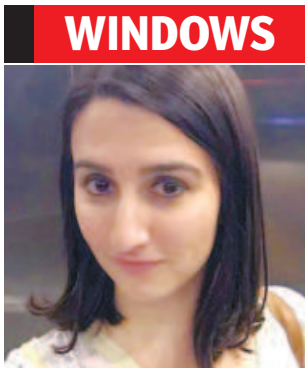




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## WINDOWS Twitter's Public Policy Director Mahima quits

NEW DELHI: Twitter's Public Policy Director for India and South Asia, Mahima Kaul, resigned from her post in January to focus on her personal life, a senior official of the company has informed. She will continue in her role till March end, the official added. "At the start of this year, Mahima Kaul decided to step down from her role as Twitter Public Policy Director for India and South Asia to take a well-deserved break. It's a loss for all of us at Twitter, but after more than five years in the role we respect her desire to focus on the most important people and relationships in her personal life," Monique Meche, Vice President, Twitter Public Policy, said in a statement.

## CBSE students in a fix as JEE, bio exam dates clash

NEW DELHI: Following the release of the CBSE date sheet, teachers and students are requesting the National Testing Agency (NTA) to postpone the last phase of (JEE) Main. As per the CBSE date sheet, the biology exam will be held on May 24 which coincides with the JEE Main last attempt scheduled to be conducting from May 24 to 28. The computer science students are also unhappy with the date sheet as their subject paper will be held on May 29, a day after the JEE Main.

## BUSINESS



## Positive reforms give fillip to markets

P7



# Work hard to achieve goals: President

■ e participated in various programmes at the Satsang Foundation in Madanapalle

■ ays foundation stone for Swasthya hospital at the Ashram and inaugurated Yogashala Bharat Yoga Vidya Kendra

■ M Jagan Mohan Reddy received the President at Chippili helipad

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
TIRUPATI

PRESIDENT of India Ram Nath Kovind has advised



President Ram Nath Kovind interacting with students of Satsang Vidyalaya at Madanapalle in Chittoor district on Sunday

the students to work hard to reach higher goals. He visited the Satsang Foundation Ashram of spiritual guide 'Sri M' in Madanapalle on Sunday. It was

founded in 1994 on the principles of service, community welfare and welfare of all living beings. The President spent some time with Sri M at Guru

Babaji's shrine. During the visit, he interacted with the students of class 6 to 10 of Satsang Vidyalaya there. Complimenting them for being educated at a good institute, he wished them to reach higher positions like him.

The President inaugurated Yogashala of Bharat Yoga Vidya Kendra in the ashram and laid the foundation stone for a 38-bed Swasthya hospital. He planted a peepal tree at the premises and offered prayers at the temple.

## UTTARAKHAND GLACIAL BURST

# 12 KILLED, 170 MISSING All 16 labourers rescued from tunnel

DEHRADUN/NEW DELHI:

A PORTION of the Nanda Devi glacier broke off in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district on Sunday, triggering an avalanche and flooding in the Dhaul Ganga, Rishi Ganga and Alaknanda rivers that washed away hydroelectric stations, swept away homes and left at least 12 people dead and 170 missing. Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat, however, put the death toll at seven.

The sudden flood in the middle of the day in the Dhaul Ganga, Rishi Ganga and Alaknanda rivers -- all intricately linked tributaries of the Ganga -- triggered widespread panic and largescale devastation in the high mountain areas. Two power projects -- NTPC's Tapovan-Vishnugad hydel project and the Rishi Ganga Hydel Project -- were extensively damaged with scores of labourers trapped in tunnels as the waters came rushing in.

Sixteen men were rescued safely from a tunnel in the Tapovan project but about 125 were still missing. As night fell in the ecologically fragile Himalayas and rescue work in the difficult to access areas became more difficult, there were fears they may be dead.



A worker being rescued from tunnel by the ITBP team

MORE REPORTS: P6

## What is glacial lake outburst flood

A glacial lake outburst is a type of outburst flood that takes place occurs when water dammed by a glacier or moraine is released. To simplify it, GLOF is an outburst that happens when a dam containing a glacial lake fails. As per antarcticglaciers.org, GLOFs have three main features:

- They involve sudden (and sometimes cyclic) releases of water
- They tend to be rapid events, lasting hours to days
- They result in large downstream river



discharges (which often increase by an order of magnitude).  
Nanda Devi glacier  
The Nanda Devi glacier forms part of the second-highest mountain in India -- the

Nanda Devi mountain. While it the second-highest after Kangchenjunga, it is the highest mountain located entirely within the country as Kangchenjunga lies on the border of India and Nepal.

## High alert in UP

LUCKNOW: The Uttar Pradesh government on Sunday put on alert the authorities in all districts on the banks of the Ganga and asked them to continuously monitor the water levels in the river after a glacier broke off at Joshimath in neighbouring Uttarakhand's Chamoli, triggering a massive flood there. The glacier burst triggered an avalanche and a deluge in the Alaknanda river system that washed away hydroelectric stations, leaving at least seven people dead and 125 missing who are feared dead.

## 4 lakh for those killed: U'khand CM

DEHRADUN: Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat on Sunday announced 4 lakh compensation for those killed by floods in the state and said it was for experts to find out the cause while the government was focused on saving lives. So far, the bodies of seven people had been recovered, the Chief Minister said, but rescuers put the number of dead at 12.

## Air quality very poor despite rise in wind speed

NEW DELHI

DESPITE strong wind speed, air quality of the national capital dipped to 'very poor' category, with the hourly average air quality index at 316 micrograms per cubic meter on Sunday afternoon.

The Ministry of Earth Sciences has advised sensitive groups to reduce prolonged or heavy exertion. If asthmatic, keep relief medicine handy, it emphasised. Out of 39 pollution monitoring stations in the city, the air quality index is highest in Jahangirpuri area in north-west district, followed by 276 at Bawana. It is the least at IGI airport at 68 micrograms per cubic meter.

According to the System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting And Research (SAFAR), "Surface winds are high and West-South-westerly direction and forecasted to stay high for the next 24 hours and gradually decrease."

The air quality index is likely to marginally deteriorate and remain in the poor to very poor category on February 7. Very Poor air quality is forecasted on February 9 and 10, the forecast further stated.

Delhi's neighbouring regions - Faridabad, Noida, Greater Noida, Ghaziabad and Gurugram are also logging 'very poor' quality of air. Ghaziabad and Noida's air quality remained the worst amongst all, with very poor air quality of 338 and 322 micrograms per cubic meter, respectively.

## Govt ready to resume talks with farmers: Goyal

NEW DELHI: Railway Minister Piyush Goyal on Sunday said the Union government is ready to resume talks with the farmers' unions if they (farmers) come out with some new proposals.

## Security beefed up at Singhu border Farmers firm on demands

NEW DELHI: Security has been further beefed up in the last couple of days at Singhu border, however, the agitating farmers remain firm on their demands. Every protesting farmer at Singhu village gives almost the same reply, "We won't go back till the three anti-farmer laws are taken back".

## PEOPLE READY TO SHOW 'RAM CARD' TO TMC VERY SOON: PM

PURBA MEDINIPUR: Using a football analogy, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said that soon Bengal is going to show the 'Ram card' to the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) which has committed many back to back fouls. The Prime Minister said that TMC has criminalised politics, institutionalised corruption and politicised administration and police. "Bengal is a football-loving state. I want to say in the language of football that TMC has made many back to back fouls including misgovernance, violence, corruption and attacks on beliefs. People of Bengal are watching and soon Bengal is going to show the 'Ram card' to TMC," Modi said at a public meeting in the Haldia area of Purba Medinipur district in West Bengal.



PM Modi during an event to lay foundation stone of two medical colleges at Dhekiajuli in Sonitpur district on Sunday

## 40 jhuggis gutted in Delhi fire

NEW DELHI



Nearly 40 jhuggis were gutted in a fire in south east Delhi's Sanjay Colony in the early hours on Sunday. The police said that there were no casualties in the fire.

"Total 26 fire tenders have been deployed to the site near Harkesh Nagar metro. Fire is under control. No causality so far," said Atul Garg, Director, Delhi Fire Services. According to the police, the fire started from a waste-dump area.

"Fire took place on 'Katran' (wastage of clothes cutting). Approx 40 Jhuggis have been gutted. One truck is burnt," R.P. Meena, Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) said.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal assured all help to the affected people.

Expressing concern over the incident, Kejriwal tweeted: "Concerned about the news of fire incident at Okhla, I am constantly in touch with the fire department and the district administration, people are being provided with all possible help."

## 2 bros with rare disease moves HC; AIIMS to give free treatment

NEW DELHI

TWO minor brothers suffering from a rare disease have approached the Delhi High Court seeking direction to the Centre and AIIMS to provide them uninterrupted treatment free of cost.

The two children, who are two and three years old respectively, are suffering from Mucopolysaccharidosis II or MPS II (Hunter Syndrome, Attenuated Type) which is a rare disease that is passed on in families. It mainly affects boys and their bodies cannot break down a kind of sugar that builds bones, skin, tendons and other tissues.

Justice Prathiba M Singh, before whom the matter came up for hearing, directed the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) to obtain instructions on how the two children will be provided with the treatment. The court listed the matter for further hearing on February 19 along with various other pleas filed on behalf of several children suffering from other rare diseases.

The plea, filed through advocate Rahul Malhotra, sought direction to the Centre and AIIMS to "provide continuous and uninterrupted treatment free



of cost to the petitioner for the rare disorder MPS II." The two brothers, in their separate petitions filed through their father Ravi Jhawar, said they started facing difficulties and certain changes in their bodies in September and December 2019, respectively, including delayed speech and language problems. The children were examined by doctors at the Sir Ganga Ram Hospital and AIIMS and after examination and tests, they were diagnosed with MPS II, the plea said, adding that a second opinion also confirmed that the two children are suffering from the ailment. The treatment of the rare disease is available and administered at the AI-

IMS. The petition said both the hospitals informed the father that there is no medicine manufactured in India for their disease and only two companies in the USA and Korea manufacture it. It said the annual cost of treatment for one patient would be between 80 lakh to one crore and the income of their father is nominal and it would be impossible for him to bear the cost of treatment. "Without the financial support of the respondent no. 1 (Centre), the petitioner cannot be medically treated in view of paucity of funds. The petitioner is only concerned with medicine and not with any direct financial help," the petition said.



# Womenia



## Democratising fashion

PUJA GUPTA

With an aim to democratize fashion and make luxury wears accessible to all, fashion designer Payal Singhal has collaborated with Delhi-based ethno-fusion brand Indya to launch an affordable summer festive capsule collection.

We spoke to Singhal and Tanvi Malik, co-founder of Indya, to know more about the collaboration, the collection and the design philosophy behind it. Read on:

### How did the collaboration happen?

**Payal:** Our endeavour has always been to be an all-encompassing label that offers something for everyone at every price point. We wanted to do a collection that makes the Payal Singhal signature more approachable and attainable, and for that, Indya made for the perfect brand to work with.

**Tanvi:** Indya's design philosophy has always been centered around the multi-tasking millennial woman who wants her occasion wear wardrobe to not only be glamorous but also modern, affordable, functional, and fuss-free in styling. We have always endeavored to break the cultural code and make clothes that are extremely utilitarian and flatter women in all their beautiful shapes and sizes. Payal's designs reflect just the same values. While she has strong signatures and a unique design language, she also has a modern and fusion sensibility that could be incorporated into our own design DNA to make it relevant to our Gen Z and millennial audience. Collaborating with Payal is another step in our endeavour to democratize fashion and introduce our audience to products and designers that may not be accessible to them otherwise.

### Tell us about the design process and what you had in mind while designing the collection?

**Payal:** We wanted to create a collection for the new age bridesmaid. In this fresh line of celebratory wear, you'll see a modern Indian sensibility and bohemian edge blend with playful elegance and current designs.

### Describe the collection in three words

**Payal:** Fresh, Flattering and Versatile

### Who do you see wearing this collection?

**Tanvi:** Every girl who is looking for a standout look this festive season. With its fuss-free and experimental silhouettes, playful embellishments, and bold prints, this collection is for every woman who is looking for glamour and comfort, all packed together.

