



## WINDOWS



Rajasthan policemen ride on elephants during the 'No Mask, No Entry' campaign at Badi Chaupar in Jaipur on Saturday

## Days after first vaccine dose, Haryana minister tests Covid+

CHANDIGARH: Almost a fortnight after voluntarily taking the first test dose of Covid-19 vaccine, Haryana Health Minister Anil Vij on Saturday



tested positive for the virus. Vij tweeted that he has tested positive for coronavirus and has been admitted to the Civil Hospital in Ambala Cantonment, about 50 km from here. On November 20, Vij was given a shot of Bharat Biotech's 'Covaxin' for which he had volunteered. Besides Vij, over 400 people from Haryana, including the Vice Chancellor of Pandit Bhagwat Dayal Sharma Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences (PGIMS), Rohtak, O P Kalra, participated in the trials. PGIMS Head of the Department of Pulmonary and Critical Care Unit, Dhruv Chaudhary, said it is not known whether Vij received a vaccine or placebo, as shots for the volunteers were selected randomly by a computer. On Friday, a deputation of the Jannayak Janta Party (JJP), Haryana government's alliance partner, had met Vij over its demand to withdraw criminal cases registered against the protesting farmers. Also, yoga guru Ramdev had called on Vij at his office in Chandigarh on December 1.

On its part, Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech said that the efficacy of its Covid-19 vaccine could be determined only fourteen days after a second dose. "Covaxin has been designed to be efficacious. Covaxin clinical trials are based on a two-dose schedule, given 28 days apart. The vaccine efficacy will be determined 14 days post the second dose," said the company in a statement.

## BUSINESS



## Constelli Signals confident of break even in FY22

P7



No water cannon on these protesters... only lathi charge

# FARMERS' STIR Stalemate continues

- Fifth round of talks fails to make headway
- Govt proposes another meeting on Dec 9

NEW DELHI

AS talks between the Centre and farmer unions remained inconclusive for the fifth time, the Union government on Saturday sought time from unions to present a concrete proposal and proposed another meeting on December 9.

At the Round 5 meeting, the farmers unions went on a 'maun vrat' (vow of silence) and sought a reply in 'yes' or 'no' on their key demand of repealing the three new farm laws. They also threatened to walk out if the government was not willing to scrap the laws.

Farmers' leaders said they do not want anything less than the complete repeal of the laws, which, they claim, are the laws meant to end the mandi system and minimum support



Representatives of various farmer unions arrive for a meeting with the government over the Centre's new farm laws, at Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi on Saturday

price procurement system to give for benefits to the corporates.

During the meeting, Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar appealed to the union leaders to send back the elderly and children to their homes from the protest

sites and assured that farmers procurement at minimum support price will continue.

The talks between the government and the protesting unions began around 2.30 pm and was also attended by Railway, Commerce and Food Min-

ister Piyush Goyal and Minister of State for Commerce Som Parkash.

Halfway through the talks, the farmers' leaders threatened to walk out if the government was not willing to scrap the agri laws enacted in September.

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## Farmers to occupy toll plazas as part of Bharat Bandh

NEW DELHI

PROTESTING farmers have called for a Bharat Bandh on December 8, a day after the fourth round of talks between them and the Centre did not yield the desirable result of scrapping the farm laws that the farmers aimed for. The farmers are holding the fifth round of talks with Union ministers on Saturday.

In the two meetings, the farmers concluded that their demand to repeal the laws was "non-negotiable".

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Representatives of various farmer unions have food carried by them, during a meeting with the government over the Centre's new farm reform laws, at Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi on Saturday

## Farmers' anger evident at 'langar' lunch again

NEW DELHI

A clear signal of resentment was witnessed even after the first two hours of discussion as the fifth round of talks between government and farmers got underway on Saturday when 40 representatives of different unions from Punjab and Haryana took a 'langar lunch' outside the venue dismissing invitation to the meal offered by the central government rep-

resentative once again. The farmer unions from Krantikari Kisan Union President Darshan Pal, Jamoohari Kisan Sabha General Secretary Kulwant Singh Sandhu, Bharatiya Kisan Sabha President Boota Singh, Kulhind Kisan Sabha General Secretary Baldev Singh were among various farmer union leaders who had their lunch on the floor of Vigyan Bhavan.

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## 36 UK MPs write to British foreign secretary on farmers' stir

LONDON

AFTER Canada, 36 United Kingdom MPs led by the Labour Party have written to British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab asking him to raise the matter of ongoing farmers' protest with New Delhi. In a letter addressed to UK's foreign secretary, Labour Party MP Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesei claimed, "The introduction of these new laws by the Indian government has, despite the coronavirus, triggered widespread farmers' protests across the country for failing to protect farmers from exploitation and to ensure fair prices for their produce."

## Trudeau backs farmers' again

OTTAWA

CANADIAN Prime Minister Justin Trudeau repeated his support for the right of farmers in India to hold peaceful protests hours after the Central government summoned the country's High Commissioner on Friday to express its displeasure at his original remarks.

"Canada will always stand up for the right of peaceful protests anywhere around the world. And we are pleased to see moves towards de-escalation and dialogue,"



he told reporters in Ottawa to a question about India's warning that he could damage ties between the two countries.

When pressed further about whether he was

worried about the consequences,

Mr Trudeau coolly reiterated the first line of his statement. India had summoned

Canada's ambassador on Friday and warned of serious damage to diplomatic ties after Prime Minister Trudeau commented on growing protests by farmers.

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# BJP just filled vacuum left by Congress & TDP: Asad



MIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi addressing the media at the party office in Hyderabad on Saturday

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
HYDERABAD

THE just-concluded GHMC elections have thrown up interesting factors. Though the BJP might have succeeded in increasing the vote percentage, in terms of seats, it has lost wherever Union Home Minister Amit Shah and UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had campaigned.

According to All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Mus-

lim president Asaduddin Owaisi, the Bharatiya Janata Party had only filled the political vacuum created by the decimation of Congress and TDP but failed to storm Hyderabad. It could not make any impact in the AIMIM stronghold under the Hyderabad Parliamentary constituency.

Asaduddin said that all the hype created by the national media which sang praises of BJP during the campaign time could not influence the

voters. "The democratic strike gave a befitting reply to the threat of surgical strike by BJP in the Old City," he said. The AIMIM, Asad said, had exhibited excellent team work.

The party contested 34 divisions in the Hyderabad Lok Sabha constituency and won 33. It won nine in Secunderabad and two in Chevella. They had contested in 51 wards and won 44 wards. All elected corporators will start visiting their re-

spective divisions to thank the voters.

On the pledge of the BJP to change Hyderabad's name, Owaisi said Yogi Adityanath should first see that in Uttar Pradesh the unconstitutional laws passed by the BJP are stopped.

In response to a question as to whether the AIMIM would help the TRS in electing the mayor, Owaisi said that before making a decision, he would hold a meeting with his party officials.



# Delhi air quality turns 'severe'



PURNA SINGH  
NEW DELHI

NATIONAL capital city's air quality turned "severe" on Saturday with slow wind speed allowing the accumulation of "locally generated" pollutants, according to India Meteorological Department (IMD) officials.

Delhi's air quality turned "severe" on Saturday with slow wind speed allowing the accumulation of "locally generated" pollutants, according to India Meteorological Department (IMD) officials. However, it is expected to improve by Monday as the wind speed is likely to pick up. At 10 am, the city's air quality index (AQI) was 401, which falls in the "severe" cat-

egory. The 24-hour average AQI was 382 on Friday, 341 on Thursday, 373 on Wednesday, 367 on Tuesday, 318 on Monday and 268 on Sunday. Air pollution in the neighbouring cities of Ghaziabad (AQI 446), Greater Noida (401) and Noida (406) also entered the "severe" zone.

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". The wind speed remained slow allowing the accumulation of pollutants generated locally. V K Soni, head of the IMD's environment research centre said.

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# GHMC arithmetic puts TRS at advantage

V RAMU SARMA  
HYDERABAD

THE new GHMC governing council, which would become functional in February, is going to witness a new style of functioning. While it is certain that the TRS will have its own mayor and deputy mayor without alliance with AIMIM, the BJP will play the role of a strong opposition while the AIMIM is likely to extend issue-based support to the TRS.

All the three major political parties have been holding a series of meetings since morning to discuss and analyse the poll results and strategies they should adopt when the new governing council is formed. TRS working president K T Rama Rao has convened a meeting of all the newly-elected corporators and city MLAs at Telangana Bhavan on Sunday to take stock of the situation.

Many believe that since the TRS could not win more

than 55 wards it will have to go in for understanding with AIMIM. But the general mood in both the TRS and AIMIM is different. They feel that it would be politically advantageous for both the TRS and AIMIM if they do not have any understanding. This will help the AIMIM to press for their demands in the governing council but at the same time can extend support to the TRS-led GHMC on issues.

But then the question is how will TRS elect mayor and deputy mayor without the support of AIMIM. With 150 elected members and 45 ex-officio members, the total strength of the GHMC council is 195. For a party to win with a simple majority, it needs 98 votes. But the TRS does not have that much strength even if the ex-officio votes of 31 are added. Hence, one of the options is that AIMIM may decide to abstain from voting.

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# PM to lay foundation for new Parliament building on Dec 10

PURNA SINGH  
NEW DELHI

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi will lay the foundation stone for a new Parliament building on December 10, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla said on Saturday. The new building will have an area of 64,500 square metres and is being built at an estimated cost of Rs 971 crore, he said. "The existing temple of democracy is completing 100 years... It is a matter of pride for our countrymen that the new one will be built by our own people as a prime example of Aatmanirbhar Bharat," Birla



Lok Sabha Speaker

said here announcing details of the new proposed building.

"The new building will showcase the cultural diversity of the country. Hopefully, in the 75th year of independence, Parliament session will be held



A model of the proposed Parliament building. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lay the foundation stone on Dec. 10 for the building and is expected to be completed by 2022 at the cost of Rs 971 crore

in the new building," he said.

Birla said the new building will be earthquake resistant and 2000 people will be directly involved in the construction of the new building and 9,000 indirectly.

He said as many as 1,224 MPs can sit together in the building, while a new office complex for all MPs of both the Houses would be built at the site of the existing Shram Shakti Bhawan.

The existing Parliament



building will be served as it is an archaeological asset of the country, Birla said.

He said the invitation will be extended to all political parties. While some would attend physically and others would attend

virtually, Birla said, while adding that the ceremony would follow Covid-related guidelines.

A formal invitation to Modi was extended by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Saturday. As per rules, the speaker of the lower House of parliament is also the custodian of the parliament building.

Sufficient steps have been taken to control air and noise pollution during the construction work for the new parliament building, which will have separate offices for all MPs and those will be equipped with the latest digital interfaces as a step towards

creating 'paperless offices'. The new building will also have a grand Constitution Hall to showcase India's democratic heritage, a lounge for members of Parliament, a library, multiple committee rooms, dining areas and ample parking space.

In the new building, the Lok Sabha chamber will have a seating capacity for 888 members, while Rajya Sabha will have 384 seats for the Upper House members. This has been done keeping in mind the future increase in the number of members for the two Houses.

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# TRS' vote share takes a beating from 2016-level

The party has to lose 8.4 per cent votes during this GHMC election

- TRS loses the chance of winning additional 7 seats than BJP
- The TRS polls 12,04,167 votes whereas the BJP polled 11,95,711 votes showing a difference of just 8,456 votes
- The ruling party has won in 55 divisions with 35.81 per cent votes

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
HYDERABAD

THE vote percentage of the ruling Telangana Rashtra Samithi has decreased in the city compared to the previous elections of Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation held in the year 2016. The party had to lose 8.4 per cent votes during this election.

The TRS might have won seven additional seats than the BJP but the votes difference between both these parties is just over 8,000 votes. The TRS polled 12,04,167 votes in this election whereas



the BJP polled 11,95,711 votes showing a difference of just 8,456 votes. During the 2016 GHMC elections, the votes polled for TRS were 14,68,618, which showed a dip of 2,64,451 votes. The percentage difference between the TRS and BJP is 0.25 per cent. Out of the 149 divisions in which results were announced, the TRS has won in 55 divisions with 35.81 per cent votes. During the 2016

elections, the party had won 99 seats with a poll percentage of 43.85 per cent.

The party had given the majority of the tickets to sitting corporators and some of them had to face the defeat. The party gave tickets to 72 sitting corporators and out of them 44 had to face the defeat. The strike rate of the changed candidate was better as 20 candidates have won out of 27 divisions in which the candidates

## Congress vote share 6pc in GHMC polls

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HYDERABAD

CONGRESS vote share in GHMC elections was at 6 per cent. The party candidates secured a total of nearly 2 lakh votes. It party won 2 divisions- Uppal and AS Rao Nagar divisions. The national party's vote share in the previous elections held in 2016 was 10.45 per cent. It also won two seats at that time. Although, the vote share fell down by 4 per cent.

were changed. The party had to lose with slender margins in divisions like BN Reddy Colony with 18 votes, Maula Ali with 200 votes, Malkajgiri with 70 votes, Moosapet 100, Adikmet with 200 votes.

