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HYDERABAD DELHI LUCKNOW

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VAISSHNAV TO **COLLABORATE** WITH MANAM **ENTERTAINMENTS**

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SENSEX POSTS WORST DAY IN 11 MONTHS, SINKS 1,940 POINTS

he BSE Sensex crashed about 1,940 points to post its biggest single-day fall in nearly 11 months and the NSE Nifty plunged over 568 points to crack below the psychological 15,000-mark on Friday, tracking global selloffs triggered by a panic in bond markets overseas. Investors also turned cautious ahead of the third quarter GDP data release, besides keeping an eye on simmering geopolitical tensions between the US and Syria. At the day's close, the 30-share BSE Sensex settled 1,939.32 points or 3.80 per cent lower at 49,099.99 its worst one-day fall since May 4 last year



POLL OFFICIALS FRONTLINE WORKERS, WILL BE VACCINATED: ELECTION BODY

lection officials will be eligible for COVID-19 vaccination, the Election Commission said on Friday as it announced dates for assembly polls in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, West Bengal, Assam and Puducherry. Election officials are frontline workers and they will be vaccinated, Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora said in the news conference in Delhi. Voting time has been increased by 1 hour because of the pandemic, he added. During filing of nominations, only two people will be allowed to accompany the candidate, he said. This is the first major set of elections to be held in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic after the Bihar election



SMRITI IRANI RIDES A SCOOTER IN BENGAL, DAY AFTER MAMATA BANERJEE

nion Minister Smriti Irani was seen negotiating the narrow lanes of suburban Kolkata on a scooter as part of a BJP motorcycle rally on Friday, just a day after Trinamool Congress boss Mamata Banerjee was seen riding pillion to work. On a day the Election Commission is expected to announce dates for the Bengal elections, due in April-May, along with other states across the country, the BJP's big guns Rajnath Singh and Smriti Irani are campaigning on Mamata Banerjee's turf. Rajnath Singh will be in Balurghat along with state BJP president Dilip Ghosh while Irani took part in the rally in the Baruipur-Sonarpur area, a TMC stronghold.



MUMBAI'S HIGH-SECURITY ARTHUR **ROAD JAIL AWAITS NIRAV MODI**

ith a UK court ruling in favour of extradition of fugitive diamond merchant Nirav Modi, wanted in India on charges of fraud and money laundering in Punjab National Bank scam case, Mumbai's Arthur Road jail has kept a special cell ready to lodge him, an official said today. The jail official said that once Nirav Modi is brought to Mumbai, he will be kept in one of the three cells of barrack No. 12, which is a high-security barrack. "Preparations for lodging Nirav Modi in the jail have been completed and a cell is ready for him, whenever he is extradited," he said.



B'desh High **Commissioner meets** Assam CM Sonowal



The way forward for the Insolvency Code



PM asks banks to come out with innovative products for startups

8

TODAY

Month & Paksham:

Magha & Shukla Paksha Panchangam Tithi: Purnima: 01:46 pm

Nakshatram: Magha: 11:18 am Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start any important work)

Rahukalam: 09:34 am – 11:01 am **Yamagandam:** 01:56 pm - 03:23 pm Varjyam: 06:44 pm - 08:13 pm 06:39 am - 08:06 am Good Time: (to start any important work) **Amritakalam:** 09:02 am - 10:32 am **Abhijit Muhurtham:** 12:05 pm – 12:52 pm

HYDERABAD

Forecast: Partly cloudy **Temp:** 34/18 Humidity: 30% **Sunrise:** 06:35 am Sunset: 06:21 pm **Current Weather Conditions**

Five Assembly polls to begin March 27, counting on May 2

Voting for five Assemblies will begin on March 27, with West Bengal conducting the maximum eight phases continuing till April 29, and votes for the polls in the four states and one union territory will be counted on May 2, the Election Commission said on Friday.

As many as 18.68 crore voters will be eligible to cast their votes at 2.7 lakh polling stations for 824 assembly seats across Assam, West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry.

The elections for the five Assemblies are expected to witness a determined attempt by the BJP to put a strong show, including in Assam where it is already in power, as well as in West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry where the saffron party has been pushing hard in recent years.

Elections in Assam will be conducted in three phases on March 27, April 1 and April 6, while polling in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry will take place in a single phase on ■ 18.68 cr voters will be eligible to cast their votes at 2.7 L polling stations for 824 Assembly seats

Assembly polls in West Bengal will be held in eight phases. up from seven last time



Elections for the West Bengal Assembly will be held in eight phases, up from seven last time, beginning with polling for 30 seats on March Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora said while announcing the poll schedule.

The second phase of West Bengal's assembly elections has been scheduled for April 1 and will cover 30 constituencies, followed by the third phase on April 6 for 31 seats, the fourth on April 10 for 44 constituencies, the fifth on April 17 for 45 seats, sixth for 43 seats on April 22, seventh

Tirupati, N Sagar schedule soon

PNS VIJAYAWADA: Curiously, the Election Commission of India failed to mention by-polls for the Tirupati Lok Sabha seat in Andhra Pradesh and Nagarjunasagar Assembly constituency in Telangana while releasing the schedule for elections in four States and the Union Territory of Puducherry. It was largely expected that the ECI would also announce the dates for the by-polls in the two Telugu states, but going by the absence of any mention in the poll panel briefing, it appears that such a schedule would be announced separately, perhaps in the

phase on April 26 for 36 seats and last and eighth phase on April 29 for 35 seats, Arora

next few days.



Bengal, TN's last-minute sops before announcement

PNS CHENNAI

At least two of the five pollbound states today rushed to announce populist schemes hours ahead of the election dates being announced. Tamil Nadu and West

Bengal introduced various policy changes seemingly aimed at electoral prospects. The model code of conduct, which comes into effect immediately after the Election Commission declares the poll dates,



SC nixes plea to implement NGT fiat on Kaleshwaram

PNS NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday refused to entertain a plea seeking implementation of National Green Tribunal order on the expansion of Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project in Telangana.

A bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde said it was not the executing court of the NGT order and for that matter any tribunal. The apex court was hearing

a plea filed by advocate Thummanapally Srinivas and others seeking implementation of NGT's October 20, 2020



order. The NGT had held that environmental clearance was granted to the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project in Telangana "ex post facto" in

violation of legal requirements and formed a committee to assess the damage caused as also to suggest restoration

Dattatreya 'manhandled' in Himachal Assembly, 5 Cong MLAs suspended

Himachal Pradesh Governor Bandaru Dattatraya was allegedly manhandled by some Congress members in the Assembly complex on Friday, following which five MLAs were suspended for the remainder of the Budget Session.

The incident took place outside the Speaker's office when the Governor was leaving for the Raj Bhavan after he cut short his adresss in the House following a ruckus create by the Congress on the opening day of the Budget session.

Speaker Vipin Parmar said the Opposition members tried to stop the Governor, who was accompanied by Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur, when he was going towards his cavalcade. They hit on the Governor's

back with copies of his address.



Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur, HP Governor Bandaru Dattatreya and State Legislative Assembly Speaker Vipin Parmar arrive to attend the Budget session, in Shimla on Friday

They also hit the bonnet of the Governor's car, the Speaker said, adding that he is examining the Assembly rules to lodge an FIR against the Congress legislators. The Speaker told PTI that

this is for the first time in the history of the Himachal Pradesh Assembly that a

Governor was manhandled by Opposition members.

After the incident, the Speaker suspended Leader of Opposition Mukesh Agnihotri and four other Congress MLAs Harsh Vardhan Chauhan, Satpal Raizada,

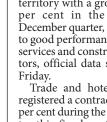


CM directs officials to formulate horticulture policy

PNS HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao has instructed officials of the Agriculture Department to formulate a Horticulture Policy, keeping in view Telangana's background, its soil, weather conditions, and requirements of the State.

Emphasising the need to expand research and development activities to boost horticulture crops,



of coronavirus pandemic.

of 3.9 per cent, and the manufacturing sector output grew by 1.6 per cent in the quarter under review.

struction

India exits recession, GDP raises at + 0.4%

PNS NEW DELHI

After contracting for two quarters in a row, the Indian economy entered the positive territory with a growth of 0.4 December quarter, mainly due to good performance by farm, services and construction sectors, official data showed on

Trade and hotel industry registered a contraction of 7.7 per cent during the third quarter this fiscal, as the sectors continued to suffer on account

According to the data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO), the farm sector recorded a growth The con-

advanced by 6.2 per cent, while electricity, gas, water supply and other utility services clocked a 7.3 per cent

growth.

The NSO said, "GDP at Constant (2011-12) Q3 of 2020-21 is estimated at Rs 36.22 lakh crore, as against Rs 36.08 lakh crore in Q3 of 2019-20, showing a growth of 0.4 per cent". The gross domestic product

(GDP) had expanded by 3.3 per cent in the corre-



State to promote 'Telangana brand' of meat and fish

ML MELLY MAITREYI HYDERABAD

Telangana State has now set its sight on branding of meat and fish produced in the State. Encouraged by the success of its ongoing programmes to give fillip to rural economy and uplift of families involved in traditional sheep rearing and fisheries, the State Government now wants to help boost farmers' incomes through quality processing and value addition in respect of sheep meat (mutton) and fish. Like in the case of brand-

ed milk and drinking water

products that come with

some assurance in terms of

certain levels of quality and

hygiene standards, it is now

time for meat, fish and other

non-vegetarian products pro-

duced in the State by local

Unauthorized, temporary facilities on the chopping block

Second modern abattoir coming

in the market. Upon being marketed as

'Telangana brand' meat and fish, the products should give confidence to consumers who have become health and qualdemic, according to sources working on the concept.

up at Chengicherla farmers to have brand value

ity conscious after the pan-

Fuel prices will come down: Pradhan

PNS VARANASI

Allaying concerns of people over the upward spiralling of fuel price, Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Friday said the price will decrease as winter season ends.

PNS AMARAVATI

Andhra Pradesh is pitching for the establishment of the National Academy of Correctional Administration in the state.

The state government will put forth this proposal to the Union Home Minister Amit Shah during the Southern

uled to be held in temple-town Tirupati on March 4, authori-

tative sources said. As the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy is located in Hyderabad, the AP government wants the National Academy of Correctional Administration (NACA) established in the state.

"The proposed academy will cater to the needs of middle

and senior level prison administrators in terms of training, policy formulation and overall development of prison administration," a senior bureaucrat in the state Home Department

told P T I. This would also bring in uniformity and standardise norms and procedures related to prison administration, the

AP pitches for Natl academy of Correctional Admin "The prestigious Academy will be established in AP," he

added. Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy, who reviewed the preparedness for the Southern Zonal Council meeting, asked the state officials to prepare a detailed proposal for presenting to the Centre.



Covid jab in pvt hospitals: How costly it is?

PNS HYDERABAD

With memories of pricey Covid-19 testing in private hospitals and testing centres still fresh in their minds, notwithstanding the 'cap on testing charges' set by the TS government back in June 2020, most people are now afraid of going for the jab in private hospitals, which are now bracing up to complement governments' vaccination drives.

What would be the cost of each dose of the Covid-19



to get vaccinated in private hospitals? There is animated

discussion on this moot question among many people as the state government has

declared that all those aged 60 years and above as well as those who are 45 years but with co-morbidities can undergo vaccination either in government hospitals or in listed private hospitals.

According to Director of Public Health Dr Srinivasa Rao, the price of each dose of the vaccine could range between Rs 300 and Rs 400 in private hospitals. A clear picture will emerge shortly.

It may be recalled that the state health authorities have been vaccinating government

and private medical professionals as well as frontline workers free of cost so far. As of now, there is no con-

sensus on who should supervise the vaccination programme in private hospitals. It is not yet clear whether the vaccines would be supplied to private hospitals through the vaccine centres or directly from the companies. According to Dr Srinivasa Rao, clear guidelines are yet to emerge from the Centre.





ne of the main reasons for the success of the insolvency code (IBC) is its design. Earlier, the insolvency legal regime was tilted in favor of debtors who retained control over management and operations of the company during the bankruptcy process. In contrast, the new insolvency code shifts the control over day-to-day working of the company towards creditors and professionals.

During insolvency proceedings, this has reduced the freedom available to company managements to decide on what evidence to present before the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT). Now, the NCLT and the professional have near complete control over evidence and conduct of the case from start to judg-

Another distinct feature of the new insolvency regime is the way the proceedings are conducted. Earlier insolven-

The way forward for the Insolvency Code First, the trial is in the hands of the NCLT. The adversarial system. In this system the court acts as a ref-NCLT plays an active role assisted by the eree between the prosecution Insolvency Professionals (IPs) and the Insolvency and the defence and the

Professional Agencies (IPAs). The trigger for

starting the IBC is a petition to the NCLT

and their resemblance to the inquisitorial system are discussed below.

First, the trial is in the hands of the NCLT. The NCLT plays an active role assisted by the Insolvency Professionals (IPs) and the Insolvency Professional Agencies (IPAs). The trigger for starting the IBC is a petition to the NCLT. This petition is called an insolvency petition. When an insolvency petition is filed, the role of the NCLT is to identify whether the debtor has committed a default in repayment of an undisputed debt to the petitioning creditor. If the NCLT finds that the debtor has defaulted to the creditor; and has not disputed the claim of default by the creditor beforehand, the NCLT must allow the petition to go through, or else it must dismiss the petition.

Second, case management in the insolvency code depends upon the NCLT members, so their contribution is very high for the disposal of any case. Case man-



agement is effective as mem bers of the NCLT sit with the debtors and creditors and exchange views in making decisions for the speedy disposal of any case. This is in contrast to the adversarial legal system, where representatives from each party take opposing positions to debate the Judge's role is to uphold principles of fairness and equality and to remain neutral until the very end when she gives judgment. Less reliance on judicial

precedents is the third similarity to the inquisitorial system. Conventionally, judicial precedent is set by "case law" which helps flesh out the statutory laws and in some cases new substantive law comes from pronouncements where statutes and precedents are silent. There is little use of judicial precedent in inquisitorial systems. This means Judges are free to decide each case independently of previous decisions by applying the relevant statutes. As the current insolvency regime is of recent origin, there are hardly any

This gives a great degree of leeway to the NCLT while deciding in insolvency proceedings.

The insolvency code confers partial executive powers on the NCLTs and it is this expansion of the range of functions that has transmuted the NCLT from a pure judicial forum to a hybrid one with judicial plus executive powers. However, appeals are made to the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) and the Supreme Court; thus, there is a clear separation of judiciary from the executive at upper levels.

This fusion of judicial and executive powers in one entity/person is not new. Prior to the amendments made in the Criminal Procedure Code

in 1973, judicial and executive powers were combined in executive magistrates in

In short, there are two distinct design features of the insolvency code. First, there is a changeover from a debtor in control to a creditor-driven insolvency process. Second, in practice the NCLTs follow an inquisitorial system, even though tacitly.

Therefore, the way forward is to build on these unique features of the insolvency code. Efforts should be made to include more and more ingredients of the inquisitorial system in the insolvency process and discourage any move to bring about 'equality of arms' between the debtors and creditors.

(Author has a PhD from the USA and a DLitt from Kanchi University. The article is based on his research and practice and views are

AP pitches...

Continued from page 1

The catch, however, is that neighbouring Telangana is also said to be pitching for the same academy. Telangana is said to have already identified required land for the Academy while the AP government is yet to do so.

"We are in the process of zeroing in on a suitable location for the Academy and the land required will also be earmarked soon," the bureaucrat here said.

The AP government would submit a comprehensive proposal to the Centre for approval, he added. The Chief Minister is expected to personally take up the issue with the Union Home Minister during the Southern Zonal Council meeting.

Muted response to Bharat Bandh

Protests at few places by the Left parties and trade unions affiliated to them in Telangana marked the 'Bharat Bandh' to protest against the fuel price

whole process is a contest

between two parties. The

underlying principle was to

create a distance between the

investigation and the person who ultimately decides the

outcome. Here, courts acted

like a referee between the

debtors and creditors, such as

in the recovery of claims by

unsecured creditors by filing

civil suits or petitioning the High Court for winding up if

the debtor was a company.

The process under the pre-

sent insolvency regime has

substantial characteristics of

the inquisitorial system.

Some of the noteworthy fea-

tures of the process followed

in the new insolvency code

The shutdown call given by All India Traders' Association evoked poor response in the state. Few shops and business establishments downed shutters in parts of Hyderabad and some other towns

The bandh had no major impact on normal life. Good transport activity, however, came to a halt as the truck owners' association joined the shutdown. As the All India Motor Transport Congress (AIMTC) backed the shutdown, the truck-



ers in the state joined too the protest demanding some relief from the Centre.

Protesting the steep hike in price of diesel, Telangana Lorry wners Association supported the bandh call

The association claimed that

nearly one lakh transport vehicles will remain off roads during the day.

They demanded that the Central taxes on diesel be slashed to ensure uniformity in the price across the country. Truck operators have threat-

if the Centre failed to respond positively to their demands.

A section of traders including Kirana merchants and steel merchants in Hyderabad took out a rally to the Collector's office to submit a memorandum of demands.

They demanded the authorities to simplify GST process. The traders alleged that several new clauses and rules were

being used to harass them. Left parties and trade unions affiliated to organised protests in Hyderabad. CPI state secretary Chada Venkat Reddy led the protest. He demanded that the fuel prices should be uniform across the country and GST should be simplified.

CPI-M also backed the

a dharna at LB Nagar crossroads in Hyderabad. The protestors alleged that the steep

life of common man miserable. Holding banners and placards denouncing the price hike, the protestors raised slogans against the government. Police detained the protestors and shifted them to a police station.

hike in prices of petrol, diesel

and cooking gas has made the

Party's state secretary T Veerabhadram said the hike in fuel prices has imposed heavy burden on common man. He said taxes on fuel were adding the burden. The CPI-M leader demanded that the Centre and states take initiative to cut the taxes to provide some relief to

CM directs officials to...

Continued from page 1

KCR called for efforts to strengthen the Horticulture University. He announced the allocation of 300 acres in the Agriculture University for setting up a Centre of Excellence in respect of horticulture

decided to increase the number of seats in Ontimamidi, Ramagiri Khilla agriculture polytechnic colleges, and appoint four senior officials especially for cultivation of fruits, vegetables, green vegetables and oil palm.

on Friday, KCR said that agri-

to profitably cultivate horticulture crops that were not waterintensive, he said.

The Chief Minister also

Addressing a high-level review meeting on a comprehensive and integrated plan for development of horticulture crops at Pragathi Bhavan here culture sector was doing well, thanks to the irrigation projects and schemes like Rythu Bandhu investment assistance schemes. In the undivided State, horticulture crops like vegetables and fruits did not get due importance. It was time for encouraging farmers Agriculture

Horticulture departments should formulate a plan to give special incentives, along with Rythu Bandhu, to farmers willing to set up horticulture nurseries or cultivate horticul-

ture crops, including flowers. The Chief Minister said that by promoting horticulture crops around municipalities and towns in the State, the requirement to source large quantities of vegetables and fruits can be brought down. Eventually the State would be in a position to export vegetables and fruits.

Horticulture The Department officials explained that horticulture farmers could earn more profits by going for short-tenure crops that utilize less water.

The Chief Minister appreciated the use of technology to guide farmers in agriculture and horticulture. He suggested that, to the extent possible, cotton cultivation should be

State to promote...

Continued from page 1

When the 'branding concept' materializes, the consumer will get details on the package such as animal's age, gender, date of slaughter, shelf life of the processed product, etc.

The Animal Husbandry and Fisheries Department, according to sources, is contemplating to devote the next financial year 2021-22 towards this goal. It proposes to set up a second modern standards Chengicherla for hygienic processing, value addition and packaging.

