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CHANDIGARH, MONDAY FEBRUARY 15, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹2

## 14 KILLED AS MINI BUS HITS LORRY IN KURNOOL Kurnool: Fourteen people,

including eight women and a child, were killed and four others injured when a mini bus collided with a lorry in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh early on Sunday.

### WON'T LET GOVT SIT IN PEACE, SAYS TIKAIT Karnal: Upping the ante against

the Government, Bharatiya Kisan Union leader Rakesh Tikait on Sunday said the farmers won't let it sit in neace till their demands are met.

### DELHI REPORTS 150 COVID CASES, 2 DEATHS

New Delhi: Delhi recorded 150 fresh Covid-19 cases and two deaths on Sunday, even as the positivity rate stood at 0.26 pe cent, authorities said here. No death related to the disease was recorded in the national capital on Saturday, the second time in February when the single-day fatality count was nil.

### **GUJ CM COLLAPSES ON** STAGE AT POLL RALLY

Vadodara: Guiarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani collapsed on stage on Sunday while addressing a rally for upcoming civic polls in Nizampura area of Vadodara. BJP leaders said. Rupani was given first aid on the stage.

### UP: DOCTOR'S HALF-BURNT BODY FOUND IN FOREST

Amethi: The half-burnt body of a 40-vear-old doctor, who had gone missing on February 11, was found in a forest area here, police said on

# Terror plot on Pulwama anniv foiled

## 6.5 kg IED recovered from arrested nursing student in Jammu

**MOHIT KANDHARI** ■ JAMMU

sinister plot to bleed Asinister plot to bleed Jammu on the occasion of second anniversary of "ghastlv" Pulwama terror attack was foiled by the alert jawans of Jammu & Kashmir Police after they recovered 6.5 kg explo-sives from a Kashmir-based nursing college student near Jammu bus stand late on Saturday evening.

The IED was to be used for triggering a blast at any one of the major installations in Jammu, including its famous Raghunath Mandir, railway station, bus stand and jewellery market located in the walled city area of Lakhdatta Bazar.

Nursing college student from Pulwama, currently studying in Chandigarh, was directed by the Pakistan-based handlers of Al-Badr terror outfit to execute the terror plot.

In a separate development, a consignment of weapons was also recovered from Samba. The weapons could have been airdropped in the area using Pakistani drones. Meanwhile, J&K DGP Dilbagh Singh also made a major revelation on Sunday that terrorist commanders in Kashmir are smuggling weapons from Bihar with the help of their over ground workers network to carry out operations in the region.

He confirmed that chief commander of Lashkar-e-



Jammu & Kashmir Police personnel display arms and ammunition recovered from a bus stand in Jammu on Sunday

Mustafa, a front organisation of Jaish-e-Mohammad, had conducted a recce of the office of NSA Ajit Doval and had also dispatched the video footage to his handler Iliyas doctor of JeM to plan a major terror strike in New Delhi.

Addressing a joint Press conference here in the district police lines in Jammu, Inspector General of Police, Jammu range Mukesh Singh said they have been on high alert for the last three days as there were inputs that on the anniversary of Pulwama attack terrorist groups may carry out some major attack in Jammu city. He said based on these inputs checking points were established at critical points and on Saturday night a person namely Suhail was found roam-

"He was carrying a bag. On being questioned and checking of the bag around 6.5 kg IED was recovered which was not active. During questioning he said he was a student of nursing college and was studying in Chandigarh. He was tasked by

ing suspiciously in the area.

Al-Badr handlers in Pakistan to place this IED at places," he said. Singh said on further ques-

tioning Suhail also revealed that after placing the IED he was supposed to take a flight to Srinagar and he was to be received by a high ranking over ground worker of Al-Bad, Athar Shakeel Khan at

"After meeting Athar he was supposed to become an active militant. This was his planning. Another person in Chandigarh was also in the know-how of this planning. He has also been picked up from Chandigarh and has been identified as Qazi Waseem and there is another person Abid Nabi associated with this outfit. He has also been arrested, he said. The IG said by his arrest and by the recovery of this IED a major terror attack has been averted.

Addressing mediapersons on the occasion, Director General of Jammu & Kashmir Police Dilbag Singh said police carried out two major successful operations and arrested two chief commanders of The Resistance Front (TRF) and Lashkar-e Mustafa in the last one week from different areas of Jammu.

He said the TRF is being run by Lashkar-e-Tayyeba while the terror outfit Lashkare-Mustafa is being run by Jaishe-Mohammad from across the border to carry out terror activities not only in Jammu & Kashmir but in some other parts of the country including Delhi. "Lashkar-e-Mustafa came into being recently in

August last year," he said. Singh said the chief commander of Lashkar-e-Mustafa, Hidayatullah Malik, who was eading this outfit and was active from the last few months, was arrested by the police from Kunjwani area of Jammu. He said Hidayatullah was working as an OGW for a long time and later became active to carry out terror activities sponsored by Jaish-e-Mohammad. He said Malik was tasked to expand the terror base of the outfit from the South Kashmir areas to Jammu region. Singh said, "Hidayatullah had set up a network of OGWs to ferry arms consignment arriving from across the border to Kashmir Valley. In addition, he was also in touch with terror associates in Bihar from where he was smuggling pistols. So far seven pistols have reached

Kashmir via Chapra in Bihar."
"Hidayatullah had also set up a network of Kashmiri students studying in different cities across Punjab and was using them to ferry these consignments to Kashmir," he said.

Referring to the modus operandi of terror outfits using tunnels, the DGP said during his interrogation Malik had also revealed that one of the active terrorist Ashiq Nengroo, who used to ferry infiltrators from Jammu to Kashmir Valley via road link himself used the tunnel route to return to Pakistan along with his family.

He said now Ashiq Nengroo is working as an active handler and organising logistics support for terrorists across Jammu & Kashmir. During 2017-18 Nengroo had managed to ferry around three dozen terrorists from the International Border to Kashmir Valley.

### **Trump acquitted** as impeachment trial in Senate fails by 57-43

**PTI** ■ WASHINGTON

The US Senate has acquitted a defiant Donald Trump in his second impeachment trial in just over a year, after the Democrats failed once again to muster enough votes to convict the former president on a charge of inciting the deadly insurrection at the Capitol on January 6.

The Senate voted 57-43 on Saturday to convict Trump on a single impeachment count incitement of insurrection. But that majority of all 50 Democrats in the upper chamber of the US Congress, ioined Republicans, fell 10 votes short of the 67 needed for a conviction, two-thirds of the 100-member Senate.

The Senate acquitted the 4-year-old Republican leader of inciting insurrection at the US Capitol last month after he urged hundreds of his supporters to confront lawmakers as they were certifying that he had lost the November 3 presidential election to Democrat Joe Biden.

He was accused of inciting riots in the Capitol which left five people, including a police officer, dead. Trump is the first president in US history to be impeached by the House of Representatives twice, and the first to be tried for impeachment after leaving

## 12 bodies pulled out from U'khand site, toll rises to 50

PNS TAPOVAN/DEHRADUN

s massive operation 30 people trapped inside tunnel began after a flash flood in Chamoli district a week ago, rescue teams on Sunday recovered 12 more bodies, including the first ones to be pulled out from the sludge-choked Tapovan tunnel.

Five bodies were recovered from the Tapovan power project tunnel, six from Raini upstream and one from the riverbank in Rudraprayag, taking the confirmed death toll in the Uttarakhand disaster to 50.

Officials said 154 people still remain missing after the February 7 devastation, possibly triggered by an avalanche in the upper reaches of the Alaknanda river system.

A surge of water in Dhauliganga and Rishiganga rivers had ripped through two hydel projects. Bodies of victims were being found at dif-



remains of a flash flood victim near Raini village on Sunday

ferent locations by the river over the past week, but rescuers had so far failed to reach anyone — dead or alive — in the tunnel network at the National Thermal Power Corporation's 520 MW Tapovan-Vishnugad

### **Get FASTag by** midnight of Feb 16 or pay double: Govt

PNS NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Road Transport & Highways on Sunday announced that all lanes in the fee plazas on National Highways will be declared as "FASTag lane of the fee plaza" from midnight of February 15, 16 of 2021.

Union Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari made it clear that the deadline for the implementation of FASTag would not be extended further, and the vehicle owners should immediately adopt the e-payment facility. The Central Government had last extended the FASTag deadline for the vehicles from January 1, 2021,

to February 15, 2021 'Therefore, as per NH Fee Rules 2008, any vehicle not fitted with FASTag or vehicle without valid, functional FASTag entering into the FASTag lane of the fee plaza shall pay a fee equivalent to two times of the fee applicable to that category," the Ministry said in a

### Omar claims father and he under house arrest again

PNS ■ JAMMU

Former Jammu & Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, along with his father Dr Faroog Al from Parliamentarian Srinagar), found themselves locked up inside their Gupkar road house early Sunday morning after they noticed a police van stationed outside the front gate had blocked their way.

Angry over this development, Omar Abdullah immediately took to Twitter to vent his ire against the security establishment. In a series of tweets Omar wrote, "This is the 'naya/new J&K' after Aug 2019. We get locked up in our homes with no explanation. It's bad enough they've locked my father (a sitting MP) & me in our home, they've locked my sister & her kids in their home as

In response, a Twitter handle of Srinagar police said, "Today is the 2nd anniversary of the dreaded Lethpora Terror incident. There shall be NO ROP on ground.



## PM launches job-creating projects in TN, Kerala

PNS CHENNAI/KOCHI

 $P_{\text{Modi's day out on Sunday}}^{\text{rime Minister Narendra}}$ to Tamil Nadu and Kerala saw the dedication and commissioning of a slew of development projects in both the pollbound States which would result in creation of thousands of jobs and savings in foreign exchange

The Prime Minister also laid foundation stones for projects meant for farming, development of innovation for youths, strengthening of skill of technically qualified youths and development of tourism projects.

One of the important functions presided over by the Prime Minister was the handing over of Arjun Mk-1A the state-of-the-art main battle tank to Indian Army. The high performance tank was developed by the scientists of Chennai-based Combat Vehicles Research and



Deputy CM O Panneerselvam during the inauguration of Chennai Metro Rail Phase-I extension, that will link North Chennai with the Airport and Central Railway Station in Chennai on Sunday

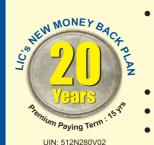
Development Establishment (CVRDE), a unit of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and other allied institutions. General MM Naravane, Chief of Army Staff, received Arjun Arjun Mk-1A from Prime Minister Modi in an elegant function held at Chennai's Indoor Stadium.

Paying homages to the soldiers ambushed Pulwama two years ago, the Prime Minister said, "No Indian can forget this day. Two years ago, Pulwama attack happened. We pay homage to all the martyrs we lost in that attack. We are proud of our security forces. Their bravery will continue to inspire gener-

Quoting the verses of Mahakavi Subramaniya Bharathi in Tamil, Modi said, "Let us make weapons; also make paper; let us make factories; let us also make schools let us make vehicles that can move and fly - also let us make ships that can shake the world." Inspired by this vision of Subramaniya Bharathi, India has undertaken a massive effort to become self-reliant in the defence sector.

Later, Modi inaugurated the Chennai Metro Rail Phase-l extension project completed at a cost of ₹3,770 crore which would ease traffic flow in the city. A long time dream of the farmers in the Cauvery Delta districts (the five districts on the banks of Cauvery river) got a boost as the Prime Minister laid the foundation stone for the extension, renovation and modernisation of the Grand Anicut Canal System to be completed at a cost of ₹2,640 crore.

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# Hydropower projects of 331.25 MW setup in HP INBRIEF

Himachal Government has launched a comprehensive programme to solve the electricity problem in far flung areas of the state.

"After the constitution of Himurja in the state, the Department has installed 89

While the electricity problem of the people of far flung areas has been solved, the utilization of solar power has also been encouraged in other places of the state, which has also reduced the

electricity bills

## Classifieds

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

I, Service No. 4468616Y, Ex. N Balvinder Singh S/O Bachan Singh R/C Vpo. Bhaini Baringan, Tehsil Raikot Distt. Ludhiana, hereby inform that in my army records my daughter Mandeep Kaur's name is mentioned wrong a Mandip Kaur. But her correct name Mandeep Kaur & DOB is 23-11-1995 a per all civil documents

I, No.14485019X Rank: Ex Havildar, Harbans Singh S/o Late Pren Singh R/o H.No.: 47, Street No.: 20-C Anand Nagar-B, Patiala (Punjab) declare that in my army record my son's nan wrongly mentioned Amandin Singl instead of his correct name Amandee Singh vide Affidavit No. AT 256953 dated 13/02/2021 before Notary, Patiala.

We, Kuldeep Singh S/O Pura Singh, Sukhminder Kaur W/O Kuldeer Singh R/O H.No-49, Punjabi Bagh Samrala Road, Khanna (Ludhiana Declare That Our Son Paramraj Singh His Wife Sandeep Kaur And Ou Daughter Amardeep Kaur Are Out Of Out Control. They Do Not Look After Us. We Disown Them From Our Movable/ Immovable Property. They Will Be Responsible For Their Acts And

I, Amarjeet S/o Tara Chand r/o Dhurali, Tehsil Thanesa (Kurukshetra) have disown my son Rahu from all my properties, as he is out of my control. Anybody dealing with him their own risk.

**में स्वर्ण सिंह कांता** पत्नी विजय कुर H.N- 476/12 मुलतानी चौक दिसार (हरियाणा बयान देती हूं कि मेरा पुत्र सकेन मुलाटी व उसकी पत्नी मेरे कड़ने - सुनने से बाहर हैं में उसे अपने चल- अचल संपित से बेदसल करता हूं। अन भविष्य में उक्त दोनों किसी से लेन देन गलद व्यवहार करते हैं वे दोनों स्वयं जिम्मेवार होनें। मेर्र व मेरे परिवार की कोई जिम्मेवारी नहीं होगी।

### **CHANGE OF NAME**

I , Parveen S/o Mam Raj # 6 Village Behlana, Chandigarh , hav changed my name to Parveen Kumar.

I. Bikram S/o Ishwar Dass #73 changed my name to Vikram Kumar.

I, Jaspreet S/o Ranjit Singh R/ Vill: Jajja Khurd Po. Kang Jagir Teh-Phillaur (Jalandhar) changed my name to

Jaspreet Singh. I, Bahadur S/o Amarjit R/o Vpc Dhanipind Teh-Phillaur (Jalandha

changed my name to Bahadur Mehra. I, Yadwinder Singh Brar S/C

Gurjant Singh R/O Village Tappa Khera District Sri Muktsar Sahib Have Changes My Name To Yadvinder Singh Brar. I, Paramiit W/O Ashwani Kum

R/O Aggarwal Colony Jalalabad Tehsil Jalalabad West District Fazilka Have Changed My Name To Paramjeet Rani.

I, Rohit S/O Kewal Krishan R/C Kalka Mandir Street Jalalabad Tehsil Jalalabad West District Fazilka Have Changed My Name To Rohit Kukkar.

I, Usha Rani D/O Sarjug Meht W/O Deepak Sahni R/O H.No 1475, Nr. N.T.C. School, Ward 21, Rajpura, Tehsi Rajpura, Distt. Patiala Have Changed My

Name To Anusha Devi. I Amanatbir Kaur Daughter O Harjinderjit Singh Dhilon Resident O House No.711. Guru Ram Dass Naga Kot Khalsa Amritsar State That My Actual Name Is Amanatbir Kaur Instead

Of Amanat Bir Kaur. All Concerne Please Note. I Indu Mehta W/O Kunal Single R/O Flat No.205, Tower-1, Bestech Park View Residences Sector-66, Mohal

(S.A.S. Nagar) Have Changed My Nan To Indu Singla, After Marriage. I Navpreet Kaur Chahal D/C Talwinder Singh R/O Vill. Rattanhe Tehsil Khanna Distt Ludhiana Have Changed My Name To Navpreet Kaur.

I Satinder Kaur W/O Barinde Singh Hans R/O Vpo. Sujapur Tehsi agraon Distt. Ludhiana Have Change

My Name To Satinder Kaur Hans. I Sulkshna W/O Parminder Kum Chhabra R/O Talwandi Bhai Distric

Ferozepur Have Changed My Name To

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MW so far, which are of upto 5 MW. These small hydro units are contributing significantly in solving the power problem of the people," said an official spokesman.

While the electricity prob-lem of the people of far flung areas has been solved, the utilization of solar power has also been encouraged in other places of the state, which has also reduced the electricity bills, he said.

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

than Rs 16 lakh

owners in 2020.

Haryana Police has recovered 228 stolen or missing

mobile phones in a month's

time and handed it back to

their original owners. The total

worth of these phones is more

Director General of Police

(Law and Order) Navdeep

Singh Virk said that 2,048

mobile phones worth Rs 1.61

crore were also recovered and

handed over to their respective

plaints, IT and cyber cell teams

traced the location of the

mobile and SIM being used

with their IMEI number. The

Acting on such com-

recovered handsets in January tronic gadgets.

Haryana Additional

Hry Police recovers 228

stolen or missing mobile

phones in a month's time

82.7 MW in Chamba district, 98.65 MW in Kangra district, 25.9 MW in Kinnaur district, 60 MW in Kullu district, 10.50 MW in Mandi district, 39 MW in Shimla district and 12 MW in Sirmaur district have been installed.

He said that Himurja has also installed 41 advanced gharats (grinder), 878 advanced chulhas and 17 wind solar hybrid systems at various places in the state. Besides this, The spokesman said that 164803 street lights, 69935

2021 also include costly high-

end mobile phones. Most of

these phones have been lost

accidently by the users while

some others were stolen as well.

Using high-end technology,

the police have been working

to trace missing cell phones and

more such recoveries are expected in coming days, he said. Virk said, "At 46, the

Hisar district recorded maxi-

mum recovery of handsets fol-

lowed by 25 in Panchkula, 15

in Palwal. The GRP also man-

aged to trace 25 handsets dur-

ple to immediately approach

the nearest police station to

report such cases to avoid any

kind of misuse of these elec-

Virk also advised the peo-

ing the same period.'

off grid solar power plant of 3152.45 KW, grid connected solar rooftop power plant of 14425.54 KW and 20,24,000 solar water heating systems have been made available to the public by Himurja.

To ensure electricity supply, the State Government has set up one kilowatt of grid solar power plants free of cost in 34 houses of Kunnu village and 40 houses of Charang village in district Kinnaur. Apart from this, 250 watt off grid solar

in the houses of one thousand BPL families in Pangi subdivision of Chamba district in December 2020 so that electrical crisis arising due to breakdown could be avoided, the spokesman said.

The Pangi area is located at an altitude of 7,000 to 11,000 feet, about 461 km from the Shimla. The State Government has made a provision of Rs 3.83 crore in the budget for the area for setting up off-grid solar power plants for people living

The spokesman further

said that grid connected solar power plants have also been set up in the capital city of Shimla. These solar power plants have been installed on the roofs of about 66 government offices in the city, which has reduced electricity bills in government offices. Also, grid connected projects of 23.25 MW have been set up on the ground, which has provided employ-

### ment to unemployed youth of Himachal, he said. Selja hits out at PM Modi over

**PNS** ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana Congress chief Kumari Selja on Sunday said that more than 200 farmers have lost their lives during the ongoing farmers' agitation against the three farm laws but it is sad to see that the Prime Minister has not uttered a word expressing sympathy for the departed souls.

"The farmers' movement has been going on for three months now but the Prime Minister has been using sarcastic words for the agitating farmers," said Kumari Selja while addressing a Kisan Sammelan in Kalanwali, Sirsa.

The Congress leader also lashed out at Haryana Agriculture Minister JP Dalal for his statement on the deaths of farmers.

said, "Everyone is sad about those who die. If you cannot express sympathy, at least do not say anything wrong about

deaths of farmers during stir

Commenting on deaths of agitating farmers, Agriculture Minister JP Dalal had a day before said, "Would not they have died if they were at home? Out of 1-2 lakh people, don't 200 people die in 6 months? Someone is dying of a heart attack and someone after falling ill. I express my sympathies towards them?

However, the Minister on Sunday apologised for the statement and maintained that his words were "misinterpreted". "If anyone is hurt by my statements, then, I apologise. My statement has been misinterpreted. I am committed to Everyone is sad about those who die. If you cannot express sympathy, at least do not sav anything wrong about them

the welfare of farmers," he said. Several Punjab and Haryana farmers, participating in farmers' agitation against the Centre's three farm laws at various Delhi border points, have died of different reasons including cardiac arrest.

Congress spokesperson Randeep Singh Surjewala had also attacked JP Dalal over his remarks on farmers' protest deaths. Suriewala said an "insensitive" person can only make such a statement. "These words can only be used by an insensitive man for agitating 'annadatas," Surjewala had said in a tweet.

## Eateries, salons in east Delhi offer spl discounts on V-Day

New Delhi: Eateries and salons in east Delhi have gone all out with special discounts on the occasion of Valentine's Day on Sunday.

While speaking to IANS, Mahesh Verma, Assistant Manager, Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) in Preet Vihar area, said : "We have started a 'couple meal' from February 12 which is valid till February 14 and is available at special discount rates.

Owner of 'Unique Pastry' in IP Extension area on condition of anonymity, said: "Special baked at our bakery on Valentine's Day with special

IANS also spoke to Kriti Yadav, the owner of the 'Nail Site', which specialises in nail shaping and also runs a 'Beauty Academy' in Delhi's Nirman

She said on the occassion of Valentine's Day, our salon is providing service of nail exten-

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with any nail art at reasonable rates. She also told IANS that manicure and pedicure services at home are also being extend-

ed without any visiting charges. Sahil Gupta of 'Sakhi Beauty Parlour' at Patparganj area said, "At 'Sakhi', we are offering 50 per cent discount on facial treatment to mark the Valentine's Day."

### BJP leader's vehicle attacked in Hoshiarpur

Hoshiarpur: A BJP leader's vehicle was allegedly attacked on Sunday by some unidentified people when a group of farmers was protesting against the Centre's farm laws.

The police said that the incident took place at Garhdiwala town, about 30 km from Hoshiarpur. The vehicle of BJP district president (rural) Sanjiv Minhas was attacked when around 100 farmers were protesting against the Centre's farm laws outside a shop of another party leader, Jogesh Chopra.

At that time, Minhas was present in the shop, said officials. As the leader was being taken to a safer place, some unidentified people scuffled with police perdow panes of Minhas's vehicle.

Minhas was taken to a community health centre for a check-up, from where he was discharged after providing first aid. Minhas accused the Congress workers of attacking his vehicle. Superintendent of Police (Headquarter) Raminder Singh said that they are verifying facts and action will be taken accordingly.

## Min temperatures hover above normal limits in Punjab, Haryana

**PNS** ■ CHANDIGARH

he minimum temperatures **1** on Sunday hovered above normal limits in Punjab and Harvana.

According to the Meteorological Department, Chandigarh, the common capital of the two states, recorded a low of 9.8 degrees Celsius.

