

# THE BEACON

PRACTICE NEWS BULLETIN OF THE PG STUDENTS OF JOURNALISM & MASS COMMUNICATION

Thursday, 18 March, 2021 / St Joseph's College (Autonomous) / Vol : 14 ; Issue : 85 / www.sjcdeptcomm.wordpress.com

## MiG-21 Bison crash kills Air Force group captain

Vandana Nampoothiri

The Indian Air Force (IAF) said on Wednesday, March 17, that one of its MiG-21 Bison aircraft met with an accident in central India, resulting in the death of a group captain.

"The IAF lost Group Captain A Gupta in the tragic accident. IAF expresses deep condolences and stands firmly with the family members," IAF tweeted.

The aircraft crashed while taking off for combat training, it added.

It also said that a court of inquiry has been initiated to determine the cause of the accident.

This is not the first time such an accident has taken place.

In January, another MiG-21 Bison aircraft crashed in Suratgarh air base of Sri Ganganagar district of Rajasthan during a practice flight.

Known as the backbone of IAF, MiG-21 Bison aircraft was acquired by India in 1961.

It is a single-engine single-seater fighter aircraft of Russian origin.

This was the same aircraft shot down by Pakistan on February 27, 2019.

The aircraft was being flown by Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman.

## 'Maharashtra delayed bullet train project'

Sudarshani

**BENGALURU:** Railway Minister Piyush Goyal on Wednesday, March 17, blamed the Maharashtra government for the delay in the ambitious Ahmedabad-Mumbai bullet train project.

Speaking in the Lok Sabha, he said: "If the Maharashtra government cooperates and makes land available in the Bandra-Kurla complex for the terminals in the state, India can get its world-class, high-speed bullet train with the Japanese technology. We can learn from this project to make a network of high-speed trains across the country."

He added, "As of now, with a heavy heart we have started working in the Gujarat



Railway Minister Piyush Goyal

Press Information Bureau

section. The project was set in motion as the land was made available and not because it's Gujarat. If

Maharashtra makes the land available, then we can commence the project there. Only when there is support

can we lay new tracks in that region."

He also said, "Land acquisition in Daman and

Diu is completed. And around 95 percent of land in Gujarat has been obtained. But in Maharashtra only 24 percent of the land has been acquired, and we are not able to find land for the starting point."

He added, "Many discussions were held at various government levels. Once the land for the project is made available and if we acquire land for terminals in Maharashtra then we can initiate the process."

This project is funded through a 50-year loan from Japan of Rs 88,000 crore at an interest rate of 0.1 percent. It is executed by the National High Speed Rail Corporation Ltd.

It is now expected to be completed by 2028.

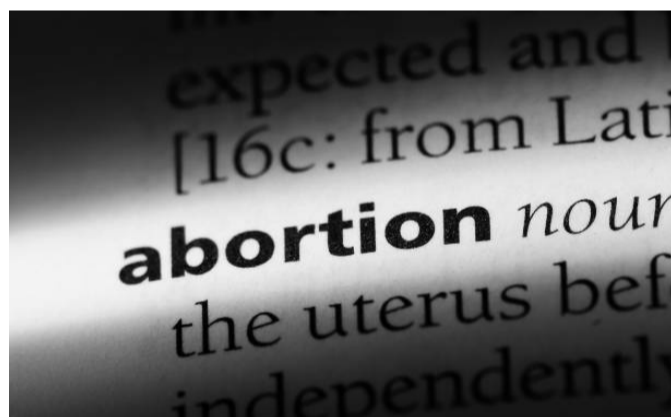
## Rajya Sabha ayes abortion reform bill

Pavithra Prabhu

The Rajya Sabha on Tuesday, March 16, passed a bill that increases the upper limit for termination of pregnancy from 20 to 24 weeks for special cases.

The bill has already been passed in the Rajya Sabha, and now awaits only the President's signature to become a law.

The bill allows abortion for special cases, like survivors of rape, victims of incest, differently-abled women and



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minors, to be done on the advice of one doctor up to 20 weeks of gestation and two

doctors between 20 and 24 weeks of gestation.

The upper limit for the

termination of pregnancy is not applicable in cases of substantial foetal abnormalities diagnosed by a Medical Board.

The ground of failure of contraceptives has also been extended to the partners of the women.

The reform comes in light of Several petitions received by courts seeking permission to abort pregnancies at a gestational age beyond the current permissible limit on grounds of pregnancies due to sexual violence on women or foetal abnormalities.

## Virat Kohli among top 5 batsmen in all 3 formats

Alwin Benjamin Soji

Virat Kohli became the only batsman to be in the top 5 in all the formats of cricket, with the latest T20I rankings released by the International Cricket Council (ICC) on Wednesday, March 17.

Kohli jumped to the fifth spot in the latest T20I rankings.

The Indian skipper achieved this feat after two blistering unbeaten knocks of 73 and 77 in the second and third T20I matches, respectively, in the ongoing T20 series against England.

Before the T20 series against England, Kohli occupied the sixth position, but the two knocks gained him 47 rating points, helping him overtake South Africa's Rassie van der Dussen.

Kohli currently holds the fifth spot in the Test rankings and the first spot in the One Day International (ODI) rankings.

England leads the five-match T20 series 2-1, with the fourth T20I to be played on Thursday, March 18, at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad. The fifth one will be at the same venue.

## Veganism continues to catch on in city

Arakkal Shada Amina

Vegan restaurants across the city say they have noticed an increased interest in veganism, especially among the youth, as more people adopt a plant-based diet and lifestyle.

Vaibhav Nayak, the founder of Tempe Wala in Koramangala and the cloud kitchen Vegan Heat, said:

"We witnessed a 20-30 percent rise in sales this year as compared to last year. The market is definitely on the rise, with a lot more vegan food joints in Bengaluru." He added: "There are a lot



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of young animal activists in the country advocating for a cruelty-free world."

He also said: "Veganism is free. It's processed food that's expensive. Plant-based food has always been the

healthier, more economical option."

Kashish Amit, the founder of city-based delivery service Happy Vegan, switched to a healthy, plant-based diet in 2019 after the untimely demise of her best friend.

She then started her business — delivering homemade, healthy, vegan food — after noticing the lack of plant-based options in the city.

"Initially, we received only 10-15 orders in a month, but now we dispatch hundreds of orders each day," she said.

"Veganism isn't expensive. Almond milk is cheaper than dairy when made at home," she added.

## Wearable sensor may eliminate blood-testing

Priyansha

An Indian scientist and researcher has developed a wearable sensor that can help doctors do away with blood and other tests that they now need to perform on patients, according to a statement from the Union Ministry of Science and Technology.

The sensor, created by Central Electrochemical Research Institute (CECRI) scientist Dr Vinu Mohan AM, is a fluidic channel that can capture real-time sweat and direct it through the active

sensing electrodes following interference-free analyses.

The flexible sensor can be attached on the irregular skin surface and monitors the dynamic biomarker levels.

These biomarkers are important for clinical diagnosis and personalised point-of-care analysis.

Vinu and his team are now trying to adapt this device to work with biofluids other than sweat, like saliva, said the ministry.

The research that went into creating this device was published in the journal ACS Sensor.