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HYDERABAD DELHI LUCKNOW **BHOPAL RAIPUR CHANDIGARH BHUBANESWAR RANCHI DEHRADUN VIJAYAWADA**

> *LATE CITY VOL. 4 ISSUE 104 *Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable



VAAN Electric Moto launches e-bikes



Modi: Aspirational districts now eliminating

barriers to progress 5



Mission Impossible P not until 2023 and 2024

→ In brief <

Staying at isolation facility not mandatory for Covid +ve foreigners

ravellers from any country arriving in India, who test Covid positive, will not mandatorily be managed at an isolation facility from Saturday, but have to quarantine themselves at home according to protocols, authorities said. In its revised 'Guidelines for International Arrivals' released on Thursday, the government said foreign arrivals, who test positive, will still have to undergo home quarantine for seven days even after they test negative, and undertake RT-PCR test on the eighth day of arrival in India. The revised guidelines came into effect from Saturday. Earlier the norm was that travellers coming from any country, including those considered 'at-risk', would be managed at an isolation facility and treated according to the standard protocols, the government said.

R-Day: Mahatma Gandhi's favourite 'Abide With Me' hymn dropped

ne of Mahatma Gandhi's favourite Christian hymns "Abide With Me" has been dropped from this year's Beating Retreat ceremony on January 29, according to a brochure released by the Indian Army on Saturday. "Abide With Me", written by Scottish Anglican poet and hymnologist Henry Francis Lyte in 1847, has been part of the Beating Retreat ceremony since 1950. This year's ceremony will conclude with 'Sare Jahan Se Acha', the brochure stated. The Beating Retreat used to end with the "Abide With Me" hymn. The brochure also listed 26 tunes that will be played at this year's ceremony at Vijay Chowk. The 26 tunes that will be played at this year's ceremony include 'Hey Kanchha', 'Channa Bilauri', 'Jai Janam Bhumi', 'Nritya Sarita', 'Vijay Josh', 'Kesaria Banna', 'Veer Siachen', 'Hathroi', 'Vijay Ghosh', 'Ladaakoo', 'Swadeshi' 'Amar Chattan', 'Golden Arrows' and 'Swarn Jayanti', according to

'IPL will start in last week of March, owners want matches in India

he BCCI is set to conduct the 2022 IPL from last week of March to end of May and efforts would be made to host the lucrative event in India as per the wishes of team owners, Board secretary Jay Shah said on Saturday. If sources are to be believed, the tentative start date is March 27. "I am delighted to confirm that the 15th season of the IPL will start in the last week of March and will run until May end. A majority of the team owners expressed their wish that the tournament be held in India," Shah was quoted as saying in a press note issued by the BCCI. He also made it clear that the board's first preference is to hold the event in India. "The BCCI was always keen on staging the 2022 edition that will see two new teams - Ahmedabad and Lucknow - in India. I can tell you that we will leave no stone unturned in ensuring that IPL stays in India," Shah said.

Month & Paksham:

Pausa, Krishna Paksha

Tithi: Panchami:Jan 22 09:14 AM to Jan 23 09:12 AM

Shashthi: Jan 23 09:12 AM to Jan 24 08:44 AM Nakshatram: Utara Phalguni: Jan 22 10:38 AM to Jan 23 11:09

AM Hasta: Jan 23 11:09 AM to Jan 24 11:15 AM

Rahukalam: 4:39 PM to 6:02 PM

Yamagandam: 12:28 PM to 1:51 PM

Varjyam: 07:35 PM to 09:11 PM **Gulika:** 3:15 PM to 4:39 PM

Amritakalam: 05:13 AM to 06:50 AM

Abhijit Muhurtham: 12:05 PM to 12:50 PM WEATHER

Temp: 31° Humidity: 41% Sunrise: 6:53 AM Sunset: 6:01 PM

Forecast: SUNNY

Updated JANUARY 22, 2021 5:00 PM

DANGER BELLS

Many corona suspects fight shy of tests, opt for self-medication

K VENKATESHWARLU HYDERABAD

Many coronavirus suspects are not showing interest in taking coronavirus detection tests during the current third wave. Many people including political leaders prefer to self-medicate instead of approaching doctors. Some are moving freely in society without undergoing quarantine or approaching hospitals.

Many people are going to medical shops and purchasing corona medicine even if they get a common cold, cough and fever without undergoing any tests.

People are purchasing medicines Azithromycin, Zincovit/Polybion, Omage, Doxycycline, Montek LC, and Limcee tablets directly from nearby medical shops Some are going by the

opinions of coronaaffected persons to purchase medicines. Some others are going to medical shops and asking to give medicines for

People are purchasing medicines like Azithromycin, Zincovit/Polybion, Omage, Doxycycline, Montek LC, and Limcee tablets

directly from nearby medical shops.

One drug shop owner in Vidyanagar said that it has become a regular for them and that they are giving medicines for corona without prescriptions.

Ramesh from Uppal said that he has been using corona medicine as he has been suffering from fever, cough and cold for the last two days. He said that he didn't go for the test as he has no severe prob-

Many political leaders too irrespective of party affiliations are following the common man's approach regarding corona treatment.

> One Congress leader told The Pioneer that he is taking corona medicine without undergoing a test as he developed corona symptoms.

"I am afraid to go for the corona test as I may contract corona if I am not having corona as many corona affected people come for tests. During the second wave I contracted corona that way," he said.

45,567 found to have fever during TS fever survey

PNS HYDERABAD

Nearly 45,567 people were found to have fever-like symptoms among the 12.68 lakh people surveyed during the fever survey conducted by the Telangana govern-ment on Friday.

This is more than 10 times the number of people who have tested positive for

Covid on Friday. Home isolation kits are given to everyone who has symptoms. Details of children and adults who participated in the survey were collected separately. A large percentage of adults were found to have corona symp-

Taking a serious note of the police action against Sanjay, Privileges Committee Chairman

LS Privileges panel serves notices to CS, DGP, others

The Lok Sabha Parliamentary Privileges Committee has served notices to Telangana Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar, Home Department Principal

Secretary Ravi Guptha, DGP M. Mahender Reddy, Karimnagar CP V. Sathyanarayana and others in connection with the arrest of BJP leader and Karimnagar MP Bandi Sanjay Kumar

when he sought to stage a 'Jagaran deeksha' at his MP office in Karimnagar on January 2 demanding that the TS government should amend GO No: 317 immediately.

Sunil Kumar Singh said that the officials would have to appear before the Committee on February

The Privileges Committee took the decision after examining pieces of evidence, including video clippings, showing how the police arrested Sanjay after cutting the grill of his MP office using gas cutters. The evidence was submitted

by Sanjay. It may be recalled that Sanjay lodged a complaint and appeared before the 15-member Privileges Committee on January 21 and explained how the TS Police had behaved towards him although he is an MP.

Kaleshwaram Irrigation Project Corporation gets 'A' category grading from REC

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Kaleshwaram Irrigation Project Corporation Limited (KIPCL) has been accorded recognition as an 'A' category organisation based on performance by the Rural Electrification Corporation (REC).

Tĥe Kaleshwaram Irrigation Project Corporation Ltd, is a Special Purpose Vehicle set up

in 2016 for developing, financing, operationalising, and running the Kaleshwaram project in Telangana. The main part of the project from the Medigadda Barrage to Kondapochamma Sagar has been completed in record time and water was conveyed from the Medigadda Barrage to Kondapochamma



KTR asks police to probe alleged land grab by AIG **Hospital**

PNS HYDERABAD

KTR has asked the police to look into the alleged land encroachment by AIG Hospital. A complaint régarding this was filed via Twitter.

In a tweet activist Khalida Praveen said, "These children lost their father to covid. An illegal encroachment is taking place by AIG Hospital in Gachibowli. They are running pillar to post for oppressed. Please help (sic)."

As per the FIR, the complainant, Mohammed Edris,

No early Assembly elections in TS, says Minister Jagadish

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Dismissing speculations, Energy Minister G. Jagadish Reddy said that there is no chance for early Assembly elections in Telangana.

He said that the Congress leader . Uttam Kumar Red of an early election will not come true. Uttam is dreaming about the possibility of early elections in the state, he added.

Jagadish said that the TRS will win all the 12 Assembly segments in erstwhile Nalgonda district in the next elections.

"The Congress doesn't exist in Nalgonda and people know that they are responsible for fluorosis and the drought-like situation

Lokayukta issues

appear on Feb 9

The Lokavukta of

Telangana has served a

notice on the Director of

Public Health, G. Srinivasa

Rao, to appear in person

before it on February 9 in

connection with a com-

plaint filed by TPCC

General Secretary Bakka

Judson alleging that the DPH had engaged in cor-

În a statement issued on

Saturday, Judson said that

the Lokayukta responded to

his complaint alleging that

Srinivasa Rao had indulged

Judson alleged that the

Vigilance Enforcement had

reported to the government

on February 10, 2019, that

Srinivasa Rao had misused

Rs 20.40 crore while print-

ing IEC material.

The government issued

GO Rt. 90 on February 27,

2021, stating that the cases

Judson said that he had

mentioned in his complaint

that a probe must be

ordered into the purchase

of medicines, mistakes in

registering corona deaths

and the irregularities in

transfers and promotions.

were dismissed.

ruption.

fiat to Health

Director to

PNS HYDERABAD



there," Jagadish said.

He said that while the Congress could not even get water from the Musi River near the district, the TRS government supplied even Godavari water to the district.



Dalit Bandhu to be implemented throughout Telangana state

Taking the sting out of the Opposition criticism that the govscheme on the backburner after the Huzurabad by-election, the government has decided to implement the scheme in all the 118 constituencies by March end. Social Welfare

Minister Koppula Eshwar and Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar held a video conference on Saturday with Collectors as per Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao's instructions to speed up the implementation of the

Dalit Bandhu scheme. KCR had earlier announced that apart from pilot projects in Huzurabad, Vasalamarri and four other mandals in the State, the

scheme would be implemented all over the State by extending assistance to 100 beneficiaries in each constituency during this financial year.

Accordingly, the Minister scheme to 100 Dalit beneficiaries in each of the 118 constituencies and by the end of this financial year in



Govt sets up committee for improving air quality

Govt okays promotions for IAS officers

The State government has issued orders granting promotions to several IAS officers.

Shailaja Ramaiyer, Ahmad Nadeem, N. Sridhar and M. Veerabrahmaiah have been promoted to the Above Super Time Scale (Level 15 in the pay matrix) and have been retained in the same posts and redesignated as Principal Secretaries. These IAS officers belong to the 1997 batch.

IAS officers D. Ronald Ross, B. Bharathi Naik, B. Vijiendra, and K. Surendra Mohan (2006 batch) have



been promoted to Super Time Scale.

Sarfaraz Ahmad, Dr N. Satyanarayana, S. Arvinder Singh and M. Prashanti (2009 batch)

It was only a courtesy call but

that meeting triggered specula-

tions that the Left may have an

Pragati Bhavan.

Sabha elections

It is raining promotions in Telangana as 25IAS officers have been promoted to newer scales. These include FOur 1997 batch IAS officers, four 2006 batch, four 2009, Nine 2013 batch, One 2017 batch and seven 2018 batch IAS officers.

have been promoted to Selection

IAS officers K. Shashanka, Shruti Ojha, Ch. Shivalingaiah, V. Venkateswarulu, M. Hanumantha Rao, D. Amoy Kumar, K. Hymavathi and M. Haritha have been promoted to Junior Administrative Grade scale.

cussions with top leaders of the

At the national level, the Left par-



A three-member committee of the Krishna River Management Board will meet next week to discuss the drinking water and irrigation requirements of the two Telugu States.

The Board has sent letters to the Engineers-in-Chief of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh requesting ing water required for drinking purpose and irrigation during the Yasangi season. It wanted the States to spell out their Krishna water requirements by January 24. Upon receipt of indents from both the States, the Board would finalise the



dates for further meetings.

Left may back Cong, big setback to Federal Front, TRS have an alliance with the Left. Keeping this in view KCR held dis-

In a big setback to the idea of a Federal Front at the national level and to the TRS at the state level, the Left is likely to sail with the

Congress. The statement of CPM State secretary Tammineni Veerabhadram indicates that the Left is not ready to break ties with the Congress at the national level.

Veerabhadram said that anti-BJP parties must join hands with the Congress and that only the Congress can fight the BJP at the national level.

It may be recalled that a few days

ago the national leaders of Left par-

ties including Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan met Chief

CPM State Secretary Veerabhadram also suspects that KCR's strategy was to split anti-BJP votes for the benefit of the latter. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister DMK supremo MK Stalin and RJD Chief Tejaswi Yadav also are not ready to break ties with the Congress as they have been sailing with the Congress for a long time.

alliance with the TRS to fight the ties are sailing with the Congress during the Lok Sabha elections to BJP in the next Assembly and Lok fight the BJP. The Left strongly feels

with the support of other anti-BJP Generally, the Left would have

only an opinion at the nationallevel regarding political alliances and do not have state-wise alliances. If the Left decides to have an alliance with the Congress at the national-level their state

units will also do the same. CPM State Secretary Veerabhadram also suspects that KCR's strategy was to split anti-BJP votes for the benefit of the latter.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister DMK supremo MK Stalin and RJD Chief Tejaswi Yadav also are not ready to break ties with the Congress as they have been sailing with the Congress for a long time.

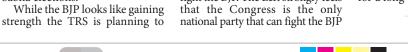
EC extends ban on physical rallies, roadshows till January 31

PNS NEW DELHI

The Election Commission on Saturday extended the ban on physical rallies and roadshows till January 31, but gave relaxation for physical public meetings of parties or contesting candidates for phase 1 from January 28 and for phase 2 from February 1.

The commission has also enhanced the limit of people allowed for door-to-door cam-Instead of five, now 10 people,

excluding security personnel, will be allowed for door-to door campaigns.



that the Congress is the only



KTR asks police to probe alleged land grab...

Continued from page 1

alleges that they suspect one Tanveer Khaleel is illegally occupying the land in Survey Number 27 of Gachibowli village.

Responding to this, KTR asked Cyberabad CP Stephen Ravindra to look into the issue.

'The case is being investigated. We will pursue and finalise it at the earliest based on evidence," Madhapur Police said.

Responding to the issue AIG said, "This is an issue between two individuals. The AIG has nothing to do with it. Secondly, the narratives are not the ones that should be believed. One has to go by facts.

The FIR that has been attached to the tweet clearly shows that the issue is between some individuals. These people are dragging in prominent companies to get mileage and public atten-

Republic Day parade to have 25 tableaux, 16 marching contingents,

This year's Republic Day parade will have 16 marching contingents, 17 military bands and 25 tableaux of various states, departments and armed forces, the Indian Army said in a statement on Saturday.

The Army will be represented by a mounted column of cavalry, 14 mechanised columns, six marching contingents and a flypast by advanced light helicopters of its aviation wing at the Republic Day parade-2022 (RDP-2022), it

The mechanised columns of the Army will show one PT-76 tank, one Centurion tank, two MBT Arjun MK-I tanks, one OT-62 TOPAS armoured personnel carrier, one BMP-I infantry fighting vehicle and two BMP-II infantry fighting vehicles, it stated.

One 75/24 Pack howitzer, two Dhanush howitzers, one PMS bridge-laying system, two Sarvatra bridge-laying systems, one HT-16 electronic warfare system, two Taran Shakti elec-



gents of the Indian Army at

Regiment, Assam Regiment,

Jammu and Kashmir Light

Infantry, Sikh Light Infantry,

Army Ordnance Corps

Regiment and Parachute

Regiment, according to the

tronic warfare systems, one Tiger Cat missile system and two Akash missile systems will also be part of the mechanised columns at RDP-22.

PT-76, Centurion tank, OT-62 and 75/24 Pack howitzer played a major role in the 1971 Îndo-Pak war in which India defeated Pakistan. The war led to the creation of Bangladesh.

One marching contingent each of the Indian Air Force and the Indian Navy will also The six marching contin-

statement.

participate in RDP-2022, the RDP-2022 will be of Rajput statement said.

From the central paramilitary forces, five marching contingents of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Central Industrial Police Force (CISF), Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and Border Security Force (BSF) will participate in RDP-

'Atmosphere of violence, hatred targeting one group'

Senior Congress leader Digvijaya Singh on Saturday said an atmosphere of violence and hatred was being fostered in the country to target a sec-

tion of society.