# BJP seat kitty swells to 48 from 4 in 2016

- Improves its vote share adding up 25.22 per cent from 2016 GHMC elections
- Stands second in about 79 GHMC divisions in 2020

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HYDERABAD

THE BJP has increased its total share from 10.35 per cent to 35.56 per cent in the GHMC elections from 2016 to 2020. Out of 150 divisions in the GHMC, the BJP could win only four seats in the 2016 elections.

However, 149 out of 150 divisions for which results have been declared in GHMC elections, the saffron party has got 48 seats, adding up about 25.22 per cent vote share from the 10.35 vote share it had got in 2016 GHMC elections.

Further, in about 79 munic-



ipal divisions it has stood the second position where mainly the ruling TRS party won, followed by Congress. In about 23 municipal divisions where the AIMIM and Congress have contested, the Lotus showed getting more votes than the ruling TRS. The overall voting percentage in 2016 touched 45.21 per cent as against 46.6 per cent in 2020.

Out of this, the BJP on its own had a vote share of 10.35 per cent in 2016. However, the total vote share of BJP which

contested along with the TDP in 2016 had a vote share of about 23 per cent. The TRS had got 44 per cent of vote share over and above the BJP and its alliance partners. Cut to in 2020, while the BJP has got a vote share of 35.56 per cent as against the TRS vote share of 35.81 per cent.

The total votes polled for BJP during the GHMC 2020 elections stand at 11,95,711, registering only a difference of 8,456 votes less than the ruling TRS.

## PARTY-WISE VOTE SHARE

TRS	BJP	MIM	INC
2016- 43.85	2016- 10.34	2016- 15.85	2016- 10.4
2020- 35.81 (-8.04)	2020- 35.56 (+25.22)	2020- 18.76 (+2.91)	2020- 06.67 (-3.73)

## Students, start-up to explore drone tech



Representatives of Muffakham Jah College of Engineering and Technology and Binford Research Labs Private Limited inspecting the drone technology after both the establishments signing an MoU in Hyderabad on Saturday

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
HYDERABAD

MUFFAKHAM Jah College of Engineering and Technology, Hyderabad, and Binford Research Labs Private Limited, Hyderabad, a start-up signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for development in the cutting-edge technology of next generation unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) or drones on Saturday.

The collaboration will forge the strengths of the start-up and deep research capabilities of the college students. Binford will support MJ College to organise workshops, seminars, lectures and joint projects that leverage cutting edge unmanned technologies, according to a press release issued here on Saturday.

Sidhanth, CEO, Binford, spoke on iterative design and plans to offer internship programmes to tal-

ented students and prepare them for real world technologies application. Commenting on the MOU, Hon Secretary of SUES, Zafar Javeed said drones could solve complex business challenges in a safe, timely and cost-effective manner. Dr Basheer Ahmed, Advisor-cum-Director, MJCET said the UAV ecosystem in India was rapidly evolving and drones were set to become integral part of future working environment. Dr Haseeb Khan, Head, EEED, MJCET, said, "We are creating a unique educational ecosystem that combines interactive learning with cutting edge research and strong industry collaboration and entrepreneurship." Convening the meeting Dr Ishrat Meera Mirzana briefed the members about the future of drones and various initiatives the college has taken so far and collaborations with industry.

## Corporators' wrongdoings cost TRS dearly in civic polls

The anger of the people can be gauged from the fact that out of the 72 sitting corporators who were given tickets 44 of them lost the election

K CHANDRASHEKAR  
HYDERABAD

THE functioning of the sitting corporators was also one of the reasons for the party to lose the seats in Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation elections even as several leaders of the party had expressed concerns over the prospects before the civic polls.

The denizens seem to be angry with the sitting corporators of the ruling party as many of them had lost the elections. The anger of the people can be gauged from the fact that out of the 72 sitting corporators who were given tickets 44 of them lost the election. Apart from the functioning of the corporators, their response during the floods had also made people angry over them.

- Charges made against some corporators for resorting to money-making tactics
- Allegations against corporators for using GHMC staff for personal use
- Party succeeds at the places where the candidate is changed

Some of the corporators of the ruling party had faced allegations of corruption, encroachments, threatening during their tenure. Their behaviour with the people in their localities had gone viral in the social media. There were allegations against some corporators for using the

GHMC staff for their personal use.

The party leaders had apprehended about the role of the corporators during the elections. "The people are happy with the government and Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao but the functioning of the corporators is only the problem the party is facing," a senior leader of the party had expressed with the reporters during the campaign time. The leader said that the corporators made mistakes like going to the construction sites and demanding money from them, this would make people angry. People will honour even if you don't serve them but they will not tolerate demanding money, said the TRS leader.

The party had succeeded in places where the candidate was

changed. The party won in 20 out of 27 divisions in which the candidate was changed. The Deputy Speaker T Padma Rao Goud changed candidates in four divisions and gave ticket to only one sitting corporator in his constituency and all the five candidates won in the division.

It is said that the TRS leadership did not heed to the requests of the MLAs in few constituencies. Some MLAs including LB Nagar MLA Sudeher Reddy wanted to change the candidates but the party gave it to the sitting corporators and the BJP swept all the divisions in the constituency. The party would discuss all the issues including the effect of functioning of the corporators in the internal meetings, said the TRS leader.

## KTR to hold meeting with newly-elected corporators

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
HYDERABAD

TRS Working President KT Rama Rao would meet the newly elected GHMC corporators of the party at 2 pm at Telangana Bhavan on Sunday.

The TRS working president would be giving necessary instructions to the corporators about their duties and also brief them about the provisions of the new Municipal Act. He would also brief them about the programmes being taken up by the government in the city.

The TRS has won 55 seats out of the 149 divisions in which the results were announced by the Election Commission.

## 25 new GHMC election winners face criminal cases

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
HYDERABAD

AS many as 25 newly-elected corporators, out of the total 150, in the recently held GHMC elections were facing criminal charges. Among them, the BJP has the highest number of 10 elected corporators with the criminal record, followed by TRS (8) and 7 members from the MIM were booked in different criminal cases.

From the BJP - K Narasimha Reddy (Musheerabad), V Madhusudhan Reddy (Champapet), V Radha (RK Puram), N Pavan Kumar (Kothapet), G Shankar Yadav

(Begum Bazar), Lal Singh (Goshamahad), T Srinivas Reddy (Mailaradevpally), D Karunakar (Gudimalkapur), K Ravi Kumar (Ramnagar) and V Sravan from (Malkajgiri) were facing criminal cases.

The cases were also pending against the newly elected TRS corporators- R Nagendra Yadav (Serlingampally), Baba Fasiuddin (Borabanda), M Kumar Yadav (Patanchuru), N Srinivas Rao (Hyderabad), Vijayashankar (Rangareddy Nagar) R Jitendarnath (Macha Bolaram), Y Prem Kumar (East Anandbagh) and Sunitha Reddy from Mettuguda.

From the AIMIM, the newly-elected members S Mirajuddin (Akbarbagh), Md Ali Sharif (Lalitha Bagh), Abdul Wahab (Chandrayanagutta), MD Mustafa Ali (Shalibanda) K Mubashiruddin ((Kishanbagh) and Md Zaker Baquer (Dattatreyanagar) and M Swamy elected from Karwan were also facing the charges. Releasing the list of the elected candidates having criminal record, the Forum for Good Governance leader Padmanabha Reddy said that the list was prepared based on the available evidences and the affidavits submitted by the candidates during the elections.

## CS swings into action, helps physically challenged victim

HYDERABAD

TELANGANA Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar's swift action gave a big relief to a physically challenged person.

On the instruction of the Chief Secretary, the authorities issued a medical certificate on spot to avail the Aasra pension to Imtiaz who has been waiting for pension under the Aasra scheme.

The Hans India has published on December 3 (on the occasion of International Day of Disabled Persons) a story highlighting the plight of Imtiaz to get the pension

from the government. On knowing the struggle being faced by the physically challenged, Somesh Kumar instructed the Secretary Rural Development

Sandeep Kumar Sultania and Rangareddy District Collector Amoy Kumar to address the grievance of Imtiaz on a priority basis. The officials arranged medical tests in a government

hospital and issued a medical certificate to apply for pension. The Rural Development department officials were taking steps fast to provide pension to the person at the earliest.



# BJP corporator-elects *not up for sale*, warns Bandi Sanjay

HYDERABAD

THE State BJP sees no scope of its 48 corporator-elects in the GHMC polls would switch their loyalty to the TRS.

According to the party sources, earlier, some BJP corporators have defected to the TRS in the case of Nizamabad civic body elections. But, GHMC elections are different from the Nizamabad civic elections.

The issue has come to the fore following the State government's decision to allow the existing council to enjoy its full term ie., until February 10, 2021. And, it might provide ample opportunity for poaching of the corporators from the opposition parties to increase its tally.

However, the saffron party views that this time, the GHMC elections were held in a different scenario and any attempts by the ruling TRS will have serious consequences to its own political future. In turn, it would further benefit the saffron party. That apart, speaking to The

## Any attempt to engineer defections by the TRS will be defeated, says BJP

- About 40 candidates who have won the election in the GHMC elections are committed party workers
- BJP sees AIMIM a saviour and liability for the TRS and it will further boost BJP to expand in the State

Hans India, a senior party leader said that about 40 candidates who have won the election in the GHMC elections are committed party workers. The new faces are very few. "If anyone dare to switch over to the ruling TRS will have to do it at their own peril. They have to face not only the wrath of the people in their municipal divisions, but the



State BJP President Bandi Sanjay Kumar felicitating Monda Market division corporator Kontham Deepika at BJP headquarters in Hyderabad on Saturday while Union Minister G Kishan Reddy and BJP National OBC Committee president K Lakshman look on.

party will also not take it lightly."

The winning of seats by the BJP candidates in the GHMC elections was the hard work of lakhs of party workers and leaders that went into it. Besides, none other than national leaders have also put their weight for the party's victory. "We will not keep quiet if any corporator-elect lured by the ruling TRS dare to cross over. It was not an election just fought over the development agenda. The party also fought the elections on the issue of self-respect and BJP's ideology.

Both the issues will act as a potential deterrence against anyone thinking of crossing over to the ruling party. "Yet, if anyone dares to do it, then, the political backlash and its consequences that follow against such persons, and those who engineer defections will have to pay heavy price," he added.

Echoing the same State BJP chief

Bandi Sanjay Kumar said that none of the corporator-elects of the party in the GHMC elections is going to cross over- as it had happened earlier in the case of other civic bodies. As of now, the party sees that the ruling TRS would certainly take covert help from the AIMIM to run the show in steering the GHMC elections.

The BJP sources said that every action of the ruling TRS is now being keenly observed by the people. If it forges post-poll ties with AIMIM, then, it would send a wrong message to the people. If it takes covert help from the AIMIM, then, it will prove the charges of the party during the electioneering. If it tries to engineer defections, then, it will further dent in its popularity among people. The saffron party sees that now the AIMIM is both a savior as well as a liability for the ruling TRS party. And, "Our response would depend on how the ruling party runs the show of GHMC in future," a State party executive member of the party said.



# Ex-banker uses pressure cooker steam to cure post Covid symptoms

## Herbal juices, steam session, guava juice and jaggery lemon tea, this is how the treatment goes at the centre

ARCHANA SHARMA  
JAIPUR

A retired banker, now a naturopath, is using a pressure cooker to generate medicinal steam to cure post COVID symptoms of people and to boost immunity by using herbs like ginger, chirata, kutki, carom seeds, lemon juice and neem leaves.

A pipe is connected to a pressure cooker which extends into a bathroom where patients are asked to inhale the steam for 30 minutes.

Besides inhaling the steam, the patient is asked to take mud therapy where black soil mixed with lemon juice is applied to his body and he is asked to rub it on his body for smooth blood circulation, says Pukhraj Vohra (65) who is operating a small naturopathy centre on the Rajasthan-MP border in Ratlam district.

Many patients from the neighbouring districts of Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra are visiting this centre to deal with their post COVID challenges. The line of treatment is quite different here. As soon as a

patient enters this naturopathy centre, he is given juice made of aamla and different herbs after which starts the steam session, a patient told IANS.

Worried about the pandemic and its consequences, Vohra has used his knowledge gathered over the last three decades to help the people. He has been operating this three-storeyed naturopathy centre on his own, running here and there, listening to the stories of patients, bringing them out of depression, giving them Reiki treatment and many other such things.