 $O\bar{f}$ 65 acres of land allotted for abattoirs in Chengicherla, one unit has been operating from 2008 in 33 acres and the government has transferred 24 acres to the Telangana Industrial and Infrastructure Corporation for setting up another major facility.

The Animal Husbandry Department will also scout for lands available with the Revenue Department and TSIIC to set up sheep and fish markets as well as basic meat processing units in all the districts to help the local sheep and goat rearing communities to sell their live-

stock.
"The goal is to make properly processed meat available

unauthorized and temporary facilities", they said.

About 2,500 meat outlets operate in the organized sector under the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation limits, apart from 150 mobile meat and fish units. Besides, another 5,000 to 6,000 temporary units operate in the city

After promoting sheep rearing through sheep distribution scheme, the sourcing at had reduced drastically, sources said. Post-Covid, there is demand from entrepreneurs too to set up intensive sheep farming units, value addition to give 'preferred cuts' to the consumers and invest on marketing

> After the sheep distribution scheme was launched in the State in 2017, a total of 3.66 lakh sheep farmers became members of Primary Sheep Breeding Cooperative Societies at the village level and each family earned an average income of about Rs.60,000 a year by producing over 77,000 tonnes of meat till 2020.

The meat consumption pattern in the State is different as people here prefer sheep meat (mutton) than goat meat, sources said.

Dattatreya 'manhandled'...

Continued from page 1

Sunder Singh and Vinay Kuma for the entire Budget session till March 20 on a motion moved Parliamentary Affairs Minister Suresh Bhardwaj.

Earlier, the Congress MLAs created a ruckus in the House during the Governor's address. He then skipped to the last sentence after reading initial few pages and stated that the entire speech should be deemed as read.

Harsh Vardhan Chauhan told PTI that they were waiting outside the Speaker's office and just wanted to ask the Governor why he cut short his address but they were not allowed to do so. He alleged that it was

Deputy Speaker Hans Raj who manhandled the MLAs, charge denied by Parliamentary Affairs Minister Suresh Bhardwaj, who said the Congress legislators had planned to create a scene. Chauhan also said they did not have any intention of manhandling the governor.

"If any FIR is registered against us, we will not go to the court for bail, rather we will prefer to be arrested," he said, adding that the suspended Congress MLAs will sit outside the Assembly during the Budget session.

Covid jab in pvt hospitals: How... istered in private hospitals

Continued from page 1

Meanwhile, the Centre is busy updating and patching up the glitches-prone CoWIN mobile application and is trying to bring out an updated version of the mobile application with certain changes. Private hospitals may be required to record vaccine stock details via the application. Since people can get vac-cinated only after registering

via the mobile application, details such as how many doses have been used and the stocks remaining should be recorded via the application.

Government officials claim that the vaccination programme can be continued in a fool-proof manner even in private hospitals. So, some officials would be appointed to monitor the programme, they said.

Dr Srinivasa Rao said that the vaccine would be admin-

charging some fees, though the vaccine is given free of cost in government hospitals. Therefore, he advised people to take the vaccine free of cost. In all, 1,250 hospitals, including major hospitals like Gandhi and Osmania as well as PHCs will administer the vaccine free of cost. The vaccine will be made available in future in over 4,500 health

Fuel prices will come down: Pradhan

Continued from page 1

"Increase in petroleum price in international market has affected consumers too. Prices will come down a little as winter

goes away. It is an international matter, price is high due to increase in demand, it happens in winter. It will come down as the season ends," Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

Bengal, TN's last Continued from page 1 minute... The Election Commission will

Continued from page 1

Prohibits governments from making fresh welfare announcements so as to minimise any undue advantage accruing to ruling par-

The Commission held a press conference on Friday at around 4.30 pm to announce the dates for the assembly elections in Kerala, Puducherry, and Assam, apart from West Bengal and Tamil Nadu.

Five Assembly polls to begin Mar 27, counting on May 2

appoint two special observers for West Bengal and a third can also be sent if required, Arora said in response to queries on whether enough arrangements are in place for the polls in the state, where many have been raising questions about political violence.

Arora also said everyone on election duty for the upcoming polls will be vaccinated against COVID-19 before polling day. Voting will take place for

126 seats in Assam, 234 in Tamil Nadu, 294 in West Bengal, 140 in Kerala and 30 in Puducherry.

Arrangements will be put in

place for candidates to file their nominations online. Voting will be allowed for an additional hour, keeping in mind COVID-19 safety guidelines, he said.

Also, webcasting arrange-

ments will be in place at polling stations in critical and vulnerable areas, while adequate CAPF (Central Armed Police Forces) deployment will be ensured, Arora said. All critical and vulnerable areas have been identified and advance teams have been already deployed across the four states and one union territory, he added.

He said door-to-door campaigning will be restricted to five persons, including the

candidate, while roadshows will be allowed with a maximum of five vehicles.

According to Arora, the nationwide vaccination drive has made the situation more conducive for conducting elections and the Health Ministry has declared everyone on poll duty as frontline workers for vaccination purposes.

All poll officials will be vaccinated before the elections, Arora said.

Arora, who will demit office on April 13, also said all must be congratulated for the successful conduct of elections in Bihar last year despite the COVID-19 challenges and he is confident of success once

Technical issues at Nasarlapalli feeder disrupts water supply

PNS HYDERABAD

The water supply to the Jalamandali pumping station at Nasarlapally was disrupted for more than two hours due to technical issues in Nasarlapalli feeder, causing difficulties in the movement of fresh water through

Krishna phase I, II and III. The power outrage caused problems in the water supply through the pumps. There will be a partial interruption in the fresh water supply in the Division No. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10, 13, 14, 16, ORR Division No 18, 19 and 20.

HYDERABAD **BULLION RATES** ₹ 47, 180 (10 gm)



₹170

Dressed/With Skin ₹161 Without Skin ₹183 Broiler at Farm

RATES ₹/100 **HYDERABAD** 415 VIJAYAWADA 506 VISAKHAPATNAM 480 RETAIL PRICE

India exits recession, GDP raises at + 0.4% Continued from page 1

In its second advance estimates of national accounts, the NSO has projected 8 per cent contraction in 2020-21, showing the pandemic impact. In its first advance estimates released in January, it had projected a contraction of 7.7 per cent for the current fiscal as against a growth of four per cent in

"Real GDP or Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at Constant (2011-12) Prices in the year 2020-21 is estimated to attain a level of Rs 134.09 lakh crore, as against the First Revised Estimate of GDP for the year 2019-20 of Rs 145.69 lakh crore, released on 29th January 2021. The growth in GDP during 2020-21 is estimated at (-) 8.0 per cent as compared to 4.0 per cent in 201920," it stated.

The economy had shrunk by an unprecedented 24.4 per cent in the first quarter this fiscal following the coronavirus pandemic and resultant lockdowns. In the second quarter, the GDP declined 7.3 per cent amid a perk up in economic activities after the easing of the lock-

The first and second-quarter GDP growth figures are revised from (-) 24.9 per cent and (-) 7.5 per cent provisional estimates, respectively, released in November 2020. The per capita income in real terms (at 2011-12 prices) during 2020-21 is estimated to

attain a level of Rs 85,929 as

compared to Rs 94,566 in 2019-

20 -- showing a contraction of

9.1 per cent in 2019-20 as

against 2.5 per cent growth in

The per capita income at current prices during 2020-21 is estimated to be at Rs 1,27,768, a decline of 4.8 per cent as compared to Rs 1,34,186 during 2019-20.

"The measures taken by the Government to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic have had an impact on the economic activities as well as on the data collection mech-"The data challenges in the

case of other underlying macroeconomic indicators like IIP (industrial production) and CPI (retail inflation), used in the estimation of National Accounts aggregates and specific measures, if any, taken by the government in the following months with a view to address the pandemic led economic situation will have implications on the subsequent revision of these

estimates," the NSO said. Estimates are, therefore, likely to undergo sharp revisions for the aforesaid causes in due course, as per the release calendar. Users should take this into

ing the figures, it added. The 0.4 per cent growth in the December quarter shows that the economy has returned to pre-pandemic times and reflects a further strengthening of V-shaped recovery, the finance ministry said on Friday.

consideration when interpret-

"Real GDP growth of 0.4 per cent in Q3 of 2020-21 has returned the economy to the pre-pandemic times of positive growth rates. It is also a reflection of a further strengthening of V-shaped recovery that began in Q2 of 2020-21 after a large GDP contraction in O1 followed one of the most stringent lockdowns imposed by

Government relative to other countries," the ministry said in a statement.

in both GDP and GVA in Q3

"With a growth re-emerging

FY2021, the pandemic-induced technical recession in India has ended, in line with our expectations," Icra Principal Economist Aditi Nayar said.

formance of the components of GDP indicates a welcome growth of 2.6 per cent in gross fixed capital formation, juxta-

The NSO has pegged the pace of growth in Q3 FY2021 at 0.4 per cent for GDP, and a higher 1.0 per cent for the GVA, whereas Icra had projected both at 0.7 per cent, she added. "The YoY (year-on-year) per-

posed with mild de-growth of 1.1 per cent in government consumption expenditure and 2.4 per cent in private consumption expenditure," Nayar said.

NIT No.: 48/EE/CIR-20/SLPZ/,GHMC/1-2/2020-21 Dt:25.02.2021, Name of Work: maintainence works. Estimate Amount (in lakhs): Rs 21.50. Start Date/ Last date & time for receipts of Bids: From Dt 26.02.2021@01.30 P.M, Date: 01.03.2021 @ 01.30 P.M. Officer Name, Address and Cell No: Office of the Executive Engineer Circle -20, SLPZ, GHMC Ph No. 9849906750. R.O. No.: 9544-PP/CL/WDVT/1/2020-21

MUSI RIVER FRONT DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LIMITED District Commercial Complex, MIDIA Complex, 2nd Floor, Block - E. Tornaka, Secundarahad - 500 807, Email: musicle/jigmail.com, Tel: 840-2323 2390 "e" Procurement MIT No.40/MRDCL/DEV/2020-21,Dt:26.02.2021 es are invited under e-precurement plat form for One (OT) work with an estimate cost of Rs.8.00 Lakhs. 1. Tenderers can be download the tender schedules from e-market place ports

https://ander.telangana.gov.in 2. Bid Document Load Start Date : 25.02.2001 at 04.00 PM 3. Bid Document Load End Date : 01.03.2021 at 04.00 PM 4, Last Date & Time : 01.03.2021 at 04.00 PM 5. Opening of Technical bids: 01.83.2021 at 04.30 PM 6. Opening of Price bids: 02.03.2021 at 12.00 PM 7. Further details can be see at o-marketplace i.e., "www.tender.telangana.gov.in" DIPR R.O. No.: 1820-PPICL-AGENCY/X0VT/1/2820-21, Dt: 26/02/2821

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
PANCHAYATH RAJ EMBRERING DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT PANCHAYATH RAJ EMBRER, ADILABAD DISTRICT Notes, Block G. S. Notes, Block H. - 8 Nos. Block L. - 3 Nos. Block J. - 8 Nos. Block L. - Nos

RO.NO.: 1042-DP/CL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2020-21

the previous fiscal, it stated. Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority of or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or not for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent court and forums in Delhi/New Delhi only. Readers are advised and requested to verify and seek appropriate advice to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any kind of advertisement before responding to any contents published in this newspaper. The printer, publisher, editor and any employee of the Pioneer Group's will not be held responsible for any kind of claim made by the advertisers of the products & services and shall not be made responsible for any kind of loss, consequences and further product-related damages on such advertisements.

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Commuters hit as TSRTC buses in city throw punctuality to the wind

Commuting is no doubt a necessary part of many people's daily routine. However, the strain associated with commuting can have a negative impact on academic and work performance.

Residents commuting on city buses, who wait endlessly at bus stops, have been forced to take cabs or auto-rickshaws as the buses fail to turn up on

This happened to be the situation in many city bus routes. Those who travel by the city buses have been growing impatient as the buses on one day arrives punctually and fails to keep it up the next day.

Employees and others who are out to attend some urgent work were annoyed at the city buses not being punctual.

The route number 279 bus olying between Secunderabad Station İbrahimpatnam has been making the commuters wishing to travel by it, wait for hours alto-

gether. The city bus number 300 plying between Chandrayanagutta - Attapur route is another bus service that is creating trouble for the commuters. At least four or five buses start simultaneously with

having commuters in one or two buses, while the rest of the three buses have to travel

Metro luxury & Jivaur

The Telangana State Road Not only these two routes, Transport Corporation but also the punctuality (TSRTC) is not running buses became a casualty in many city in tune with the demand of the

Daily, at least 2,500 city buses ply on 1,150 routes. But, there are no bus timings anywhere except the main bus station. Earlier, some LED display units have been installed at some important bus stations displaying the bus timings. However, after the lockdown, the curbs on city buses have been relaxed. The city buses have been restored in phases but the punctuality is still a

Earlier, daily the RTC used to run 40,000 trips. The reduction of bus services led to reduced frequency of the bus services. It seems there is no coordination between depot managers and top officials in preparing the bus schedules. As a result, buses from two or three RTC bus depots are deployed on the same route.

The tracking of city buses using GPS seems to have been shelved. The Metro Rail on one hand and the private vehicles on the other have been posing a threat to the RTC.

WOMEN IN RED

Conductors get new uniform

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Woman conductors in Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) will soon be seen in new cherry red or maroon coloured uniforms, a choice which they had made at the end of 2019 to the Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao. Women conductors will perform duties on RTC buses wearing the maroon aprons. As per the reports, TSRTC has recently purchased 30,000 meters of fabric from Raymonds Company for the 4,800 women conductors working in the department. Each conductor is supplied with a cloth suitable for making two aprons. They have to sew it according to their measurements and wear it while on duty. Earlier, the RTC used to give them stitching charges. Now, it has asked the woman conductors to spend from their pockets as the finances of the RTC are in a poor shape.

However, during the past one week, the RTC occupancy ratio has increased and also its finances have got better. The daily income of the RTC has increased to Rs 2

crore. The RTC officials purchased the cloth at a cost of Rs 60 lakh. The uniforms however, are not likely to be given to male conductors this year.

Soon after the RTC workers called off their strike, CM KCR spoke to the RTC employees at Pragati Bhavan at an interaction meeting. Some of the demands of the employees included giving special apron to women conductors. KCR constituted a committee which interacted with women conductors across the state and zeroed in on maroon coloured aprons. The losses induced by the Covid and poor financial position of the RTC delayed the purchase of

the cloth for uniform.

In RTC, the practice is to give two pairs of uniforms to the conductors once in three years. But for the past six years, the uniforms were not given. Some of the RTC employees were purchasing the uniforms at their own expense and wearing those, while others were making do by wearing old uniforms.

Earlier, surplus uniform cloth stored in some of the depots was distributed among some of the employees.

The RTC officials take disciplinary action against the employees reporting for work without wearing uniform. Therefore, the employees were forced to spend from their

CITY LIGHTS

HC tells Labour Dept to submit report on action against Amazon

elangana High Court has directed the TS Labour Commissioner to submit an action taken report on Vijay Gopal's complaint against Amazon which includes issues raised in 2019 complaint as well and many other such points that arise after a termination of services. Vijay Gopal who worked with Amazon was terminated on November, 2020 after complaining against illegal working hours. Vijay gopal, a Hyderabad based activist said, "The Labour Department of TS has been suspiciously silent on the issues pertaining to IT & ITES and negligent about implementing the Labour Laws. The complaints filed are taking years to be resolved, while as per citizen charter, it should not take more than 15 -30 days. Currently Labour Commissioners' office is behaving like post office, where they forward your complaint to the employer and their response to you, and never say as to who is right or wrong." He further added, "I am hoping atleast HC orders will be respected and the Commissioner will take an action against Amazon as per the rules and submit an action taken report to me. This issue is pertaining to more than a million IT based employees in TS."

Docs remove cricket ball sized tumour from man's kidney

Surgeons at Aware Global Hospitals, LB Nagar have removed a tumour of the size of a cricket ball from the rightside kidney of a 55-yearold man, using laparoscopic surgical procedure. To avoid major



incision and ensure patient's speedy recovery, the surgeons decided to take-up the minimally invasive keyhole surgery to remove the large tumour from the kidney. Kidney tumours and cancers can be treated by removing the entire tumour and usually this is performed in a variety of approaches including a more traditional open incision, or through the advanced laparoscopic surgical procedure. In the interest of the patient, the hospital surgeons decided to take-up keyhole surgery. Senior Urologist, Aware Global Hospitals, Dr Aman Chandra, along with Dr. Mervin Leo, Cluster, COO at Gleneagles Global Hospitals led the procedure. "There are many ways to remove a tumour. However, removing the tumour with little pain with the best possible approach was the route taken by us. Due to the keyhole procedure, patient got discharged after three-days, which could not have been possible in the traditional approach," Dr. Chandra said.

Traffic diversions in view of construction works

n view of the works being taken up for the construction of a RoB) parallel to the existing RoB at Falaknuma on Secunderabad-Falaknuma broad gauge line, Hyderabad City Police have announced certain traffic restrictions here for a period of six months effective



March 1. Accordingly, traffic coming from MBNR X-road towards Enginebowli will be diverted via old Chandrayangutta, Suahana function hall, grave yard, KM Lukcy Star hotel, Kandikalgate flyover, Ramaswamy gunj, Lal Darwaza temple, Venkat Rao Memorial School, Nagulchinta X-road, Shah Ghouse restaurant, Aliabad, Shamsheergunj and Enginebowli. Heavy vehicles however will not be allowed. Traffic from MBNR X-road will also be diverted via Hashamabad, Bandlaguda, Pallecheruvu, Mailardevpally X-road, My Feel hotel, Vattepally road, Railway gate, Vattepally X-road, Railway gate and Enginebowli junction. Heavy vehicle will be diverted from MBNR X-road towards Enginebowli via Hashamabad, Bandlaguda X-road, Moghal college, Pallecheruv Xroad, Mailardevpally X-road, Durga Nagar X-road, Aramgarh X-road, Shivarampally X-road, Hasan Nagar X-road, Shastripuram X-road, Tadban X-road, Shamsheergunj and Enginebowli. Restrictions have also been imposed for traffic from Enginebowli junction towards MBNR X-road. Accordingly, vehicles will be diverted via Shamsheergunj, Aliabad, Shah Ghouse restaurant, Nagulchinta X-road, Lal Darwaza temple, Venkat Rao Memorial School, Ramaswamygunj, Kandikalgate flyover, KM Lukcy Hotel, graveyard, Suhana function hall, old Chandrayangutta junction, DLRL and MBNR X-road.

HYDERABAD METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

File No.0245801LT/BKP/FLT/U6/H/2020 PLANNING DEPARTMENT

File No.024880LTBKPPLTMSH/2020 PLANNING DEPARTMENT
If it is for inform that, Sri Mola Besolio Ashok Kumar applied for Addition / afteration; 1
revision of Draft toyout with open plots in Sy No.185 of Shankespelly Willage & Mandal
R.R. District to an extent of 32650.24 Sq. Mire which was approved through online tile
No.012270/SKP/LTAJErHVDA/01062018-Dt.12.10.2018.
Therefore the Rest owners! Purchases / Agreement holders of staft layout in Sy. No.185
of Shankespelly Willage & Mandal, R.R. District to an extent of 32690.24 Sq. Mire may file their
objectional suggestions in writing if any within 15 days to this office from the date Publication
of this nebox. If no objectional suggestions are received within the above period the request of
the applicant for Addition / afteration / revision of Draft layout with open plots in Sy/No.185 of
Shankespelly Willage & Mandal R.R. Districts on extended 7270507.24 Sq. Mire says like possible. Shankerpally Village & Mondal, R. R. District to an extent of 32060,24 Sq. Mtrs will be consider being on the material papers available with this office. R.O.No.:1912-PPICL-AGENCY/ADVTH12020-21

SSI- Director Planning

ESTORED IN VAIN After a series of

bus routes under the Greater

Corporation (GHMC) limits.

