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DIRECTOR

DIRECT SSC, Inter one sitting INIOS, B.A., B.Com, BCA, B.Sc., MA, M.Com, M.Sc., MBA, MCA, Ph: 9712223672, 9291613877. (S/2021/C01921)

EDUCATIONAL

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WE MRS.G.VANI W/o:A.RAVI SHANKER & A.RAVI SHANKER S/o:GOWRY SHANKER Lost our Original Sale Deed pertaining to our Villa No.Aw.53, Mantri Euphoria Project, Manchireddipet(V) Rajendranagar(M), Rangareddy, TS-500075, Registered in Office of SRO Gundipet vide Doc No.1296/2020 on 31st December 2020 near Gachibowli. If document found Please call: 8639704479. (HYCL/2021/C02773)

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Hyacinth spreads its tentacles



Water hyacinth engulfs houses in Uma Maheswar Colony which is still submerged due to last year's monsoon floods in the Fox Sagar lake, on Tuesday. The civic authorities are yet to clear the stagnant water.

— R. PAVAN

37% VOLUNTEERS TAKE COVID-19 VACCINE

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 9

Tuesday saw 37 per cent of the volunteers being vaccinated in the state. There were 39,756 volunteers of which 14,638 were vaccinated.

There is still fear among the emergency employees about the adverse effects of the vaccine and for that reason they are not coming forward. There were minor adverse effects reported in five people on Tuesday. The cumulative number of beneficiaries in the state are 2,43,483. The vaccination drive will continue on Wednesday.

STATE REPORTS 149 NEW COVID INFECTIONS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 9

The state saw 1

SHORT TAKES
**TIME TABLE FOR
SSC EXAMS
RELEASED IN TS**

Hyderabad, Feb. 9: The Board of Secondary Education on Tuesday published the schedule for the SSC Public Examinations, with examinations starting on May 17 with the first language article.

The SSC examinations will end with the Social Studies paper on May 22, according to the schedule. The OSSC assessments will take place on 24 and 25 May, while the SSC vocational (theory) course is scheduled to take place on 26 May.

The SSC and OSSC tests will take place between 9.30 a.m. and 12.45 p.m., and the SSC Vocational Course will take place between 9.30 a.m. and 11.30 a.m.

—INN

**IACC HOLDS
WEBINAR ON VISA
FOR STUDENTS**

DC CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD, FEB. 9

U.S. Consulate in Hyderabad has said those aspiring for a student visa to the United States of America should be able to convince Consular Officer that he or she is a credible and qualified student. At the same time, students should also be able to pay for their planned studies and have credible post-education plans. Johanna Sanchez, Vice Consul at U.S. Consulate General Hyderabad, underlined.

Taking part in a webinar on various aspects of admissions for higher education in the US, she said the consulate is currently scheduling limited visa appointments, as well as limited routine American Citizen Services, to ensure health and safety of applicants. The consulate is processing some H-1B, H4, student/exchange visitor cases, and limited tourist and business (B1/B2) appointments, as well as accepting interview waiver (IW) applications for all visa classes.

The webinar was conducted by Indo-American Chamber of Commerce (IACC), Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, on "Higher Education in the United States".

Student visa officers from the U.S. Consulate General, and United States-India Educational Foundation (USIEF) participated in the webinar. The discussions focused on key parameters relevant to student community, such as selecting U.S. colleges and universities, study options, test preparation, application process, financial aid, and visa process. The webinar was attended by more than 1,800 students from both the Telugu states.

IACC AP and TS chairman Vijaya Sai Meka welcomed US President Joe Biden's plans to modernise immigration system and eliminate per country cap for employment-based green cards, saying it would benefit thousands of Indian IT professionals. This will also make it easier for graduates of US universities with advanced degrees in the STEM sector to stay in the United States, he pointed out.

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2 docs work on genomic medicine

BALU PULIPAKA | DC
HYDERABAD, FEB. 9



Dr Hima Challa and Dr Kalyan Uppuluri

In the rapidly evolving field of healthcare protocols and advancements in treatments of various diseases and health conditions, two city doctors have been digging deep, down to the genetic information level, in a bid to ensure best possible outcomes for their patients.

"This is the next step in medical care," says Dr Kalyan Uppuluri, from K&H Personalised Medicine Clinic. He, along with Dr Hima Challa, are the founders of the clinic, the first of its kind in the country to offer services bringing genomic medicine into clinical medicare. Armed with degrees in medical genomics from Stanford University and Harvard Medical School respectively, they say they took a leap of faith two years ago to set up their clinic in the city.

"There is enough data at

the genetic level of humans to help modern medicine become more precise," says Dr Hima Challa. "There is very strong objective evidence for this."

The challenge for them was to translate molecular biology level data into medical language. A team of molecular biologists armed with advanced degrees dug deep into published research and after studying thousands of research papers, gathered data on around 8,000 genes and switched what each of them do and what that

means in medical language.

"For example, the gene that regulates glycogen provides information on how glucose is released when needed by the body. If there are disorders associated with this, this can be determined by genetic studies. If a person is prone to this problem, then advise can be given that he or she needs to consume carbohydrates before exercises or workouts so energy is available for these tasks," Dr Hima Challa explained.

Genomic medicine helps in determining risk scores for various possible health conditions and these scores remain more or less stable through one's life. Clinical risk scores can change, and can be changed for the better based on follow up advice from physicians, especially when coupled with knowledge of the genetic risk scores, she says. "Our view is that personalised medicine is the future. Patients will be in a position, when their doctors have the assis-

tance of genomic medicine, to be assured that they are in a position to achieve the best possible outcomes for their treatment," says Dr Kalyan Uppuluri.

Medicines of the future will evolve based on genomics, he predicts. "We see this already in oncology, for treating cancers. Genomics is already helping in attacking this disease's pathways," he says.

On what the future holds, he says that they see their clinic offering their products based on algorithms developed based on genetic information they have compiled as well as from their patients so far, to support clinics and hospitals. If clinical medicine is combined with genomic medicine and with proper follow-ups by patients, the treatment outcomes will be much better, help patients overcome their disease and help their doctors prescribe protocols that can better combat their conditions, he says.

Firemen tell schools to run drill before opening

Hyderabad Schools Parents Association raises concern

NAVEEN KUMAR AND HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC
HYDERABAD, FEB. 9

and schools should ensure materials are not stored in any improper manner. Good housekeeping is a must for schools and colleges. Those with residential options should check the LPG facilities too."

"Telangana has over 45,000 schools. Though we were conducting checks, it would help if parents also asked schools to maintain a safer environment," he said.

Meanwhile, the Hyderabad Schools Parents Association (HSPA) has raised its concern over the tendency on the part of school managements to overlook fire safety norms. "These norms are adhered to only by private schools having funds. This is not happening in case of government or

budget schools," said Venkat Sainath, joint secretary, HSPA.

He noted that the government-run residential and minority schools do not have any fire safety steps in place. "It seems the lives of the children from poor families are not important, and this is clear from the incident at a school five days ago, or the incident at another school in Old City last year. There are 46,000 schools in the state, but not more than 10,000 private schools here would have obtained the fire NOC," said Venkat.

Junior colleges, including private ones with buildings up to a height of 50 metres have been exempted from producing a fire NOC, as per the GO issued in September 2020

by the state home department, said TSBIE secretary Syed Omar Jaleel.

However, colleges have been asked to submit a self-assessment to the education department in order to obtain an affiliation. The fire department will conduct surprise checks to assess the conditions in these buildings, he said.

WHAT GO SAID: The GO released in September had said that the Telangana state disaster response fire service will conduct surprise inspections at all private and government colleges.

If any deviation from self-certification statement is noticed, the secretary to the Telangana state board of intermediate education will be advised to cancel affiliation of the defaulters.

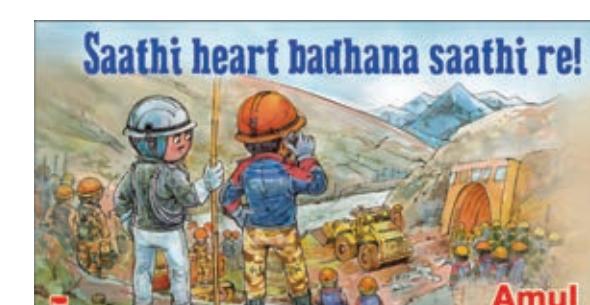
SALAR JUNG III DESCENDENTS MOVE DELHI HC

New Delhi, Feb. 9: The descendants of Hyderabadi Nawab Mir Yousuf Ali Khan Salar Jung III on Tuesday approached the Delhi High Court seeking direction to the government to consider their representations for releasing his assets in their favour.

The plea said that the Ministry of Home Affairs, which has taken over estate of Salar Jung III, ought to have considered their representations and release assets in their favour as they are the first degree legitimate successors of Nawab Mir Yousuf Ali Khan Salar Jung III of Hyderabad Deccan who died on March 2, 1949.

The high court asked them to place on record the petition filed in the Supreme Court and satisfy it on the issue of territorial jurisdiction.

It listed the matter for further hearing on March 1. —PTI



HMDA to restore OU Arts College building

MADDY DEEKSHITH | DC
HYDERABAD, FEB. 9

cal fittings. The three-floor structure was constructed nearly 80 years ago and due to the seepage, university officials are getting worried over the structural stability. Despite temporary works taken up in the past to arrest the seepage in the structure ceiling, the attempts turned out to be futile.

Against this backdrop, OU staff approached the MAUD Principal Secretary and in-charge Vice-Chancellor Arvind Kumar. Earlier, he had inspected the damaged portions of the structure and announced the sanction of ₹3 crore from HMDA towards repairs of the building.

Ever ready



Women police personnel of the City Rapid Action Force (CRAF) demonstrate weapons stripping and assembling them, while being blindfolded within three minutes, at the inaugural ceremony of Hyderabad City Police Annual Sports and Games meet-2021 at Police Stadium, Goshamahal, in Hyderabad on Tuesday.

— P. SURENDRA

Man sentenced to death for raping 5-yr-old girl

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 9

On 12 December 2017, the victim's mother lodged a complaint with the police claiming that Dinesh had taken her daughter on the pretext of giving her chocolate and raped her before murdering, said the police commissioner of Cyberabad, V.C. Sajjanar.

"Meanwhile, Dinesh returned to the camp even as the girl's parents were searching for their daughter. When the girl's mother questioned him, the accused told her that he had dropped her at the labour camp some time ago and that she might be playing somewhere. After a

detailed investigation,

the police zeroed in on

Dinesh. The police

raided his room and brought him to the station.

During interrogation,

he confessed to the

crime. He was remanded

to judicial custody on 13

December 2017," said

the official.

However, Dinesh

absconded after obtain-

ing bail and went to

Madhya Pradesh, inter-

rupting the trial for a

brief period. Special

teams were formed to

nab him and he was pro-

duced before the court.

He was awarded the

death penalty on

Tuesday.

18th Bio-Asia on Feb. 22, 23

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 9

The 18th edition of Bio-Asia will be held on February 22 and 23 and will focus on the Covid-19 pandemic, global health, pharma and medical technology. The meet will focus on the pandemic effects that led to changes in the life science industry across the globe.

SESSIONS WILL be online due to the safety protocols.

tancy taking a different shape these will be the focus of discussion. Sessions will

be online due to the safety protocols and travel restrictions in different countries.

THE MEET will

focus on the pandemic effects that led to changes in the life science industry across the globe.

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IN BRIEF

World Uanani Day tomorrow

Hyderabad: The All India Unani Tibbi Conference will observe World Unani Day on February 11. Addressing a press conference, Dr A.A. Khan President and Hakeem Mohammed Hussamuddin said February 11 is celebrated as World Unani Day to mark the 153rd birth anniversary of great Unani scholar and social reformer Hakim Ajmal Khan. In this connection, the World Unani Day will be held at Urdu Maskan, Khilwat. Ahmed Pascha Quadri and Muntaz Ahmed Khan MLAs and Dr Munawar Hussain Kazmi, Director National Research Institute of Unani for Skin Disorders will be the chief guests.

AJAY CARRIES BIER OF HIS PA'S MOTHER

DC CORRESPONDENT
KHAMMAM, FEB. 9

Minister for Transport Puvvada Ajay Kumar carried the bier his personal assistants' mother. As per the details, Chirumamila Damayanthi, mother of C. Kiran, working as personal assistant of Ajay Kumar died on Tuesday. After hearing the news, Ajay visited the house of Kiran and looked after all the funeral activities. The Minister carried the bier of her and participated in the rituals.

