesting farmers," he said.

Thousands of farmers are protesting at various border points of Delhi for over a week against the new farm laws. They have also called for a 'Bharat Bandh' on 8 December.

Talks between the government and protesting farmers remained inconclusive on Saturday even as union leaders stuck to their demand for the repeal of the new farm laws. Pawar said farmers from Punjab and Haryana contribute the most to the country's agriculture and food supply. "Farmers from these states not

'Uddhav, SAD on same page over rights of states'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI, 6 DECEMBER

Shriromani Akali Dal MP Prem Singh Chandumajra on Sunday said Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray agrees with his party on the issue of the Centre's alleged interference in the 'rights of state governments' in fields like education, agriculture and law and order.

Chandumajra, who met the CM here on Sunday, said Thackeray, who is also president of the Shiv Sena, supported the Akali Dal's

stand on the farmers' protest. Alleging that revenues of states were being diluted, Chandumajra said there was a need for regional parties to unite against "attempts to centralise" the country's politics. The Shiv Sena snapped ties with the BJP after the Maharashtra Assembly polls last year over the issue of sharing the CM post.

The SAD quit the BJP-led NDA in September this year to protest against the Centre's new agri-marketing laws.

"If states are strong, the nation will be stronger. If states are weak, the coun-

try will be weaker. Today, the country's political system is being centralised. The Shriromani Akali Dal is for federalism," Chandumajra said.

"Even Uddhav Thackeray is of the view that rights of states need to be protected," he said. Regional parties need to be united, the leader said. "Thackeray agrees with the Akali Dal on the issue of Central government's interference in state governments' rights in education, agriculture and law and order," he said, while alleging that "revenues of states are being diluted".

and make it a success.

Actor Kamal Haasan's Makkal Needhi Maiam (MNM) also extended support to the agitating farmers.

K'taka farmers' body to participate in bandh

The Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha on Sunday announced its support to the farmers' call for 8 December Bharat bandh.

The outfit president Kodihalli Chandrashekhar said: "We will hold bandh, a non-violent movement across the state in district headquarters, Taluk headquarters and villages."

Released by Houthis in Yemen, 14 Indian seamen fly back home

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

DUBAI, 6 DECEMBER

Fourteen Indian seamen who were stranded in Yemen for over 10 months after their ship sank in the Gulf of Aden flew back to India on Saturday from Dubai.

The 14 seamen were taken into custody on 14 February, 2020 by the local Houthi authorities in Yemen, the Indian embassy in Djibouti stated. After persistent and painstaking efforts, the Embassy of India, Djibouti was able to get them released on 28 November through its Sana'a office.

Dubai confirmed the arrival of the Indian seamen in Dubai.

Chandrashekhar Bhattacharya of the Gulf Maharashtra Business Forum (GMBF) said that the Indian nationals took a flight to Mumbai from the Dubai International Airport on Saturday night.

Bhattacharya also shared a letter signed by GMBF Global President Sunil Manjerakar in which he thanked the government and officials who helped ensure the release of the seamen.

In another note shared by Bhattacharya, the seamen claimed that they have not received their salaries from the last 10 months.

They requested the Indian embassy in Oman and their Omani employer to release their salary.

GOODWILL GESTURE



Volunteers at a blood donation camp on Dr B R Ambedkar Parinirwan Divas at the Red Cross Society, in the Capital on Sunday. ■ SUBRATA DUTTA

Leave guns, pick up pen: BJP to militants

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

JAMMU, 6 DECEMBER

Senior BJP leader Shah Nawaz Hussain on Sunday asked militants to leave guns and pick up a pen as the Narendra Modi government is committed to take Jammu and Kashmir to new heights of development.

However, he warned those who did not shun the path of violence to get prepared to be wiped "all-out".

"J-K is the crown of India and our government is sincere to take the development in the region to the top as well. We will ensure electricity, water and better roads and no load shedding and darkness which is the hallmark of Congress and Guptakar gang," Hussain, who is the BJP national spokesperson, told reporters here.

The former Union min-

ister, who has been camping in the Kashmir valley for the last 15 days in connection with the ongoing District Development Council (DDC) elections, reached Jammu on Sunday morning. He is expected to campaign for the party candidates in different areas, including Doda, for the next three days before returning to the valley.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi wants a pen in the hands of the local youth. Leave the gun and pick up the pen as anyone indulging in terrorism will face (operation) all out," he said, lauding security agencies for busting a plan of terrorists to carry out a major strike in the country.

He said the Modi government is fighting against militancy and those indulging in dividing the people.

Hussain said the BJP is getting support from everyone across the Union Territory.

aging" the response of the people to the party's campaign in the valley. Hussain said he held a "public meeting in a village which is the native place of Pakistan-based Hizbul Mujahideen second-in-command Amir Khan on Saturday".

"We unfurled the BJP flag in the village and thousands of people attended the rally," he said.

"The entire route from Srinagar to Anantnag was decorated with BJP flags. I talked to the people at the grassroots level during my visit to nook and corner of the valley and they want development and better future for their children," he said, adding that it is only BJP which can fulfil their aspirations.

Hussain said the BJP is getting support from everyone across the Union Territory.

Govt plans to set up Export Promotion Council for AYUSH

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 6 DECEMBER

In a move to promote Indian Ayurveda Ministry, the government has decided to set up an Export Promotion Council for AYUSH.

This decision was taken recently in a joint review of AYUSH trade and industry by Union commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal and minister of AYUSH Shripad Naik. It was also decided in the review that the entire AYUSH sector will work together to achieve price and quality competitiveness to boost AYUSH exports, said a senior officer of the AYUSH Ministry.

Held through video-conference, the review was attend-

ed by nearly 50 industry and trade leaders from the AYUSH Sector. Over 2,000 stakeholders of the AYUSH Sector also attended the e-event through live streaming on virtual platforms, the Ministry said.

Secretary AYUSH Ministry gave a detailed presentation and also briefed about the various other initiatives taken by the Ministry to mitigate the Covid-19 situation and to promote AYUSH industry. He also spoke about the emerging opportunities for promotion of the AYUSH sector and listed a few hurdles that deserved attention.

In the open forum that followed, officials from Ministry of Commerce and Industry, RIS,

BIS and Invest India and AYUSH industry representatives shared their thoughts. The efforts put in by the Ministry of AYUSH to take AYUSH-based solutions to the public in the wake of Covid-19 came in praise from all.

Shripad Naik highlighted the growing global interest in AYUSH-based solutions for disease resistance and treatment during the difficult times of the pandemic. He said the trade and commerce in the AYUSH Sector needed to upscale quickly to meet the growing demands from India and abroad, and to serve the larger number of people who are looking up to these systems for maintaining health.

Probe ordered into Bajrang leader's threat to Hindus visiting churches on Christmas

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SILCHAR (ASSAM), 6 DECEMBER

The Cachar district administration of Assam has asked the police to investigate an inflammatory speech reportedly made by a local Bajrang Dal leader threatening to beat up Hindus visiting churches during Christmas celebrations.

Taking note of a viral video in which the saffron outfit's leader was seen issuing the threat, Cachar deputy commissioner Keerthi Jalli on Sunday said she has instructed the superintendent of police to probe the matter and "take necessary steps". Police, however, said no case has been registered as of now and the incident is being probed. Bajrang Dal Cachar in-charge Mithun Nath, while

addressing a gathering of the outfit's members on 3 December, was seen telling them that no Hindus will be allowed to visit churches during Christmas. "Hindus will be beaten up. The Christians will lock down our temples and we will go to have fun in their churches ~ I condemn such Hindus. They need to be taught a lesson. "We declare it today that on next Christmas, no Hindus will be allowed to visit churches. If anyone visits, Bajrang Dal will give its reply," Nath reportedly said.

The saffron group's leader was referring to the alleged closure of the Vivekananda Centre, a part of Ramakrishna Mission, in Christian-majority Meghalaya's capital Shillong.

"Media friends will term us intolerant and 'goonda dal'. It's alright, we accept that. If

someone misbehaves with our mother-sister and we react, then we are 'goondas'. We accept that, but still, we will not allow anything disrespectful towards our mothers and sisters.

"I know what will be the headline on 26 December. It will be intolerant Bajrang Dal, who vandalised the Oriental school," Nath had said.

In a sarcastic tone, he appealed to the Bajrang Dal members to act as per the law "because the law is only for the Hindus and they should not break the law". "You open temple, we will allow the church. We welcome that. But if you will lock the temple there, then we will not allow the church here," Nath said.

People from a cross-section of the society have condemned Nath's reported threat.

Kushwaha-Nitish meeting triggers reunion buzz

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

PATNA, 6 DECEMBER

Amid buzz that former Union minister Upendra Kushwaha and chief minister Nitish Kumar may join hands again, following their recent meeting here four days ago, the RLSP chief on Sunday downplayed the speculations as "premature guesswork".

Kushwaha said he had a cordial meeting with Kumar earlier in the week but denied hammering out a deal for the homecoming. He, however, did not rule out the possibility of a reunion in

the future. "I am not hankering for a ministerial post or a legislative council seat. We had a good meeting... we talked about the latest political situation. Beyond that, any guess has no basis," Kushwaha told.

The RLSP chief further said that Kumar had invited him to his bungalow "to explore the option of working together", which he willingly accepted.

Asked about the possibility of a reunion, Kushwaha said "there is no such plan as of now... but who knows what happens tomorrow." The RLSP might have

drawn a blank in the October-November state elections, but caste dynamics in Bihar suggests that Kushwaha, a relatively empowered OBC group, may add to Kumar's political heft.

Shortly after the meeting, Kushwaha, whose RLSP fought in alliance with the BSP and AIMIM in the recently concluded Bihar polls, had launched a scathing attack on RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav for making a "personal attack" on the CM during a brief Assembly session last month.

JD(U) spokesman Rajiv Ranjan Prasad, without getting into the details of what transpired in the 2 December meeting, said, "Kushwaha believes in the same ideology as the ruling party and if he takes a decision to join hands with us, it would be a good one..." The RLSP might have

1.0 government. But, the return of the JD(U) to the NDA fold in July 2017 changed equations once again, and the RLSP quit the coalition and became a part of the RJD-headed Grand Alliance.

The Mahagathbandhan, however, suffered severe drubbing in the 2019 parliamentary polls and Kushwaha lost the election from Karat and Ujjiyarpur Lok Sabha seats.

Weeks before the 2020 Bihar assembly elections, he walked out of the Mahagathbandhan and floated a six-party front, with Uttar Pradesh leader Mayawati and Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi as its prominent members. The front failed miserably, but AIMIM managed to bag five seats in the Muslim-dominated Seemanchal region, emerging as a new force in Bihar politics.

K'taka Assembly winter session from 7 Dec likely to be stormy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BENGALURU, 6 DECEMBER

The winter session of the Karnataka Assembly starting on Monday is likely to be a stormy affair amid speculations that the ruling BJP might introduce Bills against cow slaughter and "love jihad".

The House will also debate on the subject of 'One Nation, One Election' on 14 and 15 December, making it the first legislative Assembly to do so, Speaker Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri said.

While Congress has announced it will resist any move by the government against inter-faith marriages and cow slaughter in the state. The controversial Karnataka Agricultural Produce Marketing

Hyderabad blues

To say the Bharatiya Janata Party is the big winner in the election to the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation, which covers a sprawling area of the Telangana state capital and adjoining areas including one of the country's premier IT hubs, would be stating the obvious. It went from four seats to nearly 50 in one of the richer and more prestigious civic bodies in India with an annual budget of Rs 7,000 crore and a strength of 150 members. Of greater interest in mapping the emerging political landscape in India would be the serious questions the poll results raise for the Opposition ~ the ruling regional party, the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) led by Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao (KCR), which saw it tally cut by nearly half to 50-odd; the community-focussed AIMIM of Asaduddin Owaisi, which just about managed to hold on to its 43 seats in the walled city dominated by the Muslim community and the Congress, which retained the two wards it won in the 2016 poll by the skin of its teeth thereby continuing its drift into irrelevance. Reams will continue to be written on the BJP party machine, its life-and-death approach to contesting elections, and its determined bid to expand its political footprint across the country. But the GHMC results are also in a sense a microcosm of the lay of the electoral land across a majority of states. For, the model of the BJP as a national party constituting one pole and a combination of an embarrassingly feeble second national party (Congress), a strong regional force (in this case the TRS), and a minority-community dependent 'secular-vote spoiler' comprising the other pole is now evident nationwide. The question for the Opposition, therefore, is what lessons if any it has learnt from Hyderabad.

