pg 04

DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR'S SPEECH IN THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY ON THE ADOPTION OF THE CONSTITUTION -25 November, 1949' $pg\ 06$



SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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Summittimes IN NEPALI

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Thank You

National Voter's Day observed; Reaching the unreached electorate celebrated

SHRAWAN CHETTRI GANGTOK, 25 JAN:

The 11th National **▲** Voters' Day was observed here this afternoon on the theme "Making our voters Empowered, Vigilant, Safe and Informed" and seeking to engage active and participative voters during elections. An underlying focus of the day was also to focus on Election Commission of India's commitment towards conducting elections safely through the COVID-19 pandemic.

The day, observed at the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer Sikkim was chaired by the Chief Electoral Officer, R Telang, and had the Roll Observer of Sikkim, Anil Raj Rai [Secretary, Education Department] as special guest.

A special video message from the Chief Election Commissioner of India, Sunil Arora, was also aired during the function who announced that the

day was being observed at 10 lakh locations across the country.

A highlight of the day's events was the felicitation of officers engaged in the election and enrolment process from the block to the state-level.

The most significant of these felicitations was that of new voters under the "reaching the unreached campaign" initiated by the Office of

the CEO, Sikkim, when it came to light that some sections of the society like the differently-abled and the destitute elderly, even though they have

the right to vote, do not

get enrolled.

Accordingly, the Office of the CEO-Sikkim reached out to child-care institutions, including Spastics Society of Sikkim, old age homes and detoxification centres and sensitized them and

their inmates about their right to vote.

This was in line with the ECI's "No Voter Left Behind" motto.

Mr Telang informed that during Election 2019, the State Steering Committee had suggested that the ECI allow postal ballots for the differently abled and announced today that this suggestion has become a reality today.

Along with the differ-

ently-abled voters, those above the age of 80 will also be entitled to cast their votes through postal ballots if they choose to do so.

Significantly, EPICs will now also be printed in Braille for the visually impaired voters, he informed.

To mark the day, EPIC cards were handed over to three new voters from Balika Niketan, four from Freedom Detox Centre, two from Spastic Society.

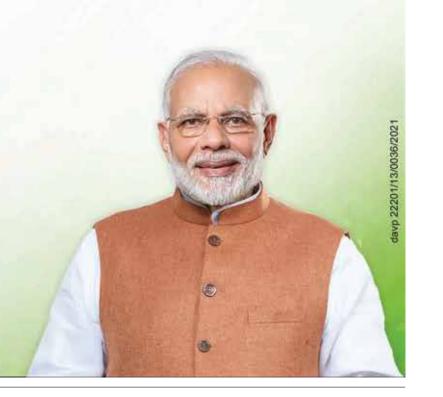






'We the people'- With this spirit of the Republic, our large and diverse nation is striding ahead towards fulfilling the dreams and aspirations of the people. The collective power of 130 crore Indians today is connected to our national goals and is constantly strengthening our resolve to build a prosperous and self-reliant India.

- Narendra Modi



Farmers gear up for

tractor parade on R-Day New Delhi, Jan 25 (PTI): Farmers at Delhi's three protest sites -- Singhu, Tikri and Ghazipur border points -- were busy with their last minute preparations on Monday ahead of their much-anticipated tractor parade on January 26.

They said one of the major highlights of the parade on Tuesday will be the 'jhankis' (tableaux) that will be led by a trolley carrying the sacred text of the Sikhs Guru Granth Sahib.

While the entire vehicle has been adorned with flowers, posters of Sikh leaders like Shaheed Baba Deep Singh, Baba Banda Singh Bahadur and Guru Tegh Bahadur have been pasted on the sides of the tolley

"The rally will be led by our holy text. We will distribute 'prasad', and devotees can pay their respects. Behind the sacred vehicle, people will walk, after which the tractors will arrive," said Jarnail Singh, a volunteer at the Singhu protest site.

According to Kashmir Singh, assistant secretary, All India Kisan Sabha (Punjab), the government has provided the farmers three routes, which the tractors will follow during their "completely peaceful parade".

"The rally will show what India's farmers can do. There will be 'ihankis' from all states that will showcase the condition of farmers ther," he said.

The tractor march is likely to begin at 11:30 am and expected to continue for 10-12 hours, a Jai kisan Andolan (Swaraj Abhiyaan) spokesperson said.

Some tractors will also pay tribute to all the farmers who died during the course of this agitation.

Artist Parminder Singh, who hails from a farmer family in Sangrur, will express his solidarity through one of his paintings that show a black snake, representative of the three farm laws, choking the farmer.

"My painting talks about the inevitability if the laws are passed. We will either place it on the top of a car, or at the back of a trolley," the painter said.

Several tractors and trolleys that will take part in the march from the Singhu border have already been adorned with flags of different farmer unions alongside the national flag.

"Some tractors will also perform stunts," said Balkar Singh, a protesting farmer.

Protesting farmer unions opposing the three contentious farm laws said their parade will not enter central Delhi and it will start only after the official Republic Day parade concludes.

The unions claimed that around two lakh tractors are expected to participate in the tractor parade which will move into the city from three border points --- Singhu, Tikri and Ghazipur (UP Gate).

Enacted in September last year, the three farm laws have been projected by the Centre as major reforms in the agriculture sector that will remove middlemen and allow farmers to sell their produce anywhere in the country.

However, the protesting farmers have expressed their apprehension that the new laws would pave the way for eliminating the safety cushion of minimum support price and do away with the 'mandi' (wholesale market) system, leaving them at the mercy of big corporates.

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Nation to learn of Pangtoed Chham at Republic Day Parade

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 25 JAN:

The tableaux propos-**I** al of the Culture Department, duly approved by the State Government, has been shortlisted after a series of meetings and scrutiny by the Expert Committee for Selection of Tableaux, Ministry of Defence, for Republic Day Parade 2021 in New Delhi, an official press release informs.

SUMMIT REPORT

GANGTOK, 25 JAN:

Sikkim last week.

Indian and Chinese

L army personnel clashed

in what is being officially

explained as a "minor" in-

cident in the Naku La pass

region in remote North

Chinese soldiers tried to

move into Indian territo-

ry in this region but were

challenged by Indian sol-

diers in Naku La which

The annual Gram Sabha of Sumbuk-Kartikey

Gram Panchayat Unit

was convened under the

Chairmanship of Radha

Sharma, Panchayat Pres-

passed different develop-

ment-related proposals

under the Gram Pancha-

yat Development Plan

prepared by the mem-

The draft plans were

(GPDP) 2021-22.

SUMMIT REPORT

GYALSHING, 25 JAN:

ivestock assistance

Licentres were opened

today at Bongten under

Maneybung-Dentam con-

stituency and Meeyong

The village assembly

SUMMIT REPORT

SUMBUK, 25 JAN:

ident, today.

Sources inform that

is themed on Pang Lhabsol - Pangtoed Chham and the Culture Department has held up its selection as a "prestigious and an honour" for the

The Department explains that tableaux is a story-telling moving medium which should be easily understandable to the audience as it passes by. Sikkim is being repre-

Indian soldiers push back

Chinese at Naku La

soldiers were reported-

ly injured in the face-off

while on the Indian side,

four soldiers sustained

injuries, sources inform.

General of Public In-

formation, under the

Directorate General of

Military Intelligence, has

clarified that there was a

minor face off in the Na-

Sumbuk-Kartikev GPU convenes annual Gram Sabha

bers of Wards through

the Participatory Rural

Appraisal tool in all

wards and prioritized

by the meeting of

Gram Planning Forum

passed today under

GPDP after the discus-

under the MGNREGS was

also passed by the Gram

Sabha for 5 wards to be

The Gram Sabha was

carried out in 2021-22.

Livestock assistance centres

opened at Bongten and Meeyong

under Chingthang GPU of

Gyalshing-Bermiok constit-

uency in West Sikkim today.

established by the De-

partment of Animal Hus-

bandry and Veterinary

The centres have been

sion in the house.

The draft plans were

Another annual plan

on 21 Jan.

Additional

About the incident,

Directorate

Around 20 Chinese

resulted in the clash.

by Preservation Officer, LN Sharma and Troupe leader Yangchok Lachenpa. The Sikkim contingent has been stationed at the Rashtriya Rangashala Camp, New Delhi since 10 Jan in preparation for the Republic Day Parade.

The tableaux will be showcased during the Republic Day Parade at New Delhi, on 26 Jan, 2021.

kula area of North Sikkim

on 20 January and was

resolved by local com-

manders as per estab-

fully managed to push

back China despite hos-

tile weather conditions

also called on the me-

dia not to exaggerate

reports which are fac-

attended by Zilla Pan-

chayat Member Jamuna

Rai, Gram Panchayat

representatives, Gram

Planning Forum mem-

bers, Village Water and

Sanitation Committee,

Social Audit and Vigi-

lance Committee, dif-

ferent GPU level stand-

ing Committees and

the officials from var-

ious line departments

and members of Gram

Sabha from the different

wards of the Gram Pan-

chayat Unit.

Agricultural

ment such as chaff-cut-

ters, spray machines, poly

pipes and seeds were also

distributed to farmers of

Bongten and Meeyong.

Indian army has

Indian Army success-

lished protocols.

in North Sikkim.

tually incorrect.

ham - Warrior Dance is a traditional Sikkimese dance in praise of the deities and was conceptualized and choreographed by the 3rd Chogyal of Sikkim, Maharaja Chagdor Namgyal in the 17th Century. This dance is performed during Pang Lhabsol which is also a State Holiday as declared by the State Govern-

131 more

India recorded the lowest number of coronavirus fatalities in over eight months with 131 more deaths being recorded, the Health Ministry said

The COVID-19 caseload rose to 1,06,67,736 with 13,203 more infections. There are 1,84,182 active cases, which is 1.73 per cent of the caseload and it remained below 2 lakh for the sixth consecutive day, accord-

As many as 1,03,30,084 people have recuperated, taking the recovery rate to 96.83 per cent,.