The Rajya Sabha MP, while speaking at a discussion on 'Iournalism and Burning Issue' organised by Central India Press Club here, also claimed politicians should have tolerance and thick skins in a democracy, as it helped them to scale new heights.

"Many a times an instance is given that when Partition was taking place Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru went in the midst of people and an old woman grabbed him by his collar and asked what she had got out of Independence. Nehruji replied what you have got is that you had held the prime minister by his collar. This democracy is missing nowadays," he said.

Taking a swipe at the ruling dispensation, without taking names, and the prevailing times, Singh said. "Leave aside

something from far off, people get upset. Sedition cases can be registered because you have become a threat to the

He said stand up comedians were now being seen as dangers to the nation, apparently a reference to some of them getting booked in the recent past, and asked how democracy would continue to be nurtured if politicians didn't have the strength to withstand criticism.

"An atmosphere of violence and hatred targeting a particular group is fascism's game plan. Identify an enemy and once your enemy is identified then declare him as antinational and then anti-nationalism becomes nationalism of the day," he said.

He said branding one section as anti-national and then making the fight against them a symbol of nationalism can't be defined as democracy but dictatorship and fascism.

"The burning issues are what is nationalism and antinationalism, religion. Should

Isn't the use of religion as a weapon unlawful? These are burning issues. Can't we criticize? Critics can't be antinational. Stand up comedians can't be anti-national," he observed.

Singh said tolerance and acceptance have been the tenets of Indian society, culture and Sanatan Dharma preached respect for all religions, and this aspect must never be forgotten, adding that the Constitution allowed all to put forth their views.

He said the National Security Act, which was used by the British to put down the Congress-led Independence struggle, was now being invoked even for "petty things" and it was unfortunate laws like NSA and sedition could not be withdrawn even after the country got freedom.

Stressing that the country's Constitutional statutory institutions were getting affected, Singh said impartial journalism had a major rolé to play if democracy was to remain

Dalit Bandhu to be implemented...

Continued from page 1

the scheme should be grounded 100 per cent and steps should be taken to ensure that all the 100 selected beneficiaries in each constituency would start their units.

The government has allocated Rs 1,200 crore for the scheme in the current fiscal, and Rs 100

crore has already been released. The list of beneficiaries should be finalised as per the advice of local MLAs and it should get the approval of district in-charge Ministers, he said.

Under the scheme, every beneficiary would be given a

grant of Rs 10 lakh without any bank linkage to set up a business unit as decided by the beneficiary based on his aptitude and experience. An amount of Rs 10,000 should be set aside from the Rs 10 lakh for the Dalit Bandhu Protection Fund.

The government has so far released Rs 100 crore out of the Rs 1,200 crore sanctioned for implementing the scheme in all constituencies and it would release the remaining amount in phases before March-end.

The Dalit Bandhu scheme is already under implementation in Vasalamarri and Huzurabad in saturation mode.

It may be mentioned that Vasalamarri adopted by the Chief Minister was the place where KCR announced the scheme while the formal announcement of the pilot project was made in Huzurabad ahead of the by-election.

Eshwar said that subsequently the government also started implementing Dalit Bandhu in the Chintakani mandal of Madhra constituency in Khammam, the Tirumalagiri mandal in Suryapeta, the Charagonda mandal in Nagarkurnool and the Nizamsagar mandal Kamareddy district.

The four mandals in four corners of the State were selected for implementing the scheme to understand the requirements of Dalits in different areas and finetune the scheme.

On Friday, Minister Gangula Kamalakar distributed the units selected by the beneficiaries themselves in Karimnagar. The video conference

addressed by the Minister was attended by SC Corporation Chairman Śrinivas, the Special Chief Secretary of Finance, Ramakrishna Rao, the Secretary of SC Development, Rahul Bojja, and the SC Corporation MĎ, Karunakar.

Continued from page 1

He said the mandate in Huzurnagar and Sagar Nagarjuna Assembly constituencies clearly indicated the faith of the people in Chief Minister Chandrasekhar Rao.

B P Pandey has written let-

ters to the Telangana and AP

The GRMB is conducting

an exercise in accordance

with the Gazette notification

to take over three projects of

Telangana and five projects

of AP under its jurisdiction.

These issues will be dis-

cussed in the sub-committee

governments.

TPCC to launch week-long and Protection Movement

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The TS government should have corrected land records after conducting a land survey, the TPCC's Dharani Committee has said. But the government acted without thinking about consequences, the panel said.

The TPCC Dharani Committee's meeting was held on Saturday at the Gandhi Bhavan with TPCC chief Revanth Reddy in attendance.

Later, speaking to the media, panel member and AICC official spokesperson Dasoju Sravan said that lakhs of farmers were roaming around MRO offices like beggars carrying land records.

He said that Dharani has

been showing that ex-servicemen are not the owners of the land allotted to them. Several survey numbers were missed and lost in mutation, he said, making it clear that the Congress will launch a weeklong Land Protection Movement supporting the vic-

He said the Congress will accept complaints from farmers facing land issues at mandal offices. He said that they will bring the issues to the notice of the state and Central governments.

tims of Dharani.

He alleged that the government had pulled assigned lands given to SCs and STs in the name of Dharani portal. He said that nobody knows about the data security of Dharani

TPCC official spokesper-son Addanki Dayakar alleged that the government was threatening farmers.

The TRS government is trying to give lands given by Congress governments to farmers to investors. He said that the Congress will stand by the victims of Dharani portal.

Another spokesperson Bellaiah Naik alleged that the government had kept assigned lands and lands given to exservicemen in the black list.

He alleged that the Telangana real estate mafia is running the state. Prices of lands have increased in such a manner that even the middle class is unable to purchase a

LS Privileges panel...

Continued from page 1

He also stated that the TS High Court had also found fault with the police excess-

es and his arrest. Sanjay also reminded that the police had attacked him in the same manner in the

past too.

Sanjay mentioned the names of the other police officials like Huzurabad ACP K. Koti Reddy, Jammikunta Police Station Inspector K. Ramchander Rao, Huzurabad Inspector V. Srinivas, Karimnagar CCS ACP K. Srinivasa Rao, and Karimnagar Two Town Inspector Ch. Natesh.

The Privileges Committee has issued notices to these police officials too.

Kaleshwaram **Irrigation Project Corporation gets** 'A' category...

Continued from page 1

Works on the distributor and field channel works are progressing briskly, according to official sources.
The KIPCL heade

headea Rajat Kumar, Special Chief Secretary, Irrigation, is a public company fully owned by the Telangana govern-

The government has issued orders to include the Palamuru Ranga Reddy lift irrigation scheme as an additional mandate of KIPCL.

The Corporation has signed agreements for financing the project so that the project is executed fast.

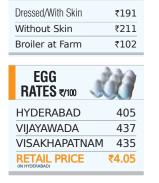
This includes loans from the commercial bankers' consortium comprising the Union Bank of India consortium, the Punjab National Bank Consortium, the Bank of Baroda and financial institutions like the PFC, REC Ltd and NABARD.

The Corporation has been paying the interest and principal of the loans to banks and financial institutions promptly. The REC Ltd, New Delhi, is one of the lenders of KIPCL and it has given 'A Category' grading based on the financial and other performances.

B. Hari Ram, the Engineer-in-Chief, Gajwel, is the MD of KIPCL. The KIPCL has six directors from irrigation, TS Transco and Finance departments.

CHICKEN

RATES ₹/KG



Many corona suspects fight shy of tests, opt for self-medication Continued from page 1

One TRS leader has been moving freely among the public although he has fever, cough and cold. He said that he has been taking corona medicine but didn't go for a

"I have no problems and freely. I think it may be an ordinary fever," he said.

Dr Kashinath said that using corona medicines is not proper without confirming corona infection as the medicines given for corona have side effects. The side effects could be serious in

The committee will examine

the proposals of both the

States and take a decision on

Telangana State has

already proposed 19 tmc for

drinking water and 151 tmc

to meet irrigation needs. The

Andhra Pradesh is yet to

submit its proposals.

the quantum of releases.

persons having diabetes, hypertension and other comorbidities.

He said that it is better for people to go for corona tests if they suffer from headaches and body pains immediately. He said that the percentage of transmission is more but the percentage of deaths is very

Moving freely even after developing symptoms is not civilised behaviour, he said. Moving freely with symptoms is nothing but transmitting corona. Those who transmit the virus may have immunity but others may not have it and will suffer, he added.

KRMB seeks Yasangi indent...

projects.

As part of the Gazette 24 and Sub Committee con-

Centre, KRMB members are

likely to visit RDS, Sunkesula

and Jurala between January

26 and 28. The members

have already visited Nettempadu and Srisailam

Management Board Sub-

Committee will hold a meet-

ing at Jal Soudha on January

The Godavari River

No early **Assembly** elections in TS, says...

Left may back Cong, big...

Continued from page 1

After the statement of th CPM State Secretary, it is clear that the Communists will go with the Congress and not with KCR. This may be a big shock for KCR.

When Left leaders met KCR a few days ago Telangana Congress leaders were worried over their proposal to form a Mahakutami to fight the TRS in the next Assembly elections. Now Congress leaders are happy with the latest political devel-

opments. While the TRS and the BJP would like to contest alone the Congress might go for an alliance with the Communists and other parties. If the Communists sail with the Congress in erstwhile Nalgonda and Khammam districts the TRS will face problems as in both the districts they can challenge the TRS if they join hands.

45,567 found to have fever during... Continued from page 1

Medical personnel admit people to hospitals if they display

Health Minister Harish Rao said that medical staff will follow up these individuals for five days to track their symptoms.

The fever survey will continue for another six days. In Siddipet, Harish Rao himself participated in the fever survey and collected details from the people. Harish went door to



door in Siddipet and asked questions like "Do you have ed? Do you wear a mask?"

fever? Have you been vaccinat-

'Every stateless day an affront to federalism'

PNS SRINAGAR

Political parties in Jammu and Kashmir reacted to Union minister Amit Shah's remarks on Saturday that the UT's statehood would be restored once the situation gets normal, saying the Centre's statement was selfcontradictory and that every stateless day was an affront to federalism.

"After quite literally terrorising people of Jammu and Kashmir into silence to create a false normalcy narrative, GoI's admission that situation still isn't normal is self contradictory. Also proves that silence shouldn't be misconstrued as normalcy," PDP president and former chief minister Mehbooba Mufti wrote on Twitter. Reacting to Shah's remarks, Peoples

Conference chief Sajad Lone asked who will define normalcy. "Who will define normalcy?

And in a federal structure, can we really use normalcy as an excuse to assume power. Irrespective of the definition of normalcy, possibly coined by the union government, every single stateless day is an affront to federalism and to the people of J&K," Lone said on Twitter.

Redeveloped Central Vista will have red granite walkways, stepped gardens

PNS NEW DELHI

Red granite walkways spreading 1.10 lakh square metre with greenery all around, 133 light poles along the Rajpath, 4,087 trees, 114 modern signages and stepped gardens will be part of the redeveloped Central Vista in the national capital, officials said on Saturday.

According to the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry, there will be a total of 915 light poles, including those in gardens and along the Raipath between the Rashtrapati Bhavan and the India gate, a move aimed at making the Central Vista more along the stretch in terms of the



pedestrian-friendly round the clock. People witnessing the

Republic Day parade this year will get to see major changes

new look of Rajpath and facilities created under the govern-

redevelopment project. Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh

ment's ambitious Central Vista

Puri, who visited the Central Vista Avenue, said that a full dress rehearsal parade will be held on Sunday.

"In spite of (recent) rains, etc., all the work is complete," Puri told reporters, adding that only 25 trees have been relocated and of them, 22 trees have been shifted to another location and three are here.

Although temporary bridges on water bodies along the Raipath have been set up as part of the Republic Day parade arrangements, a total of 16 permanent ones will come

According to an official document, eight amenity blocks

are being constructed while four pedestrian underpasses will come up in the entire

It shows that on the developed stretch, 'Tree Avenue' has 4,087 trees, but the earlier number was 3,890. The stretch also sports 422 red granite benches.

Along the Rajpath, the new red granite walkways spreading 1,10,457 sqm have been created, replacing bajri sand that lined the ground earlier.

As many as 987 concrete bollards have been installed on the Rajpath. A total of 1,490 modern-look manholes have replaced the earlier ones.

AP adds 12,926 cases to its Covid-19 tally

PNS AMARAVATI

Active cases increased to 73,143 but there was a slight dip in fresh infections as Andhra Pradesh recorded 12,926 new Covid-19 cases in the 24 hours ending 9 am on Saturday, taking the case-

load to 21,66,194. The state had reported 13,212 fresh cases on Friday. According to the latest bulletin, there were 3,913 recoveries and six deaths during the period.

The total recoveries now is at 20,78,513 and deaths 14,538, it said.

East Godavari became the first district in the state to

register over three lakh coronavirus infections since the onset of the pandemic in March 2020. With 756 fresh cases, the

gross cases in East Godavari

reached

3,00,743 on

Saturday. hours, Visakhapatnam district reported 1,959, Chittoor 1,566, Anantapuramu 1,379,

Guntur 1,212 and Prakasam 1,001 new cases. The remaining seven districts added less than 1,000 new cases each.

Visakhapatnam reported three, SPS Nellore two and East Godavari one Covid-19 death in a day.

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Govt sets up committee for improving air quality

PNS HYDERABAD

The Telangana government has issued orders on Saturday constituting a State-level Monitoring and Implemen tation Committee for implementing the 15th Finance Commission recommendations in cities with more than one million population (in the state) for strengthening measures to improve the Air Quality Component in cities like Hyderabad.

The committee has been constituted under the Chairmanship of the Chief Secretary. Its members are Special Chief Secretary, Environment, Secretary, State Development Department (UDD), a representative of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), the Chairman of the State Pollution Control Board (SPCB), the Secretary of the Transport Department, a representative of the State Chamber of Commerce &



Commissioner and Director of Municipal Administration, Commissioner.

The committee will make a performance assessment of 15th Commission recommended City/Urban Agglomeration (UA) and the recommended Forest & Climate Change as per the indicators/guidelines after ensuring compliance with the general entry-level conditions given in para-16.

The Municipal Administ ration & Urban Development Department will function as the Secretariat and in coordination with the State release of grant to the Environment Department it Ministry of Environment will convene meetings of the

Implementing Committee as frequently as required or at least every six months.The Municipal Administration and Urban Development Department will also accept proposals from Million Plus Cities/Urban Agglomerations in the formats prescribed by the Ministry of Environment Forest & Climate Change.

S S Chouhan visits Chinna Jeeyar Swamy ashram

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivaraj Singh Chouhan, along with his family members, met the Chinna Jeeyar Swamy on Saturday at Muchintal Ashram 'near Shamshabad where Sri Ramanuja Sahasrabdi celebrations will be held from February 2 to

Shivaraj Singh Chouhan has visited the Ramanuja Charya statue in Chinna Jeeyar Swamy Ashram and planted saplings in the premises and offered special pujas to Ravi Chettu in the Ashram. Later, Shivaraj Singh met Chinna Jeeyar Swamy and took his blessings. On the occasion, Jeeyar Swamy explained to Shivaraj Singh about Sri Ramanuja Sahasrabdi celebrations and unveiling of the statue and the related programmes. Jeeyar Swamy invited Shivaraj Singh Chouhan to attend the Ramanuja statue unveiling programme. It may be recalled that the Prime Minister Narendra Modi will unveil the 216 feet Ramanuja statue on February 5th.



Nizam-era stepwell in Bansilalpet on its way to restoration

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Nizam-era stepwell in Bansilalpet is well on its way to be restored its former glory as all the trash, silt and debris that buried the well for decades has been removed and freshwater is now flowing.
Work on the well began last

year with activists contributing

significantly to the process. Kalpana Ramesh, a water warrior and the founder of The Rainwater Project said about the process, 'It's been a revelation from finding the well and water and travelling to this stage of restoration. She said that she's happy to move on to the next stage of restoration with condition mapping and

conservation plan for the structure. Special chief secretary Arvind Kumar also shared before and after pictures of the structure.

