



WINDOWS

PETROL
₹91.35
PER LITRE

HYDERABAD: The petrol and diesel prices in Hyderabad touched a new high of Rs 91.35 per litre and Rs 85.11 per litre respectively. The last change in Hyderabad's petrol price was on Feb 10 when it was increased by 26 paise. In the last 10 days, the petrol price in Hyderabad has been fluctuating between Rs 89.77 and Rs 91.35. Similarly, the diesel price in Hyderabad has been fluctuating between Rs 83.46 and Rs 85.11.

Driver booked for trying to run over RTA inspector, cops

GURUGRAM: A dumper driver has been booked for allegedly trying to run over a Road and Transport Authority (RTA) Inspector and others who were carrying out a routine inspection of vehicles on the Gurugram-Faridabad road. The RTA Inspector, two staffers and two policemen who were checking vehicles overloaded with stones near Ghata T-point had a lucky escape. The complainant, RTA Inspector Sandeep Kumar was inspecting the area when they spotted the overloaded dumper coming from Ghata village on the Gurugram-Faridabad road on Wednesday night. As the dumper was carrying stones, they signalled the driver to stop. The dumper driver has been identified as Shahid Khan, a resident of Dhøj village in Faridabad. "As soon as we signalled the driver to stop, he accelerated and rammed our government vehicle. The dumper driver tried to run away from the spot leaving the vehicle behind but was overpowered by the complainant and the police personnel on the spot while the helper of the dumper fled the spot along with the driver's phone," Kumar told the police. A case was registered against the driver under sections 307, 353 and other relevant sections of the IPC.



India, China agree to pull back troops in Pangong lake areas

NEW DELHI

INDIA and China have reached an agreement on disengagement in the North and South bank of Pangong lake in eastern Ladakh that mandates both sides to cease forward deployment of troops in a "phased, coordinated and verifiable" manner, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh announced in Parliament on Thursday, in a breakthrough after a nine-month border standoff.

Sharing details of the pact to defuse the tense military face-off in eastern Ladakh that severely strained ties between the two Asian giants, Singh also assured the Rajya Sabha that India has not conceded anything in the sustained talks with China. India will not allow even an inch of its territory to be taken by anyone, he said.

The defence minister said implementation of the pact will "substantially restore" the situation to the one which existed prior to the standoff that erupted on May 5 last, adding the two sides have agreed they should achieve complete disengagement at the "earliest" and abide fully by the bilateral agreements and protocols. Making a statement in the Upper House a

day after China announced the disengagement process, Singh said both sides have agreed to remove structures that had been built since April last in North and South bank areas, and put in place a temporary moratorium on military activities including patrolling the traditional areas. The defence minister said under the agreement the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) will keep its troops in the North bank area to east of Finger 8 and the Indian troops will be based at their permanent base at Dhan Singh Thapa Post near Finger 3 in the Pangong lake areas, a major site of friction between the two large armies.

He said the implementation of the pact started on Wednesday and it was agreed to convene the next meeting of senior commanders of both sides within 48 hours of completion of the disengagement in the Pangong lake area so as to resolve all other remaining issues.

"I am happy to inform the House today that as a result of our well thought out approach and sustained talks with the Chinese side, we have now been able to reach an agreement on disengagement in the North and South bank of the Pan-



(Left) Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in the Lok Sabha, (Right) Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) Bipin Rawat at Parliament after a meeting with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday

gong lake," the defence minister said.

The border standoff between the Indian and Chinese militaries erupted on May 5 following a violent clash in the Pangong lake areas and both sides gradually enhanced their deployment by rushing in tens of thousands of soldiers as well as heavy weaponry even as the two sides continued military and diplomatic talks. "The agreement that we have been able to reach with the Chinese side for disengagement in the Pangong lake area envisages that both sides will cease their forward deployments in a phased, coordinated and

verified manner." "The Chinese side will keep its troop presence in the North bank area to east of Finger 8. Reciprocally, the Indian troops will be based at their permanent base at Dhan Singh Thapa post near Finger 3. A similar action would be taken in the South bank area by both sides," he said. The defence minister said patrolling will be resumed in the areas only when both sides reach an agreement in diplomatic and military talks that would be held subsequently. He said these are mutual and reciprocal steps and any structures that had been built by both sides since April 2020 in both

North and South bank areas will be removed and the landforms will be restored. "I want to assure this House that in these talks we have not conceded anything.

The House should also know that there are still some outstanding issues with regard to deployment and patrolling at some other points along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh," he said.

"These will be the focus of further discussions with the Chinese side. We have agreed that both sides should achieve complete disengagement at the earliest and abide fully by the bilateral agreements and protocols."

Modi govt gives 'school land' for Delhi BJP office



Saurabh Bharadwaj

PURNA SINGH
NEW DELHI

THE Aam Aadmi Party claimed on Thursday that the Centre had sanctioned more than 2 acres of posh land at just Rs 2 crore to the Delhi BJP to build its office.

AAP leader Saurabh Bharadwaj claimed the land at the Deendayal Upadhyaya Marg was not for building any political party office, but a school. No reaction was immediately available from the Bharatiya Janata Party. "At one side, the BJP government harasses the ruling party of Delhi and try to evict them from their party office.

On the other side, it provides land to the BJP at negligible prices," the legislator said at a press conference in New Delhi. Bharad-

waj demanded that the Delhi BJP must disclose how could they get 10,000 square yards of land in "just Rs 2 crores".

"Here, no one can buy 2 yards of land with this money!" he said. "On behalf of the Aam Aadmi Party, I want to ask the BJP whether it is true that this land was sanctioned to build schools or not," he said. Bharadwaj added that the Centre had asked AAP to pay crores of rupees as rent for the party office, alleging that the BJP government "had also tried to evict us from this office repeatedly".

"The BJP should come clean and tell us whether they have any shame or not to own such a party office despite having such a negligible number of assembly seats in Delhi," he added.

Maha Guv barred from boarding govt aircraft

MUMBAI

MAHARASHTRA Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari was denied permission to use a state government aircraft to travel to Dehradun on Thursday, triggering a row and inviting a strong criticism from the opposition BJP which sought an apology over the incident.

Koshyari was scheduled to travel by a state government aircraft to Dehradun, but the permission to use the plane was not granted even as the governor had boarded the aircraft, sources said. The governor later took a commercial flight to travel to the capital of his home state of Uttarakhand, a statement from the Raj Bhavan said.

The Raj Bhavan secretariat and the state government sought to blame each other for the incident, which added a new chapter in the uneasy ties between the ruling coalition, comprising the Shiv Sena, NCP, Congress, and the governor. The Raj



Bhavan statement said the governor's secretariat had written to the government authorities seeking permission for the use of the aircraft "well in advance" on February 2. The office of the chief minister was also informed about it, the statement said. However, the Maharashtra government said the Raj Bhavan secretariat had been informed a day earlier by the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) that approval for use of the official aircraft has not been given. A statement from the CMO said the state government had taken serious cognizance that the official concerned at Raj Bhavan did not apprise the governor about the communication from the government (denying nod to use the aircraft).

Difficult to live in Delhi for ₹15k: HC

NEW DELHI

The High Court said that it is difficult to live in the national capital at a minimum salary of Rs 15,000. The court made this remark during the hearing of a petition challenging the Delhi government's decision to give dearness allowance (DA) to unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled workers in the capital. The court refused to stay the government's decision.

A division bench of Chief Justice DN Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh has issued a notice to the Delhi government and the labor department on the basis of this petition and sought an answer. This petition has been filed by the apex trade and industry association of Delhi.

In the petition, the notification of October 2019 issued by the Delhi government to revise the minimum wage for all categories of workers and employees and challenged the order of December 7, 2020 of the Labor Department to fix dearness allowance. Additional Permanent Advocate of Delhi Government Sanjay Ghosh and advocate Rishab J defended the government's October 2019 notification saying that rates based on food items, textiles, housing, fuel, children's education, average cost of medical expenses and other aspects has been determined. He said that before the Delhi government fixed the minimum wage, a Delhi Minimum Wage Advisory Board was formed and it was discussed with all stakeholders in-

cluding the petitioner organisation. He said the matter was decided through vote after no consensus was reached in the talks and the board members approved the rate on the basis of majority. The organisation, which claims to have representation of around 50,000 micro, small and medium industries (MSMEs) in the national capital, has contended that there is a discrepancy in the order dated December 7, 2020 of the Additional Labor Commissioner of the Department of Labor. He said the DA has been implemented with effect from April 1, 2020 and October 2020. In the petition, the organization has said that the order of December 7, 2020 cannot be implemented with retrospective effect.

Over 4 lakh vaccinated in a day

NEW DELHI: A total of 4,13,752 beneficiaries received Covid vaccine nationwide on Thursday, the Union Health and Family Welfare Ministry said. As per the provisional data, only 20 per cent healthcare workers took the vaccine shots on the 27th day of immunisation in the country. "As per data received till 7 p.m. today, 4,13,752 beneficiaries received vaccines today. Of them, 3,28,148 beneficiaries were frontline workers while the count of healthcare workers remained 85,604," a ministry official said.



No change in policy on Jammu & Kashmir, says US

WASHINGTON

THE United States on Wednesday said that there is no change in its policy on Jammu and Kashmir. "I want to be very clear there has been no change in US policy in the region," State Department Spokesperson Ned Price told reporters in view of a tweet from the South and Central Asia Bureau of the State Department which welcomed the resumption of 4G mobile internet in Jammu and Kashmir.

"We welcome the resumption of 4G mobile internet in India's Jammu & Kashmir. This marks an important step for local resi-



dents and we look forward to continued political & economic progress to restore normalcy in J&K," tweeted the South and Central Asia Bureau of the State Department. High-speed mobile

internet was restored on February 5 in the entire union territory of Jammu and Kashmir, exactly one and-a-half years after it was snapped in August 2019 when the Centre had abrogated

the special status of the erstwhile state.

According to a 2019 Congressional Research Service report of August 2019, a longstanding goal of US policy in South Asia

has been to prevent India-Pakistan conflict from escalating to interstate war. This meant the United States has sought to avoid actions that overtly favoured either party. Over the past decade, however, Washington has grown closer to India while relations with Pakistan continue to be viewed as clouded by mistrust, CRS report said.

On a question related to Twitter shutting down some accounts in India, Price said, "Well, I think what I would say generally is that around the world - and this goes back to

what I was saying before - we are committed to supporting democratic values, including freedom of expression. I think when it comes to Twitter's policies, we'd have to refer you to Twitter itself."

Responding to a similar question, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki told reporters at her daily news conference, "Of course, we always have concerns about crackdowns on freedom of speech, freedom of expression happening around the world and when it doesn't allow people to communicate and peacefully protest." (PTI)

Action will be taken if Twitter, FB platforms are misused: Govt

NEW DELHI

THE Centre on Thursday categorically cautioned social media platforms against spreading fake news or anything inciting violence, as Information Technology Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said action will be taken if Indian laws were flouted.

"There is freedom of speech but Article 19A says that this is subject to reasonable restrictions," the Minister for Communications, Electronics & Information Technology told in the Rajya Sabha as he reminded platforms like Twitter and Facebook to comply with Indian rules while carrying out business.

"We respect social media a lot, it has empowered common people. Social media has a big role in the Digital India programme. However, if social media are misused to spread fake news and violence, then action will be taken on the misuse of social media in India whether Twitter or else," said Prasad.

He said all the social media platforms will have to adhere to the constitution of India. The Indian constitution allows criticism of the government and the Prime Minister, but spreading fake news will not be allowed, he said. Prasad said, "We have flagged certain issues to Twitter and social media has to take into consideration of the Indian Laws if they want to do business in the country.

"Different parameters can't be allowed for different countries. It can't be different for the Capitol Hill incident and some other parameters and for the Red Fort incident." The Indian government on Wednesday expressed displeasure over Twitter's delayed compliance on its order to remove "provocative" tweets amid the ongoing farmers' protests.

Womenia

Colour your hair, limit the damage

It is also very essential to choose the right colour, which goes with the colour tone of your skin. For instance, a blonde or whitish colour would not suit an Indian skin tone. However, a lighter colour may be used for highlighting or streaking. Your choice of colour would depend on the reason for colouring your hair



Hair colouring is the mantra of the day. But, however glamorous it may look, hair colourants and dyes can cause a lot of hair damage. Once the colour wears off, one wants to have the hair coloured again. This kind of repeated colouring may damage the hair, make it dry and brittle. Moreover, if dark hair is coloured to a lighter colour, the bleaching process has to be used. This causes added damage.

So, before going in for colouring, it is essential to know the methods that are available and how they affect the hair. Also, find out about limiting the damage and the latest trends.

Permanent dyes and colours work by changing the structure of the hair and entering the inner layer. They actually strip off the outermost layer, in an uneven manner, to penetrate the inner layer. Damage to the outer layer, or cuticle, weakens the hair and also makes it dry, rough, and dull.

Semi-permanent methods, like hair rinses and creams, last for 4

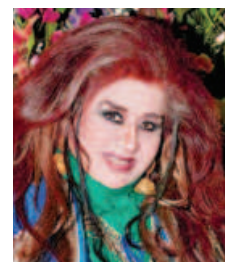
to 6 shampoos. They do not cause as much damage as the permanent dyes. Semi-permanent methods are suitable for disguising grey hair, or for lending a richer colour to dull hair.

Temporary hair colours are also available, in the form of "hair mascaras."

Hair mascaras are somewhat like crayons, which can be used to "streak" strands of the hair. Hair mascaras are temporary methods of colouring the hair. They are easier to use and remove and the effect lasts till the next shampoo.

One can also use a natural hair colour that contains natural colourants like indigo, catechu, and henna. It gives the hair a blackish brown colour and is free of chemical dyes.

