



• Simultaneously published from Hyderabad | Warangal | Tirupati | Amaravati | Visakhapatnam | Khammam | Kurnool | Delhi: RNI No: DELENG/2017/74095 •

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WINDOWS



Siraj-Bumrah hug wins hearts on social media

As Mohammed Siraj of Hyderabad led the Indian team off the field at the end of the Australian innings, a proud Jasprit Bumrah welcomed the fellow fast bowler with a hug, which had gone viral on the social media. Mohammed Siraj picked up his maiden five-wicket haul on Day 4 of the Gabba Test against Australia. Wrapping up Australia's second innings with the final wicket of Josh Hazlewood, Siraj finished with career best figures of 5/73 in what is just his third Test.

Minimum temp rises in Delhi due to cloud cover

New Delhi: Delhi's minimum temperature rose to 9 degrees Celsius, two notches more than normal, on Monday due to party cloudy weather and prevailing easterly winds, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said. The maximum temperature is likely to settle around 17 degrees Celsius. On Sunday, the minimum and maximum temperatures stood at 5.7 degrees Celsius and 15.3 degrees Celsius, respectively, resulting in cold day conditions. A cold day is when the minimum temperature is less than 10 degrees Celsius and the maximum is at least 4.5 degrees Celsius below normal. An IMD official said easterly winds are blowing in Delhi which are not as cold as northwesterly coming in from the snow-clad western Himalayas.

BUSINESS



Covid fails to slow down Chinese GDP



Share policy for declaring public holidays: SC

NEW DELHI

THE Supreme Court on Monday asked the Centre to share its policy for declaring public holidays. The observation was made by the top court during hearing of a plea by Sikh organisation All India Shiromani Singh Sabha seeking uniform and non-arbitrary policy for declaring public holidays, contrary to whims and fancies of various political groups.

A bench headed by Chief Justice S.A. Bobde and comprising Justices L. Nageswara Rao and Vineet Saran queried Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, "The petition is raising question, there are no guidelines for declaring public holidays. Tell us what is your policy. This is something every institution has to ask."

Mehta submitted that he will get back to the top court in the matter.

Senior advocate Vikas Singh, representing All India Shiromani Singh Sabha, urged the bench to issue notice in the matter. "Is-

sue notice returnable after 10 days," said the top court in its order. The plea, filed through advocate Durga Dutt, sought promotion and development of Sikh religious and cultural ethos. The plea said the important birth anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh who is a religious icon for the Sikh community, so far has not been declared a public holiday across the country which has deeply aggrieved the Sikh organisation.

The petitioner contended that the birth anniversary of the tenth Sikh Guru should be allowed to be celebrated as 'Prakash Parv' throughout the country to instil a sense of patriotism, nationalism and brotherhood among the people.

"The petitioner submits that such a recognition by way of declaration of gazette/public holiday would foster the spirit of unity, integrity and fraternity among the people of India and inspire the general populace to follow the high ideals of patriotism, nationalism and brotherhood among the people," said the plea, citing that



Sikhism is the fifth largest religion in the world with 25.8 million followers. The petitioner said Guru Gobind Singh stood against injustice and his teachings transcend time and will remain relevant in all times to come. The petitioner also cited the casual response of the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, on its representation, saying that at present there is no proposal for declaring 'Prakash Parv' as a gazetted public holiday.

The organisation has made the Centre as well as all state governments and Union Territories as parties to the plea. The plea argued that holidays in countries like New Zealand, UK and USA, are governed by legislation. However, in India there is no Public Holidays Act, except the Weekly Holidays Act, 1942, which provided for weekly holidays. The petitioner contended that in most cases holidays were declared by the executive at the behest of political groups, which is usually to appease a particular section of society.

Vaccine won't kill you' Asia's largest spice market in a bind

'Vaccine won't kill you'

Says AIIMS Director after taking the jab
PURNA SINGH
NEW DELHI

AIIMS Director Randeep Guleria on Monday allayed apprehensions about the coronavirus vaccines and assured that the side-effects will not result in death of the beneficiary. The nationwide Covid vaccination drive had commenced on January 16 and a total of 447 adverse events following immunisation (AEFI) were reported during the first two days, with most of them being minor along with three cases of hospitalisation. "Even if a person takes Crocin or Paracetamol, they may develop allergic reactions. There is nothing to worry about. There is no side-effect which would result in death," Dr Guleria said. He added, "Main side-effects are body ache, fever,



Randeep Guleria

pain at injection site which subside in 1-2 days and take place in less than 10 per cent of people. If the side-effects are severe, there could be skin rashes, nausea, difficulty in breathing."

The AIIMS Director said that people must come forth to get vaccinated if they want India to come out of the Covid-19 pandemic, decrease the mortality rate, bring the economy back on track and reopen schools.

Post-lockdown, Khari Baoli in New Delhi is yet to register upward trend

ARCHANA RAO
NEW DELHI

THE hustle and bustle in the lanes of Khari Baoli is less noisy than usual. The usual charm of this lane has somewhat faded owing to the pandemic and changing times. Asia's largest spice market, Khari Baoli Market, here at Chandini Chowk of Old Delhi continues to struggle for sustenance. The market, which was established in the era of Mughal Emperor of Shah Jahan in 17th century, has over 2,000 wholesale and retail shops dealing in spices, exotic herbs and dry fruits.

Even as the nationwide lockdown was lifted in June-July 2020, the wholesale and retail spice market at Khari Baoli is yet to register any upward trend as most established vendors complain of heavy losses and lower demand even amongst the localities.

Anshul Kumar, owner of one of the oldest wholesale spice shops in Delhi, spoke to Bizz Buzz on as to why the sector is unable to pick up as compared to other businesses.

"Our shop was set up in 1917 and since then we've been dealing in spices, dry fruits and other condiments. But the last three years have been particularly challenging. It is not just because of Covid-19, customers



have turned their preference towards online businesses. Here at our shops, customers can assess the quality of the products first-hand before buying it. But you cannot get that facility online. It is understandable that because of Covid-19 people are afraid to buy anything in the market. But sales at Khari Baoli has never been so low," said Kumar, the 4th generation owner of the famous Meher Chand and Sons.

A similar echo can be heard across the market as shopkeepers in whole-

It has been six months since we resumed work but we are not able to make even 50 per cent of sale of what we used to do till 2019. We had to dispose off most of the items during lockdown. We are yet to recover all the losses we incurred last year. I do not see any improvement at least for a year

- Anshul Kumar, a shop owner, Khari Baoli Market

we used to do till 2019. We had to dispose off most of the items during lockdown. We are yet to cover all the losses we incurred last year. I do not see any improvement at least for a year," Kumar added.

Another wholesale vendor points out that there is steady supply of spices, unaffected by the recent farmers' protest at the Delhi bordering areas.

