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## WINDOWS



Dozens of skaters took to the frozen surface of Amsterdam's historic Prinsengracht canal at Amsterdam in Netherlands as the deep freeze gripping Europe briefly made it possible to skate on a small section of the canal for the first time since 2018. People skated and walked on a small stretch of ice between two bridges close to the landmark Westerkerk before growing cracks in the ice forced all but the most daring off the ice

### 19 more Covid vaccines in pipeline

NEW DELHI: Nearly 19 coronavirus vaccine candidates are in different clinical trial stages and may be available in the coming months, Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said on Monday. Addressing the media, Vardhan said that in the next 2-3 weeks, vaccination against Covid-19 will be started for people above 50 years of age. "About 18-19 vaccine candidates against Covid-19 are in the pipeline and are in preclinical. clinical and advanced stages. We are hopeful that we will be able to offer newer vaccines to India in the coming months," Vardhan said.

### NTPC to pay ₹20 lakh to kin of **Tapovan victims**

JOSHIMATH: State-run power giant NTPC on Monday said it would pay a compensation of Rs 20 lakh each to the families of labourers who died in the recent flash flood at its Tapovan-Vishnugad hydel project in Uttarakhand. A workforce has been set up at the plant to coordinate with the administration and gather all required information about every missing worker, NTPC's spokesman RP Jayada said. He said rescue work is underway on a warfooting at Tapovan-Vishnugad project site by multiple agencies to reach people believed to be trapped inside the tunnel. Realtime information is being shared with the agencies involved in the exercise to expedite it, Jayada said



**Centre may put** 4 banks on sale



## SC slaps notice on WhatsApp, Facebook

WhatsApp may be worth \$2-3 tn, people value privacy more, says the apex court

New Delhi

THE Supreme Court issued notices to popular social media platforms WhatsApp and Facebook on a plea against its new privacy policy here on Monday. The apex court said people had grave apprehensions on loss of privacy, making it clear that it was the court's duty to protect this right as it heard an application against WhatsApp's new privacy policy.

The observation came as senior advocate Shyam Divan, representing petitioner Karmanya Singh Sareen, sought direction to restrain WhatsApp from implementing its new privacy policy in India.

"They have come up with new differentiating



ropeans and different set of rules applicable to Indians," Divan argued. He added that till the time new data protection law came into force in India, WhatsApp should not bring its new privacy policy. At this, Chief Justice SA Bobde replied, "We will issue notice in the matter."

A bench, headed by the

pearing for WhatsApp, strongly contested Divan's argument, saying that the Delhi High Court is already seized of the matter. Sibal said that Europe had a different set of data privacy laws, and WhatsApp's new privacy policy for India is similar to policy applicable in the US, Australia and other countries. "The fact is that this policy was aping Justices AS Bopanna plicable to the rest of the and V Ramasubramanian, world except Europe. In told the counsel for What-Europe, it is different besApp, "People have grave cause they have a special apprehensions about loss law," he argued. of privacy. You may be 2 or Solicitor General Tushar 3 trillion-dollar company,

Sibal and Arvind Datar, ap-

Mehta, representing the Centre, said the right to privacy was a fundamental right and they cannot compromise with the privacy of

India to test 160-km strike range Astra missile soon

## 'Turbidity in upper Ganga canal reduced by 90%'



PURNA SINGH NEW DELHI

THE Delhi Jal Board (DJB) claimed on Monday that high turbidity in water from the upper Ganga canal has been reduced by up to 90 per cent and the water supply from Bhagirathi Water Treatment Plant will resume by Monday evening. DJB vice chairman Raghav Chadha, who was at Bhagirathi WTP for an inspection, said, "Turbidity that had increased to unprecedented levels of 8,000 NTU (Nephelometric Turbidity Unit) has been reduced by up to 90 per cent

and we are expecting that Bhagirathi WTP will start treating and supplying water at its full capacity by today evening." Chadha further said that

turbidity in water that was measured up to 882 NTU at Sonia Vihar WTP, has been reduced up to 40 per cent. "DJB is still working re-

lentlessly to bring Sonia Vihar WTP to its full function. We had to reduce the capacity of water treatment at both Sonia Vihar and Bhagirathi WTP due to increase in turbidity in the water coming to Delhi through upper Ganga canal," Chadha added.



### duping Keiriwal's daughter

**New Delhi** 

Three men have been arrested for allegedly duping Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's daughter, police said on Monday.

Sajid, a resident of Nuh in Haryana, Kapil and Manvinder Singh, hailing from Mathura -- were arrested from the Bharatpur-Mathura border with the help of technical surveillance, police said. However, the main accused identified as Waris (25) is still on the run, they said. The chief minister's daughter was duped of Rs 34,000 by one of the four accused, who had approached her as a buver on an e-commerce platform, where she had put up a sofa on sale. "The three worked on commission basis for Waris.

Manvinder got multiple bank accounts opened for Kapil and Saiid using fake documents, for which he received a commission. The cheated amount was transferred to Waris' account." the officer said. According to the police, the victim had put up a sofa for sale on an e-commerce platform. She was approached by a man who showed interest in making the nurchase. To check if the account details shared by her were correct, he initially transferred a minimal amount of money into her account and later duped her

#### 5-day bail to **Kerala scribe** to visit ailing mother

New Delhi

THE Supreme Court granted 5-day interim bail to journalist Siddique Kappan, arrested on his way to Hathras where a young Dalit woman had died after being allegedly gang-raped, to visit his ailing mother. A bench headed by Chief

Justice SA Bobde said the interest of justice would be served if appropriate safeguards are built into the order for the proposed visit of the prisoner. The apex court said that during his visit he to the media, including social media. "We, accordingly, permit the prisoner - Siddique Kappan to go to Kerala for a period of five days only for the purpose of seeing his ailing mother. "He shall not meet the members of the public."



but people value their pri-

vacy more than your

money. we have to protect

Senior advocates Kapil

people's privacy.'

lish its superiority in air combat over China and Pakistan, India would start testing the Astra Mark 2 beyond visual range air-to-air missile, which would be capable of taking down enemy aircraft from a range of 160 kilometres. The extended range Astra

Mark 2 would give India an edge over its adversaries and

NEW DELHI

AAP national convenor

and Delhi CM Arvind Ke-

jriwal will address a 'kisan

support of farmers

protesting the Centre's

new agri laws, the party

mahapanchayat' Meerut on February 28 in would add more lethality to its fighter jets in aerial combat, like the one which happened a day after the Balakot airstrikes on February 26, 2019.

"The trial for the Astra Mark would be starting in

said on Monday

**Keiriwal to address 'kisan** 

mahapanchavat' on Feb 28

the second half of this year and we are hoping to see the missile fully developed by 2022," government officials said.

The next-generation missile is expected to be operamander Air Marshal SBP Sinha (Retd) said. The retired officer has

former Central Air Com-

been associated with the Astra missile programme for a long time now The Astra is a beyond vi-

sual range air-to-air missile

(BVRAAM), which flies over four times the speed of sound at Mach 4.5. Efforts are now on to integrate the over 100-km strike range missile on the indigenous fighter aircraft LCA Tejas.

The all-weather day and night capable Astra, which currently has a strike range of around 100 km, will eventually replace the expensive Russian, French and Israeli BVRAAMs that are currently imported to arm IAF fighters. The Indian Air Force and

Indian navy have already given orders for 288 Astra Mark-1 Missiles which are already "proven" on the Russian-origin Sukhoi-30MKI fighters. (ANI



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### Govt eases curbs on geospatial data for map-making New Delhi maps, he said. Prime Min-

IN sweeping changes in the country's mapping policy, the government on Monday announced liberalisation of norms governing the acquisition and production of geospatial data, a move that will help in boosting innovation in the sector and create a level-playing field for public and private entities. Under the new guidelines,

the sector will be deregu-

prior approvals for surveying, mapping and for building applications based on that have been done away with, Department of Science and Technology Secretary Ashutosh Sharma said. For Indian entities, there will be complete deregulation with no prior approvals, security clearances, licenses, for acquisition and production of geospatial data and geospatial data services, including

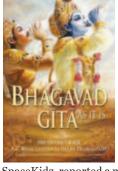
ister Narendra Modi said the liberalisation of policies governing the acquisition and production of geospatial data is a "massive step in government's vision for an Aatmanirbhar Bharat".

The reform will benefit the country's farmers, startups, private sector, public sector and research institutions to drive innovations and build scalable solutions,

## Nanosatellite to carry Bhagavad Gita, PM Modi's photograph into space

New Delhi

A nanosatellite is all set to take a photograph of PM Narendra Modi and a copy of religious book, the Bhagavad Gita to space. In addition to these, names of 25,000 individuals were also be carried by the Satish Dhawan Satellite (SD SAT) that is due of be launched by the end of this month from the space centre at Sriharikota. The nanosatellite has been developed by a private firm



SpaceKidz, reported a national daily. 'We have also added the



the prime minister on the top panel with the words

satellite has been completely developed and fabricated in India, including the electronics and circuitry," Dr Srimathy Kesan, founder and CEO of SpaceKidz India revealed to the daily Hindustan

The names of Dr K Sivan, Chairperson ISRO and Dr R Umamaheswaran, ISRO's Scientific Secretary have also been etched at the bottom panel of the nanosatel-

## As number of fresh Covid cases on rise, BBMP to ramp up testing

HANS NEWS SERVICE BENGALURU

THE BBMP commissioner N Manjunath Prasad, in a meeting, informed that in the last two days 40 out of 210 students at Manjushree College and 28 flat inmates were infected at SNM Raj Lake View Residency in the Bommanahalli Zone. Prasad said that 500 residents have been tested and there are 1,000 more to be tested. In this regard, six testing camps have been set up.

The commissioner said that most of the students attending Manjushree Nursing College are from Kerala and there is a high incidence of infection from students who come to the city from there.

"There is no restriction on



BBMP Commissioner N Manjunath Prasad addressing the meeting

those coming from Kerala as per the orders of the central government. If a person from Kerala comes to the city, he / she should enrol in the institute only if there is an RT PCR Negative report

within 72 hours. Anyone who violates the law will be prosecuted according to the Disaster Management Act," Prasad said.

The BBMP has said that a party could be a probable reason beties have been asked to increase the number of Covid tests. There are a total of 341 testing teams. including 141 primary health care

The Joint Commissioner is directed to review the testing and the Zonal Special Commissioners should hold a biennial review meeting to check for more cases and isolate those who are positive. It has also been instructed to detect and isolate primary and secondary contacts through contact tracing after being positive.

Officials have been instructed to contact Resident Welfare Associations (RWA) in connection with Covid cases in the city. Prasad has asked the officials to meet the RWAs through video conference. The commissioner

noted that in the background of low Covid cases the citizens have lowered the guard. The marshals have been instructed to take appropriate action against those not found to be wearing masks.

Second dose of Covid-19 vaccination has begun. As of Sunday, 4,09,836 healthcare workers and 86,798 frontline workers have been administered the first dose of vaccine across the state with a coverage of 50 per cent and 30 per cent respectively. The state government has set a deadline for health workers to get the vaccine and those who do not get the vaccine must get the vaccine by February 25. Health workers will not be vaccinated after that. Those who received the first dose will be given the second



### IIM-B announces national roll-out of Mahatma Gandhi Fellowship

HANS NEWS SERVICE BENGALURU

FOLLOWING the success of the pilot cohort. Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIMB) has announced the launch of 'Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship' (MGNF) 2021-23 in collaboration with the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), Government of India and State Skill Development Missions

The Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship is a unique opportunity for young, dynamic individuals to combine classroom sessions at IIM with engagement in the district economies to promote skill development and skill planning. Launched last year, the implementation of the programme has been a great success and has garnered huge appreciation from various

IIMB Director Professor Rishikesha T Krishna described MGNF Phase 2 as an opportunity for young dynamic individuals who are looking for opportunities outside the normal. "Based on our Phase 1 experience, we know that many of our past Fellows are having an impact on the District Skill Committee that they have been supporting; some have gone on to create very interesting projects that are creating skills as pre-cursor for employment by integrating ideas from business management, public policy, and development economics learned at IIMB and understanding their district's potential. Some of the initiatives are with SHGs, others are market based interventions strengthening pre-existing markets in turmeric, sarees, or garlic in an attempt to scale and integrate with new markets," he explained.

The Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship 2021-23 has been rolled out nationally in more than 660 districts across India. The programme is being hosted by nine IIMs (IIM Ahmedabad, IIM Bangalore, IIM Jammu, JIM Kozhikode, JIM Lucknow, IIM Nagpur, IIM Ranchi, IIM Udaipur and IIM Visakhapatnam) separately, with IIM Bangalore managing the common admission process.

Programme Director and faculty from the Centre for Public Policy at IIMB Professor Arnab Mukheriee said, "In Phase 1, the MGNF had to deal with disruptions due to COVID-19 like every other activity in the country. The MGNF has proved to be institutionally flexible, and, in many districts, has worked with COVID-19 recovery efforts that range from undertaking tracer studies of migrants to undertaking welfare activities for those displaced due to COVID-19. Phase 2 extends the programme nationally to all remaining districts in the country in partnership with various IIMs from across the country. Our Phase 1 experience tells us that the Fellows have been instrumental in supporting the district skill ecosystems in several parts of the country and have been critical to kick starting new initiatives that have strengthened skilling. Expanding this nationally can truly be impactful for the whole country at a time when growth concerns are paramount, and the expansion of formal employment opportunities

## New age unified learning experience platform to drive learner engagement

TECHADEMY has been making inroads as a unified learning experience platform that is poised to address the challenges in Learning and Development (L&D) programs in post-Covid 19 workplace environments. By incorporating features of both an LMS and LXP, the digital platform unifies various learning interventions to solve critical challenges, from addressing learning drop-offs and inculcating a culture of continuous learning, to virtual employee onboarding, compliance and customer training, cross-skilling, reskilling and deploying virtual training environments with ease.

Outlining the need for companies to stay on top of their L&D strategies in an era where technologies and its applications continue to change and evolve at a rapid pace, Techademy Founder, N Keshava Raju states "Unprecedented events such as the one we're in continues to create daunting challenges for an organisation's L&D strategy in a time where they need it more than ever. While we noticed that most organisations have not axed their development programs, our internal data and surveys indicate that metrics such as engagement rates, and course completion rates are taking a significant hit.'

By integrating various learning platforms that focus on various learning metrics into a sindigital solution, TECHADEMY aims to solves this very challenge, and make professional training more relevant, personalised and engaging by putting learner experiences

at the heart of an L&D strategy Given that most companies today have a distributed workforce it becomes very important for organisations to deliver meaningful learning experiences that is consumed as intended.

Commenting on the same. Techademy Founder N Keshaya Raju added, "To drive employee engagement and improves ones returns on learning (ROL) organisations need to curate and nurture an outcome-oriented learning culture. One can do this only by equipping their workforce with the right set of tools, be it assessments that evaluate core traits and acquired skills, or letting them learn in a sphere that mimics the organisations production environment."

Apart from the plethora of features the platform offers, TECHADEMY also plans on adding to about 50 new courses every month to their content library, which currently hosts over 2500 tech-based courses. The company's main goal currently is to ensure that organisations continue to deliver and improve upon their L&D programs without any interruptions.

Sharing its heritage and promoters with IIHT, Techademy is poised to be a truly one of its kind platform with a mission statement that Founder N Keshava Raju signs off with "Since our inception in 1993, we have had a strong bond with the IT & IT-enabled industries and have been a preferred L&D partner for some of the tech giants today. We have an obligation to ensure that the industry does not face any negative disruption by future-proofing talent transforma-

# Own a TV, fridge or 2-wheeler? Surrender BPL cards or face action

THE Karnataka government on Monday asked people possessing Below Poverty Line (BPL) ration cards, despite being ineligible on account of owning either a two wheeeler, TV, fridge or over five acres of land, to surrender them before March 31 or face legal ac-

"There are parameters for possessing a BPL card. They should not have more than five acres of land, motorcycle, TV or fridge. Those who don't qualify on these parameters should return the cards or else we will do it," Food and Civil Supplies Minister Umesh Katti said at a press conference in Belagavi.

He said anyone earning more than Rs 1.20 lakh annually should not use BPL cards and has to return it before March 31. Congress flayed the remarks and party workers staged protests in front of various ration shops in Bengaluru. Party workers also protested in

Dharwad, Mysuru and Tumakuru, a Congress leader said.

Congress MLAUT Khader said



the issue had come up before him when he was the Food and Civil Supplies Minister in the Siddaramaiah government and he had decided not to relax the norms as many poor people would be af-

He opined that when there are

offers like interest free loans to purchase all these items, it was obvious that people would buy it. The government is 'anti-poor', he charged and asked them to focus on identifying more beneficiaries instead of 'snatching away' their BPL cards. (PTD)

## Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra account for 77 pc of 1.39 lakh active Covid cases

BENGALURU

INDIA'S total COVID-19 active cases currently stand at 1.39 lakh with 33 states and union territories having reported less than 5,000 active cases in a span of 24 hours, the Health Ministry said on Monday. Three states -- Kerala, Maharashtra and Karnataka -- cumulatively account for 77 per cent (76.5 per cent) of India's total active cases. Kerala, Maharashtra together account for 74.72 per cent of the total active cases. Tripura and Daman and Diu and Dadra and Nagar Haveli currently have only two active cases each.

The ministry said that 18 states and UTs have not reported any deaths in a span of 24 hours. These are Assam, Rajasthan, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, Manipur, Nagaland, Lakshadweep, Meghalaya, Sikkim, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Ladakh, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura and Daman and Diu and Dadra and Nagar Haveli. Also, ten states and UTs have reported no deaths in the last week. These are Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Daman and Diu and Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Ladakh, Lakshadweep, Manipur, Nagaland, Sikkim, and



Tripura. Till 8 am on February 15, the cumulative number of healthcare workers (HCW) and frontline workers (FLW) vaccinated against COVID-19 in the country has reached nearly 83 lakh. A total 82,85,295 beneficiaries have been vaccinated through 1,73,729 sessions, as per the provisional report till 8 am. These include 59,88,113 HCWs (1st dose), 24,561 HCWs (2nd dose) and 22,72,621 FLWs (1st dose). The 2nd dose of COVID-19 vaccination started on February 13 for those beneficiaries who have completed 28 days after receipt of the 1st dose. As on Day 30 of the vaccination drive (14th February, 2021), a total of 21,437 beneficiaries received vaccination across 877 sessions.

Out of which, 20,504 beneficiaries were vaccinated for 1st dose and 933 HCWs received 2nd dose of vaccine, the ministry said. The country is witnessing a progressive increase in the vaccination day by day,

it stressed. Ten states account for 69 per cent of the total beneficiaries vaccinated in India. Uttar Pradesh alone accounts for 10.4 per cent (8.58.602) beneficiaries. India's cumulative recoveries have surged to 1,06,21,220 with 9,489 patients having recuperated in a span of 24 hours. The ministry said 79.5 per cent of the new recovered cases are observed to be concentrated in six states. Kerala has reported the maximum number of single-day recoveries with 4,692 newly recovered cases (nearly 50 per cent).

As many as 1,355 people recovered in Maharashtra in the past 24 hours followed by 486 in Karnataka. Ninety fatalities have been recorded in a span of 24 hours. Six states account for 80 per cent of the daily deaths. Maharashtra saw the maximum casualties (40), accounting for nearly 44.44 per cent of the daily deaths. Kerala follows with 15 daily deaths and Tamil Nadu reported six casualties.

