

OPINION 6 UPPER HOUSE: TO BE, OR NOT TO BE?

WORLD 8 MYANMAR ANTI-COUP PROTESTERS KEEP PRESSURE ON JUNTA

SPORT 12 WINDIES BEAT B'DESH IN 2ND TEST, WIN SERIES

RANCHI, MONDAY FEBRUARY 15, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹3



# The Pioneer

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AJAY BEGINS SHOOT FOR MAIDAAN 10 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**  
Karnat: 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 checked 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 Shaheel 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.

## 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.

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

PNS ■ TAPOVAN/DEHRADUN

A massive operation to identify 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 Rudrapur, 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 Dhaultiganga and Rishiganga rivers had ripped through two hydel projects. Bodies of victims were being found at dif-



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

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

## 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.

## 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 with no explanation. It's bad enough they've locked my father (a sitting MP) & me in our home, they've locked my sister & her kids in their home as 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."

## 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 skill of technically qualified youths and development of tourism projects.

One of the important functions presided over by the Prime Minister was the handing over of Arjun Mk-1A the state-of-the-art main battle tank to the 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 (CVRE), 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 Subramanya Bharathi in Tamil, Modi said, "Let us make weapons; also make paper; let us make factories; let us 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 Subramanya Bharathi, India has undertaken a massive effort to become self-reliant in the defence sector.

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Valentine's Day peaceful, right wing groups observe 'Black Day'

PNS ■ JAMSHEDPUR

Valentine's Day celebration in the city was peaceful without any untoward incident on Sunday. Over 200 police personnel were deployed at different parts of the city...



While the youths celebrated Valentine's Day, activists of organisations like Bajrang Dal and Vishwa Hindu Parishad observed the day as 'Black Day' in protest against Pulwama attack in Kashmir.

We have paid tributes to the martyrs who lost their lives in Kashmir on this day. We have gathered along with youths to recognize the contribution made by brave soldiers...

The weather also turned a little pleasant as people enjoyed bright sunshine. Police had made elaborate arrangements to thwart any attempt of moral policing in the city by right wing outfits.

We are not for moral policing. We will not allow anyone to take law in their hands. We have deployed adequate number of police to ensure that there is no violence and harassment of couples, a senior police officer said.

Last year, the Valentine's Day celebrations were peaceful here with police taking adequate steps.

Extending the V-day mood over the weekend, several hotels in the city like Hotel Sonnet and The Alcor have a food spread that guarantees to spice up your date with not just significant others but also with family and friends.

Sister Jacinta of RP Patel Cheshire Home in Sundernagar said there are lots of people in the city who celebrate their Valentine's Day by visiting welfare home and taking to underprivileged kids, listening to their stories and making a donation of the sum they they otherwise would have spent buying flowers and gifts for your loved ones.

If we can play a part in showing them the right path while bringing smiles on their faces, that's the best way we could spend our Valentine's Day, said one of the volunteers.

Second phase of vaccination drive kicks off in Jamshedpur SSP receives Covishield vaccine shot

PNS ■ JAMSHEDPUR

The second phase of vaccination drive against the Covid-19 has kick started in the city. About 8,000 people have been administered the Covishield vaccine so far.

On Sunday, SSP M. Vanan received Covishield vaccine shot at Sadar Hospital. He was kept under observation for some time and then he said that he is feeling comfortable to resume his work.

The four major vaccination centres in the city -- Tata Main Hospital, Tata Motors Hospital, Sadar Hospital and MGM Medical College, have set a target to give 100 health workers in each of the CHCs four days a week.

The Government had made it clear that the COVID-19 vaccine will be offered first to healthcare workers, frontline workers and to persons above 50 years of age, followed by persons younger than 50 years of age.



population, based on the disease epidemiology and vaccine availability.

The vaccination of frontline workers will be conducted simultaneously along with the drive for healthcare workers.

District administration has asked authorities to make arrangements for vaccination sites other than the health facilities in their respective areas.

Dacoits loot bus, shoot 1 dead

SURESH NIKHAR ■ GIRIDIH

One person was killed when a group of armed men looted a long route bus carrying several passengers to Nawadah from Kolkata here on Sunday, police said today.

The incident took place when around five dacoits signalled the bus to stop on NH-2 GT road near Madhupur village, following which they gunned down a passenger when he resisted the loot, police said.

The dacoits also looted cash worth over a lakh and ornaments from the passengers, they said.

The youth has been identified as 28-year-old Abhay Kumar, a resident of Nawadah in Bihar, police said, adding, the bus carrying several passengers, including few women, was coming from Kolkata to WB.

No arrest has been made so far in this connection, they said, adding, search operation to nab the accused has been started. The incident occurred within limits of Nimighat police station area in Giridih.

Police sources said that two businessmen were boarding the Doyal bus going from Kolkata to Bihar. In which one jewelry businessman and another textile businessman were also as passenger in bus.

As soon as the bus reached near Madhupur in Nimighat police station area, the criminals got into the bus and took the pistol and put on the jewelry businessman.

After two days, a family engagement programme was going to take place in the deceased's house, for which the businessman was returning after purchasing durables.

During the loot, the criminals also kept the driver and the conductor on the target of the pistol, later on the way, the criminals shot the businessman.

The same bus driver managed to escape by taking out the body of the deceased near Ghujadh in Dumri police station area. At present, the police has started investigating the entire case.

HUNT THE MIDDLE PATH

SARO MURRAY JOS & SRILAN KISHORE ■ RANCHI

COVID as an uninvited guest was successful in creating a hallaballo that showed the need for development of machinery in every country. The "conquering" attitude of man felt so helpless in front of this tiny virus.

Record-breaking has been a trend of the corona season, like 23.9 percentage of GDP contraction needs immediate attention firstly. Tracing back to lanes of our ignorance which brought us to this price that we are paying can land us to the eighteenth century, the etymology of the word autonomy.

This autonomy brought into the context of a state is the pertaining pillar for government, with its epicentre in this civil society.

This is an autonomy that has a two-pronged effect. The first is for the government and



secondly, for the citizens to have a say on what and how important are institutions in the country. The measure to liberalize the economy that started in the 90s has come a long way where we have been able to catch up in the race of development with other countries across the globe.

But what we saw as progress or growth was contradictory to this as the more our economy was welcoming to this country, the more it resulted in the welfare of the country. The underlying drive of this was to directly empower the state to reach out to more percent of the population who are deprived of their necessities.



COVID hit season, when public and private messiahs rolled the dice to find out who wants to save whom. But the result has revealed very clearly its array of elitist and communal biases that was swallowed up than anyone could cover well.

Studies estimate that almost sixty-two crore which is forty-seven percent of the population is pushed to extreme poverty and distress. It's even scarier because of one sole reason - who is going to take responsibility of holding a hand for this unerasable number and reminding that it isn't just a number but actual oxygen-breathing human beings.



Couples celebrate Valentine's Day at a mall in Ranchi

Vinay Murrmu | Pioneer

State BJP workers camp in Bengal ahead of polls

PNS ■ RANCHI

As the political pitch in neighbouring West Bengal has intensified for Assembly elections scheduled in mid this year, the BJP central unit has roped in workers from Bihar and Jharkhand in West Bengal. Thousands of BJP workers from Jharkhand are presently camping in West Bengal helping local BJP leaders in strengthening organization.

