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Centre ready to suspend Farm Laws for one-and-a-half-year

NEXT MEETING SET FOR TOMORROW

New Delhi

THE tenth round of talks between the representatives of protesting farmers and the Central government on Wednesday failed

to resolve the impasse against the three farm laws. The next meeting will be held on January 22.

"Govt has said it is ready to suspend the laws for one and half a year. In reply, farmers said that there is no point in suspending the laws and made it clear that we want the repeal of the laws," a farmer leader said after the meeting.

During the meeting, farmer leaders also raised the issue of NIA notices being served

to some farmers, alleging it was being done just to harass those supporting the agitation, to which the government representatives said they will look into the matter.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court Wednes-

day said it was "inappropriate" for the court to act on the Centre's plea seeking We Support Farmer an injunction against the proposed tractor rally scheduled on January 26. Stating that it was not for the court to pass orders, the bench said that the question of who should be allowed into Delhi to hold protests is a law and

order issue that has to be handled by the police and not the court. The Centre, later, withdrew the petition.

Biden takes oath as 46th US Prez

WASHINGTON

JOE Biden was sworn in as the 46th President of the United States on Wednesday. Biden addressed the country for the first time as President and declared to the nation that 'democracy has prevailed'

 after a chaotic transition where his predecessor denied his election win and never congratulated him on his win. 'The will of the people has been heard, and the will of the people has been heeded,' Biden said on the West Front of the Capitol just two weeks after MAGA riots threatened to stop the counting

of the electoral votes for president in its tracks.

It came moments after Biden raised his hand and took an oath to 'preserve, protect and defend' the Constitution on Wednesday – starting his tenure amid a pandemic and putting an end to a tumultuous four-year term by President Donald Trump.



US Vice President Kamala Harris, Jill Biden and President Joe Biden wave after the oath

Rapper Raja represents India at Biden's ceremony

New Delhi

Grammy-nominated Indian-American rapper Raja Kumari feels proud to represent India at the AAPI Inaugural Ball: Breaking Barriers, and says she is looking forward to a less divided,

The Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Ball is one of the traditional galas held around the presidential inauguration ceremony in the US, and this year's events were held virtually because of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Ball celebrates and honours the contribution of the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities

more united America.

ahead of the presidential swearing-in ceremony. "I am beyond honoured and grateful to be representing the Indian-American community at the AAPI inaugural ball. This election was personal for so many of us and watching Kamala Harris become the first South Asian and African American to hold the office of Vice President will be the most awe-inspiring moment...something we tell our children about," Raja Kumari said.

She continued: "The Biden administration has already set the tone by celebrating diversity and cultural exchange, not only on the campaign but also on their choices for the cabinet. A lot of people want to focus on the division in the US, but I'm more inspired than ever to focus on our mutual

SC rejects pleas seeking review of Aadhaar verdict

New Delhi

THE Supreme Court has dismissed a batch of pleas seeking review of its 2018 verdict which had upheld the Centre's flagship Aadhaar scheme as constitutionally valid but struck down some of its provisions, including its linking with bank accounts, mobile phones and school admissions. A five-judge Constitution bench headed by Justice A M Khanwilkar, by a majority of 4:1, rejected the review pleas against the apex court's September 26, 2018 verdict. Justice D Y Chandrachud, one of the five-judges of the bench, dissented with the majority verdict and said that the review petitions be kept pending until a larger bench decides the question related to certification of a bill as a money bill

The Aadhaar Bill was certified as a money bill which enabled the government to get it cleared without getting the assent of a majority in the Rajya Sabha. "The present review petitions have been filed against the final judgment and order dated September 26, 2018. We have perused the review petitions as well as the grounds in support thereof. In our opinion, no case for review of



judgment and order dated September 26, 2018 is made out," the majority order of January 11 said.

"We hasten to add that change in the law or subsequent decision/judgment of a coor dinate or larger bench by itself cannot be

regarded as a ground for review. The review petitions are accordingly dismissed," said the bench, also comprising Justices Ashok Bhushan, S Abdul Nazeer and B R Gavai. The review pleas were taken up for consideration in-chamber by the bench.

In its 2018 verdict, a five-judge Constitution bench headed by then Chief Justice Dipak Misra had held that while Aadhaar would remain mandatory for filing of Income Tax Return and allotment of permanent account number (PAN), it would not be mandatory to link Aadhaar number to bank accounts and telecom service providers cannot seek its linking for mobile connections. In its 4:1 verdict that had also quashed some contentious provisions of the Aadhaar Act, the top court, however, had held Aadhaar would be needed for availing facilities of welfare schemes and government subsidies. Ruling that seeding of Aadhaar would not be required for opening bank accounts, availing mobile services, by CBSE, NEET, JEE, UGC and for admissions in schools and free education for children, the top court had observed that Aadhaar had also become a household name and that its use has spread like a "wildfire".

1 dead during shooting in foiled theft attempt

New Delhi

A 24-year-old man was arrested for allegedly killing a person who is suspected to have come to steal his pigs from his farm in Delhi, police said on Wednesday.

Prince, alias Aman, owns around 300 pigs, but some unknown persons were stealing his pigs during lockdown. To prevent the theft, he started surveillance on the farm at nights, police said. Five-six days ago, he saw two persons loitering in a Santro car near the farm around 3 am. The

duo later fled from the spot. Prince chased and fired several rounds at the car, which was fleeing towards Madhuban Chowk, Rohini, police said. Next morning, Prince came to know that a dead body with gunshot injury was found in a car in Mangolpuri area. After confirming that the car was same at which he had fired shots, he fled away from Sunday, police arrested Prince

from Mohan Garden, Uttam Nagar. One sophisticated pistol, loaded with two live rounds, was found from his possession, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Dwarka) Santosh Kumar Meena said.

In another incident, three women were arrested for allegedly robbing a delivery van driver of over Rs 1.60 lakh in northwest Delhi, police said on Wednesday.

The incident took place when Neeraj was going in his delivery van carrying cash worth Rs 1,44,750 in a bag. He had an additional Rs 22,500 in his pocket and that was also looted by the women, according to the police. Around 2.45 pm, Neeraj reached Bawana road and noticed four women standing there. They signalled him to stop the delivery van and indulged him in conversation. After overpowering him forcefully, they took out the cash kept on the dashboard and also

Police land encroached, find it amusing: Judge

New Delhi

A judge of the Delhi High Court was on Wednesday amused to hear that police land has been encroached upon in the national capital.

The high court was hearing a plea seeking removal of encroachment from a police colony land located at Shalimar Bagh in north-west Delhi, "I actually find it quite amusing that police land has been encroached upon," said Justice Pratibha M Singh while seeking response of the AAP government, police and the North Delhi Municipal Corporation (NrDMC) on the issue.

The high court issued notice to the Delhi government's Public Works Department (PWD),

the police, NrDMC and the people, who have allegedly encroached upon the land in question, seeking their stand on the petition by $\bar{\text{April}}$ 12. It asked the authorities to inform it what action has been taken against the encroachment. The petition has been moved by a resident of the police colony whose land has been encroached upon.

The petitioner, Anil Kumar, has contended in his plea that in a criminal case before the high court involving the alleged encroachers, a categorical finding was arrived at they have encroached upon police land and built a house there despite they being neither employees of Delhi Police nor any land being allotted to them in the colony.

BLACK CATS



NSG commandoes during the rehearsals for Republic Day Parade, in New Delhi on Wednesday

Nasal Covid vaccine easy to give to children: AllMS chief

NEW DELHI

A nasal COVID-19 vaccine will be easy to give to school-going children who bear a "very mild" load of the disease but they are infectious, AIIMS Director Randeep Guleria said on Wednesday. The noted pulmonologist, who was interacting with the personnel of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) during their 16th Raising Day celebrations here, also said that people who have contracted coronavirus should also get the jab about 4-6 weeks after recovery.

"It (coronavirus infection) is very mild in children but they are infectious. They can spread the disease." "The vaccines that have come are not approved for children because there have been no studies conducted on children but this (vaccination) is a very important step and trials are being done," he said. Once children start going to the school regularly and they contract the COVID-19 infection, they will not have much problem but if

they bring it home they can spread it to their parents or grandparents, the chief of the premier Delhi-based All India Institute of Medical Sciences

"Vaccines for children may come later...Bharat Biotech is trying to get approved a nasal vaccine. Such a vaccine will be very easy to be given to

(AIIMS) said.

children as it is a spray and not a jab and hence compliance is more." "In half-an-hour you can vaccinate an entire class. So, if that (nasal vaccine) is approved it will be even easier to give the vaccine (for COVID-19)," Guleria said in reply to a question. He was also asked by the NDRF personnel if a person who has recovered from COVID-19

should get vaccinated with India commissioning two vaccines last week. "A vaccine jab is essential for them (recovered from coronavirus) due to two reasons." "One is you are not sure how strong is your post COVID-19 immunity and it has been seen quite a few times that those who had a mild to moderate infection their anti-body response has been less and we also don't know how long will it be," he said.

A vaccine will be "beneficial" for such an individual as it will act as a "booster" and if anti-bodies are depleting, with the vaccine it will be back to a high level, he said. "So, you should get the vaccine if you have been infected with COVID-19 but if it has happened recently say like 7-10 days then one should wait and take the jab after may be 4-6 weeks," he said. Before replying to queries, Guleria also gave a powerpoint presentation on the topic "Infectious Diseases: Emergencies and Challenges Ahead" and said "bio-terrorism" is an upcoming challenge.

Telangana govt to continue with WhatsApp for now

PATAN AFZAL BABU HYDERABAD

WITH WhatsApp extending its deadline on privacy policy agreement with users till May 15, one of the big users of the famous app the Telangana State Government has deferred its decision to change to other apps. From Chief Minister's Office (CMO) to village panchayats, the government has been using whats app for official communication and also sharing the documents for quick redressal of the issues at different

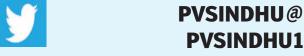
Following the earlier decision of WhatsApp to amend its privacy policy, the state government was contemplating shifting to Signal and Telegram apps. It had started creating groups on these apps and in some cases even official communication had been started. With the decision of WhatsApp to postpone implementation of its new privacy policy till May, State Ministers, Legislators, Department Secretaries and district Authorities resumed their operations on WhatsApp, a senior official said.

Though there is no official policy decision taken by the government on the use of WhatsApp for official purposes, the government had adopted the popular app as the mode of communication between the government departments and officials and legislators. The key departments like police, industry, IT, Education and Health officials were paying service charge for using it for official purposes. "Upto 250 member WhatsApp groups are permitted to operate free of cost. The app group with over 250 members has to pay service tax every month.

More than 50 official groups above 250 members were in the operation. Officials said that since there was no threat of leakage of information from WhatsApp which provides safety and security with end-toend encryption for the present, the departments were continuing with the use of the old app.

All the official app groups are being maintained by either department Secretaries of Head of the Departments. PROs were running the minister's official app group for sharing news related information with the media and press. Collectors and other top officials are the group admins in the district headquarters.





Congratulations #TeamIndia for a historic series win at the Gabba! you have shown the world what you are capable of and what New India is all about. So proud of you!! **@BCCI AUSVIND**



Styling your shirt dress

The shirt dress is a casual shirt **⊥** that's extended to create a dress. This versatile trend gives vou a choice of lengths, sleeve lengths, and hemlines, so you can create a multitude of outfits from one straightforward dress.

Wearing a shirt dress on its own

Of course, the shirt dress looks just perfect on its own. A mini denim version with scooped hemline accents tanned legs, whilst a looser design cinched at the waist with a thin belt is great for a fuller figure. A plaid knee-length dress is delightfully feminine, looking lovely with converse sneakers. Pretty pinstripes teamed with a floral print jacket and nude sandals captures the spirit if summer, whilst a rainbow-shaded cummerbund makes a colourful splash on a pure white model with tiny pin-tucks.

Wearing a shirt dress with leggings

Black leggings are a firm favourite here, such as full length leggings with a white shirt dress, worn with heeled lace-ups. Long black leggings also look good with a shaped shirt dress together with little black ankle boots. Three-quarter black leggings make the perfect pair with a loose pink shirt dress with waist tie and ballet pumps, or teamed with a scooped hem version in nautical stripes with converse sneakers. Try a bold red shirt dress with black leggings, patent waist-belt and long black boots for real impact, or wear a denim dress over polka-dot leggings with ankle



Wearing a shirt dress with jeans

Jeans work equally as well with the shirt dress, especially if they're skin-tight. A looser style of dress looks better here, such as a denim dress over ripped skinny denims with pointed sandals or sleeveless striped dress with narrow belt over skinny jeans and stilettos. A shirt dress with frilled hem in pale pink looks superb over jeans or match a colourful patterned dress with black stretch jeans and heeled lace-ups. An oversized white dress works beautifully with faded skinny denims and heels, or choose a monochrome print dress to wear with faded denims

Add colour to your lips



Nude matte lipstick is preferably the best option for corporate makeup. Matte lipsticks last longer than glossy ones and give a professional touch to the makeup. Choose a matte lipstick shade suitable for office and let your lips do the talking. Try to avoid bright lip colours. Carry a lip stain to work. Choose the right colours, opt for waterproof makeup, do not look cakey, go for a proper hairdo, and purchase beauty products from the best brands to avoid allergy or reactions. Keep yourself hydrated throughout the day to maintain skin health and look fresh. Wear a smart and simple dress and pair it with minimum accessories.

