



WINDOWS



Not ceded any territory to China, says govt

NEW DELHI: Hours after Congress leader Rahul Gandhi accused the government of ceding Indian territory to the Chinese, the Defence ministry issued a strongly-worded statement on Friday. "India has not conceded any territory as a result of this agreement. On the contrary, it has enforced observance and respect for LAC (Line of Actual Control) and prevented any unilateral change in the status quo," the Defence ministry said in a statement. The ministry also asserted that India has persistently maintained the right to patrol up to Finger 8, including in the current understanding with China.

Gadkari unveils first CNG tractor



NEW DELHI: Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Friday unveiled India's first CNG tractor that can save over 1 lakh annually on fuel costs. The new tractor has been converted to CNG from diesel. Gadkari owns the tractor that was converted to CNG and was awarded the registration certificate by Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas and Steel. The conversion was carried out jointly by Rawmatt Techno Solutions & Tomasetto Achille India. The government claims that it will help farmers increase their income by lowering operating costs. The government will start establishing retro fitment centres for CNG kits on tractors.

SPORTS



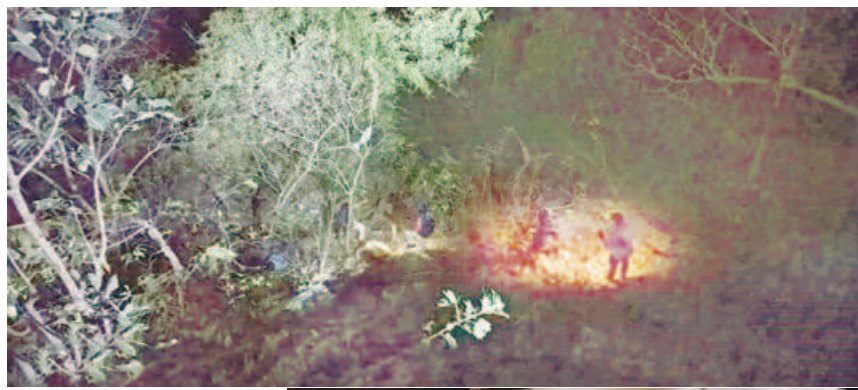
India eye win to stay alive in race of WTC final



4 tourists from Hyd die as bus falls into Araku valley

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VISAKHAPATNAM

FOUR died and 19 others were injured when a tourist bus at Dumuku village in Ananthagiri mandal plunged into the Araku valley on Friday night. The incident happened at the fifth curve of the Araku ghat road while the bus was heading towards Visakhapatnam from the Araku valley. Superintendent of Police of Visakhapatnam district B Krishna Rao said rescue operations commenced immediately with the police and the ambulance service rushed to the incident spot. The injured were shifted to Srungavarapukota hospital. The Telangana-registered vehicle was carrying



A scene of the tourist bus, which plunged into the valley. (R) Those injured in the accident being shifted to S Kota hospital

ing tourists from Hyderabad and other destinations. Twenty-three passengers were travelling in the bus. Those who lost their lives in the accident were said to be from Hyderabad.



15 killed in TN firecracker blast

CHENNAI

AT least 15 people were killed and over 30 others injured in a huge fire that broke out at a firecracker factory in Tamil Nadu's Virudhunagar district on Friday, police said. The death toll is likely to go up as the condition of some of the injured admitted to the Sivakasi government hospital is stated to be critical. Police said the fire in the factory in Achanku-

lam near Sattur in Virudhunagar broke out when some chemicals were being mixed to produce firecrackers. Four cracker making sheds were destroyed. Ten firefighting vehicles rushed to the spot from various surrounding locations like Sattur, Sivakasi and Vembakottai to douse the flames, while officials from police, revenue and other departments also reached there for rescue and relief works.

FAKE NEWS SC notice to Twitter, Centre

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Friday issued notices to the Union government and Twitter on a petition asking for a mechanism to check fake news and hate messages, seditious and incendiary content on Twitter and other social media platforms.



Delhi Police SI ends life

NEW DELHI

A 39-year-old Delhi Police sub-inspector ended his life while he was being taken to a hospital in an ambulance, officials said on Friday. The deceased has been identified as Rajbir Singh. He was posted in southeast district lines and was mentally unsound, they said. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Southeast) RP Meena said, "An information was received that Singh has ended his life by hanging himself with a piece of cloth in a CATS ambulance which was taking him to a hospital for admission from his house." He had



been on leave for five days and was marked absent on Friday morning at District Line, he said. According to the police, Singh called the CATS ambulance from his residence and was taken to the DDU hospital but doctors refused to admit

him there. Thereafter, another CATS ambulance took him to the Institute of Human Behaviour and Allied Sciences (IHBAS) hospital but due to absence of an attendant, doctors refused to admit him here too, police said. Thereafter, the same ambulance took him to Guru Teg Bahadur hospital where doctors asked the ambulance in-charge to get a slip prepared for the medicolegal cases (MLC). During that time, Singh became aggressive and started running around in the hospital premises. When he insisted on going to IHBAS again, the ambulance in-charge tried to pacify him, a senior police officer said.

Trinamool's Dinesh Trivedi quits as MP

NEW DELHI: One of the



Trinamool Congress's most visible faces, Dinesh Trivedi, announced his resignation in Parliament on Friday, adding to a series of dramatic exits from Mamata Banerjee's party ahead of the Bengal election due by May. He said the Trinamool was being run by "somebody who doesn't know politics" and no one had time to speak to him.

Kharge to be Leader of Opposition in RS

NEW DELHI

SENIOR Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge will be the leader of opposition in Rajya Sabha, succeeding Ghulam Nabi Azad whose tenure comes to an end on Monday. Congress president Sonia Gandhi has written to Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu for appointing Kharge to the post as Azad is retiring. Azad was elected to the Upper House from Jammu and Kashmir, which does not have an assembly currently after it was made a Union Territory with the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution. Kharge, a Dalit leader from Karnataka, was the leader of the Congress in the Lok Sabha from 2014 to 2019.

The grand old party could not get the leader of opposition's post in the previous and the current Lok



Sabha as its numbers were less than the mandated 10 per cent of the total number of seats in the Lower House. Kharge will be the 17th Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha since December, 1969.

Shyam Nandan Mishra was the first Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha and a total of 13 members have so far held that post in the House of Elders including M S Gurupadaswamy, Kamalapati Tripathi, Bhila Paswan Shastri, LK Advani, P Shiv Shanker, Jaipal

Reddy, Sikander Bakht, S B Chavan, Manmohan Singh, Jaswant Singh, Arun Jaitley and Ghulam Nabi Azad. Kamalapati Tripathi, M S Gurupadaswamy and Sikander Bakht had been the Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha twice each. Azad has been the Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha for the longest period of 6 years 9 months followed by Sikander Bakht (5 years 10 months), Manmohan Singh (5 years 9 months), Arun Jaitley (5 years 2 months) and Jaswant Singh (5 years). No opposition party had the requisite strength of 1/10th of the total membership of the House during the period 1952 to 1969 and 1972 to 1977 and accordingly there was no recognised Leader of the Opposition during these periods, the Rajya Sabha secretariat said.

Punjab should give AAP chance to implement Kejri model: Sisodia

PURNA SINGH
AMRITSAR

AAM Aadmi Party leader and Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Friday urged the people of Punjab to give his party a chance to form the next government in the state for implementation of welfare schemes like that in Delhi. Arvind Kejriwal's government in Delhi has done such welfare works for the people which the

Congress and the BJP never imagined, he told reporters here. Sisodia said the people in Delhi have been provided better health facilities in government hospitals and better education in government schools compared to private facilities. Free electricity and water have been provided round the clock in Delhi, he said. The Delhi deputy chief



minister appealed to the people of Punjab to give a chance to the Aam Aadmi Party once so that the Delhi model would be implemented in the state. "Two types of politics are going on. One is of the Congress, BJP and the Akalis which are running their businesses and filling their coffers with the tax money paid by the people. "On the other hand,

there is the politics of Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal, who is spending tax money paid by people for the development of the people. An example of this can be seen in Delhi where hospitals and schools were built with new technologies and facilities, with the tax money of the people," he said. The same money was being used to provide free electricity and water to the people, the AAP leader added.

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Women career scientists still face gender bias: UNESCO

SIDDHI JAIN

Women still account for only 28 per cent of engineering graduates and 40 per cent of graduates in computer science and informatics, says a forthcoming UNESCO Science Report,

A chapter on gender in science from the report, called 'To be Smart the Digital Revolution will Need to be Inclusive', was published on International Day of Women and Girls in Science, and highlights that women are not benefitting fully from employment opportunities open to highly educated and skilled experts in cutting edge fields such as artificial intelligence where only one in five professionals (22 per cent) is a woman, according to a 2018 study by the World Economic Forum on the Global Gender Gap.

A statement from UNESCO says: "Likewise, women founders of start-ups still struggle to access finance, and, in large tech companies, they remain under-represented in both leadership and technical positions. They are also more likely than men to leave the tech field, often citing poor career prospects as a key motivation for their decision. Corporate attitudes towards women are evolving, however, as studies link investor confidence and greater profit margins to having a diverse workforce."

"Women need to be part of the digital economy to prevent Industry 4.0 from perpetuating traditional gender biases. As the impact of artificial intelligence on societal priorities continues to grow, the underrepresentation of women's contribution to research and development means that their

needs and perspectives are likely to be overlooked in the design of products that impact our daily lives, such as smartphone applications."

"Even today, in the 21st century, women and girls are being sidelined in science-related fields due to their gender. Women need to know that they have a place in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, and that they have a right to share in scientific progress," says UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay in a statement.

The glass ceiling also remains an obstacle to women's careers in academia, despite some progress, says the statement. Globally, women have achieved numerical parity

(45-55 per cent) at the bachelor's and master's levels of study and are on the cusp at PhD level (44 per cent), according to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics. The gender gap widens as women progress in their academic careers, with lower participation

at each successive rung of the ladder from doctoral student to assistant professor to director of research or full professor.

"Overall, female researchers tend to have shorter, less well-paid careers. Their work is underrepresented in high-profile journals and they are often passed over for promotion. Women are typically given smaller research grants than their male colleagues and, while they represent 33.3 per cent of all researchers, only 12 per cent of members of national science academies are women.

The complete UNESCO Science Report: The Race against Time for Smarter Development, is scheduled to be released in April this year.

Women in slum areas crafting a better world for them and for others



Our age-old and long-forgotten bags have now become bags of hope for women living in slums of Pune. Their Hand-woven bags made of 100% recyclable plastic was a major hit with the Hyderabad socialites who participated in Kausalyam 2021, a Handlooms and Handicrafts exhibition organized by Crafts Council of India (CCT).

Totum, who was the social enterprise behind organizing these women said that the product was a huge hit, and everything was sold out. These bags which were once a part of our lives have now been forgotten. But they have now made a magical come back. Many women and their families from the slums of Pune have given a revival to this vintage craft. It serves a dual purpose.

Speaking to The Hans India, Sri Latha, member of organizer committee

Kausalyam2021 said, "The enterprise was first started in 1987 as Crafts Council of Andhra Pradesh and from then, its working for the development of weavers and handicrafts. Days passing on, people started showing interest and joined the organization. We conduct workshops and provide market to their art every year, that enable them livelihood every year."

Appreciating the hard work and skill of these women the NGO also facilitates them with awards.

Speaking to The Hans India, founder of the enterprise, Jyotsna Shahane, expressed joy for being able to participate in Kausalyam 2021.

It took us two years of working in the slums of Pune to introduce sustainable practices for garbage disposal, it became clear, to improve their lives, their wage-earning capacities must be im-

THEY ARE NOT ONLY REVIVING THE LONG-FORGOTTEN CRAFT, THEY ARE WEAVING A LIFE OUT OF IT



proved, said Jyotsna.

They had neither education nor marketable skills. Hand Knotting of the bags was born. Then they learnt to use 100% recyclable plastic. Then came Totum Bags to market their products.

