

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
VIJAYAWADA | WEDNESDAY | 2 DECEMBER 2020

WEATHER



Max: 33.0°C
Min: 19.0°C
RH: 81%
Rainfall: —
Forecast: rain.
Max/Min temp.
33/19 °C

NATION | 4

Sportspersons to return
awards in protest



WORLD | 5

Nirav Modi's remand
extended in UK



SPORTS | 6

India look to salvage
pride in third ODI



CM blames TD for stalling distribution of 3.65L houses

Jagan accused Desam, CPM leaders of filing
cases against distribution on flimsy grounds

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 1

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy blamed the Telugu Desam for stalling distribution of 3.65 lakh house sites to poor by filing false cases in courts and getting stay orders. He expressed confidence that he will get these orders vacated and distribute the house sites to poor in the state.

Replying to a discussion on housing schemes in the State Legislative Assembly here on Tuesday, the CM charged that followers of senior Telugu Desam leaders, including Paritala Sunita in Prakasam, and others in East Godavari, Anantapur, Kurnool, Vizianagaram and Amaravati districts, apart from CPI-M in Visakhapatnam, had filed false cases on fictitious grounds to stop distribution of house sites on nearly

JAGAN PROVES TD'S CLAIM ON INSURANCE PAYMENT WRONG

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 1

Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Tuesday slammed the erstwhile TD government while showing data in State Legislative Assembly on crop insurance payments made by the erstwhile TD government.

Refuting charges of Leader of Opposition N. Chandrababu Naidu about non-payment of insurance by the government, the Chief Minister clarified that ₹1,227 crore will be paid directly into the accounts of farmers on December 15. Accusing the TD leader of lying out-right about insurance claims, he said the opposition is trying to make an issue out of a non-issue.

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■ Page 2: 'Whatever Jagan promises, he will do'

grounds that distribution of house sites could lead to a demographic imbalance. He regretted that Telugu Desam politics had degraded to such low levels.

■ Page 2: CM blames TD for state's indebtedness

Jagan: Send Naidu to Erragadda Hosp

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 1

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Tuesday suggested to Speaker Thammneni Seetharam that Leader of Opposition N. Chandrababu Naidu be admitted in a mental hospital "as the latter was speaking about irrelevant matters".

Reddy made this statement after Naidu tried to pick faults in functioning of the state government while taking part in a short discussion on house sites and Tidco houses.

While speaking, Naidu repeatedly insisted on the Speaker to provide him more time to continue the discussion and spoke on issues unrelated to Tidco houses and house sites.

At this stage, Reddy suggested that the Speaker give Naidu another two to three minutes to wind up his statement, so that he (CM) could make his statement on the issue.

Reddy said people are eagerly waiting to know what the Chief Minister will say on the housing scheme. The CM even advised the Speaker to suspend TD MLAs who were disrupting proceedings in the House.

Reddy had recalled speeches he made during his padayatra that TD regime was giving houses of 300 square feet each costing ₹6 lakh in which ₹1.5 lakh each paid by both the state and Centre while the remaining ₹3 lakh had to be raised as bank loan.

When the CM said he had given an assurance that he would waive the beneficiaries' contribution, Naidu tried to pick a fault in the statement. Jagan then suggested to the Speaker that Naidu be sent to a mental asylum.

"I wonder if he has turned mad. What is wrong with him? He should be taken to Erragadda Hospital as he is staying in Hyderabad," he said.

SPEAKER ANGRY OVER TD CHIEF'S FINGER WAGGING

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 1

Speaker T. Seetharam warned Opposition leader N. Chandrababu Naidu to be careful when the latter made a threatening gesture and pointing a finger at him and flung papers towards the podium.

The Assembly was discussing housing schemes when the Speaker allowed ministers Botsa Satyanarayana and Ch. Sri Ranganatha Raju and YSRC MLAs to speak.

Naidu began persistently asking for time to speak. When Seetharam asked Naidu to wait, the latter raised his hand with his finger pointed at the Speaker. The Speaker became furious and said: "Be careful. So what if you are Leader of Opposition?"

■ Page 2: Speaker leaves it to Naidu

Stall PR polls, govt asks HC

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 1

The state government filed a petition in the High Court challenging the State Election Commission (SEC)'s decision to conduct gram panchayat polls in February, and sought its intervention to revoke the proceedings issued by the SEC.

Panchayat raj and rural development principal secretary Gopala Krishna Dwivedi filed the petition stating that the SEC had taken a unilateral decision to conduct the polls.

The petitioner said the government was according top priority to protect the health of the people from Covid-19, and the SEC had taken the decision without consulting the government despite a Supreme Court direction to do so.

The principal secretary said that by November 29, AP had registered 8.67 lakh Covid-19 positive cases and on an average, 1,000 positive cases were being reported per day in the state and informed the

court that the entire administration in the state was preoccupied to contain the spread of the virus. He said that once the prevalence of Covid-19 was under control, they would express their readiness to go for conduct of polls.

He said that the SEC had issued proceedings on November 17 to conduct gram panchayat polls in February 2021 and asked the court for its direction to the SEC not to go ahead with conduct of polls in February, 2021.

Centre, farmers fail to find common ground

Talks fail as both stick to stated demands; next meeting tomorrow

SANJAY KAW and
BHASKAR HARI
SHANKAR | DC
NEW DELHI, DEC. 1

As the farmers' agitation completed six days on Tuesday, there seemed to be no resolution in sight at ending the crisis as both the sides remained adamant on their demands. While the government wants the farmers to end their protest and join a committee of experts to sort out issues related to the three recently enacted farm laws, farmers' leaders say they want the new laws withdrawn or they will intensify their agitation.

With the marathon meeting between farmers' leaders and the government remaining inconclusive on Tuesday, a second meeting is now scheduled to take place on Wednesday.

A delegation of 35 farmer unions, who held a meeting with three Union ministers on Tuesday, rejected the Central government's offer to nominate their five members to a committee of experts to sort out issues related to the farm laws and said they would continue their agitation at the Delhi-Haryana border



Farmers stage a protest at Tikri border during their ongoing Delhi Chalo agitation against Centres new farm laws in New Delhi on Tuesday.

— PTI

TRUDEAU WADES INTO FARM STIR, GETS SLAMMED

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, DEC. 1

India on Tuesday criticised the remarks by Canadian PM Justin Trudeau on the farmers' protests in Delhi without naming him directly, saying these were "ill-informed and unwarranted". This came after Trudeau expressed concern about protests and that Canada always backed the right to protest peacefully.

■ Full report on Page 4

Tuesday's meeting was reportedly the third round of talks between the farmers and the government in the last few months.

At the first round of the meeting, chaired by agriculture secretary Sanjay Aggarwal, the farmers had walked out and tore up copies of the new farm laws. The second round of meeting lasted for seven hours.

COUNTER POINT



If the situation continues like this, all the film stars will have to join politics!

IN BRIEF

Nobel Prize event goes online

New Delhi: The Nobel Prize week this year will primarily be digital with laureates getting their medals and diplomas in their respective countries in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, a Nobel Foundation official said on Tuesday. The Nobel Laureates will receive their medals and diplomas on December 7 and 8 in ceremonial presentations in their countries which will be shown in the online prize award ceremonies from Oslo and Stockholm on December 10. Sweden King Carl XVI Gustaf will participate through a digital greeting at the Stockholm City Hall.

LEGAL | EAGLE

Court rejects plea to act against CM for comments

SC junks plea to sack Jagan

New Delhi, Dec. 1: The Supreme Court on Tuesday dismissed a batch of public interest litigations (PILs) seeking action against Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy for his statements against a top court judge and the judiciary.

The Supreme Court also said that prayer in a PIL filed by advocate G.S. Mani seeking direction for removal of the Chief Minister from his office for

his remarks was not maintainable.

A bench of Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul, Dinesh Maheshwari and Hrishikesh Roy refused to grant liberty to the petitioners from intervening in another matter, pending before another bench.

"That court has to make a decision. We cannot allow hundreds of petitioners to file intervention applications on the same issue. You pick up something from the

newspaper and file whatever you want under Article 32. If we allow one advocate to do so, tomorrow some other advocate will come forward with his intervention application," the bench observed, when one of the petitioners sought liberty to intervene in the matter.

The top court also dealt with the prayer of a CBI probe or an enquiry by a retired high court judge against the Chief Minister for making such statements.

"A statement was undoubtedly made and it's in public domain. What is there to probe into the statements?" the three-judge bench asked.

The bench, however, tagged a public interest litigation filed by advocate Sunil Kumar Singh in the pending matter, filed by the Andhra Pradesh government against the High Court restraining the police from investigating alleged irregularities in land deals.

— PTI

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OTHER STORIES

HC PRAISES GOVT FOR INITIATING MANY SCHEMES

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 1

The AP High Court on Tuesday praised the state government for initiating a series of welfare schemes for the benefit of women belonging to SC, ST and BC communities and minorities and for helping them with financial sustenance.

A High Court bench comprising justice B. Devanand expressed concern over the apathy of a section of officials as it was resulting in beneficiaries failing to get the benefits of the schemes. He said that though the government was coming up with several welfare schemes intending to enhance the living standards of the beneficiaries, lack of commitment on the part of a section of officials to implement the schemes effectively was resulting in deprival of benefits to them.

The Judge was referring to a petition filed by Velpula Vimalamma and 19 others hailing from Chandralapadu village, complaining that though women aged between 45 and 60 were eligible for the YSR Cheyutha scheme for financial support, they were being denied the same.

Petitioners' counsel Patibandla Prabhakar Rao informed the court that though the gram panchayat had sent the list of eligible persons for the scheme to the concerned MPDO, the latter failed to forward it to the project director of the DRDA. He further said that even as the petitioners submitted representations to the district collector, there was no response from the collector. The judge directed officials to provide all the benefits under the scheme to the petitioners.

PETITIONER TOLD TO FILE AFFIDAVIT WITH ALL DETAILS

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 1

The Andhra Pradesh High Court dealing with a petition asked the petitioner on what basis was expenditure arrived at ₹4,000 crore for the cost of painting gram panchayat buildings. The petition also wanted ministers and officials as respondents in their individual capacity in the issue.

A two-judge division bench comprising justice Ch. Praveen Kumar and justice D. Ramesh while hearing a petition filed by Dr Maddipati Sailaja here on Tuesday, expressed surprise and said that even if 10,000 government offices were painted with the ruling party colours each at a cost of ₹4,000, it could not cost ₹4,000 crore.

The court said that it could not take the amount into consideration which was arrived at without proper calculations. The court also found fault with the petitioner for holding the ministers and officers as respondents and asking for recovery of ₹4,000 crore from them. The court adjourned the case after 10 days and asked the petitioner to file an affidavit with proper details.

MODI AND JAGAN CHEATING FARMERS, SAYS SAILAJANATH

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, DEC. 1

Narendra Modi at the Centre and the YSRC government in Andhra Pradesh are cheating farmers, alleged AP Congress Committee president Dr Sake Sailajanath.

