



## WINDOWS



A customer tries a headgear for a wedding ceremony, amid the ongoing Covid pandemic at a shop in Jabalpur on Tuesday

## ED raids top Sena leader, detains son

MUMBAI: In a rude jolt to the ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi ahead of its first anniversary on November 28, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) with a huge posse of CRPF troopers raided the home and around nine other premises of senior Shiv Sena leader Pratap Sarnaik, before detaining his son Vihang, here on Tuesday. The ED teams swooped on Sarnaik's house in Thane's Hiranandani Complex, when he was not present, besides certain other locations including a leading security services agency, and picked up Vihang Sarnaik. ►P3

## NSE expels Karvy Stock Broking

NEW DELHI: The National Stock Exchange (NSE) has expelled tainted member, Karvy Stock Broking Ltd from its membership and also declared it a defaulter. In a circular, NSE says, "...the member has been expelled from the membership of the Exchange under Rules 1 and 2 of the NSEIL Rules and has been declared as defaulter under provision 1(a) of chapter XII of Exchange bye laws from November 23, 2020 after close of market hours. A major scam had erupted in November last year after it surfaced that Karvy had transferred securities worth Rs 2,300 crore of more than 95,000 clients, into its account by misusing the power of attorney (PoA) of the clients. ►P6

## Vaccine hopes push gold below ₹49K

MUMBAI: Futures of gold, which were soaring well above the Rs 50,000 mark till sometime back amid the weak economic scenario, have now started to ease and have fallen below the Rs 49,000-mark amid optimism regarding vaccines for the novel Coronavirus. ►P6



# INCREASE TESTING, REDUCE FATALITY RATE, SAYS MODI

## CMs told to prepare cold storage facilities

PURNA SINGH  
NEW DELHI

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday met the Chief Ministers where he discussed the present Covid-19 situation in the country. After the meeting, Modi said India is in a better situation while noting a spike in coronavirus cases in some parts.

"As a result of joint efforts, today India is in a better situation than other countries when it comes to recovery and fatality rates," the Prime Minister said.

"There is a need to increase testing," said Modi in the meeting that was held with the eight worst affected states. Chief Ministers of Maharashtra, Kerala, Delhi, West Bengal, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh were present in the meeting, wherein the PM emphasised that "our pri-



## Frontline health workers to receive vaccines first, followed by police personnel and sanitation workers in the second stage

ority is to make vaccine(s) available for all. States should put in the necessary mechanism including cold storage."

"Safety is as important as speed for us, whichever vaccine India will give to its citizens will be safe on

all scientific standards. Vaccine distribution strategy will be chalked out in collective coordination with states. States must also start working (on) cold storage facilities," Modi added.

Continued on Page 5

## Cyclone Nivar to cross TN coast today

NEW DELHI

THE deep depression over the Bay of Bengal intensified into a cyclonic storm on Tuesday and it is likely into further into a severe cyclonic storm during the next 12 hours, the IMD said.

Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, besides the Union Territory of Puducherry, braced for rains, even as the NDRF earmarked 30 teams to launch rescue and relief operations in the states concerned in view of the cyclone 'Nivar.' The India Me-



teorological Department (IMD) said Nivar is likely to make landfall between the coast of Puducherry and Tamil Nadu coast on Wednesday between 8pm and midnight.

Tamil Nadu has already declared a public holiday on Wednesday whereas Section 144 has been imposed in Puducherry for the next three days.

Continued on Page 5

## Sputnik vaccine 95% effective, says Russia

NEW DELHI

AMID the race to develop and distribute a potential coronavirus vaccine, Russia on Tuesday announced that its Sputnik V Covid-19 vaccine is 95% effective and will be charged less than rival vaccines as Moscow aims to produce more than 1 billion doses at home and abroad next year.

Cost of Russia's two-shot Sputnik V vaccine will be less than \$20 per person for international markets with each shot costing less than \$10, informed Russian sovereign wealth fund.

Continued on Page 5



President Ram Nath Kovind offering prayers at Venkateswaraswamy temple at Tirumala

## Delhi air quality 'very poor'

### WINDS EXPECTED TO SLOW DOWN

NEW DELHI

AIR quality in Delhi continues to remain in the 'very poor' category on Tuesday. According to data provided by government agencies, the overall air quality deteriorated with six of the 38 stations recording "severe" air quality. According to the Central Pollution Control Board's (CPCB) mobile application SAMEER, the city's air quality index (AQI) was recorded at 361 in the morning. The six stations that



Youngsters play in a field during a cold and foggy morning in New Delhi on Tuesday

recorded an AQI in the "severe" category are Anand Vihar (413), Ashok Vihar (407),

Chandni Chowk (410), Jahangirpuri (424), Patparganj (411) and Vivek Vihar (426).

The capital's AQI was in the "severe" category on November 15 but it improved since and remained in either the "poor" or the "moderate" category until November 22. Delhi's AQI was 302 on Monday, 274 on Sunday, 251 on Saturday, 296 on Friday, 283 on Thursday and 211 on Wednesday. An AQI between zero and 50 is considered "good", 51 and 100 "satisfactory", 101 and 200 "moderate", 201 and 300 "poor", 301 and 400 "very poor", and 401 and 500 "severe". Cont'd on P5

## India bans 43 Chinese mobile apps

### Alibaba, WeTV, MangoTV apps among those restricted

NEW DELHI

CONTINUING with its ban orders on Chinese apps, the Union government on Tuesday blocked 43 new mobile apps, including shopping website AliExpress owned by e-commerce behemoth Alibaba. Other popular apps that have been banned include We-WorkChina, CamCard and Snack. These apps have been banned by the Ministry of Elec-



tronics and Information Technology (MeitY) for engaging in activities which are "prejudicial to the sovereignty and in-

tegrity of the country, defence, security of the state and public order". The ministry banned these apps based on reports

received from the Indian Cyber Crime Co-ordination Centre, Ministry of Home Affairs. The Indian government had on September 2 banned 118 apps on national security concerns, including the immensely popular PlayerUnknown's Battle-grounds (PUBG) Mobile, Baidu and couple of virtual private networks (VPNs) that allowed access to TikTok that was banned earlier.

Continued on Page 5

## Pollution cause of severity in Covid third wave in Delhi

Kejriwal tells PM, asks for 1,000 ICU beds

PURNA SINGH  
NEW DELHI

AT a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday said the high severity of the third wave of Covid-19 in the national capital is due to many factors, pollution being an important one, sources said.

Kejriwal told the prime minister that Delhi saw the peak of 8,600 coronavirus cases on November 10 during the third wave and since then, the number of cases as well as the positivity rate are steadily decreasing, the sources said.

The Chief Minister hoped that the trend would continue in the national capital.

"The high severity of the third wave is due to many factors. Pollution is an important factor."

## No chance of schools resuming soon: Dy CM

NEW DELHI

THERE is no chance of Delhi schools - shut since March due to the Covid pandemic - reopening any time soon, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia told a news channels, as the national capital battles a third - and most severe, so far - wave of infections.

"No chances of schools opening soon. No parent would want to send their children until they are assured that they will be safe," Sisodia, who also holds the education portfolio, said. He also pointed out that no parent would risk their children's health at this time.

Late last month the Delhi government said all city schools would remain closed till further notice. At the time Sisodia said the decision was based on feedback from parents. "We keep getting feedback from parents... they are concerned about whether it is safe... it is not,"



he had said then.

As part of the latest "unlock" guidelines, the centre has allowed schools (outside containment zones) to reopen for Class 9 to 12. A number of provisions were suggested to minimise the spread of the virus, including staggered timings, but the final decision was left to state governments.

Sisodia also called on Union Health Minister Dr

Harsh Vardhan to "not give political statements (but) take action" over ICU hospital beds to be supplied by the Central government.

"I request Dr Harsh Vardhan not to give political statements (but) take action as health minister. It has been 10 days since you (the centre) promised ICU beds and we have got only 200. He should fulfil the commitment," he added.

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# Womenia

## TIPS TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR HANDS THIS WINTER

PUJA GUPTA

Here's some trivia for you, did you know that viruses cannot replicate unless they enter a living cell. Without a host cell, they are not be able to mutate and multiply.

However, once the virus is able to attach itself to enough cells in the host, it multiplies by the minute, wreaking havoc on the host body's structures.

Try this fun exercise : "Open your smart phone and zoom in tight while focusing on your palm. It will strike you that our hands are anything but smooth! With ridges and valleys, folds and rifts, there are lots of places for viruses to hide. If the skin is not intact, germs can enter the body through cracks and tears in the skin or through the pores of the fingers or hands," says Roopa Hariharan, Co-founder, PureCult, one stop shop for all home care needs.

Being sanitised and washing our hands is a principle that has been continually hammered into us, especially over the last few months. Is a hand washing routine lasting 20 seconds enough to kill pathogens such as viruses and other disease-causing germs?

"You may argue that you do not wash your hands as frequently as you should since you have not left your house, but you can also take steps to keep your hands healthy while you do wash them frequently," she says.

Since hand washing is so important to prevent the spread of germs and diseases, it is important to know the best method for doing so. Let us also learn why it is recommended to wash our hands in a certain manner and what we can use to keep our hands soft and moisturised after repeating this routine several times a day.

Hariharan points out: "Firstly, CoronaVirus' chemical makeup is breakable with soap and water. A single drop of soap contains quadrillions of molecules called amphiphiles which weakens the thin membrane protecting the virus and renders them defenceless. Water

then washes them all away!"

What about hand sanitizers? Are they as effective? Hand sanitizers are arguably a better alternative to soap and water if the access to soap and water is unavailable. After being exposed to a high concentration of alcohol (70 percent), the virus's structure can be broken or altered. It's like removing all the supporting foundations from a house! The virus crumbles and collapses, she explains.

The destruction of the virus occurs in the first 2-3 seconds with either method. Why do doctors then recommend 20 seconds? This is due to our intricate hand geography. Soap and sanitizer need to reach all surfaces of our hands and fingers. Our palms, finger tips, the outside of our hands and between our fingers to protect us properly.

Each of these alternatives has its own merits. A hand wash is more convenient, since it does not need water to spread the soap. A hand sanitizer, on the other hand, is convenient during travel and when there is no access to water.



### FOLLOW THESE STEPS EVERY TIME

- Those who wash their hands too often and use a hand sanitizer will remove the good bacteria needed to fight germs from the healthy oils of the hand. If you have dry, cracked hands or have many cracks in the skin on your fingers or hands, you should be aware of how often you wash your hands and avoid overuse of alcohol-based hand sanitizers that can further dry out your skin.
- In order to protect hands when cleaning dishes or doing any other cleaning or household chores, don gloves and do not use

hand washes that have chemical ingredients, which will also dry out your skin.

- The use of moisturiser is also an option, but one needs to be careful while handling food with moisturisers, as we are not going to want to ingest them accidentally.
- Pure coconut oil is an excellent clean alternative to conventional oils. Coconut oil is recognised for its anti-inflammatory, moisturising, and anti-microbial properties. Applying coconut oil over damp hands helps in sealing the moisture.

TWEET PATROL



KRITI KHARBANDA  
@KRITI\_OFFICIAL

Some people will do just about anything to validate their existence in their own heads. These people don't deserve your attention. Period.



## Style Guide: How to style sneakers for every occasion

With the harsh summer sun retreating and making way for the lovely fall breeze, it is time to update your fall wardrobe. Autumn is the season of brunches, picnics, and basking in the glory of love and celebration. With several festivities lined up, we're sure your calendar is already fully packed with multiple outings and events. However, choosing the perfect ensemble every single time can be a little hard on the nerves, and more so in case of footwear. Everybody wants to pick a pair that is high on both fashion and comfort, and this where your regular pair of heels just don't cut it. Well, we have a simple but creative solution for you. We are talking sneakers here! The metamorphosis that sneakers have gone through in the last couple of years is nothing short of revolutionary. From being known as exclusively 'active wear' or 'workout wear', sneakers have sneakily (yes, pun intended!), nudged their way into all occasions in our lives. From casual wear to formal wear, to even your pretty sundresses, sneakers work remarkably with every outfit.

Matteo Lambert, Chief Collection Officer, Bata India Limited, guides you better in styling sneakers for every occasion. Here are a few tips from him:

**For the family picnics:** Family picnics call for a laid-back and relaxed look. Go for a casual polka-dot dress in red or orange to match the fall scenery, and don a pair of chunky white sneakers to complete your look. White sneakers are a timeless classic and work wonders with polka-dot dresses.

**For Sunday brunches with your girl-gang :** Sunday brunches have now become somewhat of a ritual. It is the perfect occasion to get all dressed up and take insta-worthy pictures with your girl gang. For your next brunch, opt for an off-shoulder dress in pastel colour and pair it with metallic sneakers. The contrast will enhance your overall look and make you stand out.

**For your next shopping spree:** With festive season approaching soon, you are bound to make multiple trips to the nearest mall to check-off every item on your festive shopping list. You are literally going to be on your toes 9to9, and you will want to ensure you are comfortable while making your way through the long queue of shoppers. Go for a pair of comfortable joggers and a relaxed t-shirt in solid colours like beige or tan. Pair it with solid black sneakers and you are sorted for the entire day. This ensemble will make you look effortlessly stylish and fashion forward.

**For your next cocktail party:** Cocktails are always a heavy-duty affair and there is a lot of pressure on everyone to put their best foot forward. Instead of going all bling and glam, go for a simpler yet impactful approach this time. Bring out that ever so gorgeous LBD, pair it with neon sneakers, paint your pout red, sit back and let the compliments roll in. Neon sneakers will ensure you are the belle of the ball.