In Punjab, Amritsar recorded a low of 11 degrees Celsius while Ludhiana and Patiala recorded minimum temperatures of 9.6 and 10 degrees Celsius respectively. Among other places in the state, Adampur settled at a Halwara recorded 10.6 degrees Celsius, Pathankot 10.9 degrees Celsius, Bathinda 9.8 degrees Celsius, Gurdaspur 7.8 degrees Celsius and Faridkot 11 degrees

Ambala in Haryana recorded a low of 8.4 degrees Celsius while the minimum temperature in Hisar was 8.3 degrees Celsius. Karnal (8.6 degrees Celsius), Rohtak (9.8

degrees Celsius), Bhiwani (11.1 degrees Celsius) and Sirsa (9.5 degrees Celsius) too recorded above normal minimum tem-

In neighboring Himachal, the tribal Lahaul and Spiti's administrative centre Keylong continued to be the coldest place at minus 4.3 degrees Celsius. Kalpa recorded a low of minus 0.6 degrees Celsius. Manali, Dalhousie and

Kufri registered a low of 2.6 degrees, 6.1 degrees and 5.6 degrees Celsius respectively. Shimla recorded a low of 6.9 degrees Celsius, he added.

The Met office predicted from February 14 to 19.



### HP CM PAYS TRIBUTE TO MARTYRS OF PULWAMA ATTACK

Shimla: Himachal Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur on Sunday paid tribute to personnel of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), who were martyred in a major terror attack in Awantipora in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama district on February 14, 2019. He said this day was indeed a black day in the history of India, when Indian soldiers were martyred in one of the worst terror attacks. Thakur said their supreme sacrifice would always be remembered.

### HRY TO EXPLORE POSSIBILITY OF BOATING. RAFTING Chandinarh: Harvana Tourism Minister Kanwar Pal said that to

promote tourism in the state, the possibilities of boating and rafting on the Tajewala and Hathni Kund Barrage on the lines of Kerala will be explored. The Minister is on a tour to Kerala. He said during his tour. he is looking at the places developed in different districts in Kerala and gathering information about facilities being offered by the state to the tourists at these tourist spots. The Minister said it was being analysed as to how these schemes can be implemented in Haryana so as to promote tourism in the state.

### **3L STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN COMPETITIONS Chandigarh:** Punjab School Education Minister Vijay Inder Singla on

Sunday said that to celebrate the 400th parkash purb of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the State Government has been organizing several programs and the Education Department has also been taking part actively in these programs. The department has continuously been organizing turban tying, Shabad Gayan, Poem Reciting, Speech competition, PPT making, songs singing, poster making, painting, slogan writing, instrument playing, and calligraphy competitions in government schools in which as many as three lakh students participated.

### SARASWATI MAHOTSAV 2021 BEGINS IN HRY

Chandigarh: The International Saraswati Mahotsav-2021 began on Sunday in Haryana. A seminar will be organized on February 15 which will be attended by Chief Minister Manohar Lal. The event will be held from 10 am to 5 pm in the auditorium of Vidya Bharati Educational Institute. In this seminar, the discussion will be held on 'The New Perspective and Heritage Development of Saraswati River' a spokesman said. On the concluding day on February 16, 21-Kund Havan Yagya will be organised at Saraswati Tirth, Pehowa in the morning and Bhajan Sandhya will be held in the evening.

### WATER OF GANGA TO BE PROVIDED TO 10 L HOUSES Chandigarh: Harvana Vidhan

Sabha, Deputy Speaker Ranbir Gangwa said many people will be unable to take a dip in the holy water during Kumbh Mela due to COVID-19, thus, the Gavatri family has decided to provide the pious water of



Ganga river to 10 lakh houses. At a programme organised on the foundation day of Gayatri Shaktipeeth and Sanskarashala in Hisar, he said the Gayatri family of Hisar has been following this ideology and has been involved in socio-religious work for several years.

### REFRIGERATORS FOR STORING COVID VACCINE Chandigarh: Air conditioning and commercial refrigeration major, Blue

Star Limited has announced the launch of a new range of commercial refrigeration products and solutions which are ideal for storing vaccines. These comprise specifically designed, temperature controlled refrigerators and transporters, which are integral for building a robust ecosystem for vaccine distribution in India. Ice Lined Refrigerators (+2□C to +8□C) are ideal for vaccination programmes due to their ability to maintain a desired temperature even without power for up to as long as 48 hours.

### Four from State still missing due to flash floods in Uttarakhand, says Punjab CM

flash floods that followed the recent glacier mishap in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district.

Capt Amarinder, in a tweet, said that Punjab was willing to extend any help it could to help trace the missing people. "Four of our Punjabi workers Kewal Singh, Sukhwinder, Kulvir Singh and Sukhwinder Singh have been missing from Chamoli,

Uttarakhand since the recent disaster. I seek CM @TSRawatBJP's intervention Punjab Chief Minister Capt amarinder Singh on Sunday amarinder Singh o said that four people from the are ready to help Uttarakhand every way (sic)," the tweet

> More than 170 people are still unaccounted for since Sunday, when a wall of water and debris barrelled furiously down the valley, leaving a trail of destruction and despair. Those missing come from all over the country, many of them workers at two of the many hydroelectric dams in Uttarakhand.

## **VOICE WITHIN**



■ VIJAY SINGAL

Happiness is the universal aim of human life. Man is in search of happiness from the very beginning. But most of the times, it has eluded him. The more one craves for it, the more it dodges him. Bhagavad Gita has dealt with the subject of happiness extensively and has given an unambiguous message of comprehensive well-being. Sri Krishna has begun his discourse with the assertion that there is no cause for grief; because one's essential nature, the self, is immortal and

beyond any sorrow.

As per the three modes of material nature (the gunas), happiness has also been held to be of three kinds (shlokas from 18.36 to 18.39). The joy which springs from a clear understanding of the self is stated to be in the mode of goodness (sattvik sukha). Such joy, which results in cessation of all sorrow, is gained after long spiritual practices. Though at first it seems like poison, its result is like nectar. The happiness which arises from the contact of the senses with their objects is considered to be in the mode of passion (rajasik sukha). Such happiness at first appears like nectar but its end result is like poison. And that which deludes the soul from the beginning till end; and which arises from sleep, laziness and negligence such pleasure is said to be in the mode of ignorance (tamasik sukha).

The kind of happiness, thus, varies according to the gunas. The pleasure that arises from gratification of the senses is tamasik sukha. Such momentary pleasures drive one to inertia and envelope the soul with the darkness of ignorance. The one attached to

### The three kinds of happiness are not exclusive to each other. All of these put together make one's life enjoyable. **Dominance of any** one of these pleasures determines the overall quality of one's happiness

such pleasures, the tamasik person, remains tied to his evil deeds, throughout his life.

A rajasik person derives happiness out of his wealth, power and glory. Such happiness initially looks very attractive and pleasing as it gives comfort and pride of possession; but in the end it proves to be a cause of distress because it gives rise to more and more desires which cannot always be fulfilled. Today's enjoyment is the seed for tomorrow's grief. The material happiness, thus, is short-lived. Therefore, even in the realm of worldly enjoyments, one needs to avoid over-indulgence.

Journey towards Inner Joy

The spiritual practices are initially painful as these call for lot of restraint and discipline. But ultimately they lead to cessation of the worldly woes. The sattvik sukha arises from the serenity of one's own mind. When one stops worrying about the material pleasures, he finds the happiness within, the joy which is situated in the self. Such inner happiness is longlasting because it does not depend upon any external factor such as an object, a being or a situation. Such a joyous person remains unperturbed in any situation and is not shaken by biggest of the miseries.

The three kinds of happiness are not exclusive to each other. All of these put together make one's life enjoyable. Dominance of any one of these pleasures determines the over-

all quality of one's happiness. Broadly speaking, two paths lead to happiness - the easy but harmful and difficult but beneficial. These are the paths of transient and enduring happiness, respectively. The ignorant, who are attracted by

the glitter of external plea-

sures choose the convenient path of self-aggrandisement and suffer in the long-run. But the wise do not allow themselves to be seduced by the allurements of the material world, and follow the right path of exclusive devotion and unat-

tached work. They attain long-

lasting joy.

Bhagavad Gita has also enumerated the human traits which promote happiness. Tranquility of mind is a prerequisite to true happiness. Without a peaceful mind, there cannot be any happiness. It has further been stated that real peace can be attained only by the one who is not disturbed by the incessant flow of desires, who is free from longing, who has no sense of mineness; and who is devoid of any false ego. Only such a serene person can experience real joy. The slaves of desires can attain neither peace nor happiness. No joy can be greater than the joy which one obtains from being

being one with the Divine. Equanimity of the mind is an essential ingredient of a joyous living. One must cultivate an attitude of perfect equa-

at peace with oneself, and

ever comes his way. The wise men, who possess an equipoised mind and who renounce the fruits of their actions, attain that blissful state, which is beyond any sorrow. Only the one who is capable of withstanding the urges of lust and anger, can be a happy man. Supreme happiness comes to the one whose mind is peaceful, who is free from evil, whose passions are pacified, who is free from traces of sin; and whose mind is engaged in the self. It has also been stated that happiness can be obtained by the one whose faith is unwavering and who is not of a doubting nature.

nimity and accept gladly what-

To conclude, more than an outward voyage, journey towards one's happiness is an inward pilgrimage. True joy can be experienced only by the one whose mind is steady, equanimous and serene; and whose soul is purified. When one gains knowledge about his true nature, he attains contentment and experiences the supreme delight. He is neither perturbed by sorrow, nor he yearns for happiness. He is simply happy, content.

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# Violence, EVM snags, bogus voting mar Punjab MC polls

Seventy-one per cent voters, of the total 31.95 lakh, exercised their franchise during the polling for eight municipal corporations, and 109 municipal councils and nagar panchayats in Punjab, which was marred by a few incidents of violent clashes, minor skirmishes, EVM snags, amidst the allegations of booth capturing and bogus voting.

The state's opposition parties — Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP), and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) — accused the ruling Congress of using Government machinery and wrong tactics to win the elections, which were considered to be a preview of 2022 state

As per available information, nearly a dozen persons were injured in Ropar after workers of the ruling Congress and the SAD clashed following a heated argument in ward number 1 in the city. Minor skirmishes and scuffles were

Rajpura, Tarn Taran, Bathinda, Gurdaspur, Samana, Rupnagar, Nabha, Nangal, Mohali and

A SAD candidate Parveen Kumar Pinna, who is contesting the Moga municipal corpora-tion election, was "assaulted by unidentified people" outside the Arya School polling booth in the area.

EVM snags were reported in a few places like Ludhiana and Mohali, as per the reports received. In all, around 7,000 EVMs were deployed for voting.

Several first-time voters and even elderly citizens exercised their franchise. Held under the shadow of COVID-19, the voters were also screened through thermal scanners at polling booths.

The counting of votes will take place on February 17.

A total of 9,222 candidates are in the fray for elections to 2,302 wards, and 2,832 among them are contesting as independents, with 2,037 representing the ruling Congress,

1,003 of BJP, 1,606 of AAP, and 160 are fielded by the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP).

Held amidst tight security arrangements with as many as 19,000 police personnel deputed for the job, the polling began on a violent note in Muktsar when the former senior vicepresident of Muktsar municipal council Yadwinder Singh Yadu, a Congress candidate from ward 4, and his supporter Sudhir Sharma, were injured in a late night clash between the Akalis and the Congressmen at Kotkapura Road, on the outskirts of Muktsar.

Similar incident of violence was also reported from Ropar, where a clash between SAD and Congress workers led to nearly dozen people being injured. Minor skirmishes and heated exchanges were also reported between workers of the ruling Congress and the opposition parties at Jagraon, Batala, Rajpura, Tarn Taran and

Nine people were wound-

in Ropar. The clash followed a heated argument between supporters of Congress and the Shiromani Akali Dal, who accused each other of trying to bribe voters in the ongoing

civic body elections. Minor skirmishes reported in Tarn Taran, and in Guru Harsahai in Batala. Minor clash between Congress workers and the AAP workers in ward no. 7 were reported.

Allegations of bogus voting were reported from Mogas ward number 1, while the reports of booth capturing were received from Rajpura, Samana, and Malout. AAP leaders accused the Congress workers of indulging in booth capturing in Samana, Rajpura, Dhuri, Abohar and Bhikhiwind — a charge vehemently denied by the ruling party.

Meanwhile, the Kisan Sangrash Committee kept a check on all 12 polling booths of Amritsar Municipal Corporation ward number 37 so that BJP does not set up a large number of farmers from nearby villages, led by Sonu Mahal of the committee, checked all booths and raised anti-BJP slogans.

Taking on the state's poll panel, the SAD president Sukhbir Badal tweeted, "Failed on all fronts, Congress party leaders knew they would lose, so they resorted to rigging and booth capturing and even violence. What can we expect from a government that unleashed goondaism in the state? Shame on the State Election Commission for its absolute incompetency! (sic)"

Leader of Opposition in the Vidhan Sabha Harpal Singh Cheema claimed that an AAP volunteer was allegedly shot at in Patti by some Congress activists. However, the police rejected the charge.

Cheema alleged that the democracy was "murdered" in Punjab on Sunday by the Congress and sought resignation of Chief Minister Capt

MLA Bikram Singh Majithia, in Majitha, accused the ruling Congress of misusing the government machinery to win the polls. Also taking on the Congress, the BJP had charged the ruling party of "unleashing hooliganism under the guise of

the farmers' protest".

Hitting back, the Punjab Congress said that they were making "baseless accusations". Punjab Congress president Sunil Jakhar said: "They (Opposition) do not have any argument against the Congress party, which is fighting elections purely on the development work done in the state.

Congress leader and former MLA from Muktsar Karan Kaur Brar blamed the Akalis for the violence, and raised questions on the functioning of the police in the town. "In our government, the Akalis are assaulting the Congressmen. It is a complete failure of duty on the part of the SSP and the district police," she said,

Gidderbaha Congress MLA

Amarinder Singh Raja Warring, who visited the injured Congressmen at a private hospital, said: "It is shameful that Congressmen are being assaulted in the constituency where the party is in power. I ask Sukhbir Badal to come here and see for himself who is indulged in violence - his men or the

Congress party workers."
Notably, there were 20,49,77 male,18,65,354 female and 149 transgender voters, totalling 39,15,280 registered voters in the state for the civic body elections. For conduct of the polls, the State Election Commission (SEC) had set up 4,102 polling stations, of which, 1,708 were declared as sensitive and 861 as hyper sensitive. Former allies, the SAD and

the BJP, fought the municipal elections separately. The SAD had walked out of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) to register its opposition to the farm laws last year. SAD chief Sukhbir Singh Badal and other party leaders campaigned for their party candidates.

### **HIGHEST** TURNOUT IN MANSA, LOWEST IN MOHALI

PNS CHANDIGARH

The voting turnout recorded a new high in general or by-elections of Municipal Corporations and 109 Municipal Councils and Nagar Panchayats of Punjab with 71.39 percentage of votes have been polled with the maximum number of voters cast their votes in Mansa district, and lowest in SAS Nagar (Mohali)

The state Election Commission spokesperson on Sunday said that in SAS Nagar, the voting turnout was recorded 60.08 percent, while Roopnagar's voting figure has gone up to 73.80 percent.

percent.

"The voting percentage in Fatehgarh Sahib have achieved 75.78 percent mark, Amritsar scored 71.20 percent, Tarn Taran 63.12 percent, Gurdaspur 70 percent, Pathankot 75.37 percent, Bathinda 79 percent, Mansa 82.99 percent, Faridkot voting percentage reached at ing percentage reached at 71.03 percent, while in Hoshiarpur total 66.68 percent and Jalandhar's poll percentage reached 73.29 percent mark," said the spokesperson spokesperson.

Spokesperson said that 64.34 percent voters exercised their right of franchise in Kapurthala, besides poll percentage have reached 69.71 percent in SBS Nagar, Ferozepur have scored 74.01 percent voting, Sri Muktsar Sahib district gained 68.65 percent voting tag, Moga 69.50 percent, Fazilka have marked 72.40 percent, Patiala 70.09 percent, Ludhiana managed to get

percentage.

### SAD demands countermanding of election where booths were captured State Election Commission in Some reports of violence

assembly polls

Lambasting the Congress party for "blatantly misusing civil and police machinery to capture booths besides unleashing violence against the opposition to intimidate voters during voting for the municipal bodies", the Shiromani Akali Dal. (SAD) on Sunday filed a complaint with the State Election Commissioner demanding countermanding of elections at all places where there had been large scale booth capturing and violent incidents.

Former Minister and SAD spokesman Daljit Singh Cheema said that Congress goons not only captured booths but also attacked opposition candidates and their supporters wherever they were opposed by the opposition and the general public. Citing incidents, the SAD

leader said that gunshots were fired in Patti in Tarn Taran district, SAD supporters were injured with sharp weapons in Ropar and Fatehgarh Churian, booths were captured in

Muktsar, Rajpura, Samana, Sultanpur Lodhi, Dinanagar, Ferozepur, Bhikiwind, and an FIR was registered against Gauravdeep Singh Valtoha, son of senior SAD leader Virsa Singh Valtoha, and five others.

"Similarly policed raided the house of SAD candidate Jaswinder Kaur in ward number 26 in Khanna and registered a case against 13 members of the family including her husband. Same was done with Tej Chand Batra, SAD candidate from ward number 18 in Muktsar, who was booked in an abduction case," said Cheema adding that the situation was such that Congress goons openly tossed turbans of SAD workers and let loose a reign of terror but cases were registered against the victims.

### RESIGNATION

Strongly condemning the capturing of booths and attacks on AAP workers by the Congress goons at various places across the State in the municipal bodies' elections,

Opposition in Vidhan Sabha Harpal Singh Cheema said that democracy was being killed across Punjab today by the Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh and the Congress goons backed by him.

"Capt Amarinder failed to deliver on his promises to the people and is now assassinating democracy. Realizing his personal responsibility, Capt Amarinder should resign from the post of Chief Minister," he

He alleged that AAP volunteers have been attacked by Congress goons at many places 'A party volunteer was shot at in Patti while a volunteer was illegally arrested by the police. Similarly, in Tarn Taran, Rajpura, Fazilka, Ferozepur, Abohar, Jalalabad, Samana, Dhuri, Bhikhiwind and at many other places, the Congress goons tried to occupy the booths," alleged Cheema while warning that the "Congressbacked officers, who instead of doing their duty honestly are working as Congress workers today, would be dealt with on the formation of AAP government in 2022".

### **ALLEGED BOGUS VOTING**

When 95-year-old Jal Kaur reached the polling booth, ward number 1 in Moga city, with the help of her grandsons, little did she know that she has already cast her vote. The same is with a 37-year-old Sarbjit Kaur. Even as both of them claimed that they have not exercised their franchise yet, the presiding officer did not allow them to

Alleging that someone else has cast her vote, Jal Kaur said that the poll officers tactfully put ink on her finger to show that she has voted. Unhappy, Jal Kaur chose to sit on protest outside the polling booth demanding that she be allowed to cast a protest vote. However, the officers did not allow her to

Notably, Congress MLA from Moga Dr Harjot Kamal's wife, Dr Rajinder Kaur, is contesting the polls from ward

number 1. Accusing Congress of bogus voting, SAD candidate Harwinder Kaur alleged that she has intercepted many youths from entering the polling booths.

## BOOTH CAPTURED AT POLLING STATION IN

Around 40 unidentified miscreants allegedly captured a polling booth at Rajpura's DAV School, that too in the presence of the police.

Some youth entered the polling booth at around 11.30 am and closed the gate of the polling station to prevent voters from voting. It was only after strong protest and objections by one of the candidates and other people present there that the police took out the miscreants from the booths. For a brief time, the polling

was stopped following the protests by one of the candidates and his supporters, but was resumed after the administrative officials reached the polling station and normalized the situation.

CONG ALLEGES BOOTH CAPTURING BY AKALIS IN MALOUT

and booth capturing were also reported from Nabha and

Alleging booth capturing by the SAD workers, the Congress candidate from ward number 26 Captain Paramjit stated that he was pushed out of the polling station, and the Akalis, with the help of the police, locked the main He alleged that Akali can-

didate, along with the police, have captured three polling booths. He also accused that a thanedar has taken Rs 20,000 bribe from the Akalis. Later, when Punjab Vidhan

Sabha Deputy Speaker and Malout legislator Ajaib Singh Bhatti reached the spot, the polling station was opened for

Refusing to comment on the incident being a Deputy Speaker, Bhatti maintained that he would definitely write to the

### this regard. IN A FIRST POLLING BOOTH SCRAPPED, STAFF ASKED TO REPORT BACK

At an eleventh hour, a polling party was asked to return with the EVMs (electronic voting machines) and other poll material after being told that there were no registered voters at the polling booth — something that has happened for the first time in the recallable past.

As per the information available, a polling party was sent to booth number 42 in ward number 16, but later, they were asked to report back to the returning officer. The District Administration cited shifting of votes as a reason behind the move.

"All the votes of booth number 42 were shifted from ward number 16 to two others wards — 24 and 25 — as the number of votes in these wards were very less compared to other wards," said

### the turnout figure on 70.33. Apart from this, Barnala district attained 71.99 percentage mark, though Sangrur have administered the mark of voting at 77.39

## Hry to give advance of ₹5L to players who qualify for Olympics: Sports Min

PNS CHANDIGARH

Haryana Minister of State for Sports and Youth Affairs Sandeep Singh on Sunday said that persistent efforts are being made to ensure that maximum number of players from the state qualify Olympics to be held in Tokyo this year.

The Minister said that an advance of Rs 5 lakh will be given by the State Government for the players who have qualified Olympics. Besides this, the government will provide other facilities to the players for the preparations for the Olympics, he said

While motivating the players, he said that the Olympics are nearing and the qualified players will now have to work even harder for it. Moreover, the government is supporting the players at every step, he added.

The Sports Minister also congratulated Rahul Rohilla and Sandeep Punia from Bahadurgarh Mahendragarh districts respectively who have qualified for the Olympic Games in the Brisk

He said that players should keep their spirits high and stay strong and give their best performance irrespective of winning or losing. Tipping the players he said that defeat can also be turned into victory through hard work.

The Minister further said

Sports Minister also congratulated Rahul **Rohilla and Sandeep Punia from Bahadurgarh and** 

Mahendragarh districts respectively who have qualified for the Olympic Games in Brisk Walk race

that as per the instructions of the Chief Minister Manohar Lal, the Sports Department is making continuous efforts to ensure maximum participation of Haryana players in Tokyo Olympics this time.

He said that Rahul of Bahadurgarh and Sandeep of Mahendragarh district have made excellent achievement for the state and country by quali-

fying for the Olympics. Sandeep Punia, a resident of Surehti Jakhal of Mahendragarh and Rahul Rohilla, resident of Indira Market, Bahadurgarh have received the Olympics quota by winning the 20-km men's race in 1 hour 20 minutes 16 seconds and 1 hour 20 minutes 26 seconds respectively during the National Open Race Walking Competition held at Ranchi. Both the players have been selected for the Tokyo Olympics.