A total of 1,649 new daily cases have been recorded in a day. The ministry 86.4 per cent of the daily new cases are from six states. Kerala reports the highest daily new cases at 4,612. It is followed by Maharashtra with 4,092, while Tamil Nadu reported 470 new cases. (PTD)

### **INDIA-SA WOMEN'S SERIES**

## Bengaluru emerges front-runner after Kerala's withdrawal

BHARAT SHARMA BENGALURU

THE Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru has emerged as the front-runner to host next month's limited overs series between India and South Africa women's sides after Kerala Cricket Association (KCA) expressed its inability to stage the matches at the Greenfield Sports Hub Stadium in Thiruvanthapuram. KCA secretary Sreejith V Nair told PTI that they were supposed to host eight games (three ODIs and five T20Is) from the

first week of March and a 14-day training camp before that but the owners of the stadium -- IL & FS  $\,$ -- have booked the facility for an army recruitment drive for two

"IL & FS did not even inform us while booking the stadium on dates clashing with the women's series. It is a violation of our MoU with them. We have written to the BCCI expressing our inability to host the games," said Nair. KCA has an agreement with the owners to manage the ground. In the wake of KCA's withdrawal, the BCCI is looking at Bengaluru as an alternate option. "Bengaluru is a good option but again with the COVID-19 still very much around, we are dependent on government permission and the logistics too need to be worked out. We are still targeting the first week of March to start the series," a BCCI source told

However, both BCCI and Cricket South Africa are yet to announce the series though the Indian players have been intimated about it. The team has not played international cricket since the T20 World Cup final in March last year. Their only outing since that final was during the exhibition Women's T20 Challenge in Sharjah in November last. Since the series will have to be played in a bio-bubble, the team needs to assemble at least two weeks before the first game with six days reserved for quarantine. "The players have been training at their respective centres but of course they will need at least 10 days to train together before the series. They have been away from the game for a long time now," the source added.



# Tree park at Turahalli minor forest opposed by activists

AKSHEEV THAKUR BENGALURU

THE State government's proposal to set up a tree park in Turahalli minor forest has snowballed into a huge protest with citizens protesting the move. In a letter to the Additional Chief Secretary (forest, ecology and environment) the president of Project Vruksha Foundation and Bengaluru Biodiversity Board member Vijay Nishanth stated that the project is in contravention of Forest Conservation Act.

"It is disheartening to note that the State forest department itself has started the process to destroy the remaining last blocks of forests and convert it into a mega tree park at Turahalli Minor Forests. As everybody is aware, this is an abode to more than 120 species of birds, many species of small mammals, reptiles, amphibians, butterflies to bees and wasps. Also, the sightings of spotted deer and wild boar are frequent," the letter read. Nishanth apprised the additional chief secretary that heavy machinery is being used to destroy the secondary forests thereby, violating the condition in the approved Working Plan and also the Supreme Court directions.

"The Constitution has neither provided the State the ownership of the resources of the environment or forests. Their position is that of a trustee who is required to protect and improve these resources for the public at large. Moreover. the Forest Conserva-

**Govt not raising** 

fuel, LPG prices

to fill its

coffers: Suresh

HANS NEWS SERVICE

 $\mathbf{C}$ HAMARAJANAGAR

MINISTER for primary and

secondary education, Suresh

Kumar said that the inten-

tion of the government is not to raise the fuel and LPG

prices to fill its coffers. He

said that nobody speaks

when the prices of fuel and

coming gas go down. "The

Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has said that the price would come down," he

Reacting to Umesh Katti's statement on the cancella-

tion of BPL cards for those possessing television, fridge and vehicles, Kumar said it

was important to understand the basis of the statement.

"I will speak with him. Television is common even in

the poor families. It's com-

mon to have television sets

in one's home. Even the child

from the poorest family

watches DD Chandana chan-

nel to attend classes and

learn," Kumar said. Katti

said that there are parame-

ters for possessing a BPL

card which include that they

should not have more than

five acres of land, motorcy-

cle, TV or fridge. He said that

those Rs 1.20 lakh annually

should not use BPL cards

and has to return it before

March 31.



tion Act requires the state agencies to ensure forest diversion to non-forest activities is only an exception rather than the norm as before, and in any decision relating to diversion of forest to non-forest purpose," Nishanth

In a list of guidelines, signed by H S Bhagyalakshmi, Deputy Secretary to Government, Forest, Ecology & Environment Department, for the setting up of tree park it is clarified that the Tree-Park scheme is apt to protect forest land, "Even though protection of Forest land is desirable, achieving the same through the Tree-Park Scheme, in general, is not appropriate," the guideline quoted. The further quote taken from

the guidelines with respect to the size of the land says, "Forest lands, when available, are in large parcels of land. This leads to the temptation for converting entire available land as Tree-Park.It should be understood that only 10-20 Ha of the area is utilized effectively in a TreePark. Thus Tree-Park should ideally be between 5 to 15 Ha. However, if land is available inside the city, Tree-Park can be on one Ha also."

Nishanth in his letter has mentioned an excerpt of Lakshman Rao Committee report on Lakes and Tanks of Bengaluru wherein

he vouched for the creation of tree parks in disused and dried-up

"There are a number of lakes which have dried and are on the verge of getting grabbed or have been turned into garbage dump vards. These spaces could be utilized for the setting up of tree parks. There are legal implications. It is highly objectionable to create these tree parks in the last remaining vestiges of degraded forests. And, that too, by pushing people into these forests to threaten the already endangered and remaining flora and fauna in the urban setup," Nishanth said.



## 52 WEEKS OF TRAINING FOR 18 PILOTS ENDS

HANS NEWS SERVICE

BENGALURU

AIR Marshal RD Mathur, Air Officer Commandingin-Chief, Headquarters Training Command, IAF visited the Air Force Station Bidar and presided over the valedictory function of the 204 Pilots Course and 19 Weapon System Operators(WSO) course. The Air Marshal was briefed by Air Commodore Nikhilesh Gautam, Air Officer Commanding, AFS Bidar about the operational, administrative and maintenance preparedness of the base.

The visit marked the culmination of 52 weeks of training for 18 Pilots and 2 WSOs on fighter aircraft. The graduating pilots and WSOs were presented with certificates and trophies during the valedictory ceremony. Flying Officer Samarth Shukla was awarded the trophy for first in overall order of Merit in Pilots' Course.

### **TOOLKIT CASE**

## Activists demand release of Disha Ravi

NEW DELHI/BENGALURU

SOCIAL activists and environmentalists called for immediate release of climate activist Disha Ravi who was arrested in the 'toolkit' document case, asking the government to stop targeting India's youth. Ravi (22) was arrested on Saturday from Bengaluru for allegedly sharing with Greta Thunberg the toolkit related to the farmer's protest against the Centre's three new agriculture laws, police said. The Delhi Police claimed that Ravi was an editor of the "toolkit Google doc" and "key conspirator" in the document's formulation and dissemination. Activists and environmentalists have condemned the arrest.

Kavita Krishnan, the secretary of All India Progressive Women's Association, said people like Ravi are India's best hope because they are concerned about not just themselves, but the future generations. "We are not behaving like a democracy right now. If we are going to equate protest with conspiracy and organising protests as conspiracy, then you are not a democracy anymore," she said. "They should immediately drop this case based upon absolutely flimsy, ridiculous and evil pretext. A toolkit is not sedition, it is not conspiracy, toolkit is for protest," she added.

Rights activist Shabnam Hashmi also questioned the basis of Ravi's arrest, saying anybody even doing a local campaign prepares a toolkit. "We should look at the prime minister's campaign toolkit. We are crossing the limits of absurdity. We will become a laughing stock internationally," she said. Sunita Narain, head of the Delhi-based Centre for Science and Environment, also extended her support to the arrested activist. "We know #climatechange is an existential threat. World desperately needs the passion and commitment of the youth and their loud and strong voice to shake it to more action #FreeDishaRavi," she

Nine-year-old climate activist Licypriya Kangujam called it an attempt to silence the voices of young girls and women in the country. "This is an attempt to si-

#### **BJP compares Disha Ravi with terrorists**

HANS NEWS SERVICE

BENGALURU: BJP MP PC Mohan compared climate activist Disha Ravi with terrorists Burhan Wani and Ajmal Kasab. The 21-year-old activist is accused to be involved in the toolkit related to farmer's protest, shared by environmental activist Greta Thunberg. "Burhan Wani was a 21-year-old. Ajmal Kasab was a 21-year-old. Age is just a number! No one is above the law. Law will take its own course. A Crime is a crime is a crime

is a crime." Mohan said. Taking to Twitter, BJP National General Secretary, B L Santhosh said, "As the the great drama of #Toolkit unfolds many anarchists who are rallying behind #DishaRavi as 21 year old, sole bread winner, daughter of single mother, climate change activist will run for cover. WhatsApp

groups, editing option, conversations will unravel many characters.' "21 year old ...environment activist ... student .. Are these credentials for becoming a part of breaking India forces..? How does she get the access for editing tool kit ..? Why she is part of anti national WhatsApp groups

..?Many questions ..But only one answer ..21 year old ..!!" he tweeted BJP National spokesperson Nupur Sharma said, " What do gender and age have to do with crime? Former PM Raiiv Gandhi's assassin was a woman and allegedly either 17 or just 24. Nirbhaya's rapist and murderer was all of 17." Meanwhile, the state Congress leaders have criticised Ravi's arrest and called it politically motivated. Former chief minister of Karnataka Siddaramaiah said, "The arrest of Disha Ravi, a climate activist, has exposed the cracks in the Indian democracy under Narendra

How can the act of supporting farmers be charged under sedition? I strongly condemn this politically motivated act by Delhi Police." Byataranyapura MLA Krishna Byre Gowda called Ravi a patriot. "Disha Ravi is an Indian patriot. Supporting farmers or environmental activism are civic virtues. Purpose of her arrest is just to instil fear in people not to raise voice," he said.

lence the voices of young girls and women in this country. But this will not stop us from fighting for our planet and future," Kangujam tweeted. In a joint statement, more than 50 academics, artists and activists voiced support for Ravi and called her arrest "disturbing," "illegal in nature" and an "over-reaction of the State". The statement issued under the banner of 'Coalition for Environmental Justice in India' also called it an attempt to distract the public.

"It is also becoming increasingly clear that the current actions of the central government are diversionary tactics to distract people from real issues like the ever-rising cost of fuel and essential items, widespread unemployment and distress caused due to the lockdown without a plan, and the alarming state of the environment," it said.

An online petition has also

been started by the group demanding the immediate release of the climate activist. Environmentalist Vikrant Tongad said the incident will be demotivational for climate activists. "We cannot go on the merit of the case as the probe is ongoing, but the incident will be demotivational for climate activists...," he

Thunberg, a teen climate activist, had shared the "toolkit" to lend her support to the farmers agitation against the three farm reform laws. In the document, various urgent actions, including creating a Twitter storm and protesting outside Indian embassies, were listed which were needed to be taken to support the farmers protest. A graduate in Bachelor of Business Administration. Ravi is also one of the founding members of a group named 'Fridays For Future India', police added. (PTI)

## India under a state of undeclared Emergency: Kumaraswamy

REACTING on the reports over stickers being pasted at the house of donors for Ram Temple, JD(S) supremo HD Kumaraswamy compared the scenario with Germany under Nazi. He said that seeing the developments anything can happen in the country.

"It appears that those collecting donations for the construction of Ram Mandir have been separately marking the houses of those who paid money and those who did not. This is similar to what Nazis did in Germany during the regime of Hitler when lakhs of people lost their lives

I don't know where these de-



velopments, which are being witnessed in India, take us finally," Kumaraswamy tweeted. Taking a jibe at the Sangh Parivar, the former chief minister said, "Historians say that RSS took birth at the same time when Nazi Party was founded in Germany. There are concerns on what will happen if the RSS tries to implement similar policies adopted by Nazis. The fundamental rights of people are being snatched away in the country now.

Kumaraswamy felt that India is reeling under a state of undeclared emergency as one cannot express their views openly.

"A situation has been created where nobody can share their feelings. I do not know what will happen if media upholds the government's views in the coming days. In such a situation it is difficult to guess what would be the fate of the common man. This is nothing but an undeclared emergency," he stated.

## **GAGANYAAN IS JUST THE BEGINNING!**

## India plans to have sustained human presence in space

Bengaluru

INDIA plans to have a sustained human presence in space and is coming out with a policy framework and a long-term roadmap. The Department of Space (DoS) has envisaged a national effort to meet the goal of successful demonstration of human spaceflight capability and to achieve the vision of sustained human presence in space.

India's maiden human spaceflight module 'Gaganyaan' will be launched after the second unmanned mission planned in 2022-23, Union Minister Jitendra Singh said last week. In her Budget speech, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has said the first unmanned launch is slated for December this year.

The DoS has now put up for public consultation on the website of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), which comes under the former, the draft "Humans in Space Policy for India -- 2021" and guidelines and procedures for its implementation.

DoS believes that given the collaborative nature of human spaceflight due to its multi-disciplinary nature, it is essential to have a policy-framework, which not only fosters partnerships but also addresses proliferation concerns and compliance to existing policies, laws and treaties.

"Human-spaceflight programme needs to be sustained over longer periods to deliver tangible benefits," according to the draft. Hence, it is essential that the policy enables sustained presence in low earth orbit and beyond through reliable, robust, safe and affordable means by undertaking appropriate capacity building measures like collaborations, infrastructure development, facilities modernisation, technology development and human resource development.

This would also encourage new industries, create high technology jobs, enable socio-economic growth and further enhance India's stature and role in space, it was noted.

"The Humans in Space Policy aims for sustained human presence in space as an instrument for development, innovation and foster collaborations in alignment with national interests", the draft said. Technological elements such as development of human rated launch vehicle, environmental control and life support system, crew escape system, deceleration system, crew selection and training and development of human centric products shall be undertaken by the DoS, utilising expertise of ISRO, national research institutions, academia, industry and others.

A long-term road map for sustained human presence in low earth orbit (LEO) and undertaking exploration missions beyond it would be defined. "DoS/ISRO shall encourage start-ups and industries through suitable mechanism.

Mechanism shall be established to explore spinoff opportunities and their development for societal benefits", according to the draft. DoS/ISRO shall establish a comprehensive criterion for screening and selection of crew members. For initial missions, pilots from Indian Armed forces will be inducted as crew members, it was stated.



## **SRK's production 'Darlings',** starring Alia Bhatt, to go on floors

THE Shah Rukh Khan production Darlings, starring Alia Bhatt, is set to go on floors soon. The makers plan to release the film later this year, it was revealed on Monday. An official announcement on the project will be made soon.

Darlings is pitched as a quirky story about a mother-daughter duo. While Alia plays the daughter, actress Shefali Shah is cast as the mother. Other actors on board are Vijay Varma and Roshan Mathew.

"The film is set in Mumbai against the backdrop of a middleclass family and traces the lives of two women, as they find courage and love in exceptional circumstances. In fact, the movie is gearing up for a release this year itself. The pre-production work is going on full swing, and the team is all ready to take it on floors very soon in Mumbai," a source reveals.

The film, directed by Jasmeet K. Reen, will be officially announced soon. "An official announcement is expected this week and, according to the source, Darlings will go on the floors as early as the first



ter of 2021," says the source.

This is the second time Alia and Shah Rukh have collaborated. They worked together in Gauri Shinde's 2016 film Dear Zindagi, though as co-stars.

Besides Darlings, Shah Rukh is also backing Love Hostel featuring Bobby Deol, Vikrant Massey and Sanya Malhotra. The film is all set go on floors. He also produces Bob Abhishek Biswas starring Bachchan. The project is in postproduction stage and gearing up for a Summer 2021 opening.

SRK is also currently busy shooting for his next starrer, Pathan. The film will mark his return to screen for the first time since his 2018 release Zero. (IANS)

### 1962: THE WAR IN THE HILLS

## When 125 Indian soldiers fought a 3,000-strong Chinese army

THE upcoming war drama web series 1962: The War ▲ In The Hills offers a glimpse into the lives of the soldiers who stood rock solid against Chinese troops dedicating their lives for the security of the nation. A trailer of the 10-episode series was launched on Mon-

Talking about the series, director Mahesh Manjrekar shared: "1962: The War In The Hills is the result of a life-long dream of bringing alive a part of history that has been long forgotten. The journey of these 125 soldiers, while inspired by true events, is a story that needed to be told."

"This project has been monumental in every sense -from shooting in real locations, to recreating the 1962 era through setups, costumes and more. But this story is not limited only to the battleground, it takes us beyond into the lives of these soldiers as they grapple with love, longing and loss," the filmmaker added.

The series casts Abhay Deol as Major Suraj Singh, the charismatic leader of a small battalion called C Company. "To me, it feels like a personal responsibility to deliver the strength of Major Suraj Singh, to showcase his brave exterior as he leads his troop in a battle to the last stand, while also dealing with life as a father and husband. It's an extraordinary story about courage that is relatable to everyone, no matter which community or culture they belong to," said Deol.

The series is based on the story of 125 Indian soldiers who fought against 3,000 Chinese in a historic battle, and it also features an ensemble cast including Akash Thosar, Sumeet Vyas, Rohan Gandotra, Annup Soni, Meiyang Chang, Mahie Gill, Rochelle Rao and Hemal Ingle in key roles.

The Mahesh Manjrekar directorial has been written



by Charudutt Acharya. 1962: The War in the Hills will stream on Disney + Hotstar VIP and Disney + Hotstar Premium from February 26. GANS

## 'Roohi' in theatres on March 11

A CTORS Rajkummar Rao and Janhvi Kapoor starrer hor-ror comedy Roohi is set for a theatrical release on

Rajkummar posted the motion poster for the film on Instagram on Monday. He captioned it: "Dulhan ki tarah sajenge Theatres. Magar Dulha le jaegi #Roohi! Iss Bhootiya Shaadi mein aapka swagat hai!#MagicOfCinemaReturns; movie releases 11th March.

Janhvi shared the same motion poster and wrote: "Iss Bhootiya Shaadi mein aapka swagat hai!#MagicOfCinemaReturns; movie releases 11th March."

The film also features actor Varun Sharma, who wrote: 'Saal ki sabse bhootiya wedding ke liye theatres bhi hain ready! #MagicOfCinemaReturns; Movie releases 11th March. #Roohi." The film is directed by debutant Hardik Mehta, and produced by Dinesh Vijan and Mrighdeep Singh Lamba. It is Rajkummar's third collaboration with



#### YASHIKA MATHUR

ACTOR Suniel Shetty is aware about the continuous discussion around star kids, their lifestyles and involvement of drugs in the film industry. While he is confident that his children actor Athiya Shetty and son Ahan are safe, he does worry about the

So, no judgement," shares the

While daughter Athiva is already three films old in the Hindi film industry, Ahan will soon make his Bollywood debut in the Hindi remake of Telugu blockbuster "RX 100".

"I think my image will be affected by him because he is so damn good. Even if he does action, people will say, 'how come the father was not so good.? Father was average but the son is superb.' He is far more sincere. He has a golden heart," claims

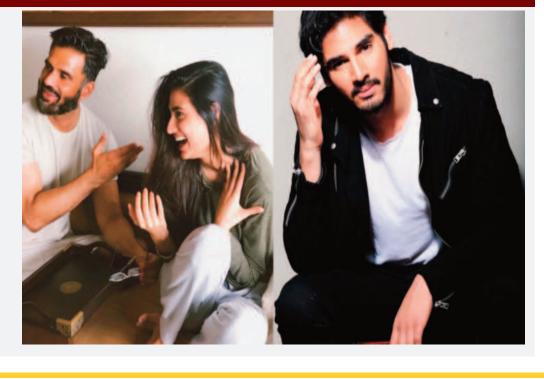
Ahan was recently spotted playing cricket in Mumbai with his friends. Suniel says, his son is an outdoor person. "He doesn't know anything other than outdoors and sports. He is coming to the close of his film. He is happy, excited. He is not that way. He is too simple, the cameramen are his friends. He plays his cricket, his football, he likes to travel, he is a deep sea diver. He is an adventure." says Suniel, who was recently in town at an event of Zeco's O2Cure. (IANS)

## Suniel Shetty: I worry for my kids in the industry in general

wrong perception people have around 'star kids.

"I don't worry for my kids," he tells IANS, adding: "(I am) worried about my kids in the industry in general. Every industry kid is called a 'druggie'. No, we are not, we are good people. We are socially placed and we do our CSR and I am very vocal about it. What I support is a clean, good, friendly environ-

The actor also believes in the concept of live and let live. "Failure has never come my way. I am Suniel Shetty even after five flops. You cannot tell me how to walk and talk. You can say about me, 'he is a flop actor' but where are you in life? Who are you to question? These are the questions I would ask if you get personal. Otherwise you are living your life and I am living my life.