"We hug our patients with warmth and treat them. Wearing masks and following social distancing doesn't fall in our system of naturopathy as what matters in COVID cases is immunity. We believe in building immunity so that the body can itself kill the coronavirus," he says.

Vohra questions why steam treatment is not given to all patients when it has a proven history of killing this virus. The high dose medicines are affecting the people's vital organs and hence steam sessions



should be made mandatory in COVID hospitals, he adds.

Vohra was working in UCO Bank till a few years back. He took VRS to start his own naturopathy centre. He has a big library in his house which has a variety of books on different aspects of naturopathy.

Aniket, 20, who had fever and breathing problems, says, "Hospitals looked like a challenge for me to go

as there were negative reports coming in. I isolated myself and contacted Vohra who gave me regular steam sessions at home with mud therapy along with Aloe Vera, Giloa and Aamla juice. The oxygen level which was 84 shot up to 98 in three days and the fever went away too. This centre has a unique feature. It helped me to stand on my own in just three days. They applied mud with Rai on my chest and all the congestion went away in just a week," he says. Aniket, speaking to IANS, said that "Doctors also doubted if I could be cured as my lung infection was quite severe. Testing was not so smooth in July and hence I did not go for it. But Vohraji helped me get better with each passing day."

Herbal juices, steam session, guava juice and jaggery lemon tea -- this is how the treatment goes at the centre. Many patients are now visiting this centre.

"I had a bad cough, depression, breathing trouble and other such ailments, however, all such symptoms vanished in four to five days after visiting

here," says Anita (name changed) who tested negative a month back.

There are many other patients who have found no solace at medical centres and have visited this place to get cured.

"Naturopathy is a science which lost its sheen to allopathy. But COVID it seems has come to remind people of nature and to teach them to value it. They are back to their lost roots which is something quite positive in these testing times," says Vohra adding that each person should know how he should boost his immunity.

In fact, many patients after recovering are adopting this steam therapy in their bathrooms after going back to their homes in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Delhi.

Kalpiti, another patient who underwent regular sessions, went back to Gujarat and installed the same steam system in his bathroom. "I had a cough which turned into asthma; after taking regular doses, I am ok now, but I wanted to be regular and hence installed this system," he said.

## 25 Taliban militants killed

KABUL

At least 25 Taliban militants, including two commanders, were killed and eight others injured during a raid in Afghanistan's Helmand province, the Army said on Saturday. "The Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) launched an operation in Naway-i-Barakzai of Helmand on Friday, leading to the above mentioned casualties," Xinhua news agency quoted the Army's Corps 215 Maiwand as saying in a statement.

The operation aimed at disturbing militants' activities in the region as the militants tried to conduct attacks on ANDSF positions.

The ANDSF also destroyed six militants' hideouts and 25 defence positions, defusing four improvised bombs during the raid in the region 555 km southwest of Kabul.

The Taliban militant group is yet to comment on the development.

# BJP NATL V-P NAMED IN TMC MLA MURDER CASE

Mukul Roy rubbishes charges and says that he never believes in politics of violence

KOLKATA:

THE West Bengal CID has named BJP National vice president Mukul Roy in a supplementary chargesheet in connection with the murder of TMC MLA Satyajit Biswas of Krishnaganj. The state wing of the probe agency filed the supplementary chargesheet in a court in Nadia district on Saturday (December 5, 2020) afternoon, as per a PTI report. As per sources, Mukul Roy has been named by the CID primarily as a conspirator and is believed to have been actively involved in the killing of Biswas.

CID sleuths had, earlier, questioned the BJP leader in this connection but had named him when they filed the first chargesheet in May, 2019.



However, Mukul Roy has rubbished the charges and said that he had never believed in politics of violence and blamed Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for naming him in the case.

"At least 45 cases are pending against me. I do not believe in politics of violence and never in-

dulge in such things. I challenge Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who is also the police minister to say in the public that I have such kind of taste.

"I was not involved in such things when I was with her party and not even now when I am a member of another political

party," Roy told PTI.

Also, BJP MP Jagannath Sarkar has been named in another supplementary chargesheet filed in September 2020 in connection to the case.

Biswas, the state's ruling party MLA, was shot dead during a Saraswati Puja programme in Nadia district in February 2019.

Meanwhile, West Bengal Labour Minister Malay Ghatak on Saturday accused the BJP of trying to instigate people to create trouble at "Duare Sarkar" (government at doorstep) camps, a charge denied by the saffron party.

Ghatak said 759 camps are functional across the state as part of the outreach programme and lakhs of people have already been benefited from it.

## IAS officer on UP poll duty dies of heart attack

LUCKNOW

AN IAS officer on election duty for the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Council polls in Varanasi died after suffering a heart attack, an official said on Saturday.

District Magistrate, Varanasi, Kaushal Raj Sharma said Ajay Kumar Singh (50) was deployed as an observer in the ongoing elections to teachers' constituency and graduates' constituency in Varanasi.

Singh suffered a heart attack at around 9.30 am on Friday while on his way to the counting centre. He was taken to a hospital where he died on Saturday, Sharma said.

An officer of the 1998-

batch, Singh was posted as a secretary in the National Integration Department and Human Rights Commission of Uttar Pradesh (Lucknow).

His wife Neena Sharma is a senior IAS officer posted as a secretary in the Infrastructure and Industrial Development Department. She arrived in Varanasi on Friday.

Singh was admitted to Shubham Hospital near Circuit House, the district magistrate told PTI.

"Singh's family members wanted to airlift him to Medanta Hospital in Gurgaon (Haryana) on Friday evening but the doctors did not allow them to do so. On Saturday, an air ambulance was called to take him to Gurgaon but he died," Sharma said.

## ‘2G internet too slow, start regular classes in Kashmir’

SRINAGAR

STUDENTS in Kashmir staged a protest on Saturday asking the government to start regular classes for some courses. The students said that prolonged slow internet service in Jammu and Kashmir has made it difficult for them to continue with their education, according to the Outlook report.

The students questioned that when the government has no issues with huge election rallies, why it is objecting to offline classes? "We are 30 students from the integrated course of the Cluster University Kashmir. We are not able to study properly. Online classes concept is doomed when you are having 2G service," says Muzafer Ahmad Dar. Dar is



one among the several students who held a protest on Saturday at the city centre Residency Road Srinagar.

"Every day we see a large number of election rallies. Thousands of people participate in these ral-

lies. There is no concept of social distancing in such rallies. But when we ask that our regular classes be started, they come up with an excuse of Covid-19. We are 30 students in our course, we will adhere to all Covid-19 norms

but please start offline classes for us," he said.

He said most of the online classes are conducted using only audio because with 2G internet speed, conducting video classes is impossible. He said even in the audio classes they are facing a lot of technical issues.

The students say often the internet remains shut in the valley especially in the South Kashmir region either due to elections or any other law and order related issues, making the online audio classes impossible.

Another student, Fayaz Ahmad, while speaking to Outlook alleged that the government has some personal issues with the students and they want this generation to remain ignorant of knowledge and education.

## 18 dead in China mine accident

BEIJING

EIGHTEEN people have died, while one other person was rescued after an accident due to excessive levels of carbon monoxide at a coal mine in China, authorities said on Saturday.

The accident took place at around 5 p.m. on Friday at the closed Diaoshuidong colliery in Yongchuan district, Xinhua news agency reported.

At the time, workers were dismantling equipment in the pit, trapping 24 workers underground.

The mine was suspended and shut down two months ago.

The rescue operation is underway, while the cause of the accident is being investigated.

## Granthi of Delhi Gurudwara hit with tabla, dies

NEW DELHI

A granthi in the RK Puram Gurudwara was hit with a tabla (a musical instrument) by a fellow granthi while performing kirtan following which he succumbed to his injuries. The wife of the deceased Ravinder Singh was also injured and was rushed to Safdarjung hospital for treatment. The police is on the lookout for the accused Darpan Singh who is absconding. "Ravinder Singh and Darshan Singh are both granthis in the sector 6 Gurudwara in RK Puram. At around 8.30 a.m. on Friday, while performing kirtan Darshan Singh and Ravinder had a quarrel over a petty issue. Darshan hit Ravinder with the tabla on his head due to which he started bleeding and later succumbed to his injuries in the hospital," Ingit Pratap Singh, DCP South West, said. According to police, when the wife of the deceased tried to save him, she was also hit in the eye by the accused Darshan. Maninder Kaur is admitted in a hospital.

## Hindus visiting church on X'mas will be beaten up: Bajrang Dal

CACHAR

A leader of the right-wing Bajrang Dal declared that those Hindus who visit churches to take part in Christmas celebrations will be beaten up. The speech given at an event at Silchar in Assam's Cachar district has been widely circulated in a video where Mithu Nath is seen giving the speech.

Nath, the General Secretary of district unit of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (the Bajrang Dal's parent body) says he is "outraged" by the alleged shut down of the Vivekananda Centre in Chris-



tian-majority Meghalaya state capital Shillong, a report in the NDTV said.

The Bajrang dal leaders said that Hindus would "not be allowed" to attend Christmas Day programmes and festivities. "The Hindus (who visit churches) will

be beaten because I revile those Hindus who would go and have fun at a Christian function after they shut down our places of worship. No Hindu will go to church this Christmas. We will make sure of it," Nath reportedly said in the video.

"If we do so (assault Hindus) I know the headlines in newspapers the next day - 'Gunda Dal' has vandalised Oriental school.. but that is not our priority. We will not allow Hindus in programmes during Christmas when they are locking gates of temples in Shillong," he reportedly said.

## Guj HC judge dies during Covid-19 treatment

AHMEDABAD

A sitting judge of the Gujarat High Court died following a cardiac arrest on Saturday while undergoing treatment for coronavirus at a private hospital here, a doctor said.

Justice G R Udhwani (59), who had tested Covid-19 positive on November 19, died at SAL Hospital due to complications arising out of the infection, the doctor said.

He died in the morning, days after he was admitted to the hospital on November 22 in a critical condition, Dr Divyang

Dalwadi, a critical care expert of the hospital, said.

"He had tested Covid-19 positive on November 19, and was admitted to the hospital with severe lung infection. He was also suffering from hypothyroidism," the doctor said.

"He suffered a cardiac arrest at 7 am on Saturday and was declared dead at 7.40 am," Dalwadi said.

In his career spanning over three decades, Justice Udhwani had also served as an additional judge of special POTA (Prevention of Terrorism Act) court in 2003.

## China second country after US to plant natl flag on the moon

BEIJING

OVER 50 years after the United States planted the first human flag on the moon, China has become the second country to leave a flag on the lunar surface.

Images of the flag, which were taken by a camera fitted to Chang'e 5, were shared by China's National Space Administration. They were taken right before Chang'e 5 collected samples of lunar soil before exiting the moon and returning to Earth.

The flag, representing China, is 2 m wide and 90 cm tall.

China's ambitious lunar mission Chang'e 5 successfully landed on the Moon on Tuesday, marking the third time that the country has placed a robotic spacecraft on the lunar surface. Chang'e 5 was launched from China's Wenchang Spacecraft Launch Site on November 23, 2020, flying to space on top of a Long March 5 rocket.

The Chinese lunar mission is a complex one as it consists of four main spacecraft that will work together to bring between 2 to 4 kilograms of lunar dirt back to Earth. You might be wondering why the need arose to send another lunar

mission when man had already stepped on the Moon in 1969.

After the United States and Russia, China would be the third nation to bring rocks back from the Moon. However, the rocks brought back by the US and Russia are much older, around 3.2 billion years. Bagging rocks from the location where China has landed its spacecraft will help scientists to more accurately date the Moon.

The Chinese lunar mission is also testing out technologies that will be needed for future missions to the Moon as well as Mars. According to ABC Science, the technology used in

this mission for functions like navigation, landing, docking in space and re-entering earth will also help with crewed missions in the future too.

China had said that it plans to send humans to the Moon and have a permanent base there by the end of the decade.

The country is also planning to work out something similar on Mars. China has sent a spacecraft flying to the Red Planet, with the aim of touching down in May next year. If it succeeds, it will be the third nation to have robots on Mars. The country hopes to bring back material from Mars by 2030.





CYLCONCE DAMAGE

Pawan demands immediate aid of ₹10,000 to farmers

- Asks the State govt to divert revenue from the liquor sale to the agriculture sector for the welfare of farmers for at least for an year
- Says crops in 17 lakh acres have been damaged in five districts in the recent floods
- States that candidate for Tirupati LS bypoll will be decided by BJP-Jana Sena coordination committee

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
NELLORE

JANA Sena Party president K Pawan Kalyan demanded Rs 35,000 compensation to each cyclone-affected farmer in the state and immediate release of Rs 10,000 financial assistance. Addressing the media here on Saturday, Pawan said crops in more than 17 lakh acre were affected by floods in five districts.