Everything you need to know about diabetes and women

Compliment your food choices with regular exercise, reduced stress and beat diabetes the Indian way!

y virtue of my profession, I am constantly in touch with women of all ages, professions and locations. I can't be happier to notice that women are taking charge and striving for their share in every aspect of life. While women are striving for equality, here is one sector we are at par with our male counterparts - The incidence of Diabetes. Sorry to be the bearer of sad news but even though we are affected equally, the consequences are far worse for us. Diabetes is on the rise in India and it is best to prevent, than to cure .Our Indian local foods are the magic to

bringing sugar levels down. Carbohydrate care - Hold on, I'm not going to ask you to cut them out. In fact, they are very essential to maintain energy and prevent binging later in the day. The key is to choose the right carbohydrates that provide plenty of fibre and are easily digested. Whole grains like wheat, barley, nachni, jowar, bajra are lower on the glycaemic scale.

Protein power - Having a balanced Indian meal is the trick to bringing down sugar levels. Our dals, sambhars and whole pulses like moong, chickpea and blackbeans should accompany every



meal. Protein is required to build muscles and carry out all the metabolic processes smoothly.

Fat is where it is at - Fats are an integral part of our meals. Add healthy fats like desi cow's ghee, coconut oil and other cold pressed oils when preparing poriyals, dosas and Idlis orany of your food. Wondered why we always need ghee to mix in our podis? It's because fats absorb phytochemicals from spices, many of which help lower sugar levels. Healthy fats are also present in nuts and seeds like almonds, cashews, walnuts, sesame seeds, pumpkin seeds etc snack on them.

Seasonal pick - I can't stress enough on the importance of including seasonal local vegetables. It is the season for the fibre rich



leafy greens like spinach, cabbage, and Fenugreek. Don't skip out on the anti-oxidant providing aubergine, carrot and radish that this season brings along. Protein rich vegetables like flat beans french beans and peas are also a great pick.

Fruit factor - Fruits have always gained a bad rep when it comes to diabetes. But this seasons fruits like strawberries, oranges and papaya are low on sugar, high on fibre and anti-oxidant rich. In fact,

Guavas help reduce sugar levels. The phyto chemicals that local, seasonal produce provide, help flush out toxins, which help control blood sugar.

Spice, nice - Cinnamon, cloves, fenugreek seeds, kokum and curry leaves are known to lower sugar levels. Herbs like fresh turmeric, ginger, garlic, also aid in lowering blood sugar. Add these to your vegetables and dal and temper the your rasam will keep away

Get rid of dry hair with proper oiling

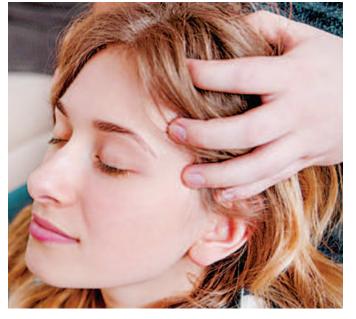
Nourishing your hair with oil is like keeping your body healthy and nourished with food. You should feed your hair with oil every now and then to make sure it stays healthy, thick and lustrous.

to your hair type and scalp

Carrier oils can be used alone or in combination with essential oils. Coconut oil, jojoba oil and avocado oil are some popularly used carrier oils. First off, you must make sure you're using the right oil for your hair and scalp. If you have a greasy scalp, using a light oil is recommended. Heavy oils can be used if your scalp is too dry and needs more moisture.

Choose your essential oil

This is not a mandatory step. However, essential oils can be ef-



fective in targeting specific scalp concerns like dry scalp or dandruff. These oils are extracted from plants. You can choose an essential oil based on its properties, what it targets and if it suits your skin. Essential oils must be diluted in carrier oils since they can be too strong and cause allergic reactions.

Heat the oil

Heat your oils for a few seconds till they are warm. Using warm oil will allow for deeper penetration through your hair cuticles and scalp. It is also more soothing and effective.

Massage your scalp

Gently massage the oil into your scalp for a few minutes. If you have curly hair, you can segregate your hair into small parts

your way across the entire scalp for 10-15 minutes. After you are done with the scalp, gently work your way till the ends of your hair.

Wrap a warm cloth around your hair

Tie your hair into a bun and into your scalp and hair follicles.

Rinse it off well

SUDOKU

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off with shampoo the next day. Try using normal or cold water to rinse your hair and make sure that you clean it thoroughly.

to avoid missing out on any areas. Use circular motions to gently

rub the oil into your scalp. Work

wrap a warm cloth around your forehead. This causes your pores and cuticles to open up, allowing for deeper penetration of the oils

6 | 8

After applying your oil, you can leave it on overnight and wash it

NEWS ROUNDUP

Endometriosis can hamper quality of your life

Deriod pain is the nightmare for most women. The extreme pain, stomach cramps, fatigue, nausea during this time make most of them anxious about their periods. Many keep popping pain killer pills just to cope up with their day to day work during this time.

Endometriosis happens when the endometrium, the tissue that usually lines the inside of a woman's uterus, grows outward from the uterus. Endometriosis most commonly involves ovaries, fallopian tubes and the tissue lining of the pelvis. Endometrial tissue may spread beyond pelvic organs as well in some conditions. These tissues thickens, breaks down and bleeds during every menstrual cycle but as they have grown outside the uterus,

they don't have any way to exit your body.

Menstrual pain is usually experienced on day one or day two of the period cycle. In endometriosis, the pain persists up to three to four days and worsens by the

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Dr Mukta Nadig, OBG Consultant, Columbia Asia Hospital, Hebbal said, "The Endometriosis Society of India estimates that 25 million Indian

women suffer from this condition but it is hardly discussed in the open. The lack of awareness, apprehensive nature, taboo associated with periods and the ignorance is making many women to bear the pain silently without proper treatment. It can occur as early as in pubertal age groups but because of the taboo of gynaecologist consultation for young girls, there is delay in proper diagnosis and treatment."

How to identify endometriosis?

The symptoms of endometriosis may vary from person to person. The severity of the pain does not indicate the stage of endometriosis. Pelvic pain is most common during this condition. Many patients diagnosed with endometriosis may finally need IVF as the method of fertility. Other symptoms include Pain in the lower abdomen before and during menstruation, Cramps around menstruation time, Heavy menstrual bleeding or bleeding apart from menstrual cycle, Lower back pain during menstrual cycle, Discomfort during bowel movements and urination, Pain during or after sex and Infertility.

If the symptoms are ignored, endometriosis can be sometimes mistaken for other illnesses such as irritable bowel syndrome or pelvic inflammatory disease. Therefore, it is important to visit the gynaecologists when you develop any signs of pain or heavy bleeding during periods. Selfmedication or delaying the treatment can be more harmful.



Though there is no particular reason for endometriosis, hormonal changes, surgical scar, immune system disorder, hereditary can be pointed out as the major

Complications

One of the major complications of endometriosis is infertility. It is observed that approximately 1/3 to 1/2 percentage of women with endometriosis have difficulty getting pregnant.

Ovarian cancer is another condition due to endometriosis. Ovarian cancer can develop only in the later stage and if endometriosis is not treated prop-



Across

1 City in Gujarat famous for

its Patola silk saris (5)

A British doctorate (5) Glossy resin coat (7)

10 Memento (5)

11 The direction to a person's left while facing east (5)

12 Two-legged support (5)

13 Cause anxiety to (7)

15 Educ. group (3)

17 Singer Redding (4)

18 Official examiner (6)

19 Bladed weapon (5)

20 Of practical use (6)

22 River of Germany (4)

24 For each (3)

25 Sent unwanted email (7)

26 Expel (5) 27 Part of a ream (5)

28 Moses' brother (5)

29 Lemon juice property (7)

30 Admirer of Beauty (5)

31 German steel city (5)

Down

2 Long-legged shorebird (6)

3 Puts on guard (6) Grandmother

CROSSWORD

informally (3)

5 Small firework (5) Indicated or meant (7)

Goad (4)

12 Noisy quarrel (5)

8 Wholly (2,4)

13 Appear suddenly (3,2)

14 Large stream (5) 15 Hymn; sacred song (5)

16 Equipped with

weapons (5) 18 Crawled (5)

19 Branch of knowledge (7)

21 Make safe (6)

22 Land-locks (6)

23 Develop into (6) 25 Runs or flies straight and fast ? (5)

26 Epochs (4)

28 Broke bread (3)

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Names of 20 'Galwan heroes' inscribed on National War Memorial

NEW DELHI

THE names of 20 Indian Army personnel, who were killed while valiantly fighting Chinese troops in Galwan Valley in eastern Ladakh in June last year, were inscribed on the National War Memorial ahead of the Republic Day, official sources said.

Col B Santosh Babu, the commanding officer of the 16 Bihar regiment, was among the Indian soldiers who laid down their lives in the fierce hand-to-hand combat on June 15, an incident that marked one of the most serious military conflicts between the

two sides in decades. China is yet to disclose the number of its soldiers killed and injured in the clash though it officially admitted to having suffered casualties. According to an American intelligence report, the number of casualties on the Chinese side was 35 The Galwan Valley clash had escalated the border row in eastern Ladakh and resulted in a large deployment of troops and heavy weaponry by both the armies at the friction points. "The names of the Galwan heroes have been inscribed at the National War Memorial," said a source.

Some of these soldiers are also



likely to be honoured with gallantry awards on the Republic Day. The Chinese soldiers used stones, nail-studded sticks, iron rods and clubs in carrying out brutal attacks on Indian soldiers after they protested the erection of a surveillance post by China around patrolling point 14 in Galwan Valley. The Indian Army has already built a memorial for the 'Gallants of Galwan' at Post 120 in eastern Ladakh.

The memorial mentioned their heroics under operation 'Snow Leopard' and the way they evicted the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) troops from the area while inflicting "heavy casualties" on them. During a visit to Lukung forward post in eastern Ladakh on July 17 last year, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh had personally conveyed his appreciation and compliments to the troops from the Bi-

har regiment for displaying exemplary grit and courage in fighting the Chinese troops. India and China are locked in a bitter military standoff in eastern Ladakh for over eight months.

Nearly 50,000 troops of the Indian Army are currently deployed in a high state of combat readiness in the mountainous region in sub-zero temperatures as multiple rounds of talks between the two sides have not yielded concrete outcome to resolve the standoff. China has also deployed an equal number of troops, according to officials. Last month, India and China had held an-

other round of diplomatic talks under the framework of Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) on India-China border affairs.

The eighth and last round of military talks between the two sides had taken place on November 6 last year during which both sides broadly discussed disengagement of troops from specific friction points. India has all along been maintaining that the onus is on China to carry forward the process of disengagement and de-escalation at the friction points in the mountainous region

CIVIC BODIES IN 'FINANCIAL MESS'

BJP says AAP owes ₹13,000 cr in dues

New Dei H

IN a protest across the city on Wednesday, Delhi BJP leaders and functionaries demanded that the Kejriwal government pay Rs 13,000 crore for the party-ruled municipal corporations.

party-ruled municipal corporations.

Delhi BJP vice president Virender Sachdeva claimed that the AAP government is "depriving" the BJP-ruled MCD of their rightful "dues". The protesters displayed banners and posters at flyovers and foot overbridges in a protest across the city on Wednesday.

Delhi BJP media cell head Navin Kumar said they were displaying large banners and posters demanding that the city government pay the "dues".

The AAP leadership has been attacking the BJP alleging "corruption and mismanagement" in the three municipal corporations ruled by the party.

Recently, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia announced that Delhi the government will provide Rs 938 crore to the municipal corporations to pay salaries to its employees.

"Doctors, nurses, sanitation workers and other employees of municipal corporations have not been paid salaries due to the funds held back by the Kejriwal government. No money has been released so far despite Sisodia's announcement," said party spokesperson Virender Babbar.

No reaction was immediately avail-



HC: Right to salary a fundamental right

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court has pulled up the municipal corporations for the non-payment of salaries and pensions to their employees, noting that paucity of funds cannot be an excuse and that right to receive pay is a fundamental right enshrined under the Constitution of India.

A division bench of Justice Vipin Sanghi and Rekha Palli was hearing a batch of petitions in relation to the non-payment of

able from the AAP. The BJP which has

The BJP which has ruled the municipal corporations for nearly 15 years

salaries and pensions to the employees of Delhi municipal corporations, particularly North Delhi Municipal Corporation (NrDMC) and East Delhi Municipal Corporation (EDMC).

"Reason assigned for non-payment of timely salaries is stated to be paucity of funds which, as is well settled, cannot be an excuse for non-payment, keeping in view the fact that the right to receive salary and pension is a fundamental right enshrined under Article 21 of Constitution and non-payment would have direct bearing on quality of life," the court stated.

and the AAP have been indulging in a blame game with the civic body polls approaching in early 2022.

Thousands throng gurdwaras on Guru Gobind's 'Prakash Purb'

CHANDIGARH

THOUSANDS of devotees paid obeisance at gurdwaras across Punjab, Haryana, Himachal and Chandigarh on Wednesday to commemorate the 354th birth anniversary of the 10th Sikh master, Guru Gobind Singh.

Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708) founded the 'Khalsa Panth' or the community of the pure at Anandpur Sahib in 1699.

Religious fervour was quite evident at 'Harmandar Sahib', the holiest of Sikh shrines also known as Golden Temple, in Amritsar in Punjab and other historic gurdwaras across the region as devotees began to assemble since early morning hours to offer prayers and



Priests stand behind the Sikh Holy Book - Guru Granth Sahib - as a 'Jalau', a show of Sikhism's symbolic items is displayed inside the Golden Temple on the occasion of the birth anniversary of the tenth Sikh Guru, Gobind Singh, in Amritsar on Wednesday

listen to the 'kirtan' or hymns set to music.

The Golden Temple complex was adorned with lights to mark the occasion.

A heavy rush of devotees

was also seen at Takht Kesgarh Sahib gurdwara in Anandpur Sahib town, around 85 km from here, since early morning. It was at this place that Guru Gobind Singh founded th 'Khalsa Panth'.

Hundreds of people also offered prayers at Gurdwara Nada Sahib in Panchkula, adjoining Chandigarh, which is associated with the visit of the 10th Sikh Guru.