### 'Bollywood a **huge inspiration** for Nigerian film industry'

Writer-director Hamisha Daryani Ahuja's film Namaste Wahala is a love story between an Indian man and a Nigerian woman, and she says Bollywood has had a strong impact on Nollywood, or the Nigerian film industry.

"Nigerians have grown up watching and loving Bollywood films. Names like Amitabh Bachchan, Hema Malini and Shah Rukh Khan are household names in many parts. Many of my Nigerian friends have watched Hindi movies growing up and can even quote famous Hindi lines. Nollywood is the secondlargest film industry in the world in terms of output, second only to Bollywood. So Bollywood serves as a huge inspiration for us and I can't wait to see how this new genre enfolds," said

Namaste Wahala highlights the differences as well as colorful similarities between Indian and Nigerian cultures. The film stars Indian actor Ruslaan Mumtaz with Nigerian actress Ini Dima-Okojie. The film dropped on Netflix on Valentine's Day. (IANS)

## 70% OTT users say threats to artistes, directors worrying

BIGFLIX

CEVENTY per cent OTT users do not ap-Prove of threats of intimidation, violence and death issued to artists, directors and producers of movies and shows. As per a Local Circles survey, there have been a spate of cases of threats of intimidation, violence and death issued to artists, directors and producers of movies and shows.

Recently, one of the artists, Richa Chadha received violence and death threat for allegedly stereotyping Dalits in the movie, "Madam Chief Minister". When OTT users were asked that "Recently threats of intimidation, violence and death have been issued against artists, directors and producers of OTT content. As a citizen of India and consumer of OTT content, does this worry you?" The majority of 58 per cent OTT users said "Yes, quite a bit", and 15 per cent said "Yes, somewhat". Further breaking down the poll, 12 per cent users said "No, doesn't affect me much", while 15 per cent said "Not at all", and 3 per cent couldn't say.

Many of the members who participated in the discussion on the subject said that such threats should have no place in the society and if they are not acted upon sternly and swiftly by law enforcement agencies, they will only increase over time. According to many OTT users, the concern or grievance of an individual or a group of individuals or an organisation must be raised through appropriate pre-defined Government channels, LocalCircles said.

OTT platforms in 2020 have been a soughtafter source of entertainment for many as people stayed home and multiplexes and cinemas stayed closed for most of the year. The consumers use OTT platforms for the choice, convenience and high-quality content and amongst OTT users, majority have subscription to two or more platforms. However, as the industry evolves and common standards are created, OTT users demand better definition and display of the minimum age requirement and rating certification so they can make informed choices of what they want to watch. Also, consumers are keen that the code of

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regulation whatever approved by the Government is shared with them and made easily accessible on the platforms. Finally, majority of the Indian OTT users are concerned about the various violence and death threats being issued to artists, directors and producers and want that effective grievance channels must be created to address concerns of individuals or groups but such threats should not be tolerated and stern and swift action must be taken by law enforcement agencies against those issuing such threats

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As people observed social distancing and stayed home amid the COVID-19 outbreak, the on-demand over-the-top (OTT) video streaming platforms for many became a primary source of entertainment. As more users were logging on to OTTs, many film and series producers also chose these platforms for launch of their series and films. International OTT players, mainly Netflix and Amazon's Prime Video together released approximately 30 original titles while Indian OTT players like Hotstar, Zee5, Sony Liv, MX Player also released many titles and provided entertainment to people on their fingertips.

With the rise of OTT's popularity in India, there has also been many consumer discussions on LocalCircles in the last 12 months enabling consumers to share both the pros and cons of OTT platforms. The pros largely have centered around giving consumers increased content choices as compared to pre-OTT and the convenience to watch content when they want to watch. Consumers concerns on the other hand have been on rating information display by some platforms, age gating and on content that can hurt the sentiments of some communities.

Amid these developments, LocalCircles conducted its OTT survey 2021 to better understand users' pulse on how they used OTT in 2020, what working well along with any concerns. The survey received over 50,000 responses from OTT users located in 311 districts of India.

The first question asked consumers about their primary source of video-based entertainment in 2020, 46 per cent said "television channels via DTH, cable or app)", 41 per cent said "OTT platforms such as Youtube, Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hotstar", and 8 per cent said "social media platforms such as Tiktok, Instagram, Whatsapp". There were also 3 per cent who said "videos downloaded from the Internet", and 2 per cent said "others". Interestingly, there weren't any vote casted for DVDs and VCDs, which suggests that the once popular medium of entertainment has vanished from the modern living room.

There are currently more than 40 OTT video streaming platforms in India. KPMG estimates that OTT revenue climbed 26 per cent and subscriptions, either ad-based or paid, surged 47 per cent, with close to 325 million Indians today streaming the favorite OTTs.

To better understand the number of platforms, OTT users are typically subscribed to, LocalCircles asked the question and in response, 30 per cent said four or more, 20 per cent said three, 26 per cent said two, 18 per cent said one. There were only 6 per cent of 7,834 OTT users who said that they don't have not subscribed with any OTT platforms currently but they take them on an as needed basis. Some platforms offer trial subscriptions while some also offer subscription for a single show or movie.

The next question tried to understand the primary reasons for consumers to use OTT platforms. The majority of 50 per cent said "choice and convenience", while 31 per cent said "high-quality content". Further breaking down the poll, 10 per cent of consumers said "lower cost than other entertainment channels", and 9 per cent voted for other rea-

The Government of India late last year brought OTT video streaming platforms under the ambit of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Recently 17 OTT players have adopted a self-regulation code that was introduced in September. These providers include Amazon Prime Video, Netflix, Disney-Hotstar, SonyLiv, MX Player, Jio Cinema, Eros Now, Viacom (Voot), Alt Balaji, Arre, HoiChoi, Hungama, Shemaroo, Discovery Plus, Aha and Lionsgate Play.

Consumers however currently seem to have little understanding of the OTT code of regulation and when asked if they would like more information about the OTT code of conduct, majority of them i.e. 78 per cent said "Yes," 14 per cent said "No", and 8 per cent couldn't say. OTT platforms must enable this on and off platforms such that the common OTT user knows what to expect and what is a deviation from the code. (IANS)

## TRS believes in deeds, not in words: Minister Vemula

HANS NEWS SERVICE NIZAMABAD

R&B and Legislative Affairs Minister Vemula Prashanth Reddy said the TRS government and Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao don't believe in words but in deeds and fulfil his promises to the people.

On Monday, he inaugurated several development projects undertaken with Rs 1 crore in Balkonda constituency and Bheemgal Municipality of Nizamabad district. Speaking on the occasion, Minister Prashanth Reddy said that the people of Bheemgal believed in TRS and elected TRS candidates in all the 12 wards in the municipality, hence they have the responsibility to fulfill the promises given to them.

He assured of sanctioning 100-bed hospital soon, a promise given during Assembly elections. Stating that politics means serving people, he said that their politics should be to improve villages and benefit farmers. Informing that there are still three more years before the next elections, he said one should strive to develop beyond parties and without criticising others.

Later, the Minister participated in the official Jayanti function of Sevalal



R&B and Legislative Affairs Minister Vemula Prashanth Reddy garlanding Telangana Thalli idol in Balkonda on Monday

#### FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE

## Agri Minister buoyed by potato yield in own farm

HANS NEWS SERVICE

HYDERABAD

HOW about practising before preaching? Exactly this is what the Agriculture Minister, S Niranjan Reddy, seems to be following. The Minister who was irked with the hike in potato prices in recent times had decided to encourage farmers in State cultivate potatoes. But before approaching the farmers, the Minister first wanted to cultivate potatoes in his own farm in Wanaparthy on experimental basis. Soon, he planted potato crop in one-fourth of an acre and ended up gaining reasonably good harvest.

The jubilant Minister is now planning to approach farmers and share his experience backed with agriculture department's feedback, which had said that the land and climate in Telangana were as good as other States where potatoes are being cultivated.

As the potatoes have consistent demand all-round the year, the fluctuation in prices would be minimal and help farmers gain profits, the Minister said,

• Niranjan Reddy gets satisfying yield from one-fourth of acre

 Wants to encourage **Telangana farmers** take up cultivation of potatoes which has demand all-round the year



adding that on an average a farmer can get a maximum yield of 100 to 120 quintals per acre. "When it comes to prices, the rate per quintal in the market would be around Rs 1,000 to Rs 1,200. Sometimes, it might even touch Rs 2,000. The farmers will gain revenues of Rs 1 lakh per acre after deducting the investment," he said.

Niranjan Reddy said that potatoes were one of the vegetables with the highest consumption rate. But, the cultivation of the crop is not preferred in southern States for reasons unknown. Along with Telangana, all the southern States have to heavily depend on potato supplies from north and this demand can be addressed if farmers here take up potato cultivation, he opined.

Investment to cultivate potatoes in an acre comes to about Rs 45,000 and the crop comes to harvest in 85 to 90 days after the plantation. But, if the time frame goes beyond 90 days, then the yields would be more, the Agriculture Minister said, hoping that farmers in the State take up potato cultivation.

### Withdraw farm laws, demands Rythu Garjana

HANS NEWS SERVICE Кнаммам

RYTHU Garjana demanded the Union government to withdraw farm laws, which are against the farmers and to abolish amendment in power bill.

All India Kisan Mazdoor Sangam general secretary Dr Ashish Mittal, Kecchala Ranga Reddy, State Kisan Mazdoor Sangam general secretary V Venkata Ramaiah, Prof Kodandaram and CPI (ML) New Democracy State joint secretary Potu Ranga Rao alleged that the Union government was trying to suppress farmers' struggle in New Delhi. They faulted the Centre's stringent action against farmers who are fighting for their justified demands at national capital.

The leaders also found fault

with Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao for not responding to the farmers' struggle and not commenting against the Central government. They called upon intellectuals and people to support farmers' fight against agriculture bills and to become aware that both Central and State governments are not supporting farmers. They gave a call to farmers across the country to come forward to fight against illegal laws brought by the Union government. Coming to local issues, they demanded distribution of pattas to podu cultivators and stop attacking podu cultivators. They also demanded issuance of new ration cards; pension to people, who crossed 57 years; allotment of house sites; and sanctioning of Rs 5 lakh to eligible poor.

Earlier a massive rally was

taken out in the town.



Leaders of CPI (ML) and All India Kisan Mazdoor Sangam taking out a rally in Khammam town on Monday

### **Suspecting** fidelity, man kills wife

HANS NEWS SERVICE MAHABUBABAD

A man stabbed his wife to death at Namalapadu forest area under Bayyaram mandal in Mahabubabad district on Monday. The victim has been identified as Saritha (25) of Penugonda village under Kesamudram mandal

According to police, accused A Naresh, a driver working in Mahabubabad, got married to Saritha some four years ago and used to beat his wife suspecting her fidelity. As a result, Saritha along with her children has been staying with her parents at Jayyaram village of Chinnagudur for some time.



### Telangana Nayara Petroleum Dealers' Association formed

HANS NEWS SERVICE

HYDERABAD

TELANGANA Nayara Petroleum Dealers' Association (Regd No. 2136/2018) is an association of dealers/franchise of Nayara Energy Ltd (Formerly Essar Oil Ltd). Dealers are involved in retail

trade of petroleum products (petrol/diesel/ lubricants, etc) with brand of Nayara/Essar petrol pumps. The Association was formed to facilitate, act as catalysts to achieve the aims, goals of the entire family of Nayara Energy Ltd., to reinforce core values of EXCEL (Energetic Xtraordi-

## nary Courageous Ethical Lead). 6 hurt in centring collapse

HANS NEWS SERVICE MAHABUBABAD

had a narrow escape when the centring for the construction of the building entrance of the new Integrated Collectorate Complex collapsed in Mahabubabad on Monday. However, the mishap left six workers, who were fixing the centring, with injuries. District Collector VP Gautham inspected the construction site and



elicited information about the incident from the Roads & Buildings (R&B) Department.

Speaking to reporters, Gautham said that six workers sustained minor injuries and they

are being treated at the Government Area Hospital. According to preliminary information, centring collapsed as iron rods bent. The Collector directed the R&B officials to submit a detailed report on the incident. Municipal Chairman P Rammohan Reddy also visited the construction site. Mahabubabad Town Inspector J Venkataratnam said that they have not received any complaint from the district administration about the mishap.

## BJP to fly in party bigwigs for Nagarjunasagar bypoll

HANS NEWS SERVICE HYDERABAD

THE Bharatiya Janata Party, which had shocked the ruling Telangana Rashtra Samithi with its performance in Dubbaka bypoll and in Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation elections, has shifted its focus to Nagarjunasagar and planning to hold huge public meeting by February end by

inviting its national leaders. The party, which had gone aggressive after Dubbaka bypoll, is now targeting the Sagar constituency where it has little presence. However, the party leaders are hopeful of repeating Dubbaka and GHMC victory in the forthcoming bypoll to Sagar constituency.

While the party had already initiated the exercise to gain foothold in the district, it had also recently taken up protest on tribal issues, including tribal lands in Gurrampodu which had led to a tense situation with police even lathicharging the protestors. The tribals here make up 40 per cent of the electorate and are crucial in deciding the fate of

candidates. According to State BJP president Bandi Sanjay, the party would soon have a huge

- Plans to hold huge public meeting by February end
- Despite dismal presence, party hopeful of winning the seat

public meeting, possibly by February end, in Nagarjunasagar Assembly constituency. The party would be bringing in senior leaders, including Union Ministers from New Delhi to campaign, as it did for Dubbaka and GHMC

Sanjay said that the party would win the Sagar bypoll along with two council seats going for polls in March, adding that all key leaders would campaign for the party candidates. Meanwhile, the party has decided to appoint one in-charge for every 50 voters who would be in constant touch with them and ensure they vote for the saffron party.

## Nine kids from two Telugu States selected for Arithmetic Genius -2020

HANS NEWS SERVICE HYDERABAD

NINE kids from the two Telugu States got qualified for SIP Arithmetic Genius, All India Online Contest 2020 to be held on February 21. These kids between the age groups seven and nine will represent Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

These nine kids competed with as many as 5,000 kids at Regional Level and then got qualified after a rigorous four-month selection process. Out of the 5,000 participants 1,000 students were shortlisted. From these 1,000 students, the above nine got selected to represent both the Telugu States at National Level informed Uma Swaminathan, Regional Head of SIP Academy in, an official release.

These 9 kids include Karri Kranthi Manaswi of Niraj Public School, Begumpet; T. Aasritha of Dev Public School, Safilguda and Sarayu Erukulla of Phoenix Greens International School Kokapet, Chirag Mohanty - St Michaels School, Marredpally; Anvitha Chapa - Johnson Grammar School Mallapur; D. Saurav - Johnson Grammar School, LB Nagar; G. Satya Hasini - Bharathi Vidya Bhavan, Tirupati; Mandala Nutan



Karri Kranthi Manaswi, T Ashritha, Sarayu Erukulla, Anvitha, Chirag, Saurav, Akshitha, Bhargav, Satya Hasini

Bhargav - Amrita Vidyalayam,, Mahendra Hills, Secunderabad; K. Akshitha - The Secunderabad Pub-

lic School, Malkajgiri. Out of these 9 kids, 3 kids - Karri Kranthi Manaswi of Niraj Public

School, Begumpet; T. Aasritha of Dev Public School, Safilguda and Sarayu Erukulla of Phoenix Greens International School had emerged as Telugu States' Champions. SIP Arithmetic Genius, All India



Online Contest 2020 was organised by SIP Academy across the country. A total of 27,000 students competed in this competition from across India. Out of which 9 winners from each State will compete at the Nationals. More than 100 students will vie for the national honours at the 5th Season of SIP Arithmetic Genius, All India Online Contest 2020.

Amid the pandemic, this edition was organised online competition for the first time in the past four years. The objective of this year's online contest is to engage home struck students more meaningfully and help them improve arithmetic skills, Arithmetic skills, Uma Swaminathan, Regional Head of SIP Academy said.

## 3 of a family die as their car plunges into SRSP canal

HANS NEWS SERVICE

**J**AGTIAL

EVEN before people forgot the incident of car falling in a canal in Warangal district, same kind of mishap took place on Monday morning in Medipally mandal of Jagtial district. Three members of a family were killed after the car they were travelling plunged into SRSP canal and one escaped narrowly.

fied as Katkuri Amarendar Rao, his wife Sirisha and daughter Shreya. Rao's son Jayanth managed to escape from the water.

Amarendar Rao, an advocate of Jagtial town, along with his family was going to his native place Joginipally village to attend temple festival. When the car reached Medipally, Jayanth, who was driving the car, lost control of the wheel and plunged into the canal.

Jayanth escaped from car by opening the door but the remaining three got stuck in the car and died. Police rushed to the spot and removed the car from the canal with the help of crane and sent the bodies to Jagtial Government Hospital for postmortem. It's learnt that Amarendar was a close relative of MLA Sanjay Kumar. It's also learnt that his daughter Shreya's engagement was conducted recently.



The car that fell into SRSP canal in Medipally mandal on Monday morning

### Need to spread equitable distribution of vaccinations

WHO and partners have learnt from the mis-steps in response to the 2009 H1N1 influenza pandemic1 and established the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator to promote equitable access to vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics. Most low-income and middle-income countries (LMICs) face difficulties in accessing and delivering vaccines and therapeutics for COVID-19 to their populations. Multinational agencies, financial institutions, and wealthier countries should consider measures that could provide relief to indebted LMICs.

The World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and others need to lead an international initiative to mobilise support for LMICs in need. Many LMICs do not have an established platform for vaccinating their adult populations. Although it is feasible to deliver COVID-19 vaccines to health-care and other frontline essential workers, in some LMICs it will be difficult to effectively reach and vaccinate with two doses all elderly populations and individuals with co-morbidities, given insufficient mechanisms to identify

The ultracold chain requirements of mRNA

COVID-19 vaccines are likely to be an insurmountable hurdle. The infrastructure for vaccination in many LMICs is already inadequate, as shown by the 19.7 million under-vaccinated infants globally. Strengthening the capacity of LMICs to do clinical trials and promoting LMIC participation in research are crucial. Tracking the safety and effectiveness of different COVID-19 vaccines over time in various populations and settings will necessitate improvements in pharmacovigilance.

Regulatory authorities in many LMICs need to be strengthened and could benefit from a programme of national and international support, as well as regional cooperation and reliance mechanisms. As part of internationally coordinated actions, Covid-19 technologies should be transferred to LMIC-based manufacturers, accompanied by regulatory guidance. Efforts to boost local manufacturing capacity in LMICs will contribute to equity, global solidarity and global health security. India and South Africa have called for the suspension of intellectual property rights related to Covid-19 vaccines to improve access for LMICs, a move now supported by many other countries, but opposed by the pharmaceutical industry, which cites the disincentive to innovation.

There are further challenges. Governments in LMICs with strong private health sectors, as those in high-income countries, will need to manage the inherent potential for inequity, whereby the rich could access Covid-19 vaccines before individuals with less access to private care who may be at increased risk of severe disease and death, such as older people and those with comorbidities. LMICs affected by war, civil conflict, economic crises, or natural disasters, or with large refugee populations or populations with special needs or vulnerabilities need additional support for vaccines and vaccination under extremely difficult operational conditions.

Re-examining global governance structures, including the UN and its Security Council, is much needed so that the voices and interests of billions of people in LMICs are better represented and recognised. Global support to multilateral institutions is essential to sustain their support to LMICs to facilitate vaccinations globally. The Covid-19 pandemic shows that no nation can stand alone. We are all part of a common humanity that requires us to respect our diverse experiences, cultures, and countries and forge partnerships that better serve the interests of all, as the health experts world over aver.

## **Upholding 'secrecy' in Lok Pal selection**



and general ministration demands the transparency about any selection or recruitment for public office. The Department of Personnel and Training rules and Office Memo-

randa also guide the CPIOs to place entire record of recruitments and promotions and transfers in the public domain on their own.

