



A sparrow collects rice grain on World Sparrow Day, in Guwahati on Saturday

CJI Bobde told to recommend his successor

NEW DELHI: With a little over a month left before Chief Justice of India SA Bobde retires, the Union government has started the process of appointment of next CJI, asking the incumbent to recommend his successor. Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad Friday sent a letter to Justice Bobde, who is set to retire on April 23, seeking his recommendation, sources said.

Hosabale replaces Bhaiyya Joshi as RSS general secretary

NEW DELHI: The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) on Saturday elected Dattatreya Hosabale its as its general secretary in Bengaluru. The 65-year-old replaces Suresh Bhaiyyaji Joshi, 73, who completed four terms of three years each. Elected by nearly 1,500 members of the Akhil Bhartiya Pratinidhi Sabha (ABPS), RSS' highest decision-making body, Hosabale will hold the position for three years, after which the post will be open for re-election.▶P3

Trust, Reliability & Service
Synonymous with Kapil Chits

41 YEARS OF TRUSTED SERVICE

Visit Us: www.kapilchits.com

KAPIL CHITS

SMALL SAVINGS GROW BIG WITH KAPIL



Delhi reports over 800 Covid cases in 24 hours

Highest single-day spike this year

NEW DELHI

DELHI has been witnessing a steady increase in cases of the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) through the week, and on Saturday it broke all records of this year by registering 813 fresh cases of the infection, according to latest figures released in the health bulletin.

Two people died of the viral disease in the last 24 hours, according to the health bulletin.

With the massive one-day jump in cases, the city's positivity rate stands at 1.07% while the cumulative positivity rate is at 4.71%.

The infection tally in the national capital has

gone up to 647,161 and a total of 10,955 fatalities due to the disease have been recorded so far. Of the total cases, 3,409 are active. As many 632,797 people have recovered from Covid-19 so far with 567 recoveries recorded between Friday and Saturday.

From March 1 till March 11, the new cases in the city were witnessing an upward trend but ranged between 150 and 370. However, the cases recorded in a single day on March 12 rose to 409 and has since remained above that except on March 14 (407) and March 16 (368). On March 17, 18 and 19 the daily new cases soared to 536, 607 and 716, respectively. Continued on Page 4



INDIA, US PLEDGE TO EXPAND DEFENCE TIES

India is key partner in rapidly shifting international dynamics: Austin

Will work to realise full potential of global strategic partnership: Rajnath

NEW DELHI

INDIA and the United States on Saturday discussed ways to elevate their security ties against the backdrop of China's growing assertiveness, with US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin saying the defence partnership with India is a priority of the Biden-Harris administration.

Top defence officials from India and the United States have pledged to expand their military engagement, underscoring the strengthening defence ties between two countries concerned over China's growing influence in the Indo-Pacific region. Austin and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh met in New Delhi and agreed to deepen defence cooperation, intelligence sharing and logistics.

"India is an increasingly important partner in rapidly shifting international dynamics. I reaffirm our commitment to a comprehensive forward-looking defence partnership with



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and US Secretary of Defence Lloyd James Austin III at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi on Saturday

Never considered India, China were on verge of war: Austin

NEW DELHI

UNITED States defence secretary Lloyd Austin said on Saturday that his country doesn't think that "India and China were at war". Speaking at a special briefing after holding talks with defence minister Rajnath Singh, Austin said the US will continue to work with "like-

minded countries' to ensure to right things are done to maintain peace. Austin was responding to a question about the standoff in Ladakh between the two countries, especially after the Galwan Valley clash in which both Indian and Chinese soldiers were killed in June last year. Continued on Page 4

India as a central pillar of our approach to the Indo-Pacific region," Austin said. Austin is making the first

visit to India by a top member of President Joe Biden's administration. Continued on Page 4

Corona vaccine should be able to give protection for 8-10 months: AIIMS chief

PURNA SINGH
NEW DELHI

THE coronavirus vaccine should be able to give good protection from virus infection for 8 to 10 months, AIIMS director Randeep Guleria said on Saturday.

He also said that no major side-effects of the vaccine have been recorded. "The vaccine should be able to give good protection from



Randeep Guleria

the infection for eight to ten months and maybe, even more," Guleria said at an

event organised by the IPS (Central) Association. The AIIMS chief said the biggest reason for the surge in cases is that people feel the pandemic is over and they are not following Covid-appropriate behaviour. "There are multiple reasons for the surge, but the main reason is that there is change in people's attitude and they feel coronavirus is over." Continued on Page 4

India records 40,000 new cases

Biggest rise in Covid cases in 111 days

NEW DELHI

INDIA'S Covid tally witnessed the biggest rise in the active cases since September as it crossed the 40,000 mark on Saturday for the first time in 111 days. The single-day rise of 40,953 new infections, 188 fatalities pushes India's Covid-19 tally of cases to 1,15,55,284, death toll to

1,59,558. Meanwhile, 23,653 recoveries were reported in the last 24 hours which took the total number of recoveries to 1,11,07,332.

As per the Union Health Ministry, the active Covid-19 cases in India recorded at 2,88,394, while 1,11,07,332 people have recovered from the disease so far. As many as 4,20,63,392 people have been

administered the Covid vaccine across the country, so far.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 1,11,07,332, while the case fatality rate stood at 1.38 per cent, the data stated. India's Covid-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30-lakh on August 23, 40-lakh on September 5 and 50-lakh on September

16. It went past 60 lakhs on September 28, 70 lakhs on October 11, crossed 80 lakhs on October 29, 90 lakhs on November 20 and surpassed the one-crore mark on December 19.

According to ICMR, 23,24,31,517 samples have been tested up to March 19 with 10,60,971 samples being tested on Friday.

Massive earth quake of 7.2 magnitude rocks Japan, tsunami warning issued

TOKYO

AN earthquake measuring 7.2 on the Richter scale struck north-eastern Japan on Saturday, prompting authorities to issue a tsunami warning for Miyagi prefecture.

The Japan Meteorological Agency warned of up to a 1-metre high tsunami in Miyagi and the first tsunami wave has already swept ashore in the city of Ishinomaki, dpa news agency quoted the national broadcaster NHK as saying. The warning prompted some residents in Miyagi to rush to higher ground ahead of the possible arrival of



tsunami, NHK footage showed. There were no immediate reports of casualties or damage to property. The quake also shook buildings in Tokyo. The temblor occurred at

6.09 p.m. (local time), with its epicentre located at a latitude of 38.4 degrees north and a longitude of 141.7 degrees east, and at the depth of 60 km, the agency said.

India ranks 139 in Happiness Index

NEW DELHI: India ranked 139 out of 149 countries in the World Happiness Report 2021, released by the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network. Finland was ranked the happiest country in the world, a feat the Nordic nation achieved for the fourth consecutive year. In 2019, India was ranked 140th. The World Happiness Report is a landmark survey of the state of global happiness that ranks 149 countries by how happy their citizens perceive themselves to be. The World Happiness Report 2021 focuses on the effects of Covid-19 and how people all over the world have fared.

PMLA cases independent of base offences: HC

ED probe can continue even after base offences are 'closed, compounded or quashed'

NEW DELHI

THE Bombay High Court has ruled that investigation by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, can be continued "even if the base offences are closed, compounded or quashed".

The accused, promoters of Omkar Realtors and Developers, had sought their release on bail on the ground of closure of the scheduled offence. They moved the High Court after the special PMLA court in Mumbai rejected their plea on February 15, 2021. Vijay Aggarwal submitted that the moment the scheduled offence comes to an end, the PMLA proceedings also come to an end, as per the report. The lawyer added that it was a settled legal proposition that if initial action does not align with law, all subsequent and consequential proceedings would fall through for the reason that the illegality strikes at its root and the

applicants could not have been remanded to further custody and were entitled to be released on bail. The report said that the Single Judge bench of Justice AS Gadkari rejected the argument, observing that the investigation under the PMLA is totally independent of the scheduled offence. "Once an offence un-



India, France working on third joint space mission: ISRO chief

BENGALURU

INDIA and France are working on their third joint satellite mission, even as the bilateral space collaboration is entering into multiple domains, including human spaceflight programme, ISRO Chairman K Sivan said.

Sivan, also secretary in the Department of Space, said many French companies are keen to tap into opportunities thrown up by recent reforms injected into the space sector by the government.