Addressing a press conference here on Tuesday, Sailajanath said the Central government is terrorising the farmers who have been peaceful all along their protest braving severe cold conditions. He said the farm bills would benefit the corporate entities and the farmers would be reduced to labourers in their own agricultural fields.

“Modi is working as an agent for the corporate bodies,” the PCC president alleged. He said when all the states have been supporting the agitating farmers, Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy backed the Bills for his personal gain.

Even now the AP Chief Minister should apologise to the farmers and pass a resolution in the ongoing Assembly sessions, he suggested. He also demanded that the Prime Minister Narendra Modi withdraw the Bills in the interest of crores of farmers in the country. Appealing to the Congress cadre to launch a state-wide agitation, Sailajanath said his party would join all the political parties that have been opposing the Bills.

Senior leaders of the Congress were present at the press briefing.

Govt firm on rooting out online gambling: CM

TD MLA alleges gambling being promoted by YSRC leaders at over 100 places; CM says won't spare anyone

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 1

Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy asserted in the State Legislative Assembly on Tuesday that his government is firm on rooting out all gambling, including online, in Andhra Pradesh.

The CM was responding to allegations of Telugu Desam MLA Anagani Satyaprasad who, during a discussion on AP Gaming (Amendment) Bill on Tuesday, alleged that unabated gambling was being promoted by the ruling YSRC leaders at over 100 places in the state.

Several ruling party MLAs rose and took vehement objection to these allegations and challenged Satyaprasad to produce any evidence.

The TD legislator retorted that gambling is going on round-the-clock at Nizampatnam. He said he had tried to lodge complaint with police, including DGP, against it. But he could not succeed as he failed to get an appointment from the police chief.

Government chief whip Gadikota Srikanth Reddy described Satyaprasad utterances as “false allegations”.

Intervening into the discussion, the CM asserted that his government will not spare anyone and pointed out that action had been taken against the relative of minister for labour G. Jayaram over such allegations. The Chief Minister went on to charge that the TD government never tried to restrain online gambling that ruined the lives of many, but their government has brought in a new bill to curb it.

Explaining provisions of online gambling bill, home minister Mekathoti Sucharitha underlined that it proposes stringent action and increased penalty, including imprisonment, for both online and offline gambling. She announced starting of a toll free number for receiving complaints on gambling.

The Legislative Assembly subsequently passed the bill.

OPPOSITION OBJECTED TO TAX AMENDMENT BILL

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 1

The Telugu Desam severely objected to proposed hike in taxes on properties in accordance with market value when the State Legislative Assembly was discussing on Tuesday Andhra Pradesh Municipal Laws (Second Amendment) Bill 2020.

TDLP deputy leader Gorantla Buchaiah Chowdary pointed out that this would put a huge financial burden on owners of residential houses in case their residences are around commercial areas.

When municipal administration minister Botsa Satyanarayana assured that there would be no burden on residential buildings, TD MLAs pointed out that such a clause does not exist in the Bill.

The minister, however, maintained that there will be no burden on people living in houses spread over up to 375 square feet, as the tax would be just ₹50 per annum. Later, the House passed the bill with voice vote.

Lokesh moves privilege notice against Guntur urban SP

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 1

Telugu Desam national general-secretary and MLC Nara Lokesh on Tuesday moved a privilege notice against Guntur Urban SP Ammi Reddy in the AP Legislative Council. He made a formal complaint to the Council Chairman saying that Ammi Reddy had threatened him through posts on social media.

The TD MLC said that when he found fault with the false arrest of TD activist Mani Ratnam, the SP put his comments on social media, threatening him of taking legal action. He claimed that if the police officer had any



Policemen chasing away a cow on the way to Assembly Hall at Velagapudi in Guntur district on Tuesday.

—DC

Pandemonium continues in Assembly on Day Two

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 1

Pandemonium prevailed in the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly on the second consecutive day of the Winter Session on Tuesday even as one Opposition Telugu Desam MLA was suspended from the House.

Telugu Desam legislators demanded their the adjournment motion on crop insurance and TIDCO houses be allowed and continued to protest at the podium disrupting a discussion on the AP Fish Feed (Quality Control) Bill-2020. TDLP deputy leader Nimmala Rama Naidu was suspended for one day from the House for his continuous protest at the podium with TD legislators. The ruckus started when minister for fisheries Seediri Appalaraju started explaining about the Bill and TD objected to the same demand allowing adjournment motion on crop insurance and TIDCO houses.

Leader of Opposition N. Chandrababu Naidu and TD MLAs claimed that the government released ₹590.51 lakh for crop insurance on Monday night due to their protest which was objected to by the ruling party. TD MLAs rushed to the podium and continued sloganeering. Naidu also staged a protest by standing at his seat.

Minister for revenue Buggana Rajendranath Reddy stated that the process of crop insurance disbursement is under progress and the government is all set to pay ₹1,227 crore funds directly into the accounts of farmers on December 15.

He stated that the earlier TD government paid crop insurance with two years to 18 months delay and farmers did not show interest in crop insurance due to negligence of the

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TD stages stir over TIDCO houses

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 1

Telugu Desam MLAs and MLCs, led by leader of Opposition N. Chandrababu Naidu, staged a rally at the State Legislative Assembly on day two of its Winter Session on Tuesday demanding that state government hand over the completed TIDCO houses to eligible families immediately.

Holding placards and raising slogans, they claimed construction of the houses had already been completed during the earlier Naidu regime. But the current state government is not handing them over to intended benefici-

SPEAKER LEAVES IT TO NAIDU TO APOLOGISE

From Page 1

“You should behave properly. I had asked you to wait until I give you the time to speak. I did not say that I will not give you the time to speak,” Speaker Sitaram told TD chief Chandrababu Naidu.

Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy condemned such behaviour of Naidu. He advised the latter to learn how to behave properly in the Assembly. Subsequently, several YSRC legislators demanded that Naidu apologise to the Speaker.

At this, Speaker said he left it to the discretion of Naidu to apologise or not.

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TD SUPREMO Chandrababu Naidu demanded that state government should hand over the completed TIDCO houses to eligible families immediately.

aries due to political reasons. Opposition will continue its struggle until TIDCO houses are allotted to the deserving poor families, they asserted.

In addition to Chandrababu Naidu, Telugu Desam Legislature Party deputy leaders K. Atchannaidu and

TD regime. He further stated that the TD was trying to disrupt the House business by creating unnecessary ruckus.

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy found fault with claims of the TD about non-payment of insurance premiums. He said that the government works on the credibility of the person at the helm of affairs and he is proud that today he can say the credibility of Jagan is such that people trust what Jagan does what he says. “That is my credibility. But what is the credibility of Chandrababu Naidu? If he says anything, he will definitely not do it. That is Naidu.”

Upset over the continuous sloganeering protest by TD, the Speaker repeatedly asked them to go back to their seats but in vain. Legislative affairs minister Rajendranath Reddy moved a motion to suspend Rama Naidu for one day after which the TD leader was suspended.

Rama Naidu alleged that the YSRC government deceived the Assembly and farmers over crop insurance.

He said that since the TD was exposing the cheating of the YSRC government, he was suspended from the House. He said that the party will give a privilege notice about misleading of Assembly on crop insurance.

Nimmala Rama Naidu, apart from others, took part in the rally.

Addressing the rally, TD leaders questioned the state government about Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's promise to construct five lakh houses per year. As per this, nearly 7.5 lakh houses should have been constructed within the past 18 months.

But ruling party leaders are not at all talking about these houses.

“The CM only knows how to make empty statements and break them without feeling any accountability,” the opposition leaders alleged.

They claimed that lakhs of houses had been con-

TD MLAS EXCEPT NAIDU SUSPENDED FROM ASSEMBLY

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 1

All the Telugu Desam MLAs except leader of the Opposition N. Chandrababu Naidu were suspended from the Assembly for one day for the second consecutive day as they were disrupting the proceedings here on Tuesday.

Earlier in the day, as the Assembly took up discussion on the housing scheme, TD MLA Nimmala Ramanaidu was suspended for the day as he was disrupting the proceedings.

Subsequently, as the Assembly was continuing its discussion, Naidu was asking for more time to speak. When the Speaker asked him wind up his statement, the remaining TD MLAs raised slogans causing pandemonium in the Assembly.

To bring the order in the Assembly, the Speaker suspended all the TD MLAs present in the House except Naidu, for the day and called the marshals in to move them out.

However, the TD MLAs resisted the marshals from lifting them out of the Assembly while some even clashed with them.

Subsequently, marshals complained to the Speaker stating that they were assaulted by the TD MLAs and sought an inquiry on the issue and action on the erring MLAs.

‘Whatever Jagan promises, he will do’

From Page 1

The CM maintained that there has been no instance when YSRC had gone back on its promises.

“Whatever Jagan promises, he will do it. That is the credibility I have,” the CM asserted commenting that Chandrababu Naidu never fulfilled his words.

Castigating TD for creating ruckus on crop insurance, he said, “We have fulfilled 90 per cent of the promises made in our manifesto. Payment of insurance is a procedure in progress as works have to be completed.

“If opposition TD continues telling such lies, in the next elections, the number of 23 (MLAs of Telugu Desam) will deplete to two or three,” he remarked.

The Chief Minister said, “We have announced five programmes in December, which include Amul-AP procuring milk on December 2, cattle distribution on December 10, crediting insurance amount on December 15, starting resurvey of lands on December 21, and distribution of house site pattas on December 25,” he pointed out.

CM Jagan asked Speaker Thammineni Seetharam to display details of insurance premium payments

on screens in the Assembly.

“During the rule of the previous TD government, farmers feared paying a heavy premium. Thus, they did not show any interest in insuring their crops. During Chandrababu's term, only ₹415 crore claims were received in October 2019 for 2018 Kharif and only ₹537 crore insurance claims were processed in 2018 Rabi and even fewer claims were received earlier. But, in our government, as many as 58.77 lakh farmers have been brought under insurance cover. The state government has taken the responsibility of paying ₹1,030 crore as premium,” he underlined.

Refuting allegations of TD, the Chief Minister said, “Our government has paid insurance for 2018 in October 2019 amounting to ₹415 crores. The 2019 amount will be paid as scheduled. We have been paying premium without burdening farmers by just collecting ₹1 from them. When everything is very clear, the opposition leaders are intentionally creating chaos in the House without having any meaningful discussion,” he remarked.

CM blames TD for state's indebtedness

From Page 1

The Chief Minister, however, made it clear that his government is committed to giving away 30.66 lakh house sites located on about 68,677 acres and worth of over ₹23,535 crore to the poor on December 25. He said in the first phase, construction of 15.60 lakh houses will be taken up.

He asserted that this itself would boost economic activity to the extent of ₹28,084 crore for purchase of materials like cement, steel and metal, among

others, apart from generating direct employment of 21.70 crore man-days and indirect employment of 10 crore man-days.

Each house would be coming up over about 340 square feet area, where each beneficiary had to pay only ₹1, he stated.

