www.thehansindia.com Forecast: Mostly sunny. Temp: Max.29°C. Min.18°C. Humidity: 44% Sunrise: 06:40 Sunset: 06:19



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WINDOWS



Jain priests and devotees perform rituals during the 'Mastakabhishek' of Lord Rishabhdevs at Tapasthali in Prayagraj on Thursday

Big IPL pay day for pacers, all-rounders

CHENNAI: All-rounders and foreign fast bowlers fetched the big bucks at this year's IPL players' auction where South Africa's Chris Morris clinched a recordbreaking Rs 16.25 crore deal with Rajasthan Royals and uncapped Karnataka player Krishnappa Gowtham also invited a bank-breaking bid. Morris became the most expensive buy in the IPL auction history with Rajasthan Royals shelling out big money for the all-rounder even as uncapped players such as Gowtham also hogged the limelight here on Thursday. Spin bowling all-rounder Gowtham was bought for a record Rs 9.25 crore by the Chennai Super Kings. The 32year-old is currently with the Indian team as a net bowler for the ongoing Test series against England.▶ P14

Pvt buses in Corbett Tiger Reserve areas

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Thursday stayed plying of private company buses in the core of area of Corbett Tiger Reserve and also issued notice to the Uttarakhand government. A bench headed by Chief Justice SA Bobde and comprising Justices AS Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian said this is an important matter. "We grant interim stay", said the bench. The plea has been filed by advocate Gaurav Kumar Bansal challenging the decision of the forest department to allow a private company to ply their buses within a core area of Corbett Tiger Reserve. The plea cited the illegal act done by the Forest Department of Uttarakhand where the officials in order to provide wrongful gain to a private sector company by allowing its buses to ply within the core



area of Corbett Tiger Reserve.

Fuel prices break into new highs across country

NEW DELHI

PETROL and diesel price continued to rally northward on Thursday, the 10th consecutive day when its retail prices rose across the country. In Sri Ganganagar town in Rajasthan, normal petrol price has shot up over Rs 100 per litre to stand at Rs 100.49 a litre. The global oil market remained firm and prices

rising trend continues, then very soon the state will meet the fate of Rajasthan as the fuel prices crossed Rs 100 in the latter State a few days ago in the state causing the final price to be sold at 93.45 and diesel increased by 0.35 paise, due to which the final price of diesel cost 87.55 per litre.

of both crude and products saw a big spike. Accordingly, oil marketing companies raised the pump price of petrol by 34 paise and diesel

by another 32 paise per litre in Delhi. With this increase, petrol is now

priced at Rs 89.88 a litre and diesel Rs 80.27 a litre in the national capital

In the last 10 days (since February 9), the price has gone up by Rs 2.93 per litre for petrol while diesel rate has risen by Rs 3.14 a litre.

Across the country as well, the petrol and diesel price increase ranged between 30-35 paise per litre depending on the level of local

taxes on the two petroleum products. In Mumbai, petrol prices is just Rs 4 per litre short (Rs 96.32 a litre) of touching the three-digit mark of Rs 100 per litre for the very first time ever. Diesel prices in the city is closing on Rs 90 a

litre (Rs 87.32 a litre). In all other metros, petrol is over Rs 90 a litre mark while diesel is well over Rs 80 a litre.

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UN chief 'extremely grateful' for India's **2L Covid vaccines** for peacekeepers

UNITED NATIONS

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is "extremely grateful" for the gift of 200,000 Covid-19 vaccine doses announced by India for peacekeepers, the spokesperson for the UN chief has said. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, while addressing the **UN Security Council meeting** on Covid-19 on Wednesday, announced a gift of 200,000 Covid -19 doses for the UN peacekeepers.

US reaches H-1B visa **2021** cap

LALIT K JHA WASHINGTON

THE US has received enough petitions needed to reach the Congressionally mandated 65,000 H-1B visa cap for the fiscal year 2021 and successful candidates for the most soughtafter work visa among foreign professionals, including Indians, would be decided by a computerised draw of lots.

The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows the US companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. The technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China.

US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has said it has received a sufficient number of petitions needed to reach the congressionally mandated 65,000 H-1B visa regular cap and the 20,000 H-1B visa US advanced degree exemption, known as the master's cap, for fiscal year (FY) 2021. Successful applicants would be decided by a computerised draw of lots. "We have completed sending non-selection notifications to registrants' online accounts," a media release said. "We will continue to accept and process petitions that are otherwise exempt from the cap," it said.

Petitions filed for current H-1B workers who have been counted previously against the cap, and who still retain their cap number, are exempt from the FY 2021 H-1B cap.

Bonds to make civic bodies strong

K CHANDRASHEKAR HYDERABAD

AS the State was reeling under severe financial crisis, the Telangana government has come up with a new policy decision of funding the municipalities through the municipal bonds. The government has

asked some of the urban local bodies in the State to raise funds through bonds or through pool funding and list out the works to be taken up under these funds. With the credit rating of ULBs completed, the authorities are

planning to keep ready, the

preliminary draft shelf of

projects for raising funds. A senior official in the Directorate of Municipal Administration said that the commissioners were asked to look for any gaps in the water supply after the Mission Bhagiratha

works such as pumps, motors and pump stations, storage reservoirs, transmission and distribution mains. The commissioners were asked to prepare critical infrastructure investment plans for raising funds.