The fatality rate rose to 1.4 per cent and 131 more deaths include 45 from Maharashtra, 20 from Kerala, nine from Delhi and eight each from Chhattisgarh, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh.

deaths have been reported so far in the country, including 50,785 from Maharashtra, followed by 12,316 in Tamil Nadu, 12,197 in Karnataka, 10,808 in Delhi, 10,115 in West Bengal, 8,617 in Uttar Pradesh and 7.147 in Andhra Pradesh. According to the ICMR, 19.23 crore tests have been conducted so far with 5,70,246 samples being

The ministry stressed that more than 70 per cent of the deaths occurred due

"Our figures are being reconciled with the Indian Council of Medical Research," the ministry said on its website, adding that statewide distribution of figures was subject to further verifi-

13203 cases

A total of 1,53,470

to comorbidities.

ment," the release adds.

COVID deaths, New Delhi, Jan 25 (PTI):

on Monday.

ing to the ministry data.

tested on Sunday.

cation and reconciliation.

Assam Cong charges Shah of spreading lies

GUWAHATI, JAN 25 (PTI): that the state will not A day after Union Home Minister Amit Shah kickstarted BJP's campaign for the state election in Assam, the opposition Congress on Monday charged him of spreading lies. Assam Pradesh Congress Committee President Ripun Bora also defended the party's alliance with AIUDF, which was the target of Shah's speech.

"The characters of Amit Shah and other BIP leaders are the same. They just lie to divert issues. They have some paid agents on social media to make the lies look like truth. It's just Hitler politics," Bora, a Rajya Sabha MP said.

Giving a point-bypoint reply to Shah's allegations, Bora said the union home ministry is sitting idle with the National Register of Citizens (NRC), which has excluded 19 lakh people from its final list.

"Amit Shah said only BJP can stop infiltrators and they are doing it. When NRC's first draft had excluded 40 lakh people, he had termed all of them as infiltrators on the floor of the Parliament and said each one would be deported.

"What step have you (Shah) taken to accept the NRC? Have you taken any initiative? Supreme Court had asked the authorities to help those 19 lakh in applying to the tribunals so that genuine Indians are included. But you and the Registrar General of India have not done anything yet. The entire process is suspended. What does it mean?" Bora said.

Shah had alleged that the Congress-AI-UDF combine will open "all gates" to welcome infiltrators if it comes to power in Assam. The state Congress

foreigners were deported from the country. This was the reply of the union home minister in Parliament. But during UPA tenure from 2005 to 2013 a total of 82,728 foreigners were deported. This is your falsehood."

In Assam 5,234 foreigners were deported in 2013 during former chief minister Tarun Gogoi's tenure, but the number was just 51 in 2017 under Sarbananda Sonowal's government, he said. On Shah's comment bly.

be safe in the hnads of the Congress and AIUDF, Bora said "In Assam, BJP is running the zilla parishads in alliance with AIUDF in Darrang, Karimganj and Nagaon districts at this moment. Please clarify your stand in this regard."

He asserted that AI-UDF chief and Lok Sabha MP Badruddin Ajmal never said anything anti-Hindu. On the contrary BJP is constantly spreading hate against the Muslims by their anti-Muslim rhetoric.

"Don't think that you (Shah) can fool the Assamese people in every election. You have already nullified the Assam Accord by bringing in the Citizenship (Amendment) Act," he added.

On the union home minister's promise to solve the perennial flood problem in the next five years, Bora cited a CAG report and said from 2014 to 2019 the fund allocation to NDRF was cut by 60 per cent in respect

"Are you solving Assam's flood problem by paring down funds or making it more complex? In 2014-2020 states got up to Rs 13,000 crore under NDRF category. But Assam was allotted only Rs 284 crore, that too in 2019-20.Before that no money was given to Assam since 2014," he claimed.

Bora also slammed Shah for promising tea garden workers of solving their problems and said the government has done nothing for granting ST status to the community and not ensured the minimum daily wage of Rs 351.

The election to the 126-member Assam Assembly is likely in March-April. The 2016 elections gave a fractured mandate chief further said "From and no party has the ab-2014 to 2017, only 1,822 solute majority in the current assembly

> The BJP is the single largest party with 60 MLAs, while its allies Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and Bodoland People's Front (BPF) have 13 and 12 lawmakers respectively. The ruling coalition also has the support of an Independent MLA.

> The opposition Congress has 20 MLAs at present, while the All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) has 14 members in the Assem-

PIB webinar celebrates how North East festivals epitomize Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat

GANGTOK, 25 JAN (PIB): What exemplifies 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' is this festive season of NE States which harnesses the potential of 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan' with environment friendly products of friends from Tribal Communities, experts opined in a Webinar organised by PIB and Regional Outreach Bureau, Guwahati on the topic 'North East Festivals epitomizes Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' here today. Experts from Industry along with academicians deliberated and discussed about 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat', 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan' and its awareness from ecological, academic, societal and policy perspective. Talking about festivities of North

Eastern States, Padma Shri Naresh Chander Lal, Ambassador of Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan, Andamaan and Nicobar Islands, said that awareness among people is vital for environment friendly growth and development. He said that it has to become a habit and a behavioural and attitudinal trait for effective results. Shri Lal said that Bihu, a festival in North East exemplifies environment friendly celebration where all celebrate the occasion with élan and gusto. He

said that it also the festival where not only the dress but also the accessories are environment friendly. He further said that whether it is the Mekhela or the Jaapi, these are all eco-friendly as well as demonstrate the talent of the region to harness the resources of the environment. He said that these festivals are also generating employment opportunities who are working in the textile and allied industries. He said that Magh Bihu festivities are occasion where celebration are just after cultivation of crops and also instances where culinary products such as Til Petha are relished by all. Shri Lal said that these festivals are a reverence to the culture of growth and prosperity and concomitant respect to environment. Talking about 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha

Bharat' and its relevance in celebration with 'Swachhta', Prof(Dr.) Mohd Arif Khan, Senior Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh said that youth are the ambassadors of this growth journey of societal awareness. He said that environment friendly growth is a WIN-WIN scenario for all. He further said that economic growth

measured by Green GDP includes parameters such as bio-diversity, environmental consequences of climate change and growth sustainability with environment emphasis. He said that North Eastern region is having huge bio-diversity and festivals such as Rongali or Bohag Bihu, Kati Bihu or Kongali Bihu, Bhogali or Magh Bihu in Assam, Losar Festival in Arunachal Pradesh, Hornbill festival in Nagaland, Sangai Festival in Manipur, Saga Dawa in Sikkim, Shad Suk Mynsiem and Wangala Festival in Meghalaya, Kharchi festival in Tripura and Chapchar Kut festival in Mizoram are all celebrated with joy and elan with huge reverence to environment.

Official, Nibedan Das, Regional Outreach Bureau, Guwahati said that the environment friendly products by tribal communities exemplifies the talent of the region. He said that these are products which are having huge utility in homes and public places also.

Field Publicity Officer, W Panthoibi Singha, Field Outreach Bureau, Tezpur said that environment friendly bamboo and cane products are utilised in furniture, decor materials, cooking utensils, among others.

Advocate Delhi High Court, Abdur Rahman Mallick said that the growth and development of a place has to be tandem with the environmental sustainability. Talking about Indian Constitution, he said that 'Swachhta' and hygiene is of efficacy for proper health and healthy habits. He said that celebrations are an occasion to look at environment as a vital value-add on for sustainability. The informative and knowledge we-

binar was planned and coordinated by Joint Director (M&C), Samrat Bandyopadhyay, PIB, Guwahati.

Senior officers of PIB and Regional Outreach Bureau were present in webinar. Assistant Director, Arijit Chakraborty, Regional Outreach Bureau, Guwahati welcomed the experts as the webinar delved into details on the various aspects of the topic such as environment, 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan' and its relevance in 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat', among others. Along with students, eminent journalists and other government senior officials from Doordarshan Guwahati, Regional Outreach Bureau, Guwahati, All India Radio Guwahati were also present on the occasion.

LOMCHEY —

We would like to inform all that last year due to strict lockdown restrictions we could not

invite our friends, wellwishers & relatives during 49th day " Kutse Shegu " prayers of our beloved mother, Late Passang Lhamu Ethenpa popularly known as Passang Guruma of PN Girls School, Gangtok.

Her 1st death anniversary (LOMCHEY) falls on Thursday

the 28th Jan 2021. Therefore, we request all our friends, well wishers & relatives to kindly join us in offering prayers at our residence at " Ethenpa Villa ", Lower Tadong, Gangtok duly following COVID-19 protocols.

Mr. Menla T. Ethenpa & Dr. Sonam T. Ethenpa (Sons) Mrs. Tshering Pem Ethenpa & Mrs. Chunki Ethenpa (Daughters-in-law) Mrs. Diki Y. Ethenpa, Ms. Chopel S. Ethenpa & Mrs. Sangay P. Ethenpa (Daughters) Mr. Karma Chankapa & Mr. Pemba Lama (Sons-in-law) & hosts of grand children and great grand children

2 startups rise to top at AIC-SMUTBI idea exposition

RANGPO, 25 JAN:

An idea exposition hackathon on "Innovations in Agriculture, Sustainable Environment and Ecotourism" was organized by AIC-SMUTBI in collaboration with IKP, Bangalore, and funded and supported by Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) Regional Innovation Centre (BRIC) on 22 and 23 Jan, 2021.

Following this 36hour grind, participated in by a pool of 15 startups, 6 start-ups were shortlisted for the finals which were put on fasttrack mentoring and funneled through the final pitch.

Padma Shri Trinity Saioo, who heads the Lakhadong Movement in Meghalaya, was one of the Key Panellist who spoke on "the struggles of founders in Agri startups and what not to do".

