

**OPINION 8**  
UPPER HOUSE: TO BE, OR NOT TO BE?

**WORLD 11**  
MYANMAR ANTI-COUP PROTESTERS KEEP PRESSURE ON JUNTA

**SPORT 14**  
WINDIES BEAT B'DESH IN 2ND TEST, WIN SERIES

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**AJAY BEGINS SHOOT FOR MAIDAAN**  
12 VIVACITY

**CAPSULE**

**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 peace 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 per 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: Gujarat 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-year-old doctor, who had gone missing on February 11, was found in a forest area here, police said on Sunday.

## Terror plot on Pulwama anniv foiled

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

**MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU**  
A sinister plot to bleed Jammu on the occasion of second anniversary of "ghastly" Pulwama terror attack was foiled by the alert jawans of Jammu & Kashmir Police after they recovered 6.5 kg explosives 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 PTI

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 Ilyas 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 named Suhail was found roaming suspiciously in the area.  
"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

Al-Badr handlers in Pakistan to place this IED at places," he said.  
Singh said on further questioning 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-Badr, Athar Shakeel Khan at Srinagar.  
"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 Dilbagh 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 Lashkar-e-Mustafa is being run by Jaish-e-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 leading 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.  
*Continued on Page 11*

## 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, joined by seven Republicans, fell 10 votes short of the 67 needed for a conviction, two-thirds of the 100-member Senate.  
The Senate acquitted the 74-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 office.  
*Continued on Page 11*

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

**PNS ■ TAPOVAN/DEHRADUN**  
A massive operation intensified to reach about 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 hydro projects. Bodies of victims were being found at different locations by the river



NDRF personnel carry the mortal remains of a flash flood victim near Raini village on Sunday PTI

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 project.  
*Continued on Page 11*

## 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 statement.  
*Continued on Page 11*

## Omar claims father and he under house arrest again

**PNS ■ JAMMU**  
Former Jammu & Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, along with his father Dr Farooq Abdullah (sitting Parliamentarian from 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 without any 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 well."  
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."  
*Continued on Page 11*

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

**PNS ■ CHENNAI/KOCHI**  
Prime Minister Narendra Modi's day out on Sunday to Tamil Nadu and Kerala saw the dedication and commissioning of a slew of development projects in both the poll-bound 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 skills of technically qualified youth 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



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Tamil Nadu CM Edappadi K Palaniswami 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 PTI

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 Mk-1A from Prime Minister Modi in an elegant function held at Chennai's Indoor Stadium.  
Paying homages to the soldiers ambushed at 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 generations."

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-I 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.  
*Continued on Page 11*

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# CM Yogi calls upon people to take up 'Clean Yamuna' task

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday called upon people to take up the task of cleaning Yamuna on the lines of what was done to make the holy Ganga river clean under Namami Gange.

"How we made Ganga clean was watched by the entire world during the glorious Prayagraj Kumbh. Now it is our responsibility to give a new face to the Braj area, the land of Krishna Leela, and set a new example to the world in terms of development," Yogi said while speaking at the 'Kumbh Poorv Vaishnav Baithak, 2021' at Vrindavan, Mathura, on Sunday. The CM dedicated and laid the foundation of development projects worth Rs 411 crore.

The 'Vaishnav Baithak' is traditional meeting of saints before the Kumbh. Yogi, in a rare gesture, attended the meeting even as the Kumbh is not being organised in Uttar Pradesh. As per the old traditions, the saints and Akharas will now proceed to Haridwar Kumbh. The CM said that when the proposal for this programme had come, the entire country was faced with the Covid pandemic. "We had a chal-



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath offering prayers on the banks of Yamuna in Mathura on Sunday

lenge to organise the programme which comes once in 12 years. What used to happen in earlier government was for everyone to see, but we could do it since it was the efficiency and resolve of the BJP government," he said.

The CM said that his government has been committed to developing the Braj area like never before and several projects remain in the pipeline while many have been completed. Speaking about Yamuna, he regretted that the 'Clean Yamuna'

endeavours should have been started from Delhi, but nothing was done in this regard.

Coming down heavily on the Arvind Kejriwal government in Delhi, Yogi said at least the Delhi government should take some initiative initially, after which the Jal Shakti department could take further care.

Making a clarion call to the people of Braj to participate in the development of this region, he said that besides being the land of

Krishna, 'Gau Sewa' and 'Yamuna' were an integral part of this region.

"If people of this region dedicate themselves to these causes, Krishna will bestow them with prosperity," he said.

Earlier, on reaching Vrindavan, the CM went to the Banke Bihari temple to pay obeisance to the deity. He met saints and attended the meeting of Braj Teerth Vikas Parishad.

Assuring world-class development in Braj, the CM said it is a matter of satisfaction that the Braj Teerth Vikas Parishad has been working in a tandem with ministers and the 'sant samaj' has ensured development of the area.

"Since independence, the governments came and went but it is for the first time that the views of the saint community are being incorporated in the development of the region," he said while pointing out that the renovation of Kashi Vihvanathin Varanasi and successful conduct of Prayagraj Kumbh had been the recent examples of how the sentiments of saints can be respected and the benefits of government schemes could reach all without any discrimination. Later, the CM also participated in 'Yamuna Aarti' at Deoraha Baba Ghat in Vrindavan.

# Abhyudaya scheme off to a flying start

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's dream project, 'Abhyudaya Coaching Scheme', is off to a flying start with a list of the first batch of over 50,000 students prepared on the basis of entrance examinations for the coaching classes.

A staggering number of over 36 lakh hits were clocked on the official website (www.abhyudaya.gov.in) in four days of its launch with over 4.84 lakh students aspiring for competitive exams got registered. After shortlisting the students after an entrance test, as many as 50,192 students will start receiving coaching in physical classes from February 16.

The chief minister, under whose guidance the whole concept is seen on ground, will interact with some selected students virtually at a function on Monday where he will also announce the formal launch of 'Abhyudaya Coaching' classes, a unique endeavour in its own right.

Divisional Commissioner of Lucknow and nodal officer of 'Abhyudaya' scheme Ranjan Kumar said the response of the scheme has been overwhelming as the message of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath went down well among the aspirants.

The CM had envisaged to set up 'Abhyudaya' free coaching centres for aspiring candidates preparing to qualify UPSC, NEET, JEE (Mains and Advanced), CDS, NDA, and all other competitive exams.

The overwhelming response of the aspirants is understandable as the faculty for the direct counselling includes the big names of state bureaucracy like Chief Secretary RK Tiwari, Agriculture Production Commissioner (APC) Alok Sinha, Additional Chief Secretary (ACS), MSME and Information Navneet Sehgal, ACS (CM) SP Goyal, Principal Secretary to CM Sanjay Prasad, Principal Secretary (Medical Education) Alok Kumar and Secretaries to CM Alok Kumar and Surendra Singh, along with several other IAS, IPS and PCS officers. All the lectures and complete study material covering the entire syllabus of various examinations will also be made available online.

# Death of Gayatri's nephew: Murder case registered

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Government Railway Police in Pratapgarh registered a case of murder on Saturday night against unidentified persons following recovery of the mutilated body of Shubham Prapapati (22), nephew of former state minister Gayatri Prapapati. Shubham's body was recovered from a railway track in Amethi on Friday.

Victim's elder brother Arun Prapapati said some unidentified people had come to call his brother on Thursday night for drinks and he did not return after that.

"They must have only killed my brother," he had alleged in his complaint to the

police. On the basis of the complaint of Arun, a case of murder has been registered by the Pratapgarh GRP.

The police said that the call detail records of Shubham and also the numbers found active during the fateful day and time are being scanned for evidence.

On February 12, Shubham's body was found at least 4 kms from his house. Shubham was a class VIII dropout and ran a small business in the city. He was not into politics. Amethi police had also claimed that besides amputation, no other injury mark was found on the body, hinting that it was a case of suicide.

# Training of UP legislators in use of tablets conclude

Lucknow (PNS): The three-day training programme for UP legislators for use of iPads and tablet computers to enable them to participate in paperless proceedings of the UP Assembly concluded on Sunday. The programme had six sessions of three hours each. The pro tem chairman of UP Legislative Council Manvendra Pratap Singh presided over the training programme concluding day along with Deputy Chief Minister Dinesh Sharma.

Addressing the concluding day programme, Manvendra Pratap Singh said more and more use

of new technology will pave the way for progress. "Our progress is directly proportional to the use of modern technology. The legislators have been trained in obtaining information about budget and proceedings of the UP Assembly, conserving the information, making comments and use of that information," he said. The training was conducted by the National Informatics Centre (NIC), a Central government organisation. The chief minister had himself held the orientation meeting with the ministers and put forth his point of view with regards to the importance of e-gov-

ernance. The budget session is commencing here from February 18. Finance Minister Suresh Khanna will present the paperless budget on February 22. UP has become the first state to conduct the proceedings of the state assembly and legislative council paperless. With UP for the first time going for paperless budget and proceedings of the legislature, the state government has sanctioned Rs 50,000 each to MLAs and MLCs for purchasing iPads and tablets. The legislators have been advised by the government to purchase iPads from their resources before February 18.

# Rajbhar hits out at UP government

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Suheldeo Bhartiya Samaj Party president said on Sunday that the three farm laws have turned the tide against the BJP in western UP, forcing the ruling party to focus its attention on eastern UP.

He claimed that the farming communities, particularly Jats, and others have deserted the BJP. He said the BJP is paying special attention to eastern UP due to the panchayat elections. SBSP is the former ally of the BJP and Rajbhar is a former Cabinet minister in the Yogi Adityanath government. "In the coming days, the panchayat and assembly elections will be held. The Jat farmers in 18 districts of western UP have deserted the BJP. So now, they have turned towards the eastern parts of the state, and are focusing on this area which has sizable Rajbhar voters. Their sole aim is to garner votes," he said.

Hitting out at the BJP government in UP, he said: "They named Mughalsarai station after Deen Dayal Upadhyay and did similar things but we had no problems with that. But why do they have a problem in writing the name of Rajbhar after Maharaja Suheldev?"

"The BJP should start liking the name Rajbhar while writing the name of Maharaja Suheldev, who is said to have killed the Ghaznavid general Ghazi Saiyyad Salar Masud in the early 11th century," he said.

The former UP minister also claimed that owing to the intense hard work of SBSP workers over the past few decades, almost all the political parties in the country, the Central and state governments are celebrating the birth anniversary of Suheldev Rajbhar.

At present, the SBSP has four MLAs in the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly. On February 11, the Uttar Pradesh government released the reservation policy for the upcoming three-tier panchayat polls in the state.

# 'Prerak Mission' to increase efficiency of schools

Lucknow (PNS): In order to increase the efficiency of students of primary school, the Yogi Adityanath government has launched the 'Prerak Mission' which is expected to change the image of these schools in Uttar Pradesh within six months.

The 'Prerak Mission' will run at every primary school of Uttar Pradesh and every district will have a motivational school. Not only this, the third party institution set up by the government will check the efficiency of the children of primary schools. Once the investigation of the institution is completed, the schools will be named as motivational schools.

According to BSA, Lucknow, Dinesh Kumar, one school from every block will be developed as a motivational school. "On the same lines, within a few months, every school of the block will be transformed into a primary school. In this way, every primary school of the districts will be developed as a motivational school," he said.

To increase the skills of children of primary schools in mathematics and languages, 'Prerna Gyanotsav Abhiyan' is being started by the government.

This campaign will enhance basic learning skills for children and will also increase

the efficiency of the children who could not continue their online classes during the lockdown period.

In the instructions issued by Additional Chief Secretary Renuka Kumar, the teachers will have to check the skills of the students at certain set points, under which the efficiency of students from classes I to III will be identified on 14 points, while the students of classes IV and V will be identified on 16 points.

After the teachers of the primary schools declare them as motivational schools, the third party institution will examine the children's efficiency.