# BJP-led Govts at Centre and in Hry have lost right to rule: Capt

## Says Punjab alone has compensated families of 102 deceased farmers, Tomar either lied in Parliament or doesn't care

Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh on Sunday expressed shock over the recent statements of senior BJP leaders, including the Union and Haryana Agriculture ministers, on the deaths of protesting farmers, saying that the party has lost the moral and ethical right to continue to rule at the Centre and in the state.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led government at the Centre should step down in the interest of the nation, as should the Manohar Lal Khattar gov-ernment in Haryana, said the Chief Minister, slamming Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Tomar's and state Agriculture Minister IP Dalal's statements on the deaths of black farm laws at the borders of the national capital for more than two months now.

Punjab alone has paid compensation to families of as many as 102 farmers who have died in these protests, said the Chief Minister, lashing out at Tomar over his outrageous statement citing Delhi Police information that only two farmers have died and one has committed suicide. Even the media has released details of more than 200 farmers (from various states) who have lost their lives in this agitation, Captain Amarinder pointed out, while also lambasting Harvana Minister Dalal over the latter's insensitive remark that farmers who have died in this agitation would have died sitting at homes anyways.

slammed the Union Agriculture Minister over his statement that the Central Government has no plans to provide financial assistance from the Kisan Kalyan Fund to the families of the deceased farmers. It was deplorable that a government that can spend Rs 8 crore on publicity campaign for the new farm laws cannot give compensation to the families of the farmers who have sacrificed their lives in fighting for their rights, he said.

These statements of Tomar and Dalal reflect a shocking lack of concern on the part of the BJP leadership towards the farmers who have been braving the elements and the lathis of Delhi and Harvana Police in their fight for survival, said

Referring to Tomar's claim that the Centre has no count of the deceased farmers, the Chief

Minister said it was appalling that a government which claimed to be working in the interest of the farmers does not even know how many farmers had died in the protests against their farm laws, just as they had no idea, some months ago, on how many migrants had died in the country during the lock-

"What kind of government is this that has no data (or so it claims) of people dying on the streets in their own country," asked Captain Amarinder.

"Either the Agriculture Minister deliberately lied on the floor of the House or simply does not care to even ascertain the facts and figures," said the this was not the first time a Central Minister had made a false statement in Parliament on the issue of the farm laws or the farmers' agitation. Another Minister had ear-

lier stated falsely in the House that Punjab had been taken on board on the farm laws in its capacity as a member of the agricultural reforms committee, which was also a blatant lie, recalled Captain Amarinder, adding that not once were these legislations even mentioned in that committee, in which Punjab was included after one meeting had already taken place.

Charging the Centre with total apathy towards the farmers, as manifest in its refusal to concede their just demand and to compensate the families of

Agriculture Minister over his statement that the Central Government has no plans to provide financial assistance from the Kisan Kalvan Fund to the families of the deceased farmers

the deceased, the Chief Minister said it was unfortunate that senior ministers in the Union Government like Tomar were using the Parliamentary precincts to promote the BJP's campaign of misinformation on the Farm laws and the farmers' agitation. Having failed to convince the farmers with their fibs and fictions, the Union Government is now resorting to Parliamentary impropriety of the highest level, in total violation of the Constitutional principles and ideologies, he added.

## Punjab Women Commission chief meets Shah for release of Nodeep

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH/NEW DELHI

Punjab State Women Commission Chairperson Manish Gulati on Sunday called upon the Union Home Minister Amit Shah to seek release of jailed labour activist Nodeep alias Navdeep Kaur — a resident of a village in Śri Muktsar Sahib district who is currently lodged in Haryana's Karnal jail since January 12. Gulati briefed the Union Minister

about circumstances leading to her

arrest from Singhu border and her harassment in custody. She requested the Union Minister to protect the constitutional rights of Nodeep Kaur who hails from Ğiadarh village in Sri Muktsar district.

PSWC chairperson is scheduled to meet Nodeep in Karnal Jail on Monday after she had taken up the matter with her Haryana counterpart and urged to intervene in the matter.

The Haryana State Women Commission (HSWC) had issued written instruction to the Director General, Jails, (Haryana) Selvaraj to ensure legal assistance under Section 3 (10), (1) (f) (k) of the Haryana State Women Commission Act-2012 to Nodeep Kaur besides ensuring the safety and security of the detainee.

HSWC chairperson had also directed the Director General, Jails, to make all necessary arrangements for the meeting, scheduled at 12 noon on February 15, of Punjab State Women's Commission chairperson and Nodeep

The Director General has also been asked to submit the action taken report in this regard.

Earlier, the Punjab women panel had taken a "stern notice" of the Nodeep Kaur's case, seeking a status report from Sonipat Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) by

Sonipat SSP, through a written communiqué, was directed to get the case of Nodeep Kaur investigated by

a senior officer, besides submitting a detailed investigation report within five days, by February 15, following which, the Commission would immediately take further action in the mat-

Besides, Gulati also apprised Shah

about the plight of NRIs wives who are abandoned or cheated by the husbands living abroad and demanded justice for them.

Amit Shah promised to look into the matter and resolve the issues.

## Parolees in Punjab to surrender back starting February 17

The prisoners, above 60 years in age

PNS CHANDIGARH

onsidering the substantial Udownward trend in cases of COVID in Punjab, the high powered committee, constitut-

ed by the Supreme Court, for dealing with COVID in prisons, has decided not to extend the parole of prisoners any further. The Committee, headed by the Punjab and Haryana High Court Judge Justice Ajay

Secretary (Jails) DK Tiwari and ADGP (Prisons) PK Sinha as members, recommended that all the prisoners surrender back to the prisons, which have been designated specifically for quarantining the returnees before testing and transferring them to their respective prisons.

"The whole process shall ule for the return of approxibe done in a phased manner mately 650-700 prisoners in

for which 'first out-first in mechanism shall be followed. that is the prisoners who have availed the longest period of parole would report back to the prisons first," said a spokesperson of the Jail Department on Sunday. Pointing out further, the spokesperson said that a sched-

Tewari, with the state Principal from February 17 onwards,

and those with chronic comorbidities, shall be taken back in the last batch of parole returnees

one batch every nine to 10 days has been circulated to all the concerned authorities. "All the parolees are required to report at the designated jails -Barnala or Pathankot for male

and Malerkotla for female with a negative COVID test report (RT-PCR only) received within three days preceding the surrender," said the spokesperson adding that they shall be

quarantined in the jail for four 18th day from the date of days (including the day of sur-render), and COVID sample collected on fifth day, subsequent to which, they shall be transferred to their respective

"If any prisoner tests positive in the pre-admission test, he or she shall inform the Superintendent of the designated prison at the earliest possible, and shall report on the

result," said the spokesperson. Divulging further, the spokesperson said that as the

return is planned in a phased manner, parole of all the prisoners released on parole in 2020 and presently out on parole shall stand extended till the date on which they have been asked to surrender at the respective designated jails created for this purpose.

years in age and those with chronic comorbidities, shall be taken back in the last batch of parole returnees, said the spokesperson. However, this schedule

The prisoners, above 60

shall not apply to prisoners released on parole in the year 2021, who shall return to the respective Special Jails, as and when their parole period expires, said the spokesperson.

## **Modi dedicates Arjun** battle tank to Army



The Army on Sunday added **⊥** muscle to its firepower capabilities when Prime Minister Narendra Modi handed over to the force the indigenously designed and manufactured Arjun Main Battle Tank (MBT) MK-1A in Chennai.

Presiding over the ceremony, Modi said the tank represented the united Indian spirit as the weapon system manufactured in the south will guard the frontiers in the north.

The Arjun tank manufacturing factory at Avadi in Chennai will shortly get an order for 118 such front-line fighting machines and the total contract is worth over ₹9,000

It is an improved and upgraded version of the original Arjun-MK 1 MBT which was also indigenously designed and manufactured within the country. The new tanks has incorporated more than 50 upgrades and 71 new features. The Army will get an edge over its enemies as the new tank has accurate firing capabilities during day and night thereby providing the army to launch counter-offensive with lethal effect, officials said here.

At the handing over function, the Prime Minister also accepted a salute by the stateof-the-art tank, indigenously designed, developed, and manufactured by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)'s Combat Vehicles Research and D e v e l o p m e n t Establishment(CVRDE) in Chennai. Modi later handed over a replica model of the tank to Army Chief General M M Naravane.

"Today I am proud to dedicate to the country one more warrior to protect our frontiers. I am proud to hand over the

The new tanks with its first round hit probability has one of the most accurate tank gun in the world. This maiestic tank has indigenous Kanchan Armour strapped with DRDO developed

indigenously designed and manufactured Arjun MK-1A.' "It also uses indigenous ammunition. Tamil Nadu is already the leading auto manufacturing hub of India. Now I see Tamil Nadu evolving as a tank manufacturing hub of

"A tank made in Tamil Nadu will be used in our northern border to keep our nation safe. This showcases India's united spirit—Bharat's ekta darshan," Modi added.

Highlighting the capabilities of the upgraded version of the Arjun MBT, officials said Arjun MK-1 Alpha is a "contemporary tank in the world with battle winning efficacy."
It is 'infused' with 71 new

features and would ensure effortless mobility in all terrains, besides precise target engagement during day and

The production order opens up a large avenue in defence manufacturing for over 200 Indian companies and scores of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) with employment opportunities to 8,000 people, they said.

Quoting from revolution-Tamil poet and freedom fighter Mahakavi Subramanya Bharathi, Modi said inspired by the former's vision, "India has taken a massive effort to become self-reliant in the defence sector."

Of the two defence corridors in the country, the one in Tamil Nadu has already received investment commitments of over ₹8,100 crore, Modi said.

We will continue working to make our armed forces one of the most modern forces in the world. At the same time the focus on making India Atmanirbhar in the defence sector moves with full speed,"

Disengagement in Pangong Tso Lake, Galwan areas surrender of India's rights, claims Antony



PNS NEW DELHI

was "a special day in our journey to become Aatmanirbhar

in the defence sector," referring to Arjun Main Battle Tank

(MK-1A). Fifteen academic

institutions, eight labs and sev-

eral MSMEs were also involved in the Arjun MK 1A.

Reactive Armour Panels.

After using in different

conditions, the Army had rec-

ommended a number of

improvements to MBT Arjun

Mk 1, which enhanced the

mobility and fire power of

MBT Årjun Mk 1A. With

these changes, this upgraded

version has successfully under-

gone extensive trials by the

Indian Army. The precise tar-

get tracking of the tank

ensures accurate engagement

during day and night in both static and dynamic condi-

The country decided to build its own main battle tank

and a project was initiated by

the DRDO in the 1970s at the

Combat Vehicles Research and

Development Establishment

the objective to design and build a state-of-the-art tank

with superior fire power, high

mobility, and excellent protec-

tion. The production of the

Arjun tanks started in 1996 at

the Indian Ordnance Factory's

production facility in Avadi.

more than 100 Arjun MK-I

tanks in its armour and is like-

ly to induct 20 odd more tanks

shortly. The first batch of 16

The old and new version of

into active service in 2004.

the MBT has a highly sophisti-

cated computer-controlled inte-

grated fire control system with

stabilised sighting that works in

all lighting conditions. The sec-

ondary weapons include a co-

axial 7.62-mm machine gun for

anti-personnel and a 12.7-mm

machine gun for anti-aircraft

version launched by the Prime

Minister gas more than 55 per

cent indigenous content as com-

pared to 40 per cent of the ear-

lier version of the Arjun.

Officials also said the new

and ground targets.

At present, the Army has

The scientists were given

(CVRDE).

Mounting more pressure on the Modi Government to come clean on the Indo-China skirmishes in recent months, former defence minister A K Antony on Sunday alleged that disengagement in both the Galwan Valley and Pangong Tso Lake areas and the creation of a buffer zone was a "surrender" of India's

Antony said he was sad that the Narendra Modi Government was not giving proper priority to national security at a time when China was getting belligerent and Pakistan continued to promote

Addressing a Press conference, the senior Congress leader said that at a time when India was facing multiple challenges at the border and was facing a two-front war-like situation, the increase in defence budget this year is meagre and insignificant and was a "betrayal" of the coun-

The Government had on Friday stated that India has not "conceded" any territory following the disengagement agreement with China in Pangong lake areas in eastern

Antony said disengagement was good as it reduced tension but it should not be done at the cost of national

"Both disengagements in Galwan and Pangong Tso are a surrender," he alleged, adding that it amounted to surrendering of areas traditionally controlled by India. We are surrendering our rights," he alleged, noting that Galwan Valley as Indian territory was never a disputed land even in 1962.

"Disengagement and buffer zone means surrender of our land at the moment," he alleged, while warning that the Government is not understanding the importance of this disengagement and creation of the buffer zone.

He warned that China can play mischief anytime by

When the whole country is facing serious challenges from both China and Pakistan, the senior Congress leader said the **Armed forces are** demanding support and substantial increase in the defence Budget

helping Pakistan in Siachen. We want to know from this Government when there will be status quo ante as on mid-April 2020 in the entire India-China border," he said, asking what was the government's plan in this regard.

He also said that the government must take the country and the people into confidence on restoration of status quo ante at the borders.

He said the Government always consulted leaders of all political parties before taking such a decision and must keep national security in

Antony alleged that the government did not increased the defence budget to "appease" China and to give a message that it did not want to confront them.

"To appease China, the government sent a message by not increasing this defence budget that we do not want to confront you.

To appease China, we have agreed to disengagement on China's terms," he alleged.

When the whole country facing serious challenges from both China and Pakistan, the senior Congress leader said the armed forces are demanding support and substantial increase in the defence budget.

"But compared to last year's revised defence budget, this budget has made a meagre and insufficient increase of only 1.48 per cent. It is a betrayal of the country. The government has let down our armed forces. Government is not paying proper attention of national security," Antony said.



On the second anniversary of the Pulwama terror strike on Sunday, dignitaries, film actors and political leaders led by the President and the Prime Minister paid rich tributes to the attack that days after had also prompted Indian Air Force to go across borders on a "punishing mission", hitting terror terror

to the country". On February 14, 2019, 40 personnel of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) were killed after a suicide bomber rammed an IED-laden truck into a CRPF convoy. Pakistan-backed Jaishe-Mohammad-executed attack took place when a convoy of 78 buses with 2,500 CRPF personnel was heading to Srinagar

"No Indian can forget this day. Two years ago, the Pulwama terror attack occurred. We pay homage to all the martyrs. We are proud of our security forces and their bravery will continue to inspire future generations," he said during a public event in

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi also expressed his grief by tweeting in Hindi saying "tribute to the brave soldiers, who died in the Pulwama terror attack. A tribute to their fami-

Actors including Akshay Kumar, Varun Dhawan and Rajkummar Rao paid tributes and said the country will forever remain indebted to the brave hearts. Kumar took to Twitter and shared a picture of the

martyrs. "Remembering our brave hearts of #PulwamaAttack, we will always remain indebted for your supreme sacrifice," the 53-year-old actor tweeted.

On this day, two years

## Parl panel asks Govt to examine delay in road construction under Bharatmala ph-1

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Of the total 29,337 km length of projects, only 8,632 kms length of projects has been awarded and 1,040 kms length of projects have been appraised so far under the Bharatmala Project phase-1 which is targeted to be completed by 2021-22. The Detailed Project Report for a length of 19,665 kms is still under preparation stage when only two years are left as per the schedule fixed for completion of Phase-I. Taking note of slow pace of work, a parliamentary committee on transport, tourism and culture asked the Government to examine the causes for delay in construction of Roads under Phase-I and take requisite remedial measures expeditiously so as to remove the stumbling blocks in order to achieve the targets "In the course of exami-

nation, it was seen that there were about 375 projects of National Highways including Bharatmala, pending due to reasons like Land Acquisition, forest clearance, utility shifting, and contractor issue and so on in various States. These included projects across the country namely in Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Íharkhand, Madhva Pradesh. Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and West Bengal. These projects have surpassed their date of completion



Government apparently has not reviewed them," the parliamentary committee said in its report, which tabled in the Parliament on Tuesday.

The Committee noted with concern that some NH projects are delayed due to multiple reasons which interalia include poor performance of contractor, utility shifting, delay in environment/forest clearance, land acquisition, cash flow problem of the concessionaire/contractor and so on. Delay in the projects has resulted in increase in the overall cost of the projects.

The Committee are constrained to note that there is time and cost over-run in many projects of the Government. "Amongst them, for example, is the Char-Dham Mahamarg Vikas Priyojana - Improvement of NH Connectivity to Char-Dham (Kedarnath, Badrinath, Yamunotri& Gangotri) in the State of Uttarakhand, foundation stone of which was laid in December, 2016 by the Hon'ble Prime Minister. It was initially targeted for com-

back, 40 soldiers sacrificed their

lives for our nation in Pulwama

attack. Prayers for the brave

souls and their families. We'll

always be in debt of yours," the

of Pulwama!", actor Suniel Shetty

slain soldiers, Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu said he stands

in solidarity with the jawans'

my humble tributes to the CRPF personnel who were martyred in

the dastardly Pulwama terror

attack. The grateful nation will

always remember their patrio-

tism'& supreme sacrifice," the

Vice President Secretariat tweet-

Shah said that the slain soldiers'

sacrifice will never be forgotten.

"I bow down to the brave mar-

tyrs who lost their lives in the

gruesome Pulwama attack on this day in 2019. India will

never forget their exceptional

courage and supreme sacrifice,"

ed against terrorists ", said the

"Entire nation stands unit-

"India will always remem-

Days after the attack, the

Indian Air Force on February

26 carried out multiple aerial

strikes at JeM terror camps in

Pakistan's Balakot, killing a

"large number" of terrorists and destroying their infra-

tweeted "We did not forget, we

did not forgive". The CRPF

renewed its resolve to end ter-

ror saying they have not for-

given or forgotten the grue-

"Be brave enough to die as martyr", said BJP MP and for-

mer test player Gautam

Gambhir and asked people to

be "brave enough to die the death of a martyr" as he paid his tributes. Delhi Chief

Minister Arvind Kejriwal

offered "heartfelt homage" to

martyrs, while Union Minister

Smriti Irani said: "Salute to

brave sons of mother India".

On its part, the CRPF

structure.

some attack.

Union home minister Amit

ed quoting Naidu.

Shah tweeted.

Rest In Power Bravehearts

While paying homage to the

"I join the nation in paying

actor tweeted.

pletion by March 2020, but the Committee was informed that it has been delayed due to litigation relating to forest and environment clearance in various 63 courts and the exact date of completion of the programme depends on the final outcome of the case," the

The Committee also recommended that 4-laning of Pune-Nashik (NH-60), Pune-Tamhini-Mangaon-Diveagar (NH-756), Hadapsar-Saswad-Jejuri-LonandPhaltan-Mohol (ŃH-965), Patas-Baramati-Akluj-Tondale (NH-65G) and 6-laning of Pune-Solapur (NH-65), Kolhapur to Vaibhavwadi-Vijaydurg under Bharatmala and Alibaug to Sindhudurg coastal National Highway in the State of Maharashtra, extension of Patna-Areraj road to Bettiah, Ramgarhwa and Raxaul in the State of Bihar, road connecting Anmod at the border of Goa to Londa, widening of Sundar Bani-Seri-Jangar-Lam Road in Rajouri district in Jammu be taken up at the ear-

India recording

## **Prez, PM, others pay** tributes to Pulwama martyrs on 2nd anniv



camps at Balakot in Pakistan. Remembering the soldiers who died in Pulwama terror attack, President Ram Nath Kovind said the nation is committed to eliminating terrorism. "Nation salutes the sacrifice of our brave soldiers", he said.

Modi described CRPF jawans' as "exceptional individuals who devoted their lives

from Jammu.

lies as the country owes you."

Dhawan shared the same image on Instagram and captioned "Jai Hind". Actor Kartik Aaryan prayed for the families of those who were killed in the

### steady decline in Covid deaths PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Sunday said that India has been recording a steady decline in the number of daily new deaths since October 1, 2020, while the national recovery rate is amongst the highest in the world. Now the17th mostaffected country by active cases, fourth by fatality, and second by total and recovered cases, India has added 78,577 cases in

the past 7 days. "Since 1st October 2020, the nation has seen an unabat-Rate. The Case Fatality Rate today stands below 1.5 (1.43%). With only 92 people succumbing to the deadly coronavirus disease, India's Case Fatality Rate is one of the lowest in the world," the Union

Health Ministry said. The recoveries have surged to 1,06,11,731 with 11,016 patients getting discharged in a span of 24 hours. "India's Covid-19 recovery rate of 97.31 per cent is amongst the highest in the world. The difference between the recovered and active cases has grown to 1,04,74,164 as on date," the ministry highlighted. Till date, the cumulative number of healthcare and frontline workers vaccinated against Covid-19 in the country has surpassed 82

A total 82,63,858 beneficiaries have been vaccinated through 1,72,852 sessions, as per the provisional report till 8 am on Sunday. These include 59,84,018 HCWs (1st dose), 23,628 HCWs (2nd dose) and 22,56,212 FLWs (1st dose). The 2nd dose of Covid-19 vaccination started on Saturday for those beneficiaries who have completed 28 days after receipt of the 1st dose. As on Day-29 of the vaccination drive (February 13), a total of 2,96,211 beneficiaries received vaccination. Out of which, 2,72,583 beneficiaries were vaccinated across 8,071 sessions for 1st dose and 23,628 HCWs received 2nd dose of vaccine.

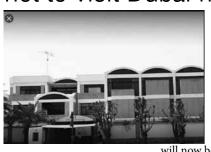
a progressive increase in the vaccination day by day," the ministry said adding 68.55 per cent of total vaccinated beneficiaries are from 10 states. It said 81.58 per cent of the

"The country is witnessing

new recovered cases are observed to be concentrated in 6 States. Kerala has reported the maximum number of single day recoveries with 5,835 newly recovered cases. A total of 1,773 people recovered in Maharashtra in a span of 24 hours followed by 482 in Tamil

### TACKLING COVID SPREAD

## Indian Consulate issues advisory asking expatriates not to visit Dubai mission



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Consulate in Dubai has issued an advisory asking Indian expatriates based there to avoid visiting the mission for consular services and instead use online means like a WhatsApp number, email or a helpline number to check the spread of Covid-19. A section of the 2.6 million Indians, many of them also engaged in blue collar jobs, based there are, however, concerned over the move as a visit to the mission is necessitated only when the online means are exhausted.

"Members of the Indian community who wish to visit the Consulate for any consular services are advised to avoid such visits unless absolutely necessary. They should, instead, make use of the various electronic platforms offered by the Consulate without having to physically visit the office," the mission said in the advisory issued on Thursday on Twitter.

Being the largest expatriate community, it is the responsibility of all the Indian nationals residing in the UAE to strictly comply with COVID preventive measures and guidelines issued by the UAE health authorities from

time to time such as wearing face masks at all times, maintaining social distancing and avoid public gatherings, it further

Many of the

expatriates there are labourers and will now be left with no grievance redressal mechanism when online mechanisms are not able to resolve their issues. a PIO settled in UAE said. adding why would a person visit the consulate if all the issues are settled online.