Ms Trinity, a mother of six and 5 grandchildren, lives in Mulieh village in West Jaintia Hill district of Meghalaya. Her village, a nondescript village comprises of 230 households and practices traditional agriculture. What is unique



guguloth Rajendhai

Trinity Saio

Pulkit Kohli

CEO, AIC-SMUTBI and

Manish Kumar, Manager,

IP & Licensing Services,

the hackathon are: CAS

Collective LLP (Lagtsal)

and The Chakras Farm

Pvt Ltd. The founders of

the two startups Chimi

Bhutia and Pranay ex-

pressed their gratitude

towards the organizers

for bringing in innova-

tive ways of fast-track

mentoring for growth

hack of businesses in

The two winners of

Bharat Bio Tech.

THE CHAKRAS FARM

about Mulieh is the fact that all the households here now grow the prized Lakadong Turmeric because of the inview Pvt Ltd). novation and hard work of one lady farmer, who led from the front with exemplary and steadfast

Her story of working with 800 farmers at the "Ieng Skhem Spice Producer Industrial Co-operative Society" for the production of Lakadong Turmeric and making it a commercially viable product was an inspiration to many.

leadership.

Start-up success stories sessions were also addressed by founder, Maato Studio, Reena Rai, and Karma Thutop and Pintso Gyatso, co-founders of ourguest.in (Top

Ms Rai, highlighted the need for intervention of younger minds in bringing new and innovative business idea which otherwise were considered unconventional in the region.

Karma Thutop and Pintso Gyatso shared their struggle and pains of their early days and the dark side of a startup after raising capital from institutional funding.

The shortlisted startup founders were mentored by Chairman and

Sikkim and North East. CEO, Deepanwita Chattopadhyay, IKP Knowledge The two start-ups were Park, Jyoti Saroop, GM, awarded a grant of Rs The Unati Co-op. Market-50,000 each. "It was a struggle ing-cum-Processing Society Ltd, Dr Tej Chingtham,

when we had to work till 1AM in the morning to get the business plan right but in the end, it paid off," said Ms Bhutia.

"Some of the opportunities that were only seen in bigger cities have started coming here now, we no longer have to travel to cities to validate our business plans and sincerely appreciate the efforts of AIC-SMUTBI for bringing such events closer home," Mr Pranay of The Chakras Farm shared.

Sunday gives Sikkim only one more case of Covid

SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 25 JAN:

Sikkim's daily Covid caseload has been falling of late and the Sunday slow down for the VRD Lab where RT-PCR tests are conducted allowed for still lower numbers on Monday when only one case of novel coronavirus infection in the last 24 hours was reported.

One person from Dentam in West Sikkim was found positive for COVID-19 in rapid antigen testing.

Sikkim's tally of confirmed cases of COVID-19 now stands at 6,072, of which 5,729 patients have already been discharged to further improve the recovery rate of Sikkim to around 94%.

13 patients recovered and were discharged from the facility and home isolation on Saturday. The number of active Covid cases in Sikkim has accordingly decreased to

In his daily health bulletin on Monday, Health Department State IEC Officer, Sonam Gyaltsen Bhutia, informed that the only case reported in the last 24 hours was from the testing of 39 samples on Sunday, 10 of which were screened via RAT.

The 12 samples tested by RT-PCR and 17 screened by TrueNat returned negative.

He informed that 87 health workers of the Central Referral Hospital were vaccinated for COVID-19 on Monday.

NIFAA members meet to discuss blood & plasma donation campaign

SUMMIT REPORT RANGPO, 25 JAN:

Ameeting on Samved-na Blood and Plasma Donation campaign was held between executive members of NIFAA Sikkim and NIFAA North District today. The role of NIFAA North District was also discussed during the meeting.

NIFAA Sikkim State members, Bikash Pradhan, Chief Advisor, Zigmee Bhutia, Advisor, Praveen Pradhan, President, Kishore Baniya, Program Coordinator, Anita Rai and others

ident, Zigmee Bhutia and General Secretary, Rinzing Lendup Bhutia, NIFAA North District. President

were welcomed by Pres-

NIFAA Sikkim State, Praveen Pradhan spoke about the Samvedna Campaign while General Secretary, Krishna Chettri, NIFAA Sikkim State shared the aims and objectives of NIFAA India. Important portfolio of NIFAA North District was also distributed. General Secretary NIFAA Sikkim State, Kishore Baniya was the host of the day.

Mr Chettri congratulated on winning the Rashtriya Prerna Doot Award 2021 to be held at Chappra, Bihar on 03 Feb, 2021. He was given best wishes from NIFAA India and NIFAA Sikkim State.

Sixty units of blood would be collected for the 23 Mar, 2021 Samvedna Blood Donation camp at Mangan and the North District team would give their best at the Samvedna campaign awareness rally to be held very soon.

Soapmaking unit launched in Turuk **SUMMIT REPORT** GANGTOK, 25 JAN:

Turuk Soap-Making I Unit was formed at the CLBRC Hall at Turuk, South Sikkim, by members of different Self Help Groups under Star SGH Federation and Panchadara SHG Federation.

The womenfolk who came together for this venture today were provided training on soap-making by the State Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj from 18 to 20 Jan.

The training was onducted with the objective of rural women's empowerment, skill and knowledge enhancement for income generation activities.

The SHG members completed the training with keen interest and emerged with the resolve to establish a soap-making unit.

The marketing of the products and procuring of raw materials will be done by mother organization of SHGs, Sikkim Pragatiseel Nari Cooperative Society (SPNCS).

An executive body of the unit was also formalized and nominated today with Passankit Lepcha as president, Lopsang Doma Tamang as general secretary and Munna Tamang as treasurer.

The meeting also decided to open a joint account in the name of unit at SBI Melli and also unanimously passed a resolution to collect a monthly fees from members to run the unit.

HAVE A **STORY TO** SHARE₽ email us: news@ summittimes Com

CRH launches Covid vaccination site



SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 25 JAN:

The Covid-19 Vaccina-I tion Session Site for doctors, nurses and staff of Central Referral Hospital was launched here at the Sikkim Manipal University premises today, a press release informs.

The vaccination site, the release adds, is well contained with all necessary infrastructure.

A total of 100 vaccines were identified today and Head of Department of Medicine CRH, Prof Dr Parvati Nandy was the first recipient. All eligible staff will be covered in the coming days, the release states.

The launch pro-

gramme was held in the presence of SMU Vice Chancellor, Lt Gen Dr RS Grewal, along with Director RCH cum State Immunisation Officer, Dr Phumzay Denzongpa, Govt of Sikkim; Deputy Director Urban PHC Gangtok, Dr Manisha Rai, and Medical Officer Urban PHC SPO UNDP Government of Sikkim, Dr Kuljan Lama. Dean, Brig Dr VK Mehta, SMIMS; Registrar, Prof Dr KS Sherpa, SMU; Medical Superintendent, Prof Dr Yogesh Verma, CRH; Head of Operations, Prof Dr Mingma L Sherpa, CRH and Dept of PSM, Prof Dr

MUSS swachhta abhiyan to celebrate Bibhuji Maharaj's b'day **SUMMIT REPORT**

RANGPO, 25 JAN: $M_{\text{Samiti, North East}}^{\text{anav Utthan Seva}}$ Youth Wing undertook a cleanliness drive under the "Swachh Bharat

Abhiyan" at 27 locations across Sikkim, Dooars and Darjeeling Hills today to commemorate the 39th birthday of Bibhuji Maharaj, a press release informs.

Sumit Kar were present

on the occasion.

Walkathon kicks off road safety month in Mangan



WANGCHUK BHUTIA Mangan, 25 Jan:

Walkathon cum Road Safety Month was held from the DAC complex, Mangan, participated in by more than 200 students and drivers under the theme, "Sadak Suraksha Jiwan Raksha." The programme was launched at the national level on 18 Jan.

The programme had additional political secretary to the CM, Tshering Wangyal Bhutia as chief guest, accompanied by DM-North, Tenzing T

Kaleon, SP Ongmu Bhutia, ADC Sonam Lepcha, Regional Transport Officer-North Mohan Kr Gurung, Asst Motor Vehicle Inspectors Milan Sharma, Youvan Gurung, Laxmi Sharma and DAC staff, Municipal Executive Officer- MNP, Drivers Association members.

The drivers received awareness on road safety, drunken driving, drug abuse, passenger dealing and discipline.

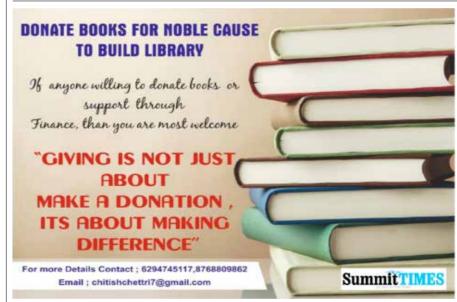
MEO-MNP also spoke on the Safai Abhiyan and Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

Lingtam teachers reach out to students cut off from classrooms

SUMMIT REPORT RANGPO, 25 JAN:

C chool teachers with active support from SMC mem-Ders of Government Secondary School, Lingtam, in East Sikkim, undertook an exemplary initiative of reaching out to the students in remote areas having no access to road connectivity, walking through rough and uneven terrain today to counsel them and their parents on how to tide over the pandemic and continue their learning even though the schools are currently closed. They suggested possible arrangements to ensure uninterrupted education.









COUNCIL OF SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH (CSIR) Anusandhan Bhawan, 2 Rafi Marg, New Delhi-110001

Advt. No. 05/2020 and Advt. No. 06/2020

Advertisement for the positions of Distinguished Scientist and Outstanding Scientist in CSIR

CSIR invites applications/nominations for the posts of Distinguished Scientist in Level 16 (Rs. 2,05,400- 2,24,400) and Outstanding Scientist in Level 15 of pay-matrix (Rs.1,82,200-2,24,100) plus allowances, as applicable in CSIR, from time to time.

