

Self-reliant India only possible with healthy citizens: Murmu

MATHURA, MAR 20: President Droupadi Murmu on Friday said that a self-reliant India is only possible when its citizens are healthy.

Murmu was speaking at the inauguration of the Nand Kishor Somani Oncology Block of Ramakrishna Mission Sevashram. "An empowered (sashakt) and 'Aatma Nirbhar' Bharat is only possible when the citizens are healthy," she said.

"Today, cancer is one of the most serious health challenges. Timely detection of the disease and high-level treatment can play a decisive role in saving the life of the patient. But, for some families, it seems that due to their economic circumstances, treatment of this disease seems impossible," she added.

Murmu, who is on a three-day visit to Uttar Pradesh, said a special emphasis is being placed on cancer prevention and treatment through awareness campaigns and timely diagnostic facilities.

She said India is contin-



uously striving to strengthen its healthcare infrastructure, and the Centre is taking steps to bolster this with such "historic" schemes as Ayushman Bharat.

"Cancer treatment is also covered under the ambit of the Ayushman Bharat scheme, thereby benefiting poor and needy patients," Murmu said.

She said across the country, new AIIMS and medical colleges are being established, making

healthcare more accessible to people living in rural and remote areas. She also praised telemedicine and e-health services, which allow consultation with expert doctors from home.

"Medical institutions driven by a spirit of service play a pivotal role in society. They do not merely treat diseases, but also instil hope, confidence, and respect in the lives of patients and their families," Murmu said.

The Ramakrishna Mis-

sion has demonstrated that the confluence of modern science and human compassion can accomplish remarkable work for the welfare of humanity, she said.

"I extend my warmest congratulations to this institution for this significant contribution. Today, we are not only inaugurating a building, but we are opening a new gateway of hope for all those patients who come here seeking high-quality medical care," the president added. (PTI)

Vishwa Kashmiri Samaj releases Sapti Rishi Calender

**HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, MAR 20**

A function was organized by Vishwa Kashmiri Samaj in Samaj Sudhar Samiti Durga Nagar Jammu regarding releasing of Sapti Rishi Calender (Samvot 5102) and Navreh Milan.

The function was attended by Shri Shri 1008 Rudra Nath Mahakal Vishal Maharaj as a chief guest, besides a large number of socio-political activists and leaders of displaced migrants also participated and Sapti Rishi Calender (Samvot 5102) was released on the occasion by the chief guest.

Swami Kumar Maharaj also attended the function as special invitee and delivered lecture on the topic Acharaya Sharad Dhar also spoke on the occasion and greeted the Vishwa Kashmiri Samaj for releasing this religious calender as well urged them to continue to work more vigorously for the community.

Kiran watal convener and M.K.Yogi General Secretary of Vishwa Kashmiri Samaj in their address greeted the people on the occasion of Navreh and explained in detail the impor-



tance of this calender from the religious point of view.

Both the leaders highlighted the plight of the community explained in detail the social works being done by this organization for the poor and economically weaker sections of the community since it's inception like organizing samohak Yagnopavit, solminizing the marriages of poor girls, organizing langars, helping poor children in their studies and organize periodic medical camps for poor and needy people and always remain engrossed in social service of the community

They impressed upon the Union Government to initiate tangible steps to address

the genuine problems of the displaced community to end their exile period. Pujya Sri Sri 108 Rudra Maharaj Mahakal Vishal Maharaj Ji, chief guest of the occasion greeted Kashmiri Pandit community on the auspicious occasion of Navreh and delivered religious sermons on the subject and hoped that all their sufferings in exile would end soon.

Vinod Pandita a special invitee & Notable social activist also spoke on the occasion and greeted the people on the Navreh. He presented vote of thanks to the prominent socio-political activists, philanthropists and academicians of the community

who participated in the event by their begin presence.

The prominent community socio political activists who attended the releasing ceremony event were professor A.N. Sadhu, Prof. B.L. Zutshi, Prof. Ashok Aima, Dr.T.K.Bhat, Prof. virender Rawal, B.L.Jalali, Kamal Ganjoo, Prof. G.L. Koul, Kuldeep Raina, Kusum Tickoo, Pankaj Bhawani, Ravi Kachroo, Rajesh Labroo, Ashwani Bhat, Ravi Jogi, Romesh Hangloo, Kashmiri Lal advocate, Shuban Ji Dhar, Sanjay Raina, Anil Bhan, Moti Lal Malla, Kusum Tickoo, M.K.Bangroo, Vishal Jotshi, Vaibhav Maitoo, and many others

Structural changes in blood plasma proteins may reflect earliest signs of Alzheimer's disease: Study

NEW DELHI, MAR 20: A new type of blood test that analyses the folding of amino acids rather than their amounts may detect earliest biological signs of Alzheimer's disease, according to a study.

