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Contestants take part in the auditions for the Miss Vizag 2021, in Visakhapatnam on Sunday

#### **18 KILLED IN MYANMAR CRACKDOWN**

YANGON (MYANMAR): Security forces in Myanmar opened fire and made mass arrests Sunday as they sought to break up protests against the military's seizure of power, and a UN human rights official said it had "credible information" that 18 people were killed and 30 were wounded. That would be the highest singleday death toll among protesters who are demanding that the elected government of

Aung San Suu Kyi be restored to power after being ousted by a February 1 coup. "Deaths reportedly occurred as a result of live ammunition fired into crowds in Yangon, Dawei, Mandalay, Myeik, Bago and Pokokku," the UN Human Rights Office said in a statement referring to several cities, adding that the forces also used tear gas, flash-bang

#### My dream is to see India, Pak become true friends: Malala

grenades and stun grenades.

NEW DELHI: The old philos-

ophy of having borders and divisions doesn't work anymore and the people in India and

Pakistan want to live in peace, Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai said on Sunday, stressing that it is her dream to see the two countries



**Markets will** remain under pressure



### M Modi's Pic OFF 2021 19 SATELLITES IN STYLE

# BHAGAVAD GITA ISRO FLAGS

### PSLV puts Brazil's Amazonia-1, 18 other satellites in orbit

**S**RIHARIKOTA

THE Indian Space Re-Organisation Sunday on launched the country's Polar rocket PSLV C-51 carrying Amazonia-1 of Brazil and 18 other satellites successfully from the Sriharikota spaceport in its first mission of the year.

The blast-off took place at 10:24 am from Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) SHAR in Sriharikota at the end of a nearly 26-hour countdown.

After a flight of about 17 minutes 23 seconds, the vehicle injected the Amazonia-1 into its intended orbit and in the succeeding 1 hour 38 minutes, all the 18 co-passenger satellites successfully separated from the PSLV in a predetermined sequence.

On the top panel of this spacecraft, a picture of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been engraved. "This is to show solidarity and gratitude for his (PM's) Aatmanirbhar initiative and space privatisation", said SKI, which is also sending up 'Bhagavad Gita'



**Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota on Sunday** 

in SD (secured digital) card. "In this mission, India and ISRO, feel extremely proud to launch the first satellite designed, integrated by Brazil. The satellite is in very good health. I congratulate the Brazilian

team," said ISRO chief K Sivan. Prime Minister Narendra Modi also took to Twitter to congratulate ISRO and New Space India Limited (NSIL) on the success of PSLV-C51/Amazonia-1 Mission.

#### 14 missions lined up for launch in 2021: **ISRO** chief

SRIHARIKOTA: ISRO has lined up 14 mis-



the space agency's first unmanned mission later this year, its Chairman K Sivan said on Sunday. He was addressing scientists at the Mission Control Centre here after the successful launch of Amazonia-1 of Brazil and 18 other satellites. "Definitely our hands are full. We are going to have something like 14 missions this year. Seven launch vehicle missions and six satellite missions, as well as our first unmanned mission by the end of the year. That is our target and the scientists are working on that", he said.

#### **Co-WIN begins** registrations

NEW DELHI: As India gears up for the next phase of Covid-19 vaccination drive for people above 60 years of age and those above 45 years of age with comorbidities from Monday, the registration for the vaccine on Co-WIN portal will open at 9 am. Citizens will be able to register and book and appointment for vaccination, anytime and anywhere, using the Co-WIN 2.0 portal or through other IT applications such as Arogya Setu, etc, the government said in a statement. There will be only one live appointment for a beneficiary at any point of time for each dose. Appointments for any date for a Covid vaccination centre will be closed at 3 pm on that day for which the slots were opened. For example, for March 1, the slots will be open from 9 am till 3 pm on March 1, and the appointments can be booked any time before that, subject to availability. However, an appointment can also be booked for any future date for which vaccination slots are available.

#### India records highest single-day jump in Covid cases in a month

NEW DELHI: India's Covid-19 tally climbed to 1,10,96,731 on Sunday with 16,752 new infections, the highest in the last 30 days, according to the Union Health Ministry data. The death toll mounted to 1,57,051 with 113 fresh fatalities, the data updated at 8 am



### Eye on 2022 polls, Kejri woos UP Jats

PURNA SINGH New Delhi

IN view of the Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh slated for next year, AAP national convenor Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday tried to woo the 'Jat' community in the western part of the state while addressing a Kisan Mahapanchayat in Meerut.

The AAP's Mahapanchayat came months after the party had announced to contest the UP Assembly polls next year.

Kejriwal's address focused mainly on the ongoing farmers' protest against the three Central farm laws. The AAP convenor reiterated his party's slogan calling the three farm laws as "death warrants" for the protesting farmers.

In a gesture of his party's support, the Delhi Chief Minister had torn the farm laws' documents in the Assembly in December last year, terming the laws as "death warrants".

Amid slogans of 'Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan' and 'Kisan Eklta Jindabad', Kejriwal said that the protesting farmers have faced atrocities which were not meted out even during the British rule. He also accused the BJP of making false cases against

"Our farmers can be anything but traitors. But the BJP has called them terrorists and Khalistanis," Kejriwal said.

Through his speech, he also tried to woo the villagers in the western part of UP reiterating his own line - 'at present, one son of a farmer is at the border and another at Delhi's border'.

He also accused the BJP of orchestrating the Republic Day violence at the Red Fort and extended his support to the protesters, claiming that AAP has provided civic and WiFi facilities at the protest sites in Singhu, Tikri and Ghazipur borders, where scores of farmers have been sitting on protest for nearly

## Mann K

### **Atmanirbhar campaign** is a national spirit: Modi

NEW DELHI: Asserting that the Atmanirbhar Abhiyan (campaign on self-reliance) is not just a government policy but also a national spirit,

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday urged the people to learn more about Indian scientists and develop sports commentaries in regional languages for the Indian sports item in order to make it so, "Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan not just a government policy, it's a na-

tional spirit...Today Aatmanirbhar Bharat has become a sentiment growing in the hearts of common man," he said in the 74th edition of his monthly radio program. He cited a number of examples of ordinary people

engaging in extra ordinary activities to promote the spirit of self-reliance from across the country to drive home his

'Catch the Rain campaign to promote water conservation'



**NEW DELHI: Prime Minister** Narendra Modi on Sunday said the Centre's Jal Shakti Ministry is about to launch a 100-day campaign called 'Catch the Rain' to promote water conservation in the country.

The Prime Minister made the statement while addressing this year's second 'Mann Ki Baat' radio pro-

#### Modi doesn't hide true self: Ghulam **Nabi Azad**

**J**AMMU

SENIOR Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad, who hails from a village in Jammu and Kashmir and served three years as chief minister, drew parallels between himself and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, stating that he has not forgotten his roots and proudly calls himself a 'chaiwala' as well as he does not hide his true self.

Speaking at a public event in Jammu, Ghulam Nabi said, "I like a lot of things about many leaders.  $\check{I}$  am from the village and feel proud... Even our Prime Minister (Narendra Modi) hails from the village and used to sell tea. We are political rivals but I appreciate that he does not hide his true

"I have travelled the whole world. I have stayed in 5-star and 7-star hotels. But the scent of the people who belong to my village is unmatched," the Congress leader said after he was felicitated with the 'Sher-e-Gurjar award' by Gurjar Desh Charitable

### One year on, LNJP Covid warriors recall havoc

KUNAL DUTT New Delhi

AT state-run Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan Hospital, the nerve centre of Delhi's battle against the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, many doctors at times had to wear PPE kits for nearly 18 hours to attend to struggling patients in the sweltering heat when its first wave had hit the city and the mortuary was piled up with bodies. It's been one year since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in the national capital, and daily cases and death counts have both come down significantly, and scenes of distress in the hospital's corridors and outside morque have been replaced by talks about the ongoing vaccination.

It was on March 1 that the first case of COVID-19 was recorded in the city, a few months after the "unpredictable virus" had wreaked havoc in Wuhan in China, where it was first reported globally. Rohit Datta, a businessman from east Delhi, who had returned from Italy last year, tested positive for the new virus that had left the world puzzled and in a grip of extreme fear. The world had not seen anything like this before since the Spanish Flu of 1918, and certainly not in India. As the cases began to spiral in large parts of the country, including Delhi, a nationwide lockdown was imposed late March by the government to contain the spread of the virus.

While most people were practically left confined to their houses for several months and work for home became the new normal, healthcare workers faced the heavy brunt of the pandemic, as doctors. nurses, served patients day in and day out, without any weekly breaks, isolated from their family members for days, weeks or even months. Amit Anand, a 35year-doctor at the 2,000-bed LNJP Hospital who has been on duty since the outbreak of the pandemic here, said, "It's one year of COVID in Delhi, and I also met my family back home, after a gap of one year." The Begusarai native, whose wife also holds an MBBS degree, told PTI, "I met my wife and son, now two-and-a-half years old, in Bokaro this February, and he almost didn't recognise me.

The pandemic literally separated us from our families. But we have to do our job, which we have chosen, so that motivated us throughout this very tough period." LNJP Hospital, now a partial COVID-19 facility, was the first hospital to be converted into a dedicated coronavirus facility in Delhi, and soon Rajiv Gandhi Su-





per Speciality Hospital (RGSSH), GTB Hospital and other government hospitals were also roped in, besides reserving beds in private hospitals to treat increasing number of patients. On June 23, the national capital had reported its first wave of the infection with 3,947 cases, the highest single-day spike till then. Delhi went into a war mode, with government efforts to combat the pandemic being led by 'corona warriors' in hospitals in white lab coats and police in streets wearing khaki.

Ritu Saxena, Emergency Department chief, at the hospital, which has treated a record over 11,000 COVID-19 patients till date, recalled that in June when the first wave had hit Delhi, a large number of people were dying daily and bodies would pile up beyond capacity in the mortuary.

"Some doctors at times had to wear PPE (personal protective equipment) kits for 18 hours in a day in harsh summer when temperature had gone above 40 degrees Celsius to attend to patients," she said. Delhi then battled the second and third waves of the pandemic in September (over 4,000 daily cases multiple times) and

the worst this year, but the city known for its resilience, soldiered on and eventually manage to surmount it.

The highest single-day spike of 8,593 cases in Delhi till date was reported on November 11, while on November 19 the city recorded 131 COVID-19 deaths, the highest single-day fatality count till date. Suresh Kumar, Medical Director of the LNJP Hospital and a COVID-19 survivor, says the past one year of battling the pandemic had taught "valuable lessons" to meet the challenges ahead.

"In this period, we also equipped ourselves with more medical infrastructure. So, we had 155 oxygen supply pipe lines in the beginning for beds, besides oxygen cylinders. We expanded it gradually to 1,000, to meet the 2,000-bed requirements. Also, we now know at least something about this virus and its behaviour." he told PTI. As one year gets over since the outbreak of the pandemic, while deaths have reduced significantly, daily cases have shown an upsurge in the last few days. Delhi recorded 243 new COVID-19 cases on Saturday, while three fresh fatalities pushed the death toll to 10,909, according to data shared by the city health department. This was the fourth successive day when daily cases count have stood at the 200-mark or beyond.

Delhi had recorded 94 fresh COVID-19 cases on February 16, the lowest in over nine months. Doctors on Friday warned that the numbers could go up in the coming months. While the vaccination drive which started on January 16 is currently underway, Kumar urged people to continue to wear masks and adhere to safety norms as the vaccine can only to cut the transmission of the virus. Asked what was the most memorable moment of this one year gone by, he said, "Entire period will stay with us in our memories, but feted by the government with floral showers from helicopters really touched our heart."

### Tikait asks farmers to keep tractors ready



A sadhu meditates during farmers' protest against new farm laws, at Ghazipur border, in New Delhi on Sunday

A mid the ongoing protest against the new farm laws, Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) leader Rakesh Tikait on Sunday asked the farmers to keep their tractors ready stating that they may have to reach the national capital any-

"This is my appeal to farmers that they should continue to work in their fields and also keep their tractors ready with their tanks full of oil as they may have to come to Delhi anytime," he told reporters in Shamli.

He alleged that the Centre formulated the new farm laws without the consent of the farmers and demanded the government to take back

the laws. "You formulate laws without asking us, and then ask us to point out the shortcomings. When the entire laws are black then they should be taken back. They (Centre) want to lock grains inside a locker, want to do business on hunger in the country, then that will not happen," the farmer leader said.

"It is necessary to hold mahapanchayats across the country because this is the problem of the entire nation. Dharna will also continue alongside these panchayats. As of now, we have planned programs till March 24. We will travel across the country," Tikait

He also asserted that the 'dharna' will continue as the government has not agreed with the farmers' demands.

#### **SAMANTHA AKKINENI** @SAMANTHAPRABHU2

Presenting the dance song of the season! @Sai\_Pallavi92 you are mesmerising #SarangaDariya @pawanch19 @iammangli #LoveStory @chay\_akkineni @sekharkammula @SVCLLP @AsianSuniel @adityamusic @NiharikaGajula



### FROM RJ TO ARTIST

### Pragya, a city-based artist, explores various forms of art works including calligraphy through her instagram page

ragya Mishra has been drawing and painting since childhood but never thought of doing it professionally.