State BJP spokesperson Pratul Shahdeo said, "BJP workers from State are presently camping in bordering districts of Bengal."

The workers are assisting local Bengal leaders in strengthening organization. Shahdeo claimed that once the election dates are announced more BJP leaders will visit Bengal helping local leaders in both election management and other campaigning organization.

Senior BJP leaders from the State including union tribal affairs minister Arjun Monda, former Chief Minister Babul Marandi and others have addressed election rallies in bordering districts of Bengal. As many bordering districts of Bengal including Purulia, West Midnapore, Bankura have sizeable tribal population. The BJP central committee has roped in these tribal leaders to reach out



BJP Party legislative leader Babul Marandi addresses a public meeting ahead of the Bengal elections at Raiganj, West Bengal

File photo

to tribal voters in Bengal. Last month BJP legislative party leader and former Chief Minister Babul Marandi addressed a rally in North Bengal Raiganj district. Marandi, addressing a sizeable rally targeted Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for her appeasement politics, saying that Didi is so deep rooted and cautious of her appeasement policy that she starts hating lord Rama and Lord Krishna. Similarly, Arjun Munda too had addressed rallies in Bengal.

Not lagging behind, State chief minister and JMM working president Hemant Soren last month reminded the hope of a greater Jharkhand while launching the party's West Bengal assembly poll campaign from Jhargram, the tribal dominated hinterland. Soren had also attacked BJP saying that it was

a calculated move by the Centre to fool the tribals by creating two separate states - Jharkhand and Chhatisgarh while nurturing the tribal aspirations of their own homeland. Sources said that as election date gets nearer the frequency of visit of Jharkhand BJP leaders to Bengal will intensify as more leaders will visit and camp in Bengal. Meanwhile, in other development State BJP observed Bharatiya Jana Sangh leader Deendayal Upadhyaya's death anniversary as Samarpun Dwas. On the occasion, the state BJP leaders heard message of Prime Minister Narendra Modi from Delhi. Modi on the occasion threw light on contribution of Deendayal Upadhyaya in nation building. At BJP office the party leaders paid floral tributes to the portrait of Deendayal Upadhyaya.

200 cops with same mobile number dodge vaccine jabs

PNS ■ DALTONGANJ

Coronavirus vaccination is a battle of wit, and the cops who are the front line workers are taking the lead, said sources.

Sources said cops not keen to have the jab now have found a way to dodge the vaccine shot. And in this ingenuity the cops of Palamu have outwitted many.

Sources said about 200 cops were found to have the same cell phone numbers in Palamu. None got the call from the vaccination desk to come and take the jab resulting in zero achievements at a couple of vaccine session sites here on Saturday.

Session sites at Panki and Harihariganj recorded no vaccination at all on Saturday.

Civil surgeon Palamu John F Kennedy admitted there has been detected one glaring thing and it is that around two hundred cops have just one cell phone number which is most unthinkable. Kennedy said this singularity of the cell phone number saved the cops from receiving our call to come for the jab.

Stung by the trick of the cops SP Palamu Sanjeev Kumar has asked for setting up a cell in the police line

DC appeals frontline workers, staff to get vaccinated

PNS ■ BOKARO

Bokaro Deputy Commissioner Rajesh Kumar Singh has appealed frontline workers, including administrative officers, staff, and health workers, who have not yet vaccinated, to visit the nearest center and get the vaccine jab at the earliest.

"This vaccine is completely safe. People must take the jab in their turn in a bid to make the vaccination campaign 100 per cent successful and to keep their family and people around them safe," said the DC.

Singh said that he got vaccinated on Saturday 9, and has had no problem until now. "I am continuously doing my work well," he added.

The DC urged everyone to take advantage of the facility provided by the government and get vaccinated. "If anyone feels that he cannot take this vaccine, then contact the medical officer or doctor to explain your problem," added Singh.

Around 14,000 frontline and health workers got their first dose of the vaccine against COVID-19 at the 10 designated sites till date in Bokaro dis-

DC appeals frontline workers, staff to get vaccinated

The beneficiaries include 78 per cent of frontline and 56 per cent of health workers, informed AK Pathak Civil Surgeon Bokaro.

Meanwhile, the second shot of first-round vaccination has been started on Saturday. Out of around 21,000 people registered for the first phase, 4700 are yet to get their first shot, informed Pathak.

The mega vaccination drive against coronavirus conducted at ANM Training Center at Sadar Hospital Bokaro, Community Health Center (CHC) Chandankiary, Jaridih Hospital, Paterwar CHC, Nawadih Hospital, Gomia Hospital, Bermo Hospital, Kasmar Hospital, Kargali, Bokaro General Hospital and CISF Bermo Camp, said Pathak.



The beneficiaries include 78 per cent of frontline and 56 per cent of health workers, informed AK Pathak Civil Surgeon Bokaro.

"All the persons who got their first shot of vaccine are well now. Expect minor symptoms of headache or nausea in few people nothing got reported after vaccination in the district," added Civil Surgeon.

Approximately 7500 frontline workers, including armed forces (JAP 1100, CISF 1000, RPF & GRP 400), home guards (1900), police (2000), volunteers, municipal workers would be administered the vaccine in the second phase. While the third phase for vaccination would comprise persons above the age of 50 years (around 3.40 lakhs), and persons with comorbidities (20,000), informed Pathak.

"For the remaining population, we are yet to receive the government's guideline," he added.



# Online application process for JPSC exam starts today

## 252 VACANCIES TO BE FILLED

**PNS ■ RANCHI**  
The online application process for Civil Services Examination being conducted by Jharkhand Public Service Commission will commence on Monday. JPSC has invited applications for recruitment to the post of Deputy Collector, PSI, Jail Superintendent and Others through Combined Civil Services Exam 2021. Candidates can apply to the posts through the online mode at [jpsc.gov.in](http://jpsc.gov.in). Candidates will be able to register themselves for the aforesaid posts from 15 February 2021 onwards. The last date of the application is 16 March 2021. Around 252 vacancies will be filled through this recruitment process. This exam is being held to

fill vacancies in various departments and organisations generated during 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020. The students who have been waiting for State Civil Service Examination for long have welcomed the State government decision to conduct civil services examinations after four years. Surendra Kumar Mishra, a post graduate student and civil services aspirant said, "We have been waiting for State Civil Service Examination for past four years, we are thankful to state government that finally government has decided to conduct civil service examination. The government decision to conduct civil service examination will provide an opportunity to those students who are preparing for civil service



examination for long." Echoing the views of Mishra, another aspirant Sushil Kumar Kushwaha said, "The government has not only issued applications, but has given relaxations in age as examination is being held after four years." The upper age limit for candidates belonging to the general category is 35 years. The minimum age limit is 21 years. The minimum educational qualification required for the exam is graduation. "There

shall be no limitation on the number of attempts, if a candidate is eligible otherwise," the Jharkhand public service commission has said. As per JPSC notification, maximum age is as per 1st August 2016 and minimum age is as per 1st March 2021. Meanwhile, in other development Jharkhand Public Service Commission (JPSC) has decided to reduce the charges of state civil service examination fees. Now, the candidates appearing for the public service examination will have to pay Rs 100 instead of Rs 600. Therefore, Rs 500 has been slashed straight. For the reserved category, the fees have been reduced to Rs 50 for the reserved category. Earlier, those in the reserved category had to pay Rs 150. Chief Minister Hemant Soren in a tweet on Saturday said his government has reduced the application fees of the state civil service examinations. "I am committed to every promise that we made to our people during the election," Soren said on his official Twitter account.