He said the state government which promised total prohibition before elections later confined to introducing its ‘own liquor brands’ and suggested that the Rs 16,000 crore revenue it was earning from liquor sales be diverted for the welfare of farmers at least for an year. He announced that their party cadres would stage protests on December 7 in support of farmers as part of the party’s Jai Kisan movement.

Mocking the YSRCP government’s liquor policy, the Jana Sena chief said the state government had been promoting various liquor brands like President’s Medal, Golden Andhra, Boom,



Jana Sena Party president Pawan Kalyan visiting a flood-affected area on the national highway at Gudur in Nellore district on Saturday

Supreme and it should launch now brands with names like YCP special, CM Medal for promoting their party branding, but they should spend the revenue thus earned on agriculture sector.

“When the YSRCP said it will bring golden Andhra, we felt happy that with their 151 MLAs, they will bring all-round development in the state. But to the dismay of all, they finally released a liquor brand ‘Golden Andhra’”, he said.

Pawan said that Jana Sena was committed to the welfare of farmers and would continue to raise its voice for their cause. He asked the government to extend financial assistance to the farmers whose lands are facing ero-

sion at Mandvaya, Bahuda, Swarnamukhi, and other rivers due to the recent flash floods.

The Jana Sena chief also blamed the district administration for the flood damage as officials had failed to operate crest gates of Somasila reservoir in time resulting in flash floods in the district. Many colonies close to Nellore city were submerged in the floodwater giving the residents a harrowing experience, he noted. .

On GHMC elections, Pawan said the people of the city considered them as a chance to achieve a world-class city and thanked his party supporters for helping the victory of BJP candidates. He congratulated the BJP leaders for

their coordinated efforts.

On Tirupati Lok Sabha byelection, Pawan said since they had an alliance with BJP, the two parties would decide the candidate by constituting a coordination committee shortly.

He welcomed the political debut of Kollywood superstar Rajinikanth as he has a huge number of fans across the country.

Party leaders Nandendra Manohar, Arham Khan, Satya Bolisetty, T Sivasankar, Manukranth Reddy, Vinod Reddy, Dr P Hari Prasad and others were present. On the way to Renigunta airport, he visited Gudur and Venkatagiri. He visited looms and interacted with weavers in Venkatagiri.

Stalemate continues

Continued from P1

However, the government managed to convince them to continue with the talks and offered to take back cases filed against farmers for stubble burning, as also the cases filed against some farmer activists.

Even as talks ended in a deadlock for the fifth time, Tomar said, “I want to assure farmers that Modi govt was fully committed to you, & will remain so in future. Under PM Modi’s leadership, several agricultural schemes have been implemented. Budget & MSP has also increased.” “We wanted some firm suggestions from farmer leaders but couldn’t get those; We will meet again on December 9,” he added.

Farmers’ anger evident as ‘langar’ for lunch again

Continued from P1

At the 4 pm break, they enjoyed their lunch brought by their supporters from the langars outside the venue.

Once again they refused to partake of the lunch provided by the Centre, a signal that the discussion during the crucial meeting is still not as per expectations of the farmers who have announced a ‘Bharat Bandh’ on December 8 if the matter was not resolved by then. In the fourth round of talks on December 3, the farmers had refused to have lunch with the government representatives as they thrashed out their charter of demands.

Saturday’s talks began at 2 pm. The refusal to share lunch indicated farmers would not take any favour from the government till their demands were met.

The farmers’ demand includes framing of a specific law on Minimum Support Price (MSP), and a written assurance on it, ending the punishment provision for stubble burning, repealing three contentious farm laws passed in September during the Monsoon Session of Parliament, and stalling the upcoming Electricity (Amendment) Act, 2020.

Oppn failed miserably in Assembly, says Botcha

AMARAVATI

MUNICIPAL administration minister Botcha Satyanarayana said they had clearly laid the facts about their one-and-a-half year governance in the Assembly, but the opposition TDP had failed miserably to play a constructive role and resorted to cheap tricks to disrupt the House.

Addressing a press conference at YSRCP central office at Tadepalli on Saturday, the minister said that the opposition members had been vindictive and deliberately tried to create chaos in the House, despite the discussions being taken as per the choice of opposition.

TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu says he has 40 years experience and worked as chief minister for three times, but still he doesn’t know how to take up opposition role in the

The Minister says TDP members were vindictive and wantonly tried to create ruckus in legislature though the govt clearly laid out facts regarding its 18-month-rule



Assembly, he said adding that he squatted at the Speaker’s podium against the rules, which no opposition leader would have done.

He said Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy and other leaders have clearly laid the facts on Polavaram project, along with other welfare schemes, where over Rs 67,000 crore was directly credited into the beneficiaries’ accounts.

While the Chief Minister affirmed that the height of

Polavaram will not be reduced, opposition leaders with their friendly media constantly distorted the facts and tried to mislead people.

Naidu and his team failed in addressing public issues as an opposition party, all they tried is to gain sympathy from the public by getting suspended, he said. The Opposition was given the opportunity to speak in the House but all they did was creating chaos even threatening the Speaker, he alleged.

Mega industrial hub proposed in Kavali

- Officials identified around 6,500 acre land in the Kavali division close to the proposed Ramayapatnam Port
- A proposal has already been there for upgrading the existing Kavali-SR Puram Road

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
NELLORE

AS THE state government settled on taking up the seaport project at Rayamapatnam in Prakasam district, the district administration has proposed a mega industrial hub at Kavali planning to tap the industry-related resources. The port has been proposed in around 3,200 acres of land at Chevuru, Ravuru and there are huge vacant lands in the Kavali division.

Officials identified around 6,500 acres of land at Chennayapalem, Anemadugu, Thummalapenta, and other villages, close to the proposed port at Ramayapatnam. The district administration has informed the state government in July this year about the availability of the lands and the plans for setting up a mega industrial hub in the area.

According to officials, there

are 1,475 acres of land at Chennayapalem, 898 acres at Anemadugu, 870 acres at Kavali and 3,250 acres at Thummalapenta village. They identified these lands in two blocks and would be utilised for the proposed industrial hub. Majority lands are within a range of 5-10 km to the proposed port and there would be a possibility for easy transportation.

The proposed lands are close to the Chennai-Kolkata NH at Kavali besides having road, rail, and port connectivity. Rallapadu reservoir will meet water needs for the industries and power can be utilised from Kavali 33kv station, if the proposal comes to true. Already there is a proposal for upgrading the Kavali-SR Puram road (NH-167BG) as an important highway keeping the demand for transport after Ramayapatnam port is built. The government is considering connecting the interior parts of Nellore, Kadapa, and Prakasam districts through a 105-km long road linking interior upland mandals of Nellore with others. The proposed project reduces traffic congestions and resolve difficulties of commuters for hassle-free transportation. The road would also be an advantage for the proposed industrial hub, officials say.

PM to lay foundation for new Parliament building on Dec 10

Continued from P1

At present, Lok Sabha has a sanctioned strength of 543 members and Rajya Sabha of 245.

In September this year, Tata Projects Limited won the bid to construct the new parliament building at a cost of Rs 861.90 crore. The new building will be

constructed close to the existing one under the Central Vista redevelopment project.

The existing Parliament House building will be suitably retro-fitted to provide more functional spaces for parliamentary events, to ensure its usage along with the new building.

The existing building is a massive circular edifice of 560 feet in diameter. The Parliament House Estate is enclosed by an ornamental red sandstone wall or iron grills with iron gates that can be closed when occasions demand. The building has twelve gates.

Setting up of Divis pharma unit opposed

KAKINADA

MEMBERS of Divis Vyatireka Porata Committee, activists of Left parties, BJP and JSP participated in a dharna in front of the Collectorate here on Saturday opposing the setting up of Divis pharma unit in forest area in Thondangi Mandal of East Godavari district. They raised slogans like ‘Go Back Divis Pharma Unit’ and protect people’sr lives.

AP Rythu Sangham vice-president P Narasimha Rao said that the proposal of laying foundation stone for the pharma unit was against the court orders. He made it clear that they would continue their agitation till the proposal for establishment of the pharma lab is dropped. Divis Vyatireka Porata Committee honorary president Matla Musalaiah and Jana Sena Political Affairs Committee (PAC) member Pantam Venkateswar Rao (Nanaji) also spoke.

Later, Nageswara Rao and members of JSP and BJP submitted a representation to DRO Ch Sathi Babu.

BJP, MIM used divisive tactics, alleges Errabelli

Minister for Panchayat Raj, Errabelli Dayakar Rao says it is unfortunate that BJP and the MIM had tried to gain political advantage by tickling sensitive issues

- Alleges that BJP, MIM managed to stop victories in the GHMC elections by instigating sentiments and playing with people’s emotions

WARANGAL

INSTIGATING sentiments and playing with people’s emotions, the BJP and the MIM have managed to stop victories in the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) elections, said the Minister for Panchayat Raj, Errabelli Dayakar Rao.

Speaking to media persons here, on Saturday, he blamed both BJP and MIM for stooping so low to win the elections. “It’s unfortunate that both the BJP and the MIM had tried to gain political advantage by tickling sensitive issues,” he said.

Even then, TRS has emerged as the single largest party in the

GHMC, he said and pointed out that it indicates that the people have faith in the leadership of Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao and MA&UD Minister KT Rama Rao. He also expressed confidence that TRS is sure to clinch the Mayor post without any party’s support. Later, responding to a query, he said that TRS had lost quite a few seats with very little margin and the party leadership will soon analyse the reasons behind its poor performance compared to previous GHMC elections.

Referring to the ensuing Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation (GWMC) elections, the Minister said that the people were aware of the development taking place in the city. The BJP has nothing to claim to woo the people, Errabelli said. Later, the Minister also inaugurated road sweeping vehicles procured by the GWMC with an outlay of Rs 30 crore and She mobile toilets.

Farmers to occupy toll plazas as part of Bharat Bandh

Continued from P1

Therefore, “we have invited the entire country to come on to the roads and participate in this movement from wherever they are,” said Harindar Singh Lakhowal of the Bhartiya Kisan Union.

As part of the Bharat Bandh call, farmers are set to “block all the roads leading up to Delhi, Lakhowal said. The toll plazas will also be occupied and protests against the Central government and corporate houses will intensify. The farmer unions have also demanded to call for a special Parliament session to repeal the “hastily-passed” farm laws.

The protesting farmers have been consistently appealing to farmers from all across the country to join the protestors. Besides parallel protests witnessed in parts of West Bengal, Tamil Nadu among others, Maharashtra farmers are likely to join the movement in Delhi. Farmer unions have also appealed to farmers from UP and Haryana borders to join them.



# Lessons that TRS failed to learn

THIS is with reference to the report 'Lotus blooms as pink pales (Dec 5). The GHMC elections have sprung no surprise results but on expected lines. These are early warning bells ringing for the TRS and the AIMIM whose combine had won 99 (55 TRS and 44 AIMIM) seats cumulatively which is exactly the same TRS's last tally of 99. The BJP's 48 seats to AIMIM's 44 seats are actually up by 44 seats to their 4 seats tally last time. What has been loss of the TRS has been gain for the BJP.

The result of this election throws an entirely frightful scenario for K Chandrashekar Rao and his party. First the BJP stunned them in Dubakka bypoll, which was supposed to be stronghold of the TRS and now the GHMC. It proves beyond a point that mainstream voters are shifting from centrist position to more rightist position. This election has made no great dent into the AIMIM base which remains largely intact. Fence



sitters or highly neutral voters have eaten from the BJP's hand and day is not far when the TRS shall feel the heat in next Assembly elections.

The TRS which is suffering from incumbency factor on one hand and in the other hand its rank and file and leaders have turned highly complacent and prone to corruption. Intent and purpose of the government may be good and many a public welfare schemes are passed for the

general good but real devil lies in their implementation. Money is swindled by the middle level functionaries and what it percolates down to rightful claimants is peanuts. The government should not only to ensure good schemes, but also work out micromanagement to oversee that it reaches to last person standing in the queue.

The GHMC results have emboldened the BJP who has taken full advantage of TRS's alliance

with AIMIM. The BJP has changed the narrative by what it knows best. Through vote polarisation. BJP leaders hammered a point that vote to the TRS is a vote to the AIMIM, which has cascading effect on centrist and fence sitting voters. Neutrals are always looking for reasons other than what party loyalists who wears blinders to their eyes.

