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**PROTESTERS HEAD BACK
BUT SCORES INSIDE DELHI****ONE PROTESTER DEAD
AS TRACTOR OVERTURNS****FARMERS BROKE PACT, 150
PERSONNEL HURT: POLICE****INTERNET SUSPENDED IN
ATTEMPT TO BRING CALM**

Farm protesters cross Red Fort line



Protesters hoist their own flag after entering the Red Fort during the tractor parade against the farm laws on Tuesday. Abhinav Saha



PM Modi with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, President Kovind at the R-Day parade. PTI



The Bangladesh contingent at the parade. Tashi Tobgyal

Marking 50 years of 1971 war, Bangla team part of R-Day eventSHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 26

MARKING 50 years of the 1971 India-Pakistan war that led to the liberation of Bangladesh, a 122-member contingent of the Bangladesh Armed Forces participated in the Republic Day parade on Tuesday.

Led by Lt Col Abu Mohammed Shahnoor Shawon and his deputies Lieutenant Farhan Ishraq and Flight Lieutenant Sibat Rahman, the contingent had personnel of the Bangladesh Army, Navy and Air Force. The Bangladesh military band, which marched with the contingent, played a popular patriotic song from 1971, "Shone ekti Mujiborer theke/Lokkho Mujiborer" (A Million Mujiburs

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Red Fort secured after descent into chaos, crackdown likely

SOFIA AHSEN, JIGNASA SINHA, SUKRITA BARUAH, ARANYA SHANKAR & SAKSHI DAYAL
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 26

THE TWO-MONTH-OLD protest by farmer unions, camping at the gates of Delhi to seek the repeal of new agriculture laws, descended into chaos on Republic Day when hundreds of protesters, breaking away from a planned tractor rally on the city's outskirts, felled barriers at the borders, clashed with police to enter the Capital, and stormed the Red Fort to unfurl the Nishan Sahib, the religious flag of the Sikhs.

One protester died when his tractor overturned while ramming a road barrier at ITO, and scores were injured, among them at least 150 police personnel, as mobs resorted to violence

and vandalism while forcing their way in, around the time the Republic Day parade was underway on Rajpath. The parade remained unaffected by the turn of events elsewhere.

As night fell, the Red Fort was secured, the flags removed and

protesters made to vacate the premises. As authorities planned a crackdown, there was some dialling down of temperature. The Samyukta Kisan Morcha, the umbrella organisation of farmer unions – the majority from

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INSIDE**AT THE BORDERS:
HOW IT UNFOLDED**
VIOLENCE NOT RIGHT,
SAYS OPPOSITION;
INSULT TO MARTYRS
AT RED FORT: RSS
PAGES 3, 5**27-year-old
dead, family
didn't know
was in Delhi**

Navreet was riding this tractor when killed

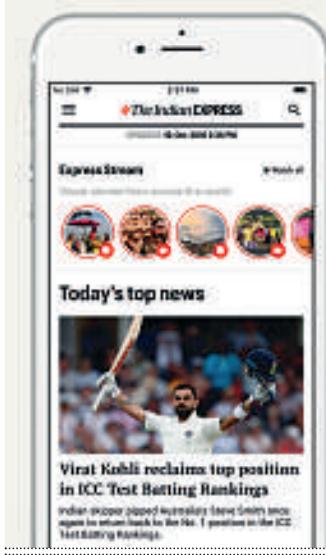
MANISH SAHU & JIGNASA SINHA
LUCKNOW, NEW DELHI,
JANUARY 26

NAVREET SINGH, 27, who died on Tuesday during the protests in Delhi, had recently returned from Australia where he was studying. Officials said his family had no idea that he had joined the protesters at the Capital's borders.

Several farmers from Bilaspur area of Rampur had travelled to Delhi for the protests, and Navreet, a resident of Dibdiba village in the district, joined the agitation three days ago, officials said. He died when the tractor he was in overturned at ITO in Central Delhi.

ACCTV grab shows Navreet's

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



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PHOTO GALLERY**FROM THE FARMERS' PROTEST RALLY**

Here's a look at how the farmers' protests unfolded in Delhi

REPUBLIC DAY**PM Narendra Modi's HEADGEAR**

The paghdi he wore has a special Jamnagar connection

EXPRESS AUDIO**The concerns that Bombay HC's POCSO judgment raises**

NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY

Today, we talk about the judgement and the concerns it raises about mandatory sentencing, and the need for specialised judges that only deal with POCSO cases

FROM PAGE ONE**Farm leaders slam chaos**

our efforts, some organisations and individuals have violated the route and indulged in condemnable acts. Anti-social elements have infiltrated our otherwise peaceful movement. We have always held that peace is our biggest strength, and that any violation would hurt the movement. We dissociate ourselves from all such elements that have violated our discipline," the Morcha said in a statement.

In a statement issued late Tuesday, Joginder Singh Ugrahan, president of the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKV, Ugrahan faction), said the message of today's march "would have been stronger if it had been kept free of communal issues".

"The act of unfurling religious flags will provide the government an opportunity to begin a propaganda war against the peasant movement. There is a need to mobilise efforts to keep intact the secular and democratic character of this struggle... these communal elements must be routed and driven away," he said.

Earlier, speaking to The Indian Express, Ugrahan alleged the role of actor Deep Sidhu, among others, in Tuesday's events. "We saw faces of actor Deep Sidhu and Lakh Sidhana on social media and found that they were misguiding the youth. None of the farmer unions had planned to go towards Red Fort. I really wonder what was the motive behind what they did. Our peaceful agitation got a different colour today. It should have been avoided."

While Sidhu, a Punjabi actor who has associated himself with the farmers' protests, had on January 16 been issued summons by the NIA in connection with a case filed against the outlawed group Sikhs For Justice, Sidhana, who too has been seen at the Singhu border, has a history of criminal cases.

BKV leader and national spokesperson Rakesh Tikit, when asked if the protests had gone out of the hands of farm leaders, told BKU Haryana, "We condemn the action of people like Deep Sidhu who are the middlemen of the government... He incited people to go to Outer Ring Road and later took them to Red Fort." He added, "I want to clarify that this aandolan is not a religious aandolan, it is ajan aandolan, a kisan aandolan (people's movement, farmers' movement). People should be vigilant about persons like Deep Sidhu and should also stay away from rumours as well."

Through the day, Sarwan Singh Pandher, General Secretary of the Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee, a group that's not part of the SKM, sent audio and video messages, asking people to come back from Red Fort as it was not a part of their original plan.

In a video message, he says, "Make a U-turn from Majnu ka Tila, going to Red Fort is not part of our plan." In an audio message he is heard saying, "My brothers, there is no plan to go to Red Fort. We have to go back to Kundli after the march on Outer Ring Road... You may have

hoisted some flag too... Now come back... Our agitation is a peaceful one and we will get detained (if we indulge in violence)."

Harmeet Singh Kadian, president of BKU (Kadian), claimed that the Red Fort incident was a "conspiracy and machination" at the behest of the Government to "sabotage the farmers' protests".

Bangla team at R-Day

singing", hailing Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Bangladesh's first president and Father of the Nation.

Officials said most of the soldiers in the contingent that marched on Rajpath are from the most distinguished units of the Bangladesh Army's East Bengal and Field Artillery regiments. These units have the distinction of fighting and winning the 1971 Liberation War, an official said.

"This Bangladeshi contingent carries with them the legacy of the legendary Muktijoddhas of Bangladesh, their fore-fathers who fought against oppression, mass atrocities by tyrannical forces and for the freedom of Bangladesh. The contingent also has members of the Bangladesh Navy and Air Force who contributed to the liberation of Bangladesh," the official said.

The Bangladeshi military contingent was flown in an Indian Air Force aircraft for the Republic Day parade in New Delhi. The visiting contingent had to spend the first week in quarantine due to the pandemic before it began rehearsals for the parade.

This is the third time the Republic Day parade has witnessed the participation of a military contingent from abroad — French troops marched in 2016 and UAE troops in 2017.

Govt sees opening

the fact that farm unions and even the Congress government in Punjab have distanced themselves from and condemned Tuesday's incidents, especially at Red Fort.

"Our strategy going forward will definitely change," said a source in the Government. "You cannot enter Red Fort by force, plant a flag there and then say let's talk about the laws."

"If farmer leaders arrive at an agreement with us and these people (agitators) do not accept that, what will these leaders do? Today's incidents show their writ may not even run," the source said.

With chaotic scenes unfolding in Delhi, senior Union Ministers remained silent.

Sources also pointed out that the tractor parade going awry could become an "exit point" for the farmers' unions who will need to signal that their authority as negotiators isn't compromised.

The Government has so far been flexible and made many compromises which the farmers have rejected. Now that things have taken a different turn and unruly elements threaten to derail the talks, we hope farm leaders use this opportunity to help facilitate a resolution," said another source. Officials also pointed out how Delhi Police had been "measured" in its response, except for firing tear gas shells.

Since December, the BJP had tried to downplay the protests, saying they were Opposition-backed and limited to Punjab. Some of its leaders had even termed the protesters as "Khalistanis" and "Maoists" although Defence Minister Rajnath Singh had stepped in to say that "such allegations should not be made by anyone" against any farmer.

However, there is a move now to recalibrate the party's position. Late Tuesday, BJP chief J P Nadda held discussions with senior leaders at the party's headquarters to decide strategy.

Senior party leader P Muralidhar Rao gave an indication of that. Speaking to The Indian Express, he said: "We were thinking the protest was against the formula the Government offered as reforms. But it appears that it is against the Indian Republic and its spirit. What happened in the national capital today was a violation of trust and freedom."

"In democracy, you can have mobilisation that challenges the Government. It may appear to be humiliating the Government and Ministers. But you cannot challenge the sovereignty and spirit of the Republic. This is what was demonstrated today and we cannot agree to it," Rao said.

BJP general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya took to Twitter and asked: "What happened in Delhi in the name of movement? Can the farmer in the country do this?"

BJP leader Ram Madhav blamed the Opposition. "After peddling all sorts of falsehoods about farm law reforms provoking farmers into aggressive action, the Indian versions of Trump like Rahul (and) ilk are now

Protesters cross Red Fort line

Punjab — spearheading the protests, distanced itself from the groups that had forced their way into the Capital. Most tractors began heading out of the city, but a small crowd remained outside the Red Fort, chanting slogans.

Officials said a "serious assessment" of the day's events was underway. Additional forces from paramilitary units were being deployed and Internet services were suspended in the areas of Singhu, Ghazipur, Tikri, Mukarba Chowk, Nangloi and adjoining areas for 12 hours to "restore order".

Sources said five additional companies (around 500 personnel) of the CRPF would be assisting the Delhi Police. These would be in addition to 115 companies of the paramilitary force already at the disposal of Delhi Police for law and order duties. Fifteen of these companies had been pressed into duty Monday.

A police officer said 13 FIRs had been registered under sections relating to rioting and damage of public property.

Wielding sticks and swords, many among the protesters attacked policemen who tried to stop them. At most places, the policemen appeared outnumbered and had to retreat as the protesters advanced.

When they reached the Karmal bypass, several protesters refused to proceed on the designated route. Police personnel at the spot repeatedly asked them to follow the route, but the protesters were adamant.

"This is the biggest highway of the country which has got blocked now. Please follow the given route. Nobody is stopping you," Additional Commissioner of Police Ajit Kumar Singla appealed to Satnam Singh Pannu, president of Kisan Mazdoor

to borders."

Until Monday night, police and farm leaders had come to an agreement to march from Singhu, Tikri and Ghazipur along three designated routes before returning to the protest sites. The agreement, though, was breached by 8 am Tuesday as farmers at the three sites used tractors to knock down police barricades and began moving towards central Delhi.

Despite farmers breaching the barricades at Singhu, the march was initially peaceful, with policemen watching from the sidelines and the youth forming a chain to prevent participants from moving ahead on their own or picking up sticks from the roadside. But some in the crowd decided to take a different direction.

"We have to go beyond the barricades. The decision of our leaders will be final, but the police cannot stop us if we want to move ahead. The farmers are the backbone of this nation. If the government will not listen to them, how will it understand the concerns of youth," 23-year-old Parminder Singh, a resident of Gurdaspur, said, minutes after the march began.

When they reached the Karmal bypass, several protesters refused to proceed on the designated route. Police personnel at the spot repeatedly asked them to follow the route, but the protesters were adamant.

"This is the biggest highway of the country which has got blocked now. Please follow the given route. Nobody is stopping you," Additional Commissioner of Police Ajit Kumar Singla appealed to Satnam Singh Pannu, president of Kisan Mazdoor

Sangharsh Committee, during the talks.

Pannu, however, sought permission to move towards Ring Road. "We will go on the road and come back. We want the government to listen to us," he told Singha, and gave him half an hour to decide on the demand.

Ten minutes after a second meeting between the two sides, there was a commotion with many protesters climbing atop barricades to cross over. Protesters were also seen using lathis and stones to chase policemen. A youth twice used his kirpan to place it before a teargas gun to prevent a policeman from targeting the protesters.

Farmers then removed containers and trucks placed on the road and the tractor march continued towards Ring Road. It halted again just outside the GTK Road Depot, and the crowd took a U-turn. Minutes later, it was on the Outer Ring Road.

A sea of tractors lined the road and protesters walked on foot too — towards a destination which many had not decided on. Once they reached near Kashmere Gate, they halted to decide where to go. By then, word of some farmers from Ghazipur having entered the Red Fort had spread, and so the crowd of thousands also decided to move towards the historic monument. By 2 pm, hundreds of men were scattered across the gardens outside the fort, and some atop it with flags.

"This is to show the government that we can do anything — what more can we do to make them hear us now? We can go to any extent to make the government listen to us, but we will also see what our leaders decide,"

said Sanampreet, a 20-year-old, among the first to enter the fort.

With police personnel outnumbered, many could be seen scrambling for cover as the protesters had a free run of the monument. There was vandalism near the ticket counters as protesters ran amok, smashing the panes. Two policemen were rushed out, bleeding from the head. A police vehicle was attacked and damaged.

Similar scenes were witnessed at the two other protest sites. At Tikri, farmers broke through barricades around 9 am. As protesters reached Nangloi, the situation spiralled into violence, with a part of the crowd breaking through barricades twice, after intermittent clashes with police for two hours which saw teargas shells being fired repeatedly. Police vans were vandalised by protesters who had armed themselves with sticks and shields of police personnel.

At Ghazipur, volunteers were stationed on one side, beneath the flyover, which was to be the point from where tractors were to begin their movement before turning right towards Anand Vihar. But a set of tractors left the site before the designated time, using alternate paths and heading towards central Delhi by going past Akshardham. By noon, hundreds of protesters had poured into ITO.

In a statement, Delhi Police Additional PRO Anil Mittal said "farmers led by Nihangs on their horses, fully equipped with deadly weapons like swords and kirpans, charged the police and broke several layers of barricades..." — With Deepthi Tiwary, Ashna Butani and Abhinav Rajput

demonstrating pseudo-indignation at violence. They (are) equally responsible for whatever happened in Delhi today," he posted on Twitter.

Party spokesperson Samit Patra posted on Twitter visual of agitators climbing on the flag staff in front of Red Fort to hoist their flag and wrote: "Sad!" In another tweet in Hindi, he posted that "those whom we have been calling annadat (food-providers) all these days proved to be ugravadi (extremists) today. Do not discredit the annadat, call the ugravadi only."

However, at least two senior party leaders pointed out that the Government will have to "tread cautiously" as it "cannot be seen as anti-farmer" or take any action that will provide a trigger for the farming community in other parts of the country to escalate the protests.

Police raised red flags

Intelligence Bureau (IB) at his residence. At the meeting, which began around 4.30 pm and continued for one-and-a-half hours, Shah reviewed the security arrangements and discussed the next course of action to defuse the tension.

A decision was taken to deploy additional forces from paramilitary units and suspend Internet in some areas of the National Capital Region, including Singhu, Ghazipur, Tikri, Mukarba Chowk and Nangloi. Sources said five additional companies of the CRPF were ordered to assist the Delhi Police. This was in addition to 115 companies already at the disposal of Delhi Police for law and order duties. Fifteen of these companies had been pressed into duty Monday.

But, sources said, the security forces were overwhelmed by the sheer number and aggression of the protesters. "There were around 11 lakh protesters and hundreds of tractors. The forces were overwhelmed but showed restraint and did not fire. They had been told not to," said an official. "Standard procedure would have been to disable the tractor's tyres but their numbers were too high and they were moving."

Sources said intelligence agencies did express apprehensions of law and order problems if the tractor rally was allowed into the city on Republic Day. Even after farmer unions agreed to stick to their designated routes, inputs suggested that attempts would be made to break the barricades and enter the city.

This is why the Delhi Police had earlier denied permission for a tractor rally. However, the

government was of the opinion that not allowing farmers to hold the rally would only make them more 'confrontational and aggressive'. So a middle ground was negotiated, where the farmers could hold their tractor rally without entering the heart of the city on Republic Day," said a home ministry official.

He said it was also anticipated that a section of protesters would try to push their way into the city. "It was for this reason that heavy barricading was done at Tikri, Singhu, Nangloi, Ghazipur and elsewhere. Apart from iron barricades, cement barricades were used. There were stretches where trailers were parked horizontally. At Ghazipur, a container loaded with sand was used to block the road. But nothing could stop the farmers," the official said.

Till noon on Tuesday, when farmers had already broken through barricades at the borders, the Delhi Police kept receiving inputs about the possibility of protesters marching towards Rajpath and Red Fort. At 12.30 pm, a message sent by the Special Branch of Delhi Police to all DCPs and senior officers read:

"Inputs have been received that the reaching of farmers with tractors to Rajpath, India Gate, Red Fort, Ramlila Ground, Rashtrapati Bhawan, PM residence, HM residence, Parliament House, CM House and LG House cannot be ruled out..."

By then, senior officers said, things had already spun out of control, and many protesters had breached border areas to spill onto roads that were not part of the designated protest route. According to senior officers, police presence on these routes was sparse on account of several personnel being deployed for Republic Day arrangements and along the three designated routes.

According to senior officers, intelligence agencies had also shared inputs with the Delhi Police on Monday evening that some anti-social elements could try to disrupt peace by taking non-designated routes. However, once protesters breached border points at Singhu and Ghazipur, most of them had a free run until they reached Red Fort and ITO, where the old police headquarters is located.

Farmer dead
tractor ramming into a police barricade and turning turtle. A senior Delhi Police officer said, "Some farmers were driving rashly in an attempt to hit us. We saw the tractor hitting the barricades. Our personnel went to rescue him, but a group of agitated farmers stopped them...

It is suspected he died because of the accident." The protesters were sitting with the body and had refused to let the police take it for post-mortem till late Tuesday evening.

Manidev Chaturvedi, a farmer from Bilaspur, however, denied the police version. "The police fired a tear gas at Navreet," he claimed. "One of the shells hit him on the head and he lost control of the steering wheel. The police didn't even help him."

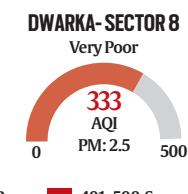
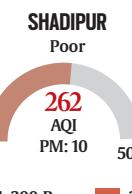
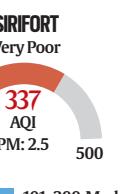
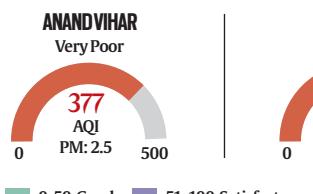
The large group of farmers at ITO had come from the Ghazipur and Singhu borders and were trying to move towards the New Delhi district, the police said. When they were stopped, a group became violent and broke barricades, damaged iron grills and dividers and tried to run over policemen, the officers claimed.

On Tuesday evening, a team of the Rampur district administration and police, which are yet to receive an official confirmation regarding Navreet's death, met the family, including Navreet's parents and a younger sister. Navreet got married two years ago and his wife, also a student, is in Australia. A police officer said, "Navreet's father Sabah Singh told us that local farmers who were part of the protests in Delhi had informed him that his son had died."

An official said, "The family told us they didn't know Navreet was in Delhi and protesting with farmers. They said Navreet had left home to meet a relative at Bajpur (in Udham Singh Nagar district, Uttarakhand)."

Andhra murders

Alekh



S K Y W A T C H
FORECAST: Jan 27
 Mainly clear sky. Shallow to moderate fog in the morning. Cold wave at few places.
MAX: 21 | **MIN: 3**
 1.4°C below normal | 5.9°C below normal

PROTEST SPLINTERED, THOUSANDS BREACH BORDERS

CAPITAL STEAMROLLED



At Mukarba Chowk, where police had to fire teargas shells. Praveen Khanna

How volunteers at Ghazipur lost the plot

SUKRITA BARUAH
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 26

WITH A large group breaking off early on to head towards central Delhi, and subsequent attempts by protesters to break from the route and head towards Delhi, the rally from Ghazipur was a splintered affair from start to finish.

Volunteers and coordinators were stationed to the left of Ghazipur flyover, the designated point for the rally to begin. As individuals and small groups of farmers tried to push through or slide past barricades before the official starting time, these volunteers caught hold of them and pulled them back. "I have been on duty at this point since 6 am and people have been trying to get through since then. If we become lax even for a bit, everyone will break through. We have been asked to keep them back till Rakesh Tikait ji tells us to open up," said Rajen Chaudhury, a 22-year-old farmer from Shamli district at 9.45 am.

Volunteers and coordinators were stationed to the left of Ghazipur flyover, the designated point for the rally to begin. As individuals and small groups of farmers tried to push through or slide past barricades before the official starting time, these volunteers caught hold of them and pulled them back. "I have been on duty at this point since 6 am and people have been trying to get through since then. If we become lax even for a bit, everyone will break through. We have been asked to keep them back till Rakesh Tikait ji tells us to open up," said Rajen Chaudhury, a 22-year-old farmer from Shamli district at 9.45 am.