Streaks and highlights are back in hair colour. Apart from blonde, gold, or platinum, you can even go for pink, violet, green or orange streaks, as bright coloured streaks are predicted in the coming sea-



Shahnaz Husain

sons! Of course, you can keep to subtle colours, close to your normal colour, with lighter and darker tinted strands all over.

Streaking is a method in which some strands are bleached or coloured. A few streaks of colour can also save the rest of the

hair from damage and yet, give you a new and glamorous look. You could have about four streaks in front, which means that some strands in front are coloured. This can look attractive and certainly cause less damage. Of course, this is suitable for those who have no gray hair and are mainly looking for a colour change.

If you go in for half-head streaking, it helps to limit the damage. In this method, some strands are selected. They are bleached and wrapped in special foil. It can be started from the hairline to the crown so that the streaked hair is fully visible. You will need to touch it up in about 4 weeks, as the roots of your original hair colour will

show through. Or, if you have short hair, the ends can be streaked in a different colour.

It is also very essential to choose the right colour, which goes with the colour tone of your skin. For instance, a blonde or whitish colour would not suit an Indian skin tone. However, a lighter colour may be used for highlighting or streaking. Your choice of colour would depend on the reason for colouring your hair. If you wish to conceal a lot of grey hair, you may have the colour the entire head of hair the same colour. If you want highlights or streaks, you have to select a lighter colour which complements the colour of the rest of your hair.

Experts recommend that the colour you choose for highlighting your hair should be 3 shades lighter than your natural hair colour. Of course, if you wish to go for bright colours, like red, purple, blue or gold, it is necessary to see if they suit your natural skin tone. The new trend is to highlight only the tips of the hair. This is favoured for a bright look. It also helps to limit the damage.

TWEET PATROL



SONALI BENDRE BEHL
@IAMSONALIBENDRE

Mid week blues and mellow hues



Apply concealer the right way

Concealer is a must-have product in every girl's makeup bag. It's there for you on more occasions than one; too conceal a pesky pimple, cover up dark under-eye circles and brighten up dull, tired-looking skin. But are we using it to its full potential? The last thing you want is for your concealer to emphasise your problem areas, here are some tips to pick the right shade of concealer to the mistakes you should avoid.

How to select the right shade of concealer

Concealer is your best friend when it comes to creating a flawless complexion. If you want to emphasise your best features and hide your imperfections, you need to pick the right shade. Your choice depends on your unique colouring and what exactly you're trying to hide. Keep in mind that different sections of your face require different kinds of concealers. When it comes to concealing under the eyes, the goal is to brighten the area, so you'll want to grab a concealer that's lighter than your skin tone. On the other hand, if you're looking to cover blemishes and/or redness, go for a product that's the same shade as your skin. No matter what area you are working on, always use a good quality concealer brush. It'll make all the difference.

Where to apply concealer

While you may think of it as a product to cover blemishes, concealer has a number of different uses. The three main ways you can use it are to cover dark undereye circles, hide blemishes and redness and brighten dark areas. As mentioned, you'll need to use different kinds of concealers for different areas of your face.

Concealer is your best friend when it comes to creating a flawless complexion. If you want to emphasise your best features and hide your imperfections, you need to pick the right shade. Your choice depends on your unique colouring and what exactly you're trying to hide

How to apply primer, foundation, and concealer

Before applying any makeup products to your face, first prep the skin. A primer will help your makeup to last longer, even out skin tone and reduce the look of your pores. While some people apply concealer first, we're here to tell you that you'll benefit more from starting with the foundation. This will prevent you from overdoing it. Depending on personal preference, you can use either a beauty blender or brush to apply your foundation. Next, you can move on to concealer. You'll want to invest in a good-quality brush to get the most flawless, even complexion. Blend the product outwards gently to avoid any tell-tale lines.

How to apply concealer under the eyes

The delicate under-eye area is prone to microtears and damage, so you'll want to approach the area with care. A concealer brush is the gentlest option. Before applying any product, first prep the area with eye cream, patting it under the eye and onto the lid. Wait a few minutes while it sets in before applying makeup. For a more lifted look, we recommend applying the

concealer in a V shape. Use a dabbing movement to blend the product out.

How to apply concealer to cover breakouts, redness and scars

When it comes to concealing breakouts, it's important to first moisturise the skin. This will help to protect blemishes from potential acne triggers like sunscreen and/or makeup. Using a brush, you can then dab the concealer right onto the spot. Sweep the brush over the blemish gently and feather out the edges to blend it into the surrounding skin. Finish by setting with loose powder.

Most of us have run into an acne scar or two. Although makeup is the easiest way to conceal these imperfections, certain application processes can emphasise them rather than minimise their appearance. Before you apply any makeup, go for priming to smooth the skin and fill in the scarring. Matte concealers are the best because of their ability to soften the appearance of textured areas. Use a fine-tipped concealer brush to blend the product out. Finish by lightly dusting a setting powder all over the blemish.



NEWS ROUNDUP



Manasa Varanasi bags Miss India World 2020 title

Manasa Varanasi, an engineer from Telangana, has bagged the VLCC Femina Miss India World 2020 title. Haryana's Manika Sheokand was declared VLCC Femina Miss Grand India 2020 while Uttar Pradesh's Manya Singh crowned VLCC Femina Miss India 2020 Runner Up.

Manasa Varanasi, an engineer from Telangana, has bagged the VLCC Femina Miss India World

2020 title. Haryana's Manika Sheokand was declared VLCC Femina Miss Grand India 2020 while Uttar Pradesh's Manya Singh crowned VLCC Femina Miss India 2020 Runner Up.

In a nationwide virtual hunt, a total of 31 finalists were short-listed for finale that was held in Mumbai on Wednesday.

The jury panel comprised actors Neha Dhupia, Chitrangada Singh, Pulkit Samrat and

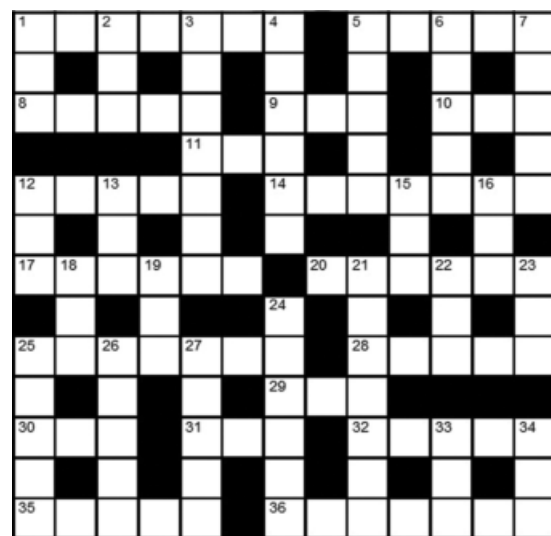
renowned designer duo Falguni and Shane Peacock.

Miss World 2019 - 2nd Runner-up and Miss World Asia 2019; Suman Rao crowned her successor Manasa Varanasi who will represent India at the Miss World pageant that is scheduled to take place later this year.

Neha Dhupia said: "Each year as the journey of Femina Miss India begins, it brings back all the memories of the priceless experiences

I've had with this pageant. It's almost like reliving every moment of my journey with these young glamorous girls who are so full of enthusiasm and capability to take on the world with power and elegance.

Certainly, there are challenges with the digital process in the wake of the pandemic, however I'm confident it will be as exciting and worthwhile irrespective of the layout."



SOLUTION TO FEBRUARY 11

CROSSWORD

Across

- 1 Branch of mathematics (7)
- 5 Inquired of (5)
- 8 Capital of Morocco (5)
- 9 Etna residue (3)
- 10 Not cooked (3)
- 11 Small house (3)
- 12 New ____ : our capital ? (5)
- 14 Back payments (7)
- 17 Tramp (6)
- 20 Frightened (6)
- 25 Mandible (7)
- 28 Prepared (5)
- 29 Hawaiian adornment (3)
- 30 Droop (3)
- 31 Kimono sash (3)
- 32 Short - work for barrister (5)
- 35 Fathers (5)
- 36 Confound (7)

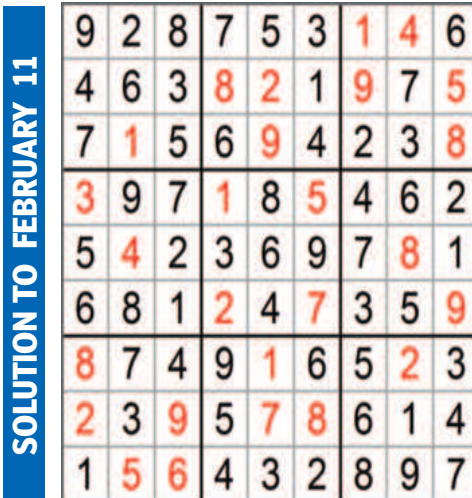
Down

- 1 Manner (3)
- 2 Lump (3)
- 3 Washing oneself (7)

Incarnation (6)

- 5 Detest (5)
- 6 Destiny (5)
- 7 Early mornings (5)
- 12 Commonly used pesticide (3)
- 13 Monetary unit of Romania (3)
- 15 Age or epoch (3)
- 16 Fish eggs (3)
- 18 Genetic stuff (3)
- 19 Confer knighthood on (3)
- 21 Reindeer (7)
- 22 Record company ____ Victor (3)
- 23 Dawn to dusk (3)
- 24 Alleviation of pain (6)
- 25 Jokes (5)
- 26 Bet (5)
- 27 Woodwind instruments (5)
- 33 Informally, any doctrine or practice (3)
- 34 Mend (3)

SUDOKU



SOLUTION TO FEBRUARY 11

Try natural lip remedies

There are several effective natural remedies for chapped lips. A person may even have some in their kitchen.

To soothe and moisturise chapped lips, apply the following directly to the lips:

- Aloe vera: This gel forms inside the leaves of aloe vera plants. It contains vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and anti-inflammatories that soothe and rehydrate damaged skin.
- Coconut oil: Made from the flesh of coconuts, this oil combats inflammation and is an emollient, which means that it can soothe and soften the skin.
- Honey: It is highly moisturising, which makes it a good treatment for dry lips. Honey also contains antioxidants and antibacterial properties, which help prevent infections from developing in extremely dry or cracked lips.
- Cucumber: It can gently moisturise the lips and may contain vitamins and minerals that could improve the lips' appearance.
- Green tea: Rich in antioxidants and minerals, green tea also contains polyphenols, which reduce inflammation. Soak a bag of green tea in warm water and gently rub it over the lips to soften and remove excess dry skin. This technique is more gentle than traditional exfolia-



tion. Aloe vera, coconut oil, and honey all have antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory properties, which can help prevent infection while moisturising and soothing the skin on the lips.

Most supermarkets stock these products, but people can browse through a range of harder-to-find ingredients online, including aloe vera gel and coconut oil.

Exfoliate the lips Chapped lips are covered in a layer of dry skin that can prevent healing ingredients in lip balms from reaching the right area.

People can use lip scrubs that contain sugar or baking soda to gently exfoliate away this dry skin. When shopping for a lip scrub, look for products that contain ingredients that will soothe and moisten the lips. People can buy these lip scrubs in drug stores or find a range of natural options online.



DEATH OF FARMER DURING TRACTOR RALLY

HC seeks Delhi govt, police stand on plea for SIT probe



NEW DELHI

THE Delhi High Court on Thursday sought response of the AAP government and police on a plea seeking a court-monitored SIT probe into the death of a 25-year-old man who died after his tractor overturned during the protesting farmers' tractor rally on Republic Day. Justice Yogesh Khanna issued notice to the Delhi government, Delhi Police, Uttar Pradesh Police and the Chief Medical Officer of District Hospital at Rampur, where the post mortem was carried out. The court sought their stand on the petition moved by the de-

ceased Navreet Singh's grandfather who has claimed that the victim has suffered gunshot injuries to his head.

The court directed the Delhi Police to file a status report with regard to the investigation on or before the next date of hearing on February 26. Delhi government standing counsel Rahul Mehra, appearing for the police, told the court that according to instructions received by him, Singh died as result of over-turning of his tractor at ITO here during the violent clash between farmers and the police personnel. He said that a general FIR in relation to Singh's death has been registered at I P Estate police

station. Advocate Vrinda Grover, appearing for the victim's grandfather, told the court that the way Delhi Police has conducted itself in the matter "does not inspire a shred of confidence".

She said that the police abandoned all procedures, like carrying out inquest proceedings, conducting a post mortem and lodging of an FIR, as required under the law, even if it was a case of accidental death. She said that the victim's grandfather took the body back to their native place in Uttar Pradesh where the post mortem was carried out.

The police, instead, seized all the

CCTV footage from the area, including from cameras which were closest to the incident site, and only selectively released video recorded from far. It also released a statement to the media, on the evening of January 26, saying that the farmer died due to overturning of the tractor without even carrying out a probe, she told the court.

Grover told the court that according to a UK-based pathologist, who saw the video of the incident and also perused the post mortem report, the injuries on the victim were consistent with at least one or two gunshot wounds. She argued that this in-

cluded that the victim lost control of the tractor and it overturned as he was shot by the police personnel.

The petition has sought directions to Delhi Police to share with the petitioner the CCTV footage recovered from the incident site. It has also sought directions to the UP police to share with the petitioner the FIR lodged there in connection with the death of the young farmer. A direction has also been sought to the Chief Medical Officer of District Hospital at Rampur to provide the petitioner with a copy of the victim's x-ray report and also the video recording of the post mortem.

Learn from Deendayal about public conduct: Modi tells MPs

NEW DELHI

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday paid rich tribute to Deendayal Upadhyaya and said that present-day leaders should learn from the late BJS leader on how to conduct themselves in public life while upholding democratic values.