Jagan Mohan Reddy found fault with former chief minister Chandrababu Naidu for failing to complete execution of houses taken up under several schemes but leaving huge arrears to be cleared by the YSR Congress regime.

Naidu stages standing protest

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 1

Leader of Opposition in the AP Legislative Assembly N. Chandrababu Naidu conducted a “standing protest” near his seat and avoided going near the podium on Tuesday.

On Monday, he faced suspension due to squatting on the floor at the podium. The rest of TD legislators went to the podium and staged a protest but interestingly Naidu opted to protest near his seat.

The ruling YSR Congress MLAs commented that Naidu realised his mistake and wrongdoing hence he was staging a protest by restraining himself from going to the podium floor.

They said that Naidu and his MLAs feared the exposure of their failure in the TIDCO housing scheme during discussion on

housing scheme hence they are creating disturbances to avoid the discussion.

Later, Naidu addressing a press meet accused the YSRC government of hijacking the projects and programmes launched by the previous TD government and renaming them after Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy without any scruples.

He said he had no objection for this strange practice since it would be only Jagan Mohan Reddy who would go down into history as a ‘sticker CM’ forever. Naidu challenged the CM to construct new houses as per his promise and compare the same to the TIDCO houses built during the TD regime.

He said that instead of that, the YSR Congress regime was giving advertisements, renaming TIDCO project after the CM's name.

LAND | SCAM

Probe agency followed due procedure laid down by SC, filed case: AG

CID submits to HC WhatsApp transcripts

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 1

In a startling development, the state government on Tuesday informed the Andhra Pradesh High Court about WhatsApp messages exchanged between people involved in the “Amaravati land scam” and their overseas investors.

On behalf of the government, the Crime Investigation Department (CID) also submitted transcripts of these WhatsApp messages to the court in support of its claims.

The state government urged the High Court to allow investigation into

the alleged scam in which people close to former chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and his son Lokesh had bought lands, as they had prior knowledge about location of the new capital city at Amaravati.

Justice Ch. Manavendra-nath Roy heard the CID arguments while taking up criminal petitions filed by several individuals, including Lokesh's close associate K. Rajesh and his wife Sriharsa seeking quashing of First Information Report filed by the Crime Investigation Department.

Dr. P. V. Raghava Sarma of Lalitha Super Speciality Hospital, Guntur, apart

from T. Venkateswarlu and Tejasvi Chekuri of North Phase Holdings, also filed petitions in the High Court seeking similar relief.

Appearing on behalf of CID, Advocate General S. Sriram said the investigation agency followed due procedure laid down by the Supreme Court and filed the case only after ascertaining facts in a preliminary investigation. A detailed investigation is required to unearth the land scam and book people, who were in top positions, for misusing their official position for personal gains.

The AG told the High

Court that mobile phones of the accused containing the WhatsApp messages had been seized. It was clear that the accused had shared confidential information about locating the new capital with their near and dear staying overseas. Further, the accused asked the overseas persons to transfer huge amounts for buying lands before the news appeared in the public domain.

The AG said Tejasvi Chekuri is a director in several companies and has links with international companies. She enjoyed a good rapport with senior officials occupying important

positions in the previous government. She thus got information on the new capital, which led to her buying land accordingly. There is a need to investigate the issue of money laundering too, the AG underlined.

According to CID, Rajesh, who worked with the Heritage Group belonging to former chief minister Naidu's wife Bhuvaneshwari Devi, had close links with Lokesh. Thus the involvement of Rajesh in Amaravati land scam as well as other financial frauds had to be thoroughly investigated, Sriram maintained.

SHORT TAKES

Cyclone Bueri to cross SL coast today

Visakhapatnam: The deep depression over southwest and adjoining southeast Bay of Bengal moved westwards with a speed of 13 kmph during past six hours and lay centred over southwest Bay of Bengal about 460 km east-southeast of Trincomalee (Sri Lanka) and 860 km east-southeast of Kanniyakumari (India). It is very likely to intensify further into a cyclonic storm.



SOUTH CENTRAL RAILWAY
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Details of the Tender Notices of S.C Railway can be seen on our website : www.scr.indianrailways.gov.in

E-Tender Notice No.04/DY.CSTE/CN/GTL/2020 Dated.30.11.2020

For and on behalf of the President of India, Deputy Chief Signal and Telecommunication Engineer (Construction), South Central Railway, Guntakal, with the approval of the competent authority invites e-tender (open) for the following work upto **15.00 hours on 06.01.2021**

SI No.: 1 Tender No.: G-SG-CN-MKR-SIGG-4-2020 **Name of the work:** (1) Provision of Centralized Electronic Interlocking System with Hot stand by architecture and MACLS Outdoor Signaling works at MADDIKERA station and (2) Signaling works related to Up&Dn IBS between TUGGALI & MADDIKERA stations in connection with the GUNTUR-Guntakal doubling of track work with RE. **Approx. value of work (₹):** 3,93,93,886.62 **EMD (₹):** 3,37,000.00 **Cost of Tender Form (₹):** 10,000.00 **Completion Period of work:** 15 Months

SI No.: 2 Tender No.: G-SG-CN-WD-SIGG-5-2020 **Name of the work:** Provision of Centralized Electronic Interlocking System with Hot stand by architecture and MACLS Outdoor Signaling works to suit 25KV RE at NALWAR NORTH & SULEHALLI WEST stations in connection with WADI BYE PASS **Approx. value of work (₹):** 4,60,51,497.76 **EMD (₹):** 3,80,300.00 **Cost of Tender Form (₹):** 10,000.00 **Completion Period of work:** 15 Months

SI No.: 3 Tender No.: G-SG-CN-WD-TELE-6-2020 **Name of the work:** Trenching, Laying of HDPE duct & 6 Quad Cable; Blowing, splicing & termination of OFC; Jointing & termination of 6 Quad cable; Testing & Commissioning of QUAD/OFC; Installation and Testing of OFC Electronics between NALWAR (incl.) - SULEHALLI (incl.) sections (By Pass line) 12Kms. **Approx. value of work (₹):** 1,05,98,796.93 **EMD (₹):** 2,03,000.00 **Cost of Tender Form (₹):** 10,000.00 **Completion Period of work:** 15 Months

1. For bid document and other details, please login to website <https://ireps.gov.in>.

2. Tenderers should watch for any corrigenda (issued online only) upto the date of commencement of the tender submission period.

Dy.Chief Signal & Telecom., Engineer (Const.),Guntakal

e-Tender Notice No:02 Dated: 27.11.2020

e-Tenders from the Contractors who are having experience in similar nature of works and having valid "B" grade electrical contractor's license for the following work are invited by the undersigned up to 15.30 hrs on **28.12.2020**.

SI No.: 1 Tender Ref No.: GNT/E/02/2020-21 Dt:27.11.2020 **Tender Title:** Out sourcing of noncore activity for maintenance of Batteries, Lights & fans and their Cleaning / replacement in TL coaches of Guntur Division for a period of 2 Years. **Approx value in (₹):** 1,50,81,435.6 **Earnest money deposit (₹):** 2,25,500.00 **Cost of tender form (non-refundable in) (₹):** 5000/- **Last Date and time for online submission of E-bids:** 28.12.2020 up to 15.30 hours.

For further similar nature of works and for any detailed information logon to website www.ireps.gov.in up to 15.30 hrs on **28.12.2020**

Any further Communication / Corrigendum shall only be intimated through E-portal www.ireps.gov.in

Sr.Divisional Electrical Engineer/M/Guntur

A1324

For further tender conditions / details and for downloading the tender documents, Please visit website at <https://www.ireps.gov.in> or www.scr.indianrailways.gov.in

Tungabhadra Pushkaralu



Priests perform harati to river Tungabhadra in Kurnool on Tuesday.

— DC

‘Traditional paddy varieties healthier’

A farmer is cultivating 14 varieties of paddy

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, DEC. 1

Some of the enterprising farmers in East Godavari district have shifted to cultivating traditional varieties of paddy using natural farming methods for earning a higher income than what the modern hybrid varieties are fetching now.

A farmer Ulli Suryanarayana, also called Suresh, is cultivating 14 traditional varieties of paddy like Navara, Kalapatti, Dehradun Red Rice, Parimala Sannalu, Burma Black, Ratna, Chintalapudi Sannalu, Kananibogg, Bossbogg, Kuji Patiala, Mysore Malliga, Sidda Sannalu, Indrani and Rakthasali.

According to Suresh, the expense for growing these paddy varieties is ₹20,000 per acre, including labour charges. Their yield is 20 bags per acre without



A farmer in U.kothapalli village in East Godavari district cultivates traditional variety of paddy

application of any pesticides or fertilisers. “Present varieties like Swarna, Samba (BPT), Sona Masoori and others yield 28-30 bags per acre. Rice millers purchase them for between ₹1,800 and ₹2,000 per quintal. But many people are purchasing traditional varieties of paddy from ₹3,000 to ₹4,000 per quintal. Even though the yield per acre of traditional varieties is lower, we can still earn ₹50,000-₹60,000 or even more, as these rice varieties sell for ₹80 to ₹130

per kilo,” the progressive explained.

He went on to point out that Navara rice controls diabetes and costs Rs. 120 to Rs. 125 per kilo in the market. Indrani variety strengthens bones, apart from being very tasty with a fragrant smell. Children are very fond of eating this rice, which is also a very short duration crop. Rakthasali variety of rice increases haemoglobin levels in the body. “People, in particular those living in cities, prefer traditional varieties of

rice for protecting their health,” Suresh underlined.

However, he said due to recent cyclones and rains, the yield of traditional varieties had come down to only 12 bags. He also pointed out that there are many traditional varieties of rice about to go extinct. Bharatiya Swaraj Manch leader Sivarama Raju is another progressive farmer promoting traditional varieties of rice. He is even selling them to people in Hyderabad. He disclosed that farmers cultivating traditional varieties can make “seed” of their own for subsequent plantings.

U. Kothapalli agriculture officer K. Satyanarayana said farmers are indeed paying attention to cultivating traditional varieties. Such farmers have even exhibited their products at several agricultural exhibitions last year.

₹5,000 PM AID SOUGHT FOR SEX WORKERS

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 1

Vimukthi and Indian Leadership Forum Against Trafficking (ILFAT), a national platform formed by the survivors and for the survivors of human trafficking wrote a letter to the Chief Secretary Nilam Sawhney seeking support of ₹5,000 per month to each of the sex workers (including old aged sex workers) in AP.

Vimukthi state coordinator Meharunnisha and ILFAT state in-charge A. Bhanu Priya appealed to the state government to provide ₹5,000 per month to each sex worker and continue it till March 2021. They requested the government of AP to support to continue the education of school and college going children that helps them to avoid this profession and live a life of dignity enjoying their child rights support them with ₹2,500 to the children of sex workers.