Religious processions were taken out at various places in the region on the eve of the Guru's birth anniversary. 'Langars' or community kitchens have been set up at gurdwaras to feed the devotees.

Punjab Governor VP Singh Badnore and Chief Minister Amarinder Singh greeted people on the occasion and urged them to follow the Guru's teachings and to maintain peace and harmony.

Strong winds improve Delhi's air quality

HANS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

DELHI'S air quality recorded a marginal improvement on Wednesday, moving to the 'poor' category from 'severe' the day before, due to a favourable wind speed, India Meteorological Department (IMD) officials said here.

The city's 24-hour average air quality index (AQI) stood at 283 on Wednesday. It was 404 on Tuesday, 372 on Monday and 347 on Sunday. Before that, Delhi's

air quality remained in the 'severe' zone for three consecutive days.

An AQI between zero and 50 is considered 'good', 51 and 100 'satisfactory', 101 and 200 'moderate', 201 and 300 'poor', 301 and 400 'very poor', and between 401 and 500 'severe'.

The maximum wind speed was 15 kmph on Wednesday. The central government's Air Quality Early Warning System for Delhi said the city's ventilation index -- a product of mixing depth and average wind speed – was 9,000

square metres/sec on Wednesday. It is likely to be 11,000 square metres/sec on Thursday. Mixing depth is the vertical height in which pollutants are suspended in the air. It reduces on cold days with calm wind speed. A ventilation index lower than 6,000 sqm/sec, with an average wind speed less than 10 kmph, is unfavourable for dispersal of pollutants. Delhi has recorded six 'severe' air quality days this month so far, while four 'severe' air days were registered in December.

3 held in liquor contractor's murder case in Gurugram

GURUGRAM

THE Gurugram Police have arrested three prime accused in connection with the murder of a liquor contractor on September 2, 2020.



The accused have been identified as Abhishek, Satender alias Lala and Harish, all of whom are residents of Jatauli village in Pataudi. The accused trio had allegedly gunned down Indraject over an old rivalry at Jatauli Mandi village in Pataudi, said the police on Wednesday.

A country-made pistol and four cartridges were recovered from their possession. The police have arrested 13 people till now in connection with the contractor's murder. The Haryana police had announced a reward of Rs 50,000 on Abhishek and Rs 5,000 each on Satender and Harish for their arrest. A team of Farrukhnagar Crime Branch led by Inspector Indravir nabbed the trio from Pataudi after a tip-off.

During the interrogation, the accused revealed that Abhishek along with his fellow gang members had planned Indrajeet's murder on August 30.

Gurugram man booked for raping woman for 7-yrs

GURUGRAM

IN a shocking incident, a man allegedly raped a 22-year-old woman for over seven years in Gurugram and blackmailed her using obscene visuals.

The woman has also alleged in her complaint that the man had forcefully married her in September 2020 at a temple in Delhi.

The Sector-14 police have booked the man and have started a probe. The woman, a resident of Prem Nagar, Sector-12 in Gurugram, was allegedly raped for seven years by the accused identified as Sunil, who also resided in the same locality.

According to the victim, she knew the accused for seven years.

work and allegedly raped her after giving her a cold drink laced with alcoholic substance. He also filmed the incident. Later, he started blackmailing her using those videos and raped her several times.

The woman stated in her complaint that the accused had forcefully married her in a temple in Delhi and also took her signature

One day the accused called her to his house on the pretext of some

fully married her in a temple in Delhi and also took her signature on blank papers on September 30, 2020, in front of two of his friends. However, this didn't end here, the woman's parents were also threatened by the accused and family members.

"A case has been registered under relevant sections of the IPC at Sector-14 police station and the matter is under investigation," said Subhash Boken, spokesperson of the Gurugram police.

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Over 1,200 bird deaths reported in Delhi since January 6

NEW DELF

OVER 1,200 bird deaths have been reported in Delhi in the last 15 days amid the avian influenza situation here, officials said on Wednesday.

Of the 201 samples collected from various places in the national capital, 24 have tested positive for bird flu so far, the director of the animal husbandry unit of the Delhi government's Development Department, Dr Rakesh Singh, told PTI.

"A total of 1,216 bird deaths have been reported in Delhi since January 6. However, all the deaths cannot be attributed to bird flu. Cold stress is another major reason," he said. On Tuesday, authorities restricted the entry of public into the Red Fort till Friday after a sample of a dead crow tested positive for bird flu. Around 15



crows were found dead in the premises of the Red Fort on January 10.

"Four cranes were found dead in the Delhi zoo a few days ago. Twelve samples were collected on Monday and sent to the National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases (NIHSAD) of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research for testing," Singh said. Authorities have not received the test results yet from the Bhopal-based lab.

On Saturday, samples from a dead owl in the Delhi zoo had tested positive for avian influenza. Last week, municipal corporations in the city had imposed a temporary ban on sale and storage of poultry or processed chicken meat after samples taken from crows and ducks at parks and lakes in the national capital tested positive for bird flu. Around 400 ducks were culled at Sanjay Lake on January 11.

The Delhi government had also banned the sale of processed and packaged chicken brought from outside the city and ordered the closure of the Ghazipur poultry market in east Delhi for 10 days. However, the ban was lifted on Thursday after all the 100 samples taken from Ghazipur, Asia's largest poultry market, tested negative

New US premier rekindles India's American dreams

 $J^{
m OE}$ Biden has not only a huge team of Indian Americans but his swearing in also had an element of Indian politics. Just as in India, no outgoing Chief Minister or Prime Minister likes to participate in the swearing in ceremony of his successor, Donald Trump who continues to stew about his loss stayed away from the swearing in ceremony of his successor. Traditionally, for over a century the outgoing President in the US makes himself present at the inauguration ceremony of the incoming President and hands over charge. The first lady would escort her successor and introduce her to the White House. However, Trump has decided to break this tradition. Just before boarding the chopper for Florida, Trump of course did wish the new administration good luck and said he had laid strong foundation and now it was for them to take it forward. He also assured his supporters that he would be back in some form. Maybe he was hinting at floating some political party. Who knows? Biden will perhaps go down in the history as the only American President so far who had to deal with a more challenging environment. His decisions and actions will have to be measured ones as the US is still the most influential country and the acts of Biden and his team will have an impact on the rest of the world. From the way he constituted his team, it appears that there would be no let-up in Washington's stand on China and its trade policies. His predecessor had adopted an aggressive trade war against China. While Biden signed executive orders on a broad range of issues, from climate change to coronavirus, India is ready with a long wish list. India wants that the curbs that were imposed during the Trump era be withdrawn and the trade benefits worth six billion dollars be restored. As Biden's pick of his team indicated towards a favourable economic and foreign policy towards India, the Indian government hopes that the US would adopt a tough stance against Pakistan backed terrorism. Interestingly, Prime Minister Narendra Modi not only congratulated Biden but also sent a photograph which was clicked seven years ago when Biden attended a lunch hosted in honour of the Indian Prime Minister in Washington DC. Biden then had talked about the promise of a strong India-US relationship. Since he is now in the driver's seat, India hopes that he will accomplish his vision. During his election campaign, Biden had raised the issue of visas and promised to lift all Trump era restrictions. There are about eight lakh Indians waiting for green card. If Biden makes changes to the visa rules, it would help the US in expanding the number of high skilled visas and eliminate country specific visas. But when it comes to the issue of trade benefits, the US may not act as expected by India at least in the immediate future. Biden has not yet made his stand clear on this issue and apparently has a reason for it. The US is facing serious economic challenges. The corona pandemic has left over 25 million unemployed. Many had to face cut in salaries. Any trade related relations with India would naturally be hardnosed one. However, Biden's entry into the White House should be welcomed since he had sent positive signals towards India right from his campaign days to the time he was sworn in as the 46th US President.

A close look at money matters



In the earlier piece we looked at the character of money as a commodity. Now let us see what happens when it starts moving around. "Action and reaction", goes the third law of Newton, "are equal and opposite". Such has, broadly speaking, been the case of the relationship between crime and punishment in the history of mankind.

Borrowing and repayment of money are an integral part of day to day life, whether in the shape of money or the things money can be used to buy – barter or exchange, in other words. Even in the celebrated set of moral principles enshrined in "Sumathi Sathakam", in Telugu, one is advised to live in a place where a moneylender, a doctor, a flowing perennial river and a learned person are available!

The very definition of the word 'lend' conveys the meaning that the act is temporary nature and conveys the assurance that whatever has been taken will be returned. Sometimes, of course, the lender may levy a charge, as a result of which what is returned maybe slightly more in value than what was originally

Clearly, such transactions are informed by the cardinal principle that something that is owed needs to be paid back at every cost. And, while the "cost of money", is a reasonable levy on the borrower, the attitude of the lender should stop short of being vengeful or bloodthirsty, as was the case of the demand made by Shylock upon Antonio in Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice.

Usurious interest rates are not uncommon in real life. Freeing the common man, especially the rural agricultural commu-

Stop this religious

hypocrisy

of entertainment.

LETTERS

THERE have been any number of

I movies in Telugu and other lan-

guages as well depicting Hindu Gods in

poor light- mocking them and making

fun of them. Come Vinayaka Chaviti fes-

tival, there are truckloads of cartoons

poking fun at Lord Ganesha. NTR's Ya-

magola was a blockbuster where in Gods

were continuously rebuked and mocked.

Our sentiments were not hurt. On the

contrary we thoroughly enjoyed such

movies. It was alright if Gods were

treated lightly and were made subjects

Of late, many, particularly the BJP

cadre had become hyper-sensitive and

active on anything related to God as seen

in the current Tandav controversy. Police

cases are filed, lot of vitriol had flowed

and the producers were made to tender

an apology. All hell broke loose because

the actor concerned is not a Hindu,

though his mother and wife are of Hindu

origin. Reference is to Saif Ali Khan,

nity, from the clutches of money lenders charging exorbitant interest rates, has for long been a policy objective of governments. Among the measures adopted have been encouraging, promoting and supporting formation of credit cooperatives, encouraging and granting credit his to self-help groups bringing in legislation to neutralise indebtedness etc.

From transactions of a day- to - day nature between individuals, the phenomenon of borrowing, lending and repaying extends to individuals and institutions, institutions and institutions and at the international level, between countries and countries as well as international institutions and individual countries.

We know that Vedic prescriptions created 'Varnas', or castes essentially to ensure the orderly performance of functions required by society for its smooth running. There were those who acquired knowledge and performed religious rituals, the warrior clan, meant for defence against enemies, the businessmen community, which bought and sold commodities and supplied daily requirements, apart from lending money in times of need and those who performed tasks needed to facilitate the other classes attending to their own tasks. Elsewhere in the world, races or communities specialised in commerce, trading and money lending as, for instance, the Jews in many parts

Needless to say the whole business of lending and borrowing is rooted in the qualities of trust and faith. In a famous saying, the character Polonius in William Shakespeare's 'Hamlet', counsels his son Laertes before embarking on a visit to Paris, saying "neither a borrower nor a lender be' for loan oft loses both itself and friend." We find the use of this phrase in everyday life, as it has a didactic tone with universal application. For instance, parents use this to warn their children against lending and borrowing money, because bringing debts into their personal relationships can cause resentment. Financial advisors in governmental or nongovernmental sectors use it as a piece of advice to their authorities, to save the organisations



from incurring excessive debt. As far as the habit of repayment is concerned tribals have the culture of queueing up on weekly shandy days, voluntarily repaying the instalment of the loan they have taken, especially from institutions. They need little persuasion, much less pressure. And, at the other extreme, one sees the behaviour of some of the captains of industries. At the international level, one saw how the atrociously irresponsible, almost criminal, attitude of financial institutions led to the financial meltdown which nearly crippled the world economy irretrievably.

In our own country, we have seen the manner in which highflying and influential businessmen callously defaulted, taking entire banking system for a ride, and exacerbating the situation created by non-performing assets (NPAs) (which are loans or advances for which the principal or interest payment has remained overdue for a period of 90 days and more). At least on two occasions this led to recapitalisation of the unfortunate victimised banks. Needless to say, the cycle only repeated it-

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) assesses compliance by banks with extant prudential norms on income recognition, asset classification and provisioning (RACP) as part of its supervisory processes.

The issue of NPAs in the Indian banking sector has become the subject of much discussion and scrutiny. The Standing Committee on Finance recently released a report on the banking sector in India, where it observed that banks' capacity to lend has been severely eroded because of mounting NPAs. The

Estimates Committee of Lok Sabha also examined the performance of public sector banks with respect to their burgeoning problem.

Then there is the pernicious habit of waiving loans on the part of commercial banks. Waivers have many undesirable consequences, including vitiation of the repayment climate, encouraging the habit of default, and leading to depletion of the total kitty available for lending. Not only is this dangerous prac $tice\,being\,repeatedly\,resorted\,to$ but, most unfortunately, at the instance of the political masters presiding over the destinies of the governments of the day, mostly for dubious political ben-

In any case, most of the small and marginal farmers, who constitute more than three fourths of the country's farming community, have little use for the waiver because they don't borrow at all. Studies have shown that it is the large borrowers, who have been heavily damaging the banking industry in India, by loading on them the enormous amount of NPAs, and not the small borrowers responsible for the present state of affairs.

There are many opinions on the real causes of swelling NPAs in the banking sector. The assumption in some quarters, which is currently gaining currency, is that the NPAs are bred mainly on account of sweet deals between the bankers and the large borrowers. This view has gained currency because of hot revelations of possible corruption in banks at the highest level.

The pressing need for restoring public confidence in the banking sector was noted in earlier times and resulted in the constitution of the Narasimham Committee on the Financial Sector. That Committee stressed the need for the banking sector to undertake asset classification, capital adequacy and income recognition. Concrete action on the recommendations, however, largely remaining on paper and often expressed in the form of lip service.