Municipal



Hyderabad



requests to restore the decades-old 'Mushk Mahal' at Attapur named after Khaja Mushk an eunuch of Sultan Abdullah Qutub Shah VII. Principal Secretary

of Urban Development Arvind Kumar has made a step and directed the GHMC officials to ensure that the area is cleaned. Neglected for years, this palace today lies in a dilapidated condition and has become a den for

Governor equates mother tongue with mother's milk

Governor Dr Tamilisai equated learning in mother tongue in initial years of childhood to giving mother's milk to the new born baby. Since both will have immense positive and vibrating effect on the well being of the children in their entire life.

She stated that respecting, loving and promoting mother language is nothing but respecting and loving our own

The Governor was participating as the chief guest at the International Mother Language Day, organised by the Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirapally, and Desiya Chintanai Kaghagam.

Highlighting the importance of learning in the mother tongue in the childhood, she said that research has concluded that a child's brain has tremendous scope for absorption in its formative years and learning through the mother



tongue will immensely help children to grasp imagine, retain better.

"In case of mother tongue, first we develop the competence by listening and express our feelings through own words. Afterwards we learn to read and write. This ideal sequence is not possible to maintain while learning the other language, wherein we first learn to read and write and their other things", she

She declared that there is no alternative to mother tongue. "It is paining me to know able to speak correctly either in their mother tongue or in this is non-importing of learning in mother tongue in the initial years. If children are taught in their mother tongue during the initial years, they could be able to learn the other languages quite easily."

She said that the languages are the most powerful instrument of preserving and developing tangible and intangible heritage and the effort to promote the dissemination of mother tongues will contribute to linguistic diversity and multilingual education.

She appreciated the organisers for celebrating International Mother Language Day like this as the celebrations like this will help in reducing the extinction of languages and promote the utility and spread of linguistic diversity and in turn has an immense potential to contribute for the Atma Nirbhar Bharat.

Corona active cases continue to rise in TS

PNS HYDERABAD

The number of active Covid-19 cases continues to be on rise in Telangana as it ranked sixth amongst all the states with the highest jump in active cases during the past 24 hours.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare data on Friday shows that Telangana added 58 active cases since Thursday. The state ranks sixth after Maharashtra (4,902), Punjab (272), Madhya Pradesh (165), Gujarat (122) and Haryana

The cumulative active cases in Telangana rose to 1,910. The data also shows 129 people recovered during the

last 24 hours. The cumulative recoveries jumped to 2,94,911. The period also saw two deaths, pushing the death toll to 1,632

The active cases in the state had dropped to below 2,000 early this month. It came down to 1,640 on February 17 before it started rising again. In less than 10 days, the state



The number of active cases was 1,701 on February 22, the last day when the state health authorities issued its daily Covid bulletin. They stopped the practice from the next day with director of public health G Srinivasa Rao announcing that a weekly bulletin will be issued instead of daily.

However, Telangana High Court on Thursday directed the state government to resume issuing the daily bulletin, saying this was important to provide information to people at a time when there are chances of a second wave

Cops bust drug peddling gang; nab 3 peddlers PNS HYDERABAD

The Kulsumpura police arrested three persons of an inter-state drug peddling gang and seized 16 kg of marijuana from them on Friday.

The arrested persons were identified Vikas Jadav, 22, Manikanta, 27 and Satish, 24. Two suspects, Satya Vishu and Anand were absconding.

"Vikas, who was involved in such offences previously, met the other gang members. They procured marijuana from Satya and Anand at lower rates and sold them to customers in Hyderabad for higher rates," Anjani Kumar

A few days ago, the gang procured 16 kg of marijuana and packed it into three bags to sell it to customers at different locations in the city. They started on their bikes to sell drugs at Puranapul area, when they were caught by the Kulsumpura police at Jiyaguda. They were handed over to the Mangalhat police, who produced them before

Two held for illegal sale of gun powder

The South Zone Task Force along with the Falaknuma police on Friday arrested two persons for indulging in illegal manufacturing and selling of gun powder. Police said they seized 34 bags of gun powder weighing about 1.3 tonnes and other material

The arrested persons were Shabbir, 57 and Hameed Khan, 49. Shabbir's father has been running a gun powder business for a long time with a valid license. Due to family disputes, Shabbir started his own business with Nazeer Ahmed Khan. They started making gun powder and sold it for Rs 45 per kg to Satish and Vishnuvardhan.

Following a tip-off, the police raided the coal depot in Falaknuma and caught the duo late on Thursday.

PNS HYDERABAD

from them.

REVENUE (LAND ACQUISITION) DEPARTMENT FORM-VI PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION

(See Sub-rule (1) of rule-25 and Section-19(1) of the Act-30(2013) Sub-Collector, Bhadrachalam, Land Acquisition Officer, Seebarrana Sapar Multi Propose Project, Rc. No. C/1010(2020-15 Ro. No.6/8845/2820. District Gazette No.83/

trict Gazette No.80/05/2021. Whereas is appeared the Desirid Collector, Bhadhadri Kothagudern that a total an extent of Ac\$102 Gs. land is required in the Tegada(2) Village, Charla Mandal of Bhadhadi Kothagudern District for public purpose, namely for the Construction of Sectormos Sognification proper Project Therefore, disclosure in route that or piece of land measuring, more or less Ac±102 gts of standard measurement under Land. Acquisition for the above said project in the Tegada(2) Wilage, Cherta Wandal of Bhadisahi Kathagudem District whose land detailed discription is as following.

SCHEDULE

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA

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8	8	78/2	78/2	Govt		2.20	Govt Land	Village site	-

This declaration is made other hearing of objections of persons interested and due engainy as provided UP. 15 of the ActAf The number of families likely to be resetted due to land outputtion is NR. The Form-VIII (25 except-viet); (1) and v. 55 and section 19(1) of the Act-30/2013 the notification is made under the provision Section-15(1). of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transferency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettliment Act., 2013 No.30,2013), Milnes of Coal, Iron-stone, State or other minerals lying under the said land or any particulars a portion of the said land, as such parts of the mines and minerals; which may be required to be dug or removed or used pairs of the mines and minesis which may be equired to be dup or removed or used during the constitution phase of the prior the purpose of which the land is being acquired are not needed. Application of the care of the purpose of which the land is being acquired are not needed. Application of the other care of the purpose of the care of the care of the care of the purpose of the

Type of Land

Patta Land

Govt Land

TOTAL

Extent(AcGts)

3.27

9.02

District Collector,

SdY-W. Venkateswantul Land Acquisition Officer, Sectamora Segar Multi Purpose

SI/-(K Venkateswork) Additional Collector, Bhadradii

DIPR R.O. No: 1271/LA/PP/Advt/Pub/2020-21

Rachakonda cops arrest woman for matrimony fraud PNS HYDERABAD

Rachakonda Police on Friday arrested a woman on charges of duping NRI men seeking suitable alliances on matrimonial sites. Police seized Rs 5.1 lakh, four mobile phones

and other material from her. The accused identified as K Swathi, 30, a native of Nellore in Andhra Pradesh, was an MBA graduate and married to a lecturer in Nellore.

Swathi started cheating people by posting fake profiles on matrimony sites with pictures downloaded from Google, seeking foreign alliances only. She gains their trust with

sweet talk and would collect money from them and then stop responding. The police booked a case and was produced before court and remanded in judicial custody.

4-member TN gang held for kidnap

PNS HYDERABAD

The Banjara Hills police on Friday arrested a four-member gang, including a lawyer from Tamil Nadu, who allegedly kidnapped a makeup artist and rescued the vic-

The arrested persons were identified as Kumara Guru, 32, a lawyer, Lokesh Kumar, 31, Jagadish, 32 and Ganesh Kumar, 30, a junior artiste. The prime suspect in the case Pradeep, 30, a production manager and Keerthana, 25, a junior

artiste are absconding.
According to the police, the victim K Amarnath Reddy, a make-up artist and production manager, had earlier approac-hed Natarajan. Guru and Lokesh Kumar in Chennai to settle a financial matter of Rs 13.5 lakh he had with three others. He promised Rs 4 lakh as commission.

"Recently, with the help of the Bengaluru police, Rs 10 lakh was recovered and the amount was deposited in court by the police. Amarnath Reddy received the

money from court, but did not give the commission and left Bengal-uru and was avoiding the suspects since then," Hyderabad Police Commissioner Anjani Kumar said. The suspects contacted Reddy several times for their commission, but he gave evasive replies. On Thursday morning, Madhu contacted Reddy and telling him that they were in the city, asked him to meet her at Kavuri Hills in Madhapur.

"The moment he met Madhu, the others caught him and stripped him. They also shot a video of him threatening to post it on social media. They then took him in a car to the Mahavir Harina Vanasthali

National Park and calling his wife Kalpana, demanded Rs 4 lakh as ransom," the CP said. Based on a complaint from

Kalpana, the Banjara Hills police booked a kidnap case. The police then arranged cash and sent photos of the money from Kalpana's phone to the kidnappers, who asked her to come to a secluded location at Srinagar Colony with the cash. There, the police caught one of

the suspects, and on interrogating him, learned that Reddy was being taken in a car to Chennai via Nalgonda. The City Police then alerted the Nalgonda police, who intercepted the car and rescued



Police resort to lathicharge, arrest BJP leaders in Medak

PNS MEDAK

Tension prevailed at the Collectorate when the police denied entry to the BJP leaders to submit a memorandum to the District Collector on demands of Golla and Kuruma community members. The police had to resort to mild lathi-charge and whisk them to the police station.

Taking part in Chalo Collectorate Ranabheri stir by Golla and Kuruma community here on Friday, BJP OBC Morcha national president K Laxman said that injustice is being meted out to SCs and STs and other downtrodden sections of the state.

the government collecting demand drafts for Rs 31,250 from each of 28,500 families and rendering them injustice to them by not allotting sheep units He charged the government

■ BIP OBC Morcha national

president K Laxman charged with

collecting demand drafts for Rs 31,250 from each of 28,500 families and rendering them injustice to them by not allotting sheep units. He called upon all castes in the state, especially the BCs, to unite and wrest power from the TRS.

Raghunandan said that the state is applying the principle

state, especially the BCs, to unite and wrest powe from the TRS

divide and rule while dealing with people of 33 castes and predicted that they would soon spell doom for KCR. He desired that the Bahujans should grow politically and should capture power in the state.

He accused the government of denying educational opportunities to BC students, while the Centre took BC students under its wings by setting up of

Central and Sainik Universities He blamed the State government for reducing the local bodies from 33 per cent to 18

Tension prevailed as part of the BJP protest programme as the police denied entry to the BJP leaders entering the collectorate to submit a memorandum to the District Collector on demands of Golla and Kuruma community members. The police had to resort to mild lathi-charge and whisk them to the police station.

BJP OBC Morcha state president Ale Bhaskar Raju, former MLA Sasidhar Reddy and others took part in the pro-

Rare snake found in **Nallamala** forest

PNS NAGAR KURNOOL

Rare snake was found in the Nallamala forest on Friday. There are about 53 species of snakes in the forest, of which only 11 are venomous and four are highly venomous. This is a special one and the reptile is said to be a 25-30 cm long that inhabits in burrows and roams for food during the night. According to forest officials, rare animals such as Honey Bedgar has been found in the forest. Although it has been established for many years, the climate here is favorable for them, and migratory birds and animals are flocking here, giving the forest area a new lease of life, officials



ADVOCATE COUPLE MURDER

Cong leaders submit memo to Guv, seek CBI investigation

PNS HYDERABAD

A delegation of Congress leaders led by TPCC President and MP N Uttam Kumar Reddy met Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan at the Raj Bhavan on Friday and requested her to order a court-monitored CBI investigation into the brutal murder of lawyer couple Gattu Vaman Kao and Nagamani.

Uttam Kumar Reddy told the Governor that the brutal and horrific murder of the advocate couple in broad daylight and in full public view proved that there was a total collapse of law and order in Telangana. "We or the general public do not believe that the local police would carry out a fair or neutral investigation into the double murder," he said while urging the Governor to order a court-monitored CBI investigation into the matter.

Later, speaking to the media, Uttam Kumar Reddy alleged that the local police were trying to shield the TRS leaders, who were involved in the brutal murders. He said there was a conspiracy behind the murders, which needed to be exposed. "The lawyer couple murder is directly linked to the Manthani



TPCC President and MP N Uttam Kumar Reddy submits a memorandum to Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan at the Raj Bhavan in Hyderabad on Friday

"We or the general public do not believe that the local police would carry out a fair or neutral investigation into the double murder," said **TPCC President**

custodial death, which is again linked to sand mafia backed by top TRS leaders. However, local

police are trying to suppress the facts to protect the TRS leaders, who are involved in the murders," he alleged.

Uttam Kumar Reddy said that though the High Court had directed the Telangana Police to submit a report on March 1, yet the local police could not be trusted as they were being pressured by the ruling party to hush up the case. "CM KCR did not issue (even) a single-line statement condemning the brutal murders. This clearly shows that the Chief Minister is giving a free hand to 'sand, land and mines mafia' to establish their control using murder as a tool to instil fear among com-

Two LI schemes proposed on Manjira

PNS ■ ZAHEERABAD

Construction of two major lift irrigation schemes on the Manjira River--Sangameshwara Basaweswara LI schemes-will irrigate 2.30 lakh acres in Zaheerabad and Narayanakhed Assembly constituencies.

The LI schemes will irrigate one lakh acres in Žaheerabad and 80,000 in Narayanakhed and the rest of the 50,000 would be irrigated in other backward areas of Andole and Sangareddy Assembly constituencies.

According to reports, irrigation department officials have drawn up plans in this regard.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA

Aruna lauds Gudur for his gesture

PNS HYDERABAD

BJP senior leader Gudur Narayana Reddy celebrated his 59th birthday at Bhoodan Pochampally in Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district a novel way by distributing weaving machines to the poor weavers in the presence of BJP national vice-president DK Aruna and former minister M Narasimhulu.

Speaking on the occasion, DK Aruna appreciated Gudur Narayana Reddy for not being pompous and instead choosing the path of helping the weak-er sections i.e; weaving com-She lauded Gudur for help-

ing the 30 poor families by distributing 'Aasu Yantram' (weaving machines). She also commended the party cadre for



BJP national vice-president DK Aruna hands over the 'Aasu Yantram' gift certificate to a woman weaver at Bhoodan Pochampally in Yadadri Bhuvanagiri on Friday. Former Minister M Narsimhulu and Gudur Narayana Reddy look on

attending the programme and making the function a grand success and appealed to the cadre to work for the victory of MLC candidate G Premendar Reddy.

She exuded confidence that Gudur Narayana Reddy would

Collector inspects

amenities for Army

Medchal-Malkajgiri District Collector

Shwetha Mohanty instructed officials to pro-

vide adequate facilities for the Army recruit-

ment rally in Hakimpet Sports School from

Hakimpet in Shamirpet mandal in the dis-

trict here on Friday, along with the recruit-

ment director Colonel Manoj. She inspect-

ed the school and arrangements for the walk-

ter facilities and accommodation. In all, 4,000

will be allowed a day for the recruitment rally

and arrangements have to be made accord-

ingly avoiding any inconvenience, she said.

conducting the rally in a prestigious manner

as thousands of youths come for the selec-

tions. Effective coordination with other

wings like police and others for traffic reg-

ulation, parking and sanitation will give bet-

Asking them to plan out in advance for smooth conduct of the event she instructed

for better arrangements for the rally. The

Collector planted saplings on the school

premises. Additional collector Vidyasagar

and other officials were present.

She further stated that the government is

She asked officials concerned to ensure bet-

ing track and rally.

ter results, she said.

She paid a visit to the Sports School at

recruitment rally

strengthen the party in Bhuvanagiri Assembly constituency. M Narsimhulu said that KCR has no value for the people of Telangana though they have elected him for the

top post. Gudur Narayana Reddy stat-

PNS SANGAREDDY

March 8 to 16.

Minister for Finance T Harish

Rao on Friday asked the

Sangareddy District Collector

Hanumantha Rao and other

officials to take steps to con-

duct Mahashivaratri celebra-

tions at the famous Ketaki

Sangameshwara temple in

Sangareddy district from

In a meeting to review the arrangements held at Aranya

Bhavan in Hyderabad on

Friday, officials told the min-

ister that over five lakh devo-

tees from Andhra Pradesh,

Telangana, Maharashtra and

Karnataka is expected to take

The minister asked offi-

cials to conduct all rituals as

per the tradition on all nine

days and take all precautions

to rule out any inconvenience

to the devotees. He asked

them to provide all amenities

to the devotees and also pro-

part in the festival.

KETAKI SANGAMESHWARA TEMPLE

BJP senior leader Gudur Narayana Reddy distributed weaving machines to poor weavers to mark his birthday

ed that he was lucky to take birth in this area, which has given him a chance to serve the

Leaders and workers of RSS, BJP, Yuva Morcha, ABVP, VHP and Hindu Vahini have attended in big numbers and felicitated Gudur Narayana Reddy. Leaders of the weaving com-

munity of Pochampalli and surrounding villages have appreciated Narayana Reddy for his gesture of distributing the 'Aasu Yantrams' to the

Harish reviews arrangements

for Mahashivaratri festival

'TS govt claims on creating 1.32 lakh jobs 'fake and fabricated'

PNS HYDERABAD

AICC spokesperson Sravan Dasoju took a dig at KT Rama Rao, Minister for Industries, IT and Municipal Administration, on Friday for avoiding an invitation to attend the open debate organised by the Congress at the Telangana Martyrs Memorial, Gun Park, to discuss the issues of 'employment' in Telangana. The Congress spokesperson did not spare the CM as well. Sravan Dasoju not only categorically stated that KTR's statement on the recruitment numbers given during a meeting at Telangana Bhavan was wrong, but also pointed out

that during the tenure of TRS



AICC spokesperson Sravan Dasoju gestures while addressing the media at Telangana Martyrs' memorial at Gun Park in Hyderabad on Friday

jobs were actually lost than getting created.

While ridiculing KTR's statements on job offers, he explained that while there were 4.19 lakh sanctioned jobs in 2014, 3.12 lakh employees used

to work in the government sector and there were 1.07 lakh vacant jobs at that time.

mon people," he said.

He asked KTR if he was right, how could the current vacancies had gone up to 1.91 lakh and why the total number of existing government employ ees reduced to 2.28 lakh? With the formation of new districts and gram panchayats, the number of sanctioned jobs should have been increased to 5.19 lakh. As per the Biswal Commission, the state had only 2.28 lakh employees, while 4.19 lakh sanctioned jobs were available, which meant 47 per cent of sanctioned jobs were currently vacant in Telangana, he

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION (See Sub-rule (1) of rule-25 and Section-19(1) of the Act-30/2013) Sub-Collector, Bhadrachalann, Land Auguidiún Officer, Sectamma Sag Multi Purpose Project, Rc. No. C/1010/2028-10 Dated: 12:0 District Collector, Bhadrach Kathagudem Re. No. 6/3627/2020. District Gazette No. 83/26/2020. District Gazette No. 88/26/2020. Detect 15.82.2021 Whereas is appears to the District Collector, Bhadcachi Kofragudern first a total or extent of As-40.20 Gbs. land is required in the NP Pall Villago, Charta Mandal of Bhadradri Koffragudern District for public purpose, namely for the Construction of Seatannia Sagar Matti Purpose Project. Theodors, declaration is made that a piece of land reasurement under class As-40.20 gbs of standard reasurement under Land Acquisition for the above said project in the MP Pall Villago, Charta Mandal of Bhadradri Koffragudern District whose land detailed description is as following. SCHEDULE Village: MP Palli Mandal: Cherla District: Bhadradri Kothagudem Name & Address of ime of the Name of the Pattaclar Enjoyer 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1 41/1 41/1 mets # 0.04 夏 1.03 Prabhakar meta 👸 7 41/6 41/ Road 10 129/129/meta 1 13 | 130 | 130 met 13.21 Godavari flood Type of Land TOTAL This declaration is made after hearing of objections of persons inter-

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Land Acquisition/Officer & Sub-Collector, Bhadrachalam on any working day.

