

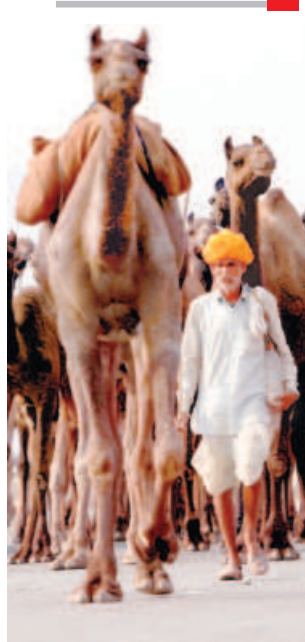
WINDOWS

BIZZ BUZZ

Moody's improves GDP growth forecast

MOODY'S Investors Service on Thursday upped India's growth forecast to (+) 10.6 per cent for the current fiscal, from its earlier estimate of (+) 11.5 per cent saying the latest stimulus prioritises manufacturing and job creation, and shifts focus to longer-term growth. Last week, the government announced a new fiscal package amounting to around Rs 2.7 lakh crore, which included production-linked incentive scheme for manufacturing units and enhanced credit guarantee programme for small businesses.

<https://epaper.thehansindia.com/Home/ArticleView>



A camel-herder along with his camels returns after authorities cancelled the annual Pushkar Fair due to the coronavirus pandemic, at Pushkar in Ajmer district on Thursday

Four Jaish terrorists killed

Four suspected Jaish-e-Mohammad terrorists were killed and two policemen were injured in a gunbattle on the Jammu-Srinagar national highway after a truck carrying a group of freshly infiltrated militants was intercepted by security forces on the outskirts of Jammu city on Thursday, top police officials said. The terrorists had come to execute a "big plan" which has now been foiled, Inspector General of Police (IGP), Jammu, Mukesh Singh, said. ▶ P3



DESIGN TECH LOCALLY, DEPLOY GLOBALLY: PM

BENGALURU

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said it is time for tech solutions that are designed in India but deployed for the world and declared that the country is uniquely positioned to leap ahead in the information era. He also called on the industry to make a conscious attempt to take product-level innovations to the next level.

Addressing the Bengaluru Tech Summit, 2020 (BTS2020) virtually, Karnataka's flagship technology event, he said, his government's policy decisions are always aimed at liberalising the tech and innovations industry. Recently the government has eased the compliance burden on the IT industry in various ways. Besides, it has always tried to engage with stakeholders in the tech industry and chart out future-proof policy frameworks for India, Modi noted.

"You all are the drivers of this industry. Can we make a conscious attempt to take our product-level innovations to the next level? A framework-level mindset has the potential to build an ecosystem of multiple successful products," he said at the inaugural of the summit attended among others by the Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa.

Union IT and Communications Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad attended the event virtually. Organised by the government of Karnataka along with Karnataka



India as a country is uniquely positioned to leap ahead in the information era. We have the best minds as well as the biggest market. Our local tech solutions have the potential to go global. India is at a sweet spot. It is time for tech-solutions that are designed in India but deployed for the world' - Narendra Modi

Data protection law soon: Prasad

BENGALURU

UNION IT and Communications Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on Thursday said the government was very keen to promote India as a very big centre of the data economy and would finalise a data protection law very soon.

Addressing the Bengaluru Tech Summit, 2020 (BTS2020) virtually, he said India produces huge data and the digital ecosystem, like mobile phones and Aadhaar, is producing data.



"We are going to finalise a data protection law very soon. India is waiting for its movement for data economy, data innovation, data refinery. I would urge the Chief Minister (of Karnataka) to ensure that the state

becomes a great centre of India's data economy," he added.

Organised by the Karnataka government, along with Karnataka Innovation and Technology Society, the state government's Vision Group on Information Technology, Biotechnology & StartUp, and Software Technology Parks of India, the summit, that saw the inaugural address by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is scheduled to take place from November 19 to 21.

Prasad said even during the pandemic the

communications sector witnessed a growth of over seven per cent and also received significant investments from major global companies. "It is a challenging time and we decided to convert it into an opportunity. The global manufacturing world was looking towards alternative destinations. In view of India's enormous success in mobile manufacturing, we came up with a big idea of production linked incentive," he said.



A health worker collects sample for Covid-19 testing in New Delhi on Thursday

HC raps Delhi govt on Covid situation

Asks why it didn't 'wake up' when numbers were spiralling

NEW DELHI

THE Delhi High Court on Thursday asked the AAP government if it could explain to those who had lost their near and dear ones to Covid-19 in the last 18 days why the administration did not take steps when cases were spiralling in the national capital. The high court, which also asked the government to look at the situation with a "magnifying glass", observed that it was "disheartening" to see that the number of daily deaths due to the virus has increased to 131 and fresh Covid cases have risen to 7,486.

Pulling up the Delhi government, a bench of Justices Hima Kohli and Subramonium Prasad asked why it waited till the court intervened to take steps such as reducing the number of people attending weddings to 50 to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

"You (Delhi government) saw from November 1 which way the wind was blowing. But you turn turtle now because we asked you some questions. The bell should have rung loud and clear when the numbers were spiralling. Why did you not wake up when you saw the situation was deteriorating? Why did we have to shake you out of your slumber on November 11? What did you do from

November 1 till November 11? Why did you wait 18 days (till November 18) to take a decision? Do you know how many lives were lost during this period? Can you explain it to those who lost their near and dear ones," the bench asked.

It also noted that Delhi government statements, with regard to the rising Covid cases, to the press appear to be contrary to the submissions made in court. The bench said that while Delhi government ministers were giving press statements to the effect that third wave of Covid infections has reached its peak and the numbers are going down, the same "is not reflected" in the daily figures and the status report before the court.

"We can take judicial note of the statements your ministers are making," the bench told senior advocate Sandeep Sethi and Delhi government additional standing counsel Satyakam, who were representing the AAP government.

The bench also noted during the hearing that the crematoriums are "overflowing" and the "funeral pyres are burning throughout the night" and asked the Delhi government whether adequate arrangements are in place to cremate or bury the rising number of people succumbing to Covid-19.

Continued on Page 5

Corona warriors, elderly will get vaccine on priority

NEW DELHI

EXPRESSING confidence that a Covid-19 vaccine will be ready in the next three-four months, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan on Thursday said the government has drawn up a meticulous priority plan with healthcare workers and those above 65 years on top of the list.

Addressing the FICCI FLO's national webinar on 'The Shifting Healthcare Paradigm During and Post-Covid', Vardhan said it is estimated that 400-500 million vaccine doses will be made available for 250-300 million people by July-August. "I am confident that the Covid-19 vaccine will be ready in the next three-four months," he said.

"It is natural that the vaccine distribution would have to be prioritised. As you know the healthcare workers who

are corona warriors will be prioritised, then people who are above 65 years of age, they have been prioritised and then those from 50-65 years of age have been prioritised. Then those below 50 years who have other diseases," he said.

Vardhan said everything is being decided by experts with a scientific point of view. "We have made a very detailed meticulous plan on this," he said. "What we would have to do in March-April next year, we have started planning for it from now only," Vardhan said.

The minister said, "We have also initiated an integrated response system against Covid-19 and will also host clinical trials for all the major vaccines. About 20 vaccines are in different stages of development." He said about 90-99 per cent tackling of Covid-19 is only through protecting and motivating others. Continued on Page 5



Minto Hall illuminated with blue lights under UNICEF's 'Go Blue' campaign to highlight the issue of child rights, in Bhopal on Thursday

US records more than 2,50,000 Covid deaths

WASHINGTON

THE US has recorded over 250,000 deaths from Covid-19, a bleak milestone as cases soar once again across the country, worst-hit by the deadly infectious disease that has claimed over 1,349,000 lives across the world.

According to Johns Hopkins University, the US has now reported 250,537 deaths and over 11.5 million confirmed cases. It has more reported infections and a higher death toll than any other country worldwide.

The coronavirus is now killing at least one American every minute of the day

► Situation to get worse, warn experts
► 1 American dies every minute of the day

can every minute of the day, bringing the country to another horrific milestone on Wednesday: At least 250,029 people in the country have died of Covid-19 since the first death on February 29 in Washington state, CNN reported.

The situation is only going to get worse, warned Dr Jonathan Reiner, a professor at George Washington University School of Medicine, amidst the continued obstruction from the Trump administration for a smooth handover to the

incoming administration of US President-elect Joe Biden.

"The horrible death count that we saw yesterday in the United States ... reflects the number of people who were being infected three weeks ago -- two to three weeks ago, because that's the lag," Reiner said on Wednesday.

"On average, two to three weeks ago, we were seeing 70,000 to 80,000 (new) cases per day. Yesterday, there were about 155,000 (new) cases. So, if you're

alarmed at the 1,700 deaths today, two to three weeks from now, we're going to see 3,000 deaths a day," Reiner said.

While some hospitals are running out of health care workers, the US once again set a new record for hospitalised Covid-19 patients -- 76,830 on Tuesday, according to the Covid Tracking Project. America's top infectious diseases expert Dr Anthony Fauci said the country was "going in the wrong direction at a very precarious time", with people more likely to gather inside as the weather gets colder.

In an interview on the BBC News channel, Fauci

warned about the new surge in cases leading to more deaths. At the end of March - when the US had recorded 2,200 deaths - Fauci, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, predicted the pandemic could kill up to 200,000 Americans and infect millions more. "It's a very serious situation because there are lagging indicators," the 79-year-old physician said. "So when you see the massive increase in cases as we're seeing now particularly as more and more people are doing things inside, we're in a very difficult situation," he said.

Mumbai attack mastermind Hafiz gets 10-year jail

LAHORE

MUMBAI terror attack mastermind and Jamat-ud-Dawa (JuD) chief Hafiz Saeed was on Thursday sentenced to 10 years in jail by an anti-terrorism court in Pakistan in two more terror cases.

Saeed, a UN designated terrorist whom the US has placed a USD 10 million bounty on, was arrested on July 17 last year in the terror financing cases. He was sentenced to 11 years in jail by an anti-terrorism court in February this year in two



Hafiz Saeed, a UN designated terrorist whom the US has placed a USD 10 million bounty on, was arrested on July 17 last year in the terror financing cases

terror financing cases. He is lodged at the Lahore's high-security Kot Lakhpat jail. "The Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) of Lahore on Thursday sentenced four leaders of Jamat-ud-Dawa, including its chief Hafiz Saeed, in two more cases," a

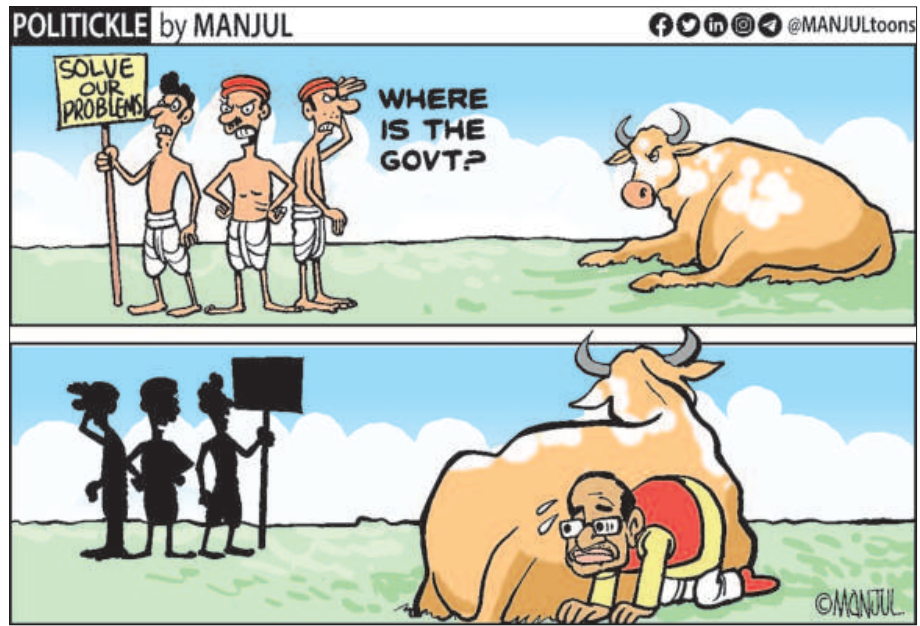
court official told PTI. Saeed and his two close aides - Zafar Iqbal and Yahya Mujahid - have been sentenced to 10 and a half years each, while JuD chief's brother-in-law Abdul Rehman Makki was sentenced to six months

imprisonment. "Judge Arshad Hussain Bhutta of ATC Court No. 1 heard the case No. 16/19 and 25/19 filed by Counter Terrorism Department in which the verdict has been announced after the statements of witnesses were cross-examined by Naseeruddin Nayyar and Mohammad Imran Fazal Gul Advocate," the official said.

A total of 41 cases have been registered by the CTD against the JuD leaders, out of which 24 have been decided while the rest are

pending in the ATC courts. Four cases have been decided against Saeed so far. Saeed-led JuD is the front organisation for the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) which is responsible for carrying out the 2008 Mumbai attack that killed 166 people, including six Americans.

The US Department of the Treasury has designated Saeed as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist. He was listed under the UN Security Council Resolution 1267 in December 2008.



Womenia

TWEET PATROL



NIVETHA THOMAS
@I_NIVETHATHOMAS
At golden
hour's
mercy



Stay at King Khan's Delhi home

ASKARI JAFFER

Shah Rukh Khan and Gauri, on Wednesday, announced that they have collaborated with Airbnb to rent out their home in Panchsheel Park, New Delhi. With the help of a video and a set of pictures, the couple gave their fans a tour of their house, redesigned by none other than Gauri, and revealed that a lucky duo will get a chance to be their guest through Airbnb.