"France is the biggest partner of India in space", he said at the DST (department of science



and technology) golden jubilee discourse on 'unlocking India's space potential - geospatial data & mapping', an event presented on virtual mode by

the National Council for Science and Technology Communication and 'Vigyan Prasara' on Friday. According to officials, ISRO and French space

agency CNES (Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales) have undertaken two joint missions 'Megha-Tropiques', which was launched in 2011, and

Earlier, ISRO and French space agency CNES have undertaken two joint missions 'Megha-Tropiques' and 'Sara-Altika'. Currently, they are working for the third mission and have completed the feasibility study to realise the earth observation satellite mission with thermal infrared imager, TRISHNA

'Sara-Altika' in 2013. "Currently, we are working for the third one (mission)", Sivan said.

Officials said Isro and CNES have completed the

feasibility study to realise the earth observation satellite mission with thermal infrared imager, TRISHNA (Thermal infrared Imaging Satellite for High resolution Natural resource Assessment) and are working towards finalising an implementing arrangement for the joint development.

Sivan said India is also working with France on joint experiments and accommodation of scientific instruments in space missions. "Indo-French space collaboration is expanding into multiple domains including space exploration and human space flight programme," he said.



Edn crucial for women empowerment, says Guv

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

GOVERNOR Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan said that education was vital for women empowerment.

The Governor was virtually addressing the “Women Power Talk” programme organised by the State Bank of India as part of the International Women’s Day celebrations on Saturday. She said, “Education, employment, entrepreneurship and self-confidence would contribute to the empowerment of women.

Their willpower will help them overcome the obstacles in their path,” she added.

Elaborating on the achievements of women in various fields, the Governor said that

women were now flying fighter jets, guarding borders and excelling as astronauts.

“Women should not desist from pursuing their dreams fearing obstacles. They should make it big in life,” she added.

The Governor lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi for assigning key portfolios like Finance, External Affairs and Defence to women ministers and thus shattering the tradition of restricting women ministers only to portfolios like Women and Child Development.

She lauded that women medicos were now opting for specialisations like surgery, cardiology, nephrology, and orthopedics.

Many women officers of various ranks of the State Bank of India took part in the virtual Power Talk programme.

Budget not near to reality: Bhatti

- Says Telangana spends less from the budget
- Demands the State government to stop the construction of Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Project

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

CONGRESS Legislative Party leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka on Saturday said that the budget presented by the Finance Minister T Harish Rao was not close to reality and said that Telangana was among the States that spends less from the budget in the country.

Speaking during the discussion on budget in the Assembly on, Mallu said there was a big gap between the allocation in the budget and spending by the government. While national average in terms of spending by the State governments was 17.9 per cent, the spending by the Telangana government was 9.5 per cent. He said that there



were no big allocations in important departments like Education, Health, Roads and Bridges and Rural Development.

The CLP leader said that there were doubts on the income of the State as projected by the Finance Minister. He said that the government said that the non-tax revenue would be Rs 30,500 crore. However, if the records were seen in the last three to four years, the non-tax revenues have been around Rs 10,000 crore. How the government would bring the remaining Rs 20,000 crore? he asked. Similarly, the grant in aid has been around Rs 10,000 to Rs 12,000 crore but the State government is expecting Rs 28,000 crore. How the government

would bring Rs 48,000 crore? he sought to know. The debt repayment has been mentioned at Rs 9,000 crore, but the actual repayments are Rs 50,000 crore, he said adding that budget was not near to reality.

The CLP leader said that the government should take a stand and stop the construction of Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Project. He said that if the project was constructed, the water would not come to Srisailem and Nagarjunsagar. Already, the people in the said areas are deprived of water and if the project was completed, there would be no water at all, said Mallu, demanding the government to stop the project.

The Congress leader said that the Dharani software had glitches. The site has Part A and Part B and the problem lies in Part B where there are assigned lands belonging to weaker sections. He wanted the government to solve the problems and also demanded the appointment of Chief Commissioner of Land Administration.

Will never contest polls again, says dejected Chinna Reddy

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

DEJECTED over the defeat in MLC elections, Former Minister and Congress senior leader G Chinna Reddy on Saturday said that he would never contest elections again, and also suggested people to not contest elections if they do not have money.

Talking to a news channel, Chinna Reddy said that if there was no money, no one should dare to contest the elections. He said it was painful to see graduates also selling their votes to the ruling TRS. He said he had to lose the election only because he could not distribute money, adding that he could only impress 32,000 persons. “There is no one in the country to compete with Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao in terms of spending money in the elections,” he said.

Replying to a question, Chinna Reddy said that only K Jana Reddy could compete against K Chandrashekar

I lost the election because I could not distribute money. There is no one in the country to compete with Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao in terms of spending money in the elections. Chinna Reddy



Rao in Nagarjunsagar bypoll and can win the election.

He said that his party leadership and Revanth Reddy made all out efforts for his victory and added that he would work for the strengthening of the party. “There is a need to save Telangana, which has been converted into a drunken and corrupt state,” he said.

Of 9 lakh applicants, only 3.5 lakh get white ration cards

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

CIVIL Supplies Minister Gangula Kamalakar on Friday said that the State government till date issued 3,59,974 white ration cards of the total 9,41,641 applications.

He was replying to questions raised by members in the House during the Question Hour of the ongoing budget session of the State Assembly on Friday.

Speaking on the subject, Kamalakar said that 92,000 applications were rejected by the department so far for various reasons and the rest 4,88,775 applications were under

- 92,000 applications rejected while 4,88,775 are under process
- 44,734 white ration cards are provided to eligible in Hyderabad



- Another 97,000 cards are not issued due to corona pandemic

process. He made it clear that issuance of food security cards was a continuous process and

would keep on going.

Replying to a question about the number of food security

cards distributed in the State capital, he informed that 44,734 white ration cards were provided to eligible in Hyderabad in the last three years, while another 97,000 cards could not be issued due to the ongoing corona pandemic.

“Pending applications will be verified soon and white ration cards will be issued to eligible citizens,” he assured.

Speaking about the cancellation of cards, the Minister said that in case the beneficiary does not avail the card for three months, then it would be discontinued automatically. He further assured to solve the complaints about malfunctioning of white ration cards.



TRS activists trying to douse the flames at the Telangana Bhavan which erupted after the dry bushes on the premises caught fire on Saturday

Training imparted to traffic cops to help accident victims

HANS NEWS SERVICE
SHADNAGAR

CYBERABAD traffic police in association with Society for Cyberabad Council (SCC) and CIHS (Care Institute of Health Sciences) launched a first responder training course for traffic police to teach basic first aid skills so that they can help injured victims of road accidents. Cyberabad Police Commissioner VC Sajjanar participated in the training programme organised for Shadnagar batch on Saturday.

Speaking on the occasion, the CP said every month almost 25-30 persons die in hospitals while undergoing treatment for injuries sustained in road accidents. Keeping this in mind, Cyberabad traffic police in association with SCC and CIHS started the ‘first responder’



training course. As part of this programme, on March 3, the first batch of training was conducted for 30 persons at CTC. On Saturday, the training was conducted to sixth batch con-

sisting 30 members of Cyberabad Highway patrol personnel and the staff so that they could save the lives of accident victims.

Cyberabad Highway patrol

personnel and the staff from petrol bunks, dhabas, restaurants, shops, security guards along NH-44 in Shadnagar area also participated in the programme.

Woman sanitation worker Killed; ornaments, cash stolen

HANS NEWS SERVICE
PARIGI

A sanitation worker was brutally stabbed to death in Kulkacharla mandal of Parigi constituency on Friday midnight by unidentified persons. The victim, Maisamma (58), succumbed to injuries while undergoing treatment at the Osmania General Hospital on Saturday. According to the police, Maisamma sent her daughter to Hyderabad on the March 17 and came back home with essentials. Unidentified persons attacked her with a sharp weapon while he was sleeping in her house at night and later robbed jewellery and cash from her house.

When Maisamma did not come to work in the village at 5 o'clock in the morning, Madhavi, her co-worker, reached Maisamma's house and noticed that she was lying in a pool of blood at home and informed her fellow workers.

Maisamma was immediately rushed to Mahbubnagar Government Hospital with serious injuries and later shifted to Osmania Hospital where she died while undergoing treatment.

Kulkacharla police have registered a case and are investigating. The police are investigating whether the murder was committed for the purpose of theft or any other reason.

3 lakh jobs in electronics sector in next 4 yrs: KTR

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

THE TRS government has aimed to create three lakh jobs in the electronics-manufacturing sector and plans are designed for the investments of Rs 75,000 crore in the next four years, said Minister for Information Technology and Industries K T Rama Rao.

