



One crore COVID-19 vaccine doses given in 34 days: Health Ministry  
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U.K. court rules that Uber drivers are entitled to workers' rights  
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Indian govt. likely to file appeal against Cairn arbitration award  
Page 14



Medvedev eases past Tsitsipas, meets Djokovic in final  
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## NEARBY



3 policemen, 3 militants killed in J&K incidents

SRINAGAR  
Three policemen and three militants were killed in three separate incidents in the Kashmir Valley on Friday, as the police chalked out a summer strategy to secure tourism in J&K. In an attack in Srinagar, a militant, who was caught on camera, alighted in busy Baghhat Barzulla and shot dead two policemen from a close range.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 9

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Delhi Police to go easy on violators of COVID norms

NEW DELHI  
Delhi Commissioner of Police S.N. Shrivastava on Friday said violators of COVID-19 norms will face no action. Over the next few days, the police will recommend filing of non-traceable reports and deletion of the database of people who were booked for violating lockdown rules or not wearing face masks. Earlier, the Commissioner had instructed officers to take no action against migrant workers during the lockdown.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

## 4 PLA soldiers died in Galwan: China

Beijing breaks silence 8 months after LAC clash



Face off: This still from China TV footage shows Indian and Chinese troops in the Galwan Valley in June last year. ■ AP

on the border since 1967.

The official *PLA Daily* said "five Chinese frontier officers and soldiers stationed in the Karakoram Mountains have been recognised by the Central Military Commission of China for defending national sovereignty and territorial integrity", one of whom was injured.

"Chen Hongjun, Chen Xiangrong and Xiao Siyuan fought to the last minute and sacrificed their lives," the report said, adding that Chen Hongjun was a battalion commander. "Wang Zhuoran, a fellow soldier, also gave his life to rescue his

## Disengagement at Pangong Tso completed

India and China have completed disengagement on both banks of Pangong Tso (lake) in eastern Ladakh, and the 10th round of Corps Commander talks are to be held in Moldo on the Chinese side around 10 a.m. on Saturday to discuss pullbacks from other

friction areas, a defence official said on Friday.

Disengagement was fully complete as per an agreement and had been jointly verified by both sides, a second official said. All landforms have been restored as they existed before April 2020. ■ PAGE 9

comrades when crossing the river to support the others."

The regimental commander of the PLA Xinjiang Military Command, Qi Fabao, was also recognised "and given the title of 'hero regimental commander for defending the border'".

The report said he sus-

tained "a serious head injury" and survived. A first-class merit was awarded to Chen Xiangrong, Xiao Siyuan and Wang Zhuoran.

The report, however, did not say how many injuries the PLA suffered in total.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## Touchdown



First shot: The shadow of NASA's Perseverance rover is seen on the surface of Mars as it lands on the planet. With this, NASA is set to become the first space agency to fly a drone in the atmosphere of another planet. ■ AFP (REPORT ON PAGE 13)

## Disha sent to 3-day judicial custody

Police say activist was being evasive

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Friday sent climate activist Disha Ravi, arrested for allegedly being involved in sharing a 'toolkit' on social media in connection with the ongoing farmers' protest, to three-day judicial custody.

The court's decision came after the Delhi Police said it wanted three days judicial custody as, during the course of investigation under the five-day police custody, Ms. Ravi had been evasive and tried to shift the blame on the co-accused.



Disha Ravi leaving a Delhi court on Friday. ■ ANI

The police said her custodial interrogation was not required for now but they may seek her further interrogation later.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## HC criticises police probe in riots case

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH  
NEW DELHI

## Two, including minor, held for death of girls in Unnao

DAMINI NATH  
UNNAO

In a scathing remark over the way a north-east Delhi riots case has been investigated, the High Court on Friday rebuked the Delhi Police for arresting three men and objecting to their bail with "no evidence whatsoever".

The two victims were laid

to rest on Friday amid a large police presence.

According to Inspector General (Lucknow range) Laxmi Singh, the main accused, Vinay, confessed to giving water mixed with insecticide to one of the girls after she rebuffed his repeated requests to give him her phone number.

Ms. Singh added that according to the accused, the

other two girls, all relatives, snatched the bottle and drank from it, despite his attempts to stop them. Vinay was helped by a minor, the official said.

The IG said Vinay had come to know the girls during the lockdown as their fields were adjacent to each other.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## 'Reply to pleas by Natasha, Devangana'

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday sought response of the Delhi Police on appeals by JNU students and Pinjra Tod members Natasha Narwal and Devangana Kalita challenging the rejection of their bail pleas by a trial court here.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

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P V Sindhu

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Jayesh Ranjan, IAS

Secretary, IT, Electronics & Communications Dept., Govt. of Telangana



Durga Shakti Nagpal, IAS

TIRUCHIRAPPALLI SMART CITY LTD		
Tender Notice No : 245 Serial No. 1,2,3/- 2020-2021		
Receipt and submission of tenders as per Tender Notice No. 245 Serial No. 1,2,3 /2020-2021 is postponed due to administrative reason as detailed below.		
Other terms and Conditions remain unchanged.		
Details	Date already notified	Date postponed
Last date for download of Bid documents	18.02.2021 Upto 15.00 Hours.	23.02.2021 Upto 15.00 Hours.
Submission of bids through e-submission	19.02.2021 Upto 15.00 Hours.	24.02.2021 Upto 15.00 Hours.
Tender Opening Date and Time	19.02.2021 Upto 16.00 Hours.	24.02.2021 Upto 16.00 Hours.
Other terms and Conditions remain unchanged.		
Commissioner, Tiruchirappalli City Corporation.		DIPR/ 1282 /TENDER/2021

TIRUCHIRAPPALLI SMART CITY LTD		
Tender Notice No :242-2020-2021		
Receipt and submission of tenders as per Tender Notice No. 242 /2020-2021 is postponed due to administrative reason as detailed below.		
Details	Date already notified	Date postponed
Last date for download of Bid documents	18.02.2021 Upto 15.00 Hours.	23.02.2021 Upto 15.00 Hours.
Submission of bids through e-submission	19.02.2021 Upto 15.00 Hours.	24.02.2021 Upto 15.00 Hours.
Tender Opening Date and Time	19.02.2021 Upto 16.00 Hours.	24.02.2021 Upto 16.00 Hours.
Other terms and Conditions remain unchanged.		
Commissioner, Tiruchirappalli City Corporation.		DIPR/ 1281 /TENDER/2021

Tender Notice Government of Punjab					
Executive Engineer, DWSS Division Reajpura on behalf of Chairman concerned GPWSCS, invite online bids for the following works under Sub Component A(II), in District Patiala:-					
<b>Providing improved access to water, through house connections to water supply schemes:-</b>					
1. Lohsimbi Ghanour 19.45 0.39 2. Malikpur jattan Sanour 4.10 0.08 3. Sanjarpur Ghanour 9.73 0.19 4. Sehra Shambhu kalan 5.65 0.11 5. Salempur jattan Ghanour 6.49 0.13 6. Bakshiwal Rajpura 8.46 0.17 7. Basantpura Rajpura 6.38 0.13 8. Bir Kauli Sanour 6.59 0.13 9. Chatar nagar Shambhu kalan 8.06 0.16 10. Fatehpur garhi Rajpura 6.34 0.13 11. Ghaggar sarai Shambhu kalan 8.39 0.17 12. Kam khurd Ghanour 8.63 0.17 13. Khanpur barring Shambhu kalan 8.37 0.17 14. Lalina Sanour 7.10 0.14 15. Mandwali Shambhu kalan 9.28 0.19 16. Ramnagar Rajpura 9.83 0.20 17. Rangian Rajpura 7.16 0.14 18. Rathian Sanour 5.54 0.11 19. Ugana Rajpura 5.01 0.10					
Date & time of start of sale of Bid document: 23.02.2021 at 11:00 Hrs. Date & time for submission of Bid document: 08.03.2021 upto 17:00 Hrs. Date & time of opening of Technical Bid: 09.03.2021 at 14:00 Hrs Bid processing fee: As per web site. For detail log onto: <a href="https://eproc.punjab.gov.in">https://eproc.punjab.gov.in</a> Note: Any corrigendum(s) to the Tender Notice shall be published on the above website only.					
Ph: 01762-241169 Email- wss_xenrajpura@yahoo.in DPR PB 4215/12/54/2021/1661					
Executive Engineer W/S & Sanitation Div., Rajpura					

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT NOTICE INVITING TENDER					
Sealed items rate tender are hereby invited by the Executive Engineer Paonta (B&R) Division HP/PWD Paonta Sahib on behalf of Governor of HP from the approved/ eligible contractor registered in HPPWD for the work, so as to reach in this office on 10-03-2021 up to 10.30 AM and shall be opened on 10-03-2021 the same day at 11:00 A.M. in the presence of intending contractors or their authorized representative who may like to be present. The tender form can be had from this office against cash payment (non refundable) up to 4.00 PM on 04-03-2021 for which the applications should reach in this office up to 4.00 PM on 03-03-2020. The tender form will be issued to the contractor giving proof of registration as GST.					
The earnest money in the shape of NSC / Time deposit account / Saving account in any of the Post Office in HP or FDR/CDR from nationalized bank duly pledged in the name of Executive Engineer Paonta B&R Division HP/PWD Paonta Sahib must be accompanied with the application. Conditional tender and tender received without earnest money will be rejected. The offer of the tender shall be kept open for 90 days. The Executive Engineer reserves the right to reject any or all tenders without assigning the reason. If there happens to be any holiday the same will be open on the next working day.					
Sr. Name of works No.	Estimated Cost	Earnest Money	Time Limit	Cost of Form	Class of Form
1 Periodical renewal on Maijra to Kotri road km 0/0 to 2/230. (SH:- Providing and laying G-II for repair to pot holes, 20mm thick premix carpet surfacing and 1/L kilometer stone in km. 1/900 to 2/230 and V-shape drain essential reaches under AMP for the year 2020-21). HP-1004MRL062432302.	Rs. 2,14,770/-	Rs. 4,300/-	Two months	350/-	C & D Class
2 Repair & maintenance of Sainik Rest House at Paonta Sahib (SH-P/L Roof treatment, panelled & glazed shutters, Alumin-um fitting, distempering etc.).	Rs. 1,46,568/-	Rs. 3,000/-	Two months	350/-	C & D Class
3 A/R & M/O Civil Hospital Paonta Sahib, Tehsil Paonta Sahib, Distt. Sir-mour(HP) (SH-P/L Wood work, grill, tiles work, roof treatment, distempering and painting and sanitary fitting in old hospital building) in DRB Ward.	Rs. 1,35,178/-	Rs. 2,800/-	Two months	350/-	C & D Class
4 A/R & M/O link to village Longarh km 0/0 to 5/150. (SH- P/L bearing coat over bridge slab & C/o parapets on both sides approaches of bridge at Km. 5/125).	Rs. 98,983/-	Rs. 2000/-	Two months	350/-	C & D Class
Conditions:- 1. The tender document shall be issued to only those contractors / firms:- 2. Who possess valid Contractor Registration Number. 3. Who possess valid GST Registration Number. 4. Who Possess valid EPF Number. 5. Ambiguous / telegraphic / conditional tenders or tenders by FAX / E-mail shall not be entertained / considered in any case. 6. If any date mentioned above happens to be local/gazetted holiday, the same shall be processed on next days. 7. The earnest money for above cited work should be submitted with the applications for tender form, no exemption for earnest money will be allowed. 8. The contractor / firms are requested to insert the rate of each item in words as well as in figures/failing which XEN reserves the right to accept/reject any or all tenders. 9. List of machinery tool plants as per schedule F Sr. No. 6.19 Ref. Clause No. 18 i.e. R.C. and purchase bills alongwith proof of ownership/Affidavit hire basis.					

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Other terms and Conditions remain unchanged.	
Commissioner, Tiruchirappalli City Corporation.	
DIPR/ 1282 /TENDER/2021	

Executive Engineer,  
Paonta B&R Division,  
HP PWD, Paonta Sahib

HP / 5906/20-21

CM YK

## 94 arrested in riots cases using tech aid, say police

They employed tools like facial recognition technology

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI



S.N. Shrivastava

gated by Special Cell".

Mr. Shrivastava elaborated on the use of technology: "Evidence based on use of science and technology cannot be refuted so we used technology in a big way. We used video analytic and Facial Recognition Software (FRS) for the analysis of CCTV footage to identify all the accused persons."

Explaining further, he said the pictures were extracted from the CCTV and available video footage. Then, using FRS, it was matched against the criminal database available with the force as well as the data from driving licence photograph taken by transport authorities. "A total of 231 persons were arrested on the basis of CCTV and video footage, including 137 who were identified by FRS when matched with criminal record and remaining 94 identified from driving licence photograph," he said.

The commissioner said that "to ensure free and fair investigation", three Special Investigation Teams were formed under Crime Branch to investigate relatively important 60 cases and one case was registered "to unearth the conspiracy behind the riots which was investi-

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- Package A from Chandranagar to Papu-Nallah will be completed by March 31, 2021 (except for bridges, culverts & underpass).
- Long pending work on Hollongi airport started and Itanagar would soon be in country's Aviation Map.
- Government of Arunachal Pradesh has made structural changes and strengthen the Arunachal Pradesh Public Service Commission and Arunachal Pradesh Staff Selection Board, where meritocracy, hardwork and talent is rewarded.
- Arunachal Pradesh passed a bill to do away with the Anchal Samiti, the intermediate level of the three-tier panchayati raj system, and set up a two-tier system in the state.
- ₹ 400 cr earmarked for upgrading the health infrastructure in Arunachal Pradesh.
- Five (5) new ITIs approved by the Government of India (Lumla, Koloriang, Bana, Basar and Namsai).
- Bottlenecks in construction of 132 KV Transmission Grids in Arunachal by Power Grid and Subansiri Hydro Project (2000 MW) resolved and work progressing in full swing. 600 MW Kameng Hydro Electric Project has been completed.
- Strengthening of Power distribution system in 9 towns with ₹ 150 Crore in advance stage of completion.
- India Today 'State of the States Award- 2020': Arunachal Pradesh has been conferred as the 'leading small state in the fight against COVID-19' and 'the most enhanced small state in education'.
- Under Chief Minister's Sashakt Kisan Yojana, 1553 farmers were benefitted during last year. They have been provided subsidized farm machineries like Tractors, Power Tiller, Rotaty Tiller, Paddy De-husking Machine, Power Sprayer, Atta Chakki, Reaper, Combine harvesters.
- Under the Farm Cluster scheme, each district having an area of at least 5 hectare upto 100 hectares with focus crops for cultivation covering almost 4000 acres of land developed and under cultivation.
- Arunachal Pradesh have fully implemented PM Garib Kalyan Yojana and PM Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana. All 1.77 lakh BPL and AAY families received 5 kg rice per person and 1 kg pulses and 1.33 lakh families received ₹ 1000/- as assistance from state government.
- Additional ₹ 70 cr credit approved for 3500 entrepreneurs of Arunachal Pradesh by Government of India.
- Tezu airport has been included in Udan and flight service to start soon.
- Defence Minister inaugurated 8 new bridges in Arunachal and laid foundation stone for Nechiphu Tunnel. Sisiri bridge over Sisar river and Tawangchu bridge over Tawangchu river has been inaugurated and made operational.

### ARUNACHAL BATTLE AGAINST COVID -19

Arunachal Pradesh receives 32000 doses of COVID vaccine and are dispatched to designated vaccine stores across state.

Over 24,000 health and frontline workers have so far received vaccine shots in the state.

Arunachal Pradesh has emerged as the state with the best recovery rate in the country, touching nearly 99.56%.

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## PUBLIC NOTICE

## DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-III, DELHI

4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Jeevan Tara Building, Parliament Street, New Delhi-110001

Notice under Section 19(4) of the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 read with Rule 12 &amp; 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rules) 1993.

In the matter of  
OA NO. 524/2018 DRT / III

CANARA BANK Vs SH. SARVESH KUMAR GUPTA &amp; ANR

APPLICANT DEFENDANTS

D-1 SH SARVESH KUMAR GUPTA S/O SH JAHAR SINGH (PROPRIETOR M/S PERFECT CLEAN SERVICES) FLAT NO.90, GROUND FLOOR, BLOCK-F, POCKET-17, SECTOR-15, ROHINI, DELHI-110089

D-2 SMT. RAJAN DEVI W/D SHARVESH KUMAR (GUARANTOR/MORTGAGOR) FLAT NO.90, GROUND FLOOR, BLOCK-F, POCKET-17, SECTOR-15, ROHINI, DELHI-110089

Whereas the above named applicant has instituted a case against you and whereas it has been issued by the concerned court of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in this Tribunal 22.02.2021 at 10:30 A.M.

Take Notice that in case of your failure to appear on the above mentioned day before this Tribunal, the case will be heard and decided in your absence.

Due to ongoing Pandemic Situation, all the matters will be taken up through video conferencing and for that purpose : (i) All the advocates/litigants shall download the "CISCO WEBEX" application/ Software; (ii) "Meeting ID" and "Password" for the next date of hearing qua cases to be taken by "Registrar/ Recovery Officer-I and Recovery Officer-II" will be available one day prior to the next date at DRT Official portal i.e., [drt.gov.in](#) under the Public Notice Head. (iii) In any exigency quota that the Advocates/Litigants can contact the concerned office at Ph. No. 23748468

Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal on this 07th day of JAN 2021.

By Order of the Tribunal, Assistant Registrar DRT-III, New Delhi

## PUBLIC NOTICE

I Vijayalaxmi Rajendran, Resident of Flat No. F-704, Nirala Eden Park, Ahinsa Khan-2, Indrapuram, Ghaziabad, U.P. am purchasing Flat No. C- 806, Nirala Eden Park, Ahinsa Khan-2, Indrapuram, Ghaziabad measuring 1600 sq ft (148.64 sq mtrs) from Mrs Neeta Tyagi who is the owner of the said property. I have been informed that Mrs Neeta Tyagi has lost and misplaced the original allotment letter and flat buyer agreement regarding which a police complaint has been lodged on 10.02.2020 at Indrapuram police station, Ghaziabad. If anybody finds the misplaced original documents, the same may be returned to C-806, Nirala Eden Park, Ahinsa Khan-2, Indrapuram, Ghaziabad, U.P. I am the sole owner of the property and stand on my own risk. If anybody has any claim, right, interest in the said property he/she shall inform within 7 days to the undersigned on telephone number 9655988133 failing which the property shall be deemed to be free from any encumbrances, claims and liens.

Dated- 19.02.2021 Vijayalaxmi Rajendran

## LOST OF FORM 38

We Would like to inform the General Public that the form-38, bearing no. 3947955 to 3947964, 4362412, 4362415, 450893, 450909, 165542, 450904 to 450906 total 18 (Eighteen) Forms has been lost if any person (s) who find it is requested to return at below address. Legrand Hospitality Pvt. Ltd, R3, Builder area Greater Noida Phone No. 8527794770.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

The General Public is informed that my client's Shri Mukesh Kumar Agarwal & Shri Diyanshi Agarwal resident of 59 Ashirwad Apartment, Plot No. 74, I.P. Extn., Patparganj, East Delhi-110092 (IND), Partners in M/s Chandra Laxmi Agrotech & M/s DRMA Agrotech respectively, are intending to purchase 2 (Two) Farm House's No. 28 & 29, Situated at Ganga Krishi Vatika, Village Arthalah, Indrapuram Ghaziabad from Shri Rajesh Arora & Smt. Samita Arora W/o Shri Rajesh Arora (owners), resident of P-7/7, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi.

If any person is having any objection, claims, interest & dispute with the title of Farm House or for the above intended transaction, he/she/they may contact the undersigned with the documentary proof within 14 days of publication, failing which my client will proceed to complete the purchase of above farm lands from the above owners. Thereafter, My Client shall not be responsible for any claim in any manner.

Avinid Anand  
Chamber No. 722, Block-E, Lawyers Chamber, Karkardooma Court Shahdara, Delhi-110032

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RISE 06:55	SET 18:15
RISE 11:55	SET 01:04
SUNDAY, FEB. 21	
RISE 06:54	SET 18:16
RISE 12:36	SET 02:00
MONDAY, FEB. 22	
RISE 06:54	SET 18:17
RISE 13:23	SET 02:55

**Delhi Weather** max min  
Delhi City 27 10  
Safdarjung 27 10  
Palam 24 12

**Delhi Palam Today**  
29°C Shallow to moderate fog would prevail during morning. A comfortable day with mainly sunny sky.

**Delhi Palam Tomorrow**  
29°C Dry weather mainly, marginal drop in morning temperatures likely. Light dry winds and haze would prevail.

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**THE HINDU**  
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As farmers and visitors to the protest site at the Singhu border make their way from their trollies parked along the National Highway to the main stage, their walk is not only interrupted by various langars that have been set up offering food but also local vendors trying to sell their wares.

From power banks and speakers to clothes and dholaks, the vendors who usually frequent weekly bazaars across the Capital have made a beeline for the protest site hoping to make a profit. As Ramesh peels carrots, caul-

## Vendors look to cash in at Singhu

They have utilised the opportunity to sell their 'inventions' to make up for loss



A vendor selling his wares at the farmers' protest site at the Singhu border on Friday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

from Yamunanagar to show solidarity with the farmers after eating a meal of rice and dal at a langar says the innovative products add an interesting touch to the protest. "We have been coming here often to show solidarity. The last time we came here, we were treated to a popcorn langar and now we have seen some interesting products. For people to keep coming back to show solidarity, these are interesting changes," says Harkeerat Kaur a visitor.

It is not only wandering vendors who are looking for a change of fortunes at the protest site but also those with permanent shops. Akhilesh, who has a sticker shop, says: "Earlier, we used to make stickers that said Jai Mata Di or other message stickers popularly stuck behind trucks. But now there have been no takers so we have started making and selling stickers related to the farmers' protest."

flower, potatoes and onions with quick strokes, leaving those watching awed, he says that he has been selling his peeler called "fata fat" that he claims he invented 20 years ago. Due to the COVID-19 lockdown, sales have dwindled but he hopes to do brisk business at the protest site.

"I buy my stock from Sadar Bazaar and sell them across the city. I have been coming to the protest site for the past few days and have found more takers than anywhere else in the city," he said.

A family that has travelled

## 'Reply to appeals by Natasha, Devangana'

HC seeks response from Delhi Police

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday sought response of Delhi Police on appeals by JNU students and Pinjra Tod members Natasha Narwal and Devangana Kalita challenging the rejection of their bail pleas by a trial court here.

A Bench of Justices Siddharth Mridul and A.J. Bhamhani also issued notice to the Delhi government and sought their stand by March 10, the next date of hearing.

Both Ms. Narwal and Ms. Kalita are booked under the anti-terror law Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act in north-east Delhi riots case.

Ms. Narwal was arrested

on May 23, along with fellow JNU student Ms. Kalita in relation with an FIR registered on February 24 last year over the sit-in protest at Jaffrabad metro station against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

On January 28, the trial court had dismissed their bail pleas.