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2.	<b>Borrower:</b> M/s Aplomb Sales Prop. Mr. Arun Kumar Pandey S/o Kesari Prasad Pandey R/o 117/0/702A, Sharda Nagar, Kanpur <b>Guarantor:</b> Mr. Rajesh Singh S/o Mr. Vishambhar Singh & Ashish Dubey S/o Girish Chandra	Mr. Rajesh Singh Chauhan	EQM of Plot No. 2/125, BLock 21 G, Swarn Jayanti Vihar, Kanpur Area: 74.30 Sqm Boundaries: East-House No. 2/121 West - Road North: Open Plot South: Open Plot	Rs. 2,40,563.75 (intt. upto 09.10.2019) Demand Notice 29.10.2020	11.02.2021
<b>RATHIGAON BRANCH</b>					
3.	<b>Borrower:</b> Mrs. Reena Devi W/o Mr. Ramesh Chandra Plot No. 213 Nai Basti Gajner Road, ArazinO. 319, Moosnagar, Tehsil Bhognipur, Kanpur Dehat.	Mrs. Reena Devi	EQM of Plot No. 213 Nai Basti Gajner Road, ArazinO. 319, Moosnagar, Tehsil Bhognipur, Kanpur Dehat. Area: 74.48 Sqm Boundaries: East- Kacha Rasta West- Khet Babu Singh North: Kacha Rasta 15 Ft. South: Khet Vimal Kumar	Rs. 2,06,314.00 (intt. upto 30.04.2019) Demand Notice 23.10.2020	12.02.2021
<b>GUJAINI BRANCH</b>					
4.	<b>Borrower:</b> Mr. Tejvinder Pal Singh S/o Mr. Onkar Singh R/o HIG, 79, Ratanlal Nagar, Kanpur <b>Guarantor:</b> Mr. Surpal Singh S/o Mr. Onkar Singh	Mr. Tejvinder Pal Singh	EQM of Flat No. 202, Second Floor having Coered Area 62.15 sq m Premises No. 126/P/ 3, Yuvraj Tower No. -A, Govind Nagar, Kanpur. Free Hold Plot No. 3 Block P Scheme-1. Undivided Share in Land of 26.39 sq m. Boundaries of Said Flat: East- Plot No. 4 West - Flat No. 201 North: Flat No. 203 South: Plot No. 32 Boundaries of Premises Yuvraj Tower A: East- Plot No. 4 West- Plot No. 2 North: Road 9.14 Mr South: Plot No. 32	Rs. 14,68,916.50 (intt. upto 30.09.2019) Demand Notice 31.10.2019	12.02.2021

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**उत्तर प्रदेश भवन एवं अन्य सन्निर्माण कर्मकार कल्याण बोर्ड में पंजीकृत**

**निर्माण श्रमिकों की पुत्रियों के सामूहिक विवाह कार्यक्रम के अंतर्गत**

**समी तगों के 2500 जोड़ों के सामूहिक विवाह का वृहद् आयोजन**

गरिमामयी उपस्थिति

**योगी आदित्यनाथ**

मुख्यमंत्री, उत्तर प्रदेश

**स्वामी प्रसाद मोर्य**

मंत्री, श्रम एवं सेवायोजन व समन्वय

उत्तर प्रदेश

**डॉ. महेन्द्र सिंह**

मंत्री, जल शक्ति

उत्तर प्रदेश

**भूपेन्द्र सिंह चौधरी**

मंत्री, पंचायतीराज

उत्तर प्रदेश

**एवं अन्य गणमान्य महानुभाव**

दिनांक : 15 फरवरी, 2021 | समय : अपराह्न 1:00 बजे

स्थान : सेक्टर-7 ई मझौला-4, फेज-2, बुद्धि विहार निकट सर्किट हाउस, मुरादाबाद

**योजना की विशेषताएं**

- पंजीकृत श्रमिकों की न्यूनतम 18 वर्ष की कुल दो पुत्रियों को हितलाभ अनुमन्य।
- पंजीकृत महिला श्रमिकों द्वारा स्वयं के विवाह के लिए भी पात्रता पूर्ण करने पर आवेदन की सुविधा।
- योजना के अंतर्गत पात्र को 55,000 रु. तथा अन्तर्जातीय विवाह की स्थिति में 61,000 रु. की धनराशि आर्टीजीएस के माध्यम से

- श्रमिक के खाते में हस्तांतरित की जाती है।
- सामूहिक विवाह की दशा में पुत्री के विवाह की धनराशि 65,000 रु. तथा वर-वधू प्रत्येक की पोशाक के लिए 5,000 रु. प्रत्येक की दर से भुगतान।
- सामूहिक विवाह की दशा में 7,000 रु. प्रति जोड़े की दर से आयोजन व्यय बोर्ड द्वारा वहन किए जाने का प्रावधान।

**सूचना एवं जनसम्पर्क विभाग, उत्तर प्रदेश**

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उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार की अभिनव पहल

युवाओं को प्रतियोगी परीक्षाओं के लिए  
निःशुल्क कोचिंग की



योजना का



एवं

योजना में पंजीकृत अभ्यर्थियों से संवाद

योगी आदित्यनाथ

मुख्यमंत्री, उत्तर प्रदेश द्वारा



दिनांक : 15 फरवरी, 2021 | समय : पूर्वाह्न 10:00 बजे | स्थान : 5, कालिदास मार्ग, लखनऊ

### योजना की मुख्य विशेषताएं

- सिविल सेवा, नीट, जेईई, एसएससी, एनडीए व सीडीएस, बैंकिंग व टीईटी सहित अन्य प्रतियोगी परीक्षाओं के लिए मेधावी छात्र-छात्राओं को लाभ।
- अभ्यर्थियों का चयन पात्रता परीक्षा के आधार पर।
- चयनित अभ्यर्थियों के निःशुल्क प्रशिक्षण के लिए मंडल मुख्यालयों में प्रशिक्षण केन्द्रों की व्यवस्था।
- ऑफलाइन व ऑनलाइन प्रशिक्षण के माध्यम से विभिन्न परीक्षाओं के पाठ्यक्रम व परीक्षा पैटर्न की जानकारी की सुविधा।
- गुणवत्तापूर्ण पाठ्य सामग्री उपलब्ध कराने के लिए ई-लर्निंग कंटेंट प्लेटफार्म का सृजन।
- वरिष्ठ आईएएस और आईपीएस अधिकारियों से लेकर भारतीय वन सेवा, पीसीएस, पीपीएस एवं अन्य संवर्ग के अधिकारियों/सेवानिवृत्त अधिकारियों एवं विषय विशेषज्ञों से अध्ययन एवं मार्गदर्शन का अवसर मिलेगा।
- वेबिनार, लाइव सेशन और सेमिनार के माध्यम से अभ्यर्थियों की समस्याओं के समाधान की सुविधा।

अभ्युदय योजना का लाभ लेने के लिए

<http://abhyuday.up.gov.in> पर अभ्यर्थी अपना पंजीकरण कराएं



# 14,875 health workers expected to get Covid vaccine shots today

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

As many as 14,875 health workers are scheduled to be vaccinated in a mop-up session while 844 are expected to get their second dose of Covid vaccine on Monday. District immunisation officer MK Singh said there will be 119 booths in the district for the vaccination drive on Monday.

The 844 health workers who will get the second dose were vaccinated on January 16 when the drive was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Vaccine vials were sent to 16 cold chain points on Sunday and the same will be distributed to SGPGI, KGMU, RMLIMS, ERA's Medical College and Hospital, Medanta and other hospitals by 8 am on Monday.

If there are any health workers who had registered at the CoWin portal but their names are not on the list of beneficiaries for the drive on Monday, they can their names added to the portal. "We hope to get the maximum number of left out health workers vaccinated through this add-on option," Singh said.

The district immunisation officer said that the mop-up session for the frontline workers will be held on February 18.

The Covid vaccination drive was inaugurated on

## MOP-UP SESSION



January 16 while the next sessions were held on January 22, 28, 29, February 4, 5, 11 & 12.

Singh said that for the UP Budget session commencing shortly, testing of the officials and employees at Sachivalaya and the members of Vidhan Sabha will be conducted.

Director of Balrampur Hospital Dr Rajeev Lochan said they have started a post-Covid clinic at the hospital where those who have tested Covid negative can be treated in case they face problems post recovery.

"We are exposing them to yoga and other things so that they can be stress-free. We have established it at the point where we have our yoga centre," he said. Dr Lochan said they are getting 10-15 post-Covid cases everyday and they feel better after being exposed

to yoga. "Most of the patients are stressed out because of Covid and carry a great amount of fear. They also complain of weakness," he pointed out.

He said that within two days, they will have two dialysis machines donated to the hospital. "We have two dialysis units; one is our indoor unit while the other is an ambulatory unit. The ambulatory unit is totally PPP and only for those persons who walk in and get their dialysis done and leave. The other unit is our own and has ten beds. Over 40 patients are admitted everyday for nephrology problems. Out of the eight machines which we have in our unit, four were very old, so we requested a corporate giant to donate the machines as part of their CSR initiative, and they agreed," he

## Tripathi critical

Lucknow (PNS): The condition of former Governor of West Bengal Keshari Nath Tripathi, who is admitted in SGPGI, is critical. SGPGI spokesperson said though Tripathi had tested negative on January 30, he is still having problems while breathing and he was shifted to the Pulmonary ward under the care of Dr Alok Nath. "Through several tests it was found that he had fungal and bacterial infection in his lungs and the treatment was started accordingly," she said. She added that when Tripathi's condition did not improve and he required more oxygen, he was shifted to the pulmonary ICU on February 11. "His condition is critical and unstable," the spokesperson said.

He added that with this addition, the strength of their dialysis unit will reach seven and they will be able to carry out three dialysis rounds everyday.

Meanwhile, NBRI director SK Barik said they are waiting for a few reagents to start genome sequencing. The genome sequencing helps in discovering the different strains for coronavirus and has become important in the aftermath of the UK strain.

# KGMU to focus on curbing maternal mortality, says VC

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

KGMU will focus on maternal healthcare to curb maternal mortality, have a placement cell for better inter-phase for students and strengthen its knowledge portal by connecting to the alumni among various other plans for the next six months.

KGMU Vice-Chancellor Dr Bipin Puri shared his vision for the medical university on the completion of six months in the office. Addressing mediapers on Sunday, he said: "We are working to bring down the maternal mortality rate even though Queen Mary's hospital is receiving patients with complications from other hospitals. These patients succumb because of no reaction time. The efforts are directed at making the maternal services so strong that patients should be sure that they are in safe hands."

Dr Puri said they have 100 additional beds in Queen Mary's hospital, including six ICU and eight HDU beds.

"Earlier when a critically ill woman came to the hospital, she would be checked up by gynaecologists and then shifted to ICUs in the main hospital. It required the building of infrastructure at the QMH itself as the patients were being shifted. The doctors informed me about the problems and efforts were made to build infrastructure. We have posted a critical care doctor and anaesthetist

24x7 and organised a blood facility at the hospital itself," he said. He added that he has also informed the government that strict action should be taken against quacks who operate on women and create complications. The KGMU vice-chancellor said they were also planning to have a placement cell which could help the residents and doctors find employment avenues.

"The placement cell will show them places where they can go for higher education, fellowship and employment. It will help them develop communication skills and also give them opportunities to interact with the industry and entrepreneurs," he said. He added that it would also serve as an information cell wherein they can get details of where they can get fellowships and improve their employability and how they can improve their leadership skills, managerial skills, entrepreneurial skills. He further said that they also have big plans for their knowledge portal. "We have over 30,000 alumni with doctors at the UK, USA and Australia who want to get connected with their alma mater. In the last few months, we have reached out to them and asked them whether they are happy to interact with the students and talk to them about their speciality at the student level. The alumni are delighted to talk to these students," he said.

Dr Puri said they have created a knowledge portal, where in there is a transfer of knowledge and information. He further said that they had made several other achievements. "We never had a medical oncologist but we have appointed one and we also have a burn centre which is the largest in the state. The orthopaedic superspeciality, which is the first of its kind and will come up shortly, maybe by the end of the year. Four superspecialities will be working under one roof," he said.

The KGMU VC also appealed through the media to the corporates and NGOs to donate for facilitation in the intramural transport within the medical university. "There are many patients who are very poor and they cannot walk, have difficulty in going from one department. They can be provided with facilities like battery-operated vehicles for the intramural transport so that they can move effortlessly," he said.

The KGMU VC said that they are working on the medical supply chain management system which he wants to work as a proper system. "We are planning to get institutionalised prices of medicines so that the patients have to pay less, because there is a gap between the institutionalised prices and market prices through the Hospital Revolving Fund and stopping all the local purchase," he said.

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# Eight women among 12 arrested for flesh trade

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Twelve people, including eight women, were arrested on the charges of flesh trade during raids at their spa parlour and body massage centre in Indiranagar under Ghazipur police station area on Saturday night. The male accused were identified as Manish Srivastava of Husainganj, Ashish Yadav & Gufran Ahmad of Barabanki, and Arjun Sonkar of Banthra. The police recovered 20 bags, 11 mobile phones and 20 registers in which details of customers were scribbled, Rs 6,125 in cash and other items. The

police kept the names of women accused under wraps.

The police said they got a complaint about the flesh trade which was being run in the guise of a parlour in the area. Accordingly, a team was formed and a raid conducted. The police said the sex racket was being run for a long time.

The customers were called on their mobile phones and sent the photos of the women working as sex workers to select partners of their choice. After the deal was finalised, the customers were called at the parlour where they were provided with the 'services'. Sources said some of the

accused managed to flee the scene.

Meanwhile, a youth was arrested for giving fake information about murder to the police control room, thus keeping the cops on their toes. The accused was identified as Nihal of Talkatora. Police said Nihal had made several calls to the police control room and complained about murder. However, when the police reached the scene, nothing of that sort was found. Since then, the police were keeping a track on Nihal and nabbed him from Campwell road. The accused said he used to make fake calls to fool the police.

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Central Institute for Subtropical Horticulture (CISH) is promoting vegetable production among landless SC category farmers through vertical structure designed at the institute. CISH director Shaileendra Rajan said that many farmers want to grow their own vegetables but are not able to do so because they don't have land for kitchen gardening. "Vertical structures developed by the institute are useful for such farmers for vegetable production for personal use," he said. During the Covid period, the institute distributed 40 vertical structures to the landless farmers and conducted interaction programmes in Kakori and Mall blocks after six months of providing vertical structures.

"A field day was organised in a Kakori block village to popularise the technique and get feedback for improvement in design and production technology. Farmers were very much delighted to share their experiences and problems faced by them. The institute provided the structures, knowhow and vegetable seedlings so that farmers did not have to make much efforts to arrange the seedlings of good vegetable varieties. A large number of vegetable varieties were tried by the farmers, and women were interested in this non-traditional way of growing leafy vegetables," he said. The CISH director said that aftercare of crops is easy in vertical structures and after planting of the seedlings or seed sowing, they have to spare

# Bid to promote production of veggies among landless farmers

limited time for maintenance. "Limited irrigation, as per need, is the only activity to be performed. College student Anshika from Kakori block was interested to have more number of structures so that additional vegetables are grown for family use. Although vertical structures are equally suitable for urban farmers, one can satisfy kitchen gardening hobby

needs by vegetable growing in balcony or rooftop. It is a misconception that in rural areas, sufficient land for kitchen gardening is available to all. Many of the farmers don't have this opportunity to have a kitchen garden as they have small pieces of land and they utilise it for constructing houses," he said. Rajan said that vertical vegetable cultivation has been a tradition in villages where

people grow vegetable vines like gourds, dolichos beans.