## Retirement can be wonderful



After numerous long stretches of business, you have at last passed the boundary into retirement. Congrats! You might be inclination diminished, energized, restless, and maybe somewhat tragic. You may likewise be understanding that retirement implies a lot more hours at home with your life partner. This may have sounded extraordinary from the outset, however as the days and weeks walk forward it stops to be all daylight and rainbows.

Actually, retirement can put a serious strain on a marriage, even a generally sound one. For a long time you had discovered a harmony, and now abruptly everything is extraordinary. In my treatment practice, I have seen various couples through the progress into retirement. The following are five updates I regularly give.

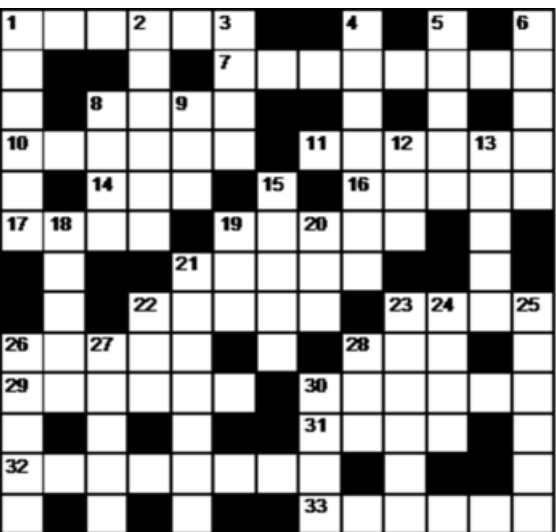
- Be patient with each other: The months preceding and after retirement can be a passionate exciting ride. In any event, when retirement came after a considerable delay and a great deal of arranging, at long last passing the boundary can bring sudden considerations and emotions. Numerous positive occasions can bring a ton of anxiety our adapting aptitudes. You may recall the pressure of arranging a wedding or having kids. Despite the fact that such occasions are

favours, they actually bring a lot of stressors. Retirement is the same, so give each other some additional empathy and opportunity to be vindicated. Keep in mind, regardless of whether you are the person who most as of late resigned, it is a major change for both of you.

- Notice changes in musings, emotions, and practices: Is it accurate to say that you are abruptly drinking more liquor, shopping more, or getting vexed all the more without any problem? Is it accurate to say that you are more sad than expected? What about your life partner? These can be pieces of information that either of you is stressing to acclimate to life after retirement, or the relationship changes that have joined it. You may likewise have the option to help each other by having a "walk and talk" where you take a walk and alternate discussing how retirement is going for you. Strolling can assist you with parting your time uniformly, with one accomplice getting the "going out" half of the outing to talk, and the other the "strolling back" parcel. In this training, it is significant not to interfere with one another and to just give each other chance to talk while listening mindfully.

Just give counsel or criticism that is explicitly mentioned by your accomplice.

- Try not to anticipate that your accomplice should engage you: Your companion has had their own daytime schedules without you, maybe for a long time. Whenever you are resigned and both together at home, be aware of the propensities that you have each evolved. Invest some energy becoming acquainted with how your accomplice likes to go through their days and search inside yourself to find the schedules that you most appreciate. At the point when every one of you has self-information about your own inclinations, it will be simpler to discover approaches to blend your timetables in manners that are commonly fulfilling.
- Rediscover yourself and your own advantages: Numerous individuals are so bustling when they are working that they have failed to remember how they like to invest their free energy. You may have casted off your additional tedious or included interests (for example preparing, playing an instrument, planting) for easier exercises you can endure toward the finish of a long workday (for example sitting in front of the TV).



BLING E PSALM  
A EARMARK E  
DREAD O OILED  
E R STUMP R  
ADULATE I SEW  
BODY E ISOLDE  
O D WAYNE Y I  
VEERED L PEER  
EAR S SEVERED  
G STUNT S R  
ALGAE I TAXIS  
E GRAPHIC E  
ATMAN E CHARM

SOLUTION TO NOVEMBER 24

### CROSSWORD

Across

- Genghis Khan's kin (6)
- Age of majority (8)
- Squandered (4)
- Flung (6)
- Cabbage or cauliflower? (6)
- It's not free of charge (3)
- Coin (5)
- Cut into pieces (4)
- Invigorate (5)
- Angry (person, bruise) (5)
- Palindrome: \_\_\_ I'm Adam (5)
- Floor coverings (4)
- For a special purpose (2,3)
- Impress greatly (3)
- Free? (6)
- Medicinal amount (6)
- Alright (4)
- Maturity (8)
- Feverish (6)

Down

- Legendary (6)
- Horse's gait (6)

Obscene (4)

Made bird sounds (7)

Rule over (5)

Sung correctly (2,3)

Verve (4)

Even, poetically curtailed (3)

High army rank, in short (3)

Cove or bay (5)

Seat (5)

"Surprise Symphony" composer (5)

Removable cover (3)

Get-up-and-go (3)

Wanting (7)

Sound like a bovine (3)

The decorative inlaid design of tile (6)

Apart (4)

Picturesque (6)

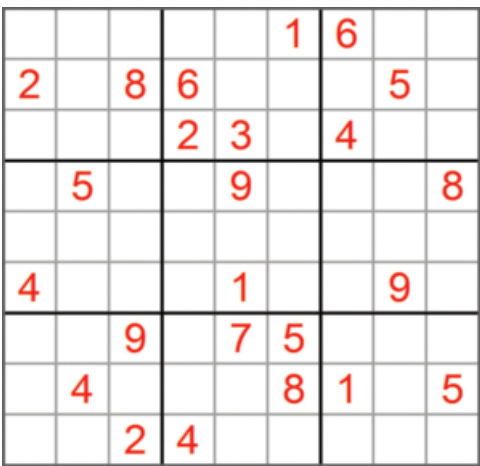
Pertaining to the ear (5)

Overexcited (5)

Large bowl-shaped pan (3)

Money, informally (4)

### SUDOKU



SOLUTION TO NOVEMBER 24

### NEWS ROUNDUP

## Kareena, Taimur try pottery in Dharamkot

Kareena Kapoor Khan and son Taimur have taken to pottery, going by her new Instagram post on Tuesday.

Kareena and little Taimur are on a family vacation in Himachal Pradesh where her husband Saif Ali Khan is shooting for his forthcoming film, Bhoot Police. In a new video and photographs she posted, the actress and her son can be seen trying their hand at pottery at Dharamkot.

"Pot, pot, pottery with the lil man. Dharamkot studio such brilliant stuff," Kareena captioned her photographs and video.

The actress is currently expecting her second baby with hubby Saif and she keeps sharing photographs flaunting her baby bump on social media.

On August 12 this year, Kareena and Saif had announced that they are expecting their second child. The actress recently completed her shoot for the upcoming film "Laal Singh Chaddha" co-starring Aamir Khan in Delhi.





## British woman celebrates 100th birthday

# She survived Nazi plot, plane crash, cancer and now Covid-19

LONDON

A 99-year-old World War veteran who survived a Nazi assassination attempt, a plane crash and breast cancer over the course of her illustrious life, has now beaten the novel coronavirus to emerge a winner to celebrate her 100th birthday, reported *The Guardian*. Joy Andrew, who suffers from dementia, had tested positive for the coronavirus in May and her condition at one point was extremely severe, so much so that the staff at the care home where she lived had arranged

for her to be put on end-of-life care. But always the warrior, Andrews managed to beat the deadly virus over a period of few months and came out stronger, having defeated the virus to mark her 100th birthday. Marking her birthday, the Queen sent a card and a personal message for Andrews in accordance with tradition, hailing her for her determination that brought her back from the clutches of death. Born in London in 1920, Andrews went on to join the Women's Auxiliary Air Force as sergeant when the second world war ensued. She also reportedly served in the operations room at



German Jewish family was then posted in Dusseldorf. She put up with an elderly couple who had a daughter

Bomber Command, that was involved in the strategic bombing of Germany. The Bomber Command was in charge of the RAF's bomber forces for almost 30 years since 1936. Bearing the scars of war, Andrew, who hailed from a

who was a Nazi. Andrews was also assigned a driver and she often took trips to Berlin to wander amid the remains of the Reichstag, her daughter Michele said. One day while taking her to the destination, the driver attempted to kill her by causing an accident. The driver was caught and turned out to be a Nazi, her daughter said. Incredibly proud of her mother, Michele, 57, says her surviving the coronavirus is yet another milestone for her in her eventful life. Post World War 2, Andrew also became one of the first air hostesses of the British Overseas Airways Corporation.

A flight she was onboard once overused its fuel and ended up crashing in Libya that broke up the craft due to pressure, killing one passenger but the crew survived. They were later rescued by the Bedouins. Andrew also survived breast cancer in the 1970s. Her husband David, a squadron leader in the RAF reportedly died from cancer in 2013. Andrew now lives at Minster Grange care home in York. Her daughter Michele, says that she hasn't met her mother since March due to the coronavirus lockdown but hopes to do so soon.

## MONEY LAUNDERING CASE

# ED raids Sena MLA's premises, son quizzed

MUMBAI

SHIV SENA MLA Pratap Sarnaik's son Vihang was on Tuesday brought to the ED's office here for questioning following raids at premises linked to his father in connection with a money laundering case being probed against a security service provider company and others.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Tuesday raided various premises linked to Sarnaik in Mumbai and neighbouring Thane, official sources said. The ED officials picked up Sarnaik's son from his residence and reached the probe agency's office at Ballard Estate in south Mumbai around 3.15 pm, an official said. Sources said the searches are being conducted by the central agency at 10 locations in Mumbai and Thane.

CRPF personnel were seen assisting ED sleuths during the operation that was launched early morning. Sarnaik, 56, represents the Ovala-Majiwada constituency of Thane in the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly. He was in news when he wrote a letter seeking re-opening of an alleged abetment to suicide case of 2018 in which Republic TV's editor-in-chief Arnab Goswami was arrested by Mumbai Police. Goswami is now out on bail. Sarnaik had also demanded a unanimous resolution in the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly for legal action against actress Kangana Ranaut, who, he said, has "maligned" the image of Maharashtra and Mumbai through her tweets.



Shiv Sena MLA Pratap Sarnaik's son Vihang Sarnaik being brought to the ED office in Mumbai on Tuesday

## Actions will backfire: Sena

MUMBAI

THE Shiv Sena on Tuesday termed the ED's raids on properties of party MLA Pratap Sarnaik as "political vendetta" and said the Maharashtra government or its leaders will not surrender to pressure from anyone. Talking to reporters, Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut, without naming the BJP, said it should forget the dream of coming to power in Maharashtra for the next 25 years, "no matter how much pressure it exerts or spreads terror through agencies". "If you have begun today, we know how to end it," the Shiv Sena's chief spokesperson said. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) raided premises linked to Shiv Sena MLA Sarnaik in Maharashtra on Tuesday in connection with a money-laundering case. "This action is definitely a political vendetta. The ED or other agencies should not work as if a branch of a political party," Raut said. He said Sarnaik's properties were raided while the latter was not at home, and added that no matter how many notices are issued, only truth shall prevail in Maharashtra. Raut also said there is no ban on probes by an agency and it can take action if there is evidence. "But, you want to mentally harass the people related to the (state) government.

## Kalpakkam Nuclear power complex gears up to tackle cyclone Nivar

CHENNAI

THE atomic power complex in Kalpakkam about 70 km from here is geared up to meet Cyclone Nivar that is expected to cross the coast near Mamallapuram and Karaikal in Puducherry on Wednesday evening, said the top official of the Disaster Management Committee. He also said the atomic power reactor of Madras Atomic Power Station (MAPS) belonging to Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd (NPCIL) will generate power if everything pertaining to the grid is normal.

"We had a review meeting. We are all geared up to meet Nivar. All our diesel gensets are ready to kick in when needed and there are sufficient diesel reserves," Arun Kumar Bhaduri, Director, Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research (IGCAR) and also the Chairman,

Disaster Management Committee, Kalpakkam complex. The Kalpakkam complex about 70 km from here houses various nuclear facilities of IGCAR, NPCIL, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) and the fast breeder reactor company Bharatiya Nabhikiya Vidyut Nigam Ltd (Bhavini).

According to Bhaduri, the disaster management rescue force has been stationed here.

"We are also monitoring Nivar's movement continuously on our own and also with the weather department," Bhaduri said.

According to him, workers in high rise structures have been asked to stop their work.

Meanwhile MAPS said it has activated its cyclone protection machinery.

The MAPS have two 220 MW nuclear power units of which one unit is functional.



A woman wearing face mask stands in front of a mural on novel coronavirus and protective measures, in New Delhi on Tuesday

## Transgender doc charges media for wrong reportage

CHENNAI

A transgender doctor on Tuesday charged a section of the media for a gross wrong reportage about her. Speaking to IANS the doctor said: "It was totally a wrong reportage about me. The report has upset my parents and they are in tears."

A police official in Madurai told IANS the transgender doctor was sitting in the Madurai railway station on Monday and a police official at the outpost enquired about her. The police official said everyone was dumb-stuck on hearing that she was a quali-



fied doctor and had undergone a sex change -- from male to female. The police then verified her certificates and cross checked with the Madurai Medical College where she had studied.

The matter was brought to the notice of the Thilagar Thidal police station Inspector Kavitha who spoke to her higher officials and got the doctor a coat and stethoscope. According to the police, the doctor was working in a private hospital after completing her course and lost her job after she underwent a sex change surgery. The police told IANS that a section of the media wrongly reported that the doctor along with several other transgenders were found begging on the streets and were rounded up. "The media has damaged my name. I had requested the channel not to reveal my earlier name and other details. But the channel had revealed that and in the process damaged my name and upset my parents," the doctor said.

## Kejri orders 1,200 BiPAP machines for new ICU beds

NEW DELHI

AMID a surge in the number of coronavirus cases in the city, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has ordered for an immediate procurement of 1,200 BiPAP machines for the new ICU beds being added in the national capital this week, an official said on Tuesday.