It was during the time that the world's economy faced an unprecedented international financial meltdown that India was able to hold its head high in the comity of nations, thanks to the manner in which the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) ran a tight ship through its mature and wise policies. In fact Dr Y V Reddy, the then Governor of the RBI was showered with encomiums by the Chairman of the Federal Bank of the United States who went to the extent of saying that, if America had had the good fortune of having a Chairman like him, the meltdown would never have taken place!

Earlier in 1991, India had come close to total financial collapse and was on the brink of defaulting in repayment to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The situation was so bad that the country's gold reserves had to be pledged and IMF persuaded to come to India's rescue and bail it out of the crisis with a timely loan. Thereafter, thanks largely to the astute leadership of P V Narasimha Rao, the then Prime Minister of India, and the skilful and firm management of the economy by Dr Manmohan Singh, the then Finance Minister, the country was able to wriggle out of a nasty and dangerous crisis. The time has now come for taking quick and urgent action in the interest of saving the economy especially in the context of the current crisis through which the country is passing through.

Even in the celebrated set of moral principles enshrined in "Sumathi Sathakam", in Telugu, one is advised to live in a place where a moneylender, a doctor, a flowing perennial river and a learned person are available!

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



What happens at the US Presidential inauguration?

JAVVADI LAKSHMANA RAO

S presidential inaugurations have been very similar affairs since 1789 when George Washington was sworn in. There have been peaceful transitions of power between politicians and between political parties: Barack Obama attended Donald Trump's inauguration, George W Bush attended Obama's, Bill Clinton attended George W Bush's and his father George Bush attended Clinton's. There have been a couple of legal battles along the way, notably after the 2000 election between Al Gore and George W Bush.

Once resolved, however, the transition was civil, barring a few pranks played by Clinton's staffers on the incoming Bush team. But this year, departing President Trump said he will refuse to attend the inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-Elect Kamala Harris.

The last living President not to attend his successor's inauguration was Richard Nixon, who resigned and vacated the White House prior to Gerald Ford's low-key swearing-in ceremony in the East Room of the White House in 1974. Before that, Woodrow Wilson remained inside the Capital building because of poor health, rather than appearing alongside Warren G Harding on the inauguration platform, as is customary in 1921.

In normal times, boycotting an inauguration is extremely rare. Only three presidents have done so, and all in the 1800s. So, what usually happens on the day?

The departing President wakes up in the White House on January 20, where the chefs cook a family breakfast and the first family says their goodbyes to staff before the President-elect arrives. The two families leave the White House together around 10:30 am to head to the Capitol building for the inauguration. The presidency expires at noon, at which time the new administration is sworn in. Shortly afterward, the old president bids farewell and leaves the capital.

During this time, the world of transforming the 136-room mansion into a home for a new family begins. A team of almost 100 staff, tradesmen, and movers amend the furniture and décor, supervised by the White House's Chief Usher. The format for the residential quarters will have been decided with the new first lady. Ahead of the move, while kitchen staff will stock their cupboards with the incoming family's preferences and last-minute details will be catered for, such as their choice of soap in the bathrooms.

Even the Oval office undergoes some changes, such as seating and layout, although almost every President chooses to sit at the Resolute Desk, which has sat in the White House almost every day since 1880. The team has just five hours from the departing President leaving and the new President arriving at the residence from the inaugural parade to prepare all of this. By 3.30 pm, the White House needs to be a comfortable home to a new family.

Under the shadow of violence at the US Capitol, Trump's refusal to attend the ceremony and the Covid-19 pandemic forcing usual festivities like the inaugural parade and ball to be scaled back. Inauguration Day 2021 is unlikely to pan out in the usual way. Trump could leave Washington before Inauguration Day to avoid the event, though it appears Vice President Mike Pence will be in attendance.

There were reports Trump wanted to spend the day playing golf on one of his courses in Scotland, leading the country's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon to announce he was not welcome under Covid-19 restrictions. It now looks likely he will go to his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida, which he and First Lady Melania Trump declared as their primary residence in 2019. Whatever happens, it seems sure that Biden's inauguration will write an unconventional footnote to Trump's unconventional presidency.

Biden has set sky-high expectations

WILL WEISSERT

BACK when the election was tightening and just a week away, Joe Biden went big. He flew to Warm Springs, the Georgia town whose



thermal waters once brought Franklin Delano Roosevelt comfort from polio and pledged a restitching of America's economic and policy fabric unseen since FDR's New Deal.

Evoking some of the nation's loftiest reforms helped Biden unseat President Donald Trump but

left him with towering promises to keep. And he'll be trying to deliver against the backdrop of searing national division and a pandemic that has killed nearly 400,000 Americans and upended the economy. Such change would be hard to imagine under any circumstances, much less now

He's setting out with Democrats clinging to razor-thin House and Senate control and after having won an election in which 74 million people voted for his opponent. And even if his administration accomplishes most of its top goals in legislation or executive action, those actions are subject to being struck down by a Supreme Court now controlled by a 6-3 conservative majority. Even so, the effort is soon underway.

Washington is bracing for dozens of consequential executive actions starting Wednesday and stretched over the first 10 days of Biden's administration, as well as legislation that will begin working its way through Congress on pandemic relief, immigration and much more. Has Biden promised more than he can deliver? Not in his estimation. He suggests he can accomplish even more than he promised.

He says he and his team will "do our best to beat all the expectations you have for the country and expectations we have for it." Some Democrats say Biden is right to set great expectations while realising he'll have to compromise, rather than starting with smaller goals and having to scale them back further. "You can't say to a nation that is hungry, uncertain, in some places afraid, whose economy has stalled out ... that you had to slim down the request of their government because you have a narrow governing margin," said former Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick, Biden's onetime Democratic presidential primary rival.

New presidents generally enjoy a honeymoon period that helps them in Congress, and Biden's prospects for getting one were improved by Democratic victories this month in two Georgia special Senate elections. He may have been helped, too, by a public backlash against the deadly, armed insurrection at the US Capitol by Trump supporters.

tively. First of all, let us stop making fun of our Gods even for fun's sake. Other religions don't do it.

When we don't follow ourselves, why make fuss when others do. Either we stop taking these things seriously or take them up with all seriousness. In that case, all earlier movies that made fun of Gods should be banned. All said and done, the commoner remains unaffected by all the drama. It is only political devotees who

e agog. *Vinay Bhushan Bhagwaty,* Hyderabad

Talasani is being immature

WITH reference to Animal Husbandry Minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav's comment praising a particular community and ignoring Gangaputra community appears as a conspiracy to isolate Gangaputra community. The comments are surprising, immature, and unexpected, an apology has no value as the damage is done. Such remarks are dangerous and leads to conflict between the communities. What is the intention is not clear of minister. There may be political milage or some type of conspiracy to remove Gangaputra community from BC-A reservation quota or alterations to it.

Gangaputra community do not have any relationship with other occupations,

no lands and no relation even agriculture or Husbandry. The financial condition of the community is very poor. Many community members lost lives while catching fish and no compensation or support from successive governments. TRS government should take action on Talasani not to repeat the same, and protect the suffering community.

Deshavena Kishan Prasad Rao, Thimmapur

Dispel vaccine-related doubts

ALMOST all the media outlets have been carrying many stories of the worldwide vaccine rollout. Countries from the West and the East have been into the rollout process and have been dealing with all the concerns and complexities possibly involved in the vaccine procedures.

Having been coping with the COVID guidelines like wearing masks, the people are now having certain vaccine-related doubts. Who are going to benefit from the jabs? Who should get vaccinated in the first place then? Is it mandatory to do so? Simultaneously, it would be better to come up with pamphlets and pocket-sized books on the vaccines against the coronavirus covering answers to those questions mentioned - such books must be made accessible to the people in all

ways possible whereas the books have that enduring attraction to get the attention of all out there.

Even then wisely speaking, the actual corona patients can better get vaccinated at first even as there should be continuation of the mask mandate for quite sometime now- as ways forward in the corona fight so to speak. Above all, the world media houses should take positive steps to dispel all the rumours and apprehensions on the corona vaccine shots. Yet again, the international community and the WHO should come forward with much more confident measures like accurate bulletins and quick references to the COVID-19 fight to name a few to say

P Senthil Saravana Durai, Mumbai

Well done, LS Speaker!

M Birla deserves the gratitude and congratulations of the people of India for doing away with the subsidies on refreshments and meals to the MPs. This has always been vulgar because while the ordinary citizens of India are paying full prices for what they eat and drink, the MPs had been getting them at a fraction of what people outside the Parliament pay. Precaution may be taken so that this good deed is not undone by the introduction of sumptuary allowance for the MPs.

Dr T Hanuman Chowdary, Secunderabad

Sharmila and Kareena Kapoor respecthehansreader@gmail.com

26 child labourers freed from bondage

HYDERABAD

IN a breakthrough, the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU) of Rachakonda police on Wednesday rescued 26 children aged between 15-17 from different workshops in Bhongir and arrested four persons who were involved in employing the children and forcing them to work in harsh conditions. Rachakonda Police Commissioner Mahesh Bhagwat said that the AHTU got credible information about the children employed to work in inhumane conditions, and rescued them.

CS assures support to Information **Commission**

HANS NEWS SERVICE **A**MARAVATI

CHIEF Secretary Aditya Nath Das assured necessary cooperation to AP Information Commission. Chief Commissioner of AP Information Commission P Ramesh Kumar, Information Commissioners M Ravikumar, B V Ramanakumar, K Janardhana Rao, Ilapuram Raja and R Srinivasa Rao met the Chief Secretary at the Secretariat on Wednesday.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Secretary assured the officials to fill the vacant posts in AP Information Commission. He said necessary technical support would be provided to the Commission's office.

REOPENING OF COLLEGES

Confusion prevails over Covid-19 guidelines

JNUT-H prepares action plan to hold online and offline classes on shift basis

HYDERABAD

CONFUSION prevails over the guidelines to be followed in several colleges under the Osmania University in the wake of the State government deciding to physically reopen the schools and colleges.

Speaking to The Hans India, a senior official from the Koti Women's College said that they have been following the Covid guidelines issued by the University Grants Commission (UGC) in conducting the examinations. So far examinations for the final year students have been completed last year following the same guidelines. Also, semester examinations for the third year are scheduled to be held from the first week of February. But, as of now, there are no specific guidelines received either from the government or from the Osmania University, he added.

Similarly, St Pious Degree, PG and MBA College For Women, Aurora College and a few others have been holding the examinations for the students following the schedule issued by the Osmania University. Officials from several of these colleges affiliated to the OU said they were following the Covid-19 guideESTÉ LIMPIO, ESTÉ SANO

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lines issued by the UGC and also

the steps specified during the

conduct of the examinations.

However, when it comes to the

physical reopening of the col-

leges, they have not received any

guidelines, such as the steps

needed to be taken, the timing

However, currently, the OU

examinations are going on. "We

have decided to run the classes

in shift system for some stu-

dents in the morning and for

others in the afternoon. This

was to ensure that the students

of the college if any etc.











are gathered in good numbers

on the college campus," said a

faculty member from St Pious X

Degree, PG and MBA College

Meanwhile, the Jawaharlal

Nehru Technological University,

Hyderabad (JNTU-H) officials

held a virtual meeting with the

directors, principals of the con-

stituent colleges, and the prin-

cipals of 170 engineering and 60

pharmacy colleges to prepare an

action plan for the physical re-

JNTU-H Registrar Prof M

opening of the colleges.

For Women.









of action is being prepared to

ensure that only 50 per cent of students are present at any given point of time on the college campus. Accordingly, students of 3 and 4 years would be attending the first 15 days in a month in face to face classes. The other 50 per cent would attend online classes. Then, the process would be reversed among students. A similar plan of action q\would be prepared for the first and second-year

students and examinations

Officials from several of these colleges affiliated to the OU said they were following the Covid-19 guidelines issued by the UGC and also the steps specified during the conduct of the examinations. However, when it comes to the physical reopening of the colleges, they have not received any guidelines, such as the steps needed to be taken, the timing of the college if any etc

would be conducted from the first week of March. So, currently, the JNTU-H will review the situation to prepare an action plan afresh when the students come back to the campus after the semester break, he

Auto unions protest over rising fuel prices

Union leaders warn of protests on a larger scale if prices not reduced

HANS NEWS SERVICE HYDERABAD

THE auto unions of the city on Wednesday protested at Narayanaguda junction against the rising prices of fuel and burnt the effigy of the Central government.

Though the police were deployed at the protest site and they tried to nullify the protest by talking to the auto union leaders, the leaders didn't budge and continued their programme.

The union leaders demanded that the petrol and diesel prices should be reduced immediately as the prices are rising drastically and the Central government is not paying attention to it. They further alleged that the amount of taxes being collected by the Centre is too heavy and if the prices are not reduced, they will carry out the protest on a larger scale, they warned.

However, while the protest was going on two men who were carrying the effigy got burned and were shifted to Gandhi Hospital for further treatment and the protestors were taken away by police to Narayanaguda PS where they were held for a few hours and released by evening.

High Court quashes SC, ST case against Dalits

HANS NEWS SERVICE NELAPADU (AMARAVATI)

JUSTICE M Satyanarayana Murthy of Andhra Pradesh High Court has quashed the criminal case filed against the Dalits of Amaravati under the provisions of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of

Atrocities) Act, 1989. However, the Single Judge Bench delivering the judgment on Wednesday partly allowed the petition directing the police that they could investigate the allegation against the accused under Section-503 of the IPC for threatening the victim with injury.

It may be recalled that the police filed a criminal case against a group of 11 Dalits on the charges of indulging in abuses against another Dalit person, Eepuri Ravi Babu, under the

provisions of SC, ST Atroci-

Appearing for the petitioners, Karumanchi Indranil stated that the provisions of the SC, ST Act are applicable if a person who does not belong to either SC or ST indulges in abuses against the persons belonging to those communities. Likewise, he also established that the other sections of the Indian Penal Code are also not applicable and the criminal case is liable to be quashed.