"Deendayal Upadhyaya used to say that only a strong nation can contribute to the world. This is the basic concept of an 'Atmanirbhar' (self-reliant) India today. It is with this ideal that the country is moving forward on the path of self-reliance," he said.

"You all have read about Pandit Deendayal and moulded your lives on the basis of his ideals. Hence, you all must be well aware of his thoughts and



Prime Minister Narendra Modi pays floral tribute to former Bharatiya Jana Sangh leader Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya on his 53rd death anniversary as part of 'Samarpan Diwas', in New Delhi on Thursday

his dedication.

"I have experienced this... you too must have felt that the more

we think about Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya, more we speak about him -- a novelty in

his thoughts is felt and experienced," Modi said while addressing MPs on the occasion of Dedication Day -- which commemorates the death anniversary of Upadhyaya -- at the Ambedkar International Centre here: Deendayal Upadhyaya was a leader of Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS), the forerunner of the BJP. The Prime Minister said: "Wherever there is a question of service to the humanity, there will be talk of welfare of the humanity; and Deendayal ji's Integral Human Philosophy will remain relevant."

Modi said that while on the one hand he was moving forward with new ideas in Indian politics, on the other hand, he was equally comfortable with leaders of every party and their ideologies. He said that he had close relations with everyone.

2L UP frontline workers to get Covid vaccines

LUCKNOW

THE Uttar Pradesh government will cover nearly two lakh frontline workers across 75 districts in the vaccination session taking place on Thursday and Friday.

Additional Chief Secretary (Health and Family Welfare) Amit Mohan Prasad said that so far, nearly 15,000 frontline workers have taken the Covid-19 vaccine.

"In the next round, slated to take place on Thursday, over 2,000 sessions would be organised across 75 districts," he said.

Officials engaged in the vaccination process stated that on an average 100 persons would be covered per session. At this rate, the target is to cover two lakh frontline workers on Thursday.

The department has listed about eight lakh frontline workers for the vaccination.



Prasad further said that the session for frontline workers will continue on Friday as well while health workers who missed their vaccine could also take the jab on February 15.

Officials said that those who received the vaccine on January 16 will get the second dose on February 16.

Officials have urged the listed beneficiaries not to miss their vaccine as there was negligible risk of side effects.

Health officials stated that barely one in 1,500 is having mild side effects.

Alex presents credentials as British High Commissioner

NEW DELHI

ALEX Ellis presented his credentials to the President of India Ram Nath Kovind as UK's new High Commissioner to India at a virtual ceremony, on Thursday

Alex Ellis said: "I am delighted to return to India, my home, 35 years ago. I remember my time fondly - trekking in the Himalayas, exploring the beautiful cities and taking in the night sky in the desert near Jaisalmer. I hope to see even more this time around and look forward to starting tomorrow by visiting Chennai.

This is a significant year for the UK-India partnership, both bilaterally and on the global stage. The UK Government has made clear the importance it places on this relationship, as visits by the Foreign and Trade Secretaries underline. My immediate priorities include preparing for the UK Prime Minister's upcoming visit to India and, I hope, welcoming India to the G7 and COP26 summits in the UK later this year.



Woman crushed to death by truck after falling off scooter

NEW DELHI

A 22-year-old woman was crushed to death by a truck after she fell off a scooter in east Delhi's Mayur Vihar area on Thursday, police said. The deceased, Swati, is a resident of Rajbir Colony in Kondli area, they said. The police said that she was returning home from G B Pant Hospital, where her father had died on Thursday morning. During enquiry, it emerged that the woman, who was travelling with her neighbour, fell off the scooter which hit a speed breaker on Ghazipur nala road near Chilla village, and died after a truck came from behind and ran

over her, a senior police officer said.

The truck driver escaped from the spot, he said. The injured woman was taken to a nearby hospital, where she was declared brought dead, the officer added. Deputy Commissioner of Police (East) Deepak Yadav said that a case has been registered under various sections of the Indian Penal Code at the Mayur Vihar police station and efforts are being made to trace the truck driver. The police said they are also scanning CCTV cameras in and around the scene of the incident to identify the driver and ascertain the sequence of events.

BCI: Decision to scrap one-year LLM to operate from 2022-23

NEW DELHI

THE Bar Council of India on Thursday told the Supreme Court that the decision to discontinue the one-year LLM course will come into effect from academic year 2022-23.

A bench, headed by Chief Justice S.A. Bobde and comprising Justices A.S. Bopanna and V. Ramasubramanian recorded the submissions of BCI Chairman Manan Kumar Mishra that no interim order would be required in the matter.

Senior advocate A.M. Singhvi, representing the Consortium of National Law Universities, which challenged the validity of



the BCI rules, expressed its satisfaction at the submissions of the BCI Chairman.

The universities agreed before the top court that no urgent order was required in their appeal against the BCI's decision. The universities had pointed

out that one year LLM degree was the norm across universities the world over.

Recently, the BCI had notified the BCI Legal Education (Post Graduate, Doctoral, Executive, Vocational, Clinical and other Continuing Education) Rules,

2020, which held that the LLM course has to be of two years and scrapped the one-year course, in the official gazette on January 4.

After a brief hearing in the matter, the top court adjourned the matter for four weeks.

The Consortium of National Law Universities had sought status quo in the matter against the backdrop of 5,000 applications for one-year LLM course advertised in January this year.

They had contended that LLM degree course comes under the domain of UGC regulations and the BCI had power under the Advocates Act to regulate the LLB degree only.

SI suspended for attempted rape

PILBHIT

A sub-inspector (SI) with Barkhera police station has been suspended after he was booked for allegedly attempting to rape a 29-year-old woman.

The woman alleged that the accused had been harassing her with obscene comments over the phone for days, before the incident.

The complainant alleged that after her parents passed away 15 years ago, she was married to a man with whom she has been living in a village under Gajraula police station. Her parents had willed their agricultural land in the name of her mentally impaired brother and her elder sister



had forcibly taken away the brother to live with her in Bisalpur city, hoping to usurp the land.

About a month ago, she had filed a written complaint against her sister with Barkhera police station and the accused SI, Ram Gopal, got her cell phone number. After this, the SI started making

obscene phone calls to her almost every night.

One day, he suggested that she should accompany him to Bisalpur to bring her brother back from her elder sister's house.

She agreed and after reaching Bisalpur on February 2, he asked her to accompany him to a flat in Patel Nagar, to write a complaint that would be filed at Bisalpur Kotwali police station.

She said that when they reached the flat, the SI closed the door from inside, grabbed her and attempted to molest her. However, she managed to flee from the flat.

Gayatri Prajapati in ED custody for seven days

LUCKNOW

FORMER UP minister Gayatri Prajapati, arrested earlier, has been sent to a seven-day Enforcement Directorate (ED) custody by a special court in a money laundering case linked to disproportionate assets.

Prajapati was booked in January this year by the ED in a fresh money laundering case after analysing an Uttar Pradesh Police vigilance FIR filed against him on charges of possessing alleged disproportionate assets.

The ED had sought at least



10 days' custody of Gayatri Prajapati from the court to 'dig out details of funds and 59 immovable properties worth Rs 20.90 crore', allegedly amassed by the former minister and his family members using purported pro-

ceeds of crime earned from illegal mining and other avenues.

In this case, he was arrested and sent to jail on March 15, 2017 and has been in judicial custody since then.

The ED had raided a number of his premises and those of his associated at Lucknow, Kanpur and Amethi in December last year.

The agency had then said that during the raids, it seized Rs 1.42 lakh cash, demonetized currency valuing Rs 11.50 lakh, stamp papers worth Rs 5 lakh, some property-related documents and computers.

Man kills sis to escape gang rape charge

AMROHA

A boy has been arrested by the Uttar Pradesh Police for killing his sister in order to implicate those who had filed a rape case against him.

According to the police, there is already a rape case registered against the accused and to avoid this, he conspired to kill his sister but got trapped.

To gain sympathy and mislead the police, the accused started crying loudly before the body of his sister, who used to work in a private bank in Noida and was an MBA student.

He named his rivals to the police arrived and blamed them for his sister's murder. However, the CCTV cameras installed at various points and the call details of the accused played an important role in solving the case. The cops have also gathered evidence from the cab used by the accused for the murder.



SC declines to interfere with East Kidwai Nagar redevelopment project

NEW DELHI

THE Delhi High Court on Thursday declined to interfere with the East Kidwai Nagar redevelopment project saying it was in tune with the Master Plan of Delhi (MPD) approved by various statutory authorities.

The high court also said it cannot reassess the project in the absence of any specific challenge to the permissions for it. It, however, said that there was a shortfall in compensatory tree plantation in lieu of the trees felled for the project and also "misuser" or excess earmarking of area for commercial use under the redevelopment. The high court also observed that while decentralisation of offices was the need of the hour, it cannot be said that there was

total prohibition on relocation of central PSU offices within Delhi at present, making the present project illegal. "One can only say that the government must work towards the fulfilment of this goal that has been set in the MPD," Justice Navin Chawla said. The high court directed NBCC, which is carrying out the work, not to handover possession of the commercial/office block in the project to the allottees without first ensuring that the compensatory plantation was completed. With regard to the excess commercial use of 16,241.9 square metres, the high court directed that the authorities would have to consider if the same can be compounded and if not, then the Centre and NBCC have to bring the construction in conformity with the usage requirement,

"the mode and manner of which is again left to the relevant authorities to consider". "In such consideration, the authorities shall take into account the traffic and parking issues also which have been raised by the petitioners..

However, till such consideration and terms thereof are complied with, the respondent no. 19 (NBCC) shall stand restrained from handing over of the possession of such construction, i.e. 16,241.9 square metres to the third parties/allottees. It is directed accordingly," the high court said in its 96-page judgement disposing of the plea by some residents of nearby South Extension-II colony opposing the project. The high court came to the conclusion that there was "misuser" or excess

commercial usage under the project after noting that out of the total project land of 86 acres, 14 acres were classified as land of the protected monument -- Darya Khan Tomb -- where no construction was permissible and therefore, it could not have been taken into account for sanctioning the plan or determination of the floor area ratio (FAR) applicable to the project.

"By adding the said area to the total area of land handed over to the respondent no. 19 (NBCC), what could not have been achieved directly was sought to be achieved indirectly. The same is not permissible. Mere sanction of the plan by New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) would also not come to the aid of the respondent no. 19 in this regard.

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USA’s human rights track record under watch

THE United States President Joe Biden has announced plans to end US support for Saudi Arabia’s “offensive operations” in war-torn Yemen, including ceasing relevant arms sales to the government in Riyadh. “This war has to end. And to underscore our commitment, we’re ending all American support for offensive operations in the war in Yemen, including relevant arm sales,” the US president said in a speech at the State Department. But, the US cannot ignore the attacks on Saudi Arabia which faces missile attacks, UAV (drone) strikes and other threats from Iranian-supplied forces in multiple countries.

The US will continue to support and help Saudi Arabia defend its sovereignty and its territorial integrity and its people. So, will the US be seeking a

diplomatic solution to the long feud? America has been silent on the logistics part here. It has not given away any details regarding support to Saudi Arabian forces in Yemen henceforth. The United States provides spare parts, munitions, technical assistance, all kinds of things to the Saudi military, which enable its offensive operations.

So if the Saudis continued to use the Royal Saudi Air Force to bomb targets in Yemen, presumably, under this doctrine, that aid and assistance should halt. Stopping aid to Saudi led coalition is easier said than done. The US has to go through a process to determine the right and wrong moves of Saudi now onwards. All this will be only one part of bringing peace to the strife torn Yemen. The country is going through the worst humanitarian crisis.

Yemenis will continue to face a risk to their life and suffer as long as Riyadh’s blockade continues. The conflict in Yemen has become a conflict of Saudi Arabia and Iran. The last minute decision of the previous Trump Administration which led to the present crisis in Yemen has been much criticised by the UN and others. Yemen is the world’s biggest humanitarian crisis, with 80 per cent of its people in need. Last month the United Nations’ aid chief warned the new sanctions would push Yemen into a famine on a scale not seen for nearly 40 years.

Former U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo blacklisted the Houthis on Jan. 19, one day before Biden took office. The Trump administration exempted aid groups, the United Nations,

the Red Cross and the export of agricultural commodities, medicine and medical devices from its designation. But UN officials and relief groups called for the designation to be revoked. The mistakes that the US does are phenomenal. The country which talks about human rights and values and democratic principles and lectures the world on the same keeps flouting the very same everywhere. It was Obama who stepped up the crisis in Yemen.

In 2015, the Barack Obama administration was mostly silent as Riyadh aggressively opposed a Dutch-led push for a human rights inquiry in Yemen. The US also did not step up when Riyadh reportedly threatened to pull UN funding if the organisation did not remove it from a list of violators of children’s rights for its actions in Yemen in 2016. Despite the best efforts of the US now, nothing would become normal in Yemen.

Charles Darwin’s challenge to world religions



THE WAY AHEAD **D**A R W I N was born this same day – February 12 in 1809. Darwin studied the evolution of turtles in the Galapagos island of South America. He came up with the theory that the present man had evolved from apes. At that time the Western world believed that God had made man as a sculptor makes a statue with hammer and chisel. Thus, the Bible says, “God created humankind in his own image... male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27). Instead, Darwin suggested that there was no intervention by an external entity such as “God” in the process.

Humankind evolved by the process of natural selection. There is a variation in all living species. Some monkeys are supple, others are strong. Those among these that adjusted to the available environment procreated in larger numbers and survived while those who did not adapt died. His theory challenged the Biblical conception of God “creating” mankind.

The opposition to Darwin’s theory can be gauged from a discussion held in 1860 between Bishop Samuel Wilberforce and naturalist Thomas Henry Huxley who supported Darwin’s theory at the University of Oxford. Wilberforce asked Huxley whether he claimed descent from an ape on his grandmother’s or grandfather’s side? Huxley responded that he would rather be descended from an ape than a man who used his talents to bring ridicule into a serious scientific discussion. The question posed by the Bishop shows that Darwin’s theory was pitted against the narrative of the Bible.