Lok Pal is an anti-corruption institution which is supposed to decide the legal action on complaints of abuse of authority for gain in a transparent manner. Though law was passed in 2013, the NDA Government could not appoint the Lok Pal and Lok Ayuktas since 2014 till recently. The high-level committee headed by the Prime Minister will appoint Lok Pal and others, which is expected to maintain the minutes of meetings that has to be in public domain as per law and rules.

But, according to CIC order dated January 28, the CPIO of DoPT has denied the minutes of the selection process of Lok Pal. Though CPIO did not invoke any 'exception', but his denial was upheld by CIC as valid. The CIC wrongly quotes the two Supreme Court judgements and gives order exactly opposite to SC orders.

The CIC cited SC order 15th Feb 2019 in Anjali Bharadwaj v Union of India which directed disclosure of all details of appointment of Information Commissioners which was complied with by DoPT. But it denied sharing the minutes of Lok Pal appointment which was made by almost similar Selection Committee.

Another case cited is: Common Cause A Registered Society vs. Ajay Mittal[Contempt PET.(C) No. 714/2018 in W.P.(C) No. 245/2014] relating to the constitution of the Lok pal, wherein the SC said: "...So far as the prayer for putting the names recommended by the Search Committee in the public domain is concerned, we have considered the provisions of Section 4(4) of the Act and it is our considered view that no direction from the Court should be issued in this regard. Rather the matter should be left for a just determination by the Selection Committee as and when the meeting of the Committee is convened.'

A simple reading of Section 8(1)(b)would have been sufficient to know that disclosure of minutes was not prohibited by SC. Section 8(1)(b) says: information which has been expressly forbidden to be published by any court of law or tribunal or the disclosure of which may constitute contempt of court". This decision shows that Selection Committee if believes in

transparency should decide to disclose. There is no prohibition imposed by SC.

Appellant Anjali said the contempt petition was filed when despite the court's 2017 ruling, the Centre failed to appoint a chairperson and members of the Lokpal. She pointed out that Section 4(4) of the Lok pal Act which states that the Selection Committee shall regulate its own procedure in a transparent manner for selecting the Chairperson and Members of the Lok pal.

 $The \, Central \, Information \, Commission$ has affixed its seal to non-disclosure of minutes of the anti-corruption body allowing secrecy in appointment process much against the letter and spirit of Right to Information Act and good governance

Thus, selection process of Lok Pal is the 'secret' according to latest order of the CIC, most unfortunate. Secrecy breeds corruption. There are two tragedies: Lok Pal, which is expected to introduce transparency in all governance wings fights against transparency, the DoPT and CIC Saroj Punhani supports

Nowhere the order of CIC does support its conclusion that information sought 'confidential' 'secret' and 'fiduciary' in nature. One can find collegium conclusions in Supreme Court but not details of appointment of Lok Pal either from Lok Pal or DoPT. The CIC has simply listed the CPIO's illegal and illogical contentions and approved at the end, without giving any justification.

Anjali Bharadwaj has filed RTI application in November 2018 with the Department of Personnel and Training, seeking records related to the process of selection of the chairperson and members of the Lok pal.

#### Authorship: A new concept

The DoPT refused to provide a copy of the minutes of the meetings of the Selection Committee claiming the authorship of such documents which include 3-5 high level dignitaries does not vest in the Department of Personnel and Training and same have been shared as secret document. This raises fundamental question - who is the author of file of selection committee? It is neither poetry nor a story for someone to author it. Posts are advertised, applications are submitted, and selection committee conducts the process. None is author or owner of a file. Any file is built on application and ends with decision. Everyone who adds a comment is a contributor and each owns it. RTI recognizes holding the file not owning. And the DoPT which is nodal agency to implement RTI does not know it. Civil servants feel they are subordinate to DoPT and do not displease the boss.

The CIC has no jurisdiction or legal



When Cabinet decisions are disclosable along with entire material after decision was taken, how can any other body be considered as 'high level authority'? Is that committee higher in level than the Cabinet? How the 'level' of authority prevents the disclosability? The CIC should have answered these questions

provision to examine the authorship of 'file' and deny it without referring to any clause of exception. The CIC's judgment is a shock to RTI activists as it laid down a new precedent of rejecting the appeal though no exception is attracted.

#### **Sealed cover: Sealing transparency**

The CPIO thought that confidentiality of the said record can be gauged by the fact that the averred minutes of the Selection Committee were received in a sealed cover by the DoPT and that it had been presented before the Supreme Court too in a sealed cover. The CIC did not explain who and why the minutes was categorised as 'secret' and on what grounds? Is it CIC's new concept that sealing the cover itself is 'secrecy' and every post and courier that goes in sealed cover, should never be opened?

The Commissioner understood that the information belonged to Lok Pal and thus it was 'third' party information with DoPT, which was given in sealed cover. Perhaps CIC assumes that anything given in sealed cover is 'top secret'. It is a clear misuse of third-party provision as 'exception' though there are several judicial pronouncements that information could be denied only under Sections 8 and 9 of

It also exposed the CPIO's knowledge

of RTI, who thinks that consent of third party is needed. If that is so, why did he not consult Lok Pal, who might have consented for disclosure. It is pathetic that CPIO and first appellate authority of DoPT thinks that because third party is 'higher level" committee, the information should be totally 'secret'. The CIC did not bother to ask CPIO why he did not pursue the process of consulting third party. From CPIO of DoPT to CIC, an independent authority, they go by their own sense of transparency ignoring the RTI Act completely.

When cabinet decisions are disclosable along with entire material after decision was taken, how can any other body be considered as 'high level authority'? Is that committee higher in level than the cabinet? How the 'level' of authority prevents the disclosability? The CIC should have answered these questions.

Another wonderful idea of CPIO of DoPT floated was that minutes of a decision-making committee 'is holding it in fiduciary in nature' and hence should be denied. The CIC did not find it unreasonable and did not give any reasons.

The Government was never ready to constitute the Lok pal, though Act was passed in 2013. Even after the SC direction, the process did not begin. Only after contempt petition was pressed, the Selection Committee met. The Committee consists of the Prime Minister (Chairperson), Speaker of the House of the People, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, the Chief Justice of India, or a Judge of the Supreme Court nominated by CJI and an eminent jurist, as recommended by the Chairperson and other members. As none was recognised as the Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha after the 2014 elections, Committee met without the LoP and selected the Chair and other members of Lok Pal in 2019. The CIC, sadly, agreed with DoPT and Lok Pal in denying the information without reasoned application of any exception.

(The writer is Professor of Law, Bennett University and former Central Information Commissioner)

## Design education for new millennials

PROF A BALASUBRAMANIAM



ESIGN education is changing," says the Design Guru Don Norman, Professor Emeritus, UC San Diego, and author of the famous book, 'Design of everyday things'. He further calls for a new paradigm in design education: "Design education has to move away from schools of art and architecture and move into the schools of science and engi-

neering. We need new kinds of designers, people who can work across disciplines, who understand human beings, business, and technology and the appropriate means of validating claims."

The reason for this simple. Design itself is changing and evolving: from a predominantly form-giving activity to a strategic problem-solving one. Design thinking is the new mantra for innovation. Technology institutes and Management firms are seen to invest more and more in Design. Millennials are advised to understand the changing scenario of the profession, as they embark on the journey for a career in Design.

#### Design education is responsible

Students of Design must understand that the profession needs to be responsible. From a merely form giving activity that was creating aesthetically interesting products, the profession of Product Design is now contributing to sustainable living by innovating with materials, technology and processes. Products that end up in landfills are frowned upon. There is also this growing concern for planet-friendly products as opposed to user-friendly products that pollute the earth. Curriculums are therefore being transformed to include sustainable production processes, eco-friendly materials and design projects focus more on helping humankind than create wasteful products.

#### Design education gets generic

There was a time when specialisations were the norm. Industrial Designers went on to specialise in Product Design, which progressed into Interior Product Design, and further into Bathroom Designers! Such specialisations are not working any more. Customers are happy to deal with Interdisciplinary designers who are generalists who can tackle a plethora of problems straddling different specialisations. Progressive Universities like JKLU have included Interdisciplinary Design programmes to cater to this requirement.

#### Design education is getting digital

The pen has been sacrificed for the stylus. The paper for screens. Designers have gone completely digital. There is therefore, this need for an urgent revamping of the course contents to make digital learning, online classes and bite-sized inputs. Take for instance, a discipline like Communication Design. All new programmes have extensive emphasis on the digital way of learning.

#### Design education is about co-creation

Designers used to work in silos, developing new products and patenting their innovations. There is, however, a new breed of designers who are open and develop products that include all the stake holders of the project. Co-creation is gaining ground and copy-left is the new normal. Design schools are now getting the millennials to collaborate on digital platforms, working across time-zones and developing solutions collectively for the problems of the world.

#### Design education is multi-disciplinary

Designers who learn in special institutes dedicated to design, miss out a multi-disciplinary approach to problem solving. Inputs in sociology, psychology, finance and management make design professionals more ready for solving real-life problems. Critical thinking and systemic thinking processes are taught in new institutes of Design for making them develop into a well-rounded professional.

#### JKLU for future-ready education

The future of design is all pervading. It has to cater to all sectors of the economy. The divisions and specialisations are blurring. The world is shrinking and one can no more afford to work in silos.

Designers will be expected to take on leadership roles and have to become more disruptive and innovative, responsible and inclusive. They should learn to cultivate empathy to cater to the last individual. Sustainability will become the mantra for the future of design. Imagination will become paramount and creativity will be the key to solving world's problems.

The Institute of Design JKLU is ready for the challenge. New curriculums are embedded with Communication and Critical thinking classes. Interdisciplinary Design is an option for the generalist designer. Communication Design programme is predominantly digital. Co-creation is the norm, as students from Technology, Management and Design get together for classes and projects. We are poised to bring about a new paradigm in design education. One that is contemporary and relevant for the new millennials.  $\,$ 

(The author is with JK Lakshmipat University, Jaipur)

### Drains in Indore being turned into playgrounds for residents

SUNDEEP POURANIK



THIS Madhya Pradesh city, ■ which has been awarded the title of the country's cleanest city four times, is now converting open drains filled with garbage into playgrounds where cricket and football matches are being played.

The process from waste collection to its disposal has been given a new dimension in In-

dore by creating a new drainage model.

The form of the drains flowing in Indore is being transformed through the Sirpur Dhar Road to the Aam wali Pulia and the meeting of drains at Chandan Nagar.

Residents and large outfalls have been identified by the municipal corporation under the river-drain outfall taping work and after trapping these by laying down a sewerage line, the sewerage falling into the primary sewerage line of the city was stopped, causing the sewage flowing in the drains to now be transferred directly to the Sewage Treatment Plant. The corporation is doing plantation work on a large scale to beautify and protect the environment on both sides of the drain as well as taping it. Due to these efforts made by the Corporation for the Kanh-Saraswati river and purification of drains, the drain at Chandan Nagar has completely dried up.

A similar process has been followed from Shiv Nagar to Kailash Chaudhary Park Nagar, Virat Nagar, Udyog Nagar, Khatipura and Azad Nagar which meets the drain in the Kanh river. This drain has also dried up and at a particular place a football match was played after which a cricket match was also played there.

Municipal Commissioner Pratibha Pal said Indore is the first city where drain and sewerage water used to flow once, but now the entire drain has dried up as a result of sewer taping done under the 'River-Drainage Sanitation Campaign'. Where it was not possible to stand near these drains due to the stench and filth, a 'Nullah cricket match' was organized in the past few days.

Superintendent Engineer Mahesh Sharma and Gopal Jagtap of Institution 'Basics' said 'Hamara Nullah, Hamara Abhiyan' was started under which the drains are drying up and the residents are playing football and cricket there. Residents of Chandan Nagar also took an oath of maintaining cleanliness as well as not throwing any garbage and litter into the drains.

#### Civilised behaviour missing

YOUR editorial 'Cuss words the new normal' (15th Feb) aptly sums up the decadent state of ever-falling standards of public decorum among large number of our politicians. Not only in politics, even in our ordinary lives, cuss words seem to have become quite common, as frequently evidenced in street brawls, road rage cases, informal meetings and discussions. There is a general tendency to browbeat a person with a differing viewpoint with loudmouthed rhetoric, provocative gestures and even casting unwarranted aspersions.

Cutting across all sections of society, people generally have no qualms about calling each other names. Unfortunately, this malaise has even afflicted the average household, where arrogant behaviour seems to hold sway. It is high time that due primacy is accorded to polite and courteous behaviour in our day-to-day lives. These values need to be inculcated in children in right earnest in their infancy and both educational institutions and parents can play a highly pro-active role in this regard. In the state legislatures and Parliament, the speakers and leaders of different parties should keep a hawk's eye on the general behaviour of the elected representatives and take appropriate deterrent steps for curbing any deviant mannerism.

Amit Banerjee, New Delhi

#### India should maintain vigil in Ladakh

THE India-China agreement on disengagement at Pan-■ gong Tso in Ladakh is certainly a promising start towards peace. However, stabilising the borders could take a long time. The Indian and Chinese troops are expected

to stop their forward positions on either side of Pangong in a phased manner. The troops will have to return to the pre-April 2020 position.

However, the surprisingly hasty decision of China to withdraw its troops raises doubts about its intentions. What could have prompted China to take such a hasty decision? It is reasonable to assume that Beijing's strategic move is linked to the US factor of interfering in the Ladakh standoff. In spite of the attempts by both countries to end the row peacefully through dialogue, talks between the two sides remained in a state of complete deadlock.

The takeaways are clear here: China has been moving cautiously since the Biden administration took a decision on the China-centric Quad and indo-Pacific strategy. In the recent telephonic conversation between US President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, both of them had reiterated their commitment to a strong India-US relationship. China's disengagement could be linked to deterring India from joining the US-led alliance. China wants to lessen the prospect of India partnering with the new administration to form an anti-China coalition.

It is a fact that earning US support is essential for India's standing up to China. China believes that if India-US relationship is further strengthened under Biden administration, it will reinforce the US-led alliance. Notwithstanding the fact that the disengagement is unquestionably positive, India must monitor the progress closely and press for the resolution of all remaining issues including the Depsang plateau.

Venu GS, Kollam

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## **LETTERS**

#### Wanted a new law for exports



NEW agricul-tural-law for exports is required (not for corporates or brokers eating into farmers' profits). Everyone wants raise in salary / income. Why not farmers? Exports will avoid the main

problem of accumulation of unsold / stationary stocks. This way it is possible for the government to buy food grains from farmers for maximum support price / reasonable price and export the accumulated stocks. Also with profits from exports at hand, it is easy for government and farmers TEAM (with sharing of investment burden) to set up long-term warehouses / godowns to store the harvest, buy the vehicles to speedily transport the harvest to godowns to save it from sudden rains, possible are:- crop rotation, latest technology introduction etc.

Many suggest that private investment arrangement in production of crops will nullify loan taking by small farmers via mortgaging assets. In case of spoilt-crop, loss burden is reduced for farmer (as part of loss is shared by the private investor). Money-Amount burden for agricultural loans write off to farmers too gets reduced to government of India.

Madhav P, Secunderabad

**LOCAL BODY ELECTIONS** 

## 10.5L voters to exercise franchise in Kurnool

HANS NEWS SERVICE KURNOOL

DISTRICT Collector G Veera Pandiyan has said that as per the State Election Commission noti fication, the elections for Kurnool Municipal Corporation, seven municipalities and a nagara panchayat will be conducted in Kurnool district.

Addressing media along with Superintendent of Police Dr Fakkeerappa Kaginelli and District Deputy Election Officer Kalpana Kumari at the Collector's Conference Hall here on Monday, Veera Pandian said with the issuing of notification, the model code of conduct has come into effect immediately in the district.

The collector said urban local body elections would be conducted for Kurnool Municipal Corporation along with Nandyal, Adoni, Yemmignoor, Dhone, Nandikotkur, Atmakur and Allagadda municipalities and Gudur Nagara Panchayat.

He said the nominations can be withdrawn up to 3 pm on March 3. According to the schedule, the urban local body election would be conducted on March 10, he said and added the Election Commission would decide on repolling, if necessary, on March 13 and the counting of votes would start on March 14 from 8.00 am. As many as 5,14,555 male and 5,33,628 female and 300 third

Lions Club district chairman K V Ramana inaugurating the NCLP school at

Chittoor mayor post

reserved for SC category

HANS NEWS SERVICE

CHITTOOR

WITH State Election Commission issuing of notification for urban

local body polls, Municipal Commissioner P Viswanath said that elec-

tion model code has come into force with immediate effect. As per

the SEC instructions, all the flexi boards were removed and the idols

He said the elections would be held for 50 divisions and the Mayor

post of Chittoor Municipal Corporation was reserved for SC cate-

gory and added voters' list was updated and reservation of wards

has been completed. He said that there would be no deviation in

the implementation of all the ongoing welfare schemes. He reiter-

ated that no civic employee should take part in political meets and

added that no permission would be accorded for any employee for

exempting the election duty. Town planning officer Nagendra and

Rudrampet bypass in Anantapur on Monday

of political leaders were covered with masks.



District Collector G Veera Pandiyan along with Superintendent of Police Dr Fakkeerappa Kaginelli and District Deputy Election Officer Kalpana Kumari addressing media at the Collector's Conference Hall in Kurnool on Monday

District Collector G Veera Pandiyan says the election for Nandyal, Adoni, Yemmignoor, Dhone, Nandikotkur, **Atmakur and Allagadda** municipalities and Gudur Nagara Panchavat will be held on March 10

Superintendent of Police Dr Fakkeerappa Kaginelli says strict vigil has been kept on the strangers and anti-social elements

deployed for the elections

genders, altogether 10,48,483 voters would exercise their franchise in the election, the collector said. The district has around 302 wards, 80 routes, 39 sectors of the 979 polling stations, 302 hyper-sensitive, 288 sensitive and 389 normal polling stations. Strict measures would be initiated to prevent violation of model of conduct through video

graphing and web casting, he

made it clear. A total number of 6,207 staff that includes 92 Returning Officers (ROs), Additional ROs 77, Assistant ROs 134, Presiding Officers 1,179, Assistant Presiding Officers 1,179 and Polling Officers 3.849 would discharge duties at the urban local bodies' elections. their franchise in a free and fair manner without any fear.

Superintendent of Police Dr Fakkeerappa Kaginelli said the election code would be in force at Kurnool Municipal Corporation and Nandyal, Adoni, Yemmignoor, Dhone, Nandikotkur, Atmakur and Allagadda Municipalities besides Gudur Nagara Panchayat. Entry and exit check posts have been set up at the urban local body elections.

Strict vigil has been kept on the strangers and anti-social elements. Special police bando bast has been made at the sensitive and hyper-sensitive areas besides filing bind over cases on the problematic persons, stated the SP. District Deputy Election Officer (DDEO) and Nandyal Sub-Collector Kalpana Kumari were also present in the press conference.

### PM announces ex gratia for kin of Veldurthi victims

HANS NEWS SERVICE **A**MARAVATI

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi has approved ex-gratia for the victims of the road accident in Veldurthi in Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh, which claimed 14 lives. In a tweet, the Prime Minister Office said here on Monday that "An ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh each from Prime Minister's National Relief Fund would be given to the

next of kin of those who have lost their lives due to the unfortunate road accident in Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh. Rs 50,000 would be given to those seriously in-

## 4 civic bodies to go for polls in Nellore The Collector appreciated the

AS the State Election Commission issued notification on Monday for conducting municipal polls, District Collector K V N Chakradhar Babu said the elections would be conducted for Atmakur, Naidupet, Venkatagiri and Sullurpet municipalities. Addressing the officials at Tikkana Bhavan at the Collectorate on the elections along with the observer P Basant Kumar, the collector said the election code will be in force from Monday itself. Election notification has not been given for Gudur and Kavali municipalities and in Nellore Corporation.

phase of Panchayat polls in the district successfully. He said third phase of polls will be held for Naidupet and Gudur divisions on February 17 and fourth phase of polls on February 21 in Nellore division.