All bag designs and colour combinations that we sell are unique to Totum Bags says Jyotsna, and your purchase has a direct social impact on women in need. Totum's colourful bags brighten up all our lives! she adds.

The women behind these bags are home-bound due to cultural or religious traditions, have multiple dependents to take care of, or have been widowed or abandoned, informs Jyotsna.

This enterprise works ahead with this primary mission to support the women of Totum to become pillars of their communities, she informs.

All you need to know about these bags

The bags are made to safeguard the future while taking inspiration from the

past. By reviving the vintage Indian craft of hand-knotted bag weaving and using 100% recyclable plastic, the NGO hopes to encourage the practice of reuse and help reduce the demand for disposable single-use bags that wreak havoc on the planet.

The bags are not just recyclable, they are sturdy, works well for versatile usage, easy to clean and extremely water-resistant. They come in various shapes and sizes. The collection includes: Boss Essentials; Marché Collection; Newly Added; Best Sellers; Limited Edition

Their designs and handles also vary. They include Vegan Leather Handles; Woven Handles; Monochrome Bags; Third Eye Knot Bags; Cross Knot Bags; Regular Knot Bags. Depending on the design, the bags have handles that are hand-woven to match, or made from vegan leather. Vegan leather handles can be black, brown, tan, white, or deep red, based on the bag design.

The price of the bag varies from design to design, from Rs 1100/- and above and some cost even Rs 2150/- and even more.

Ode to the Royals

Leading couturiers & fashion designer duo, Rimple & Harpreet Narula stepped into 2021 with a spectacular fashion show titled 'Ode to the Royals' at the iconic Burj Khalifa in Dubai. The show was attended by the who's who of the United Arab Emirates and was widely appreciated for its showcase of the finest Indian couture on the ramp.

Held against the backdrop of one of the tallest buildings in the world, the fashion show bedazzled Dubai with its immaculate amalgamation of couture, craft and heritage. The splendor and glory of the erstwhile days of the Raj which is the raison d'etre of the collection was being showcased by Rimple and Harpreet. Inspired by the Indian Maharajas and the nobles of that era and their lifestyle, which was heavily influenced by their travels to the West, the collection was an ode to splendor and extravagance of their lives well lived.

Rimple and Harpreet have delved into the vast archives that chronicle the Maharajas and their retinues, their early interactions with western luxury and the collection is reminiscent of the vast and extraordinary commissions that were conferred by these royals on western design houses.

The collection is a celebration of royal opulence



tempered in hues of ivory & beige, burnished gold's, rose tints, and velveteen blacks that harks back to a time when the "Maharajas" and "Maharanees" were the toast of European high society- equally at ease in the royal ballrooms of Calcutta and Kapurthala as well as chic Parisian saloons. Scintillating handcrafted embroideries veritably breathe life onto the surfaces of each ensemble while the theatrical, larger-than-life silhouettes -- dramatic lehengas, sheer sarees, regal robes and achkans -- are evocative of a bygone majestic magnificence, making the collection a befitting tribute to an opulent era of high fashion, exotic indulgence and rich statements in regal clothing and accessories.



Newsletter by all-women team on farmers' agitation launched

SUKANT DEEPAK

"We are trained to look at the ongoing farmers' agitation with a certain gaze that tends to ignore the role of women participating actively and passively. The same holds true for Dalit labourers who do not own tractors and trolleys, and make a huge effort to be at protest sites. This is where the newsletter 'Karti Dharti' comes in," says social activist Sangeet Toor.

Launched today (February 12), this four page A3 sized newsletter in Punjabi, and later Shahmukhi (Persian) too, founded and edited by Toor, a Master's degree holder in Cyber Security from George Washington University in the US comprises an all women's team. While it has been designed by Navjeet Kaur, funded and distributed by Sargam Toor, another social activist, the rest of the team is in the background. "Considering the crackdown by the government, some other women members have decided to contribute for different roles anonymously.

Besides two protest sites, the newsletter will also be distributed at several morchas in Punjab," Toor tells. Interestingly, 'Karti Dharti' was conceived when the founder-editor was invited to give a talk (digital) by the Young Lyallpur Historian's Club in West Pakistan. "Talking about the ongoing farmer' agitation, the host asked if there was any newsletter taken out by women. I instantly felt that there was a need for one to bridge gaps on multiple levels."

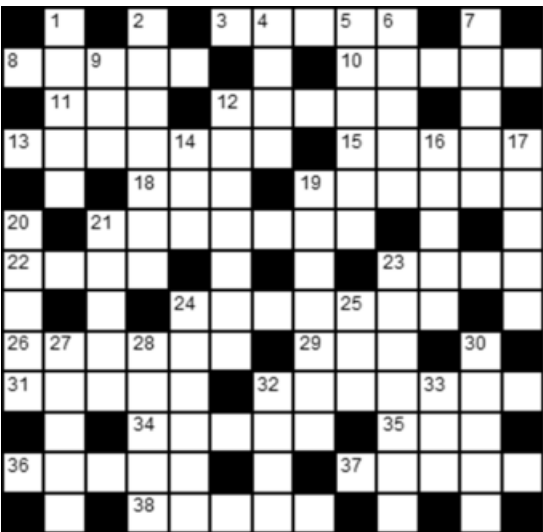
While the newsletter has been christened 'Karti Dharti' by

Nausheen Ali, a Professor at New York University (NYU) in the US, Toor, who is also involved with 'Trolley Times', a newspaper taken out by a team of activists on the borders says that she did initially think about talking to them about the space she would like to explore. "However, considering the fact that I have been writing independently on women and labour issues, I was also looking for more elbow room. Moreover, I wanted this to be a woman led initiative."

Stressing on the role of women in the agitation -- not just those who are on the borders, but also ones back in their villages, the social activist says, "From making foodstuff in huge quantities for protesters to mobilizing other women in villages, they are making an important contribution. We must understand that not every family is schooled to let the women go out and participate in the protest. Many of them who cannot go collaborate with other women are taking out jago in their areas."

Adding that she wanted 'Karti Dharti' to be a print edition and not a digital one owing to the reader base being targeted, Toor says, "You will see most women in Punjab still reading established Punjabi newspapers and not really going in for news distributed through digital or social media platforms."

For her, the life of the newsletter goes beyond the agitation. "We have put a lot of thought and are convinced that the present agrarian crisis goes beyond the three new laws. It is how we have been doing agriculture and the need for structural changes. The 'Karti Dharti' space is also going to be used for starting new conversations and involving common people."



SOLUTION TO FEBRUARY 12

CROSSWORD

Across

- 3 Bottomless pit (5)
- 8 Portents or road indicators (5)
- 10 Not our (5)
- 11 Dopey what? (3)
- 12 Extremist (5)
- 13 Composer of The Four Seasons (7)
- 15 Supplementing with difficulty (5)
- 18 Pod vegetable (3)
- 19 Roman emperor (6)
- 21 Best (7)
- 22 Moist (4)
- 23 English river (4)
- 24 Underhand (7)
- 26 Like better (6)
- 29 Egg cells (3)
- 31 Air tubes for wheels (5)
- 32 Czech composer (7)
- 34 Tiny particles (5)
- 35 Bond creator Fleming (3)
- 36 Employ again (5)
- 37 Dull (2-3)
- 38 Shallow gardening baskets (5)

Down

- 1 This meant nothing to Nero (5)
- 2 Miserable (7)
- 4 Indonesian island (4)
- 5 Brook (6)
- 6 Tremble (5)
- 7 Singer Ross (5)
- 9 Governor (3)
- 12 Rajasthan city known for its palaces (7)
- 14 Give permission (3)
- 16 Point in dispute (5)
- 17 Thin porridge (5)
- 19 Import/export duties (7)
- 20 Take as one's own (5)
- 21 Possessor (5)
- 23 Enthusiastic reception (7)
- 24 Rankle (6)
- 25 I have - "vie" anagram ? (3)
- 27 Actress Winona (5)
- 28 Banquet (5)
- 30 Invalidate (5)
- 32 Self-satisfied (4)
- 33 Old time musical hit (3)

SUDOKU



SOLUTION TO FEBRUARY 12

Delhi Police rules out communal angle in Mangolpuri murder

NEW DELHI

THE Delhi Police on Friday clarified that the murder of a 25-year-old man in outer Delhi's Mangolpuri area was due to a business rivalry, and no communal angle should be attributed to it.

Rinku Sharma was stabbed to death allegedly by a man known to him, and his three friends, following an argument at a birthday party late on Wednesday night.

The clarification by the police has come after some organisations started giving communal overtones to the murder, and hashtag Justice for Rinku Sharma trended on Twitter.

Four persons -- Danish, Islam, Zahid and Mehtab, accused of being involved in the case, have been arrested.

"So far, during investigation, it has surfaced that the quarrel started during a birthday party over shutting down of a restaurant. All persons are known to each other and live in the same locality. Any other motive alluded to this incident is factually wrong," said A Koan, DCP, Outer Delhi.

In CCTV footage of the fight that broke out near his home, a group can be seen, armed with lathi and sticks.

But Rinku Sharma's family alleges

the fight erupted over a rally he had organized last year to raise donations for the construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya. He was associated with both the BJP and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). His brother Manu Sharma said he was also active in the Bajrang Dal.

"On August 5, we had taken out a rally for the construction of the Ram Temple. At that time too, we were harassed. They had threatened us. Then he (Rinku Sharma) was murdered on Wednesday. They used to object to the chanting of 'Jai Shri Ram'," he said.

"When my son was being killed,

at that time too, he was chanting 'Jai Shri Ram'," his mother said, alleging that there were "30 to 40 people with lathi, sticks and knives".

Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta on Friday met the family of Rinku Sharma who was allegedly stabbed to death, and provided an assistance of Rs 5 lakh to them.

The BJP leader also demanded the Delhi government to provide Rs 1 crore to the family. "Rinku Sharma was socially active. He was also associated with collecting contributions for the construction of Ram temple. The BJP strongly con-

demns his brutal murder," Gupta said after meeting Sharma's family members in Mangolpuri.

He also demanded that the trial of the murder case be heard in a fast-track court.



Army personnel build a cable car bridge to transport villagers to their home, after Sunday's glacier burst in Joshimath causing a massive flood in the Dhauli Ganga river, in Chamoli district of Uttarakhand

Uttarakhand flash floods: 2 more bodies recovered

TAPOVAN

TWO more bodies were recovered from the flash flood-hit areas of Uttarakhand's Chamoli district on Friday, taking the toll in the calamity to 38, as rescue teams battled on against the odds for the sixth consecutive day to get to 25-35 people trapped in a sludge-choked tunnel here.

One body was recovered from the rubble at the demolished Rishi Ganga Hydel Project in Raini and the other from Malithana, district administration officials here said. A separate team of rescuers was formed under the supervision of the executive engineer of the Rural Works Department to expedite the search operation taking the help of locals and old photographs of the demolished Rishi Ganga hydel project.

National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) personnel using excavators and JCBs are dredging through the muck to locate the missing, the officials said. At Tapovan, besides the continuing sludge clearing and drilling inside the tunnel, an approach road is being built near the Gauri Shankar temple so that a Poklad machine could be sent down in search of those missing in the debris.

A cofferdam is also being constructed at Tapovan to prevent any more water from flushing into the tunnel. Meanwhile, with scientists spotting a new glacial lake in the higher reaches of Rishi Ganga, an eight-member team of the scientists of the Geological Survey of India was formed to inspect the lake, Chamoli District Magistrate Swati S Bhadauria said.

50 children sexually abused in UP CHARGE SHEET FILED AGAINST ENGINEER

BANDA

THE CBI on Friday filed a charge sheet against a junior engineer and his wife arrested for allegedly exploiting children sexually and selling videos of the act to paedophiles across the globe on darknet.

The CBI filed the charge sheet against suspended Irrigation Department's Junior Engineer Ram Bhavan and his wife Durgawati in the court of Additional District and Sessions Judge Mohammad Rizwan Ahmad, Assistant Government Counsel Manoj Dixit said.

The charge sheet was filed in a steel box and it could have more than 2,500 pages, he said.

