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COIMBATORE I SATURDAY 20 | FEBRUARY 2021

### WEATHER



### ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Maasi 8 Tithi: Ashtami/ Navami Star: Rohini Rahukalam: 9 am to 10.30 am Yamagandam: 1.30 pm to 3 pm **PRAYERS** Fajar: 5.20 am Zohar: 12.28 pm

**Asar:** 3.44 pm Maghrib: 6.15 pm Isha: 7.27 pm **SUNSET TODAY 6.16 PM** 

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.30 AM **MOONRISE TODAY 12.10 PM MOONSET TOMORROW 1.16 AM** 



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(+89)1,09,76,739 1,56,239

covid19india.org STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+448)TN: 8,47,385

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

11.10,40,682 **DEATHS** £24,57,011

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES 219 worldometers.info

### India crosses 1 crore

vaccination milestone

New Delhi: Over one crore Covid-19 vaccine doses have been administered in the country till now with the highest single-day vaccinations of more than 6 lakh jabs given on Thursday, the Union health ministry said on Friday. Of the 1,04,49,942 doses administered, joint secretary in the Union health ministry, Mandeep Bhandari, said 70,52,845 vaccine healthcare workers and 33.97.097 to frontline workers whose vaccination started on February 2. Of the 70,52,845 vaccination doses, 62,95,903 healthcare workers were administered the first dose, while 7,56,942 healthcare workers were given the second

"A total of 6,58,674 vaccinations were done on February 18, which is the highest single-day vaccinations during the ongoing Covid-19 vaccination drive," Bhandari said. While till 6 pm on Friday, 2,61,935 vaccinations were carried out. He said 41 hospitalisations have been reported till now out of which 25 have been discharged treatment.





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# India, China complete pulling troops back

### **■** Corps commanders of two countries will meet in Moldo today

PAWAN BALI | DC NEW DELHI, FEB. 19

Indian and Chinese soldiers have completed their disengagement from the most contentious friction point of Pangong Tso in eastern Ladakh after nine months of their eyeball-toeyeball military standoff. Now the Indian and Chinese corps commanders will meet in Moldo on Saturday morning for the 10th round of talks to discuss disengagement in other friction points in Ladakh -- the Depsang Plains and Gogra-Hot Springs.
China on Friday for the

first time officially acknowledged that four of its People's Liberation Army soldiers were killed and one officer seriously injured in the clashes with Indian troops in June last year in the Galwan Valley. The Indian Army had lost 20 soldiers, including Col. B. Santosh Babu, commanding officer of 16 Bihar, during that clash. Earlier this week, the head of the Indian Army's Northern Command, Lt.



In this image taken from video footage run Feb. 19, 2021 by China's CCTV via AP Video, soldiers bandage the head of China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) regimental commander Qi Fabao as Indian and Chinese troops face off in the Galwan Valley on the disputed border between China and India disputed border between China and India, June 15, 2020. China's military said Friday, Feb. 19, 2021 that four of its soldiers were killed in a high-mountain border clash with Indian forces last year, the first time Beijing has publicly conceded its side suffered casualties in the deadliest incident between the Asian giants in nearly 45 years.

Gen. Y.K. Joshi, had said that Indian observers had counted more than 60 Chinese casualties being picked up on stretchers and taken back after the clash. "But whether they were fatal or non-fatal, we can't say with authority so I will not give a figure. But

Russian (news) agency Tass had put out a figure of 45 (Chinese soldiers killed in the clash) and I think that could be the figure we can look at," he had said.

Both India and China have withdrawn around 200 tanks and armoured

CHINA ADMITS DEATH OF 4 SOLDIERS China has vacated the area between Finger 4 and Finger 8 on the north bank of Pangong Tso

China dismantled military infrastructure at Finger 5, including a jetty and a helipad.

Indian and Chinese soldiers have vacated the Kailash range on the southern bank of Pangong

India and China have withdrawn around 200 tanks and armoured vehicles.

India claims that its territory is up to Finger 8. Corps commanders to meet today in Moldo.

China, for the first time, admits death of four

Under the India-China agreement, the Chinese troops will move east of Finger 8 on the north bank of Pangong Tso while the Indian troops will move to their permanent base at Dhan Singh Thapa Post near Finger 3. There will be a 'temporary' freeze in the patrolling by both sides in the area between Finger 4 and Finger 8 on the north bank of Pangong Tso till both sides reach an agreement in the diplomatic and mili-

> vehicles and troops from the north and south bank of Pangong Tso.

The speed with which the disengagement, which started on January 10, has been completed by the Chinese PLA has taken many observers by surprise as it looked that they had come in for the long haul. China had built a large number of structures in the Finger area on the north bank of Pangong Tso and had deployed a significant number of its troops.
China has now vacated

the area between Finger 4 and Finger 8 on the north bank of Pangong Tso, which its troops had occupied in May 2020. India claims that its territory is up to Finger 8. The Chinese soldiers have dismantled the military infrastructure they had set up at Finger 5, which includes a jetty and a helipad. Both Indian and Chinese soldiers have also vacated the Kailash range on the southern bank of Pangong Tso.

The Indian Army had on Tuesday released videos which showed Chinese s dismantling san-temporary structroops tures, and loading supplies and provisions onto trucks. The Chinese soldiers were also seen using earthmovers to dismantle shelters and restoring the landforms as per the agreeTsitsipas, in final



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■ Anti-CAA protests, lockdown violations

### No action against protesters: CM

ARULOLI M | DC TENKASI, FEB. 19

Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami on Friday announced the withdrawal of about 10 lakh cases registered against anti-CAA protestors and those who violated Covid-19 lockdown norms across the state.

Addressing a mammoth election gathering at Kadayanallur in Tenkasi district, the Chief Minister recalled the public protests that broke out across the state against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019. The protesters had then taken out rallies, burnt effigies and also copies of the Act, resulting in the state police registering as many as 1,500 cases against the protesters. "Barring cases registered

for specific offences involving violence and cases registered for preventing the police from discharging their duties, all the other cases against CAA protestors are withdrawn," he declared, to the great jubila-

knife following an altercation at round 4.30 pm. She

collapsed and fell on the

floor. Murahari and Kumari, Keerthana's par-

ents who stay with the cou-

ple, tried to stop Dr Gokul Kumar but he stabbed

them, too, repeatedly. Mr

Murahari suffered serious

injuries on his abdomen,

tion of the crowd. Extending a similar gesture to thousands of others against whom cases were registered under the Tamil Nadu Public Health Act and Epidemic Diseases Act for violation of lockdown norms, the Chief Minister announced, "Further investigation in cases connected to Corona norms violation will be dropped at the larger interest of the public.' About 10 lakh such cases were registered for violation of the pandemic health norms. Mr Palaniswami announced that his government would positively consider withdrawal of cases against those who partici-

pated in the protests against the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project (KKNPP) in Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi and Kanyakumari districts.

TOOLKIT CASE

### Delhi court sends Disha Ravi to three-day judicial custody

New Delhi, Feb. 19: A Delhi court Friday sent climate activist Disha Ravi, arrested for allegedly being involved in sharing a 'toolkit' on social media related to the farmers" protest, to three-day

judicial custody. Additional chief metropol-Jain sent Ravi, 21, to jail after Delhi Police produced her before the court on expiry of her five-day custodial interrogation.

Police said that her custodial interrogation was not required for the time being and the agency may seek her further interrogation once her co-accused --Shantanu Mukul and Nikita Jacob -- join the interrogation.

evasive during her previous interrogation and tried to shift blame on the co-accused. Mr Mukul and Ms Jacob

have been asked to appear before the investigating agency on February 22,

My aim is to help BJP come

New Delhi, Feb. 19: Set to

enter the political fray by

joining the BJP next week,

technocrat E. Sreedharan

on Friday said his main aim is to help the party

come to power in Kerala

and that he will be open to chief ministership. He also

said that the focus will be

on developing infrastruc-

ture in a big way and bring the state out of the debt

trap if the BJP wins the

assembly polls that are

likely to be held in April-

May this year.

to power: Sreedharan

Police said Ms Ravi was



Disha Ravi

the agency told the court. The defence lawyer opposed the police plea and urged the court to release Ms Ravi.

He further said that there was an apprehension of tampering of the evidence by police as the "case diary is not properly made...and in volume form. There's no ground to keep her in any custody, police custody or judicial custody. I (Ravi) ought to be released right now". The court was also informed that the accused has moved a bail application which will come up for hearing Saturday. — PTI

### Shah justifies arrest, says age no matter

Delhi, Feb.19: Justifying Delhi Police's arrest of 22-year-old climate justice activist Disha Ravi in the 'toolkit' case, Amit Shah said that age, gender and profession are not relevant in assessing the culpability of the

#### Shah summoned by special court in defamation case

Kolkata, Feb 19: A designated MP/MLA court in West Bengal issued sumto Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday to appear either personally or through a lawyer before it on February 22 in connection with a defamation case lodged against him by Trinamool Congr-ss MP Abhishek Banerjee. -PTI

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC

In a sensational act, a lone militant on Friday afterassailant running away amid commotion caused by the terror act.

both of them succumbed to their injuries soon, the police and hospital sources police (Kashmir range), Vijay Kumar, said, "The terrorist fired indiscriminately upon the police personnel who were unarmed concealed under his pher-

### **Terrorist guns down two policemen** in upmarket Srinagar area

SRINAGAR, FEB. 19

noon appeared in a busy marketplace in Srinagar, walked a few steps, took out an AK assault rifle concealed under his pheran (the traditional outfit) and fired at two policemen standing by the roadside. CCTV footage of the shooting, which went viral soon, shows the cops falling on the ground and the

The injured policemen were rushed to hospital but said. Inspector general of with the automatic weapon

### Nasa's rover makes historic Mars landing

**Cape Canaveral, Feb. 19**: A Nasa rover streaked through the orange Martian sky and Thursday, accomplishing the riskiest step yet in an epic quest to bring back rocks that could answer whether life ever existed on Mars.

Ground controllers at the agency's Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, leaped to their feet, thrust their arms in the air and

Ground controllers at the space agency's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, leaped to their feet, thrust their arms in the air and cheered in both triumph and relief on receiving confirmation that the six-wheeled Perseverance had touched down on the red planet, long a deathtrap for incoming spacecraft

cheered in both triumph and relief on receiving confirmation that the sixwheeled Perseverance had

touched down on the red planet, long a deathtrap for incoming spacecraft. "Now the amazing science

starts," a jubilant Thomas Zurbuchen, NASA's science mission chief, said at a news conference, where he the atrically ripped up the contingency plan in the event of a failure and threw the document over his shoulders.

The landing marks the third visit to Mars in just over a week. Two spacecraft from the United Arab Emirates and China swung into orbit around Mars on successive days last week. — AP

### Doc stabs wife, crushes her under car wheels on her neck with a kitchen

SINDHIYA SAMUEL & P.A. JEBARAJ | DC

35-year-old doctor stabbed his wife and crushed her to death under the wheels of his car in broad daylight in full public view on the outskirts of the state capital on Friday, police said. Originally

Tindiyanam, Dr Gokul Kumar (35), who used to work at a private hospital married in Potheri, Keerthana (28), a native of



Gokul Kumar and Keerthana

ago. They had filed for a

divorce as disagreement cropped up one year after their marriage Reports said Dr Gokul

while Ms Kumari sus-

tained minor cuts on her Eyewitnesses told police that after stabbing Keerthana and her par-Dr Cokul

allegedly pulled his wife out to the road, and let her bleed. He drove his car from the parking space and crushed her to death under the wheels of his car

before fleeing the scene. Madurantakam police reached the spot after being alerted by the neigbours a few minutes after the incident rushed the severely injured Mr Murahari to M a d u r a n t a k a m Government hospital. The police later shifted the body of Keerthana to Chengalpet government hospital for

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A third year law student of the Vellore government law college, Rahul Ganesh, son of auto driver Somu, a resident of Ariyoor in the district, undertook a 12-km marathon rally to spread awareness among the public about the concept of environmental conservation, global warming, creation of forests for rain and unpolluted air, and the dangers of using plastics. Vellore CEO, Gunasekaran, flagged off the rally, which Rahul commenced from the Chittoor bus stand in Katpadi. - K. Senthil Nathan

#### **Health dept** orders to not use paediatric vaccines

Coimbatore, Feb. 19: The health department here on Friday asked the anganwadis and primary health centres (PHCs) not to use a particular batch of vaccines following the death of two infants a couple of days ago.

Postmortem revealed the death of one infant due to pneumonia and the cause of the other death was yet to be ascertained, sources in the department said.

Since the parents were panicky, the department ordered not to use the particular batch of paediatric vaccines until fur-ther orders, even as the condition of nearly 35 babies vaccinated at both the centres was reported normal, they said.

The babies, aged 2.5 months and three months, died after they were given pentavalent, rotavirus and oral polio vaccines at an anganawadi at Masakalipalayam and in a PHC at Sowripaqlayam in the city on Thursday. -PTI

### **BJP** will get two digit in TN **Assembly: Reddy**

DC CORRESPONDENT THAN JAVUR, FFB, 19

The BJP will enter the Tamil Nadu assembly with a two-digit strength of MLAs after the coming state assembly election, said P. Sudhakar Reddy, national co-in charge of BJP for Tamil Nadu elections, here on Friday.

Describing the chances of NDA's victory in the assembly election as bright, he said the party high command will decide on the number of seats to be asked in the NDA alliance for the elections.

He said the response to his tour in Tamil Nadu and enthusiasm shown by people are indications of the growth of BJP in the state.

He said the farmers' agitation at Delhi borders will not have any impact on the state assembly elections. "We got maximum number of seats in Bihar assembly election and Hyderabad corporation election which were held after the agitation was launched by farmers. Only farmers from Punjab and Haryana are participating in the agitation. Some outside elements have also mingled with farmers and are creating problems. Farmers in the rest of the country are happy with the central government. They know that APMC and MSP will continue. In my opinion, farmers associations agitating in Delhi are not interested in finding a solution to the problem. The central government is open for talks and held talks 11 times so far" Reddy said.

He blamed the former UPA government and the DMK for the increasing petroleum prices. "When we wanted to bring petroleum products under GST, many state governments opposed it as they don't want to lose the cess. However, the Centre is trying to find a solution" he said.