"The biggest challenge is that some of our spices and dry fruits have to be imported from other countries such as Latin America, the Middle East and the US. Our sales have been poor but we are still paying higher taxes. We are paying 5 per cent -12 per cent of GST on spices. We can't cover our bases if the tax slab is not lowered by the Centre this year," Harish, a wholesaler, said. "In this upcoming Budget, I hope government gives special attention to businesses like ours and offer some solution on logistics, infrastructure, tax and import duty."

Kirana Committee or The Whole Sale Market Association is confident that business will be back to normal soon. "Things are getting back on track. We have around 2,000 wholesale spice shops here and only 1 per cent of them closed down permanently due to Covid-19," Vijay said.

PROPOSED TRACTOR RALLY BY FARMERS ON R-DAY

POLICE SHOULD DECIDE ON ENTRY INTO DELHI: SC

NEW DELHI

THE Supreme Court on Monday said the Delhi police should decide on the entry of protesting farmers into Delhi on Republic Day, as it heard a plea seeking an injunction against the proposed tractor rally scheduled on January 26.

Stating that it's a law and order matter, the apex court said, "Police is first authority to decide who should be allowed to enter Delhi. We are not going to tell you what you should do. We will take up this matter on January 20."

The court's observations came during a hearing on the plea of the central government, filed though the Delhi Police, seeking an injunction against the proposed tractor march or any other kind of protest by farmers that seeks to disrupt the gathering and celebrations of Republic Day on January 26.

The farmer unions, meanwhile, are firm on holding the rally on Republic Day. They further said protesters will not carry weapons or indulge in inflammatory speeches or violence. They also clarified that there will be no occupation or attack on any government building or area



Farmers during their ongoing protest against new farm laws, at Singhu Border in New Delhi on Monday

We have constitutional right to take out tractor rally: Farmers

NEW DELHI

PROTESTING union leaders on Monday said that farmers have a constitutional right to take out their tractor rally peacefully and asserted that thousands of people will participate in the proposed event on January 26.

The Supreme Court said on Monday that the Delhi police is the first authority to decide the entry of protesting farmers

into the national capital. Bhartiya Kisan Union (Lakhnaw) Punjab general secretary Paramjit Singh said that farmers are not going to hold their rally on Rajpath and in other high-security areas, adding that they would only take out it on the Outer Ring Road in Delhi and that there will be no disruption in the official Republic Day parade.

"We are stuck at the Delhi borders.

during the parade, which will see tractors start their journey from their respective position at the Delhi border and return to the same place, said a farmer leader.

"Farmers will celebrate Republic Day with huge fervour. The tractor parade will move in a circle on the Outer Ring Road, which goes around areas like Janakpuri, Munirka, Nehru Place, Tikri. We hope that Delhi and Haryana police will not cause us any problems or restrictions. This will be a very peaceful protest since our biggest weapon is non-violence," said Yogendra Yadav from Sanyukt Kisan Morcha.

Last week, a bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde had stayed the implementation of the new farm laws till further orders and had constituted a four-member panel to listen to the grievances and make recommendations to resolve the impasse. Claiming that negotiations between the farmers and the government had been fruitless, the court said a "committee of experts" to "negotiate between the farmers' bodies and the Government of India may create a congenial atmosphere and improve the trust and confidence of the farmers".

JEE, NEET syllabus cut

NEW DELHI

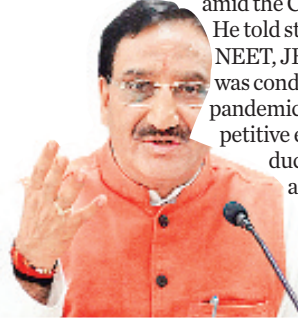
UNION Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal announced that students will be asked questions based on a revised syllabus in the upcoming board exams 2021, during a webinar with teachers and students of Kendriya Vidyalaya on Monday. Pokhriyal also announced that JEE Main 2021, held as an engineering entrance test and medical entrance test NEET 2021 will also be held on basis of a reduced syllabus.

During the webinar, he said that students will only have to study the revised syllabus for the CBSE board exams as well as other exams based on CBSE board syllabus 2021 and that questions will only be asked from that particular portion.

During the course of the live interaction, Pokhriyal said that the Kendriya Vidyalayas will reopen in a phased manner soon and that offline classes will resume in the schools along with online classes across the country.

He also replied to concerns regarding travelling to exam centres for Board Exams 2021 amid the Covid-19 pandemic. He told students that the NEET, JEE exams in 2020 was conducted amid the pandemic and all the competitive exams were conducted successfully across the country by the government and students should not be afraid about travelling to exam centres amid Covid-19.

Recently, Pokhriyal announced that the JEE Advanced 2021 exam will be held on July 3, and that it will be conducted by the IIT Kharagpur. The Education Minister said the Centre has decided to do away with the criteria of a minimum of 75 percent marks in view of the Covid-19 pandemic.



Rafale to feature in R-Day parade

NEW DELHI

THE newly inducted Rafale fighter aircraft will feature in India's Republic Day parade on January 26 and culminate the flypast by carrying out the 'Vertical Charlie' formation, the Indian Air Force (IAF) said on Monday.

In the 'Vertical Charlie' formation, the aircraft flies at low altitude, pulls up vertically and conducts rolls before stabilising at higher altitude. "The flypast will culminate with a single

Rafale aircraft carrying out a 'Vertical Charlie' formation," said Wing Commander Indranil Nandi. A total of 38 IAF aircraft and four planes of the Indian Army will participate in the flypast on January 26, he said.

This year Republic Day parade is going to be bit different owing to the Covid-19 pandemic situation hovering in the country. The number of participating folk artists and children have been cut down to 400, earlier there used to be more than 600 participants in the parade.



Private airline pilot killed in road mishap

GURUGRAM

A 40-year-old pilot with a private airline died when a trailer truck crashed into his car on the Dwarka expressway near here, police said on Monday. According to the police, Anmol Verma, was driving back to his home in Gurugram from Delhi at around 1.30 am on Sunday. When he reached the Dwarka expressway near sector-114, a trailer truck coming from the wrong direction crashed into his car, from the front.

In the collision, the pilot sustained grievous injuries and was rushed to a private hospital for treatment. Locals have also informed his friend Pankaj Kaushal, a pilot with another private airline. Police said that the injured pilot later died in the hospital during treatment.

"We have heard a loud boom and it sounded like an explosion. We weren't sure what it was and we went to the accident spot and saw that it was a horrible accident," a passerby told the police. The truck driver has fled the spot, leaving his vehicle on the spot. "We have impounded the truck which has Haryana's registration number. We are collecting information about the absconding truck driver.