Concurring with the arguments, Justice Satyanarayana Murthy quashed the criminal proceedings under the provisions of the SC, ST (PoA) Act and the IPC sections except Section 503. Partly allowing the petition, the Judge directed the police that they may conduct the investigation into that allegation.

Time ripe for KTR to don CM mantle

MINISTERS. MLAS. LEADERS IN UNISON MAY BE ELEVATED TO THE TOP POST ANY TIME

HYDERABAD

LENDING credence to speculations that there might be a change of guard in Telangana, senior ministers and key TRS leaders are vouching for it. It appears the stage is being set for heir apparent and TRS working president and IT Minister KT Rama Rao to be anointed as chief Minister replacing his father and incumbent K Chandrashekar Rao.

TRS leaders are not losing any opportunity to sustain the growing demand for change of guard. Ministers and MLAs are joining their bandwagon too. For some time, there has been a demand in the party to elevate KTR as the CM. Several leaders of the party including ministers say in unison that the young leader has all the capabilities to become the Chief Minister.

Health Minister Eatala Rajender on Wednesday said that KTR may be taking over the mantle very soon. Rajender asked what was wrong if KTR got elevated to the CM. "KCR may take a call any time in this regard," he said giving rise to speculations that something big

It appears the stage is being set for heir apparent and TRS working president and IT Minister KT Rama Rao to be anointed as Chief Minister replacing his father and incumbent K Chandrashekar Rao

was going to happen. Similar views were expressed by another key minister in KCR cabinet, Talasani Srinivas Yadav, on Wednesday. Replying to a media query, he too saw much merit in Eatala's contention that KTR would become the CM. He too said that KCR may take a call any time in this regard.

Yadav repeatedly said that KTR was very much efficient and capable to hold the top post to head the state. He asked the media to tell him whether KTR who was taking care of all development programmes was not fit for the top post in the State.

Bodhan MLA Md Shakeel went a step further and said that he wanted KTR to lead the party in the next Assembly elections. Nizamabad Rural MLA Bajireddy Goverdhan said that if KTR was made the chief minister there would be more development in the state.

Earlier, expressing his opinion, Council Chairman G Sukhender Reddy said that KTR had all the abilities to become the CM. Speaker P Srinivas Reddy too supported KTR as the next CM.

Four new IPS officers allotted to Telangana

HANS NEWS SERVICE HYDERABAD

THE Union government has given orders to allocate State cadres to candidates who have joined the Indian Police Service (IPS) According to these orders, four new IPS officers were allotted to Telangana, while three officers were given to Andhra Pradesh.

Paritosh Pankaj (hailing from Bihar, rank 142); Surisetti Sankeerth (Telangana, 330), Patil Kantilal Subash (Maharashtra, 418) and Ankith Kumar Sankhwarth (Telangana, 418) are the officers who are assigned to the Telangana cadre (Uttar Pradesh, 563).

Other State cadres were granted to three others hailing from Telangana who got into IPS. MV Sathya Sai Karthik (rank 103) was allotted to Maharashtra,

while Assam, Meghalaya was allotted to R Sheetal Kumar (417) and Chhattisgarh to Rajanala Smruthik (466).

Three IPS officers assigned to the other Telugu State - Andhra Pradesh include - Jagadish Adahalli (Karnataka, 440), Pankaj Kumar Meena (Rajasthan, 666) and Dheeraj Kunubillibilli (Andhra Pradesh, 320).

Similarly, other states were given five IPS officers from Andhra Pradesh that include Y Megha Swaroop (rank 98) allocated to Maharashtra, Tirumalaraju SD Varma (478) to Himachal Pradesh, Neethipudi Rashmitha Rao (534) to Maharashtra, Gujarat to Korukonda Siddharth (566) and Kerala to Juvvanapudi Mahesh (612).

The Ministry of Home Affairs gave framework allotments across the country to 150 IPS officers.

'Operate more buses to meet passenger requirements'

RTC MD R P Thakur lauds services rendered by the staff during the Covid lockdown

HANS NEWS SERVICE VIJAYAWADA

R P Thakur, Managing Director and the Vice-chairman of APSRTC, has appealed to the RTC officials and staff to operate more buses to meet the requirements of the bus passengers.

Thakur assumed charge as Vice-Chairman and MD of the RTC on Monday. The MD on Wednesday said normalcy was restored after the post Covid lockdown in the State and there is need to increase the bus operations as per the guidelines of the State and Central governments.

He praised the services rendered by the RTC staff during the corona lockdown time when train services were cancelled and transport was badly affected.

He announced incentives to the depot managers and traffic supervisors to improve the services to the passengers. Thakur has appealed to the staff to increase the occupancy ratio in the next three months.

Train staff of village, ward secretariats on land survey: CM

- tests to them periodically to improve their knowledge and efficiency
- This will ensure that better services are rendered to people
- Jagan says registration services should start at village secretariats once comprehensive land survey is completed

HANS NEWS SERVICE AMARAVATI

CHIEF Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy directed the officials to create awareness, give training and conduct tests to improve the efficiency of village/ ward secretariat staff on comprehensive land sur-

During a review meeting on YSR Jagananna Saswatha Bhoomi Hakku-Bhoomi Rakshana scheme here on Wednesday, the Chief Minister said tests should be conducted at regular intervals to improve knowledge and efficiency among staff on issues related to comprehensive survey so that their work will be efficient and they can serve people better.

He said the new colonies to be built for the poor should be in-



Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy holding a review meeting on YSR Jagananna Saswatha Bhoomi Hakku-Bhoomi Rakshana

scheme at his camp office in Tadepalli on Wednesday cluded in the survey and should be taken into account in the preparation of maps and added that every house in the colonies should be given an unique ID. He said employees of village secretariats who are participating in land survey should allot two hours daily for receiving grievances and solving

The officials explained to the Chief Minister about the workflow of registration process of land in Village Secretariats. The Chief Minister said registration services should start in a village secretariat once comprehensive land survey is completed. He directed the officials to prepare an action plan for village secretariat staff to learn about registration process directly from registration offices.

He said a call centre should be set up with experts and senior officials to clear the doubts of employees of village secretariats. This

would ensure that there would be no interruptions once the registration process begins at village/ward secretariats. He said the facility to register from anywhere is already available and directed the officials to ensure it is continued.

The officials informed the Chief Minister that the staff participating in comprehensive land survey is being given training in phases. Tests were conducted at two levels till now and 92 per cent of them passed in second level. The remaining employees are being given training to promote awareness among them. The third level tests will be conducted in February, the officials said.

The Chief Minister directed the officials to prepare SOPs for the survey process from Surveyor to Joint Collector and said they should be responsible for the work. The Chief Minister pointed out that the distribution of house site

pattas programme has been extended till January 30 and directed the officials to pattas are allotted to all the eligible within 90 days. The officials said distribution

of house site pattas is being delayed as they are showing the house site to the beneficiary besides giving the patta. Deputy Chief Minister (Revenue) Dharmana Krishna Das, Chief Secretary Aditya Nath Das, Principal Advisor to Chief Minister, Nilam Sawhney, Chief Commissioner of Land Administration Neerab Kumar Prasad, Special Chief Secretary (Revenue) Rajat Bhargava, Panchayat Raj Principal Secretary Gopalakrishna Dwivedi, Principal Secretary (Revenue) V Usharani, Panchayat Raj Commissioner M Girija Shankar, Survey, Settlements and Land Records Commissioner Siddharth Jain and other senior officials were present.

Minister alleges TDP hand in idol desecration at Santhabommali

HANS NEWS SERVICE AMARAVATI

THE desecration of Nandeeshwar idol at Santhabommali temple is a conspiracy hatched by the TDP, alleged Minister for Animal Husbandry and Fisheries Seediri Appalaraju on Wednesday.

He alleged that the TDP leaders intentionally demolished the idols to create communal disputes in society. Addressing a press conference here, the Minister said that the conspiracy of Chandrababu Naidu in vandalising idols was exposed with the Santhabommali incident, which took place under his di-

rection. He said Naidu has been spreading lies and a case should be filed against him under Section-153 (A) for exaggerating religious matters, and Sections 499 and 500 for defaming a political party or person, just like during Guiarat riots.

The Minister questioned why the TDP leaders remained silent on the Santhabommali incident, while they made a huge ruckus on the Ramatheertham issue. Desecrating Nandeeshwar idol was clearly recorded in

Says Opposition leader N Chandrababu Naidu is hatching plots to divert people's attention from various welfare schemes being introduced by Y S Jagan's govt

CCTV cameras and was found that TDP State president Atchannaidu's followers, TDP activists as well as a journalist from their favored media house were involved, Appalaraju alleged.

He said that the police had filed cases against 22 people in the Santhabommali incident including the followers of Atchannaidu and other TDP activists. The TDP is totally responsible for the incident, he added.

The Minister alleged that Naidu has been hatching plots to divert the people's attention every time the government is doing some good activity for the public. As Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy is launching door delivery of ration supplies on Thursday, the TDP leaders are planning such conspiracies to divert people from the government's welfare schemes, he added.

CBI arrests its DSP, inspector in bribery scam within agency

Deputy Superintendent of Police R K Rishi and inspector Kapil Dhankad along with an advocate were arrested in connection with an alleged bribery ring run by them within the agency to help companies accused of siphoning off bank loan funds worth ₹4,300 crore

New Delhi

THE CBI has arrested one of its deputy superintendents of police R K Rishi and Inspector Kapil Dhankad along with an advocate in connection with an alleged bribery ring run by them within the agency to help companies accused of siphoning off bank loan funds worth Rs 4,300 crore, officials said Wednesday.

The agency also conducted searches at Rishi's house in Saharanpur district of Uttar Pradesh and that of his wife in Roorkee, they said. The CBI had booked Rishi,

Dhankad and advocate Manohar Malik along with Deputy SP RK Sangwan and another lawyer Arvind Kumar Gupta for allegedly "compromising the integrity of investigation of certain cases on extraneous pecuniary considerations".

The FIR also named Additional Director of Shree Shyam Pulp and Board Mills Mandeep Kaur Dhillon and directors of Frost International Sujay Desai and Uday Desai in the bribery case. It is alleged that Dhankad, a State Bank of India manager who joined the agency on deputation as Inspector acted in collusion with Rishi and Sangwan and re-

DSP Rishi received Rs 15 lakh twice through advocates Malik and Gupta (having office in Defence Colony) to extend favours to a Chandigarh-based company against which a corruption case was being investigated by the CBI, the FIR alleged

ceived regular pay offs to pass crucial information pertaining to cases against Shree



Shyam Pulp facing probe in Rs 700 crore loan default and Frost International in Rs

3,600 crore loan default, they said. "The CBI has a zero tolerance policy towards corruption be it other departments or within the organisation.

The case is a result of strict vigil and action on any input which indicates involvement of our officials in corrupt practice." an official said after the FIR. Dhankad allegedly received at least Rs 10 lakh each from his superiors Sangwan and Rishi who were soliciting favours for Shree Shyam Pulp and Board Mills and Frost International respectively. DSP Rishi received Rs 15 lakh twice through advocates Malik and Gupta (having

office in Defence Colony) to extend favours to a Chandigarh-based company against which a corruption case was being investigated by the CBI, the FIR alleged. It alleged Dhankad twice received Rs 2.5 lakh from Gupta for having brokered the deal through Rishi. "It has also been reliably learnt that the details of the investigation of many other cases including confidential notes and directions have been communicated by Sameer Kumar Singh.

Steno, to Sangwan and Rishi on pecuniary considerations to protect interests of the accused." the FIR alleged.

Balakot air strikes 'leaked' chats 'Accused deserve no mercy'

LEAKING of official secrets of military operations is treason and those involved in it must be nunished, the Congress said on Wednesday on the purported WhatsApp chats of Republic TV editor-in-chief Arnab Goswami and demanded that the Prime Minister must come clean. The party said those involved in the "anti-national act" deserve no mercy and the government should immediately order an inquiry into the "information leak" about the 2019 air strikes. The Congress fielded its top leaders -- former defence minister A K Antony, leader of opposition in Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad, former home minister Sushilkumar Shinde and former law and external affairs minister Salman Khurshid to launch a scathing attack on the government at a joint press conference.

The Congress said it would raise the issue in a big way in Parliament during the budget session starting January 29 and garner support of other parties for a joint offensive against the government including a joint parliamentary committee probe. It also accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi and top ministers who are members of the Cabinet Committee on Security of violating the Official Secrets Act and demanded that action be taken against them and ascertain who

Congress leaders AK Anthony, Pawan Khera, Ghulam Nabi Azad and Salman Khurshid during a press conference in New Delhi on Wednesday

Court rejects bail plea of BARC's ex-CEO: A sessions court in Mumbai on Wednesday rejected the bail application of former CEO of ratings agency BARC, Partho Dasgupta, an accused in the alleged fake TRP case. Dasgupta was arrested by the Mumbai crime branch from Pune district last month

leaked the sensitive information. "Leaking of official secrets is a criminal act. Leaking official secrets about military operation, national security matters, sensitive military operations especially military strike is treason, anti-national. They have to be punished for anti-national activities, for treason.

They deserve no mercy," Antony

said. Referring to the WhatsApp chats between Goswami and ex-BARC CEO Partho Dasgupta, he said India's national security has never been compromised in such a way and never have the high offices of the prime

been "brazenly compromised". "Does the Prime Minister, Home Minister, in fact the entire govern-

minister, home minister and others

tutional right to continue in office after such damning revelations? "We demand that the prime minister should come clean on these accusations immediately in order to restore the severely damaged credibility of the highest office of the country," a ioint statement by the leaders said. "Never before has India's national security been so completely compromised.

