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COIMBATORE I FRIDAY 26 | FEBRUARY 2021



ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Maasi 14 Tithi: Chaturtashi Star: Aayilyam/ Magam Rahukalam: 10.30 am to 12 noon Yamagandam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm **PRAYERS**

Fajar: 5.17 am Jumma: 12.28 pm **Asar:** 3.44 pm Maghrib: 6.17 pm Isha: 7.28 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.17 PM SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.27 AM MOONRISE TODAY 5.31 PM MOONSET TOMORROW 6.27 AM



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11,33,04,773 £25,12,907

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world ometers. info

Mamata demands immediate roll back of fuel prices

Kolkata: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Thursday demanded immediate roll back of fuel prices by 50 per cent and threatened a strong movement if it was not done. Banerjee who travelled to and back from the secretariat on a scooter as a mark of protest against fuel price hike, told reporters that it was a 'mystery' LPG were not brought down in the country despite the decrease in international crude price by 50 per cent in recent times.

Haryana takes step towards making functioning of state Assembly paperless

Chandigarh: Haryana has taken a step towards making the functioning of the state Legislative Assembly paperless. A tripartite memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed on Thursday between the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, the state government and the Legislative Assembly for the implementation of the National e-Vidhan Application (NeVA), Speaker Gian Chand Gupta said.

Sri Lanka receives 5,00,000

doses of Covid-19 vaccines from India

Colombo: Sri Lanka on Thursday received 5,00,000 doses of Covid-19 vaccines ordered from India. "Actively aiding #lka win against COVIS, 2nd consignment of 500,000 COVISHIELD vaccines arrived from #India to #Ika today," the High Commission of India in Sri Lanka tweeted.



Not bail papers, he is distributing party tickets to potential candidates!

STATE | 3 PF not a bounty, but a right: HC



WORLD | 5 Biden revokes **Green Card ban**

SPORT | 7 Kohli surpasses MS with most wins



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control over online, OTT

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■ Both nations agree to abide by 2003 understanding

LoC to fall silent as India, Pak to observe all ceasefire pacts

PAWAN BALI | DC NEW DEI HI, FEB. 25

Indian and Pakistan armies on Thursday announced observing ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC) and all other sectors from February 24 midnight in a major de-escalatory move.

The announcement comes after 2020 witnessed a record high of ceasefire violations of 5,133 at LoC and international border with Pakistan at Jammu and Kashmir in nearly 18 years; these figures were 3,479 in 2019 and 2,140 in 2018. The tensions on the LoC had risen after terror attack on CRPF con-voy in Pulwama in February 2019 and revoking of Article 370 in Jammu and

Kashmir in August 2019.

Both sides agreed for strict observance of all agreements, understandings and cease firing along the Line of Control

There have been nearly 600 ceasefire violations in first two months of 2021.

and all other sectors.

Some 24 security personnel were killed in these ceasefire violations by Pakistan and another 126 injured in 2020.

The agreement has also come at a time when India is currently focused on a military stand-off with China in Ladakh since May last year. India and Pakistan had signed a ceasefire agreement in 2003 but it was frequently violated.

India's director-general of military operations (DG-MO) Lt Gen. Paramiit Singh Sangha and his Pakistani counterpart, Maj. Gen. Nauman Zakaria held discussions over hotline. The two sides reviewed the situation along the LoC and all other sectors in a "free, frank and cordial atmos-

"In the interest of achieving mutually beneficial and sustainable peace along the borders, the two DGsMO agreed to address each other's core issues and concerns which have propensity to disturb peace and lead to violence," said a joint statement issued by both armies. It said both sides agreed for strict observance

of all agreements, understandings and cease firing along the Line of Control and all other sectors with effect from midnight 24-25 February 2021.

"Both sides reiterated that existing mechanisms of hotline contact and border flag meetings will be utilised to resolve any unforeseen situation or misunderstand ing," it added. Pakistan military spokesman Maj. Gen. Babar Iftikhar said both the DGsMO have agreed that the existing 2003 understanding should be implemented in letter and spirit, according to a news report by Pakistan's newspaper *Dawn*. Both officials have agreed on making it sustainable and have expressed the intention to act on it, **P4**

TN GOVT SCRAPS **FINAL EXAMS FOR CLASSES 9, 10, 11**

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 25

Students studying in Classes 9, 10 and 11 will not have to appear for the final examination this year in view of the extraordinary circumstances that prevailed this academic year following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami told the Assembly the syllabus for the students has earlier been reduced since they had been attending classes either online classes or learning their lessons through television this academic year. Now, after taking into consideration the feedback of parents and experts, the government decided to do away with the examinations, he said, adding that the norms awarding marks would be

GOVT FIGHTS BACK New norms to tighten govt

FC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, FEB. 25

The Union government on Thursday unveiled new guidelines on Code of Ethics and self-regulation mechanism for video streaming services, which will lead to stricter monitoring on the use of social media and over-the-top (OTT) platforms and pro-vide for severe punish-ment for violators.

As per the new norms, social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, etc and OTT platforms such Netflix, Hotstar, Amazon, Disney+, Prime Video among others, would come under stricter vigil of the government. The government has, however, said the new rules are aimed at empowering

the users of social media. The new Information Technology (Guidelines for Intermediaries and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, will require the companies to take down contentious content quicker, appoint grievance redressal officers and

assist investigations.
The new rules, IT and communications minis-ter Ravi Shankar Prasad said, are designed to curb misuse of social media platforms and social media firms as well as streaming services to appoint executives to coordinate with law enforcement agencies, disclose the first originator of the mischievous information and remove, within 24 hours, content depicting nudity or morphed pictures of women.

NDA aims to ensure farmers' dignity: PM

"From kisan credit cards to soil health cards, from

(National

Nirav Modi loses extradition fight

PNB SCAM CASE

London, Feb. 25: In a comprehensive extradition win for the Indian authorities, a UK judge ruled on Thursday that fugitive diamond merchant Nirav Modi not only has a case to answer in the Indian courts but that there is no evidence to suggest he would not receive a fair trial in

Nirav Modi, wanted in India on charges of fraud and money laundering in the estimated USD 2-billion Punjab National Bank (PNB) scam case, lost his nearly two-year-long legal battle against extradition Judge Samuel Goozee also read out in court.



concluded that there are no human rights concerns that his medical needs would not be addressed as per several Indian government assurances. The 49year-old appeared via video link at Westminster Magistrates' Court from Wandsworth Prison in south-west London, dressed in a formal suit and sporting a thick beard, and showed no emotion as exce-

Coimbatore, Feb. 25: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday sought to underline the NDA government's commitment for the farmers to ensure their prosperity and dignity, saying it does not want small ryots to be dependent on anyone or "feel suffocated due to middlemen"

The conventional view of development only took into account the more vocal interest groups, ignoring businessmen and small farmers, but the government has given topmost priority to these two sections," he said at a BJP rally here.

Training his guns against the DMK-Congress combine, he alleged their meetings are like "corruption leaders sit and brainstorm



on how to loot. In a statement that comes amid the sustained protests by farmers outside Delhi for nearly four months oppos-ing the new Central farm laws, he said the NDA also wanted to bring a paradigm shift in the agricultural sec-

"It has been our honour to work for the small farmers of India. In the past seven years our efforts for the small farmers are aimed at perity and dignity.'

Agriculture Market) to an effective crop insurance scheme, we want to bring a paradigm shift in the agriculture sector," he said. While farmers had for many years demanded rise in minimum support price

(MSP), "it was our government which had the opportunity to bring a holistic MSP rise." In the last six years MSP for copra has nearly doubled, Mr Modi said. Hitting out at the opposition, he said while its style

of politics was "misgover-nance with corruption" that of NDA was "governance with compassion.

"Both methods are very different. For the opposition gains. They want to capture he alleged.

power to fill their pockets,' he alleged. The only politics people

will accept is politics of development and good governance and they want a government where fruits of progress reach the public, he said. "They want the anti-development forces (to be kept) at a distance," he said.

Taking a swipe at the DMK-Congress combine in Tamil Nadu, Modi said their "meetings are like corruption hackathons" where 'their leaders sit and brainstorm on how to loot."

"Those who are given the most innovative ways are given posts and ministries. The opposition style of politics is based on bullying and harassing. Whenever DMK comes to power, they promote a st ongman

President's rule imposed in Pondy

New Delhi, Feb. 25: President's Rule was imposed in Puducherry following a recommendation by the Union Cabinet after a Congressled government lost power in the Union Territory in a vote of confidence. The not-ification, signed by President Ram Nath Kovind, said the decision was taken after the president received a report from the administra-tor of the Union Territory of Puducherry on February 22. It said after considering the report and other information received by him, the president was satisfied that a situation had arisen in which the administration of the Union Territory of Puducherry could not carry on in accordance with the provisions of the Governent of Union Act, 1963 (20 of 1963). — PTI

MEA denies India conceding territory to China along LAC Observance and respect for the Line of

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI NEW DELHI, FEB. 25

India "has not conceded any territory" as a result of the recent agreement on disengagement of troops with China on the North and South Banks of the Pangong Tso lake in the Ladakh sector and "on the contrary, it has enforced observance and respect for the Line of Actual Control (LAC)", New Delhi said on Thursday, adding that this has in fact "prevented any unilateral change in status quo". New Delhi also reiterated that "there's absolutely no change with respect to our position on the LAC".

This came even as External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar spoke to Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Thursday evening during which they

Actual Control has in fact "prevented unilateral change in status quo", says MEA The Indian and Chinese foreign ministers agreed the current situation in border areas is not in the interest of either side

discussed "the implementation of our Moscow Agreement and reviewed the status of disengagement"

On the Sino-Indian Moscow Agreement last year, it may be recalled that the Government had recentinformed Parliament, 'the EAM (Mr Jaishankar) had a meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on September 10, 2020, in Moscow. The two foreign ministers agreed that the current situation in the border areas is not in the interest of either side. They agreed therefore that the border troops of both sides should confinue their dia-

logue, quickly disengage, maintain proper distance and ease tensions. The two ministers also agreed that both sides shall abide by all the existing agreements and protocol on China-India boundary affairs, maintain peace and tranquility in the border areas and avoid any action that could escalate mat-ters." Mr Jaishankar tweeted on Thursday evening, "Spoke to State Councilor & Foreign Minister Wang Yi this afternoon. Discussed the implementation of our Moscow Agreement and reviewed the status of disen-

Retirement age of TN govt staff increased to 60 vrs

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 25

The retirement age of all state government employees has been raised to 60 years from the present 59 years. Making the announce-

ment in the state assembly, Chief Minister Edappadi Palaniswami recalled

that the retirement age was increased to 59 in May, 2020, from the earlier 58 years.

The rule will be applicable to all government staff and those working for all governorganisations corporations, schools and aided schools and all those who were scheduled to retire till May 31 would benefit



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R. Ashwin cel-



Axar, Ashwin shine as India beat England by 10 wickets

DC CORRESPONDENT AHMEDABAD, FEB. 25

Left-arm spinner Axar Patel bagged a match-haul of 11 for 70 as India drubbed England by 10 wickets on Thursday to take a 2-0 lead in the four-match Test series.

The victory, achieved under two days to make it the shortest ever Test played in India, boosted Virat Kohli & Co.'s chances of qualifying for the World Test Championship final to be held in July.

Off-spinner R. Ashwin, playing his 77th Test, took four wickets in the second innings to become the fourth Indian and second

fastest in the world to take 400 Test wickets. Sri Lanka spin wizard Muttiah Muralitharan holds the record having achieved the feat in his 72nd Test.

Former India captain Anil Kumble (619), Kapil Dev, (434) and Harbhajan Singh (417) are the other Indians who have 400 Test wickets to their credit. Speaking at the post-match presentation, India skipper Virat Kohli called Ashwin a modern-day legend. "It's time we stood up and noticed what Ashwin has done for the country," he added. ■ P7

ebrates his 400th Test wicket. - BCCI

President's rule imposed in **Puducherry**

New Delhi, Feb. 25: President's Rule was imposed in Puducherry following a recommendation by the Union Cabinet after a Congress-led government lost power in the Union Territory in a vote of

confidence. The notification, signed by President Ram Nath Kovind, said the decision was taken after the president received a report from the administrator of the Union Territory of Puducherry on February 22. It said after considering the report and other information received by him, the president was satisfied that a situation had arisen in which the administration of the Union Territory of Puducherry could not carry on in accordance with the provisions of the Government of Union Territories Act, 1963 (20 of 1963). "Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by section 51 of the Act and of all other powers applying we in that held I. (a) enabling me in that behalf, I (a) suspend, until the constitution of the 15th Legislative Assembly of Puducherry, in relation to the said Union Territory of Puducherry...," the notification said. The president notification said. The president also suspended the operation of various provisions of the Government of Union Territories Act, 1963 (20 of 1963), thus imposing central rule in Puducherry. The notification also said the Legislative Assembly of the Union Territory is placed under suspended animation. V Naravanasamy who led the Congress yanasamy, who led the Congress government in Puducherry, resigned on Monday ahead of the confidence vote after his government was reduced to a minority following a spate of resignations by his party MLAs and a DMK legislator in recent

Woman techie ends life in Chennai

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 25

A 32-year-old woman working with an IT firm in city suburbs allegedly jumped to death from the 4th floor of an apartment building in Oragadam in Vanchipurum district on Kanchipuram district on

Wednesday night.
According to the police, the woman identified as Elakiya was working in an IT company in Maraimalai Nagar. Elakiya, originally from Theni, got married to Dinesh (36) an engineer five years ago. The couple has twin boys.