Soon, volunteers arrived at the flyover to ask people heading up the flyover to return and take a right turn from Ghazipur towards Anand Vihar. Senior leaders including BKU national head Rakesh Tikait stood at Ghazipur Chowk, directing incoming tractors to take the right turn.

The rally came to a halt at Apsara Border for around two hours, resulting in a several kilometres-long line of tractors. At the head of this logjam was a group of protesters trying to convince each incoming tractor not to head onwards with the designated route, and instead move towards Kashmere Gate by deviating on to a flyover heading towards it.

"Hum kisan hai aur kisan sab sansad jaayenge aaj," said one of these protesters who did not

share his name. As tractor after tractor said they were not willing to do so and headed towards Sahibabad, some of them were met with taunts such as 'darpok'.

Some tractors did take the deviation and go on the flyover, at the end of which they were met with police force, including lathi charge. Several vehicles were damaged in this confrontation, and that group of farmers was forced to turn back. Satender



Spotted on Meerut Road near Akshardham. Gajendra Yadav

Singh from Bharoch was one of these farmers. "One of the tires of my tractor has been completely deflated," he said.

In the meantime, many farmers caught in the jam decided to head back towards Ghazipur. Here, the split throughout the protest was reflected within one tractor.

Sandeep Kumar (45), who reached Ghazipur border the previous night, was bent on going

towards Delhi while his companions said they would go back to Ghazipur. "We will either stay here or go towards Delhi. We will not go back to Ghazipur till we are heard," he said.

Harjinder Singh, who is part of the Ghazipur Kisan Andolan Committee, said the most likely reasons for the breakaway groups was the size of the protest surpassing expectations and several farmers joining too late to be

briefed on guidelines for the rally.

"We had made announcements from the stage and spread the word through our volunteers. I am confident that we got through to all those who were present last night. However, many joined in even later. They might not have known what the route was. Everybody also wanted to be at the front of the rally. Wherever they found a way, they pushed forward. The numbers were so large that coordinators couldn't keep track of who went where," he said.

However, according to another committee member, Gurammeet Mangat, the breaking away had to do with more than just logistical confusion.

"There are people who arrived from 400 km away just before this rally. They arrived despite being pressured not to by police back in their villages. They might have felt that circling back to Ghazipur after following a route decided by the police is not what they came for. It also needs to be understood that 70-80% of the farmers are not members of any farmers' union and they might not have felt bound to directives issued," he said.

(Inputs from Ashna Butani)



During clashes at Nangloi. Amit Mehra

Frayed nerves at Tikri: 'Didn't come here to sit at border for months on end'

ARANYA SHANKAR & SAKSHI DAYAL

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 26

A TRACTOR parade that began around 9 am from Tikri border, and which seemed to be progressing smoothly until noon, took a violent turn as farmers started to veer off the designated route and police retaliated with lathi charge and teargas shells.

The parade, which was to end at Asoda toll plaza as per a plan by farmer unions and Delhi Police until the previous night, finally culminated with a large section of protesters landing up at Red Fort. The insistence of one group that they would continue straight towards Peeragarhi instead of turning right towards Najafgarh – and over three hours of almost continuous teargas shelling by the police – led to tempers running high.

Two hours before farmers broke through barricades at Nangloi, an indication of what was to follow came from one of the many protesters marching on foot from Tikri. Even as those around him claimed the parade would follow the allotted route, Varinder Singh, a farmer from Punjab, said,

"We were able to cross Tikri and enter Delhi without issues... We will now look to reach Lal Qila and stay there... We've not come so far to sit at Tikri for months."

Sukhveer Singh, another protester, added, "We can continue this protest for even two years, we have enough community support for that. We can all eat at langars here... but we have to build pressure, we cannot keep sitting here."

In the morning and early noon, hundreds of tractors that left Tikri were stuck in a traffic jam near Jharoda Kalan. Tired of

waiting, some left their vehicles and sat on roads and pavements. Once movement began, the first group of tractors managed to break through barricades at Nangloi around noon, after police unsuccessfully tried to disperse them using teargas.

What followed was chaos below Nangloi flyover. Police fired multiple rounds of teargas and resorted to mild lathicharge to disperse the crowd, which kept coming back with heightened aggression. The desire to deviate from the planned route only increased as news spread that farmers from Ghazipur and Singhupur had managed to reach Lal Qila. A group could be heard discussing how they must now turn their tractors to central Delhi.

But many also stuck to the original route. Gulvinder Singh from Punjab said, "We will follow the route given by the leaders. I don't know where the other tractors are going but what they are doing is wrong. It is going to taint our cause and weaken it."

By 4 pm, the situation had worsened. A group of protesters climbed onto the roof of two police vehicles and hit the windows and roof, shattering the glass and overturning one of the vehicles. Batons and shields of personnel were now in the hands of some protesters. "We have waited peacefully for two months. Today, we faced tear gas and laths repeatedly – we're out of patience. If things have gone awry, the government is to blame," said Gurjant Singh from Bathinda.

Once barricades were broken, protesters faced a another round of teargas and lathicharge near Peeragarhi flyover. But they overpowered police and reached Lal Qila around 6 pm.

OUTNUMBERED, POLICE RESORT TO LATHICHARGE, TEARGAS SHELLING

Chaos at ITO indicates how violence spiralled: Many didn't care about route plan, Delhi was destination

JIGNASA SINHA
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 26

UNDER THE iconic Mahatma Gandhi portrait at the old Delhi Police headquarters at ITO, violence lasted for more than two hours as thousands of protesters – some on foot and others on tractors – clashed with police personnel who, severely outnumbered, resorted to teargas shelling and lathi charge.

A 27-year-old farmer died near Ram Charan Agarwal Chowk, allegedly when his tractor overturned, while dozens were injured on both sides.

Most of the crowd that gathered at ITO had arrived from Ghazipur border after refusing to follow the rally route of Hapur road-KGP Expressway. Protesters



At ITO, farmers on tractors were seen driving recklessly as policemen scrambled out of the way. Tashi Tobgyal

had earlier broken through barricades and reached Akshardham a few kilometres away.

At ITO, both sides engaged in a brief dialogue in front of the old PHQ, but with farmers adamant on going to Red Fort and police wanting them to stay put, the situation soon escalated. Amid the clash, a small group of farmers on tractors could be seen driving recklessly as policemen scrambled out of the way.

Around 1.30 pm, Navreet Singh (27), a farmer from UP's Bajpur, was found dead. Several protesters at the spot gathered around his body. Hundreds who had gathered then uprooted roadblocks and railings near ITO Metro station while sloganising against police before taking a right towards Red Fort, even as police teams tried to stop them

on four roads.

Those who stayed back placed Singh's body at Ram Charan Agarwal Chowk and sat around it. Manjeet Singh Binder (22), a

farmer from Bilaspur, sustained injuries to his right leg. His parents and fellow farmers sat beside him, shouting slogans against the Centre and the police.

"Is this how police treat protesters? Will they kill all of us for protesting?" was among the first group of farmers to reach ITO. We weren't told there are other routes. We wanted to march to Red Fort, so we came here and told the police that we want to protest there. But they resorted to lathi charge. A teargas shell hit my leg. I fell down and a group of three-four policemen thrashed me with lathis. Farmers then picked up the shells and threw them back," claimed Binder.

Several protesters said they had recently joined the agitation at Ghazipur, where farmers predominantly from Uttar Pradesh had gathered, and claimed they were unaware of the proposed route map for the rally.

Pooja (27), a farmer from Bilaspur, told *The Indian Express*,

"More than 100 people from my village joined the protest on Sunday. We were told police had allowed us to march in Delhi. Police should have made more arrangements and been patient with protesters. We don't know who planned what. We wanted to go to Rajpath so we came here. Later, some of my friends went to Red Fort but due to the lathi charge, I had to stay here."

Rohit Jakhad, member of the Rashtriya Jat Mahasabha, said, "We started the march late from Nangloi, an indication of what was to follow came from one of the many protesters marching on foot from Tikri. Even as those around him claimed the parade would follow the allotted route, Varinder Singh, a farmer from Punjab, said,

"We were able to cross Tikri and enter Delhi without issues... We will now look to reach Lal Qila and stay there... We've not come so far to sit at Tikri for months."

Sukhveer Singh, another protester, added, "We can continue this protest for even two years, we have enough community support for that. We can all eat at langars here... but we have to build pressure, we cannot keep sitting here."

In the morning and early noon, hundreds of tractors that left Tikri were stuck in a traffic jam near Jharoda Kalan. Tired of

TABLEAUX SHOWING RAM MANDIR, BIOTECH ADVANCES ON DISPLAY

Rafale steals Republic Day show

JIGNASA SINHA
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 26

A SHORTER parade from Rajpath to National Stadium, with fewer spectators, is how India celebrated its 72nd Republic Day against the backdrop of a pandemic.

At entry gates to the venue, Covid booths and thermal screening centres were set up along with security checks. Only 25,000 people were allowed to watch the parade at Rajpath, and approximately 4,000 tickets were given to the general public. The seats were also placed a few feet apart to maintain social distancing.

This year, the motorcycle stunt show — a major attraction for spectators over the years — was cancelled in view of safety concerns due to Covid-19. In its absence, the Rafale fighter jet took centre stage, with a 'Vertical Charlie' manouevre that left everyone in awe. The plane flew from Rashtrapati Bhavan at a speed of 900 km/hr before pulling up vertically at a 90 degree angle and spinning three-four times. The audience cheered as the jet vanished in the air and flew towards National Stadium. Other Air Force officers also flew jet planes in diamond and wing formations.

In another first, the parade witnessed a tableau from Ladakh, called 'Vision of the Future'. Ladakh became a Union Territory in 2019 and this was the first time its tableau — a model of The Indian Astronomical Observatory — was part of the celebrations. The show's highlight was to make the UT "carbon-free" in the future.

Another tableau that caught everyone's attention was from Uttar Pradesh — the front portion showed Maharsi Valmiki composing the Ramayana with a peacock by his side, while the second part had a mini-version of the Ram temple in Ayodhya.

The 'Coir of Kerala' tableau was made with eco-friendly and biodegradable material. The tractor on which the tableau was placed showed coir making and coconuts. The coir making also depicted women empowerment as the industry is mainly run by women.

A total of 17 states and UTs, 11 ministries, departments and paramilitary presented their tableaux.

The march past had over 35 marching contingents and bands from different departments. This included the Bangladesh Contingent — a 122-member contingent of Armymen, sailors



and air warriors from the country.

The Black Cat Commandos, a contingent of the National Security Guard, also caught

everyone's attention as the ramp system used by the force had a K-9 dog squad member. The commandos also showed their armoured tactical vehicle.

Spectators, meanwhile, said they missed the old parade. Pankaj Vig (38), who works at a Maruti showroom in Delhi, said: "My family and I attend the pa-

rade every year. Sadly, my kids weren't able to see the march past and dance performances this time. We wish the pandemic ends soon and we can enjoy the

event like before."

Ranjan Kumar (37), brother of

CRPF officer Abhay Kumar, who died in the 2017 Sukma attack, attended the event with his fam-

ily. "We usually don't attend the parade but I liked the event today. The Ayodhya tableau and Black Cat commandos were my favourites. My brother died four

years ago in the Sukma attack. We feel good when we see other officers serving the country." Kumar came to the parade with his wife and parents.

FARMER PROTESTS IN THE CAPITAL

150 policemen injured, 2 in ICU as crowd control takes heavy toll

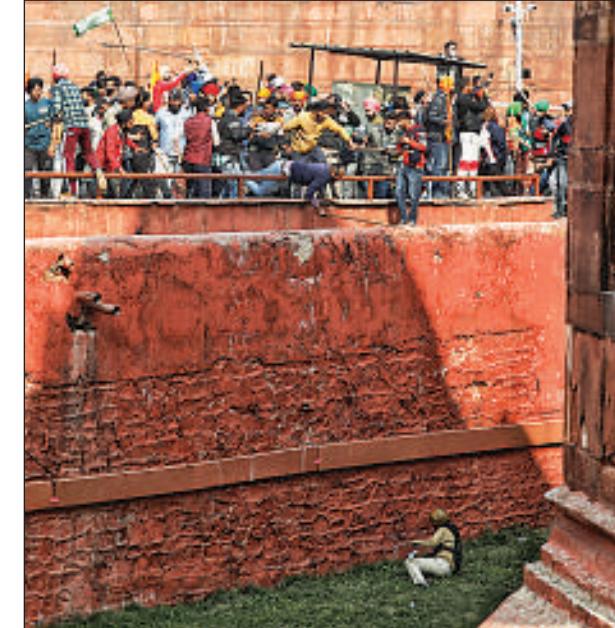
EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 26

OVER 150 police personnel sustained injuries amid clashes with farmers as Tuesday's tractor march took a violent turn, with a group of protesters entering the capital. While most suffered minor injuries on the head and leg, along with lacerations on the forehead, two injured policemen had to be admitted to the ICU at Lok Nayak and Sushruta Trauma Centre.

In a video of the clashes at Red Fort, several police personnel could be seen jumping off the walls of Red Fort after being beaten up by protesters armed with sticks. Protesters were also seen chasing police officers.

At ITO and Nangloi, too, policemen received injuries in clashes with protesters.

Additional PRO, Delhi Police, Anil Mittal said: "86 police personnel have been injured after clashes broke out with farmers. Most of them who sustained injuries were posted at Red Fort area, followed by Nangloi Chowk." The figure was updated later as a total of 153 policemen were injured — 41 in North district, 34 in East, 27 in West, 30 in Dwarka, 5 in Shahdara.



A policeman takes cover at Red Fort. Abhinav Saha

Outer-north and 4 in South.

The injured policemen were taken to different hospitals in the city including Lok Nayak, Sushruta Trauma Centre, Lady Hardinge Medical College, Aruna Asaf Ali and Lal Bahadur Shastri. The highest number of injured

policemen were taken to the Delhi government's Lok Nayak Hospital in Delhi Gate area.

"We have received 21 injured people, including police personnel and farmers. Of these, 11 are police officers. A 40-year-old policeman has suf-

fered a critical head injury and is admitted to the ICU for observation. We performed a CT scan and the report is normal. We will admit him for one more day," said a senior doctor from Lok Nayak.

At Sushruta Trauma Centre, 58 policemen were taken during the day, out of which most have been discharged. "One policeman was admitted to the ICU after he sustained an injury on his head. He is in a state of shock," said a senior doctor from the hospital.

At the Palwal-Faridabad border, too, a clash broke out.

"There was no approval for a tractor March from Palwal. Despite repeated requests, protesters did not listen. Both the Palwal SP and another officer were almost run over by a tractor, but the situation is under control now," said Sube Singh, PRO of Faridabad Police.

However, no police personnel were injured. "To ensure that law and order was maintained on Republic Day, the tractor rally was not permitted to enter Faridabad from Palwal. After some small incidents during the day, following talks between farmers and police, they took their tractors back to Palwal," said Singh.

In town for R-Day, artists in middle of Red Fort chaos, taken to safety

DIVYA A
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 26

AS THOUSANDS of protesters descended on the monument, around 300 artists associated with the Republic Day parade tableaux were "stranded" in Red Fort, Delhi Police said on Tuesday. "We rescued all the artists, which included many children, and took them to GOS mess where they were provided snacks and taken care of," DCP (North) Anto Alphonse said.

Usually, Red Fort shuts down for the public on January 21 every year — five days ahead of the Republic Day — to give adequate time to authorities to carry out sanitisation and security drill as the parade culminates at the monument. This time, owing to the pandemic and curtailment of the parade, the contingents weren't marching up to the Red Fort.

Also, Red Fort had been shut since January 19 after a sample taken from a dead crow tested positive for bird flu, officials said.

Said an Archaeological Survey of India official, "Usually the monument shuts down every year by January 21. But this year, as a precautionary measure, we closed it two days earlier because of the bird flu."

As protesters entered the 17th Century monument, many hit the turnstile gates with tractors, damaging entry points, officials said. Abhinav Saha

Minister Prahalad Singh Patel condemned the protesters barging into the monument: "The Red Fort is a symbol of the dignity of our democracy; the agitators should have stayed away from the Red Fort. I condemn the violation of its dignity. It is sad and unfortunate."

By 6.30 pm, the premises had been completely vacated of any kind of outside elements except for government officials, security personnel and the ASI team. There was no clarity on whether the monument will open to the

public as scheduled on Wednesday. The MHA is likely to assess the situation and advise ASI accordingly.

As per ASI, the monument will remain shut on Wednesday.

Outside, as some took selfies, Gurjeet Singh from Haryana said he had been protesting at Singhu for the past 20 days. He claimed that some of them had decided on Monday night itself that they would come to central Delhi because "no one would take note of the protests on the periphery".

Deepa Brar, who had been at Tikkri border for the past two months, said before an agreement was reached about designated protest routes, some protesters were in favour of coming to a prominent location. "Today, even on the sanctioned route, there were hindrances by police, so we decided to divert to the

Pointing to the Nishan Sahib flag earlier in the day, Gurcharan Singh, 32, said: "It is a feeling... Now we have shown that we are strong enough to carry on the struggle to any extent." But Singh, a resident of Ferozepur, said that farmers too had "a right to celebrate Republic Day by fighting against laws being imposed on them".



DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



THE BIHAR MOVE

SYED SHAHNAWAZ Hussain's nomination to the Upper House in Bihar earlier this week has been keeping everyone guessing, right from his own party leaders to ally JD(U). With Hussain likely to get a ministerial berth in the forthcoming Cabinet expansion in the state, several BJP leaders are curious about the party's central leadership's move to shift Hussain. Some call it rehabilitation with demotion, others call it a way to keep Chief Minister Nitish Kumar guessing on the BJP's attempt, though symbolic, to keep Muslim voters in good humour. Although most leaders in the JD(U) are linking it to upcoming Assembly polls in West Bengal, the party does not look very enthused with Hussain's entry into Bihar politics.

GREETINGS FROM ABROAD

BRITISH PRIME Minister Boris Johnson may have not been able to make it as the chief guest for the Republic Day celebrations, but he and British Foreign Minister Dominic Raab sent video messages wishing India. Greetings also came from French President Emmanuel Macron, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Israel PM Benjamin Netanyahu among others. Chinese ambassador to India Sun Weidong also tweeted greetings for India, apart from US State Department. Ambassadors from Germany and Canada also sent in their wishes on the Republic Day celebrations, along with Turkish Foreign Ministry.

JUMPING THE GUN

AS PROTESTING farmers reached the Red Fort on Tuesday, Congress's Assam state chief Ripun Bora tweeted that India is witnessing the historic moment of the kisan rally. His tweet was with a photograph of thousands of protesters in front of the Red Fort. But soon he deleted the tweet after news channels started airing live visuals of the protesters entering the monument. He had perhaps jumped the gun. He then tweeted that "unfurling of any flag other than our Tirangaa at the Red Fort is very very unfortunate. The farmers should have refrained from doing this". Not just that. He said "what I tweeted and termed 'historic' is the saddest fact that farmers stormed Red Fort. Nation is supreme, Tiranga above all."

Incident at Red Fort unfortunate, insult to martyrs: RSS gen secy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 26

THE RSS on Tuesday condemned the violence during the farmers' tractor parade in Delhi and said the "unfortunate act" at the Red Fort was an insult to those who sacrificed their lives for India's freedom.

The ruling BJP's ideological mentor appealed to all countrymen to rise above political and ideological differences and strive for peace as a priority.

"The violence and disturbances unleashed in Delhi today,

on the sacred Republic Day, are extremely painful and deplorable," RSS general secretary Suresh Bhaiyyaji said in a statement.

Joshi described the hoisting of a flag other than the national flag at the Red Fort as an "unfortunate act", and said that "it is an insult to martyrs who sacrificed their lives for freedom and national integrity".

Meanwhile, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat, who is on a three-day visit to Ahmedabad, hoisted the national flag at RSS headquarters in Maninagar area. "We can take our country forward by keeping the three colours in front of us."



RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat after hoisting the Tricolour at Hedgewar Bhavan, in Ahmedabad. Nirmal Harindran

Police for the tractor parade, and insisted on heading to the Outer Ring Road.

Early Tuesday morning, this group moved towards Delhi by removing police barricades while others followed them. However, the majority of farmers could not move ahead due to traffic snarls on the highway even as volunteers made announcements on loudspeakers to remain in line. A biker, with a yellow light on his vehicle, too tried to discipline the crowd.

Meanwhile, farmer leaders started receiving inputs regarding the situation in the national capital, and held group meetings

SUKHBIR SIWACH
RAI (SONIPAT), JANUARY 26

UNFAZED BY developments in the national capital on Tuesday, especially at the Red Fort, thousands of farmers sitting on protest on National Highway-44, leading to Kundli border from Murthal, remained peaceful.

On Monday night, farmers at NH-44 were apprehensive that some elements were trying to provoke them. According to sources, a group at the Singhu border were not happy with the route finalised by leaders of the Sayukt Kisan Morcha and Delhi

Opp condemns Delhi violence, says situation created by govt

MANOJCG

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 26

FOLLOWING INCIDENTS of violence in the national capital on Tuesday, many in the Opposition admitted it can impact the discourse around the farmers' protests but argued that while unruly scenes must be condemned, the focus should not be allowed to move away from the demand for repeal of the three farm laws. The Opposition leaders indicated the forthcoming session of Parliament would be stormy.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said violence is not the solution to any problem. "If anyone gets hurt, the damage will be done to our country. Take back the anti-agricultural laws in national interest," he said in a tweet in Hindi.