He said the move will allow immediate operationalisation of the new ICU beds. A total of 1,200 BiPAP machines will be procured immediately from the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), the official said.

On Monday, Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain attributed the high COVID-19 death rate in the city to the pollution caused by stubble-burning and said he expects a downtrend in the next two-three weeks.

The city recorded 4,454 fresh COVID-19 cases and a positivity rate of 11.94 per cent on Monday, while 121 more fatalities pushed the death toll due to the disease to 8,512 in the city.

Meanwhile, the High Court asked the government as to what was so special about spas that they were not being allowed to open even though everything else like markets, gyms, restaurants, metro and buses was operational in the city.

## Chemical castration of rapists approved in Pak

ISLAMABAD

PAKISTAN Prime Minister Imran Khan on Tuesday approved, in principle, a law on chemical castration of rapists. The decision was made during a cabinet meeting wherein the Law Ministry presented a draft of the anti-rape ordinance. The draft includes increasing women's role in policing, fast-tracking rape cases and witness protection, Geo TV reported. Stressing that this was a serious matter, PM Imran Khan said no delay will be tolerated. "We need to ensure a safe environment for our citizens."

The PM said the legislation will be clear and transparent with strict enforcement. He said the rape survivors will be able to register complaints without fear, adding that the government will protect their identity.

Sources said some federal ministers also recommended public hanging for the rape convicts. But the premier said castration will be a start.

The federal cabinet has, in principle, approved strict severe punishment for rape convicts.

Taking to Twitter, PTI senator Faisal Javed Khan said the law will soon be presented before the Parliament. There has been much debate around rape laws in Pakistan. The incident of Kasur's Zainab and more recently the motorway gang-rape in Lahore sparked a debate on the severity of punishment to prevent sexual assaults. Speaking at a joint sitting of the Parliament after a passage of bills pertaining to the FATF, PM Imran Khan had said that the government will soon introduce three-tier legislation including registration of sex offenders, exemplary punishment for rape and child abuse and effective policing.



## Covid cases in India climbs to 91.77 lakh

NEW DELHI

INDIA saw 37,975 new coronavirus infections being reported in a day taking the country's COVID-19 caseload to 91.77 lakh, while the recoveries crossed 86 lakh, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Tuesday.

The total coronavirus cases mounted to 91,77,840 and the death toll climbed to 1,34,218 with 480 new fatalities, including 121 from the national capital alone, the data updated at 8 am showed.

The number of active cases remained below 5 lakh for the fourteenth consecutive day. There are 4,38,667 active cases of coronavirus infection in the country as on date which comprises 4.78 per cent of the total caseload, the data stated. The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 86,04,955 pushing the national recovery rate to 93.76 per cent, while the COVID-19 case fatality rate stands at 1.46 per cent.

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh on August 23 and 40 lakh on September 5. It went past 50 lakh on September 16, 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, and surpassed 90 lakh on November 20.

# Earlier verdict cited by Yogi for 'love jihad' not good law: HC

**'We fail to understand that if the law permits two persons even of the same sex to live together peacefully then neither any individual nor a family nor even State can have objection to relationship of two major individuals who out of their own free will are living together'**

LUCKNOW

IN a significant judgment, the Allahabad High Court has reiterated that a person's right to live with people of their choice, irrespective of religion, is intrinsic to their right to life and personal liberty guaranteed by the Constitution.

A bench comprising Justices Pankaj Naqvi and Vivek Agarwal ruled that two of its earlier verdicts -- which said that religious conversion solely for the purpose of a marriage was prohibited -- are incorrect and do not lay down "good law", according to The Print report.

The judgment assumes significance as Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had cited the HC's observations while announcing that he would bring in a law on "love jihad".

The Uttar Pradesh government on Tuesday approved the draft of a stringent law to deal with religious conversion for the sake of marriage, which BJP leaders refer to as 'love jihad'.

In the verdict passed on 11 November, the court observed, "Right to live with a person of his/her choice irrespective of religion professed by them, is intrinsic to right to life and personal liberty. Interference in a personal relationship, would constitute a serious encroachment into the right to freedom of choice of the two individuals."

It also advocated against State interference in a relationship between two adults, noting, "We fail to understand that if the law permits two persons even of the same sex to live together peacefully then neither



any individual nor a family nor even State can have objection to relationship of two major individuals who out of their own free will are living together."

It asserted that an adult's decision to live with another adult of their choice is "strictly a right of an individual", and that a breach of this right would amount to a breach of their "fundamental right to life and personal liberty as it includes right to freedom of choice, to choose a partner and right to live with dignity as enshrined in Article 21".

The high court also relied on the Supreme Court's judgment in the Hadiya case, to observe that "the Apex Court has consistently respected the liberty of an individual who has attained the age of majority".

The court was hearing a petition filed by a couple -- Salamat Ansari and Priyanka Kharwar (now Alia) -- who

tied the knot on 19 August 2019 after Kharwar converted to Islam. However, her father filed an FIR against Ansari, his mother and brother, under various provisions of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) including Sections 363 (kidnapping), 366 (kidnapping, abducting or inducing a woman to compel her marriage), 352 (assault) and 506 (criminal intimidation), along with provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. The couple had approached the court asserting that both Ansari and Alia are adults and have willingly tied the knot.

Meanwhile, a Special Investigation Team probing cases of alleged "love jihad" in Kanpur has found criminality in 11 out of the 14 instances but found no evidence of foreign funding or organised conspiracy, a senior police officer said.



# IT cos may get H-1B boost under Biden

H-1B visa programme remains a critical factor for driving growth of the Indian IT industry which is valued at over \$175 billion. This programme also plays a significant role in driving innovations in US-based multinational giants such as Microsoft, Apple, Facebook, Google, and Amazon, among others. Ironically, the American government under the Trump administration created a lot of administrative road-blocks in the last 18-24 months, making it increasingly difficult for Indian IT professionals to receive these kinds of temporary visas to work in the US. In addition to the undue delay in the processing of visa applications, the Trump government also increased visa fees. To check the unemployment rates in the North American nation, Trump banned the entry of foreign workers under H-1B and L-1 visas till December this year. The US administration is now proposing to fix minimum wages for the foreign workers, which if implemented, will force Indian IT firms to cough up higher pay packages for their employees. Though drastic leg-

islative changes such as 'no work visa' for spouses of H-1B visa holders and wage ceiling for non-immigrant workers are yet to be approved, such restrictions on foreign talent began to hurt innovations in the global technology industry. Even the head honchos of global tech giants pointed out that and underlined the need for allowing overseas talent to work in the US tech industry. Further, the stringent curbs on H1-B visas also started to reflect in numbers. The share of Indian IT professionals availing the H-1B visa programme, which has an annual cap of 65,000, has been reducing over the years. According to the US Citizenship and Immigration Services, the share of Indian companies among the top-10 visa recipients dropped from 51 per cent to 24 per cent during 2016-19 periods. Even the belief that the Indian IT industry has cornered about a major share of H-1B visas is also wrong. For instance, Amazon received 3,026 initial approvals for the H-1B visa programme last fiscal, while Google got initial

approvals for 2,678 visas. During this period, Microsoft received 1,701 applications, while it was 1,518 for Facebook. In comparison to this, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) received 1,733 approvals and Infosys got 757. Amid these difficulties, the new US President-elect Joe Biden is expected to ease some of these regulations. Being part of the Obama administration earlier, Biden always has a lenient view towards allowing high-skilled overseas individuals to work in the US. His presidential bid also seems to be supportive of his earlier stance. A policy document of his campaign states that an immigration system that crowds out high-skilled workers in favour of only entry-level wages and skills, threatens American innovation. Though it's too early to gauge the direction of his policy decisions related to the technology sector and immigration, relaxations of some kind are highly expected on the popular H-1B visa programme. The US is traditionally known as a 'melting pot' society, which has emerged as a superpower by promoting immigration, and Biden is expected to follow this tradition. Therefore, better days are ahead for those who are keen on working in the US.



## Behavioural practices and Covid-19 in Telangana

DR SUJIT KUMAR MISHRA

Coping with Covid-19 is a very new experience for everyone across the world and the people of Telangana who largely stay in rural areas are no exception. In the absence of a vaccine yet, the only safeguard mechanism available to protect their lives against Covid-19 is to practise "Physical Distancing". This is amply demonstrated in the definition laid out by the World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines which clearly indicates that physical distancing means "maintain at least one meter distance between yourself and others; Avoid going to crowded places".

The other important preventive measure is hand washing at regular intervals. In this context, it should be understood that such protocols indicated by the WHO to combat the virus would be difficult to practise for those households living within congested, over-crowded housing as well as those using shared basic amenities.

As per the report on "Drinking Water, Sanitation, Hygiene and Housing Condition in India" by Government of India 2019 based on National Sample Survey (NSS) 76th round information, the average number of living rooms available at the household level is 1.89 and more than one third of the ofhouses (33.7 per cent of the total cases) do not have separate room for the married couples. So they share physical space with the rest of the family. An analysis of the same report on hand-washing practices reveals that around three fourths of the population (73.2 per cent at the state and 61.3 per cent in rural) wash their hands using soap and water after defecation. This share is lower than the national figure (74.1 per cent at all India level and 66.8 per cent in rural areas).

However except for Kerala (87.8 per cent at the state and 82.8 per cent in rural), all other southern states have proportions less than Telangana - (Karnataka - 69.2 per cent at the state and 57.4 per cent of rural; Andhra Pradesh - 54.0 per cent at the state and 44.3 per cent of rural; Tamil Nadu - 46.3 per cent at the state and 30.7 per cent of rural). So far as washing hands with water and soap/detergent before having a meal is concerned, in Telangana, only 39.9 per cent complies with the practice (28.9 per cent in the rural areas and 52.4 per cent for urban areas).

Within this proportion, a large proportion (59.2 per cent) uses only water to wash hands before meals (70.1 per cent in rural and 46.7 per cent in urban). At the national level, the share of population that washes hand with soap/detergent in rural is 25.3 per cent while the same stood at 56.0 per cent in urban areas (35.8 per cent at national level). Among the southern states, the share is highest in Kerala (53.8 per cent at the state and 51.6 per cent in rural) and lowest in Tamil Nadu (27.3 per cent at the state and 13.2 per cent in rural).

The habit of frequent hand-washing is completely dependent upon the availability of running water in houses. An analysis of the same report based on NSS 76th round information reveals that 58.2 per cent of urban households and 35.3 per cent of rural households in Telangana have access to tap water in the house or within their residential premises. It should be noted in this context that the status of Telangana is better in comparison with other southern States (except Karnataka) and India

However, the rest of the households are dependent upon the facilities - public taps, tube wells and hand pumps - situated outside the premises of the dwelling units. Of the total households, around 12 per cent (19.8 per cent in the rural areas) fetch their water from public taps in Telangana. It should be kept in mind that these households struggle a lot to fetch their water from the public taps because its availability is restricted to a particular time and within that stipulated time period one has to make arrangements for storing water for as per his/her requirements. One can always see a large crowd within the vicinity of the tap.

Given the fact that the place involves a congregation which stands in close proximity within the vicinity of the public tap, the physical distancing guidelines to combat the Covid-19 virus would be difficult to implement. This clearly indicates that while frequent washing of hands as mandated in Covid prevention measures is in itself a difficult task, there is a possibility of spread of infection during public health crises given the lack of proper drinking water facilities.

The availability of bathrooms and toilets exclusively for households is an important aspect which can prevent the rapid spread of the virus. Around 78 per cent of households have access to exclusive bathrooms and 73.2 per cent have access to exclusive latrines in Telangana. Households with no bathrooms are 8.5 per cent in Telangana (14.7 per cent in rural areas) whereas the same is 12.7 per cent for latrines (22.5 per cent in rural areas). The accessibility to bathrooms for common use is 13.9 per cent (higher in urban areas with 21.6 per cent) whereas the same is 14.0 per cent for latrines (higher in urban areas with 21.3 per cent).

Physical distancing norms which are very crucial to prevent the spread of virus are extremely difficult to comply with given the state of housing and sanitation facilities. Thus, the major challenge to combat the virus lies in the behavioural practices of the majority of the population in the state. There have been ample efforts made by the government to disseminate information about preventive measures regarding combating Covid-19, but the above mentioned indicators are becoming a constraint in achieving the desired objectives.

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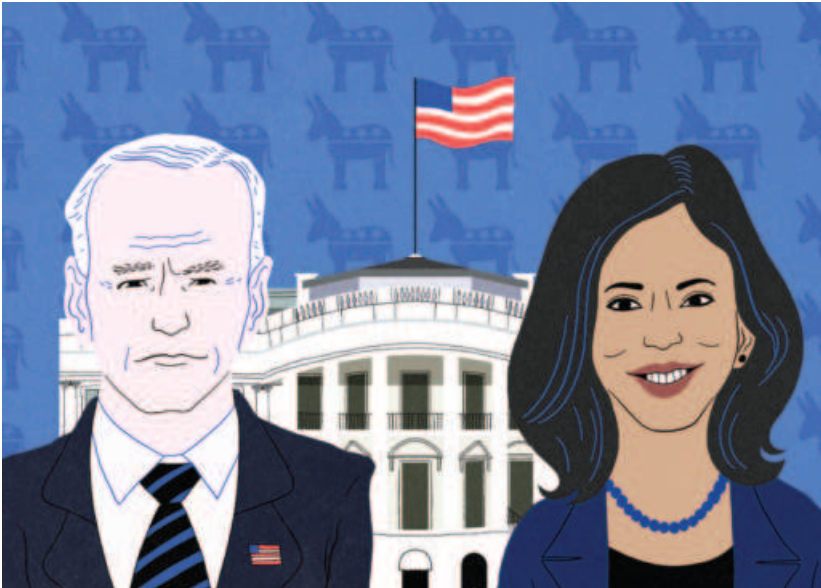
# India's expectations from Biden Presidency

D C PATHAK

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has personally congratulated President-elect Joe Biden on his success and used the occasion to emphasise on the importance of strategic partnership between the two countries. There is little doubt that the change of regime in the US will not affect the tested foundations of this friendship that were in fact laid with Obama administration declaring India as a major defence partner of the US. The deep convergence that Modi government struck with the US in the Presidency of Donald Trump on most matters relating to security and economic development established a bench mark in Indo-US relationship and this will have to be sustained by the two sides through a new set of interactive meetings at various levels.