Womenia



Take care of your nails on regular basis

Whether you're the type of person who religiously paints their nails as a form of self-care or someone who's constantly picking and biting at their cuticles, we all yearn for healthy, perfectly manicured nails. When it comes to taking care of your nails, getting a manicure is not the only option. In fact, you must take care of your nails on a daily basis.

Here are some simple tricks and tips that will help you do so

Keep your fingernails dry and clean

All problems start with germs and bacteria. You must make sure that there is no scope for them to breed. Clean your nails regularly and make sure you dry them after washing.

This also prevents dirt and bacteria from accumulating under your nails. However, don't overdo it; nails soaked in water for long durations may lead to splits. When you need to wash dishes, it is best to protect your fingernails with gloves. You also need to ensure that the skin around the nails is clean and dirt-free too.

Stop biting your nails

Biting your nails causes a lot of damage. In addition to making your nails look pathetic, the contact with your saliva makes them weak and brittle. It also harms your cuticles. Also, putting fingers in your mouth transmits the dirt and germs from your fingers to your mouth. We advise you to apply a nail paint that smells bad and puts you off to help you stop biting your nails.

Tame your cuticles

Cuticles are very delicate and get ruptured easily. Taking good care of your cuticles is a crucial part of nail care. If you have hanging skin or nail, handle it carefully – trim it gently so that it doesn't stick out or cause more pain. Do not

bite or pick the cuticles. Make sure you moisturize your cuticles – apply either coconut or almond oil to the cuticles and massage gently to nourish them.

Maintain hygiene

Clean your nails regularly and make sure all your nail tools are periodically washed and sanitized. Make sure that your nails don't grow too long as that makes it easier for the dirt to accumulate below the nails. Apply natural disinfectants on your nails like tea tree oil to keep the bacteria away and protect your nails from germs.

Use a moisturizer

Dry and flakiness are as bad for your nails as they are for your skin. Nails are very delicate and tend to break off easily. Moisturize them to make them strong. Choose from a range of hand creams, cuticle oil/creams or moisturizing oils that will help keep your nails and cuticles shiny and healthy.

Trim regularly

Similar to how trimming your hair regularly is good for its health, the same goes for your nails. Take a nail cutter and cut them neatly. Take out some time every few weeks to trim your nails and shape them in a manner you like. It is best if you trim your nails in a straight line and then either square or round them off at the tips.

Apply a base coat for protection

Base coat forms a protective layer on your skin and prevents your nails from getting discolored and stained. It makes the polish look better on your nails. Applying it thick on your nails will enhance the color of your nail polish. So, the next time you decide to paint your nails, do not skip applying a base coat – because it is worth it.

TEJAL SINHA

Le_arts is a small venture by Aysha Jasrin that she has always dreamt of starting for a long time. Aysha, a 22-year-old self-taught who is in her final year of architecture course at National Institute of Technology, Calicut has always been aesthete and finds joy in almost anything and everything that are related to art.

Aysha shares, "Le_arts is my art journey defining myself. Even though I had the idea for so long to start something on my own to showcase my works I was never been able to do it. Finding time for this in my busy life schedule was truly hard but then lockdown. I still procrastinated during the first 8 months of le arts. I did not feel I was doing justice to whatever little gift god has given me and I knew that if I don't do it now then I will never do it. This thought of mine itself made me do this. I've not been inspired by any but there were many people who reassured and made me believe in myself.

Some of the first things she made include journals made from her torn leather bag and denim pants. There was never a shortage of denim to make journals out of in the beginning, thanks to her hostel mates and relatives. However, it has turned challenging now.

Aysha was always environmentally conscious. She promotes only eco-friendly packaging. Around 80% of the products are upcycled and not only that she promotes plastic free pack-



aging but also feels happy and proud that she has the capability to turn some of the crap to beautiful and useful stuff.

Sharing about her initial challenges, she says, "I found it hard to believe in myself and accept it. Finally, that I was actually doing this and taking up commitment and responsibilities. Apart from these I found it hard to get the quality materials in my small town. I had to rely mostly on online stores. It took me a while to get going with everything since it was just me who was doing all the order taking, replying to messages, making the order, packing and shipping it, tracking the orders and even cleaning the final mess. I've never really tried to

copy any work and I followed my own style and may be that's what makes me unique."

According to Aysha, what makes her different from the other handmade ventures is that she focuses on customer satisfaction and tries to place herself in the shoes of the customers. She tries to make them as if she is making it for herself.

She adds, "I love doing and experimenting a lot of things. Currently I am doing handmade denim and leather journals, Macrame boho wall hangings, plant hangers, calligraphy, mandalas and paintings. Dot mandalas are my favourite. As of now its all done by me. My younger sister helps me out in various things. I really



Aysha started her Instagram page 'Le_arts' for herself, to exhibit her creation and not with the intention of selling them. However, soon she began receiving orders for her macrame arts and upcycled journals

and that was when I thought of starting Le arts. My course will be done in 4 months and I am planning on becoming a full-time artist with my full concentration and effort to le arts. I would also love to share my knowledge and plans to keep workshops and learning sessions. I also want to do more of experimentations with new styles and art works and will never stop learning," says Aysha.

Lockdown, a blessing for Aysha

The pandemic has indeed been a tough time for everyone. However, for Aysha it helped more than it put me in trouble.

"I finally had the time to start le arts. It's actually a blessing in disguise for me. I found my true passion and flow during lockdown. I am happy that I am finally doing the stuffs I love doing the most and hopefully will be doing for the rest of my life," concludes Aysha.

NEWS ROUNDUP

Shehnaaz Gill's new post is all about 'love'

Bigg Boss 13 contestant and Punjabi singer Shehnaaz Gill on Monday shared a stunning picture that is all about love, going by her caption.

In the Instagram image, Shehnaaz poses on the bed. She is dressed in blue denims paired with a powder blue off-shoulder blouse. She opted for basic make-up and kept her long hair open.

For the caption, Shehnaaz dropped two red heart emojis. Shehnaaz gained massive fandom with her stint in "Bigg Boss 13", which concluded in January 2020. Her chemistry with the show's winner Sidharth Shukla made the duo popular and the two even had a hashtag #Sid-



Naaz trending on social media. Sidharth and Shehnaaz brought back the chemistry

when they featured in the music video of the song "Shona Shona" by Tony Kakkar.

Styling your palazzo pants

Everywhere you look, palazzo pants are making a comeback. You see them on the street, at a party, at the beach, in the office and even at weddings. Hugely popular in the 60s and 70s, it's easy to see why everyone loves them now. They're stylish, comfortable, and above all versatile, so if you're wondering whether they're for you, or you're stuck for ideas about how to wear palazzo pants, take the plunge and jump right in. There's a wealth of choice when you're deciding what to wear with palazzo pants, and it all depends on the occasion and the look you want to achieve.