He was replying to a question raised by the fellow members on the promotion of electronics-manufacturing sector and about jobs during a question and answer session in the Legislative Assembly on Saturday.

Delivering the answer, he said the government has focused on electronics manufacturing, research and development to promote the industry and also to create jobs. To provide jobs to local youth, Telangana Academy of Skill and Knowledge centres have imparted training to 60,000 locals in Electronic System Design and Manufacturing stream and about 30,000 of them are employed in the electronics sector. He assured that more number of Telangana Academy of Skill and Knowledge centres would be brought in the State soon.

Elaborating about the establishment of electronics-manufacturing, the Minister said the State government was trying to turn Telangana as electronics-manufacturing hub and as part of the policy formulation, the government has launched a special electronic policy to

- The IT Minister says State government is trying to turn Telangana as electronics-manufacturing hub
- Says special electronic policy launched to address specific needs of the industry
- Two manufacturing clusters identified to set up the industry

address the specific needs of the industry and an expert team has been constituted for research and development of the sector.

Two manufacturing clusters were identified to set up the industry, the Minister informed.

“To make investments easy in the State, the government is providing a capital subsidy of Rs 2 to 30 crore, GST reimbursement, transport subsidy and also providing subsidy on power to the industries to attract the investors to the State. Special incentives are being provided to SC, ST and women entrepreneurs who are in the electronics sector,” he added.

Providing information about the industrial investments in the State, he said Rs 23,000 crore were invested in the electronic manufacturing sector in the last six years. As many as 40 new companies invested here even after pandemic and 1,60,000 jobs were created while only 50, 000 jobs were there in this sector in the erstwhile State.

Free training for jobless youth from March 31

HANS NEWS SERVICE
MAHESHWARAM

EDUCATION Minister Sabitha Indra Reddy released wall posters on free training classes for unemployed youth to help them get government jobs. The Minister released the wall poster on Saturday in Maheshwaram. Free training classes will start on March 31 from 9:00 am at Sri Kalavathi Gardens at Tukkuguda.

Speaking on the occasion, Sabitha said it was a good opportunity for the unemployed youth in Maheshwaram constituency and urged them to utilise the opportunity. She also said that under the auspices of Patilolla Indra Reddy Trust, free training and study material would be provided to the unemployed youth for recruitment of all types of government jobs in future.

Indra Reddy Charitable Trust chairman Karthik Reddy, local TRS leaders and others were present.



PM'S B'DESH VISIT

‘Mujeeb Jackets’ to add sheen



NEW DELHI

KHADI “Mujeeb Jackets” will be the centre of attraction during Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s two-day visit to Dhaka next week with dignitaries at the Indian High Commission wearing the signature garment honouring Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Bangladesh’s Father of the Nation. The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has supplied 100 such custom-designed “Mujeeb Jackets” to the Indian High Commission in Dhaka. The garment will be the key attire of dignitaries during Prime Minister Modi’s diplomatic visit to the nation on March 26-27.

“As Bangladesh celebrates ‘Mujib Borsho’, the birth centenary of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Cultural Centre of the Indian High Com-

mission in Dhaka, had placed an order for 100 Mujeeb Jackets, ahead of the Prime Minister’s visit,” KVIC Chairman, Vinai Kumar Saxena said.

The “Mujeeb jacket” is an immensely popular outfit in Bangladesh. For the older generation, it is symbolic of the ideology of their great leader, while it has increasingly become a fashion statement for the youth of Bangladesh. Modi has always been particular about Khadi and its heritage and cultural value to strengthen diplomatic ties with foreign countries.

In 2016, the BRICS leaders, which also includes Modi, had attended the summit in Khadi jackets in Goa. “The Prime Minister always accorded top priority to Khadi during his diplomatic visits.

This is to carry forward the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi who always carried Khadi products specially a Khadi handkerchief with him and presented it to dignitaries during his foreign visits,” Saxena said.

The specially designed “Mujeeb Jackets” have been made of high-quality handcrafted Khadi fabric. The black Mujeeb Jackets have been designed with six buttons, two pockets on the lower half and a front pocket on the left, as worn by Rahman.

In keeping with the eco-friendly nature of the fabric, the zip-covers for these jackets too have been made of black cotton fabric with “Khadi India” logo embroidered over it. These jackets will be carried in specially designed white coloured waste plastic-mixed carry bags made at KVIC’s Kumarappa

National Handmade Paper Institute (KNHPD) in Jaipur. “Mujeeb Jacket” is historically significant in Bangladesh and it is a matter of great pride that these jackets made of Khadi fabric be adorned during the Bangladesh visit of Prime Minister Modi who is the biggest brand ambassador of Khadi, Saxena said.

“Mujeeb jackets made of Khadi will add significantly to the historical and cultural values of the celebrations,” he said, adding, this will also promote Khadi on the global and diplomatic platform in a big way.

Since the jackets were meant for diplomatic purposes, KVIC accorded top priority to it and delivered the consignment before time.

Earlier KVIC sent its high-quality cotton and silk masks to various countries. (IANS)

NEW RSS TEAM ANNOUNCED

Ram Madhav returns, Arun Kumar is new joint general secretary

NEW DELHI

THE Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) on Saturday declared its new team. While Arun Kumar and Ram Dutt have been appointed as the new joint general secretaries, Ram Lal has been appointed the Akhil Bharatiya Sampark Pramukh.

Significantly, Ram Madhav has returned to the RSS fold from the BJP. Former BJP general secretary Madhav has found place in the RSS’s All India Executive Council (Karyakarini Mandal). He was part of the RSS before becoming a general secretary in the BJP. The new team was announced after the appointment of Dattatreya Hosabale as general secretary earlier on Saturday at the the Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha (ABPS), the RSS’s highest decision-making body, which is meeting in Bengaluru to discuss the new appointments, apart from deliberating on other important issues.

The five Sahsarkaryavahs (joint general secretaries) are Dr Krishna Gopal, Mukund C.R., Dr Manmohan Vaidya,



Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh newly-elected General Secretary Dattatreya Hosabale addresses a press conference during the 'Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha-21' in Bengalur on Saturday

Ram Dutt and Arun Kumar. Gopal, Mukund and Vaidya were looking after the same responsibility even earlier. Kumar and Dutt have been added to the select list.

Suresh Soni moves to be part of the All India Executive Council. Arun Kumar was the prachar pramukh (media head) before this and played a crucial role in forming public opinion on the abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir.

Ram Lal, who returned to the Sangh from the BJP in 2019, has been elevated to Akhil Bharatiya Sampark Pramukh. Sunil Ambekar gets a promotion as well to become Akhil Bharatiya Prachar Pramukh (media head).

Romesh Pappa and Alok are the two new All India Sah Sampark Pramukhs and Mahendra will take up the responsibility of Regional Pracharak for Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. (IANS)

Plea in SC terms PIL against 1991 law on places of worship as ‘mischievous’

NEW DELHI

A plea has been moved in the Supreme Court challenging a PIL against a law fixing August 15, 1947 as the cut-off date to maintain the character of a place of worship. The application moved by a Lucknow-based co-manager of a mosque said the PIL filed by advocate Ashwini Upadhyay is “mischievous”, which aims at isolating the Muslim community as a separate category from the other major religious communities in India. On March 12, the Supreme Court had issued a notice to the Centre on a PIL challenging the validity of the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991, which barred litigation on any place of worship for change of its character as it existed in 1947. The matter assumes significance in the backdrop of demands to resume litigation on Kashi-Mathura related to temples of Lord Shiva and Lord Krishna, respectively. The Act did not include the Ayodhya Ram Janmabhoomi case, which was decided by the top court in 2019. The application argued that the country has been progressing unitedly but certain individuals, including the petitioner, was making attempts to divide people on the basis of religion. “The language of the petition is shocking. The petitioner has sought to set up an allegedly factual case of fundamentalist barbarians coming to India and destroying places of worship without providing any facts, sources or setting up a case that any such places of worship have indeed been destroyed,” said the application.

THE COLOURS OF FESTIVITY



Women smear colours at each other during Holi celebrations in Nadia district on Saturday

‘Parties do not send their best talents to Parliament’

NEW DELHI

FORMER Supreme Court judge A K Patnaik on Saturday said political parties do not send their best talents to Parliament due a variety of reasons, including a lack of internal democracy in their functioning.

Speaking at an event, he said lack of funds to contest elections without the support of a political party has discouraged many capable and meritorious persons from seeking an opportunity for election to Parliament. Justice

members in their constituencies and their state.