The awareness programme will not only help in growing vertical structures but also cultivating vegetables like bottle gourd, sponge gourd, pumpkin on the rooftop. For motivating farmers, the institute is distributing more than 2 lakh vegetable seedlings to SC group farmers for vegetable gardening.

# Gym trainer shoots self over failed love affair

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A gym trainer shot himself due to a failed love affair, at a hotel room in Gomtinagar. Police sent the body for autopsy and started further investigation. The deceased was identified as Praveen Pandey (33) of Mau district. He was staying at a house in Vishwas Khand of Gomtinagar. For the last two years, Praveen was without a job after he met with an accident. As per reports, Praveen

got a room (206) booked at the Trimoori Palace Hotel online around 2 pm on Saturday and was found dead around 12:30 pm on Sunday. Hotel staffers Rahul Shukla and Pawan said they went to check the room and found Praveen lying in a pool of blood. A pistol was also found lying beside the bed. The police said the pistol appeared to be of an illegal make. The police informed the family of the deceased and started further probe into the case. The

investigation was assigned to sub-inspector Tarun Shukla.

Inspector DK Singh said: "Praveen had some differences with a woman with whom he was in love, and he shot himself due to same reason". Sources said Praveen had chatted and called some people through WhatsApp the previous night. "The police suspect that Praveen shot himself probably after his fiancée did not turn up to meet him on Valentine's Day," the sources said.

# Case against 8 SGPGI pharmacy employees for procuring medicines illegally

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A case was registered against eight contractual employees of Sanjay Gandhi Post-Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences (SGPGIMS) pharmacy for procuring medicines fraudulently. These medicines were meant for patients and were available through hospital revolving funds. SHO, SGPGI, Ashish Kumar Dwivedi said security officer Manoj Kumar Saxena lodged the case against the employees identified as Nripendra Singh, Mohammed Naseem Khan, Pawan Kumar Singh, Ashutosh Kumar Yadav, Arvind, Vineet Shukla, Hari Tiwari and Anil Yadav. They have been booked under the charges of criminal breach of trust, dishonesty, punishment for cheating, forgery for purpose of cheating, and forgery of valuable security.

Dwivedi said that according to the complaint of security officer Saxena, the accused used to forge signatures of doctors on prescriptions and take out costly medicines against the names of patients admitted there. The SHO also said that no specific time period was mentioned by the security officer. However, the bungling was revealed during an inspection. "It will be investigated what they did with these medicines procured illegally," he said.

The SHO also said that the pharmacy runs on the principle of Hospital Revolving Fund (HRF) and can be defined as a process of procurement of hospital consumables on the principle of self-sustainability, classifying the requirements, distribution of goods through its outlets and peripheral stores, realisation of cost, communicating the financial data for online billing and to take a meaningful decision in the interest of patient care.

# Stress on strong bond among BBAU alumni

Lucknow (PNS): A programme called 'Alumni Connect' was organised on Sunday under the joint aegis of the Alumni Association and Alumni Cell of Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (BBAU). The programme was presided over by Vice-Chancellor Sanjay Singh.

Singh urged the alumni to cooperate and said that BBAU's placement cell is striving for training and placement of students. In addition, he also provided information about MoUs with various institutions in recent years. He said that programmes like Alumni Connect are important for establishing good contact with the alumni. He also informed the alumni about some of the positive changes in the university such as PhD entrance examination twice a year, expansion of choice-based credit system, NCC unit and many changes related to training and placement cells. The alumni talked about moving forward together and having emotional bonding among themselves.

Dr Tarun Chaturvedi of 1999 batch, who is the senior vice-presiding HR at Consultancy Innovation and Incubation Centre (IIT-Kanpur), said it was important to make productive use of research work so that the research work can be used for public interest.

Dr Monika Singh, joint director of Indian Economic Service,

Department of Food and Public Distribution, shared her university experience and said she wanted to see the university join the country's leading tier universities and BBAU is moving forward in this direction. Dr Himanshu Chaturvedi, who is currently contributing to the Swachh Bharat Mission of the Government of India, is a solid waste management expert. He offered all possible support for current students.

Dr Madhuresh Singhal, DGM Eurofins Edvinus Ltd, said that job-oriented courses should be started in the university. Chanchal Tiwari, deputy commissioner, GST UR, said: "We need to teach students practical things and give them practical knowledge instead of just giving them bookish knowledge."

Dr Sohail Ahmed, assistant professor, Department of Computer Science, suggested further improvement in the Patent Cell at BBAU and to move forward with joint collaboration. At the same time, he also stressed on character building among the students. Amit Kumar Gautam, managing director of Technoson India Pvt Ltd, said students should be made self-reliant. Dr Manjari Singh, assistant professor, Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Assam University, said that the university should sign MoUs with other institutions and move forward with mutual cooperation.

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## 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2021

(up to 5:30 pm)

For queries, please contact: GM & Head - Investment, BIRAC. Email: [investment.birac@gov.in](mailto:investment.birac@gov.in)

## NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY

Open Tender Notice No.: SrDEE-TRD-BSS-2020-21-T14 Date 13-02-2021

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer/ TRD, North Eastern Railway, Varanasi for and on behalf of President of India invites sealed "OPEN" E-tender for the following work:-

Sl. No.-01, Name of work: 25 KV Electrification work in connection with modification of CPR yard (Provision of full CSL running line in North part with Innd Home platform, Two stabilising line, Two full CSL running line with Island platform, water hydrant for carriage filling on platform and connection at both ends in connection of second entry with coaching facilities). Tender reference no.: SrDEE-TRD-BSS-2020-21-T14, Approx. Cost (in Rs.): ₹ 3,60,59,917.22, Earnest Money/ Bid Security (Rs.): Nil, Cost of Tender documents (in Rs.): Nil, E-Tender closing date and time: 12-03-2021 up to 15:00 Hrs., Completion period: 11 Months.

• E-Tender Online will be submitted up to 15:00 Hrs. on date 12-03-2021.

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# Floral tributes paid to Pulwama martyrs

PNS ■ VARANASI

The city on Sunday paid floral tributes to the martyrs who laid down their lives in the terror attack in Pulwama in Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir.

On the second anniversary of Pulwama terror attack, the teachers and employees associated with the All Teachers & Employees Welfare Association (ATEWA) gathered at Dr Ambedkar Park near the district court here and paid their rich tributes to the CRPF personnel who made the supreme sacrifice when the terrorists attacked them.

It may be mentioned that 40 personnel of CRPF had lost their lives in the terror attack in Pulwama on February 14 in 2019.

Paying tributes, the ATEWA members recalled the martyrdom of the CRPF personnel and said that the terrorists had shown their cowardice



Tributes being paid to Pulwama martyrs in Varanasi on Sunday

Pioneer

# Cong workers protest rising inflation

PNS ■ VARANASI

Congressmen on Sunday adopted a unique way to protest against the skyrocketing prices of petro products and household commodities by highlighting inflation.

The Congress workers gathered near the Cantonment railway station and staged a demonstration by putting households, domestic gas cylinders and essential commodities on a wooden cart.

They were highlighting inflation as the commodities daily use have now become out of reach with the prices skyrocketing.

The Congress workers also 'complimented' the people for voting to the Bharatiya Janata Party to power as it had created a situation in which the peo-

ple were finding it difficult to meet both ends.

They said the people were facing their worst situation nowadays with the price of petrol reaching a record high as a result of which was that the prices of fruits, vegetables and other essential commodities were increasing day by day.

They said if this situation continued further, the condition of people would worsen more.

They demanded that the Centre and state government take the initiative to control the situation to give relief to the weaker section of society.

Harish Mishra, Kunwar Yadav, Ashish Keshari, Dr Ashish Yadav, Dimple Singh and many other Congress workers and leaders were present on the occasion.

# Bangladesh delegation arrives in Varanasi

PNS ■ VARANASI

A six-member team of Bangladesh visited Ramnagar terminal across the river Ganga here on Sunday.

The team came here to see the prospects of boosting trade between the two countries as with the development of inland waterways facilities in the city and other parts of this region, the possibilities of trade have increased.

Though the inland water-

ways development project was launched more than three decades back during the prime ministership of Rajiv Gandhi, serious work on it was done during the present government and just before the last parliamentary election.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had not only dedicated the Ramnagar terminal to people but had also received the first freight cargo vessel here.

Work is going on to link this terminal properly with

railways and road transportation. With the development of inland waterways, the business between India and Bangladesh would become easier and faster. To study these prospects, the visit of the Bangladesh delegation is being considered as an important step. The delegation comprises Bangladesh Shipping Ministry Joint Secretary Monemul Haque, Ministry of Commerce Deputy Secretary Solim Hussain, Director of

Department of Marine Safety Traffic Management Mohammad Rafiqul Islam, Inland Waterways Traffic Authority Superintendent Engineer Rajadur Rahman, Rakibul Alam of MS Rahman Shipping Lines and Bashir Ahmed of Wind Ship Corporation.

The Bangladesh team first reached Ramnagar terminal along with senior officers of Inland Waterways Authority of India and district administra-

tion and saw the facilities there. Later, they also held a talk with their Indian counterparts at a hotel in Nadesar and discussed the avenues and possibilities of increasing business between the two nations as this inland waterway also connects Bangladesh through the sea. The visiting team arrived at Pt Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Junction on Saturday night and then came to a hotel here where they were welcomed by the local authorities.

# SBSP extends support to farmers' 'Rail Roko' stir

PNS ■ VARANASI

Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party president Om Prakash Rajbhar, a former ally of National Democratic Alliance, has decided to extend his support to the proposed 'Rail Roko' agitation of farmers on February 18.

Talking to reporters at the Circuit House here on Sunday, Rajbhar said that the SBSP would celebrate the birth anniversary of party's ideal Maharaja Suheldev Rajbhar on February 17, observing the day as 'Rashtra Rakshak Diwas'.

The SBSP is determined not to allow the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party to woo Rajbhars, its traditional vote-bank. Rajbhars, a sub-caste of the Other Backward Classes (OBC), have a sizeable population in many districts in this belt of Purvanchal (eastern UP). As the BJP started strengthening itself among the Rajbhars by promoting cabinet minister in the Yogi Adityanath government, Anil Rajbhar, an MLA from Shivpur assembly constituency of the city, the differences between the BJP and the SBSP had widened and reached a peak when prior to the last Lok Sabha elections the ruling party organised a grand Rajbhar meet at Ghazipur which was also addressed by



SBSP chief Om Prakash Rajbhar addressing a press conference in Varanasi on Sunday

Pioneer

# 'Chandalika' enthralled at MGKVP celebrations

PNS ■ VARANASI

The dance drama 'Chandalika' enthralled the audience in the cultural evening organised at Gandhi Adhyayan Peeth auditorium under on-going week-long century year celebrations of the Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapith.

The dance drama 'Chandalika' is based on the story of a socially untouchable girl of Chandal community and is written by Guru Ravindranath Tagore.

The students of the university staging this dance drama kept the audience glued to their seats with their mesmerising performance. Dr Shubhra Verma directed it.

It was followed by the drama 'Gandhi Teri Smritiyani' in which the students delighted the students by showing the revolutionary life of Mahatma Gandhi. A short film 'Swadesh' was also screened, showing the beautiful scenes of the Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapith, Banaras Hindu University and this holy city.

The cultural evening of the four-day celebrations ended with the drama 'Geshe Jampa', based on the novel written by Dr Neerja Madhav, in which the students showed the thoughts and feelings of Tibetans.

Earlier, the evening began with 'Shiv Stuti' presented by Kathak dancer Abhishek Basak.

MGKVP Vice Chancellor Prof TN Singh and eminent novelist Dr Neerja Madhav were also present at the cultural programmes.

# Police groping in dark in army man's killing

Allahabad (PNS): The working of Dhoomanganj police has come under question in the killing of army personnel. The policemen and the family members of the deceased were informed about the incident by an eyewitness around 10 pm. It is clear from this that the incident took place before 10 pm. There are always people on the road from 9:30 pm to 10 pm. Despite this, it is clear from the incident that the killers were not scared at all and were freely roaming on the road. This has raised a question on the night patrolling by the cops.

Meanwhile, the police are still groping in the dark for clues to the killers of the army man. Senior police officers, including the DIG, had reached the spot to monitor the investigation. The dog squad and forensic team were also called but no clues to the killers could be found till late in the night.

ADG Zone Premprakash reached the spot in the morning and questioned the father and family of the deceased. He also formed a team to arrest the killers.

The woman who was present at the time of the incident alleged that the goons attempted to rape her. But the police officer kept claiming that she kept changing her statement again and again.

The officials said that while giving information on the control room number 100, the woman had alleged an attempt to rape her but after Dhoomanganj police reached the spot, she did not reveal any

such thing.

In the morning, when the family members of the deceased gave her name in the written complainant, she again started talking about the rape attempt.