Analysis of blood plasma samples from over 500 individuals show that structural differences in three proteins — one involved in immune signalling, another in protein folding, and a third that transports fats in bloodstream — are strongly linked to Alzheimer's status, according to the findings published in the Nature Aging journal.

Researchers, including those at The Scripps Research Institute, US, said structural differences of plasma proteins helped accurately distinguish cognitively normal individuals, from those with Alzheimer's and mild cognitive impairment — the

preceding stage.

The method could eventually allow early diagnosis and treatment, they said.

Alzheimer's disease is currently diagnosed by measuring amyloid plaques and tau tangles, formed due to accumulation of amyloid and tau proteins in one's brain — in blood or spinal fluid.

However, the neurodegenerative condition is increasingly thought to involve a broader failure of proteostasis, a system responsible for keeping proteins properly folded and removing damaged ones, researchers said.

The system is said to become less effective with ageing, because of which proteins are more likely to fold incorrectly during formation or restructuring, they said.

"Many neurodegenerative diseases are driven by changes in protein structure. The question was, are there structural changes in

specific proteins that might be useful as predictive markers?" senior author John Yates, a professor at The Scripps Research Institute, said.

The researchers proposed that if proteostasis is disrupted in the brain, similar structural changes might also appear in proteins circulating in blood.

Plasma samples from the participants were divided into three groups — cognitively normal adults, individuals with mild cognitive impairment and patients diagnosed with Alzheimer's.

The analysis determined how exposed or buried certain specific areas were in three-dimensional amino acid chain, indicating changes to their structure. Machine learning, a form of artificial intelligence, was used to identify patterns connected to disease stage.

As Alzheimer's disease advanced, specific blood

proteins became less structurally "open", with structural changes of three showing the strongest association with disease.

The proteins were C1QA, involved in immune signalling, clusterin, involved in protein folding and amyloid removal, and apolipoprotein B, which transports fats in the bloodstream and contributes to blood vessel health.

The structural changes proved to be more informative for identifying disease stage than simply measuring protein concentrations, researchers said.

"This multi-marker panel based on plasma protein structural alterations represents a promising diagnostic approach that may enhance early AD (Alzheimer's disease) detection and provide insights for clinical trials, improving therapeutic outcomes," the authors wrote. (PTI)

31, 000 Vaishno Devi Pilgrims brave inclement weather to visit Cave Shrine

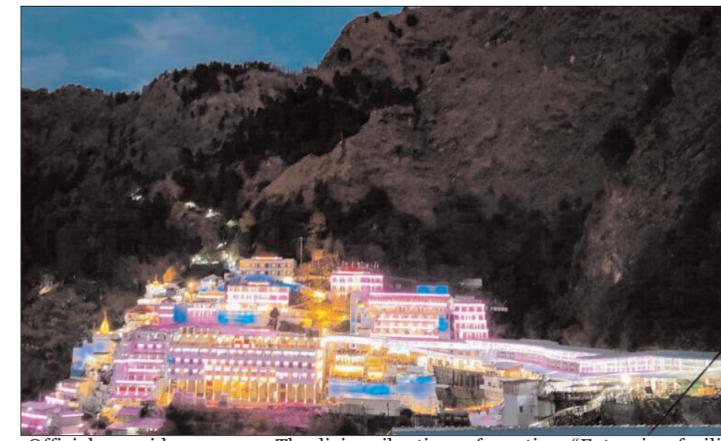
**HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, MAR 20**

Braving inclement weather, over 31,000 pilgrims visited the holy town of Katra and paid obeisance at the Mata Vaishno Devi temple atop Trikuta hills in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district on the first day of Navratri, officials said on Friday. City & Local Guides

"As many as 31,690 pilgrims visited the cave shrine and paid obeisance at the temple on the first day of Navratri (Thursday) till 10 pm," a senior official of the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board said.

The nine-day Navratri festival got off to a grand start on March 19, with officials expecting a daily footfall of more than 30,000 pilgrims. It will conclude on March 27.

Decorated with fresh flowers and illuminated with multi-coloured lights for a spectacular view, the cave shrine is witnessing a huge rush of pilgrims.



Officials said over 15,000 pilgrims have registered for the yatra on Friday, while hundreds made a beeline for darshan at the Bhawan since morning.

On Thursday, a large number of devotees, braving rain and chanting "Jai Mata Di," trekked along the serpentine pathway to the Mata Vaishno Devi temple atop Trikuta hills to pay obeisance and seek the deity's blessings.

The divine vibrations of Vedic chants and rituals at the holy cave are invoking blessings of peace, prosperity, and well-being for all humanity, they said.