For the cleaning process, GHMC had appointed workers and earthmovers who cleared tonnes of garbage from the site near Nalla Pochamma

Pranavayu Urban Forest Park ready for opening

PNS HYDERABAD

The Pranavayu Urban Forest Park along with a Sports park in Gajularamaram and a multipurpose function hall in Bhagat Singh Nagar, Chintal will be inaugurated this week. All these facilities are located in the Kukatpally Zone of Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation. The Pranavayu Urban Forest Park offers recreational facilities to people of all age groups, said GHMC officials. The sports park in the TSIIC area, Gajularamaram ward, was also built by the GHMC at a



cost of Rs.198.50 lakh. The multi-purpose function hall in Bhagat Singh Nagar was built at a cost of Rs 333.65 lakh.

ties, a foundation stone will be laid for road widening works at Bachupally and nala works at Jeedimetla on the same In addition to these facili-

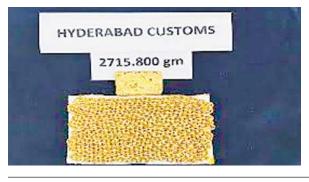
Customs officials seize gold worth Rs 1.36 cr at RGIA

PNS HYDERABAD

The customs officials seized 2,715.800 grams of gold from a passenger at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA) in Hyderabad on Saturday. According to the officials, the passenger arrived by 6E 025 from Dubai on Friday. The officials found 2,715.800 grams of gold items valued at Rs 1.36 crore from him. Gold chains and gold in paste form were concealed inside hand baggage and check-in baggage.

It may be noted that on January 11, the officials seized 1.48 kg gold valued at Rs 72.80 lakh from three women passengers who arrived from

Dubai. The gold was seized in three separate cases. Two of the passengers concealed the gold inside undergarments while the third had concealed it in rectum. On January 10, a total of 442.6 grams of gold valued at Rs 21.70 lakhs was seized from a passenger who arrived from Dubai. The gold in paste form was concealed inside specially stitched pocket of undergarment. Gold was also seized on January 7 at the Hyderabad airport. Around 330 grams of gold wires with white rhodium coating polish valued at Rs 16.18 lakh was seized from a passenger who arrived from Dubai. The gold was hidden inside the metal frame of his bag.



Cyberabad cops arrest notorious chain-snatcher

PNS HYDERABAD

Due to vigorous efforts and meticulous planning, the SOT police teams of Cyberabad police commissionerate were able to arrest notorious chain snatcher on

In this connection, it may be noted that the accused chain-snatcher had involved in five chain-snatchings between 11.am to 5.00 pm on 19th, Jan in Hyderabad.

It is to be noted that the culprit used a stolen scooty for his chain-snatchings and the scooty was stolen from Jiaguda in Hyderabad, the previous day (Jan 18). Police were able to seize the scooty used by the culprit.

Special teams were formed to nab the accused. After thorough investigation and with the help of CC footage and other technical evito know that the accused fled to Ahmedabad in Guiarat after chain snatching



incidents in Hyderabad. SOTs of police personnel

went to Ahmedabad and with the help of local police there, the Cyberabad SOT police teams were able to nab the culprit. The accused is identified as Umesh and he hails from Ahmedabad. The accused will be brought from Ahmedabad to Hyderabad, police said. It is also revealed cases registered against Umesh in Ahmedabad and

Mechanic's murder case:one held

PNS HYDERABAD

The Jeedimetla police solved the murder case of Beerender Kumar (55), an automobile mechanic. On Saturday, the police arrested a worker from his workshop in connection with the murder. In this connection, it may be noted that the automobile mechanic Beerendra Kumar was found murdered and it was reported on

A financial issue led to the murder, it was revealed. The arrested person was identified as Mohd Zaheer (30), from Roda Mistry Nagar, who started working at Beerender Kumar's shop one month ago.

Police sources said, on Thursday midnight, Zaheer had picked up an argument with Beerender in the workshop over a matter of Rs.500. He demanded money and when Beerender refused to rod and bludgeoned him to death. Beerender Kumar died on the spot.

Stopping of blood donation camps by cops resented

PNS HYDERABAD

Alam Baig, the Joint Secretary of Thalassemia and Sickle Cell Society, organises blood donation camps for Thalassemia patients in Shamshabad. This has come to a halt as cops stopped him from conducting camps citing covid restrictions. Speaking to The Pioneer,

Alam Baig said, "My concern is why blood donation camps for thalassemia patients have been restricted by the government. I see many marriage functions going on with huge gatherings without any restriction.

He added that thalassemia patients need a blood transfusion every 15 to 20 days and that they are following the covid protocol at blood donation camps.



Online classes for class 8 to 10 from tomorrow

PNS HYDERABAD

Telangana government has issued orders permitting online classes for class 8 to 10 and 50 per cent attendance for teaching and non-teaching staff from January 24

As per the GO issued by A Devasena, Director, School Education, "Online / distance learning shall be permitted for classes VIII, IX & X. 50 per cent of teaching and non teaching staff are instructed to attend to the schools on rotational basis from

24.01.2022". Government has issued orders extending holidays to all educational institutions - Private, Aided and Government schools- in the state of Telangana, except Medical Colleges till 30.01.2022. As per the new GO, all the Heads of the Departments, Regional joint Directors of School Education Hyderabad & Warangal, and all the District Educational Officers in the State are hereby directed to take necessary action accord-

Raghavender Rao's remand extended

PNS HYDERABAD

Kothagudem Second additional judicial magistrate on Saturday extended remand of Kothagudem Vanama Venkateshwara Rao's son Vanama Raghavender Rao for another 14 days.

He was arrested in connection with the Naga Ramakrishna's family suicide in Paloncha in Bhadradri Kothagudem district. The police produced Raghavender Rao before the court via video conferenc-

OU's CPGET final seat allotment PNS HYDERABAD

Osmania University has released the final phase seat allotment for admissions into various PG, PG diploma and five-year integrated programmes through the TS Common Post Graduate Entrance Tests (CPGET)-2021. The university also released first phase seat allot-ments for MEd and MPEd

courses. A total of 52,921 seats were available under the convener quota and 19,191 candidates were admitted in the first and second phases of counselling of CPGET. While

14,355 candidates exercised web options in the final phase of counselling, 6,498 candidates were allotted seats, CPGET-2021 convener Prof. I Pandu Ranga Reddy said.

Those who have received seat allocations, have to pay the prescribed fee of the course/college online and self-report at respective colleges by submitting the original transfer certificate on or before January 27, he said. The candidate has to submit only the original transfer certificate at the allotted college and produce other original certificates for verification. The principals of the colleges have been instructed to verify all the original certificates and collect only the original TC.

The CPGET is conducted

for admissions into PG, PG diploma and five-year integrated programmes offered by campus, constituent and affiliated colleges of the Osmania University, Kakatiya University, Telangana University, Mahatma Gandhi University, Palamuru University, Satavahana University and Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University-Hyderabad.

PD Act invoked on human trafficker

PNS MEDCHAL MALKAJGIRI

C.P. Rachakonda invoked PD Act against one human trafficking offender for organising prostitution in the limits of Balapur PS of Rachakonda Commissionerate and detained him in Central Prison, Cherlapally. The offender Syed Abubaker is a native of Chandrayangutta, Hyderabad. The accused, along with his wife and another associate, was running prostitution with innocent girls by taking a rental

GHMC developing 18 sports complexes

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

GHMC is providing modern facilities for athletes to promote sports on the sports grounds in GHMC limits. Efforts are being made to improve the efficiency and

modern games.

At an estimated cost of Rs 87 crore, the municipal body undertook the development of 18 complexes and modernisation of the sports ground and work on 8 complexes have

multipurpose sports grounds where required. The remaining are in various stages of progress and efforts are being made to complete them soon and make them available to



Gang held, Rs19 lakh worth property seized

PNS MEDCHAL MALKAJGIRI

The sleuths of CCS LB Nagar team, IT Cell-Rachakonda, along with LB Nagar police of Rachakonda Commissionerate, apprehended four professional thieves. The offenders indulge in temple thefts and other offences. Police recovered 215 grams of gold ornaments, 2cars and bikes all worth Rs 19,40,000 from their posses-

The offender Ponnuri Chinna Satyanandam (31), was earlier arrested by Manglagiri and Donakonda police. He was also arrested in Arms Act". The offender Gandam Sammaiah (24) was earlier arrested in illegal liquor sale case by Gurajala police.
The accused Jangala Prasad
(27) and Mandla Nagendar
hail from Guntur dist, AP.
Another accused Daravath Naveen (25) of Nalgonda district is a B.Tech student and also an old offender.



Police officials displaying seized gold ornaments in Hyderabad on Saturday

Earlier he was arrested in NDPS act by Miryalguda Rural PS. All of them formed a group in Gurajala Jail and committed thefts for easy money. CP Mahesh Bhagwat said in a press conference that, 'In December the complainant Kumbari Madhav Maharaj went to his house by locking the temple after the rituals. On next day, they found that temple's main door lock was broken and gold ornaments were missing. While vehicle checking at

LB Nagar PS limits, the offenders revealed their names and also confessed that they have committed 10 property offences - 4 belong to theft offences, 1 Bank offence, 2 Night HB offences and 3 Automobile cases.

The gang is already in preparation for bank robbery. They procured oxygen cylinder, gas cutter to open strong rooms of cash and jewellery. They commit theft of cars and motorcycles, later change number plates.

Night temp to fall below 11 degree Celsius in city

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Mercury dropped sharply in the city and on the outskirts in the early hours of Saturday with Serilingampally recording a low of 12.4 degree Celsius.

For the last few days, the night temperature in various parts of the city has dipping and the average minimum temperature of 15.8 degree Celsius was recorded in

Hyderabad this morning.

According to the forecast by
India Meteorological Department-Hyderabad, the northeastern monsoon has withdrawn from the southern parts of the country. However, due to the western disturbances, the temperatures in several parts of the city are likely to dip on Sunday and

While in most parts of the city the night temperature



might range from 11 degree Celsius to 15 degree Celsius, the mercury in areas located towards the outskirts of the city might dip below 10 degree Celsius. Several districts of Telangana are again suffering from a cold wave-like situa-tion. It is likely that night temperatures in districts Adilabad, Kumram Bheem Asifabad, Nirmal and Mancherial might dip below 10 degree Celsius in next two or three days.



'No need to panic over Covid-19'

Health Minister Harish Rao urges people on door-to-door fever survey not to go to private hospital

PNS SIDDIPET

Health Minister T Harish Rao on Saturday participated in a door-to-door Covid-19 survey along with ASHA workers in the 37 th ward of Siddipet and got vaccines and booster doses administered to the needy.

He distributed the Covid kits to the needy then and there. He advised them not to be disheartened by the Covid-19 and Omicron threat as the government kept ready at least one crore home isolation kits and two crore test kits ready. He advised the affected not to go to private hospitals. He said that over one lakh diagnostic tests are being run per day.

The Minister said that door to door fever survey is being implemented to check the spread of the disease and sought cooperation of the people to the exercise. The government has kept the test and home isolation kits ready to face any eventual-



Minister for Health T Harish Rao interacting with people as part of door-to-door fever survey in Siddipet on Saturday

ing with the residents of Ambedkar Nagar and on Karimnagar Road in 37 th ward of the municipality. He monitored the progress of the fever survey at the field level and enquired the ASHA workers as to how many have been

through the second dose in the ward. He also enquired them when the third dose - the booster dose - is due to them. He went door to door inquiring about the people's health and their vaccination doses progress affectionately addressing the

people. At one of the houses, he spoke with resident Posavva and enquired about how many doses of the vaccine she has had. She replied to the minister that she has had only one. When seeking to know why she did not receive the second dose,

ter that she is afraid of receiving the vaccine. Wondering whether anyone would fear for receiving the vaccine shot under the prevailing circumstances, he got her second dose administered. At another house, he asked a woman - 60-year-old lady Gyodagani Renuka --whether all members received the vaccine.

She replied to the minister that she has had two doses. The minister told her that she should have received three not two and spoke with RMO Kasinath and asked him to check her vaccine status. He got her the first booster dose

At another household, he spoke with the resident Anjamma and advised her to wear mask. He gave her a spare mask available with him. He also interacted with the sanitation staff Devavva of the municipality and enquired about their



Medak District Additional Collector Pratima Singh addressing multi-displinary teams in Medak on Saturda

Visit 100 homes per day

Multi-disciplinary teams told to distribute isolation kits

PNS MEDAK

Additional Collector Pratima Singh has asked the multi-disciplinary teams of fever survey to visit at least 100 homes per day daily and give isolation kits to the needy having symptoms like cold, cough, and fever. The people should be sensitised to use the medicines daily for

developed by spending Rs 2 crore and all basic facilities

would be provided. Janardhan

Reddy, in his address, stated that

he and his younger brother got

education from school at

Sirpavada and he was fortunate to take up the development of the school. The works would be completed by June, he said.

Similarly, reconstruction works

of Tadur ZP school would also

five days without fail. She was addressing the members of the multi-disciplinary teams -ASHA workers, doctors, MEPMA resource persons, Anganwadi teachers – here on Saturday. She asked the teams to take steps to administer the second dose of the vaccine or the booster dose wherever it is necessary. Teens in 15 to 17

Be courteous with

complainants

year age group should be identified and encouraged to receive the vaccine, she said asking the teams to send her the survey report daily before evening. Municipal Commissioner Srihari, Dr Manikantha, health supervisor Pawan, ASHA workers, Anganwadi teachers, resource persons, and others took part in the event.

Rathod assures action against errant guards

PNS KHAMMAM

Minister for Tribal, Women and Child Welfare Satyavati Rathod on Saturday directed the Tribal Welfare Secretary and Commission to order a probe into the forest beat guards allegedly misbehaving with three Adivasi women. The incident took place at Sakivalasa village under Mulakalapalli mandal in Kothagudem district. The Minister assured that the State government would protect the Adivasi women. She warned of stringent against anyone who



misbehaved with the women in the forest area. All the authorities were given strict instruction not to misbehave with women, she said.

MJR Trust to develop 5 govt schools with Rs 10 cr

PNS NAGARKURNOOL

MLA Marri Janardhan Reddy stated that five government schools in Nagarkurnool Assembly constituency would be reconstructed (developed) on par with corporate schools. The par with corporate schools. The reconstruction works would be taken up by MJR Trust by spending Rs 10 crore, he said. Marri Janardhan Reddy (MJR) and District Collector Uday Kumar laid foundation for the Kumar laid foundation for the reconstruction work of ZP school at Sirpavada on Saturday. As part of development, playing grounds and computer labs will be provided at the schools. In addition, library, dining hall, laboratories, wash rooms and rest rooms will also be constructed



A school rennovated with the aid from MJR Trust in Nagarkurnool district

at the schools. District Collector Uday kumar lauded the services of Marri Janardhan Reddy who has been striving hard to improve educational and medical facilities in the constituency. The MLA has been showing

keen interest to develop the schools in all respects, said the Collector. He also appreciated the services of MJR Trust director Marri Jamuna Rani for her self-less services. The Collector said that each school would be

be taken up shortly. `Chief Minister K Chan drashekar Rao has been giving top priority to health and education,' he said. MJR Trust director Jamuna Rani, in her speech, said that they have decided to develop five government schools in

Nagarkurnool constituency

Police Commissioner N Swetha planting a sapling at Gajwel police station on Saturday

PNS SIDDIPET

Police Commissioner Swetha has asked the policemen and officers to behave courteously with complainants and visitors to the police station and extend immediately services to them upon knowing their problems.

She visited the Gajwel police station in the district and planted saplings on the premises of the police station. Later, she went around the police station. He held an interactive session with the personnel there to find out

She reviewed the progress of the cases under the police station limits during the past three years. She told them to monitor the CCTV cameras on daily basis and get the

damaged cameras repaired. The entry of data in the CCTNS should be monitored daily. A strict vigil should be maintained on rowdysheeters, KDs, other suspects and anti-social elements and

keep tabs on their movements. The night patrolling officials should check lodges and movements of the old criminals.She laid emphasis on having role and goal clarity for all the personnel. She asked the VPOs should create awareness among the people on cybercrimes. With the help of the CCTNS project, the FIRs, CDF, part-1 and 2 of remand case diary, chargesheets, court disposals should be entered online daily.

She asked the police officers and personnel to represent their problems if any, through S grievance

Enforcement duties should be performed daily in the mornings and evenings.