“I am of the view that our political parties do not send their best talents, with merit and integrity, to Parliament for various reasons,” he said. The first reason, Justice Patnaik (retd.) said, was that there is no internal democracy in political parties. “In a democracy, a political party should give an opportunity to its members to participate in the debates on the formulation of the programmes of the party. This is now recognised in the



Patnaik, who retired as a Supreme Court judge in 2014, said he has been listening to the debates in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha and have been reading about them in newspapers.

“I appreciate the quality of debates on the national issues and some of the criticisms that the opposition members make in Parliament. For such debates and criticisms, parliamentarians need to be rewarded,” he said. He also referred to criticism by the opposition on the issue of “seditious acts”. “This is what Parliament should do. The government should respond. This is how democracy is kept alive,” he said. He said he was “not quite sure” whether Parliament in India today is represented by people who are the best amongst their party

laws of various other countries,” he said. The second reason is that persons with merit and integrity who want to contest Lok Sabha election do not have the funds for campaigning for their election.

“Considering the huge resources required by a candidate in an election for parliamentary seat, a prospective candidate has to either depend on a political party for such funds for election or has to organise his own funds as an independent candidate,” he said. This has discouraged many capable and meritorious persons from contesting elections for seats in Parliament, he opined. (PTI)

Kamal Haasan on bed rest after leg pain during TN campaign



COIMBATORE

POPULAR southern superstar and founder of Makkal Needhi Maiam, Kamal Haasan’s campaign trail hit a roadblock on Saturday when he developed pain in his right leg after concentrated canvassing in the Coimbatore South constituency over the past few days.

The development took place when an unidentified person allegedly stepped on the MNM leader’s foot while he was out on a routine morning walk during which he interacted with locals.

The thespian who is making his political debut in the Tamil Nadu Assembly polls is contesting from Coimbatore South assembly constituency, and is camping here.

People surround him during his morning walks and take selfies, shake hands and interact with him. It was during one such interaction that someone reportedly stepped on Kamal Haasan’s foot.

Immediately after the incident, Kamal Haasan was taken to a local hospital where doctors took an X-ray of the injured leg. Party sources said that Kamal Haasan’s condition is stable and he is currently taking rest.

In January this year, the 66-year-old actor had undergone surgical treatment for an infection in his right leg bone. With the same leg getting hurt on Saturday, the actor-politician was forced to curtail his campaign plans. The party is preparing to reschedule their leader’s public events in the city. (IANS)

GIFT A PLANT AND MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE

NEW DELHI

THE International Day of Forests is on March 21 and the emphasis is on planting trees and saving the environment. At a time when deforestation is rampant, pollution is making our cities not worth living and climate change is causing natural disasters, experts are recommending a simple way to make the world greener and healthier.

Here is a platform which can be used for planting trees in the country on barren land. The platform provides opportunities to gift a plant on special occasions such as birthdays and other happy moments to plant trees on your behalf which will be planted across India and looked after by the company.

If you don’t have time to go out or the land to plant trees, you can do your bit through Grow-Trees.com. In its new project it will plant trees on 500 acres across 19 villages of the Laylam and Lubasa Panchayats in East Singhbhum district of Jharkhand and Jamukewar Panchayat in Mayurbhanj district of Odisha.

This will not only expand the green cover but also enhance animal habitat.

Over 2.6 million trees were planted in 2020 across the country, providing rural

Today is International Day of Forests

employment during the pandemic. The platform charges Rupees 85 for planting one tree. Since it came into being, the platform has planted about 7.5 million trees. Explains Pradip Shah, the co-founder and director of Grow-Trees.com: “The company has earned the trust of thousands of individuals and hundreds of companies for planting millions of local trees on community lands in projects benefiting local communities, tribals, and wildlife. All plantings are audited and undertaken after permission of authorities.” Grow-Trees.com’s eco-planner and environmental expert Supriya Patil says, “It is time to go back to the basics and simply plant more trees. Let me give you just five reasons why we should though there are a million more.”

She says: “Trees create the much-needed carbon sinks, absorb CO2 and even sequester pollutants like nitrogen oxide, ammonia and sulphur dioxide. It is a commonly known fact that just one tree can absorb nearly 10 pounds of polluted air annually. Thriving forests and green lung spaces are critical to the health of the planet as they are the most

effective eco-warriors and natural oxygen-generators.”

Experts say a lot of natural disasters occur because there is an imbalance between what we take from nature and what we give back. “Trees prevent soil erosion, curtail fires, floods and even landslides. They also sustain biodiversity, protect animal habitats and even slow down the filtration of water into the drainage networks of concrete jungles. Increased vegetation in any region improves moisture conservation and also enhances the water table in the region,” adds Patil. Denuded forests mean more industrialisation and pollution and less space for wildlife. Shrinking wildlife corridors have resulted in increased animal-human conflicts, elephants being electrocuted or hit by trains.

The platform has initiated several projects to support the locals and tribal communities in Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, and many other Indian states. “When trees mature, they serve as a sustainable source of income for rural communities,” adds Patil. (IANS)



New sand policy to bring ₹765 cr per year for AP

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

THE state government announced upgraded sand policy on Saturday, which is expected to generate about Rs 765 crores revenue per year.

The director, department of mines and geology entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on January 4, this year with M/s MSTC Ltd, a Central government undertaking to select the eligible agency to undertake sand mining, storage and sales for a period of two years in a transparent and impartial manner.

The MSTC Ltd confirmed that M/s Jayaprakash Power Ventures Ltd became the successful bidder as they announced the highest price for all the three packages for two years at the end of the phase of accepting technical and financial bids. The package-wise details offered by M/. Jayaprakash Power Ventures Ltd for two years are: Package-1: Rs 477.50 crore, Package2: Rs 745.70 crore and Package-3 Rs 305.60 crore.

Jayaprakash Power Ventures Limited is part of the Jaypee Group, which has a leading infrastructure in India and is headquartered in New Delhi.

Under the existing policy, the government has earned a net income of Rs 161.30 crore



- The State govt announces upgraded sand policy under which a private entity of Jaypee Group will undertake sand mining, storage and sales
- New system will provide several facilities to customers, including opportunity to check the quality of sand directly at the ramps, pay the money at the reach of their choice and take the required quantity in the vehicle they have set up

for the financial year 2019-20 and Rs 380.00 crore for the current financial year (2020-21) i.e. up to February 2021. It is expected to generate about Rs 765 crores per year under the upgraded sand policy.

This upgraded new policy will provide several facilities to customers, including opportunity to check the quality of the sand directly at the ramps, tie up the money at the reach of their choice and take the required quantum of sand in the vehicle they have set up.

There will be same price at

each reach across the state and a price with upper ceiling is determined regionally based on distance. Details of the phone numbers to complain about the higher rates will be made available to the public. Strict action will be taken on such complaints. There is no need to apply online.

Those who cannot afford to make the vehicle available, they will have the option of obtaining sand through a transport conglomerate. Sand excavation is no longer permitted on patta (graded) lands.

India, US pledge to expand defence ties

Continued from P1

His visit follows a meeting last week between leaders of Australia, India, Japan and the United States, which together make up the four Indo-Pacific nations known as the Quad.

The Quad is seen as a counterweight to China, which critics say is flexing its military muscle in the South China Sea, East China Sea, Taiwan Strait and along its northern border with India.

Singh said the talks were focused on expanding military-to-military engagement. "We are determined to realize the full potential of comprehensive global strategic partnership," he said.

Austin arrived in New Delhi on Friday and met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval.

According to a statement from the Prime Minister's Office, Modi "outlined his vision for the strategic partnership between the two countries and emphasized the important role of bilateral defence cooperation in India-US ties."

Before the talks on Saturday, Austin visited the National War Memorial and was accorded a ceremonial guard of honour.

The timing of Austin's visit, which follows talks between high-ranking US and Chinese officials in Alaska amid a bitter exchange of words, signals the importance Biden places on New Delhi as a security ally.

If 'chaiwala' doesn't understand your pain, then who will: Modi

Continued from P1

"If a 'chaiwala' doesn't understand your pain, then who will. I assure that the NDA govt will work extensively to improve the standard of living of people working in tea garden areas," said Modi. While accusing the Congress government of ruining the image of the tea sector, he said that the party has indulged in defaming Assam's tea. "A toolkit has been circulated that will defame Assam's tea. Congress party supports this toolkit makers & then has the audacity to ask for votes in Assam. Can we forgive them?" he added. Launching a scathing attack on the Congress, the PM stated the party uses pictures of tea gardens from Sri Lanka and Taiwan claiming it to be from Assam and circulating on social media is an insult to the state.