The BJP beside drumming up growth and development agenda, seeped through fault lines caused by the TRS and the AIMIM alliance. Citadel has been penetrated and now it is a matter of time, either it fights back or goes under. Chandrashekar Rao's charismatic personality notwithstanding, he has to reinvent himself and his party and cannot afford to be living on past laurels. Even people pulled down Mujib Rehman who fought and carved Bangladesh out of Pakistan. The GHMC election results have given equal reasons to the

AIMIM for worrying and contemplate. Their kind of politics is giving more space to the BJP and may use them as 'vote cutters' in the times to come. Their loudmouth leaders were busy instigating rank and file of the TRS party with some baseless claims. Thus, may lead to mistrust and split them from making any worthwhile alliance.

Chandrashekar Rao has tested waters and he still has a lot of time in hand to understand and reinvent the party by infusing in it a sense of purpose and reaching out to masses. Easier said than done, Rao needs to have some spring cleaning and rebuilt bridges with the masses and banish all corrupt leaders who have gathered around him for some droplets of honey only. The party cannot be aloof to the ground realities and live in fools' paradise forever. There is a knock at the door, reading on the wall and one can ignore them at one's own peril.

Ashok Goswami, Mumbai



## Well-researched article

THIS is with reference to your editorial article titled 'Soul searching time for TRS, BJP on a roll' by Ramu Sarma (Dec 5). In general, I have to say it is well-researched and well-analysed article. To be particular, I liked the part of you discussing the strategy of the TRS from 2014 to decimate the Congress and the TDP, thereby making BJP default Opposition party. I also liked your reasoning for Andhra factor not effecting the BJP. I also liked your co-relating it with one-poll idea of BJP (even your last week's discussion on 'One Nation One Poll' was good. I also liked you asking political parties not to indulge in personal level derogatory language. I hope that every week you enlighten us with these kinds of well-researched and well-analysed articles.

Baglekar Akash Kumar,  
5th year LLB student, Osmania University, Hyderabad

## Second wake-up call for TRS

V Ramu Sarma, in his article (Soul searching time for TRS, BJP on a roll, Dec 5) gave correct analysis of recent GHMC elections. The BJP which was almost non-existent so far with nothing to lose made big gains. The AIMIM contested in 51 seats and won 44 seats, thus making this year's striking rate better than 2016. Except the Congress, the BJP, the TRS and AIMIM tried their level best to polarize the voters. Though the Congress got only two seats in these elections, it was the only party who solved civic problems like roads, sanitation and water supply. Most parties focused more on Pakistan, Jinna, Nizam and changing the name of Hyderabad to Bhagyanagar. K T Rama Rao who led the TRS campaign sought an emotional chord with the people appealing to them to save the city from divisive forces hinting at the BJP.

The TRS has lost many seats because of the public anger against the State government over the alleged mishandling of flood relief works. Bandi Sanjay's comments threatening a surgical strike, Tejaswi Surya's 'vote for Owaisi is a vote against country', Amit Shah's comments on Nizam culture, Yogi's comments on changing of Hyderabad's name into Bhagyanagar, Akbaruddin's comments on NTR and PV Ghats all were highly objectionable and senseless statements. As said by Ramu Sarma, the GHMC elections are certainly a second wake-up call for TRS. The TRS failure in carrying flood relief works, creating jobs, providing double bedroom houses etc proved death knell in these elections. Failures of the TRS government will help the BJP expanding its footprints in the State.

Zakir Hussain, Kazipet

## Matinee idol's political aim may miss target

THE proposed party of Tamil cine icon Rajinikanth may not be a successful one. His prolonged oscillation to jump into TN politics and his recent announcement of dropping the idea of entering politics owing to the prevalence of Covid-19 and his sudden announcement to enter the politics caused utter confusion in the minds of Tamil population. Firstly, he has no confidence in himself then how can he lead a 'not yet started' political party? He has several disadvantages as he has already crossed 70 years and maintains a poor health. Many times he was hospitalised to cure from major ailments. After all, politics is not a three-hour show to impress his fans and audience with his gimmicks. He has to put a lot of hard work, but he has no time to organise a new party and prepare it to face upcoming State elections in 2021. What would be the fate of his party can be assessed by any sensible person. What happened to Kamal Haasan's party? Has anybody remembered his party? The same way, Rajni's yet to start

'Makkal Manram' also will go into oblivion. It may cause initial euphoria, but will die a natural death in the short run. Apart from his fragile health and advanced age, he says that his is a spiritual person and is associated with 'Swami Dayananda's Arsha Vidya Ashram located in Anaikati (Coimbatore) and often participates in spiritual activities there. Can he sail in the existing politics full of filth? He has to face hardcore atheist party DMK and a well-run AIADMK under the accidental Chief Minister E K Palani Swami (EPS). EPS gained the name as 'common man's CM'. He braved so many odds and was able to successfully continue the government left abruptly by Jayalalitha. He has the solid support of the BJP and both parties together are ready to face the electorate



in the coming State elections. Against this background, it is better for Rajni to drop the idea of starting a new party and lead the remaining life peacefully in spiritual activities. I am sure if he hurries to jump into political fray, his party may be subjected to 'Bruna Hatya' (kill in the womb before birth). Hope wisdom will prevail over Rajni and he will drop the idea of running a party which is devoid of grass root cadres and established leaders. Rajni may learn a practical lesson from the neighboring State of Andhra Pradesh and study the history of megastar Chiranjeevi's flopped party and unending struggle of his brother Pavan Kalyan to make a mark in the State politics. He has to make a choice whether to live and die as a reel hero or to end up as another political clown.

Rama Krishna M, Kakinada

## Rajni on wild-goose chase?

THERE is always a rolling rough weather in political field. In films, the scenes can be rescheduled until perfection is arrived. It is not possible in political game as each and every word is recorded for praise or for criticism. Moreover, superimposition exhibited on silver screen often damage the image that was built in movie land. Only M G Ramachandran, Jayalalitha and N T Rama Rao have carried out many social welfare activities before they jumped into politics which fetched them to become Chief Ministers. Does Rajinikanth possess the convincing power when the winds are blowing in opposite direction? He must be aware of the hapless experiences of

Chiranjeevi, Vijayashanti, Pavan Kalyan, Vijayakanth, Prem Nazir etc., in the tinsel world.

However, welcome to Rajni in politics. He must be knowing the variations between acting in movies and moving with the varieties of publics. Another renowned actor from Tamil Nadu Kamal Haasan had already launched a political party. The existing good old parties like the DMK and the AIADMK are now looking forward for political alliance. As per the present scenario, new parties may not win absolute favour of people unless they stretch their hands towards national parties.

N Ramalakshmi,  
Bolarum, Secunderabad

## Agitating farmers, adamant Modi

THE Prime Minister of India is adamant and deaf towards the farmers of India by bringing unfavourable laws for farmers and favourable to private sectors. The Central government is working hard to help top-most industrialists to control the farmers and farmer-related activities. The democratically elected government is planning and executing for the benefit of private sectors and thus proving anti-common citizens. Today, thousands of farmers are on the roads in severe climatic conditions, but the Central government is so adamant in its decision. It is so stupid on the part of the government to introduce laws in farm sector without taking farmers into confidence. It is ridiculous that non-farmers (businessmen & politicians) are taking decisions with which they are not directly connected. Schoolchildren offered food and beverages to the striking farmers while the so-called people's



government is stubborn. The Delhi University Teachers Association has extended its support to farmers. The farmers in Kolkata have conducted a protest rally against the new farm laws. The intellectual community of the country is against the new farm laws and the anti-

people government at the Centre does not bother about it. The Central government is totally in favour of capitalists, corporates and industrialists. That is the only reason with which they began their favouritism by privatisation of telephones, railways, airways and education. Still the

people are voting to the BJP and it is a clear indication that Indians are not mature enough to choose better leaders. Unfortunately, no statesman is in this country to plan and work for the betterment of common citizens. The non-BJP State governments should come out openly and support the present farmer's movement. The Modi government has long ago forgotten the meaning of 'secularism and socialism', two ideals that are incorporated in the Constitution of this country. The secular and socialistic ideas in practice alone are suitable to countries like India with its existing social and religious diversity. It is really a great insult to the country to see thousands of farmers on roads nearer to the country's capital. Let us all unanimously pray to God Almighty to change the attitude of Modi in favour of the agitating farmers.

Thummapudi Bharathi,  
M R Palli, Tirupati

## World should get ready to handle climate change

THE UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has strongly reacted to the issue of climate change, discussing deeply the actual challenges posed by the climate crisis. This news piece has caught the attention of the world community, having been highlighted by the media houses like CNN. It is time to create such serious climate change talks at the world stage. The factors like carbon dioxide-greenhouse gases contributing to the climate crisis have to be dealt with in a proper way as chalked out at climate change summits so far.

Volatile weather patterns and climate change impacts have started eating into the growth of the world. Intense tropical storms have become the order of the day. Just as in American continent, Asian nations have been encountering plenty of storm systems. There was recently cyclone Burevi off my native areas like Korkai,



Tiruchendur, Tuticorin, Tirunelveli, Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu. It is time to make the most of monsoon rainfall tapping only the good benefits, negative sides apart.

This aside, there have been reports of rigorous deforestation activities going on in the Amazon rainforest. The fact that the Amazon has been home to rich biodiversity and green cover in the world should dawn on everyone out there to protect this rich green

area forever even as it is time to make certain 'ranching activities' though necessary will not come in the way of green activities. In short, the globe and geographical areas out there have long been the natural gifts to the human society. Therefore, the international community should furthermore get ready to handle the climate challenges through mutual cooperation and strong green strategies. P Senthil Saravana Durai, Andheri West, Mumbai



## TRS watered lotus to bloom

K Chandrashekar Rao and his party failed to read the writing on the wall. The party was overconfident of winning the GHMC elections. It had 99 members in the outgoing council. The party failed to take any lessons from its debacle in the bye-election held recently in which the BJP won. In all, it is a great loss for the TRS. On the other hand, the election results have given the BJP an upper hand. It had won 48 seats coming next to the TRS which won 55 seats, 44 short of its strength in the outgoing council. Staking claims for the Mayor post have now become a

bargain which otherwise would have been a cakewalk. The corrupt administration is a major cause for concern. The less said about the dynastic politics, the better. Appeasement of the minorities and neglecting the majority is another factor for its debacle. They failed the TRS, 2023 is not far away. If the TRS does not mend its ways of functioning, it would have to face the same fate in the 2023 general elections too. On the whole, the TRS is solely responsible for the bloom of lotus in Hyderabad.

Sravana Ramachandran,  
Chennai

## CIVIC POLL RESULTS SEND MESSAGE OF DISENCHANTMENT

PARTISANSHIP in reaching political goals is no vice. Political battles make the country stronger when they are fought with integrity and purpose. But political viciousness is no virtue. All the parties fighting the elections taking it a challenging one leaving no stone unturned. The BJP in an upbeat mood after winning the by-election to the Dubbaka Assembly seat recently and Hyderabad's disenchantment with the government's

THE BJP has spectacularly risen its footprint in the GHMC region from 4 (2016) seats to 48 (2020) seats and gained foothold where it had none before. Many exit polls gave a maximum of 30 seats to the party, but it is now clear that they did not catch the people's pulse.

Government employees have shown their strong rancour to TRS government. It corroborates that not just teachers, but also in other departments majority employees voted against the government policies which was clearly evinced in

handling of recent flood havoc in the State capital is in belligerent spirits to win the hearts of 10 million people to grab majority of seats in the 150-member corporation. The VVIPs from Delhi flocking into the city for campaigning in local body election is a facetious act. The ruling TRS treating it as prestigious challenge sails vigorously against the stormy weather.

The kind of ridiculous campaign

full of aggressive postures was never witnessed before. Cynicism often arises because politicians judge themselves by their rhetoric while citizens judge them by their (mis)deeds. Out of 74 lakh voters, less than half of them (36.74%) had exercised their franchise - a message of disenchantment with politicians' poll-eve promises and post-poll actions.

Seetharam Basaani, Waddepalli, Hanamkonda

## BJP's spectacular performance

postal ballots. In a timely and welcoming move, the High Court of Telangana has suspended a late-night notice issued by SEC which says not just Swastika mark, but other marks can also be accepted as voted. This decision by the court was needed for fair counting. It was a municipal election like never before, with the two-week campaign witnessing the spectacle, colour and rhetoric reserved for State and na-

tional elections.

The result witnessed is a clear mandate for change and referendum on ruling party. It certifies that hubris and oratorical artistry will no longer sway the voters. Though Mayor will be of other party, the BJP emerged as the star of the show, having nothing to lose, took big leap at the cost of the ruling party.