She asked the police officers and personnel to work with coordination to reduce crime rate. Gajwel ACP Rmesh, Gajwel CI Veera Prasad, Traffic CI Ramu Naik, SIs Sridhar Reddy, Naresh, Sankar, and other police personnel took part in the pro-

National Anthem to be sung every day

PNS NALGONDA

On the occasion of the 75 th anniversary of the Indepen dence Day, the Centre is organising annual festivals under the name of 'Azadika Amrut Mahotsava.' In this context, special attention is being paid the National Anthen national anthem programme was launched on Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose birth anniversary on January 23 in Nalgonda. Janaganamanda Utsava Samithi has been formed under the leadership of Karnati Vijayakumar, former government employee, as president and MVR Schools chairman Kolanu paka Ravi Kumar as secretary to take forward the programme.

'Identify units for beneficiaries in week days under Dalit Bandhu'



PNS KAMAREDDY

Minister for Roads and Buildings Vemula Prasanth Reddy here on Saturday directed the officials to identify the units under Dalit Bandhu for beneficiaries in a week days. While participating in a review meeting at the District Collectorate on Dalit Bandhu and on Covid-19, Prasanth Reddy said Chief Minister had introduced the scheme to ensure financial independence to Dalits. It open their bank accounts.

would help the Dalits living below the poverty line come up in life. now be implemented across the State, he said. It was implemented first as pilot project in Huzurabad. District Collector Jitesh V Patil said that nodal officers were appointed in each constituency to ensure proper implementation of the scheme. A total of Rs 35 crore would be released in the first phase. He asked the officials to ensure that the beneficiaries

Mega corruption in Suryapet district, says BJP leader Sankineni

BJP state vice-president Sankineni Venkateswara Rao has alleged that there is massive corruption in Suryapet district. He alleged that the huge corruption has been taking place with the blessings of Minister Jagadish Reddy.

Sankineni alleged that the Suryapet Municipal Comm issioner has been behaving as he liked. False cases have been registered against BJP leaders for questioning the Municipal Commissioner, he added.

He said that the officials who hounded a Dalit for setting up a small shop before his house didn't bother when some people had set up businesses after encroach-



Sankineni Venkateswara Rad

ing a lake near the new

Collectorate. He alleged that the Municipal Commissioner had behaved rudely when BJP general secretary Saliganti Veerendra approached him regarding a

Dalit's problem. Moreover, false cases were

knowledge of the Minister and he was kept in jail for eight days, he said. Sankineni alleged that officials have filed cases against persons who have no connection with the irregularities and have spared the real culprits like demanded the immediate dismissal of the Minister for supporting officials responsible for irregularities. He demanded that the false cases filed against BJP leaders should be dropped immediately. Alleging that corrupt deals worth hundreds of crores have taken place at the purchasing centres in Suryapet district, Sankineni demanded that the government should order a CBI

The Pioneer helping solve people problems MLA Korukanti Chandar unveils the calendar

PNS PEDDAPALLY

Ramagundam MLA Koruk anti Chandar lauded the efforts of The Pioneer in high-lighting the problems being faced by the people. Most of the problems highlighted were solved, he said and added that the entire media had contributed to the development of the constituency.

He was unveiling The Pioneer calendar at a function, held at S S Function hall in Godvarikhani on Saturday. The media had helped him solve several problems being faced by the people. City Deputy Mayor N Abishek Rao, corporators Datu, Srinivas, Schools Association leader took part.



Ramagundam MLA Korukanti Chandar unveiling The Pioneer calender at Godavarikhani on Saturday

and Govern ment Recognised

Pullender and Saganti Sankar Mokka Rajaih, Kandi Ravinder Reddy and Ratnkar

CPI demands legislation to curb fraud by chit fund firms

PNS WARANGAL

CPI State executive committee member Takkallapalli Srinivas Rao here on Saturday demanded that the government bring in a new legislation to prevent cheating by chit fund and finance companies that have been mushrooming in the State. These companies, he said, have been attracting customers by promising higher interest on the deposits. The money being deposited by customer was being diverted into real estate and the management of some companies had defaulted on repayment. The cheques being issued by some of these companies had

These companies, he said, have been attracting customers by promising higher interest on the deposits.

bounced and it led to the customer going around the courts. The organisers of the chit fund companies were making "out of court" settlements by partially paying the money deposited by customers, he said. Under these circumstances, it is necessary to take a strong action to curb fraud being perpetrated by some of these companies.



Fever survey: Collector interacts with citizens

PNS MAHABUBNAGAR

The door-to-door fever survey has been continuing in the district actively. As part of the programme, District Collector S Venkat Rao on Saturday went round at Subhashnaga area in the town and interacted with people. He sought information from people whether everyone in the household had been fully vac-cinated and whether the adolescents in the age group of 15-17 are getting the jabs.

The survey, which began on Friday, was declared a success. The team formed to conduct a survey visited a little over

60,000 household on the first day of the survey, the officials said. The Collector said there was no need for panic over coronavirus. Those with symptoms of the virus can get relief by taking medicine in isolation kits being handed over to the patients.

Those with severe symptoms may be admitted to hospitals and the doctors would visit the households on a phone call to the control room. The phone number to the control room is 08542 241165.

The Collector urged the citizens to take all precautions to curb the surge of the virus.

Those with symptoms of the virus can get relief by taking medicine in isolation kits being handed over to the patients.

District Medical and Health Officer Krishna, Programme officer Ravi and Medical officer Pragati were present.

Road widening pose threat to saplings

PNS ■ NAGARKURNOOL

The State government is spending huge amounts of money for Haritha Haram to enhance the forest cover, but it may prove futile to a large extent in the district

because of "bad" decisions.

As part of the prestigious Haritha Haram project, the officials accomplished the task of planting 80.70 crore saplings on either side of the highways under the third phase of the

programme. The authorities had also hired men to water the saplings. Funds in crores of rupees were released and spent for the success of the project. Efforts contributed by the Roads and Buildings and Forest Department officials led to the success of the pro-

ject.
The saplings may disappear at any time with the government embarking on the widening of highways, the saplings planted on

be pulled down. It will lead to the wastage of public money. The Roads and Buildings Department has sent proposals to widen the Kalwakurti-Nandyal high-way into two lanes and 167 national highways. Tenders were also called for building bridges on the highways.

MP P Ramulu appealed

to the Centre to recognise the highway between Nagar kurnool and Amrabad as national highways



Haritha Haram saplings on either side of the road in Nagarkurnool district

Modi: Aspirational districts now eliminating barriers to progress

Aspirational districts are now eliminating the barriers to the progress of the country and they have become accelerators for growth instead of impediments, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday as he interacted with District Magistrates

In his remarks at the virtual interaction with DMs and some chief ministers, Modi said the teamwork of Centre, states and local administration was yielding good results in aspirational districts.

"Today, aspirational districts are eliminating the bar-



riers to the progress of the country. With the efforts of all of you, aspirational districts are becoming accelerators of

growth instead of impediments," he told the DMs. Modi said that for developadministration and the public as well as an emotional connect is very important.

A sort of 'top to bottom' and 'bottom to top' flow of governance is needed, he said, adding that an impor-tant aspect of this is technology and innovation.
Officials in aspirational

districts now feel a great deal of satisfaction when they see lives of people improving with their efforts, Modi said.

The prime minister told the district magistrates that every district needs to learn from the success of others and also evaluate their challenges. Aspirational districts have

the implementation process can result in one and one becoming eleven, Modi said.

Launched by the prime minister in January 2018, the aspirational districts programme aims to quickly and effectively transform 112 most under-developed districts across the country.

Chief Ministers of states such as Gujarat, Karnataka and Chhattisgarh also participated in the interaction.

The interaction was aimed at taking direct feedback about the progress and status of implementation of various government schemes and

Bid to present 'new avatar', Cong fields 70% fresh faces in Uttar Pradesh polls

Making a conscious effort to shun the old baggage and present her party in a 'new avatar' in Uttar Pradesh, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra has hand-picked over 70 per cent new faces among the total 166 candidates for the high-stakes state assembly election.

Besides sticking to her promise of 40 per cent women candidates, Gandhi has overwhelmingly given a chance to debutants with an aim to build a new leadership in the Hindi heartland, which had slipped from the party hands in recent years. Uttar Pradesh is scheduled to have sevenphase polls for the 403 assembly constituencies beginning from February 10. The results will be out on March 10.

Of the total 166 names declared so far by the Congress, 119 candidates will be making their electoral debut, party spokesman Anshu Awasthi told PTI.

With the candidature of Sangeeta Tyagi, wife of party leader late Rajiv Tyagi, from Sahibabad seat, Gandhi has made an earnest effort to

break the mould and create new leadership in the century-old party which has faded into political oblivion. "Priyanka Gandhi has made

INDIA CORNER

closure of schools till Jan 30

Covid: UP govt extends

farmers, backwards or dalits, to the forefront," Awasthi said. He said the list of candidates gis a clear vision of the party's effort to give a new direction to the state politics which has been suffering from caste and religion-based politics for years. "Party tickets have been given to youth and those who are working strongly in their respective fields,"

an attempt to bring all those

fighting on people's issues, be

it regarding women, youth,

the Congress spokesman said adding that in the first list of 125 names, 26 candidates are those who are up to 35 years

He said 55-year-old Asha Singh, mother of the Unnao rape victim; anti-CAA activist and party spokesperson Sadaf Jafar; ÁSĤA worker and activist Poonam Pandey who fought for the rights of ASHA workers and was attacked at Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's programme at Shahjahanpur; Ram Raj Gond who fought for the rights of Adivasis in Sonbhadra; are all making their debut this election.

he Uttar Pradesh

government on

closure of schools in the

state till January 30 in view

of rising coronavirus cases

in the state. The closure of

schools has been extended

60 pc MLAs in Goa switched parties in last five years

PNS PANAJI

As many as 24 legislators in Goa, which is 60 per cent of the total strength of the 40-member state Assembly, have switched parties in the last five years, a report by an organisation has said. The Association of Democratic Reforms (ADR) said in its report that with this, Goa has set a unique record, which is "unparalleled" in the history of Indian democracy. Assembly polls in Goa will

be held on February 14. "In the five year tenure of the current Assembly (2017-2022),

as many as 24 MLAs have

PNS ALIGARH

Congress candidate

from Aligarh city

Salman Imtiaz has been

slapped with an order

barring him from stay-

ing in the district,

authorities said on

Saturday. The extern-

ment order which was

changed their parties, which is 60 per cent of the total strength of the House. It has never happened anywhere else in India.

Congress Aligarh candidate

barred from entering district

Additional District

Magistrate city Rakesh

Kumar Patel said.

Imtiaz, a former presi-

dent of the AMU stu-

dents' union, was

served a ban order in

March 2020 also in the

wake of anti-CAA agi-

tation in the Aligarh

respect to the mandate of voters. A callous approach to ethics and discipline overborne by uncontrolled greed at A clear reflection of utter dis-

Six dead, 23 injured in massive fire on 19th floor

At least six persons were killed and 23 others injured in a major fire that broke out on the 19th floor of a residential building in Tardeo area of central Mumbai on Saturday morning, an official said.

The blaze erupted around 7 am in Sachinam Heights building located opposite Bhatia Hospital at Gowalia Tank, when many of its residents were still asleep, the official of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) said. Senior BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis alleged that nearby hospitals refused to admid the injured persons, which he said resulted in "more deaths", and sought action against those responsible for the fatalities.

Talking about the incident, the civic official said, "It is a ground plus 20-storey building. The fire broke out on its 19th floor. On being alerted, the fire brigade personnel and police rushed the spot. Several persons were rescued, of them 29 were taken to different nearby hospitals as some of them were injured, while others complained of health problems, like suffocation." Seven of the injured were taken to the BMC-run Nair Hospital, where five died, while one more succumbed to injuries at the civic-run Kasturba Hospital, he said, adding 17 injured were admitted to Bhatia Hospital, where five were discharged following treatment, while three of the 12, who are currently undergoing treatment there, are in a critical condition.



Rahul Gandhi

PNS NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday condoled with the families of those who died in a fire in Mumbai. He wished a speedy recovery to the injured and urged party workers to provide assistance to the affected. "The tragic news of fire in a Mumbai high rise is disturbing. My condolences to the family of those who've lost their lives. Wishing a speedy recovery to the injured," Gandhi said in a Facebook post. "I appeal to Congress workers to be of every possible assistance," he said. At least six people died and 15 others were reported injured in a massive fire that broke out this morning in a Mumbai high-rise. The fire reportedly broke out on the 18th floor of Kamla Building opposite Gandhi Hospital at Gowalia Tank in city's Tardeo area.

terms Mumbai fire 'tragic'

till January 30 and online classes will continue, according to an order issued by Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Awanish Kumar Awasthi. The government had earlier ordered closure of the educational institutions till January **Lata Mangeshkar showing** signs of improvement



Mangeshkar is showing Signs of improvement but remains in the ICU, her doctor said on Saturday. The 92-vear-old singer tested positive for coronavirus with mild symptoms and was

admitted to the Intensive

January 8. Sharing the health update, associate professor Dr Pratit Samdani from the Breach Candy Hospital told PTI, "She is showing signs of improvement. She is in the ICU. It is difficult to say for how many days she will be in the hospital." Anusha Srinivsan Iyer, a close friend of the family, also said the veteran singer is doing well. "Lata Didi is showing signs of improvement from before and is under treatment in the ICU from the amazing team of doctors spearheaded by Dr Pratit Samdani. We are looking forward and praying for her speedy healing and coming back home," lyer said in a statement. On Friday, rumours started doing the rounds on social media that Mangeshkar's health had deteriorated.

DHANBAD JUDGE MURDER CASE

Friday was dated

Imtiaz had filed his

nomination for the

Uttar Pradesh polls on

Thursday. "The ban was

imposed on the basis of

his being charged under the Gunda Act

since he posed a threat

HC: CBI seems to be protecting accused



Jharkhand High Court has slammed the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for its "laxity" in probing the murder of Dhanbad judge Uttam Anand, and observed that it seems that the agency was trying to quit the investigation and even protect the accused.

The division bench of Chief Justice Ravi Ranjan and Justice S N Prasad, while reading the report of the narco-analysis test of the two accused, on Friday said that when the auto-driver

tractors, machinéry PNS NAGPUR

Maha: Naxals

Besides him, several

Imtiaz said he had

other AMU student

leaders were issued

responded to the ban

order in 2020 and but

there has been no offi-

cial response to his plea

such a ban order.

A group Naxals allegedly set on fire 11 tractors and two JCB machines engaged in road construction work in Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra, police said on Saturday. The incident took place at Irapnagar village in Bhamragadh tehsil around 2 pm on Friday, during which they also torched one Poclain machine, a senior police official said. "Around 40 to 50 Naxals were involved in the incident. They are Dalam and militia members," he said. The burnt vehicles and other machinery belonged to different contractors involved in the road construction work, he added. According to the official, po lice have registered an offence and launched a probe.



K'taka crosses six crore

Karnataka Health Minister Dr K Sudhakar on Saturday congratulated healthcare workers and district authorities as the state crossed six crore COVID-"Testing has been one of the

cornerstones of Karnataka's success in fighting Covid. We have completed crore tests since the beginning of the pandemic, third highest in the country. Congratulations to all the health workers and district administration who made this possible," the minister tweeted. Later speaking to reporters, the minister said when the pandemic started in early 2020, National Institute of Virology units were used to conduct tests and Karnataka used to send samples to NIV

centres in Pune. Karnataka gradually established labs across the state and now we have about 268 testing facilities including 99 government and 169 private labs, he added. According to him, Karnataka has tested



6,01,14,815 samples so far including 1,14,12,162 Rapid Antigen Test and 4,87,02,653 RT-PCR tests.

While 1,41,96,065 samples were tested in 2020, 4,23,91,357 samples were tested in 2021 and so far 35,27,393 tests have been conducted in 2022, he explained.

Sudhakar said, "Testing plays a vital role in this battle against pandemic. Karnataka has always been aggressive in testing and tracking and it has been one of our cornerstones in this direction against COVID. Karnataka has now

achieved another milestone by crossing 6 crore tests."

Further, the minister said that both Health and Family Welfare and Medical Education departments have always religiously followed 5T strategy of Test, Track, Trace,

Triaging and Technology.