**Describing the** chances of NDA's victory in the assembly election as bright, he said the party high command will decide on the number of seats to be asked in the NDA alliance for the elections

## **Chennai reservoirs** brim ahead of summer

T. SUDHEESH I DC CHENNAI, FEB. 19

Though Chennai is experiencing sunny weather for over a month now, the city reservoirs continue to receive a steady inflow of water, marking the level way ahead of the same period last year. The data on water storage level, provided by Chennai Metro Water, shows at least 1,330 mcft additional water two months after Cyclone Nivar and subsequent flood situation that had forced the authorities to release water from reservoirs including Chembarambakkom and

The city reservoirs have received at least 26 mcft season. additional water since January 5. Now the total water storage level in the

**A. ARUL PALANI I DC** CHENNAI, FEB. 19

The Indian Coast Guard

Ship C-453, 17thof the 18

interceptor boat (IB) proj-

ect built indigenously, was

commissioned in Chennai on Friday by Leena Nandan, secretary, depart-

ment of consumer affairs.

The ship was constructed

Jiwesh Nandan, additional secretary, department of defence,

Krishnaswamy

Natarajan, director gener-

al, Coast Guard, Inspector

General S Paramesh, commander, Coast Guard region (East), JS Mann and other officials of

Coast Guard and L&T

ICGS C-453, the 27.80-meter-long IB with a dis-

shipyard were present.

58-year-old

man's body

by Larsen & Toubro Ltd.

The city reservoirs have received at least 26 mcft additional water since January 5. Now the total water storage level in the top five reservoirs stands at 11,012 mcft against the capacity of 11,757. This is almost double compared to last year in the same period, ie, 6,275 mcft

at 11,012 mcft against the capacity of 11,757. This is almost double compared to last year in the same period, ie, 6,275 mcft.

This is a big relief for the Chennai residents, as the city, which experiences water crisis from mid-March, is gearing up for yet another summer

C-453 commissioned

Animesh Sharma and

under the operational

Coast Guard region

control of commander,

placement of 105 tons and maximum speed of 45 knots (85 kmph), is capa-

ble of undertaking multi-

farious tasks including surveillance, interdiction,

close coast patrol, search

and rescue, in addition to

rendering assistance to boats and craft in distress

ICGS C-453 is commanded by assistant commandant Animesh Sharma

and will be based at

Chennai under the opera-

will be based at Chennai

commanded by assistant commandant

Coast Guard ship

Meanwhile, the water level at Redhill stands close to its capacity of At the 140-ft Poondi 3,208, which is 2 mcft rise reservoir, the biggest in the city, the water level from 3,206 on January 5 now stands at 3,101 mcft. against the full capacity of

while inflow is 30.

This is a dip from 3,135 mcft on January 5. here on December 4 was However, it was an increase from 2867 mcft 2,878 (87 percent) while storage was 2,715 in the (88 percent) on December same period last year. 4 against the full capacity However, the outflow is of 3,231. The water level on the same day last year was 1,767 mcft. The out-146 cusecs and inflow 140. The water level in Cholavaram, which has an

flow is 219 cusecs of water outflow of 10 cusecs with zero inflow, hit way high The water level in Chembarambakkam reservoir, where the outthis year compared to last year. Now the level stands at 880 mcft against 881 on January 5 while the storage in the same period last flow is 163 cusecs while inflow is nil, is 3, 325, a fall from 3,364 mcft on January 5 but a rise from year was just 69 mcft. Cholavaram has received 3,137 mcft on December 4 against a total capacity of 3,645. The water level on at least 290 mcft more within water months the same day last year was

Meanwhile, Kannankottai Thervoykandigai reservoir that gets an inflow of 5 cusecs without outflow, the water storage is 498 mcft on Friday while the level was 396 mcft on December 5.

### **TN reports 448** more fatalities

CHENNAI, FEB. 19

Tamil Nadu on Friday logged 448 new Covid-19 cases and seven more fatalities, taking the caseload to 8,47,385 and the toll to 12,451, the health department said. Recoveries outumbered new infections with 467 people being discharged, taking the cumulative number to 8,30,787, leaving 4,147 active cases.

Chennai accounted for the maximum number of

The metropolis also accounted for a little over one-third of the Covid fatalities at 4,134 deaths. Among the deceased, five had preexisting morbidities, while a 52-year-old man did not have any illness or comorbity, the bulletin said. —PTI

# new infections, 7

infections with 136, taking the total to 2,34,072.



Scrap to sculpture





Students at exibition opened by Chennai corporation at Tiruvanmiyur government school.

E.K. Sanjay

### **IUML** hails withdrawal of CAA protest cases

mander, Coast Guard

region (east).
The ship, on joining the

Coast Guard eastern fleet,

will be deployed exten-

sively for the country's

territorial exclusive eco-

nomic zone waters and other duties as enshrined

in the Coast Guard

Charter, to safeguard the

maritime interests of

India. The Coast Guard

will now have 157 ships & boats and 62 aircraft. Further, 40 ships are at various stages of construction at different ship words in India and 16

yards in India and 16 advanced light helicopters MK III are being accepted by Hindustan Aero-nautics Limited,

Bengaluru, which will

provide the added teeth to

the surveillance capabilities of the Coast Guard.

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 19

found in pond

The body of a 58-year-old man was recovered from a pond in Chennai's Indira Nagar under Shankar Nagar police limits on Thursday evening.

The deceased has been identified Ramalingam, a resident

of Pozhichalur in Pallavaram. He is survived by wife and two children. The incident came to

light when the family lodged a complaint at Shankar Nagar police station alleging that Ramalingam had gone missing three days ago.

Shankar Nagar police station received information about a man found dead in a pond in Indira Nagar. The police immediately rushed to the spot, seized the body and sent it to Chromepet Government Hospital for autopsy. Following investigation, the police found that he reportedly used to work as a security guard at actor Trisha Krishnan's house in Virugambakkam and he had left the house after an argument with his wife three days ago.Shankar Nagar police have registered a DC CORRESPONDENT

Union Muslim League (IUML) national president Prof. K. M. Kader Mohideen has welcomed the Tamil Nadu Government's decision of withdrawing more than 10 lakh cases filed against those who violated the Covid-19 prevention norms and participated in the agitations against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and also in this regard. Mohideen,

addressing a press conference on the sidelines of the Milad Nabi celebrations at a mosque administered by the prince of endowment at Tiruchy on Friday, pointed out that a few other state governments have moved a resolution against the union government's NRC, NPA, and CAA and appealed to the M Chief Minister Edapaddi tions.

thanked the government K. Palaniswami to move a resolution against these three draconian acts, in ensuing session of the state assem-

Chief executive officer of the prince of Arcot endowment A.Basheer Ahamed, who was present at the press conference, said they have arranged a mass feeding with special prayers the Milad Nabi celebra-

### Traffic SI held for demanding bribe

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 19

A traffic police sub inspector from Chromepet has been arrested for allegedly demanding a bribe of Rs 5,000 from the owner of a travels agency for a traffic violation, DVAC sources said on Friday.

The sub-inspector attached to the Chromepet traffic wing, identified as Krishna Kumar (48), had demanded a bribe of Rs 5,000 from the complainant Ezhumalai for releasing his vehicle seized and taken to the police station for violating his driver, Ezhumalai contacted the traffic cop, the traffic rules. Ezhumalai, a resident of

K.K Nagar runs a travel agency in the same area. On Thursday, one of his drivers came to pick up a customer in Tambaram. Sources said when the driver took a wrong Uturn on Chromepet-Sanitorium road, the traf-fic cop Krishna Kumar stopped the car.

He confiscated his car for violating the traffic rules and asked his owner to contact him to release the car. On being informed by

when the latter demanded a bribe of Rs 10,000 to release the car. As he initially refused to pay the money, Krishna Kumar allegedly insisted on paying Rs 5000.

As Ezhumalai did not want to pay the bribe, he approached the Alandur DVAC and lodged a complaint against the officer. Following the complaint, the DVAC sleuths laid a trap and directed him to give him the chemically treated currency to the

The victim was asked to come to the Chromepet traffic wing office at 2:30 pm on Friday to hand over the cash. On the advice of DVAC officials, Ezhumalai handed over the chemically treated currency to Krishna Kumar, while the sleuths in plainclothes waited for him to accept the money. When he reportedly accepted the bribe, he was caught red-handed. The DVAC officials further raided the Chromepet traffic wing police station. A search was also conducted

at the house of the SI.

### hand: HC to commissioner of labour DC CORRESPONDENT

Corrupt officials must be dealt with iron

CHENNAI, FEB. 19

Pointing out that in the event of any lapses, negligence, dereliction of duty, corrupt activities, the commissioner of labour is expected to initiate action with iron hand and there cannot be any leniency or otherwise, the Madras high court has said all suitable actions are to be initiated against such officials who all are committing such misconducts as well as corrupt activities in the matter of hearing of the cases or signing of the orders or issuance of the Award copies to the parties or their counsels.

Justice S.M.Subramaniam made the observations while directing the commissioner of labour to constitute a special cell in the directorate to monitor these kinds of irregularities and illegalities in the office of the competent authorities across the state. "The special cell must contain a separate telephone number and a website enabling the workmen or the counsels appearing for the parties to register their complaint enabling the commissioner to initiate further actions on such complaints", the judge added.

"The special cell must contain a separate telephone number and a website enabling the workmen or the counsels appearing for the parties to register their complaint enabling the commissioner to initiate further actions on such complaints"

sought to condone the delay of 460 days in filing the C.M.A (Civil Miscellaneous Appeal) to the award dated October 22, 2018 and made on the file of the Commissioner Employee's Compensation Joint Commissioner of Labour-II, Chennai, the judge said this court is of the opinion that the delay is to be condoned, as there is no proof for serving of the award copy to the

applicants and the insur-

Passing orders on the

petition filed by Vanaja

and three others, which

# Declare Covishield unsafe, volunteer urges HC

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 19

A business consultant, aged 41, who claimed to have suffered serious sideeffects after he volunteered for phase-III of the clinical trial of Covishield vaccine of the Serum Institute of India and was administered the vaccine on October 1, 2020, has approached the Madras high court seeking to declare that Covishield is

In his petition, Asif believed in the "safety" of



Riyaz of Anna Nagar submitted that a close reading of the participant information sheet reveals that the vaccine is safe, with side-effect.

the vaccine and decided to Hospital. volunteer to take the vaccine. He signed the consent form on September 2020. Before being administered the vaccine, his brief medical history was obtained, but no blood, urine or any other diagnostic test, such as pulmonary function test or ECG, were done. Only tests for Covid-19 and antibodies were done, which were negative and the Covishield study vaccine was administered on him on October 1 at SRMC

He said there was no

adverse reaction for the first 10 days, but from October 11 he suffered several side-effects and was hospitalised till October 26. The severe trauma he suffered, because of the 'acute neuro encephalopathy", was an extreme sideeffect of the test vaccine, he claimed.

In the petition, he sought to declare that the severe side-effects and his hospitalisation from October 11

adverse event" due to the administration of trial vaccine, and as a follow up to declare that Covishield was not safe and consequently direct the Serum Institute of India to pay him a compensation of Rs 5 crore.

Justice Abdul Quddhose, before whom the petition came up for hearing on Friday, ordered notice to the union government and Drugs Controller General of India and posted to March 26 further hearing of the case.

BRIEF

### **DMK's second** corruption list

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 19

The DMK presented a second representation, listing corruption charges against State Ministers, to the Governor Banwarilal Purohit on Friday and sought action against them.

The representation, signed by party president M K Stalin, was handed over by the top leaders of the DMK, including general secretary Duraimurugan and treasurer T R Baalu at the Raj Bhavan Earlier, Stalin himself had presented a representation listing corruption charges against Chief Minister Edappadi K Palanisami and other Ministers to the Governor on December 22, 2020.

#### **Lankan Tamil** refugee ends life

DC CORRESPONDENT PERAMBALURI, FEB. 19

A 31-year-old Sri Lankan Tamil refugee allegedly committed suicide by hanging himself at his friend's house Perambalur in the wee hours of Thursday.

Police said the deceased, Indrakumar, residing at Ceylon Colony, went for a movie along with his friends Vinod and Manobalan on Wednesday night and after that he stayed at Vindo's house. On Thursday morning while Manobala went out of the Vinod house, Vinod who went to awaken the deceased found him hanging. Upon information, Perambalur police recovered the body and sent the same for post-mortem. Police are investigating.

#### **PMANE** coordinator welcomes move

From P1

Anti-nuke activist and coordinator of People's Movement Nuclear Energy (PMANE) S.P. Udayakumar welcomed the announcement. He had yesterday petitioned the Chief Minister seeking withdrawal of 106 cases pending against anti-KKNPP protesters.

'Many youths against whom cases were pending in connection with the mass struggle against the nuclear project have lost job opportunities all these years since 2011 as they could not get police verification certificates," said Dr Udayakumar in his petition.

It is to be noted that of the total number of 349 cases registered against about 2,000 protestors, the state government withdrew 213 cases on October 9. 2014 following a Supreme Court direction, while action was dropped in another 31 cases based on a ruling of the Madras High Court on a writ petition filed in 2015.

Among the 105 pending cases against the anti-KKNPP protestors, 68 are still in the FIR stage, while charge sheets were filed in 37 cases at the Valliyoor

#### **SBI Chennai Circle's CSR donation**

Chennai: As part of its CSR activity SBI Chennai Circle donated Rs 21.83 lakh to SRI PRATYAKSHA CHARITABLE TRUST for purchase of laundry machine and accessories. The trust which was established in 2007 works to make a difference to society by rendering service in the fields of education, healthcare, culture, heritage, rural development, support for the aged and many more.

The cheque was handed over to managing trustee Jayaramakrishnan by Dinesh Khara, chairman, in the presence of B. Sankar, Chief General Manager Chennai Circle, and General Managers Shirley Thomas, U N N Maiya and Vinod Jaiswal.

# Uncertainty continues in Pondy G. BABU JAYAKUMAR & former MILA A Namassiva- But the present AIADMK and NR meeting the three local abuse of daughter

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR & D.SEKAR I DC CHENNAI, FEB. 19

Puducherry be brought under the President's rule after Monday? Or will the V Narayanasamy-led Congress government survive the trust vote? Or will the BJP be able to install an alternative government till the Union Territory goes to polls?

These were the domineering questions being deliberated in the political grapevine in Puducherry and also in the neighboring state of Tamil Nadu as the local units of the parties concerned went into huddle to decide on their

future course of action. The BJP leaders too were closeted to work out a strategy after three of them returned from New Delhi after reportedly meeting Union home min-

ister Amit Shah. BJP MLA V Saminathan,

Tamilisai Soundararajan,

given additional charge

developments and other

issues related to the

state through video con-

ferencing from Raj Nivas

in the union territory cap-

She said she always gave

top priority to the well-

being of Telangana people

Puducherry, on reviewed

yam who defected from the Congress to the BJP and BJP's Puducherry unit incharge Nirmal Kumar Surana, had rushed to Delhi when the Congress government was pushed to the precipice following the resignation of two of its MLAs.