Cute palazzo pants outfits

The feminine cut of palazzo pants makes them perfect for creating a cute look. Loosely-styled pants, perhaps with a little polka-dot print and teamed with a frilled cross-over top, is a wonderful choice for a summer evening. Or try a gorgeous pastel pair with a hint of pink, matched with a soft pin-striped top for the ultimate in cool elegance.

Sophisticated palazzo pants outfits

A well-chosen palazzo pants outfit can simply exude sophistication, especially when teamed with high heels. But it's often a case of 'less is more', and understating the look is definitely the way to go, with a monochrome palette a popular choice. Plain black palazzo pants worn with a flowing tunic-style top will catch every eye, and an ornate waist belt will add an interesting focal point to the ensemble. Monochrome print palazzos and a black ruffled top featuring embellished bishop sleeves creates a real air of the exotic, whilst tailored cream palazzos looks unbelievable when teamed with a boldly striped chevron top.

Casual palazzo pants outfits

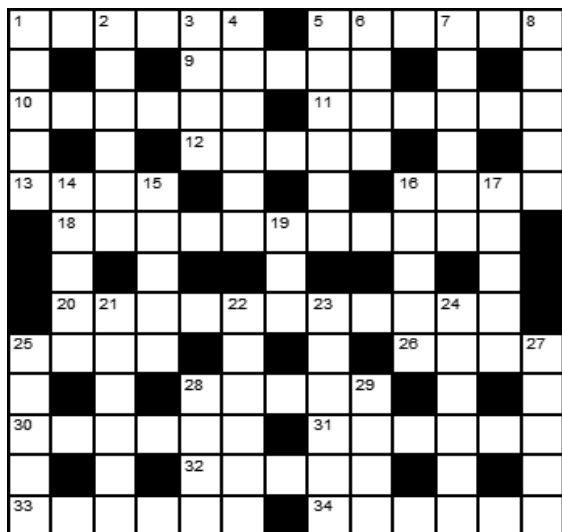
The superb comfort of palazzo pants makes them a natural choice for the casual look. For

an unfussy approach, choose plain palazzos in a vibrant colour and wear with a plain contrasting top. To give emphasis to the flaring nature of your palazzos, go for a stretch top such as a classic tee, crop top or spaghetti top. Or to bring out your softer side, try palazzos with a pretty floral print together with a frilled gypsy top. And nothing works better as a beach cover-up than light palazzos with a bikini top or plunging scoop neck vest.

Vintage palazzo pants outfits



Of course, with its roots so firmly in vintage culture, the retro look really lets your palazzo pants outfit shine. Classic vintage-print palazzos are the order of the day here, with striking monochrome prints such as diagonals or Jacquards, as well as richly coloured choices like ethnic mandala patterns, kaleidoscopic designs or bold florals. These palazzos make the best impact teamed with a plain-coloured top.



SOLUTION TO JANUARY 18

CROSSWORD

Across

- Smear all over (6)
- Snobbish (6)
- Zoo beast (5)
- Non-violence to Gandhiji (6)
- Parisian tower (6)
- Muslim pilgrimage city in Rajasthan (5)
- Flexible joint (4)
- Aims or goals (4)
- Chain of islands (11)
- Senseless (11)
- Shade (4)
- Told a whopper (4)
- Kasparov's game (5)
- Flowering shrub of the genus Rhododendron (6)
- Zit (6)
- A frozen rain (5)
- Furry (6)
- Barrister (6)

Down

- Lacking hue (5)
- Chauffeur (6)

Across

- Polaris bear (4)
- Harbhajan Singh's petname (6)
- Cold symptom (6)
- Film genre (4)
- A time some way (6)
- Cries out in pain (5)
- Ruth's mother-in-law (5)
- Panache (5)
- Picture-stand (5)
- Use a divining rod (5)
- Vessel for frying (3)
- Necessitate (6)
- Breathe in (6)
- The teaching of christ (6)
- Merely (6)
- Walk heavily (5)
- It's a ___ : it is depressingly dismal ? (5)
- Tax in an old-fashioned way ? (4)
- First lady of "Ramayana" (4)

SUDOKU



SOLUTION TO JANUARY 18

Smiles, sanitisers welcome students as schools reopen in Delhi

NEW DELHI

BALLOONS, flowers, sanitisers and smiling faces welcomed class 10 and 12 students in schools in the national capital on Monday as they returned to campuses after over 10 months. The students who were elated to be able to attend the first of-line class of the academic session wore masks and queued up outside schools maintaining social distance.

Schools reopened on Monday after over 10 months of being closed in view of coronavirus pandemic. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said it was an emotional moment to see children back in school. "Seeing kids back in school af-



A teacher takes class at a Rajkiya Sarvodaya Bal Vidyalaya in east Delhi on Monday

ter a long time, is an emotional moment for me. Schools have

reopened today after leaving behind a very difficult time. We

are hopeful that soon, everything will be normal and all stu-

dents will be able to come to schools and meet their teachers and friends," he tweeted.

Pragati Diwan, an excited class 12 student said, "it was optional to come but I was sure I have to. It is the last year of my school life and I haven't come to school even one day," said Pragati Diwan, an excited class 12 student. For another student at Geeta Bal Bharti School, the feeling was similar to that of attending first day at school.

"It does not feel like I am coming to school after ten months, it feels like I have come to school for the first time. I am looking forward to the preparations for board exams here," she said. Prince, a student at Delhi gov-

ernment school, said, "The on-line classes were a great help for theoretical subjects but the practical subjects were a challenge. I am glad to be back at school so the practical concepts will be easily brushed up before the board exams".

The school put up posters of "welcome back" in corridors where teachers stood with sanitisers and checked the temperature of each student before letting them in. Sarvodaya Kanya Vidyalaya in Mandawali decorated the premises with balloons and the teachers showered flower petals on students, welcoming them. Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia also visited a school in Chirag Enclave on Monday to

assess the readiness of schools to welcome class 10 and 12 students.

"Felt really good to meet children in schools after a long time. They are still adjusting to being back in school with safety norms but are extremely happy to meet their friends. The teachers are also overjoyed to meet students, saying it has filled an empty space in their life," Sisodia said. Calling students in different slots, shorter school hours, frequent sanitisation and staggered entry and exit are among the plans of various schools in the national capital as they gear to welcome class 10 and 12 students on Monday for the first time in the academic session.