DENYING NATIONAL FEST STATUS TO MEDARAM JATARA

ML MELLY MAITREYI HYDERABAD

to worship tribal deities Sammakka and Saralamma there

Telangana government officially organises the biennial Medaram fair while the temple year prior to the official event to

priests conduct the mini-jatara a satisfy the sentiments of devotees. This year the mini-festival

conducted as per the aboriginal traditions commenced on February 24 with the temple cleaning, worship rituals. The devotees from various villages across the state made a beeline to the mini-jatara to offer worship on February 26 and 27 reflecting the popularity of the festival.

statistics over one crore tribals and non-tribal devotees come to the biennial festival and offer jaggery to the presiding deities.

who fought for the protection of tribals, are worshipped as deities

from the days of Kakatiya kings. The Telangana government had been organising the biennial festival in a befitting manner by sanctioning Rs 100 crore for providing facilities for lakhs of devotees, who came to the Mega

as a sentiment to run national politics, why can't Medaram festival that became world-famous as tribals' festival be accorded the status of the national festival," he sought to know. It made one wonder if it had anything to do with discrimination between regions and communities, he



celebrations with officials on Friday at the famous Ketaki Sangameshwara temple

vide annadanam and presentation of art forms to entertain the public. He asked officials to use

four mobile toilets in the district. He advised officials to ensure that the drinking water and temple pond water not get polluted. He asked them to set up labs then and there to test the water quality.

He asked officials to ensure that round-the-clock sanitation programme should continue deploying workers in ready.

three shifts. He enquired about transportation amenities for the festival. Electricity department personnel were asked to ensure that there are no hiccups in the power supply. Furthermore, he asked officials to make arrangements for providing toilets, bathing ghats, dress changing sheds and so on. He also asked them to provide medical camps, besides keeping



the Dwcra Bazar after inaugurating it in Patancheru on Friday

'Government striving for women empowerment'

PNS ■ PATANCHERU

The government was striving for the empowerment of women, said MLC Bhupal Reddy and Patancheru MLA Goodem Mahipal Reddy. They inaugurated the Dwcra Bazaar, an exhibition of products organised by the Ishwarambha Mahila Society at Bharathi Nagar Division in Patancheru constituency on Friday in collaboration with the NABARD.

Speaking on the occasion, they said that women's asso-

ciations would be set up through the Indira Kranti Patham to empower them and provide loans at very lowinterest rates. He said that training is being imparted in various fields in line with the new trend. The event was attended by corporators Sindhu Adarsh Reddy, Pushpa Nagesh, former corporator Anjaiah, society organisers Satyavathi, Jyothi, Šrilatha, TRS senior leaders Devendra Chari, Satyanarayana, activists, members of women's unions and many others.

ambulances and fire tenders

Former MP Sitaram Naik alleges discrimination

Even as pilgrims thronged the ongoing four-day Mini-Medaram fair in Mulugu district is disappointment among people's representatives from the scheduled tribes about the indifference of the Centre to their

long pending demand to declare it as the national festival.

A Sitaram Naik, former Lok Sabha MP, who attended the Mini- Medaram Jatara said on Friday that as per government

Sammakka and Saralamma

Medaram festival.

"When Gods were being used

The Union government agreed to organise National in February in Delhi for the tribals of north India while it continued to ignore the request from tribals of south India, he pointed out.

The Central government should at least initiate measures to declare the Medaram festival to be celebrated next year as a national festival, he demanded.

The biennial Medaram festival is compared to Kumbh Mela in terms of the congregation of pilgrims. "I spoke several times as an ST MP representing the region in Parliament explaining the prominence of the tribal festival and requested it be declared as national festival, but in vain," he said.



Odisha Assembly adjourned after BJP lawmaker threatens suicide

Odisha Assembly was Friday adjourned till post-lunch session after a BJP lawmaker threatened suicide and the Congress Legislature party leader sat on dharna in the well of the House demanding immediate procurement of paddy from farmers in different mandis of the state.

The issue was raised during the question hour when BJP MLA from Deogarh, Subash Chandra Panigrahi announced that he will not hesitate to immolate himself to protest against the sufferings of the farmers who are not able to sell their paddy in the mandis following the introduction of the centralised token system.

Farmers are given tokens to sell their paddy before it is harvested. By the time the paddy is ready for sale, the tenure of the tokens are found to have elapsed causing harassment

This has led to hundreds of farmers to protest and put up

road blocakdes in the state, he constituency are threatening to

Sitting on a dharna in the well of the House, Panigrahi said: I will immolate myself if the procurement process is not streamlined and the produce of the farmers are procured at the earliest.

He said, "The farmers in my

commit sucide as they are not being able to sell their paddy. Therefore, when the farmers are getting prepared to go for self-immolation, I as their representative have no choice but to adopt the same procedure to protest against

the governments inability to

procure paddy.

PNS MUMBAI

Panigrahi, however, returned to his seat after Speaker S N Patro asured him that he will be given opportunity to raise the issue durinmg the zero hour. As soon as the zero hour began, Congress Legislature Party leader Narasingha Mishra sat on

the same demand. He said that the government must give justice to farmers and should refrain from cheating them.

We want specific reply from the government. Let the Speaker convene an all party meeting and resolve the issue immediately," Mishra said.

Unable to run the House due to the ruckus, Speaker S N Patro adjourned the proceeding till 4 pm.

The House also witnessed members cutting across party lines expressing concern over sand smuggling across the state during the question hour. The opposition BJP and Congress members created ruckus demanding formulation of a policy to curb illegal sand mining across the state.

The speaker too expressed concern and asked the Revenue and Disaster Minister Sudam Marandi why the government has no specific policy for lifting sand from differ-

BJP's double-engine analogy will be non-starter in Bengal: TMC

Taking a dig at the BJP for pitching that governments formed by the same party both at the Centra and the state will accelerate development in West Bengal, the Trinamool Congress Friday said the double-engine analogy by the saffron party will be a non-starter in the state.

Senior party leader and minister Bratya Basu told reporters at a press meet here here that while campaigning for the upcoming assembly polls in the state, BJP leaders are highlight-ing the need for same party's government both at the Centre and the state.
"This double-engine train will

not have bogies for the common man to ride. These engines must be driven at a very slow pace on chord lines, if you take into account the number of killings, attacks on dalits and women in BJP-ruled states,"he said.

....they are not saying how their government(BJP) is working on the agenda to hand over railways to private parties. The saffron party wants to do something similar for Bengal. They only work to fulfill the interest of big corporate," the minister said.



On scooter, Smriti Irani leads BJP rally for Bengal polls

PNS ■ SONARPUR (WB)

Riding a scooter Union minister Smriti Irani led a rally of the BJP on Friday as she campaigned for the upcoming West Bengal elections in the South 24 Parganas district. Taking part in the BJP's state-wide 'Poriborton Yatra'. Irani along with BJP MP Roopa Ganguly and Agnimitra Paul began the campaign in Gangajoara near Garia on the party's 'rath' -- a bus decked up with slogans and photos of the leaders. After covering a short distance, the minister got down from the 'rath'

and took to a scooter, wearing a black helmet and a mask. "When we began the 'rath yatra' today, the administration deliberately tried to delay it. We will ride two-wheelers, walk on foot because West Bengal is on the march towards change," Irani said. Enthused by the minister's spontanity, scores of BJP workers followed Irani on twowheelers, chanting "Jai Shri Ram" and "Khela Hobey", meaning 'game on' -- a slogan first raised by the Trinamool Congress, which has now become the catchphrase of this election season

INDIA CORNER

Bomb attack on Bengal minister: Two arrested by CID

he West Bengal CID has arrested two persons in connection with the blast in Murshidabad's Nimtita Railway Station in which state minister Jakir Hossain and over 20 others were injured, a senior official



said on Friday. Both have been booked under Section 3 of the Explosive Substances Act, 1908, and other sections of the IPC, including attempt to murder, he said. "The two will be produced in court for further legal action," the official said. Sleuths of the CID have been conducting raids at different places in the state as part of the probe. Hossain, Trinamool Congress MLA and the minister of state for labour, was waiting at platform number 2 to catch a train to Kolkata around 10 pm on February 17 when the blast occurred, seriously injuring him and the others. The senior TMC leader and the other injured persons are undergoing treatment at a

B'desh High Commissioner meets Assam Chief Minister Sonowal

Bangladesh High Commissioner to India Muhammad Imran called on Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal here on Friday and discussed a wide range of issues of bilateral interest. The chief minister highlighted issues concerning bilateral trade and commerce of mutual interest of Bangladesh and Assam, an official release said. Sonowal said that both Assam and Bangladesh should work



to explore markets in their respective territories for mutual benefit, particularly in areas of agriculture, agricultural products, information technology and textiles. Since Assam is an immediate neighbour of Bangladesh, there should be frequent exchange programmes between both the geographical entities, he said. The chief minister also called for improvement of connectivity between Assam and Bangladesh through waterways, airways and roadways.

ISRO lining up launch of India's geo imaging satellite GISAT-1

he Indian Space Research Organisation is lining up the launch of its geo imaging satellite GISAT-1 close on the heels of the February 28 PSLV- C51 mission. The launch of GISAT-1 onboard GSLV-F10 rocket was originally planned for March five last year, but was postponed a day before the blast-off due to technical reasons. Secretary



in the Department of Space and ISRO Chairman K Sivan told PTI that the technical issues have been resolved and the delay in the launch was due to COVID-19-induced lockdown which affected normal work. Sources in the Bengaluru-headquartered space agency said ISRO is now looking at March-end-early-April timeframe for the mission from Sriharikota will facilitate near real-time observation of the Indian sub-continent, under cloud-free condition, at frequent intervals. Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV-F10) will launch GISAT-1 from the Second Launch Pad of Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) SHAR, Sriharikota.

Will not allow smooth session unless Rathod quits, says BJP

JP MLA Atul Bhatkhalkar on Friday said the party will not allow the Budget session of the Maharashtra legislature to run smoothly unless Forest Minister Sanjay Rathod stepped down. The opposition party has been demanding the resignation of Rathod, a Shiv Sena leader from Yavatmal, since



his name was linked to the death of a 23-year-old woman in Pune. Rathod has denied that he had anything to do with the case. In a video message, Bhatkhalkar alleged that Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray was "planting" stories of Rathod likely to resign before the session begins on March 1. "It is a shameless attempt to maintain image. Unless Rathod steps down or is removed from his post, the BJP will not allow the budget session to run smoothly," the MLA said. "The chief minister can remove Rathod from the cabinet any time, but he is trying to protect the minister by delaying it," Bhatkhalkar further said

Bail granted to labour rights activist

PNS CHANDIGARH

The Punjab and Haryana High Court granted bail to labour rights activist Naudeep Kaur on Friday in a case filed under attempt to murder and some other charges, more than six weeks after she was arrested in Haryana's Sonipat for allegedly gheraoing an industrial unit and demanding money from the compa-"The court accepted the bail application of Naudeep Kaur. She has been granted bail by the high court," her counsel Arshdeep Singh

The vehicle with explosives, which was found near industrialist Mukesh Ambani's residence here in south Mumbai on Thursday, had been stolen last week and its owner had

it, police said on Friday.

The vehicle with gelatin sticks and apparently a fake number plate was found parked on Carmichael Road near 'Antilia', the multi-storey residence of Ambani, the chairman of Reliance Industries, on Thursday evening.

The owner of the vehicle, Hiren Mansukh, visited the



police commissioner office in south Mumbai this afternoon after he saw visuals of the SUV found near Ambani's house,

which was similar to his vehicle," an official said.

"His statement will be

Intelligence Unit (CIU) of the Mumbai crime branch," he

Mansukh, who is a resident of Thane, later told reporters that he had parked his SUV near Airoli Mulund bridge on February 17 after its steering got jammed while he was on his way to attend a family function.

The next day, when I went to get my car, it could not be found at the spot. After a search of about four hours, I realised that it had been stolen, following which I lodged a complaint at Vikhroli police station and an offence was registered in that connection,'

Prakash Amte tests COVID positive

PNS NAGPUR

Noted social worker and RamonMagsaysay award recipient Prakash Am te has tested positive for coronavirus and is undergoing treatment at a prihospital in Maharashtra's Nagpur

Amte (73) had been experiencing symptoms of coronavirus for the last seven days, but his test in Gadchiroli had come out negative for the infection, the Padma Shri recipient's son Aniket told PTI. Amte suffered from fever and was taken to Chandrapur, before being admitted to a private hospital in Nagpur after he tested positive for coronavirus on Thursday evening, he said. Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh wished Amte a speedy recovery.

Many assns 'support' Bharat bandh but keep shops open

PNS NEW DELHI

Various markets in the national capital remained open on Friday during the 'Bharat Vyapar Bandh' called by traders' union with many saying that despite supporting the cause, they did not want to suf-

The Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) on Thursday had said all commercial markets across the country will remain closed on February 26 in view of its 'Bharat Bandh' call demanding a review of the provisions of the goods and services tax (GST) regime.

The CAIT said dharnas (protests) will be held nationwide at 1,500 places to urge the Centre, state governments and the GST Council to keep in abeyance the "draconian" provisions of GST.

Brijesh Goyal, president of Chamber of Trade and Industry (CTI), said most of the markets in Delhi have opened but the associations have extended their support to the 'bandh'.

'Around 98 per cent markets, hotels, restaurants and industrial areas were open except in some parts of Chawri Bazaar and Karol Bagh. However, they have extended their support. We also held a protest at Kashmiri Gate around 12.30 pm," Goyal said.



Although various market bodies said they support the cause for which the 'bandh' was called, they however, could not shut down their shops or outlets due to multiple reasons. The bandh was not enforced at Connaught Place market.

"We are completely in support of the cause. However, it was not practically feasible to enforce the 'bandh' in the mar-

The traders are already reeling under the losses they incurred during the lockdown and they have heavy burden of rents. We completely support the cause and feel the demands are right," said Atul Bhargava, president, New Delhi Traders Association.

Echoing his views, Sanjeev Mehra, president, Khan Market Association, said, the issue is very genuine but the traders are already suffering and we did not want to add another day of losses so we did not participate in the

Shah to address meetings in TN, Puducherry Tamil Nadu and Puducherry.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Senior BJP leader and Union Home Minister Amit Shah will address public meetings in poll-bound Tamil Nadu and Puducherry on Sunday. Party leaders said Shah will also take organisational meetings in both

Shah will leave for Tamil Nadu on Saturday and is scheduled to hold a public meeting in Karaikal in Puducherry on Sunday morning, followed by a 'Vijay Sankalp Rally' Janakipuram in Villupuram district in Tamil Nadu.

according to the schedule released by his office. Besides this, Shah will also hold organisational meetings of the party's units of the state and the Union Territory.

The BJP is contesting assembly elections in Tamil Nadu in alliance with ruling

NIA files charge sheet against 11 terrorists in al-Qaeda conspiracy case

PNS NEW DELHI

The NIA on Friday filed a charge sheet against 11 members of the banned terrorist group al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent for allegedly planning to carry out attacks in India on the instructions of their Pakistan- and Bangladeshbased handlers, an official said.

Murshid Hasan, Mosaraf Hoseen, Mainul Mandal, Lea Yean Ahmed, Najmus Sakib, Ivakub Biswas, Samim Ansari, Ábu Sufian, Atiur Rahman, Al Mamun Kamal and Abdul Momin Mandal have been named in the charge sheet under sections of the IPC, the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and the Arms

Act, the NIA official said.

the NIA based on information about an al-Qaeda-inspired module sprouting and operating in West Bengal and Kerala under the leadership of Hasan, the spokesperson of the premier investigation agency said. The members of this module

India and Pakistan signed a ceasefire

agreement in 2003, but it has hardly been

followed in letter and spirit over past several

years with more violations than observance

The case was registered by were in advanced stage of conspiracy to execute terrorist attacks in different parts of the country, the NIA official said. In raids conducted on September 19 last year in West Bengal and Kerala, nine terrorists were arrested. Subsequently,

two more terror operatives

on August 26 and November 1

Hasan was in touch with al-Qaeda handlers based in Pakistan and Bangladesh and had received instructions along with radical propaganda material through encrypted social media platforms from them, the NIA official said.

Hasan along with his other associates conspired to radicalise and recruit more individuals into al-Oaeda, he said.

They disseminated radical material through social media and encrypted chat platforms with an intention to radicalise and recruit others for establishing an Islamic State by waging a violent jihad in India, the NIA spokesperson said.

India-Pak pace on ceasefire rekindles hope for peace

The announcement by India and Pakistan to strictly observe all agreements on ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC) and other sectors has rekindled hope for a peaceful future among border residents in Jammu and Kashmir who have been living under constant fear of firing and shelling.

We are joyous over the news of a fresh agreement between the two countries to observe complete ceasefire along the borderline. It has rekindled hope among us," Kalal-resident Mohmmad Isaaq said.

Isaaq hoped that Pakistan would keep its promise of complete observance of the ceasefire agreement.

"We hope Pakistan keeps



the promise of not firing on Pakistan has engaged in us. We do not feel that they shelling and firing along the will religiously observe cease-LoC and the International Border (IB) resulting in casufire. They have made such promises in the past as well, alties, damage to houses, schools, health centres and only to violate them," he religious places.

For the past few years, We have suffered a lot to

due Pakistani firing and shelling.... Education of kids was affected. Houses were damaged. There were casualties. The fresh agreement of maintaining complete ceasefire is a happy news for us. Hope it stays," Sarpanch Bhawani in Rajouri district

of the pact

Sunil Kumar said. Subash Chander, a Panch, said although they are very happy over the news, but it is difficult to trust Pakistan.

Similar apprehension was raised by Kerni-resudent

Mohmmad Ashraf who welcomed the fresh agreement but raised question over the intention of Pakistan. Kiran Kumar, a Kathua

District Development Council (DDC) member, says that it is a happy news for border residents. "We thank the central government for this decision. We want Pakistan to behave as a good neighbour by ensuring zero firing from their side. Farmers will fearlessly cultivate their lands on border.

Life will be better," he said. India and Pakistan on Thursday announced that they have agreed to strictly observe all agreements on ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir and other sectors.

A joint statement issued in Islamabad and New Delhi said the Director Generals of Military Operations of the two countries held discussions over the established mechanism of hotline contact and reviewed the situation along the LoC and all other sectors in a "free, frank and cordial" atmosphere.

India and Pakistan signed a ceasefire agreement in 2003, but it has hardly been followed in letter and spirit over past several years with more violations than observance of the pact.

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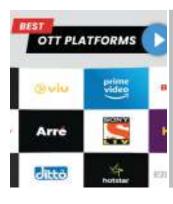
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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

Censorship?