"We have set up 3,678 comprising of 3,102 government. and 666 private swab collection centres, which is one each for every 20,000 population. We have labs in government hospitals, medical colleges and also private hospitals,"

Bengal: Four injured in parcel bomb blast in pharmacy



t least four people have been injured in a parcel bomb blast in a pharmacy in West Bengal's Uttar Dinajpur district, police said on Saturday. The incident took place at Baharail in Hemtabad on Friday afternoon, a senior police officer said. The

condition of two of the injured persons is critical, while the other two are stable, he said. An electric rickshaw driver and a woman have been identified in connection with the incident, the IPS officer told PTI, "The parcel bomb was delivered to the pharmacy by the electric rickshaw driver. A preliminary probe suggested that the woman was also involved in it. A manhunt has been launched to nab the duo. The samples of the remnants of the bomb and the parcel box have been sent for forensic examination," he said. A Criminal Investigation Department (CID) team has reached the spot for probing the matter. A police team has been deployed in the area where the pharmacy is located.

Two buses gutted in separate fire incidents in Gujarat, no casualty



in separate incidents of fire that took place at Rajkot and Surat in Gujarat, in which no casualty was reported, officials said Saturday. A city bus caught fire in Rajkot's Bhaktinagar locality on Saturday morning. There was no

department official said. "As soon as the driver started the bus, it caught fire. He tried to douse the flames with the extinguisher kept inside the bus, but could not do so. Later, a fire extinguisher from another bus was also used." the official said. By the time the fire was brought under control by a fire department team, the bus was completely destroyed, he said. In the second incident, a luxury bus caught fire at Mora village near Surat city late last night, though no casualty was reported in the bus, a fire department official said

passenger travelling in the bus when the blaze erupted, a fire

Driver, conductor killed after bus rams truck

PNS HOSHIARPUR

A bus driver and a conductor were killed and six passengers injured when their bus rammed into a truck parked on a roadside near Tuto Mazara, about 30 kms from here, on Saturday, said police. The accident took place when the bus bearing Punjab registration number was on its way to Hoshiarpur from Delhi, they said. The deceased were identified as driver Gurnam Singh (50) and conductor Jatinder Kumar (35).

Four candidates file papers for 'auctioned' post tions uncontested. He said money would be spent for the

PNS BHUBANESWAR

At least four candidates filed their nomination papers for the alleged "auctioned" sarpanch post of Bileisarada gram panchayat in Odisha's Bolangir dis-

Anand was a judge before hitting him, how could the CBI come

up with the theory of murder for

bench said that the agency has

failed to get down to the bottom of the matter. "The investigation

into the case raises a question on

the credibility of the CBI. It

seems that the agency is now

tired of the case and wants to

quit the investigation, which is

why it is making up stories so

that the accused are not charged

Rejecting the CBI's theory, the

robbing a mobile phone?

Apart from Susant Chhatria, who had reportedly won the bid by promising to pay Rs 44,000 for the development of the Jagannath temple at the village under Puintala block, his nephew, Bilasini Sharma and Prabhudutta Panda have also filed their nomination papers.

Following media report of the alleged "auction" of sarpanch post at Bileisarada gram panchayat, Odisha's State



Election Commissioner AP Padhi on Thursday had asked the Bolangir Collector to ensure that no willing person is obstructed from filing nom-

ination papers for the post of sarpanch.

Chhatri claimed that he own the bidding and agreed to pay Rs 44,000 if he wins the elec-

development of the Jagannath temple at the village. The auction was done at a meeting attended by the heads of three villages - Bandanakata, Kasurpali, and Bileisarda - at the Jagannath temple where the alleged bidding took place.
Meanwhile, in Koraput dis-

trict, as unanimously decided by three major political parties - BID, BJP and Congress - consensus candidate Mamata Jani, a graduate of Thuria village has filed nomination papers for Zilla parishad member post in the election to Kotia panchayat. Jani was selected by ruling BJD and opposition BJP and

Congress for the post. She filed her papers at the sub-collector's office on the last day of filing nominations on Friday. The three parties had decided to field a consensus candidate in order to thwart any

attempt by Andhra Pradesh to meddle in the panchayat elections in Kotia gram panchayat. Though the parties had decided to select consensus candidates for different posts instead of going for elections, two other candidates, one of them being a dissident Congress leader and another person have also filed nomination for the Zilla Parishad member post as Independent candidates.

E-mobility start-up, VAAN Electric Moto, launches e-bikes in India

Indian lifestyle e-mobility startup VAAN Electric Moto Pvt Ltd has launched its electric bicycle-Urbansport in the

Union Minister of State for Skill Development, Entrepreneurship, Electronics and IT, Rajeev Chandrasekhar, launched the Van Electric Moto brand in India in a virtually held event in Kochi on

The e-bike is available in two variants- Urbansport and Urbansport Pro, priced at Rs 59,999 and Rs 69,999 respectively and will initially go on sale in Kochi, before being launched in other high-potential markets like Goa, Bangalore, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Delhi in the

According to VAAN, the vehicles offer a maximum assistance (top speed) of 25 km/h, and a pedal assisted range of 60 kilometres.

VAAN claims that a full charge would require just half a unit of electricity, costing

around Rs 4-5. The removable MP Chandran Pillai was also battery pack, with a net weight of 2.5 kg, would offer added convenience and would require

Leader of the Opposition in Kerala Assembly V D Satheesan and the Chairman and Managing Director of OilMax Energy Pvt. Ltd, Kapil Garg jointly launched the VAAN e-bikes in the Indian market.

hours for a full charge.

Ernakulam MP Hibi Eden unveiled the VAAN brand logo in the event in which former

Both the electric bikes get, compact 6061 aluminium unisex frames, saddle, rims and handlebar designed by Benelli Biciclette, the e-bike vertical of

the Italian brand. VAAN has tied with them for engineering and supply chain and has worked closely with the Benelli team for the development of the Urbansport duo," the group said in a

release VAAN claims that its this segment, adding that the bicycles come with Shimano Tourney 7 speed derailleur gear system, front and rear disc brakes and Spinner USA front

"The electric pedal assist system consists of a 250W hub mounted electric motor, a 48 Volt, 7.5 Ah removable Lithium-ion battery, and a total of 5 electric 'gear levels," it said

VAAN Urbansport e-bikes get a Smart LCD display serving all necessary information, that can also be used to control front and rear lights.

'The Urbansport is the most practical of the two and gets 20 inch spoke wheels, a carrier that can carry up to 15 kilograms and an exposed electric motor. Urbansport Pro is a more stylish and premium ebike that offers alloy wheels and an electric motor that is neatly integrated into the rear hub," the release said.

The company's plant at Ernakulam has a capacity to assemble 2,000 cycles a month, and are initially targeting sales

"We targeted a young crowd earlier but are now looking at even those in the age group of 40-55 years who need not be cycling enthusiasts, considering the advantages of our product that comes with three modes," Jithu Sukumaran Nair, Chief

Executive Officer and founder of VAAN Electric Mobility said. He said the e-cycle has a power-assisted mode with five electric gears and a full-throt-tle mode ratcheting up a speed of up to 25 km per hour. VAAN says the lithium-based removable battery

based removable battery weighing around 2.50 kg with a two-year warranty can be fully charged in around four hours and lasts for 50 km to 60 km depending on the mode in which the cycle is used.

KTM-owned KISKA GMBH, Austria handles branding for VAAN an Indian lifestyle e-mobility start-up.

It was globally launched at the EICMA motorcycle show in Italy. Vaan has technology partnership with the wellknown motorcycle producer brand Benelli.

US blocks flights by Chinese airlines in escalating dispute

PNS WASHINGTON

The United States has moved to block 44 flights to the US by Chinese airlines in retaliation for China forcing the cancellation of flights by US

Transportation Department's Friday order affecting four Chinese airlines is the latest development in a long-running dispute over COVID-19 restrictions.

China previously barred some inbound flights by Delta Air Lines, United Airlines and American

earlier flights tested positive for the virus. The US maintains that China's actions violated a treaty over access to each country by the other country's airlines.

Transportation Department said that China's move to block 44 flights by US carriers was "adverse to the public interest and warrant proportionate remedial action by the department".

The department said that China's regulations are unfair because passengers who test negative for the positive up to seven days later can result in future flights being cancelled.

The US order limits flights between Jan. 30 and March 29 by Air China, China Eastern Airlines, China Southern Airlines and Xiamen Airlines.

The dispute over flights goes back to 2020 and the early days of the pandemic. In 2020, the Trump administration backed down from a threat to block four Chinese airlines after China agreed to let United and Delta operate a limited number of flights.

Yes Bank Q3 profit zooms 80 pc as provisions decline

PNS MUMBAI

Yes Bank on Saturday reported 80 per cent jump in consolidated net profit at Rs 265.76 crore for December quarter 2021-22, helped by a fall in the provisions for bad loans.

The bank's core net interest income declined 31 per cent to Rs 1,764 crore, despite a 0.25 per cent expansion in net interest margin to 2.4 per cent but limited by the loan growth being suppressed at 4 per cent.

On a standalone basis, the profit jumped 77 per cent to Rs 266.43 crore in the quarter under review. Given the debulking exercise where it has reduced high value loans and also de-leveraging exercises by corporates, the bank has reduced its FY22 loan growth guidance to 10 per cent from the earlier 15 per cent, Managing Director and CEO Prashant Kumar said.



The provisions declined 82 per cent to Rs 375 crore from the year-ago period's Rs 2,089

The share of gross non performing assets (NPAs) in the overall loan portfolio declined to 14.65 per cent from 15.36 per cent in the year-ago period and quarter ago's 14.97 per cent, as the fresh slippages got contained at Rs 978 crore.

The bank management said Rs 435 crore came from corporate loans, Rs 388 crore from retail and Rs 123 crore from small businesses.

The quantum of restructured loans increased to Rs 6,878 crore from the quarter crore, helping the bottom line. ago's Rs 6,184 crore, which Kumar attributed to some projects facing a delay in date of commencement of commercial operations and also the

COVID-2 restructuring.

Kumar said the bank's plans for floating an asset reconstruction company (ARC) to house the entire quantum of its Rs 50,000 crore in stressed advances seem to be getting delayed by a quarter due to the fresh outbreak of COVID cases.

Rs 50,000 cr investments to come to JK: Shah

PNS NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday said Rs 50,000 crore investments will come to Jammu and Kashmir in the next few years and agreements have already been signed for Rs 12,000 crore.

Virtually launching the District Good Governance Index (DGGI) in Jammu Kashmir, he said all investments together will generate employment opportunities for five lakh youths.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made the best industrial policy ever for Jammu and Kashmir, under which investments of about Rs 50,000 crore is going to come in Jammu and Kashmir and that will provide employment to five lakh youths," he said.

The home minister said on one hand, investments during last 70 years was Rs 12,000 crore. However, he said, in a single year, MoUs for invest-

ments worth Rs 12,000 crore have been signed and ground breaking ceremonies worth Rs 2,000 crore have also taken place."Today, I once again want to tell my young friends, especially the young friends of the valley that you should walk on the path of develop-ment laid by Modi. No one can stop Jammu and Kashmir from becoming the most developed region of the country," he said. The home minister urged youths of the valley to focus on the development initiatives undertaken in the Union Territory and said they should participate in the development process, the political process and in the democratic process and make their future bright.Referring to the outcomes of the DGGI, Shah said the achievements of Jammu and Kashmir will

reach every state and this will

lead to healthy competition of

good governance in every dis-

trict of the country.

World Bank approves **Rs 1,000 cr loan** to West Bengal

PNS KOLKATA

The World Bank has approved a loan of around Rs 1,000 crore to the West Bengal government primarily to support its effort to help the poor and vulnerable groups access its social protection services.

According to a statement released by the state government on Saturday, the loan will help the administration improve services such as medical help through telemedicine, support for the elderly and differentlyabled, financial inclusion of citizens with digital payments and disburse-ment of benefits for public schemes.

MONEY MATTERS

Energy major Shell sheds 'Royal Dutch' from name



nergy giant Shell has dropped from its name the 'Royal Dutch' part, which it had carried for 130 years, following plans of a major overhaul announced recently. It is anticipated that Euronext Amsterdam and the London Stock Exchange will reflect the change in name on January 25. New York Stock Exchange will show the changed name on January 31.

According to a statement on Friday, the board's decision to change its name to Shell plc on December 20, 2021, has now taken effect. The energy major's overhaul involves integrating its dual-share structure into a single line of shares and relocating its headquarters to London. The changes will only involve about a dozen executives, including Chief Executive Officer Ben van Beurden and Chief Financial Officer Jessica Uhl, moving to the UK capital. Despite retaining a significant presence in the Netherlands. the company said it expected that it would "no longer meet the conditions for using the honorary Royal designation", which it has carried for more than 130 years. According to the statement, shareholders should note that their shareholdings will be unaffected by the change of name and existing share certificates should be retained as they will remain valid for all purposes and no new share certificates will be issued.

Rio de Janeiro delays Carnival parades as omicron spreads

he world-famous Carnival festivities in Rio de Janeiro will be held in late April rather than the final weekend of February, as the number of coronavirus cases in Brazil spikes and the omicron variant spreads across the country. "The decision was made respecting for the current situation of the COVID-19 pandemic in Brazil and the need, at this time, to preserve lives and join forces to drive vaccination throughout the country," said a statement issued Friday jointly by the cities of Rio and Sao Paulo, which also delayed the start of its Carnival parades until April 21. Earlier in the afternoon, Rio's Mayor Eduardo Paes and his Sao Paulo counterpart Ricardo Nunes held a video call along with their respective health secretaries and each city's league of samba schools that put on the parade, according to the statement.

Jio completes 5G coverage plans for top 1,000 cities

Jio has completed 5G network coverage planning for top 1,000 cities in the country and is augmenting its fibre capacity as well as running pilot across sites, a senior company official said during a presentation. The company has created

teams to focus on dedicated solutions for 5G deployment in India, Reliance Jio Infocomm President Kiran Thomas said on Friday evening.
"5G coverage planning has been completed for 1,000 top

cities across the country. Jio has been doing trials on advanced use cases across healthcare and industrial automation on its 5G network," Jio said in a statement. Thomas during the presen-

tation said that the company is running a 5G pilot in multiple cities and network planning for the roll out of 5G using 3D maps and ray tracing technology is going on.
"We are using the most

modern approaches towards network planning, especially 3D maps and ray tracing technology because 5G is pretty



unique technology, which requires very advanced network planning techniques, and we are undertaking that for all of India, so that as and when the approvals are received for us to roll out this network, we will be well geared-up to prioritise our rollout, where we can make the maximum contribution," Thomas said.

Auction for 5G spectrum is expected to be held in the first quarter of the next financial

Reliance Jio reported to close the third quarter which ended December 31 with net addition of 1.02 crore customers yearon-year (YoY) at 42.1 crore. The subscriber base, however, declined on a quarter-on-

quarter basis. We closed the quarter at 421 million subscribers. That was a reduction of 8.4 million, but the gross addition continued to be very strong 34.6 million. And the reduction was really on account of SIM consolidation and some of the less active customers, now with tariff increases, etc, looking at consolidating uses in a single SIM," Reliance Jio head of strategy Anshuman Thakur

On a reported number basis,

Jio's ARPU remained almost flat but the company's average revenue per user (ARPU) increased by 8.4 per cent to Rs 151.6 on a year-on-year after making adjustments interconnection usage charges (IUC) which it had to pay to other

The IUC charges have become nil from January 1,

Jio Platforms posted an 8.8 per cent increase in net profit at Rs 3,795 crore for the third quarter ended December 2021. It had posted a net profit of

Rs 3,486 crore in the same period a year ago. Gross revenue from operations increased by 5.76 per cent

to Rs 24,176 crore from Rs

22,858 crore in the October-December 2020 period. Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd (RJIL), the telecom services arm of Jio Platforms, posted a 9.8 per cent rise in net profit at Rs 3,615 crore for the quarter,

compared to Rs 3,291 crore in

the year-ago period. RJIL's revenue from operations increased 4.62 per cent to Rs 19,347 crore from Rs 18,492



Investigations going on in death of four Indians, smuggling operation

PNS NEW YORK

Investigations are going on into the death of a family of four Indian nationals, including an infant, along the US-Canada border and into a larger human smuggling operation, as seven other Indians, believed to be from Gujarat and illegally present in the US, have been arrested.

A criminal complaint has been filed on Thursday in the US District Court for the District of Minnesota against 47-year-old US citizen Steve Shand, who has been charged with human smuggling.