Since the two MLAs quit, the obvious arithmetic points to the trust vote throwing up a 14-14 tie leading to the government losing the majority. Yet the Minister Narayanasamy had exuded confidence in winning

He has made a claim that nominated members of the House were not eligible for voting, which would mean that the three BJP MLAs appointed by former Lieutenant Governor Kiran Bedi, do not take part in the voting and thus the government would sur-

**Tamilisai holds video meet with Telangana officials** 

top priority to the welfare

and well-being of the

Telangana people as the

Governor of the state.

Puducherry now, I am con-

stantly monitoring the

affairs of the Telangana

state," she said in the

video conference with offi-

cials of the Raj Bhavan

She directed the officials

I am in

**Hyderabad, Feb. 19:** wherever she was. Telangana Governor "Wherever I am, I give

Though

here.

Governor

Lieutenant Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan Governor has treated the three nominated members and proper MLAs, particularly since their nomination had been subsequently approved by the Supreme Court.

In such a backdrop, how would Narayanasamy manage to get an additional vote in his favour on Monday when Territorial Assembly convenes? The possibility is that some MLAs from the opposition would help out the government.

In view of the BJP's sudden entry into the opposition camp, many leaders of and AIADMK Congress are reportedly feeling threatened. One, the BJP might take away some of their seats that they had nurtured for

Two, the demography of some of the constituencies is such that some MLAs of

about the developments in

Telangana, according to a

Raj Bhavan press commu-

nique. "I am always think-

ing about the people of

Telangana as the first citizen of the State. My addi-

tional charge as the Lt

Governor of Puducherry

does not affect my concern

and care towards Telanga-

na. I am with the people of

Telangana always," she said. Secretary K.

Surendra Mohan joined

AIADMK Congress might not be able to win their seats again if with Amit Shah. they are seen to be in the The DMK, however, is alliance of BJP.

Pandiarajan is Nilgiris SP

task.

So, even if not taking the risk of disqualification by cross voting, there is a chance of some MLAs not turning up for the trust vote on Monday and thus saving the Congress government.

Also Speaker V. P. Sivakolunthu could disallow the nominated members from casting their vote. But that could create a ruckus in the House followed by litigations, which could also lead to the promulgation Presidents' rule.

Apart from that, the BJP, which has managed to bring the Congress government to the brink through a series of machinations. carried out through Kiran Bedi, may also spring a surprise, particularly in view of the

DC CORRESPONDENT

R. Pandiarajan, on Friday

assumed charge as Superintendent of Police, the

Nilgiris. While the dis-

trict witnessed frequent

transfers of SPs in the

recent years, Pandiarajan

is the fourth top cop to

assume charge as SP of

the Nilgiris in a span of

Speaking to media per-

OOTY, FEB. 19

three years.

leaders had reportedly

unlikely to pull the rug from under the Congress feet, since the alliance between the two parties was indeed intact and DMK letting down the Congress at this juncture was not going to be beneficial to it. With Tamilisai Sounda-

rarajan presiding over the entire drama that is to unfold on Monday, the final outcome is unlikely to be favourable to the Congress. But such a development could also be detrimental BJP's future growth as it could earn the people's wrath for pulling down an elected government. The Congress party, if it is pulled down, is more likely to earn some sympathy among the voters and romp home in the next elections, which are any-

sons Pandiarajan said

that his priority was to

maintain law and order.

Traffic management was

an equally important

ing summer tourist

season, focus would be

more on traffic manage-

ment, involving studies

on traffic management

issues, to evolve effective

traffic management plans

With the fast approach-

B. RAVICHANDRAN|DC

The Mahila court here sentenced a man to life imprisonment under the Pocso act for sexually harassing his

Police sources in Gudalur said that one Abdullah Nasser (44), a textile trader from Kottharvayal village limits on the Nilgiris border, is alleged to have repeatedly sexually harassed 11-year-old daughter for three years whenever his wife was away from home. He is also alleged to have threatened his daughter that he would kill her mother and relatives if she informed them about his misadventure, and the frightened child kept quiet.

Once, she happened to visit her maternal grandfather's house in Kerala, when she revealed to them the cruelty she suffered at the hands of her father, and refused to return to Gudalur to her house. Shocked, her grandfather's family took her to a hospital in Kerala, where medical examination confirmed sex-

Following this, the girl was

Police sources in Gudalur said that one Abdullah Nasser (44), a

textile trader from Kottharvayal village limits on the Nilgiris border, is alleged to have repeatedly sexually harassed his 11-year-old daughter for three years whenever his wife was away from home.He was awarded life imprisonment and slapped a fine of ₹10 lakh on him.

taken to the All women's police station at Gudalur, where a complaint was lodged in September 2017. Police registered a case and arrested Abduallah Nasser and filed a case in the Mahila Court in Ooty under Pocso Act.

Malini Prabhakar, special public prosecutor (Mahila Court) here, said that the Mahila court which pronounced the judgment in this case on Friday, sentenced Abduala Nasser to life imprisonment and slapped a fine of ₹10 lakh on him.

#### TAMIL NADU GENERATION AND DISTRIBUTION CORPORATION LTD.

NOTICE

This is to inform all concerned that TAMIL NADU GENERATION AND DISTRIBUTION CORPORATION LIMITED has been accorded Environmental Clearance for the Kundah Pumped Storage Hydro Electric Project (4x125MW) in Nanjanad Village, Udhagamandalam Faluk, Nilgiris District, Tamil Nadu by the Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change

Government of India on 12" February, 2021.
The copy of the clearance letter is available with the State Pollution Control Board and may also be seen on the website of the Ministry of Environment & Forests at <a href="https://parivesh.nic.in.and">http://parivesh.nic.in.and</a> in the website of TANGEOCO at <a href="https://www.tangedco.org">https://www.tangedco.org</a> Chief Engineer/Projects-I, TANGEDCO

### Man can't abdicate responsibility of paying maintenance to estranged wife: SC

New Delhi, Feb. 19: The Supreme Court Friday said a husband cannot abdicate the responsibility of paying maintenance to his estranged wife and gave a last opportunity to a man to clear entire outstanding of Rs 2.60 crore along with monthly payout of Rs 1.75 lakh to his wife, failing which he

would be imprisoned.

The man, who claimed to have been working on a project of national security in the telecom sector. said that he had no money and sought two years to pay the money. The top court said however that he has lost credibility by failing repeatedly to follow the court's order and wondered how a person with this kind of case was asso-

ciated with a project of national security.

A bench of Chief Justice Bobde and Justices AS and Bopanna Ramasubramanian told the man, a Tamil Nadu resident, "Husband cannot abdicate from his responsibility to provide maintenance to his wife and it is his duty to pro-

ordered, "Accordingly by way of last chance, we permit the respondent (man) to make payment of the outstanding entire amount along with the monthly maintenance regularly to his wife...within a period of four weeks from today, failing which, the respondent may have to be punished and sent to

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(all above in Natural Colour)

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU **HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT** LAND ACQUISITION OFFICER AND DISTRICT REVENUE OFFICER, NAMAKKAL Ros.No.15690/2018/H.7 AMENDMENT TO NOTIFICATION Dated: 11.02.2021

Where as a Amendment of Notification under sub section (2) of Section (15) of Tamil Nadu Highways Act-2001 was published on 22.01.2021 in Deccan Chronicle (Coimbatore Edition) News page for acquisition of Dry lands in Ladduvadi Village of Mohanur Taluk in Namakkal District to wit for the formation of By-Pass road to Namakkal Town, the following amendment is issued to the above said

Amendment

In the above said Notification, Under the Schedule, In serial No. 38 Column No.3,the word "79/4B2" shall be added instead of the word "76/4B2" Land Acquisition Officer/

DIPR/ 98 /LAND/2021

### FM interacts with top industry captains of TN

Chennai, Feb. 19: Union tains in Tamil Nadu after Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday held an informal meeting with top industrialists of Tamil Nadu to elicit their views on the budget she presented on

TVS Motor chairman Venu Srinivasan, MRF Chairman viammen, India Cements Ltd Vice Chairman N Srinivasan, former Ashok Leyland Chairman R Seshasayee and Apollo Hospitals MD Sunita Reddy were among those who took part in the meeting, sources said.

This is the first time she

presenting the budget. However, the meeting was out of bounds for the media and the points discussed were not known. Industry sources said the FM listened to the views put forth by the industrialists during the interac-

The India Cements Ltd Managing Director Srinivasan thanked the FM for presenting an 'outstanding' budget that would spur growth. "The budget will spur

during this calendar year itself, all the industries, is meeting industry capincluding manufacturing,

will be running towards full capacity", Srinivasan told PTI. The official twitter han-

dle of the FM's office shared images of the Minister interacting with the industrialists. Earlier in the day, BJP Tamil Nadu unit president L Murugan received Sitharaman and presented a 'Vel' to her as part of welcoming her to the

"Vel" refers to a spear-like weapon that is traditionally associated with Lord Muruga. "Presented 'Vel' growth. I told her that to Nirmala Sitharaman on her arrival to Chennai" Murugan said in a tweet.



Union finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman meets industrialists at a private hotel in

### Sivakarthieyan, Anil Srinivasan among 124 Kalaimamani awardees

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 19

Film actor Sivakarthikeyan and Ramarajan, director Gautam Vasudeva actress Ashwariya Rajesh, comedian Yogi Babu, comedianne Devadarshini, producers Kalaipuli Thanu and Ishwari Ganesh and stunt master Jaguar Thangam were among the popular personalities named to receive the Kalaimamani awards for the years 2019 and 2020.

Some of the other wellknown persons in the award list were Anil Srinivasan (piano), Sikkil S Gurcharan (vocal), Jolly Abraham (light music) and film director Liquat Ali Khan.

government



winners of a plethora of awards in arts and culture, which include Kalaimamani, special Kalaimamani named after J Jayalalithaa, awards in the names of Bharati, M S Subbulakshmi and Balasaraswati and awards for impoverished aged Kalaimamani awardees of the past on Friday.

announcement said announced the names of the eight old and impoverished



Kalaimamani awardees would get a silver parrot and an amount of ₹50.000 and the Kalaimamani gold medal would now weigh five sover-

While the 59 persons have won the Kalaimamani for 2019, 65 artistes have won it for 2020.

The 'Puratchi Thalaivi Dr J Jayalalithaa Special Kalaimamani' has been



awarded to Saroja Devi (films), P Susheela (music) and Ambika Kameshwaran (dance) for 2019.

For 2020, the award goes to Janaki (films), Jamuna Rani (music) and Parvathi Ravi Ghantasala (dance)

Awards have also been announced for the best art organization and the best



SHORT TAKES

### **CONG LEADER IN MP HITS OUT AT KANGANA**

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, FEB 19

Senior Congress leader and former minister Sukhdev Panse has called Bollywood actress Kangana Ranaut a 'naachney gaane wali' (a pro-fessional singer and dancer), sparking a row here.

The BJP termed his 'uncharitable' remarks against the actress as reflection of 'narrow mindset' of the Congress.

What do you expect from a leader of a party whose leader Rahul Gandhi re-tweets comments on farmers' stir by (pop star) Rihanna and (former pornographic actress) Mia Khalifa", BJP spokesman Rajneesh Agrawal said here on Friday.

While protesting the purported comment by Ranaut calling protesting farmers in Delhi as terrorists, Panse on Thursday said the Bollywood actress was hardly aware of farmers' plights since she was a 'naachney gaane wali'. Senior Congress leader and

former minister Sajjan Singh Verma came to the rescue of his colleague when the latter's comment on Ms Ranaut snow-

balled into a controversy.
"He (Panse) should have said Ranaut knows how to dance, but is not aware of farmers issues", he said.

The Bollywood actress was currently shooting for her upcoming film *Dhaakad* in Sarni in Betul district.

#### **COURT REJECTS** LALU YADAV'S **BAIL PLEA**

DC CORRESPONDENT PATNA, FEB. 19

The Jharkhand High Court on Friday rejected Lalu Yadav's bail plea in the fodder scam case pertaining to the illegal withdrawal of ₹3.97 crore from the Dumka treasury in the 1990s when he was the Chief Minister of Bihar.

Justice Aparesh Singh dismissed the bail petition of Mr. Yadav on the ground that he has not com-pleted half of his prison term and asked his lawyer to file another application after two months.

"The court's observation was that he has to serve two more months in jail to complete half of the term of his total sentence in the case. We will file another application after two months". Lalu Yadav's lawver Prabhat Kumar told reporters in Ranchi after the court's ver-

dict on Friday Sources in the RJD said that the court's order came as a setback for Lalu Yadav's family and the party as they were expecting a favourable decision in the case.

He is already on bail in three out of four fodder scam cases pertaining to fraudulent withdrawal of ₹900 crore from Deoghar, Chaibasa and Dumka treasury. He was convicted in

the Dumka case in March 2018. The money was withdrawn through fake vouchers and bills on the pretext of purchasing fodder and other livestock. Fraudulent withdrawal from government treasuries and the use of fake bills and vouchers took place between 1991 and 1996 when Lalu Yadav was the Chief Minister of Bihar.

### **TERRORIST GUNS DOWN TWO** POLICEMEN

FROM PAGE 1

He identified the slain cops as Mohammad Yusuf and Suhail Ahmad. "They had received critical gunshot injuries," he said. He, however, also said that preliminary investigation on the basis of CCTV footage and other evidence indicate the involvement of two militants in the attack. He claimed that one of them was a local and the other a foreigner affiliated with proscribed outfit Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT) and said that a manhunt has been launched to arrest them.

Earlier during the day, a Special Police Officer (SPO) Altaf Ahmed was killed and a selection-grade constable Manzoor Ahmed were critically injured in a gunfight with militants in Beeru area of Budgam district. The police sources said that the gunfight broke out during a cordon-and-search operation launched by a joint team of J&K police, the Army's 53 Rashtriya Rifles and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)'s 79th Battalion in Beeru's Zanigam hamlet to flush out militants. However, after the initial exchange of fire the militants managed to break the security dragnet and escape.

# Some media coverage on Disha sensational, prejudicial, says HC

Delhi court sends climate activist Disha Ravi to 3-day judicial custody in toolkit case

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, FEB. 19

The Delhi High Court on Friday said certain media coverage of investigation into the FIR against climate activist Disha Ravi for her alleged involvement in sharing a toolkit backing farmers' protest indicates "sensationalism and prejudicial reporting", but declined to order removal of any such content at this stage. Justice Prathiba M Singh

said the interim plea for removal of such news content and tweets by Delhi Police would be consid-

ered at a later stage.

The court, however, asked media houses to ensure that no leaked investigation material is broadcast as it could affect the probe and directed Delhi Police to abide by its stand on affidavit that it has not leaked nor intends to leak any probe details to the press.

The court also said that police would be entitled to hold press briefings in the matter in accordance with the law and the agency's 2010 office memorandum with regard to media coverage of cases.