For details kindly see the complete Advertisement No. 05/2020 and 06/2020 on CSIR Website www.csir.res.in. Applications/Nominations with complete biodata and list of publications/patents etc. may kindly be sent through e-mail on e-mail ID drc@csir.res.in or by post to Director Recruitment Cell, CSIR, Anusandhan Bhawan, 2, Rafi Marg, New Delhi-110 001 on or before 15.02.2021

The advertisement No. 02/2018 issued earlier for the position of Distinguished Scientist may be treated as cancelled and withdrawn. Those who wish to be considered for the position of Distinguished Scientist need to apply afresh, as per the terms of advertisement no 05/2020, available on CSIR Website

davp 36202/11/0018/2021

SummitTI

People First

...because the Constitution insisted it be so

What Sir Anthony Eden, the then Prime Minister of Britain, said at the time of the emergence of the Indian Republic in 1950 underlines what 26th January stands for. He said, "Of all the experiments in government, which have been attempted since the beginning of time. I believe that the Indian venture into parliamentary government is the most exciting. A vast subcontinent is attempting to apply to its tens and thousands of millions a system of free democracy... It is a brave thing to try to do so. The Indian venture is not a pale imitation of our practice at home, but a magnified and multiplied reproduction on a scale we have never dreamt of. If it succeeds, its influence on Asia is incalculable for good. Whatever the outcome we must honour those who attempt it."

71 years hence, the nation can be proud of what the Constitution has given the people. Mahatma Gandhi had visualized the Constitution of India in terms of universal values applied to the specific and special conditions of India. As early as in 1931 he had written, "I shall strive for a Constitution which will release India from all thralldom and patronage. I shall work for an India in which the poorest shall feel that it is their country in whose making they have an effective voice: an India in which there is no high class or low class of people, an India in which all communities shall live in perfect harmony. There can be no room in such an India for the curse of untouchability. We shall be at peace with the rest of the world, neither exploiting nor exploited. All interests not in conflict with the interests of the dumb millions will be scrupulously respected whether foreign or indigenous. Personally, I hate the distinction between foreign and indigenous. This is the India of my dreams for which I shall struggle."

This essence has been incorporated into the Constitution and if divisions still exist in our midst, it is not because the Document has let us down, but because the people and the leaders have failed the Constitution. At the end of the day, the Constitution of India is more than a codification of rules and laws, it is a social document scripted to further the aim of social revolution by establishing conditions necessary for its achievement. Needless to add, the society it is compiled for has to respect and abide by it. Things could have been much better for India, but then, the Constitution was not offered as a magic mantra to end all ills, it was drafted to strengthen the hands of those who could bring about real change.

Speaking on the draft of the Constitution, Dr. Ambedkar claimed that, "It is workable, it is flexible and it is strong enough to hold the country together both in peace time and in war time. Indeed, if I may say so, if things go wrong under the new Constitution, the reason will not be that we had a bad Constitution. What we will have to say is that Man is vile."

Do we want to go down in history as vile men?

What every Indian reminds himself is that the word "Republic" is no ordinary word. It is a commitment to the effect that, in our country, supreme power is exercised not by some remote monarch but by the people. The Constitution of India guarantees equal rights to all citizens, and prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, caste, and religion; it also allows universal franchise which makes the Indian electorate the largest in the world. Indians for example are more free than the British. The people of the United Kingdom are legally neither sovereign nor supreme, the Sovereignty of the State vests in the Crown, King or Queen, and the supremacy with the Legislature. British Parliament is credited with powers to do 'anything but make a man a woman', implying thereby that the limits of nature are the limits of British Parliament. The question of laws passed it being unconstitutional does not arise.

In contrast, in India, it is the people who are sovereign and supreme. The representative government is limited by the Constitution. A law duly passed by the legislature and assented to by the Head of the State has to be proved true on the touchstone, the Constitution, as and when so challenged. And that makes the people special... supreme.

WRITE US:

Readers are invited to comment on, criticise, run down, even appreciate if they like something in this paper. Letters carrying abusive/indecorous language and personal attacks, except when against people responsible in this newspaper (who are fair game), will have to be ignored. Letters which carry forward a conversation or initiate a dialogue will command immediate attention and receive prominence. Mail us at: news@summittimes.com

Gulf Blockade: Qatar Hugs and Makes Up With its Warring Beighbours – but Will it Last?

MUSTAFA MENSHAWY theconversation.com

Chortly after four Arab countries - Saudi Arabia. The United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt – imposed an embargo on Qatar in 2017, I flew into the country's capital Doha. Hamad airport - usually buzzing with visitors from the Gulf countries (one of every four visitors to Qatar in 2015 came from Saudi Arabia) - was eerily quiet.

The four countries severed ties with Qatar in June 2017 after they accused Doha of supporting terrorism. They demanded the shutdown of Qatari news network Al Jazeera as well as calling on the country to downgrade its relations with Iran. Doha defiantly rejected the accusations and agreed to mediation from Kuwait and the US to end the

Qatar has estimated its losses from the blockade in the billions of dollars – citing factors such as "industrial-scale theft of content from its sports broadcaster BeIN by rival Saudi network BeoutQ and the manipulation of its currency by the four countries. So, when they agreed on January 5 to lift the embargo and restore diplomatic relations with Qatar, all sides were keenly anticipating any economic benefits the restored detente might bring.

Qatar may be the smallest of the Gulf states but it's the richest. So when, hours after the agreement, foreign minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani talked about the possibility of the country's sovereign wealth fund investing in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states, his hint would have been well received in Rivadh.

Dangling the carrot of investment is a good way of appeasing Saudi Arabia, which is keen to attract foreign investment to back Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's grandiose modernisation projects as well as respond to the country's long-term need to secure new export markets and diversify its oil-dependent economy.

FRATERNAL RELATIONS

But the biggest sign of the new detente has so far been in the tone of Qatar's news media. Top of the list of the 13 demands placed on Qatar by the four countries was shutting down Al Jazeera.

Qatar didn't shut the network down - but watching the network in the days after the blockade ended, one could feel the difference. Bulletins no longer include regular news on "violations" by the Saudi regime. The channel even rebranded the Saudi Crown Prince, who it had vociferously attacked just a few weeks ago for "tarnishing the image of the Saudi state". Now Bin Salman is represented as a rising peacemaker engaged in relations of "fraternity". This was symbolically reflected in the way he hugged Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani when the Qatari emir arrived in Riyadh for their meeting on the sidelines of the Gulf Cooperation Council meeting in Saudi Arabia on January 5.

Coverage of Qatar by Saudi network Al Arabiya has also softened considerably, something picked up on by the BBC, which even hosted analysts to comment of the repeatedly screened scene of the hugging between the two leaders. "It was a hot hugging", commented one analyst, of the enthusiastic way the two leaders embraced when meeting at the airport in Riyadh.

The reconciliation has brought a sense of relief in all four countries. Ordinary people paid a deep humanitarian price - many are linked by close tribal ties and there are thousands of cases of cross-border intermarriage (to give you an idea of how close the Saudi Arabia and Qatar are, consider that it takes just an hour to drive from Doha to

In Qatar, I heard many stories of families split apart when Qatari nationals were ordered to leave their three Gulf neighbours within 14 days. More than 12,000 residents in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and UAE were also ordered to leave Qatar. Social media is now full of videos of families jubilantly crossing "Abu Samra", the land border between Saudi Arabia and Qatar within hours of the agreement.

HAPPY TALK

This may all sound like a return to normality, but sceptics pointed to the fact that, while the two feuding leaders talked of "brotherly unity" and desires for "Gulf unity", neither mentioned an agree-

ment on any of the issues that caused the crisis. On the one hand, everyone's a winner - but, on the other, we don't know how or why. The situation has been described as a "detente borne more of exhaustion than compromise".

The 13 demands made by the other Gulf states of Qatar remain unmet. For example, the Qatari foreign minister has already scotched a demand for Qatar to reduce its ties with Iran by shutting down diplomatic posts in Iran or expelling members of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guard, saving a couple of days after the agreement that his country would not alter relations with Tehran.

So this dispute is far from ended and there is a lot of tension brewing under the surface. Saudi Arabia, for its part, sees Iran as an "existential threat" and is unlikely to take no change as a negative answer.

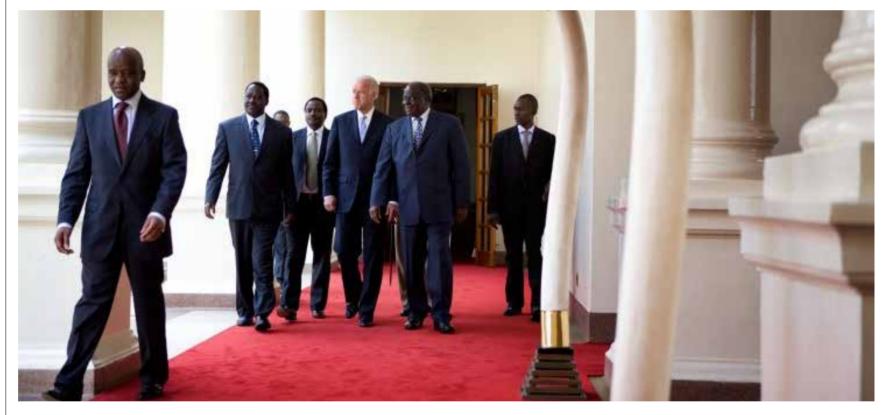
Others believe that for Bin Salman, temporarily easing the tension with Qatar is "low-hanging fruit" - something achieved with relative ease ahead of the inauguration of Joe Biden as the 46th US president. Biden is known for his critical attitude towards Riyadh's approach to human rights.

There is no sign that Qatar is also heeding the other demands, including closing Turkey's military base outside Doha. Turkey is popular among Qataris. You'll see cars with number plate stickers featuring the Turkish flag - or even with the image of Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

With so few issues apparently actually resolved, it's little wonder that it took just days for new signs of tension to reappear after the agreement. The UAE's minister of state for foreign affairs, Anwar Gargash, said following the GCC summit that Doha still has questions to answer, including: "How is Qatar going to deal vis-à-vis interfering in our affairs through support of political Islam? Is Turkey's presence in the Gulf going to be permanent?"

These are the same questions asked of Qatar long before the four countries issued their ultimatum in 2017. It's tension that is likely to outlive the warmth engendered by those televised hugs.