## Rail Land Development Authority

(A Statutory Authority under Ministry of Railways, Government of India)  
Unit No. 702-B, 7th Floor, Konnectus Tower-II DMRC Building, Ajmeri Gate, Delhi-110002, Phone: +91-11-23232854, Fax: +91-11-23232835

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) FOR ENGAGEMENT OF CONSULTANT FOR PROVIDING ARCHITECTURAL & REAL ESTATE CONSULTANCY FOR RE-DEVELOPMENT OF LOCO COLONY AT DANAPUR, BIHAR

Estimated Cost for the work Rs. 8.98 Lakh | For any queries/questions, please contact JGM/Arch., M: 7507896237 | E-mail: jgmarch@rlda.railnet.gov.in

Last Date & Time of Submission of E-bid: 18.03.2021 upto 15:00 hrs.

(1) For complete details, visit website [www.rlda.indianrailways.gov.in](#) or [www.tenderlandz.com/RLDA](#). (2) Any Corrigendum/Addendum to this publication, if any, would be hosted on above mentioned websites only and will be published in newspapers. (RFP Notice No. RLDA/RFP/CT-07 of 2021) DGM/Tender (Mob: 770318078)

## WESTERN RAILWAY

## E-Procurement Tender Notice No. STM FEBRUARY 2021 1 - TENDER dated 18.02.2021.

Chief Engineer, Western Railway, Churchgate invites the following E-Procurement tender: Tender No. W628-03-20-25. Description of stored tender : Digital Ultrasonic Single Rail Tester with coloured signals & real A-scan pulse echo with continuous recording of B-scan storage along with data sets as per RDSO specification No. RDSO/M&C/NDT/128/2007 (B-Scan) Rev-III, July 2017 with standard Accessories. Qty. In Nos. 16, Digital Ultrasonic Double Rail Tester with minimum two base lines, coloured signals & real A-scan pulse echo with continuous recording of B-scan storage along with data sets as per RDSO specification No. RDSO/M&C/NDT/130/2007 (B-Scan) Rev-III, July 2017 with standard Accessories. Qty. In Nos. 18, Digital Ultrasonic Tester Equipment for welded rail joints with coloured LCD TFT screen, trigonometrical function & A-scan storage as per RDSO specification No. M&C/NDT/129/2005, Rev-II, Aug 2014 with standard Accessories. Qty. In Nos. 02, Total Tender Value is ₹ 4,39,14,912.00/- EMID In ₹. Exempted: Date of Closing of e-Tender Box at 11:00 Hrs : 16.03.2021, Date of Opening of e-Tender Box at 11:15 Hrs : 16.03.2021, 1. The complete information along with tender document of above E-Procurement Tenders is available on website [https://ireps.gov.in](#), upto the due date of tender opening. 2. Bids other than in the form of E-bids shall not be accepted against above tenders. For this purpose, vendors are required to get themselves registered with IREPS website along with class III Digital signature certificates issued by CCA under IT Act 2000.

## U. P. POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED

## E-Tender Notice

E-Tender No. SD-901- online e-Bids are invited for "Supply

of 245 kV CVTs e-tender has been uploaded on 17.02.2021 on [www.etender.up.nic.in](#)

estimated Cost of supply : Rs. 1.72 Crore only. Completion Period: 04 months E.M.D. cost Rs. 90 Thousand only. Last date of tender submission 18.03.2021 at 15:30 Hrs. Total Quantum of work, tender specification and other terms & conditions are as per tender document available on the e-tender portal. Undersigned reserves the right to cancel the e-Bids without assigning any reason.

Corrigendum, Addendum, Extension if any shall be uploaded only on the above website. Bidders are advised to visit the website regularly for updated information from time to time.

Superintending Engineer, ESDC-I, UPPTCL

## HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT "CORRIGENDUM"

The Tender invited vide this office NIT No. 8846-96 dated 12.02.2021 due to be opened on 16.03.2021, inadvertently the starting date for downloading of bid and deadline for submission of bid written as 18.02.2021 & 25.02.2021 respectively, now the starting date of downloading and deadline for submission of bid is read as 03.03.2021 and 15.03.2021 instead of above said date respectively.

Executive Engineer, Paonta B&R Division, HP. PWD., Paonta Sahib.

HP / 5916/20-21

## SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

## PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL LINE WITH PLATFORM AND APPROACH ROAD

## E-Tender Notice

Sr. Divisional Engineer (Co), South East Central Railway, Nagpur, acting for and on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tender for execution of work mentioned below:- Sl. No. 1.

Name of the work: Provision of Additional Line with Platform and Approach Road at Garha station under the jurisdiction of ADEN/ Nainpur. Tender Notice No.: N/33/NGP/2020-21. Approx. Tender Value: ₹ 1,98,81,396/-

Earliest Money: Nil. Completion Period: 6 (Six) Months.

**WEATHER WATCH**

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

**Forecast for Saturday:** Thunderstorm with lightning likely at isolated places over Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Gilgit-Baltistan, Muzaffarabad, coastal Andhra Pradesh, south interior Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Kerala. Dense/very dense fog likely in isolated pockets over Delhi, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	... .31.2...	15.7		Kozhikode	10.1...32.1...	22.2	
Ahmedabad	... .33.2...	17.3		Kurnool	3...26.3...	21.2	
Aizawl	... .27.7...	10.7		Lucknow	1.6...29.5...	16.0	
Allahabad	... .31.2...	13.5		Madurai	... .34.0...	23.2	
Bengaluru	... .29.4...	18.2		Mangaluru	0.6...34.5...	22.9	
Bhopal	... .28.1...	15.0		Mumbai	0.3...33.8...	21.5	
Bhubaneswar	... .32.7...	20.0		Mysoor	... .32.2...	18.6	
Chandigarh	... .25.7...	11.5		New Delhi	... .26.8...	9.9	
Chennai	... .31.0...	24.0		Patna	... .28.8...	14.4	
Cochin	... .32.2...	22.0		Poorni	4.00...30.0...	26.1	
Dehradun	... .26.6...	10.1		Puducherry	... .32.4...	21.0	
Gangtok	... .16.4...	7.6		Pune	0.6...27.8...	16.3	
Goa	... .33.2...	21.6		Raipur	... .29.0...	17.0	
Guwahati	... .29.2...	14.0		Ranchi	... .25.8...	16.0	
Hubbali	... .29.0...	19.0		Shillong	... .19.6...	11.3	
Hyderabad	... .21.7...	18.4		Shimla	... .16.3...	6.0	
Imphal	... .28.0...	8.4		Srinagar	... .18.0...	0.6	
Jaipur	... .29.6...	14.6		Thiruvananthapuram	... .34.1...	24.4	
Kochi	... .31.2...	25.0		Tiruchi	... .33.7...	22.0	
Kohima	... .20.8...	7.0		Vijayawada	... .30.4...	22.2	
Kolkata	... .30.3...	19.6		Visakhapatnam	... .30.6...	22.0	

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

**Pollutants in the air you are breathing**

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Muzaffarpur, Bihar recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 358 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Shillong, Meghalaya recorded a healthy AQI score of 16.

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor □ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)  
■: Sulphur Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

**PM2.5 & PM10:** Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Punjab to amend industrial policy

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH

To promote post-COVID-19 industrial revival and attract greater investment, the Punjab Cabinet on Friday gave approval to amend the Industrial and Business Development Policy, 2017, for

extension of Goods and Services Tax (GST) formula for availing incentives under the said policy till October 17, 2022.

The decision was taken in a Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Amarinder Singh here.

New tourist points to be identified at Sambhar Lake

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
JAIPUR

New tourist points for witnessing the flora and fauna and having a glimpse of salt harvesting will be identified shortly at the world-famous Sambhar Salt Lake, situated 80 km away from Jaipur. A "salt train", which transported salt from the pans to a nearby refinery, will also be restarted.

Chief Secretary Nirjan Arya said here on Friday that the Sambhar Lake, which formed part of the desert circuit in the Centre's Swadesh Darshan Scheme, had an immense potential for tourism. In addition to the migratory birds, the natural process of salt getting deposited in the lake could be displayed to the tourists, he said.

**Protection of birds**  
New destinations around the lake, including salt museum, caravan park, bicycle track and gardens, are set to attract a large number of tourists to the region. Mr. Arya said a constant monitoring for protection of migratory birds would be ensured at the lake, where the mass death of birds had occurred in 2019 because of avian botulism.

The illegal salt production in the lake will be stopped through action against unauthorised borewells and pipelines laid in the region, while encroachments on the land will be removed with the help of police.

# Farm laws are against middle class, says Pilot

Farmers are not begging but fighting for their rights'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
JAIPUR

Congress leader Sachin Pilot on Friday said the Centre's agriculture sector laws were not just anti-farmer, but were also against the middle class and the youth. The farmers agitating against the statutes were not begging but fighting for their rights as an important segment in the democratic set-up, he said.

Mr. Pilot, along with 15 Congress MLAs, addressed a huge farmers' rally organised in Kotkhwada area of Chaksu tehsil, near Jaipur, with a call for immediate repeal of the controversial laws. The legislators included Niwai MLA Prashant Bairwa, who had extended support to Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot during the political crisis in July last year.

The rally, organised by Chaksu MLA Ved Prakash Solanki, sent across the mes-



Congress leader Sachin Pilot addressing a farmers' rally at Kotkhwada in Jaipur district on Friday. ■ PTI

sage of Mr. Pilot's political influence with the presence of thousands of people of the region dominated by Dalit, Jat and Meena communities. Large cut-outs of Mr. Pilot and former Congress president Rahul Gandhi were put up at the venue.

Mr. Pilot, who was sacked as Deputy Chief Minister during the turmoil created by his rebellion, said his party would compel the BJP-led

government at the Centre to withdraw the farm laws. A three-point resolution passed on the occasion demanded repeal of the legislations, enactment of a law to ensure minimum support prices for crops and the rollback of the hike in fuel prices.

This was first major rally of farmers organised after the recent visit of Mr. Gandhi to the State.

## Rats nibble at farmer's body

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The body of a 72-year-old farmer was allegedly gnawed at by rats at the mortuary of the civil hospital in Haryana's Sonipat district. The incident came to light when the family of Rajaender found injury marks on his face and foot.

TO ADVERTISE  
PLEASE CONTACT

Mr. N SELVA KUMAR

PH: 9820350726

selvakumar.n@thehindu.co.in

THE HINDU

India's National Newspaper

## ADVERTISEMENT NOTICE

To,  
S/218 Anmol Sapota  
Vill..Putali Bazar-01  
PO/PS/Dist: Syangja,  
West Nepal

(T) Officer-in-Charge, Syangja Police Station, Dist-Syangja, West Nepal.

It is to intimate by this advertisement Notice that, you were granted and availed 30 days leave w.e.f. 30.08.2019 PM to 29.09.2019 PM. You were due to resume duty on 30.09.2019 AM, but instead of joining, you are overstaying the leave w.e.f. 30.09.2019 AM without any intimation or prior permission from the competent authority. Inspite of issue several recall notices by Registered Post with AD, you have not joined till now. So Departmental Proceeding No.05/2020 was initiated against you to removal from service. Your present where about is also known.

Hence, you are once again directed to join your duty within 7 (Seven) days from the date of publication of this Advertisement Notice, failing which necessary Departmental action as deemed proper shall be taken against you.

Commandant OSAP 2nd Bn.,  
Jharsuguda, Odisha, India  
OIPR-12029/11/0030/2021

**OdishaTourism**  
**Paryatan Bhawan, Lewis Road**  
**Bhubaneswar-751014**  
Fax No.+91 674 2430887  
E-mail: info@odishatourism.gov.in

**Government of Odisha, Tourism Department**

Dated 18.02.2021

No. 1920 / TSM, Bhubaneswar,

TCT-COOD-MISC-0003-2021

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR SELECTION OF OPERATOR TO REFURBISH/AUGMENT, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN CATAMARANS OF DEPT. OF TOURISM FOR TOURISM PURPOSE AT SELECTED WATER BODIES IN ODISHA

Department of Tourism (DoT) invites proposals from prospective applicant(s) for Selection of Operator to Refurbish/Augment, Operate and Maintain Catamarans of Dept. of tourism for Tourism Purpose at selected water bodies in Odisha in accordance with the conditions and manner prescribed in the Request for Proposal (RFP) document.

The Proposals should be submitted by interested parties to the Director Tourism, Paryatan Bhawan Lewis Road, Bhubaneswar-751014 on or before 16.03.2021 upto 12 00 Hrs The detail terms of RFP may be downloaded from our website: https://dot.odishatourism.gov.in/?q=tender. Corrigendum, if any, will be published on the same website on 22.02.2021.

Director & Addl. Secretary to Govt.  
R-16

OIPR-37001/11/0035/2021

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER,  
ANANDAPUR BARRAGE PROJECT, SALAPADA  
(E-mail id: cceabp-elcwr.od@nic.in/oabp-elcwr.od@nic.in)

E-procurement Notice No. CCEABP-06 of 2020-21

Date of Submission of Bid: 24.02.2021

Period of completion: 18 calendar months

Availability of tender on line for bidding: 24.02.21

Date of opening of technical Bid (Cover-1): 12.03.21

From: 11.30AM

To: 12.03.21

Date of opening of technical Bid (Cover-2): 16.03.21

From: 11.30AM

To: 16.03.21

Period of completion: 18 calendar months

Availability of tender on line for bidding: 24.02.21

Date of opening of technical Bid (Cover-1): 12.03.21

From: 11.30AM

To: 12.03.21

Period of completion: 18 calendar months

Availability of tender on line for bidding: 24.02.21

Date of opening of technical Bid (Cover-2): 16.03.21

From: 11.30AM

To: 16.03.21

Period of completion: 18 calendar months

Availability of tender on line for bidding: 24.02.21

Date of opening of technical Bid (Cover-1): 12.03.21

From: 11.30AM

To: 12.03.21

Period of completion: 18 calendar months

Availability of tender on line for bidding: 24.02.21

Date of opening of technical Bid (Cover-2): 16.03.21

From: 11.30AM

To: 16.03.21

Period of completion: 18 calendar months

Availability of tender on line for bidding: 24.02.21

Date of opening of technical Bid (Cover-1): 12.03.21

From: 11.30AM

To: 12.03.21

Period of completion: 18 calendar months

Availability of tender on line for bidding: 24.02.21

Date of opening of technical Bid (Cover-2): 16.03.21



## Defamation as crime

A criminal prosecution that is inexpensive and quick becomes a handy tool to silence critics

**S**ome judicial verdicts acquire emblematic significance far beyond the outcome of a particular case. The acquittal of journalist Priya Ramani of the charge of defaming M.J. Akbar, a former Union Minister, journalist and author, has protected and preserved the space for women who have found their voice in recent times to speak out about their experience of sexual harassment in the workplace. A conviction in this case would have had disastrous consequences for the many courageous women who have come out with disturbing revelations about the extent to which a large number of professions and fields in the country have been unsafe. Be it the media, as in this case, or any other domain, the reality that many women suffer in silence in the face of harassment, especially in the early stages of their career, has been brought to the fore by the new-found space and freedom to share their experiences, even if it be after many years. Mr. Akbar's case was rooted in the claim that he had a 'stellar reputation' as a highly respected journalist and an accomplished writer. However, the court found the testimony of Ms. Ramani and Ghazala Wahab, another journalist who testified in her defence, to be credible and detailed enough to question the reputation that he was so strenuously trying to uphold. A welcome feature of the judgment is that the court was receptive to the defence that Ms. Ramani's claims were true and made for the public good.

Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Ravindra Kumar Pandey, has placed the case in the correct perspective by noting that a woman cannot be punished for criminal defamation when she raises her voice against sexual harassment because "the right of reputation cannot be protected at the cost of the right of life and dignity of [the] woman". He has taken note of the unequal equations of power between the harasser and victim in most situations. Given that it may result in loss of dignity and self-confidence at that time, the court underscored that "a woman has a right to put her grievance at any platform of her choice and even after decades". It may appear to be a sweeping statement that opens up the possibility of incidents from the distant past to be raked up, to the detriment of anyone's reputation. However, the court places it in the context of the need for women to have freedom, equality, equal opportunity and social protection, if they were to excel in an atmosphere in which their workforce participation is undesirably low. In this backdrop, it is unfortunate that criminal defamation still survives in the statute book, thanks to a 2016 Supreme Court verdict upholding it. A criminal prosecution is quicker and less expensive, making it a handy tool to silence one's critics and detractors. The time may have come to decriminalise defamation so that those who suffer injury to their reputation are left only with a civil remedy.

## Formula failure

The BJP's loss in the civic elections in Punjab is reflective of a deeper malaise

**S**ometimes, a defeat is more significant than a victory. The ruling Congress party's emphatic win in the recent civic elections in Punjab is amplified by the poor performance of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its former ally, the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD). The results will inevitably be read as an outcome of the ongoing farmers' agitation. The Centre's new farm laws, and its attitude towards the farmers who have been protesting for months against the laws, were prominently raised by the Congress against the BJP during the canvassing. The BJP tried to defend the farm laws but its leaders and workers faced heavy backlash on the ground, and it is clear that the party failed to convince the voters. The Congress, which may be on the back foot for unkept election promises of 2017, could find popular approval largely due to the support it extended to the farmers. The BJP's oldest alliance partner, the Shiromani Akali Dal's decision to end its coalition with the National Democratic Alliance amid the farmers' protests was an attempt to regain its alienated voter base. The result, however, makes it clear that it may not be an easy task ahead of the Assembly elections, due in early 2022, for the BJP or SAD. And the political ripples of the farm agitation are spreading beyond Punjab.

The Centre's hope that the agitating farmers will disperse out of fatigue, and in the face of police measures, appears to have been too optimistic. The Delhi police miserably failed to prevent violence by certain farmer groups on Republic Day and later started haunting civil society activists on flimsy grounds. Criminalising dissent has been a familiar component of the BJP toolkit, but the endurance of that strategy is on test as political costs accrue for the party. The Jannayak Janta Party, which counts the Jat community as its support base, and the BJP share power in Haryana after bitterly fighting each other in elections; in western Uttar Pradesh, a sharp polarisation on religious lines had brought sections of the community closer to the party in recent years. The BJP raised a new band of leaders from the community based entirely on vituperative communal rhetoric. With the farming community now turning against the BJP, and even reaching out to Muslims, the formulaic toolkit of cow and communalism has been interrupted. The BJP called a meeting of Jat leaders in Delhi to mend the situation. If the situation continues, the BJP could face reverses in the 2022 Uttar Pradesh Assembly election. It will be able to recover lost ground only by being more accommodative to the livelihood concerns of the Jat community and not by heightening the polarising rhetoric.

# A verdict that has ended a long silence

The Priya Ramani case is a key moment in the legal process that has often failed to bring justice to women complainants



SANJAY HEGDE

**T**he acquittal of Priya Ramani, a journalist, on a complaint of criminal defamation by former Union Minister M.J. Akbar has come as a vindication to a long line of women who have not been taken seriously earlier when they have alleged sexual harassment. Many an allegation has often remained unvoiced for fear of ridicule, shaming, or on grounds of sheer financial necessity. There have also been those who feel that anything short of rape or outraging a woman's modesty is not actionable. That long silence has now been broken by this verdict. A powerful man's predatory past has caught up with him, when a not-so-powerful victim chose to come forward with her story and even at the risk of imprisonment, turned down suggestions of a compromise and persisted with telling her truth.

The story begins in December 1993 when the very term sexual harassment was rather unknown. Ms. Ramani, then 23, was being interviewed for a job by the then 43-year-old celebrity editor, at 7 in the evening, in a five-star hotel, the Oberoi, in Mumbai. Rather than having a meeting in the lobby that she was expecting, she was surprised to be called up to the man's room. She says, "It was more date, less interview. You offered me a drink from the mini bar (I refused, you drank vodka), we sat on a small table for two that overlooked the Queen's Necklace (how romantic!) and you sang me old Hindi songs after inquiring af-

ter my musical preferences. You thought you were irresistible. The bed, a scary interview accompaniment, was already turned down for the night. Come sit here, you said at one point, gesturing to a tiny space near you. I'm fine, I replied with a strained smile. I escaped that night, you hired me, I worked for you for many months even though I swore I would never be in a room alone with you again."

This account from her article dated October 12, 2017 in *Vogue India* (<https://bit.ly/3jZYWLe>), did not name Mr. Akbar, who since June 2016, was a Minister of State, in the Ministry of External Affairs. However, on October 8, 2018 Ms. Ramani put out on Twitter "I began this piece with my MJ Akbar story. Never named him because he didn't 'do' anything. Lots of women have worse stories about this predator maybe they'll share." A media storm followed which forced Mr. Akbar to resign his position as a Minister on October 17, 2018. The next day, he filed a criminal complaint for defamation against Ms. Ramani for her article and her tweets.

### Defamation and the defence

The law of criminal defamation is premised on a person's right to a reputation. Making or publishing "any imputation concerning any person, intending to harm, or knowing or having reason to believe that such imputation will harm, the reputation of such person", is criminal defamation. Mr. Akbar alleged that Ms. Ramani's allegations, "by their very tone and tenor, are *ex facie* defamatory and had not only damaged the complainant's goodwill and reputation in his social circles and on the political stage, which was established after years of toil and hard work but also had affected the personal



reputation of complainant in the community, friends and colleagues, thereby caused him irreparable loss and tremendous distress."

Ms. Ramani premised her defence on the First Exception to Section 499 which postulates that "It is not defamation to impute anything which is true concerning any person, if it be for the public good that the imputation should be made or published." She also relied upon the Ninth Exception which says that, "It is not defamation to make an imputation on the character of another provided that the imputation be made in good faith for the protection of the interests of the person making it, or of any other person, or for the public good."

### For public good, witnesses

The Third Exception was also pressed into service saying: "It is not defamation to express in good faith any opinion whatever respecting the conduct of any person touching any public question, and respecting his character, so far as his character appears in that conduct ...." Thus Ms. Ramani's lawyers, led by Rebecca John, "plead[ed] truth as her defence, made in good faith, in public interest, and for public good". They also contended that [the] complainant is not a man of stellar and impeccable reputation and [the] accused did not defame him by

publishing the tweets and article".

What seems to have turned the case is the testimony of witnesses produced by Ms. Ramani in her defence. Her friend, Niloufer Venkataraman, corroborated that Ms. Ramani had narrated the incident to her soon after it had occurred. The journalist, Ghazala Wahab, who had also worked with Mr. Akbar at a later point of time, narrated her own horrifically detailed experience of harassment by him.

Relying on these witnesses, the court accepted the "defence of the accused that she disclosed the truth regarding the incident of sexual harassment against her at the Oberoi Hotel, Bombay in December 1993 on the basis of testimony of accused DW1 and its corroboration by the testimony of DW2 Niloufer Venkataraman. The Court also accepts the contention of the accused that the complainant is not a man of stellar reputation on the basis of testimony of accused DW1 and testimony of DW3 Ghazala Wahab." The judgment has thus ruled that Ms. Ramani spoke the truth, and that Mr. Akbar had a pre-existing tarnished reputation which had been exposed for the public good."

