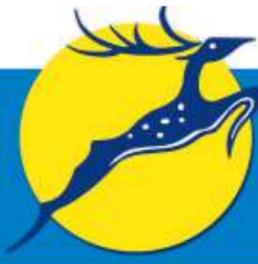


ANALYSIS 7
CURB REGULATORY
OVERREACH

MONEY 8
'CELEBI AVIATION READY TO
HANDLE COVID-19 VACCINES'

SPORTS 12
INEXPERIENCED ATTACK
KEEPS OZ IN CHECK

HYDERABAD, SATURDAY JANUARY 16, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer



I THINK MY
ENTIRE JOURNEY
HAS BEEN
SPECIAL: KIARA

Page 11

www.dailypioneer.com

DAY AFTER JOINING BJP, PM'S TRUSTED AIDE NAMED FOR KEY POLLS IN UP

Former IAS officer Arvind Kumar Sharma was named BJP candidate for the legislative council polls in Uttar Pradesh, a day after he joined the party, days after he opted for voluntary retirement from the service. Elections to 12 Legislative Council seats will take place on January 28. Sharma -- who has spent years in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's team and is among his most-trusted aides -- had surprised many after he applied for voluntary retirement this week, two years before his term was to end. Reports suggest Sharma after his election as a legislator will be given a key position in the Yogi Adityanath government.



IN BENGAL MULTI-CRORE PONZI SCAM, ROSE VALLEY CHAIRMAN'S WIFE ARRESTED

In a key arrest by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in West Bengal's Rose Valley Ponzi scam estimated to be worth over ₹ 15,000 crore, Shubhra Kundu, the wife of the firm's chairman Goutam Kundu was taken into custody in Kolkata on Friday. Rose Valley was one of many Ponzi groups in Bengal exposed in 2013 that continue to provide ammunition to the opposition against the ruling Trinamool Congress especially ahead of elections due this year. The company came under the scanner along with Saradha scam, which too was a Ponzi scandal and triggered allegations of corruption against top leaders of the party.



MODI TO FLAG OFF 8 TRAINS TO BOOST CONNECTIVITY TO STATUE OF UNITY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will flag off eight trains connecting different parts of the country to Kevadiya, where the Statue of Unity dedicated to Vallabhbhai Patel is located, on Sunday to boost seamless connectivity to the tribal region in Gujarat. The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said on Friday that Modi will also inaugurate several other railway projects related to Gujarat during the event via video-conferencing.



300-400 PAK-TRAINED TERRORISTS READY TO INFILTRATE INTO JK: ARMY CHIEF

Around 300-400 terrorists trained in camps across the Line of Control (LoC) are ready to sneak into Jammu and Kashmir, Army chief General M M Naravane said on Friday. In his speech during the Army day parade, he also said that there has been 44 per cent increase in ceasefire violations that reflects Pakistan's sinister design. Pakistan often provides cover fire to help terrorists sneak into Jammu and Kashmir. Gen Naravane said India's active operations and strong counter-infiltration grid not only inflicted heavy losses on the enemy but they contained infiltration attempts as well.



'Celebi Aviation ready to handle COVID-19 vaccines'

8



EC gives nod to use its data only during Covid vaccination drive

5



Role-based decision-making in Mission Karmayogi

2

VACCINE DAY FOR INDIA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch the nation's rollout of the Covid-19 vaccination drive on Saturday, connecting with 3,006 vaccination sites across the country via video-conferencing. The Prime Minister's Office said Modi would address the sites, where over three crore priority groups would be vaccinated over the next few months, at 10.30 am. "Around 100 beneficiaries will be vaccinated at each session site on the inaugural day," the government said. "The vaccination session is from 9 am to 5 pm. Whoever comes till 5 pm will be vaccinated even after 5 pm, just like how it happens in elections," an official from



Medical staff of Gandhi Hospital are ready to administer Covid-19 vaccine on Saturday.

the Health Ministry said. Since the bulk registration of healthcare workers had already taken place, they need not individually register, the official added.

The vax session is from 9 am to 5 pm. Whoever comes till 5 pm will be vaccinated even after 5 pm

Eatala vouches for efficacy of vaccine

PNS/HYDERABAD: Minister for Health Eatala Rajender has appealed to people not to entertain any apprehensions about the COVID-19 vaccine, whose administration would begin on Saturday in 139 centers across the state. He sought public cooperation for the success of the vaccination programme. In a statement issued here on Friday, Eatala reassured people that the scope for the vaccine showing side effects was very less. However, as a precautionary measure, 57 emergency centres had been set up to treat people showing vaccine reactions, if any.



All set for vax rollout today from 139 centers in TS

- The number of vaccination centers to be scaled up to 1,213 in two weeks
- Only 3.15 lakh doses received from the Centre
- 50,000 doses sent to all districts
- Job to 4,000 healthcare workers first

TS Public Health Director Dr Srinivas has said that the vaccination drive against the Covid-19 pandemic will commence initially from 139 centers set up across all districts of the state on Friday. The number of vaccination centres would be scaled up to 1,213 in about two weeks. The Telangana Health Ministry on Friday clarified that both vaccines approved to fight COVID-19- Serum Institute's co-developed Covishield and Bharat Biotech's indigenously developed Covaxin-are trusted and safe to be taken by citizens.

TS govt plans to defer Warangal, Khammam civic polls by 3 months

VENKAT RAM REDDY LAKKADI ■ HYDERABAD

The TRS government, chastened by the pink party's poor show in the recent GHMC elections, has moved quickly to defer elections to the municipal corporations of Warangal and Khammam by three months. The state government had advanced GHMC polls by two months, but TRS could not capitalize on the early polls though opposition parties were caught off-guard by the pink party's 'strategy'. The emergence of the BJP as a force to reckon with in the GHMC has changed political dynamics in the State forever. The Warangal and Khammam municipal corporation polls should be held in March as per schedule, but the government now wants to



defer these polls to May or June.

Since the strategy of advancing polls had backfired in GHMC, the government wants to delay the polls to buy more time to take up more developmental programmes so that TRS could retain hold on its perceived vote banks and lure more voters. The present GHMC Council's term is set to end on February 10, 2021. But the state government had issued the GHMC poll notification in

mid-November and held elections on December 1, 2020. According to observers, the TRS did not want to give adequate time for the opposition parties to select strong candidates and launch solid cam-

Police to take possession of Akhila's mobiles

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The police have stepped up investigation in the case relating to the kidnapping of Pravin Rao and his brothers, and they may approach the court to take possession of the mobile phones of Ahila Priya, former minister who is the main accused. The police said Akhila Priya was found to have used two phones, including one to converse with the kidnapers. She used two mobile phones during her journey from Vijayawada to Lodha Apartments in Kukatpally. The police feel that analysing the call records from her mobile phones would throw more light in the case. Meanwhile, the police have intensified search for Jagatvikhyat Reddy, brother of Akhila Priya, Bharagava Ram's mother Kiranmayi, Bhargava Ram's brother Chandrabhas as these persons "are knowledgeable about the kidnap conspiracy".

TS tops in own tax revenue earnings

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana State, having more than doubled its GSDP since inception, from Rs 4 lakh crore in 2014 to Rs 9.60 lakh crore in 2020, has also topped Indian states with regard to own tax revenues at Rs 60,000 crore every year, amounting to 7.4 per cent of GSDP. Significantly, TS has achieved this despite the fact that the state suffered huge losses due to the corona- induced financial crisis as well as the drastic cut in Central grants. These findings were revealed in a study done by PRS Legislative Research, an Indian non-profit organization, for the period 2015-20. While Telangana topped the country with its own tax

revenues at 7.4 per cent of GSDP, at 7.2% Uttar Pradesh occupied the second place. No other state in the country could achieve 7 per cent growth. Maharashtra secured the third place with 6.8 per cent own tax revenues. The study found that the Centre had imposed 58 per cent cut in grants-in-aid. Prior to the formation of Telangana State in 2014, Telangana's own tax revenues totaled just Rs 35,000 crore. Within three years, the state's own tax revenue earnings increased sharply to Rs 60,000 crore, the report says. The Telangana region's GDP in combined Andhra Pradesh was less than the national GDP average then.

Baby boy survives serious accident with minor injuries

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In what is seen as a providential escape, a baby boy playing in front of his house survived a major accident when the kid's head came under the rear wheels of a passing car that dragged him to some distance, causing minor injuries to his face on the right side. The incident, which left lookers-on breathless, took place in Ashok Vihar of Upparpalli area under the Rajendra Nagar Police Station limits on Thursday. CCTV cameras in the locality have recorded the mishap. The car driver reportedly noticed the boy playing near the gate, but did not care to apply brakes. When he went past the gate, the boy's head got entangled behind the rear wheels of the car, due to which he was dragged for some distance, before the



vehicle came to a halt. Local people alerted the boy's parents about the accident. They rushed the boy to a hospital. The car was easily identified as it belongs to the cab service that drops employees at the apartment complex. The parents have lodged a complaint with the Rajendra Nagar Police.

Govt-farmers meet: 9th round talks fail

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Friday asked protesting farmers to form an informal group to prepare a concrete proposal about their objections and suggestions on the three farm laws for further discussion at their next meeting on January 19 to end the long-running protest at various Delhi borders, but unions stuck to their main demand of a complete repeal of the three Acts.

As nearly five hours of talks between 41 unions and three central ministers did not reach a decisive stage in the ninth round of talks at Vigyan Bhawan here, the two sides decided to meet again the next Tuesday. Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar told farmer leaders at the meeting that the government has been flexible in its approach and urged the same from them.

NGT questions lenient view adopted by TSPCB towards pharma units

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal chairman Adarsh Kumar Goel on Friday asked the Telangana State Pollution Control Board to penalise the pharma companies located in Polepalli SEZ that violated the norms from the day one of the violation of the rules. Concurring with the petitioner, who contended that the violations of environmental approval given to them since 2013 and objected to the TSPCB



imposing fines for violation by nine pharma companies for only one year, Adarsh Kumar Goel gave the ruling. Depositing before the tribunal,

counsel for the pollution control board said that Hetero Labs, Silpa Medicare, Aurobindo Pharma, APL Health Care, Maidan Laboratories, Evertogen Life Sciences, Amneal Oncology Private Ltd were fined each Rs 18.25 lakh, while Sri Kartikeya Pharma Company was fined to the tune of Rs 9 lakh. The chairman sought to know the reason from the Pollution Control Board for the soft corner towards these pharma companies.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Paush & Shukla Paksha
Panchangam
Tithi : Tritiya: 07:45 am
Nakshatram: Shatabhisha: 06:09 am (Next Day)

Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start any important work)

Rahukalam: 09:39 am - 11:02 am
Yamagandam: 01:49 pm - 03:12 pm
Varjyam: 12:44 pm - 02:24 pm
Gulika: 06:53 am - 08:16 am
Good Time: (to start any important work)
Amritkalam: 10:41 pm - 12:21 am
Abhjit Muhurtham: 12:03 pm - 12:48 pm

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Sunny
Temp: 29/17
Humidity: 53%
Sunrise: 06:49 am
Sunset: 06:02 pm
Current Weather Conditions
Updated January 15, 2021 5:00 PM

'Farm bills, a significant step towards reforms'

IMF lauds India's commitment

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) believes the farm bills passed by the Indian government have the potential to represent a significant step forward for agricultural reforms, a spokesperson of the organisation said here.

There is, however, a need to strengthen the social safety net for those who might be adversely affected by the transition to the new system, Gerry Rice, Director of Communications at IMF, said at a news conference in Washington on Thursday. "We believe the farm bills do have the potential to represent



a significant step forward for agricultural reforms in India," Rice said.

"The measures will enable farmers to directly contract with sellers, allow farmers to retain a greater share of the surplus by reducing the role of middlemen, enhance efficiency and support rural growth," he added. "However, it is crucial that the social safety net adequately protects those who might be adversely impacted during the transition to this new system,"

Chicago-Hyderabad weekly flight starts

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The first Air India non-stop flight to Hyderabad from Chicago landed at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport here early on Friday. Airport officials and AI employees welcomed flight AI-108 with 237 passengers and 16 crew members,

Transforming decision-making from rule to role-based is one of the objectives of Mission Karmayogi.

Commonly, administrative roles are connected to the positions (posting) administrators occupy as they progress in their careers. In rule-based roles, decision-making, in the words of Paul Appleby, is conceived to be a "mechanical, merely technical, unvarying" activity, leading to "wholly scientific or technical and wholly right decisions".

On the other hand, role-based decision-making focuses on the process used by administrators to make decisions in different situations.

The most common process is the typical bureaucratic way flowing from the ideas of Max Weber. The steps in this process are — bureaucrats identify a goal based on public interest, make an exhaustive list of all possible courses of action with their consequences, and decide on a course of action that is most likely to lead to goal achieve-

Role-based decision-making in Mission Karmayogi

ment.

The assumptions are that administrators know and are able to determine a goal based on public interest; politics has no role in decision-making, and policy-making is separate from implementation.

This process of conventional decision-making is found to be slow, costly, ineffective and unable to respond to unforeseen changes. To get over this, administrators reduce the extent of analysis by examining only a limited number of alternative courses of action.

Issues are addressed individually rather than in a holistic manner, no visionary goals are set, and the objective is to give small solutions to what are largely more complex problems.

When new problems arise, these are addressed through a new round of incremental decision-making. This short-

Issues are addressed individually rather than in a holistic manner, no visionary goals are set, and the objective is to give small solutions to what are largely more complex problems

term focus leads to faster and more politically relevant decision-making. This is called the incremental way of making decisions.

Administrators use two variants of the incremental process. If the political environment so demands, the incremental approach is reduced to a hands-off role in which administrators operate only within the latitude permitted by the political executive.

Administrators also introduce an element of long-term by following a mixed-method, which consists of setting a large

goal and then using incremental actions to achieve short-term objectives. In this way, the incremental process acquires a long-term vision.

The pragmatism of incremental decision-making is based on the 'principle of bounded rationality' developed by Nobel Laureate Herbert Simon. The premise is that reality is complex and cannot be completely understood by any human brain; therefore, capacity to solve problems is also limited. As a result, human beings satisfice — settle for a course of action that is 'good enough' for the



DR. SAMEER SHARMA

purposes at hand.

The conventional and the incremental processes serve the welfare of all. Often, this permits the wealthy, outspoken and powerful to veer decisions in their direction. As a result, special interests of the poor and disadvantaged tend to be relegated to a subordinate status. This is addressed by following the advocacy

way of selecting a course of action. In the advocacy way of decision-making, administrators actively pursue the interests of a less-endowed group (e.g. tribals, differently-abled) and behave like lawyers arguing the case of their clients.

The conventional process of deciding on a course of action was overhauled in the 1970s. This is called the strategic process, and owes its origins to the private sector when managements of large corporates started to practice a strategic process in order to deal with an increasing uncertain future. The strategic process is oriented towards actions, results, and implementation.

It promotes broader and more diverse participation in the planning process, places more emphasis on understanding the external context, assumes competitive behaviour among people (and

groups), and focuses on a community's strengths and weaknesses in the context of external opportunities and challenges.

Communication to change the mindsets of people is a completely different way of decision-making. The changed motivations and emotions, in turn, drive action. Administrators aim to develop a public realm in which individuals can engage in free and open communication. Public interest also becomes the interest of plural communities, which is known through communication and discourse.

Some of the processes used by administrators are - dialogue and discussion, consultation on projects during design and implementation, and the use of appropriate type of language and mediation in order to evolve consensus among individuals and groups of people. Social media has spawned a new way of discourse and communication, having the potential to influence action by giving new meanings to information and issues.

Therefore, role-based decision-making involves knowing different ways of choosing paths of action, where all seem to be appropriate. The selection of a particular path depends on the deep structure of assumptions, beliefs, and values held by administrators as well as requirements of the situation. The task before the Mission Karmayogi is to build the capacity of administrators in order to empower them to choose and practice one way of being and doing over another.

(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 personal)

TS tops in own tax revenue earnings

Continued from Page 1

However, due to the pro-industry, pro-investment policies implemented by the Telangana government over the past six years, the state's GSDP witnessed a sharp growth.

Telangana's GSDP prior to 2014 was Rs 4 lakh crore. In six years, its GSDP has increased by leaps and bounds -- to Rs 9.60 lakh crore in 2020. Of this, the state's own tax revenue earnings itself stand at Rs 60,000 crore every year, amounting to 7.4 per cent.

The neighbouring Andhra Pradesh achieved just 6.4 per cent own tax revenue earnings, the report says.

Shilparamams to come up across State

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister of State for Excise, Sports, Tourism and Culture V Srinivas Goud said that Shilparamams were developed to reflect the culture and traditions of the Telugu people in a concrete jungle like Hyderabad to reflect the rural environment, caste-based occupations, 'Gangi Reddulu' and Haridas chants in today's changing modern age.

Minister of State for Excise, Sports, Tourism and Culture, along with his family members, participated in the Sankranti festival organised under the auspices of the Department of Tourism and Culture at Shilparam in Madhapur here on Friday.

Speaking on the occasion, he reminded that after the formation of Telangana under the leadership of the Chief Minister



Minister of State for Excise, Sports, Tourism and Culture V Srinivas Goud is all smiles by holding a 'Gangi Reddu' at Sankranti festival celebrations in Shilparamam on Friday

K Chandrasekhara Rao, the government is not only accorded priority for the development of rural areas but also for tradition and culture.

Therefore, the festivals are being organised at Shilparamams to pass on the festivals uniqueness, folk traditions and customs to future generations. Second Shilparamam was set up at Uppal, thanks to Minister for Municipal Administration KT Rama Rao and one more would be set up in Mahabubnagar district headquarters.

"Apart from these, we are setting up Shilparamams in all the districts as per the directions of KCR," said the minister and added that people living in towns come together with their families on the occasion of the festival and celebrate it traditionally in a rural atmosphere at Shilparamam. On the occasion, the family members watched cultural programmes organised as part of the Sankranti celebrations at the Hampi theatre in Shilparam. Shilparamam Special Officer Kishan Rao, Shilparamam and Cultural Department officials were present on the occasion.

Conspiracy behind desecration of temples, but not political : RSS seniors

MARTHI SUBRAHMANYAM ■ VIJAYAWADA

With the arrest of the controversial pastor Pravin Chakravarti of Kakinada, it has been established that there was no political conspiracy whatsoever to unsettle YSRCP government in the state, according to senior RSS figures in the state.

The arrest points to a Christian conspiracy against the government, they said.

The RSS functionaries say that their suspicion that some pastors were misusing Christianity as a shield and taking advantage of the situation was proven correct by the arrest of Pravin Chakravarti following his objectionable and insensitive statements made in a YouTube video. The pastor was arrested based on a complaint filed by one Singam Lakshmi Narayana of Guntur.

Over the past year, Hindu religious organisations have been getting increasingly restless over the desecration of



temples. The RSS, which has taken a serious view of the attacks, has been claiming that there was no political conspiracy but political parties have tried to use the incidents to derive mileage.

The RSS is of the view that some pastors, taking advantage of the fact that it is "their government" in the state, resorted to the attacks on Hindu temples out of sheer recklessness.

RSS seniors say that Pravin's

arrest justifies their suspicion. In fact, RSS functionaries reportedly sent a video clip of Pravin making sensitive remarks against Hindu religion to the DGP a week ago.

The RSS is of the view that the Jagan government is hesitating to take action against such pastors for fear of losing the Christian vote bank.

A section in the RSS believes that the attacks are the result of a tussle for supremacy among pastors.

Chicago-Hyderabad weekly flight starts

Continued from Page 1

a press release from GMR group which manages the airport said.

Arriving passengers were treated to a cake cutting ceremony intermeshed with cultural events and photo opportunity with all sanitisation and social distancing protocols adhered to.