GIVE QUOTA ON PERCENTAGE OF CITIZENS: BC LEADER

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 9

National Backward Classes Welfare Association president R. Krishnaiah demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi give reservation as per percentage of the population.

On Tuesday the BC leader wrote a letter to the Prime Minister objecting to the EWS reservation for nine per cent of the population with 10 per cent reservation. He appealed to the Prime Minister to increase the BC reservation percentage from 27 to 56 with the population of the BC community manner.

He also demanded the Union government implement the reservation in the Assembly and Lok Sabha election with population percentage. Added that should apply the same logic to the High Court and Supreme Court Judges appointment. Mr. Krishnaiah demanded the political parties should fight for BC people rights and build the pressure on the Union Government to apply the reservation as per population ratio, otherwise it will take massive agitation against union government and political parties.

ON TUESDAY the BC leader wrote a letter to the Prime Minister objecting to the EWS reservation for nine per cent of the population with 10 per cent reservation. He appealed to the Prime Minister to increase the BC reservation percentage from 27 to 56 with the population of the BC community

Teachers demand promotions



Teachers under the banner of PRSTU stage a protest near collectorate office demanding promotions, in Hyderabad on Tuesday. —P. SURENDRA

Mind game on between BJP, TRS

Sources say Mayoral election 'would be a surprise' for all political parties

MADDY DEEKSHITH DC
HYDERABAD, FEB. 9

The absence of an absolute majority has made political parties curious over the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) Mayoral election. This would be the first election after the formation of GHMC, from its earlier avatar as MCH, when political parties are in dilemma over the outcome till the last minute.

In the past, these elections have been unanimous and clear. In 2009, the Congress and the MIM cracked a deal to share the term of mayor for two and half years. As part of the deal, while Banda Karthika Reddy served from December 4, 2009 to January 3, 2012, Mr Majid Hussain served for the remaining period until March 7, 2014.

After the formation of Telangana, TRS won the first elections with a thumping majority by winning 99 corporator seats. Bonthu Rammohan, president of TRS youth, was unanimously elected as the mayor.

The newly-elected ward members of the GHMC would take oath at 11 am. A special meeting for the election of Mayor and Deputy Mayor would be held at 12.30 pm.

The election of Mayor would be held first, and followed by the elections of Deputy Mayor.

Both elections would be held by the voice vote method or by raising of hands by the members present, with 50 per cent of total members having voting rights treated as the quorum. In the absence of a quorum at the time of election, the meeting and election process would be postponed for an hour by the president officer.

If the same position continued, it would be put off for the next day. In the event of elections not being held the next day, the presiding officer will refer the matter to the State Election Commission for further

MIM leaders clueless on poll

ATHER MOIN DC
HYDERABAD, FEB. 9

AIMIM corporators are clueless about the party's strategy on the election for the posts of Mayor and Deputy Mayor in the GHMC scheduled on February 11.

The party is maintaining silence on the issue. It seems that the party has decided not to negotiate with the TRS for power-sharing in the GHMC.

Most of the present and future corporators are either camped in Gujarat or in West Bengal to strengthen the organisational set up there. Leaders of

the party when contacted said we are not aware of the party plan. Party chief Asaduddin Owaisi will take a decision in this regard and there is no communication from the party in this regard so far. However, it is learnt that newly elected corporators will be instructed to gather at Party headquarters on February 11, before attending the Council meeting. In that meeting they will be informed about the party's strategy on the elections to the posts of Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

Cutting across party lines, sources said that a cabinet minister is backing Bharathi Nagar corporator Sindhu Adarsh Reddy for mayoral post while MLAs from Kukatpally and Serilingampally are opposing her. Late P. Janardhan Reddy's daughter and ward member from P. Vijaya Reddy's candidature for mayor ward has been opposed by the Khairatabad MLA, while Chintala Vijayashanthi's bid is being opposed by the Malkajgiri MLA. Sources said that BJP is in constant touch with corporators, who are dissatisfied with the ongoing developments and may surprise the TRS in the GHMC council hall. This apart, Bonthu Rammohan, in his efforts to promote his wife Sridevi, has been constantly in touch with the party high command.

Sources said the Mayoral election "would be a surprise" for all political parties based on the quorum and party strength present in the council hall. They said that the MIM with 44 seats could play a crucial role on the poll day as well.

Meanwhile, as per SEC, if only one Mayor candidate is proposed by corporators, there shall be no election and he or she shall be declared elected unanimously.

In case, there are two or more candidates in fray, a list of the contesting candidates will be prepared. Thereafter, names of each contesting candidate shall be put to vote in order and members, including ex-officio, present will have to raise their hands as a means of voting.

The presiding officer will record the number of votes polled for each candidate, ascertained by show of hands. In the event of there being equality of votes between two candidates, the officer shall draw lots in presence of members and the name of candidate drawn first, will be declared elected.

Former MLC K. Premasagar Rao criticised both the BJP and TRS. He appealed to people not to get attracted towards BJP, which is only promoting religion while neglecting development.

Congress party ST wing national vice-president Bellayya Naik said the three farm laws will badly affect farmers and make them depend on corporate companies for their livelihood. He pointed out that many government purchasing centres have already closed down in Bihar, where companies are into contract farming.

TPCC state general secretary Gandrath Sujatha alleged that both TRS and ₹500 crore payable to farmers under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Beema Yojana in Adilabad district alone.

an action plan on February 24 when its "Rythu Bata Poru Bata" programme concludes on February 24. The CLP leader said KCR has insulted people of Telangana, especially farmers, by taking a U-turn on TRS stand on the farm laws after his meeting in Delhi with Narendra Modi, who is trying to sell the country to Ambani and Adani. He asserted that farmers will not tolerate any move of the central and state governments to close purchasing centres of IKP, CCI, and market yards.

He announced that Congress will announce

Bhatti calls PM, CM 'bada, chota KDS'

DC CORRESPONDENT
BHEEMSARI (ADILABAD), FEB. 9

Congress Legislature Party leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka on Tuesday described Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao as "bada and chota KDS" (known delinquents). He accused both of trying to exploit farmers.

Speaking on the occasion of launching "Rythu Bata Poru Bata" programme at Bheemsari in Adilabad district, Bhatti Vikramarka said farmers will become slaves of a handful corporate companies and MNCs if central government is allowed to implement its three farm laws in the country.

He announced that Congress will announce



CLP leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka rides a bullock cart during the launching of 'Raithulath Mukhamukhi' programme at Bheemsari village in Adilabad on Tuesday.

an action plan on

BJP NOMINEES WILL CONTEST GHMC MAYORAL POLLS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 9

In an interesting development, the Bharatiya Janata Party has decided to put up candidates for the mayor and deputy mayor posts of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation.

In this regard, key state BJP leaders, including MLC Ramchander Rao and former MLA Chinthala Ramachandra Reddy, met here on Tuesday.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, Ramchander Rao said there is only a slight difference in the number of seats held by ruling TRS and BJP.

So, their party has decided to contest the mayor and deputy mayor's posts, elections for which will be held on Thursday.

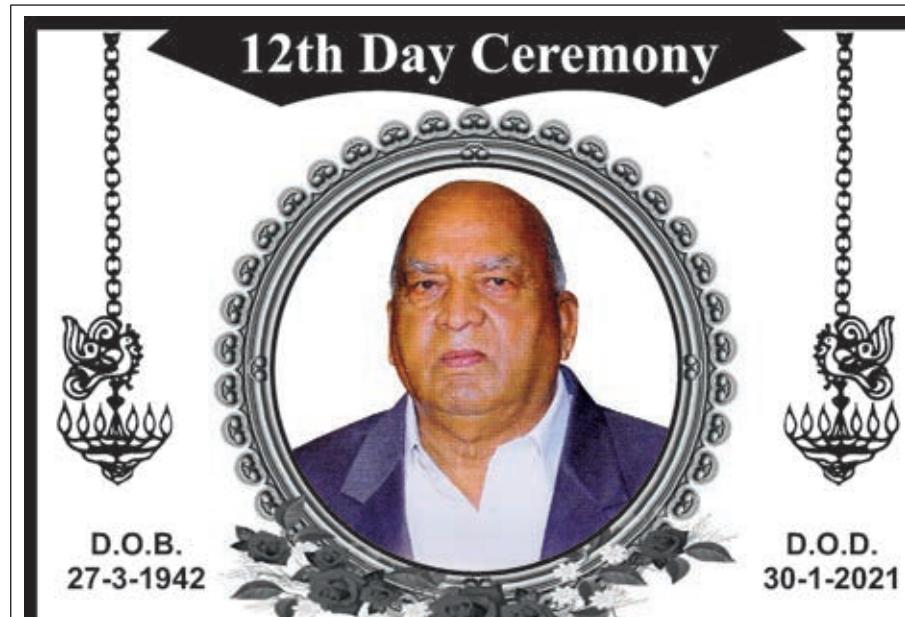
A meeting of all 47 elected BJPs corporators, which will also be attended by key leaders of the party on Wednesday, will finalise the candidates for the mayor and deputy mayor posts. BJP has three ex-officio votes in the GHMC council by way of union minister of state G. Kishan Reddy, MLA Raja Singh and MLC Ramchander Rao.

A senior party leader said contesting the mayoral elections will be a morale booster for corporators. He pointed out that BJP had also put up candidates for the mayor and deputy mayor posts in Karimnagar and Nizamabad municipalities.

DICHPALI INSPECTORS SUSPENDED ON PENDENCY OF CASES

NIZAMABAD, FEB. 9: Dichpal police circle inspector G. Venkateshwar

lu, Nizamabad rural police sub inspector Madhusudan Goud were suspended on Tuesday on the charges of pendency of cases.

Late Sri Boddu Bal Reddy
Your Blessings are Guiding light to all of us.
You will always remain in our Hearts

12th Day Ceremony will be held on 10-02-2021 at JRC Convention Centre, Jubilee Hills, Hyd.

Inserted by

Smt. B. Leela Devi (Wife)

Son & Daughter-in-law

B.V. Reddy - B. Sangeetha Reddy

Kaushik Reddy - Kethana Reddy (Grand Children)

Daughters & Son-in-law

M. Anitha - M. Mahender Reddy

K. Vijitha - K. V. Rameshwar Reddy

K. Radhika - K. Aravind Kumar Reddy

(Grand Sons, Grand Daughters)

Management & Staff

JRC CONVENTION CENTRE, Jubilee Hills, Hyd.
BHAGYALAXMI RICE MILL - Hyd. KETHANA ENTERPRISES - Bangalore

Smt. Nirmala Vala (w/o Dr. Dayasagar Rao Vala)

passed away in her sleep on

January 26th, 2021 at age 74.

She will be remembered for her zest for life and unending drive to learn and teach. Her love and dedication to her family is unforgettable. She served for 35 years at Kamala Nehru Polytechnic College for Women in various roles, including HOD of Catering and Food technology / Hotel management and Principal of the college. Her hobbies and interests were innumerable and inspiring to all. Her grandchildren (Meghana, Nitya, Maiya and Anya) were her pride and joy!

Due to the current COVID situation we will be happy to receive condolences via SMS (9849022989). We thank all our well wishers for the support and kindness we have received.

Dr. Dayasagar Rao Vala

Madhavi P. Rao and Deepthi M. Varma (daughters)

Raman P. Rao and Vikram M. Varma (sons-in-law)

BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCE OF OUR DEAREST



13th Day Ceremony



Smt. Kamini Singh
W/o Late Sri. Inder Kan Singh.
Left for heavenly abode on 29 Jan 2021.

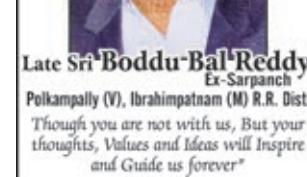
13th day ceremony will be held on Wednesday 10 Feb 2021 at 10.00am

At Vaikuntam Mahaprasthamam (Near Darga) Jubilee Hills - Whisper Valley, around 1 PM

Inserted by:
Leadership & Members of Secunderabad, Nacharam, Uttam Nagar, Begumpet, A.S. Rao Nagar, L.B. Nagar and Kondapur Churches.

(S/2021/D01211)

12th DAY CEREMONY



Late Sri Boddu Bal Reddy
Ex-Sarpanch Polkampally (V), Ibrahimpatnam (M) R.R. Dist.

Thought you are not with us, But your thoughts, Values and Ideas will Inspire

and Guide us forever!

Inserted by:

N. Bal Reddy, N. Venkat Reddy

N. Mahender Reddy, R. Ravinder Reddy

(S/2021/D01212)



A. SUMATHI JOHN
DOB: 22-07-1934 DOD: 10-02-2002

Though her smile is gone forever,

And her hand we cannot touch,

We still have so many memories,

Of the love we loved so much.