### Other cases

Many have wondered why the acquittal on a charge of defamation by a victim of sexual harassment is being celebrated when the alleged perpetrator has faced no criminal prosecution at all. The answer is that this judgment shines like a good deed in a naughty world when contrasted against a series of cases where the legal process has failed to bring closure and justice to women complainants.

In the Mathura rape case of 1978, the Supreme Court's acquittal of the policeman, Tukaram, earned it a stinging rebuke from legal scholars that "consent involves

submission, but the converse is not necessarily true". A decade later, in 1988, IAS officer Rupan Deol Bajaj prosecuted Punjab's super-policeman K.P.S. Gill, for outraging her modesty. Mr. Gill's conviction was maintained right up to the Supreme Court but he was released on probation and suffered no imprisonment.

Two years later, in 1990, S.P.S. Rathore, another senior policeman in the neighbouring State of Haryana, tried to force himself on a 14-year-old tennis player. When the girl and her family complained to the authorities, a targeted pattern of vengeance and harassment followed which lead to her death by suicide. Nevertheless, even after a prolonged uproar, in 2016, Mr. Rathore got away in the Supreme Court, with a six-month term of imprisonment already undergone, in view of his advanced age. The founder-editor of a magazine, Tarun Tejpal's trial for an alleged digital rape, in 2013, of his subordinate in a hotel lift, is still pending trial in a court in Goa.

By rarely visiting retribution upon the perpetrators, the legal process has hitherto yielded little in terms of relief to the victim. Against all odds, the sight of Ms. Ramani and Ms. Rebecca John triumphing in court may come to be a defining image in India's long walk towards respecting female sexual autonomy. Many more women will now be emboldened to resist harassment at the workplace and elsewhere. Hopefully a few men are now deterred from trading power and position to secure sexual favours. Mr. Akbar may yet file an appeal and the wheels of justice may yet be kept grinding, but Ms. Ramani today stands tall and vindicated.

Sanjay Hegde is a Senior Advocate of the Supreme Court of India

## Too many IITs, unrealistic expectations

It is time to rethink the changing role and the mandate of the IITs in order to ensure that quality and focus continue



PHILIP G. ALTBACH &  
ELDHO MATHEWS

**W**ithout question, the Indian Institutes of Technology, or the IITs, are the crown jewels of Indian higher education. They are world-renowned for the quality of their graduates and for their academic programmes in a range of fields in technology and engineering – and in the past decade, in research and innovation through research parks as well. They are among the few Indian higher education institutions that do reasonably well in the global rankings. However, for the past decade or so, and according to current plans, the IIT "system" has expanded beyond its capacity to maintain its high standards and is in danger of sinking into mediocrity. The recent decision of the University Grants Commission to permit select IITs under the 'Institutions of Eminence' category to set up campuses abroad could further weaken these already stretched institutions. It is time to rethink the changing role and mandate of IITs in order to ensure that quality and focus are maintained – and by prioritising the needs of India, but with a 21st century twist.

### What the IITs are, are not

The original five IITs were established in the 1950s and early 1960s (<https://bit.ly/3kfq9K9>). Four had a foreign collaborator: IIT Bombay (the Soviet Union), IIT Madras (Germany), IIT Kanpur (the United States), and IIT Delhi (the United Kingdom). Currently, there are 23 IITs. After setting up

IIT Delhi in 1961, it took another 34 years to establish the sixth IIT in Guwahati (1994). Since then, 17 more IITs have been established, including several that resulted from upgrading existing institutions.

Funded generously by the central government, the IITs focused exclusively on technology and engineering. They later added the humanities and social sciences – but these programmes were modest until the 2020 National Education Policy emphasised the IITs should focus more on "holistic and multidisciplinary education".

According to data available with the Council of Indian Institutes of Technology, the IITs are small institutions with average student enrolments in the five older IITs of around 10,000. Some of the newer ones remain quite small, with fewer than 400 students. The older IITs have faculties of around 1,000, while some of the new ones, such as those in Palakkad and Jammu, employ 100 or so. Further, most of the IITs suffer from a severe shortage of professors. For example, IIT Dhanbad is approved to hire 781 instructors but only 301 positions were filled as of January 2021.

**Offerings, students, faculty**  
The IITs are not universities; they have neither the range of disciplines nor the size that characterise universities worldwide. The IITs started as undergraduate institutions; they gradually added small post-graduate programmes, but some are now adding significant post-graduate offerings. IIT-Bombay's student enrolment, for example, was 58% post-graduate during 2019-20 (<https://bit.ly/3pxUzyp>). The IITs were, and are, self-consciously elite institutions aiming at the highest international academic standards – a tradition which, in our view, is im-

portant but increasingly difficult to maintain.

It is not surprising that IITs graduates are so successful – the schools may be the most selective institutions in the world. Around 7,00,000 students sit for the national engineering entrance examination for the IITs and several other elite institutions each year and a vast majority of them target the 16,000-plus seats available in the 23 IITs. According to an answer provided in Lok Sabha by the Minister of Human Resource Development, in February 2020, dropout rates at the IITs are infinitesimal and declining, from 2.25% in 2015-16 to 0.68% in 2019-20.

Similarly, the IITs have traditionally attracted high quality faculty, where most have doctorates from the most respected western universities. Top quality professors have been attracted to the IITs because of the quality of the students, the chance to work with the best academic minds in India, and a commitment to India's development. While salaries do not compare well on the international market, working and living conditions on the older IIT campuses are comfortable.

In recent years, however, things began to change. The IITs could not attract a sufficient number of young faculty to fill vacancies resulting from retirements. The emerging IT and related industries in India offered much more attractive salaries and exciting work op-

portunities, and many were lured to universities and industry in other countries.

At the same time, the government dramatically expanded the number of IITs, spreading them around the country. Most of the new IITs are located in smaller towns such as Mandi (Himachal Pradesh), Palakkad (Kerala), Dharwad (Karnataka), and others. While it is important to provide educational opportunities outside the major metropolitan areas, top institutions are seldom located far away from urban amenities. There is no doubt a sufficient number of excellent students to attend all of the IITs, but there are not now, nor will there be in the future enough top-quality faculty to staff all of the new institutes, especially those in mofussil locations. Facilities and infrastructure are unlikely to be "world class." It is, thus, inevitable that quality will decline and the "IIT brand" diluted. This would be very unfortunate for India, since the IITs are without doubt India's most recognisable and respected academic institutions.

Another area is the lack of correlation between the local needs and IITs. Most of the IITs and other prominent "Institutes of National Importance" are "academic enclaves" with little connection with their regions. Only a few State governments are effectively utilising the presence of IITs in the local milieu through knowledge sharing networks involving universities, colleges and schools, and local industries and firms. Similarly, there are few community outreach programmes. Such an approach could prevent disruption, such as that occurring in Goa, where local groups are resisting locating a new IIT in their region.

**What needs to be done**  
While excellent engineering/STEM (science, technology, engi-

neering and mathematics) institutions are needed, they all do not have to be IITs. Perhaps 10 to 12 "real" IITs located near major cities are practical for India. Some of the newly established institutes can be renamed and provided with sufficient resources to produce high quality graduates and good research. A more limited "IIT system" needs to be funded at "world class" levels and staffed by "world class" faculty, perhaps with some recruited from top universities internationally. Recent decision to liberalise the recruitment rules to attract more foreign faculty is a good step in the right direction.

Further, the IITs need to pay attention to internationalisation beyond sending their brightest graduates abroad and recruiting Indians with foreign PhDs; starting overseas branches is a bad idea, but in-depth collaboration with the best global universities, and hiring foreign faculty, perhaps with some recruited from top universities internationally. This would yield excellent results, and further build the IITs international brand. IIT Bombay-Monash Research Academy, and University of Queensland-IIT Delhi Academy of Research (UQIDAR), are promising examples. The IITs need robust policies to attract international students. And, of course, adequate and sustained funding is mandatory – both from government and from the philanthropy of tremendously successful IIT graduates at home and abroad. It would be tragic for India's "jewel in the academic crown" to be diminished. And over-expansion will inevitably mean exactly that.

Philip G. Altbach is research professor and distinguished fellow, Center for International Higher Education, Boston College, U.S. Eldho Mathews is a higher education researcher based in New Delhi. The views expressed are personal.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

### Others vulnerable

The judgment of the Delhi High Court which will now embolden women to respond against what they feel is inappropriate behaviour needs to be hailed. At the same time, one is sceptical of whether it is deemed to be effective for the vulnerable, illiterate and minority sections of society who often fall prey to predators. Despite the court having taken cognisance of the "shame and social stigma" that

women sustain, the concomitant intimidation these victims go through during judicial proceedings has to be acknowledged. Perhaps this should lead to the formulation of grass-root level and impartial organisations where victims are free to report their grievances.

SHIJU THALIKUNJU,  
Secunderabad

**An anachronism**  
It is hard to believe that Kiran Bedi's ouster, from

her post as Lieutenant Governor, Puducherry, was for overstepping the constitutionally mandated role, for if that be the case, she would have been removed earlier. The BJP's need for a politically savvy person to safely navigate its interests during the run-up to the Assembly elections and the availability of Tamilisai Soundararajan as a perfect foil appear to have pushed matters to tipping point. What comes out loud and clear is that the office

of the Governor has reached its nadir. Many of them are too willing to be used by the Centre to engineer defections and subvert popular will in States.

MANOHAR ALEMBATH,  
Kannur, Kerala

**A safety valve**  
Manufacturers, interpreters and enforcing authorities of law should bear in mind that they can go wrong any time. With this thought at the base, democracy

encourages and thrives on different and opposite points of view. In a situation where Question Hour is quashed, activists controlled, the Internet shut down and stand-up comedians compelled to sit in dungeons, there is something definitely wrong with the system if gadflies are able to change democracy. Comic relief is the safety valve in the times we live in.

P. DAVID BALASINGH,  
Nagercoil, Tamil Nadu

# When the mountains had a meltdown

An avalanche in Chamoli district of Uttarakhand early this month claimed 62 lives, destroyed two hydropower projects and ravaged the region. **Jacob Koshy** reports on how development projects are endangering the lives of people in the young and fragile Himalayas

The Rishiganga river looks like an idyllic brook from the balcony of Gyan Singh Rana's two-storey house. The former headman of the village of Raini, who is in his nineties, has a stunning panoramic view of cliffs, glaciers, mountains, and the two Himalayan rivers – the Rishiganga and the Dhauliganga. In all these years of gazing at this view, Rana says he has seen the river flood from glacier melt only thrice. "But I've never seen anything of this sort," he says referring to the avalanche of February 7 in the Chamoli district of Uttarakhand that he watched in disbelief. "It was a blast, like something exploded in the mountains around me, and unlike the sound of big rocks of ice crashing."

Pushpa, another resident of the village, was tending to her cattle when the disaster struck. "I really thought I'd die," she says. "There was a huge cloud of dust. For a long time, I couldn't see anything. I was suddenly knocked off my feet by the wind. I somehow got up and untied the cattle."

The residents of Raini number less than 300, according to the 2011 Census. They aren't strangers to the vagaries of glaciers. Ranjit Singh Rana, the village headman and Gyan Singh Rana's son, says villagers in the region frequently go to the forests that are part of the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve, home to some of the most imposing glaciers in the Himalayas. "We go there to collect herbs for cooking. From there we can see icy peaks. They break, they grow, they recede and sometimes flood. But the recent event was simply extraordinary," he says.

The sentiment is the same among all the villagers: they are familiar with the mountains and their moods and they have seen tragedies before, but the Sunday landslide that killed 62, smashed two hydroelectric power plants, and swept away everything in its wake have them shaken and worried. After the 2013 floods in the State, this tragedy has once again put the spotlight on the model of development in the fragile region, where the environment may not be able to sustain massive projects of development, as scientists have warned time and again.

#### A trail of destruction

On that fateful Sunday, a mass of rock, around half a kilometre wide according to satellite-based estimates, detached from a hanging glacier on a mountain called Raunthi. This massive lump fell vertically for about two km and then pulverised into a large cloud of dust and debris. Within minutes, a mix of ice, stone, sand and water coalesced into an estimated 25 million cubic metres of slurry, rolled down the Raunthi stream, and slammed into the Rishiganga river. Part of this mass of dust has dammed the Rishiganga's natural flow. The rest hurtled down, past the Rana residence, and crashed into the Dhauliganga river that meets the Rishiganga.

The force of the landslide was so great, recounts Rana, that it slammed against a cliff and travelled for a few hundred metres upstream, against gravity. Then it made a ferocious descent down to the Dhauliganga engulfing five residents of Raini village in its fury and at least 62 workers at the Tapovan-Vishnugadhi hydropower plant, eight km downstream.

Labourers were busy in construction work at the 520 MW power plant which was delayed by many years. When the avalanche came, it trapped several of those who were working on the barrages as well as those inside one of the tunnels used to divert the natural flow of the Dhauliganga.

The Tapovan site is now a vast expanse of grey slush. Workmen are attempting a drainage on an industrial scale. The site is teeming with bulldozers, excavators and all manner of heavy machinery. The task is to unclog the mulch and debris that have blocked most of the tunnel and find survivors, if any, though hope of this has faded. It is still not clear how much of the two km tunnel has been obstructed. Ten days since the disaster, only about a tenth of it has been accessed by the machines. All the bodies that have been recovered so far are from this stretch. However, the barrages that failed to stop the onslaught of mud remain standing. Some workmen at the site point out that had it not been for the walls of the triple-gated barrage, more mud would have rolled further downstream.

#### All that remains is a pipe

Unlike in Tapovan, eight km upstream, there is simply no trace of the Rishiganga hydropower project except for a torn metal pipe. A 60-metre bridge that used to connect the two banks of the Rishiganga has been obliterated. The bridge allowed people to cross over from Tapovan onto the road that eventually snakes up to the China border. It connected two halves of the Raini village – one where the Ranas live and the other housing several residents, some of whom as children joined their parents



Personnel from the Border Roads Organisation, the Army and the National Disaster Response Force, among others, build a bridge to connect one half of Raini village to the other half over the Rishiganga river in Chamoli district after an avalanche destroyed the earlier bridge. (Below): Tree cover is rampantly cut in order to widen roads under the Char Dham Pariyojana near Rudraprayag in Uttarakhand. • V.V. KRISHNAN



in the iconic Chipko movement of the 1970s. Defence personnel, members of the Border Roads Organisation, and the Indo Tibetan Border Police troop down this half of the village fixing cable and communication lines. "We are sitting ducks for China," one of them remarks.

With the bridge gone, a manually operated trolley that can ferry one person at a time and requires four to strain and heave it serves as a mode of transportation. It is also being used to carry goods including vegetables, medical supplies, sanitary pads, and packaged food. The other option is to walk several kilometres down and gingerly cross a temporary bridge built by the army after the disaster. "We are hoping that a new bridge will be ready this month," says an officer of the Border Roads Organisation. But there is less certainty on whether the Rishiganga project will survive again.

#### The ill-fated plant

The 13.2 MW Rishiganga power plant that was designed to generate electricity with the force of the Rishiganga waters had a tumultuous history. In 2011, nearly 15 years after plans to first install a power plant at the site were drawn, Rakesh Mehra, the Ludhiana-based owner of the plant, was in Raini to witness a trial run. He was killed by a falling boulder on site. Disputes then began in his extended family over control of his businesses, including of the plant. Tragedy struck again in 2016 when a flood destroyed the plant rendering it unworkable. Ultimately, the ownership of the plant passed on to the Kundan Group in 2018.

"Mehra was a good man. He had developed the plant involving the villagers. There was a lot of support for the project as it was going to provide electricity to the villages in the vicinity," says Deepak, a resident of the nearby Peng village. "But the company that took over after Mehra died was different. It expanded the project and in the process, destroyed a Kali temple that was located near the dam site."

The villagers strongly opposed what the company did. There were also disputes involving ownership of the land. "The company blocked access to our grazing pastures and did not compensate us for the use of our land," Deepak says. "This project is cursed."

In 2019, residents of the village petitioned the Uttarakhand High Court for the environmental damage that was caused due to the use of explosives in

the construction of the power projects.

Silt and debris continue to cascade down the Rishiganga but other concerns loom. Teams of scientists and police personnel, who have trekked up the mountain near the vicinity of the glaciers, have identified a lake that's about 350 m long. This, too, is Rishiganga water that has been dammed by the debris from the day of the disaster.

Though the water from the lake is gradually emptying, many in the village fear it may not be quick enough before the rains. "What if the river floods and we see a gush of water along with the debris? What will happen to the villages and the dams below," asks Ramesh Singh, a resident of Joshimath who lives uphill of Raini for a few months. "The climate here is warmer than usual. Last year, the snow was falling on the highway during February. This year has been unusually warm," he says.

The Rishiganga project was among the several hydropower projects that had applied to secure carbon credits under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in early 2012. This was when hydropower projects were seen as competitors to solar power projects. However with the enormous challenges involved in setting up hydropower plants in the Himalayan region, the risks from natural calamities, and the falling price of solar power, there are now doubts about the future of hydropower plants and their viability as an alternative to fossil fuel-based sources of energy.

#### Development and local constraints

Atul Sati is a prominent political activist based in Joshimath, the tehsil that encompasses Raini and Tapovan. Sati, who is associated with the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist), had been involved with movements for the independent statehood of Uttarakhand. He has been questioning the developmental models in the State for years. In his two-storey house that also doubles up as a workplace, there is no electricity for long stretches. In the darkness he points to a sequence of electric bulbs from a window that are from a substation of the Vishnuprayag hydropower project on the Alaknanda river down-

stream. "That power plant is located right here in Uttarakhand but the power it generates is for other States including Uttar Pradesh and Haryana. It is not for us. There is darkness here, the people who work for the plant are from here, but the benefits are routed out of here," he claims.

When the Uttarakhand government entered into agreements with private companies to develop power plants, it allowed them to produce and sell power to anyone. Only 12% of the power produced is to be provided compulsorily to Uttarakhand.

While hydropower is the mainstay of electricity power generation in the State, Uttarakhand did not really need large hydropower projects such as the Tapovan plant, says Sati. The needs of large parts of the State can be met with smaller projects that are no more than 5 MW, he says.

"The promise of carving out Uttarakhand from Uttar Pradesh was precisely that the geography and the challenges posed by the environment here are unique and so all development here must be framed respecting local constraints," he says.

Sati recounts the story of a tunnelling accident in 2009, again involving the construction of the Tapovan-Vishnugadhi power project, to demonstrate how there is little accountability for excavation projects. Geologists Piyush Rautela of the Disaster Mitigation and Management Centre, Government of Uttarakhand, and M.P.S. Bisht of Garhwal University wrote about the same incident in a 2010 article in the scientific journal *Current Science*.

Larsen and Toubro (L&T), the infrastructure company, employed a tunnel boring machine (TBM), a huge drilling apparatus that is used as an alternative to blasting mountains with explosives, to excavate an eight km tunnel. The head race tunnel, through which the natural flow of the river is diverted, was located in a geologically fragile area below Joshimath. On Christmas eve in 2009, the TBM, located nearly a kilometre below the ground, ended up puncturing a water-bearing aquifer about three km inward of the left bank of the Alaknanda near Shelong village.



"The site was more than a kilometre below the surface, somewhere below Auli, according to the project authorities. The water discharge was reportedly between 700 and 800 litres/sec. The aquifer discharge was about 60-70 million litres daily, enough to sustain 2-3 million people," Rautela and Bisht wrote.

The caving-in after the collision damaged the TBM. In 2016, L&T washed its hands off the project and NTPC, the project developers, commissioned the Hindustan Construction Company to fix the machine.

Geologists R.K. Goel and Bhawani Singh wrote in a research paper on Himalayan tunnels that the TBM was finally made operational after a second excavation tunnel was bored through. Sati said that after a brief recovery, the machine failed again. The challenge with tunnel boring in the Himalayas is that these mountains are relatively younger and have several regions that are tectonically active. "Faced with cost and time constraints, detailed investigations before selecting a tunnel alignment are often compromised, resulting in encountering disturbed geological conditions. It is essential that detailed exploration work is carried out before the start of the project and exploration ahead of the face is undertaken on a continuous basis," they wrote in their article.

#### Vulnerable mountains

The vulnerability of the Himalayas to flash floods, landslides and earthquakes was brought home in 2013 when floods killed at least 6,000 people, destroyed hydropower projects and plunged the State into darkness for days. Following that disaster, the Supreme Court constituted a committee, led by Ravi Chopra, founder and director of the People's Science Institute, Dehradun, to assess the role of hydroelectric projects in causing environmental degradation in the Himalayas and in causing the floods of Uttarakhand in 2013.

In its April 2014 report, the committee singled out para-glacial zones (regions higher than 2,000 m from sea level) and valleys north of the Main Central Thrust (MCT), a geological fault where the Indian Plate has pushed under the Eurasian Plate along the Himalayas, as "disaster-prone areas." The committee recommended that hydroelectric projects not be built in these valleys. These recommendations were accepted by the Union Environment Ministry and placed before the Supreme Court in December 2014.

The apex court recommended that 24 proposed projects be stayed but no decisions were taken on ongoing projects such as the Tapovan-Vishnugadhi and on the Rishiganga. The committee also recommended installing a flood warning system.

#### Chardham challenges

"Last Sunday's tragic disaster has confirmed our fears and warnings. Hundreds of crores spent in the last 7 years for constructing these dangerous dams have ended up with the loss of over 200 persons, domestic animals and destruc-

tion of national property," Ravi Chopra wrote in a letter to the Supreme Court on February 13.

This, however, was also written in the context of another ongoing project called the Char Dham Pariyojana, which is a 900-km-long road widening project connecting major pilgrimage spots in Uttarakhand. The drive from Dehradun, at the foothills of the Himalayas, up to places such as Kedarnath and Badrinath is as much replete with beautiful views of valleys, Himalayan rivers and glacial peaks as it is with swarms of JCB excavators, muck dumping sites, scaffolding, half-erected pillars to support a future railway line, and frequent roadblocks.

Large amounts of rock are being cut to widen stretches of the road. After protests by several environmental groups against the Char Dham Pariyojana construction project, which is not a single ₹12,000-crore project but consists of 53 small projects that are handled by separate contractors and companies, the Supreme Court constituted a committee, again headed by Chopra, to suggest measures by which the project could be executed with minimal environmental damage. There was dissent within the committee on the matter of the appropriate width of the new roads. Chopra and two other members opined that the roads be no wider than 7m of tarred surface. A majority of the committee members suggested a 12m tarred surface width. Making the roads 12m wide, argued Chopra and the two members, would result in further assault of the mountains. They said that this was also in contravention of the standing recommendations of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways that hill roads, particularly above the MCT, should not be no more than 5.5m wide. The Supreme Court is yet to take a view on the matter.

"There are numerous instances where the roads have been identified by experts as being prone to destabilisation and landslides. Disaster resilience is more critical than simply wide highways. Slope stabilisation works so far have been most inadequate as evident from the frequent failures and road closures. Excessive tree-felling, indiscriminate disposal of road construction and landslides debris have endangered downhill slopes and polluted rivers," Chopra noted in his letter.