### IN BRIEF

#### PARADISE DONATES COMPUTERS TO SCHOOL

Volunteers of the Paradise group on Sunday donated eight desktops, a printer and two large batteries and an inverter worth Rs 1.5 lakh to Saraswati Shishu Vidya Mandir, which imparts education to nearly 500 impoverished children. Efforts are being made to educate the children here through Hindi medium to class 10 through jack board and is included in the examination. The school has its own building. The school does not yet have a system of computer education. If the computer education can be imparted, then the quality of education can be greatly improved and from this, the prescribed criteria of JAC Board can be met.

#### JCI HOLDS BLOOD DONATION CAMP

A total of 80 units of blood donation were carried out in the camp by the members of Jharkhand Chamber International. Males as well as women also participated in the camp. The institution gave the certificate of Proud-Donor to the donors as well as gifted chocolates. JCI Ranchi President Gaurav Aggarwal, Amit Khawal, Ajit Sahu, Neeraj Poddar, Prashant Padalia, Vikram Chaudhary, Gaurav Maheshwari, Abhishek Modi, Anant Jain, Vinay Minister, Nitish Samman Rai Anand, Prakash Raj, played key role in making the blood donation camp a success. Kanchan Maheshwari, Sheetal Sharma, Ranjana Ranjan also played important roles in the women's wing.

#### 7 LAKH CARDHOLDERS TO GET RATION

Nearly seven lakh families of the State will get two months ration under the Green ration card for the first time. In the same month, these beneficiaries will get ration for January also in February. This food will be given to the beneficiaries at the government rate. In which each cardholder will be given five kg of food grains for two months. The Food-Supply Department has issued instructions to all districts in this regard. It has been said in the instructions issued that the new green card beneficiaries should be given two months' grain from this month in any case. Also, its information will have to be given to the district headquarters, how much grain is distributed; its full details will have to be handed over to the headquarters.

## Int'l Race Walking Championship concludes in Ranchi

**PNS ■ RANCHI**  
The two-day Eighth National and Fourth International Race Walking Championship concluded at the Morhabadi ground of the State Capital on Sunday. Manish Rawat clinched Gold Medal in the 35 km walking race at the National Race Walking Competition held on Sunday whereas Ganapathi Krishnan received Silver and Vikas got the Bronze medal.



Athletes participate in a National Open Race Walking Championship-2021, at Morhabadi in Ranchi on Sunday

Athletes participated in a National Open Race Walking Championship-2021, at Morhabadi in Ranchi on Sunday. Vinay Murnu | Pioneer

In the 50 km walk, Gurpreet Singh got the Gold medal, Ram Babu got the Silver and Sagar Joshi got the Bronze medal. In the boys category under-20, in the 10 km walk, race, Vishwjit Singh got first, Paramjit Bisht was second and Gilshan got third place. Drinking Water and Sanitation Minister, Mihitesh Thakur expressed happiness over the successful organisation of the Walking Championship. Expecting that from the new sports policy of the State Government, players of Jharkhand will get medals in the Olympics in 2028 and

2032. On this occasion Madhubank Patkark and the Jharkhand Athletics Association, Shivendra Dubey and other people associated with the organizing committee were also present. On the first day, Sandeep Kumar of Haryana, Rahul and Priyanka Goswami of Uttar Pradesh have qualified to play Olympic in the 20 km walk competition. Sandeep Kumar secured his place for the Tokyo Olympics, where he took 1

hour 20 minutes 16 seconds. While Rahul took 1 hour 20 minutes 26 seconds. At the same time Priyanka Goswami qualified for the Olympics with a time of 1 hour 28 minutes 45 seconds. Vikas Kumar of Jharkhand finished fourth in this competition. A resident of Meerut, Uttar Pradesh, Goswami set a new record in the race. She took 1 hour 28 minutes 45 seconds to set a new record in this event. It is also the new National record for Olympic qualifica-

tion timing. Goswami missed the Olympic qualification in the International Race Walk held in Ranchi last year due to just 36 seconds of timing. The competition being held in Ranchi has got the status of World Cup qualification and Olympic qualification from the International Association of Athletics Federations and Athletics Federation of India. But this time not a single international player is participating. Although four foreign officials are present in the role of judge. This time, 160 athletes are participating out of which 46 are women participants in this competition apart from 14 athletes in the National camp. The event will conclude on Sunday. Martin Serba of Slovakia, Frederik Bianchi Pastori of Switzerland and Alexandru Nicole Stefan of Romania have reached Ranchi to play the role of the judge in the competition, but not a single foreign athlete has signed up yet. The most important reason for foreign athletes not coming is strict guidelines regarding Corona infection.

## JPCC chief Oraon to visit Latehar, Hazaribag today

**PNS ■ RANCHI**  
Jharkhand Pradesh Congress Committee (JPCC) Chief and the State Finance Minister, Dr Rameshwar Oraon will visit Latehar on February 15 and Hazaribag on February 16 to participate in many organizational events of the party.



13. The responsibility of organizing this rally has been entrusted to Agriculture Minister Badal.

JPCC Spokesperson and the party's membership In-Charge, Alok Kumar Dubey said that on February 15, the party is launching a membership campaign in Latehar district. He informed that Oraon and Rajya Sabha MP Diraj Prasad Sahu will also be present on the occasion of the beginning of the membership drive. He informed that a statewide campaign is being launched to include people into the party from every section of the society. Dubey said that during the membership drive a strategy has been chalked out to connect more and more youth, farmers, laborers, businessmen and women with the organization. At the same time JPCC Spokesperson, Kishore Nath Shahdeo and Rajesh Gupta Chhotu informed that a nationwide farmers' movement is being organized against the agriculture law of the Central Government, in support of this, phase-wise programs are being organized by the party in Jharkhand. "A State level Kisan Rally cum Tractor Rally is being organized at Hazaribag on February 20, after the Conference will be held at headquarters on February 10 and the Padayatra at all the district headquarters on February

13. The responsibility of organizing this rally has been entrusted to Agriculture Minister Badal. In order to make the rally a success, programmes are being organized in all the districts with great emphasis from the party. In the same session, on February 16, JPCC Chief will also go to Hazaribag and take part in the party program. On the other hand, Badal is constantly visiting Hazaribag, Ramgarh, Koderma and other districts including Chatra and meeting with party workers and giving necessary guidelines for making the rally a success," said Shahdeo. Meanwhile, JPCC Chief and the State Finance Minister, Rameshwar Oraon paid homage to the martyrs of Pulwama. JPCC Spokesperson Alok Kumar Dubey, Lal Kishore Nath Shahdeo and Rajesh Gupta Chhotu also accompanied him and paid homage to the martyrdom of the martyrs of Pulwama. JPCC Chief said that the Congress party never does politics on martyrdom, but the people of the Country still want to know how and why the sensitive area like Jammu and Kashmir.