Love you Mom!

Inserted by:

Children & Grand Children

(B/2021/D00118)

11th DEATH ANNIVERSARY

KOWKUTLA KONDA REDDY
Ex. Mayor GHMC

D.O.B.: 10-02-2010

Your memories always in our hearts forever.

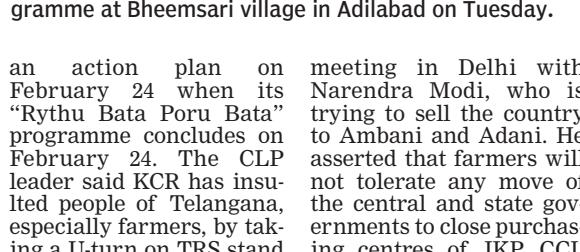
May your soul rest in peace.

Son-in-law: Kowkutla Pratap Reddy

Son-in-law: Kowkutla Usha Sree

Grand Son: Kowkutla Sai Shiva Reddy

(S/2021/D01213)



CLP leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka rides a bullock cart during the launching of 'Raithulath Mukhamukhi' programme at Bheemsari village in Adilabad on Tuesday.

<p

IN BRIEF
Cong finalises
MLC candidates

Hyderabad: The Congress on Tuesday declared its MLC candidates for the Warangal-Khammam-Nalgonda and Mahbubnagar-Hyderabad-Rangareddy Graduates constituencies. While Ramulu Naik would contest from the Warangal-Khammam-Nalgonda Graduates constituency, G. Chinna Reddy will be confirmed as the candidate for Mahbubnagar-Hyderabad-Rangareddy Graduates constituency. Their candidature was finalised by Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Tuesday.

Manuu holds online seminar

Hyderabad: The Directorate of Translation & Publications (DTP), Maulana Azad National Urdu University (Manuu), is organising a two-day online National Seminar on 'Urdu Mein Maloomati Adab' (informative literature in Urdu). The seminar is sponsored by the National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language (NCPUL). The inaugural session will be held on February 10, at 3 pm at Instructional Media Centre. Prof. Muzaffar Shahmiri, Vice-Chancellor, Dr Abdul Haq Urdu University, Kurnool, will be the chief guest and Prof. Mohammed Naseemuddin Farees, Dean, School of Languages, Linguistics and Indology, MANUU, will be the guest of honour while Prof. S.M. Rahmatullah, Vice-Chancellor, MANUU will preside over.

FINANCE PANEL EXPOSED TS GOVT: CONG

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 9

Former minister Mohammed Ali Shabbir has demanded a high-level probe into observations made against Telangana government by 15th Finance Commission, whose report was placed in Parliament last week.

Addressing a press conference at Gandhi Bhavan on Tuesday, Shabbir Ali said the commission has exposed several financial irregularities committed by the TRS government headed by Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao. "The 15th Finance Commission has made serious comments about issues, including the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project. These observations vindicate Congress party's stand that Kaleshwaram is not financially viable and would not benefit farmers in the long run," Shabbir Ali maintained. He pointed out that though the first State Finance Commission (SFC) was constituted in 2015 after formation of separate Telangana, its report is yet to be submitted.

Meanwhile, Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee president and Nalgonda MP N. Uttam Kumar Reddy on Tuesday said "reckless and indiscriminate" borrowing by the Telangana state government will result in the state getting into a debt trap.

The Congress leader asked for more details of the Finance Commission study and their adverse comments on Kaleshwaram project being unviable should be sent to him. He made these statements while attending a briefing and interactive session by members of 15 Finance Commission in Delhi in Parliament.

Jagan distances himself from sister's political plan

Says it won't harm or impact their personal relationship

N. VAMSI SRINIVAS | DC
HYDERABAD, FEB. 9

Ending varied speculations and conspiracy theories, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has wasted no time in distancing himself from his sister, Y.S. Sharmila and her plans to float a political outfit in Telangana.

The YSR Congress supremo made it clear that he was against expanding the party in Telangana as it would hurt the interests of people of his own state and give an opportunity to political forces in the neighbouring state to widen the gap among people by raking up sentiments.

"There is a difference of opinion between brother and sister on expanding the party in Telangana. The issue was discussed for the last three months.

Both are firm in their respective views and she has finally chosen her own path," said Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy, advisor to Chief Minister on public affairs.

He, however, sought to underplay the divide in the family by saying it was "only a difference of opinion" and it would "not harm or impact their personal relationship".

Sharmila Reddy, on the other hand, tried to retain ambiguity over her brother's stand vis-à-vis her political moves. Asked if Jagan Mohan Reddy was in approval of her moves, she shot back saying, "did he tell you (the reporter) the other way? He is my elder brother and I am of the view that I have his blessings."

It was evident from Tuesday's political developments in the YSR's family that Sharmila took a plunge into direct politics out of anger at being neglected by her brother. She was forced to choose Telangana as she can't afford a direct confrontation with Jagan Mohan Reddy in Andhra Pradesh.



DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 9

YS Sharmila, younger sister of Andhra Pradesh chief minister Jagan Mohan Reddy, said on Tuesday that the people of Telangana "feel there is a dire need to bring back the Rajanna Rajyam" -- a 'keep-all-happy-welfare state' envisaged by her father and deceased chief minister Y.S. Rajasekhar Reddy.

Sharmila was speaking to the media at her Lotus Pond residence. She made clear her intent to establish an identity for herself in politics. None of the numerous billboards erected all over the area had photographs of her Chief Minister brother.

During the day, a few hundred people thronged the Lotus Pond residence. She made clear her intent to establish an identity for herself in politics. None of the numerous billboards erected all over the area had photographs of her Chief Minister brother.

Sources close to Sharmila said about 1000 persons had been invited for the meeting and a majority of them took part in the consultations. She began her interaction sessions with her followers from erstwhile Nalgonda.

Sharmila had helped her brother in poll campaigns twice. She is believed to have fallen out with Jagan and decided to pursue her own career in politics after she was denied both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha nominations by the YSRC.

A rank outsider, to be more precise an "Andhrite", she seems to be unmindful of her success in Telangana as the real objective, it appears, is to put her brother in a tight spot.

"It seems more as an act of vengeance, which normally Jagan is accused of pursuing with rival politicians," a senior party leader said, adding that at the best, she might want to prove a point to Jagan by winning from a Lok Sabha segment in Telangana, which has lots of settlers' votes as a

deciding factor. Incidentally, the first salvo against Sharmila was fired by Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee working president A Ravanti Reddy, who represents Malkajgiri Lok Sabha segment, which has considerable settlers vote. He dared Sharmila to impede in the ongoing legal battle against the proposed Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Scheme to prove her sincerity towards Telangana.

He also demanded that she should offer an apology to families of several people, who sacrificed their lives for separate statehood, for the tough stand taken by both her father and brother against the division of AP.

Sensing such troubles in advance, Ramakrishna Reddy made it clear that it would be no more a family matter once she crossed the line and decided to pursue her policies.

If anything arises in future, it is between two parties and two ideologies," he pointed out.

Ready to cast vote



Voters wait in queue to cast their votes at Ramavarappadu and Enikepadu rural areas for the local elections on the outskirts of Vijayawada on Tuesday.

YSRC bags 1,383 gram panchayats in AP

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, FEB. 9

The ruling YSRC won 1,383 gram panchayats in its favour out of 3,249 that went for polling to the gram panchayat in phase-1 on Tuesday.

District-wise gram panchayats won by the YSR Congress supported candidates for the positions of sarpanches and ward members include: Anantapur-101, Kurnool-118, Chittoor-29, Kadapa-126, Prakasam-93, Nellore-50, Guntur-178, Krishna-51, West Godavari-63, East Godavari-67, Visakhapatnam-83 and Srikrishna-164, as per the reports available at 10 pm.

As the elections were held for 2,723 positions of sarpanches and 20,157 ward members in the gram panchayats located in 12 districts with an exception for Vizianagaram district in the state, a large number of voters turned out to exercise their franchise.

Based on reports, voters cast their vote in favour of the contestants supported by both the ruling YSRC, Telugu Desam and other parties even though the election was held on a non-party basis.

Out of a total number of 3,249 positions of the sarpanches, 525 were unanimously elected and out of 32,502 positions of ward members, 12,185 were elected unanimously earlier.

Migrant votes

People of rural areas showed keen interest in casting their votes during the first phase of gram panchayat elections on

chayats located in 12 districts with an exception for Vizianagaram district in the state, a large number of voters turned out to exercise their franchise.

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Tuesday, migrant people returned to their native places from workplaces and stood in long queues to cast their votes in Krishna, Guntur and other districts, thereby contributing to an increase in poll percentage.

Only Srikrishna and Kadapa districts registered below 80 percent voting. The highest 85.06 percent polling was registered in Krishna district and the lowest 75.77 per cent in

Srikrishna district. Kadapa district recorded the second-lowest voting of 78 percent.

Polling started at 6:30 a.m. for the 2,723 sarpanch and 20,157 ward members in 12 districts of AP. In majority villages, voters could be seen arriving at polling booths from 7 a.m. onwards. Their numbers increased after 8:30 a.m. and the trend continued till 3:30 p.m. when the polling ended.

Elders reached polling booths with the help of relatives. Locals and policemen help them to cast their votes on a priority basis.

Ruling YSR Congress and main opposition Telugu Desam have taken the gram panchayat elections as a prestigious issue, though these polls are held on non-

party basis.

According to sources, candidates with support from political parties offered financial packages to small, middle and big families for their votes. There are reports that ₹2,000 per vote has been paid in certain areas, apart from sarees. Those who returned from other places, including Telangana and Karnataka, for casting their vote were reimbursed travel charges and paid "bonus".

Rural voters in Guntur district J. Sarathi, P. Venugopal and D. Siva said their villages did not have any elected body for the past seven years. They underlined that gram panchayat elections should be conducted on a timely basis, as they empower local people.

BJP: KCR BEHIND SHARMILA PLAN TO FLOAT PARTY

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 9

BJP senior leader NVSS Prabhakar said on Tuesday he suspected that Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao and former MP KVP Ramachander Rao are behind the plans of Jagan Mohan Reddy's sister, Y.S. Sharmila, to float a new party.

The BJP leader said KCR was losing its popularity. "He is trying to help YS Sharmila get the anti-incumbency votes."

He said a conspiracy has been hatched in the KCR family and the CM feared his son K.T. Rama Rao would pull his leg in the same way Chandrababu did with his father-in-law NTR in the Telugu Desam party. "The supporters of KT Rama Rao are pressuring KCR to make his son the CM," he said.

He said as Chief Minister, KCR failed in implementing schemes for Dalits and tribals. Every community is suffering from KCR's rule, he said.

Sources close to Sharmila said about 1000 persons had been invited for the meeting and a majority of them took part in the consultations.

Sharmila had helped her brother in poll campaigns twice. She is believed to have fallen out with Jagan and decided to pursue her own career in politics after she was denied both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha nominations by the YSRC.

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DECCAN Chronicle

10 FEBRUARY 2021

Sasikala the 'X' factor in TN's soap opera politics

The red carpet reception was more like those given to pop singers in star-struck declarations of adulation. Ex-convict V.K. Sasikala, who came home after serving a four-year jail sentence under the Prevention of Corruption Act, was elevated to demigod status in a 22-hour car journey that was more a procession pandering to the blind loyalty of lumpen political party elements. As a social phenomenon, it defies decoding; as a person convicted of stealing from the government treasury is elevated to the status of a neta who can bring deliverance to the people. This is not restricted to cinema-obsessed Tamil Nadu as the phenomenon encompasses Lalit Prasad Yadav and many a charismatic netas suspected of being corrupt.

Ms Sasikala's impact on Tamil Nadu politics is not to be dismissed though she is ineligible to stand for election. Her nephew T.T.V. Dhinakaran's disinformation campaign cannot change the law. Her role as a backroom manipulator in Jayalalithaa's regime when she virtually picked people for plum Cabinet posts and even made or unmade chief ministers had made her a force to be reckoned within the AIADMK.

Ms Sasikala's role as a backroom manipulator in Jayalalithaa's regime when she virtually picked people for plum Cabinet posts and even made or unmade chief ministers had made her a force to be reckoned within the AIADMK

Bengaluru. Lengthy legal challenges to her being stripped of the post of general secretary may be in the offing but that does not change the electoral scene except that an AIADMK split by loyalty calls may be playing right into the hands of DMK, which pollsters are favouring to emerge victorious in the summer of 2021.