The CBI produced one more accused, aged about 36, arrested from Gita Colony in Delhi and sought his remand from the court, he said. Dixit said the court has fixed Feb-



ruary 15 as the next date of hearing during which all three accused will be present in the court.

CBI Circle Officer Amit Kumar had got statements of 25 children recorded till January 25 and their medical tests were also done by a team of AIIMS doctors. Ram Bhavan

was arrested on November 16 last year following which he was suspended. His wife Durgawati was arrested on December 28.

The arrests were made by a dedicated unit of the CBI specialising in the probe into cases of online sexual abuse and exploitation of children.

The arrested junior engineer, a resident of Chitrakoot district, is alleged to have victimised about 50 children in the age group of five to 16 years in Chitrakoot, Banda and Hamirpur districts.

During searches, the CBI had recovered eight mobile phones, around Rs 8 lakh in cash, sex toys, laptops and other digital evidence carrying a huge amount of child sexual abuse material, agency officials had said earlier.

The junior engineer had allegedly been indulging in the crime for the past 10 years, mainly contacting and sharing the sexual abuse material with other paedophiles globally using the darknet and cloud services abroad, they said.

He is also alleged to have told investigators that he used to bribe children with mobile phones and other electronic gadgets to keep their mouth shut about his activities.

Ex-UP Min Prajapati's kin found dead on railway tracks

AMETHI

THE body of the 22-year-old nephew of former UP minister, Gayatri Prajapati, was found on the railway tracks in Amethi on Friday morning. Shubham, the deceased was son of Prajapati's younger brother, Jagdish Prasad Prajapati, and was a college student.

He was missing since Thursday evening. Around 9 a.m., the local people spotted the body and informed police.

Police circle officer, Arpit Kapoor said that the body has been sent for autopsy by government railway police Pratapgarh and further investigations are on.

The police are also investigating if it was an accidental death or some foul play was involved.

40-day 'Kumbh Baithak' to begin in Vrindavan tomorrow

MATHURA

THE Uttar Pradesh Braj Teerth Vikas Parishad will be organising a 40-day long fair here called 'Kumbh Baithak' beginning Sunday as a precursor to the famous Haridwar Kumbh Mela, officials said.

Prior to the Haridwar Kumbh, the fair will be organised for 40 days and is expected to see the congregation of saints and Akharas in Vrindavan for which the state government has made grand arrangements. Shail-jakant Mishra, Vice-President of UP Braj Teerth Vikas Parishad said on Friday.

"Though the first auspicious bathing day falls on 16th February, the fair is likely to be inaugurated by UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on February



14," he added. Thrilled by the massive arrangements made for the 'Baithak' this year, Rajendra Das, Mahant of Akhli Bharitya Nirmohi Akhara said, "The mas-

sive arrangements made here reflects the religious sentiments of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, who appears to be committed to revive the glory of

the ancient past and culture."

Mela Adhikari and CEO of the organisation Nagendra Pratap said arrangements have been made to provide Ganga water for drinking purpose in the fair. Authorities are also trying to ensure continuous flow of Ganga water into the Yamuna river during 'Kumbh Baithak', the official said. For uninterrupted power supply, a sub-station has been established by the Power department at the fair, Pratap added.

Other significant feature of the fair are a permanent exhibition reflecting the culture of the state, especially Braj heritage, daily cultural programmes, temporary police line for foolproof security, a camp for journalists, bathing area at the renovated ghats, etc., he added.

Bail plea of 2 Hathras accused rejected

HATHRAS

A SPECIAL SC/ST court has dismissed the bail petition of two of the four accused in the Hathras gang rape and murder case of the 19-year-old girl.

The victim's lawyer, Bhagirath Singh, said that Ravi and Lovekush had moved a bail application and the same was dismissed by the court of special judge (SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act) Hathras, B.D. Bharti.

Last month, the court had dismissed the bail application of accused Ramu after hearing the arguments, he added.

The CBI had filed a charge sheet in the court in Hathras and invoked charges against four accused -- Sandeep, Ravi, Ramu and Lovekush.

They have been charged under



sections 302 (murder), 376 (rape), 376A (punishment for causing death resulting in persistent vegetative state of victim) and 376D (gang rape) of the IPC, and under Section 3(2)(v) of the SC/ST Act (offence punishable with imprisonment for a term of 10 years or more against a person on the grounds that the person belongs to an SC or ST community).

The CBI had registered the case on October 11 and started investigating two days after that.

The case had hit the headlines in September last year when the victim died after battling for life for almost ten days. Her body was hurriedly cremated in the dead of the night which further fueled the controversy.

UP MLA declared absconder in kidnapping case

LUCKNOW

INDEPENDENT MLA Aman Mani Tripathi has been declared an absconder by a court in Lucknow. He has not been appearing in the trial proceedings for the past many dates despite warrants. Special MP-MLA court judge P K Rai on Thursday also initiated the process to attach his property in the case as Tripathi, who is the MLA from Nautanwa in Maharaiganj district, did not turn up in the court. The court has fixed March 4 as the next date of hearing. An FIR was lodged on August 6, 2014, at the Gautam Palli police station in Lucknow against Tripathi and others, who were accused of kidnapping a Gorakhpur businessman for a ransom. Aman Mani Tripathi is the son of former minister, Amar Mani Tripathi, who is serving life sentence in Gorakhpur jail for the murder of a poetess Madhumita Shukla in 2003.

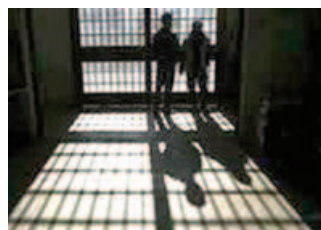
Death of youth in police custody triggers protest

JAUNPUR

THE death of a youth allegedly in police custody in the Buxa area here triggered protests by locals who blocked a national highway and indulged in stone pelting, leading to injuries to several policemen.

Superintendent of Police Raj Karan Nayyar has ordered the suspension of three policemen, including the in-charge of Buxa police station, and ordered a magisterial inquiry into the death of Kishan Yadav alias Pujari who was taken into custody for questioning in a loot case.

A crime branch team had brought four to five youths for questioning in a loot case to the Buxa police station on Thursday. Yadav, 25, who was among them, was taken ill during the night and was rushed to the community health centre. From there he was referred to the district hospital but he died during treatment, Nayyar said. Evi-



dence of loot had been found against Yadav and he was taken into custody for questioning, the SP said. As soon as the news of the death of Yadav spread, his family and locals gathered on the Lucknow-Varanasi national highway and staged a protest. They also indulged in brick-bating, resulting in injuries to Circle Officer (City) Jitendra Dubey and other policemen, Nayyar said. Police and Provincial Armed Constabulary personnel have been deployed in large numbers in the area to maintain law and order, he said. The family alleged that the youth died after being severely beaten up in custody.

Farmers' protest unites Muslims, Jats, Gurjar in western UP

MUZAFFARNAGAR

THE communal divide that was created in the Muzaffarnagar riots in 2013, is now filling up with the ongoing farmers' agitation.

Muslims, along with Jats and Gurjars, are slowly wiping off differences and joining hands for the ongoing farmers' agitation. "The communal differences are now history. Farming is our profession and the problems we are facing, do not differentiate between communities. If we want a solution, we will have to remain united and sweep aside other differences," said Iqbal, who lost his brother in the 2013 riots.

"Apart from my brother, the family lost its house which was burnt down and also our savings. We have built back our lives in the past eight years but the situation, at present, demands that we look together towards the future. What happened in 2013 is in the past," he told IANS. Muslims, according



to sources, have been increasingly participating in the Kisan Panchayats being held across western Uttar Pradesh.

Mehru Zaman, a local lawyer, said, "Both communities have always shaped the politics of western UP. Together, we can solve our problems and create a vast vote base."

In 2013, Muslim members of

the Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU), led by founding member Ghulam Mohammad Jola, had walked out of the outfit after the Tikait brothers were booked for inciting communal violence.

Recently at a Kisan Mahapanchayat, Jola shared the stage with Naresh Tikait and embraced him. This was a day after Rakesh Tikait emotional out-

burst made it it to national headlines.

"Eight years have passed. Both Jats and Muslims have seen the losses that came with drifting apart, both politically and structurally. Now, we are together. The Muzaffarnagar Mahapanchayat was the beginning. I am hopeful that this camaraderie will endure and help build bridges among people," Jola said.

Sanjay Baliyan, a farmer, said, "It may seem an uneasy truce but it now one that is firm and strong. It is a good start. The matter is farmers' welfare, irrespective of faith."

Haseeb Siddiqui, a veteran journalist and a political analyst, said, "This coming together of Jat, Gurjars and Muslims, will ultimately lead to a realignment of political forces, especially in western UP and any political party that supports their cause now will also get their support in the next assembly elections in the state."

A new battle with China on the anvil

CHINA has recently announced its plans to harness the waters of Yarlung Tsangpo (Brahmaputra) triggering a bout of fresh fears amongst the downstream nations. China keeps repeating that it will be a run-off-the-river dam and hence would not affect the water flows. However, there is little to suggest that the country speaks the truth. In addition, the world is aware of China's designs to divert the Tibetan waters to the rest of the country upstream. China's state-owned media shared plans for a 60-gigawatt mega-dam on the Yarlung Tsangpo River in the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) last year.

Now with the "aim of achieving carbon neutrality by 2060, Beijing has significantly boosted its efforts to build a 'super dam' in Tibet". China has already built

several smaller dams on the Yarlung. The new dam's ability to generate hydropower could be three times that of central China's Three Gorges Dam, which currently has the largest installed hydropower capacity in the world, reports suggest.

The point at which China seeks to construct the project is known as the Grand Canyon of Tibet. This is the point where the mighty Tsangpo plunges down to 2,700 metres in its course of long journey. This one is good for producing hydroelectric power, but experts have been warning of the consequences it will have not only for the ecology and ecosystems but also the political fallout too.

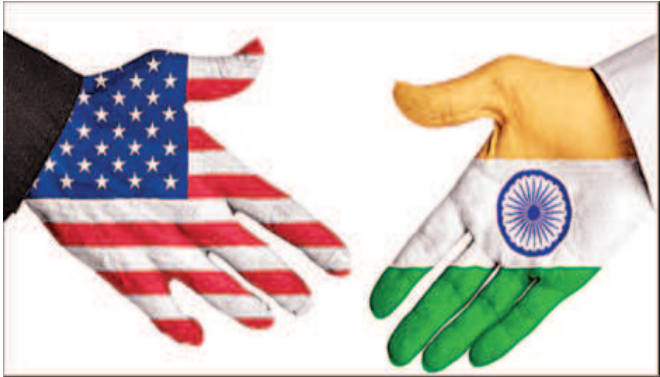
The Three Gorges Dam forced more than 1.4 million people out of their habitats and the new one would do so to a

much greater number. The argument of China put forth through Yan Zhiyong, chairman of the country's Power Construction Corp that the hydroelectric power was aimed at China's green future sounds ridiculous as China is already a power surplus country. Tibet is known as the 'Water Tower' of Asia catering to the dense populations of the Asian countries such as not only India but also Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Burma, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Pakistan.

Tibet in itself never played around with its ecology as the greedy Chinese do and hence there was no problem as long as it was independent. But a major problem in the world arises now that it is under the occupation of China. In fact, Tibet's water resources were one of the major concerns that made China take

control of the land 70 years ago. In Southeast Asia, China has faced accusations that a series of dams it has built on the Mekong have worsened drought in downstream countries, which Beijing denies.

China will definitely use the proposed mighty dam against India. China's downstream neighbours have a legitimate cause for concern. Water flow will be disrupted. India and Bangladesh are also engaged in a long-standing dispute over sharing river waters, especially those of Teesta. The two countries share 54 rivers between them. The International Water Courses Convention, adopted by the United Nations in 1997, applies certain rights and duties in relation to trans-boundary flows, although neither Bangladesh, India or China are signatories. It is time our politicians wake up to the threat and build a consensus amongst all neighbours and friends against the same.