The issue is equally important for Hindu religion although it was apparently not debated at that time—or now. The Vayu Purana says that Brahma created four sets of 1000 pairs of men and women (8:37-40), just as the Bible says God created humankind. Next, the Bible says God formed the man from the “dust, ashes, rubbish breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being” (Genesis 2:7).

In parallel Vayu Purana tells of Brahma’s five efforts at creation of demons, gods, man, ancestors, and birds

and animals from “darkness” (9:6). Next, the Bible tells of the creation of Eve from Adam’s ribs (Genesis 2:21-22). In parallel, the Purana says that Swayambhu and his wife Shatarupa were created by splitting of the body of Brahma (10:7-8). Next, the Bible says that after being expelled from the Garden, Adam started to till the ground (Genesis 3:23).

In parallel the Vayu Purana says that the trees began to die at one time. The people meditated on the matter. Then trees began to grow again in their homes (8:83-90). Therefore, Darwin’s refuting the Biblical creation of man by God equally refutes the Hindu creation of man by Brahma.

I believe that Darwin does not actually refute the Bible or the Vayu Purana. The issue hinges on how we understand “God” or “Brahma.” Scientists tell us that at one time the entire universe was contained in a Black Hole. Then there was an explosion and elements like hydrogen, oxygen, earth, plants, animals and man were created sequentially. Question arises, where was God or Brahma when the entire universe was contained in the Black Hole?

If we consider that God was in the Black Hole at that time then it would follow that “God” and “universe” were the same entity and that God-Universe itself exploded or divided its own body and it came out as if a person suddenly comes of a jail. In this formula, “God” is the name of the consciousness of the Universe as contained in the Black Hole. God is Universal Consciousness.

This possibility matches with the statement in the Upanishads that Brahman thought “I am one, let me be many.” This description of God is known as “Monist” philosophy. If, on the other hand, if we think that God was outside the Black Hole and He created the explosion in the Black Hole as if by planting a dynamite, then the question arises where was God when there was nothing in the Universe except the Black Hole?

This description of God is known as “Monotheist” philosophy. Be that as it may, if we accept the Monist approach of God then Darwin’s, Biblical and Hindu ideas of the creation of man become consistent with each other. In that case we may understand that the inner consciousness of the ape caused the ape to evolve and it became man.

In continuation of above, when the Bible says that created Eve from Adam’s ribs (Genesis 2:21-22), or the Vayu Purana says that Brahma divided



The opposition to Darwin’s theory can be gauged from a discussion held in 1860 between Bishop Samuel Wilberforce and naturalist Thomas Henry Huxley who supported Darwin’s theory at the University of Oxford. Wilberforce asked Huxley whether he claimed descent from an ape on his grandmother’s or grandfather’s side? Huxley responded that he would rather be descended from an ape than a man who used his talents to bring ridicule into a serious scientific discussion. The question posed by the Bishop shows that Darwin’s theory was pitted against the narrative of the Bible

his body of darkness into Swayambhu Manu and his wife Shatarupa; we may understand this as the evolution of the human consciousness into male- and female consciousnesses. Mankind had already been made both according to the Bible and the Vayu Purana. However, they may be living without dividing their physical- and mental work between the male and female just as we see among the monkeys and other animals.

This uniform human stock may have divided its physical and mental labour and between the male and the female. Biblical scholars such as Nahum M Sarna, author of the JPS Biblical Commentary and David Wenham, author of the Word Biblical Commentary say that the creation of Eve from Adam’s ribs actually describes the beginning of the institution of marriage.

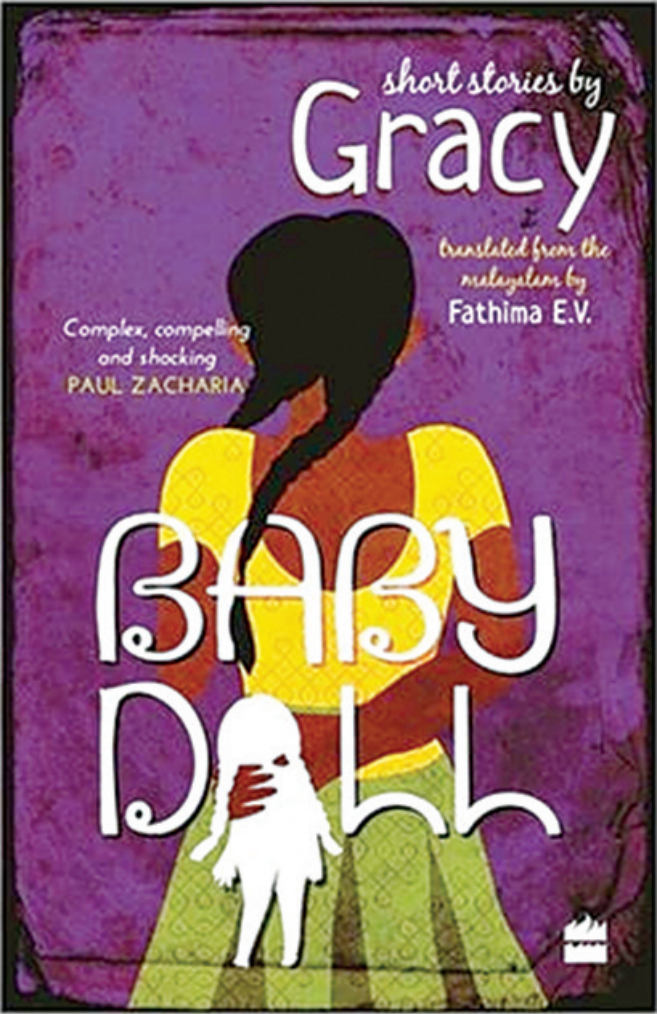
Previously a woman used to cohabit

with any man. After God “created” Eve from the ribs of Adam, one woman began to cohabit with one man. The same idea is encapsulated in the Vayu Purana saying that Shatarupa accepted Swayambhu Manu as her husband.

Darwin represents a fundamental break in the understanding of God. He has caused us to think whether God was an external entity that created man, so to say, with a hammer and a chisel; or God was an all-pervasive internal entity that evolved itself. The road opened by Darwin still needs to be walked.

One key difference between the Abrahamic and Hindu religions is that the Abrahamic religions think of God as an external entity while Hindu religions think of Brahman as an internal and all-pervasive entity. Time is at hand to resolve this debate, thanks to Darwin.

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



Mining the recesses of the human mind

WHEN they were first published, Gracy’s stories shocked readers with their sexual candour and frank celebration of female desire. She is now widely recognized as one of the most important contemporary writers in Malayalam.

Her short stories, which vary from half a page to novella-length, draw the reader into the world of modern men and women caught in quagmires of desire, lust, jealousy and vengeance - emotions that they often carry even into the afterlife. In these pages we will find: the bitter defiance of a daughter going to her mother’s funeral in her most alluring sari; a contemporary retelling of the story of Draupadi; the sinister coming-of-age tale of a young girl.

“I enjoy mining deep into the recesses of the human mind while writing. Often, my stories tend to be woman-centric, as they can’t help but be fierce responses to male intrusions, and dominance over female bodies,” author Gracy says, adding: These stories attempt to evoke a sense of woman’s identity, even as they try to meet the challenge of exploring diverse themes and concerns.”

“I am looking forward to the responses of new readers who, I hope, would take to my stories in Baby Doll”, she says.

Gracy’s first collection of short stories, “Padiyirangippoya Parvathi”, came out in 1991. It was followed by nine more short-story collections. She has published three memoirs and a short autobiography. She has also made her mark in writing for children. Her work has been translated into Tamil, Kannada, Hindi, etc. Some of Gracy’s stories have also been translated into English and Oriya.

She has been the recipient of many awards, including the Lalithambika Antharjanam Award (1995) instituted for women writers, the Thoppil Ravi Award (1997), the Katha Prize for the Best Malayalam Short Story (1998) and the Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award (2000).

Translator Fathima says: “I am delighted that this long overdue translation of Gracy’s stories is now set to reach a wider set of readers. Gracy occupies a unique position among Malayali women writers who challenged the seemingly inviolable male bastions in the Malayalam literary field.”

“Though she was initially associated with the ‘Pennenezhuthu’ movement (changing the historiography of women’s writing in India and the images of certain writers and writing trends) of the 1990s, Gracy has always preferred to walk alone, rattling conservative readers with her unapologetic assertion of female sexuality and clinical exposure of the slippery slopes of kinship and marital bonds,” Fathima says.

Layered with biblical and mythical resonances, her stories allow the living and the undead to jostle for space, amid an array of lost and listless men and women, bewildered children, lethal predators, and misfits, as much as spunky and sensitive women. They carry a distinctly edgy, sardonic humour and a style which varies from the acerbic, to minimalistic, to lyrical. Gracy’s refusal to romanticise the harsh realities of life is often a calculated affront against the patriarchal values that inform Kerala society, the faultlines of which her writing continues to expose,” Fathima adds.

Fathima’s translation of Malayalam writer Subhash Chandran’s “A Preface to Man” (an artistic meditation on human existence-2016) won the V. Abdulla Translation Award in 2017 and the 2018 Crossword Book Award for Fiction in Translation. She is a co-translator of “Delhi: A Soliloquy” by M. Mukundan. Fathima is currently an Associate Professor at KMM Govt. Women’s College, Kannur, Kerala. She did her MA and PhD from the University of Calicut, and her CertTESOL (Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) from St Mary’s University, Twickenham. Her poems have appeared in international journals and anthologies.



Her short stories, which vary from half a page to novella-length, draw the reader into the world of modern men and women caught in quagmires of desire, lust, jealousy and vengeance - emotions that they often carry even into the afterlife. In these pages we will find: the bitter defiance of a daughter going to her mother’s funeral in her most alluring sari; a contemporary retelling of the story of Draupadi; the sinister coming-of-age tale of a young girl

Financial literacy should be mandated in all curriculum

P C CHHABRA



THE recent economic crisis has focused a spotlight on the need of financial decision-making in times when the economy is uncertain. Our school education system failed at preparing students for financial crises in adulthood. Successful professionals who have worked successfully in their chosen path with skills, have no idea how finance and investments work. The reason behind this is personal finance is not a part of our curriculum in school or college.

Now as the economy begins to recover and coming back on track, it is important to improve financial literacy. Well, there is no specific age to start learning but educators should start teaching basic financial knowledge to students as soon as they feel the kid is ready. Research also shows that children who learn to manage finance at a younger age will be able to handle it better as adults. Strong mindset and good financial habits are

Now as the economy begins to recover and coming back on track, it is important to improve financial literacy. Well, there is no specific age to start learning but educators should start teaching basic financial knowledge to students as soon as they feel the kid is ready. Research also shows that children who learn to manage finance at a younger age will be able to handle it better as adults. Strong mindset and good financial habits are crucial for everyone and it can be taught from an early age.

There is a need of having basic personal financial skills so that one can live a happy, secure and healthy life, as every step a person takes is directly or indirectly connected to the fact how well one can manage money. It cannot be learnt overnight; experience and habits are really important and one can start with basics by making a budget regarding spending and savings. Hence

early exposure to financial affairs along with proper guidance is crucial.

There is an urgent need to include Financial management and Investment in curriculum because: -

You need to manage it at the level of your life: - From graduation to retirement every step related to investment is going to directly or indirectly affect our lifestyle. Finance plays an important role in deciding our career, getting married, buying a house and many other life events. Finance is a part of our everyday life from what we eat to how we live. At our young age we lack the experience and knowledge to make these decisions whether big or small.

Lack of financial knowledge has painful consequences: - wrong decisions can be painful at the end of our working life and we can only regret the kind of financial decisions we made. It can be stressful for adults. Lack of savings or funds can cause a lot of hardship in one’s life and can create many other problems.

Proper financial management leads to a healthier life: - According to a survey half of millennials feel their financial illiteracy is holding them back from making proper financial decisions. It is becoming a speed breaker in utilizing their full potential.

It is the need of the hour to teach personal finance in schools: - Many adults feel students should be taught in schools about financial management. It is a good age where they start with basics and can expand their horizon in the field of financial management.

It is where they can learn: - School is the place where we learn about many lessons of our life and it is the best place to learn about personal finance.

Thus for inculcating the habit of savings, improving financial literacy and making children responsible, financial education is necessary, it helps them to keep a check on spending.

(The author is Executive Director, Sanskriti University)



CAG submits TS govt audit reports to Guv

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

THE Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India office on Thursday submitted the reports of 'General, Social and Economic Sectors', 'Public Sector Undertakings', and 'Revenue Sector' for the year ended on March-2019 to the Governor Dr Tamilisel Soundararajan. A Raj Bhavan statement here on Thursday said that the reports were submitted as per the Article 151 of the Constitution of India, that the CAG is required to forward its audit reports on the accounts of the

State government to the Governor. In turn, the Governor causes them to be laid on the table of State Legislature. Accordingly, the report of the CAG on Government of Telangana containing audit comments and observations on accounts and transactions about activities of 'General, Social & Economic Sectors', 'Public Sector Undertakings' and 'Revenue Sector' for the year ended March-2019 in English and Telugu versions have been forwarded to the State government on February 11, for tabling in State Legislature, it added.

GoAir direct flight from Hyd to Male

HYDERABAD

GMR Hyderabad International Airport Limited (GHIAL) on Thursday saw the launch of GoAir's maiden direct flight service from Hyderabad to Male, Maldives. The GoAir aircraft took off from Hyderabad to Male around 11.40 hours amidst much fanfare and a festive atmosphere at the airport. GoAir also started the touch-less e-boarding facility for international passengers with this service. Senior officials from GMR Hyderabad International Airport along with GoAir officials, other airport stakeholders were at the terminal to see off the passengers and crew.