"In the case of Himalayan development we are all like the proverbial blind men identifying the elephant," Kalachand Sain, Director, Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology, Dehradun, told *The Hindu*. In the aftermath of the latest disaster, five of Sain's colleagues drove and then took a helicopter to survey the glacier to ascertain the causes of the damage.

"This is a difficult terrain to study. Even today we cannot forecast an earthquake or an avalanche in the region with the required accuracy. Scientists can assess potential risks. The government must live up to its promises of providing infrastructure and services. But when something goes wrong, we all collectively suffer," he says.

## FROM PAGE ONE

## 4 PLA soldiers died in Galwan, says China

It only mentioned the regimental commander's injury.

The PLA likely suffered a far higher number of injured, with Indian officials saying they counted around 60 Chinese soldiers being carried on stretchers after the clash.

Explaining why China made the announcement eight months after the clash, PLA Senior Colonel Ren Guoqiang, spokesperson for the Ministry of Defence, said "the public reporting of heroic deeds" was "conducive to clarifying the truth and setting the record straight so that the world can see clearly the rights and wrongs."

He accused India of "repeatedly playing up and hyping up the incident, distorting the truth, misleading international public opinion and slandering the Chinese border troops."

### 'Distorting the truth'

The Foreign Ministry in Beijing also hit out at India for "distorting the truth". "This will help people to better know the truth and this is a tribute we pay to our heroes and martyrs," spokesperson Hua Chunying said. "I read the reports time and again and I was so moved by the stories of these soldiers. The martyr Chen Hongjun was about to be a father in four months and the martyr Xiao Siyuan missed so much the

girl he loved and wished to marry but they would not see that day come, regrettably. They have dedicated their life and youth to the land they are defending. The motherland and the people would never forget them."

The news of the deaths was among the most discussed topics on Friday on Chinese social media, with many posts expressing anger at the loss of life and calling for the four soldiers to be honoured appropriately.

Over recent months, there have been isolated calls on Chinese social media to recognise those lost in Galwan, but no major discussion on the PLA's casualties, a sensitive topic that China's state-controlled media has studiously avoided.

In August, a leaked photo circulated on the Chinese social media app, WeChat,

showed a grave of a PLA soldier named Chen Xianrong, but it was not confirmed by the authorities.

This was among the names announced on Friday.

In June, a source close to the PLA told the Hong Kong-based *South China Morning Post* that Beijing was "very sensitive" about military casualties, saying all numbers had to be approved by President Xi Jinping, who heads the Central Military Commission, before being released.

## Disha Ravi sent to 3-day judicial custody

Police said further interrogation would take place after co-accused Shantanu Muluk and Nikita Jacob joined the interrogation.

Mr. Muluk and Ms. Jacob have been asked to appear before the investigating agency on February 22. Ms. Ravi's bail application is likely to come up for hearing before a sessions court on Saturday.

Meanwhile, the Delhi High Court on Friday ordered the Delhi Police to ensure that there is no leakage of any documents relating to its investigation into the FIR against Ms. Ravi. It, however, said the police could conduct press briefings in relation to the case "as per law" so long as none of her rights were violated.

The court direction came on Ms. Ravi's plea seeking to restrain the police from leaking any investigation material relating to her case to the media.

Ms. Ravi has claimed that after her arrest, various messages were leaked by the police to the media, resulting in a large number of programmes, news bulletins and online dissemination of various private messages and interventions which were broadcasted.

## Two, including minor, held for death of girls

Over time, he began talking to the girls and developed a fondness for one of the girls, she said. She added that the investigation was still on and that Vinay's confession was being verified.

The three girls were found in unconscious state, frothing at their mouths, in their family's fields where they had gone to collect fodder.

The mother of one of the girls who died has alleged that the girls were sexually assaulted. The FIR, however, does not include the allegation and the police said that the post-mortem report found no injury marks on the victims.

Speaking after the funeral, the mother said she had found the body of her 16-year-old daughter with her hands and feet tied. "I untied the dupattas myself," she said, breaking into

"Some of the bulletins also made allegations that she is associated with various illegal and unlawful groups," she stated. She pleaded for action against *News18, India Today* and *Times Now* for publishing contents or extracts of her private WhatsApp chats, claiming it to be "violative of fair trial rights and right to privacy".

**Sensationalism'** Taking note of the facts of the case, Justice Prathiba M. Singh said, "Recent coverage by the media definitely shows that there is sensationalism. While police briefings and the happenings in court proceedings etc. can also be broadcasted and disseminated, leaked investigation material ought not to be disseminated so as to prejudice the investigation".

The court said, "Media houses shall also ensure that the telecast/broadcast by them is from verified/authenticated sources, though the sources need not be revealed... The channel editors shall ensure that the channels exercise proper editorial control so that the Petitioner's [Ms. Ravi] investigation is not hampered, in any manner."

## Modi launches slew of infra projects in Kerala

Pinarayi assures Centre of continued cooperation in implementing works

### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday inaugurated a bevy of infrastructure projects in Kerala, including the 2,000-MW Pugalur-Thrissur high voltage direct current (HVDC) power transmission corridor.

He said the power transmission corridor would ensure the transfer of a large quantum of power from the national grid to the State and guarantee reliable access to electricity.

Stating that "development is our aim, development is our religion," the Prime Minister also inaugurated, via videoconference, a 50-MW solar park in Kasaragod and a 75-mld (million litres a day) water treatment plant at Aruvikkara, Thiruvananthapuram, and launched the work

on two Smart City Mission initiatives in the capital – the ₹427-crore 37-km Smart Road project and the Integrated Command and Control Centre at the City Corporation.

"The great Malayalam poet Kumaranasan said, 'I'm not asking your caste, sister, I ask for water. I'm thirsty'. Development and good governance do not know caste, creed, race, gender, religion or language. Development is for everyone," Mr. Modi said.

**National grid link** The Pugalur-Thrissur line is Kerala's first HVDC interconnection with the national grid and the country's first system to use the voltage source converter technology, he said.

Kochi and Thiruvananthapuram had made signifi-



**Growth package:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurating various projects in Kerala via video conferencing from New Delhi on Friday. ■ PTI

cant progress under the Smart Cities Mission. Under the mission, 27 projects worth ₹770 crore had been completed in the two cities, while 68 projects worth ₹2,000 crore were in the pipeline.

As many as 175 water supply projects worth ₹1,100 crore were being taken up in

Kerala under AMRUT, he said.

Mr. Modi said the government was giving utmost importance to the blue economy. Development strategies targeting the fishermen community were based on "more credit, increased technology, top-quality infrastructure, and supportive government

policies". Government policies would ensure that India became a hub of seafood exports, he added.

Presiding over the function, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said that in a federal structure, it was imperative that governments at various levels work together for the benefit of the people. Mr. Vi-

jayan assured the Centre of the State's continued cooperation in projects that were being implemented jointly by the State and the Centre.

He said the State government was happy that work on the power transmission corridor, started in 2017, could be completed on time. Under the Smart Cities Mission initiatives, the Thiruvananthapuram Corporation, the State, and the Centre were implementing projects worth ₹1,135 crore in the corporation. Under the ₹427-crore, Smart Roads project, 37 km of city roads would be developed with amenities, including footpath, cycle tracks, and utility corridors.

Union Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs Hardeep Singh Puri and Minister of State (Independent Charge) R.K. Singh also addressed the event. Governor Arif Mohammed Khan, Ministers, MLAs, and Mayor Arya Rajendran attended.

## Karnataka drops 2 pages from Class VI textbook

They refer to practices like animal sacrifice during rituals

### STAFF REPORTER BENGALURU

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) in Karnataka has decided to withdraw two pages from a lesson, "Birth of new religions", that was part of the Class VI social studies textbook. The content talked about some practices during the latter Vedic period.

In a letter issued by the Karnataka Textbook Society, teachers have been told not to teach two pages from the lesson that carry references to practices, such as animal sacrifice during religious rituals. The lesson states that offering food-grains in fire rituals and animal sacrifices added to food scarcity. The lesson further

states that Sanskrit, used extensively in religious ceremonies, was not accessible to a larger section of people.

The department has ordered that pages that refer to these be omitted based on the instructions given by Primary and Secondary Education Minister S. Suresh Kumar.

Earlier, a delegation from the Brahmin Development Board had petitioned Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa that certain contents in this chapter be omitted since it "hurt the sentiments" of the community.

The Minister had then said that contents of the book were prepared years before the BJP government came to power.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, writer Baragur Ramachandrapuram, who headed the textbook revision committee that drafted the syllabus, said that with these two pages gone, a significant chunk of information pertaining to the birth of Buddhism had been deleted. "The information omitted was also part of the NCERT book and was based on facts. When a controversy arises, governments cannot take a decision on what needs to be eliminated unilaterally. Subject experts should take a call on such matters based on facts," he said.

Officials of the DPI said a committee was formed to look into this matter but did not elaborate on the modalities involved.

For the investigators, the arrest of Bittu Srinu was the crucial link to connect the dots in the murder case. Police officials, however, declined to confirm the detention of Bittu Srinu. On Friday evening, the police shifted the other accused – Kunta Srinivas, Chiranjeevi and Kumar

– for producing before the magistrate at Manthani. Ear-

lier, they were taken to the crime scene for reconstruction of the sequence of events. They are likely to be remanded in judicial custody for 14 days.

**'Videos morphed'** Meanwhile, the police are verifying reports that some morphed videos relating to the lawyer couple murder were getting circulated on social media. In one such video clip, the slain lawyer Vaman Rao was seen taking the name of an ex-MLA of the ruling TRS party. However, a top police official said it was a morphed video and the original video clip which they saw was different. "In that original video, he did not take any specific name of a politician," the officer said.

## Contract workers must get maternity leave: HC

### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT BENGALURU

Coming down strongly on the Karnataka government for terminating the service of a woman employed on contract basis, merely because she had sought maternity leave, the Karnataka High Court observed that "it would be power at wrong hands when men who man such offices become insensitive".

The court also imposed a cost of ₹25,000 on the government while quashing the order of termination and directed the authorities to reinstate the petitioner with 50% back wages from the date of termination of her contract.

The court also directed the government to recover ₹25,000 cost from the officer who had passed order of termination.

Justice M. Nagaprasanna passed the order while allowing the petition by B.N. Rajeshwari, who was working as Project Information Officer/MIS Expert on contract basis with the Directorate of Municipal Administration in Bengaluru since 2009 with annual renewal of contract.

"The action of the DMA cannot be countenanced, as the Maternity Benefit Act, 1967, does not classify or qualify a mother to be a government servant, temporary employee, employee on contract or an employee on daily wages," the court held.

Ms. Rajeshwari's contract was terminated in August 2019 after she sought maternity leave at the eighth month of her pregnancy in June-July 2019.

## New beginning



Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy pulling the new 40-ft-tall wooden chariot at the Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple in Antarvedi, East Godavari district. In September, the temple's century-old chariot was destroyed in a fire. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

## AI Express aircraft lands in emergency

Boeing 737-800 hit by hydraulic failure

### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

A Boeing 737-800 aircraft of Air India Express (AIE) with 104 passengers and eight crew on board made an emergency landing at the Thiruvananthapuram international airport on Friday after it developed hydraulic failure en route to the Kozhikode international airport from Sharjah.

"The flight, IX 1346, landed safely under full emergency measures around 12.39 p.m. Smoke was emanating from the rear left tyre of the aircraft even while it was landing and moving through the runway," Airport Director C.V. Ravindran said.

The flight that took off at

7 a.m. from Sharjah was to land at Kozhikode at 12.40 p.m. The flight commander noticed a warning of hydraulic failure and alerted the Kozhikode Air Traffic Control. As the Kozhikode international airport from Sharjah.

As Category B emergency was declared, all agencies were alerted by the Airports Authority of India and five crash fire tenders kept a close watch on the aircraft till all passengers alighted. The aircraft was later examined by maintenance engineers. The passengers were flown to Kozhikode around 5.30 p.m. in another aircraft, sources said.

**KERALA**

## IN BRIEF



Record the counting of votes, says A.P. SEC

VIJAYAWADA Andhra Pradesh State Election Commissioner N. Ramesh Kumar has directed senior officials to record the counting of votes in sensitive and hypersensitive gram panchayats through webcasting or closed circuit cameras and preserve the footage.

**Odisha gets four weeks to reply to A.P.'s affidavit** NEW DELHI The Supreme Court on Friday granted four weeks to Odisha to reply to Andhra Pradesh government's affidavit on the former's contempt petition against senior officials of A.P. for notifying panchayat polls in three "disputed areas". On February 13, A.P. conducted local body elections in three villages claimed by Odisha.

### Cases booked against PFI activists in Karnataka

BENGALURU Karnataka Home and Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Friday criticised the Popular Front of India (PFI) for what he called "anti-national speech" by its general secretary Anis Ahmed at a rally in Ullal in Mangalore on February 17. Following this, the police registered cases against PFI activists.

**AICC in-charge chairs meetings in Kerala** TIRUVANANTHAPURAM Tariq Anwar, All India Congress Committee (AICC) general secretary in-charge of Kerala, on Friday chaired a slew of meetings at the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee headquarters here. He is here to supervise the arrangements for the conclusion of the Aishwarya Kerala Yatra led by Opposition leader Ramesh Chennithala.

## Little chef sets a new Asian cooking record

Nine-year-old Hayan Abdulla whips up 172 dishes in just one hour in Kozhikode

### AABHA RAVEENDRAN KOZHIKODE

Hayan Abdulla dreams of setting up a 'pasta bar' and making everyone fall in love with pasta. It may sound insignificant coming from a nine-year-old. But not very much when one learns about Hayan's talent in cooking.

This Class 3 student of Sherwood Hall Senior Secondary School in Chennai cooked up a storm at Feroke, Kozhikode, recently, setting a new record gaining entry to both India Book of Records and Asia Book of Records. He whipped up 172 dishes in



just one hour. The dishes he prepared include different types of salads, munchies and dosas. Of them, a delicacy made of sausages is Hayan's personal favourite.

chain in Chennai and started showing an interest in cooking when he was just three-and-a-half years old. Now he runs a YouTube channel, Hayan Delicacy. He has also been part of several cooking shows on television. "My family lives at Feroke. Kozhikode is known to be a hub of food items and foodies as well. Hence we chose this place for the eat," said Rasha P.V., Hayan's mother.

He is also passionate about dancing and playing the violin and aspires to be a pilot. Hashnas Abdulla and Rasha are all support for their son's endeavours.

# India, China complete Pangong Tso withdrawal

10th round of Corps Commander talks in Moldo today to discuss disengagement from other areas that witnessed friction

DINAKAR PERI  
NEW DELHI

India and China have completed disengagement on the north and south banks of Pangong Tso (lake) in eastern Ladakh, and the 10th round of Corps Commander talks are to be held in Moldo on the Chinese side around 10 a.m. on Saturday to discuss pullbacks from other friction areas, a defence official said on Friday.

Disengagement was fully complete as per an agreement and had been jointly verified by both sides, a second official said. In line with the agreement, all landforms have been restored to what as existed before April 2020.

As per the agreement for Pangong Tso, the next commanders talk is to be held within 48 hours after the completion of withdrawal from the lake.



**Then and now:** Satellite images provided by Maxar Technologies show an area in Pangong Tso, with troop deployment on January 30 and, right, after withdrawal on February 17. • AP

The process started on February 10, with tanks and mechanised columns being pulled back initially from the south bank.

The other major friction areas between the two coun-

tries are Gogra, Hot Springs and Depsang Plains. The focus of the next round of talks is expected to be on complete disengagement from the friction points at Gogra and Hot Springs. Some pull-

back had taken place at Patrolling Points (PP) 15 and 17A in Gogra and Hot Springs, and the process stopped after the developments on the south bank of the lake in end-August.

The second official said that with disengagement completed on both the banks, withdrawal from the PP15 and PP17A should not take too long and could be completed quickly once an

agreement was reached.

Disengagement from PP14 at Galwan and partial disengagement from PP15 and 17A began in June last and continued in July even after the clash at Galwan on June 15.

With disengagement now complete, a moratorium on patrolling by both sides in the Pangong Tso area has come into effect.

To ensure that there is no violation of the agreement by China, there is monitoring by unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) and cameras have been installed at several locations, the second official stated, adding that the entire area was visible from multiple heights.

On the north bank, Chinese troops have withdrawn to east of Finger 8, while Indian troops have moved back to the Dhan Singh Thapa post near Finger 3.

## 3 policemen, 3 militants killed in J&K incidents

Srinagar, Shopian and Budgam witness violence

PEERZADA ASHIQ  
SRINAGAR

Three policemen and three militants were killed in three separate incidents in the Kashmir Valley on Friday, as the police chalked out a summer strategy to secure tourism in J&K.

In an attack in Srinagar, a militant, who was caught on a camera, alighted in busy Baghbar Barzulla and shot dead two policemen from a close range.

"He fired indiscriminately with an automatic weapon concealed inside his pheran [traditional Kashmiri dress] upon unarmed police personnel," the police said.

The policemen were identified as senior constable Mohammad Younus and constable Suhail Ahmad.

In an encounter in Shopian's Badigam area, three



**Encounter spot:** People looking at a damaged house near the encounter site in Shopian district on Friday. • NISSAR AHMAD

militants, identified as Suhail Sheikh alias Azeem from Turkwangan; Shahid Ahmad Dar alias Furkan from Samboora Awantipora; and Muddasir Ahmad Wagay were encircled on Thursday night and killed on Friday. Inspector General of Police Vijay Kumar said they were affiliated to Al-Badr.

In central Kashmir, one

policeman was killed and another injured during an anti-militancy operation in Budgam's Beerwah area. "During a search operation, hiding terrorists fired indiscriminately upon the search party. Two policemen, Mohammad Altaf and Manzoor Ahmad, received gunshot injuries. However, Altaf died of his injuries," the police said.

## EU envoys call for early polls in J&K

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
SRINAGAR

The European Union (EU) envoys, who studied the ground situation for two days in J&K, on Friday have praised certain measures taken post August 5 in the Union Territory (UT) but called for "early organisation of the legislative Assembly elections," which remains in a suspended animation since June 2018.

"We have taken note of recent steps such as the election of District Development Councils and the resumption of 4G internet services. We look forward to a number of other important steps to be taken in the political and economic sphere, including the early organisation of the legislative Assembly elections," a EU spokesman said. The 24 envoys from different continents toured both Srinagar and Jammu and took feedback from Feb. 17-18.

## Govt. surviving on fuel taxes: Congress

'Domestic crude production down now'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi accused previous governments of being dependent on imported crude that "burdened" the middle class, the Congress on Friday hit back by alleging that domestic crude production under his government had fallen substantially from its level during the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) regime.



Randeep Surjewala  
Congress general secretary Randeep Surjewala and spokesperson Gourav Vallabh said the domestic production of crude oil had fallen by as much as 53.66 lakh metric tonnes in the past six years. The party accused the government of earning over ₹21.5 lakh crore as taxes on petroleum products.

## Questions on costlier fuel shot down at panel meet

Bidhuri blames States for extra taxes

SOBHANA K. NAIR  
NEW DELHI

Amid severe criticism of a frequent hike in fuel prices, questions on the issue by Opposition leaders at a meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Petroleum on Friday were shot down by Chairman and BJP leader Ramesh Bidhuri by shifting the blame on the States for imposing additional taxes.

According to informed sources, the committee, which was meeting to discuss the demand for grants, saw the Opposition members question Petroleum Ministry officials and representatives of oil marketing companies.

Petrol is now retailing above ₹90 per litre in all major cities, including Delhi, and is on the verge of crossing ₹100.

The members wanted to know why despite a histori-

cal low in the rate of global crude oil prices the fuel prices are spiralling. "But the Chairman did not let us ask the questions, saying that the meeting is solely to discuss the budgetary provisions and a separate meeting will be held for the fuel price hike," a member said.

Mr. Bidhuri blamed the State governments for the hike, instead of the Centre.

"He said the States should waive tax to reduce the burden. And the only solution to rationalise fuel prices is to bring them under the GST regime, which will save the common man from multiple taxes levied by both the Centre and the States," another member said.

The Opposition-run States have so far opposed the idea since this will adversely impact their revenue collection, which has already been shrunk under the GST regime.

'Govt. need not carry entire burden'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Minimum support prices for farm produce should be paid by private traders, not just the government, the All India Kisan Sabha said on Friday.

The Left-affiliated farmers' organisation, which is part of the ongoing farm protests, argued that its proposal for legally guaranteed MSPs would not place the entire additional burden on the government budget, or ultimately, the taxpayer.

"Basmati farmers get paid ₹18.30 per kg for their crop. The Adani group's Fortune Special Basmati rice is sold at ₹208 per kg. Some brands

## Jharkhand HC denies bail to RJD chief in fodder scam case

Lalu Prasad yet to complete half his jail term, says the court



Lalu Prasad

Kumar told the media in Ranchi. Earlier in October 2020, Mr. Prasad was granted bail by the Jharkhand High Court in the Chaibasa treasury case (RC 68 (a) / 1996) as he had served half his jail term in the case.

Convicted in several cases pertaining to the ₹950-crore fodder scam of fraudulent withdrawal of money from different treasuries of Jharkhand districts in undivided Bihar in the name of supplying fodder to animals, Mr. Prasad has been at the Birsa Munda central jail of Jharkhand since December 2017.

Currently Mr. Prasad is undergoing treatment at the AIIMS in New Delhi.

### TAMIL NADU GENERATION AND DISTRIBUTION CORPORATION LTD.

#### NOTIFICATION FOR EMPANELMENT OF VENDORS IN MATERIALS MANAGEMENT WING, HEADQUARTERS, CHENNAI

Suppliers/Manufacturers/Contractors who are interested for Empannelment of Vendors/Contractors (item wise) for HT/LT Materials procured in Materials Management wing at headquarters, Chennai,viz., HT/LT UG Cables, Conductors, Meters, Power Transformers & Distribution Transformers, Breakers, Copper Control Cables, Strain Disc & Insulators, Batteries & Chargers, Line materials, etc., [Detailed list can be viewed in URL: www.tangedgeco.gov.in under "Latest News"] are requested to furnish the documents such as Firm Profile, GST No., PAN No., UAN No., Udyam No., Audited Financial Statement with Turnover for the previous 3 years, Plant & Machinery details, BIS certificate details, Previous experience in Public/Private Power Utilities during the past 10 years, Type Test certificates for the tests prescribed as per relevant IS/IEC done in any one of the NABL accredited standard laboratories, such as NPL/CPRD dated not later than 5/7/10 years, etc., in soft copy and hard copy to the Chief Engineer/MM and Concerned Superintending Engineers/MM-I to III, 4th Floor, NPKRR Maaligai, 144-Anna Salai, Chennai-600002 before 30.03.2021.

DIPR/324/Display/2021 CHIEF ENGINEER/MATERIALS MANAGEMENT/CHENNAI.