Ravi Teja Kathuripalli,  
Hyderabad

## Bitter truths about branded honey

THIS is with reference to the edit 'Oh honey, this tastes bitter!' (Dec 5). The bitter truth of some honey brands in the country that we regard to be safe and natural has been exposed by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) on some popular brands like Dabur, Patanjali and Zandu that seem to be adulterated by a type of sugar syrup to the tune of 80% though the makers of these products claim that they meet the regulatory requirements laid down by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (Fssai). People have been using several brands of honey that is sold in the country as a natural preventive against Covid-19 pandemic, along with other spices as an age-old recipe against the bacterial and viral infections. Even popular brands of cooking oils produced in the country that were tested by a German laboratory, did not pass the quality parameters for their contents. This serves as a lesson not to use the cheap cooking oils that are available in the market at the cost of health, in terms of trans fats and other harmful contents in them to be detrimental to our cardiovascular health. Do we deserve to consume these products that are not in the interest of our health anymore?

S Lakshmi, Hyderabad





# Back home, Punjab farmers add sweetness to stir

VISHAL GULATI

THE sweet fragrance of gur or jaggery fills the air in fields across Punjab these days with wood-fired stills continuously working to make it ‘immunity’ booster for protesting farmers who have set up vast camps for over a week to mark their protest at the borders of the national capital against new farm laws they say will destroy livelihoods.

Besides jaggery, scores of women and children, preferred to stay back in Punjab, are adding sweetness to the protest by their brethren bitter over the farm laws.

Every early morning they are assembling voluntarily in gurdwaras and community places for making a traditional Punjabi sumptuous sweet, ‘desi ghee pinnis’, for the farmers braving chilly nights on the border.

Even the aid is pouring from across the sea. Two US-based NRIs, popularly known as Tut brothers, have sent 30 quintals of almonds for them. “We have so far dispatched five tonnes of ‘gur’ especially made for the protesting farmers stationed on the Delhi border,” local farmer Lal Singh, who sets up a still in his fields on the outskirts of Jalandhar town, said.



He said he was getting gallons of sugarcane juice daily collected from nearby villages and they are making it extra nutritious by adding a lot of nuts and dried fruits like almonds and species.

“The sugarcane, dried fruits, species and fuel wood are contributed voluntarily by the villagers,” Singh said.

“By profession we are farmers,

not ‘gur’ sellers. Our brothers and sisters have been stationed on the border to fight a battle to save our livelihoods. Back home, it is our duty to take care of them,” another farmer Rajbir Singh said. He said a tractor-trailer loaded with ‘gur’ is sent to Delhi borders once in two days through village young volunteers. Like this special one,

scores of ‘gur’-making units, run by volunteers, have come up across Punjab. Likewise, a group of local women and children assemble in a gurdwara at Nauli village of Jalandhar to roll sumptuous ‘pinnis’ for the protesting farmers. “Our village young men have been tasked to maintain the supply line with the protesting farmers. These ‘pinnis’ are not

only for the farmers but also served to the security men stationed there,” remarked octogenarian Sarbajit Kaur. She said all ingredients are voluntarily offered by the local villagers.

Added Nachattar Singh: “We have another team of men and women stationed along with our protesting brothers and sisters to cook and serve ‘kheer’ daily along with the ‘langar’. For the ‘kheer’, the milk is being provided free by our brothers and sisters from Haryana.” A group of volunteers have been serving almonds among the farmers along the Singhu border. “We came with five quintals of almonds and 10 quintals of ‘gur’ yesterday. After distributing this lot, another lot will be dispatched accordingly,” Paramvir Singh said.

While serving a palm full of almonds and a cake of ‘gur’ to a Rapid Action Force (RAF) man, he told IANS these almonds have been sent by California-based Tut brothers through their cousins based in Jalandhar. “Jaggery is one of the best natural cleansing agents for our body. In this polluted Delhi, it efficiently cleans our respiratory tract, lungs and the stomach,” remarked Ajmer Singh, a protesting farmer from Ropar district.



## Renowned trumpeter brings life to battered Beirut

ALAA KANAAN

Renowned jazz trumpeter Rihab Maalouf delighted crowds on Friday with a concert in Beirut, bringing life to an area battered by Lebanon's economic meltdown and the catastrophic Aug. 4 port explosion.

“Because of what is happening now in the region and in Lebanon, it makes it even more important to be here, to play music in the streets, in the venues,” Maalouf, a French-Lebanese citizen born in Beirut, said this correspondent.

Maalouf, 40, helped raise some 2 million euros for Lebanon with a charity concert in France after the August explosion which killed some 200 people and hit

swathes of the capital, including the Beirut Souks area where he performed on Friday. The audience wore masks to guard against Covid-19 at the concert, part of the annual Beirut Chants Festival, a series of free performances held before Christmas.

Lebanon is in the throes of an economic collapse that has paralysed its banks and crashed the currency, fuelling poverty, unemployment and a brain drain.

“We need something like this now in order to eventually get back up from what we’ve fallen into, and hopefully soon we’ll see more of these events with artists, to be able to revive Lebanon once again,” said Rony Chalhita, who attended.

## Amjad Ali Khan, sons to join Joe Walsh’s charity concert

Sarod maestro Ustad Amjad Ali Khan and his musician sons, Ayaan Ali Bangash and Amaan Ali Bangash, are set to perform at the fourth edition of Grammy award winning musician Joe Walsh’s charity concert, ‘VetsAid 2020: Home for the Holidays’.

The Eagles guitarist will be

hosting the concert, organised by his non-profit veterans’ organisation VetsAid, virtually on December 12. The Sarod



maestro and his family joins a group of musicians set to perform at the event, including American singer-songwriter Gwen Stefani and Jon Bon Jovi. All proceeds from VetsAid 2020 will go directly to veterans’ services charities, which were chosen through a vetting process in collaboration with the Combined Arms Institute. Amjad Ali Khan said it is his “great honour” to perform and raise funds and awareness for the “still urgent and significant needs of returning soldiers”.

“Through the establishment of VetsAid and its annual benefit concert we offer our love to through music. A great initiative by Joe Walsh,” the 75-year-old musician said in a statement. The concert will feature previously unreleased footage from past VetsAid events in 2017, 2018, and 2019. The livestream will showcase

archival performances from the last three years - including Don Henley, Haim, ZZ Top, Jason Isbell, The Doobie Brothers, James Taylor and Sheryl Crow. Amaan Ali Bangash said he considers music to be the “greatest wealth” and is grateful to share it with the world. “I also hope for peace and one-

ness to prevail with kinder and happier times ahead for the world. I hope you are well and staying safe,” he said. The charity concert will also feature new appearances by musicians Eddie Vedder, Alice Cooper, Willie Nelson, The Killers’ Brandon Flowers, James Hetfield, among others. Walsh, 73, said the decision to go virtual this year was due to the coronavirus pandemic. The musician said the concert is a way to honour the men and women who have served the country and raise funds to support their needs. “Our veterans’ community already suffers from increased poverty rates, mental health issues, re-entry difficulties and personal crises in the best of times. During this pandemic they are especially vulnerable. I’m proud of this nationwide tradition we have built,” he added.

## NATURAL CURE FOR CORONA



A group of women collecting mahua flowers near Budhiarmari village in Chhattisgarh State on Saturday. Indigenous tribes use caramelised mahua flowers mixed with oil of sal seeds and fluffed rice to ward off the Covid-19 pandemic

VLADIMIR SOLDATKIN

Moscow began distributing the Sputnik V Covid-19 shot via 70 clinics on Saturday to the most exposed groups, marking Russia’s first large-scale vaccination against the disease, the city’s coronavirus task force said.

The Russian-made vaccine will first be made available to doctors and other medical workers, teachers and social workers because they run the highest risk of exposure to the disease.

“You are working at an educational institution and have top-priority for the Covid-19 vaccine, free of charge,” read a phone text message received by one Muscovite, an elementary school teacher, early on Saturday. President Vladimir Putin

## Moscow rolls out Sputnik V vaccine to most exposed groups

has ordered a nationwide voluntary vaccination programme to begin next week. He said Russia will have produced 2 million vaccine doses within the next few days.

The head of the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF), Kirill Dmitriev, said in an interview with the BBC on Friday that Russia expects to give the vaccine to about 2 million



people this month.

“Over the first five hours, 5,000 people signed up for the jab - teachers, doctors, social workers, those who are today risking their health and lives the most,” Mayor Sergei Sobyanin wrote on his personal website on Friday.

Russia has already vaccinated more than 100,000 high-risk people, Health Minister Mikhail Murashko said earlier this week

during a separate presentation to the United Nations about Sputnik V. Among the first people signing up to the Moscow roll-out, Nadezhda Ragulina, an administrator at a Moscow clinic, said she wanted the vaccine as she had witnessed many COVID-19 patients.

“This is my decision... Some people close to me also have had an experience (of COVID-19). That’s why I want to protect myself, my relatives, to obtain the immunity,” she told Rossiya-24 state TV channel. Moscow, a city of around 13 million people, has been the epicentre of Russia’s coronavirus outbreak. It reported 7,993 new cases on Saturday, up from 6,868 the day before and well above the daily tallies of around 700 seen in early September.

# Unmet job hopes raise high suicide risk in men

Declines in jobs may have left some working-class men frustrated by unmet job expectations and they are more likely to suffer an early death by suicide or drug poisoning, warn researchers.

For the study, published in the journal JAMA Network Open, the research team compared life outcomes of 11,680 men to the job expectations they held as high school seniors in the early 1980s.

The findings showed that men who expected to work in jobs that did not require a college degree but later faced declines in the job market were nearly three times as likely to suffer early deaths by suicide and drug poisoning as men who sought work that required a bachelor’s degree. “Work plays a major role in how individuals experience their communities, derive a sense of purpose, and



thus develop a sense of psychological well-being,” said study lead author Chandra Muller

from the University of Texas at Austin in the US. “It’s possible that occupa-

tional expectations developed in adolescence serve as a benchmark for perceptions of

adult success and, when unmet, pose a risk of self-injury,” Muller added.

In the study, the research team investigated the relationship between the two trends using data from the High School and Beyond cohort, a nationally representative sample of 11,680 men who were surveyed throughout high school in the early 1980s, again in 1992 (when they were 28-30 years old), and again in 2015. Between 1992 and 2015, less than six per cent of the participants had died.

The researchers compared suicide and drug poisoning deaths, which are forms of self-injury, to other causes of early adult deaths, such as heart attacks and cancer. They found that the men most likely to suffer death by suicide or drug poisoning were those who as adolescents ex-

pected to earn enough to support a family through some type of semi-skilled labour that later declined when they reached adulthood, such as manufacturing, mechanics and carpentry.

The study showed that neither educational attainment nor the actual job worked increased risk for death by self-injury.

Furthermore, unmet occupational expectations were not associated with a higher risk of early death by natural or other causes. This comparison further strengthened their conclusions about a link between a decline of working-class jobs and deaths of despair.

“Our findings suggest closed pathways to sustaining working-class jobs may contribute to men’s increasing rates of suicide and drug-poisoning mortality,” Muller said.

## High cost of cheap fashion

SUJATA ASSOMULL

Fast fashion has almost become a dirty word. With people unable to afford high end fashion, let alone handcrafted sustainable fashion, fast fashion is what makes up the bulk of most people’s wardrobe.

Last week when it was announced Topshop and Miss Selfridge had filed for bankruptcy - many took to social media to celebrate their demise, calling it “the end of fast fashion”. Yes, fast fashion does have many questions to answer from how they make their clothes to the way they have propelled consumerism culture to an unjustifiable level.

But there are always two sides to a coin; let us not forget that Topshop and Miss Selfridge were also considered great British brands at one time. Both labels were born before the term fast fashion became a phenomenon. (Fast Fashion is a phrase that was coined in the 1990s, Topshop has been around since the 1960s). They were amongst the first high street brands to make fashion democratic buy making the latest trends available at prices that normal people could afford and access at their local high street.

One of the major reasons they are going out of business, is not because everyone has woken up to how bad fast fashion is for the environment (which it is), but because of a new cheaper (yet more harmful) alternative - ultrafast fashion.

Of course, one can argue that it was brands like Topshop that started this trend, but new labels have taken things to a whole new level. Millennial friendly labels like Pretty Little Things, Missguided and Shein fall under this bracket launching new collections on an almost weekly basis. This week a UK based newspaper reported that the “Made in China” Shein sells over 30,000 items a day - it accused the brand of “piracy, profiteering and mass pollution.” With dresses costing around Rs. 450 one has to wonder how these products are made.

Pretty Little Things calls their e5 dresses “bargain beauties” on their website. The brand owned by one of the pioneers of ultra-fast fashion, Boohoo, has been accused of paying workers well under the minimum wage in substandard conditions and forcing employees to stay on their jobs even if they tested positive for the coronavirus. Everything about these brands is toxic, from the fabric they use, to their working conditions to their attitude to fashion’s throw away culture. (It is estimated that over 18 million tonnes of unwanted clothing will end up in a landfill this year.)



## How Covid has taken big toll on luxury biz

VINCENT FERNANDES

Covid-19 impact has caused an unprecedented fall in market size to EUR217 billion, down 23 per cent from 2019 and back to 2014 level; turmoil accelerates potential for change and transformation of the industry.