Shand, a "suspected smuggler of undocumented foreign nationals", was arrested near the US/Canadian border on January 19 for transporting two Indian nationals, who were illegally present in the US. The two Indian nationals have been identified as 'SP' and 'YP' in

the complaint. The complaint said that five Indian nationals "illegally present in the United States were also identified and arrested" around the time of Shand's

He said that while data

usage in the country has been

rising, the prices have been

The minister said that the

government has taken cogni-

sance of network roll-out

issues faced by telecom com-

panies and the Department of

Telecom is working to resolve

concerns of the telecom infra-

structure companies. Telecom Secretary K Rajaraman said

declining since 2014.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA ROADS & BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT

1.Online tenders are invited under e-procurement Notice

1.Online tenders are invited under e-procurement platform for two works (1st call) in Yadadri Bhuwanagiri District and one work (8th call) in Nalgorida District taken up under corenet Non Plan, vide Engineer-in-Chiet/RBB/SR,CRN & Manging Director, TSRDC, "o" CTN No.31/CRN/ENC/DCE(R)/2021-22; Dt: 13.01.2022.

2.Tenderers can download the tender schedules and have further details from e-market place i.e. www.eprocurement.gov.in. The last date of recippt of tenders is 31.01.2022 upto 3.30 P.M.

8.O.No. (980,0821) Antercomposition of the control of tenders in State Chief Chief

GREATER WARANGAL MUNICIPAL CORPORATION Tender Notice No : EE/Circle-III/GWMC/CTN/12/e-proc/2021-22, Dated: 22-01-2023

Submitted:- Based on the approval of the work by the Commissioner GWMC, 41 No. of Civil Works under General Fund, SC Sub Plan & Pattans Pragathi Funds for Rs. 776.53 Lakhs will be called through online tender system on "e" procurement platform. The tender notice along with list of works are enclosed. Startling date for downloading: 27-01-2022 from 10.30 am onwards. Last date for downloading: 04-02-2022 up to 4.00pm. Opening of Bids: 04-02-2022 at 4.30 pm. Sdi-Commissioner, DIPR.No.20448-PP/CL/Advl/1/2021-22 Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA ROADS AND BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT

e-Procurement Notice

"e"MITNo.32.E-in-C[R&B], SR &CRNCRNI2021-22

1. Online tender is invited under e-procurement platform for one Road work [2nd call] under No Plan, in Rangareddy District vide E-in-C(R&B), State Roads & CRN, "e" NIT, No.32/E-in-C (R&B) SR & CRN/CRN/2021-22 Dt.: 18.01.2022.

Tenderers can download the tender schedules and have further details from e-market place to www.tender.telonsers.gov.in. The last date of receipt of tenders is 11.02.2022 up to 3.30 pm. Soli-for Engineer-in ChiefR&

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

NIT No. : 37/EE-8/SZ/GHMC/2021-22

's' Procurement Notice

Name of the Work: 19 works, Bett. Coet (Rs in Lakhe): 394.35. Start Date/Last Date &

Time for Receipts of Bids: Download Start Date: 24.01.2022 at 03.00 PM. Last Date

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5G coverage inside buildings to be a challenge

PNS NEW DELHI

Telecom regulator Trai will soon come up with recommendations that will facilitate in improving telecom connectivity, especially 5G when it is rolled out, a top official has

said. Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) chairman P D Vaghela during a virtual event organised by Digital Infrastructure Providers Association (DIPA) said that it will be difficult to get 5G coverage inside the building as signals will be transmitted on high frequencies which cover very small distances.

"Holistic approach will be required to ensure availability of digital infrastructure in building complexes, that also in a non-discriminate manner. There is a huge problem in getting access to the buildings by the infrastructure providers, telecom service providers and other players. We have already prepared a consultation paper and very soon we will come out with a recommendation. This will require change in bylaws and working with the states very closely," Vaghela

He said that a time will come when revenue will become secondary for the

states and they will push for digital connectivity.



Telecom Devusinh Chauhan ground and the government is said that digital connectivity committed to support tele-Minister of State for empowers people on the com infrastructure compa-

are a step in that direction.

that there is a constant endeavour to bring down the cost of operations of telecom services in the country, and the recently announced telecom reforms

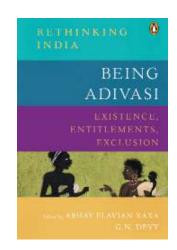


As G.N. DEVY, the editor of *Being Adivasi* with the late Abhay Xaxa, shares in his introduction: 'I would like to hope that it is received not just as a publication or academic exercise but as a prelude to change that is now overdue, a change that will bring to the Denotified & Nomadic communities at least some measure of justice and human rights that they expect to get as citizens of a democratic country & to Adivasis the understanding of their distinct identity. We, the people of India, owe it to them as the indigenous people of India'. An edited excerpt:

of the awareness of Adivasis and their concerns is scant among the non-Adivasi population of India, knowledge about communities described as 'Denotified Tribes' is almost absent. Lest the term be misunderstood as 'some kind of Adivasis' or 'officially non-recognised Adivasis' - which is not unusual among even those who know something about Adivasis — I would like to offer the following brief description of the Denotified Tribes. During the nineteenth century, after the British had more or less secured authority over all princely states in India, they found it necessary to disarm the disbanded soldiers of the vanquished armies of Indian princes. The British also wanted to ensure safe travels in Indian states for commercial purposes. In order to accomplish the two objectives, they appointed William Henry Sleeman to detect the use of arms by unauthorised individuals. Sleeman made copious notes and listed instances of armed clashes on highways in central India. In the process, he gave rise to the idea of 'thuggee'. The idea attracted readers of his books back in England. The list of persons and their communities came to be associated with the idea of thuggee or communities that make looting and crime their profession. The 1871 Criminal Tribes Act (CTA) was based on this notion. It listed communities as 'criminal communities', implying that being born in any of those communities made one automatically criminal intendency. The CTA provided for 'reformatory settlement', which were soft prisons. The listed communities were interned in these settlements, with severe restrictions placed on their free movement. Sleeman's list had many flaws in it. Most of the communities had been traditionally nomadic in habit, an age-old social phenomenon in India. Members of the interned communities were put to hard labour, in most instances unpaid labour.

It is difficult to estimate as to how many perished due to the stress of labour. The members of these communities continued to live in the settlements for several generations spread over eight decades. In1952, two years after India adopted the Constitution, the 'notified' communities were 'denotified'. They continued to be described as Denotified and Nomadic Tribes (DNT), while very few of them found a place in the official lists of jan-jatis, the 'indigenous peoples' or Adivasis. The stigma of criminality continued to stick to them despite the slight change in the label. Not being included in the lists of STs and SCs, with a few exceptions, they continued to languish without land, livelihood or access to schools and healthcare. Not having fixed

addresses, their minimum rights as citizens too were not safeguarded. The stigma around their name often causes harassment from villagers and the urban population even to this day. There have been widespread incidences of mob lynching of members of the DNT communities. Governments have been generally indifferent to the plight of the DNTs as they do not form even a substantial minority, though their total population in the country is by no means insignificant. When Dr Manmohan Singh's United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government appointed me as chairman of the Technical Advisory Group for the Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Communities, I found that the population of the DNTs could be close to seven-eight crore. That was in 2008. At present, the number may have gone up and may be close to ten crore. The Census of India has never carried out any clear counting of the DNTs. And since the numbers are not officially ascertained, the locations of these communities are not properly documented and no systematic thought has been given to their livelihood requirements and their human rights; they continue to remain in India's imagination as the invisible nowhere people. The present volume includes an introductory essay on the DNTs. For several decades following Independence, 'Adivasi' was an anthropomorphic 'type' cast in sentiment and piety, or else dismissed as historical baggage worth leaving behind in India's march to modernity and nationhood. Though the complexities of Adivasi society received attention in scholarships related to the theme, the popular attitude to Adivasis was severely restricted by the acronym 'ST'. Excessive pity and excessive contempt are both equally potent instruments of 'othering' people. It is therefore that Archana Prasad's analysis of the class-currents within Adivasi communities becomes important as an antidote to the 'othering' processes. She concludes, after presenting a nuanced analysis of the tensions and textures in Adivasi contemporary identity discourse: "... the multifarious manifestations of neoliberal policies have also created diverse forms of Adivasi politics with different social basis. It is therefore important to distinguish between identity based struggles which have been led by those who are situated within the working class and those whose motive has been to get incorporated within the current power structure. Further, the culturally exclusive character of Adivasi politics is also hegemonic and camouflages the inequalities within the Adivasi society. On the other hand, non-culturally exclusive class politics has had to come to terms with the persistence of identity-



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based politics by adopting a more nuanced approach towards it. This collaboration has been facilitated by the intensifying communal polarisation and economic crisis, leading to the transformation of Adivasi politics, both class and identity based. Such a development is not only positive, but also essential to take on an authoritarian and neo-liberal government and the challenges that it poses to all progressive forces within the country."

It needs to be mentioned that the facts of Adivasi political expression, cultural production and major social struggles over the last half century, all go to show that the general perception of Adivasis and their participation in modern India's process of becoming falls woefully short of reality. The new-generation Adivasis are keen to create a more realistic view, one that is from the perspective of Adivasis. Abhay Xaxa states in clear words: "Apart from development issues, there was also a demand for a stringent anti-conversion law which has been used as a tool to divide the Adivasi communities on the lines of religion. The communal agenda of these organisations has gradually created a fear among people who don't subscribe to the dominant discourse of assimilating the Adivasis in the Hindu fold. As a result, the harmonious relationship between various Adivasi and forest dependent communities have been broken and communal violence is also increasingly experienced in Adivasi areas?

In order to obtain this view, the UPA-II government appointed the Committee headed by Virginius Xaxa. Abhay Xaxa refers to the Xaxa Committee report and points out that: "The panel recommended radical changes to the laws, regulations and rules to protect Adivasi communities from land alienation and to ensure their rights over resources are handed back and protected. The report also laid out an overhauled, expansive and detailed framework for providing better education, health and opportunities to tribal communities across the country. If the recommendations of the Xaxa committee are implemented, it will surely have an empowering effect on Adivasi communities."

On the other hand, N.C. Saxena's essay presents a deeply sympathetic but somewhat predictably simplified view. Dr Saxena's historically important contribution to Adivasi development and the role he played inside government bureaucracy in favour of Adivasis are of a legendary proportion. Yet, seen from an Adivasi perspective, his overview is likely to be read as slightly less than a full view of what is happening today inside the minds of Adivasi communities

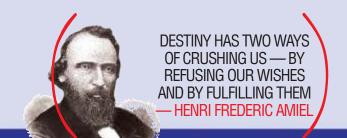
in India. Saxena states: "The oppressed tribals, unlike other disadvantaged groups, generally suffer and endure their exploitation silently. In some areas, however, they have taken to armed insurgency. The middle path of agitational politics by organising bundhs, taking out processions, and putting pressure on the politicians, so successfully adopted by other groups in India to articulate their grievances, is alien to the tribals and has historically been unknown to them. Civil society needs to play a big role here, and government too should not brand all tribal activists as Maoists."

These comments need to be read together with fictional works by Mahasweta Devi in order to understand that the silence of Adivasis is not the absence of voice but rather a powerful statement which we have not yet begun grasping. The 'silence' is extremely powerfully articulated by Vikrant B.: "... stunted reading of social, economic and political realities created a host of mythologies and prejudices with respect to Adivasis and tribes in India. They were perceived to be isolated, self-sufficient, animist, under-developed and backward. Seemingly harmless, these mythologies have had serious policy and political implications. For example, tribes are seen as inter-linked with castes in India, by policymakers, academics, and even in popular perception. At one level, it is perhaps necessary to denote common subalternity, so as to emphasise the State's obligation to their upliftment and empowerment. However, this manufactured equivalence glosses over the fact that while the Dalit question is relatively centre stage in the nation's consciousness, the Adivasi question is not."

The last clause of this paragraph sums up the purpose of this volume. It is, in the simplest words, to present 'the Adivasi question.' It includes the question of Adivasis in the context of modern India, the questioning of the nation's ideas of development by Adivasis and also the manner in which Adivasis pose their questions within the much-misunderstood framework of their understanding of what democracy means. Or, in other words, the Adivasi is the question handled by this volume, the Adivasi manner of questioning too is its concern and the questions raised by Adivasis before the Indian nation too are its paramount concern.

Extracted from Being Adivasi: Existence, Entitlements, Exclusion by Abhay Xaxa (Editor), Ganesh N. Devy (Editor) & run with due permissions from Samruddha Bharat Foundation and publishers Penguin Random House India





spirituality

HYDERABAD, January 23, 2022

DYNAMICS OF KARMA & DESTINY

As we create the world along with our cravings and attachments, these are apparently writing our destiny, through us, shares HINGORI

arma and Destiny — these arma and Destiny — these words are quite familiar and a part of our everyday conversation. However, when we dig deeper into the true meaning of these, we come to realise what appears simple isn't so if we view it from the lens of duality.

So, what are Karma and Destiny? It would not be very wrong, if we were to say that memory and latent tendencies (conditioning of the mind) is 'Destiny' and 'perceived action' as a result of the circumstances created by this combination of memory and latent tendencies, is Karma.

Let's examine what this memory is, and why the action is described as 'perceived'. When deeds get stored in the perceived subconscious, the tendencies and memory come together to create a situation where the action needs to come to fruition. The stored deeds awaiting fruition are destiny and the fruition itself is karma. When we view it from a lens of duality, we perceive all of this within the mind.

Our scriptures say, all that has been created is from and in the infinite consciousness or the consciousness supreme. Like when we dream, we create form, experiences, consequences and feelings, but when we wake up from the dream, we realise it was all unreal. Those who are in an enlightened or in an awakened state see themselves as no different from this consciousness supreme, and the actions, and all else that exists, are a part of the dream and therefore, unreal that we view as real, only in our perception.

As we create the world along with our cravings and attachments, these are apparently writing our Destiny, through us. However, rather than being truly written, its being imagined. Since the past, past present and future too, are measures of the mind and for the sake of simplicity, may be viewed as stacked in a layered manner as opposed to linear progression, the fruition is not awaiting a subsequent date, but is also happening in the moment. This is quite like watching a movie at home, one has the ability to forward, rewind, skip and imagine what is likely to happen in the movie. Now imagine the director of the movie conceiving it in his mind — all the parts, wardrobes, the sets, the visual cues and each scene being shot independent of the other to be strung together later as he deems fit. As you start to see how this plays out, so do our lives in terms of Karma and Destiny.

tinct from the infinite consciousness, we create duality as a result of the mind and egotism, however in reality there is only one perpetual truth simplistically stated as us being the creations of the thought or imagina-



tion of the consciousness supreme. Therefore, all that exists, all beings, their minds, their fruition, exists in the infinite consciousness.

Some like Sage Bhrigu and Nostradamus have seen this movie called destiny because they see the infinite consciousness, and all the memories, tendencies, characters and the actions are ultimately just a part of this consciousness. To explain it in simple terms — if we can wake up, recount and document each detail of the dream we have witnessed, we will be able to write a perceived prophecy, since in each dream there are beings, environments, elements actions and consequences. Like in a dream, in an enlightened state we transcend time since we are capable of viewing all that is on at the same time. In any event, from the place we epochs and not years.

So, what about free will? Is that too an illusion? How can there be free will when it is being conceived of something that in itself is unreal? The action too exists in our mind and has

WHEN WE **IDENTIFY OURSELVES AS DISTINCT FROM** THE INFINITE CONSCIOUSNESS, **WE CREATE** DUALITY AS A RESULT OF THE MIND AND **EGOTISM**

been determined by our memory and tendencies — it is also being created like in a dream where we are imagining new things as we deal with the existing. Our individualised consciousness is the recipient of the memories pending fruition, and we then live part of these out, and create another set of memories for further fruition. This is why it is said that the scenarios repeat till we learn our lessons. If the perceived action plays out in a way that we perceive as wrong, we create a different script from this, for fruition at another time. However, when our embedded memories believe that the action has fructified, the memory is discarded as it creates no further actions and leads us on the path to freedom from samsara. All of this too is unreal, much like a simulation or as in a movie like the Matrix movies you don't need 'software codes' or 'spinning tops' to second

guess the truth. Once you realise it, you see the movie as the director as opposed to actor impacted and immersed in the

role so deeply that he is unable to see the difference between what is 'real'

Can destiny be changed? Only a Siddh Guru can change destiny. Being enlightened, he knows the true nature of reality as he is 'one' with the reality. It is easy for him to distinguish between what is real and the unreal. He can alter the unreal through a simple thought. A Siddh Guru is the guide who can take you through the journey of self-enquiry and help you over-come the inner turmoil that arises

from cravings of the mind.
While the above explanations are perhaps those at a 'school level' in the spiritual journey, you will need a *Siddh Guru* to accelerate your 'Spiritual PHD. It's a journey of experiencing and realisation through the experiences. And as you go through it, you that can be set in the world we are familiar with in order to help you get there. So be patient and aware of your experiences.

