

The Russian satellite Louch-Olymp allegedly approached the Athena-Fidus satellite in what French authorities called 'an act of espionage.'

Womenia

TWEET PATROL


MUKTI MOHAN
@THISISMUKTI

My "You're overthinking, you got this!" look!!!
 #yougotthis
 @MohanShakti



Behind every successful woman



Sunitha Lakshma Reddy

ASKARI JAFFER

On the occasion of International Women's Day, the Telangana State Commission for Women organised a closeted conversation with the theme 'Men for Women' on Wednesday.

For the conversation, the commission invited eminent male personalities who in their personal or professional capacity have made concerned efforts towards the empowerment of women in the society and also supported the cause of women at various ways for a leading to breaking gender stereotypes.

The chief guest of the meet was Sunitha Lakshma Reddy, chairperson, Telangana State Commission for Women and B Sumathi, DIG of Telangana State Women Safety Wing.

The meet also had the presence of other members of Telangana State Commission for Women. The male personalities who got felicitated included K Venkata Reddy, DSP, State She team and Women safety wing, S Raj Kumar, chairperson and founder, Ganesh Utsav Commit-



MEN SHOULD FOLLOW 3 'S', 'SAVE, STRENGTH AND SUPPORT' TO SAFEGUARD WOMEN AT ANY TIME THEY NEEDED

tee, Khairthabad, N Jayakar, Retd. IRS, Additional Commissioner Income tax, P Ramesh Shekar Reddy, Mahita NGO and D Ramulu, husband of Aashamma, model couple, Retd. Railway employee.

B Sumathi, is one of the role models has been working in different sections and corners to reduce the crimes faced by women. She along with her team have also started safety clusters in colleges to stop violence in their levels.

Speaking on the occasion, Sunitha Lakshma Reddy says, "Nowadays the notion is depended on the youth. They can change the situation and play a vital role in building the notion. They need to try to safeguard women at anytime when needed and possible. They should follow the 3s which are 'Save, Strength and Support'."

N Jayakar is a retired IRS (Additional Commissioner of Income tax). He founded a trust by the name Sahaaya- A helping hand in 2009. The aim was to support poor children in the areas of education and empowerment. He has been providing services in the service home maintained by women's development and child welfare since 2006.

Rajkumar Singari is the chairman and founder of the Ganesh Utsav Committee, Khairtabad. Its an NGO involved in Social service work, community development, women empowering and humanitarian causes. Ramesh Sekhar Reddy is currently working as Programme Director of Mahita. Since the inception of the organization, he has helped empower girl children as well as supporting the Women empowerment programs in urban slums of Hyderabad, Rural villages of Ranga Reddy and Nalgonda and Tribal villages of Adilabad district. The awardee, K Venkat Reddy, was

recruited as Sub-inspector of Police in 1996 in Warangal. On promotion in 2010, he as Inspector of Police worked in Cyberabad Commissionerate as CI in Rajendra Nagar Traffic PS Kusaiguda Police also in Hyderabad City Commissionerate as inspector of Mahankali Traffic PS, CCS D.D, Hyderabad. He is presently discharging his duties in SHE Module, Women Safety Wing, TS, which co-ordinates with 331 SHE Teams of Telangana State. He enabled all the unit of She Teams to become active. He has been a role model to all SHE Teams of the Telangana State through his conduct initiative as well as exhibits the need of 'male officer', if gender sensitive can improve the work culture and citizen response on a much higher scale. Under his discharge, SHE Teams have become more responsive, women friendly and all are able to use technology in a big way to reach out to victims and complaints.

Food for healthier lifestyle

The pandemic has made us realise that a healthier lifestyle is the only way ahead for us ladies. My easiest guide to good health and immunity is the all-star antioxidants sources. Read my easy-to-add-on common Indian foods that destroy immunity lowering free radicals.

Key Antioxidants in the All-Star Antioxidant team:

Beta-carotene

This team player of Vitamin A family. Not only does it do wonders for hair, skin and eye health but also a strong anti-oxidant. Keep a watch for green, yellow, orange colored produce. Add on coriander and curry leaves tiny in size but mighty warriors protecting you. My tip for absorbing nutrients better is by squeezing lemon onto leafy like spinach, dill, fenugreek etc. Plus include pumpkin and carrots. Grains like barley or sweet potato must be a part of your regular diet to get more of this anti-oxidant.

Lycopene

Another member of the Vitamin A family, this serves as a powerful antioxidant. Red colored produce falls under this category. Vegetables like tomatoes are your best source cooked even better. Include them in your vegetable's soups, Dals and grains. Fruits like watermelon and pink guava can give your lycopene dose too.

Vitamin C

You main defense player, this antioxidant takes center stage for its immune boosting, iron absorption, protein digestion and wound healing functions. Indian guavas have plenty choices Amla (highest), guava, lemon, citrus fruits, mangoes, papaya. Vegeta-



Naini Setalvad



Though many foods are naturally anti-inflammatory, antioxidants found in foods protect your cells from the effects of free radicals and can help reduce an overabundance of inflammation in your body

bles like tomato, drumstick, pumpkins, mixed peppers and green chilies all are Vitamin C sources. Don't forget to include starches like Potato, Sweet potato, orange yam.

Vitamin E

This essential antioxidant aids in cell repair and provides extra protection from free radical damage due to environmental sources. Don't skip out on Vitamin E foods like

whole grains, brown rice, peanuts, dry coconut, sunflower seeds and flaxseeds.

Zinc

This mineral plays a multifunctional role in the body from immune boosting to supporting growth and development. Stock up on cashews, almonds, sunflower, sesame, pumpkin seeds, whole pulses, dals and sprouts to get in your zinc.

Selenium

Not a commonly heard antioxidant but Selenium is an essential support for the immune system and maintaining heart health. Common pantry staples that can give you selenium are unpolished rice, whole grains, garlic, nuts, seeds, legumes, dals and whole pulses and dairy products.

Coenzyme Q10

An unheard but star player of the team, CoQ10 can help neutralize free radical damage and even prevent it. Local foods like peanuts and spinach provide this anti-oxidant. We are fortunate to have such a wide range of local and seasonal Indian produce that provide us with our all-star team of antioxidants. Eat them in balanced meals to be an all-star yourself.

Deepika Padukone on what fitness means to her

PUJA GUPTA

Bollywood actress Deepika Padukone believes that fitness is not just a person's physical appearance, but a balance of mind, body and soul.

"I've always believed that fitness is far more than just one's physical appearance. It is about balancing the mind, body and soul. It is about being fit physically, mentally and emotionally," says Deepika.

"It is also about making better choices every day, which eventually allows us to become a better version of ourselves," says the actress who has been roped as the ambassador of OZiva -- a plant-based nutrition brand.

Commenting on the association, she says: "OZiva's products and philosophy both come from the same school of thought; something I absolutely relate



to." Deepika will be promoting the brand's philosophy of 'har tarah se a better you' that aims to empower every individual's journey to a fitter, healthier and better life with certified clean and plant-based nutrition.

Aarti Gill, Co-founder, OZiva says: "We started OZiva with the aim of touching millions of lives and enabling them to lead a healthier, fitter and better life with clean, plant-based nutrition. For us, it's about creating a more inclusive and encouraging outlook towards overall well-being, by rewriting the traditional definition of fitness. We are extremely happy to have Deepika Padukone come on board on this journey with us and be a part of the OZiva family. She is the perfect embodiment of our values of striving to be better in every way and adopting a holistic approach towards overall health, physically and mentally."

NEWS ROUNDUP



FDCI launches new 'Emerging Talent' category

The Fashion Design Council of India has announced a new category 'Emerging Talent' under which young designers will be given an opportunity to prove their prowess on the runway.

This new property of the FDCI will be launched at the joint phygital fashion week it is holding with Lakmé Fashion Week, slated from 16-21 March.

The process will be initiated with designer Akshat Bansal (Bloni) with his show on March 17, presented on all FDCI & LFW channels at 5 pm.

The new-age designer talks about the importance of sustainability through the language of clothes.

"This collection marks the third year of us making clothes, clothes that are not conformed to any particular gender. It's self-accepting and self-informed. Enhancing transparency and creating a unique culture, something the brand thrives on," says Bansal. Bloni's USP is craft and techniques which give ingenuity to the brand. Blending textiles and giving sustainability, a new form and edge by using technologies to make eco-friendly clothing, not only supports Indian artisans, but also introduces advancements and hybrid textiles for the

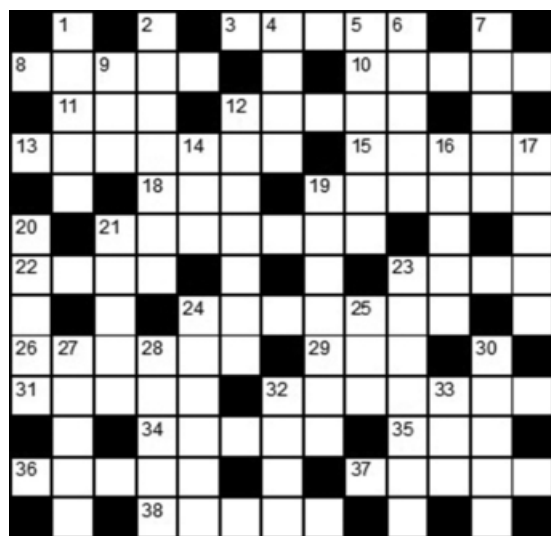
Akshat Bansal will launch the new category through his show on March 17

new-tech generation, a quiet mission of Bansal.

The collection introduces marine plastic waste textile, blending tech-generated fabrics mixed with local artisanal techniques, the craft of tie and dye, hand crochet and knitting. The designer has used glazed fabrics, clean silhouettes and gender neutral shapes.

FDCI Chairman Sunil Sethi comments: "The FDCI believes in nurturing new talent and creating stars, who will rewrite the existing template of the fashion world. This fresh showcase is reflective in character, sensing the need to explore boundaries and adopt a multi-layered approach to design.

After careful consideration, we chose Akshat Bansal sensing the complex and intriguing nature of his ideology, which gets translated into clothing that exudes a social message."



SOLUTION TO MARCH 10

CROSSWORD

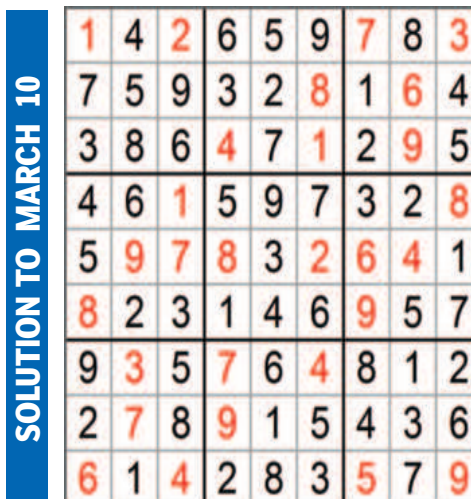
Across

- 3 Hops, ___ and jumps ? (5)
- 8 Escort courteously (5)
- 10 Debris (5)
- 11 Scottish cap (3)
- 12 Acquit (5)
- 13 Young baby (7)
- 15 Small hand drum (5)
- 18 Old name for Tokyo (3)
- 19 Sighted (6)
- 21 Commanded (7)
- 22 God of war (4)
- 23 Charged particles (4)
- 24 Serenading passers-by (7)
- 26 Breads or pieces of bread (6)
- 29 Clod (3)
- 31 German-born surrealist (5)
- 32 Nameless (7)
- 34 Links club (5)
- 35 Not, as a prefix ? (3)
- 36 Goatlike antelope (5)
- 37 Steep slope (5)
- 38 Man-made fibre (5)

Down

- 1 Flower - "rates" differently ? (5)
- 2 Component parts (7)
- 4 A large closed oven used for drying or baking pots (4)
- 5 Blabbed (6)
- 6 Twilled fabric of silk (5)
- 7 Little mound (5)
- 9 Hesitation (3)
- 12 King of proverbial wealth (7)
- 14 Unusual, strange (3)
- 16 Confuse or obscure (5)
- 17 Scorched (5)
- 19 Calls (7)
- 20 Leisurely walk (5)
- 21 Church instrument (5)
- 23 Babyhood (7)
- 24 Be disloyal (6)
- 25 Bond creator Fleming (3)
- 27 Killer whales (5)
- 28 Churchillian gesture (1-4)
- 30 Literary category (5)
- 32 Biblical word (4)
- 33 Extinct NZ bird (3)

SUDOKU



SOLUTION TO MARCH 10

Gang rape victim's father dies in 'accident' a day after filing case

KANPUR

THE father of a 13-year-old 'gang rape' victim died Wednesday under suspicious circumstances in UP's Kanpur district, a day after he filed a police complaint naming the alleged rapists.