Sources said Dinesh was an alcoholic and the couple argued over his arinking habits often At around 10 pm on Wednesday, when Dinesh was consuming liquor inside the house, an argument broke out between them. During the tiff, Dinesh reportedly hurled abuses at Elakiya.

Upset over this, she reportedly jumped from the 4 th floor of the apartment building. Dinesh alerted the 108 ambulances, however, she was declared dead

on the spot by the medical team. Based on the information, Oragadam police came to the spot. The police sent the body to the Sriperumbudur government hospital for autopsy and a case of suspicious death has been registered. Oragadam police are investigating the case. an RDO investigation is also initiated in the case. An RDO investigation is done when a married woman, who has been married for seven or less, dies suspiciously. Further investigations are on.

Govt bolsters coronavirus containment zone strategy

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 25

At a time when Covid-19 cases are increasing and new variants are reported in states like Maharashtra and Kerala, the Tamil Nadu government has tightened its containment zone strategy which had immensely helped the efforts of the state Covid task force to flatten the curve.

According to the latest order issued by the state health department, the containment zone strategy will be implemented in areas where three and more cases are reported or three and more families are affected by Covid-

19. In case of up to three cases or up to three households having positive cases, the affected families and their neighbours will be put in home quaran-

The containment operation will be stopped in 14 days if no active case is reported in the zone during the period from the date of the last confirmation of positive case.

The containment zone is the primary area where an intensive action has to be carried out with the aim of breaking the chain of transformation.

In containment zones no

Covid-19 tests vital for Kerala tourists to enter Nilgiris

B. RAVICHANDRAN | DC OOTY, FEB. 25

The district administration here has tightened their grip on tourists from Kerala as Covid-19 cases are reported to be rising in neighbouring Kerala. Even as Corona tests have been made mandatory for tourists from Kerala, both politicos and members of the tourism industry feel that the restrictions would cripple the tourism-based revenue flow, affecting their liveli-hood and also adversely affect their prospects in the election.

except for medical emergencies and essential goods and services. No unchecked person will be allowed inside. People who are transiting will be recorded and followed through the integrated Disease Surveillance

Though the threat from

movement will be allowed

Programme. Active searches for cases will be conducted through physical house to house surveillance by special Kerala tourists has not been too alarming, the district administration confidence to the tourism industry, he added.

Collector J. Innocent here has taken precautionary measures and made Covid-19 tests mandatory for tourists and travelers entering Nilgiris from Ke-

N. Chandrasekar, secretary, Nilgiris Hotels and Restaurants Association, "While said the restrictions on tourism would dampen the prospects of travel and tourism in the Nilgiris which is looking forward for the popular summer season, which is just four weeks away. The authorities should give

teams. One health worker

will be assigned for every 50 houses in a rural containment zone and one health worker per 100 houses in urban areas based on local conditions. A buffer zone will be delineated around each containment zone based on local conditions in urban areas. In rural areas, 0.5 km radius will be defined as a buffer zone. The rules

appropriately

Collector J. Innocent Divya said that tourists and other travelers from Kerala must show negative Covid-19 reports at the check-posts, or samples will be lifted from them for analysis to keep track on them in the

"While e-registration process for tourists and those from other districts is already the practice in the Nilgiris, there are no restrictions or mandatory test procedures for locals to visit neighbouring districts and return to Nilgiris," she added.

defined by the district administration or local

The first containment zone was declared in the city on April 2. The authorities, a month later, had been able to set up at least 513 containment zones across the city. However, the zones were limited by the authorities for the last few months as the cases started coming



explosion at a fireworks factory near Sivakasi in the district on Thursday,

police said. More than ten sheds where chemicals had been stored were razed to the ground in the mishap, the second such incident this month in a cracker manufacturing unit in this region, the country's fireworks hub.

Fire and Rescue service teams battled the blaze in the unit at Kalayar Kurichi, police said, adding the injured were rushed to hospitals. The cause of the explosion was not known immediately.

More than 20 people had died and around 30 injurea in a major explo sion in a fireworks unit at Acchankulam village near Sattur in this district on Feb. 2. — *PTI*



CHENNAI'S POLICE HISTORY



Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami will inaugurate the 178-year-old iconic metropolitan police commissioner's office Egmore converted into a police museum on Saturday. The work is in the finishing stage. During

the British rule, in 1842,

the headquarters of the

V. Rama Rao, secretary,

Chennai Metropolitan police was opened at Vepery. Later, it was relocated to Arunagiri Mudaliars' bungalow on Egmore Pantheon Road. This is the second police museum in Tamil Nadu after Coimbatore. The Egmore museum houses important historical documents of the police,

weapons used by the British police, early uniforms of the Tamil Nadu police, photographs of belts, sniffer dogs, historical news packages, wireless instruments and artifacts. The names of the policemen who lost their lives in service are engraved on the wall.

Buses parked at Chinnamalai bus depot on Thursday.

Transport strike leaves city commuters inconvenienced

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 25

The day one of indefinite transport employees on Thursday caused hardship to com-

muters, particularly office-goers and students The Tamil Nadu trans-port workers affiliated with nine trade unions commenced their indefinite strike on Thursday demanding the govern-ment to conclude the 14th wage revision talks immediately, leaving several stranded across the state.

operated from all the depots and that services were maintained well.

On Thursday, with fewer numbers of buses on the road, commuters had to wait for a long time to catch a bus. This also resulted in jam-packed buses in the city and its suburbs. Worsening the situation, EMU train service was affected from 5.30 am to 8.25 am between Tambaram and Chennai Beach station after an overhead cable line snapped.

Nine transport unions, including DMK-affiliated Transport department LPF, CITU, AITUC and officials claimed that INTUC, have called for the nearly half the buses were strike over the govern-

ment's failure to conclude 14th wage revision talks, pending terminal benefits of the workers retired since 2020 and non-allocation of funds in the budget to compensate the losses incurred by the corporation which is a service sector. The unions also refused to accept the interim relief of ₹1,000 per month until the wage revision talks are completed which was announced by the government.

Sources from the union said that the protest would continue till the government accepts to continue the talks and meet the demands.

Consumers protest LPG, fuel price hike

CHENNAI, FEB. 25

After the Central government allowed the oil marketing companies to increase ₹25 per a liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) domestic cylinder on Thursday, the Chennai residents demanded an immediate rollback of hike as it's the third time this month.

The residents said the price of a subsidized cylinder was Rs 735 on February 4. Now it has climbed up to ₹810.

Awareness People's Association, union petroleum minister was just indicating halt in production by OPEC countries as a reason to increase the prices. This claim is irrelevant as the original price of basic petrol is around ₹30 or ₹32 only. Rest is the tax levied by the central and state governments. However, the minister is silent on the taxes. We are also hit by a 20 to 30 percent increase in the expenditure for vegetables and

central and state governments can come up with steps to address the issue, he said. V. Latha, a homemaker

at Adambakkam, pointed out that even the Reserve Bank of India Governor had cautioned the central and state governments on levying cess and taxes on petrol and diesel and on account of that price rise can be curbed only by reducing taxes.
We can't afford such a

high amount for buying cooking gas. We cook only

groceries. So we hope both depending on the cooking gas. Since the pandemic derailed all budget plans for a year now, the hike in cooking gas price is a bolt out of blue, she said.

Anuradha, another homemaker Rajakilpakkam, said the petrol price in neighbourcountries Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka is only around ₹60.

The government should bring the petrol price at par with those countries forgoing excessive levving

Jumbo tales: Protect and conserve gentle giants

B. Vijayalakshmi

Viewpoint

he video of a mahout and his assistant canan elephant to a tree at the annual elephant rejuvena-tion camp in Mettupalayam triggered an outrage among wildlife conservationists this week. Animal welfare activists sought action against the two men as the disturbing video had gone viral on social media. The two were arrested and remanded in judicial custody. The elephant belonging to Srivilliputhur Andal temple at the camp was examined by forest veterinary officers and found to be in good health. The recent incident left the state govern-ment red-faced as the 48-day elephant rejuvenation camp at Thekkampatti is an annual affair, inaugurated by former CM J Jayalalithaa in 2003. This year, more than 25 temple and mutt elephants in TN and Puducherry have been brought to the camp. The mahout was suspended and also a committee consisting of experts sensitized the mahouts at the camp on handling unruly elephants without resorting to cruelty. Last month, an elephant died near Ooty due to severe bleeding caused by a burning tyre thrown at it by local residents.

Two days after the camp incident, the Madras high court in a different case suggested that the state formulates a policy to prohibit private ownership of elephants. The court observed that elephants should ideally be under the care of the



Elephants take a bath with the help of mahouts at the rejuvenation camp in Mettupalayam.

all temples and human agen-

forest department and that elephants. The petitioner, a devotee of Srirangam temcies be banned from having ple, alleged that elephants owned by several temples faced inhumane treatment and sought the government to file a report on steps taken to rehabilitate temple elephants.

Last year, the Puducherry government was involved in a long, protracted legal battle with People for Ethical Treatment of Animals over the custody of Mankula Vinayakar temple elephant Lakshmi. Finally, the Madras HC directed the UT government to provide proper nutrition to the jumbo and sought a status report on the facilities provided to

the animal. Early this month, the Madurai bench of Madras high court directed the state government to pay Sindhu, a BE computer science graduate, ₹25 lakh as compensation within a month and provide her a job in the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments department

attacked by a temple ele-phant and sustained severe Înjuries on her throat in 1999. Also, a CBI probe has been ordered by the HC into a series of elephant poaching incidents reported in the state based on a report by the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau.

With the Supreme Court upholding a Madras HC order against encroach-ments in the elephant corridor in the Nilgiris, concerted efforts of the forest department, experts and people alone can reduce the incidence of man-animal conflict. Similarly, the conflict. annual retreat for captive elephants may be a welcome measure, but the TN government should act fast and put in place a fool-proof system to ensure jumbos in religious and private places are not exploited but maintained and treated properly.

Saudi Riyals, US dollars worth ₹70.28L seized

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 25

Chennai air customs seized Saudi Riyals and US dollars worth ₹70.28 lakh and arrested a passenger in connection with the case on Wednesday. According to an official statement from the Customs Commissioner, Based on intelligence, Noormohamed Sultan (60) of Kanchipuram was intercepted by AIU offi-cers after he cleared immigration and was proceeding towards the security hold area for boarding Indigo flight 6E-65 destined for Dubai, on suspicion of carrying for-

eign currency. As he appeared to be nervous his search was carried out and 2000 US Dollars in 100 denomination valued at ₹1.45 lakhs

were recovered from his

His check in baggage, a carton box, was recalled from the aircraft. On opening, it was found to contain magazine/ old books and five covers wrapped with adhesive tape. On cut opening, it was found that the covers were made of old newspapers in which Saudi Riyals were ingeniously concealed.

Total, 357000 Saudi Arab Riyals in the denomination of 500 valued at Rs. 68.83 lakhs were recovered. Total foreign currency worth Rs.70.28 lakhs was recovered and seized under the Customs Act read with FEMA (Export and Import of Currency) Regulations. He was arrested. Further investigation is in

TAKES_

'Dismiss with cost the suit relating to AIADMK intra-party election'

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 25

presidium chairman of AIADMK has approached the Madras high court to reject with an exemplary cost, a suit, which related to conduct of intra-party election to elect the co-ordinators and high level executive members and other members as per Rule 30 (ii) of AIADMK rules and regulations.

E.Madoosudhanan filed an application to this effect, in response to the suit filed by G.Sundaram of Salem district. In his application, Madoosudhanan submitted that as a person, who is not a member of AIAD-MK, the plaintiff (Sundaram) has no locus standi whatsoever to seek for a mandatory injunction for the conduct of intra-party election. The plaintiff is m otivated and has approached this court with malafide intention to demean the stature of AIADMK political party, he added. Justice R.Pongiappan, before whom the case came up for hearing, adjourned it to April 24.

In his application, Madoosudhanan submitted that as a person, who is not a member of AIADMK, the plaintiff (Sundaram) has no locus standi whatsoever to seek for a mandatory injunction for the conduct of intra-party election. Justice adjourned the hearing to April

PM Modi inaugurates various projects in TN

Coimbatore, Feb 25: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday dedicated to the nation key projects in Tamil Nadu, including the 2x500 mw Neyveli new thermal power plant, and laid the foundation stone for important initiatives in the state. Among the initiatives were

those in the shipping sector,

where the Centre has identified ₹6 lakh worth projects to be implemented under the Sagarmala scheme between 2015 and 2035 in the country, he said. Reciting from the Tamil classic Tirukkural, the second time on Thursday after doing the same at a government function Puducherry earlier, he hailed farmers, even as he laid the foundation stone for extension, renovation and modernisation of the Lower Bhavani Project System. It will irrigate over two lakh acres of land and benefit the ryots in Tirupur, Erode and Karur districts in the state, he said. Referring to the parcouplet from Tirukkural, Modi said, "the farmers are the ones who truly live and all others live because of them, worshipping them." The Prime Minister inaugurated widening of the Korampallam surplus course beige and rail overbridge (ROB) including widening of the road at VOC Port in Tuticorin, saying it



Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurates various projects in the presence of the Governor, Chief Minister and Deputy CM in Coimbatore on Thursday.

will greatly benefit the port. 'The Government of India's commitment to port related develpoment can be seen through the Sagarmala scheme. About 575 projects at a total cost of Rs six lakh crore have been identified for implementation during 2015-2035 period," he said at a government event after inaugurating various projects and laying the foundation stone for others. Works cover port modernisation, new port development, port connectivity enhancement, port linked industrialisation and coastal community developent under this initiative, he added.