The wily politician that KCR is, he recognised long before the penny dropped for the national media that the BJP would be the main challenger in a state where it was previously among the also-rans. So, he advanced the GHMC election due in March 2021 to give the saffron camp as little time as possible to prepare organisationally, ended (at least publicly) the TRS' alliance with the AIMIM to try and prevent a consolidation of the non-Muslim vote in favour of the BJP and tried desperately to focus on effective governance after the widespread criticism of his administration's handling of the recent floods. Yet, the results have been far from ideal for the anti-BJP camp.

The portents for the TDP and YSR Congress in Andhra Pradesh; the Dravidian parties and Congress in Tamil Nadu, the Left, Congress, and IUML in Kerala and the TMC, Congress-Left and AIMIM in West Bengal - to mention only a few of the states where the BJP is looking to make inroads - are ominous. The BJP will hope these parties continue to flog the electorally dead horse of secularism, ally with minority communal forces, and promote dynasts for top spots so it continues to shine by contrast.

Battle for Senate

With the American Presidential election all but decided, even it has not been conceded by President Donald Trump, the action has shifted to the southern state of Georgia, where two crucial Senate seats are up for grabs. The importance of these contests, which will be decided before 20 January when the inaugural takes place, is that they will determine who controls the Senate. A Republican win will mean that the Joe Biden presidency will be hobbled by a potentially obstructionist Congress. A Democratic win ~ of both seats ~ would ensure relatively smooth sailing for Mr Biden as he pursues his administrative and legislative agenda to repair what he believes are grievous wounds inflicted by the incumbent. The importance of the contests is underscored by the amount of effort and money both parties are pouring into the campaign. Reports suggest that in just over four weeks between October and November, the four campaigns received online donations totalling nearly \$200 million. More than \$300 million will be spent on television, radio and digital advertisements alone. And already Georgia's estimated 5 million voters are said to be feeling the heat of bombardment by spam mail, telephone pitches and text messages from one or other of the contestants. One frustrated voter tweeted: "I can't watch anything without being pounded with political ads. I get it but I am soooooo tired." The importance of these elections has drawn star campaigners such as Vice President Mike Pence and former President Barack Obama into the fray, with the latter telling a virtual rally how his initiatives were stymied by a Republican-controlled Senate. Mr Obama told voters, "If the Senate is controlled by Republicans who are interested in obstruction and gridlock, rather than progress and helping people, they can block just about anything." Reports suggest that Mr Trump, obsessed since last month with somehow overturning the result of the Presidential vote, was initially reluctant to campaign. But now he appears to have been persuaded to pitch in after he was advised that Republican successes would buttress his claims of the Georgia vote having been stolen from him. A second recount has confirmed that Mr Biden won the state by a margin of over 12,000 votes but the Trump campaign is now calling for a third.

While many Republicans will hope that Mr Trump is able to tilt the scales in favour of his party's candidates, others in the party are worried that if he rails against Georgia officials, including the Governor who he has already described as "hapless" and top election officials, it may backfire. Already, the Trump narrative of the past four weeks has painted the President as a sore loser, and some in his party fear that if he takes up this well-worn thread, it will deflect focus from the critical need to retain control of the Senate to keep a check on the Democrats.

Sixth Schedule ~ II

Applying the Sixth Schedule to the entire state of Meghalaya is thus not only unnecessary but also illogical, and undermines social harmony, political stability and economic development of the state and the region



The case of the tribal state of Meghalaya is a study in contradictions in many respects. Meghalaya was formed in January 1972 by carving out the United Khasi and Jaintia Hills and Garo Hills districts from the erstwhile composite state of Assam under the North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971.

These districts were predominantly inhabited by the people belonging to the Khasi, Jaintia and Garo tribes respectively. These districts were also included in the Sixth Schedule as part of the tribal areas of Assam - they now constituted as a full-fledged state along with the Sixth Schedule - a possibility not divined by the Constitution makers.

As a result, in Meghalaya, there is a unique governmental architecture, with three parallel administrative structures operating simultaneously within a single state the boundaries of which often get blurred - the legal-constitutional-political structure of a state under the Indian constitution, the political-administrative and quasi-judicial structure under the Sixth Schedule and the traditional autonomy of Khasi Durbars that enjoy certain powers and exercise limited autonomy within the State.

At its birth in 1972, Meghalaya's population had 20 per cent non-tribals. Most of these people belonging to different communities were living in the state for many generations. It is important to understand the historical context that brought them to Meghalaya. In the 19th century, the British administration had brought the Bengalis, one of earliest Indians to become English-educated, into Shillong which was then the capital of the composite state of Assam, to help them with their administration.

The contiguous district of Sylhet which was made a part of Assam by the British before it went to East Pakistan at Partition also had close ties and warm relations with the Khasi and Jaintia people based on trade and other exchanges since the early 19th century. When partition forced the Hindu Bengalis out of Sylhet, many came naturally to Shillong. They contributed richly to the educational, commercial, economic and cultural life of the town which emerged as a major

educational hub in the region. The British had also encouraged the Biharis, Nepalese and Punjabis to help with their labour and other skills, like trade and commerce by Marwaris and Sindhis. Many members of these communities got assimilated into the economic life and settled permanently here.

Once Meghalaya was carved out of Assam as a separate hill state, these people suddenly found themselves in a quagmire. The state having reserved 85 per cent of jobs for their own people way above the 50 percent limit mandated by the Supreme Court in the Indra Sawhney case, they effectively lost the right to public employment. The Meghalaya Transfer of Land (Regulation) Act, 1971, took away

their right to settle in the state where they and their ancestors had lived through generations. Subsequent violence, genocide and riots that erupted with regular frequency against different non-tribal communities in the state ~ in 1979, 1987, 1999, 2018 and recently in 2020 ~ orchestrated by a rogue outfit that masquerades as a student organisation - the Khasi Students Union (KSU) ~ drove most of the non-tribals away from Meghalaya, which is as much a homeland to the non-tribal communities as it is to the indigenous khasis, Garos and Jaintias, and for the development of which they had also contributed equally, especially during its formative years.

But by 2011, the share of non-tribal population had reduced to only 14 per cent. Inaction by the state government to bring the culprits of such massacres to book or to provide protection to the minority non-tribals have relegated them to the status of second-class citizens, who have to live with the permanent fear of violence and threat to life. Can the Constitution allow marginalisation of one community in the name of protecting the interests of another?

In a different context, while dealing with the discretionary powers of the Governor, the Supreme Court, in deciding the

appeal case of Pu Myllai Hlylho & Others vs. State of Mizoram & Others (2005), had observed, "it was argued that the tribal areas are to be administered as per the provisions of the Sixth Schedule only. This contention of the appellants cannot be accepted for various reasons.

The Sixth Schedule to the Constitution is a part of the Constitution and cannot be interpreted by forgetting the other provisions in the Constitution. It is impossible to visualize complete segregation of the Sixth Schedule from the rest of the Constitution. As regards the inclusion of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution, there is a legislative history, but that by itself is not sufficient to hold that the

Sixth Schedule is a 'Constitution within the Constitution.' This takes us back to the question of the continuance of the Sixth Schedule in a state that possibly needs no such protection for its tribal people, or to limit such protection only in certain areas within the state and not the entire state.

The Sixth Schedule was incorporated in the Constitution to protect the rights, culture and identities of the minority tribals living within the erstwhile composite state of Assam. Now that these tribal people have their own state within which they enjoy overwhelming majority and overpowering voice for their own governance, with 90 per cent of the Assembly seats (55 out of 60) reserved only for the tribal candidates, the original consideration of protection of their rights has long ceased to exist. It is the rights of minority non-tribals that need protection. Applying the Sixth Schedule to the entire state is thus not only unnecessary but also illogical, and undermines social harmony, political stability and economic development of the state and the region.

Presently the KSU is spearheading another movement for extending the so-called Inner Line Permit (ILP) ~ another legacy from history dating back to the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation of 1873 ~ to the state to regulate

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

ASIAN VOICES

Why water & sanitation systems are vital for Cambodia's economy

Water and sanitation are critically important to the health and survival of Cambodia's communities. But, do our decision-makers adequately prioritise and invest in the sector? Despite improvements in our water and sanitation systems, we must consider the costs of failing to serve so many people with the most basic but crucial of services. Globally, there are still 2.2 billion people without access to safe drinking water and 4.2 billion who don't have access to safely managed sanitation. Over six million Cambodian homes do not have access to basic sanitation, and almost three quarters of Cambodians do not have access to safely-managed water services, according to a 2017 WHO/UNICEF report based on national data. Despite millions of people gaining access to a toilet since 2000, five million still suffer the indignity of defecating in fields or other places outside. This continues to be a real challenge, as human waste near waterways and houses spreads diseases quickly and puts children and their families at risk. However, it is not all bad news. Cambodia has set an ambitious goal of eliminating open defecation by 2025, five years ahead of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target.

But for real progress to be made, investments need to grow ~ by three times, to an annual \$114 billion, according to the World Bank ~ to meet the global scale of the challenge. In Cambodia alone, an estimated investment of \$898.4 million will be required over five years. However, this is not a plea for charity, this is a wake-up call. The current global water and sanitation crisis is a story of colossal, rapidly increasing, unmet demand leading to colossal, rapidly increasing costs.

Meeting SDG 6 ~ water and sanitation for all by 2030 ~ is not a burden but a massive opportunity. To find concrete solutions to the financing gap, the partnership Sanitation and Water for All ~ a global platform for achieving the WASH-related targets of the SDGs ~ is organising three Regional Finance Ministers' Meetings in November and December. The ministers will focus on the opportunity for economic growth and sustainable development, through the expansion of water and sanitation services. Many countries are already implementing some of these measurements and seeing the immediate advantages. One such measurement from Cambodia became an international success story. The government has recently developed and launched a 'National Action Plan for Rural Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene' for 2019-2023. This marks a stepping stone for Cambodia's SDG 6 ambitions and its impact was recognised in a Handbook for Ministers of Finance published by Sanitation and Water for All. With the right level of investment, benefits could include an estimated 1.5 per cent growth in gross domestic product, and a \$4.30 return for every dollar invested. This is due to the likely reduced healthcare costs and potential for increased productivity. That's a rate of return that any investor would wish for. The cost of not investing affordable, reliable, easily accessible water and sanitation services prevent thousands of children from preventable diseases, such as diarrhea and cholera.

It would also seriously undermine the Prime Minister's Act East Policy focussed on culture, commerce, connectivity, capacity building and national security, for the success of which seamless connectivity and exchange within the north-eastern states is an essential element. Hopefully, the Centre will not yield to such irrational demands, but it also behoves upon the Centre to drive the sense of duty upon a state that has abdicated its duties in respect protecting the life and liberties of minority non-tribals, which is a fundamental right guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution.

(Concluded)



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

Steering with erratic compass

SIR, Apropos 'Full circle' by Devendra Saksena, (December 4), bad loans of banks had touched a high of Rs 20.4 lac crore at the start of January 2019. For two years since, private investment was not only dormant but had dipped. The huge NPAs having choked fresh lending, increased government borrowing to stimulate the economy further crowded out funds for private industry.

We enjoy a demographic dividend, unlike say Japan today or China later, when consumption would overtake the capacity to save. The government was either short-sighted or misled into reducing small savings rates to depress the lending regime for big industry. We are now reaping the ill-effects of neglecting small savings.

The funds diverted from savings went to PSU banks who were already mis-lending and today are saddled with nearly Rs 11 lac crore in

NPAs, after dressing up books by infusion of funds to recapitalise them, largely off budget.

The savings of India's corporate and government sectors had always remained inadequate to meet the country's investment needs. In far better times of fiscal prudence, our household savings had made up as much as 67 per cent of total savings, to then pave the way for healthy growth and successful reforms in the 1990s.

In neglecting savings, government has been steering both the economy and growth, with an erratic compass.

Yours, etc., R Narayanan, Navi Mumbai, 4 December

FARMERS' WOES

SIR, Over the years Indian farmers' problems have worsened as farm incomes have been squeezed by slower output growth, higher costs and increased vulnerability to changing climates.

Added to these, the recent agricultural legislations enacted by the Centre have come as a threat to the existing MSP system, which eventually will leave the farmers at the mercy of big corporate houses that would take control over the market. ('Farmers snub Centre's offer', Dec. 2).

The Narendra Modi government enforced the new laws amid the Covid-19 pandemic, first as emergency ordinances in June and then by passing them in Parliament in September, without consulting the primary stakeholder, the farmer.

In the process, it ignored the deep-rooted fear that market reforms would turn the Punjab and Haryana zamindar (landlord) into a marginal kisan. When a month-long protest and railway blockade within Punjab yielded no results, farmers, having no option, started their protests by arriving in New Delhi.