### Your advice to the 2021 bride and what she should keep in mind while shopping for her bridal outfit and trousseau?

**Payal:** The 2021 bride should go for something that makes her look beautiful on her big day and something which is grand yet appropriate for an intimate wedding so it has to be elegant and understated at the same time. Also I have always reinforced that one should invest in a piece which has a great re-wear value and that's how I conceptualise my designs too.

### How do you think the pandemic changed the design philosophy and trends?

**Payal:** It made us rethink our product offerings and we launched a line of masks which was the need of the hour. We also introduced Loungewear and athleisure options in order to keep up with the demand for comfortable yet fashionable options to wear at home.

## THE 'MESSIAH' FOR THE POOR

TEJAL SINHA

Dr Noori Parveen is a native of Krishna district in Andhra Pradesh. She comes from a social service-oriented family and no doubt, what has been her inspiration for doing the service. She is titled is the 'Mother Theresa of Kadapa'.

Her grandfather, Noor Mohammed was a communist party leader in the 1980s. She could not see her grandfather as he passed away in 1986 and Noori Parveen was born in 1992. Being heard of his service, she was always inspired to do something for the people from a very young age. Her father was also into social service. She always preferred motivational movies.

Dr Noori shares, "My dream since the time I was in class 2, was to become a doctor. In all the skits and plays, I would get the role to become a doctor. Since class 1st till my MBBS, I have always been the class representative so I always had the leadership qualities within myself. In movies, I always saw doctors helping the poor. In movies, poor always treated doctors as a god and I always had this wish to do social service and help the poor and the unprivileged people."

She has always been a combination of the jovial, straightforward and the naughty kid of her class. She never had any kind of stage fear and always loved to be on the stage.

After her MBBS, she wanted to do her PG but a sudden thought that popped in her mind changed her life. She did not want to be the same like other doctors who had the same routine.

**Dr Noori Parveen, one of the youngest doctors of the South states, has been in news since a couple of days for her service to treat the patients in just Rs 10. Let's go ahead and read her inspiring story of providing her services especially for the people from Lower income or the unprivileged family**

She adds, "I had a thought of what about my goals, motive of my life and the social service that I have always wanted to do. Immediately searched for a place in Kadapa where people of Low socio-economic group of people lived. The main motive of this Rs 10 service was to help the unprivileged people. The service would not be as effective in the middle class or posh areas as in the areas were the lower socio-economic people resided. Few peoples were supportive for the service while some were like now how will this service work-out."

Since her childhood, she has always been a positive person and was already ready for what people thought they cannot do. Since she was always a chill-out happy-go lucky girl, her family always told her that doing a MBBS is a huge thing and she has to study a lot and do a lot of hard work. However, she always wanted to become a doctor and stood by her decision.

"In my 2nd year of MBBS, I organized a student organization, where we used to take our pocket moneys and visited to orphanages and old-age homes. I always used to motivate my friends and juniors saying that we are in a field where



we can help and do service for the people who are in need," says the happy go-lucky doctor.

According to her, as a doctor, one treats and earn money for themselves which cannot be called as a service. This was one of the reasons that made her start this Rs 10 OP service.

She adds, "People from lower middle class cannot visit the corporate hospitals due to the fees and in government hospitals not all the services are provided. These people then visit to unqualified doctors who are not qualified in the field as they charge less fee and give 3 or 4 medicined and spoil their own health. I want to provide a help and give back to the society. This initiative has completed a year now. This initiative was started on February 7, 2020 and I am very happy and overwhelmed to see the success of this initiative."

She charges only Rs 10 for outpatients and Rs 50 for those in need of bed. Her clinic is a 3 bedded clinic, where after the outbreak of

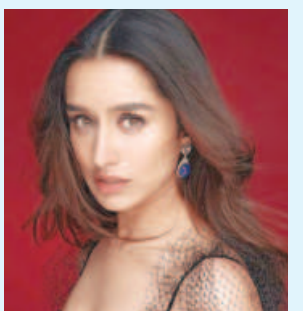
the pandemic more than 100 patients visits her clinic.

### The negativity into positivity through her service

She shares, "Earlier when few people visited the clinic, they used to think that we are charging just Rs 10 and writing medicines of around 300. It is not the same in other hospitals, the consultation fees just start from 400 and they ask one to but medicines for more than Rs 1000. However, later these people themselves used to come another time and also recommend other people to visit the clinic. The amount that I get from medical, it goes on for rent, medicines, salary of the nurses and the rest."

### The pandemic dint affect her joy for helping the poor

During the pandemic, all the clinics were asked to be closed and she went to a COVID center hospital. Coincidentally, which was her college FIMS itself that was a COVID center and she voluntarily



**SHRADDHA @SHRADDHAKAPOOR**

Distressing to hear about the glacier breaking off in #Uttarakhand Praying everyone's safety there



served the positive infected patients. She adds, "After a couple of days I started getting calls of the patients and I choose to open my clinic again. If a person had minor fever and cold, they were also not getting any sort of treatment. I then opened the clinic for 24 hours. During this time, doctors charged even more and for a minor symptom they asked people to do various tests which the poor could not afford. With my staff, I provided all the services. When people had a normal cold and cough, I used to treat them. However, the ones who were infected were sent to the nearby hospitals."

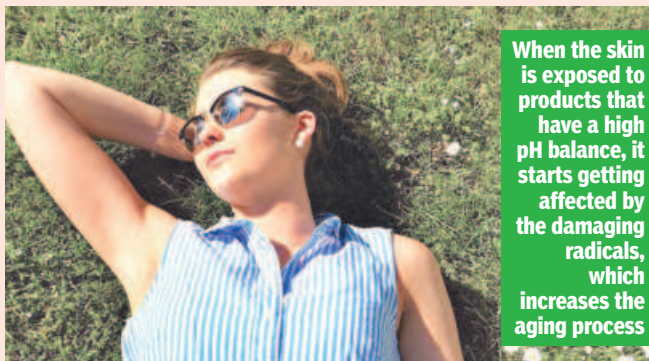
She also received other services like ortho, gynae, neuro. For patients with these services, she used to call doctors if the treatment could be done over the call and treat the patients making them sit in front of her. If the patients had anything serious, they were recommended to the specialist.

Re-calling one of the cases that she received during the pandemic, she said, "There was a Neuro case I treated once, when a 65-year-old came to me. He needed the support of his children to walk. I was a bit scared if I could treat him. However, after exactly a month, he returned walking on his own two feet. He asked me if I remembered him and thanked me profusely. Handling that case really made me very happy."

## Maintaining pH balance crucial for healthy skin

The skin's pH can be impacted by nearly anything: the skin care products you use, what you're washing it with (classic soaps are too alkaline), how often you're washing it and even what you're eating. Similarly, if you're using products that are too acidic or too basic, you could alter the skin's pH. Dermatologist Dr. Anju Methil points out.

"Skin's pH plays an important role in skin condition. The acid mantle is the key to skin's protective barrier. It neutralizes alkaline-based aggressors (such as harsh surfactants), inhibits the growth of bacteria, restores, and maintains the optimal acid environment in which skin's natural flora can thrive. Hence, when the skin is exposed to products that have a high pH balance, it starts getting affected by the damaging radicals, which increases the aging process," she tells.



When the skin is exposed to products that have a high pH balance, it starts getting affected by the damaging radicals, which increases the aging process

The acidic nature is due to the natural secretions of the skin like the sebum, amino acids and fatty acids. The skin's barrier is slightly acidic for a reason: to keep moisture in and bacteria out.

If your pH balance is off and it's too alkaline, your skin is going to look flaky and red. If it's too acidic, you'll increase your chances of inflammatory skin conditions like

eczema and acne. A good diet as well as topical agents containing probiotic will help to regain the skin pH, Dr Methil states.

Adhering to skincare routines and discovering DIYs are fun but it is essential to understand our skin texture before indulging in a routine found online. The first step is to complement your skincare routine with a healthy diet.

She suggests: "Ensure starting your day with lemon water or turmeric water followed by eating nuts and fresh fruits. Maintain a diet chart including wholesome foods that are high in nutrition and help build your body inside out. Also, hydrate yourself regularly. Hydrating will help to flush out the waste from your body, fight off wrinkles, and give your outer layer a healthy glow."

Facial Yoga is known to be effective to help maintain the glow of the skin. It helps in strengthening your face muscles, increasing blood circulation, and releases tension in the face and neck.

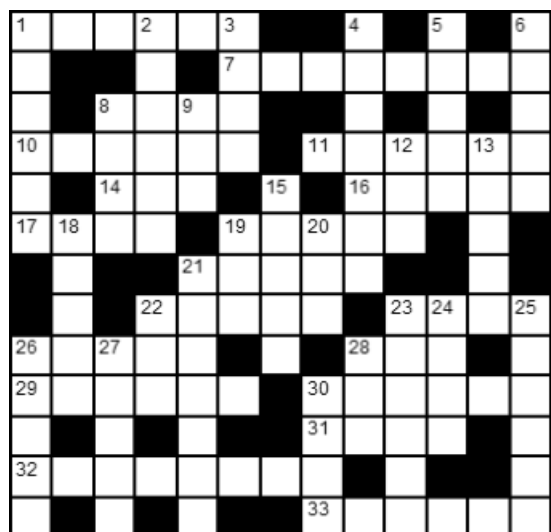
"Practicing facial Yoga for 20 minutes every day will help rejuvenate your skin and mind and help tighten your skin. It is important to stitch different aspects to maintain your skin health especially the right way.

Facial yoga works best to soothe the skin along with protecting it from potential drooping."

Naturally, our skin starts getting affected by the damaging radicals, which increases the aging process. Hence, it is important to understand the depth of learning about how pH works.

Dr Methil adds: "Choosing the right product will help keep your skin stay intact and protect it from the harshness of acid. Soaps having a pH balance of 5.5 is ideal for Indian skin. They maintain the softness and keeps it healthy for a long period."

Amidst choosing the best skincare routine and complementing it with the right skincare products, it is important to study and understand the texture of your skin. Hence, complement your healthy regime in the ideal way that helps you keep your skin healthy and safe.



SOLUTION TO FEBRUARY 6

### CROSSWORD

#### Across

- 1 Seller of food (6)
- 7 Imperil (8)
- 8 Immense (4)
- 10 Looked lasciviously at (6)
- 11 Islands in the N Atlantic (6)
- 14 King in Latin (3)
- 16 Hop-drying kilns (5)
- 17 Scare away (4)
- 19 Intoxicated (5)
- 21 Indian corn (5)
- 22 Capital of Vietnam (5)
- 23 Stringed instrument (4)
- 26 Constellation (5)
- 28 In short, second month of the year (3)
- 29 Unmarried girl (6)
- 30 Most devious (6)
- 31 Tassel (4)
- 32 Unfairness (8)
- 33 Ancient king of Persia (6)

#### Down

- 1 Questions thoroughly (6)
- 2 A red wine (6)
- 3 "Retired" in short? (4)
- 4 Folded over pizza (7)
- 5 Lab gels (5)
- 6 Dozen dozens (5)
- 8 Miles from Hollywood (4)
- 9 The fair \_\_\_\_ : the females ? (3)
- 12 Acorn bearer (3)
- 13 Anaesthetic gas (5)
- 15 Earlier (5)
- 18 Wispy clouds (5)
- 19 Son of Jacob (3)
- 20 Israeli gun (3)
- 21 State neighbouring Assam (7)
- 22 Pig (3)
- 23 A young cow (6)
- 24 Incite by encouragement (4)
- 25 Flower parts (6)
- 26 Egg-shaped body (5)
- 27 Bugged, irritated (5)
- 28 Sick-day cause (3)
- 30 River of Hades (4)

### SUDOKU

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8	4	1	7	5	3	2	6
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5	2	9	8	6	7	4	3
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SOLUTION TO FEBRUARY 6

### NEWS ROUNDUP

## New mom Anushka Sharma reveals her 'current favourite accessory'

Bollywood actress Anushka Sharma, who has just become a mother, revealed that her baby's burp cloth is her current favourite accessory!

Anushka took to Instagram on Sunday to share a picture of herself where she stands in front of a mirror with her daughter Vamika's burp cloth on her shoulder.