Another expat who did not wish to be identified said it is illogical to restrict the Indians from visiting the consulate in the name of preventing Covid-19. There are always means to regulate the flow of visitors to a place and instead a home service should be launched to cater to such Indians who are under any kind of distress or an emergency due to lack of consular access, he further said, adding the rich and mighty cannot have exclusive access to the

consulate. The Indian mission houses help centre for distressed Indians -Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayata Kendra (PBSK), that runs a 24x7 toll free helpline number 800 46342 of PBSK there are cases wherein physical interaction is also required to resolve the issues, the expats said.

Other online options to connect to the mission are sendemails

pbsk.dubai@mea.gov.in or send messages on a WhatsApp number +971-54-3090571 besides using the PBSK Dubai Mobile

## IMA seeks withdrawal of move letting Ayurveda practitioners to perform surgery

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Medical Association (IMA) on Sunday announced a mass petition movement from February 15 to March 31 to protest against a Central Council of Indian Medicine notification that authorises post-graduate practitioners in specified streams of ayurveda to perform general surgical procedures. The IMA said that this notification will lead to

"mixopathy" and demanded its immediate withdrawal. The IMA had held a pan-India relay hunger strike from

February 1-14 on the issue. The "impractical, unscientific and unethical notification" should be immediately

withdrawn, it said in a state-

ment, adding that besides the petition movement, it will also spread awareness among the

people on the notification. The IMA also said that it will submit a list of 1,000 modern medicine doctors willing to serve in remote areas of the country to counter the false claim of lack of doc-

"All IMA members, all specialty organisations, all modern medicine students, all women doctors across the country will educate people about this retrograde and unscientific mixing of different systems of healthcare. All modern medicine hospitals will promote the importance of scientific ethical surgical expertise," the doctors' body

The IMA also announces non-cooperation movement "henceforth in which modern medicines surgeons and anesthesiologists shall not cooperate with AYUSH persons training and performing

surgery", it said.

The doctors' body has been opposing the notification by Central Council of Indian Medicine, a statutory body under the Ministry of AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha

and Homoeopathy).
The notification authorises post-graduate practitioners specified streams of Ayurveda to be trained to perform surgical procedures such as excisions of benign tumours, amputation of gangrene, nasal and cataract surgeries.

## AIMPLB moves SC opposing plea seeking uniform grounds of maintenance, alimony

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The All India Muslim Personal Law Board has moved the Supreme Court against a plea seeking laying down of "gender and religion neutral" uniform grounds to award maintenance and alimony in matrimonial disputes as per international conventions and Constitution.

The Board has opposed the plea filed by advocate and BJP leader Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay which also seeks directions to the government to take appropriate steps to remove the prevailing anomalies in the grounds of maintenance and alimony, and make them uniform for all citizens without

The applicant would like to submit that the expression

discrimination.

advisedly to exclude personand 'Custom and Usage' in Article 13 of the Constitution does not include faith of a religious denomination embedded in personal laws," the All India Muslim Personal

Law Board (AIMPLB) plea said.
"The constituent assembly the basis that personal laws was aware of the distinction cannot be tested on the anvil between 'personal law' and the of Articles 14, 15, 21 and 44 of 'Custom and Usage' and chose the Constitution

al law and include Custom and Usage in Article 13 of the Constitution," it said while seeking impleadment in the petition filed by Upadhyay.

The AIMPLB opposed Upadhyay's plea on

terrorist attack.

### Defence Minister. BJP president JP Nadda also remembered the sacrifice of CRPF personnel. ber their martyrdom. We should all unite to completely end terrorism from its very roots," Nadda said on Twitter.

## 14 killed, 4 hurt as mini bus hits lorry in Kurnool

ple, including eight women and a child, were killed and four others injured when a mini bus collided with a lorry in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh early on Sunday, police

said.

The incident took place at around 4 am when a group of hailing from Chittoor district of the state were travelling in the mini bus towards Hyderabad, a senior police official told

They were all on their way to Ajmer in Rajasthan, he

suggests that the driver of the bus apparently lost control and the vehicle first crashed against the road median and then rolled to the other side of the



on the Hyderabad-Bengaluru National Highway, near Veldurthi in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh, Sunday early morning

road hitting a lorry, the official The injured have been hospitalised and the condition of

### Devendra Kula Vellalar community to get delisted from SC soon, announces PM

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

long pending demand of the A long pending demand of the Devendra Kula Vellalar community to delist from the Scheduled Caste and put them in the Other Backward Community would soon become a reality, according to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Addressing a public meeting at the International Indoor Stadium at Chennai on Sunday after laying foundation stones for various development schemes in the State including a Discovery Centre for the Indian Institute of Technology-Madras, the Prime Minister declared that the long pending demand of the Devendra Kula Vellalar community would soon become a reality. "The law which meets this demand would be introduced in the Parliament when it meets the next time," said

The demand of Puthiya Tamilakam, representing the scheduled caste community was

to merge the seven sub sects Pallar, Kudumbar, Pannadi, Kaaladi, Kadayar, Devendra Kulataar and Vadhiriyaar and rename the integrated entity as Devendra Kula Vallalar, according to Dr Krishnasami, party presi-

The Prime Minister said in his speech that the Devendra Kula Vellalar was a community in search of its original identity. He remembered the meeting he had with the representatives of the community sometime back in Chennai. "Their craving for the reclamation of their original identity was discernible and I had assured them that the demand would be considered favourably,"

According to Dr Krishnasami, the DKV constituted eight per cent of the Tamil Nadu population which means that there were 90 lakh members belonging to the

The DKV leaders had asked the State and Centre to delist them

Caste and they be included in the OBC list. "It was a travesty of history that a community which was experts in wet-land farming was dispossessed of their land and listed as scheduled caste by the colonial Britishers. Sreenivasan Pillai, the then leader of our community had written to the British administrators that we were culturally and traditionally different from Adi-Dravidar," said Dr Krishnasami who also disclosed that because of the poor financial status of the community, they could not travel to London to argue their case.

He said the stigma attached to the community could be removed only after it was delisted from the Scheduled Caste and incorporated in the list of OBC. According to Dr Krishnasami, hundreds of thousands of DKV had been forced to get converted into Christianity because of the harassment meted out to the community members by caste Hindus.

## 80 Shia orphans donate money for Ram Temple

Over 80 orphans from the Saadatganj orphanage of the All India Shia Orphanage in Lucknow and people from the minority community donated more than Rs 1.5 lakh for the construction of the Ram temple.

The donations ranged from Rs 1,100 to Rs 10 and Rs 100. Former chairman of Shia Waqf Board, Wasim Rizvi, said: "Such an initiative will send a message of unity to those who work to divide people in the name of reli-

RSS executive member, Indresh Kumar, said a new chapter of mutual harmony would be written with the construction of the Ram temple.

The Shri Ram Janambhoomi Teerth Kshetra trust is conducting a mass contact and fund-raising campaign from January 15 till February 27 for the construction of the grand temple in Ayodhya.

Shri Ram Janambhoomi Teerth Kshetra Secretary Champat Rai was quoted as saying: "The accounts of the trust in three nationalized banks show an amount of over Rs 1,000 crore. Nearly 1.50 lakh VHP activists are collecting funds for the Ram temple. 37 activists have been deputed to deposit the donations in the bank accounts.

### Army personnel killed by unidentified men in UP

**Prayagraj (Uttar Pradesh)**: An Army personnel, on a visit to his home, was attacked and killed by unidentified miscreants. His body was found on Saturday with severe head injuries in his car from the Neem Sarai area here.

Police have registered an FIR against unidentified assailants and a woman, who was with the army man in his car at the time of the incident.

Police have detained the woman and are also looking into her allegation that she was gang-raped by the assailants.Reports said the army havildar's blood-stained body was found by his family members on the information given by the woman.

They rushed him to the Military Hospital in Prayagraj, where the doctors declared him dead.

Superintendent of Police (City) Dinesh Kumar Singh said, "The 38year-old victim, identified as Ashutosh Kumar Singh, was a resident of Mahendra Nagar under Dhumanganj police station. He was working on the post of havildar in the Indian Army and was posted at Udhampur in Jammu and Kashmir. He had come home on leave a few weeks back and was set to return back soon.

His father Ashok Kumar Singh informed the police that Ashutosh left home on Friday night on some errand. Later that night, Ashutosh's wife received a call on her mobile phone from a woman who informed her that Ashutosh was seriously injured and that his car was parked

at a ground in Neem Sarai area. The family members soon rushed to the site and found him with severe injuries.

The woman informed the victim's kin that she was accompanying Ashutosh to check on a plot of land when they decided to buy momos but lost the way and ended up at Neem Sarai.

Suddenly, they were interrupted by a few men who were blocking the road and this led to an argument with Ashutosh when he asked them to give way for the car to pass.

The men attacked Ashutosh with bricks causing him serious injuries on the head.

The SP said that on the complaint of the family members, an FIR has been registered against the woman who was accompanying Ashutosh and unidentified miscreants in connection with the crime.

'We have detained the young woman named by the family members in the FIR. During questioning she first claimed that the unidentified miscreants also tried to rape her. However, she later changed her statement and claimed that she had been gang-raped. In the light of her conflicting statements, we are getting a medical examination of the woman conducted and have also sent her clothes for forensic examination," he added. "The body of the victim has been sent for a post-mortem examination. Efforts are now on to identify and arrest the miscreants," the police official said. *IANS* police official said.

## Girl thrown off terrace after failed rape bid

Lucknow Varsity students form blood donors' group

Pilibhit (Uttar Pradesh): A 16-year-old girl was allegedly thrown off a terrace after a failed rape attempt by two of her neigh-

bours, police said on Sunday.

The two pushed the girl down when they saw her father enter the house, alleged the family. The girl has suffered several fractures and internal injuries, said her father while lodging a complaint with the police in Jahanabad area.

Harish Vardhan Singh, Station House Officer (SHO), said the accused, identified as Arvind and Mahendra, have been booked under IPC section 354 (applying force to a woman with intent to outrage her modesty), 504 (intentional insult) and 323 (causing hurt), besides provisions of the SC/ST Act and the POCSO Act.

Lucknow: Six students of B.A. (Hons) final

year in Lucknow University (LU) have

launched 'Mission Zindagi', an online blood

donor group, to extend a helping hand to

base of students, teachers and staff who are

regular donors or are keen to donate and

coordinate to make donors available to the

needy. Group coordinator, Devansh Krishna

Srivastava, said: "We have created a link,

'Mission Zindagi', on the website where inter-

ested people may register themselves by pro-

viding their details and suitable time for

donation. A registered donor closest to the

patient's location will be alerted for help."

The students are creating online data-

people facing medical emergency.

The police have set up teams to arrest

the two youths who are now absconding. According to reports the incident took place on Saturday.

The minor's father alleged that he found his daughter missing from her room. On searching, he discovered the mobile phone of the key accused, a 21-yearold youth who resides in the neighbourhood.He went to the youth's house to enquire about the whereabouts of his daughter. He claimed he was just in time to prevent them from sexually assaulting his daughter.

The two youths allegedly abused him, making casteist remarks against him. They then threw his daughter off the roof.

When she regained consciousness, she narrated her ordeal, saying the duo had tried to outrage her modesty.

"Any resident who requires blood may

go to the Lucknow University website where

contact numbers of 'Mission Zindagi' mem-

bers are available. They can call our team and

we will provide help at the earliest," he

it would save time and help save lives.

"Students will receive calls and coordi-

nate blood donation round the clock. More

members from all undergraduate and post-

graduate courses will be added later," he said.

Kumar Vishwakarma, Ayushi Tripathi,

Shivangi Srivastava, Utkarsh Chitranshi

Other members of group are Mangesh

The biggest benefit of the initiative is that

## Yogi Govt to celebrate Suheldev anniversary to appease Rajbhars

**Lucknow:** With the exit of Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party (SBSP) from the alliance with the BJP last year, the Yogi Adityanath Government has now chalked out an elaborate plan to commemorate the contribution of Maharaja Suheldev in national integration and reach out to the Rajbhar community.

According to the government spokesman, various programmes will be organised across the state and a grand memorial will also be built at Chittaura in Bahraich where a huge statue of Raja Suheldev, who is revered by the backward Rajbhar community in eastern Uttar Pradesh, will be installed.

The event to mark the birth anniversary celebration on February 16 will be addressed virtually by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

This is the first time that the government is celebrating Suheldev's anniversary.

"While the Prime Minister will address the programme virtually, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will be in Bahraich and is expected to announce major projects for Bahraich and Shravasti. Among other projects, the memorial of Suheldev in the middle of Chittaura Lake will also get a facelift. Earlier, BJP had issued a postal ticket and also announced a train in his memory," the spokesman said.

The programmes will also include poetry recitation by renowned poets followed by lighting of 1.25 lakh 'diyas' and other cultural events.

Bahraich district magistrate, Shambhu Kumar, said: "The state government has decided to organise the Maharaja Suheldev birth anniversary programmes across the state. The chief minister will visit Bahraich, the birth place of Maharaja Suheldev, and inaugurate the ceremony.

He further said, "The Basic Shiksha Adhikari (BSA) has been entrusted with the

responsibility of lighting 1.25 lakh diyas." BSA Dinesh Kumar Yadav said at least 300 people had been engaged for the work.

The move is apparently designed to appease the Rajbhar community, which constitutes around 17-18 per cent of the population in the Purvanchal region.

The Chief Minister has issued directives to hold events to mark Suheldev's birth anniversary at the memorials of martyrs in all districts. An officer in the state tourism department

said the government would expand Chittaura as a tourist spot and a memorial would be built which would have a meeting hall with the seating capacity of 2,000 people. The memorial would be built on 82 bighas of land belonging the royal family of Payagpur. Availability of land was the biggest obsta-

cle for the construction of Maharaja Suheldev Memorial. Most of the land here is owned by the Payagpur royal family.

Raja Yashuvendra Vikram Singh has been ppointed the lifetime vice-president of Maharaja Suheldev Memorial Committee while the Bahraich district magistrate would be the honorary president. 'The temple of Maharaja Suheldev was

built by Raja Virendra Vikram Singh of the royal family and his father Raja Yadvendra Singh has been the president of the temple," Raja Yashuvendra Vikram Singh said. Suheldev was a legendary king of Shravasti

(in present day north-eastern Uttar Pradesh) who is known to have defeated and killed the Ghaznavi general, Ghazi Saiyyad Salar Masud, in Bahraich in the early 11th century. Raja Suheldev finds mention in 'Mirat-i-

Masudi', a 17th century Persian-language historical account. According to the legend, Suhaldev was the eldest son of King Mordhwaj of Shravasti.

## on her second death anniversary

New Delhi: On the occasion of second death anniversary of late Malti Mohinder Singh, the inspiration and guide to teachers in the field of education, it was resolved to follow the path always paved by them.

Tributes were paid to the late Malati Mohinder Singh on her second death anniversary with devotional songs held at the Sri Sathya Sai International Center in New Delhi. Former Union Minister for Women and Child Development, Smt Maneka Sanjay Gandhi while paying tribute to the late Smt. Malti Mohinder Singh and said that the path paved by them will always be exem-plary for all of us. Former Haryana Chief Minister Om Prakash Chautala, Shri Devendra Singh, IAS, Additional Chief Secretary, Government of Haryana, Dr.



Sonia Rajesh Khullar and other dignitaries paid homage paid to late Malti Mohinder Singh.

It is noteworthy that in the way to encourage and honor teachers, Malti Gyanpeeth Awards were start-

ed in the year 2013 in Punjab. Under the Malti Jnanpith Awards the best 15 teachers of state and government aided high schools and senior secondary schools of Punjab are given award of Rs. 01 lakh for

## cases in J&K

Jammu: J&K saw 73 new Covid cases on Sunday while 65 patients were discharged from different hospitals after recovery during the last 24

An official bulletin said that of the new cases, 15 were from the Jammu division and 58 from the Kashmir division while of the recovered patients, 16 were from the Jammu division and 49 from the Kashmir

So far, 125,341 people have been infected with coronavirus in J&K out of which 122,768 have recovered, while 1,951 people succumbed, including two on Sunday.

The number of active cases is now 622 out of which 160 are from the Jammu division and 462 from the Kashmir

### Tributes paid to late Malti Mohinder | 73 new Covid | Army helps douse major forest fire | Yogi assures seers of along China border in Arunachal

Itanagar: Army troops successfully doused a major forest fire in Arunachal Pradesh's Dibang Valley district along the China border, offi-

cials said on Sunday.

Defence spokesman Lt Col P.

Khongsai said that troops of the
Spear Corps extended immediate and critical help to the civil administration in dousing the major forest fire near Anini in Dibang Valley.
"The forest fire broke out at

Koylabasti and Anini on Thursday night and soon engulfed the surrounding mountain ridges. In a quick response to the developing situation, the units of the local formation quickly deployed three response columns and immediately took charge of the situation. It took the Army and local administration almost 11 hours to douse the forest fires," he said.

Khongsai said the well-coordinated and timely response by the Army averted a major disaster and

saved lives and property. The local authorities and members of civil administration lauded the Indian Army's effort in averting a major

tragedy in the area.

Last month, the Army, Indian Air Force, National and State Disaster Response Force, local volunteers and administration jointly doused a major wildfire in the famous Dzukou Valley on Nagaland-Manipur borders after two weeks of battle.

The forest fire caused huge damage to the flora and fauna, forest and environment of the Dzukou Valley, which is one of the 10 most beautiful places in the mountainous northeast

The Dzukou valley, situated at an altitude of 2,452 metres above the sea level and 30 km from Nagaland capital Kohima, is also a sanctuary for the endangered Blyth's tragopan -Nagaland's state bird - and other species of birds and animals. IANS

## development in Braj region

Mathura: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Sunday met saints and seers in Vrindavan town and assured them of the development of the Braj region. "The government is working in tandem with the religious leaders for the development of this region. We will take this region to the global level," he said while

addressing saints.

He said that after Independence, the governments had not worked for religious tourism."The Kashi Vishwanath corridor work is being done under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Kumbh Minister Narendra Modi. The Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj is another example of development of religious tourism. Ayodhya is also coming up as a world class city," he said. Yogi Adityanath said he had set up the Braj Teerth Vikas Parishad and var-ious developmental projects were being taken up The Chief Minister also

being taken up. The Chief Minister also visited the famous Banke Bihari temple and offered prayers.

### Three held in UP for making fake HSRP

Meerut (UP): Three persons have been arrested in Meerut for allegedly manufacturing and selling fake high security registration plates (HSRP).

In a surprise raid on the intervening night of Friday/Saturday in Mohanpuri area, the police recovered about 400 finished plates and more than 300 'empty' ones on which number

Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, station in-charge of Civil Lines police station said: "We have arrested manufacturing unit owner, Tanuj Agarwal, his associate Shriram and a seller named Sandeep Kumar who was picked up from Gurdwara Road and possessed at least 18 fake plates. Police are searching for fourth associate Mohd Wasim. We have also seized machines and equipment, including hydraulic press, fake holograms, dye, etc. used to make these fake num-

ber plates."

During questioning, the accused have revealed that machinery, plates and equipment were brought from Delhi and were being sold to various shop owners that claimed to provide the high security number plate to prospective buyers who had no idea that the plate was

## Fancy garb, gowns, siblings in fray in Andhra panchayat polls

Amaravati: Being held under the Covid shadow, the ongoing panchayat polls in Andhra Pradesh are witnessing the same colour, theatrics and human interest stories that accompany elections in India at

Though there was uncertainty whether the polls to the rural local bodies would be held as announced by the State Election Commission, the Supreme Court's dismissal of the state government's appeal to defer them led to the four

phase elections kick off.

As the polls are midway, some interesting aspects include village volunteers contesting polls, a contestant wearing a gown to campaign, sib-lings testing electoral waters and alcohol and money allegedly being distributed as usual. In Nellore district, two siblings are contesting but for different panchayats.

Piduru Venugopal Reddy contested the election In Nellurupalli village while his younger sister Sannareddy Rajani fought for the Nellaballi

In Vizianagaram district, a government official's mother is in the fray. Krishna District Joint Collector Lotheti Sivashankar's mother Lotheti Krishnaveni filed her nomination for the sarpanch's post in

Srungavarapukota village.

A good number of village and ward volunteers are contesting, and a few have also

Three former village vol-unteers managed to win the Sarpanch posts Visakhapatnam district. Ainampudi Bhaskar Raju won in Melipaka, Padmarekha in Mangalapuram and Karaka Rajyalakshmi Jamadulapalem.

Subhalekha, a former vil-

Muthyalacheruvu village in Ananthapur district's Kadiri mandal, has filed her nomination for the sarpanch post and so did three others. However, all three withdrew them, recognising the service Subhalekha rendered as a volunteer, enabling her to win unanimously. A young Russiaeducated doctor contested the Sarpanch election in Guntur district recently.

Jada Jitin Dev, who was working as a doctor in Guntur town, sought to test his electoral prospects in his village Gopalamvaripalem.

In Guntur district's Pedakurapadu village of Krosuru mandal, former sarpanch, Picchayya Chowdary, donned the garb of Satyaharischanduru, a mythological character to campaign and propel Janga Soubaghyalakshmi's electoral

prospects for the sarpanch

Meanwhile, Gundepudi village in Krishna district has emerged as one of the smallest panchayats in fray during the second phase of elections

which happened on Saturday. Gundepudi separated from Polukonda panchayati in 1956. It is 20 km far away from Nandiwada, with a population of just 196 people, out of which 150 are voters.

Among these 150, 74 were men and 76 women. Despite being one of the smallest panchayats, the village hasn't seen unanimous elections until now, though bigger villages with far larger populations were going for unanimous polls. Setting an example that

come what may one must

always keep fighting, a contes-

tant in Guntur district straight-

away went from the hospital to

on a ventilator but on the last day of nominations and in a better condition after treatment, she drove down to Chamallamudi office to file her As she reached the office, the poll officials, empathising with her, went to her car to take

her papers. In East Godavari district's

Kadiyam village, famous for horticulture, a 92-year-old horticulture, a 92-year-old woman mustered all her strength to personally visit the office and file nomination for a ward member's post.

In a peculiar development, a panchayat election contestant at Gummalaxmipuram in Vizianagaram district literally wore his election symbol -- a

wore his election symbol -- a gown -- to impress upon the voters to cast their vote in his



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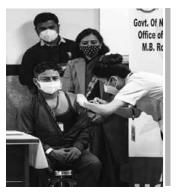
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- PAPER WITH PASSION-

## Halfway through

Round one of first-phase COVID-19 vaccination drive over, India gets its act together to accolades

ndia has begun the second round of its phase one COVID-19 vaccination drive. The first round that began on January 16 saw 58,65,813 healthcare workers and 19,00,506 frontline workers being inoculated till February 12. Once India administers both the shots, the vaccination process for the first lot of chosen people will be complete. Thankfully, from the time the venture got underway, the number of infections and casualties has seen a downward spiral. According to the Union Health Ministry, on February 11 the country reported 12,923 new infections in 24 hours, taking the number of those infected to 10,871,294. There are 142,562 active cases and 10,573,372 recoveries as India's death toll stood at 155,360 with 108 deaths during the same period. India is witnessing a consistent decline



in the number of infections reported daily since the peak in mid-September 2020. This has earned the Government a pat on the back from the World Health Organisation (WHO), as has the fact that over seven million people have been inoculated since the world's largest vaccination drive began in January. "It's the fastest rate of vaccination happening," Roderico Ofrin, the WHO's India representative, has said. However, despite its relative success, the first round was not without challenges. For instance, there was the issue of procuring enough vaccines, which still remains. AstraZeneca's Covishield, which is the main vaccine being administered, is given in two doses, four weeks apart. This means that India needs 60 crore shots for the first phase.