Never before has the office of the prime minister, office of the home minister, office of the law minister, of fice of the information and broadcasting minister been so brazenly compromised," the statement also said. Antony said having worked with the military for long as former defence minister, he can vouch that they could never leak information about such operations and only one of the top five persons in the government are suspect in the case.

"It has to be enquired immediately on war footing as to who that person is. Whoever is responsible for the leakage must be punished for treason and this journalist who was in possession of sensitive military operations he has to be punished. The government must order a proper enquiry. Whoever is responsible, whoever is party to the leakage of this sensitive military operation deserves no

Farmer dies after consuming poisonous substance

New Delhi

A farmer who allegedly consumed a poisonous substance at the Tikri border died during treatment at a hospital here on Wednesday, police said.

The deceased has been identified as Jai Bhagwan Rana (42), a resident of Pakasma village in Rohtak district of Haryana. He had consumed Sulphas tablets at the farmers' protest site at Tikri on Tuesday, they said. In a purported suicide note, Rana said he was a small farmer and many peasants have taken to the streets to protest against the Centre's new farm laws.

"The government says it is a matter of only two to three states, but farmers from all over the country are protesting against the laws. Sadly, it is not a movement now, but a fight of issues. The talks between the farmers and the Centre also remain deadlocked," he wrote in

the letter. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Outer) A Koan said the man was taken to Sanjay Gandhi Hospital by CAT ambulance where he passed away during the course of treatment. He added that legal proceedings under CrPC have been initiated in the matter.

Man pays ₹ 55 lakh to increase height

A man has undergone cosmetic limb-lengthening surgery to increase his height from 5ft 11 to 6ft 1 to be more like the basketball heroes he grew

Alfonso Flores, 28, from Dallas, Texas, said that he had wanted to be taller from the age of 12 but his family and friends had all warned him against the 'unnecessary' treatment.

The freelance writer and pre-med student persevered with the surgery under the care of Harvard-trained orthopedic surgeon Dr Kevin Debiparshad of The LimbplastX Institute in Las Vegas. Alfonso has now been at his new height for seven months and says that it feels great to say he has finally achieved his dream of topping 6ft. The procedure is incredibly expensive. however.



Alfonso Flores (left) with Dr Kevin Debiparshad

Dr Debiparshad's website states that the surgeries start at \$75,000 (Rs 55 lakh) for a femur-lengthening procedure - which is what Alfonso had done - and go up to \$84,000 for a tibia-lengthening surgery, however patients may also opt for add-ons that can raise the price to around \$94,000. Between one and two years after the surgery has taken place, patients then have to fork out an additional fee to have the nails removed from their legs, a procedure that costs between \$14,000 and \$20,000, which would bring the total cost of the limb-lengthening to between \$89,000 and \$114,000.

Savarkar's portrait in **UP Assembly** sparks row

Lucknow

A portrait of Hindutya ideologue Veer Savarkar in the picture gallery Council has sparked a row, with Congress MLC Deepak Singh raising an objection and writing a letter to the Chairman seeking its removal.

The portrait was inaugurated by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday

"The installation of the picture of Savarkarii along with that of great freedom fighters who withstood atrocities of the British and yet did not bow before them is an insult to all those who continued to bear all kind of tortures and kept fighting for independence," Singh said in the letter to Chairman Ramesh Yadav. He also said that the picture of Veer Savarkar should be removed

and be placed in the BJP parliamentary office. Singh said the Chairman has di-

rected the principal secretary of the Council to look into the matter and take necessary action.

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav, when asked to comment on the issue, said there should be a debate among the youth about what contribution has been made by different people to the country and all those who have contributed to the freedom struggle should be honoured.

SC directs free edn to minor kids of rape victim

THE Supreme Court on Wednesday directed Deputy Commissioner of Ranchi to ensure that minor children of a rape victim are provided free education till they attain the age of 14

Observing that a rape victim suffers not only a mental trauma but also discrimination from the society, a three-judge bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan, R Subhash Reddy and M R Shah also ordered the Deputy Commissioner to consider the case of the petitioner for a house under

PM Awas Yojna or any other Central

or State Scheme "The Senior Superintendent of Police, Ranchi and other competent authority shall review the Police security provided to the petitioner from time to time and take such measures as deem fit and proper. With regard to the payment of compensation to the petitioner as a rape victim, the

statutory scheme already enforced in Jharkhand framed under Section 357A of the Code of Criminal Procedure Code, 1973, which provides procedure for grant of compensation. "The petitioner had already made ap-

> plication to seek compensation under the above Scheme and payment of compensa tion has already been made," the top court said. The apex court was hearing plea filed by a woman claiming to be a Scheduled Tribe in Jharkhand. She was taken away by a man after which

her father lodged a complaint. The man was later apprehended and the victim's father and the police got her married to him. The woman filed a complaint as well as case for maintenance against her husband after which she got the divorce and the custody of son was given to the man. On June 8, 2002, she went to Daltonganj to meet her son when she was raped by four people.

14 KILLED IN BENGAL



Fourteen people lost their lives in a road accident in West Bengal's Jalpaiguri district as a boulder-loaded truck coming from the opposite direction collided head-on with a multi-purpose vehicle, on Wednesday

BJP not to project CM face in Bengal

BJP leader Kailash Vijayvargiya on Wednesday said the party will not project a chief ministerial face for the West Bengal Assembly elections at present. While speaking to ANI, BJP General Secretary and West Bengal in-charge Kailash Vijayvargiya said this is in line with the party's approach where it is not in power.

"Nobody is asking about the CM face in West Bengal elections. In most of the states where the BJP doesn't have a government, we fight elections without chief ministerial candidates. Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Assam are examples of this. No chief ministerial face will be projected in (West Bengal Assembly elections). After securing the majority, the party leadership and the MLAs will decide who will become the chief minister," Vijayvargiya said.

 $^{\prime\prime}\mathrm{I}$ want to assure the people of Bengal that our CM will work for the all-round development of Bengal. We will provide good governance to West Bengal," he added. As elections are nearing in West Bengal, ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) leaders and supporters are approaching BJP to become its part. However, Vijayvargiya said that the party will accept only those leaders who believe in PM Modi's leadership and the politics of development.

Meanwhile, TMC continues to lose its leaders to the BJP as the Bengal election draws closer. Party MLA Arindam Bhattacharya crossed over to the BJP

3 infiltrators killed, four soldiers hurt

JAMMU

THREE infiltrators were reportedly killed and four soldiers iniured overnight on the Line of Control (LoC) in J&K's Jammu district where the army foiled an infiltration bid, officials said on Wednesday.

Defence sources said Pakistan Army started heavy shelling in Khour area of LoC's Akhnoor sector on Tuesday evening to facilitate infiltration of terrorists.

"Four army soldiers were injured in Pakistani shelling and three terrorists were killed in Indian retaliatory action while the infiltration bid was foiled.

"The bodies of the slain terrorists are lying on Pakistan side of the LoC and these have not been so far picked up by Pakistani troops," a source said. This is the first major ceasefire violation by Pakistan on the LoC in 2021.

Meanwhile, a body of a 22vear-old truck driver from Haryana was found in a stream in Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban district on Wednesday, two days after his vehicle skidded off the road and plunged into a 150foot-deep gorge along the Jammu-Srinagar national highway, officials said. The Jammubound truck rolled down into a stream at Sherbibi, following which one person was rescued in an injured condition.

1st in US history: Trump leaves White House with tainted legacy

WASHINGTON

DONALD Trump, known for his unpredictable leader-ship style, divisive rhetoric targeting both allies and opponents, and the only US president to be impeached twice, left the White House on Wednesday with a tainted legacy never seen before in American political history.

The 74-year-old real estate mogul-turned politician was impeached for a second time on the charges of "incitement of insurrection" for the violent storming of the US Capitol by his supporters just days before the end of his four-year term.

Trump, who is inseparable from controversies, was first impeached last year on charges that he abused power to boost his chances of re-election in 2020. He was subsequently acquitted by the Republican-dominated Senate in January last year. He is the third US president in history to be impeached by the House of Representa-

tives and only president to be impeached twice. Trump is also accused of mishandling a major public

health crisis in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic that has claimed more than 400,000 lives and battered the economy. He repeatedly downplayed the threat from the COVID-19 that infected him in October last, dealing a blow to his hectic election campaign just weeks before the presidential election on November 3. During his campaign, Trump portrayed himself as a champion of Black people. It was in an apparent response to his criticism in the wake of the killing of African American George Floyd by a White police officer in Minneapolis that triggered large scale riots.

His four-year term in the White House was dogged by a record number of resignations by top administration officials, controversies and strain in ties with allies. Trump also made unprecedented outreach to North Korea, imposed controversial Muslim ban, worked on the Middle East peace process and landmark peace deal with the Taliban to end the 18-year-long Afghan war. Demonstrating America's strong strategic partnership

with India, President Trump visited the country in Febru-



ary last year. The US is now the second-largest arms supplier to India, growing from virtually no arms sales a decade ago to more than USD 20 billion today.

Trump had teased the idea of running for the presidency since 1987, but many feel the final straw for him was the 2011 White House Correspondents' dinner when he was made the unwitting target of President Barack Obama's pointed jokes. Trump was born in Queens, the fourth child of New York real estate tycoon Fred Trump. He attended the Wharton School and got into real estate with a USD 1 million loan from his father before joining the company. He helped manage his father's extensive portfolio of residential housing projects in the New York City boroughs, and took control of the company - which he renamed the Trump Organisation - in 1971.

Considered a ruthless businessman, Trump transformed his family's business from residential units in Brooklyn and Queens to high-class Manhattan projects. Behind this veneer of success, however, are a series of failed ventures - Trump has filed for bankruptcies and

has been accused of not paying his contractors and selling small businesses that work for him short.

He is known as much for being an entertainment tycoon as he is for owning prime real estate across the world. He built an empire in the entertainment business. and from 1996 until 2015, was an owner in the Miss Universe, Miss USA, and Miss Teen USA beauty pageants. In 2003, he launched a reality television show called The Apprentice in which contestants competed for a shot at a job within Trump's organisation. The show, which became known for Trump's firebrand and brutal tagline 'You are fired', ran for 14 seasons. He married thrice and is currently husband to Melania Trump.

His social media accounts were blocked after the deadly attack on the Capitol, leaving him with little alternatives such as friendly news networks to get his message out at the time of leaving the White House. Trump did not attend the oath ceremony of Biden, becoming the first President to skip his successor's inauguration since Andrew Johnson in 1869.



TODAY'S QUOTE

States must adopt alternative fuels

States must increasingly adopt the alternative fuels in the operation of buses and use CNG, LNG, electric vehicles and ethanol blended fuels. States must avail all the schemes of central government such as FAME-II to gradually shift to electric vehicles – Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister



Govt raises authorised capital of PSB

STATE-OWNED Punjab & Sind Bank (PSB) said the government has raised its authorised capital from Rs 3,000 to Rs 10,000 crore. Last year, the government had approved capital infusion of Rs 5,500 crore into the bank through preferential allotment of shares. The fund was approved from Rs 20,000 crore cleared by Parliament in September 2020

FOREX (bu	n ₹)		
US Dollar	77.4	South	N. BA
Euro	92.95	African Rand	5.64
UAE Dirham	21.87	Hong Kong Dollar	10.83
Thai Baht	2.8	Japanese Yen	0.81
British Pound	104.07	New Zealand Dollar	54.72
Australian Dollar	59.29	Saudi Riyal	21.4
Canadian Dollar	60.39	Swedish Krona	10.04
Swiss Franc	85.41	Singapore Dollar	57.83

DELHI THURSDAY 21 IANUARY 2021

BIZ BRIEFS

Piaggio rolls out new scooter

PIAGGIO India launched Aprilia SXR 160 in Hyderabad. The much-awaited premium scooter is available at an ex showroom for price Rs 1,26,372 in the state of Telangana and can be booked for an initial amount of Rs 5000 across all dealerships and through e-com merce website. Aprilia SXR 160 comes with latest global design language and is equipped with a single-cylinder, 4-stroke, aircooled, 3 valve fuel injection clean emission engine technology. Diego Graffi, Chairman and Managing Director, Piaggio India said: "With the launch of Aprilia SXR 160 in Hyderabad, we have again served our mission of offering premium differentiated products for our discerning customers. To ensure that we bring this experience much closer to everyone, we are expanding our footprint of dealer network in India."

Nuvoco goes international

NUVOCO Vistas Corp limited forayed into the international market by launching InstaMix Xpress, a pre-mixed, ready-touse, bagged, dry concrete supply in Bhutan. The product is easy to use and can be supplied anytime anywhere regardless of the desired quantity thus making it the perfect solution for remote areas and treacherous terrains. Prashant Jha, Chief Ready-Mix, Nuvoco Vistas Corp, said: "Nuvoco's reputation as top manufacturers and suppliers of concrete products is due to our commitment to upholding the quality standards. The client was looking for M35 grade concrete which is a structural grade concrete and can't be produced at the site level. Instamix Xpress fits the requirement perfectly as it needs only water to be added at the site."

YFLO organises virtual event

YFLO chairperson Apurva Jair and committee members organized virtual event at FLO Eminent Women Series. The chairperson introduced socia activist Amla Ruia, renowned for her remarkable work in rural areas and water harvesting. Amla established the Aakar Charitable Trust, to create water sources for drought stricken villages of India. The 350 check dams that are benefitting 400 villages and people living there are now debt free and above poverty line. Amla Ruia said: "The construction of these dams provide an income of Rs 1,300 crore yearly and are also made on a promise of no dowry, child marriage, better education and life for all villagers." YFLO's chairpersons from Hyderabad, Kolkata, Uttarakhand, Chennai, past chairpersons and members asked important queries on issues like saving water on a larger scale.