## FJCCI, RMC jointly organise camp to renew, make new licenses

are those who operate their business on rented establishments but they are not able to make license due to lack of facilities to make license based on electricity bill and rent agreement. Around 50-60 traders attended the camp, got information about the documents required for license and renewal.

Giving the above information, Civic Amenity Sub-Committee Chairman Amit Sharma said that for the convenience of businessmen, on Monday, from 10 am to 4 pm, the camp will again be conducted in addition to the Chamber building located in Upper Market. Chamber President Praveen Jain Chhabra, Vice President Kishore Mantri, General Secretary Rahul Maru, Treasurer Paresch Gattani, Civic Amenity Sub-Committee Chairman Amit Sharma, Executive Member Shailesh Agarwal, Aditya Malhotra, Member Pramod Saraswat, Raju Chaudhary, Publication Apart from Mohanad Jaz, Nitish Kumar, a large number of traders were involved on behalf of P&S Pvt in the camp.

## Cops bust burglary gang

The Ranchi police have busted a gang involved in house robberies in Khelari and neighbouring areas of State Capital. The police have arrested ten members of gang. The police from these arrested persons have recovered a 32-inch LED TV, a gold locket, seven brass plates, a pair of anklets, a brass can, three silver coins, an American watch, a copper water pot, a drill machine kit box, two music systems, four mobile phones, a remote toy, a flashlight, a small bag, two purses, a Bajaj Pulsar bike, a theft toolbox and burglary and Rs 10,000 cash. The arrested members include Nishesh Kumar Gupta, Rahul Kumar alias Guddu,

Mausam Ansari, Shibu Lohra, Raja Madras, Mohit Mundra, Sameer Ansari and Shaltorn Mendei. The Ranchi police on this connection today held a press conference which was attended by Ranchi SSP Surendra Kumar Jha, Rural SP Naushad Alam among others. SSP Surendra Kumar Jha told the press on Sunday that on the basis of secret information, a team was constituted which conducted raid and arrested a total of 10 members of a notorious house burglary gang. The arrested robbers revealed that they had committed 13 theft cases under Khelari police station area in the past month. Apart from this, a total of 19 cases are registered on them.

### PNS ■ RANCHI

In view of the problems faced by businessmen, a field-wise camp for creating new trade licenses and renewals of license under joint aegis of Federation of Jharkhand Chamber and Commerce and Industry (FJCCI) and Ranchi Municipal Corporation (RMC) started at the Chamber building from Sunday. The traders gathered at the camp throughout the day and approximately 135 people attended the camp. A total of 16 license renewal works were carried out at the camp. While 48 people did not receive license due to lack of documents. Among the ones benefited, most of the people

### PNS ■ RANCHI

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### PNS ■ RANCHI

Members of Rashtriya Yuva Shakti light lamps to pay tribute to martyred soldiers on the second anniversary of Pulwama attack, at Albert Ekka Chowk in Ranchi on Sunday

# ANISH JAIPIURAR AMONG 'FUTURE LEGAL LEADERS OF 2021'

**DIVYA MOOD ■ RANCHI**  
Highly regarded by clients for his hands-on approach, technical knowledge and negotiating skills, Anish Jaipurar (30)- a partner at AKS Partners, New Delhi has been recognised by renowned India Business Law Journal as one of India's 50 up and coming Future Legal Leaders of 2021. Jaipurar is also Head of General Corporate, Mergers and Acquisitions with the firm. "This award has been a massive resounding 'yes' on my practice. It is very humbling to be included in such a prestigious list and especially when you see your peers who have also been ranked in the same. I feel honoured and hope to continue to do better and also expand my practice with time," said Jaipurar. Jaipurar specialises in corporate and commercial laws including arbitrations and has also represented a large number of local and international corporates on both corporate, transactional as well as dispute res-

olution. The budding entrepreneur has also advised major corporates and some of India's biggest companies on a wide spectrum of issues pertaining to corporate and commercial law. Jaipurar's commercial acumen has further enabled him to provide distinguished support to the arbitration team of the firm in general and also with respect to the commercial and transactional issues arising in such arbitrations. His competencies include a unique mix of corporate and litigation as he has been appointed as arguing counsel in Supreme Court of India for State of Jharkhand. "I feel the unique thing about me is that I am a pure corporate and commercial attorney that while I am advising on the corporate end of a company, I also have the expertise to advise on dispute resolution in particular arbitrations. One may not find a lot of lawyers doing this kind of mixed work," remarked Jaipurar. In addition to this, Jaipurar is also



"I feel the unique thing about me is that I am a pure corporate and commercial attorney which means that while I am advising on the corporate end of a company, I also have the expertise to advise on dispute resolution in particular arbitrations. One may not find a lot of lawyers doing this kind of mixed work," remarked Jaipurar

Regulations from London School of Economics and Political Science. During his graduation days at NLUO, Jaipurar was the first student to be issued a pre-placement offer from a top tier law firm called Khaitan & Co LLP, New Delhi. He later joined Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas & Co New Delhi. "During my college days I was very active in academics and was an avid mooter. Initially I wanted to become an economist but I guess destiny had other plans for me. I decided to give law a try and since then have never doubted my decision," said the budding entrepreneur who is also very fond of travelling and trying different cuisines. Residents of Morhabadi, Ranchi, his father Jaishankar Jaipurar is a practicing Chartered Accountant and Member, CSR Committee, Government of Jharkhand and his mother Leena Jaipurar is a social worker. Her wife Raj Rajeshwari is also a Delhi based lawyer with specialisation in tax and commercials.

**E-TENDER NOTICE**

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer/TRS, East Central Railway, Gomoh on behalf of the President/Chief Engineer, "Open" E-tender from the eligible and experienced agencies or contractors for E-Tender No. EL/547/AMC-Crane/16-19-21R3. Particulars are under:-

1. Name of the work with its Location: Annual maintenance of 09 Nos. EOT Locomotives of various capacities (Open) Tendering Electric Locomotive Shed, Gomoh 2. Approx. Cost of the work: Rs. 2105710.88 (Rupees: Twenty One lakh five thousand seven hundred ten and paise only eight only) 3. Earnest Money: Nil 4. Date & Time for submission of tender & closing of tender: From 19/02/2021 up to closing of tender at 11:30 hrs. on 05/03/2021 5. Website particulars where Tender documents is available: IREPS website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in). Bidders will be able to submit their original / revised bids online through this website only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Notice board location where complete details of tender can be seen: Notice board at the Electrical Engineering/TRS/Gomoh PR/1460/DHM/ETRS/17/20-21/36

# 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 start getting 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 N Naravane.