Speaking about her Delhi residence, Gauri says, "Our Delhi home is almost 20 years old. As many know that I am from Delhi and have lived a major part of my life here, so I thought it would be a great idea to buy and design a home close to my mom's home. That was the idea behind it, to have all our memories under one roof. We travelled and collected so many things and memories throughout the years, with the kids, and Shah Rukh and I, and I wanted all of it under one roof. That is what my Delhi home became; it was that one place where I decided to keep all my memories. When I walk into that home, every corner that I look at, it is full of memories. From the time the kids grew to teenagers, and now that they have all grown up, so we have a 'nostalgia wall' where all their collectables and little things from their childhood are adorned."

The wall has Suhana's makeup brushes, Aryan's badminton racket, AbRam's first birthday gift, Shah Rukh's artwork, some postcards, some other things which are nearly antique that the King Khan had gifted to the love of his life, Gauri has framed them and hung them on the wall, which is her favourite corner.

When asked Gauri how she decides on the centerpiece element and what all goes on behind the scenes when designing a home, she shares, "One's home

Ever dreamed of getting a chance to stay in King Khan's Delhi house? Of course, who has never had such a wish or dream? Here's a chance to actually stay in the actor's family home through Airbnb, a home-rental service

should reflect their personality. A home is where you are truly yourself. It is a place where you have family or loved ones around you, so it is critical to add that design element where the person feels comfortable. That's the most important thing while designing a home."

She also considers comfort to be the most important element in designing a home for others. She further elaborates, "The key piece would be that it depends on the clients, whether they are into lights, a comfortable sofa, or they are into a nice living room or a bar. So, I think it would all depend on the client and what their focus is and then we work around what they love."

As for that one lucky couple who will get to spend a day at the Khan's Delhi home through Airbnb collaboration, Gauri hopes to offer them "a home away from home since that is what people want when they come and live in your home."

While ending the virtual meet, Gauri says that she misses the Delhi weather, food, shawls and other memories and this year is definitely not a bad idea to stay in Delhi.

A teacher by profession, a beauty influencer by passion

TEJAL SINHA

Unlike her family of professionals, Tanya Manavalan was interested in creating content around beauty and skincare. While her father showed support for her decision to start making vlogs on Trello, her mother and extended family were not very happy with this choice.

Tanya shares, "When I was a child, my parents wanted me to follow my dreams and be whoever I want to be. When I told them I want to teach, they were happy to support me. But when I told them that I also want to create makeup videos and review skincare products as I have always been passionate about it, everyone in my family said that no one will take me seriously. But I think that we should all be able to do whatever we want to do. Just because I am a lecturer does not mean that I can't do super fun things like makeup. I have always been super passionate about makeup and skincare. I like researching products and taking my time to understand how they work and so I like to talk about this whenever I can. I like to be authentic and not biased and so I share my actual experiences with products and makeup based on whether they worked for me or not."

A lot of her family members have questioned her decision to put up videos on makeup and product reviews but Tanya continues to follow her passion. However, as a young 24-year-old, the thought that her choices may be disappointing for her family, continues to loom over her head.



Tanya Manavalan

But instead of letting this sinking feeling impact her love for all-things-beauty, she has embraced the love of her followers and the platform. Her product reviews are authentic and very engaging, which has made her one of the most-loved beauty vloggers on the platform.

With close to 50K followers and her passion for educating users about different products, she has amassed a large following and even bagged multiple brand collaborations, helping her make close to Rs 18,000 every month. Recently,

she was even part of a campaign with Tinder, where she made a video in which she gave her followers tips on preparing for a virtual date. Her success through doing something that she is wholeheartedly dedicated to has begun to open her family's eyes to the potential of content creation.

Sharing about the initial challenges, Tanya shares, "The challenge I usually face is that I like to take my time to fully understand how well the product has worked for me not. It is impossible to give a fair and accurate review of a skin-

care product without trying it out for some time. Reviewing makeup is easier as using it once can help you understand whether it will work or not. And so sometimes I feel I'm a little late to review products when almost every other influencer takes out a review the very next day after the product launch."

All her videos come packed with useful information about products, helping users make informed choices about whether they should buy a product or not. This has made her a vlogger who can be trusted to give good,

solid advice and guidance.

She explains complicated and scientific skin routines with ease, which makes her content very relatable and easy to follow. Thanks to all the appreciation she has received from her community on the platform, Tanya has got the confidence to continue creating videos along with taking up the job of teaching at a school in Bengaluru. She has realized that she actually likes teaching as well and she has the power to be two people at once; a creative content creator and a wonderful teacher.



Look on point with chokers

An excellent way to draw attention to the face, choker has been going strong as the most popular choice of accessory. Since it's comeback a couple of years back, it has been the go-to jewellery option for women with all kinds of personal styles alike. With so many types of chokers to pick from, the whole approach of how to wear a choker has also widened up.

Go get your hands on all those fancy chokers including the long choker necklace and the layered one, as you'll be so on point with your style after all the inspiration we have lined up for you.

Boho Babe

The idea of imaging a choker with a flowy dress and a pair of boots instantly makes us want to fly to boho land. Correct? A good piece of choker in black or silver is the best bet to channel the inner bohemian in you.

Street Chic

If you are someone who aces in the streetstyle department then chokers are surely for you. A smart approach would be to go for the clean and minimal ones that'll match the practicality of your casual outfit.

Geek Girl

Geekiness is cool. Add a punch of fun to it by introducing a choker along with those clear glasses. The geek meets grunge look also get a heads up from our side. Just pick up a choker in the colour complementing your outfit.

Fusion Fever

Well with the festive season being right around the corner, fusion is definitely on the mind. Infuse the fusion to your look by teaming up a traditional Indian choker necklace with a western dress or do the opposite by pulling off an everyday

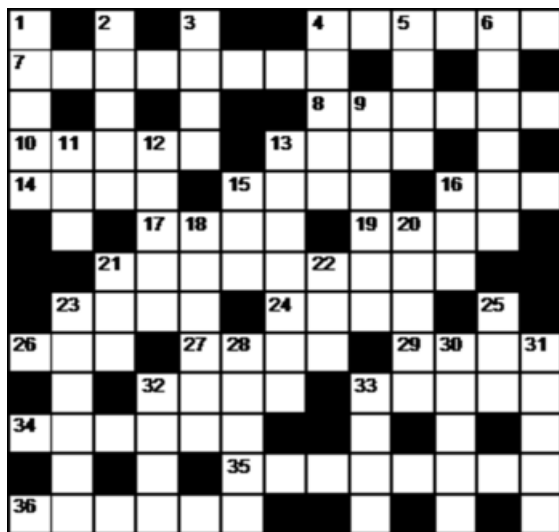
choker neckpiece with a kurta or suit. Compliments would be following in immediately!

Indie Vibes

Fans of junk jewellery know how stunning a silver choker can look. So is the case with choker neckpieces featuring designs having a strong tribal influence. You can keep playing around with them as they make for a perfect pairing with both Indian and western outfits.

Bridal Bliss

We cannot not talk about bridal chokers. They are the most gorgeous piece of jewellery you can pick as a bride/bridesmaid. Classy and sophisticated, Indian traditional chokers in Kundan, Pearl, Jadai or Polki are no less than a dream. Such chokers look the best when styled with a high neckline or a deep cut neck.



SOLUTION TO NOVEMBER 19

CROSSWORD

Across

- 4 Canal and country (6)
- 7 Confidence (8)
- 8 Poisonous snakes (6)
- 10 Old person? (5)
- 13 Film genre (4)
- 14 Accomplished (4)
- 15 Adolescent (4)
- 16 At high temperature (3)
- 17 Meadows (4)
- 19 Body wrapper (4)
- 21 Flat (9)
- 23 Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (4)
- 24 A board game (4)
- 26 Gross Natl. Prod. (3)
- 27 Having a digit afoot (4)
- 29 Droop (4)
- 32 Reproved (4)
- 33 Utter boredom (5)
- 34 Novelist Waugh (6)
- 35 Suicide pilot (8)
- 36 Buries (6)

Down

- 1 Crush together into a

Across

- space (5)
- 2 Arrange in a line (5)
- 3 Agreement (4)
- 4 Black tea (5)
- 5 Handy to (4)
- 6 Act of moving (6)
- 9 Washed lightly (6)
- 11 Charged particle (3)
- 12 Assists (5)
- 13 Became close and snug (7)
- 15 It paves the way (3)
- 16 ___ it off : get on well with ? (3)
- 18 Lusty, crude (6)
- 20 Recognised (5)
- 21 Cleopatra is said to have died from its bite (3)
- 22 Mire (3)
- 23 Rough (6)
- 25 Influenza, in short (3)
- 28 Porcine sounds (5)
- 30 Old Peruvian (5)
- 31 Movements of sea (5)
- 32 You are solving one just now ? (4)
- 33 One of the Great Lakes (4)

SUDOKU



NEWS ROUNDUP

Sunny Leone stuns in Little Black Dress

Actress Sunny Leone makes a killer style statement in a glittery little black number in her latest social media post.

In the Instagram picture, Sunny matches her LBD with a bright blue jacket. She completes the impact leaving her hair open and casually holding her stilettos in one hand as she walks barefoot. She gives a smile away from the camera for impact.

"Headed to work? Headed to buy groceries?? Or just going for a stroll?? Hmmmm...." she teased in the caption.

Sunny was in Los Angeles with her family for six months this year following the onset of the pandemic. At that time, she said she felt they would be safer in America than in India during the pandemic.

She returned to Mumbai recently and has resumed work, though she hasn't yet disclosed anything about the project she is shooting for.



5 MBBS seats to be reserved for children of Covid warriors

NEW DELHI

Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said the move aims to dignify and honour the noble contribution made by COVID-19 warriors who have lost their lives due to the infection or died accidentally on account of COVID-19-related duty. The Union Health Ministry has introduced a new category, 'Wards of COVID Warriors', in the guidelines for selection and nomination of candidates against central pool MBBS seats.

The selection will be made by the Medical Council Committee (MCC) through online application on the basis of rank obtained in the NEET-2020 conducted by National Testing Agency.

Vardhan said, "This will honour the solemn sacrifice of all COVID warriors who served with selfless dedication for the cause of duty and humanity."

Noting that the definition of "COVID warrior" has

been laid down by the government while announcing the insurance package of Rs 50 lakh for them, the minister said, "COVID Warriors are all public healthcare providers including community health workers, who may have to be in direct contact and care of COVID-19 patients and who may be at risk of being impacted by this." "Private hospital staff and retired/volunteer/ local urban bodies/ contracted/ daily wage/ ad-hoc/ outsourced staff requisitioned by states/central hospitals/ autonomous hospitals of central/ states/UTs, AIIMS and Institutes of National Importance (INIs)/ hospitals of central ministries drafted for COVID-19-related responsibilities are all included," he added.

Centre rushes Covid teams to 4 States

The Centre has rushed high-level teams to Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Manipur where they will visit districts reporting high number of COVID-19 cases and



support the state's efforts towards strengthening containment, surveillance, testing and efficient clinical management of positive cases. With the spike in daily new COVID-19 cases and fatalities in Delhi, the spillover effect is being observed in the NCR regions within Haryana and Rajasthan where the number of COVID positive patients is on the rise.

India records 45,576 infections

With 45,576 more coronavirus cases in the last 24 hours on Thursday, India witnessed a jump of over 50 per cent in such cases reported on Tuesday, pushing its cumulative tally to 89,58,483.

As per Health Ministry data, the total death toll rose to 1,31,578 with 585 more fatalities in the last 24 hours, a jump of 24 per cent over the previous day's figure.

On Wednesday, India reported 38,616 new cases and

449 deaths, and on Tuesday 29,154 new cases.

The active cases now total 4,43,303 as 83,83,602 people have recovered from the disease so far.

One reason for the daily spike could be increased testing as 10,28,203 samples were tested on Wednesday after a long weekend when eight lakh samples on an average were tested, data from the Indian Council of Medical Research showed. Forty-five deaths in the past 72 hours, of which 13, highest ever in a single day on Wednesday, has put Himachal Pradesh on high alert. The health authorities fear that the cases will see a further spike in the next few days during the winter. Those who have lost their lives, during the past some days, are mainly persons with comorbidities in the age group of 62 to 85 years.

However, the youngest was a 31-year-old male while a 19-year-old female had died on Tuesday in Shimla



Combo photos show arms and ammunitions along with other items recovered from four militants killed in an encounter at Nagrota Ban toll plaza in Jammu on Thursday

FOUR JAISH TERRORISTS KILLED

A huge cache of arms, ammunition, explosive material recovered including 11 AK rifles, 3 pistols, 29 grenades and 6 UBGL grenades

JAMMU/SRINAGAR

Four suspected Jaish-e-Mohammad terrorists were killed and two policemen were injured in a gunbattle on the Jammu-Srinagar national highway after a truck carrying a group of freshly infiltrated militants was intercepted by security forces on the outskirts of Jammu city on Thursday, top police officials said. The terrorists had come to execute a "big plan" which has now been foiled, Inspector General of Police (IGP), Jammu, Mukesh Singh, said.

In Srinagar, IGP, Kashmir, Vijay Kumar said the four terrorists were on their way to the Kashmir valley to disturb the District Development Council (DDC) polls scheduled later this month, as Pakistan has been trying to cause trouble in the political process.