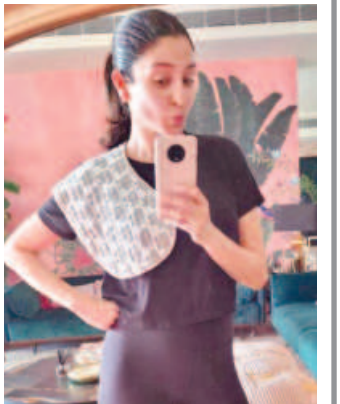
"Current favourite accessory- burp cloth!" the actress captioned the picture.

Netizens commented on Anushka's photo saying she looks so fit that it does not seem that she delivered a baby recently. Fans also requested the actress to share photographs of her daughter.

Anushka Sharma gave birth to her daughter Vamika on January 11. The actress recently introduced her daughter in front of the world with an Instagram post.

Anushka shared a photograph of herself along with husband Virat Kohli where she is holding the baby and wrote: "We have lived together with love, presence and gratitude as a way of life but this little one Vamika has taken it to a whole new level! Tears, laughter, worry, bliss - emotions that have been experienced in a span of minutes sometimes! Sleep is elusive but our hearts are so full of love. Thanking you all for your wishes, prayers and good energy."

Commenting on her post, Anushka's husband Indian cricketer Virat Kohli wrote: "My whole world in one frame."





# Cancer surgeries at AIIMS witness 30% drop amid pandemic peak

ASHISH SRIVASTAVA  
NEW DELHI

THE arrival of Covid-19 pandemic in March last year left thousands of cancer patients - both within and those coming from outside the national capital - without early medical intervention and timely treatment of the disease since most of the tertiary care hospitals were converted into dedicated Covid care facilities.

At a time when super speciality hospitals had to completely restrict their cancer care services, the treatment at All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi continued, albeit, with a significant drop.

Dr Rakesh Garg, Additional Professor, Onco Anesthesia and palliative medicine, AIIMS, said that barring one or two weeks, the treatment of cancer patients continued in the hospital.

The data by the apex institute's dedicated cancer institute-- Institute of Rotary Cancer Hospital-- showed that it realised 29 per cent of drop in Cancer surgeries in the pandemic year compared to 2019.

As per the data, the institute performed 1592 surgeries in 2019 while 1135 surgeries happened in 2020. The major drop was witnessed in certain kinds of cancer surgeries like Gynae, Soft-Tissue



Sarcoma and Gastrointestinal, where more than 50% drop in sur-

geries were witnessed. However, the institute witnessed

a marginal drop in the surgeries of Breast Cancer.

The data showed that most of the surgeries conducted by the institute in both the years of comparison was of breast cancer. In 2019, the institute performed 449 surgeries of breast cancer while in 2020, 426 such surgeries took place.

Besides, certain departments also showed a higher number of surgeries in the pandemic year than 2019. Skin cancer surgeries conducted in 2020 stood at 33 compared to 2019 when 32 such surgeries were performed. Interestingly, surgeries of metastatic diseases showed improvement in

2020 where 105 such surgeries took place against 88 surgeries performed in 2019. The data also showed that 426 surgeries were performed between April and November when the national capital suffered three surges of Coronavirus cases.

Speaking to IANS, Dr (Major) MD Ray, said that the institute performed overwhelmingly given the pandemic circumstances. "Many of our staff were inducted in Covid duties which created a shortage of manpower. Besides, our surgeries procedure also slowed down since a chunk of patients turned positive before their surgeries. So we had to treat their Covid first before

putting them under the knife," he said. As per the data, 42 patients before and after their surgeries tested positive for the Covid-19 at the centre. Meanwhile, Ray also pointed out that many of the staff got infected with the COVID-19 as well, which added to the delay.

As per the data, total 34 health-care workers at the institute including surgeons, anaesthesiologists, nursing officers, technicians and others tested positive for the disease between April and November 2020.

"Given all the pandemic restrictions and real-life situations, we did fairly well in treating cancer patients," Ray commented.



## With love, from farmers! Sugarcane, potatoes, flowers

NEW DELHI

LAND plots filled with wild grasses near Ghazipur, Tikri and Singhu protest sites have been converted into well-curated nurseries with a variety of flowers like marigold and rose. The protesting farmers have also sowed seeds for potatoes and sugarcane in the nurseries surrounded by concertina wires that came up as part of stringent security installation at the agitation sites to hinder the protestors' movement to Delhi. "Our motivation is simple.

The government had fixed iron nails. But we are planting flowers, fruits and crops. We are farmers, this is what we do," Ramraji, who hails from Jind in Haryana, said at UP Gate (Ghazipur). The 54-year-old farmer is among the several who are now curating the nurseries for which seeds and

saplings are being sourced from nearby nurseries in Ghaziabad. Another protestor volunteering for the work said the nursery has flowers like rose and marigold besides varieties of plants like palm, pine and others set in planters. "We had also planted flowers next to the iron nails fixed near the barricading by police. We give flowers and crops in exchange for nails," he said.

Farmers from Dhurana village in Sonapat planted flowers at Singhu border protest site. Satyanaryan, 74, said his group even brought soil from their village to plant the flower saplings. "It is our message to the government that we will spread love even if it uses force to suppress us," he said. A farmer leader from Haryana, Suresh Koth, said, "Sarkar kaante bo rahi hai, ham phool laga rahe hain."

LUCKNOW

IN order to give a mass base to the campaign for cows, the Yogi Adityanath government has announced that local people should be involved in maintenance and upkeep of cow shelters.

According to a government spokesperson, "The government has prepared a scheme to generate employment through cow shelters and connect locals with their management and maintenance.

Along with management of the shelters, local people should also be involved with looking after the cattle, their vaccination and sanitation in the shelters. They can use cow dung and urine for manufacture of various products and also carry out plantation near the shelters."

There are currently 5,150 cow shelters in the state where about 5.21 lakh cattle, out of a total of 11.84 lakh stray cattle in the state, are kept.

The government is also giving grants for building of cow conservation centres.

In rural areas, there are more than 180 large cow conservation centres while in urban areas, 400 'Kanha' gaushalas and 'Kanha' upvans have been set up. More than 98.34 lakh cattle has been tagged in the state.

The Chief Minister has also asked experts to work on the improvement of the breed of cattle.



AYODHYA

UTTAR PRADESH Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath visited Ram Lalla Temple in Ayodhya and offered prayers there on Sunday.

He reviewed the developmental works being carried out at the temple including 'expansion of Bhajan Sandhya Sthal, Queen Ho Memorial Park, Ram Katha Park, beautification of Ram Katha Gallery and Ram Ki Paidi'. The development works include widening many city roads, construction of multilevel parking sites, and revamping of bus and railway station, state Information and Public Relations Department informed.

"There is also a plan to make Ayodhya a solar city, besides augmenting existing facilities. In addition, the renovation of all the religious, mythological, and historical sites of the '84 Kosi Parikrama' is also being

## Yogi offers prayers at Ayodhya, reviews works



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath visits Hanuman Garhi Mandir in Ayodhya on Sunday

carried out to add to the beauty of the city,' it said. According to the release, the government has de-

cided to appoint a world-class consultant to prepare a new model of development for Ayodhya.

## Two held for killing monkeys

BHADOHI

TWO carpet exporters have been arrested for allegedly shooting dead two monkeys in Fattupur under City Kotwali police station area.

An FIR in this connection was lodged by Forest Ranger Richesh Kumar Mishra and arrested persons are Buland Ansari and his brother Mohsin Ansari.

The incident took place on Saturday in the premises of Eastern Carpets on Station Road, which is owned by the Ansari brothers.

According to eyewitnesses, one monkey was shot dead on Friday night and the other on Saturday.

Mishra said that some locals made a video of the incident and posted it on social media after which the police and the forest department team reached the spot.

Further action is being taken, Mishra said.



## Constable kills parents, self in Sonipat

CHANDIGARH

A 39-year-old Delhi Police constable committed suicide by consuming some poisonous substance after allegedly axing his parents to death at his home in Sonipat's Matindu village on Sunday, police said.

Kharkhoda police station SHO Inspector Bijender Singh said Deepak was found dead in a room while half-burnt bodies of his parents bearing head injuries were recovered from the ground floor of the house.

"We found Deepak, a constable with the Delhi police, lying motionless in an upper storey room," the SHO said, adding that they had to break open its door as it was bolted from inside. "Half-burnt bodies of his parents, aged around 65, were found from the ground floor of the house," the SHO said over the phone. He said parents bore head injuries, which appeared to have been inflicted with an axe, which was found from Deepak's room with blood and white hair stuck to it.

## Delhi Cong to test waters in MCD bypolls

NEW DELHI

THE Delhi Congress has repeated old faces for the upcoming MCD bypolls except on one seat where it has given a ticket to the son of a former party MLA. This will be the first test for Delhi Congress President Anil Kumar.

While speaking on the MCD affairs Anil Kumar said that in the fight between BJP and AAP, the people of Delhi are suffering and the situation in the MCDs is "pathetic".

The Congress has fielded Balkishan as Trilokpuri East candidate, who had contested the 2007 MCD election from the same ward and is now a DPCC delegate.

From Kalyanpuri (SC) reserved ward, Dharampal Maurya is contesting. He had also con-



tested the 2012 and 2017 MCD polls. Maurya's wife, Vidya Devi was an MCD councillor twice.

From Chauhan Bangar, Seelampur, Chaudhry Zubair Ahamad has been given a ticket.

He is Delhi Pradesh Youth Congress General Secretary and son of ex-MLA Mateen Ahmed. From Rohini-C, ex-councillor Memwati Barwala has got the ticket and Mamta from Shalimar

Bagh. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Saturday had announced the names of its candidates for the Delhi Municipal Corporations bypolls on three seats.

Bypolls for five municipal wards - Kalyanpuri, Trilokpuri (under East Delhi Municipal Corporation), Chauhan Bangar, Rohini C and Shalimar Bagh (under North Delhi Municipal Corporation) - will be held on February 28. Results of the bypolls will be declared on March 3.

AAP has nominated Bunty Gautam from Kalyanpuri municipal ward, Vijay Kumar from Trilokpuri, Mohammad Isharaq Khan (ex-Seelampur MLA) from Chauhan Bangar, Ram Chandra (ex-Bawana MLA) from Rohini C and Sunita Mishra from Shalimar Bagh-North.

## Fake job racket busted in Varanasi, 4 arrested

VARANASI

IN a joint action by the Special Task Force (STF) of UP police and Military Intelligence, a gang of miscreants engaged in duping money from unemployed youths in the name of arranging jobs in government institutions, has been busted in Sarnath in Varanasi.

The kingpin and three others were arrested from Sarnath area on Saturday.

Acting on MI inputs, the STF team led by Inspector Anil Singh succeeded in arresting Ramanuj Bhargava, Ajay Kumar Gautam, Anil Bharti and Vishvesh Mishra

from Sinhpur crossing in Sarnath and Matics computer centre in Sundarpur area. STF spokesman said that apart from laptops, mobile phones, cheque books, Rs 6,000, eight fake appointment letters of railway and secretariat were recovered from their possession.

Following initial investigation, the STF handed over them to Sarnath police after lodging an FIR under sections of IPC and IT Act. STF said that MI had collected inputs about this gang earning lakhs of rupees from youths, looking for government jobs, by giving them lucrative proposals.



## UP farmers demand withdrawal of FIR against widow, brother

PILIBHIT

LOCAL farmers in Pilibhit district have demanded that the FIR lodged against the widow and brother of a protesting farmer, who had recently lost his life in Delhi, be immediately withdrawn.

Three persons, including the deceased farmer's wife and

brother, were booked on Thursday for draping his body in Tricolour.

Local farmer leaders and politicians have expressed their support to the demand for withdrawal of the FIR.

Yogendra Yadav, who is the president of Swaraj India, said that he was not surprised with the police action.

AAKANKSHA KHAJURIA  
NEW DELHI

AS agitating farmers face grave legal challenges emerging out of the Republic Day violence, scores of lawyers from the adjoining states have stationed themselves at the borders, courts and jails of the national capital to offer free legal assistance to them.

On January 26, protesting farmers had clashed with the police during the tractor rally against three farm laws. During the clash, a section of protesters had entered the Red Fort and hoisted a religious flag. So far, the police have arrested over 120 people in connection with the Republic Day violence. About 160 lawyers, under the banner of 'Advocates for Farmers', have split into 11 teams to carry out tasks ranging from data entry of the arrested and missing protesters, drafting, figuring out where they are jailed to filing their bail applications.