NHPC BESTOWED ICAI AWARD



NHPC, India's premier hydropower company has been awarded as 'winner' in the category 'Silver Shield' at the prestigious ICAI Awards for Excellence in Financial Reporting for 2019-20. RP Goyal, Director (Finance), NHPC received the award from Arjun Ram Meghwal, Union Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs and Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises in Ghaziabad on Sunday

INDIAN RAILWAYS VACCINATION DRIVE



A healthcare worker being vaccinated by Indian Railways doctors against COVID-19. South Western Railway vaccination started functioning from Monday morning at Central Hospital, Hubballi and Railway Hospital, Mysuru



Big B's voice removed from caller tune, HC told

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

THE Delhi High Court was on Monday told that megastar Amitabh Bachchan's voice has been removed from the caller tune on precautions against coronavirus and therefore, nothing remains in the PIL which sought its removal.

The submission was made before a bench of Chief Justice D N Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh by the petitioner who said that with the removal of the actor's voice from the caller tune his plea has become infructuous. Taking note of the submission, the court disposed of the petition as not pressed. The petitioner had sought removal of the voice of the megastar from the caller tune on the ground that the actor himself, along with some family members, had been infected by the virus.

Don't join WhatsApp, it's voluntary: Delhi HC

PURNA SINGH
NEW DELHI

THE Delhi High Court on Monday said accepting the new privacy policy of social messaging app WhatsApp was a "voluntary" thing and one can choose not to use or join that platform if one did not agree with its terms and conditions.

"It is a private app. Don't join it. It is a voluntary thing, don't accept it. Use some other app," Justice Sanjeev Sachdeva said to the petitioner, a lawyer, who has challenged WhatsApp's new privacy policy which was slated to come into effect in February but has been deferred till May. The court also said that if the terms and conditions of most mobile apps are read, "you would be surprised as to what all you are consenting to".

"Even Google maps captures all your data and stores it," the court said. The court further said it could not understand what data would be leaked according to the petitioner and since the issue requires consideration, it will be listed on January 25 due to paucity of time on Monday. The central government also agreed



with the court that the issue needs to be analysed. WhatsApp and Facebook, represented by senior advocates Kapil Sibal and Mukul Rohatgi, told the court that the plea was not maintainable and many of the issues raised in it were without any foundation.

They further told the court that private chat messages between family and friends would remain encrypted and cannot be

stored by WhatsApp and this position would not change under the new policy. The change in policy would only affect the business chats on WhatsApp, they said.

The petition, by a lawyer, has contended that the updated privacy policy violates users right to privacy under the Constitution. The plea has claimed that the new privacy policy of WhatsApp allows full access into a

user's online activity without there being any supervision by the government. Under the new policy, users can either accept it or exit the app, but they cannot opt not to share their data with other Facebook-owned or third party apps. The lawyer appearing for the petitioner claimed that the option not to agree with the new policy was given to users in European nations, but not in India.

90% road accidents caused due to human error: HP CM

SHIMLA

PEOPLE must be sensitised about ensuring road safety and obeying traffic rules as almost 90 per cent of the road accidents are caused due to human error, Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur said on Monday.

Presiding over the virtual inaugural function of national road safety month here, he said the theme of road safety was related to the life of every human being. Therefore, the road safety month was important to sensitise the masses. He said the state is committed to make roads safer, adding that continuous efforts are required to reduce the hazards of road accidents by involving communities and stakeholders in various awareness activities on road safety.

Thakur also felt the need for ac-



tive participation of general public, voluntary organisations, Panchayati Raj institutions, local bodies and related departments to make this campaign a big success.

Thakur said that special training must be imparted to drivers to make them sensitive regarding road safety, especially while driving school buses and professional vehicles, so as to bring about changes in their behaviour. The state government had taken several necessary steps for improving the black

spots on the roads to mitigate the accidents. The government is taking all necessary measures to conduct awareness campaigns for citizens to sensitise the public about the safety measures, he said.

The Chief Minister said that the Public Works Department and the National Highway Authority of India must ensure that the roads are built by ensuring proper gradients and better quality.

The authorities must not wait for accidents to declare any part of the road as black spot, but act proactively to remove the blind curves at the earliest.

At present, the Chief Minister said, there are 12.75 lakh driving licence holders in the state, including 82,325 women. Special efforts should be made to make them sensitive about road safety and their participation in this campaign should be ensured.

2 coaches of express train derailed in Lucknow

LUCKNOW/NEW DELHI

TWO coaches of the Amritsar-Jaynagar Express derailed near Lucknow on Monday, however, no passenger were injured in the incident, official said.

Northern Railway spokesperson Deepak Kumar said the two coaches of Amritsar-Jaynagar Express train derailed soon after its departure from platform number one of Charbagh station in Lucknow division at 7.50 a.m.

While one coach was derailed by all wheels, the other was by one wheel.

NR officials said that senior railway officers have reached the accident site.

Punjab-based foundation bags road safety award

NEW DELHI

THE chief functionary of Patiala Foundation Ravee Singh Ahluwalia was honoured for his outstanding work in road safety by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways in New Delhi on Monday.

Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadhkar and Minister of State for Road Transport and Highways V K Singh honoured Ahluwalia as 'Good Samaritan' in the individual category at the inauguration of the National Road Safety Month at Vigyan Bhavan here. Ahluwalia has been doing social work for the last 12 years. He has also been awarded the Punjab State Award and District Award twice in the field of social service by Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh. With



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Transport Minister Nitin Gadhkar release booklets during the inauguration of 'National Road Safety Month' in New Delhi on Monday

continuous efforts to highlight the concept of road safety, Ahluwalia has designed an innovative "Children Challan Book" for school children which has been appreciated and documented as one of the good practices at the national level in 2020 by Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu. The launch of the state's

first helmet bank is again an exemplary contribution of Ahluwalia towards the safety of two-wheeler users. The foundation based in Patiala under Ahluwalia's guidance holds reflective sticker camps regularly and is working on awareness generation activities among all stakeholders of the society.

#MeToo: Ramani ignited flame to harm my reputation: Akbar

NEW DELHI

FORMER Union minister M J Akbar told a Delhi court on Monday that harm to his reputation was done by journalist Priya Ramani as she instigated and ignited the flame first when she accused him of sexual misconduct that allegedly took place decades ago.

Akbar was replying to Ramani's argument that she was not alone but many women journalists have accused him of sexual misconduct but he filed a defamation complaint only against her.

Akbar made the submission before Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Ravindra Kumar through senior advocate Geeta Luthra during the final hearing in a criminal complaint filed by him against Ramani for



allegedly defaming him by accusing him of sexual misconduct, when he was a journalist more than 20 years ago. Ramani had made allegation of sexual misconduct against Akbar in the wake of #MeToo movement in 2018.

"It doesn't matter what people say post facto. Harm is done by the man who instigates and ig-

nites the flame first," Luthra told the court. She said there was no public interest in Ramani's allegation. "There is no public interest. There is no good faith. There is just some other motive. It is not for me to state it," she said. She added that "it is vindictive and actuated out of malice. The fact is your can just spoil a person's reputation".