To media houses, the court said they should ensure the information received from their sources is authentic and only verified content ought to be publicised as also that the investigation is not hampered.

The court was hearing Ravi's plea to restrain police from leaking to the media any probe material in relation to the FIR

lodged against her. The petition also sought to restrain the media from publishing the content or extract of any private chats, including those on WhatsApp, between her and third parties.

TWO ARRESTED

IN UNNAO

affair.

police

a hospital.

reporters here.

off, the IG said.

Both accused are resi-

dents of Pathakpur vil-

lage in the Ashoĥa area

and were held on a tip-

During interrogation.

Vinay told police that he

was involved in agricul-

ture and owned a piece

of land at Baburaha vil-

lage, near the spot where

girls were found on

girls used to go to the

fields for fodder and they became friends dur-

ing the Coronavirus lockdown. He had a one-

sided love affair with

We used to play and eat

together in the field. I

had a one-sided love

affair with her. When I

proposed her, she reject-

this month to give me

her phone number, she

did not give due to which

I was angry and decided to kill her," Vinay told

mixed pesticide in a

water bottle and asked

my friend to bring sna-

cks. The three had it and

when they asked for wa-

ter, I gave them the wat-

er bottle in which pesti-

cide was mixed and they

bodies in the field," the

IG said quoting Vinay's

confession.

police. "On

When I asked her

Wednesday, I

one of the girls.

Wednesday night. According to police, Vinay told them that the

**DEATHS CASE** 

Unnao, Feb. 19: The Uttar Pradesh Police on Friday held two people

in connection with the deaths of two teenage

teenager, according to



Police officers in plain clothes escort environment activist Disha Ravi (C) to a local court in New Delhi on on Friday.

The police, represented by Additional Solicitor General S V Raju, placed an affidavit before the court categorically denying leaking of any infor-

mation to the media. It also assured the court that it has no intention of leaking any information to the media.

The ASG during the hearing said that the possibility of leakage by some officer of the agency cannot be ruled out entirely. The court, however, to it for taking action aggrieved and prejudiced directed that the police has to abide by its affi-media house for any rounding her arrest and

davit. The media houses, one of them represented by advocate Mrinal Bharti, told the court that the source of information in the present case was the Delhi Police and its tweets.

central government standing counsel Ajay Digpaul, appearing for the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, told the court that the petition was not maintainable as no

ASG Chetan Sharma and

complaint was first made

alleged incorrect reporting of the case. The News Broadcasting

Standards Authority (NBSA) told the court that it can take any action only if a complaint is made to it regarding the media houses named in the plea. It further told the court

that media houses named in the plea were members of the News Broadcasters

Association (NBA).
Ravi, in her plea, has said she is "severely aggrieved and prejudiced

the ongoing investigation, where she is being viscer-ally attacked by the respondent 1 (police) and several media houses"

She has claimed that her arrest from Bengaluru on February 13 by a Cyber Cell team of Delhi Police "wholly unlawfully and without basis".

She has also contended that in the present circumstances, it was "highly likely" that the general public will perceive the news items "as being conclusive as to the guilt of the petitioner (Ravi)".

and to restrain the respondents from further violating her privacy, her reputation, and her right to a fair trial, the petitioner is moving the present peti-tion," the plea has said.

Her petition has alleged that investigative matters have been leaked to the media and the press briefings by the police are "prejudicial" and "grossly violative of her right to a fair trial and presumption of innocence"

It has claimed that the police first "leaked investigative material" - like alleged WhatsApp chats -the substance and details of which were only in the possession of the investi-

possession of the investi-gating agency.

Thereafter, the "private alleged WhatsApp chats" were published and dis-seminated by various media houses which was a wiolation of the provisions of the Cable Televisions Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 (CTN Act), the Programme Code and the Uplinking and Downlinking Guidelines,

the petition has contend-

Meanwhile, a Delhi court on Friday sent climate activist Disha Ravi, arrestactivist Disna Ravi, arrest-ed for allegedly being involved in sharing a "toolkit" on social media related to the farmers' protest, to three-day judi-cial custody. Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Akash Jain Magistrate Akash Jain sent Ravi, 21, to jail after Delhi Police produced her before the court on expiry of her five-day custodial interrogation. Police said that her custodial interrogation was not required for the time being and the agency may seek her fur-

ther interrogation once

her co-accused - Shantanu

in Kerala. Moreover, the

Left is desperate to retain

power for what it says — to

present an alternative

development model to the

country. Chief Minister Pinarayi

Vijayan, 75, has led from the front during the past

five years. While the LDF

government has a series of

schemes like the 'Life

Mission' to provide land

and house to landless and

homeless people, social

welfare pensions to the

poor, development projects

and the helping hand pro-

The Left leaders claim that

they will create history by

the Kerala voters pen-

chant for change after

every five years, it's a

winning back to back term

Mukul and Nikita Jacob

Shivraj Singh Chouhan

### MP CM'S SLEEP DISTURBED, **ENGINEER FACES MUSIC**

**DC CORRESPONDENT** BHOPAL, FEB. 19

An engineer of state public works department (PWD) has been placed under suspension for the inconvenience caused to Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan owing to mosquito bites during his night stay in a government rest house

in Sidhi on February 17.
In-charge of the Sidhi circuit house Babulal Gupta was suspended for the poor maintenance of the rest house which caused inconvenience to the 'special guest' (Chief Minister) during his night stay, a notice served to him by the Rewa revenue division commissioner (RDC) Rajesh Kumar Jain said.

The notice dated February 18 went viral on Friday.

The notice said assistant engineer of PWD Babulal Gupta who was in-charge of the circuit house had been intimated of chief minister's stay in the facility much in advance.
The notice said lack of

maintenance of the rest house has been found and complaints of mosquito menace in the rooms received.

### Doc stabs wife, crush her under car wheels

FROM PAGE 1

Meanwhile, Dr Gokul Kumar, who was speeding in his car, met with an accident near Athur toll plaza under Acharapakkam police limits on Chennai-Trichy National highway. His car overturned due to rash driving and he sustained injuries. Acharapakkam police rescued him from the car and admitted him to a hospital nearby.

He was later handed over to the Madurantakam police, which is investigating the case. Keerthana was work-

ing in the human resource department in a private company in Melmaruvathur, the police said. After the marriage, the couple moved to Krishnapriya Colony in Maduran-takam in Chengalpet district near Chennai.

Police sources said that Dr Gokul Kumar and Keerthana have had a disagreement on several issues from just a year after their marriage. However, during the COVID-19 lockdown, the couple began arguing with each other very often which pushed them to apply for a

### Political climate hots up in Kerala ahead of state assembly elections tion in the country. With no signs of immediate GILVESTER ASSARAY I DC Open for chief ministership revival of party in West Bengal and going out of hand, the Left has to keep its flag flying

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,

besides galvanising their

girls at an Unnao village. accusing them of mur-With Kerala currently witnessing the 'ceremonial' yatras of political parties der over a one-sided love The third victim in the crisscrossing 140 Assembly segments in the case is battling for life at state, rival Fronts have One of the accused started vying with each held in the case is a other to woo the voters

cadre for the forthcoming "Vinay Kumar, alias elections. After the recent two day Lambu, and a teenager have been held in convisit of the Election Comnection with the case. mission team to Kerala, The matter is a fallout of a one-side love affair. there are speculations that the Assembly polls might The accused gave some be held in the second week pesticide with water to of April or first week of the three girls," Lucknow Range IG Laxmi Singh told Quite understandably then, the political

> crucial electoral battle. The ruling CPM-led LDF has launched two yatras -Vikasana Munnetta Yatra (Development yatra), one from Kasargod to cover the northern districts and another from Kochi to cover the southern districts. The Congress-led UDF's Aishwarya Kerala Yatra led by opposition

parties are leaving no

chance to prepare for the

if BJP wins, says Sreedharan

New Delhi, Feb. 19: Set to enter the political fray by joining the BJP next technocrat Sreedharan on Friday said his main aim is to help the party come to power in Kerala and that he will be open to chief ministership. He also said that the focus will be on developing infrastructure in a big way and bring the state out of the debt trap if the BJP wins the assembly polls that are likely to be held in April-May this

Known as 'Metroman' for the efficiency in com-

leader Ramesh Chenni-

thala is almost on its last leg covering southern dis-

The BJP's yatra is set to

be flagged off by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister

Aditvanath

pleting big infrastructure projects, Sreedharan said that he will contest the Assembly elections if the party wants and will also be open to chief ministership if the party asks.

The 88-year-old technocrat also made it clear that he will not be interested in governorship, saying that it is purely a "constitutional position and no powers at all" and that he won't be able to make any positive contribution to the state in such a position.
"My main idea is to

bring BJP to power in

February 23 in Kasargod. Prime Minister Narendra

Modi who was in Kochi on

Sunday to launch projects

worth ₹1,600 crore took

time to attend the BJP

nister state unit's core commit-on tee meeting in which he

Kerala. If BJP comes to power in Kerala, there will be three to four major areas we want to focus. One is infrastructure development in a big way and another is to bring industry to the state," he

> Speaking over phone from Ponnani in Kerala where he is based now. Sreedharan said that a finance commission could also be formed for the purpose of improving the finances of the state, which is in a "debt trap today".

asked the leadership to attract all sections of people in Kerala.

So what are the stakes for different political fronts? For the CPM-led LDF, it's prestigious battle to safeguard its last bas-

vided during Covid and back to back floods, it also has its share of controversies like the gold smuggling case involving the Chief Minister's office.

FIGHTING | COVID | While the US took 31 days to achieve this, UK crossed the mark in 56 days

### Over 1 cr vaccinated against Covid so far had sought emergency use

SANJAY KAW | DC with agency inputs NEW DELHI, FEB. 19

A little over a month after starting its Covid-19 inoculation drive, India on Friday achieved the landmark feat of vaccinating over one crore people against the deadly virus. The health ministry said Friday India was the second-fastest after the United States to achieve this milestone.

While the US had taken 31 days to achieve this, Britain had crossed the one-crore vaccination mark in 56 days. India achieved it in 34 days. Till 8 am Friday, the total number of Covid-19 vaccine doses administered to

healthcare workers and frontline workers in India was 1,01,88,007. The ministry data, how-

ever, showed an uneven pattern, with several states and Union territories injecting doses to less than 50 per cent of their target frontline workers. Tamil Nadu, Delhi and Punjab are among the larger states yet to reach 50 per cent vaccine cover-

Among eight states that accounted for 57.47 per cent of total inoculations in the country, Uttar Pradesh accounted for 10.5 per cent doses. Seven states administered 60.85 per cent of the second dose In this, Telangana led the

been infected by the virus in the last four days. charts, with a 12-per cent

EVEN AS Covid-19

cases in Maharashtra are

and senior leaders have

rising, four MVA ministers

share of the second dose vaccine administration in the country. In January, the Drugs Controller-General

India approved the Oxford Covid-19 vaccine, locally produced by the Serum Institute of India as Covishield, and Bharat Biotech's Covaxin, making the two India's first vaccines against the pandem-

On Friday, pharma giant Dr Reddy's Labs said it

authorisation for Russia's Sputnik V vaccine in As part of the review

process, Dr Reddy's will present the safety profile of the Phase 2 study, and interim data of the Phase 3 study, that is expected to be over by

February 21. Going by the speed at which the vaccination drive is going on, it will take two more years to get 30 per cent of the population inoculated in India. Experts have suggested private healthcare bodies should also be involved to ramp up the vaccination

Meanwhile, a total of 13,193 new Covid-19 cases

were detected in a span of 24 hours. The death toll rose to 1,56,111 with 97 new fatalities in the last 24

The fatalities count was reported to be between one and five in 15 states and Union territories, while it was between six and 10 in three states and Union territories.

Meanwhile, even as the Coronavirus cases in Maharashtra are rising, four MVA ministers and senior leaders have been infected by the virus in the last four days.

Maharashtra public health minister Rajesh Tope got infected on

Thursday. Ministers Bacchu Kadu, Jayant Patil and Rajendra

Shingne have also been found Covid positive. In addition to this, senior

leader Khadse and his daughterin-law Raksha Khadse, who is also BJP MP from Raver, have also tested pos-

Minister of state for water resources and education Bacchu Kadu has tested positive for Covid for the second time on Friday.

new strains of Also, coronavirus found in the United Kingdom, South Africa and Brazil have not been detected in Amravati, Yavatmal and Satara districts of Maharashtra where cases have spiked

recently, the state government said on Friday.

**BREACH FUELS** 

**CALLS FOR U.S.** 

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**ACTION ON** 

### SHORT TAKES

### 31 DEAD IN DR **CONGO PLAGUE OUTBREAK**

Bunia, Dr Congo, Feb. 19: Thirty-one people have died in an outbreak of plague that erupted in northeastern DR Congo three months ago, health officials and experts said on Friday.

"We have more than 520 cases... of which more than 31 have been fatal," Patrick Karamura, health minister in Ituri province, where plague is endemic,said.

The cases are the bubonic form of the disease, except for five cases of pneumonic plague and two of septicaemic plague, he said.

Anne Laudisoit, an epidemiologist with a New York-based NGO called Ecohealth Alliance, said the cases had surfaced between November 15 and December 13 in Biringi, in Ituri's Aru Territory.

The average age of patients was 13, but this varied between three months and 73 years, she said.

World Organisation (WHO) issued an alert in July of a plague outbreak in Rethy, also in Ituri.

Plague has persisted in the province since it was first confirmed there in 1926.

A long-feared disease with biblical connotations, but treatable today with antibiotics, the plague is caused by a bacterium called Yersinia

### **U.S. SCIENTIST ACCUSED OF CAVIAR RACKET**

Washington, Feb. 19: The fish eggs were supposed to be for research, not for eating but a US biologist reportedly known as Wisconsin's "stur-geon general" was hatching

another plan. An alleged caviar racket, in which sturgeon eggs meant for a research study were being sold and processed as food, has landed Wisconsin's top stur-geon biologist, Ryan Koenigs, in hot water.

scientist allegedly accepted at least \$20,000 in kickbacks in the form of jars of caviar from a processor in exchange for eggs intended for research, according to the *New* York Times, citing Winnebago County filing.

Catching sturgeon, a freshwater fish whose eggs are turned into caviar, is allowed during the month of February on frozen Lake Winnebago, in northern state Wisconsin.

According to the Times, eggs must be either returned to the person who speared the sturgeon or tnrown away undei state law, while local news station Fox 11 reported that it is illegal to barter processing for a portion of the product.

Wardens employed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources had been instructed to collect sturgeon eggs that fishers did not want to keep, for use in a research programme, Fox 11 reported.