Changing contours of Indo-US ties

ASAD MIRZA

AFTER tolerating four years of tantrums, mood swings and fits, bad language, and the worst idiotic and overtly racist behaviour when defeated by any US President, the world keenly awaited the change of power in the oldest democracy in the world when Joe Biden took over as the new American President.

Similarly, the world keenly looked forward to understanding the contours of the new administration's internal and external policies, particularly its foreign policy. In a wide-ranging address at the US State Department last week, Biden outlined his new foreign policy vision, reiterating the catch phrase, "America is back".

This stance was reflected in the words that Biden used, such as "re-build" (America's alliances) and "re-engage" (with the world). He also sought to outline a clear vision of what the new administration aims to achieve in order to improve and stabilise international relations. It was a speech designed to re-establish order and global faith in the US; things that Biden clearly feels were lost under his controversial predecessor.

Michelle Bentley, Reader in International Relations at the Royal Holloway University, London, opines that the US foreign policy will now focus more on multilateral diplomacy and working with other nations in a more positive way. But Biden hinted that this should not be considered a "soft approach", insisting that diplomacy would be the best way to get what the US wants. He also tried to highlight the importance, which his administration attaches to democratic values and described it as a key aspect of America's identity and ethos.

During his first year in office, President Biden will bring together the world's democracies to strengthen the global democratic institutions, and forge a common agenda to address threats to common democratic values. Biden has explained that the so-called 'Summit for Democracy' he plans to convene later this year, will focus on fighting corruption and authoritarianism and protect human rights world over.

The Summit will also issue a Call to Action for the private sector, including technology corporations and social media giants, to make their own commitments, recognising their responsibilities and their overwhelming interest in preserving open, democratic societies and protecting free speech.

Indo-US Ties

James Traub of the NYU's Center on International Cooperation, opines that in Asia, India has a geopolitical status of all its own. The world's fifth-largest economy, India serves as a bulwark against China, which the Biden administration regards as America's most dangerous adversary. And because China increasingly seeks to export its model of authoritarian, state-run capitalism, China also poses a unique threat to democracy, which the new administration will definitely try to weaken.

The Biden administration has inherited from Trump the premise of an 'Indo-Pacific' region with India at its core. In the recent past, as

During his first year in office, President Biden will bring together the world's democracies to strengthen the global democratic institutions, and forge a common agenda to address threats to common democratic values. Biden has explained that the so-called 'Summit for Democracy' he plans to convene later this year, will focus on fighting corruption and authoritarianism and protect human rights world over.

relations between New Delhi and Beijing soured, India strengthened its commitment to a multilateral partnership with the US, Japan and Australia, known as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, or Quad.

China has castigated this forum as an Asian version of the NATO, or one which is directly aimed against it. India, though cautious of formal alliances was initially hesitant to fully engage, as it also didn't want to sour its trade relations with Beijing.

The US considers India as "one of the most important partners in the Indo-Pacific region" and says it welcomes its emergence

as leading global power. "India is one of the most important partners in the Indo-Pacific region to us. We welcome India's emergence as a leading global power and its role as a net security provider in the region," US State Department spokesperson Ned Price said during a press briefing earlier this week.

In addition, Kurt Campbell, the China hawk whom Biden recently appointed as the 'Indo-Pacific Coordinator' at the National Security Council, has reportedly proposed forging a new system of alliances binding South and East Asia, and Asia and Europe, as well as of incorporating India, South Korea, and Australia into the G-7 to form a new 'D-10', the 10 great democracies.

This further strengthens the importance which US attaches to India but it will also keep a strict watch on the internal political developments in India, particularly related to minorities. Though the personal equation, which existed between Trump and Modi, might be missing under the new dispensation yet it may not afford to ignore India.

Also, the new administration will not be able to drastically alter its policy toward India as the US needs its help to counter China in the region and also increasingly values India as a military and trade partner.

Biden, who once spoke optimistically of China's emergence "as a great power", has become increasingly tough on Beijing, and some analysts said his administration would most likely use the Quad as a way to ensure that the balance of power in the Indo-Pacific region does not tilt too far toward China.

Still, in New Delhi there is a school of thought which feels that the new administration might not be as tough on China as the previous one and that Biden might be forced to adopt a more nuanced and less favourable position toward India.

In addition, the US has been trying unsuccessfully to increase arms sales to India, but the country's history of buying weapons from France, Israel and Russia, has complicated that effort. There is an added US concern that providing military equipment to India might help Russian military or other foreign agents to have access to the US technology.

Other issues, which might have an impact on the relationship, are the visa and climate change issues. The outgoing President had earlier this year suspended H-1B visas for high-skilled workers, a major setback for American IT sector, which employ many Indians. The US will also require the Indian support and cooperation on its initiative on climate change issues and in addition both countries are trying to hammer out a mutually beneficial Trade Agreement, which has eluded the officials so far conducting the talks.

However, there are signs that the next phase of the US-India relations will be based more on substance and less on rhetoric as India, now is able to offer much more to the us, both in military, security, trade and technological terms. The ties might not be personality oriented but focussed more on changing hard realities and individual aspirations, particularly in the post-Covid changed world.

Of Governors and responsible federalism



IN MY OPINION
V RAMU SARMA

THE institution of Governor in India has been getting mired in political controversies. When the Constituent Assembly came with the idea of creating the institution of Governor, the aim was to provide good and pure administration.

Dr Ambedkar had felt that effective performance of the elected executive should have certain checks and balances and hence there should be a chief executive called the Governor whose main role will be to protect and defend the Constitution and the law as incorporated in the oath of office under Article 159 of the Indian Constitution in the administration of the State affairs.

It was felt that this was a prerequisite and that the Governor must, in the first place, help create a perception about himself within the government as well as among the citizens of the state that he cares for good and pure administration, and is not promoting the interests of the party ruling at the Centre.

Foreseeing the possibility of misuse of the office of Governor, some of the members of the Constituent Assembly expressed reservations about the impartial functioning of a nominated Governor endowed with "discretionary powers".

But people like Jawaharlal Nehru, K M Munshi and P S Deshmukh, argued that the Governor should be a nominated head of the State with sufficient powers to discharge his constitutional duties. In a debate on June 2, 1949, P S Deshmukh opined: "After all the Governor is essentially a link between provincial autonomy and the President and the Government of India, and that function he can discharge adequately only if he has the authority to ask the Cabinet to reconsider certain things and also to keep himself informed from day to day as to what orders have been issued and what sort of administration is being carried on."

Nehru was of the opinion that Governor should be a detached figure who can rise above party politics, a person eminent in other walks of life, such as an educationist. Though in practice things proved to be different. The office of Governor came to be known as rehabilitation centre for some retired politicians.

There was also a phase where the Governors played politically motivated roles and were alleged to be the agents of the Centre by

opposition parties. It was not a mere allegation. There have been instances where complete disregard for constitutional morality was shown in many states which includes the undivided Andhra Pradesh.

Such practices continued across regimes from the United Progressive Alliance to the National Democratic Alliance, be it the wrongful dissolution of the Bihar Legislative Assembly by Governor Buta Singh in May 2005 or the constitutional crisis triggered by the unlawful advancement of the Assembly session and subsequent imposition of President's rule in Arunachal Pradesh by Governor J P Rajkhowa in 2016.

We have seen how the then Governor Ramlal dismissed the elected Chief Minister N T Rama Rao in a coup of August 16 and replaced him with Nadendla Bhaskara Rao who pledged cooperation with the Congress government led by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. We have seen how Governor Narayan Dutt Tiwari had to be pushed out of the state for certain immoral activities in Raj Bhavan.

There have been instances of Tripura Governor justifying the act of BJP supporters pulling down a statue of the leader of the Russian revolution Vladimir Lenin in Tripura, Governor Tathagata Roy tweeted: "What one democratically elected government can do another democratically elected government can undo and vice versa". The statue had stood there for the last five years in Belonia town which is about 90 kms south of the state capital Agartala. The statue was installed in 2013 at a cost of three lakh rupees by the then State government.

In the recent past we have seen the confrontation between the Rajasthan Governor and the Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on July 12, 2020 when the former deputy chief minister Sachin Pilot revolted. There were also a serious confrontation between the Chief Minister of Delhi and the Lt Governor and a situation arose when the Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal sat on dharna inside Raj Bhavan as the Governor refused to meet him. On Thursday, we have seen how the Maharashtra Government refused permission to their State Governor to use private aircraft after he had boarded the flight.

Tensions between West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee and Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar reached a flashpoint recently and angry exchanges over issues like curfew protocols, coordination on relief measures and the visit of a central team to check for coronavirus measures were witnessed. Mamata had shot off a five page letter to Dhankhar and questioned his role as a governor. She accused him of making direct attacks, in-



Nehru was of the opinion that Governor should be a detached figure who can rise above party politics, a person eminent in other walks of life, such as an educationist. Though in practice things proved to be different. The office of Governor came to be known as rehabilitation centre for some retired politicians. There was also a phase where the Governors played politically motivated roles and were alleged to be the agents of the Centre by opposition parties. It was not a mere allegation

terfering in her government's work.

Another recent confrontation between the Governor and government was in Kerala. The Governor refused to convene a special session of the Kerala Assembly that was intended to discuss the ongoing farmer protest in New Delhi.

Such instances portray the negative image of the state governors as an agent of the centre and gives an impression that the Governor's office undermines duly elected State governments.

On the other hand we have also seen some governors who were pro active and came to be known as people's governor. The first woman Governor of Andhra Pradesh Sharada Mukherjee (1977 to 1978) is one of the best examples of demonstrating the relationship between the elected executive and the gubernatorial post of governor.

Born in Rajkot, she was hailed as 'Beauty Queen' of Elphinstone College of Bombay (now Mumbai). She married the first Air Chief Marshal of Indian Airforce Subroto Mukherjee in 1939. She came to be known as people's Governor. Her concern for the people can be seen from her reaction when the state was hit by worst kind of cyclone.

A major and most devastating cyclone had ravaged many areas in the Krishna River delta region. The island of Diviseema, which was hit by a six-metre-high (20 ft) storm surge, experienced a loss of 10,000 people. Hundreds of bodies were floating in the waters and bodies bloated beyond recognition were consigned to mass pyres. Landslides ripped off the railway lines in the Waltair-Kiran-

dal route. Sharda Mukherjee broke down in tears after seeing the plight of people. She took initiative in ensuring that the State administration goes to the rescue of the people and take up rehabilitation works.

Now Tamilisai Sounderarajan, the first woman Governor of the youngest state Telangana has set a good precedent of not only being an active Governor but also creating her own style of approaching the government in getting several issues resolved and has come to be known as people's Governor.

When she was appointed as the Governor of Telangana replacing her predecessor ESL Narsimhan who had the longest tenure starting in undivided Andhra Pradesh in 2009 to 2014 and thereafter till 2019 in the newly formed state of Telangana, there were speculations that BJP government at Centre had chosen her with some political agenda.

The state government too was apprehensive and presented a cold attitude initially. But then she made it clear that she was very aware of the responsibilities of the elected government, the boundaries of the office of the Governor, the limitations and the powers of the Governor.

Still the State government was not convinced since she after assuming office had started playing active role. Being a gynaecologist by profession she started her proactive role by focussing attention on health sector. She had visited hospitals like NIMS and gave certain suggestions. The state government somehow was not very happy with her visits to hospitals. But then following few interactions the Chief Minister K Chandrababoo Naidu had with her,

Tribal feast with Telangana taste



The major attraction of the overall Haat Bazaar in post-Covid arena had a focus of immunity boosters from forest products. There were around five stalls representing the state of Telangana. Each stall had unique products that were reflecting the tribal artistic work. The jewelry made of coin metal included earrings, studs, bangles, chains, necklaces, finger rings and soon. There was an attraction of Ludo game sheet made of cloth with embroidery work and coins and dias are in

wooden handmade shape. The old five paisa and 25 paisa coins are used to design finger rings and chains which had a beautiful handmade finishing.

The two stalls at the food court attracted the visitors with spicy dishes. Hyderabad chicken biryani served with raita and mirchi ka salan, most farmers festive food of Telangana native i.e. Bagara rice with chicken masala of course the dessert was sold out kadhu ka kheer.