> [the writer is Postdoctoral Researcher in Middle East Politics, Lancaster University]



Joe Biden Sends a Clear Message to the Watching World – America's Back

SCOTT LUCAS theconversation.com

Politics doesn't have to be a raging fire destroying everything in its path

Two weeks after the storming of the US Capitol by the followers of his predecessor, in the middle of an outof-control pandemic that has killed more than 400,000 Americans, Joe Biden — the 46th president of the US — tried to contain the blaze in his inaugural address.

As aspiration, the speech was pitch perfect. Biden rightly took on the present of America's most serious domestic crisis since the Civil War. Coronavirus, the Capitol attack, economic loss, immigration, climate change and social injustice were con-

We'll press forward with speed and urgency for we have much to do in this winter of peril and significant possibility. Much to do, much to heal, much to restore, much to build and much to gain.

But what distinguished the speech beyond the essential was the sincerity with which it was delivered. Since the election, there has been a commingling of Biden's personal narrative of loss with the damage that America has suffered. When he

tives who have died, it was from the heart and not just the script.

So, as he said in front of the Capitol: "My whole soul is in this", there was no doubt — in contrast to the statements of his predecessor — that

Complementing Biden's rhetoric are the executive orders and legislation set out in the days before the inauguration. Immigration reform will be accompanied by protection of almost 800,000 young Dreamers from deportation. There is a mandate to reunite children separated from parents and a path to citizenship for millions of undocumented immigrants.

The US has rejoined the Paris Accords on climate change. The "Muslim Ban" is rescinded, Donald Trump's wall with Mexico suspended. And coronavirus will finally be confronted with coordination between the federal, state and local governments and a US\$1.9 trillion "American Res-

WORDS TO A WAITING WORLD

But where is America in the world in all this? In Biden's attention to domestic crises, there was little beyond his intention to re-engage with the world on climate and reverse the previous administration's myopic immigration measures. Even the in-

spoke of the "empty chair" and rela-vocations of American greatness, with one exception, staved within its

> Through a crucible for the ages, America has been tested anew and America has risen to the challenge.

> There is historical precedent for the exclusive focus on home. In 1933, as the Great Depression raged, Franklin Delano Roosevelt also made no reference to the world as he said at his first inauguration:

> The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.

> Perhaps even more pertinently, in 1865, Abraham Lincoln said in his second inaugural address, a month before his assassination and two months before the end of the Civil

With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's

Beyond the inaugural, there are clues in Biden's appointment of Obama-era pragmatists: Antony Blinken as secretary of state, Jake Sullivan as national security advisor, John Kerry in a special post for climate change. There will be no sweeping "Biden Doctrine", nor a grand speech such as Barack Obama's in

Cairo or Ankara in 2009.

Instead, the pragmatists will try to restore alliances, reestablish the "rules of the game" with countries such as China, Russia and North Korea - and work case-by-case on immediate issues such as the Iran nuclear deal.

But for this day, and for the weeks and months to come, the foreign challenges will primarily be an extension of the domestic issues that Biden set out on "America's day ... democracy's day".

Recovery of America's damaged standing will come from success in putting out the fires that are not just in the US: saving lives and vanquishing a virus, committing to a secure environment, tackling the inequities and divisions in the way of justice for all.

For as the world watched, Biden's exceptional reference to an aspiration beyond the US came in his penultimate paragraph about the "American story" to be written:

"That America secured liberty at home and stood once again as a beacon to the world. That is what we owe our forebears, one another, and generations to follow."

> [the writer is Professor of International Politics, *University of Birmingham*]

A SUMMIT TIMES SPECIAL ON REPUBLIC DAY 2021

A Document of Faith. An Article of Commitment

The Constitution of India and Article 371F

PEMA WANGCHUK

The reason we remain one of the rare countries to L celebrate a Republic Day is because "Republic" is no ordinary word in the Indian context. With us, it is a commitment under which supreme power is exercised not by some remote monarch and his coterie of favoured-few, but by the people.

Sikkim, in turn, has a special debt to the Constitution of India. Its special status within the Union of States that is India has been written into this document and because it is so, no one can deny this status. Attempts may be made to dilute this status, and some might even succeed, but fact remains that such dilutions will remain temporary. The moment someone holds up the mirror of the Constitution to such dilutions, the status as enshrined under Article 371F will be returned to Sikkim. That is something that no Tripartite Agreement or Old Law can guarantee and that is why Sikkim, even though it was not a part of India when the Constitution was drafted and installed, needs to be grateful to the great minds that gave us our Constitution.

It is thus unsettling to see how obscure Article 371 F of the Constitution of India remains even though it underlines the very identity of Sikkim and sets the conditions for its being a part of India. It is also ironic that its dilu-

tion happens more from its constant invoking than any intentional sidelining or harm. This tendency to bring up Article 371F too often has, it appears, taken away the need to explain or understand it in deeper detail. As a result, there is more confusion than understanding about it.

All the confusion surrounding this Article in the Constitution of India, perhaps stems from the

terminology that that Sikkim has associated with it - speaking almost exclusively of protecting and upholding the "sanctity" of Article 371F. Sanctity, which means sacredness, something inviolable, is associated with that which is to be accepted without question. Much like faith actually, and thus the communication gap which exists between religious texts and followers of the faith, is also reflected in Sikkim with its understanding/ appreciation of Article 371F. Even the most devout adherent has at best a sketchy understanding of the invocations that are always on her/his lips. S/he might not understand the full import of the words, but will never question them. Clearly then, the desire is never expressed to interpret the meanings. Till such time that such beliefs remain in private spaces, they are fine, but the moment this incomplete knowledge is expounded in the public domain, things can go out of hand. India knows only too well how faith and its interpretations have often been exploited to bloody

ends by various factions.

In the case of Sikkim, Article 371F occupies a similarly edified position. It is respected, but only superficially understood and yet passionately protected. While no one questions the need to protect Article 371F, it is the still sketchy understanding that needs to go and one needs to underline here that the Article, being a part of the Constitution, is already well protected, so energy will be better deployed trying to explain, understand and interpret

It is downright laughable how easily political parties whip up emotions just citing this Article and resorting to selective quoting. Article 371F

place to guard against the complete swamping of the Sikkimese identity. To whip it out at every pretext makes a mockery of the noble ideals which led to the creation and insertion of this Article in the

should be seen as an overarching clause put in the people so strongly in 1975 as to become part of ent". There has not been enough discussion on clause democratic India will be achieved only when the true potential of the Constitution trickles down to every corner of the State. For that, a more complete understanding of this document needs to be promoted. For the world for that matter, when one finds much faith

that, Sikkim, its people and its leaders will need to

expand their scope beyond Article 371F. Agreed, this

is the Article which provides the special arrangement

for Sikkim as a part of India, but what should not be

(k) in its entirety and it is perhaps time that the people did so. Agreed this is not the time in the country, or even

in either "competent legislatures" or "competent authorities", but if one were to look beyond the infectious scepticism of the times, one might emerge with an even deeper respect for the Constitution of India. The attendant clause which allows a "competent Legislature or other competent authority" to amend or repeal Old Laws need not necessarily be seen as an instrument to dilute Sikkim's uniqueness, but instead as empowerments to allow the should not be seen as a fullstop, but a semi-colon which allows two independent clauses that are closely related in thought to come together with-

Sikkimese to adapt to changing times... on their own terms. It out losing either individuality or getting estranged.

The Constitution of India is nothing if not organic and flexible; it is that rare document which can keep step with the times and has never been regressive in itself. If more informed discussions were undertaken

> to flesh out its virtues and what it makes possible for Sikkim, the State and its people can set even better terms for their involvement in the nation-building process while still ensuring Sikkim's unique identity within the Union without making it a museum display.

This is after all the document that makes every Indian free, equal and empowered; and in the case of Sikkim even more

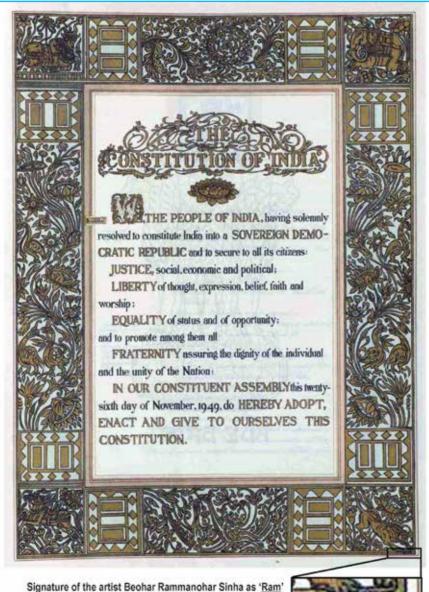
But to secure its true potential, there has to be more faith and more sharing. The Constitution was never offered as a magic mantra to end all ills of society or compromises of governance, it was drafted to strengthen the hands of those who could bring about real change. Speaking on the draft of the Constitution, Dr. Ambed-

kar had claimed that, "It is workable, it is flexible and it is strong enough to hold the country together both in peace time and in war time. Indeed, if I may say so, if things go wrong under the new Constitution,



"He Loyal To Chosen

Lazy leaders cannot be expected to go easy with their exploitation of Article 371F in their speeches, so the onus falls on the people to protect its "sanctity" which is under threat more from the overexposure that it suffers than a concerted plan to undermine it. For that to happen, the people must first understand what the Article is all about.



अलंकरणकर्ता व्यौहार राममनोहर सिंहा के संक्षिप्त हस्ताक्षर 'राम

Anyone can pick up a copy of the Constitution and read Article 371F in it, but to develop an understanding, one needs more. For that Sikkim will have to bring the Article down from the pedestal of reverence it has been placed on and approach it more practically. It has to be tackled as an academic pursuit of understanding and not as a theology class. Once the people Know, they will also be able to see things properly for themselves and not the tinted glasses that leaders whip out each time they invoke Article 371F.

What is safeguarded by Article 371F will always be safe, the Constitution is strong enough to guarantee that, but the real aspirations which moved

Impressive Ceremony To Be Held In New Delhi REPUBLIC DAY

TO BE PROCLAIMED TODAY

BIRTH OF INDIAN REPUBLIC INDONESIAN DEMAND FOR MERGER

overlooked is that this special arrangement is essentially incorporated for the Sikkimese to enjoy the guarantees of the rest of the Constitution.