Congress deputy leader in Rajya Sabha Anand Sharma said it is a situation entirely created by the

government. "The government has been arrogant and obdurate. They should have instead of putting on hold the laws should have repealed those," Sharma said. He said the Supreme Court instead of forming the panel should have formed a Constitution Bench to look into the constitutionality of these laws.

Congress communication department head Randeep Surjewala said "violence of all shapes and forms is reprehensible and gives the opportunity to elements within and outside the government to divert the core and fundamental issues of the struggle of the farmers".

NCP chief Sharad Pawar said from the information he has received, strict conditions were imposed on the protesters before they took out the tractor rally. "It is my expectation that the Centre shows prudence and gives up its extreme position on the issue while holding dialogue with these

(farmers) bodies," the former Union minister said in Mumbai.

Trinamool Congress chief and West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee said she was deeply disturbed by the worrying and painful developments that have unfolded on the streets of Delhi but argued the Centre's "insensitive attitude and indifference" towards farmers has to be blamed for "this situation". "First, these laws were passed without taking farmers in confidence. And then despite protests across India and farmers camping near Delhi for the last two months, they have been extremely casual in dealing with them. The Centre should engage with the farmers and repeal the draconian laws," she said.

CPM general secretary Sitaram Yechury said "violence in no form is an answer and is unacceptable" but argued "the situation has been brought to this pass by the Modi government" as the protests are

for a legitimate demand of millions from various states. That remains the issue at hand, and must be resolved. The solution is clear—repeal these farm laws....the PM must make the announcement." He said while the government "smears dissent", "BJP's troll army vilifies those who ask for their rights. Ministers make wild allegations and law officers make claims without basis in court. This is no way to deal with legitimate demands of our farmers".

His CPI counterpart D Raja said "government should be held answerable for what has happened today...Government should have told the farmers that we will bring a Bill to withdraw all the Bills in the Budget session itself... things would have been settled." On the violent incidents, he said, "Nobody is justifying...that is not the primary issue. Focus should not be deflected." FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com

Govt snaps Internet in Delhi, Haryana areas

AASHISH ARYAN

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 26

THE MINISTRY of Home Affairs (MHA) Tuesday ordered temporary suspension of Internet services in parts of Delhi, including Singhu, Ghazipur, Tikri, Mukarba Chowk, Nangloi and their adjoining areas, from 12 noon to midnight.

The MHA order asked telecom operators to suspend Internet services in these areas "in the interest of maintaining public safety and security, either by the Department of Telecommunications or by the order of an officer of the rank of Joint Secretary or above, authorised by the Centre or the state home secretary in case of 'unavoidable circumstances'".

India tops the total number of Internet suspensions ordered by authorities every year, according to the Software Freedom Law Centre (SFLC)'s Internet shutdown tracker. FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com

Later in the day, Internet serv-

ices were also suspended for 24 hours, till 5 pm on January 27, in at least three districts of neighbouring Haryana, with the option to extend it further if the situation deteriorated, sources said. The three districts, Sonipat, Jhajjar and Palwal, are within a two-hour distance radius from Parliament.

Internet services in the NCR were last suspended in December 2019, during the anti-CAA protests.

Internet, voice, as well as other broadband telecom services, can be suspended citing public safety and security, either by the Department of Telecommunications or by the order of an officer of the rank of Joint Secretary or above, authorised by the Centre or the state home secretary in case of "unavoidable circumstances".

India tops the total number of Internet suspensions ordered by authorities every year, according to the Software Freedom Law Centre (SFLC)'s Internet shutdown tracker. FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com



People gather for a tractor rally in Bengaluru on Tuesday. Reuters

Marches in states to back tractor rally, slam farm laws



A rally by the Centre of Indian Trade Unions in Kochi. PTI

ENS & PTI

JANUARY 26

MARCHES WERE carried out in several parts of the country by farmers and trade unions to express solidarity with the tractor rally in Delhi, demand repeal of the three farm laws and condemn the government's response to the ongoing agitation. A few were also organised by political parties. A look at the states:

TAMILNADU: Farmers and trade unions held protests against the new farm laws and to support the agitation in Delhi. Protesters took out motorcycle rallies in many areas though police denied permission. Such processions were held in Thanjavur, Coimbatore, Tiruchirappalli and Nagapattinam, among others. In Thanjavur, farmers had a scuffle with the police for stopping them. Over 300 people who attempted to protest on the Thanjavur-Tiruchirappalli highway were detained.

TELANGANA: Leaders and activists of Left parties, farmers' associations and others held a rally in Hyderabad in support of the protest in Delhi and demanded repeal of the new farm laws. The "farmers' parade", organised by the Telangana unit of All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee, condemned the police action against farmers in Delhi.

MAHARASHTRA: A tractor march organised in Aurangabad to extend support to the protesting farmers in New Delhi passed off peacefully. The march was organised by the Maharashtra Raja Kisan Sabha and the Maharashtra Raja Lal Bawta Shetmajur Union. Some workers of the Congress also joined the procession. Ram Baheti, one of the organisers of the march, said, "The clashes (in Delhi) occurred because of the stubborn stand of the Centre," he added.

KERALA: The ruling CPI(M) organised 'farmers parades' in several areas, including panchayats and municipalities, in support of the tractor rally in the national capital. Protesting the death of a farmer in Delhi during the protests on Tuesday, Youth Congress activists took out a march to the Raj Bhavan here, but were detained and removed, police said.

GUJARAT: Surat police filed four cases against 93 people, including leaders of the Patidar Anamat Andolan Samiti and the Congress, after they took out a Tiranga Yatra on tractors and two-wheelers to support the farmers' protest, and to demand withdrawal of criminal cases against Patidar leaders. The PAAS was denied police permission for the rally.

UTTAR PRADESH: The Samajwadi Party organised Kisan rallies across all districts in support of the farmers. SP president Akhilesh Yadav addressed a programme at Saifai in Etawah district where party workers gathered at the venue on tractors to show their support to farmers.

RAJASTHAN: Farmers who have been agitating at Shahjahanpur in Alwar near Rajasthan-Haryana border took out a tractor rally to Manesar (Haryana).

MAHARASHTRA: A tractor march organised in Aurangabad to extend support to the protesting farmers in New Delhi passed off peacefully. The march was organised by the Maharashtra Raja Kisan Sabha and the Maharashtra Raja Lal Bawta Shetmajur Union. Some workers of the Congress also joined the procession. Ram Baheti, one of the organisers of the march, said, "The clashes (in Delhi) occurred because of the stubborn stand of the Centre," he added.

MANOHAR LAL KHATTAR: The Samajwadi Party organised Kisan rallies across all districts in support of the farmers. SP president Akhilesh Yadav addressed a programme at Saifai in Etawah district where party workers gathered at the venue on tractors to show their support to farmers.



Haryana CM Manohar Lal Khattar in Panchkula. PTI

to urge protesters to stay away from rumours. While a few youth called on farmers to walk towards Delhi's borders, they did not get much response.

Satnam Singh Sidhu, vice-president of the Indian Farmers' Association, Punjab, said most farmers want a peaceful agitation but some elements had been trying to provoke them at Singhu border since Monday evening. "Such elements don't have any support from most of the farmers; we will continue the agitation peacefully," he said.

By 2 pm, farmers on NH-44 realised they won't be able to move further. So they halted on

the highway and moved to lagers where tea, snacks and food was being offered to them. At 3 pm, a section of farmers started returning to Haryana and Punjab from NH-44 while some decided to stay.

Protesters reiterated that the three farm laws are meant to facilitate corporates to grab their land. Mandev Singh (33) said, "I have left behind my one-and-a-half-year-old daughter at home with her mother. We are fighting to save our land which is like a mother to us."

Suraj Bhan (78), a farmer from Sonipat's Murlana village, said: "We farmers have joined hands

Meanwhile, highway snarl meant many on NH-44 remained there



Jaipal Singh
Farmers on way to the protest march on foot near Kundli-Manesar-Palwal (KMP) Expressway.

Police for the tractor parade, and insisted on heading to the Outer Ring Road.

Early Tuesday morning, this group moved towards Delhi by removing police barricades while others followed them. However, the majority of farmers could not move ahead due to traffic snarls on the highway even as volunteers made announcements on loudspeakers to remain in line. A biker, with a yellow light on his vehicle, too tried to discipline the crowd.

Meanwhile, farmer leaders started receiving inputs regarding the situation in the national capital, and held group meetings

New Delhi

THE REPUBLIC AT 72

A look at Republic Day celebrations in states, UTs



KARNATAKA: An illuminated Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru on the occasion of Republic Day. PTI



TAMIL NADU: During the parade in Chennai. PTI



BEIJING: Indian Ambassador to China Vikram Misri hoists the National Flag at the Indian Embassy in Beijing. PTI



ASSAM: Tribal artistes perform the traditional 'Jhumur' dance at Nehru Maidan in Tezpur. PTI



MADHYA PRADESH: A traditional dance at Pandit Ravishankar Shukla Stadium in Jabalpur, on Tuesday. PTI



UTTAR PRADESH: AMU officials bury a time capsule with documents on the institute's history. @AMUOfficialPRO



WEST BENGAL: Governor Jagdeep Dhankar with Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee at Red Road in Kolkata. Partha Paul



LADAKH: Indo-Tibetan Border Police personnel near the Pangong Tso bank, in Ladakh. PTI



JAMMU AND KASHMIR: Lt Governor Manoj Sinha hoists the Tricolour in Jammu. PTI

Unity, fight against Covid: Key message from states



The 12x8 foot flag at the Octroi Border Outpost in Suchetgarh sector. Express



BSF unfurls 131-foot-high Tricolour, tallest along India-Pak border in J&K

ARUN SHARMA
SUCHETGARH, JANUARY 26

THE BORDER Security Force (BSF) unfurled the Tricolour on a 131-foot-high flag post along the India-Pakistan border on the occasion of Republic Day – the tallest ever along the zero line in Jammu and Kashmir.

The 12x8 foot flag at the "heritage" Octroi Border Outpost in Suchetgarh sector of R S Pura sub-division will be visible as far as Pakistan's Sialkot town, nearly 11 km across the International Border.

BSF IG NS Jamwal, who unfurled the flag, said the Tricolour would serve as a landmark for Jammu, adding that the BSF will keep it flying at all costs.

Pakistan Rangers had initially objected to the erection of such a high flag post within 50 metres from the zero line, suspecting that the Indian side was installing cameras to keep vigil in their area.

However, they relented after being told that it was being erected for unfurling the Tricolour on Republic Day.

BSF's Octroi Border Outpost has drawn its name from an octroi collection point in Suchetgarh village. This is where the erstwhile Indian princely state of Jammu and Kashmir used to collect octroi from traders for movement of goods between Jammu and Sialkote area of then undivided Punjab.

RAJASTHAN: At a state-level ceremony held in the SMS stadium in Jaipur, Governor Kalraj Mishra hoisted the Tricolour and inspected the parade in the presence of Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, Assembly Speaker CP Joshi and other dignitaries. Speaking to reporters later, Gehlot said it was very unfortunate that even on Republic Day, the farmers of the country are sitting on dharna because the government is unwilling to listen to them.

JHARKHAND: Announcing a host of welfare measures, Hemant Soren on Tuesday said that his government will soon formulate a new domicile policy and reserve 75 per cent of jobs in the private sector for the people of the state. He also said that the government will recruit school teachers and police personnel. Unfurling the national flag and taking the salute of the parade at Dumka Police Lines, the chief minister said, "2021 will be the year of appointments."

MAHARASHTRA: Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari said the state faced a financial blow during the Covid-19 crisis, but the state government took measures to deal with it. Addressing a programme at Shivaji Park, Koshyari said Maharashtra remained at the forefront of attracting investments and employment generation even during the Covid-19 crisis. CM Uddhav Thackeray unfurled the Tricolour at his official residence.

KARNATAKA: Governor Vajubhai Vala commended the efforts of the state government in combating the Covid-19 pandemic and in using technology to monitor those who were quarantined. "People are using the Apthamitra helpline during the Covid-19 pandemic," he said during the Republic Day Parade at the Field Marshal Manekshaw Parade Ground here. Vala said India took the pandemic as a challenge and became self-reliant in manufacturing PPE kits and ventilators in a big way.

HARYANA: In his address, Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar made an apparent reference to the farm protests saying one has the freedom to agitate, but not to spread anarchy. "We are a democracy... On Republic Day, we got our Constitution. The Constitution makers talked about various



A police contingent participates in a parade in Ahmedabad. PTI

rights with which we can make our lives happier. But I want to remind one thing that under the Constitution, both our rights and duties have been mentioned. Our rights do not mean that we can do anything, there are some limits. And through these limits, we should remember that the Constitution which we have accepted, it becomes our responsibility to abide by it," he said. Later in the address, he touched upon several "pro-farmer" initiatives taken by his government over the past six years.

CHHATTISGARH: Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, who is on a four-day tour of the Bastar division, hoisted the Tricolour at the district headquarters. Remembering tribal leaders who had rebelled against the British, CM Baghel addressed the state from Jagdalpur's Lal Bagh. In his address, Baghel spoke on the farmers' protest: "Our constitution is the biggest protector of farmers, villagers and general public, but if any new law comes in the way of this system, then it is the responsibility of the state government to deal with a challenge like that. And we have fulfilled this responsibility by introducing Chhattisgarh Agricultural Produce Market (Amendment) Bill," he said.

ODISHA: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik emphasised on the strength India derives from its diversity. "We should work together to protect our diversity and for a consensus on various national issues to make our democracy stronger and vibrant," Patnaik said, adding that India stands for the unity of diverse beliefs, religion, language, castes. "Every region is different from the other and we draw our cultural and social strength from this diversity. It is beautifully reflected in our Constitution and has created equal opportunities for development for all," he said. The national flag was hoisted at Mahatma Gandhi marg in Bhubaneswar by Governor Ganeshi Lal.

Uttar Pradesh: Celebrations were flagged off on Tuesday by Governor Anandiben Patel, who unfurled the Tricolour at the Raj Bhavan here and took the salute of the marching contingents of the Army, police, PAC and the homeguards. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Deputy CM Dinesh Sharma, ministers, MPs, MLAs, senior administrative, police and Army officials were in attendance. In his address, Adityanath said that "our public life" gives inspiration of one dharma – "Rashtra Dharma" and it should be above all for everyone.

WEST BENGAL: Celebrations were muted in Kolkata due to the Covid-19 pandemic, but the metropolis witnessed a colourful parade and procession with decorated tableaux at Red Road on Tuesday. No spectators were allowed at the customary programme, which was truncated to around 30 minutes, a senior official said. "Only a few VIPs other than Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Governor Jagdeep Dhankar and senior bureaucrats were invited," he said. Dhankar hoisted the tricolour and presided over the march past of the armed forces and the state police at Red Road in the heart of the city.

MIZORAM: Mizoram Governor PS Sreedharan Pillai said Mizoram has stood the test of the Covid-19 pandemic. Unfurling the Tricolour at Lammual here, Pillai said that Mizoram has the lowest number of Covid-19 cases, lowest fatality rate and one of the best recovery rates in the country due to concerted efforts of the state government and selfless service of churches, NGOs and frontline workers. The administration has taken concrete steps to bolster internal security and tension along the Mizoram-Assam inter-state border was diffused with the timely deployment of police, the governor said.

UTTARAKHAND: Governor Baby Rani Maurya unfurled the national flag in the presence of Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat at Parade Ground in Dehradun. She also honoured police personnel for exemplary performance on duty. A tableau showcasing the Covid-19 vaccination exercise was displayed.

NAGALAND: Governor and Centre's interlocutor for the Naga peace talks, RN Ravi said that in a democracy there was ample space for peaceful resolving issues but none for "politics by gun". "Those who believe in such a politics shall always remain outliers in democracy," Ravi said. He added that Naga society never accepted violence as a "political resource".

MADHYA PRADESH: Emphasising on the achievements of 11-month-old BJP government after hoisting the Tricolour in Rewa district, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan came down heavily on land mafia, mining mafia, drug traffickers and pointed out that people who loot the public through chit fund companies and those who misbehave with women and force religious conversions will not be allowed to stay in the state.



(Above) Folk artistes perform in Kullu.
(Below) BSF Director General Rakesh Asthana offers sweets to soldiers at the Attari-Wagah border. PTI



TAMIL NADU: Governor Banwarilal Purohit unfurled the national flag at the Chennai Marina beach. Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami, Madras high court Chief Justice Sanjib Banerjee, Assembly speaker P Dhanapal were present. CM Palaniswami awarded the Anna Medals for Gallantry to four people during the celebrations.

KERALA: Governor Arif Mohammed Khan hailed the initiatives of the state government saying that every segment of society got empowerment. Speaking on the state's fight against Covid-19, the governor said it has been challenging but the state managed to keep the mortality rate the lowest in the country. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, a few Cabinet colleagues, legislators and senior bureaucrats attended the celebrations in the state capital.

JAMMU AND KASHMIR: Invoking the ancient text 'Rajtarangini' by terming Kashmir as a holy and beautiful place, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said 2020 has been a year of unprecedented change in J&K. "Through a continuous process of change, the roots of progress have been planted in the new J&K," he said. "We have been successful in conducting a violence free, fair and fair elections to District Development Councils. We assure all the elected representatives that with your support, administration will bring the fruits of development to the last person standing in the queue", he added.

MEGHALAYA: Governor Satya Pal Malik hoisted the national flag at the Polo Grounds here on Tuesday. He urged the people to remember the founding fathers of the nation and the state. Meghalaya continues to be one of those states that have the lowest number of active COVID-19 cases and fatalities, he said. The state's efforts in dealing with the pandemic were appreciated nationally, and even by the World Health Organisation, Malik said. The governor also highlighted the concerted response of the state government to the economic slowdown caused by the pandemic.

BIHAR: Governor Phagu Chouhan lauded Nitish Kumar-led government for electricity reforms and effective management of Covid and migration crises. He added that the government had been making serious attempts to increase the income of farmers.

ENS & PTI

BRIEFLY

TELANGANA
Police arrest
serial killer in
Hyderabad

Hyderabad: A 45-year-old man, who was allegedly involved in 18 cases of murder of women, besides other offences, was arrested here on Tuesday, police said. With his arrest, two recent cases of murder of women have been detected. Earlier, he was arrested in 21 cases, including 16 cases of murder, four property offences and one case of escaping from police custody. Police said he started his criminal activity in 2003, targeting single women by offering them money for sexual favours. He would kill his victims after consuming liquor or toddy with them and then flee after stealing their valuables, police added.

PTI

MADHYA PRADESH
Man befriends
minor on dating
app, rapes her

Bhopal: A 14-year-old girl was raped in Bhopal on Tuesday allegedly by a 23-year-old man who befriended her through a dating application, police said, adding the accused was arrested. The accused befriended the girl on a dating app about a week back and called her to meet him on Tuesday, an officer of the police station where the case was filed said quoting the FIR. After the girl came to meet him, the accused took her to his house where he raped her, the officer said. "A police constable and other people spotted the girl crying on a road. On the basis of the complaint lodged by her family members, a case of rape was registered under the IPC POCSO Act, and the accused was arrested," the officer said.

PTI

WEST BENGAL
In a first,
Kolkata gets
boat library

Kolkata: A children's library on a boat was launched in Kolkata on Republic Day, a first of a kind initiative. Children will be able to choose from a selection of 500 titles in English and Bengali on the Young Readers' Boat Library, an official said on Tuesday. The idea behind the boat library is that one can read some good books while appreciating the beauty of Kolkata, cruising on the Hooghly, he said. "The boat library would take people on a three-hour trip," the official said. The trip will start at Millennium Park and the boat will travel all the way to Belur Math jetty and return, he said.

PTI

LADAKH DISENGAGEMENT: CHINA PLAN JUNKED

India wants both to pull out, step by step

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 26

on the withdrawal of Chinese troops from Dapsang Plains.

Sources said that in the latest round of talks, India said it would not agree to the Chinese proposal that their troops would withdraw to Finger 8 on the north bank of Pangong Tso after India withdraws from the south bank of the lake.

China, which is currently occupying positions till Finger 4 on the north bank, had made this proposal during the eighth round of military talks on November 6, 2020. It had said both sides would vacate the friction point on Finger 4 with India restricting itself to Finger 3 and China going back to Finger 8, with neither side patrolling the area in between.

"It was made clear that this proposal was not acceptable as it was conditional on our withdrawal first. We had told them this time that any disengagement would have to be a 'simultaneous and step-by-step effort' by both sides.

Besides, India proposed that from the next meeting, detailed discussions should also be held

can only be a simultaneous and step-by-step effort. We can't be asked to vacate an entire region at once and then wait for China to keep its end of the bargain. But this meeting was more positive than the last one. An in-principle agreement on a mechanism was achieved by the two sides during the meeting. It has been agreed that each step of withdrawal will be physically verified by both sides before moving on to the next step," a Government source said, underlining the trust deficit on disengagement.

According to sources, details of this disengagement mechanism -- in terms of which height or area will be vacated and the scale -- will be decided during diplomatic engagements and future military level talks.

"It has also been made clear that in the next round of talks, Dapsang will also be discussed and that the entire eastern

Ladakh region will be part of negotiations. Until now, they have insisted on disengagement at Pangong Tso where there is eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation," sources said.

The Dapsang issue, officials maintained, predates the current standoff by several years. In Dapsang Plains, which is close to the strategically sensitive Daulat Beg Oldie post near the Karakoram Pass in the north, the Chinese have been blocking Indian soldiers at a place called Bottleneck from accessing Patrolling Points (PP) 10, 11, 11A, 12 and 13.