#### **OZ, FB IN TALKS OVER SWEEPING BAN OVER NEWS**

Sydney, Feb. 19: Australia and Facebook held high-stakes talks on Friday after the social media giant sparked global outrage by blacking out news for its Australian users, as Canberra insisted it wouldn't back down on a new law that would force the tech firm to pay for journalistic content.

From Thursday, Facebook has blanked out the pages of media outlets for Australian users and blocked them from sharing any news content, rather than submit to the proposed legislation.

Treasurer Josh Frydenberg said he had spoken with Facebook CEO Mark Facebook Zuckerberg on Friday to find a way out of the showdown, and that negotiations would continue over the weekend.

"We talked through their remaining issues and agreed our respective teams would work through them immediately," Frydenberg said.

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

He said his government's world-first legislation to force Facebook and Google to pay Australian media for news content published on their platforms was garnering interest from leaders around

the world. "People are looking at what Australia is doing," he said, noting that he had already discussed the situation with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Canada's Justin Trudeau.

## Nasa's rover touches down on Mars

After 7 months in space, overcomes tense landing phase called 'seven minutes of terror'

After seven months in Nasa's Perseverance rover overcame a tense landing phase with a series of perfectly executed maneuvers to gently float down to the Martian soil on Thursday and embark on its mission to search for signs of past

"Touchdown confirmed," said operations lead Swati Mohan at 3:55 pm Eastern Time (2055 GMT), as mission control at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena erupted

The autonomously guided procedure was in fact completed more than 11 minutes earlier, the length of time it took for radio signals to return to Earth.

Shortly after landing, the rover sent back its first black-and-white images, revealing a rocky field at the landing site in the Jezero Crater, just north of

the Red Planet's equator.

More images, video of
the descent and perhaps the first sounds of Mars ever recorded by microphones are expected in the coming hours as the rover relays data to overhead satellites.

US President Joe Biden hailed the "historic"

"Today proved once again that with the power of science and American ingenuity, nothing is beyond the realm of possibility," he tweeted.

Perseverance's prime mission will last just over prime two years but it is likely to remain operational well beyond that, with its predecessor Curiosity still functioning eight years after landing on the planet, said Nasa acting administrator Steve Jurczyk.

"It'll be on Mars for its entire life," he said, adding "these robots tend to be really reliable." Over the • AS THE world witnessed the historic landing of Nasa's Perseverance rover on the Martian surface, it was Indian-American scientist, Swati Mohan, who led the guidance, navigation, and control operations of the

MOHAN ALSO confirmed that the rover had survived a particularly tricky plunge through the Martian atmosphere.

Mars 2020 mission.

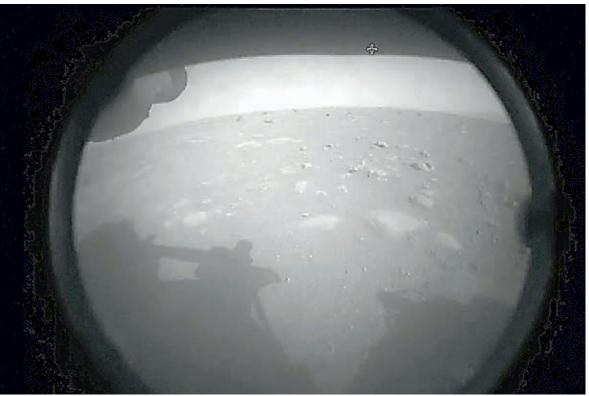
coming years, Perseverance will attempt to collect 30 rock and soil samples in sealed tubes, to be eventually sent back to Earth sometime in the

2030s for lab analysis. About the size of an SUV, the craft weighs a ton, is equipped with a seven foot- (two meter-) long robotic arm, has 19 cameras, two microphones and a suite of cutting-edge instruments to assist in its scientific goals.

Before it could set out on its lofty quest, it first had to overcome the dreaded "seven minutes of terror"—the risky entry, descent and landing phase that has scuppered nearly half of all missions to

The spacecraft carrying Perseverance careened into the Martian atmosphere at 12,500 miles (20,000 kilometers) per hour, protected by its heat shield, then deployed a supersonic parachute the size of a Little League field, before firing up an eight-engined jetpack.

Finally, it lowered the rover carefully to the ground on a set of cables. Allen Chen, lead engineer for the landing stage, said a new guidance sys-tem called "Terrain Relative Navigation," which uses a special camera to



This Nasa photo shows the first images from Nasa's Perseverance rover as it landed on the surface of Mars. Nasa said that the Perseverance rover has touched down on the surface of Mars after successfully overcoming a risky landing phase known as the 'seven minutes of terror.'

identify surface features and compare them to an onboard map, was key to landing in a rugged region of scientific interest.
"We are in a nice flat

spot, the vehicle is only by about degrees," he said. "We did successfully find that parking lot, and have a safe rover on the ground."-Scientists believe that around 3.5 billion years ago the crater was home to a river that flowed into a deep lake, depositing sedi-

ment in a fan-shaped delta. Perseverance ended up landing about two kilometers (a mile) southeast of the delta, NASA scientist Ken Farley said, in a geologically significant area. -AFP



# Biden admin introduces Citizenship Act

### Bill to create an earned roadmap to 11 million undocumented immigrants

**Washington, Feb. 19:** A bicameral US Citizenship Act of 2021 proposing a pathway to citizenship to 11 million undocumented workers, elimination of per country quota for employment-based green cards and work authorisa tion for dependents of H-1B foreign workers, was introduced

The bill, if passed by both the chambers of the Congress — House of Representatives and the Senate — and signed into law by President Joe Biden would bring citizenship to millions of foreign including undocumented and those who came to the country

The legislation would also benefit hundreds and thousands of Indian IT professionals and their families. Authors of the Senator Bob

Menendez Congresswoman Linda Sánchez — told reporters that the US Citizenship Act of 2021 establishes a moral and economic imperative and a vision of immigration reform that is expansive and inclusive. It grows the economy by

making changes to the employment-based immigration system, eliminating per-country caps, making it easier for STEM advanced degree holders

### US ends Trump policy, lets in refugees stuck in Mexico

San Diego, Feb. 19: After waiting months and sometimes years in Mexico, people seeking asylum in the United States are being allowed into the country starting from Friday as they wait for courts to decide on their cases, unwinding one of the Trump administration's signature immigration policies that President Joe Biden vowed to end.

The number of asylumseekers coming in initially will be very limited, beginning on Friday at a border crossing in San Diego and expanding to Brownsville, Texas, on Monday and El Paso,

from US universities to lets people live without stay, improving access to green cards for workers in lower-wage industries. giving dependents of H-1B holders work authorisation, and preventing children of H-1B holders from

immigrant parents from Mexico. I have dedicated my career to building an

Texas, next Friday.

US officials are warning people not to come to the US-Mexico border, saying an estimated 25,000 people with active cases in the "Remain in Mexico" program and several hundred who are appealing decisions should register on a website that the UN High Commissioner for Refugees is launching early next week.

The International Organisation for Migration, the UN migration agency, plans to test asylum-seekers for Covid-19 and will quarantine anyone who tests positive for 10 days before they enter the

fear, and a system that gives immigrants — like my parents — who sought a better life and contribute to our nation a fair opportunity to thrive," Sanchez

"Immigrants contribute aging out of the system. "Immigrants contribute "I am the daughter of greatly to our country and society. They own businesses, pay taxes and teach our children. They immigration system that are our coworkers, neigh-

United States.

Friday marks a key milestone in unraveling one of former President Donald Trump's cornerstone policies to deter people from seeking protection from persecution and returns the US asylum system to the way it worked for dec-

But there are unanswered questions, including how Central Americans who returned home will get back to the US-Mexico border. It's also unclear how long it will take to work through more than 25,000 active Remain in Mexico cases, with the oldest going first.

bors and friends," said Menendez. "We have a historic opportunity to finally enact bold immigration reform that leaves no one behind, addresses root causes of migration, and safeguards our country's national security. We have a moral and economic imperative to get this done once and for all," he said. The ruling Democrats have a majority in both

said.

the House and Senate. However, in the upper chamber, they need support of 10 Republicans to get the legislation through the Congress before it can be signed into law.

ship and the White House hope that they will get the necessary support in the interest of millions of non-citizens living in the country. Supported by the White House, the bill creates an earned roadmap to citizenship for all 11 million undocumented immigrants, with an expedited three-year path to citizenship, and giving all other undocumented grants who pass background checks and pay taxes with an eight-year path to citizenship without fear of deportation.

It reforms family-based immigration system to keep families together by recapturing visas from previous years to clear backlogs, including spouses and children of green card holders as immediate family members. It also eliminates discrimination facing LGBTQ+ families, provides protection for orphans, widows and children, allows immigrants with approved family-sponsorship petitions to join family in the US on a temporary basis while they wait for green cards to become available. -PTI

This Nasa photo shows members of Nasa's Perseverance rover team as they react in mission control after receiving confirmation the spacecraft successfully touched down on Mars at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California.

#### Washington, Feb. 19: Jolted by a sweeping hack that may have revealed government and corporate secrets to Russia, US officials are scrambling to reinforce the nation's cyber defenses and recognising that an agency created two years ago to protect America's networks and infrastructure lacks the money, tools and authority to counter such sophisticated threats.

The breach, which hijacked widely used software from Texas-based SolarWinds Inc., has exposed the profound vulnerability of civilian government networks and the limitations of efforts to detect threats.

It's also likely to unleash a wave of spending on technology modernisation and cybersecurity. "It's really highlighted investments we need to make in cybersecurity to have the visibility to block these attacks in the future," Anne Neuberger, the newly appointed deputy national security adviser for cyber and emergency technology said Wednesday at a White House briefing.

### **MYANMAR'S ANTI-COUP MOVEMENT SEES FIRST DEATH**

Yangon, Feb. 19: A young protester died on Friday, more than a week after being shot in anti-coup demonstrations in Myanmar, offering a fresh source of anger inside the country as international pressure grows on the generals who seized power.

Much of the country has been in open revolt since troops deposed civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi on February 1, with disparate strands of Myanmar society uniting to protest against a return to military rule.

Security forces have steadily stepped up the – and use – of show force, by deploying troops against peaceful protesters, and firing tear gas, water cannon and rubber

#### கோயம்புத்தூர் மாநகராட்சி ஒப்பத்தப்புள்ளி அறிக்கை எண். (e) 14 / 2021 நஎள்: 15.0<mark>2.20</mark>2 பணியின் விபரம் சமர்ப்பிக்கும் கடைசி நாள் மற்றும் நோம் வார்டு எனர்.13,33,34,45,56, 25.02.2021 26.02.2021 பிற்பகல் 3.00 யானவ 4.00 57,58,59,60,61,63,64,65,66, 384.00 किल्ला ഥക്തി 82 க்குட்பட்ட பகுதிகளில் இலட்சம் (As per the (As per the அபிவிருத்தி பணிகள் செய்தல் Server Clock) | Server Clock மேலும் முழு விபரங்களுக்கு கிழ்கண்ட இணையதள முகவரி மூகம் தெரிந்து கொள்ளலாப். https://tntenders.gov.in, ஆணையர், கோயம்புத்தூர் மாநகராட்சி, பெரிய கடை வீதி, டவுன்ஹால், கோயம்புத்தூர் 1. தொலைபேசி எண். 0422-2395026.

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Tender form O/o. General Manager, Tiruvannamalai -4 Place. Date and Time of opening Part.I Technical Bid Part.II Commercial Bid 27.02.2021 Evening at 2.30 P.M The cost of tender form Rs. 1180/- (including Tax) By post each Rs.100/- extra,EMD,Rs.1,90,000/ through www.tenders.tn.gov.in

**ROYALTY | STRIPPED | Harry still 6th in line to the throne, with no change in the line of succession** 

# Prince Harry to lose all honorary titles

London, Feb. 19: Britain's Prince Harry will relinquish his honorary military appointments and patronages after confirming to Queen Elizabeth II that he and his wife Meghan Markle will not return as working royals, Buckingham Palace announced on Friday.

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex, as they are officially known, rocked the British monarchy when they quit frontline royal duties a year ago and relocated to the United States, where they have embarked on several commercial ventures.

Under the terms of their departure, thrashed out at an



attend the 91st Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey – AP FILE PHÓTO in London.

emergency summit with the queen in early 2020, Harry agreed the couple would stop using the "Royal Highness" title and no longer carry out Sussex have confirmed to Her

duties on behalf of the monarch, but vowed to review

"The Duke and Duchess of

away from the work of The Royal Family it is not possible to continue with the responsibilities and duties that come with a life of public service.

Majesty The Queen that they

will not be returning as work-

ing members of The Royal Family," Buckingham Palace

"The Queen has written

confirming that in stepping

"The honorary military appointments and Royal patronages held by The Duke and Duchess will therefore be returned to Her Majesty, before being redistributed among working members of

The Royal Family.'

Place: Tiruvannamalai-4 Date: 19,02,202



# Chronicle

**20 FEBRUARY 2021** 

### Cong's Punjab lesson: Set store by the local stalwarts

he spectacular sweep by the Congress in the civic polls in all three regions of Punjab earlier this week presents an object lesson to the Narendra Modi government as well as the Congress Party itself. The poll results have pushed the otherwise powerful Akali Dal, which derives its authority from Sikh religious forums, and the BJP into a narrow

The lesson for India's oldest party, which now appears to be in a semi-som-nolent state in many parts of the country — is that the road to revival is not closed. But there is a proviso: in the states the party must be led by local stalwarts who have come up the political ladder in the normal course of elections and manoeuvring, and not by lightweight flunkeys accidentally selected by the central leadership and its nominated committees on a whim or to bestow

In Punjab, chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh, in spite of his advanced years, proved his mettle. He gave mature political leadership. He could instinctively pick issues to highlight that matter. He also dealt with upstarts favoured by the Centre in a manner that did not raise any dust and he did not throw tantrums, although he is a maharaja. Attempts by his opponents to throw barbs of a personal nature at him cut no ice.

No doubt, the farmers' agitation helped the Congress greatly. Former party chief Rahul Gandhi's initiative in the Lok Sabha in holding two minutes silence — by treading into the Speaker's domain — in memory of the farmers who have died in the agitation could hardly have gone unnoticed in Punjab or

But these meaningful acts of symbolism may not have gone far enough and been translated into votes, were it not for the astute leadership of the state by Captain Amarinder and the tending of the state party organisation by PCC chief Sunil Jakhar in a sober manner. The Congress high command, such as it is, will doubtless realise that the party could have swept the Assembly election in neighbouring Haryana if only it had handed over charge of the party to

Bhupinder Hooda early enough.