The eight-laning of Korampallam and the ROB undertaken under the Sagarmala scheme will facilitate seamless and congestion free transit to and from the port and also reduce the turnaround time of cargo trucks, the PM said. Noting that Tamil Nadu has a glorious history of sea trade and port related development, he recalled "the great freedom fighter V O Chidambaranar," after whom the port is named. "His vision for a vibrant Indian shipping industry and maritime developmet inspire us greatly. The projects launched today will further strengthen the cargo

handling ability of the port. It will even support the green port initiative," he said. A new multimodal logistics park is going to be launched near Sriperumbudur in Chennai soon, he said.

In the power sector, he dedito the nation the Neyveli thermal project which is a lignite based power plant designed for power generation capacity of 1000 MW with two units of 500 MW capacity each. He also inaugurated virtually a 709 MW solar power project of NLCIL and over 4,000 tenements in Tiruppur, Madurai and Tiruchirappalli. -PTI

Modi targets Rahul over his 'north-south' remarks, lashes out at Narayanasamy

Puducherry, Feb 25: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday attacked the Congress and its erstwhile government in Puducherry, saying the V Narayanasamy led dispensation had 'different priorities' than public welfare and flayed party leader Rahul Gandhi over his recent 'north-south' remarks.

Hitting out at the "Congress culture," at a public meeting in the poll-bound union territory, he said people were witness to it in the last five years. "Our colonial rulers had the policy of

divide and rule. Congress has a policy of divide, lie rule. Sometimes and their leaders put region against region... community against community," he said in an apparent reference to Gandhi's recent 'north-south' remarks which the BJP opposed strongly.

During his Kerala visit on Tuesday, Gandhi had said he was used to a "different type of politics" in north India and coming to the southern state was "very refreshing" as people are interested in

Modi also expressed

'shock' over Gandhi's statement that there was no 'dedicated' fisheries ministry at the Centre, adding the NDA government had set it up in 2019 and that its budgetary allocation has substantially gone up ever

Averring that the people of Puducherry did not deserve a "high command" government that would serve a few Congress leaders, Modi assured that the NDA government, if voted in the coming elections, would treat people as its high command.

Viralimalai temple consecration held

DC CORRESPONDENT PUDUKKOTTAI, FEB. 25

The Maha Kumbhabhishekam of Subramaniya Swamy temple, an ancient Muruga Viralimalai temple near Pudukkottai was performed on Thursday.

Health minister Dr.C.Vij-yabaskar, Pudukkottai ayabaskar, Collector Mrs.B.Uma Maheswari, Central zone IG H.M.-Jayaram and Superintendent of Police Pudukkottai S.Balaji Saravanan and others partici

According to Bharathiraja, executive officer Pudukkottai temples, renovation work to the tune of several lakhs of rupees was carried out in the temple.

PF not a bounty, but a right: HC

J. STALIN I DC

Pointing out that provident fund is not a bounty, but a right of a government servant and that the government is obliged to follow the rules, the Madras high court has directed the authorities to pay the interest amount for the delayed period payable on the PF already disbursed to a government employee within eight weeks.

A division bench comprising justices Pushpa Sathyanarayana and S. Kannammal gave the directive while allowing an appeal filed by R. Mythili, challenging an order of a single judge, dated November 24, 2010.

The bench said in this case, it was not only a delayed payment, but despite the request and the emergency expressed, it was granted only after five years. The single judge while disposing of the writ petition had recorded only the payment of the PF without adverting to the fact that the same was claimed with interest. The appellant cannot be directed to resort to a separate proceeding for this purpose, as the appellant had already retired. Therefore, it would be appropriate to direct the authorities to pay the interest for which there was a delay in payment, the bench added.

Referring to the contention of the special government pleader that the claim of for the purpose of getting the interest.

Field our men as candidate, fishermen tell DMK, Cong

ARULOLI M | DC KANYAKUMARI, FEB. 25

fishermen Kanyakumari district, one of the deciding communities in three of the six constituencies in the district, have planned to field their own candidates if the Congress and the DMK refuse a seat to

Despite the Roman Catholic fishermen community being the second largest vote bank next to the Nadar community in the district, it is a matter of contention that they have been neglected politically by the Congress and the DMK, the two parties which the community supports tradi-

"It was during the period of and fisheries. She was later

chief minister Kamaraj that the Congress fielded Lourdhammal Simon from our community at Colachel constituency in 1957," recalled general secretary, South Asian Fishermen Fraternity SAFF), Fr Churchil. 'Lourdhammal Simon was also inducted in the Kamaraj cabinet and served as minister for local administration

QUICK CROSSWORD

defeated by a Congress rebel candidate, A Swamidoss, in the 1962 election, and that was the end of our political representation," said Chu-rchil, adding that none of the parties since then had fishermen candidates.

"Inspite of the strength of our vote bank, we are ignored by the Congress and the DMK," said Shelton, a fisher youth, adding, "They pacify

and convince us to support them election after election, telling that it was necessary to keep away the 'Hindutva forces', the BJP.

"This time, if they continue the same tactics, we have no other option than to show off our strength in a way that we can," said Shelton. He wanted fishermen leaders to out this message across to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi during

started working towards fielding their own candidates in coalition with the parties like Naam Tamilar Katchi (NTK) Dhinakaran's AMMK in Colachel, Kanyakumari and Killiyoor, where the fishermen community is a deciding

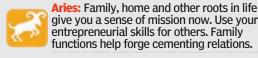
Monday. Some of the fisher-

men community leaders have

12 percent interest cannot be permitted, the bench said when the claim itself was made with the interest to avail the same, the government should have come forward to offer at least some percentage of interest. The appellant cannot be driven to a different forum

COFFEE-BREAK

Your day today By Dr C.V.B. Subrahmanyam



entrepreneurial skills for others. Family functions help forge cementing relations. Taurus: Get rid of your past for a better life. Impart technical knowledge; increase employee



Gemini: Avoid setting unrealistic targets that unknowingly add undue pressure. Don't reveal plans; jealous colleagues create obstacles. Spend time with your beloved.

creating romantic friction.



Cancer: Pay attention to enjoy domestic peace. Think twice about investment schemes presented today. Get realistic about your weight. Teachers must toil hard.



time alone, escaping confusions. Virgo: Choose a nonstop activity to work your heart and lungs harder than normal. You'll satisfyingly complete the long-pending

construction work. Keep employees happy.

Leo: You find happiness when serving the needy. Home isn't very exciting today. Get prepared for falling in love. You want to spend



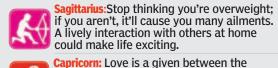
known for her roles in the films like Bedtime Stories, The Sorcerer's Apprentice, Take Me Home **Tonight, The Ever After amongst others.** ibra: You get opportunities to correct your



expenses may go up. Scorpio: Encouraging news may lift spirits at home. Avoid snacking between meals to stay fit. Focus on setting business targets. Your search for a career ends today.

enhance your career prospects. Domestic

lifestyle flaws. Expect specialised training to



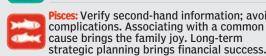
could make life exciting. Capricorn: Love is a given between the lover and the beloved — enjoy each other's company. Friends can't influence you with

their views. Pay heed to senior colleagues.



Aquarius: Living in a fortress, always concerned about security could prevent growth. An illustrious, outstanding academic record gives a professional edge over others.

isces: Verify second-hand information; avoid



bridge PHILLIP

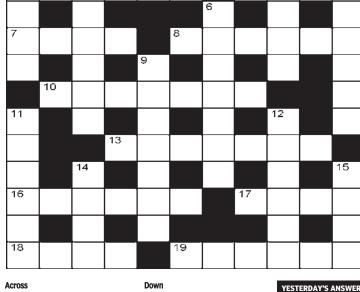
RETIRING TO WARMER WEATHER You must have noticed that tolerance for cold weather is inversely proportional to age. The older you get, the more you seek warmth. Showing my age, anything below 70 degrees is freezing, according to my internal thermometer. (Skiers are the exception to the rule.)
In Fingland some 30 years ou must have noticed

In England some 30 years ago, there was a trickle of bridge-playing retirees to Spain's Costa del Sol. They usually did well at a big

tournament that used to be held there each November. In today's deal, from the 1993 event, declarer spotted a safe line. How did he play in six hearts after West led a

North responded with the Jacoby Forcing Raise. spades showed at most one spade. After that, some control-bidding led to the small

Dealer: South
Volterable For
h West North
Pass 2NT
Pass 14
Pass 14
Pass Pass Declarer discarded a dia-



1.Winding downhill ski race (6) 3. Clutch (4)

7. Mountains (4) 8. Advantageous (6)

10. Detrimental (7)

13. Keepsake (7) 16. Putrefying (6)

17. Peak of perfection (4) 18. Twenty-four-carat (4) 19. Relish (6)

Word Mine

S

How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown in today's puzzle? In making a word, each letter may be used once only. Each word must contain the letter at the top of the pyramid. There should be at least one nine letter word. Plurals, foreign words and proper names are not allowed.

1. Rock (4) 2. Emerge (6)

4. Breach in relations (4) 5. Trifling (6)

6. Self-confident (7)

9. Put in jeopardy (7) 11. Hearsay (6) 12. Plaster coating (6)

14. Impetus (4) 15. Erosion (4)

jumble

Across: 1. Handcuffs, 6. Aloft, 7. Looks, 9. Mode, 10. Scenic, 12. Ripple, 14. Urge, 17. Droop, 18. Nitre, 19.

Down: 2. Avoid, 3. Duty, 4. Unlock, 5. Frown, 6. Admired, 8. Secrete, 11. Elapse, 13. Props, 15. Ratio, 16. Knot.

ODYII DUFIL RHYOTN **GANDOR** Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above carbon

trumps, cashed the spade ace, throwing another dia-mond, and took three rounds of clubs ending on the board.

If they had broken 3-3,
South would have pitched
his last low diamond on the
13th club and tried the diamond finesse for an overthe board.

If West had started with four clubs, declarer would have led dummy's last club and discarded his diamond nine. West would have had

trick.

to lead into declarer's dia-

However, when turned up with four clubs, declarer led a low diamond from the dummy, covering East's card. West won the trick but was endplayed, as

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ALVIN AND HOBBES | Bill Watterson

I INTRODUCED THE DAME TO A FRIEND WHO'S VERY CLOSE TO MY HEART. JUST A LITTLE DOWN AND LEFT, MY FRIEND IS AN LLOQUENT SPEAKER. HE MADE THREE PROFOUND ARRUMENTS WHILE I EXCUSED MYSELF FROM THE ROOM, I ALWAYS LEAVE WENT TALK GETS PHILOSOPHICAL.







THE WIZARD OF ID | Parker and Hartsd

YES, I'LL HAVE A WIZ! THIS IS THE MOST PRESTIGIOUS RESTAURANT IN THE KINGDOM!





ARCHIE|Bill Henry Scarpelli & craig boldman







BLONDIE | Dean Young and John Marshall

BUMSTEAD, IN APPRECIATION FOR ALL THE OVERTIME YOU'VE PUT IN LATELY, I WANT TO YOU BET! IT'S A LITTLE BOOK IL OF INSPIRATIONAL QUOTES GIVE YOU SOMETHING









TARZAN|Edgar Rice Burroughs





I-T RAIDS OFFICES, **RESIDENCES OF HARYANA MLA**

Chandigarh, Feb. 25: The Income Tax Department carried out raids on the offices and residences of Haryana's Independent MLA from Meham, Balraj Kundu, in Rohtak on Thursday, officials said here.

A residential building linked to his relatives in Hisar district and another one in Gurgaon which is connected to the legislator himself were searched as well, they said.

Kundu, a vocal supporter of the ongoing farmer's agitation against the new central farm laws, had in February 2020 withdrawn support to the M.L. Khattar dispensation in Haryana, saying he was "deeply hurt" with the government giving "clean chit" to those involved in the alleged corruption in sugar which he had flagged.

In October 2020, the Haryana Police booked him and three other people in a cheating case. The FIR was registered in Gurgaon based on a complaint from a resident of the

city, the police had said.
The MLA had then hit back, saying the FIR, like another one lodged against him in January 2020, was due to "political considerations" and that he had been raising his voice against the BJP-led government in Haryana on various issues. The state police had in January 2020 booked Kundu and his brother Shivraj for allegedly cheating a Rohtak resident.

When the case was registered, Kundu had claimed that he was being framed in the case due to political vendetta at the behest of a BJP leader and former minister from the state. Kundu, who runs a construction company along with his brother, was not answering

MUMBAI MAYOR UNVEILS RESTORED TRAM CAR

Mumbai, Feb. 25: Mumbai mayor Kishori Pednekar on Thursday unveiled a tram car by i Municipal restored Brihanmumbai Corporation (BMC) in south Mumbai, a civic official said.

The civic body had earlier displayed the tram car on an elevated podium at Bhatia Baug garden next to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus, but due to various reasons including the Covid-19 pandemic, it was not open for

public viewing.
"The BMC has taken this tram from the BEST and installed it at Bhatia Baug so people could re-experience the past glory of Mumbai," Pednekar said, while unveil-

ing the tram.

The yellow and maroon coloured single-decker tram car is decorated with lights for tourists to enjoy viewing it at night time as well, the mayor said.

Trams were part of Mumbai's public transport Trams system for nearly 90 years and were one of the cheapest and favourite modes of transport for citizens, before they were discontinued from service in

RSS ACTIVIST'S MURDER: 8 SDPI WORKERS HELD

GILVESTER ASSARY I DC THIRUVANANTHAPURAM.

The brutal murder of RSS activist in Vayalar in Alappuzha district of Kerala allegedly by SDPI workers, the political arm of PFI, has created tension in many parts of the area.