Giving details of the encounter, IGP Singh

told a press conference in Jammu that during checking a truck was stopped at Ban toll plaza in Nagrota area at 5 am but the driver fled leaving behind the vehicle.

CRPF and police personnel moved to search the vehicle and came under fire of the terrorists hiding in the truck. They retaliated resulting in an encounter. Other forces also joined resulting in a fierce gunbattle in which terrorists fired grenades and arms, he said. In the three-hour-long gunbattle, four terrorists were killed and two policemen were injured, he said, adding the policemen were out of danger.

A huge cache of arms, ammunition and explosive material was recovered including 11 AK rifles, 3 pistols, 29 grenades and 6 UBGL grenades, he said. As per weapon recovery and past instances, it appears that they belong to JeM, he added. Speaking on the sidelines of a

function in Srinagar, IGP Kumar said, "For the last few days, Pakistan has increased attempts to infiltrate militants into this side and to disturb the elections for which the process is on.

In this context, Jammu Police and security forces have done a good job by neutralising four Pakistanis (militants). Their (militants') aim was to come to Kashmir to disturb the election process".

He said there were apprehensions about militants targeting the elections, but the security forces were fully prepared to deal with the situation. "Whether there is an election or August 15 or January 26 or even a VIP visit, apprehensions are always there, but we are fully prepared... We are providing security to the candidates and they have started going to the field for campaigning and there is nothing to fear," he said.

'Registration of construction workers to be done through doorstep delivery'

NEW DELHI

Registration of construction workers for availing benefits under various Delhi government schemes will now be done through the doorstep delivery programme, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said. "It has now been decided that the registration and renewal of construction workers with the construction board will be done through the doorstep delivery programme.

"The service begins today on '1076' helpline. No construction worker will have to stand in long queues at government offices now," Sisodia said at a press conference. He said the workers can now just dial 1076 and say that they're a construction worker in Delhi and want to get registered for Delhi government's schemes.

"A government executive will go to the worker's home and the documents will be uploaded there. It will be approved online and he or she will receive the acknowledgement SMS and a call confirming his registration," he added. Sisodia said the construction workers' welfare cess is collected from construction companies, and this amount is used for the welfare of construction workers.

SC, CJI targeted Twitter grilled over tweets by Kamra

NEW DELHI

A parliamentary committee questioned Twitter on Thursday over the recent "obscene" tweets by stand-up comedian Kunal Kamra targeting the Supreme Court and the chief justice of India (CJI), and sought reply from the social media giant over the matter within seven days, said the panel's chairperson Meenakshi Lekhi.

This came close on the heels of Twitter apologising in writing to the same parliamentary panel for wrongly showing Ladakh in China and promising to correct the error by the month-end. Twitter India representatives deposed before the Joint Committee of Parliament on Data Protection Bill on Thursday. "It is shameful that Twitter is allowing its platform for obscene remarks like the one by stand-up comedian Kunal Kamra against the Supreme Court

and the CJI," Lekhi told reporters here. "Twitter is allowing its platform to be misused for abusing top constitutional authorities, such as Supreme Court and CJI."

She said members of the committee across political spectrum, including Congress MP Vivek Tankha, BSP MP Ritesh Pandey and BJD MP Bhattruhari Mahtab, grilled Twitter representatives on this issue. Lekhi also said that explanation of Twitter about banning handles and tweets was found to be inadequate. Meanwhile, Kamra has refused to retract his controversial tweets against the Supreme Court or apologise for them, saying he believes they "speak for themselves".

Earlier, Attorney General K K Venugopal consented to the initiation of criminal contempt proceedings against him for a series of tweets following the apex court giving interim bail to Republic TV Editor-in-Chief Arnab Goswami.



Delhi policewoman promoted for tracing 76 missing kids in 3 months

NEW DELHI

Delhi Police head constable Seema Dhaka, 33, did not take a single day off for almost three months she worked to trace and reunite 76 missing children with their families. She would go home for two-three hours on most days and even if she got a clue about a child in the middle of the night, Dhaka would leave to follow it up at that hour. Dhaka, who is now an assistant sub-inspector, was awarded for her feat with an out-of-turn promotion under a new initiative that promises quick promotions for constables and head constables for tracing missing children.

Dhaka said some of the children have developed a special bond with her and a few of them wept when she handed them over to their families. "There were these two children whom I traced. While accompanying them to their homes in West Bengal, they developed a special bond with me during the train journey. They were crying when it was time for me to

leave them with their parents," said Dhaka. Being a mother, it was easier for her to bond with the children. "I have an eight-year-old son. I could feel what the children felt on being separated from their parents, what the parents felt on losing their children. That motivated me to work harder," said Dhaka.

She said a child she helped reunite with his family in Bengal after travelling on two separate boats in flood-hit areas in October did not want to go back to his stepfather. "The boy said that his stepfather was abusive. I had to ensure that the mother knew of it and that she would take care of the boy after I was gone. I ensured that the boy and the parents were counselled," said Dhaka. Dhaka said that a lot of the children she helped reunite with their parents had been separated for long. She added some of them had quarrelled with their parents before running away from their homes.

"Every tracing; every reunion posed its own challenges. It was often so difficult to make children help with the details of their parents

and homes. But my senior officers lent all possible support. Police in different states also helped my work." Dhaka even tested positive for Covid-19 and had to be isolated for three weeks in July. She returned to work as soon as she recovered. "The happiness on the faces of the parents of children upon their reunion motivated me." Delhi police spokesperson Eish Singhal said Dhaka traced the 76 missing children to states like Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal.

"Dhaka traced these children since August 7 this year when police commissioner SN Shrivastava announced incentives for those tracing a large number of children," said Singhal. She said 56 of the children Dhaka traced are aged under 14.

The Delhi police have traced 1,440 missing children since August 7 even as 1,222 were reported disappeared during this time. According to the incentives announced, constables and head constables, who trace 50 or more missing children in 12 months, are eligible for the out-of-turn promotions.

Widow of CRPF jawan gets ex-gratia dues after 18 years

NEW DELHI

The widow of a CRPF jawan, who died fighting terrorists during the 2002 Jammu and

Kashmir assembly polls, has received ex-gratia payment from the Election Commission after 18 years following the intervention of the top brass. Anguished by the

delay, Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora wrote a letter to Pramila Devi, personally apologising on behalf of the administrative machinery.

Bihar's 'tainted' Education Minister resigns

PATNA

Bihar education minister Mewa Lal Chaudhary, whose appointment to the post had triggered a

controversy on account of a corruption taint, on Thursday tendered his resignation, barely three days after being sworn in as a member of the Nitish Kumar cabinet. Chaudhary, who was allocated the portfolio on Tuesday, a day after taking oath, sent his resignation immediately after assuming charge at 1 P.M., informed sources said.

Chaudhary, who belongs to the JD(U) headed by the chief minister, had been named an accused in a five-year-old case relating to alleged irregularities in appointment of teachers and technicians at Bihar Agricultural University,

Bhagalpur, where he was the Vice Chancellor. He tendered his resignation after a meeting with Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. A Raj Bha-van communique later said

Chaudhary's resignation has been accepted on the recommendation of the chief minister. Building construction minister Ashok Chaudhary, also of the JD(U), has been given additional charge of the education ministry, it said. Shortly after Chaudhary resigned, RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav attacked the chief minister

for inducting into his cabinet a "corrupt" person. "You deliberately made a corrupt person a minister and, in spite of criticism, got him to assume charge, before enacting this resignation drama. You are the one who is guilty," he said in a series of tweets.



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Stan Swamy deserves better treatment

National Platform for the Rights of the Disabled has recently written to the National Human Rights Commission seeking its intervention to provide 'reasonable accommodation' to Stan Swamy who has been in detention in Nagpur Central Jail. Father Stan Swamy is a well-known Jesuit priest and a tribal rights activist based in Jharkhand. He has worked in the state for over three decades on various issues of the adivasi communities on land, forest and labour rights. But, the State and its law and order agencies never liked him because he has been consistent in questioning the non-implementation of the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution.

Father Swamy is 83 years of age and suffers from Parkinson's disease. The NPRD, in its appeal to the NHRC,

sought compliance of rights of prisoners with disabilities as also "providing them with reasonable accommodations as mandated by international conventions to which India is a signatory. Similar is the case of Professor Saibaba, a person with 90 per cent disability lodged in the Nagpur Central Jail. There are no supportive mechanisms for prisoners with disabilities. Yet another case is that of revolutionary poet Vara Vara Rao.

Parkinson's is a progressive nervous system disorder that also impacts movement. Those living with Parkinson's often have tremors (involuntary, uncontrollable muscle contractions manifesting as shaking in body parts, most often the hands). Given this condition (tremor in both hands etc) he has been using a sipper as also a straw for

intake of water and fluids. He was carrying these essentials (straw and sipper) with him when he was arrested by the NIA. The NIA refused to hand them back and the jail authorities refuse to provide him these inexpensive but essential assistive items.

He has trouble eating because of the tremors. He is unable to take bath, bring water or wash clothes on his own. Father Stan also has serious hearing problem and needs hearing aid for both ears. He was operated twice for hernia in the recent past and hence may not be in a position to go through a strenuous schedule as demanded in the jail. He used to take daily steam inhalations too.

Simply put, the current conditions in which he is languishing are violative of his Right to life, dignity, equality and protection from torture. He inhuman

conditions not just Stan but the others are subjected to everyday in the prison are aplenty. Over the years, the Supreme Court has in several cases clearly held that prisoners also have certain fundamental rights including those stated above, which in these cases are being violated.

Furthermore, India is a signatory to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the UN Resolution 70/175 on Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (also known as the Nelson Mandela Rules), all of which reaffirm the right to life with dignity of prisoners. Father Stan, as we have pointed out earlier, has Parkinson's, a condition recognised as a disability and listed in the Schedule as "Specified Disability" in the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. No one questions the enforcement of laws of the land but one should always remember that the same laws also stipulate some rights to the arrested.



Aggressive tobacco industry expands influence during Covid-19

IAN S

New research citing evidence collected by civil society groups in 57 countries reveals that, during 2019, the tobacco industry stepped up efforts to lobby governments through departments of finance, customs, and trade. This enabled the industry to further expand its influence during the COVID-19 crisis in 2020.

The Global Tobacco Industry Interference Index 2020, released by STOP, a global tobacco industry watchdog, outlines how governments were vulnerable to the industry gaining influence, while some acted to prevent it. Patterns emerged showing how:

- Corporate social responsibility initiatives created access to officials and a false perception of tobacco companies as responsible actors.
- Public officials were offered jobs in the tobacco industry and vice versa, creating potential conflicts of interest.
- Tobacco companies exploited a lack of transparency and coordination across government agencies to gain access.

Based on analysis of the 57 country reports, Ministries of Finance, Trade, Agriculture, Development and other non-health agencies were the most susceptible to influence, according to the Index's lead author, Mary Assunta, a partner in STOP and Head of Global Research and Advocacy at the Global Centre for Good Governance in Tobacco Control (GGTC). By sidestepping health ministries, tobacco companies secured tax breaks and influenced policy decisions that helped them continue to sell products that kill more than 8 million people every year.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the industry sought to secure a continuation and expansion of tax breaks and a relaxation of tobacco control policies, despite the increased need for governments to implement measures that protect health and advance economic recovery.

"The message to governments is: do not take the bait when it comes to industry offers. With tobacco, there are always strings attached and ultimately the cost is paid in human lives," said Mary Assunta. "Governments can hold tobacco companies liable for the harm they cause instead, offering a win-win for the economy and health that is especially important during the coronavirus pandemic."

No government is immune to industry interference

While Big Tobacco aggressively targets low- and middle-income nations with larger populations and weaker regulations, the Index shows rich countries are also susceptible to industry interference. Japan, Indonesia and Zambia rank worst overall because of deep links between the government and industry. This year, Brunei Darussalam, France and Uganda ranked best, with the 2019 report's best-ranked country, the United Kingdom, slipping to fourth place due to links between industry and current government ministers and industry participation in two government consultations during 2019.

The Index details dozens of instances where governments let their guard down and the tobacco industry took advantage:

- Tanzania and Zambia, the two worst performing countries in Africa, have delayed tobacco control legislation for years due to tobacco's meddling.
- Industry lobbying undermined efforts to increase tobacco taxes in Bangladesh, Colombia and Germany.
- In Indonesia, Philip Morris International (PMI)'s local subsidiary, PT HM Sampoerna Tbk, signed an agreement with the government to conduct research on heated tobacco products (HTPs), which the company sells, and in Colombia the government allowed PMI to produce HTPs after the company threatened to withdraw tobacco production operations from the country.
- France, Germany and Japan have given preferential tax treatment to HTPs, taxing them at a lower rate than cigarettes, when there is no evidence these products are any safer than smoking.
- In Pakistan, British American Tobacco (BAT) donated US \$35,450 to the Prime Minister for a dam fund, just one month before the government budget announcement.
- At the request of the governor of a tobacco-growing region, a senator in Mexico attended a BAT event where he spoke in favour of the industry.
- In Nigeria, the tobacco industry sits in the standards organization that determines the standards of tobacco products.

Actions governments can take to identify and prevent tobacco industry interference

- Avoid conflicts of interest.
- Avoid unnecessary interactions with the tobacco industry and ensure transparency of meetings that do occur.
- Adopt measures to protect public officials from industry influence.
- De-normalize the industry's so-called corporate social responsibility activities and implement transparency measures: make the industry disclose its marketing, lobbying and philanthropic activities.
- Prevent tobacco industry participation in policy.
- Stop benefits and incentives for the tobacco industry.