The Modi government and the ruling BJP cannot but have noticed that the day after the Punjab civic poll results came out, Rakesh Tikait, who has by now emerged as a famous farmers' leader from western Uttar Pradesh, called on the community of farmers to intensify their agitation and not return home until the controversial farm laws are rolled back. It is not unlikely that the farmers will show up in poll-bound West Bengal to queer the pitch for the BJP, which is trying hard to challenge CM Mamata Banerjee.

The Punjab results also point to the fact that the dissatisfaction with the Centre's policies that have fuelled unemployment, shutting down of micro,

small and medium industries, and the relentless climb in diesel and petrol prices, are hurting the urban voter badly. The government leadership and the ruling party leadership need to look sharp and make wise choices.

### Prince's ransom for cricketers

couple of IPL teams seem to have gone overboard in splashing crores on cricketers who are looking to rediscover their mojo after very poor out-Aings in the last edition of the league played in the UAE. Considering that 130 countries around the globe are yet to lay their hands on vaccine supply in the face of the coronavirus pandemic, such splurging seems a tad extravagant. But then chasing sporting success is an expensive but far from scientific pursuit. Perhaps, the extravagance has to be seen as part of a larger sport bubble that comes more as an entertainment package and is not to be equated with normal pay for work rewards in common men's lives and livelihoods. The 2020 records of Chris Morris of South Africa, who at ₹16.25 crores has become the cash-rich league's most expensive player at an auction and Glenn Maxwell of Australia who gets close to US \$2 million (the approximate procurement cost of

5.7 lakh vaccines) bear no relation to the prince's ransom being paid as salaries. The teams seemed so overenthusiastic about foreign T20 all-rounders that they could not show the same largesse to homegrown talent. The riches showered on some youngsters in this annual auction like K. Gowtham, bought by Chennai Super Kings for US \$9.25 crores and M.Shahrukh Khan, picked up by the renamed Punjab Kings for ₹1.2 crores, may have been heartwarming as their potential to shine in the T20 format is being recognised. The champions Mumbai Indians, who were parsimonious compared to the likes of Royal Challengers, Bangalore who broke their bank at the auction on a couple of expensive buys, also chose to take on the cricketer with the famous surname -Arjun Tendulkar — at the modest starting price of ₹20 lakhs. In cricketing terms, the hunt for impact players who can be expected to swing games with bat and/or ball seemed logical enough. The timing of the commitment of millions hit awkward when the world is vaccin ating against the existential cri sis posed by the virus.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

KAUSHIK MITTER

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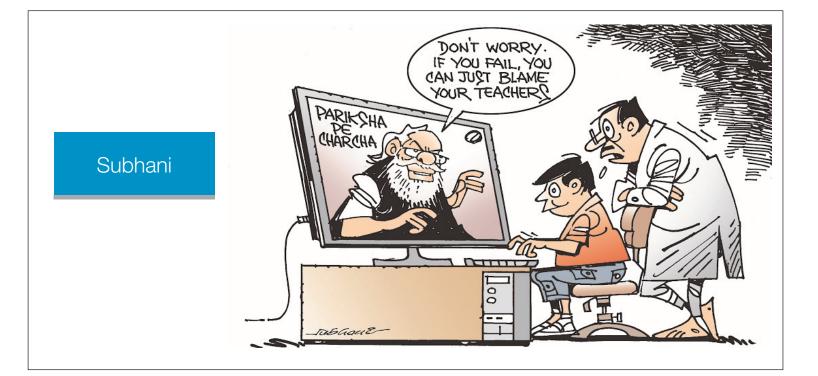
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# Women walk taller... But what if Ramani had lost?



Shobhaa De

ne temptation to gloat at this very moment is overwhelming. I'm sure millions of women across India (and possibly the world) are viewing journalist Priya Ramani's acquittal by a Delhi court in a criminal defamation case filed by former Union minister/ journalist/author M.J. Akbar as a personal victory. It was a goose-bumps-inducing historic few minutes for those present at Delhi's Rouse courts Āvenue Wednesday as Ravindra Dubey, additional chief metropolitan magistrate, pointed out what should have been obvious to everybody all along that even a person of high social standing can be a sexual harasser and a woman cannot be punished for raising instances of abuse decades later. The irony of that significant observation is not lost on any-Ramani was the accused in this case, and had to fight valiantly for her truth to be established in court! And yes — as in most such cases, it is men (and more infrequently, women) "of high social standing" who are guilty of misusing this very "social standing", secure and complacent in the belief that nothing and no one can touch them

because of it. Well, a plucky woman, Priya Ramani, and her equally plucky lawyer, Rebecca John, just threw that smug self-assurance into the dustbin. Good on you, ladies! What I appreciated the most was the sobriety and restraint displayed by both women as soon as the verdict was delivered (M.J. Akbar was surrounded by dozens of policemen, while Priya had all the

women of India behind her). In Priya Ramani's place, I know I would behaved most indecorously, immaturely and irrepressibly. I might have broken into a victory dance or something silly and spoken to the media between sobs of relief. Priya and Rebecca must know what this victory and acquittal signifies for women — it is like the biggest validation of all times! It shows one thing unequivocally — women matter. Their voices matter. Their hurts, pain, humiliation and subjugation matter! None of it can be ignored or devalued. For centuries. woman's "virtue" has been equated with her "value". If a woman's "purity" is defiled — her market worth crashes. Even if

it's she who has been at the receiving end of sexual harassment! It is the perpetrator who generally wins! When after she has been raped, tortured and brutalised society decides "women always ask for it". With this important

verdict, all of a sudden,

women are experiencing

a surge of confidence.

They are walking taller, heads held high. Courage they have never lacked! Just the thought that they will get a fair hearing, is enough for now. The silence of victims has been misread as weakness. Worse, it has been equated with consent and compliance Ravindra Dubey spoke on behalf of many men who share the sentiments expressed in the verdict but dare not go public with their pro-women views. Why? Because they fear the wrath of other men and are scared of being mocked by a hypermacho, over-patriarchal system that entitles men

to bully and browbeat women — no questions

Often it is the unalloyed arrogance of men in power (I refuse to call them "powerful men" they are anything but!) that makes them believe in their own invincibility. Here's my theory for what it's worth: M.J. Akbar overplayed his card. Plus, he was badly advised by his mighty legal team. He probably thought he could turn the tables on Priya Ramani and crush her with formidable money power and political clout. Who was she, after all? That's the way mediocre minds function. One expected M.J. Akbar to be a shrewder strategist. Like some of his contemporaries, who ducked under the radar, and waited for the #MeToo storm to blow over. Today, hardly anybody remembers who they were -- and nobody cares! The momentum is long over. People have moved on. And those very same men are carrying on with their lives like nothing ever happened. A few are still lying low, perhaps hoping their accusers have "forgotten", preferably "forgiven". Dream on! No Sir... Women do not forget. Never! Some are unable to fight back, others too emotionally drained to rage on. But no woman forgets the face of her abuser or his despicable abuse, till her last breath.

remarkable verdict has emphasised that there is no time bar for speaking out. A woman is entitled to do so decades later, if she so chooses. In no way **Priya and Rebecca** must know what this victory and

The court in

acquittal signifies for women — it is like the biggest validation of all times! It shows one thing unequivocally — women matter. Their voices matter.

does that diminish her truth.

"A woman cannot be punished for raising her voice," the court said. But she is! Often, with extreme punishment rape and murder. Then comes the question of her "rights" — what rights? Those are enshrined in our Constitution — but does anybody bother with these rights when women across the board face the worst form of torment? Priya Ramani for working women everywhere when she outed M.J. Akhar — her boss in the 1990s. I wrote four impassioned columns at the time, and was asked to "calm down", mostly by men of his generation, some of whom had faced similar charges in the media and had denied them. Most of the Bollywood men accused during the height of the #MeToo movement are back in the studios, chastened for now, but certainly not sensitised. It's just that they don't want to be caught with their pants down — not that they see anything wrong with sexual harassment per se. It's the same power trip as the one M.J. Akbar imagined would insulate him when he tried to put Priya Ramani on the back foot by suing her for defamation. The point is: A man's reputation has to be impeccable to have the guts to sue a woman for tarnishing it. That's really rich, in this case, considering the court accepted advocate Rebecca Jacob's argument that M.J. Akbar's reputation was far from "stellar".

"Right of reputation can't be protected at the cost of life and dignity of the woman..." Yessssss! So ... all the "powerful" men cowering at the moment at the thought of the repercussions of this verdict — cower away. It's your turn next! ... But what if Priya

Ramani had lost?"

Readers can send feedback to www.shobhaade. blogspot.com

### **LETTERS**

### **COVID-19 VARIANTS**

This refers to your editorial Covid-19 variants: India not out of woods yet (Feb. 19). The fear of experts and scientists cannot be ignored as variants have a tendency to spread faster than the original one. In our country, the number of people exposed to the pandemic is not small and are vulnerable to attack and new variants are knocking on the door. The best solution is reinvigoration of the awareness programmes on appropriate methods stringently as usual, and very particularly avoiding of social gatherings for next six months. The caution is not excessive to fight with pandemic. **Suresh V.V.,** Vellore

#### **WOMEN'S WOES**

THE RECENT judgment by a Delhi court absolving journalist Priya Ramani in a criminal defamation case filed by former Union minister M.J. Akbar is really welcome. It will give more strength to women who are afraid of raising their voice against those who sexually harass or molest them. The victims often keep quiet fearing stigmatisation by society, which still looks down upon women and holds them responsible for such crimes, instead of targeting the wrong-doers. Many people who are of orthodox and patriarchal mindset question the victim over her choice of ress and what-not. There are many villages where people don't allow girls to go to school as soon as they reach puberty. They also look at girls as some sort of liability and try to marry them off at an early age

C.K. Subramaniam, Chennai

#### **OIL PRICE HIKE**

T PM hlames previous govts for not cutting import dependence (Feb. 18). The PM does not want to criticise but blames the previous governments for not cutting import dependence. But did the NDA government cut the same? The BJPled NDA government is in power for almost seven years but the petrol, diesel and domestic gas cylinder prices are progressively sky-rocketing, burdening the commoner who is cursing himself and the government of the day. According to Dr. Swamy's recent tweet the petrol price is ₹93 in Rama's India, ₹53 in Sita's Nepal and ₹51 in Ravana's Lanka. This proves that the government has failed to control the petrol, diesel and domestic gas cylinder prices despite its tall claim that stupendous progress has been made on all fronts. As the common man is ignorant of economics, import dependence etc., the government which is earning average ₹1 lakh crores GST should divert one quarter of the amount, share the burden and supply petrol, diesel and domestic gas cylinders at half the cost, emulating Ravana's Lanka.

A. Seshagiri Rao, Chennai

Farrukh Dhondy Cabbages & Kings

Why it's crucial

to stand up for

views you may

not agree with...



'There is time always, Bachchoo, To talk of many things As the Walrus did expound On cabbages and kings

And yet this global fear Clips conversation's wings The only news we hear Is of Covid's mutatings!"

— From **O For a Sip of Bepsi Kohla** by Bachchoo

rithout freedom of speech and opinion, there is no democracy. The system of counting votes and giving the majority the privilege of governing in fairness to the minority — is only the first requirement. The rule of unoppressive, uncoercive law, freedom of association and assembly, freedom of speech — yes, even on Twitter — are some of the rest.

Twitter has now banned Donald Trump's outpourings, not because they're left-wing or supportive of some mythical religious bias, but because very many of them amount to hate speech and incitement to

break the law. In Britain, there are laws against hate speech. Though difficult to define, the law trusts judges and

juries to identify speech which calls for any sort of attack on the minorities — or even a majority of the population. It's a law that upholds decency, but "hate crime" shouldn't stretch to expressing a questioning or dissenting opinion about, say, a religion. I am free to publicly proclaim that I don't believe in virgin births, or that God engraves, by lightning, laws on stone tablets or indeed dictates books to prophets. I won't have, I hope, crossed the line between a theological or scientific belief and incitement to attack any religious group or the buildings they

The definition of hate crime in any democracy should not deteriorate or ever be interpreted as "Disagree Crime". Dictatorships and fascistic regimes, some, as in Turkey, based on religion and others on a mafiocracy, are universally known for their intolerance of dissent. Turkey locks up its journalists and Russia arrests and imprisons 11,000 of the protesters who took to the streets in favour of the release of a dissident politician. Other nations disgracefully encourage and allow curtailment of the freedom of speech or even fiction, on the grounds of dubious interpretations of religious sanctity.

In recent years, American and British universities have entertained insidious attacks on the principle of freedom of speech. Cambridge University, for instance, backpedalled in recent months on an edict they issued to "respect" all opinions. Several senior and junior members of the university interpreted this injunction as a "shut-up" call to all dissidence. They wanted the diktat to be modified to "tolerate" all opinions, while reserving the right to contradict and oppose them. The dissidents won.

Several prominent writers and academics, among them J.K. Rowling of the Harry Potter books, Germaine Greer, widely recognised as a pioneer of contemporary feminism and, most recently, Prof. Selina Todd of Oxford University, have been variously "no-platformed" by university student organisations because they've argued, in the media or through social media outlets, that transgender women were not really women and shouldn't be afforded the reserved rights and spaces that belonged to the gender. They had rational and scientific arguments on their side and each one, and others on the side of these three, strongly aver that they are not denying social or political rights to

transgender people, but insist on their own freedom, without censure and abuse from trolls, to hold scientific and biological arguments which deny that humans or animals can change gender because they want to.

In a recent case, brought by a young woman who was, when she was underage, subject to what she called pressure and "mind control" at the Tavistock Institute, the court ruled that influencing or indulging minors to change their gender and undergo medicinal, surgical and psychological therapy to so do, was unlawful.

This censorship, the denial of platforms to people whose opinions, politics or stances on any issues which the banning and debarring bodies disagree with, has been confined to supporters of what has come to be known as the "woke" agenda. People with doubts or dissenting opinions on race, gender, sexual orientation – and politicians who have acted in favour of right-wing policies — have been the targets of this denial of appearance on university platforms, sometimes being informed of the banning only hours before they

were invited to appear. The phenomenon has been taken up by right-wing commentators, who argue that this is an anti-democratic assault on free speech in the very institutions, the universities, where opposing arguments should be debated. Britain's Conservative government, with an ear wide open to these commentators, has now resolved to legislate for "free speech" and appoint a sort of supremo to see that this law is enforced.

Prof. Todd has expressed her support for such a law. She says it's necessary as the atmosphere on campus, perpetrated by self-appointed activists and attitudeenforcers, inhibits the expression of dissenting opinions — about history, science, politics, sociology and

even literature.

The National Union of Students' representatives argue that there is no need for such a law and that it has constantly been vigilant about absolute freedom of speech in universities. A good cellar of salt should flavour this assertion.