"Today I am proud to dedicate to the country our modern 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 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 north-east 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 "conventional 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 major step 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 commitment of over ₹6,100 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 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 indigenously developed by DRDO developed Reactive Armour Panels.

After using in different conditions, the Army had recommended a number of improvements. 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 Army. The MBT Arjun MK-1 is a "conventional tank in the world with battle winning efficacy".

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.

"Disengagement and buffer zones 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 buffer zones. He warned that China can play mischief anytime by

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 speciality 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 had the a panel of 11 members struck off on February 1-14 on the issue.

The "impractical, unscientific and unethical notification" should be immediately withdrawn, it said in a statement.

# 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 facing a major 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 tensions but 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 zones 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 buffer zones.

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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 Sichen. "We want to know from this Government when there will be status quo ante as on mid-April 2020 in the entire Indo-China border," he said, asking the Modi 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. "The Modi Government has 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, this does 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, 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."

Antony said 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-1 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 Mahagauri Vikas Paryojana - 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 completion 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 during the clearance of Pune-Nashik (NH-60), Pune-Tambhni-Mangan-Diveagar (NH-756), Hadapsar-Saswad-Jejuri-LonandPhaltan-Mohol (NH-965), Pata-Baramati-Akluj-Tondale (NH-65G) and fourthly of Pune-Solapur (NH-65), Kolhapur to Vaibhavwadi-Vijaydurg under Bharatmala and Allbuga to Sindhudurg coastal National Highway in the State of Maharashtra, extension of Patna-Areraj road to Bettiah, Ramgarhi and Kasauli in the State of Bihar, road connecting Amhad at the border of Goa to Londa, widening of Sunda Sani-Seri-Jangar-Lam Jammu 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 terror attack over the past 14 days after the attack 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 Kovind said the nation is committed to eliminating terrorism. "Nation salutes the sacrifice of our brave soldiers," he said.

Modi described CRPF 'jawsans' 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-Millat 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. I 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.



back, 40 soldiers sacrificed their lives for our nation in Pulwama attack. Remembering the 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.

"I'm paying homage to the slain soldiers. Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu said he stands in solidarity with the jawans' families. "Join the nation in paying my humble tributes to the CRPF personnel who were martyred in the cowardly Pulwama terror attack. The grateful nation will always remember their patriotism & supreme sacrifice," the Vice President Secretariat tweeted quoting Naidu.

"On his home minister Anit Shah said that 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.

# 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, fourthly by fatality and secondly 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. 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 Minister said.

The difference between the recovered and active cases has grown to 1,04,71,164 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), 23,62,8 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 1st dose. As on Sunday, 26 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 2,62,8 HCW 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

Dubai has issued an advisory asking Indian expatriates based there to avoid visiting the mission for consular services and instead use online services as advised in the advisory. The advisory, via 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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Medical Association (IMA) on Sunday urged the government to petition movement from February 15 to March 31 to protest against a Central Council of Indian Medicine notification that authorises and allows 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 the a panel of 11 members struck off on February 1-14 on the issue.

The "impractical, unscientific and unethical notification" should be immediately withdrawn, it said in a statement.

# 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.



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.



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

**Kurnool (AP):** 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, police said.

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

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

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



Police inspect the mangled remains of a traveller van after it collided with a truck on the Hyderabad-Chittoor highway, near Velduthi in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh, Sunday early morning PTL

road hitting a lorry, the official said. The injured have been hospitalized and the condition of two is stated to be serious, police said. Agencies

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

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

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

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

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

to merge the seven sub sects Pallar, Kudumbar, Pannadi, Alaadi, Kadayar, Devendra Kulaatar and Vadhijayar and rename the integrated entity as Devendra Kula Vallalar, according to Dr Krishnasami, party president.

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

According to Dr Krishnasami, the DKV constituted eight per cent of the Tamil Nadu population of about 70 lakh. There were 90 lakh members belonging to the community.

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

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

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

# 80 Shia orphans donate money for Ram Temple

SIANS ■ LUCKNOW

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

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

RSS executive member, Indresh Kumar, said a new chapter of mutual understanding had been written with the construction of the Ram temple.

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

Shri Ram Janambhoomi Teerth Kshetra Secretary Chaitanya Rai said that the accounts of the trust in three nationalized banks show an amount of over Rs 1,000 crore. Nearly 1.50 lakh VHP activists are collecting funds for the Ram temple. 37 activists have been deputed to deposit the donations in the bank accounts.

# Army personnel killed by unidentified men in UP

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"We have detained the young woman named by the family members in the FIR. During questioning she first claimed that the unidentified miscreants also tried to rape her. However, she later changed her statement and claimed that she had been gang-raped. In the light of her conflicting statements, we are getting a medical examination of the woman conducted and have also sent her clothes for forensic examination," he added.

"The body of the victim has been sent for a post-mortem examination. Efforts are on now to identify and arrest the miscreants," the police official said. SIANS

# Girl thrown off terrace after failed rape bid

**Pilibhit (Uttar Pradesh):** A 16-year-old girl was allegedly thrown off a terrace after a failed rape attempt by two of her neighbours, police said on Sunday.

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

Harish Vardhan Singh, Station House Officer (SHO), said the accused, identified as Arvind and Mahendra, had been booked under IPC section 354 (applying to a woman) and 304 (causing hurt), besides provisions of the SC/ST Act and the POCSO Act.

The police have set up teams to arrest

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

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

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

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

# Yogi Govt to celebrate Suheldev anniversary to appease Rajbhar

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

According to the government spokesman, various programmes will be organised across the state to mark the birth anniversary of Maharaja Suheldev, who is revered by the backward Rajbhar community in eastern Uttar Pradesh, will be installed.

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

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

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

The programmes will also include poetry recitation by renowned poets, lighting of 1.25 lakh diyas and other cultural events. Bahraich district magistrate, Shambhu Kumar, said: "The state government has decided to organise the Maharaja Suheldev birth anniversary programmes across the state. The chief minister will visit Bahraich, the birth place of Maharaja Suheldev, and inaugurate the ceremony."

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

responsibility of lighting 1.25 lakh diyas."

BSA Dinesh Kumar Yadav said at least 300 people had been engaged for the work.

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

The Chief Minister has issued directives to hold events to mark Suheldev's birth anniversary at the district level. Memorials in all districts.

An officer in the state tourism department said the government would expand Chittaura as a tourist spot and a memorial would be built which would have a meeting hall with the seating capacity of 2,000 people. The memorial would be built on 82 bighas of land belonging to the royal family of Patparganj.

Availability of land was the biggest obstacle for the construction of Maharaja Suheldev Memorial. Most of the land here is owned by the Patparganj royal family.

Raja Yashuendra Vikram Singh has been appointed the lifetime vice-president of Maharaja Suheldev Memorial Committee. While the Bahraich district magistrate would be the honorary president.

"The temple of Maharaja Suheldev was built by Raja Virendra Vikram Singh of the royal family and his father Raja Yashuendra Singh has been the president of the temple," said Vikram Singh said.

Suheldev was a legendary king of Shravasti (in present day north-eastern Uttar Pradesh) who is known to have defeated and killed the Ghaznavi general, Ghazi Saiyyad Salar Masud, in Bahraich in the early 11th century.