Later in the day, flight AI 107--the same aircraft--took off to Chicago with 226 passengers and 16 crewmembers at around 12.50 PM, amid fanfare.

Senior officials from GMR Hyderabad International Airport along with Air India staff and other airport stakeholders were present at the terminal to see them off, the release said.

Flight AI-107 will operate once a week every Friday,

Flight AI-107 will operate once a week every Friday, departing from Hyd at 1250 hrs (IST) to arrive in Chicago at 1805 hrs (CST/Local US time) the same day

departing from Hyderabad at 1250 hrs (IST) to arrive in Chicago at 1805 hrs (CST/Local US time) the same day.

The return flight AI-108 will operate every Wednesday leaving Chicago at 2130 hrs (CST/Local US Time) to arrive in Hyderabad at 0140 hrs (IST).

Govt-farmers meet: 9th round talks fail

Continued from Page 1

Incidentally, the tenth round of talks has been scheduled for a day when a Supreme Court-appointed committee to resolve the impasse is also likely to hold its first meeting. A day before that, the apex court is likely to hear a petition against a tractor rally call given by the protesting farmers for the Republic Day on January 26.

After the meeting, Tomar told reporters that two separate deliberations can run parallelly as the farmer unions want to continue their talks with the government and the court-appointed panel has also been set up with an aim to resolve the crisis and a solution can emerge from anywhere.

"Discussions happen at various platforms and a solution can emerge from anywhere... Our effort is to find a solution at the earliest through dialogue so that the farmers' protest ends. Farmers are sitting in cold weather amid the threat of COVID-19 and the government is concerned about that also and is therefore engaging with farmers with an open mind," he said.

The minister said the government will also present its side before the SC-appointed panel whenever it is asked to do so. Farmer leader Joginder Singh Ugrahan said after the meeting that the unions urged the Centre to repeal the three laws, but the Centre was unwilling to do so. Ugrahan said the union leaders also raised the issue of NIA raids on transporters in Punjab who are supporting farmers' protests and were providing logistic support for the agitation.

Shivkumar Kakka, national president of Rashtriya Kisan Mazdoor Mahasangh, said the union leaders raised the issue of Income Tax raids on 'arhtiyas' (commission agents) in Punjab.

"Cases were also filed against 900 Haryana farmers under IPC section 307, while the NIA raided transporters and called them for interrogation. You are taking vindictive action against those who are helping us. This is not constitutional," he said.

The farmer leader said that Tomar told them the government will look into it and see why it was happening.

Farmers union leaders, who had their own langar food during the lunch break, said at the meeting they are committed to continuing holding direct talks to resolve the over-one-month-long deadlock over three agri laws, even as a committee has been formed by the Supreme Court to resolve the deadlock.

In his opening remarks, Tomar urged farmer leaders to be flexible in their approach as has been done by the government.

Besides Tomar, Railways, Commerce and Food Minister

Piyush Goyal and Minister of State for Commerce Som Parkash were part of the government side.

"Both the government and farmer unions have reaffirmed their commitment to continue with the direct dialogue process," said All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee member Kavita Kuruganti, who was part of the meeting.

"In his opening remarks, Tomar ji said you keep saying that the government is adamant and making it an issue of ego, even though we have accepted several demands. Don't you think you should be flexible and not stick to one single demand of repealing the laws," said Baljit Singh Bali of Punjab Kisan Morcha.

Farmer leader Darshan Pal said there was a good discussion on all three laws. "There is a possibility of some resolution. We are positive," he added.

HYDERABAD BULLION RATES	
GOLD	
₹ 50, 180 (10 gm)	
₹ 230	
SILVER	
₹ 70,600 (1kg)	
₹ 100	
CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹138
Without Skin	₹157
Broiler at Farm	₹95
EGG RATES ₹/100	
HYDERABAD	369
VIJAYAWADA	516
VISAKHAPATNAM	505
RETAIL PRICE (IN HYDERABAD)	₹3. 69

All set for vax rollout today from 139 centers...

Continued from Page 1

"To avoid and contain the COVID-19 infection, we must take the vaccine which is very safe and efficient. Both Covishield or Covaxin are trusted to be taken by the citizens," said Dr. Srinivas Rao. Addressing media persons, along with Director of Medical Education Dr Ramesh Reddy at his office here on Friday, Dr Srinivas said that the Co-WIN software had till date registered the details of over 3.15 lakh health professionals working in government and private sectors.

On Saturday, the inaugural day of the inoculation programme, vaccine will be administered to 30 persons at each of the 139 centers. The vaccination programme will be held four days a week - Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Over the next two

weeks, the vaccine will be administered through 1,213 centers.

The vaccine will be administered first to health activists working in the government sector and at the same time it would be given to health professionals working in private hospitals, Dr Srinivas elaborated. An action plan has been formulated to administer the vaccine from the level of PHC workers to that of staff in teaching hospital. Nodal officers have been appointed to monitor all aspects of the vaccination, he said.

Job to 4,000 healthcare workers first

About 4,000 healthcare workers will be vaccinated first on the first day of Covid vaccination drive on Saturday in the state. Director of Public Health Dr.

Eatala vouches for efficacy of vaccine

Continued from Page 1

As the captain of the Health Department, he would be the first person to receive the vaccine shot at Gandhi Hospital here. Others to take part in the vaccination programme along with him are Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar, Health Secretary Rizvi and Director of Medical Education Ramesh Reddy. Local MLAs and MPs would take part in the vaccination programme in their respective areas. People should compulsorily take the second dose after 28 days of receiving the first dose. The vaccine doses sent by the Centre to the state are sufficient to vaccinate the medical professionals and others working in government hospitals, according to the minister. Upon receiving additional doses, the vaccine would be administered to the private hospital personnel, those who have been suffering from comorbidities as per the rules of the ICMR and to those who are aged above 50 years.

Srinivas Rao told media persons: "Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch the pan-India rollout of the COVID-19 vaccination drive on January 16, 2021 via

video conferencing. Around 139 session sites have been established across the state for the COVID-19 vaccine drive".

The beneficiaries include faculty, staff, and students serving in hospitals. They will be vaccinated on 18, 19, 21, 22 and 25 of January at six sites in Osmania General Hospital, Hyderabad. The COVID-19 vaccination drive will begin at 9am and will go on till 6 pm. "We have received instructions from the Union government to administer the vaccine first to healthcare workers, sanitation workers as they were the first who took care of Covid-19 patients," he observed.

Telangana Director of Medical Education Dr Ramesh said "All necessary actions to maintain the protocol have been taken. Given the directions from the Government of India, this vaccine will not be given to people aged under 18 years, pregnant women, and lactating mothers as these sections were not trialed for the vaccine."

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 have 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.

GHMC woefully short of food inspectors

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

As there are only three food inspectors for the entire six zones of the GHMC to monitor quality of the food being sold by various eateries and restaurants in the city, adulteration of food might go unchecked taking toll on public health.

After a long lull due to lockdown, hotels and other eateries have resumed recently. People are slowly returning to these facilities. Enforcement of sanitation and other precautions and prevention of food adulteration has apparently taken a backseat due to inadequate manpower.

Out of the 16 posts of food inspectors, only 20 posts have been notified last year by the TSPSC due to court litigation. The training for 20 food inspectors will take another 40 days to complete. Unless they complete their training, they will not be given their postings. For all six zones, six gazetted food inspectors are required to be posted. However, there are currently only three. Of them, two officials have attained superannuation, but their service has been extended.

As per the GHMC statistics, there are 10,000 minor hotels,



curry points and 3,000 ordinary and star hotels. Other eateries in the city are put at 2,000.

Annually, the food inspectors are not able to collect more than 230 samples. On many occasions, adulteration has been detected. But the offenders are let off with fines. Efforts to bring out a mobile application on fines for various offences did not bear fruit.

Complaints about food adulteration by orders supplied by

well established brands like Swiggy and Zomato are also reported.

The forum for good governance secretary, M Padmanabha Reddy, urged the municipal administration minister, KT Rama Rao, to take steps to prevent food adulteration. He urged KTR to set up a special cell to lodge complaints about adulteration and set up another lab to test the samples.

The Food Safety and

Standards Act of 2002 pertaining to public health is not being implemented in Greater Hyderabad.

The Act came into force in GHMC from 2011, but it remained unimplemented in the city. As per the Act, the GHMC should have details of eateries within its limits.

Inspections should be done at regular intervals and there should be enough labs to test the collected food samples. If the samples are tested

As there are only three food inspectors for the entire six zones of the GHMC to monitor quality of the food being sold by various eateries and restaurants in the city, adulteration of food might go unchecked taking toll on public health.

positive for adulteration, stern punishment should be awarded to offenders.

There should be no scope for food adulteration right from production facility to packing and transportation. To implement the Act, enforcement authorities are needed. Because of the shortage of the food inspectors, the law is not being implemented.

GUV PERFORMS GOPUJA



Telangana Governor Dr. Tamilisai Soundararajan feeds cows while performing Gopuja, as part of the Kanuma celebrations, at Gausshala in Raj Bhavan on Friday.

Police step up vigil as snatching cases go up

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The police have intensified surveillance as nine snatching cases - seven mobile and two chain snatching cases - have been reported in the last 14 days in Hyderabad Commissionerate limits.

Among the nine snatching cases, three were registered in Central Zone, two cases each in West and North Zones and one each in East and South Zone.

Analysis of the snatching cases reveals that they were committed during night hours from 9 pm to 6 am. As many as 13 offenders were arrested in five cases. Of the 13 offenders, three were juveniles and nine offenders were

between 19 and 25 years of age.

In most of the snatching cases, the method of operation is same where the bike-borne assailants identify their target who walk alone along the roads and flee from the spot after committing the theft.

Hyderabad police officials intensified checks. They police higher officials have instructed the cops to conduct surprise vehicle checks from 9 pm to 6 am.

"During vehicle checks, the cops are concentrating on motorists in the age group of 16-25 years. Assistant commissioner of police (ACP) is closely monitoring the situation to prevent such cases," said a police official.

Cops recover Bonsai stolen from ex-DGP's residence

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The police recovered the expensive Bonsai tree which was stolen from the residence of retired Director General of Police V. Appa Rao in Jubilee hills and arrested the person accused in the case. The age of plant estimated to be 15 years.

The accused has been identified as Gollapudi Prasannanjaneyulu, 21, a construction worker. The bonsai tree in front of the residence of retired DGP's house at Road No 18, Jubilee Hills, caught the attention of the accused while he was roaming in the area.

"Keeping in view the high demand for the tree in the market, the accused hatched a plan to steal the plant with the help of his friend Abhishek," said Jubilee Hills Detective Inspector A Ramesh.

As per the plan on last Sunday (January 10) both the accused reached the spot at around 3.10 pm on a motorcycle stole Bonsai plant. During the investigation, the police analysed the CCTV footages in surrounding areas and identified the accused with the informants.

CITY LIGHTS

Air Force Academy to celebrate Golden Jubilee today

The Air Force Academy of Indian Air Force (IAF) based at Dundigal in Hyderabad will be celebrating fifty years of its glorious existence on Saturday. Air Force Academy has been rendering yeoman's service since its inception by training and commissioning brave and distinguished officers of the IAF from its famed portals. Several events such as golden jubilee marathon, academy utsav, blood donation camp, activities by Air Force Wives' Welfare Association (AFWWA) and others have been planned on the occasion of celebrations. The celebrations will culminate on January 19, 2021 with a training workshop and the release of Indian Postal Department's special cover by Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhaduria, the Chief of the Air Staff. The foundation stone of the Air Force Academy was laid by former President of India late Dr Zakir Hussain on October 11, 1967. The then Chief Minister of erstwhile Andhra Pradesh, K Brahmananda Reddy formally inaugurated the Academy on January 16, 1971. During its fifty glorious years, Air Force Academy, the 'alma mater of all officers' of IAF has evolved progressively to become a world class Academy to train Air Force officers.



Song on soldier's life goes viral

DURGA PRASAD SUNKU ■ HYDERABAD

As a tribute to Indian Army, a song has been released by Superintendent of Police Nalgonda A V Ranganath on Army Day.

An inspector from Nalgonda police has acted as a protagonist which is being circulated in social media. The song which has been released on social media has garnered over 41K views within 20 hours of its upload.

The song, which aims at instilling patriotism among youth, highlights the difficult conditions the soldiers face while discharging their duties.

Nalgonda Town Two inspector SM Basha, who played a lead role in the song, hails from army family. The song was directed by Charan Arjun.

Both his elder brothers and his paternal uncle served in Army and Navy. Basha, who was known for his investigative skills, took part in various sensational operations in both Telugu states. He also worked for central agency in South India.

The Sainika song was inspired from the life of Srinivas Reddy, an ex-army personnel who sustained bullet injuries in Kargil war. Srinivas Reddy was disappointed with the attitude of the public towards nation and soldiers.

Speaking about his first acting gig, Basha said, "While playing the role of Srinivas Reddy (ex-army man), I have stepped into the shoes of my paternal uncle who lost his legs in war while fighting for nation and was confined to bed since then."

Sharing about his aim of



joining forces. "My both elder brothers joined armed forces and I was always fascinated towards the job and their lifestyle in armed forces. That is how I decided to serve nation."

The song throws light on various violations of citizens and like jumping traffic signal, atrocities against women, spitting in public, littering openly asking for liquor from army personnel.

The songs clearly brought out the citizens' irresponsible attitude by comparing the life of army soldier with reckless citizens' attitude.

Sharing his aspirations regarding future endeavours, Basha said, "I would like to work on other serious cases dealing with drug abuse, human trafficking especially women trafficking, infanticide and others."

The song was released by Nalgonda Superintendent of Police AV Ranganath.

Gold paste worth 19.98L seized in airport

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A passenger who tried to hoodwink customs officials with gold paste at Rajiv Gandhi international airport, Shamshabad has been arrested by the Hyderabad customs officials on Friday.

The officials seized gold worth Rs 20 lakh from his possession while he was trying to smuggle gold.

With a specific intelligence, air intelligence officials of Hyderabad Customs unit intercepted a passenger who arrived from Dubai in 6E-025 flight on Friday.

"On close examination, the officials found gold in paste form concealed in specially stitched pocket in waist portion of jeans trouser," said customs official.

As he couldn't produce required documents to verify the gold, he was taken into custody. Total gold seized weighs 395.07 gm valued at 19.98 lakh rupees.

Subsequently, customs officials booked a case of gold smuggling against the accused and further investigation is underway.



TSRTC bags national award for improving fuel efficiency

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) bagged second best STU (State Transport Undertakings) award at national level in KMPL improvement for the year October, 2019 to September 2020 in category-I of STUs having more than 4,001 buses in operation.

Petroleum Conservation and Research Association under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has launched a scheme recognising best STU at national level and best depots in each STU at state level for "Maximum improvement in KMPL by presentation of cash awards and trophy."

A cash award of Rs 3 lakh and a memento will be presented to the Managing



Director of TSRTC by Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas and Steel, Dharmendra Pradhan during the inaugural function of SAKSHAM 2021 on Saturday.

TSRTC Managing Director Sunil Sharma, along with Executive Director C Vinod Kumar and Chief Mechanical Engineer T Raghunath Rao will receive the award.

Similarly, Hayathnagar-I,

Uppal and Dilukhnagar depots have been selected as best depots for fuel efficiency awards at state level in improving fuel efficiency for the same period.

Telangana Governor Dr. Tamilisai Soundararajan will present the best depot awards with a cash prize of Rs 50,000 for each depot. The respective Depot Managers along with their team would receive the award online in a virtual function.

Transport Minister Puvvada Ajay Kumar appreciated TSRTC management on winning the prestigious award. He also appreciated the officials and employees of depots and extended his best wishes to them. He dedicated the award to the drivers, mechanics, supervisors and managers who were instrumental in achieving the feat.

Mist or shallow fog likely to occur in TS in next 48 hours

Mist or shallow fog is likely to occur during morning hours at isolated places in Telangana during the next 48 hours, the Met department officials said on Friday. Dry weather is likely to prevail in Telangana, Coastal Andhra Pradesh, Yanam and



Rayalaseema during the next five days. Dry weather prevailed in Telangana, Coastal Andhra Pradesh, Yanam and Rayalaseema during the past 24 hours, the release issued by Indian Meteorological department said. The lowest minimum temperature of 13.7 degree Celsius was recorded in Adilabad and 17.6 degree Celsius in Hyderabad in Telangana. Anantapur in Rayalaseema recorded the lowest minimum temperature of 15.8 degree Celsius on the intervening night of Thursday and Friday.

Iran's new Consul-General meets Telangana Home Minister

The new Consul-General of Iran, Mohammad Hussein Bani Asadi, has met Telangana Home Minister Mohammad Mahmood Ali at the Home



Minister's office on Friday. Asadi has been appointed the Consul-General as Mohammad Hagbin Ghomi, who served as Consul-General till now, has completed his tenure. He has previously worked in Bulgaria, Brazil, Pakistan and other countries. The Home Minister said that he would always extend cooperation on behalf of the Telangana state government.

Phased reopening of MANUU from January 27

Maulana Azad National Urdu University's (MANUU) competent authority has accorded approval for reopening the university in a phased manner in compliance with the guidelines issued by UGC. According to Prof. Syed Alim Ashraf, Dean Students



Welfare, in the first phase, research scholars of the School of Sciences and School of Technology from Semester III onwards are being permitted to report to the university from January 27, 2021. MANUU is conducting running academic activities online right from the announcement of lockdown and has also successfully conducted two term end examinations in online mode.

Army fulfils Nyorah Patra's dream, makes her day

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Unlike other children who want to play with dolls in their own fantasy world, the seven-and-a-half-year-old Nyorah Patra dabs around with paintings like her mother and spends time listening to music.

She decided to spend time with the soldiers of Indian Army on the Army Day celebrated on Friday.

She developed interest in Armed Forces when she watched the Republic Day Parade from her home in Hyderabad last year. Her curiosity further increased whenever her parents narrated the stories of sacrifices of brave soldiers.

A soldier's life always inspiring for many and Nyorah Patra was no different.

She was awestruck to watch the grandeur of the event and especially the exhibit of Indian Armed Forces.

By the time the bravery medals were presented, her



Nyorah Patra participating in Army Day celebrations in Secunderabad on Friday.

parents narrated the roles and responsibilities of the soldiers and sacrifices they made for the nation.

While narrating the tales, her father pulled out a few videos from social media and explained the toughest conditions in which soldiers dis-

charge their duties.

Nyorah was so much connected to the selfless contribution of the soldiers that she fancied the uniform and wanted to see herself in the attire.

She wanted to meet the Army in person and started drawing a lot of paintings on

the same theme.

Looking at her enthusiasm, her parents wrote to the Prime Minister seeking permission to allow her to attend the celebration s of either Independence Day or Republic Day.

Much to their surprise, PMO

Nyorah developed interest in Armed Forces when she watched the Republic Day Parade from her home in Hyderabad last year.

attending Army Day and Army Veteran's Day celebration.

She was escorted by an officer of Colonel's rank and two soldiers from her home to Veerula Sainik Smarak where Major General RK Singh, General Officer Commanding, Telangana and Andhra Sub Area, and the veterans graciously received her like a queen. She coyly in her own small way thanked them as they interacted with her and took photos with her which made her day.

Nyorah lives with her parents Samir Patra and Varsha Patra who returned to India after a long-stay abroad only to raise her in India. They have extreme admiration for the Armed Forces.

They believe that the experience of being invited to attend the Army Day and Veteran's Day celebration will leave a very strong impression in Nyorah's heart and mind. They sincerely hope that she grows up to see herself as a part of it.