### CSIR - INDIAN INSTITUTE OF CHEMICAL BIOLOGY

#### 4, Raja S. C. Mullick Road, Kolkata - 700032

Advt. No. : R&C/545/2021 Vacancy Code : 5452101 & 5452102 A Online interview for engagement of Junior Research Fellow (Direct) will be held at CSIR-IICB Jadavpur, Kolkata-32, Campus on 16.03.2021 and 17.03.2021 from 10.30 a.m. For details log on to our website [www.career.iicb.res.in](http://www.career.iicb.res.in)

#### ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

### CANCELLATION OF NOTICE INVITING TENDER

No.SSA/ESTT/STC/BAGS/374/2020/4492 Date : 18.02.2021 The Notice inviting e-tender vide No.SSA/ESTT/STC/BAGS/374/2020/3382 Date : 11.12.2020 for supply of School Bag is hereby cancelled due to administrative reasons.

Sd/-Executive Director, SSA, Assam, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19 Janasanayog No. CF/5104/20

### CENTRAL MINE PLANNING AND DESIGN INSTITUTE LIMITED

#### (A Subsidiary of Coal India Limited)

Gondwana Place, Kanke Road, Ranchi - 834031, Jharkhand, India

#### NOTICE

"All the tenders issued by CIL and its Subsidiaries for procurement of Goods, Works and Services are available on websites of Coal India Ltd. [www.coalindia.in](http://www.coalindia.in)/respective Subsidiary Company (CMPDI, [www.cmpdi.co.in](http://www.cmpdi.co.in)), CIL e-procurement portal <https://coalindia.tenders.nic.in> and Central Public Procurement Portal <https://eprocure.gov.in>. In addition, procurement is also done through GEM Portal <https://gem.gov.in>."

### IISER

Indian Institute of Science Education and Research Berhampur Established by the Ministry of Education, Govt. of India

Tender Enquiry Nos. IISERPr/S&P/2020-21/39 dt. February 17, 2021 Notice Inviting Tender for Custom House Agent

#### NIT No.

IISERPr/S&P/2020-21/39 Detail of Service

Hiring of custom house agents from the parties dealing with custom clearance, import & export handling and international freight forwarding under consolidation

Last date for submission of e-tenders complete in all respect and confirming entirely to the specifications along with all necessary documents is, on or before 1500 hrs of March 10, 2021, on <https://www.tenderwizard.com/IISERPr>. Complete detail and the tender document is available on Institute website i.e. <http://www.iiserpr.ac.in/tender.php> and <https://eprocure.gov.in>. Any corrigendum etc will be notified on the above website only.

प्रतीक्षा विद्यालय शिक्षा एवं अनुसंधान संस्थान परम्परा

Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (Indian Council of Agricultural Research)

Vizhinjam Regional Centre, Post Bag No.9, Vizhinjam P.O.

Thiruvananthapuram - 695521 Phone: 0471-2480224 (off), 2480324 (Per), 2483324 (Apt), 2481143 (Lab), Fax: 2480324

F.No.32-2/2017/NFDB/Viz.(Vol.I) Date: 16/02/2021

#### e-Tender Notice

Online tenders in CPP Portal <https://eprocure.gov.in> are invited for procurement of The Stereo Zoom Microscope with camera (1 No.) at Vizhinjam Regional Centre of CMFRI, Vizhinjam, Thiruvananthapuram - 695521

For complete specifications and for downloading the full set of tender documents visit our Website [www.cmfr.org.in](http://www.cmfr.org.in)

S/d. Head

Bank cannot disclaim responsibility on lockers: SC

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
NEW DELHI

Banks cannot wash their hands of any liability if any harm is caused to their customers' lockers or safe deposits in an era when miscreants can manipulate technology to gain access to electronically-operated bank lockers, the Supreme Court observed in a judgment on Friday.

Ditching responsibility would not only make banks liable for legal action under the Consumer Protection Act but also damage investor confidence and harm the nation's reputation as an emerging economy, a 41-page judgment by a Bench, led by Justice Mohan M. Shantanouder, noted.

Six months time  
The court gave the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) six months to lay down "comprehensive directions mandating the steps to be taken by banks with respect to locker facility/safe deposit facility management".

"Banks should not have the liberty to impose unilateral and unfair terms on the consumers. In view of the same, we direct the RBI to issue suitable rules or regulations within six months from the date of this judgment," Justice Shantanouder ordered.

"The very purpose for which the customer avails of the locker hiring facility is so that they may rest assured that their assets are being properly taken care of," he said.

The judgment came on an appeal filed against the Union Bank of India.

## PFI leader Shareef sent to 5-day police custody

Accused taken from Mathura to Noida

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GAZIABAD

A Mathura court on Thursday granted five-day police custody of Popular Front of India (PFI) leader Rauf Shareef to the Uttar Pradesh Special Task Force (STF) in a case of alleged funding and stirring unrest in the wake of the gang-rape and subsequent death of a Dalit girl in Hathras.

The STF officials took Shareef from a temporary jail in Mathura to Noida for interrogation. The STF sought a 10-day remand but additional district and sessions judge Anil Kumar Pandey granted only five-day custody.

Shareef, who will be sent

back to prison on February 23, was brought from Ernakulam jail, where he was lodged after being arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in December last in a money laundering case. According to the STF, Shareef needed to be interrogated on funding received from foreign countries and funding the trip of Siddique Kappan, Delhi-based Kerala journalist, and three other alleged PFI activists to

## NEP is a milestone to self-reliant India: PM

It promotes research, innovation'

**SHIV SAHAY SINGH**  
KOLKATA

Describing the new education policy as a major milestone in the making of a self-reliant nation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore developed systems at Visva-Bharati which were the medium of modernising Indian education and freeing it from the shackles of slavery.

Mr. Modi, who was virtually addressing the convocation at Visva-Bharati University, said the new education policy promoted entrepreneurship and self-employment, research and innovation.

"This education policy is a major milestone in the making of an Aatmanirbhar Bharat," he said.

### Praise for Bengal

The Prime Minister said West Bengal had served as an inspiration for 'Ek Bharat-Shreshth Bharat' (One India-Superior India) and added that Visva-Bharati would play a big role in the 21st century knowledge economy, taking Indian knowledge and identity to every corner of the world.

He urged the students of Visva-Bharati to prepare a vision document for the next 25 years, by which time the country would celebrate

**G** Tagore gave a call to work towards solving the problems of the poorest of the poor

**NARENDRA MODI**  
Prime Minister

100 years of independence.

Mr. Modi said students should utilise knowledge for the benefit of society. They should not be part of the problem but of the solution.

He suggested that they help farmers and artisans of nearby villages find global markets for their produce and craft.

The Prime Minister said Gurudev Tagore named the university Visva-Bharati, meaning 'Global University', as he expected that anyone who came to learn in the university would see the whole world from the point of view of India.

"So, he (Tagore) made Visva-Bharati a place to learn... He gave a call to research on Indian heritage and work towards solving the problems of the poorest of the poor," the Prime Minister said.

Mr. Modi also quoted from Tagore's poem *Shivaji's Utsav* on the unity of India and from Gandhian Shri Dharampal's book *The Beautiful Tree: Indigenous Indian Education in the Eighteenth Century*.

## Volunteer files plea against Covishield

**LEGAL CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI

The Madras High Court on Friday ordered notices, returnable by March 26, to the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) and the Director General of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) on a writ petition to declare Covishield vaccine unsafe since it had reportedly led to adverse effects on a litigant who had volunteered for its clinical trial.

Justice Abdul Quddhose ordered issuance of notices to the CEOs of Serum Institute of India Private Limited, Astra Zeneca U.K. and also to the chairman of the ethics committee of Sri Ramchandra Institute of Higher Education and Research, a deemed to be university in Chennai, on the petition filed by Asif Riaz, a business consultant, who also sought ₹5 crore in compensation.

Mr. Riaz said in his affidavit that he underwent severe adverse reactions about 10 days after he was administered the vaccine on October 1, 2020. He claimed that even after three months, he often experienced trembling of hands, fear, anxiety, trepidation, panic and mood swings and that he has lost his earnings.

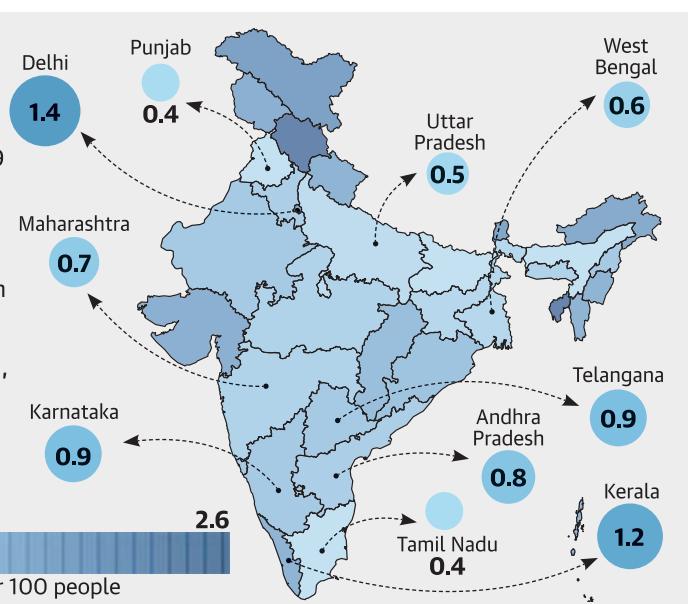
## '1 crore vaccine doses given in 34 days'

### A jab for health

As many as 2.1 doses of a COVID-19 vaccine have been administered for every 100 people (health and frontline workers) in Himachal Pradesh, the highest in the country. Tamil Nadu, Punjab and Bihar have administered only 0.4 doses per 100 people

0.4

Doses per 100 people



13,193 new daily cases recorded in the last 24 hours along with 97 fatalities, the Ministry said.

Health Minister Harsh Vardhan has appealed to the medical community and the frontline workers to come forward and get inoculated against COVID-19, saying the vaccines were safe and immunogenic.

"I humbly and strongly appeal to all healthcare and frontline workers to come forward to take the vaccine. Let us all work together to fight against COVID-19. The world is not free of the disease. It is only with our collective effort that we shall overcome this public health challenge," the Minister said on Friday.

The total active case load in the country now stood at 1.39 lakh (1,39,542), with

## Dr. Reddy's to seek nod for use of Sputnik V

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

Dr. Reddy's Laboratories Ltd. on Friday announced that it had initiated the process with the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) for Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) of human adenoviral vector-based platform vaccine candidate Sputnik V.

"As part of the review process, Dr. Reddy's will present the safety profile of the phase 2 study, and interim data of the phase 3 study, which is expected to

complete by February 21," said a company release.

G.V. Prasad, co-chairman and managing director of Dr. Reddy's Laboratories, said, "The efficacy of Sputnik V was reported to be 91.6% by the Lancet. The initiation of the EUA process will be a critical step forward for us in ensuring speedy access to the Sputnik V vaccine in India."

Dr. Reddy's has partnered with the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) to conduct the clinical trials.

'Pfizer vaccine stable at low temperature'

**R. PRASAD**  
CHENNAI

On Friday, the U.S.-based Pfizer claimed that its COVID-19 vaccine is stable when stored in low temperatures of -25 to -15 degree Celsius, which are commonly found in pharmaceutical freezers and refrigerators.

In a release, the company said data had been submitted to the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) to support a proposed update to the U.S. Emergency Use Authorization Prescribing Information. It claimed that the vaccine could be stored at low temperatures for a "total of two weeks as an alternative or complement to storage in an ultra-low temperature freezer".

On December 11, 2020, when the FDA approved the vaccine for emergency use, the storage temperature stipulated was -60 to -80 degree Celsius. The vaccine remains stable at ultra-low temperature for up to six months.

The data submitted to the FDA included low temperature (-25 to -15 degree C) stability data generated on batches manufactured over the past nine months.

### IN BRIEF



#### Maharashtra sees surge in COVID-19 case count

PUNE In its highest single-day jump since December last year, Maharashtra reported 6,112 new COVID-19 cases on Friday even as the State health department denied the presence of any new virus strain in the samples tested from Amravati, Yavatmal and Satara. The latest surge has taken the number of active cases to 44,765.

#### ED attaches properties in Gurugram land scam

NEW DELHI The Enforcement Directorate has attached properties worth ₹281.42 crore of several accused persons and their associates in connection with the Gurugram land scam, in which a large number of villagers were forced to sell about 400 acres of land to private builders at throwaway prices. The attached assets include 54% of a project in the name of Dove Infrastructure Private Limited pertaining to the main accused, Atul Bansal, and the ABWL Group companies, worth ₹108.86 crore.

## SC refuses petition against M.P. ordinance

Petitioner told to approach HC



**LEGAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday declined to entertain a petition challenging the validity of the controversial Madhya Pradesh ordinance regulating religious conversions through inter-faith marriages.

A Bench headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sharad A. Bobde asked petitioner Vishal Thakre to approach the Madhya Pradesh High Court.

### Privacy rights

The plea said the law, which followed a similar ordinance made by Uttar Pradesh, infringed a person's right to privacy and freedom of choice, leading to violations of fundamental rights under Articles 14, 19(1)(a) and 21 of the Constitution.

The apex court had refused to hear some other pleas on the issue.

However, the court, on January 6, issued notice to the Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand governments on the pleas of NGO Citizens for Justice and Peace and others

## Army rescues 447 tourists from Nathu La

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
GUWAHATI

The Army rescued 447 tourists caught in sub-zero temperatures following a snowstorm at Nathu La on the India-China border in Sikkim on Thursday, officials said on Friday.

Defence spokesperson Lt. Col. P. Khongsai said the tourists were stuck in 155 vehicles on the Nathu La-Gangtok Road following sudden heavy snowfall.

The tourists were stranded over a 15 km stretch and their vehicles started skidding after the snowstorm. They were rescued in Army vehicles and given space in the barracks of 17-Mile military camp," he stated.

All the tourists were provided accommodation, food and medical support, while 26 had to be hospitalised as they required critical medical support. There were no major injuries or casualties," he added.

Nathu La, meaning "listening ears", is in East Sikkim district and is one of the highest motorable roads in the world at 14,450 feet above sea level.

## Chamoli disaster toll rises to 62



Identities of 34 bodies have been established

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

The death toll in Uttarakhand's Chamoli flash floods rose to 62 on Friday. The identities of 34 bodies have been established.

The DNA samples of 96 family members of the missing persons and 73 bodies/body parts have been sent to the forensic science laboratory in Dehradun for matching. The Joshimath police have

registered 204 missing reports. Search teams have been removing sludge and debris from the Tapovan hydel project tunnel, from

where 13 bodies have been recovered so far. About 35 workers were earlier said to be trapped there.

As part of the relief opera-

tions, electricity and water supplies to the 13 villages that were cut off after the flash floods on February 7 have been restored.

## Rahul flags delay in review of OROP

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

On the second day of the three-day meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi questioned government officials on the review of One Rank One Pension (OROP) which has been pending since last June.

Ministry officials, according to sources, informed the panel that there were certain

'loopholes' which need to be fixed. A committee has been constituted to look into the issue and a review will be held once the committee submits its report, officials said.

Last year in June, the Defence Ministry had formed a committee to work out the modalities of the revision but no announcement has been made on when the revision would be undertaken.

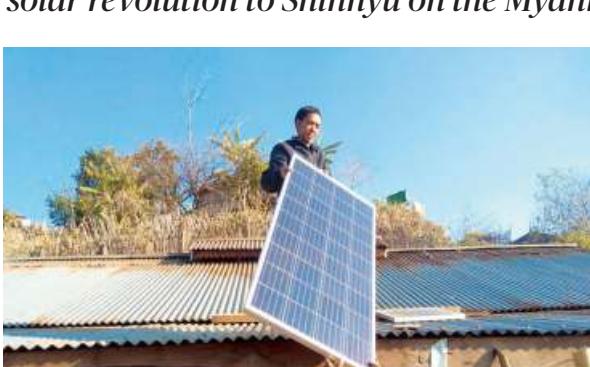
After the war of words

between committee Chairman, Jual Oram of the BJP, and Mr. Gandhi at the meeting on Thursday, it is learnt that that Chairman did not intervene on Friday.

The Congress had earlier in Parliament raised the issue of a cut in Defence budget, irrespective of the date of retirement. The Government had implemented the long pending demand of veterans in November 2015 and as per the notification, it is to be revised every five years.

## Sun shines at night in remote Nagaland village

A teacher's lament on social media brings a solar revolution to Shinnyu on the Myanmar border



**RAHUL KARMAKAR**  
GUWAHATI

A remote village in Nagaland is celebrating the sun - for shining at night.

The bamboo torch was the source of light after dusk in Shinnyu for almost 44 years after it was set up close to the border with Myanmar. The last of these torches were lit on February 15, the day before solar-powered bulbs lit up the village of 60 families belonging to the Konyak Naga community.

Shinnyu would probably have been in darkness for some more time had not John Khangnyu, the headmaster of the government-run village school, lamented the lack of electricity on social media.

Mr. Khangnyu is from Tobi, the nearest connected settlement about 58 km from Shinnyu. He is one of the few people in Shinnyu to own a mobile phone.

**Bright spot:** Solar panels being installed at Shinnyu village in Nagaland. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Mr. Khangnyu said it wasn't easy for him to log on. He had to come home in Tobi from Shinnyu, where he is posted as one of three teachers of the primary school catering to 74 students, to post his views on social media.

Shinnyu was set up in 1977 and recognised by the State government in 2002.

one of 10 un-electrified villages in our district. We intend to work with GHE for the other nine," Mon district's Deputy Commissioner Thavaseelan K. said.

GHE executed the ₹23 lakh solar project under its corporate social responsibility with the district administration taking care of the logistics. A team of 10, including engineers, set up the project.

"Our next mission is a solar engineering workshop to train locals in maintaining the technology we have developed," Mr. Bansal said.

Part of the agreement made with the villagers, Mr. Bansal added, is for them to open a village bank account where every household contributes ₹100 periodically for maintenance, repair and replacement of components of the solar installation.

"I know I have to follow the rules. But imagine not meeting to your family for 15 months. It was mentally exhausting. Never in my two-decade long career, have I been away from my family for such a long period. We knew people from outside

were helping us, but that feeling of uncertainty never left me," Mr. Bansal said, speaking to *The Hindu* over telephone.

Mr. Bansal is currently being kept at a mandatory seven-day quarantine at a hotel in Andheri East. Mr. Bansal started his

## After 15 months, Mumbai sailor is glad to return home

Cargo vessel *Anastasia* was stranded at Chinese port



journey on *Anastasia* before the pandemic in November 2019 and the ship travelled to the U.S., Netherlands, South Africa, India, China, and Australia. However, the second trip to China resulted in the ship being stranded in Chinese waters as the pandemic scare prevented unloading of Australian coal. China also had new regulations on imports.

"We had to work on our mental health. We had to be careful to ensure nobody lost his control as we did not want any untoward incident on the ship," said Mr. Fernandes, who worked in the engine department of the vessel.

After the successful negotiations with Chinese officials, the ship was then taken to Japan from where the crew flew to Dubai and then to the respective cities of residence.

■ N.D.N.



## Instapick

**LV by Appointment:** The next big trend? Fans showing off a truckload of Louis Vuitton merchandise. The luxury brand has made shopping easy in California with LV by Appointment, a mobile store that brings customers personalised pieces to their homes. Introduced in New York last year, these futuristic trailers will stock up on clothing, leather goods, accessories and more.



## Talking point

**Koo App:** Users across the country have shown they are ready to 'koo' and 'reko' as the hometown answer to Twitter has registered over 3 million users. This follows several personalities joining Koo, from Minister of Railways, Piyush Goyal, to actor Kangana Ranaut. Meanwhile, another social networking app, Clubhouse, is quietly making its presence felt, and it is only by invitation.

## Pick of the week

**Concerts, stand-up and other events you just can't miss.**



### The water debate

One T-shirt takes about 3,000 litres of water to make. The stats are scary. So, to shine a light on water consumption by the fashion industry, dialogue platform **ReFashion Hub** is collaborating with seven artists – Priyanka Paul, Aditi Mali, Manasi Deshpande, Mehek Malhotra, Vinu Joseph, Param Sahib, and Sonali Basin. They will create comic strips with a sarcastic take on producing tees and the resources that the process drains. The aim is to make the wearer question the source of all the clothes they wear.

### Starbucks x The Label Life

Coffee meets style, as coffee chain **Starbucks** collaborates with **The Label Life**, helmed by style editor Sussanne Khan, Malalika Arora and Bipasha Basu. With the theme 'Here's to joy', the products include coffee mugs, notebooks and pouches. Prices start from ₹500. On [thelabellife.com](http://thelabellife.com) and at Starbucks outlets, in Delhi, a Warli exhibition has been organised as a part of the third **India Craft Week**, at the British Council Gallery. The exhibit has paintings of Jivya Soma Mashe, the pioneer who popularised Warli art. Tickets on [insider.in](http://insider.in).

### Jim Sarbh in Sea Wall

Jim Sarbh takes the stage with **Sea Wall**, by playwright Simon Stephens. Hailed as a delicate and powerful monologue, it is directed by Bruce Guthrie, the NCPA head of theatre. Watch on February 27-28 and March 6-7 on [bookmyshow.com](http://bookmyshow.com). Tickets at ₹299. On February 27, authors who took part in the writers' workshop by **The Rumour Mill Theatre Company** will get to see their monologues come alive. The actors too participated in a different workshop. Tickets cost ₹50. On [townscript.com](http://townscript.com).

### Listen up, superhero fans

Learn about Karna, Draupadi and others, with **Spotify India's** original, **Superheroes of Indian Mythology**. The Hindi podcast brings to life the triumphs and tribulations of these heroes. Five episodes will release every week. Elsewhere, **Hungama Music** plans to launch 30 new podcasts in six languages in the coming year. The app has also tied up with podcast platform Hubhopper to host over 4,000 podcasts in 15 languages and popular ones such as Story Time with Soha Ali Khan. On [hungama.com](http://hungama.com).

### Seeing and feeling

**Ways of Seeing** is an art exhibition and sale of artworks that focuses on the gaze, featuring over 150 works by female (Mrinalini Mukherjee, B. Prabha, Anupam Sud, and more) and male artists (Nandal Bose, George Keyt, K. H. Ara, amongst others). At DAG, The Claridges, Delhi; [dagworld.com](http://dagworld.com); or until March 7. **The Glasgow Film Festival**, online from February 24 to March 7, will host six world premieres, including **Sir Alex Ferguson: Never Give In**. On [glasgowfilm.org](http://glasgowfilm.org).

### For plant parents

Are you an aspiring plant parent? Then **How Not to Kill Your Houseplants: A Beginner's Guide to Plant Parenting** by Trisha Bora is likely a good place to start. Learn how to choose the right plants for your living space and how to make them thrive. Priced at ₹499. And for those interested in alternative healing, the second edition of the **Wellness Fest** is on at Express Avenue mall till February 21. Curated by The Divine Sparks and Sunita Agarwal, it will include practices such as aura tuning and sound healing.