While assuring that the NDA government is working for the betterment of the tea community, Modi said, "The government has allotted land patta to the tea garden workers. Rs 1,000 crore only for the tea garden community. The NDA government is committed to increase the salaries of the tea garden workers."

AMARAVATI

TDP leader Saptagiri Prasad on Saturday urged the Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy government and the ruling YSRCP leaders to stop misusing the SC, ST atrocities Act to take political revenge against former chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu and the TDP leaders. Dr Saptagiri asserted that the atrocities law was enacted at the national level with the sole purpose of protecting the sacred rights of the Dalits and tribals but not to help the leaders like Chief Minister to harass their political rivals. But in a very shameless manner, the state officials filed an FIR under the atrocities act against Naidu based on a complaint given by a

SEC moves HC for CBI probe

- In a petition filed in HC, he also refers to motion of breach moved by two Ministers against him to Assembly Speaker based on one of such leaked communications
- Names the Union Home Secretary, AP CS, the Governor's Secretary, CBI, State Ministers Peddireddi Ramachandra Reddy and Botcha Satyanarayana and a private person as respondents
- Says there has been no action despite his several requests to the Chief Secretary and the Secretary to the Governor to probe the leak of 'privileged communication' to the Governor

AMARAVATI

STATE Election Commissioner Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar filed a petition in the High Court on Saturday seeking a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) into the alleged leak of "privileged communication" between him and the Governor. The SEC also mentioned about the motion of breach of privilege moved by two ministers against him to the



Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar

Botcha Satyanarayana

Peddireddi Ramachandra Reddy

Assembly Speaker, "based on one such privileged communication between me and the Governor", and a subsequent letter addressed to him by the Legislature secretary in the matter.

He named the Union home secretary, AP chief secretary, the Governor's secretary, CBI, state ministers Peddireddi Ramachandra Reddy and Botcha Satyanarayana (both of whom moved the motion of privilege) and a private person as respondents in the petition.

The SEC pointed out that as the state government has been trying to interfere with the conduct of elections, he had approached the Governor on several occasions for redressal of issues through confidential letters.

"The letters are written in strict confidence and are not for public consumption and ought not to have leaked to the general public or media. However, these confidential and privileged communications are constantly being brought into the public domain by

certain individuals having vested interest," the SEC said.

Ramesh Kumar, while citing certain communication between him and the Governor since January this year, submitted that such communications were supposed to be protected against all possible leaks. Referring to a private person, whom he made a respondent in the case, the SEC pointed out that a petition was filed in the High Court based on a letter he had written to the Governor on March 12. "This respondent does not disclose the source from which he obtained such privileged communication and chose to rely upon it to seek a Mandamus against me," the SEC added.

Noting that such communications were between two constitutional bodies, the SEC referred to certain judgments of various courts in this regard. "Leakage of such communications had severely hampered the functioning of the petitioner (SEC) and if such

trend is allowed to continue, it will have serious consequences in the democratic polity and governance. It would hamper functioning of the constitutional bodies and, hence, is liable to be dealt with an iron fist," Ramesh Kumar contended. The SEC said he made several requests to the chief secretary and the secretary to the Governor to investigate into the leak of "privileged and confidential communication".

"However, the secretary to the Governor failed to act upon the requests," he added. Ramesh Kumar requested the court to direct the Union home secretary, AP chief secretary, secretary to Governor and the CBI to investigate the leak of privileged communication. He made a plea that the court direct the CBI to file an interim report within 72 hours. Taking up the petition, Justice Rao Raghunandan Rao of the High Court asked the registry to refer it to the Chief Justice for appropriate listing and hearing.

Delhi reports over 800 Covid cases in 24 hours

Continued from P1

A Central government panel has attributed the grim figures to superspreader events like weddings. "We must understand that there is still a large section of population that is vulnerable, especially in villages. We cannot afford to lower our guard at this stage and should avoid mass gatherings as it can become superspreading events," said Dr VK Paul, member (health), Niti Aayog.

Delhi is also among the eight states contributing most to the nation's daily Covid-19 count. Other states showing rising trajectory of daily new cases are Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka and Haryana.

Chief minister Arvind Kejriwal led-Aam Aadmi party government said it is ready to vaccinate all adults in the city against the coronavirus disease. Kejriwal has appealed to the Centre to make vaccines open for all who are 18 years of age and above. "Walk-in centres should be opened for all. I urge the central government to take this up on a war footing. If this is allowed, we can vaccinate everyone in Delhi (18 years and above) in three months," he said earlier this week.

Corona vaccine should be able to give protection for 8-10 months: AIIMS chief

Continued from P1

"People should still restrict non-essential travel for some more time," the official asserted.

NITI Aayog member (Health) V K Paul said the chain of transmission has to be stopped and for that vaccine is one tool but another is containment and surveillance strategy. "Not following Covid-19 behaviour and laxity is major reason for the surge," he said.

Responding to a question on vaccinating more people, Paul said the issue is vaccines are limited and that is why, prioritisation has been done. "If we had unlimited supply, we would open the vaccination for everyone. That is the reason, not everyone, is getting vaccinated. Most countries in the world are not able to go beyond priority group because of this reason," he said.

Never considered India, China were on verge of war: Austin

Continued from P1

"We are working with India, Australia and Japan in the Indo-Pacific region to ensure that freedom of navigation is maintained, and to keep the Indo-Pacific region free and open. There are a lot of capabilities in these countries," said Austin. "Working with like-minded countries which have shared interest is the only way to check any aggression and we look forward to continue to do that in the future," he added.

Austin further said that the US has a lot of common things with Quad countries like India and Australia in terms of defence perspective and President Joe Biden's administration will continue to build on that. Austin's visit to India is first by a top member of Biden's administration. His visit follows a meeting last week between leaders of Australia, India, Japan and the United States, which together make up the four Indo-Pacific nations known as the Quad.

Environmental Education test on March 27

Ethics and Human Values exam for Inter 1st yr students on March 24

HANS NEWS SERVICE
GUNTUR

ETHICS and Human Values examination for Intermediate first year students will be conducted on March 24 from 10 am to 1 pm. Similarly, Environmental Education examination will be held on March 27 from 10 am to 1 pm. The Board of Intermediate Examination secretary V Rama Krishna issued orders to this effect. The students who don't qualify in these exams will not be issued pass certificates. He further said that the first year students of 20-21 academic year should appear with first year hall ticket number and old students who did not appear and not qualified should write above examination with previous Intermediate hall ticket number. The BIE has decided to conduct these examinations with online question paper. The instructions to download the question paper through online will be posted in the BIE website.

₹2.5 cr worth red sanders seized

- SEB and Chittoor police chase two vehicles which did not stop during vehicle checking at Penumuru-Chittoor junction
- 4 persons have been arrested, 182 logs seized

HANS NEWS SERVICE
CHITTOOR

SPECIAL Enforcement Bureau (SEB) personnel and Chittoor police in a joint operation seized two vehicles carrying 182 red sanders logs worth Rs 2.50 corer and nabbed 4 red sanders smugglers on Saturday

Speaking to media here on Saturday, district SP S Senthil Kumar said V Sivaiah, 31, of Kadapa district, K Krishnaiah, 63, of Nellore district, A Kiran, 25, of Tirupati rural mandal and V Balaji, 19, of Tamil Nadu were arrested while carrying red sanders logs in two vehicles. The vehicles were intercepted during a vehicle checking operation at Penumuru-Chittoor junction on Chittoor-Tirupati highway on Saturday morning. According to him, the vehicles proceeding towards Bengaluru did not stop when police stopped them and the police have to chase them.

He said that the police of Chittoor, Kadapa, Anantapur and Tirupati Urban districts have been coordinating their efforts to curb red sanders smuggling.



Chittoor SP S Senthil Kumar (left) with seized red sanders in Chittoor on Saturday

AP sees surge in Covid cases

380 new infections, two deaths reported in 24 hrs

AMARAVATI

AS many as 380 fresh cases of coronavirus were reported on Saturday in the state, the highest since December 22, pushing the caseload to 8,93,366. The number of active cases again touched 2,083, the highest since January 16 when it fell below the 2,000 mark.