The people of a state, who were in such a thrill of cinema that they allowed it to play a larger-than-life role in the making of netas, are far more forgiving of corruption, which has historically been rampant in the 54 years of Dravidian regimes. Ms Sasikala, who has never been in electoral politics, can be expected to play only the role of a disruptor as she seeks the Jayalalithaa legacy and her party. Time is not on her side in her emergence too close to the Assembly polls to build anew her nephew's breakaway AMMK party. Her journey to Chennai that occupied nearly 24 hours was stretched out to play to a television gallery in the highest traditions of the state's soap opera politics. What happens from here is in the people's court.

Pay heed to ex-judge's plea

Justice Madan Lokur, who retired as a judge of the Supreme Court just over two years ago, has in public remarks expressed his "disappointment" with the manner the top court has conducted itself in the discharge of its constitutional functions, and has recently even called upon the apex court to adopt an "interventionist" approach to check the "rampant misuse (even abuse) of the country's criminal justice system.

A hands-off approach by the Supreme Court in the matter of a spate of FIRs for the same presumed violation encourages those who take advantage of the law to trouble fellow citizens, the retired judge observed.

Making a direct reference in this regard to the growing tendency on the part of some to file multiple FIRs, Justice Lokur drew attention to the case of prominent journalists, including several well-regarded editors, and an MP, Shashi Tharoor, being subjected to harassment through the filing of near-identical FIRs in several states, accusing them of sedition and causing social harmony. In the case of Mr Tharoor and the journalists, their initial tweets on the cause of the death of a farmer in the course of the recent agitation had led to the spate of FIRs being lodged — clearly by the people of the same motivation or persuasion.

Justice Lokur contrasted the above case with those of two television anchors — Arnaul Goswami and Amish Devgan. The case of the first was heard within 15 hours of the top court being approached. His prayer to club the FIRs was instantly heeded. The other anchor was also given some relief. But the senior journalists charged with sedition, and Mr Tharoor, have not had the same luck. The former judge has, therefore, urged the Supreme Court to be "interventionist" and "lay down the law" in the case of multiple FIRs with the same content.

Criticisms of Supreme Court judgments by retired members of the top judiciary are not unknown. Nor is the failure of the top court to take action, as in constitutional matters concerning Kashmir, CAA, and habeas corpus — issues on which Justice Lokur has also expressed himself. But urgings to be "interventionist" from a retired member of the top court bench do appear novel. In this lies their freshness and historical value.

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Skand Tayal

US-Russia ties, already rocky, get worse after Navalny jailing

The fraught relationship between the United States and Russia has come under further strain after the alleged poisoning and recent sentencing of prominent Russian Opposition leader Alexei Navalny. On Feb. 4, US President Joe Biden, in his first articulation of foreign policy after assuming office, had some harsh words for President Vladimir Putin. Mr Biden "made it clear that the days of the US rolling over in the face of Russia's aggressive actions — interfering with our elections, cyberattacks, poisoning its citizens — are over". Castigating Russia for "the politically motivated jailing of Alexei Navalny", President Biden cautioned Moscow that the US "will not hesitate to raise the cost on Russia", alluding to possible additional sanctions.

Ignoring diplomatic niceties, President Biden said: "The politically motivated jailing of Alexei Navalny and the Russian efforts to suppress freedom of expression and peaceful assembly are a matter of deep concern. He should be released immediately and without conditions."

On February 2, after Mr Navalny was sentenced to more than two years in prison on rather flimsy charges, new US secretary of state Anthony Blinken tweeted: "We reiterate our

call for the Russian government to immediately and unconditionally release Mr Navalny, as well as hundreds of other Russian citizens wrongfully detained in recent weeks for exercising the rights."

Such public criticism is likely to deeply offend Mr Putin, the strong leader of a proud country. Russia would be loath to taking any action under outside pressure and the chances of the Russian State showing any leniency towards a high-profile dissident may have simply vanished.

Besides the persecution of Mr Navalny, the Biden administration takes office with a deep-rooted suspicion towards Mr Putin's Russia. The Democratic Party holds Russia's involvement in the leaking of presidential candidate Hillary Clinton's emails responsible for her defeat in 2016 by Donald Trump. In a signed *Foreign Affairs* article in March 2020, Joe Biden had declared solidarity with "Russian civil society, that has stood up against President Vladimir Putin's kleptocratic authoritarian system". Laying down his future policy, candidate Biden wrote that "to counter Russian aggression, we must keep (Nato's) military capabilities sharp", and threatened to "impose real costs on Russia for its violation of international norms".

Incoming national security adviser Jake Sullivan added to the chorus by declaring that "unlike the previous administration, we will be taking steps to hold Russia accountable for the range of malign actions taken".

America's penchant for conducting critical bilateral relations in the full glare of media publicity may win the Biden establishment accolades from internal constituencies but are unlikely to lead to effective outcomes. The United States is no longer the world's undisputed economic and military power, with China snapping at its heels. Its grip on alliances like Nato has also weakened. In the backdrop of the Covid-linked economic downturn, much of the democratic world puts national interests first. In this dynamic and uncertain international environment, it is doubtful that other key powers will stand by the US if it tries to impose more punitive sanctions on Russia. The US, however, certainly has the capacity to impose unilateral sanctions isolating Russia from the global financial and banking network, that would adversely hit the Russian economy.

In his February 4 address at the state department, Mr Biden assured a wary

world that the US will act "not to meet yesterday's challenges, but today's and tomorrow's" and to "take on directly the challenges posed... by our most serious competitor China". Mr Biden declared that "we will confront China's economic abuses; counter its aggressive, coercive actions; to push back on China's attack on human rights, intellectual property and global governance."

At his confirmation hearing, Mr Blinken had also clearly identified China as "posing the most significant challenge of any nation-state in the world for the United States".

The Biden administration would be well advised to take a hard look at America's declining influence in the world and prioritise adversaries and challenges. Russia now has a shrinking footprint on the global strategic map. It's no longer an expansionist power. In 2008, Russia was severely provoked by Nato's offer of membership to Ukraine and Georgia. Mr Putin had clearly warned at that time that Nato's expansion towards Russia "would be taken in Russia as a direct threat to the security of our country". Russia's annexation of Crimea and action in Donbas, South Ossetia and Abkhazia were a riposte to the aggressive intentions of Nato.

President Putin had a career in the KGB in the days of the Soviet empire. He has firm control over all the levers of power in Russia and is popular among citizens. With Mr Putin at the helm, Russia is not an ideology-driven country, like the erstwhile Soviet Union. Russia is now obsessed with internal stability and external security. Outside support to vocal Opposition leaders is seen by the Kremlin as a West-inspired attempt to destabilise the country.

Russia poses no future challenge to the United States or the West, be it economic or technological. The West lacks any levers to soften the harsh internal system in Russia. Public criticism of a proud nation will only harden positions and genuine concerns are best conveyed behind closed doors.

For America's own future primacy, the real challenge is from China and its demonising of Russia will only push the Kremlin into the Dragon's embrace, immeasurably adding to China's clout and aggression. The Biden administration needs a pragmatic foreign policy, overcome its prejudices and arrest the slide of US-Russia ties on this slippery slope.

The writer is a retired Indian diplomat and a former ambassador

Subhani



Playing with God's world: 'Growth' has a high price



Sanjeev Ahluwalia

Senior BJP leader Uma Bharati's first reaction to the terrible news of the Chamoli glacier break/avalanche disaster on Sunday — "I told you so" — fully aligns with the reservations of all those who put a higher value on conservation than on the development of natural resources for economic growth.

On Sunday, a part of the Nanda Devi glacier broke off and avalanched down, causing a flash flood in the Rishiganga and Dhauliganga — the upper riverine stretches of the Alakananda, which feeds into the mighty Ganga — washing away back-to-back dams diverting water into a privately-owned hydro project on the Rishiganga stretch and seriously damaging an under-construction government-owned power generation project at Tapovan.

As minister for water resources in the first BJP government of Narendra Modi, Ms Bharati had dragged her feet on the development of the upper reaches of the Ganga in Uttarakhand — much to the dismay of gung-ho advocates of development and growth. Conservationists cite the "fragile" structure of the Himalayas to caution against over-exploitation of the riverine system for electricity generation.

Others go so far as to blame the recent much-publicised widening of the highways connecting the Char Dham — the four pilgrimage shrines in Garhwal — Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri and Yamnotri. Construction of roads is still done the old way, by simply carving additional road width out from the mountain side, causing significant soil erosion both above and below the road. Measures to bind the exposed mountainside using nets or by planting fast-growing

ground cover are only a sideshow, rarely given prominence, in already overloaded road construction budgets.

But then, isn't it always "the growth-wallahs" who stick their necks out by measuring risk versus rewards, even in the playground of the gods — as the Himalayas are so few downsides to the belief that only the sparing use of natural resources is sustainable. Multiple alternative sources of growth do remain unexploited, like higher productivity in the use of existing resources or the use of alternative "clean" technologies for power generation, like solar or offshore wind.

At times like the present one, in the immediate aftermath of a human tragedy, calculating the trade-off between lives cruelly snatched away from loved ones and the potential economic gains from development seems particularly pointless.

It is also unclear to what extent the disaster is the outcome of over-exploitation of resources in the back-to-back construction of dams to divert water into tunnels to run turbines for electricity generation. The shearing-off of glaciers, causing an avalanche and a flash flood in downstream riverine systems, is a natural calamity. After all, avalanches do happen, and lives are lost.

Doubtless, lessons must and will be learned, with respect to continuous monitoring of the higher reaches for signs of fragility. Assessing the geological safety of hill development — extending road access, urban sprawl and related projects — is no longer a choice. Coupled with the deprivations of climate change, already fragile ecosystems could tumble over the edge much faster than the rate and style of

intrusive development is not carefully regulated.

How much of a say should local communities have in large projects being created in their midst is another vexed question — on which there are no clear answers. The "wisdom and public interest orientation" of NIMBY (not in my backyard) communities varies and is often romanticised. In comparison, centralised planning is easy to vilify as representing the cruel, uncaring imposition of rules made by "outsiders". Ultimately, help must come from science in guiding the government on project site selection and regulations for risk minimisation and occupational safety for project workers.

In 2013, PM Narendra Modi made history as chief minister of Gujarat by arranging transport for Gujarati pilgrims stranded in the Kedarnath flash floods. In a similar vein, within a day of the incident, R.K. Singh, Union minister for power, visited the damaged NTPC-owned Tapovan hydro generation project.

VIP visits are a traditional, albeit a much-reviled, device for speeding up the release of funds for relief work and energising those engaged in the onerous task of rescue, relief distribution and rehabilitation.

It is a tradition that a politician ignores only at his peril — after all "we are like that only". Happily, the minister, previously a civil servant who retired as India's home secretary — did more than just that.

He was on the button when he commented that the structural safety of glacier formations around large project construction sites in mountainous regions should be monitored for geological stress, much more so than they are done now. Early advan-

ce warnings of incipient trouble can enable the evacuation of workers, at the very least.

Adroit operational steps to minimise the downstream damage also mitigated the scale of the disaster. Reportedly, emergency measures to release water stored in downstream dams at Rishikesh and Srinagar helped create the required space to absorb the upstream water shock. All these actions speak to our improving capacity for the safe operation of large water systems. To the credit of the civil administration, households along the affected stretch of the river, potentially under threat from flood waters, were reportedly evacuated as a precaution, though the waters subsided subsequently.

National Disaster Management Authority personnel were also visibly in attendance, although it is unclear whether more boots on the ground, in an area choke-a-block with the security forces, is of additional value. The NDMA, sadly, remains a neglected cousin of the military and the police in terms of their technical capacity, rescue equipment and surge capacity for assisting the local civil authorities.

The bulk of the casualties are on-site contract workers — mostly migrants from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Hopefully, once these two hydro projects are completed, the memories of those who laid down their lives during their completion will be commemorated in a suitable manner.

The CM of Uttarakhand announced ₹4 lakhs as relief for the families of each of the victims. An additional ₹2 lakhs each would be given from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund.

The question which remains unanswered, however, goes far beyond the welfare of the families of the deceased. The jury is still out on what is an acceptable societal trade-off between the risk of mortality and morbidity and the compulsions of economic development.

The writer is adviser, Observer Research Foundation

LETTERS

THIRD PARTY

The presence of a third party is compulsory for meaningful talks between Central government and farmers. As so many rounds of talks between the two parties have ended in a stalemate, it is time that experts as a third party can bring freshness or new dimension to the issue.