Much water has flown down the bridge since the times of Obama-Biden rule in US and the government of Dr Manmohan Singh in India - the geo-political changes revolving round Xi Jinping's China and the transition of 'war on terror' to a broader global conflict between Islamic radicals and the US-led West, warrant a new effort by the two nations to steer the democratic world towards greater safety and security. India would keenly watch President Joe Biden unfolding his foreign policy agenda. So far he has not spoken on Pakistan or on the rise of Islamic militancy on the latter's soil. Also, his approach to China may be firm without replicating the hard line of Trump while in respect of Putin's Russia - with whom Trump seemed to have an even tie - Biden's view is that the former superpower is an adversary that should be made to pay for its alleged interference in the last US election. Unlike Trump who was cool towards Europe, Biden wants to restore American ties with it - this fits in with his attitude towards Russia. Biden does not share the visceral dislike of Islamic militancy that Trump displayed through his tenure. The stand of the Democrat President on Pakistan, China and Afghanistan will therefore be of great strategic interest for India.

The President elect has in his statements and write ups focused entirely on the domestic scene that prevails in the US in the aftermath of a bitterly contested election and pledged to unite the nation, get on with the effective handling of Covid and work for restoring 'decency' in America's socio-political life. It is a fact that the political divide has been sharpened by ideological, demographic and class polarisation cumulatively caused by the appeal of America First, economic downturn resulting from the pandemic and the tensions on the street generated by the campaigns. Some analysts term this as the after effect of 'Trumpism' on American politics. The democratic environ at home will reestablish itself with passage of time but for the world outside, particularly India, Biden's foreign policy package would be eagerly awaited as that would have to define the new regime's stand on a vast spectrum of global hot spots like America's trans-



Pacific policy, security of Indo-Pacific, trade imbalance between US and China, peace in Afghanistan and climate change. President Trump would be remembered for breaking from the traditional polity to confront the new challenges of the present, for shifting the focus from the international politics to the economic situation of Americans at home and for being straightforward about not letting the growing threat of Islamic militancy reach the US soil again.

An area of possible strain for India could crop up in the Biden administration at some point of time because of the ideological proneness of a Democrat dispensation to getting easily influenced by the motivated campaign of liberal lobbyists who had lately become active also against Modi government in India - particularly in its second spell. A politically inspired combine is forming in India around the so called left liberals including Maoists, practitioners of minority politics who ran down nationalism and some sections of the opposition, with the aim of somehow pulling down the Modi rule. This axis is rapidly linking up with forces outside - led by the Pak lobby against India - and building a narrative that human rights were in jeopardy in the Modi regime. It is significant that this anti-Modi 'alliance' has suddenly assumed a high profile in Kashmir - well after the completion of an year since the abolition of Articles 370 and 35A of the Constitution by the Indian Parliament. It comprises the pro-Pak separatists, the valley based politicians seeking to benefit from an anti-India stance and some forces in the national opposition. They are inclined to invite the intervention of the Sino-Pak alliance to keep Kashmir separated from India. Somewhere these desperate elements might be thinking that a democrat regime in US - unlike the Trump presidency - would be easier to influence with a narrative of 'suppression of Kashmiris'. If the past conduct of Pakistan is an indicator a desperate attempt would be made by that country also to precipitate violence in Kashmir to draw attention of the new US President. India will no doubt take an early opportunity to convey it to the Biden ad-

ministration that the problem in Jammu and Kashmir - that was an integral part of India - was one of infiltration of Mujahideen by Pakistan from across the LoC and not of democratic pro-development governance of the state that the Centre was now ensuring. If necessary Biden-Harris leadership would have to be reminded that there was no room for a third party intervention in the affairs of Kashmir.

The big picture about the likely course of Indo-US relationship under Biden regime is that the strategic partnership between the two countries will remain undiminished at the level of complete interoperability and exchange of military intelligence that had already been reached - this is primarily because the two largest democracies do share a common threat from an ambitious China. However, in respect of the forces of radical Islam which considered the US as their prime enemy, ambiguities may arise if the Democrat leader underestimates the potential for global disruption that Pakistan - known to be harbouring Islamic extremists and radicals on its soil - carried today. The old legacy of American administration looking at Pakistan as an 'ally' who had ensured success of the anti-Soviet armed campaign in Afghanistan and therefore ignoring the Pak mischief of unleashing cross border terrorism against India in Kashmir, might play out again because of the reliance Biden might still put on the 'helpful' role of Pakistan in Afghanistan. Indian diplomacy is on test on Afghanistan since Pakistan with its special relationship with Taliban could regain its say at the cost of democratisation of that country and to the detriment of India's strategic interest there.

It is good that former President Barack Obama has in his just published book revealed that Pakistan Army knew of the hideout near Abbottabad where Osama bin Laden was living before the American SEALs took him out in a covert operation conducted at the back of that army. Indian diplomacy has this challenge of counselling the new policy makers in US of the increasing hold of radicalisation in the Muslim world - enlarged by the trio

of Pakistan, Turkey and Malaysia acting as its patron and doing this at the cost of US-led West, ultimately. The threat of faith-based terror arising from within the Muslim world should not be allowed to be diluted - the experience of Europe in recent times and the play of Islamic card by Pakistan in South Asia should be taken note of. Interactions between US and India at the official level as also through credible think tanks must adequately focus on this danger of the future facing the democratic world. Once it is understood that the problem in Kashmir was caused by the plan of Pakistan to replicate the Afghan Jihad there to lay claim on the territory and also by the communal agenda of the valley based parties to join hands with the pro-Pak separatists to gain political power, it would become clear that the repeal of temporary Art 370 was necessitated by the desire of India to give the state its due as an integral part of the nation. The valley-based parties have never condemned Pakistan for infiltrating terrorists in Kashmir and China for illegally occupying a large part of undivided J&K and their expression of support for these enemies of India has finally exposed them for what they are - a set of anti-India leaders not deserving of any latitude from this nation.

India should be prepared to face a situation where Biden presidency is fully geared to dealing with Chinese aggressiveness in Indo-Pacific region militarily through QUAD but is not able to see the threat of Sino-Pak collusion against this country with the same alarm. India has to continue building its defence forces to counter any joint mischief by Pakistan and China on our borders even as our military level talks with China for disengagement on LAC in Ladakh are kept up. Also, India has to use all international forums to warn the democratic world against the grave threat of terrorism that it faces on account of the spread of radicalisation not only in the Islamic countries but also in the countries that had significant Muslim minorities. It is also necessary to expose the trend developing in India of pro-Pak lobbies working with the left liberal - anti-Modi opposition combine to play up Minority politics here on issues ranging from CAA to Kashmir. The political calculation that drives this trend is that so long as the majority community was divided in multiple ways the minority was a match winner in an electoral contest. This is the time for reaching out to the minorities with assurances of development without discrimination and equal protection of law to everybody in India on one hand and coming on with a ton of bricks on those who filled the community with exclusivist and communal thoughts and even disparaged the idea of nationalism as a uniting factor for the country, on the other. Biden-Harris team must understand that India puts all citizens on the same footing regardless of creed, class or region and that this was an example other democracies would do well to follow.

(The writer is a former Director, Intelligence Bureau. The opinions expressed are personal)

## LETTERS

### Unending electoral battles

Amazingly, even municipal elections have become vociferous and vituperative. It is hard to believe that central level leaders can descend on the city to campaign for what is rapidly turning into a major ego issue. Looking at the promises made by all political parties, the only wish one could have for individual and societal prosperity is to have elections every two years.

The first year to implement the previous promises and the second year to make promises for the next elections. No problem if the treasuries are completely swept clean. We can always tax the people more. It is the most painful fact of Indian politics that I become aware of my personal faith, my 'caste', my language, my every single belief most acutely during elections.

Not only that, I also feel a great danger to all of them from the 'others'. The roads in my city have only seen constant construction for the last two decades; repair after every rain, cosmetic covering of potholes during VIP visits,

and then back to a default non-motorable condition. Surprisingly, no political party after coming to power ensures proper roads to all its citizens; surely the best way to win elections next time and also make everyone happy without needing to divide.

Road building somehow in our country seems to be even more complicated than rocket science. The politics is unfortunately atomising the society; if democracy and elections are the best form of governance, India does not seem to be good advertisement for it.

Dr Pingali Gopal, Warangal

### Please take up core issues

In the cacophony of polarisation of votes for GHMC elections, primary and pertinent issues of greater Hyderabad have been buried under the carpet. Political parties are trying to rake up National and international issues which have got minimum role to play in GHMC administration. Opposition parties are trying to criticise TRS government as a whole but not able to bring core issues, concerning GHMC administration, to the books. Moreover these elections are coloured with communal fervour. It is too harmful to embrace this. Both sides of Musi river have been occupied

illegally by many. Most of these occupiers have political backing. Migrated labour and marginalised families too live on the Musi bank. The irony part of it is, if these dwellers do not reside on the banks of Musi, upper middle and above classes suffer to find "house maids" for their routine. Hence provision of dwelling to the poor and marginalised, within the city is need of the elite society.

A dignified dwelling for those people has to be thought off by GHMC. This issue must be brought to fore. At the same time, a congregation place for daily wagers (Adda coolies) is essential. Lakhs of people are dependent on such employment in the city. They do not have proper place to wait till they get opportunity of a days work. It needs a solution.

Open urination is a serious menace in Hyderabad city.

Open defecation on the banks of Musi river and at several other places is a common scene in the city. Make shift toilets are arranged at several places but poor maintenance left the issue to as is where condition. Indeed these toilets are spreading foul smell due to which the nearby atmosphere has further exacerbated. In spite of attempts to cull street dogs by GHMC the gravity of issue is still at its peak. Pet dog's defecation is rightfully allowed on

the roads and in the residential areas by people adopted them. Is this not an irresponsibility? The new team of GHMC must concentrate to bring awareness on these issues.

G Thirupathaiah, Hyderabad

### Is the TRS nervous this time?

The fear and apprehension that is apparent by TRS in the run up to the GHMC polls in the language by KTR, in his frantic moves to prove his party credentials, and remind the voters, not to forget TRS at any cost. But, this is a new dimension in the political power play that is being witnessed in the GHMC elections that is not governed by the credentials of the ruling party that has been in power in the state. This time it is surely about basic infrastructure facilities in the twin cities - particularly in the old city of Hyderabad, which lacks basic amenities of decent living by people in the area, despite tall promises.

KTR used words like beggars, while describing the opposition and tell voters that Hyderabad is not Ahmedabad, reminding them that they are smart, during his road show in the city. It smacks of his arrogance and ignorance to assess and warn voters, in the light of BJP's resolve to sweep the GHMC polls. The final out-

come however will be in the hands of the electorate whom, I believe have already made up their minds this time around.

S Lakshmi, Wayanad

### Devastating pandemic of 2020

This year was ruled by Covid-19 global pandemic - an unexpected havoc. Year 2020 seems the most cursed year in the history of civilisation of mankind. There were many outbreaks of diseases earlier but this is the deadliest global pandemic experienced till date.

2020 also experienced a lot of natural calamities like cyclones, floods, locust attacks, earthquakes, etc added to the pain. A stretch of bad events kicked off the year. Economy around the world collapsed and many people lost their jobs.

People are drowned with fear and uncertainty about their future and their health safety. This leap year needs the leap of hope and faith to stay positive. We are very close to the breakthrough of vaccine, as it is on its last stage of trials. Hope everything will be hunky-dory again soon in next year.

Kirti Bihani, New Delhi

thehansreader@gmail.com



# Focus on vaccine storage, logistics: CM

- Interacts with Prime Minister along with other Chief Ministers on various issues relating to Covid vaccination
- Instructs officials to prepare an action plan on storing the vaccine at optimum temperature as well as logistics to take it to remote areas at the same temperature

AMARAVATI

CHIEF Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy on Tuesday participated in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's videoconference with Chief Ministers on the prevailing Covid-19 situation. During the interaction, the Prime Minister discussed various issues related to Covid vaccination, including to whom it has to be given first, priorities, policies to be followed at the field level, and procedures to be followed while distribution of the vaccine. Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy held a review meeting with officials after the videoconference with the



Chief Ministers taking part in a review held by Prime Minister on Covid vaccine on Tuesday

Prime Minister and asked them to focus on methods to be followed on storage and distribution of the vaccine. He said focus should be on the infrastructure facilities required for refrigeration of the vaccine. The Chief Minister directed the officials to prepare an action plan on storing the vaccine at opti-

mum temperature, as well as transporting it to remote areas at the same temperature. He directed the officials to prepare an action plan on readiness of vaccine distribution. He instructed them to collect technical information on the respective issues and also take relevant information from various compa-

nies and conduct a study on it. The Chief Minister said a review meeting should be held on vaccine-related issues. Home minister Mekathoti Sucharitha, transportation principal secretary T Krishnababu and other officials were present in the videoconference.