The police said he was hit by a truck outside the community health centre where his daughter's medical examination was being done. The incident took place in Ghatampur

area of the district. The incident took place a day after the father of the victim had alleged that the brother of the accused had threatened him of dire consequences if the matter was taken to the police. One of the accused's father is said to be a policeman.

DIG Kanpur, Preetinder Singh, said in a video statement. "The main accused in the gang rape case has been arrested. A search is on to nab those who threatened the family members



and other accused involved in the crime.

"The death of the victim's father is tragic. The accident took place when the medical examination of the victim was underway and the father stepped out for a cup of tea.

"After some time, we got to know that he met with an accident by truck. He was immediately taken to a Kanpur hospital, but was declared brought dead by doctors. We have filed an accident case and we are

probing the matter."

The family members of the victim and villagers have alleged that the incident at Sajeti police circle was actually a planned murder by one of the rape accused.

According to Kanpur police, the father met with the accident outside a hospital where the girl was taken for a medical examination.

Angry villagers blocked the Kanpur-Sagar highway demanding swift action into

the alleged murder.

The minor girl, who lives in a village under Sajeti police station, was allegedly gang raped by a few men of the same village.

As per a complaint filed by the victim's family, two men named Golu Yadav and Deepu Yadav of the same village abducted and raped the teenager. According to reports, Deepu Yadav's father works as a policeman and is posted in Kanunauj district.

Nine dead as bus falls into gorge in Chamba

SHIMLA

NINE people were killed and as many injured as a private bus fell into a deep gorge in Himachal Pradesh's Chamba district on Wednesday, Deputy Commissioner D C Rana said.

The DC said the accident occurred at Colony Morh in Bhanjraru of Churrah tehsil in the morning when the private bus bearing registration number HP73A 1316 and operated by Happy Bus Service fell into the gorge while going from Bondedi to Chamba.

During the ongoing budget session of the state assembly, Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur told the House in the afternoon that he has ordered an inquiry to ascertain the exact cause of the accident.

Expressing grief over the deaths in the accident, the chief minister informed the House that the bus fell into about a 200-metre-deep gorge near Colony Morh at 10.15 am.

The injured have been rushed to Chamba Medical College, Thakur said.

The DC said an inquiry into the causes of the accident would be carried out by the SDM Tissa.

A total of 18 people were on the ill-fated bus. Of them, nine died while as many were injured, he said adding three of them are critical.



People stand near the wreckage of a private bus after it skidded off the road and rolled down into a deep gorge on its way to Chamba, near Bhanjraru on Wednesday

Revenue, Police, Health and Fire Department teams carried out the rescue operation. Immediate relief of Rs

20,000 and Rs. 5,000 has been given to family members of the deceased and injured persons respectively, he added.

Court stays search warrant against riots case advocate Pracha

NEW DELHI

A DELHI Court on Wednesday stayed till March 12 the search warrant procured by the Delhi Police against advocate Mehmood Pracha, representing various accused in the Delhi riots cases, after he moved the court against the second raid conducted at his office on Tuesday.

Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Pankaj Sharma will pass the final order on the advocate's application on March 12.

On Tuesday, Pracha alleged that the Delhi Police raided his office in southeast Delhi's Nizamuddin area. He said



that around 100 police personnel came to his office about 12.30 p.m.

The search warrant was procured by the police from Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Pankaj

Sharma on March 4 to seize the computer with primary evidence which were identified during the previous search.

The court had directed that videography of the search proceedings be done. The investigating officer was directed to carry out the search in the presence of a senior police officer within two weeks of issuance of the search warrant.

Earlier, the Delhi Police Special Cell in December 2020 had raided the premises of Pracha in a case related to alleged use of forged documents as genuine in judicial records in a northeast Delhi riots case.

NEW DELHI

DRAW for the allotment flats of Delhi Development Authority's (DDA) Housing Scheme 2021 began at its office on Wednesday. The DDA had offered a total of 1,354 flats including MIG, MIG and LIG accommodations under the scheme which was launched in February this year.

The allotment of flats is being conducted based on a random number generation system, under the supervision of a panel consisting of retired judges

DDA begins online draw of flats under its housing scheme



and senior DDA officials. The DDA has received over 33,000 ap-

23,000 applicants had made payment of registration till the last date.

Out of 1,354 flats, a total of 757 flats have been offered for middle-income group (MIG), 254 for MIG (Higher Income Group) -- majority of which is located in Jasola and 276 EWS flats in Dwarka's Manglapuri area are on offer.

Pocket 9B flats in the MIG category are priced

from Rs 1.97 crore to Rs 2.14 crore, while 13 flats ranged between Rs 1.43 crore and Rs 1.72 crore are on sale in Vasant Kunj.

As many as 352 MIG (Middle Income Group) flats located in Dwarka Sector 19-B, 348 in Dwarka Sector 16, and four in Vasant Kunj are on sale under the scheme, while 276 EWS flats in Dwarka's Manglapuri area are on offer.

Draw of allotment is also being streamed online on DDA's official website - dda.web-cost.ml.

Dutch national among 2 held over Red Fort violence

NEW DELHI

DELHI Police have arrested two more people in connection to the January 26 Red Fort violence, including a Birmingham-based Dutch national who is of Indian-origin.

While the Dutch national has been identified as Maninderjit Singh (23), the second arrested person is Delhi resident Khempreet Singh (21) who attacked a policeman with a spear inside the Red Fort premises.

The two men were arrested on Tuesday night.

According to the police, Maninderjit Singh was trying to flee the country with forged documents and posing himself as Jarmanjit Singh Khabbe Rajputan from Gurdaspur, Punjab.

A Look Out Corner notice was issued against him, and as per his plan and arrangements, he

was to fly first to Nepal from Delhi and then to the UK.

Maninderjit Singh was previously involved in a riots case registered with the Rangar Nangal police station in Gurdaspur and also has a case of cheating at Indira Gandhi International Airport Police Station in New Delhi.

"The accused Maninderjit Singh was involved in the Red Fort violence case. There are video footages on record, which shows the presence of the accused alongside the unlawfully assembled unruly riotous mob carrying a 'bhaala' (spear) during the farmers' agitation on January 26," Monika Bhardwaj, DCP Crime, said.

Delhi Police further said that electronic evidence corroborates the fact that the accused had also visited Singhu border protest site on different dates.

Khap panchayat bans jeans for women, shorts for men



MUZAFFARNAGAR

A KHAP panchayat in Uttar Pradesh's Muzaffarnagar district has barred women from wearing jeans and men from wearing shorts, saying they are part of western culture and that people should wear traditional Indian clothes.

The Rajput community panchayat also warned that those found violating the diktat will be punished and face boycott. The panchayat was convened on March 2 in Pipalshah village under Charthawal police station. Announcing the panchayat's decision, community leader and Kisan Sangh chief Thakur Puran Singh said it was decided to bar women from wearing jeans and men from wearing shorts. He said these

clothes are part of the western culture.

"We should wear our traditional clothes such as sarees, 'ghagra' and 'salwar-kameez,'" he said. Those found violating the order will be punished and boycotted from the community, Singh said. The khap panchayat also protested the Uttar Pradesh government's decision to grant reservation to Scheduled Castes (SC) and backward classes in the upcoming panchayat polls. Singh said the panchayat expressed concern over the decision and condemned it.

The state government issued its reservation policy for panchayat polls last month. According to the policy, seats will be reserved for SCs, backward classes and women in the elections.

CENTRAL ORGANISATION FOR RAILWAY ELECTRIFICATION

1, NAWAB YUSUF ROAD, CIVIL LINES/PRAJAGRAJ-211001

FAX No.: 0532-2407797

E-TENDER NOTICE

E-Tender Notice No. ST215008

Dated: 09.03.2021

On behalf of the President of India, Principal Chief Materials Manager, Central Organization Railway Electrification, Prayagraj, invites following E-TENDER (Two Stage Reverse Auction) :-

E-Tender No	Brief Description	Quantity	Tender Due Date
ST215008	Cable for Railway Signalling 12 Core x 1.5 sq. mm as per RDSO specification	1143 Kms	15.04.2021

Note:1. The complete information of above E- Tender (Two Stage Reverse Auction) and Tender document are available on IREPS website i.e. <http://www.ireps.gov.in>. **Only E-Bids shall be accepted against above Tender.** The e-bids may be submitted before 11.00 hrs on tender opening date.

PRINCIPAL CHIEF MATERIALS MANAGER/CORE/PRAJAGRAJ
FOR AND ON BEHALF OF PRESIDENT OF INDIA

PR/714/2021 Adk

"Serving Customers with a Smile"

Jilted lover held in Agra double murder case

AGRA

THE 20-year-old jilted lover, who had allegedly stabbed his girlfriend and her mother to death, has been arrested after a brief encounter with police.

The incident happened on Monday in Agra's Bah area. The accused, who is pursuing his graduation, was remanded to judicial custody after being produced in the court, said the police.

Station House Officer, Bah police station, Vinod Kumar, said that acting on a tip-off, the area near Badeshwar was barricaded on Tuesday for checking the vehicles.

After some time, when the police noticed a motorcycle-borne youth, they signalled him to stop, but he took U-turn and opened fire at the police in a bid to escape.

The SHO said that in the retaliatory firing, the suspect was injured and shifted to a hospital. The police have also seized an illegal weapon from his possession and impounded the motorcycle.

According to police sources, during interrogation, the accused, Govind, confessed to having killed Kamini and her mother Sharda Devi.

Govt to take senior citizens to Ram Temple: Kejriwal



PURNA SINGH
NEW DELHI

ADDRESSING the Delhi assembly on Wednesday, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said once the Ram temple in Ayodhya is ready, the government will take Delhi's senior citizens to Ayodhya for a visit.

Kejriwal said this during the motion of thanks on Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal's address to the budget session.

The 10 ten principles are providing food, education, medical care, electricity, water supply, employment, housing, women security, honouring

the elderly, he said. No one should sleep on an empty stomach in Delhi. Every child, irrespective of the social status, should get quality education, Kejriwal said. The chief minister said everyone, be it rich or poor, should get the best possible medical treatment. "We have improved government hospitals and set up mohalla clinics while working in this direction," he said. The chief minister also appealed to all residents of Delhi to participate in the Covid-19 inoculation drive. He also asked the members of the Delhi Assembly to go to hospitals, stand in queues and take vaccine like common people.

Zufar Farooqui re-elected UP Sunni Waqf Board chairman

LUCKNOW

ZUFAR Farooqui has been re-elected as the chairman of UP Sunni Waqf Board for the third consecutive term.

He won by a margin of one vote over his rival candidate Imran Mabood. The Sunni Waqf Board controls 1.3 lakh mosques and mauzoleums across UP. Barely 24 hours before the keenly contested poll, most Board members had veered around to Farooqui as an unanimous choice, but the pitch was queered at the last minute when Imran Mabood from the Bar Council quota, jumped into the fray. The election drove a vertical split in the



Board with most SP members from MP/MLA quota - Moradabad MP S.T. Hasan and Azamgarh MLA Nafees Ahmad - voting against Farooqui. SP's Sultanpur MLA, Abrar Ahmad, broke ranks to back the incumbent.

BSP MP Kunwar Danish Ali, who was earlier projected as a chairman's candidate, also voted against Farooqui. Mabood's colleague in the Bar Council, Abdul Razzaq Khan, also voted against him.