The luxury goods industry has been heavily impacted by the Covid-19 crisis in 2020. The core personal luxury goods market contracted for the first time since 2009, falling by 23 per cent at current exchange rates to hit EUR217 billion. The drop is the largest recorded since we have been tracking the industry. The overall luxury market – encompassing both luxury goods and experiences – shrunk at a similar pace and now is estimated at approximately EUR1 trillion.

It has been a year of profound global change in the way we live, the way we shop and what we value. Tourists have remained at home, changing how, when and why they purchase luxury products. Online shopping for luxury goods has soared, doubling its share of the market to 23 per cent in 2020 from 12 per cent in 2019. The turmoil of Covid-19 has been the catalyst for change for the luxury industry, which is on a path to recovery by 2022-2023. Consumer demand for action with purpose and social impact is growing and luxury brands are expected to demonstrate real and sustained commitment to diversity, inclusion and sustainability.

While the industry has suffered from a pause in global travel and ongoing lockdowns, experts believe it has the necessary resilience to manage through the crisis. We have faith in its ability to transform its operations and redefine its purpose to meet new customer demands and retain its relevance, especially for younger generations."

Uncertainty will hover over the industry for some months to come. Following on the second quarter, which was the worst the sector has ever experienced, there were signs of recovery in the third quarter. The most likely outcome is a -10 per cent year-over-year drop in the fourth quarter,

which is heavily dependent on the future evolution of Covid-19 and the additional restrictions that national governments could put in place.

Scenarios for 2021 are varied and Bain forecasts growth that ranges from +10/12 per cent to +17/19 per cent depending on macroeconomic conditions, the evolution of Covid-19 and the speed of return to travel globally as well as the resilience and confidence of local customers.

The decline in revenue is taking a disproportionate toll on profitability – Bain expects operating profit to decline by 60 per cent in 2020 vs 2019 level (i.e. from an average of 21 per cent margin to 12 per cent margin).

According to the study, in 2021 the market is expected to recover 50 per cent of the profit loss of 2020 – still below 2019 levels. This is driven by requirement to continue spending, and sometimes even accelerate investment, on most cost items (marketing, online channels, store costs) despite the drop in sales.

Bain expects the recovery to gather pace over the next three years, with the market returning to 2019 levels by the end of 2022/early 2023.

### Online channel to drive growth

The changes brought by Covid-19 increased the presence of online in every aspect of life. In the luxury market, online sales made up EUR49 billion in 2020, up from EUR33 billion in 2019. The share of purchases made online nearly doubled from 12 per cent in 2019 to 23 per cent in 2020. Online is set to become the leading channel for luxury purchases by 2025, fuelling the omnichannel transformation.

This dramatic increase comes at the expense of bricks-and-mortar. Bain expects no growth in the number of stores operated directly by brands in 2020 and possible decline in store networks in 2021. According to a recent study by Statista, India's luxury market will amount to \$7,956 million in 2020 (after considering the pandemic) and grow annually by 9.7 per cent (CAGR 2020-25), with cosmetics and fragrances taking the lead.

DASARI SREENIVASA RAO

*How's the journey so far in the last three years?*

We started our journey in November 2017. Within the first six months of operations, we raised Rs1.2cr. Thereafter, though we had opportunities, we didn't avail of any funding support. First 18 months, we faced issues pertaining to cash flows, operational issues. Initially, we had some problems. Of course, it was a learning experience as well. We faced many issues such as funding, but never compromised on choosing projects as we remained focused on our domain i.e. defence technology. We couldn't pay salaries for six months, but our staff supported us in the initial phase.

For team building on niche technology, we need the right talent. Finding the right people is very difficult. We're facing this challenge. We focus on work culture. We interviewed 60 people to hire 3-4 candidates. We have good support from THub, which invited us to propose some ideas offered office space also.

*Have you faced any funding obstacles for the startup?*

Of course, we had funding problems, but got help from a seed investor. We need investors generally for startups. For apps and general services, investors can easily understand the business model and come forward to fund them. But for the defence sector, investors need to have domain knowledge. On the other hand, billing takes up to two years. So, attracting investment is a bit difficult exercise for startups with a focus on the defence sector. We faced a setback as one investor opted out of the project after initial work was done. We worked from home for a couple of months. Later we got another

# Constelli Signals confident of break even in FY22

Foresees export revenue reaching to one-third of total income next fiscal

Constelli Signals, a Hyderabad-based startup focusing on core defence technology, is perhaps among few organizations to take up hiring in turbulent times of Covid-19. After overcoming teething problems and the impact of Covid pandemic, the technology startup is set to break even in 2021-22 financial year i.e. in the fourth year of operations. "We want to become a global defence organization by exporting our products and technology solutions", says **Chenreddy Avinash Reddy**, founder and CTO, Constelli Signals, in an interview with **Bizz Buzz**



(From Left) Avinash Reddy, Founder and CTO, Satya Gopal, CEO, Constelli Signals

investor. We have to run the show for 18 months until we get revenues for the delivered projects.

*What products do you make?*

Our startup is focusing on niche signal processing technology including satellite communication, WiFi, mobile communications, etc. Our product range includes radio links from radars, detect objects, etc. The product line is spanning to three domains-- radars and EW (electronic warfare), telemetry used in getting information remotely.

For providing telemetry solutions, we partnered with DRDO. We have a lab in Odisha also. We developed indigenous product digital telemetry receiver, which is an import substitute. We have orders for seven products. Currently, we're catering mostly to Indian defence sector.

*Any plan to export your products and solutions?*

Yes, we want to export our products and technology as we do a lot of system integration. We want to build a brain for core signal processing. We have an export order from Turkey for a radar test simulator. We are participating in mul-

multiple tenders abroad and in discussions with EU companies to partner on technology sharing. We may enter into an MoU with an overseas company very soon. Our objective is to become a global defence organization.

*How do you see demand and competition for defence products?*

There's completion always, but not much in India. However, we face stringent competition in global markets. We are just a three-year-old startup but facing competition from global majors with over 30 years of experience. We participated in first level tender in Australia and are selected for technical qualification for the bid. We see many opportunities despite Covid and funding issues. Business dynamics keep changing. We have opportunities in India also. We have good opportunities globally in radar and EW segments.

*Any boost from Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative?*

Right now, there're MSME loans available, but we didn't avail of it. Some key decisions under Atmanirbhar Bharat on EMD for tender, priority to startups, innovation for defence sector, grants for start-

much by the pandemic. In fact, during the times of Covid, we're hiring now.

*How do you see the future in post-Covid?*

Now, we're almost self-sufficient, feeding ourselves sustaining ourselves. We had a turnover of Rs2.9 crore in the last two years. We expect to touch Rs7cr of billing and orders worth Rs12 crore this year including Rs3.5 cr from abroad. For FY-22, we forecast a revenue of Rs18cr including 30 per cent income from exports. We want to scale up fast. One export project is already in progress.

*How do you see the ecosystem for startups in Telangana?*

Ecosystem in Hyderabad is very good. We chose T-Hub as our mentor. T-Works is supporting the hardware segment and it's also doing well and already set up a few labs for startups. We see continuous growth of startups in Telangana as the State government is giving grants. Hyderabad is becoming a good hub for defence companies after Bengaluru. Major companies are setting up their units in Hyderabad as it offers a good ecosystem for startups. We're growing organically and our growth is satisfactory. For three years, we got I-T benefits as we're recognized as a startup by DIPP. We won in a competition organized by the Union Defence Ministry.

*What's the next target?*

We're on the way to become a self-reliant startup and confident of achieving break-even point in 2021-22 financial year. Touching break-even level within four years for a startup like ours is reasonably good. Today, if we want to scale up the operations to the size of our startup, it needs more funding and time. We're cautious on spending.

## A year of Covid, mergers, claims for gen insurance players

Technology, digitalisation are trending and fast-tracked

VENKATACHARI  
JAGANNATHAN  
CHENNAI

THE year 2020 will go down for the Indian non-life insurance sector as a year of coronavirus that resulted in large scale digital embracement and increased health insurance spread, reduced overall business, industry consolidation, large losses, said senior industry officials.

At a time when the private sector is witnessing mergers and acquisitions, the central government scrapped its earlier plan to merge National Insurance Company Ltd, Oriental Insurance Company Ltd and United India Insurance Company Ltd into one.

"Some things that were building up at the start of the year have been blunted by the pandemic: the growth in the 5th largest economy in the world; the '\$5 Trillion GDP (gross domestic product) by 2025' forecast; a 14-15 per cent growth forecast for the general insurance sector as a consequence and as a subset of the economy; an important position for India in the Asia-Pacific as the main," said Sharad Mathur, Managing Director and CEO, Universal Sompoo General Insurance Company Ltd.

The company is a joint venture of Indian Bank, Indian Overseas Bank, Karnataka Bank, Dabur Investments Corporation and Sompoo Japan Insurance Inc.

"Some trends have been accentuated and fast-tracked were technology and digitalisation," Mathur added.

Giving a different take on that Mathur said: "Much has been spoken about the accelerated adoption of digital and the continued use of digital means for transacting financial services including insur-



ance in the future as well."

"However, continued adoption of digital in insurance is hampered by a general lack of trust in insurance companies when it comes to paying claims and the general apathy of consumers towards buying insurance," he added.

He said this has been the reason that digital has not been able to penetrate the insurance process as much as it has done in other financial services like banking, mutual funds or participation in equity markets.

Policyholders believe that they need hand holding when it comes to managing claims. "However, the need for lesser than earlier face to face interaction and social distancing will remain with us. This leads us to the hypothesis that insurance companies will have to work on this problem in a two-step process.

First to guide and make insurance intermediaries adept at using digital means to transact and second to rebuild the trust in insurance companies claims capabilities. Insurance companies will have to reorient their operation model in a new "phydigital" world of insurance," Asthana said.

According to Mathur, the low points for the sector in 2020 are: a flat growth of 1.11 per cent till October, 2020 - out from the horrors of negative growth till Q1. Multi-line

general insurers still at a negative growth of 1.68 per cent till October 2020; the marginal growth of 1.68% for the overall industry due to GWP (gross written premium) growth rates of the specialised insurers (Agriculture, Health, Exports); change in the business mix; motor for the first time in history ceasing to be the highest contributor to the pie because of sluggish growth of the auto sector; high growth in health insurance claims outgo largely due to the pandemic.

"Apart from Covid-19 increasing the number of health insurance claims and the ticket size, there has also been natural catastrophes in different parts of the country with unseasonal hail and rain in Delhi during the lockdown, Amphan cyclone in West Bengal, Nisarga cyclone in Maharashtra, Hyderabad floods and now the cyclone hitting Tamil Nadu. All these will lead to higher claims in motor and property insurance," said Shanai Ghosh, Executive Director and CEO, Edelweiss General Insurance.

"The gas leak at the LG Polymers plant in Andhra Pradesh, boiler explosion at Yashashvi Raasayan Private Limited at Dahej, Gujarat and the oiler explosions at Neyveli Lignite Corporation's thermal power plant in Tamil Nadu," added Mathur. On coronavirus impact on the general insurers,

The entire automobile sector was already subdued in 2019-2020 and the lockdown and virtual stoppage of business had aggravated the situation

Mathur said motor insurance, the major premium contributor witnessed a significant decline during this period as not many vehicles were sold in Q1 and the GWP was generally from the renewal of premium from existing policies. "The entire automobile sector was already subdued in 2019-2020 and the lockdown and virtual stoppage of business had aggravated the situation. Several challenges like lack of purchase of new vehicles and claim surveying haunted the sector," he said.

Further, the customary increase in premium rates for motor third party cover not happening this year also has contributed to the fall of motor insurance premiums.

"Commercial premiums overall, particularly fire, have not been impacted much and registered a growth in FY2021. The major segments impacted are travel and marine (cargo) business for Universal Sompoo and for the industry," Mathur said. Industry officials are of the view that with the Covid-19 pandemic still evolving, it is difficult to predict the extent of impact on the sector. While the business lost cannot be recovered, coming back to the pre-Corona growth rates should happen by Q3 of FY2022.

"In general, the level of uncertainty has been elevated

substantially and this is going to make consumers very careful about what they spend. Frugality and spending for prioritised needs will be the new norm. For insurers this implies the need to repackaging products to reduce premiums and create more contextual products - which will create a pull and move the ecosystem away from a push model of selling," Roopam Asthana, CEO and the Whole Time Director, Liberty General Insurance Ltd said.

On the regulatory measures Asthana said: "The regulator, IRDAI (Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India), has taken several efforts to ease customers' misery and provide a seamless experience during such a tough time."