She chooses to be a Radio Jockey worked with different Radio Stations for around 2.5 years. However, later she decided not to work under someone and get self employed and that was when she switched the profession of artists.

Pragya shares, "I started my page in mid 2019 and it is all about art, you can find different forms of artworks on my page as I love to explore with different mediums. On my page, you can find calligraphy, acrylics, oil paintings, watercolor and inks and as I love different forms of art and mediums a lot that's the reason I named it as palette\_pragya. Now I do conduct art workshops as well as I sell my paintings. I like both of my professions but I love working independently that's why I'm a full time artist now."

Initially she didn't thought of a separate account for her art and felt like her existing account would be enough but it was not for sure because Radio jockey and artist are totally different professions

She adds, "I made this account and it really helped me to promote my workshops and artworks and I think I got more exposure because of my account only. For an artist its art account is like it's profile so that people can have an idea of their work. So I feel like it's really important these days. Things are a little easy with social media.'

Pragya shares that when she was a Radio jockey, she used to



explore whenever she could and art was something really close

She adds, "I once attended one

an idea is easy but applying it can be really difficult for a budding artists who's not having any contacts also. She then collaborated with different venues which were already famous and they helped her getting people in her workshop, and she slowly started do-

ing it independently. Pragya says that there are always challenges when you are self employed you can never be ignorant as you never know what's going to happen next. Sometimes you may get so many people in your workshop or sometimes not even a single one. So, keep going is the only mantra which she has been following and also helped her to grow..

"I do take very rare orders in which I feel like I'm interested because as an artist you are very specific about what you love to do so you can do anything or everything according to people as you love to be independent with your thoughts and how to convey it. So I don't take a lot many orders but if in case I feel like I'll enjoy it then I don't even charge a

lot for it and if someone pleases a lot then I have to do it going out of my way and then of course I charge more. Pandemic did impact me some-

what as I was not sure when I'll be able to teach living again. But I kept on doing online workshops so that helped me to not to think a lot but still we all know offline workshop is more satisfying I think in any field it's same. I don't have very big plans but still I would love to have my own art studio where I can conduct more and more workshops and I can encourage more people to try out art as it gives you peace which is very costly these days," ends the self-learned artist.



### Dev DD2's shoot was challenging: Rumana Molla

plays the role of Radha in Dev DD 2, says that it was challenging to shoot for the series as the shoot did not happen in one go. There was a break in the shoot due to the lockdown and other circumstances and it got tough to maintain continuity, says the actress.

"I had a blast with the cast and I am glad I got to know some wonderful people. But was also challenging because the shoot didn't happen in one go due to various circumstances. We shot

we reshot some portions after some time, but then again, the shoot was halted due to the lockdown. Reprising the same character also means maintaining the same look and that was the most difficult part," says Rumana.

The actress is a huge fan of her character and says that she has always been a fan of the values that Radha has. "I love the character, who she is and what she stands for. She's a good example to follow. She's strong, independent, accomplished but she's willing to drop everything in a heartbeat for the person she loves," says the actress, who has also been seen in the web film Bawri Chhori.

Meanwhile, Rumana says that any project on any medium comes with its own set of challenges. "I don't think there's anything challenging as such about a particular medium. But I think what can make a project challenging is the part, the lack of time, sometimes circumstances, the writing... various factors!" she says.

### Fashion and art are different, but lines can blur at times: Sanjay Garg

why I can't do this as it could

have been a good way of spread-

ing my knowledge of art but seri-

In her first workshop nobody

turned up and that was really

heartbreaking her and that's

when she realised that thinking

ously it was not that easy."

PUJA GUPTA

ashion and art are different, though at times the line can blur, feels fashion designer Sanjay Garg.

He shares, "Audiences - Indian or not don't need to be spoken down to. We are all audiences throughout the day, and I certainly think that provocations of thought and emotion are important to connect with."

The designer recently launched his latest Spring/Summer 2021 collection titled 'Other' through a campaign released on Instagram. Sharing about the concept, he shares, "Other is what lies within - it is all

**LATEST SPRING/SUMMER 2021 COLLECTION 'OTHER**'

the things we are, everything that makes us. The styling of the collection always speaks to the larger campaign narrative. Equally important is the audience to recognize the garments and relate with them in a wearable way. We were careful to bal-

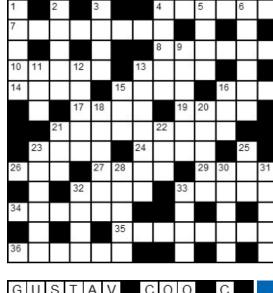
ance both within the images. The collection is essentially a capsule of digitally printed floral for summer. The cornerstone of the textiles and silhouettes are defined in vivid, acidic colors of digi-

THE DESIGNED SDEAKS ABOUT HIS tally printed sarees to garments, in organza and silk.

> He adds, "As we were editing, we knew these images would have a varying degree of response, and the digital audience has reaffirmed that. Overall, we are glad that the audience is being vocal about their love, or dislike, of the campaign."

However, the new campaign has seen a major shift from what Garg usually does. Sharing about how he is defining this new campaign to his audience, he shares, "We are not concerned with defining anything for our audience - they are independent minds whose judgment has always been a pleasure to engage with."





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#### Across

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- Italian composer -
- "gripes hi" anagram (8)
- Musician wind section
- player? (6)
- 10 Twilight (5)
- 13 Blemish (4) 14 Clothing (4)
- 15 Poker holding (4)
- 16 Hours, in short (3)
- 17 Drag (4)
- 19 Cooking rod (4) 21 Architect of glasnost
- and perestroika (9)
- 23 Young salmon (4) 24 Eccentric persons (4)
- 26 Joule fraction (3)
- 27 Formerly (4)
- 29 Works of art (4)
- 32 Small and sweet (4)
- 33 Test ore (5) 34 Umbrian town (6)
- 35 Language spoken in Surat and Ahmedabad
- 36 Pain in side (6)

#### **Down**

1 Confederate Civil War

**CROSSWORD** 

- general (5) 2 American Fur Company
- founder (5)
- Motion picture (4)
- Garlicky mayonnaise (5)
- Medium pace (4) 6 Put in (6)
- 9 Russian soup (6) 11 A young boy (3)
- 12 Dislike intensely (5)
- 13 Equilibrium (7)
- 15 Tavern or inn (3) 16 Virus that causes AIDS
- (3) 18 Darts (6)
- 20 Mexican money (5)
- 21 Joke (3)
- 22 Hint (3) 23 Fix beforehand (6)
- 25 \_\_carte (3)
- 28 Sound of horse (5) 30 SF writer Asimov (5)
- 31 Arab state (5)
- 32 Add colour (4) 33 Trojan War hero (4)

#### **SUDOKU**

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### **NEWS ROUNDUP**

### **Lakshmi Manchu cycles** 100 km for a cause

ctress Lakshmi Manchu on Sunday completed 100 km of cycling here for a cause. She had pledged this initiative to support the differently abled for sports.

Sharing her experience, Lakshmi says, "I have always been moved by the Philosopher Marcellus Aurelius. He says, "To be tolerant to others and strict with yourself'. This is what drove me every day for the last 60 days- waking up at 5am, drawing my boundaries, setting a structure, and toiling hard every day."

The actress participated in the cause for Aditya Mehra's foundation and says that her inspiration came from various people in need.

Lakshmi, who was recently seen in Telugu web series, "Pitta Kathalu" says, "Inspired by the many who have less than me and inspiring my



community who have more than me. I'm grateful to Aditya for putting this ride together."

The actress had earlier shared her reasons for taking up the cause. She said, "My heart again went out to these people, who have a limb or something missing from their lives because of they weren't born like this, they had an accident or they were in the front lines saving our country and they willingly gave up a part of their body for the betterment of us or an accident took it away

### DJB yet to evolve a concrete plan to avoid water crisis

New Delhi

WITH no increase in supply of raw water from its sources for the last four years and a month-long closure this summer of a water channel that caters to 25 per cent of Delhi's potable water supply, the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) is facing enormous odds. Delhi is fully dependent on neighbouring states for raw water supply to cater to around four crore people in the city as it generates only around 100 MGD from groundwater resources.

According to a senior official, the DJB must provide up to 135 litres per capita per day. However, owing to shortage of raw water supply, the target could not be achieved and it provides 100 liters per capita per day on an average.

DJB member Shalabh Kumar, told IANS. "Demand of water has increased to around 1500 -1600 MGD in summer months, whereas, the DJB at present maintains water supply at around 935 MGD after recycling the raw water received from multiple sources. We are already facing a shortage of raw water. DJB has increased its capacity for recycling of raw water received but there has been no increase in raw water supply since the last three to four years. But upto 10 MGD of water consumption increases every year in Delhi. It may be that water consumption may not increase in comparison to last summer as scores of people have left the city due to



the DJB has prepared any alternate plan Covid-19, but still we do not have suffito get supply of raw water when the cient water to cater to around 4 crore people in Delhi."Replying to whether Nangal Hydel Channel decides to stop

raw water supply from March 25 to April 24, an official said, "We are in the process to convince the Bhakra Beas Management Board to postpone its plan for repair of canal for the next few months. We have also requested the Haryana government to increase raw water supply, at least during that period, so that we can avoid any major water crisis. But, we are yet to reach any concrete decision He further added that DJB has taken

some initiatives to generate raw water on its own, through recycling and other processes but those projects are at the

Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB), a central government agency, would cut off 232 million gallons per day the Ravi and Beas rivers, which is around 25 per cent of its total water supply.

DJB vice chairman Raghav Chadha had said a couple of days back that if Delhi faces 25 per cent reduced water supply, then several national and international institutions of importance will also suffer from a water crisis. This includes the Rashtrapati Bhavan, the residence of the Prime Minister, the Supreme Court of India, the High Court of Delhi, National Green Tribunal and the embassies.

However, a senior official in DJB said NDMC and Delhi Cantonment are bulk users of water and they may not get affected as compared to residential or any other areas.

#### **EYE ON 2022 ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS**

### **UP: Bhim Army inches** closer to SP-RLD alliance

LUCKNOW

THE ongoing farmers' agitation and the changing political scenario in western Uttar Pradesh are now throwing up new political combinations, ahead of the 2022 Assembly election.

The Samajwadi Party and the Rashtriya Lok Dal alliance in the region is likely to be joined by the emerging Bhim Army's political wing - Azad Samaj Party.

According to highly placed sources, channels of communication have been opened between Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav and Bhim Army chief Chandra Shekhar.

"The two leaders have spoken to each other thrice and if all goes well, west UP may see a SP-RLD-Bhim Army combine in the 2022 Assembly elections," said a source. In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, SP-RLD alliance was joined by Bahujan Samaj Party in Uttar Pradesh.

Chandra Shekhar, when asked,



**Bhim Army chief Chandra Shekhar** 

possible alliance but said that all parties must come together to defeat the BJP which has caused irreparable damage to the state and its people, particularly weaker sections.

A senior Bhim Army functionary, meanwhile, said that in the present situation in western

"The best thing is that Bhim Army and RLD are not in the race for the chief minister's post. Alliances break only when there are more than one claimants for the top post," he said. Chandra

UP, the SP-RLD-Bhim Army al-

liance could prove to be a win-

ning combination.

Shekhar told reporters that his first priority was to contest the upcoming panchayat elections under his own banner. "We will build up our organisation till the booth level in the panchayat elections and then decide our future course of action," he said. Political analysts feel that the SP-RLD-Bhim Army combine could bring Muslims, Jats and Dalits on a single platform and this could upset the BJP's apple cart in region.

For the Samajwadi Party, this could be the much-needed shot in the arm.

Akhilesh has also been looking for a formidable ally for the Assembly polls after the BSP walked out on him last year and Bhim Army fits the bill.

The icing on the cake, meanwhile, is the sudden resurgence of the Rashtriya Lok Dal which has been catapulted to the political centre stage in western UP during the farmers' agitation.

Any alliance which has RLD in it, is bound to start with a major

#### **MCD** bypolls amid Covid



AAP members at a polling station, during by-polls in five wards of Kalyanpuri area in New Delhi on

### Nearly 43% voter turnout

New Delhi

A turnout of about 42 per cent was recorded in the first eight hours of voting for the bypolls to five municipal wards in Delhi on Sunday, the first electoral exercise being conducted in the national capital amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The results of these bye-elections are likely to have an impact on the big-ticket 2022 Delhi civic polls. Polling began at 7:30 am amid tight security arrangements. By 3:30 pm, the overall turnout across the five wards was 42.91 per cent, with Kalyanpuri ward recording the maximum 50.56 per cent, as per the data shared by a senior official of the State Election Commission in Delhi.