The support of three members nominated by the UP government - Maulana Naeem-Ur-Rahman Siddiqui (Firangi Mahal cleric), social worker Sabiha Ahmad and Tabassum Khan- helped Farooqui win the post.

VSP privatisation: Death knell of federalism?

NO matter what the State government says, or its spokespersons claim, the Centre will not recognise the sentiments or the feelings of the people of Andhra Pradesh. It is now crystal clear that privatisation of Visakha Steel Plant (VSP) is now just a matter of time. What is more alarming is the statement of the Minister of State for Finance Anurag Thakur in Parliament that the government had decided to privatise five steel industries and if no purchaser comes forward, they would be closed. The attitude of the Centre seems to be like no matter how much the demonstrators shout, it will ensure its dominance. May be the situation would have been different if the political executive and the Opposition had woken up early and had acted in time to see that the process of privatisation had not reached advanced stage. The Centre has been making well-

calculated and systematic move to privatise the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant along with other PSUs. The seed for privatisation was laid in 2018 October when officials of the Steel Ministry met RINL officials and representatives of the Korean company POSCO. The TDP claims that they had objected to any such proposal then itself. But then it did not subside. The issue went before the standing committee of Parliament and the committee in its report in March 2020 gave its consent for "100 percent disinvestment." The report of this committee was sent to the State government. Since the committee chairman and another member were from the YSRCP, the government naturally would have been in the know of things. If a concerted effort by the State government and the Opposition had started at that point of time, perhaps the Centre would have decided

otherwise. But neither the State government, nor the Opposition woke up. The protests and that too by the workers of the VSP and some other social organisations began after the Union Finance Minister Nirmala Seetharaman announced that VSP would be privatised during her Budget speech 2021. Ever since then, the State BJP and other parties including the Jana Sena have been indulging in flip flop game. There was no united effort. The State BJP first said they were opposed to privatisation but after their visit to Delhi they went into hiding. The Jana Sena too which had opposed the move decided to maintain low profile. The ruling party MPs and Ministers participated in the State bandh and the Chief Minister shot off two letters but it did not take categorical stand that it will not agree for privatisation and will not cooperate with the Centre

if it fails to recognise the sentiments and aspirations of the people. Taking advantage of this, the Centre continues to go ahead with its decision to implement 100 percent disinvestment. The interesting turn in this episode is that Telangana government has taken a firm stand saying that they are opposed to privatisation of VSP. If that is permitted to happen, next would be Singareni Collieries, the Telangana Minister for Industries K T Rama Rao said on Wednesday. Unfortunately, such a firm stand and united action is not found in Andhra Pradesh because the tendency is more towards centralisation and it seems to have now reached an unprecedented height, with the Union government having greater financial powers specially after the introduction of Goods and Services Tax. The Modi-Shah duo have acquired total control of the party organisation and the Prime Minister has emerged as unchallenged leader and the Centre is tightening its grip over the States.

ABROGATE CRIMINAL DEFAMATION LAW

C S KRISHNAMURTHY

THE explicit observations in the recent ruling by the Delhi court in "M J Akbar vs. Priya Ramani" case, among others, include:



(a) "Right of reputation can't be protected at the cost of right to dignity". (b) "A woman has the right to put her grievance at any platform of her choice, even after decades". (c) "Most of the women who suffer abuse do not speak up about it or against it for the simple reason "The Shame" or the social stigma attached with the sexual harassment and abuse".

It's, however, puzzling that the victim had to defend herself and be acquitted. Did taking the social-media route instead of filing a sexual harassment case end up in her having to defend a defamation case? What grows from within this culture is an attitude of impunity. The rich and the resourceful rely on their invulnerability, and the 'superiority' allows them to do what they do. The criminal proceedings for defamation will have an alarming effect on the victims and induce fear in them against reporting the wrongs committed on them. There cannot be a resolute Priya Ramani in every victim and fight the offenders. Though it is triumphant for the journalist, the acquittal is only half the battle. If Akbar escalates, will all the "20 women" whom he has allegedly wronged follow Priya Ramani?

Sec.499/500 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), relating to criminal defamation, is a colonial legacy, so its current relevance must be evaluated with the provisions of the Constitution. The law of defamation contemplates the clash of two fundamental rights - the right to freedom of expression and the right to reputation. The rules of defamation laws are said to be designed to mediate between these two rights. Though defamation hurts a person's dignity, criminal libel has a dreadful effect on free speech. Not only intimidating, the imprisonment for conviction also dampens the citizens' drive to engage in legitimate public critique.

Several jurisdictions are steadily doing away with the criminal defamation laws, whose provisions are incompatible with the basic democratic ideals.

Journalists and whistleblowers alert the public on impending disaster, substandard healthcare, unfair polls, faulty systems and procedures... That is why the Act to support whistleblowers has not seen the light of the day. Threats of punitive criminal Acts by the powerful would kick start libel journey that will enter into the realm of public good, decimating public debate. Law Commission has acknowledged that criminal defamation law goes against freedom of speech and "violates international norms". Defamatory acts that may harm public order are covered by civil provisions, and hence criminal defamation does not serve any dominating public interest. Though Sec.499 provides safeguards by means of exceptions, the threat of criminal prosecution is in itself unreasonable and excessive. PILs have been filed in Supreme Court to declare this law as unconstitutional. Amnesty International recommended that "if defamation is retained as a criminal offence, the law should not use imprisonment as punishment for those convicted of defamation, in line with international standards of freedom of expression. The onus of proof of all elements of the offence should be on the state." Acts like murder, rape, robbery...are punishable with imprisonment, threat to public, too. But slander is between two parties and the defamed has an opportunity to respond to allegations unlike in the former where the individual liberty is snatched. Political libel needs a different treatment. As opposed to a private individual, a political/public figure has the benefit of a political stage and media to launch counterattacks. Criminal defamation laws, in the context of public prosecutions, place the political elite at a distinct institutional advantage which uniquely enables them to forget critics and dissuade them from future dissent. It must be distinct from private libel, or else one runs the risk of snuffing out criticism that is not malicious.

A salutary lesson

The late Robert Maxwell, the owner of the British Newspaper, Daily Mirror, who plundered his own workers' pension fund, when confronted by investigative journalists on his financial shenanigans, threatened them with defamation charges, thus shutting up the media efforts to expose him. It is only after his death in 1991, the truth came out, destroying many pensioners' lives. When a reader shares a possibly libelous article to a friend, is that "friend" liable for libel, too? Virtually anything can be seen as offensive, and something that is both true and important is bound to offend somebody. Truth emerges from free-speech systems, not from gags and controls. While social media network enables everyone to air their views, the present structure of the 19th century provisions, is very restricting. Even though freedom of speech and expression is not absolute and is subject to "reasonable restrictions," these checks should be in accordance with the current trends in society. The defamation laws have always faced friction with Article 19(2) which gives freedom of speech "chilling effects." Under the defamation law, a journalist has no special status. Socio-economic and political circumstances have enormously changed over the century. Hence, criminalising defamation can be an extreme step. For public debate to remain robust, people should be able to express their opinions without fear of prosecution. We cannot protect the vulnerable unless we protect those who blow the whistle on abuse of power. "Freedom of information" according to Win Tin, a Burmese journalist, "is the freedom that allows us to verify the existence of all other freedoms." Democracy merits the informed consent to be governed.

Putting leisure time to productive use

TALKING OF MANY THINGS



Dr Mohan Kanda

NO one can argue with the fact, that the last one year has been a period during which the whole world has gone through a strange and hitherto unfamiliar, experience. No doubt, many of us, at one time or other earlier, have had the experience of being required to stay indoors and curtail our movements, on account of restrictions imposed by the authorities. Still, spending a whole year, more or less confined to one's home, while presenting a challenge, also proved to be surprisingly educating.

I use that word intentionally, because the period taught me a number of things, about life and relationships, which I had little time to dwell upon in the past. There was a vast amount of leisure. The pressure, either of having to receive visitors or to call on friends and relatives, was not there. Therefore the challenge actually proved to be an opportunity to indulge in hobbies which one had little time for earlier, and also to nurture neglected relationships.

The greatest challenge, obviously, was to devise methods of staying physically fit, mentally alert and emotionally stable, given the trying circumstances. One had also to ward off the possibility of loneliness leading to ennui or, over time, even to depression. The trick lay in organising a challenge to one's faculties, the response to which can lead to a state of detachment from the harsh imperatives of the external environment.

Just as the person next door does, I have my set of hobbies. They not only give me joy and

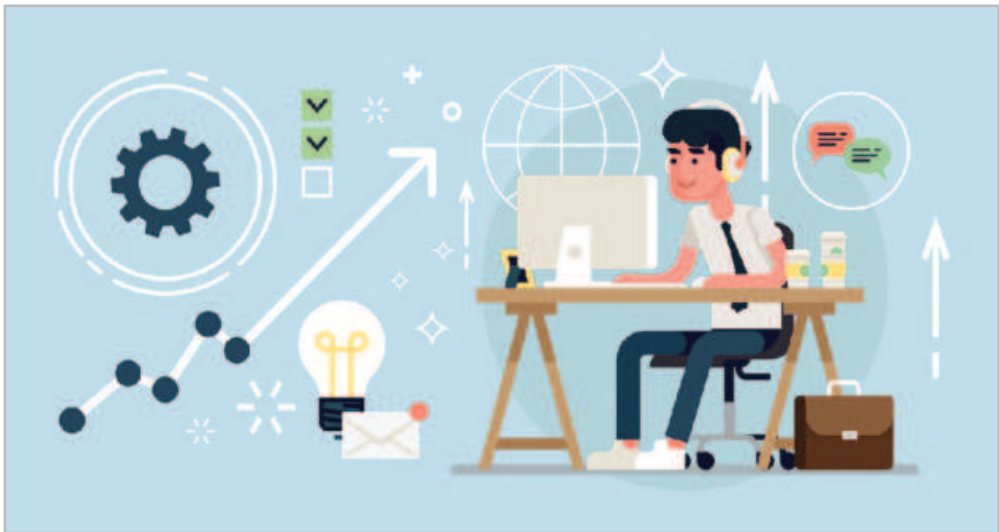
pleasure, but also, simultaneously, help me to keep my body in condition, and my mind engaged. These include playing Solitaire on the computer, playing contract bridge with myself, using an appliance on the computer called Bridge Baron, watching movies etc.

One was also able to revisit items of the unfinished agenda, tasks such as completing the writing of books one had put off for some time, as well as devoting more time to mentor students aspiring for a career in the civil services. I have made a reference, earlier in these columns, to a concept called 'fractured time', which enables you to deal with unexpected spells of leisure by drawing upon a shelf of projects put on the back burner precisely for being drawn upon in such times.

Then, there is always the occasional request from a non-government organisation, or a charitable trust, to assist in the furtherance of their objectives. And, of course, requests from friends and relatives to clear hurdles in the clearance of their personal and professional problems, using my goodwill with the administrations of both the state and central governments. Therefore, what with one thing or other, one was able to keep one's head above water and, not merely survive, but actually enjoy an experience not quite what Shakespeare would have described as a "..... consummation devoutly to be wished".

I also frequently got in touch with colleagues, friends and relatives to find out how they were doing in coping with the demands of the situation. And was pleasantly surprised to find that they were thinking on the same lines as I was, discovering new ways not only of amusing themselves, but also sharpening one's wits and enjoying the adventure of making forays into new fields of knowledge (thanks to the internet), apart from perfecting their skills at old habits, while trying their hand at new ones.

All that was by way of introduction to the subject of the importance of hobbies. Hobbies not merely serve a means of



The greatest challenge, obviously, was to devise methods of staying physically fit, mentally alert and emotionally stable, given the trying circumstances. One had also to ward off the possibility of loneliness leading to ennui or, over time, even to depression. The trick lies in organising a challenge to one's faculties, the response to which can lead to a state of detachment from the harsh imperatives of the external environment

combating boredom and fatigue, but also can prove beneficial in avoiding ailments that come with professional pressures or age, such as high blood pressure, diabetes, depression or impaired mental faculties. The benefits that come are not merely in terms of physical, mental and emotional rewards but also psychological. They, provide an opportunity to recharge one's batteries and, what is more, a nice source of 'eustress' a form of 'healthy stress' which everyone needs to remain feeling excited about life. A kind of 'joie de vivre', if you like.