Take for instance how it is almost always exclusively quoted with reference to clause (k) and its opening remark, "all laws in force immediately before the appointed day in the territories comprised in the State of Sikkim or any part thereof shall continue to be in force therein..." This is the inclusion in the Constitution which protects Sikkim's Old Laws. That sentence however continues to state: "...until amended or repealed by a competent legislature or other competent authority". The next clause - (l) - had empowered the President of India to bypass the "competent legislature or other competent authority"

and "make such adapta-

repeal or amendment, as may be necessary or expedi-



tions and modifications of the law, whether by way of the reason will not be that we had a bad Constitution. What we will have to say is that Man is vile."

A SUMMIT TIMES SPECIAL ON REPUBLIC DAY 2021

Dr. B.R. AMBEDKAR'S SPEECH IN THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY ON THE ADOPTION OF THE CONSTITUTION — 25 NOVEMBER, 1949

"...down-trodden classes are tired of being governed"

ir, looking back on the work of the er hand, this Constituent Assembly had to Constituent Assembly it will now be two years, eleven months and seventeen days since it first met on the 9th of December 1946. During this period the Constituent Assembly has altogether held eleven sessions. Out of these eleven sessions the first six were spent in passing the Objectives Resolution and the consideration of the Reports of Committees on Fundamental Rights, on Union Constitution, on Union Powers, on Provincial Constitution, on Minorities and on the Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes. The seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth and the eleventh sessions were devoted to the consideration of the Draft Constitution. These eleven sessions of the Constituent Assembly have consumed 165 days. Out of these, the Assembly spent 114 days for the consideration of the Draft Constitution.

Coming to the Drafting Committee, it was elected by the Constituent Assembly on 29th August 1947. It held its first meeting on 30th August. Since August 30th it sat for 141 days during which it was engaged in the preparation of the Draft Constitution. The Draft Constitution as prepared by the Constitutional Adviser as a text for the Draft Committee to work upon, consisted of 243 articles and 13 Schedules. The first Draft Constitution as presented by the Drafting Committee to the Constituent Assembly contained 315 articles and 8 Schedules. At the end of the consideration stage, the number of articles in the Draft Constitution increased to 386. In its final form, the Draft Constitution contains 395 articles and 8 Schedules. The total number Committee was of amendments to the Draft Constitution drifting, it was tabled was approximately 7,635. Of them, never without the total number of amendments actually moved in the House were 2,473.

I mention these facts because at one stage it was being said that the Assembly had taken too long a time to finish its work, that it was going on leisurely and wasting public money. It was said to be a case of Nero fiddling while Rome was burning. Is there any justification for this complaint? Let us note the time consumed by Constituent Assemblies in other countries appointed for framing their Constitutions. To take a few illustrations, the American Convention met on May 25th, 1787 and completed its work on September 17, 1787 i.e., within four months. The Constitutional Convention of Canada met on the 10th October 1864 and the Constitution was passed into law in March 1867 involving a period of two years and five months. The Australian Constitutional Convention assembled in March 1891 and the Constitution became law on the 9th July 1900, consuming a period of nine years. The South African Convention met in October, 1908 and the Constitution became law on the 20th September 1909 involving one year's labour. It is true that we have taken more time than what the American or South African Conventions did. But we have not taken more time than the Canadian Convention and much less than the Australian Convention. In making comparisons on the basis of time consumed, two things must be remembered. One is that the Constitutions of America, Canada, South Africa and Australia are much smaller than ours. Our Constitution as I said contains 395 articles while the American has just seven articles, the first four of which are divided into sections which total up to 21, the Canadian has 147, Australian 128 and South African 153 sections. The second thing to be remembered is that the makers of the Constitutions of America, Canada, Australia and South Africa did not have to face the problem of amendments. They were passed as moved. On the othdeal with as many as 2,473 amendments. Having regard to these facts the charge of dilatoriness seems to me quite unfounded and this Assembly may well congratulate itself for having accomplished so formidable a task in so short a time.

Turning to the quality of the work done by the Drafting Committee, Mr. Naziruddin Ahmed felt it his duty to condemn it outright. In his opinion, the work done by the Drafting Committee is not only not worthy of commendation, but is positively below par. Everybody has a right to have his opinion about the work done by the Drafting Committee and Mr. Naziruddin is welcome to have his own. Mr. Naziruddin Ahmed thinks he is a man of greater talents than any member of the Drafting Committee. The Drafting Committee would have welcomed him in their midst if the Assembly had thought him worthy of being appointed to it. If he had no place in the making of the Constitution it is certainly not the fault of the Drafting Committee.

Mr. Naziruddin Ahmed has coined a new name for the Drafting Committee evidently to show his contempt for it. He calls it a Drafting committee. Mr. Naziruddin must no doubt be pleased with his hit. But he evidently does not know

that there is a difference between drift without mastery and drift with mastery. If the Drafting mastery over the situation. It

was not merely angling with the off chance of catching a fish. It was searching in known waters to find the fish it was after. To be in search of something better is not the same as drifting. Although Mr. Naziruddin Ahmed did not mean it as a compliment to the Drafting committee. I take it as a compliment to the Drafting Committee. The Drafting Committee would have been guilty of gross dereliction of duty and of a false sense of dignity if it had not shown the honesty and the courage to withdraw the amendments which it thought faulty and substitute what it thought was better. If it is a mistake, I am glad the Drafting Committee did not fight shy of admitting such mistakes and coming forward to correct them.

I am glad to find that with the exception of a solitary member, there is a general consensus of appreciation from the members of the Constituent Assembly of the work done by the Drafting Committee. I am sure the Drafting Committee feels happy to find this spontaneous recognition of its labours expressed in such generous terms. As to the compliments that have been showered upon me both by the members of the Assembly as well as by my colleagues of the Drafting Committee I feel so overwhelmed that I cannot find adequate words to express fully my gratitude to them. I came into the Constituent Assembly with no greater aspiration than to safeguard the interests of he Scheduled Castes. I had not the remotest idea that I would be called upon to undertake more responsible functions. I was therefore greatly surprised when the Assembly elected me to the Drafting Com-

mittee. I was more than surprised when

the Drafting Committee elected me to be its Chairman. There were in the Drafting Committee men bigger, better and more competent than myself such as my friend Sir Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar. I am grateful to the Constituent Assembly and the Drafting Committee for reposing in me so much trust and confidence and to have chosen me as their instrument and given me this opportunity of serving the country. (Cheers)

The credit that is given to me does not really belong to me. It belongs partly to Sir B.N. Rau, the Constitutional Adviser to the Constituent Assembly who prepared a rough draft of the Constitution for the consideration of the Drafting Committee. A part of the credit must go to the members of the Drafting Committee who, as I have said, have sat for 141 days and without whose ingenuity of devise new formulae and capacity to tolerate and to accommodate different points of view, the task of framing the Constitution could not have come to so successful a conclusion. Much greater, share of the credit must go to Mr. S.N. Mukherjee, the Chief Draftsman of the Constitution. His ability to put the most incate proposals in the simplest

and clearest legal form can rarely be equalled, nor his capacity for hard

> He has been as acquisition tot he Assembly. Without his help, this Assembly would have taken many more years to finalise the Constitution. I must not omit to mention the members of the staff workunder Mr. ing Mukheriee. For, know how hard they have worked and how long they have toiled sometimes even beyond midnight. I want to thank them all for their effort and their co-operation.(Cheers)

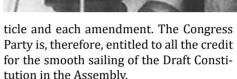
The task of the Drafting Committee would have been a very difficult one if this Constituent Assembly has been merely a

motley crowd,

pavement with-

tasseleted

out cement, a black stone here and a white stone there is which each member or each group was a law unto itself. There would have been nothing but chaos. This possibility of chaos was reduced to nil by the existence of the Congress Party inside the Assembly which brought into its proceedings a sense of order and discipline. It is because of the discipline of the Congress Party that the Drafting Committee was able to pilot the Constitution in the Assembly with the sure knowledge as to the fate of each ar-



therefore enter into the merits of the Constitution. Because I feel, however good a Constitution may be, it is sure to turn out bad because those who are called to work it, happen to be a bad lot. However had a Constitution may be, it may turn out to be good if those who are called to work it, happen to be a good lot. The working of a Constitution does not depend wholly upon the nature of the Constitution. The Constitution can provide only the organs of State such as the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary. The factors on which the working of those organs of the State depend are the people and the political parties they will set up as their instruments to carry out their wishes and their politics. Who can say how the people of India and their purposes or will they prefer revolutionary methods of achieving them? If they adopt the revolutionary methods, however good the Constitution may be, it requires no prophet to say that it will fail. It is, therefore, futile to pass any judgement upon the Constitution without reference to the part which the people and their parties are likely to play.

The condemnation of the Constitution largely comes from two quarters, the Communist Party and the Socialist Party. Why do they condemn the Constitution? Is it because it is really a bad Constitution? I venture to say no'. The Communist Party want a Constitution based upon the prin-

ciple of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. They condemn the Constitution because it is based upon parliamentary democracy. The Socialists want two things. The first thing they want is that if they come in power, the Constitution must give them the freedom to nationalize or socialize all private property without payment of compensation. The second thing that the Socialists want is that the Fundamental Rights mentioned in the Constitution must be absolute and without any limitations so that if their Party fails to come into power, they would have the unfettered freedom not merely to criticize, but also to over-

These are the main grounds on which the Constitution is being condemned. I do not say that the principle of parliamentary democracy is the only ideal form of political democracy. I do not say that the principle of no acquisition of private property without compensation is so sacrosanct that there can be no departure from it. I do not say that Fundamental Rights can never be absolute and the limitations set upon them can never be lifted. What I do over-statement, I say they are the views of the members of the Constituent Assembly. Why blame the Drafting Committee for embodying them in the Constitution? I say why blame even the Members of the Constituent Assembly? Jefferson, the great American statesman who played so great a part in the making of the American constitution, has expressed some very weighty views which makers of Constitution, can never afford to ignore. In one place he has

"We may consider each generation as a distinct nation, with a right, by the will of the majority, to bind themselves, but none to bind the succeeding generation, more than the inhabitants of another country."