The industry is exploiting Covid-19

The report notes a disturbing trend: the tobacco industry found ways throughout 2019 to aggressively market novel tobacco products, which are addictive and harmful, as a solution to the tobacco epidemic the industry itself created. It has continued this strategy in 2020, using relatively inexpensive donations to promote itself as a partner to governments fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. Such gestures mask the enormous burden tobacco use places on people's health as well as health systems worldwide and provides a platform to curry favour for future policy changes.

India needs a freedom movement against non-performing officers

CHARUDUTTA PANIGRAHI

Freeing the country from non-performing officers (NPO) would free it from the shackles restricting its quantum leap in quality of life and gross domestic product (GDP) indicators.

Growth is directly proportional to the functioning, efficiency and the behaviour of the bureaucracy. That is the reason for the purported elitism of bureaucracy. Inefficient officers take the high hat for granted and are amnesic that they owe their subsistence to the taxpayer.

They are civil servants, selected after stringent screening, but gone awry down the line. Hence, innate capacities are presumed. If the capacities are not utilised for the state, then we assume wrongful intentions. I believe that the development of India, as we see today, is majorly due to the skillful implementation of the schemes and policies by our bureaucracy.

Because, over the years, our civil society and polity have been dimming and distancing from social issues. Bureaucracy is responsible for the successful outreach of our governance, though much more is desired. But a few rotten apples destroy the entire pack. A cabal of NPOs eat into our establishment, leaving behind the bright officers to face distrust and malignment.

Full marks need to be given to the bold steps by the Government of India and pioneering state governments to remind the officers about their joining oaths and the expected 'civility in and of their services'.

The Union as well as the state governments have braved the nexus of NPOs and set off India's most wanted freedom movement of the present times — our liberation from the clutches of inept

officers. This freedom movement will guarantee us at least 40 per cent all-round better performance in human development indices.

Our ambition of a \$5-trillion economy would stagger sluggishly if the NPOs continue unabated. Atmanirbhar Bharat and the National Education Policy are the two path-breaking initiatives, but when it comes to implementation on the ground, it is imperative that the brakes of the NPOs be removed.

Otherwise, we would be going in rounds — 'making files go in circles' is the expertise of NPOs and that is the single-most potent killer of our country's progress.

The frustrations of hard-working Union ministers and the state governments are palpable. They have come out in open to purge the system and started the freedom movement, which should have snowballed with the civil society activism. But it seems our activism is always for 'no-causes'.

I thank the well-meaning governments with temerity and strong political will for having taken up the role of raising civic consciousness and responsible citizenry. Introduction of OS-WAS (Odisha Secretariat Workflow Automation System), for example, in Odisha has resulted in marked improvement in the decision-making system.

For states such as Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Odisha and some banks like the Central Bank of India, have not dithered from taking steps to take strict action against non-performing employees and encouraging the many efficient ones.

NPOs don't relate only to government employees. Bureaucracy is omnipresent. But government bureaucracy is additionally omnipotent. Like late-comers to a meeting make punctual partic-



ipants suffer by making them wait, the POs should not suffer at the hands of the NPOs. Rather POs should drive the NPOs out.

The civil society should provide complete support to the governments aiming to weed out sponges from the bureaucracy. The NPOs are more corrupt than anyone else because they enjoy with impunity at the cost of the daily strugglers and common citizens of this country.

They are the vortex of inequity in our society, which negates all our hard work as a country. The GDP suffers because of the anti-development stand of the NPOs.

They need to be treated as anti-national elements, because they are majorly responsible for the degradation of our productivity and the futility of our repeated attempts to rise. They damage our social fabric as well.

The NPOs should be penalised and made to retire compulsorily. This has been mooted by the Union government and state governments such as Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, MP and Rajasthan. And it is a welcome move.

No matter how senior or significant an officer is — s / he

should be afraid of losing the job if there is no performance. They should make way for many brilliant young Indians waiting for a chance.

All of us realise the bonding of the NPO caucus and their clandestine war against such moves to clean up the bureaucracy. They would try their best to derail the movement, the same way vassals from our communities killed us much more times than the colonial rulers.

Our government needs our help in extricating the NPO scourge from the nation.

I hope that the civil society supports the governments in this endeavour through judicious reporting of inefficiencies, gathering evidence against wrongdoings and legitimate reporting at the right places. It should adhere to the rule of law in this gargantuan task of Swach Bharat in a different avatar.

A national uprising is necessary to deal with the NPO mafia. But the responsibility lies with us.

A McKinsey report spelt out: "India is at a decisive point in its journey toward prosperity. The economic crisis sparked by

ther affect business nor tax-collection because traders and people will have complete five days for trade and shopping.

Subhash Chandra Agrawal, Delhi

UK PM, a he-man

The UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson has just got the ball rolling to establish a fierce fight with the climate change crisis. Johnson has announced a string of action plans just well ahead of the upcoming 2021 UN Climate Change Conference to be held under the supervision of the UK government.

Strict plans to ban petrol vehicles, serious measures to cut the greenhouse gas emissions, innovative ideas to make homes greener and energy-efficient and bold steps to switch to traditional yet beautiful ways of travelling like walking, cycling have all been on the list prepared to fight the climate crisis.

Johnson has been the real he-man out there as many British English newspapers have been showing him as planting trees across the country - he was even captured posing in front of a tree he had planted during his London Mayor tenure.

P Senthil Saravana Durai, Mumbai

Wanted, strategic partnership with US

Propos, news item, "Modi, Biden discuss Covid, climate change", (The Hans India, November 19). It's reassuring that prime minister (PM) Narendra Modi tweet about his phone conversation with US president-elect Mr Joe Biden immediately layout three areas with greatest

potential for bilateral cooperation. The first is the Covid-19 pandemic. Much of this already exists at the commercial and scientific level but can be infused with governmental support. The second, and one with considerable long-term potential is climate. PM Modi is committed to move India to a green energy trajectory but needs International support in terms of finance and technology.

Mr Biden has to not only reverse Mr Trump's damage to the climate efforts but also move the US to the vanguard of the battle against carbon. On the multi-lateral track, there is a smorgasbord of climate policies that the two can work on, including looking beyond the Paris Accord and strengthening Indian initiatives such as the international Solar Alliance.

Finally, India and the US need to share the notes on their versions of the Indo-Pacific - shorthand for how to handle an openly aggressive China. It's in this policy area where Mr Biden's views are hazy. He and his advisers accept China is a strategic competitor. The devil, however, is in the tactical details and Mr Biden's seeming preference for non-military responses to China is questionable.

The flip side is that the areas of differences are almost certain to arise. Mr Biden's trade policy differs from Mr Trump's only in terms of tone rather than substance. Delhi is braced for lecturers on inclusivity and Kashmir from the other side. The best way to keep these problem areas on the margins of the relationship is for both governments to work hard to ensure the areas of cooperation generate tangible results. Strategic partnerships work best if they generate a return on investment in the policy space.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, Bengaluru

LETTERS

Welcome Bizz Buzz!

Compliments to The Hyderabad Media House (HMH) group for launching first evening financial e-paper and that too in tabloid form which is something unique. After having established yourself in mainstream print media and boldly entering even India's capital, as a regional entity from south India your group has made a mark in the highly competitive media world. I wish Bizz Buzz all the best.

N Nagarajan, Hyderabad

Neutrality of SEC under cloud

It appears, in the background of circumstances, which dramatically led to unilateral but unwise step to stop abruptly the local body election process in midway in AP, on the pretext of wild allegations of rigging and Covid 19, there is deep mistrust and doubt in the minds of people, contesting candidates including the successful candidates, who won unanimously - on the splendid neutrality of the SEC, which is the highest election management body in the state. This is precisely the elephant in the room, and a perniciously dangerous and undesirable development that is deeply disturbing the six crore Telugu people in the state today. The honourable commission therefore may have to burn the midnight oil and do its homework first, in consultation with the Government of the day and all electoral stake holders and create confidence in the voters, before proceeding further, in these perilous pandemic time.

P H Hema Sagar, Secunderabad

thehansreader@gmail.com

AP CM praises police dept for impartiality

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

CHIEF Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy said the state police could send a strong message that everyone is equal before law and did not spare even the department personnel in booking cases.

It takes lot of courage and the department is high on esteem, credibility and reputation, he said adding that he is very proud of the police who have shown such calibre and it takes a lot to live up to it.

Addressing district SPs through video conference on Wednesday, the Chief Minister said Andhra Pradesh police stood as a role model in the country by sending a clear message that everyone is equal before the law by pressing charges against police who committed mistakes. The Chief Minister said public will lose respect and belief in police and the credibility of police will go down if they don't act on crimes committed

► Addressing district SPs through a videoconference, Jagan says the department has sent a strong message that it will not spare even police personnel who commit crimes

► States that people will lose faith in the police force if it doesn't act over crimes committed by their colleagues

The Chief Minister said Andhra Pradesh police have suspended, arrested and booked cases on accused police personnel who have committed crimes and it is something which increases reputation of the department. Such a thing has never happened before. The message that everyone is equal before the law and police won't tolerate crimes committed by police personnel and will serve justice to the common people, should be sent to everyone, he said.

Promote 'Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao' extensively, media told

KADAPA

SPEAKERS at a district-level workshop organised by the women development and child welfare department and the information and public relations department here on Thursday stressed the need for media to play a key role in the progress of women by proving extensive coverage to the Beti Bachao- Beti Padhao (BBPP) scheme in the district. They also called for highlighting the various welfare schemes being implemented by the state government to promote living standards of women and ensure their social and economic empowerment.

Joint collector Saikanth Varma (Development) who inaugurated the workshop lauded the media for playing an important role in restricting the spread of coronavirus through several articles and stories. He urged that with the same spirit they should work towards ensuring the progress of women in different fields.

'Sunrise AP' turned 'Suicide AP' under Jagan, alleges Anuradha

■ The TDP leader demands white paper on murders and suicides in the state since the YSRCP has come to power

■ Says that AP is being destroyed in all sectors and people are facing untold misery due to retrogressive policies of Jagan govt

AMARAVATI

TDP general secretary Panchumarthi Anuradha on Thursday accused the YSRCP government of achieving nothing for Andhra Pradesh except bringing in a new era of demolitions and destruction besides insurmountable financial crisis and debts.

Anuradha demanded the ruling party to publish a white paper on the non-stop murders, suicides and suicide attempts that were continue among the Muslim minorities, Dalits, BCs, farmers,



Panchumarthi Anuradha

construction workers and all sections of society. The people, who gave a landslide victory, were now stuck in deepening life and death problems under the oppressive rule of the YSRCP, she said.

Addressing a press conference here at Mangalagiri, Anuradha said that N Chandrababu Naidu strove hard and moulded Andhra Pradesh into a 'Sunrise AP' during his five-year rule. But now, Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy followed all sorts of retrogressive and reverse policies only to reduce the 'Sunrise AP' into a 'Suicide AP'. The State was being destroyed in all sectors. The people were facing untold misery

and suffering like never before.

The TDP leader deplored that economy, development and construction sectors completely collapsed while caste-based attacks continued against Dalits, BCs and minorities. The Asha, Anganwadi and NREGS workers were facing untold problems. A young man named Venkatesh committed suicide due to lack of work opportunities on account of collapse of construction sector. All this happened because of sand shortage which was created by the YSRCP government, she alleged.

Anuradha said that in just one-and-a-half years, the ruling YSRCP made over Rs 1 lakh crore debts. In doing so, the CM created a record of his own. His government's atrocities led to suicides by over 750 farmers. He was not at all bothered and not changing his decisions though over 90 Amaravati farmers died ever since the agitation started against the 3 capitals plan, she added.

HC raps Delhi govt on Covid situation

Continued from P1

It said that Delhi government ought to reduce its reliance on the Rapid Antigen Testing (RAT) and focus on increasing tests by the more accurate RTPCR method as more and more asymptomatic persons are testing positive and the number of Covid-19 cases are spiralling in the city.

"Delhi government should have been alive to the fact that RAT is not effective," it said. RT/PCR, short for Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction, is a laboratory technique widely used in the diagnosis of genetic diseases and to measure gene expression in research. The bench directed the Delhi government to file a status report, before the next date of hearing on November 26, indicating the funeral/burial arrangements, increase of ICU beds in its hospitals by an additional number of 663 and number of care homes for accommodating those who cannot home quarantine themselves. On implementation of social distancing norms, prevention of spitting and wearing of masks, the court was not satisfied with the monitoring being done by the

Delhi government in some districts where Covid-19 numbers were high. The bench also said the fines being imposed -- Rs 500 for first violation and Rs 1,000 for every subsequent violation -- did not appear to be a deterrent. It said there appeared to be substantial disparity in monitoring and imposition of fines in certain districts as compared to others.

"What kind of monitoring and marshalling are you doing? Look at the situation seriously with a magnifying glass. You have crossed cities like New York and Sao Paulo," the court said. The high court was hearing a PIL by advocate Rakesh Malhotra seeking increase in the Covid-19 testing numbers in the national capital and getting speedy results.

The court on November 11 had pulled up the Delhi government for relaxing norms for public movement and gatherings even as Covid-19 cases were increasing with no household "left untouched", and sought to know if it had any policy or strategy in place to deal with the "alarming" situation. It had directed the Delhi government to file a status report ex-

plaining steps taken by it in the last two weeks, when the Covid-19 cases have risen alarmingly, to contain the spread of the infection.