There is, in fact, a new branch of psychology called 'positive psychology', which has estab-

lished that hobbies can be pleasurable and make life worthwhile, by virtue of the fact that they provide relaxation; and activities such as listening to music, painting, taking part in sports and games, surfing the internet, writing, fishing, to mention just a few, all belong to the category of hobbies.

Hobbies reward you best when practiced in a group or a circle of like-minded persons. The best part is that they can, in addition to all the advantages we have noted already, bring with them additional incomes, smoothen the process of transition to retirement, prevent wastage of time stave off the temptation of succumbing to bad habits. Above all, they help

one grow spiritually through a process of improved self - confidence and self - esteem.

In short, hobbies are critical to making one's life worthwhile. And, no matter what hobby one chooses, the benefits can be surprisingly abundant. No wonder the saying goes, to use a worn-out cliché, "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy!"

There is a flip side to the coin, however. Studies have shown that hobbies can have their negative points. For instance, activities such as rock climbing, skydiving, hiking or hunting can lead to a waste of time, besides exposing one to psychical danger. Similarly, video games may become addictive in the long run. There can, in other words, be such a thing as too much of a good thing.

Just as hobbies provide an outlet to stress and overwork, over-indulgence in them can also have counter-productive effects. Quite apart from that, hobbies or even regular healthy and desirable activities such as exercise, can become a sort of addiction. Which is why it is advised that one should be able to do without a scheduled activity once in a way, just for the sake of proving to oneself that one can live without it! The trick, therefore, lies, as in all other matters pertaining to life, in balance!

(The writer is former Chief Secretary, Government of Andhra Pradesh)

LETTERS

Ensure high voter turnout on Mar 14

WHENEVER elections come, it is a very normal trend in India to approach and request voters by various methods, to motivate them to exercise their right to vote. Despite this, the past experiences exhibit a drastic downfall in voting percentage, particularly in urban areas/cities. Reasons for this may be many. Negligence and disinterest are main reasons, as observed clearly. Immediately after voting, all concerned show their readiness to play blame game. To avoid this, for graduate voters, this is a good opportunity to set an example in the present political scenario, while participating in the voting, with full strength in the MLC elections scheduled on March 14, instead of giving scope for criticism, from any corner. Hope all graduate voters think seriously and play their part in strengthening democracy.

D N Rao, Hyderabad

Generic medical shops need better visibility

OVER the years, an apprehensive fear psychosis has descended on the economy making its mindset favourably inclined to the idea that the lower the price, the inferior may be its quality,

given a set of homogeneous services and goods. Exactly, this is where the concept of "Jan aushadi" is failing to penetrate deeply into the consumers' economic psyche in their attitude towards selection of the purchase of their regular quota of monthly medicines requirements.

In spite of Prime minister Narendra Modi exhorting the people to opt for purchasing their monthly medicine quota at an affordable cost, still the patient community is quite apprehensive about its cent per cent efficacy in lieu of the otherwise very expensive medicine allopathic dosages, mainly due to the "false economic psyche" described earlier. The "confidence deficit" about its correct substitute in "Aushadi" parlance and what is more, absence of a cent per cent confidential assurance from the treating doctors and lack of adequate guarantee from them is throwing the patients into jitters.

It is high time the patients are taken into full confidence and the treating doctors also on their parts, come out in a big way supporting the prescription of medicines in Jan Aushadi parlance equivalent to their usual prescribing pattern in the Allopathic system. This way the "Modi Ka dukaan" can be a thumping

success and an take the country by storm from its present number of 8000 to several thousands more. What else is more required than the satisfaction of the maximum number of maximum people in a democracy!

Seshagiri Row Karry, Hyderabad

The endemic of Congressism

THE infighting hitherto the sole property of the grand old party, Congress has now crept into the party with a difference. Infighting and digging holes under the feet have started in Karnataka BJP, moved to Tripura and now in Uttarakhand with the resignation of CM Rawat. BJP, Congress and all other minor parties are the same in their operation model, with some negligible differences. In a way all parties have adapted Congress culture- corruption, nepotism, cronyism, casteism, etc. Only degree of adaptation may be different. If, only if, there is any rule of law, most of our elected representatives, if not all, will be in jail for breaking the law. They are out making laws, because they are not following the law. All political parties are clubs with people with membership

based on how blatantly they disregard the law. So, culture of Congress is there in all political parties to cover that up they say- Hindutva, Secularism, social justice, Ram Raj, Minority rights, discrimination etc, that is for public consumption.

Ramanathan Krishnan, Ghaziabad

Petty politics

ADDRESSING the first election rally in Kolkata, attacking the Chief Minister of West Bengal, the PM Modi who is being used as Chief Ministerial face went to say in his typical style, Khel Katam Vikas Shuru (game over and development begins). But the narrative seems to be otherwise, so as of now it's Khel Katam, Bakwas (rubbish) Shuru. It's for the voters to demand talks about Vikas or as usual the Bakwas (rubbish) from the main contender TMC and BJP who seem to be focusing more on religion.

N Nagarajan, Hyderabad

Wooing the Hindu voter

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi's Bengal campaign has had its desired effect on the negative politics that is being played by Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress in the state. Senior leaders of the party are jumping the ship, unable to put up with tantrums and



whimsical behaviour of Mamata; in fact those leaders were her ardent supporters of the TMC earlier, who had laid the foundation for the party WB, in lieu of the CPM - they could no longer tolerate the deliberate anti-national agenda that is being propagated by the Mamata government in West Bengal.

The blatant animosity towards the Centre, while failing to implement several people friendly and advantageous schemes introduced by the Centre that are being efficiently utilised in the rest of the country. This indicates the widening gap between WB and the Centre that Mamata has taken as her personal pride to promote, which became an ego issue

with her. The net effect as a result is deprivation of advantages that are meant to benefit people as other states have been enjoying. There is no doubt that people of West Bengal have had enough of bua's mismanagement pushing the state to a brink of stagnation in terms of development and employment generation while deliberately pandering to a particular community, thereby encouraging illegal immigration from Bangladesh posing a great threat to national security. Mamata Banerjee, now playing the Hindu card is truly astounding as chanting of 'jai Sriram' was an anathema for her earlier.

K V Raghuram, Wayanad

Shabbir asks KCR to seek higher quota %

HYDERABAD: Congress leader Mohammed Ali Shabbir on Wednesday asked Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao to write to the Supreme Court of India supporting the proposal to scrap the 50% ceiling on reservation in educational institutions and jobs.

Addressing a meeting organised by the Federation of Telangana and AP Minority Educational Institutions here, Shabbir Ali slammed the TRS government for not implementing the promised 12% quota for Scheduled Tribes and Muslims. He reminded that TRS came to power in 2014 on the promise of increasing the Muslim quota from 4% to 12% and ST quota from 6% to 12%. However, nothing was done for almost three years. Finally, due to pressure from the Congress party, TRS government introduced a Bill in the Legislature to increase the quota of Muslims to 12% and STs to 10%. The Bill was unanimously passed and was sent to the Centre for approval. Since the increase in quota took the overall reservation percentage to 62%, it remained unimplemented due to the Supreme Court's ceiling on quota to 50% as per Indra Sawhney case. Shabbir Ali said that the Central government has written three letters to the State government seeking information with regard to the bill for enhanced quota. However, TRS govt did not respond to those letters and kept the matter in abeyance. "The State government should take advantage of the situation and immediately write to the Supreme Court and the Centre advocating the increase in quota for different castes and communities," he said.

Swamy blames Naidu for 'propaganda' against TTD

HANS NEWS SERVICE
TIRUPATI/AMARAVATI

BJP senior leader and Rajya Sabha MP Dr Subramanian Swamy on Wednesday said that he was filing a defamation suit against a Telugu daily on behalf of TTD executive officer Dr K S Jawahar Reddy for publishing a "false report" denting the image of TTD. Swamy, who was here in connection with the filing of case against the daily, said that first he, a year back sought the newspaper to deny the false report it published alleging that the TTD portal praised other religious god but there had been no response. "The daily ignored even after issuing of a notice, warning a legal action against the false report, forcing me to go ahead with the filing of a suit for damaging the image of the TTD," he said adding that as a Hindu bhakat and an ardent devotee of Lord Venkateswara, I readily agreed to file the suit claiming damages for Rs 100 crore from the daily."

BJP leader further said that the vernacular daily should have checked the genuineness of the information on the TTD website before publishing the report instead of relying on it, he said answering a reporter who pointed that his own party BJP leaders also protested against the TTD for the mentioning of other religious god on its website.

The case includes the demotion suit and also criminal case under various sections against the newspaper for trying to create rift among various religious groups, he said observing that he has not lost any defamation case, so far he has filed.

Later, the BJP MP met Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy at his camp office. Speaking to media after the meeting, Subramanya Swamy accused former chief minister and TDP chief of being behind the misinformation campaign against TTD. He said RSS need not endorse his meeting with Jagan as Chief Minister is a democratically elected person and anyone can meet him, adding that YS Rajasekhara Reddy was his best friend.

On Visakha steel plant, Subrahmanya Swamy said there was no need for privatisation and he would accompany Jagan Mohan Reddy if he meets the Prime Minister on the issue. He said TTD accounts should be audited by CAG not the government of Andhra Pradesh and alleged that Chandrababu Naidu had not submitted any accounts during his regime. The MP said Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy had taken a positive decision by agreeing to CAG audit.

Increase in weight-gain tied to kidney ailments

PANDEMIC EFFECT: There is about 30% rise since the start of lockdown

HYDERABAD

THERE is an estimated 30 per cent increase in 'weight-gain' linked kidney ailments since the start of Covid-19-induced lockdown last year. Doctors say obesity is potent factor for the development of major risks for chronic kidney diseases, like diabetes and hypertension, and it has a direct impact on the development of even the end-stage renal disease.

"Sedentary habits have crept into everyday lives of people since the start of Covid-19 pandemic. The lockdown produced behavioural, psychosocial, and environmental changes which, through a variety of mechanisms, has led to widespread rapid weight gain amongst certain sections of the population. There has been an increase in food shopping, food takeaway, and surge in alcohol sales, resulted in increase in obesity instances, and related kidney problems," said Gandhe Sridhar, Chief Consultant Nephrologist, Gleneagles Global Hospitals.

"Job losses linked to Covid-19 pandemic increased stress levels resulting into high-blood pressure and increase in metabolic syndrome among people, which is dangerous for the kidneys because it can increase the pressure on the glomeruli (tiny blood vessels in the kidneys where blood is cleaned). It is best advised people lead a physically

HEAVY BURDEN

► Sedentary habits creep into everyday lives of people leading to weight gain

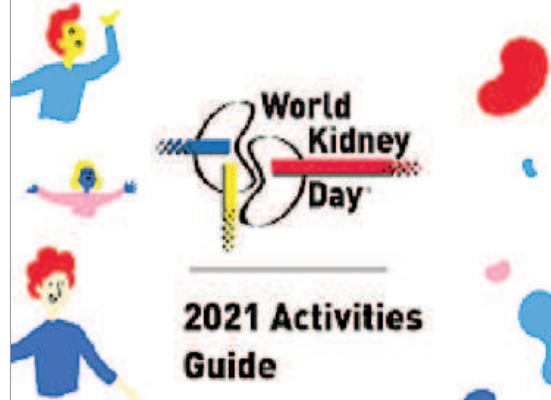
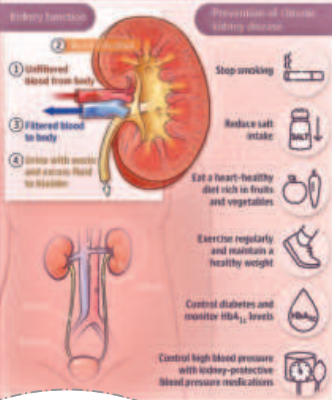
► Job losses increase stress levels resulting in high BP and increase in metabolic syndrome, which is dangerous for kidneys

► Fear of pandemic dissuades many with early-stage as well as end-stage kidney ailments from seeking timely medical help at hospitals

MEDICAL ADVICE

► Those having diabetes, heart disease, or high blood pressure should get tested annually

► Lead a physically active life daily to ensure their internal organs do not feel the pressure of excessive body weight



Doctors say kidney problems generally do not cause symptoms until they enter a more advanced stage. However, a basic metabolic panel and complete urine examination are standard tests that can be done as part of a routine medical exam to check blood for creatinine or urea

active life daily, to ensure their internal organs do not feel the pressure of excessive body weight," said

Dhananjaya Kappadi Lingapareddy, Consultant Nephrologist & Kidney Transplant Physician, Continental Hospitals.