India's current position, sources in the security establishment said, is bolstered by the fact that its troops withdrew harsh winter and that there is no compulsion now to cede ground. Besides, they said, the Chinese have been brought to the negotiating table by India's preemp-

tive capture of key heights on the south bank of Pangong Tso in the Rezang La sector.

"It has brought China under pressure. We are overlooking some of their key posts from the heights we have captured. It is the only leverage we have over China for negotiations. It can't be wasted on pushing them to Finger 8 alone. This could be a long process, but we have no option if we do not want matters to escalate in the summer," sources said.

A Home Ministry official told The Indian Express that this push in talks was laid down over the last couple of months when both sides agreed to thinning of troops at friction points and across the region. "There has been about 30 per cent reduction in troops by both sides. It was imperative for both sides given the harsh winter and inhospitable conditions at those heights. Troops have to be rotated much faster in these

conditions, and reduced strength at friction points helps," the official said.

On Monday, the Army described the ninth round of military level talks held the day before as "positive, practical and constructive", and said it had "enhanced mutual trust and understanding". It said in a statement that the "two sides had a candid and in-depth exchange of views on disengagement along the Line of Actual Control in the Western Sector of China-India border areas".

The two sides agreed to push for an early disengagement of the frontline troops. They also agreed to follow the important consensus of their state leaders, maintain the good momentum of dialogue and negotiation, and hold the 10th round of the Corps Commander Level Meeting at an early date to jointly advance de-escalation," it said.

Lt Colonel Sharma's wife, five-year-old son and parents, who were incidentally in Pathankot on a visit, were also flown back to Delhi in the service aircraft.

Offering condolences to the family, an Army tweet said that Western Army Commander Lt General R P Singh and all ranks "salute the supreme sacrifice" of Lt Colonel Sharma.

20 lakh have got Covid vaccine jabs so far, says Health Ministry

New Delhi: More than 20 lakh healthcare workers across the country have received Covid-19 vaccine jabs till Tuesday evening, as per provisional reports, the Health Ministry said Tuesday.

The ministry said that on the 11th day of the nationwide immunisation drive, 5,615 beneficiaries were vaccinated till 7 pm in five states - Tamil Nadu (4,926), Karnataka (429), Rajasthan (216), Telangana (35) and Andhra Pradesh (9) - through 194 sessions.

"The cumulative number of healthcare workers vaccinated against Covid-19 crossed 20.29 lakh today. A total of 20,29,424 beneficiaries (till 7 pm today) have been vaccinated through 36,572 sessions, as per the provisional report," the ministry said. It said in view of Republic Day, a limited number of sessions in some states were conducted. PTI

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YERAWADA TOURISM

The Maharashtra government on Tuesday launched a jail tourism initiative at Pune's Yerawada Central Prison. The inaugural ceremony was held at the prison premises in presence of Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, with Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and state Home Minister Anil Deshmukh present virtually. Students of a local school were the first visitors at Gandhi Yard and Tilak Yard in the prison. Pavan Khengre

People exhausted, exasperated by antics of BJP, TMC: Adhir



Cong-Left combine gaining ground: Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury

Indian Secular Front launched by Furfura Sharif Pirzada Abbas Siddiqui. He said Siddiqui does not have a "divisive agenda" like Asaduddin Owaisi's AIMIM but added that "we have not had any kind of structured discussion with them...they are sending feelers to the Congress and the Left."

The Congress leader said

people of the state had started thinking a few months ago that the West Bengal elections would be a battle between the BJP and the TMC, but people are now getting "exhausted and exasperated by the antics of both these parties".

"...It has become ridiculous. They don't have any content or subjects or issues...simply competitive harangu...and competitive hurling of abusive language has become the order of the day in Bengal politics now. So people are getting exasperated by seeing this kind of politics. No public issue is being debated; no substantial issues are being referred to, only competitive Hindutva and competitive communalism that has been persisting here over the years," he said.

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

Trinamool notice to MLA after he quits party posts

Kolkata: The TMC on Tuesday issued a show-cause notice to Uttarpara MLA Prabir Ghoshal after his resignation from two party posts, alleging he was not being allowed to carry on work in his constituency by a powerful section within the TMC.

Ghoshal, said he will continue to be a member of the Assembly and did not have immediate plans to desert the TMC, was asked to explain "why he discussed internal party affairs with the press" and cautioned "not to do such things in future", a source said. He resigned as a member of the Hooghly district committee and also quit as TMC spokesperson. Ghoshal also alleged that a conspiracy is being hatched to defeat him in the upcoming Assembly polls "if I contest again".

**ACTIVE CASES: 177,266
DEATHS: 153,587**

**CASES: 10,676,838
DEATHS SINCE PANDEMIC BEGAN: 330**

TESTS: 193,062,694 | RECOVERIES: 10,345,985

JAN 25 CASES 9,102 DEATHS 117 RECOVERIES 15,901 TESTS 725,577

STATES REPORTING MAXIMUM CASES

CASES (JAN 25) TOTAL

Kerala 3,361 893,640

Maharashtra 1,842 2,010,948

Tamil Nadu 540 835,280

STATES REPORTING MAXIMUM DEATHS

DEATHS (JAN 25) TOTAL

Maharashtra 32 52,043

Kerala 17 3,672

Chhattisgarh 13 3,630

Data as on January 25, released by Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Indian Council of Medical Research and state governments. Often the numbers released every day contain data from previous days as well. As such, trends based on daily numbers are only indicative and not definitive

TRACKING INDIA'S COVID CURVE



NUMBER OF VACCINATIONS (JAN 25)

5,615

Total: 20,29,424

NUMBER OF ADVERSE EVENTS AFTER IMMUNIZATION

6

Total: 1,649

Demand rises, migrants make long bus journey back to Kerala

There are agents on both sides to get the migrants for the journeys. Buses are being operated from Kerala up to Nagaon in Assam and Howrah and Siliguri in West Bengal.

A day's casual work fetches between Rs 900 and Rs 1,000 in Kerala – which drives migrants to the state.

Arshad N of Najath Tour and Travels, who operates daily services from Kerala to the northeast, said, "It takes a continuous journey of four to five days between Kerala and Assam. We charge between Rs 4,000 and Rs 5,500 per person to Kerala. The trend would remain until normal train services begin."

bus to Kerala earlier this month. "Only a few trains are being operated and we can't wait," said Ansar, who works in a tea shop.

Like him, Mamun Mandal, 22, a mason from Murshidabad, is also back in Kerala. "There is no job in my village. My contractor in Kerala had been asking me to return. If I did not come and start work, he would have taken somebody else... Hence, I was forced to take the bus, despite the journey being long and strenuous," said Mandal.

According to bus operators, at least a dozen buses operate every day from Kochi and suburban areas to east and northeastern states to ferry migrants.

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LAW & DISORDER

Farmers' unions can't wash hands of violence, it discredits long winter of peaceful protest, makes resolution more fraught

THE IMAGES OF violence from the heart of the nation's capital, of lumpen youth forcing their way atop the ramparts of the Red Fort, to wave a flag that was not the Tricolour on the 72nd Republic Day, pose serious questions. They are questions, primarily, for the farmers' movement to answer. The Samyukt Kisan Morcha has said it "dissociates" itself from Tuesday's "anti-social elements" and events, and has called them "undesirable" and "unacceptable." That is not enough. It cannot evade its own responsibility for the tractor march taking a violent turn. What is also clear is this: The violence has hurt, most of all, the farmers' protests and movement. It deals a blow to what has been, so far, its biggest boast: That even as it has voiced its strong opposition to the Centre's new farm laws, it has stayed scrupulously sober and meticulously kept the peace. Even on the eve of Tuesday's march, visible attempts were made by leaders in a largely leaderless agitation to ensure that the designated routes are adhered to, and that the restraint that has marked the over two-month-long sit-in at Delhi's borders is maintained. That it wasn't, that the mob took over and went on a rampage, means that the defining image of the protests will no longer be of farmers camping in the cold against laws they perceive to be harmful imposed by a government they see as arrogant, but of tractors being used as bulldozers to break barricades and a religious flag being hoisted at Red Fort by a crowd that forcefully entered its premises.

Ever since it began more than six months ago, the farmers' movement was leaderless and that was also seen to be its strength. The lack of identifiable faces helped it to keep the focus on its stated purpose — repeal of the three farm laws that the Modi government had pushed without adequate consultation through Parliament. Tuesday's riotous scenes, however, will invite the charge that its leaderlessness has slipped into rudderlessness. For the farmers, therefore, the march that became a showdown is a giant step backward after significant gains had been made with the government offering to put the laws on hold — an offer the farmers rejected as not good enough. The farmers' movement is now pushed firmly onto the backfoot, from where it must contend not just with the challenge of finding a way forward, but also, in the near term, with issues of legal accountability for the scenes of disorder.

But the government cannot afford to see this as a we-told-you-so moment. That a section went rogue and has discredited the protests does not a resolution make. In fact, it makes it more fraught. More name-calling is not the answer. No matter where it goes from here, the farmers' protest has pointed to the path governance and legislation and reform must not take. Reform cannot be imposed by turning a deaf ear to people's anxieties and concerns, due deliberation must not be short-circuited in framing law. The hard work of communicating and persuading on the farm laws remains to be done. The farmers' self-goal is, by no means, anyone's victory.

KEEP THE VIGIL

Results of sero survey in Delhi are reassuring. But the virus is unpredictable, there is no room for complacency

THE RESULTS OF the latest round of the sero survey conducted in Delhi confirm what many health experts and scientists have been saying for some time now: That the prevalence of COVID-19 in the population has reached a level where the dynamics of "herd immunity" can be said to start playing a role. The results indicate that in at least some areas of Delhi, the disease prevalence could have gone beyond 50 per cent. So far, only Pune has reported similar numbers in a sero survey conducted way back in September.

In a situation where a vast majority of infected people exhibit few or only mild symptoms, a high disease prevalence rate can be reassuring. This could be one of the more important reasons why the spread of the disease has slowed down considerably in the last few months, leading to a steady decline in the number of cases that are detected. But it is important to remember that these results do not give any reason to believe that the epidemic is over, or that the whole population has achieved enduring immunity. And that is because one key detail is still missing: How long does the immunity, gained through natural infection or through vaccination, last? So, just like the start of the vaccination drive must not bring complacency, and prompt the abandoning of masks or norms of physical distancing, so must not the results of a sero survey, however reassuring they may be.

At the same time, the government must undertake more sero surveys in many more places. This is the only way to know what might be happening on the ground, beyond the numbers revealed by testing. The last round of the country-wide sero survey by the Indian Council of Medical Research was conducted in July and August. After that, individual research groups have been conducting it in some major cities. In the absence of such data, the reasons for the spectacular decline in the number of cases that has happened since the middle of September will not be understood, nor the bewildering numbers that continue to be reported from Kerala for the last three months. It will not be known either why the trajectory of the epidemic in India has been so different from that in many other countries in the world. Reliable and transparently-obtained data can help scientists and health experts to assess the situation better, and improve preparedness for the future.

THE VILLAGE SONG

France has passed a law to protect 'sensory heritage' in rural areas, putting a check on entitlement of city slickers

THE JOLTING CRY of a cockerel, the comforting smell of manure and the rumbling of tractors — the idyllic sensory landscape of rural France has been the source of much civil strife in recent years. An increasing number of city slickers have vacation homes in rural areas, to enjoy peace and serenity. As it turns out, rural life is full of activity, and at least in France, not amenable to change for the comfort of strangers. There have been several complaints about the noise and smells from animals and churches in the last few years. Maurice, the rooster, became a symbol for this conflict when his neighbours went to court against his owners in 2019, chagrined at being woken up by the cockerel's cry at dawn. French legislators have finally put the matter to rest by passing a law to protect the countryside's "sensory heritage".

To be fair, there is something gnawing about being woken up when it's still dark outside by the shrill crowing of a rooster. But the entitlement to comforts the wealthy thought money can buy at their weekend chalets, are at odds with the choices of empowered rural residents. Unlike the luxury stores at the Champs-Élysées, rural France has refused to serve the interests of tourists. France — both culturally and economically — is still strongly agricultural. The campaign for the law was based on the principle that the countryside is more than a scenic landscape, and living there means accepting that fact.

Their "sensory heritage" safeguarded, French country folk must not get complacent. Soundscapes are fragile things, as Indians are well aware. A loudspeaker and an upcoming election can drown out the sounds of a homestead a lot faster than the complaints of bratty neighbours. But in the meanwhile, at least, the Maurices of France are free to make a morning racket.


VIKRAM PATEL

THE WAR HAS begun. We are battling a malevolent enemy which spreads unseen, invading most victims with such stealth that they aren't even aware they have been occupied, lurking in the shadows of our physiology to emerge in its deadly avatar when it strikes the sick and elderly. But our nation is prepared. With military precision, our weapons are leaving their factories under armed guard, transported with Coca Cola efficiency to the frontlines, in an epic struggle for our survival. The publication of the trials testifying to the safety and immunogenicity of two weapons, one of which is entirely indigenous, by prestigious medical journals, will soothe the frayed tempers of ethicists and scientists who fretted about short cuts being taken for political gains, while also pumping up national pride. Still, most of us are keeping our fingers crossed and hoping for the best.

Which brings me to an awkward question: How will we know if the vaccines are victorious if the enemy is not just in retreat but, if the past month is a reliable predictor, may soon disappear beyond the horizon much before we reach our vaccination targets? Addressing this question requires us to confront a baffling observation: Why is it that India, in contrast to most other countries, seems to have navigated the epidemic with just one wave and with one of the lowest mortality rates in the world? A review of sero-prevalence studies, which are the best indicator of true infection rates, offers a plausible reason. The paper, published in the current issue of the WHO's bulletin, reports that sites in India had the highest infection rates on the planet. In Mumbai slums, for example, nearly 60 per cent of people surveyed many months ago had antibodies which indicated prior infection. These findings are replicated in a state-wide study conducted six months ago in Karnataka which reported that half the population had been exposed to the virus. Such astonishingly high infection rates also mean that the inferred mortality rates due to the virus are very small, less than 0.1 per cent, and similar low rates are also seen in our neighbouring countries.

For once, it seems, wealthy nations have

Vaccine is here, virus is already in retreat.
Let's just wait our turn

been hit by an infectious disease much harder than the teeming billions of the poorest countries. Leaders of global health and public health scientists who predicted millions of dead bodies on the streets of Asian (and African) cities are bewildered by how much they were off the mark. These estimates had triggered the nationwide lockdown even when we had such few reported cases. But, in contrast to other countries, instead of "flattening the curve", our lockdown was immediately followed by a monumental peak of cases. This has led some to wonder whether the virus had already begun to circulate in the community even before the lockdown, which then actually led to the infection spreading like wildfire in the densely populated slums of our cities. The subsequent policies to ferry millions of infected persons to their villages smoothly fast-tracked the infection across the country and, inadvertently, led us to herd immunity. And if hundreds of millions of people in India have already been infected, what saved us from an apocalyptic death toll was a combination of our youthful demographics and some other, yet to be deciphered, biological immunity to the infection. One thing we can say for sure is that this had nothing to do with drinking cow urine.

Regardless of the truth behind India's unique tryst with COVID-19, it appears that we are about to vaccinate hundreds of millions of people to protect them from a virus which has already infected more than half of our population. Moreover, this poses an existential question: Should a country whose health system is in such shambles, which is still a long way from universal coverage of proven vaccines which protect children from deadly diseases, which is witnessing the highest rates of malnutrition and TB in the world, be spending

so much money on a vaccination programme for a disease which may be well on its last legs and which has a vanishingly low mortality rate? Is this why there is mounting hesitancy to be inoculated? After all, many people might be sceptical about taking a jab of a new vaccine with the associated, albeit tiny, risk of adverse reactions, for a disease which is yesterday's news.

But the horse has bolted and in the derby of whose country will be first to win the race, our weapons of microbe destruction are well on their way to a famous victory. Never mind my cynical quibble about this appearing like sending in your troops to battle an enemy which is on the retreat. Never mind that while we do so, countless more people will die of mundane diseases of poverty which could have been prevented or treated if we could show a similar commitment and allocation of money. So now, the best we can do is to pray that the campaign is fought equitably. In a country notorious for the shameful sight of its privileged watching vicariously or banging *thalis* as the biggest human migration since Partition unfolds on their TV screens with little compassion or outrage, we should be wary of the vaccine programme being hijacked by the wealthy and well-connected.

I applaud the government's commitment that not a single dose will be allowed to leak into the private market until all the priority populations have been covered by the public system. Unsurprisingly, some of the pampered are grumbling about having to wait their turn, and rumours are flying around in tyro residential colonies about who might once have had tea with or sat on a plane next to a Poonawalla. To them, members of my class, I have one plea: If there is one thing that the pandemic should have taught us, it must be to wait in line, patiently, with at least six feet in between. No matter when you get the jab, our victory is assured.

The writer is The Pershing Square Professor of Global Health at Harvard Medical School, and a member of the Lancet Citizen's Commission on Re-imaging India's Health System


BHUPENDER YADAV

OVER THE past 200 years or so, humankind has undergone massive changes. While change has been constant throughout human life on earth, science and technology gave humans the handles of control over a lot of those changes. Science and technology also accelerated the pace of change. Many say human life has reformed in all these years.

The point they seem to miss is that in all these years, we have mostly tried to regulate procedure and not really been working at reform. Regulation is not reform. Reform is a more fundamental concept, one that introduces positive changes. The pandemic, which stopped life in its tracks, was a reminder that we need reforms. With the vaccine now reaching people and restrictions on movements gone, it is possible we will soon push the lessons of the pandemic into oblivion and move on without reforming.

Governance, as a tool, is not about reforms. Governance is about laying out procedures for the smooth functioning of systems. But reforms go beyond that. The fight today is between life and lifestyle. In the process of our evolution, we have built many institutions and each institution has taught us more regulation and less reform.

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Human life is not eternal. Life is about more than just inhaling and exhaling air. Science and technology only create an illusion of giving us a quality life, with more apps

REFORM, FOR FUTURE'S SAKE

Return to the old normal may take away from us a very potent opportunity

and gadgets. For every problem, there is a machine. The machines have more machines to enhance their performance and give us an illusion of a life well lived. We judge the quality of life by an individual's ability to buy these machines.

But the quality of life can't improve just by automating daily functions. To attain a quality life, we have to reform. This reform requires change and actualisation of the inner self. This needs inner reforms. Artificial intelligence cannot regulate our minds and emotions. It cannot stop a pandemic from hitting us again, even if it can assist in making a vaccine faster through data collection, analysis and sharing.

We must also ponder over what needs more attention and care — regulation or life itself? This crucial question also provides answers to what is more important — regulation or reform. And what is reform exactly — a real change or more regulation? It is important to make these distinctions and set the right priorities.

Regulations can show the way but the end goal of society needs to be reform. We are faced with huge crises such as climate change, environmental degradation, crimes against people based on their life choices, and an increase in violent tendencies among children due to unmonitored exposure to online content and violence-promoting gaming.

To each problem our response is to bring

in a new regulation — but in the absence of real reforms, we find our problems getting bigger and seemingly out of control.

Societies will have to get together and discuss the need for reforms. They must begin by asking the crucial question: Are we only destroying what we have or are we building something new?

Sustainable life goes beyond just planting trees or reducing our carbon footprint. It is also about a balance between regulation and change. The pandemic proved to us that all that we built in over 200 years has pushed us towards living more dangerously. We are now living in what is called the age of anxiety. Our youngsters are at the receiving end of this, with mental health experts warning that we are, as a society, literally living on the edge. Substance abuse is being seen as a refuge and the relationship between substance abuse and violent tendencies is well known.

No regulation can stop this until we move towards and discuss real reforms. During the lockdown, these life-changing questions were being asked and answered.

The safety of the vaccine and return to the old normal may take away from us a very real and potent opportunity to reform. We should not miss it at any cost.

The writer is BJP National General Secretary and a Rajya Sabha member



JANUARY 27, 1981, FORTY YEARS AGO

PORTILLO-INDIRA TALKS
PRESIDENT OF MEXICO, Jose Lopez Portillo, arrived in New Delhi today on a six-day state visit, had a 70-minute-long talk with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on the international economic situation. A spokesman said that the two discussed the strengthening of ties between India and Mexico. Portillo gave Mrs Gandhi his assessment of the prospects of the economic "summit" of 20 world leaders which will be held later in Mexico. The President of Mexico also touched upon the problems relating to energy resources faced by developing nations and stressed the need to devise ways to increase the production of such resources.

ATAL'S WARNING
BJP PRESIDENT ATAL Bihari Vajpayee served an ultimatum on PM Indira Gandhi's government to arrest the rise in prices of essential commodities, solve the problem of shortages and curb the deteriorating law and order situation within three months, failing which his party will be forced to resort to agitation to prevent her from destroying the country's economy. Addressing a big gathering at the Ramlila grounds, Vajpayee challenged Mrs Gandhi to have an open debate on the problem of rising prices. Vajpayee felt that the Opposition had a right to resort to peaceful agitations to focus attention on the failures of the government.

R-DAY HONOURS
SITAR WIZARD RAVI Shankar and Satish Dhawan, Secretary, Department of Space, have been given the second-highest award of the nation—the Padma Vibhushan — on the occasion of Republic Day. The highest honour — Bharat Ratna — has not been awarded to anyone this year. Nine Padma Bhushans have been awarded. This includes filmmaker Mrinal Sen, Abid Ali Khan, a journalist of Andhra Pradesh, is one of the 28 recipients of the Padma Shri award.

The photo above is from the January 27, 1981, edition. The stories above are from the January 26 edition.