According to the family members, around 11 pm, Shweta had called Ashutosh's wife and told her that four-five youths were found standing on the way near Gayasuddin Pur Maidan in Nimsarai and when Ashutosh asked them to move, they started abusing him. On protesting, he was pulled out of the car and was thrashed brutally by the youths, who later attacked him with a brick and killed him on the spot.

The police on Sunday afternoon sent the girl for medical examination after she alleged rape attempt.

# One tests +ve in Varanasi

PNS ■ VARANASI

One more person tested positive for coronavirus infection in the district, taking the tally of confirmed cases to 21,960 on Sunday evening.

With no COVID-19 death being reported in the last 24 hours, the death toll remains at 377.

Three more COVID-19 patients have been cured, all of them in home isolation. So far, 21,540 COVID-19 patients have recovered in the district - 18,569 in home isolation and 2,971 in Covid hospital.

At present 43 active cases are under treatment in the district.

The recovery rate in the district is 98.08 per cent and the mortality rate 1.71 per cent.

# Mahant Giri lauds Yogi for Magh Mela preparations

... asks U'khand CM to take lessons from UP

PNS ■ ALLAHABAD

Mahant Narendra Giri, president of Akhil Bharatiya Akhara Parishad (ABAP), on Sunday advised Uttarakhnd Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat to learn from the Yogi Adityanath government of UP and complete preparations for the Kumbh Mela.

He said that during the coronavirus period, the Magh Mela of Prayagraj had become an example and in such a situation, preparations for the Kumbh should be made on the lines of Magh Mela.

The Akhara Parishad president said that despite the COVID-19 pandemic, due to better arrangements made by the Yogi government, lakhs of

devotees were taking the holy dip in the Sangam in Magh Mela. However, such preparations were yet to be seen regarding the Mahakumbh to be held in Haridwar.

He lauded the Yogi government for making the biggest bathing festival of Magh Mela on Mauni Amavasya smooth. He said the saint and seers were with the chief minister of Uttarakhnd and were also willing to follow the Covid guidelines.

Mahant Giri said that there was still a month for Haridwar Mahakumbh and at this juncture, if the Uttarakhnd government held talks with the officials of Prayagraj, it could improve the preparations for the mega event.

# Swachhata Sangram-2021 logo unveiled

PNS ■ VARANASI

In the aim to intensify cleanliness drive in the parliamentary constituency of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Swachhata Sangram-2021 logo was unveiled at Shastri Ghat near the Varuna bridge on Sunday.

On the occasion, several dignitaries were nominated as ambassadors of this cleanliness drive and many others were lauded for their contribution in this field in the recent past.

The function began with the PAC Band playing tunes and Jyoti Sharma and Shreela Gupta reciting Ganesh Vandana. This was followed by a colourful dance programme. Later, Mayor Mridula Jaiswal and Municipal Commissioner Gaurang Rathi nominated many prominent citizens as envoys of the cleanliness drive.

In 2016, when Prime



Swachhata Sangram-2021 logo being unveiled at Shastri Ghat in Varanasi on Sunday

Pioneer

Minister Narendra Modi had launched his Swachhata Abhiyan from Assi ghat here, he had also named 'Navratnas' but later on, rarely any of them was seen active.

This time, those who have been nominated ambassadors of the cleanliness drive include eminent vocalists Padam

Bhushan Pt Channu Lal Mishra, Padam Bhushan Pt Rajan-Sajan Mishra brothers and Padam Shri Pt Rajeshwar Acharya. The others are leading basketball player Vishesh Briguwansi, hockey player Lalit Upadhyay, social worker Anil Kumar Jain, Dr Deepak Asthana, Manish Khatri and

Salman Chaudhari of Kinnar Samaj. They all were felicitated by presenting them angvstrum.

Besides, the contributions of leading athlete Neelu Mishra, Dr Ritu Garg, Saquib Bharat and Anil Kumar Singh were lauded by presenting bouquets to them as they all also

remained active during the coronavirus pandemic period.

On the occasion, some Banaras Hindu University students made some art work to send the message on cleanliness.

The participants also took a pledge to keep the city clean, to throw waste only in dustbins and to help Varanasi perform well in the nation-wide cleanliness survey. The pledge was administered by the Mayor.

Additional Municipal Commissioner Devi Dayal Verma, health officer Dr NP Singh, secretary of Jan Vikas Evam Kalyan Samiti Mahendra Singh Gautam, Shishir Kumar, Nibhaya Singh, Meenakshi Singh, Dr Anushree Srivastava and senior officers of Varanasi Nagar Nigam, including Ram Sakal Yadav, Ajay Kumar Ram, Dilip Shukla, Arpana Bajpai and Brijesh Prajapati were also present.

# Mahila Sabha protests crime against women

Allahabad (PNS): The Mahila Sabha of Samajwadi Party staged a sit-in in front of the All Saints Cathedral in Civil Lines under the banner of Mahila Ghera programme on Saturday evening.

Former MLAs Vijma Yadav, Pooja Pal, Mahila Sabha district chief Anita Srivastava, its city unit president Manju Yadav and Nidhi Yadav alleged that incidents of crime against women were rising in the state and the state government had failed to check them.

The Mahila Sabha leaders said that during the Samajwadi Party regime, women were protected in panchayats by starting schemes like reservations, Kanya Vidya Dhan, pension scheme, 181 and 1090 helpline to protect their honour and self-respect.

Indu Yadav, Richa Singh, Sabiha Mohani, Nisha Shukla, Sudha Yadav said that the Bharatiya Janata Party had stopped all these facilities provided to women by the SP government. Manju Pathak, Sangeeta Malviya Sharma, Pooja Mishra, Nirmala Yadav, Satyabhama Mishra, Kamala Yadav and Rita Maurya also expressed their views. Samajwadi backward cell state chief Rajpal Kashyap also reached the dharna site. He was accompanied by district chief Yogesh Chandra Yadav, City unit president Sayed Iftekhar Hussain, Sandeep Patel, Israr Anjum, MLC Ramvriksha Yadav, Basudev Yadav, Dharmaraj Patel, Haji Parvez Ahmed, Danbahadur Madhur, Sayed Mohd Askari, Mohd Gauss and others.

# HC appreciates work done to contain Covid-19

PNS ■ ALLAHABAD

Appreciating the work done for the containment of COVID-19 infection, the Allahabad High Court expressed hope and trust that every individual in Uttar Pradesh shall get himself/herself vaccinated.

While hearing a PIL relating to COVID-19, a division bench comprising Justices Siddhartha Varma and Ajit Kumar observed, "Before we proceed with the case, we would like to record our appreciation for the great work with regard to the containment of COVID-19 infection which has been done by the state and its instrumentalities. We are also noticing that the number of infections of COVID-19 have been coming down. This is a very positive sign." Regarding the vaccination, the counsel of the Central gov-

ernment as well as the state government received instructions from the respective authorities that as per the availability of the vaccine, the vaccination programme was continuing.

So far as the availability of ambulances was concerned, the affidavit of the nodal officer of Moti Lal Nehru Medical College at Prayagraj was filed before the court wherein it was stated that the hospital had two advanced life support (ALS) ambulances. It was also stated that the office of the chief medical officer had three ambulances.

The counsel for the state government also informed the court that Wi-Fi had also been installed in the post-Covid ward where patients come after getting treated in the ICU.

While taking this affidavit on record, the court observed, "We connected ourselves

through video-conferencing and saw for ourselves the post-Covid ward. We appreciate the work which has been done. We found that the situation there was very satisfactory." While appreciating the work done by nodal officer Rishi Sahai, who was present in the court, the court observed, "So far as the work which has been done by him is concerned, we appreciate the job performed by him during the times of pandemic. We also hope and trust that he will perform his duties further in Prayagraj so far as the vaccination programme is in vogue. In the times of pandemic, we would like to observe, such officers who have worked hard and are still working responsibly should not be transferred out, especially for now while the programme for vaccination is going on in its full steam."

# Expert throws light on research integrity

Allahabad (PNS): The sixth day of the orientation programme organised by the Faculty Development Centre, Iswar Saran Degree College, began on Sunday with a lecture by the resource person Dr BK Singh, librarian at the University of Allahabad. He spoke on ethics in research. He also talked about research integrity in which transparency, rigour, respect, relevance, and accountability were the main content. In the second session, Prof Subhash Agrawal from the Department of Education, CSJM University Kanpur, talked about national education policy based on the report and recommendation of Kothari Commission, the first national policy on education in 1968, which called for a radical restructuring and proposed equal educational opportunity in order to achieve national integration.

Prof Agarwal also talked about NEP2020. He said the draft NEP discussed reducing curriculum content to enhance essential learning and critical thinking.

# Min: Union budget a road map to self-reliant India

PNS ■ ALLAHABAD

Uttar Pradesh cabinet Minister Sidharth Nath Singh said the Union Budget 2021 provided a road map to the vision of making the new India self-reliant.

He said the budget presented by the Central government was the budget of the common man up to the last rung of society.

The minister said that the special thing about the budget was that the opposition had nothing to say against it.

Singh said the rural economy of Uttar Pradesh was developing rapidly through the One District One Project (ODOP) scheme.

This model of economy is now known as the Yogi Model. There is a discussion

going on by organising seminars on behalf of Bharatiya Janata Party and other organisations regarding various aspects of the budget.

People are also giving their opinion.

BJP City unit chief Ganesh Kesarwani said the Union budget was balanced. He said the way the Central and state governments took care of all sections of society, particularly the migrant labourers, during the coronavirus pandemic was praise worthy.

Singh said the Union budget would take all effective steps to establish India as a strong and developed country at the international level. He said the development in diverse areas would be beneficial for the people in the coming times.



# Docs stage relay hunger fast against mixopathy

PNS ■ KANPUR

Hundreds of members of the medical fraternity and all the members of Indian Medical Association-Kanpur sat on relay hunger fast at the Gandhi statue in Phool Bagh on Sunday to express solidarity against 'forced mixopathy'.

The doctors took the oath to remain united and give momentum to their agitation for their "rightful demands" and the "safety of the suffering humanity" which they claimed would be dangerously eroded once there was amalgam of various modes of treatments.

Chairman of the Action Committee, Dr Shiva Kant Mishra, addressing the gathering, said the medical fraternity was forced to take to agitation because it was concerned about the dangerous impact of 'mixopathy' on human health. He said this amalgam was going to produce quacks in big numbers and the common man stood at threat.

Dr Mishra said the objective was to draw the attention of the masses towards the threat to human health as quacks would be a potent threat to the people. He said the decision of the government to bring allopathy, homeopathy, Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani on one common platform was



Members of Indian Medical Association-Kanpur, sitting on relay fast at Gandhi Statue, Phool Bagh on Sunday Pioneer

a suicidal move and the IMA was not going to allow this to happen.

He said self-styled doctors in the times to come would not be in the larger interest of the suffering humanity.

Addressing the gathering, IMA-Kanpur Secretary Dr Dinesh Sachan said the relay fast was continuing all over India in protest against the move of the government and would end this Sunday.

He said members from the national body of the IMA had come to take part in the relay fast and to work out modalities for giving further momentum to the agitation.

IMA-K President Dr Neelam Mishra said the IMA strongly supported the need to improve various modes of treatment but the amalgam of all the modes and putting them all at par was certainly not acceptable.

He said this could be termed as mockery of human health and placebo treatment could play havoc with human health.

She said the life expectancy had shot up from mere 35.21 years in 1950 to 73 years in 2020 and this could be made possible due to meticulous and dedicated service of the allopathic doctors.

She said allopathy had made India a trusted medical

tourism destination and this was due to the expertise of the Indian doctors and affordable treatment and providing at par medical expertise that was dear in the West.

She said it would be no exaggeration to state that allopathy was based on sound research work and it alone had posed a challenge to pandemics, especially COVID-19, and the vaccines were all the gift of allopathy.

She added that in foreign countries there were over 60 per cent doctors from India and this was on account of their medical expertise in allopathy. She said the IMA had girded up its loins to give further momentum to this agitation. She said this move would be followed by 'Chalo Rajdhani' call.

Members of MSN, JDAS, IMA, Women Wing, IMA Hospital Board and all in-service doctors including of the medical college, participated in the relay fast. Prominent among them were Dr VC Rastogi, Dr RN Chgaurasia, Dr AK Srivastava, Dr Gulab Agarwal, Dr AC Agarwal, Dr Rajesh Jain, Dr Aarti Lalchandani, Dr Pravin Katiyar, Dr Alka Sharma, Dr Rashi Mishra, Dr Savita Rastogi, Dr Poornima Dixit and Dr Reeta Kumar.

# DC reviews law & order

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

Divisional Commissioner (DC) Yogeshwar Ram Mishra held a meeting of officials of the division and reviewed law and order situation, revenue collection and progress of development works. Reviewing law and order the



DC asked the DMs and SPs to direct SDMs and COs to patrol the area jointly for minimum one hour everyday and interact with people to get a feedback. He directed the DMs and SPs to visit the places themselves as far as sensitive issues were concerned. He instructed the officials of Mirzapur district to increase the revenue collection through stamp. On less collection in Bhadohi through excise the ADM(F&R) and excise officer were directed to make a strategy for increasing it. He expressed satisfaction over recovered done by Mirzapur and Sonbhadra through cooperative but officials concerned with Bhadohi were taken to task for less collection. The DC expressed discontent over works related to minor irrigation and the SE was warned to mend his ways and directed him to ensure transparency in expenditure and allocation of budget. The CDOs of Mirzapur and Sonbhadra were asked to monitor works of minor irrigation, inspect checkdams constructed by the Minor Irrigation department and

report to him. The DC expressed his discontent over tardy progress in clearing of silt from canals and reprimanded the EE of Mirzapur Canal Division. The DC reviewed the progress of all agencies related with development, including roads, and directed the Jal Nigam to ensure the

connection in every household too along with laying of pipelines under AMRUT scheme. The meeting was attended by all divisional officers, DMs, SPs, CDO and ADMs of the division and was conducted by Joint Development Commissioner (JDC) Suresh Chandra Mishra who was assisted by Rahul Tiwari.