Apart from Telangana cuisine, a special mention of unique stall of Jharkhand with exclusive dishes made of Ragi flour like Ragi kheer, laddoo and Ragi rasgulla. And one could end the meal by having a hot khawa tea from Jammu and

Kashmir stall which suited the cold climate of Delhi.

The exhibition had captured the visitors with a short cultural performances from the tribes from various states. The Mahotsav had maintained sanitisation supply to visitors.

The saree products can be bought online on tribesindia.com but you are going to miss the Live performance of artists and the relaxation for your eyes and mind by a sight of beautiful natural colours display of products with traditional art. Soon, there will be an exclusive store of all tribal products from Telangana state at Telangana Bhavan, New Delhi.

TRIFED is a national level co-operative body established in the

year 1987 to bring about socio-economic development of tribals in the country by providing marketing opportunities at national and international markets. The state of Telangana has achieved 84.8 per cent i.e. 4325 out of 5100 targeted beneficiaries on board, in collaboration with Tribal Development, Forest Development and nodal department in Tribal Welfare department. The implementing agency is Telangana State Girijan Cooperative Corporation limited. The Van Dhan - TRIFED has a regional office in Hyderabad as a point of contact. The State is having 4 government owned retail outlets located in Hyderabad. There are 17 Vandhan Kendra's promoting many value-added products.

(The author is Assistant Director at TSIC, New Delhi, Views expressed are personal)

DR P HARSHA BHARGAVI

WITH the pandemic, every individual has a changed lifestyle, food habits and has begun seeking organic and forest products. There is huge demand for the immunity-based products especially from forest.

The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) has organised a Aadi Mahotsav in Dilli Haat from February 1-15. The Mahotsav is enthralling the visitors with exhibits of tribal handmade products, cultural events and cuisine from the states of the country. The traditional Haat Bazaar has various crafts, paintings, handmade stationary, bags, organic products, apparels and clothing, jewellery, woolen products, artefacts, products for home, pottery and soon.

TRS pays insurance claims of ₹47 cr to deceased partymen

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

UNDER the insurance scheme of the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS), the party settled claims worth Rs 47 crore to the families of the deceased party workers, said the party sources. This membership drive kicked off on Friday. During the meeting with the party's executive meeting Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao asked the MLAs to enroll as many as 80 lakh members in the State including 50,000 members for each Assembly constituency by the end of this month. Later in March the party would be taking up the formation of the committees, right from village, mandal to district level. According to the party lead-



ers, TRS has been implementing the insurance to the members since 2015-16 and this is their fifth year. The party insurance incharge also claims to have paid an insurance premium (including GST) of Rs 47.65 crore

to the insurance companies and received claims of Rs 46.84 crore, till date. The total sanctioned claims were 79 per cent as the money was given to the family members of the 2,342 deceased workers of the party.



HMTV celebrates 12th anniversary

HANS NEWS SERVICE
JUBILEE HILLS

HMTV which has successfully completed 12 years and has been the voice of the people rededicated itself to continue to stand by the people, and disseminate real news to its viewers not only across the two States but also to those who are in other parts of the world.

HMTV was launched with the idea of a regional news channel which would be a true voice of the common man and would never ally with any political outfit. It has also been focussing on fulfilling its social responsibility by taking up several people-centric programmes. Speaking on the occasion, the Chairman of Kapil group, K Vaman Rao, said that as a respon-



sible media house, HMTV should continue to strive to highlight people's voice and focus more and more on public issues. It should also see that issues of human interest get their due share in its programmes. In the last 12 years, HMTV had highlighted several im-

portant issues, he noted. Ombudsman Ch Rajeswara Rao called upon the staff to go in for more and more innovative programmes. HMTV CEO Chandrasekhar, and other board of directors including Krishnasaagar Rao participated in the programme.

GOVT TO FILL 35% SEATS IN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES

AMARAVATI

CHIEF Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy in a review meeting on higher education discussed amending AP Private University Act, 2006, and enquired about the reopening of colleges and conducting of classes post Covid-19 pandemic.

During the review at camp office at Tadepalli on Friday, the proposals were made for amendments to AP Private University Act, 2006 focusing on providing quality education to the students who are socially and financially backward and fill 35 per cent seats under government quota in private universities.

The Chief Minister directed the officials to set highest standards for newly coming up private universities and converting existing colleges into private universities.

It has been decided to introduce the amendment bill of AP Private University Act, 2006, in coming Assembly session. Discussing aided colleges, it was opined that they should be handed over to either government or private totally, if they cannot be run independently.

It was decided to introduce English as medium of instruction in all degree colleges like engineering and medical colleges. The Chief Minister directed the officials to come up with appropriate courses so that students do not get in trouble due to the immediate introduction of English as medium of instruction and introduce them in the curriculum of first year of degree course. He also directed introduction of English as medium of instruction in Intermediate education and print the textbooks in both Telugu and English languages for the convenience of students.



Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy reviews higher education at his camp office on Friday

- CM discusses amendment to AP Private Universities Act, 2006 to raise standards as well as govt quota
- Ailing aided colleges may be handed over to either govt or private varsities
- It is decided to introduce English as medium of instruction in all degree colleges like engineering and medical colleges

He said the employment opportunities will be increased for students with the government measures and it would be difficult for BA and B Com students to excel in the competitive world without English. He asked the officials to prepare a curriculum that would create employment opportunities for the students. He said awareness on basic financial activities such as stock markets should be created among B Com students which will create scope for self-employment. Good courses are available online and directed the officials to add those courses in the curriculum.

The Chief Minister said revolutionary changes will come up in education and skill sectors with introduction of unlimited internet access in every village along with providing laptops to students at affordable prices through schemes like Amma Vodi and Vasati Devana. He said there should be no place for recommendations in university recruitments and they should be conducted transparently and qualified staff should be present in universities. The Chief Minister has approved for Wi-Fi protocol project for online learning. Connection can be

given for up to 500 users simultaneously through remote device. The range of each remote device is 100 metre. Connection can be made through laptop, tab and TV. Data can be transferred in seconds. Devices can use that facility even after the internet facility is available.

Higher education principal secretary Satish Chandra, AP Higher Education Regulatory and Monitoring Commission (APHERMC) chairperson Justice V Eshwaraiah, APHERMC chairman K Hemachandra Reddy and other officials were present.

After stray dogs, 'meow' menace troubles people

M M FAROOQUI
HYDERABAD

AFTER the stray dog menace, the next big nuisance is cat menace for the residents as the civic body is receiving galore of complaints from citizens across the city. However, the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) veterinary wing is showing its reluctance in taking concrete steps to control the growing cat menace.

The ever-increasing cat population has now turned a big nuisance in residential areas, as at least a dozen cats can be seen on an average in bylanes in different parts of the city. Residents are now claiming that cats are not much harmful or dangerous, but they are creating issues in localities and causing issues of hygiene. "No doubt that cats are cute and most favorable domestic animals, but the stray cats are troublemakers.



A police officer is seen taking action as minors violated traffic rules. A challan of Rs 10,000 was imposed on them, near GHMC head office on Friday.

Photo: Ch Prabhu Das

Voter enrolment for teachers MLC polls till today

AMARAVATI: VOTER enrolment for teachers MLC elections will conclude by February 13, according to Chief Electoral Officer K Vijayanand.

It may be noted that the Election Commission of India issued notification for two teacher MLC posts as the term of East and West Godavari, Krishna Guntur MLC constituencies will end soon.

SRM inks MoU with TANUVAS for joint research

HANS NEWS SERVICE
KATTANKULATHUR

SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Kattankulathur, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (TANUVAS).

The MoU was between the Department of Food Process Engineering, School of Bioengineering, SRMIST and College of Food

and Dairy Technology, Koduvalli, TANUVAS.

As per the MoU, both institutes will have a broad scope to carry out faculty and student exchange programmes and to conduct training and research activities for a shorter duration. The area will be extended to joint research activities to explore opportunities to undertake research projects and seek

research funding from external funding agencies. This agreement will also facilitate to conduct joint academic events such as short courses, seminars, workshops, or conferences based on mutual interests and available expertise in both the institutions. Both institutes can share and carry out joint research in technology for distance and computer-based learning.

Kodali Nani confident of YSRCP sweep in GP polls

HANS NEWS SERVICE
TADEPALLI

CIVIL supplies minister Kodali Sri Venkateswara Rao (Nani) said that no one can stop the winning spree of YSRCP supporters and expressed confidence that they will win over 11,000 of the total 13,000 sarpanch seats.

Addressing a press conference at the party headquarters here on Friday, the minister said that TDP leaders were carrying out false propaganda on polls to divert public attention for political gains. He said that TDP president N Chandrababu Naidu was never concerned about the villages or the public welfare which reflected in the first phase results. The minister stated that it was the Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's governance that was driving the YSRCP on a winning spree in all local body elections and added that the TDP cadre itself would abandon Chandrababu after the results.

Speaking in regard to door delivery of ration supplies, Kodali Nani said that Andhra Pradesh was the only state in the country to distribute sorTeX rice and door delivery of ration supplies. Although the Chief Minister took this initiative with 9,260 vehicles, creating employment for thousands of people from backward communities, TDP leaders were intentionally politicising this by holding back its implementation at the village level. The minister said that the scheme was rolled out on February 1, but citing the model code of conduct, a few political parties with the support of SEC N Ramesh Kumar had stopped the implementation in rural areas.



Minister for Civil Supplies Kodali Venkateswara Rao (Nani) addressing the press conference at YSRCP Central Office in Tadepalli on Friday

- Says the party will win more than 11,000 of total 13,000 gram panchayats
- Blames TDP and SEC Ramesh Kumar for allegedly depriving ration door delivery in rural areas in the name of Model Code

SEC issues notice to Kodali Nani on comments

- Minister in his response expresses 'highest' regard to Constitutional bodies, including SEC
- Explains his remarks were in context of his criticism of TDP regarding Phase-1 panchayat polls

AMARAVATI

THE State Election Commission (SEC) issued show-cause notice to minister for civil supplies Kodali Sri Venkateswara Rao (Nani) for his derogatory remarks on State Election Commissioner N Ramesh Kumar during a media conference at YSRCP party office earlier in the day. The SEC stated that the utterances of the minister

were in a manner intended to lowering the esteem of the commission and made with malafide intention. The commissioner N Ramesh Kumar sought immediate explanation from the minister. In response, the minister in a letter addressed to State Election Commissioner stated that he had highest regard for constitutional bodies and SEC. He said that he conducted a media conference to explain the atrocities of TDP leaders during phase-I panchayat elections only. He said that he has no intention of degrading the State Election Commissioner and requested the SEC to withdraw the show-cause notice.

The minister slammed the opposition leaders for creating hurdles and spreading irrelevant news through their selected media houses. He said that only 2,067 of a total of 9,260 vehicles are be-

ing used to deliver the supplies confining to urban areas. He assured that the government would rectify any technical glitches involved in the scheme gradually and take the scheme forward.