A widening learning gap

Children from economically weaker backgrounds have fallen behind as classes shifted to the digital mode during the pandemic. Remedial action involving parents, community and schools is urgent



WILIMA WADHWA

IN INDIA, school closures post the spread of the pandemic started as early as March 2020. As months went by, concerns increased: Would learning levels drop, existing inequalities deepen? The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER 2020 Wave 1) conducted in September 2020, focused on a nationally representative sample of rural children and their access to learning opportunities during the period when schools were still closed. State governments as well as private schools tried to provide learning materials in a variety of ways. However, not much was known about whether children were receiving this material and how they engaged with it. Moving forward, it is critical to understand what worked, and for whom. And to understand if this shift to remote learning will widen the digital divide and accentuate equity issues in learning.

It is well established that children from economically weaker backgrounds have lower learning outcomes. For instance, children from poorer households tend to have less educated parents who are unable to provide learning support like in richer households. Parents support their children's learning in many ways — helping with homework, sending children to tutors or private schools, and spending more time with children. All these inputs contribute to the overall development of the child. Remote learning opens up another channel that widens the learning disadvantage of relatively poorer children. These children may not have access to devices like computers, tablets, smartphones etc. that are needed for remote learning and, therefore, may not be able to access the opportunities provided during the pandemic.

ASER 2020 has found that children with low parental education are less likely to have a smartphone — 45 per cent as compared to 79 per cent of children with high parental education. Such families are also more likely to send their children to government schools — 84 per cent compared to 54 per cent for children with more educated parents. Further, only 55 per cent of children with low parental education received any learning support at home compared to almost 90 per cent of children with high parental education.

What about other learning resources, like availability of textbooks and access to private tuition? Here the gap is much smaller: 28 per cent children with low parental education took private tuition compared to 33 per cent with high parental education. Similarly, there was not much difference in access to textbooks — 79 per cent versus 83 per cent. This is understandable as most state governments made a big push to get textbooks to children during the lockdown.

Other than textbooks, school systems shared a variety of learning materials during the pandemic. Overall, only about 35 per cent children reported receiving any learning material (other than textbooks) from their school in the week prior to the survey. However, only 23 per cent children with low parental education received any material as compared to 49 per cent of children with high parental education. There could be a variety of reasons for this large gap in access. First, as noted earlier, a majority of children at the lower end of the income distribution are enrolled in government schools and



CR Sasikumar

these schools were slightly less successful at distributing learning materials (other than textbooks) as compared to private schools — 33 per cent children in government schools reported receiving learning materials as compared to 40 per cent in private schools.

Second, while schools used a variety of ways to share material and activities such as phone messages, messenger apps, in-person visits and phone calls, 87 per cent of children received learning material via one medium, predominantly WhatsApp (72 per cent). Again, with a majority (55 per cent) of children in relatively poorer households not having a smartphone, their access to whatever learning material being distributed in this mode was limited.

Although there has been a lot of public discussion on digital modes of education for school children, online and video classes catered largely to urban or educated elite populations whose children went to private schools. Among the learning materials and resources shared by schools, the closest thing to "instruction" were online videos/classes. With limited access to digital devices, it is not surprising that less than 5 per cent of rural children with low parental education attended online classes as compared to 20 per cent of rural children with high parental education. In other words, apart from having a textbook, children whose parents had little or no education, who most likely had learning deficits to start with, were pretty much left to their own devices. In fact, 40 per cent of these children did not engage in any kind of learning activity in the reference week, as compared to 20 per cent of the children with more educated parents.

It is clear that all children will need some

remediation as and when schools open. However, children from disadvantaged backgrounds, typically studying in government schools, will need more help. According to ASER 2018, the proportion of children in Class 5, with low parental education, who could read a Class 2 level text was 35 per cent as compared to 70 per cent of children with high parental education. So, not only did these children have limited access to learning materials during the school closures, they also started with a much larger learning deficit. By implication, children who had lower learning levels to start with will experience greater learning losses due to limited access to learning resources during this period. This, in turn, will lead to a widening gap between children from poorer backgrounds as compared to more well-off children.

States may use this opportunity to put in focused remedial instruction in school. ASER 2020 shows how families and communities stepped in during the pandemic. Today, parents are more educated than ever before — more than 75 per cent children have at least one parent with more than primary school education. ASER 2020 shows 75 per cent children receive some kind of help from a family member in studying at home. Also, the community can play a larger role. During the school closures, almost 70 per cent of school respondents reported getting help from a variety of community members to reach out and support children. This narrowing of distance between school, home and community is a welcome step and needs to continue even after schools reopen.

The writer is head, ASER Centre

Bridge to an earlier Hindutva

NM Ghatare's life mirrored the 20th century journey of Hindu nationalism

VINAY SITAPATI

N M GHATARE, known as "Appa" to friends and family, passed away on Sunday. He was 83. His obituaries refer to him as once "vice-chairman of the Law Commission" — a non-job if there ever was one. It obscures what made him significant.

Ghatare was born into RSS blue-blood in the early decades of the organisation. The top brass then was from a closely-knit circle of lower middle-class Nagpur families. Not only were they Maharashtra Brahmins, they came from two sub-castes, Deshasheb and Karhade. Ghatare's father, Babasaheb, was from one such family and was an early leader in the Hindu Mahasabha as well as the RSS.

This itself was an act of reconciliation. During those initial years — the 1930s and 1940s — the Mahasabha was a party pursuing votes under British-controlled elections. The RSS, on the other hand, stayed away from politics. Theirs was a distance made longer by the unease between Mahasabha head V D Savarkar and the RSS's Guru Golwalkar. But it was men like Babasaheb Ghatare who ensured no rupture. He stood by Golwalkar after his contentious elevation in 1940 after the first RSS head died in Ghatare's bare-

brick-and-stone bungalow. But he managed to manage Savarkar too. When Savarkar would visit Nagpur, it was in that very bungalow that he would stay.

It was from such a Sangh Parivar family that Appa Ghatare emerged. As a young man in his twenties in 1957, he was sent to study law in Delhi. His journey mirrored Hindu nationalism's own. For the RSS had since established a new political party, the Jana Sangh, during a meeting between Golwalkar and Syama Prasad Mookerjee in 1951 — yet again, this took place in Ghatare's house. And so, it was not natural that Appa Ghatare initially stayed with the 34-year-old first-time Jana Sangh MP, Atal Bihari Vajpayee. He also got to know Lal Krishna Advani, deputed at that very time to be Vajpayee's secretary.

From then on, Ghatare remained close to both. He eventually edited a multi-volume book of Vajpayee's speeches in Parliament. "He was Atalji's Hanuman," someone close to Vajpayee reminisces. He was also a friend to Advani; his wife Sheela assisted Advani in his parliamentary work from 1979 to 1989. The Ghatares would make it a point to attend every celebration at the Vajpayee and Advani

residences. And even when relations between Vajpayee and Advani frayed from 1998 to 2004, Ghatare was one of the few who wordlessly worked to suture the wounds.

Appa Ghatare's defining moment came during the Emergency from 1975 to 1977. With Jana Sangh and RSS leaders in jail, it fell on Ghatare to be their lawyer. And represent he did, running to courts challenging unjust laws, while running to jails to provide counsel. Letters written to him by those incarcerated are revealing. One such, by Advani, ends: "Regards for Sheela and love for the kids". In another, Advani writes: "Sorry for this shoddy scrap. We are required to write on these pro-formas. Always yours, Lal".

It says something of Ghatare that he never converted this warmth to political power. And much after Vajpayee and Advani left office, Ghatare stayed loyal. He refused to sideline Advani, unlike many others in Narendra Modi's BJP. And as Vajpayee spent his final decade an invalid, Ghatare was one of the few who would habitually call on his old friend.

What added to Ghatare's mystique was his association with V K Krishna Menon,

Jawaharlal Nehru's close friend. Sacked as defence minister after the failed 1962 China war, Krishna Menon began a career in the Supreme Court. Appa had by then studied law as well as gained a PhD in the US. He joined Krishna Menon as his legal junior, all the while remaining in Hindu nationalism. Like his father before him, Ghatare junior was at ease in smoothing creases.

Appa Ghatare was something of a scholar, writing his own books as well as aiding others to write theirs. I came to know him while researching my book on the BJP. He had just finished assisting the Congress's Jairam Ramesh on his Krishna Menon biography. Ghatare was now in the twilight of his life. But he did not exude the pomposity of those who once had power, or the rancour of those who never had it. He was content promoting friends rather than thrusting light onto himself. With his passing, the curtains draw ever closer on the 100 years of pre-Modi Hindutva.

Vinay Sitapati teaches at Ashoka University. He is the author, most recently of *Jugalbandi: BJP Before Modi*

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Moreover, while there has been mild criticism of India from Team Biden vis-à-vis New Delhi's actions in India-held Kashmir, Pakistan must remain vigilant and realistic, as the new American administration is unlikely to take India to task."

—DAWN

The right to life, and environment

The Constitution must guide us in crafting a distinctly Indian, climate-friendly development paradigm



SHLOKA NATH AND AARAN PATEL

and so easily remember when disaster and tragedy unite us into falling together. *Bandhuta* can particularly serve as a call to action for the powerful to direct their resources towards shaping India's response to climate change and "assuring the dignity of the individual", as framed in the Preamble. Indian business and philanthropy can play a key role in building resilience by encouraging innovation, complementing the role of the state, and securing citizens' legislated rights. Climate philanthropy can help develop and pilot new solutions and inspire ambitious political action. This is crucial in the narrow window available in the wake of the pandemic during which India can build a green and just transition. A plethora of opportunities are currently on the margins but could become mainstream drivers for the three key pillars of jobs, growth and sustainability.

A distinctly Indian, climate-friendly development paradigm powered by clean energy could play an integral role in fostering social and economic justice by uplifting millions of Indians. Imagine rural livelihoods supported by clean-energy appliances such as grain crushers and cold chains that build decentralised access to electricity, reduce drudgery and foster entrepreneurship. Envision pilot projects with urban bodies to create local area plans that develop more habitable cities with renewable energy-driven public transportation, more pedestrian access and rejuvenation of green spaces and water bodies. Picture how Indian businesses can become more competitive for investment, spur innovation and nudge a more conducive regulatory environment through adopting renewable energy.

Our nation's welfare depends on healing the broken relationship between a broken economy and a broken ecology. We must equip and encourage people to think about the future, as well as the privations of the present. As the Centre for Policy Research's Shibani Ghosh explains, the right to life enshrined in Article 21 is increasingly interpreted as a right to environment. When this is read together with Articles 48A and 51A(g), there is a clear constitutional mandate to protect the environment that will only grow more important in the coming decades for citizens and the executive, legislature and judiciary.

Central to these considerations is the need for a uniquely Indian climate narrative, one that is both by and for Indians. On January 26, 1950, when the Constitution came into effect, India stepped out of the shadow of the empire to become an independent republic with power held by its own citizens and elected representatives. Seventy-one years later, India can build its own pathway out of the pandemic to become a climate leader aiming to secure a future where both people and nature can thrive. Much of this work can be rooted in the constitutional framework that binds together millions of Indians despite their myriad differences — a framework that is progressive in scope and ambitious in vision.

Nath and Patel are executive director and engagement consultant respectively, India Climate Collaborative

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MUTED PARADE

THIS REFERS to the editorial, 'The Republic Day' (IE, January 26). The country is celebrating Republic Day amid the shadow of the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, a parallel parade of tractors by farmers on Delhi roads against the new farm laws will compete for our attention. The protest has earned the backing of all sections of society. The pandemic and the protest have made the celebrations this year shine a little less.

Sanjay Chopra, Mohali

UNREPUBLICAN

THIS REFERS to the article, 'R-Day walk in heaven' (IE, January 26). Technically speaking, India is still a republic. Yet, the values on which it was founded have eroded — this is not a country that Nehru, Subhas Bose or Gandhi would recognise. It has become a hard, uncaring, parochial, violent and bigoted society. Perhaps, this is who we are as a people, and the Golwalkarites and Savarkarites have merely brought out the reality of this country. The difference between the architects of India's freedom — in which the saffron brigade played little part — and the champions of India is that the former wanted a patriotic citizenry, the latter want nationalists. The love for one's country, where criticism and desire to see its people do better, is patriotism. Blind worship, often led by demagogues serving ideological ends, is the nationalism of today.

Biswadeep Chatterjee, Delhi

IDEAS ONLINE

ONLY IN THE EXPRESS

● LESSONS IN RESISTANCE: JAVEED IQBAL WANI AND L DAVID LAL

● INDIA, NEPAL AND THE LIVES ON THE GROUND: TRIPU KAUR AND PARTHA PRATIM CHAKRABORTY

www.indianexpress.com

COLLEGES OF CASTE

THIS REFERS to the article, 'The injustice of merit' (IE, January 25). The piece revealed the pernicious casteism prevalent at IIT Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh. This is not an isolated phenomenon. In fact, the scenario is more or less the same in most institutes of higher learning in India. It is a kind of social ragging that never ends. It is a reflection of the unjust and inequitable social relations based on caste hierarchy in Hindu society. It is worth remembering that "reservation" has not given birth to caste discrimination, it is the other way round. Broadening the social diversity of faculty has been found to be of some help.

L R Murmu, Delhi



VINAY SITAPATI

N M GHATARE, known as "Appa" to friends and family, passed away on Sunday. He was 83. His obituaries refer to him as once "vice-chairman of the Law Commission" — a non-job if there ever was one. It obscures what made him significant.

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This itself was an act of reconciliation. During those initial years — the 1930s and 1940s — the Mahasabha was a party pursuing votes under British-controlled elections. The RSS, on the other hand, stayed away from politics. Theirs was a distance made longer by the unease between Mahasabha head V D Savarkar and the RSS's Guru Golwalkar. But it was men like Babasaheb Ghatare who ensured no rupture. He stood by Golwalkar after his contentious elevation in 1940 after the first RSS head died in Ghatare's bare-

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THE INDIAN EXPRESS, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2021

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If there are questions of current or contemporary relevance that you would like explained, please write to explained@indianexpress.com

SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

In Budget, disinvestment and borrowings

Why asset sale targets are important

Despite favourable market conditions, the government has raised less than 3% of budgeted revenues from disinvestment. As a result, fiscal deficit for the current year is set to worsen.

NUSAIBA IQBAL
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 26

PRESENTING THE Union Budget last year, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had surprised everyone when she announced a disinvestment target of Rs 2.1 lakh crore.

As annual targets go, this was easily three to four times the usual targeted amount. Given its size, it was a vital element in the government's strategy to keep its fiscal deficit under check. However, the tardy pace of sales of these public assets during the year implies that the government is unlikely to meet its target.

What is disinvestment?

The Union government invests in several public sector undertakings (PSUs) such as Air India, Bharat Petroleum, Delhi Metro Rail Corporation etc. Since it is the majority shareholder (meaning that it owns more than 51% of the shares), the Centre can raise money through the liquidation of its shareholding in these PSUs.



BUDGET '21
COUNTDOWN
IN & OUT OF COVID SHADOW

Such asset sales can either reduce the government's share — like when it attempted to do with the public listing of Life Insurance Corporation in 2020 — or it can also transfer the ownership of the firm altogether to the highest bidder — as it did with Bharat Aluminium Company, which was sold to the Vedanta group in 2001.

Why are PSUs up for sale?

Broadly speaking there are two main motivations behind disinvesting in PSUs. One is to improve the overall efficiency of their functioning. As PSUs, they are managed by the government on a daily basis. But in doing so, there are chances of political considerations overshadowing economic and corporate interests. This is especially true when the PSU transacts with the government — for ex-

ample when it sells its products and services to the government, the pricing may be influenced by factors other than market factors.

By disinvesting (or reducing the government stake), an attempt is made to make such a PSU more efficient as it would not be accountable to people and entities other than the government. The underlying hope is that private or corporate ownership will result in more efficient management.

The second factor is the government's need to plug its deficit. Indian governments perennially run budget deficits. In other words, the government is unable to meet its expenditures just from its tax revenues. In times of extreme monetary stress, governments have thought of selling off their stake in PSUs to raise funds and meet the gap between its expenses and revenues. Before economic liberalisation, such efforts to monetise government's assets were criticised as selling the family silver. But post-liberalisation, reducing government stake, especially in sectors — such as the strategic sectors like defence — where government presence is not necessary, disinvestment is welcomed.

With the proceeds of these sales, the government can reduce its debt liabilities and raise money for investments in other parts of the economy — such as building infrastructure in the form of new roads and bridges or increased spending on providing welfare to the poor and needy in the country.

How are these revenues generated?

All PSUs work under different departments and ministries within the government. However, the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) under the Ministry of Finance is tasked with managing the Centre's investments in the PSUs. Sale of the Centre's assets falls within the mandate of DIPAM.

Each year, the Finance Minister sets a "disinvestment target". Accordingly, bids are in-



A big chunk of the current financial year's disinvestment target was expected to come from the public listing of LIC. Express Archive

DISINVESTMENT TARGETS, RARELY ACHIEVED

YEAR	DISINVESTMENT TARGET (BE, Rs CRORE)	ACTUAL DISINVESTMENT RECEIPTS (Rs CRORE)	ACTUALS AS A PROPORTION OF BE (%)
2006-2007	3840	0	0.00
2007-2008	41651	3392	8.14
2008-2009	1165	2	0.17
2009-2010	1120	4306	384.46
2010-2011	40000	22275	55.69
2011-2012	40000	1145	2.86
2012-2013	30000	2193	7.31
2013-2014	40000	1589	3.97
2014-2015	43425	222	0.51
2015-2016	41000	12853	31.35
2016-2017	36000	21433	59.54
2017-2018	100000	100195	100.20
2018-2019	80000	85045	106.31
2019-2020	105000	50304	47.91
2020-2021	210000	6179	2.94

Source: CGA

vited, or as in the case of LIC, public offerings are made and the PSU is privatised partially or fully.

Are disinvestment targets met? Will it be met in 2020-21?

The table alongside shows the government's performance in meeting its disinvestment target over the past 15 years. Except in a few years, the government has failed to raise as much money as it wanted at the start of the year.

The current year was particularly poor in this regard. According to the latest data on the Controller General of Accounts (CGA) website, only Rs 6,179 crore of the total budgeted amount for 2020-21 — that is, less than 3% of the targeted revenues — have been generated through disinvestment as of November 2020.

This is despite there being an appetite for

public assets in the market.

An about-turn in the disinvestment situation seems unlikely even in favourable market conditions, according to Dr Rathin Roy of the Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi. "It is surprising and unfortunate that despite favourable market conditions, it appears that the central government will yet again fail to meet its disinvestment targets in any substantial way," he said.

What are the implications of this shortfall for the Centre's finances?

According to CGA, as of November, the Centre's fiscal deficit had overshot its target by 35%. Of course, not all of the slippage would be due to the lack of revenues from disinvestment, but with 97% of the biggest target ever still unrealised till November, it is a matter of concern.

NUSAIBA IQBAL

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 26

ONE OF the most sought after details in any Union Budget is the level of fiscal deficit. It is essentially the gap between what the central government spends and what it earns. In other words, it is the level of borrowings by the Union government.

This number is the most important metric to understand the financial health of any government's finances. As such, it is keenly watched by rating agencies — both inside and outside the country. That is why most governments want to restrict their fiscal deficit to a respectable number.

One of the ways to do this is by resorting to "off-budget borrowings". Such borrowings are a way for the Centre to finance its expenditures while keeping the debt off the books — so that it is not counted in the calculation of fiscal deficit.

What are off-budget borrowings?

According to the last Budget documents, in the current financial year the Centre was set to borrow Rs 5.36 lakh crore. However, this figure did not include the loans that public sector undertakings were supposed to take on their behalf or the deferred payments of bills and loans by the Centre. These items constitute the "off-budget borrowings" because these loans and deferred payments are not part of the fiscal deficit calculation.

This year was no exception. Every year, the Finance Minister announces the quantum of funds that will be raised by the government by borrowing from the market. This amount and the interest due on it is reflected in the government debt.

Off-budget borrowings are loans that are taken not by the Centre directly, but by another public institution which borrows on the directions of the central government. Such borrowings are used to fulfil the government's expenditure needs.

But since the liability of the loan is not formally on the Centre, the loan is not included in the national fiscal deficit. This helps keep the country's fiscal deficit within acceptable limits.

As a result, as a Comptroller and Auditor

General report of 2019 points out, this route of financing puts major sources of funds outside the control of Parliament. "Such off-budget financing is not part of the calculation of the fiscal indicators despite fiscal implications," said the report.

How are off-budget borrowings raised?

The government can ask an implementing agency to raise the required funds from the market through loans or by issuing bonds. For example, food subsidy is one of the major expenditures of the Centre. In the Budget presentation for 2020-21, the government paid only half the amount budgeted for the food subsidy bill to the Food Corporation of India. The shortfall was met through a loan from the National Small Savings Fund. This allowed the Centre to halve its food subsidy bill from Rs 15,100 crore to Rs 7,892 crore in 2020-21.

Other public sector undertakings have also borrowed for the government. For instance, public sector oil marketing companies were asked to pay for subsidised gas cylinders for Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana beneficiaries in the past.

Public sector banks are also used to fund off-budget expenses. For example, loans from PSU banks were used to make up for the shortfall in the release of fertiliser subsidy.

If these numbers were included, what would the government fiscal deficit look like?

"If we consider the amount borrowed from the NSSF only for this year, the fiscal deficit will go up by Rs 40,000 to Rs 50,000 crore in absolute terms," said Professor N R Bhanumurthy, Vice-Chancellor of B R Ambedkar School of Economics, Bengaluru.