**THANA SAMADHAN DIVAS:** Superintendent of Police Ajay Kumar Singh held the meeting of Thana Samadhan Divas at Dehat Kotwali on Saturday and directed the cops to dispose of all applications on merit and maintain records properly. He interacted with the aggrieved and issued directions accordingly. Three matters were received but none of them were disposed of the same day. In the district total 73 applications were received through 15 police stations in which 14 were disposed of on the spot while for the rest joint teams of Revenue department and police were sent for disposal.

**GIRL RECOVERED:** The Lalgaon police recovered a kid-

napped girl and arrested the kidnapper. According to a report received here, on February 8 a man in a first information report (FIR) lodged at the police station in which he stated that his minor daughter was kidnapped by the accused by enticing her. Acting on the matter the police was investigating the case when it got the information about the presence of the kidnapper at Dubar turn. Thereafter the police raided the place and arrested Babbar Dharikar, a resident of Lalapur village under Lalgaon police station. On the identification of the accused the police recovered the girl too. After completing the legal formalities the police sent the accused to jail. Meanwhile an earlier report said that the Kachhawaan police arrested two accused of theft recently. Rinku Singh, a resident of Bajahaan village, had lodged a complaint at the police station regarding the theft in his shop. During investigation the names of Vikas and Neelish, residents of Ramapur village under Kachhawaan police station, came to light. Taking instant action the police arrested the accused from Kanaksaraan turn. Besides Adalahaat police arrested a criminal along with a countryside gun and a cartridge recently. During routine patrolling at night on being tipped off by an informer that some suspects were sitting at Tendhi puliya in Pachengada village the police raided the place and caught Divesh Kumar Singh, a resident of Pachengada village under Adalahaat police station and recovered an illegal gun along with a cartridge. After registering a case in this connection the police sent the accused to jail.

# Anil Dhingra takes over as KESCO MD

PNS ■ KANPUR

Kanpur Electric Supply Company's new Managing Director Anil Dhingra took over the charge at an informal function where outgoing MD Anil Mathur was given a warm send-off.

The new managing director said his priority would be to ensure that the consumers did not face any problem related to power supply, especially during the summer months.

He appealed to the officials and staff of KESCO to ensure that all necessary preparations were made in advance for providing uninterrupted power supply to the city.

Dhingra said the biggest problem of the electricity consumer was that there was a weak redressal cell to up the problems of the consumers on priority. He directed the officials and staff to ensure that the complaints of the consumers were attended to on priority. He said in case of any fault it should be given top priority and attended to also. The new managing director said Kanpur was a metro city and the need for power was much more and thus there were frequent problems related to fault repairs and transformers.

He said the common complaint which cropped up more in summer season was transformers getting burnt up and said for this all preparation should be made well in advance. He said those who looked after the transformers should regularly check oil which was one reason for transformers going up in flame.

Dhingra said the load should be balanced equally and appealed to the people to ensure they paid their electricity dues on time to help KESCO give the best service to the people of the city.

# Kanpur Metro construction progressing at rapid pace

PNS ■ KANPUR

Civil construction work of Kanpur Metro project is progressing at a rapid pace and this can be substantiated with the fact that the first 100 U-girders were placed in 67 days, second hundred in 63 days and third hundred in a record 57 days.

The team of Uttar Pradesh Metro Rail Corporation has successfully placed 300 U-girders in six months.

UPMRC Managing Director Kumar Keshav, on Sunday, said that the base of the Metro track had been laid for about half the distance of the 9-km-long priority corridor from IIT-Kanpur to Motijheel.

He said a total of 622 U-girders were to be placed and in accordance with this the UP Metro completed the erection of about half of the U-girders, which was a major achievement in itself.

He said the first U-girder of the priority corridor was erected



on August 11, 2020, in presence of the UP chief secretary. He said the UPMRC had placed 300 U-girders within 187 days. He praised the work of the entire UPMRC team and contractors of Afcons and the team of general consultants.

He said the work was moving ahead with full speed and expressed confidence of providing world class Metro services to the residents of Kanpur in a stipulated time-frame. Keshav said in such a short tenure, the dedicated and skilled team of UPMRC engineers and contractors had accomplished numerous achievements associated with the civil construction work of the priority corridor and had been sustaining the pace of work.

# KV at IIT to organise India Toy Fair

PNS ■ KANPUR

Kendriya Vidyalaya at the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur is among the three schools selected for organising India Toy Fair.

In association with the Union ministries, including the Human Resource Ministry, the Toy Fair is being organised for the first time in India. It will provide an opportunity to students of Kendriya Vidyalaya to show their talent and skills through different types of toys and emerge winners.

Kendriya Vidyalaya Principal RN Wadalkar said three KV's were selected for organising the Toy Fair in the country.

Besides KV-IIT Kanpur, the other two are Kendriya Vidyalaya on JNU campus and Kendriya Vidyalaya at Gurugram.

The Toy Fair will be organised virtually from February 27 to March 2 and inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi who will give his message to students, teachers and other participants to promote Vocal for Local and Atmanirbhar Bharat campaigns.

Wadalkar said it was a great platform for KV students to display their toys in the fair being organised for the first time in India.

As many as 15 students of KV-IIT Kanpur will present their self-made toys in the fair. At the India Toy Fair organised here on February 2, the panel of judges had selected 15 best toys for display. The toys to be displayed in the fair include: Wave Maker, Starry Cube, Selected Julia, irrigation toy truck, touching screen device, revolving wheel, puppet show, surface area, dictionary board, element bytes, balloon hovercraft, Fun with Knowledge, Indian Railways, Save the Chicken and Covid Rakshak.

# Govt to increase area under Zaid crop

PNS ■ KANPUR

Agriculture plays a vital role in the Indian economy and is the spine of India. The important and vital section includes farming of crops, animal husbandry, pisciculture, agro-forestry etc. Over 60 per cent of Indian population primarily depends on agriculture. Totally it contributes around 15.90 per cent to the gross domestic product of the nation. The credit for all this goes to the particular weather and soil conditions which are best for Zaid crops.

This was stated by Deputy Director, Agriculture, Dr Manish Sinha, while addressing a meeting at Vikas Bhawan here on Sunday.

He said the current season was that of Zaid crops and which grew in a long time period mainly from March to June. He said the period in which the crop was mainly grown in summer was called Zaid crop season.

Sinha said the Zaid crops required warm dry weather for growth and longer day length for flow-

ring. He said the UP government had started giving importance to the Zaid season as it had the potential to decrease the deficit in the production of pulses. He said the government intended to increase the area under moong and urad cultivation to 4.9 million hectares, which would be a whopping increase of 75 per cent from the 3.1 million hectares area under cultivation in 2021.

Sinha said Zaid season gave farmers a chance to utilize their land and water reserves to grow profitable crops, which included a few pulses. He said growing cash crops in this season was particularly beneficial because as the summer approached the demand for cash crops like cucumbers, water melon, and musk melon increased. He said it was not the production per se which met the demand but it was the supply chain which met the demand. He said the supply chain started even before production and cold stores helped imports to grow but infrastructure in Uttar Pradesh was incomplete and not complementary.

# Mahana launches Micro ATM

PNS ■ KANPUR

Industrial Development Minister Satish Mahana launched the Micro ATM developed by Redmil Business Mall here on Sunday.

This is the first-of-its-kind ATM in India launched from Kanpur. Available at the cheapest rates in Indian markets, the company will not promote any Chinese product in the ATMs.

Minister of State for Higher Education Neelima Katiyar, Mayor Pramila Pandey, MLC Arun Pathak, Redmil Business Mall founder Ashish Paliwal and Chief Executive Officer Raj Singhal were also present at the launch ceremony.

Speaking on the occasion, Mahana said during the past few years, a lot of changes were seen in two sectors - technology and employment - in the country. He said former prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee had provided highways for the countrymen while Redmil Business Mall had created ample opportunities of employment for youth by launching the Micro ATM.

He added that the project was



State Cabinet Minister Satish Mahana launches the Micro ATM on Sunday Pioneer

inspired by the 'Local for Vocal' call of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Paliwal said it was the biggest B2B Fintech platform which provided employment to over 70,000 persons in 17 states of the country. "The application consists of over 35 services covering 125 plus brands of India and overseas countries. With the help of this ATM, one can get cash from his/her neighbouring shop against the

credit/debit card," he said. Singhal said the application could be downloaded from Google Play Store.

The cost of an ATM is Rs 2,800 and the device works like an ATM machine which allows any debit/credit card holder to swipe in it and get cash. The respective shopkeeper will get a commission from 4 to 10 per cent, he added.

# Kanpur gears up for vaccination of frontline worker

PNS ■ KANPUR

Additional Director Health and Family Welfare, Dr AGK Mishra, said the district had girded up its loins to ensure that the vaccination drive to be taken up between February 18 and 22 was optimal and no frontline worker was left out.

He said there were certain errors in the list of various departments, including that of the mobile numbers. He said directives had been issued to the officials concerned to rectify these errors.

Dr Mishra said several frontline workers had registered for the vaccination drive from February 18 through a single mobile phone number and this was the reason that the number had declined.

He said many mobile phone numbers through which registration was made were no more in use and thus contact with the frontline workers was suffering a setback.

He said as per the directive of Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Awanish Awasthi, all officials concerned were required to trace out the wrong mobile numbers in the list. He said all those who were to be vaccinated on that particular date should be given one day holiday.

He said all the officials had joined hands to ensure optimum vaccination between February 18 and 22.

# NTPC Rihand gets environment protection award

CORRESPONDENT ■ SONBHADRA

NTPC Rihand station received the Greentech Environment Protection Award for the year 2019-20 at the 20th Environment Protection Award ceremony held in Mahabalipuram recently. On this achievement of the station, Executive Director (Rihand) Balaji Iyengar while expressing his happiness congratulated the department concerned. The Greentech Environment



Protection Award was received by NTPC Rihand station's Additional General Manager (AGM), EMG/ AU Department, VK Atri, from Chairman and CEO of Greentech Foundation K Sharan. The station has received this award for special commendable work done towards environmental safety. On this achievement of the station, there is wave of happiness among the residents of Rihand.

# Communication workshop organised

CORRESPONDENT ■ SONBHADRA

NTPC Vindhyachal organised a communication workshop on the topic 'Crisis Management- Role of Public Relation and Communication' on Saturday for the seniors of NTPC Vindhyachal. The faculty comprised the keynote speakers, Assistant Professor of Media and Mass Communication, Graphic Era Hill University, Dehradun, Shikha Mishra, and Assistant

Professor Department of Mass Communication, PMIR Indore, Bhavna Pathak. This communication workshop witnessed participation from ED (Vindhyachal) Munish Jahuri, GM (O&M) SC Nayak, GM SSC Vipin Kumar, GM (HR) Uttam Lal and all the other GMs, heads of departments (HODs) and other seniors who were connected via MS Teams. In this workshop ED Vindhyachal Munish Jahuri appreciated the faculty members who delivered

an effective session and added that it is imperative that we adopt a crisis management and communication plan as it not only help us in identifying the potential threats but also prepares us to manage the same through the application of cogent and effective communication strategies. The workshop came to an end by thanking all dignitaries and seniors who were present as well as the team which organised this communication workshop.

# Training programme inaugurated

CORRESPONDENT ■ JALAIUN

A two-day training programme was inaugurated by Additional Director Basic Education Ganga Singh Rajpoot at Kuthond block resource centre. He instructed the teachers to use problem solving tricks, reasoning, generalisation method, estimation method in teaching of mathematics and language subjects in order to improve elementary education at the primary level, basic theme of course programme is based on founda-



tional learning and remedial teaching. While referring to the forthcoming classes he said their main focus was to make

students comfortable in the school environment. On the occasion he also instructed all teachers to ensure all facilities in school before the classes started like proper maintenance of toilets etc. He emphasised on following all Covid-19 prevention guidelines when the school reopened. Block Education Officer (BEO) Mahesh Sharma and academic resource persons Sanjeev Kumar, Brijesh Pathak, Mahesh Yadav and Shyamji Tripathi were among those present during the training programme.



# Modi dedicates Arjun battle tank to Army



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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 crores.

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 state-of-the-art tank, indigenously designed, developed, and manufactured by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)'s Combat Vehicles Research and Development 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

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 India," he said.

"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 night.

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 revolutionary 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," he said.

Later, in a tweet, he said it was "a special day in our journey to become Atmanirbhar in the defence sector," referring to Arjun Main Battle Tank (MK-1A). Fifteen academic institutions, eight labs and several MSMEs were also involved in the Arjun MK-1A.

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

After using in different conditions, the Army had recommended a number of improvements to MBT Arjun Mk 1, which enhanced the mobility and fire power of MBT Arjun Mk 1A. With these changes, this upgraded version has successfully undergone extensive trials by the Indian Army. The precise target tracking of the tank ensures accurate engagement during day and night in both static and dynamic conditions.

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 (CVRDE).

The scientists were given the objective to design and build a state-of-the-art tank with superior fire power, high mobility, and excellent protection. The production of the Arjun tanks started in 1996 at the Indian Ordnance Factory's production facility in Avadi.