Raja Suheldev finds mention in Mirat-i-Masudi, a 7th century Persian language historical account. According to the legend, Suheldev was the eldest son of King Mordhwaj of Shravasti. SIANS

# Tributes paid to late Malti Mohinder on her second death anniversary

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

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



Sonia Rajesh Khullar and other dignitaries paid homage paid to late Malti Mohinder Singh. It is noteworthy that in the way to encourage and honor teachers, Malti Gyanpeeth Awards were started in the year 2013 in Punjab. Under the patronage of Malti Mohinder Singh, 15 teachers of state and government aided high schools and senior secondary schools of Punjab are given award of Rs. 01 lakh for each year.

# 73 new Covid cases in J&K

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

An official bulletin said that of the new cases, 15 were from the Jammu division and 58 from the Kashmir division while the recovered patients were 65 from the Jammu division and 49 from the Kashmir division.

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

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

# Army helps douse major forest fire along China border in Arunachal

**Itanagar:** Army troops successfully doused a major forest fire in Arunachal Pradesh's Dibang Valley district along the China border, officials said on Sunday.

Defence spokesman Lt Col P. Khongsai said that troops of the Spear Corps extended immediate and critical help to the civil administration in dousing the major forest fire near Anini in Dibang Valley.

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

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

# Yogi assures seers of development in Braj region

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

He said that after Independence, the governments had not worked for religious tourism. "The Kashi Vishwanath corridor work is being done under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj is another example of development of religious tourism. Ayodhya is also coming up as a world class city," he said.

Yogi Adityanath said he had set up the Braj Teerth Vikas Parishad and various developmental projects were being taken up. The Chief Minister also visited the famous Banhi temple and offered prayers. SIANS

# Three held in UP for making fake HSRP

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

In a surprise raid on the intervening night of Friday/Saturday in Mohanpur area, the police recovered about 400 finished plates and more than 300 empty ones on which number was yet to be written.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Piduru Venugopal Reddy contested the election in Nellurupali village while his younger sister, Sannareddy Rajani fought for the Nellaballi panchayat.

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

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

Three former village volunteers managed to win the Sarpanch posts in Visakhapatnam district. Ainnampati Bhaskar Raju won in Melipaka. Padmarekha in Mangalapuram and Karaka Rajyalakshmi in Rajyalakshmi in Jayadulapalem. Subhalaksha, a former vil-

lage volunteer from Muthyalacheruvu village in Ananthapur district's Kadri mandal, has filed her nomination for the sarpanch post and so did three others. However, all three withdrew them, recognising the service Subhalaksha rendered as a volunteer in the panchayat in 1956. It is 20 km far away from Nandiwada, with a population of just 196 people, out of which 150 are voters.

Among these 150, 74 were men and 76 women. Despite being one of the smallest panchayats, the village has seen unanimous elections until now, though bigger villages were going for unanimous polls.

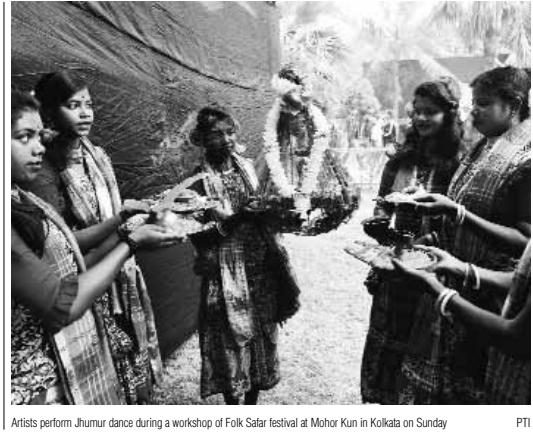
Setting an example that come what may one must always keep fighting, a contestant in Guntur district straightaway went from the hospital to file her nomination papers.

Eluru Aruna was suffering from an ailment related to the nerves. She even had to be put on a ventilator but on the last day of nominations and in a better condition after treatment, she drove down to Chamallamudi office to file her papers.

As she reached the office, the poll officials, empathising with her, went to her car to take her papers.

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

In a peculiar development, a panchayat election contestant at Gummamalapuram in Vizianagaram district literally wore his election symbol - a gown - to impress upon the voters to cast their vote in his favour. SIANS



Artists perform Jhumur dance during a workshop of Folk Salar festival at Mohor Kun in Kolkata on Sunday PTL



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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



Govt. Of India Office of M.S. No.

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 jobs, 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.

# 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



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 the 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 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

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

in Delhi and read up before speaking the following week.

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

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



are making all-out efforts to weaken the TMC when State Assembly elections are round the corner. This 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 States.

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 would increase. The oil expenditure of a farmer who operates various agricultural apparatus and machines like diesel pumps, generators and so on, will increase but the income will not rise proportionately. Hence the Centre and the State Governments should reconsider relaxing the prices keeping in mind the interests of marginal farmers and common oil consumers.

Yugal Kishore Sharma | Faridabad

### 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

## SOUNDBITE

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 —Ajayshann 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

Send your feedback to: [letterstopioneer@gmail.com](mailto:letterstopioneer@gmail.com)





## 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. So be it!

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



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

Be that as it may, any such shift needed a change in technology. Other collateral 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 and use. 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



MOIN ZAZI

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

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 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.

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.

## POINTCOUNTERPOINT

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

I 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 flesh meats." But some far-sighted people understood that the nation's soul was at stake here.



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 oak? Well, okay, maybe not exactly those examples. But what would the veterans of the Long March say about these effeminate young gily-men? 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 policymakers 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?"

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.

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 for our liberties, our rights and our freedoms," Trump said.

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

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

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

"The Senators are Richard Burr, Bill Cassidy, Mitt Romney, Ben Sasse and Pat Toomey," Politico reported.

"The Louisiana GOP

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 almost all the major social media platforms including Twitter and Facebook.

"The arguments of the House Impeachment Managers that the Constitution permits the impeachment of a private citizen, the free speech protection of the First Amendment and the 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 was appointed as 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

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

Inspired by the students, families, and AmeriCorps community she met, went on to help found City Year Sacramento and launch the organization's 2nd 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 districts to improve the 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 TROTTING

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 the results of clinical testing done in Japan showed that the vaccine had an efficacy similar to what overseas tests showed.

KOSOVO VOTES FOR NEW PARLIAMENT

Pristina: Kosovo's voters defied freezing weather to take part in an early parliamentary election Sunday to form a new government amid the coronavirus pandemic, an economic downturn and stalled negotiations with Serbia. Some 1.8 million eligible voters on Sunday are expected to cast their ballots in 2,400 polling stations. They're electing 120 lawmakers among more than 1,000 candidates from 28 political groupings.

TURKEY SAVES 13 OF ITS CITIZENS KILLED IN IRAQ

Ankara: Troops have found the bodies of 13 Turkish citizens abducted by Kurdish insurgents in a 2006 complex operation in northern Iraq, the Turkish defense minister said Sunday. Hulisi Akar said 12 of the victims were shot in the head and one died of a shoulder bullet wound. They were discovered in the Gara region near the Turkish border during an operation against the Kurdistan Workers' Party.