## From borders to courts, lawyers huddle for protesting farmers



Farmers participate in a 'Kisan Mahapanchayat' in support of their agitation against Centre's farm reform laws in Nuh district on Sunday

Few of them have set up their tents at three borders -- Singhu, Ghazipur and Tikri -- and are

contacting the families of those arrested or missing by wading from trolley to trolley. Besides this,

they have also set up toll-free numbers to address the farmers' grievances.

Advocates Ajit Pal Singh Mander and Hakam Singh head the teams and carry out coordination among them. "Data is collected by three teams at the border and execution is carried out by eight teams at different courts in the city," Mander, belonging to Punjab's Bathinda district, said.

The advocate said that five protesters have been let out on bail so far, while the petitions of three others are coming up for hearing at the Dwarka court on Monday. "Today we found out that 22 more people are missing since that day (January 26), out of which we have found that eight

are lodged in jail," he said. At Singhu, a 29-year-old lawyer explained how legal aid is being provided to the farmers. "We collect data as to who is missing or who has been arrested since Republic Day by going from tractor to tractor, and based on the information, we inform our teams at Tihar jail." Advocate Gaurav Kaushal went on to say, "From there, the team attests the power of attorney and gives it to the teams working in various courts. Another team then drafts the bail applications and also argues the matter." He, however, rued the internet issue, due to which the lawyers have to travel to Delhi to hand over the documents to the other teams. The team also claimed that Delhi Police are not cooperating with them in getting the details.

Another lawyer, Tanya Tabasum, said that the team covers the 15 km stretch on Singhu border in a day to find out information about the farmers.



# Our women break yet another glass ceiling

Paradoxical as it has always been, the status of women in Indian society has seen a saw between the determined assault of patriarchy on the one hand and an equally resolute attitude to break free from entrenched gender prejudices which have kept their potential under-utilised over centuries.

According to a news report which was featured extensively in the media, a maiden contingent of 34 Central Reserve Police Force women personnel was recently inducted into its specialised jungle warfare commando force CoBRA, which will soon be deployed in the anti-Naxal operations grid of the country. It had

been an all-male affair for this unit till now.

The Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) was raised under the CRPF in 2009 for undertaking intelligence-based jungle warfare operations. The majority of CoBRA teams, whose commandos are expected to have tough mental and physical attributes, are deployed in various Maoist violence affected states while a few are based in the northeastern states for undertaking counter-insurgency operations.

CRPF Director General A P Maheshwari lauded the women, saying they are an inspiration for numerous young girls who aspire to do good for themselves and the country. He said these combatants have proved that power is not in the muscles but in the head. According to him, he considers it the failure of leadership if someone says that one cannot do a work that is being done by the other. He rightly commented that it is the Force's responsibility to ensure that every effort is made to bring all the personnel to the same level of efficiency.

The D - G urged the women personnel to "make their place" in the families of those youth who have gone astray or away from the national mainstream and help in bringing them back. He said the new age warfare is asymmetric, proxy, radicalisation-based, cyber-centric

and has "shifted" from the geographical to the human terrain.

Progressive views indeed suited the modern times when boundaries have blurred and wars are being waged over battlefields and cyberspace. On similar lines, on Republic Day, we saw a lady officer - Flight Lieutenant Bhawana Kanth, the first woman in India to qualify for combat mission in a fighter jet, becoming the first woman fighter pilot to participate in the Republic Day fly-past joining her fellow male fighter pilots.

Indian military history also boasts of a fair share of women soldiers, Razia Sultan and the Rani of Jhansi being the most famous. Women were also a part of the Indian National Army raised by Subhash Chandra Bose to fight the British. Post-independence, women have for long been serving the Indian Army in the Army Medical Corps, Army Dental Corps and Military Nursing Service. In all these branches they have played a commendable role and have risen to high ranks within their cadre. From being ace home makers to turning out at their fiery best to safeguard the nation, it needs no further mention that we cannot get anyone better than our women.



# 'Uttarakhand disaster may be due to water pocket burst'

VISHAL GULATI

A massive flood in Uttarakhand's Joshimath area on Sunday is a rare incident of a glacial burst, and may be "a climate change event", say leading climate scientists.

Satellite and Google Earth images do not show a glacial lake near the region, but there is a possibility that there may be a water pocket, or lake inside the glacier, in the region that may have erupted leading to the disaster, Mohd. Farooq Azam, who is an Assistant Professor at IIT Indore, told IANS.

"We need further analysis, weather reports and data to confirm if this indeed was the case. It's unlikely that this was a cloudburst, since weather reports in Chamoli district show sunny weather till today with no record of precipitation," he said.

"There is no doubt that global warming has resulted in the warming of the region. Climate change driven erratic weather patterns like increased snowfall and rainfall, and warmer winters have led to the melting point of a lot of snow falling. The thermal profile of ice is increasing... where earlier the temperature of ice ranged from minus six to minus 20 degree Celsius, it is now minus two, making it more susceptible to melting," he said.

Another scientist, Anjal Prakash, who is the Research Director and Adjunct Associate Professor at the Indian School of Business in Hyderabad, said prima facie this looks very much like a climate change event. "The IPCC's Special Report on Oceans and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate reports that climate change has altered the frequency and magnitude of natural hazards. The scientists reported with medium confidence that in some regions, snow avalanches involving wet snow have increased, while the rain on snow floods have also increased at lower elevations in springs," Prakash told IANS.

"We do not have the data now to give you information on what has caused the avalanche in Chamoli district but what we know, prima facie, is that this looks very much like a climate change event as the glaciers are melting due to global warming."

He noted that the impact of global warming on glacial retreat is well documented. "The recent assessment report called the Hindu Kush Himalayan Monitoring and Assessment Programme (HIMAP) report facilitated by ICIMOD has also pointed these out."

The report shows that temperatures are rising in the Hindu-Kush Himalayan (HKH) region and the rise in global temperature will have more impact in the Himalayan region due to elevation-dependent warming. "If the world can keep the temperature rise to below 1.5 degrees Celsius, in the HKH region, it would translate to at least a rise of 1.8 degrees, and in some places, above 2.2 degrees. Himalayan regions are also the least monitored region and this event actually shows how vulnerable we could be. "I would request the government to spend more resources in monitoring the region better so that we have more information about the change process. The result would be that we are more aware and could develop better adaptation practices."

Prakash is an UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) author who was Coordinating Lead Author of the special report on Oceans and Cryosphere in 2018 and Lead Author of the ongoing Sixth Assessment Report of the IPCC.

# More Indians design right shoe fit online

VIVEK SINGH CHAUHAN

As more and more Indians buy customised, made-to-order and well-fitting apparel online in the pandemic, the same trend has been observed in the accessories segment where people are now spending on customised shoes and other items in these social distancing times.

Ashish Prakash and Aayush Jindal, who graduated from IIT Delhi started Toesmith in 2019 that allows customers to not only customise different parts of the shoe but also edit and upload their own design online. Based in Gurugram, Toesmith ships their products - mostly in the range of Rs 1,000-Rs 3,000 -- across Delhi-NCR, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Pune, Chennai and Kolkata. Toesmith offers a 3D interactive design tool that allows people to customise different parts of a shoe individually. The customer can easily change five aspects of a shoe - the vamp (the front part of the shoe), the quarters (sides), the heel counter (backside), the binding (inner part), and the collar lining via the 3D design. "There was a strong need for affordable customisable shoes. So, we thought let us give the consumer the option to customise and order their own shoes and that's how we started Toesmith," Aayush said in recent media reports. At Lusso Lifestyle, which is India's first shoe brand for men with a vegan-luxury concept, its founder Bhavesh Doshi is busy devising new ways to help customise the shoes as per the client's needs and choices.

"We make the customer's experience hassle-free by having a walk-in store plus an online website that provides our entire collection which makes it convenient for the customers to choose the right pair for themselves. We also provide free exchanges and returns," Doshi told IANS.

"We also have WhatsApp services available where our designers help the client choose the right pair, suggest to them what will suit their attire and their comfort," he informed. The pandemic has been a difficult period for him. "Since every cloud has a silver lining, we managed to take this pandemic in a positive way. It has given us time to work on our new product line that we recently launched," he said.

Their products range from Rs 1,500 to Rs 10,000. With the help of a few experts, Doshi uses a combination of high-grade Polyurethane and Rexin, which aesthetically looks as appealing as leather and has the same comfort level.

Mumbai-based Tiesta provides custom-made luxury footwear which can be ordered from the comfort of your home. "Make your pair as unique as you are! You choose your leather, your colour, your sole and your details. We'll handcraft your desired pair as per your specifications using the finest materials and bespoke workmanship," according to the company. Many people have a hard time finding the perfect pair of shoes. There are some who just can't seem to fit their feet in the standard-issue shoes from the retail stores, especially in these times.

The company offers customised solutions for tiny/narrow feet too. Yashaswini Dayama who is a singer-actor and worked in the movie "Dear Zindagi" uses Tiesta shoes. Another customer Shikhani had a hard time finding a shoe that fit her tiny feet.

"I got to know about Tiesta through a friend and they were surely a life saviour!", she posted on their website. The company says that all of the shoes are handmade by skilled artisans. "We make sure that the shoe that leaves our facility is of the most premium quality with proper comfort and luxury," according to Tiesta.

# Three paths to the taxation of agriculture

BHARAT JHUNJHUNWALA

It will also secure social justice because the tax collected from bigger farmers could be used to provide benefits like subsidised food grains to the poor.

The United Nations Development Programme studied the agricultural taxation in four developing countries. They found that agriculture has been subject to income tax like other sectors in Kenya since 2018. Previously income tax was payable on agriculture on incomes above USD 600 per year. This limit has now been reduced to USD 108 or about Rs one lakh per year. Agriculture is similarly subjected to income tax like other taxpayers in Cameroon though it is not actually collected.

The Agriculture Income Tax Act was enacted in Pakistan in 1997 giving power to the State governments to collect income tax on agriculture. In Punjab a farmer owning more than 12.5 acres land or having an income of above Rs 37,000 Indian Rupees has to pay income tax. The UNDP says that the tendency of all developing countries is to move towards collecting income tax on agriculture.

Income tax is not payable on agricultural incomes in India. Thus, Kaveri Seeds claimed exemption of Rs 186 crore of agricultural income, Monsanto India claimed Rs 94 crore, McLeod Russel claimed Rs 73 crore, Madhya Pradesh Rajya Van Vikas Nigam claimed Rs 62 crore exemption in 2013-14. Such exemptions do not establish food security of the country because these are claimed by entities not producing food grains.

Income tax will not hit at the food security even if it were collected from the farmer because it is collected after he has produced the food grains and already established the food security of the country. The economic development of the country will also move forward because of the availability of revenue. According to a study undertaken by the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy we have a potential of collecting 1.2 percent of our GDP or Rs 3 lakh crore per year from agricultural income tax.

It will also secure social justice because the tax collected from bigger farmers could be used to provide benefits like subsidised food grains to the poor. The revenue of Rs 3 lakh crore, for example, would be sufficient to make a direct transfer of Rs 2,200 per person per year to all the citizens and more than compensate for the additional burden due to higher price of food grains. Therefore, farmers having land or income in excess of the prescribed limits should be subjected to income tax.

The UNDP has said that Ghana collects an export tax on cocoa. The amount of tax is adjusted to the difference between the domestic and international price of cocoa. This begets revenue to the government. The UNDP says that most developing



**Income tax will not hit at the food security even if it were collected from the farmer because it is collected after he has produced the food grains and already established the food security of the country. The economic development of the country will also move forward because of the availability of revenue. According to a study undertaken by the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy we have a potential of collecting 1.2 percent of our GDP or Rs 3 lakh crore per year from agricultural income tax**

countries are already collecting export taxes on agricultural produce or moving in that direction. Such export taxes beget social justice as well. The crop that would have been exported becomes available to the citizens of its own country upon the imposition of export tax.

For example, if our government imposes an export tax of Rs 50 per kilo when the price of Basmati rice in India is Rs 60 per kilo while the international price is Rs 100 per kilo, then exports of Basmati rice will be reduced because cost of exported Indian Basmati would become Rs 110 per kilo. That will make that Basmati rice available to our citizens and secure social justice.