The court will further hear the matter on January 23. Akbar had filed the criminal defamation complaint against Ramani in October 15, 2018. He resigned as Union minister on October 17, 2018. Akbar had earlier told the court that Ramani had defamed him by calling him with adjectives such as 'media's biggest predator' that harmed his reputation.

He has denied all the allegations of sexual harassment against the women who came forward during #MeToo campaign against him. Over 20 women came up with accounts of the alleged sexual harassment by Akbar while they were working as journalists under him. He termed the allegations "false, fabricated and deeply distressing" and said he was taking appropriate legal action against them.

8 cows mowed down by train, six injured

ETAWAH

EIGHT cows were killed and six were injured after speeding Rajdhani Express mowed them down near Tamera Ki Madaiya village on Delhi-Howrah route in Jaswantnagar area of Etawah district. The incident took place on Sunday, between Jaswantnagar and Balrai railway stations. According to the villagers, a herd of cattle was grazing near the tracks when 14 of them were mowed down by the Rajdhani Express. Eight cows died on the spot, while six suffered critical injuries.

The gateman and villagers alerted the district officials including SDM Jaswantnagar Jyotsana Bandhu, who rushed to the spot. The SDM supervised the rescue operation and shifted the six injured animals to a nearby gaushala for treatment, said the police.

Vardhan inaugurates 100-bed Plastic Surgery Block at AIIMS

NEW DELHI

UNION Health Minister Harsh Vardhan on Monday inaugurated the newly-constructed Burns and Plastic Surgery Block at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences and dedicated it to the 'Father of Plastic Surgery' - ancient Indian physician Sushruta.

"Due to the large population, most of the burn care facilities are overburdened and state-of-the-art burn care is negligible. There is a dire need for a health-care facility which can provide high quality care for a large fraction of the population," the Health Minister said following the launch. Burn injury is one of the biggest causes of workforce loss and an issue of concern for a rapidly developing economy like India. India has as many as 70 lakh burn injuries annually



Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare Harsh Vardhan with AIIMS Director Randeep Guleria and other senior faculty members looks at a hospital model

with mortality rate as high as 1.4 lakh per year and an additional 2.4 lakh patients end up with severe deformities. Harsh Vardhan added that this initiative will bridge the gap between this need and availability. "Burns and Plastic Surgery Block has three goals. The first is to reduce the number of deaths due to burns. The present death toll of 1.4 lakh a year due to burns is not a happy situation."

The fascinating progress of Indian cinema

INDIAN film industry is limping back to normality. The pandemic-hit industry will take time to recover. It needs to reshape itself with a relook of its priorities. A review of Indian film industry is going on alongside the 51st International Film Festival of India at Goa. It is time to reflect on the 60s, 70s and even 80s and what has changed the very idea of cinema.

Prior to 'Chetna' in the 70s; it was all about magnificent sets. But the 70s brought about a revolution with shootings done on location over four to five weeks. It was unusual to do so. As acclaimed filmmaker Rahul Rawail puts it, bold themes effected a lot of changes then onwards. Dev Anand starrer 'Johnny Mera Naam' gave rise to a new form of action oriented, big plot films in that period. The golden 70s when business was growing fast in the Hindi film-industry saw an 'unconventional hero' played by Amitabh Bachchan in Zanjeer giving birth to the image of 'angry

young man', a newly established brand back then. Nasir Hussain's 'Yaadon Ki Baaraat' (1973) which saw the coming of Salim-Javed had a great script.

Raj Kapoor's 'Bobby' which introduced Rishi Kapoor and Dimple Kapadia also started a new trend. These films were bringing in a change and adding to the whole palate of film-making. Another star, Jeeendra also came in with a new appeal and new style in the world of Hindi cinema. 'Deewar' – a brilliantly toned film took Yash Chopra to great heights in that period. Yash Chopra went further with more memorable films like Trishul. However, if one notices, in those days there existed a healthy competition among the film stars.

Every actor was rising above each other, but there was no rivalry. On one particular occasion the three stalwarts – Raj Kapoor, Dev Anand and Dilip Kumar came across each other in a restaurant and started

talking like intimate friends about the old days and each other's films, old timers recall. It is also well known that the great Sachin Dev Burman politely said that doing music for 'Laila Majnu' was not for him and recommended Madan Mohan for it.

The music directors, great singers and lyricists would sit together with directors and get to know the story and also the actor who would lip-sync, all for adding perfection to the film. Then there was another experiment in L V Prasad's 'Ek Duihe Ke Liye' where a hero who did not speak Hindi and spoke only Tamil and an actress who spoke only Hindi and not Tamil" did a love story. People were inventing and doing different kinds of works.

It carried on into the 80s when more new people came in, although the old-guards were still there. The 80s saw the coming of stalwarts like Subhash Ghai and Shatrughna Sinha, among others. It was also the period when Amjad Khan, who was popular for playing villains, did a comic role. There are lessons in all this for everyone. When the going gets tough, the tough get going, it is said and the industry must not forget that.

UNCONSTITUTIONALITY OF FARM LAWS

Why can't SC hear on this issue?



Madabhushi Sridhar Acharyulu

January 11 remains a great day in the current history of the Supreme Court when it strongly stood by the agitating farmers. Chief Justice of India Mr Justice Sharad A Bobde was humane, highly reasonable

and was in right form in questioning the political executive's complete failure in dealing with the farmers agitation against its unconstitutional laws. But the interim order next day disappointed many. The apex Court proposed to form an independent panel chaired by a former CJI to 'amicably resolve' stand-off between protesting farmers and government. It was supposed to be the chaired by the CJI. But the committee was proved to be totally biased and useless as one recused and farmers refused to attend before these members.

A three-judge Bench led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sharad A. Bobde made serious observations while underlining its "disappointment" at the way the NDA Government was dealing with the farmers' protest. Chief Justice asked Attorney General K.K. Venugopal and Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, who were appearing for the Centre. "We don't want to make any stray observations against you... But we are extremely disappointed in the way you are handling this situation. You made a law without enough consultation, resulting in a strike. Many States are up in rebellion against you... The whole thing has been going on for months... You say you are negotiating, talking... What negotiating? What talking? What is going on?"

CJI asks AG not to give a lecture

Attorney General was objecting to the intention of the SC to give an interim order against the implementation of the three laws, calling it as a "drastic decision".

He said that 'none of the farm leaders, during the discussions, had shown a single provision in the laws which was unconstitutional'. The CJI replied: "Mr. Attorney, sorry to say, we may be taking a decision because you, the Union of India, did not take responsibility. You were not able to solve the problem... You should have been able to solve the strike, but you did not." The AG suggested the Court not to "hurry" to pass the order of stay, Chief Justice Bobde said. "Mr. Attorney, we are giving a very long rope to you. Don't give us a lecture on patience..."