The Serum Institute of India (SII), which makes Covishield, has said it has a stockpile of five-seven crore doses and aims to produce 50 crore shots by July 2021. So, by the Sll's own admission, there will be shortages in the first half of 2021. However, this shortage will ease when other vaccines are cleared for use. But other issues like inadequate cold storage facilities will continue to haunt the system in the second round too. The fact that more than 52 per cent of the country's 29,000 cold chain points and 40 per cent of the equipment are concentrated in just six States doesn't help. As the drive speeds up, the Government will have to increase the number of cold chain facilities, keeping in focus the States without an adequate infrastructure. Plus, Bharat Biotech's Covaxin, the other approved vaccine, can be kept at room temperature for at least a week. So the Government needs to ensure that going forward the campaign has a healthy mix of both the vaccines. But, for that to happen, the people's hesitation in using Covaxin needs to be overcome by releasing its efficacy data. Also, with the registration process being mostly electronic till now, the Government should ensure some amount of "on-the-spot" registration as not everyone has a mobile phone and internet connection in a poor country like ours. With Indians developing antibodies faster than the Government can get the jabs, there is hope for the country. But for a lot of people, as for the economy, it would have come a bit too late.



Wreckage at the scene of a bombing in Mogadishu, Somalia

## **Foolhardy acts**

Uttarakhand's fragile ecosystem is being abused by the builders' lobby in cahoots with babus and *neta*s

ne calamity leads to another and if it is a man-made disaster it most certainly will, unless extraordinary steps are taken to forestall the impending danger. What is happening in Uttarakhand is a case in point, if aerial surveys are anything to go by. The debris accompanying the deluge earlier this week has blocked a stream that joins the Rishi Ganga river, forming a temporary lake which if it breaches can cause further devastation. With the threat still looming, if authorities fail to take timely and adequate precautionary measures, the loss to life, property and flora and fauna may be colossal.



blasting activity in the hills — to most of which the complacent babus and their political masters turn a blind eye — the fragile local ecosystem is facing an existential crisis. We might pompously bellow about our sustainable development goals but the reality is to the contrary. In our quest for development, we have messed up the region's biodiversity and pushed many exotic and indigenous varieties of plants and animals to the verge of extinction.

Due to (often illegal) rampant construction, mining and

Not only that, we have been quite an ignoramus people with respect to the importance of knowledge as passed down by the local generations. The villagers and tribals have traditional wisdom to fore-

see any catastrophe by studying the signs of nature, changes in the behaviour of domestic and wild animals, insects, change in wind speed and direction and so on. This begs the question as to how many times have successive Governments made serious attempts to tap this traditional knowledge base as a means of forewarning against natural or man-made disasters? But, more importantly, what should be done for now? Should the authorities work on a contingency rehabilitation plan, or should a safety valve be drilled to drain out the water from this temporary lake? Are the authorities in a position at all to regulate the flow? Or will the Government leave the people to their fate, only to announce compensations later? These and other such questions will keep crossing our mind. According to a report by the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology, an autonomous research institute under the Department of Science and Technology, the assessment of the actual magnitude of risks involved due to this impoundment of water requires a detailed survey. However, the scientists, NGOs and the Government must put their heads together and work out an action plan before it gets too late.

# Upper House: To be, or not to be?



Political parties need to realise and decide whether they wish to make serious use of the Upper House or exploit it for their convenience

s expressed in this journal, others have voiced, from time to time, doubts about the utility of the Upper House of legislature whether in the States or at the Centre. The cause of these doubts is the notso-infrequent misuse of the Rajya Sabha as well as the Vidhan Parishads. As Sanjay Gandhi's influence grew in the 1970s, many of his friends were lifted into the Rajya Sabha. Fortunately for them, the election rule-framers prescribed the minimum age for such candidates as 30. Hence, like the minimum age of 25 years for the Lok Sabha, anyone who was over 30 years was eligible for the Upper House. In many ways, this was the first reason of misuse.

The Upper House was never meant for the young woman or man to get into. They, being young and fit, should cultivate the common folk, broaden the party base and, in due course, contest a Lok Sabha seat. The young and raw individuals reflected on the House discipline as well as the quality of debates and their contribution to Parliament. The purpose of the Upper House, whether at the Centre or in States, was the exact opposite: Older, mature individuals, preferably well educated who could devote time to study issues and then speak on them in an informed manner. They may or may not relate to the common folk of a constituency, nor perhaps may the mass voters relate to such members.

The Upper House should be used to accommodate leaders who made competent Ministers and had to get elected within six months of their appointment by the Prime Minister or a Chief Minister.

One recent example is that of Yogi Adityanath. He was in the Lok Sabha when the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections were held in 2017 and he had Thursday evenings, to return not contested from any constituency. Yet he was selected to Rajya Sabha members could be the Chief Minister and, afford to spend the weekends

therefore, had to enter the Assembly. He could have requested an MLA to give up his seat. But instead of doing that, he chose not to disturb anyone; there was a Vidhan Parishad seat vacant which he used to become an Assembly member. In 2001, when Narendra Modi was in a similar situation in Gujarat, he could not do the same. There being no Vidhan Parishad in his State, Modi had to get elected from an Assembly seat vacated by an MLA.

Having been a member of the Rajya Sabha, I found that the level of debates and discussions was, on the whole, more sober and mature than in the Lok Sabha. Generally, the speakers in the Upper House ensured that they had studied and reflected on the subject they spoke on whereas, in the Lok Sabha, more members spoke off the cuff; most of them had spent time in their constituencies over the weekend. Many of them regularly left Delhi on Friday afternoons, if not on on Monday mornings. The



THE UPPER HOUSE SHOULD BE USED TO ACCOMMODATE LEADERS WHO **WOULD MAKE** COMPETENT MINISTERS AND HAVE TO GET **ELECTED WITHIN** SIX MONTHS OF THEIR APPOINTMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER OR A CHIEF MINISTER

in Delhi and read up before speaking the following week.

The Communist parties had a commendable system; most of their Upper House members spent the weekends in Delhi. They not only studied the contemporary subjects but also collected the Bills coming up for debate and passed on their notes to their Lok Sabha colleagues. I offered to organise a small secretariat at my cost for all my party members so that all of us could be better prepared for discussions. Being in power after long and with a lenient leadership, the general mood in the party was one of overconfidence. Little wonder then that the 2004 general election was lost on a manifesto which projected "India shining". To every Indian shining, there were citizens not shining.

In India, our constituencies are large and the voters are much more varied than, say, in western countries. Moreover, our diversity makes it useful for the Members of Parliament and even Assemblies to know other parts of the country. would have the leisure to do are personal.)

this kind of work during the weeks when the House does not sit. The Lower House members cannot normally have much leisure; their focus has to be on their own voters. If the legislators do not take their knowledge side seri-ously, they would yield help-

Executive or the Ministers. It is for the political parties to realise and decide whether they wish to make serious use of the Upper House or exploit it for their convenience. But, truly, these chambers can be useful as knowledge-cum-wisdom banks for the parties as well as for the country. They can help raise the quality of politics.

lessly to the dominance of the

Getting elected by lakhs of people is related to popularity or, at least, acceptability whereas knowledge depends on education and experience. Both are necessary virtues; the Lower House more for the party while the Upper House more for the country in the long run, if used wisely.

(The writer is a wellknown columnist and ar The Upper House members author. The views expressed

### LETITERS TO THE EDITOR

### **INDIA CANNOT BE A SURVEILLANCE STATE**

Sir— The Union Home Ministry's call for citizens to become "cyber volunteers" and identify, flag and report illegal, unlawful and "anti-national" online content is perhaps the most brazen and dangerous sign of an attempt to turn our democratic and free society into a "surveillance State".

Though vigilante activities directed against individuals, social groups and communities have increased in the past few years and the Government has ignored and sometimes even patronised these, it was not expected of it to move towards setting up a virtual vigilante force. The pilot project is to be implemented in Jammu and Kashmir and Tripura, and then extended to other States. This will have dangerous consequences for citizens, as it will curtail their rights and will jeopardise freedom of society. It is illegal as it violates the basic tenets of the Constitution which guarantee freedom of speech and privacy to every individual.

These volunteers will act like secret police service agents reporting to the Government and its machinery about any post or comment which they dislike or dispprove of. Where we are moving? It's really a matter of great concern. A time will come when these volunteers will dictate terms to the common man and will assume the role of courts. They will pronounce judgments on social media and will lynch anybody they feel like without any fear. We are building a "Taliban" State.

**Shovanlal Chakraborty** | *Kolkata* 

**FUEL PRICE RISE WILL HIT POOR FARMERS** Sir —In March 2020, international oil prices were raised due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Central Government is not taking immediate steps to reduce taxes on oil or petroleum. The retail petrol and diesel rates are governed by international prices. India is 85 per cent dependent on oil imports to meet its needs. Of course, it is well known that Central and State taxes account for about 60 per cent of retail prices. But the Union Budget included petrol and diesel among those products,

### TMC is shaken to the core



Congress is shaken to its core as many big leaders are leaving the party to join the BJP. The recent jolt came on Friday when Rajya Sabha MP and former Railway Minister Dinesh Trivedi announced his resignation from the Rajya Sabha on the floor of the House. It is no secret that these defections are fanned by the BJP leaders who

are making all-out efforts to weaken the TMC when State Assembly elections are round the corner. These will likely prove a grave setback to the TMC and will diminish its prospects of making to the power corridors in one of the most politically sensitive State

The BJP, which enjoys power at the Centre, knows that winning the battle of West Bengal is easier said than done. However, if the old guard and most trusted lieutenants of Chief Minister Baneriee are leaving the party's fold at such a crucial time, it indicates that something is not well internally. The fault lines are now apparent. Not to mention, these leaders are disgruntled by the party leadership and the alleged dictatorial manner of Didi who is the party supremo

These defections will also be a setback to the BJP's image in the long run as the saffron party is already infamous for creating rifts and fanning defections in opposite camps

Yash Pal Ralhan | Jalandhar

on which a new agricultural structure and development cess has been imposed.

Fuel prices are increasing time to time in Pakistan and Nepal but in India, relatively high rates will trouble the oil consumers or end users. By increasing the rates of petrol and diesel, the Central and State Governments will generate more revenue from taxation. But this will only enrage the common people as the prices of commodities would increase. The oil expenditure of a farmer who operates various agricultural apparatus and machines like diesel pumps, generators and so on, will increase but the income will not rise proportionately. Hence the Centre and the State Governments should reconsider relaxing the prices keeping in mind the interests of marginal farmers and common oil consumers.

Yugal Kishore Sharma | Faridabad

Sir — Parents must stop telling their chil-

dren that the attraction they feel towards

**DON'T IMPOSE MORALITY ON CHILDREN** 

the opposite gender is merely infatuation and love has nothing to do with it. By doing so they are suffocating their children, demoralising their spirit and also doubting their sense of judgment. Most of the parents do it because they think that in this way they would prevent the young minds from getting distracted. They are unaware of the fact that by imposing sanctions and unnecessary high moral principles on their children, they are actually naking them weak from within.

Gradually and slowly, such children will stop discussing their problems with their parents. The distance between them will increase which will have adverse consequences for the family. Adolescents who have reached the age of puberty need to be convinced that their love is real and that if they marry for love, then they will have a

great deal of parental support.

Srinivas Reddy | Hyderabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneér@gmail.com

I request village panchayat representatives to identify and make a list of all unused Government land in their respec-

tive areas. We can restore and renovate them. GOA CM



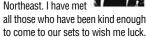
The overriding priorities of 2021 are to defeat the pandemic, accelerate the country's economic recovery implement economic reforms and

—Pramod Sawant

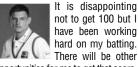
fight corruption South African President

—Cyril Ramaphosa I'm truly overwhelmed

with the love that I'm receiving from the people here in the Northeast. I have met



—Ayushmann Khurrana



have been working hard on my batting. There will be other opportunities for me to get that score. Cricketer -Joshua Da Silva

The reign of suppression and ter-

ror in Kashmir is the unvarnished and unpalatable truth that

Government of India wants to hide from the rest of the country.

Former J&K CM —Mehbooba Mufti

## **FIRST COLUMN**

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## **UNDERSTANDING ENERGY CONCERNS**

A grasp of the methods of transition in the past, from one energy era to another, is important



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

ach social grouping has its mythology. The sense in which the phrase social groupings is being used in this text refers to human ■aggregations popularly clubbed as a category, such as "the rich", "the poor", "the professional", "the sailor" and so on. The rich have a sub-category that is derisively referred to. This sub-category is called "the nouveau riche," which is supposed to be loud in its display of recently-acquired wealth. Whether as a characteristic this is true or not has never been empirically tested, however it is believed to be true. Similarly, many professional groups such as engineers, doctors, et al look down upon history as a discipline. A professional historian is neither taken seriously nor referred to with the mellowness which any "serious" professional would have been. So be it!

Applying this yardstick of traits to the profession of energy specialists, the same kind of syndrome can be found. Unexplained professional myopia prevents many of them from recognising that the need for green energy is not a first energy shift that has ever touched the human civilisation. Energy shifts are as old as humanity. When the physical energy of human beings was used to break down aggregations of natural material, such as branches or boulders, the substitution of physical human energy by power of draft animal energy was a major energy revolution. For any kind of traction or movement being substituted with the use of animal energy, there was an equally big revolution.



Ostensibly human beings took a long time to recognise that they need not walk to move from one point to another but they could instead ride an animal. This too was nearly as big a revolution as any. Lions remained untameable, elephants lost on speed what they gained on bulk. The horse was the clear winner and its popularity became so much that horse power became the unit of measurement and even today the strength of an engine is explained in terms of how many horse powers it represents. The message is simple. Each source of energy was a process which had its era of dominance. The shift from one era to another was as fundamental, drastic and dramatic as the shift one talks of today for an aspirational or needed change from fossil fuel to green energy.

Be that as it may, any such shift needed a change in technology. Other collaterals followed in the process of evolution: Size of the circle (often referred to as the wheel) and the concomitant size of the case which would contain the machinery (called the equipment). This meant change in the service industry and indeed the full gamut of ancillary skills. Hence, to understand green energy and the era in which many front-edge communities are locked in today, in a module of learning, is a complicated process. In the prevailing dominant social culture of "fast food", few have the time to pause and consider the nature of the problem.

There isn't any serious dissertation available on how long any era lasted before it gave way to the next era of energy usage. To recognise and change this framework of reference to a more holistic one is the need of the hour. The present obsession with one form of green energy or another, be it solar, wind, hydro, oceanic or biomass is proving good almost only for talking shop and the industry. There is a clear need to get our perspective right on the significance of power, per se. Energy is the underpinning of human civilisation. Its characterisation determines the periods of history. Understanding the methods of transition in the past, from one energy era to another, will help us to find solutions to the current energy concerns better.

(The writer is a well-known management consultant of international repute. The views expressed are personal.)

# Need for affordable housing and microfinance for all



While India continues to record improvement in dealing with poverty, homelessness has elicited a poor response from our policymakers

A mong the many challenges that need urgent attention, more so after the COVID-19 pandemic invaded our lives, is housing. This vital segment needs a scientific and creative intervention to make it a sustainable proposition. Lack of proper housing is one of the reasons, apart from loss of jobs, that led to the mass migration of labourers from cities to the villages, during the initial days of the countrywide lockdown. Hence, expanding access to affordable housing is essential not just for equitable development but also for social stability.

Looking at the gravity of the issue, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget speech announced the extension of the tax holiday on affordable housing projects for one more year. The Government has done this to ensure affordable housing for migrant workers. The affordable rental housing projects are part of the 'Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban).'

While we continue to record improvement in dealing with poverty, homelessness has elicited a poor response from our policymakers. Consequently, slums constitute 17 per cent of urban households in India and in Mumbai they make up 42 per cent of the households. These slum clusters lack necessary amenities like private toilets and potable water. A high population density and a weak public healthcare system mean more susceptibility to COVID-19 and other diseases and epidemics. Necessary precautions like social distancing to stay safe of the Coronavirus cannot be practised under such deplorable living conditions that prevail in slums and jhuggi jho-

Human health and well-being depends on a range of interconnected social, economic and physical factors that impact the environment in which we live and sustain ourselves. The key to good housing is to ensure that residents have access to transportation, affordable healthcare, jobs, education as well as other essential services. A decent habitat and shelter can contribute in not just individual or societal well-being but also have the potential to catalyse overall economic growth. It is, thus, critical to recognise housing investment as a basic, fundamental building block of econom-

Housing is not a standalone issue and is closely intertwined with other factors and lack of sustainable housing is often the cause of a slew of health and developmental problems. Poor ventilation and the inability to maintain basic hygiene are major causes of poor health. Fragile building structures undermine safety and increase vulnerability to disaster. Lack of lighting and space limits the ability of children to study. Inadequate privacy and lack of sanitation contribute to a host of diseases, hence perpetuating poverty.

For many people in the developing world, the land on which they live is their only asset. If that property is not recognised as legally theirs, they lose out on several social benefits. Land ownership is often the bedrock of other development interventions. Owning land boosts nutrition, educational outcomes and gender equality. The converse is equally true. Where land security is absent or weak —when men and women do not have recognised legal rights to their land and can thus be easily displaced — all other development efforts



LOW-INCOME VILLAGERS HAVE OWNED THEIR LAND FOR **GENERATIONS BUT LACK** FORMAL OWNERSHIP DOCUMENTS. HENCE, THEY DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO **FORMAL** FINANCIAL SERVICES. ONCE THEIR INHABITED LAND **GETS FORMALLY** TITLED, THEY COULD OBTAIN ACCESS TO SEVERAL **PUBLIC** INCLUDING LOANS

The writer is a

well-known development

professional. The views

expressed are personal.



go in vain and conflict arises.

Many who live in slums have little or no control over the ownership of the property they live upon. The lack of official land titles is a major impediment to the acquisition of housing finance. People do not have documentary proof of being owners of the land on which they live and are, therefore, legally insecure.

Many low-income villagers have owned their land for generations but lack formal ownership documents. Hence, they do not have access to formal financial services. Once their inhabited land gets formally titled, they could obtain access to several public benefits, including loans.

Traditional housing finance

has not been able to offer much help to people in the low-income group. But a range of financial institutions are applying good microfinance practices, thus promoting housing. The increased provision of housing microfinance has resulted in safe and healthy housing conditions for millions. Successful housing microfinance providers have married the core principles of micro-credit — peer-based borrower selection and repayment enforcement, close follow-up on repayment and so on — with the technical expertise required to investigate land owner-

finance principles. This model has been highly successful wherever Governments are offering long-term tenancies

ship and other classical housing

and shared-ownership housing. But the sector is still in need of more sustainable business models to get legitimacy in mainstream finance.

Housing micro-finance can

include a range of financial services that support improving or upgrading housing such as home repair and expansions, additional cooking space, water and sanitation services, energy efficiency upgrades, the purchase of inhabitable land or permanent structures and the construction of new housing.

The demand for housing

micro-finance is high. The clients are already channelising a good portion of micro-enterprise loans for home improvement; microentrepreneurs also use their homes as productive assets for generating income. A home can be a place to store inventory, produce goods and run a business. A home is also a personal asset that usually appreciates in value over time. Home improvement, thus, not only enhances living conditions but is also an investment.

The Government also needs to use creative approaches for making rental housing a safe option for house owners. Its share in overall housing has been steadily declining. There is clearly a need to replace the current rent control laws with modern tenancy laws, so as to give full freedom to tenants and owners to negotiate the rent and the length of the lease.

Rules with respect to eviction also need to be reformed to restore

the balance between the rights of tenants and the owners

We need a differently structured and more professional market rental sector. A model Rent Act is needed to promote rental housing. There should be mutual agreement between the landlord and the tenant for a stipulated lease period prior to which the tenant can't be evicted and after the expiry of the lease period, the tenant will not be permitted to continue in the housing unit.

However, rent control laws give tenants so much security that landlords worry that they may not regain possession of their property at the end of the lease period. People often leave their properties vacant until they get a tenant they are comfortable with.

It is time the Government puts rental housing to use. Its share in overall housing has been steadily declining. There is a need for replacing current rent control laws with a modern tenancy law, which would give full freedom to tenants and owners to negotiate the rent and the length of the lease.

Policymakers, financial institutions and housing experts also need to evaluate their current policies, cultures and ways of working. With a thoughtful approach, they can be better prepared to tackle this humongous problem. The Government will have to change course and shift away from the legacy mindset before the problem gets

NOT JUST DINESH TRIVEDI, WHOEVER WANTS TO DO HONEST WORK CANNOT STAY IN THE TMC. IF HE WANTS TO JOIN THE BJP, WE WILL WELCOME HIM. —BJP NATIONAL GENERAL SECRETARY

KAILASH VIJAYVARGIYA





I AM VERY GRATEFUL TO THE BJP AND ITS SENIOR LEADERS. I WAS TOLD THEY HAVE SAID THAT I AM WELCOME. BUT LET ME SETTLE DOWN FIRST.

—FORMER TMC MP **DINESH TRIVEDI** 

China in a tizzy to prevent 'feminisation' of male adolescents

This will eventually be resolved, as these things usually are, by the magic of generational turnover. The young will outlive the old and become the majority

t seemed innocent enough at the start: Just a surge in Lthe number of boys coming to school with notes from doctors saying they were excused from playing contact sports. But pretty soon high schools all over China were having trouble finding enough willing young men to make up a football team. It was around the same time that attendance at the compulsory classes in Marxist-Leninist-Xi-Jinping-Thought crashed. Even when boys started talking about their feelings and trying to look like K-Pop stars, people tried to laugh it all off and dubbed them "little fresh meats." But some far-sighted people understood that the nation's

soul was at stake here. As early as last June, Si Zefu, member of the Standing Committee of the 13th Chinese People's Political



Consultative Conference's National Committee and chairman of Harbin Electric Corporation, was warning that many of China's young males had become "weak, timid and self-abasing." From not playing football to not wanting to be an "army hero" is a short, slippery slope.

This "feminisation", Si rrumphed, "would harrumphed, inevitably endanger the survival and development of the Chinese nation unless effectively managed." And even as he spoke, limp-wristed young men with flowers in their hair were spotted lolling about in the street outside.

Just as Oscar Wilde heralded the fall of the British empire and hippie "peace and love" caused the US to lose the Vietnam War and start its long decline, so too, young Chinese men wearing that the Party wants you to go down this particular rhetorical road?

Well, okay, maybe not exactly those examples. But what would the veterans of the Long March say about these effeminate young girlymen? You can't turn them into proper soldiers. China will be easy meat for the first manly country that comes along. Harrumph!