UPL bags award

UPL Limited has won sixth CII Industrial Intellectual Property Awards aimed at recognizing and celebrating enterprises that have embraced IP generation and protection to fuel their business. The company has always put the farmers' needs first and created products and services around fulfilling their requirements and won the award in the category of Best Patent Portfolio, Large (Lifesciences/Pharma) for its pioneering Intellectual property (IP) research and innovation. Vishal Sodha, who accepted the award at a virtual 'CII International Conference on IPR & CII Industrial IP Awards', said: "Our focus is completely on sustainable development including efficient utilization of the natural resources and adapting and building resilience to climate change."

Weak reforms bane for India's growth

HANS BUSINESS

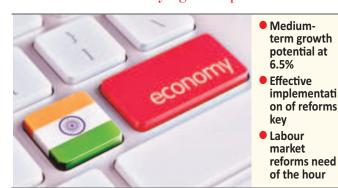
Financial sector woes could also lower country's growth potential: Fitch

New Delhi

FITCH Ratings on Wednesday said India's medium-term growth potential is at around 6.5 per cent but weak implementation of reforms, combined with continued financial sector problems, could lower its potential.

It said the revival of the reform agenda is among the Indian government's policy responses to the Covid-19 pandemic shock. "If implemented effectively, we believe these reforms may help to support India's medium-term growth and partially offset downside pressures to investment from renewed asset-quality challenges in the financial sector and damaged corporate balance sheets," Fitch said. It said the planned farm sector reforms aim to enhance efficiency, by giving farmers more flexibility over where to sell their produce by stripping out middle men and has the potential to improve farmers' income and reduce consumer prices.

"But, implementation risks are significant and the Supreme Court in mid-January suspended the relevant laws to facilitate a review and airing of farmer grievances," Fitch Ratings said. It added that segments of the farm lobby have protested for months, apparently over fears that the reform could result in abolition of minimum support prices, al-



We expect India's Central government to remain generally reform-minded over the next few years, further reform seem plentiful. However, the process of reform in India remains complex, and implementation has proven difficult

- Fitch Ratings

though the government has said this will not happen. Further, the labour market reforms aim at improving worker access to social security (in the large unorganised sector), strengthen occupational safety requirements, speed up the resolution of labour disputes and ease migrant workers' ability to move between states.

The steps could support formalisation of India's labour market and improve its flexibility and efficiency. "We expect India's central government to remain generally reform-minded over the next few years, and potential areas for further reform seem plentiful, in our view. However, the process of reform in India remains complex, and implementation at times has proven difficult," Fitch said. It added that weak implementation of the reforms, combined with continued financial sector problems, could lower growth potential below our current estimates.

"Our projected annual medium-term GDP growth is relatively high, nevertheless, at around 6.5 per cent reflecting above-trend growth rates needed to close the output gap." Fitch estimates medium-term growth potential to be some 1.7 percentage point lower than otherwise as a result of the scarring effects of the health crisis and financial sector weaknesses. (PTD



Jack Ma back after missing for 75 days

BEIJING

CHINA's highest-profile entrepreneur, Jack Ma, appeared in an online video on Wednesday, ending a two-and-a-half month absence from public view that prompted speculation about the future of the e-commerce billionaire and his Alibaba Group.

In the 50-second video, Ma congratulated teachers supported by his foundation and made no mention of his disappearance or official efforts to tighten control over Alibaba and other internet companies over the past six months.

The video appeared on Chinese business news and other websites. The normally voluble Ma disappeared from public view after he irked regulators by criticising them in an October 24 speech at a Shanghai conference. Days later, regulators suspended the planned multibillion-dollar stock market debut of Ant Group, a financial platform that grew out of Alibaba's payments service, Alipay. That prompted speculation on the internet about whether Ma, China's biggest global business celebrity and a symbol of its tech boom, had been detained or might face legal trouble.

Markets soar to lifetime highs

Sensex settles at 49,792.12 pts, Nifty closed at 14,644.70 pts; Maruti shines

Mumbai

EQUITY benchmarks galloped to lifetime highs on Wednesday, in lockstep with global markets which surged ahead of US President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration amid expectations of fresh stimulus by the incoming administration.

Rallying for the second straight day, the 30-share BSE Sensex advanced by 393.83 or 0.80 per cent to close at its fresh record of 49,792.12. The broader NSE Nifty jumped 123.55 points or 0.85 per cent to settle at a lifetime high of 14,644.70. World stocks advanced on Wednesday after US Treasury Secretary nominee Janet Yellen called for a hefty stimulus to protect the US economy. Biden, who will be sworn into office on Wednesday, has laid out a \$1.9 trillion stimulus package proposal to boost the economy.

Among Sensex stocks, Maruti rose the most by 2.75 per cent, followed by Tech Mahindra (2.67 per cent), Mahindra & Mahindra (1.98 per cent) and Asian Paints (1.98 per cent). Heavyweights Reliance Industries, Infosys, HDFC and TCS accounted for the lion's share of the gains. Among losers, Power

Grid dropped

1.75 per cent,

NTPC 1.35 per cent, HDFC Bank 0.83 per cent and ITC 0.59 per cent.

"An optimistic western market aided the Indian market to touch lifetime highs with new buying in segments like auto, IT and PSU Bank. So far, the Q3 results are better than forecasted and this has led to continued buying across sectors. "Ahead of Joe Biden's inauguration as President, the US market is on an upbeat mood with high expectations of a big US stimulus," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

Sector-wise, BSE auto, energy, IT and teck indices climbed up to 2.18 per cent, while utilities, FMCG and telecom ended in the red. In the broader markets, the BSE midcap and smallcap gauges jumped as much as 1.08 per cent.

On the global markets front, Australia's S&P/ASX 200 rose 0.4 per cent and South Korea's Kospi by 0.6 per cent while Hong Kong's Hang Seng added 0.7 per cent. Japanese market, however, dropped 0.4 per cent due to fresh COVID-19 concerns. European bourses were trading



TS among top 5 States in Niti Innovation Index **Karnataka tops list for 2nd time in a row**

New Delhi

KARNATAKA, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Kerala have been ranked as top five states in innovation in Niti Aayog's second Innovation Index released on Wednesday. The index, released by Aayog's vice chairman Rajiv Kumar and CEO Amitabh Kant, has been developed in the lines of Global Innovation Index. Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Bihar were ranked at the bottom of the Index.

Karnataka topped the Index for the second year in a row. Among Union Territories Delhi topped the chart, while in the North-Eastern and Hill States category Himachal Pradesh occupied the top spot. "Amongst major states, the average innovation score is 25.35. Karnataka tops at 42.5, which is attributable to its strong number of venture capital deals, registered GIs



(Geographical Indications) and ICT (Information and Communication Technology) exports.

Karnataka's high FDI inflow has also enhanced the innovation canabilities of the state." the India Innovation Index 2020 said. Maharashtra was ranked second with an innovation score of 38, while Bihar finished last at 14.5. "The case for the southern states as the top performers has also become stronger as four of them occupy the top-five spots within the major states," it added. According to the index, the North-Eastern and Hill states achieved an average innovation score of 17.89.

Ethanol push turns sweet for sugar mills ARCHANA RAO

New Delhi

THE The Indian sugar industry is gearing up to enter a new chapter for mass production, as the sector welcomes the latest announcement by central government on the modified scheme for extending interest subvention for those setting up grainbased along with molasses-based ethanol distilleries.

Abinash Verma, Director-General, Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA), told Bizz Buzz that the sugar industry is preparing to make a significant reduction on its sugar

"The central government incentivised 6 million tonnes (or 60 lakh tonnes) of exports in both 2020 and in 2021. That is one strategy on surplus sugar. The second strategy is to divert the surplus sugarcane itself towards production of ethanol and reduce the sugar production. The last season the quantum of molasses and (sugarcane) juice that we diverted to ethanol, allowed us to re-



duce our sugar production by 8 lakh tonnes. This year (2021), the offer that we have given to the oil marketing companies (OMCs) and the contract that we have signed, we are expecting that we will reduce sugar production to about 20 lakh tonnes by diverting the surplus into ethanol production," Verma said.

"As we move forward into the next year, and the year thereafter, we will be looking at increasing the number

from 20 lakh tonnes to up to 30 to 40 lakh steadily, and for this we are trying to develop required capacities. We are short of capacity. This programme was started in 2009, and in 2015 it was further pushed by the Prime Minister by incentivising ethanol pricing and production," he

On Monday, ISMA had announced that the country's sugar output rose by 31 per cent to 142.70

half months of the 2020-21 marketing year that started in October Speaking on the notification on

modified scheme to enhance ethanol distillation capacity in the country, released by the Department of Food and Public Distribution, dated January 14, 2021, Verma said that the sugar industry will be able to produce significant amount of ethanol as against the target of 1,100 crore litres set by the government.

"We are regularly in touch, and in consultation, with the government. The government is looking at targeting 20 per cent blending (ethanol in petrol), for which they have estimated that OMCs would require about 1,100 crore litres (ethanol) in the next 7-8 years. So, if there is a requirement of 1,100 crore litres, and from the back calculations we looked at, there would be enough ethanol produced by the sugar sector, from sugarcane juice or molasses (by product of sugarcane)," the ISMA Director General said.

Kadapa: A repository of mineral wealth

M SRINIVASA RAO KADAPA

KADAPA district is well known for horticulture cultivation and has immense potential to be transformed into an industrial hub in the coming days. Several national and multinational companies are evincing interest to set up their units here. To meet their human resource requirements, the State government is planning to establish a Skill Career Guidance

Kadapa city very soon. According to the information available from the District Industries centre (DIC), the district houses 30 large industries with an investment of Rs 13,228.37 crore, providing employment to 17,360 youth.

Counselling Centre (SCGCC) in

There are another 2,711 micro, small and medium industries with an investment of Rs 1,100 crore, employing 35,881. Recently, 13 industries namely,

Apache Leather, Neelkamal, Dixon, Visiontek, Pit Engineering Solutions and Quantum Green Private Limited (Pulivendula), Chaitra Seeds Private Limited (Porumamilla), Mfarms Horticulture Products Private Limited (Kadapa), Anuradha Seeds Private Limited (Porumamilla), Fayaz



Hi-Tech Mines and Minerals Private Limited (Proddaturu), Gulzar Hi-Tech Mines and Minerals Private Limited (Proddaturu), Eswar Biotech Private Limited (Rayachoti), Elite Crop Sciences Private Limited (Mydukuru), Om Narayana Adi Narayana Natural Farms Private Limited (Kadapa), Rata Konda Private Limited (Rajampet) were registered with the DIC for approval. Besides these, several agro and mining-based companies were registered in the district.

The Andhra Pradesh Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, has recently approved the new Industrial Development Policy (IDP), which envisaged the establishment of an Electronic Manufacturing Cluster (EMC) in Kopparthi in Kadapa city with an investment of Rs 10,000 crore, aiming at creating employment to 100,000 vouth.

The Chief Minister had laid the foundation stone for the establishment of Apache Intelligent SEZ in Pulivendula on December 24, 2020. He also inaugurated a popular footwear manufacturing unit with an investment of Rs 70 crore. The unit would provide employment to 2,000 locals. On the other hand, works related to Annum Kadapa Steel Plant at Sunnapurallapalle village of Jammalamadugu mandal aims to provide direct employment to 25,000. The foundation stone was laid by the Chief Minister on Decem-



ber 23, 2019. Work on the project is in various stages of completion.

The district administration has acquired more than 10,000 acre at several places for encouraging industrialists. DIC General Manager Chand Basha told Bizz Buzz that as per the industrial policy of the government, the district administration is providing all necessary infrastructure facilities such as land and water, besides recommending allotment of scarce raw materials like coal and rectified/ denatured spirits for the proposed industries in the district. He said that administration is recommending the entrepreneurs based on technically and economically feasible projects through a single-desk policy.

High GST crippling IT sector: RITPA

SANTOSH PATNAIK VISAKHAPATNAM

RUSHIKONDA IT Park Association (RITPA) sought cut in goods & services tax (GST) on IT sector from 18 per cent to 12 per cent as the high incidence of taxation was taking a heavy toll on the key

industry. "This is a crippling factor for us to scale up and we hope the Centre will reduce GST as requested by the IT sector across the country,"O Naresh Kumar,

the association's vice president, told Bizz Buzz. He further said that GST should be made payable on receipt of payment of invoice and not on raising the invoice.

"TDS on IT services is currently fixed at 10 per cent. This should be reduced to 2 per cent like in contracts. GST on software products also must be reduced from 18 per cent to the lowest slab to encourage more purchases as part of attempts to revive the economy after the pandemic hit everyone," he explained.

Work from home or remote working has become the norm of the day for most organisations due to the pandemic. With the government relaxing rules for IT/ITeS industry and increasing number of

employers extending work from home for the long run, there is a sizable population of employees working remotely in India. Employers have extended remote working even after the lockdown was lifted considering employee health and safety and to

O Naresh Kumar some extent the associated costs. He said: "The convenience of

working from home has also brought along additional expenses for employees, such as investment in high-speed internet, power backup, setting up a home-office requiring work chairs and desks, electronic accessories and air conditioning to maintain efficiency. Some employers have granted allowances, reimbursements and even assets to employees to meet these requirements.

ample. Even he would agree

would be remembered for a

that this series is his best over-

seas performance and the way

he made Steve Smith his bunny

long time. But has Ashwin, who

will probably be the fourth In-

dian to reach 400-wicket club

in some time,

been feted as

Lyon has

been in

his own

country?

Lyon's

Nathan

No threat to Kohli's captaincy

Will be among 'equals' in the dressing room

Cheteshwar Pujara (271) -- has

cemented his own place in the

annals of Indian cricket history.