Yours, etc., Ranganathan Sivakumar, Chennai, 3 December.

UNDER SCRUTINY

SIR, In a landmark judgement, the Supreme Court directed the Centre last Wednesday to install CCTV cameras and recording equipment at the offices of investigating agencies, including the CBI, the ED and National Investigation Agency (NIA), which conduct interrogations and have the power of arrest.

The Supreme Court order comes months after the CBI said in a charge-sheet that a man and his son who died after their arrest for allegedly violating the coronavirus lockdown in June, were tortured for hours by policemen at Sathankulam in Tamil Nadu who "wanted to teach them a lesson." There were nationwide calls for justice for Jeyaraj, 59, and his son Benniks, 31, who were beaten so brutally that blood was splattered on the walls of the police station. However, there was no CCTV footage as recordings at the police station where they were tortured were automatically erased, according to the claim of policemen.

The installation of CCTV cameras in police stations will certainly help in avoiding the misuse of muscle power by police officers, normally done at the behest of their bosses within the force as well as their political masters. As a result, commoners are exposed to unnecessary torture at the hands of police force.

The directives of the SC must be implemented in letter and spirit across the country within set timelines. Also, functionality of CCTV systems must be checked periodically by higher authorities to avoid any intentional breakdowns.

Yours, etc., Sanjay Chopra, Mohali, 4 December.



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WARREN FERNANDEZ

The recent presidential election in the United States, which has long held itself up as a "shining city on a hill", or a model democracy for the world, threw up more heat than light.

Some have lamented that the stalemate after November 3, with an incumbent leader casting doubts on the process and outcome, lowered the standing of the US in the world and undercut the case for liberal democracy. Those at the other end of the ideological spectrum have declared pretty much the same, triumphantly, if somewhat prematurely.

Most significantly, in my view, the election has made clear how vital, and fragile, democracy is; how it can so easily go wrong, with crucial outcomes of polls sometimes turning on a few hundred votes; and that elections have consequences.

Even in mature democracies, voters have been known to hand power to those who use it to subvert the very system that made their election possible. The upshot of this is clear: to work, democracies need more than elections.

They must be underpinned by a shared political culture, with conventions and values that are respected and upheld by all players. They have to be supported by strong institutions – from trusted election officials, independent civil servants and judges, and also a credible and trusted media.

Democracy cannot function in a world of alternative facts, fake news, and the winning of arguments by sheer assertion and reiteration. Nor can it thrive in a society where voters chose not to be engaged, allowing themselves to fall into opinion bubbles, outsourcing their thinking and decision-making to others, whether that be big technology companies or foreign powers only too willing to oblige.

Indeed, a thoughtful book by technology writer Jamie Bartlett, *The People Vs Tech: How The Internet Is Killing Democracy*, points to several prerequisites for a functioning democracy – active citizens, capable of making important moral judgments; a shared culture of democracy, including a spirit of give-and-take and the willingness to compromise; elections that must be free, fair and trusted; manageable levels of equality among all stakeholders; competition in the economy and autonomy in the civic sphere; trust in the system, which is fostered by the authorities remaining in touch with and accountable to the people.

The most critical of all of these,

More heat than light from the 'shining city on a hill'

to my mind, is trust. Voters must believe that the system, which purports to be the rule by the people, for the people, genuinely reflects their interests and the popular will. Which is why Mr Donald Trump's continuing insistence that the election was fraudulent is so corrosive.

Although most observers now accept that he lost, the vast majority of his supporters believe his unbacked assertions that the election was "rigged" or "stolen".

Caricatures of the over 74 million voters who backed him, though, often paint them as naive, or plain wrong-headed. Yet, this reflects the very condescension that these voters have grown tired of from the country's political and intellectual elites.

Rightly or not, these voters believed that Mr Trump reflected their hopes and fears, and would safeguard their interests. As *The Economist* summed up well in an editorial: "Whether you support them or not, Mr Trump and his fellow populists came to power as a response to the failing of democratic governments."

"In rich countries, working-class voters came to believe that their politicians did not care about them, after their living standards stagnated and they became worried about immigration." In central and eastern Europe, governments seeking to join the EU paid more heed to Brussels than their own voters. In developing countries, corruption sent the message that the ruling classes were chiefly interested in their own bank accounts."

Taking up this idea on how policy failures and political missteps can fuel the rise of populism, Mr Bartlett cites Harvard professors Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, who pointed out in their book, *How Democracies Die*, that this demise is not always associated with bullets or bust-ups. Instead, it can happen insidiously, with elected or appointed officials undermining trust in key institutions, egged on by polarised and angry citizens.

The real threat, adds Mr Bartlett, could arise when large numbers of people conclude that "democratic values and institutions no longer solve social problems, reduce crime or create jobs".

But trust in the democratic system can also be gradually whittled away, with voters oblivious that it is



even happening.

As Mr Bartlett notes in his book, which presaged the thinking in the recent Netflix hit, *The Social Dilemma*: "We live in a giant advertising panopticon which keeps us addicted to devices; this system of data collection and prediction is merely the most recent iteration of a long history of efforts to control us; it is getting more advanced by the day, which has serious ramifications for potential manipulation, endless distraction and the slow diminishing of free choice and autonomy." Through sheer distraction or inattention, many voters are allowing themselves to be manipulated, their views formed and biases reinforced by the information and opinions served to them – supposedly for free – by tech companies with their opaque algorithms, which they chose to click on, read, like, and share.

Meanwhile, big tech is watching, parsing, and serving more of whatever is mostly likely to catch their fancy, the better to present advertising messages from the highest bidder.

This leaves the electorate open to being swayed not just by political leaders, but also by commercial and ideological players, at home and abroad.

The ultimate check on the growing polarisation so evident in many societies today must lie with voters who take the trouble to stay well-

informed, arming themselves with knowledge and the ability to make their own political choices and weigh up their long-term interests.

But this is increasingly difficult in an ever more complex, hyper-connected, fast-changing world, with citizens so buffeted by the welter of fake news, designed to mislead and confuse. The polarisation in some societies is often mirrored in the media. Anyone toggling between the US election reports on CNN and Fox News in recent weeks might well have wondered if they were reporting on the same event. Voters will therefore be greatly aided in exercising their civic duties by a responsible, credible media, which aims to provide them the information they need, separating fact from fiction, rational arguments from unsubstantiated assertions, striving always to be accurate, balanced and fair. Unfortunately, when media organisations are unduly focused on chasing eyeballs and revenues, often with newsrooms starved of resources, they risk losing sight of this public service mission.

The underlying problem here is that the business model that gave rise to professional newsrooms and helped sustain them has been fundamentally gutted by the rise of tech companies, aggressively pushing news for "free".

As media guru Ken Doctor notes

in his book, *Newconomics: Twelve New Trends That Will Shape The News You Get*: "The question we face is how we're going to pay professionals to get us the news we need." The great US President John F. Kennedy once declared: "One man can make a difference, and every man should try."

While this might be slightly out of kilter in these gender-neutral times, his statement remains relevant and carries a double significance in the light of recent developments.

Yes, one man can make a huge difference, whipping up populist sentiments to win power, and then wielding it to undermine institutions, cajole officials, vilify political opponents as well as professionals in the media, and even appointing people to key roles to entrench his views and position. Alas, this can happen, even in a democracy, and some mature ones at that. If the much-cherished rule of "by the people, for the people" is to prevail, then every one of us should try to do our part, as engaged, informed and active citizens, striving to ensure that those who promote political sweetness and light, trump those who would sow division and discord.

Ultimately, democracy depends on you and me.

The writer is Editor-in-Chief of *The Straits Times*, President of the World Editors Forum and chairman of the Asia News Network.



when life can be peaceful and comfortable, thinking exactly the way my friends think and I have always thought? It is less important to be right, in some complex philosophical way, than to be right with my friends and colleagues and neighbors, most of whom adore a politician or a party or an ideology and join the bandwagon. That may be the gospel that inspires and holds the allegiance of good, decent, honest people, who would be horrified at the suggestion that they are doing something irresponsible and hurtful.

But their search for comfort does hurt people. Lives are wrecked, careers are destroyed, institutions are corrupted, government becomes an oligarchy – as it nearly became in the last four years. Thoreau, who went to a prison for his principles, insisted that in a land where one just man is in prison, the place of all just men is also in prison. He told us that injustice always flourishes on the assumption that it need not expect active resistance from people. Thoreau's observation was sadly right: we saw a vast number of party members and politicians who went along with every impropriety, even every illegality, of a false leader. At long last some good men revolted and voted against him.

Active resistance? Long before one acts, there must be some awareness – and the biggest barrier to awareness is the comfort born of indifference.

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Illustration: Debabrata Chakrabarty

visions, computers and smart phones every day of their lives? Then how are they so deaf and blind to events, so indifferent to the suffering of people around them?

That is the giant mystery that faces us. How do thinking people arrive at such perverse conclusions? The uncomfortable conclusion to which I feel pushed is that many of these people don't really think. Thinking, truly speaking, is an uncomfortable business for many of us. It takes time and effort. We have to see, read and hear; we have to talk to different types of people; we have to digest widely

divergent views. That strains us, stresses us, makes us face troubling ideas, quite cherished illusions, in short makes life difficult. It is so much easier to live comfortably, drink a cool beer or two, watch mindless shows and silly games on television, and, above all, delve for hours in 'friends' pages with friendly views that confirm our easy impressions and convenient prejudices. We can go on living the life we have ever lived, unclouded by new ideas, untroubled by the necessity to compromise the privileges we have long taken for granted.

So, why think? Why create waves

100 YEARS AGO

OCCASIONAL NOTE

To many people it has always seemed that the height to which wages have soared, no less than the extravagant recapitalisation of most industrial enterprises in Europe, would effectively prevent what is now usually described as "deflation." American industry, however, presents already the phenomenon of deputations of workmen waiting on their boards of directors to beg them to arrange a fifteen per cent reduction of their (the workers') wages to facilitate the continuous running of the mills. Astonishing though it sounds, this has actually occurred, and not in one but in many centres. It remains to be seen whether the distress now prevailing in Lancashire and Yorkshire will produce a similar result. It is, of course, true that were Manchester piecegoes prices reduced to pre-war standards Indian orders alone would keep the Lancashire mills running for a good many months to come. The markets, in other words, exist but Lancashire prices based on present costings make business impossible. Probably if wages could be readjusted to fit in time, overwatered stock would readjust itself in time, namely, by the process of writing down the mills' valuation at the expense of present shareholders to the figure at which it stood until two years ago. The operation would be an uncomfortable one for those concerned but it would assist the mill-hands to live and those who compose the "foreign markets" to clothe themselves decently.

NEWS ITEMS

DARING RIVER PIRACY

A daring case of river piracy of the Calcutta Port, was brought to light in the trial of Nakur Chandera De Biswas at the High Court. The charge against the accused, who pleaded not guilty, was that of receiving stolen property knowing that it was obtained by dacoity. Mr. B.L. Mitter in opening the case for the prosecution told the jury that a grocer at Noakhali named Nafar used to send his men to Calcutta to buy grocers stores, which were despatched by boat to Noakhali. About 8 o'clock when the boat was some little distance above Budge Budge, two other boats containing about 30 men armed with knives came down the river, and held up the boat containing the goods. A dozen of men terrorised the crew and removed a quantity of the goods. The police arrested the accused. The trial is proceeding.

ASSAM COUNCIL CHAMBER

The attention of the Chief Commissioner of Assam has been drawn to a letter published in a local newspaper saying that arrangements are now being made for building a new Legislative Council Chamber in Shillong. In fact, the Chief Commissioner has expressly refrained from arriving at any decision as to whether the new Council Chamber shall be in Shillong until he knows the considered opinion of the non-official members of the new Legislative Council. On this important question the non-official members of the late Legislative Council were sharply divided in opinion. The misapprehension on the part of the newspaper correspondent is probably due to the fact that a small office is now being built in Shillong for the immediate accommodation of the two Ministers and the two Members of the Executive Council.

WORK RESUMED AT ALIGARH COLLEGE

The Aligarh College opened. Admission cards were sent only to 325 students, of whom over 200 have already joined. Applications from about 250 other students for admission have already been received and are now under consideration. These students would be admitted after 10 days if approved by the Muslim University Admission Committee. Regular lectures have commenced and the normal work has now been resumed. A few students of the National University came to the hostels in the afternoon and they were asked to retire. A notice was sent to Principle Mahomed Ali, asking him that no student of the National University should enter the college precincts. A few students of the National University also came to the hostel on the following day, but they were sent back.