Expedite land mutations, says Collector

PNS ■ MEDAK

District Collector P Venkata Rami Reddy has underlined the need for elected people's representatives, officials and beneficiaries explaining the significance of the Dharani website and how transparently it conducts the transactions. He asked the revenue officials of Siddipet and Medak districts to clear the applications received for mutation of lands with jet speed.

Giving directions to Siddipet and Medak districts additional collectors, RDOs and tahsildars on mutations addressing them through tele-conference mode on Friday, he said that over 2,869 applications, barring

three, from Siddipet and Medak districts seeking mutation of lands have been cleared. Acting on the directive of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, all applications received on his computer have been cleared.

As and when the applications have been cleared, SMSes have been sent to the mobile phones of concerned landowners. They have been asked to immediately book slots in the MRO office and get mutation orders from the tahsildar and get the data in the Dharani website updated.

He wanted tahsildars to verify the lands whether the lands in question are government lands or lands acquired for the



Medak District Collector P Venkata Rami Reddy

public purpose or prohibited lands or assigned lands as per the government rules, the tahsildars should complete the



process in five minutes. He wanted the tahsildars to speak to farmers and ensure that they book slots. The target is to complete over 10,000 mutations in two months and update the information on the Dharani website. The cases before the tribunals in the two districts would be sent to tahsildars in the districts. He wanted them to pay special attention to them and resolve them. He said that the CM intro-

Giving directions to Siddipet and Medak districts additional collectors, RDOs and tahsildars on mutations addressing them through tele-conference mode

duced the new system for the benefit of farmers. The district administration and field level officials have a responsibility on their shoulders to take Dharani close to the people. Overcoming the initial hiccups, the website will yield good results by becoming user friendly. He asked the revenue officials to treat farmers, who booked slots for registration or mutations should be treated as guests. Welcoming them with a broad

smile, they should be sensitised on the necessity and benefits of the Dharani websites.

Kishan Reddy for revamp of education

PNS ■ NAGAR KURNOOL

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs G Kishan Reddy has said that the education system in the country needs to be revamped in line with the changing times. He said that corporate schools are fleecing the parents demanding more fees by giving wide publicity to their ranks. He felt the need to do away with that system, which encourages the ranking system. He exhorted everyone to



work for the strengthening of the education system. "We have five million dreams, but Corona has wiped out our dreams," he opined. "We should feel proud as the countries across the world have shown interest to buy our Covid vaccine. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is determined to provide to all the people across the country. In the first phase, which will commence on Saturday, the Corona Warriors will be administered the vaccine," he said.

'Encourage sports among children'



Minister for BC Welfare and Civil Supplies Gangula Kamalakar in action at the closing ceremony Karimnagar Cricket Champions League (KCL) at the Perumandla Swamy Temple Grounds

PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR

Minister for BC Welfare and Civil Supplies Gangula Kamalakar said that sports bring physical endurance as well as mental well-being. He was the chief guest at the closing ceremony of Karimnagar Cricket Champions League (KCL) at the Perumandla Swamy Temple Grounds.

One should have physical fitness, said the minister and suggested playing sports and games into a habit in order to stay fit. He said that if parents

focus on fitness, their children will get the same fitness. He recalled that the interest in sports among children has decreased with the advent of corporate schools.

The minister congratulated Uppu Suresh for organising the cricket tournament. The trophy was handed over to the winners of the cricket competitions. Mayor Y Sunil Rao, deputy mayor Challa Swaruparani- Harishankar, Olympic Association president Mahipal and corporators were present.

Police Act in force in Sangareddy from Jan 15



CP Joel Davis

PNS ■ SANGAREDDY

Police Act will be in force within under the Siddipet Police Commissionerate limits from January 15 to 31, disclosed Commissioner of Police Joel Davis.

He said that dharnas, rallies, roadblocks and meetings should not be organised and the permission of the police officers should be sought before conducting aforesaid activities. "We will take legal action against those who force and threaten to close companies and offices for various reasons in the name of bandhs." He suggested that people from all walks of life should cooperate with the police in their efforts to maintain law and order.

SWACHH SURVEKSHAN

Harish Rao calls upon people to ensure top ranking for Siddipet

PNS ■ SIDDIPET

People should take part in a clean survey to spread the fame of Siddipet all over the country, said Minister for Finance Harish Rao. He participated in the Kite Festival organised as part of the Swachh Survey and Sankranti festival on the Siddipet Degree College grounds on Thursday.

He called upon the citizens, officials and elected representatives to put a collective effort to ensure Siddipet tops Swachh Survekshan rankings in 2021.

Speaking on the occasion, the minister extended Sankranti greetings to people. "The Kite Festival is supposed to take place in big cities, but we are very happy to host this event in Siddipet. The Kite Festival is being organised as a testament to the inspiration that enhances our Siddipet unity in Swachh Survey and our reputation in the country. Kites give a great message that the sky is the limit!"



Minister for Finance Harish Rao flying a kite as part of Kite Festival in Siddipet



"People of Siddipet town can lodge their complaints through app and we want every citizen of the town to participate in the Swachh survey voting, which is being conducted by the Central government in municipal towns across the country and bring laurels to Siddipet town. One should visit http://swachhsurvekshan2021.org/Citizen_Feedback or dial 1969 to give positive feedback, or to take part in a clean survey via the vote for your city SS2021 VoteForYourCity App.

To this end, as part of the Kite Festival, the minister witnessed the kite flying of the representatives of various clubs from across the country. Furthermore, the minister,

along with Municipal chairman Rajanarsu, commissioner Ramanachari, municipal councilors from all wards, flew kites. Later, the minister handed over mementos to the representatives of the Mangalore Kite Club, Vadodara Kite Club-Vadodara, Duddh Bhallapur-Bengaluru, Jim Kite Club, Indian Kite Club and Kohinoor Kite Club-Hyderabad.

Covid vaccination launch in Warangal

PNS ■ WARANGAL RURAL

The government will officially launch the Covid-19 vaccine on Friday, said Warangal Rural District Medical Officer of Health Madhusudan. He said that vaccination should not exceed 30 per cent in local government community hospitals. Similarly, the first will be administered to the medical staff. District Collector Haritha issued directives while speaking in a teleconference on the need to adhere to social distance and social responsibility in the vaccination distribution programme. It was stated that the public representatives and the people should cooperate and make the program a success without any difficulty.



GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA									
REVENUE (LAND ACQUISITION) DEPARTMENT FORM-VII PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION									
Under Section 11 (1) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition Act 2013 (Central Act 20/2013) and under state rule 19 (1)									
Special Collector, Land Acquisition, Adilabad district									
Collector's File No G1/2462/2017 Date: 03-01-2021									
RDO's File No. B/701/2017 Date: 11-12-2020									
The Government of Telangana District Collector, Adilabad has decided to acquire Acre 45.25 guntas of land situated in Ponna village of Srikonda mandal of Adilabad district for construction of a tank/canal under the Mission Kakatiya Phase-IV.									
As per Section (2) of the central Act 20/2013 and by an order GO Ms No.32 of 18/CAD (LLR & RA2) (25 of such tanks) dated 11-07-2018, as per the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition Act 2013 and as per the Chapter II and III of Act 21/2017 the social impact report is not necessary. Therefore a notification has been issued to acquire lands mentioned in the following annexure. Therefore, a preliminary notification has been issued to acquire Ac. 45.25 guntas of land in Ponna village of Srikonda mandal of Adilabad district from those whose names have been mentioned in the table below.									
SCHEDULE									
Village: Ponna Mandal, Srikonda District, Adilabad									
Sl. No.	Area	Regd. No.	Regd. No.	Regd. No.	Regd. No.	Regd. No.	Regd. No.	Regd. No.	Regd. No.
1	56/2	6/25	Regd. No. 0.30	Srinivas Reddy S/o Ganganna	Overs	1 Borewell			
2	56/2	56/2	Regd. No. 2.80	Musli Prabhakar S/o Gopal	Overs	Nil			
3	56/2	56/2	Regd. No. 0.05	Musli Venkatesh S/o Venkatesh	Overs	Nil			
4	56/1/1		Regd. No. 1.37	Musli Venkatesh S/o Venkatesh	Overs	Nil			
5	56/1/1		Regd. No. 2.08	Musli Venkatesh S/o Venkatesh	Overs	1 Borewell			
6	57/1/1	7.06	Regd. No. 2.16	Chouhan Sanyal S/o Madhav Rao	Overs	Nil			
7	57/1/2		Regd. No. 0.25	Kandire Bharati S/o Maruti	Overs	Nil			
8	57/1		Regd. No. 2.28	Pandhara Sai Kiran S/o Maruti	Overs	2 Borewells			
9	57/1/2		Regd. No. 1.17	Musli Venkatesh S/o Venkatesh	Overs	Nil			
10	58/2	58/2	Regd. No. 1.08	Srinivas Rao S/o Karol Rao S/o Chaital Rao	Overs	Nil			
11	58/2	58/2	Regd. No. 0.35	Pandhara Sai Kiran S/o Maruti	Overs	Nil			
12	58/2	5.31	Regd. No. 0.16	Musli Venkatesh S/o Venkatesh	Overs	Nil			
13	58/2	58/2	Regd. No. 2.80	Jagade Sani S/o Maruti	Overs	2 Borewells			
14	58/2	58/2	Regd. No. 0.35	Engole Gangappa S/o Madhav Rao	Overs	2 Tank Trees			
15	58/4	80	Regd. No. 0.32	Engole Sani S/o Maruti	Overs	Nil			
16	51/2	13.14	Regd. No. 1.05	Shah Noore Anand Rao S/o Rama Rao	Overs	1 Borewell			
17	51/2	51/2	Regd. No. 0.15	Engole Sai Kiran S/o Maruti	Overs	Nil			
Total Area 45.25 45.25									
The notification has been issued under Section 11 (1) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition Act 2013 for information of all. Rules governing the social impact under Chapter IV and Chapter VIII do not apply to acquire land for construction of tank/canal in Ponna village of Srikonda mandal. A plan of the land may be inspected in the office of the Special Land Acquisition Officer and the Revenue Divisional Officer during working hours on any working day. Under section 11(4) of the Act, no person shall make any transaction or cause any transaction of land i.e. sale/purchase, etc., or create any encumbrance on such land from the date of publication of such notification without prior approval of the Collector. Objections to the acquisition if any, and claims from all the persons interested affected by the acquisition, may be filed by the person interested in the land within 90 (ninety) days from the date of publication of this notification as provided under Section 15 of the Act before the Land Acquisition Officer.									
			Sd/-	Sd/-	Sd/-				
			Mandal Revenue Officer	Additional Collector	District Collector				
			And Land Acquisition Officer	Adilabad	Adilabad				
DIPR R.O. No: 1133/LA/PP/Adv/Pub/2020-21									

Arrangements in place for Covid vaccine launch in Sangareddy

A CHANDRASHEKHAR RAO ■ SANGAREDDY

The medical health employees are gearing up for the launch of the Covid vaccine on Saturday across the district. In the wake of the decision to distribute the vaccine across the country on the same day, the district medical health officials have made elaborate arrangements for the vaccination to be administered at several centres in Medak, Siddipet and Sangareddy districts.

The first vaccine will be distributed on Saturday on the Covid portal to accommodate already registered medical and health officials, paramedics, private doctors and staff of primary and urban health centres.

The vaccine will be distributed for four days in the first phase i.e. on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, with the medical staff being vaccinated on the first day on Saturday, and the next day being Sunday, vaccination will not be administered. One hundred will be vaccinated every day from 9 am to 4 pm.

The vaccine will not be distributed during the holidays. The second dose should be given 28 days after the first vac-



Medical personnel storing vaccine at a cold storage in Siddipet on Friday

ination. Vaccination is carried out under the supervision of a physician for half an hour.

The Dugal Primary Health Centre in Sangareddy district, Patancheru, Zaheerabad Area Hospital, MNR Medical College in Sangareddy, Balaji Medicare Hospital and Indranagar UPHC are administering the Corona vaccine. In all, 40 people will be vaccinated at each centre.

Collector M Hanumantha Rao said the vaccination would be administered on a priority basis as per the government guidelines. About 36 centres have been selected in Siddipet district and 7,751 people will be vaccinated in the first phase. On the first day, over 90 peo-

ple will be administered the vaccine.

Minister Harish Rao will inaugurate the vaccination drive on Saturday in Siddipet. Vaccination will be administered at Siddipet, Gajwad Area Hospitals, Nangunur PHC.

In Medak district, 4,221 people will be vaccinated on the first day at Medak, Narsapur Area Hospital. Officials said 24 centres have been set up across the district. Over 790 doses of vaccine are available in the first phase, said DMHO Dr Venkateshwara Rao.

Manohar, DMHO Siddipet, said that 36 centres have been set up in the district. Cold storages have been set up for vaccination

Traditional crops festival launched



Women take part in traditional crops festival at Sansalapur village in Zaheerabad mandal on Friday

PNS ■ ZAHEERABAD

The annual festival of traditional crops was launched at Sansalapur village in Zaheerabad mandal on Makar Sankranti under the aegis of the Deccan Development Society (DDS).

The 21st annual old crops festival, to highlight the importance of consumption of millets, was launched at Sansalapur by taking out a procession of bullock-carts.

The National Institute of Health Institute of Plant Management representative Dr RP Chandrasekhar, Village Resource Centre for Women representative Dr Rukmini Rao, National Institute of Micro representative G Swarupa, Nyalakal MPP Anjamma and others graced the occasion. Earlier, the lamp was lighted to mark the

commencement of the festival and the procession of the bullock carts. The decorated bullock-carts with various grains took part in the procession. Each cart contained about 100 varieties of grains.

Dr RP Chandrasekhar addressing the gathering expressed concern over farmers migrating to towns and cities. The agriculture sector is in severe distress. Food security, nutritional security and climate change have become major problems nowadays. Hybrid seeds replaced the traditional crops. As a result, people are not getting quality food, he pointed out.

However, women's farmers' groups of the DDS have been cultivating millets and set an example for the whole country to follow, he said.

'Call 1066 for medical emergency on ORR'

PNS ■ MEDCHAL

The government appealed to the people to call 1066 in case of any medical emergency on the outer ring road (ORR). In all, 10 state-of-the-art fully equipped advance ambulances are ready to provide medical services in case of emergencies while another 10 trauma care centres are operational round-the-clock.

Urban Development Secretary Arvind Kumar, tweeted, "Anyone, who has noticed an accident for immediate medical care on the ORR should dial 1066 for medical assistance to the victims to save their lives".

In road accidents and other emergencies on ORR, the Hyderabad Metropolitan



Development Authority introduced 10 trauma care centres across 158 km of the ORR. These trauma centres will be fully equipped with medical resources and paramedical staff for support. They are the lifesaving link between the accident spot and

medical emergency services. In case of serious emergencies, telemedicine will be used by paramedical staff to call the doctor and take their support and stabilising the accident victims. This is an initiative by the HMDA and in association with Apollo

Urban Development Secretary Arvind Kumar, tweeted, "Anyone, who has noticed an accident for immediate medical care on the ORR should dial 1066 for medical assistance to the victims to save their lives"

Hospitals and 10 advanced life support ambulances equipped with all critical care resources will be covering the ORR. Wherever the accident occurs across the ORR, as soon as the call is received on 1066, the ambulance will reach the accident spot and immediately take the victims to the nearest trauma care Centre. During the process, the victims

will be given first aid by medical staff. In crucial life-threatening conditions, this is the first time when such a trauma care centre facility is made available for an expressway in the country by the HMDA.

These centres are set up to prevent deaths from accidents and to promptly help the affected people.

EC gives nod to use its data only during Covid vaccination drive

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission will extend "full assistance" to the government in identifying targeted beneficiaries at the polling station level for the Covid vaccination drive, but wants health authorities to delete the data once the inoculation exercise is over, sources privy to the development said on Friday.

On December 31 last year, Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla wrote to Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora requesting the commission's help in identifying people above 50 years of age at the polling station level, the sources said. On the issue of data security, the home secretary wrote that the government is complying with the current best practices for ensuring cyber security. He has assured the poll panel that the data will be used only for the purpose of vaccination, the sources said.

The EC, after detailed deliberations, wrote back to the home secretary on January 4, saying it has decided to render "full assistance" in the vaccination drive. But asked the government to ensure that the data is strictly used for the limited purpose for which it has been sought, the sources said.

The commission also said that the data should be deleted by health authorities once the vaccination exercise concludes, they said.

Some senior EC officials will be in touch with nodal officers of the Union home ministry and

the Union health ministry to settle day-to-day issues, the sources said. Last month, officials of the Union health ministry and the Niti Aayog had met the EC top brass seeking their help in the distribution of Covid vaccine given the poll panel's robust network at the booth level.

The letter by the home secretary is a follow up to the meeting, the sources said.

According to guidelines for the Covid vaccination drive, the latest electoral roll for Lok Sabha and assembly elections will be used to identify the pri-



Delhi geared up for vaccine roll-out at 81 centres

New Delhi: The national capital is all set for the roll-out of the Covid vaccination exercise on Saturday at 81 centres with healthcare workers who have been in the forefront of the fight against the pandemic to be given the shots first.

The inoculation drive will be kicked off from the state-run LNJP Hospital with a simple ceremony in the presence of Chief Minister Kejriwal and Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain.

The 81 sites include six central government facilities -- AIIMS, Safdarjung Hospital, RML Hospital, Kalawati Saran Children Hospital and two ESI hospitals.

The rest 75 centres, spanning all 11 districts of Delhi, include Delhi government-run facilities such as LNJP Hospital, GTB Hospital, Rajiv Gandhi Super Speciality Hospital, DDU Hospital, BSA Hospital, Delhi State Cancer Institute, ILBS Hospital, and private facilities such as Max Hospital, Fortis Hospital, Apollo Hospital and Sir Ganga Ram Hospital.

Goa: 700 healthcare workers to get vaccine today

Panaji: As many as 700 healthcare worker will be administered the COVID-19 vaccine in Goa on the first day of the vaccination drive on January 16, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said on Friday. Vaccination will initially take place at seven centres, including two private facilities in the state, the chief minister said. At least 100 healthcare workers each will be inoculated at seven centres on the first day of the programme, he said. Apart from five government-run facilities, the drive will also be carried out at Manipal Hospital and Healthway Hospital, both located near Panaji, a senior health department official said. The dean of Goa Medical College and Hospital Dr Shivanand Bandekar said a special facility has been set up at the GMCH by converting an examination hall-cum-auditorium into a vaccination centre. Around 5,000-odd healthcare workers attached to the GMCH will be vaccinated in the first phase, Bandekar said, adding that the cleaning staff who work at the hospital's COVID-19 ward will be first to get vaccinated.



Jallikattu begins at TN's Palamaneru

PNS ■ MADURAI

Bulls and men tried to get the better of each other as the bull taming sport 'Jallikattu' began at the famed Palamedu here on Friday.

A test of grit was on full display with the animals fiercely trying to get past the waiting men while the tamers attempted to get on to their humps to emerge victorious.

The animals were let out one after the other from 'Vadivasal', a narrow entrance to the sporting arena after announcements on the bull, like who owned it and so on. As hundreds of spectators cheered from the gallery, over 300 bulls and men have taken part in the sport so far amid tight security and a number of people, which includes participants, sustained injuries.

Organisers repeatedly directed enthusiastic tamers through the public address system to ensure that only one of them took on the bull. The bull owners were given

prizes if their animals outmanoeuvred the waiting men and the participants were rewarded if they managed to hang from the hump of the bulls for a while.

Till now, 100 plus bulls and men -with some men managing to dominate four to five bulls one after the other- have been declared winners and the prizes on offer include a range of things including bicycles, utensils and chairs.