### Australian Open

In a rematch of their 2018 US Open decider, Naomi Osaka beat American great Serena Williams to cement her place in the **Australian Open 2021**. The three-time Grand Slam winner will now come up against first-time Grand Slam finalist Jennifer Brady. Today at 2 pm IST. Defending champion Novak Djokovic beat Russian qualifier Aslan Karatsev to seal his place in the final. However, fellow great Rafael Nadal saw his hopes dashed as he lost to no. 5 seed Stefanos Tsitsipas in the quarterfinal.



APARNA NARRAIN

"Someone once described the Jaipur Literature Festival [JLF] as *Monsoon Wedding* meets the *Hay Festival*," William Dalrymple tells me over a call from New Delhi.

"Anyone who enjoys the *Monsoon Wedding* side of it – the colour, the spectacle and the crowds – will obviously miss that. But I think there have been compensations in the astonishing quality of the [300] speakers this year: Noam Chomsky, Malala Yousafzai, Joseph Stiglitz, Mark Haddon, Jonathan Safran Foer, Robert Macfarlane, Philip Pullman... for free! In the West, any one of them would be a \$50 ticket," says the writer, historian, and festival director (a title he shares with publisher Namita Gokhale).

We are discussing the 14th edition of the 'greatest literary show on Earth' going digital. Pre-pandemic, the annual bibliophiles' pilgrimage had seen the Pink City come alive – with hotels booked months in advance, students camping out at railway stations, and visitors scrambling between jam-packed sessions and book signings. Evenings had buzzed with performances, special tours, and exclusive dinners. But 2021 is seeing the 10-day festival exchanging the

# JLF AT A 3D DIGGI PALACE

The event's debut virtual outing boasts an enviable line up of speakers and some fun tech



physical grounds of the Diggi Palace for a 3D rendition of it.

### Lessons from television

"The biggest challenge was how to capture the essence of JLF," says Sanjoy K Roy, festival producer and managing director of Teamwork Arts, an entertainment company. For starters, they've tried to keep it as visual as possible. "We have the entrance of the Diggi Palace pictured on our website's landing page. Enter it to choose between sessions on the front lawn or the Durbar Hall, and 3D renditions will show you the path [to your destination]. Once there, you will enter the screen box where the sessions happen." While some will be recorded live – such as conversations with satirist Craig Brown and art critic Ranjit

Hoskote – other sessions will be on Zoom and a few will be pre-recorded. Guests can also choose to hear applause by clicking on a button. "The idea is to give as close an experience as possible to Diggi," adds Roy.

The last few months were spent navigating the online space, and putting into practice the learnings they had taken away from the "series of digital conversations" – such as JLF Brave New World (April) – that they had organised in 2020. "We had to tackle questions like how do we reach people? How do we manage the algo-

(Clockwise from left) Diggi Palace, Noam Chomsky, Malala Yousafzai, a 2020 performance, and William Dalrymple

## Let's talk money

Expectedly, the pandemic has affected sponsorship. "It has been such a deathly year for most organisations across the world, and especially in India, with limited support. So we've had a really difficult time," says Roy. "But we still have some of our usual sponsors."



### Special editions

An exclusive talk with American fantasy author Sarah J Maas will be open only to those who buy her books. Sessions with Priyanka Chopra Jonas and Bill Gates will not be available on social media. "You can only watch it on our website," says Roy.



rhythms that all the social media channels put out? How do we get good data from the people who visit? We've been able to convert all of that learning and use it for JLF, to target our audience better," says Roy, adding that in many ways, they also went back to their roots in television "because it is really about creating hundreds of hours of programming".

What about virtual reality, which music festivals such as

Burning Man had used last year? "Teamwork Arts did that for *Fables of the Earth*, an exhibition and sale held last August as a fundraiser for artists and artisans. But for most audiences, negotiating VR is not necessarily easy," he says, adding that they have tried to make the festival as phone-friendly as possible, "because 70% of the audience will access JLF on their phones".

Roy is certain JLF's future will include digital events. "I don't think we're getting out of the digital aspect of it. For example, on the front lawn, on an average there used to be about 14,000 people. Today, an average session has 29,000 to 32,000 people online. You can't beat the statistics anymore."

### The Harvard class

Meanwhile, for Dalrymple, the absence of the physical – which takes away concerns of travel and accommodation – has meant he's been able to onboard speakers that he's been trying forever to get. "Even by usual JLF standards, these are incredible names," he says. "Just take the Harvard crew. Vincent Brown, who was the finalist in The Cundill History Prize for his amazing book [*Tacky's Revolt: The Story of an Atlantic Slave War*]; Michael Sandel, who probably has the highest profile of all the Harvard professors with his amazing TV presentations on law and ethics; and Michael Puett [who teaches Chinese history and anthropology], the single most popular professor at Harvard."

From February 19-28. Register on [jaipurliteraturefestival.org](http://jaipurliteraturefestival.org)

You could make pineapples or other combustible things? History is the worst (unless it is the re-heated version). Lies! Wars are not started by power-hungry tyrants but by ignorant youngsters like you, who demand freedom, (sorry, replace with cabbage) through protests (replace with coconuts). Don't you dare engage in coconutting for cabbage. And treat all books with suspicion, my child.

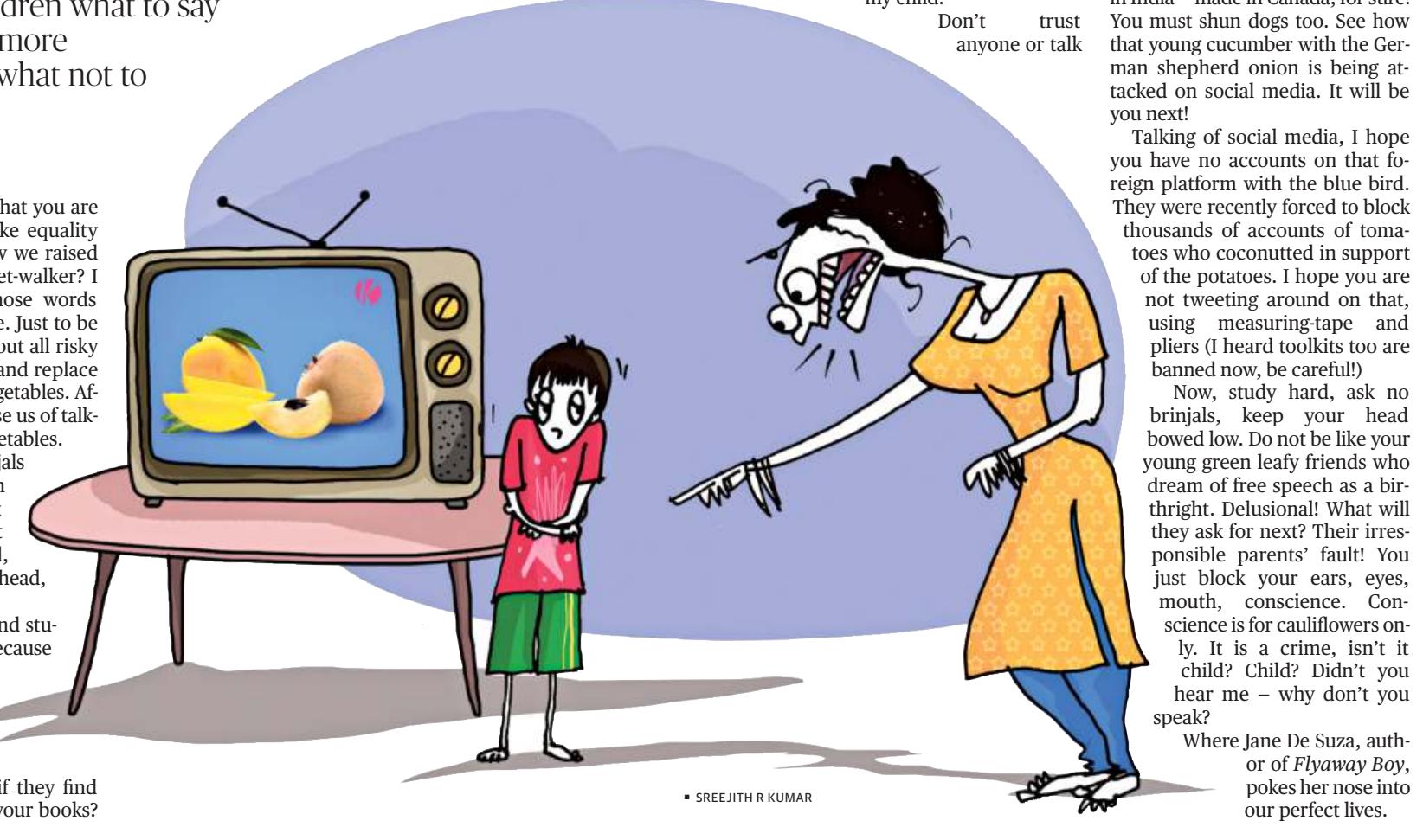
Don't trust anyone or talk

to anyone, even in private room or Zoom – anywhere. See that 22-year-old cucumber for example, environmental (one of the worst words of all) activist, apprehended for pro-potato talks (because you should not mention the ungrateful, tractor-driving growers of that tuber). Her picture is going viral with a dog. Photoshopped! A German shepherd dog too – not even made in India – made in Canada, for sure! You must shun dogs too. See how that young cucumber with the German shepherd onion is being attacked on social media. It will be you next!

Talking of social media, I hope you have no accounts on that foreign platform with the blue bird. They were recently forced to block thousands of accounts of tomatoes who coconuted in support of the potatoes. I hope you are not tweeting around on that, using measuring-tape and pliers (I heard toolkits too are banned now, be careful!).

Now, study hard, ask no brinjals, keep your head bowed low. Do not be like your young green leafy friends who dream of free speech as a birthright. Delusional! What will they ask for next? Their irresponsible parents' fault! You just block your ears, eyes, mouth, conscience. Conscience is for cauliflower only. It is a crime, isn't it child? Child? Didn't you hear me – why don't you speak?

Where Jane De Suza, author of *Flyaway Boy*, pokes her nose into our perfect lives.

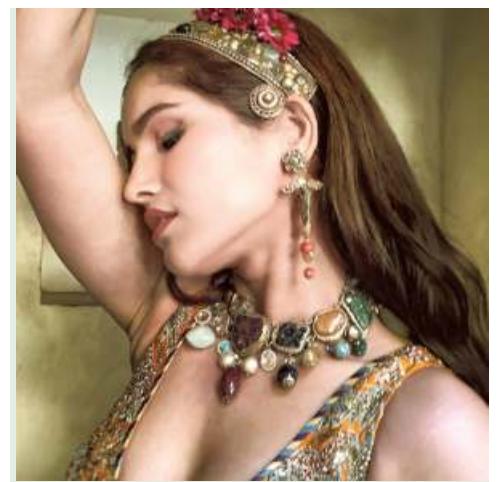


• SREEJITH R KUMAR



### Australian Open

In a rematch of their 2018 US Open decider, Naomi Osaka beat American great Serena Williams to cement her place in the **Australian Open 2021**. The three-time Grand Slam winner will now come up against first-time Grand Slam finalist Jennifer Brady. Today at 2 pm IST. Defending champion Novak Djokovic beat Russian qualifier Aslan Karatsev to seal his place in the final. However, fellow great Rafael Nadal saw his hopes dashed as he lost to no. 5 seed Stefanos Tsitsipas in the quarterfinal.

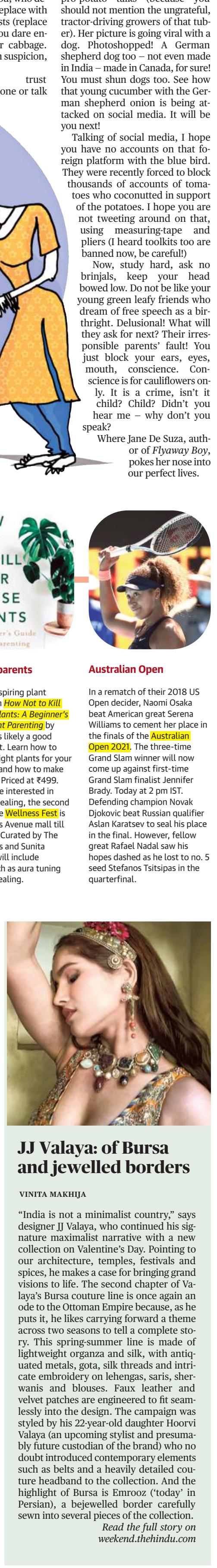


## JJ Valaya: of Bursa and jewelled borders

VINITA MAKHJA

"India is not a minimalist country," says designer JJ Valaya, who continued his signature maximalist narrative with a new collection on Valentine's Day. Pointing to our architecture, temples, festivals and spices, he makes a case for bringing grand visions to life. The second chapter of Valaya's Bursa couture line is once again an ode to the Ottoman Empire because, as he puts it, he likes carrying forward a theme across two seasons to tell a complete story. This spring-summer line is made of lightweight organza and silk, with antiquated metals, gotta, silk threads and intricate embroidery on lehengas, saris, shawl-wanis and blouses. Faux leather and velvet patches are engineered to fit seamlessly into the design. The campaign was styled by his 22-year-old daughter Hoovri Valaya (an upcoming stylist and presumably future custodian of the brand) who no doubt introduced contemporary elements such as belts and a heavily detailed couture headband to the collection. And the highlight of Bursa is Emrooz ('today' in Persian), a bejewelled border carefully sewn into several pieces of the collection.

Read the full story on [weekend.thehindu.com](http://weekend.thehindu.com)





SUNALINI MATHEW

Avaz Mohammed claims he made the first lac button in 1968; "then everyone copied it". The 74-year-old father of four girls, two boys, and a black cat that races around the house faster than his grandchildren with their handbells, has worked with designer Rina Dhaka, while his son with Manish Malhotra. His designs and colourways go beyond the Jaipur market and have a contemporary appeal: a bangle with one end twisted into a snake head; a speckled choker, primary colours mixed into a black base; beads twined into balls or fashioned into barrell shapes.

#### Tools of the trade

"I am the seventh generation doing this work," he says, having trained his children to take the craft forward. We sit on the floor in his home and studio near Jaipur's Jantar Mantar as he explains the way lacquer is made: 250 grams of resin from the *ched ka ped* (pine), half a kilo lac from the *peepal, budh, beri* (the cheapest), or *kusum* (the most expensive) trees, and one kilo soapstone powder. The lac itself is an insect secretion found on the tree. "A lot of what you see in the market is just re-

sin and soapstone," he says, as he praises his daughter, who teaches other women the trade. "Indiraji [late prime minister Indira Gandhi] came to one of my exhibitions," he shares, showing a four-inch thick album with pictures of his work, dignitaries, and a thank you note from the Prince of Wales. The conversation traverses many areas and takes us through time.

"Abhi biryani mangva deta hoon [I'll order some biryani now]," he says, gesturing to one of his family members who are hovering around with water, milky 'North Indian' coffee, sweets and mixture. The generosity of spirit is humbling. Es-



(Clockwise from top) Lac products, puppets in leheriya-gota clothes, Avaz Mohammed in his studio, and puppeteer Pappuji making his raja puppet



#### Virtual shift

During the lockdown, Gagan says, they were forced to dilute the brand and take experiences from across the country online. These were not those of traditional craftspeople, but of artists of different types. He is now working to hive off this business on to an app called Rooftop – "on-demand virtual activity" with "100 passionate influencers" and users who can "unlock value".

am invited into their home, their lives, to experience the way they work, to play with the lac, creating what I want.

Mohammed talks of going to Milan in 2017, with the Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts. "Wahan bahut kadr karte hain craft ka [they hold craft in high regard there]," he

especially when his wife, Anwar Jahan, tells me, "The lockdown was almost a year of starvation for us." But they are not billing me for the *biryani*, their time or the use of their tools: the *bhatti* with coals to soften the sticks of lac, the wooden *hatta* to flatten the warm plasticine-like mixture, the *patti* to cut the lac. I

says, remembering how the people who watched him work later used the lac disks to make oversize pendants and masks. In the Pink City, post pandemic, orders are trickling in. He is now making lac balls filled with *gulal* (pink colour) for Holi – a transient expression of his craft that will still bring joy to many.

#### Culture karma

The experience has been organised by Jaipur-based Rajasthan Studio, which works to connect craftspeople with customers – "those with passion to those with an interest", as Kartik Gaggar, who founded the brand in January 2019, says. Currently, they do 27 experiences across Jaipur, Udaipur, and Jodhpur, with Kota and Bikaner up next, spread across craft forms like blue pottery, miniature painting, and puppet making (which is my first experience of the day).

There are 103 forms of craft to be explored across the state, so Rajasthan is an obvious place to start. "We are a destination management company, where the artist is the hero," says Gaggar, who is hoping to grow the brand pan India. The highest priced experiences, at ₹6,000, are *meenakari* and fresco painting; some like sandalwood art are at ₹3,500; while many like writing on rice grains are at ₹2,500. Each is meant for a small group, usually no larger

than four people.

Gaggar believes the future of travel will be about learning, experiencing, and exploring. And with Indians being their mainstay – before the lockdown and after – it is all the more reason to put *karigars* and the Indian craft story in the spotlight.

#### Craft drive

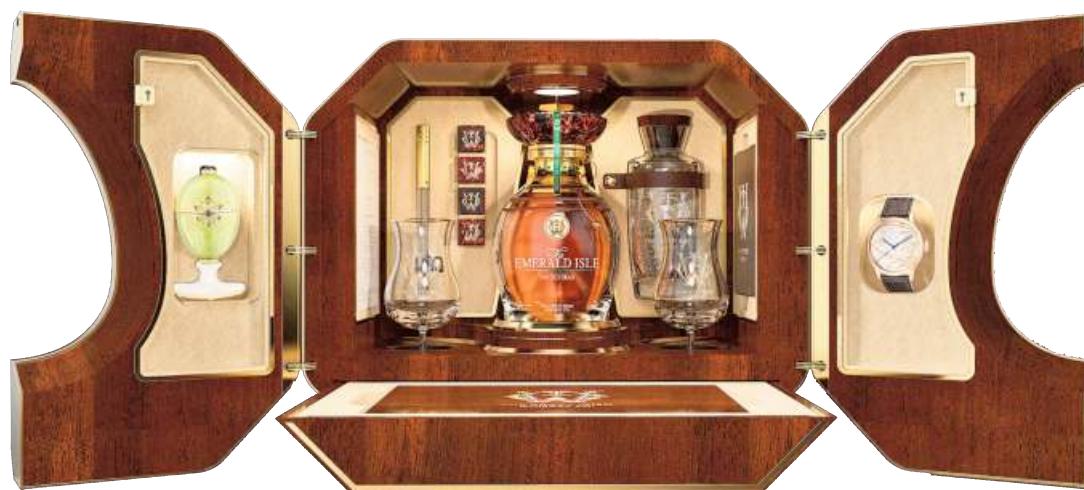
Gaggar is a chartered accountant who has worked in consulting, and experimented with organising experiential trips within Mumbai. Later, his training in PricewaterhouseCoopers taught him processes, so he spent three-and-a-half years studying the market worldwide. The turning point that solidified his method was when he and his wife took a trip to Seattle and a rower who had won an Olympic gold showed them the city through its waterways.

Back in Jaipur, where his family is from, he began documenting specific craft forms, beginning with information found on Google. "The deeper I go, the more I feel I don't know anything," he says, adding that in time the company aims to look at museum records and those kept by royal families. From the craftspeople he has learnt patience, making the experiences as slow as possible. "Across the world, there is no blueprint of how to sell folk art," he says.

His vision meshes with that of puppeteer Pappuji, whom I'd visited earlier – that the craftsman does not have to stand on the street peddling his wares. As Pappuji chisels the jaw of the *raja* puppet and smooths the edges off the face of the *rani*, he asks that people come to his house to buy rather than visit a shop. "Issi se kala aage badhega [only with this will the craft grow]," says Sumitra, his wife, as she slips up a sari to make the *leheriya-gota* clothes of the puppets.

## The \$2 million whiskey collab

Fabergé and The Craft Irish Whiskey Co team up for seven experience sets that include 30-year-old whiskey and other luxe rarities



SUSANNA MYRTLE LAZARUS

What does a legacy brand with roots in Russia and French heritage have in common with a fairly new whiskey maker from Ireland? That would be The Emerald Isle, a new collaboration between Fabergé and The Craft Irish Whiskey Co (CIWC), that includes seven collectible sets with rare 30-year-old whiskey inside. The collection, which was launched earlier this month, also features a Fabergé Celtic egg objet, and an Altruist timepiece. Each of the seven boxes will be auctioned with a starting price of \$2 million.

The drink itself is special, a single malt Irish whiskey, which has been aged in American oak casks that previously stored bourbon, and then finished in a rare Pedro Ximénez sherry barrel. "This maturation process has imparted profiles that range from chocolate fudge and maple syrup on the nose, to sweet leather and silky-smooth, ripe banana on the palate which flows into a long finish with hints of creamy meringue and rich vanilla cigar smoke," in-

forms the press note.

Josina von dem Bussche-Kessell, Global Sales Director, Fabergé, says that this project has been well over a year in the making. "The idea was to create a future classic and a modern-day heirloom... Having a 30-year-old triple-distilled whiskey come out of Ireland is an incredible feat,"

she says, adding that

it was only fitting that the jewellery brand created the egg objet using the traditional guilloche enamelling craftsmanship. Each egg opens to reveal an uncut emerald sourced from Gemfields' Kagem mine in Zambia.

CIWC's design director Tiago Russo picked seven wonders of Ireland, chosen for their historical and mythological significance. "Each place, like The Blarney Stone and Giant's Cause-

way, is represented by different gemstones on each egg's exterior: emerald, blue sapphire, ruby, amethyst, rhodolite, spessartite or tourmaline," says Jay Bradley, founder of CIWC. The experience box features illustrations of these landmarks, showcasing the egg and revealing the handcrafted whiskey bottle once it is opened.

With each dark walnut experience box featuring two bottles of ultra-rare, 30-year-old, triple distilled Irish whiskey, and the creations from Fabergé, I wonder if this is the future for luxury brands? To collaborate and create products that appeal to a larger consumer base. Bradley says, "Working with Fabergé has really enabled us to elevate and reinvigorate Irish whiskey and re-establish its rightful position on the global stage." Bussche-Kessell agrees, adding that she believes that such a partnership "is more about appealing to new and different niche client groups which otherwise may remain separated."



The walnut experience box with The Emerald Isle whiskey, Fabergé Celtic egg, and the Altruist timepiece



#### FOOD SPOT

## A treasure chest of FOOD

Tastes from all across the country, brought to you by the Pitaara Kitchen



RAHUL VERMA

I met Udit Maheshwari while scooping up some delicious *keema* with a crispy *paratha* at the cafeteria in Triveni a few years ago. Udit was the chef in charge there, and I remember how sublime the *keema-paratha* was.

I am happy to know that he is still wielding his magic spatula. Udit now runs a delivery outfit called Pitaara Kitchen. And it has some delightful dishes, as I discovered last week.