GoAir's Flight G8 1533 will depart from GMR Hyderabad International Airport at 11.30 am and arrive at the Maldiv's Velana International Airport

at 1.30 pm. The return flight G8 4033 will depart from Malé at 2.30 pm and arrive in Hyderabad at 5.30 pm. Flights will operate between GMR Hyderabad International Airport and Malé four times a week - Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Kaushik Khona, Chief Executive Officer, GoAir, said "Passengers travelling from Hyderabad will now have convenient additional options to travel to Male, thus making their travel experience enjoyable and comfortable."

Hyderabad is a gateway to South & Central India, and a preferred and largest transit hub. It offers convenient proximity for passengers originating from the nearby cities, viz. Vijayawada, Vishakhapatnam, Nagpur, Bhubaneswar, Rajahmundry, Bhopal, and Tirupati.

Spillway pillar works completed on A project

MEIL erects 52 pillars each with a height of 52 metre to discharge floodwater

AMARAVATI

PRESTIGIOUS Polavaram irrigation project crossed another milestone as Megha Engineering and Infrastructures Limited (MEIL) has completed the construction work of the spillway pillars. The 52 pillars, each with a height of 52 metre, were erected on the spillway to discharge floodwater. In Spillway Block-2, the design was changed to build a fish ladder. Due to delay in permissions, construction of the 2nd pillar was hindered.

MEIL worked on a war footing to complete the construction of the spillway which is crucial to the project. Satish Babu Angara, GM, MEIL, said, "Construction of 52 pillars each with a 52 metre height on spillway has been completed. Last year while construction was ongoing, we had to face obstacles like heavy rains, floods and Covid-19 pandemic. We have overcome all and are working to complete the project within the time frame given by the Andhra Pradesh government." The state government is putting in all efforts to complete it as per the stipulated schedule.

MEIL began spillway concrete work on November 21, 2019. The total spillway slab length is 1,128 metre, of which 1,095 metre work has been completed. On the spillway, total number of girders to be installed was 192, of which 188 girders have been installed so far. The MEIL is going to complete the spillway concrete work shortly. Work on spillway girders and Spillway bridge concrete began in July and September 2020 respectively.

On the spillway bridge, 45 slabs have been completed. The remaining three slabs are nearing completion. A total of 49 Trunion beams are ready. Out of the 48 gates on the spillway bridge, 28 gates have already been erected. Soon, a platform will be built to set up cylinders and power pack to these gates. Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy is monitoring the project and wants it completed at the earliest.



AMARAVATI

- Says the State govt's meeting with Korean steel giant POSCO were not about steel plant but investments
- Points out POSCO officials met Naidu too when he was the CM
- States that Centre decided to private VSP in 2018 when Naidu was in power in the State

BRUSHING aside the allegations of Opposition on the state's role in privatisation of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP), YSRCP leader Ambati Rambabu said the Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy has made his view clear in the letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The allegations that the state is selling VSP to Korean company POSCO stands no ground as it is the Centre that governs the steel plant, he added.

Speaking to media persons here on Thursday, the Sattenapalli MLA affirmed that the state government meeting with

the plant, Rambabu said that the company people have also met Chandrababu Naidu during his term for investments, and they met Chief Minister to explore investment opportunities.

He said that the Union government had taken a decision to privatise the steel plant in 2018 when Chandrababu Naidu was Chief Minister. He stated that the steel plant was in a profitable condition until 2015, but all of a sudden it ran into a pile of losses, which was during TDP rule.

The MLA slammed Jana Sena chief Pawan Kalyan for finding fault with the letter written by Chief Minister S Jagan Mohan

VSP PRIVATISATION

POSCO company is not regarding the steel plant but for investment options. The steel plant is a central government organisation and there is no possibility for the state government to sell it for a private company. Rejecting the allegations of state government having talks with POSCO to sell the plant, Rambabu said that the company people have also met Chandrababu Naidu during his term for investments, and they met Chief Minister to explore investment opportunities.

He said that the Union government had taken a decision to privatise the steel plant in 2018 when Chandrababu Naidu was Chief Minister. He stated that the steel plant was in a profitable condition until 2015, but all of a sudden it ran into a pile of losses, which was during TDP rule.

The MLA slammed Jana Sena chief Pawan Kalyan for finding fault with the letter written by Chief Minister S Jagan Mohan

Jagan govt playing dubious role on VSP, alleges Lokesh

AMARAVATI

THE opposition TDP on Thursday accused the ruling YSRCP of "playing a dubious role" and not putting pressure on the Centre to stall the ongoing privatisation of the Vizag steel plant. "The steel plant should remain in government control, considering how Andhra people waged prolonged agitations and farmers gave away thousands of acres of their ancestral lands. The Jagan Mohan Reddy regime is playing a dubious role in the whole privatisation plan,"

Reddy to the Central government urging to reconsider the decision of disinvestment. He asked Pawan Kalyan whether he has taken up the disinvestment of steel plant issue with Union home minister Amit Shah during his meeting with him or is it for securing a ticket in Tirupati byelection. He

claimed TDP national general secretary Nara Lokesh. The opposition leader claimed that the people of Visakhapatnam would chase away senior YSRCP leader and Rajya Sabha member V Vijayasai Reddy due to his attempts to undermine the agitations on the issue. "When plant employees and the people were rising up in massive protests, Sai was bold enough to say that he cannot give an assurance to the agitators but only get an appointment with the Prime Minister," the TDP supremo's son said.

said that Pawan has got a responsibility to convince the Union government in changing its decision to hold back the privatisation, as he is in alliance with BJP. He reiterated that the Chief Minister shall only work for the development of the state prioritising state interests.

BJP wants to turn farmers into slaves, fumes Revanth

The Congress MP comes down heavily on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao for farmers' protest against the new agri laws

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

SLAMMING Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Congress MP and TPCC working president A Revanth Reddy said Modi was teaching "Deshbhakti" to those who were sacrificing their lives on the border.

Addressing the farmers during



the Rythu Sabha at Kalwakurthy of Nagarkurnool on Thursday, Revanth said that Prime Minister and his supporters were calling farmers as terrorists. He sought to know whether protesting for rights was called terror-

ism. "How dare he call farmers as terrorists while at least two members from families from Haryana and Panjab are serving the Indian Army. By calling farmers as terrorists, the government not only insulted farmers but also hurt the jawans serving the country," he said.

Stating that the farmers are the backbone of the Indian economy, he said the Congress treated farmers as soldiers during its regime as they were part of the growth of the country and its economy.

"Congress party initiated Minimum Support Price to help farmers, but the BJP wants to turn the farmers into slaves by snatching away their lands. Modi

claims that he knows more about farming than the farmers themselves," mocked Revanth.

Commenting on Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao, the Malkajgiri MP said that KCR was playing a dual role in front of people. "On one hand he is acting like he is fighting with the BJP, while on the other he is bowing to Modi. His speech at Halia was paid by Modi. In his speech, KCR accused Congress, but did not utter a single word against the saffron party. KCR with BJP is planning to destroy the Congress, which is not possible. The farmers and the people must teach a befitting lesson to both the parties in the next elections," he said.

Mayoral elections a farce: Congress

HYDERABAD

REACTING on Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation's Mayor and Deputy Mayor elections, Telangana Congress Party called it a well-scripted drama. Telangana Congress Party spokesperson G Niranjan said that with the help of its rival All India Majlis Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen (AIMIM), Telangana Rashtriya Samiti won the elections. They engaged in heated arguments during the GHMC election only to mislead the people, he contended.

Niranjan said leaders from AIMIM insulted NTR and PV Narasimha Rao in their speeches. Reacting to them, TRS countered and warned the leaders against making such comments. Now, it is clear that it was nothing but a well-crafted narration. Both parties were finally exposed at the end. MIM going back on putting up candidate from minority sections for Deputy Mayor post was disappointing.

TRS takes U-turn on truck with MIM

- Offers the post of Deputy Mayor to MIM
- However, MIM supports TRS candidate for the post

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

THE Telangana Rashtra Samithi which claimed of not having any alliance with the AIMIM during the GHMC elections campaign has surprised all by offering the post of Deputy Mayor to the Majlis.

Everyone was surprised to see MIM corporators and ex-officio members raising hands in support of the TRS Mayor and Deputy Mayor candidates during the election at GHMC office on Thursday. The All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen, which had declared contesting the mayoral election, decided to support the candidate fielded by the ruling party after the TRS reportedly offered the



post of Deputy Mayor to them.

This was confirmed by AIMIM chief and MP Asaduddin Owaisi, who took to social media to thank the TRS for offering the Deputy Mayor's post. "Congratulations to the newly-elected Mayor and Deputy Mayor of GHMC. Hope that, under their leadership, Hyderabad will be taken to new heights and public works will be actively taken up in areas that need them the most, including Old City of Hyderabad. I hope that GHMC will carry out its works with honesty and financial propriety. Also appreciate TRS for offering us Deputy Mayor's post," said

Asaduddin Owaisi on his Twitter account on Thursday.

It may be mentioned here that the TRS had criticised both the BJP and MIM during the election campaign and said that there was no alliance with Majlis. The Municipal Administration Minister KT Rama Rao had in fact said that the MIM was their main rival and also said the TRS would win more seats in the Old City. During the elections the TRS leaders called the rumours of alliance with MIM as nonsense. The MIM leaders also targeted the TRS leaders including the TRS working president during the campaign.

However, it is an open secret that the party maintains cordial relations with the Majlis in the State. The MIM party is in alliance with the ruling party in Nizamabad Municipal Corporation and the post of Deputy Mayor was also given to the Majlis party. Similarly, the TRS is also having alliance with MIM in Karimnagar Municipal Corporation.

Plea to allow physical classes till Class 6

ESA BIN ABDUL REHMAN
HYDERABAD

AS the schools from 9th to 12th classes are already running and as there is a possibility of resuming schools for 6th 7th and 8th standards soon, private schools are mulling over closing online classes for high school students from February 25 throughout the state. They called on Education Minister P Sabitha Indra Reddy at her chambers on Thursday and submitted a representation.

The TRSMA (Telangana Recognised Schools Management Association) pointed out to the government that no fresh cases of Covid-19 were reported from schools anywhere from the State. As such, the government should allow physical classes for other standards too, they pleaded.

"We met and apprised the minister about the situation where no adverse incident is reported in the

schools anywhere from the state. We even made a request to allow private schools to start physical classes even for 6th 7th and 8th standards. The minister responded positively saying she completely agrees and is even optimistic about the early reopening of all classes. However, the decision to allow the upper primary section to run rests with the chief minister," informed Yadagiri Shekar Rao, President Telangana Recognised Schools Management Association (TRSMA). There are 10,984 recognised budget schools in the entire Telangana state wherein around 33 lakh students are enrolled. Recalling that the schools in neighbouring States have come under full-fledged operational mode from February itself, Shekar Rao said, "Parents too are eager to see their children start regular schooling again in the state as keeping them off from the institutions will have a bearing on their academic careers."

Shooters offer to cull wild boars voluntarily

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

TELANGANA State Forest Department (TSFD) has identified and empanelled 30 rifle shooters for the culling of wild boars in Telangana.

Empanelment of the shooters has been done against the backdrop of the State government orders for culling the wild boars destroying crops.

A TSFD official statement on Thursday said that the list has been circulated to all the officials of Agriculture, Forests, Horticulture and Panchayat Raj departments in the State.

It said that some of the members from the panel of shooters met the Forest officials in Aranya Bhavan and voiced their concern over the issue of demand of money for the culling of wild boars.

The empanelled shooters, the TSFD said, have reiterated that they were ready to take up the culling of wild boars free of cost



and if possible within 48 hours as and when requested by the gram panchayat Sarpanch. Further, the Forest officials said that they were not a party to the decision wherein certain shooter has requested money for the culling of wild boars in farmers' fields.

Also, the shooters have informed that they would bear the cost of ammunition, travel to the site of culling, do not expect any remuneration or expenditure from the State government and take the culling activity voluntarily for farmers following the provisions of the State government orders and the proceedings of the PCCF and the Chief Wildlife Warden. They have handed over a signed letter to this effect, the statement said.

Opposition playing cheap politics, says Jagadish Reddy

Adds that setting up new irrigation projects shows TRS commitment towards farmers well-being

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NALGONDA

ENERGY Minister G Jagadish Reddy flayed the opposition parties for their "cheap politics and loose talk" and stated that people were the real strength of the TRS party which was proved once again with the Halia meet.

Addressing the media at a press conference held at the residence of local MLA Kancharla Bhupal Reddy in Nalgonda on Thursday, the Minister said that farmers in huge numbers from Nagarjunasagar and surrounding constituencies have attended the Wednesday's meet to express their gratitude to Chief Minister for providing irrigation waters through various schemes. Stating that the people were aware of development taken place in erstwhile Nalgonda after Chandrashekar Rao assumed the CM



Energy Minister Jagdish Reddy along with MLAs and party leaders addressing the media in Nalgonda on Thursday

chair, Reddy said the formation of Telangana had helped the erstwhile Nalgonda district to create new record in rice production last summer.

He added that the credit of record paddy production of 12.50 lakh tonnes in erstwhile Nalgonda district goes to Chandrashekar Rao, reminding that the paddy production was just 2.5 lakh tonnes in district before 2014. Stating that senior Congress leader Jana Reddy, who represented the Sagar constituency for a period of 30 to 35 years, was not coming forward to discuss constituency's development under his tenure, the Minister alleged that the tail end lands of the left canal were completely neg-

lected and so were woes of farmers.

"The Chief Minister sanctioned 13 lift schemes with an estimated cost of Rs 3,000 crore to provide irrigation facility to the tail end lands of left canal of Sagar and other parts of erstwhile Nalgonda district and showed his commitment towards the well-being of farmers," he said.