In addition to the borrowings by PSUs, the actual liabilities of the government would include loans taken for the recapitalisation of banks and capital expenditures of the Ministries of Railways and Power.

Given the various sources of off-budget borrowing, the true debt is difficult to calculate. For instance, it was widely reported that in July 2019, just three days after the presentation of the Budget, the CAG pegged the actual fiscal deficit for 2017-18 at 5.85% of GDP instead of the government version of 3.46%.

In Bombay High Court verdict on sexual assault, the issue of mandatory minimum sentencing

APURVA VISHWANATH

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 26

THE BOMBAY High Court has acquitted a man of sexual assault charges under the Prevention of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act for groping a child, and instead convicted him under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) for a lesser offence. Justice Pushpa V Ganeshwala said the allegation was not serious enough for the greater punishment prescribed under the law. The ruling, which drew criticism for its restricted interpretation of the offence, spotlights the concept of mandatory minimum sentencing in legislation, including POCSO.

What was this case about? The Nagpur Bench of the Bombay High Court reversed the decision of a sessions court which had convicted 39-year-old Bandu Ragde under Section 8 of the POCSO Act, and sentenced him to three years in jail. Section 8 prescribes the punishment for the offence of sexual assault defined in Section 7 of the Act.

The convict was accused of luring the 12-year-old prosecutrix to his house on the pretext of giving her a guava, and pressing her breast and attempting to remove her salwar.

The High Court upheld the conviction under sections that carry a lesser minimum sentence of one year under the Indian Penal Code, including outraging the modesty of a woman.

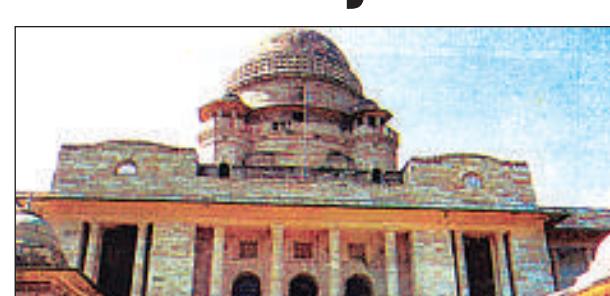
Why did the High Court acquit the man of charges under the POCSO Act?

The court reasoned that since the offence under POCSO carried a higher punishment, a conviction would require a higher standard of proof, and allegations that were more serious.

Section 7 of the Act says "Whoever, with sexual intent touches the vagina, penis, anus or breast of the child or makes the child touch the vagina, penis, anus or breast of such person or any other person or does any other act with sexual intent..."

The court said that since the convict groped the prosecutrix over her clothes, this indirect contact would not constitute sexual assault.

Is such a reading of the law unusual?



Nagpur Bench of Bombay HC reversed a lower court ruling and convicted the accused under a less stringent section.

Such restrictive reading is not uncommon, especially in POCSO cases.

In *State v Bijender* (2014), a Delhi court acquitted a man under the POCSO Act and instead convicted him of IPC offences. A seven-year-old girl had testified that the convict took her into the bathroom by force, slapped her, and tore her jeans. The Special Court held that the act of tearing the clothes of the victim did not constitute physical contact even if sexual intent was present.

This was despite the recognition of "any other act with sexual intent which involves physical contact without penetration" to be sexual assault under Section 7 of POCSO. The court reasoned that since the accused did not touch the vagina, penis or breasts of the child, the latter part of the section could not be invoked. The court restrictively interpreted the lack of physical contact with sexual organs to mean that there was no physical contact.

What is a mandatory minimum sentence?

Section 8 of the POCSO Act carries a sentence of rigorous imprisonment of three to five years. However, imposing the minimum sentence is mandatory. Where a statute has prescribed a minimum sentence, courts do not have the discretion to pass lighter sentences irrespective of any specific circumstances that the case or the convict might present.

Minimum sentences have been prescribed for all sexual offences under the POCSO Act barring the offence of sexual harassment. In a 2001 ruling, the Supreme Court held that where the mandate of the law is clear and un-

ambiguous, the court has no option but to pass the sentence upon conviction as provided under the statute. "The mitigating circumstances in a case, if established, would authorise the court to pass such sentence of imprisonment or fine which may be deemed to be reasonable but not less than the minimum prescribed under an enactment," the court said in *State of J&K v Vinay Nanda*.

Why do some legislation prescribe a mandatory minimum sentence?

A mandatory sentence is prescribed to underline the seriousness of the offence, and is often claimed to act as a deterrent to crime. In 2013, criminal law reforms introduced in the aftermath of the 2012 Delhi gangrape prescribed mandatory minimum sentences for criminal use of force and outraging the modesty of a woman, among other charges.

Mandatory minimum sentences are also prescribed in some cases to remove the scope for arbitrariness by judges using their discretion. For example, the punishment for a crime under IPC Section 124A (Sedition) is "imprisonment for life, to which fine may be added, or...imprisonment which may extend to three years, to which fine may be added, or...fine", which leaves room for vast discretion with judges.

What are the criticisms of mandatory sentencing?

Studies have shown that mandatory sentencing in laws lead to fewer convictions, because when judges perceive that the punishment for the offence is harsh, they might prefer

to acquit the accused instead. After conviction, a separate hearing is conducted to award sentence, in which aspects such as the accused being a first-time offender with potential for reformation or being the sole breadwinner of the family, or the accused's age and social background, or the seriousness of the offence, etc., are considered. The absence of the opportunity to consider such factors, and instead prescribe a mandatory sentence, pushes judges in some cases towards acquitting the accused.

A 2016 report on the 'Study on the Working of Special Courts under the POCSO Act in Delhi' by the Centre for Child Law at the National Law School of India University, Bengaluru, has highlighted the reluctance of courts in convicting under sections that carry a mandatory minimum sentence.

The study noted: "Some within the legal fraternity were of the view that minimum sentences under the POCSO Act are very high. An example, one respondent shared that the minimum punishment for sexual assault and aggravated sexual assault is high. 'Should a 21-year-old be imprisoned for three years for forcibly kissing a girl? He will become a criminal in jail. No point in packing our jail with adolescents.' Another respondent was of the view that probation should be used in cases of statutory rape where the accused is between 18-22 years. One respondent also felt that the Act should provide sentencing discretion to judges."

In its 2016 book *Discretion, Discrimination and the Rule of Law: Reforming Rape Sentencing in India*, Mrinal Satish, professor of Law at NLSIU, argued that when mandatory sentencing regimes are put in place to remove judicial discretion, the discretion merely shifts within the system to the police, but is not removed.

So what is the way forward?

Legal experts have argued that mandatory sentences are counterproductive to the aim of reducing crime or acting as a deterrent. Instead of harsher punishment, they recommend judicial reform that makes the sentencing process more accountable and transparent. This would include holding transparent proceedings for sentencing, recording specific reasons for punishment in rulings, etc.

CORONAVIRUS DASHBOARD

COVID-19 VACCINE TRACKER

What early data on Israel's vaccination strategy show

PRABHA RAGHAVAN
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 26



Bobi Wine

UGANDA

Blockade of
oppn leader's
home lifted

Kampala: Ugandan troops have withdrawn from around the home of opposition leader and pop star Bobi Wine, ending his house arrest since a Jan. 14 election won by long-serving President Yoweri Museveni. With the vote behind him and fraud claims by Wine failing to gain significant traction, Museveni appears to be calculating that he can mollify pressure from Western allies to free his rival without significant risk to his power base. The withdrawal of security forces, which the government had said were for Wine's own protection, complied with a court order Monday. **REUTERS**

NORWAY

Privacy breach:
Grindr to be
fined \$11.7m

London: Gay dating app Grindr faces a fine of more than \$10 million from Norwegian regulators for failing to get consent from users before sharing their personal information with advertising companies, in breach of stringent European Union privacy rules. The Norwegian data privacy watchdog said Tuesday that it notified Grindr LLC of its draft decision to issue a fine for 100 million Norwegian krone (\$11.7 million), equal to 10% of the U.S. company's global revenue. Norway isn't a member of the EU but closely mirrors the bloc's rules and regulations.

AP

SEOUL

Seoul ex-mayor
sexually harassed
secy, says report

Seoul: A top human rights watchdog in South Korea has released a report confirming that the former mayor of Seoul, who disappeared in July only to later be found dead, had sexually harassed a secretary. The National Human Rights Commission led an investigation into the allegations against the former mayor, Park Won-soon, whose body was found on a wooded hill in Seoul just one day after one of his secretaries filed a police report accusing him of making unwanted physical advances and sending her obscene messages and photos late at night. **NYT**

Sri Lanka panel
to look for
solution to stop
poaching by
Indian fishermen**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**
COLOMBO, JANUARY 26

THE SRI Lankan government has appointed a three-member committee which will make recommendations on measures to stop poaching by Indian fishermen inside the country's waters, the Ministry of Fisheries said on Tuesday, a week after four people were killed when an Indian trawler capsized after colliding with a Sri Lankan Navy vessel.

Fisheries Minister Douglas Devananda has appointed the committee of senior officials from his ministry who would be talking to all stakeholders to try and find a permanent solution to this recurring issue, officials said.

Last week, India lodged a strong protest with Sri Lanka over the death of four fishermen in a collision between their vessel and a naval craft of the island nation, saying steps should be taken to ensure that such incidents do not recur. India expressed "deep anguish" over the incident and emphasised the need to deal with issues pertaining to fishermen in a humanitarian manner.

ELISABETTA POVOLEDO
ROME, JANUARY 26

PRIME MINISTER Giuseppe Conte of Italy resigned on Tuesday after weeks of political infighting, thrusting the country into renewed instability as the coronavirus pandemic ravages lives and livelihoods.

The latest political crisis caught many off guard as the country struggles to cope with the virus, which has already killed more than 85,000 in Italy. As in the rest of Europe, Italy's immunization campaign has been held up by production delays for the vaccine developed by Pfizer and BioNTech. At the current pace, it would take almost five years to vaccinate the majority of Italians, according to the most recent data.

Mr. Conte is serving his second consecutive stint as prime minister — first as the head of an alliance of right-wing nationalists and populists, and then leading a coalition of populists and the center-left establishment that focused almost exclusively on the pandemic.

A change in government would likely shift attention back to issues that have been put on a

back burner during the coronavirus crisis, including a more forceful crackdown on illegal immigration, which has slowed dramatically because of the virus.

Mr. Conte met with his cabinet early Tuesday before informing President Sergio Mattarella of his resignation.

Mr. Mattarella will hold consultations with parliamentary leaders on Wednesday afternoon and Thursday morning to determine whether Mr. Conte or someone else could garner enough support to govern, or whether early elections would be the only option.

Opposition parties have been clamoring for elections, which would otherwise be two years away. Polls indicate that nationalist parties would be the likely winners in a new vote.

Mr. Conte stepped down after failing to cobble together enough senators to support his government. Two weeks ago, he lost the support of Italia Viva, the political party of former Prime Minister Matteo Renzi.

The principal partners of Mr. Conte's 17-month-old coalition have reiterated their support for the prime minister. **NYT**

Police officers separate members of far-right group Proud Boys and counter protesters in Washington. **Reuters file**Healthcare workers prepare to treat patients at a Covid emergency hospital in Jakarta, Indonesia. **Reuters**WHO issues new clinical advice
on treating Covid-19 patients**REUTERS**
GENEVA, JANUARY 26REGENERON STUDY SHOWS ANTIBODY COCKTAIL
EFFECTIVE IN PREVENTING COVID INFECTION

London: Regeneron Pharmaceuticals Inc said on Tuesday its antibody cocktail was found effective in preventing Covid-19 in people exposed to those infected with the new coronavirus in an ongoing late stage trial. The two-antibody cocktail, REGEN-COV, caused a

100% reduction in symptomatic infection and roughly 50% lower overall rates of infection, based on an early analysis of 400 participants in the trial who had a household member with Covid-19. Full data from the trial is expected early in the second quarter. **REUTERS**

dose anti-coagulants to prevent blood clots forming in blood vessels. We suggest the use of lower doses rather than higher doses because higher doses may lead to other problems," Harris said.

She added that a WHO-led team of independent experts, currently in the central Chinese city of Wuhan where the first human cases were detected in December 2019, is due to leave quarantine in the next two days to pursue its work with Chinese

researchers on the virus origins. She declined to comment on reports of delays in roll-out of vaccines in the European Union. She said she had no specific data and the WHO's priority was for health workers in all countries to be vaccinated in the first 100 days of the year.

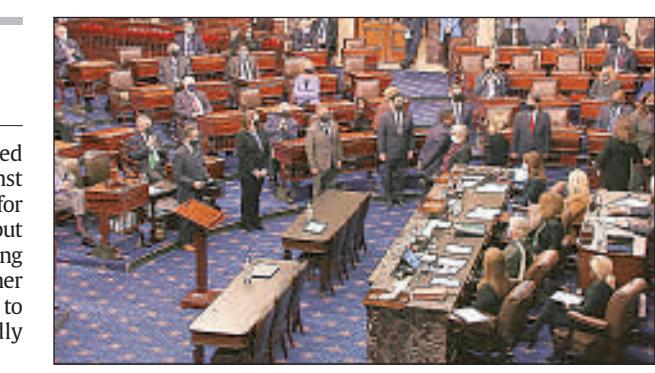
AstraZeneca, which developed its shot with Oxford University, told the EU on Friday it could not meet agreed supply targets up to the end of March.

Stop hoarding
vaccines, S Africa
President tells
rich nations**REUTERS**
JOHANNESBURG, JANUARY 26

SOUTH AFRICAN President Cyril Ramaphosa on Tuesday urged wealthy countries not to hoard surplus doses of Covid-19 vaccine, saying the world needed to come together to fight the pandemic.

South Africa has recorded nearly half the coronavirus deaths in Africa, and the continent as a whole is struggling to secure sufficient vaccines to start country-wide inoculation programmes for its 1.3 billion people.

"We need those who have hoarded the vaccines to release the vaccines so that other countries can have them," Ramaphosa told a virtual meeting of the World Economic Forum. "The rich countries of the world went out and acquired large doses... Some countries even acquired up to four times what their population needs... to the exclusion of other countries."

House impeachment managers arrive in the Senate chamber on Monday. **Senate Television via AP**Trump impeachment
goes to Senate, tests
his sway over GOP**LISA MASCARO &
MARY CLARE JALONICK**
WASHINGTON, JANUARY 26

HOUSE DEMOCRATS delivered the impeachment case against Donald Trump to the Senate for the start of his historic trial, but Republican senators were easing off their criticism of the former president and shunning calls to convict him over the deadly siege at the US Capitol.

The nine House prosecutors carried the sole impeachment charge of "incitement of insurrection" across the Capitol on Monday night, making a solemn and ceremonial march to the Senate along the same halls the rioters ransacked just weeks ago.

But Republican denunciations of Trump have cooled since the Jan. 6 riot. Instead Republicans are presenting a tangle of legal arguments against the legitimacy of the trial and questioning whether Trump's repeated demands to overturn Joe Biden's election really amounted to incitement.

What seemed for some Democrats like an open-and-shut case that played out for the world on live television, as Trump encouraged a rally mob to "fight like hell" for his presidency, is running into a Republican Party that feels very differently. Not only are there legal concerns, but senators are wary of crossing the former president and his legions of followers — who are their voters.

Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, asked if Congress starts holding

impeachment trials of former officials, what's next? "Could we go back and try President Obama?"
Arguments in the Senate trial

will begin the week of Feb. 8, and the case against Trump, the first former president to face impeachment trial, will test a political party still sorting itself out for the post-Trump era. Republican senators are balancing the demands of deep-pocketed donors who are distancing themselves from Trump and voters who demand loyalty to him. One Republican, Sen. Rob Portman of Ohio, announced Monday he would not seek re-election in 2022, citing the polarized political atmosphere.

For Democrats the tone, tenor and length of the upcoming trial, so early in Biden's presidency, poses its own challenge, forcing them to strike a balance between their vow to hold Trump accountable and their eagerness to deliver on the new administration's priorities following their sweep of control of the House, Senate and White House. **AP**

Janet Yellen becomes
US's first woman
treasury secretary**THE NEW YORK TIMES**

WASHINGTON, JANUARY 26

THE ACTING

chief of the Capitol Police apologized to Congress on Tuesday for the agency's massive security failures on Jan. 6, acknowledging during a closed-door briefing that the department knew there was a "strong potential for violence" but failed to take adequate steps to prevent what she described as a "terrorist attack."

Yogananda D. Pittman, the acting chief of police, also confirmed that the Capitol Police Board, an obscure panel made up of three voting members, had initially declined a request two days earlier for National Guard troops and then delayed for more than an hour as the violence unfolded on Jan. 6 before finally agreeing to a plea from the Capitol Police for National Guard troops, according to prepared testimony obtained by *The New York Times*.

In an extraordinary admission, Ms. Pittman, who was not the acting chief at the time of the siege, told members of the House Appropriations Committee, which oversees funding for the agency, that the Capitol Police "failed to meet its own high standards as well as yours."

Ms. Yellen now faces a new and considerable challenge. As Treasury secretary, she will be responsible for helping Mr. Biden prepare the \$1.9 trillion stimulus package he has proposed, steer it through Congress and — if it is approved — oversee the deployment of trillions of dollars of relief money.

The magnitude of the task became clear over the weekend, as a bipartisan group of senators met virtually with senior White House officials on Sunday and expressed doubt that such a large package was necessary. Lawmakers in both parties raised the prospect of curtailing elements of the proposal, including the eligibility for a suggested round of \$1,400 checks to individuals and ensuring that a more targeted distribution of additional aid, according to multiple people familiar with the discussion. They also asked the White House to provide data that would justify the proposed spending, which includes \$350 billion in state and local aid and \$130 billion to reopen schools shuttered by the pandemic.

"The relief bill late last year was just a down payment to get us through the next few months," Ms. Yellen said. "We have a long way to go before our economy fully recovers." **NYT**

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It is not the first time Telegram has had to contend with unsavory characters taking advantage of the same features that draw in democracy activists. After a similar crackdown by Twitter on Islamist radicals a few years ago, the Islamic State migrated to Telegram and used it to orchestrate terrorist attacks, spread propaganda and find recruits.

Several attacks in France were carried out by Islamic State

Telegram, pro-democracy tool, struggles over new fans from far right

MICHAEL SCHWIRTZ
NEW YORK, JANUARY 26

THE MESSAGING app Telegram has long been an engine of resistance and an annoyance for tyrants. Authoritarian leaders in Russia and Iran have tried to ban it. When protests broke out recently in Belarus and Hong Kong, Telegram was the glue that held democracy movements together in the face of violent onslaughts by powerful security services.

These days, though, Telegram is quickly becoming an online refuge for a different kind of resistance. Far-right conspiracy theorists, racists and violent insurrectionists have been flocking to Telegram in recent weeks after being banished from the big

With Washington and the rest

of the United States on high alert after the Capitol violence, some fear that the features that make Telegram a popular tool for organizing resistance to authoritarian regimes could be used by the far-right and extreme supporters of Mr. Trump to cause further mayhem. Already the FBI has warned police chiefs across the country to be on the lookout for potential attacks by armed militia groups and racist extremists.

"There's a real push and pull between the people that are using Telegram — and messengers like it — for good, and the people who are using them to undermine democracy," said Nina Jankowicz, a disinformation analyst at the Wilson Center, a nonpartisan research group. "We see the same openness and sense of connection that is used by dem-

ocratic activists opportunistically exploited by extremists."

Mr. Durov initially welcomed the influx of users and criticized the big American competitors for the expulsions, suggesting they were an effort to limit free speech. Last Monday, though,

Mr. Durov announced that his team had blocked hundreds of posts from American channels calling for violence ahead of the presidential inauguration.

"For the last two weeks, the world has been following the events in the United States with concern," Mr. Durov said in a post on his own Telegram channel. "While the US represents less than 2% of our user base, we at Telegram have also been watching the situation closely."

Mr. Durov said that 94 percent of Telegram's 25 million new users came from Asia, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East and North Africa.

Some have come to Telegram out of privacy fears after WhatsApp informed its customers that it was sharing information with Facebook.

New Delhi

militants who used Telegram's encrypted chat function to coordinate their actions.

When the French authorities sought information about the attackers from Mr. Durov, he replied that secrecy protocols made getting user information impossible, even for Telegram employees.

Mr. Durov, an extreme libertarian who is often described as Russia's Mark Zuckerberg, has for years faced off against the Kremlin's efforts to silence him in his native Russia and now lives in self-imposed exile. He founded Telegram with his brother in 2013 as a digital outpost of free speech after the Kremlin stripped him of control over Vkontakte, a popular social media site he created as a Russian version of Facebook.



GOLD

₹48,509



RUPEE

₹72.94



OIL

\$55.98



SILVER

₹66,019

Note: Gold, silver rates at Delhi spot market; gold per 10 g, silver per 1 kg; Brent crude as of 0000 IST

SECTOR WATCH

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

CCI: Jurisdiction overlap ought to be harmonised for robust decisions

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 26

THE COMPETITION Commission of India (CCI) has called for formal and informal lines of communication between the Telecom Department, telecom sector regulator Trai, the antitrust body and the envisaged Data Protection Authority to ensure robust and consistent regulatory decisions in a "complex data-centric converged" telecom industry.

The CCI, in its key observations and findings of the telecom sector's market study conducted by ICRER, also notes the conflict between allowing access and protecting consumer privacy.

The competition regulator said that abuse of dominance can take the form of lowering the privacy protection and, therefore, fall within the ambit of antitrust as low privacy standard implies lack of consumer welfare.

"Privacy can take the form of non-price competition. In the era of data aggregation, competition analysis must also focus on the extent to which a consumer can 'freely consent' to action by a dominant player," the Competition Commission said in its report.