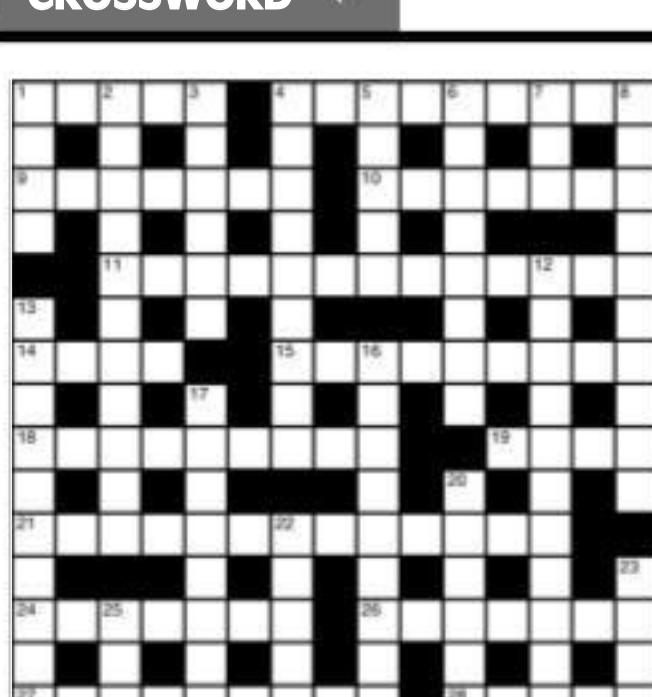
COALITION'S NARROW ESCAPE

Yesterday's division on the Food Ministry estimate is described as a nasty shock for the Coalition Government, which only escaped defeat after telephoning and sending messages to the clubs and private houses of the Coalitionists. Eventually Labour saved the position, all except one voting with the Government. Apparently Labour's attitude was that the Food Ministry acted as a protection against the profiteer. Later in the debate Mr. McCurdy assured the House that a Food Ministry would in future confine its activities to terminating Government control of commodities.

ALLIES NOTE TO GREECE

The grave Allied communication to Greece shows a concord of views based on a compromise of previous divergent opinions pivoting round the question of the return of Constantine to Athens. It is pointed out that there has been up to the present no reference to the question of revision of the Treaty of Sevres, which is intimately connected with the dynastic problem. The Allied statement is considered equally a warning to electors in view of the forthcoming plebiscite, and to Constantine, whose restoration would almost inevitably lead to sowing the seeds of civil war. Reuter said that Mr. Lloyd George, M. Leygues and Signor Sforza will today confer on the situation in connection with interests in the East, regarding which they any how maintain a free hand if Constantine reascends.

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1 Gets out dishes (5)
- 4 Some civil disturbance does for alleged war criminal (9)
- 9 Kept horses mad about light (7)
- 10 Quiet touchdown at last in nameless airport (7)
- 11 Enjoy attempt at demo - it fails! (4,1,4)
- 14/22 Peer, prime minister or civic dignitary (4,5)
- 15 Part on edge as deep ice is melting (9)
- 18 Valued fresh lottery (5,4)

- 19 See sides being removed from organ (4)
- 21 Town memorably built on lies? (6,7)
- 24 Fully cleared after sounding angry, swear (7)
- 26 Sheep needs servant, as elephant may (7)
- 27 Danger signals about weapons the French brought in (3,6)
- 28 Remove hair at second try (5)
- DOWN
- 1 Transport king to sing outside

- 2 station? (4)
- 3 In extremes of scarlatina, not quite breathing spit (6)
- 4 Mary rides round man's address (2,4,3)
- 5 Catch up in Franco's salon (5)
- 6 Laurel's holding party for comedians (5-3)
- 7 Morrison's delivery vehicle (3)
- 8/23 Meeting standard to preserve English fruit (10,4)
- 12 Strange mysteries enshrouded

- Clement Attlee's origins, you must agree (1,4,2,4)
- 13 Measure of audience approval a complete fiasco ending in disaster (10)
- 16 Have fights, splitting theologians vertically (9)
- 17 Foreign currency note found on top of the Cenotaph? (8)
- 20 I'm surprised American network has strange content (6)
- 22 See 14 Across
- 23 See 8
- 25 The German up and down (3)

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

NO 28157



Israel has incarcerated (Palestinians) in concentration camps under the flimsiest of security accusations young and old, women and men, who are rotting there without recourse to justice.

SAUDI PRINCE TURKI AL-FAISAL

STRONGLY CRITICISING ISRAEL AT A SUMMIT IN BAHRAIN

The Statesman

NEW DELHI, MONDAY 07 DECEMBER 2020

09

Japan capsule with asteroid samples retrieved in Australia

Space experts say Ryugu may be a potential source of organic matter when solar system was forming

ASSOCIATED PRESS

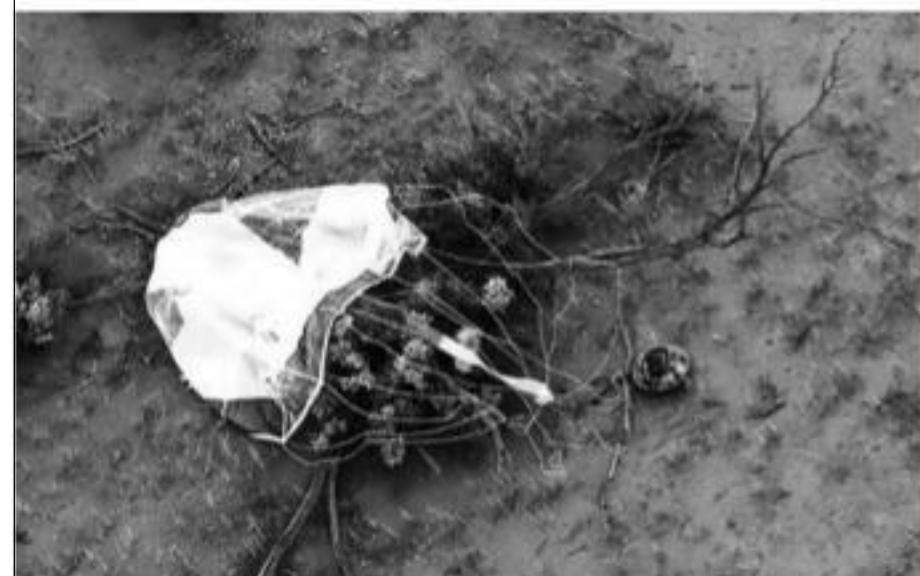
TOKYO, 6 DECEMBER

Japan's space agency said its helicopter search team has retrieved a capsule, which is carrying asteroid samples that could explain the origin of life, that landed on a remote area in southern Australia as planned Sunday.

The capsule collection work at the landing site was completed..." the space agency said in a tweet about four hours after the capsule landed. We practiced a lot for today... it ended safe."

Hayabusa-2 had successfully released the small capsule on Saturday and sent it toward Earth to deliver samples from a distant asteroid that could provide clues to the origin of the solar system and life on our planet, the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency said.

Early Sunday the capsule briefly turned into a fireball as it reentered the atmosphere 120 kilometers (75



miles) above Earth. At about 10 kilometers (6 miles) above ground, a parachute was opened to slow its fall and beacon signals were transmitted to indicate its location.

"It was great ... It was a beautiful fireball, and I was so impressed," said JAXA's Hayabusa2 project manager Yuichi Tsuda as he celebrated the successful capsule return and safe landing from a command center in Sagamihara, near Tokyo. "I've waited for this day for six years."

Beacon signals were detected

ed, suggesting the parachute successfully opened and the capsule landed safely in a remote, sparsely populated area of Woomera, Australia, said JAXA official Akitaka Kishi.

About two hours after the capsule's reentry, JAXA said its helicopter search team found the capsule in the planned landing area. The retrieval of the pan-shaped capsule, about 40 centimetres (15 inches) in diameter, was completed about two hours later.

The fireball could be seen even from the International Space Station.

After it released the capsule, it moved away from Earth to capture images of the capsule descending toward the planet as it set off on a new expedition to another distant asteroid.

The capsule descended from 220,000 kilometers (136,700 miles) away in space after it was separated from Hayabusa2 in a challenging operation that required precision control.

JAXA officials said they hoped to conduct a preliminary safety inspection at an Australian lab and bring the capsule back to Japan early next week. Dozens of JAXA staff have been working in Woomera to prepare for the sample return.

They set up satellite dishes at several locations in the target area inside the Australian Air Force test field to receive the signals.

Australian National University space rock expert Trev-

or Ireland, who was in Woomera for the arrival of the capsule, said he expected the Ryugu samples to be similar to the meteorite that fell in Australia near Murchison in Victoria state more than 50 years ago.

The Murchison meteorite opened a window on the origin of organics on Earth because these rocks were found to contain simple amino acids as well as abundant water, Ireland said.

We will examine whether Ryugu is a potential source of organic matter and water on Earth when the solar system was forming, and whether these still remain intact on the asteroid.

Scientists say they believe the samples, especially ones taken from under the asteroid's surface, contain valuable data unaffected by space radiation and other environmental factors. They are particularly interested in analyzing organic materials in the samples.

Chinese Chang'e 5 probe finishes docking mission, set to return moon rocks to Earth

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BEIJING, 6 DECEMBER

China's Chang'e-5 probe that touched down on the moon transferred the rock samples it collected from the lunar surface to its orbiter on Sunday, with an ambitious aim to bring them back to Earth for the first time in nearly 45 years, the country's space agency said.

Chang'e-5 probe, comprising an orbiter, a lander, an ascender, and a returner, was launched on November 24, and its lander-ascender combination touched down on the north of the Mons Rümker in Oceanus Procellarum, also known as the Ocean of Storms, on the near side of the moon on December 1.

The ascender of the spacecraft which collected samples from the moon successfully rendezvoused and docked with the orbiter-returner combination in lunar orbit early Sunday, the China National Space Administration (CNSA) said.

Next, the orbiter-returner will separate from the ascender, and wait for the right time to return to Earth, it

LUNAR MISSION

► The Chang'e-5 probe, named after the mythical Chinese moon goddess, is expected to bring about 2 kilograms of lunar samples back to Earth

► China chose a complicated technological approach, including unmanned rendezvous and docking in lunar orbit, in order to bring back more samples

► This is the first-time a Chinese spacecraft has carried out rendezvous and docking in lunar orbit

kilograms of lunar samples back to Earth.

China chose a complicated technological approach, including unmanned rendezvous and docking in lunar orbit, in order to bring back more samples and lay a technological foundation for manned lunar missions, said Pei Zhaoyu, deputy director of the Lunar Exploration and Space Program Centre of the CNSA. This is the first-time a Chinese spacecraft has carried out rendezvous and docking in lunar orbit.

Chang'e-5 is one of the most complicated and challenging missions in Chinese aerospace history, as well as the world's first moon-sample mission in more than 40 years. Those samples will now be put in a return capsule for the trip home, expected to land in Inner Mongolia later this month.

If the mission is successful, it will make China only the third country to return samples from the moon, more than 50 years after the US Apollo missions. The last successful lunar sample return mission was the Soviet Union's Luna 24 mission in 1976.

Taliban, Afghan peace negotiating teams meet after months of bickering

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

KABUL, 6 DECEMBER

After months of bickering over rules and procedures for the Afghan peace dialogue, negotiating teams of the Kabul government and the Taliban met in the Qatar capital of Doha, the State Ministry for Peace Affairs said in a statement released here on Sunday.

"The first meeting of the joint committee of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the opposition side was held in Doha (on Saturday) to arrange the issues for the agenda of the talks," Xinhua news agency quoted the statement as saying.

The working groups exchanged views on issues around the formal peace parley's agenda and the meeting is expected to continue on Sunday.

Also addressing the meeting, Chairman of the HCNR, Abdullah Abdullah said that Afghan people were in dire need of political unity more than ever and need an urgent inclusive ceasefire.

The meeting came as Taliban militants, who had ruled the country before being ousted in late 2001, intensified armed insurgency killing government troops as well as civilians.

More than 35,000 Afghan civilians have died and about 65,000 have been injured as a result of armed conflict in Afghanistan since January 2009, according to figures of the UN mission in the country.

The negotiating teams of the Kabul government and the Taliban exchanged views on issues around the formal peace parley's agenda and the meeting is expected to continue on Sunday

al Reconciliation (HCNR) after its establishment a few months ago.

At the meeting, Ghani renewed his call for the Taliban to observe a nationwide ceasefire, which the militant group has so far denied.