₹100cr recovery notice to JC kin for illegal mining

DC CORRESPONDENT ANANTAPUR, DEC. 1

In a major development, former minister J.C. Diwakar Reddy's family has been served notices under Revenue Recovery Act for recouping ₹100.24 crore for illegal mining of limestone in the name of Trishul Cements in Yadiki mandal of Anantapur district “without establishing the unit itself”.

According to deputy director of Mines and Geology, the company representatives failed to respond to notices served on November 26. Even though the lessee company had acknowledged the demand notice, the company failed to pay the due amount within the stipulated time, the notice revealed.

The company had to pay ₹100.24,44,802 towards value, royalty and other taxes for illegal transportation of 13,91,0133 metric tonnes of limestone from the

leased area without valid permits and for misuse of permitted quantity of 1,21,956 tonnes.

The notices were issued to J.C. Diwakar Reddy's son J.C. Pavan Reddy, daughter-in-law Samyuktha Reddy, Venu Gopal Reddy and close aides of JC family S. Hussian Basha, S. Gopal Rao, Timmapuram Devaputrudu, J. Naga Subbarayudu and K. Silas, who are shareholders of the company.

The state government had allotted 649.86 hectares of limestone mines to Trishul Cements in Konuppalapadu village in Yadiki mandal.

The previous government had reportedly extended the lease period for five more years towards construction of a factory.

The YSRC government cancelled that lease and also ordered a probe into illicit mining of about 38,212 metric tonnes of limestone from the

leased mines without constructing the cement unit.

Family members of Diwakar Reddy had also received notices from the High Court in 2019 November over misuse of limestone leases based on a PIL filed by V. Muraliprasad Reddy, a native of Tadipatri who is presently YSRC state secretary, seeking a CBI probe into alleged fraud by the company in 2011.

Mines and Geology Department deputy director S. V. Ramana Rao ordered tahsildars of Yadiki, Tadipatri, Peddapur and Puttur mandals to furnish information about the movable and immovable properties of shareholders of Trishul Cements Company and recover ₹100.24 crore.

The family of J.C. Diwakar Reddy has, however, accused that the notices are part of YSRC government's political vendetta against TD leaders in the state.

CURTAINS DOWN ON PUSHKARALU

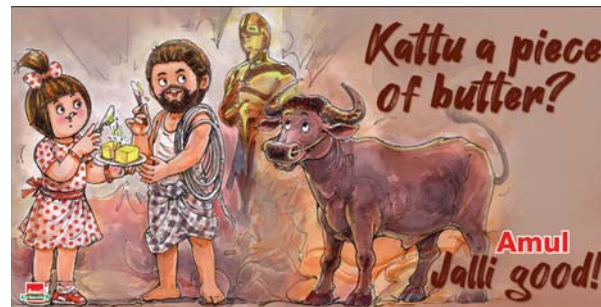
DC CORRESPONDENT KURNOOL, DEC. 1

The 12-day Tungabhadra pushkaralu concluded with traditional ‘purnahuthi’ on Tuesday. As many as 1.65 lakh of people visited the pushkaralu ghats along the course of the river in the district, and all of them were screened for Covid-19. About 20,000 performed ‘pinda pradanam’ and other rituals.

Speaking with media-persons, Kurnool collector G.Veera Pandian said the pushkar ghats would be developed as tourist and entertainment spots. He ordered officials to make an action plan to develop these areas for walking, jogging, skating and spiritual activities and provide food courts as early as possible.

Devotees from the state and those from Telangana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra took part in the pushkaralu at Mantralayam and Sankal Bagh in Kurnool. The 12-day fete was inaugurated by Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on November 20 in Kurnool.

The district administration had set up 23 ghats with facilities for devotees at Mantralayam, Naguladinne in Nandavaram mandal, Gundrevula in Kodumur mandal, Sunkesula and Panchalingala in Kurnool mandal, 10 places of Kurnool city, Nandikotkur Rural, and Sangameswaram in Kothapalli mandal.



State records 685 new Covid-19 cases

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 1

AP recorded 685 new Covid-19 cases raising tally to 8,68,749 and four deaths taking toll to 6,996.

The state health authorities issued Covid-19 bulletin here on Tuesday reporting that out of 51,854 samples tested, 685 persons were found infected with the virus.

Out of a total number of 1,01,09,708 samples tested so far, 8,54,326 patients were recovered while 7,427 patients are still active with the virus.

Among daily Covid-19 cases, Krishna reported the highest of 146 followed by 95 in Chittoor; 87 in Guntur; 77 in West Godavari, 71 in

Visakhapatnam, 70 in East Godavari, 39 in Nellore, 30 each in Kadapa and Prakasam, 18 in Anantapur, 10 in Kurnool, nine in Vizianagaram and three in Srikakulam.

Krishna topped the state with the highest number of total Covid-19 active cases with 1,263 followed by 1,142 in Guntur, 1,098 in East Godavari, 714 in Nellore, 707 in Visakhapatnam, 613 in West Godavari, 547 in Chittoor, 363 in Prakasam, 234 in Srikakulam, 215 in Anantapur, 182 in Kadapa, 179 in Vizianagaram and 170 in Kurnool.

Among daily cases of death of Covid-19 infected patients, Anantapur; Chittoor, Guntur and West Godavari reported one each.

DONATION

S.J. Foundation has been giving donations to well managed charitable institutions engaged in providing services to poor and destitute persons, handicapped people, old age homes and for providing health and educational services to meet their recurring/nonrecurring expenditure. Institutions seeking donations must have valid recognition U/s 80G or 35 AC of IT Act. Well managed charitable institutions desirous of getting donations for furtherance of its activities like construction of school/hospital buildings, purchase of medical equipments, may apply to the Foundation giving details of their activities/requirements. The application form is available on website: www.sitaramjindalfoundation.org or E-mail to: donation.blr@sitaramjindalfoundation.org for details.

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VACANCIES TO BE FILLED UP ON DIRECT RECRUITMENT BASIS
Advertisement Number: NIELIT/NDL/STQC/2020/1 Website: <http://www.nielit.gov.in>.
On behalf of Standardisation Testing & Quality Certification Directorate (STQC) an attached office of MeitY applications are invited from eligible and qualified persons for the following posts in STQC.

Post	Scale of Pay	No. of Vacancies	Reserved for PWD
Scientist-B	Level-10 (Rs. 56100-177500)	10 (UR: 6, EWS: 1 OBC: 3)	OH = 1
Scientific Assistant 'A'	Level-6 (Rs. 35400-112400)	39 (UR: 24, EWS: 3, OBC: 10, SC: 2)	HH = 1 LV = 1

Candidates are requested to apply online at <https://apply-delhi.nielit.gov.in> between **02-12-2020 (11.30 A.M.) and 31-12-2020 (5.30 P.M.)**. No other means/ mode of application will be accepted except ONLINE mode. Before applying, candidates are advised to read the detailed advertisement carefully for determining their eligibility as per specified criteria for the post. Detailed advertisement is also available at nielit.gov.in, meity.gov.in, and stqc.gov.in.

davp 06102/11/0005/2021 **Registrar**

<div>SOUTH CENTRAL RAILWAY</div>									
REVISED TRAIN TIMINGS									
Passenger may kindly note the revised timings of the special trains originating/terminating over SCR:									
REGULAR SPECIAL TRAINS									
S. No.	Train No.	Station From	Old Dept. Time	New Dept. Time	Station To	Old Arr. Time	New Arr. Time	Frequency	
1	02723	Hyderabad	06.25	06.00	New Delhi	09.05	07.50	Daily	
2	02702	Hyderabad	14.50	14.50	Mumbai	04.55	04.55	Daily	
3	02728	Hyderabad	17.15	17.05	Visakhapatnam	05.50	05.35	Daily	
4	02285	Secunderabad	13.10	12.55	H Nizamuddin	10.40	10.50	Sun,Thu	
5	02704	Secunderabad	15.55	15.55	Howrah Jn	17.55	17.40	Daily	
6	02791	Secunderabad	09.35	09.25	Danapur	18.55	18.00	Daily	
7	07007	Secunderabad	22.15	22.40	Darbhanga Jn	13.40	13.25	Tue,Sat	
8	07202	Secunderabad	12.30	12.30	Guntur	21.15	21.00	Daily	
9	07201	Guntur	06.00	06.25	Secunderabad	13.50	13.55	Daily	
10	02794	Nizamabad	14.05	14.05	Tirupati	06.15	06.10	Daily	
11	02793	Tirupati	16.25	17.30	Nizamabad	08.38	09.25	Daily	
12	02774	Secunderabad	05.40	03.55	Shalimar	09.05	06.05	Weekly (Tue)	
13	02775	Kakinada Town	20.10	20.10	Lingampalli	07.30	07.20	Tue,Thu,Sun	
14	02776	Lingampalli	19.55	19.00	Kakinada Town	07.15	06.10	Mon,Wed,Fri	
15	02784	Secunderabad	17.50	21.35	Visakhapatnam	06.50	09.50	Weekly (Sat)	
16	02708	Tirupati	21.50	21.55	Visakhapatnam	11.00	10.30	Wed,Fri,Sun	
FESTIVAL SPECIAL TRAINS									
1	02733	Tirupati	18.25	18.25	Lingampalli	06.55	06.55	Daily	
2	02734	Lingampalli	17.30	17.25	Tirupati	06.00	05.55	Daily	
3	02737	Kakinada Port	19.10	19.10	Lingampalli	06.05	06.05	Daily	
4	02738	Lingampalli	20.30	20.30	Kakinada Port	07.20	07.20	Daily	
5	02755	Narasapur	18.55	18.50	Lingampalli	05.50	05.50	Daily	
6	02756	Lingampalli	21.05	21.05	Narasapur	07.45	07.35	Daily	
7	07225	Vijayawada	19.45	19.45	Hubballi Jn	11.25	11.25	Daily	
8	07610	Purna Jn	18.10	14.10	Patna Jn	02.30	23.20	Weekly(Fri)	
9	02765	Tirupati	15.10	15.40	Amravati	14.50	15.10	Tue,Sat	
10	02785	Kacheguda	19.05	19.05	Mysore Jn	09.30	09.40	Daily	
11	02720	Hyderabad	20.35	20.25	Jaipur	06.05	05.25	Mon,Wed	
12	07005	Hyderabad	23.15	23.05	Raxaul Jn	16.50	16.50	Weekly (Thu)	
13	02730	Secunderabad	12.20	12.20	Trivandrum Central	18.50	18.30	Daily	
14	02756*	Secunderabad	15.15	15.00	Rajkot Jn	19.00	17.50	Mon,Tue,Sat	
15	02760	Hyderabad	18.30	18.00	Tambaram	09.15	08.00	Daily	
16	02757	Secunderabad	08.20	08.20	Sirpur Kagazngr	13.40	13.40	Daily	
17	02758	Sirpur Kagazngr	14.45	14.50	Secunderabad	20.00	20.15	Daily	
18	07614	Nanded	17.30	17.35	Panvel	09.00	09.00	Daily	
19	07049	Hyderabad	22.45	22.45	Aurangabad	13.20	13.20	Daily	
20	07050	Aurangabad	16.15	16.15	Hyderabad	06.30	06.30	Daily	
* Train No. 07018 Secunderabad-Rajkot Festival Special Train No is changed as 02756									
Passengers to note that there are also changes in arrival/departure timings at some of the enroute stations in few of the above trains and also in some trains passing through SCR. Passenger are advised to check the exact train timings to plan their travel accordingly. Passengers are requested to dial 139 or visit National Train Enquiry System (or) IRCTC website for any information in this regard.									
A1327									

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Name Change

SHORT TAKES

KAMAL WANTS PM TO HAVE DIALOGUE WITH FARMERS

Chennai, Dec. 1: Makkal Needhi Maiam chief and actor Kamal Haasan on Tuesday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi should have a dialogue with farmers agitating in Delhi and redress their grievances.