Nandu N. Krishna, 23, was hacked to death allegedly by SDPI workers on Wednesday night following a political clash between the rival groups. Eight SDPI workers have been arrested in connection with the murder; Suneer, 33, Yasir , 32, Abdul Khader, 52, Mohammed Amaz , 24, Ansil , 33, Riyaz, 38, Nishad, 32, and

Shabudeen, 49. The police said that the mur-der was well-planned as the assailants had arrived at the spot in a car carrying sharp edged weapons. These weapons were used for hacking the RSS worker.

The BJP and Hindu outfits

had called for a dawn to dusk hartal in the district on Thursday against the murder.

The police have clamped prohibitory orders in some areas of Cherthala and Vayalar to check retaliatory attacks by

the rival groups. The area had witnessed political clashes in the recent

J&K border residents heave sigh of relief

India, Pak for strict observance of ceasefire agreements

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, FEB. 25

Tired of unending military tensions and frequent bouts of skirmishes between the facing troops, the border residence of Jammu and Kashmir have heaved a sigh of relief over India and Pakistan agreeing to strictly observe all agreements on ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC) and other sectors.

"It has come as a great relief to us. We hope and pray that both sides will really ensure strict observance of all agreements, understandings and cease firing along the LoC," said Irshad Ahmad Khawaja, a resident of Uri while speaking to this newspaper

over the phone.

He said that the border residents were happy. Echoing their and his own sentiment, he said, the two countries armies follow the promise we won't suffer any further human and property losses. Kam se kam chen ki sans ley payengay (At least, we will breath

in peace). Bashir Ahmed Wathloo, chairman of Rural Development Society, Uri said, "I will get a good night's sleep now. My joy knows no bounds today.'

Bashir However. Ahmad Dar, who lives at Balkote, a hamlet at a stone's throw from the LoC, said he would keep his fingers crossed. Dar who lost his wife Farooga Begum, 35, in cross-LoC shelling in November last year said, "I feel lost since I have lost my spouse. Had the two sides abided by the ceasefire agreement they had reached in 2003, my world would not have been

ruined" Though the two countries pushed on with the ceasefire agreement signed after months of tortuous negotiations in 2003, the facing armies and border guards have often clashed both along the LoC and International Border (IB), the 198km stretch of the 2,912km India-Pakistan border from Gujarat to J&K called 'Working Boundary' by Islamabad as it isses through a "disput

ed region" particularly. Both sides suffered hugely in interminable particularly

IN WRITTEN

RESPONSE to a question in Lok Sabha earlier this month, Union Minister of State for Home G Kishan Reddy said a total of 10,752 cases of ceasefire violations have taken place along India's border with Pakistan in the last three years, in which 72 security personnel and 70 civilians were

• HE SAID 364 security personnel and 341 civilians were injured in cross-border firings along the International Border and the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir in 2018, 2019

after 2010 but it has been mainly the civilian populations on both sides which bore the brunt in cross border firing and shelling over the years. There had been strong

craving for bringing this to a close.

J&K parties too

welcome the pledge

Apart from the border residents, the fresh pledge of the two sides to revert to the November 2003 ceasefire agreement and hold to it has been welcomed by J&K's political parties across the

Former chief minister and National Conference president, Farooq Abdullah, said that the measure will go a long way towards sustainable peace between the two neighboring countries.

"The agreement between the DGMOs of India and Pakistan will go a long way in ushering long lasting peace along-side LoC and IB. NC has always been a strong votary of Indo-Pak peace. It is the people of J&K who have been facing the brunt of escalating tensions alongside the borders. I hope the agreement is followed in letter and spirit. The development, I sincerely believe, will allow people living alongside LoC and IB to go about their normal lives with minimal disruption and risk," he People's

Democratic Party president, Mehbooba Mufti, said, "It is a big and welcome development.

There are no back-channel talks: Pak NSA

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC NEW DELHI, FEB. 25

Hours after India and Pakistan agreed to a "strict observance" the ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC), Pakistani National Security Advisor (NSA) Moeed Yusuf made it clear that there had been "no back-channel" talks between him and India's NSA Ajit Doval but nevertheless added that the "welcome development on the LoC is a result of discussions through the established channel of DGMOs" and that "obviously these are by their very nature not in the public eye and done privately and professionally through the direct chan-

Pakistani NSA insisted that that "there is nothing more than meets the eye here'

Meanwhile, India on Thursday evening also said it "desires normal neighbourly relations with Pakistan" and has "always maintained that we (India) are committed to addressing issues, if any, in a peaceful bilateral manner".

Asked whether this was the start of the resumption of the Indo-Pak peace process, New Delhi merely said that "on key our position remains unchanged"

India had earlier this month squarely put the onus on Pakistan to "create an environment free of terror, hostility and violence", in its response

The former chief minister added, "I have been saying all along that dialogue is the only way forward if both countries want to stop the unending cycle of violence and bloodshed across the bor-

to a media query on the statement made by Pakistan's Army chief Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa who had said that "it is time" for his country to "extend the hand of peace in all direc-

tions" The Pakistan Army chief had even called on both countries to resolve the Kashmir issue in a "peaceful and dignified manner", in comments that were seen as a possible outreach to India.

On Thursday evening, the Pakistani NSA tweeted. "I have seen claims by Indian media that attribute ceasefire announcement between Pakistani and Indian DGMOs to back-channel diplomacy between me and the Indian NSA. This is baseless. No such talks have taken place between me and Mr. Doval. The welcome development on the LoC is a result of discussions through the established channel DGMOs. Obviously these are by their very nature not in the public eye and done privately and professionally through the

direct channel." The Pakistani NSA added, "Pakistan has continued to call for the 2003 ceasefire agreement to be honored and I am glad we have reached the understanding. It must be followed in letter and spirit. Doing so will save innocent lives so no one should question the intent. Nor should wrong inferences be drawn. There is nothing more than meets the eye here.

in the right direction. It will provide huge relief to the beleaguered people living under constant threat on the LoC and end the bloodshed there. It added, "Just as the joint statement correctly Conference faction headed by Mirwaiz Umar Faroog said "It is a real of the conference faction headed by Mirwaiz Umar Faroog said "It is a real of the conference faction headed by Mirwaiz Umar Faroog said "It is a real of the conference faction headed by Mirwaiz Umar Faroog said "It is a real of the conference faction headed by Mirwaiz Umar Faroog said "It is a real of the conference faction headed by Mirwaiz Umar Faroog said "It is a real of the conference faction headed by Mirwaiz Umar Faroog said "It is a real of the conference faction headed by Mirwaiz Umar Faroog said "It is a real of the conference faction headed by Mirwaiz Umar Faroog said "It is a real of the conference faction headed by Mirwaiz Umar Faroog said "It is a real of the conference faction headed by Mirwaiz Umar Faroog said "It is a real of the conference faction headed by Mirwaiz Umar Faroog said "It is a real of the conference faction headed by Mirwaiz Umar Faroog said "It is a real of the conference faction headed by Mirwaiz Umar Faroog said "It is a real of the conference faction headed by Mirwaiz Umar Faroog said "It is a real of the conference faction headed by Mirwaiz Umar Faroog said "It is a real of the conference faction headed by Mirwaiz Umar Faroog said "It is a real of the conference faction headed by Mirwaiz Umar Faroog said "It is a real of the conference faction headed by Mirwaiz Umar Faroog said "It is a real of the conference faction headed by Mirwaiz Umar Faroog said "It is a real of the conference faction headed by Mirwaiz Umar Faroog said "It is a real of the conference faction headed by Mirwaiz Umar Faroog said "It is a real of the conference faction headed by Mirwaiz Umar Faroog said "It is a real of the conference faction headed by Mirwaiz Umar Faroog said "It is a real of the conference faction headed by Mirwaiz Umar Faroog said "It is a real of the conference faction headed by Mirwaiz Umar Faroog said "It is a real of the conference faction headed by Mirwaiz Umar Faroog said "It is a real of the conference faction he the borders.

MEA: Govt will liaise with UK for Nirav's early extradition

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, FEB. 25

Thursday evening said that "since Westminster Magistrate's Court has recommended Nirav Modi's extradition to the UK home secretary, the Government of India would liaise with the UK authorities for his early extradition to India"
On Thursday, the Ministry of External Affairs said, "Nirav Modi

is wanted in India in connection with the multi-million dollar Punjab National Bank Fraud case. On the request of CBI and ED, his extradition from UK was sought in August 2018. He was arrested and produced before the Senior District Judge at Westminster Magistrate's court on 20.03.2019. Since then he is facing extradition proceedings while in judicial custody. The final hearing in this case was held on 7-8 January 2021. Thursday,

Westminster Magistrate's Court in London has pronounced that Nirav Modi be extradited to India to stand trial."

MEA"Dismissing the mental health concerns raised by Nirav Modi, the judge observed that Nirav Modi conspired to destroy evidence and intimidate witnesses. Since the Court has recommended extradition to the

CBI SAYS VERDICT IS REMINDER TO **ALL FUGITIVES**

New Delhi, Feb. 25: The CBI on Thursday termed the judgement of a UK court in the Nirav Modi's case as "significant" and said it should serve as a reminder to all fugitives, who have indulged in large value frauds, that they cannot escape the law merely by changing their countries of residence.

The CBI said the court vindicated the painstaking probe carried out by the agency espe-cially since Modi had raised various issues on admissibility of evidence, fairness of investigation, trial, prison conditions availability of health facilities in India and extraneous consideration, with a view to divert attention from his own

Secretary, India Home would liaise with the UK authorities for his early extradition to India."

A senior diplomat at India House said the judgment paves the way for the government of India and the high commission officials to liaise with the UK authorities on the next stages of the procedural matters for extradition.

NEW NORMS TO TIGHTEN GOVT CONTROL OVER ONLINE, OTT

FROM PAGE 1

Mr Prasad said the rules require the 'significant' social media intermediaries to follow additional due diligence including the appointment of a chief compliance officer, a nodal contact person and a resident grievance officer. All three officials will have to reside in India. They will have to publish monthly compliance report and detail contents removed proactively. The resident grievance officer shall register complaints in 24 hours, and file monthly compliance reports. User grievances have to be resolved within 15

The rules state that users who voluntarily want to verify their accounts should be given an appropriate mechanism to do so and be accorded a visible mark of verification. Any contentious content flagged by the government or legal order has to be taken down quickly.

Also, social media platforms on being asked by court or government will be required to disclose the first originator of the mischieinformation that undermines the sovereignty of India, security of the state, or public order. The intermediary, however, will not be required to disclose the contents of any message.

Beyond streaming and messaging, the code will also set guidelines for digital publishers of news and current affairs content, requiring them to disclose their ownership and other infor-

LoC to fall silent as India, Pak Maha: 229 students to observe all ceasefire pacts

FROM PAGE 1

The ceasefire will also come as a relief to villagers settled near LoC who have suffered both loss of lives and damage to their property. Some 22 civilians were killed during ceasefire violation by Pakistan in 2020 and 71 injured. In 2019, 18 civilians were killed and 127 injured in ceasefire violations by Pakistan.

However, there will be no compromise on anti-infiltration grid along the LoC and troops will not be back, moved said sources. India has the right to respond in case of any major ter- any kind of help being rorist attack on India by Pakistan supported other.

terrorists. Indian security forces had eliminated 221 terrorists in 2020 in J&K and 9 in 2021. Indian sources insisted that the ceasefire with Pakistan had nothing to do with stand-off with China. Indian Army General Chief M.M. Naravane had said on Wednesday that there was no overt signs of

any collusion between China and Pakistan against India during current stand-off at LAC. He said there were no large scale mobilisations Pakistan or any kind activity which would be suggestive of given by one to the

test Covid positive DC CORRESPONDENT

Worried over the rising cases of Covid-19, the Union Cabinet Secretary has scheduled a review meeting with seven states Kerala, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Chhattisgarh - that are witnessing an upsurge in daily detections.

The Centre has also rushed Multi-Disciplinary High Level Central teams to these states. India's active caseload was 1,51,708

on Thursday comprising 1.37% of the total positive cases. This is large ly attributable to the upsurge in daily new cases in these seven states.

Overall 16,738 new daily cases were recorded in the last 24 hours out of which 89.57% of the new cases were from these seven Manarashtra continues to report the highest daily new cases at 8,807 followed by Kerala with 4,106 while Puniab reported 558 new cases.

Electrifying protest



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee rides an electric scooter during a protest against the hike in fuel price in Kolkata on Thursday. She slammed the BJP-led government at the Centre, "We are protesting against the fuel price hike. The Modi government only makes false promises. They have done nothing to bring down fuel prices. You can see the difference in petrol prices when the Modi government came to power and now.'

Vehicle with explosives found near Mukesh Ambani's house

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC MUMBAI, FEB. 25

An abandoned vehicle with 20 gelatin sticks was found just metres away from business tycoon Mukesh Ambani's house in Mumbai on Thursday.

The SUV was noticed at around 3 pm after which some people from the vicinity alerted the local police, who rushed to the spot and cordoned off the entire area, sending the state government and the police into a tizzy.

A Bomb Detection and Disposal Squad (BDDS) team reached the spot immediately, he said. It was not an assembled explosive device, he said, adding that further investigation was on.

"A Scorpio with 20 gela-

• THE SUV was noticed at around 3 pm after which some people from the vicinity alerted the local police, who rushed to the spot.

CCTV FOOTAGE of the area revealed the SUV was parked beside a tree on the Carmichael Road at around 1 am.

tin sticks was found near Mukesh Ambani's Mumbai residence. The crime branch of Mumbai Police is investigating the entire matter and the truth will emerge soon," Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh

According to reports, CCTV footage of the area revealed the SUV was

parked beside a tree on the Carmichael Road at around 1 am. More than one person was seen alighting from the car.