Zilla Parishad chairman Banda Narender Reddy, MLAs Kancharla Bhoopal Reddy, Gadari Kishore Kumar and Chirumarthi Lingaiah, Municipal Chairman Saidi Reddy, Market Committee chairman Borra Sudhakar, TRS town president Pilli Rama Raju and others attended the press meet.

YSRCP pooh-poohs Oppn charges



AMARAVATI

- Says the State govt's meeting with Korean steel giant POSCO were not about steel plant but investments
- Points out POSCO officials met Naidu too when he was the CM
- States that Centre decided to private VSP in 2018 when Naidu was in power in the State

BRUSHING aside the allegations of Opposition on the state's role in privatisation of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP), YSRCP leader Ambati Rambabu said the Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy has made his view clear in the letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The allegations that the state is selling VSP to Korean company POSCO stands no ground as it is the Centre that governs the steel plant, he added.

Speaking to media persons here on Thursday, the Sattenapalli MLA affirmed that the state government meeting with

the plant, Rambabu said that the company people have also met Chandrababu Naidu during his term for investments, and they met Chief Minister to explore investment opportunities.

He said that the Union government had taken a decision to privatise the steel plant in 2018 when Chandrababu Naidu was Chief Minister. He stated that the steel plant was in a profitable condition until 2015, but all of a sudden it ran into a pile of losses, which was during TDP rule.

The MLA slammed Jana Sena chief Pawan Kalyan for finding fault with the letter written by Chief Minister S Jagan Mohan

Jagan govt playing dubious role on VSP, alleges Lokesh

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said that Pawan has got a responsibility to convince the Union government in changing its decision to hold back the privatisation, as he is in alliance with BJP. He reiterated that the Chief Minister shall only work for the development of the state prioritising state interests.

SEC PATS OFFICIALS FOR SUCCESS OF PHASE-1 POLLS

- CS and DGP meet State Election Commissioner
- They discuss the measures to be taken to the smooth conduct of remaining phases of panchayat elections

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

STATE Election Commissioner N Ramesh Kumar congratulated chief secretary Aditya Nath Das and director general of police Gautam Sawang for the successful conduct of first phase of panchayat elections. Both the officials met the State Election Commissioner on Thursday.

Congratulating both the officials, the SEC said the efforts of officials yielded good results. He also discussed the measures to be taken during the remaining three phases of panchayat elections. The SEC sought the opinion of officials for smooth conduct of next phases of elections. The meeting held in a cordial atmosphere as the officials exchanged greetings for the success of

elections.

Later, the chief secretary inspected the call centre set up by State Election Commission to receive complaints from people on panchayat polls. He went round the call centre set up at the SEC office and enquired the staff about the process of registering complaints. The staff informed the chief secretary that they were forwarding the complaints to the district collectors and superintendents of police concerned as per the instructions of the SEC.

State Election Commission secretary K Kannababu explained to the chief secretary the continuous monitoring of the call centre data. Additional DGP N Sanjay is also present.

Rising waters interrupt rescue effort at Tapovan project tunnel

The interruption took place amid a massive effort by multi-agency rescuers to break through the sludge and debris that choked the tunnel after Sunday's disaster, which left 35 dead and about 170 missing. Smaller teams for now at rescue site

TAPOVAN /NEW DELHI

The water level in the Dhauliganga river surged again briefly on Thursday, forcing rescue workers to stop for some time their operation to reach the over 30 people trapped in the Tapovan hydel project tunnel after the flash flood four days ago. The interruption took place amid a massive effort by multi-agency rescuers to break through the sludge and debris that choked the tunnel after Sunday's disaster, which left 35 dead and about 170 missing.

Later the operation resumed but officials said they were only sending smaller teams for now to the rescue site. Hours before this sudden rise in the water, rescuers had also begun an operation to drill through the debris from the mouth of the tunnel to reach life-

saving devices to the trapped workers, an apparent change in strategy after trying to shift mounds of debris. But as information on the rise in water level upstream came, rescue workers scrambled out of the tunnel with their heavy machinery. A joint press briefing by the rescue agencies also came to sudden halt. Chamoli District Magistrate Swati S Bhadauria said work was temporarily halted as a precautionary measure.

Amid mounting concern over the lives of those inside, the focal point of the rescue operation remains the 1.5-km "head-race tunnel" -- a part of the 2.5-km long network of tunnels. "A drilling operation was started by the rescue teams at 2 am to peep into the slush-flushing tunnel that is about 12-13 metres below," Vivek Kumar Pandey, the spokesperson for the



lead rescue agency, Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), said in Delhi.

As the continuous flow of slush and silt remains a major obstacle between the rescuers and those trapped inside, a boring operation by a huge machine is being undertaken to see if this problem can be addressed in a different way and the teams can go further deep inside, he added.

Drilling through the debris started from around 68 metres inside the tunnel, Garhwal Commissioner Ravinath Raman, who is supervising the massive rescue effort at the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) project site, told PTI. The focus at the moment is to take life-saving devices such as oxygen cylinders to those trapped by drilling, Raman said.

The drilling is to be done for 12 metres to access the

probable location of those trapped, he added. Till Wednesday, about 120 metres of slush from the mouth of the tunnel was cleared and those trapped inside were stated to be located somewhere at 180 metres, where the tunnel takes a slip or a turn. "More slush and water coming from inside the tunnel is making the way ahead difficult," Pandey had said.

ITBP chief S S Deswal had told PTI that his men and those from other agencies will continue with the rescue operation till "any length of time" or till a logical conclusion is arrived at and the trapped workers are located. He had expressed hope that those trapped inside might be safe with the help of possible air vents in the structure. An officer said no doubt that those trapped inside must be in a bad situation without food and water.

No record on discussions held on farm laws: RTI reply

Enshrine MSP in law, farmers will go back home: SAD
Farm laws will damage rural economy: Rahul in LS

NEW DELHI

THE government asserts discussions were held on the controversial agri laws but according to an RTI reply, there is no record, senior Trinamool Congress leader Sukhendu Sekhar Ray on Thursday said in Parliament and wondered whose words were to be believed.

Hitting out at the Centre for bringing the farm laws without proper consultations, Ray said, "Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad had publicly said the bills were discussed with lakhs of people. An electronic media organisation through an RTI had asked for names of farm bodies with which the government held discussions on the bills. But the RTI information commissioner said it has no record. Whose words we believe? Minister or RTI..."

Farmers protesting at the borders of the national capital for over two months will return home if the government was to include a guarantee through a law for purchase of their crops at an administered price or MSP, Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) said in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday.

SAD, the oldest partner of BJP, had quit the



A worker prepares a scaffolding structure to set up a shed at the farmer's protest site, at Ghazipur border in New Delhi on Thursday

NDA government over the three contentious farm reform laws.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi attacked the government for the three agriculture laws that have triggered protests by farmers at Delhi's borders, saying these legislations will allow industrialists to buy unlimited quantity of foodgrains and hoard them.

Lending his support to the ongoing farmers protests, he said in Lok Sabha that it was not an agitation of the farmers only but a movement of the country and the government will have to repeal the laws. Gandhi also dramatically led his party members and those from the TMC and the DMK to observe a two-minute silence by standing to mourn the death of "200 farmers" during the ongoing agitation and said he was doing this as the government has not paid tributes to those who died during the protests. "The intent of the three laws are to allow industrialists to buy unlimited quantity of foodgrains and hoard them as much as they want," he alleged. Gandhi cited the old family planning slogan 'hum do hamare do' to attack the government and said just 4-5 people are running the country.



Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra takes a holy dip in Sangam on the occasion of 'Mauni Amavasya' during the ongoing 'Magh Mela' in Prayagraj on Thursday

Priyanka takes holy dip in Sangam

ALLAHABAD

CONGRESS general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Thursday took a holy dip at the Sangam in Allahabad on Mauni Amavasya and performed a puja. The Congress leader, who arrived in Lucknow in the morning, reached the Sangam, a confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna and mythical Sarswati river, for taking the holy dip and participation in the puja, Congress media convener Lalan Kumar said.

Priyanka was accompanied by her daughter and Congress MLA Aradhana Misra, party sources said. While returning from the Sangam, she was seen assisting a boatman in rowing.

The Congress leader also visited the Anand Bhawan where she interacted with children from an orphanage, holding a girl in her lap. She also offered flowers at the place where mortal remains of her great grandfather and India's first prime minister Pt Jawaharlal Nehru were kept before being immersed in the Sangam. The Anand Bhawan had been the Nehru family's residence in the past but it has now been converted into a museum, showcasing India's Independence movement. Priyanka Gandhi, who was in Saharanpur on Wednesday to address a farmers' rally, has lately been making efforts to revive the party's support base in Uttar Pradesh before the assembly elections next year.

Now Trevor Noah throws spotlight on farmers protest

MUMBAI

STAND-UP comic and late night show host Trevor Noah is the latest international personality from the entertainment industry to highlight the ongoing farmers agitation.

Through his popular TV programme "The Daily Show", the Emmy-winning presenter explained the origins of the farmers' protest, their demands and the subsequent global support the agitation has received. On February 2, a tweet by pop star Rihanna triggered a wave of support for the protesting farmers by a number of global personalities, activists and politicians.

"Why are India's farmers protesting? The government tried to change the decades-old agriculture laws and that's when the manure hit the fan," Noah tweeted, along with the video link. In the show's segment 'If you don't know, now you know', which ran over eight minutes, the 36-year-old South African comic pieced together news clippings to provide a holistic view of the protest.

The video clip also mentioned the burning of effigies of Rihanna and Swedish teen climate activist Greta Thunberg, who had voiced her support.

Noah, who delivers satirical news related to the international and American political matters in an entertaining way on "The Daily Show", said the govern-



ment has decided that they've had "enough" of the protest because this is "a major crackdown". "Maybe they think postponing the law will satisfy the farmers. But think about it. In 18 months, people will be in the same position that they are in now. And the protests will happen all over again..." "But this crackdown shows you how worried the government must be about the protest. And honestly they should be, because it's clear that these farmers are digging in for the long haul," Noah said in the video.

Meena Harris, an American lawyer and niece of US Vice President Kamala Harris, Hollywood veteran Susan Sarandon, actors John Cusack, Amanda Cerni, singers Jay Sean, Dr Zeus and former adult star Mia Khalifa have also lent their support to the protesting farmers.

Actor Sonakshi Sinha has narrated a heartfelt poem, described as a "tribute to the hands that feed us".

The 33-year-old actor, who first expressed solidarity with the farmers last week, shared a video on Instagram to share her thoughts about the protesting farmers. The 1 minute 19 second-long clip captures the visuals of the distressed farmers, who have gathered at various border points of Delhi since November last year as part of their protest against the Centre's farm laws. According to Sinha, the Hindi poem was penned by Varad Bhatnagar, and the video was shot and conceptualised by Gursanjam Singh Puri.

CAA soon after Covid-19 vaccine drive ends: Shah

KOLKATA

UNION Home Minister Amit Shah, who is in West Bengal campaigning for the BJP as the state readies for assembly election, reiterated that the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) will be implemented as soon as the nationwide Covid-19 vaccination drive ends. "There are people who are spreading misinformation about CAA. But, I told my brother Shantanu Thakur (BJP MP from Bongaon) that I will come personally and clear all the confusion. I could not make it here recently (on January 30) he postponed his Thakurnagar rally due to the Delhi blast case near the Israel Embassy). Mamata di was very happy that I could not make it. But I would like to tell her that I will come again and again till I free Bengal from her misrule," Shah said in Thakurnagar, a stronghold of the Matuas - a refugee community credited with helping the saffron brigade secure numbers in the 2019 Lok Sabha election.

Party insiders feel that Shah's rally in Thakurnagar is an attempt to appease the Matua community ahead of the crucial assembly polls scheduled to be held in April-May in the state. Defending the legislation, which its opponents say is discriminatory against the Muslim community, Shah, said, "Propaganda has been spread that this bill is against the Muslims in India. They are Indian citizens and will always remain. There is no question of discrimination against Muslims."



Army Chief General Manoj Mukund Naravane

'War weapons overtaken by disruptive technologies'

NEW DELHI

INDIAN Army Chief General Manoj Mukund Naravane said on Thursday that the current weapons of war are fast losing their importance and are being overtaken by disruptive technologies that operate in the cyber and space domain.

Speaking during a webinar organised by the Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS) on multi-domain operations and the future of warfare, Naravane said that everyone has seen how the very imaginative and offensive use of drones in Idlib and then in Armenia-Azerbaijan challenged the traditional prima donnas: The tanks, the artillery and the dug in infantry.

He also talked about the showcasing of swarm drone offensive striking multiple targets during the Army Day parade last month, terming it as

a strong message to India's adversaries. India is facing a two-front war situation in the northern and western borders with China and Pakistan. The Army Chief said that the swarm drone demonstration was a message to India's adversaries that: "The Indian Army is steadily inducting niche capabilities to enhance its combat proficiencies in multi-domain operations."

He said that swarm drones can overwhelm and effectively suppress an enemy's air defence capability, creating windows of opportunities for strike elements.

"It is also no longer necessary to score a physical hit to destroy a target. Offensive capabilities in the digital domain can effectively neutralise satellites and networks, denying them at critical junctures to decisively alter the course of the conflict," he said.

17 States, UTs report no Covid death in last 24 hrs

NEW DELHI

While the country recorded 108 deaths due to Covid-19 in the last 24 hours, a matter of relief for the nation is that they were limited to a few states and union territories as 17 states have not reported any fatality due to Covid-19, the Health Ministry said on Thursday.

The ministry informed that 17 states and UTs including Telangana, Gujarat, Assam, Haryana, Odisha, Uttarakhand, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Lakshadweep, Ladakh, Sikkim, Manipur, Mizoram, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh and Daman & Diu, have not reported any Covid death in the last 24 hours.