Addressing a press conference here to announce former IAS official Santhosh Babu joining his party, Haasan, answering a question, said a dialogue with farmers was overdue.

"All he (Prime Minister) has to do is look at my farmers. Have a dialogue, it is long overdue. You must have a dialogue. Because it is very important for the nation. You also believe in the good of the nation. Agriculture must be taken care of. This is not a request," Haasan said. Party lines should blur in matters like these and efforts must be taken to address the concerns, he said.

The MNM chief said it was not good for the country to allow more and more voices to support protesters, apparently indicating that before the agitation intensified further, government should intervene and redress the grievances of farmers.

On the Modi government's handling of the farmers agitation, he said, "I like the sound of the violin. But not now. You can't be playing the violin now, when Rome is aflame."

Thousands of farmers were camping at various Delhi border points for the sixth consecutive day on Tuesday protesting against the new farm laws, which they fear would dismantle the minimum support price system and corporatise farming.

BILKIS DADI TURNED AWAY FROM BORDER

New Delhi, Dec. 1: Bilkis Dadi, the octogenarian who was the face of the months-long anti-citizenship law protest in the national capital and featured in the *Time* magazine, was on Tuesday stopped by Delhi Police personnel at the Singhu Border where thousands of farmers have been demonstrating against the centre's new farm laws, officials said.

Bilkis, popularly known as the Shaheen Bagh Dadi, had expressed her willingness to join the farmers' protest at the Delhi-Haryana border at Singhu.

Soon after she reached the border point to extend her support to the agitating farmers, she was stopped by Delhi Police personnel at the border.

"She was stopped at the Singhu Border and was escorted by the police back to her home in southeast Delhi," a senior police officer said.

Bilkis shot into limelight last year during the months-long anti-citizenship law protest at Shaheen Bagh here and was also recognised by the American weekly *Time* magazine as one of the 100 most influential people of 2020 alongside Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bollywood actor Ayushman Khurrana.

During the protest which began in December last year, the 82-year-old sat under a tent with hundreds of women and children, braving the extremely cold weather.

DELHI GOVT NOTIFIES ONE FARM LAW

New Delhi, Dec. 1: The Delhi government has notified one of the three central farm laws and is examining the remaining two, officials said on Tuesday. The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Ordinance, 2020 was notified on November 23, said a senior Delhi government official.

"The remaining two laws are under examination by the development department of the Delhi government," he said.

The ruling AAP said the notification allows farmers to sell their crop anywhere, including outside mandis. Selling of fruits and vegetables was already de-regulated in Delhi many years ago; now this holds for grains too, it said.

The party has openly supported the farmers demands to scrap the laws. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had also demanded withdrawing of the laws in a protest by AAP at Jantar Mantar last month.

Officials said that vegetables and fruits were deregulated in 2014 enabling trading beyond agricultural produce marketing committee managed mandis. The notified law adds food-grains and poultry to the list, they said.

Sportspersons to return awards

On Dec. 5, Kartar Singh, Sajjan Singh Cheema & Rajbir Kaur will join agitation

Chandigarh, Dec. 1: Several former sportspersons including Padma Shri and Arjuna awardees have extended their support to the agitating farmers and said they will return their awards in protest against the "force" used against the peasants en route to Delhi.

Among them are Padma Shri and Arjuna awardee wrestler Kartar Singh, Arjuna awardee basketball player Sajjan Singh Cheema and Arjuna awardee hockey player Rajbir Kaur.

They said they will proceed to Delhi on December 5 and will place their awards outside the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

They slammed the Centre and Haryana government for using water cannons and teargas against the protesting farmers to stop them from going to Delhi.

"We are the children of farmers and they have been holding peaceful agitation for the last several months. Not even a single incident of violence took place.

"But water cannons and teargas shells were used against them when they were going to Delhi. If turbans of our elders and brothers are tossed, then what will we do with our awards and honour? We are in support of our farmers. We do not want such awards and that is why we are returning the same," said Cheema on Tuesday.

Farmers had faced water cannons and teargas when they were heading



Farmers eat a meal during their 'Delhi Chalo' protest against new farm laws, at Ghazipur Delhi-UP border, New Delhi on Tuesday.

- PTI

towards the national capital as part of their 'Delhi Chalo' march against the farm laws. Singh said several former players will go to Delhi on December 5 and will return their awards.

"If farmers do not want such laws, then why the central government was imposing on them," asked Singh, who has retired as Inspector General in the

Punjab Police.

He said that former players would also join farmers' stir at the Delhi borders on December 5.

Singh said they are also trying to contact former players in Haryana for coming out in support of farmers agitation.

Cheema said several former players including Kaur and Arjuna awardee (shotput) Balwinder Singh

have backed them.

Thousands of farmers from Punjab and Haryana have stayed put at various Delhi border points for the sixth consecutive day on Tuesday protesting against the new farm laws, which they fear will dismantle the minimum support price system, leaving them at the "mercy" of big corporates.

- PTI

SHOW RESTRAINT, CENTRE TELLS SECURITYMEN

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, DEC 1

Even as intelligence inputs suggest that the number and strength of agitating farmers on outskirts of Delhi could increase substantially in the coming days, the Home Ministry has categorically asked all security forces deployed all along the borders of the national capital to "show utmost restraint and sensitise their security personnel accordingly."

Sources claimed that Home Ministry wants the security forces to adopt a "humane approach" towards the farmers and ensure that no force, even in terms of use of water cannon or tear gas should be used against the farmers.

"We want to have a humanitarian approach towards the protesting farmers as it has been peaceful so far. Even if there is slight or some small provocation from them, the security forces have been asked to handle the situation with a lot of restraint," a senior Home Ministry official said.

Meanwhile, inputs from multiple agencies available with the Centre suggests that the number of agitating farmers is likely to increase substantially in the coming days as farmer organisations and unions from Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh too will join the ongoing agitation.

Further, more farmer from Punjab and Haryana are expected to join the agitation as they will try and block all major highways and entry and exit points from Delhi.

As many as 500 tractor trolleys are expected to reach Delhi border over the next two to three days, officials claimed.

India fumes as Trudeau backs farmers

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC NEW DELHI, DEC 1

India on Tuesday slammed remarks made by Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on the raging farmers' protest in some states of northern India. Without naming him directly, saying these were "ill-informed and unwarranted" and pertained to the "internal affairs of a democratic country".

New Delhi also said "diplomatic conversations" should "not be misrepresented for political

purposes". The reaction came after the Canadian PM said the protests were "concerning" and that Canada always backed the right to protest peacefully, adding that the Canadian Government had raised the issue with Indian authorities.

In remarks made while wishing the large Canadian Sikh community in his country on the occasion of the Gurupurab, Mr. Trudeau said, "I would be remiss if I didn't start off by recognising the news coming out of India about the protests by farmers. The

situation is concerning and we're all very worried about family and friends ... Let me remind you. Canada will always be there to defend the right of peaceful protest. We believe in the importance of dialogue and that's why we reached out in multiple means directly to the Indian authorities to highlight our concerns."

India hit back sharply, with the Ministry of External Affairs stating, "We have seen some ill-informed comments by Canadian leaders relating to farmers in India. Such comments are unwarrant-

ed, especially when pertaining to the internal affairs of a democratic country. It is also best that diplomatic conversations are not misrepresented for political purposes."

With fringe elements in the Canadian Sikh community often raising the issue of Khalistan, India has been uncomfortable with the perceived reluctance of the Trudeau Government in cracking down hard on such pro-Khalistan radical elements. In fact, the week-long visit of Mr. Trudeau to India in 2018, had been marred by controversy.

Up in arms



A farmer holds a flag, with a picture of Shaheed Bhagat Singh printed on it, as they stage a protest at Singhu border during their Delhi Chalo march against the Centre's new farm laws, in New Delhi on Tuesday.

- PTI

TWO VOICES

Rahul backs farmers, others concerned over Khalistani angle

Differences in Cong over stir

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, DEC. 1

As the farmers' protest continued for the sixth day on Tuesday, differences surfaced within the Congress on the nature of the agitation. While Congress top brass led by former party president Rahul Gandhi came out in full support of the protests, a certain section of Congress leaders in Punjab expressed apprehension about the agitation being hijacked by rogue elements including

Khalistanis. Mr Gandhi began the day by asking the government to wake up and shed "arrogance" to provide protesting farmers their rights.

Observing that everyone was indebted to the farmers for their hard work, he said this debt could be repaid only by giving them justice.

"The food grower is sitting in protest on the roads and fields and speeches are being given on TV. We all are indebted to the hard work of farmers. This debt will be over

only by giving them justice and their rights, and not by mistreating them or by beating them with batons or using tear gas against them," the former Congress President tweeted.

"Wake up and come down from the chair of arrogance and think of giving the farmers their rights," he added.

However, sources said that within the Congress, specially in Punjab, there was a deep concern over the turn the movement was taking.

Ravneet Singh Bittu, Congress MP from Ludhiana, came out in the open and said that rogue elements including Khalistanis entering the agitation remained a concern.

Sources said that Punjab Congress Chief Sunil Jhakhar held a meeting with Chief Minister Amarinder Singh over this.

It might be recalled that Haryana Chief Minister M L Khattar had been the first to claim that the agitation had been infiltrated

by Khalistanis.

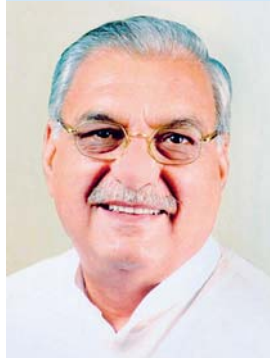
The Centre had invited agitating farmer unions for talks on December 3 but looking at the seriousness of the issue and in view of Covid pandemic and cold, the meeting was preponed to Tuesday.

The stir by farmers appeared to intensify despite a strong defence of the legislation by the government and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has accused the opposition of "playing tricks" on farmers again through misinformation.

We will always stand by farmers: Hooda

Q&A

Bhupinder Singh Hooda



As the farmer protests intensifies, former Chief Minister of Haryana and Leader of Opposition in Haryana Mr. Bhupinder Singh Hooda speaks to *Ashhar Khan* over the crisis.

How do you see these protests by farmers on the borders of Delhi?