Madhav P.
Secunderabad

KCR AND BJP

A win by the BJP against the TRS has caused commotion in the Telangana state political system (**KCR on backfoot against BJP, hints 'all set' at top, DC, Feb. 8**). As far as the ruling government is concerned, the BJP has always criticised and suggested alternative policies. As a result, the TRS has become a responsible government in the state. We would like a government that we can trust and a strong Opposition that we can rely on.

Mansoor Dashti
Secunderabad

NEW REVENUE ACT

When New Revenue Act was passed by Telangana Legislative in 2020 people of the state especially pottadars like me had great expectation of justice in getting back lands which are occupied by land-grabbers with the help of corrupt revenue staff by means of tampering the records. But till date the problem exists with pottadars like me still suffering as checking of records and physical survey has not started.

T. Kailash Ditya
Hyderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

Apollo-14 splashes down

BOARD USS (NEW ORLEANS), February 9

The Apollo-14 spaceship splashed down in the South Pacific at 2.35 a.m. from its flight to the moon. The spacecraft was in an upright position as the rescue helicopters circled overhead.

SHORT TAKES

TIGER FOUND DEAD
IN TADOBÀ-ANDHARI
RESERVEBHAGWAN PARAB | DC
MUMBAI, FEB. 9

A tiger was found dead in a buffer range of Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR) in Chandrapur district of Maharashtra on Tuesday. This is the seventh death of the big cats recorded in Maharashtra since the beginning of the new year.

The carcass of the male tiger, aged around three years, was recovered from Mudholi beat of Moharli buffer range of the reserve, field director of TATR Jitendra Rangaonkar said.

The carcass was intact, but bore signs of external injuries, said the officials. According to them, the death might have been caused due to a fight with another tiger.

The actual cause of death will be ascertained after post-mortem. All procedures are being carried out as per the standard operating procedures of the National Tiger Conservation Authority, said officials.

In 2021, seven instances of tigers' deaths have been registered in Maharashtra, which is the highest in the country. In two separate incidents, a tiger and a tigress with her three cubs were poisoned by the locals in Umred-Karhandla-Paoni Wildlife Sanctuary (UKPWS) early this year.

According to officials, a local has admitted that he had poisoned the carcass of his cow when he found that his livestock was killed by the tigress. The feline was a resident of the sanctuary and was about 4-5 years old while the cubs were about 5 months old.

On January 27, a tiger was found dead under Bhadravati forest range of Chandrapur district. In the last two years, 40 tigers have died in Maharashtra.

PRO-KHALISTAN
TERRORIST'S AIDE
ARRESTED IN U.P.

Lucknow, Feb. 9: A joint team of Punjab and UP police has arrested an accomplice of pro-Khalistan terrorists here, police said on Tuesday.

Jagdev Singh alias Jagga was arrested from Vikas Nagar area of the city on Monday, they said.

The accused is linked to pro-Khalistan terrorists Paramjit Singh Pammah and Maitani Singh, they said, adding, Paramjit is currently in the UK while Malatani is in Germany.

Both of them are accused of carrying out anti-national activities in Punjab and trying to promote terror and harm peace and religious tolerance, police said.

According to the police, Paramjit and Malatani were allegedly preparing Jagdev Singh to carry out anti-national activities and with the money provided by them, he along with his partner Jagroop Singh bought guns and cartridges from Madhya Pradesh.

Punjab Police had arrested Jagroop on Sunday. Jagdev, who hails from Ferozepur district of Punjab, was arrested earlier in 2019 and 2020.

SENA SLAMS
SHAH OVER
CM'S POST ISSUESONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC
MUMBAI, FEB. 9

The Shiv Sena on Tuesday slammed Union home minister Amit Shah over his remarks that he never made any closed door promise to share Maharashtra CM's post with the Uddhav Thackeray-led party.

The Sena said that the BJP leader is making such comments only because his party failed to form the government in Maharashtra. It also argued that Shah had himself stated in his previous "sponsored interviews" that it is not his sanskar (culture) to reveal what was decided in the closed door meeting.

In an editorial in its mouthpiece *Saamna*, the Shiv Sena claimed that the BJP is misleading people. It advised Shah to focus on matters like the Uttarakhand flash floods and the farmers' agitation against contentious three farm laws.

Referring to the statements by Shah that he does everything openly, the editorial said, "There is a similarity in style of functioning between Amit Shah and Shiv Sena. The Sena also does everything openly... if this was not the case, the Sena would not have openly joined hands with the Congress and NCP and formed the government with them."

In Uttarakhand, it's a race against time

ITBP deploys drones, dogs to detect 170 people missing since disaster struck the Chamoli region

DC CORRESPONDENT
with agency input
NEW DELHI/LAKHIMPUR
KHERI (UP), FEB. 9

Ten years back, Nathu Lal's elder son Subhash drowned. Now, he is waiting for news on the fate of his younger son, missing since Sunday after the deluge in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district.

Dharamendra, a labourer at the Tapovan power project, had called their home in Bhulanpur village here last Friday, just two days before the flash flood that was possibly triggered by a glacial burst or an avalanche.

The death toll in Uttarakhand's glacier burst tragedy reached 31 as security agencies were racing against time to pull out more people from slush and two blocked tunnels where construction workers are trapped. ITBP has deployed drones and dogs to detect about 170 people still missing since the disaster struck on Sunday.

"A joint team of ITBP, NDRF, SDRF and other agencies conducting rescue operations used drone cameras to see feasibility to enter beyond the cleared site inside Tapovan tunnel. They have not been successful so far. Machines have been deployed to clear slush," an ITBP official said.

Uttar Pradesh relief commissioner Sanjay Goyal said about 70 of the total missing people are from the state, most of them from Lakhimpur Kheri district.

This includes 34 from Lakhimpur Kheri, nine from Saharanpur followed by five from Shravasti, he said on Tuesday.

Nathu Lal, who has three married daughters, told visitors that Dharamendra decided to try his luck in Tapovan as a labourer when he saw his fellow villagers earning a decent wage there.

He left home on January 6 or 7 to begin work there.

In Ichhanagar, another village in Lakhimpur Kheri district, three families hover between hope and despair. There has been no contact since the calamity with 15 people, all of them workers at the same hydel project.

At least five of them are related Shrikrishna (50), his son Raju (22), close relative Jagdish (40) and his son Umesh (21), and another relative Ramtirtha (35).

Tears rolled down the face of Shrikrishna's wife as she told media persons that Raju had talked to the family on the phone just hours before the calamity.

Raju's marriage is scheduled in April and his mother and three younger sisters now pray for his return.

Ichhanagar's Azim told his family that he survived as he had left the Tapovan site for a higher location on Sunday to get the refill for an LPG cylinder. Muzeem from Mirzaganj had also come with him.

But there is no news of their co-worker Bhalbal, also from Mirzaganj.

Eighteen people from Bhairampur village worked at the Tapovan project. Ten of them had stayed away from work on Sunday and are safe. There has been no contact with the remaining eight, villagers said.

Santosh Bhargava, head of Maanja panchayat, which incorporates Ichhanagar and Bhairampur villages, rushed to Tapovan when reports of the tragedy came in.

He talked with the managing director of the private construction company, which had recruited labourers from the area.

Bhargava said that the MD has assured all help possible for the victim's families.

"All the Kheri people were engaged as casual labourers at the Tapovan project and most of them worked at a depth of nearly 40 metres at the site, he said.

In view of the Uttarakhand glacier tragedy home ministry's National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) will conduct a fresh "safety and security audit" of all major infrastructure projects in high altitude and hilly areas and suggest corrective measures.

Home ministry sources said there was considerable concern in the government regarding the safety of infrastructure being carried in hilly terrain particularly after the Uttarakhand glacier burst.

Officials said all projects being carried in Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and the North-Eastern states would be



Neema Devi, wife of Mithilesh Mahato, a worker at Tapovan-Vishnugad hydel project who went missing after the glacier burst in Chamoli district, and her children sit outside their house waiting for his return in Chaukad village in Ramgarh district on Tuesday. Mahato along with four other villagers from Ramgarh district are missing since the glacier burst at Joshimath in the Dhauliganga river on Sunday. — PTI

COLLAPSE OF
ROCK MASS LIKELY
THE REASON,
SAY SCIENTISTS

New Delhi, Feb. 9: A rock mass, weakened due to years of freezing and thawing of snow may have led to the creation of a weak zone, triggering its collapse that resulted in flash floods in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district on Sunday. Initial observations by scientists of the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology (WIHG) suggest.

The crashing rock mass also brought earth and mounds of snow with it. The friction may have resulted in heating, which could have caused the floods, the observations suggest.

Scientists from the institute conducted a helicopter survey of the area to find clues as to what led to the deadly flash floods that swept everything in its way.

Kalachand Sain, Director of the WIHG, said the glaciers where the incident occurred feed the Rishi Ganga river that ultimately joins the Dhauliganga.

"This region has a very steep gradient. Our observations suggest that the rock mass may have weakened due to freezing and thawing. This sometimes leads to the development of a weak zone and fractures."

"As the rock mass weakened, the glacier and snow came down crashing, it resulted in flash floods," he said.

The steep slopes of the mountains in the region further increased the intensity of the crash.

Two teams of the WIHG comprising five glaciologists left for Joshimath on Monday to ascertain the reason behind the incident. — PTI

In-depth safety audit of major infrastructure projects on cards

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, FEB. 9

In view of the Uttarakhand glacier tragedy home ministry's National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) will conduct a fresh "safety and security audit" of all major infrastructure projects in high altitude and hilly areas and suggest corrective measures.

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Officials said all projects being carried in Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and the North-Eastern states would be

ministry official said. Experts from NDRF and even external agencies like IIT, Indian Institute of Science and others would be roped in for this exercise.

Uttarakhand glacier burst. So this incident is being used as an opportunity to do an in-depth safety audit.

Officials said all projects being carried in Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and the North-Eastern states would be

thoroughly reviewed. A detailed report and analysis would be submitted within the next two months.

"As of now this survey would be conducted in hilly states as they are more vulnerable to such disasters as was witnessed in Uttarakhand," a senior

ministry official said.

Experts from NDRF and even external agencies like IIT, Indian Institute of Science and others would be roped in for this exercise.

A number of power projects, dams, roads and bridges are being constructed in these states which would be examined.

Ministry sources said NDRF teams with assistance from the SDRF would be deployed close to these infrastructure projects so that immediate relief and rescue operations can be carried out in case of any future disasters.

AZAD HOPES FOR
RESTORATION OF
PEACE IN J&KDC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, FEB. 9

Calling himself proud Indian Muslim, outgoing leader of opposition in the Rajya Sabha, Ghulam Nabi Azad on Tuesday prayed militancy to end from the country and hoped for the restoration of peace in Jammu and Kashmir and the return of Kashmiri Pandits back to the valley.

In his farewell speech, Azad recalled his association with several leaders, including stalwarts from other parties, which helped him learn many things and got emotional while recalling the 2007 terrorist attack in Jammu and Kashmir and how it was one of those rare occasions that he could not stop himself from crying in the public. Earlier Prime Minister Narendra Modi had also teared up while recalling the incident when he was bidding farewell to Azad and three other MPs.

The former Union minister said he is among those "lucky" people who have never gone to Pakistan. "When I read about the state of affairs in Pakistan, I feel proud that I am a Hindustani Muslim," he said adding that Muslims in India should have pride for themselves as they have kept away from the evils that are there in the neighbouring countries.

However, he also added "The majority community should also take two steps forward."

Remembering his tenure as the chief minister of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, Azad said he had convened his first public meeting in the troubled Sopore district, which is unthinkable even today. "I had said my government would be a government of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and if any minister worked on the basis of religion and party, I would be ashamed," he said.

R-Day violence: SC stays arrest of Tharoor, Sardesai & others in FIRs lodged for tweets



Actor Deep Sidhu, accused in the violence on Republic Day during a farmers' tractor rally, arrested by Delhi Police special cell in New Delhi on Tuesday. — PTI

Sidhu remanded to 7 days custody

BHASKAR HARI
SHARMA | DC
NEW DELHI, FEB. 9

Punjabi actor-turned activist Deep Sidhu, who was allegedly involved in the violence and vandalism at Red Fort during the farmers' tractor rally on January 26, was arrested by the Delhi police special cell late Monday night. On Tuesday, a Delhi court remanded Sidhu to seven days' police custody.

Sidhu was produced before metropolitan magistrate Prigya Gupta. The police alleged he was one of the main instigators of the violent incidents at the Red Fort. Sidhu's counsel, however, claimed that he had nothing to do with the violence and was at the wrong place at the wrong time.