Deshmukh said that the car was parked some distance away from Ambani's palatial house. Mumbai

spokesperson, DCP S. Chaitanya, said, "The gelatin sticks recovered in the SUV were not an assembled device. But details of the risks they posed would be known only after a thor-

ough probe."

Efforts are on to trace the persons who parked the vehicle there, from where they came, what were their diabolic motives, who or what were the exact targets etc., officials said.

NEW | MEMBER | Chaurasia had earlier pledged to spread Godse's last court statement to 1L people Godse 'devotee' inducted in MP Congress

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, FEB. 25

A 'devotee' of Mahatma Gandhi's assassin Nathuram Godse has been inducted in Congress here, much to the chagrin of a strong section of the party.

Babulal Chaurasia who had a few years ago pledged to spread Godse's last court statement to one lakh people was welcomed into the party by MP Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) presi-

dent and former chief minister Kamal Nath here on Wednesday.

The official Twitter handle of MP Congress on Wednesday evening broke the news of Chaurasia being admitted Congress by sharing the picture of the event in the

party HQ here. Former PCC president of MP Arun Yadav reacted to the development with a one-liner, "Bapu hum sharminda hai' (Bapu, we are ashamed).

He tagged the photo-

graph showing Nath welcoming Chaurasia into the party in his Twitter account, while posting his comment.

Sources in the party said the decision to induct Godse's "follower" in the party has left many senior leaders in Congress flabbergasted.

Chaurasia had quit Congress and joined Hindu Mahasabha in 2014 to contest the local civic body elections in Gwalior. He was said to be one of the brain behind the temple built for Godse in Gwalior in 2017. He was also reportedly

present at the 'consecration' ceremony held to install Godse's statue in the temple. Later, the Gwalior district administration had

Talking to reporters in Gwalior on Thursday, Chaurasia described his joining in Congress as his 'homecoming".

removed the idol.

"I was not aware then that the idol I was worshiping was that of Godse.

I was pushed into worshiping the idol", he said. Hindu

Mahasabha national vice-president Jaiveer Bhardwaj took a swipe at Chaurasia for disowning his devotion to Godse, saying, "He (Chaurasia) used to be present in almost all the events organised to pay respect to Godse in the last

several years". "It shows Congress is not averse to accommodating people who espouse the nationalistic ideology of Nathuram Godse", he

took a jibe at Congress for inducting the Godse 'devotee', saying that this has exposed the grand old party's double standard as far as sticking to its ideology is concerned.

"On one hand, Congress projects itself as the rightful inheritor of Mahatma Gandhi's legacy, on the other the party is not hesitant a bit to embrace a follower of Godse", BJP spokesman Rajneesh Agrawal said.

KEJRIWAL'S SECURITY COVER REDUCED: AAP

New Delhi, Feb'. 25: A day before Delhi Chief Minister Kejriwal's roadshow in Gujarat's Surat, sources in the AAP government alleged on Thursday that his security cover has been scaled down, a charge denied by the Union Home Ministry.

Joint Commissioner (Security) of Delhi Police ID Shukla said Kejriwal has a Z+ security cover and his "complete Z+ security" is being maintained.

GERMAN POLICE RAID ISLAMIC EXTREMISTS

Berlin, Feb. 25: Hundreds of German police officers conducted coordinated raids early Thursday in Berlin and the surrounding state of Brandenburg in the investigation of an organisation banned over allegations of Islamic extremism.

Some 800 police, including SWAT teams, were involved in the raids of apartments linked to members of the organisation, authorities told the DPA news agency. The raids were carried out with the primary focus of obtaining evidence. No arrests were immediately reported. Berlin authorities said further details would be released at a press conference later Thursday.

MINE COLLAPSE IN INDONESIA KILLS SIX

Jakarta, Feb. 25: An illegal gold mine in Indonesia's Sulawesi island collapsed on nearly two dozen people working inside, killing three and leaving another five missing, officials said Thursday.

Survivors estimated about 23 people were trapped in the rubble when the mine in Central Sulawesi province's Parigi Moutong district collapsed late Wednesday due to unstable soil, said Andrias Hendrik Johannes, who heads the local search and rescue agency. Rescuers were able to pull 15 people from the debris and recover the bodies of three women during a gruelling search effort, he said. Police, emergency personnel soldiers and volunteers were all taking part in the efforts.

DRONE HIT ON SAUDI PALACE WAS FROM IRAQ

Baghdad, Feb. 25: Explosiveladen drones that targeted Saudi Arabia's royal palace in the kingdom's capital last month were launched from inside Iraq, a senior Iran-backed militia official in Baghdad

and a US official said.
Speaking to *The Associated* Press this week, the militia official said three drones were launched from Iraqi-Saudi border areas by a relatively unknown Iran-backed faction in Iraq and crashed into the royal complex in Riyadh on January 23, exacerbating regional tensions.

Attacks on the Saudi capital

have been sporadic amid the kingdom's years-long war agaınst Houthi rebeis control large part of neighbouring Yemen.

SRI LANKA SEEKS \$2.2 BN **FROM CHINA**

Colombo, Feb. 25: Sri Lanka is seeking \$2.2 billion from Chinese banks, the government said Thursday, in echoes of a borrowing binge more than a decade ago that resulted in the country having to give up a strategic port to China.

Money and capital markets minister Nivard Cabraal said the government was hopeful of finalising a \$1.5-billion swap facility with China's central bank. "Within the next two weeks we should be able to finalise it," Cabraal told reporters in Colombo while maintaining that the funds would be used as a "buffer" to meet the government's foreign currency needs.

Official figures show Sri Lanka's foreign reserves plummeted to \$4.8 billion at the end

Biden revokes Green Card ban

Lawyers: Was blocking legal immigration

President Joe Biden has lifted a freeze on green cards issued by his predecessor during the pandemic that lawyers said was blocking most legal immigration to the United States. Former President Donald Trump last spring halted the issuance of green cards until the end of 2020 in the name of protecting the Coronavirus-wracked job market — a reason that Trump gave to achieve many of the cuts to legal immigration that had eluded him before the pandemic. Trump on December 31 extended those orders until the end of March. Trump had deemed immigrants a "risk to the US labour market" and blocked their entry to the United States in issuing Proclamation 10014 and Proclamation 10052.

Biden stated in his proclamation on Wednesday that shutting the door on legal immigrants "does not advance the interests of the United States". "To the contrary, it harms the United States, including by preventing certain family members of United live permanently in the

man man has been char-

ged with espionage for

allegedly passing infor-

mation on properties

used by the German par-

liament to Russian mili-

tary intelligence, prosec-

utors said Thursday.
The suspect, identified only as Jens F. in line

with German privacy

rules, worked for a comp-

any that had been repeat-

edly contracted to check

portable electrical appliances by the Bundestag,

or the lower house of par-

liament, federal prosecu-

tors said in a statement.

As a result of that, he had

access to PDF files with

floor plans of the proper-

ties involved. Prosecutors

said, at some point before

early September 2017, the

suspect "decided of his

own accord" to give infor-

mation on the properties

PDF files to an employee

of the Russian Embassy

cer with Russia's GRU tensions.

in Berlin who was an offi-

to Russian intelligence

Berlin, Feb. 25: A Ger- military intelligence age-

San Diego, Feb. 25: States citizens and lawful permanent residents from joining their families here. It also harms industries in the United States that utilize talent from around the world," Biden stated in his proclamation.

Most immigrant visas were blocked by the orders. As many as 120,000 family-based preference visas were lost largely because of the pandemic-related freeze in the 2020 budget year, according to the American Immigrant Lawyers Association. Immigrants could not bring over family members unless they were US citizens applying for visas for their spouses or children under the age of 21.

It also barred entry to immigrants with employment-based visas unless they were considered beneficial to the national interest such as health care professionals. And it slammed the door on thousands of visa lottery winners who were randomly chosen from a pool of about 14 million appli-

ncy. They didn't specify

how his activities came to

light. The charges against

the suspect, who is not in

custody, were filed at a

Berlin court on February

12. The court will have to

decide whether to go ah-

Relations between Ger-

many and Russia have

been buffeted by a grow-

ing list of issues in recent years. In October, the Eur-

opean Union imposed sa-

nctions on two Russian of-

ficials and part of the

GRU agency over a cyber-

attack against the Germ-

an parliament in 2015. In

addition, a Russian man

accused of killing a Geor-

gian man in downtown

Berlin on Moscow's orde-

rs in 2019 is on trial in

Berlin. And last year's po-

isoning of Russian oppos-

ition leader Alexei Nava-

Iny, flown to Germany for

sted immediately after he

returned to Russia, has

added another layer of

They said he sent the treatment and then arre-

ead with a trial.

United States. The blocked visas add to a growing backlog that has reached 437,000 for family-based visas alone, said California immigration lawyer Curtis Morrison, who represented thousands of people blocked by the freeze. "I'm thrilled for my clients who are now in a position that they can now enter the US," he said.

"But that backlog will take years if the administration does not take ambitious measures." A federal judge last year issued a ruling that all but lifted Proclamation 10052 by allowing temporary foreign workers to enter the United States if their employers are members of the US Chamber of Commerce or several other large organisations that represent much of the US economy. But Proclamation 10014 continued to block thousands of immigrants. Immigration lawyers said they were surprised Biden did not immediately lift the freeze like he did with Trump's travel ban imposed against people from mostly Muslimmajority countries. -AP

German charged WHO: LONG **COVID PRIORITY** with espionage FOR AUTHORITIES

Copenhagen, Feb. 25: The World Health Organisation on Thursday urged national authorities to make a priority of understanding the consequences of long-term coronavirus infections to help those suffering from worrying sympt-

oms after many months. 'It's a clear priority for WHO, and of the utmost importance. It should be for every health authority," Hans Kluge, regional director for WHO Europe, said while address-

ing a press conference. While some studies have begun to shed light on the illness, it is still unclear why some patients with Covid-19 continue to show symptoms for months, including tiredness, brain fog, and cardiac and neurological disorders.

'The burden is real significant About one in 10 Covid-19 sufferers remain unwell after 12 weeks, and many for much longer," Kluge

Completely eradicated poverty in China, says Xi

verty fighters.

Beijing, Feb. 25: President Xi Jinping on Thursday declared that China has scored a "complete victory" in its fight against poverty by lifting over 770 million people out of it in the last four decades, calling it another "miracle" created by the country that will go down in history. Absolute poverty has been eradicated in the world's most populous country, Xi announced while addressing a gathering held here to mark the country's accomplishmen-

ts in poverty alleviation

and honour its model po-

China has a population of around 1.4 billion. "No country has been able to lift hundreds of millions of people out of poverty in such a short time," Xi said. Xi said that all poor people in rural areas have been lifted out of poverty. With this, China has achieved the UN goal of poverty eradication 10 years ahead of the 2030 deadline, he said. Over the past eight years, the final 98.99 million impoverished rural residents living under the

current poverty line have

all been lifted out of pov-

erty. All the 832 impoverished counties and 128,000 impoverished have been removed from the poverty list, he said. Since the launch of the reform and opening up in the late 1970s, 770 million impoverished rural residents have shaken off poverty when calculated according to China's current poverty line, he said. China has contributed to more than 70 per cent of global poverty reduction over the same period, Xi, also General Secretary of the ruling Communist Pa-

Black-browed babbler emerges after 170 years

Jakarta, Feb. 25: A bird last seen more than 170 years ago in the rainforests of Borneo has been rediscovered, amazing conserva-tionists who have long assumed it was extinct.

The Black-browed Babbler has only ever been documented once — when it was first described by scientists around 1848 — eluding all subsequent efforts to find it.

But late last year, two men in Indonesian Borneo saw a bird they didn't recognise and snapped photos of it before releasing the palmsized creature back into the forest, according to Global

Wildlife Conservation. Ornithologists were asto-unded to find that the Blackbrowed Babbler was alive and well, despite not having been seen since before Charles Darwin published "On the Origin of Species".



"It was a bit like a 'Eureka!" moment," said Panji Gusti Akbar, lead author of a paper on the discovery published Thursday in the journal *BirdingASIA*.

"This bird is often called bird, according to the paper. 'the biggest enigma in Indonesian ornithology.' It's mind-blowing to think that it's not extinct and it's still

living in these lowland forests." Little is known Little is known about the creature with brown and grey feathers, which has been "missing" longer than any other Asian

Researchers hoped to go back to the area where it was recently spotted, but Covid-19 travel restrictions

"There is now a critical window of opportunity for conservationists to secure these forests to protect the babbler and other species,' said Ding Li Yong, a coauthor on the paper and a Singapore-based conservawith BirdLife International.

More than 150 species of birds around the world are considered "lost" with no confirmed sightings in the past decade, conservation-

ists sav. "Discoveries like this are incredible and give us so much hope that it's possible to find other species that have been lost to science for decades or longer," said Barney Long, Global Wildlife Conservation's senior director of species con-

Coup attempt: Armenia PM

Yerevan, Feb. 25: Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan accused the military of an attempted coup and brought supporters to the streets on Thursday, as months of tensions over its defeat in last year's war with Azerbaijan came to a

Thousands marched through the streets of the capital Yerevan in support of Pashinyan, with the opposition urging him to step down to avoid bloodshed or even civil war.

President Armen Sarkisian, whose role is largely symbolic, said he was taki ng urgent steps to try to defuse the crisis, calling on all involved to "show restraint and common se-

Under pressure for his handling of the conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh region, Pashinyan

Under pressure for his handling of the conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh region, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has ignored repeated calls to resign for losing swathes of territory to Azerbaijan in the war. President Armen Sarkisian said he

has ignored repeated calls to resign for losing swathes of territory to Azerbaiian in the war.

was taking urgent steps

to try to defuse the crisis.