According to P Vijay Verma, Consultant Nephrologist, SLG Hospitals, fear of Covid-19 pandemic dissuaded many with early-stage as well as end-stage kidney ailments from seeking timely medical help at hospitals. "And this led to some devastating outcomes among the low immunity sections along with the aged population. People struggling with obesity fared poorly with their weight-control plans flying off the rails as they coped

with the stress of the pandemic, and this did no good to those with kidney ailments," he added.

Doctors say kidney problems generally do not cause symptoms until they enter a more advanced stage. However, a basic metabolic panel and complete urine examination are standard tests that can be done as part of a routine medical exam to check blood for creatinine or urea. These are chemicals that leak into the blood when the kidneys are not working properly. And one should be tested annually if they have diabetes, heart disease, or high blood pressure.

CS calls for focus on climate change issues

ADARSH NAGAR: CHIEF Secretary Somesh Kumar presided over a meeting of EPTRI at BRKR Bhavan on Wednesday. He underlined the need to have a clear understanding of the vision of EPTRI (Environment Protection, Training, Research Institute) and directed the officials to identify people from various prestigious academic institutions to take up projects related to climate change, environmental impact assessment, waste management etc. The Chief Secretary asked the officials to come out with an action plan to transform EPTRI as a world-class institution in accordance with the vision of the Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao. The need for improving human resources and focus on research was also discussed. It was also decided to conduct monthly meetings to formulate a more aggressive market driven approach. He suggested that at least two workshops should be conducted every year to enhance the brand value of the organization.



BJP state chief Bandi Sanjay himself is making posts about a particular community to whip up passions, they said. They urged the Chief Electoral Officer to take action against Bandi Sanjay for objectionable comments. The TRS leaders remarked that the BJP leader is speaking without 'common sense'.

Pointing out that TRS government completed construction of Yadadri temple in three years, Bharat Kumar said construction of Ram temple will take 15 years because BJP wants to take political mileage from it. He said BJP was maligning Lord Ram by talking of Ram Rajya.

TRS seeks action against Bandi for inciting posts

HYDERABAD

TELANGANA Rashtra Samithi (TRS) on Wednesday urged the Election Commission to take action against state BJP chief Bandi Sanjay Kumar for posting communally inflammatory content on social media platforms. TRS general secretaries Bharat Kumar and Srinivas Reddy called on State Chief Electoral Officer Shashank Goel to submit a memorandum, seeking action against the BJP leader.

They alleged that Sanjay Kumar is making inflammatory posts on Facebook, Twitter and other social media platforms as part of the campaign for March 14 elections to two graduates' constituencies of Legislative Council. The ruling party leaders said while TRS is highlighting the work it has done and what it plans to do, BJP, which has nothing to say on what it wants to do, is making provocative statements. They alleged that the BJP leaders were trying to take political mileage by using religion.

KCR, Guv to unfurl tricolour tomorrow

HYDERABAD

CHIEF Minister K Chandrashekar Rao and Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan will unfurl the national flag in Hyderabad and Warangal respectively on March 12 to mark the 75th anniversary of India's independence. The Chief Minister will hoist the tricolour at the inaugural programme to be held at Public Gardens at 11 a.m. on March 12. The Governor will unfurl the national flag at Warangal the same day.

Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar on Tuesday held a meeting with top officials in connection with the arrangements for the celebrations 'Azadi Ka Amruth Mahotsav'. He asked the officials to make all arrangements to make the event a very successful one. All the government buildings and junctions will be illuminated on March 11 and 12.

Mahender Reddy, Director General of Police, Vikas Raj, Principal Secretary, GAD, Anjani Kumar, Commissioner of Police, Hyderabad, Surendra Mohan, Secretary to Governor, Srinivasa Raju, Secretary, Tourism and Cul-



ture and other officials attend the meeting. The Chief Minister has directed the officials to organise the celebrations in a big way. He noted the Telangana region played a unique role in the then freedom movement. He sanctioned Rs 25 crore for the celebrations to take place from March 12, 2021 to August 15, 2021, for 75 weeks.

National flag would be unfurled at 75 important locations in the state. Flag hoisting will be followed by the police march-past and releasing of the balloons in air. These programmes would be held following the Covid guidelines. The Chief Minister also wanted essay writing competitions, debates, elocutions, drawing competitions, poets' gatherings and other such programmes should be conducted all over the state on the occasion.

State Covid count jumps to 189

HYDERABAD

THE daily Covid count in Telangana saw a spike on Wednesday as 189 new cases were detected during the last 24 hours. The fresh cases pushed the cumulative tally to 3,00,342. Two more persons succumbed to the virus during the last 24 hours taking the death toll to 1,646. The fatality rate remained 0.54 per cent against the national average of 1.4 per cent. While 44.96 per cent of the deaths occurred due to Covid, 55.04 per cent had comorbidities.

According to the daily media bulletin released by the health department, Greater Hyderabad saw the maximum number of cases at 34 followed by Rangareddy (15), Medchal Malkajgiri (12) and Karimnagar (10). Only two districts reported no cases while in the remaining 27 districts the daily count was in single digit. The

health authorities conducted 39,000 tests, taking the cumulative number to 90,55,741.

Telangana's figure for samples tested per million population now stands at 2,43,303. Officials say the daily testing target for the state is 5,600 as per the WHO benchmark of 140 tests per million per day. A total of 176 people recovered during the last 24 hours, taking the cumulative recoveries to 2,96,916. The recovery rate stands at 98.85 per cent against the national average of 96.9 per cent.

The total number of active cases rose marginally to 1,780 including 693 who were in home/institutional isolation. Over 90 per cent of the beds in hospitals treating Covid cases remained vacant. As many as 8,113 beds out of 8,454 beds in 62 government hospitals were vacant. Similarly, in 215 private hospitals 6,859 out of 7,605 beds were vacant.

Uttam slams employee union leaders for bias

HYDERABAD

TELANGANA Pradesh Congress Pradesh (TPCC) President & MP Capt. N. Uttam Kumar Reddy exhorted employees to revolt against their union leaders for betraying their cause.

He was addressing a series of meetings in Nalgonda and Hyderabad on Wednesday in connection with the MLC election campaign for Congress candidate Sabavath Ramulu Naik (Hyderabad-Ranga Reddy-Mahabubnagar).

Bhongir MP Komatireddy Venkatreddy and other senior leaders also addressed the meeting at Laxmi Gardens in Nalgonda.

Uttam Kumar Reddy accused the union leaders of mortgaging the interest of employees for personal gains. He said that the union leaders were acting like TRS leaders while treating the employees as their slaves.

He said that instead of pressuring the State Government for implementation of new PRC and fitment of not less than 43%, the union leaders reportedly bargained for some sops for themselves

with Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao.

The TPCC chief strongly objected to the secret meeting the union leaders had with the Chief Minister at Pragathi Bhavan and questioned its validity. He said that KCR held the meeting not as the Chief Minister, but as the President of TRS seeking the support of employees. Therefore, he should've organised an on-camera meeting and should've given assurances of giving fitment of not less than 43% in full public view.

He said KCR has been using union leaders as a tool to betray the employees. He alleged that KCR has reportedly offered an MLC seat to one of the union leaders in exchange for employees' support for TRS candidates in MLC elections for Graduates constituencies.

Uttam Kumar Reddy appealed to the employees not to trust the union leaders as they allegedly sold out themselves to the TRS.

He said that the employees should re-elect their bodies and pick leaders who could fight for their cause and dump those who mortgaged the employees' interest to CM KCR.

Fear of defeat behind YSRCP attacks: Naidu

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

- Strongly condemns threats and falls cases against TDP cadres
- Says YSRCP leaders attacked TDP activist in Machilipatnam with knives in order to create panic among rival political parties
- Slams arrest of TNSF president Pranav Gopal and MLA Velagapudi Ramakrishna Babu in Vizag

nate manner by the YSRCP leaders. They were doing this to create a fear psychosis among the rival parties and the candidates. In the 13th division in Machilipatnam, the YSRCP activists brandished knives and attacked TDP sympathiser Dinakar. It was only out of fear of facing defeat in the polls that the YSRCP was resorting to such cowardly attacks.

The TDP chief demanded the

police to explain how they could prevent a TDP activist from entering the polling booth in Nayudupeta in Nellore district just because he was wearing the party yellow colour shirt. At the same time, the police were not taking any action and just watching like silent spectators when the YSRCP leaders were resorting to the election violations without any fear of the code or the law.

HOUSING REVIEW

‘Supply material to beneficiaries’

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

CHIEF Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy instructed the officials to support with construction materials those who opt to build houses on their own and ensure they are provided with steel, cement and other construction materials at lower price. He asked the officials to focus on providing water and electricity facilities in Jagananna colonies so that the construction works would be expedited. He said the focus should be on solving the problems related to house sites which are in legal disputes and added that officials should not compromise on quality in construction of houses.

Th Chief Minister reviewed housing and infrastructure development in Jagananna colonies besides felicitation of volunteers



Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy examines the samples of awards and citations to be awarded to volunteers, at a review in his camp office on Wednesday

in recognition of their services.

He directed the officials to ensure the width of roads in Jagananna colonies should not be less than 20 feet. He examined the designs for development of infrastructure facilities such as roads drainage, electricity facility in colonies and suggested

changes.

In the review, it has been decided to give awards to volunteers under three categories – Seva Vajra, Seva Ratna and Seva Mitra — on the eve of Ugadi in recognition of their services. Seva Mitra will be awarded for 2,18,115 volunteers who served

for over one year without any complaints. Seva Ratna award would be conferred on 4,000 volunteers who would be selected at the rate of five volunteers from each mandal, five volunteers from each municipality and 10 volunteers from each corporation. Seva Vajra award would be given to 875 volunteers who would be selected at the rate of 5 each from an Assembly constituency.

Volunteers will be selected based on the efficiency shown in door-to-door survey, distribution of pensions, implementation of home delivery services and in activities related to pension card, rice card, health card, etc., A financial incentive of Rs 10,000 would be given to Seva Mitras, Rs 20,000 to Seva Ratnas and Rs 30,000 to Seva Vajras. The Chief Minister inspected the medals, certificate and badges to be awarded to volunteers.

CHANGE OF GUARD



New Uttarakhand CM Tirath Singh Rawat (left) interacts with outgoing CM Trivendra Singh Rawat in Dehradun on Wednesday

New U'khand CM was denied MLA ticket in 2017 polls

NEW DELHI

THE BJP Lok Sabha MP from Garhwal, Tirath Singh Rawat, was Wednesday appointed as the new CM of Uttarakhand. Rawat alone was sworn-in on Wednesday, which means the members of his Cabinet will be finalised and sworn-in later.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Tirath Singh Rawat, who was sworn-in as the Uttarakhand chief minister on Wednesday, and said he brings with him vast administrative and organisational experience. Modi expressed confidence that under Rawat's leadership, the state will continue to scale new heights of progress. An RSS

pracharak, Rawat was elected as a member of the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Council in 1997 and served until 2002. He also served as the first education minister of Uttarakhand from 2000, when the state was formed, until 2002.