China has a very big bureaucracy, so it takes a while for an issue to come to the top of the pile but by early this year it had arrived. It's not clear if President-for-Life Xi Jinping took a personal interest in the issue but his enthusiasm for football as a symbol of national strength and manliness is well-known, so the policy-makers knew they

were on a safe track. The Education Ministry make-up....Stop! Are you sure took the lead, with the pub-



lication of a policy document last week entitled, 'Proposal to Prevent the Feminisation of Male Adolescents'. No, really, I swear I'm not making this up. Check it out online.

The document claims that China needs to hire more male teachers to serve as role models (at present four out of five teachers in urban

areas are women) and "vigor-ously develop" sports like afternoon after a forced football to "cultivate the students' masculinity."

The official Chinese news agency Xinhua instantly took up the cause, condemning "androgynous" young men as slender but weak as willows," and there was a suspiciously instant chorus of support on social media for the notion that traditional forms of masculinity are the foundation of national military strength.

It probably sounds fresh to an adult generation of Chinese who don't even know their own country's real history. To people elsewhere, it sounds like a bunch of early 20th Century Englishmen in wing collars declaring that "the battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton." (No, it wasn't. It was

won when Blücher's Prussian

march.)

It sounds like a bunch of late imperial claptrap, because that's what it is. Playing football sometimes makes you better at playing football. It does not make you better at dominating foreigners or fighting wars — and why do you want to do that anyway? It's, therefore, pleasing to report that the response in Chinese official and social media was far from unani-

mously enthusiastic. "Is feminisation now a derogatory term?" one Weibo user asked and received over 200,000 likes, and the *People's* Daily, no less, published an opinion piece arguing that diversity and tolerance should be encouraged among feminine and masculine men

country on Earth where the generational divergence of opinions, especially among the male half, is greater than it is in China. From an almost entirely hierarchical society as as the 1980s (Confucianism reinforced by the 'democratic centralism' of Communism) to a younger generation that is egalitarian and gender-fluid (at least in the big cities) is one hell of a leap.
It will eventually be

resolved, as these things usually are, by the magic of generational turnover. The young will outlive the old and become the majority. And here is the authentic voice of the young, summed up in a single tweet: "There are 70 million more men than women in this country. No country in the world has such a deformed sex ratio. There is probably no Isn't that masculine enough?"

Gwynne Dyer's new book is 'Growing Pains: The Future of Democracy and Work.' The views expressed

Biden admin appoints

2 Indian-origin experts to key positions

√wo Indian-origin experts in Two Indian-origin experts in public service have been

appointed by the Biden admin-

istration to key positions at AmeriCorps, the federal agency for volunteering and

Sonali Nijhawan has been med Director of

AmeriCorps State and National, and Sri Preston

Kulkarni, 42, was appointed the

new Chief of External Affairs.

Congress twice unsuccessfully

in Texas, Kulkarni was certain-

ly noticed by the leadership in

Kulkarni's appointment, along with Nijhawan and Dan Kohl, reflects "the Biden

Though having run for

named

Washington.

AmeriCorps.

AmeriCorps said.

Kulkarni lost his race for

## AFTER SECOND IMPEACHMENT ACQUITTAL-

# Trump indicates active public life

**PTI** ■ WASHINGTON

Donald Trump has told millions of his supporters that he is ready for yet another phase of active public life after the US Senate acquitted him in his second impeachment trial.

Following four days of the impeachment trial, the 100member Senate voted to impeach the former US president by 57-43 votes, 10 votes short of the two-thirds majority needed for conviction.

Trump, a Republican, is the first-ever president to have been impeached twice and the first president to have faced impeachment after leaving

Trump, 74, faced the charge of incitement of insurrection over the deadly January 6 assault of the US Capitol by his supporters.

"Our historic, patriotic and beautiful movement to Make America Great Again has only just begun. In the months ahead I have much to share



### NEW ZEALAND CITY GOING INTO 3-DAY LOCKDOWN

Wellington: New Zealand's largest city of Auckland will be placed in a three-day lockdown beginning just before midnight Sunday following the discovery of three unexplained coronavirus virus in the community

### JAPAN APPROVES ITS FIRST COVID VACCINE

Tokyo: Japan on Sunday formally approved its first Covid-19 vaccine and said it would start nationwide inoculations within days, but months behind the US and many other countries. Japan's health ministry said it had approved the vaccine codeveloped and supplied by Pfizer Inc. The announcement comes after a Government panel on Friday confirmed that final results of clinical testing done in Japan showed that the vaccine had an efficacy similar to what overseas tests showed.

### KOSOVO VOTES FOR **NEW PARLIAMENT**

Pristina: Kosovo's voters defied freezing weather to take part in an early parliamentary election Sunday to form a new government amid the coronavirus pandemic, an conomic downturn and negotiations with wartime foe Serbia. Some 1.8 million eligible voters on Sunday are expected to cast their ballots in 2.400 polling stations. They're electing 120 lawmakers among more than 1,000 candidates from 28 political groupings.

### TURKEY SAYS 13 OF ITS CITIZENS KILLED IN N IRAQ

Ankara: Troops have found the

bodies of 13 Turkish citizens abducted by Kurdish insurgents in a cave complex in northern Iraq, the Turkish defense minister said Sunday. Hulusi Akar said 12 of the victims were shot in the head and one died of a shoulder bullet wound. They were discovered in the Gara region near the Turkish border during an operation against the Kurdistan Workers' Party.



continuing our incredible journey together to achieve American greatness for all of our people. There has never been anything like it!" Trump said in a statement.

"We have so much work ahead of us, and soon we will

emerge with a vision for a bright, radiant, and limitless American future," Trump, who received 74 million votes in the November 3 presidential election, higher than that of any president before him.

While Trump

remained quiet on his postpresidency life, speculation has been rife that he might run for the presidency in 2024 or encourage someone from his family to fight out a battle for the White House.

There is also some talk that

the former president might part ways with the Republican Party to form his own party. However, there been no statement on this from Trump.

cherished Constitutional Republic was founded on the impartial rule of law, the indispensable safeguard for our liberties, our rights and our freedoms," Trump said.

After the end of his term on January 20, Trump flew to his resort in Palm Beach Florida, where he has been staying since then.

Trump has been banned from almost all the major social media platforms including Twitter and Facebook.

Meanwhile, several Republican leaders slammed the party's Senators who voted against Trump.

The seven Senators are Richard Burr, Bill Cassidy, Susan Collins, Lisa Murkowski, Mitt Romney, Ben Sasse and

immediately censured Sen. Bill Cassidy, while state party officials in North Carolina and Pennsylvania issued sharp statements expressing disappointment over the votes cast Saturday by Sens. Richard Burr and Pat Toomey," Politico reported.

"The moves are the latest in a series of censures and disciplinary actions doled out to lawmakers deemed to be critical of the former president in the wake of the Capitol riot," it

Republican Senator John Cornyn said that he had concerns about this snap impeachment from the start.

"The arguments of the House Impeachment Managers that the Constitution permits the impeachment of a private citizen, the free speech protections of the First Amendment don't apply, the due process clause of the Fifth Amendment is optional, and that the trial may include a presiding officer Pat Toomey. who also serves as a juror all "The Louisiana GOP were a bridge too far," he said.

very active in the protests, and

social media postings on

Sunday indicated that state

railway workers have joined

them, with some unconfirmed

claims that they have gone on

on February 1, detaining Suu

Kyi and members of her gov-

ernment and preventing

recently elected lawmakers

The military seized power

administration's commitment service to support to diverse leadership," accordthe administration's ing to the release by agenda, focusing on In their roles, these leaders four of the most will use service to support the administration's agenda, focusurgent challenges of ing on four of the most urgent our time: Covid-19, challenges of our time: Covid-19, economic recovery, racial economic recovery, equity, and climate change, the racial equity, and

In their roles, these

leaders will use

climate change, the

the Texas District 22 seat in the US House of Representatives to AmeriCorps said former Fort Bend County Sheriff Troy Nehls in November as the Democratic ground also includes extensive nominee in a deeply experience in education, Republican district. AmeriCorps said in a press Kulkarni brings a variety of release.

Inspired by the students, families, and AmeriCorps experience in service and public affairs to AmeriCorps, including 14 years as a foreign community she met, she went service officer with the State on to help found City Year Department where he spe-Sacramento and launch the cialised in public diplomacy organisation's 22nd site with 50 and worked in public affairs new AmeriCorps members. and international information

Nijhawan also served as the California director of Education Pioneers where she recruited, placed, and supported managers in urban school systems and education nonprofits, empowering people to challenge the status quo of our public education system.

She earned a bachelor's in education and psychology from Marquette University and a master's in social work from the University of Maryland, Baltimore.

**White House** 

aide resigns

reporter

after threatening

## Myanmar anti-coup protesters keep pressure on junta

Vast numbers of people all over Myanmar flouted orders against demonstrations and marched again on Sunday to protest the military takeover that ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi. Large demonstrations were

held in the major cities of Yangon, Mandalay and the capital, Naypyitaw, as well as in far-flung areas dominated by ethnic minorities. Resistance also took place

in cyberspace, as a group calling itself BrotherHood of Myanmar Hackers defaced the government's Myanmar Digital News website, replacing content on its home page with words and pictures against the military takeover.

Protesters in Yangon again rallied outside the Chinese and U.S. Embassies. They accuse



Min Aung Hlaing, also chairman of the State Administrative Council, lies on a road as anti-coup protesters gather outside the Hledan Centre in Yangon, Myanmar on

Beijing of propping up the military military regime and applaud "The civil Washington's actions sanction- movement and demonstrations

"The civil disobedience

Myanmar want democracy. We stand with them," said a statement Saturday on the U.S. Embassy's Twitter account. Other protesters carried

signs urging people to boycott businesses linked to the mili-Sunday's activism took

place after the ruling junta issued a new order suspending several basic civil liberties. The order, issued late

Saturday and published Sunday in state newspapers, suspends provisions in an existing law on security and privacy protection, allowing the authorities to carry out searches and make arrests without court warrants.

It also allows the interception of electronic and other communications without a warrant and permits the detention of detainees for more than 24 hours without court permisfrom opening a new session of programmes, completing tours in Taiwan, Russia, Iraq, Israel, Parliament. The junta, led by Senior Jamaica and Washington, the Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, said it statement said. was forced to step in because Nijhawan has committed her career to developing leadthe government failed to propers and growing national service. Most recently, she devel-

erly investigate allegations of fraud in last year's election, which Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy party won in a landslide. The state election commission refuted that contention, saying there is no evidence to support it.

## UK PM to host virtual meeting of G7 leaders

PTI ■ LONDON

TK Prime Minister Boris U Johnson is to host fellow G7 leaders for a virtual meeting on February 19 ahead of its presidency of a summit in June of the Group of Seven countries including the UK, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the US, Downing Street said on Sunday.

The virtual meeting, the first hosted by Johnson as part of the UK's G7 Presidency this year and the first gathering of G7 leaders since April 2020, will bring together the world leaders to discuss how leading democracies can work together to ensure equitable distribution of coronavirus vaccines around the world and prevent future pandemics.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to attend the

G7 Summit in Cornwall in June after India was invited as a alongside South Korea and

"The solutions to the chal-

lenges we face - from the

colossal mission to get vaccines

to every single country, to the

fight to reverse the damage

done to our ecosystems and

lead a sustainable recovery

from coronavirus — lie in the

discussions we have with our

friends and partners around

have given us the vaccines we

need to end this pandemic for

good. Now world governments

have a responsibility to work

together to put those vaccines

to the best possible use. I hope 2021 will be remembered as the

year humanity worked togeth-

er like never before to defeat a

common foe," he said.

'Quantum leaps in science

the world," said Johnson.

oped and served as the execu-

tive director of Stockton Service

Corps, a six-year, USD 12 mil-

lion initiative to address local

Her professional back-

needs through AmeriCorps.

White House deputy press secretary TJ Ducklo has resigned, the day after he was suspended for issuing a sexist and profane threat to a journalist seeking to cover his relation-

Ducklo had been put on a weeklong suspension without pay on Friday after a report surfaced in Vanity Fair outlining his sexist threats against a female Politico journalist to try to suppress a story about his relationship, telling her "I will

destroy you." The journalist had been seeking to report on his relationship with a political reporter at Axios who had previously covered the Biden campaign and transition.

### Prachanda-led group announces fresh agitation against House dissolution Kathmandu: The Nepal the ruling party. The faction led January 26 to February 10

Communist Party's splinter by 'Prachanda' and Madhav under the third phase of Dahal 'Prachanda' on Sunday announced a fresh agitation programme against the dissolution of the House of Representatives by Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli.

Nepal plunged into a political crisis on December 20 after Oli, in a surprise move, recommended dissolving the 275-member House, amidst a tussle for power with the chairman of the Nepal Communist Party's (NCP) splinter faction led by 'Prachanda'.

Acting on the prime minister's recommendation, President Bidya Devi Bhandari dissolved the House the same day and announced fresh elections on April 30 and May 10, sparking protests from a large section of the NCP led by 'Prachanda', also a co-chair of agitations against the dissolution of the House of Representatives.

During a press conference on Sunday, the struggle committee led by leader of the faction Narayan Kaji Shrestha said a human chain will be formed on February 19 around Tundikhel Open Ground in Kathmandu as a symbolic protest against "the House dissolution" and corruption.

The protest rallies will be staged in various districts across the country including capital city Kathmandu from February 17 to 24. The party will also launch a campaign to collect signatures against the dissolution from February 19 to 27 at various public places. The agitating faction had

earlier staged protests from

of the House. Defending his move to dissolve Parliament, Oli recently said some leaders tried to obstruct the functioning of his government and he had no other alternative other than seeking a fresh mandate.

"As some leaders tried to make Parliament defunct and obstruct the government's functioning, I was compelled to go for the fresh mandate. Such a situation was created in which the government was unable to move forward, which prompted us to go for elections," he said on February 5.

Following the House dissolution, both the factions of the party, one led by Prachanda and the other by Oli have been staging public meetings and mass rallies across Nepal to show their strength. *PTI* show their strength.

### 2 killed, 2 hurt in NYC subway stabbing attacks

New York: An unidentified man could be responsible for occurred within a few hours in the New York City subways, leaving two people dead, authorities said. The assaults happened between Friday morning and early Saturday, New York Police Department officials said during a news conference.

Authorities believe all four victims were homeless.

Police said they were searching for a man they suspect could be behind all of the attacks. They were reviewing subway security camera footage as part of the investigation. All four stabbings occurred along the A subway line.

One of the victims was discovered dead on a train in Queens at about midnight on Friday with several stab wounds to his neck and torso.

## **Anti-viral coating on** face masks may kill

PTI ■ LONDON

on facemasks attacks the virus by rapturing its outer layer, effectively eliminating all new mutant variants, including the UK's so-called Kent variant and the South African variant.

avirus," Dr Graham Christie, senior lecturer at the Department of Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology at the University of Cambridge, told the newspaper. "In fact, you could mutate

the entire genome of the virus and it would have no effect on the envelope. We expect to see the same response regardless of the strain of coronavirus because structurally they are all very similar," he said. The technology called

DiOX is based on quaternary ammonium salts — organic compounds widely used in the textile industry for their antimicrobial properties. Laboratory tests showed that the mask coated with it killed 95 per cent of pathogens on its surface within one hour and they were undetectable after

### China fires back at US allegations of lack of transparency Beijing: China fired back at the

US On Sunday over allegations from the White House that Beijing withheld some information about the coronavirus outbreak from World Health Organization investigators.

In a statement on Saturday, White House National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said Washington had "deep concerns about the way in which the early findings of the Covid-19 investigation were communicated and questions about the process used to reach them."

"It is imperative that this report be independent, with expert findings free from intervention or alteration by the Chinese government," he said, referring to the WHO mission investigating the origins of the pandemic in the central city of Wuhan. "To better understand this pandemic and prepare for the next one, China must make

available its data from the earliest days of the outbreak," Sullivan's statement said.

China responded Sunday with a statement from its Washington Embassy that said the US Had already "gravely damaged international cooperation on Covid-19" and was now "pointing fingers at other countries who have been faithfully supporting the WHO and at the WHO itself."

While it welcomed President Joe Biden's decision to reverse the Trump administration's move to leave the WHO. China hopes the U.S. Will "hold itself to the highest standards, take a serious, earnest, transparent and responsible attitude, shoulder its rightful responsibility, support the WHO's work with real actions and make due contribution to the international cooperation on Covid-19," the statement said.

## Archaeologists unearth ancient beer factory in Abydos

American and Egyptian have unearthed what could be the oldest known beer factory at one of the most prominent archaeological sites of ancient Egypt, a top antiquities official said Saturday.

Mostafa Waziri, secretary general of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, said the factory was found in Abydos, an ancient burial ground located in the desert west of the Nile River, over 450 kilometres (280 miles) south of Cairo. He said the factory appar-

ently dates back to the region of King Narmer, who is widely known for his unification of ancient Egypt at the beginning of the First Dynastic Period (3150 BC-2613 BC). Archaeologists found eight

to produce beer, Waziri said. The joint mission is cochaired by Dr. Matthew Adams huge units — each is 20 meters of the Institute of Fine Arts, (about 65 feet) long and 2.5 New York University, and Deborah Vischak, assistant metres (about 8 feet) wide. Each unit includes some 40 professor of ancient Egyptian art history and archaeology at pottery basins in two rows, which had been used to heat up Princeton University. a mixture of grains and water Adams said the factory

was apparently built in this area to provide royal rituals with beer, given that archaeologists found evidences showing the use of beer in sacrificial rites of ancient Egyptians.

This photo provided by the Egyptian Antiquities Ministry shows pottery basins, which archaeologists say had been used to

heat up a mixture of grains and water to produce beer, in Abydos, some 450 km (280 miles) south of Cairo, Egypt

British archaeologists were the first to mention the existence of that factory early 1900s, but they couldn't deter-

mine its location, the antiquities ministry said. With its vast cemeteries

and temples from the earliest times of ancient Egypt, Abydos was known for monuments honoring Osiris, ancient Egypt's god of underworld and the deity responsible for judging souls in the afterlife.

# corona, UK study finds

Ccientists at the University of Cambridge working with an anti-viral coating technology called DioX believe that it could protect facemask users by killing the deadly coronavirus in as little as an hour.

According to 'The Daily Telegraph', the invisible coating

"The antiviral agent within the coating of the mask kills the virus by breaching its protective outer membrane, which is known as its envelope. Unlike other parts of the virus, the membrane remains the same regardless of any type of mutation. Hence this way of attacking the pathogen will work on

The cost of petrol in

Fuel in Parbhani comes

"We need Rs 3,000 extra for

Parbhani is one of the costliest

in Maharashtra. The cost is

higher due to longer distance of

from Manmad in the Nashik

district, which is at a distance

every tanker if prices go up by

10 paise. Hence, the investment

in buying fuel has also gone

fuel stands at nearly 21 paise a litre now, he added. *PTI* 

The transportation cost for

up," Bhedsurkar said.

litre now, he added.

transportation.

of 340 km.

## **GST** officers to suspend taxpayer's registration for 'anomalies' in sales return

pend registration of taxpayers whose sales return or GSTR-1 forms show "significant differences or anomalies" from the return filed by their suppliers, a move aimed at curbing tax evasion and safeguarding revenues.

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has issued a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for suspension of registration of a person on observance of such discrepancies /anomalies which indicate violation of the GST Act.

As per the SOP, the registration of specified taxpayers shall be suspended and system generated intimation for suspension and notice for cancellation of registration in form GST REG-31, containing the reasons of suspension, shall be sent to such taxpayers on their registered e-

The registration would be suspended in cases where a comparison of the returns furnished by a registered person with the details of outward supplies furnished in form GSTR-1, or the details of inward supplies derived based on the details of outward supplies furnished by his suppliers in their GSTR-1, show 'significant

to reduce cost

New Delhi: Doing away with

restrictive conditions for use of

steel in highways construc-

tion, the government on

Sunday announced that all

kinds of steel will be allowed for

highways provided these meet

visions required use of steel

produced by primary/integrat-

ed steel producers only. The

move is aimed at ensuring cost

reduction in highways con-

Transport and Highways has issued orders that all steel -

whether produced from ore,

billets, pellets or melting of

scrap - would be allowed to be

used for National Highway

construction, as long as it

meets the standards required

for specific grades of steel," the

used would be tested in NABL-

accredited laboratories as a

third party check before

The steel proposed to be

Ministry said in a statement.

"The Ministry of Road

Earlier, the contract pro-

the quality parameters.

struction using steel.

Govt eases curbs on steel

for highway construction

differences or anomalies', indicating contra vention of the provisions of the GST Act.

"Till the time functionality for FORM REG-31 is made available on portal, such notice/intimation shall be made available to the taxpayer on their dashboard on the common portal in Form GST REG-17.

The taxpayers will be able to view the notice in the 'View/Notice and Order' tab post login,'

Goods and Services Tax (GST) officers have already intensified their drive against fake invoicing and this has also contributed to increase in tax collections in the past couple of

GST collections have crossed the Rs 1 lakh crore mark for four consecutive months and surged to an all-time high of about Rs 1.20 lakh The SOP further said the taxpayers whose

registrations are suspended would be required to furnish reply to the jurisdictional tax officer within 30 days from the receipt of such notice / intimation, explaining the discorption anomalies and the reasons as to why their regular anomalies and the cancelled PTI / intimation, explaining the discrepancies / istration should not be cancelled.

subsidiary to

buy own gas

New Delhi: Taking a leaf out of

Reliance Industries Ltd's play-

book, state-owned Oil and

Natural Gas Corporation

(ONGC) is forming a new sub-

sidiary for gas business that

could be used to bid and buy gas

meeting on February 13

approved creation of a new

wholly-owned subsidiary com-

pany for gas and liquefied nat-

ural gas (LNG) business value

chain subject to necessary

approvals, according to the

firm's third quarter earnings

"The company is being formed with the objective of

sourcing, marketing and trading

of natural gas, LNG business,

Hydrogen enriched CNG

(HCNG), gas to power business,

bio-energy/ bio-gas/ bio

methane/ other biofuels business, etc," it said.

announcement.

making the procurement system transparent, it added. *PTI* Subsidiary to buy any new gas

The board of ONGC at its

from the firm's own fields.

## Irdai asks insurers to issue Digilocker to policyholders to preserve documents

issue digital policies to their policyholders and also tell them how to use these documents.

The regulator has reasoned that the step will not only bring down the cost but also help speed up claim settlement process.

In its circular issued to all insurers excluding GIC Re, Lloyd's (India) and FRBs (foreign re-insurance branches), Irdai said that Digilocker will drive reduction in costs, elimination of customer complaints relating to non-delivery of policy copy, improved turnaround time of insurance services, faster claims processing and settlement, reduction in disputes, reduction in fraud and improvement in customer contactability.