# 'Jagananna Thodu' to be launched today

- Under the scheme, each small and petty vendors will be given Rs 10,000 loan
- Around 10 lakh vendors have applied for the loan
- The State govt has allocated Rs 1,000 cr for the interest-free loan scheme

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
AMARAVATI

CHIEF Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy will launch Jagananna Thodu scheme on Wednesday, which aims at providing a helping hand to small and petty vendors across the state. Interest-free loan of Rs 10,000 would be provided to small and petty vendors under the scheme and nearly 10 lakh vendors have applied to avail the scheme. In regard to this, the Chief Minister will be releasing Rs 1,000 crore and the amount will be directly credited into beneficiaries' bank accounts. The scheme took shape after Jagan Mohan Reddy has seen the plight of small and petty traders during his Praja Sankalpa Yatra. The objective of the scheme is



to free vendors from paying heavy interest to the loans taken from private parties and falling into debts. The banks will be providing loans to all the eligible members and the government shall pay the interest of the loan amount to banks, by reimbursing it to beneficiaries' accounts. The state government had also started a special web portal to co-ordinate with banks and to implement the scheme giving no scope for corruption. The beneficiaries will also be provided with QR-

based smart ID cards and the scheme will be monitored by SERP and MEPMA officials. Vegetable vendors, fruit vendors, small shopkeepers, pushcart vendors, and traditional artisans are eligible to apply for the scheme. The volunteers of the village/ward secretariat have identified the beneficiaries in the recent survey and the list of beneficiaries is being displayed at secretariats for social audit. If any eligible person was not covered in this scheme, they can still apply through volunteers.

## TDP complains to SEC on YSRCP attacks

- TDP AP chief Atchannaidu writest to Election Commissioner seeking 'stringent steps', including a CBI probe into the intimidating tactics of ruling party nominees against TDP contestants of local polls

AMARAVATI

TDP state President K Atchannaidu on Tuesday made a strong plea to the State Election Commission (SEC) to take stringent measures to prevent the ongoing attacks by the ruling YSRCP leaders on the opposition parties' candidates in the local body elections. Atchannaidu wrote a letter to SEC N Ramesh Kumar, saying that the YSRCP candidates and their followers were resorting to intimidation tactics and attacks on the TDP nominees in Santhamaguluru mandal in Prakasam district. The ruling party is targeting all those who contested the local polls on behalf of the TDP. Stating that the common people were being terrified with murder politics, Atchannaidu demanded that the CBI inquiry be launched into the ruling party attacks on the TDP activists. The YSRCP was indulging in undemocratic and unlawful activities all over the state, he said. The TDP leader sought postponement of elections wherever violence and irregularities were reported. Security should be provided to the Opposition candidates with the Central forces. The SEC should begin online nominations in order to give a level playing field to all the candidates in a democratic manner. Atchannaidu stressed the need for conducting the elections amid security provided by the Central forces since the YSRCP was resorting to widespread violence and attacks.

# Prez offers prayers at Tirumala

- Governor accompanies the President
- CM welcomes him at the Renigunta airport



TIRUMALA

PRESIDENT of India, Ramnath Kovind on Tuesday afternoon offered prayers in Sri Venkateswara temple at Tirumala. In his visit to the shrine, the President sporting 'Thirunamam, the tradition mark the devotees wear on their face, had darshan of the Lord. His family members, including spouse Savitha, daughter Swathi and Andhra Pradesh Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan accompanied the President for the darshan.

Following the age-old temple tradition, the President first offered prayers to Swami Pushkarini (temple tank) and later had darshan of Sri Varahaswami before offering prayers to Lord Venkateswara. Thereafter when the President reached the Sri-vara temple, he was received with traditional welcome of Istikaphal honour by temple priests along with the TTD chairman Y V Subba Reddy along with TTD EO Dr K S Jawahar Reddy, additional EO A V Dharma Reddy and conducted into sanctum sanctorum to the accompaniment of traditional music. The President and his entourage offered prayers to the presiding deity of Lord Venkateswara in the sanctum sanctorum. The chief priest explained the significance of the Mula Virat, the

President Ram Nath Kovind offering prayers at Goddess Sri Padmavathi Devi temple at Tiruchanoor on Tuesday



jewels adorned to the Lord and Kshetra Mahatmyam to the President. The president while on Pradakshina (circumambulation) offered prayers in the sub-shrines located in the Vimanaprakaram in the temple complex and made offerings in the temple Hundi. Later, he and his entourage were offered Veda Ashirvachanam at Ranganayakula Mandapam by priests and Veda pundits blessing the dignitaries. The TTD chairman and EO together presented Srivari Theertha Prasadam and laminated photo of Lord Venkateswara along with 2021 TTD diaries and calendars to the President.

mar. Agama Advisor Srinivasacharyulu along with priests offered the dignitary with traditional welcome chanting hymns from scriptures. The President who arrived on a seven-hour visit to the pilgrim city, on his arrival at Renigunta airport was accorded a warm welcome by Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy along with Governor and non-officials and officials from the district including Deputy Chief Minister K Narayana Swamy, district in-charge minister Mekapati Goutham Reddy, senior leader and panchayat raj minister Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy, district collector Dr N B Gupta and others.

## India bans 43 Chinese mobile apps

Continued from P1

Other popular banned apps were Baidu Express Edition, ShareSave by Xiaomi, WeChat Work, Tencent Weiyun, Tencent Watchlist, Alipay, GO SMS Pro, ZAKZAK Pro and Live, Smart AppLock and Ludo World-Ludo Superstar, among others. In July, the government barred 47 Chinese apps from operating in the country, which were largely clones of the 59 apps that were banned in June.

On June 29, the government banned 59 Chinese apps, including TikTok, WeChat, UC Browser and Xiaomi's Mi Community, over national security concerns amid the border tussle in Eastern Ladakh which led to the death of 20 Indian soldiers in a bloody clash with Chinese PLA troops in the Galwan Valley in June. Other Chinese apps in the banned list were Club Factory, SHAREit, Likee, Mi Video Call (Xiaomi), Weibo, Baidu, BIGO LIVE and more.

## Sputnik vaccine 95% effective, says Russia

Continued from P1

The head of Russia's sovereign wealth fund said Kirill Dmitriev told Reuters that new clinical trial data based on 39 confirmed cases and 18,794 patients who got both shots had shown that Sputnik V was 91.4% effective on day 28 and over 95% effective on day 42. No adverse side-effects reported during the trial, reports said.

Earlier this month, developers of Sputnik V, RDIF and Gamaleya Institute, announced interim data from a large trial suggests the shot appears to be 92% effective.

According to an official statement, Sputnik V vaccination will be free of charge for Russian citizens. Customers who recently submitted requests will get first batches of the vaccine starting from March 2021.

RDIF is currently considering additional applications from number of countries and companies to further increase production capacity, the statement read.

On August 11, the Sputnik V vaccine was registered by the Ministry of Health of Russia and became the world's first registered vaccine against Covid-19 based on the human adenoviral vector platform. On Monday, British-Swedish drug-maker AstraZeneca said its covid vaccine for the novel coronavirus, developed along with the University of Oxford, could be around 90% effective under one dosing regimen.

On November 17, Moderna, in its official statement, had announced that the independent, U.S. NIH-appointed Data Safety Monitoring Board (DSMB) for the Phase 3 study of mRNA-1273 has informed Moderna that the trial has met the statistical criteria pre-specified in the study protocol for efficacy, with a vaccine efficacy of 94.5%.

## Increase testing, reduce fatality rate, says Modi

Continued from P1

This statement is in light of the varying efficacy rates for different vaccines: While the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines have higher efficacy rates than the Oxford-SII one, the latter vaccine can be stored at much more convenient temperatures of 2 to 8 degree Celsius. The vaccine manufacturer Serum Institute of India has promised 50 per cent of all doses for the domestic market.

Modi also mentioned the steps of "testing, confirmation, contact tracing and data" to be given top priority in order to bring the positive rate to less than 5 per cent and the fatality rate to under 1 per cent.

Confirming as to who will receive the vaccines first at their arrival, Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani said, "PM made it clear that in the first stage the vaccine will be given to the front-line health workers, in the second stage to the police personnel, sanitation workers etc, to those above 50 years of age in third stage and to those with comorbid conditions in the fourth stage."

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said that "the high severity of (the) third wave is due to many factors. Pollution is an important factor," seeking the Prime Minister's intervention to stop stubble burning in the neighbouring states of Haryana and Punjab.

# TDP alleges properties of Oppn leaders targeted

AMARAVATI

FORMER home minister and TDP MLA Nimmakayala Chinaraajappa on Tuesday accused the YSRCP government of adopting a policy of demolishing the opposition leaders' constructions while not handing over the completed houses built by the TDP government to the eligible beneficiaries. Chinaraajappa criticised that the buildings of GITAM, Sabbam Hari, Sri Harsha and others were wrongfully demolished in Visakhapatnam. The properties of the opposition leaders was being targeted with an ulterior motive to suppress all dissenting voices, he alleged. In a statement here, the TDP leader said that the ministers and ruling party MPs were obstructing all forms of development with utter disregard for the future of the state. MP V Vijayasai Reddy should ex-

- Chinaraajappa cites demolition of properties of GITAM, Sabbam Hari

plain why he had written a letter for stalling the works on the Visakhapatnam airport, he demanded. He asserted that the people would not believe the false propaganda by the ruling YSRCP that the TDP had created hurdles for the distribution of the houses which were already completed. Also, the YSRCP leaders were committing all sorts of frauds in the house sites programme but not taking steps for providing proper liveable house sites to the poor. Stating that the Jagan government was least bothered about the welfare of the people, Chinaraajappa said that the TDP along with all other opposition parties would continue its agitation to protect the people from the YSRCP's destructive policies.

# YSRCP afraid of backlash from BC, SC, ST, Minorities, says Naidu

AMARAVATI

TDP national president and former chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Tuesday called upon all sections of people being victimised by the YSRCP government to rally together and wage a relentless battle against the ruling party's atrocities and oppression. Naidu asserted that the people would have nothing to lose if they agitated except the fact that the ruling party would face false cases and make illegal arrests. The Jagan regime was scared of facing a backlash from the BC, SC, ST and Muslim minorities which was they were creating hurdles for the local body elections. Addressing a meeting with the party mandal committee leaders from all over the state, the TDP chief said that the ruling party leaders were afraid of being routed in the polls if they were to be held immediately. They were scared that all the victimised sections of society would become united and defeat their candidates. This Chief Minister would not discourage atrocities but he would encourage miscreants and their atrocities. Everybody was suffering because of the irresponsible administration. The TDP chief stressed on the need for a united effort of all the affected sections to give a tough fight against the oppressive regime. Muscle power would not stand in front of a people's revolt. If the state was not rid of the YSRCP menace, it would further slip into chaos and anarchy. The responsibility to save AP would now rest upon the shoulders of each and every citizen of the state, he said.

## Delhi air quality 'very poor'

Continued from P1

However, according to the Ministry of Earth Sciences' air quality monitor, SAFAR, the stubble-burning count significantly decreased to 149 on Sunday, contributing to six per cent in Delhi's air on Monday.

It said winds are expected to slow down and low ventilation is expected, adding that if the stubble-burning count increases, the AQI will further worsen to "severe". Stubble-burning accounted for 12 per cent of Delhi's PM2.5 pollution on Sunday. It was 13 per cent on Saturday, 15 per cent on Friday, 20 per cent on Thursday and eight per cent on Wednesday.

# Cyclone Nivar to cross TN coast today

Continued from P1

The regional Meteorological Office in Chennai said the cyclone is likely to move northwards and pass the Karaikal-Mamallapuram coast around noon on Wednesday. Villupuram, Cuddalore, Puducherry and Chennai are expected to be among the worst-hit regions.

According to the cyclone live tracker, Nivar has been stagnant for the past three hours. Earlier, it was moving at a speed of 5 km per hour. Meanwhile, with heavy rain expected over parts of coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema, the Andhra Pradesh government alerted all district officials and dispatched National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and SDRF teams to Nellore.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister K Palaniswami said as many as 4,133 vulnerable locations have been identified in the state and district collectors advised to take measures to ensure people's safety. There are 3,146 cyclone shelters and people accommodated there would be provided with all necessary items, including milk for children, he said.

A total of 22 teams have been pre-deployed while eight are on standby in the two affected states of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, and in the Union Territory of Puducherry, NDRF chief SN Pradhan said. "Out of these 30 teams, 12 are deployed in Tamil Nadu, seven in Andhra Pradesh and three in Puducherry", he said.

An additional 20 teams will be on standby to be airlifted from locations such as Cuttack (Odisha), Vijaywada (Andhra Pradesh) and Thrissur (Kerala), he said. He also said they are prepared for a "high level of intensity and the worst form" of the cyclonic storm as it surges from the Bay of Bengal towards the southern coastline.

Six special trains of the Thiruvananthapuram division of the Southern Railways, have been cancelled on November 25 in view of the IMD forecast of cyclonic storm Nivar making landfall over Tamil Nadu and Puducherry coasts.



BIZ BRIEFS

AMC announces new scheme

UNION AMC announced the launch of Union Hybrid Equity Fund. It is an open-ended hybrid scheme investing predominantly in equity and equity related instruments. The scheme will invest a minimum 65 per cent in equity and maximum 35 per cent in debt. The New Fund Offer (NFO) of the scheme opens on November 17 and closes on December 11. The allotment would be on December 18 and it will re-open for continuous sale and repurchase on December 28, 2020. Pradeepkumar, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), AMC, said "Among other things, prudent asset allocation forms the bedrock of a successful investment outcome. Different asset classes do not generally move in tandem and hence taking exposure to Union Hybrid Equity Fund which inherently offers a combination of equity and debt can be a good choice for investors looking for a balanced approach to asset allocation."