"IRDAI's measures have helped the insurance industry evolve faster and stronger with customer centricity and servicing at the core of all its measures," Asthana added. "The Sandbox initiative by IRDAI is also a welcome and progressive move. It is a great opportunity to provide innovative, relevant and meaningful solutions to address evolving customer needs, especially in the current situation," Edelweiss General Ghosh said. The three officials were unanimous in saying that consolidation would happen in the sector.

**Acquisition the order of the day**

"Acquisitions are becoming a strategic business route. Increased fundraising activity in the sector is an indicator of growth and scale of business. Some recent developments on this front include Paytm acquiring Raheja QBE, HDFC Ergo acquiring Apollo Munich, Sachin Bansal buying DHFL General Insurance and the merger of ICICI Lombard and Bharti Axa General," Ghosh said.

QUIZ NO.  
150

## HANS BIZ QUIZ

### 'Alfred Escher: A railway pioneer of Switzerland'

1. Alfred Escher, a Swiss politician, railways pioneer, and the father of Switzerland's economic development, died on 6 December 1882. Which foundation was created by Alfred's daughter to donate his fortune for charitable activities?

- a) Luginbuhl Initiative
- b) Gottfried Keller Foundation
- c) International Committee for Relief of the Wounded in Geneva
- d) Centre d'Etudes de la Philanthropie en Suisse

2. Even after 200 years, Alfred Escher's achievements live on in present-day Switzerland's economic reality. Alfred Escher was instrumental and had a significant role in the foundation of which of the below?

- a) Swiss Life
- b) Gotthard Railway
- c) Swiss Northeastern Railway
- d) All of the above

3. The privatization of railways in Switzerland boosted demand for a skilled workforce to build this new transport infrastructure. Which institution Escher helped establish to produce engineering and technical graduates

- a) Institute of Engineers Bern
- b) Federal Institute of Technology Zurich
- c) Switzerland Institute of Technology
- d) Swiss Polytechnic Institute

4. Which Railway Company was founded in 1871, with Albert Escher as its Chairman, putting him at the world's largest engineering project's helm?

- a) Gotthard Railway Company
- b) Bern Lotschberg Simplon Railway
- c) Rhaetian Railway
- d) Swiss Federal Railways

5. With which construction through the Alps in Switzerland, a crucial rail link from the north to the south, Albert Escher received tremendous success?

- a) Gotthard Tunnel
- b) Simplon Tunnel
- c) Ceneri Base Tunnel
- d) Lotschberg Tunnel

6. With his extensive political network and business relationships, Escher became one of the most influential politicians in the young Swiss federal state. Escher had also earned monikers from his political opponents and



faced severe criticism for his concentration of power. Which moniker?

- a) King Alfred I
- b) Federal Baro
- c) Railway Baron
- d) All of the above

7. The railway boom in Switzerland increased the need for capital to finance railway construction. What financial institution did Alfred Escher establish to meet the Railway projects' capital requirement and cover risk?

- a) Banque Cantonale de Geneve
- b) Credit Suisse
- c) Schweizerische Kreditanstalt
- d) Swiss Raiffeisen

8. The investment bank that was founded by Alfred Escher in 1856 is now known as?

- a) UBS
- b) EFG International
- c) AIG
- d) Credit Suisse

9. Escher's rise through cantonal and national politics was meteoric. Which of the below statements concerning Alfred is incorrect?

- a) He was elected to Zurich's cantonal parliament, the Grand Council
- b) He was president of the House of Representatives
- c) He was elected President of the Swiss Confederation
- d) He was one of the first leaders elected to the National Council of the new federal state

10. Born on 20 February 1819 into Zurich merchants' influential family, Alfred Escher had a profound and lasting impact on Switzerland's transition to the modern age. In 1889, which sculptor created a bronze statue outside Zurich's central railway station in honor of Alfred Escher?

- a) Arnold Bocklin
- b) Richard Kissling
- c) Urs Fischer
- d) Felix Vallotton

The Hans Biz Quiz has been compiled by **Sunil Dhavala**, CEO, The Third Umpire Media. He had held senior management roles at Bertelsmann, NGC, Fox Broadcasting, Star TV and others. He is an alumnus of Indian Institute of Foreign Trade

KEY

1B

2D

3B

4A

5A

6D

7C

8D

9C

10B



# India short on late-order batting prowess sans Jadeja

2nd T20I

SYDNEY

INDIA will have their task cut out in the second T20 International at the Sydney Cricket Ground against Australia as they will miss the services of injured all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja, who powered them to victory with the bat in the last two white-ball games. Jadeja played a stellar role in the consolation win in the last ODI

and also starred with the bat in the first T20 International at Canberra on Friday. But he has been ruled out of the remaining two games in the shortest format after being hit on the head by a delivery from Mitchell Starc in Friday's first T20 International. India will, however, still fancy their chances to win the second T20I and seal the series in the shortest format against an Australia side that too has been plagued by injuries. Skipper Aaron Finch suffered a niggle on his hip in Friday's game at Canberra and

the reports of his scan are awaited. The Aussies are already missing vice-captain Pat Cummins who is being rested, senior batsman David Warner who has been ruled out due to groin injury, and Ashton Agar who is down with a calf injury. Nathan Lyon was drafted in the squad to replace Cameron Green who was picked in the Australia A side that plays India A on Sunday. If India win the second T20, they will continue to remain unbeaten in a T20 series in Australia. They drew the three-match T20I series in 2018-19, won the 2015-16 T20I series 3-0, drew the two-game series in 2011-12. Though, they had lost the one-off T20I in 2008.

Skipper Virat Kohli is likely to persist with leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal, who came into the first T20I thanks to a stroke of luck, replacing Jadeja as concussion substitute in Australia's batting innings. Jadeja was hit on the head by a short ball from Mitchell Starc but he was also struggling with his hamstring which meant he couldn't have bowled or fielded if he had not been hit on the head.

Chahal, replacing him, took three key wickets -- Aaron Finch, Steve Smith and Matthew Wade to put India in charge.

But the responsibility of leading the late assault with the bat will now solely rest in Hardik Pandya's hands in Jadeja's absence. Pandya was instrumental in helping India win the last ODI as he put on an unbeaten 150-run partnership with Jadeja although he failed to get going in Friday's T20I.

India could also play Shradul Thakur, Jadeja's replacement in the T20I squad, in place of Mohammed Shami as they will most likely look to rest the senior India pace bowler ahead of the Test series that begins on December 17. (IANS)

## India's Test side to get first taste of competitive cricket

SYDNEY

AFTER nearly a month-long stay in Australia, India's Test specialists will get first taste of competitive cricket when they face a strong Australia A team in a three-day warm-up at the Drum-moyne Oval here from Sunday.

This is the first of the two warm-ups; the other three-day game begins on December 11.

Prithvi Shaw, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane, Hanuma Vihari, Wriddhiman Saha, R Ashwin, and Mohammed Siraj are part of only the Test squad and have not played any game, in any format, up until now during their stay in Australia.

India Test team's vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane will most likely lead the side.

The Australia A side includes the home side's Test players like skipper Tim Paine, Joe Burns, Travis Head and James Pattinson.

The game will especially be crucial for Pujara who hasn't played any competitive cricket since the Ranji Trophy final against Bengal in March.

Pujara was India's star during the last tour in 2018-19, scoring three centuries to help India beat Australia for the first time in a Test series in Australia. He scored 521 runs in that series.

The No.3 batsman will again play an important role, especially with skipper Virat Kohli set to return home after the first Test to attend the birth of his first child.

Wicketkeeper-batsmen Pant and Saha could face off during this match for a spot in the Test squad. Pant, who has been excluded from the Indian limited overs teams, apparently due to fitness issues, had scored an unbeaten 159 in the fourth and final at the Sydney Cricket Ground during the previous tour in 2018-19.

Among other players looking to perform will be Prithvi Shaw, who endured a horrible back-end of the Indian Premier League tournament. After starting the tournament well, Shaw aggregated just 30 in the last seven IPL games for Delhi Capitals. His highest in those seven matches was 10 as he got three ducks and three single digit scores. (IANS)



New Zealand's Daryl Mitchell celebrates the wicket of the West Indies' Jason Holder during day three of their first Test in Hamilton, New Zealand on Saturday

## Kohli, Bumrah among Lara's best of this era

NEW DELHI

INDIANS Jasprit Bumrah and Virat Kohli feature in Brian Lara's lists of five best batsmen and bowlers of this era.

The former West Indies captain listed Kohli, New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson, England's Joe Root, South African AB de Villiers, and Australia's Steve Smith as the best batsmen of this era on his Instagram account, although he did not rank them.

Among bowlers, Lara mentioned Bumrah, England's Jofra Archer and James Anderson, South Africa's Kagiso

Rabada and Afghanistan spinner Rashid Khan as the best five in the present era.

Lara also mentioned the five best batsmen and bowlers he played against. Sachin Tendulkar, Ricky Ponting, Jacques Kallis, Kumar Sangakkara, Rahul Dravid are the best batsmen while Wasim Akram, Shane Warne, Waqar Younis, Muttiah Muralitharan, and Glenn McGrath as the best bowlers he faced.

Lara also listed the best West Indies cricketers of all time. This list of five includes George Headley, Everton Weekes, Garfield Sobers, Vivian Richards, and Malcolm Marshall.

Among the five best West Indians of his era, Lara named Courtney Walsh, Curtly Ambrose, Shivnarine Chanderpaul, Carl Hooper, and Chris Gayle. (IANS)



## Rivals Goa, Kerala look for first wins

MARGAO (GOA)

FC Goa and Kerala Blasters FC, who face each other here on Sunday, are still searching for their first wins of the season as they go into their fourth games of the season, at the Fatorda Stadium.

Both sides have faced each other 12 times, with FC Goa having the upper hand, winning eight while losing thrice. Goa are also on a six-match unbeaten run against Kerala and will aim to continue that.



**Match Result**  
NORTHEAST UNITED FC beat SC EAST BENGAL 2-0

Both sides find themselves in the bottom half of the table with just two points each. While Kerala have dominated possession against all their opponents so far, they haven't been efficient in the final third of the pitch and have struggled to create chances. Kerala are yet to score a goal from open play this season. Both their goals so far have come from set-pieces. At the back, Kibu Vicuna's side has appeared shaky.

The two-time finalists have also been dealt a huge blow with captain Sergio Cidoncha likely to be out of action for a while.

"Every team is a different challenge. It's true we have more similarities with FC Goa

because of a similar style of play. It's going to be a battle to have more of the ball. But they are going to play their cards and so will we," said Vicuna.

Meanwhile, Goa have managed the highest possession in the ISL so far. But despite that, Juan Ferrando's men have also dropped points from promising positions in their previous two encounters.

The Gaurs have also shipped in four goals, all of which have come through set-pieces. They will be hoping to tighten things up at the back. They are set to be without midfielder Alberto Noguera, who will miss the game through suspension.

"For our supporters, I want them to enjoy the game because it is two teams trying to play football. I'm sure it's going to be a beautiful game," said Ferrando. As both teams indulge in similar style of play, fans can expect an open contest with plenty of entertainment. (IANS)

### Today's Fixtures

Mumbai City FC vs Odisha FC at GMC Stadium Bambolim 5pm  
FC Goa vs Kerala Blasters FC at Fatorda Stadium 7pm

Kerala Blasters FC's Nongdamba Naorem trains under the watchful eyes of Ishfaq Ahmed ahead of their Hero ISL season 7 game against FC Goa

## Pujara caught in racism controversy at Yorkshire

New Delhi

INDIA'S top-order batsman Cheteshwar Pujara became part of a racism controversy after a couple of former Yorkshire employees lent support to former Yorkshire cricketer Azeem Rafiq, who has alleged that the experience of racism at the county had forced him to attempt suicide.

Pujara, currently in Australia for Test series, had played for Yorkshire in 2015 and 2018. "(There were) continuous references to taxi drivers and restaurant workers when referring to (the) Asian commu-

nity. They called every person of colour 'Steve'. Even (India batsman) Cheteshwar Pujara, who joined as an overseas professional, was called Steve because they could not pronounce his name," Taj Butt, one of the employees, was quoted as saying in a report on ESPNcricinfo.com. Butt, who was employed within the Yorkshire Cricket Foundation as a community development officer, resigned within six weeks of joining due to the 'targeted language used at the club'.

Tony Bowry, who worked as a coach and cultural diversity officer at the club,

was the other Yorkshire employee who testified.

"Many youngsters struggled to make progress, and the few that did found the environment of the dressing rooms very difficult and unwelcoming, as a direct result of racism they faced. It affected performance -- they were labelled trouble-makers," he was quoted as saying.

Former Yorkshire overseas players, Pakistan's Rana Naved-ul Hasan and West Indies's Tino Best have also reiterated their support to Rafiq in his fight against racism at the club. (IANS)





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