Elaborate preparations preceded the event, which coincides with 'Mattu Pongal' celebrations Monday to honour cattle that help farming. Men seeking to dominate the bulls were tested for coronavirus and animals were examined by veterinarians.

The opening 'Jallikattu' of the Pongal season was held at Avaniapuram here on Thursday.

It was witnessed by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and DMK youth wing secretary Udhayanidhi Stalin and others.

INDIA CORNER

Night curfew to continue for 15 more days in four Gujarat cities

Even as fresh cases of coronavirus are on decline in Gujarat, Chief Minister Vijay Rupani on Friday asserted that night curfew will remain in place in four major cities of the state for the next 15 days as a precautionary measure. While urging people to be and cooperate with the authorities for some more days, Rupani said the viral infection has come under control due to the night curfew imposed in November, 2020 in Ahmedabad, Surat, Vadodara and Rajkot. "The night curfew after 10 pm will continue for 15 more days in all four cities. There will be no relaxation for now, as there is a drastic decrease in new cases (because of curfew). People need to have patience and cooperate with the authorities," he told reporters in Jamnagar. A decision about lifting the curfew will be taken at an appropriate juncture, he said.



Celebrated biker dies after crashing into camel in Jaisalmer

King Richard Srinivasan, a celebrated biker from Bengaluru, died after his motorcycle crashed into a camel in Rajasthan's Jaisalmer district, police said on Friday. The incident took place in Fatehgarh sub-division on Wednesday night when Srinivasan along with his three friends was headed to Jaisalmer, they said. A camel suddenly came in front of Srinivasan's motorcycle. He sustained head injuries in the accident and succumbed on Wednesday night. The body was handed over to his family members after a post-mortem examination on Thursday, said Head Constable, Sangarh police station, Sonaram Bhati.



Nobody is bigger than law, not even a minister: Deshmukh

Nobody is bigger than the law and it will not discriminate against anyone in Maharashtra, Home Minister Anil Deshmukh said on Friday, in comments coming in the backdrop of his cabinet colleague Dhananjay Munde facing rape allegations. Munde, the Social Justice Minister, has been accused of rape by a Mumbai-based woman. The 45-year-old NCP leader has denied the charges and termed them as a blackmail attempt. Nobody is bigger than the law, not even a minister. The law will not discriminate against anyone in Maharashtra. "Our police will probe the matter properly and take proper action against whoever is guilty. The legal process is on, Deshmukh said.



EAM Jaishankar holds talks with Nepalese counterpart Gyawali

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Friday held talks with his Nepalese counterpart Pradeep Kumar Gyawali with a focus on various key aspects of the bilateral relations. The talks are taking place under the framework of the Indo-Nepal joint commission meeting (JCM), officials said. Gyawali arrived here on Thursday on a three-day visit. He is the first senior political leader from Nepal to visit India after the ties between the two countries came under strain following a border row.



Goa govt decides to shift IIT project



PNS ■ PANAJI

Bowing to public pressure, the Goa government on Friday announced that the proposed IIT campus at Shel Melaulim village in Sattari taluka will be shifted to another part of the state.

The project has met with severe opposition from locals, who staged a large-scale protest at the village, insisting that they will not part with their land for the campus.

Chief Minister Pramod Sawant held a meeting with the sarpanches and Zilla Panchayat members from Sattari taluka at his official residence on Thursday evening in presence of state Health Minister and Valpoi MLA Vishwajit Rane.

Speaking to reporters, the chief minister said the state government has decided to shift the project out of Sattari due to the constant opposition from locals.

"We respect the sentiments

of people, which is why we have decided to shift the project out of Sattari," he said, adding that the government is yet to decide on an alternative site.

The project was planned from the perspective of development, but the state government could not convince locals, he said.

Earlier this week, Rane had appealed to the chief minister to shift the project considering the opposition to it and had urged him to withdraw cases registered against protestors.

At least 12 policemen and several villagers were injured when both groups clashed in the forest area near Shel-Melaulim village last week. Sawant said that the police will review the cases filed against protestors.

"There are requests to withdraw the cases filed against protestors. There is a process which needs to be followed. We are reviewing the cases," he said.

Three civil defence volunteers held for fraud

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Three civil defence volunteers have been arrested for allegedly issuing fake COVID-19 challans and collecting the penalty amount, police said on Friday. The accused -- Sunny (19), Yashwant Rathi (21) and Lucky (20) -- were posted in the office of SDM (New Delhi) in Jamnagar House, they said.

They mostly issued fake challans to people visiting the Talkatora Garden, they said.

The matter came to notice on December 31, when a resident of Shakarpur was issued a fake chal-



lan by the accused for not wearing masks when he was sitting inside the Talkatora Garden with his friend, police said. In his complaint, the victim alleged that the three volunteers came in Khakhi uniform and told him

that they were posted in the office of SDM, New Delhi.

They told us that since we had violated COVID-19 guidelines by not wearing face masks, challans of Rs 2,000 each will be issued, the victim alleged.

The complainant did not have cash so he paid them via Paytm, police said. However, the complainant got suspicious and approached the police.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (New Delhi) Eish Singhal said, "We conducted a detailed inquiry and sought details of the Paytm beneficiary. We got to know that the mobile number was registered in the name of one civil defence employee named Sunny." The alleged challan was found not issued from the SDM office and was fake and forged, he said, adding that the three civil defence volunteers were then arrested.

Man held for duping 70 investors

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A 43-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly duping over 70 people of Rs 3 crore on the pretext of allotting them the kiosks on lease in a mall, police said on Friday. The accused identified as Shashank Jain, of Gurgaon, was arrested on Wednesday, they said.

Two more accused, Labsang Tenzing Bhutia and Gaurav Mittal were arrested earlier, police said. The complainants, all members of Rohini Monastery Market Association, alleged that Mittal and others told them that their firm Red Reality Infratech Pvt Ltd had taken an area of 9,607 square feet at City Centre in Rohini on lease for five years, police said.

India's new Covid cases in last 7 days among lowest in world

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India recorded 87 new Covid cases per million population in the last seven days which is one of the lowest in the world when compared with countries like the US, the UK, Russia, Germany, Brazil, France and Italy, the Union Health Ministry said on Friday.

It further said that only one new death per million population was reported in India in this period. "With a case fatality rate of 1.44 per cent, COVID-19 deaths per million population in India are one of the lowest in the world," the ministry underscored.

India's total COVID-19 active caseload continues to manifest a sustained down-



ward movement and has dropped to 2.13 lakh comprising just 2.03 per cent of the country's total infections, it said. The daily new cases added to the country's COVID-19 numbers have been below 20K in the recent

days, it said.

The number of daily new cases registered in a span of 24 hours is 15,590 while 15,975 cases have recovered and discharged during the same period. "New cases per million population in India in the last seven days are 87. It is one of the lowest in the world. The number is significantly low when compared with countries like Russia, Germany, Brazil, France, Italy, USA and UK," the ministry highlighted.

The total recovered cases stand at 10,162,738. "The gap between COVID-19 recoveries and active cases is steadily increasing and has crossed 99 lakh and currently stands at 99,49,711," the ministry underlined.

In a first, drone operations feature at Army Day parade

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Drones of the Indian Army carried out mock kamikaze attacks and first-aid delivery exercises as the service showcased its latest assets during the Army Day parade held at the Cariappa ground here on Friday.

This is the first time drones featured at the parade that also had detachments of the upgraded anti-aircraft weapon system Schilka, BrahMos missile system, infantry fighting vehicle BMP-2, T-72 bridge laying tanks and multi-rocket launcher system Pinaka.

Army Chief Gen M M Naravane conferred gallantry awards and unit citations at the event, which was also attended by Air Chief Marshal R K S Bhaduria, Navy Chief Admiral Karambir Singh and Chief of Defence Staff Gen Bipin Rawat.



The Indian Army said it carried out a live demonstration of "drone swarming capability" using 75 indigenously designed and developed drones, which executed an

array of artificial intelligence (AI) enabled simulated offensive missions and close support tasks, at the event.

"This demonstration is a recognition of the Indian

Army's steady embrace of emerging and disruptive technologies to transform itself from a manpower-intensive to a technology enabled force to meet future security chal-

Army demonstrated drone swarming capability using 75 indigenously developed drones, which executed an array of AI enabled simulated offensive missions and close support tasks

lenges," it said in a statement.

Around 75 drones of the Indian Army carried multiple mock operations including kamikaze attacks, first-aid delivery and parachute payload delivery exercises at the event.

The first detachment of the parade was of the upgraded anti-aircraft weapon system Schilka and it was commanded by Captain Preeti Chaudhary of the 140 AD reg-

iment (self-propelled). Marching contingents of the Jammu and Kashmir Rifles, the Mahar Regiment, the Garhwal Regiment and the Jat Regiment also participated in the parade.

Thirteen Army officers of the Northern Command, eight officers of the Eastern Command, one officer each of the Southern Command and the Central Command received unit citations from the Army chief, while 15 Army personnel were awarded the Sena Medal.

Army Day is celebrated on January 15 every year in recognition of Field Marshal K M Cariappa's taking over as the first Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army from Sir Francis Butcher, the last British Commander in 1949.

It is celebrated in the national capital, as well as in all the six Army Command Headquarters.

Privacy matters

You wouldn't want anyone else seeing what you do online, would you? But they already do



WhatsApp's new privacy policy is in essence providing Facebook a way to monetise messages on the messaging app. At one level, it makes sense since users of the messaging app are getting a free service, and Facebook's algorithms go through your messages just like Google's algorithms go through every email you send and receive on Gmail. And most of us do use Google's service for email and the tech giant's search for everything and we post about our lives on Facebook and Twitter, so to suddenly cry 'wolf' about the new privacy policy does little but to expose our hypocrisy. Could Facebook and WhatsApp have handled it any better? Yes, they should have; many Indians will migrate

to other messaging platforms and apps over the coming weeks and some of them, at least for now, assure privacy. But with applications like Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp, there is something called the 'network' effect; it is difficult to use a service that few of your friends and relatives use, so while many people will download Signal and maybe even use it for some discussions that they'd rather nobody else sees, WhatsApp is unlikely to suffer much in the long term other than a bruised ego. It is more than likely that many groups, after discussing the new privacy policy threadbare with huge doses of misinformation, have gone back to their regularly scheduled "Good Morning" and "Good Evening" messages.

At a level, this comes down to our understanding of privacy as a people. In such a crowded country, the concept of personal privacy as understood in the western world does not simply exist. If one is really concerned about privacy, they should probably use better hardware devices, the iPhone for example, instead of Chinese-brand Android devices and pay for better messaging and email services. There has to be a realisation that there is a price for 'free services' because, as the saying goes, "You can't have your cake and eat it too". There is a cost to privacy when it comes to technology and when notions of personal privacy are so limited to begin with, teaching Indians about the need to keep things private is a difficult task. In many western countries, for example, it is a given that without the permission of a guardian, the pictures of children cannot be published; in India we do not think twice before doing such a thing. Remember, Indian cricket player Virat Kohli and his actor wife Anushka — among the most photographed couples in the country — had to very recently make an appeal to the paparazzi to refrain from taking pictures of their newborn daughter. The simple issue was the pesky photographers who often cross the fine line between the demands of the "profession" and intrusion of privacy. On the other hand, citing the case of the western world, is the instance of Hollywood actor George Clooney, who sued a member of the paparazzi brigade and his publication for climbing over the walls of the actor's villa and clicking photos of his child. Privacy is a luxury in a crowded nation and if we want it, we have to pay for it, such as living in a large house with a boundary wall. If we want luxury on the internet, we have to be willing to pay!

Anatomy of Uttarayana

Makar Sankranti is an event of the sidereal solar calendar while Uttarayana is a matter of tropical solar reckoning



PRIYADARSHI DUTTA

Makar Sankranti marks the Sun's entry into Makar *raashi*, identified with the sign of Capricorn. The reference here is merely to the apparent motion of the Sun resulting from Earth's yearly revolution. Annually, there would be a dozen such Sankrantis, because of the Sun's transit across 12 signs of the celestial zodiac. No other Sankranti enjoys religious significance, though each of them marks the beginning of a new month in the sidereal solar calendar. In India, several States like Tripura, Assam, West Bengal, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Punjab, Haryana and so on follow a sidereal solar calendar. Several other States like Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh-Telangana in addition to the Hindi-speaking belt follow the luni-solar calendar.

In the luni-solar calendar, the months are based upon a lunar cycle of 29½ days, resulting in a year length of 354 days. Therefore, it has to be adjusted against the solar year by insertion of intercalary month (*Adhimasa*) every three years. The luni-solar calendar, besides being expressly followed in several parts of India, is also implicit to the solar calendar because of its religious significance. All Hindu religious festivals including *vrats*, *parvas* and most *jayantis* are determined as per the 354-day lunar calendar. This results in a drift of dates for religious festivities and austerities (within a bracket of 25 days) *vis-a-vis* the Gregorian calendar.

Why is Makar Sankranti celebrated with such great fanfare even in parts of India where the writ of solar calendar does not run? This is due to a belief that Makar Sankranti marks Uttarayana (literally meaning sun turning north). Uttarayana is a function of a tropical solar calendar like the Gregorian calendar. Tropical calendar has zero connection with zodiac background. It stands on four pillars — Vernal Equinox (March 21), Summer Solstice (June 21), Autumn Equinox (September 21) and Winter Solstice (December 21). In the two equinoxes, the day and night are of equal length all over the world. In June solstice, the day is longest across the northern hemisphere, shortest in the southern. In December solstice, the day is shortest in the northern hemisphere and longest in the southern. This interplay of 'light and shadow' is due to the fact that the axis of Earth's rotation is inclined to the plane of Earth's revolution at 23.5°. As a



result, different zones of the globe receive direct light whereas others pass into shadow. This, in the extreme, results in six months of day and six months of night between one equinox to the other in alternating polar zones — the Arctic and Antarctic.

In winter, the sun travels low across the sky in the northern hemisphere. On December 21, the declination is the least and the Sun is directly overhead the Tropic of Capricorn (23.5° S) at the local noon. The trend is, however, reversed on the morning of Solstice. The Sun, figuratively speaking, turns northwards. Thus, as per one belief, December 22 should be the real Uttarayana. A common factor, coincidental at first sight, is the name Capricorn. On December 21, the Sun is overhead the Tropic of Capricorn, an imaginary line; and on January 14 it enters the Sign of Capricorn. However, we realise that it is more than mere coincidence when the same thing is repeated in the summer. While on June 21 the Sun is directly overhead at the Tropic of Cancer, it enters the Sign of Cancer on July 16. The gap is 24 days.

Now, 24 days seems to be the new common factor. What explains this 24 days' time lag that links the name of a tropic (an imaginary line) with a constellation? The secret might lie in the factor called "precession of equinoxes" or "axial precession" called *ayana-chalan* in Sanskrit. The axis of the Earth is not exactly stable but describes a conical motion. This motion, similar to the wobble of a spinning top, results from the Sun's

rotation, goes round the entire zodiac. The amount of precession is 50" (less than 1/60th of one degree, when one segment of zodiac is of 30 degrees). We get the seasons from the Sun, not from the zodiacal background. Thus, measuring seasons from the zodiac signs by ignoring the effect of precession (the Nirayana calendar) is not the best way. The sidereal or Nirayana year (365 d 06 hrs 09 m 10 s) is 21 minutes longer than tropical year (365 d 05 h 48 m 46 s). A sidereal year, therefore, would disengage from the seasons twice as fast as Julian calendar (which assumed year length to be flat 365 d and 6 hrs) did before being reformed by Pope Gregorian XIII in 1582. "The difference between the sidereal and the tropical year is 20.4 minutes," says Bal Gangadhar Tilak, "which causes the seasons to fall back nearly one lunar month in about 2,000 years, if the sidereal solar year is to be taken as the standard of measurement" (*The Orion*, P.19). This would explain the mystery of the lost 24 days. Possibly two millennia ago, the Sun went overhead in the southernmost tropic when it entered the sign of Capricorn. In the ancient times, Uttarayana and Sun's entry into Capricorn would have coincided. That is no longer true. Tilak (1856-1920), however, hinted at a different possibility on Uttarayana. Known as a tough politician, he was also a noted Sanskrit scholar who found time to delve deep into Hindu astronomy to reconstruct Vedic history. It is reflect-

ed in his books like *The Orion*, or, *Researches Into The Antiquity of the Vedas* (1893) and *Arctic Home in the Vedas* (1903). In his book, viz., *The Orion*, the author says that Uttarayana is susceptible to two meanings. Tilak states: "It might mean 'turning towards the north from the southernmost point' or it may indicate 'the passage of the Sun into the northern hemisphere, i.e. to the north of the equator'. If we adopt the first meaning, Uttarayana and the year must be held to commence from the winter solstice while, if the second interpretation is correct, Uttarayana and the year must have commenced with the vernal equinox." Citing the *Rig Veda*, Tilak says: "The facts that the central day of annual *satra* was called *vishuvan*, the Vasant or spring was considered the first of the seasons and the *agrayaneshtis* or the half-year sacrifices were required to be performed every Vasant (Spring) and Sharad (autumn) clearly show that the second interpretation is more likely to be correct (*The Orion*, P.22)."

Tilak, thus, maintained that Uttarayana was the vernal equinox (March 21). He further believed that the six-month period from vernal equinox to autumn equinox, when the Sun moves along the northern latitude, is *Devayana* (way of the gods) in the *Rig Veda* and from autumn equinox to vernal equinox *Pitriyana* (way of the dead ancestors) as mentioned in the *Rig Veda*.

(The writer is an author and independent researcher. The opinions expressed are personal.)

Virus shadow over R-Day

No chief guest at this year's parade; the number of attendees as well as pageantry scaled down, too



The devastating Coronavirus pandemic has upended all our lives and nothing is the same again. Not the global economy, nor the way we socialise, nor the education and the healthcare systems nor the way we work, conduct business or even celebrate. If there has been a major disruptive force in living memory, it is the outbreak of the accursed virus. And now, in a historical first since 1966, India will celebrate its Republic Day without a Head of State as the chief guest to showcase its military prowess to. The pesky virus has ensured that British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who was supposed to attend the iconic Republic Day parade, had to bow out after he announced a fresh lockdown in the UK over the

new strain of the Coronavirus that has affected thousands of people there and reared its ugly head in India, too. The complete lockdown for England's 56 million people could last until mid-February, hence the Prime Minister was needed back home. This was supposed to be Johnson's first bilateral outing after the UK's departure from the European Union in December. But the contingency back home needed his urgent attention, so he had no choice but to cancel his visit that was expected to bind the Indo-UK relations even closer. The trip to New Delhi was being seen in the diplomatic circles as the UK's post-Brexit tilt towards the Indo-Pacific region, in which India is an important player. In fact, on December 15, UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab, who visited New Delhi as a prelude to Johnson's trip, announced a closer collaboration with India on an enhanced trade partnership, and he also met Prime Minister Narendra Modi to discuss a 10-year roadmap for a new era in the UK-India ties. Apart from trade, the two democracies are also seeking closer collaboration on tackling the Coronavirus pandemic, climate change, enhancing defence cooperation so that they can better address key issues like terrorism and maritime security.