Let me at the outset state clearly that until the farmers win this battle, we stand firmly with their demands. The attitude adopted by the government to crush the movement is completely undemocratic as every citizen and every class has the right to demonstrate peacefully for their just demands in democracy. We have been trying to bring to the notice of the government that there are serious lapses in these three bills that have now become laws but the government is refusing to listen to their woes.

There are questions being raised that the farmers are being instigated by vested interests? Also, that they are being fed false information about the laws. Your comments?

This is blatantly false. There is no such thing like this happening. The farmers of Haryana have been agitating against the three agricultural laws for many months and I have repeatedly urged the government to withdraw these laws or bring in a new law to guarantee minimum support price (MSP) for farmers. Similarly, we have seen in neighboring states also there have been protests for long but the central government and the BJP just refused to see and acknowledge the unease and injustice being met out to farmers. Also Mr. Khattar should tell us whether he does not consider the agitating farmers as residents of Haryana? If the farmers of Haryana are not part of the movement, then who did the government lathi-charge in Pipli? Who are the people who were detained by the Haryana Police before their Delhi march? Who where are the thousands of farmers against whom the Haryana government has filed cases. They are just trying to deflect attention from the real issue.

The way the farmers were stopped from marching to Delhi like water cannon was used, tear gas was fired and roads were dug up. What is your response?

The government's job is to keep the roads and highways open, not to close them down. The government's job is to make roads but this government blocked roads and dug roads to stop the farmers. The government has completely lost the trust of the farmers and this is why the farmers do not believe in the assurances given by it and now wants a law that guarantees MSP. I don't understand why is it so difficult for the political leadership to hear out the grievances of the farmers. Till now the entire agitation of the farmers has been peaceful. But the Haryana government's role in the entire movement has been negative.

What is your demand from the government?

The government should care about the farmers. They should at once keep these three laws in abeyance. Then the Prime Minister should call a delegation of the farmers and hear them out. Also cases that have been filed against the farmers in Haryana, almost 12,000 of them, should be immediately taken back. I would like to appeal to my farmer brothers that if the Centre does not listen

We have heard the government saying that these laws are not anti-farmers and the farmers say that they are so now what happens next?

I feel that the farmers have made up their mind on this issue. The government should know that the farmers of Haryana and Punjab have stood shoulder to shoulder in this movement. They are also getting support from farmers of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and other states. Ignoring them is an insult to those who work hard to put food on our tables. As a responsible Opposition, we fully support the demands of the farmers. Until the farmers win this battle, we stand firmly with the demands of the farmers. Again I do not understand what is the problem in passing a law that makes adhering to MSP compulsory? High handedness in all these issues will not get us anywhere. The government should adopt a humane approach and ensure that the issue is resolved at the earliest instead of putting conditions and giving future dates.

What will the Congress do in all this?

Obviously we will stand with the farmers. The Congress has taken a principled stand on this since the monsoon session of parliament when this issue came up. We were not allowed to put our points across and the government brazenly passed all legislation. Several Congress ruled states have already passed legislations to nullify the impact of the centers legislations. Infact I have several times asked the state government to do away with the law but no avail. I often find that the state government's ignorance towards such a large movement is not only shocking but also disturbing.

What are the issues that you have with these three laws?

The three anti agricultural laws, as I would call them, will give vested interests the opportunity to grab the ₹20-25 lakh crores agriculture commodities market by subverting and subjugating the interest of farmers, farm labourers, the small grain merchants, the labourer work and the employees working in the grain markets across India. It tantamounts to finishing forever the Minimum Support Price Mechanism which will be a death knell for the interest of the farmer.

The laws have provisions which have an overriding effect on the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee and MSP regime.

SHORT TAKES
GERMANY BANS
FAR-RIGHT,
PRO-NAZI GROUP

Berlin, Dec. 1: Police raided homes in three German states early Tuesday after the German government banned a far-right group, a spokesman for the interior ministry said.

The homes of 13 members of the far-right group Wolfbrigade 44 were searched in Hesse, Mecklenburg West-Pomerania and North Rhine-Westphalia to confiscate the group's funds and far-right propaganda material, the German news agency DPA reported.

"Whoever fights against the basic values of our free society will get to feel the resolute reaction of our government," Interior Minister Horst Seehofer said, according to his spokesman, Steve Alter. The group's goal is to re-establish a Nazi dictatorship, according to security officials. The 44 in their name stands for the fourth letter in the alphabet, DD, and is an abbreviation for Division Dirlewanger. Oskar Dirlewanger was a known Nazi war criminal and commander of a Nazi SS special unit. The far-right group was founded in 2016. It is known for possessing illegal weapons and members have participated in far-right protests. Earlier this year, the German government banned other far-right groups, including the Combat 18 and the Nordadler.

TAINTED RICE
WINE KILLS 7 IN
CAMBODIA

Phnom Penh, Dec. 1: Seven people died and more than 130 others were hospitalised in Cambodia after drinking rice wine that health authorities believe was adulterated with a toxic substance.

The Health Ministry said the incident happened Saturday in a remote rural area of central Cambodia's Kampong Chhnang province, where villagers drank the wine at a funeral ceremony. It said a toxic substance in the wine was the cause of the deaths. Most of the people who were sickened are recovering, with some already released from the hospital, it said in a statement Monday.

Dangerous cheap but powerful alcoholic drinks are a perennial problem in Cambodia's poor rural areas, and several accidental poisonings are reported each year. Often the alcohol is not distilled properly and contains methanol, which can kill even in small amounts.

Rice wine is typically homemade and is popular at social gatherings, although in at least one case the tainted wine was a bottled brand made in the capital, Phnom Penh, that had been sold in provincial markets for several years without incident.

The Health Ministry said it sent three experts to the village on the day of the incident to investigate the situation and make sure sales and consumption of the wine were immediately stopped. In one of the worst incidents, 14 villagers died and more than 200 others were sickened in the province of Kratie in May 2018.

BIDEN, HARRIS
GREET ON GURU
NANAK B' ANNIV

Washington, Dec. 1: US President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris have greeted the Sikh community on the 551st birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev, emphasising that the timeless and universal message of compassion and unity from the founder of Sikhism can inspire and help Americans heal as people and as a nation.

In a joint statement issued by the offices of Biden and Harris, the two leaders said that for more than five centuries, Guru Nanak's teachings on spiritual enlightenment, service to humanity and moral integrity have endured and embodied each day by Sikhs in America and around the world. "For more than five centuries, Guru Nanak's teachings on spiritual enlightenment, service to humanity, and moral integrity have endured and are embodied each day by Sikhs in America and around the world, as we have seen during this challenging year," Biden and Harris said.

"We are grateful to all of the Sikh Americans who continue to stand by their neighbours as essential workers of the pandemic, and who open their hearts and community kitchens in their gurdwaras to prepare, serve, and deliver countless meals for people most in need," they said. "During the summer of protest, we saw Sikhs of all ages marching peacefully for racial and gender equality, religious pluralism, and fidelity to truth and justice — core tenets of the Sikh faith," they said.

Euphoria in Azerbaijan



Azerbaijani soldiers hold national flags and a portrait of Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev as they celebrate the transfer of the Lachin region to Azerbaijan's control, as part of a peace deal that required Armenian forces to cede the Azerbaijani territories they held outside Nagorno-Karabakh, in Agghabadi, Azerbaijan, on Tuesday. Azerbaijan has completed the return of territory under a Russia-brokered peace deal that ended six weeks of fierce fighting over Nagorno-Karabakh.

— AP

Vaccine: Europe agency
to decide on Dec. 29

It will convene meet to find efficacy for it to be approved

Berlin, Dec. 1: The European Medicines Agency will convene a meeting on December 29 to decide if there is enough data about the safety and efficacy of the Covid-19 vaccine developed by Pfizer and BioNTech for it to be approved, the regulator said Tuesday.

The agency also said Tuesday it could decide as early as January 12 whether to approve a rival Covid-19 vaccine developed by Moderna Inc. The German pharmaceutical company BioNTech and its US partner Pfizer said earlier Tuesday that they had asked the regulator for speeded-up, conditional approval of their coronavirus vaccine, concluding the rolling review process they initiated with the agency on October 6.

The move comes a day after rival Moderna said it was asking US and European regulators to allow the use of its Covid-19 vaccine. BioNTech said if the vaccine, currently named BNT162b2, is approved, its use in Europe could begin before the end of 2020.

The companies said last month that clinical trials with 44,000 participants showed the vaccine is 95% effective. The efficacy rate in particularly vulnerable older age groups was more than 94%, they said. In a statement, the EU medicines regulator said it had already begun a "rolling review" of the Moderna vaccine based on laboratory data previously submitted by the company and would now assess data on how well that vaccine triggers an immune response and whether it is safe enough for broad use across Europe. The agency said that "if the data are robust enough to conclude on quality, safety and effectiveness," then it could approve the Moderna vaccine at a meeting scheduled for January 12.

BioNTech and Pfizer have already submitted a request for emergency approval with the US Food and Drug Administration and the UK regulator MHRA, as well as rolling submissions in other countries including in Australia, Canada and Japan.

— AP

Trump Coronavirus
adviser Atlas resigns

Washington, Dec. 1: US President Donald Trump's controversial special adviser on the Coronavirus, Dr Scott Atlas, has resigned. During his four months in the role, Atlas, who had no formal experience in public health or infectious diseases, questioned the need for masks and other measures to control the pandemic that has killed over 268,000 people in America.

While questioning the usefulness of masks he was against lockdowns and promoted the idea of herd immunity. The 65-

year-old the Stanford University neuroradiologist resigned on Monday at the end of his 130-day temporary assignment, according to US media reports.

Atlas tweeted a photo of his resignation letter on Monday. In the letter, he said his "advice was always focused on minimising all the harms from both the pandemic and the structural policies themselves, especially to the working class and the poor." "I sincerely wish the new team all the best as they guide the nation," he wrote.

— PTI

UK MPs to vote on
tier-based lockdown

London, Dec. 1: UK Parliamentarians on Tuesday are set to vote on the government's tier-based coronavirus lockdown as the country's health minister said the Covid-19 situation was "back under control" but vigilance was necessary. UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock attempted to rally lockdown sceptics at a Downing Street briefing on Monday evening, reiterating the need for a regional system of tiers, which come in force after England's current nationwide lockdown imposed in wake of Covid ends on

Wednesday. "While we can let up a little, we can't afford to let up a lot," said Hancock.

"We've reduced pressures on the NHS (National Health System), we've brought down the number of coronavirus cases, we've got this virus back under control... The success of our collective efforts means that from Wednesday, everyone in England, even those in tier three, can have some greater freedoms — but we don't have much headroom," he said.

— PTI

Trafficking up: Nobel winner

United Nations, Dec. 1: Nobel Peace Prize laureate Nadia Murad said the Coronavirus pandemic has increased trafficking of women and gender-based violence, leaving the health and safety of women "on the line." The 27-year-old activist, who was forced into sexual slavery by Islamic State fighters in Iraq, said curfews, lockdowns and travel restrictions imposed by governments to slow the spread of the virus "have had unintended consequences on women worldwide."