In its latest status report filed on Wednesday, the Delhi government has said that it was not allowing all the activities, like re-opening of schools, higher educational institutions and swimming pools, that have been permitted by the Central government. It also told the court that it banned bursting of firecrackers during Diwali with the view to prevent increase in air pollution and crowding of people and also prohibited celebration of Chhath Puja in public places, open grounds, riverbanks and temples. The Delhi government also told the court that it has approached the Centre seeking its sanction for closing certain markets in the city during certain days or hours of a week.

It told the court that it was alive to the situation and was making every effort to arrest the spread of Covid-19. However, the bench said that whatever the Delhi government was doing was not enough in the prevailing situation.

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

CHIEF Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy will launch first phase of distribution of dairy cattle to the beneficiaries of YSR Cheyutha and Aasara schemes on November 26.

In the first phase, the virtual distribution of milch cattle will take place in 4,000 villages covering Prakasam, Chittoor and Kadapa districts.

During a review meeting here on Thursday, the Chief Minister said that care should be taken in selection of breed of the animals to be purchased to ensure good returns.

He said the Purchase Committee should include people with technical expertise, insurance company representatives and bankers. Veterinary services should also be strengthened by filling up vacant posts in animal husbandry department.

The Chief Minister told the officials that dairy cattle should be treated within Rythu Bharosa Kendra (RBK) level for any veterinary issues. He said that the video-conferencing facilities being set up under RBKs should be utilised to provide treatment to cattle and focus should be laid on setting up of call centres to provide veterinary services to animals.

He said animal feed should be free of chemicals and should be prepared with natural ingredients. Diseases like cancer are on the rise due to food contaminated with chemicals; he said and added that focus should be on organic food.

The Chief Minister directed the officials to give priority to organic milk and meat and to promote organic milk brand by creating awareness among women on or-

► The cows and buffaloes will be given to women beneficiaries in 4,000 villages in Prakasam, Chittoor and Kadapa district under the first phase

► CM tells officials to see that animals that give good returns are purchased

► Wants technical expertise, insurance company representatives and bankers in Purchase Committees

ganic methods in order to get more returns.

The officials said 4.68 lakh women have opted for cows and buffaloes and 2.49 lakh women opted for sheep and goats so far and the unit cost is Rs 75,000 and the project cost is Rs 5,386 crore. The government has planned to distribute 2,11,780 cows, 2,57,211 buffaloes, 1,51,671 sheep and 97,480 goats across the state.

Animal husbandry department officials will conduct physical verification of every animal being given to the beneficiary and register the list of beneficiaries under RBKs. The health card of cattle will carry veterinary details and output measure.

In regard to retail stores started by the women beneficiaries of Cheyutha and Aasara schemes, the officials said 78,000 shops have been opened in urban and rural areas till date.

The Chief Minister directed the officials to take options from 2.78 lakh new beneficiaries identified in second phase of YSR Cheyutha scheme.

Panchayat raj minister Peddireddi Ramachandra Reddy, fisheries and animal husbandry minister Sidiri Appalaraju and other officials attended the meeting.



Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy holding a review on YSR Cheyutha and Aasara schemes at his camp office in Tadepalli on Thursday

Housing: Beneficiaries to choose

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

CHIEF Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy reviewed the allotment of houses to beneficiaries under AP-TIDCO (Andhra Pradesh Township and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited), the state level nodal agency for the Union government's affordable housing scheme-Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) on Thursday.

The government will start a week-long campaign from December 23 asking the beneficiaries of TIDCO houses to choose from YS Jagan's housing scheme, or the TDP leader Chandrababu's housing scheme.

The village volunteers will clearly explain both the schemes and take the opinion of the beneficiary. On December 25, the government shall

► CM reviews allotment of TIDCO houses

► Beneficiaries will be given option to pick TDP govt houses or Jagan govt hosues

allot the 300 sq ft houses to the beneficiaries through the agreement of sale by paying just one rupee, for those who chose Jagan's scheme.

In Naidu's housing scheme, the beneficiary has to pay Rs 3 lakh loan amount in EMI of Rs 3,000 for 20 years totalling to Rs 7 lakh and the beneficiary will be handed over the house rights after the completion of the payment.

The government had decided to spend Rs 2,500 crore towards the infrastructure of TIDCO houses and is ready to call for tenders and com-

plete the process by December 15. In order to complete the project in the next three years, the state government will be spending a total of Rs 9,550 crore.

In regard to TIDCO housing, the previous government had left a debt of Rs 3,200 crore for constructing 2,62,216 houses, of which 1,43,600 houses with 300 sq ft, 44,300 houses with 365 sq ft, and 74,300 houses with 430 sq ft are under construction.

So far, the state government cleared Rs 1,200 crore debt and soon the rest will be cleared in two phases.

Besides these, the TDP government had also left a debt of Rs 1,432 crore for rural housing, of which Rs 470 crore will be cleared this week, and the rest shall be cleared on December 25.

TUNGABHADRA PUSHKARAMS

Holy baths, pujas through e-tickets only

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

MINISTER for endowments Velampalli Srinivas announced here on Thursday that the devotees could book their slots through e-ticket free of cost to take bath in the River Tungabhadra during the Pushkarams which would be inaugurated by Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy on Friday at 1.21 pm.

The devotees through e-ticket booking would be informed the name of the ghat where they could take bath and worship and perform other rituals.

Addressing the media here, the minister said that all arrangements were in place for the successful conduct of Pushkarams for the River Tungabhadra from



Endowments Minister V Srinivas addressing the media in Vijayawada on Thursday

November 20 to December 1 with the cooperation and coordination of various departments.

Ministers who hail from Kurnool, Buggana Rajendranath Reddy, G Jayaram and Kurnool

■ Endowments Minister Srinivas says the e-tickets will be free

■ Name of the ghat where the devotee should take a bath will be on the e-ticket

■ CM to inaugurate the 12-day religious event today

in-charge minister P Anil Kumar have been continuously conducting review meetings for the fool-proof arrangements.

All the roads in the district right from the village level to the city of Kurnool were developed and ghats were spruced up for the convenience of the devotees.

As per the guidelines issued by

the Centre, shower baths were arranged at the ghats, the minister said and appealed to the devotees, religious organisations to cooperate with the officials in the smooth conduct of the Pushkarams.

The minister said that in all 23 ghats were set up with seven in Kurnool, eight in Mantralayam, five in Kodumuru, two in Yemiganuru and one at Nandikotkur. The services of 350 Purohits were pressed into service for the convenience of the devotees.

The minister said that the government had taken all the precautions for the safety of the devotees during Pushkarams. The devotees would be allowed near the ghats from 6 am to 6 pm keeping in view the Covid-19 guidelines.

Design tech locally, deploy globally: PM

Continued from P1

Pointing out that technology is setting the pace for the defence sector to evolve, Modi said, earlier wars were determined by who had better horses and elephants, then came the era of firepower, now technology is playing a very important role in global conflicts. From software to drones to UAVs, technology is re-defining the defence sector. Also highlighting that with the rapid increase of tech use, data protection as well as cyber security has become very important, he said, our youth can play a big role in devising robust cyber security solutions, which can effectively "vaccinate" digital products against cyberattacks and viruses.

"Today our Fintech industry is also doing very well, millions of people are doing transactions without any hesitation," he said, adding that this is because of people's trust, which is very important to be preserved and made

stronger. A sound data governance framework is also our priority, Modi said. The Prime Minister also said that the scope and need for innovation is relevant in the fields of science as well. "Be it bio-sciences or engineering, innovation is the key to progress. India has a clear advantage when it comes to innovation because of the talent of our youth and their zeal to innovate," he said.

Pointing out that Digital India has become a way of life, particularly for the poor, marginalised and for those in government, Modi said, thanks to Digital India, our nation has witnessed a more human-centric approach to development. "Our government has successfully created a market for digital and tech solutions, but it has made technology a key part of all schemes. Our governance model is technology-first. Through technology, we have enhanced human dignity. Millions of farmers receive mon-

etary support in one click. At the peak of the Covid-19 lockdown, it was technology that ensured that India's poor received proper and quick assistance," he said. Modi also lauded the resilience of the country's tech sector during global lockdowns, travel restrictions, and said it used tech solutions to keep work going on, from home and from anywhere. The tech industry recognised a great innovation opportunity in bringing people together. "The Covid-19 pandemic was a bend in the path not the end...The amount of tech adoption that would not have happened in a decade, happened in just a few months," he said.

The summit will have the participation of more than 200 Indian companies setting up their virtual exhibition, more than 4,000 delegates, 270 speakers, around 75 panel discussions and more than 50,000 participants every day, officials said.

Corona warriors, elderly will get vaccine on priority

Continued from P1

"You can protect yourself from this deadly virus with small precautions like wearing a good quality mask properly, maintaining social distance and taking care of hand-hygiene," he noted.

The phase-3 trial of the Oxford vaccine of the Serum Institute is almost near completion, while the phase-3 clinical trial of the indigenously-developed

vaccine candidate of the Bharat Biotech and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has already started. Dr Reddy's Laboratories will also soon start the combined phase 2 and 3 clinical trials of the Russian Covid-19 vaccine, Sputnik V, in India. Also, the Biological E Limited has started early phase 1 and 2 human trials of its Covid-19 vaccine candidate. Pfizer Inc. and BioNTech SE

have said their vaccine candidate was found to be more than 95 per cent effective in preventing COVID-19.

Moderna had on Monday said the independent National Institutes of Health-appointed Data Safety Monitoring Board (DSMB) for the Phase 3 study of mRNA-1273, its vaccine candidate against Covid-19, found it to have an efficacy of 94.5 per cent.

FOREX (buy rates in ₹)			
US Dollar	78.73	South	
Euro	92.2	African Rand	5.49
UAE Dirham	22.24	Hong Kong Dollar	11.02
Thai Baht	2.81	Japanese Yen	0.82
British Pound	102.04	New Zealand Dollar	53.66
Australian Dollar	56.62	Saudi Riyal	21.77
Canadian Dollar	59.45	Swedish Krona	9.87
Swiss Franc	84.55	Singapore Dollar	57.9

DELHI FRIDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2020

BIZ BRIEFS

Metlindex clocks ₹1,336 cr turnover

LEADING commodity bourse MCX on Thursday said its metal index futures, Metlindex has completed its first expiry cycle with a turnover of Rs 1,336 crore. The Metlindex futures, launched in October this year, tracks the price movements of five base metals traded on the exchange. "The METLINDEX futures has witnessed good participation from all stakeholders ever since its launch last month. We thank all participants for their overwhelming support," MCX Managing Director and CEO P S Reddy said in a statement

Ather Energy offers buy option

ATHER Energy has opened the full purchase option for the Ather 450 Plus and Ather 450X across multiple cities and the scooters will be delivered within two weeks of payment. Ather 450X charges at a rate of 15km in 10 minutes at Ather Grid, making it the fastest charging rate in the electric two-wheeler category. Ather 450X has a 4G SIM card along with Bluetooth connectivity, allowing riders to manage phone calls and music on the touchscreen dashboard. They introduced the first-of-its-kind assured buyback programme, with a guaranteed buy back for Ather 450X at Rs 85,000 at the end of 3 years and at Rs 70,000 for Ather 450 Plus. Deliveries of the Ather 450X began in Bengaluru and Chennai on Deepavali and will begin in other cities like Pune, Ahmedabad and Mumbai soon.

Foodys service at Hyd airport

Foodys launched first food delivery initiative at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, Hyderabad. They have the menu from the most reputed of restaurants under one roof at the Hyderabad airport, which is live on MakeMyTrip and Goibibo Apps. Foodys has set up two physical stores - one at departures and one at arrivals at the Hyderabad airport. These stores serve as delivery points to all customers who book their food online either through MakeMyTrip or the Foodys App. Naem Khan, Founder and CEO of Foodys said, "The response has been phenomenal. Both Foodys kiosks at Hyderabad airport are doing amazingly well. It is heartening to see the interest in consumers towards this concept. I strongly believe that local food and flavours are emotions and I am content to have found a way to keep that emotion intact."

LPG pipeline works begin

BM Santosh, Managing Director, Hyderabad Growth Corridor Ltd, inaugurated the LPG pipeline works initiated by Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd. at Harshaguda near ORR, on Thursday. Mangalore-Hasan-Mysore LPG pipeline to meet the LPG demand mainly in the Southern and Western States. Currently, HPCL is extending this Pipeline from Hassan (in Karnataka) to Cheralipalli (in Telangana) through Ananthapur (in Andhra Pradesh) with a length of 653 kms to meet the LPG demands in these three States. B Ravinder, CGM-HGCL, Imtiyaz Arshad, GM, HPCL, Special Deputy Collector & Competent Authority, HCPL P/L project, B Venkateshwarlu and other HPCL Managers were present on the occasion. BM Santosh appreciated HPCL's foresight in laying this pipeline, which is expected to meet the ever-increasing LPG demand of Telangana for the next several years in a seamless and safe manner.

Moody's improves GDP growth forecast

Revises India GDP Growth upward to (-) 10.6% for FY21 from (-) 11.5%

NEW DELHI

MOODY'S Investors Service on Thursday upped India's growth forecast to (-) 10.6 per cent for the current fiscal, from its earlier estimate of (-) 11.5 per cent saying the latest stimulus prioritises manufacturing and job creation, and shifts focus to longer-term growth.

Last week, the government announced a new fiscal package amounting to around Rs 2.7 lakh crore, which included production-linked incentive scheme for manufacturing units and enhanced credit guarantee programme for small businesses. Moody's said the latest measures aim to increase the competitiveness of India's manufacturing sector and create jobs, while supporting infrastructure investment and is 'credit positive' as it presents potential upside to growth forecasts.