The menu would gladden any food lover's heart. It has a mix of regional cuisines, and has zeroed in on some of the most loved dishes from across the country – but with a makeover. For instance, if you like *gatteki sabzi* – which I do – you will be surprised to find that the *gattei*, a steamed lentil cake, has a soft and mildly sweet core. Udit stuffs it with some *paneer* and *khoya*, and that gives it an entirely new taste.

But let's start at the beginning. Udit and his wife Subha are the brains and hands behind Pitaara Kitchen (Ph no: 8882015225, website: pita-

rakitchen.in). It is based in Chirag Dilli and delivers to places within a 10 km range. The packaging is secure and reassuring, and the food is sublime!

I enjoyed not just the Govind *gattei* (₹435) poached in a yoghurt and onion curry, but also the Keralan fish *tikka* (Rs 800), sole fish fried with a mix of masalas. The fish was firm and had been well coated with herbs and spices – mustard, whole coriander, black pepper, curry leaves and *kasuri methi*.

I loved the *kuku paka* chicken (₹580) – juicy pieces of chicken in a delightfully creamy sauce prepared with coconut milk and tomatoes, and flavoured with, among other ingredients, fennel and cardamom. Equally enjoyable was the wild mushroom stew (₹420). The mushroom had soaked in the flavours of the curry, cooked with coconut milk and vinegar.



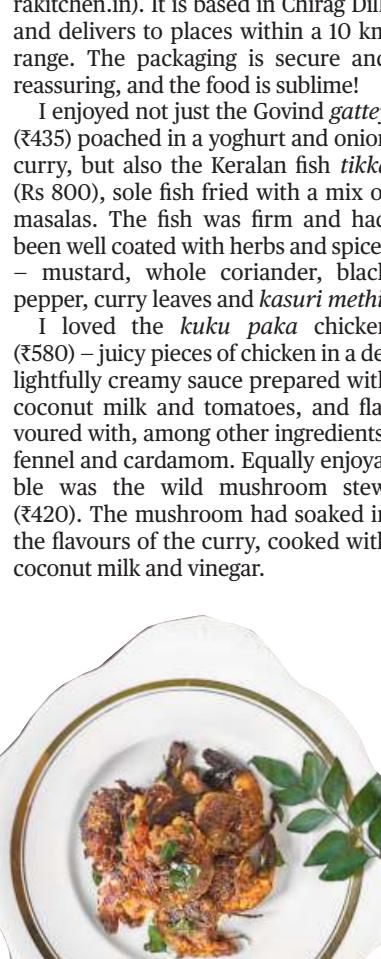
His accompaniments are innovative, too. He has a Bandel cheese mini *kulcha* (₹280); the strong cheese of Bengal is kneaded into *kulcha* dough, cooked in a tandoor and then served with *ka-sundi* butter and spicy tomato chutney. There are *appams* to go with the stews, and different kinds of breads – tandoori, Malabar parottas, *bajra* roti, *sattu* roti, pumpkin seed and green chilli *naan*, and many more.

The dish that didn't appeal to me was the Beliram *saag* meat. I found the meat too fatty and the *saag* overpureed. The *kale channe ke kabab* may appeal to vegetarians but left me yearning for the real thing. But the *Etti masala* prawn (cooked with onions, dried green peppercorn and cracked black peppercorn, ₹520) was superb. I had that with a bacon and Kalimpang cheese mini *kulcha* (₹470) and when I bundled up a succulent piece of prawn with the plump *naan*, it gave me the kind of joy that the Triveni *keema-paratha* did.

Pitaara does have *keema pao* (₹390) on the menu, and a host of other interesting dishes such as pulled pork *samosa* (₹470), tamarind vegetable *moilee* (₹320) and Bhopali chicken *rezala* (₹600). I am not surprised that the outlet is called Pitaara. The word means a box: and this indeed is a treasure chest.

*The writer is a seasoned food critic*

(Clockwise from left) Beliram Saag Meat; Keralan Fish Tikka; Bandel Cheese Kulcha; Etti Masala • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



# U.S. ready for talks on Iran deal

Blinken tells EU that the U.S. will re-enter the deal if Iran returns to compliance

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN

The Biden administration has said that it will participate in talks with Iran with a view to reinstate the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) or the 'Iran nuclear deal', which has been unravelling since the U.S.'s departure from the deal in 2018.

"The United States would accept an invitation from the European Union high representative to attend a meeting of the P5+1 and Iran to discuss a diplomatic way forward on Iran's nuclear program," State Department spokesperson Ned Price said on Thursday.

In 2018, Mr. Trump pulled the U.S. out of the JCPOA, an agreement between Iran, the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and Germany, which lifted longstanding international sanctions against Iran in exchange for Tehran scuttling its nuclear programme. The U.S. had reinstated ramped up sanctions against Iran as part of what it called a 'maximum pressure campaign', after leaving the deal.

Also on Thursday, Secretary of State Antony Blinken told his counterparts from the U.K., France and Germany



**Resetting ties:** The U.S. has asked the UNSC to withdraw Trump administration letters seeking sanctions on Iran. •REUTERS

ny ('the E3') that the U.S. is prepared to talk to Iran and was prepared to re-enter the JCPOA if Iran also returned to compliance with it.

The Ministers affirmed strong interest in continuing their consultations and coordination, including with China and Russia, on this key security issue, recognising the role of the High Representative of the European Union as Coordinator of the Joint Commission," a joint statement released after the meeting read.

The Biden administration sent a letter to the UN Security Council withdrawing letters from the Trump administration that had attempted to reinstate UN sanctions on Iran via a 'snap-back' process (the Trump move was not recognised by other members of the then

Security Council).

Travel restrictions within the U.S. on Iran's UN diplomats were also eased, a State Department official told reporters on a briefing call on Thursday. "So essentially, returning to the status quo of the last few years before the last administration," the official said.

Iran has threatened to partially stop International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspections next week if other parties to the JCPOA do not meet their commitments under the deal – a move the West cautioned against.

"The E3 and the United States are united in underlining the dangerous nature of a decision to limit IAEA access, and urge Iran to consider the consequences of such grave action, particularly at

## Iran renews call to U.S. to withdraw all sanctions

TEHRAN

Iran on Friday renewed its call for the U.S. to lift all sanctions imposed by former President Donald Trump, after an offer for talks from President Joe Biden's administration. Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif tweeted that Iran would "immediately reverse" its retaliatory measures if the U.S. lifts "sanctions" on Iran. AFP

this time of renewed diplomatic opportunity," the statement from Thursday's Ministers' meeting said.

"We are the ones who have kept this agreement alive in recent years, and now it's about supporting the United States in taking the road back into the agreement," German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas told reporters in Paris, according to the Associated Press. "The measures that have been taken in Tehran and may be taken in the coming days are anything but helpful. They endanger the Americans' path back into this agreement. The more pressure that is exerted, the more politically difficult it will be to find a solution," he said.

Talks between the West and Tehran have not been announced as of this writing.

# Northern Tamils sceptical ahead of 'another Geneva session'

The 46th session of the Human Rights Council is set to begin next week

MEERA SRINIVASAN  
MULLAITIVU

In the nearly 12 years since her husband surrendered to the Sri Lankan Army, E. Sumathra has seen many sessions of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva come and go. Half a dozen resolutions on Sri Lanka have been adopted since, but she is no closer to finding out where he is.

Ahead of the 46th session of the Council beginning next week, the Sri Lankan government, Tamil polity, civil society, and diaspora groups are frantically lobbying member countries, hoping for different outcomes. But Ms. Sumathra is not waiting with bated breath. "We are used like trophies every time, and nothing that comes out of these sessions alters our reality," she says.

She was seated at a concrete shelter by the sea, shining in a lavish blue-green shade under the afternoon sun, last weekend. Along with her are groups of women, from both the Tamil and Muslim community residing in the district, all gathered for a campaign on caring better for the environment.

"Families of forcibly disappeared persons have been agitating since the war ended [in 2009], but some of our politicians and diaspora organisations have split our struggle. Today, we are all in different groups with no prospect for truth or justice," says the 36-year-old.

So far, none of the past UN resolutions or governmental mechanisms has delivered a convincing outcome for many like her. Although the UN human rights chief, in her latest Sri Lanka report, called for an International Criminal Court probe into alleged war crimes committed by different warring actors, as well as sanctions, Ms. Sumathra is unable to feel hopeful. The new, likely con-



**Waiting for closure:** Protesters carrying black flags and pictures of missing Tamils in Kilinochchi on February 4. •AFP

tested, resolution in the coming session is "just another" one, in her view.

Sri Lanka's long civil war played out across the Tamil-majority north and east, but Mullaitivu bore the brunt of its gruesome end. According to UN estimates, some 40,000 civilians were trapped and killed in the final battle between the armed forces and the separatist LTTE, at the Nandikandai lagoon here in May 2009.

The Rajapaksa administration in power then and now – except from 2015 to 2019 – has repeatedly denied the number of civilian casualties, deeming it an "exaggeration". The numbers

may be contested, but survivors' suffering is hard to miss, following death and destruction all around. Districts in the former war zone are among the poorest in the country. Neither appropriate development, nor adequate jobs have come their way.

Mullaitivu district remains militarised, with even traffic checkpoints run by armed military men.

**Domestic mechanism**  
Months after Gotabaya Rajapaksa was elected President in late 2019, Sri Lanka said it would withdraw from the existing UN resolution on post-war accountability and reconciliation. It has instead proposed a domestic mechanism that Tamils have

even less faith in, compared to international ones.

"If you look at the Tamil people here, we did not get a solution through the armed struggle that lasted 30 years. We have not got a solution in the decade after that, either. Meanwhile, our people are struggling in poverty, as livelihoods are destroyed and the youth are jobless," says Ganeshwaran Selvamani, a counsellor who has worked with war-affected families. In addition to coping with the trauma of the past, they face "enormous hardships" today, she says, referring to numerous conflicts over land – some of it still held by the military – destruction of old Hindu temples based on "archaeological" claims, growing concerns of narcotics penetrating villages, and a rise in teen marriages and pregnancies.

"The worst of all the problems are in Mullaitivu, maybe that is why even the coronavirus fears us, we have that level of immunity," Ms. Selvamani says, barely hiding her sarcasm. Women, at the forefront of protests to reclaim land, demanding answers about their missing loved ones, or against predatory microfinance-induced debt, have an especially hard time, with nothing but their resilience to count on. "I don't know if anyone speaks of women's problems in Geneva. The continuous assault

on our livelihoods is affecting women disproportionately," says Prasanna Sujatha, a pre-school teacher, speaking of families in which women are sole earners.

The going has never been easy, but the heightened fear after the Rajapaksa's return to power is stark.

It is in this climate that thousands of Tamil-speaking people recently took out a mass rally from Pothuvil in the eastern Ampara district to Polihandy in Jaffna (titled 'P2P'), demanding the rights of Tamil and Muslim minorities. Some in Mullaitivu are agnostic about the outcome of the march but see it as a necessary assertion of the minorities' rights. "When our basic right to bury our dead is refused, I feel even more for Tamils who have suffered so much during and after the war. The rally has made me hopeful about the two minority communities coming together," says M. Jenufa, an activist.

There is "no other way to take on majoritarianism," says a history teacher, asking not to be named. "Whether it was the rally or this Geneva session, it is about retaining what little we have. We don't expect major gains," he says. Few people in the district seem dewy-eyed about the Human Rights Council delivering big outcomes or lasting solutions. But with the space for negotiation shrinking further within the country, they see no other option. Considering the geopolitical interests that dominate such forums, they realise that any positive outcome is more incidental than intentional.

"Whether Geneva delivers or not, people are certain that this government will not. That is why we pursue international mechanisms despite all the limitations," says Shanthi Sriskantharajah, a former MP from the district.

# Transatlantic alliance is back, says Biden

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden declared the "transatlantic alliance is back" on Friday in a powerful speech seeking to re-establish the U.S. as leader of the West against what he called a global assault on democracy.

The address to the annual Munich Security Conference – held by video link – dove-

tailed with German Chancellor Angela Merkel's welcoming of a return to "multi-lateralism" after the confrontational years of Mr. Biden's predecessor Donald Trump.

"I'm sending a clear message to the world: America is back. The transatlantic alliance is back," he said from the White House.

"The United States is determined, determined to reengage with Europe, to consult with you, earn back our position of trusted leadership," he said.

Mr. Biden said he was not seeking a return to "the rigid blocs of the Cold War", but warned about the threats posed by Russia and China. "The Kremlin attacks our

democracies and weaponises corruption to try and undermine our system of governance," he said.

Similarly, U.S. partners should stand together against "the Chinese government's economic abuses and coercion that undercut the foundations of the international economic system," he said.

## Myanmar protester, who was shot in the head, dies

Woman was on life support for 10 days

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

YANGON

A young woman protester in Myanmar who was shot in the head last week as police dispersed a crowd died on Friday, her brother said, marking the first death among opponents of the February 1 military coup since they began demonstrating two weeks ago.

News of her death came as police and soldiers arrested about 50 people in the northern town of Myitkyina, a human rights activist said, after breaking up a procession carrying banners of de-

tained government leader Aung San Suu Kyi. Mya Thwate Thwate Khaing, who had just turned 20, had been on life support since being taken to hospital on February 9, after she was hit by what doctors said a live bullet at a protest in the capital, Naypyitaw.

Her death could become a rallying cry for the protesters who were again on the streets on Friday.

Friday marks two weeks of demonstrations against the military coup and the arrest of democracy campaigner Ms. Suu Kyi.

## Australia and FB in talks over news ban

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

SYDNEY

Australia and Facebook held high-stakes talks on Friday after the social media giant sparked global outrage by blacking out news for its Australian users a day ago, as Canberra insisted it wouldn't back down on a new law that would force the tech firm to pay for journalistic content.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison also urged Facebook to "move quickly past" what he called threatening behaviour and "come back to the table".

DPR/1267 /TENDER/ 2021

PRINCIPAL CHIEF MATERIALS MANAGER

**RAIL WHEEL FACTORY**  
YELAHANKA, BENGALURU - 560 064  
Website: www.rwf.indianairways.gov.in, E-mail: workfetender@gmail.com

**Tender Notice No. RWF/S-146/2020-21/06 Dated: 18.02.2021**

E-TENDER: On behalf of the President of India, the Principal Chief Materials Manager / RWF invites electronic tender for the following work online through the website <http://www.rwf.gov.in> experienced / reputed contractors in the field.

**Tender No.** RWF\_S\_TPT\_FWRSRT2500\_21-22

**Date & Time** 15.03.2021-Tender closing at 14.15 hrs.

**Scope of Work** Carriage of finished products i.e. Railway Wheel Sets of 3500 MT from Rail Wheel Factory (RWF), Yelahanka, Bangalore - 560 064 to various Railway consignees in India by road, under distance slab of above 1000 Kms. (For detailed scope of work, please refer uploaded tender document).

**Distance Slab** Above 1000 Kms. **Quantity** 3500 MT **Tender Doc. Cost** Rs. 5,600/-

**Est.Tender Value** Rs.1,83,75,000/- **EMD Amount** Rs.2,41,900/-

**Contract Period** 12 (Twelve) months from the date of commencement of Work

**PRINCIPAL CHIEF MATERIALS MANAGER**

**PUNJAB STATE POWER CORPORATION LTD**  
(Regd. Office PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala)  
O/o CE/MM, Room No.215, 2nd floor, Multi Story Building, PSPCL Head Office, The Mall, Patiala, Phone No. 0175-2213047,  
Mob: 96461-22954, 96461-11034, e-mail: po-transformer@pspcl.in  
Corporate Identification Number (CIN): U40109PB2010SCG033813, Registration Number:33813, website: [www.pspcl.in](http://www.pspcl.in), e-tendering portal: <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>

**Notice Inviting Tender**

**Tender Enquiry No.** Q-3993/20-21/PO-TCE-MM

Procurement of 25,000 Nos. EEL-3(re-designated as EEL-2 as per Amendment No. 4 to IS-1180) Star-2 (New), ISI Marked, 11/0.43 KV, 25 KVA, Three Phase, 50 cycles, outdoor type, oil immersed Natural cooled, coil on shell type Stackvround core type construction (aluminum wound), CRGO/ Amorphous core distribution transformers complete with fittings as per PSPCL specification & conforming to IS 1180 Part-1(2014) & 2026 (with latest amendments)

**Start date for down loading of specification/ tender documents from PSPCL's web site** <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>

**Last date for down loading of specification/tender documents from PSPCL's web site** <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>

**Last date of bid submission** 09.03.2021 (upto 11:00 AM)

**Bid opening date** 12.03.2021 (11:00 AM)

**Note:** It is informed that in case tender process is not completed due to any reason, no corrigendum will be published in newspaper. Details regarding corrigendum may be seen on official PSPCL website [www.pspcl.in](http://www.pspcl.in)

**Chief purchase officer/ MM**

C 65/21 Central Purchase Organization, PSPCL, Patiala

DPRPB 76155/12/10/2021/1632

**CM YK**

## Uber drivers entitled to workers' rights: U.K. SC

"This has been a gruelling four-year legal battle for our members – but it's ended in a historic win," said Mick Rix, from the GMB trade union.

The Supreme Court has upheld the decision of three previous courts, backing up what GMB has said all along: Uber drivers are workers and entitled to breaks, holiday pay and minimum wage," he added.

The Supreme Court ruling that the drivers were employees followed a years-long legal battle with the Silicon Valley taxi and delivery company.

DPR/1267 /TENDER/ 2021

## MANAGING DIRECTOR

Tender Notice No.1/F/R&T/No.27,28,29,30/2020-21 dated 18.02.2021

### SHORT TERM TENDER NOTICE (3<sup>RD</sup> CALL)

For and on behalf of State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu Limited, sealed tenders are invited for the auction sale of the following units taken possession U/s.29 of State Financial Corporations Act 1951, "AS IS WHERE IT'S" basis. Tenders will be received upto 3.00 p.m. on 01.03.2021 and the same will be opened on the same day at 4.30 pm.

**SINo.** Name of

## MARKET WATCH

	19-02-2021	% CHANGE
Sensex	50,890	-0.85
Gold	45,568	-0.65
Brent oil	63.77	-0.89

## NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	653.50	-10.55
Asian Paints	2416.45	-54.30
Axis Bank	749.65	-27.35
Bajaj Auto	4001.10	-114.35
Bajaj Finserv	10250.45	51.50
Bajaj Finance	5497.95	-65.40
Bharti Airtel	581.35	-7.70
BPCL	430.00	-2.20
Britannia Ind	3331.20	-28.25
Cipla	807.35	-18.10
Coal India	139.25	-0.70
Divis Lab	3523.20	-64.45
Dr Reddy's Lab	4681.45	64.50
Eicher Motors	2584.65	-65.55
GAIL (India)	145.40	2.30
Grasim Ind	1218.00	-11.65
HCL Tech	950.15	2.05
HDFC	2741.30	-3.85
HDFC Bank	1539.10	-15.20
HDFC Life	710.65	-2.80
Hero MotoCorp	3389.70	-133.15
Hindalco	308.00	-1.90
Hind Unilever	2181.10	34.25
ICICI Bank	624.05	-20.60
IndusInd Bank	1065.90	19.85
Infosys	1291.30	-1.15
Indian Oil Corp	97.55	-1.45
ITC	215.95	-2.90
JSW Steel	395.65	-12.00
Kotak Bank	1938.70	-6.70
L&T	1508.80	-15.80
M&M	879.25	-15.20
Maruti Suzuki	7323.00	-174.55
Nestle India Ltd.	16376.40	11.70
NTPC	104.20	0.80
ONGC	105.10	-5.60
PowerGrid Corp	232.20	-4.30
Reliance Ind	2080.30	12.60
SBI Life	881.50	-12.00
State Bank	399.55	-15.65
Shree Cement	27542.45	-80.90
Sun Pharma	607.30	-8.75
Tata Motors	311.85	-12.00
Tata Steel	670.70	-27.05
TCS	3071.85	14.50
Tech Mahindra	993.95	-16.65
Titan	1425.55	-7.45
UltraTech Cement	6208.50	-117.35
UPL	552.80	11.75
Wipro	429.95	-3.00

## IN BRIEF



## Production commences at ALL's A.P. bus facility

Commercial vehicle manufacturer Ashok Leyland (ALL) on Friday started commercial production of buses at its greenfield plant in Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh. It is the company's first plant in Andhra Pradesh. Spread over 75 acre, the plant, once fully completed, would be able to produce 4,800 buses per annum, said the company in a statement. The completely-green facility, with an electric vehicle development centre, would have positive water balance and zero discharge.

## Muthoot Finance mulls ₹6,000-crore bond issue

Muthoot Finance on Friday said its board has approved a proposal to raise up to ₹6,000 crore by issuing non convertible debentures (NCDs). The funds would be raised by way of private placement of redeemable NCDs to be issued in one or more tranches as may be decided by the board or a committee thereof from time to time, it said in a BSE filing. Muthoot Finance stock closed at ₹1,297.15, or higher by 0.26%, on the BSE. PTI

# Govt. said to likely file appeal against Cairn arbitration award

Option of appeal did not figure in Pandey's talks with U.K. firm's CEO, say sources

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

The Centre is likely to file an appeal against the \$1.4 billion international arbitration award won by Cairn Energy in a tax dispute, even as the issue did not figure during two days of talks the Finance Secretary held with the company officials to look for a resolution, sources with knowledge of the matter said.

Soon after the second meeting in as many days between Cairn CEO Simon Thomson and Finance Secretary Ajay Bhushan Pandey ended, a person informed of the development said the government intends to defend its sovereign right in taxation and will file an



**Point of friction:** Cairn has said it could seize India's overseas assets if New Delhi fails to comply with the award. ■ REUTERS

appeal against an international tribunal ordering India to return \$1.4 billion to the British firm.

Cairn remained tight-lipped on the parleys it has initiated with an aim to avert

having to take legal recourse to recover the amount including through seizure of Indian assets overseas.

"Constructive dialogue is continuing," Mr. Thomson said after the meeting on Fri-

day. He did not elaborate.

Cairn has indicated it could seize overseas assets such as aircraft and ships if New Delhi fails to comply with the arbitration award and return the value of the shares sold, dividend seized and tax refund withheld by the income tax department to recover part of the tax demand it had raised using retrospective legislation.

The first person said the government, however, has kept open the possibility of a resolution within Indian laws. The options include Cairn opting for the Vivad se Vishwas scheme, which gives relief on interest and penalty if the principal tax demand is paid.

## IKEA operator Ingka to invest ₹5,500 cr. in India

Firm to set up shopping centre in U.P.

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Ingka Centres, part of the Ingka Group that operates IKEA Retail, on Friday said it plans to invest about ₹5,500 crore, or more than ₹600 million, to set up its first shopping centre in India.

The Swedish firm has bought a 47,833 sq. m. plot in Noida, U.P., for ₹850 crore for developing an IKEA-anchored retail destination.

"Ingka Centres has today taken its first step to expand into India with a major land acquisition in India," the company said in a statement.

"The total volume of investment into the project is planned to be close to ₹5,500 crore [over ₹600 million].

The development is expected to create more jobs, support infrastructure development and growth of the organised retail and home-furnishings sector in the region."