And however reticent or unex-

pressive he might be, his voice

will now be heard if he wants it

to be heard. That has changed

KUSHAN SARKAR

FIRST things first. There is no imminent threat to Virat Kohli's captaincy in any format and neither is BCCI even remotely thinking on those lines. But that's the news part of the story. When it comes to views, there are many -- some are quite open about the theory of split captaincy and some are speaking about it in hushed

Ajinkya Rahane's calm demeanour in India's biggest overseas series win has opened up a debate but to disappoint the fans of the Test vice-captain, there is little chance of a permanent anointment for him in the immediate future. However, there could be a paradigm shift in how the leadership group in the Indian cricket team works when Kohli re-enters that dressing room after a month-long paternity break.

When Kohli left, it was a team that was down in the dumps -- dismissed for its lowest Test score of 36. But a lot has changed since that fateful afternoon in Adelaide. While head coach Ravi Shastri is absolutely right in saying that this team bears Kohli's "stamp and character" but from December 19 in Adelaide to January 19 in Brisbane, a few senior cricketers will be perceived a bit differently.

Rohit Sharma, Ravichandran Ashwin, Cheteshwar Pujara and certainly Rahane, in their own little way, have created a legacy but post Brisbane, that legacy will need proper acknowledgement. These four will not ask for it as they have now earned it after quite literally putting their bodies on line. So when Kohli enters that Indian dressing room, he will remain the "first" but "among equals" in a leadership group that possibly will be more in-

On Friday, when PTI had put forth a question on this to stand-in skipper Rahane after the match got over but expectedly, his tight defence couldn't be breached. The question was how would he feel when he again takes a back-seat with Kohli returning to the steering wheel in his hands. "I don't want to think about all these

things. This is a victory that we all need to enjoy and I will think about England series once I am back in India," Rahane dodged the question.

But in his heart, the Mumbaikar couldn't have possibly forgotten that he, as a sitting vice-captain, was dropped from the Indian playing XI dur-



BCCI likely to allow 50% attendance for England Tests

New Delhi

THE BCCI brass is seriously contemplating allowing 50 percent crowd attendance at both Chepauk and the newly constructed Motera Stadium during India's upcoming four Test matches against England. The first two Tests will be held in Chennai, beginning on February 5, while the next two will be played at the renovated stadium at Motera in Ahmedabad. The BCCI is believed to be taking a cue from Cricket Australia which had allowed entry of spectators during the India series that concluded on Tuesday.

"As of now, we are likely to allow 50 percent spectators for

ries. While one can give a sound explanation for that decision but the fact that a vice-captain was dropped cannot be seen in isolation. Now, Rahane -- India's third highest run-scorer in the series with 268 runs after Rishabh Pant (274) and

the four Test matches. The BCCI is in talks with both state cricket associations (TNCA and GCA) and also state health authorities," a senior BCCI source told PTI on conditions of anonymity. However, the BCCI is also factoring the fluid public health situation due to the COVID-19 pandemic and if case load in either Chennai or Ahmedabad increases, then the decision will change accordingly. "If you allow 50 percent crowd with all necessary precautions, then it will be an indicator if we can also allow spectators during IPL in India," the source said.

In Ahmedabad, which can

"His hundred put us back on track." Shastri was the first to acknowledge his impact. Take Ravichandran Ashwin (12 wickets in 3 games which was just one behind the team's debutant star Mohammed Siraj) for exhold over one lakh spectators, spacing of seats to maintain social distancing will not be an issue. Meanwhile, England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) will name the squad for first two Test matches against India on Thursday. This is the first time that a touring team is not naming a squad for full away series keeping the workload management of its players in mind. The fact that Chennai and Ahmedabad will have two separate biobubbles and the teams will travel by chartered flight within the country may also be the reason that England, like the Indian team, decided to name its squad for two Tests. (PTI)

wickets at MCG, SCG and Adelaide are spoken in glowing terms but has the extremely cerebral cricketer got his due for all the wickets that he has taken at Chennai, Nagpur, Pune and Hyderabad? When find of the series Siraj (13 wickets) was

New Delhi

THE Sports Ministry has ap-

proved shooters Manu Bhaker

and Angad Vir Singh Bajwa's

proposal to hire the services

of Singapore-based sports

psychologist Sanjana Kiran

for better preparation

ahead of the Tokyo

Olympics. The Tokyo

Games are scheduled

to be held

in July-

August

this year

proposal

was sanc-

tioned last

week at the

Mission

Podium

(TOPS).

Olympic Cell

part of the govern-

ment's Target Olympic

Sanjana Kiran is a

high performance expert

in the field of sport psy-

chology and performance

Scheme

the

and

Manu Bhaker's proposal for

sports psychologist approved

racially abused, the public stance that Ashwin took and the statement he made was no less than Anil Kumble's statesmanship during the 'Monkeygate' series. "When Siraj told us, we seniors, Rohit, Jinks and myself decided that we need to report the matter to the match referee," Ashwin had said in Sydney after the incident. He spoke about how three seniors came together to rally around Siraj and comfort him when he faced abuse.

Kohli knows that Ashwin is one of the most astute voices and after the fight in Sydney, he also will be heard more in that dressing room. And then there is Pujara (271), who played 928 balls and the Brisbane victory belongs to the man from Rajkot as much as it belongs to Pant. Pujara took those blows to show that resistance at times could also mean intent and like Shastri said, he is a "Warrior" who needs to be valued.

Pant was slipping down the radar but Rahane has put an arm around him and let him blossom in his own way. May be when the ball starts keeping low and turns in Chennai, Kohli will keep faith in him and if dropped, Pant has done enough to owe an explanation for that. Rohit looked good in three of the four innings and he had that calming influence on India's newest batting sensation Shubman Gill (259 runs) during those opening partner-

Rohit loves white ball cricket but he values the white India shirt for which he was ready to spend 14 days in hard quarantine in Sydney. All of it just to play two Test matches. He has taken those five catches at the slips and certainly, as a part of the leadership group, he had a role in Navdeep Saini's pace being preferred over T Natarajan's swing at Sydney.

When the next team meeting is held, these four seniors will have their say and the skipper will have to seriously factor in their inputs, changing the dynamics to some extent. There is a famous saying by American gossip columnist Walter Winschel that aptly describes the new Indian dressing room. "Never Above You, Never Below You, Always Beside You".

psychology and has provided support to

elite athletes and elite coaches in prepa-

ration for major events and interna-

tional competitions. Manu, who is eligi-

ble to participate in both the women's

10m air pistol and women's 25m pistol

at the Olympics, said, "Being in a sport

that requires vigorous mental strength

and stability to be able to perform flaw-

lessly, getting Sanjana Kiran's guidance

better

Olympics."

will help me to prepare

Olympian

medallist at the

Asian and Com-

monwealth Games

Suma Shirur, who

is currently the High Perform-

ance Specialist

coach of the In-

dian junior rifle

shooting team, wel-

comed the decision to have

a psychologist working with

shooters. "Sport is getting more profes-

sional. If we have to put our best foot

forward, why not engage experts. In our

time, we learnt through experience but

nowadays shooters begin early so ex-

perts will expedite their learning curve,"

and

Warne predicts 'huge fallout'

THE legendary Shane Warne believes the embarrassing Test series loss to an under-strength India will result in a "huge fallout" in the Australian team and said a few heads could roll in the coming days. India recorded one of their most memorable wins on Tuesday when they defeated a

full-strength Australia by three wickets in the fourth Test here to pocket the four-match series 2-1 and retain the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

"I think there'll be a huge fallout from this (defeat). There's not

too many times that you lose to the second or third (choice) side," Warne was quoted as saying by Fox Cricket. "Their (Australia) tactics will come into question, and they have to. Bowlers will come into question, people's spot in the team will come into question. It has to. You can't just deflect it and flick it off and say India were too good for us," he added.

Warne was, however, effusive in his praise for the Indian team which braved injuries to its key

players and absence of regular skipper Virat Kohli after the first Test on paternity leave to emerge triumphant. "That's not taking anything away from those Indian guys that played but their first selection side, there's probably only two or three players in that side who would play." The spin legend said Australia didn't grab their

chances in the series. "Yes they were, but Australia had so many chances in this series to bury it and crush India, but they couldn't do it. They just couldn't do it," he said.

> Warne was also critical of Tim Paine's captaincy and said the

wicketkeeper didn't own up responsibility for his failed tactics. 'I think at times their tactics haven't been good enough, and I suppose that's got to come down to Tim Paine as captain," he said. "It's not just Tim Paine's fault, the bowlers are allowed to say 'Tim I want to do this', so it's a combination between the bowlers and the captain. But at the end of the day, you are captain, you have to take responsibility. He'll be disappointed." (PTI)

We needed a bit more attitude: Clarke

MELBOURNE

AUSTRALIA definitely needed more "attitude" from the first to last ball while tackling a gritty India in the fourth and final Test in Brisbane, opined former captain Michael Clarke. Clarke, however, would not blame team leader Tim Paine for the unthinkable Test series defeat at home. Under Paine, Australia have competed in 23 Tests and have managed to win only 11 of them. Two Test series defeats at home against India make his

record look worse. Paine, who took over from Steve Smith in 2018 after the ball tampering scandal in South Africa, is copping criticism for not only the 1-2 defeat but also for his sloppy work behind the stumps. However, Clarke said it was the negative mindset that pegged Australia back. "I thought we might have been a tad negative at certain stages throughout because we were scared to lose versus attack hard and look to win the game," Clarke said on Big Sports

'Can't comprehend how India's 'A team' won'

BRISBANE

A "shocked" Ricky Ponting is struggling to comprehend how India's "A team" overwhelmed Australia in the Test series in their own backyard. Hit by a spate injuries, India competed without many a key players, yet downed Australia by three wickets in the series-deciding fourth Test at the Gabba, a month after the Adelaide debacle where they scored their lowest Test score of 36. "I'm quite shocked that Australia weren't quite good enough to win this series. The cold hard facts of it are pretty much that was the

India A team that played this Test match and still won," Ponting told cricket.com.au. Ponting said India won all the key moments throughout the series and that was the difference between the two sides. "They've played really good, tough, hard Test match cricket day-in and day-out. India have won all the big moments in every Test match and Australia have fallen short. That's been the difference between the two teams." "They (India) have done it really well and they thoroughly deserve to win the series ... because (of) how resilient they've been." (PTI)

Smith released as Sanju Samson named RR captain

New Delhi

SANJU Samson replaced Steve Smith as Rajasthan Royals captain after the Australian batsman and some other under-performing stars were released by their respective IPL franchises even as Chennai Super Kings retained veteran Suresh Raina for the upcoming IPL-14. The deadline for the eight franchises to submit the lists of retained and released players for the next edition of the lucrative league ended on Wednesday

Samson was appointed to the top job after RR decided against renewing former skipper Steve Smith's contract. "As the IPL has grown, the captaincy has become a year-round task, and as such strong local Indian leadership has become increasingly important," said RR owner Manoj Badale in a



as a Royal, and it has been a joy to watch his development over the last 8 years. He is the ideal person to lead the Royals into the 2021 season," he added. Smith's contract ended in October 2020. The Australians, smarting from a Test series loss to an injury-plagued India, took a hit as the likes of the explosive Glenn Maxwell and opener Aaron Finch too were released by Kings XI Punjab and Royal Challengers Bangalore respectively.

Flying Monkey to organise zonal cricket tournament

HANS NEWS SERVICE

HYDERABAD

FLYING Monkey Cricket League is a vertical of Flying Monkey Foundation, focusing on facilitating cricket tournaments for non-professional cricketers, cricket clubs, colleges and schools.

It's coming soon with 'Flying Monkey Zonals', and it is for the first time that a zonal level tournament is being conducted in Hyderabad corporate



cricket. Teams play against each other in their respective zones (North, East, West and South), and each zone will have a zonal winner.

The game of each zone would be conducted on grounds of the respective zones. Every zone has an elite and a plate cup (2-cup format) winner and runner. Post this the winners and runners of each zone get to play against the other zones in an interzonal city championship, crowing the champion team of the whole city (for both elite and plate). Therefore every team enrolled for the zonal gets to play a minimum of 6 games and a

maximum of 11. The other features of the FMCL

matches include live streaming of every match with camera panning, instant releases of highlight videos for every match, special moments in the match featured out on social media, special videos of the best players and teams to spread out the word about the kind of talent that our city has. The finalists of the tournament will lift the trophies of FMCL. There will be other awards as well in this tournament for the exceptional players with their batting, bowling, and all-rounder performances.

Rani's goal help women's hockey team draw 1-1 with junior Argentina side

BUENOS AIRES THE Indian women's hockey

team wasted a number of penalty corner chances before skipper Rani Rampal's fourthquarter strike helped the visitors salvage a 1-1 draw against Argentina's junior side, here. It was a second straight draw

for the Indian team following a 2-2 result in the tour-opener. India began on an attacking note, earning a penalty corner in the very first minute of the match but Gurjit Kaur's powerful drag was saved by the Argentine goalkeeper. India won another penalty corner in the fifth minute, but Deep Grace Ekka's shot went wide. In the following minutes, the home side won three penalty corners and succeeded in converting the last one

for a 1-0 lead in the 13th minute. While India created plenty of opportunities to score in the second and third quarters by making a number of circle penetrations, they were unable to beat the Argentine defence. India earned four more penalty corners (37th, 43rd, 48th and 58th minutes) in the course of the game and eventually succeeded in drawing level in the 58th minute when a powerful injection by Navneet Kaur was well

"Today the quality of play was better and that's why we are here - to improve in every match. Today players got the chance to show their best and these are players who normally don't get a chance to make the 18-member squad so it's good they are able

received and powerfully struck

to get international exposure," said chief coach Sjoerd Marijne in a Hockey India release.

"It is also good for the core group that we are getting to try more players and see how different combinations work." "We created enough opportunities to score more and this is an area we need to keep working on. We have a break of two days before our next game against the Argentina B team and we look forward to the challenge," added Marijne. India will take on Argentina B team on

January