The board has implemented comprehensive, multi-layer security involving CRPF, Jammu and Kashmir Police, and Army personnel, with 24/7 CCTV surveillance via an Integrated Command and Control Centre, they said. Civil Services Prepa-

ration "Extensive facilities, including free battery car and pony services for the disabled, 24/7 sanitation, water, and food services, have been prepared for the expected influx of pilgrims," officials said.

The sacred Shat Chandi Maha Yagya has commenced at the revered Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine, heralding the auspicious beginning of Chaitra Navratri 2026, officials said.

Indian nationals coming home from Iran via Armenia, Azerbaijan; about 280 pilgrims returned: MEA

NEW DELHI, MAR 20: Nearly 880 Indian nationals, including students who had got stranded in Iran due to the conflict in West Asia, have started to return to India through Armenia and Azerbaijan, the Ministry of External Affairs said here today.

At the weekly media briefing, MEA Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal also said, of the 284 pilgrims who had gone to Iran, about 280 have returned via Armenia, and three-four of them are expected to arrive in a couple of days.

"Some people do not register with the Indian Embassy. So, our estimate was that about 9,000 people were there (in Iran). Many of the students had returned before the strikes began. And, recently nearly 882 Indian nationals, including students, people from the business community, and pilgrims had gone from India," he said.

Jaiswal was asked for an update on Indian nationals in Iran who wish to return to the country.

"These 882 Indian nationals, via Armenia and Azerbaijan, are expected to return, some have re-



turned. A total of 772 are returning via Armenia, and through Azerbaijan, 110, out of whom, some have returned, while other are coming back," he said.

He also said that the MEA's Control Room set up on March 4 here remains fully functional, supporting the needs of the Indian nationals.

Jaiswal said the number of calls or emails have reduced significantly. The issues of people getting stranded have been largely addressed, and calls and emails have gone down significantly, and helplines in the Indian embassies in various countries in the region are working 24x7, he added.

The MEA spokesperson further said, "We have a large number of students, including girl students

from Kashmir who are getting medical education in Iran. We had issued an advisory, we had told everybody to get in touch with the Embassy before crossing the Azerbaijan border, so they could help them in crossing the Iran-Azerbaijan border."

As the conflict in West Asia widened with global ramifications, India on Thursday said the situation has been a "testing time", not just for the country, but the entire global community.

The West Asia conflict began on February 28 when the US-Israel combine launched military strikes on Iran. In retaliation, Tehran has targeted Gulf countries hosting US military bases.

The West Asia conflict has stretched into three

weeks, with an Israeli attack on Iran's strategic gas fields of South Pars resulting in an intense Iranian retaliation on key energy infrastructure in several Gulf nations, including Qatar's LNG (liquefied natural gas) hub of Ras Laffan, triggering global concerns.

Qatar accounts for nearly 40 per cent of India's LNG requirement.

"Yes, it has been a testing time, not just for us, but the entire global community. Our leaders have been in touch with their counterparts, as I just spoke about the conversation between our prime minister and the Crown Prince of Kuwait. Similarly, we have been in touch with several other leaders," Jaiswal said at an inter-ministerial briefing here on the West Asia situation, earlier in the day.

Additional Secretary (Gulf), MEA, Aseem R Mahajan, told reporters at the inter-ministerial briefing that the MEA continues to "closely monitor" the developments in the Gulf and the wider West Asia region, with the safety, security and welfare of the Indian community remaining the highest priority.

Selfish Interests, Desire For Dominance Root Cause Of Global Conflicts: Bhagwat

NAGPUR, MAR 20: Selfish interests and the desire for dominance were the root cause of conflicts in the world, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat said on Friday, asserting that lasting peace can only be achieved through unity, discipline and adherence to dharma.

Addressing a gathering in Nagpur, Bhagwat said that for 2,000 years the world has experimented with various ideas to resolve conflicts with little success.

Religious intolerance, forced conversions and ideas of superiority and inferiority still exist, he pointed out.

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief was speaking at the gathering after laying the foundation stone for the Vishwa Hindu Parishad's office in the city.

Bhagwat said that India's ancient wisdom teaches that "all are con-



nected and one", and called for a shift from conflict to harmony and cooperation.

He further noted that even modern science is gradually moving towards this understanding.

The RSS chief noted that selfish interests and the desire for dominance were the root cause of conflicts

in the world, and said lasting peace can only be

achieved through unity, discipline and adherence to dharma.

Highlighting the importance of conduct, Bhagwat said dharma cannot remain confined to scriptures, but must be reflected in people's behaviour.

Discipline and adherence to moral values require sustained practice and often involve personal hardship, he said.

While India believes in humanity, others believe in the struggle for existence and survival of the fittest, he said, reiterating that the world needs harmony, not conflict. (Agencies)