A source said Sidhu was waiting for someone on the road when he was nabbed. "Meanwhile, it was also revealed that Sidhu was in contact with a woman friend who lives in California. He used to make videos and send it to her, and she used to upload them on his Facebook account," said the source.

According to Sanjeev

Kumar Yadav, DCP (Special Cell), he was arrested from the Karnal Bypass at 10.40 pm on Monday.

"Sidhu was wanted in connection with the case of instigating the crowd at the Red Fort on Republic Day. The Crime Branch will investigate his role in detail," said the DCP.

Asked where he was hiding after the January 26 violence, Yadav said the investigation was in an initial stage.

A source said Sidhu was waiting for someone on the road when he was nabbed. "Meanwhile, it was also revealed that Sidhu was in contact with a woman friend who lives in California. He used to make videos and send it to her, and she used to upload them on his Facebook account," said the source.

According to Sanjeev

Will take agitation to far corners of country: Tikait

SANJAY KAW | DC
NEW DELHI, FEB. 9

These laws are repealed." As Kurukshetra is also known as *Dharmakshetra* (holy place) and the "Land of the Bhagavad Gita", Tikait said he was sure farmers will get justice from this land.

After Haryana, he said that mahapanchayats will also be held in Rajasthan and Maharashtra.

The BKU leader said tractors from Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Punjab, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh and other states have already reached Delhi's borders.

He urged the khap to wholeheartedly support the agitation, saying, "We will have to increase the

number of farmers at the borders (protest sites)."

Tikait said the farmers were fighting for their land.

"Land is more dear to a farmer than his son. That's why a farmer does not transfer his land to his son when he is alive."

Warning that there will be attempts to break the agitation on caste lines, the farmer leader said: "When this agitation started, they tried to divide us on the lines of Punjab and Haryana as well as Sardars and non-Sardars (Sikhs). The Sardars cannot be separated from us."

Earlier on February 2, the state cabinet decided to write off interest on crop loans taken by the farmers from the state cooperative banks.

The crop loan interest waiver decision comes in the wake of the release of ₹4,000 crore to 22 lakh farmers under the Chief Minister's Kisan Kalyan Yojana by the government.

SHORT TAKES
ED RAIDS PREMISES OF NEWS PORTAL

New Delhi, Feb. 9: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Tuesday conducted searches on the premises of a news portal and its promoters here on charges of alleged money laundering, official sources said. They said the premises of the website — *Newslick* — and its promoters in South Delhi's Saiduljabad and some other areas are being searched.

The action is being undertaken to collect additional information to probe money laundering charges against the news company and its promoters, the sources said.

They said the probe is linked to some suspect foreign funding.

UK PRODUCTION HOUSE REP ARRESTED

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC
MUMBAI, FEB. 9

The Property Cell of Mumbai crime branch on Monday arrested Umesh Kamat, a representative of UK-based production house, Kenrin, in connection with a porn film production racket. With Kamat the number of arrested persons in this case has reached 7. He was produced before the court on Monday which remanded him to police custody till February 10.

The police on Sunday arrested model and actor Gehena Vasisth for allegedly shooting porn videos. Now Kamat has been arrested for uploading at least seven to eight such porn videos on a social media app.

According to police, during the interrogation Vasisth had told the interrogators that she had sold seven to eight movies to Kamat. The police have come to know that Kamat was working for Vasisth and used to upload pornographic videos sent by her. He used to upload the videos on foreign IP addresses to avoid being detected by Indian agencies.

Legal team representing Vasisth has denied the charges and said that she only made erotic movies. Police have also summoned three more in-house production representatives for questioning in the case.

The case came to light last Thursday, when the Mumbai crime branch's property cell had raided a bungalow, named Green Park, at Madh Island in Mala which resulted in the arrest of five persons.

Those arrested were identified as Yasmin Beg Khan alias Rows, Pratibha Nalawade, Monu Joshi, Bhanusuryam Thakur and Asif alias Saify Khan was allegedly the producer and director; Saify the cameraman, Nalawade graphic designer, Joshi actor and Thakur an assistant.

PARTIAL STRIKE IN KASHMIR ON AFZAL GURU ANNIV

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR, FEB. 9

A partial to complete strike to commemorate the eighth death anniversary of Parliament attack convict Muhammad Afzal Guru closed marketplaces and disrupted transport services in many parts of Kashmir Valley on Tuesday. Guru was hanged in New Delhi's Tihar jail on February 9, 2013.

The call for Tuesday's strike was issued on behalf of laid up Kashmiri separatist leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani by his Pakistan-based representative Abdullah Gilani and the same was circulated through social media earlier.

While life was brought to a standstill in Srinagar's central quarter of Lal Chowk, its neighbourhood, the old city and a few other parts of the Valley including Guru's native Sopore area, only a partial shutdown was observed or normal life was largely not affected elsewhere. The strike found no takers in Jammu or Ladakh regions either. The security across the Valley was tightened further ahead of the Guru anniversary.

The authorities said that the Jammu and Kashmir police and Central armed police forces will remain in a state of high alert for two more days as the death anniversary of Jammu Kashmir National Liberation Front co-founder Muhammad Maqbool Butt falls on Thursday.

Butt charged with murder of an Indian intelligence officer Amar Chand in Boma area of Sopore way back in mid-1960s was also executed in Delhi Tihar jail on February 11, 1984 and like Guru his mortal remains were buried inside the prison premises.



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee during a public rally at Kalna in Burdwan district on Tuesday.

- PTI

BJP's Shahnawaz inducted as min in Nitish govt

NAYEER AZAD | DC
PATNA, FEB. 9

The Nitish Kumar-led Bihar cabinet was expanded on Tuesday with the induction of 17 ministers, of these nine are from the BJP and eight from the JD(U).

Prominent among them is senior BJP leader and former union minister Shahnawaz Hussain. He took oath in Urdu. He has been given the industry portfolio.

Shahnawaz Hussain has been three-time Lok Sabha MP from Bhagalpur and is considered a popular Muslim face in Bihar especially in the Seemanchal region. He couldn't contest the 2019 Lok Sabha polls as his constituency went to the JD(U). Last month he was elected to the Bihar legislative council.

Others from the BJP who were inducted into the Bihar cabinet are Nitin Navin, from Bankipur constituency in Patna, MLC Samrat Chaudhury, Neeraj Singh Babloo a close relative of deceased Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput, Saharsa MLA Alok Ranjan Jha and Subhash Singh from Gopalganj constituency.

● **AMONG THE new faces, the JD(U) has included first-timers like Jayant Raj, ex-IPS officer Sunil Kumar, JD(U) MLA Sumit Singh and Jama Khan.**

in the state.

As per an assessment both the parties JD(U) and BJP took caste and regional representation into consideration in the selection of ministers.

"Whenever there is cabinet expansion we try and consider the representation of every section of the society. I would urge all the ministers to work for the development of Bihar", Chief Minister Nitish Kumar said in a statement after the oath ceremony.

This was the first cabinet expansion of the Nitish Kumar government since it returned to power in November 2020. Last year, Nitish Kumar took oath as Bihar Chief Minister along with 14 ministers.

The BJP with 74 seats is the largest party in Bihar assembly while its partner JD(U) has retained several of its experienced faces like Shrawan Kumar, Sanjay Kumar Jha, Madan Sahani and Lessi Singh.

Among the new faces, the JD(U) has included first-timers like Jayant Raj who won from Amarapur constituency in Banka district, former IPS officer Sunil Kumar, JD(U) MLA Sumit Singh and Jama Khan who had won the assembly elections on BSP ticket from Chainpur constituency in Kaimur district but later joined the JD(U).

While several new faces especially from the BJP were inducted into the cabinet. Senior leaders like Nand Kishore Yadav and Prem Kumar have not found a place this time. Both the leaders have been part of all previous NDA governments

TWO FROM U.P. BOOKED UNDER 'LOVE JIHAD' LAW

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC
BHOPAL, FEB. 9

Two people hailing from Uttar Pradesh have been booked under anti-conversion law in Mandsaur district for luring two local Dalit girls by posing as Hindus.

According to the police, Irfan alias Chote Khan and his nephew Sahil Hassan of Fani Colony under Bijnor district in Uttar Pradesh posed as Akash and Vikas respectively and lured the two girls of Suvasra in Mandsaur on the pretext of marriage and allegedly raped them in captivity.

According to Suvasra police station in-charge Rakesh Choudhury, a wrong call to the mobile phone of one of the two girls, aged 15 and 16, by one of the two accused had established their relations. While one of the two girls is a school dropout, the other is a student of Class IX.

"The two teenage girls were lured into a marriage trap by the two men after they became friends. The girls boarded a train to Delhi from Mandsaur and were later taken to Bijnor", he said.

The girls were confined in a house in Bijnor and allegedly raped by the two men.

The Indian embassy said, "All Indian nationals are, therefore, advised to kindly ascertain the latest Covid-related travel guidelines of their final destination country before embarking on an outward journey from India. They are also advised to carry enough personal provisions and funds to cater to any emergent requirements."

Acting on a tip off, a police team from Mandsaur reached Bijnor and with the help of the local police rescued the girls on February 6. They were brought to Mandsaur early on Monday morning.

2 more rath yatras flagged off, Nadda calls Didi's nephew a 'spoilt child'

Former top cop Kabir joins TMC ahead of elections

DC CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA, FEB. 9

the VRS on January 29 though his superannuation was due in April, as a TMC candidate from a minority dominated seat in the polls to woo the Muslim votebank, according to sources.

Hailing the CM, Mr Kabir said, "In the last ten years, development has ushered in the state under the leadership of Ms Banerjee as the CM. While in service, I have seen her tireless work with dedication to many projects for the people apart from pan-

demic or natural disaster like Amphan or flood."

He added, "My experience of working with her is very good. I am overwhelmed by her inspiration. Today a party from outside is trying to create a division among the cultural people of Bengal to grab power. But the people of Bengal will give them a reply soon. It is our firm belief that our Chief Minister will return to power. We are taking a pledge to be with Ms Banerjee."

They also have their lunch, which is cooked at a five-star hotel, on a gold plate."

She claimed at Maati Utsoob in the same district,

"The BJP has turned the country into a crematorium. But we will not let that happen in Bengal." At her rally in Berhampore in Murshidabad, Ms Ban-

erjee accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of lying on the payment of salary to the state government employees during his last state visit. Seeking

Govt to issue OTT guidelines soon

New Delhi, Feb. 9: The government will soon issue guidelines for regulation of OTT (over the top) platforms that will address issues such as sensitive content, the Rajya Sabha was informed on Tuesday.

Replying to a Zero Hour mention, Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar said a lot of suggestions and complaints on the regulation of OTTs have been received.

"Guidelines and direction are almost ready. It will be soon implemented," he said in his brief submission.

Earlier, raising the issue through a Zero Hour mention, Mahesh Poddar of the BJP said the content and language on OTT platforms was discriminatory and offensive.

Objectionable content on OTT platforms includes sexual discrimination and abusive language, he said adding that the government should, without delay, implement the Internet regulations.

There are at least 40 OTT platforms, including global ones such as Netflix, Amazon Prime and HotStar (Disney Plus), and hundreds of news content websites.