The Government's guidelines regulating OTT platforms and social media raise a few questions

he first-phase lockdown of last year's pandemic outbreak spawned newfound attention and increased popularity for a number of web series as cinema halls had been ordered shut and people were forced to remain closeted inside their residences. Several big-budget and multi-starrer movies, which had been slated for theatrical release in the last week of March 2020 and beyond, fell to the Government's social distancing order and, to make up for the imminent financial losses in light of the prevailing uncertain conditions, chose the new fad of releasing the films online. As days gave way to weeks and months wore on, the average Indian family — already reeling under fear psychosis and bored to death by now — rediscovered the panacea of entertainment in various web



series streaming on Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms. So far, so good. *Mirzapur* aired, made a splash, but there was no hue and cry. Along came Saif Ali Khanstarrer Tandav, focusing on how politics affects collegial environment, and all hell broke loose. Everybody seems to have conveniently forgotten Haasil (released in 2003, starring Jimmy Sheirgill, Irrfan Khan and Ashutosh Rana, directed by Tigmanshu Dhulia) which was a gripping narrative based on the same subject. As avid watchers of the series among the OTT viewers point out, the ostensible objection — "hurting religious sentiments" by taking umbrage to the Shiva scene in the first episode — was just a ruse to express

anger against the way the controversial Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019, and the National Register of Citizens issues had been projected in the series.

The "religious sentiments" angle, coupled with allegations of the earlier series brimming with sexually explicit scenes and foul language, brought the spotlight back on Mirzapur, too, though there had been no protests during its run earlier. The tepid response of Twitter officials to the Centre's recent earnest entreaty to suspend the handles of certain "rumourmongering members" during the ongoing farmers' agitation, especially in the wake of the January 26 violence at Red Fort, seems to have added fuel to the authorities' displeasure and, therefore, today we find both the OTT platforms and social media facing a barrage of directives. The question now arises: Are the Government guidelines regulating the two media correct, or could it lead to pressure or censorship on them? Experts opine that the 29 pages of rules raise concerns over several factors, including the privacy of users and censorship of digital news media, which will ultimately affect citizens' rights. It seems the Government just does not like us to have fun and make personal choices. It had better heed common sense and allow its adult population, those who are eligible to vote and can take learned decisions in all other spheres of life, to decide for itself whether it wants to watch a particular show or series. Of course, cracking down on the creators and propagators of fake news is a different ball game altogether.



Dark secrets

Who is giving patronage to Mukhtar Ansari? Who is gunning for him, and why?

rguing in the Supreme Court, senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi termed him "a small fry". However, anyone who knows even a little about don-turned-politician Mukhtar Ansari and his deadly gang war in the badlands of Uttar Pradesh (UP), is aware that the name is enough to send a chill down the spine of many politicians, bureaucrats, police officers and, especially, businessmen. Ansari, an MLA from



UP's Mau Sadar, is currently lodged in the Ropar Jail of Punjab in connection with an extortion case. The Punjab and UP Governments are at loggerheads for his custody, with the former trying every trick up its sleeve to keep him from the UP Police's hands on health grounds. A natural question to ask would be as to what makes a dreaded criminal so important that UP's BJPled Government and Punjab's Congress Government are fighting over his custody in the Supreme Court. Well, there is nothing new in Ansari's name being associated with heinous crimes like murder, extortion and kidnapping, but what actually has pitted him against the

saffron party is the chilling murder of then BJP MLA Krishnanand Rai in 2005, who and six associates were gunned down by assailants armed with AK-47 rifles. The murder was more than sensational as 400 rounds were fired. Ansari, the main accused,

was acquitted by the CBI court in 2019. Recently, the BJP's Mohammadabad MLA Alka Rai, the slain MLA's widow, wrote to Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra accusing the party Governments in Punjab and Rajasthan of shielding Ansari. However, the story is not as simple as it appears. The UP Police has of late become "trigger-happy" and several criminals have been gunned down in encounters that the Opposition terms "extra-judicial killings". Last year, wanted criminal Vikas Dubey was shot by the State police after the vehicle carrying him "overturned" on a highway and Dubey "tried to escape after snatching a gun" from a policeman. There is no denying that Ansari must be fearful of meeting the same fate if Punjab jail authorities hand him over to the UP Police. But there is another side to the story: The criminal-politician-bureaucrat-police nexus is nothing new and Ansari must have been part of many such connections at the interstate and intrastate level, and it is only in the interest of such corrupt elements to exterminate the voices that can reveal their dark secrets. Now, who is giving patronage to Ansari and who is out to get him, and why, is the moot question.

A flight and travel after one year



As an air trip to Goa for an event after a year-long hiatus revealed, being constantly stressed about the virus is clearly not the way to be

t is not good form to write columns in the first person but since this column talks of a personal experience, I will be writing it as such. The experience in question was catching a flight for the first time in 350 days. Part of my work involves evaluating and reviewing motor vehicles and that invariably involves a lot of travel, although the COVID-19 pandemic ensured that the few drives we did in 2020 all occurred in the Delhi-NCR and were fairly well-managed. Car companies don't do events in places like Goa because of the sun and sand or because folks like me enjoy flying, there are hundreds of decent hotel properties in Goa and the State is connected by flight to almost every major city in India. So, to do a media drive in Goa makes immense sense; in fact it is probably cheaper than organising individual drives in different cities and is definitely logistically easier.

I had promised myself that I would not fly in 2020, even after flights resumed and a few isolated automotive events took place. But as the new year rolled around and the first events began to be planned, one could not put off travel much longer. After all, working in a newspaper, I had been reading firsthand how the Government has more or less brought the pandemic in check. Of course, by the time I did eventually fly that had actually changed a bit with the new strain emerging in Maharashtra. However, my tickets were booked and I was taking a flight after 350 days.

A drive that once seemed like a weekly commute to Terminal 3 from my house appeared strange, not least because this was my first time in a taxi after almost a year. Traffic to and from the airport seemed normal and the few ams were more to do with the construction of the new flyover taxiways. Since my flight was in the afternoon, there was less haos at the drop-off area. Airlines are running at a restricted domestic schedule at about three-quarters capacity and with very few international flights, India's largest airport terminal did not feel crowded.



from flying in 2019 and before. Though I did sanitise my

pathogens before, maybe we

had been exposed to a "rela-

tive" of the COVID-19 virus

and that gave our bodies the

B-cells and the T-cells needed

hands after going through security which I feel is the CAREFUL, PARTICULARLY biggest congregation point of the entire flying process, it felt the same as before. I must state, SINCE THERE IS IN at no point did I feel unsafe and ALL LIKELIHOOD A while I would not go as far as MORE VIRULENT to claim that there was a laissez faire attitude, you really STRAIN DOING THE would not have guessed that ROUNDS. IT MAY there was a pandemic going on. (OR MAY NOT) BE Now part of this can be explained by India's caseload, MÒRE DEADLY, BUT something that was well explained by oncologist and IT WOULD BE award-winning medical writer STUPID TO FIND Siddhartha Mukherjee in The THAT OUT THE New Yorker recently. It elucidated on the concept that HARD WAY because we live in India and have been exposed to so many

THAT SAID, WE

SHOULD STILL BE

to deal with the virus. What else could explain the low death toll in India, many parts of sub-Saharan Africa and South-East Asia? One could argue that the "true" death toll has been suppressed but there is no way to hide hundreds of thousands of deaths; people would be talking about it, and that clearly isn't the case.

That said, we should still be careful, particularly since there is in all likelihood a more virulent strain doing the rounds. It may (or may not) be more deadly, but it would be stupid to find that out the hard way. I was flying on Vistara and while mask compliance was followed, the flight was packed with families travelling to Goa to get away from the boredom, one presumes. Some passengers stuck in the middle seats were covered in their wovenfibre protective suits and most people kept their face-shields on during the flight.

But it was not so much the flying experience, but what I saw in Goa which was scary. My hosts had organised dinner at a popular nightspot and it was crowded. There were few precautions being taken and while the bouncers were taking temperatures using an infra-red scanner, it was quite evident that the public at large

had travelled to the party State to leave their Coronavirus worries behind. 'Thalassa' on Vagator beach was packed to the rafters and nobody appeared to care.

With the Goa airport seeing flights from every corner of the country even if some States ask for the returnees to be tested, the crowds at restaurants and bars were back to pre-COVID levels, just that they were almost completely Indian with very few foreigners. That said, there were some expats around; those who had business and diplomatic visas and they were praising the Government and Indians for taking such a "Zen" attitude to the pandemic.

It was really incredible. Either people were not worried or they had reverted to their usual "dekha jayega" (we will see) attitude. Or maybe this was another example of Goan "susegad", the chilled-out laidback attitude. I still don't know whether it is the attitude to adopt, but being constantly stressed about the virus is clearly not the way to be. But the "new normal" doesn't really seem very different from the "old normal".

(The author is Managing Editor, The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal.)

ERS TO THE EDITOR

BJP SCARED OF RAHUL GANDHI

— This refers to the editorial 'Slip of the tongue?' (February 26). Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has yet again proved that he is suitable for politics and can make the BJP and its leaders uncomfortable. The BJP leaders, including the top brass, fear the popularity that Rahul enjoys among people and miss no opportunity to project the Gandhi scion in bad

light or poke fun at him. They know that only he can change political equations and has the ability to ead the country. On the other hand, knowingly or otherwise, Rahul makes such statements or speeches which give good fodder to the BJP to keep attacking him, his family and also the Congress. Attacking Rahul gives the ruling party an opportunity to cover up its own failures. All the BJP leaders talk about 70 years of Congress rule alleging that the 'Grand Old Party' did nothing for the nation but rather looted it. However, they fail to count the achievements of the Congress against which the seven years of the BJP's rule stand nowhere.

Fuel prices are at an all-time high, the economy is at all-time low, unemployment rates are high and there are no jobs in the Government sector. The Modi Government is doing rampant privatisation to benefit its corporate friends and is least concerned about the plight of the poor and the have-nots. Only a Government under Rahul's leadership can save the nation and put the economy back on tracks.

N Nagarajan | Secunderabad

EXTRADITE ALL FUGITIVE INDIANS Sir — There is finally the good news that fugitive diamond merchant Nirav Modi, wanted in India on charges of fraud and money laundering in Punjab National Bank (PNB) scam case, will be extradited from the UK. Mumbai's Arthur Road jail has kept a special cell ready to lodge him. It is like a win-win situation for the Indian Government and authorities. Further, the UK judge ruled that there is no evidence to suggest that Nirav would

Nothing wrong with renaming stadium



n unnecessary controversy is being created for having the Motera stadium named After Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Those making the hue and cry must understand that Modi isn't the first living person to have a stadium named after him. Many stadiums in India have been named after leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi and so on. Even airports and railway stations have been named after great leaders and personalities. Narendra Modi. during his tenure as the Chief Minister of Gujarat,

Nirav lost his nearly two-year-long legal battle against extradition on all grounds.

and punished as per the law of India.

Sir — It is really shocking that Rajesh Das,

had developed the State quite a lot. After all, it was Modi's dream to create a stadium meeting the global standards with state-of-the-art facilities and he played an instrumental role in the rede-

velopment of the sports facility.

We must understand that renaming the stadium after Modi in no way belittles or insults other leaders. In the past, Mumbai's Brabourne and Wankhede stadiums were named after individuals who were then alive. Similar is the case with Navi Mumbai's DY Patil Stadium, Bengaluru's M Chinnaswamy Stadium and Chennai's MA Chidambaram Stadium, Mohali's PCA Stadium was renamed after former BCCI and Punjab Cricket Association president IS Bindra. However, this outcry reeks of dirty politics and a section of people who have developed a sort of phobia against the name of the Prime Minister. However, we should not lend our ears to such people who

criticise him for the sake of criticism only. M Pradyu | Kannur

not receive a fair trial in India. With this,

The 49-year-old fugitive businessman has been repeatedly denied bail due to the seriousness of the allegations against him and remains behind bars in a London prison since his arrest in March 2019. It will also set an example for other criminals who flee the country after committing financial and other crimes and think they can get away with it. Such criminals and fugitives can afford big lawyers, but they must remember that law is above all and it's not easy to hide or escape its long hands. All fugitives should be extradited

CK Ramani | Chennai

SHAMEFUL ACT BY POLICE OFFICER

the Special Director General of Police, Tamil Nadu, has turned out to be a black sheep as he is accused of misbehaving with a female IPS officer on duty and sexually harassing her. This is what happens when officers are promoted to senior positions, particularly in the police department, without taking into account their past records but rather on various other considerations. It is also unwarranted that posts such as Special DGP are created with the intention of accommodating blue-eyed officers.

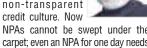
Suspension would not be sufficient in his case and he should be summarily dismissed from service as the female IPS officer has come forward to lodge a complaint against him.

It is expected that the panel to probe the harassment charge would do a fair job and submit its final report in record time. If women police officers are not safe and are vulnerable to such crimes at the hands of their own colleagues, the plight of common women is not hard to understand. Tharcius S Fernando | Chennai

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One after the other steps have been taken to pull the country out of the non-transparent

to be reported

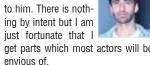


Prime Minister — Narendra Mod



Russia is confronted aggressive aimed at disrupting its development and creating problems along our perimeter **Russian President** –Vladimir Putir

An actor can only choose what is offered to him. There is nothing by intent but I am just fortunate that I



—Avinash Tiwar



officially announce retirement from all forms of the game. I thank my family, friends, fans, teams, coaches and the whole

country wholeheartedly for all the support and love.

Cricketer -Yusuf Pathan

Today in 2019, the Indian Air Force (IAF) had responded to the Pulwama terror attack and reiterated the country's policy against ter-

rorism in "New India" **Union Home Minister**



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ADULT EDUCATION SET TO TURN A PAGE

Free access to adult learning through online mode backed by extensive usage of ICT has been emphasised



VIPIN KUMAR

merican industrialist Henry Ford famously said: "Anyone who stops learning is old - whether this happens at 20 or at 80. Anyone who keeps on learning not only remains young but becomes constantly more valuable - regardless of physical capacity." This is true even today, particularly for illiterate adults. Adult Education (AE) extends schooling options to those who are 15 years of age or above and have missed the opportunity of formal tutoring earlier but now want to pursue education. Though the literacy rate in India has increased from 12 per cent in 1947 to 73 per cent in 2011, however, adult illiteracy is still a challenge for the Government because the absolute number of illiterates in India was 25.76 crore, the largest in the world, as per the 2011 census. Successive Central governments took major initiatives to improve the adult literacy rate in the country. For instance, under the National Education Policy (NEP), 1986, the National Literacy Mission Authority (NLMA) was founded to impart functional literacy to non-literates in the age group of 15-35 years in a time-bound manner. Subsequently, the Saakshar Bharat Programme continued till March 2018



A major paradigm shift in the programme could help in imparting functional literacy to 7.63 crore non-literates, including 5.38 crore women, with four broader objectives namely: Basic literacy and numeracy, basic education, vocational education and continuing education. In this programme, the Government introduced new components of literacy and under the financial literacy component, one crore bank accounts of adult illiterates or neo-literates were opened under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana. With regard to legal literacy, a new curriculum was designed and developed for neo-literates to create awareness of their rights and duties. These components have been included in the critical life section of AE and the lifelong learning chapter of the NEP, 2020. The new curriculum will be developed by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and includes five components: Foundational literacy and numeracy; critical life skills (including financial literacy, digital literacy, commercial skills, healthcare and awareness, child care and education, and family welfare); vocational skills development; basic education and continuing education (including holistic adult education courses in arts, science, technology, culture, sports, recreation and more advanced material on critical life skills).

The NEP-2020 recommends a strong and innovative Government initiative for AE to facilitate community involvement and the smooth and beneficial integration of technology to expedite the aim of achieving 100 per cent literacy. These resources are a must to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.6 of the United Nations. Giving impetus to adult literacy, the Union Budget 2021-22, states that "to enable increased access of resources, online modules covering the entire gamut of adult education will be introduced." Hence, for the improvement of the AE programme, free access to adult learning in States and Union Territories (UTs) through online mode backed by extensive usage of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) has been emphasised. An online teaching and learning system will be developed in which a learner may register with essential information like name, date of birth, gender, Aadhaar number (not mandatory), mobile number and so on and attend the class through online mode by using a mobile or any Common Service Centre (CSC) or digital booth or cybercafé. At the national level the NCERT, NIOS, National Informatics Centre and the DAE will facilitate ICT support in designing and developing central modules, portal, apps, while States and UTs may explore partnerships with stakeholders for a vibrant adult education programme. As Mahatma Gandhi once said, "Mass illiteracy is India's sin and shame and must be liquidated."

(The writer is Joint Secretary, Ministry of Education. The views expressed are personal.)

Time for an eco-friendly development model



The people living in hilly regions and the country at large demand that the Govt adopt a pro-people and pro-nature development model instead of a pro-corporate one

The recent havoc in the Chamoli district of Uttarakhand — where a large part of the Nanda Devi glacier fell into the Alaknanda stream near Joshimath and caused severe flooding that resulted in the hydropower projects of Rishi Ganga and NTPC Tapovan Vishnugad plus many buildings being destroyed and scores of people being killed — has raised the pertinent question: Is this development or the destruction of the environment and people? The Chamoli incident has brought back the traumatic memories of the June 2013 tragedy when the Mandakini river was suddenly flooded after a cloudburst and the flow of water killed more than 5,000 people and left millions stranded in floodwater for days. The fact remains that though Uttarakhand is blessed with natural beauty and invaluable resources such as dense forests, rivers and mountains, it has a very fragile ecosystem. Hence, the State is prone to natural disasters. An earthquake of the magnitude 6.8 on the Richter scale hit the district of Uttarkashi in 1991, killing hundreds of people and destroying thousands of houses. Another earthquake in 1999 in Chamoli killed hundreds, too. The entire Malpa village of Pithoragarh was devastated by a massive landslide in 1999 and 250 people lost their

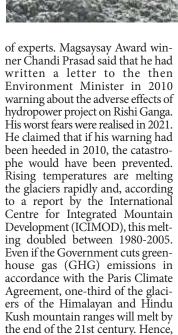
Though earthquakes, cloudbursts, landslides, massive avalanches and other natural disasters have been a part of natural processes in Uttarakhand for centuries, the increase in their frequency and depth of intensity is due to human activities. The natives of Uttarakhand are acutely aware and have widespread knowledge about the fragility and ecosensitivity of their environment. For centuries they have lived in harmony with the environment, but now, this stability is being threatened by indiscriminate development and flagrant violation of environmental rules. They have been trying to save their State for a long time.

As early as June 1950, Mira Behn, an environmental activist of Garhwal, published an article titled 'Something is wrong in the Himalayas' documenting that the flash floods in Uttarakhand are bound to wreak havoc as the sensitivity of the environment is being overlooked during the economic development process. Later, she also wrote to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on the issue. It is pertinent to note that the site of the recent mishap is the cradle of the Chipko Movement that was initiated to save trees from commercial lumber firms. The first protest occurred near the village of Mandal in the upper Alaknanda valley in April 1973. Alas, governments past and present have neither listened to the cries of locals and environmental activists nor learnt any lessons from the tragedy of 2013. Still, more than 50 hydroelectric projects are underway on the Alaknanda and Bhagirathi rivers, even though a committee of experts warned that such projects were a threat to the State and its frail ecol-

In fact, Uma Bharti, a senior BJP leader and former Water Resources Minister, in her time had requested the Centre not to build power projects on the Ganga river and its major tributaries since the Himalayas are a fragile area. Following the recent catastrophe in Uttarakhand, the Government needs to seriously reconsider its stance on building hydroelectric dams in the region. It should no longer ignore the advice and warnings



GAS EMISSIONS IN
ACCORDANCE
WITH THE PARIS
CLIMATE
AGREEMENT,
ONE-THIRD OF THE **GLACIERS OF THE** HIMALAYAN AND RANGES WILL MELT BY THE 21ST CENTURY. HENCE, URGENT ACTION NEEDS TO BE TAKEN SOONER **DISASTERS ARE** LIKELY TO **INCREASE WITH TEMPERATURE**



n India is a result of climate change. but an increase in their impact is due to overexploitation of natural resources. The Centre and State Governments have been pursuing pro-corporate development by ignoring environmental norms.

urgent action needs to be taken

sooner as natural disasters are like-

ly to increase with temperature

Uttarakhand is inviting climatic tragedies and destroying its beauty by regularly flouting the Environmental Impact Assessment Laws to build a 900-km-long stretch of the Char Dham route. Shockingly,

these roads pass through an environmentally-sensitive zone. The construction of this 900 km stretch was done by dividing it into 53 small sec-

The Environmental Impact Assessment Department's permission has to be sought to construct more than 100 km of a road that is passing through environmentally sensitive areas. This road's width is being kept at 12 metres, for which land with a width of 24 metres would be required. Significantly, most European countries have kept the width of their roads in the mountains to eight metres.