A disappointed India, which had been "looking forward to Johnson's visit", tried to fill the gap on the dignitary podium by approaching leaders in neighbouring countries like Sri Lanka and Bhutan, but lockdowns and various COVID-related issues made it impossible for others to step in. As it is, the parade this time had been restricted to a limited few from the masses instead of the thousands who used to throng it earlier. Even the marching contingents will be fewer and they will sport face masks and face shields, and the general distance between members in each of the contingents has been expanded from two to three feet. Even the number of dignitaries will be less and only a limited number of people will be invited; and they too will be seated far apart in order to maintain social distance. The highlight of the parade this year is expected to be the felicitation of the "Corona warriors". A few hundred people who have been in the frontline from the field of medicine — such as staff nurses, paramedics, doctors and sanitation staff — have been selected and they will be given certificates of appreciation on the occasion to show the nation's appreciation for the work they have been doing in battling the virus. This whittling down of the pomp and show that is usually associated with the R-Day parade makes one wonder why we never thought of this before? Each year, India spends hundreds of crores in organising the mega event. So this begs the question: Where is the justification in a poor country like India spending so much money on impressing the world's leaders when millions are dying of malnutrition and living below the poverty line in the nation? Would this money not be better spent on ramping up our healthcare and educational infrastructure? Or skilling the nation's *beti* and fighting crimes against women? If we can decrease our disease and hunger burden and increase our per capita income, it would really be something to showcase to the world. Else, we should adopt the Gandhian principle of leading a simple life.

SOUNDBITE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi did not respect the farmers. The Congress is with farmers and will support them till these laws are withdrawn.



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi

United States so far, at least the current administration, is doing all it can to hamper any chance for dialogue between Iran and the Persian Gulf countries.



Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov

I think every film mattered, right from my first film, because that is what gave me my first step into the film industry. My entire journey has been special.



Actor Kiara Advani

It is great to be coaching the young players of the West Indies and trying to guide them as we prepare for the World Cup at home.



West Indies Under-19 coach Floyd Reifer

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Ensure accountability

Sir — The Government must frame stringent laws to hold politicians accountable for corruption in the country. It is often seen in cases of corruption or malpractices in any Government department that the officials are usually taken to task by agencies like the CBI and ED while politicians belonging to the ruling dispensation, who are no less involved in the fraud, walk away scot-free. Our politicians, with their unchecked involvement in corrupt practices, have tarnished the reputation of our country. Over the past four decades or so, we have seen many cases of corruption. It will not be an exaggeration to say that most of the politicians are corrupt to the core and are involved in the dirty game of power and money. They have unaccounted money stocked in foreign banks or assets disproportionate to their income. It is high time for all political parties to think about this serious issue and join hands for making legislations that are more effective in curbing corruption by the politicians.

Seetharam B Telangana

India should provide vaccines to poor nations

As India is all set to launch the world's biggest vaccination drive on Saturday, many countries look towards it with hope. Apart from inoculating millions of countrymen, India should also provide the COVID vaccine vials to its neighbours and poor countries across the globe, either free of cost or on concessional rates. India's commitment to serve humanity is second to none and we, as a nation, have always helped those in need. It's beyond doubt that the chariot of self-reliant India is touching new heights everyday and the days are not far when we will become the torch-bearer of humanity and development. The manufacturers of the vaccines — Bharat Biotech (Covaxin) and Serum Institute of India (Covishield) — should take the lead and work out a plan with the Centre for exporting the vaccine to Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and so on. This will go beyond their realm of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and be a true service to the mankind. We, as a nation, cannot fail those who look towards us for help during the COVID crisis. India must tread cautiously and care about its global image. If the



immunisation drive turns out to be successful, India will set an unprecedented example in the world's history. It will emerge as the world leader and its reputation will increase manifold.

The Opposition parties and leaders, who have unequivocally criticised the Modi Government during the initial phase of vaccine development, should also rise above politics.

Aman Jaiswal Delhi

Accept demands in toto

Sir — The Modi Government must immediately repeal the three farm laws that are the bone of contention between the Centre and the farmers. Although the Supreme Court has put a stay on these legislations but the farmers are not contented and the situation can turn volatile anytime.

The cultivators are not ready to settle for anything less than revocation of the laws and a legal guarantee on the Minimum Support Price (MSP). The NDA Government must realise that 70 per cent of the rural households still depend primarily on agriculture for their livelihood. They also constitute a large proportion of the BJP's vote bank and if they

turn against it in the next elections, it will severely mar the party's prospects of making it to the power corridors. Farmers are a peace-loving community and their leaders have clarified that the tractor rally on January 26 will take place only at the Haryana-Delhi border.

Bhagwan Thadani Mumbai

Army is our pride

Sir — On Army Day, we must remember those who choose to die for the nation. The sad part is that today's youth doesn't know about the stories of courage and valour that have shaped India's destiny saved us from enemies. Those who are ignorant about their past cannot shape their future.

It's time to remember our heroes like Field Marshal KM Cariappa, who was the first Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army and all the Param Vir Chakra (PVC) awardees like Major Somnath Sharma (first winner of the PVC), Naik Jadunath Singh, Lt Rama Raghoba Rane, Company Havildar Major Piru Singh and many others who made the supreme sacrifice for the nation. India's history is incomplete without its military history and our soldiers are our real heroes. We are safe because they are guarding our borders and fighting our enemies. We must pay our tribute to them on such occasions.

N Soumik Bhubaneswar

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

A shot at halting the virus' march

Vaccines take over six weeks to provide immunity. So it will be vital to continue with COVID protocols during the vaccination period and beyond



RAJINDER DHAMIJA

India begins its first phase of the COVID-19 vaccination drive from today. History is being created as it marks an important milestone in the pandemic's trajectory which began almost a year ago when three students returning from Wuhan were found to be COVID positive in Kerala. Since then, we have lost more than 1.51 lakh people and over 1.05 crore individuals have tested positive in India. The year 2020 was indeed a long one as lives were lost and livelihoods vanished as business closures, job losses and salary cuts became the norm. Politics overtook science in many countries and they eventually paid the price in terms of preventable deaths and sickness just because of a delay in instituting Corona protocols like masking, social distancing, hand hygiene and restriction of movement. As I had highlighted previously in these columns, the cold and pollution resulted in a surge in Coronavirus cases in India and globally, too. However, many mathematical models have been proved wrong in terms of hypothetical projections of the number of cases as well as the timelines of the pandemic's trajectory. Experimental therapies were tried in order to save lives, some of which failed to generate scientific evidence while others were withdrawn fearing more risk than benefit through their use. The learning curve continues as the contagion rages on and new mutations are being reported from different parts of the globe, keeping science and scientists on their toes. Consequently, physical distancing has led to social isolation for many, especially the elderly and vulnerable populations like people with disabilities and comorbidities. This has resulted in significant mental health issues. Social isolation is indeed a major risk factor not only for the psychological repercussions it has but also for those suffering from ailments. The approval of two Coronavirus vaccines and their rollout from today is a major step towards combating the pandemic in India and may be the beginning of the end of the COVID-19 outbreak. Covaxin and Covishield will be used during the initial phase of the inoculation drive and a priority group of three crore people will get the shots. The vaccination programme will use Co-WIN, an online digital platform developed by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, which will facilitate real time information of vaccine stocks, storage temperature and individualised tracking of beneficiaries for the shot. This digital platform will assist programme managers across all levels while conducting inoculation sessions.

This drive is a welcome step in the right direction and the Coronavirus shot is indeed a gift for mankind in the midst of this humanitarian crisis. Vaccines have historically saved lives from many deadly diseases in the past. A vaccine for the Coronavirus becoming available in less than a year seemed impossible at one time. However, it has become possible because of global efforts and collaborations by scientists and nations. Consequently, these shots have been developed in record time and have shown remarkable efficacy with safety. But India's vaccine campaign poses a major challenge in getting a substantial number of the population inoculated in view of scepticism and the undercurrent of vaccine hesitancy. So far these jobs have protected people from getting the virus, thereby preventing morbidity, hospitalisation and subsequent mortality. This is important not only for countries like ours with an inadequate and inequitable public health system but also for nations with a robust health infrastructure.

It is widely understood that a person protected by a vaccine or a natural COVID-19 infection acts as a dead end for the virus' transmission and an unprotected person who has not been inoculated or had the infection becomes a facilitator. We need most of the population to be vaccinated to break the chain of transmission. The shot will prevent the disease for sure in most of the vaccinated people but whether it will prevent the spread of the virus is still unclear. There is evidence, though not strong, that some of these shots do prevent the spread of the virus. Epidemiological methods reveal that we need at least 60 to 70 per cent of the population to be immunised either through jabs or natural infection to halt the transmission of the virus and develop "herd immunity." So how do we tackle these challenges with the vaccine rollout now becoming a reality? First we need to vaccinate as many people as possible by allaying fears and convincing citizens about the benefit of the vaccine not only for them but also for the community. The vaccine needs to be made as easily available as possible, keeping priorities in place. Plus, the importance of concise communication to the masses cannot be underestimated as is highlighting and stressing scientific facts over misinformation and myths prevalent on social media. It must also be anticipated that people may become complacent during the vaccination drive or after getting the shot. All vaccines take at least six weeks to provide immunity. So it will be critical to continue with all COVID protocols like before during the vaccination period and months or years after completing the two dosages of the shot. We will need to continue the new normal with all public health measures in place along with lasting change in our behaviour. The shot is here but we will have to live with the virus even after this. Vaccines will save lives and livelihoods but the virus is here to stay.

(The writer is Head of Neurology Department, Lady Hardinge Medical College and SSK Hospital. The views expressed are personal.)

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

MAY GOD GIVE OWAIISI STRENGTH. HE HELPED US IN BIHAR AND WILL HELP US IN UP PANCHAYAT AND ASSEMBLY POLLS AND ALSO IN WEST BENGAL.

—BJP MP

SAKSHI MAHARAJ



PEOPLE OF UP AND WEST BENGAL HAVE ALSO SEEN THROUGH THIS NEXUS AND WILL NOT LET THIS MATCH-FIXING GO THROUGH.

—CONGRESS LEADER
JITIN PRASADA

Curb regulatory overreach

Neither the legislature nor the judiciary should be allowed to frame and pronounce punishment disproportionate to the crime as compared to other contextual offences



ABHAY RAJ MISHRA

Since time immemorial, human civilisation has maintained social order by framing rules and regulations which are implemented through various mechanism of imparting justice to people. Justice by its very nature represents something that is just and right. What is just may depend on the context but being fair, impartial and right is essential to the idea of justice. Professor Henry Sidgwick, a 19th century British jurist known for his ethical theory had opined that the best indicator of a nation's political success is to see how it administers justice.

In primitive societies punishment was targeted to evoke fear by subjecting offenders to brutality. This was supposed to act as a lesson and deterrent for others. However, with development and social evolution, punishment is now a subject of human rights with greater focus on reforming the wrongdoers, instead of tormenting them.

India as a welfare State has also adopted a reformative approach where the primary aim is to rehabilitate the offender. For instance, then IG (Prisons) Kiran Bedi took her reformist vision to Tihar Jail in 1993 and initiated a programme for the welfare of the inmates in the notorious prison, totally transforming the conditions inside Tihar. The reform policy had several aspects like changing prisoners' attitudes through education, meditation and yoga; imparting vocational skills; making the prison administration accountable; involving prisoners through mobile petition boxes, various panchayats and daily mass *sabhas*; providing a better diet and improving living conditions; assisting addicts through drug de addiction centres and undertrials through legal aid cells. Similarly, the introduction of the Model Prison reforms by the Government in 2016 was a major step which brought uniformity in laws, rules and regulations governing prisoners.

However, there remains a major gap when it comes to the structure and uniformity of sentencing guidelines. Despite this being raised by various committees from time to time, neither the legislature nor the judiciary has issued any structured sentencing norms. The Malimath Committee on Reforms of the Criminal Justice System that was set up by the Ministry of Home Affairs, in its report submitted in 2003, emphasised the need to introduce sentencing guidelines in order to minimise uncertainty in awarding sentences. A few years later the Madhav Menon Committee, too, reasserted the need for a sentencing policy in India. In 2010, the then Law Minister stated that India was planning to establish a "uniform sentencing policy" on the lines of the guidelines followed in the US and the UK. However, no progress has been made in this direction till date. Instead, the recent amendments proposed in the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 2020 (COTPA 2020) signal a movement in the reverse direction.

COTPA 2020 amendments prescribe new excessive penalisation for petty street vendors or hawkers selling tobacco products. Exemplifying this is a seven-year imprisonment or a fine of ₹1 lakh for violations which involve immense subjectivity. Further, these violations are proposed to be made cognisable offences, which means police officers have the unilateral power to arrest these vendors, without a warrant or permission of a court and a bail will require appearance in front of a Magistrate.

These violations include selling tobacco products to a person below 21 years of age and selling

“WHILE THERE IS NO DEBATE ON THE HARMFUL EFFECTS OF TOBACCO AND AN ONGOING REDUCTION IN ITS USE SHOULD BE PURSUED, SHOCKINGLY DISPROPORTIONATE DRAFT RULES MAKE A MOCKERY OF THE SYSTEM AND CREATE A LEGAL PARADOX, THEREBY RAISING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE LAW-MAKING PROCEDURE IN THE COUNTRY”



tobacco within 100 meters of an educational institute. Even selling loose cigarettes, which has been an age-old system, is going to abruptly become a crime attracting a jail term.

In a country where an 18-year-old is a legal adult with the right to vote or marry, this is regulatory overreach. A section of these petty retailers sell their goods on foot and we don't have a fixed definition of educational institutes which can vary, from a school to a private tuition centre. This proposal makes petty retailers look like heinous criminals who will be subjected to the whims and fancies of local police officers, many of whom can be compulsively corrupt.

Compared to other sentences and imprisonments prescribed under the Indian Penal Code (IPC), these are disproportionate and excessive. For instance the law prescribes a maximum punishment of six months' jail for sale of adulterated drugs (IPC 275); up to six months in prison for rash or dangerous driving (IPC 279); maximum two years for rioting (IPC 147); three years for extortion (IPC 384); three years for voluntarily causing hurt with a dangerous weapon (IPC 324); five years for voluntarily throwing acid (IPC 326B) and seven years for kidnapping (IPC 363).

This move has rightfully caused widespread consternation among small retailers who are being made to look like criminals. The potential social harm caused by the sale of a *bidi* or a cigarette to an 18-year-old adult with fundamental rights to make informed choices, does not equal to the acts of kidnapping or throwing acid or even sale of adulterated drugs which can kill or maim. If tobacco is a legal product with the Government earning hefty revenues, how can selling it to lawful adults become a

crime? This raises pointed questions on the process behind the framing of such rules. Is it the poor quality of research by bureaucrats drafting such proposals where they did not compare this with other existing provisions? Or is there an emotional overdrive to control tobacco consumption too fast? These retailers also sell other items of daily consumption like tea, water, juices, soft drinks, biscuits, savoury items and confectionary besides tobacco products. Their presence on every street corner forms the very character of India's urban retail activity and is a sign of self-reliance and micro-entrepreneurship among people at the bottom of the pyramid.

The critics of the Government might draw controversial conclusions and say this is a larger move to attack unorganised retailers and kill micro retail activity to benefit large business groups or networks seeking organised retail activity. NGOs might even term it a bid by foreign firms to push more international tobacco into India through smuggled and illicit products at the cost of Indian tobacco farmers. However, this is a clear case of loss of balance that legislators and the judiciary need to maintain while framing sentencing guidelines. Neither the legislature nor the judiciary should be allowed to frame and pronounce punishment, which is disproportionate to the crime as compared to other contextual offences. Otherwise the belief of the people in the rule of law will erode.

In the past there have been instances of disproportionate sentencing being overturned by the judiciary. In the *Soman vs. State of Kerala* case, 2012, the Supreme Court reversed the imprisonment sentence imposed on the accused by the High Court, who was a liquor retailer charged with selling spurious

alcohol which eventually led to the death of six people. Here the Supreme Court observed that: "Giving punishment to the wrongdoer is at the heart of the criminal justice delivery, but in our country, it is the weakest part of the administration of criminal justice." The court cited the need to consider a combination of three factors while directing the quantum of sentence: Proportionality, deterrence and rehabilitation, among which the principle of proportionality assumes highest prominence. A sentence must be commensurate with the seriousness or gravity of the crime. Here, the seller was the last and the weakest link in the supply chain of adulterated liquor comprising of an illicit manufacturer, the distributor and finally the retailer. Hence the court felt that reduction of the sentence from five years of imprisonment to three years was a fair decision.

While there is no debate on the harmful effects of tobacco and an ongoing reduction in its use should be pursued, shockingly disproportionate draft rules make a mockery of the system and create a legal paradox, thereby raising questions about the law-making procedure in the country. Such rules, affecting the livelihoods of many, need more debate and should be reviewed by expert committees comprising of judicial experts, socialists and industry representatives, before being put up for public review. If allowed, these will adversely affect the sense and sensibilities of judges who will have a dilemma while pronouncing sentences, given their disproportionate nature as compared to other crimes.

(The writer is president, not-for-profit organisation PRAHAR. The views expressed are personal.)

Biden holds promise for US-Taiwan relations

At the diplomatic level, Taiwan works as a major bargaining chip for the US to deal with an increasingly aggressive China



SUDHIR SINGH

SUMIT KUMAR

Just days before the US Congress certified President-elect Joe Biden's victory in the 2020 presidential election, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo lifted the long-standing restrictions on dealing with Taiwan. These "self-imposed restrictions", which were introduced decades ago to appease the mainland Chinese Government were declared "null and void" by Pompeo on January 9.

This allows US officials to engage with their Taiwanese counterparts on the same footing with

which they deal with functionaries of other countries.

While the latest development has elevated US-Taiwan relations to a new height, it is still to be seen whether Biden follows the trend or reverses the trajectory of bilateral engagement that has been achieved under the Donald Trump era.

Some experts, diplomats and commoners are speculative that the Biden Administration could backpedal US-Taiwan relations and instead favour China. Their apprehensions are not without a reason, as they cite a statement made by Biden in the US Senate in 2001 when he said that "Washington is not willing to go to war over Taiwan's unilateral declaration of independence."

However, it would be unfair to form an opinion about his foreign policies just based on some isolated statement. It is pertinent to recall that Biden had supported the Taiwan Relations Act in 1979. Even in 2020 he was among the first global leaders to congratulate Taiwanese

President Tsai Ing-wen on her reelection and said: "You are stronger because of your free and open society. The United States should continue strengthening our ties with Taiwan and other like-minded democracies." Biden has also supported US legislations providing arms and defence equipment to Taiwan under the outgoing President Donald Trump's Administration.

We should also keep it in mind that Biden had used strong words against China during his election campaign. He termed the communist nation a "thug" and even accused Trump of being too soft on China. Further, in an article published in a journal, Biden said: "We're a Pacific power, and we'll stand with friends and allies to advance our shared prosperity, security, and values in the Asia-Pacific region," and "that includes deepening our ties with Taiwan." This, in turn, makes it aptly clear that Biden is fully conscious of the changing geostrategic, security and econom-

ic environment largely due to China's expansionist tendency.

Furthermore, some appointments made by Biden should indeed be viewed as a good signal for the East Asian nation. For instance, Antony Blinken, the Secretary of State-designate, has held talks with Taiwanese diplomats and in a tweet, Blinken mentioned that "stronger economic relations between the US and Taiwan will support our shared democratic values and our common commitment to regional peace and stability."

At the same time, the existence of Taiwan as an independent and vibrant democracy is also in the interest of the US for various reasons. First, Taiwan's geo-strategic location in the South China Sea (SCS) prevents Beijing from dominating sea trade routes. China controlling Taiwan would embolden Beijing to establish its dominance over the SCS and eventually it would pose a serious threat to East, Southeast Asia and the US. China can further assert its territorial

claim more aggressively against the Philippines, Vietnam and some other countries in the region.

Second, Taiwan is one of the leading export-based economies in the world. Taiwan succumbing to China would only accentuate Beijing's imperialist tendency. Third, at the diplomatic level, Taiwan works as a major bargaining chip for the US to deal with China. Fourth, while the recent attack on the Capitol Hill in Washington has bemused several countries across the world, the disappearance of Taiwan as an independent country would prove to be a big blow to the idea of democracy.