He said the State Election Commission directed to admit the recounting requests only within 15 minutes of completion of counting for one time and there would no chance for the second recounting. They are arranging webcasting in 100 polling stations in Gudur and 50 stations in Naidupet.

## Political activity picks up pace in Anantapur after SEC notification

HANS NEWS SERVICE ANANTAPUR

WITH the State Election Commission issuing notification for the urban local body polls, there is a sudden spurt in political activity and many aspirants representing main political parties, the TDP and YSRCP going into a huddle with supporters. The homes of ex-councillors and corporators and fresh aspirants have become a beehive of activity. The Election Commission notification enthused political parties as the local body elections are fought on party and

There are eight municipalities and three Nagara Panchayats in the district. In all, there are 358 municipal wards for which 2,536 nominations had been filed in March 2020 and just at a time when the date of withdrawal of nominations was to expire on March 16, 2020, the SEC announced postponement of elections abruptly in the middle of election process.

Hindupur municipality has 38 wards for which 360 nomi-

Eight municipalities and three Nagara Panchayats will go for elections in the district

TDP has been holding parleys expecting civic body elections any time after panchayat polls

nations had been filed, Dharmavaram 40 wards and 241 nominations had been filed. Tadipatri with 36 wards received 230 nominations, Guntakal with 37 wards got 234 nominations. Kadiri with 36 wards received 270 nominations and Gooty with 25 wards nominations. Rayadurgam with 32 wards got 166 nominations and Kalvandurgam with 24 wards got 184 nominations and Puttaparthi and Madakasira with 20 wards each received 118 and 96 nomi-

Anantapur Municipal Corporation and Hindupur Municipality were ruled by TDP in the

nations respectively.

ing emergency sessions with supporters to determine candidatures within their Assembly constituency domain. TDP of course for some time had been holding parleys expecting civic body elections anytime after panchayat polls and had been working out strategies to win civic body polls believing that urban voters will definitely be with the TDP as the party enjoys more urban support when compared to rural centric YS-RCP. Political climate in the district suddenly is heating up.

Meanwhile, Collector Gandham Chandrudu told 'The Hans India' that the model code of conduct will come into immediate effect with the SEC releasing notification for the civic polls, picking up from where it stopped during last year March 15. According to the latest guidelines, those who want to withdraw from the electoral fray must come in person to effect withdrawal from contest and third-party withdrawal application will not be entertained.



TDP sarpanch aspirant's husband Bathina Lokanath injured in attack by the YSRCP men at Atikalagundu village in Pathikonda constituency on Sunday late night during canvassing

## Tension grips Nalakadoddi as TDP, YSRCP men clash

HANS NEWS SERVICE Kurnool

TENSION prevailed Nalakadoddi village Pathikonda constituency on Sunday late night when the supporters of YSRCP and TDP clashed with each other during canvassing for sarpanch elec-

In the clash, one Bathina Loknath, the husband of sarpanch aspirant, was injured. The cops of Pathikonda police station on learning about the incident immediately rushed to the village and took stock of the situation.

According to information, one Bathina Hemavathi of Nalka Doddi village is contesting for sarpanch post on TDP banner. Her husband Bathina Lokanath accompanied with some villagers has gone to Atikalagundu village for canvassing on Sunday night. Atikalagundu is a majra village with which sarpanch would be single to both villages (Nalakadoddi and Atikala-

In the clash, one Bathina Loknath, the husband of sarpanch aspirant Bathina Hemavathi was injured

During canvassing, the YSRCP men warn them to go back else they will face dire consequences

gundu). While the TDP men were busy in canvassing and urging the voters to support the candidature of Hemavathi, the YSRCP men intercepted them and warned them to go back else they have to face dire consequences.

The argument between both parties turned violent and in no time, both indulged in fierce fighting. In the incident, Bathina Loknath and some others were severely injured in the attack of YSRCP men. Bathina Loknath, speaking to media personnel, said they were peacefully urging voters to support the candidature of a sarpanch aspirant.

In the meantime, Bobby Reddy and his associates intercepted and threatened us to leave from the village immediately. Before we could convince them to leave in some time, they attacked us and injured several people, including me, alleged Bathina Lokanath.

Based on the complaint of Loknath, Pathikonda police registered a case. The women, who also participated in the canvassing, alleged the YSRCP men were threatening everyone. They have also injured women despite their repeated requests to set them free. The women alleged the YSRCP men have taken 4 cell phones and a woman has lost 2 grams of gold chain.

The third phase of polling is likely to start in the constituency on February 17.

### **Five arrested** for ganja **smuggling**

others were present.

HANS NEWS SERVICE Nellore

POLICE arrested five persons involved in ganja smuggling in the city on Monday and recovered 4.250 kg of ganja from them. According Vedayapalem police, Bhaskar, who resides in Bujabuja Nellore, has been trading ganja as he was getting it from Visakhapatnam and East Godavari districts.

Police, on a tip-off, conducted raids on the secret point located in the same area close to Technology Bhavan on Monday and apprehended Kudicheti Usha, Kamala Vinay, Arava Sampath, Konda Praveen, and SK Khaleel belong to various parts of the city while they were shifting the stocks. Vedayapalem Circle Inspector P Ramakrishna, SI B Lakshmana Rao, Nellore rural Tahsildar, and others participated in the raids. Vedayapalem police registered a case under respective sections.

## TTD to develop Veda pathasala in Keesaragutta

AFTER his inspection at TTD Veda Pathashala in Keesaragutta, near Hyderabad on Monday, EO Dr K S Jawahar Reddy instructed the engineering officials concerned to send proposals to take up the development works of the Vedic institution to improve facilities to cope with the increased strength of students in the Veda pathasala. Earlier, Vedapathasala Principal D Mallikarjuna Avadani informed EO that the hostel facility in the Pathasala is sufficient to accommodate only 40 pupils whereas there are 120 students studying at present in Veda Pathashala at Keesaragutta stressing the need of construction additional rooms to cope with the increased strength of students. He also sought EO for construction of a compound wall direly required to prevent wild animals straying into Yagashala and Vedapathashala premises for the safety of teachers and students.

The EO directed the officials concerned to send a detailed proposal immediately to take up the development works without any delay. Later the vedic students brought to



TTD EO Dr K S Jawahar Reddy inspecting TTD Veda Pathashala in Keesaragutta, near Hyderabad on Monday

the notice of TTD EO that though they have become accomplished pundits after pursuing eight years Vedic course in TTD, they are denied employment in Vedic related posts by the Endowments Department of Telangana State. The EO told them that he will definitely discuss the issue in the ensuing TTD Trust Board Meeting which is slated on February 27 to take it to the notice of the Telangana government.

The EO had darshan of Sri Ramalingeswara Swamy in Keesaragutta temple. TTD EO also visited TTD

Information Centre, Kalyana Mandapam, Guest House, Dining Hall which are under renovation in the centre at Himayat Nagar area of Hyderabad city. The officials concerned informed the EO that the works will be completed by this April. Later he also visited the SVBC Studio, HDPP Office and interacted with the employees in the city. Medchal Malkajgiri Additional Joint Collector Vidyasagar, TTD DyEE Nagaraju, AEO C Naik, AEO Ramesh, Manager of Kalyana Mandapam Ramesh were also present.



S/o. P.NARASIMHULU, R/o. D.No:10/703, Bellam Mandi Street, Kadapa A.P., hereby State that I have changed my Son's name from P ARJUN to PANCHAKSHARI ARJUN henceforth for all purposes.

I, YARAM SANKARAIAH S/o YARAM GARATAIAH, R/o. 19-8-115/2, Hathiramji Colony, Near Annamaiah Circle, Tirupati, Chittoor Dist., A.P., have changed my name as YARAM RAVI SANKAR.

I, SHAIK KARIM BASHA S/o SHAIK ABOUL SALAM (Old Name) R/O D No. 1-183, Settipalli, Sambepalli, YSR, Kadapa Dt, Ap. India. I Have Chenged My Name SHAIK KAREEM BASHA (New Name).

I, GANGICHETTY KIRTHI KALYAN(old name), R/o. H.No.46-1-M-20B-2A, Chanikvapuri Colony, Kurnool Dist., A.P. have changed my name as GANGISETTY KIRTHI KALYAN (New Name).

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### Rayachoty, Y.S.R. Dist., A.P. have changed my name as SHAIK JAFAR SAB S/o

SHAIK SYED SAB(New Name) for all purpose in future. **CHANGE OF NAME** I. GUTHULA REKHA VENKATUSWAR

RAO(old name) W/o GUTHULA VENKATESWARARAO, R/o. Lakshmi Enclave, Flot No. b2, 70-Boat Near 1b-13, Ramanayyapeta, Kakinada (Urban) East Godavari, A.P.- 533005, Henceforth will be known as GUTHULA REKHA (New Name).

This is for all records. CHANGE OF NAME I, VENKATASRI KUMAR REDDY

(Existing Name of as per Records) Son of Ex Army Service No15306205W Rank Nk Name DUGGIREDDY SREENIVASA REDDY Palli Tehsil Giddalur, Dist-Prakasam (AP).PIN 523373 (Address) have changed my name mVENKATASRI KUMAR REDDY' Existing Name of ) to DUGGIREDDY ENKATA SREEKUMAR REDDY roposed New Name) vide Affidavit sted 15-02 - 2021 (Date of Affidavit) before Sk. Yasin Basha(Name and pla of the Notary/Court).

## CHANGE OF NAME

A.P., I have lost my M.Sc. (I.T.)

Convocation, Bearing No. 1061/07

and Roll No.2606, While I was going

to take Xerox copies at Almaspe

Circle, Kadapa. If anybody found

please contact above address.

KONDURU VENKATESWARLU S/ SSC Certificate), resident of D.No. 5-1-46B/2, Jonnayagunta Street, KAVALI Town, SPSR Nellore Dist., is ereby declared that I have change ny name as

KONDURU VENKATESWARLU REDDY S/o KONDURU SESHA REDDY

ereinafter call all purpose in future.

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## BJP seeks NMDC lifeline for VSP

- State party chief and other leaders submit a petition to Union Steel Minister **Dharmendra Pradhan** with suggestions to better the financial condition of steel plant
- It is suggested that the Centre can work out an MoU between NMDC and RINL for supply of iron ore on cost-to-cost or with marginal profit basis
- In the letter to the Union Minister, State leaders explain the historical, socio-economic significance of the project

HANS NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI** 

A delegation of the Andhra Pradesh BJP unit led by its president Somu Veerraju and comprising former Union minister D Purandesawari, former MLA P Vishukumar Raju and MLC P V N Madhav met Union minister for steel, Dharmendra Pradhan here on Monday and urged him to revisit the decision to privatise the RINL (Visakhapatnam steel plant). They said a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis of the plant would reveal that it would be an excellent profit-making unit which had also an emotional connect with the Telugus.



AP BJP president Somu Veerraju, BJP AP co-in-charge Sunil Deodhar aand party leaders meet Union Steel Minister Dharmendra Pradhan at Udyog Bhavan in New Delhi on Monday

Meanwhile, in his three-page letter to Dharmendra Pradhan, Veerraju said the government should instead work out an agreement between NMDC (National Mineral Development Corporation) and Vizag Steel for supply of iron ore from NMDC at cost-tocost basis or cost-plus marginal profit basis for next five years. Capital should be infused through IPO (public issue) which would give real valuation of RINL and the Union government should provide sovereign guarantees to raise unsecured loans, he urged.

All options to pursue the revival of RINL should be undertaken instead of condemning the plant to privatisation on the basis of its losses now, he added.

Recalling the long fight Visakha Ukku-Andhrula Hakku in the past and the sacrifices made by the people of Andhra, the state BJP president said the plant was the biggest public sector unit in entire south India. It had brought a metamorphic development in the entire three backward districts of north Andhra Pradesh

The plant had witnessed an investment of Rs 4.950 crore in three decades but the Centre had secured Rs 43,0990 crore in return and the AP state government got Rs 8,565 crore till 2020 in the form of various taxes and duties. That apart, the Vizag Steel had immensely helped in uplifting the living conditions and dignity of thousands of families from socially deprived communities. The overall development of the backward districts became possible in Andhra Pradesh abutting Odisha borders.

He said Visakhapatnam Steel Plant was initially envisaged with an installed capacity of 3 MTPA (million tonnes per annum) in 1992 and subsequently expanded to 7.3 MTPA without any budgetary support from the Centre. All this was despite the fact that the RINL was disadvantageously positioned compared to its rivals vis a vis access to captive iron ore mines thus incurring an additional expenditure of Rs 5,000 per tonne production.

The plant had a land bank of 20,000 acre and losing such a treasure was ill-advised, he argued. More than 60 villages had to be evacuated to acquire land in the past, he said to buttress his point.

Other office bearers of the AP Unit of the party too are signatories to the letter.

Common pilgrims availing offline free darshan token have to wait for days for darshan

increased to 56448 on February 14.

## **HC suspends SEC order** on delivery vehicles



Commission can't stop vehicles supplying food to the people

**Says the State Election** 

The SEC earlier suspended ration door delivery vehicles for 4 weeks in rural areas in view of Model Code

**A**MARAVATI

IN a major relief to the state government, the Andhra Pradesh High Court on Monday suspended the State Election Commissioner (SEC) Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar's orders restricting rice door delivery service during the ongoing elections.

The court said the State Election Commission (SEC) cannot stop the government from using mobile delivery vehicles to supply food to the people.

Earlier, the SEC ordered that the government cannot use these mobile vehicles for a period of four weeks, in view of the ongoing rural local bodies' elections.

The SEC personally examined a delivery vehicle to see if these vehicles will allegedly exert any influence on the polls as they would fan out across the nooks and corners of the villages, carrying ration rice for heneficiaries.

Many decisions of Ramesh Kumar are being challenged in the court by the state government and there seems to be no end to the bickering between the state and the SEC

Earlier, he issued a gag and home confinement order on panchayat raj minister Peddireddi Ramachandra Reddy which was also suspended by the court but

### Kodali Nani's house motion plea posted to tomorrow

 HC seeks video clippings of Minister's comments

 To appoint a senior advocate as amicus curiae to assist in this case

**A**MARAVATI

THE AP High Court posted the hearing on house motion petition filed by civil supplies minister Kodali Venkateswara Rao (Nani) to Wednesday, February 17.

It may be noted that the State Election Commission (SEC) issued show-cause notice and a gag order on him for his remarks on the commission as well as State Election Commissioner Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar last week. The SEC also directed the Krishna district SP to register a case on the minister.

with some riders.

The court is also poised to hear a case on civil supplies minister Kodali Sri Venkateshwara Rao, against whom the SEC ordered a

In this regard, the minister

filed House motion petition. When the advocates of the both the parties explained their stand to the court, the court observed that the case should be examined in detail and posted the next hearing to Wednesday. The court said that it would appoint a senior advocate as amicus curiae to assist it in this case. It ordered the petitioner to submit necessary video clippings. The court also directed the advocate of SEC to submit video tapes of the minister's comments by

Wednesday. The SEC advocate appealed the court to take action after examining the video clippings of the minister's press meet. He said that the minister used objectionable language towards

The court observed that it cannot decide on the case without examining the video clippings of the minister's press meet.

case to be registered.

The commission has already successfully completed two phases of rural local bodies elections, even as two more are due.

SEC urged to

banish anti-social

elements

from Kuppam

the poll panel points to

TDP chief in a letter to

attempt on life of

Pacharlapalli village

Demands release of TDP

Avulavaripalem village

HANS NEWS SERVICE

sarpanch candidate and

**Congress leader** 

Suresh Babu in

other leaders in

in Krosuru mandal

of Guntur district

### 56,448 pilgrims have darshan at Tirumala

TIRUPATI

THE highest number of 56,448 pilgrims had darshan of Lord Venkateswara at Tirumala on Sundav while the common pilgrims availing the free darshan off line SSD tokens have to wait 3 days for darshan with

the rush remaining unabated.

TTD is issuing 22,000 offline SSD tokens for free darshan against 25,000 special entry tickets of Rs 300 daily for darshan. This apart, ticket holders of various Arjitha sevas (virtual), donors including Srivani Trust donors and also Supatham and VIP break.

IS STEEL PLANT SALE JUSTIFIED?

The proposal of Union government to privatise over Rs 20,000 crore turnover company - Visakhapatnam

Steel Plant (VSP), the biggest eco-friendly industry in the entire Southern India, is unfair and unacceptable to the

people of Andhra Pradesh. Instead of helping the modern

temple to survive, it appears that the Centre has kept an

eye on its huge land bank that extends around 22,000

acres. Time has come for Andhra people to show their

will remain in the hearts of Andhra people forever.

The Forum of Legal Professionals strongly opposes the

proposed privatisation of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant

by the Union government. Instead of handing over the

seeking solutions to help the unit tide over the financial

crisis. Government-controlled units like SAIL, NMDC and

other mining firms should come together to make do for

infusion by both the Central and State governments in order

to return to normalcy. A holistic approach is the need of the hour. The forum

of legal professionals will render all the support to see that the Centre's

the shortcomings. The loans taken by the steel plant

have to be rescheduled and there must be capital

proposal of privatisation is dropped.

steel plant to private parties, the focus should be on

fighting spirit and save the company from privatisation.

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy should play a vital

role in protecting the plant from privatisation. The CM should demonstrate

Dr YS Rajasekhara Reddy in case of Hindustan Shipyard and BHPV, the oldest

industries in Vizag. If the CM succeeds in saving the plant from privatisation, he

Rtd PR and Communications Senior Executive of RINL

fighting spirit and courage in saving the plant as was done by his father

With the pilgrim rush steadily picking up, the SSD tokens for darshan on Tuesday and Wednesday were already exhausted while tokens for darshan on February 18 up to evening 6 pm slot were also over when when reports last came in on Monday. According to TTD sources the de-

tails of the pilgrims who had darshan of Lord in the last three days are 48,846 on February 12 which jumped to 54,134 on February 13 and further

## CM stresses on affordable plots to middle class

- Officials propose construction of ring
- roads around towns Smart township layouts will come up around ring roads
- Govt to start Clean **Andhra Pradesh** programme with a 100-day action plan to keep the state clean

HANS NEWS SERVICE

AMARAVATI CHIEF Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy suggested changes in the proposals made for providing infrastructure facilities in smart townships.

In a review on solid waste management and urban housing at his camp office in Tadepalli on Monday, the Chief Minister said the goal was to provide high living standards to middle class people and directed the officials to provide undisputed and cleartitled plots with all the required permissions at affordable prices on

non-profit basis to them. The officials discussed with the Chief Minister several town plans already being implemented in various states and also how to create land bank for the scheme and develop infrastructure.

The Chief Minister said providing plots at affordable prices to middle



Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy making suggestions on the proposals on smart townships submitted by officials during review on waste management and urban housing at Tadepalli on Monday

class people is a continuous process and plans should be made to provide plots to eligible beneficiaries as and when they apply.

The officials laid proposals for building ring roads around the towns. The designs of roads should be such that both the government and people who give land for the construction should be benefitted and smart towns' layouts should come up around the ring roads. It was decided initially to develop 18 layouts in 12 towns. The proposals are made for designing smart towns of at least 25 acre to 200 acre, depending on the population of cities and towns. The plan is to prepare the layout within 18 months after works start.

The government will start Clean Andhra Pradesh (CLAP) programme with a100-day action plan to keep the state clean. Plans are afoot for NGOs and public participation in the programme which will have 3.825 garbage collection vehicles, more auto tippers, and over 6,000 bins and waste management systems in municipalities. The Chief Minister said to start bio-mining and there should be change in cleanliness in the state with these programmes

Municipal and urban development minister Botcha Satyanarayana, Solid and Liquid Waste Management Task Force chairman Alla Ayodhya Ramireddy, municipal and urban development principal secretary Y Srilakshmi, municipal administration commissioner M M Nayak, CCLA special commissioner Naravana Bharat Gupta, finance secretary Gulzar, TIDCO MD Ch Sridhar and other senior officials were present.

MANGALAGIRI TDP national president N Chandrababu Naidu on Monday demanded the State Election Commission (SEC) to take step to banish troublemakers and outside miscreants from the villages in Kuppam Assembly constituency in order to ensure a free and fair panchavat election.