In the aftermath of the February 7 catastrophe, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said that the country stands by Uttarakhand. He also announced financial assistance to the families of the victims. But such promises and financial aid are of no use for Uttarakhandis as continuous negligence of environmental regulations by successive govern-An increase in natural disasters ments has led to repeated natural disasters. A few lakhs in assistance from the Centre and State won't help people rebuild their houses or bring back their loved ones. To prevent such emotional and financial losses to the people, the Government should mend its pro-corporate economic development methods.

The massive loss of life and property resulting from natural disasters should serve as a warning signal to the Central Government and make it realise that it must strictly

abide by environmental norms. However, the Government seems to be in no mood to hear the alarm bells as the Central Government is planning to relax environmental standards for Mopa Airport in Goa, sand mining in Uttar Pradesh, Sterlite Copper in Tamil Nadu and construction activities in and around Delhi, which have been blocked by the Supreme Court and the National Green Tribunal. Meanwhile, the NITI Aayog — the Government's apex think tank — has commissioned a study that seeks to examine the "unintended economic consequences" of judicial decisions that have hindered and stalled big pro-

jects on environmental pretexts.

If mountainous areas of the country, including Uttarakhand and their people, are to be saved, then it is incumbent upon the Central Government not to carry out development work in these areas without seeking the opinions of geologists and the locals.

The Government should immediately ban unsustainable development projects in the hilly regions, be it the Char Dham route or hydropower projects. If this does not happen, the people of these areas will be forced to endure frequent natural disasters in the future. The people living in the hilly regions and the country at large demand that the Central Government adopt a propeople and pro-nature development model instead of a pro-corporate economic development one.



Kaur is professor, Department of Geography, Punjabi University, Patiala, and Visiting Professor, IMPRI, while Kumar is Director, IMPRI. The views expressed are personal.

NICE OF THE ENGLAND BOYS TO GET THIS TEST MATCH FINISHED JUST BEFORE ENGLAND **WOMEN PLAY TONIGHT. —ENGLAND CRICKETER ALEX HARTLEY**





VERY DISAPPOINTING ATTITUDE CONSIDERING ALL THE BOYS DO TO SUPPORT THE WOMEN'S GAME.

-ENGLAND CRICKETER **RORY BURNS**

A bleak future without sustainable water resources

India has an extremely low rainwater harvesting percentage, varying from three-six per cent of the annual rainfall. Hence, watershed management is imperative

he farmers' protest reflects their approach towards securing their future, and soon there would be a solution to that. But there still looms a larger crisis for India and its people, including the farmers. One of the most fertile lands on Earth today stands as the most water challenged nations in the world. India has the highest number of people in the world without access to safe water. Over 80 million people — a majority from impoverished communities — living on less than \$4 a day, are forced to collect dirty water from open ponds and rivers or spend most of what they earn

buying water from tankers. A report by the NITI Aayog in 2018 revealed that 75 per cent of households do not have drinking water on the premises; 84 per cent of rural households do not have piped



SASHIDHAR **VEMPALA**

The writer is a

conservationist, wildlife photographer, documentary film-maker

and sustainability

professional. The views

expressed are

personal.

extreme water stress and 21

diseases.

cities, including New Delhi, Bengaluru and Chennai, will run out of groundwater soon, affecting 100 million people. Critical groundwater resources, which account for 40 per cent of our water supply, are being exploited at unsustainable rates. India is already plagued with groundwater contaminated with iron, nitrate, chlorine, along with the predominant arsenic and fluoride, both pos-

wastewater treatment remains

stuck at the national average of

over 33 per cent, leading to the

high burden of waterborne

people in India face high to

More than 600 million

ing human health risks. A study published by Duke University in 2018 found uranium contamination in aquifer-

water access; 70 per cent of the drawn groundwater in 16 Indian States.Water Index water is contaminated and scores vary widely, but most States have achieved a score below 50 per cent and could significantly improve their water resource management

Because of this, food security is at a risk as the low performers on the Water Index are home to over 50 per cent of the country's population and its agricultural baskets. The low performers, worryingly, comprise the populous northern States of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Haryana and others, and are home to over 600 million people. Given the combination of rapidly declining groundwater levels and limited policy action this is also likely to be a significant food security risk for the country going forward.

Critical groundwater resources, which account for 40



per cent of our water supply, are being depleted at unsustainable rates. Droughts are becoming more frequent, creating severe problems for India's raindependent farmers (over 53 per cent of agriculture is rainfed). When water is available, it is likely to be contaminated, resulting in nearly 2,00,000 deaths each year. Interstate disagreements are on the rise, with seven major disputes currently raging, pointing to the fact that limited frameworks and institutions are in place for

national water governance.

By 2030, the country's water demand is projected to be twice than the available supply, implying severe water scarcity for hundreds of millions of people and an eventual over six per cent loss in the country's GDP. As per the report of the National Commission for Integrated Water Resource Development of MoWR, water requirement by 2050 in a high use scenario is likely to be a milder 1,180 BCM, whereas the present-day availability is 695 BCM.

The total availability of water possible in country is still lower than this projected demand, at 1,137 BCM. Thus, there is an imminent need to deepen our understanding of water resources and usage and put in place interventions that make water use efficient and sustainable. Israel is the world leader in water governance.

And India has partnered with them to share methods and technology. There is a need for more such partnerships, knowledge transfer but more than that, it is awareness that is needed by common users about the impending water crisis.

With nearly 70 per cent of the water being contaminated, India ranks 120 out of 122 countries on the water quality index. Policymakers face a difficult situation because there is not enough data available on how households and industries use and manage water.

There is an urgent need to deepen understanding of our water resources and usage and put in place interventions that make water use efficient and sustainable. Consumers and industries need to look at the 4Rs with renewed rigour. "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Recharge." India has an mote sustainable use.

extremely low rainwater harvesting percentage, varying from three-six per cent of annual rainfall. Large-scale watershed management is imperative for holistic management of ecosystems. Coupled with stronger implementation policies and regulations, an ecosystem management approach will bring in adoption of newer conservation tech-

The agriculture sector will evolve further to improve irrigation and water use efficiency. All this is not possible without investment in education and awareness. Community governance and partnerships, water pricing a strong wastewater recycling ecosystem and increasing rainwater, stormwater harvesting will make people realise the importance of every drop of water and pro-

PM asks banks to come out with innovative products for startups

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday stressed on increasing credit to businesses to meet the needs of a fast reflating economy and said financial products will have to be tailormade for fintech and startups.

He said that although the government's endeavour is to promote the private sector, the public sector still needs to have their presence in banking and insurance to support the

Speaking at a webinar on Budget announcements on Financial Services, Modi said to help medium and small businesses during the COVID pandemic, 90 lakh Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) were given credit worth Rs 2.4 trillion.

"Supporting MSME and startups and expanding credit flow to them is necessary. The government has undertaken reforms and opened up sectors like farm, coal and space. Now it's the responsibility of the financial sector to understand the aspirations



of rural and smaller cities and make them the strength of Aatmanirbhar Bharat.

"As our economy is growing, and growing fast, credit flow has also become equally important. You have to see how credit reaches new sectors, new entrepreneurs. Now you will have to focus on creation of new and better financial products for Startups and Fintech," Modi said.

Stating that Kisan Credit has helped small farmers and those involved in animal husbandry to come out with the grasp of informal lending, Modi said the private sector now will have to think of innovative financial products for

this section of the society. He said the government has a clear vision for the financial services sector and is taking steps to make it vibrant, proac-

The pace at which we have to take the country forward in the 21st century, proactive participation of the private sector is important. The government's vision is clear about the financial sector, no place for ifs and buts. The government's highest priority is that every depositor and investor experience trust

and transparency," he said.

The trust is based on safety and security of deposit and economic growth. There is a need to change the old policies relating to the banking and non-banking sector.

"The financial sector was hurt 10-12 years back due to aggressive lending. Steps have been taken to take the country out of non-transparent credit culture. Today instead of brushing NPAs under the carpet, we have made it mandatory to report even NPA of 1 day,"

He said the government is aware of the ups and downs faced by businesses and does not foster a thinking that all business decisions are taken in

The government's responsibility is to stand with all such business decisions taken with good intent and I want to say this to all those in the financial sector that I will stand by you for all decisions taken with honest intent," Modi added.

In the 2021-22 Budget, the government has proposed privatisation of two public sector banks, allowed 74 per cent for eign direct investment in the insurance sector and announced the initial public offering of Life Insurance Corp of India

Elaborating on the Budget proposal of setting up of an Reconstruction Company (ARC), Modi said the ARC will address the bad loans in a "focussed manner" and this will help strengthen PSBs and increase their lending capability.

He said 130 crore people have Aadhaar cards and 41 crore have JanDhan Account holders, of which 55 per cent

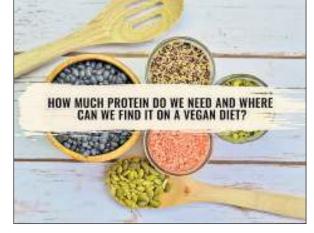
PROTEIN DAY 2021

Teach For India collaborates with Right to Protein

India's largest non-profit education network - Teach For India, which is also a part of the global Teach For All Network is collaborating with the Right To Protein initiative commemorate the macronutrient protein on

India's second annual Protein Day. In association with nutritionist Pooja Makhija, Right To Protein and Teach For India will educate children and their parents about the importance of consuming adequate protein in their daily diets for overall better health and nutrition. The educational session will

be conducted over an online webinar, where children from around the country, especially those that are a part of the Teach For India network in Mumbai, Pune, New Delhi, Chennai, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad and Bangalore will participate along with their parents in the online session. Led by Makhija, topics such as protein consumption for the development of the human body, common errors with



protein consumption, identification of easily affordable and accessible plant and animal protein sources, and methods of including all types of protein in daily diets, will be the focus on Protein Day

Abhik Bhattacherji, National Director of Marketing & Communications at Teach For India said, "Teach For India has always believed that an excellent education is a balance

of academics, holistic development, strengthening values and mindsets and overall wellbeing of children. Through this collaboration with Right To Protein, we were presented with the opportunity to educate our students about the importance of nutrition in their development. Children and parents understanding the role of nutrition is a great step towards raising leaders with

Rupee tanks 104 paise to close at 73.47 against USD

PNS MUMBAI

The rupee dived 104 paise to settle at 73.47 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, following a heavy selloff in domestic equities and strong American currency in the overseas market. At the interbank forex market, the local unit opened at 72.43 against the greenback, then lost further ground to touch an intra-day low of 73.51. It finally ended at 73.47 against the American currency, registering a massive fall of 104 paise over its previous close. On Thursday, the rupee had settled at 72.43 against the American currency. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, advanced 0.43 per cent to 90.52. "US bond yields have surged on worries about unprecedented liquidity infusion in the system and a series of economic data, which is indicating that the economy is on the path to normalcy. This has in-turn led to a rebound in the dollar index and prompted a selloff in risk assets.



US jobless claims at 730K, high but fewest in 3 months

PNS WASHINGTON

The number of Americans seeking unemployment benefits fell sharply last week in a sign that layoffs may have eased, though applications for aid remain at a historically high level. Jobless claims declined by 111,000 from the previous week to a seasonally adjusted 730,000, the Labor Department said Thursday.

It is the lowest figure since November sharpest one-week decline since August. Still, before the virus erupt-

ed in the United States last March, weekly applications for unemployment benefits had never topped 700,000.

The latest figures coincide with a weakened job market

that has made scant progress in the past three months. Hiring averaged just 29,000 a month from November through January. Though the unemployment rate was 6.3 per cent in January, a broader measure that includes people who have given up on their job searches is closer to 10 per cent.
All told, 19 million people

were receiving unemployment aid as of February 6, up from 18.3 million the previous week. rters of those recipients are receiving checks from federal benefit programs, including programs that provide jobless aid beyond the 26 weeks given by most states.

Last week's drop in applications was concentrated in two states, California and Ohio, where they fell by a combined 96,000. Ohio officials had said earlier this month that a surge in new applications was driven in part by a jump in potentially fraudulent claims. That now appears to have faded.

California's system operates on a biweekly bases, which can make its weekly data choppy.

This month's devastating winter storms and power outages in Texas and some neighbouring states might have also disrupted the filing or process-Applications for jobless aid fell by one-sixth in Texas to about 35,000.

Yet last week's decline in applications was broad-based, with 36 states and the District of Columbia reporting fewer people seeking unemployment

'Question on GSP in India is very high on my radar'

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

The Biden administration has indicated that the issue of restoring the GSP status to India is on top of its radar, as several lawmakers have raised the issue of retaliatory tariffs imposed by New Delhi on American agricultural products after the previous Trump regime terminat-

In 2019, former president Donald Trump terminated India's designation as a beneficiary developing nation under the Generalised System of Preference (GSP) trade programme after determining that New Delhi has not assured the US that it will provide "equitable and reasonable access" to its markets.

The GSP is the largest and oldest US trade preference programme and is designed to promote economic development by allowing duty-free from designated beneficiary countries. The issue was raised by several members of the Senate Finance Committee on Thursday during the confirmation hearing of Katherine C Tai or the position of United States Trade Representative.

"On your question on GSP in



India, let me just say that if confirmed, this is very high on my radar," Tai said, responding to a question from Senator Maria Cantwell who raised the issue of high retaliatory tariffs imposed by India on several American products after US terminated GSP privileges of India.

What can we do to open up the Indian market to US apples and reduce the horrific tariffs that are on those apples, particularly with the Trump administration terminating the GSP Biden administration restore India's GSP status and help us with apple exports?" Senator Cantwell asked

India was the largest beneficiary of the GSP programme in 2017 when it exported USD 5.7 billion worth of goods to the US under this scheme.

MONEY MATTERS

Gold declines Rs 342; silver plummets by Rs 2,007



Gold prices on Friday declined by Rs 342 to Rs 45,599 per 10 grams and silver plummeted by Rs 2,007 to Rs 67,419 per kg in the national capital, due to selling in the international market, according to HDFC

Securities. The precious metal had closed at Rs 45,941 per 10 grams on Thursday. Silver plummeted by Rs 2,007 to Rs 67,419 per kg, compared with the previous close of Rs 69,426 per kg. HDFC Securities Senior Analyst (Commodities) Tapan Patel said, "Spot prices for 24 karat gold at Delhi fell for the third day by Rs 342, in line with selling in global gold prices despite of sharp rupee depreciation." In the international market, gold was trading lower at USD 1,760 an ounce, while silver was down at USD 26.78 an ounce.

Wisdom Capital Acquires Imagine Sales, launches Wisdom CRM

Wisdom Capital, a Wisdom Group flagship company, has recently taken over a start-up, Imagine Sales - a customer relationship management (CRM) company, and launched Wisdom CRM. CRM is a massive industry and is likely to grow at double digit growth rates in the coming decade; however, it is very sporadically distributed in India. "The idea is to provide CRM software, cloud telephony, Artific Intelligence(AI) enabled chatbots with voice command functionality, encrypted data transfer. Whatsapp messaging services, bulk emailing social media embedded tools, and helpdesk services under one roof. It will be similar to an all-encompassing modern departmental store" said Founder and Group CEO, Deb Mukherjee. Wisdom Group was already in the process of developing CRM software under the flagship of its group IT company, Wisdom Tree Ventures with a brand name of 'Wisdom CRM'. Apart from the tangible assets, both sides have brought their intellectual worth on the table and hope to create value in the long run with the launch of the new product. Wisdom CRM was being developed with the eventual intention of penetrating and servicing the Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) sector when an opportunity presented itself after the Covid-19 era.

Institutional investments in Indian real estate to increase by 14.6%

PNS ■ GURUGRAM

In their latest outlook report for 2021, Colliers estimates that institutional investments in Indian real estate will grow by 14.6% to INR 396 billion (USD) 5.5 billion) from INR 346 billion (USD4.8 billion) in 2020. For comparison, 2020 had witnessed a drop of 23% from 2019. Colliers believes that institutional investors continue to be bullish on Indian real estate asset classes such as offices, data centers and warehouses and they are looking to deploy their

"The investment climate in India is very buoyant with global investors' interest in real assets getting stronger"

existing dry powder. The investment climate in

India is very buoyant with global investors' interest in real assets getting stronger. With global interest rates at historic

lows and positive net yields in India, the country has emerged among the preferred destinations for investments in real estate. Further, the resilience of the Indian market is also evident from continued good housing sales performance across various markets, the large institutional investments in commercial office and industrial parks, and the listing of two REITs in the past six months," says Piyush Gupta, Managing Director, Capital Markets & Investment Services (India) at Colliers.

German firms find success at CIIE

China retained its position as the largest trade partner of Germany for the fifth consecutive year in 2020, according to a report recently released by the Federal Statistical Office of Germany. Statistics show that despite COVID-19, the bilateral trade volume between China and Germany rose by 3 percent year-on-year to about 212.1 billion euros (\$258 billion). China was the second largest export destination of German goods in 2020, with the value of exports from Germany to China hitting around 95.9 billion euros last year. China was also Germany's largest destination



for exports of electric and electrical products, according to a news release by the German Electrical and Electronic Manufacturers' Association (ZVEI) on Feb 22. Industry experts have said that these achievements are partly due to the China International Import Expo.

Clas Neumann, Chairman of the Board of the German Chamber of Commerce in China, said that the CIIE is a good opportunity for German

cutting-edge products in technology, innovation and life

style. By participating in the CIIE, German enterprises can expand their brand influence and promote "Made in Germany", Neumann added. Germany, which has a number of large enterprises specialized in equipment manufacturing, automobiles and heath care, has been an important participant of the annual expo. It was also the guest-of-honor country for the first CIIE. About 170 German firms attended the third edition of the expo last year, with their combined exhibition area surpassing 18,000 square meters, highest among European countries.

Godrej Precision Engg hands over LAToT to Godrej & Boyce



Godrej & Boyce, the flagship company of the Godrej Group announced that its business, Godrej Precision Engineering received the coveted Licensing Agreement for Transfer of Technology (LAToT) for the Mechanical Mine Layer - Self Propelled (MML - SP) from the Ministry of Defence's DRDO Laboratories at the 'Bandhan' ceremony at Aero India 2021. Raksha Mantri Shri

Rajnath Singh, Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat, three Services Chiefs, Secretary Department of Defence R&D and Chairman DRDO Dr G Satheesh Reddy and Secretary (Defence Production) Shri Raj Kumar along with other senior officials from Ministry of Defence and Karnataka Government and industrialists from the entire country were present.