At present, the Army has more than 100 Arjun MK-1 tanks in its armour and is likely to induct 20 odd more tanks shortly. The first batch of 16 Arjun tanks were inducted into active service in 2004.

The old and new version of the MBT has a highly sophisticated computer-controlled integrated fire control system with stabilised sighting that works in all lighting conditions. The secondary weapons include a coaxial 7.62-mm machine gun for anti-personnel and a 12.7-mm machine gun for anti-aircraft and ground targets.

Officials also said the new version launched by the Prime Minister has more than 55 per cent indigenous content as compared to 40 per cent of the earlier version of the Arjun.

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



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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 rights.

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 terrorism.

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 country.

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 Ladakh.

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

"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 mind.

Antony alleged that the government did not increase 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 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.

"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. The Government is not paying proper attention of national security," Antony said.

# 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 fixed.

"In the course of examination, 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, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and West Bengal. These projects have surpassed their date of completion and the



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 inter alia 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 Priyोजना - 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-

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 report said.

The Committee also recommended that 4-laning of Pune-Nashik (NH-60), Pune-Tamhini-Mangaon-Diveagar (NH-756), Hadapsar-Saswad-Jejuri-LonandPhaltan-Mohol (NH-965), Patas-Baramati-Akluj-Tondale (NH-65G) and 6-laning of Pune-Solapur (NH-65), Kolhapur to Vaibhawadi-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 earliest.

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



DEEPAK K UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

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 40 CRPF personnel killed in the attack that days after had also prompted Indian Air Force to go across borders on a "punishing mission", hitting terror 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 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 Jaish-e-Mohammad-executed attack took place when a convoy of 78 buses with 2,500 CRPF personnel was heading to Srinagar from Jammu.

"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 Chennai.

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 families as the country owes you"

Actors including Akshay Kumar, Varun Dhawan and Rajkumar 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.

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 terrorist attack.

"On this day, two years



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 actor tweeted.

Rest In Power Bravehearts of Pulwama!, actor Suniel Shetty wrote.

While paying homage to the slain soldiers, Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu said he stands in solidarity with the jawans' families.

"I join the nation in paying my humble tributes to the CRPF personnel who were martyred in the dastardly Pulwama terror attack. The grateful nation will always remember their patriotism & supreme sacrifice," the Vice President Secretariat tweeted quoting Naidu.

Union home minister Amit Shah said that the slain soldiers' sacrifice will never be forgotten. "I bow down to the brave martyrs who lost their lives in the gruesome Pulwama attack on this day in 2019. India will never forget their exceptional courage and supreme sacrifice," Shah tweeted.

"Entire nation stands united against terrorists", said the Defence Minister.

BJP president JP Nadda also remembered the sacrifice of CRPF personnel.

"India will always remember their martyrdom. We should all unite to completely end terrorism from its very roots," Nadda said on Twitter.

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 infrastructure.

On its part, the CRPF tweeted "We did not forget, we did not forgive". The CRPF renewed its resolve to end terrorism saying they have not forgotten or forgotten the gruesome attack.

"Be brave enough to die as martyr", said BJP MP and former 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".

# India recording 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 the 17th most-affected 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 unabated decline in Case Fatality 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 lakhs.

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.

"The country is witnessing 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 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 Nadu.

## 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 said.

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

# 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 doctors.

"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 said.

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 in 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 discrimination.

"The applicant would like to submit that the expression



and '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 was aware of the distinction between 'personal law' and the 'Custom and Usage' and chose

advisedly to exclude personal law and include Custom and Usage in Article 13 of the Constitution," it said while seeking implementation in the petition filed by Upadhyay.

The AIMPLB opposed Upadhyay's plea on the basis that personal laws cannot be tested on the anvil of Articles 14, 15, 21 and 44 of the Constitution.





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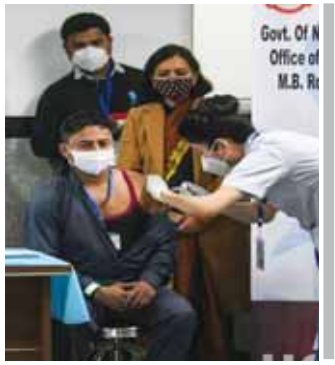
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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Halfway through

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

India 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 front-line 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 SII'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.

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 SII'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.

### PICTALK



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 netas

One 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. Due to (often illegal) rampant construction, mining and 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.



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 foresee 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.

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 foresee 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



PROF. PRAFULL GORADIA

As 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 not-so-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 not contested from any constituency. Yet he was selected to be the Chief Minister and,

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 Thursday evenings, to return on Monday mornings. The Rajya Sabha members could afford to spend the weekends



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 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. The Upper House members would have the leisure to do

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 seriously, they would yield helplessly to the dominance of the 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.

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 well-known columnist and an author. The views expressed are personal.)

## LETTERS 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 disapprove 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



The Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool 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 Banerjee 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 Raihan | 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 will 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

### DON'T IMPOSE MORALITY ON CHILDREN

Sir—Parents must stop telling their children that the attraction they feel towards

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 making 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

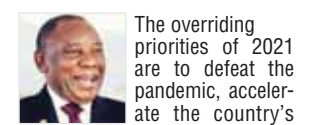
Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## SOUND BITE

I request village panchayat representatives to identify and make a list of all unused Government land in their respective areas. We can restore and renovate them.



GOA CM —Pramod Sawant



The overriding priorities of 2021 are to defeat the pandemic, accelerate the country's economic recovery, implement economic reforms and 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 all those who have been kind enough to come to our sets to wish me luck.

Actor —Ayushmann Khurrana



It is disappointing not to get 100 but I 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 terror 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

## UNDERSTANDING ENERGY CONCERNS

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



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

Each 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 equal-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



MOIN QAZI

Among 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 jhopri* clusters.

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 economic activity.

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



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

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 ownership and other classical housing finance principles.

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

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; micro-entrepreneurs 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 out of hand.

## POINT COUNTERPOINT

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

It seemed innocent enough at the start: Just a surge in the 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



GWYNNE DYER

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

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 harrumphed, "would 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 make-up...Stop! Are you sure

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 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 "vigorously develop" sports like 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

army joined the battle in the afternoon after a forced 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 unanimously 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 alike.

There is probably no

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 late 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. Isn't that masculine enough?"



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

**New Delhi:** GST officers will immediately suspend 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 GSTR-REG-31, containing the reasons of suspension, shall be sent to such taxpayers on their registered e-mail address.

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

differences or anomalies', indicating contravention 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 GSTR REG-17.

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

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 months.

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 crore in January.

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 discrepancies / anomalies and the reasons as to why their registration should not be cancelled. **PTI**

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

**New Delhi:** Insurance sector regulator Irdai has asked insurers to 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 India (Irdai).

In order to promote the adoption of Digilocker in the

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

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 come 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 manner. **PTI**

## Petrol with additives cross ₹100 mark in Maharashtra's Parbhani district

**Aurangabad:** The rate of 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' association said.

After a 28 paise rise on Sunday morning, the per-litre rate of petrol with additives for retail sale crossed Rs 100.

Parbhani District Petrol Dealers' Association President Amol Bhedurkar told PTI, "The rates of petrol with additives in Parbhani has reached to 100.16 rupees for one litre. The

cost of unleaded petrol is 97.38 here." The cost of petrol in Parbhani is one of the costliest in Maharashtra. The cost is higher due to longer distance of transportation.

Fuel in Parbhani comes from Manmad in the Nashik district, which is at a distance of 340 km. "We need Rs 3,000 extra for every tanker if prices go up by 10 paise. Hence, the investment in buying fuel has also gone up," Bhedurkar said.

The transportation cost for fuel stands at nearly 21 paise a litre now, he added. **PTI**

## Sebi mulls cybersecurity fusion centre for securities market

**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.

In its annual report for 2019-20, Sebi noted that cyber attacks 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 cybersecurity-related 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 established under the tier-2, the regulator said.

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 infrastructure institutions (MIIs). **PTI**

## Govt eases curbs on steel for highway construction to reduce cost

**New Delhi:** Doing away with restrictive conditions for use of steel in highways construction, the government on Sunday announced that all kinds of steel will be allowed for highways provided these meet the quality parameters.

Earlier, the contract provisions required use of steel produced by primary/integrated steel producers only. The move is aimed at ensuring cost reduction in highways construction using steel.

"The Ministry of Road 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 Ministry said in a statement.

The steel proposed to be used would be tested in NABL-accredited laboratories as a third party check before

approval. The move is based on the analysis and discussions with stakeholders and also technical opinion.

In view of the increase in 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 construction.

With this step, the supplier base for steel used in the construction of national highways would increase, leading to more competition and better price discovery by the markets, the statement said.

This is also part of the continuous effort by the Minister

to reduce costs through use of new technology, reducing restrictions on suppliers and making the procurement system transparent, it added. **PTI**

## ONGC takes leaf out of Reliance's book

### Floats 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 subsidiary for gas business that could be used to bid and buy gas from the firm's own fields.

The board of ONGC at its meeting on February 13 approved creation of a new wholly-owned subsidiary company for gas and liquefied natural gas (LNG) business value chain subject to necessary approvals, according to the firm's third quarter earnings announcement.

"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.

ONGC may use the new subsidiary to buy any new gas

that the firm produces from fields such as KG-D5 in the Krishna Godavari basin, people with direct knowledge of the matter said.

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

This policy change allowed 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 block.

"ONGC too can look at this option now. The new subsidiary can participate in any auction that ONGC will do for incremental gas from KG-D5 block," a source said.

Besides ensuring competition 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 a margin.

This would help ONGC earn better margins on the gas produced.

"Right now gas is a loss-making business for ONGC.

The government controls gas price which is less than cost of production," the source said. 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 production.

It allows a higher rate of USD 4.06 per mmbtu for difficult fields such as deepsea fields (KG-D6 and KG-D6) but even that is less than the cost of production from highly capital intensive projects.

The current regulation means even if Reliance discovered 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 till March 31.

The same would apply for 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.

"So, essentially the ONGC's gas subsidiary can bid and buy KG-D5 gas. It will pay ONGC USD 4.06 per mmbtu but can sell to MRPL or any other customer at a price higher than that, ensuring that the gas business

becomes a viable proposition," the source said.

The government has given operators the freedom to discover 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 USD 4.06 per mmbtu.

In the February 5 auction, Reliance O2C Limited, an affiliate of Reliance Industries Ltd, picked up 4.8 mmscmd out of the 7.5 mmscmd gas auctioned.

State gas utility GAIL (India) Ltd won 0.85 mmscmd of supplies while Shell picked up 0.7 mmscmd.

Adani Total Gas Ltd got 0.1 mmscmd, Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) 0.2 mmscmd and Torrest Gas 0.02 mmscmd. Other buyers included IRM Energy (0.1 mmscmd), PIL (0.35 mmscmd) and IGS (0.35 mmscmd), they said.

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**

## Keeping close eye on cost structure amid rising commodity prices: Maruti Suzuki official

**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 India.

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 semiconductor 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 vehicles.

"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 India Executive Director (Marketing & Sales) Shashank Srivastava told PTI.

Supply was less and global 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 problem."

Commenting on Maruti Suzuki's position with regards to semiconductor supplies,

Srivastava said, "right now for semiconductor 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 affected."

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 commodity 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 line. We have to take care of the demand. **PTI**

## 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.

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. Devas Employees 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 management of Devas Multimedia.

However, the NCLAT 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," said NCLAT in its order passed on February 11. **PTI**

## SRM inks MoU with TANUVAS for joint research

**Kattankulathur:** SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Kattankulathur has signed a Memorandum of 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, Koduvalli, TANUVAS.

As per the MoU, both institutes will have a broad scope to carry out faculty and student exchange programme to carry out training and research activities for a shorter duration. The area will be extended to joint research activities to explore opportunities to undertake research projects and seek research funding from external funding agencies. This agreement will also facilitate to con-

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 Dr. S. Ponnusamy, Registrar; Dr. T.V. Gopal, Dean College of Engineering and Technology;



Dr. M. Vairamani, Chairperson, School of Bioengineering, and heads of

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 scope is more in this sector."

Dr. C. Muthamizhchelvan, 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 parties."

## Transporters' body threatens strike

**New Delhi (PTI):** Protesting against rising diesel prices and excessive taxation among other issues, transporters' apex body AIMTC on Sunday said it would suspend transport operations if the government fails to address their issues.

The All India Motor Transport Congress (AIMTC) claims representing about 95 lakh trucks and about 50 lakh bus and tourist operators.

"Rising diesel prices, excessive taxation, issues related to e-way bill... present state of scrapping policy... rationalisation of presumptive tax were the key issues discussed and deliberated upon" by governing council of AIMTC, the transporters' umbrella body said in a statement.

The AIMTC's national leadership has decided to issue

a 14-day notice to the government for starting the process towards resolution of the demands.

The demands include immediate reduction of diesel prices and uniformity in it, resolution of issues related to e-way bill and GST, and discussion on scrapping policy with transport fraternity before its roll-out.

"It is decided that if the government fails to address and/or start the process to resolve the above demands of the industry in a positive way, then another governing council meeting will be convened," the statement said.

It added that they will be compelled to surrender their vehicles and declare nationwide suspension of transport operations.



# 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 100-member 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 office.

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 with you, and I look forward to



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 has

remained quiet on his post-presidency 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 has been no statement on this from Trump.

"Our cherished Constitutional Republic was founded on the impartial rule of law, the indispensable safeguard of 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 Pat Toomey.