In another place, he has said: "The idea that institutions established for the use of the national cannot be touched or modified, even to make them answer their end, because of rights gratuitously supposed in those employed to manage them in the trust for the public, may perhaps be a salutary provision against the abuses of a monarch, but is most absurd against the nation itself. Yet our lawyers and priests generally inculcate this doctrine, and suppose that preceding generations held the earth more freely than we do; had a right to impose laws on us, unalterable by ourselves, and that we, in the like manner, can make laws and impose burdens on future generations, which they will have no right to alter; in fine, that the earth belongs to the dead and not the living;"

I admit that what Jefferson has said is not merely true, but is absolutely true. There can be no question about it. Had the Constituent Assembly departed from this principle laid down by Jefferson it would certainly be liable to blame, even to condemnation. But I ask, has it? Quite the contrary. One has only to examine the provision relating to the amendment of the Constitution. The Assembly has not only refrained from putting a seal of finality

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Dr. B.R. AMBEDKAR'S SPEECH...

and infallibility upon this Constitution as in Canada or by making the amendment of the Constitution subject tot he fulfilment of extraordinary terms and conditions as in America or Australia, but has provided a most facile procedure for amending the Constitution. I challenge any of the critics of the Constitution to prove that any Constituent Assembly anywhere in the world has, in the circumstances in which this country finds itself, provided such a facile procedure for the amendment of the Constitution. If those who are dissatisfied with the Constitution have only to obtain a 2/3 majority and if they cannot obtain even a twothirds majority in the parliament elected on adult franchise in their favour, their dissatisfaction with the Constitution cannot be deemed to be shared by the general public.

There is only one point of constitutional import to which I propose to make a reference. A serious complaint is made on the ground that there is too much of centralization and that the States have been reduced to Municipalities. It is clear that this view is not only an exaggeration, but is also founded on a misunderstanding of what exactly the Constitution contrives to do. As to the relation between the Centre and the States, it is necessary to bear in mind the fundamental principle on which it rests. The basic principle of Federalism is that the Legislative and Executive authority is partitioned between the Centre and the States not by any law to be made by the Centre but by the Constitution itself. This is what Constitution does. The States under our Constitution are in no way dependent upon the Centre for their legislative or executive authority. The Centre and the States are co-equal in this matter. It is difficult to see how such a Constitution can be called centralism. It may be that the Constitution assigns to the Centre too large a field for the operation of its legislative and executive authority than is to be found in any other federal Constitution. It may be that the residuary powers are given to the Centre and not to the States. But these features do not form the essence of federalism. The chief mark of federalism as I said lies in the partition of the legislative and executive authority between the Centre and the Units by the Constitution. This is the principle embodied in our constitution. There can be no mistake about it. It is, therefore, wrong to say that the States have been placed under the Centre. Centre cannot by its own will alter the boundary of that partition. Nor can the Judiciary. For as has been well said:

"Courts may modify, they cannot replace. They can revise earlier interpretations as new arguments, new points of view are presented, they can shift the dividing line in marginal cases, but there are barriers they cannot pass, definite assignments of power they cannot reallocate. They can give a broadening construction of existing powers, but they cannot assign to one authority powers explicitly granted to another."

The first charge of centralization defeating federalism must therefore fall.

The second charge is that the Centre has been given the power to override the States. This charge must be admitted. But before condemning the Constitution for containing such overriding powers, certain considerations must be borne in mind. The first is that these overriding powers do not form the normal feature of the constitution. Their use and operation are expressly confined to emergencies only. The second consideration is: Could we avoid giving overriding powers to the Centre when an emergency has arisen? Those who do not admit the justification for such overriding powers to the Centre even in an emergendo not seem to have a clear idea of the problem which lies at the root of the matter. The problem is so clearly set out by a writer in that well-known magazine "The Round Table" in its issue of December 1935 that I offer no apology for quoting the following extract from it. Says the writer:

"Political systems are a complex of rights and duties resting ultimately on the question, to whom, or to what authority, does the citizen owe allegiance. In normal affairs the question is not present, for the law works smoothly, and a man, goes about his business obeying one authority in this set of matters and another authority in that. But in a moment of crisis, a conflict of claims may arise, and it is then apparent that ultimate allegiance cannot be divided. The issue of allegiance cannot be determined in the last resort by a juristic interpretation of statutes. The law must conform to the facts or so much the worse for the law. When all formalism is stripped away, the bare question is, what authority commands the residual loyalty of the citizen. Is it the Centre or the Constituent State

The solution of this problem depends upon one's answer to this question which is the crux of the problem. There can be no doubt that in the opinion of the vast majority of the people, the residual loyalty of the citizen in an emergency must be to the Centre and not to the Constituent States. For it is only the Centre which can work for a common end and for the general interests of the country as a whole. Herein lies the justification for giving to all Centre certain overriding powers to be used in an emergency. And after all what is the obligation imposed upon the Constituent States by these emergency powers? No more than this – that in an emergency, they should take into consideration alongside their own local interests, the opinions and interests of the nation as a whole. Only those who have not understood the problem, can complain against it.

Here I could have ended. But my mind is so full of the future of our country that I feel I ought to take this occasion to give expression to some of my reflections thereon. On 26th January 1950, India will be an independent country (Cheers). What would happen to her independence? Will she maintain her independence or will she lose it again? This is the first thought that comes to my mind. It is not that India was never an independent country. The point is that she once lost the independence she had. Will she lost it a second time? It is this thought which makes me most anxious for the future. What perturbs me greatly is the fact that not only India has once before lost her independence, but she lost it by the infidelity and treachery of some of her own people. In the invasion of Sind by Mahommed-Bin-Kasim, the military commanders of King Dahar accepted bribes from the agents of Mahommed-Bin-Kasim and refused to fight on the side of their King. It was Jaichand who invited Mahommed Gohri to invade India and fight against Prithvi Raj and promised him the help of himself and the Solanki Kings. When Shivaji was fighting for the liberation of Hindus, the other Maratha noblemen and the Raiput Kings were fighting the battle on the side of Moghul Emperors. When the British were trying to destroy the Sikh Rulers, Gulab Singh, their principal commander sat silent and did not help to save the Sikh Kingdom. In 1857, when a large part of India had declared a war of independence against the British, the Sikhs stood and watched the event as silent spectators.

ElseWhere

Will history repeat itself? It is this thought which fills me with anxiety. This anxiety is deepened by the realization of the fact that in addition to our old enemies in the form of castes and creeds we are going to have many political parties with diverse and opposing political creeds. Will Indian place the country above their creed or will they place creed above country? I do not know. But this much is certain that if the parties place creed above country, our independence will be put in jeopardy a second time and probably be lost for ever. This eventuality we must all resolutely guard against. We must be determined to defend our independence with the last drop of our blood. (Cheers)

On the 26th of January 1950, India would be a democratic country in the sense that India from that day would have a government of the people, by the people and for the people. The same thought comes to my mind. What would happen to her democratic Constitution? Will she be able to maintain it or will she lost it again. This is the second thought that comes to my mind and makes me as anxious as the first.

It is not that India did not know what is Democracy. There was a time when India was studded with republics, and even where there were monarchies, they were either elected or limited. They were never absolute. It is not that India did not know Parliaments or Parliamentary Procedure. A study of the Buddhist Bhikshu Sanghas discloses that not only there were Parliaments-for the Sanghas were nothing but Parliaments - but the Sanghas knew and observed all the rules of Parliamentary Procedure known to modern times. They had rules regarding seating arrangements, rules regarding Motions, Resolutions, Quorum, Whip, Counting of Votes, Voting by Ballot, Censure Motion, Regularization, Res Judicata, etc. Although these rules of Parliamentary Procedure were applied by the Buddha to the meetings of the Sanghas, he must have borrowed them from the rules of the Political Assemblies functioning in the country in his time.

This democratic system India lost. Will she lost it a second time? I do not know. But it is quite possible in a country like India – where democracy from its long disuse must be regarded as something quite new there is danger of democracy giving place to dictatorship. It is quite possible for this new born democracy to retain its form but give place to dictatorship in fact. If there is a landslide, the danger of the second possibility becoming actuality is much greater.

If we wish to maintain democracy not merely in form, but also in fact, what must we do? The first thing in my judgement we must do is to hold fast to constitutional methods of achieving our social and economic objectives. It means we must abandon the bloody methods of revolution. It means that we must abandon the method of civil disobedience, non-cooperation and satyagraha. When there was no way left for constitutional methods for achieving economic and social objectives, there was a great deal of justification for unconstitutional methods. But where constitutional methods are open, there can be no justification for these unconstitutional methods. These methods are nothing but the Grammar of Anarchy and the sooner they are abandoned, the better for us.

The second thing we must do is to observe the caution which John Stuart Mill has given to all who are interested in the maintenance of democracy, namely, not "to lay their liberties at the feet of even a great man, or to trust him with power which enable him to subvert their institutions". There is nothing wrong in being grateful to great men who have rendered lifelong services to the country. But there are limits to gratefulness. As has been well said by the Irish Patriot Daniel O'Connel, no man can be grateful at the cost of his honour, no woman can be grateful at the cost of her chastity and no nation can be grateful at the cost of its liberty. This caution is far more necessary in the case of India than in the case of any other country. For in India, Bhakti or what may be called the path of devotion or hero-worship, plays a part in its politics unequalled in magnitude by the part it plays in the politics of any other country in the world. Bhakti in religion may be a road to the salvation of the soul. But in politics, Bhakti or hero-worship is a sure road to degradation and to eventual dictatorship.