Time will tell if this law and its enforcement have any effect. Perhaps every country with a claim to being democratic should pass such a law and appoint a manifestly independent "neyta" with powers to dismiss frivolous and outrageous attacks on the freedom of opinion and creativity from politicians and













INDICATORS		%
Sensex	50,889.76	-0.85
Nifty 50	14,981.80	-0.91
S&P 500*	3,926.25	0.31
Dollar (₹)	72.64	0.16
Pound Sterling (₹)	100.98	0.02
Euro (₹)	87.67	0.15
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	45,568▲239	0.52
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	63.41	-0.81
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.132	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.321	0.034
* As of 8:30 PM IST		

### Govt to appeal against Cairn **Energy tax award**



The government is likely to file an appeal against the \$1.4 billion international arbitration award won by Cairn Energy in a tax dispute, sources said. Soon after the second round of meeting between Cairn CEO Simon Thomson and finance secretary Aiay Bhushan Pandey ended on Friday, the source said the government intends to defend its sovereign right in taxation and will file an appeal against the tribunal award.

# ■Platinum up 120% on auto demand

# Gold down ₹10K from Aug. rally

**SANGEETHA G** CHENNAI, FEB. 19

Gold prices have corrected 18 per cent and lost more than Rs 10,000 since August while platinum prices have gained more than 120 per cent since April. Despite the current weakness in gold, both the metals are expected to see further rally in 2021.

Gold prices have dropped to Rs 45,950 per 10 gm in the Multi Commodity Exchange from the highs of Rs 56,590 in Augustlosing more than Rs 10,000 per 10 gm. In the international market, the yellow metal had touched a record high of \$2,075 an ounce in August as the favourable macro-economic factors got a boost from the pandemic uncertainty. Since then prices have been receding and have fallen to \$1,760 levels, losing more than \$300 per ounce.

"Gold prices have slipped below the crucial Rs 46,000/10gm level, to hit an eight-month low. The rise in the US Treasury yields and stronger dollar, optimism of a larger economic stimulus package, and the vaccination drive have led to downside pressure on gold prices," said Nish Bhatt, founder and CEO, Millwood

International. "Gold has seen considerable weakness as investors started profit-booking ever since the vaccine news started coming. Easy money started flowing into riskier assets like equities and Bitcoin and the indus-



trial recovery saw the base metal prices more than doubling. Most of the equity markets are trading at their life-time high levels and Bitcoin has shot up from Rs 4,000 in March to Rs 52,800," said Ajay Kedia, MD, Kedia Commodities. Another precious metal,

platinum, too saw a rally with the recovery in the automotive sector. Prices are at a six-year high and have moved up from \$560 an ounce in April to \$1273—up by more than 120 per cent. "Tougher pollution regu-

lations requiring vehicle makers to use more platinum in catalytic converters are supporting prices. China is implementing Phase 6 standard for both gasoline and diesel vehicles from January 2021. As other economies follow the same, the demand will further go up. Moreover, platinum may see a third consecutive annual production deficit in 2021 amid supply concerns from South Africa," said Kedia.

**QUICK CROSSWORD** 

13

16

Across

1. Effervescent (6)

8. Coarse canvas (6)

10. Tramp wearily (7) 13. Bookbinding leather (7)

16. Travelling seller (6)

19. Grimly persistent (6)

17. Laver (4) 18. Alone (4)

Despite the divergent movement seen in both the metals in the second half of last year and the initial months of this year, analysts say the metals will rally in 2021.

"Gold rally never ends in a year. It goes on for six to eight years. Despite the current weakness, there are several factors that still support gold. A possible weakness in the US dollar, low interest rates, overvalued equities, ETF inflows and recessionary trends in major economies will continue to support gold,' said Kedia.

In a report published in November. CitiGroup found gold prices pushing to \$2,000 an ounce in the medium term with a target of \$2,500 for 2021. Similarly, platinum also may move towards \$1,500 with tougher pollution norms in the automotive sector increasing demand. Platinum ETFs too have been seeing significant inflows in the recent

### 18 mn Indians to find new occupation by 2030: Report

Mumbai, Feb. 19: Covid-19 will have a lasting impact on labour markets, and as much as 18 million Indian workers will be forced to switch to a newer occupation by 2030 because of the pandemic, a report said on Friday.

The impact will be "dis-proportionately" felt on low-wage workers in retail, food services, hospitality, and office adminstration, the report by McKinsey Institute, said.

The pandemic has disrupted labour markets because companies have been forced to respond to a new dimension of work-physical proximity. The report identifies the lasting impact of Covid-19 on labour demand in eight countries.

Three broad changes in consumer behaviour and business models will persist to varying degrees, which include the rise of remote work, the increased embrace of ecommerce and virtual interactions, and the more rapid deployment of automation and artificial intelligence.

This will lead to a reshuffling of jobs in the economy over a decade. and over 100 million workers will have to find a new job, it said, adding 18 million of those will be in India itself.

The impact on India has been minimised because 35-55 per cent of the country's workforce depends on the outdoor production and maintenance arena.

### ₹25,000-cr fund for stalled realty projects bearing fruit

**DHWANI PANDYA** 

A 25,000-crore (\$3.5 billion) fund set up by the government to complete stalled housing projects is set to deliver its first finished apartments in 2021, offering a template for a prob-lem that has washed out savings of thousands of home buyers and bankrupted developers.

The fund will hand over 16 projects, or more than 4,000 homes, in the financial year starting April 1, said Irfan A. Kazi, chief investment officer at SBI-CAP Ventures Ltd, the government-appointed manager of the alternative investment fund. The 'Special Window for Comp-letion of Construction of Affordable and Mid-Income Housing Projects' (Swahim) fund announced was November 2019.

At the time, India had an estimated \$63 billion of such stalled projects as an economic slowdown and a credit crisis cascaded through the sector. Builders were unable to service their loans, forcing banks to write off the debts and worsen what was already one of the world's biggest bad-loan piles. The government created the fund as a measure to unclog the financing pipes. Kazi spoke in a phone interview Feb. 12. Edited excerpts:

How much money has been disbursed?

We have given approvals to around 159 projects involving investment of about Rs 14,500 crore, which will complete around 100,000 homes. Of this, about 47 projects (Rs 5,000 crore) have received final approIrfan A. Kazi

val but 112 are early-stage approvals, where due diligence is pending. We don't disclose disbursal amount as we give funding only against project progress; two projects will complete construction by April.

#### What kind of returns do you expect?

We take first charge on assets and cash flows, so when projects get completed we are the first one to get our money back. Existing lenders have to agree to take second charge. We invest via zerocoupon non-convertible debentures. All our investments are done at 12 per cent internal rate return across projects.

#### Was there any pushback? There was a significant

degree of resistance from lenders about our first charge on repayment but, as our deal track record shows, that hurdle is being gradually scaled. We now allow sharing of the security with lenders and shar-ing of cash flow to some extent. We keep having internal discussions and also with the finance ministry on what criteria can be relaxed.

Who are your investors? We have 14 investors, the

government has 50 per cent in the fund, Life Insurance Corporation and State Bank of India each have 10 per cent and the rest are other public and private sector players. Global funds have not shown a large interest for a couple of reasons: they prefer rent-yielding office and warehousing assets over residential. They also expect returns of more than 20 per cent to account for risks, including asset class and exchange rate, at which level our projects will be loss-making. We have raised Rs 10,000 crore so far (of the Rs 25,000 crore fund size) but the government has assured us that more will be made available when required.

#### What kind of challenge has the fund faced?

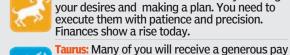
In many cases we are dealing with the bottom rung of companies, which have lost manpower and some even no longer have a finance team, so due diligence can be hard. A no-objection certificate from existing lenders has come only in some cases and takes an exceedingly long period of time. Then there are also pending court cases or home buyers demanding compensation.

#### How and where does the fund operate?

Before setting up the fund, we did a market study which established that about 40 per cent of the stressed projects were in the National Capital Region, about 25 per cent in the Mumbai Metro-politan Region and the top seven cities accounted for about 85 per cent of all the stalled projects. However, we are a pan-India fund.

### **COFFEE-BREAK**

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



Aries: Success will come from clearly defining your desires and making a plan. You need to execute them with patience and precision. Finances show a rise today.

rise, a promotion, a new job or a career break-

hrough. This day you will learn the value of



being discreet. Gemini: Today, academic study will be a part of your life. You will be determined to under-



take further studies on a part-time or fulltime basis to start a new career. cancer: A relative or older person will provide support or guidance in your business or aca-



overseas will bring you success. eo: Artists, performers, writers can gain public recognition. First-time authors could have a

demic pursuits. Connection with people from



novel published. Some students can begin a career in law. firgo: This day is particularly dangerous for keep-



ing secrets hidden. Romance will take a serious note, with many of you tying the knot and also, building a solid foundation for the future.

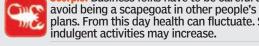
#### You share your b'day with Rihanna is a Barbadian singer. She is famoulsy known for her

songs and albums like Good Girl Gone Bad, Rude Boy, What's My Name?, We Found Love, Dimonds, Loud, Music of the Sun



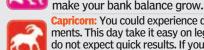
ibra: Today shows a day of growth and good fortune. The day begins with you enjoying social interaction and also, looking forward to exciting events.

scorpio: Business folks have to be careful and

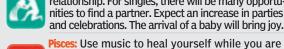


plans. From this day health can fluctuate. Selfindulgent activities may increase. Sagittarius: You will try some new paths and erase old and outworn partners from your life.

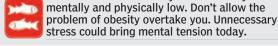
A promotion or a new business venture will



Capricorn: You could experience delays in payments. This day take it easy on legal proceedings do not expect quick results. If you are in the writing or publishing business, this day is very fruitful.



arius: A holiday romance could turn into serious relationship. For singles, there will be many opportunities to find a partner. Expect an increase in parties and celebrations. The arrival of a baby will bring joy.



bridge **ALDER** 

### **PLUCK THE** TRICKS OUT OF THE

This week, we have been looking at some defensive techniques. In each deal, one defender could see how to

defeat the contract, but it was not so clear to partner. The in-the-know player had to take control immediately and hope that partner got on the same page.
It made me think of "carpe diem," which I thought meant "seize the day." Apparently,

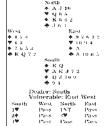
though, it was first used by

Horace in 23 B.C., and really

Loosely translated, Horace wrote, "While we're talking, envious time is fleeing. Pluck the day; put no trust in the future."

In bridge, of course, we need to "pluck the trick,"

which is "carpe dolum" appar-In today's deal, one player cannot afford to spend time smelling the roses; he must pluck the right cards to defeat the contract. What happens in



1. Inclination (4)

- 2. Small restaurant (6) 3. Stupor (4)
  7. Springtime construction (4) 4. Wheel shaft (4) 5. Dilate (6)
  - 6. Noughts (anag) (7)
    9. Crucially important (7)
  - 11. University grounds, buildings 12. Pretending (6)
- Across: 1. Hindrance 6. Coins, 7. Snips, 9. Tots, 10. Impala, 12. Reflex, 14. Idle, 17. Debut, 18. Elite, 19.

Down: 2. Idiot, 3. Dash, 4. Assume, 5. China, 6. Catered, 8. 14. Pop hero (4) Siamese, 11. Beetle, 13. Fable, 15. Drift, 16. 15. Reproduced (4)

# **Word Mine**

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

### iumble MUDIH 1 CIYPK GAHUCT 6 × RLETEN HOW LONG THEIR HOMEMADE (ITE WOULD STAY ALOFT WAS ---Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartexin.

(Answers tomorrow)
PHONY GENIUS JABBEA
spotted the alligator on the golf
aused APPRLITENSION

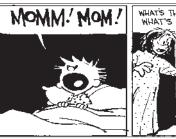
four hearts after West leads the club king?
In the auction, South cor-

rectly opened one heart, not one no-trump. Always try to show a five-card major, and here South had no rebid problems. North responded with one no-trump forcing. (What would you bid in Standard American? It would be a nightmare.) On the next round, the jump to three hearts showed game-invita tional values with three-card

East took control immediately -- there was no time to waste. He overtook his partner's club king with the ace. cashed the diamond ace and returned the club five. Then it was easy for West to take that trick and give his partner a diamond ruff to defeat the

> Copyright United Feature Syndicate (Asia Features)

#### CALVIN AND HOBBES | Bill Watterson







# THE WIZARD OF ID|Parker and Hartsd





### ARCHIE | Bill Henry Scarpelli & craig boldman







THAT'S THE THING

ABSOLUTELY NOTHING!

**BLONDIE**|Dean Young and John Marshall







TARZAN|Edgar Rice Burroughs







### SHORT TAKES

### **Pugilists Chanu,**

Vinka make semis

New Delhi: Asian youth gold medallists Babyrojisana Chanu (51kg) and Vinka (60kg) advanced to the semifinals of the 30th Adriatic Pearl tournament in Budva, Montenegro, assuring themselves of at least a bronze medal each with dominating first-round wins. Manipur's Chanu, who trains at MC Mary Kom's academy, did not put a foot wrong and dominated her opponent Georgieva Blagovesta of Bulgaria from the word go and as a result, the ref-

eree had to stop the contest in the first round itself. She will face Uzbekistan's Feruza Kazakova in the semifinals. Vinka, who was up against Uzbekistan's Sevara Ashurova in a quarterfinal bout, produced a flawless display of her attacking prowess. She will face Suvi Tujula in the semifinals. - PTI

### **BWF extends Oly** qualifying time

New Delhi: The Tokyo Olympics badminton qualification period was on Friday extended by nearly two months to June 15 after the postponement of three important tournaments due to Covid-19 relat-

ed restrictions. The qualification period was earlier to end on April 25. "The Olympic Qualifying period for the Race to Tokyo will now close on 15 June 2021, with the last tournament counting for qualification being the Singapore Open 2021," the

BWF said in a statement. "BWF is working with the IOC to update the Tokyo 2020 qualification system whereby the final updated regulation will be shared once ready following formal approval by IOC," it

#### **Star high jumper Vlasic retires**

Zagreb: Croatia's two-time world champion and double Olympic medallist Blanka Vlasic announced on Friday she was retiring after struggling with

injuries for years. Vlasic, 37, said in an open letter that since winning a bronze medal at the 2016 Rio Olympics, "I have been trying to cure my injury, four years full of hope that I will once again stand in front of the bar and challenge myself. "The following years brought

countless rehabilitation treatments, hope and disappoint-

### **Harden digs deep** to lay Lakers low

Los Angeles: James Harden scored 23 points as the Brooklyn Nets blew away a depleted Los Angeles Lakers in a one-sided showdown between the Eastern and Western Conference heavyweights on Thursday. With Kevin Durant sidelined with

a hamstring strain, Harden shouldered the offensive burden.