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 added.

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 who also serves as a juror all were a bridge too far," he said.

## Biden admin appoints 2 Indian-origin experts to key positions

PTI ■ HOUSTON

Two Indian-origin experts in public service have been appointed by the Biden administration to key positions at AmeriCorps, the federal agency for volunteering and service.

Sonal Nijhawan has been named Director of AmeriCorps State and National, and Sri Preston Kulkarni, 42, was appointed the new Chief of External Affairs.

Though having run for Congress twice unsuccessfully in Texas, Kulkarni was certainly noticed by the leadership in Washington.

Kulkarni's appointment, along with Nijhawan and Dan Kohl, reflects "the Biden administration's commitment to diverse leadership," according to the release by AmeriCorps.

In their roles, these leaders will use service to support the administration's agenda, focusing on four of the most urgent challenges of our time: Covid-19, economic recovery, racial equity, and climate change, the AmeriCorps said.

Kulkarni lost his race for the Texas District 22 seat in the US House of Representatives to former Fort Bend County Sheriff Troy Nehls in November as the Democratic nominee in a deeply Republican district.

Kulkarni brings a variety of experience in service and public affairs to AmeriCorps, including 14 years as a foreign service officer with the State Department where he specialised in public diplomacy and worked in public affairs and international information programmes, completing tours in Taiwan, Russia, Iraq, Israel, Jamaica and Washington, the statement said.

Nijhawan has committed her career to developing leaders and growing national service. Most recently, she developed and served as the executive director of Stockton Service Corps, a six-year, USD 12 million initiative to address local needs through AmeriCorps. Her professional back-



**In their roles, these leaders will use service to support the administration's agenda, focusing on four of the most urgent challenges of our time: Covid-19, economic recovery, racial equity, and climate change, the AmeriCorps said**

ground also includes extensive experience in education, AmeriCorps said in a press release.

Inspired by the students, families, and AmeriCorps community she met, she went on to help found City Year Sacramento and launch the organisation's 22nd site with 50 new AmeriCorps members.

Nijhawan also served as the California director of Education Pioneers where she recruited, placed, and supported managers in urban school systems and education non-profits, 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.

## GLOBE TROTTER

### 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 co-developed 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.

## Myanmar anti-coup protesters keep pressure on junta

AP ■ YANGON

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



A large image that has an X mark on the face of Commander in chief Senior Gen 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 Sunday

Beijing of propping up the military regime and applaud Washington's actions sanctioning the military. "The civil disobedience movement and demonstrations

show that the people of 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 military.

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 permis-

sion. Civil servants have been 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 strike.

The military seized power on February 1, detaining Suu Kyi and members of her government and preventing recently elected lawmakers from opening a new session of Parliament.

The junta, led by Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, said it was forced to step in because the government failed to properly 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.

## FROM PAGE 1

### TERROR PLOT ON PULWAMA ANNIVERSARY FOILED

The DGP said that in another major success one more chief commander of another terror outfit TRF being run by Lashkar-e-Tayyeba, Zahoor Rather alias Sahil and Khalid was also arrested. Singh said that Zahoor was arrested during an operation on the intervening night of 12 and 13 February. "Zahoor was active for a long time and was a trained militant. He was leading TRF. He was also working as an OGW. In 2002 he was working with Hizbul Mujahideen," he said.

Singh said that Zahoor remained active for 5 years and later surrendered in 2006 and he again became active in 2009 and in 2009 his handlers sitting in Pakistan knew his potential.

He said that Zahoor was handed over the responsibility of running TRF in Jammu & Kashmir and he was involved in killing 3 BJP leaders in Kulgam last year.

Singh said that intensive questioning of Zahoor Ahmad is going on and it is expected that some more breakthroughs will take place through Zahoor.

### 12 BODIES PULLED OUT FROM U'KHAND SITE, TOLL RISES TO 50

Chamoli District Magistrate Swati S Bhadauria and Superintendent of Police Yashwant Singh Chauhan rushed to the tunnel when the first two bodies were brought out in the early hours of Sunday.

Three more bodies were recovered later from the tunnel, which is packed with debris brought by the flash flood. Officials said a helicopter has been kept on standby at the Tapovan rescue site to quickly fly out survivors, if there are any, for medical treatment.

Rescuers are also continuing with an alternative approach -- trying to widen a hole they have drilled into another interconnected tunnel from where the trapped men could perhaps be reached.

The men found dead Sunday were identified as Alam Singh from Tehri, Anil (Dehradun district) Jitendra Kumar (Jammu), Shesh Nath (Faridabad), Jitendra Dhanai (Tehri), Suraj Thakur (Kushinagar) Jugal Kishore (Punjab), Rakesh Kapur (Himachal Pradesh), Harpal Singh (Chamoli), Ved Prakash (Gorakhpur), Dhanurdhari (Gorakhpur).

The bodies were kept at a temporary mortuary at Tapovan, officials said.

The Chamoli DM said about 445 people stranded after the flash flood have so far been sent to their villages using heli-

copters. Over 500 ration kits have been distributed in the affected areas.

Medical camps put up in the affected villages have so far treated 998 patients.

The process of cremating the victims after taking their DNA samples continued in Chamoli district. Two bodies and four severed limbs were cremated on Sunday.

The agencies involved in the Tapovan rescue work include the Indo-Tibetan Border Police, the National Disaster Response Force and the State Disaster Response Force.

### TRUMP ACQUITTED AS IMPEACHMENT TRIAL IN SENATE FAILS BY 57-43

He was first acquitted by the Senate on February 5, 2020 on charges of abuse of power and on obstruction of Congress. The Democrats had charged Trump in December 2019 with pressuring Ukraine to smear Biden, his rival in the November election.

On Saturday, seven Republican senators -- Bill Cassidy, Richard Burr, Mitt Romney, Susan Collins, Lisa Murkowski, Ben Sasse and Pat Toomey -- voted in favour of impeaching Trump.

If he had been convicted, the Senate could have voted to bar Trump, who has not yet conceded defeat to Biden, from running for office ever again. Minutes after the verdict was announced, Trump released a statement, saying "no president has ever gone through anything like it".

"It is a sad commentary on the times that one political party in America is given a free pass to denigrate the rule of law, defame law enforcement, cheer mobs, excuse rioters, and transform justice into a tool of political vengeance, and persecute, blacklist, cancel and suppress all people and viewpoints with whom or which they disagree," he said.

Trump, now based in his resort in Florida, denounced the trial as "the greatest witch hunt in history".

He thanked his team of lawyers and others for their tireless work "upholding justice and defending the truth".

He also said that the Democrats' attempt to end his political career had also failed, telling 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 with you, and I look forward to continuing our incredible journey together to achieve American greatness for all of our people. There has never been anything like it!" said Trump, who received 74 million votes in the election, higher than that of any president before him.

In his first reaction to the development, President Biden said that the Senate's acquittal of his predecessor was a reminder that democracy was "fragile" and every American had a duty to defend the truth.

"This sad chapter in our history has reminded us that democracy is fragile. That it must always be defended. That we must be ever vigilant. That violence and extremism have no place in America. And that each of us has a duty and responsibility as Americans, and especially as leaders, to defend the truth and to defeat the lies," Biden said in a statement.

While the final vote did not lead to the conviction of Trump, the substance of the charge is not in dispute, he said.

"Even those opposed to the conviction, like Senate Minority Leader McConnell, believe Donald Trump was guilty of a "disgraceful dereliction of duty" and "practically and morally responsible for provoking" the violence unleashed on the Capitol," Biden said.

The Democratic Party criticised the Republican senators for acquitting Trump, saying their vote to clear him "will live as a vote of infamy in the history of the US Senate".

"January 6th will live as a day of infamy in the history of the United States of America. The failure to convict Donald Trump will live as a vote of infamy in the history of the US Senate," Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said.

Senate Republicans who voted not to convict Trump chose to abandon the Constitution, the country and the American people, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said.

"What we saw in that Senate today was a cowardly group of Republicans who apparently have no options because they were afraid to defend their job, respect the institution in which they serve," she said.

After the vote, Senator Mitch McConnell said Trump had been "responsible" for the assault on the Capitol and called it a "disgraceful, disgraceful dereliction of duty".

However, he voted against his conviction, saying it was unconstitutional now that Trump was no longer president. But he warned Trump could still be held liable in court.

The Washington Post said that the result of the vote underscored Trump's continued grip on most Republicans despite the party losing control of both the White House and Congress during his tumultuous tenure.

The verdict brought an abrupt end to the fourth presidential impeachment trial in American history, and the only one in which the accused had left office before being tried, it said.





# 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-

vator for everyone involved in sports. Even after having an emphasis on participation 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 same page. In this competitive world, increased exposure to international competitive events, advances in support from corporate and government sectors has led to increased performance pressure. With time, sports has moved from mere joy, sense of satisfaction to pride and professionalism. The demand to perform is so strong that it comes with the tag of "Success at any cost." But do we really need success at the cost of our mental peace? Mental health when disturbed

affects one's ability to recognise the self-potential and gets bogged down by stress. Talent wasted due to lack of professional help at right time can never stand the spirit of sports. Hence, it becomes essential to learn the mind-body connection and mental toughness to become resilient in testing moments of matches.

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 control too.

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 multiple 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 psychologist.)



## WEBBED



### 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.



### PELÉ (2021)

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 February 23 on Netflix.

## TREND TOOL

Here are five common myths around organic skincare products



Today consumers have become more aware and conscious of 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 Botanicals lists five common misconceptions about organic skincare that will make you rethink 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 as much as an organic face mask. 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 and potent part for your skin care.

#### MYTH 2: Organic products are ineffective

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

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 container.

#### 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,

a healthy diet alone is not necessarily 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 complexion.

#### 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.

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 films.

#### 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 excitement towards treating it like a larger 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 on set. 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

though we are poles apart, we still manage to fit together. It's like sugar 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,

landing on a coal train and much 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 my career.

#### What do you think was the film's USP?

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.

## TRENDBLAZER



### AJAY BEGINS SHOOT FOR MAIDAN

AJAY DEVGN began shooting for the final schedule of his forthcoming sports film *Maidan* 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 Mumbai.

### fairtalk

TANVI AZMI



'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

GULSHAN DEVAIAH



'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 every-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 them.

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







Labour (NCCBL) responsible for conducting rescue operations across India said, "Amid the pandemic, many were trapped in the sites of exploitation as rescue operations remained stalled. As the nationwide lockdown was announced, brick kiln sites, several construction sites in remote parts of the country, including the agricultural sector continued to function."

However, the meagre wages that the bonded labourers were getting was also stopped. They had appealed in the Chandigarh High Court and the Allahabad High Court, but the state was overburdened at that point and undertaking rescue operations became difficult. Even those who could be rescued were not being given repatriation and police protection, making their chances of falling back in the trap of bonded labour much higher.

Though bonded labour was outlawed in 1976 when the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act came into force, the news of rescues is fairly common. Convictions, however, are a few.

A senior official in the Central Labour Ministry on the condition of anonymity said, "There is widespread prevalence of violence in case of the bonded labour and the assistance, especially during the times of COVID has been delayed. However, when it comes to rescues, the responsibility lies with the respective states to act on these complaints."

The Centrally Sponsored Plan Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourers has been in place since 1978 to rehabilitate those rescued. As part of this scheme, adult male rescuers are entitled to the financial assistance of ₹1 lakh, while those who come under special categories, such as women and children are entitled to ₹2 lakh. Others, who are rescued from forced or bonded labour from more extreme conditions like sexual exploitation, brothels or trafficking, as deemed by the District Magistrate, are eligible for financial assistance of ₹3 lakh along with some non-cash assistance from the state governments.

This financial assistance is funded by the centre but comes only after conviction. A person who is rescued is eligible to ₹20,000 as immediate assistance from the District Administration, regardless of conviction. Apart from the immediate assistance, those rescued are also entitled to a state-issued rescue certificate (RC), which makes them eligible for the rehabilitation measures; however, those getting the certificates remain abysmally low.

None of the people the writer spoke to had been provided with the compensation. Despite a large number of women workers, Women's work is unaccounted for and their labour is not recognised in the economy. Doubling the oppression of taking care of the food, family and suffering harassment from contractors, they remain invisible and unpaid.

Charkha Features



## Towards a better society

To change the current situation, the lifestyles of the people need to change, says RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJJI

Population, when unchecked, increases at a geometrical ratio. Subsistence increases only in an arithmetical ratio..." said Thomas Malthus in his thesis, titled *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, which was published in 1798. When he made this observation, the world-population was not even one billion. During the last 200 years, it has grown to around 7.8 billion. And the prediction of Malthus that the world would run out of food due to its growing population, has not yet come exactly true. There is no doubt, Malthus did not foresee that at some time in the future, there would be a spectacular increase in food production and that the earth would not produce exactly in arithmetic progression, yet no sensible person can deny that, after all, there is an upper limit to production of subsistence by the earth. But, strangely, we find that there is no effective clarity in regard to this hard fact in the minds of those who formulate national policies.

One can see that, even today, in most of the under developed countries, the situation is still Malthusian and the people there do not have enough food. It is a well-established fact that the population growth-rate in these countries makes it extremely difficult for their governments to eradicate poverty and unemployment. So the living conditions for large sections of people there are really poor.

In such a critical situation of stark poverty, high incidence of disease and extreme scarcity of health care facilities, many welfare and social service agencies voluntarily help the impoverished, the sick, the handicapped and the mentally unwell people. No doubt, immediate help in the form of food, medicine, shelter, health-care, etc. is needed for quite a large number of people and these charitable institutions do commendable social service. Nevertheless, the basic problem remains because the root of all these maladies is not eradicated.