The writer is the author of Hingori Sutras series of spiritual books

HIDDENSOULS PRAMOD PATHAK



Disease of the century

rf we ask somebody what is the disease of the present century the answer we are likely to get would be Covid-19.

How ironical and sad because the disease of the previous century also was something similar though it was called by a different name — Spanish flu. Two conclusions can be drawn. First, that we have hardly achieved anything significant to prove that humanity has grown in strength when it comes to being a match for nature's power and intrigues. True, we have spent billions on so called research and technology to make human beings less vulnerable. But neither the research nor the technology came to our rescue in the bat-tle against this pandemic. Yes, the research and technology has made a few richer and many poorer. The second con-clusion that we can draw is that our predicament will be no better hundred years from now when it comes to man versus nature. But this reality notwithstanding, let's come back to the initial question regarding the disease of the century. But is Covid-19 really the disease of the century? Not exactly. And the reasons are not far to seek. Of course, the recent coronavirus pandemic was in some way responsible for killing a large number of people around the world. But so are many other diseases. Then there are many other reasons why people die. Accidents, suicides and what not. Further, in many cases deaths cannot be attributed to one single reason because of the fact that multiple causation cannot be ruled out. Moreover, statistical data is hardly reliable, given the problems in their recording, accuracy, and, of course, ability and desirability of the enumerators. For the same reasons there are many who say that deaths due to Covid-19 were not correctly reported. Not just in India, even in more advanced countries like the US, deaths are usually recorded by the precipitating cause. Incidentally, even this is not very accurately diagnosed. Thus, in many cases it is difficult to pinpoint exact cause of death. These days, to further confound the confusion a new term co-morbidity has found its way into the popular discourse. So it is difficult to be sure whether corona aggravated co-morbid conditions or co-morbid conditions worsened corona. However, in reporting deaths, corona finds a place more often, given the excessive noise around the pathogen that leads to availability bias. This is a psychological phenomenon, a mental shortcut that people tend to resort to while evaluating, due to excessive information about the subject. These days we found that everything veered around corona increasing the possibility of availability bias. And there were other interests, too. In fact, those other interest played a major role in precipitating the crisis. No marks for guessing what were those interests. We may come to that a little later, but see what these interests led to. Hundreds of so called scientific research papers being published and circulated everyday worldwide, and without any clinching evidence or conclusion. It seemed as if confusion was helping the cause of some interested quarters. We are into strange times that is wrongly called knowledge era. It is a purely business era. Everything is business, business is everything. Health is business. Education is business. Religion is business. Even relationship is also business. It is the commerce age. Naturally, in this age greed is the biggest disease.

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Meditate on colours

Colour meditation requires you to focus on chakras and their colours to maintain an ideal balance, writes AARRTI ZAVERI

olours are an integral and essential part of our daily lives. Their role in our lives is at times dramatic and at others subtle. They can be used to express, impress and more. There are numerous ancient cultures around the world that believe in the healing powers of colours. Chromo therapy also known as light therapy is a popular holistic healing and meditating treatment. Psychologists and medical researchers, have for years, conducted several studies on the effect of colours on the psyche. Advertisements incorporate conscious use of colour to emanate certain feelings about products and places. For the same reason, we believe that focusing on colours during your daily meditation will prove to have a significant impact on your daily meditation.

Before we delve into this, let's understand the relationship between colours and chakras. The sanskrit word for wheel, 'chakra' is known to be located in a straight line with your spine. The seven *chakras* in the body run down the centre, right from the top of your head to the base of your spine. Each chakra is an individual energy centre and has a unique colour representing it. Colour meditation requires you to focus on each of your chakras and their respective colours to maintain an ideal balance between body and mind. This balance will thereby promote healing and peace of mind. The chakras can be related to the ele-



ments of the Earth — air, fire, water, ether, spiritual awakening and enlightenment. The seven chakras and the colours associated with them are:

• **Red:** The colour represents the chakra located at the root of your spine. It is known as your life force and represents stability. While meditating focusing on the colour red will help you assuage gnawing feelings of frustration and anger. Red is the colour that stimulates your body and mind thereby increasing your stimulation.

• Orange: It represents the chakra located in the naval area, also known as the sacral *chakra*. Focusing on the colour orange will help you mitigate issues with sensuality, relationships, physical pressure, emotional self

expression and creativity. Orange is known to kick start your nervous system and activate stimulation.

• Yellow: Just below your breastbone, is located your solar plexus chakra. Yellow focuses on your solar plexus *chakra* and has an impact on your optimism, happiness and thought processes. Yellow is the colour that affects your physical vitality, mental awareness and ability to think and process analytically. • Green: The heart *chakra* is

located in the centre of your chest. Green focuses on your heart chakra and instills emotions of peace, love and nurturing. It initiates physical healing. This is why most hospitals are painted green. • Blue: Located at the base of

your larynx is the throat chakra and blue focuses on it. While meditating, focusing on your throat chakra will help you with your confidence and self expression. Physically blue controls your thyroid gland and lymphatic system. • Indigo: This represents the

third eye *chakra*, i.e. located in the middle of your forehead. Focusing on the colour while meditation will help with your intuition and peace of mind. • Violet: Located at the top of your skull the crown chakra is represented by the violet colour. Meditating on the colour will help you align with universal consciousness and make your

more self aware and at peace with your self. The writer is a visual artist

Are you secure?

Taking shelter of God is tough, because one has to give up ahankar, an intrinsic part of us, writes AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

y honest answer is no; I don't except, occasionally. As I am a thinking person, I am always looking for ways to feel secure. There are not so many ways; there is just one. I have to take shelter of God, period. As you may have guessed, I have tried every way, but nothing else could make me feel secure. Taking shelter of God is tough, very tough, because one has to give up 'ahankar' (ego) — an intrinsic part of us. This is the cosmic

The same cosmic design lets us know that we live in two worlds. Yes, there are two, not just one world. One is the material world, about which we are all aware of, and the other is the spiritual world. This world consists of God and those who have realised their identities as souls, i.e. 'aham brahma asmi'. Both these worlds are governed by the 'karmaphala' principle, which in short means 'what we sow we reap.' All our acts, whether done by our minds, words or the rest of our bodies result in fruits, both good and bad, depending on whether they were good acts or bad

Fortunately, in the spiritual world there are only good acts, i.e. spiritual acts, beginning from a silent prayer of a child asking for the well-being of his parents. Each such act is duly recorded for rewards in future. Lord Krishna states in the *Bhagavad Gita*, "Neither there is waste of effort here nor there is opposite effect. Even a little of this activity protects one from great fear."
(2.40) This goes on throughout one's life. All acts add up and continue to be recorded. The question is: Have we totaled enough spiritual acts, especially by the time we reach old age, when we need them the most? Because



knowingly or unknowingly we have also been accumulating bad material acts in the past, including in previous lives, which come to fruition at their appointed times. Why else are we here?

If we have been doing spiritual acts also, God gets involved, He is pleased. He manifests *vis-à-vis* the person/devotee concerned. He begins to take charge of that fortunate soul's life. Guidance and help start arriving. God, being omniscient, is in perfect position to do so. Surprising as it may seem to some, God guides about everything material and spiritual. He even helps in changing people's hearts in our favour, if God becomes so inclined. God also gives us strength to tolerate the inevitable miseries of this material world. Our present activities, i.e. 'kriyamana' become highly productive and efficient. Our ego begins to shrink. One becomes more and more dutiful both

materially and spiritually.

Personally, I am much gratified when God bails me out of some punishment, which was due to me for bad acts done earlier God manages to do so without infringing on the 'karmaphala' principle. He takes into consideration the bad act done earlier, which is due for punishment. He also considers what spiritual acts have been accumulated, which could be used to mitigate the suffering. God has to ensure that His devotees never perishes, as promised by Him in the Gita verse #9.31. This means that the resultant suffering must be tolerable.

Having understood what the Lord does for us devotees, I am absolutely amazed. Not only do I feel more secure now than ever before, I am able to control my mind and senses better Bishnoi is a spiritual writer and can be reached at spiritual@ajitbishnoi.com



Blot on American rights claims: Gitmo turns 20

The infamous Guantanamo Bay military prison completed two decades of its operations this January 11, 2022. Many say that this secret jail is truly an ethical failure of the American justice system. Besides, the last twenty years in Guantanamo have been a catastrophic legal misstep that is bringing home more problems and disgrace than credible solutions. It is increasingly becoming a symbol of torture. The military prison in Cuba is now left with only 39 inmates. During its peak time, it housed nearly 800 prisoners. Indeed, some media reports say that it is symptomatic of CIAsanctioned torture cells carried out in stealth. Today another critical question looms large over the Biden Administration: Is it worth guarding 39 prisoners with one of the most sophisticated ring of 1,500 commandos? It is felt that the taxpayers' dollars must be spent judiciously at a time of global pandemic like the Covid-19. The Guantanamo deten-

tion camp, also called Guantanamo Guantanamo or Gitmo, is in the Southeastern part of Cuba. The horrible prison is located at the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base of America. It was created by then US President George W Bush in the year 2002 after September 11 terror attacks on the country. And the prison was especially designed to host the inmates who were caught as a part of the Global War on Terror (GWOT). Though the prison was first used in 2002, the American Government has been maintaining a military naval base there since 1903. Interestingly, the original prison was named Camp X-Ray. In fact, after the terror attack on September 11, the prison facility was made ready for immediate use in just 96 hours. Shortly after the Bush administration dethroned the Taliban Government headed by Mullah Omar in Afghanistan, the facility came into being as the most secure prison. The first batch of detainees was brought to the prison on January 11 the very next year and they were classified as "enemy combatants".

Most of the inmates of a part of the GWOT or those who had helped harbouring terrorists. Precisely, the majority of them belonged to the countries of West Asia. The worst part of the Guantanamo saga was that these prisoners were captured on foreign soil but were not charged on any particular crime. Further, they were



In this February 6. 2002. file photo a detainee is led by military police to be interrogated by military officials at Camp X-Ray at the US Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. At the time the image was taken there were 158 al-Qaida and Taliban prisoners being held at Camp X-Ray

detained in this secluded prison for an indefinite period and were denied access to any legal counsel. Another important point to be noted here is that the GWOT is not an official war as there was no declaration of war by the US Congress. On November 13, 2001, barely two months after the terror attack, President Bush announced a military order, officially permitting these actions: it authorised the detention and trial by the Military Commission of any current or former member of the al-Qaeda and anyone who aids or abets its work or harbors its members. Thus, the GWOT has no scheduled end those nations who were either date, and it has handed down an indefinite mandate to the powerful armed forces to carry out the operation as long as the real culprits are not held. And when Osama bin Laden, the brains behind 9/11, was killed by American forces in 2011 during the Obama administration, in a way, the biggest milestone of the operation was already

Now, America's withdrawal from Afghanistan was completed last year by handing over the reign to the same Taliban, the butchers against whom America and other liberal nations fought for nearly two decades. Now, there is no point of maintaining the Guantanamo Bay. In fact, the terror has come home all the way. It is ubiq-

uitous now. Now, the most pertinent questions are: Why Guantanamo was chosen and why is it still open? First of all, the US strategic experts and security agents wanted to global terror suspects outside the purview of public and, most importantly, the constant media glaze. Also, when they are housed far away from the US mainland, these detainees will not be able both to demand and enjoy the protection of rights under the country's justice system. Another critical point to note here is that the 117square kilometre base had

enough space and facilities to hold the prisoners for a long time. Many human rights advocates say that this Bay is not technically a part of the US territory, but rather an "island outside law". Second, it is still open as there are tough Congressional roadblocks to close the jail.

Global experts condemn unrelenting human rights violations at Guantanamo Bay. The detention centre is internationally known for its human right violations committed there. The saddest part is that the international community has failed to discharge their responsibilities to e prison shut by using pressure on the successive US Government since 2002 or by enforcing international human rights obligations. Rights advocates say that the American actions at the prison violate its obligations under the Third Geneva Convention, the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Convention Against Torture

(CAT) and the customary international law. It is widely recognised that violations Guantanamo Bay include illegal and indefinite detention, inhuman conditions, torture, unfair trials (military commissions), etc.

Today, the prison has become a symbol of American injustice and torture. In a nutshell, Gitmo was prepared just to torture the detainees, mostly belonging to the al-Qaeda and the Taliban. Today, this island prison bears the testimony of what many call the first war of the 21st century. This war was a different kind of a war against a different kind of enemy. The GWOT highlights the fact that the enemy is not a nation, but the enemy is massive global terror network that threatens the way of life of all peaceful people.

Frankly speaking, it is clear now that there had been and also continues to have flagrant violations of international human rights of the detainees inside the prison

complex. As the prison has been kept completely out of global media glaze, a very few of the tragic incidents that took place inside were brought to the notice of the outside world.

The maintenance of Guantanamo Bay prison is an insult to American democracy and the liberal ethos that Washington has been preaching for decades. President Biden can finally put an end to the extra-judicial and abhorrent system that has existed in Guantanamo for the last twenty years. If one flashes back and observes, they can single out how difed to deal with the a decade in institutions of Guantanamo crisis differently after the exit of Bush in 2009. Barack Obama, a Democrat, who took over the reign from the Republican Bush, indeed pledged to shut it down during his first campaign for office. During his al research journal) electoral march, he once said: "In the dark halls of Abu Gharib and the detention

compromised our most precious values." An eloquent speaker as he used to be, but he found it too difficult to put an end to the tragedies of the prison. Even though he signed an executive order to close the prison within a year, he failed to do so. Sadly, the Congress maintained such restrictions that barred Obama from closing the prison in the first two years of his time in office. And these two years have recorded a Congress, largely controlled by the Democrats. by the Democrats. Interestingly, liberal veterans like Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren voted against easing Congressional restrictions in the Senate in the year 2013. But Obama reduced the number of

inmates from 242 to 41 dur-

ing his tenure, by transferring

some of them to the United Arab Emirates. When Donald

Trump came to office, he maintained the status quo. Is there any hope that Biden will be able to close down the prison? At present, the Democrats have a razorthin majority in the Congress. And this is the only golden chance to bring an end to Gitmo, which Obama miserably failed despite his tall promises. If Biden wants to do something on the issue, first he must repeal longheld restrictions on shutting down the prison as the US Congress brings two legislations each year, namely, an annual defence authorisation bill and a Government spending bill. These are legal hurdles that Biden needs to overcome at the moment.

On record, Biden has also ledged to close Guantanamo. But the irony is that those Congressional impediments that prevented Obama are still in the books. However, Biden should give a final push. He must not postpone. This collective scar on American democracy should be buried with full presidential might and by taking all legal nuances. Hope, Biden, a matured and a patient listener to the woes of the world, would be able to fix the rights

(Dr Makhan Saikia has taught political science and national and international repute after specialisation in globalisation and governance from Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. He is the chief editor of the Journal of Global Studies, an internationIt's high time US **President Joe** Biden closed the books on the **Guantanamo Bay** prison which is infamous for its unrelenting human rights violations. The continuation of the Guantanamo prison is an insult to American democracy and the liberal ethos that Washington has been preaching to the world for decades



MAKHAN SAIKIA

PERSPECTIVE

India should use cash crops to its strategic advantage

Tobacco farming is suffering due to the actions of vested groups advocating high taxes on FCV tobacco to achieve tobacco control goals by making cigarettes unaffordable



JAVARE GOWDA

World Bank has held its growth outlook for the Indian economy at 8.3 per cent despite a global pandemic. To support growth, there would be greater demand on natural sources where agriculture holds a pivotal role. Today, we are expecting agriculture to provide alternative fuel and sustainable energy sources. In India, agriculture remains the largest source of employment. It is imperative for India to actualise the PM's vision for farmer welfare at the core of agri development. Farm production must be

aligned with good market infrastructure to enable farmers to sell their produce at reasonable prices and improve the flow of much-needed private investments in the sector for crop development and farm practices.