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DEVI 70-RTC X ROADS
(ENJOY 4K LASER PROJECTION & DOLBY ATMOS SOUND SYSTEM)
11.00, 2.15, 6.00, 9.00PM

TARAKARAMA 70MM
2.15, 9.00PM (2 SHOWS)

BRAMARAMBA 70MM
11.30, 2.45, 6.30, 9.45PM

ARJUN 70MM-KUKATPALLY
11.30, 2.30, 6.30, 9.30PM

KONARK 70MM-DSNR
11.15, 2.15, 6.15, 9.15PM

VENKATARAMANA/PADMAVATHI
11.15, 6.00PM (2 SHOWS)

OAMB	10.35, 1.25, 4.25, 7.20, 10.20PM
	8.45, 8.45, 8.45, 11.30, 2.15, 4.00, 5.00, 7.45, 8.45, 10.30PM
ASIAN CINEMAS	SHA-11.15, 2.30, 9.15PM
	SIVAGANGA-11.00, 6.15, 9.0
GPR	10.55, 1.45, 4.40, 7.25, 10.15
RADHIKA	10.55, 1.45, 7.25, 10.20PM
UPPAL	10.40, 1.35, 4.35, 7.25, 10.15PM
	10.55, 1.45, 4.35, 10.30, 7.15, 10.10
TIVOLI	11.15, 2.10, 4.50, 7.40, 10.30PM
	11.00, 1.55, 4.45, 7.45, 10.45PM
PVR	RK-11.00, 7.50PM
	INORBIT-11.30, 2.25, 8.05, 11.00PM
MUSARAMBAGH	12.30, 3.25, 6.20, 9.15
FORUM	10.10, 11.35, 1.55, 5.20, 7.35, 10.45
CENTRAL	11.15, 2.10, 7.35, 10.30PM
GALLERIA	11.00, 1.55, 4.50, 7.45, 10.40PM
ICON	1.20, 7.20, 10.15PM
IRRUMMANZIL	12.30, 3.25, 6.20, 9.15PM
PRESTON	4.15, 7.20, 10.15PM

LAXMIKALA	2.30, 9.30PM
INOX	GVK-10.20, 1.20, 4.20, 7.20, 10.20
	GSM-12.05, 1.05, 2.55, 4.10, 7.15, 9.00, 9.45, 10.20PM
MP	10.10, 11.00, 1.10, 4.10, 8.00, 10.40PM
AMEERPET	10.40, 1.35, 4.15, 7.00, 10.00PM
Cinepolis	CCPL-10.00, 12.55, 3.35, 7.25, 10.20
	DSL-12.45, 7.00, 10.10PM
MANTRA	10.00, 1.05, 7.15, 10.20PM
SUDHA	12.00, 3.00, 6.10, 9.15PM
MIRAJ CINEMAS	GEETHA-12.15, 7.15, 10.15PM
	SHALINI-11.00, 1.45, 5.00, 7.30, 8.00, 11.00PM
BALANAGAR	11.00, 5.20, 8.10, 11.00PM
PLATINUM	10.30, 12.45, 3.15, 5.30, 8.00, 10.20PM
SRLAXMI	2.30, 9.30PM
MAHALAXMI	11.00, 3.00, 7.00, 10.00
SRIRAM	11.15, 2.15, 6.15, 9.15PM
SVC SANGEETH	11.30, 2.30, 6.30, 9.30PM
SHARADA	11.00, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00PM
SENSATION	11.00, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00PM
BHUJANGA	11.00, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00PM
GOKUL	70MM
	11.30, 2.30, 6.30, 9.30PM
SAIPOOJA	70MM
	11.00, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00PM
EESHWAR	70MM
	11.00, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00PM
VIMAL	70MM
	11.15, 2.15, 6.15, 9.15PM
VYJANATHI	70MM
	11.00, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00PM
SAIRANGA	70
	11.00, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00PM
SRI DEVI	CH.GUDA
	11.30, 2.30, 6.30, 9.30PM
METRO	70MM
	11.30, 2.30, 6.30, 9.30PM
KRISHNA	ALIYABAD
	11.00, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00PM
SV CINEPARK	
	11.00, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00PM
VENKATASA	70
	11.00, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00PM
LAXMI	SHAMSHABAD
	11.30, 2.30, 6.00, 9.00PM

WHO fails to find source of Covid-19

Mission rules out Donald Trump's propagated Wuhan lab-leak theory

Wuhan, Feb. 9: The WHO mission to China to uncover the origins of the Coronavirus has failed to identify the source of the pandemic but the team on on Tuesday ruled out the Wuhan lab-leak theory propagated by Donald Trump.

Experts believe the disease — which has killed more than 2.3 million people worldwide — originated in bats and could have been transmitted to humans via another mammal.

World Health Organisation foreign expert Peter Ben Embarek said identifying the animal pathway remains a "work in progress", and the absence of bats in the Wuhan area dimmed the likelihood of direct transmission.

It was "most likely" to have come from an intermediary species, he said. He also backed up China's position that there was no evidence of "large outbreaks" in Wuhan before December when the first official cases were recorded.

Animals such as rabbits, ferrets and bamboo rats could be the intermediary, another team member Marion Koopmans added, saying they might be an "entry point" for further investigations.

Liang Wannian, head of

Geneva, Feb. 9: The World Health Organisation insisted that the AstraZeneca vaccine was still a vital tool in the global fight against the coronavirus pandemic, after South Africa delayed the start of its inoculation program over concerns about the drug's efficacy against a virus variant.

As concerns rose over the AstraZeneca shot, the United States said it had lost its first sitting member of Congress to the virus, 67-year-old Texas Republican Ron Wright, who had also been battling cancer.

President Joe Biden called Wright a "fighter who battled bravely against both cancer and Covid-19." His death came after a 41-year-

old Republican House member-elect lost his life to the disease in December, just days before he was to be sworn in.

In South Africa, alarm was

raised when a trial at Johannesburg's University of Witwatersrand concluded the AstraZeneca vaccine provided only "minimal" protection against mild to moderate Covid-19 caused by the variant first detected in South Africa.

That was bad news for many poorer nations counting on the logistical advantages offered by the AstraZeneca shot.

But Richard Hatchett, head of the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), said it

was "vastly too early to be dismissing this vaccine." "It is absolutely crucial to use the tools that we have as effectively as we possibly can," he said, speaking at the WHO's regular bi-weekly press briefing on the pandemic.

The AstraZeneca vaccine is currently a vital part of Covax, the system set up to procure Covid-19 vaccines and ensure their equitable distribution around the world. It accounts for almost all of the 337.2 million vaccine doses Covax is preparing to begin shipping to some 145 countries during the first half of the year, once it receives WHO authorization, expected next week.

— AFP

theory that a leak from a virology lab in Wuhan could have caused the pandemic.

"The laboratory incident hypothesis is extremely unlikely," he said. It is not in the hypotheses that we

will suggest for future studies".

The mission was a diplomatically knotty one — pre-saged by fears of a whitewash — with the US demanding a "robust" probe

China possibly via frozen foods.

Koopmans said the next steps could include searching for "earlier circulation" of the virus.

Reporters were largely kept at arms' length from the experts during their closely-monitored visit, but snippets of their findings crept out via Twitter and interviews.

The

WHO experts spent a month in China including two weeks in quarantine.

Liang said studies showed

the virus could be "carried long-distance on cold chain products", appearing to nudge towards the theory

the virus was imported — an idea that has abounded in China in recent months.

Ben Embarek said "the virus can persist and survive in conditions that are found in these cold and frozen environments".

"But we don't really understand if the virus can transmit to humans and under which conditions this could happen," he said.

Beijing is desperate to defang criticism of its handling of the chaotic early stages of the outbreak. It has tried to refocus attention on its handling and recovery while floating the theory that the virus emerged abroad and was brought into

— AFP

FRANCE PATROLS SCS, LIKELY TO ANGER BEIJING

Paris, Feb. 9: A French nuclear attack submarine was among two navy ships that recently conducted a patrol through the South China Sea, its defence minister announced, in a move likely to anger Beijing, which claims most of the strategic waters as its territory.

The SNA Emeraude was accompanied by support ship BSAM Seine for the passage, Defence Minister Florence Parly said on Twitter. "This extraordinary patrol has just completed a passage in the South China Sea. A striking proof of the capacity of our French Navy to deploy far away and for a long time together with our Australian, American and Japanese strategic partners," she tweeted along with a picture of the two vessels at sea.

China lays claim to nearly all of the South China Sea while Taiwan, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia and Vietnam all also claim parts of the region, believed to hold valuable oil and gas deposits.

Snow brings chaos to Germany



A man pulls his child on a sled in the gardens of the Charlottenburg Palace in Berlin on Tuesday. Freezing drivers were stranded for hours in traffic jams in Germany and Covid-19 vaccination centres were shut in Britain on Tuesday as Europe was pummelled by the heaviest snow in years. Some parts of Germany were cloaked in up to 50 centimetres (20 inches) of snow by Tuesday afternoon, according to local media reports.

Trump's 2nd impeachment trial begins

Washington, Feb. 9: The US Senate puts Donald Trump on trial for inciting insurrection on Tuesday, charging into unprecedent constitutional territory and laying bare the national trauma inflicted in the former president's attempt to overturn his re-election defeat.

The gavel will come down at 1:00 pm (1800 GMT) in the Senate, opening a trial expected to rivet much of the nation.

Inside the ornate building, Democratic prosecutors will lay out a case heavily supported by video evidence that Trump deliberately stoked rage over his election loss to Joe Biden in November, fed the

country lies that the vote was rigged, then incited a mob to storm Congress on January 6.

It will make uncomfortable viewing for senators, including the many Republicans making clear they will not

convict Trump, but who had to flee to safety when the violent crowd surged through the Capitol that day.

Outside, thousands of National Guard troops deployed in the aftermath of the January 6 debacle continue to patrol, while hastily thrown up fences barricade the area from ordinary Americans — visible proof that the aftershocks of the Trump era continue to rumble.

Trump becomes the first president ever to face two impeachment trials — he was acquitted in 2020 of abuse of office — as well as the first in history to be tried after

leaving office.

For Democrats leading the case against the populist real estate tycoon, Trump's crime is also a first — the "most grievous constitutional crime" in US history.

But his legal team is resting its case largely on the procedural argument that a former president cannot be tried, calling the Senate trial "aburd."

A second acquittal is all but certain for Trump, who is holed up in his luxury Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida and, after being barred from Twitter, has spent the weeks since leaving office in near silence.

— AFP

Air pollution shortens lives by more than 2yrs on average

Fossil fuel causes one in five deaths

Paris, Feb. 9: Fossil fuel pollution caused more than eight million premature deaths in 2018, accounting for nearly 20 percent of adult mortality worldwide, researchers reported Tuesday.

Half of that grim tally was split across China and India, with another million deaths equally distributed among Bangladesh, Indonesia, Japan and the United States, they reported in the journal Environmental Research.

The toxic cocktail of tiny particles cast off by burning oil, gas and especially coal was responsible for a quarter or more of the mortality in half a dozen nations, all in Asia.

"We often discuss the dangers of fossil fuel combustion

in the context of CO2 and climate change and overlook the potential health impacts," co-author Joel Schwartz, a professor of environmental epidemiology at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, said in a statement.

The potential to avoid millions of premature deaths should be a powerful additional incentive for policymakers to drive down greenhouse gas emissions and hasten the global shift from brown to green energy, he said.

Worldwide, air pollution shortens lives by more than two years on average, earlier research has shown. Worst-hit is Asia, where average lifespan is cut 4.1 years in China, 3.9 years in India, and 3.8 years in Pakistan. In some

regions of these countries, life expectancy is reduced by twice as much.

In Europe, it is shortened by eight months on average.

The new study nearly doubles previous estimates of the number of people killed by fossil fuel pollution. The World Health Organisation says that air pollution — including indoors — kills seven million people per year, with 4.2 million of those deaths due to ambient, or outdoor, pollution.

The most recent Global Burden of Disease study — the most comprehensive catalogue of why people die — advances roughly the same numbers.

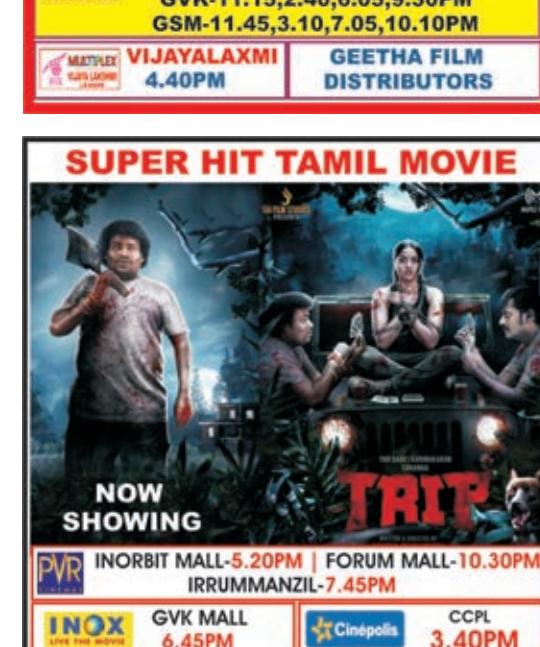
Both of these estimates relied on satellite data and surface observations to deter-

mine concentrations of the smallest — and most deadly — calibre of pollution, known as PM2.5.

But they cannot determine whether these microparticles come from burning fossil fuels or, say, dust and wildfire smoke, according to co-author Loretta Mickley, an expert in chemistry-climate interactions at Harvard. "With satellite data, you're seeing only pieces of the puzzle," she said.

To get a more fine-grained picture of where particle pollution comes from and its health impacts, Mickley and colleagues used a 3-D model of atmospheric chemistry, known as GEOS-Chem, that divides Earth's surface into 50-by-60-kilometre (30-by-36-mile) blocks.