Rawat is currently the BJP MP from Uttarakhand's Pauri Garhwal Lok Sabha constituency as well as a national secretary of the party.

He then had a stint as the BJP's Uttarakhand general secretary in 2007. Rawat, who belongs to Seeron

village in Pauri district, was elected from the Chaubattakhal assembly seat in 2012. He was, however, denied a ticket in the next assembly polls in 2017 as the party fielded former Congress leader Satpal Maharaj from his constituency.

Rawat thanked the top leadership of the saffron party for giving him the new responsibility.

"I am a small party worker from a village. I had never imagined that I will be a given an opportunity like this by the party. I hope that with

everyone's cooperation and blessings, I will fulfil the expectations from me," he said.

Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal "Nishank", who was also being considered a contender for the post, said Rawat was a good choice. "Tirath Singh Rawat is indeed a good choice. Now the BJP is sure to win the 2022 Assembly polls in Uttarakhand," he told reporters after coming out of the State party office.

Former Chhattisgarh chief minister Raman Singh, whose report to the central leadership of the party set in motion the process of leadership change in the hill state, said, "With the kind of challenges facing Uttarakhand, it has got a good leader.



PAKISTAN AVIATION TECHNOLOGY 2021 !



The airplane-shaped balloon, with 'PIA' written on it, was found in Hiranagar Sector of Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday

Vaze removed from Ambani probe

MUMBAI

MAHARASHTRA Home Minister Anil Deshmukh announces in the Legislative Council that Sachin Vaze will be removed from the Crime Branch and posted in some other department. "It is being done so that an impartial investigation can be conducted in the Mansukh Hiren death case," Deshmukh announced.

BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis on Tuesday demanded the arrest of police officer Sachin Vaze in connection with the mysterious death of auto parts dealer Mansukh Hiran, the purported owner of a vehicle laden with explosives found near industrialist Mukesh Ambani's residence.

Fadnavis's comments in the Maha-

rashtira Assembly led to an uproar in the House, with the Shiv Sena raising the issue of alleged suicide of Dadra and Nagar Haveli Lok Sabha member Mohan Delkar.

Amid the noisy scenes, Deputy Speaker Narhari Zirwal adjourned the House first for 10 minutes. A Scorpio, with 20 gelatin sticks inside, was found near Antilia, Ambani's high-rise residence in south Mumbai, on February 25. Police said the vehicle was stolen from Airoli-Mulund Bridge on February 18.



The mystery deepened after Hiran's body was found in a creek last Friday in Thane district neighbouring Mumbai. Before the adjournments, Fadnavis claimed that Hiran's wife has given a statement that her husband may have been murdered by assistant police inspector Sachin Vaze.

No confidence motion in Haryana defeated

CHANDIGARH

THE Congress' motion of no confidence against the BJP-JJP government in Haryana was defeated on Wednesday with 55 members of the assembly voting against the motion while 32 members from the opposition camp backed it.

The motion was defeated following a division of votes.

At the end of a marathon six-hour discussion on the motion, Speaker Gian Chand Gupta announced the 55-32 break up in the House.

The 55 members who voted against the motion included 39 from the BJP, 10 of ally Jan-nayak Janta Party, five Independents and one from the Haryana Lokhit Party.

Thirty members of Congress and two Independents, who had earlier withdrawn support, backed the motion.

In the 90-member Haryana Assembly, currently having an effective strength of 88 members, the ruling BJP has 40 members, the JJP 10 and the Congress 30. Seven are Independents, five of whom are supporting the government, while one member is of the Haryana Lokhit Party, who has also extended support to the government.

Cricketers clash: 'Will look to score boundaries'

NEW DELHI

HAVING shared a dressing room with fellow cricketer Ashoke Dinda for years, TMC's new recruit Manoj Tiwary on Wednesday said his friendship with Dinda would remain intact despite him joining the BJP but quipped that he would "always look to score boundaries" off the paceman's deliveries on the political pitch. Tiwary, an aggressive right-handed batsman who represented India in 12 One-day internationals and three T20s, has been named as the Trinamool Congress (TMC) candidate from the Shibpur seat in Howrah.

In an interview with PTI, he said he wants to play a long innings in politics and the idea as always has been in his cricketing career was to -- make Bengal win. He said like he does in cricket, he would always offer a "straight bat" in politics as well and work for the people in a straightforward manner. On his association with Dinda, who has joined the BJP and is the saffron party's candidate from Moyna, Tiwary said just because Dinda has gone to the BJP does not mean that they will not be friends.

"Yes, we cannot be friends till the elections get over. We also live in the same complex so when we get an opportunity to meet we would, but don't want to discuss politics," Tiwary told PTI over phone. "It is his (Dinda's) decision (to join the BJP), I have made the right decision, he can answer for himself. As a person I wish him well," the 35-year-old cricketer-turned-politician said when asked about his former Bengal teammate's decision to join the BJP.

"I never see myself as a celebrity, I have come up the hard way and I can relate to the struggles of the people," Tiwary said, adding that his life's aim was and will always be to make Bengal win. Pointing to some qualities from his cricketing career that would stand him in good stead in the political arena, he said the game had taught him to become a better human being and make less mistakes.



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee files her nomination for the Nandigram seat, to contest the upcoming assembly election in the State, at SDO Haldia in Purba Medinipur on Wednesday

Chacko quits Cong over ticket distribution

NEW DELHI: In a big blow to the Congress ahead of Assembly polls in four states and one UT, former MP and once Delhi in-charge P.C. Chacko resigned from the party in New Delhi on Wednesday.

He said he sent his resignation letter to party interim chief Sonia Gandhi saying that "it had become difficult to continue in Congress".

Chacko was miffed over ticket distribution in his home state Kerala which is going to polls on April 6.

"There is no democracy left in Congress. Candidate list has not been discussed with the state Congress committee. I have sent my resignation to Sonia Gandhi," Chacko said here.

BJP fields actor from Dilip Ghosh's seat

KOLKATA: The BJP named Bengali actor Hiran Chatterjee, who recently joined the party, as its candidate from Kharagpur Sadar assembly seat, ending speculations whether party's state party chief and MP Dilip Ghosh would be fielded from there. The party also fielded Supriti Chatterjee from Barjora seat, raising the number of women contestants to seven, for the 60 seats in the first two phases of the polls. Hiran Chatterjee is the first Bollywood actor to be fielded by the BJP. The actor named as Hiranmoy Chatterjee in the official BJP list told PTI, "I will follow the party's decision. If the BJP asks me to campaign from today, I am ready. Our common objective is to build a Sonar Bangla."

Mamata injured in attack, taken to Kolkata hospital

BENGAL Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said she was attacked while in Nandigram, where she had gone to file her nomination for the coming elections. The Chief Minister said she was attacked by four or five people at a time when there was no police officer around her. Visuals from the spot showed security guards lifting and placing her on the backseat of a car. The 66-year-old -- who has sustained many an injury earlier, most notably in 1991 when she was attacked by CPM goons -- appeared pale, visibly shaken and in much pain.

Ms Banerjee told reporters that she was pushed by four or five men while she was trying to get into her car. Pointing to her leg, she added, "See how it is swelling up". Asked if it was a planned attack, she said, "Of course it is a conspiracy... there were no policemen around me".

Ms Banerjee -- who was expected to spend the night in Nandigram -- returned immediately to Kolkata, around 130 km away, where she was taken to a hospital.

The attack came a day after the Election Commission replaced the Director General of Bengal Police, Virender, amid concerns of violence voiced the loudest by the BJP. An IPS officer of the 1987 batch, P Niranjayan, has been named the new police chief. The Commission has asked for a report on the attack on the Chief Minister. Nandigram will be the site of the biggest battle in the state elections that begin by the end of this month. The Chief Minister has been challenged by her erstwhile aide Suvendu Adhikari, who is now representing the BJP.

UP boy dies after 3 men pump air into his body

PILIBHIT

IN a shocking incident, a 16-year-old boy died after three men allegedly pumped air through his rectum with a high-power air compressor.

This damaged his internal organs, leading to his slow and painful death over a period of two days in a hospital in Bareilly.

The three men, aged between 22 and 26 years, have been booked in Pilibhit after the boy died in a private hospital.

Two of the accused have been arrested. The motive behind the bizarre crime is yet to be ascertained.

According to a written complaint given by the boy's father, his son used to work at a rice mill.

"On March 4, when he was about to eat his lunch, three labourers identified as Amit, Suraj and Kamlesh grabbed my son. Amit and Suraj held his hands while Kamlesh pumped air in his body with the rice mill's air compressor through his rectum," the complainant said.

As the local doctors could not deal with the case, the boy was shifted to the district hospital in Pilibhit. From there, doctors referred him to a higher medical facility in Bareilly.

Remove smoking zones from public places: Docs, cancer victims urge Centre

India has the second largest number of tobacco users, 268 million or 28.6% of all adults, in the world

A group of doctors, cancer victims and restaurateurs has expressed concerns about passive smoking and urged the Centre to remove smoking zones from various public places.

According to the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce Production, Supply and Distribution) Act COTPA 2003, smoking is banned in all public places, but allowed in designated zones at restaurants, hotels, and airports, among others.

The appeal comes on the occasion of 'No Smoking Day' with the idea to make the country 100 per cent smoke-free and to check the spread of COVID-19 infection.

There is a growing evidence that smoking is a risk for COVID-19 infection, Pankaj Chaturvedi, Head Neck Cancer Surgeon, Tata Memorial Hospital, said, adding that smoking worsens lung function and reduces immunity.

He also said that smokers who test positive for coronavirus have more complications and greater risk of fatality.

"Smoking areas in hotels and restaurants and even airports should be abolished...most of these zones are rarely compliant as per the COTPA requirements and are actually putting the public at great health risk," Chaturvedi said.



Exposure to passive-smoking, according to him, risks the lives of thousands of non-smokers.

Nalini Satyanarayan, a passive smoking victim and health activist, agreed.

According to Binoy Mathew from Voluntary Health Association of India, designated smoking areas facilitate the spread of COVID-19 infection as non-smokers cannot socially distance or wear masks and are trapped in close proximity in a smoke-filled environment.

"Families prefer to stay in hotels which do not allow smoking. We are happy that the government is strengthening the COTPA provisions to make hospital-

ity sector completely smoke free," said Mohammad Imran from Hotel Awadh International.

In 2020, the government started the COTPA Amendment process by introducing a bill.

India has the second largest number of tobacco users (268 million or 28.6 per cent of all adults in the country) in the world.

Nearly 27 per cent of all cancers in India are due to tobacco usage.

The total direct and indirect cost of diseases attributable to tobacco use was a staggering Rs 182,000 crore, which is nearly 1.8 per cent of India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), he said.

TODAY'S QUOTE

44,534 startups recognised by DPIIT

“ Since the launch of Startup India initiative a total of 44,534 startups have been recognised by the DPIIT as on February 24, 2021. The recognised startups are eligible for several benefits under the Startup India initiative. They avail tax exemptions besides other support measures. As many as 339 startups have been granted income tax exemptions till January 2021. — Som Parkash, Union Minister



MARKETS

Easy Trip's IPO subscribed 159 times

Easy Trip Planners' initial public offer was subscribed a whopping 159.30 times so far on the last day of subscription on Wednesday. The issue received bids for over 240.23 crore shares against more than 1.50 crore shares on offer, as per data available with NSE.

FOREX (buy rates in ₹)

US Dollar	77.28	South	
Euro	90.99	African Rand	5.47
UAE Dirham	21.83	Hong Kong Dollar	10.8
Thai Baht	2.73	Japanese Yen	0.77
British Pound	105.13	New Zealand Dollar	54.73
Australian Dollar	58.85	Saudi Riyal	21.37
Canadian Dollar	60.46	Swedish Krona	9.83
Swiss Franc	81.4	Singapore Dollar	56.8

DELHI THURSDAY 11 MARCH 2021

BIZ BRIEFS

Vivo IPL's title sponsor

Vivo has returned as the title sponsor for the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2021. The brand after taking a break last year is back with the position on the same terms as the previous deal. This association testifies Vivo's commitment to the Indian market and the intent to provide an interactive experience to its customers, the company said. The smartphone maker has 27 per cent market share and marked an annual growth of 10 per cent last year. Nipun Marya, Director-Brand Strategy, Vivo India, said: "IPL is a highly influential game in India, and we are happy to re-store our partnership with the league that unites the nation and over the years, our association with IPL has helped us connect with our consumers along with expanding pan India brand presence."