The new cases came from 30,978 tests in the 24 hours ending 9 am on Saturday, while the 402 cases on December 22 came from 56,425 tests, indicating a higher infection rate now. The latest bulletin said a total of 1.47 crore sample tests were carried out in the state so far, at the rate of 2.75 lakh per million, with an overall positivity rate of 6.08 per cent. In the 24 hours, the state saw 204 recoveries and two deaths, taking the cumulative to 8,84,094 and 7,189

respectively. The virus seems to be spreading fast in Guntur, Kurnool, Visakhapatnam districts, while in Chittoor and Krishna it has been maintaining steady pace.

Anantapur and Nellore districts are also moving into the fast lane now, along with East Godavari. Guntur reported the highest 70, Chittoor 60, Kurnool 51, Krishna 44, Visakhapatnam 43, East Godavari 26, Anantapur 22, Nellore 21 fresh cases in a day. Srikakulam was behind with 15 new cases while the remaining four districts added less than 10 each. Seven districts in the state now have active cases in triple digits, ranging from 105 to 491. Only West Godavari (31) and Vizianagaram (35) districts have active caseload of less than 50 each. Kurnool and Prakasam districts reported one fresh COVID-19 fatality each.

failed, he said.

He said Jagan had such a bad record that his government brought GO 25 only to transfer assigned lands to his near and dear ones in the name of solar power projects. Instead of this, the Chief Minister should give 10 acres out of the 600 acres assigned lands for developing a solar power project in his Idupulapaya estate. Dr Saptagiri asked how the YSRCP govt was asking proofs from the same persons against whom it was filing cases without any preliminary probe. The YSRCP leaders once said that Amaravati was named capital to benefit only one particular caste but now they were saying that Dalits had got their own lands there.

The ugly side of online classes

WHILE India enjoys a wide geographic and cultural diversity, it also suffers from a huge socio-economic divide. Only a small part of the Indian population has access to online education right now. Interrupted power supply, weak or non-existent internet connectivity, and un-affordability to buy necessary devices are major concerns. "In a Class of 40 students, after two months of online classes, around 20 students regularly attend class with whatever device and connection they have. Around 5-8 students are completely absent till date and rest are fluctuating", says a schoolteacher in Ratnagiri in Maharashtra. A teacher in a government-aided school from the small town of Chamba in Himachal Pradesh says, "It is a frustrating experience to engage students of lower classes in online mode. There are network issues on both teachers' and students' ends".

To deal with internet connectivity and device availability issues, 'classes' in many places are happening via sharing of videos by teachers over What-



sApp or YouTube, so that students can watch them at their convenience. This too, however, comes with difficulties in understanding the lessons and promotes rote learning. The same is true of pre-recorded sessions aired on the television (e.g., Swayam Prabha DTH channels) and radio (audio lessons, through All India Radio),

although they do cater to a wider student population that cannot avail live online classes. That is not all. With limitations of livelihood in a family, the first ones to receive a blow are often girls. In a recent survey of 733 students studying in government schools in Bihar, only 28 per cent of the girls had smartphones in their homes, in

contrast to 36 per cent of the boys. These smartphones almost always belonged to male adults, often being lesser accessible to girls than boys, and half of these families could not afford internet data packages. Therefore, lessons aired on television was the main option for a majority of the students participating in this survey. How-

ever, girls were found to spend a disproportionately longer time on household chores than boys, which often overlapped with the time of telecast of these lessons. Such gaps in education could worsen the already wide gender gap in employment in India.

Students with disabilities are among the most dependent on in-person education and hence least likely to benefit from distance learning. A survey by Swabhiman (an NGO working mainly in Odisha), in association with the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People, indicated that 73 per cent of the students with disabilities had concerns regarding the availability of study material in appropriate formats. Also, 79 per cent of their teachers were apprehensive about teaching effectively without use of touch to students with learning disorders, autism and low vision. The lack of effective education may further aggravate the high dropout rates of these children from schools (nearly 50 per cent pre-Covid) in developing countries.

- Vasavi Raju Barde, Nagpur

PAST AND PRESENT

The school that is only in memories now...



ELIZABETH KOSHY

THE old village high school, which was the only one around within a radius of several kilometres at one time, where generations have studied and passed out, sits pretty even today, occupying a prominent place just a stone's throw away from the major junction in our small town where four roads intersect each other at perfect right angles.

Today the road is a busy state highway bustling with traffic. A new concreted Higher Secondary wing has been added to the old school, sporting the insults cum injuries, by way of broken window panes and foul graffiti, in keeping with the modern mindsets of the children, who seem to sport more of a destructive streak than good behaviour. After all what are seniors if not a bit rebellious, they seem to say. In contrast the old tiled structure stands as it stood more than a century or so ago.

Coming to the school, many illustrious alumni have learnt to cross their 't's and dot their 'i's from this grand old institution, some of whom constitute the who's who of the place. From the 103-year-old bishop Mar Chrysostum who headed the Marthoma Church, to professors, doctors and engineers (including my husband), this school was the launch pad for many who made it big in their individual capacities, simply because there was no other to speak of in the vicinity.

There is another personal reason connecting me to the school. It was one of my husband's lady teachers coming from our area, who played the 'matchmaker' between the two families, which ended in our marriage. Since I hail from a place within a radius of two kilometres from my husband's house, which is in the vicinity of the school, many of my relatives and neighbours of a certain age group have passed in front of our house, walking to school. They have all claimed to have eaten the fruits of our grand old rose apple tree in our front courtyard which has borne witness to generations of school-going kids helping themselves to its juicy pink and white fruits,

sometimes facing stones and brickbats in the process.

Another feature of our small town is that almost everyone knows each other in some way or the other. School drop-outs who didn't make it up the ladder of success, may sometimes come face to face with their classmates who have become 'professionals' (as if what their less educated friends do is not profession but work!). The best part is there are no inhibitions between them, a coconut plucker may address a government executive engineer as 'eda', a term used among equals, as they were classmates in school. They would know each other only by their official names, as per the school register. The goodwill among classmates have to be seen to be believed. In some cases well-to-do classmates living abroad may send dollars or dinars in large sums to help their less fortunate classmates either to build houses or get their daughters married. The bond between them is special and cannot be understood by others.

In sharp contrast to its old significance, the school now stands shorn of its former glory, as a symbol of 'mediocrity', among the dying schools of the state, where even the poor will not dare to tread for fear of poor results, even though education is free. Ironically, the children of teachers teaching there study elsewhere, while they go from door to door canvassing for kids. This is the bane of government aided schools as there are private English medium schools by the dozen in every nook and corner. Though the vernacular language is being promoted by poets and cultural activists, the ground reality is that even the poor want to send their children to English medium schools! One can only hope that the school is restored to its former glory by the government by making the necessary upgrades, employing result-oriented teachers and improving the standard of the school. This will make the students want to study in there and one day proudly say to their children, 'That is my Alma Mater', like their older counterparts.

Ensure Hindus control temples

THIS has reference to the article on "Free temples from government control" (Mar 20). It is the first and foremost duty of any government, for that matter, is to govern. It has no business in peeping its nose in the matter of if any religion by taking over and managing administration of particularly temples in a state of Hindu religion.

Initially the revenue by the government from the Hindu temples are huge. Temple properties lies in the form of land, money, Jewellery, agricultural income, rent from land and buildings and shops. The revenue thus earned is not set apart either to improve the Hindu culture nor the temple itself which is in a dilapidated condition. But for certain famous Hindu temples like Tirupati in AP, Sabarimala in Kerala, Palani in TN and the like rich revenue earning temples small temples are not taken over by the government for the best reasons open to all. Also vote bank politics has a role to play. The income of other small temples is very meagre. Even paltry salaries of priests could not be paid in certain temples, leave alone lighting a lamp in the small temple daily. Low rent payment on land and buildings, looting of money, antique statues and Jewellery are some of the ills of our Hindu

temples today.

It is very sad that 14 per cent of the funds in government controlled temples go as administrative expenses. Politicians are appointed as Executive officers and staff. They take away half the income as their salaries. Government takes over only the administration of high revenue earning temples. Non-revenue earning temples are left to fend for themselves. It is a matter of concern that only Hindu temples and that too high revenue yielding Hindu temples are taken over by the government. The temple EO, who is a politician, enjoys unlimited powers. In TN the temple properties like antique statues, Jewellery, lands, shops and all have disappeared in a large scale due to political interference. This is highly regrettable. Our culture is also eroded by keeping the control of the Hindu temples in the hands of the corrupt politicians. The state of affairs of the Hindu temples is pathetic in the hands of our politicians. This really needs a check.

Secondly this act of taking over the administration of the Hindu temples stands partial. But for Hindu temples, the temples of no other religion is taken over by the government for administration.