On the whole it is expected that it will lead to better customer experience, said the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of

In order to promote the adoption of Digilocker in the

that the firm produces from

fields such as KG-D5 in the

Krishna Godavari basin, people with direct knowledge of the

The government had in October 2020 allowed affiliates of gas producers to buy the fuel

Reliance to buy two-thirds out of the additional 7.5 million

standard cubic metres per day of

gas it along with partner BP plc

of UK plans to produce this year

from the new fields in KG-D6

option now. The new subsidiary

can participate in any auction

that ONGC will do for incre-

mental gas from KG-D5 block,'

tion and fair price discovery, the

ONGC subsidiary can then sell

the gas so sourced to firms such

as Mangalore Refinery and

Petrochemicals Ltd (MRPL) at

earn better margins on the gas

making business for ONGC.

This would help ONGC

"Right now gas is a loss-

"ONGC too can look at this

Besides ensuring competi-

This policy change allowed

matter said.

in open auction.

a source said.

a margin.

ONGC takes leaf out of Reliance's book

insurance sector, the Authority advises all insurers to enable their IT systems to interact with Digilocker facility to enable policyholders to use Digilocker for preserving all their policy documents.

The insurers should inform their retail policyholders about Digilocker and how to use it. Insurers are also advised to enable the process by which the policyholders can place their policies in the digilocker, said the regulator.

As per the circular, the Digilocker team in NeGD (National e-Governance Division) under Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology will provide necessary technical guidance and logistic support to facilitate adoption of Digilocker.

Digilocker is an initiative under the Digital India programme by the government where citizens can get authentic documents/ certificate in digital format from original issuers of these certificates.

It aims at eliminating or

price which is less than cost of

The government has fixed a

price of USD 1.79 per million British thermal unit for ONGC's

fields. This is half of the cost of

USD 4.06 per mmBtu for diffi-

cult fields such as deepsea fields

(KG-D6 and KG-D6) but even

that is less than the cost of pro-

duction from highly capital

means even if Reliance discov-

ered a price equivalent of USD

6-7 per mmBtu for the 7.5

mmscmd of new gas from KG-

D6, it would get only USD 4.06

ONGC. It might discover a rate

higher for the 15 mmscmd

incremental gas planned from

KG-D5 block but it can get only

USD 4.06 as per current price.

as subsidiary can bid and buy

KG-D5 gas. Ít will pay ONGĆ

USD 4.06 per mmBtu but can sell to MRPL or any other cus-

tomer at a price higher than that,

ensuring that the gas business

"So, essentially the ONGC's

The same would apply for

The current regulation

It allows a higher rate of

production.

intensive projects.

till March 31.

production," the source said.

minimising the use of physical documents and will enhance effectiveness of service delivery, making these hassle free and friendly for the citizens.

Notably, the decision of Irdai has came against the backdrop of a letter written by Sanjay Dhotre, Minister of State for Electronics & IT, Communications and Human Resource Development, to Anurag Singh Thakur, Minister of State for Finance and Corporate Affairs with regards to issuance of digital insurance policies to citizen's DigiLocker accounts.

In the letter, Dhotre had requested Thakur to advise Irdai to issue an advisory to all insurance companies to make available the digital insurance policy of all policy holders via their Digilocker account and acceptance of Digilocker issued documents as valid documents.

"This will provide an alternate channel to access and manage all their insurance policies in a safe and authentic

becomes a viable proposition,"

operators the freedom to dis-

cover market prices but this rate

is subject to a pricing ceiling or

cap that the government notifies

every six months. The cap for six

months to March 31, 2021 is

Reliance O2C Limited, an affil-

iate of Reliance Industries Ltd,

picked up 4.8 mmscmd out of

the 7.5 mmscmd gas auctioned.

(India) Ltd won 0.85 mmscmd

of supplies while Shell picked up

mmscmd, Hindustan Petroleum

Corporation Ltd (HPCL) 0.2

mmscmd and Torrest Gas 0.02

mmscmd. Other buyers includ-

ed IRM Energy (0.1 mmscmd)

(0.35 mmscmd), they said.

PIL (0.35 mmscmd) and IGS

Sources said the gas was bought at a price of USD 0.18

per million British thermal unit

discount to JKM (Japan/Korea

liquefied natural gas import

price), that is price of JKM (minus) USD 0.18 with tenures

ranging from 3 to 5 years. PTI

State gas utility GAIL

Adani Total Gas Ltd got 0.1

In the February 5 auction,

USD 4.06 per mmBtu.

The government has given

the source said.

### Sebi mulls cybersecurity fusion centre for securities market

Petrol with additives cross

Parbhani district Aurangabad: The rate of her petrol with additives has

crossed the Rs 100 mark for a

litre in Maharashtra's Parbhani

district on Sunday morning, an office bearer of a petrol dealers'

Sunday morning, the per-litre rate of petrol with additives for

Dealers' Association President

Amol Bhedsurkar told PTI,

"The rates of petrol with addi-

tives in Parbhani has reached to

100.16 rupees for one litre. The

cost of unleaded petrol is 97.38

retail sale crossed Rs 100.

After a 28 paise rise on

Parbhani District Petrol

association said.

₹100 mark in Maharashtra's

New Delhi: Markets regulator Sebi is in the process of setting up a cybersecurity fusion centre, a move aimed at detecting cyber threats faster and resolve such incidents efficiently and effectively.

and threats attempt to compromise the confidentiality, integrity and availability of the computer systems, networks and databases in the markets ecosystem.

Establishing a cybersecurity fusion centre or a cyber lab is part of Sebi's three-tier structure for monitoring cybersecurityrelated events in the securities markets and taking actions as deemed necessary in the interest of protection of the securities market. The three-tier structure would strengthen the cybersecurity preparedness or resilience of the entire securities market ecosystem.Under the tier-1, high-powered steering committee on cybersecurity chaired by a whole-time member of Sebi has been set up and a cybersecurity fusion centre would be estab-

In the tier-3, division of technology and cybersecurity on Sebi would coordinate with the steering committee, cyber security lab security and operations centres at the respective market infra-

In its annual report for 2019-20, Sebi noted that cyber attacks

lished under the tier-2, the regulator said.

structure institutions (MIIs).

## PUBLIC NOTICE This is to notify the public at large that our client, Mr. Abdul Saber Barak,

son of Sh. Abdul Jalil is applying to the Secretary to the Government of India in the Ministry of Home Affairs for citizenship by naturalization and that any person who knows any reason why citizenship by naturalization should not be granted send a written signed statement of the facts to the

Rohit Yadav (Advocate) Ch.No.728, Lawyers Chamber Block, Rohini District Courts, Rohini Delhi-85 (M): 9266130562, 8383002256

wife of Sh. Abdul Saber Barak is applying to the Secretary to the Government of India in the Ministry of Home Affairs for citizenship by naturalization and that any person who knows any reason why citizenship by send a written signed statement of the facts to the said Secretary.

Rohit Yadav (Advocate

Ch.No.728, Lawyers Chamber Block, Rohini District Courts, Rohini Delhi-85 (M): 9266130562, 8383002256

### PUBLIC NOTICE

mutatee of FLAT No. 6247 ON THIRD FLOOR CAT-SFS-II, SECTOR-B. POCKET-9. VASANT KUNJ. NEW DELHI-110070 Vide DDA's File No.125(9592)83/SFS/VK/II. My original document viz. 1. Fifth and Final Demand Letter, 2.Possession Letter 3.NOC for electric & water connection, 4.Possession Slip, Correspondence Letters from DDA 6. All Bank Challans/ Receipts in respect of the said property have been misplaced. An Information Report of this effect has been lodged in Police Station, Crime Branch, Delhi vide LR No:119876/2021 on 09/02/2021

Any person(s) claiming any right, Interest having any objection or found in possession of the said original Documents may Write/ address/phone No. 9891272788 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objections with respect to this property can personally inform D- Block, 3rd Floor, Vikas Sadan, INA, New Delhi-110023 3rd Floor, Vikas Sadan, INA, New Delhi-110023

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

To be known to all that I, NALINI MALHOTRA alongwith my son CHANCHAL MALHOTRA are the joint owners of FLAT No. 1175 ON THIRD FLOOR CAT-SFS-II, SECTOR-C, POCKET-1, VASANT KUNJ, NEW DELHI-110070. Vide DDA's File No.125(2803)83/SFS/VK/II. The original document Possession Letter 4.NOC for electric & water connection 8.All Bank Challans/Receipts and 9. Correspondence Letters from DDA in respect of the said property have been misplaced.

An Information Report of this effect has been lodged in Police Station, Crime Branch, Delhi vide LR No:127741/2021 on 11/02/2021 Any person(s) claiming any right, interest having any objection or found in possession of original Documents may Write/ Contact with above named person at above address/phone No. 9999772919 within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objections with respect to this

property can personally inform or write to Dy. Director, LAB (H) or Director (H)-1, D- Block

# commodity prices: Maruti Suzuki official

approval. The move is based

on the analysis and discussions with stakeholders and also

steel prices, which can impact

the cost of building national

highways, Road Transport &

Highways Minister Nitin

Gadkari had suggested the

need to re-look at all conditions

which could be restrictive,

without impacting the quality

of material used for highway

er base for steel used in the

construction of national high-

ways would increase, leading to

more competition and better

price discovery by the markets,

tinuous effort by the

of new technology, reducing restrictions on suppliers and

This is also part of the con-

to reduce costs through use

the statement said.

With this step, the suppli-

In view of the increase in

technical opinion.

New Delhi: Increasing commodity prices, specially those of rhodium and palladium, which are used in catalysers to meet strict emission norms, are putting cost pressure on automobile makers, according to a senior official of Maruti Suzuki

The company, which had hiked prices of its vehicles in January, however is not planning to pass on the burden to consumers in the near future although it is keeping a close eye on its cost structure.

With the supply of semiconductors becoming a challenge for the automotive industry, Maruti Suzuki is also watching the situation closely although it will have normal supply this month.

"In commodities, prices have gone up dramatically this year, especially that of steel, and rhodium and palladium, which are used in catalysers of BS-VI

Kattankulathur: SRM Institute

of Science and Technology,

Kattankulathur has signed a

Understanding (MoU) with

Tamil Nadu Veterinary and

Animal Sciences University

(TANUVAS). The signing was

between the Department of

Food Process Engineering,

School of Bioengineering, SRMIST and College of Food

and Dairy Technology,

tutes will have a broad scope to

carry out faculty and student

exchange programme to carry

out training and research activ-

ities for a shorter duration. The

area will be extended to joint

As per the MoU, both insti-

Koduvalli, TANUVAS.

Memorandum

"Demand across the world has gone up but its mining happens only in Russia and South Africa. There, the mining was much lesser because of the pandemic," Maruti Suzuki Îndia Executive Director (Marketing & Sales) Shashank Srivastava told PTI. Supply was less and glob-

al demand is very high because all Euro VI, BS-VI and China VI vehicles require catalysers, he said adding, "so, the demand has gone up, whereas supply is constant and 80 per cent of demand for rhodium and palladium comes from the auto industry.'

When asked if the issue is as critical as that of semiconductor, he said, "for rhodium and palladium, supply is not an issue but price is a problem but in semiconductor supply is a

Commenting on Maruti to semiconductor supplies, demand.

Srivastava said, "right now for semiconductors we don't have an issue. January was normal for us. February seems to be normal but there is a major semiconductor shortage in the auto industry. So, we are watching the situation very carefully. Right now we are not affect-

On whether the company plans to pass on the burden of increased rhodium and palladium prices to consumers, Srivastava replied in the negative stating the company had hiked vehicle prices in January because of increase in com-

modity prices. "In fact all OEMs have increased prices largely because of the increase in commodity prices. We keep watching the cost structure, how the costs are evolving and take decisions accordingly.

Now we have to draw a fine Suzuki's position with regards line. We have to take care of the

## Keeping close eye on cost structure amid rising | NCLAT asks Devas Multimedia shareholder to approach NCLT

New Delhi: The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) has asked Devas Employees Mauritius to approach NCLT to raise its objection over the court's decision to admit a petition by Antrix Corporation seeking winding up of Devas Multimedia.

While disposing of its plea, the Chennai bench of the NCLAT has directed Devas Employees Mauritius to file an interlocutory application and be a party in the ongoing matter at the NCLT.

On January 19, the Bengaluru bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) had admitted the petition by Antrix Corporation, the commercial arm of Indian Space Research Organisation, for winding up Devas Multimedia and has appointed a provisional liquidator for the company.

SRM inks MoU with TANUVAS for joint research

It had also directed the provisional liquidator to take control of the management, properties and actionable claims of Devas Multimedia.

The NCLT order was challenged before the NCLAT by Devas Employees Mauritius, which holds 3.48 per cent of issued equity share of Devas Multimedia.

Employees Devas Mauritius has submitted that being a shareholder of Devas Multimedia, being its constituent Board Member and owner and hence it has a say in the manner in which the company, its affairs, management etc are carried out.

According to the petitioner, the NCLT order of January 19, affects its right to participate in the affairs' and manageof Devas Multimedia.

observed: "It is relevantly point-

ed out that just because an 'Order of Admission' is passed at the initial stage, the Appellant's interest is not likely to be affected or prejudicial because latent and patent reason that still it may get an opportunity to be heard when

its Petition is Allowed.' The NCLAT Chennai bench, which consisted Member (Judicial) Justice Venugopal M and Member (Technical) Balvinder Singh directed it to file an application before NCLT, to be a party into the main matter.

....Deems it fit and proper in 'Directing' the 'Appellant' to file necessary 'Interlocutory Application' before the 'Tribunal' (NCLT) seeking permission to implead itself in the main pending Company Petition setting out necessary facts/reasons for the same, However, the NCLAT said NCLAT in its order passed on February 11.

### Office of the Executive Engi Jammu Power Distribution Corporation Limited (JPDCL), Batote Power Development Department Email: pddbatote@gmail.com

e- NIT No: 51 of 2020 Dated 09.02.2021

for and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor of the UT of Jammu and Kashmir, the For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor of the UT of Jammu and Kashmir, the Executive Engineer, Electric Division JPOCL Batote (Distribution), herein after referred as 'Employer', invites online e-bids from Class 'A' registered contractors or Self Help groups for Supply, Erection, Testing and Commissioning of 25 KVA sub-station at Lower Movelkote Ward. No 3 along with HTLT. network and Augmentation of 63 KVA Rai Mohalla Transformer from 63 KVA to 100 KVA UNDER CAPEX BUDGET 2020-21 ON TURNKEY BASIS UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF ELECTRIC DIVISION JPDCL BATOTE. Bidders are advised to study the Bidding Document carefully. Submission of e-Bid against this SBD shall be deemed to have been done after careful/conscious study and examination of the procedures, terms and conditions of the Standard Bidding Document with

full understanding of its implications. The tender document is available at website <a href="http://jktenders.gov.in">http://jktenders.gov.in</a>. Interested Bidders may view, download the e-Bid document, seek clarification and submit their e-Bid online up to the date and time mentioned in the table below:

A. Tender Document Sale/Download Start Date :- 11.02.2021; 10:00 Hrs B. Tender Document Sale/Download End Date:-17.02.2021; 12:00 Noon

Electric Division, JPDCL Batote Dated :- 13-02-2021

### **ZEL JEWELLERS LIMITED**

REGD. OFFICE: E-5, South Extension, Part-II, New Delhi-110 049 CIN:- L74899DL1994PLC058832 Website:www.rkjwellers.in Landline: (91)-11-25252416, 011-22655988, FAX:011-41640689 Email ID:zeljewellers@yahoo.co.in Extract of Unaudited Standalone Financial Results for the Third Quarter Ended December 31, 2019

Net Profit/(Loss) for the Period Extraordinary Items) Net Profit/(Loss) for the period 48,22 148.61 Extraordinary (tems) Net Profit/(Loss) for the period after tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary (tems) Total Comprehensive Income for 66.73 37,29 110.34 the Period (Comprising Profit/ (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (afte Equity Share Capital (In Oty.) 355.00 355.00 355.00 Earnings Per Share (of Rs. 10/-each) (for continuing and discontinued operations)

The above is an extract of the detailed format of Unaudited Financial Results for the third quarter ended and nine months ended December 31, 2020, filed with the Stock Exchange under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The Full format of the Financial Results for the third quarter and nine months ended December 31, 2020 is available on the Stock Exchange website (www.msei.in) and Company's website (www.rkjewellers.in). 2. The above un-audited financial results for the third quarter and nine months ended on

December 31, 2020 have been reviewed by the Audit Committee and have been approved

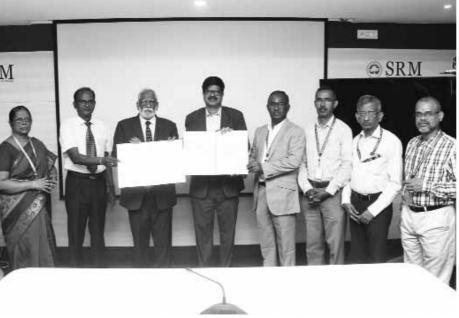
by the Board of Directors in its meeting held on 14/02/2021.

3. The above results have been prepared in accordance with Ind-AS notified under the Companies (Indian Accounting Standard) Rules, 2015 and relevant amendments

research activities to explore opportunities to undertake research projects and seek research funding from external Dr. S. Ponnusamy, Registrar; funding agencies. This agree-Dr. T.V. Gopal, Dean College of ment will also facilitate to con-Engineering and Technology;

duct joint academic events such as short courses, seminars, workshops, or conferences based on mutual interests and available expertise in both the institutions. Both institutes can share and carry out joint research in technology for distance and computer-based learning.

The MoU was exchanged between Dr. C. Balachandran, Vice Chancellor, TANUVAS and Dr. C. Muthamizhchelvan . Pro Vice Chancellor (E&T). SRMIST in the presence of TANUVAS officials Dr. P.Tensingh Gnanaraj, Registrar; Dr. Cecilia Joseph, Director Research; Dr. V. Appa Rao, Dean Research and Dr. Premnath Manoharan, professor & HoD Food Processor Engineering. SRMIST officials



the departments and faculty members.

Speaking at the signing ceremony Dr. C. Balachandran, Vice Chancellor, TANUVAS said, "The outcome of this MoU may bring new innovative ideas and solutions for the growing demand and recurring issues of the Food Processing and Health sector in India. Both the universities can now share knowledge, technology, and faculty exchange program. We need engineers when it comes to technology hence the

Pro Vice Chancellor (E&T), SRMIST said, "Gone are the days when we worked as individuals, now it is important that we work with other with institutes/ universities. Such collaborations open up new avenues and will benefit both

Vairamani, Chairperson, School of Bioengineering, and heads of

scope is more in this sector." Dr. C. Muthamizhchelvan,

Place: New Delhi

Rakesh Sharma



# vivacity https://www.dailypioneer.com/vivacity/

mental

tal peace? Mental health



Bollywood You can tell how smart people are by what they laugh at.

# PLAY YOUR MIND

Positive mental health helps athletes handle the pressure and boosts their performance on ground. AMRUTA KARKHANIS DESHMUKH shares how



Sports players are considered as fit individuals who showcase their strength, endurance and flexibility to flex their bodies through tough circumstances and pull through their sport performance. They train day in and out to have command over their body and techniques. Every sport has their own demands and likewise a training schedule is devised by their coaches and followed by players and their parents for optimal performance. Long ago it was identified that despite best body and technique, something was stopping the players to achieve their best. On deeper investigation it was found that mind

had a role to play in performance which was often not understood. With time, coaches, parents and players recognised this gap and started understanding the need for mental training.

Despite increased awareness, the taboo of visiting a mental health professional acts as a huge barrier to adopt a positive and progressive change. Over years sport psychology (area of specialisation that uses psychological interventions in sports set up) has found its space and parents, coaches and players are reaching out to professionals for performance enhancement.

Winning is still the biggest moti-

involved in sports. Even after having an emphasis on partic-

ipation and excellence, achieving success and avoiding failures takes centre stage for one and all. Whether one is playing an individual sport or a team sport, chief coach to subordinate coaches, sport science experts along with player's parents make a crucial part of the team which together influences the course of action for long.

Management of sports players involves binding the entire team strongly and keeping them on the affects one's ability to recognise the self-potential and gets bogged down same page. In this competitive world, by stress. Talent wasted due to lack of professional help at right time can increased exposure to international competitive events, advances in supnever stand the spirit of sports. port from corporate and government sectors has led to increased perfor-Hence, it becomes essential to learn mance pressure. With time, sports the mind-body connection and menhas moved from mere joy, sense of tal toughness to become resilient in satisfaction to pride and profestesting moments of matches. sionalism. The demand to perform

It's scientifically proven that exercise promotes positive mental health but sometimes this observation doesn't hold true. With increasing competition, competitive stress, pressure of expectations, financial crisis, logistic issues and infrastructural concerns, the challenges to perform good are not just vested in talent but in things beyond one's con-

Anxiety, depression, personality disorder, mood disorders, panic, PTSD, eating disorders as well as more serious mental health issues are coming to surface in population as young as age 10. The peak years of sport performance and the onset of mul-

tiple mental health issues coincide and thus, this fact of understanding the underlying issues which need attention are simply side-lined. While the mind of a player is most important, even the mind-set of their coaches and the parents are equally important. It is essential to create a holistic approach in bringing a change in their perspectives towards winning and success. Lack of time, resources, myths that it is only for elite players have been

wiped-out; the need of the hour is mental health training for all. (The writer is a sports psycholo-



### BEHIND HER EYES (SEASON 1) A single mother enters a world of twisted mind games

when she begins an affair with her psychiatrist boss while secretly befriending his mysterious wife. Starring Simona Brown, Eve Hewson and Tom Bateman, the TV drama releases on February 17 on Netflix.



I CARE A LOT (2021)

A court-appointed legal guardian defrauds her older clients and traps them under her care. But her latest mark comes with some unexpected baggage. Starring Rosamund Pike, Peter Dinklage and Eiza González, the film releases on February 19 on Netflix.



Against the backdrop of a turbulent era in Brazil, this documentary captures Pelé's extraordinary path from breakthrough talent to national hero. It releases on

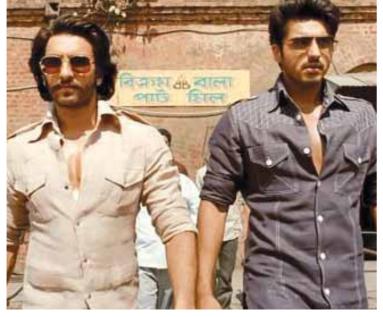
Arjun Kapoor and Ranveer Singh's On-screen bromance in the film Gunday was a hit as audiences really loved their camaraderie. Past the seventh anniversary of the film's release, Arjun shares why Gunday is and will always be one of his favourite

### □What did you love about the film that made you sign it instantly?

At the time I was starting my career, I was hardly six months old in the business and Adi sir (Aditya Chopra) offered me a film which was a two-hero ensemble, big commercial set-up. When I met Ali (Abbas Zafar), I loved his energy and exciteer than life adventure. It was like a throwback and a tribute to the 70's & 80's cinema that I grew up watching. The 'Mukul Anand, Subhash Ghai space of cinema' and at the same time a film about brotherhood and gangsters. When you are a young actor starting out, these are all trappings that you love exploring and doing in mainstream cinema. You want to establish yourself at the beginning. You want to do mainstream stuff with a sense of heightened reality and that's what Gunday was all about. I got really excited about doing something so front footed and mainstream.

