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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 war-footing at Tapovan-Vishnugad project site by multiple agencies to reach people believed to be trapped inside the tunnel. Real-time information is being shared with the agencies involved in the exercise to expedite it, Jayada said.

BUSINESS



Centre may put 4 banks on sale

P6

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



SC slaps notice on WhatsApp, FB

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 privacy policy for the Europeans 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 Chief Justice and comprising Justices AS Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian, told the counsel for WhatsApp, "People have grave apprehensions about loss of privacy."

You may be 2 or 3 trillion-dollar company, but people value their privacy more than your money. We have to protect people's privacy." Senior advocates Kapil Sibal and Arvind Datar, appearing 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 applicable to the rest of the world except Europe."

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RACHABANDA LIKELY FROM UGADI

HANS NEWS SERVICE AMARAVATI

WITH the positive response from people towards YSRCP government during the present panchayat polls and successful implementation of welfare schemes announced under Navaratala programme of YSRCP election manifesto, Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy is likely to organise Rachabanda programmes in the State soon.

Though there is no official confirmation, speculations are rife that the programme would be launched from Ugadi. Chief Minister is said to be keen to start the programme which is aimed at getting direct feedback from people about the implementation of welfare programmes. Sources say that by Ugadi, the local body elections will also be over and hence Ugadi could be the best and auspicious date to launch the programme.

India to test 160-km strike range Astra missile soon

AJIT K DUBEY NEW DELHI

IN a step that would establish 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



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 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 operational by the next year-end,

former Central Air Commander Air Marshal SBP Sinha (Retd) said.

The retired officer has been associated with the Astra missile programme for a long time now.

The Astra is a beyond visual 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)

PM to address experts for effective implementation of budget

NEW DELHI

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi will address a webinar on Tuesday for consultation on the roadmap for effective implementation of the Union Budget 2021-22 in the infrastructure sector. The webinar will see

the participation of more than 200 panelists, including representatives of major financial institutions and funds, concessionaires and contractors, consultants and subject matter experts, the Prime Minister's Office said in a statement.

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Govt eases curbs on geospatial data for map-making

NEW DELHI

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 deregulated and aspects such as 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

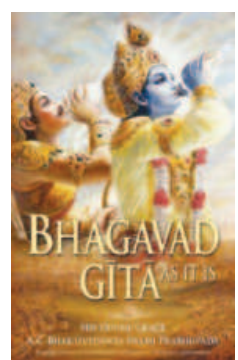
maps, he said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the liberalisation of policies governing the acquisition and production of geospatial data is a "massive step in government's vision for an Aatmanirbhar Bharat". The reform will benefit the country's farmers, start-ups, private sector, public sector and research institutions to drive innovations and build scalable solutions, he said.

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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 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



name and photograph of the prime minister on the top panel with the words

Atmanirbhar mission. This 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 Times. 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 nanosatellite.

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Centre releases GST compensation of ₹2,167 cr to AP



HANS NEWS SERVICE HYDERABAD

THE Finance Ministry on Monday released 16th weekly instalment of Rs 5,000 crore to the States to meet the GST compensation shortfall, taking the total amount released so far to Rs 95,000 crore.

Till now, 86 per cent of the total estimated GST compensation shortfall has been released to the States and Union Territories (UTs) with legislative assembly.

Further, additional borrowing permission of over

Rs 1.06 lakh crore was granted to the States. As part of that amount raised through special window passed on to Andhra Pradesh is Rs 2,167.20 crore and Rs 1,703.56 for Telangana.

The Centre set up a special borrowing window in October 2020 to meet the estimated shortfall of Rs1.10-lakh crore in revenue due to GST implementation. The borrowings are being done through this window by the Centre on behalf of the States and Union Territories.

Municipal polls on March 10

HANS NEWS SERVICE AMARAVATI

THE AP State Election Commission (SEC) issued notification for the conduct of elections to 12 municipal corporations and 75 municipalities/nagar panchayats in the State here on Monday.

It may be noted that the election process was completed up to the state of scrutiny of nominations on March 14, 2020, and the commission stopped the election process midway due to Covid-19 pandemic. Now the SEC will continue the election process from the stage of withdrawal of candidature.

As per the notification, the commencement of withdrawal of candidates will be on March 2 from 11 am to 3 pm, last date of withdrawal of candidature on March 3 after 3 pm and date of polling will be March 10 from 7 am to 5 pm. Repolling, if any, will be conducted on March 13 and date of counting will be held on March 14 from 8 am onward.

With the issuing of election notification, the model code of conduct has come into force in the State from Monday. However, Opposition parties including the TDP, the Congress, the CPI (M) and the Jana Sena felt that the SEC should have cancelled the previous elections that were held about one year ago and started the process once again.



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