Shravana Ramachandran, Chennai

Temples should be out of govt control

THIS refers to 'Free temples from government control' by V Ramu Sarma (THI March 20) which has given elaborate notes to governments. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that government's business is not doing business. Is it right? Truly false. It is also doing more business than business by collecting taxes in various methods, etc. In days of yore, Hindu temples were under private trusts. There was only one temple in each village and today every street has a temple. Gods and Babas have be-

come more and it leads to cultural diversification to leaps and bounds.

Huge flow of income in certain temples has become eyesore and as such they were brought under government control. Why are Christian and Muslim places of



N Ramalakshmi, Secunderabad

I V RAMU Sarma in his column had well-articulated on why temples need to be freed from government, though he had portrayed the other side also. The most common argument by the proponents of freedom to temples is that places of worship of other religions are not under government control and why should it be so for Hindu temples? It may be noted that the number of temples is vast and varied. Unlike other religions, unity of control becomes difficult here. In the spectrum, there are so many Matts and Peetams who don't see eye to eye. Then is it possible to bring administration of all temples under one umbrella? When different seers are brought under one roof, they may pull and push in different directions leading to total disarray.

Another argument is about expenditure. Can we avoid the expenditure by simply taking them out of the purview of government? There may be no substantial difference in expenses of ad-

ministration and salaries. It is said- service to Man is service to God. What is wrong if the temple funds are spent for education, health and improving the living standards of poor? Handing over to private bodies will fuel feuds among religious heads within the Hindu religion for control and administration.

We have seen how some seers in control of vast temple funds have driven themselves to infamy by their acts in Karnataka. This is not at all to say that there is no lacuna in administration of temples by government. It is bad but alternative will be worse. Of late, we are worried not because we lack but because others have it. Freeing temples from government and handing over to religious bodies will be like falling from pan into fire, considering the magnitude of funds and inherent divisions within.

Vinay Bhushan Bhagwat, Hyderabad

VALUING WATER IS AN IMPERATIVE FOREVER

V NAGENDRA KUMAR

WORLD Water Day is celebrated on March 22 every year to raise awareness about the importance of water, the magnitude of challenges we face and the need for urgent action. More than 70 per cent of the surface of the earth is covered by water out of which only 3 per cent of water can be used for consumption. Right from the beginning of this program, the United Nations has all the responsibility of celebrating World Water Day. It also decided the theme of World Water Day every year to spread the global message. The theme of World Water day this year is 'Valuing water'. One of the most popular and easy ways to save water is rainwater harvesting. There should be educational awareness campaigns on how to use water judiciously both on domestic level and on a business level.

Water is made of two molecules of hydrogen and one molecule of oxygen. Every year the World Water Day is celebrated by India, U.S.A., Indonesia, Pakistan, Japan, Ghana, Bangladesh, Germany, Nigeria, Egypt and United Nations member countries around the world with a theme in order to focus the attention of the public about the value of fresh water in human life. It inspires people around the world to share ideas about water related issues and take some concrete action in terms of preservation and conservation of water resources.

Encroachment of water bodies like lakes, rivers and ponds has increased due to the burgeoning population in urban areas. Photography exhibition, community walk, interviews, talk shows etc., are organized on a national level on World Water Day. Schools organise various competitions like painting, documentary screening, essay writing and quiz competition on this day. The school students, academicians, scientists participate in the event organised at various places in India to celebrate World Water Day.

On this day, people around the world, governments and non-government organizations, youth, and the general public come together and celebrate the occasion. The aim of the celebration is to create awareness of water and its resources which are crucial for the survival of living beings on earth. The government should also focus on problems related to water and more efforts should be taken to encourage people and officials to understand their duties. Water is important to our family lives, cultural practices, wellbeing etc., This day raises awareness about billions of people living without access to safe water.

It is a known fact that without water humans cannot survive. Water is complex because it is linked to almost everything in the world. Water is a precondition for human existence and for the sustainability of the planet. We need water to stay clean and healthy,



to grow food, to run business etc., Billions of gallons of untreated sewage and wastewater are discharged into the environment, polluting our waterways. Rivers are running dry and lakes are turning into dust beds due to unsustainable water withdrawals.

Climate change is also drastically affecting our water systems worsening existing water problems. In many parts of the world, human demands for water have

outstripped the sustainably available supply. We know the value of water when we don't have access to it. In addition to water supply challenges, we also have water quality challenges. More quantity of wastewater is released back into the environment without any treatment which causes severe health hazards both for people and ecosystems. Water has become such an essential commodity that we have wit-

nessed water wars between states in the process of sharing of river waters. On this day, all of us should take a pledge that we have to save water from getting polluted in any way and also take care of our environment.

We have been witnessing serpentine queues just to get one vessel of water. In this aspect it is very much essential for every one of us to conserve water which will be useful for others as well. By

conserving water judiciously, we are not only saving on utility bills, but also giving a chance of using the water for our future generations as well. The water on earth is of three categories namely saltwater, brackish water and freshwater. Enough resources have to be allocated for research and development to convert saltwater into freshwater.

A most popular way to save water is recycling of used water treatment plant set up in local communities. Rainwater harvesting is found to be an important method to save water and recharge groundwater table. In rural areas, sprinkler irrigation to be used to reduce wastage of water. The population explosion, rapid industrialization, globalization and economic growth around the world are taking a toll on the limited resources of natural water on the planet. There are certain African nations who are already suffering from drought because of irresponsible use of water for the last few years.

In India too, the states of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and parts of Maharashtra and Karnataka are facing drought every year because people of these regions are not inculcated to proper use of water resources. In cities like Hyderabad and Bangalore, which doesn't have seasonal rivers flowing in, rainwater harvest and building of embankments should be done so that they become independent from river usage. The construction of

artificial tanks and lakes should be encouraged so that the water collected in these can be used for domestic purposes in cities.

Steps to conserve water

- Leakages in water pipes should be immediately attended
- Dug out percolation pits to allow access to rainwater to flow into it.
- Water thrown out after washing clothes, dishwashers has to be diverted into percolation pits.
- Don't brush your teeth and wash your utensils while keeping the tap open. Instead use one container to store water which can be used for brushing your teeth.
- Water used for cleaning of milk packets, vegetables has to be used for watering plants during the corona pandemic period.
- While taking showers in the toilet, see that your bath is finished before a song is completed ie, say 3 minutes to minimise excess usage of water unnecessarily.
- Arrange float valves to water tanks that will cut-off the water supply after filling up of water tanks.

It is easier said than done. So, we have to preach what we practice. So, water conserving methods have to be given topmost priority to preserve the water.

**HANS BUSINESS
HYDERABAD**


Viiveck Verma

**HANS BUSINESS
HYDERABAD**

QUIZ NO.
165

KEY

1B 2D 3D 4C 5D 6A 7C 8B 9A 10C

A portrait of Thomas Jefferson, an older man with white hair, wearing a dark coat and a white cravat.

10. In 1802, Jefferson, the third president of the United States, had arranged to purchase which of the below from France?

INDIA REIGN

Host beats England by 36 runs; wraps up 5-match T20I series 3-2

AHMEDABAD

INDIA defeated England by 36 runs in the fifth Twenty20 International to claim the series 3-2 here on Saturday, thanks to some splendid bowling both with the new ball and at the death by Bhuvneshwar Kumar after Rohit Sharma's sensational 64 and skipper Virat Kohli's well-crafted 80 powered India to a massive 224 for two, their best ever total against England.

In reply, England managed to score only 188 runs for the loss of eight wickets in the stipulated 20 overs.

Earlier, after losing the toss for the fourth time in the series, India were predictably put in to bat by Eoin Morgan.

Preparing themselves for success in all conditions ahead of the T20 World Cup, India thrived under the pressure of a series-decider to produce their best total of the series.

Jofra Archer and Mark Wood had troubled the Indians with their extra pace in earlier games but Rohit and Kohli sent them to the cleaners on way to their 94-run stand. The other major contributions came from Suryakumar Yadav (32 off 17 balls) and Hardik Pandya (39 not out off 17 balls).

The hosts hammered 67 runs in the last five overs to give the innings a perfect finish. Barring Ben Stokes and Adil Rashid, all England bowlers leaked more than 10 runs per over with Chris Jordan (0/57) being the most expensive.

India decided to drop opener K L Rahul to accommodate an extra bowling option in left-arm pacer T Natarajan for the all important game. With no Rahul at the top, Virat Kohli

moved himself up the order to open with Rohit. The move worked wonders with Kohli and Rohit sharing a 94-run stand off 54 balls.