Potential for growth Siddipet, Warangal, Nizamabad,

Badangpet, Bandlaguda Jagir, Meerpet, Boduppal, Peerzadiguda, Jawaharnagar, Nizampet, Kamareddy, Jagtial, Miryalguda Suryapet, Adilabad and <u>Mahbubnagar</u>

> Similarly, they were told to look in the sewerage and solid waste management for works like sewerage network, collectors and trunk sewers, treatment plants, roads, bridges including bypass, link roads, flyovers and other municipal operated services like parks, medians and greenery developmenturban lung space develop

ments, bus stands, recreational areas, including town beautification and development of water bodies.

The official said that these works were indicative areas for preparing the shelf of projects for raising of finance, which gives ef-

> ficient citizen civic services, and also projects of infrastructure which give impressive facelift or image to the urban local bodies. The municipalities/corporations which are asked to prepare draft shelf

of project for raising funds include Siddipet, Warangal, Nizamabad, Karimnagar, Ramagundam, Khammam, Badangpet, Bandlaguda Jagir, Meerpet, Boduppal, Peerzadiguda, Jawaharnagar, Nizampet, Kamareddy, Jagtial, Miryalguda, Suryapet, Adilabad and

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Tamilisai asks Puducherry CM to prove majority on Feb 22

PUDUCHERRY

PUDUCHERRY tenant Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan on Thursday directed Chief Minister V Narayansamy to prove his majority in the Assembly on February 22.

Hours after taking additional charge as Lieutenant Governor of the union territory, she directed the Congress-led government to prove its majority.

The direction came amid claims by the opposition parties that the Congressled government slipped into minority after one more party MLA quit the party on Tuesday.

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MLC ELECTIONS TRS, Congress and BJP special teams

keep ear to ground HANS NEWS SERVICE

THE elections to the two graduates' constituencies which will witness a triangular fight is throwing up new strategies to win the MLC elections.

HYDERABAD

Instead of going to people with what they would do if elected and convince voters on why the voters should support them, all political parties seem to be depending on keeping a hawk eye on what the moves of rival parties and working out counter strategies.

The TRS, the BJP and the TPCC have formed 'Special Teams' whose only job is to keep a close watch on the moves of the opponents and assess how it could help those parties.

Though the TRS is still maintaining silence on fielding candidate from Hyderabad - Rangareddy- Mahbubnagar graduates' constituency, TRS chief K Chandrasekhar Rao was closely monitoring fast changing political equations in this constituency after Congress and BJP candidates G Chinna Reddy and N Ramchander Rao hit campaign trail in the con-

stituency. While the ruling party has high hopes of retaining the MLC seat under Warangal-Khammam-Nalgonda graduate constituency from where the TRS leader and sitting MLC P Rajeshwar Reddy is contesting the elections, the two main BJP and Congress parties were leaving no stone unturned to wrest the seat from TRS.

The special teams have been asked to visit the places where the rival candidates are campaigning and addressing party meetings

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'Pariksha Pe Charcha' to be online due to Covid

New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi's annual interaction with students 'Pariksha Pe Charcha' will be held online this year in view of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The interaction with students from classes 9 to 12 ahead of their exams will be held in March. "As our brave #ExamWarriors padding up for their exams, 'Pariksha Pe Charcha 2021' returns, this time fully online and open to students all over the world. Come, let us appear for the exams with a smile and without stress! #PPC2021," the prime minister tweeted.

"On popular demand, 'Pariksha Pe Charcha 2021' will also include parents and teachers. It'll be a fun filled teachers to take part in



#PPC2021 in large numbers," he said.

Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' said the registration process of the fourth edition of the interaction has started. Questions related to dealing with examination stress from school students of classes 9 to 12 will be invited through the 'MyGov' platform and selected questions will feature in the programme, he said.

"I feel happy to share that $the\,interaction\,every\,student$ was waiting for is back! Get ready to smile your way through exams with PM @narendramodi in #ParikshaPeCharcha2021," Nishank

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discussion on an otherwise serious subject. I call upon my student friends, their amazing parents and hardworking said in a tweet.

'Indians' shine in **TIME's 100** emerging leaders list

YOSHITA SINGH New York

FIVE Indian-origin personalities, including Twitter's top lawyer Vijaya Gadde and UK's finance minister Rishi Sunak, and an Indian activist feature in TIME magazine's annual list of 100 "emerging leaders who are

shaping the future". The 2021 TIME100 Next, released on Wednesday, is an expansion of TIME's flagship TIME100 franchise of the most influential people in the world and highlights 100 emerging leaders who are shaping the future. "Everyone on this list is poised to make history. And in



Shikha Gupta

fact, many already have," Dan

Macsai, the editorial director of

the TIME100, said. Other Indian-









origin personalities on the list are Instacart founder and CEO Apporva Mehta, doctor and Ex-

ecutive Director of nonprofit Get Us PPE Shikha Gupta and founder of nonprofit Upsolve Rohan Pavuluri. Bhim Army chief Chandra Shekhar Aazad is also on the list. Sunak's profile in the TIME

feature says that a little over a year ago, the 40-year old was an "unknown junior minister in the British government" but after he was named to lead Britain's Treasury last year, he "quickly became the benevolent face of the government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic, approving large handouts for many citizens whose jobs were disrupted by the virus."

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