"Rather than reducing human trafficking and gender-based violence, the pandemic has increased the risk of exploitation and brutality against those most vulnerable," she said. "Numerous countries have seen increases in

reports of domestic violence since Covid began." She said domestic tensions have intensified in confined living spaces, and stay-at-home orders "are increasing human trafficking farther underground, out of sight of law enforcement."

"The few resources for prevention, rescue and rehabilitation are being stretched thin," she said.

— AP

VIRUS: BIBLICAL
BETHLEHEM LOSES
CHRISTMAS CHEER

Bethlehem, Dec. 1: The Coronavirus has cast a pall over Christmas celebrations in Bethlehem, all but shutting down the biblical town revered as Jesus' birthplace at the height of the normally cheery holiday season. Missing are the thousands of international pilgrims who normally descend upon the town. Restaurants, hotels and souvenir shops are closed.

The renowned Christmas tree lighting service will be limited to a small group of authorised people, as will church services on Christmas Eve. "Bethlehem is dead," said Maryana al-Arja, owner of the 120-room Angel Hotel on the outskirts of Bethlehem.

The hotel was the site of the West Bank's first coronavirus outbreak — when a group of Greek tourists came down with the virus last March. She kept her 25 workers on staff for several months but ultimately couldn't continue to pay them.

Al-Arja, who herself was infected with the virus, said she has been forced to close the hotel and lay off the entire staff because there is no sign of the pandemic ending or tourists visiting anytime soon.

— AP

US opposes release
of Tahawwur Rana

Washington, Dec. 1: The US government has moved a motion in a federal court in California opposing the release of Pakistani-origin Canadian businessman Tahawwur Rana, who has been declared a fugitive by India for his involvement in the 2008 Mumbai terror attack case, describing him a flight risk.

Rana, 59, a childhood friend of David Coleman Headley, was re-arrested on June 10 in Los Angeles on an extradition request by India for his involvement in the 26/11 Mumbai terror strike in which 166 people, including six Americans, were killed.

Pakistani-American LeT terrorist Headley was involved in plotting the 2008 Mumbai terror attack. He was made an approver in the case, and is currently serving a 35-year prison term in the US for his role in the attack. Rana is a declared fugitive in India.

His extradition hearing is scheduled for February 12. In a motion filed before

the US District Court Judge in Los Angeles Jacqueline Chelonian on Monday, US attorney Nicola T Hanna urged the court to deny Rana's motion for release for failure to prove that he is not a flight risk or that special circumstances exist and continue to detain him pending resolution of this extradition proceeding.

Hanna's motion comes in opposition to the latest effort of Rana to avoid detention pending extradition, by capitalising on the developments of the Covid-19 pandemic. Rana's attorney has argued that pandemic warrants his release from custody. Hanna said a fugitive facing extradition is entitled to bail only if he can demonstrate that he is not a flight risk, is not a danger to the community, and that "special circumstances" warrant his release from custody.

Rana in his court filing has said the Bureau of Prison (BOP) was unable to manage the Covid-19

pandemic and as such he should be released from custody. Hanna argued that BOP is committed to fighting Covid-19 and protecting the inmates in its custody. "In addition to ignoring the BOP's ability to manage the pandemic, Rana ignores the significant increase of Covid-19 cases in the population in which he wishes to be released," Hanna said, adding, unlike the BOP Rana will not have immediate access to frequent Covid-19 testing, and should he test positive, treatment.

Following the increase of Covid-19 cases, Metropolitan Detention Centre Los Angeles began testing inmates, including Rana. MDC-LA has not received the results of his Covid-19 test conducted on November 27. Accordingly, it has placed Rana in isolation, pending confirmation that he is not positive for Covid-19. In denying Rana's initial motion for release in July, the court had said he constituted a flight risk.

— PTI

Rahm may be
transport secy

Chicago, Dec. 1: President-elect Joe Biden is considering former Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, a substantial and somewhat divisive figure in Democratic Party politics, to serve as his transportation secretary. Biden's selection of his nominee to lead the Transportation Department is not believed to be imminent and Emanuel is among multiple candidates in the running for the Cabinet position, according to people familiar with the matter who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

But his candidacy threatens to pull at the divisions among Democrats that Biden has largely managed to avoid as he begins to fill out his administration. Progressive leaders, including Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, have been especially vocal in criticising the prospect of Emanuel joining the Cabinet.

Emanuel, a former three-term congressman who served as Barack Obama's first White House chief of staff and was a senior adviser in Bill

Clinton's administration, has been a significant force in Democratic Party politics for much of the last three decades. He also turned reviving Chicago's ragged public transportation system and overhauling the city's two busy, worn airports into a top issue during his eight years as mayor.

Emanuel is also credited with making Chicago one of the most bicycle-friendly cities in country during his time in office. But selecting Emanuel could be a tough sell to some in the progressive wing of the Democratic Party who are critical of his handling of the high-profile police shooting death of Laquan McDonald, a Black teen killed by a white police officer, during his time as Chicago's mayor. Whether Emanuel is ultimately picked could also be affected by other factors as Biden has placed a premium on building out a Cabinet and team of senior advisers from a diverse set of backgrounds, according to people familiar with the matter.

— AP

Biden gets access
to Prez Daily Brief

Wilmington, Dec. 1: Joe Biden on Monday got his first look as president-elect at the President's Daily Brief, a top secret summary of US intelligence and world events — a document former first lady Michelle Obama has called "The Death, Destruction, and Horrible Things Book." Biden has already had eyes on different iterations of the so-called PDB, which is tailored to the way each president likes to absorb information. More than a decade ago, Biden read President George W. Bush's PDB during Biden's transition into the vice presidency.

After that, he read President Barack Obama's PDB for eight years. Now, after a four-year break, he's reading President Donald Trump's PDB.

"The briefers almost certainly will be asking Biden what he prefers in terms of format and style," said David Priess, author of "The President's Book of Secrets," a history of the PDB. "At a minimum, they're seeing what seems to resonate most with him so that when they make the book his book, they can tailor it to him."

Obama's PDB was a 10- to 15-page document tucked in a leather binder, which he found waiting for him on the breakfast table. Later in his presidency, he liked reading the ultra-secret intelligence brief on a secured iPad. "Michelle called it 'The Death, Destruction, and Horrible Things Book,'" Obama wrote in his recently released book, "A Promised Land."

— AP

SPACE | RESOURCES

Research may radically change logistics of future missions to the Red Planet and beyond

Novel system can extract oxygen, fuel from Mars water

Washington, Dec. 1: A team led by an Indian-origin scientist in the US has developed a new system that can extract oxygen and hydrogen fuel from the salty water on Mars, and may radically change the logistics of future missions to the Red Planet and beyond.

The researchers noted that Mars is very cold, and water that is not frozen is almost certainly full of salt from the Martian soil, which lowers its freezing temperature. Using electricity to break the briny

water down into oxygen and hydrogen fuel requires removing the salt, which is a cumbersome and a costly endeavour in a harsh, dangerous martian environment, they said.

The team, led by Vijay Ramani, a professor at the Washington University in the US, examined the new system in a simulated Martian atmosphere at minus 36 degrees Celsius. "Our Martian brine electrolyser radically changes the logistical calculus of missions to Mars and beyond. This technology is equally

useful on Earth where it opens up the oceans as a viable oxygen and fuel source," said Ramani.

In 2008, NASA's Phoenix Mars Lander "touched and tasted" Martian water, vapours from melted ice dug up by the lander. Since then, the European Space Agency's Mars Express has discovered several underground ponds of water which remain in a liquid state thanks to the presence of magnesium perchlorate salt.

In the journal *Proceedings of the National Acad-*

● IN 2008, NASA's Phoenix Mars Lander "touched and tasted" Martian water. Since then, the European Space Agency's Mars Express has discovered several underground ponds of water which remain in a liquid state thanks to the presence of magnesium perchlorate salt.

emy of Sciences (PNAS), the researchers noted that in order to live — even

temporarily — on Mars, not to mention to return to Earth, astronauts will need to manufacture some of the necessities, including water and fuel, on the Red Planet.

NASA's Perseverance rover is en-route to Mars, carrying instruments that will use high-temperature electrolysis. However, the Mars Oxygen In-Situ Resource Utilisation Experiment (MOXIE) will be producing oxygen only, from the carbon dioxide in the air. The system developed in Ramani's lab can produce

25 times more oxygen than MOXIE using the same amount of power, said the researchers, adding it also produces hydrogen, which could be used to fuel astronauts' trip home.

"Our novel brine electrolyser incorporates a lead ruthenate pyrochlore anode developed by our team in conjunction with a platinum on carbon cathode" Ramani said. "These carefully designed components coupled with the optimal use of traditional electrochemical engineering principles has yielded this

high performance," he said. The careful design and unique anode allow the system to function without the need for heating or purifying the water source, the researchers said.

"Paradoxically, the dissolved perchlorate in the water, so-called impurities, actually help in an environment like that of Mars," said Shrihari Sankarabramanian, a research scientist in Ramani's group and joint first author of the research paper on the study.

— PTI

SHORT TAKES

Hamilton tests Covid-19 positive

Sakhir, Bahrain: The Mercedes-AMG Petronas F1 Team says seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton has tested positive for Covid-19 and will miss the Sakhir Grand Prix this weekend.

The team issued a statement saying Hamilton was tested three times last week and returned a negative result each time, the last on Sunday afternoon at the Bahrain International Circuit where he won the Grand Prix.

"He woke up on Monday morning with mild symptoms and was informed at the same time that a contact prior to arrival in Bahrain had subsequently tested positive," the team said. "Lewis, therefore, took a further test and returned a positive result. This has since been confirmed by a retest. Hamilton is in isolation in accordance with the health protocols in Bahrain. Apart from mild symptoms, he is otherwise fit and well, and the entire team sends him its very best wishes for a swift recovery," the team statement said. — AP

Bach unopposed in bid for 2nd term

Lausanne: Thomas Bach will stand unopposed to serve a second term as International Olympic Committee president, the body said on Tuesday.

Bach, a 66-year-old German lawyer, is set to be confirmed for a second and final four-year term at an IOC session in March in Athens.

Bach was initially elected for an eight-year term as Olympic chief in September 2013, taking over from Belgian Jacques Rogge. If re-elected, Bach's term will end in 2025, a year after the Paris Olympics. The next term for the IOC presidency will start after the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, which will now take place from July 23-Aug 8, 2021, having been postponed because of the coronavirus pandemic. Bach, who won gold for West Germany in the foil fencing team event at the 1976 Olympics, was elected an IOC member at the age of 37. — AFP

Olympic rings back in Tokyo Bay

Tokyo: The five Olympic rings are back in Tokyo Bay. They were removed for maintenance four months ago shortly after the Tokyo Olympics were postponed until next year because of the Covid-19 pandemic. The rings arrived on Tuesday after a short cruise from Yokohama and are positioned on a barge in the shadow on Tokyo's Rainbow Bridge. The rings painted blue, black, red, green, and yellow are gigantic. They stand about 15 meters tall and 33 meters in length about 50 feet tall and 100 feet in length. The rings will be lighted at night and herald the coming of the Olympics, which are to open on July 23, 2021, followed by the Paralympics on August 24. The rings made their first appearance early in 2020, just a few months before the Olympics were postponed late in March. — AP

Lopez banned 8 years for fixing

London: Spanish tennis player Enrique Lopez was banned for eight years on Tuesday for fixing matches at tournaments in 2017.