Many government initiatives in this regard are laudable such as National Agriculture Market (eNAM) to create a unified national market for agricultural commodities, National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) for enhancing agricultural productivity in rain-

fed areas, and digitisation. Cash crops like tea, coffee, tobacco, cotton have a strategic role in India's international agriculture play. Take for example tobacco crops which are one of the largest foreign exchange earners with exports of ₹6,500 crore in 2021. Indian FCV tobacco has a new opportunity in the global market due to new-found usage in medicines for several autoimmune and inflammatory diseases, including diabetes. But for this to happen, we must invest in R&D to produce valueadded tobacco products that capture growing buyer interest and thus improve the country's position as the 2nd largest exporter of tobacco.

Challenges faced by FCV farmers

Unfortunately, tobacco farming is suffering due to the actions of vested groups advocating high taxes on FCV tobacco to achieve tobacco control goals by making cigarettes unaffordable. This has resulted in reduced crop size with a decline in the acreage of land under tobacco cultivation. According to industry sources, tobacco use in legal cigarettes registered a sharp decline in the last few decades when illicit cigarettes gained

market share. This contributed to shrinkage in FCV crop size by sharp 39 per cent from 316 million kg per annum to 218 million kg per annum between 2013-14 and 2021-22. Our country has also witnessed a big decline of 1 lakh hectares in FCV tobacco acreage between 2013-14 and 2020-21 which led to 35 million mandays of employment loss.

Also, FCV tobacco exports from Indian have become uncompetitive globally losing share to countries like Zimbabwe, which is catering to the international tobacco market despite its small size. Today, legal cigarettes have

become unaffordable in India. Cigarette in India cost amongst the highest in the world as a percentage of per capita GDP at 7.70 per cent in comparison to 0.46 per cent for the USA and 1.14 per cent for China (WHO Report). This is even though cigarettes are only 8 per cent of tobacco consumed in the country while 92 per cent is other forms of tobacco. This is in stark contrast to the rest of the world where tobacco is synonymous with cigarettes representing 90 per cent of tobacco consumption.

The World Health Organization (WHO) in a report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic 2021 has acknowledged that the affordability of legal cigarettes in India reduced sharply from 11.10 per cent in 2010 to 13.78 per cent in 2020. These findings were further corroborated with the results of the American Cancer Society study which observed that India has one of the lowest per capita cigarette consumptions in the world.

The above situation is stressing the farm community as consumers shift to smuggled cigarettes that do not use domestic tobacco. This is besides revenue loss to the exchequer which further limits the government's ability to invest in R&D which means farmers are not able to refine their products to meet international standards or come up with other farm innovations which can increase demand for Indian tobacco.

As per FICCI CASCADE's study, the total loss to the economy because of cigarette smuggling has been ₹16,138 crore while the total employment opportunity lost in the sector is about 3.34 lakh.

Vested groups and

flawed research reports The problem lies in misleading data, which the policymakers are bombarded with, which limits their capacity to make informed and prudent decisions. Take for instance two separate studies conducted in 2018 and 2020 and cited in certain media articles which claim that the illicit cigarette sales figures are exaggerated.

The first study uses empty packs picked from retailers to compare legal and illegal cigarette sales, in total disregard of the fact that retailers would be hesitant to disclose that they are selling illegal cigarettes. No retailer in his right mind would save the empty pack as there is a deep fear because of coercive laws against them. Our custom laws put the onus on retailers to prove that the product being sold is a legal product. So, the researchers using this technique to understand illegal cigarette sales will only get a lopsided view.

The second study, on tax gaps, confirms a steady ncrease in consumption of illegal cigarettes between two time periods. Also, the proportion of illegal cigarettes as a percentage of legal ones in the two studies has a difference exceeding 100 per cent, raising doubts as to which of the

figures are accurate. It is unquestionable that smuggled cigarettes are a raging phenomenon not only in India but all international markets. It has been established through studies by reputed research firms that India is the fourth largest and fastest-growing illegal ciga-

rette market in the world. As per Euromonitor International, Illicit cigarette volumes in India registered a whopping 44 per cent in a decade from 19.5 billion sticks in 2011 to 28.1 billion sticks in 2020. This takes the market share of illicit cigarettes in the country from 21.3 per cent in

2015 to 27.6 per cent in 2020. It is noteworthy to know that a recently released report by Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) states that one of the largest global cigarettes MNC as part of its market expansion strategy has been using smuggling as one of the distribution channels to increase their market penetration. Unfortunately, vested

groups do not share such market developments with the policy makers.

Despite this, the move to project in studies low penetration levels of illicit cigarettes below international markets (which are better regulated) is an obvious mis-projection.

Such grossly unreliable studies should be looked at with caution as they give a skewed picture of the illegal cigarette trade in the country and downplay the severity of the illegal cigarette trade in the

India has the option to use cash crops like FCV tobacco to its strategic advantage given the huge potential of tobacco in newer applications. We should not let this opportunity slip and extend all necessary policy support to the FCV tobacco farmers in earnest to capture the growing tobacco

(The writer is president of Federation of All India Farmer Associations (FAIFA), a nonprofit federation whose mission is to support the farming community in India and create a sustainable future for farmers)



Trudeau working with US to stop smuggling

Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau has said that his government was doing all it can and work-ing "very closely" with the US to stop human smuggling, a day after a family of four

Indians, including a baby, died from exposure to extreme cold weather on the Canadian side of the border with America.

Terming the incident as a "mind blowing" tragedy, Trudeau on Friday said that the Canadian

government is doing all it can to stop people-smug-gling across the US border.

"It was an absolutely mind-blowing story. It's so tragic to see a family die like that, victims of human traffickers... and of people who took advantage of their desire to build a better life," Trudeau told a news conference."This is why we are doing all we

can to discourage people from crossing the border in an irregular or illicit manner. We know there are great risks in doing so," he said. The prime minister said

that Canada

was working

with the United

very closely



Close shave

for Arnold

Schwarzenegger

Veteran Hollywood star Arnold

Schwarzenegger escaped unhurt after he was

involved in a car crash

here. The four-vehicle

crash happened late

Friday afternoon and

sent a woman to the

hospital with minor

Schwarzenegger's

spokesperson con-

According to the Los

Angeles Times, the 74-

year-old star and former

California governor was driving his car when it

was involved in a crash

with another vehicle at

Sunset Boulevard and

the Riveria Country

intersection were also

collision, the outlet

ed a woman who suf-

fered a head abrasion to

the hospital, according

to a Los Angeles Police

Department statement.

Schwarzenegger's

the actor was unhurt

spokesperson confirmed

and was only concerned

about the woman who

was injured.

struck as a result of the

Paramedics transport-

Club here.

reported.

Allenford Avenue, near

the intersection of

injuries,

Singapore's first Omicronrelated death

Singapore on Saturday reported its first Omicron-related death, a 92-year-old unvaccinated woman who caught the virus from a family member, according to a media

The woman, who had no known medical history, died on Jan 20, about 10 days after catching the virus from a family member, the Channel News Asia report-

"Upon investigation, doctors have concluded that the death was due to COVID-19 infection, by the

Omicron variant," the report said, quoting a health ministry statement. The woman was unvaccinated and had no known medical history, the min-

istry said. Meanwhile, Singapore on Friday reported 3,155 new COVID-19 infections, com-

prising 2,794 local infections and 361 imported ones, taking the nationwide tally to 307,813 since the start of the pandemic. One more person succumbed to the infection, pushing the death toll to 846.

On Friday, the government had said that Singapore is likely to see a "significant wave" of Covid-19 cases as the more infectious Omicron variant spreads through the community, which could strain its healthcare capacity.

States to stop smuggling and help people "taking unacceptable risks".

According to Canadian officials, the incident was unusual as illegal migrants generally try to cross into Canada from America, rather than the other way round. Border crossings into Canada on foot increased in 2016 following the election of Donald Trump as the president of the United States.

On Thursday, the Manitoba Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) said that the bodies of four people — two adults, a teen and an infant were found on the Canadian side of the US/Canada border near the Emerson locality in south central Manitoba on Wednesday.

Mission Impossible not until 2023 and 2024

he seventh and eighth instalment of Tom Cruise-led "Mission: Impossible" franchise have now been delayed until 2023 and 2024. In a joint statement, Paramount Pictures and Skydance said they had to further postpone the two movies due to the Covid-19 pandemic. "After thoughtful consideration, Paramount Pictures and Skydance have decided to postpone the release dates for Mission: Impossible 7 & 8 in response to delays due

to the ongoing pandemic," the companies said. "Mission: Impossible 7", in which Cruise is reprising his role of Ethan Hunt, will now open in the US on July 14, 2023, instead of September 30, 2022. Its follow-up,

"Mission: Impossible 8", has moved from July 7, 2023, to June 28, 2024, reported Variety. "We look forward to providing moviegoers with an unparalleled theatrical experience," Paramount Pictures and Skydance said. The production of "Mission: Impossible 7", directed by Christopher McQuarrie, has also been delayed due to the pandemic. The film will also feature Rebecca Ferguson, Hayley Atwell, Ving Rhames, Henry Czerny, Simon Pegg, Vanessa Kirby and Angela Bassett. Cruise has another high-profile project with Paramount -- "Top Gun: Maverick". The movie, which is a sequel to Cruise's 1986 blockbuster, also saw multiple delays. It is currently set to released in the US on May 27, 2022.

'Legal trade' alone won't save rhinos

emand for rhino horn in Asian markets, especially Vietnam and China, has pushed the remaining rhino populations to the brink of extinction.

In the past decade, nearly 10,000 rhinos were killed by poachers in Africa. The remaining rhino populations in Africa and Asia are steadily declining, with fewer than 30,000 animals left in 2020 from a population of 500,000 at the beginning of the 20th century.

Rhino horn is coveted for rumoured medicinal properties and as a status symbol. To stop the rhino poaching crisis, it has been suggested that horns sustainably harvested from live rhinos can be sold in a legal trade to international buyers to meet

At the same time, this may generate income to fund anti-poaching activities, create jobs for local people, discourage poachers and encourage private rhino owners to conserve rhinos. In an international, legal trade, rhino horns can be microchipped, and a certification and permit system put in place to prevent laundering.

But whether legalising the international trade in rhino horn can contribute to conserve rhinos is a hotly debated question in conservation circles. Opponents argue that a legal trade will remove the stigma associated with using rhino horn and thus increase demand to a dangerous level.

Preference for wild rhinos

The trade in rhino horn is highly lucrative. In the black market, rhino horn prices can fetch up to US\$400,000 per kg for Asian rhino horns and US\$20,000 per kg for African rhino horns.

While rhino horn is mostly used as a traditional medicine in Vietnam to reduce hangovers, detoxify the body, and reduce high fever (despite no scientific evidence supporting these benefits), a large quanti-ty of rhino horn is supplied to the art and antiques market in China.

Only by interviewing actual consumers of this product can we generate insights into motivations for purchase and rhino horn preferences. However, because rhino horn is so expensive, rhino horn consumers are mostly senior and very wealthy individuals who are notoriously averse to investigations of their illegal

behaviours. They generally do not want to talk to researchers they do not trust about their purchase and use of rhino horn. Nor are

motivated to participate in interviews by small gifts or abstract reasons, like conserving rhinos. This poses a major challenge for studying the impact of a legal trade on consumer demand.

To interview a large number of rhino horn consumers, we hired a team of research assistants with a winning sense of humour, colourful life experience, and true grit. With a rented Porsche and

a Rolex watch borrowed from friends, we reached out to various networks and clubs where wealthy consumers often gather, such as golf and tennis clubs, and established a network of key informants who helped introduce us to potential respondents.

In the interviews, we showed them choice cards and kindly asked them to make choices about purchasing rhino horn for medical use in different scenarios including an international, legal trade in rhino

Our study shows that consumers do not want captive-bred rhinos who are perceived as "farmed", like cattle or horses. They prefer, and are willing, to pay more for horns from rhinos living in the wild or semiwild environments – like private ranches where they need to find food and water themselves but receive supplemen-

tal feeding at some times of the year. This is because the consumers believe that wild rhino horns have better medicinal efficacy than farmed

ones being exposed to naturally occurring medicinal herbs. Consumers preferred a legal



Mother: Teachers manipulated child to change gender identity

A mother who claims Ateachers secretly manipulated her 11-year-old daughter into chang-ing her gender identity and name has filed a legal case against a finy case against a tiny California school district.

Spreckels Union School
District was responsible
for "extreme and outrageous conduct" that led
the student on a path
toward transitioning as a boy and drove a wedge

boy and drove a wedge between mother and child, according to the claim filed Wednesday by a conservative legal group. Jessica Konen said two middle school teachers who ran the school's Equality Club — later known as LIBLI (You Be known as UBU (You Be You) — planted the seed that her daughter was bisexual in 6th grade and then introduced the idea she was transgender. The legal claim — a precursor to a lawsuit — follows a dustup in the district last fall after the author of a book widely criticized as

speaking at a conference about how to run an

LGBTQ+ club in a conservative community.

Spreckels is a speck of a town in the agricultural Salinas Valley, about 90 miles (144 kilometers) south of San Francisco. It world's largest sugar refinery and was the setting for some scenes in the 1955

Steinbeck's "East of Eden."
While Konen said her daughter had revealed she was bisexual, the mother was unaware she was identificing as a box particular to the same than the same that the same than tifying as a boy until she was called to a meeting at the Buena Vista Middle School principal's office in December 2019 when her daughter was in 7th grade.

She wasn't told the purpose of the meeting until her daughter entered the room and sat across a table from her and teacher Lori Caldeira broke the news.

Where Ukraine's sunflowers once sprouted, fears now grow

day in Ukraine 26 years ago, three men smiled for cameras as they planted symbolic sunflower seedlings in freshly tilled earth where Soviet nuclear missiles had once stood ready. That placid scene was, briefly, a launchpad for hope that the demise of the Soviet Union would bury the threat of great power war and mark the start of lasting peace in an undivided Europe. Today Ukraine is ground zero for worry that Russia will ignite a conflict that could engulf the region. On that early-June day in 1996, the American secretary of defense, William J Perry, joined his Russian and Ukrainian counterparts in ceremonies marking the completion of Ukraine's nuclear disarmament. Under Western pressure, Ukraine had agreed to give up the weapons it inherited with the breakup of the Soviet empire in exchange for a Russian and Western security guarantee. Perry likened the moment to the parting of a dark cloud of Cold

"It is altogether fitting that we plant sunflowers here at Pervomaysk to symbolize the hope we all feel at seeing the sun shine through again," he said, standing on a small concrete pad in the former missile field, where SS-19 nuclear missiles once stood in underground silos, prepared to launch toward targets in the United States. Nearby, American, Russian and Ukrainian national flags waved in a

Today, Russian President Vladimir Putin stands accused by the West of violating that deal by targeting Ukraine with 100,000-plus troops. Now it is Russia that wants a security guarantee from the West as well as legal guarantees that Ukraine never be permitted to join the NATO alliance, even as Moscow readies for a potential invasion of a neighbor with inferior military might and none of the 170-plus nuclear-tipped missiles it once held. Moscow wants a stop to NATO's eastward expansion, which it asserts Washington promised in the early aftermath of the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 in the context of the reunification of Germany. U.S. and its NATO allies deny any such promise was given. The opportunity for countries to join NATO is enshrined in Article 10 of the organization's

founding treaty, and this "open door" policy was reaffirmed in 2008 when alliance leaders agreed that Ukraine and Georgia "will become members of NATO" but set no timeline and offered them no formal path to membership.



Biden and Kishida agree to 'push back' China's games in SCS

US President Joe Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida have agreed to "push back" against China's attempts to change the status quo in the East China Sea and the South China Sea, and highlighted the importance of the Quad grouping as a critical

forum for promoting a free and open Indo-Pacific region. During the 80-minute virtual meeting on Friday, their first formal summit meeting, Biden said the age-old alliance between the US and Japan is the cornerstone of peace and security in the strategic Indo-Pacific

region and across the world. It was an honour to meet with Prime Minister Kishida to further strengthen the US-Japan alliance — the cornerstone of peace and security in the Indo-Pacific and around the world," Biden said in a tweet after the

meeting.

"As Indo-Pacific powers, the
United States and Japan are united in a shared purpose to sustain and enhance our commitment to the region," the

White House said in a readout

of the meeting.
"The two leaders resolved to push back against the People's Republic of China (PRC)'s attempts to change the status quo in the East China Sea and South China Sea," it said.

The US, India and several other world powers have been talking about the need to ensure a free, open and thriving Indo-Pacific in the backdrop of China's aggressive military manoeuvring in the