After largely backing the prime minister for montĥs, the military's general staff on Thursday joined calls for him to step down, saying in a statement that he and his cabinet "are not capable of taking adequate decisions".

Pashinyan hit back with an accusation that top

brass were mounting an "attempted military coup" and fired the chief of the general staff Onik Gasparyan. Hundreds of supporters then joined Pashinvan to march through central Yerevan, chanting "Nikol Prime Minister!"

Speaking to supporters through a megaphone, Pashinyan called for calm, as dozens of police deployed outside the main government offices. "The situation is tense, but we must agree that there cannot be clashes," said Pashinyan, who was joined by his wife, daughters, ministers and security detail.

He said the situation in the country was under control and that the militarv's call had been an "emotional reaction" to his firing the previous day of the deputy chief of the general staff Tigran Khachatryan. Khachatryan had

ridiculed claims by Pashinyan that Iskander missiles supplied by Russia -Armenia's main military ally — had failed to hit targets during the war over Nagorno-Karabakh.

Armenia's opposition who have been calling for Pashinyan's resignation since a ceasefire deal in November — urged him to heed to military's call.

"We call on Nikol Pashinyan not to lead the country towards civil war and to avoid bloodshed. Pashinyan has one last chance to avoid turmoil," Prospe-Armenia, rous country's largest opposition party, said in a statement.

Prosperous Armenia and another opposition party, Bright Armenia, called for the holding of an extraordinary session of parliament.

-AFP

J Arenthomim P Sankar

RIOT PANEL IS PRO-DEMOCRATS: REPUBLICANS

Washington, Feb. 25: Republican leaders in the House and Senate say a proposed plan for an independent commission to study the Capitol insurrection is overly tilted toward Democrats, arguing that the panel should have an even party split like the one formed to study the September 11 terrorist attacks. House Republican leader Kevin McCarthy and Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell said Wednesday that a legitimate commission would be comprised of an equal number of Rep-

ublicans and Democrats.

A draft proposed by
House Speaker Nancy Pelosi would create an 11member commission with four Republicans and seven Democrats, three of whom would be chosen by President Joe Biden, according to one of multiple aides who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the details under negotiation.

Pelosi has not commented on the draft or said why there should be more Democratic members. Last week, she said the commission must be "strongly bipartisan" and have the power to subpoena witnesses. But on Wednesday, House

Democratic Confere n ce Chair Hakeem Jeffries said McCarthy hasn't opegood faith and "set a bad tone" when he supported former President Donald Trump's efforts to overturn Biden's legitimate election victory.

The partisan bickering before the commission gets off the ground is raising questions about whether lawmakers can coalesce around a thorough review of the Jan. 6 riot that interrupted the presidential electoral count and led to five deaths. Both parties support creating an independent investigation, but much of the consensus ends there, with Democrats demanding accountability for lawmakers who amplified Trump's falsehoods about the election.

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Authorised Officer or ICICI Bank Limite

Roc. No. 4431/2021/H7

any, to the acquisition of said lands.

GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU

Date : 26.02.2021 Place : Coimbatore, Erode, Nilgris, Tiruppu

HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT

LAND ACQUISITION OFFICER AND DISTRICT REVENUE OFFICER, NAMAKKAL Public Notice under Sub-Section (2) of Section 15 of Tamilnadu Highways Act - 2001 Dated: 08.02.2021

and Tamilnadu Highways Rules - 2003 Section-5

Under sub-section (2) of section 15 of Tamilnadu Highways Act-2001 (Tamilnadu Act 34/2002) notice is hereby given that the lands specified n the Schedule and Situated in the Village of Reddipatti in the taluk of Sendamangalam in the District of Namakkal are required for highways purpose, to wit for the formation of By-Pass road to Namakkal Town. All persons interested in the lands are accordingly required to lodge before the District Revenue officer. Namakkal within thirty days from the date of Publication of this notice, a statement in writing of their objections, is

Any objection / statement which is received after the date or which does not clearly explain the nature of the sender's interest in the lands liable to be summarily rejected

Objections received within the due date, if any will be enquired by District Revenue officer, Namakkal, when the objectors will be at liberty to appear in person or by a person or persons authorized by him or them in this behalf or by a pleader and to adduce any oral or documentary evidence in support of their objections.

SCHEDULE SENDAMANGALAM District - MARKETICAL

District : NAMAKKAL					Taluk : SENDAMANGALAM			Village : REDDIPATTI			
\$1. No.	Survey No.	Pro posed Sub Division No.	Total Extent of the lands in (Sq. Mt.)	Total Extent of the lands to be acquired in (Sq. Mt.)	Classifica tion of the Lands	Name of the Pattadar as per 10-(1) Chitta	Details of Buildings, Structures, Trees, Crops and Others	Boundaries for the proposed Acquisition lands			
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(N)	(E)	(S)	(W)
1	156/1B	156/181	1600	69		Patta No.355 Shanmugam Udaiyar Sło.Subraya Udaiyar-1, Paranjothi S/o.Shanmugam Udaiyar-2, Rajangam S/o.Sengamatai-3, Raju S/o.Ramasamy Udaiyar-4	Tin roofed Shed-1	S.No. 154	S.No. 156/1C1	S.No. 156/ 1B2 156/ 1B3	S.No. 156/1B2
2	156/1B	156/1B3	1600	71	,	Patta No.355 Shanmugam Udaiyar S/o.Subraya Udaiyar-1, Paranjothi S/o.Shanmugam Udaiyar-2, Rajangam S/o.Sengamafai-3, Raju S/o.Ramasamy Udaiyar-4	-	S.No. 156/1B1 156/1B2	S.No. 156/1C1	S.No. 156/ 1C1	S.No. 156/1B2
Total 140			140								
To	Total Extent of Dry Lands to be acquired 149 Sq.Mts. Land Acquisition Officer and										

DIPR /110/LAND/2021

District Revenue Officer, Namakkal



Chronicle

26 FEBRUARY 2021

Disha bail order should set welcome precedent

he order of the additional sessions judge of Patiala House Courts, Delhi, granting bail to Bengaluru-based climate activist Disha A. Ravi, arrested for her alleged role in the preparation of a "toolkit" that the police claimed led to the violent incidents in the nation's capital on January 26, has sought to right two wrongs. One, it has made a timely intervention and stopped the state from using legal tools to put dissenting citizens behind the bars for no end. Two, it has reassured the people that Article 19 (1) of the Constitution which guarantees the freedom of speech and expression has the strength to come to the aid of a legitimate dissenter.

The court demolished the Delhi police's case by pointing out that it was devoid of material evidence to connect the activist with the case slapped on her; and more importantly, whatever she did was protected by the Constitution. The court found that the investigating agency which charged the activist with sedition has produced "not an iota of evidence" to link her with seditious or violent acts; and reminded the police that it cannot resort to "surmises or conjectures" to convince itself of the culpability of an accused. The "scanty and sketchy" pieces of evidence the agency has produced are not enough to send a 22-year-old young woman with absolutely blemish-free criminal antecedents to jail, it said. The strong words on the nature of the evidence were, in fact, a censure of the police, which went overboard picking up a citizen violating the Supreme Court's guidelines and her basic rights.

The court made a series of observations on the citizen's rights that a democracy would love the judiciary to assert and protect in the face of state assault. "Citizens are conscience keepers of the government in any democratic nation," it said. "They cannot be put behind the bars simply because they choose to disagree with the state policies." In a warning to the self-appointed "patriots" who miss no chance to threaten dissenters with the label "traitor" and the state which has a profligacy to slap sedition charge at the drop of a hat, the court said, "The offence of sedition cannot be invoked to minister to the wounded vanity of the governments." The court observed that difference of opinion, disagreement, divergence, dissent, or even disapprobation, are recognised legitimate tools to infuse objectivity in state policies. If the Constitution was not enough, the judge referred to the nation's 5,000-year old civilisation and the Rig Veda to remind everyone that we were "never been averse to ideas

It's an irony that a government manned by people who have participated in the greatest freedom restoration movement in Independent India is resorting to suppressing voices of legitimate dissent. They should not ideally expect the nation to experience the silence of a graveyard when they go about implementing their agenda. They will face, to quote the judge, an "aware and assertive citizenry, in contradistinction with an indifferent or docile citizenry", which is, "indisputably a sign of a healthy and vibrant democracy". The refreshing thoughts must set in motion a process to free many more that are languishing in prisons facing similar charges.

An act of sycophancy

The Gujarat Cricket Association succumbed to the temptation of naming the stadium after the Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The cricket arena lacksquare had many earlier monikers like Gujarat and Motera, besides having borne the name of a famous son of the soil in Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

The baptism does break an unwritten law that no edifice should be named after a living person even if it seemed apt to honour a person who headed GCA in the long running Indian tradition of politicians getting themselves elected as presidents of cricket associations. The concept of a magnificent, cricket arena that cost more than ₹800 crores came from his grand vision and its creation was carried out by the other leading contemporary political personality, Union home minister Amit Shah, and his son who is the BCCI secretary. Donald Trump, as US President, even paid a ceremonial visit there just before the pandemic was declared in 2020.

The honour bestowed spontaneously and sentimentally on Narendra Modi is somewhat akin to India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru being awarded the Bharat Ratna by the first President Rajendra Prasad. But it does rankle considering this is a stadium named like this since the Maharashtra politician and chief minister S.K. Wankhede named one in Churchgate in Mumbai after himself in 1974. A second cricket stadium within a stone's throw of historic Brabourne was owed to a clash of egos between Maharashtra Cricket Association and Cricket Club of India. The era of building an edifice of homage to members of one political family is thought to be well and truly over. And so the Congress playing the Sardar Patel card in criticism seems hypocritical now. The issue, however, is to do with the need for 21st-century India to evolve from a sycophantic, fetishist and neta-worshipping past.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

KAUSHIK MITTER

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> s Antony Blinken, US President Joe Biden's secretary of state, preparing to abandon Barack Obama's powder-puff Asian foreign policies? It is now widely agreed that Mr Obama, under whom Mr Blinken served as deputy secretary of state, ceded to China uncontested control of the South China

be important.
British PM Boris Johnson has group: G-7 plus India, South Korea and Australia. Having finally decidby China's crackdown on democracy in Hong Kong, the UK has thrown its hat into the "Stop China" camp. D-10 is a grouping Nato is undermined by the continuing membership of Turkey, now closely aligned with China. Even France's President Emmanuel Macron said Nato was "brain dead". But is the D-10 a credible base for an anti-Chinese contain-

A containment strategy needs real military power. Besides the UK and France, the other European nations are largely window dressing. One suspects neither Mr Biden nor Mr Blinken have the cojones to initiate armed conflict to contest China's

trol of the South China Sea. If Southeast Asia is lost, what next? China has already moved on to securing control of the Bay of Bengal, the Indian Ocean and Šuez Canal trade routes. Burma is in China's pocket. Bangladesh, with 165 million people, where in 2016 Mr Xi made the first state visit by a Chinese leader in 30 years, is being increasingly suborned by Chinese infrastructure investment and armaments. In the south, where the Bay of Bengal meets the Indian Ocean, China is entrenched. In 2018, China negotiated a 99-year lease for Sri Lanka's Hambantota port and India's coast. There's the rub. For China's Southeast Asia strategy is to contain India, which it sees as its longterm geopolitical rival. Although India lags a distant third to America and China in terms of aggregate GDP, it is also likely to overtake the US in 20 to 30 years. India already ranks fourth in the world in terms of aggregate mili-

tary power. As the world's largest democracies, the United States and India should always be the best of friends. Yet US-Indian relations have rarely worked well. India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, rebuffed President Eisenhower; Nehru's meeting with President Kennedy was a car crash. (Kennedy later admitted it was "the worst head of state visit I have had".) Henry Kissinger described Indira Gandhi's meeting with Richard Nixon as a "dialogue of the deaf"; even the normally polite Kissinger described Mrs Gandhi as "a bitch". Relations between American and Indian heads of government have later improved, but their substance has not. Mr Obama liked Dr

Manmohan Singh but judging from

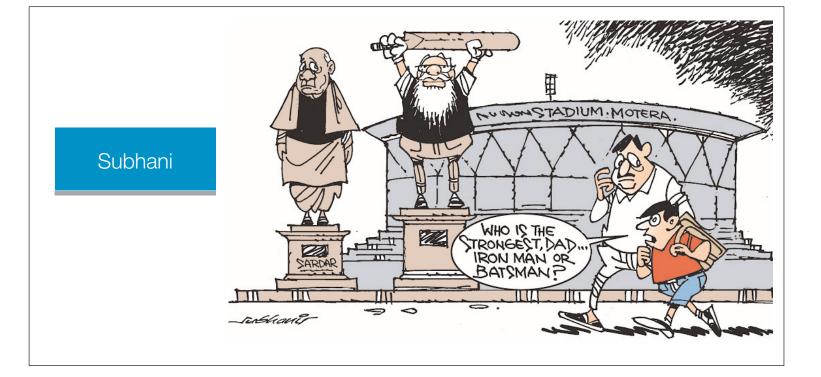
his autobiography they do not seem

to have discussed much more than "progressive politics". As for Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the ultranationalist Hindu head of the BJP, he is, like Donald Trump, a populist with a cult following. Mr Biden may well court Mr Modi too. Noticeably Mr Blinken, like Donald Trump, refers to Asia as "the Indo-Pacific" a term that the Chinese government detests.

While the geopolitical interests of America and India are clearly in alignment, bringing them into a more formal arrangement may be difficult. India is proudly independent. It does things its own way, and its prickly relationship with the West remains.

While India — currently engaged in border skirmishes with China in the remote Himalayas — is fully aware of the Chinese threat, it may be difficult to lasso the country into a formal mutual defence relationship. The D-10 is one of those neat ideas that might look good in a state department or Foreign Office briefing but, given the difficulties of coopting India and Germany, can it cut the mustard in the real world?