— AFP



+ + +

+ + +

quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	51,329.08
Nifty 50	15,109.30
S&P 500*	3,915.38
Dollar (₹)	72.89
Pound Sterling (₹)	100.41
Euro (₹)	87.99
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	47,559▲495
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	61.11
IN 10-Yr bond yield*	6.074
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.146 -0.013

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Gross NPAs of PSBs decline to ₹6.09 L cr in Sept.

Gross non-performing assets (NPAs) of public sector banks declined from Rs 8.96 lakh crore in March 2018 to Rs 6.09 lakh crore in Sept. 2020 due to various government measures, minister of state for finance Anurag Singh Thakur informed the Rajya Sabha. There was record recovery of Rs 2.54 lakh crore during March 2018-Sept. 2020 and 11 out of 12 PSBs reported profit in the first half FY21 amounting to Rs 14,688 crore.

IOB posts net profit of ₹213cr in Dec. quarter



Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) reported a net profit of Rs 212.87 crore for the December 2020 quarter as provisions for bad loans declined. IOB had posted a net loss of Rs 6,075.49 crore in the year-ago quarter. It had posted a net profit of Rs 148.14 crore in the Sept. quarter. Total income rose to Rs 5,786.51 crore from Rs 5,197.94 crore YoY. Gross NPAs fell to 12.19 per cent of gross advances from 17.12 per cent.

Govt to close two pharma PSUs, disinvest in three

The Centre has decided to close two pharma sector undertakings and disinvest in the other three. "The Department of Pharmaceuticals has five public sector undertakings. Out of the five PSUs, the government has taken a decision to close two pharma PSUs, namely Indian Drugs & Pharmaceuticals Ltd and Rajasthan Drugs & Pharmaceuticals Ltd," minister of chemicals and fertilisers D. V. Sadananda Gowda said.

German exports see biggest dip since 2009

Germany's exports plunged by 9.3 per cent last year as the pandemic dragged down demand, the biggest drop since the financial crisis in 2009. Imports dropped 7.1 per cent. That also was the steepest decline since 2009, when exports fell by 18.4 per cent and imports by 17.5 per cent. The US remained the single biggest destination for German exports despite a 12.5 per cent drop, at 103.8 bn euros (\$125 bn).

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■ Workers to be briefed on rights, concerns Wistron to restart riot-hit iPhone unit

SARITHA RAI

FEB. 9



Apple Inc's manufacturing partner Wistron Corp will hire workers and restart operations in its Narasapura factory outside Bengaluru after a violent protest shut the iPhone-manufacturing facility last December. Apple's teams and independent auditors have been working with Wistron over the past eight weeks to put the necessary systems and processes in place, the Cupertino-based iPhone maker said in an emailed statement on Tuesday. However, the Taiwanese contractor will continue to face scrutiny.

"A comprehensive set of corrective actions has now been completed and Wistron has restructured their recruiting team and

enhanced training and support for workers," Apple said in the statement. "Wistron remains on probation and we will monitor their progress closely."

Apple had suspended new orders to Wistron in December after workers who had been hired on monthly pay of about \$200 stormed the factory and rioted over unpaid salaries, destroying furni-

Bloomberg

ture and equipment leading to losses worth millions of dollars.

All workers in the facility

will undergo a new training programme to ensure they understand their rights and how to raise concerns, Apple said in the statement. Its representatives will remain on site to validate that the new processes are effective.

Bloomberg

Pak to seek debt relief from China

FASEEH MANGI

FEB. 9

Pakistan plans to ask China for relief on payments for power projects Beijing financed over the past eight years, the latest developing nation that's struggling to repay debt under President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative.

In informal talks, Pakistan and China have discussed easing terms on the repayment of debt on about a dozen power

plants, according to a person with knowledge of the matter, who said Islamabad hasn't made a formal request yet. The parties have canvassed Beijing's willingness to stagger debt payments, as opposed to lowering equity returns, the person said, requesting anonymity as the plan is private.

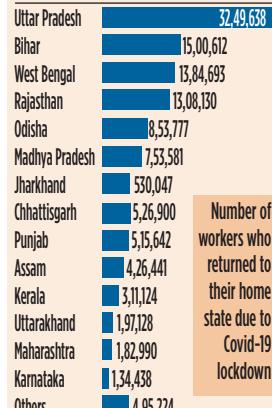
An enormous build-out of Chinese-financed power plants in Pakistan, which was originally intended to solve its electricity shortages, has

resulted in a surplus that Islamabad isn't able to afford. Infrastructure projects funded by China's initiative in other developing nations, such as Sri Lanka and Malaysia, have suffered issues ranging from heavy debt loads to corruption.

China has denied US criticism that the initiative leads to debt traps, while acknowledging that countries have had difficulties repaying loans due to the pandemic-induced global recession.

Bloomberg

Migrant workers who returned home



Source: Reply to Lok Sabha unstarred question # 1056 dated 08 Feb (Ministry of Labour and Employment)

— KBK Infographic

INDIAN-ORIGIN LAWYER TO BE TEMASEK CEO



Dilhan Pillay Sandrasegara

GURDIP SINGH

SINGAPORE, FEB. 9

Indian-origin corporate lawyer Dilhan Pillay Sandrasegara will succeed Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong's wife as the chief executive officer and executive director of a state-owned wealth management group.

Sandrasegara will take over from Ho Ching—who has been serving in leadership roles at the wealth management group Temasek Holdings since 2004—on October 1.

"Leadership succession is a strategic responsibility of the board," said Temasek Holdings chairman Lim Boon Heng.

Lim described Sandrasegara as an established leading corporate lawyer, who joined Temasek 10 years ago "with a sense of mission and purpose".

Sandrasegara has since played "several critical roles" in Temasek, including a two-year stint as head of the Americas, based out of New York.

— PTI

Teens drive civil behaviour online

FC BUREAU
HYDERABAD, FEB. 9

Microsoft on Tuesday said fewer people in India experienced negative online interactions or encountered online risks in 2020 compared to the previous year, thanks largely to positive interactions by India's teens.

Unveiling results from its annual study, "Civility, Safety, and Interactions Online - 2020" along with findings from its 2020 Digital Civility Index (DCI), Microsoft said India's score in online civility had improved to 68 this year from 71 in 2019. The DCI survey covered 16,000 respondents.

The survey found that the improvement in online experience was contributed by the positive approach of teenagers aged 13-16. The online experience among adults in 16 and above age group remained relatively poor.

The measure of online civility among teenagers is 67 compared to a lower rank of 69 for adults.

"It's heartening to see our next generation take the lead in driving posi-

tive interactions online, and to witness digital citizens come together to uplift online communities during the pandemic," said Keshav Dhakad, group head & general counsel, Microsoft India. "Nonetheless, threats such as hate speech, together with other uncivil behaviours, continue to pervade society." Online risks such as hate speech doubled from 2016.

Bloomberg

The aggregators say they have the expertise to select strong products and avoid faddish ones that flame out before they have a chance to grow.

The latest entrant, Branded Group, said on Tuesday it had purchased 20 houseware and leisure brands. Formed last summer and flush with \$150 million raised by venture firm Target Global, Branded will be run by Pierre Poignant, who previously led the southeast Asian online marketplace Lazada, and Michael Ronen, who spent almost 20 years in mergers and acquisitions at Goldman Sachs and also worked for SoftBank's Silicon Valley venture division.

About 40 Amazon aggregators have emerged in the past few years, according to people following the trend, with most of them still quietly seeking deals behind the scenes. Eight have announced fundraising rounds totalling more than \$2.5 billion since 2019.

Thrasio, launched in 2018, has the deepest pockets and has already purchased 90 companies with \$1.75 billion in funding and debt from backers that include the PE firm Advent International. Perch, founded in 2020, has raised \$130 million and gobbed up almost 30 brands. Several PE firms have launched websites to court Amazon sellers.

The demand for Amazon mom-and-pops reflects the maturation of the e-commerce giant's third-party marketplace, which accounts for more than half of all products sold on the site. The web store has grown so large that deep-pocketed investors can prospect for tomorrow's big hit among the millions of merchants competing on the site. "The emergence of these companies

reflects how selling with Amazon offers small businesses powerful opportunities to build their brands and reach millions of customers," an Amazon spokesperson said.

Aggregators look for consistent money-makers with annual sales up to about \$10 million; they generally offer three to four times a target's annual profit, including the salary the owners pay themselves. The buyers don't focus on specific categories and are content to jam together a potpourri of brands. Perch, for example, sells maternity belts, auto upholstery tools, pep-me-up-based athlete's foot cures and virtual-reality headsets. — Bloomberg

INDIA ENERGY DEMAND TO SEE FASTEST GROWTH, TO OVERTAKE EU

New Delhi, Feb. 9: India's energy demand will increase more than that of any other country over the next two decades, the International Energy Agency (IEA) said on Tuesday, forecasting that India would overtake the European Union as the world's third-largest energy consumer by 2030.

An expanding economy, population, urbanisation and industrialisation will result in India's energy needs growing at three times the global average under today's policies, said the IEA's India Energy Outlook 2021.

"India has arrived at the centre of the world energy stage," said Fatih Birol, the IEA's executive director.

Energy use has doubled since 2000, with most of that demand met by coal and oil. This is set to grow about 35 per cent until 2030, down from 50 per cent before the coronavirus pandemic.

India will see the addition of 13 new Mumbai urban population, boosting demand for cement, steel, electricity

LIC IPO to reserve 10% shares for policyholders

New Delhi, Feb. 9: Up to 10 per cent of the LIC IPO issue size would be reserved for policyholders, minister of state for finance Anurag Thakur said on Tuesday.

The government will remain the majority shareholder and will continue to retain management control, safeguarding the interest of policyholders, he said.

"In the Finance Bill 2021-22, it has been proposed to have a reservation on a competitive basis, to an extent of up to 10 per cent of the issue size, in favour of life insurance policyholders of LIC," Thakur said in a written reply to a query in the Rajya Sabha.

In her Budget Speech 2021, finance minister



Nirmala Sitharaman said the initial public offering (IPO) of Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) would be launched in the next financial year, beginning April 1.

The LIC Amendment Act has been made part of the Finance Bill, thereby bringing the required legislative amendment for launching IPO of the country's largest life insurer.

The Department of Investment and Public Asset Management

(Dipam), which manages the government's equity in state-owned companies, has already selected actuarial firm Milliman Advisors for ascertaining the embedded value of LIC.

Deloitte and SBI Caps have been appointed as pre-IPO transaction advisors.

The Budget 2021-22 has set a disinvestment target of Rs 1.75 lakh crore, higher than the Rs 32,000 crore estimated to be garnered in the current fiscal.

Of the Rs 1.75 lakh crore, Rs 1 lakh crore is to come from selling government stake in public sector banks and financial institutions, and Rs 75,000 crore would come as CPSE disinvestment receipts.

event.

She said the government has taken steps to instill confidence in taxpayers. It has not put any additional burden on taxpayers by way of increasing taxes to fund the stimulus, Sitharaman said.

"We are staying away from burdening the taxpayer any further, while simultaneously easing compliance," the minister added.

The minister said the time bar for reopening of past assessments has been cut down to three years in the Budget, from six years earlier, because the intent of the tax department is not to bother a regular taxpayer.

EQUITY MF REDEMPTIONS UNABATED IN JANUARY

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, FEB. 9

The mutual fund industry's average assets under management (AUM) hit an all-time high of Rs 31.84 lakh crore in January. However, the net AUM fell to Rs 30.50 lakh crore in January on profit booking from Rs 31.02 lakh crore in December, monthly data released by the Association of Mutual Funds in India (Amfi) showed.

Equity mutual funds continue to witness outflows as record gains in the equity market in January led retail investors to book profit, with equity-oriented schemes seeing outflows worth Rs 9,253.22 crore. Equity-linked savings schemes and other equity schemes also witnessed outflows worth Rs 2,940.96 crore.

The hybrid schemes witnessed net inflows worth Rs 2,141.3 crore while the debt fund category witnessed outflows worth Rs 33,408.76 crore.

Equity ETFs, index funds, gold ETFs and fund of funds investing overseas in total witnessed combined inflows worth Rs 7,966.82 crore.

"Equity-oriented mutual funds continued to witness net outflows for the seventh month in a row. The continuation of net outflows from equity funds could be attributed to profit booking/portfolio rebalancing as markets continue to touch new highs," said Himanshu Srivastava, associate director-manager research, Morningstar India.

"Though on an overall basis, the net outflow was lower than the previous month, yet in terms of absolute quantum, it continues to be on the higher side," he said.



Investors ploughed \$83 billion into 248 Spacs in the US last year, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. The trend is rapidly going global, with