India as on Thursday, has reported 12,923 new infections and 108 more deaths from novel coronavirus. The case tally has mounted to 1,08,71,294 while the Covid-19 death toll in the country has increased to 1,55,360, the data by the Health Ministry showed.

Meanwhile, the country has recorded 1,42,562 active cases of the Covid-19 disease. The union ministry said that the total positive cases in the country now comprise merely 1.31 per cent of the total cases. "India's active cases per million population (104) is amongst the lowest in the world," the ministry added.

IIT Kharagpur artificial intelligence study says

20 per cent of India has toxic levels of arsenic in groundwater

NEW DELHI

Almost 20 per cent of India's total land area has toxic levels of arsenic in its groundwater, exposing more than 250 million people across the country to the poisonous element, says a new IIT Kharagpur study which used artificial intelligence (AI)-based prediction modelling. According to the researchers, the findings suggest a much greater extent of the high arsenic zones and total population exposed than already known from arsenic sampling exercises and reports by various governmental and non-governmental organisations.

The research, published in the journal Science of the Total Environment, indicates the need for much more rigorous sampling of arsenic levels across India than what exists.

Arsenic is highly toxic in its inorganic form, with long-term exposure to the element from drinking-water and food potentially causing cancer and skin lesions, among other disorders, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The current study noted that these high arsenic areas are mostly located along the Indus-Ganga-Brahmaputra river basin and in pockets in Peninsular India. It said the states of Punjab (92 per cent), Bihar



(70 per cent), West Bengal (69 per cent), Assam (48 per cent), Haryana (43 per cent), Uttar Pradesh (28 per cent), and Gujarat (24 per cent) show the highest areal extent of elevated groundwater arsenic zones.

These are followed by sporadic occurrences in the states of Madhya Pradesh (9 per cent), Karnataka (8 per cent), Odisha (4 per cent), Maharashtra (1 per cent), and south-eastern part of Jammu & Kashmir (1 per cent), the researchers said. Apart from these, all other states are found to have negligible or mostly no arsenic hazard, they added.

"A total of more than 250 million people are estimated to be exposed to high arsenic in India," said

Abhijit Mukherjee, Associate Professor at the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur, West Bengal. "Our study indicates a strong influence of irrigation abstraction (of groundwater) and regional geology on arsenic distribution patterns within India," Mukherjee, the lead author of the study, told PTI.

In the study, the scientists used advanced AI to model the occurrence of arsenic above its national permissible limit of 10 microgrammes per litre (µg/L) in the groundwater across India based on the various geologic, hydrogeologic and anthropogenic factors that have been known to control the groundwater arsenic distribution in the aquifers.

TODAY'S QUOTE

Preparing 5G roadmap for next 10 yrs

“The communications ministry has begun work on preparing a spectrum roadmap for the next 10 years in consultation with stakeholders. 5G services would be introduced gradually, and will advance to full range of services as the ecosystem and demand for services grow.”

— Sanjay Dhotre, MoS, Communications & IT



PROFIT

ACC net profit jumps 73%

Cement maker ACC Limited on Thursday reported a 72.88 per cent increase in consolidated net profit to Rs 472.44 crore for the fourth quarter ended December 31. The company, which follows the January-December financial year cycle, had posted a profit of Rs 273.28 crore in the corresponding quarter a year ago.

FOREX (buy rates in ₹)

US Dollar	77.2	South	
Euro	92.75	African Rand	5.71
UAE Dirham	21.81	Hong Kong Dollar	10.8
Thai Baht	2.8	Japanese Yen	0.8
British Pound	104.77	New Zealand Dollar	55.24
Australian Dollar	59.22	Saudi Riyal	21.35
Canadian Dollar	60.28	Swedish Krona	10.06
Swiss Franc	85.1	Singapore Dollar	57.73

DELHI FRIDAY 12 FEBRUARY 2021

BIZ BRIEFS

Pitti Engg Q3 net at ₹7.26 cr

Pitti Engineering limited posted 78.8 percent rise in net profit at Rs 7.26 crore for the quarter ended December 2020 as against Rs 4.06 crore for the corresponding quarter of previous fiscal. The company's third-quarter revenue reached at Rs 151.32 crore, up 28.32 per cent. As a result, PAT margins improved by 78.82 per cent. For nine months ended December 2020, the company posted a lower profit of Rs 7.57 crore as against Rs 15.56 crore and revenue was also lower at Rs 347.82 crore as against Rs 412.12 crore. Sharad B Pitti, company's Chairman & Managing Director, said: "The company has been continuously investing in cutting edge manufacturing technology and expanding our product offering. As a result of these initiatives, we have been able to deliver improved margins and profitability during the quarter."

Vivo launches new offers

Vivo announced exclusive offers for its customers across platforms on the occasion of Valentine's Day. These offers, coupled with attractive finance schemes, are available on vivo V20, Y51A, Y31 and Y20G. The offers will be valid till February 13 for online buyers and the mainline offers will be valid till February 28. Offline offers include up to Rs 2,000 cashback on HDFC Bank on credit card regular & credit/debit card EMI transactions. Triple zero down payment scheme from Bajaj Finance, zero down payment offer from Home Credit, HDB, IDFC First bank, TVS credit, HDFC Bank & ICICI Bank, are on offer. Online offers include free bluetooth speaker with all mobile prepaid orders, Rs 3,000 cashback on TWS on purchase of X, V, U, Z, S, Y series smartphones and no cost EMI up to 12 months.

NCC posts ₹71.20 cr net

Infrastructure major NCC Limited posted net profit of Rs 71.20 crore for the third quarter ended in December 2020, down from Rs 103.83 crore in the same period a year ago. The total revenues down to Rs 2,150.69 crore during the quarter from Rs 2,282.93 crore in the same quarter a year ago. The company's EBITDA was down to Rs 256.15 crore in the last quarter from Rs 262.76 crore in the third quarter of last financial year. The company has secured orders aggregating to Rs 11,861 crore in the third quarter, taking the order book to Rs 39,182 crore.

Bajaj Auto's CSR move

JanaJal WOW, an IoT-based proprietary technology solution three-wheeler developed by Noida-based JanaJal to deliver safe drinking water to the doorsteps of households, has been approved by the Ministry of Jal Shakti as one of five technologies to deliver billion drinking water scheme under the National Jal Jeevan Mission. Bajaj Auto is supporting this initiative. Samardeep Subandh, President Intracity Business, Bajaj Auto Ltd. said: "Bajaj Auto is keen to support the JanaJal WOW initiative that resonates with nation building. Our CNG operated maxima cargo variant will deliver safe drinking water to the doorstep of households." Parag Agarwal, founder & CEO of JanaJal: "We are delighted and honoured that JanaJal WOW (Water on Wheels) has been recognized and recommended by the Ministry of Jal Shakti".

STEEP RISE IN COPPER PRICES

WHITE GOODS LIKELY TO COST MORE NOW

KUMUD DAS
MUMBAI

WITH the copper prices going across the roof, home appliances may see a price hike in near future. Copper prices at MCX were hovering at Rs 638.50 a kg on Wednesday last from Rs 420 a year ago, thus showing an increase by 50 per cent.

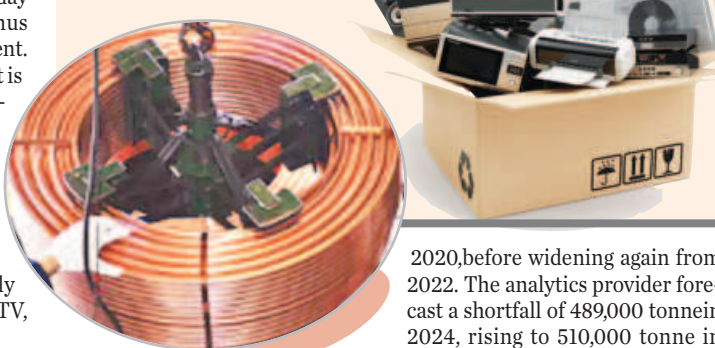
A deficit in the copper market is set to deepen over the next several years as supply of the widely used metal struggles to keep up with strong demand from the power and construction sectors, compounded by the proliferation of electric vehicles. Besides, copper is mostly used in home appliances like TV, fridge, fans and refrigerators.

Kamal Nandi, Executive Vice President, Godrej Home Appliance, said that the industry uses copper for manufacture of AC and refrigerators and hence spike in copper prices will definitely have its impact on these items. "Currently, we are busy working out the modalities," he added. Interestingly, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, while presenting the Budget on February 1 in the Parliament, had announced the deduction of import duty on copper by half to 2.5 per cent from five per cent earlier.

"Copper demand is likely to witness healthy growth on the back of strong demand from user segments. This, coupled with lower

Copper at

₹638.50
at MCX, up 50% in a year



supplies globally, has already pushed copper prices sharply, which are expected to remain firm in the medium-term during 2021," said Avinash Gorakshakar, Head (research), Profit Mart Securities. Refined output is expected to increase by 4.3 per cent, year-on-year, to 24.7 million tonne in 2021 after decreasing by 2.1 per cent to 23.6 million tonne in 2020, primarily as a result of disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic, says a report.

Fitch Solutions expects the global copper market deficit to ease from an estimated 416,000 tonne in 2019 to 299,000 tonne in

2020, before widening again from 2022. The analytics provider forecast a shortfall of 489,000 tonne in 2024, rising to 510,000 tonne in 2027.

The price of copper has climbed 6.9 per cent since the start of 2020, defying a massive slump in March, and stood at USD 6,574 per tonne as of Sept 29. A rising tide of electrification, as many countries seek to lower their emissions through developing new technologies, promises robust demand for years to come. Global copper production would need to rise by between 3 per cent and 6 per cent per annum by 2030 for countries to meet the targets of the Paris Agreement on climate change. Fitch expects mine output to rise at an average annual rate of 3.2% from 2020 to 2029, from 20.4 Mt to 27.7 Mt.

NMDC may wait till late FY22 to demerge steel unit

NEW DELHI

COUNTRY'S largest iron ore producer NMDC may have to wait till the end of monsoon this year before commissioning its three million ton steel plant and initiating the process of its demerger and subsequent disinvestment.

Government sources said though 3mt steel plant is likely to be commissioned in July-August, 2021 as per management, it could be delayed beyond monsoon and is likely to coincide with the demerger of the steel plant.

This would allow for completion of work on a byproduct unit and coke oven batteries. So, the demerger process itself may get extended to late this year or in the first quarter of calendar year 2022, said the sources. In October, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) approved the demerger of the Chhattisgarh-based Nagarnar Steel Plant or NMDC Iron and Steel Plant (NISIP) from state-owned NMDC (erstwhile National Minerals Development Corporation) and strategic disinvestment of the demerged entity by offloading the entire government shareholding to a buyer. The Board of Directors of the NMDC in August had already accorded in-principle proposal to demerge the NSP with itself.

The NSP is a three million ton per annum (mta) Integrated Steel Plant being set up by the NMDC at Nagarnar in Chhattisgarh's Bastar district in an area of 1,980 acres at revised estimated cost of Rs 23,140 crore.

Techno Paints' new plant in Hyd this year

HANS BUSINESS
HYDERABAD

CITY-BASED Techno Paints which provides painting services and is also into the manufacturing of paints, has on Thursday announced that it is expediting its plans to set up a new manufacturing unit as the utilisation levels in its existing plants reached 100 per cent.

"We will start work on our new plant soon. It will be ready for production by this December," said Akuri Srinivas Reddy, founder of Fortune Group which markets its products under Techno Paints brand, in a statement.

The new plant with an annual capacity of 2.5 lakh metric tonnes will be set up in three acres of land at Sultanpur Industrial Estate near Hyderabad. The company is investing Rs 25 crore on this new plant. "All five units of our company are running at full capacity. With the new plant, our total capacity will reach 3.3 lakh tonnes," he said.

The company has drawn up



Akuri Srinivas Reddy, Founder, Fortune Group

plans to set up two more plants with 5 lakh tonne additional capacity in other States by 2025. It plans to go for IPO in five years.

Srinivas Reddy said the demand for company's products exceeded expectations due to high quality that Techno Paint offers. Painting services being offered by the company were driving overall growth and enabling it to compete with industry majors, he added.

According to him, Techno Paints is among the top companies that provide painting services for Hyderabad real estate segment.

Robust gains in RIL push markets to new highs

MUMBAI

EQUITY benchmarks reversed their two-session slide to finish at fresh closing highs on Thursday, propelled by robust gains in market heavyweight Reliance Industries.

Dovish comments from US Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell also bolstered global investor sentiment, which augurs well for fund flows into emerging markets like India, analysts said. Overcoming bouts of mid-session volatility, the 30-share BSE index settled 222.13 points or 0.43 per cent higher at its new closing peak of 51,531.52. In similar movement, the broader NSE Nifty advanced 66.80 points or 0.44 per cent to its all-time high of 15,173.30.

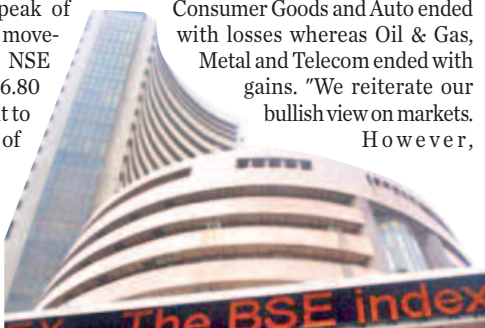
Reliance Industries was the star performer in the Sensex pack, rallying 4.07 per cent,

DOVISH COMMENTS FROM US FED CHAIR BOLSTER INVESTOR SENTIMENTS

followed by Sun Pharma, Bajaj Finance, PowerGrid, Bharti Airtel, Nestle India and HUL. On the other hand, Titan, L&T, HDFC Bank, ITC, ONGC and SBI were among the laggards, tumbling up to 2.50 per cent.