Naidu said that on February 14, an attempt was made on the life of District Congress Committee (DCC) president Suresh Babu at Pacharlapalli village in Gudupalle mandal by a miscreant with knife. The attacker has attacked four other people also when they were trying to protect Suresh Babu. The Opposition leaders were being attacked with an ulterior plan to demoralise them in the panchayat elections, he alleged.

Naidu said that the State Election Commission (SEC) should act swiftly and ensure that the gram panchayat elections being held on February 17 would be conducted peacefully in a free and fair manner. For this, additional protection forces shall be deployed and all the non-bona fide outsiders should be sent out of villages in Kuppam Assembly segment. Simultaneously, inquiry shall be conducted into the presence of anti-social elements and miscreants in villages and action be taken against the culprits.

In a separate statement, Naidu condemned the arrest of the TDP sarpanch candidate along with some others in Avulavaripalem village in Krosuru mandal in the Guntur district on false charges and demanded their immediate release.

### Kuppili Muralidhar, president of Forum of Legal Professionals

K Bangar Raju,

There is no need to privatise the Vizag Steel Plant as it has been doing well in recent months. The plant was set up with an objective of strengthening public sector in the country. But now the situation is different with the Modi government gradually stepping aside from the responsibility of developing the public sector.

G Lalith Bhargav, contract employee, Tirupati



hat the Central government deciding to privatise Visakhapatnam Steel Plant, one of the Navaratna public enterprises, is unfair. It is not a white elephant to get rid of, but a golden goose which is starved and deserves to be taken care of. It has no own captive mines for uninterrupted supply of raw material. It has been on the path of expansion. So the ongoing losses cannot be shown as acause to prove it a losing enterprise. It can be turned around into a profit-making entity with a little help and political resolve. Of course, to strengthen the public sector would be the right step in the direction of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

D D V G Sankara Rao, Prof of Anaesthesiology, MIMS, Vizianagaram

## TDP TO STAGE STATE-WIDE STIR FOR VSP ON FEB 18

TDP national president N Chandrababu Naidu on Monday called

Naidu stressed the need for waging a relentless agitation against the ruling YSRCP secret plans in the deal with the South Korean company, POSCO. It was only to save himself from his illegal investments cases that Chief Minister Y S Jaganmohan Reddy was bent on handing over the steel plant to private hands, he alleged. In a statement here, the former

 Party national president accuses Jagan of privatising VSP to save himself from cases

 Alleges that the CM has set his sights on steel plant surplus lands

chief minister asserted that their party would do everything possible to prevent the state government from carrying out its nefarious designs any further. Protest rallies would be organised from village to state level.

He alleged that the Chief Minister had apparently struck a secret deal with POSCO only to grab the surplus lands of the VSP which have got a

his unquenchable thirst for personal gains only, the Chief Minister was prostrating before the Centre with respect to the steel plant issue," he said. Naidu deplored that in the name of

privatisation, the steel plant has been weakened without trying for mines exclusively meant for it.

was for the whole people of AP to agiteach a strong lesson to the ruling YS-RCP, he said. Naidu said that the VSP was protecting the livelihoods of over

# HANS NEWS SERVICE

MANGALAGIRI

upon his party leaders and cadres to take part in massive protests all over the state on February 18 to denounce the privatisation of the Visakha Steel Plant (VSP).

very high value in the market. "Out of

The people of the state achieved the industry after fighting a prolonged struggle in the past. Once again, it tate and save the steel plant from all future threats. It was high time to 40,000 people directly and another 50,000 workers indirectly.





**MINI MATHUR** @MINIMATHUR

If young people are not always right, the society which ignores and knocks them is always wrong"



## **Does fashion ignore** the 40-plus woman?

SUJATA ASSOMULL

am 47-years-old and have worked in fashion for over 25 years; earning every smile line on my face and those extra few kilos around my mid area. Unfortunately, the industry I work in writes off every woman over the age of 45. Of course, we all know the reason, it's because fashion sees the youth as the future of the industry, it is where the growth is. But what about the now?

A recent study by the International Longevity Centore (ILC) found that those over the age of 50-years account for over 50 per cent of the spending in fashion — the fact is mature women have more purchasing power and today are also in better shape than ever—they become an easy target for fashion. Yet they are ignored. Brands are so occupied with pleasing millennials and Gen Z-ers, they forget to make styles that work for today's 40 plus woman.

It is only in your 40s when you really understand what your personal style is. You definitely make less fashion faux pas than you did in your 20's, but you still want some style inspiration. I keep reading articles on how "Fifty is the new Thirty" in fashion glossies — yet when it comes cover girls, women over 40 only tend to be chosen for the "Ageless" or "Fab at Every Age" cover. This at a time when inclusivity is one of hottest fashion talking points.

Luckily, there are a handful of real women in this age group who have great taste, I suggest you follow them on In $stagram-they \ have \ style, substance$ and just the right amount of sass.

#### Anaita Shroff Adajania

The 40-something fashion powerhouse is the name behind some of Bollywood's red carpet most glamorous moments and fashion magazine's glossiest covers (Anaita has styled everyone from Aishwarya Rai to Alia Bhatt); though her own sense of style is comfortable. carefree yet always chic; she can go from a handloom sari, a Dior gown to a Savio Jon kurta while always injecting her special blend of boho-chic into the look. The launch fashion director of Vogue India, this celebrity stylist still rocks a bikini better than most swimsuit cover girls. Anaita was recently part of a Gucci social media campaign for its iconic Jackie 1961 bag and added her own unique cool girl vibe to her Instagram video for the Italian fashion house.

#### **Trinny Woodall**

I grew up watching "What Not to Wear" the BBC make-over show featuring Trinny Woodall and Susannah Constantine-women

always said it as it is. Today Trinny runs her own successful make-up company, Trinny London, (and I suggest every woman over 30 use her Miracle Blur it smooths the face and blurs those lines in an instant). Trinny's personal Instagram handle is the one to follow though, a digital closet confidential. From shopping to styling tips this 50-something likes to have fun with her fashion. Honest about the aging process, she enjoys dressing up and her flamboyant (yet mainly high street) outfit of the day

choices will always surprise you. Roohi Oomerbhoy Jaikishan: The executive director of an Indian FMCG company, RR Oomerbhoy has a maximalist take on fashion. A true style maven—she is an art collector, a clotheshorse and a host-

ess with the

mostess. While food has become the mainstay of her Instagram account, she shares recipes from some of her fashionable friends around the world, it is served with a side of fantastical fashion. From timeless saris by her motherin-law, veteran fashion designer, Pallavi Jaikishan to Erdem floral dresses Roohi adds her own sense of eclectic charm to her ensembles. A permanent fixture on best dressed lists, her fashion superpower is the way she plays with fun and statement making accessories. It is never about fashion diktats for Roohi but about her own personal take on



The year 2020 was a period of silence for the Indian lacksquare fashion industry as everything came to a halt. Then, 2021 started with a big announcement -- designer Sabyasachi Mukherjee sold 51 percent of his fashion brand to Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail Limited.

First Anita Dongre, then Raghavendra Rathore and now Sabyasachi, why are Indian fashion houses opting to take the corporate route? Are strategic collaborations the way forward in order to establish Indian brands as global entities?

"This was always the way forward" replies industry veteran JJ Valaya who took to Instagram to unveil his latest SS21 collection today. Titled 'BURSA', the line is the second chapter of his collection which was launched at the FDCI India Couture Week in September 2021.

"What is now happening in India, was happening in the West several decades ago and popular designer brands like Coco Chanel, Burberry, Versace are the leading example of it," Valaya tells.

"It's only when the corporate comes in, that there's stability of the busi $ness\ and\ the\ brand\ goes\ to\ another$ dimension. So, I think this is a fan-

tastic move forward and it's only going to go better."

Earlier designer Anita Dongre's company had received a sizable investment from a large US Private Equity Fund in 2013 and was the only Indian designer with a retail presence in New York. Now Sabyasachi has announced he is set to open a 6,000 square foot retail space in the city in early 2022.

Asked if he has similar plans, Valaya answers: "Well, if it happens, we will surely consider it. I feel for us it's a couple of years to go before we can take this route. At the moment, we are doing a significant amount of experimentation and expansion within. If we find a suitable partner, of whom we are convinced can take the brand to another level, we will certainly be open for it."

Talking about his collection, Valaya believes: "I always believe when you are truly inspired to do a collection then seeing all the interpretations in six months is never enough, you must give it at least 12 months to kind of try and interpret it in as many ways and forms as possible."

He adds, "And fortunately for us, in India we have two very clear themes between winter and summer that allows a significant change in the weather and that gives us room to experiment. And yet having said that, at the same time we are essentially a couture design house and we focus on wedding clothes and occasion wear. So the challenge is always how will you make the bride, the groom and the guests look spectacular still wearing the silks and organza but making them relevant to the season. This second chapter of Bursa -- is essentially a whole new interpretation of inspiration we initiated six months ago."

As the pandemic has changed how Indian couture is seen and interpreted, has it also brought on a change in design philosophy? Valaya replies: "I have always been very clear that come hail or storm, the signature of the brand should never change. So, of course things will lead us to all kinds of circumstances... but the DNA of a brand should persistently continue. So, if you ask me that if the pandemic changed the way I think, No, it

### **Better** that breakfast

Begin your morning with a nice bowl of fruit, porridge or granola and yogurt, and you can feel brilliant in no time! Not only are these foods tasty, satisfying for your hunger and a valuable source of energy, but you'll be pleased to know that they are great flat-belly foods. Combined they are supposed to help burn abdominal fat, improve digestion and help you keep away from the cupboard for longer. Breakfast is the

of the day: kick starting your metabolism and fueling your healthy and nutritious meal will do wonders for your body. Plus there are so many alternatives and additions you can make to this simple meal that provide that little bit extra; adding a spoon of peanut or almond butter, pouring



on some honey or making a tasty smoothy, can make your



### Across

- Term of play in polo (6)
- To some extent (8)
- 8 Assist or aid (4)
- 10 Small two-door cars (6)
- 11 Abrasive (6)
- 14 Panaji is its capital (3) 16 Sensational (5)
- 17 Computer screen symbol (4)
- 19 Dairy product (5) 21 Monetary unit of
- Ecuador (5) 22 Neck of mutton (5)
- 23 Playful sprite (4)
- 26 Sleeper's woe (5)
- 28 Vessel or duct (3)
- 29 Governess (6)
- 30 Active (6) 31 Snakelike fish (4)
- 32 By which people are familiarly called - not only cats and dogs?
- 33 Cuts off (6)

### **Down**

1 Ostentatious (6)

**CROSSWORD** 

- 2 Persist in (4,2)
- 3 Serpents (4) 4 Interstellar clouds (7)
- 5 Professorship (5)
- 6 Horse (5)
- 8 Quasimodo's creator (4)
- 9 Meadow (3)
- 12 Not speaking (3)
- 13 Relating to or of a city (5)
- 15 Killer whales (5) 18 S. American "beaver" (5)
- 19 Mongrel dog (3)
- 20 Work unit (3)
- 21 Public disgrace (7) 22 Monetary unit of
- Japan (3) 23 Russian physiologist who experimented with
- dogs (6)
- 24 Functions (4) 25 Canoes used by Eskimos
- 26 Take as one's own (5)
- 27 Efts (5)
- 28 Contend (3) 30 Not so much (4)

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	3	9	4	5	8	7	1	2	6
	9	3	8	1	4	5	2	6	7
	7	1	5	8	6	2	9	3	4
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## Artist Michelle Poonawalla exhibits series on companionship

### Titled 'Kagaz', the show featuring her works runs till February 26, 2021

elebrating friendship and companionship during these challenging times, five portraits taken by artist Michelle Poonawalla in her home city of Pune, are part of an ongoing exhibition in an Ahmedabad gallery.

Poonawlla, an artist who lives and works between London and Pune, is showing this new series of drawings as part of 'Kagaz', a group exhibition of works on paper which runs until February 26 at 079 Stories.

For Poonawalla, drawings and works on paper represent a very personal and emotive medium, allowing her to delicately portray the emotion of the subjects. As with Poonawalla's larger body of work the drawings are intended to create a moment of reflection for the viewer and ask them to think about their surroundings and the wider world.

Talking about the exhibition, Poonawalla says: "For me drawing is a very important medium. Whilst audiences may be more familiar with my larger installations and digital work, drawing forms the base of everything I do and I was delighted when 079 Stories asked me to present a series of works on paper."

Poonawalla's works explore universal, socially engaged topics that resonate with a diverse range of audiences, creating powerful memories and moving experiences.

Her practice combines cutting-edge technology and traditional artistic mediums in an emotionally charged and poetic form; often utilizing sound, video mapping, projection, motion sensors and other techniques to bring her innovative paintings and installations to life.

Paper is the strongest and the most versatile medium of expressing oneself may it be in the form of words, crafts, or art. 'Kagaz' is a celebration of this and alongside Poonawalla the exhibition presents 21 artists from across the country displaying works on paper including Anuj Ambalal, Al Qawi Nanawati, Ashish Kushwaha, Claire Iono, Ghanshyam Rathod, Hindol Brahmbhatt, Krishnendu Roy, Malabika Burman, Milburn Cherian, Pradeep Ahirwar, Rachnan Badrakia, Ronak Sopariwala, Satish Gupta, Shahanshah Mittal, Shefali Nayan, Shrikant Kadam, Vikesh Ghosh and Viraj Mithani.





## BJP to expand base in Nepal, Lanka: Oppn slams Tripura CM's statement

'When Home Minister was the BJP's national president, he during a meeting with us in Agartala had said that we have extended our base across India. Party's philosophy enlarged to many Asian and African countries'

Agartala

OPPOSITION Left parties and Congress on Monday criticised the BJP leadership after Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb's reported comments to extend the base of the saffron party in Nepal and Sri Lanka.

The opposition parties said that the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party's plan and target to expand its base in Nepal and Sri Lanka are against India's foreign policies and these cannot be done as the two countries are sovereign nations.

Deb while addressing a party meeting here on Saturday reportedly quoted Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and said: "When Home Minister was the BJP's National President he during a meeting with us in Agartala had said that we have extended our base

across India. Now we have to go to Sri Lanka and Nepal." The Chief Minister said that the BJP would form government in West Bengal. Kerala, Tamil Nadu and the party would remain in power in Tripura for 30 years as the CPI-M would be finished in the next assembly elections in 2023. "The BJP is the largest party in India now. It has maximum numbers of MPs, MLAs and other elected members," Deb said. The BJP, however, also supported the Chief Minister's views. Party spokesman Nabendu Bhattacharjee said that not only Sri Lanka and Nepal, the BJP's philosophy is being extended in many Asian and African countries. "Our targets and plans are not to form governments in those states. Our "Pracharaks" (functionaries)



are broadening BJP's philosophy and belief in those states. If the people of those countries accept our principles and viewpoints then the future course of action would be shaped," Bhattacharjee told the media on Monday.

Sharply criticising the Chief Minister's announcement, Communist Party of India-Marxist central committee member Jitendra Chowdhury said that Deb's speech is a combination of arrogance and ignorance.

Chowdhury, a former Tripura Minister, said that Deb's speech in a public forum portrayed the approach and method of governance that was prevailing in Tripura after the BJP-IPFT (Indigenous People's Front of Tripura) alliance came to power three years ago. "The BJP-led

governments both at the Center and the states have forcefully muted all kinds of civil liberties, freedom of speech and all pillars of democracy while a total law-lessness has been prevailing in Tripura.

"It has been revealed further from Deb's speech that the top brass in BJP is engaged in the internal affairs of our neighbouring countries, which is contrary to our long cherished foreign policy since independence," the veteran tribal leader and former Lok Sabha member said. He alleged that it is extremely unfortunate that this same BJP and their governments have brought sedition charges against the innocent citizens to silence the dissent voices, and octogenarian Varavara Rao, Gautam Navlakha and teen ager Disha Ravi like people are not spared.

## 96% Covid warriors skip 2<sup>nd</sup> dose

'7,668 beneficiaries received the second jab, which is just 4 per cent of the over 1,91,000 healthcare workers who received their first dose on Jan 16'

New Delhi

IN what could eventually become worrisome, 96 per cent of Covid Warriors have not been turning up for the second dose of the Covid-19 vaccine.

On Saturday, 7,668 beneficiaries received the second jab, according to the provisional data released by the Union Health Ministry, which is just 4 per cent of the over 1,91,000 healthcare workers who received their first dose on January 16, according to News18 report.

The two vaccines that have been cleared for used in India – Covishield and Covaxin – require that two doses be given 28 days apart. However, as per the recommendation of the apex drug regulator, the doses can be taken within a window of four to six weeks.

The government has set a deadline of March 1 to complete the vaccination of the frontline workers across the country, with a five-day period for "mop up" activity to vaccinate those who might have been missed out, said joint secretary of the Union health ministry, Mandeep Bhandari. For healthcare workers, the deadline is February 20.

India has been recording a steady decline in the number of daily new deaths since October 1, 2020, while the national recovery rates amongst the highest in the



## 'Vaccination for above 50 in 3 weeks'

NEW DELHI The Union government will begin vaccination drive for around 27 crore Indians above the age of 50 three weeks from now, Union Health Minister Harsh vardhan said on Monday.

"Three weeks from now, the government will start giving doses of coronavirus vaccines to 27 crore persons above the age of 50," he said at a press briefing here. An expert group on vaccination will discuss how to pay for the doses for those above 50, he added.

#### Maha Minister bats for 3T formula

Aurangabad: The "3T formula" of tracing, testing and treatment will have to be implemented strictly to tackle a rise in COVID-19 cases in some parts of Maharashtra, state health minister Rajesh Tope said . Talking to reporters, Tope said the state government had managed to flatten the curve in the last one month as far as daily addition of cases was concerned, but a recent rise in numbers in Mumbai, Wardha and some other pockets was "alarming".

world, the Union Health Ministry said on Sunday. "Since 1st October 2020, the nation has seen an unabated decline in Case Fatality Rate. The Case Fatality Rate today stands below 1.5 (1.43 percent). India's Case Fatality Rate is one of the lowest in the world," it said. The recoveries have surged to 1,06,11,731 with 11,016 patients getting discharged in a span of 24 hours. "India's Covid-19 recovery rate of 97.31 per cent is amongst the highest in the world. The difference between the recovered and active cases has grown to 1,04,74,164 as on date," the ministry highlighted.

Meanwhile, the night curfew, currently in force in four major Gujarat cities, including Ahmedabad, to stem the COVID-19 spread, was on Monday extended till February 28, officials said. However, in a concession to people, the curfew from now on in Ahmedabad, Surat, Vadodara and Rajkot will be in force between midnight and 6 am instead of the earlier 11pm to 6am, they added.

The Centre on Monday approved the proposal of the Press Information Bureau's journalist welfare committee to provide as financial relief Rs 5 lakh each to families of 39 journalists who died due to the coronavirus, a panel member said. The government has earmarked an additional fund for this purpose for the Journalist Welfare Committee (JWC), and journalists from across India will be covered under the scheme.



## Rupani collaspes, tests Covid +ive

AHMEDABAD

GUJARAT Chief Minister Vijay Rupani has tested positive for coronavirus, said a hospital where the CM is admitted after he fainted in a rally. He has mild symptoms and his condition is stable, the Ahmedabad-based medical facility said on Monday. On Sunday, Rupani, 64, fainted on stage while addressing a rally in Vadodara for the upcoming civic polls in the state, following which he was flown to Ahmedabad and admitted to the U N Mehta Heart Hospital here. Rupani's sample was collected on Sunday night and sent for RT-PCR test which has come out positive for coronavirus, said a health bulletin issued by the hospital on Monday. "His symptoms are mild and his condition is stable," it said. The hospital also said the chief minister fainted on Sunday due to "tiredness and physical weakness". His ECG, blood test and other examinations were conducted and their results are normal, it said. State Deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel told reporters that on Sunday night it was decided to keep Rupani under observation for 24 hours. "After his test report came out positive for coronavirus, he is being treated for the infection as per the course and protocol," said Patel.