Women up in protest

During the hearing, Chief Justice Bobde appealed to senior citizens, women and children at the protests to return

home. "Tell them the Chief Justice of India wants them to go home... Whether you have faith in us or not, we are the Supreme Court of India and we will do our job," he said. This comment sparked off protests from women organizations who criticised it as a patriarchal and unwarranted.

Most problematic part was that the Court did not want to go into the question of constitutionality of the laws at this stage. It should have taken up the case long back when farmers announced a long agitation or at least given the timeline for its hearing. Most of the experts opined that these laws cannot stand the constitutionality test for many reasons.

Govt vs Right to Protest

Attorney General has pointed out that the farmers were going to bring 2000 tractors to "join" the Republic Day parade. Senior advocate Dushyant Dave, however, refuted the claim and said: "Mr. Venugopal, these farmers too have members in the Army. They will do no such thing... Really don't understand the attitude of the government". The AG referred to how rioters recently destroyed the stage where the Haryana Chief Minister was to come. Then Chief Justice Bobde said, "We are not saying we will protect law-breakers. Law and order are the job of the police. We will protect the right to peaceful protest like Gandhiji's satyagraha."

Will majority support the farmers?

Government was arguing that the "majority" in the country thought the farm laws were harmless, then the CJI said the thoughts of the majority would not help resolve the farmers' strike. "We ourselves do not claim to know how to resolve every situation. We are only trying to break the tension and make the atmosphere more conducive for negotiations. We are a constitutional court... Who is going to be responsible if this sabre-rattling goes on?", he stated.

Violence

The CJI warned: Everybody, including the court, would be responsible if any violence broke out. Each one of us is responsible. The responsibility is on all of us, including the Supreme Court, that there will be no bloodshed. We don't want any blood on our hands. There should be no violence. A stray incident can spark violence."

CJI's clarification

To the farmers, the CJI clarified that an order of stay on the implementation of the laws would not mean they have to call off their protests, pack up and go home, and said: "Even after we stay the implementation of the laws, you [farmers] carry on the protest. We don't want



any criticism that the court is stifling the protest". He, however, asked whether the farmers would "move a little" from their present protest sites to convenience citizens once the talks with the committee got going.

A committee without basis

The Committee appointed by the Supreme Court fizzled out as soon as it was formed. One member recused and agitating farmer leaders declined to appear before the Committee. A PIL is filed before Supreme Court to remove the remaining members.

Social Media and other media have exposed the bias of the four members chosen by the Supreme Court, within hours of the announcement of the Committee, which was expected to hear the objections, demands, grievances and complaints against the three Farm Laws passed by the Centre. Media has firmly established with proofs that these four have totally supported the hurriedly brought Bills to 'liberate' farmers.

The Farm Laws of the Centre has created an existential challenge for the small and marginal farmers all over the country. They have determined and developed strong agitation preparedness, stationed on roads leading to New Delhi to fight against the farm harm laws. The farmers continued peaceful protest against the farm harm laws is testing the efficacy of the judicial system and posing threat to the political executive. The worst part is that the Government exhibited lack of humanity when they attacked farmers with water cannons amidst 2 degree centigrade cold in NCR and remained silent thereafter.

Can Supreme Court resolve an issue which the centre failed to address? Is it a subject matter of judicial mediation? The apex court has tried perhaps with genuine motive and good faith. The Supreme Court gave an interim order suspending the implementation of three agriculture Acts which were long back notified and prior to that were already in

vogue in the form of ordinances. This suspension is no solution for the farmers agitating for their withdrawal. The so-called negotiations are just formal time-gaining strategies and appears to be not intended to arrive at a solution. In fact, when farmers unions say that there cannot be any solution except abolition of laws, which the Government is not willing to. The Centre does not want to accept the 'defeat', or it could be under heavy pressure for continuation of these enactments. In these circumstances there is little scope for any other solution. Each side wanted the other to agree to its demand totally, and hence, there appears no possibility for middle path.

The Supreme Court thought a committee suggested by a non-political entity like judiciary might make agitating farmers to come forward to find a solution. Whether Centre has agreed to this committee? Is there any commitment from the Government to implement the report of this Committee? Would it be legal if the SC issues any final order based on the recommendations of this committee?

Most important question is what criterion was followed in selecting the panelists? But the experts whom SC chose, were already fixed their mind-frame that farm laws are good and beneficial for farmers. They exposed themselves earlier through media writings, interviews etc. It is almost impossible for such members to play a neutral role and convince the farmers that their reasons will be heard when mediators have already drawn adverse conclusions. This is the inherent defect of the committee appointed by the Supreme Court. It is not known whether their views were brought to the notice of the SC. One member has recused himself from the committee, while the farmers unions have already announced that they would not appear before this Committee.

The interim order of the Judiciary basically appears to be an executive function. Whether the Supreme Court replaces the members? Or treats the recusal by member or non-appearance by farmers. Such an order be a proper precedent. There is no conclusion on constitutionality, against which there are many strong arguments. The Court dealt only with the protests and presented its thinking on solution to the stalemate. Instead, the SC should have expedited the hearing this important Constitutional question. When a member recused from the Committee, and when farmers declared that they would not present before this Committee, the authority of the court has suffered a serious dent. How can the SC secure compliance to its order?

(The writer is Professor of Law, Bennett University and former Central Information Commissioner)



'Downfall of the BJP govt has started with farmers protest'

ANAND SINGH

WITH the farmers agitation continuing for the 54th day and the crucial 10th round of talks of the farmers with the government scheduled on Tuesday, Kisan Congress Vice President Surendra Solanki on Monday said that the downfall of the Narendra Modi-led BJP government will start from this farmers agitation, as it is the first protest in 73 years of Independent India which has gone strong even during the Covid pandemic.

The Kisan Congress has been standing shoulder to shoulder with farmers by lending their hand for providing food and other materials to the farmers at several borders of the national capital, where the farmers have been agitating since November 26 last year demanding repealing of the three farm laws.

In an interview to IANS, Solanki alleged the motives of the government are not good, as it has already made up its mind "not to repeal" the three farm laws.

He said, "Somewhere the government is under pressure from its capitalist friends. And for the first time in the history of Independent India in last 73 years, such a huge number of farmers has been sitting on protest in this chilling winter and in this pandemic era."

He said that the motives of the BJP are questionable as on number of occasions government has clearly said it will not repeal the farm laws.

"So once you are not in mood to listen to farmers then from where a solution can be expected?" he quipped.

To a question about the farmer leaders being called for questioning by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) and many leaders describing the farmers as Khalistani, Solanki, who hails from Haryana, said, "There is a famous saying in Hindi 'Vinash kale viprit Buddhi', the brain of the government has stopped functioning in right direction."