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Ethiopia's conflict stokes humanitarian crisis

ASSOCIATED PRESS
HAMDAYET, 6 DECEMBER

Ethiopia's month-long war in its northern Tigray region has severely hampered efforts to fight one of Africa's worst coronavirus outbreaks, as the fighting has displaced almost 1 million people and strained local humanitarian services to the breaking point.

Tens of thousands of those fleeing the conflict between Tigrayan and Ethiopian federal forces have crossed into neighboring Sudan, where countrywide virus numbers are also rising rapidly.

More than 45,000 refugees from the Tigray conflict are

now living in remote parts of Sudan, where they have taken shelter in crowded camps that have no coronavirus testing or treatment capabilities.

With Covid-19, it's not comfortable in these buses, said one refugee, Hailem, who said over 60 people were crammed onto the transport that took them from Hamdayet, on the Sudanese side of a main border crossing, to the camps.

Many staying in the camps are forced to share shelters and crowd together in lines for food, cash and registration with different aid agencies. There are few face masks to be seen - or available for distribution.

I think the war is worse. The virus outbreak is a threat, Gebre said, but the drastic conditions in the refugee camps make people forget its

risks, as they face hunger, heat, and thirst. But Sudan's growing virus cases has raised concerns that a new countrywide lockdown could be imposed - including measures that could stop refugees from crossing the border.

The people that are fleeing from conflict and violence are also fleeing for their lives. U.N. refugee chief Filippo Grandi said last weekend about the Tigray conflict.

According to humanitarian officials, the crisis in the Tigray region of 6 million people remains critical, with medical supplies running low, including those needed to fight the pandemic.

Virgin Atlantic to commence operations to Pak from 13 Dec

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ISLAMABAD, 6 DECEMBER

British airline Virgin Atlantic will commence its flight operation for the country from 13 December as the nation's aviation regulatory body has approved its flight operation to and from Pakistan, the Dawn reported.

Virgin Atlantic is scheduled to start its flight operations for

Islamabad and Lahore and will use Airbus A-332 aircraft to continue a weekly eight-flight operation to the two cities.

The airline will operate four weekly flights between London and Lahore and three flights between London and Islamabad, the report said.

The decision comes following the decision of European Commission to retain the ban on Pakistan International Airlines operations in its member countries, saying it is dissatisfied over the steps taken by Pak's civil aviation authority to address licensing and safety concerns.

'Covid could push people living in extreme poverty to over 1B by 2030'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
UNITED NATIONS, 6 DECEMBER

An additional 207 million people could be pushed into extreme poverty by 2030 due to the severe long-term impact of the coronavirus pandemic, bringing the total number of the world's extremely poor to more than a billion, a new study from the UN Development Programme (UNDP) has found.

The study assesses the impact of different Covid-19 recovery scenarios on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), evaluating the

multidimensional effects of the pandemic over the next decade.

The study is part of a long-standing partnership between the UNDP and the Pardee Center for International Futures at the University of Denver.

Severe long-term effects of the Covid-19 pandemic could push an additional 207 million people into extreme poverty by 2030, and increase the female poverty headcount by an additional 102 million compared to that baseline, says the report.

tality rates and the most recent growth projections by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), would result in 44 million more people living in extreme poverty by 2030 compared to the development trajectory the world was on before the pandemic.

Under a 'High Damage' scenario, where the recovery is protracted, Covid-19 is likely to push an additional 207 million people into extreme poverty by 2030, and increase the female poverty headcount by an additional 102 million compared to that baseline, says the report.

The 'High Damage' scenario anticipates that 80 percent of the COVID-induced economic crisis would persist in 10 years' time due to loss in productivity, preventing a full recovery to the growth trajectory seen before the pandemic.

However, the study also finds that a focused set of SDG investments over the next decade in social protection/welfare programmes, governance, digitalisation, and a green economy could not only prevent the rise of extreme poverty, but actually exceed the development trajectory the world was on before the pandemic.

"This ambitious, yet feasible SDG Push" scenario would lift an additional 146 million people out of extreme poverty, narrow the gender poverty gap, and reduce the female poverty headcount by 74 million, even taking into account the current impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic," UNDP said.

UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner said as this new poverty research highlights, the COVID-19 pandemic is a tipping point, and the choices leaders take now

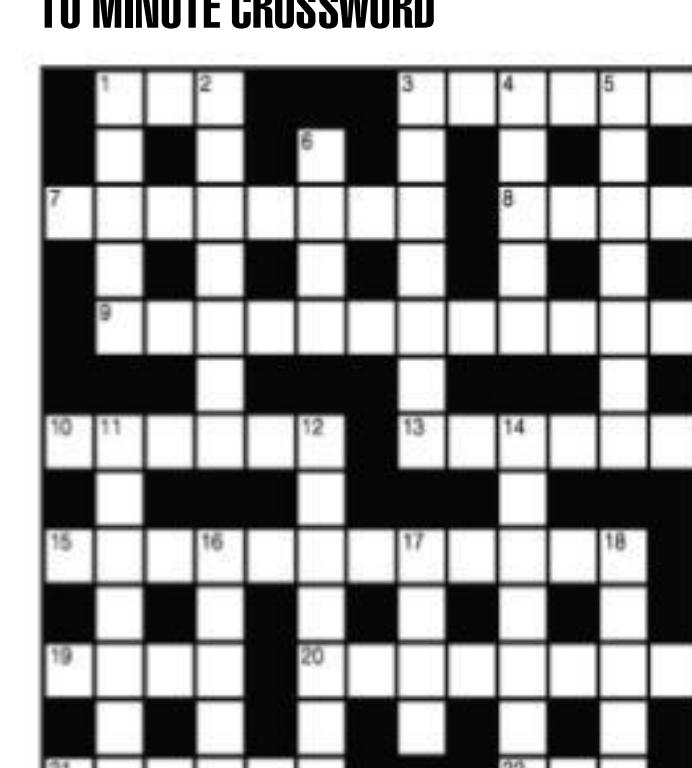
could take the world in very different directions.

"We have an opportunity to invest in a decade of action that not only helps people to recover from COVID-19, but that re-sets the development path of people and planet towards a more fair, resilient and green future," he said.

The concerted SDG interventions suggested by the study combine behavioural changes through nudges for both governments and citizens, such as improved effectiveness and efficiency in governance and changes in consumption of food, energy and water.

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



ACROSS
1 Organ of sight (3)
3 Reaping-hook (6)
7 College teacher (8)
8 Nautical hail (4)
9 Railway station feature (6,6)
10 Short of money (4,2)
13 Close at hand (6)
15 Disdaining (12)
19 Celebrity (4)
20 Sweet on a stick (8)
21 Indented area (6)
22 Consumed (3)

DOWN
1 Bring to bear (5)
2 Tempted (7)
3 Cut of beef (7)
4 Seed husks (5)
5 Young feline animal (4,3)
6 At liberty (4)
11 Disciple (4)
12 Spots (7)
14 Struggle (7)
16 Laconic (5)
17 Story (4)
18 Solidly built (5)

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD
1 Piddle, 2 Swell, 3 Plunge, 4 Owe, 5 Pedal, 6 Purficial, 7 Concomitant, 8 Absolute, 9 Ground, 10 Tripod, 11 Perfect, 12 Callous, 13 Thaw, 14 Husk, 15 Oil well, 16 Grass, 17 Set, 18 Extol, 19 Set, 20 Crisps.
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 42000447
- Vidyasagar Institute for Mental and Neuro-Sciences 26924300, 26924304
- Batra Hospital & Medical Research Centre 29051280, 29958747
- Deen Dayal Upadhyay 25496320, 25494403
- Guru Tegh Bahadur 23717473, 23325320

RAILWAY INQUIRY

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

ROADWAYS INQUIRY

- ISBT (General Inquiry): 23868836, 23865181
- INDIGO AIRLINES New Delhi City Office 43513185, Call Centre 09910383333, 18001803838, Reservation



When I was younger, I used to look up comments about myself on the Internet. That is an insane and bad thing to do. And to me Twitter and everything just sort of feels like an extension of that

ACTOR DANIEL RADCLIFFE

REVEALING WHY HE IS NOT ON SOCIAL MEDIA

WEATHER

| CITY | MAX(°C) | MIN(°C) |
|---------------|---------|---------|
| SINGAPORE | 32 | 26 H |
| HONG KONG | 24 | 17 S |
| TOKYO | 15 | 5 CL |
| LONDON | 04 | 0 CL |
| DUBAI | 27 | 22 CL |
| SAN FRANCISCO | 21 | 08 S |
| NEW YORK | 06 | -1 S |
| MOSCOW | -5 | -11 S |

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

THUMBNAILS



Thousands march in protests in Paris on Sunday against a contested security bill as intruders set fire to several cars, broke windows and tossed projectiles at police. AP

China coal mine accident toll climbs to 23: The death toll due to a carbon monoxide leak inside a coal mine in southwest China has gone up to 23, while one person has been rescued, officials said. The accident took place at around 5 pm (local time) on Friday at the closed Diaoshuidong colliery in Yongchuan district of Chongqing Municipality. PTI

Shooting of maimed Palestinian boy: Israeli authorities have cleared police of any wrongdoing in the case of a 9-year-old boy who lost an eye after apparently being shot in the face by an Israeli officer earlier this year. Malik Eissa was struck by what appeared to be a sponge-tipped munition last February and lost vision in his left eye. AP

Voting opens in Venezuela assembly poll amidst boycott



Polling places in Venezuela open on Sunday to elect members of the National Assembly in a vote championed by President Nicolas Maduro but rejected as a fraud by the nation's most influential opposition politicians.

Maduro seeks to pack the assembly with members of his United Socialist Party of Venezuela, capturing the last government institution out of his reach.

Critics say doing so will smother the last remnants of democracy in Venezuela.

An opposition coalition led by US-backed politician Juan Guaidó is boycotting the vote. The Supreme Court loyal to Maduro this year appointed a new elections commission, including three members who have been sanctioned by the US and Canada, without participation of the opposition-led congress, as the law requires.

The court also took over three leading opposition parties, appointing new leaders the opposition accuses of conspiring to support Maduro. Guaidó's opposition movement is holding a referendum over several days after the election.

It will ask Venezuelans whether Venezuelans want to end Maduro's rule and hold new presidential poll.

It's unclear whether either side's vote will draw the masses as neither Maduro nor Guaidó are popular among Venezuelans.

The South American nation is caught in a deepening political and economic crisis, despite holding the world's largest oil reserves. AP

Trump floods rally with poll grievances

Outgoing president alleges voter fraud to his cheering supporters at campaign rally in Georgia for upcoming special Senatorial elections

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WASHINGTON, 6 DECEMBER



Adventurous Donald Trump is showing no signs of surrender and has reiterated yet again his unsubstantiated allegations of widespread voter fraud, claiming at his first post-poll rally in Georgia that he won a "rigged" US presidential election that he lost.

Trump alleged on Saturday that the last month's US election was rigged in favour of his Democratic opponent Joe Biden, who is now the President-elect.

"They cheated and they rigged our presidential election, and they're gonna try to rig this election too," Trump told his cheering supporters at the rally in Georgia where he campaigned for his Republican candidates for the Special Senatorial elections.

Trump began by falsely claiming he won Georgia in the presidential race. The state has already certified its election results, declaring Biden the winner. Trump claimed he won an election that he lost.

"If I lost, I would be a very gracious loser. If I lost, I would say I lost and I would go to Florida and I would take it easy," Trump said at the rally.

Trump was a resident of New York. After becoming the president, he moved his residence from New York to Florida. Thousands of his supporters, not only from Georgia but also from the neighbouring states, as far as California and Ohio, came to

hear his speech.

This was Trump's first public rally after he lost the election and Biden was declared as the President-elect.

"I think they say that if you win Florida and if you win Ohio, in history you've never lost an election. This has got to be a first time - but the truth is they were right, we've never lost and we're winning this election," Trump said.

He urged his supporters to go out and vote for the 5 January Senate elections in Georgia. "You must go vote and vote early starting 14 December. You have to do it. They cheated and they rigged our presidential election, but we will still win it. We will still win it. We'll still win it. And they're going to try and rig this election, too," he said.

"If you don't vote, the socialists and the communists win. They win. Georgia patriots must show up and vote for these two incredible people. They are two of the finest people you will ever meet, he said. The cheering crowd frequently erupted into chants of "stop the steal" and "fight for Trump."

"This election was rigged, and we can't let it happen to two of the most respected people in Washington. We can't let it happen again. Your governor could stop it very easily if he knew what the hell he was doing. He could stop it very easily," he claimed.