The food security will also be enhanced because less exports will lead to more availability of rice in the domestic market. The food security will be further enhanced because of conservation of our water and soil. We pack our water and soil and export these scarce resources when we export rice. A reduction of exports will lead to less over-use of our soil and water which will enhance our food security. Export tax will provide more revenue to the government

although this benefit will be cancelled by less foreign exchange earnings. The mixed impact of the two contrary effects may be negligible. Therefore, export tax establishes social justice and food security and has no impact on economic growth.

UNDP says that Kenya has started to dismantle the agricultural subsidies and other developing countries are moving in that same direction. We are providing subsidies of about two percent of our GDP or a huge amount of Rs 6 lakh crore per year in terms of fertiliser, water, electricity and other subsidies. These subsidies help establish social justice. The cost of production of food grains becomes less.

For example, the price of wheat may become Rs 24 from the present Rs 20 per kilo if the farmer has to pay full market price of these inputs. The eighty percent population that buys food grains will have to pay a higher price. The impact on poor can be easily managed by transferring the saved Rs 6 lakh crore to them at the rate of Rs 4,400 per person per year in cash out of the monies saved.

The subsidies help secure our food security because it becomes profitable for

the farmers to produce the food grains. However, our food security is not threatened today. We have not had a famine since the sixties because of the development of irrigation and other agricultural technologies. Today we have surplus production of food grains and we incur losses in storage and in making exports below the cost of production. We can maintain adequate buffer stocks and manage food security. The subsidies also harm our food security.

Our farmers overuse the subsidised inputs. They undertake excessive irrigation from canals and tube wells because they do not have to pay according to the volume of the water used. This is pushing these resources towards extinction and hits at our food security. The same water would produce much higher income if provided to industries and software parks. It is necessary to remove these subsidies to secure efficient use of our resources.

The Government must implement three changes in the agricultural tax system. One, export taxes must be imposed on agricultural exports so that social justice and food security are secured without harming economic growth. Two, income tax must be collected beyond a specified area of farm land or income so that social justice is secured without harming food security. Three, agricultural subsidies must be removed along with cash transfers to the common man so that food security and economic growth are secured without harming social justice.

The present standoff between the farmers and Government presents an opportunity to present these policies before the farmers and to use this opportunity to clean up the act, so to say.

the agri bills by the present government at the Centre.  
KV Raghuram, Wayanad

## AP is the loser

The issue of Vizag Steel Plant is gaining momentum reaching the level of one even resigning the post of Member of Legislative Assembly. BJP which gained a lot of confidence to project itself as a viable alternate after its performance in Telangana is caught in a fix. The party was in competition in encashing the damages taking placing in temples and whip the communal sentiments of the people to its political advantage. One of its functionaries even went to the extent of making a call to voters in Tirupati to make their choice between Bible or Bhagavad Gita. But doing away with PSUs being the main agenda of BJP the party stands as a culprit before the people of Andhra Pradesh, who are already much irritated due to total negligence of the funds starving State. Special Category Status, for which the party supported vehemently while in opposition declined categorically after assuming power, the special fund that was compromisngly agreed upon by TDP was also not given, Steel industry in Kadapa district is yet to see the light of the day, special funds for improving the backward region like Rayalaseema is not considered at all and many more to count upon. In this background it is not only an embarrassing situation for the BJP but for all those supporting it. In fact, the strength of BJP in the State is the unconditional support extended competitively by all the major parties operating here. Every party has its opportunistic reasons for extending support to BJP. It is said, 'United we Gain'. But it is a case of unitedly losing in AP. Before people react on their own, it is better these political parties ensure their being with the people first.

A G Rajmohan, Anantapur

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## LETTERS

### Enter Sasikala

The arrival of V K Sasikala, affectionately called Chinamma by her supporters, in Chennai after serving a prison term of four years in a disproportionate assets case is viewed with excited anticipation. Like it or not, Sasikala is an influential figure in Tamil Nadu politics. Her being away from the thick of politics does not seem to have diminished her appeal. She cannot be written off; she is certainly a figure to watch out for in the run-up to the Assembly election. It is a proven fact that she has an instinct for politics and political ambitions and, like her companion and soul-mate J Jayalalithaa, she too has that indefinable something that arouses awe and respect for her in her supporters. Images - Amma and Chinamma as family at the Poes Garden, Edappadi Palaniswami and others kneeling before Sasikala and Sasikala at Jayalalithaa's resting place and thumping the grave and taking vows - bring to mind the enormous power wielded by Sasikala.

The position of the present crop of AIADMK leaders that there is no place for Sasikala in the party could win her public sympathy, more so when they should be beholden to her. Those who now control the party and run the government were sycophantic when J. Jayalalithaa-V.K. Sasikala pair was at the helm. The coming days will show the role Sasikala plays in Tamil Nadu politics and the popular support she manages to garner by virtue of her claim as the legitimate inheritor of Amma's legacy. Viewers of the current political scene in Tamil Nadu are inclined to believe that the DMK-led alliance could romp home in the upcoming Assembly election and V.K. Sasikala could take on the mantle of AIADMK's leadership and reserve it as a viable alternative to its Dravidian counterpart.

G David Milton, Maruthancode, Tamil Nadu



SICKENING APATHY OF MANAGEMENTS

# Medical equipment left ‘ailing’ at govt hospitals

VASAVI KALERU  
HYDERABAD

DOCTORS at government hospitals often cut a sorry face, while asking poor patients to get tests done at private hospitals. Utter lack of upkeep has led to dysfunctional equipment. Though crores of rupees were invested in procuring various equipment, the government is not ensuring their good condition. As a result, poor people are bearing the brunt.

Highlighting the negligent attitude of the government, Dr Ambedkar, working at Osmania Hospital, observes that most of the equipment in the government hospitals is rusting away because of lack of maintenance. He points out that it was the responsibility of director of hospitals to monitor the equipment and ensure that they were in working condition. “I would like to recall an instance of negligence. At Sarojini Eye hospital, the laser equipment for eye treatment was purchased but due to poor maintenance, it became dysfunctional. A private laboratory bought the same machine and started earning in crores. If the State-run hospitals maintains the equipment properly, it could serve the poor patients and save the taxpayers money,” he added.

The doctors deplore that valuable equipment CT scan, ABG machines and others are regularly found to be non-functioning at several government hospitals.

Explaining the lack of infrastructure facilities, Dr Md Iqbal



## SORRY STATE OF AFFAIRS

- ▶ Lack of proper maintenance; Patients forced to undergo tests at private laboratories
- ▶ At OGH had acquired the Faco emulsification machine (laser machine); It is not in use
- ▶ Of two CT scan machines, one not in service and the other often faces glitches



- ▶ PG students unable to get clinical exposure and first-hand experience of equipment
- ▶ At Sarojini Devi Eye Hospital, laser equipment has become dysfunctional



Jaweed, a physician and consultant at NIRDPR, says that as the inpatient block of Osmania General hospital remained closed since July, the equipment rusted.” The OGH had acquired the Faco emulsification machine (laser machine) and now it is out of order. The PG students are not able to get enough clinical exposure and a chance to get trained on it. More working equipment is needed for service of the de-

serving and also academics in all departments of medical colleges, he said.

“The government purchases machinery worth crores but it fails to maintain it. For Instance, the CT scan machinery has not been working in the Osmania hospital for a long time and the administration hardly reacts for such concerns and it takes at least a day to get it functional,” said Dr Rohit of Osmania Hospi-

tal. “We had two CT scan machines in the hospital, out of which one has been not in service for past several days and the other needs repairs every alternate day,” he added.

Arterial Blood Gas (ABG) test equipment at the Chest Hospital turned dysfunctional within a month after its installation and the patients are being forced to go for tests at private labs. It costs Rs 600 per ABG test.

## ‘Vizag Steel is a dream come true for Andhrites’

- Privatisation is not a solution to overcome losses, point out people who took part in the ‘Visakha Ukku- Andhrula Hakku’ movement



- Recalling the days of the movement, Korala Uday Bhaskar, former sarpanch for Kothapalli village in Peravali mandal of West Godavari district, says people stood united for the steel plant and the jobs and development it could bring to the State

- Chaganti Mohan Rao, also from Kothapalli village, says the decision to privatise Vizag Steel is injustice towards AP, which is already in troubles after the bifurcation



NARESH NANDAM  
ONGOLE

THE people who have participated in the ‘Visakha Ukku- Andhrula Hakku’ movement allege that the Union government has neglected the Vizag Steel industry from the beginning, and now resorting to privatise it in the name of losses.

They questioned when the private companies come forward for buying stakes in the Vizag Steel with confidence, why not the government believe in it. They said the Vizag Steel is a dream come true for the Andhra people and privatisation in the name of losses is not the real solution.

Korala Uday Bhaskar, who worked as the sarpanch for Kothapalli village in Peravali mandal of West Godavari district, said that he was a teenager when the agitation for the Vizag Steel happened. He said that responding to the call from people like Tenneti Viswanatham, Gouthu Latchanna, Kaloji Narayana Rao, Mullapudi Harishchandra Prasad, Parakala Se-

shavataram, Vanka Satyanarayana, Gudivada Narasimha Rao, Pendyala Ramachandra Rangarao, Muppavarapu Venkaiah Naidu, Chaganti Ramakrishna and other State and local leaders, they also jumped into the movement and conducted awareness programmes in the nearby villages.

Uday Bhaskar said that the then merchants, businessmen in their area voluntarily shut down their businesses and extended their support to the people who were sitting in the relay hunger strike at Peravali. He said that the police arrested him also for participating in the agitation and shifted him to Tanuku police station, where they were released without registering any case, but with a warning to not participate in the protests again.

He said that the people stood united for the steel plant, and the jobs and development it could bring. He said that the Vizag Steel is a dream-come-true for every Andhra person and the government disinvesting in it is like killing it. He said

that no private company will come forward if any industry is really incapable to make profits and suggested the government to make alternate arrangements for the Vizag Steel and let it have the resources.

Another man, Chaganti Mohan Rao of the same Kothapalli village recollected that freedom fighters Prathi Sessaiah and his wife Prathi Manemma led the ‘Visakha Ukku- Andhrula Hakku’ movement in their area. He said that the Vizag Steel movement is the first agitation that local people witnessed after the freedom fight and all of them participated in it for the jobs to the youth and income to the State. He said that all sections of the people volunteered to take part in the relay hunger strike, though the Brahmananda Reddy government tried to suppress the agitation. But the leaders like Amrutha Rao, Subbaratnam, Murthy Raju and others ensured that the movement was held peacefully, he added.

He remembered that though the government installed the pylon after the foundation, there was a delay for a few years to start the works and they conducted the agitation again. He recollected a scene in the film, ‘Maro Charitra’, in which the hero responds to the heroine, that they could marry after the dream of steel plant is realised.

Mohan Rao said that the decision to privatise the Vizag Steel is injustice towards the State, which is already in troubles after the bifurcation, and is an attempt to rupture the wound again. He said that the Union government has neglected the south Indian PSUs since the beginning, and never bothered to provide the mines to the Vizag Steel in all these years.

He said that if the government doesn't change its decision, a similar movement will be built in just a few days and the party that is planning to strengthen its routes in the State may have to reconsider its plans.

With 33,980 tests, the total number of tests conducted stood at over 1.33 crore so far in the state. The total confirmed cases were 8,88,423 while the recoveries stood at 8,80,261, it said.

The State has 1,003 active cases while the total toll remained at 7159. In the last 24 hours, Guntur district accounted for the most number of cases with 15 followed by Chittoor and Krishna with 14 and 12 cases respectively.

no death was reported in 24 hours ending 9 am on Sunday.

The State also reported 82 more recoveries, a health department bulletin said.

# TS explores Agri air cargo facilities in Shamshabad

State is introducing a new dimension of establishing facilities for agricultural air cargo operations at GMR Airport

VRC PHANIHARAN  
HYDERABAD

THE TRS-led Telangana State is moving with lightning speed while several opposition-ruled States in the country are grappling with the issue of the Centre's farm laws.

It may be mentioned here that the TRS had initially expressed its opposition to the farm laws. Later, it has voiced its concern about the continuation of the Minimum Support Price (MSP). However, the initial apprehensions and fears expressed seem waning, as the Centre has made it clear that MSP is here to stay.

Following this development, the State government is exercising and exploring multiple options to create market linkages and synergies to felicitate not only for selling agriculture produce within the country but also exports to other countries.