In Kalyanpui ward in east Delhi, two of the seven polling locations are in "critical" category. A total of 16

polling locations out of the total 44 have been kept in this category, as per official data. According to the State Election Commission, around 2.42 lakh people are eligible to cast their votes in two wards under the North Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC) and three wards under the East Delhi Municipal Corporation (EDMC). The main contenders are the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), the BJP and the Congress. All of them have expressed confidence that they will emerge victorious in the bypolls, being held under strict COVID protocols. The municipal wards where polling is underway are Rohini-C. Shalimar Bagh (North), Trilokpuri, Kalyanpuri and Chauhan Banger. While Shalimar Bagh (North) is reserved for women, Trilokpuri and Kalvanpuri are reserved for the Scheduled Caste (SC) category, according to the poll body.

### **NSA** invoked

accused BAHRAICH: A man accused of abduction and murder of a 12-year-old boy in Bahraich in October last year, has now been booked

against murder

rity Act (NSA). Under the NSA, a person can be detained for up to 12 months without a charge. A person can be held for 10 days without being told of

under the National Secu-

the charges against them. The accused, Hasan Mohammed, had kidnapped a 12-year-old boy for ransom, murdered him and dumped his body in Shravasti district. Superintendent of Police, Bahraich, Vipin Mishra, said that NSA was invoked on Saturday against the accused following the approval of the district magistrate.

He said that the police had recorded statements of eye-witnesses and gathered evidence on the role of the accused, who was arrested along with his son, Kalim, 48 hours after the body was

"We filed the charge sheet on November 22 last year and collated forensic details a few weeks back," said Mishra.

Kalim was selling 'biryani' in Mumbai, but was forced to return to his Bahraich home after the Covid-triggered lockdown came into force.

"He tried to revive his business in his village, but failed. He was in heavy debt and then Kalim planned, with his father, Hasan, to kidnap a 12-year-old boy for ransom," the officer

said. On October 29. Maiholi police received a complaint about a 12-year-old boy of a contractor who had gone missing.

A case of kidnapping was registered, but his body was found the next day.

### SI-rank cops to get time-bound promotion in Har

HARYANA Director General of Police (DGP) Manoj Yadava on Sunday announced that the Sub-

Inspector's (SI) rank police officers will now get time-bound promotion once they become eligible for

Yadava said that the parameters have been set to conduct the Departmental Promotion Committee meeting once in a year in which names of all eligible Sub-Inspectors would be considered for promotion. After recommendation, their promotion order would be issued from the month they be-

He said earlier the committee meeting could not be held every year regularly. "Under the new system, a total of 184 Sub-In-

> spectors were promoted in 2020. These include 116 women officers," Yadava added. "In addition, we are

also expediting the process of carrying out promotions of all categories of posts at all levels.

To improve the police-public ratio, the DGP said the police is all set to add more than 10 per cent staff to its total strength this year. The process to recruit 7,818 police personnel has be-

### **SEERS DEMAND CLEAN WATER**

### 'Won't participate in *shahi snan* in Yamuna'



Ayodhya

UNDERLINING the Yamuna's acute water pollution, three prominent Hindu seers of the country vowed not to take another bath on other shahi snan' days during the ongoing Vrindavan Kumbh near here unless the river water is clean.

The declaration to boycott the shahi snan in the river on three remaining auspicious days --March 9, 13 and 25 -- and thereafter during subsequent Kumbh

fairs was made by the chief of the Ayodhya-based Maha Nirvani Akhara, Mahant Dharm Das.

Mahant Dharam Das made the declaration in presence of the chiefs of two other Vaishnavi akharas -- Maha Nirmohi and Maha Digambar akharas.

"In the next 'shahi snan', we would take the holy dip in the Yamuna, only if the water is clean,' Mahant Dharm Das said, with the chiefs of two other prominent akharas nodding in agreement.

The Mathura district administration had promised to arrange for clean water in the river at its Devraha Ghat during the Vrindaban Kumbh by discharging additional water from the Ganga but nothing appears to have been

**Penal action against** 

Kumbh mela in Haridwar, the Uttarakhand government has issued standard operating procedures making it mandatory for devotees to produce a negative report of RT-PCR test conducted not earlier than 72 hours of arrival and warning of penal action against violators of COVID-19 standard operating procedures (SOPs). Based on the

done, he said.

Mahant Dharam Das made the critical remark on the pollution in the Yamuna after taking a holy dip along with the two other seers at the Devraha Ghat of the

The three seers earlier led a

Ahead of the violators of Covid SOPs by the Ministry of Welfare, the SOP also makes it compulsory for devotees to bring a medical fitness certificate and an e-pass

> istering on the Kumbh Mela web portal, Chief Secretary Om Prakash said. The Kumbh Mela is likely to begin on April 1 and will go on only for 28

or e-permit issued to them after reg-

procession of saints to the river bank for 'shahi snan' during which they were showered with flower petals all along the route of the procession, said Nagendra Pratap, a government official deputed to supervise arrangements for the Vrindavan Kumbh fair.

### Gurugram condominium declared Covid containment zone

**G**URUGRAM

AN upscale condominium in Gurugram's Sector-67 has been declared a containment zone after 20 cases of Covid-19 infection were detected there, a health official here said on Sunday. The condominium was de-

clared a Covid-prone zone on Thursday. It is reported that the residents in the condominium were infected after having attended a party at a restaurant earlier this February. According to information, the party took place on February 7

where nearly seven people,

mostly the elderly citizens, contracted the infection. Nearly 12 people had tested positive later on different days. "At present, nearly 20 Covid-19 cases were detected in the condominium. We can't comment on the source of the infection. A team of Health Department has

positive," said Virender Yadav, Gurugram Civil Surgeon. "So far we have collected more

conducted contact tracing of

those who had tested Covid-19



than 780 samples from the condominium. We have directed the residents to strictly follow the Covid-19 norms. Jitender Kumar, Joint Commissioner of the Municipal Corporation of Gurugram (MCG), and Raman Yadav, MCG Executive Engineer, have been appointed as the Cluster incharge and Incident Commander, respectively, for the con-

tainment zone," Yadav added. The Health Department said they have conducted a meeting with the Resident Welfare Association (RWA) of the condominium and directed them to ensure the residents are tested.

According to the residents, the main cause of the infection spread was a lack of social distancing in the society. Out of the 800 flats in the society, most of them are four-storey towers.

The district official said all necessary steps have been taken and movement of people has been restricted in the containment zones. The curb would be lifted if no new case is reported after 14

Gurugram has reported more than 35 cases a day since the last week of February with more than 3,000 tests conducted in a single

### No clarity by Delhi govt on free vaccination to all residents

ASHISH SRIVASTAVA

New Delhi

AS the vaccination for people aged above 45 with comorbidities and above 60 is around the corner, the enthusiastic promise of 'free vaccination to all' by the Delhi government appears a far fetched dream for the UT residents

So far, there is no clarity in the government whether or when it will provide vaccines free to the residents.

Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain while speaking to IANS said that the government "will see" about the free vaccination promise it made a month ago.

"The central government is formulating a policy and we will see what could be done," Jain

"So far, vaccinations have been provided free. The Centre is managing the vaccines' cost from our Delhi's Budget." he added, directing towards the free vaccination given to the healthcare and frontline workers under nationwide Covid vac-



cination drive which started on "We will see and will inform

you about the development in this situation," Jain stated.

Meanwhile, the national capital is witnessing a rise in cases of Covid-19 which is in line with many states and Union Territories, pushing the positivity rate to reach 0.5 which had been reduced to 0.2 per cent. However. Jain assured that the pandemic is in control.

"That decimal rise is just a

fluctuation. It cannot be called an upsurge. However, we are watchful of the trends," he told IANS.

A month ago, Raghav Chaddha, national spokesperson of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) from Rajinder Nagar constituency had told IANS that the demand to provide free vaccines was conveyed to the Centre and the Delhi government was waiting for their instructions.

"The Arvind Kejriwal govern

ment is of a firm view that the vaccines should be provided to every citizen free of cost. It is the bounden duty of every government to ensure that it is given. One should not be deprived of the vaccine if one does not have wealth. Our demands and ideas have been forwarded to the Centre and we will wait for their instructions," he had said.

Days before the country embarked on Covid immunisation drive, Kejriwal had publicly announced that his government will ensure free Covid-19 vaccines to the residents of the national capital. He had guaranteed that the AAP government would provide free Covid-19 vaccination even if the Centre fails to do so.

There are a lot of people who would not be able to afford the vaccine. I had appealed to the Centre to provide free vaccines to all the people of the country. If required and if the Centre doesn't do it, the Delhi government will provide free vaccines to all residents," Kejriwal had stated.

### Political opportunism at its best in AP

Tt is time political parties stop playing hide and seek on lacksquare important issues. The national parties always say by and large all the State units follow the same policies, programmes and strategy that are decided at the national level. We have over six national political parties. But in reality, that does not happen. They seem to have lost courage to say 'Yes, this is the decision of our national party and we stand by it'. We have seen how the State Congress leaders from Andhra region opposed bifurcation of the State while Telangana leaders were either playing safe or making excuses by telling that it should be bifurcated only after the agitation reached its peak. Apparently, both were playing to the gallery. After bifurcation, when the residuary State of Andhra Pradesh was demanding Special Category Status as promised by the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in the Rajya Sabha in response to a demand by the BJP that the period of special status should be for 10 years, the Centre had decided not to give Special

he Finance

nounced in the

budget for the

Minister

Category Status but the State BJP kept on saying that it was representing and trying to convince the Centre to rethink its decision. When it became clear that special status was a mirage and would never be given, they started saying that the Centre was very generous in announcing the special package which gives more benefits than special status. In regard to Amaravati as capital city, the State unit had supported in the Assembly. They praised the farmers for giving land under land pooling. But once there was change of government and serious friction between the TDP and the BJP, they started criticising the previous government for not completing the construction of capital city forgetting the fact that even the BJP government took over a decade to give a shape to Naya Raipur. The BJP was in power for three consecutive terms there since 2003. When the present Andhra Pradesh government came up with the proposal of three capitals, the State BJP had two different voices. One group said the BJP at Centre had no role in it and it was the decision of the State government. Another group said it was not proper to shift capital city, supported the agitation by the farmers of Amaravati capital region who had given their land under land pooling for construction of capital city. Now comes the issue of privatisation of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant. Here again the Prime Minister made it clear that the government had no business to be in business, but the State unit says they are opposed to such move and will put pressure on the Centre to rethink the decision. They also participated in some demonstrations. Why this duel policy of national parties? Why can't they be honest enough to follow the decision of the Central party leadership? Is this not opportunistic politics? Even on issues like hike in petroleum prices, the State units demand that the governments reduce the VAT percentage but when it comes to the Centre, they are silent. Union Ministers justify the hike saying that it was because of international prices of crude oil. If the government has no business to be in business, it also has no business to be a mute spectator when prices shoot up beyond a limit. It can have a large heart and forego part of the VAT or show the courage of bringing the petroleum products under GST. They are in power in 18 States and if they want, they can bring it under GST. As the Prime Minister says, they cannot take hard decisions in running PSUs, but can't it take even hard executive decisions like bringing petroleum products under GST? The Congress party which now finds fault with the BJP for everything is no different. All political parties chant same mantra, 'Paisa Mein Parmatma Hai.'

### Hail public sector bank privatisation!



coming year that two Public Sector Banks (PSBs) will be privatised. The policy of the government in the last three decades

of economic reforms was to sell a part of the shares in the Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) including PSBs to the public while retaining the controlling share in its own hands. This is known as "disinvestment." The Secretaries of the respective Ministries, and more often than not, IAS officers continued to head the management of these PSUs. In contrast, the controlling shares of a PSU are sold to a particular private buyer in "privatisation." The management is transferred to the hands of the buyer and the government interference in the affairs of the privatised company ended completely.

Privatisation of PSBs is important because the government has been investing huge amounts in them every year in the last decade to keep these banks from collapsing. This is called "capitalisation" of banks, that is, augmenting the capital to compensate for the losses incurred by them. One aspect of this investment is to bring the capital of PSBs in line with the international norms. The other aspect is that this investment covers up the losses incurred by these PSBs. More capital is required because they have incurred losses and their existing capital has been wiped off. The present policy marks a departure because the government will be able to earn monies by the privatisation of these PSBs instead of having to invest more monies to keep them afloat. It is like an owner of four cars having to invest huge amounts every year to repair a decrepit car when she could have earned money by selling it off.

The first criticism of this step is that the money earned from privatisation will be used to support the increasing consumption expenditures of the government such as paying higher salaries and dearness allowance to its employees. This criticism is only partially correct. The government is expected to obtain a revenue of Rs 20,000 crore from disinvestment in the current financial year 2010-21. The target for the coming vear 2021-22 is Rs 175,000 crore. There is an increase of Rs 155,000 crore in the revenue to be earned from this head. In tandem, the capital expenditures of the government are targeted to be increased from Rs 4,30,000 crore in 2020-21 to Rs 5,54,000 crore in 2021-22 indicating an



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government's efforts in this direction.