"The answer to the Democrats' fraud is not to stay at home; that's what (House Speaker) Nancy Pelosi and (Senate Minority Leader Chuck) Schumer want you to do - stay at home. If you want to do something to them - I don't want to use the word revenge, but it is a sense of revenge - to the Democrats, you show up and vote in record numbers," he said.

The president alleged that

"hundreds of thousands of illegal votes were cast in each state" and insisted falsely that poll watchers were "thrown out" of polling places in Pennsylvania. Trump has allowed the official start of Biden's transition to power but has not yet conceded defeat.

Hours before the event,

Trump asked Kemp in the phone call to order the legislative session; the governor refused, according to a senior government official in Georgia.

According to a tweet from the governor, Trump also asked him to order an audit of signatures on absentee ballot envelopes in his state, a step Kemp is not empowered to take because he has no authority to interfere in the electoral process on Trump's behalf.

Republican White House hopefuls wait to see what Trump does next

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, 6 DECEMBER

When a party loses the White House, a new crop of presidential hopefuls typically begin moving quickly to lay the groundwork for a run in the next campaign.

Not this year.

President Donald Trump fruitlessly pressed Georgia's governor on Saturday to call a special legislative session aimed at subverting the presidential election results in that state as Trump's fixation with his defeat overshadowed his party's campaign to save its majority in the Senate.

Trump and Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp (photo) spoke by phone hours before Trump was to appear at a rally in Valdosta, Georgia, where Republicans hoped the president would dedicate his energy to imploring their supporters to vote in two runoff elections on 5 January.

Trump has yet to concede defeat.

Trump has yet to concede the election, which he has repeatedly alleged was massively rigged. State officials and media have said that they have not found any such evidence.

The Trump campaign has filed a slew of lawsuits across the United States in an attempt to turn its defeat in the November 3 election into a victory.

Except for one, all have been rejected by the courts.

campaign in a significant way, said Alex Conant, a Republican operative who served as communications director to Florida Sen. Marco Rubio's 2016 presidential campaign.

In a normal campaign cycle, Conant said, you would see potential presidential candidates in Iowa and New Hampshire this month. This year, that's not going to happen because nobody wants to be seen as challenging Trump.

Grover Cleveland was the last and so far only president to win the White House after being defeated for reelection, and that was more than a century ago. Trump has been increasingly vocal about his desire to follow that path.

I don't want to wait till 2024. I want to go back three weeks," he said at a really Saturday evening in Georgia. That followed comments during a White House Christmas party this past week when Trump said, "We're trying to do another four years. Otherwise, I'll see you in four years."

Such overtures are particularly problematic for the current and former administration officials considered among the likely contenders, including Mike Pence, Mike Pompeo and Nikki Haley.

UK, EU make last-ditch effort to strike post-Brexit trade pact

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LONDON, 6 DECEMBER

BREXIT TALKS

► Lord David Frost, the UK's Brexit negotiator, and his team travelled back to Brussels to resume a final set of talks with EU chief negotiator Michel Barnier to try and find a way through the significant differences that remain in the path to a deal. The key focus is over access to UK waters by the EU's fishing fleets

► Other stumbling blocks include what measures there should be to ensure a "level playing field" for businesses on both sides of the English Channel and the role of the European Court of Justice

ences, we agreed that a further effort should be undertaken by our negotiating teams to assess whether they can be resolved.

We are therefore instructing our chief negotiators to reconvene tomorrow [Sunday] in Brussels. We will speak again on Monday evening they said.

Lord David Frost, the UK's Brexit negotiator, and his team travelled back to Brussels to resume a final set of talks with EU chief negotiator Michel Barnier and his team to try and find a way through the significant differences

that remain in the path to a deal. The key focus is over access to UK waters by the EU's fishing fleets.

According to reports, France is leading the charge in this area and demanding rights for at least 10 years a demand the UK is unwilling to give in to, claiming it fails to meet its take back control criteria for leaving the bloc.

Other stumbling blocks include what measures there should be to ensure a "level playing field" for businesses on both sides of the English Channel and the role of the European Court of Justice.

If a deal is not reached before the December-end deadline, border checks and taxes will be introduced for goods travelling between the UK and the EU.

It would have a far-reaching impact on the way business and trade is conducted in Europe after the UK voted in favour of Brexit in a June 2016 referendum.

The Sunday Times' highlights the plight of animals in London Zoo, whose travel to neighbouring EU countries for species-protecting mating has to be expedited to ensure they don't get stuck in transit.

Three Asiatic lioness sisters, Rubi, Heidi and Indi, are heading for a new home in Germany to find a new mate after they had failed to breed in London with Bhanu, the resident male.

Three Asiatic lioness sisters, Rubi, Heidi and Indi, are heading for a new home in Germany to find a new mate after they had failed to breed in London with Bhanu, the resident male.

China prepares rollout of Covid vaccines

ASSOCIATED PRESS
TAIPEI, 6 DECEMBER

Provincial governments across China are placing orders for experimental, domestically made coronavirus vaccines, though health officials have yet to say how well they work or how they may reach the country's 1.4 billion people.

Developers are speeding up final testing, the Chinese foreign minister said Thursday during a UN meeting, as Britain issued approval for emergency use of Pfizer Inc.'s vaccine candidate and providers scrambled to set up distribution.

China's fledgling pharmaceutical industry has at least five vaccines from four producers being tested in more

than a dozen countries including Russia, Egypt and Mexico. Health experts say even if they are successful, the certification process for the United States, Europe, Japan and other developed countries might be too complex for them to be used there.

However, China said it will ensure the products are affordable for developing countries. One developer, China National Pharmaceutical Group, known as Sinopharm, said in November it applied for final market approval for use of its vaccine in China.

Others have been approved for emergency use on health workers and other people deemed at high risk of infection. We must be prepared for large-scale production, said

Vice Premier Sun Chunlan, who has overseen much of the country's response, during a visit Wednesday to developers, according to the official Xinhua News Agency.

Sun visited one of Sinopharm's Beijing subsidiary companies; another producer, Sinovac, and a research lab under the National Medical Products Administration, a regulatory agency that approves medical products for public use.

The government has yet to say how many people it plans to vaccinate. Sun said plans call for vaccinating border personnel and other high-risk populations this month.

The companies are using more traditional techniques than Western developers.

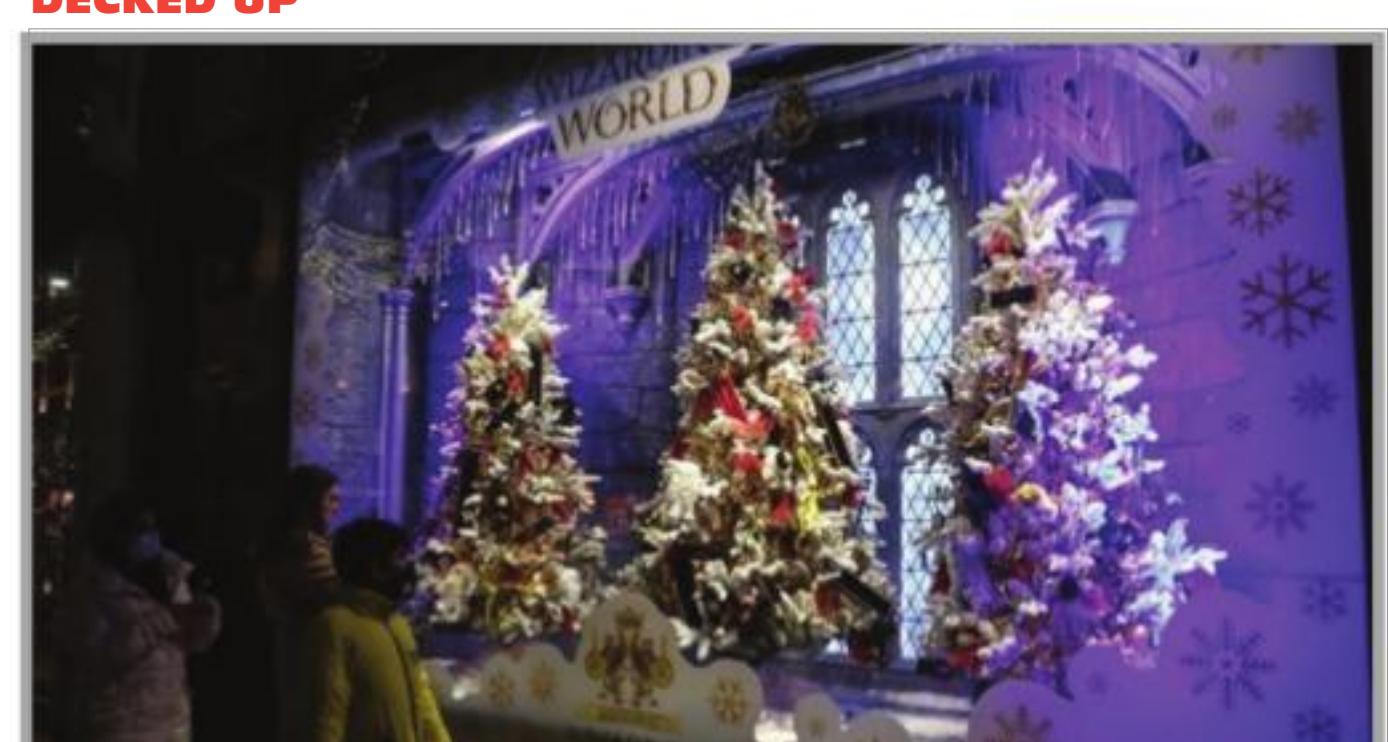
They say unlike Pfizer's vaccine, which must be kept frozen at temperatures as low as minus 70 degrees Celsius (minus 94 Fahrenheit), theirs can be stored at 2 to 8 C (36 to 46F). The Chinese producers have yet to say how they might be distributed.

More than 1 million people in China have received experimental vaccines under emergency use approval. Health experts question why China is using them on such a vast scale now that the outbreak is largely under control within its borders.

Health officials previously said China will be able to manufacture 610 million doses by the end of this year and ramp up to 1 billion doses next year.

Virus cases in US continue to rise during holiday season

WASHINGTON, 6 DECEMBER



People walk past a shopping window with Christmas decorations in London on Sunday. IANS

3 generations under one roof~ emerging trend amplified by Covid crisis

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
POTOMAC (US), 6 DECEMBER



Great Recession brought the number of adults living in their childhood homes back to levels last seen in the 1950s.

Now, with the upheaval of Covid-19, many are turning to the playbook again.

When she moved in, Mrs Marcoux, now 49, was working part-time for the school system and "not in a very good financial position", she recalled.

But living with her parents allowed Mrs Marcoux to maintain a part-time work schedule while raising her daughters, who were adjusting to new schools and their parents' divorce. She was assisted by her mother Judy Kristensen.

"When the girls were little, we were able to help Katie out by driving them places and stuff so she could work," Mrs Kristensen, 78, said.

Meanwhile, Mrs Marcoux was able to progress professionally and now works full-time. "One of the things that

it has afforded me big time is a financial freedom that I was able to recover," she said.

Her husband, Mr Eric Marcoux, felt "very at home" with his parents-in-law, "so I sold my house and moved in", recalled the 47-year-old former cartographer, who brought along his dog, Jazzman.

Still, Mr Marcoux, his wife and two stepdaughters, then teenagers, were forced to share one bathroom, an arrangement that "wasn't ideal", he said.

The situation improved immeasurably after a home improvement project added a second master bedroom and another bathroom.

Ms Dana Scanlon, a real estate agent in the Washington region, said more young parents are taking a similar approach during the pandemic. "We have seen many couples with young children move in with their parents, into the large homes they grew up in - something they never imagined they would do,"

she said. "This allows them the opportunity to have in-house babysitters or 'Zoom school supervisors' while they work from their laptops."

Another factor behind the shift has been the ageing of the overall population, with many baby boomers still vigorous but looking ahead to a future when mobility will probably be more difficult.

Mr Marcoux's parents appreciate the buzz of company when many of their contemporaries rue their solitude and they do not expect to have an empty nest again.

Staying with the parents is

North-East Maker of 21st century Assam



RANGAN DUTTA

T arun Gogoi, chief minister of Assam for three consecutive terms (2001-2016) and a member of the Assam Legislative Assembly, passed away on 23 November this year in Guwahati at the age of 86. His death marks the end of a generation as he was one of the finest representatives of a graceful political class.

Gogoi entered public life soon after joining the District Bar at Jorhat and was elected to the Municipal Board Jorhat in 1968. Ever smiling, suave and always willing to stand for a right and just cause, private as well as public, he quickly earned respect. He did not look back after being elected to the Lok Sabha in 1971 from the Jorhat constituency on a Congress Party ticket.