Further, according to a senior CCI official, the regulator is likely to look at solutions such as data portability as a means of ensuring that a few companies holding significant amount of data does not result in entry barriers for fresh entrants into this growing sector.

FEWER BARRIERS FOR NEWCOMERS



According to a senior CCI official, the competition regulator is likely to look at solutions such as data portability as a means of ensuring that a few companies holding significant amount of data does not result in entry barriers for fresh entrants into this growing sector

model.

To this extent, the competition watchdog has initiated another study on M&A deals in the digital markets to track the non-notified deals.

This is being done with an aim to identify trends and patterns of such transactions to provide an empirical basis for a legislative amendment to bring in the deal-value based threshold for the digital sector.

However, with regard to the telecom sector, the CCI has observed from the market study that the antitrust law framework is broad enough "to address the exploitative and exclusionary behaviour arising out of privacy standards, of entities commanding market power".

"While overlapping jurisdiction between institutions cannot be completely eliminated, it ought to be harmonised through better regulatory design and improved lines of communication," it noted, adding the CCI will remain the body to resolve antitrust and competition related issues.

WORKING GROUP SAYS NO TO STANDARDISED COVER FOR NOW

Irdai panel proposes norms for rising 'silent cyber risks'

GEORGE MATHEW
MUMBAI, JANUARY 26

WITH UNKNOWN cyber risks on the rise, the Working Group, set up by the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai), has proposed detailed regulations to address the issue.

"Insurers may place this matter (silent cyber issue) high on the agenda and address this problem sooner than later," the committee said in its report. In simple words, silent cyber is the unknown exposure in an insurer's portfolio created by a cyber peril, which has not been explicitly excluded or included. This is also known as "unintended" or "non-affirmative" cyber coverage. A cyber event can trigger losses across various lines of insurance.

"Cyber exposure is a concern for all underwriters. Cyber affirmative and silent covers are scattered in many different products beyond standalone ones. Cyber risk permeates all classes of insurance without boundaries of industries," it said. With technology improving and digital business expanding, silent cyber risks, involving unknown developments through the debit and credit cards, mobile phones and online deals, have raised concerns for insurers and the insured.

A cyber event can trigger losses across various lines of insurance — property damage and business interruption, resulting from computer systems failure

EXPLAINED

E What is this risk?

SILENT CYBER is the unknown exposure in an insurer's portfolio created by a cyber peril, which has not been explicitly excluded or included. This is also known as "unintended" or "non-affirmative" cyber coverage. A cyber event can trigger losses across various lines of insurance.

Further, the working group said many property and liability

insurance policies were designed when cyber wasn't perceived as a major risk. These policies often did not explicitly mention cyber coverage. While the insurance fraternity debated this issue as part of regular review of operations, albeit at a low volume, the devastating NotPetya attack and other high-profile cyber security events, in the recent past, have placed the issue high on the agenda for the insurance industry.

"Having recognized the need to avoid assumption of unintended exposures or losses, insurance regulators have also expressed concerns about lack of certainty in policy coverage and inadequate risk assessment, in response market has engaged a clarification process," it said.

The working group said it is neither desirable nor possible to standardise the cover at this juncture. "Nevertheless, insurers can build in certain minimum covers as a part of individual cyber insurance. The attached model policy wording can be considered by the insurance industry as a reference point to provide minimum basic coverage," it said.

Cyber insurance product is in a development phase, and standardisation of the cyber policy wordings for individuals may hamper the developments of this product in Indian market. It

is important now to focus on popularising the cyber insurance product, make it easier for insurer to adapt the product as per the customer requirements and continue to enrich customer's experience and protection, the panel said.

It said some of the ways financial fraud can be perpetrated is through phishing or spoofing attacks, malware or spyware, SIM swap (original SIM gets cloned and becomes invalid, and the duplicate SIM can be misused to access the user's online bank account to transfer funds), credential stuffing (compromising devices and stealing data), man-in-the-middle attacks during online payments or transactions, identity theft, card cloners or readers at ATM machines and as simple as imposters calling up unsuspecting individuals and asking their personal banking details, it said.

The safety of bank accounts and debit and credit card lies with the customer as well as the concerned bank. Taking the cognizance of the complaints related to unauthorised transactions, in July 2017, the RBI reviewed the criteria for determining customer liability in such cases and issued some directions. The RBI has also set forth the situations to establish liability of a customer.

'GDP TO CONTRACT AS MUCH AS 8% IN FY21'

India only key nation with double-digit growth in FY22: IMF

OVERVIEW OF WORLD ECONOMIC OUTLOOK PROJECTIONS

Nation	YEAR-OVER-YEAR (% CHANGE) PROJECTIONS	
	2021	2022
The United States	5.1	2.5
Germany	3.5	3.1
The UK	4.5	5.0
China	8.1	5.6
India*	11.5	6.8

*For India, data and forecasts are presented on a fiscal year basis and GDP from 2011 onward is based on GDP at market prices with fiscal year 2011/12 as a base year; source: IMF

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 26

'2021: Global economy likely to grow at 5.5%'

New Delhi: The global economy, ravaged by Covid-19, is projected to grow at 5.5 per cent in 2021 and 4.2 per cent in 2022, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said on Tuesday, revising up its earlier forecast of an 8.8 per cent expansion.

With this, India will emerge as the only key nation to record a double-digit growth and reclaim the status of the world's fastest-growing major economy, it added.

In its latest World Economic Outlook Update, released Tuesday, the IMF predicted that China would grow 8.1 per cent in 2021, followed by Spain (5.9 per cent) and France (5.5 per cent). China, which was the only major country to register a growth rate of 2.3 per cent in 2020, will expand 5.6 per cent in 2022, the IMF said.

Last October, it had projected an 8.8 per cent real GDP growth for India in FY22, highest globally. For the current fiscal, however, the IMF had forecast a record 10.3 per cent contraction.

IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva this month said India "actually has taken very decisive action, very decisive steps to deal with the pandemic and to deal with the eco-

nomic consequences of it".

"What we see is that transition, combined with policy support, seems to have worked well. Why? Because if you look at mobility indicators, we are almost where we were before Covid in India, meaning that economic activities have been revitalized quite significantly," Georgieva said.

The Finance Ministry had also exuded confidence that India would recover at a fast pace and reach pre-Covid levels by the end of this fiscal unless a second wave of cases was triggered by a fatigue with social distancing. FE

₹1,19,291 CRORE: VALUE OF 1,90,120 HOUSING UNITS, LAUNCHED IN 2013 AND BEFORE, THAT WERE STUCK IN DELHI-NCR AS OF 2020-END

HOUSING MARKET IN FIVE OTHER CITIES:

Bengaluru	Pune	Hyderabad
29,850 units worth ₹22,276 crore stuck	80,480 units worth ₹49,667 crore delayed	6,520 housing units worth ₹4,305 crore stuck
Chennai 5,940 units worth ₹3,886 crore stuck	Kolkata 9,180 units worth ₹5,436 crore delayed	



Why is it important: Project delays have been the bane of the Indian real estate sector over the last decade. Even the implementation of RERA had only a little impact on this

Source:
Anarock/PTI

BRIEFLY

Irdai: KYC for legal entities

New Delhi: The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (Irdai) has asked reporting entities to upload 'Know Your Customer' data pertaining to accounts of legal entities opened on or after April 1 onto Central KYC Registry (CKYR).

RBI: Overseas investment falls

Mumbai: Overseas investment by domestic companies fell by over 42 per cent to \$1.45 billion last December, as per Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data.

Petrol in Delhi tops ₹86 a litre

New Delhi: After a hike of 35 paise in fuel prices, petrol price Tuesday edged past ₹86 a litre mark in Delhi at ₹86.05 and was at ₹92.62 in Mumbai. Diesel in Delhi rose to ₹76.23 a litre. PTI

SoftBank telco names new CEO

Tokyo: SoftBank Corp, Japan's third-largest telco, will elevate chief technology officer Junichi Miyakawa to CEO. He replaces Ken Miyauchi, who will replace founder Masayoshi Son as the board chairman. REUTERS

'Pandemic has accelerated R&D processes across world'

NANDAGOPAL RAJAN
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 26

THE REMOTE collaboration between researchers necessitated by the pandemic has accelerated the R&D process across the world, according to Motoo Nishihara, executive vice president & chief technology officer, NEC Corporation. NEC, a 120-year-old Japanese conglomerate with footprints across the world, has seen technologies like facial recognition and artificial intelligence evolve to take on the new challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Given that 1.1 billion people in the world don't have any form of identification, multi-modal authentication system using facial



Motoo Nishihara, executive vice president & chief technology officer, NEC Corporation

not yet have a product that can be used in Covid-19 vaccine rollout.

Another technology that could become important in future if NEC's use of AI for cancer treatment. Nishihara examined: "AI is very effective in cancer treatment because we can define the parameters of the customers. I think from now on we have a lot of opportunity for integrating our AI system to the other domains like healthcare." Over the past few months, researchers involved with this AI-powered drug for cancer are now contributing towards the creation of an effective Covid-19 vaccine. Working with the Oncolmunity AS, a Norway-based bioinformat-

ics company which NEC acquired in 2019, its AI Drug Development Division completed a genetic analysis of Covid and published the results in just a month's time.

Dr Akhiko Iketani, head of NEC Laboratories, explained that their fingerprint identification system is utilised in African countries to see whether a baby was already vaccinated, and, if yes, then what kind of vaccination was given. NEC India's president and CEO Aalok Kumar chipped in, saying it is seeing "very strong requirement, both from the government and the enterprise to go more touchless".

Full report on
www.indianexpress.com

'Big bang end for Libor could overload markets'

HUW JONES
LONDON, JANUARY 26

LONDON, JANUARY 26
LIBOR, the London Interbank Offered Rate, will be scrapped on December 31 after banks were fined for trying to rig it

Libor, the London Interbank Offered Rate, used to price everything from mortgages and credit cards to derivative contracts, will be scrapped on December 31 after banks were fined for trying to rig it. Instead, rates set by central banks will replace Libor in the biggest change in global financial markets in decades.

Some smaller customers are not ready. "Key in this next phase is going to be the response from customers as we engage with them," said Ian Fox, Libor transition director at Lloyds. REUTERS

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BRUSSELS, JANUARY 26

THE EUROPEAN Union on Tuesday called on US President Joe Biden to help draw up a common rule book to rein in the power of big tech companies like Facebook and Twitter and combat the spread of fake news that is eating away at Western democracies. In a speech to the Davos World Economic Forum, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen urged the Biden administration to join forces against "the darker sides of the digital world," which she said was partly behind the "shock"



Klaus Schwab (left), founder and executive chairman of WEF, and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. AP storming of Capitol Hill on January 6.

GDP TO CONTRACT 1.3% IN Q3FY21

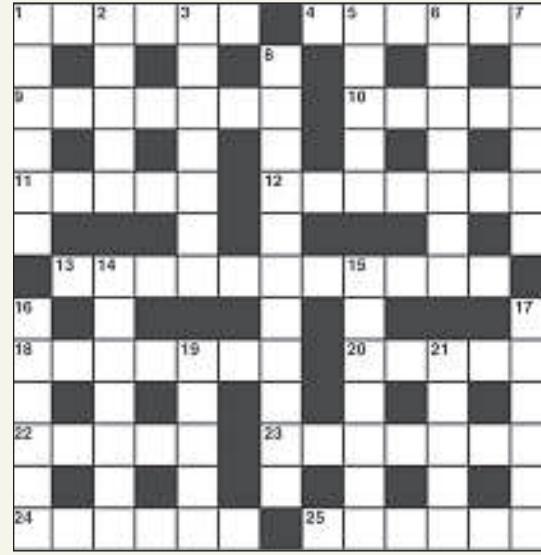
The quarterly median forecasts indicate GDP growth to contract by 1.3 per cent in the third quarter of 2020-21, estimates the Economic Outlook Survey.

cent and 9.2 per cent, respectively, during 2020-21.

The quarterly median forecasts indicate GDP growth to contract by 1.3 per cent in the third quarter of 2020-21. The growth is expected to be in the positive territory by the fourth quarter with a projection of 0.5 per cent growth," estimates the survey.

sumers and their rights online, make tech platforms more accountable, and improve digital competition, building on the bloc's data protection rules, which are among the most stringent in the world. Von der Leyen said: "The business model of online platforms has an impact and not only on free and fair competition, but also on our democracies, our security and on the quality of our information," von der Leyen said.

CROSSWORD 4338



ACROSS

- 1 Not wholly employed on the stage (2,4)
4 Sailor marries Elizabeth - a superior lady (6)
9 Arrangement to admit us into the sports ground (7)
10 Superior kind of cut (5)
11 Time to muse (5)
12 Statue with which one is too familiar (7)
13 Possibly uppermost in arrogance (11)
18 Manage to continue with foreign capital (7)
20 Part of a hospital grant (5)
22 Possibly showed off Eastern craft (5)
23 Communicate fast (7)
24 Resent having to change one's name (6)
25 A number put on tissue (6)

DOWN

- 1 Conforming part of the body (6)
2 Square market place abroad (5)
3 When an I.O.U. runs out, it could well be (7)
5 Attractive material for a jacket? (5)
6 Grass around the seaport (7)
7 Wanders away from the street lights (6)
8 Little cared for, being petty (5)
14 In poor health - result of a car accident? (3-4)
15 Tramp might have been a priest (7)
16 Game to cross the river (6)
17 Refreshing side-on view of original thinker (6)
19 It is well used by desert travellers (5)
21 A chief in front of his followers (5)

Solutions Crossword 4337: Across: 1 Cyrián, 5 Coco, 8 Printer's error, 9 Spain, 10 Empire, 11 Crease, 12 Brutal, 15 Account, 17 Anvil, 19 Broken romance, 20 Ruled, 21 Exposes. Down: 1 Copes, 2 Private school, 3 Stones, 4 Nurses, 5 Cheap, 6 Current events, 7 Aerosol, 11 Clamber, 13 Roadmap, 14 Sterne, 16 Upend, 18 Leeks.

JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given quip.

Adopting the _____ can convert a negative stress into a positive one - Hans Selye (5,8)

EAEIR

OPPUTU

EHITT

EERDGH

Hans Selye
Adopting the _____ can convert a negative stress into a positive one.

Classifieds

PERSONAL

I, Santosh Kumar Sunaniya S/O Bhagirath, R/o Ghati Mohalla, 237, kanasayi, Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh - 456770, have changed the name of my minor Son Anurag aged about 6 Years and he shall hereafter be known as Anurag Sunaniya. 00707287741

I, Junaid Naseem S/O Mohammad Nasim, Born On 02/05/1971, Resident of B-473, New Friends Colony, New Delhi, Have Changed My Name to Junaid Nasim, for all Purposes, Vide Affidavit Dt 22/1/2021, Delhi. 0130018730-1

I, Taj Beevi W/O Pulinava Vasudevan Nair Madhu R/o # 2A, Swapna Citrus 4th Cross, Abbaiah Reddy Layout, Kaggadasapura, Bengaluru, Karnataka - 560093, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Thaj Beevi P. 0070728769-1

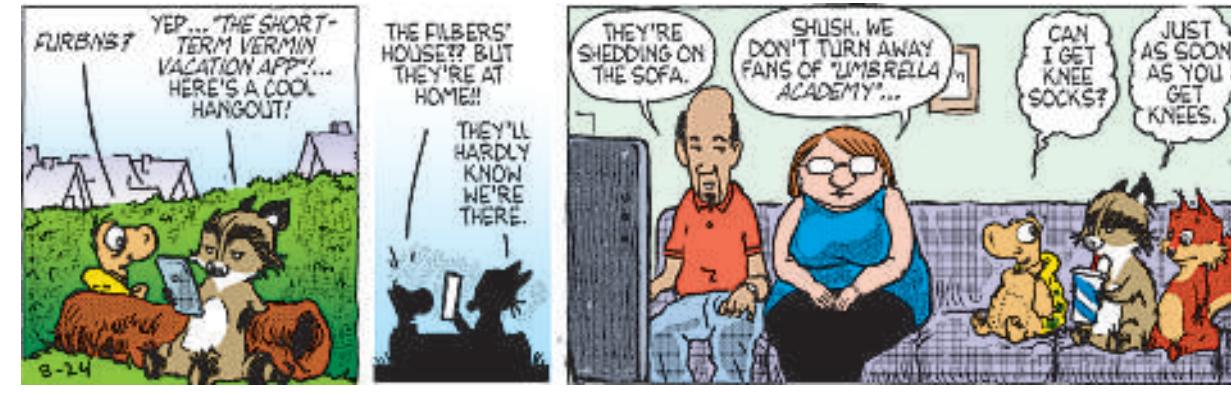
I, Sisir Sarkar S/O Nagendra Sarkar, R/o Near Ville parle Police Station, Vobani Store, Sanjay Gandhi Nagar, Nehru Road, Ville Parle (East), Mumbai, Maharashtra - 400057, Declare that Name of Mine and My Father has been wrongly written as Rabat Nagan Gomes and Nagan Gomes in my Aadhar Card No. 635335012408. The actual name of Mine and My Father are Sisir Sarkar and Nagendra Sarkar, which may be amended accordingly. 0070728765-1

I, Siddhant Goel S/O Arun Kumar Goel, R/o G-1702, The Jewel Of Noida, Plot No. 14, Sector 75, Chahjarsi, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh - 201307, have changed my name and shall hereafter be Known as Siddhant Goel. 0070728773-1

I, Shob Husain S/O Irshad Husain, R/o Mohalla Ramprasad Gaur, Aliganj, Etah, Uttar Pradesh- 207247, Declare that Name of My Father and My Mother has been wrongly written as Mohammad Irashdhan Shan And Sham Beby Begam in my Passport No- N2745105, that the name of my father has been wrongly written as Mohammad Irashdhan Shan in my Pan Card No- ATOPH8205P. The actual name of My Father and My Mother are Irshad Husain And Shama Beby, which may be amended accordingly. 0070728776-1

I, Mamta D/O Bambadhar, R/o H-5864, G.No- 5, Block 4, Devnagar Karol Bagh S.O Central Delhi- 110005, have changed my name and shall hereafter be Known as Neha Patel. 0070728775-1

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBES by Bill Watterson



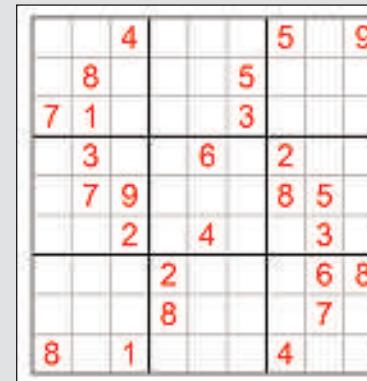
MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



SUDOKU 4365

Difficulty Level 5s

Instructions
To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.