By arrangement with



Arrests on flimsy basis undermine democracy



Venkateshwar Rao Jr

has been the bad practice and bad habit of the Indian police and criminal investigators to slap a mountain of charges against any accused in the hope that at least some, or even one, of them would stick. This amounts to indulging in slander in more than a legal sense. And this is what the Delhi police and its investigators have tried to do with the violence that erupted on January 26, 2021 when the farmers' tractor parade went off the rails at some points. Instead of focusing on what went wrong tractor during the parade, the Delhi police went off on a tangent, distracted by the tweets of American pop singer Rihanna and teenage climate protester/warrior Greta Thunberg. Greta Thunberg put out a toolkit, retracted and put it back again. And it is here that Bengaluru cli-22, entered the picture. The Delhi police saw it as a good opportunity to

when she edited it for Ms Thunberg. In the heightened atmosphere of the exaggerated nature of the petty violence that broke out at Red Fort on January 26, the reckless overreach of the police under the guidance of an authoritative Union home ministry came into play. The Delhi police went off to Bengaluru, arrested Ms Ravi and brought her to Delhi in total violation of all legal norms in a democratic polity. The courts did not

nail the international linkages of the imagined

conspiracy when they found the toolkit linkage

between Ms Ravi and Ms

Thunberg. The police

discovered that Ms Ravi

had a hand in the toolkit

themselves in cover glory when the legal process was short-circuited in bringing Ms Ravi from Bengaluru to New Delhi as though this country was under martial law and no questions could be raised about the way the Delhi police went about hauling up an ordinary citizen in Bengaluru. The pusilla-nimity of the courts was underscored further when the police custody of Ms Ravi was readily granted for five days by duty judge Dev Saroha on February 14. This was

is at the DISHA RAVI & end of five days of police cus-**DELHI POLICE** tody, two days of judicial custody and another day of police custody, with the police wanting to confront Ms

Ravi with the other two accused, Nikita Jacob Shantanu Muluk, that she was finally granted bail and released. The excesses commit-

ted by the cybercrime branch of the Delhi police should have been condemned by additional sessions judge Dharmender Rana. It was easier for him to excoriate the police on the serious charge of sedition that they brought against the young woman from Bengaluru. The judge tore into the flaky evidence on which they based their charge. It was necessary that the judge had said what he had about the innocuous toolkit and the laboured connect that the police wanted to make between the toolkit, Ms Ravi and the Poetic Justice Foundation (PJF). And he rightly pointed out that the PJF was not a banned organisation for

Ravi with having associated herself with an illegal entity Judge Rana could have

avoided the homilies

about pluralist Indian civilisation going back to the Rig Veda and rapped the police for creating a faux chargesheet. He did admit that the investigation was on, but the evidence produced by the police so far to oppose bail to Ms Ravi was paper-thin. But in times when the government is keen to spread the pall of fear by invoking demons who are less than paper tigers, Judge Rana seems to have found refuge in pious platitudes about democracy, liberty, and the right of the citizen to dissent. It would however be mistaken to get carried away by Judge Rana's quiet plaint. Something more serious the police riding roughshod over the law and the judge allowing it tamely. It

"Khalistani" elements behind the three-month-old farmers'

agitation against the new laws brought by the Narendra Modi government has been the theme song of the government and the ruling party. It seems that the police just follows the lead of their

political masters. The "Khalistani" elements have been simmering beneath the surface for many years now, but it is quite clear that the farmers have nothing to do with them, and the people, whether Indian or foreign, who sympa-thise with the farmers' agitation have nothing to do with them either. The government and the police are fully aware

Judge Rana could have avoided the homilies about pluralist Indian civilisation going back to the Rig Veda and rapped the police for creating a faux chargesheet

protesting farmers can-not be an offence and it cannot be deemed sedition. It is only by bringing in the "Khalistani" factor that people like Ms Ravi can be charged with a crime, and even if the charge fails, they can be defamed. It is in this diabolical bid to outlaw dissent and protest that the

government and the Delhi police are commit-ting the crime of undermining democracy. The Disha Ravi case goes much beyond the Delhi police's cybercrime cell. It is a blatant misuse of the laws of the land. The police can claim that they investigate charges against people in good faith, and they nurse no animus against anyone. We can readily concede the point if they had gone about the investigation in a sober manner. They could have easily built up more evidence, they could have interrogated MsRavi in Bengaluru without the cheap theatrics of arresting her and bringing her to

Delhi. There is a clear need for the courts to rule clearly and loudly that the police have no right to arrest people as long as they are cooperating with the investigation, and there is no danger of the person absconding. In the case of Ms Ravi, it is self-evident that she would have cooperated with the police investigation. Arresting Ms Ravi was an attempt by the police to humiliate and intimidate her and make an example of her to other dissidents. This just cannot be allowed in a democracy. The powers of the police to arrest people and keep them in custody for 24 hours before they are brought before a magistrate for being remanded smacks of a police state. A citizen's liberty cannot be left to the mercy of a policeman or policewoman.

> The writer is α Delhi-based commentator and analyst

LETTERS

SINO-INDIAN RELATIONSHIP

This is with reference to your editorial *Business* trumps nationalism (Feb. 25). You have given areas where both China and India are dependent on each other like heavy machinery, electronics, highways and pharmaceuticals. Since there is mutually agreed withdrawal of forces at eastern Ladakh, it is right time to normalise economic transactions which were in limbo for quite some time affecting the economies of both countries. Our armed forces must be ever vigilant at our borders and never yield to PLA tactics. In the larger interests of two populous Asian giants, they must work towards confidence building measures and allow the business to be brought back on even keel.

Parthasarathy Mandadi,

VACCINATION DILEMMA APROPOS YOUR report Vaccination for public set to start on March 1 (Feb. 25). As the central government has announced that vaccination for Covid-19 pandemic will be open to the public and commence from March 1, will be highly appreciated if our Prime Minister and his Cabinet ministers could set an example to the public by vaccinating so that people would gain confidence on authenticity of the vaccine. While most of the people will be opting to be vaccinated at government hospitals since it is free of cost, one could imagine malpractices in drug disp other hand, it will be a sure shot money making racket in private hospitals. It is pathetic to say that our country is so fraudulent in every sector and hence it is hard to gain faith in whatever is facilitated to the public through whichever scheme provided. At this juncture vaccination seems still to be a dilemma.

Jacquelene Netto, Chennai

KUDOS TO AXAR PATEL

MOTERA GROUND has become a happy hunting ground for spinners. The ball spun from day one in Narendra Modi Stadium and we enjoyed the spectacle of spinners reaping a rich harvest of wickets. Axar Patel did it in style and the Indian skipper Virat Kohli encouraged him by giving him the ball ahead of Ashwin and the move paid rich dividends. Thus, Axar Patel in his second match had a five-wicket haul and finished with 6 for 38. This reminds me of Bhagwat Chandrasekhar's 6 for 38 at the Oval, which helped Team India win against England.

C.K. Subramaniam, Chennai



India, America & China: Can 'D-10' forge new relationships?

Sea. Mr Obama's so-called "pivot to Asia" was all talk and no trousers. Mr Blinken, who believes diplomacy must be "supplemented by deterrence", may be about to implement a more aggressive foreign policy in

Southeast Asia and elsewhere. In his first speech as general secretary of the Communist Party of China in 2012, Xi Jinping made his intentions clear. He stated his commitment to "accepting the baton of history and continuing to work for realising the great revival of the Chinese nation in order to let the Chinese nation stand more firmly and powerfully among all nations". President Xi's international adventurism, under the umbrella of his "Belt and Road Initiative", has been most evident in his illegal military occupation of the South China Sea, but it is a global strategy for domination which can be observed in Central Asia, the Indian Ocean, the

Middle East, Europe, even the Arctic. How did Mr Obama respond? He did nothing. He issued platitudes. He vacillated over whether the Mutual Defence Treaty with the Philippines included the disputed South China Sea. By the end of his presidency, it was too late. And weakness in the South China Sea was undoubtedly an invitation for Mr Xi to push elsewhere on Mr Obama's open door.

There are indications that the Biden administration will seek to construct alliances in Europe and Asia to contain the Chinese and Russian threats. As a former deputy secretary of state, Mr Blinken has long been President Biden's point man on Europe and is known to be a long-time confidant. For a "multilateralist" who speaks fluent French, getting Europe onside will

been floating the idea of a "D-10" ed to ditch Huawei, and persuaded that has some logic. By comparison, ment strategy?

already established military con-

15,000 adjacent acres — just off

Boxer Naveen

makes semis

New Delhi: Naveen Boora (69kg) assured himself of at least a bronze by advancing to the semifinals while Manjeet Singh (+91kg) entered the quarters on an all-win day for Indian boxers at the 72nd Strandja Memorial Tournament in Sofia,

Bulgaria. Boora defeated Brazil's Eravio Edson in his quarterfinal bout, prevailing 5-0 in the contest. Manjeet, on the other hand, got the better of Ireland's Gytis Lisinskas in his last-16 stage bout on Wednesday night. Earlier, Jyoti Gulia (51kg) upstaged two-time world champion Nazym Kyzaiby of Kazakhstan to enter the quarterfinals along with two others. Gulia, a 2017 world youth champion, defeated the goldwinner from the 2014 and 2016 senior world championships. She will take on Romania's Perijoc Lacramioara in her quarterfinal bout later in the day. Another Indian to enter the quarterfinals on the second day was Bhagyabati Kachari. — PTI

Para archers cruise into final

Dubai: Para-archers Rakesh Kumar and Shyam Sundar Swami set up an all-Indian men's compound open final after brilliant victories in the last four stage of the 7th Fazza Para Archery World Ranking tournament here. Jyoti Baliyan also cruised to the final in the women's event, defeating Russia's Dzhioeva Anastasia by a point (139-138). Thus, the archers have ensured at least two silver and a gold medal for the country in the individual events. In the semifinal match, Rakesh defeated Turkey's Aygan Erdogan 143-138.

Guptill stars in

New Zealand win

Dunedin (New Zeal-and): Veteran batsman Martin Guptill returned to form with a blistering 97 as New Zealand held on for a nail-biting win over Australia in the second Twenty20 international in Dunedin on Thursday. Guptill's Black Caps set Australia a challenging target of 220 after losing the toss but were made to sweat as Australia came within four runs of victory. Both sides took advantage of University Oval's short boundaries in a thrilling match that featured 30 sixes and 434 runs at an average of 10.9 an over. Marcus Stoinis starred for the Australians with 78 from 37 balls but Guptill's 97 from 50 laid the foundation for New Zealand's win. — AF Brief scores: New Zealand 219/7 in 20 overs (Guptill 97, Kane 53,

Regd. No. TNENG/2010/35692

K. Richardson 3/43) bt Australia

215/8 in 20 overs (Stoinis 78,

Santner 4/31).

Printed & Published by K. Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited and Printed at Deccan Chronicle Press situated at No 2/22, Sengalipalayam Road, N.G.G.O Colony Post, Kurudampalayam Village, Coimbatore - 641 022. RNI tration No: TNENG/2010/35692

Editor: KAUSHIK MITTER

AXARDHAM

Patel hits back, makes Motera his own

Ahmedabad, Feb. 25 Left-arm spinner Axar Patel created an illusion of turn with 11 straighter deliveries that put India on the brink of the World Test Championship final with a 10-wicket demolition of England inside two days in the day-night third Test here on Thursday.
In only his second Test,

Patel (15-0-32-5), with a match-haul of 11/70, relentlessly hit the good length area and hoodwinked England batsmen, who played for turn only to find that there was none on offer from him.

The result was their lowest total against India -81 all out in 30.4 overs leaving the hosts with a target of 49 which they achieved with minimum fuss taking a 2-1 lead in the four-match series.

At the other end, offspinner Ravichandran Ashwin (15-3-48-4) was an ideal foil, becoming the fourth Indian bowler and second fastest in the world to complete a commendable milestone of 400 Test wickets with the dismissal of Jofra Archer.

Incidentally, after Afghanistan's debut Test in 2018 in Bengaluru, this was the second time that India won a Test match, well inside two days.

This was after England skipper Joe Root's fabulous career-best spell of 6.2-3-8-5 resulted in India's dramatic collapse from 114 for 3 to 145 all out.

India lost as many as seven wickets for only 31 runs after looking solid at 114 for 3 at one stage in the game but England lost all 10 in an entire session in which no pacer was seen in action.

Ironically, it was the non-turning deliveries from Patel that had the England's rank and file pressing the panic button as they pre-empted away turn every time.

Whether it was Zak Crawley, Jonny Bairstow or skipper Root, everyone lost the mind-game as Ashwin also joined the fun with records tumbling one after another.

When Patel sent back Ben Foakes, he became the first spinner to get 11 wickets in a pink ball Test

While a bowler might end up getting the man of Rohit match. Sharma's 66 off 96 balls in the first essay was 24carat gold given that other batsmen looked like sitting ducks.

But Indian batsmen save Rohit did have a torrid time during an afternoon session when Root and Leach made their lives miserable

Ajinkya Rahane was rapped on the pads as Leach fired one in and it was not much of an issue for umpire min men adjudge him leg before.
— PTI for umpire Nitin Menon to



Axar Patel of India appeals for England's Zak Crawley's wicket during Day Two of their third Test at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on Thursday.