The second criticism of privatisation is that the government is stepping back from its responsibilities of "Welfare State." The banks were nationalised in 1971 with the idea that private banks were not serving the rural areas and the poorer sections of the society. They were nationalised so that they could be directed to open branches in the rural areas and provide loans to the priority

sectors. This objective has largely been fulfilled. PSBs are today providing services in interior areas. However, another problem has arisen. The PSBs are incurring losses due to inefficiency and corruption. And, the government is investing money to keep them afloat. The people are being taxed to raise the money for this investment. In this way, the policy of nationalisation has had a twofold effect on the people. On the one hand, the PSBs have provided services to them. On the other hand, the same people are taxed to make investment in the PSBs. On the whole, the backward areas and poorer people would not have benefitted much in my reckoning.

Truly speaking, it was not necessary

to nationalise the banks in order to provide banking services to the rural areas. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had adequate powers to direct the private banks to open branches in the specified backward areas. The government made a mistake in 1971. The private banks were nationalised instead of setting right this failure of the RBI to give suitable directions to them. In the process now these nationalised banks are incurring losses. We have fallen from the frying pan into the fire. The need today is that the RBI should strictly require the private banks to provide services in the rural areas along with privatising the

The third criticism of privatisation is that private banks indulge in giving loans to the sister concerns of their owners. This is correct. However, the same problem exists in the PSBs. They provide loans to doubtful entities at the asking of the Secretaries and the Ministers coupled with corruption by the bank officials. The Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) of PSBs have arisen in large measure due to such lending. The problem of "bad" lending, therefore, has no relation with the lender being a PSBs or a private bank. Both can equally be at fault. The solution of this problem, again, is for the RBI to vigilantly track the lending portfolios of the private banks and take proactive steps when they indulge in lending to their sister concerns or doubt about the viability of the borrowers emerge. The RBI has indeed behaved in this excellent manner in Yes Bank and other weak banks in the recent past. This proactive approach of the RBI must be strengthened.

The Finance Minister has to be congratulated that she had decided to privatise two PSBs. Knowledgeable sources indicate that two small PSBs could be privatised initially, so to say, to test the waters. The Finance Minister should move fast and take steps to privatise the major PSBs. The stock market conditions are favourable at present. The saying goes, strike when the iron is hot. Let us not forget that the efforts of the government to privatise Air India were put on the backburner, in part, because of the adverse stock market conditions. The Finance Minister must use the present buoyancy in the stock market to privatise the larger PSBs. That will provide the much-needed revenues to meet the contingencies arising out of the Covid-19 pandemic. The additional receipts from privatisation should be used to make public investments in new areas such as genetics, big data and space research. This will lay the foundations of our technological prowess of India in the coming decades.

(The writer is formerly Professor of Economics at IIM, Bengaluru)

# Covid-19 pandemic Puja Marwaha In the very first week that India entered the lockdown in March 2020 to curb the novel coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic, Prime Minister Narendra Modi called on non-government organisations (NGO) to help the government — by providing basic necessities to the underprivileged, by supplying medical and protective gear and assisting with awareness campaigns on social distancing. The NITI Aayog reached out to more than 90,000 NGOs and civil society organisations (CSO) in the first week of May, seeking assistance in delivering services to the poor as well as health and community workers. The Supreme Court, on a similar note, applauded the contribution and role played by NGOs in coming

The role of NGOs

in combating

The Supreme Court, on a similar note, applauded the contribution and role played by NGOs in coming forward to help migrant workers by providing food, water and transport during the difficult time.

Development experts believe it is

Development experts believe it is crucial to understand that it would not have been possible for the government alone to holistically address the pandemic — develop, implement and ensure that measures reached the needy, last-mile people.

To add to its reach and resources, the government needed the civil society, non-government and community organisations to spearhead its initiatives with their extensive reach and large volunteer-base embedded in the community — as the PM rightly observed.

António Guterres, the secretary-general of the United Nations, also praised civil society and grassroots organisations for the fundamental role they played in fighting COVID-19 at local levels, as he highlighted in the recent Report on the socio-economic impact of COVID-19. NGOs, according to him, bring economic and livelihood opportunities and can adapt responses to the community context.

'Impact of COVID-19 on India's non-profit organisations' — a snapshot report released by the Centre for Social Impact and Philanthropy (CSIP), Ashoka University, in June 2020 — revealed:

"Three-fourths of the interviewed NPOs were actively engaged in ongoing relief work, using their embedded presence in communities as a particular strength. This work ranged from last-mile delivery of relief material such as dry ration and sanitation kits, community awareness and sensitisation, setting up health camps and isolation facilities, rescuing stranded labour, provision of direct cash transfers, to offering rehabilitation of the distressed communities."

Voluntary Action Network India (VANI), in its recently published 'Study Report on National Policy on Voluntary Sector', observed: our awareness generation and advocacy programmes with our target communities and local government bodies, primarily through occasional home visits and mainly through phone calls and messages, in keeping with the social distancing protocols. **CRY** has been spreading awareness, distributing relief materials and advocating for the access and availability of services to the communities and children. Awarenessbuilding programmes covered topics like social-distancing, best practices related to public health and hygiene and behaviour change, sanitization, use of face masks, following government guidelines during the lockdown period and ways to protect people from community spreading of the epidemic.

"In a country like India, the voluntary sector bridges the gap between the government and the population of the country. It identifies the needs of the community and provides its support and services, even in the most untouched and marginalized areas, where the government is not able to reach."

This World NGO Day (February 27), with all humility, we celebrate achievements of the flag-bearers of sustainable development and social change. The gritty efforts of the CSOs and NGOs become all the more significant, if we keep in mind the fact that they themselves have been reeling under a huge economic stress impacted by the pandemic.

In the wake of this deadly pandemic and the lockdown induced by it, our first thoughts were about how to reach out to our children and their communities. Topmost in our minds were the remotest regions of our operational areas and urban slums, their survival, safety and their health.

Therefore, during the lockdown period, CRY's efforts, along with its partner NGOs, have been concentrated on reaching all households as far as possible, with basic health and hygiene kits for the children and their families

we also focused on our awareness generation and advocacy programmes with our target communities and local government bodies, primarily through occasional home visits and mainly through phone calls and messages, in keeping with the social distancing protocols.

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As part of the awareness programme, children created posters, wall paintings and short videos on hand washing, social distancing and wearing masks.

There is no doubt that the grit and resilience shown by the civil society crusaders against Covid-19 is paramount. Though we are yet to see the end of the pandemic, it is key that the civil society organisations collaborate with the government in a constructive and meaningful way to build back better, and enhance India's preparedness to face any threat on the development of its society and people.

(Courtesy: Down To Earth)

### **LETTERS**

#### Nirav Modi has no other go than to languish in Indian jail

FINALLY, fugitive Nirav Modi seems to be coming back to India. Two years ago, the PNB scam was the highlight of every news channel, about how a person who was a jeweller and a designer Nirav Modi made a fraud of Rs 14,000 crore (approx.) and ran away to the UK. But this is all because of corruption, system loopholes and a combination of a person's greed. As the UK provides great immunity in the name of protecting human rights, India strived to bring back many fugitives from the UK but failed. Now, the court's decision to extradite him to India is a great victory. However, he still has got many legal remedies left. I hope, once he runs out of all his options, he will live the rest of his life in Indian Jail.

Anshita Rochwani, Ujjain

#### Roads should be accident-free

It is axiomatic that the incidents of road accidents are increasing at an alarming rate. Many valuable lives are lost in these mishaps. Both the government and the public are equally responsible for these tragedies. Negligence on the part of the government and lack of foresight on the part of the public are the formidable reasons. Governments should widen roads wherever narrow. Speed-breakers should be painted with radium colour to make them more conspicuous especially during night times. Those indulge in drunk and drive should be dealt with seriously. A legislation should be passed to ban vehicular traffic from midnight to early hours. This was

implemented in Tamil Nadu sometime back. Speed limits should be indicated by sign boards and the violators should be given punishment. The government has to take all measure to make the country accidents-free. The public also are equally responsible for these accidents. The youth must realise that nothing is greater than life. It is only the life that cannot be restored, if lost. "Speed thrills but kills" should be understood in letter and spirit. Wearing of helmet and safety belts should not be forgotten. It should be remembered that all traffic rules are intended for safety of human life. Self-discipline is the need of the hour in the matter of traffic regulations. Many youngsters are under the illusion that nothing will happen to them if they follow examples of celluloid heroes. The police department ought to organise awareness classes from time to time. Through pamphlets also, necessary awareness can be imparted to the young minds. Let us hope good sense will prevail on the minds of the youth and save the roads from the blood stains.

E Sreerama Murty, Yellamanchili (Vizag dist), AP.

### Accident victims should get quick relief

INDIA'S largest insurance firm, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance company has knocked the door of the Supreme Court on compensation to the road accident victims. Bajaj Insurance Company filed a writ petition, on the plight of the victims who have been waiting for years together for accident compensation. The Supreme Court is exploring the creation of a nationwide online mechanism to help road accident victims and their families get compensation within a short time of the accident. It should be established as early as possible to give helping hand to the victim's family members. The Supreme Court said that, to speed up the compensation

process, including the setting up of a national grid to seamlessly disburse compensation across State to the online submission of police records and accident claims documents in motor accidents claims tribunals. Usually in many parts of the country, the police take months to even file accident report for submission before the claims tribunal. So, it should be done prescribed time only. Otherwise there is no use of Insurance rules in view of help of the family members and delay also would destroy crucial and important evidence. Hence, in these times, institutions must think on humanity grounds and do justice as laws desire. Due to pandemic, most of the general activities also turned in to technology and virtual mode. So here also strengthen the legal activities done in active mode to provide compensation as early. In general days also must provide quick relief to the ac-

*A Bruhathi*, Hanamkonda, Warangal Urban

### Sharmila's political dreams in TS not viable

In view of old experiences, it is not advisable for Y S. Sharmila to start a new political party in Telangana, which may hardly fetch Rayalaseema voters settled in Telangana. Though she was born in Hyderabad, she is the daughter of legendary Rayalaseema leader Y S Rajasekhara Reddy. Sharmila may start seva kendras for women in AP on voluntary basis so that she could solve women's problems and then think about the political entry in future. Padayatras for women's sake should be the immediate action that Y S Sharmila take.

V R K Valmeeky, Kukatpally, Hyderabad

thehansreader@gmail.com

### **IT exports could have** been higher, feels KTR

The IT and Industries Minister recalled that in 2013-14, the IT exports from then undivided Andhra Pradesh were only ₹57,258 crore. "The State recorded IT exports of ₹1,28,807 crore, an increase of 17.93% over 2018-19

HANS NEWS SERVICE HYDERABAD

WITH the information technology exports from Telangana likely to grow at seven per cent to cross Rs 1.40 lakh crore during 2020-21, Information Technology Minister K T Rama Rao on Sunday said the growth rate would have been much higher if the Centre had not scrapped the ITIR (Information Technology and Investment Region) project.

The Minister said he was delighted that projected Telangana IT export numbers show terrific growth, at a much higher rate than national average. He said despite numerous personal requests to the Prime Minister and Union IT Minister, the ITIR has been scrapped for reasons unknown. "Telangana government had submitted Detailed Project Report and IT Cluster details but unfortunately neither ITIR has



taken forward nor has there been an alternate progressive policy. According to

Nasscom, the national growth rate during the same period is estimated to be just 1.9 per cent," he added.

KTR recalled that in 2013-14, the IT exports then undivided Andhra Pradesh were only Rs 57,258 crore. "The State

recorded IT exports of Rs 1,28,807 crore, an increase of 17.93 per cent over 2018-19. The growth rate was more than double the national average of 8.09 per cent and more than twoand-a-half times the rest of the nation's average of 6.92 per cent," he said

#### 'Auto bandh' on March 15 called for

HYDERGUDA

TELANGANA Auto Drivers Joint Action Committee has given one-day 'Auto bandh' call on March, 15 demanding corruption-free RTA offices and demanding that the government formulate necessary guidelines to stop private auto financiers' 'zulum and harassment' among other things. The JAC is demanding immediate transfer of Hyderabad East Zone and West Zone corrupt RTOs Subash Reddy and CP Venkateshwar Rao respectively without further delay.

Mohd Amanullah Khan, the JAC convenor, pointed out that if the top to bottom corruption is to be routed out the RTA corrupt staff should be nick-named as "Corrupt-Mad Dog, Pick Pocket" and "we do not take bribes" written boards should be erected in every RTA office without fail and corruption should be put down with an iron hand.

The other demands of the auto drivers include: the central government should withdraw the steep rise in the petroleum products including LPG & CNG rates; the dieselrun OLA, Uber cabs causing pollution should be banned from plying on the city roads; stern action against the OLA Uber cabs looting the passengers in the name of 'surge-pricing;' like AP State the Telangana state should also provide Rs 10,000 to every auto annually and help the poor au-



Visitors thronging Charminar area, cocking a snook at Covid safety norms on Sunday.

Photo: Adula Krishna

### Kavitha to help kin of loan app fraud victim



RESPONDING to media reports of a man who died by suicide after falling prey to a financial fraud on a Chinese loan app, MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha on Sunday reached out to the family of the victim and promised to support the education of her three daughters.