Rohit did the bulk of the scoring in their partnership as Kohli



5TH T20I SCOREBOARD

India	
Rohit Sharma b Stokes	64
Virat Kohli not out	80
Suryakumar Yadav c Roy b Rashid..	32
Hardik Pandya not out	39
Extras (LB-3,WD-6)	9
Total (For 2 wickets in 20 overs)	224
Fall of wickets: 1-94, 2-143.	
Bowling: Adil Rashid 4-0-31-1, Jofra Archer 4-0-43-0, Mark Wood 4-0-53-0, Chris Jordan 4-0-57-0, Sam Curran 1-0-11-0, Ben Stokes 3-0-26-1.	
England	
Jason Roy b Kumar	0
Jos Buttler c Pandya b Kumar	52
David Malan b Thakur	68
Jonny Bairstow c Yadav b Thakur	7
Eoin Morgan (c) c sub (KL Rahul) b Pandya	1
Ben Stokes c Pant b Natarajan	14
Chris Jordan c Yadav b Thakur	11
Jofra Archer run out (Yadav/Pant)	1
Sam Curran not out	14
Adil Rashid not out	0
Extras (lb 9, w 11)	20
Total (For 8 wickets in 20 overs)	188
Fall of wickets:	
1-0, 2-130, 3-140, 4-142, 5-142, 6-165, 7-168, 8-174	
Bowling: Bhuvneshwar Kumar 4-0-15-2, Hardik Pandya 4-0-34-1, Washington Sundar 1-0-13-0, Shardul Thakur 4-0-45-3, T Natarajan 4-0-39-1, Rahul Chahar 3-0-33-0	

was more than happy to enjoy a sensational display of stroke-making from the other end. Rohit, who was rested for the first two games and did not get much in the next two, enhanced his reputation of a big match player on Saturday.

Most of his five sixes were his trademark shot, the seemingly effortless pull over deep square leg. Also a treat to the eye were his rasping straight drives off a seriously quick Mark Wood in his first over. (PTI)

India's Rohit Sharma greeted by skipper Virat Kohli after scoring half century during fifth and final T20 match against England at the cricket stadium in Sardar Patel Sports Enclave, Ahmedabad on Saturday



Kamal-Manika earn Olympics berth in mixed doubles

singles and mixed doubles categories in table tennis at the Olympics that begins on July 23.

The most impressive part of this final encounter was the way the world No.18 pair of Sharath and Manika turned the game in their favour after starting the match 0-2 (11-8, 11-6) down against their higher-ranked Korean counterparts.

The Indian pair won six points in a row in the third game and scripted a slow but steady comeback.

"I can tell you this is nothing short of phenomenal. It is one of the biggest victories for Manika and me. I have

been sleepless since 5 am in the morning and was under a lot of pressure as this was our only shot to qualify for the Olympics," said an elated Sharath.

The reigning Asian Games bronze-medallist in the mixed team event added, "We started off with two losses but this victory against such top-ranked players will surely give us the confidence and belief of being strong medal contenders for the Tokyo Games."

While the mixed team event is being introduced at the Olympics, the Indian duo had a 1-1 head-to-head count before this encounter. Sharath and Manika had defeated Lee and Jeon during the 2018 Asian Games before this. (IANS)

Hyderabad to host 72nd National Track Cycling Championship

5-day event begins on March 27; is first-ever to be recognised by UCI

HYDERABAD

CYCLING Federation of India's 72nd National Track Cycling Championship-2021 is to be held in Hyderabad from March 27 to 31 at Velodrome SATS, Osmania University. The five-day event will be hosted by Telangana Cycling Association.

Minister of Sports V. Srinivas Gound, SATS Chairman Shri A. Venkateshwar Reddy unveiled the brochure and trophy of the event. The Minister assured all the help in organising the event.

The organising committee, in a press note, said that Telangana State is privileged to host the National Track Cycling Championship and it is the first Championship registered with UCI (Union Cycliste Internationale) which is a history in the making and it will be recognised internationally.

This is the first-ever Indian National Championship to be recognised by the UCI and as such has been listed in the UCI World Track Cycling Calendar.



Sports Minister V Srinivas Gound unveils the Trophy of 72nd National Track Cycling Championship Hyderabad

More than 700 cyclists, both men and women from across India are expected to take part in the National Track Cycling Championship which comes to Hyderabad after a gap of 14 years. They will compete in Individual Time Trial, Individual Sprint, Individual Pursuit, Point Race, Keirin, Scratch Race, Team Pursuit, Team Sprint and Flying Lap. The organizing committee comprises of Malla Reddy, president; Katkam Dattatraya, secretary; Rajkumar Kacharla, chairman; three Co-Chairmans Anurag Rai Saxena, Vijay K and Dr Maxwell Trevor; Vijay Kanth and Venkat Khumbam.

Yashaswini shoots gold, silver for Manu

NEW DELHI

INDIA'S Yashaswini Singh Deswal personified consistency and calmness on her way to winning the gold medal in the women's 10m air pistol ahead of the more celebrated Manu Bhaker in the ISSF World Cup here on Saturday.

Deswal shot 238.8 to comfortably finish on top of the podium in the eight-women final while Bhaker managed 236.7 to settle for the silver medal. Viktoriya Chaika of Belarus bagged the bronze medal with 215.9 at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range.

The other Indian in the final, Shri Nivetha, started well but had to eventually settle for the fourth place with 193.5.

Sindhu loses in All England Open semis

BIRMINGHAM

REIGNING world champion P.V. Sindhu crashed out of the All England Open semi-finals, losing to Thailand's Pornpawee Chochuwong in straight games here on Saturday.

The Thai player, seeded below the Indian in the tournament, won 21-17, 21-9 in 45 minutes.

Chochuwong's dominance was quite evident with the total points won by her -- 42 to Sindhu's 26 out of the 68 points played.

Even though the world No. 7 Sindhu had a better head-to-head record (4-1), her 23-year-old world No. 11 put up a dominant show to tame her.

In the first game, both the players were level at 4-all. However, Chochuwong won two successive points to steer clear. Sindhu tried to catch up but the Thai player stretched the lead to four games, going up 9-5. From then on, Sindhu had to play catch-up.

Although the Indian shuttler did try to narrow the gap on three occasions -- 15-13, 17-15 and 17-16, Chochuwong was too good to let her get ahead.

Bosphorous Boxing tournament

Nikhat, Gaurav crash out in semis

ISTANBUL

INDIAN boxers Nikhat Zareen (51kg) and Gaurav Solanki (57kg) settled for bronze medals after going down in their respective semi-finals at the Bosphorus Boxing Tournament on Friday.

Asian Championship bronze-medallist Nikhat, who defeated world champion Paltceva Ekaterina of Russia in pre-quarter-finals and two-time world champion Nazym Kyzabay of Kazakhstan in the quarter-finals in her last two bouts was up against the 2019 World Championship silver medallist Busenaz Cakiroglu of Turkey in the semi-final.

The opening round saw both the boxers playing a waiting game but the subsequent rounds saw both of them go into attack mode. But the home favourite landed more punches and secured a unanimous 5-0 win over the Indian pugilist.

Meanwhile, Commonwealth Games gold-medallist Gaurav Solanki, who notched up im-

pressive wins in the previous rounds, faced Argentina's Nirco Cuello.

Gaurav fought hard and displayed attacking prowess from the start but conceded clear punches in the dying minutes to lose 0-5 and bow out of the tournament.

Other Indian boxers, Sonia Lather (57 kg), Parveen (60 kg) and Jyoti (69 kg) exited with losses in their respective quarter-final ties on Friday. Shiva Thapa (63 kg) too had lost in the quarter-finals to bow out.



గోపురం పసుపు పాడి మరియు కుంకుమ

ASWINI MEDIA ENTERTAINMENT

VIP
VERY INSPIRING PERSON

WITH OUR VIP
Today at 10 am to 11 am

watch on
hmtv
hmtvlive

VASIREDDY AMARNATH
Chairman, Slate schools

KT residency

KAPIL PROPERTIES

"A premium Co-Living Space"

PROPERTY MULTIPLIER
WITHOUT ADDITIONAL INVESTMENT

KT Residency approved by **RERA** | Approved No. PO2400001598

SAFE Earn extra sft*

AFFORDABLE 9% to 11% Returns

NO MAINTENANCE Assured rental income for **20years**

+91 95337 76694

www.ktresidency.com | sales@kapilproperties.com