SCORECARD

England 1st innings: 112
India 1st innings (Overnight 99/3): Rohit Sharma Ibw b Jack Leach 66, Ajinkya Rahane Ibw b Jack Leach 7, Rishabh Pant c Foakes b Root 1, Ravichandran Ashwin c Zak Crawley b Root 17, Washington Sundar b Root 0, Axar Patel c D Sibley b Root 0, Ishant Sharma not out 10, Jasprit Bumrah lbw b Root1. Extras (B-2, LB-2, W-1) 5. Total (all out in 53.2 overs) 145. FoW: 1-33, 2-34, 3-98, 4-114, 5-115, 6-117, 7-125, 8-125, 9-134, 3-98, 4-114, 5-115, 6-117, 7-125, 8-125, 9-134. **Bowling:** James Anderson 13-8-20-0, Stuart Broad 6-1-16-0, Jofra Archer 5-2-24-1, Jack Leach 20-2-54-4, Ben Stokes 3-0-19-0, Joe **England 2nd innings:** Z. Crawley b Axar Patel O, D. Sibley c Pant b Patel 7, J.

Bairstow b Axar Patel O, J. Root Ibw b Axar Patel 19, B. Stokes Ibw b Ashwin 25, O. Pope b Ashwin 12, B. Foakes Ibw b Axar Patel 8, J. Archer Ibw b Ashwin O, J. Leach c Rahane b Ashwin 9, S. Broad not out 1, J. Anderson c Pant b Sundar O. Extras O. **Total (all out in** 30.4 overs) 81. FoW: 1-0, 2-0, 3-19, 4-60, 5-56, 6-66, 7-68,

Bowling: Axar Patel 15-0-32-5, Ashwin 15-3-48-4, Sundar 0.4-0-1-1.

India 2nd innings: Rohit Sharma not out 25, Shubman Gill not out 15. Extras (B-8, LB-1). Total (for no loss in 7.4 overs) 49. Bowling: J. Leach 4-1-15-0, J. Root 3.4-0-

NUMBERS GAME

RAVICHANDRAN ASHWIN JOINS 400-WICKET CLUB

 Ravichandran Ashwin became the fourth Indian and 16th bowler overall to claim 400 wickets in Tests. The off-spinner from Chenna reached this milestone by dismissing Jofra Archer, leg before, in England's second innings on the second day of the third Test macth at Ahmedabad on Thursday

(February 25).

By achieving this feat in his 77th Test match, he is the second fastest after Sri Lankan Muttiah Muraliatharar who took his 400th wicket in

his 72nd Test match.
Anil Kumble (619 wickets in 132 Tests), Kapil Dev (434 wickets in 131 Tests) and Harbhajan Singh (417 wickets in 103 Tests) are the other Indians to t ake 400 wickets before Ravichandran Ashwin Joe Root recorded his best bowling performance by taking five wickets for eight runs in India's first innings. It was first time England skipper has taken five-wicket haul with his off breaks in any type of the game. His previous best in Tests was four for 87 against South Africa at Port Elizabeth in 2019-20. India slumped to their joint sixth lowest total against England at home by bowling out for 145 in 53.2 overs.

India's lowest against England at home is 83 in 38.5 overs at Chennai in 1976-77.

Jonny Bairstow became the eighth England batsman to receive ducks in the both innings of a Test match against India. He is only fifth England batsman to achieve

 England were bundled out for 81 runs in 30.4 overs. It was first time when England were dismissed under 100 against India in Tests. Their previous lowest against India was 101 in 45.1 overs at The Oval in 1971.

 Axar Patel became the fourth Indian bowler to take 11 or more wickets in a Test match against England. His match figures of 11 for 70 is the fourth best for India

Shaw slams record score

Jaipur, Feb. 25: Mumbai ister their third win on the captain Prithvi Shaw on trot. Thursday became the highest individual scorer in Vijay Hazare Trophy national 50-over championships as he smashed an unbeaten 227 off just 152 balls to help Mumbai beat Puducherry by 233 runs in their Elite Group D game

The 21-year-old Shaw, who has played in five Tests and five ODIs, broke the earlier record of the highest individual score held by Sanju Samson (212 not out against Goa in 2019). Puducherry's decision to put Mumbai in to bat backfired badly as Shaw and Suryakumar Yadav (133 off 58 balls) toyed with their bowling attack at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium and

post a mammoth 457/4. Prashant Solanki (5/48) then picked a five-for as Mumbai bundled out Puducherry for 224 to reg-

Jaiswal (10) added 58 runs for the first wicket to lay the foundation. After Jaiswal was dismissed, Shaw found an able partner in Aditya Tare (56, 7x4) as the duo stitched a 153run stand for the second wicket. Suryakumar, who came in at No. 4, was in his elements, hitting 22 fours and four sixes. He and Shaw added 201 runs for the third wicket stand and helped Mumbai go past the 400 mark. — PTI

BRIEF SCORES Mumbai 457/4 in 50 overs (Prithvi Shaw 227 not out, Suryakumar Yadav 133; Pankaj Singh 2/79) beat Puducherry (Damodaran

Prashant Solanki 5/48)

Himachal 251/8 (Nikhil Gangta 100 not out, Kulwant Kherjroliya 2/30) lost to Delhi 252/4 (Kshitiz Sharma 67 not out, Lalit Yadav 52 not out)



Mumbai's Prithvi Shaw celebrates his double century against Puducherry in the Vijay Hazare Trophy match at

STATE SQUASH CHAMPIONSHIP

SANDHESH, ASHWIN STORM INTO SEMIS

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 25

PR Sandhesh and Ashvin Ganesh stormed into the semifinals in the U-17 secsquash championship at the Indian Squash Academy on Thursday. RESULTS

Boys U-15: Round of 16: Arihant Ks (1) bt Shravin Jain 11-0, 11-2, 11-1. Ijaz Mohammed Meyyappan P 11-1, 11-2, 11-2. Darshil

Parasrampuria Aravind R 11-0, 11-6, 11-4. Rahul Rathnavel Aarush Rajagopal 11-4, 11-0. 11-6. Sandhesh Pr bt Adithya 11-1, 11-3, 11-5. Paygun bt Advaith 11-7, 11-4, 11-3. Jai Murlikanna bt Anbarasan 11-1, 11-2, 11-3. Aakash Kannan bt Dheer Hirani 11-6, 11-6, 11-

BOYS U-17 QF: Sandhesh Pr bt Aakash Kannan 11-6, 13-11, 11-8. Ashvin Ganesh bt Abhay S Vasudev 11-6, 11-4, 11-5.

BOYS U-19 QF: Navaneeth Prabhu bt Abhay S Vasudev 11-3, 11-5. Adhil

Mohammed Syed bt Sreekartikeyan 11-7, 11-7, 11-5. Arihant Ks bt Kautham Krish 11-2, 11-2, 11-7. Shreemann Raghavan bt Meyyappan L 11-7, 11-5, 11-2.

MEN

Round of 16: Guhan

Senthilkumar Kautham Krish 11-2, 11-2, 11-3. Navaneeth Prabhu bt V. Anand 11-1, 11-3, 11-O. R Kishore Arvind bt Raghul Venkatesh 11-3, 11-4, 11-2. R. Dinesh bt Solomon Ravi 11-4, 11-6, Murukesh Mani 11-7, 8-11, 11-7, 13-11. Kissan bt Chirag Surana 11-6, 11-7, Viswanathan bt Sathya Narayanan 7-11, 11-9, 8-11, 12-10, 11-6. Velavan Senthilkumar bt Adhil Mohammed Syed 11-3, 11-

Girls U-15: QF: Ananya Narayanan bt M Amritha Rajalakshmi 11-2, 11-4, 11-6. **Round of 16:** Manvi Jain bt Tanusri Nanda Kishore 11-6, 11-3, 11-3. Yaavnaa Saravanakumar bt Sobana Stanly 11-1, 11-1, 11-1. Ananya Narayanan bt Ananthi Vivek 11-2, 11-

Kohli bests MS India sit atop as with most wins Engout of WTC on the points table, which Ahmedabad, Feb. 25: Ahmedabad, Feb. 25:

Virat Kohli on Thursday surpassed Mahendra Singh Dhoni's record of winning maximum number of Test matches as captain on home soil after leading the side to a 10wicket victory over England in the day-night

third Test here. Kohli now has 22 victories at home in 29 Tests as captain which is one better than Dhoni, who had 21 wins in 30 Tests. Kohli already is India's most successful Test captain

with 35 wins. India chased down a target of 49 runs in only 7.4 overs to win the Test by 10



Virat Kohli

wickets and go up 2-1 in the series. Sourav

India now have to either

Ganguly and Mohammed Azharuddin their credit as captains. -PTI

India knocked England out of contention from the ICC World Test Championship (WTC) final in June with their 10-(WTC) wicket triumph in the day-night third Test here which propelled the hosts to the top of the stand-

win or draw the final game here starting March 4 to claim the right to take on New Zealand at the Lord's. The Black Caps have already qualified and are placed second in the latest list.

"England have dropped to 64.1 percentage points is now led by India with 71 percentage points," the ICC stated "England are out of the

race for a place in the Test Championship after losing the third Test against India Ahmedabad," it added. England needed to win

the four-match series 3-1 to play the June 18-22 final. New Zealand are assured of a place in the final with 70 percentage points. If India lose the final

Test then Australia will sneak in to make the final. -PTI

Blank-cheque companies, flush with cash and on the hunt for a private business to take public, have started adding corporate carveouts to their list of potential purchases.

The surge in special purpose acquisition companies (Spacs), which have raised more than \$137 billion over the past 12 months, has set off a global search for suitable targetsusually startups with little revenue or mature companies sitting in private equity portfolios. Now Spacs are also looking at divisions of public companies, with an eve on those that have the potential to be carved out as standalone businesses.

cier Alec Gores. The transaction valued the can business at \$8.5 billion, including debt, making it the biggest Spac deal involving a corporate carve-out since the surge began, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. This type of transaction

could become popular as more blank-cheque firms move to the deal-making stage of their life cycle, crowding the market with suitors looking for a transaction.

"It's a pretty sizable deal," said Christopher Anthony, a partner at Debevoise & Plimpton LLP. "It'll be interesting whether this gets on people's radar and stokes interest for this type of transaction.'

US-based Eventbrite Inc's co-founder Kevin Hartz, whose Spac on Wed-nesday announced a \$2.1 billion deal to merge with Markforged Inc, said that a public-company spinout was among the targets it reviewed before choosing the manufacturer of 3D printers. 'Spacs have the ability to

offer a path to liquidity not just for standalone-type private companies, but also public companies," Hartz

While blank-cheque companies have circled carveouts before, some haven't made it to the finish line. Hartz said it's easier to complete a deal with a private company than a spunout entity, whose financials and accounting functions must be separated from its

parent. Michael Klein's Church ill Capital Corp IV, months before it announced a deal with Lucid Motors Inc, held talks with AT&T Inc about acquiring a part of satellite provider DirecTV.

succeed. Intercontinental Exchange Inc in January said it would list its cryptocurrency platform Bakkt Holdings LLC through a Spac in a deal that valued the unit at \$2.1 billion. —Bloomberg

FINANCIAL Chronicle quick BITES

INDICATORS Nifty 50 14563.50 S&P 5003 3,803.94 0.11 Dollar (₹) 73.25 0.27 Pound Sterling (₹) 81.51 Euro (₹) 48,946▲297 Gold (10gm)* (₹) Brent crude (\$/bbl)* IN 10-Yr bond yield US 10-Yr T-bill yield* * As of 8:30 PM IST

Moody's sees 13.7% growth in India next fiscal

The Indian economy is expected to clock a growth of 13.7 per cent in FY22, registering a strong rebound from a 7 per cent contraction this fiscal, Moody's Investors Service said. Moody's had in November projected 10.6 per cent contraction in the current fiscal and 10.8 per cent growth in 2021-22.

■ Country scores in digitalisation & connectivity

India top over-performer in frontier technologies

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, FEB. 25

India is the top "over-perreadiness in using, adopting and adapting frontier technologies like artificial intelligence, big data, block chain and robotics, as per the Unctad global index.

The global index rates 158 countries on their readiness for frontier technologies based on building blocks: information and communication technologies (ICT) deployment, skills, research and development (R&D), industry activity and access to finance. Frontier technologies are those that take advantage of digitalisation and connectivity. They include artificial internet of things, big



data, block chain, 5G, 3D printing, robotics, drones, gene editing, nanotechnology and solar photovoltaic.

The Unctad report finds that a few developing nations are exhibiting stronger capabilities to use, adopt and adapt frontier technologies than their per capita GDPs

would suggest. "The greatest over performer is India, whose actual index ranking was 43, while the estimated one based on per capita

India over performed by 65 ranking positions. It is followed by the Philippines, which over performed by 57 ranking says the Nations positions," United Conference on Trade and Development. Over-performance is measured as the difference between the actual index rankings

income was 108. Hence,

and the estimated index rankings based on per capita income. Ukraine, Vietnam and China are also in the top five overperformers. Outliers like India and

China exceeded expectations by performing well for R&D. This reflects their abundant supplies of qualified and highly skilled human resources available at a comparatively low cost. They also have large local markets, which attract investment

by multinational enterprises. In China, the progress is partly a reward for spending 2 per cent of GDP on R&D. The Philippines has a

high ranking for indus-try, reflecting high levels of foreign direct investment in high-technology manufacturing, particularly electronics. Multinational enterprises are attracted by the country's strong supply chains and solid base of parts manufacturing. The country also has probusiness policies along with a skilled, well-educated workforce and a network of economic zones.

As per the global index, economies in Northern America and Europe are most ready for frontier technologies while those least ready are in sub-Saharan Africa.

Blank-cheque buyers eye corporate spinouts

KIEL PORTER & CRYSTAL TSE

Publicly traded Irelandbased packager Ardagh Group SA on Tuesday agreed to sell its beveragecan unit to a blank-cheque company backed by finan-



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