The former MP from Nizamabad offered her condolences to the daughters and wife of the victim, Sarita, and shared that she would be supporting the education of all the daughters till they graduate and get a job. She also promised Saritha a job at a prestigious institution and has asked them to contact her in case of

any distress. "The Chinese loan app scam that took the precious life of Chandramohan had left a deep void in the life of Saritha and their daughters. Today, I met the family and extended my support to them," Kavitha

The victim of the incident, Chandramohan, died by suicide earlier this month after falling prey to fraud on a Chinese loan app. Kalvakuntla Kavitha, daughter of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, has been a vocal advocate and driver of women empowerment. In the past, she has been known for launching several free meal centres across Telangana and reaching out to the needy.

#### **MUNICIPAL POLLS**

### Candidature to be reconsidered in case of forcible withdrawals

- SEC to issue orders in this regard today
- N Ramesh Kumar says Collectors and SPs are working in coordination to ensure smooth conduct of polls to urban local bodies
- Hopes that the voting percentage will increase as the polls will be held in a free and
- Covid-19 guidelines to be followed at the polling
- Points out that more than 80% polling was recorded in panchayat elections

VIJAYAWADA

RECALLING that the State Elec-

tion Commission had earlier is-

sued instructions that the ward

and village volunteers should not

indulge in any political activity

such as canvassing or indulging

in any manner in elections to lo-

cal bodies, State Election Com-

missioner N Ramesh Kumar re-

iterated in a statement here on

Sunday that strict neutrality gov-

erns all categories or govern-

ment servants and the volun-

It may be recalled that the SEC

teers are no exception.



HANS NEWS SERVICE **A**MARAVATI

THE State Election Commissioner (SEC) N Ramesh Kumar said that that the SEC will take a decision on reconsidering the candidature of those who are forced to withdraw their nominations for the municipal polls in the past on benefit of doubt.

He said that the SEC for the first time is taking a decision on reconsid-

Ward volunteers told not to

indulge in political activity

the State and poll is scheduled on

The Commission while inter-

acting with representatives of

recognised and registered polit-

ical parties with reserved sym-

bols at the regional conferences

received serious complaints as in

the case of Gram Panchayat elec-

tions concerning ward volun-

teers. It has been decided that

sterner measures are necessary

to ensure free and fair polls by

completely isolating the ward

volunteers from the municipal

election process. The Commis-

sion accordingly directed the

Collectors and District Election

Authorities that ward volunteers

shall be completely kept away

from poll process and they shall

March 10.

N Sanjay in Vijayawada on Sunday ering candidatures by using its powers. He said the SEC will issue neces-

State Election

Commissioner

N Ramesh Kumar

addressing a press

with Additional DGP

conference along

sary orders by Monday. Speaking to mediapersons here on Sunday, the State Election Commissioner said that officials including Collectors and Superintendents of Police are working in coordination for smooth conduct of municipal elections. Praising the services of officials, the SEC expressed hope that poll percentage will definitely in-

not be entrusted with distribu-

slips to the voters.

tion of authenticated photo voter

The officials were also in-

structed that ward volunteers

shall be grounded and their

movements are to be closely

monitored and their phones shall

be kept in safe custody as the

database of beneficiaries is likely

The Commission views the

participation of ward volunteers

in the election process either di-

rectly or indirectly in support of

a candidate or a political party is

a serious violation of Model Code

of Conduct and any evidence in

deviation of the Commission's

'Direction' shall result in their

summary discharge.

to be leveraged and misused.

crease in municipal polls as the elections will be conducted in a free and fair manner. He said more than 80 per cent polling was registered in panchayat polls.

The State Election Commissioner said some of the candidatures rejected in scrutiny and those who want to file nomination afresh also appealed to SEC to consider their plea to give a chance. He said that the SEC has no such power to reconsider their candidature.

The SEC said that no political campaign will be allowed within a range of 100 metres from polling stations. He said the polling will be conducted following the Covid guidelines. Referring to money distribution to voters in elections, the he said that so far 100 teams were set up to prevent distribution of money to voters and stressed the need for increasing the number of teams.

School Edn Dept

denies declaring

holidays for schools HANS NEWS SERVICE VIJAYAWADA

SHARPLY reacting to the false and fake news spread in the social media that holidays are announced for all schools and colleges in the State from March 1 to May 4 due to increasing coronavirus cases in the State, Director of School Education V Chinaveerabhadrudu in a statement here on Sunday stated that the government has not declared any holidays to the schools regarding corona cases in the State. He recalled that the government issued orders for reopening of schools and colleges in a graded manner. Accordingly, schools are running from classes 1

The director said that the messages being circulated in the social media platforms are false and fake. He warned that necessary action would be taken against the persons who spread such false and fake news.

#### **Ruling party leaders harassing TDP activists, alleges Naidu**

HANS NEWS SERVICE **A**MARAVATI

TDP national president N Chandrababu Naidu has alleged that the YSR Congress party has been harassing TDP leaders and indulging in destroying the properties of TDP men as the ruling party is unable to face the TDP in

> Place of publication Periodicity of its publication Printer's name

Whether citizen of India (If foreigner, state the country

Publisher' name whether citizen of India

Whether citizen of India

Name and address of

individuals who own the newspaper

and partners or shareholders holding more than one percent of the

(If foreigner, state the country of origin)

municipal elections. In a statement here today,

the TDP supremo said that Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy has been destroying democracy by resorting to threatening and harassment of TDP leaders to prevent them from contesting elections. He condemned the removal of a 20-year-old pan

shop of Srinivasulu at Tirupati. He said that the YSRCP removed the shop of Srinivasulu, as he is contesting as corporator candidate in the municipal elections. He said by threatening the TDP leaders, the YSRCP was forcing the TDP men to join the YSR Congress party at Palasa in Srikakulam district.

#### FORM - IV

- Kurada Hanumanta Rao
- Plot No.4, Near Loyola Model School, Hayathnagar, R.R.Dist-Hyderabad, Telangana-501505

- : Plot No.4, Near Loyola Model School, Hayathnagar, R.R.Dist-Hyderabad, Telangana-501505
- : V.RAMU SARMA
- : B-22. Steel & Mines Complex, Srinagar Colony, Hyderabad, Telangana-500073
- : 1) Kapil Consultancy Services Pvt Ltd 3-1-631, Vajayaraghunandan Nagar, Karimnagar, Telangana – 505 001.
- 2) Indur Avenues and Foods Private Limited H.No.11-1-1941/2, Kanteswar Road, Gangsthan, Nizamabad, Telangana -503 002. 3) Indur Developers and Agencies Pvt Ltd
- 40-14-3/1, Chandramoulipu Near Benz Circle, Labbipet, Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh - 520 010. 4) Kapil Foods and Structures Pvt Ltd
- H.No.2-5-760, Subedari, Opp: District Collectors Office, Hanamkonda, Warangal, Telangana-506 001. 5) Kapil Infra Avenues Pvt. Ltd
- 40-14-3/1, Chandramoulipuram, Near Benz Circle, Labbipet, Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh 520 010.
- 6) Kausalya Management Services and Structures Pvt. Ltd 3-1-188, CVRN Nagar, Karimnagar, Telangana -505 001
- 7) Nalgonda Realtors Pvt. Ltd Plot No.2, Madhupala Enclave, Akbar Road, Secunderabad. Telangana – 500 009.
- 8) Preethi Foods and Villas Pvt. Ltd H.No.7-3-284, Khammam, Telangana - 507 002.
- Kausalya Agro Farms and Developers Pvt Ltd. H.No.16-31, 9th Phase Main Road, KPHB, Hyderabad, Telangana 500 072.

10) Kausalya Avenues Pvt Ltd

- 3-1-630, Vajayaraghunandan Nagar, Karimnagar, Telangana 505 001. 11) Ujwala Publications and Developers Pvt Ltd
- H.No.2-5-760, Opp: Collector's Office, Subedari, Hanamkonda, Telangana - 506 001.
- 12) Kapil Chits ( Hyderabad ) Pvt.Ltd, Plot No.51, Main Road, 9th Phase, KPHB Colony, Kukatpally, Hyderabad, Telangana -500 072 13) Kapil Chits (Kakatiya) Pvt Ltd
- H.No.2-5-760, Opp: Collector's Office, Subedari, Hanamkonda, Telangana 506 001.
- 40-14-3/1, Chandramoulipuram, Near Benz Circle,
- Labbipet, Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh 520 010
- Dakshin Infrastructures Pvt. Ltd, Survey No.115/1, IT Park, Nanakramguda, Gachibowli Hyderabad. Telangana - 500 032.
- 16) Kausalya Shelters Pvt. Ltd 3-1-175, Vajayaraghunandan Nagar, Karimnagar, Telangana – 505 001

18) Kapil Health Club Pvt. Ltd.

- 17) Ramya Constructions limited,
- 40-14-3/1, Chandramoulipuram, Near Benz Circle, Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh 520 010.

Plot No., Madhupala Enclave, Akbar Road, Old Bowenpally,

Secunderabad, Telangana

I, K.Hanumanta Rao hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Sd/- K. Hanumanta Rao

March 1st 2021

issued notifications for 12 municipal corporations and 75 municipalities and nagar panchayats in

### Exam burden issue reaches NHRC, child panel in Delhi

#### Due to lockdown, many govt school students have also been deprived of online study due to lack of resources

New Delhi

AFTER the Delhi government's decision not to hold an examination for the students from Class 3 to 8 studying in its schools, parents of the children studying in the private schools are feeling discriminated as the rule does not apply for the private schools.

Parents are calling it discriminatory and Online exams are also being sought for Class 9 and 11. The controversy related to the examination has now reached to institutions like the National Human Rights Commission and the National

Commission for Protection of Child

According to the Directorate of Education, Government of Delhi, students studying in classes 3 to 8 will not have to take the annual examinations. The directorate said that this decision will be applicable to government and governmentaided schools. This decision of the Delhi government is not acceptable to the millions of parents whose children study in private schools.

Parents have alleged discrimination, saying that whether government or private, all schools are closed for children studying in small classes for almost a year. President of Delhi Parents Association Aparajita Gautam said, "We have written a letter to the Governor and the Chief Minister. We have raised the issue that the education department has addressed the

concern of student studying in government school while children of private schools have been ignored."

Gautam said, "Till now we were appealing for online exams of 9th and 11th class. The Education Department did not



NHRC and National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, an appeal has been made to conduct online exams of Class 9th and 11th

in private schools of Delhi." At the same time, President of All India Parents Association, Ashok Aggarwal said, "We welcome the decision of the

Delhi government but it needs further improvement. In addition to the students up to the eighth standard, the government should adopt the same policy for the students of class 9th and 11th. Due to Corona, all the students of Delhi who are studying in small classes are not able to go to school.

In this case, this rule should be applied to private school students also." In favour of the decision taken by the Delhi government, educationist K.C. Kandpal said, "Due to the lockdown, many government school students have also been deprived of online education due to lack of resources. However, students studying in private schools have also been affected. In such a situation, if the government wants, students studying in private schools can also be given relief.

According to Vaibhavi, a student of Class 11. studying in a private school in Delhi, said, "There is no regular education in schools. We have studied online for the whole year. In such a situation, examinations could also be conducted online, but this decision has not been implemented. Now the offline examination has also been announced from next



**Supporters** during a joint rally of Left, Congress and Indian Secular Front (ISF), ahead of West Bengal assembly

### 'MAMATA, BJP PACT AFTER POLLS'

### TMC has to be defeated to stop communal bandwagon of RSS-BJP: Yechury **CPM wonders how Home Minister Shah's son became the secy of BCCI**

KOLKATA

CPM General Secretary Sitaram Yechury on Sunday said that the Trinamool Congress has to be defeated first to stop the communal bandwagon of the RSS-BJP, and claimed that the TMC might rejoin the NDA to form the government in West Bengal in case of a hung assembly.

Terming the ongoing political tussle between the TMC and the BJP as a "mock fight", Yechury alleged that the saffron party is using money from the PM CARES fund, set up to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, to "buy" leaders during the time of elections. "The farmers at the Singhu border in Delhi are fighting against the

Modi hails Tamil, regrets he couldn't learn it

Terming the world's oldest language Tamil, as beautiful and popular, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said that he regrets not being able to learn the language.

In 'Mann Ki Baat', one listener Aparna Reddy asked Modi if there was something he missed out on during these long years as CM and PM. "I thought about the question and felt that -- it is a regret of sorts that I could not learn the world's oldest language Tamil. It is a beautiful language and popular across the world. Many people told me about the qualities of Tamil literature and the depths of Tamil poetry," the prime minister said.

(Narendra) Modi government's anti-people policies. If farmers who provide us with food can put up such a gallant fight, we too can do it here," he said.

"This grand alliance of the Left and the secular forces will fight to defeat the cor $rupt\,TMC\,government\,and\,the\,BJP\,in\,the$ state, will fight for a better Bengal, Yechury said while addressing a joint rally at the Brigade Parade Ground in Kolkata ahead of the assembly election in West

The CPM leader alleged that the Mamata Banerjee administration is doing the same to youths what the Narendra Modi government is doing against the farmers. "Many people ask me what we would do in case of a hung assembly. I tell them to direct their question to the TMC as they are in the best position to answer it.