"We have revised our real, inflation-adjusted GDP forecast for fiscal 2020 (April 2020-March 2021) to a 10.6 per cent contraction, from a 11.5 per cent drop previously," Moody's said. In September, the global agency had projected Indian economy to contract 11.5 per cent this fiscal. For fiscal 2021-22, India's growth is projected at 10.8 per cent, as against the previous estimate of 10.6 per cent, Moody's said adding that in the medium term the growth is likely to settle around 6 per cent.

"The country's mixed track record on revenue-raising measures lowers prospects for fiscal policy-driven budget consolidation. A sustained increase in

CREDIT POSITIVE

In Sept, global agency projected Indian economy to contract 11.5% for FY-21

For FY-22, India's growth is projected at 10.8% as against previous estimate of 10.6%

Medium term the growth may settle around 6%

New stimulus measures to

boost output, jobs

₹2.7-lakh cr new fiscal package including production-linked incentive scheme will help manufacturing units

Enhanced credit guarantee programme for small businesses

Supporting investment in infrastructure



GDP growth would therefore likely be a major driver of any durable future fiscal consolidation," it said.

Moody's forecasts government debt to increase to 89.3 per cent of GDP in fiscal 2020 and decline to 87.5 per cent in fiscal 2021, from 72.2 per cent in fiscal 2019. According to Moody's fiscal deficit would reach around 12 per cent of GDP, with some upside risk, in fiscal 2020 and narrowing to about 7 per cent of GDP over the medium term, still above the

deficit of 6.5 per cent of GDP in 2019.

Moody's, however, said that consumer confidence in India remains relatively low amid a continued elevated number of daily new coronavirus cases, although this has come down from a peak in September. "Stronger nominal GDP growth over the medium term would make it easier for India's government to address its weak fiscal position, which the coronavirus has exacerbated," Moody's said.

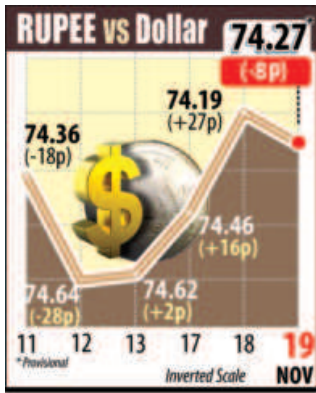
Rupee logs 1st loss in 4 sessions

MUMBAI

THE Indian rupee saw its first decline in four sessions on Thursday, depreciating by 8 paise to settle at 74.27 against the US dollar tracking weakness in Asian currencies and a lacklustre trend in domestic equities.

At the interbank forex market, the domestic unit opened at 74.28 against the US dollar and touched an intra-day high of 74.22 and a low of 74.33. It finally closed at 74.27 against the greenback, registering a fall of 8 paise over its previous close.

In the previous three sessions, the rupee had gained 45 paise over the US dollar. Forex traders said the rupee is trading in a narrow range as rising Covid-19 cases in the US and Europe offset positive sentiments surrounding the progress on the vaccine front. American pharmaceutical giant Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech said they have concluded phase 3 study of their mRNA-based Covid-19 vaccine candidate BNT162b2, meeting all primary efficacy endpoints. Meanwhile,



the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, rose 0.33 per cent to 92.62. "The Indian rupee depreciated against the dollar giving up some of the gains from yesterday's session, tracking a broad decline in Asian currencies amid lacklustre risk appetite and strength of the US Dollar Index," said Sriram Iyer of Reliance Securities. Iyer further said that "the US Dollar Index rose as investors shifted to the safe haven appeal of the greenback.

Oaktree, Varde offer \$2 bn funding to Vodafone Idea

Funding is critical as Vodafone hit by losses

A consortium backed by Oaktree Capital has offered to provide at least \$2 billion of funding to Vodafone Group Plc's listed Indian arm, people with knowledge of the matter said. Oaktree teamed up with several other firms including Varde Partners for the potential deal with Vodafone Idea Ltd., according to the people. The investor group made a proposal to provide around \$2 billion to \$2.5 billion of capital to Vodafone Idea, the people said, asking not to be identified because the information is private. Vodafone Idea said in September it plans to raise as much as 250 billion rupees (\$3.4 billion) selling shares and debt to shore up its finances as competition heats up in the Indian wireless industry. It wasn't immediately clear how a potential deal with the Oaktree-backed consortium would be structured.

The Indian carrier has also been speaking to other potential in-



vestors, and there's no certainty the negotiations will lead to an agreement, the people said. Representatives for Oaktree, Varde and Vodafone Idea declined to comment. Shares of Vodafone Idea rose as much as 4.4% Thursday in Mumbai. The stock has fallen more than 25% since Sept. 3 when it said its ability to continue as a business relied on successful negotiations with lenders and sufficient cash flow to settle or refinance liabilities coming due.

Debt Management

A fund infusion is critical for the telecom carrier formed by the merger of Vodafone Group's local unit with billionaire and chairman Kumar Mangalam Birla's Idea Cel-

lular Ltd. Vodafone Idea reported its ninth straight quarterly loss in the three months through September and has not reported an annual profit since the merger was announced in 2017. The 2016 debut of billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd. with its free calls and cheap data kick-started a massive consolidation that reduced the number of private wireless companies to three from about a dozen.

Vodafone Idea is the weakest financially among the remaining Indian wireless carriers, with \$15.48 billion of net debt. It was impacted by an India court order last year to pay billions of dollars in back fees to the government, and Birla warned in December 2019 that the company was headed for insolvency in the absence of relief on the dues. However, in September, India's top court allowed telecom carriers to stagger back fees payment over 10 years.



THE Sensex and Nifty retreated from record highs on Thursday following heavy profit-booking in financial stocks amid a weak trend in global markets due to rising Covid-19 cases in multiple countries.

A depreciating rupee and concerns over frothy valuations further dented risk appetite, traders said. After briefly touching its record intra-day high of 44,230 in a

volatile session, the 30-share BSE Sensex ended 580.09 points or 1.31 per cent lower at 43,599.96. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty hit a fresh

Karnataka sees \$300-bn digital economy in 5 yrs

BENGALURU

THE Karnataka government said on Thursday that it is aiming to mould the state into a \$300 billion digital economy in the next five years. It is also targeting to garner 50 per cent market share of India's bio-economy (biotechnology-economy) by 2025. "One of the key goals of the State is to achieve 50 per cent market share of the national bio-economy target of 100 billion US dollars by the year 2025 and necessary steps have already been taken," Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa said at Bengaluru Tech Summit.

Deputy Chief Minister and the Minister for IT, BT and S&T, C N Ashwath Narayan said, "we will mould Karnataka from the present \$52-billion digital economy into a 300 billion dollar digital economy in the next five years."



Isha Mukesh Ambani

"With our focus on new commerce, we are committed to playing a transformational role in the Indian retail sector by empowering millions of merchants and micro, small and medium enterprises," she said. Isha is the daughter of the richest Indian, Mukesh Ambani. Silver Lake Partners bought two per cent stake in two tranches for Rs 9,375 crore, while KKR invested Rs 5,550 crore for 1.19 per cent interest.

Markets snap record run

MUMBAI

intra-day peak of 12,963, before ending 166.55 points or 1.29 per cent down at 12,771.70. Both the key indices had ended at fresh lifetime highs in each of the previous three sessions.

The Sensex and Nifty have closed in the red only twice this month so far. SBI was the top laggard in the Sensex pack on Thursday, tumbling 4.88 per cent, followed by Axis Bank, ICICI Bank, UltraTech Cement, Bajaj Finance, HDFC Bank and Bharti Airtel.

UAE escalates OPEC dispute over output

ANTHONY DI PAOLA & JAVIER BLAS

THE United Arab Emirates ratcheted up tension with oil allies in OPEC+, with officials privately questioning the benefits of being in the producers' alliance and even considering whether to leave it. The UAE has not said publicly it's debating its membership, let alone planning to exit. And officials briefed the media under condition they would not be named, allowing room for maneuver if they later want to distance themselves from the comments. The move is unusual because the UAE the biggest producer in OPEC after Saudi Arabia and Iraq has long avoided public clashes, preferring to solve disputes quietly behind closed doors. It's unclear whether the warning is designed to force a negotiation over output levels with OPEC+'s leaders Saudi Arabia and Russia, or if it represents a genuine policy debate. Any decision to leave OPEC would need the approval of Mohammed bin Zayed, the UAE's de facto ruler and Abu Dhabi's crown prince.

Data centre industry in India gets \$396-mn investment

MUMBAI

THE Indian data centre industry has attracted investments totalling around \$396 million during January-September 2020, a report by Anarock and Mace said on Thursday.

"The Indian data centre industry has attracted close to \$977 million in PE and strategic investments since 2008, of which nearly 40 per cent or approximately \$396 million were infused between Jan-Sept 2020 period alone," said the report titled 'Navigating the India Data Centre Lifecycle - Trends & Perspectives'.

It said that India will see at least 28 large 'hyperscale' data centres constructed over the next three years. These will span over

28 LARGE 'HYPERSCALE' DATA CENTRES WILL COME UP IN NEXT 3 YRS: REPORT



16 million square feet space with at least over 1,400 MW of IT power capacity, equalling nearly 0.6 million square feet and 50 MW per facility on an average per

hyperscale data centre.

Anuj Puri, Chairman, Anarock Group, said: "While India has been seeing a massive digital thrust since 2014, the current

India will see at least 28 large 'hyperscale' data centres constructed over the next three years. These will span over 16 million square feet space with at least over 1,400 MW of IT power capacity, equalling nearly 0.6 million square feet and 50 MW per facility on an average per hyperscale data centre

government's data localisation policy has paved the way for hyperscale data centres to handle

the increasing data consumption."

He noted that 'hyperscale' facilities have clear advantages over smaller colocation centres as they can cater to the huge domestic data warehousing demand for operating efficiencies and thus pass on cost benefits to their customers.

"Smaller colocation facilities will need to reassess their competitive position and may need to repurpose to ensure survival," Puri said.

Indians' data consumption increased from 0.3 GB per user per month in 2014 to 10 GB per user per month in 2018. The per capita consumption is likely hit 25 GB per month by 2025 and the total data traffic in the country is likely to touch 21 EB (exabytes) per month, as per the report.

The report finds that India currently has 126 third-party data centres (colocation or hyperscale) spanning across more than 7.5 million square feet, and a cumulative IT power capacity of over 590 MW.

While 53 players own or operate these 126 third-party data centres, the capacity is highly concentrated among the top 12 players who operate 95 per cent of the total IT power capacity in the country.

Further, upcoming supply is expected to be concentrated in Mumbai and Chennai, followed by NCR and Hyderabad with a fair share of interest. Mumbai and Chennai together will witness 60 per cent of the total future capacity, with NCR and Hyderabad contributing another 33 per cent, it said.

BJP dubs KCR anti-national, traitor

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

TELANGANA BJP leadership on Thursday mounted a no-hold-bar attack calling Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao as anti-national and a traitor of the country. Addressing the media here, State BJP chief Bandi Sanjay Kumar reacted to the reported remarks made by KCR, that the BJP-led Centre had only unleashed propa-

ganda. He alleged that KCR was toeing the line of the AIMIM and trying to stoke communal passions among people. Condemning the remarks of the Chief Minister, the Karimnagar MP asked as to "Whom was he wooing for votes by belittling the country?"

Sanjay Kumar said that KCR has questioned whether the Centre wanted to send 30 crore Muslims out of the country. But, he does not seem to bother about the atrocities being committed against Hindus in Bangladesh and Pakistan. He stated that the saffron party was all set to pack off KCR and TRS from Telangana.

Condemning the remarks of Chief Minister against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he warned KCR to restrain himself from making such remarks. The BJP State chief said that earlier the CM had asked the TS DGP

- ▶ State BJP chief wants intelligence agencies to keep Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao under strict surveillance
- ▶ Questions TRS chief's "pro-China and anti-India stance"

State BJP chief Bandi Sanjay Kumar addressing a press meet in Hyderabad on Thursday. Senior BJP leader D K Aruna is also seen



to put a person for making in-temperate remarks against the PM. "Now, we demand the State DGP to put him (KCR) behind the bars for the same," he added.

He alleged that the CM KCR had stalled the disbursement of financial assistance to the flood victims as per a pre-designed plan by creating a forged and fake letter in his name. He said that it was unbefitting on the part of a Chief Minister to make remarks like "A tea seller selling out the country."

Further, "KCR has a habit of revising his third front rhetoric before every election. But, none

bothered and took him seriously, despite making several rounds to different States," he pointed out.

Bandi Sanjay said that that the PM Modi has taken several challenging decisions like scraping Article 370 to send a clear message that Jammu and Kashmir was an integral part of the country. Similarly, CAA has been enacted to provide the much-needed relief to the religiously persecuted minorities in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan and to give them citizenship in the country.

Creating legal protection to Muslim women with scraping

triple Talaq, free LPG connections, construction of individual toilets, financial assistance to farmers, loans to women, Atmanirbhar package economic stimulation package, construction of Lord Sri Ram temple in Ayodhya are a few to name the achievement of the Modi's government.

On the other, he asked the Chief Minister as to what he had done in the last six years and demanded to give clarity on his achievements to the people. He said that BJP has the election manifesto of TRS though it had removed the same from its website.