Myanmar anti-coup protesters keep pressure on junta

AP ■ YANGON



Vast numbers of people all over Myanmar have taken to the streets in protest against military takeovers 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 applauding 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 the detention of detainees for more than 24 hours without court permission.

Civil servants have been very active in the protests, and social media postings on Sunday indicated that the railway workers have joined them, with some unconfirmed claims that they have gone on strike.

The military seized power on Feb. 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 Sunday commission refuted that contention, saying there is no evidence to support it.

Prachanda-led group announces fresh agitation against House dissolution

Kathmandu: The Nepal Communist Party's splinter faction led by Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' on Sunday announced a fresh agitation programme against the dissolution of the House of Representatives by Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli.

Nepal plunged into a political crisis on November 20 after Oli, in a surprise move, recommended dissolution of the 275-member House, amidst a tussle for power with the chairman of the Nepal Communist Party's (NCP) splinter faction led by Prachanda. The prime minister's recommendation, President Biddya Devi Bhandari dissolved the House the same day and announced fresh elections on April 30 and May 10, sparking protests from a large section of the NCP. Prachanda, also a co-chair of

the ruling party. The faction led by Prachanda and Madhav Kumar Nepal announced fresh agitations against the dissolution of the House of Representatives.

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

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

January 26 to February 10 under the third phase of protests against the dissolution of the House. Defending his move to dissolve Parliament, Oli recently said some leaders tried to obstruct the functioning of his government and he had no other alternative other than seeking a fresh mandate.

"As some leaders tried to obstruct the functioning of my government and he had no other alternative other than seeking a fresh mandate. Such a situation was created in which the government was unable to move forward, which prompted us to go for elections," he said on February 5.

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

2 killed, 2 hurt in NYC subway stabbing attacks

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

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

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

UK PM to host virtual meeting of G7 leaders

PTI ■ LONDON

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

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

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to attend the

G7 Summit in Cornwall in June after India was invited as a guest country by the UK, Australia, South Korea and Australia.

"The solutions to the challenges we face — from the colossal mission to get vaccines to every single country, to the fight to reverse the damage done to our ecosystems and lead a sustainable recovery from coronavirus — lie in the discussions we have with our friends and partners around the world," said Johnson.

"Quantum leaps in science have given us the vaccines we need and this pandemic for good. Now world governments have a responsibility to work together to put those vaccines to the best possible use. I hope 2021 will be remembered as the year humanity worked together to never before to defeat a common foe," he said.

White House aide resigns after threatening reporter

AP ■ WASHINGTON

White House deputy press secretary T.J. Ducklo has resigned, the day after he was suspended for issuing a sexist and profane threat to a journalist seeking to cover his relationship with another reporter.

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

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

China fires back at US allegations of lack of transparency

Beijing: China fired back at the US on Sunday over the White House's allegations that Beijing withheld some information about the coronavirus outbreak from World Health Organization investigators.

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

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

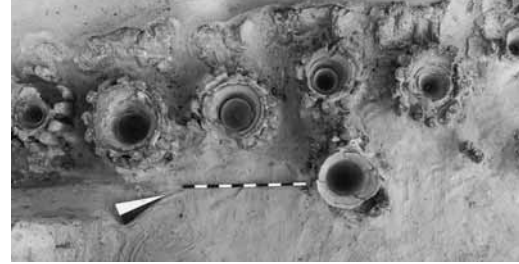
available its data from the earliest days of the outbreak," Sullivan's statement said.

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

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

Archaeologists unearth ancient beer factory in Abydos

AP ■ CAIRO



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

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

He said the factory apparently dates back to the region of King Narmer, who is widely known for his unification of ancient Egypt at the beginning of the First Dynastic Period (3150 BC-2613 BC).

Archaeologists found eight huge units — each is 20 meters (about 65 feet) long and 2.5 metres (about 8 feet) wide. Each unit includes some 40 pottery basins in two rows, which had been used to heat up a mixture of grains and water

to produce beer, Waziri said.

The joint mission is co-chaired by Dr. Matthew Adams of the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, and Deborah Vischak, assistant professor of ancient Egyptian art history and archaeology at Princeton University. Adams said the factory

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

British archaeologists were the first to mention the existence of that factory early 1900s, but they couldn't determine its location, the antiquities ministry said.

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

Anti-viral coating on face masks may kill corona, UK study finds

PTI ■ LONDON

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

According to "The Daily Telegraph", the invisible coating on facemasks attacks the virus by rupturing its outer layer, effectively eliminating all new mutant variants, including the UK's so-called Kent variant.

The technology called DioX is based on ternary ammonium salts — organic compounds widely used in the textile industry for their antimicrobial properties. Laboratory tests showed that the entire genome of the virus, the membrane remains the same regardless of any type of mutation. Hence this way of attacking the pathogen will work on any new variant of coronavirus in Great Britain, senior lecturer at the Department of Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology at the University of Cambridge, told the newspaper.

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

"The technology called DioX is based on ternary ammonium salts — organic compounds widely used in the textile industry for their antimicrobial properties. Laboratory tests showed that the entire genome of the virus, the membrane remains the same regardless of any type of mutation. Hence this way of attacking the pathogen will work on any new variant of coronavirus in Great Britain, senior lecturer at the Department of Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology at the University of Cambridge, told the newspaper.



# 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 observation 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 GST 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 efforts 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. PTT

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

**New Delhi:** Doing away with restrictive conditions for use of steel in highway 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 private integrated steel producers only. The move is aimed at ensuring cost reduction in highway 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 relax conditions which would 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 Ministry to take measures to reduce costs through use of new technology, reducing restrictions on suppliers and making the procurement system transparent, it added. PTT

# ONGC takes leaf out of Reliance's book

**New Delhi:** Taking a leaf out of Reliance Industries Ltd's play book, state-owned Oil & 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 (H2-CNG), gas to power business, bio-energy/ bio-gas/ bio methane/ other biofuels business, etc," it said.

ONGC may use its 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 its own markets.

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 BPCL 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 market price.

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

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

# 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 claim settlement process.

In its circular issued to all insurers excluding GIC Re, Lloyds (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 satisfaction.

"In its circular 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

# Sebi mulls cybersecurity fusion centre for securities market

**New Delhi:** Markets regulator Sebi is in the process of setting up a cybersecurity fusion center, 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 data bases in the markets ecosystem.

Establishing a cybersecurity fusion center 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).

# 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 intercity 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 pointed 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 potential claims are still in play and 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 plead itself in the main pending Company Petition setting out necessary facts/reasons for the same," said NCLAT in its order passed on February 11. PTT

# 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 has 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 less because of the pandemic," Maruti Suzuki India Executive Director (Marketing & Sales) Shashank Srivastava told PTT.

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."

"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.