#### 15 killed after truck overturns in Jalgaon

JALGAON

Fifteen people were killed and five others injured after a truck carrying labourers overturned and fell into a roadside pit in Maharashtra's Jalgaon district in the wee hours of Monday, police said.

The accident took place near a temple in Kingaon village around 1 am when the papaya-laden truck was on its way to Yawal tehsil in Jalgaon from Dhule, an official from Yawal police station said.

The deceased included two children, aged 3 and 5 years, and a 15-year-old girl. A 14-year-old boy, who was sleeping on top of the truck, escaped unhurt, the official said. The labourers belonged to Abhoda, Vivra, Kerhala villages and Raver tehsil in the district, he said.

PM Narendra Modi expressed grief at the loss of lives. The Maharashtra government announced an exgratia of Rs 2 lakh to the kin of each of the deceased. After the accident, police and some locals rushed to the spot and the truck was brought out of the pit with the help of a JCB machine, the police official said.

# Two more activists on police radar Toolkit makers on the run

New Delhi

NON-BAILABLE warrants have been issued against a Mumbai lawyer and a Pune engineer for allegedly creating a protest toolkit backing the farmers' agitation along with arrested climate activist Disha Ravi and collaborating with pro-Khalistani elements, Delhi Police officials said on Monday.

Lawyer Nikita Jacob and engineer Shantanu, who are absconding, also attended a Zoom meeting organised by 'pro-Khalistani' group Poetic Justice Foundation, Joint Commissioner of Police (Cyber) Prem Nath said.

The three had created the toolkit and sent it to others, officials said as a fierce political debate broke out between the opposition and the ruling BJP over the action against 21year-old Ravi in the case related to the "toolkit Google doc" that came to light when it was shared by global climate campaigner Greta Thunberg. "Disha, Shantanu and Nikita created and edited the toolkit. Disha sent the toolkit to Greta Thunberg through Telegram. Disha deleted a Whatsapp group which she created to spread the toolkit. Due procedure was followed when Disha was arrested."

Nath said.

Ravi was arrested from Bengaluru on Saturday and sent to police remand for five days by a Delhi court on Sunday with officials claiming she was an editor of the "toolkit Google doc" and "key conspirator" in its formulation and dissemination.



Historian Ramchandra Guha (right) along with other activists holds placards during a protest against the arrest of climate activist Disha Ravi, in Bengaluru on Monday

#### Nikita moves HC for bail

Mumbai Mumbai-based lawyer-activist Nikita Jacob moved the Bombay High Court for anticipatory bail after a Delhi court issued a nonbailable arrest warrant against her. Jacob's plea for an urgent hearing was mentioned by her lawyer Abhishek Yende before Justice P.D. Naik on Monday who has posted the matter for Tuesday.

A practicing lawyer since the past six years, Jacob is a resident of Goregaon and has been active in public causes.

Terming the Delhi Police FIR as "false and baseless", she sought transit anticipatory bail for a period of four weeks to enable approach the court in Delhi concerned and apply for a pre-arrest bail.

## Is State so weak? Sibal

New Delhi: The Congress termed the arrest of climate activist Disha Ravi as 'shocking' and 'unfortunate' and asked if the 'state was so weak that a tweet threatened its security'. "Is the State so weak that a tweet threatens its security? Is the state so paranoid that a 22 year is a national security threat? Is the state so intolerant that it cannot tolerate youth standing with farmers? Is this the "badlav" Modiji wanted?": Congress leader Kapil Sibal tweeted. The party's Deputy leader in Rajya Sabha, Anand Sharma tweeted: "Police should recognise her right to liberty and courts must respect the Supreme Court Judgement which says bail is the rule and Jail an exception. "

## What is a toolkit?

A toolkit, simply put, is a document created to explain any issue. It also provides information on what one needs to do to address the issue. This might include information about petitions, details about protests and mass movements and so on. The toolkit that Thunberg shared, tries to "explain the farmers' protests" in the national capital.

"This is a document meant to enable anyone unfamiliar with the ongoing farmers protests in India to better understand the situation and make decisions on how to support the farmers based on their own analysis," the toolkit states.

The toolkit then goes on to apparently summarise the situation of farmers in India and talks about the Centre's recent agriculture legislations.

agriculture legislations.

"Instead of being supported to become self-reliant and prosperous, a majority of farmers are increasingly being subjected to the control of large corporations and international institutions whose sole focus is profits, and necessarily involves increased exploitation of nature," the toolkit states.

It further lists out what actions one can take to support the farmers' protests and the Delhi Police is currently trying to ascertain who created it.

## War of words between BJP, Oppn

New Delhi

Accusing the government of "murdering democracy" by using force against a 21-year-old, the Opposition said the voice of India cannot be silenced even as the BJP defended the action, saying a crime is a crime no matter at what age. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi led the opposition offensive following the arrest of 21-year-old Disha Ravi in the case and said the country will not be silenced.

"Your lips are free to speak. Say that the truth is still alive. They are scared, not the country," he said in a tweet in Hindi. "India will not be silenced," he added. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said, "Arrest of 21 year old Disha Ravi is an unprecedented attack on Democracy. Supporting our farmers is not a crime."

RJD leader Manoi Jha said democracy is under threat. "I am worried about democracy, as it is passing through the most difficult times," he said, Union Minister and BJP leader Gajendra Singh Shekhawat tweeted: "If age is the criteria then Param Veer Chakra Second Lt Arun Khetarpal, martyred at 21 is who I am proud of. Not some toolkit propagandists." BJP general secretary B L Santosh tweeted: "21 year old...environment activist...student...Are these credentials for becoming a part of breaking India forces? How does she get the access for editing tool kit ...? Why she is part of anti-national WhatsApp groups...? Many questions...But only one answer...21 year old." "Bengaluru, Greta Thun-

## Disha argued her own case

Disha Ravi did not have her own lawyer when she was produced in court with charges of sedition and conspiracy. According to Disha Ravi's legal team, she argued her own case before the magistrate. In a post, lawyer Rebecca John has alleged "shocking abdication"

has alleged "shocking abdication of judicial duties". According to her, the magistrate failed to ensure that Disha had legal representation in court. "Deeply disappointed by the conduct of the duty magistrate... who remanded a young woman to five days in police custody, without first ensuring that she was being represented by counsel," Ms John wrote.

berg, Vegan, sole bread winner, student. 21 year old, passionate activist...so many attempts to white wash a sin...!! Not one anarchist ready to answer the question...How 21 year old student got access to edit Toolkit." he asked. Former Union ministers P Chidambaram and Jairam Ramesh have also come out strongly against the police action in the case, accusing the government of running an authoritarian regime as it was threatened by a student. "I strongly condemn the arrest of Disha Ravi and urge all students and youth to raise their voices to protest against the authoritarian regime." Chidambaram said.

## Forging and fabricating medical prescription of Sushant Singh Rajput

## Mumbai HC refuses to quash FIR against sister Priyanka Singh

Mumbai

THE Bombay High Court on Monday refused to quash an FIR lodged against late actor Sushant Singh Rajput's sister Priyanka Singh for allegedly forging and fabricating a medical prescription for her brother. A division bench of Justices S S Shinde and M S Karnik, however, quashed the FIR against Meetu Singh, another sister of

The court said while there was prima facie evidence against Priyanka Singh, the case against Meetu Singh does not stand. "We are of the considered opinion that the FIR against petitioner Meetu Singh does not survive,"

the bench said. "However, the FIR against petitioner Priyanka Singh is not quashed as we prima facie find that a case is made out," the court said.

The bench said its judgment shall not cause an impediment for the investigating agency to probe the FIR and submit whatever report it deems fit. The sisters had approached the HC seeking to quash the First Information Report (FIR) lodged for alleged forgery and fabrication of a medical prescription for their brother for anxiety issues. The FIR was lodged against Priyanka Singh, Meetu Singh and doctor Tarun Kumar of Delhi's Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital by the Bandra police in Mumbai on September 7 last year, based on a complaint filed by Rajput's



girlfriend Rhea Chakraborty. As per the complaint, Rajput's sisters and the doctor prepared a forged and fabricated prescription for anti- depressants for the actor a few days before his death

Rajput, 34, was found dead at his home in suburban Bandra on June 14 last year. His father K K Singh later lodged a case of abetment of suicide and cheating against Chakraborty and her family members. The CBI is conducting a probe into the case.

After registration of the FIR against Rajput's sisters, the Bandra police forwarded the case papers to the Central Bureau of Investigation, as per directions of the Supreme Court which had said all cases pertaining to the death of Rajput shall be probed by the CBI. Senior counsel Vikas Singh, appearing for Rajput's sisters, had argued that telemedicine practice guidelines permitted a

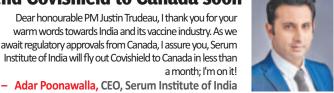
doctor to prescribe medicines after online consultation. He had claimed that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Rajput could not go for physical consultation.

Even assuming that such a prescription was procured, there was no evidence to show Rajput consumed any medicines, Singh told the court. Senior counsel Devdutt Kamat, appearing for the Mumbai police, had opposed the plea and said there was no online consultation done. Rhea Chakraborty's advocate Satish Maneshinde had also opposed the plea of Rajput's sisters, and said one of the circumstances that may have led to the actor's death was the "dangerous cocktail of drugs, narcotic substances and medicines"

**TODAY'S QUOTE** 

#### Will send Covishield to Canada soon

Dear honourable PM Justin Trudeau, I thank you for your warm words towards India and its vaccine industry. As we await regulatory approvals from Canada, I assure you, Serum Institute of India will fly out Covishield to Canada in less than a month: I'm on it!



#### **PROFIT** Sidbi Q3 profit rises by 9%

Small Industries Development Bank of India (Sidbi) on Monday reported 9 per cent growth in net profit at Rs 630 crore for December guarter 2020-21. In the year-ago period, its profit stood at Rs 578 crore. During the first nine months of 2020-21, Sidbi's net profit rose 38.4 per cent to Rs 2,165 crore.

FOREX (bu	n ₹)	Park	
US Dollar	77.05	South	PTA
Euro	92.61	African Rand	5.79
UAE Dirham	21.77	Hong Kong Dollar	10.78
Thai Baht	2.8	Japanese Yen	0.79
British Pound	105.12	New Zealand Dollar	55.24
Australian Dollar	59.36	Saudi Riyal	21.3
Canadian Dollar	60.27	Swedish Krona	10.1
Swiss Franc	84.87	Singapore Dollar	57.69

BENGALURU TUESDAY 16 FEBRUARY 2021

### BIZ BRIEFS

#### **Navi General's** health plan

NAVI General Insurance has launched a two -minutes online retail health insurance product. Customers can buy health insurance via the Navi health in surance app through a quick and completely paperless process and the policy issued to them instantly on the app. The product offers customizable health insurance cover ranging from Rs 2 lakh to Rs 1 cr for individuals and families. The policy offers comprehensive health insurance that covers more than 20 health benefits including in-patient hospitalisation, pre and post hospitalisation expenses, Covid-19 hospitalisation, domiciliary hospitalization etc. Ramchandra Pandit, MD & CEO, Navi General Insurance, said: "With our health insurance offering, our objective is to radically simplify health insurance for individuals and families."

#### **Udaan expands** supply chain

UDAAN announced that its supply chain and logistics capability to serve small businesses across the country, through udaanExpress, has been strengthened to over 10 mn sq. ft. of warehousing space. This warehousing capacity is 230 acres. The achievement of this milestone has been made possible through capacity expansion and addition of new warehouses, taking the total number of warehouses to 200, spread across the country. Sujeet Kumar, co-founder, udaan said: "We are committed to offering world class, tech-enabled and cost-effective supply chain & logistics solutions, in addition to the benefits of eCommerce scale, to small businesses of Bharat. The latest capacity expansion to 10 million sq. ft. allows our customers a better and hassle-free inventory management."

#### **Bada Business** nires more

WITH a post Covid surge in digital learning, EdTech startup Bada Business expanded its workforce by almost 300 per cent this financial year, adding over 300 employees to its work force across the country. The platform offers a series of online business training and skilling programmes for small entrepreneurs and wantrepreneurs. Founded by business trainer Dr Vivek Bindra in 2019. Bada Business is a rare case of a bootstrapped startup crossing Rs 100 crore in revenue within two years of starting up. "In a post Covid environment, not only has digital learning witnessed a boost, there has also been a surge in requirement for up-skilling and business training for entrepreneurs looking to adapt their businesses to the new normal. We have witnessed a soaring demand," said Dr Bindra, CEO, Bada Business.

#### **Eupheus** raises \$4.1mn

Eupheus Learning a Delhibased leading B2B EdTech company has raised \$4.1 million in series B funding round. The round is led by United Education Company, Kuwait's leading company in the education sector and Al Ravan Holding Company in which UEC holds a majority stake, offering different curriculum to cater to the Kuwait's markets diverse demographic composition. The company is the largest outreach platform for schools with an ecosystem of 13,000 schools, driving partnerships with 5,000 schools covering 4 million students. Shaikha Dana Nasser Al-Sabah, chairperson, UEC, said: "We are excited to partner with Eupheus Team as they continue their journey in fast-growing EdTech market with their innovative and differentiated offerings".

## **Centre may put** 4 banks on sale

HANS BUSINESS

New Delhi

THE central government has shortlisted four mid-sized state-run banks for privatisation, under a new push to sell state assets and shore up government revenues, Reuters news agency reported quoting three government sources.

Privatisation of the banking sector, which is dominated by public sector banks (PSBs) with hundreds of thousands of employees, is politically risky because it could put jobs at risk, but Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration aims to make a start with second-tier banks, the report said. The four banks on the shortlist are Bank of Maharashtra, Bank of India, Indian Overseas Bank and the Central Bank of India, two officials told Reuters on condition of anonymity as the matter is not yet public. Two of those banks will be selected for sale in the next financial year which begins in April, the officials said. The shortlist has not previously been reported.

The government is considering mid-sized to small banks for its first round of privatisation to test the waters. In the coming years it could also look at some of the country's bigger banks, the officials said.

The government, however, will continue to hold a majority stake in



**PSB SALE LIST** 

Bank of Maharashtra Bank of India

Indian Overseas Bank Central Bank of India

**Privatisation of the banking** sector, which is dominated by public sector banks (PSBs) with hundreds of thousands of employees, is politically risky because it could put jobs at risk

India's largest lender State Bank of India, which is seen as a 'strategic bank' for implementing initiatives such as expanding rural credit. A finance ministry spokesman declined to comment on the matter.

India's deepest economic contraction on record caused by the pandemic is driving the push for bolder reforms, economists say.

Government also wants to over-

haul a banking sector reeling under a heavy load of non-performing assets, which are likely to rise further once banks are allowed to categorise loans that soured during the pandemic as bad. PM Modi's office initially wanted four banks to be put up for sale in the coming fiscal year, but officials have advised caution fearing resistance from unions representing the employees, the report added.

#### **Demand for** completed flats rise in 2020: Survey

New Delhi

DEMAND for completed residential properties is rising compared to that for under-construction flats, as the share of ready-to-move-in homes in the total housing sales in 2020 rose to 21 per cent from 18 per cent in the previous year, according to News Corp-backed realty brokerage firm PropTiger.

A total of 1,82,640 units were sold in the 2020 calendar year, of which 21 per cent were in the RTMI (ready-to-move-in) category and 79 per cent were under-construction, PropTiger said quoting its Real Insight report for 2020. In 2019, a total of 3.47.590 units were sold of which 18 per cent were RTMI, it said in a statement. PropTiger research found that the share of RTMI in the total sales has been on the rise since 2016.

The share of RTMI in total sales during 2015 was 7 per cent, which increased to 10 per cent in 2016, 12 per cent in 2017, 15 per cent in 2018 and 18 per cent in 2019, the statement said. "Risk-averse home buyers are increasingly opting for readyto-move-in flats. Even in underconstruction properties, the preference is towards branded developers or those with an impeccable track record of execution," said Dhruv Agarwala, Group CEO, Housing.com, Makaan.com PropTiger.com.

## Sensex hits 52,000 mark on global cues

#### Rallies 610 points as investors pile into banking, finance stocks

**M**UMBAI

THE Sensex rallied 610 points to finish above the 52,000-mark for the first time while the Nifty soar past 15,300 on Monday as investors piled into banking and finance stocks amid a bullish trend overseas

Supportive macroeconomic data and unabated foreign fund inflows added to the momentum, traders said. After touching a record high of 52,235.97 during the day, the 30-share BSE Sensex ended 609.83 points or 1.18 per cent up at its new closing peak of 52,154.13. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty soared 151.40 points or 1 per cent to finish at a record 15,314.70. It touched an intra-day peak of 15,340.15. Axis Bank led the Sensex gainers' chart, climbing 5.88 per cent, followed by ICICI Bank, Bajaj Finance, SBI, IndusInd Bank, HDFC, Bajaj Finserv and HDFC Bank. On the other hand, Dr Reddy's, TCS, Tech Mahindra, HUL, Asian Paints and Titan were among the laggards, sliding up to 1.77 per

"Indian market opened on a positive following upbeat peers in Asia as Nikkei 225 crossed

30,000 for first time in more than three decades with Japan's economy growing 12.7 per cent on an annualised basis in October to December last year," said Narendra Solanki, Head - Equity Research (Fundamental), Anand Rathi. Meanwhile, the wholesale price-based inflation rose sharply to 2.03 per cent in January on costlier non-food manufactured items. Indicating some signs of recovery, industrial production recorded a positive growth of 1 per cent in December while retail inflation cooled to a 16-month low of 4.06 per cent in January, as per data released post market hours on Friday. Sector-wise, BSE bankex, finance, realty, industrials, telecom and healthcare indices rallied up to 3.31 per cent, while IT, consumer durables,

metal and teck ended in the red. Broader BSE midcap and smallcap indices surged up to 1.40 per cent. Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in China and Hong Kong were closed for the Lunar New Year holidays, while Tokyo and Seoul ended with strong gains.

### OpenTeQ rolls out new integrated tech solutions

HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

OPENTEQ, a global digital solutions and IT services company, has announced its new integrated technology solutions for customers. The IT solutions will help businesses modernise their operations by integrating software and systems to meet their technological needs.

OpenTeQ, with over a decade of experience, offers a wide spectrum of services and solutions like development and integrabusiness tion,

processes services, engineering services, quality assurance and testing, digital engagement, data and analytics and Cloud-enabled IT operations. With these services, all enterprises can streamline their business processes and create business models to meet changing market needs, the company said in a statement.

"As businesses today continue to migrate critical workloads, enter-

prises need to focus on digital transformation and smart use of IT services. With our new integrated solutions, we can confidently help enterprises modernise workloads and enable digital acceleration, thereby increasing productivity and reducing IT costs. We want to be the trusted technology partner, delivering the best-suited technology consulting and services to em-

power our clients," said Narendra Anumolu, Director, OpenTeQ Technologies

OpenTeQ's services

include application, development and integration, business processes services, engineering services, quality assurance and testing, digital engagement, data and analytics, and Cloud-enabled IT operations. The objective is to also enable clients to draw deep insights and predictive analysis in real-time to uncover new business opportunities, increase operational efficiencies, empower employees, and offer a better experi-

ence to their customers.

#### **NCDEX** set to launch Hi-pro soybean meal **futures tomorrow**

New Delhi

LEADING agri-commodity bourse NCDEX on Monday said it will launch futures trading in animal feed 'Hi-pro soybean meal' on February 17. The futures contracts in Hi-pro soybean meal, expiring in the months of March to September will be available for trading at the time of the launch. The contract will have a trading and delivery unit of 10 tonne. The basis centre and additional delivery centre for the contract would be Indore in Madhya Pradesh and Latur in Maharashtra, respectively, the exchange said in a statement. Hi-pro soybean meal is an animal feed with the high protein content of 50 per cent or more as compared with around 46 per cent in normal soymeal.

With the launch of Hi-Pro sovbean meal contract, NCDEX Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Vijay Kumar said the exchange has achieved a key milestone of having all the major tradeable products in soybean complex on the derivatives platform.