Criticising the BJP for attacking several other political parties, especially the Congress, over the issue of dynasty politics, Yechury wondered how Union Home Minister Amit Shah's son became the secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India

### Maha Min linked to woman's death resigns

#### **BJP WELCOMES DECISION**

 $\mathbf{M}$ UMBAI

MAHARASHTRA Minister Sanjay Rathod, facing flak from the opposition BJP after being linked to a woman's death, on Sunday resigned

from the state cabinet. Rathod made the announcement after submitting his resignation to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, who is also the president of his Shiv Sena party. "There has been

a lot of dirty politics over the issue of the woman's death," Rathod told reporters, adding he has quit the ministry so that the truth can come out.

Rathod, who holds the forest portfolio, was facing allegations of complicity in the death of Puja Chavan (23), a resident of Beed district, who was found dead in Pune on February 8, apparently after falling off from the building in which she lived. Talking to reporters after meeting the chief minister at his official residence Varsha, Rathod said he had resigned to facilitate a free and fair probe. "Attempts were made to tarnish my image and destroy my reputation I had built after 30 years of socialwork. I was saying that let the probe happen before taking any decision. But the opposition

threatened to budget session," Rathod said.

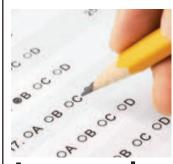
The BJP on

Sunday welcomed the resignation of Sanjay Rathod. Talking about Rathod's resignation,

state BJP chief Chandrakant Patil said, "It was due to the constant pressure of the people of Maharashtra and the workers of the BJP that the chief minister had to ultimately yield."

He said he was glad that the chief minister showed courage in removing Rathod from the cabinet. Patil said he hoped that NCP chief Sharad Pawar would also take a similar decision regarding another minister Dhananjay Munde, accused of rape by a Mumbaibased woman, who later withdrew her complaint.

**CBI identifies** 



#### **Army cancels** recruitment exam after paper leaked

New Delhi

THE Army has cancelled an examination for pan-India recruitment of general duty personnel after paper was found to have been leaked, officials said on Sun-

They further said at least three persons have been arrested in Pune so far.

"The Indian Army has zero tolerance towards corrupt practices in the recruitment process for selection of suitable candidates," an official said. Based on a proactive joint operation with local police at Pune, a case of possible leakage of question paper prepared for **Common Entrance Examination** for Recruitment of Soldiers (General Duty) was reported last night, the official added.

While further investigations are underway, it was decided to cancel the examination to ensure continuous transparency in the recruitment process.

### Rahul dubs Modi a 'formidable enemy,' vows to defeat him

CONGRESS leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday described Prime Minister Narendra Modi a "formidable enemy" who 'crushed' his opponents and vowed to send him to political oblivion by following the path of love and non-violence. When a participant wanted to know if Gandhi felt it was possible to nudge the Modi government to implement his 'good ideas'



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi drinks coconut water at the roadside during his election campaign near Alangulam in Thenkasi district on Sunday

rather than waiting to assume power which seemed 'Utopian', he said it could be done with the 'powerful' and 'valuable' support of

the people. It was important to dream big, though some of it may not come true, he said in an obvious reference to snatching the reins of power from the BJP at the Centre.

Continuing, he said, "yes we are fighting a formidable enemy (Modi). We are fighting an enemy that is dominating the money in this country. We are fighting an enemy that is crushing its opponents. But we have done this before. We have defeated a much bigger enemy (British) than this new enemy that has

Recalling the country's independence movement, he said the Britishers were much more powerful than Modi would ever be. "Who is Narendra Modi in comparison to the British empire? nobody. People of this country sent the British empire back and in the same way we will send Narendra Modi back to

Nagpur (RSS headquarters in Maharashtra)," he said.



Singh, husband of a 25-yr-old woman, who was allegedly stabbed to robbery bid. is condoled by relatives as he wails outside Babu Jagiiyan Ram Memorial Hospital in NewDelhi on

**Paramjit** 

### Woman carrying baby stabbed to death in chain snatching bid

A 25-year-old woman Simran Kaur, holding her child was stabbed to death during a robbery bid in North-West Delhi, police have said. The incident was captured by a CCTV camera in the capital's Adarsh Nagar locality. This is at least the second such incident reported from the city in the past two days. The police said the woman, identified only as Simran, was stabbed while trying to resist a snatching bid. She was coming home from a market and was holding her child when the incident occurred at around 9.30 pm on Saturday.

The CCTV footage clearly shows two women walking when one person approaches them from behind and tries to snatch a chain from one of them. On facing resistance, he stabs one of the women with a knife and leaves. A case has been filed but no arrests made till now as 10 police teams probe further. Residents of the locality have al-

in the area in recent times but the police have not intensified patrolling, ANI reported.

Simran had came to the national capital only last week to meet her elder sister who was visiting from Canada. Simran's aunt said that the 25-year-old had got married

to Pramajeet, a Patiala-based businessman, three years ago and they had a two-year-old daughter together. Anil Jindal, Simran's neighbour, said three years ago, an incident of snatching took place at the same spot where

Simran was stabbed Gurvinder Singh, a local resident, said crime in the area is increasing day by day. "Crime in our area has become routine. Thieves are highly active here. They snatch gold chains, mobiles and other valuables. Incidents of battery theft are also increasing in the locality. I locked the bat-

tery of my car with a chain, despite that it was stolen by

10 more victims of child sexual abuse by UP's junior engineer NEW DELHI

THE CBI has identified 10 more victims of alleged child sexual abuse by now-suspended Uttar Pradesh Irrigation department junior engineer Ram Bhuwan, the alleged paedophile also accused of selling the illicit acts with kids on

the dark web, officials said. Further expanding its exhaustive probe, the central probe agency recorded the statement of these 10 male victims to buttress its charges against Bhuwan who was arrested along with his wife and a suspected accomplice, they said. The person arrested from the national capital, whose identity is being kept secret by the CBI, is understood to be an important link in unravelling the mystery of the 50-year old junior engineer using the dark web to sell child sexual abuse material and making money from it, they said.

The agency team has so far identified around 35 victims and is in the process of identifying others, they said. The CBI is also working on deciphering digital evidence from recoveries made during searches at the premises of Bhuwan and his suspected accomplice, they said.

### My dream is to see India, Pak become true friends: Malala

### 'The old philosophy of borders, divisions and divide and conquer, they just don't work anymore'

THE old philosophy of having borders and divisions doesn't work anymore and the people in India and Pakistan want to live in peace. Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai said on Sunday, stressing that it is her dream to see the two countries become "good friends".

She also said that minorities need protection in every country, be it Pakistan or India, adding that the issue is not related to religion but to the "exploitation of power" and must be taken seriously. Yousafzai, a Pakistani activist for girls education who miraculously survived a bullet to the head from the militant Taliban in October

2012, said the news of internet shutdown and arrests of activists "protesting peacefully" in India is "worrying" and expressed the hope that the government will make sure that people are heard.

"You can continue to watch Pakistani dramas, we can continue to watch Bollywood movies and enjoy cricket matches," the youngest Nobel Peace Prize winner said. She was speaking on her book "I Am Malala: The Story of the Girl Who Stood Up for Education and was Shot by the Taliban" on the concluding day of the Jaipur Literature Festival (JLF) which is being held in the virtual mode. "You are Indian and I am Pakistani and we are completely fine, then why is this hatred created be-



tween us? This old philosophy of borders, divisions and divide and conquer... they just don't work anymore, as humans we all want to live in peace," she said.

thieves." Gurvinder said.

The actual enemy of India and Pakistan is "poverty, discrimination and inequality" and both countries should unite and fight them, not each other, she added. Apart from "India-Pakistan friendship", Yousufzai said she also dreams of the day when every girl would get to go to school and have access to quality education. The 23-year-old activist also raised her voice for minorities across the world and said they are at "risk" and need to be protected globally by governments and human rights organisations. "Minorities are at risk.

Minorities' rights are not given to them. Be it Hindus and Christians in Pakistan, Muslims, Dalits and other minorities in India ... Palestinians, Rohingya refugees. It is not religion, it is the exploitation of power, it is just elites vs the poor and minorities. "Minorities need protection globally from every country. They need a voice. need protection, and it is a reminder to governments, to human rights organisations to take this very seriously," she noted. During the discussion, she also applauded Indian girls and young women fighting for human rights, "speaking out" for farmers in India, climate change and protection of the minority rights, and called their work "empowering and inspiring".















#### **Dollar gains strength** amidst changing geo-political equations

DR H C UPADHYAY HYDERABAD

AMIDST rapidly changing geo-political equations where US diplomacy is seemingly scoring higher over other countries, particularly China and Russia, dollar gained further strength during the week ended Saturday. Consequently, New York gold declined and closed at \$1,734.60 (per Ounce) while silver followed the suit and closed at \$ 26.70 (per Ounce). Platinum and palladium too declined and closed at \$ 1,181 (per Ounce) and \$ 2,229 (per Ounce) respectively.



Other economic parameters remained moderate. Brent closed at \$ 64.42 (per barrel) while Crude MCX oil was quoted at Rs 4, 603 (per barrel). While Gold MCX stood at Rs 45, 767 (per 10 grms), MCX Silver closed at Rs 67, 475 (per kg), Copper MCX closed at Rs 703.50 (per kg). Sensex and Nifty 50 closed at 49099.99 and 14529.15 points. Leading foreign currencies' exchange rates were, US \$: Rs 73.60, British Pound: Rs 102.48, Euro: Rs 88.85, Singapore \$: Rs 55.24, Swiss Franc: Rs 81.02, Australian \$: Rs 56.71, Saudi Riyal: Rs 19.62, New Zealand Dollar: Rs 53.24, Kuwaiti Dinar: Rs 243.03, Omani Rial: Rs 191.10 and UAE Dirham: Rs 20.04, Japanese Yen: Rs 0.69, Hong Kong Dollar: Rs 9.49.

In local markets, standard gold (24 carats) depreciated by Rs 600 and closed at Rs 46, 580 (per 10 gms). Ornamental gold too, followed the suit and was quoted in the range of Rs 42, 600 - 42,700 on the closing day. Silver (0.999) declined by Rs 1,300 and closed at Rs 72, 500 (per kg).

### Markets will remain under pressure

Increasing bond yields, fear of rising US inflation, and concerns over 2nd wave of Covid will weigh on markets

**MARKET** 

**KHABREIN** 

CHERUKURI KUTUMBA RAO

pooked by the increasing bond vields and fear of rising inflation in the US and the concerns over a second wave of Covid cases; markets witnessed a serious correction on the last day of the week ended. The Sensex slumped 1,789.77 points or 3.52 per cent to 49,099.99, and the Nifty corrected 452.60 points or 3.02 per cent to 14,529.15 during the week. After this fall, both the benchmark indices are around 6 per cent lower from recent record high levels.

However, the broader markets outperformed frontline indices last week as the Nifty Midcap 100 index and Smallcap 100 index gained 0.65 percent and 0.87 per cent respectively. The biggest single-day FII outflow (of Rs 8,295 crore) since November 3, 2017 on February 26 triggered weakness in rupee which depreciated to Rs 73.46. Observers fear that the rise in US bond yields may force FIIs to pull out money from emerging markets like India and could also be a risk for emerging markets currencies. By and large, bond yields are inversely proportional to equity returns. When bond yields rise, equity markets tend to underperform. The Taper Tantrum of 2013 is infamous for how the sudden rise in bond yield caused equity markets to slide, as it resulted in mass selling of bonds.

At present, FY22 Nifty PE stood at 22 times resulting in an earning yield value of 4.54 (1/forward PE multiple or EPS/price). With bond yield at 6.18 per cent, BEER ratio stands at 1.36. A value above 1 suggests equities are overvalued. For this ratio to come down, either bond yields need to fall or earnings yield needs to rise. The risks to equities are that bonds offer better value than equities at current levels and/or inflation surges says a report of Morgan Stanley. It is pertinent to observe that the cryptocurrency Bitcoin slumped as much as 20 per cent this week showcasing that risk-on assets are taking a hit at the moment. Reports of India's third quarter growth at a marginal 0.7 per cent, signalling the economy's exit from the pandemic-induced recession were the only bright spot during the week ended.

Heard on the street Despite signs of an improving world economy, rising bond yields blunted stock markets momentum across the world during the week ended. Government spending and the aggressive monetary policy of Central Bank's across the world have supported the stock market during a tumultuous vear. But those two sources of stimulus are now fuelling inflation bets and sparking a bond selloff. When bond yields were at their lows, they offered investors virtually no returns or even negative returns in some countries after inflation. The lack of returns on bonds drove investors to stocks, pushing valuations to their highest point in years. Now that bond yields are rising, those richly valued stocks look less attractive. Everything is divorced from the risk in those instruments. Everything is mispriced. Markets are increasingly dominated by momentum. Expectations among some investors that inflation will climb sharply prompted concern that the Central Banks of some countries may increase interest rates sooner than previously

anticipated, which could potentially boost borrowing costs and weigh on economic growth. The Central Bank's across the world can either fight the bond market by ramping up its bond buying, or abandon its dovish policies, or do nothing and hope it goes away, he said. All options would have different ramifications for the markets and economy, and that is making life difficult for investors. This is all coming at a time when the economic picture appears to be improving. The fall didn't surprise say observers, many of whom say the correction was overdue as the market was trading at higher valuations and most of the positives were already factored in. Market participants should keep an eye on bond yields and the movement of USD/INR currency pair, which could undergo some depreciation. Equity markets could remain under pressure as the normal course of correction continues to take shape.