Gogoi's foresight and strong political acumen was displayed as he had joined the Indira Gandhi-led Congress group at a time when the Congress Party was sharply divided between veterans and younger leaders. He served six terms as a Member of Parliament in the Lok Sabha and was also the Union minister of state (independent charge) for food processing during the PV Narasimha Rao government from 1991-96.

Gogoi was the general secretary of the All India Congress Committee in 1985 and president

of the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee from 1985-90. It was a difficult period for the Congress Party in Assam as following the 1985 Assam Accord, leaders of the Assam movement replaced the Congress Party and took over the reins of the state. Interestingly, he became a member of the state Assembly only in 1996 from Margherita but from 2001, he represented the Kaliabor constituency in Upper Assam.

The preceding period had seen the breakdown of governance in Assam but given Gogoi's experience of working as a Union minister, he must have been prepared for the task. In the 1990s, identity politics came to the forefront and caused deep fissures within the diverse "political societies" of the North-east, especially Assam. Unfortunately, they continue to shape political discourse even now.

Given his standing in national politics, Gogoi was a natural choice for the post of CM when the Congress Party returned to power in Assam. He restored peace by providing good governance and engaging constructively with insurgent groups. He tried to accommodate their legitimate demands within the framework of the Constitution while retaining the integrity of Assam, which was always his prime concern. One must mention here his Ahom lineage, given that the Ahom

dynasty was the longest in the world and ruled over a vast empire for more than 700 years.

Gogoi deftly handled the Bodo insurgency leading to the 2002 Bodo Accord, which granted autonomy under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution to the Bodoland Territorial Administrative District. He took strong measures to deal with Karbi and Dimasa militants' statehood demands and stamped out "secret killings" that made a mockery of law and order. They reflected his commitment to the integrity of Assam.

All those events laid the foundation of Gogoi's legacy - restoration of growth after the "lost decades" of the 1980s and 90s. How bad the economic scene was in Assam before he assumed office in 2001 was neatly summed up in the erstwhile Planning Commission's Assam Development Report of 20 August 2000, "Unless extortion by various insurgent groups, which seems to have been the fastest growing activity, is brought under control, industrial growth is unlikely to ? accelerate."

No wonder the state's finances were in a mess and the government was unable to pay staff salaries without taking an overdraft from the Reserve Bank of India. In July 2002, the overdraft reached a staggering sum of Rs 500 crore. With several bold steps such as issuance of State Bank

After two decades of unrest in the 1980s and 90s, Tarun Gogoi brought Assam back on the growth path. It will remain his enduring legacy

of India bonds and strict expenditure control, financial discipline was restored, broken infrastructure rebuilt and augmented with remarkable speed. The rural economy was accorded its due priority, and development of industrial, urban and social infrastructure was given a push as never before.

Four medical colleges, a homeopathic college and a college of physiotherapy and medical sciences were set up. The long-stagnant agriculture, manufacturing and services sectors were revived with new investments and as a result, the economy bounced back. Assam achieved steady annual growth of more than six per cent during the Tenth and Eleventh Five-Year Plans.

Agriculture and the rural economy received a huge boost as rice output went up to 5.22 million MT. Presently, Assam occupies the ninth position among the major rice-producing states of India. With diversified farming, increased use of modern inputs and farm technology backed by an expanded shallow tube well-based assured irrigation system and agro-horticultural processing industry, agriculture was put on a growth path during the 15 years under Gogoi. It is this strong base that accounts for Assam's estimated 8.5 per cent growth in 2019-20 especially in industry and services.

The Economic Survey 2014-15 of the Government of India placed Assam among states with higher growth rates both in net state domestic product and growth of NSDP per capita for two consecutive years - 2013-14 and 2014-15. It was indeed a breakthrough unimaginable in the 1990s and secured a place for Gogoi in the state's economic history as the maker of 21st century Assam.

The enduring legacy of Gogoi is much more than "development". His idea of Assam as a confluence of many faiths, cultures and languages is being sorely missed now. He had an abiding faith in Assam's role as the "pivot" of the North-east and yet never compromised on his state's interests. It was that faith which enabled him to set up six Autonomous Councils under state laws for self-rule and development of areas largely inhabited by six plains tribes - Rabha, Hasong, Mising, Tiwa, Deori, Sonowal Kachari and Thengal Kachari.

The spectacle of prayers being recited, first in Tai-Ai Chang lo, the original language of Gogoi's community, and ending with "Tarun Gogoi pe eng lai" (Tarun Gogoi is immortal) before the funeral pyres were lit with chanting of Sanskrit mantras, will remain alive in the minds of people in Assam. According to his wishes, his mortal remains were taken to different places of religious worship in Guwahati - Namghar at Zoo Road, Ambari mosque, Ugratara temple and a church at Rukminiagaon. It attested to Gogoi's inclusive mindset and his vision of Assam and India.

The writer is a retired IAS officer of the Assam-Meghalaya cadre and has served as a scientific consultant in the office of the principal scientific advisor to the government of India

PLUS POINTS

Statue unveiled



A life-size statue of Ahom general Mahabir Lachit Barphukan was unveiled on the occasion of Asom Divas (2 December) at Sepon by Assam chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal, commemorating the great Ahom general's astonishing fight against Mughal invaders in the battle of Sariahat.

Sonowal commented that Lachit Barphukan's courage and valour gave a distinct identity to the Assamese people worldwide inspiring generations to dedicate themselves selflessly to the service to the nation. He urged the people of Assam to devote themselves for safeguarding the Assamese identity, its culture and precious heritage.

Sonowal also paid tribute to Swargadeo Chaulang Siu-Ka-Pha on the day and urged people to commit themselves for promoting unity, harmony and brotherhood in society. The Ahom kings espoused the ideals of unity and harmony through their centuries-long history full of heroism and great virtues, he said.

Understanding the need for further research on the history of the Ahom period, Sonowal informed that the government had taken up the initiative to set up the Swargadeo Samannay Kshetra in a bid to inspire the younger generation to realise the contributions of the 42 great Ahom kings.

-NAVA THAKURIA

Concerns raised



China is planning to build a hydropower project on the Yarlung Zangbo (Tsangpo) river downstream, according to the Communist Party-run *Global Times* newspaper, says a report in the Itanagar-based *Arunachal Times*. Yarlung Tsangpo is Siang in Arunachal Pradesh.

Quoting the chairman of the Power Construction Corp of China, or Powerchina, which is the Chinese government agency for hydropower, it reported that China will implement hydropower exploitation in the downstream of the Yarlung Zangbo river in Tibet and this was clearly put forward in the proposals for formulating the country's 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) and its long-term goals through 2035 made by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.

Meanwhile, the report of the proposed project has been received with apprehension in Arunachal Pradesh and elsewhere. Congress MLA Ninong Ering said that the state government should seek clarity from the Centre as the whole ecology in the downstream area would be destroyed.

Neeraj Vagholicar of the environment research and advocacy group Kalpavriksh said, "News about a proposed mega dam on the Yarlung Zangbo river close to the line of actual control in Tibet, is a matter of very serious concern. Although specific details are awaited, this could potentially cause serious downstream impacts on the Siang in Arunachal Pradesh and the Brahmaputra floodplains in Assam."

"Downstream impacts of dams on the Brahmaputra floodplains in Assam has been a major issue of debate over the last decade in the region, including projects being built or proposed in China and those within Indian territory," he said.

Golden dome



The sacred Kamakhya temple, one of 51 shakti-peeths, is now adorned with a golden dome. Donated by the Reliance group of companies, the 20 kg dome of gold was installed on Diwali. The temple, atop Nilachal hills on the south bank of the mighty river Brahmaputra, is dedicated to Mother Goddess Kamakhya and visited by thousands of devotees every day from different parts of the country.

-NT

LEARNING UNDER AN UNEQUAL GLOW

The Sikkim government's decision to distribute smart televisions to students seems a short-sighted one at best

SHRADHA R CHHETRI

In Sikkim, private schools were some of the first to install e-learning labs, with a dedicated classroom and maybe, even a technician. Government schools followed suit with help from the Centre. Yet, when the pandemic arrived and suddenly everyone had to be confined to their homes, it was not only digital literacy that came into panicked questioning but what the administration could have done to avoid the general state of helplessness that many faced.

Children of economically backward families were left without a solution. A few good Samaritans began asking people to donate their old smartphones for students who did not own one. Without the involvement of good neighbours and civil society, students might have missed out on chunks of learning, which in the Indian education system is already difficult.

It is public knowledge in Sikkim that the smart TV distribution has garnered mixed reviews and for good reason. On the surface, it might look like a well-intentioned decision but at best it comes off as a short-term solution.

Jiwan Rai, a social commentator and education enthusiast, believes that at a time when the world is exploring ways to resume in-person/physical classes, we seem to be intensifying online classes at a huge financial cost. He says, "Does Sikkim's human resource development department have enough money to spend on fixing other major problems faced by the pandemic-stricken education system? Is this a short term or long term programme? Have the views of learned educationists been considered? Or is it a desperate stop-gap arrangement? What goals are we looking to achieve?" The Sikkimese populace should be echoing Rai's



questions.

There is the possibility that once children return to school, their families would use the TV for purposes other than education. They might even sell them for good money since several people in the era of laptop distribution did exactly the same.

Students are going through a massive shift, switching from physical classrooms to learning from a TV screen. Television is regarded as an object for entertainment. Now, it has the new identity of a learning device. It's a strange time to live in, watching

children take notes from a flat-screen with no engagement whatsoever. How long until the tedious nature of staring at pixels for extended periods of time begins to take a toll on the mental health of students?

The political parties who formed the Sikkim government have overlooked one simple thing -- a student is a person. The pandemic has impacted people the world over and children who had a set routine for learning in classrooms with other people, with enough time for themselves, are now staring blankly at TV screens.

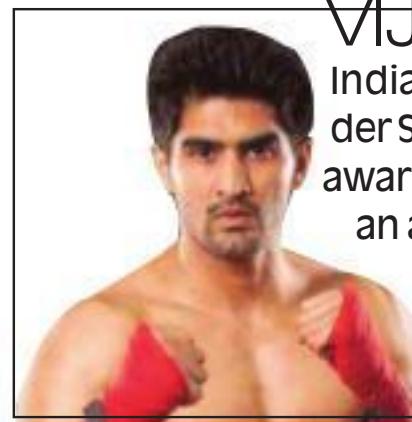
When it comes to convenience, wouldn't a tablet or smartphone have been a better option? An optometrist could argue that it would lead to poor eyesight due to prolonged periods of exposure to blue light. True, but one must consider this -- information would be more accessible and they could learn how to solve quadratic equations on the move. Smart TV is only limited to revision and one-way learning.

But all such measures are for a brief while. Someday, students will return to schools and colleges. There will be interaction and note-taking. They won't forget, however, that for some time, the privileged were painfully isolated, learning under the luminous glow of the TV and the underprivileged were almost completely cut-off from educational interaction.

One could always blame previous governments for not thinking about possible scenarios like the Covid-19 pandemic or one could urge their leaders to take the help of people who have been in the field of education and IT for years, developing what they know to the finest degree.

Leaders and administrators in Sikkim and elsewhere must not forget that when one says "the future is digital", that future begins now. Real issues should not be sidelined by elaborate measures. The dust under an ornate carpet is still dust.

The writer is a journalist at *The Sikkim Chronicle*, Gangtok



VIJENDER'S THREAT

India's first Olympic medallist in boxing and Congress leader Vijender Singh on Sunday threatened to return his Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna award if the new farm legislations were not withdrawn. He made an appearance at Delhi's Singhu border where farmers have been protesting against the laws and expressed solidarity with the agitators. "...if the government does not take back these black laws, I will request them to take back my award," he said.

For more updates

www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

MPCA's offer: Madhya Pradesh Cricket Association (MPCA) on Sunday said it is ready to host the premier Ranji Trophy as well as the Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 tournament and has already informed the BCCI about its decision.

Misbah's grudge: Pakistan head coach Misbah-ul-Haq on Sunday said not being able to train while being in managed isolation has affected his side's preparation ahead of the series against New Zealand, beginning December 18 in Auckland.

Schumacher wins: Mick Schumacher celebrated his impending move into Formula One by clinching the F2 title on Sunday. He is the son of F1 great Michael Schumacher, who won seven F1 titles and 91 races in a glittering career.

Mbappe's feat: Striker Kylian Mbappe came off the bench to score his 100th goal for Paris Saint-Germain as the French league leader secured a hard-fought 3-1 win at Montpellier. He turned in a cross from Layvin Kurzawa from close range in the 90th minute.