The Tennis Integrity Unit said Lopez cannot play in or attend any officially recognized tournament while banned. He was fined 25,000.

The 29-year-old Lopez reached a career high singles ranking of No. 154 in 2018, though never qualified for the main draw at a Grand Slam event. His best doubles ranking was No. 135. The TIU said three charges of match fixing were proven and two charges were not proven. The tournaments Lopez tried to corrupt were not identified. — AP

Live on TV

CRICKET

Australia vs India: Third ODI from 9.10 am on Sony Six, Ten 1, HD

FOOTBALL

Indian Super League: Hyderabad FC vs Jamshedpur from 7.20 pm on Star Sports 2, 3

Champions League: Istanbul Basaksehir vs RB Leipzig from 11.25 pm on Sony Ten 2; Manchester United vs PSG from 1.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 2; Ferencváros vs Barcelona from 1.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 1; Juventus vs Dynamo Kyiv from 1.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Six; Sevilla vs Chelsea from 1.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 3

Third time lucky?

India look to salvage pride in third ODI against Oz

Canberra, Dec. 1: Left chasing shadows in the first two games, a listless Indian team would most certainly tweak their bowling combination in order to avoid a second successive clean-sweep when they take on Australia in the third and final ODI here on Wednesday.

A 0-3 defeat against Australia would be their second rout in consecutive ODI series having met the same fate in New Zealand earlier this year.

"We are very much determined to go out there to win the next match and see that it's not a clean sweep," top-order batsman Shreyas Iyer said when asked what his team can do to stop Australia's first in 20 years.

"Our bowlers are really positive with their work ethic and we could see that during training, a few of the bowlers practising with certain plans," he added.

The first two games turned out to be run-fests in which Australia out-batted Virat Kohli's men and before they switch over to the T20 series, a win at the picturesque Manuka Oval could do their confidence a world of good.

Skipper Kohli has been the first to admit that they have been "out-played" in the two games and it is expected that some corrective measures will be taken in order to get their campaign back on track.

Navdeep Saini, India's fastest bowler, like a lot of others on his first tour of Australia, has looked clueless.

It could well be possible that one among Shardul Thakur, with an experience of 27 international games, or the yorker sensation' rookie left-arm Thangarasu Natarajan will be seen replacing Saini.

In case of Natarajan, it could be his international debut. — PTI

Langer feels Warner paves way for others to grab slot

Canberra, Dec. 1: A groin injury has ruled David Warner out of at least the first Test against India and Australia coach Justin Langer says the temporarily vacant opening slot will go to the one who performs well for Australia A in the upcoming tour games against the visitors.

The Australian cricket fraternity has been debating about Warner's opening partner in the Test series with a few backing the struggling Joe Burns to keep his place while others want the young William Pucovski to open.

However, the injury to Warner has changed the scenario and has created a situation where both Burns and Pucovski could open.

Langer said, it has



India captain Virat Kohli (left) talks with teammate Mohammed Shami during the second One-Day International match against Australia at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Friday. — AP

Iyer glad that Oz have plan against him

Canberra, Dec. 1: Overwhelmed that the Australians devised a short ball strategy against him, Indian batsman Shreyas Iyer says it can best be tackled by adopting a counter-offensive approach and taking advantage of the field placing.

Josh Hazlewood got Iyer into a tangle with a well-directed bouncer in the first ODI while he gave a better account of himself in the second game where

he scored 38 off 36 balls.

"I am really happy that they are coming up with a plan (against me)," Iyer said on the eve of the inconsequential third ODI when asked about the home team peppering him with short-pitched stuff.

"I feel overwhelmed and take it as a challenge. But I thrive under pressure and it motivates me to go against them. I feel it (a short leg and leg gully) helps to take advantage

● **Hazlewood got Iyer into a tangle with a well-directed bouncer in the first ODI while he gave a better account of himself in the second game where he scored 38 off 36 balls.**

and score more runs and make best use of it." Playing the short stuff

is all about mind-set for Iyer along with the adjustment while batting at the nets.

"It's all about mind-set that you need to adjust. How you need to place yourself on the wicket. Rather than bending down too much (during stance), you stand upright. It easier to pick up the short one.

"I have set a pattern for myself. Every time I play, I give myself a little bit of time and get set." — PTI

CAPTAIN FINCH STANDS FOR STRUGGLING STARC

Canberra, Dec. 1: Top pacer Mitchell Starc's patchy form is among the few worries for a rampaging Australia in the ongoing series against India but skipper Aaron Finch on Tuesday threw his weight behind the seasoned campaigner, saying there is no need to panic just yet.

The left-arm seamer, who has an outstanding record with the new ball in white-ball cricket, has been far from his best in the ongoing series against India. In the two ODIs, Starc has managed to claim just one wicket while giving away 147 runs in 18 overs. Australia won both the games.

"He hasn't been at his very best, and you have to understand his standards are a lot higher than what you expect from most other people because of how dominant he's been over

the last eight or nine years, especially in the white-ball formats," Finch said.

"He'd love to be swinging the ball and getting it right early on, but the reality is when you're defending big totals and playing against good players, they're coming hard at you," he added.

With star pacer Pat Cummins rested for the final ODI, Finch said there will be discussions on how to use Starc.

"So, there'll be conversations today about what we can do slightly different.

"We'll chat about that today. But, definitely no panic stations here from my point of view," Finch said.

Since the World Cup last year, Starc has endured a dip in form. The pacer has picked just 12 wickets while bleeding runs at an economy of 6.28 in 11 matches. — PTI

SHAH RUKH INVESTS IN USA CRICKET LEAGUE

Kolkata, Dec. 1: Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan's Knight Riders Group, on Tuesday, announced their foray into the untapped US cricket market investing in development of Major League Cricket with a multi-million dollar T20 tournament.

As per the deal, Knight Riders, will join hands with American Cricket Enterprises (ACE) to become a stakeholder in development of the sport in the region.

"For several years now, we have been expanding the Knight Riders brand globally and closely watching the potential for T20 cricket in the USA," Shah Rukh, the principal owner of the Knight Riders group, said in a media statement. — PTI

Mumbai sweep aside East Bengal

Goa, Dec. 1: A thumping 3-0 victory over newcomers SC East Bengal helped Mumbai City FC climb top of the Hero Indian Super League table at the GMC Stadium here on Tuesday.

Hugo Boumous assisted all three goals as a brace from Adam Le Fondre (20', 48') and a strike from Hernan Santana (58') saw Mumbai register their second straight win with SCEB yet to open their account.

Mumbai made four changes from their 1-0 win against FC Goa, with Ahmed Jahouh returning to the eleven. Meanwhile, SCEB made two changes to the side that lost the Kolkata derby.

SCEB suffered a huge blow early on as defender Daniel Fox was replaced by Mohammad Rafique.

Mumbai had the opportunity to break the deadlock in the 10th minute but they failed to convert.

Six minutes later,

Mumbai goalkeeper Amrinder Singh was also called into action. Rafique pounced on a misplaced pass from Jahouh before firing a shot from long range that was kept away by Amrinder. But it didn't take long for Mumbai to grab the lead. Mumbai won the ball outside their own box and Rowlin Borges provided a sublime diagonal ball towards Boumous on the left. The Frenchman displayed brilliant compo-

HYDERABAD FC LOOK TO EXTEND UNBEATEN RUN

Vasco, Dec. 1: Hyderabad FC will look to continue their unbeaten run when they play their third game in 10 days, taking on Jamshedpur FC in an Indian Super League match here on Wednesday.

While the league has seen a series of draws over the weekend, Hyderabad and Jamshedpur are coming into the game on the back of contrasting form.

While Hyderabad are unbeaten in two games to be currently placed at the fourth position, Owen Coyle's Jamshedpur are ninth in the table.

JFC played two eventful games so far a season opening 1-2 loss to Chennaiyin FC followed by a 2-2 draw against Odisha FC on Sunday. — PTI

sure in the box to beat his marker and find Le Fondre, who made an easy tap in.

The Islanders continued to dominate the game after taking the lead. — Agencies

PELLEGRINI'S BETIS LOSE AGAIN IN LIGA

Seville, Dec. 1: Eibar defeated Real Betis 2-0 in the Spanish league, handing Manuel Pellegrini's team their fifth loss in six matches.

Japan forward Yoshinori Muto and Esteban Burgos scored five minutes apart early in the second half to give Eibar the away victory.

The Basque Country club moved to 12th place, while Betis dropped to 15th after their third defeat in a row. It was outscored 17-5 in their last six games, with their only win against promoted Elche.

Pellegrini has been trying to rebuild his team without Spain midfielder Sergio Canales, who injured a tendon two weeks ago with the national side and is expected to be out until next year.

Eibar has lost only one of their last seven games. They won in Seville despite playing without defender Paulo Oliveira and forward Quique Gonz lez because of injuries, and without striker Kike Garcia because of a suspension. — AP



Fulham's Ademola Lookman (left) celebrates with Andre-Frank Zambo Anguissa after scoring against Leicester City in their English Premier League match at King Power Stadium in Leicester on Monday. — AFP

Fulham escape relegation zone

London, Dec. 1: The first ballooned over the crossbar. The second was a dreadful attempt at a "Panenka" that flopped into the goalkeeper's arms. The third flew off target because of an unfortunate slip.

Three embarrassing penalty misses have summed up Fulham's miserable start to life back in the English Premier League, so hopes weren't exactly high when the team was awarded another against Leicester on Monday.

This time, no mistake. Ivan Cavaleiro one of the spot kick culprits from previous matches stepped up and curled his effort high into the net for a goal that ultimately proved the winners at King Power Stadium.

A 2-1 victory was only Fulham's second in 10 games since promotion

back to the top-flight and it lifted the team out of the relegation zone.

It also ended Fulham's penalty nightmare.

"I didn't feel pressure," said Cavaleiro, who slipped before shanking a penalty over the bar in last week's 3-2 home loss to Everton.

"That happens in football and the manager just gave me confidence to take it and I did."

A penalty proved to be pivotal in Monday's late match, with Aston Villa striker Ollie Watkins hitting the bar with a second-half effort to allow West Ham to hold on for a 2-1 win at their Olympic Stadium and climb to fifth place. Watkins also had a stoppage-time goal ruled out by the video assistant referee when his outstretched arm was adjudged to have made him offside before he turned in a cross from the left. — AP

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