Taiwan can contribute significantly towards promoting the emergence of a strong supply chain free from the clutches of China. While Taiwan runs leadership training courses for the officials of the Pacific islands, its timely medical support to the rest of the world and its success in controlling the spread of COVID-19 have won the hearts of the international community.

But Taiwan could have certainly helped immensely had it been a member of the World Health Organisation.

The global perception about China has changed significantly in recent years as Beijing has become more repressive internally and aggressive internationally. China's repressive measures against peaceful protesters in Hong Kong and its attempt to cover up the outbreak of the contagion have finally ended the delusions about China's peaceful rise. It is all because of these factors that there exists a strong bipartisan understanding among US leaders about strengthening ties with Taiwan.

Now, the time has come when not only the independent existence of Taiwan should be a global concern, but efforts should also be undertaken to enable it to contribute to world affairs in an effective manner. For its pursuance, the US should take initiatives to sign the Free Trade Agreement with Taiwan, which in turn would propel other

countries to institutionalise their economic ties with it. The process will eventually not only reduce Taiwan's economic dependence on China, it would also integrate Taiwan into the regional and global economic groups.

The US should also take initiatives to include Taiwan into the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD). Since the East Asian country has fostered a strong relationship with India, Japan has already expressed its concern for the independence of Taiwan and Australia is facing an assertive China, Washington can explore the means of providing a role to Taiwan in this QUAD grouping.

While it becomes logical for the Biden Administration to sustain the momentum of the bilateral relationship, only time will tell if this transition leads to anticipated transformation.

(Singh is Professor at Delhi University while Kumar is former fellow at National Chengchi University, Taipei.)

'Celebi Aviation ready to handle COVID-19 vaccines'

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Turkish aviation firm Celebi Aviation on Friday said it is operationally ready to handle COVID-19 vaccines and is working closely with existing airline operators and freight forwarders to understand their specific requirements.

The company has the infrastructure and capabilities to handle as many charters as required, at its facility and ensure a quick 'turnaround time', it said in a release.

Besides warehousing, the company offers ground handling services to these freight operators, Celebi Aviation said. Stating that it is "operationally ready" to handle the COVID-19 vaccines, the Turkish firm said the distribution of the vaccine will take place through its state-of-the-art pharma logistics center situated at Delhi Airport, which has the capacity of 72,000 MT annually.

"Celebi is able to play a leading role in the distribution of COVID-19 vaccine in India and globally. We understand the need for a strong emphasis on pursuing the highest standards in pharmaceutical cargo handling. These vaccines



Celebi is able to play a leading role in the distribution of COVID vaccine in India and globally

require rigorous temperature control throughout the entire supply chain, therefore, Celebi is operationally ready to handle the COVID-19 vaccines," said Murali Ramchandran, CEO India, Celebi Aviation. The company has also set up a special 24x7 duty managers desk to oversee these move-

ments, he said. The Center is equipped with the facility of temperature-controlled chambers for storage of consignments ranging between minus 25 to plus 25 degrees centigrade with humidity control to prevent moisture damage, according to Celebi Aviation.

In preparation for a domestic and global distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine, Celebi Delhi Cargo Terminal Management is working on preparing proficient handling scenarios for the import and export of various types of vaccines in a safe and efficient way, the company said.

Celebi Delhi Cargo Terminal Management is the joint venture between Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL), which operates and manages Delhi Airport, and Celebi Ground Handling.

Handling of trucks carrying vaccines, dedicated truck dock bays at Export Pharma Logistics Center, dedicated delivery gate for import of vaccine and quick turnaround time of all trucks are some of the measures the company has put in place as part of the preparations, it said.

Other facilities include cool dolly and "Tyvec" cover availability, along with dry ice, batteries, thermal blankets, among others, at pharma mini shop, it said, adding there is also provision for unitizing in temperature-controlled zones and data tracking and monitoring.

Celebi at present carries out ground handling activities at seven airports -- Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Cochin, Ahmedabad and Kannur -- in the country. The company claims it to be the first handler in India to deploy 'Cool Dollies' to extend the cool chain (-20 to +25 Celsius) till the aircraft bays on the airside.

PGIM India eyes Rs 500 cr from balanced advantage fund

PNS ■ MUMBAI

PGIM India Mutual Fund on Friday launched its maiden balanced advantage fund from which it expects to garner at least Rs 500 crore.

The new fund, which is an open-ended dynamic asset allocation fund with a floor of minimum 30 per cent equity, closes on January 29, PGIM said. This product tries to deliver reasonable downside protection and lower volatility, making it suitable for investors who are seeking capital appreciation over a long period and is categorized as equity-oriented scheme.

A balanced asset allocation helps buy low and sell high, Ajit Menon, the chief executive of PGIM India MF said. Its dynamic asset allocation model considers 15 years rolling price to earnings (PE) average as long-term average PE to capture changing trends in the equity markets.

"We hope to collect at least Rs 500 crore from the fund," Menon told PTI. The fund will be managed by Aniruddha Naha (for equities), Kumaresh Ramakrishnan (for debt and money markets) and Anandha Padmanabhan (for overseas investments), Menon said.

GAIL okays ₹1,046.35 cr share buyback to return surplus

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

GAIL (India) Ltd, the nation's largest gas distribution firm, on Friday announced a Rs 1,046.35 crore share buyback programme as it looked to return surplus cash to shareholders, the biggest being the government of India.

In a stock exchange filing, the company said its board has approved the buyback of 6.97 crore shares at a price of Rs 150 per share.

The shares being bought represent 1.55 per cent of the total number of fully paid-up equity shares.

The company board also declared an interim dividend of 25 per cent (Rs 2.50 per share) for financial year 2020-21.

GAIL stock was down 2.2 per cent on the BSE and was trading at Rs 140.75 at 14.15 Hrs.

The government owns 51.76 per cent of GAIL and is expected to participate in the share buyback.

It stands to get Rs 583.6 crore from the dividend payout and another Rs 541.5 crore if it participates in the buyback by tendering a proportionate number of shares.

The buyback plan of Rs 1,046.35 crore represents "2.5 per cent and 2.26 per cent of the aggregate of the fully paid-up equity share capital and free



reserves of the company," GAIL said in the filing. The plan was within the statutory limits of 10 per cent, it said.

The record date for buyback of equity shares as well as payment of the interim dividend will be January 28, GAIL said.

The government has asked at least eight state-run companies to consider share buybacks as it scours for ways of raising funds to rein in its fiscal deficit.

The firms asked to consider share buybacks include miner Coal India, power utility NTPC, and minerals producer NMDC.

A buyback, also known as a share repurchase, is when a company buys its own outstanding shares to reduce the number of shares available in the open market.

Companies buy back shares for a number of reasons, such as to increase the value of remaining shares available by reducing the supply or to return surplus cash to shareholders.

The government wants public sector undertakings to either meet their targets for capital expenditure or 'reward the shareholder in the form of a dividend' or share buyback.

The government, which holds 51.76 per cent of GAIL, is likely to participate in the GAIL buyback just as it did in the case of NTPC, Engineers India Ltd, RITES and KIOCL.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had in her budget for 2020-21 set a target of raising Rs 2.1 lakh crore from privatisations and the sale of minority stakes in state-owned companies.

HCL Tech posts 31.1% rise in profits

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

HCL Technologies on Friday posted a 31.1 per cent rise in its December quarter net profit at Rs 3,982 crore on the back of strong momentum in its digital, products and platform segment, and exuded confidence in clocking further acceleration in bookings in the coming quarters.

The IT services major, which had registered a net profit of Rs 3,037 crore in the year-ago period, has also crossed the USD 10 billion revenue milestone in CY2020.

HCL Tech's revenue grew 6.4 per cent to Rs 19,302 crore in the quarter under review, from Rs 18,135 crore in the year-ago period (as per US GAAP).

The company recorded revenue growth at 3.5 per cent quarter-on-quarter in constant currency, beating its own estimate of 1.5-2.5 per cent growth for the December quarter.

HCL Tech has now revised its sequential revenue growth guidance to 2-3 per cent (including DWS contribution) in constant currency from its previous estimate of 1.5-2.5 per cent increase quarter-on-quarter for the March 2021 quarter. "The calendar year 2021 has



started on a very strong financial note. Our strategic bets continue to deliver outstanding results as reflected in our sequential revenue growth of 3.5 per cent in constant currency and 4.4 per cent in US dollars," HCL Technologies President and CEO C Vijayakumar said.

The company continues to see a strong pipeline and remains confident of "even further acceleration of bookings in the coming quarters", he added.

"Looking ahead, a combination of a strong pipeline, good order booking gives us a lot of optimism about the growth trajectory. I strongly believe that we are uniquely differentiated through a combination of solutions and services..." he said. HCL Technologies' revenue

has crossed USD 10 billion milestone in CY20, delivering 3.6 per cent year-on-year growth in constant currency.

Vijayakumar said the July-December period of FY21 -- which constitutes the first two comparison quarters since the closure of the IBM deal -- registered a y-o-y growth of 13.4 per cent.

HCL Tech had acquired select IBM software products for Rs 12,252 crore (about USD 1.8 billion).

"While it is early days, this is the fastest growing business from a year-on-year perspective for HCL and probably in the industry as well... Our geographic performance was led by Europe... In terms of verticals, five of the seven verticals showed good positive growth momentum. It was led by media and telecom," he added.

On a sequential basis, net profit was 26.7 per cent higher from Rs 3,142 crore, while topline was higher by 3.8 per cent from Rs 18,594 crore in September 2020 quarter.

Vijayakumar said the uptick in net income was on account of lower tax expense, primarily due to reversal of tax provisions related to prior years, and a couple of other factors.

Maruti rolls out online finance platform in Arena dealerships

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) on Friday said it has launched an online financing platform at its Arena dealerships across 30 plus cities. With the launch of Smart Finance platform, 24 out of 26 steps in the customer vehicle purchase journey have been digitised, the auto major said in a statement.

The digital platform allows customers to choose the best-suited loan product, completion of all finance related formalities and disbursement of loan, with just a few clicks, it added.

The company's website will act as a facilitator between the customer and the financier providing real time status updates and in turn provide a hassle free and transparent financing solution, MSI said.

The carmaker said it has currently partnered with 12 financiers including State Bank of India, HDFC Bank, Mahindra Finance, ICICI Bank, IndusInd Bank, Bank of Baroda, Cholamandalam Finance and Kotak Mahindra for the initiative.

Embassy REIT raises Rs 2,600 cr via debentures

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Embassy Office Parks REIT on Friday said it has raised Rs 2,600 crore through issue of non-convertible debentures to refinance an existing debt of its IT park 'Embassy TechVillage' in Bengaluru.

In a regulatory filing at BSE, the company said it has "successfully priced and allotted by way of a private placement, Rs 2,600 crore or USD 351 million of rupee-denominated, listed, rated, secured, redeemable, transferable non-convertible debentures (NCDs) at a 6.40 per cent quarterly coupon."

The NCDs will be listed on the wholesale debt market of BSE. "We will use the funds raised to refinance a portion of the in-place Embassy TechVillage debt. Post this bond raise, we continue to maintain conservative leverage ratios and retain our flexibility to finance future growth," said Mike Holland, Chief Executive Officer of Embassy REIT. On January 12, the debenture committee of the board of directors of the manager to Embassy REIT approved the issue of NCDs.

Embassy REIT had on December 24, 2020, completed the acquisition of Embassy TechVillage for Rs 9,780 crore

Embassy REIT is India's first publicly listed Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT), sponsored by global investment firm Blackstone and realty firm Embassy group.

MONEY MATTERS

NTPC's 1,320 MW Meja JV plant made fully operational



State-run power giant NTPC on Friday said its 1,320 megawatt (MW) joint venture power plant at Meja, Uttar Pradesh, has been made fully operational with successful completion of trial operation of Unit-2 of 660 MW.

First unit of 660 MW of the joint venture Meja Urja Nigam was made commercially operational in April 2019. "Based on achievement of approved norms, Unit-2 of 660 MW capacity of Meja Thermal Power Project of Meja Urja Nigam Pvt Ltd (MUNPL) (a joint venture of NTPC Ltd and UPRVUN Ltd) has successfully completed trial operation and consequently included in the installed capacity of MUNPL and NTPC group," a BSE filing said. With this, the total installed capacity of the MUNPL and NTPC group has become 1,320 MW and 63,635 MW, respectively, it added.

Bharti Airtel divests stake in Seynse Technologies



Telecom operator Bharti Airtel has divested its stake in Seynse Technologies, according to a regulatory filing. The stake was held through Bharti Airtel's wholly-owned subsidiary Nettle Infrastructure Investments Limited. The divestment of 6,824 equity shares was for a cash consideration. "...the company has divested its stake in

Seynse Technologies Private Limited held through Nettle Infrastructure Investments, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the company," Bharti Airtel said in a late evening filing on Thursday. It, however, did not disclose the price at which the shares were divested "for the reasons of confidentiality". Seynse is a financial technology company that has created Loan Singh platform.

Sensex tumbles 549 pts; Nifty drops below 14,450

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark Sensex plunged 549 points on Friday, dragged by losses in index majors Infosys, HDFC and ICICI Bank amid a largely negative trend in global markets.

Profit-taking at higher levels kept benchmark indices volatile, traders said. The 30-share BSE index ended 549.49 points or 1.11 per cent lower at 49,034.67.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty tumbled 161.90 points or 1.11 per cent to 14,433.70.

Tech Mahindra was the top loser in the Sensex pack, shed-

ding over 4 per cent, followed by HCL Tech, ONGC, Asian Paints, UltraTech Cement and HDFC.

On the other hand, Bharti Airtel, ITC, Bajaj Auto and Bajaj Finance were the gainers.

According to Binod Modi, Head-Strategy at Reliance Securities, domestic equities witnessed sharp pullback with increased volatility.

"However, we are not surprised with the day's fall as this was broadly expected as benchmark indices had been marking fresh highs for last couple of days, which made valuations quite stretched," he said.

Honda City tops mid-sized sedan segment in 2020

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Honda Cars India on Friday said its mid-sized sedan City led the segment last year with cumulative sales of 21,826 units.

Staying true to its legacy of being the Japanese automaker's longest running nameplate in India, the all-new fifth generation City was launched in July 2020 and has once again exceeded benchmarks with its design, technological prowess, safety and connectivity features, the automaker said in a statement.

The City's cumulative sales in July-December 2020 stood at 17,347 units.

December 2020 stood at 41 per cent in the segment, it added.

The model is not only leading the segment sales but also contributing to the overall growth of the mid-sized sedan segment which grew 10 per cent in July-December period, the carmaker said.

The cumulative sales for the segment in July-December period last year stood at 45,277 units as compared to 41,122 units in the same period of 2019.

The City's cumulative sales in July-December 2020 stood at 17,347 units.

Skoda launches refreshed version of Superb in India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Czech automaker Skoda on Friday said it has launched the refreshed version of premium sedan Superb in India with price starting from Rs 31.99 lakh (ex-showroom), Skoda Auto India said in a statement.

The model is powered by a 2-litre petrol engine mated with a seven-speed automatic transmission. Skoda Auto India Brand

Director Zac Hollis said, "Since its introduction, the Skoda Superb has been a favourite for many 'value luxury' seekers in India.

"The refreshed Skoda Superb hosts some contemporary updates that further elevates its appeal and shall be appreciated by all," he added.

The updated version comes with adaptive front-lighting system, the company said adding it has virtual cockpit - a customisable digital instrument panel that offers a vitalised perspective on comprehensive driving data and navigation, as a standard feature.

One Web secures funding from SoftBank, Hughes

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Bharti Global and the UK government-led OneWeb on Friday said it has secured additional funding from SoftBank Group and Hughes Network Systems, bringing OneWeb's total funding to USD 1.4 billion, "the company said in a statement.

OneWeb did not provide individual break-up of investments made by SoftBank Group and Hughes Network Systems. Earlier, the UK government and Bharti Global had announced a combined USD 1 billion investment (USD 500 million each) in OneWeb.

Commenting on the development, Masayoshi Son, representative director, corporate officer, chairman and CEO of SoftBank, said, "We are excited to support OneWeb as it

owned by the UK government and Bharti Global, announced today that it has secured additional funding from SoftBank Group and Hughes Network Systems, bringing OneWeb's total funding to USD 1.4 billion, "the company said in a statement.

OneWeb did not provide individual break-up of investments made by SoftBank Group and Hughes Network Systems. Earlier, the UK government and Bharti Global had announced a combined USD 1 billion investment (USD 500 million each) in OneWeb.

Commenting on the development, Masayoshi Son, representative director, corporate officer, chairman and CEO of SoftBank, said, "We are excited to support OneWeb as it



increases capacity and accelerates towards commercialisation."

He added that the company is thrilled to continue our partnership with Bharti, the UK government and Hughes to help OneWeb deliver on its

mission to transform internet access around the world.

OneWeb Executive Chairman Sunil Bharti Mittal said that both SoftBank and Hughes are deeply familiar with OneWeb's business, share its vision for the future, and

their commitment allows the company to capitalise on the significant growth opportunity ahead.

"We gain from their experience and capabilities, as we deliver a unique LEO network for the world," Mittal said.

In December, OneWeb launched 36 new satellites, built at its Airbus Joint Venture assembly plant in Florida, USA. It has brought the company's total fleet to 110 satellites, all fully-functioning and benefiting from International Telecommunication Union spectrum priority.

The recommencement of satellite launches by OneWeb had come within weeks of billionaire Sunil Bharti Mittal-run Bharti Group along with the British government taking over

as the new owners of the broadband satellite communications company, which emerged from bankruptcy.

Recently, the company said it is on track to offer global services to customers from late 2021, starting with the United Kingdom, Alaska, Northern Europe, Greenland, Iceland, the Arctic Seas, and Canada, with global service in 2022. The company aims to offer high-speed internet from OneWeb satellites in India by mid-2022.

"OneWeb's mission is to deliver broadband connectivity worldwide to bridge the global Digital Divide by offering everyone, everywhere access including to the Internet of Things (IoT) future and a pathway to 5G," the statement on Friday said.

Bridgestone India launches new tyre for commercial vehicle segment



Tyre maker Bridgestone India on Friday launched a new tyre, V-Steel Mix M721, for the commercial vehicle segment with an aim to establish a strong presence in the drive axle tyre category. The latest offering is specifically for the general cargo, long haul and highway

application, the company said. The new product addresses the issues of both tyre fuel mileage and cut-chip resistance. Bridgestone India said. "The commercial vehicle segment is focussed on optimising total cost of operations to achieve higher profitability. The V-STEEL Mix M721 is targeted towards the general cargo segment, which is the largest portion of the CV segment and delivers 15 per cent extra tyre mileage and subsequent reduction in cost per kilometre (CPK) for the fleet operators," said Parag Satpute, Managing Director, Bridgestone India. Pune-based Bridgestone India, which is a subsidiary of Bridgestone Corporation of Japan, had last month announced an undisclosed investment in fleet management firm Fleeca India to strengthen its positioning in the digital mobility space.

Rupee slips 3 paise to settle at 73.07 against US dollar



The rupee snapped its three-session winning streak and settled for the day 3 paise lower at 73.07 (provisional) against the American currency on Friday, tracking weaker Asian peers and heavy selloffs in domestic equities. At the interbank forex market, the rupee opened at 73.07 and hit an intra-day high of 72.99 and a low of 73.15. It finally finished at 73.07, lower by 3 paise over its last close. On Thursday, the rupee had settled at 73.04 against the American currency. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, rose by 0.16 per cent to 90.38. "The movement in USD/INR spot is in tandem with other Asian peers and going ahead the optimism over US stimulus package will keep it lower," said Rahul Gupta, Head of Research-Currency, Emkay Global Financial Services. Gupta further said that there was not much volatility this week and also RBI's participation in spot was subdued.