GeneStore's Covid test kit

GeneStore France, a French MNC founded and led by its Indian founder Anubhav Anusha has launched Covid-19 RT-PCR test kit at a price of Rs 199 approved by both the French Ministry of Health and ICMR. Prior to the launch of the kit for Covid-19, the pricing within the diagnostics industry globally was controlled primarily by large companies based out of North America and Europe and during the initial days in India the kit was retailed at a price point of Rs 500 to Rs 1,000. "As a company, GeneStore faced one major challenge, primarily of demonstrating to the leading laboratories in India that delivering consistent quality was in fact possible at the affordable price. However, the company smoothly sailed through the stringent validation processes," said Anubhav Anusha, Global CEO, GeneStore France.

Taneira expo from March 12

Taneira, the brand from Titan, has announced three-day exhibition and sale of handcrafted sarees from March 12 to 14, 2021 at the Tanishq Showroom, Nellore, Andhra Pradesh. Visitors at the show will be able to witness Taneira's exclusive bridal collection of handcrafted sarees from Banaras, Chandri, Maheshwari, Bengal, Bhagalpur, Kanjeevaram, South, and other collection of sarees inspired by the cultural and design elements of the three goddesses, Durga, Laxmi and Saraswati. The brand is offering upto 30 per cent off on select products. Rajeshwari Srinivasan, Chief Operating Officer, Taneira, said, "We are excited to bring our pop up to the beautiful city of Nellore. We aim to provide our customers with the best of India under one roof. We are bringing our exclusive range of sarees handcrafted across varied crafts from Tussar, Banarasi to Ikat"

Sreedhareeyam forays into Hyd

Ayurvedic eye care chain Sreedhareeyam based out of Koothattukulam in Ernakulam district of Kerala, has announced its foray into Hyderabad and started its branch in the city. The group has branches in eleven cities in Kerala. The hospital aims to touch hundred branches mark pan India in a phased manner, by next financial year end. NP Sreejith Nambhoori, Executive Director, Sreedhareeyam, said: "I have always had an ambitious vision to make Sreedhareeyam a national phenomenon. We have plans to open over 100 eye care centres across India, we will be adding the other 61 eye care centres by March 2022. Our next branch will be launched in the national capital, New Delhi".

Deepika, Borosil MD in Young Global Leaders' list

Class of 2021: World Economic Forum's list includes world's 112 most promising leaders under 40

NEW DELHI

ACTOR Deepika Padukone and several Indian citizens and India-origin persons on Wednesday joined the list of the Young Global Leaders (YGLs) compiled by the World Economic Forum. Announcing its 2021 class of YGLs, the WEF said these are the world's most promising 112 leaders under the age of 40 and are involved in activities ranging from advocating for public healthcare to campaigning for inclusivity in medical research.

They join a group of Nobel Prize recipients, Pulitzer winners, heads of State and chief executive officers committed to improving the State of the world, said the Geneva-based organisation that describes itself as an international organisation for public-private cooperation.

"In the past year, they have worked on more than 30 Covid-19-related initiatives, including expanding the use of free public digital health services, launching data challenges to build an ecosystem that can help tackle the pandemic, creating mobile intensive care shelters, opening mental health support



Deepika Padukone

platforms and working on vaccine development," the WEF said. It further said the class of 2021 is gender-equal and has representatives from 56 countries.



Shreevar Kheruka

tries. These members will take part in a five-year programme, which offers executive education courses, expeditions and opportunities to collaborate and

test ideas among a trusted network of peers. "The YGL Class of 2021 is comprised of thoughtful and courageous leaders who will shape a more sustainable and inclusive post-pandemic era," said Mariah Levin, head of the Forum of Young Global Leaders.

"We are delighted to welcome the class of 2021 at a time when cultivating responsible leadership is needed more than ever to steer us through the multiple challenges the world is facing," said Nicole Schwab, board member of the Forum of Young Global Leaders.

Academia and research field

- **Devi Sridhar** (University Lecturer in Global Health Politics, University of Oxford, UK)
- **Mashrafe Bin Mortaza** (captain of Bangladesh cricket team)
- **Rohan Ramakrishnan** (founder and CEO of the ASEAN Post, Malaysia).

Business field

- **Nirvana Chaudhary** (Managing Director of Nepal's Chaudhary Group),
- **Shreevar Kheruka** (Managing Director and CEO of Borosil India)

The 2021 YGL class

- **Srikanth Bolla** (CEO of Bolland Industries, India).

Social entrepreneurship

- **Amit Paley** (CEO of The Trevor Project, USA),
- **Deepika Padukone** (founder of the Live Love Laugh Foundation, India).

Others on the list

- **Vasudha Vats** (global commercial lead, senior director, Pfizer, USA)
- **Vivek Ramaswamy** (founder and CEO of Roivant Sciences, USA)

Auto sector may post double-digit growth

PVs, TWs and CVs expected to see 23-25%, 18-20% and 34-36% volume growth respectively: Crisil

NEW DELHI

AFTER two years of sluggishness, India's automobile sector is set to post double-digit growth next fiscal, said credit ratings agency Crisil. As per the agency, the growth will be supported by improving the economic situation and personal incomes.

It estimated that passenger vehicles (PVs), two-wheelers (TWs) and commercial vehicles (CVs) are expected to see 23-25 per cent, 18-20 per cent and 34-36 per cent volume growth, respectively, next fiscal, compared with contractions of 3-5 per cent, 12-14 per cent and 19-21 per cent, respectively, in the current fiscal. "Our analysis of 800 listed companies shows salary cuts made in the first quarter of this fiscal have largely been restored by the manufacturing sector, while the IT sector is continuing to offer raises," said Pushan Sharma, Associate Director, Crisil Research.

"Consequently, sentiment among urban consumers, who account for a crucial 65 per cent of PV sales and 40 per cent of TW sales, has im-



Crisil points out that since the third quarter of this fiscal, however, all three OEM segments have seen their sales volume reach and even surpass pre-Covid levels, and the recovery should be sharper next fiscal

proved. This, and buoyancy in rural income, augur well." Besides, the increase in the cost of acquisition of PVs and TWs including insurance, registration, down-payment, and ex-showroom price next fiscal will be moderate at 3-4 per cent compared with a combined 8-11 per cent rise in fiscals 2020 and 2021.

That, along with new model

launches and quest for safe personal transport options will stoke demand for PVs and TWs, Crisil said. Furthermore, it cited that the demand for CVs is expected to be stronger next fiscal, riding on a significantly low base, improving economic activity since the third quarter of this fiscal, and government thrust on road infrastructure.

NTPC's floating solar plant to be ready by May

HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

NTPC Southern Region on Wednesday announced that the Ramagundam Floating Solar power project of 100 MW will be commissioned in May 2021.

The 100-MW solar project at Ramagundam in Peddapalli district, Telangana, is the largest floating solar power plant in India. NTPC set up the project at an investment of Rs423 crore spread across 450 acres.

"NTPC had successfully completed pilot projects of floating solar power plants at Kayamkulam of 100 kWh, Kavas (1 MW). We are now implementing large floating projects. We use reservoirs for floating solar plants near our thermal plants but require about five acres for one MW of ground solar projects," said CV Anand, Regional Executive Director, NTPC Southern Region, told the media here.

The other ongoing floating solar projects in the south are 25 MW unit at Simhadri Super thermal power plant in Andhra Pradesh and 92 MW unit at Kayamkulam in Kerala.

These floating solar projects would have been completed earlier but got delayed due to the lockdown amid Covid-19 pandemic.



Around Rs 4 crore would be used for each MW in floating solar projects, Anand added.

The NTPC's Southern Region operates 9,125 MW capacity of power and will add 2,027 MW after completion of the ongoing thermal and solar projects. It currently has a total capacity of 265 MW solar PV projects. Apart from the floating solar plants, a 230 MW ground solar project will be coming up at Ettayapuram near Tuticorin in Tamil Nadu next year.

In 2016, NTPC commenced construction works on 1,600 MW (2x800 MW) Telangana Super Thermal Power Project at a cost of Rs10,598.98 crore. The unit-1 of Telangana Super Thermal Power project will be operational by January 2022 and unit-2 by March 2022. About 85 per cent of the plant power has been allocated to the Telangana State and remaining unallocated 15 per cent would also be supplied to the State following a request made by the State government.

Centre strikes off 3.8L shell cos in FY20



NEW DELHI

THE Union Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) has identified and struck off over 3.8 lakh shell companies during FY18-20. In a reply to the Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for Finance and Corporate Affairs, Anurag Singh Thakur stated that there is no definition of the term 'shell company' in the Companies Act-2013.

It normally refers to a company without active business operation or significant assets, which in some cases are used for illegal purposes such as tax evasion, money laundering, obscuring ownership, benami properties among others.

The Special Task Force set up by the government to look into the issue of 'shell companies' has recommended the use of certain red flag indicators as alerts for identification of shell companies. The government has undertaken a special drive for identification and striking off such companies, he said.

"Based on non-filing of Financial Statements (FS) consecutively for two years or more, shell companies were identified and after following due process of law, 3,82,875 number of companies were struck off during the last three years up to financial year ended 2020," Thakur said.

The Minister further said that no companies have been struck off during the current financial year.

Dorsey to donate \$2.5M from tweet sale in Bitcoins

NEW DELHI

TWITTER CEO and billionaire Jack Dorsey who last week announced to sell his very first tweet of March 6, 2006, has said that he will donate the money in Bitcoins to charity. The highest bid for the tweet, put up for auction as an NFT (non-fungible token) on

a platform called Valuables, is currently \$2.5 million and there auction will end on March 21. "Ending this March 21, will immediately convert proceeds to #Bitcoin. And send to @GiveDirectly Africa Response," Dorsey said in a tweet late on Tuesday. NFT is a digital good on the Ethereum blockchain. The very first tweet by



Dorsey on March 6, 2006 read: "Just setting up my twttr."

According to Valuables, "What you are purchasing is a digital certificate of the tweet, unique because it has been signed and verified by the creator." However, the fact is that this tweet has been publicly available for free for nearly 15 years on the internet.

Most Indians get unwanted SMS despite 'blocking'

NEW DELHI

A total of 74 per cent of citizens say they still get spam SMS despite registering on TRAI's 'Do Not Call Registry', as per a LocalCircles survey.

A 14 per cent have got spam SMS in the last 12 months about earning money. Only minor reduction observed in volume of unsolicited SMS received by citizens in last 2 years, the survey said.

After SMS and OTP disruptions were reported for banking, payment and other transactions, the TRAI for 7 days suspended the implementation of norms for commercial text messages or SMS which came into effect on Monday.

TRAI on Tuesday, said that it has observed that some of the Principal Entities (PE) have not fulfilled the



requirements as envisaged in Telecom Commercial Communication Customer Preference Regulation (TCCPR), 2018 and as a result their SMS were getting dropped after scrubbing by Telecom Service Providers (TSPs). TRAI added that this was to protect the consumer from inconvenience faced due to not receiving these messages. LocalCircles has now conducted a follow on survey to check the citizen pulse on unwanted and spam SMS, to understand if there's been an increase in

UCC and if Regulator's "do not disturb, or DND" initiative has been any effect at all. Also, citizens' opinion on spam SMSs was compared with previously conducted surveys to understand the change over time. The survey received more than 35,000 responses from citizens located in 324 districts of India.

In the first question, citizens were asked how many unwanted SMS they receive every day on average? 37 per cent said they receive 4-7 messages every day, 36 per cent said 8 or more, 25 per cent said 1-3, while only 2 per cent said they don't get unwanted SMS at all.