### Live on

Australian Open: Women's singles final from 1.30 pm, followed by mixed doubles final on Sony Six, Sony Ten 2, HD

CRICKET

PSL: Karachi Kings vs Quetta Gladiators from 7.30 pm on Sony

South Africa T20 League: Lions vs Warriors from 1.30 pm; Knights vs Dolphins from 5.55 pm on Star Sports Select 2, HD

**FOOTBALL** 

**English Premier League:**Southampton vs Chelsea from 6 pm; Burnley vs West Brom from 8.30 pm; Liverpool vs Everton from 11 pm; Fulham vs Sheffield United from 1.30 am (Sunday) on Star Sports Select 1, HD

Indian Super League: Jamshedpur vs Mumbai City from 7.20 pm on Star Sports 2, 3

Italian League: Genoa vs Verona from 10.30 pm; Sassuolo vs Bologna from 1.15 am (Sunday) on Sony Ten 2

UFC

Fight Night: Curtis Blaydes vs Derrick Lewis and other bouts from 6.30 am (Sunday) on Sony Ten 1, HD

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# Money, Money, Money

### Jamieson didn't know how much ₹15 crore was

Christchurch, Feb. 19: Waking up at around mid-night in New Zealand, Kyle Jamieson wondered how much ₹15 crore would be in his country's curren-cy, after having watched an intense three-way bid for him in the IPL auction.

The 6'8" pacer eventually ended up with Royal Challengers Bangalore for \$2 million approximately, making him the highest paid New Zealander and fourth highest in the IPL's 14-year history.

"I woke up around mid-night and decided to check the phone. Rather than trying to avoid the situation, (I thought) I'll sit back and enjoy it. It was certainly a weird hour and a half waiting for my name to be called up, Jamieson was quoted as saying by stuff.co.nz.

"I had a message from Shane Bond (former New pacer Mumbai Indians bowling coach) as it was going and he said, 'How good is this'

"I didn't actually know what the amount of money, how that translated to New Zealand dollars. It was quite cool to share that moment with him and ride that two or three minutes with him," he added.

Also showing in interest in him were Delhi Capitals and the Punjab Kings in the auction on Thursday.

Black Caps Former coach Mike Hesson, RCB's director of cricket operations, led the charge to win the three-way bidding for Jamieson, who made his Test debut against India at home last year. His retainer fee for the

Black Caps, according to the report, is between \$100,000 to \$150,000, which makes RCB's winning bid amount 20 times more. It completed a rapid rise

for Jamieson, who is known for extracting awkward bounce. The right-arm quick, playing in the 2019 Super Smash, picked up 6 for 7 in four overs, a New Zealand T20 record.

He has so far played in six Tests, two ODIs and four T20Is. He took two five-wicket hauls in his first four Tests and has also shown a lot of competence with the bat as well. Asked what would he buy if his New Zealand teammates asked for treat, Jamieson said, 'Probably a few coffees I

would have thought.
"I don't know. It's only been a few hours. My bank account hasn't changed overnight, but there'll be a bit of stick given and a few coffees and a few beers I'm sure," the New Zealand speedster further

Jamieson will join a starstudded RCB team who scooped ₹14.5 crore in the auction.



New Zealand bowler Kyle Jamieson in this file photo.

### ₹9.25 crore IPL contract is nerve-wracking: Gowtham

Ahmedabad, Feb. 19: A net bowler with the Indian team right now, uncapped Karnataka all-Krishnappa Gowtham is still trying to get a grip on his emotions after fetching a mind-boggling ₹9.25 crore deal with Chennai Super Kings which left his parents and wife overwhelmed by

tears of joy.

After a bidding war at the IPL auction in Chennai on Thursday, Gowtham was bought by CSK, his price surpassing that of Krunal Pandya's then record of ₹8.8 crore by the Mumbai Indians in 2018 for an uncapped play-

"It was nerve-wracking, I was very anxious, watching on TV," Gowtham, who is currently with the Indian Test team here as a net bowler for the series against England, told ESPNcricinfo.

name came up. Emotions changing every Then, Rohit and Hardik Sharma Pandya knocked on my door and gave me a big hug and they asked for a

big treat," he added. His base price was ₹20 lakh, and he was quickly the focus of a fierce bidding war between the Kolkata Knight Riders and the Sunrisers Hyderabad, before CSK Sunrisers

swooped in with a late bid. Krishnappa has modest



It was nerve-wracking, I was very anxious, watching on TV. My parents had tears, happy tears. They were all so happy for me.

— KRISHNAPPA GOWTHAM after fetching a mind-boggling deal with Chennai Super Kings

"We'd just landed in IPL statistics. He has Ahmedabad and I'd just switched on TV and my three seasons since 2018 and has scored 186 runs

and taken 13 wickets. He was a part of RR for two seasons — 2018 and 2019 playing 15 and 7 matches respectively and was with Kings XI Punjab (now Punjab Kings) in 2020 where he featured in just two games before being released.

Gowtham's parents and wife in Bengaluru were in tears when they came to know of the good news. "My parents had tears, happy tears. They were all

happy Gowtham said.

"It's hard to describe that feeling sinking in. Obviously this isn't the first time I've been part of the auction but every time your name comes up, the kind of butterflies in your tummy is unimaginable," he added.

Gowtham will be playing under M. S. Dhoni and he remembers queuing up with a few other uncapped players to get his bat signed by the legendary wicketkeeper batsman after an IPL game three years ago. — PTI

### **ARJUN CAN'T WAIT TO WEAR MI'S JERSEY**

New Delhi, Feb. 19: Pacer Arjun Tendulkar cannot wait for his maid en IPL stint to start with Mumbai Indians and thanked the coaches for having faith in him after being picked by the fivetime champions at the players' auction.

The 21-year-old, son of iconic former captain Sachin Tendulkar, got a major fillip on Thursday when he was bought by Mumbai Indians at his base price of ₹20 lakh.

His celebrated father hasn't just played for the franchise but is also the mentor of the side, which is the most successful team in the IPL.

"Since childhood I have always been a die hard fan of Mumbai Indians. I would like to thank the coaches and support staff who showed faith in me.

"I am excited to join the MI Paltan and can't wait to wear the blue and gold," Arjun said in a video message posted on MI's *Twitter* handle.

Arjun has been a net bowler for the franchise for the past two-three seasons. He recently made his senior Mumbai team debut when he played in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, the national T20 championship,

### **MORRIS ROLE IS TO SUPPORT ARCHER: SANGA**

Feb. Mumbai. Rajasthan Royals' director of cricket Kumar Sangakkara on Friday said that allrounder Chris Morris, who was brought by the franchise for ₹16.25 crore in the IPL auction, will have a "very specific role of supporting" pace spearhead Jofra Archer.

Morris became the most expensive buy in IPL history when he was picked KK tollowing intense bidding war at the auction on Thursday.

"Morris was significantlv high in terms of auction price. Morris has a very specific role for us to play in supporting (Jofra) Archer. It gives us a lot more flexibility in the way we use Archer,' Sangakkara said.

"Also, Morris' numbers, when he is (has) been fit and strong, has been some of the best in all IPLs, Sangakkara added. —PTI



Belgium's Elise Mertens (left) and partner Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus leap with their winner's trophy after defeating Czech Republic's Barbora Krejcikova and Katerina Siniakova 6-2, 6-3 in the women's doubles final at the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne

### **Medvedev mauls** Tsitsipas, in final

Melbourne, Feb. 19: Russia's Daniil Medvedev overpowered Tsitsipas to make his first Australian Open final Friday, where he will bid to stop world number one Novak Djokovic from clinching an unprecedented ninth title.

The fourth seed proved far too strong for Greece's Tsitsipas, crushing him 6-4, 6-2, 7-5 in front of more than 7,000 noisy fans at Rod Laver Arena to extend his win streak to 20.

The 25-year-old, ultraconfident on the back of his unbeaten run, which includes three titles, has been knocking on the door of Grand Slam success for some time, but has yet to

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

But nobody on tour has more momentum than Medvedev, whose tricky game has stymied all opponents since November, and he has won three of his last four against the 17-time Grand Slam-winning Serb.

"It definitely wasn't easy," said Medvedev, only the third Russian after Yevgeny Kafelnikov and Marat Safin to reach the Australian Open final. "I got a little bit scared and tight (in the third set)

because it's a semifinal of

THE RESULTS

Men's singles semifinal: Daniil Medvedev (RUS x4) bt Stefanos Tsitsipas (GRE x5) 6-4, 6-2, 7-5.

Women's doubles final: Elise Mertens (BEL)/ Aryna Sabalenka (BLR x2) bt Barbora Krejcikova (CZE)/ Katerina Siniakova (CZE x3) 6-2, 6-3.

a Slam... but happy I was able to turn my game on, especially in some tight

#### moments on my serve.' **ELISE-SABALENKA DUO CLINCHES DOUBLES TITLE**

Elise Mertens and Aryna Sabalenka won the Australian Open women's doubles final Friday to collect their second Grand

Slam trophy as a team. It is likely to be their last for a while. The 22-year-old from

Belarus was the dominant player on court as she and Mertens, the U.S. Open doubles champions in 2019, combined for a 6-2, 6-3 win over third-seeded Barbora Krejcikova and Katerina Siniakova of the Czech Republic.

Second-seeded Sabalenka and Mertens wasted three championship points in an eight-minute last game. Sabalenka earned a fourth championship point with an ace and clinched the title when Siniakova sent a backhand wide.

# **INDIA'S ANKITA DAZZLES.**

Melbourne, Feb. 19: India's Ankita Raina on Friday claimed her maiden WTA title by lifting the Phillip Island Trophy along with Russian partner Kamilla Rakhimova, a feat which will catapult her into the top-100 in the doubles for the first time in her career. Ankita and Kamilla erased a one-set deficit to beat

the Russian combination of Anna Blinkova and Anastasia Potapova 2-6, 6-4, 10-7 in the summit clash The 28-year-old Indian shared the \$8000 prize money

with her partner and earned 280 ranking points, which will take her to 94 from the current 115 when the WTA doubles chart is updated next week. Ankita will become only the second player to crack

the doubles top-100 since Sania Mirza, who is a sixtime Grand Slam champion. The past two weeks have been extremely memorable for the gritty Indian, who made her Grand Slam debut at the Australian Open in the doubles, and also won a

round in the main draw of a WTA singles tournament. "It's been a great week. Kamilla and I played together for the first time. We signed up just 20 minutes before the draw because there was a lot of confusion with the entry list," Ankita said.

### Bruno nets brace in Man U victory

Fernandes scored twice as Manchester United romped to a 4-0 victory over Real Sociedad in their Europa League last-32 first leg on Thursday, while Gareth Bale impressed for Tottenham in a 4-1 thrash-

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's United are all but into the last 16, with four 'away' goals to take into the return game in a week's time, after the first leg was played in Turin due to Coronavirus travel restric-

The Premier League outfit grabbed the lead in the 27th minute when Fernandes pounced on a defensive mix-up to slot in from Marcus Rashford's at a pace Sociedad could not deal with and Rashford finally got his goal in the 65th minute. The tie was surely put to

bed in the final minute of normal time as Daniel James raced clear and fired into the bottom corner. Meanwhile, Gareth Bale

notched Tottenham assist since April 2013 to tee up Son Heung-min for the opening goal in Budapest against Wolfsberg, before drilling in the second before the half-hour mark.

A wonderful individual strike from Lucas Moura extended Spurs' first-half lead, and although Michael Liendl pulled one back for the Austrians with a second-half penalty, the English club have one foot in the next round after Vinicius' minute goal.

-AFP

# Australian speedster Jhye Richardson in this file photo.

### Christchurch, Feb. 19: Promising Australia fast

bowler Jhye Richardson was left "excited as well as exhausted" after he earned a "life-changing" bid of ₹14 crore from Punjab Kings at the IPL auction. Richardson was in

quarantine Christchurch hotel room for the upcoming T20 International series Zealand against New when he tuned into the broadcast of the IPL auction in Chennai.

I got this wave of (nausea) just not knowing what to expect. For the first, what to me felt like about 20 minutes, no one put their paddle up and it's one of those things where you're just like, 'Oh no'. You have no idea what's going to happen,'

I almost got blanked: Jhye

Richardson was quoted by cricket.com.au. Then the first paddle went up, which was probably (only) like 10 seconds or five seconds (later), but it felt like a

played a game yesterday. I myself of feeling all these emotions, of feeling sick and excited. "I almost blanked. I was watching it, but I felt like

"My name came up and lifetime. I feel like I

wasn't actually watching it. After everything happened you're obviously really, really excited but then you just hit this massive wall," he said.

He said emotions took over and he felt as if he had hit a "massive wall".

# Captain Virat opens up on depression

New Delhi, Feb. 19: India captain Virat Kohli has revealed that he battled depression during a harrowing tour of England in 2014 where he felt like the "loneliest guy in the world" after a string of

failures with the bat. In a conversation with former England player Mark Nicholas on his 'Not Just Cricket' podcast, Kohli conceded that went through a tough phase during the particularly

difficult tour. "Yes, I did," was his response when asked whether he had suffered from depression at the

"...it's not a great feeling to wake up knowing that you won't be able to score runs and I think all batsmen have felt that at some stage that you are not in control of anything at ' he recalled.

Kohli had a disastrous tour of England in 2014, registering scores of 1, 8, 25, 0, 39, 28, 0,7, 6 and 20 in five Tests, averaging 13.50 roared back to form in the tour of Australia after that, accumulating 692 runs in the Test series. "You just don't under-

stand how to get over it.

That was a phase when I

literally couldn't do any-

thing things...I felt like I was the loneliest guy in the world," he said of the England tour.

could feel that lonely even though you a part of a big group. I won't say I didn't have people who I could speak to but not having a professional to speak to who could understand what I am going through Virat Kohli completely, I think is a huge factor. I think I would like to see it overturn

' Virat added. change,' Virat believes mental health issues cannot be Kohli remembered feeloverlooked as they can ing alone despite the fact destroy a person's career.

what he needed.

that there were supportive "Someone whom you can people in his life. He said go to at any stage, have a professional help was conversation around and say 'Listen this is what I "Personally, for me that am feeling, I am finding it was a revelation that you hard to even go to sleep, I feel like I don't want to wake up in the morning. I have no confidence in myself, what do I do?'

> carries on for months, it carries on for a whole cricket season, people are not able to get out of it," Kohli said.

> "Lot of people suffer with that feeling for

longer periods of time, it

"I strongly feel the need for professional help there to be very honest," he added.

### Paris, Feb. 19: Bruno United continued to play

ing of Austrian side Wolfsberg.

clipped pass.

Solskjaer's men doubled their advantage 12 minutes into the second period as Fernandes stroked home his 21st goal of the season.