‘Family pension upper ceiling raised from ₹45k to ₹1.25L per month’

The move will bring ease of living for the family members of the deceased employees and would provide adequate financial security to them. A surviving child is eligible for two family pensions in respect of the deceased parents

NEW DELHI

UNION minister Jitendra Singh on Friday said that in a far-reaching reform regarding family pensions the upper ceiling has been raised from Rs 45,000 to Rs 1.25 lakh per month. He said the move will bring "ease of living" for the family members of the deceased employees and would provide adequate financial security to them. The minister said that the Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare (DoPPW) has issued a clarification on the amount admissible in case a child is eligible to draw two family pensions after death of his or her parents. "The amount of both the family pensions will now be restricted to Rs 1,25,000 per month, which is over two and half times higher than the earlier limit," said Singh, the

Minister of State for Personnel. In accordance with sub-rule (11) of rule 54 of the Central Civil Services (Pension) Rules 1972, in case both wife and husband are government servants and are governed by the provisions of that rule, on their death, the surviving child is eligible for two family pensions in respect of the deceased parents, a statement issued by the Personnel Ministry said. Earlier instructions laid down that the total amount of two family pensions in such cases, shall not exceed to Rs 45,000 per month and Rs 27,000 per month, which were determined at the rate of 50 per cent and 30 per cent, respectively taking into account of the highest pay of Rs 90,000 as per the sixth Central Pay Commission (CPC) recommendations, it said. Since the highest pay has been revised to Rs 2,50,000 per month after the im-



plementation of the seventh CPC recommendations, therefore the amount prescribed in Rule 54(11) of CCS (Pension) Rules has also been revised to Rs 1,25,000 per month being 50 per cent of Rs 2,50,000 and Rs 75,000 per month being 30 per cent of Rs 2,50,000, the statement said. The above clarification has been issued on the references received from various ministry/department, it said. As per the existing rule, if parents are government servants and one of them dies while in service or after retirement, the family pension in respect of the deceased shall become payable to the surviving spouse and in the event of the death of the spouse, the child shall be granted two family pensions in respect of the deceased parents subject to fulfilment of other eligibility conditions, the statement said.

Army chief: Rising China’s footprints major concerns

NEW DELHI

INDIAN Army Chief General MM Naravane said on Friday that the country's failure to keep its promises on connectivity and security to its neighbours, coupled with China's rising footprints are major concerns for the region. "The rising footprints of China in India's neighbourhood and its attempts to unilaterally alter the status quo along the disputed borders have created an environment of confrontation and mutual distrust," General Naravane said. The Army chief said that regional and internal connectivity is acutely linked to security. Talking about the Northeast and the prevailing situation in the region, Naravane said, "It is vital to unleash the potential of Northeast and balance the influence of China." He pointed out that with the failure to deliver on promises, delivery deficit has plagued India's efforts to improve regional connectivity. The Kaladan Multi-modal Transport Project and the Trilateral Highway have both seen cost and time overruns, he pointed out. Talking about China, Naravane stated that the security environment is characterised by Chinese belligerence in the Indo-Pacific, its hostility towards weaker nations and relentless drive to create regional dependencies through initiatives like the 'Belt and Road Initiative'. The resultant Sino-US rivalry has created regional imbalance and instability, the Army chief said. On Nepal, Naravane said the neighbouring



country, which is India's long-term partner and has witnessed heavy Chinese investment, is going through a period of political volatility. "While Bhutan has been cautious in its approach, we have seen an upswing in our relations with Bangladesh," he added. This year, India is celebrating the Swarnim Vijay Varsh to commemorate its victory over Pakistan in the 1971 War for Liberation of Bangladesh. The sight of the tri-service contingent from Bangladesh marching down Rajpath on Republic Day bodes well for India's future relations, although growing radicalisation in the society remains a serious concern. The ongoing dynamics in these neighbouring countries directly impact the security environment in the Northeast.

China bans BBC

BEIJING

IN an apparent tit for tat move, China has banned BBC World News from broadcasting in the country for seriously violating its guidelines for reporting, China's television and radio regulator has announced. The move comes a week after Ofcom, the British media regulator, revoked the license of Chinese state-owned broadcaster China Global Television Network's (CGTN) to broadcast in the UK. China has criticised the BBC for its reporting on the deadly coronavirus pandemic and the persecution of ethnic minority Uighurs in the restive Xinjiang province and lodged a protest with the British broadcaster. The BBC said it was "disappointed" by China's decision to ban it. The Chinese regulator, the National Radio and Television Administration (NRTA) has made the announcement on Thursday night on pulling BBC World News off the air in the country for serious content violation. NRTA said BBC World News was found to have seriously violated regulations on radio and television management and on overseas satellite television channel management in its China-related reports, state-run Xinhua news agency reported. The BBC coverage went against the requirements that news reporting must be "true and impartial, and undermined China's national interests and ethnic solidarity," it said.

PM Modi threatens farmers but ceded territory to China: Rahul

Not conceded any territory to China: Govt

Ask grandpa who gave land to China: Min

JAIPUR/NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday of trying to clear the path for his "friends" through the three new farm laws, saying he is threatening farmers when he cannot stand up to China. Addressing a farmers' "mahapanchayat" in Pilibanga town of Rajasthan's Hanumangarh district, Gandhi claimed the laws will impact 40 per cent of Indians. After demonetisation and the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), the new farm laws are another blow to the people of the country, he said. He also referred to the India-China agreement on disengagement of troops in east Ladakh, alleging that the Modi government ceded territory between fingers 3 and 4 on the banks of Pangong lake. "He would not stand before China but threatens farmers. This is the reality of Narendra Modi," Gandhi charged. Gandhi said the new laws do not affect just the farmers, adding that his party will ensure that they are



withdrawn. "Forty percent people who include farmers, traders and labourers will be hit by the implementation of the laws," he claimed. "Later, it came to be known that loans of three or four persons were waived and your money went to the banks," he said. "After this, the GST was implemented, which was an attack on small and midsize businesses. Naren-

dra Modi wants to clear the way for his friends," Gandhi alleged, without naming anyone but apparently referring to big businesses. "The first law is meant to finish the mandi system. The second law is about unlimited hoarding. It means one person can control prices. When this starts, top rich businessmen of this country will start hoarding," he said. The third law is about snatching the right of farmers to seek justice, he claimed. "The objective of the laws is to shift the business of 40 percent people to two or three people. What will happen to those who sell grain, fruit and vegetables on roads if only one company starts selling grain, fruits or vegetables of the entire country?" he said. The government on Friday strongly objected to the misinformation in media and its amplification on social media on the disengagement of Indian and Chinese troops. Minister of State (MoS) for Home Affairs G Kishan Reddy said Rahul must ask Nehru (grandpa) about who has given up India's territory to China.



A municipal worker clears snow as an honor guard soldier stands in his station at the Tomb of Unknown Soldier in Moscow on Friday

Three cow slaughterers arrested

NOIDA

THREE alleged cow slaughterers were held in Uttar Pradesh's Greater Noida after a gunfight with the police, officials said on Friday. The three accused were injured during the exchange of fire, they said. A calf was also rescued from their possession following the gunfight that broke out late Thursday night near Sector Omnicron 1, Greater Noida Deputy Commissioner of Police Rajesh Kumar Singh said. Among those held, one was carrying a reward of Rs 25,000 on his arrest, Singh said, adding the police have recovered slaughtering tools like chopping knives, rope, intoxicants and syringes from the accused. "They were in a car when the local Dadri police intercepted them. An exchange of fire took place between the two sides in which the trio got injured while two more of their associates managed to escape from the spot. A search operation has been launched for their arrest also," DCP Singh said. Those held have been identified as Jameel, Rizvan, both from Hapur district, and Waseem, who hails from Ghaziabad, the police said. Three illegal firearms along with some ammunition have also been seized from their possession, the police added. Singh said the Dadri police station had announced an award of Rs 25,000 on Jameel.

‘Inter-caste marriages may reduce caste and community tensions’

NEW DELHI

INTER-CASTE marriages will possibly reduce caste and community tensions, the Supreme Court has said while noting that the educated younger boys and girls are now a days choosing their life partners which is a departure from earlier societal norms. The top court said that youngsters face threats from the elders and the courts have been coming to the aid of these youngsters. It said the way forward to the police authorities is to counsel the Investigating Officers (IO) and lay down some guidelines and training programmes on how to handle such socially sensitive cases. The remarks came by a bench of Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and Hrishikesh Roy which quashed an FIR lodged by the parents of the girl, who had married a boy of her choice against the wishes of elders, at Belgavai district of Karnataka. The top court in its recent verdict said that it hopes that the parents of the girl will have a better sense to accept the marriage and re-establish

social interaction not only with her but even with her husband. "That, in our view, is the only way forward. Under the garb of caste and community to alienate the child and the son-in-law will hardly be a desirable social exercise," the bench told the parents of the girl, who has sought quashing of the FIR lodged against her. The top court said, "Educated younger boys and girls are choosing their life partners which, in turn is a departure from the earlier norms of society where caste and community play a major role. Possibly, this is the way forward where caste and community tensions will reduce by such inter marriage but in the meantime these youngsters face threats from the elders and the Courts have been coming to the aid of these youngsters." Referring to earlier verdicts of the top courts, the bench said it has been held that the consent of the family or the community or the clan is not necessary once the two adult individuals agree to enter into wedlock and that their consent has to be piously given primacy.



Case against comedian: Two get interim bail

INDORE

THE Madhya Pradesh High Court on Friday granted interim bail to two men accused of organising a comedy show in Indore, during which stand-up comedian Munawar Faruqui allegedly insulted Hindu deities. Faruqui, who was arrested on January 1 and was in jail since January 2, was set free on bail last week. A single bench of the high court comprising Justice Rohit Arya granted bail to the two co-accused Prakhar Vyas and Adwin Anthony. In two separate orders that ran identical, Justice Arya observed, "The applicant is held entitled for temporary bail maintaining parity in light of the order of February 5 passed by the Supreme Court (granting bail to Faruqui)." "Accordingly, applicant is hereby enlarged on temporary bail on the conditions to the satisfaction of the trial court, with further condition that applicant shall not indulge himself in any such activity subversive to public order," the order stated. Comedian Faruqui and five others involved in organising the show in Indore were arrested following a complaint by Eklavya Singh Gaud, son of local BJP MLA Malini Laxman Singh Gaud. The MLA's son had alleged that objectionable comments were made about Hindu deities and Union Home Minister Amit Shah during the show held on January 1.

Cops drop Pichai’s name from FIR

VARANASI

POLICE in Uttar Pradesh's Varanasi had booked Google CEO Sundar Pichai and 17 others over a video that allegedly defamed Prime Minister Narendra Modi but later removed the tech giant officials' names from the FIR, police officials said on Friday. The names of Pichai and three other Google top officials were removed after they were found "not involved" in the case, a police official privy to the probe told PTI over the phone. The FIR was lodged following a complaint by a local resident who claimed that he got over 8,500 threat calls on his mobile phone after he objected to the video that he first came across in a WhatsApp group and later on YouTube, where it has over five lakh views, the officials

said. Besides the US-based Pichai, others named in the FIR are three Google India officials including Sanjay Kumar Gupta, according to the FIR lodged at Bhelupur police station on February 6. Google's response over the case is awaited. Among the rest named in the FIR are Ghazipur district-based musicians who allegedly made the video song, a recording studio and a local music label company. The FIR has been lodged under Indian Penal Code sections 504 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of the peace), 506 (criminal intimidation), 500 (defamation), 120B (party to a criminal conspiracy). Charges under the Information Technology Act's section 67 (publishing or transmitting obscene material) have also been invoked against the accused, according to the FIR, which has been accessed by PTI.

Padmanabhaswamy Temple panel tells Supreme Court

‘Can’t pay ₹11.7 crore to Kerala govt due to Covid-19 crisis’

NEW DELHI

ADMINISTRATIVE committee of Padmanabhaswamy Temple in Thiruvananthapuram on Friday informed the Supreme Court that it is unable to pay Rs 11.7 crore to the Kerala government due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The committee has to reimburse the amount to the state for security and maintenance-related expenses. The committee further said there had been a severe impact on donations due to pandemic,

and sought more time to pay the amount. The said committee was formed by the court in July last year to look after temple-related affairs till arrangements are made by the former royal family of Travancore, as reported by NDTV. "Let the (Kerala) government consider the request," a two-judge bench of Justices UU Lalit and Indu Malhotra said, while making it clear that all its earlier orders in the matter had been followed. The court also said that it will examine the audit report of the Padmanabhaswamy Temple in mid-September.

In July last year, the Supreme Court reversed the 2011 Kerala High Court judgement after they upheld the rights of the former royal family to run the administration of the famous Padmanabhaswamy Temple. The temple was earlier controlled by the state government after the Kerala High Court decision. The tiff around the maintenance and legal rights of the historic temple has been going on for years. The famed Lord Padmanabha Swamy temple re-opened on August 26 after remained closed for several months due to coronavirus.