### Sreemukhi promotes Luvih cosmetic retailer

HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

NEW retailing brand Luvih has on Sunday forayed into beauty products retailing business. Luvih means beauty in Sanskrit. Promoted by noted anchor and actress Sreemukhi, Rasgau International, which owns Luvih brand, will initially sell perfumes in the outlets. Soon the company will introduce beauty, grooming, haircare products. Sreemukhi is also the brand ambassador for the product.

Perfumes from 80 brands including 40 international brands will be available. They are priced from Rs 299 to Rs 7,500. During the first year of its operations. Luvih will introduce 10 global perfume brands for the first time in India. A total of 300 products will be on sale. Products of 110 brands will be available online as well.

"I have been thinking of setting up a business for quite some time. I have now got partners who understand my thoughts. The experience they have in retail business will help Luvih brand. Demand for perfumes



(From left) Rasagau International Directors Tirupati Rao Vojja, Srikanth Avirneni, Sreemukhi and Vijay Adusumilli, launching the brand

and other cosmetics is on the rise in villages too. My objective is to provide self-employment opportunities for the youth through franchise, with small investment," said Sreemukhi, Director, Rasgau International, V Tirupati Rao, Srikanth Avirneni and Vijay Adusumalli are the other company directors.

Luvih has signed an agreement with Linen House, which sells linen garments, for setting up shop-inshop outlets. These outlets will be opened in 23 outlets of Linen House located in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. The brand is also talking to other retail chains for shop-in-shop outlets.

#### Israeli firm signs deal to transfer crop breeding programme

HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

NRGENE, an Israeli genomics artificial intelligence (AI) company, on Monday signed an agreement with Indian seed genetics startup Foragen Seeds to transfer its India-based, eightyear-old crop breeding programme of maize, rice and chillipepper to the latter.

This agreement is to advance the field breeding programme of elite seed development and product commercialisation in India. NRGene has carried out broad molecular breeding projects for the Indian market. The germplasms and breeding materials will significantly help in developing a robust commercial product pipeline suited to the various climate zones in India and other tropical and sub-tropical countries. "We look forward to see our elite germplasm cultivated across India, providing Indian farmers with extra yield and quality," said Dr Gil Ronen, NR-Gene CEO.

The following are the large and

medium scale industries that are

#### A Raju MAHABUBNAGAR

PALAMURU region of erstwhile Mahabubnagar district is unfortunately known for its backwardness, and large migrating labor population since past many decades, however, ever since the beginning of open economy and industrial liberalization in 1990s onwards, the industrial sector in the district has been moving on a fast track, where in hundreds of large, medium and small scale industries have set up their manufacturing bases across various parts of the district and have been providing employment to the local population sine past over 3 decades now.

However, the industrial growth in Mahabubnagar had further accelerated ever since the establishment of the green filed Industrial Park Special Economic Zone (SEZ), an exclusive pharmaceutical and allied industrial hub at Jadcherla, in the year 2008. To begin with, the erstwhile Mahabubnagar district's industrial sector which was initially given the push 3 decades ago has established various small, medium and large scale industries in various parts of the district. The most prominent among all these industrial zones is the Kottur Industrial Development Area (IDA), which was established during 1990s on wards. This industrial area had grown at a rapid pace in the district and it is spread over

## Palamuru fast picking up industrially

### **District offers umpteen opportunities for investors**

more than 180 acres in the Kottur Mandal of erstwhile Mahabubnagar district. Apart from Kottur IDA, there are 5 other important industrial zones that came up subsequently which include one Industrial Estate in the district located at Mahabubnagar and 4 Industrial Development Areas at Kottur, Jadcherla, Palem, and Gadwal. Almost all plots, sheds and shops that have been developed are allotted to the entrepreneurs except in Gadwal.

All these industrial areas have brought in a sea change in the overall outlook of the erstwhile Mahabubnagar district, where in, lakhs of people who used to migrate for livelihood could now earn their living due to the employment opportunities available for the local people in these industries.

As per the latest statistics available from the district industries department there are at present 60 Large and Medium Industries in the sectors of basic metals, fibre glass, pharmaceutical formulations, particle board manufacturing, poultry, and textiles. In addition to this, there are over 3,308 registered small scale / tiny industries with an overall in-



vestment of Rs 154.10 crore. It is estimated that all these industries provide employment to more than 50,000 people in the district.

The main reason for the fast pickup of industrial sector in the erstwhile Mahabubnagar is its proximity to Hyderabad city and the international airport located at Shamshabad in Ranga Reddy district, adjoin erstwhile the district

With the establishment of the airport, it has enhanced the establishment of export oriented units in the district. "Erstwhile Mahabubnagar had attracted a large scale, national and international companies to its industrial areas. Particularly, the Pharma SEZ at Jadcherla and upcoming small and medium scale industries elsewhere in the district has really changed the face of the Palamuru region. From being negatively labeled as a labor migration district, today we are witnessing reverse migration to the district, where in hundreds and thousands of people from other states are coming to Mahabubnagar in search of livelihood.

However, apart from the existing industries, the district has ample opportunities to attract investors in various sectors like agro based industries, food processing industries, fiber and cement manufacturing industries, steel manufacturing industries and others," said Sdistrict collector S Venkat Rao.

#### Mega projects

ITC Limited had proposed to established a 2 lakh ton ECF Pulp Mill and 92 lakh ton coated wood free paper machine in area of about of 1,000



hectares. The proposed cost of entire project is Rs 2500 crore. The Plant requires 21 cusecs of water for day throughout the year. Land has been identified in Gadwal, Pebbair, Makthal and Maganoor mandals of Mahabubnagar district. The suitability of the land for the project has to be finalized by M/s ITC Limited.

Grasim Industries Limited, an Aditya Birla Group company, which is a leader in the field of textiles, having a turnover of Rs.25000 crore per annum has proposed to establish a polyfibre unit in Mahabubnagar district. The project is proposed to be implemented in three phases with total outlay of Rs 2100 crore. The project requires an area of around 1,000 acres. The land identification for the project is under process.

coming up newly in Mahabubnagar and they have already filed for single window clearances system for obtaining various clearances/approvals from different department. These industries are under active implementation and are likely to go into operation shortly. Some of these ininclude, Hoffamann International Limited located at IDA, Kottur, high security vehicle registration plates making, Abhedya Industries Ltd located at Kottur, makers of all types of BOPP filters, Dayakar Sugar (P) Ltd., at Balakistapur village, Binjusaria Sponge and Power (P) Ltd at Shadnagar, Sponge Iron, pig iron makers, Bilasraika Sponge Iron India Pvt. Ltd., at Gundla Potkapally in Balanagar mandal, Indo American Paper Products Limited, at Nandigaon in Kothur mandal, Surva Jyothi Spinning Mills Ltd., at Maktal, M.S.Ingots, Steel Toling Sponge Iron, Kedia Alloys Ltd, at Thimmapur, GVK Novopan Inds. (P) Ltd and various other industries have established bases in Mahabubnagar district.

Apart from the above industries, one more mega industry is coming up in State - Jai Raj Ispat Limited. Announcing its decision to set up a steel plant in Dharur mandal of Gadwal in the district. The proposed steel plant will come up in 250 acre land in the southern region of the district.

## INDIA ON CUSP OF BIG WIN

CHENNAI

RAVICHANDRAN Ashwin on Monday scored his fifth Test century as India tightened the noose around England in the second Test as they set England a target of 482 runs and then reduced them to 52 for three at stumps on the third day.

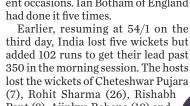
Ashwin scored 106 runs off 148 balls with the help of 14 fours and a six as India's second innings came to an end at 286 in the post-tea session. Mohammad Siraj remained unbeaten on 16, and added 49 runs for the final wicket with Ashwin who was the last wicket to fall.

India then knocked out openers Dom Sibley (3) and Rory Burns (25) as well as night-watchman Jack Leach (0) to set England back in chase of 482. England are still 430 runs adrift.

Ashwin's century followed a fivewicket haul in England's first innings, making him only the second cricketer to achieve the feat of a century and a fifer in the same game on three differ-

ent occasions. Ian Botham of England had done it five times. (7), Rohit Sharma (26), Rishabh





However, skipper Virat Kohli and Ashwin then shared a 96-run stand for the seventh wicket to put India in a commanding position.

Kohli, who showed his class on a Chepauk wicket that aided turn, was the first wicket to fall in the post-lunch session as he was dismissed by Moeen Ali at his individual score of 62. This was the fifth time that Ali had dismissed the India skipper in Test

Kuldeep Yadav (3) and Ishant Sharma (7) also shared eight and 27run partnerships respectively with Ashwin to frustrate the England bowlers.

India had posted 329 runs in their first innings. The hosts then bowled out England for 134, securing a 195run lead in first innings.

former players from around the

More calling him one of

the best overseas

players to have

world for his brilliant work

against India, with Kiran

**England wicket-keeper Ben Foakes, who turned 28** 

on Monday, drew all-round praise from renowned

### **LEFT-HANDERS' BOGEYMEN**

OFF-SPINNER RAVICHANDRAN ASHWIN HAS BECOME THE FIRST PLAYER IN THE 143-YEAR HISTORY OF TEST CRICKET TO TAKE 200 WICKETS AGAINST LEFT-HANDED BATSMEN. IN 76 TESTS, HE HAS PICKED 391 WICKETS AND 51.27 PER CENT OF HIS VICTIMS ARE LEFT-HANDERS





an innings



172 of 563

Vinoo Mankad (vs England at Lord's, London, in 1952) and Polly Umrigar (vs West Indies in Port of Spain in 1961-62) are the other Indians to score a century and take five wickets in

### **SCOREBOARD DAY 3**

## Brought out the sweep shot after 13-14 years: Ashwin

INDIA off-spinner R Ashwin, who scored his fifth Test century after a five-wicket haul to help India take the stranglehold of the second Test, said he brought out his sweep shot for the first time after well over a decade.

"After the last Test, we were thinking on how to counter [Jack] Leach and start bringing sweep to the game. The last time I was sweeping was probably when I was 19 years old; hit a couple of sweep shots, got dropped from the side, and maybe never played a sweep for the last 11, maybe 13-14 years. I've been practicing that shot for the last week to 10 days. Very, very thankful that the plan has really paid off," Ashwin, who scored 106 to help India make 286 in the second innings and set a target of 482 runs for England, said after the third day's play.

Ashwin credited India's batting coach Vikram Rathour, a former India opener, for improvement in his batting.

"We have been practicing along with Vikram Rathour. Rathour has been very, very helpful trying to explore new options. He is someone who is facilitating me to go out there and be able to express myself, explore various options. I would love to credit him for how my batting has gone through the last four-five Test matches. He has kept me in the loop, said I have been batting very well. He asked me not to overthink but just look at the gameplan," he disclosed.

Ashwin added that the big target has helped them be able to attack the batsmen with fielders around the bat. "The wicket is such that you have to get runs square of the wicket. Sort of had a very, very good day. We posted a very good score. Now we can really attack with men around the bat," said Ashwin.

"I think in the past when I have made my hundreds in India, Ishi [Ishant Sharma] has been a sort cog in the wheel. He has been with me twice when I made my hundred. He sort of understands how I go about it. Ishi was defending well. So, I thought I need to take calculated risks as long as he was there. But once Siraj came, I knew I had to get it done in a few overs. But I was super thrilled how he batted and hit the ball out of the ground," he said smilingly.

On Siraj's celebration after his hundred, Ashwin said: "Quite a funny thing [to see him] excited when I got to my hundred. That says a thing or two how the dressing room has been. Lived a dream over the past three-four months."

Earlier, on Sunday, Ashwin became the first player in the 143year history of Test cricket to take 200 wickets against left-handed batsmen. Fast bowler Stuart Broad was the 200th left-hander he

### ALL-ROUND



## Play-off spot in sight, Hyderabad FC hope to return to winning ways

Vasco

A play-off spot in sight, Hyderabad FC can ill-afford any slipup when they take on a struggling Kerala Blasters in an Indian Super League match at the Tilak Maidan Stadium here on Tuesday.

For most part of the ISL season, Hyderabad had maintained their place in the top four. But now, with three games to go, they find themselves at fifth, level on points with fourthplaced FC Goa and two points below NorthEast United.

From here on, Hyderabad can't afford more slip-ups. They have played out six draws in their last seven matches. And when t h e

Aridane Santana looks to add on to nis goal tally against KBFC





**RESULTS** 2-4

p four."

Nizams face Kerala Blasters on

Tuesday, they will know that any

more dropped points will hugely

of the most vulnerable sides in the

league, who are playing for pride.

Kerala Blasters have conceded 29

goals, which is the second-worst

tally. Their defence has been so

fragile that Kibu Vicuna's side has

now dropped 18 points after scor-

ing the first goal. But for Hyder-

to be taken lightly.

bad coach Manuel Marquez,

that doesn't mean Kerala are

"All the other teams, from

Kerala who are second from

Kerala with our style. We are

nine games unbeaten but six

of them are draws. We have

to continue in the same

vein and try to win the

game because our season

has been fantastic. We

want to be in the top

the bottom, till the top posi-

tions, can climb posi-

"We will play with

🐧 tions in the table," he

On paper, Hyderabad face one

dent their play-off ambitions.

CLUB	M			L				
ATK Mohun Bagan	17	11	3	3	23 .	10	13	36
Mumbai City FC								
NorthEast United FC	17	6	8	3	24 .	21	3	26
FC Goa	17	5	9	3	26 .	21	5	24
Hyderabad FC	17	5	9	3	21 .	17	4	24
Bengaluru FC	18	5	7	6	23 .	23	0	22
Jamshedpur FC	18	5	6	7	16.	20.	4	21
Chennaiyin FC	18	3	9	6	13.	19.	6	18
SC East Bengal	17	3	8	6	15 .	22.	<b></b> -7.	17
Kerala Blasters FC	17	3	7	7	22 .	29.	<del></del> -7.	16
Odisha FC	17	1	6	10	17 .	30	13	9

### **Racing Team India makes ALMS debut**

DUBAI: Racing Team India won its bid to become the first all-Indian squad to compete at the 24 Hours of Le Mans with a solid debut over the opening two rounds of the Asian Le Mans Series in Dubai this weekend. The JK Tyres-backed team's ORECA 07 LMP2 car, driven by Narain Karthikeyan, Arjun Maini and Naveen Rao, with technical support from reigning ALMS champions Algarve Pro Racing, finished fifth and fourth in the two fourhour races held at the Dubai Autodrome on Saturday and Sunday respectively. The team's car showed promising pace throughout the weekend. But its challenge was hampered by racing incidents and a penalty. The team had to make an extra precautionary pit-stop in Saturday's opening race which dropped the car down the order.

## Ojha retires from all forms of cricket, says keen to play in global T20 leagues

AN emotional Naman Ojha struggled to hold back tears on Monday as he bade adieu to all forms of cricket, bringing down curtains on a two-decade long illustrious domestic career.

The 37-year-old from Madhya Pradesh, who holds the record for the most dismissals by a wicketkeeper in the Ranji Trophy, featured in one Test, one ODI and two T20 Internationals. "I would like to announce my retirement from international and BCCI/MPCA domestic

first-class cricket," a tearyeved Oiha said in a virtual press conference.

against Fabio, you worry," said

Nadal after the match as per the

"There can always be prob-

lems. I was just lucky that when

he broke me (in the second set) I

ATP Tour website.

BHOPAL "After 20 years in first-class wishers, and MPCA & BCCI," he cricket and many more during the junior competitions, I feel it's time for me to move on. It was a long journey and wonderful phase of my life.

"I am grateful to all who supported me in achieving dream of playing for my country and state

my coaches, trainers, physios and selectors, my



added.

Ojha said he is eager to ply his trade in global T20 leagues. As per the BCCI rules, he is now eligible for such leagues, having announced his retirement from all forms of cricket.

"While I leave the competitive format of game for my state and country with best of memories, I shall be keen to wear the gloves and face the ball in global competitions," he said.

Ojha made his international debut in 2010 in his only ODI against Sri Lanka, followed by his first T20I match in Zimbabwe a week later. His lone Test came in 2015 against Sri Lanka in Colombo and the top-order batsman rued not being able to play for his country more. (PTI)

## Nadal beats Fognini to enter Aus Open quarters

MELBOURNE

WORLD number two Rafael Nadal on Monday entered the Australian Open quarter-finals for the 13th time after getting past Fabio Fognini in their

fourth round contest. Nadal, the 2009 champion, registered a 6-3, 6-4, 6-2 win over the Italian No. 16 seed in two hours and 16 minutes at the Rod Laver Arena. "When you go on court

Spain's Rafael Nadal hits a forehand return during his fourth round match against Italy's Fabio Fognini at the Australian

Open tennis

in Melbourne

Australia on

become the first man in the Open Era to clinch each of the four major championships on two

or more occasions.

He will next face fifth-seeded Greek Stefanos Tsitsipas, who received a walkover after No. 9 seed Matteo Berrettini of Italy withdrew due

responded immediately and to an held the score. Today was very humid and quicker during the day, which I like, but I have to adapt to every condition," he The 34-year-old is

looking to

nal strain. Earlier in the day, fourth seed Daniil Medvedev also booked his place in the quarter-finals after a commanding straight-sets win over Mackenzie McDonald. Medvedev beat the 25-year-old

American 6-4, 6-2, 6-3 in his fourth-round match that lasted an hour and 29 minutes at the Margaret Court Arena.

domi-

"It's an exciting moment (to

be) in (the) quarter-finals in Australia for the first time, that's a great achievement for me," Medvedev was quoted as saying in his post-match interview by the ATP Tour website. "I want more all the time, but step by step. So this is amazing."

Medvedev can now face Andrey Rublev -- who takes on Casper Ruud in the fourth round -- in what can be a blockbuster quarter-final clash.

"Of course I'm going to be (cheering) for Andrey, because if he goes through it's going to be at least one Russian in the semis, maybe two with Aslan (Karatsev) in the other half of the draw," said Medvedev.

With the win, Medvedev had moved into his third Grand Slam quarter-final, and his first away from the US Open. He is looking to become Russia's first male Grand Slam champion since Marat Safin won the Australian Open in 2005. (IANS)

### Rahul at 2, Kohli at 7 in ICC T201 rankings

DUBAI: Indian batsmen KL Rahul and Virat Kohli have maintained their respective second and seventh spots in the ICC T20I rankings for batsmen which got updated on Monday.

India are slated to take on England in five T20Is, following the culmination of the ongoing four-Test series, part of the ICC World Test Championship (WTC) and the duo will get a chance to gain some points.

The rankings got updated following the culmination of the threematch series between Pakistan and South Africa which the Babar Azam led-side won 2-1.

South Africa spinner Tabraiz Shamsi has grabbed a career-best second position among bowlers while Pakistan wicketkeeper-batsman Mohammad Rizwan has raced to 42nd place in the rankings.

Shamsi's series-topping six wick-

ets, which included a haul of four for

25 in the final match, helped the left-

arm wrist-spinner overtake Australia's Adam Zampa, England's Adil

Rashid and Afghanistan's Mujeeb Ur Rahman to within three points of top-ranked Rashid Khan of Afghanistan. Rizwan too benefited from heading the run-aggregate in the series with 197 runs, which comprised knocks of 104 not out, 51 and 42. The string of impressive scores won him the player of the series award and lifted him a whopping 116

slots to a career-best 42nd position. Haider Ali is another Pakistan batsman to advance, moving up 13 places to 137th position while fast bowlers Shaheen Afridi (up five places to 11th) and Hasan Ali (up 14 places to 82nd), and spinners Mohammad Nawaz (re-entered at 64th) and Usman Qadir (up 129 places to

92nd) are the bowlers to progress.

For South Africa, Reeza Hendricks's 98 runs in the series have lifted him seven places to 17th and David Miller's 116 runs, which included a 45-ball 85 not out in the second match, sees him gain seven places to 22nd position in the list led by Dawid Malan of England. There is no change of positions in the ICC team rankings after the series.