Carlsberg's initiative

CARLSBERG has signed an agreement with Desolentator to create clean drinking water for a town of 4,000, in the Sundarbans in West Bengal, India. The Sundarbans, West Bengal, has been hard hit by climate change and water scarcity. The situation has been compounded in 2020 by Covid-19 and Cyclone Amphan, with water being trucked into some areas. This transformative approach enables the long-term supply of clean drinking water, setting the foundation for all other development goals to thrive health, education, income generation and rural female empowerment. The sustainable desalination project, due to complete mid-2021, will create 20,000 litres of clean drinking water using the heat and power of the sun. Cees't Hart, CEO, Carlsberg Group, said: "Through our Together Towards ZERO programme, Carlsberg is committed to developing partnerships to protect shared water resources in our high-risk areas".

GS Caltex unveils product

GS Caltex India has unveiled its new range of BS VI compatible products for the Indian motorists. Available under the brand name Kixx, the latest engine oils are equipped to meet the stringent requirements of the new BS VI emission norms announced by the Government of India. These engine oils are based on advanced additive technology to deliver excellent protection and superior performance in BSVI vehicles cars and motorcycles. Rajesh Nagar, MD & CEO, GS Caltex India, said, "We at GS Caltex India, have been at the forefront in launching products which meet the latest requirements of the market. It has been our constant endeavor to work on improving and upgrading our product portfolio as per the latest norms to offer superior customer experience."

Naselin partners with Gaana

NASELIN and Gaana, have stepped into a partnership to create the idea of a SubhRatri specially curated playlist. The two brands have associated with each other to blend the magic of soothing music and the proposition of Naselin that alleviates cold-induced blocked nose and subsequent sleep deprivation. Shivam Puri, CEO, Cipla Health Ltd. said, "It is our continuous endeavour to aid consumers with innovative solutions. We are delighted to partner with Gaana for the SubhRatri playlist. It's a one-of-a-kind innovation that will directly reach consumers and provide them comfort in distress."

# Vaccine hopes propel indices to fresh high


Nifty closes above 13k for first time; Sensex at new peak of 44,523.02 pts on unabated foreign capital inflows

MUMBAI

INDIAN equity indices conquered new peaks on Tuesday, with the Nifty closing above the 13,000-level for the first time, as banking, FMCG and auto stocks saw heavy buying amid optimism over Covid-19 vaccine progress and unabated foreign capital inflows. A strengthening rupee further boosted investor confidence, traders said. After scaling a lifetime intra-day high of 44,601.63, the 30-share BSE Sensex ended 445.87 points or 1.01 per cent higher at a record 44,523.02. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty climbed 128.70 points or one per cent to close at 13,055.15 points.

"Market is inching higher with more confidence that Covid-19 vaccine will be available in India soon. It can provide an advantage to India compared to the rest of the world. While, foreign inflows have already broken to a new high on a monthly basis, due to risk on strategy on healthier emerging markets like India. Recently broad market, including mid and small caps, have started to perform better which may continue in the short-term as large caps look expensive post the solid rally from Covid low," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

Axis Bank was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, spurring 4.02 per cent, followed by M&M, HDFC Bank, ITC, SBI, ICICI Bank, Maruti, Kotak Bank and Sun Pharma. On the other hand, HDFC, Titan, Nestle India, Bharti Airtel, ONGC



Sensex may cross 45k mark

KUMUD DAS

AS it was expected, the market bellwether BSE Sensex opened on a positive note near 44,341 levels, made an intraday low of 44,247 and again started up journey making new 52-week high of 44,601, to finally settle above 44,500 at 44,523 levels.

Sensex is up near 74 per cent from March 2020 lows. It rallied mainly on buying in banking and financial sectors. Also auto, pharma and metal stocks edged higher. Broader market mid & small cap stocks trade higher by 0.70 per cent & one per cent respectively. Asian cues were mixed. Nitesh Karani, V-P (research), Magnum Equity, said: "Tomorrow Sensex to open on a positive note and further uptrend to resume till 45,200 levels, with first resistance near 44,700-44,750 levels and next 44,870-44,920 levels & next 45K mark, if Sensex fails to sustain above 44,400 mark in Intraday, then probably witness some correction with immediate support near 44,170-44,220 levels & next 44K psychological levels, below which may extend some further correction near 43,810-43,850 levels."

and Infosys were among the main laggards, shedding up to 1.47 per cent. Global markets maintained their upward trajectory as investors wagered on swift rollout of Covid-19 vaccines following encour-

## GPay plans to levy fee for money transfers

NEW DELHI


GOOGLE Pay is set to kill the peer-to-peer payments facility on its web app in January and is going to add a fee for instant money transfers, the media reported.

Google Pay offered the ability to manage payments as well as send money from both a mobile app or from pay.google.com. Now, Google has released a notice on the web app that notifies users that the site will no longer work from January next year.

"Starting early in 2021, you won't be able to use pay.google.com to send and receive money from other people. To send and receive money, use the new Google Pay app," the company informed. While you can still manage payment methods on the web app, peer-to-peer payments will cease to exist.

Google also clarified on a support page that the original Google Pay app will stop working in January, reports 9to5Google. Google Pay will also add a fee on instant money transfers.

Starting early in 2021, you won't be able to use pay.google.com to send and receive money from other people. To send and receive money, use the new Google Pay app



"It can take 1-3 business days when you transfer money to your bank account. Debit card transfers are usually instant. There is a fee of 1.5% or \$31 (whichever is higher), when you transfer out money with a debit card," the company said on its support page.

Google last week introduced several features in its Pay feature for both Android and iOS users which have been first rolled out in the US. The company said it is working with trusted financial institutions to create Plex, a new mobile-first bank account integrated into Google Pay.

## NSE expels Karvy Stock Broking from membership

- Declares it as defaulter for non-compliance with regulatory provisions
- Investors with fund balances up to Rs 30,000 due from Karvy have been settled, says NSE

NEW DELHI

THE National Stock Exchange (NSE) has declared Karvy Stock Broking Ltd as a defaulter for non-compliance with the regulatory provisions of the bourse.

In addition, Karvy Stock Broking has been expelled from the membership of the exchange, the NSE said in a circular. The move effective from November 23, was taken as the broker failed to comply with NSE guidelines, it added. Under the guidelines, stockbrokers are required to fulfil their obligations and should not involve in any misconduct, or unprofessional conduct among others.

In a statement, NSE said: "While disciplinary proceedings are underway, funds and securities of approximately Rs 2,300 crore belonging to about 2,35,000 investors have been settled so far, with efforts focused on settlement of small investors. Investors with fund balances up to Rs 30,000 due from Karvy Stock Broking have been settled."

Earlier, Karvy had unauthorisedly transferred securities of clients into its demat accounts by misusing the PoAs (Power of Attorney) given by its clients. In November 2019, the market regulator Sebi had barred Karvy from taking new brokerage clients after it was found that it had allegedly misused clients' securities worth Rs 2,000 cr.

## FII inflows make rupee stronger

MUMBAI

THE rupee appreciated by 10 paise to close at 74.01 against the US dollar on Tuesday on sustained foreign fund inflows and positive development over coronavirus vaccine.

Traders said investor risk sentiment improved amid growing hopes of an early rollout and efficacy of Covid-19 vaccines. Besides, strong domestic equities, sustained foreign fund inflows and weak American currency also supported the local unit. At the interbank forex market, the domestic unit opened at 74.10 against the US dollar and then touched a high of 73.88 and a low of 74.12 in day trade.

The local unit finally ended at 74.01 against the greenback, registering a rise of 10 paise over its previous close. On Monday, the rupee had appreciated 5 paise to settle at more than two-week high of 74.11 against the US dollar. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was down 0.32 per cent to 92.20.

## Gold price falls below ₹49,000

MUMBAI

FUTURES of gold, which were soaring well above the Rs 50,000 mark till sometime back amid the weak economic scenario, have now started to ease and have fallen below the Rs 49,000-mark amid optimism regarding vaccines for the novel Coronavirus.

The December contract of gold on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) is currently trading at Rs 48,975 per 10 gram, lower by Rs 505 or 1.02 per cent from its previous close. Similarly, domestic futures of silver also continued its downward trend on Tuesday and its December contract on the MCX is currently at Rs 59,825 per kg, lower by Rs 700 or 1.16 per cent from its previous close.

Anuj Gupta, DVP for Commodities and Currencies Research at Angel Broking Ltd said that noted that the decline has been on the back of recovery in global equity market and development on the front of corona virus vaccine. Gold ETF holding is also falling more than a million ounce in this month, he said. "The trend of gold and silver now become down and expectation of safe haven demand of this asset may fade out. As for today traders can go for sell in gold at Rs 49,800 levels with the stop loss of Rs 50,100 levels for the target of 49,000 levels," Gupta said. In the international market, gold may test \$1780 to \$1800 per ounce levels soon, according to him.

He was of the view that traders can also go for sell in Silver at Rs 61,000 levels, with the stop loss of 61,800 levels and for the target of 59,800 levels. Optimism has been fueled in the global markets after the recent series of positive

announcements on the vaccine front. AstraZeneca on Monday announced that positive high-level results from an interim analysis of clinical trials of the Covid-19 vaccine candidate in the UK and Brazil showed it was highly effective in preventing the disease, the primary endpoint, and no hospitalisations or severe cases of the disease were reported in participants receiving the vaccine.

One dosing regimen showed vaccine efficacy of 90 per cent when 'AZD1222' was given as a half dose, followed by a full dose at least one month apart, and another dosing regimen showed 62 per cent efficacy when given as two full doses at least one month apart. The combined analysis from both dosing regimens resulted in an average efficacy of 70 per cent.

All results were statistically significant. More data will continue to accumulate and additional analysis will be conducted, refining the efficacy reading and establishing the duration of protection.

Non-performing assets in the Indian banking sector is likely to witness an uptick and may shoot up to 11 per cent of gross loans in the next 12-18 months, S&P Global Ratings said on Tuesday.

It said forbearance is "masking" problem assets for Indian banks arising from Covid-19 and the financial institutions will likely have trouble maintaining momentum after the proportion of non-performing assets (NPA) to total loans declined consistently so far this year.

"While financial institutions performed better than we expected in the second quarter, much of this is due to the six-month loan moratorium, as well as a Supreme Court ruling barring banks from classifying any borrower as a non performing asset,"


## NPA's likely to rise in next 12-18 months: S&P

NEW DELHI

S&P Global Ratings credit analyst Deepali Seth-Chhabria said.

In its report titled "The Stress Fractures in Indian Financial Institutions", S&P said with loan repayment moratoriums having ended on August 31, 2020, NPAs in the banking sector will likely shoot up to 10-11 per cent of gross loans in the next 12-18 months, from 8 per cent on June 30, 2020.

According to S&P, the banking system's credit costs will remain elevated at 2.2-2.9 per cent this year and next. "Resumption of economic activity, government credit guarantees for small to mid-size enterprises, and buoyant liquidity is helping to limit stress. Our NPA estimates are lower than previous but we are still of the view that the sector's financial strength will not materially recover until fiscal 2023 (ended March 31, 2023)," it said.



3-8% Loans could get restructured

8% NPAs as on June 30, 2020

# Global crypto players set to tap Indian market

Supreme Court's recent 'go-ahead' for crypto currency payments may spur trading volume

KUMUD DAS MUMBAI

A SIGNIFICANT number of global crypto players have started making foray into the untapped Indian market of virtual currency. The trigger is the recent apex court's 'go-ahead' for the virtual currency in the country.

The Supreme Court overturned a ban imposed by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on crypto currency payments on March 4. As a result, the global crypto players are preparing to tap into an opportunity potentially worth \$12.9 billion.

While Bitcoin was the first crypto currency to see widespread distribution, the birth of the industry gave rise to other alternative coins like Ethereum, Litecoin, Ripple, Monero, and more.

The growing popularity of the Crypto assets witnessed Bitcoin val-

In fact, India is now one of the fastest growing crypto communities, with the number of wallets (accounts) growing by 18% m-o-m



at approximately Rs 12.5 lakh for one Bitcoin. Sathvik Vishwanath, CEO of Unocoin, a crypto currency exchange, says, "we have actually seen the all-time high of \$20,000 in December 2017."

I think at that time the increase in price was more related to fear of missing out for the investors. But this time there is more genuine reasons for the price increase like American hedge funds adding crypto assets to their balance sheet, PayPal allowing access to its millions of customers to buy and sell cryptos followed by an announcement from DBS bank that

they will soon start providing trading services for crypto to their clients."

US exchanges like Coinbase have over 1.5 crore users, which is close to five per cent of the population. In contrast, India has an estimated 50 lakh users at present. In fact, India is now one of the fastest growing crypto communities, with the number of wallets (accounts) growing by 18 per cent month-on-month.

At ZebPay alone, a crypto exchange active in the country, its active user base has multiplied by 3.8 times since March.

Taking a note of it and making the crypto currencies affordable, the crypto exchanges are currently working towards lowering their fees.

Talking to Bizz Buzz, Vikram Rangala, Chief Marketing Officer, ZebPay, said, "We are restructur-

ing so we can offer the lowest possible fees, lower than others, to make it affordable for everyone. This is the way for ordinary families to create wealth for the future using this new asset class."

Of late, Zebpay has launched Project Dazzle, which will offer India's first non-fungible crypto token (NFT).

In 2020, CoinDCX, crypto currency exchange and liquidity aggregator, saw record increases in user sign-ups (10x), and 47 per cent growth in trading volumes in Q1 alone and even during the lockdown the growth was consistent across month-on-month with Q3.

In Q3 we observed 3 x quarter-over-quarter growths in trading volume, and 4 x quarter-over-quarter growths in daily active users, says Sumit Gupta, co-founder and CEO of CoinDCX.