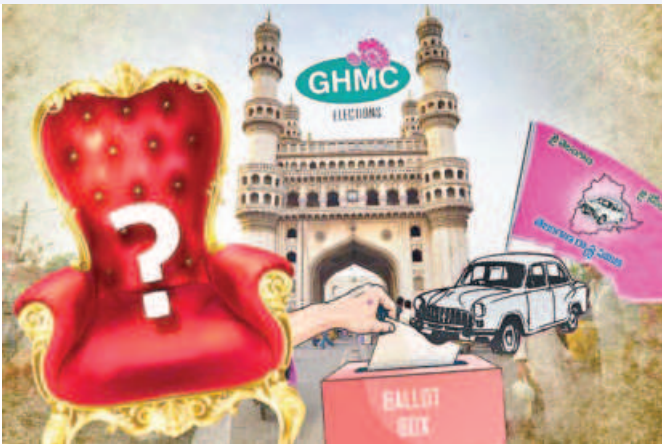
Kin of TRS netas eye Mayor's kursi

- ▶ The names of Madhavaram Roja, Gadwal Vijaya Laxmi, P Vijaya Reddy among others are doing the rounds
- ▶ Party unlikely to give ticket to Bonthu Sridevi, wife of Mayor Bonthu Rammohan

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

SEVERAL woman contestants, including relatives of TRS leaders, are in the race for the Mayor post. Though the party has not decided on the post of Mayor, there are speculations that the candidates who are relatives of TRS leaders are in the race. The city would have a woman mayor this time, thanks to the draw of lots taken during the Municipal elections in the State early this year.

The party leaders said that there were many candidates who can take up the post of Mayor as most of them have experience as corporator and have got the ticket for the second time. Sources said that Madhavaram Roja from Vivekananda Nagar Colony division, who is said to be a close relative of Kukatpally MLA Madhavaram Krishna Rao could be a possible Mayor candidate. Leaders said that being from the Velama community, her



name was heard in the party circles. The other leaders who are also in line include Gadwal Vijaya Laxmi from Banjara Hills division. Vijaya Laxmi is the sitting corporator and she is also the daughter of party's secretary general and parliamentary party leader K Keshava Rao. The name of P Vijaya Reddy, Khairatabad division corporator is also being heard. She is the daughter of former Congress leader P Janardhan Reddy. The other names in Mayor's race include Padmavati Reddy from Bagh Amberpet, Muta Padma Naresh from Gandhi Nagar division. Padma Naresh is the wife of M Naresh, the brother of Musheerabad MLA M Gopal.

Present mayor Bonthu Rammohan Rao is keen on making his wife Bonthu Sridevi the next

Mayor. Rammohan met party leaders including Minister KT Rama Rao and Kavitha to seek ticket for his wife from Cherlapally. However, the party has not taken any decision on Cherlapally division and kept it pending. Sources said that the party may not give ticket to her.

Though the city will have a woman Mayor this time, it will not be the first time. The first mayor of Hyderabad was Rani Kumudini Devi. She was the daughter of P Venkataramana Reddy, who was deputy prime minister in Nizam's rule. She was elected unanimously as mayor of Hyderabad in 1962.

CP Sajjanar directs depositing of weapons

RANGA REDDY

CYBERABAD CP Sajjanar on Thursday, directed to all arms license holders except those persons employed on guard duty to deposit their weapons in the concerned police stations or with any authorised arms dealer in Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) limits.

He also said that sports men who are members of National Rifle Association at different levels and have to participate in various sporting events in which they need to use their rifles, shall deposit their weapons in police stations concerned or authorised arms dealers with immediate effect on or before November 19.

BJP releases 2nd list of candidates

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

THE State BJP on Thursday has released its second list of 18 candidates for the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) elections.

With this, the BJP has so far released a total of 39 candidates. Out of 150 divisions, in which, it wants to contest in the elections. The names of candidates finalised in BJP's second list on Thursday are Renu Soni, Ghansi Bazar (49 division); Boyini Darshan, Ziaguda (62 division); Shashikala, Mangalhat (63 division); M Dharmendra Singh, Dattatreya Nagar (64 division) Pasam Shakuntala, Golconda, (67 division); Devara Karunakar, Gudimalkapur (71

division); Chintala Aruna Yadav, Nagole (11 division); Koppula Narsimha Reddy, Mansoorabad (12 division); Kallem Navjeevan Reddy, Hayat Nagar (13 division); M Lachireddy, BN Reddy Nagar (14 division); Vanga Madhusudhan Reddy, Champapet (17 division); Akula Ramesh Goud, Lingojiguda (58 division); N Pavan Kumar Mudiraj, Kothapet (21 division); Ranga Narsimha Gupta, Chaitanyapuri (22 division); Akula Sreevani, Saroor Nagar (19 division); Radha Dheeraj Reddy, RK Puram, (20 division); Thokala Srinivas Reddy, Mailardevpally (19 division) and K Mahender, Jangammet (45 division).

TRS releases second list of 20 candidates

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

TRS Party on Thursday released the second list of candidates for the GHMC elections. The party released the list with 20 names.

With this the party has released the names of 125 candidates out of the 150 divisions in GHMC. Among the candidates, the prominent name is of Madhavaram Roja, who is said to be a relative of Kukatpally MLA Madhavaram Krishna Rao. The party has to decide on the Cherlapally division where the present Mayor B Rammohan has been trying ticket for his wife B Sridevi.

Second List of TRS Party Candidates for GHMC Elections - 2020					
S.No	Division No	Division	Candidate Name	Caste	
1	5	Mallapur	Devender Reddy	OC Reddy	
2	9	Ramanthapur	Gandham Jyotsna	BC Munnurukapu	
3	50	Begum Bazar	Pooja Vyas Bilal	Rajasthan Brahman	
4	57	Suleman Nagar	A Saritha Mahesh	BC Padmashali	
5	58	Shastripuram	B. Rajesh Yadav	BC Yadav	
6	59	Mailardevpally	T Premdas Goud	BC Goud	
7	60	Rajendra Nagar	Korani Sripatha	SC Madiga	
8	79	Himayatnagar	Hemalatha Yadav	BC Yadav	
9	84	Bagh amberpet	Padmavathi Reddy	OC Reddy	
10	88	Bholakpur	Bingi Naveen Kumar	BC Padmashali	
11	94	Shaikpet	M Satya Narayana Yadav	BC Yadav	
12	106	Serilingampally	Ragam Nagender Yadav	BC Yadav	
13	120	Balanagar	Ravinder Reddy Avula	OC Reddy	
14	121	Kukatpally	Satyanarayana Jupalli	OC Velama	
15	122	Vivekanandanagar Clny	Madavaram Roja Rangarao	OC Velama	
16	137	Vinayak nagar	Baddam Pushpalatha Reddy	OC Reddy	
17	142	Addagutta	Prasanna Laxmi	SC Madiga	
18	144	Mettuguda	Rasuri Sunitha	SC Mala	
19	146	Boudhnagar	Kandi Sailaja	BC Gangaputra	
20	149	Begumpet	Maheshwari Srihari	BC Mudiraj	

TJS enters election fray, declares 27 candidates

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

KODANDARAM'S TJS party is also entering the GHMC fray. It has released a first list with 27 candidates on Thursday. It is going to release another list on Friday, the last day for filing of nominations. Begum Bazar, Goshamahall, Mangalhat, Jambagh, Puranapul, Jiyaguda, Gandhinagar, Ramnagar, Shaikpet, Ameerpet, Akbarbagh, Saroornagar, RK Puram, Lingojiguda, Champapet, Kothapet, Chaitanyapuri, Hasthinapuram, Vanasthalipuram, Mansoorabad, Gaddiannaram, Nacharam, Mallapur, East Anandbagh, Meerpet HB Colony, Chilukanagar, AS Rao Nagar are the divisions chosen by TJS to contest the polls.

Voters who tested positive after Nov 1 can avail postal ballot facility

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

THE State Election Commission has given postal ballot facility to Covid-19 positive voters as well as voters above 80 years of age and electors, who are marked as Persons with Disabilities (PwDs). The same facility was extended to them during the recent Dub-

baka by-election. Covid-19 patients, who tested positive after November can avail the postal ballot facility. They have to enclose a medical test certificate along with an identification document. Electors were told to apply for the postal ballot through application form 22-A physically or through official website (tsec.gov.in). Also, the SEC has

asked every candidate filing nomination for GHMC polls to file an affidavit on a Stamp Paper of value of Rs 20 or file an affidavit sworn before a notary or a magistrate of the First Class with information relating to criminal antecedents, assets and liabilities and educational qualifications failing which application will be rejected.



Nizamabad MP Aravind Dharmapuri addressing press conference in Hyderabad on Thursday

GHMC battle is between BJP, Majlis: MP Aravind

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

NIZAMABAD MP Aravind Dharmapuri said that the battle for the saffron party in the GHMC elections was between the AIMIM and BJP, and TRS was no factor. Addressing the media here on Thursday, he said that the people were all set to teach a lesson to the TRS in the Greater elections.

He said that the TRS was trying hard to make Majlis occupy the Mayor seat. However, the BJP will defeat its selfish designs. Dismissing the remarks of BJP a commu-

"We say it openly to the TRS that it can go and distribute the money. But people are not going to vote for it," - Aravind Dharmapuri, MP, Nizamabad

nal party, he said those who stoke communal violence (Majlis) are hand in glove with the TRS. Responding to the TRS allegation of BJP stalling the financial assistance to the flood victims, he said, BJP has no issues if the State government wanted to distribute financial assis-

tance, even if it wanted to increase it and also if it wanted to purchase votes spending the money it had amassed in the form of commissions from Mission Kakatiya and Mission Bhagiratha.

"We say it openly to the TRS that it can go and distribute the money. But people are not going to vote for it," he said. He pooh-poohed the claims of uninterrupted power supply by Minister KT Rama Rao and Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao. He said that the 24-hour uninterrupted power supply was there in every State across the country.

No truck with JSP, says BJP

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

THE State BJP on Thursday has clarified that so far it has not planned to enter into an alliance with any party in the GHMC elections. The statement has come from the State BJP chief Bandi Sanjay Kumar amidst of growing speculations of a BJP-Jana Sena Party (JSP) alliance in the GHMC elections.

When asked he said that no electoral alliance has so far been contemplated with JSP. And, "We have already finalised our candidates for the GHMC elections," he added. Further, Sanjay said that he has good relations with the JSP chief Pawan Kalyan and there was no mediation by any other between them, he said. The BJP State chief said no proposals for the electoral alliance in GHMC elections have been mooted from either the side of BJP or JSP.

SEC allots symbols to five parties

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

THE State Election Commission has allotted symbols to five political parties contesting the GHMC polls and it will remain with them for five years provided they comply with the rules. Hindustan Janata Party was given coconut farm symbol, India Prajabadh Party was given Trumpet symbol, Jana Sena Party - glass tumbler, Marxist Party of India United-gas cylinder and Indian Praja Congress was given a whistle symbol.

The SEC has clarified that these parties can make use of these symbols allotted for five years and contest in any local body or general elections. If they failed to contest for 10 per cent of the seats, the allotted symbol would be cancelled and the respective party would lose the chance to apply for symbol

The fate of TJS is not known as their matchbox symbol was cancelled by the election authority as they failed to fulfill the 10 per cent rule

for five years. Also, the allotted symbols are confined only to the wards where the party fields a candidate and can be given to other parties in other wards.

Meanwhile, the fate of TJS is not known as their matchbox symbol was cancelled by the election authority as they failed to fulfill the 10 per cent rule.

TDP names candidates for 90 divisions

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

TELANGANA TDP unit which has decided to contest alone in the GHMC elections on Thursday announced the candidates for 90 divisions. The Telugu Desam once held a sway in the Greater Hyderabad limits. Currently the party is struggling to maintain the party cadre and leadership due to mass exodus to the ruling TRS after the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh. The names have been finalised at the State body meeting conducted by party President L Ramana at the party head office NTR Trust Bhavan here. Telangana party unit Vice-President N Suhasini, daughter of the former TDP leader Harikrishna, also participated in the meeting. She is likely to take up poll campaign in the divisions where the party is considered to be strong and the winning prospects are bright. The BCs have been given priority in the finalisation of the candidates in many divisions, Ramana said that the TDP is committed to the upliftment of BCs politically.

party's election manifesto for the GHMC elections, he said, "If BJP wins the Mayor seat, the party will ensure that the flood victims get Rs 20,000 as financial assistance." Besides, a comprehensive survey would be conducted to assess the loss caused due to the floods and to announce the much-needed relief to

compensate for the loss caused. Bandi Sanjay also said that his party, if voted to win the GHMC elections, would ensure that the civic body returns the fines it has forcefully collected from people slapping challans. Also, the party would fight for the scraping of the TRS government's Land Regularisation Scheme (LRS).



ISL season 7 kicks off today

Kerala Blasters to face off with ATK Mohun Bagan in opener

BAMBOLIM (GOA)

BEHIND closed doors and with a raft of health safety measures in place, football's Indian Super League (ISL) will kick off here on Friday and become the country's first major tournament to be organised since the enforcement of a COVID-19 lockdown eight months ago.

Former champions ATK Mohun Bagan and Kerala Blasters will start the proceedings with what is expected to be a blockbuster clash at the GMC Stadium here. But the season's first big game will undoubtedly be the one between ATK Mohun Bagan and SC East Bengal in Fardora on November 27, the two heavyweights renewing their more-than-a-century-old rivalry in a new avatar.