Hyderabad

the pioneer

Follow us on
@TheDailyPioneer
facebook.com/
dailypioneer

Saturday
January 16, 2021

Namrata Bhagtani Sadhvani is somebody to look up to as she always knew what she wanted from life and she's more than capable of getting it on her terms. Hailing from the city known for its palm trees, deserts and the Burj Khalifa - Dubai, this editor of a popular parenting website called 'Momspresso' volunteers for an NGO against gender-based violence called 'Sayfty' and is Hyderabad's most well-known mom blogger. She has a purpose to be working here, in the city of Nizams. She talks to *The Pioneer's* SHIKHA DUGGAL about her life in the city, her contribution and more.

Hyderabad, A POTPOURRI OF CULTURE

From recently appearing on a television show hosted by author, chef and well-known actor Arshad Warsi's wife Maria Goretti to being the only nomination from Hyderabad for digital women awards by SheThePeopleTV, Namrata Bhagtani Sadhvani has rightfully made several heads turn across the city by representing her 'karmabhoomi' across the nation. Defining a completely new relationship with the current city she has been progressing in, she shares that she moved to Hyderabad right after she got married in 2008. An individual who never thought of permanently settling down here in the city is today generating some good amount of business for it and rejuvenating her true self here.

"Hyderabad is the perfect potpourri of culture, a blend of the traditional and the modern and brings the best of all worlds together! I hate to say, this but when I first moved here, I was always complaining about my stretch here in Hyderabad while later on, I truly made an effort to learn the native

language, understand the locals better and erudite the city's culture. Comparing both the cities, Life in Dubai was certainly fast-paced and denizens are always in a hurry. However, when I moved to Hyderabad I found the locals to be very loosened up, taking their time to process stuff which alerted me to buckle-up too," she laughs.

The very theme of exposing yourself to each other's influences is what helps in building a good city. Immensely in love with the culture of Nizams here, Namrata incorporated the same modernity and civilisation in her life as well. "The Hi-tech city is enormously developed today and there is a concurrent traditional Hyderabad lifestyle also that's going on," she adds. While talking about how Hyderabad played an essential role in expanding the very existent influencer industry, Namrata tells us that she has made her name for herself in this city right when there was a need for bloggers! She calls herself a mom-blogger with so much pride and certainly believes that if she had tried starting this career in cities like



Mumbai or Delhi, chances are that she wouldn't have been as successful as she is currently, since the market is already over-crowded there. "The one thing I dislike the

most here is the traffic! There's so much traffic in the city, it's hard to get around. And, people here are obsessed with non-vegetarian food. They say that

Hyderabad is no place for vegetarians, but I'd like to differ. I'd like to dispel myths and say Hyderabad is wonderful for vegetarians as well," she concludes.



For that flawless skin

Certain external factors and medication can cause skin pigmentation. Dr Nivedita Dadu shares tips that can help

Skin pigmentation refers to the colour of the skin. Skin pigmentation or dark patches are a common issue amongst both males & females wherein the skin becomes darker often in patches. Hence, one gets uneven skin tone. The main cause for skin pigmentation is over-production of the brown pigment called melanin. Melanin is the pigment responsible for the colour of the skin and is made by melanocyte cells in the skin.

Skin rashes like rosacea, psoriasis, eczema, contact dermatitis; skin infections such as acne, ringworm, tinea versicolor, candidiasis, medical conditions, and hormonal changes due to pregnancy can cause the formation of skin pigmentation and dark patches.

Certain external factors and medication can also cause dark patches or skin pigmentation. UV rays are the biggest cause that trigger the overproduction of melanin. However, the damage caused by UV rays is not visible immediately, it will be visible over a period of time.

Hyperpigmentation is

generally harmless but can sometimes be caused by an underlying medical condition. Therefore, it is advised to consult a qualified dermatologist if someone is facing skin pigmentation problems.

There are several types of skin pigmentation such as age spots or solar lentiginosis (Liver Spots), melasma or chloasma, freckles (Ephelides) and post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation.

The following are some tips and home remedies one can follow to get rid of skin pigmentation and dark patches:

Apply sunscreen every day at least 15-20 minutes before heading out in the sun as it needs some time to get absorbed into the skin. Re-apply sunscreen after every 4 hours or use a physical sunscreen as it provides protection for long duration. This is the most important step towards preventing and treating skin pigmentation.

Apple cider vinegar contains polyphenolic compounds that are beneficial in managing pigmentation. One can apply it daily.

Take oral supplements like Vitamin C or glu-

tathione. These can boost the skin's resilience to the UV rays of sun.

Potatoes are known for their anti-pigmentation properties. It can work quite well on pigmented areas and blemishes. For this, cut a potato into half and dip the sliced part into water. Rub the potato slice on the affected areas in a circular motion for about 10 minutes. Wash off the face with lukewarm water. Repeat this procedure twice or thrice in a week to get rid of dark patches of the skin.

Apply black tea water on the skin. For this soak a cotton ball in black tea water and apply it on the pigmented skin at least twice a day.

Coconut oil helps to remove the dead skin cells and also protects it from the harmful UV rays of the sun. Take a few drops of coconut oil and massage it well so that it penetrates deep down the skin's layers. Leave the oil on the skin for about 20-25 minutes so that it gets absorbed. Wash the face and repeat this method thrice in a week.

(The writer is Dermatologist, Founder & Chairman of Dr Nivedita Dadu's Dermatology Clinic)

'BB opened many doors of work for me'

Big Boss is definitely one of the most controversial reality shows on Indian television. Despite all the negativity, every season has contestants with clean innings in the house. With the admirable Nagarajuna hosting the show, it has become a rage down south. History has it that whoever has been a part of this contentious show has gained both good and bad publicity. Correspondingly, a never-seen-before avatar of Gujarati actress Monal Gajjar in Bigg Boss 4 is grabbing headlines everywhere. Without any controversy, she played an individual game in the house where there are more cameras than contestants. Having made some long-lasting relationships, Monal came across as one strong and focused contestant. She talks to *The Pioneer's* SHIKHA DUGGAL about her time in the house, future projects and more

What was the finicky emotion you were carrying along while entering the BB house?

There is one cliché quality in our personalities that can never be polarised and that is my magic pill - positivity. The reality show came across as another break for me to work for the Telugu film industry and to display more of my flair for the Southern audiences. It was like I was adding to the demographics of my active fan base. And why would miss a chance like this? I was consciously cultivating positivity in my mind so that it would help me get through anything inside the house.

Do you think that because you come from Gujarat, you were representing your fellow Gujaratis or were you there only as a public figure who has worked in many languages?

I don't think I was there just representing Gujarat, but all the film fraternities I have been a part of till date, along with the responsibility of showcasing family values that I have inherited on my

way to success. Tabloids, glossy magazines, channels, public, etc they are constantly judging us based on the personality and habits we are displaying on the show so the accountability also levels up.

How emotionally challenging was it for you in the house?

The right expression would be "excessively challenging". The initial week began on a fine note, although from the second week the atmosphere was filled with so many misunderstandings. To be precise, it was a mess! I had to deal with so many feelings all at once, emotions change every second over there. Though it's absolutely normal to have intense thoughts, how one should deal with it amid a crowd of strangers is another challenge altogether.

What worked in your favor?

I have always believed honesty takes you places and it gives you happiness in return. That being my foundation for my core values, it helped me cut through what is rather deceptive in the house and allowed me to be the real Monal

that I am. Whatever was happening around me, I never gave up because it was such a wonderful opportunity that was pushing me to keep going. After all, you never know how close you are to succeeding.

Your personal life was 24x7 rolling on cameras for the public, were you apprehensive about anything?

No, I was prepared for it and knowing that, I signed up for Bigg Boss. There is nothing in my lifestyle that I will feel apprehensive of, I am a very transparent person and my life is an open book. In fact, I wanted my audience to know me up, close and personal.

What tactics did you apply inside the house to fight unwanted moments of aggression?

I tried to control my anger as much as possible so it doesn't take a toll on my mental health. Instances would definitely arise which would make one fume, but handling it healthily is the key. I always know how to collect my thoughts before speaking so I

don't regret anything later on. Even if I ever would have expressed my emotional vulnerabilities, it was always in a non-confrontational manner. I was also taking note of what made the other contestants leave before me and that I mustn't recede that way.

How surprised were you on being evicted?

Surprisingly, not much because I knew how badly every other contestant wanted me to exit. I was so close to the finale! But I state it to be a satisfying journey altogether along with the golden mic opportunity that I received. To be able to connect with your watchers while inside the house is something that I can never forget.

Can you tell us more about the connections that you formed inside? Will they last long?

Bonding always isn't meant to be associated only with partners. I made some really deep connections with Akhil and Sohail and we are still in touch despite the show having ended. We may not meet regularly, but I can surely say that all three of us will always be

there for one another whenever needed. Sohail takes so many efforts to stay connected. I am hoping it is a lifelong pursuit with them as good, close peers with a growing amount of affection and admirable respect.

How has Bigg Boss helped you bag more prospects in the showbiz industry?

I am currently appearing as a judge for the dance reality show called Dance Plus and a plethora of scripts have been listed out for me to start working on. The controversial show actually opened so many doors of first-class work for me and it has come as a boon for me in my life. If I ever get a second chance to go back and do the season, I won't mind at all. Nagarajuna sir hosted us so well; at times it felt as if we were being welcomed at his own residence. He was more of a mentor and a guide always directing us to not deviate from our goals. In fact, when Samantha visited for a day, she radiated so much of positivity! We were full of energy even after the episode ended.



what's brewing?

Get rid of winter stiffness with yoga

During winter days, the body becomes stiff which makes it prone to cramps, joint pain, and injury. Yoga can cure your winter lethargy and stiffness.

All you need is your yoga mat and as little as 20 minutes thrice a week to see the difference. Exercise heats up the body from the inside and releases stiffness from the muscles making you feel active and energetic. Grand Master Akshar shares a few yoga poses that may help deal with these winter woes.

Sukshma vyayam

Start your day with sukshma vyayam. In yoga, warming up of the body starts from the toes and goes all the way up. You can start with ankle rotations, warming up the ankle joints, moving on to your knees, hips, arms, neck, and head. Warming up the body ensures that your productive levels on the mat are high and you also remain free from injuries.

Go slow

Practise gently and slowly keeping awareness on each movement and syncing your breath along with each posture. When you practice slowly it ensures that you are mindful of your movements and this results in better

strength flexibility and a positive outcome overall. Establish the communication between the mind and the body through the breath in a gentle and slow manner. Practising any movements in a hasty way not only leads to injury but can also harm the respiratory and the nervous system.

Choose your environment

During the winter, choose a warm and cosy place for your practice. If indoors, choose a room or a spot where there isn't a cold draft in the air. If you are practicing outdoors make sure that you are well covered in warm clothing. Practise is vital to keep your body in good health and in a mobile condition. Practice the following yoga postures:

Yoga asanas

Upward facing dog - Urdvha Mukhi svanasana: Come to plank posture and from here gently drop the pelvis and the stomach down without touching the floor. Lift the chest and the shoulders towards the sky and look up. In this posture do not bend your elbows and squeeze the glutes to activate the back muscles.

Downward dog -- Adhomukhi svanasana:

To form downward dog, you can start in Child's Pose resting your pelvis on your heels and reaching out in front of you with your forehead on the floor. From here, bring your toes down to push your knees and pelvis up forming a triangular shape with the body. Make sure the distance between the palms and your feet is neither too far away nor is it too close.

These are simple and effective postures that can be performed by practitioners of any age. Once you are able to perform these postures with ease then you can add advanced level asanas in your practice such as Wheel Pose, Bow Pose, Peacock Pose, Headstand and so on. Along with your yoga practice, ensure that you monitor your food intake and consume water at room temperature.



Fitness apps that make your home-workouts interesting

Sitting at home for months has made people shift everyday fitness to virtual or online programmes. Here's a list of a few digital fitness platforms to help you reach your fitness goal from the comfort of home.

TREAD
It is an online fitness start-up that connects the country's top trainers and fitness experts with fitness enthusiasts and individuals free of cost. It covers Yoga to Zumba and Running to HIIT, allowing users to create their own schedules and ensure uninterrupted fitness training at home or on the road with the app. It organises interactive group workout sessions with live trainers, leading to trainer empowerment and incorporating the concept of working out

'Anytime. Anywhere.'
GOQii
GOQii's smart health ecosystem integration tools are real-time personalised coaching, a health e-commerce store, scheduling doctor appointments, and a unique 'GOQii Cash' programme where healthy behaviour is rewarded with cash discounts and insurance discounts. The smart tech-enabled startup already had a pre-existing platform of live videos, e-commerce, and doctor consultations.

Curefit
At cure.fit, one makes group workouts fun, daily food healthy & tasty, mental fitness easy with yoga and meditation, and medical and lifestyle care hassle-free. These guided workouts at curefit includes bodyweight exercises that will strengthen the mid-section, burn belly fat and help

improve your overall fitness.
Daily yoga
Daily Yoga inspires yogis worldwide with the largest yoga pose base. It helps one practice yoga on all mobile devices and multiple other platforms. It has more than 100 yoga and meditation classes to help people from all levels, including a whole series of beginner-friendly tutorials to help you find a different and better self in only 2 weeks. Most of them are between three to sixty minutes, and it's designed for both beginners and professionals.

If you are looking to incorporate yoga into your weight loss or staying fit program, the programs are designed for exactly that.

TWellness
Based in Bologna, Italy,

Technogym's new fitness app TW, (TWellness), helps users access specialised sessions conducted by master trainers at Technogym, across the globe. Technogym also offers a complete range of products for home fitness based on the space available, training needs, sport passions, or home interior style.

30 day fitness
The name of this app is quite relevant as this fitness app has the personalised 30-day challenges to help you achieve your goals of being more active, lose weight, or gain muscle. This app has 400-odd individual fitness workouts that are designed to be done at home or pretty much anywhere. These workouts are named after different cities of the world and under each city, there's a particular set of workouts to be completed.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



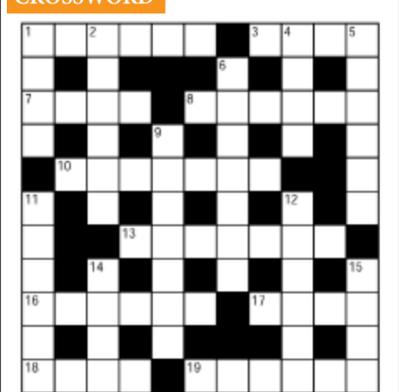
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



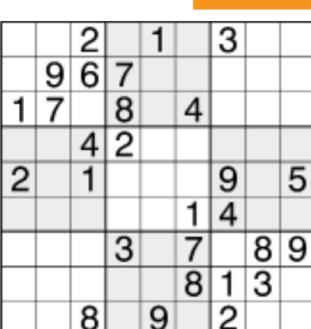
CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

8	9	4	5	3	2	1	6	7
6	7	5	8	1	9	3	4	2
3	1	2	4	6	7	5	9	8
2	8	7	6	5	3	9	1	4
4	6	3	9	8	1	2	7	5
1	5	9	2	7	4	6	8	3
5	4	1	3	9	8	7	2	6
7	2	6	1	4	5	8	3	9
9	3	8	7	2	6	4	5	1

Rules

- 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.

ACROSS

- Pepper might make you do this
- Use needles and wool to make something
- Quick
- Spread this on bread
- Rich
- Injured
- Repaired
- Factual
- Utters
- A weight to stop a boat drifting

DOWN

- Not in danger
- Less difficult

4 A short letter

- Wearing
- Shoving
- Permitted
- Postage stickers
- Look carefully for
- Jealousy
- Expensive

SOLUTION



GINGER MEGGS



POPCORN entertainers are Vijay Konda's first choice

NAGARAJ GOUD

Vijay Kumar Konda has chosen *Power Play* as the title of his next project, first look and motion poster was unveiled by Rana Daggubati on Sankranti. The film, a production venture of Mahidhar and Devesh under Vanamalee Creations, sees *Hushaaru* girl Hemal Ingle as the female lead, while noted actress Poorna has essayed a role with negative streak. Rounding off the supporting cast are Kota Srinivas Rao, Ajay, Madhunandan, Dhanraj, Venu, Raja Ravindra and Ravi Varma.

The film was wrapped up last year and it is presently in post-production. Vijay Konda tells us they are planning to slot it for a theatrical roll out next month but it depends upon other releases. Talking about the storyline, he says, "Due to some people who wield power, a middle-class youngster (played by Raj Tarun) who is preparing for his Groups Exam faces a lot of trouble. How he rises up to the challenge forms the crux. As he is playing a mature role, Raj Tarun was required to give a restrained performance."

Vijay Konda has directed the project from a story of Nandyala Ravi and it is for the first time in his career he adapted someone else's written material. Known for his popcorn family entertainers, it is also his maiden shot at a thriller. "Ravi's storyline excited me but I did give my touch to it. As a filmmaker I thought it will be a welcome change for me from the kind of films I have directed in the past and for Raj as well. So we did it," he maintains, adding that if he comes across ideas like *Power Play*, he would direct them occasionally but his priority remains entertainment films.

Vijay has wrapped up the film in less than 40 days and speaking about his fast pace, he points out, "I'm a producer's director. I strongly believe the money should be seen on screen. As a filmmaker if you plan meticulously, the working days will come down, so will be the budget. People like Raj and Nikhil who have worked with me for the first time last year have expressed their interest to work with me again. *Power Play* with Raj was a step in that direction."



Vakeel Saab teaser breaks the internet

The teaser of *Vakeel Saab*, Pawan Kalyan's comeback film, was released by production house Sri Venkateswara Creations on Sankranti. The one-minute-long teaser has Pawan taking centre stage, beating people to pulp in a public restroom and metro train. Filled with his trademark swag and a killer one-liner as it culminates, the pulsating score of composer Thaman made the teaser all the more delectable for legions of power star fans, as the actor is returning to the silver screen after three years.

However, the teaser had to face some criticism as well, with many pointing out that it hardly gave any scope for the leading women who were the beating heart of the courtroom drama in *Pink* - which *Vakeel Saab* is based on. With the film set to discuss the importance of consent and how women are shamed in the name of culture, the fact that the three women - Nivetha Thomas, Anjali and Ananya - appear out of focus in the teaser had left many furious. Interestingly, earlier posters of *Vakeel Saab* too celebrated Pawan, leaving out the women.

Directed by Venu Sreeram, the film, a joint production venture between Sri Venkateswara Creations and Bayview Projects, is set to open in cinemas halls in April.



I think my entire journey has been special: Kiara

Actress Kiara Advani made her film debut in 2014 with *Fugly*, which was a no-show at the box office. However, she was later seen in hits such as *M.S. Dhoni: The Untold Story*, *Lust Stories*, *Bharat Ane Nenu*, *Kabir Singh* and *Good Newwz*. The actress cannot name a particular role as a game changer in her career, but credits all her work for the success she enjoys today. "For me I think every film (mattered) — right from my first film because that is what gave me my first step into the film industry. People also say *Kabir Singh* and *Lust Stories* (but) every film has been a turning point in my life. I would want every film to be like that, even my future films. So, I can't think of just one film. I think my entire journey has been special," Kiara says. She will be next seen in the Sidharth Malhotra-starrer *Shershaah*, *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2* with Kartik Aaryan and the star-studded *Jug Jugg Jeeyo*. She is also rumoured to be playing a role in *Acharya* opposite Ram Charan.