## Cashfree raises \$35mn in Series B funding

Existing investor Y Combinator also participated in the funding round. "With our Series B funding round of \$35 million led by Apis Growth Fund II, we plan to utilise this fresh capital to further scale Cashfree's payments solutions, developing innovative products and strategic acquisitions," Akash Sinha, Co-Founder and CEO, Cashfree, told IANS.

"Our renewed focus is on strengthening the fintech infrastructure by ensuring that the framework can seamlessly support the unprecedented higher volumes of digital payments. This investment comes at a crucial time with the recent surge in digital payments," Sinha said.

Cashfree was founded by Sinha and Reetu Datta in 2015 and processes online payments for thousands of Indian businesses.



BLITZKREIG AGAINST ‘COUSINS OF GOEBBLES’

# KTR poses a 50-question challenge to BJP, Centre

Blistering attack on BJP govt for failing people of India on all fronts

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
HYDERABAD

TAKING serious exception to the charge sheet released by Union Minister Prakash Javadekar against the State government, TRS Working President KT Rama Rao on Tuesday fired a 50-question challenge to the BJP leaders. The TRS leader said, “the slogan of BJP is ‘Becho India (sell India), while the slogan of TRS is ‘Socho india’ (think India).”

Addressing a press conference at Telangana Bhavan, Rama Rao termed the BJP leaders ‘Cousins of Goebbels.’ The BJP government is on a selling spree. They are selling Air India, Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), and are also privatising the prestigious Indian Railways among others. “We are scared they will sell Charminar, Golconda, and privatise GHMC if given a chance. BJP is working with a sole slogan ‘Becho India’. We appeal to the people ‘Socho India,” said Rao.

Rubbishing Jawadekar’s charge sheet, Rao said that in the charge sheet released, they termed Telangana government TRS-MIM sarkar. “In reality, we were never in alliance with MIM. This shows their ill intentions and their hatred for the Muslim community and the union minister shamelessly releases the charge sheet,” said Rao.

Rama Rao said that Telangana achieved exceptional progress in just six years, which the states like Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Uttarakhand created by the BJP couldn’t achieve. “Youth of Hyderabad should file charge sheets on BJP for cancelling the ITIR project to Hyderabad. Migrant workers should file charge sheets on BJP for charging money for their rail travel and food expenses during the lockdown,” he fumed. He said that even



TRS Working President KT Rama Rao addressing a press conference at Telangana Bhavan in Hyderabad on Tuesday Photo: N Shiva Kumar Meru

the God should file charge sheet on BJP for using the term ‘Act of God’ and blaming the God for slowdown to cover your failed economic policies and inefficiency. “When we demand our rightful share in taxes, they term us as separatists. But in reality, BJP leaders are the real separatists who were with the PDP in Jammu and Kashmir,” said the TRS leader.

The TRS leader shot questions to the BJP as to why charge sheets should not be issued against them on for selling the PSUs, which generate thousands of crores of income, cheaply as chips. “Aren’t you privatising the world’s fourth-largest railway network? Haven’t you collected railway ticket charges from the helpless migrant workers during the lockdown? Isn’t your government responsible for bringing down the GDP growth less than that of Bangladesh and Sri Lanka? Despite low crude oil prices, aren’t you responsible for doubling the fuel prices,” said Rao.

He also questioned the BJP on Telangana issues such as transferring seven mandals to Andhra Pradesh, for not relapsing GST

dues to Telangana, for not delivering promises made in the Reorganisation Act, for not giving even a single rupee additionally to Hyderabad, for not releasing funds for flood relief et al. He slammed the Centre for not taking steps for tribal varsity, steel factory, ITIR, Navodaya schools, and many others. The minister launched a blitzkrieg on the Modi Government for adopting policies to sell off the benefit making public sector undertakings (PSUs). He accused the Union deputy home minister Kishan Reddy of indulging false information campaign on the TRS government.

He asked whether Modi regime kept its promise of 2 crores of jobs a year and 12 crores in 6 years. The people have to fight charge sheets on the centre for not giving rs 15 lakh per head he said.

The Minister wondered whether roads in the BJP ruled states like Gujarat or cities, like Mumbai, Ahmedabad and others. He challenged the BJP leaders to show any other cities better than Hyderabad. Noted agency Mercer has recently announced that Hyderabad is the

BJP slogan is ‘Becho India (sell India), while ours is ‘Socho india’ (think India). Due to their utter failure, India is lagging behind even Sri Lanka and Bangladesh in GDP growth. Having done nothing for Telangana and Hyderabad, they are out to communalise atmosphere. It was they who shared power with terrorists in J&K, thus fumed the TRS Working President, taking umbrage at BJP charge sheet

best livable city in the country, he claimed.

“It was you who formed government with PDP in Jammu and Kashmir. You shared power with separatists,” said KTR, who is also the minister for municipal administration, urban development, industry and information technology.

The TRS leader said it was ironic that the ministry of the central government praised Telangana for its success in ensuring drinking water supply but the same party which is in power at the centre is releasing charge sheet. KTR remarked that the same party had no shame in copying the schemes of Telangana like Rythu Bandhu and give it the name of PM Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme.

“Your inefficient and bankrupt economic policies led to eight consecutive quarters of slowdown. From slowdown the economy was thrown into lockdown and from lockdown to recession. It was your inefficiency and you blame god for this by calling it an act of god,” he added. KTR claimed that India was lagging behind Sri Lanka and Bangladesh in GDP growth.

## Shabbir slams Sanjay for ‘surgical strike’ remark

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
HYDERABAD

CONGRESS leader Mohammed Ali Shabbir has strongly condemned State BJP president Bandi Sanjay’s statement, wherein the latter promised that his party would conduct surgical strike on Old City after winning GHMC elections.

“As a Member of Parliament, Bandi Sanjay must know that surgical strikes are conducted in enemy’s land and not in our own country. Is he trying to say that Old City of Hyderabad is not part of India? He should be ashamed of himself for stooping to such a low level just to win a few seats in GHMC elections.

He is clearly trying to create a divide in the society on the basis of religion and it is highly regrettable that neither the Election Commission nor the Hyderabad Police are taking any action against him for such provocative



stooping to such a low level just to win a few seats in GHMC elections,” Mohammad Ali Shabbir, Congress leader

statements,” Shabbir Ali said in a media statement released here on Tuesday.

Stating that the issue of Rohingya should be dealt by the Central government, the Congress leader said that instead of communalising the peaceful atmosphere in Hyderabad, he should question his own party (BJP) which is in power for the last six years, as to why it failed to resolve the issue. By describing Old City as hub of terrorism,

“As an MP, Bandi Sanjay must know that surgical strikes are conducted in enemy’s land and not in our own country. Is he trying to say that Old City of Hyderabad is not part of India? He should be ashamed of himself for

Bandi Sanjay is directly questioning the capabilities of Union Home Minister Amit Shah in handling terrorism.

Shabbir Ali said that the BJP leader has been making provocative statements without showing any respect for the law or the Model Code of Conduct. “Instead of inciting communal hatred, Bandi Sanjay must explain what the BJP government did for Hyderabad in the last six years,” he said.

## Fall in night temperatures

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
HYDERABAD

THE night temperatures in the State registered an appreciable fall ranging from 2.1 to 4 degrees Celsius at one or two places during the last 24 hours, ending at 8.30 am on Tuesday.

The Met department bulletin said that the minimum temperatures were above normal by 1.6 to 3 degrees Celsius in some parts of Telangana and normal in many areas. The lowest minimum temperature of 12.2 degree Celsius was recorded in Adilabad.

The other temperatures elsewhere in the State were:

Hyderabad (15.4), Medak (15.5), Dundigal (15.7), Ramagundam (15.8), Hanmakonda (16), Hakimpet (17), Nizamabad (17.4), Mahbubnagar (18.6), Bhadrachalam (18.8), Nalgonda (19.4) and

Khammam (21). According to the forecast, the night temperatures from November 25 to 30 would be 18, 18, 18, 19, 19 and 19 respectively. The weather on the first three days would be generally cloudy sky with one or two spells of rain or thunder-showers. Partly cloudy sky with haze would prevail during the subsequent three days.



## IMD warns of heavy rains across State

Adilabad records 12.2 deg C; Hyd’bad 15.4, Medak 15.5, Dundigal 15.7, Hakimpet 17

HYDERABAD

THE Indian Meteorological department, Hyderabad, even as the City returned to cooler nights after a brief respite from the chill, issued an alert stating that heavy rains could occur in Hyderabad and across the State over the next three days. The districts include Narayanpet.

The sudden change in weather is due to a deep depression over the Bay of Bengal. The impact-based weather forecast for Wednesday said that municipal corporations can issue necessary advice to show alerts on restricted movement and to remain alert due to heavy rains.

KTR DISHES OUT ENTERTAINMENT FORMULA

Shun movies, serials, watch speeches of BJP

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
HYDERABAD

TRS working president KT Rama Rao on Tuesday asked people to stop watching movies and serials for a week and start watching speeches of BJP leaders, which would provide enough entertainment to them. Addressing the heads of various schools and colleges at the Professional and Non-Professional Educational Institutions Association meeting in Hyderabad, Rama Rao said that the TRS government was sincerely working for the welfare of the people of Telangana. “Stop watching movies and serials for a week and start watching speeches of BJP leaders. They will give enough entertainment. The BJP has started a new university called Whatsapp University and the VC for it is the gentleman who is at the top,” said Rama Rao.

He accused the BJP government of not sanctioning a single educational institution to Telangana. He said that the government knows about the demand by private educational institutions for a separate slab for property tax and electricity bills. He stated that soon a meeting would be called for with the heads of the institutions and concerned officials, and a decision will be taken on it.

## HC allows State govt to continue flood relief after Dec 4

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD

THE Division Bench headed by Chief Justice Raghavendra Singh Chauhan and Justice Bolam Vijayen Reddy heard a plea filed by S Sharath Kumar. The court refused to stay the letter dated 17-11-2020 issued by the Secretary, State Election Commission directing the State government to immediately stop disbursement of Rs 10,000 flood relief to the victims.

Further, to stop people from registering themselves at Mee Seva centres, on the ground that the court cannot issue ex-parte interim orders i.e., without hearing the State government’s stand, the court refused to pass any orders and directed the government to file its response to the petitioner’s contentions by December 4.

The court observes once the government has taken a decision, it cannot go back on its decision and it can continue to extend the financial aid of Rs 10,000 after the last ballot of GHMC elections is cast

The petitioner and the counsel in the plea informed the court that the SEC has taken a unilateral decision without consulting different parties in foray for GHMC elections and directed the State government to stop distribution of flood relief to the victims.

Moreover, when major parts of the city were still inundated in floodwater and when the State government has taken a decision

to come to the aid of the flood victims, the decision of the SEC has come as a rude shock to victims, who are deprived of flood relief, the petitioner informed the court.

The Division Bench observed that “The Election Commission is a separate entity and exists on its own under the Constitution of India and does not work under the government so that SEC will be consulted on this issue. Moreover, when

### LEGAL NOTES

## Disha movie: HC serves notices to Ram Gopal Varma

Kin of victims allege that the filmmaker is trying to show the victims as villains in the movie, and this is subjecting them to lot of emotional pain

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD

THE Telangana High Court has issued notices to filmmaker Ram Gopal Varma while responding to a petition filed by victims of Disha encounter. The counsel for the petitioners told the High Court that the decision of Varma to make a movie on the lives of victims was causing a lot of emotional pain to them. He also said that the making of the movie would also force the victims leave their native villages. He said that the film maker was making attempts to show the victims as villains in the movie. He urged the High Court to issue orders of stay on the release of the movie on Disha. The High Court later adjourned the matter for two weeks after issuing the notices to the film director. It may be noted here that the father of Disha, Sridhar Reddy, has already filed a case and made a similar plea to the High Court.

### GHMC POLLS

## Rival parties at daggers drawn

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
HYDERABAD

WITH just six days left to the prestigious GHMC elections, the main political parties – ruling TRS, BJP and Congress kick-started aggressive poll campaign from Tuesday. On decorated campaign vehicles with dance and musical troops, the entire TRS, BJP and Congress leadership swarmed the main roads by conducting road shows and rallies in almost all divisions.

Elections to 150-member GHMC are scheduled to be held on December 1. Over 74 lakh voters are eligible to cast their votes to elect the new civic body. The TRS, which had captured power in 2016 with a landslide majority of 99 seats, is confident of retaining power to ensure “uninterrupted growth” in Greater Hyderabad, considered as the economic engine of the state.

All the state ministers, TRS MLAs and MLCs and senior leaders has been asked to join the campaign in every street in the division allotted to them in the poll bound GHMC limits. The leaders were strictly instructed to counter every statement made by the rival parties against the TRS government and explain the development taken up in Hyderabad in the last six years during the campaign. The TRS special social teams were busy uploading the campaign videos instantly ensuring the reach of the party message to every individual in every division. KTR was taking up road shows on every evening in the city. TRS chief K Chandrashekar Rao is likely to attend a public meeting on November 28 in Hyderabad.

The BJP leaders have made elaborate arrange-

ments for intensified poll campaign involving all senior most leaders, Union minister of state for Home G Kishan Reddy, BJP state unit President B Sanjay, BJP national Vice President DK Aruna and Nizamabad MP D Arvind were leading the poll campaign. National leaders will also join the campaign. BJYM national President Tejaswi Surya took part in rallies in support of the BJP candidates this morning. The BJP is planning to organise a public meeting before the end of the poll campaign.

The Telangana Congress Chief N Uttam Kumar Reddy and TPCC working President A Revanth Reddy have taken the responsibility of the party campaign. All the senior Congress leaders were visiting the colonies to convince the leaders in support of their party candidates.