# SRM inks MoU with TANUVAS for joint research

**Kattankulathur:** SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Kattankulathur has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (TANUVAS). The signing was in the presence of TANUVAS officials: Dr. P. Thiruganathan, Registrar; Dr. Cecilia Jnanapr, Director Research; Dr. V. Appa Rao, Dean Research and Dr. Premnath Manoharan, professor & Head, Food Processing Engineering. SRMIST officials: Dr. S. Ponnamasu, Registrar; Dr. T.V. Gopal, Dean College of Engineering and Technology;

duct joint academic events such as short courses, seminars, workshops, or conferences based on mutual interests and available expertise in both the institutions. Both institutes can share and carry out joint research in technology for disseminating 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. Thiruganathan, Registrar; Dr. Cecilia Jnanapr, Director Research; Dr. V. Appa Rao, Dean Research and Dr. Premnath Manoharan, professor & Head, Food Processing Engineering. SRMIST officials: Dr. S. Ponnamasu, 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."

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

**Aurangabad:** The rate of petrol with additives has crossed the ₹100 mark for a litre in Maharashtra's Parbhani district on Sunday morning, an officer of petrol dealers' association said.

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

Parbhani District Petrol Dealers' Association President Amol Bhedsurkar told PTT, "The rates of petrol with additives in Parbhani has reached to ₹100 per litre for a 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 Mannad 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," Bhedsurkar said.

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

# Sebi mulls cybersecurity fusion centre for securities market

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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).

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

This is to notify the public at large that our client, Mr. Mahaboa Barak, wife of Sh. Abdul Sabar Barak, is applying to the Secretary to the Government of India in the Ministry of Home Affairs for citizenship, and that any person who knows any reason why citizenship by naturalization should not be granted may wish to inform the said Secretary.

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

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**PUBLIC NOTICE**

To be known to the SBI/BSBI, the address of Mr. A. P. V. G. (ON RFD/ROD/CA/381-1)...

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**Office of the Executive Engineer, Jammu Power Distribution Corporation Limited (JPDC), Batoe**

REC'D OFFICE : E-5, South Extension, Part-8, New Delhi-110 049  
 TEL: 011-26159411, 26159422, 26159433, 26159444, 26159455, 26159466  
 FAX: 011-26159477, 26159488, 26159499, 26159500  
 E-MAIL: jpmail@rediffmail.com

**Invitation:** For and on behalf of the Executive Engineer of the Jammu and Kashmir Electric Corporation (JKELCO), Batoe, Jammu, the following are invited to submit bids for the supply, installation, testing and commissioning of 25 KVA substation at Luvher, Muzaffargarh. For all the details and conditions of the Bid, please refer to the enclosed copy of the Bid Form, Specifications, Terms and Conditions, and the Bill of Materials (BOM) for the work.

The Bid Form is available at the website: [www.jkelco.com](http://www.jkelco.com). The Bid Form is to be submitted to the Executive Engineer, Batoe, Jammu, on or before 11/02/2021 at 10:00 hrs. The Bid Form is to be submitted in sealed envelope and should be accompanied by the required bank guarantee in the form of a cash or a bank guarantee for the full amount of the Bid.

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PARTICULARS	QUARTER ENDED 31/12/2020		QUARTER ENDED 31/03/2021		NINE MONTHS ENDED 31/03/2021	
	(₹) LAACS	(₹) LAACS	(₹) LAACS	(₹) LAACS	(₹) LAACS	(₹) LAACS
Net Income from operations	1504.42	1181.31	2045.64			
Net Profit/(Loss) for the period before tax, exceptional and extraordinary items	8987	4822	14851			
Net Profit/(Loss) for the period before tax, (after exceptional and extraordinary items)	8987	4822	14851			
Net Profit/(Loss) for the period after tax (after exceptional and extraordinary items)	6673	3729	11034			
Total Comprehensive Income for the Period (Comprising Profit/(Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)	6673	3729	11034			
Equity Share Capital (₹ QTY)	355.00	355.00	355.00			
Earnings Per Share of (₹) (10: each) for continuing and discontinued operations	1.88	0.67	3.10			
	1.88	0.67	3.10			

**NOTES:**  
 1. The above is an extract of the detailed financial statement for the quarter ended and nine months ended on 31/03/2021. The details of the Financial Statement are available on the website of the Company.  
 2. The above unaudited financial results for the quarter and nine months ended on 31/03/2021 have been reviewed by the Audit Committee and have been approved by the Board of Directors in its meeting held on 14/02/2021.  
 3. The above results have been prepared in accordance with IAS notified under the Companies (Indian Accounting Standards) Rules, 2015 and relevant amendments thereunder.

**Zel Jewellers Limited**  
 Place: New Delhi  
 Date: 14th February, 2021  
 981  
 Rakesh Sharma  
 Chairman  
 DIN: 00128270



**Bollywood**  
 You can tell how smart people are by what they laugh at.  
 —Sonam Kapoor Anuja

# 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-

ator 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 has 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.

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 his love for the role 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 things that you love for each other 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 have 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 rivalries. 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 was 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.

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

## TREND TOOL

# Glow up



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.

## TRENDBLAZER

### AJAY BEGINS SHOOT FOR MAIDAN

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

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



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

### JANNEY PRAISES HER CO-STARS

Actress ALLISON JANNEY enjoyed working with Mila Kunis, Regina Hall and Awkwafina in the film *Breaking News In Yuba County*, and has praised 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 with 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 bonded labour case of 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 rescues 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 government.

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 the 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.

Charukha 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. Subistence 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 true. This 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 this hard fact 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 workers, voluntarily, have come forward to help 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 real 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 situation is so dire 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 such a policy. Hence, what people of developing nations should made 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 the 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 work cannot 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, 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 severe 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-year-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 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 would if I'm there. For people who are just start-

## Train together, stay together

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



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-

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 a workout isn't the last thing on your mind.

**It brings happiness to your relationship**

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

**Accountability**  
Working out together sets the accountability for both partners

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.)

## Don't let yesterday take up too much of today. —Will Rogers

### TEAMS 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 Faresjö 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 to 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 Dorothea 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 wear 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, disrupted 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 overall total on a dustbowl in their bid to level the first Test. Ishant provided the first



## Sorry Bhajji 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 Bhajji 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 Bhajji 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, Bhajji Pa..." said Ashwin. **PTI**

breakthrough for India when he 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.

when the England captain's attempted sweep against the turn landed safely in the hands of Ashwin at short fine-leg.

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

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

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

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

Moosen Ali, coming in at number eight, fell when his edge hit Pant's thighs and rebounded to Ajinkya Rahane who took a fine catch diving forward.

Earlier resuming the day at 300 for six, India added 29 runs to their overnight score. The aggressive Pant scored 25 of those runs, hitting two fours and two sixes to remain unbeaten.

For England, pacer Olly Stone finished with 3 for 47 in his first game in India. Off-spinner Ali (4 for 28) picked up four wickets but proved expensive.

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 wicket-keeper-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. Theirs is obviously a very skilled spin attack as well on that 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 a decision 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 wanted 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 Jonny Warren (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. Mehdi 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 Elvira 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 Azzam had won the toss and had asked Heinrich Klaasen's men but 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 by 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 brought two match points to oust 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, 1-6, 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 any other 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 dominated herself before drawing level by pouncing on Williams' 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

Aired-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 aging 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 tugged 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 in good form 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.