"After the initial downtick, the benchmark recovered in no time and remained range-bound thereafter. The mixed trend continued on the sectoral front as Capital Goods, Consumer Goods and Auto ended with losses whereas Oil & Gas, Metal and Telecom ended with gains. "We reiterate our bullish view on markets."

However,



traders should maintain extra caution in the selection of stocks now. Participants would be actively tracking macroeconomic data like IIP, CPI and WPI data for cues on Friday," said Ajit Mishra, VP - Research, Religare Broking. BSE energy, telecom, oil and gas, utilities, basic materials and metal indices surged up to 3.13 per cent, while capital goods, consumer durables, auto and industrials ended in the red. Broader BSE midcap and smallcap indices rallied up to 1.06 per cent.

US Fed Chair Jerome Powell reassured investors that interest rates will remain low in the near future to prop up the economy, adding that the jobs scenario is "a long way" from where it needs to be.

Elsewhere in Asia, markets in China, Japan and South Korea were closed for holidays.

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

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.

CITD set to boost industrial sector in Karimnagar

THIRUNAGIRI VENKATESWARA
SWAMY
KARIMNAGAR

THE State and Central governments are striving hard for enormous development of the industrial sector in various regions across the State. There are a total of 1,388 small and medium scale industries in Karimnagar district, of which 250 are granite and cutting industries, 150 are rice mills, 62 are seed industries, 800 are power loom industries and 188 are other small scale industries.

To equip the unemployed youth with various skills that would make them job-ready in tune with the developments in the industrial sector and encourage them to come up with new ideas for the establishment of small, medium and large scale industries in the district, former MP, B Vinod Kumar, took the initiative for sanctioning of Central Institute of Tool Design Extension Centre (CITD) to Karimnagar district. The Central government also sanctioned Rs 20 crore for the purpose. The funds will be utilised for



purchasing of machines and equipment required for giving training to the youth. For the construction of separate buildings for the CITD, the State government released Rs 95 lakh from the Internal Industrial Promotion funds in Phase-I and allotted 1.5 acre on the Satavahana University premises. The construction works were handed over to SITCC. Out of 50,000 sq ft required for the construction of

CITD building, the government initially allotted 10,000 sq ft. The main centre of CITD is situated in Balanagar, Hyderabad. The CITD centre, being established in Karimnagar district, is the extension centre to the main centre present in Hyderabad.

The State government had sent a proposal for the establishment of CITD extension centre in Warangal district also. But funds were re-

leased only for the CITD extension centre in Karimnagar district. There are 10 government engineering colleges, 6 polytechnic colleges, 4 ITI colleges in the united Karimnagar district that are producing as many as 6,000 engineers every year. CITD is going to be a boon for these students. The youth will be trained in new design, different kinds of products, new machinery and their functioning and about the



changes that occurred in the science and technology along with coaching in advanced technology pertaining to engineering, automobile and MSME sectors. The General Manager of the District Industrial centre, Naveen Kumar, said that the CITD will train the youth to be self-sufficient through invention and innovation. The youth can learn the functioning of various kinds of machines used in the industry and the technological advancements across the world.

The construction of the CITD building will commence as early as possible, he said.

World Para Athletics Grand Prix Opening Day

Devender, Nimisha win gold

DUBAI

PARA-athletes Devender Kumar and Nimisha Suresh Chakkungalparambil clinched a gold medal each as India started their campaign at the 12th Fazza International Championships - Dubai 2021 World Para Athletics Grand Prix on a strong note, winning six medals on the opening day.

Devender hurled the discus to a distance of 50.61m in his second attempt to take the gold in Men's Discus throw F44 event.

In F-44 classification, athletes with a leg deficiency, leg length difference, impaired muscle power or impaired passive range of movement in the legs compete in a standing position.

F46/F47 is for athletes with arm deficiency, impaired muscle power or impaired passive range of movement in arms, competing in a standing position.

In fact, India took the one-two position in the event, with Pardeep taking the silver with a throw of 41.77m. Belarus' Dmitry Bartashevich (37.08m) claimed the bronze.

"This is my first international medal. I am very excited about it. But I came into the Championships with a target of 54m throw. I will try to attain it in the next Championships," said Devender.

Nimisha clinched the top honours with a jump of 5.25m in Women's F46/47 events. She finished ahead of France Angelina Lanza (5.05m) and K. Dissanayake Mudiyanse of Sri Lanka (4.89m).

"I am very happy to be classified here, and this gold is special to me. I was a little nervous ahead of my competition as this was my first international championship. I have been training for the last two years," said the Kerala-born para-athlete, who will compete in Women's 100m T46/47 event later on Thursday.

Among others, Pranav Desai ran in 11.76 seconds to claim the silver in Men's 100m T64 event, while Vinod Kumar took the



bronze medal in Men's Discus throw F52 with a throw of 18.52 metres.

Rakshita Raju (5:22.15min) also took the bronze in the Women's 1500m T11 event.

Later in the evening, Sundar Singh Gurjar and Ajeet Kumar will be in action in Men's Shot put F46, while Simran will take part in Women's 100m T13 event. (IANS)

Atalanta beat Napoli, to meet Juventus in Coppa Italia final

ROME

ATALANTA eliminated Napoli in the second leg of the Coppa Italia semi-finals with a 3-1 home win, setting up a clash against Juventus in the final.

In the reverse fixture last week, the two sides played out a 0-0 draw despite Atalanta's dominance at the Diego Armando Maradona Stadium, reports Xinhua news agency.

In Wednesday's game, Atalanta showed no mercy as Duvan Zapata and Matteo Pessina scored just 15 minutes into the game, putting the home side firmly in charge before halftime.

Napoli got a lifeline in the 53rd minute as Hirving Lozano pulled one goal back with a double-strike, but Atalanta sealed the win in the 78th minute when Pessina dinked over an on-rushing David Ospina after a great team move. Atalanta will face Juventus in the final on May 19, after the Bianconeri saw off Inter Milan on Tuesday. (IANS)



Atalanta's Matteo Pessina celebrates after the Italian Cup semifinal match against Napoli at the Gewiss Stadium in Bergamo, Italy, on Wednesday

Karthikeyan hopes to complete 'unfinished business' in Le Mans Series

DUBAI

NEARLY 12 years after he crashed out following a freak accident, a more determined and experienced Narain Karthikeyan is back to complete an "unfinished business" in the Le Mans Series endurance racing.

India's first Formula One driver, Karthikeyan, dislocated his shoulder in May 2009, forcing him out of the 24 Hours of Le Mans, which is considered one of the world's toughest races. The 44-year-old is now back, forming an all Indian team comprising former F2 and European Le Mans Series racer Arjun Maini and 2020 IMSA Prototype Challenge champion

Naveen Rao.

"Yeah, absolutely, I'm here to complete an unfinished business. Le Mans is one of the greatest races in the world and I want to go back and get the job done and not only drive there but be competitive," Karthikeyan said during a virtual media conference on Thursday.

The trio will represent Racing Team India which will make its debut in the Asian Le Mans Series in Dubai this weekend in a bid to secure an invitation to the coveted 24 Hours of Le Mans, to be held in France on June 12-13.

Racing Team India's

Dubai debut will make it the first outfit with an all-Indian driver line-up to compete in international endurance racing.

The trio will compete in the top class LMP2 category over two, four-hour-long races at the Dubai Autodrome. The two runnings of the 4 Hours of Dubai will take place on Saturday and Sunday respectively before moving to Abu Dhabi's Yas Marina circuit for an-



2nd Test: BCCI curator sent off, India team management gets involved

NEW DELHI

FOLLOWING the defeat in first Test in Chennai, the Indian cricket board has removed its curator who was to oversee the pitch preparation at the MA Chidambaram Stadium for the second Test, starting on Saturday. Now, the Indian team management is overseeing the pitch preparation along with chief local groundsman V Ramesh Kumar, who hadn't prepared a pitch even for a first-class game before the first Test that India lost to England here on Tuesday. Now, Kumar has been assigned the crucial task of preparing the pitch, for which black soil will be used instead of red.

The gap between the first and the second Test, which is to begin on February 13, is only of three days. But the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) curator Taposh Chatterjee of Central Zone was sent off immediately after the first match and, instead, tasked to oversee the preparation of pitches for the Vijay Hazare Trophy matches in Indore and Jaipur.

The development

is strange considering that the BCCI panel of curators, which was to be reviewed and revised at the its annual general meeting in December, has four others besides Chatterjee in the elite panel. Ashish Bhowmick, who will prepare the Motera wicket for the third and fourth Tests against England, Prashanth K, Sunil Chauhan, and Prakash Adhav are the others. There were five other curators in the emerging panel earlier.

The Tamil Nadu Cricket Association (TNCA) confirmed the development. "Taposh has left. He was there for the first match. V Ramesh Kumar will oversee the preparation for the second Test," TNCA secretary RS Ramaswamy told IANS.

Kumar is a businessman and had, in the past, not even prepared a first-class wicket.

"It is a surprise that no BCCI curator is at the spot as the BCCI sent back Taposh after the first Test when the players showed their displeasure with the way the pitch [for first Test] behaved on the first two days.

The MA Chidambaram Stadium has not had a proper curator for a long time. Earlier, K Parthasarathy, the head groundsman, was looking after it, but he was not been a regular in the past few years," said a source close to the development.

"The wicket for the second Test is being prepared under the supervision of the team management. There has been no proper watering. The surface for the first Test had red soil and the pitch to be used for the second match is of black soil," he said.

Over the last 15 years, the Chennai pitch has attracted a lot of attention due to lack of grass and its weird behaviour due to mixture of red and black soils. The pitch for the next game is also a mix, with its topping being of black soil while the one used for first Test was entirely of red soil.

"At other grounds like Bengaluru, Kolkata, or Mumbai, the grass recovers quickly. But not in Chennai nowadays. There are a combination of reasons for this. One is that there are far too many matches being played and the other is the Ranji Trophy team's demands. You would have noticed in the Indian Premier League also that chasing is always difficult here. There is no proper curator looking after it," he said.



East Bengal chasing crucial win against Hyderabad

VASCO (GOA)

HYDERABAD FC are in the driver's seat in the race for the Indian Super League (ISL) playoffs while East Bengal need to win all the rest of their matches while needing a few results to go their way to make it to the playoffs. Beating Hyderabad, however, would go a long way in Robbie Fowler's team securing a playoff

spot and they would be trying for just that at the Tilak Maidan Stadium on Friday.

SC East Bengal have had a stop-start debut campaign. They've spent most of the season near the bottom of the table. A win against Hyderabad will bring them to within four points of their opponents with three games left for the Kolkata club.

East Bengal have 16 points from 16 games.

Vamshi double ton helps Noble CC score 551/8

HYDERABAD: Banking on Vamshi Ramavat's blitzkrieg 238 runs off 142 balls (35 X 4's 8 X 6's)

Noble Cricket Club made a massive 551/8 in the stipulated 90 overs at the end of Day-1 of the HCA A-2 Division 2-Day Leagues Cricket. The event organised by the Hyderabad Cricket Association is played at PKMCC Grounds, Bommalaramam, Hyderabad. Y Aakash played the role of second fiddle with 57 runs and Ambarish made 52 runs while Krishnkanth Tiwari made swash-buckling unbeaten 53 runs.

Brief Scores: Noble Cricket Club : 551/8 in 90 overs (Vamshi Ramavat 238, Y Aakash 57, Ambarish B 52, Krishnkanth Tiwari 53 not out) versus Mayura CC



Wrestlers Sushil, Sakshi out of annual contract

NEW DELHI: Double Olympic medallist Sushil Kumar (74kg) and 2016 Olympics bronze medallist Sakshi Malik (62kg) have been dropped from the Wrestling Federation of India's (WFI) annual contract due to "non-performance". Teenage wrestlers Anshu Malik (57kg) and Sonam Malik (62kg) of Haryana have replaced them in the 'A Category'.

RESULT Odisha FC draw with Kerala Blasters FC 2-2

TODAY'S MATCH SC East Bengal vs Hyderabad FC at Tilak Maidan Stadium 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		
FC Goa	16	5	8	3	24	19	5	23		
Hyderabad FC	16	5	8	3	20	16	4	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	16	3	7	6	14	21	-7	16		
Kerala Blasters FC	17	3	7	7	22	29	-7	16		
Odisha FC	16	1	6	9	16	27	-11	9		

Sharan, Ankita crash out of Australian Open

MELBOURNE

INDIA'S Divij Sharan and Ankita Raina on Thursday lost their respective first-round matches in men's doubles and women's doubles event to crash out of the Australian Open Grand Slam.

Sharan, alongside Igor Zelenay of Slovakia, lost 1-6, 4-6 to the German pair Kevin Krawietz and Yannick Hanfmann in a match that lasted one hour and four minutes.



In women's doubles event, Ankita - who partnered with Romania's Mihaela Buzarnescu -- suffered a 3-6, 0-6 defeat to Australian pair of Belinda Woolcock and Olivia Gadecki in one hour and four minutes.


Earlier on Wednesday, Rohan Bopanna had bowed out of the men's doubles event after he lost his first round contest alongside Japanese

partner Ben McLachlan 6-4, 7(7)-6(0) to the South Korean pair of Ji Sung Nam and Min-Kyu Song in a match lasting one hour and 17 minutes.

However, Bopanna will be seen in action on Friday when he will partner Duan Yingying of China to face UK-US pair of Jamie Murray and Bethanie Mattek-Sands in the first round contest of the mixed doubles event.


Sumit Nagal earlier on Tuesday faced a crushing 2-6, 5-7, 3-6 defeat to Lithuania's Ricardas Berankis to bow out of the men's singles competition. (IANS)





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