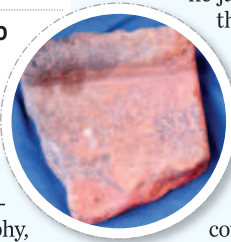
HANS NEWS SERVICE  
HYDERABAD

RESEARCHERS discovered a terracotta object containing Brahmi inscription written in Prakrit language and in characters of the 3rd century BC. The inscription read “devānārī” prefixed with a symbol of ‘nandipada’. The word “devānārī” indicates the part of the title of the great emperor Aśoka of Mauryan dynasty.

History and Archaeology researcher MA Srinivasan and his team comprising of B Shankar Reddy, B Nagaraju and Narun Kumar discovered this terracotta antiquity on the bank of Manjira river, a tributary of Godavari located at Kulcharam (deserted village) in Medak district. The present ancient mound is located in the island formed by the two streams of river Manjira.

The inscription on the pottery is

- ▶ Another milestone in epigraphical discovery in Telangana
- ▶ The discovery likely to throw more light on Ashokan period in Telangana and India



studied and read as “devānārī” of Mauryan period by the Director, Epigraphy, Archaeological Survey of India. This discovery of Brahmi script palaeographically assignable to Mauryan period on the terracotta is a rare and landmark epigraphical discovery in India in general and in Telangana State in particular.

Three Buddhist label inscriptions were also found in rock shelters just a kilometer away from the site where this antiquity is found. These inscrip-

tions are in Prakrit language and Brahmi script of 1st BC-1st AD. They read as ‘Henamo Buddheya’, ‘dhama’, ‘he jama’ and are found on the rock boulders. The researchers found them after cleaning these rocks. This rock shelter has the evidences of neolithic period too.

Finding of the terracotta antiquity inscribed with Mauryan Brahmi letters happened in the process of finding a supporting ancient habitation site for the Buddhist rock shelter.

The site spreading an area of about 100 acres and likely to yield a large number of archaeological materials besides evidences like fortification wall, terracotta objects such as different pot-shreds of red-slipped ware, black-polished ware and dull-red

ware. “This discovery unveils a new chapter in the history of Telangana as this is the first time we could find such precious evidence in Manjira valley,” said Srinivasan.

He added, “The research team urges the Department of Heritage and the Archaeological Survey of India to take up survey and excavations of the site to bring out more evidences to light. A thorough survey and search for the past three months in the rock beds and Manjira river bank could make this possible. Throughout this research, the support and guidance of the Director of Epigraphy Archaeological Survey of India, historian Dr D Surya Kumar and Y Bhanu Murthy of Department of Heritage in each step is invaluable.” The team members B Shankar Reddy, B Nagaraju and Narun Kumar along with some students took part in this months-long exploration.



INDIA TOUR OF AUSTRALIA

# Ishant, Rohit ruled out of first two Tests, says report

NEW DELHI

ISHANT Sharma and Rohit Sharma have been reportedly ruled out of the first two Tests of the upcoming four-match Border-Gavaskar Trophy between India and Australia slated to begin from December 17 in Adelaide.

ESPNcricinfo confirmed the development and stated the hopes of both the players to take part in the last two Tests hinges on "swift and decisive action" from the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). To be in contention for the third Test which begins January 7 next year in Sydney, Ishant, who has regained bowling fitness, will have to board a plane almost immediately, the report further said.

"If there is a T20 game and he needs to just bowl four overs, Ishant is good to go immediately, but for him to get back to Test-match fitness, he needs four weeks of proper bowling still," a BCCI source was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo.

Rohit, on the other hand, is currently at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) recovering a hamstring injury he suffered during the 2020 edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL).

However, according to the report, the batsman is understood to be a while away from full fitness. He can be cleared travel only in the second week of December and will need two weeks of further rehabilitation after which a final assessment can be made.

According to a BCCI functionary, the 32-year-old would have had a better chance of featuring in the Test series had he flown directly to Australia with the other squad members after taking part in the IPL in the United Arab Emirates, the report further stated.

Even if Rohit flies out on the earliest possible date, which is December 8, he would have to

undergo a two-week quarantine, which will keep him out of training until at least December 22, the report said.

Earlier, Team India head coach Ravi Shastri had on Sunday said that Rohit and Ishant will have to be on the flight to Australia in the "next four or five days" if they are to take part in the Test series.

"He's (Rohit) going through some tests at the NCA and they're obviously going to decide (for) how long he needs to take a break," Shastri said, speaking to ABC Sport.

"But things could get difficult if he's asked to wait for too long, (because) then you're talking of the quarantine again, which might

make it really tough for even him to come just in time for the Test series," he added.

Shastri had said that Rohit was never considered for the limited-overs leg, which includes three ODIs and three T20Is.

"He was never going to play the white-ball series, they were just looking to see how long he needed the rest, because you can't afford to be resting for too long," Shastri said. "If you need to play in the Test series or any red-ball cricket, you've got to be on the flight in the next three or four days. If you aren't, then it's going to be tough."

"It's a similar case to Rohit," Shastri said of Ishant. "You don't really know how quickly he'll be available to fly out. Like I said, if anyone has to play in the Test series, he has to be on the flight in the next four or five days. Otherwise, it's very difficult."

(IANS)

## Adelaide Test to go ahead as planned, confirms CA

NEW DELHI

THE Adelaide Test between Australia and India will go on as per schedule, Cricket Australia Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Nick Hockley confirmed on Tuesday.

"You are aware that there was a small, contained cluster of Covid cases last week. We have been working very closely with the South Australian government and at this stage we have been given assurances that it has been contained," Hockley said in response to a question by IANS during an interaction with Indian media.

"The lockdown that they were under finished last Saturday. So at this stage all assistance go for the Adelaide Test. We are confident that it will go ahead as scheduled," he added.

There had been doubts over the first Test -- a pink-ball fixture -- as coronavirus outbreak in South Australia led to suggestions that the December 17-21 match at the Adelaide Oval, the only Test of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy which Virat Kohli will play before returning to India for the birth of his child, be shifted to the latter half of the series.

But Hockley said that the match is on schedule.

"We have been lucky that the cases have been very low in Australia. The community transmission has been limited. We worked very hard with the health authorities and with each host city in Australia and worked together the best possible conditions that includes over the last number of days of quarantine, full training, centre-wicket practice, outdoor gym for both India and the Australian players returning from IPL," said the Cricket Australia chief executive.

"Obviously, the safety of both participants in the community is our absolute number one priority. But we are working closely with the BCCI to make sure that we are providing absolutely the best possible conditions for both training and playing and also accommodation throughout the course of the tour," he added. (IANS)



NEW DELHI

IF Jasprit Bumrah & Co plan to get rid of Steve Smith with short deliveries, they may have to target the area between Smith's shoulder and ribs for a significantly long period and vary the pace of the deliveries like New Zealand pace bowler Neil Wagner who troubled the Australian batter last summer, dismissing him four out of five times in three Tests.

Ahead of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, Smith, on Tuesday, threw down the gauntlet at the Indian bowlers, saying that the area Wagner targets may not be possible for Indian bowlers because of his unique ability to use short deliveries with speed variations and for a long time.

"He (Wagner) is really patient with them. He is able to do that all day. There are not too many quick bowlers that can run in and bowl bouncers the whole day. I guess the way Neil does it is that he is particularly special. He gets balls between shoulder and rib high. He is incredibly accurate. And then he has an ability to change his pace," said Smith to a question from IANS on why he thinks Indian pacers, led by Bumrah, would not be able to trouble him with bouncers as Wagner would.

"It is one of the hardest things that guys, not just me but some of the other guys as well, coped with last year. He bowled one ball at 135, the next ball would be at 128, the next ball would be at 130 and 135. It was tough to get a rhythm because his short balls were coming out at different pace. I think he has a pretty unique set of skills, the way he does it. He has done to, not just me, but to plenty of different batsmen around the world," he added.

The Australian run-machine's struggle last year against Wagner was reminiscent of what Don Bradman faced during the bodyline series of 1932-33 when the English tried the leg-side trap to Bradman, continuously targeting him with short balls at the body.

Just like Bradman then, Smith still managed to pick some runs -- 214 runs at an average of 42.8 with two half-centuries, though he couldn't play big knocks. Smith added that Wagner's skills at using the short ball can't be matched by anyone as the Kiwi has picked majority of his wickets from that.

"He (Wagner) is the No. two Test bowler at the moment or something like that (No. 3 behind Pat Cummins and Stuart Broad; Bumrah is the best

## Indian bowlers not good as Wagner is with short balls, indicates Smith

Indian at number nine). I think you look at Neil Wagner's career, the way he bowls, you see the majority of wickets he has got are from short-pitched bowling - with the way they set the field up. And he is the number two bowler for a reason. I mean that is what he does, yeah, it means he is different to what anyone tries to do it. It (others' bowling) is not the same as Neil does. (He) Possesses a set of skills that not many do and he does that for a very long time," Smith said.

One of Wagner's strengths is the angle he gets from round the wicket as a left-armer, making it difficult for right-handed batsmen. The Indian bowling unit lacks a left-arm pacer, so if they are going to use the short deliveries and target the area between shoulder and ribs, they may have to be very accurate as Smith alludes while praising Wagner. Otherwise, Smith having a habit of moving to the off could have a field day if the Indians get waver.

Bumrah could be the man targeted to trouble Smith with short deliveries. He used the delivery well during the recent Indian Premier League, getting rid of players like Virat Kohli and Andre Russell. Smith says that this kind of talk, others preying on his short-ball weakness, gives him confidence.

"Yeah, people can go for that. In a way, it is a kind of flattery, if people try to get me out (off short balls) because they've exhausted all other options.

Gives me a lot of confidence to know that," he added. Smith also said that Test cricket allows a batsman to form partnership unlike limited overs cricket, meaning that even if you

are barred with short balls you can wait.

"It is Test cricket. That is the beauty of it. You can form partnerships for as long as you can do. So if I can take that kind of approach, then great. I managed to do that (against NZ)," he added. "While I had some contribution, my strike rate was down." (IANS)



Neil Wagner

## Dhoni's mentor passes away

New Delhi: Deval Sahay, mentor of cricket icon Mahendra Singh Dhoni and who is credited with preparing first turf pitches in Ranchi, passed away due to multi-organ failure in the early hours of Tuesday in a hospital in the Jharkhand capital. Sahay was 73, and is survived by his wife, a daughter and a son. Sahay, whose first name was Deobrat but was popularly called Deval, was admitted to a hospital due to breathing problems and was laid low by coronavirus while in hospital. He was discharged from the hospital on October 9. "After spending about 10 days at home, he was again admitted to a hospital when he developed complications. And today at around 3 a.m. he passed away," Sahay's son Abhinav Akash Sahay told IANS from Ranchi. (IANS)

## Kohli, Ashwin nominated for Player of the Decade award

NEW DELHI

INDIA skipper Virat Kohli and ace off-spinner R Ashwin were on Tuesday nominated for the International Cricket Councils (ICC) Mens Player of the Decade award. Apart from Kohli and Ashwin, Joe Root (of England), Steve Smith (Australia), AB de Villiers (South Africa), Kane Williamson (New Zealand) and Kumar Sangakkara (Sri Lanka) were also nominated for this accolade. Among other awards, the following are the nominees:

**Men's Test Player of the Decade:** Kohli, Root, Williamson, Smith, James Anderson (England), Rangana Herath (Sri Lanka) and Yasir Shah (Pakistan). **Men's ODI Player of the Decade:** Kohli, Lasith Malinga (Sri Lanka), Mitchell Starc (Australia), de Villiers, Rohit Sharma (India), MS Dhoni (India) and Sangakkara.



**Men's T20I Player of the Decade:** Kohli, Rohit, Malinga, Rashid Khan (Afghanistan), Imran Tahir (South Africa), Aaron Finch (Australia), and Chris Gayle (West Indies).

**Women's Player of the Decade:** Ellyse Perry (Australia), Meg Lanning (Australia), Suzie Bates (New Zealand), Stafanie Taylor (West Indies), Mithali Raj (India) and Sarah Taylor (England).

**Women's ODI Player of the Decade:** Raj, Lanning, Perry, Raj, Bates, Stafanie Taylor, and Jhulan Goswami.

**Women's T20I Player of the Decade:** Lanning, Perry, Sophie Devine, Deandra Dottin, Alyssa Healy and Anya Shrubsole.

**Spirit of Cricket Award of the Decade:** Kohli, Dhoni, Williamson, Brendon McCullum (New Zealand), Misbah-ul-Haq (Pakistan), Anya Shrubsole (England), Katherine Brunt (England), Mahela Jayawardene (Sri Lanka) and Daniel Vettori (New Zealand). (IANS)

## Lobera turns foe on familiar pitch as Mumbai take on Goa

MARGAO (GOA)



AN interesting clash of similar styles can be expected when Mumbai City take on FC Goa at the Fatorda Stadium in the sixth match of the 2020-21 Indian Super League (ISL) on Wednesday.

Sergio Lobera's influence on Mumbai City was clearly visible in their first match of the season in which they dominated possession even after going down to 10

men. FC Goa, meanwhile, showed that they haven't strayed too far away from Lobera's ways yet in their 2-2 draw against Bengaluru FC. Under Lobera, Goa averaged 535 passes per match. Ten-man Mumbai had more than 60 per cent possession in their 1-0 defeat to NorthEast United in their first match this season and completed 451 passes to their opponents' 217. Among the

teams that have played their first matches thus far, it is Goa who came closest with 448 passes, which was more than twice of what their opponents Bengaluru managed.

Mumbai will be without midfield stalwart Ahmed Jahouh, arguably their most influential player, on his return to his former stomping ground.

The red card Jahouh received in Mumbai's season opener comes with a one-match suspension. (IANS)





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