### □Your bromance with Ranveer in the film was an instant hit. Tell us what made the bonhomie so special.

I think it was the off-camera love and respect we had for each other because we realised we have too much in common. In fact we are born just ten days apart from each other. It was much simpler for us to bond than we realised. And when you are starting out, you are not thinking about your career and rivalry. You are just trying to make the best film possible and have the most fun. Ranveer and I also knew each other before the film so it made it a little simpler to break the ice onset. Credit to Ali for writing a film that allowed us to be best friends. He was a big factor for bringing me and Ranveer closer. It just happened, it was just the flow. It's like chalk and cheese where even



# Larger than life

Past the seventh anniversary of Gunday, actor ARJUN KAPOOR shares his love for the role and how his on-screen bromance with RANVEER SINGH instantly became a hit

and spice, they are opposites but both sound good together. We were two people who were completely different but ended up getting along and working well together. People realised this when they saw the trailer where both of us looked good together.

### ☐The film presented you in an all new avatar. What did you love the most about your character?

Costumes. To play a character in the 70's, a gangster, it's always exciting to go into. It was my first-period film at that time. The way I was styled, presented, the low angle trolleys and just being treated larger than life, running in slow motion, that introduction coming out of the train,

though we are poles apart, we still landing on a coal train and much manage to fit together. It's like sugar more. I think the presentation was way bigger than any third film could have gotten me and it was cool, unique and exciting. You usually feel that you need to work a lot, before you get that kind of scale but here I was immediately, in the third film, within the first six/eight months of

### □What do you think was the film's

I think the camaraderie between Ranveer and me and the big star cast coming together, was special. After a long time, there was a two-hero film and the youth loved the music. I know for a fact that the music and trailer made all the difference.

### Here are five common myths around organic skincare products

 $T^{\text{oday consumers have become}}_{\text{more aware and conscious of}}$ your regimen.

### MYTH 1: Using DIY masks is same as using organic products

People believe that whipping up a yogurt and honey smoothie in your blender and using it as a face mask will benefit their skin

While we're all up for a DIY face treatment once in a while, the ingredients you find in your kitchen can't really compare to the active ingredients found in organic skincare products. These special ingredients are usually extracted at the molecular level leaving behind the most active

### MYTH 2: Organic products are

Many people are afraid of change and stick to a product that

harmful chemicals hidden in their skincare products. They are skeptical of using skincare that wear the claim of being "organic" and "all natural", often questioning if these claims are just marketing gimmicks. Dr. Jagvir Singh, Founder and President, Refresh conceptions about organic skincare that will make you rethink

as much as an organic face mask.

and potent part for your skin care.

### ineffective

they are familiar with and have used for years. Unfortunately, many drugstore products have been diluted, watered down, and filled with an abundance of chemical preservatives to extend the lifespan. This means that while the product may offer quick results, you shouldn't hold your breath waiting to see any real long-term benefits for the health

Organic products, on the



other hand, are jam-packed with vital nutrients, antioxidants, vitamins and minerals at high concentrations that truly feeds your skin. You'll instantly get that radiant, hydrated and clear skin.

### MYTH 3: Organic products need preservatives to last longer

Highly organic products often require premium packaging that are equipped with airless pumps. This prevents the highly organic plant material from oxidising, thus spoiling. When looking for organic skincare, look for airless pumps meaning that the product is being pumped through literally being pushed out of the contain-

### MYTH 4: Eating healthy is enough for great skin

There is no argument with the benefits of eating clean, antioxidant-rich foods and drinking tons of water. However, essarily enough for great skin. While everything you eat does have an impact on your skin, food cannot cleanse away impurities and environmental toxins the way a good face wash can, or provide a protective barrier on the skin the way a moisturiser can. For truly beautiful skin, be sure to eat healthy, exercise regularly and practice safe, organic skincare. Organic skincare products should accompany a healthy lifestyle for a more youthful and fresher complex-

a healthy diet alone is not nec-

### MYTH 5: All "Natural Types" of skincare are created equal

There is a thin line between organic and natural products. Note that we use the word natural here, and not organic. While many products may claim to be "all-natural" on their labels, it doesn't mean that their ingredients are in fact "organic." Natural products often contain natural

ingredients but may contain pesticides and other harmful

chemicals. For a skin care brand to be able to wear the claim of "organic," ingredient suppliers have to undergo a rigorous process where they are monitored for many years to ensure that their farming methods are free of pesticides, herbicides and chemicals. Additionally, skin care brands must ensure that their manufacturers follow stringent practices to ensure there is no cross contamination of organic and inorganic materials.

In today's time awareness about chemical-laden products is gaining momentum, which is highlighting the importance of natural organic skincare products. This increased awareness is making more people to switch to organic products. While more people are making the transition, more become mindful about the use of chemicals in regular everyday products and are adapting to the natural organic skincare regime.

## TREND BLAZ

### AJAY BEGINS SHOOT FOR MAIDAAN

AJAY DEVGN began shooting for the final schedule of his forthcoming sports film *Maidaan* on Valentine's Day in Mumbai. The film is slated for a Dussehra release this year.

The film is inspired by the true story of Indian football coach Syed Abdul Rahim, who coached and managed the Indian national team from 1950 till his death in 1963, and is considered by many as the man who changed the face of modern Indian football. Major portions of the film, helmed by Amit Ravindernath Sharma, have been shot across Lucknow, Kolkata and

## fairtalk



'At home, I tend to create a lot of drama. So, my daughter says that I am dramatic about everything. I tell her that is because of my profession. I feel as an actor, you play various characters. You leave a part of yourself in every character, and a bit of every character stays back in you. So you are really not the person that you are claiming to be.

dailytalk

'Every time there has been an adversity, my life seems to fall in place rather than fall apart. From failing exams, getting fired to heartbreaks, major sickness and serious injuries, my life has only fallen in place after every such event. I'm not exactly a super positive about everything kind of person but if it can happen to me, it can happen to you too.'

### JANNEY PRAISES HER CO-STARS

**Actress Allison Janney** enjoyed working with Mila Kunis, Regina Hall and Awkwafina in the film *Breaking* News In Yuba County, and has praises to shower on each of

"The script really grabbed me from the start. It was incredibly exciting, dark, funny, and violent — a great mix," said Janney.



# ASHWIN SPINS OUT ENG

India take firm control of 2nd Test after Ashwin & Co wreak havoc on Chepauk track

2nd Test. Day 3 **STAR SPORTS 1 NETWORK** 

PTI ■ CHENNAI

ndia took command of the second Test after an exhilarat-Ling day two when 15 wickets fell on a rapidly deteriorating pitch with star spinner Ravichandran Ashwin ensuring a massive first innings lead for the hosts with his 29th five-wicket haul, here on

Resuming the day at 300 for six, Rishabh Pant took India to 329 in their first innings with an unbeaten 58 before running out

Ashwin (5/43) and company then bundled out England for 134 on a pitch that is getting more vicious by each passing session. The 34-year-old picked up his second five-wicket haul of the series by uprooting the stumps of number 11 Stuart Broad.

By close of play, India were 53 for one in the second innings, extending their lead to 249 runs. Wickets fell in a heap on

Sunday but it was by no means an unplayable surface, as demonstrated by Rohit Sharma on the opening day and with 25 off 62, he was going strong even by stumps on day two. Cheteshwar Pujara (7 batting off 18) was at the other end.

However, barring Ben Foakes (42 not out), England batsmen had no answers to the challenge posed by the Indian bowlers. The sweep shot that came to their rescue in much easier conditions in the previous Test, brought their downfall including Root.

So far, the script has played out perfectly for India, who won the all important toss on the opening day and put up a decent enough total on a dustbowl in their bid to level the series.

Ishant provided the first



## Sorry Bhajju pa: Ashwin after breaking Harbhajan's record

CHENNAI: With apologies to day of the second Test. Harbhajan Singh, R Ashwin on "When I was water Sunday cherished surpassing his former India teammate's number of Test wickets in the country.

With 266 scalps, Ashiwn is now only behind spin legend Anil Kumble's 350 wickets in home Tests. Ashwin went past Harbhajan, who took 265 wickets in India at an average of 28.76, by dismissing Ben Stokes with a perfect off-spinner on the second

breakthrough for India when he had left-handed opener Rory Burns LBW for a duck with a ball that nipped back and beat his "When I was watching the

2001 series where Bhajju Pa (Harbhajan) was playing, I didn't even imagine that I would go out and become an off-spinner for the

"I was still a batsman for my state, trying to accelerate a career towards batting and playing for the country, I wasn't sure whether I would go on and become a player for the Indian team," Ashwin

defensive push. The other opener Dom Sibley (16) was the next to go, caught by

Virat Kohli at leg-slip off Ashwin,

said at a post-day conference. The 34-year-old Ashwin, who

has so far taken 391 wickets from 76 Tests at an impressive average of 25.26, was not aware of his feat until he had come for the media interaction at the end of the day's

According to Ashwin, a lot of his teammates, when he was young, would make fun of him as he used to try bowling like

which was given by the third umpire after India chose to review as the on-field umpire turned down the appeal for a catch.

"Lot of my teammates from that age, from that generation, you know, used to make fun of me, because I used to bowl like Bhajju Pa, my action, I used to try and bowl like him and all that.

"So, from there on to come one and actually break the record of something that he possesses, has to be incredibly special. I didn't know of it, now that I do know of it, I feel happy. Sorry, Bhajju Pa...," said Ashwin.

The big wicket of captain Joe Root (6), who tormented the host bowlers in the first Test, was taken by debutant Axar Patel

when the England captain's attempted sweep against the turn landed safely in the hands of

Ashwin at short fine-leg.

Ashwin then struck at the stroke of lunch, having Dan Lawrence (9) caught at short-leg by Shubman Gill reducing England to 39 for four.

India claimed another four in the post-lunch session to leave England gasping at 106 for eight

Ashwin added two more scalps to his tally while Mohammed Siraj (1/5), who was introduced as late as in the 39th over, debutant Axar Patel (2/40) and Ishant Sharma (2/22) also did the damage.

Ashwin got the big wicket of Ben Stokes in the sixth over after lunch. The left-hander missed an attempted clip off a beauty that drifted in and lost his off-stump.

Ollie Pope (22), who looked assured against the spinners, was brilliantly caught by a diving Rishabh Pant when he tried to glide one down the leg-side, to give Mohammed Siraj a wicket off the first ball he bowled in Tests in Foakes, who impressed with

his keeping skills when India batted, showed his abilities in front of the wickets too. He batted with poise against the spinners, who were looking to make the most of a helping pitch.

Moeen Ali, coming in at number eight, fell when his edge

hit Pant's thighs and rebounded to Ajinkya Rahane who took a fine catch diving forward.

Earlier resuming the day at 300 for six, India added 29 runs to their overnight score. The aggressive Pant scored 25 of those runs, hitting two fours and two sixes to remain unbeaten.

For England, pacer Olly Stone finished with 3 for 47 in his first game in India. Off-spinner Ali (4 for 128) picked up four wickets but proved expensive.

BAYERN MUNICH SNAPS UP UPAMECANO MUNICH: Bayern Munich is signing French defender Dayot Upamecano from Bundesliga rival Leipzig in its first transfer for next season. The Bavarian powerhouse said in a statement on Sunday that the 22-year-old Upamecano had agreed a five-year deal through June 2026 effective from July 1. Bayern is making use of a 42.5 million euro (\$51.5 million) buyout clause in Upamecano's current contract at Leipzig, which would

### ANKITA RALLIES TO WIN TOUR OPENER

otherwise have run to 2023.

MELBOURNE: Indian tennis player Ankita Raina recorded her first victory in the singles main draw of a WTA Tour event with a three-set win over Elisabetta Cocciaretto at the Phillip Island Trophy here on Sunday. Ankita came from behind to beat the Italian 5-7, 6-1, 6-2 in the opening round of the \$235,238 hard court tournament. The two-hour and 11 minutes win will take Ankita to her new career-high singles rank of 156 from 181. If she goes deep, then she will ensure her place in top-150.

### ASIAN RECORDS FOR PRAVEEN, NISHAD

DUBAI: Teenaged high jumpers Praveen Kumar and Nishad Kumar produced their personal best efforts to take a Gold each and set new Asian records as the curtains came down on the 12th Fazza International World Para Athletics Grand Prix here. Praveen's and Nishad's Gold medal-winning efforts were the high points for India who also had three Silver and a Bronze on Saturday, to end their campaign at the championships with 23 medals. At the end of the competition, India were among the top finishers in the medal tally with Thailand returning home with 34 medals, while Turkey, Kenya and India finished with 23

### SPEZIA STUNS SERIE A LEADER AC MILAN SPEZIA: AC Milan missed the chance to extend its lead

in Serie A when it lost 2-0 at Spezia, which was playing its first match under new American owners. Giulio Maggiore and Simone Bastoni scored their first Serie A goals as Spezia dominated and stunned Milan in the second half on Saturday. Milan did not even have a shot on target. The Rossoneri remained two points clear of second-placed Inter Milan, which could leapfrog its city rival on Sunday with a win at home to Lazio.

### MAN UTD TITLE PUSH LOSES STEAM

WEST BROMWICH: Manchester United squandered a chance to put pressure on Premier League leaders Manchester City as Bruno Fernandes' equaliser spared their blushes in a 1-1 draw at struggling West Bromwich on Sunday. Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's side were rocked by Mbaye Diagne's second-minute opener for Albion at the Hawthorns. Portugal midfielder Fernandes levelled just before half-time with his 19th goal of the season in all competitions. But United were unable to find a break down second-bottom Albion again and had to settle for a third damaging draw in their last four league matches. They moved above Leicester into second place, but sit seven points behind City, who have a game in hand.

## Pant needs break from constant comparisons: Ash

Give Rishabh Pant a "break" from constant comparisons and let him go from strength to strength, his senior India teammate Ravichandran Ashiwn suggested on Sunday.

Be it for his keeping or batting, be it with one of India's greatest or any other from all sorts of comparisons, expressed Ashiwn, who has been keeping the young stumper on his toes with deliveries that look like fetching their team wickets every now and then.

"He was constantly compared with the great MS Dhoni for a long time. Now he gets compared for his wicketkeeping with (Wriddhiman) Saha, this that and all that, sometimes it's just better to give a break and let people build on confidence," Ashwin said at the end of the second day's play during which he collected his 29th five-for in Test cricket.

On his swashbuckling wicketkeeper-batsman, Ashwin continued, "With respect to Rishabh's keeping,



the name of the game is confidence right, he has been batting well, he has been working incredibly hard on his keeping as well... "And sometimes, when

you are constantly being com-

### 'Chennai pitch is incredibly challenging'

CHENNAI: It is an incredibly challenging surface, said England assistant coach Graham Thorpe as India took upper hand after dismissing England for 134 in their first innings on Sunday.

"It is a very challenging offered straight bat, saying offered straight b

going to say. In terms of me commenting on the pitch I think that is for someone above me to look at. "It was incredibly chal-

lenging on that surface for us on day two. Theirs is obviously a very skilled spin attack as well on their own conditions. And it was a very good toss to win," Thorpe said at press confer-

Decisions by the third

pared to someone who has done well for years, it can be really hard, I really do feel for Rishabh, on a lot occasions, when I am watching games from home where he is playing the white-ball format.

"He has definitely got the ability, that is why he is here umpire have come in for criticism in the match so far and on Sunday there was an issue over Rohit Sharma being ruled not out on

have to accept the deci

"We have to trust the technology...That's really all I can say," the former England batsman said to a question if there was a sense of frustration with the Decision Review System.

Asked how the England batsmen would need to bat on a tricky pitch like the one here, Thorpe said the batsmen had plans but could not execute.

and I have no doubt he will go from strength to strength.'

After playing a key role in India's incredible series win in Australia last month, Pant said the comparisons with Dhoni are flattering but added he wants to carve his own identity in the game.

## Caribbeans pull off Pak hand Proteas fourth another thrilling win

 $T^{
m he}$  West Indies beat Bangladesh by 17 runs in the second Test on Sunday to complete a 2-0

Rahkeem Cornwall claimed 4/105 and completed a superb catch at first slip to end the match as the tourists bowled out Bangladesh for 213 in the second innings on the fourth day, 18 runs short of their victory target.

Brathwaite (3/25) and Jomel Warrican (3/47) grabbed the remaining wickets as Bangladesh were bowled out for 213 on the fourth day.

The West Indies made 409 and 117 runs in their two innings and Bangladesh were all out for 296 in their first innings. The tourists had won the first Test by three wickets. which was another thriller with debutant Kyle Mayers scoring a record-breaking fourth-inning double century. Cornwall took centrestage as spinners picked

up all 10 wickets in a famous win. Mehidy Hasan hit two sixes and three fours

late in the day to add drama after the hosts lost their ninth wicket but the West Indies kept their cool to deny them a come-from-behind win. "I would say this is a team effort. The one-

day team didn't do well. But we had some plans and came on top," said skipper Kraigg Brathwaite. The West Indies had lost the ODI series 3-0.

"Coming over here with all the protocols in place, it is huge," he added.

"Very thankful for this opportunity. I'm very proud of the boys. It means everything back

# straight T20 series loss

 $\label{eq:pakistan clinched a four-wicket victory over South Africa in the third and final T20I with eight balls to spare$ at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore on Sunday to clinch the series 2-1.

South Africa were all at sea and despite heroics from David Miller, Tabraiz Shamsi's career-best of 4-25, Pakistan were too good for the visitors as Hasan Ali and Mohammad Nawaz clubbed 20 runs off the penultimate over, bowled by Andile Phehlukwayo (2.4-0-37-0), to clinch the game and the series with some space to spare.

Babar Azam had won the toss and had asked Heinrich Klaasen's men to bat first. South Africa had slumped to 48 for six and 67 for seven before Miller's exploits pushed the South African effort to a respectable 164 for eight.

Miller clubbed five boundaries and seven sixes, four of which came in the final over of the innings, bowled by Faheem Ashraf (3-0-38-0), in his 45-ball innings after the entire South African batting order had been caught like a deer in the headlights.

In reply, Shamsi had bamboozled the Pakistan top-order to leave South Africa with hope of clinching a victory from the jaws of defeat but a lack of



support proved the difference as Pakistan reached 169 for six with still eight balls remaining in the match.

The only support Miller received in the South African effort was from opener Janneman Malan. The Cobras man struck three fours and a six from 17 balls before being trapped leg before from debutant legspinner, Zihad Mahmood (4-0-40-3).

For Pakistan, Mohammad Rizwan, who scored a century and a fifty in the first two games, along with new partner Haider Ali (15), gave the home side a good start with an opening stand of 51 from just 37 balls.

# Osaka, Serena prevail in three-setters

¬utsy Naomi Osaka saved two match points to outlast Garbine Muguruza in a tense comeback while Serena Williams was pushed to a decider but prevailed against Aryna Sabalenka in a thriller on Sunday and reach the Australian Open quarter-finals.

Hsieh Su-wei swept into her first Grand Slam quarter-final after 16 years of trying becoming the oldest player to make a last-eight debut in the Open Era. Also, Simona Halep fought back from a set down to beat French Open champion Iga Swiatek 3-6, 6-1, 6-4.

Third seed Osaka as on the verge of elimination at 3-5, 15-40 on her serve in the third set before rattling off four points in a row

She then twice broke the serve of the two-time Grand Slam winner Muguruza to prevail 4-6, 6-4, 7-5 in one hour and 55 minutes of gripping action on an empty Rod Laver

She will now have an all-Asian quarter-final against Chinese Taipei veteran Hsieh Su-wei, who upset 19th seed Marketa Vondrousova 6-



4, 6-2 in the fourth round.

The 35-year-old overwhelmed Vondrousova, a player 14 years her junior. Hsieh got a early break in the

opening set and never looked troubled in win over the 19th seed, a player she also toppled in an Abu Dhabi warm-up event in January.

### SERENA SURVIVES ONSLAUGHT

Serena Williams outlasted bighitting Aryna Sabalenka in a threeset thriller to make Australian Open

The American withstood a barrage from the seventh seed to prevail 6-4, 2-6, 6-4 in two hours and nine minutes and set up a mouthwatering clash with world number

two Simona Halep. Williams, 39, had never before played the Belarusian, who has collected more trophies than anyone else since last year French Open but never reached the quarter-finals of a Slam. Sabalenka, who has spoken about modelling her big-hitting game on Williams, showed off her power with blistering serves and groundstrokes in the high-octane contest.

A composed Williams, watched by older sister Venus in the stands, counter-attacked superbly in the early stages and broke Sabalenka's serve in the 10th game to win the

Sabalenka, who was born four months after Williams made her Grand Slam debut in 1998, was unperturbed and stepped up her assault to dominate Williams' usually reliable serve. The 22-year-old admonished

herself before drawing level by pouncing on Williams's faltering first serve, which she landed just 36% of the time in the second set. Williams regrouped and raced to a commanding 4-1 lead in the third set as a frustrated Sabalenka slammed her racquet to the ground as the match began to

slip away. Sabalenka won three straight games to get back on terms but Williams's experience saw her through as she maintained her unbeaten run since emerging from 14-day quarantine in Australia.

Halep exacted revenge on Swiatek with a comeback three-set victory, which set up a blockbuster quarter-final with Serena Williams.

The world No 2 was thrashed by the 19-year-old at Roland Garros winning just three games, but turned the tide in Melbburne.

## **300th Slam win for Djoker**

A tired-looking Dominic Thiem became the highest seed to fall at this year's Australian Open when the US Open champion was sent tumbling out in straight sets by Grigor Dimitrov in the fourth round on Sunday while ailing world No 1 Novak Djokovic battled past Milos Raonic to keep his title defence alive.

The night match's scheduling gave Djokovic the maximum amount of time to recover from a midriff muscle injury sustained in his five-set win over American Taylor Fritz late on Friday. And not oper-

ating at his best, Djokovic dropped a set but won 7-6(4), 4-6, 6-1, 6-4 in a bruising battle. It was the Serb's win No 300 in Grand Slam

Earlier, Thiem, the Austrian third seed and last year's losing finalist, appeared to lack energy after rallying to beat Nick Kyrgios over five gruelling sets on Friday in front of a raucous crowd. He struggled to match the intensity of the 18th-seed-



ed Bulgarian on a silent, fan-free Rod Laver Arena and slumped out 6-4, 6-4, 6-0 in 2hr 1min.

Former world No 3 Dimitrov will now play giant-killing Russian qualifier Aslan Karatsev in the quarter-finals after he stunned 20th seed Felix Auger-Aliassime over five sets. The power-hitting 27-year-old, a virtual unknown before the tournament started, battled back from two sets down to upset the Canadian Court Arena. Also, Alexander Zverev totted

up his 50th Grand Slam win when he beat Serbia's Dusan Lajovic in straight sets to reach the quarter-The German sixth seed was

tested in the first two sets but found it easier in the third, sealing his 6-4, 7-6 (7/5), 6-3 victory with