Difficulty Level
1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy;
3s = Medium; 4s = Hard;
5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius

SOLUTION SUDOKU 4364



ANDHRA PRADESH CENTRAL POWER DISTRIBUTION CORPORATION LIMITED

Dr. Y.S.R. Vidyan Southa,
Corporate Office, Besides Govt Polytechnic college, TIT Road, Visayawada - 520 033

e-Procurement Notice
Tender notification No: CPMT-18_12_13_14/2020-21-01/APCPDC/CGM/P&ML dt: 27-01-2021
APCPDC, invites online bids under e-procurement for obtaining 6 CPMT-19/20-21-300 Nos-11KV CTs of ratio 400-200-100/1-1A Class 0.25 accuracy, 100 Nos-300-300/1-1A Class 0.25 accuracy, 30 Nos-11KV Neutral CTs 10-A, SP10 15VA, 35 Nos-11KV Neutral CTs 10/5A, SP10 15VA, 50 Nos-11KV CTs 100/VA, Class 0.25, 20 Nos-33KV IPTs 10W/0.2, 60 Nos-33KV IPTs 120/0.2, 150 Nos-11KV Phase II G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 130/0.2, 160 Nos-11KV Phase II G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 100/0.2, 30 Nos-33KV IPTs 10W/0.2, 60 Nos-33KV IPTs 120/0.2, 150 Nos-11KV Phase III G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 130/0.2, 160 Nos-11KV Phase III G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 100/0.2, 30 Nos-33KV IPTs 10W/0.2, 60 Nos-33KV IPTs 120/0.2, 150 Nos-11KV Phase IV G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 130/0.2, 160 Nos-11KV Phase IV G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 100/0.2, 30 Nos-33KV IPTs 10W/0.2, 60 Nos-33KV IPTs 120/0.2, 150 Nos-11KV Phase V G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 130/0.2, 160 Nos-11KV Phase V G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 100/0.2, 30 Nos-33KV IPTs 10W/0.2, 60 Nos-33KV IPTs 120/0.2, 150 Nos-11KV Phase VI G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 130/0.2, 160 Nos-11KV Phase VI G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 100/0.2, 30 Nos-33KV IPTs 10W/0.2, 60 Nos-33KV IPTs 120/0.2, 150 Nos-11KV Phase VII G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 130/0.2, 160 Nos-11KV Phase VII G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 100/0.2, 30 Nos-33KV IPTs 10W/0.2, 60 Nos-33KV IPTs 120/0.2, 150 Nos-11KV Phase VIII G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 130/0.2, 160 Nos-11KV Phase VIII G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 100/0.2, 30 Nos-33KV IPTs 10W/0.2, 60 Nos-33KV IPTs 120/0.2, 150 Nos-11KV Phase IX G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 130/0.2, 160 Nos-11KV Phase IX G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 100/0.2, 30 Nos-33KV IPTs 10W/0.2, 60 Nos-33KV IPTs 120/0.2, 150 Nos-11KV Phase X G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 130/0.2, 160 Nos-11KV Phase X G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 100/0.2, 30 Nos-33KV IPTs 10W/0.2, 60 Nos-33KV IPTs 120/0.2, 150 Nos-11KV Phase XI G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 130/0.2, 160 Nos-11KV Phase XI G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 100/0.2, 30 Nos-33KV IPTs 10W/0.2, 60 Nos-33KV IPTs 120/0.2, 150 Nos-11KV Phase XII G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 130/0.2, 160 Nos-11KV Phase XII G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 100/0.2, 30 Nos-33KV IPTs 10W/0.2, 60 Nos-33KV IPTs 120/0.2, 150 Nos-11KV Phase XIII G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 130/0.2, 160 Nos-11KV Phase XIII G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 100/0.2, 30 Nos-33KV IPTs 10W/0.2, 60 Nos-33KV IPTs 120/0.2, 150 Nos-11KV Phase XIV G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 130/0.2, 160 Nos-11KV Phase XIV G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 100/0.2, 30 Nos-33KV IPTs 10W/0.2, 60 Nos-33KV IPTs 120/0.2, 150 Nos-11KV Phase XV G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 130/0.2, 160 Nos-11KV Phase XV G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 100/0.2, 30 Nos-33KV IPTs 10W/0.2, 60 Nos-33KV IPTs 120/0.2, 150 Nos-11KV Phase XVI G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 130/0.2, 160 Nos-11KV Phase XVI G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 100/0.2, 30 Nos-33KV IPTs 10W/0.2, 60 Nos-33KV IPTs 120/0.2, 150 Nos-11KV Phase XVII G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 130/0.2, 160 Nos-11KV Phase XVII G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 100/0.2, 30 Nos-33KV IPTs 10W/0.2, 60 Nos-33KV IPTs 120/0.2, 150 Nos-11KV Phase XVIII G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 130/0.2, 160 Nos-11KV Phase XVIII G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 100/0.2, 30 Nos-33KV IPTs 10W/0.2, 60 Nos-33KV IPTs 120/0.2, 150 Nos-11KV Phase XVIX G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 130/0.2, 160 Nos-11KV Phase XVIX G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 100/0.2, 30 Nos-33KV IPTs 10W/0.2, 60 Nos-33KV IPTs 120/0.2, 150 Nos-11KV Phase XX G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 130/0.2, 160 Nos-11KV Phase XX G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 100/0.2, 30 Nos-33KV IPTs 10W/0.2, 60 Nos-33KV IPTs 120/0.2, 150 Nos-11KV Phase XXI G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 130/0.2, 160 Nos-11KV Phase XXI G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 100/0.2, 30 Nos-33KV IPTs 10W/0.2, 60 Nos-33KV IPTs 120/0.2, 150 Nos-11KV Phase XXII G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 130/0.2, 160 Nos-11KV Phase XXII G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 100/0.2, 30 Nos-33KV IPTs 10W/0.2, 60 Nos-33KV IPTs 120/0.2, 150 Nos-11KV Phase XXIII G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 130/0.2, 160 Nos-11KV Phase XXIII G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 100/0.2, 30 Nos-33KV IPTs 10W/0.2, 60 Nos-33KV IPTs 120/0.2, 150 Nos-11KV Phase XXIV G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 130/0.2, 160 Nos-11KV Phase XXIV G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 100/0.2, 30 Nos-33KV IPTs 10W/0.2, 60 Nos-33KV IPTs 120/0.2, 150 Nos-11KV Phase XXV G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 130/0.2, 160 Nos-11KV Phase XXV G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 100/0.2, 30 Nos-33KV IPTs 10W/0.2, 60 Nos-33KV IPTs 120/0.2, 150 Nos-11KV Phase XXVI G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 130/0.2, 160 Nos-11KV Phase XXVI G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 100/0.2, 30 Nos-33KV IPTs 10W/0.2, 60 Nos-33KV IPTs 120/0.2, 150 Nos-11KV Phase XXVII G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 130/0.2, 160 Nos-11KV Phase XXVII G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 100/0.2, 30 Nos-33KV IPTs 10W/0.2, 60 Nos-33KV IPTs 120/0.2, 150 Nos-11KV Phase XXVIII G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 130/0.2, 160 Nos-11KV Phase XXVIII G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 100/0.2, 30 Nos-33KV IPTs 10W/0.2, 60 Nos-33KV IPTs 120/0.2, 150 Nos-11KV Phase XXIX G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 130/0.2, 160 Nos-11KV Phase XXIX G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 100/0.2, 30 Nos-33KV IPTs 10W/0.2, 60 Nos-33KV IPTs 120/0.2, 150 Nos-11KV Phase XXX G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 130/0.2, 160 Nos-11KV Phase XXX G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 100/0.2, 30 Nos-33KV IPTs 10W/0.2, 60 Nos-33KV IPTs 120/0.2, 150 Nos-11KV Phase XXXI G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 130/0.2, 160 Nos-11KV Phase XXXI G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 100/0.2, 30 Nos-33KV IPTs 10W/0.2, 60 Nos-33KV IPTs 120/0.2, 150 Nos-11KV Phase XXXII G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 130/0.2, 160 Nos-11KV Phase XXXII G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 100/0.2, 30 Nos-33KV IPTs 10W/0.2, 60 Nos-33KV IPTs 120/0.2, 150 Nos-11KV Phase XXXIII G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 130/0.2, 160 Nos-11KV Phase XXXIII G/Fuse Sets, 60 Nos-11KV IPTs 100/0.2, 30 Nos-33KV IPTs 10W/0.2, 60 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BRIEFLY

CA unable to identify fans who abused Siraj

Sydney: Cricket Australia has told the ICC that it was unable to identify spectators who racially abused Indian players during the Sydney Test and the six who were ejected from the stands were not the real culprits, a media report stated on Tuesday. 'The Age' reported that the CA investigators "have cleared the six men ejected from their seats during the Sydney Test of racially abusing Mohammed Siraj." CA has sent the findings to the ICC after a probe.

Champions ousted from Mushtaq Ali

Ahmedabad: Punjab knocked defending champions Karnataka out from the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy as their bowlers set up a comfortable nine-wicket win in the first quarter-final, here on Tuesday. Punjab first dismissed Karnataka for meagre 87 and then overhauled the target in 12.4 overs in what turned out to be a lopsided contest at the Sardar Patel stadium. Pacers Siddharth Kaul (3/15) and Sandeep Sharma (2/17) ran through the Karnataka top-order after they were sent in to bat.

BRIEF SCORES: Karnataka 87 all out (Anirudha Joshi 27, Shreyas Gopal 13; Siddharth Kaul 3/15, Arshdeep Singh 2/16) lost to Punjab 89/1 (Prabhakar Singh 49 not out, Mandeep Singh 35 not out; A Mithun 1/11) by 9 wickets.

Former India goalkeeper no more

Kolkata: Former India goalkeeper Prasanta Dora, who made a name for himself while playing for big three clubs of Kolkata Maidan, died on Tuesday. He was 44 and is survived by 12-year-old son Adian and wife Soumi. According to his elder brother Hemanta, who also played as a goalkeeper for India and Mohun Bagan, Prasanta was diagnosed with Hemophagocytic lymphohistiocytosis (HLH) in December after he developed unrelenting fever. HLH is severe systemic inflammatory syndrome that can cause a strong activation of the immune system, such as infection or cancer.

NorthEast Utd beat ATK Mohun Bagan

Margao: Uruguayan Federico Gallego scored a spectacular goal and provided an assist to help NorthEast United beat ATK Mohun Bagan 2-1 in an Indian Super League match here on Tuesday. Gallego had a part to play in Luis Machado's opener (60th) before Roy Krishna (72nd) equalised for the Mariners. Gallego's 81st minute curler settled things for NorthEast. Meanwhile, East Bengal on Tuesday signed Subrata Paul for the remainder of the season, taking the star goalkeeper on loan from Hyderabad FC.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

For Lampard & Chelsea, an encore without cheers

PREVIEW: WORLD TOUR FINALS

Sindhu, recharged and battle-ready

Having played more matches than most top players, taking a break last year was a wise decision

SHIVANI NAIK
JANUARY 26

CAROLINA MARIN (50 total) played 24 tournaments fewer than PV Sindhu (74) for four whole seasons from 2016 to 2019. That's an average of 6 less than the Indian every year. Add to that the air-travel time hopping countries and the official tour's media and sponsorship commitments, which can be a drain on energy reserves.

Marin missed three of those year-end season finales (in 2017, 18, 19) either from injury or not qualifying. Sindhu played each of the four, making two finals and winning once. For the top players in shuttle, the big tournaments to peak are either the quadrennial Olympics or the annual World Championships. Marin, made it to two of those (2016 & 2018), though she's a triple World Champion from 2014 & 15, and arguably the greatest female shuttler if Majors are considered. Sindhu is 4/4 (Olympics and three World Championships) at the majors finals, winning once.

The Indian avoided Marin in the group draw at World Tour Finals, the season finale, which begins on Wednesday. Sindhu has World No.1 Tai Tzu Ying (Chinese Taipei), home favourite Ratchanok Intanon and Ponnappa Chochuwong. Sindhu's nowhere near her best - nor expected to be if the Olympics are the target as she will want to peak in Tokyo.

Not getting injured -- Marin was away at least for 14 months from different injuries including a serious ACL -- might seem one right curse, because of the overall break the medical attention can afford. Sindhu told ESPN recently about a shoulder overuse condition.

The fact that she hadn't taken a break through the countless niggles that she might've endured, and kept her date with the Major finals means she ran herself ragged, showing physical commitment to the competitive circuit. Though she was off-colour during the 2018 Commonwealth Games from a foot injury, she made the individual finals. Add to that her Uber Cup load, the Indian Nationals where it's obligatory to play and the PBL, which rakes in the dough, and Sindhu's played more badminton than any other shuttler in the world in the four year period.

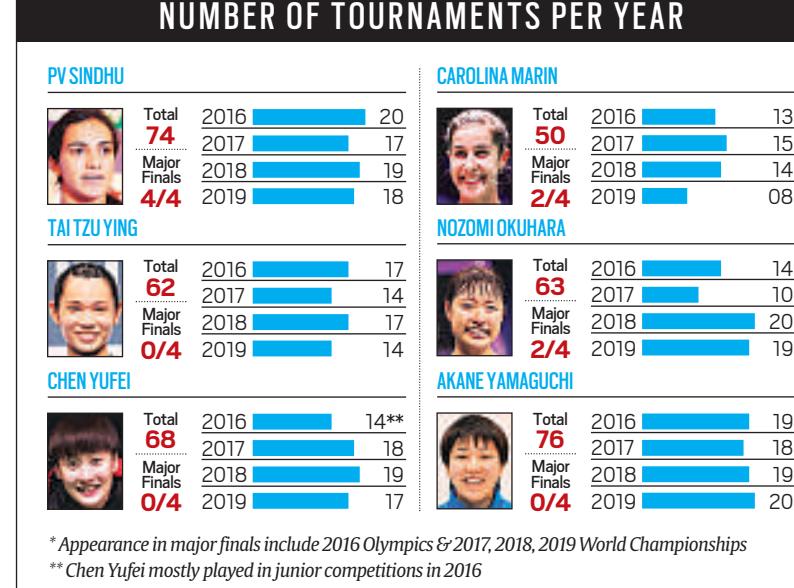
Akane Yamaguchi clocked 76 tournaments, but failed to make the World's finals (which can be unbearable pressure on its own), and had a string of first round losses, for half a year, nursing her back. Both Nozomi Okuhara and Tai Tzu Ying have had time off to recalibrate their pacing, while Sindhu was slaving away incredulously at tournaments.

So it must be amusing for Sindhu to listen to commentators questioning her two-month light training in England, where she spent her initial days at a nutrition facility.

If anyone had earned a two-and-a-half month time off training and competition, it was PV Sindhu, and grudging her that in the middle of a pandemic, can count as cruel. That she had kept up her fitness workload at home under the relentless gaze of her father, and had the Indian coaches and federation in the loop during her training in England, means it's two months well spent, taking a mental break, even if she did nothing but toss the shuttle and watch its flight.



Sindhu is now assertive in making her decisions, travels by herself and simply pauses from the sport, without getting injured.



* Appearance in major finals include 2016 Olympics & 2017, 2018, 2019 World Championships

** Chen Yufei mostly played in junior competitions in 2016

If she was escaping distractions or sheer restrictive ennui of lockdown in India, all the more reason to be grateful for the rapidly planned trip. The badminton court can do with a Sindhu, 26 now, who's more assertive in making her decisions, travels by herself not needing to be chauffeured by parents and simply pauses from the sport, without getting injured. Remember this was a reticent player who needed to be taught how to scream on a badminton court, and for one whole set in the Rio final, looked like she could carry off a decent impersonation of aggression.

Five years on, hungry for what she missed in Rio, Sindhu builds up her own appetite for a fight and fuels her own decibel. Pieces of her game jigsaw can fall into place in the coming months.

Marin unstoppable

Carolina Marin has had a tough year. She lost her father, ended a relationship, missed out on the last World Championship after

a wincing injury and surgery and has matured through this indescribable loss and strife. She put in 10 hours a day on rehab with an earpiece plugged in, before she returned to the court.

She's always driven herself to training, living near the national centre in Madrid, while home was coastal Huelva, so independence isn't something that she needed to learn. But loss of motivation after the Rio gold was real. Then the knee snapped with a crack.

Marin literally has two different psychologists - Maria Martinez for her game and Fany Barembaumgor her personal life. Turning 27 last year, she told Spain's El País media about seeing a psychologist since 15, to blend into the game. "In the end you play the way you are, there are things I need to know about myself, externalise emotions, get them out from inside because sometimes you have a lot of poison inside and you need to get it out and free yourself of it," she said.

Delving into her life, Marin told El País about having fewer friends than fingers on one hand, not having time to meet new people, being difficult because of the time she spends in the gym or travelling, being "irascible and hyperactive" and not being able to stand herself at times, also bringing problems upon herself.

When asked: On a scale of 1-10 how much does Carolina Marin love Carolina Marin?

"Not much. A 6 or 7. I always put everyone else before myself. And that's good for some things, but for others not so much."

Her post-retirement dreams consist of being "bored for the first time in my life," and wearing 10cm heels that she has stocked in a closet and keeps looking at to make herself happy, she tells El País.

Called the golden generation of women's singles, the current Top 10 have barely caught their breath till this pandemic year, busy as they were in raising the stature of the game, playing one classic after another. Akane Yamaguchi was thrilled to make a Snowman and play with Legos sets this Christmas, away from the training grind.

Stomping in her flat trainers and shoes on court though, Carolina Marin has returned as a speedier demon, winning the year's first two tournaments without dropping a set.

She has baited Tai Tzu Ying by saying the Taiwanese will need to "change to beat me."

Tai Tzu was rattled into unforced errors, struggling to handle Marin's smashes, saying, "She's very fast and I'll try to keep up."

Korean An Se-young attacked her backhand backcourt but was battered in both semis, saying: "Marin is fast and her style is attacking. I tried to respond to her smashes and tried everything I wanted to. Unfortunately, it didn't go quite so well."

Okuhara too tried to pin Marin back with her defensive clears, yo-yoing her front and back, but Marin has only returned faster than before, plus skilled at the net.

That she can maintain the speed till the end has wiped off the rest of the world's challenge. She remains Sindhu's last citadel in a major tournament.

Pakistan in trouble after bundling out Proteas for 220

ASSOCIATED PRESS
KARACHI, JANUARY 26

SOUTH AFRICA came back roaring after being skittled out for 220 on a bowler-dominated first day Tuesday of its first Test in Pakistan in more than 13 years. Pakistan was reduced to 33-4 at stumps on a pitch devoid of grass as 14 wickets fell on an eventful opening day of the two-Test series.

South Africa fast bowler Kagiso Rabada, playing his first Test in a year, removed openers Abid Ali (4) and debutant Imran Butt (9) off deliveries with uneven bounce. Rabada had impressive figures of 6-3-8-2.

Left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj also had captain Babar Azam trapped leg before wicket for 7 off his third delivery, and Andrich Norrie knocked back the stumps of night-watchman Shaheen Afridi for a duck. At stumps, Azhar Ali and Fawad Alam were both unbeaten on 5.

Earlier, legspinner Yasir Shah grabbed 3-54 and left-arm spinner Nauman Ali 2-38 on debut to peg back South Africa after it won the toss and started confidently. Opening batsman Dean Elgar top-scored with 58 off 106 balls with nine fours, and No.9 batsman Rabada was unbeaten on 21 as South Africa, 94-2 at lunch, lost its last eight wickets for 112 runs.

"Definitely, I do think that South Africa had a better day, even though we had a low score," Elgar said.

Faf du Plessis and Elgar were using their feet well against the spinners by lunch but Shah brought Pakistan back when he had du Plessis caught behind on 23 in his second over after the break. Du Plessis should have been out on 14 immediately after lunch but Abid couldn't hold on to a sharp catch at forward short leg.

Nauman got into the act in his seventh and eighth overs, mainly because of the Proteas' wrong shot selection. Captain Quinton de Kock, in his 50th test, tried a reckless pull on 15 and was caught at mid-wicket, then Elgar's loose drive flew into the slips after a knock of nearly three hours, at 136-5.

Tembu Bavuma added 43 runs with George Linde, but just before tea the diminutive Bavuma couldn't beat a strong throw from Hasan Ali while going for a second run. Bavuma was out for 17. Linde successfully overruled an lbw decision against him off Shah on 14 before holing out in the deep, which gave Hasan Ali his first wicket in his return to test cricket after two years.

In the last session, Shah picked up two quick wickets but Rabada was missed twice, one of them a drop. Both teams opted to go with three seamers and two spinners. South Africa, playing its first Test in Pakistan since 2007, included two left-arm spinners — Keshav Maharaj and Linde — and left out Shams Tabraiz as a third spinner after he had a back spasm just before the toss.

Pakistan umpire Aleem Dar, who has officiated on-field in a record 391 internationals, was supervising his first Test in Pakistan since his debut in 2000. Dar's appointment was allowed because of travel restrictions in the pandemic.

BRIEF SCORES: South Africa 220 (Elgar 58, Linde 35; Yasir 3/54, Nauman 2/38, Afridi 2/49) vs Pakistan 33/4 (Rabada 2/8)



Frank Lampard was sacked as Chelsea manager on Monday. Reuters

SHOWN THE DOOR

1.67 Lampard's points per game average of 1.67 is the 4th lowest of any permanent Chelsea manager in the EPL, with the 1.35 goals per game conceded under his reign the worst at the club

PLAYING TONIGHT

- Chelsea vs Wolves, 11.30pm
 - Burnley vs Aston Villa, 11.30pm
 - Brighton vs Fulham, 1am
 - Man Utd vs Sheffield Utd, 1.45am
 - Everton vs Leicester City, 1.45am
- Live on Star Sports Network

into ninth place.

The banner provides the most eloquent explanation of that loyalty. Not just through the image of Lampard the player, the most productive goal-scorer in Chelsea history, a multiple winner of the Premier League and the FA Cup, a cornerstone of the team that turned the club into London's first-ever European champion, or the reference to man and team's shared past, but the fact that he knew the fans were planning it, too.

He had been told the banner was coming by, as he put it, "the people directly involved" in making it. Lampard's association with Chelsea runs long and deep enough that he has deep-seated, well-established connec-

tions with Chelsea's fans.

That would be an advantage anywhere, but it is particularly precious at Chelsea. Not for the manager — that Lampard was fired so soon after he was given such public backing illustrates, quite neatly, how little power fans have — but for the public itself.

Chelsea's fans have grown sufficiently accustomed to seeing managers come and go that, at times, they can harness Abramovich's susceptibility to the slightest pressure to their own ends.

Maurizio Sarri, who preceded Lampard, was hardly an unmitigated success, but his only season at Stamford Bridge was no overwhelming failure: His team finished third in the Premier League and won the Europa League. And yet, months earlier, some fans had been agitating for his dismissal. They had never taken to him, never bought into his style of play, and they knew that, at Chelsea, it does not take much to tip the balance.

In that context, the fans' desperation for Lampard can be read not just as hopeless sentimentality, but as a desire for some sort of constancy. For 18 years, Chelsea has staged an endless parade of managers: some young, some old, some exotic, some familiar. Each one has hinted at some new direction for the club. And yet none have stuck around for long.

The riposte to any criticism of that approach has always been to point at Chelsea's bulging trophy cabinet, but that is no longer as convincing as it once was. The cycle of boom and bust, crest and fall, has left the fans with a feeling of seasickness, rootlessness, one to which both the club's supporters and its hierarchy hoped Lampard would be the balm.

NEW YORK TIMES

IOC to meet to talk Tokyo Games, but not cancellation

REUTERS
JANUARY 26

THE TOKYO Olympics will top the agenda when the International Olympic Committee's executive board meets on Wednesday - but with the board firmly backing the event, any talk of scrapping it altogether due to the COVID-19 pandemic is highly unlikely.

With less than six months to go until the troubled Games are due to start, the board will instead tackle questions over the vaccination of athletes, international visitors and the attendance of spectators, and safety regulations among other matters.

The Olympic body, which will meet remotely, nevertheless finds itself in a similar situation to March last year, when it was forced to postpone the Games by 12 months as the COVID-19 pandemic shut down sport worldwide. Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga is sticking to his government's commitment to host the Games, with officials last week dismissing a report in Britain's Times newspaper that Tokyo had abandoned hope of holding the event this year. Opinion polls in Japan show the public is strongly against staging the Games amid the pandemic, however.