Home affordability to improve further in 2021: JLL

PNS MUMBAI

Despite the nationwide pandemic and the economic uncertainty and rising stock market volatility that came with it, there has been a sequential growth of 51% in the residential sales during the last quarter of 2020, according to the recent report 'India Real Estate Outlook - A new growth cycle' by JLL. While there is still a long way to go, the worst is behind for the residential sec-

The evolving COVID-19 pandemic has influenced short-term decision making with job security cited as the biggest concern when contemplating the purchase of a

home. "In the second quarter of FY 2020-21 when the GDP showed higher than expected recovery, the housing market showed some initial signs of recovery, with sales increasing by 34% on a sequential basis. In Q4 2020, uncertainties around the economy and jobs started reducing, which led to an increase in the pace of recovery in residential real estate. New launches and sales across the seven key markets under review witnessed a significant jump," Dr. Samantak Das, Chief Economist and Head Research & REIS, JLL.

Expectations from 2021 The challenges faced by residential real estate in 2020

have become the catalyst in providing stimuli to the industry for sustained growth. With people spending an inordinate amount of time at home, the

lockdown re-established the importance of owning a house. Simultaneously, government initiatives to support the recovery by holding policy rates at

historically low levels to initiate a cycle of consumption led growth. This has resulted in extremely low mortgage rates. And, prices have also been stagnant for the past few years. This affordable synergy makes it a great time to purchase a home. Furthermore, the market is also witnessing renewed interest from Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) impacted by economic uncertainties in Europe and the Middle East.

Changing homebuyer preferences and product metrics

A healthy lifestyle has become a key criterion for homebuyers, resultantly, preferences have tilted towards larger homes in self-contained

complexes with facilities like gym, green open spaces, and access to daily necessities. Moreover, with work from home becoming a reality, product metrics are likely to change. Increased importance of

study rooms, good network and broadband speed as well as acoustics. Also, remote working practices are expected to increase the attractiveness of suburban markets. Suburban markets offer lower density environments and more spacious apartments at affordable rates. Since, travel to office may no longer be an everyday activity, the importance of connectivity to office hubs will no longer dictate home purchas-

Ansys, TÜV SÜD sign MOU to augment learning experience



South Asia, a leading Certification, testing, auditing, inspection and training company and the wholly owned subsidiary of TÜV SÜD Group, Germany, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Ansys Software Pvt. Ltd. (Ansys) in order to improve the overall learning experience of the participants of Automotive Functional Safety ISO 26262

training programme. The MOU was signed at a virtual event by Mr. Rafiq Somani, Area Vice President - India and South Asia Pacific Ansys and Mr. Vishal Nerurkar, Vice President of Business Assurance, TÜV SÜD South Asia. With this MOU signing, TÜV SÜD in India is poised to offer its participants of Automotive Functional Safety ISO 26262 training, access to Ansys medini analyze, a world class simulation software tool.

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Saturday February 27, 2021



FROM A VACAY-SPOT TO A PERMANENT HAVEN

oming from a state known for its palmlined backwaters, Tollywood actress Nitva Naresh can't stop gushing about this Nizami now calls home "For me now, Hyderabad is my home. I believe in the saying about home not being a place but people who make you feel belonged, and it fits so well in my life too. Wherever my beautiful family is, that's my home. Moreover, some of my best friends in my life today, who are so precious to me, have been living in this very city for more than a decade and have always been there with me through thick and thin," the Operation Gold Fish actress tells us.

Nitva, who has made a name for herself in Hyderabad says that she has always lived by the ocean, and not getting to see blue waters as often is a drastic change for her. "Earlier, I had apprehensions about the air being dry and missing water bodies, but eventually, I fell in love with the city because of

its denizens and the experiences that I encountered. One of my favourite things that I always will have to say about Hyderabad is how one, despite the hustle and the bustle, can still find solitude here. Mumbai is so fast-paced ar Kochi is so laid back but in this city, you have your own luxuries and choices to make," she adds. With a lot of commitment and

hard work, Nithya stepped into the Tollywood industry adorning the craft as if she was born to be in it. She never knew a vacay spot will one day turn out to be a permanent haven for her! The Soda Goli Soda girl says, "I learnt driving here, what has always stayed with me are the moments of going for a ride with my friends on my vehicle. I felt so independent! Geographically too, this city always makes you feel at ease. If you're driving from Paradise to Banjara Hills, nobody can ever get lost on their way. Hyderabad made me feel safe, I always knew my routes."

Destiny played a very important

role in this artiste's life! A predetermined and unchanging event took shape in Nitva's life while looking for a job in the city of dreams, also known as the Bollywood hub, Mumbai — she gets a call from the Telugu film industry! It made her feel something is calling her back to the city and she must go! "I wasn't in the mindset of becoming an actress at first, the auditions were an experiment for me to tell my children someday: "hey, your mother also did a movie in her life!" I chose to pay heed to the calling and who would've known I'd come this far? Of course, my parents did believe in me. Today, I am not just an actor from Tollywood but also an artist, content creator and influencer, who is self-made. Currently, I am making my career in arttherapy too! So, Hyderabad gave me the chance to don more than just a single hat. I am exploring so many things here. I haven't grown up idolising Telugu actors but the industry is getting better at what it does with talent, post-production,

cinematography, and concepts. This city's cinema is evolving with better ideas, passionate actors, and focussed storytellers," narrated the 31-year-old actress.

Describing her immense love for the cuisine here in the city. whenever somebody mentions Hyderabadi food, it brightens up her face with glee! Mentioning the kind of food platter that the city has to offer, she also tells us that it took her years to get used to the kind of spice Hyderabadis eat every day. The variety that it offers including the royal cuisine, Telangana bhojanam and Andhra delicacies — all this fills her heart and tummy! Add to that, the different cuisines from across the globe that the city has managed to master! Whenever she goes out for a fine-dining, it's always a burst of relishing flavours on her taste buds, shares the actress of Nandini Nursing Home fame.

Having talked about all the good things Hyderabad has, the one thing that she dislikes is the traffic. Although, when she visited

Mumbai recently, she says it made her feel that the traffic here in Hyderabad is much better and she's never going to complain

"My great grandfather was the advisor to the Nizams in his day and then my grandfather joined the police force here. My dad was very clear that when he had to return to his roots, he's going to choose Telangana and invest here. So whenever I was here in the city for a vacation, we would go to the Nehru Nehru Zoological Park, Ramoji Film City and Snow World. Though the city has transformed tremendously, there are so many things that still take one down the nostalgia trip and that's just beautiful. My grandmother always narrates to me about how Banjara Hills was a deserted place once and today, when I drive through the lanes of Banjara Hills, it's fully commercialised. Nevertheless, Hyderabad is a place where I feel encouraged and accepted by all means," she concludes on a heart-warming note.

Badass Devika wins hearts in Dev DD 2

ev DD Season 1 set the stage but season 2 of its drama shattered the glass ceiling. It brought with it a never-before-seen version of Devika Dharam Dwivedi! Season 2 finds a chink in the armour of Devika Dharam Dwivedi opening up her vul-nerable side, making her very relatable to audiences everywhere — a very beautiful, vulnerable, feminine version of Devika that captures hearts. There are switches between her reality and inner self filled with monologues from the protagonist describing her innermost thoughts but externally her agony doesn't let her act on it.

This is part of the charm of *Dev DD 2!* Season 1 shows us how totally badass Devika Dharam Dwivedi is and how she makes a life for herself on her terms, setting herself up for epic love and heartbreak. Season 2 shows us Devika Dharam Dwivedi at a complete loss.

She is a jilted lover and forgotten friend, her hopelessness takes her home back into the arms of her parents. At home, she starts to build herself up once again against all odds and society's cruel taunts. There are, of course, new twists and turns in the story, blasts from the past and new friendships, all adding to the attraction of the story. The best friend Chandni and her lover battling all odds to be together, Anurag and Aditi fighting a scam together and Devika's humorous way of fending off society aunties and evil relatives all make for a very delightful watch.

Actress Asheema Vardaan who plays the role of Devika, spills some more beans about the role, she says, "The show focuses more on the major issues of LGBTQIA+ and female foeticide. The concept revolves around queer marriage which equally needs relevant awareness in our surroundings as queer people don't enjoy marriage rights as much as their straight counterparts do. It's saddening to see that our law doesn't see straight and queer couples as the same, which in turn leads to social stigma and ostracisation. One shouldn't miss watching this show because it is a take on Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay's *Devdas* story but with a female perspective! As you progress through the show, you get to know how Devika comes across as a rebel yet is a simple girl at heart who only wants someone to love. My role in the new show challenges stereotypes and touches topics like feminism, sexism and homophobia - ones that are usually brushed under the carpet."

The series is extremely empowering, not just for women but it champions people of every gender, race, religion and sexual orientation. The flawless acting, the clever lines, the screenplay, the dialogues, the story, the comic moments are just a few of the many reasons to watch the show.

The series is filled with magical moments that give you goosebumps and also ones that tickle you till you fall off your chair laughing, making the series both lovely and heartbreaking at the same time.



On World **Protein Day** today, nutrition expert Dr Jagmeet Madan shares that issues around this important nutrient need to be constantly discussed and propagated

hile a number of socio-economic issues hound us today, our right to basic nutrition and health is one that should be demanded across the globe, especially in India. It is, therefore, not surprising that the second goal in the 17 Sustainable Development Goals is 'Zero

Hunger', which aims to reduce malnutrition in infants and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older

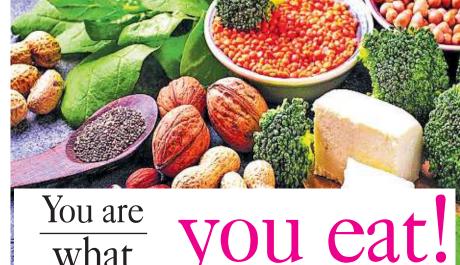
towards its commitment to becoming a malnutritionfree country, a number of hurdles, further exacerbated by the pandemic, continue to hinder and slowdown the progress. It is estimated that the pandemic will lead to a rise in hunger, with approximately 270 million people facing food insecurity as opposed to the 149 million during pre-COVID times. These findings are not only grave but a serious cause for alarm — India ranks 94 out

— nay critical — to tackle only creating awareness of protein-rich food sources but also dispelling misconaffordability, cultural nuances, and inherent hyperlocal habits. And this Protein Day, celebrated on

While India continues

of 107 countries on the Global Hunger Index 2020.

It is, therefore, important the pressing issue of malnutrition and protein deficiency in specific head-on by not ceptions around accessibility,



February 27, with its theme of Powering With Plant Protein, let's delve into everything protein.

Why plant protein?

try with the single largest

vegetarian population in the world with also a sizable population of flexitarians i.e. those who prefer a vegetarian diet while still enjoying meat (animal protein) in We are perhaps the counmoderation. One of the key myths affecting the protein

deficiency debate in India is the perception that not only are protein-rich foods expensive but that there is limited variety for those who don't eat meat — over 76 per cent recently surveyed shared this sentiment.

Moreover, when presented with a number of proteinrich sources, a large segment of Indian mothers could only identify three out of 11 protein-rich foods correctly; thereby eliminating several key protein-rich sources completely.
This lack of knowledge

coupled with the misconceptions that plant-protein is nutritionally inferior is myth to dispel as we continue in our quest to educate Indians about the role of proteins, especially plant-based protein rich diets that will help bridge the protein based nutrition and affordability

Is it for everyone?

The quantity, quality and timing of protein consumed throughout the day across one's life span together play a role in determining the health benefits of dietary protein. While one needs different levels of protein across different phases of life, the underlying key fact remains — protein is a key micronutrient that is essential for one's growth and development throughout

It begins with pregnant

women and lactating mothers. A woman's diet during and immediately after pregnancy is pivotal for both, mother, and child, with proteins playing a key role in overall health and the baby's development. The immunoglobulin of the breast milk derived from the colostrums adds to the benefits accrued from exclusive breast feeding of a baby for a minimum of six months which needs to be emphasised to all lactating mothers. The good quality protein based weaning foods with plant protein diversity should be an integral part of

an infant's weaning foods.
For growing children, the need for protein intake is even more augmented as it not only helps in muscle and bone growth but also adds significantly to strengthening their immunity. Be it the usual routine at school. extra-curricular activities and cognitive development, protein plays an important role.

For healthy adults, who go about their day-to-day life, it is much required to continue to build immunity, maintain a healthy gut and repair of muscle wear and tear. In

fact, it is believed that we may begin to naturally lose as much as eight per cent of overall muscle mass every decade after we turn 40, making it more important than ever to consume more protein as we age.

And while one may believe that protein's role with age might diminish, it is quite the contrary: With reports suggesting that one in three adults over the age of 50 experiences advanced muscle and strength loss, and thus, adequate protein intake is recommended for aging adults to support muscle and strength requirements.

Even as we recognise and act this Protein Day, it is important to make note that this cannot be a one-time or one-day discourse. Proteinrelated issues are very much an ongoing concern that need constant discussion, dialogue and education to continue on India's journey in becoming a healthy nation with sustainable wellbeing at its core.

(The writer is the National President of Indian Dietetic Association and supporter of the Right To Protein initiative.)



what's brewing?



ARCHIE







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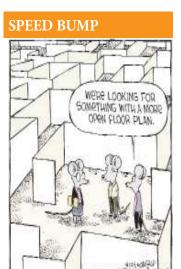
GARFIELD











CROSSWORD

NANCY

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17 Push roughly 19 Having no paid work DOWN

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8 Precise

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14 Articles

1 Molten rock flowing from a volcano 2 Birthday present

3 A spinning toy on a string

4 A joint in your leg 5 Unable to move some or

all of your body

6 San Francisco is in this

10 A kind of play where all

the words are sung

American state

- 17 Black stuff in chimneys 18 Unlock

12 Baby goat

7 Very tasty to eat

cover a hole

9 Make butter with this

11 A piece of material to

15 The organs of sight

16 Drinks little by little



GINGER MEGGS







• Each row and column can contain each number (1 to 9) exactly once.

The sum of all numbers in any row or column must equal 45.

tollywood

Never thought I WOULD DO TELUGU MOVIES: FARIA In a conversation



try Telugu industry before going to Bollywood. I started watching Telugu cinema a couple of years Telugu cinema a couple of years ago. I've been to Mumbai multiple times and gave auditions. To begin with, language barrier was an issue for me to think of Bollywood but I'm past that. The Telugu industry has been very welcoming. Now, I'm open to exploring other south languages as well. In the last two years, I've realised that our cinema is changing rapidly in tune with the audience's taste. I want to be a part of the new wave," she points out, adding that she learnt 80 percent of Telugu on the sets of *Jathi Ratnalu*.

While she is tight-lipped about her part despite some reports stating that she plays a lawyer in the film, she adds that it is integral to the narrative. A light-hearted drama, *Jathi Ratnalu*, directed by drama, *Jathi Ratnalu*, directed by *Pittagoda* fame Anudeep KV, follows three good-for-nothing guys (played by Naveen, Priyadarshi and Rahul) who are trapped in a serious crime. It's set in Jogipet, Telangana. "It's a clean comedy and every role has its own essence and plays out in the story beautifully. It's a sarcastic take on society and is also about take on society and is also about love and friendship," Faria

informs.

Ashwin, who

is debuting as a pro-

ducer with

which will

theatrical

March 11, she says.

"Every time I felt nervous

the film,

have a

bow on

Effusive in her praise for It's exciting to see so many people coming up with their own versions of Chitti nee navvante. In fact, people around me started addressing me as Chitti and I love

or a little unsure, he would say, 'Hey you know what? You should try this' and it worked like magic for my association with him began. me. He is a simple, quiet and Sometime later, he spoke to me happy-go-lucky kind of person. about the female lead slot opening in *Iathi Ratnalu*. I auditione the role and after a look test with Priyadarshi and Rahul — are like Naveen Polishetty, I was picked for each other. So we got along well the project," the newbie tells us. easily."

She admits to having been a Faria never thought she would start touch nervous on the first day of her shoot. "I wanted to make sure industry. "To be honest, I never thought I would do Telugu movies. that I got my lines right and didn't want to be a burden on anyone. I In fact, many people advised me to was keen on leaving a good

with The Pioneer, the debutante, who is a Hyderabadi, speaks on how she landed Jathi Ratnalu, why she wanted to debut in Hindi and how Nag Ashwin eased her nerves whenever she was a tad nervous on sets

impression on the first day, so I've rehearsed my lines thoroughly to get the accent and pronunciation right. I was a little worried about the language but I gave my first shot in a single take," she chortles, adding that she even dubbed for her role. "Nag Ashwin told me, 'If you don't dub for yourselves, it would only be half of a perfor-

mance'. So I dubbed for the part." Faria is ecstatic with the response Chitti nee navvante from the film's soundtrack has garnered. It crossed 10 million views of YouTube, and is

still counting.
Smiling, she observes, "I didn't expect it to go this viral. It's exciting to see so many people coming up with their own versions of it. In fact, people around me started addressing me as Chitti and I love it. (Singer) Ram got the pulse of the song so well and he took it to the next level with his rendition."



that Shaadi

film's shoot, Sagar showed

me the trailer. I found it

interesting and told him that I will watch the com-

problems at places, I found it to be a hilarious

entertainer. The makers

expressed, after which

attended to the problems I

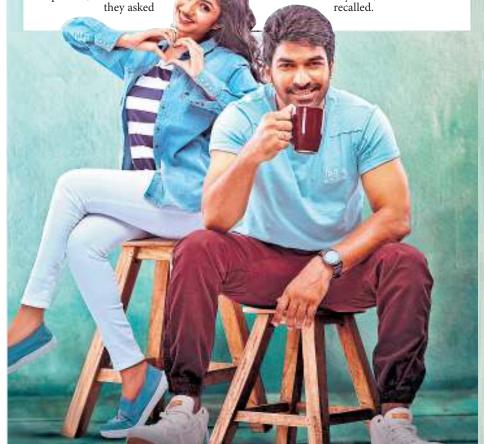
Dil Raju: Shaadi Mubarak

me to release it as well. It's a good film so I wasn't in plete film. Except for some two minds to accept their proposal. I even acquired it. It's

a two-hour

minutes film with nonstop entertainment," the producer said. He was speaking at the trailer launch of the film in Hyderabad on Thursday evening. Sagar said it's been his

eight-year dream to achieve success in the industry and Dil Raju's step to join the project as a producer was to encourage him. He pointed out that after listening to the first half of the narration from writer Srinivas Reddy, he wrote a cheque. "After the second half, I handed it over to him. I didn't take much time. My friends too endorsed the story later," the actor



VAISSHNAV TO

COLLABORATE WITH

MANAM ENTERTAINMENTS

project, it is being said.

aisshnav Tej, who is basking in the glory of

Uppena, is understood to have signed his third film. While his second film, Kondapolam (tentative title), with Krish has been wrapped

up last year itself, his third, according to

Prudhvi, who is an alumnus of Annapurna College of Film and Media, is attached to the project as a director. The project is reportedly a love story laced with action and family emotions. Supriya, who

looks after Annapurna Studios, will execute the

Vaisshnav has also agreed to do a film for

reports, will be with Nagarjuna's Manam

Adah says she has signed 5 Telugu films

Born and bred in Hyderabad,

her film career with the Telugu



aria Abdullah was an

alumnus of Lovola

early 2019.
"I wanted to listen to him and

maybe if I get a chance, even ask

some questions. He overheard me

speaking to my juniors about my

stint with the theatre. Then he said,

"Oh! You are an actor?' That's how

College, Hyderabad

Nag Ashwin graced it as a chief guest for a fest in

ctress Adah Sharma took to Instagram to announce that she has signed five new Telugu films. In her post, the actress, whose film *Kshanam* completed five years

on Friday, thanked the makers for encouraging her to experiment with projects.

The actress posted a clip from the film and wrote: "On 5 yrs of *Kshanam* I want to announce that I have signed 5 Telugu films! Everytime I've done something experimental in any language u guys have always given me sooo much love and support. The films I'm doing now are all stuff that's not done before. Thank you for Shweta @adivisesh @raviperepu @pvpcinemaoffl."