ATK Mohun Bagan, playing in their first tournament after the merger of last season champion sides of ISL and I-League into one club, will start as the frontrunner for the title in the seventh edition of the lucrative franchise-based tournament. They have roped in some quality players like star India defender Sandesh Jhingan while retaining the core of last season champions ATK side such as Fijian international Roy Krishna who was on rampage against opposition defences.

Roy was last season's joint top-scorer with 15 goals from 21 matches while also providing six

ISL TEAMS

ATK Mohun Bagan
Bengaluru FC
Chennaiyin FC
FC Goa
Hyderabad FC
Jamshedpur FC
Kerala Blasters FC
Mumbai City FC
NorthEast United FC
Odisha FC
SC East Bengal



WINNERS

2019-20: Atletico de Kolkata
2018-19: Bengaluru FC
2017-18: Chennaiyin FC
2016-17: Atletico de Kolkata
2015-16: Chennaiyin FC
2014-15: Atletico de Kolkata

assists. He was named captain in the final as ATK cruised to their third ISL title and will return as skipper alongside four other leaders of the newly-formed ATK Mohun Bagan outfit.

Chief coach Antonio Lopez Habas had recently announced that five players will be given the captain's armband in rotation through the upcoming season. Of the five, four are members of the team that picked up the title last season with ATK. Habas has named Fijian striker Roy Krishna and Spanish midfielder Edu Garcia among the captains.

Indian players, Pritam Kotal, Arindam Bhattacharya and the seasoned Sandesh Jhingan, will also share the leadership responsibilities.

FC Goa, who won the League Winners Shield last season to become the first side from India to qualify for the group stage of the AFC Champions League, will be hit hard by the departure of star forwards Ferran Corominas and Hugo Boumous. Both these players established themselves as feared goal scorers in the ISL over the years. They have also added a

few quality players and their knowledge of the home conditions will come handy in their bid to at least reach the play-offs stage.

Former winners Bengaluru FC, under Carlos Cuadrat, will be among the perennial favourites with an array of top Indian players and proven foreigners. Cuadrat has ensured that his key players from their 2018-19 title-winning squad are still around. Besides two-time Golden Glove winner Gurpreet Singh Sandhu and ISL's highest Indian goal-scorer Sunil Chhetri, the Spanish head coach has also managed to tie down defender Juanan and midfielders Erik Paartalu and Dimas Delgad.

A number of their young and talented players have also been retained, including Ashique Ku-

runiyan and, most importantly, the high-quality Udanta Singh. Mumbai City FC are another side which will aim for at least a play-offs appearance after undergoing massive changes since last season.

With Abu Dhabi-based City Football Group buying a majority stake in Mumbai City FC, the club has revamped the squad in a grand manner. The biggest name to have joined is head coach Sergio Lobera from FC Goa.

Lobera led FC Goa to the final of the 2018-19 season, and was in charge for the large part of last season when the Gaurs cemented their place atop the league table. He has brought some high quality players from FC Goa in the form of Mourtaad Fall, Mandar Rao Dessai and Hugo Boumous -- hero of the League with 11 goals and 10 assists in 15 matches.

Newcomers Sporting Club East Bengal, under Liverpool legend Robbie Fowler, and two-time ISL champions Chennaiyin FC could be among the dark horses. The tournament, which will run from November to March, is being restricted to a single venue in view of the pandemic. (PTI)

Medvedev stuns Djokovic, books semis spot

ATP Finals



LONDON

DANIIL Medvedev is enjoying the ATP Finals a lot better in his second appearance. Medvedev secured a spot in the semifinals of the season-ending tournament by dominating five-time champion Novak Djokovic 6-3, 6-3 late on Wednesday for his second straight win of the group stage.

Medvedev, who lost all three of his group matches last year on his tournament debut, has now beaten Djokovic in three of their last four meetings.

The top-ranked Serb can still advance if he beats 2018 champion Alexander Zverev in a winner-takes-all match on Friday. Zverev kept his tournament hopes alive with a 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 victory over Diego Schwartzman earlier on Wednesday. Medvedev broke Djokovic three straight times to go from 3-3 in the first set to a 3-0 lead in the second. The first break came after a marathon game when the Russian finally converted his third break point when Djokovic missed a forehand after a long rally.

Djokovic then double-faulted on set point and never looked likely to stage a comeback in the second. Medvedev saved the only break point he faced at 2-0 and then secured the victory with a forehand winner on his first match point.

"He was just better, no question about it," Djokovic said. "Just not a great match from my side. I thought I could have and should have done

better, but credit to him for playing on a high level."

Medvedev is looking a lot more comfortable at the O2 Arena than last year, when his three losses included a collapse against Rafael Nadal in a match where he led 5-1 in the third set.

"You always have doubts in your head, like maybe next year is going to be (like) last year in London, I'm going to go out there and be tight, again, I'm not going to show anything in the Masters finals," Medvedev said. "Well, not the case. Finished No. 1 in the group already, which is great."

Zverev, coming off what he had described as one of his worst matches of the season in his opening loss to Medvedev on Monday, led 3-1 in the second set before his Argentine opponent battled back with two breaks. A visibly frustrated Zverev fired a ball into the empty stands after losing the second set.

The 23-year-old German recovered and broke Schwartzman twice in the third set. Schwartzman, who struggled with unforced errors, sent a forehand into the net to end the match.

The decisive Zverev-Djokovic match on Friday will be a rematch of the final from two years ago when the German won in straight sets.

"I'm happy to give myself a chance to go to the semifinals," Zverev said. "I need to win every match, otherwise I'm out, so I've got to go in with that mindset. I went to that mindset today, and I did my job." (AP)

New FIFA rules to protect female players' maternity rights

Geneva: Female soccer players should soon get their maternity rights protected under new employment rules announced Thursday by FIFA. The governing body of soccer is preparing to mandate clubs to allow at least 14 weeks of maternity leave paid at a minimum two-thirds of a player's full salary. National soccer bodies can insist on more generous terms. "Her club will be under an obligation to reintegrate her into football activity and provide adequate ongoing medical support," FIFA said. Any club that ended a player's contract for becoming pregnant faces having to pay compensation and a fine, and being banned from the transfer market for one year. "The idea is to protect female players before, during and after childbirth," FIFA chief legal officer Emilio Garcia said on a conference call. The move is seen as a key step in professionalizing women's soccer — and respecting players' family lives — after a successful 2019 World Cup and more investment by elite clubs in having a women's team. United States forward Alex Morgan, a World Cup winner last year, signed with Tottenham in September, four months after giving birth to her first child. She played her first game this month. The rules are expected to be approved by the FIFA Council next month and would take effect on Jan. 1. At least eight weeks of the 14-week minimum maternity leave must be after the player gives birth. (AP)

SA cricketer tests Covid +ve

Johannesburg: A South Africa cricketer has tested positive for novel coronavirus ahead of the upcoming limited-overs series against England. According to Cricket South Africa, the player, whose identity has not been revealed, and two other "close contacts based on the risk assessment undertaken by the medical team" have all been placed in isolation in Cape Town. (IANS)

Gayle, Plunkett pull out of LPL

Colombo: Big-hitting West Indies batsman Chris Gayle and England fast bowler Liam Plunkett will not be featuring in the inaugural edition of the Lanka Premier League (LPL). Gayle and Plunkett were set to join former India all-rounder Irfan Pathan, Munaf Patel, local icon Kusal Perera, Lankan T20 specialists Kusal Mendis and Nuwan Pradeep among others at Kandy Tuskers. (IANS)

India's 2018-19 series triumph star Pujara takes guard



SYDNEY

A lot hinges on batting mainstay Cheteshwar Pujara, who was the star of India's historic Test series triumph in 2018-19, during the forthcoming Test series in Australia.

The right-handed No.3 batsman, who amassed 521 runs with three centuries and earned the Man-of-the-Series award in 2018-19, got down to batting at the nets for a long session on Thursday to prepare for the Border-Gavaskar series that India are seeking to defend.

Pujara faced net bowlers, who are travelling with the Indian team, as well as regular India bowlers like R Ashwin.

A video posted by the BCCI showed him using the backfoot to good effect as also leaving the deliveries outside the off-stump which had been his forte in the previous series Down Under.

"The wait is over.

@cheteshwar1 is back in the nets and is back to doing what he loves the most. Bowlers be prepared for a long workout. #TeamIndia," said a tweet from the BCCI on Thursday.

Due to Covid-19 pandemic, the entire contingent has gone to Australia together. It means that even Test specialists like Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane, Wriddhiman Saha and Rishabh Pant have got over a month to practice in Australia and get accustomed to the conditions and pitches.

Pujara, unlike the other Test specialists mentioned, was not part of any IPL team and played no competitive cricket. He last played a competitive game, in early March, the Ranji Trophy final which his team Saurashtra won on first innings. Pujara had scored 66 off 237 deliveries in the first innings, batting at No. 6. He was not needed in the second innings.

On Wednesday, the Board had posted a video of Test wicketkeeper Wriddhiman Saha batting at the nets. Saha had suffered a couple of hamstring injuries in the Indian Premier League which forced the Board to put him under observation.

Although there had been no word on his fitness, the BCCI tweeted a video of the 36-year-old cricketer playing shots off deliveries hurled at him by the team support staff using the side-arm. (IANS)

Max 6 officials for each delegation allowed at Oly opening ceremony

TOKYO

THE International Olympic Committee has set a limit of six officials to be allowed to participate in the Parade of Nations at the opening ceremony of the postponed Tokyo Olympic Games, IOC's Tokyo Olympic Games Coordination Commission chairman John Coates has said.

Coates, who attended a project review with the Tokyo 2020 organisers and the IPC on Wednesday, said that athletes' number at the opening ceremony will not be cut, reports Xinhua news agency.

"We don't want to change the tradition that all athletes have the opportunity to parade at the opening ceremony," Coates told reporters at a press conference.

The athletes' places are usually filled by officials from their national Olympic committees if they choose to focus on their preparation for their competitions, but next year this will not happen.

"The IOC Executive Board has already discussed this and we won't allow it this time," Coates said. "This will increase the problem at the ceremony."

"We want to see the athletes from all 206 delegations and the refugee team in the opening ceremony ... The number of officials is limited to six."

Tokyo 2020 president Yoshiro Mori is pessimistic about the possibility of seeing all participating athletes march into the Olympic Stadium, although he admitted that the parade in the opening ceremony is their "prerogative" and "no one can deprive them of their right".

"We have to have a secure and safe games," he said, adding that people need to make some "sacrifice".

Mori said that it is still too early to make decisions because it might be not a problem to worry about.

"Maybe we should ask the opinions of the athletes," Mori said. (IANS)

When Sachin told Aussie Hogg 'this will never happen again'

NEW DELHI

BATTING maestro Sachin Tendulkar has signed his autograph on diverse things for his fans and players he has played with and against, and on one such signature he put on a photo of his shattered stumps, bowled by former Australia Chinaman bowler Brad Hogg in 2007.

During the third One-day International against Australia on October 5 in Hyderabad, India chased 291 to win. Hogg bowled Tendulkar, who had opened the innings alongside Gautam Gambhir, in the 27th over of the innings for 43.

After the match, Hogg had revealed in an interview to The Sunday Age, Tendulkar gave him in writing to the Australian that he would never take his wicket



again.

"I got him out in one of the games, and there was a photo of it I asked him to sign for me. He did it and wrote me a message. Underneath his signature, he wrote, 'This will never happen again, Hogg'," Hogg had told The Sunday Age at the time.

It so happened that Hogg never took Tendulkar's wicket

again. But that autograph remains a "prized possession" for the cricketer-turned-commentator.

"It's a bit of a prized possession. It's an honour to be on the field with the calibre of a player like Sachin Tendulkar. To bowl at him is a great experience. It's not overawing, just a great experience. If I'm out there, I'm out

there to compete against him and make life as hard as possible for him," he said.

India lost that match by 47 runs, despite Yuvraj Singh's 115-ball 121. However, Tendulkar kept his word and never got out against Hogg again in his career.

In his stellar career that spanned over two decades, Tendulkar scored 100 centuries across Tests and ODIs -- a record that still stands. In 463 ODIs, Tendulkar scored 18,426 runs, including 49 tons, and in Tests, he tallied 15,921, including 51 centuries. In his lone T20I appearance which came against South Africa in 2006, he scored 10 runs.

On the other hand, Hogg played seven Tests, 123 ODIs, and 15 T20Is, in which he scalped 17, 157, and 7 wickets respectively, between 1996 and 2014.

Host Italy, Belgium advance to stellar Nations League finals

LONDON

ITALY earned the right to host a star-filled Nations League finals that will feature the current No. 1-ranked team and three of the past four World Cup champions. Italy's 2-0 win at Bosnia-Herzegovina late on Wednesday sealed top spot in Group 1 above the Netherlands, which beat Poland 2-1. That group winner had been pre-selected to host the Final Four next October.

Top-ranked Belgium also booked its place in that knockout bracket, lifted by Romelu Lukaku's 56th and 57th international goals in a 4-2 win over Denmark. Belgium and Italy join Spain and France, who topped

groups that finished on Tuesday. That means the tournament will feature the winners of the World Cup in 2006, 2010 and 2018.

A total of 18 Nations League games were played on Wednesday to complete a difficult 2020 program for Europe's 55 national teams amid a spike in the coronavirus pandemic.

A swath of players and team staff tested positive for COVID-19 during this international break, including Italy coach Roberto Mancini who was absent in Sarajevo.

"I think the lads have given a great gift to Mancini," assistant coach Alberico Evani said. "We look forward to facing the best teams in Europe in the finals."