Futures & options sector watch Mirroring the savage sell off in the cash markets, the March series opening day witnessed sharp selling in the derivative segment. Rollovers were in line with three month averages. However, many traders say that rally during the early part of the week ended fol-

lowed by sell off on Friday is 'bull trap'. The maximum Call options OI was seen at 15,000 strike, which will act as a crucial resistance level in the March series, followed by 15.500 and 15,200 strikes, while the maximum Put options OI was seen at 14,000 strike, which will act as a crucial support level in the March series, followed by 14,500 strike.

The recent surge in the metal prices led to a rally in the index whereas the improved manufacturing scenario in China helped the indices to record gains. Use declines to buy JSW Steel, Tata Steel and SAIL. Auto stocks will be in focus as sales data for the month of February will be released on Monday.

Industry sources indicate muted two wheeler sales and mild uptick in passenger vehicle sales; and buoyant tractor and commercial vehicle sales. Buy Tata Motors, Escorts and M&M. The Finance Ministry dictat to allow private banks to participate in government business would be beneficial for the smaller private banks like IDFC First and Bandhan say industry insiders. Stock futures looking good are BPCL, HDFC, IRCTC, Navin Flouro, SAIL and Tata Chemicals. Stock futures looking weak are Bajaj Auto, L&T Finance, RBL Bank, PVR and Zee.

#### Stock picks

Hindustan Oil Exploration Company Limited is the first private company in India to enter the field of oil and gas exploration. HOEC has 10 blocks with discoveries producing or ready to be developed and 1 exploratory block in its portfolio. Gross Production stood at 7,869 boepd and Net Production stood at 3,163 boepd for FY20. Proved and Probable (P+P) reserves on working interest basis stood at 26.65 MMBOE as on FY20. Able to fund capex from inner accruals and raise funds as needed for growth. Awarded the Oil & Gas production & Development Company of the year in 2018-19 from FIPI. The competitive Advantages of the company include uniquely placed with a strong organisation and a quality asset portfolio. HOEC will take advantage of its position to deliver superior returns and value to all stakeholders, through a 5-pronged strategy, focus on discovered resources, and light asset model, and low cost operating model.

Why we are recommending the company:

- Presently Oil & Gas industry is again in upward cycle. Results of Q3 of the company reflect the buoy-
- ancy for company in coming days. The company has started produc-
- Possible exceptional gains from the new fields

tion from new fields

Ex-Chief of Cairn India is now managing the company.

Buy between Rs 90-100 for medium term (nine to twelve months) price target of Rs 160 - 200. In the event of sharp correction in the broader market, stop loss should be at Rs 75. We are looking at a risk reward ratio of 1:6.

> (The author is a stock market expert. He is former vice chairman of AP Planning Board)

### Participate in green tech through these ideas



Technological innovation has been on the forefront in disrupting multiple, rather almost all industries. It could be in the form of automation, eliminating layers (of distribution), reduction in emissions or pollutants, shrinking the time of commute or communication, etc. have changed the way businesses were carried out. While some companies have pioneered these changes, many incumbents have adopted in their models to survive and thrive.

Last week we covered about how clamour for green alternatives could be setting a super cycle in metal and commodities. As the countries meet this year again to ratify and assess the progress of Paris climate accord, the impetus for greater integration of EV into mainstream only increases the resolve. Till date. the industry has benefited from the govt. largesse at almost across the geographies including in India (at least last year's Budget provided tax incentive for purchases). Now, there has been a greater awareness among the consumers and larger public about the carbon footprint they're leaving behind.

This has resulted in the sustained

There has been a greater awareness among the consumers and larger public about the carbon footprint they're leaving behind

growth of EV in the automobile sales which is primarily driven by the changing consumer trend of reducing the fossil fuel usage and also an alarming rise of fuel prices. As the cost of ownership and maintenance

of an ICE (Internal Combustion Engine) is narrowing that of the EV, there's a visible change in the consumer pattern to buy EVs. While this is the macro trend evolving and many forecasts highlighting the shaping up of their future, how could an investor take advantage

of this trend? In the public transport system, there's been an increased reliance of ethanol blended diesel fuels, Compressed Natural Gas and even Electric buses being used extensively. The listed space is littered with options in this segment also with the likes of Indraprasta Gas and Olectra while there has been recent news of Ashok Leyland partnering with ABB to have developed the charging technology to the bus-

es in just 20 seconds. As I'd mentioned earlier, not all companies especially in the listed space related to these trends are involved in the pioneering or technological breakthroughs of this in-

dustry. But there are many companies trying to take advantage by chasing this trend and are fast adapting to it. This is evident from many of the leading auto man-

> a lead by introducing a product range that's suiting the aspiring demographic. Then there're battery manufacturing companies like Exide Industries and Amar Raja batteries are investing in the new technology of Lithium-ion (used in EV).

ufacturers like Tata

Motors, etc. taking

Similarly, auto component manufacturers and the ancillary units are different from the ICE technology where the number of parts is substantially are reduced but replaced with a different kind of architecture. Same is the case with the charging infrastructure which is completely different from the current fuel pump stations. This requires a huge real estate as unlike the current structure, fill and go is not easy for EV. Of course, there's lot of possibilities for the existing oil retailers (in terms of space) which could be doubled up as the charging points for EV.

The infrastructure isn't limited to only the EV but the source itself has to be from clean energy. Solar

energy has been the leading producer of this green source and has been ramping up ahead of the other renewable like wind and natural gas for its abundance and ease of operation. Governments across have begun to significantly increase the allocation and spurring the private sector continues to bid lower in the recent years bringing the cost of solar production towards

that of the hydel power.

Investors looking to take advantage of these developments could consider investing through Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) themed funds which largely concentrate on stocks which have positive impact on the environment (by their overall operations). greater diversity of workplace with social responsibility and exhibiting good corporate governance. Almost every fund house has been riding the bandwagon by launching newer funds on this theme. As we lack pure play stocks that are engaged in EV and green tech could explore the DSP NRNE (Natural Resources & New Energy) fund is a hybrid structure where over 70 per cent of the investment is routed to domestic equity which is into ferrous, non-ferrous metals, oil, gas and minerals while about 26 per cent of the allocation is into global energy and sustainable energy through BlackRock managers. Investors could enjoy the flavour of new tech in energy or sustainable energy equities in this fund.

(The author is a co-founder of "Wealocity", a wealth management firm and could be reached at knk@wealocity.com)

### 15,431 could be intermediate top for now

THOVITI BRAHMACHARY

Dalal Street witnessed the biggest fall in the last ten months during the previous

Monday and showed some strength during the next three days. But, geopolitical tensions and FII selling brought markets down by 3.75 per cent Friday, a black day. The Nifty fell sharply by 452.60 points last week and settled at 14,529.1. The BSE Sensex

Broader market indices, Nifty Midcap-100 and Smallcap-100, were down 0.7 per cent and 0.9 per cent respectively. The Nifty-500 index, which represents 90 per cent of the market capitalisation, declined 2.07 per cent. On the sectoral front, Nifty Metal index was up 7.6 per cent, and Energy and Realty indices advanced by 0.5 per cent each. The Nifty IT declined by 4.7 per cent while Financial Services was down by 3.9 per cent. FIIs made a net investment of Rs 18,169.79 crore last week. If the investments of Rs 30,000 crore in Bosch and MSCI buying of Rs 8,300 crore were taken out, they actually sold stocks about Rs 20.130 crore. DIIs bought Rs 280.36 crore worth of equities. For the last few weeks, I have

**Markets trading at highest valuations historically** 

week. It had opened on a negative note on

lost by 3.5 per cent.

been mentioning about historical evidence. The "Doubling Factor and the second one is historical 'Bearish Engulfing' candles occurred at a new lifetime high. Whenever these two events occurred, the market corrected by

25 per cent. 'Bearish Engulfing' got the confirmation decisively during the last week. From a high

of 15,431 on 16th February, the Nifty got corrected by 5.85 per cent. It also formed a lower swing high and low. It exactly retraced by 50 per cent of the recent swing. As soon as the Nifty doubled from March 2020 bottom, the bulls turned cautious. It also reacted from the channel resistance. The weekly channel and the daily channel supports placed at 13,800 and 14,290 levels. The prior swing low of 29th January is at 13,596. These are the important levels for near future. The 61.8 per cent retracement level of the prior upswing is at 14,297. This could be a very strong support level. The 50DMA support is at 14,444. For this week, 14,290-14,444 will act as an important zone of support. On the indicators front, the

negative divergences have shown their effect on the price. The RSI closed below the prior swing low and moving in a downward channel. It reached to historical support of the 40-44 zone. Watch whether this leading indicator will be able to take support at 37. The MACD is approaching towards the prior swing low and zero line. Though the weekly MACD still in a bullish structure, the histogram is declining and is near the zero line. If histogram moves below the zero line, Nifty may breach the 50DMA support. The deceleration in momentum definitely is a concern for now. The negative move-

ment indicator, -DMI, is above the ADX and +DMI. It also moved above the prior swing high. This structure is nothing but bearish. FII flows fuelled market boom

from March last year lows. As mentioned earlier, the dollar index and bond yields share an inverse relationship... These two are now rising, leading to fall in FII flows. Last week, barring Bosch and MSCI investment, the net flow was actually very negative. DXY and bond yields are denting the sentiment worldwide. Banking and financial services sectors which also fuelled stock market rise are now cooling off and declining very fast. The defensive IT, Pharma and FMCG sector indices turned laggards. Mid and small cap indices are showing exhaustion. We know that fundamentally; the market is trading at the historical highest valuations. The price to book value ratio is at 12 year high. Importantly, we are in January-March topping cycle. Historically, most of the market tops were achieved in the first quarter of the calendar year. If history repeats, the 15,431 could be intermediate top for now.

(The author is a financial journalist and technical analyst. He can be reached at tbcharv@gmail.com)

### DERIVATIVES OUTLOOK

DASARI SREENIVASA RAO

ndicating a lack of clear direc-**⊥** tion in the market, the resistance and support levels, as per the options data, remained at same levels for the fourth consecutive week. The highest Call OI is seen at 15.000 strike followed by 16,000 strike, 15,200 and 15,800 strike, while 14,800/ 15,000/ 15,800/ 16,000 strikes recorded reasonable addition of Call OI. Coming to the Put side. the 14,000 strike has the highest Put OI followed by 14,500 strike, 14,300 strike and 13,800 strike. Strikes such as 14,600/ 13,700/13,500/14,250 witnessed

significant build-up of Put OI. Dhirender Singh Bisht, senior research analyst (derivatives) at

### SMC Global Securities Ltd, said:

"From derivatives front, huge Call writing was observed at 14,800 strike along with Put unwinding which clearly points that bulls are now on back foot and lacks in giving any support to markets." Based on the options data and long rollover, the NSE Nifty remains in a Buy on Dips scenario and it holds value as long as it's above 14,700-14,800 and next target of 15,500 level is expected in the first half of the March derivatives series.

After witnessing volatile trading in the January F&O series, the February series recorded a lifetime high of 15,431 points in the spot market. It's a month-on-month gain of nine per cent. Rollover in the Nifty to March derivatives series was 78.25 per cent against the

points. The high rollover cost is indicating a clear long rollover in the next series. Open Interest on the Nifty rose one per cent on a series basis, indicating that along with short covering some longs were also seen in the index. "Indian markets began the March series with a negative impression as bloodbath was witnessed in Friday's session with Nifty and Bank Nifty both slipped nearly four per cent in a single session as a selloff in bond markets across the globe sparked a rout in global equities," added Bisht.

On the options front, the deep Out Of The Money (OTM) 14,000 strike Put option is highest in OI with 40,429 contracts followed by

#### Product Contracts Premium (Rs/cr) Turnover (Rs/cr) **Index Futures** 7,33,800 72,670.02 Stock Futures 11,11,447 1,02,317.43 25,113.98 **Index Options** 2,74,17,497 27.26.556.56 Stock Options 15,79,646 1,46,404.80 4,346.13

13,500 PE with 29,363 contracts. While on the Call side, 16,000 CE is highest in OI with 25,681 contracts followed by In The Money (ITM) Call option of 15,000 strike with 14,158 contracts, according to sharekhan.com.

For the week ended February 26, 2021, BSE Sensex closed at 49,099.99 points, a net loss of 1,789.99 points or 3.51 per cent, as against 50,889.76 points. NSE Nifty

fell by 452.15 points or 3.02 per cent and closed at 14,529.15 points from 14.981.75 points.