A tweet from the official handle of the Noida Authority CEO said the investment would happen over the next seven years.

## Inox Air plans ₹2,000-crore expansion

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

Inox Air Products, the industrial and medical gases business division of the diversified Inox Group, is investing ₹2,000 crore to augment capacity by 50%, with eight new air separation units across the country over the next 36 months.

This is the largest greenfield investment coming to the industrial gases sector in the country, the company said.

The addition to the present 44 plants will ramp up liquid medical oxygen capacity by 50% and overall capacity to 4,800 tonne per day, Inox Air added.

The lender said IL&FS Transportation had availed

## Indian IT workers to benefit from U.S. immigration bill

Per-country cap for employment-based green cards may go

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

WASHINGTON

In a major move that will benefit thousands of Indian IT professionals in America, the Biden administration has introduced an immigration bill in Congress, which, among other things, proposes to eliminate the per-country cap for employment-based green cards.

The U.S. Citizenship Act of 2021 proposes a pathway to citizenship to 11 million undocumented workers, elimination of per-country quota for employment-based green cards and work authorisation for dependents of H-1B foreign work-



ers. The bicameral immigration bill, if passed by both the chambers of the Congress – House of Representatives and the Senate – and signed into law by the President, would bring citizenship to millions of foreign

nationals, including undocumented workers and those who came to the country legally. Those waiting for a green card for more than 10 years would get the legal permanent residency immediately as they would be exempted from the visa cap.

Indian IT professionals waiting for more than a decade now, and whose number runs into thousands, are likely to be the biggest beneficiaries. Authors of the bill, Senator Bob Menendez and Congresswoman Linda Sanchez, said the bill establishes a vision of immigration reform that is expansive and inclusive.

## Gold price decline boosts sales, dealers strike it rich

Premiums jump to \$7 an ounce

## REUTERS



+

Physical gold demand in India this week surged as local prices dropped to their lowest since June last year, with buying expected to pick up in other Asian centres after the Chinese Lunar New Year holiday week.

+

Dealers were charging a premium of up to ₹7 an ounce over official domestic prices, the highest in eight months.

+

Last week they were

charging a premium of up to ₹5 inclusive of 12.5% import and 3% sales levies.

+

"Sales are robust. People are buying coins, bars and jewellery because of price correction," said Chanda

+

Supplies are limited but demand is robust from jewellers, who are keen to build inventory for the festive and wedding season, said a Mumbai-based dealer with a bullion importing bank.

+

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+

In the next 5-6 years, MSN will bring products, once the patent expires," executive director Bharat Reddy said, announcing that MSN will unveil anti-epilepsy drug Brivanext in India in the next few days.

At ₹15 a tablet, the drug, under the Brivanext brand would be one of the most affordable therapeutic options, he added.

+

MSN Group to unveil drug to treat epilepsy

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD

Drugmaker MSN Group is focussed on introducing generic products for various therapies at a fraction of the innovator's product price once the patent expires.

"In the next 5-6 years, MSN will bring products, once the patent expires, at one-tenth of the cost," executive director Bharat Reddy said, announcing that MSN will unveil anti-epilepsy drug Brivanext in India in the next few days.

At ₹15 a tablet, the drug, under the Brivanext brand would be one of the most affordable therapeutic options, he added.

+

MSN will bring products, once the patent expires, at one-tenth of the cost," executive director Bharat Reddy said, announcing that MSN will unveil anti-epilepsy drug Brivanext in India in the next few days.

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At ₹15 a tablet, the drug, under the Brivanext brand would be one of the most affordable therapeutic options, he added.

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MSN Group to unveil drug to treat epilepsy

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD

Drugmaker MSN Group is focussed on introducing generic products for various therapies at a fraction of the innovator's product price once the patent expires.

"In the next 5-6 years, MSN will bring products, once the patent expires, at one-tenth of the cost," executive director Bharat Reddy said, announcing that MSN will unveil anti-epilepsy drug Brivanext in India in the next few days.

At ₹15 a tablet, the drug, under the Brivanext brand would be one of the most affordable therapeutic options, he added.

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MSN Group to unveil drug to treat epilepsy

## SPORT

## No clear favourite for title: Sharath

Nine-time champion predicts some very good contests

## NATIONAL TT

RAKESH RAO

CHANDIGARH

"This year, there is no clear favourite (for the National title). No one knows how well others are playing."

These words from nine-time champion Sharath Kamal aptly summed up the scenario on the eve of the National table tennis championship on Friday.

Looking leaner and fitter due to his training regimen in the last 11 months, Sharath said he was ready to chase a 10th title in the championship that has remained very special to him.

Speaking to *The Hindu* at the Tau Devi Lal Indoor Stadium, Panchkula, Sharath said, "Playing for the National title is different from any other title. Over the years, I have enjoyed the challenges. Apart from the younger

# Medvedev cruises past Tsitsipas, meets Djokovic

The fourth-seeded Russian continues his red hot streak; Mertens-Sabalenka pair clinches women's doubles trophy



## How they stack up

■ No player who won his/her first Slam after Maria Sharapova claimed her fourth (2012 French Open) has bagged four Majors. Osaka can become the first

■ After having already captured the 2018 US Open, 2019 Australian Open and 2020 US Open, Osaka is bidding to become the first woman since Monica Seles to win her first four Major finals

■ Brady is gunning for her maiden Grand Slam trophy and could become the 10th first-time women's singles Major champion in the last 16 Slams

■ Brady and Osaka first met way back in 2014 in the first round of an ITF \$50k in New Braunfels, Texas. Their most recent meeting was in the 2020 US Open semifinal, which Osaka edged 7-6(1), 3-6, 6-3

**I** think I fight the hardest in the finals. That's where you sort of set yourself apart. It's the other person who won as many matches as you did. It's like the biggest fight.

**OSAKA**

**I**belong at this level. I've earned the right to compete for Grand Slam titles four times a year. That match I played against Naomi in the semis may have changed my life and my outlook

**BRADY**

Saturday's schedule: Women's final: 3-Osaka vs 22-Brady (2 P.M. IST)

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**BRADY**

## ATKMB outplays East Bengal

Takes another step closer to claiming the winner's shield

### ISL 2020-21

#### SPORTS BUREAU

ATK Mohun Bagan cemented its position at the top of the current Indian Super League by convincingly outplaying its traditional rival SC East Bengal 3-1 at the Fatorda Stadium on Friday. Mohun Bagan tallied 39 points from 18 outings to take another step closer to claiming the League winner's shield.

ATKMB produced a blitz of attacks in the first quarter of the action pinning East Bengal back to defending for a great part.

The Mariners utilised the early advantage to garner the lead which came off its most prolific striker Roy Krishna in the 15th minute.

The Fijian forward showed his class latching on to a long 60-yard pass from his defensive colleague Tiri, who floated the ball from the Mohun Bagan box, and produced a fantastic solo finish.

#### 13th goal

This was Krishna's 13th goal of the tournament and it definitely helped Mohun Bagan position itself for another successful finish.

East Bengal tried to regroup with its mercurial forward Bright Enobakhare producing some magic in the middle of the park.



In top gear: ATKMB's Roy Krishna had a wonderful outing with a goal and two assists. ■ SPORTZPICS/ISL

The Nigerian was spectacular with his skills on a few occasions but that could not provide the reward East Bengal was looking for.

**Equaliser**  
East Bengal managed the equaliser in the 41st minute but it was Bagan defender Tiri who nodded his attempted clearance on a long throw from Raju Gaekwad into his own goal.

Bagan, which beat East Bengal 2-0 in the first phase, unleashed its true self after the break as it relaunched its bid to regain the lead.

Bagan kept mounting the pressure on East Bengal with a multi-pronged onslaught

and the latter's defence yielded to the pressure in the 72nd minute.

David Williams produced the finish when Krishna set him up with a nice assist on top of the Bengal box.

Bagan put the match beyond East Bengal's reach in the 89th minute when Krishna came in the provider's role once again to help substitute Javi Hernandez nod home a spectacular goal.

**The result:**  
ATK Mohun Bagan 3 (Roy Krishna 15, David Williams 72, Javi Hernandez 89) bt SC East Bengal 1 (Tiri 41-og).

**Saturday's match:** Jamshedpur FC vs Mumbai City FC.

### THE RESULTS

**Men: Semifinal:** 4-Daniil Medvedev (Rus) bt 5-Stefanos Tsitsipas (Gre) 6-4, 6-2, 7-5.

**Women's doubles: Final:** 2-Elise Mertens (Bel) & Aryna Sabalenka (Blr) bt 3-Barbara Krejcikova (Cze) & Katerina Siniakova (Cze) 6-2, 6-3.

Medvedev came into the showdown boasting a 5-1 edge in their head-to-heads and a frosty relationship stemming from Shanghai in 2019, when the popular Greek blasted his sluggish playing style as "boring". Fifth seed Tsitsipas was

wasted three championship-points in the last game. But, Sabalenka forced a fourth championship-point and clinched the title when Siniakova sent a backhand wide.

To finally get over the line, on Sunday he must beat top seed Djokovic, who has won all eight finals he has played at Melbourne Park.

Sabalenka, the 22-year-old from Belarus, was the dominant player on court as she and Mertens of Belgium, the U.S. Open doubles champions in 2019, combined for a 6-2, 6-3 win.

Sabalenka and Mertens wasted three championship-points in the last game. But, Sabalenka forced a fourth championship-point and clinched the title when Siniakova sent a backhand wide.

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## TV PICKS

**Australian Open:** Sony Ten 2, 3 & Sony Six (SD & HD), 2 p.m.  
**Premier League:** SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 6 p.m., 8.30 p.m., 11 p.m. & 1.30 a.m. (Sunday)  
**Serie A:** Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 10.30 p.m. & 1.15 a.m. (Sunday)  
**ISL:** Star Sports 2 & 3 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.  
**PGA Tour:** Eurosport (SD & HD), 2.15 a.m. (Sunday).

## IN BRIEF



## Nets pound Lakers

LOS ANGELES  
James Harden scored 23 points as Brooklyn Nets blew away a depleted Los Angeles Lakers in a one-sided showdown between the Eastern and Western Conference heavyweights on Thursday. Harden added 11 assists and five rebounds while power forward Joe Harris added 21 points, after making six of seven three-point attempts. **The results:** Milwaukee Bucks 96 lost to Toronto Raptors 110; LA Lakers 98 lost to Brooklyn Nets 109; Sacramento Kings 110 lost to Miami Heat 118.

## Vaas named Sri Lanka fast bowling coach

COLONBO  
Sri Lanka Cricket on Friday has appointed the great Chaminda Vaas as national fast bowling coach, replacing Australian David Sekar who resigned just before the West Indies tour. AFP

## Indian boxers assured of 12 medals

NEW DELHI  
Alfiya Pathan (81+kg), Geetika (48kg) and Raj Sahiba (75kg) have entered the finals of the 30th Adriatic Pearl boxing tournament in Budva, Montenegro. Advancing to the semifinals were Babyrojisan Chanu (51kg), Vinka (60kg), Arundhati Choudhary (65kg), Neha (54kg), Sanamacha Chanu Thokchom (75kg), Preeti (57kg) and Lucky Rana (64kg) among women. In men's section, Priyanshu Dabas (49kg) and Jugnoo (91+kg) have also made the semifinals and are assured of at least a bronze each.

## India's football WC qualifiers postponed

KUALA LUMPUR  
India's 2022 FIFA World Cup 2023 Asian Cup qualifying round matches, which were scheduled to be played next month, have been postponed to June due to coronavirus-related travel and quarantine restrictions. The second round of qualification matches have not been held since November 2019 due to COVID-19.

## The domestic grind resumes

50-over format is not India's focus in 2021, but aspirants have plenty to play for

## HAZARE TROPHY

ASHWIN ACHAL  
BENGALURU

The ICC T20 World Cup and the race to book a World Test Championship final spot are the highlights of India's 2021 men's cricket calendar.

The one-day format is low on the totem pole, evidenced by the fact that the Indian team will feature in only six ODIs for the rest of the year (three against England next month, and three against South Africa in September). In these circumstances, the Vijay Hazare Trophy dips in significance.

The BCCI opted to hold the 50-over tournament in preference to the Ranji Trophy in this truncated domestic season.

As a result, the Ranji Trophy will not be held for the first time since its inception in 1934. The 38-team Vijay Hazare Trophy, which commences on Saturday, does offer one immediate reward.

Outstanding performances could lead to a national team berth for the ODIs against England.

## Saturday's matches

**Elite A (Surat):** Gujarat vs Chhattisgarh; Hyderabad vs Tripura; Baroda vs Goa.

**Elite B (Indore):** Tamil Nadu vs Punjab; Jharkhand vs Madhya Pradesh; Vidarbha vs Andhra.

**Elite C (Bengaluru):** Karnataka vs Uttar Pradesh; Kerala vs Odisha; Railways vs Bihar.



ALL MATCHES AT 9 A.M.



**High on confidence:** Dinesh Karthik-led Tamil Nadu will be keen to replicate the T20 success in the 50-over Vijay Hazare Trophy. ■ FILE PHOTO

The teams are split into six groups – six each in the Groups A to E, and eight in the Plate Group. The Elite Group matches will be held in Surat, Indore, Bengaluru, Jaipur and Kolkata, while the Plate Group fixtures will take place in Chennai.

Defending champion Karnataka, missing the services of K.L. Rahul, Mayank Agarwal, Manish Pandey and K. Gowtham, faces a tough task in Group C. The side has a new skipper in R. Samarth, who has taken over from Karun Nair.

Tamil Nadu, led by Dinesh Karthik, will fancy its chances after having won the Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy a few weeks ago.

Batsman Shahrukh Khan, who was signed by Punjab Kings for ₹5.25 crore at the IPL auction on Thursday, will hope to find big runs. Left-arm pacer T. Natarajan will miss the action, having been rested to stay fresh for the upcoming limited-over matches against England.

Shreyas Iyer, who sat out of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy due to a shoulder injury, will lead Mumbai, while Prithvi Shaw will serve as his deputy.

Southpaw Shikhar Dhawan is a familiar face in the Delhi squad. Former India

Under-19 World Cup-winning captain Unmukt Chand returns to represent Delhi after spending a season with Uttarakhand.

All-rounder Krunal Pandya, who had to leave the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy bubble due to the demise of his father, is back to lead Baroda.

The likes of Chetan Sakarya (Saurashtra), Lukman Meriwala (Baroda), Mohammed Azharuddin (Kerala) and Sheldon Jackson (Puducherry) – uncapped players who found favour at the IPL auction – will hope to add to their growing white-ball reputation.

## BWF extends Olympic qualification window

Hopefuls now have till June 15

## BADMINTON

REUTERS  
BENGALURU

The Badminton World Federation (BWF) said on Friday that the Tokyo Olympics hopefuls will have until June 15 to secure qualification for the Games after a number of World Tour events were postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Pushed back:** The Malaysia Open, which was initially scheduled for March 31-April 4, has been pushed back to May 25-30, while April's Malaysia

Masters has been postponed until further notice.

The Singapore Open has also been pushed back by two months and will now be held from June 1-6.

Rankings at the end of April should have been the cut-off to decide which players will be at the Tokyo Games, due to begin on July 23.

However, the BWF's Race to Tokyo standings will now close on June 15, with the Singapore Open serving as the last tournament for qualification.

The Race to Tokyo is set to resume at next month's Swiss Open.

## Man United and Tottenham win big

## EUROPA LEAGUE

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
BERLIN

Bruno Fernandes scored twice as Manchester United took a big step toward the last 16 of the Europa League with a 4-0 "away" win over Real Sociedad. The first leg was played in Turin on Thursday, one of a number of games relocated away from their original venues.

**Important results (last 32, first legs):** Olympiakos 4 (Bouchalakis 9, M'Vila 37, El Arabi

45+, Masouras 83) bt PSV Eindhoven 2 (Zahavi 14, 40); Young Boys 4 (Fassnacht 3, Siebatcheu 19, 89, Meschack 44) bt Bayer Leverkusen 3 (Schick 49, 52, Diaby 68).

Braga (POR) 0 lost to Roma 2 (Dzeko 5, Mayoral 87); Slavia Prague 0 drew with Leicester City 0; Red Star Belgrade 2 (Kanga 52+, Pavkov 90+3) bt AC Milan (ITA) 2 (Pankov 42+, Hernandez 61+pen); Real Sociedad 0 lost to Manchester United 4 (Fernandes 27, 57, Rashford 65, James 90).

Wolfsberg 1 (Liendl 55+pen) lost to Tottenham Hotspur 4

(Son 13, Bale 28, Lucas 34, Vinicius 88); Lille 1 (Weah 72) lost to Ajax 2 (Tadic 87+pen, Broby 89).

Granada 2 (Herrera 19, Kennedy 21) bt Napoli 0; Molde 3 (Ellingsen 41, Ulland-Andersen 71, Fofana 75) drew with Hoffenheim 3 (Dabbur 8, 28, Baumgartner 45+4); Salzburg 0 lost to Villarreal 2 (Alcacer 41, Nino 71); Antwerp 3 (Avantatt 45, Refaelov 45+, Holland 66) lost to Rangers 4 (Arbo 38, Barisic 59+pen, Kent 83); Benfica 2 (Pizzi 56+) drew with Arsenal 1 (Saka 57).

## AITA president assures best support

Says plans are in place to set up the National tennis centre

KAMESH SRINIVASAN  
NEW DELHI

The president of the All India Tennis Association (AITA), Anil Jain, assured 100% support from the national federation and pleaded the players to give their 100%, in an interaction with them at the end of the High Performance training camp for girls at the DLTA Complex here on Friday.

Unable to join the players at the venue owing to other commitments, the Rajya Sabha Member of Parliament, Anil Jain said, "You are the future of the country. Only you can put Indian tennis on the world stage".

## To find solution

Explaining that the national federation was planning to set up the National tennis centre and support about 30 players, the AITA president said that every effort would be made to address all the problems of Indian tennis and find solutions.

Commending Ankita Raina's doubles triumph in a WTA event in Melbourne earlier in the day, Anil Jain told the girls in a virtual meeting, "you can be like Ankita and Sania Mirza. You can go further ahead".

The intense training over a fortnight was followed by a tournament on a league-cum-knockout basis, in



**Well done!** Champion Akanksha Nitture flanked by coaches Namita Bal and Shivika Burman in the High performance tennis camp for girls in Delhi. ■ KAMESH SRINIVASAN

which Akanksha Nitture beat Jagmeet Kaur 6-3, 6-3 in the final.

The national coach Zeeshan Ali congratulated the players for their effort and announced that the champion would get a wild card entry into the main draw in one of the ITF women's tournaments scheduled in March.

**Thanking coaches**  
Summing up the experience on behalf of the players, Reshma Maruri, who beat Kashish Bhatia for the third place, thanked the coaches Zeeshan, Namita Bal and Shivika Burman.

"We lost Akhtar Ali, a great legend. But, Zeeshan sir came back quickly for the camp. We are grateful for his commitment and devotion," said Reshma, lauding Akhtar's son Zeeshan.

All the players and coaches were unanimous in their appreciation of physio Anand Dubey for taking good care of the players.

On behalf of the AITA, the CEO Akhoury Bishwadeep hoped that the national federation would be able to generate more resources in the near future, to provide the best possible support for the players through the national tennis centre.

## BCCI tweaks Vijay Hazare Trophy format

AMOL KARHADKAR  
MUMBAI

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has accepted the objections raised by State associations and modified the qualification format for the Vijay Hazare Trophy knockouts. As a result, the winner of the Plate Group will not get a direct entry into the quarterfinals of the inter-State one-day championship, which starts on Saturday.

*The Hindu* understands that the Vijay Hazare Trophy will see the topper in each of the five groups qualify for the knockouts along with three other teams from the combined points table. The eighth-placed team in the rankings after the league stage will face the winner of the Plate Group in an Eliminator for a quarterfinal berth.

The pre-quarterfinal is scheduled for March 7, the first day of the knockouts, the venue for which is yet to be announced.

For the Mushtaq Ali Trophy, seven teams from the Elite league had qualified for the quarterfinals along with the winner of the Plate Group. This prompted State associations of Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh to write to the BCCI, suggesting an alteration to the format.

The associations had claimed that the Plate team results in a dilution of the knockouts, a point that has been raised by various experts as well.

## Painfuel increase!



## Gokulam blunts Arrows

## I-LEAGUE

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOLKATA

Gokulam Kerala FC posted a convincing 4-0 win over Indian Arrows in the Hero I-League on Friday.

Gokulam's fourth victory helped it jump to fourth with 13 points from eight matches.

Gokulam's first penalty was saved by Arrows custodian Aahaan Prakash in the 40th minute.

Emil Benny netted the

first goal off a loose ball after Sharif Mohammed's shot was blocked by Aahaan in the 47th minute.

Substitutes Lalromawia and Ronald Singh found the target towards the close.

**The results:** Gokulam Kerala FC 4 (Emil Benny 47, Dennis Antwi 50+pen, Lalromawia 78, Ronald Singh 94) bt Indian Arrows 0; NEROCA FC 2 (Judah Garcia 45, Songpu Singsit 72) bt Sudeva Delhi FC 0.

## DELHI ROUND-UP

Dev Lakra, Prince Rana star for Bhawan International

Sivash Kumar 42, Harsh Baisla 5/35) bt Madras Club 117 in 27 overs (Prashant Kumar 54, Kabeer Sachdeva 5/22).

## Saurabh hits century

Saurabh Nautiyal's 102 and Prashant Vashishth's 52 helped Gush Club beat Dogra Academy by 32 runs in the 10th Ghevra Cup.

**The scores:** BBIS 245/5 in 40 overs (Dev Lakra 101 n.o., Yash Dhull 60) bt Sonnet Club 239 in 39.5 overs (Aryan Dalal 63, Deepanshu Chaudhary 50, Naman Tiwari 37, Akash Yadav 36, Prince Rana 5/46).

## Kabir takes a five-for

Kabeer Sachdeva took a five-wicket haul and Sanyam Khanna made a half-century as Maulana Azad Club beat Madras Club by 122 runs in a league match of the Harcourt Butler under-19 tournament.

**The scores:** SKA 186/9 in 40 overs (Aryan Rana 69, Om Chaudhary 46, Harshit Kumar 3/16) lost to GRM Academy 190/4 in 28.1 overs (Harsh Kumar 70, Sachin Rathore 67).

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU  
COIMBATORE CITY MUNICIPAL CORPORATION  
1, Big Bazaar Street, Town Hall, Coimbatore - 641001, Tamil Nadu  
INVITATION FOR BIDS

Date	17.02.2021
Loan No. and Title	49107-IND Tamil Nadu Urban Flagship Investment Program – Tranche 1
Tender Notice e-8/Jnnurm/2020-21	
Contract No. and Title	Establishing a Ground Mounted Grid Tied 2-MW, solar PV Power Plant for the Proposed Sewage Treatment Plant in Vellalore for Coimbatore City Municipal Corporation

Deadline for submission of Bids

07.04.2021 at 15.00hrs (IST)