The 2016 thriller film Kshanam starred Adivi

Sesh, Anasuya Bharadwaj, Vennela Kishore, Satyam Rajesh and Satyadev Kancharana. In fact, the film was also remade in Tamil and titled Sathya. Its Hindi version was called Baaghi 2 and Aadyaa in Kannada.

Adah is presently awaiting the release of a mystery thriller titled **Ouestion Mark** with director Vipra. It features

Saniay, Bhanu Sree Mehra, Abhay, Hari Teia. Akshatha Srinivas and Ajay in other key

Middle Class Melodies director's

fter the enjoyable lighthearted drama Middle Class Melodies, which marked his directorial debut last year, Vinod Anantoju is set for his

sophomore venture. Premier production house Matinee Entertainment signed him immediately after the release of his

maiden film and he is right now working on the story. Once again, he will be directing it from a script by dear friend Janardhan

next with Matinee Entertainment

Pasumarthi. Vinod tells us, "The project will be an adventure comedy. Portions of it will be shot in a fictional village. The writing will be completed in a month's time after which I

will initiate the casting process. The production house gave a complete free hand; they just want us to come up with a good

story. Vinod joins a long list of directors- Swaroop RSJ, Ravi Kiran Kola, Teja Marni and Uday Gurrala — who are making their second films for Matinee.





It's all about confidence, Axar on Test outings

PTI AHMEDABAD

t was a long wait for Axar Patel and it didn't help that Leveryone around him had just one question for the past three years — "Why aren't you in the Indian team?"

But Patel was unfazed as he knew, his time would come.

"I think it's all about confidence," said the 27-year-old from Anand in Gujarat who wanted to be a mechanical engineer growing up but was prodded into trying his hand at cricket by a school friend.

With his record 11 wickets in the Day-Night third Test against England, the left-arm spinner finally found his big moment in International cricket, seven years after he made his India debut in an ODI against Bangladesh.

Since that day, he has been in and out of the team with the spin all-rounder's spot firmly with Ravindra Jadeja.

In this series too, he made it because Jadeja was out injured. He hadn't been in the national team since 2018 and made his Test debut in the second game against England last week in Chennai.

"I have been out of the team for three years and at that time, I used to think about the areas of my game which need to be worked upon. So, I was working on my bowling and batting," he told Hardik Pandya in a bcci.Tv interview, thoroughly



team, many people, friends keep asking you 'why aren't you in the team despite doing well? These things keep coming in the mind," said the bowler who has 152 wickets in 41 first-class game at an impressive average

enjoying his good time. "So, I told myself 'just wait
"When you are out of the for the right time and whenev-"So, I told myself 'just wait

er I get an opportunity I will give my 100 per cent." Asked by Pandya if he finds Test cricket easy, Axar replied: "Everybody asked me that question. When it goes your way then you think it's easy but when you miss a full toss, you

actually realise how easy it is." Patel said he would aim to front of his home crowd in the fourth and final Test against England, starting here on

"(The Day-Night Test) was my second Test and first in Motera. It's a special feeling to play and perform before the home crowd. My efforts would be to do the same," Patel said.

Towards the end of the light-hearted interview, India skipper Virat Kohli also made

an appearance and appreciated Patel's performance in Gujarati. "Ae Bapu taari bowling kamaal chhe! (Bapu, your bowling is wonderful!)," Kohli said.

EXPECTED WICKET TO HOLD UP LITTLE LONGER

England head coach Chris Silverwood on Friday played down talks of lodging any formal complaint to the ICC regarding the Motera pitch but said he had expected the surface to hold up a little longer after his team lost the third Test against India inside two days.

"First and foremost, just to follow up from what Joe (Root) said yesterday, he got five for 8, but at the same time whatever the pitch did or didn't do, India ultimately played better than us on that surface, probably pushed us to the extremes of which our players haven't experienced before," he said during a virtual press confer-

"We did expect the wicket to hold up a little longer than it did," he added.

I became a cricketer accidentally: Ashwin

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

alled a modern day legend by his captain Virat Kohli, ace off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin says he is actually an accidental cricketer, who is living a dream with over 400 Test wickets under his belt.

Ashwin reached the milestone in the Day-Night third Test against England, which ended here on Thursday with India winning by 10 wickets inside two days. Ashwin picked up seven in the match to take his overall tally to 401.

"I accidentally became a cricketer. I am actually a cricket lover who went on to become a cricketer. I am living my dream here, I never imagined that I will wear the Indian jersey one day and I will play," Ashwin told *bcci. Tv* in an interview but did not elaborate on the remark.

According to Ashwin, being in the Covid-19 lockdown made him realise just how lucky he was to play for India.

"And every time I finish playing a game and if I give that winning result for the team, I just feel I am being given a blessing, but the Covid times made me feel how lucky I am to actually play for India.

Even when I came back after the IPL, I never thought I will play in Australia, so that is what I said, everything has been a gift, for the love with which I play the game, the game is giving me back enough and more laurels," he added.

Ashwin, who also became the second fastest bowler to reach the 400 Test wicket-mark after Sri Lankan spin legend Muttiah Muralitharan, said that he watched a lot of old videos of great individ-

I am actually a cricket lover who went on to become a cricketer. I am living my dream here, I never imagined that I will wear the Indian jersey one day and I will play

ual performances in the lock-down helped improve his understanding of the game.

"I used to watch a lot of footage even before, but the understanding of the game has gone one notch higher...During the lockdown, I was watching a lot of cricket from the past, especially Sachin's hundred in Chepauk, all sort of stuff on Youtube," recalled the 34-year-old Chennai-born player.

Jofra Archer became Ashwin's 400th wicket during the second day of the third Test here, which India won by 10 wickets and he said it was only when the batsman had opted for DRS, he realised that he had reached the landmark

"Initial feeling is quite empty to be honest, because we were under immense pressure...For me I was actually in the moment, only after he (Archer) had taken the DRS, I realised the 400th that happened," he said.

"...After they flashed 400 Test wickets on the board, the entire stadium was up, everybody was clap-ping, I don't know, I cannot put a finger and say how I feel about it, the last three months have been a complete fairy-tale," he added.

WOMEN'S CRICKET SEASON FROM MARCH 11 New Delhi: The women's domestic cricket season wil begin with a 50-over tourney from March 11, the BCCI has informed its affiliated units. The tourney will be held across six venues — Surat, Rajkot, Jaipur, Indore, Chennai and Bengaluru. The teams will have to assemble by March 4 and will need to have three Covid-19 negative before entering the respective bio-bubbles. Each of the five elite groups will have six teams each, while the plate group has seven. The quarter-finals will be held on March 29, and semi-finals on April 1. The final will be played on April 4.

CAS REDUCE UMAR AKMAL BAN TO 12 MONTHS

KARACHI: Pakistan batsman Umar Akmal will be able to resume his cricket career after the Court of Arbitration for Sports (CAS) reduced his suspension to 12 months and imposed a fine of 42.50 lakh Pakistani Rupees on him for breaching the Anti-Corruption Code. The CAS announced its decision in a consolidated order on the appeals filed by Umar and the PCB. Umar was initially suspended from all cricket activities on February 20 last year for not reporting approaches made to him for spot-fixing in the PSL. On Friday, the PCB said that Umar will now be eligible to reintegrate into competitive cricket subject to deposits of fine, which adds up to ₹19.62 lakh in Indian currency, and undergoing the program of rehabilitation under the PCB Anti-Corruption Code.

YUSUF PATHAN ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT New Delhi: Out-of-favour India all-rounder Yusuf Pathan, who made a name for himself as a power-hitter,

on Friday announced retirement from all forms of cricket, saying time has come "to put a full stop to this innings of my life." The 38-year-old Pathan was part of the inaugural T20 World Cup-winning Indian team in 2007 and also the one that triumphed in the 2011 ODI

PIETERSEN TO CAPTAIN ENGLAND LEGENDS MUMBAI: Former England batsman Kevin Pietersen will

lead the England Legends while Khaled Mahmud will captain the Bangladesh Legends in the Unacademy Road Safety World Series, starting in Raipur from March 5. Former cricketers Matthew Hoggard, Owais Shah, Monty Panesar, Nick Crompton are some of the other key members in the England side. The Bangladesh Legends squad comprises players like Nafees Iqbal, Abdur Razzaq and Mohammed Rafique.

HENDERSON SIDELINED AFTER SURGERY

LIVERPOOL: Liverpool captain Jordan Henderson faces a long spell on the sidelines after undergoing an operation on the groin injury he sustained in last weekend's Merseyside derby loss against Everton. Liverpool has not put a timescale on the midfielder's recovery but said he will be out until at least April in another blow to its fading Premier League title defense.

SWIATEK VS BENCIC IN ADELAIDE FINAL

ADELAIDE: Second seed Belinda Bencic battled for almost three hours before seeing off 16-year-old Coco Gauff in three sets on Friday to reach the final of the Adelaide International. Bencic set up a final showdown against French Open champion Iga Swiatek with her 7-6 (7/2), 6-7 (4/7), 6-2 win. Swiatek had a much easier passage to the final, beating Jil Teichmann 6-3, 6-2.

DISCOVERY BECOMES HOME OF GIRO D'ITALIA

New Delhi: Discovery has secured the exclusive global rights to show the Giro d'Italia until at least 2025. The long-term deal means Discovery retains its status as the Giro's multi-platform rights holder, providing Live and uninterrupted coverage of every stage from the year's first Grand Tour. For the Indian audience, Giro d'Italia can be viewed on Eurosport as well as on discovery+ app from 8th — 30th May 2021. AGENCIES

Eng guilty of thinking too far ahead: Bell

PTI ■ LONDON

Former batsman Ian Bell has slammed England's muchdebated rotation policy, saying they were guilty of thinking too far ahead and have gone wrong with the constant chopping and changing in a "big" Test series like India.

England fell to an embarrassing 10-wicket defeat in the third Test to go down 1-2 in the four-match series against India, while also getting knocked out of contention from the ICC World Test Championship



(WTC) final in June. "I think England have been guilty of thinking too far ahead

of having a squad for the Ashes when actually this is bigger than the Ashes, this is probably as big as the Ashes," Bell told ESPNcricinfo.

"Why are we rotating in the biggest Test series you are playing in? For me that's where England have gone a bit wrong," he added.

The 38-year-old, who featured in 118 Tests for England, feels for the English players for whom the tours to India and Australia can make or break

"These tours, certainly for

Englishmen coming to India or going to Australia are the pinnacle. They make your careers, you look back and if you win in those conditions they are remembered for a long long time," Bell said.

"For me, India are going to come to England in the summer. If they are 2-0 or 1-0 up will they rotate? I know for a fact that when India come in the summer they won't be rotating their best bowlers or their best players or leave somebody out. They want to

Padikkal scores another ton in Karnataka's win



PTI ■ BENGALURU

 $\mathbf{Y}^{ ext{oung opener Devdutt Padikkal continued his sensational form, smashing a}$ second successive century to lead defending champions Karnataka to a nine-wicket win over Kerala in the Vijay Hazare

Trophy here on Friday.
Chasing Kerala's 278, Karnataka cantered home with 27 balls to spare with the Royal Challengers Bangalore opener hitting 13 fours and two sixes in an unbeaten knock of 126 from 138 balls.

He got a fine support from Krishnamurthy Siddharth (84-ball 86 not out; 5x4, 3x6) as they toyed with the Kerala

Delhi to host Vijay Hazare knockout Arsenal, Man Utd, Rangers in last 16

matches of the ongoing Vijay Hazare Trophy will

organised at the Arun all the affiliated state units Jaitley Stadium and the on February 25. Palam Ground.

attack in their match-winning 180-run

chart with 427 runs from four matches at

of the Group E table ahead of Uttar Pradesh, who beat Railways by 70 runs in

The big win took Karnataka to the top

In Group A game in Surat, skipper

Krunal Pandya's unbeaten 133 formed the

cornerstone of Baroda's 13-run win over

Chhattisgarh in an Elite Group A game,

even as Atit Sheth blazed away to a 16-ball

Opting to bat, Baroda rode on Pandya's

an astounding average of 142.33.

Alur and Kerala on net run-rate.

FOUR FOR BARODA

Vijay Hazare Trophy 2020-21 will be played at New be held in Delhi from Delhi from March 7," stated a mail sent from the The matches will be BCCI secretary's office to

As per the BCCI web-"...Kindly note that the site, the pre-quarter final 14.

Mumbai: The knockout knock-out stage of the (Eliminator) will be played on March 7, while the quarter-finals will be played on March 8 and March 9.

The two semi-finals will be staged on March 11 while the summit clash will be played on March

undefeated stand. Fresh from his 152 332/6 after a top-order failure, and then against Odisha, Padikkal carried on from restricted the opposition to 319/9 to record their fourth win on the trot. The left-hanwhere he left and put on a 99-run opening stand with skipper Ravikumar Samarth der smashed 20 fours and three sixes in his whirlwind 100-ball knock while forging a The 20-year-old, who also has two half-139-run stand for the fifth wicket with centuries, now leads the Vijay Hazare run Vishnu Solanki (78 off 99 balls, 8x4).

JHARKHAND LOSE

In Group B matches in Indore, Tamil Nadu ended Tharkhand's three-match winning streak with a convincing 67-run win.

hundred and Sheth's big-hitting to post

At Holkar Stadium, Prabhsimran Singh hammered 167 (140 balls, 13 fours, 9 sixes) to power Punjab to a four-wicket win over Vidarbha. While Madhya Pradesh handed Andhra a 98-run defeat.

Jharkhand is on top of the standings with 12 points, followed by Punjab, Andhra, Tamil Nadu and Madhya Pradesh with eight points. Vidarbha lies in last place with 4





Deepak upstages world champ Zoirov

New Delhi: Asian Silver-winner fancied Zoirov, who had claimed Deepak Kumar (52kg) on Friday stunned Olympic and world champion Shakhobiddin Zoirov of Uzbekistan to storm into the finals of the 72nd Strandja Memorial Boxing Tournament

in Sofia, Bulgaria. Deepak clinched one of the most memorable wins of his career with a 4-1 win over more competition.

the 2019 world championship medallist from the Asian Games

title beating India's Amit Panghal. Zoirov is also a Silverand the championships.

However, former youth world champion Jyoti Gulia (51kg) and Bhagyabati Kachari (75kg) bowed out of the women's



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Earlier, there were discussions that Mumbai, with four stadiums — Wankhede, Brabourne, DY Patil and Reliance Stadium, will be a good option to create a single bio-secure bubble and hold the eight-week long tourna-

lowing a surge in Covid-19

cases in and around the city.

However, the Covid-19 situation in Maharashtra has worsened with a spike in cases.

There is still a month left for the IPL to start but obvious-**PNS** | ly some decisions need to be April.



taken. It will be risky to have a single city IPL in Mumbai if there is steady rise in cases that's happening right now," a senior BCCI official said.

"So cities like Hyderabad, Bengaluru, and Kolkata will be ready to host matches. Ahmedabad, in all likelihood, will host the play-off and final match of the IPL," he said.

The IPL is scheduled to start in the second week of in the Premier League only on



scored twice including a late winner as Arsenal qualified for the last 16 of the Europa League on Thursday with a 3-2 victory over Benfica in Greece, while Manchester United and Rangers cruised through to the next round. The Gabon striker put

in their home leg of a tie relocated due to Covid-19 travel restrictions. Diogo Goncalves levelled the contest with a magnificent free-kick and Rafa Silva gave Benfica a 2-1 lead on the night when he took advantage of an

Arsenal ahead at the

Karaiskakis stadium in Piraeus

error from Dani Ceballos on the hour. Kieran Tierney rifled in an equaliser and Aubameyang headed in the decisive goal from Bukayo Saka's cross on 87 minutes, earning the Gunners a 4-3 aggregate victory and saving them from an unusual away goals exit following a 1-

1 draw in the first leg in Rome. "Everyone is happy tonight. This is what gives me power every day, take errors from the past and transform to strength," Aubameyang told BT Sport.

"The team showed a lot of character and we deserved the win. It was a hard game. What we showed tonight will be an example for the future." United cemented their place in Friday's draw with a 0-

draw at home to Real Sociedad, having effectively clinched the tie last week with an emphatic 4-0 win on neutral ground in Italy. Mikel Oyarzabal's awful penalty miss represented the best chance at Old Trafford for

La Real, while Bruno Fernandes rattled the crossbar and Axel Tuanzebe's header was disallowed for a foul. Leicester City, who are behind second-placed United goal difference, were knocked out after sliding to a 2-0 loss at home to Czech champions Slavia Prague. Lukas Provod fired Slavia

in front just after half-time following a goalless draw in the first leg, and Senegalese teenager Abdallah Sima ensured the visitors extended their run in the competition.

'OUTSTANDING' RANGERS Steven Gerrard's Rangers progressed following their 5-2 win over Belgian side Antwerp at Ibrox, with five different

players on target for the

Scottish league leaders. After a dramatic 4-3 win in the first leg last week, goals from Alfredo Morelos, Nathan Patterson and Ryan Kent put Rangers in control before late penalties from Borna Barisic and Cedric Itten wrapped up

the tie 9-5 on aggregate.
"I'm very satisfied, the performance was outstanding in a lot of areas," said Gerrard.

AC Milan squeezed past Red Star Belgrade on away goals after a 1-1 draw in a clash of former European champions at the San Siro. Franck Kessie's early penal-

the two legs.

ty was enough to book Milan's place in the last 16 despite El Fardou Ben Nabouhane equalising as the tie finished 3-3 over Napoli's dismal run contin-

as they sit second in the Premier League having lost just once in the English top flight since the start of November.

while Gerard Moreno netted both goals as Villarreal dumped out Salzburg 4-1 on aggregate.

Egyptian forward Ahmed Hassan's 88th-minute strike in Eindhoven sent Olymiapkos through at the expense of PSV 5-4 on aggregate, while Roma and Young Boys brushed aside Braga and Bayer Leverkusen respectively.

Former winners Shakhtar Donetsk completed a 3-0 aggregate victory over Maccabi Tel-Aviv, while Norwegians Molde dumped out Hoffenheim 5-3 on aggregate following a 2-0 win in Germany.

Dinamo Zagreb and Dynamo Kiev complete the line-up for the last 16, with Tottenham Hotspur also in the mix after destroying Wolfsberg of Austria by an aggregate score of 8-1 on Wednesday.

Red Devils face AC Milan in last 16

AFP NYON

M anchester United and AC Milan will face off in the last 16 of the Europa League after being paired together in

ued as they were knocked out

3-2 on aggregate by Granada

despite winning 2-1 in the

Ligue 1 leaders Lille with a 2-

1 victory in Amsterdam to

complete a 4-2 overall win,

Ajax eliminated French

return fixture in Italy.

Friday's draw in Nyon. Únited, who beat Real Sociedad 4-0 in the previous round, will face the seventime European champions in a two-legged encounter after they squeezed past Red Star

Belgrade on away goals.

The tie will pit Zlatan Ibrahimovic against his former club in United, where he won the 2017 edition of the Europa

United will be considered favourites for the tie however

surrendered top spot in Serie A to neighbours Inter Milan after a run of three defeats in five league matches

Ajax will fancy their chances against Switzerland's Young Boys after the fourtime European champions eliminated Ligue 1 leaders Lille on Thursday. Granada were rewarded

for making the last 16 in their first ever European campaign with a tie against Norway's Molde, while Roma coach Paulo Fonseca will be reunited with his old team Shakhtar Donetsk.

United's fellow Premier League teams Tottenham Hotspur and Arsenal will face Dinamo Zagreb and Olympiakos respectively. Rangers take on Slavia Prague after dumping out Royal Milan meanwhile have Antwerp 9-5 on aggregate.