The population in these poor countries continues to rise enormously and, alongside it, the number of poor unemployed, diseased and hungry people also continue to multiply. The reason for this is that no sincere and concrete steps are taken to give a high degree of clarity to the people.

Another factor that is responsible for this critical situation is the highly consumeristic and wasteful lifestyle of affluent nations or of affluent sections of society in the same country. It is not known to many that about 80 per cent of the gross world-products are consumed by the developed countries which constitute only 20 per cent of the world-population while remaining world population that dwell in developing countries gets only 15 per cent of gross world products. So again there is need to give clarity to the people about the urgent need for simplicity in life. Hence, what people of developing nations should make to be understood that mere charity cannot solve the problems of poverty and hunger, created by exploitation, social injustice and the utterly selfish and wasteful life-style of some nations or some sections of society. In fact, some people have recently raised this vital question about the end-result of charity after a controversial documentary was made by a popular director in the West on charity work done by the organisations there.

Many scholarly people across the globe have made a strong observation and said that charity alone would not serve the purpose. One has, therefore, to reiterate that what is required more is clarity, by means of such knowledge that brings in its wake, the highly needed moral values of social justice, brotherhood, love, abstinence from sex-lust and inspiration for a simple lifestyle. Remember, to change the current situation, the lifestyles of the people need to change.



**A**zaadi hai toh sab hai (where there is freedom there is everything)," said Rehana Begum, who along with her husband and children, was rescued from a Municipal Corporation toilet compound in 2017. Originally from Purnia in Bihar, the family moved states looking for work opportunities. "My husband and I were married without the permission from our families, so we had no place to fall back on, that is the price one pays for being a woman who dares to love," said Rehana.

"Initially, we were offered ₹5,000. As we lived in a rented space, the idea of moving into the complex full time seemed lucrative. As our entire family moved into the complex, I had to do double shifts of guarding the toilet and on several occasions, had to clean it as well. My work started at nine in the morning until 11 at night," added she. Taking care of three children, cleaning toilets and juggling housework, clearly took a toll on her.

"She shared, "Living on the site permanently, we worked in the compound day in and day out. Our wages were stopped and when I refused to work, I was threatened with sexual violence. I had fallen sick at one point and was diagnosed with pneumonia but was not allowed to go to a hospital for proper treatment. The only saving grace is that I am finally free."

Rehana and her family were rescued by National Campaign Committee for

## BREAKING CHAINS

Innovative solutions are needed to prevent bonded labour, says SUMEDHA PAL

Eradication of Bonded Labour (NCCBL). A court case is pending in Delhi for her rightful compensation and lack of accountability on the part of the Delhi Municipal Corporation. To survive, Rehana's husband, at present, is working as a rickshaw puller while she is trying hard to find a job as a domestic worker. The family fears that they may be trapped in debt bondage again as they look for jobs.

Not just Rehana, across India, an estimated 12 million workers are employed in brick kilns, garment factories, construction units among others. Over three lakh informal workers have been released according to the Government of India. India identified at least 1,35,000 bonded workers in its 2011 census, while the Australian charity Walk Free Foundation put the number at eight million in its 2018 Global Slavery Index.

Most of these workers are sourced from remote rural pockets with concentration of poverty through a vast network of contractors. While most of these

pockets exist in the Northern and Eastern part of the country, some developed states in the West and South, also have such pockets.

Desperate and vulnerable population of unorganised workers, who are in no position to negotiate wages or their rights, have become a massive pool for cheap labour. A large number of these labourers are children, forced out of school, bearing the burden of sustaining their families.

"I lost two of my children, an eight-years-old boy and one girl, who was barely 10, as they were sent off to work in a kiln in Himachal Pradesh. We were just informed that they both died but no one bothered to tell us how," shared Pinki, the mother of the two children.

Pinki and her husband, Kale, live in a small hamlet of Bandhera Khas in Deoband, Uttar Pradesh, a colony where several migrant workers like herself and her husband now reside. In 2014, Pinki and Kale, originally from Saharanpur, were taken to work in a brick kiln in Nawanshahr in Punjab and were

promised ₹1,500 per person per week by the contractor. The same person promised to pay the same amount for two of her children, giving them a chance of making more money.

Explaining what transpired at the kiln, she said, "The only means for us to have made money was to move cities. My children were taken to Himachal Pradesh. Instead of ₹1,500, we were paid only ₹500 every week or even less. With no money and no clue of our children, there was a sense of feeling trapped. I remember working around the clock carrying bricks on my back. It feels like a blur to me, the life that I lived for five years."

Pinki survived by living in a makeshift tent, eating corn kernels and bread. She was finally rescued in 2017 along with her husband by NCCBL. As per the wages promised to the couple, the contractors owed them over one lakh rupees. However, the family hasn't received a single penny so far.

For her, losing her children and never getting to see them again was the biggest trauma. "I was beaten up several times, I was not paid for my work, but losing my children was the scariest part," said she.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown imposed to contain the spread of the virus has worsened the situation for the bonded labourers as rescue operations have also come to halt. Nirmal Gorana of the National Campaign Committee for Eradication of Bonded

**Y**ou are most influenced by the people you surround yourself with, so choose wisely. This was some really good advice I was given very early on in life. In my opinion, one of the biggest reasons people falter on their fitness plans or goals is peer and family pressure. So what happens when your spouse or partner joins you on this journey of yours? Would that make your life easier? Would it help you stick to your plan and process? Most likely, yes!

The pandemic has been a huge learning curve for a lot of people. Not only have their priorities changed, but also their attitude towards health and fitness. For someone like me, fitness has been a part of life since a very young age and even though I've suffered through my fair share of family or peer pressure, it's never actually made me waiver. My wife never really worked out in life to be honest. The only time she started taking her fitness seriously was after we had our first child. She's always been thin, but fit is something she's had to work on and really hard. I wasn't really enthused about the idea of us working out together if I'm being absolutely honest, but having a goal and working on it together has been a lot of fun. It also gives me an opportunity to make her push a little because I know if she trains alone, she isn't going to work as hard as she should. For people who are just start-

## Train together, stay together

Working out with your partner can have psychological benefits, shares SOHRAB KHUSHRUSHAKI



ing out, the peer and family pressure can get a bit too much and nine times out of 10 they will falter. So having your partner or spouse join you on your journey will only make it easier. Having said all of the above, there are documented advantages of working out with your spouse

that can benefit both parties.

### It improves the emotional bond you share with your partner

According to various studies, working out with your partner like sprinting or jogging at the same pace, rhythmic weight-training or any workout has a plethora of pos-

itive effects. As a result, couples who work out together may feel more "emotionally attuned" with one another as compared to others.

### Accountability

Working out together sets the accountability for both partners

and each one motivates the other to achieve goals, both as individuals and as a couple. And let's be honest, we have our bad days where we don't feel like working out, on such days your partner could be the person who pushes you to get the work done. If one needs a push to get out of bed in the morning to workout, setting couple goals could be the answer. If they're awake and ready to go, you will be more likely to get your workout done instead of hitting the snooze button on the phone for the next hour. Having a partner can make you stick to your goals, even on days when working out is the last thing on your mind.

### It brings happiness to your relationship

Exercise makes you a happier person individually, thanks to all the endorphins you release during and after your workout. If you work out with your partner, you get to experience that together.

Pushing and motivating each other, then seeing the results of all the hard work you've put in,

creates positivity for your relationship.

### It's a commitment to each other

If you and your partner make working out together a regular thing, you establish a common goal and respect that physical activity is important for yourselves and your relationship. There are a bunch of studies that show that individuals are more likely to make a positive health behaviour change if their partner does too.

Overall, fitness regimes can be made more interesting and working out as a couple is one of the ways to make that happen. What adds to the fun are those moments of slight humour in between workouts that is just understood between you and your partner through mere eye-contact. Also, following healthy eating habits becomes easier and a fun thing to do if the same is shared. Hence, the saying 'couples who train together, stay together.'

(The writer is the founder of Sohfit.)

### APPS THAT MAY ENHANCE YOUR PERSONALITY

A team of researchers have developed a smartphone app that may help people who are looking to work on their personality.

The majority of participants, who used the app for three months, said that they wanted to reduce their emotional vulnerability, increase their conscientiousness or extraversion.

Those who participated in the intervention for more than three months reported greater success in achieving their change goals than the control group who took part for only two months, indicated the findings published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

"The participants and their friends alike reported that three months after the end of the intervention, the personality changes brought about by using the app had persisted," said researcher Mathias Allemand from the University of Zurich in Switzerland.



### GREEN VEGGIES MAY UP THINKING SKILLS

People who eat a Mediterranean-style diet — particularly one rich in green leafy vegetables and low in meat — are more likely to stay mentally sharp in later life, a study shows.

The study indicated that closely adhering to a Mediterranean diet was associated with higher scores in a range of memory and thinking tests among adults in their late 70s.

"Eating more green leafy vegetables and cutting down on red meat might be two key food elements that contribute to the benefits of the Mediterranean-style diet," said researcher Janie Corley from the University of Edinburgh.

The individual components of the diet that appeared to be most strongly associated with better thinking skills were green leafy vegetables and a lower red meat intake.

"In our sample, the positive relationship between a Mediterranean diet and thinking skills is not accounted for by having a healthier brain structure, as one might expect," said Corley.



### STRESS LINKED TO RISK OF HEART ATTACK

Taking stress may not be good for your heart as a new study suggests that long-term stress may lead to increased risk of heart attack.

The study, published in the journal Scientific Reports, indicated that people with higher levels of cortisol are at an increased risk of heart attack.

"The levels of the stress hormone cortisol differed between people who have had a heart attack and those not affected. This suggests that cortisol in hair may be a new risk marker for heart attacks," said Tomas Faresjo from the Linköping University in Sweden.

Cortisol is a steroid hormone that regulates a wide range of processes throughout the body, including metabolism and the immune response. It also has a very important role in helping the body respond to stress.

The researchers showed that patients who suffered a heart attack had statistically significant higher levels of cortisol during the month preceding the event.



### VR-BASED APP TO TREAT FEAR OF HEIGHTS

A team of researchers have developed a virtual reality (VR)-based app for smartphones to reduce fear of heights.

The findings indicated that trial participants who spent a total of four hours training with the app at home had an improvement in their ability to handle real height situations.

"What is new, however, is that smartphones can be used to produce the virtual scenarios that previously required a technically complicated type of treatment, and this makes it much more accessible," said lead author Dorothee Bentz, from the University of Basel in Switzerland.

Fear of heights is a widespread phenomenon. Approximately five per cent of the general population experiences a debilitating level of discomfort in height situations.



### DOUBLE MASKS REDUCE EXPOSURE TO VIRUS

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recently conducted experiments to improve the fit of masks amid COVID-19 pandemic, suggesting that combining cloth mask and medical procedure mask could reduce a wearer's exposure to virus by over 90 per cent.

In January, the CDC conducted experiments to assess two ways of improving the fit of medical procedure masks: Fitting a cloth mask over a medical procedure mask, and knotting the ear loops of a medical procedure mask and then tucking in and flattening the extra material close to the face, the Xinhua news agency reported.

Each modification substantially improved source control and reduced wearer exposure, according to a report released by the CDC on Wednesday.





# ASHWIN SPINS OUT ENG

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

2nd Test, Day 3  
Live from 9:30am IST  
STAR SPORTS 1 NETWORK

PTI ■ CHENNAI

India took command of the second Test after an exhilarating 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 Sunday.

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

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 Harbhajan Singh, R Ashwin on Sunday cherished surpassing his former India teammate's number of Test wickets in the country.

With 266 scalps, Ashwin 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

day of the second Test.

"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 country."

"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

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 play.

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

"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. **PTI**

breakthrough for India when he had left-handed opener Rory Burns LBW for a duck with a ball that nipped back and beat his

defensive push.

The other opener Dom Sibley (16) was the next to go, caught by Virat Kohli at leg-slip off Ashwin,

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

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

## Pant needs break from constant comparisons: Ash

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Give Rishabh Pant a "break" from constant comparisons and let him go from strength to strength, his senior India teammate Ravichandran Ashwin suggested on Sunday.

Be it for his keeping or batting, be it with one of India's greatest or any other player, Pant needs a break from all sorts of comparisons, expressed Ashwin, 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 wicket-keeping with (Wridhiman) 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 surface that is what I am 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 challenging on that surface for us on day two. There 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 conference.

Decisions by the third

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 review after he was ruled out by the on-field umpire.

However, Thorpe offered straight bat, saying "we have to accept the decision."

"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. **PTI**

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 another thrilling win

AFP ■ DHAKA

The West Indies beat Bangladesh by 17 runs in the second Test on Sunday to complete a 2-0 series sweep.

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.

While Cornwall took centerstage, Kraigg 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 centerstage 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 home."

## Pak hand Proteas fourth straight T20 series loss

AFP ■ LAHORE

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, who scored an unbeaten 85, and 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

AFP ■ MELBOURNE

Gutsy 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 Arena.

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 an 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 big-hitting Aryna Sabalenka in a three-set thriller to make Australian Open quarter-finals.

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 mouth-watering 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

opening set.

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 racket 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 Melbourne.

## 300th Slam win for Djoker

AFP ■ MELBOURNE

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 operating 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 events.

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

3-6, 1-6, 6-3, 6-3, 6-4 on Margaret 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-finals.

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 an ace.