As part of these new initiatives, now the State of Telangana is introducing a new dimension establishing facilities for agricultural air cargo operations at GMR Airport. A meeting in this connection was held at Professor Jayashankar Telangana State Agriculture University on Saturday.

State Agriculture Minister Singireddy Niranjan Reddy, the CCO Ashish Kumar, COO Manish Agnihotri and senior offi-



cials from the Marketing Department. According to the officials, the meeting focused on the expansion of perishable cargo facilities for exporting

has sought cooperation from the State, government to expand the cargo facility to 25,000 sq ft.

The Minister said encouragement will be provided to the Agriculture and Horticulture products with demand in the international market. Further, irradiation facilities are proposed for mangoes exports, Niranjan Reddy said.

That apart, Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao has side ted for establishing Agri export processing unit in an extent of 400 acres. Also, efforts are made to hold coordination meetings with sellers, buyers, exporters and importers. A series of meetings are also planned between GMR officials and senior officials of the State Horticulture, Marketing Department, and the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA)



fruits and vegetables.

Currently, the Shamshabad Airport has a car facility in 5000 sq ft. The airport author

# MP demands withdrawal of RINL's disinvestment plans

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
VISAKHAPATNAM

VISAKHAPATNAM MP MVV Satyanarayana made it clear that he will not step back even to put his papers down if the Centre refused to withdraw the proposal of privatising RINL.

Speaking to the media here on Sunday, the MP said the RINL is one of the largest steel makers that produce quality products. “It has the capacity to fall back on track even if it is incurring losses. Lack of own mines is one of the main reasons for the steel plant to slip into losses. This apart, a huge amount of interest is also being paid for loans applied for the plant's expansion plans. If the financial aid taken to the tune of Rs 22,000 crore could be converted into equity, the plant



MP MVV Satyanarayana addressing the media in Visakhapatnam on Sunday

could return to normalcy in no time,” he opined.

Accompanied by YSRCP Rajya Sabha member V Vijayasai Reddy, Satyanarayana said he would meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi and explain the sentiments of Andhra people and appeal to the

PM to reconsider the proposal of privatising the steel plant.

Addressing the gathering, Gajuwaka MLA Tippala Nagireddy said Visakhapatnam Steel Plant plays a key role in the development of the district. After elaborate discussions with the

- MVV Satyanarayana says he will submit resignation as MP if the Centre failed to withdraw its proposal to privatise Visakhapatnam Steel Plant
- Points out that RINL is one of the largest steel makers that produces quality products
- Lack of own mines is one of the main reasons for the steel plant to slip into losses, he points out
- If the financial aid taken to the tune of Rs 22,000 crore is converted into equity, the plant can return to normalcy in no time, he says

# SEC issues guidelines on transfer of officers

VIJAYAWADA

THE Andhra Pradesh State Election Commission (SEC) on Sunday issued guidelines by invoking the plenary powers vested under Article 243K and 2432A of the Constitution on the issue of government servants on election duty and their protection in discharge of their duties. It may be recalled that the ECI informed the States/Union Territories that States shall obtain prior approval of the ECI before initiating disciplinary action against Chief Electoral Officer/Joint CEOs during their tenure and also up to one year from its expiry. Recently the employees associations have brought to the notice of SEC, glaring instances wherein a senior functionary of the State government had threatened the Collectors and All Returning Officers with dire consequences if they do not toe a certain line. The Commission has felt the need to lay down clear guidelines regarding the protection of government employees on poll duty are entitled to.

# Record 50,200 devotees have darshan of Lord Venkateswara

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
TIRUPATI

THE number of pilgrims who had darshan of Lord Venkateswara at Tirumala, the abode of Lord Venkateswara, crossed 50,000 mark on Saturday.

According to temple sources, 50,200 had darshan while the number of pilgrims tonsured as a mark of fulfillment of their vows was 25,621 and the cash offering in the temple Hundi stood at Rs 3.11 crore.

With the TTD issuing daily 20,000 offline SSD tokens for free darshan of common pilgrims since two weeks, the number of pilgrims who had darshan in the shrine is ranging from 45,000 to 49,000 and on Saturday it went further up crossing 50,000 mark which is the highest so far after the famed shrine was thrown open for public darshan in June last year, following the relaxation of the lockdown restrictions.

In all, the TTD is allowing about 50,000 pilgrims daily under various categories including Rs 300 special entry tickets and offline free SSD tokens (20,000 each), Arjitha Sevas that are performed virtually with a provision for darshan including Kalyanotsavam, Unjal



- This is the highest number of pilgrims visiting the hilltop shrine of Tirumala on a single day after it was thrown open for devotees following the relaxation of the lockdown restrictions in June last year

- The temple receives Hundi cash offerings of Rs 3.11 cr on Saturday

Seva, Sahasra Deepalakara Seva, Darshan linked Srivani trust donation and donors of various trusts floated by TTD for social service activities etc.

The decline of Covid cases in many States particularly in the two Telugu States coupled with restoration of more and more bus and train services from various places to Tirupati naturally enabling more number of devotees visit the most popular hilltop temple town for darshan of Lord

Venkateswara. It is needless to say with the substantial increase of pilgrims being allowed daily for darshan, the darshan timing also has been extended up to 11 in the night i.e, 18 hours daily duly following Covid guidelines and the two pilgrim footpaths are also being kept open for the ticket holding devotees who prefer to reach Tirumala on foot including Alipiri which is from morning to up to 2 pm and Srivari mettu up to 4 pm, for darshan of Lord.

# 73 fresh cases in State

AMARAVATI

ANDHRA Pradesh recorded 73 fresh coronavirus cases taking the aggregate to over 8.88 lakh while



# 'NO TIME TO ALERT ANYONE'

## 'Himalayan tsunami' still not forgotten

A witness who spoke to news agency Reuters reported a wall of dust, rock and water as an avalanche roared down a river valley. "It came very fast, there was no time to alert anyone," Sanjay Singh Rana, who lives on the upper reaches of Raini village, told Reuters by phone. "I felt that even we would be swept away."

Locals fear that people working at the nearby hydro-power project had been swept away, as well as villagers roaming near the river looking for firewood or grazing their cattle, Rana said. "We have no idea how many people are missing."

"The flow of the Alaknanda River beyond Nand-prayag (stretch) has become normal," Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat said on Twitter. "The water level of the river is now 1 meter above normal but the flow is decreasing."

Uttarakhand in the Himalayas is prone to flash floods and landslides. In June 2013, record rainfall caused devastating floods that claimed close to 6,000 lives.

That disaster was dubbed the "Himalayan tsunami" due to the torrents of water unleashed in the mountainous area, which sent mud and rocks crashing down, burying homes, sweeping away buildings, roads and bridges.

## Major natural disasters

- ▶ 1991 Uttarkashi Earthquake: An earthquake of 6.8 magnitude hit the undivided state of Uttar Pradesh in October
- ▶ 1991 in which at least 768 people were killed and thousands of homes destroyed.
- ▶ 1998 Malpa Landslide: The small village of Malpa in Pithoragarh district was wiped in the landslide in which about 255 people, including 55 Kailash Mansarovar pilgrims, were killed. The resulting debris partially blocked the Sharda river.
- ▶ 1999 Chamoli earthquake: An earthquake of 6.8 magnitude hit Chamoli district killing over 100 people. The adjoining Rudrapur district was also heavily affected. Several ground deformations were reported as a result of the earthquake, and landslides and changes in water flow were also recorded. Cracks were observed in roads and on the ground.
- ▶ 2013 North India Floods: In June 2013, a multi-day cloudburst centered on Uttarakhand caused devastating floods and landslides. According to the state government, more than 6,000 people were presumed dead in the disaster. As bridges and roads were destroyed more than 3 lakh people were trapped in the valleys leading to the Char Dham pilgrimage sites.

Damaged Dhaultiganga hydropower project at Reni village, after a glacier broke off in Joshimath causing a massive flood in the Dhaulti Ganga river, in Chamoli district of Uttarakhand on Sunday



ITBP personnel in rescue operation

### 200MW power supply to national grid cut

AROUND 200 MW of power supply to the national grid was affected due to avalanche in Uttarakhand as local administration shut down two plants, Tehri and Koteswar, as a precautionary measure. The hydro power plants in the affected area are mostly under-construction or fall in small hydro project category which are of up to 25MW. These small hydro projects are mainly state owned. Earlier in the day, a glacier broke off in Joshimath in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district which caused a massive flood in the Dhaulti Ganga river and endangered lives of people living along its banks. It is reported that massive destruction is feared and many people were missing after the disaster. An official told PTI, "The local authorities have shut two power plants- Tehri and Koteswar as a precautionary measure in view of the disaster."

### Glaciers melting twice as fast

A study published in 2019 had warned that Himalayan glaciers have been melting twice as fast since the start of this century due to climate change. The study, spanning 40 years of satellite observations across India, China, Nepal and Bhutan, indicates that climate change is eating the Himalayas' glaciers, the researchers said.

The study, published in the journal Science Advances in June 2019, shows that glaciers have been losing the equivalent of more than a vertical foot and half of ice each year since 2000 -- double the amount of melting that took place from 1975 to 2000.

"This is the clearest picture yet of how fast Himalayan glaciers are melting over this time interval, and why," said Joshua Maurer, a PhD candidate at Columbia University in the US. While not specifically calculated in the study, the glaciers may have lost as much as a quarter of their enormous mass over the last four decades, said Maurer, lead author of the study. The study synthesised data from across the region, stretching from early satellite observations to the present.

The data indicates that the melting is consistent in time and space, and that rising temperatures are to blame, the researchers said. Temperatures vary from

### 2013 disaster

place to place, but from 2000 to 2016 they have averaged one degree Celsius higher than those from 1975 to 2000, they said.

Researchers analysed repeat satellite images of some 650 glaciers spanning 2,000 kilometres from west to east. Many of the 20th-century observations came from declassified photographic images taken by the US spy satellites. They created an automated system to turn these into three dimensional (3D) models

that could show the changing elevations of glaciers over time.

The researchers then compared these images with post-2000 optical data from more sophisticated satellites, which more directly convey elevation changes. They found that from 1975 to 2000, glaciers across the region lost an average of about 0.25 metres of ice each year in the face of slight warming. Following a more pronounced warming trend starting in the 1990s, starting in 2000 the loss accelerated to about half a metre annually.

Researchers noted that Asian nations are burning ever-greater loads of fossil fuels and biomass, sending soot into the sky, adding much of it eventually lands on snowy glacier surfaces, where it absorbs solar energy and hastens melting. They compiled temperature data during the study period from ground stations and then calculated the amount of melting that observed temperature increases would be expected to produce. The team then compared those figures with what actually happened. "It looks just like what we would expect if warming were the dominant driver of ice loss," Maurer said. The Himalayas are generally not melting as fast as the Alps, but the general progression is similar, the researchers said.



Family members wait for news of their relatives

Over 125 are missing following a massive flood near a power project at Reni village in Joshimath area of Uttarakhand's Chamoli district on Sunday, Chief Minister said.

The incident occurred after the water level in Dhaultiganga river, one of the six sources of the Ganga river, suddenly surged on Sunday morning following an avalanche near the Rishi Ganga power project. The 85 km river meets the Alaknanda river at Vishnupur, at the base of Joshimath mountain in Uttarakhand.

More than 100 labourers at the barrage and 50 plus in the tunnel lost their life as per the charge of Tapovan NTPC.

work site, ITBP said.

Around 150 personnel of ITBP are carrying out rescue and search operations on the site, according to information received late in the afternoon. The paramilitary force said connectivity of its Border Outposts was totally restricted due to bridge destruction near Reni village.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah have spoken to the Chief Minister to take stock of the situation in the state.

A dam of the Tapovan power project was breached and feared to have been washed away

Image: Google Earth

Alaknanda river at Vishnupur

Tapovan Power project Channel

Rishi Ganga power project

### AIADMK goes to police against Sasikala

CHENNAI

Ahead of expelled leader Sasikala's return on February 8 to Tamil Nadu from Karnataka, the ruling AIADMK has lodged a complaint with police against her camp, alleging a 'conspiracy' to unleash 'violence' and sought action to ensure peace in the State. While Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam chief and Sasikala's nephew Dhinakaran rubbished the conspiracy allegation as defamatory and lies, the police department warned of action against 'activities contrary to law.' The AIADMK's allegation came ahead of her return to TN from Bengaluru after her recovery from Covid-19 and following completion of her jail term in a corruption case.