TODAY'S QUOTE

Centre spends ₹7.95 cr to bust farm laws myths

The Centre has spent over Rs 7.95 crore in five months till January for a publicity campaign to bust myths about the new farm laws, Out of this, the Information and Broadcasting Ministry committed Rs 7.25,57,246 for release of advertisements between September 2020 and January 2021 on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

— Narendra Singh Tomar, Union Minister



LOSS

IFCI posts net loss of ₹718 cr in Q3

Infrastructure term lender IFCI Ltd on Friday reported a consolidated net loss of Rs 717.99 crore for the third quarter ended December, as expenses ballooned amid a drop in income. The company had posted net profit of Rs 335.38 crore in the same period a year ago.

FOREX (buy rates in ₹)			
US Dollar	77.1	South	
Euro	92.45	African Rand	5.7
UAE Dirham	21.78	Hong Kong Dollar	10.79
Thai Baht	2.79	Japanese Yen	0.8
British Pound	104.27	New Zealand Dollar	54.9
Australian Dollar	59.01	Saudi Riyal	21.32
Canadian Dollar	59.92	Swedish Krona	10.04
Swiss Franc	84.76	Singapore Dollar	57.53

DELHI SATURDAY 13 FEBRUARY 2021

BIZ BRIEFS

TAFE unveils tractor series

TAFE Tractors and Farm Equipment Limited launched its new DYNATRACK series, an advanced range of tractors that offers dynamic performance, sophisticated technology, unmatched utility and versatility, all engineered into a single powerful tractor. The product is designed to deliver greater productivity while ensuring good mileage, durability and comfort. The equipment provides an extendable wheelbase, which makes it ideally suitable for agricultural, haulage and commercial applications for around-the-year usage. Malika Srinivasan, CMD, TAFE, said: "The DYNATRACK series from TAFE sets new benchmarks in the tractor industry by offering utility and versatility, comfort and safety, productivity and efficiency, to meet the ever-evolving needs and aspirations of modern-day farmers and rural entrepreneurs"

Reliance Jewels' new collection

Reliance Jewels has launched its new Valentine's Day collection 'Eternity'. The collection encapsulates the spirit of eternal love. The Eternity collection signifies the love and affinity that will eternalise your feeling for your loved ones. The collection comprises magnificent stylish rings, pendants and earrings crafted in 14kt gold-studded with exquisite diamonds that are a feast to the eyes and is perfect for the modern Indian woman of today. "When we gift jewellery to someone, it is always very special. It is meant to be an expression of love, commitment, and other inexplicable emotions, a symbol of affection and lifelong commitment. This is exactly what we wanted to express through our new collection Eternity," the company said in a statement.

Factory output grows 1% in Dec, enters positive zone

NEW DELHI

INDUSTRIAL production grew by 1 per cent in December, entering the positive territory after a gap of one month, mainly due to better performance of the manufacturing sector, official data showed on Friday.

The manufacturing sector -- which constitutes 77.63 per cent of the index of industrial production (IIP) -- recorded a growth of 1.6 per cent in December 2020, as per the data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO).

Mining sector output declined by 4.8 per cent in December 2020. However, power generation grew by 5.1 per cent. The index had grown by 0.4 per cent in December 2019. The industrial production had plunged 18.7 per cent in March last year following the Covid-19 outbreak and remained in the negative zone till August 2020.

With the resumption of economic activities, factory output posted growth of one per cent in September. The IIP had grown by 4.2 per cent in October. In November 2020, the factory output contracted by 2.1



per cent, a tad higher than the provisional estimates of 1.9 per cent decline. The government had imposed a lockdown to contain the spread of Covid-19 infections on March 25, 2020. With the gradual relaxation of restrictions, there has been a relative improvement in the economic activities by varying degrees as well as in data reporting, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation had said in a statement issued in November.

The ministry had also given a

disclaimer that it may not be appropriate to compare the IIP in the post-pandemic months with the data for the months preceding the Covid-19 outbreak.

The manufacturing sector had recorded a contraction of 0.3 per cent in December 2019. Mining sector output increased by 5.7 per cent, but electricity generation shrank by 0.1 per cent in December 2019. The output of capital goods, which is a barometer of investment, rose by 0.6 per cent in December 2020 as against a contraction of

18.3 per cent. Consumer durables output surged by 4.9 per cent, compared to 5.6 per cent contraction in December 2019. Consumer non-durable goods production grew by two per cent, compared to a contraction of 3.2 per cent a year ago. The IIP for the April-December period has contracted by 13.5 per cent, according to the data. It had registered a flat growth of 0.3 per cent during the same period last fiscal.

Inflation eases 4.06% in Jan RETAIL inflation eased to 4.06 per cent in January, mainly on account of a decline in vegetable prices, as per government data released on Friday.

The inflation based on Consumer Price Index (CPI) was 4.59 per cent in December 2020. The rate of price rise in the food basket was 1.89 per cent in January, significantly down from 3.41 per cent in December, revealed the data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO). The Reserve Bank, which mainly factors in the retail inflation while arriving at its monetary policy, has been asked to keep CPI inflation at 4 per cent (+, - 2 per cent).

Chanda Kochhar granted bail in Videocon loan case

MUMBAI

A court here on Friday granted bail to former ICICI Bank CEO and Managing Director Chanda Kochhar with a rider that she cannot leave the country with its permission.

Kochhar on Friday appeared before the Special PMLA court in connection with the ICICI-Videocon loan case here and applied for a bail through her lawyer Vijay Agarwal. The court granted her bail on a bond of Rs 5 lakh.

"There is no material with the ED against her. Technically speaking she cannot be accused in that case," Agarwal said. "Moreover she is a woman and has cooperated during investigation, so she is covered by the provision under section 45 of the PMLA," he added. The case pertains to alleged irregularities in sanctioning six loans worth Rs 1,875 crore to Videocon Industries Ltd, Videocon International Electronics Ltd and four other companies associated with the Videocon group between June 2009 and October 2011.

Chanda was on the sanctioning committee deciding two loans - Rs 300 crore to Videocon International Electronics on Au-

The case pertains to alleged irregularities in sanctioning six loans worth ₹1,875 crore to Videocon Industries, Videocon International Electronics and four other companies associated with the Videocon group between June 2009 and October 2011

gust 26, 2009 and Rs 750 crore to Videocon Industries Limited on October 31, 2011. The loans were issued in the alleged violation of the laid-down policy and regulations of the bank. The term loan of Rs 300 crore sanctioned to VIEL was disbursed on September 7, 2009. The next day, Dhoot transferred Rs 64 crore to NuPower Renewables Ltd through Supreme Energy Private Ltd founded by him.

The ED had arrested her husband Deepak Kochhar in September last year.

FLO organises annual meet

HYDERABAD

FLO organised its annual interstate meet "Vagyre Dhol" under the presidency of Tarunaben Patel at Ahmedabad on February 9 to 11, hosted by the Ahmedabad Chapter. The event saw the participation of over 100 women entrepreneurs from across the country led by FLO National President Jahnabi Phookan. Over 100 entrepreneurs and professional members from Ahmedabad and 12 pan-India Chapters attended the meet. Actresses Deepti Bhatnagar and Pooja Batra, District Collector Anand and RG Gohil were the guests of honour at the inauguration meet. "The Interstate meet is a common platform for experience-sharing, showcasing, mentoring and networking of our dynamic pan-India members. Our objective is to bring together women entrepreneurs and professionals from Delhi and 17 Chapters across India and provide a perfect milieu for exchange of ideas and meeting of the minds," said Jahnabi Phookan, National President, FICCI Ladies Organisation.

Tenet gets NABL accreditation

HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

City-based Tenet Diagnostics, became the first medical imaging facility in the country that has been granted accreditation by the National accreditation board, called NABL. The board is a part of Quality Council of India (QCI). The accreditation conforms to ISO 15189:2012.

This unique accreditation status, has been a result of the sustained focus by Tenet Diagnostics on matching service, quality, technical competency, client safety with international standards, on par with the best in the

world. With a specific focus on research and development as well as adapting to innovations in medical practices have driven Tenet to be India's first NABL-I accredited diagnostic facility in medical imaging.

This accreditation is recognized internationally by 76 accreditation bodies and in 64 economies, propelling the medical imaging facility onto the world stage. Tenet Diagnostics Chairman D Suresh's vision has been to create a truly world class facility competing with the world's best and propelling India and Telangana into the forefront of diagnostic care.

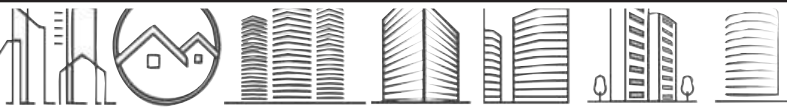
Markets end flat after choppy trade; post weekly gains

MUMBAI

DOMESTIC equity benchmarks Sensex and Nifty ended flat after choppy trade on Friday, tracking weak cues from global markets.

Participants also remained on the sidelines ahead of key macroeconomic data releases amid lack of fresh buying triggers, traders said. The 30-share BSE Sensex gyrated 543.96 points before closing 12.78 points or 0.02 per cent higher at its new closing record of 51,544.30. The broader NSE Nifty, however, slipped 10 points or 0.07 per cent to 15,163.30. During the week, the Sensex surged 812.67 points or

1.60 per cent, while the Nifty advanced 239.05 points or 1.60 per cent. ICICI Bank was the top gainer in the Sensex pack on Friday, spurring 2.67 per cent, followed by Axis Bank, Infosys, HDFC, SBI, Bajaj Finserv and HDFC Bank. On the other hand, ITC was the biggest laggard, tumbling 3.97 per cent, a day after the FMCG-to-tobacco major reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 3,587.20 crore for the December quarter, compared to Rs 4,047.87 crore in the year-ago period. Other losers included Sun Pharma, ONGC, Bharti Airtel, Titan and NTPC, shedding up to 2.53 per cent.



REAL CORNER



Prestige Group, Awfis to set up 6 co-working centres

The centres, spread over 2 lakh sqft, will come up at Hyderabad, Bengaluru & Chennai

NEW DELHI

REALTY firm Prestige Group has tied up with co-working operator Awfis to set up six centres, comprising around 4,000 desks, in Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Chennai with an investment of about Rs 40 crore.

Bengaluru-based Prestige Group and Awfis will jointly invest to set up these centres and also share revenues. These six centres, spread over 2 lakh square feet area, will come up at Prestige Group's commercial properties in the three cities.

"The total investment in setting up these six centres is around Rs 40 crore. Both the partners are investing," Awfis Founder and CEO Amit Ramani, said. He said all these centres will be operational between April and July this year. Ramani said the company will target not just startups and SMEs but also mid- and large-sized corporations looking to decentralise their workplaces amidst the new normal.

"This partnership will help us to accelerate our plans to strengthen our office portfolio and increasing our offering to our large clients, while leveraging the strength of Awfis' proven credibility in the co-working space across India," said Juggy Marwaha, CEO,



Prestige Office Ventures. He remained bullish about the growth prospects of the Indian office market. Of the six centres, four are located in Bengaluru's prime commercial locations, namely Koramangala, Outer Ring Road and two in Whitefield. The other two centres are at Guindy in Chennai and Begumpet in Hyderabad. Prestige Group has completed 112 commercial projects spread across 36 million square feet and is developing 24 projects



spread across 42 million square feet in some of the major cities of the country. In November, Prestige Estates Projects announced sale of large portfolio of office, re-

tail and hotel properties to global investment firm Blackstone for an enterprise value of Rs 9,160 crore. Awfis currently has 75 centres and 40,000 seats across 11 cities. (PTI)

Panchshil Realty brings SOHO concept to Pune

PUNE

PANCHSHIL Realty today announced that it has launched Pune's first-ever Small-Office Home-Office (SOHO) development branded as SOHO in Pune's eastern IT corridor near the World Trade Centre and EON Free Zone Pune. SOHO is a RERA registered project. Small-Office Home-Office is a popular global concept featuring multi-use spaces in which living spaces are offered and integrated along with work spaces with a sprinkling of retail and food and beverage options available in the same development.