Bisht forecasts: "For upcoming week, we believe that selling pressure is likely to keep markets under pressure. From the technical front. the 14700-14800 zone is a strong hurdle for Nifty, while we may witness a fresh round of selling in Bank Nifty, if it manages to slide below the 34500 strike." The Put-

series began at 1.35 level. The volatility index rose to 25 per cent in the last week of the February series and eased off and currently hovering at 22.89 per

"The Implied Volatility of Calls closed at 21.03 per cent, while that for Put options closed at 23.80 per cent. The Nifty VIX for the week closed at 22.89 per cent and is expected to remain volatile. Put-Call Ratio of OI for the week closed at

1.90," remarked Bisht. FIIs continued to be net buyers in the cash market as they bought Rs 50,339 crore due to some big block deals. On the Derivative front also, FIIs increased their long positions in Index Futures as they rolled over closed to 100 per cent

of their index long futures while only 56 per cent of their index short futures got rolled over to the next expiry and their long-short ratio stands healthy at around 3.22, according to data from sharekhan.com.

#### **Bank Nifty**

The NSE's banking index Bank Nifty closed at 34,803.60 points, a net fall of 1,038 points or 2.9 per cent from 35,841.60points. Bank Nifty March month rollover is at 77.76 per cent versus 74.55 per cent. Bank Nifty saw a spectacular run up of 20 per cent on an expiry to expiry basis and touched lifetime high at 37,708 level. The Open Interest declined by 21 per cent and it indicates short covering in the index. Rollover in Bank Nifty was 77.76 per cent as against the threemonth average of 77.34 per cent with a huge rollover cost of 171 points, indicating long rollover in the next series.

#### Options data holds more put writing Call Ratio (PCR) in the March three-month average of 77.30 per F&O TRADING cent with a rollover cost of 72

### **Asia Cup to be postponed if India** reach WTC final: PCB chief Mani

KARACHI

THE 2021 Asia Cup could be postponed if India reach the World Test Championship (WTC) final, said Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Ehsan Mani. The tournament is scheduled to be held in Sri Lanka in June while the WTC final

is slated to be held from June 18-22 at the Lord's in London. "Asia Cup was set to be held last year, but it got postponed to this year. Right

now, it looks like the tournament won't be going ahead this year as the WTC final is set to go ahead in June. Sri Lanka had said that they would try to host the tournament in June," Mani told reporters in Karachi.

India's victory over England in the third Test of the four-match series earlier this month helped them take a 2-1 lead in the series. They now need only a draw in the fourth Test to qualify for the WTC final where they will face New Zealand. "The dates are clashing. We think the tournament would not be going ahead,

and we might have to push the tournament to 2023," Mani added.

Originally scheduled to be held in September 2020, the Asia Cup was postponed to 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Pakistan had won rights to host the tournament but it was moved out of the country after the Board of Control for Cricket in India requested for a change in venue due to security concerns. (IANS)

### Vinesh Phogat wins gold in 53kg freestyle

New Delhi

STAR wrestler Vinesh Phogat outplayed European bronze medallist Vanese Kaladzinskay of Be-

larus 10-8 to win the women's 53kg freestyle title in the Outstanding Ukrainian Wrestlers and Coaches Memorial tournament in Kiev, Ukraine, on Sunday. The 26-year-old

Asian Games champion from Haryana trailed 6-8, but in the closing stages of the bout, she pinned her rival to emerge victorious. This was Vinesh's first international tour-

nament of the year. The tournament attracted more than 500 wrestlers from across

the globe. Vinesh is one of the four Indian wrestlers to have qualified for the 2021 Olympic Games. Male wrestlers Bajrang Punia (65kg), Ravi Dahiya (57kg) and Deepak

> Punia (86kg) are the others. Vinesh, a world bronze medallist, had been training in Hungary for a while prepare for the Olympics that start on July 23 in Tokyo.

> > For this reason, she skipped the wrestling nationals held in January in Agra.

The Wrestling Federation of India has named Vinesh in the national team for upcoming World Ranking Series in Rome starting March 4. (IAN

#### 14 Indian boxers off to Spain for tourney

NEW DELHI: The week-long Boxam International Tournament in Castellon, Spain, starting Monday will enable the Indian boxing think-tank to evaluate the preparations for the Olympic-bound team, chief women's boxing coach Raffaele Bergamasco said on Sunday. Six-time world champion M.C. Mary Kom (51kg) is among the nine Olympic qualifiers who will be seen in action in the first international tournament of the season being held after about 12 months, as sporting activities were stopped due to the Covid-19 pandemic. An Indian team had last participated in Asian/Oceanian Olympic qualifier in in Jordan in March last year.

### **Hyderabad FC out of playoffs**

### Hosts Goa seal fourth spot, set new unbeaten record

ALL FC Goa needed to progress to the playoffs was a draw. That they achieved with an efficient performance as they held Hyderabad FC to a goalless draw at the Fatorda Stadium here on Sunday, setting a new Hero Indian Super League record for the longest unbeaten run in the process.

A brilliant defensive performance from Ivan Gonzalez and some crucial saves from Dheeraj Singh was enough for the Gaurs to get the point they needed. They were lucky not to concede late in the game and a good show from Hyderabad was not enough to stop Juan Ferrando's men from qualifying for their fourth consecutive semifinals and extending their unbeaten run to 13 games.

Hyderabad are still unbeaten in 2021 and extended their unbeaten run to 12 games, but they had to settle for fifth on the table.

Playing without their main players was always going to be difficult for Hyderabad. They missed the services of their regular scorer Aridane Santana (fourth yellow) upfront and Chinglensana Singh (red card) in defence. But the Nizams were up for the challenge and were able to match their opponents.

HFC made it difficult for Goa with incessant pressing all over the pitch and had a few chances in the opening minutes. What they lacked was the poacher's instincts in the final third.

Goa, as usual, dominated possession and passing but they couldn't convert it into chances. The first half had zero shots on target as neither goalkeeper was called into action much.

Both sides have scored more goals in the second session and Goa rang in an early warning when Alberto Noguera set Redeem Tlang free on the left. The winger covered some distance and crossed to Alexander Jesuraj, who was late to react.

With HFC trying to get the required goal to progress, tempers flared along with the pressure as Edu Bedia, Tlang and Joao Victor went into the referee's books within a span of nine minutes

Kerala Blasters FC. Hyderabad had their best opportunity Odisha FC . in the 84th minute. Victor chipped in a delightful ball into the box from outside the box. Joel Chianese and Liston Colaco, both of whom made runs in behind, failed to head in from close

After being withdrawn, Lluis Sastre was shown a red for throwing a bottle at the Goa bench. Noguera also received a yellow and will miss the first leg of the playoffs.

Hyderabad nearly took the lead in the injury time but Gonzalez came with a crucial interception to deny Liston Colaco from scoring a simple tap-in. Later, Adil Khan almost scored an own goal but an alert Dheeraj pulled off a stunning save to send his team

into the playoffs. (PTI)

**ISL STANDINGS** Mumbai City FC . ATK Mohun Bagan. Hyderabad FC... Jamshedpur FC

**RESULTS** 

FC Goa draw with Hyderabad FC Mumbai City FC beat ATK Mohun Bagan

**TEAMS TO REACH PLAYOFFS** 

2-0

**Mumbai City FC** ATK Mohun Bagan **NorthEast United FC & FC Goa** 



### I'm all for it: Lyon on Ind vs Eng 3rd **Test pitch**

**SYDNEY** 

AUSTRALIA spinner Nathan Lyon threw his weight behind the pitch that was rolled out at the cricket stadium of Sardar Vallabhai Patel Sports Enclave for the third Test between India and England.

The match, the only day-night Test in the four-game series, got over in just two days with India winning by 10 wickets, A number of former cricketers from both India and England said that the pitch was not suitable for Test cricket.

Lyon, however, joked that he was thinking about bringing the curator for the Motera Test to the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG). "I was up all night watching it. It was absolutely brilliant. I'm thinking about bringing that curator out to the SCG," Lyon said according to cricket.com.au.

"We play on seaming wickets around the world and get bowled out for 47, 60. Nobody ever says a thing (about the pitch). But as soon as it starts spinning, everyone in the world seems to start crying about it. I don't get it. I'm all for it, it was entertaining," said the offspinner, who with 399 wickets is the third most successful Australian bowler in Test cricket behind Shane Warne (700 wickets) and Glenn McGrath (563).

Lyon was amused by the fact that England played with four fast bowlers and deployed Jack Leach as the lone full-time spinner on that pitch.

"The best thing about this Test match that just passed is that England went in with four seamers. That will do me. I don't need to say any more," he said. (IANS)

#### **VIJAY HAZARE TROPHY**

### Tanmay, Tilak shine in Hyderabad's win

 ${\bf HYDERABAD\ sealed\ a\ narrow\ two-run}$ win over Goa in their last Group A match to end third in their group table at the league stage of the Vijay Hazare Trophy while hosts Gujarat defeated Baroda by 40 runs to remain unbeaten in the league stage here on Sunday.

Hyderabad set a 346-run victory target for the loss of six wickets, riding on openers Tanmay Agarwal's quick-fire 150 off 131 balls and Tilak Verma's 128 off 127 balls. In reply, Goa too started off on a sound note. An unbeaten 169 by KD Eknath and 116 by Snehal Kauthankar went in vain as they managed to score only 343 for 5 in the stipulated 50 overs. **Brief Scores** 

Group A

At Surat: Guiarat 277 for 7 in 50 overs (Dhruv Raval 102, Het Patel 82: Atit Sheth 3/53) beat Baroda 237 for 9 in 50 overs (Smit Patel 73, Vishnu Solanki 37; Piyush Chawla 3/52, Chintan Gaja 2/40) by 40 runs.

At CK Pithawala ground: Hyderabad 345 for 6 in 50 overs (Tanmay Agarwal 150, Tilak Verma 128; Lakshay Garg 2/60, Suyash Prabhudessai 1/60) beat Goa 343 for 5 in 50 overs (KD Eknath 169 not out, Snehal Kauthankar 116; T Ravi Teja 3/69; B Sandeep 1/63) by two runs.

At Kholvad Gymkhana ground: Tripura 230 all out in 48.4 overs (Samrat Singha 102; Milind Kumar 55; Ajay Mandal 2/18, Sumit Ruikar 2/39) lost to Chhattisgarh 233 for 5 in 47.1 overs (Amandeep Khare 101 not out,

Mura Singh 2/45) by five wickets. Group B

Vidarbha 150 all out in 41 overs (Akshay Wadkar 31, S R Ramaswamy 28; B Aparajith 3/10, J Kousik 3/22, M Mohammed 3/33) lost to Tamil Nadu 152 for 5 in 11.2 overs (N Jagadeesan 48, M Mohammed 37 not out) by five wickets.

Jharkhand 139 all out in 46.2 overs (Ishan Kishan 38, Anukul Roy 30; M Harishankar Reddy 4/30) lost to Andhra 140 for 3 in 9.5 overs (Ashwin Hebbar 44, Ricky Bhui 57 not out) by seven wickets.

Madhya Pradesh 402 for 3 in 30 overs (Venkatesh Iyer 198, Aditya Shrivastava 88 not out, Rajat Patidar 54) beat Punjab 297 all out in 42.3 overs (Abhishek Sharma 104, Siddharth Kaul 33: Mihir Hirwani 4/62) by 105 runs. Group C

At M.Chinnaswamy Stadium: Railways 284/9; 50 overs (Pratham Singh 129; Shreyas Gopal 3/41, J Suchith 2/72) lost to Karnataka 285 fo no loss; 40.3 overs (Devdutt Padikkal 145 not out, Ravikumar Samarth 130 not out) by 10 wickets.

At KSCA Cricket (3) Ground, Alur: Bihar 148 all out; 40.2 overs (Babul Kumar 64; Sreesanth 4/30, Jalaj Saxena 3/30) lost to Kerala 149/1; 8.5 overs (Robin Uthappa 87 not out, Sanju Samson 24 not out) by nine wickets.

At Just Cricket Academy Ground: Odisha 148 all out; 40.1 overs (Subhranshu Senapati 49 not out. Rakesh Pattnaik 46: Shivam Sharma 6/22) lost to Uttar Pradesh 150/4; 21.4 overs (Upendra Yadav 32, Sameer Choudhary 29 not out) by six wickets. (PTI)

#### Sharma moves to career-best Test ranking of 8th

AHMEDABAD

OPENING batsman Rohit Sharma moved up to a career-best eighth on the Test rankings for batsmen after his first innings 66 and unbeaten 25 in a low-scoring third Test between India and England.

Sharma was one of two batsmen, the other being England opener Zak Crawley, who managed to score a half century in the match which ended in two days. As many as 17 wickets fell on the second day as India won by 10 wickets to knock England out of contention for a place in the World Test Championship final that will be played at London's iconic Lord's Cricket Ground in June.

Rohit's rating points aggregate is 742 in the rankings that the International Cricket Council released on Sunday, 20 more than his previous best of 722 in October 2019 when he was ranked 10th.

Player of the match Axar Patel and Ravichandran Ashwin have also made gains on the bowlers' rankings after helping carve out a crucial win that helped India remain in contention for the ICC World Test Championship final. Left-arm spinner Patel's 11wicket match haul has helped him gain 30 slots to reach 38th position while off-spinner Ashwin's seven wickets have lifted him four places to third position.