## 'As Minister, I was against power projects on Ganga'

NEW DELHI

BJP leader Uma Bharti on Sunday said the Uttarakhand flood tragedy triggered by a glacier burst is a matter of concern as well as a warning, and added that as a minister she had spoken against having any power project on the Ganga and its major tributaries.

Bharti was the minister of water resources, river development and Ganga rejuvenation during the first term of the Modi government.

In a series of tweets in Hindi, she said the glacier breaking off had damaged a power project,



Uma Bharti

triggering the massive crisis. This tragedy that has happened in Rishi Ganga in the Himalayas is a matter of concerns as well as a warning, she said. "When I was a minister, my ministry in its affidavit about the dams in Uttarakhand in the Himalayas had requested that it is a very sensitive region, and, therefore, power projects should not be built on the Ganges and its main tributaries," she said. She said the electricity shortfall caused by that decision could have been met by the national greed. Bharti said she was in Uttarkashi on Saturday and is now in Haridwar.

### Advance booking for flowers for Valentine week

LUCKNOW

With the Valentine week having begun on Sunday with Rose Day, young couples have started advance booking for flowers.

"The flower business had wilted completely during the lockdown. Weddings were low key affairs and since public events were not being held, the demand for flower decorations and bouquets had gone down too. Finally, business is blooming with the advent of the Valentine Week," said Gaurav Krishna who runs a flower shop in the Gomti Nagar.

He said that most florists were cautious initially in ordering large quantities of flowers.

"But since Saturday, we have been flooded with advance booking -- seen for the first time in Valentine week. We have increased our orders too," he informed.

### 52-yr-old farmer commits suicide

NEW DELHI

In yet another unfortunate case of farmer suicide, a farmer from Jind in Haryana who was taking part in the farmers' protests outside the national capital, allegedly died by suicide near the tikri protest site on Sunday, police said.

According to officials, the farmers allegedly died by hanging himself from a tree. Police said, the 52-year-old farmer left a suicide note adding that its authenticity is being verified. This comes just days after a protesting farmer died in Delhi on Republic Day after his tractor overturned.

"The farmer, Karamveer Singh, hailed from a village in Jind. He was found hanging from a tree in a park, which is around two kilometres away from the Tikri border," Bahadurgarh City police station SHO Vijay Kumar said adding that his body was found on Sunday morning.

According to the police, the hand-written suicide note purportedly left behind by the deceased said, "Dear farmer brethren, Modi government is giving date after date... No one knows when these black farm laws will be rolled back." Over a fortnight ago, another farmer from Haryana had allegedly consumed a poisonous substance at the Tikri border. He died during treatment at a Delhi hospital, later. In December, a lawyer from Punjab had allegedly killed himself by consuming poison a few kilometres away from the protest site at the Tikri border.

# Ali Manikfan: The versatile genius without formal education

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

THE locals of Olavanna in Kozhikode used to see an upright, lean person wearing Arabian clothing walking towards his home. They only knew that he was a retired official from Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) living here and was from Lakshadweep.

But, when television screens flashed the name of Ali Manikfan among the Padma awardees, the people were lost in words as to who they had ignored albeit unknowingly.

Mohammed Basheer and P.R. Ramachandran, employees of a private firm in Olavanna said, "He is lean and frail but walked straight and with a twinkle in his eyes but we never knew who he was until the news flashed that he was awarded the Padma Shri."

Manikfan, who is currently living in a rented accommodation along with his wife in Olavanna, was sent to Kannur in Kerala for studies but after fifth standard he did not pursue formal education and returned to Minicoy, his home town in Lakshadweep Islands.

He was a keen observer, knew almost every fish that inhabited the sea off the Minicoy islands and this observation turned into a passion for fishes. This motivated him to study more about fishes, their origin and everything in and out about them.

The research in fishes got him a job at the CMFRI where he discovered a rare fish which has been named after him - Abudedefduf Manikfani.

He can speak, read and write 14 languages including French, German, English, Arabic and other lan-



guages and uses seven of them to communicate.

In 1981, he was invited to Oman to make a ship, a replica of the one believed to be used by Sinbad, the Sailor, during his voyages. He was invited by the Irish voyager Tim Sirven who wanted it to be made without metals.

Ali and his made a 27-m long ship using timber and coir in an year. Named "Sohar" after the town of Sohar in Oman. Tim and his team travelled 9,000 km from Oman to China on it and it is now kept in a museum in Oman.

Manikfan told IANS, "Those days metal was not used for making ships and hence we had to replicate one using timber."

This ship sailed up to China from Oman and is still kept at Oman museum."

Another major interest of Manikfan is Lunar calen-

dar and he has built one calendar based on the New moon and on astronomical algorithms.

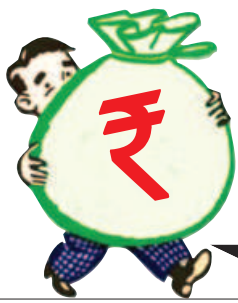
The multifaceted personality had invented a bicycle with roller motor and travelled to New Delhi along with his son Musa. Another of his interest is agriculture and he has converted a barren 15 acre land at Tirunelveli in Tamil Nadu into a lush green farm land using indigenous methods of cultivation. He also built a residential premises using traditional materials.

He is now basking in the glory of Padma Shri award but local people vouch that there is no difference in his attitude even after this honour.

Ramachandran said, "He is a great personality and down to earth, we never knew who he was until media reported about him. The local people are planning a grand programme to felicitate him."



“Bull markets are born on pessimism, grow on skepticism, mature on optimism and die of euphoria”  
- John Templeton



## IMPORT DUTY CUT TO BOOST GOLD DEMAND

HC UPADHYAY

The new government of President Joe Biden in the US seems to have started off well as the economic parameters suggest. Within our country too, markets zoomed to the new heights following the bumper Union budget presented on February 1. Consequently, New York gold closed at \$1815.20 (per Ounce) while silver closed at \$26.74 (per Ounce). Platinum and palladium closed at \$1121 (per Ounce) and \$2,274 (per Ounce) respectively.

Other economic parameters remained moderate. Brent closed at \$59.34 (per barrel) while Crude MCX oil was quoted at Rs 4,144 (per barrel). While Gold MCX stood at Rs 47,270 (per 10 gms), MCX Silver closed at Rs 68,671 (per kg), Copper MCX closed at Rs 610.10 (per kg). Sensex and Nifty 50 after touching the record levels of 51,000 and 15,000 following the presentation of Union budget closed at 50,731.63 and 14,924.25 points respectively on the closing day, the leading foreign currencies' exchange rates were, US \$: Rs 72.79, British Pound: Rs 99.99, Euro: Rs 87.68, Singapore \$: Rs 54.57, Swiss Franc: Rs 80.96, Australian \$: Rs 55.88, Saudi Riyal: Rs 1941, New Zealand Dollar: Rs 52.27, Kuwaiti Dinar: Rs 240.42, Omani Rial: Rs 189.16 and UAE Dirham: Rs 19.82, Japanese Yen: Rs 0.69, Hong Kong Dollar: Rs 9.39.

In local markets, the renewed optimism was seen in the jewelry market, thanks to the Finance Minister who announced the 5 per cent cut in the import duty on gold. There is great demand for gold ornaments in the USA, Canada and Middle East countries. The import-duty reduction will also provide the much needed boost to the gold-making units which are spread over in the MSME sector.

# Positive reforms give fillip to markets

FM takes the risk of balancing between populism, reform and growth in admirable fashion

CHERUKURI KUTUMBA RAO

Saluting to the Union Budget, markets traded exuberantly all through the week and the benchmark indices the Nifty, the Bank Nifty and the Sensex witnessed a parabolic and vertical rise during the week ended. The BSE Sensex spiked by 4,446 points to 50,732 and the Nifty jumped 1,289 points to 13,634.60. Bank Nifty rallied by over 15 per cent this week. While the benchmark indices rose nearly 9.5 per cent, broader markets marginally underperformed, as the Nifty Midcap, Smallcap gained 7 per cent each. It is pertinent to observe that markets recorded the highest ever jump on Budget day in a decade and posted its best weekly gain since April 2020. FIIs have pumped up more than Rs 13,500 crore in the cash segment of the equity markets so far in February.

Positive global cues, Budget push, renewed buying by FIIs, strong Q3 earnings reports, coupled with the dovish outlook from the RBI MPC meeting are some of the factors that fuelled the risk-on rally. Positive economic reforms in the Budget that aimed at economic growth through infrastructure development, capex incentives, setting up of bad bank, privatisation, and asset monetisation gave fillip to markets. FM took the risk of balancing between populism, reform and growth under a weak fiscal position in admirable fashion. RBI's Monetary Policy Committee, which met after the Union Budget 2021 on Friday, decided to retain an accommodative policy stance at least for the current financial year and into the next to revive growth as inflation

has eased below 'tolerance level of 6 per cent'.

Apart from the accommodative stance, MPC said funds from banks via the TLTRO scheme will also be available to NBFCs. Additionally, banks have been exempted from keeping cash reserve ratio requirements against loans disbursed to new MSME borrowers. Key macroeconomic data to watch in the coming week are IIP numbers, Inflation data and global cues like US Jobless data.

Heard on the street

The recent experience of GameStop on Wall Street is heralding a real revolution on Wall Street. Invention of a new financial adventurism: swarm trading; wherein together several online traders bid up the prices of some obscure firms has triggered vast losses to hedge funds that had bet on share prices falling. Look beyond the memes and the mania, though, and the GameStop story tells us something about the deep structural changes in financial markets. The fact that the fast-paced frenzy was possible is a testament to just how frictionless trading stocks has become, aided by technological advances. Shares can be bought on an app while you queue for a coffee, at a price that is whisker-close to the wholesale price. A new epoch for retail investors is just beginning and technology may soon make markets for all kinds of assets as liquid as the stock market, say observers. Information technology is being used to make trading free, shift information flows and catalyse new business models, transforming how



markets work and bring big long-term benefits. Far from being a passing fad, the disruption of markets will intensify. Wherever we look, technology has helped create new, liquid markets. Insider-dealing and manipulation rules also need to be modernised to deal with new information flows.

Futures & options sector watch

Mirroring the exuberance in the cash markets, derivative segment witnessed "sizzling" activity. Overshadowing the Nifty, Bank Nifty was the flavour of the week. Bank Nifty outperformed the Nifty index by a whopping 7 per cent. On the option front, the maximum Call OI is at 16,000 followed by 15,500 whereas the maximum Put OI recorded at 14,000 followed by 14,500. Call writing at strike prices 15,100 and 15,200 indicates upside will be limited in near term. Spike in VIX suggests continued volatility in next few sessions. Stay away from creating any fresh exposure in the frontline high-beta stocks warns savvy old timers.

Sectorally, all major indices ended in green led by financials, metal, infra

and auto. Apart from the PSU banks which rallied on the back of surge in SBI stock price, private banks like IndusInd Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, RBL Bank, Axis Bank and HDFC Bank logged impressive gains. Setting up of Bad Bank, Developmental Finance Institution and privatization of PSU banks will be a great positive for the ecosystem. Stay overweight on the sector. Use corrections for entry into good counters. Sector churning was clearly evident with cement, autos, and later in the week the pharma participating in the rally. Scrapage policy gave impetus to auto sector. Use declines to buy Tata motors and Ashok Leyland. Considered defensive bets, pharma and consumption stocks, are witnessing renewed buying. Coming out of recent hibernation several pharma counters are poised for comeback rally. After recent correction Dr Reddy's and Cipla look attractive for short term gains. Sharp selloff in Zee Entertainment is likely to be short lived. Rumours of valuation of OTT division and possible PE player's entry are doing rounds. Contrarian buying suggested for target price of Rs 275 in next few weeks. Stock futures looking good are ITC, Divi's Labs, PEL, Godrej Properties and Ultratech Cement.