The categories in SOHO are: SOHO Studios - Duplex spaces combining a work area and a living area; Soho Works - Boutique office spaces; Soho Street- Retail shopping and fine dining spaces. Commenting on the debut of the SOHO concept in Pune, Sagar Chordia, Director, Panchshil Realty, said, "SOHO is a pioneering initiative that provides flexible, multi-functional and mixed-use spaces that allow you to do more within the same space by reinventing the utilization of spaces. The response to the launch has been fantastic and many professionals like doctors, chartered accountants, architects, small business owners and other entrepreneurs have embraced the concept readily."

Co-locating workspaces with living spaces is a more sustainable and smart way of living that allows people to be more productive and efficient whilst eliminating commuting time. SOHO Studios are available for sale from Rs 17.2 million onwards.

BAI protests against sharp rise in cement, steel prices

NEW DELHI

THE Builders Association of India (BAI) staged a day-long strike on Friday at construction sites alleging price cartelisation in cement and steel industry.

The association demanded that the government appoint regulatory authorities in these two industries. The BAI staged nationwide dharna and day-long strike on Friday to attract the attention of the government authorities towards "cartelisation and unnatural price hike by cement and steel manufacturers", the association said. The strike at project sites was observed from 10 am to 1 pm with prior intimation to the state authorities of the respective governments, it added. The association demanded im-



mediate appointment of a regulatory authority in cement and steel industry to curb the "unethical practices" which ultimately hamper the common man.

The call for the dharna and strike was given to all its stakeholders across the country during the meetings of the office bearers of BAI on January 13, 2021 and February 4, 2021.

BAI is an apex all-India body of engineering construction contractors and real estate companies founded in 1941.



Greater West City Builders Association, Hyderabad, recently released its diary for 2021. C Prabhakar Rao (2nd from right), Telangana Builders' Federation (TBF), released the diary at an event in Hyderabad. K Raja Reddy (1st from right), president, Greater West City Builders Association, Hyd and other office bearers of the association, were present on the occasion.

2nd Test
Hosts likely to replace left-arm spinner Shahbaz Nadeem with Axar Patel while England make four changes, bring

in Moeen, Broad, Foakes & either Woakes or Stone

INDIA EYE WIN TO STAY ALIVE IN RACE OF WTC FINAL

CHENNAI

SKIPPER Virat Kohli's captaincy will be under scanner again as India will look to level the ongoing four-match series against England in the second Test beginning on Saturday here at the MA Chidambaram Stadium to keep alive their chances of qualifying for the World Test Championship (WTC) final.

India need to win two Test matches and also the series in order to face New Zealand in the WTC final to be held at Lord's, London in June.

If England win the second Test, India will be out and the fight for the place in the final will be between Australia and England.

India under Kohli have lost two Tests in the last two months whereas they won two out of three Tests in Australia in Ajinkya Rahane's leadership in the same period. There have already

been calls for Rahane to take over Test captaincy and another loss could see the calls growing louder. The Joe Root-led side has made four changes from the team that played the first Test as a result of an injury, lack of form and rotation policy.

James Anderson has been replaced by Stuart Broad as part of rotation policy. Dom Bess has been left out due to poor form in second innings of first Test and replaced by Moeen Ali while wicket-keeper Ben Foakes comes in place of Jos Buttler who has flown back to England also as part of the rotation policy.

One of either Chris Woakes or Olly Stone will replace Jofra Archer who is out with a shoulder niggle.

India, meanwhile, are likely to replace left-arm spinner Shahbaz Nadeem with Axar Patel who is now fit to play. Axar was injured in the first Test which England won by 227 runs.

The key to India will be stopping Joe Root who scored a double century and helped England build a huge total. Root's 218 had helped England score 578 and put pressure on India who conceded a 241-run lead in the first innings and were put on the backfoot. The second Test will be played on a black soil pitch that has not been watered for days.

SQUAD

ENGLAND: Dom Sibley, Rory Burns, Dan Lawrence, Joe Root (c), Ben Stokes, Ollie Pope, Ben Foakes, Moeen Ali, Stuart Broad, Chris Woakes, Jack Leach, Olly Stone.

INDIA: Virat Kohli (c), Rohit Sharma, Mayank Agarwal, Shubman Gill, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane, KL Rahul, Hardik Pandya, Rishabh Pant (wicket-keeper), Wriddhiman Saha (wk), R Ashwin, Kuldeep Yadav, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Ishant Sharma, Jasprit Bumrah, Md. Siraj, Shardul Thakur.

Match starts at 9.30am

“On social media, every radio station, every television channel and every news channel, there are very deep discussions around what should happen. Captaining your country is very difficult and unfortunately this is the nature of the beast. It's one more distraction that Kohli doesn't need but he is, of course, capable of leading his side to a victory in the second Test to quieten things down a bit — KEVIN PIETERSEN Former England captain

Last chance saloon for Chennaiyin as they face Goa

BAMBOLIM (Goa)

FC Goa face Chennaiyin FC who are fighting to stay alive in the Indian Super League (ISL) here on Saturday. While Chennaiyin would still need other results to go their way to reach the top-four if they win this match, a defeat to Goa on Friday would be the end of their challenge.

To get anything against Goa, Chennaiyin need to score goals from somewhere. They are second in the league in terms of shots at the goal and third in terms of chances created, but somehow they have contrived to score the least number of goals. They haven't scored in 10 of the 17 games they have played and haven't netted in more than 10 hours of football.

Even if Chennaiyin win, qualification is still a stretch with multiple permutations needing to work in their favour. But at

RESULT

SC East Bengal draw with Hyderabad FC 1-1

this point, coach Csaba Laszlo knows that all his team can do right now is win whatever games they are left with.

“We had a big chance to win the game against Jamshedpur. They had just one shot on target but unfortunately we conceded an own goal and lost a game at the last minute. This is very painful because we had good chances to score and win the game. But we have to take it how it is and we have to concentrate on the next three games. It is most important that we go out against Goa and play for the club and show that we are still a good team,” said Laszlo.

TODAY'S MATCH

Chennaiyin FC vs FC Goa
GMC Stadium Bambolim 7.30pm

ISL STANDINGS

CLUB	M	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
Mumbai City FC	16	10	4	2	25	11	14	34
ATK Mohun Bagan	16	10	3	3	22	10	12	33
Hyderabad FC	17	5	9	3	21	17	4	24
FC Goa	16	5	8	3	24	19	5	23
NorthEast United FC	16	5	8	3	21	20	1	23
Jamshedpur FC	17	5	6	6	16	19	-3	21
Bengaluru FC	17	4	7	6	19	21	-2	19
Chennaiyin FC	17	3	8	6	11	17	-6	17
SC East Bengal	17	3	8	6	15	22	-7	17
Kerala Blasters FC	17	3	7	7	22	29	-7	16
Odisha FC	16	1	6	9	16	27	-11	9

World Para Athletics Grand Prix

India bag 2 golds among 5 medals on Day 2

DUBAI

INDIAN para-athletes continued their good show at the 12th Fazza International World Para Athletics Grand Prix winning five medals, including two golds, on the second day of the competitions.

Para-athlete Simran got closer to her Paralympic dream as she clinched the gold medal in women's 100m T13 final, clocking 12.74 seconds. This was her second international medal after the China Grand Prix in 2019.

“It feels very good to finally compete internationally. Almost after two years, I was competing in an event. Though I had felt some pain in my hamstring, this is a recurring injury,” said the visually impaired athlete from Delhi.

“My dream is to break the world record at the Tokyo

2020 Paralympic Games. I am targeting 11.40secs. I will work harder to better my timing now,” she added.

Meanwhile, 36-year-old Neeraj Yadav hurled the discus to a distance of 35.49m to take the gold in men's discus throw F55.

In men's long jump final T44, Praveen Kumar (5.95m) and Pardeep (5.73m) claimed the second and third positions with jumps of 5.95m and 5.73m, respectively and finishing Kantanan Khumphong (5.50m in T63).

It was a combined T44/63 event.

Among others, Bhagyashri Mahavir Jadhav claimed the bronze medal in women's Javelin F34 with a throw of 11.36m.

On the opening day, Devender Kumar and Nimisha Suresh Chakkungalparambil had won the gold

Simran clinched the gold medal in women's 100m T13 final, clocking 12.74 seconds

Bayern beat Tigres in Club WC final to clinch sixth title

DOHA: Benjamin Pavard scored the winning goal as Germany's Bayern Munich defeated Mexican side Tigres 1-0 in the Club World Cup final to claim its sixth trophy within a year.

The Bundesliga giant finished the 2019-2020 season with a treble-winning performance and has won the UEFA Super Cup, German Super Cup before the victory in Al Rayyan, reports Xinhua news agency.

Thus Hansi Flick's Bayern became the second football team in history to win all six domestic and international titles available within 12 months after 2009's Barcelona, coached by former Bayern manager Pep Guardiola.

This is also the eighth year in a row that a European club has won the title in this tournament.

“Even for the successful club that is FC Bayern Munich, this was the most successful season ever. The team played outstandingly. The win was never in danger, we dominated and deservedly won the final,” said Flick, who started to take charge of the Bavarians in November 2019.

Earlier in the day, Egyptian club Al Ahly beat South American champion Palmeiras 3-2 on penalties after a goalless draw to clinch third place. (IANS)

Don't know about it, can't comment: Rahane on row surrounding Jaffer

CHENNAI

INDIA vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane on Friday steered clear of the controversy surrounding domestic stalwart and his former Mumbai teammate Wasim Jaffer, who is fighting allegations of trying to push religion-based selections during his stint as Uttarakhanda coach.

Jaffer, who quit as Uttarakhanda

hand coach owing to a dispute with the state association, has rejected the charge by the Cricket Association of Uttarakhanda officials that he favoured Muslim players in the team.

“Sir, I don't have an idea regarding this issue, what has happened, so I don't think that I should comment on this topic, because I don't have an idea,” Rahane said at



the virtual press conference on the eve of the second Test against England here.

Rahane and Jaffer, who is the leading run-getter in Ranji Trophy, have together played for Mumbai and the West Zone. They also have played together for the Indian Oil Corporation.

Aus Open: Serena to face Sabalenka for Q/F berth

MELBOURNE: Twenty three-time Grand Slam champion Serena Williams on Friday battled past a determined effort from Russian teenager Anastasia Potapova to book her place in the last 16 of the Australian Open.

In an exciting third-round contest, Williams defeated world No. 101 Potapova 7-6(5), 6-2, saving two set points in the first set and overcoming 31 unforced errors to set an enticing fourth-round meeting against Belarusian No.1 Aryna Sabalenka.

Earlier in the day on Rod Laver Arena, Sabalenka eased to a 6-3, 6-1 win over Ann Li, improving her record to 18-1 since October.

“I came out a little bit not (out) of the starting blocks like I would have wanted to and like I have been since I've been playing here, but you know it's about surviving and playing better every round,” Williams said after the match.

Noble outplay Mayura

HYDERABAD: Riding on Rahul Reddy magical spin (4/7) Noble Cricket Club clinched an emphatic 461-run win over Mayura CC in HCA A-2 Division Two-Day Leagues Cricket. The tourney organised by the Hyderabad Cricket Association was played at PKMCC Grounds, Hyderabad.

Chasing a huge total of 552 runs in the stipulated 90 overs Mayura CC collapsed like a pack of cards at 90 runs. Earlier, banking on Vamshi Ramavat's 238runs Noble made a massive 551/8 runs in 90 overs. Aakash Y played the role of second fiddle with 57 runs. Ambarish scored a patient 52 runs while Krishnkanth Tiwari made swash-buckling 53 runs to take the team total to 550 plus mark. Brief Scores: Noble Cricket Club 551/8 in 90 overs (Vamshi Ramavat 238, Y Aakash 57, Ambarish B 52, Krishnkanth Tiwari 53 not out) beats Mayura CC 90 allout in 36.5 overs (Adeeb 53; Rahul Reddy 4/7).



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నా ఎంపిక కపిల్ చిట్స్ ఇప్పటికీ వెన్నంటే ఉంది.