Dhawan, Pandya seal T20 series win for India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SYDNEY, 6 DECEMBER

India sealed the T20 International series against Australia with a game to spare after a swashbuckling Hardik Pandya finished what Shikhar Dhawan had set out to achieve with a scintillating 36-ball 52 in the second and penultimate match here on Sunday.

The visitors thus avenged their 1-2 ODI series loss, chasing down a challenging 195-run target in 19.4 overs with six wickets in hand. India won the opener in Canberra by 11 runs on Friday.

This was India's 10th successive win away from home in T20 Internationals.

Needless to say, 25 of the final 12 balls after fetching 12 in the 18th over, Pandya brought the equation down to 14 in the last over with two fours. The all-rounder then hit two sixes to seal the match in India's favour and also claim the player of the match honours.

Pandya remained unconquered on 42 off 22 balls.

India were off to a sedate start with no boundaries coming in the first two overs. But fours and



sixes rained from the willows of Dhawan (52) and KL Rahul (30) once the duo got their eye in.

Rahul capitalised on a free hit by smashing Andrew Tye for a maximum over extra cover, India's first boundary of the innings.

Dhawan got himself a couple of boundaries and a six off Glenn Maxwell as India scored 34 runs in two overs to gain the momentum they were looking for.

The seasoned Dhawan, despite coming down the wicket early, managed to pull Sean Abbott over deep mid-wicket for another six.

Australia got their first breakthrough when Rahul gave a simple catch to Mitchell Swepson at deep point. But India had still managed a strong start, reaching 60 for one at the end of the Powerplay.

Having played some fine

shots, Dhawan top-edged an attempted slog sweep off leg-spinner Adam Zampa to give Australia their second wicket.

Sanju Samson got out after a 10-ball 15 but it was debutant Daniel Sams, who gave the hosts their biggest breakthrough when he had Virat Kohli caught behind for a well-made 24-ball 40.

Earlier, stand-in skipper Matthew Wade led from the front with a blistering half-century and powered Australia to a strong total after a fairly commanding performance with the bat.

Leading the side in the absence of an injured Aaron Finch, Wade smashed 59 off 32 balls while Steve Smith made a breezy 38-ball 46 after India opted to field.

For the visitors, T Natarajan finished with five figures of 2/20 in his four-over spell. Australia accumulated 62 runs in the last five overs after a few tight middle overs.

Wade started the Australian innings on a rousing note, launching into a flurry of boundaries and a six against an Indian attack that lacked in experience with the exception of Yuzvendra Chahal.

Wade collected 13 runs off the first over, pulling, driving and paddle sweeping Deepak Chahar for three fours.

Bowling the second over, off-spinner Washington Sundar was hoicked over deep square leg for a six as the hosts looked to set a big total.

Shardul Thakur was welcomed into the attack with a boundary, smashed off the hip by the in-form Wade.

Sundar conceded 15 runs

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

The Statesman Sport

towards the dressing room and even though he was alerted by Steve Smith of the drop, he had backed up too far by that time. Before that, Pandya had dropped Wade.

However, the Australian onslaught continued unabated as the duo of Smith and Glenn Maxwell kept dealing fours and sixes.

Even as Smith played some innovative shots, Maxwell, in his characteristic fashion, smashed Chahal for two sixes before falling to Shardul Thakur's change of pace.

Moises Henriques joined Smith and the two carried on in the same vein before falling to Chahal and Natarajan respectively.

SCOREBOARD

| AUSTRALIA INNINGS | |
|--|-----|
| KL Rahul c + b | 58 |
| Short c Iyer b Natarajan | 9 |
| S Smith c Pandya b Chahal | 46 |
| Gl Maxwell c W Sundar b Thakur | 22 |
| M Natarajan c Rahul b Natarajan | 26 |
| MP Stoinis not out | 36 |
| DP Sams not out | 8 |
| Extras: (lb 1, nb 1, w 2) | 4 |
| TOTAL: (20 Ov, RR: 9.7) | 194 |
| BOWLING: D Chahar 4,0,48,0 | |
| W Sundar 4,0,35,0 S Thakur 4,0,39,1 T Natarajan 4,0,20,2 | |
| Y Chahal 4,0,51,1 | |
| TOTAL: (19 Ov, RR: 9.91) 195 | |
| BOWLING: D Abbott 4,0,17,0 A Tye 4,0,47,1 | |
| G Maxwell 1,0,19,0 M Swepson 4,0,25,1 MC Henriques 1,0,9,0 | |
| A Zampa 4,0,36,1 | |

Mohammedan Sporting makes winning start

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 6 DECEMBER

Mohammedan Sporting Club got their IFA shield campaign off to a flying start by beating Kidderpore SC 4-0 at the Salt Lake stadium today. Sujit Singh scored the first goal in the second minute and then Mohammedan Sporting Club did look like losing their way. Kidderpore SC failed to convert their scoring chances. Hira Mondal at 35'min and Philip Adjapong scored at 46'min during injury time. Mohammedan Sporting Club tightened their grip on the match in the first half by scoring three goals. Gani scored the fourth goal in the 87th min. Hira Mondal was named man of the match. Mohammedan Sporting Club got 3 points and top of the table in Group A. Their next match is with Kalighat MS on 12 December at Kalyani stadium.

In Group B, Real Kashmir defeated Peerless SC at the East Bengal ground. Real Kashmir conceded in the 20th minute, while they repaired

the damage quickly by scoring two goals in a span of seven minutes. C Lyngdoh in the 25th minute and Danish Farooq in the 32' min scored the goals and sealed the victory. Real Kashmir will play their next game against Aryan club at the Kalyani Stadium on 9 December.

In group C, the match between Indian Arrows and England and Wales Cricket Board said in a joint statement that Sunday's game in the nearby city of Paarl was being delayed until after the tournament. Cricket South Africa and the England and Wales Cricket Board said in a joint statement that Sunday's game in the nearby city of Paarl was being delayed until after the tournament. All remaining South African players returned negative tests on Saturday, Cricket South Africa said.

The first of three ODIs had already been postponed from Friday after a South African player tested positive for the virus on the eve of the game, the third home player to test positive during England's tour. That test caused concern among both squads because the player seemingly contracted COVID-19 while in the secure bio-bubble at the Cape Town hotel where both

SAfrica-England ODI delayed again after more COVID-19 cases

AGENCIES
CAPE TOWN, 6 DECEMBER

teams are staying.

South Africa's team doctor said there was an investigation underway to try and track how that South African player was infected.

The delay to Sunday's game came after two hotel staff members tested positive, causing the England party to undergo a round of additional tests on Saturday night, the ECB said. The results were yet to be received but any more positives among players might cause the remainder of the tour to be called off.

South Africa's squad had to undergo additional tests after the latest player positive that caused the first postponement. All the remaining South African players returned negative tests on Saturday, Cricket South Africa said.

Of the three South African players who have tested positive for the virus during England's tour, two of them tested positive while in the secure environment. One before the three-game Twenty20 series and the latest last week before the ODIs.

They didn't say how long the delay might be.

The first of three ODIs had already been postponed from Friday after a South African player tested positive for the virus on the eve of the game, the third home player to test positive during England's tour. That test caused concern among both squads because the player seemingly contracted COVID-19 while in the secure bio-bubble at the Cape Town hotel where both

NZ beats West Indies by Innings and 134 runs in 1st Test

AGENCIES
HAMILTON, 6 DECEMBER

New Zealand completed the first step of its mission for the home summer when it beat the West Indies by an innings and 134 runs Sunday on the fourth morning of the first cricket test.

The win began New Zealand's drive to win all four of its home tests against the West Indies and Pakistan this season which could lift it into the top two in test rankings, depending on the series between Australia and India.

The win began New Zealand's drive to win all four of its home tests against the West Indies and Pakistan this season which could lift it into the top two in test rankings, depending on the series between Australia and India.

The first step Sunday was decisive. The West Indies resumed at 196-6, still 185 runs behind New Zealand after being asked to follow on 381 runs in deficit on the first innings. They were finally all out for 247.

"We knew the West Indies coming here were going to be a really tough challenge and we were fortunate to get off to a really good start in this match and hold that position," New Zealand captain Kane Williamson said.

"Coming into today we also knew it was going to be tough. This West Indies side bat very deep and they showed that as their middle and lower order applied themselves very, very well."

The stubborn seventh-wicket partnership between Jerome Blackwood and Alzarri Joseph which prevented New Zealand from wrapping up the match on the third day by bowling out the West Indies twice in one day finally was broken in the 58th over of the innings, the 16th of the day Sunday.

The partnership had been worth 107 runs by stumps on



day three when Blackwood was 80 not out and Joseph was 59. The pair provided one of the few displays of defiance from the West Indies batsmen and the only one Saturday when the tourists lost 15 wickets for 285 runs in 80 overs.

Blackwood, who resumed at 80 not out, went on to his second test century in an outstanding attacking innings, played out against a gloomy background for the West Indies.

The tourists were 89-6 in their second innings when Blackwood was joined in the middle by Joseph, a bowler with an ambition of being recognized as an allrounder.

They frustrated New Zealand's bowlers through the last two hours of the third day, guiding the West Indies to 196 without further loss by stumps.

The New Zealand bowlers had dominated the third day, bowling out the West Indies for 138 in their first innings as they replied to New Zealand's 519-7 declared. That total was based around Williamson's 251, his third test double century and highest test score.

Williamson enforced the follow-on and the New Zealand bowlers, still fresh after bowling out 38 overs, continued to hold sway over the West Indies batsmen. They reduced the tourists to 30-4 by lunch and 89-6, again maintaining pressure on the top order batsman.

Blackwood and Joseph changed the tone of the day with a stand which was both stubborn and belliger. When Joseph was out for 86 in the 58th over, they had batted for 35.5 overs and added 155 runs.

Brief scores:

West Indies 138 and 247 all out (Jermaine Blackwood 104, Alzarri Joseph 86; Neil Wagner 4/66); New Zealand 519/7 declared

Real Madrid wins, Barcelona loses

AGENCIES
MADRID, 6 DECEMBER

After Zinedine Zidane got some relief seeing Real Madrid end a winless streak in the Spanish league, Ronald Koeman was back under fire after another disappointing Barcelona loss.

Diego Simeone's Atletico Madrid, meanwhile, won again to take the league lead for the first time this season.

Real Madrid edged Sevilla 1-0 Saturday for its first win after three straight league setbacks, while Atletico beat Valladolid 2-0 to win its seventh straight league game and Barcelona lost 2-1 at promoted C'diz to stay far from the top.

Atletico moved two points ahead of Real Sociedad, which visits Alaves on Sunday, and has played one extra game compared to Simeone's team.

Third-place Real Madrid is six points off the lead and also has played one extra game compared to Simeone's team. Seventh-place Barcelona is now 12 points back.

This was a huge step backward for us in the fight for the league title, Koeman said.

It's disappointing. A difference of 12 points against a team like Atletico is a lot. Atletico, which has already beaten Barcelona this season, visits Real Madrid next weekend.

BARCELONA HALTED

Barcelona lost in the league for the fourth time this season despite the return of Lionel Messi, who had been rested in the team's Champions League

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Fans return to the EPL as Chelsea, Man United enjoy comeback wins

AGENCIES
LONDON, 6 DECEMBER

They filed into the stadiums for the first time in nine months, clutching treasured match tickets and with their masks partially hiding the glee on their faces.

What once might have been taken for granted going to watch their teams play in the English Premier League felt like a huge privilege Saturday for the fortunate 4,000 given the honor of being the first soccer supporters to be allowed into games in England's top division since the outbreak of the coronavirus in March.

West Ham imploded at its Olympic Stadium, squandering a 1-0 halftime lead against Manchester United as substitutes Bruno Fernandes and Marcus Rashford inspired the visitors to a 3-1 win.

Chelsea's players treated their select group of attending fans to a comeback of their own at Stamford Bridge. The hosts rebounded from conceding a fourth-minute goal from former player Patrick Bamford to beat Leeds 3-1 thanks to goals from Olivier Giroud, Kurt Zouma and Christian Pulisic.

England is the first of the major soccer nations to allow some supporters back into games during COVID-19's second wave now that its national lockdown has ended.

Only half of the Premier League's stadiums are allowed to welcome back a limited number of fans. Teams from the cities and towns under the toughest coronavirus restrictions must still shut out their supporters.

For that reason, Manchester City played in an empty stadium for its 2-0 win over Fulham and Burnley's Turf Moor also had no spectators for the team's 1-1 draw with Everton.

Carrying minor injuries amid a packed schedule of games