Salaar launched



Actor Prabhas' next, *Salaar*, with KGF helmer Prashanth Neel was launched at Ramanaidu Studios, Hyderabad on Friday. Besides the film's unit, the likes of Dil Raju, DVV Danayya, Yash, Sai Korrapati, and Ashok Kumar, Karnataka Deputy CM Dr Ashwath Narayan too graced the launch which went on with much pomp and show.

Produced by Hombale Films, the film, an underworld action saga, will see Prabhas play a "violent character". Early last month when the film was officially announced, the actor said *Salaar* provided him with an exciting opportunity to delve into a role he hasn't played before. "This is a very exciting film and my character is extremely violent, so this is something I haven't really done before. It's a pan-Indian film and I can't wait to be on the sets already," the 41-year-old actor said.

The film will go to floors in the last week of this month and it is believed that Prashanth will complete Prabhas' portions in less than two months. Talking to Twitter, Neel said he is overwhelmed with all the love and support coming the film's way. "Thank you @VKiragandur sir and #Prabhas sir for this opportunity. Thank you my rocky @TheNameIsYash for being with us today. Will not let you all down!! Overwhelmed with all the love and support coming our way. Thank you everyone (sic)," he wrote. KGF composer Ravi Basur is attached to compose music for this film as well.

Interesting title for Simha's next

The filming of Sri Simha Koduri's next with debutant director Manikanth Gelli, who assisted Ajay Bhupathi, is in the last leg.

The makers on Sankranti announced the title as *Thellavarithe Guruvaram*, while simultaneously unveiling the first look of Simha. Dressed as a bridegroom, he is seen sitting clueless on a chair with a varmala in hand.

Being bankrolled jointly by Rajani Korrapati and Ravindra Benerjee Muppaneni under their respective banners Vaarahi Chalana Chitram and Loukya Entertainments, the makers also announced that they are looking at a March release date for the Kaala Bhairava musical.

A romantic-comedy, Manikanth is directing from a script by Nagendra Pilla. Co-starring Chitra Shukla and newbie Misha Narang, the film features Rajeev Kanakala, Satya, Ajay, Viva Harsha, Sharanya Pradeep, Giridhar, Priya and Ravi Varma in supporting roles.



Sudeep joins Uppi's pan-India project

The duo of Upendra and Kichcha Sudeep, Kannada heavyweights, are teaming for the former's *Kabzaa*, it was announced on Sankranti. This is the second time after *Mukunda Murari*, which was a remake of Hindi film *Oh My God* that they are sharing screen space together. The *Eega* star is on board for a supporting role *Bhargav Bhakshi* in the multilingual film, and according to sources he has allocated close to 25 days from his call sheet. He is believed to be essaying the role of a cop who is ordered to end the bloody mafia in the film. He will begin shooting next month. "As actors, we all r ambitious n wake up wth ideas, thirsty to narrate a story n a gud one. But Sometimes being a part of someone else's dream is being family. Im happy to to b a part of #Kabzaa and once again share screen with @nimmaupendra sir. Bst wshs #BhargavBakshi (sic)," Sudeep posted on Twitter.

An underworld gangster- retro period drama, *Kabzaa*'s story spans from 1947 to 1980. Lagadapati Sridhar is presenting the Telugu version, while director R Chandru is doubling up as the producer as well. Besides Kannada and Telugu, the film, being made on a whopping budget of Rs 80 crore, will release in Tamil, Hindi, Malayalam, Odia and Marathi.



Inexperienced attack keeps Oz in check

Debutants Natarajan, Washington shine as Australia score 274/5 courtesy Labuschagne ton

PTI ■ BRISBANE

The incredible underdog fairytale of Thangarasu Natarajan got better with his twin strikes on debut headlining a commendable effort from an inexperienced Indian bowling attack, which reduced Australia to 274 for 5 despite a stylish hundred from Marnus Labuschagne on the opening day of the final Test here.

The Indian attack, with a collective experience of 3 Tests and 10 balls and 11 wickets in its kitty, was pitted against a batting line-up with 59 hundreds.

After 87 overs, the two Tamil Nadu rookies Natarajan (20-2-63-2) and Washington Sundar (2-4-63-1) could hold their heads high for a lion-hearted effort on a good batting pitch in the absence of the injured Ravichandran Ashwin and Jasprit Bumrah.

If tall off-spinner Washington set up a nice little trap to get rid of Steve Smith (36 off 77 balls), Natarajan forced centurion Labuschagne (108 off 204 balls) and Matthew Wade (47 off 85 balls) to miscue their pull-shots after a 113-run stand which threatened to put India in a spot.

At stumps, Tim Paine (38) and Cameron Green (28) had added 61 runs for the sixth wicket and the visitors would need a few quick wickets to keep the first innings total within a manageable range.

The distance between Palayampatti, a non-descript village in Tamil Nadu's Salem, to Australia's modern city Brisbane is 9035 km on a google map.

But add the hardships of a daily wager mother trying to put



Shardul Thakur hugs Washington Sundar after he dismiss Australian opener Marcus Harris on Day 1 of fourth Test at Gabba

food on table, being called for suspect action early in his career, not being privileged enough to get a paternity leave (his daughter is already three months old), it's a million miles emotionally that Team India's favourite Nattu has traversed.

Getting Labuschagne, who was on a rampage, with a short delivery ensured that Australia didn't finish the day with a score close to 350.

For someone, who was supposed to be a net bowler, India's Test Cap No 300, did well

enough on the first day despite not exactly being a natural. He also knows that he doesn't have the express pace to trouble batsmen (his average speed is 130 plus).

He bowled full during his first two spells and made the length shorter when the ball got old and that's how he induced Wade and Labuschagne to go for those pull shots.

Nobody would have blamed a Natarajan or a Shardul or "leader of the attack" Mohammed Siraj (19-8-51-1),

all of whom toiled manfully throughout their multiple spells in a battle of unequals.

The inexperience was palpable as Thakur (18-5-67-1) bowled a lot of full pitched deliveries which Labuschagne pounced on in the second and third sessions during an innings that had nine boundaries.

If all the injuries weren't enough, Navdeep Saini (7.5 overs) now seems to be in trouble as he has sustained a groin niggle moments after his skipper Ajinkya Rahane dropped a

dolly at gully when Labuschagne was on 37.

By far, Australia's most consistent batsman in the series, Labuschagne batted in two gears during the day.

In the first session, he faced 82 balls and sedately moved to 19 but in the next 113 balls, scored another 82 runs to reach his fifth hundred in 195 balls.

He trusted the bounce, hit some lovely drives and

4th Test, Day 2
Live from 5:00am IST
SONY TEN 1, 3 & SIX

was also ready to pull anything that was short.

During his partnership with Smith, the former Australian skipper was the aggressor but Washington, a specialist batsman till 2016 and now a frontline off-spinner, with the help of his seniors — skipper Rahane and his deputy Rohit Sharma — laid a beautiful trap.

Washington had bowled three maiden overs prior to lunch and the fidgety Smith, who is always looking to get a move on, fell for the leg trap that was set for him.

Rohit stationed himself at

Saini complains of groin pain



Brisbane: The injury-plagued Indian team took another hit on Friday when pacer Navdeep Saini was forced off the field during the fourth and final Test due to groin pain and taken for

scans. The 28-year-old Saini had bowled five balls of his eighth, and the innings 36th, over during the second session when he had to walk off the field because of the pain. With this, his further participation in the match, which began this morning, has been thrown into serious doubt.

"Navdeep Saini has complained of pain in his groin. He is currently being monitored by the BCCI medical team," read a short statement from the BCCI on the one-Test-old bowler's condition. "Navdeep Saini has now gone for scans," added a brief update that came after the initial note. PTI

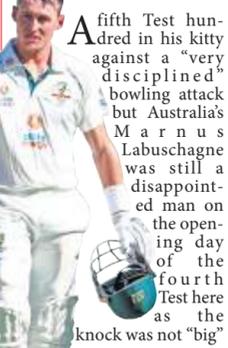
short mid-wicket for a whip that Smith plays on the on-side.

They were banking on the extra bounce that they had seen Washington generate with the white ball.

The plan worked as Smith flicked one straight into Rohit's hands just few minutes after the lunch.

Labuschagne disappointed at not getting 'big score'

PTI ■ BRISBANE



enough for him. Australia ended the day 274/5, thanks largely to Labuschagne's 108 off 204 balls. The 26-year-old said he should have done more.

"...I think, I am definitely disappointed not going on and getting a really big score, which would have put us in a better position as a team," Labuschagne said at the virtual post-play press-conference.

"Any Test century, it doesn't matter who it is against or against what opposition, you want to make sure you are scoring hundreds and probably for me (it was) today it was disappointing that (I) did not

end up making that a really big hundred," he stressed.

However, he credited the Indian bowlers for being disciplined early on and hardly giving away any scoring opportunities.

"...Indian bowling attacks, they are very disciplined and doesn't matter who is bowling, they are very planned, they are very strategic and we saw that today with their bowling attack.

"They were disciplined early and did not give us many of those scoring opportunities in the first session," the right-handed batsman said.

Siraj abused by Gabba crowd, called grub

PTI ■ BRISBANE

India fast bowler Mohammed Siraj was targeted for abuse by a section of the crowd on the opening day of the fourth Test, a newspaper here reported, claiming that he was called a "grub" by some spectators.

The reported incident happened a few days after Siraj was racially abused by spectators at the Sydney Cricket Ground on the third and fourth day of the drawn third Test. That had led to an expulsion of six people from the stands and an unreserved apology from Cricket Australia to the visiting team.

On Friday, a report in the Sydney Morning Herald quoted a spectator as saying that a

section of the crowd at the Gabba targeted Siraj.

"The guys behind me have been calling — shouting — both Washington and Siraj grubs," a spectator named Kate was quoted as saying by the newspaper.

"It started targeted at Siraj and it was a chant similar to the SCG one (in which fans sung to the tune of Que Sera, Sera but substituted the lyrics with Que Shiraz, Shiraz).

"But this time it was Siraj. I suspect it's not a coincidence that it's Siraj being targeted post the SCG stuff."

According to the newspaper, at one point, a man in the crowd was heard yelling, "Siraj, give us a wave, give us a wave, give us a wave. Siraj, you bloody grub."



Injured Hanuma Vihari on Friday left for India after being ruled out of the ongoing fourth Test in Brisbane. Vihari has sustained a grade 2 injury during the final day of his match-saving 23 and will now require rest, followed by intense rehabilitation which rules him out of England series. BCCI/Twitter

Sundar ready to bowl 40-50 overs

PTI ■ BRISBANE

Washington Sundar, prior to his unexpected Test debut on Friday against Australia, had bowled over 285 overs in first-class cricket and after dismissing Steve Smith, the Tamil Nadu off-spinner is ready to bowl 50 in an innings if that's what the side wants of him.

India's T20 specialist off-spinner was asked to stay back by the team management after the white-ball series to help as a net bowler but injuries to key players, including senior pro Ravichandran Ashwin, landed him in a mouth-watering duel with Smith which he won hands down.

"I have always felt that my skills are very good with red ball. I have bowled a lot of overs in first class cricket and first division league in Chennai as well.



Washington Sundar celebrates after he dismiss Steve Smith

I was just waiting for this opportunity and last couple of months, we were here, I did get to bowl a lot of overs and improve upon my skills," the shy bowler said after first day's play.

But does he have the stamina to bowl long spells that a team expects from its spinners

considering that he hasn't played first-class cricket since 2017?

His answer is 'bring it on'. "Like any bowler, I love bowling a lot of overs. It's just so much fun to bowl a lot of overs. Give me 20, 30, 40 or 50 overs. We had some plans going for Steve Smith and (Marnus)

Labuschagne and I am very glad they worked. The first wicket definitely felt good."

Washington kept Smith quiet for two overs and in the 13th delivery got him caught at short mid-wicket.

Did Ashwin versus Smith set a template for him?

"We did have some plans for Smith and it's a different game altogether. Last game was different, conditions were different and I had to bowl good balls over and over again. It happened (the dismissal) and it's great."

The former India U-19 World Cupper feels the wicket was good for batting and it was great effort to reduce to the hosts to 274 for 5.

"There was a little bit of spongy bounce till lunch and the wicket was good and bowlers did a good job to restrict Australia to 5 for 274."

Arjun Tendulkar makes debut for Mumbai senior team

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Budding left-arm pacer Arjun Tendulkar, who is the son of iconic former batsman Sachin Tendulkar, made his Mumbai senior team debut on Friday in a Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy match against Haryana, which the hosts lost by eight wickets here.

In the Elite E League group clash played at the suburban BKC ground, Mumbai made 143 after opting to bat first, a target which Haryana overhauled in 17.4 overs.

Arjun had an off day with

the ball as he returned with rather unimpressive figures of 1/34 in the three overs that he bowled.

He dismissed Haryana opener Chaitya Bishnoi (4) cheaply after he edged a delivery to wicket-keeper Aditya Tare to claim his maiden wicket for the Mumbai senior team.

Incidentally, his legendary father's last Ranji Trophy game was against Haryana back in 2013.

Arjun didn't get the chance to face a single delivery when Mumbai batted as the team was bundled out in

19.3 overs.

Haryana then rode on one-down Himanshu Rana's blazing unbeaten 75 off 53 balls to chase down the target with consummate ease.

The 21-year-old Arjun has now qualified for the IPL auctions, as he has made his debut for the Mumbai team.

Tendulkar junior was added to the Mumbai squad, along with another pacer Krutik Hanagavadi, by the Salil Ankola-led selection committee, after the BCCI permitted a total of 22 players to be selected.

Captain Root's 168* puts Eng ahead

AFP ■ GALLE

England captain Joe Root hit an unbeaten 168 as his side built up a lead of 185 over Sri Lanka on a rain-hit second day of the opening Test.

England were 320/4 when rain halted play in Galle. Root and Dan Lawrence, who scored 73 on his Test debut, built a 173-run partnership after the tourists resumed the day on 127/2.

Root, who is batting with Jos Buttler (7), hit his 18th Test ton and kept up the pressure on the home bowlers despite losing overnight partner Jonny Bairstow for 47 early in the day.

"I think the things could happen very quickly as the game moves forward, generally does here. It is really important that we make the most of this first innings lead that we have got now," Root told reporters.

"We will be really ruthless. I have spoken about this ahead of the series and make it count and put them under pressure. That way try and bat just once."

After a full opening day in the empty stadium in Galle, rain started falling just before the start of the second day and wiped out the final session.

Root started the day on 66 and passed 100 soon after lunch with a single off Dilruwan Perera. He raised his bat and hugged Lawrence. It was the star batsman's highest Test score in more than a year after going through 2020 without a century and said he felt "good" to make it count.

"Generally when I get a



hundred I make it really count," Root, who has a Test best of 254 in 98 Tests, said. "I have got a good record past 100. Tomorrow I will try to make another really big one and drive the game forward from there."

He added, "I felt I really got in a good mindset throughout this game so far. Will try and take that forward into the rest of this winter tour and beyond."

England will tour India for a full series including four Tests after the two matches in Sri Lanka as part of a hectic cricket calendar in 2021.

Lawrence, 23, stood firm with his captain, displaying confidence against the spinners as he brought up his fifty in 95 balls with five fours and one six.

Lawrence, who plays for English county Essex, survived two dropped catches on 60 and 68 and finally fell to Perera.

Arsenal remain in midtable after draw

AFP ■ LONDON

Mikel Arteta admitted Arsenal were suffering from fatigue after their recent revival fought to a halt in a scrappy 0-0 draw against Crystal Palace on Thursday.

Arteta's side had won their previous four matches in all competitions, but they were not fortunate enough to extend their unbeaten run to five games.

Palace were unable to convert several first half chances at the Emirates Stadium and, although Arsenal improved after the interval, they missed a chance to climb into the top half of the Premier League.

"I wanted to see a win and a few goals but we were fatigued. I cannot fault the spirit but it wasn't enough," Arteta said.

"We created a lot of situations against the low block but there was a period when we gave the ball away too much. We are playing a lot of games and you can see fatigue. Many players aren't fresh. We lacked the quality in the final third to win the game."

Arsenal sit in 11th place, eight points adrift of the Champions League places as they continue to pay the price for their worst start to a season since 1974-75.

Just before Christmas, Arsenal were only four points above the relegation zone, so their current position 12 points away from the bottom three affords Arteta some much-needed breathing space.

But this disjointed display underlined the attacking flaws that have stopped Arsenal building on last season's FA Cup triumph. Palace have only won one of



their past eight matches in all competitions and are one point behind Arsenal in 13th.

Emile Smith-Rowe, Arsenal's promising young midfielder, started after scoring against Newcastle as a substitute last weekend.

But Kiernan Tierney was absent with muscle tightness and the Gunners missed the Scotland left-back's busy presence.

Aubameyang has endured a difficult season and, once again, Arsenal's captain was a difficult figure.

The Gabon forward briefly sparked into life and tested Vicente Guaita with a fierce strike that was parried by the Palace keeper.

But Palace were finding their feet on a wet evening and Granit Xhaka had to make a perfectly timed sliding tackle to stop Wilfried Zaha getting a shot away after the forward slalomed into the penalty area.

Palace broke through the Arsenal defence again when Christian Benteke scooped his shot wastefully over from 10

yards after good work by Tyrick Mitchell.

James Tomkins was inches away from giving Roy Hodgson's men the lead as the Palace defender got above Rob Holding to glance his header against the bar from Eberechi Eze's free-kick.

Arsenal were struggling to get out of their own half and Bernd Leno had to make a superb save to repel Benteke's header from Mitchell's cross.

Arteta's half-time team talk seemed like it might have the desired effect and Hector Bellerin drilled just wide from the edge of the area in the opening minute of the second half.

Arsenal threatened again as Bukayo Saka forced Guaita to block at the near post before Lacazette blasted into the side-netting after a flowing move.

Arteta sent on Nicolas Pepe and Thomas Partey, back after a month out with a thigh injury. But the expected push never came and Palace were able to keep the misfiring Gunners at bay with ease.

Karachi: Six players, including Shan Masood, Haris Sohail and Imam-ul-Haq, from the recent New Zealand series were axed as Pakistan's new chief selector Mohammad Wasim on Friday announced a massively overhauled 20-member squad for the two-Test home series against South Africa.

Wasim rewarded several top performers of the domestic season and included nine uncapped players in the squad, which will be trimmed to 16 players ahead of the first Test.

Top scoring batsmen Saud Shakeel, Kamran Ghulam, all-rounder Agha Salman, left-arm spinner Nauman Ali, off-spinner Sajid Khan and fast bowlers Hasan Ali and Tabish Khan — all got call-ups for the series beginning on January 26 at the National Stadium here.



The selectors also upgraded young batsman Abdullah Shafique to the Test squad although he was selected for the New Zealand tour as a specialist T20 player. Similarly, the selectors have also called up pacer Haris Rauf, another T20 specialist for the two-Test series.

The selectors also dropped six players from the dismal tour

of New Zealand with Wasim insisting that fast bowler Naseem Shah was not in the Test squad because he had an injury.

Other players dropped from NZ tour include experienced pacers, Mohammad Abbas and Sohail Khan.

Wasim, insisted that selectors would follow a horses for courses policy now and the squad had been picked keeping in mind the conditions in Pakistan for the SA series.

Test squad: Babar Azam (C), Mohammad Rizwan (VC), Imran Butt, Abdullah Shafique, Abid Ali, Azhar Ali, Fawad Alam, Sarfaraz Ahmed, Saud Shakeel, Kamran Ghulam, Agha Salman, Hasan Ali, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Tabish Khan, Haris Rauf, Sajid Khan, Nauman Ali, Yasir Shah, Faheem Ashraf, Mohammad Nawaz. PTI