Stock picks

Ahlada Engineers Limited is pioneer in residential, commercial steel doors, windows, clean room equipment and furniture for industrial, commercial and residential applications. It makes OEM supplies to Tata Steel. The company supplies equipment to the pharma, biotech, real estate and food industries. Using opportunities that have emerged due to Covid-19 the

company manufactured and supplied isolation and quarantine wards during the current fiscal. The manufacturing facility in Hyderabad is equipped to produce over 300,000 steel doors and 60,000 steel windows a year. It is pertinent to note that the company has come out with a public issue of equity shares at Rs 150 each including share premium of Rs 140 per equity share in September, and have been listed on the Emerge platform of NSE. The stock has now been moved to main board for trading and attracting attention of savvy investors. With cash reserves of over Rs 100 crores and free float market cap of just Rs 36 crores, Ahlada Engineers is good buy for medium term target of Rs 150.

Kabra Extrusion Technik Limited is engaged in the sale of plastic extrusion machinery. The company also manufactures allied equipment and specialises in providing plastic extrusion machinery for manufacturing pipes and films. It offers a spectrum of plastics extrusion solutions for pipes, drip tubes, monolayer-multi-layer blown films, pelletising, mixers and profiles. The company has now diversified to provide advanced lithium-ion battery packs with battery management systems (BMS) for electric vehicles (EVs) transportation under the brand name 'BATTRIXX'. Being the first company entering the sunrise industry of Lithium Ion battery packs, this expansion will be game changer for the company. Buy in the range of Rs 100-110 for medium term target of Rs 175.

(The author is a stock market expert. He is former vice chairman of AP Planning Board)

## Is it time to book profits from the portfolio?



K Naresh Kumar

The equities markets have created another lifetime high. The larger benchmark indices have been on a tear ever since the shortest bear market that we experienced last march. We're now witnessing the sharpest recovery in the history of the markets with major indices across the world notching up their all-time highs. This is at the backdrop of the one of the largest human suffering where the pandemic has infections have crossed over 100 million of the global population resulting in deaths of over 2.28 million.

Of course, to counter the spread of the virus, world governments have responded with lockdowns and restrictive movements causing widespread unemployment many temporary and some permanent with no clarity of the timelines for the normalcy.

The governments also have loosened their purse strings to release fiscal stimuli at their affordability with a coordinated effort from the respective central banks through monetary packages. This near synchronicity has not only arrested the economic slide but also manifested in a recovery that was not envisaged

### Time spent in the market trumps over timing the mkt over the long run

as the turmoil unfolded. While some experts note that the loose liquidity along with the helicopter money (loose fiscal policy) has led to the investors to rush into riskier assets driving their valuations up. Some other opine that as the interest rates dived southwards, savers looking for better returns were coerced to pursue riskier assets. Of course, with interest rates at zero or near-zero in the advanced economies,



stocks should be acquired at whatever price. All these opposing views, however, are pointing to further rise in the equity valuations and thus newer highs for the equity markets.

For the ordinary investor, who were appalled at the jaw-dropping falls during March and the unbelievable rise thereafter are confused. They see that the Wall Street (stock markets) is devoid of the main street (real economy) and are not reflecting the actual conditions. This mismatch has ensued to continued redemp-

The best way to address this conundrum is through a defined asset allocation in tune with the life goals. This would allow an investor continuing to commit to the path of investing while enduring the volatility associated with the markets

markets continue to run-up post the rationalisation of profits, what to do with the booked gains? And the current interest rate scenario is unattractive to divert them into a fixed deposit or debt funds.

Compounding works well with time and studies have proven that time spent in the market trumps over timing the market over the long run. It's true that viewing the nominal gains wouldn't make us enjoy the fruits of returns from an investment, likewise, nominal losses shouldn't bother us. The best way to address this conundrum is through a defined asset allocation in tune with the life goals. This would allow an investor continuing to commit to the path of investing while enduring the volatility associated with the markets.

As each of the goals are defined, the sense of investing is frozen and these distractions could be easily overcome. This also resists from withdrawing the investments unnecessarily and the only timing is to match the goal requirements. While planning to invest it's always important to create a portfolio that allocates funds across the spectrum of the market in sync with the timelines. One should, however, first have clear provisions for emergency funds and also have sufficient risk cover to overcome exigencies through insurance.

(The author is a co-founder of "Wealocity", a wealth management firm and could be reached at knk@wealocity.com)

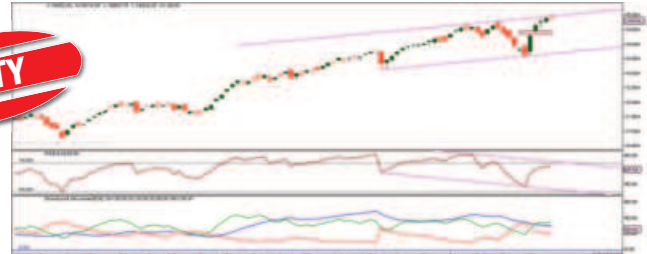
## Mkt trading in overvalued zone

THOVITI BRAHMACHARY

The Indian stock market bounced with the union Budget and rallied above 15,000 levels during the week. It is one of the most positive closing weeks in the past decade and registered a second highest Budget day gain. The market has a tremendous weekly gain. For all the five sessions, it closed positively. The Nifty was up by 1,290 points or 9.46 per cent during the week. BSE Sensex gained by 9.6 per cent. On the sectoral front, the PSU Bank index is the top gainer with a whopping 25 per cent. The BankNifty and FinNifty advanced by 15 per cent each. Auto, metal and realty indices were up by 10-14 per cent during the week. The broader indices Nifty Midcap-100 and Smallcap-100 were up by 7.3 per cent and 6.4 per cent respectively. After a one-week pause, the FIIs bought Rs 13,595.16 crore worth of equities during the week. The DIIs slowed down the selling. They sold just Rs 4712.60 crore. The advance-decline ratio is positive during the week.

The Nifty rose by 99.89 per cent (doubled) from the March low. It is important to keep in mind that we are trading in the overextended and overvalued zone. It is obvious that the market tops are formed when the optimism is high. The current market condition is no exception to that. But, we need to have technical evidence to suspect any top in place or not.

On the front of the indicator, nothing is negative on daily or weekly charts. The MACD is showing the bullish momentum on the daily and



weekly chart. But the Directional movement indicators are showing a different picture. On 29th January the ADX is 35.23. After this date, the Nifty rose by 10 per cent. But, the trend strength indicator was down to 30.41. Does it mean trend strength weaken? On a weekly chart, it is flat at 27.70. This is the first caution for not to be aggressively bullish. The second point of interest is that the RSI is moving in a downward channel, and the price is moving higher. With 10 per cent correction previous week, the indicators came out from an overbought condition. In this process, the indicator made a new low, which is divergent from the price. One way this is indicating these divergences hinting some probable negative outcomes in the near future. These all only caution, not the confirmations.

In 1992, it was an Old Economy bubble based on asset valuations. When it was bust, the old economy stocks like Tisco, Tata motors and ACC fell by 90 per cent. In 2000, it was a new economy bubble base on Y2K or Dot bubble or IT bubble. The bubble bust as 90 per cent fall in then the benchmark for the sector, BSE IT index fell sharply by 90 per cent. In 2008, it was Real Estate or Construction bubble when it

busts the BSE Reality index also lost by 90 per cent. If the current scenario believes that the ownership is changing towards foreign hands, as the domestic institutions are selling at a record level. The latest data needs to check on this front. In a majority of Nifty-500 stocks dominated by FIIs holdings. For the last five weeks, the Dollar index up by 2.7 per cent. Any further bounce will lead to profit booking by the FIIs. In such a case, coincides with a weekly price confirmation, the current market may lead to a Foreign Investment bubble. Watch the FI figures for the next two months.

The 50DMA also stands there as major support. Before that, there is major support, the gap area of 2nd February 14336- 14469 zone will act as a critical support for the near term. Keep in mind these levels. Any breakdown below these levels will lead another down leg. For the short term trades, a close below the prior day low is a weak signal. Ride the up-trend as long as the Nifty is making higher highs on a daily chart.

(The author is a financial journalist and technical analyst. He can be reached at tbchary@gmail.com)

### DERIVATIVES OUTLOOK

DASARI SREENIVASA RAO

The futures and options (F&O) data is pointing to the support level higher by 400 points, while the resistance level remains at 16,000 strike. The highest concentration of Call OI is at 16,000 strike followed by 15,500/15,000/15,200 strikes. Coming to the Put side, 14,000 strike has the highest Put OI followed by 14,500/13,500/13,000 strikes. Dhirender Singh Bisht, senior research analyst (derivatives) at SMC Global Securities Ltd, said:

"From derivatives front, short covering was done by Call writers at 14,500 and 14,700 strikes, while Put writers were seen shifting to higher bands." As per the data on ICICI Direct.com, a significant Call

## PUT WRITERS SHIFTING TO HIGHER BANDS

VIX for the week at 23.12%; Put-Call Ratio of OI at 1.62 indicates more Put writing

option concentration was at ATM 15,000 strike for both weekly and monthly settlement. Further closure of positions can take the index above these levels. On downsides, incremental Put writing was seen at 14,700 strike, which remains immediate support for the index. The Nifty has started the new series with relatively low Open Interest and despite the recent up move, no major OI accumulation was seen suggesting low leverage.

"Indian markets surged sharply high in the week gone by as both the indices marked their lifetime highs. Nifty moved above 15,000 levels and corrected, while Bank Nifty also tested 36,600 level posting their best weekly advance since

April 2020," remarked Bisht.

The NSE Nifty exhibited a strong reversal post-Budget and witnessed one of the best weekly returns since 2009 as the key indices gained almost 10 per cent during the week. Once again, the banking stocks took the lead and the Bank Nifty recovered 20 per cent in the week triggered by both PSU and private-sector heavyweights.

Bisht forecasts: "From the technical front, secondary oscillators suggest that markets are likely to remain volatile in upcoming sessions with more likely stock-specific action. However, derivatives data also suggests that a tug of war between bulls and bears is likely to keep Nifty indices in broader range

of 14,700 to 15,000 levels. However, the next upside in the index would continue once Nifty surpassed above 15,000 levels decisively."

Despite the sharp up move, the volatility index India VIX has remained elevated and did not move below 23. While closure among Call writers can be attributed to elevated volatility, analysts predict drop in volatility from onwards. Sustainability at current levels may be considered a sign of caution after recent sharp upsides.

The Implied Volatility of Calls closed at 20.08 per cent, while that for Put options closed at 21.47. The Nifty VIX for the week closed at 23.12 per cent. Put-Call Ratio of OI for the week closed at 1.62 and it

F&O TRADING			
Product	Contracts	Turnover (Rs/cr)	Premium (Rs/cr)
Index Futures	5,29,257	51,203.04	--
Stock Futures	10,81,751	99,638.48	--
Index Options	2,20,61,139	21,66,650.08	19,679.18
Stock Options	20,23,994	1,90,858.39	5,906.27
F&O Total	2,56,96,141	25,08,349.99	25,585.45

Source: NSE. As on Feb 05, 2021

indicates more Put writing than Calls," added Bisht. FIIs turned net buyers and bought Rs 6,115 crore in equities after the Budget announcement. On the other hand, domestic institutions avoided any major buying and turned net buyers of just Rs 56 crore in equities during the week. While the major moves were seen in infra and banking, stocks from the pharma and technology space relatively underperformed. In the F&O space, FIIs re-

mained net buyers as they bought index options to the tune of Rs 8,136 crore, while they sold Rs 469 crore in index futures and Rs 93 crore in the stock futures.

Bank Nifty

The NSE's banking index Bank Nifty closed at 35,654.50 points, a net gain of 5,089 points or 16.64 per cent from 30,565.50 points.

Bank Nifty futures rallied about 5,450 points last week and managed

to surpass its Call base of 36,000. However, post the RBI monetary policy, profit booking was visible and it reverted sharply from higher levels. IndusInd Bank, SBI and Axis Bank outperformed other banking stocks, whereas supportive price action was also there in other PSU banks. Even after the announcement of Budget and RBI policy, IVs continue to remain at elevated levels, which provided added advantage to option writers. Deep OTM strike, which is 2,000 points away, witnessed a good build-up in OI positions indicating broader trading range in coming days.

The sizeable Call base for the Bank Nifty is placed at 36,500 from where it reverted last Friday whereas the highest base is at 37,000 strike. Analysts predict profit booking and that may push Bank Nifty to test its intermediate support of 35,000 from where rally towards 37,000 is possible.



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