Per the survey, the aggregate votes of citizens indicated that 73 per cent get 4 or more unwanted SMSs every day. The question to the survey received 7,632 votes. In the last 2 years,

there's been a minor reduction in the volume of unsolicited SMS received by citizens, which could be attributed to lockdowns and office shutdowns.

Many people face issues of unwanted telemarketing messages and calls made to them by fraudsters, spammers, telemarketers, despite registering on TRAI's Do Not Call Registry (NDNS). More shocking is the news of around 93 million phone numbers registered with the TRAI's "Do Not Call Registry (NDNS)" kept on sale on the Darknet in February 2020.

In the last 2 years, more citizens complained of getting unsolicited SMS despite being registered on the DND list. According to the telecom regulator, as of May 2018, there were 23 crore mobile subscribers registered with the DND registry.

INDIA'S FIVE-MATCH T20 SERIES AGAINST ENGLAND

VARUN CHAKRAVARTHY
FAILS FITNESS TEST AGAIN

Natarajan at NCA with shoulder niggle

AHMEDABAD

LEG-SPINNER Varun Chakravarty's failure to clear fitness tests has ruled him out while pacer T Natarajan is racing against time to be battle-ready, making him doubtful for at least the early part of India's five-match T20 series against England starting here on Friday. Chakravarty has repeatedly failed to clear the fitness test at the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru while yorker specialist Natarajan is yet to join the squad here due to an apparent "shoulder niggle".

"Varun Chakravarty was selected because he recovered from his shoulder injury that ruled him out of the Australia series. He did his rehab at the NCA and started throwing normally. However, he has failed to clear the YoYo test mark stipulated for a 2km run at least twice," a senior BCCI source told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

The question now being asked is why did the Chetan Sharma led committee select such a player, who, after the month of October,

hasn't played even one competitive game for his state Tamil Nadu. "We can understand he was doing his rehab during Mushtaq Ali (T20 Championship). But then again, he didn't play a



single Vijay Hazare Trophy game. How do you assess his match fitness based on games that he played five months back? I guess Varun Chakravarty is a lesson for selectors," said the source.

"If a player is generally not maintaining the standards set by this Indian team, his bowling alone can't be a criteria for selection." It is learnt that Rahul Chahar will be inducted in the squad as he is already in the bio-bubble since the start of the Test series. In case of Natarajan, the NCA

DUBAI

INDIA climbed a spot to second in the latest ICC men's T20 International team rankings ahead of a five-match series against top-placed England beginning on March 12.

England are seven points ahead of India, who were third before the away series against Australia. Australia's 2-3 loss to New Zealand in a recent five-game series pushed the side below India with just one point separating the two. In the T20 batting chart, India batsman KL Rahul lost a place to be at the third spot but skipper Virat Kohli retained his sixth position. With 816 points, Rahul is behind England's Dawid Malan (915) and Australia's Aaron Finch (830), while Kohli was static at sixth with 697 points. Finch jumped two places following his exploits in the last three T20Is against New Zealand, where he scored 69, 79 and 36, while New Zealand's Martin Guptill gained three

spots to be at the 8th position after his good show in the T20Is. Guptill had scored 218 runs which included two half centuries during the T20 series against Australia. Australia's Ashton Agar and New Zealand's Ish Sodhi made big gains after capturing 13 and 8

India move to 2nd spot in ICC T20I team rankings ahead of England series

wickets in the recent series.

Agar and Sodhi moved to the fourth and 8th positions respectively after climbing four and three places. Kiwi pacer Tim Southee and spinner Adam Zampa, however, lost three and one place respectively to be at the 9th and 6th place. Left-arm Sri Lankan spinner Lakshan Sandakan, who took six wickets in the series against West Indies, broke into the top 10 at the 10th spot after gaining nine spots. *(PTI)*

medical staff is trying to get him fit or at least the later part of the series. Rahul Tewatia is training with the Indian team in Ahmed-

abad as he awaits his second fitness Test results. The T20s will be followed by a three-match ODI series in Pune. *(PTI)*

Hitesh Sharma signs 2-year extension with Hyderabad FC

Midfielder pens new deal till the end of 2022-23 season

HYDERABAD

AFTER a memorable campaign in the Indian Super League, Hyderabad FC have turned their attention to strengthening their team for the next season. Impressive midfielder Hitesh Sharma has now signed a two-year contract extension with Manolo Marquez's side, the club announced on Wednesday.

"I am really proud and happy to have signed this contract with Hyderabad FC," said Hitesh after putting pen to paper. "I believe that we have the best players, the best management and the best coaches we can ask for at the club and I hope to continue the hard work for years to come," he added.

The 23-year-old medio, who joined Hyderabad FC in January 2020, played a crucial role in the side's fight for a place in the top-4 this league campaign. The youngster made 15 appearances (13 starts) and grew into a regular in the first team under Head Coach Manolo Marquez this season. He played a total of 1,060 minutes in the season, which remains his busiest league campaign in his career.

"Hitesh is a really smart player, who understands the game very well," said Manolo. "He has a great attitude, is calm in possession and always seems to know to do the correct thing in every moment. I am sure he will grow into a better player next season as well," he added. Hitesh, who already has a couple of appearances for the



The 23-year-old, who joined Hyderabad FC in January 2020, played a crucial role in the side's fight for a place in the top-4 this league campaign. The youngster made 15 appearances (13 starts) and grew into a regular in the first team under Head Coach Manolo Marquez this season

Indian National team, was also named in the probables list by National Team coach Igor Stimac, for the upcoming friendlies against Oman and UAE. The youngster who has 42 ISL appearances, believes that it is now time to keep his head down and work hard, to build on his performances this season. "The plan is to continue the hard work and improve as a player, even in the off-season. I want to become a better player individually and I hope that we can improve as a team and take the next step in the upcoming ISL campaign," Hitesh added.

Selection trials

Hyderabad District Handball Association is conducting selection trials for Senior Men at Gymkhana Ground on 12th March evening 4.30pm and 13th March morning 6.30am and evening 4.30 pm sessions. Selected Team will participate in Sr. Men Inter district Handball Championship in Maddur, Siddipet from March 20-22. Hyderabad Junior Girls selection is at L.B Stadium on March 12 evening 4.30 pm and March 13 morning at 6.30 am and evening at 4.30pm. Contact: Siva Kumar (Joint Secretary), 919848336484, Deepak Prasad (Handball Coach) 919989756792, Ravi Kumar (SATS Handball Coach), 91986622997 and Randheer Kumar (Handball Coach) and 917702662210

IPL will help in T20 World Cup preparation, says Billings

AHMEDABAD

ENGLAND wicket-keeper batsman Sam Billings feels the upcoming IPL will be good preparation for the T20 World Cup later this year but conceded that he will get limited game time due to the "phenomenal" competition in the Delhi Capitals' squad.

The 29-year-old was bought by Delhi Capitals for Rs 2 crore at the mini-auction last month. "You look

at the squad that Delhi have, and especially the overseas options: you could go with any combination and it would be a successful one," Billings told 'ESPNCricinfo'.

"The competition for places is phenomenal: they obviously got to the final last year, so game time might be limited, but it comes back to the point of preparing for a World Cup and giving myself the best chance in these conditions to pre-

pare for that," he added. Delhi, who finished runners up in the previous edition, are spoilt for choice in the overseas players department.

Last year, their go-to combination was South African pacers Kagiso Rabada and Anrich Nortje, Australian all-rounder Marcus Stoinis and big-hitting West Indian Shimron Hetmyer. This year they have added former Australian skipper Steve Smith, England's Tom Curran

and Billings into the squad. Billings, who was part of the Delhi franchise in 2016 and 2017 as well, recalled the first time he got a glimpse of the flamboyant Indian wicketkeeper batsman Rishabh Pant. "With Pant, I played with him for 2 years when I was in Delhi. I turned to Rahul Dravid and asked 'who is this kid?' "He was smacking Nathan Coulter-Nile, Chris Morris, Rabada everywhere in the open net.

"I was just thinking 'this is unbelievable!' and that year he lit up. It's been great to see him evolve as a cricketer and to be in the same team as him again would be great," Billings said. The right-handed batsman from Kent is eager to team up with India spinners Ravichandran Ashwin and Axar Patel, who snared 32 and 27 wickets respectively in the recently-concluded Test series against England. *(PTI)*

Lahiri happy to be back at THE PLAYERS Championship

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Anirban Lahiri returns to THE PLAYERS Championship for a fifth time this week but is still looking at making a meaningful mark at the event.

Lahiri got into the elite field at the US\$15 million showpiece following the withdrawal of former World No. 1, Brooks Koepka who pulled out due to an injury. The opportunity to feature in the PGA TOUR's flagship tournament at The Stadium Course at TPC Sawgrass is not lost on Lahiri as he seeks to find some momentum to truly get his 2020-21 season into gear following a bunch of mixed results including a missed cut at the Arnold Palmer Invitational presented by Mastercard last week.

Candid as usual, Lahiri, a former Asian No. 1, said, "It's nice to be back. I didn't realize it's my fifth time back. I really like this golf course, I love the way it is set up and I feel like it's one of those tracks where I can do really well. My record doesn't show that though. The game has been a little patchy, up and down, but I think it's trending back in the right direction. I have a couple of things that I've been working on and they seem to be falling into place, so it's all about putting it together now."

The 154-player field includes more than 100 PGA TOUR winners and 48 of the top 50 each from the FedExCup points list and world ranking, including Dustin Johnson, Rory McIlroy, Bryson DeChambeau, Justin Thomas, Collin Morikawa and Jon Rahm. In Lahiri's

This will give fans 'every shot live'

The action from PGA Tour - THE PLAYERS Championship - Day 1 will be LIVE on EUROSPORT and EUROSPORT HD from 10:30 pm IST onwards on Thursday, March 11



four appearances at TPC Sawgrass, he missed three cuts and finished T74 in 2019.

Apart from the star-studded field, the tournament will also set a unique landmark. Golf fans will be able to enjoy 'Every Shot Live' on GOLFTV powered by PGA TOUR, made available exclusively by the PGA TOUR.

It will be available from the first round and every shot by every player will be live-streamed on GOLFTV, allowing fans to follow any player in the elite field. More than 32,000 shots are expected over 72 holes from a starting field. Fans will be able to choose what players to watch, how you watch and stream on different devices.

Lahiri has played at THE PLAYERS both in May previously and now in March and sees a change in weather between the two periods. "Well, obviously three of my previous appearances were in May, with different

weather. I played in 2019 in March. But it's going to be slightly different in terms of the temperatures and the wind. If anything I think this is probably a better wind for my game style. So the one thing I haven't done as well in the past is probably hit as many fairways as you need to.

"On the weekend, the greens are going to get really firm and fast, we all know that, so it's going to be critical to come in from the short grass to really control the ball and that's going to be my mine focus this week."

Lahiri did not make it to the field at last year's edition of THE PLAYERS, and the event itself was cancelled after the first round and the TOUR shut down for three months. "I think it's been a year now, a full circle pretty much since COVID struck the golfing world. For me it was, there was a lot of good that came out of it. I did get a

lot done in India, I went back for the Hero Indian Open, which was the week after THE PLAYERS last year. And that ended up being a good thing for me, because I got a lot of time at home with my coach and just managed to reassemble all the parts that were kind of getting a little rickety."

On what it would take make a serious bid for the title, Lahiri elaborated, "I mean, all the guys who have won here previously have driven the ball really well and putted really well. I think those are the two things that are going to be really, really important. So you have to have all the departments firing and also that's why it's not so heavily dominated by someone who hits it miles or who has a really exceptional short game, you got to do everything good and you got to drive and putt well more than anything else."

"A premium Co-Living Space"

PROPERTY MULTIPLIER

WITHOUT ADDITIONAL INVESTMENT

KT Residency approved by Approved No. PO2400001598

SAFE

Earn extra sft*

AFFORDABLE

9% to 11% Returns

NO MAINTENANCE

Assured rental income for 20years

+91 95337 76694

www.ktresidency.com | sales@kapilproperties.com