The third thing we must do is not to be content with mere political democracy. We must make our political democracy a social democracy as well. Political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of it social democracy. What does social democracy mean? It means a way of life which recognizes liberty, equality and fraternity as the principles of life. These principles of liberty, equality and fraternity as the principles of life. These principles of liberty, equality and fraternity are not to be treated as separate items in a trinity. They form a union of trinity in the sense that to divorce one from the other is to defeat the very purpose of democracy. Liberty cannot be divorced from equality, equality cannot be divorced from liberty. Nor can liberty and equality be divorced from fraternity. Without equality, liberty would produce the supremacy of the few over the many. Equality without liberty would

kill individual initiative. Without fraternity, liberty would produce the supremacy of the few over the many. Equality without liberty would kill individual initiative. Without fraternity, liberty and equality could not become a natural course of things. It would require a constable to enforce them. We must begin by acknowledging the fact that there is complete absence of two things in Indian Society. One of these is equality. On the social plane, we have in India a society based on the principle of graded inequality which we have a society in which there are some who have immense wealth as against many who live in abject poverty. On the 26th of January 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality. In politics we will be recognizing the principle of one man one vote and one vote one value. In our social and economic life, we shall, by reason of our social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle of one man one value. How long shall we continue to live this life of contradictions? How long shall we continue to deny equality in our social and economic life? If we continue to deny it for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril. We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment or else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy which is Assembly has to laboriously built up.

The second thing we are wanting in is recognition of the principle of fraternity. what does fraternity mean? Fraternity means a sense of common brotherhood of all Indians-if Indians being one people. It is the principle which gives unity and solidarity to social life. It is a difficult thing to achieve. How difficult it is, can be realized from the story related by James Bryce in his volume on American Commonwealth about the United States of America.

The story is- I propose to recount it in the words of Bryce himself- that- "Some years ago the American Protestant Episcopal Church was occupied at its triennial Convention in revising its liturgy. It was thought desirable to introduce among the short sentence prayers a prayer for the whole people, and an eminent New England divine proposed the words 'O Lord, bless our nation'. Accepted one afternoon, on the spur of the moment, the sentence was brought up next day for reconsideration, when so many objections were raised by the laity to the word nation' as importing too definite a recognition of national unity, that it was dropped, and instead there were adopted the words `O Lord, bless these United States."

There was so little solidarity in the U.S.A. at the time when this incident occurred that the people of America did not think that they were a nation. If the people of the United States could not feel that they were a nation, how difficult it is for Indians to think that they are a nation. I remember the days when politically-minded Indians, resented the expression "the people of India". They preferred the expression "the Indian nation." I am of opinion that in believing that we are a nation, we are cherishing a great delusion. How can people divided into several thousands of castes be a nation? The sooner we realize that we are not as yet a nation in the social and psychological sense of the world, the better for us. For then only we shall realize the necessity of becoming a nation and seriously think of ways and means of realizing the goal. The realization of this goal is going to be very difficult – far more difficult than it has been in the United States. The United States has no caste problem. In India there are castes. The castes are anti-national. In the first place because they bring about separation in social life. They are anti-national also because they generate jealousy and antipathy between caste and caste. But we must overcome all these difficulties if we wish to become a nation in reality. For fraternity can be a fact only when there is a nation. Without fraternity equality and liberty will be no deeper than coats of paint.

These are my reflections about the tasks that lie ahead of us. They may not be very pleasant to some. But there can be no gainsaying that political power in this country has too long been the monopoly of a few and the many are only beasts of burden, but also beasts of prey. This monopoly has not merely deprived them of their chance of betterment, it has sapped them of what may be called the significance of life. These down-trodden classes are tired of being governed. They are impatient to govern themselves. This urge for self-realization in the down-trodden classes must not be allowed to devolve into a class struggle or class war. It would lead to a division of the House. That would indeed be a day of disaster. For, as has been well said by Abraham Lincoln, a House divided against itself cannot stand very long. Therefore the sooner room is made for the realization of their aspiration, the better for the few, the better for the country, the better for the maintenance for its independence and the better for the continuance of its democratic structure. This can only be done by the establishment of equality and fraternity in all spheres of life. That is why I have laid so much stresses on them.

I do not wish to weary the House any further.

Independence is no doubt a matter of joy. But let us not forget that this independence has thrown on us great responsibilities. By independence, we have lost the excuse of blaming the British for anything going wrong. If hereafter things go wrong, we will have nobody to blame except ourselves. There is great danger of things going wrong. Times are fast changing. People including our own are being moved by new ideologies. They are getting tired of Government by the people. They are prepared to have Governments for the people and are indifferent whether it is Government of the people and by the people. If we wish to preserve the Constitution in which we have sought to enshrine the principle of Government of the people, for the people and by the people, let us resolve not to be tardy in the recognition of the evils that lie across our path and which induce people to prefer Government for the people to Government by the people, nor to be weak in our initiative to remove them. That is the only way to serve the country. I know of no better.

Mexican president tests positive for COVID-19, symptoms mild

MEXICO CITY (AP): Mex- me, Satan," López Obraican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador said he has tested positive for COVID-19, an announcement that comes as his country registers the highest levels of infections and deaths to

López Obrador, who has been criticized for his handling of Mexico's pandemic and for not setting an example of prevention in public, said Sunday on his official Twitter account that his symptoms are mild and he is under medical treatment.

"I regret to inform you that I am infected with COVID-19," he tweeted. "The symptoms are mild but I am already under medical treatment. As always, I am optimistic. We will all move forward."

José Luis Alomía Zegarra, Mexico's director of epidemiology, said the 67-year-old López Obrador had a "light" case of COVID-19 and was "isolating at home."

Mexico's president wrote that while he recovered Interior Secretary Olga Sánchez Cordero would be taking over for him in his daily news conferences, at which he usually speaks for two hours without breaks each weekday.

Despite his age and high blood pressure, López Obrador has not received a vaccine shot even though Mexico has already received a batch of Pfizer-BioNTech doses. He has said that health workers would be the first ones to get them. Under the government plan, people over 60 will start being vaccinated in February.

López Obrador has rarely been seen wearing a mask and continued to keep up a busy travel schedule taking commercial flights.

locking down the economy, noting the devastating effect it would have on so many Mexicans who live day to day, despite that the country has registered nearly 150,000 COVID-19 deaths and more than 1.7 million infections. A new wave of infections has pushed the health system of the country's capital city close to saturation.

Early in the pandemic, asked how he was protecting Mexico, López Obrador removed two religious amulets from his wallet and proudly showed them off.

"The protective shield is the 'Get thee behind dor said, reading off the inscription on the amulet, "Stop, enemy, for the Heart of Jesus is with me.

In November, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, head of the World Health Organization, urged Mexico's leaders be serious about the coronavirus and set examples for its citizens, saying that "Mexico is in bad shape" with the pandemic.

He didn't name López Obrador, but said: "We would like to ask Mexico to be very serious."

"We have said it in general, wearing a mask is important, hygiene is important and physical distancing is important and we expect leaders to be examples," he added.

At the start of the pandemic López Obrador was criticized for still leaning into crowds and giving hugs. The eternal campaigner, López Obrador's style of politics has always been very hands on and personal. As the pandemic grew he began limiting attendance to his events and maintaining his distance from supporters.

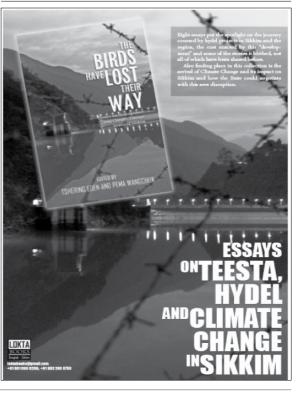
But on Friday, López Obrador posted a photo of him, Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard, a translator and former chief of staff Alfonso Romo, all gathered around a table for a phone call with U.S. President Joe Biden. None were wearing masks; the foreign relations department has not answered questions about whether Ebrard has been tested.

López Obrador's announcement came shortly after news emerged that he would speak with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday about obtaining doses of the Sputnik V COVID-19 vaccine.

Mexico Foreign Af-He has also resisted fairs Secretary Marcelo Ebrard said via Twitter the two leaders would speak about the bilateral relationship and supplying doses of the vaccine.

> The vaccine has not been approved for use in Mexico, but the government is desperate to fill supply gaps for the Pfizer vaccine.

> Besides López Obrador, other Latin American leaders who have tested positive for the coronavirus are Brazil's President Iair Bolsonaro, Guatemala's Alejandro Giammattei, Honduras' Juan Orlando Hernández and Bolivia's then-interim President Ieanine Ánéz. All have recovered.





गणतन्त्र दिवसको शुभकामना

लोकतन्त्रको महान उत्सव ७२ औं गणतन्त्र दिवसको शुभोपलक्ष्यमा सम्पूर्ण सिक्किमेली जनगणमा हार्दिक मंगलमय शुभकामना व्यक्त गर्दछु।



कला राई अध्यक्ष, नारी शक्ति मेकिम कान्तिकारी मोच



७२ औं गणतन्त्र दिवसको शुभोपलक्ष्यमा सम्पूर्ण राज्यवासीमा हार्दिक मंगलमय शुभकामना व्यक्त गर्दछ।



वाई.टी. लेप्चा विधायक गान्तोक समब्दि

"The Constitution is not a mere lawyer's document, it is a vehicle of Life, and its spirit is always the spirit of age."

— Dr BR Ambedkar, Father of the Indian Constitution.

Happy Republic Day!

I join the Sikkimese people and all the citizens of our glorious country in resolving to stand true to the ideas promoted by the Constitution of India and the responsibility shouldered on us by this holy document which defines the principles by which We, the People, are expected to govern ourselves and engage in the celebration of democracy that the Constitution empowers us to be part of.



DR THAPAMLA, UPPER Burtuk





Happy Republic Day!

Heartiest greetings to all the people of Sikkim and the Nation on the occasion of the 72nd Republic Day. Let us resolve to always stand true to the virtues expected of citizens as envisioned in the Constitution of India and reiterate our steadfastness to the principles of Freedom and Equality enshrined in the Document.

EM PRASAD SHARMAMLA, Namcheybong Advisor, Excise Department