"They need to understand the fact that even during the nationwide lockdown, the farmers kept on supporting the GDP of the country," he said, adding that even the sons of the farmers are part of the armed forces fighting for the country on borders.

Slamming BJP's leaders, Solanki said: "Who are BJP leaders to distribute the certificate of nationalism to farmers? This is unfortunate and condemnable. Their decline has started now with the farmers agitation."

'If the government had reports that the condition can deteriorate then they should have found a solution immediately instead of delaying it for more than 54 days. Why they have taken such long time? There are number of examples when the Supreme Court has held hearings and the government has taken decisions at midnight' – Surendra Solanki, Kisan Congress Vice President

When pointed out that the farmers were not allowed to enter the national capital, he said that it shows that they are not willing to "find a solution".

"If the government had reports that the condition can deteriorate then they should have found a solution immediately instead of delaying it for more than 54 days. Why they have taken such long time? There are number of examples when the Supreme Court has held hearings and the government has taken decisions at midnight," the Kisan Congress leader said.

Hitting out at the BJP government, he said that after coming to power in 2014 the government has started to distribute the certificate of fake nationalism.

"They need to tell the country about their contribution in the Independence movement and why the tricolour is not hoisted at the RSS headquarters at Nagpur," Solanki said.

To a question that Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi hitting the streets in the favour of farmers on Friday, almost after a delay of 52 days and many of the Congress leaders missing on the front, the Kisan Congress leader said, "Rahul Gandhi has led from the front on the farmers issue and he has won the trust of farmers." He said that Rahul Gandhi has taken a stand for their farmers in

Uttar Pradesh, when then Chief Minister Mayawati decided to acquire the land of farmers in Bhatta Parsaul.

He highlighted that it was the Congress-led UPA govt that brought in the Land Acquisition Bill. "And after the Modi government came to power and it brought changes in the land acquisition bill, Rahul Gandhi opposed it in Parliament and fought it fearlessly and all of use got inspiration from him," he said.

Talking about the role of the Kisan Congress against the three farm laws, Solanki said: "We were the first to oppose the ordinances when they were brought last year during the Covid pandemic. I even went to President Ram Nath Kovind and also staged a protest outside Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar's residence during the nationwide lockdown amid the Covid pandemic to oppose the farm ordinances."

Solanki also said that before participating in the protest in the national capital last Friday, Rahul Gandhi had held talks with farmers across the country virtually three months ago. "Rahul Gandhi also spoke to the traders in different mandis across the country to understand their grievances," he said.

"Rahul Gandhi has also made it clear that if the government does not repeal these three farm laws, if voted to power, the Congress will repeal these laws," he said

He also said that the Kisan Congress was the first organisation to demand compensation of Rs one crore to the families of the farmers who died during the protest and a government job to their kin.

Asked about the farmers' planned tractor parade on Republic Day, Solanki said, "We are extending all support to the farmers for their planned Republic Day tractor parade. I am a farmer first. And I am associated with the party later."

He also said that now the farmers agitation fight is about self-esteem for farmers and farmers have decided not to return home until the three farm laws are repealed.

Thousands of farmers from Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh have been protesting against the three farm laws at several borders of their national capital and over 60 farmers have died. The farmers are demanding the repeal of the three farm laws.

LETTERS

NTR deserves Bharat Ratna

Mr Somasekhara Prasad's writeup, "NTR, man of many roles" (Hans India, Jan 18) was very informative. At the age of 60 years, Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao entered into political

arena with a sole object to revive 'Telugu Pride'. As the founder President of Telugu Desam, within nine months he created a 'prabhanjanam' in Andhra Pradesh, by dethroning ruling Congress party in January 1983, much to the surprise of then Prime Minister and Congress supremo, Mrs Indira Gandhi.

As the head of first non-Congress govt bin state, as a man of reforms he introduced the poll promise Rs 2 kg rice scheme. The age old practice of Patel Patwari system was abolished by his Govt. in Telangana region, replacing with Mandal Praja Parishad.

His party was first of its kind to introduce midday meals in schools, free housing to poor; it is reported about five lakhs

THI's visual treat is a delight

THE primary objective of the newspaper is reporting the news as to what is happening in the country and the world in varied spheres of life, covering politics, economics, science and technology, environment and sports etc. That is exactly what "The Hans India" like most newspapers performs with dedication and commitment to the journalistic principles.

But your newspaper stands out from all other newspapers, performing a unique and sublime function to the immense delight of readers like me. The way your newspaper publishes beautiful pictures of nature with so poetic lines below the pictures elevates the spirit of the reader, offering him so much happiness.

For instance, the picture captioned "Pretty Cool" (published on Jan 12), presenting a beautiful scene of a flock of cranes perching on a barren tree at Hussain Sagar Lake and another picture captioned "Golden Dusk" (published on January 18), depicting the entrancing beauty of the crimson-gold painted sky and of the glowing waters of Hussain Sagar at the Sun-down hour with the stream of poetic lines are really splendid. Hearty congratulations to Mr Adula Krishna, the lensman and creator of these beautiful photo-pictures.

Dr Venugopala Rao Kaki, Kakinada

houses were built and allotted to the needy poor during his tenure as Chief Minister during three different spells. He was also instrumental in changing the face of Hyderabad city, beautifying Tank bund and installing prestigious Buddha idol in Hussain Sagar waters. It is reported that as a man of discipline and punctuality Rao used to visit the Secretariat at 7 am daily, where CMO used to function in two shifts!

In order to checkmate the Congress party at Centre, NTR made a positive attempt to unite non-Congress parties on one platform and conducted a conclave in Vijayawada in March 1983 by bringing all national non-Congress leaders on

common platform. The National Front was floated accordingly and Mr Rao became first founder Chairman of the Front which also formed it's govt in Centre by reducing ruling Congress party as opposition in ruling.

The entry of his biographer turned wife, Lakshmi Parvati in his life, changed the political scenario in Telugu Desam Party. A midnight political coup engineered by his younger son in law, N Chandrababu Naidu unseated NTR from his party as well as CM gaddi in September 1995. The unexpected upheaval in his life, the first of its kind probably left a deep shock to this aged leader that cost his life on 18th January 1996.

An appeal to AP CM

Before February 2021, we the pensioners of AP State should submit life certificate. For people who are 75-plus, coming out of their homes due to Covid 19 Virus pandemic is inviting viral infection knowingly. We have been confined to our homes since last April. I request the Chief Minister this work may be entrusted to Ward/Village Secretariat, because they knew everyone in every house without exception. Kindly consider favourably Sir.

R Sarva Jagannadha Reddy, Tirupati

thehansreader@gmail.com

Venkaiah gives a call to protect whistle-blowers

HYDERABAD

VICE-PRESIDENT M Venkaiah Naidu on Monday suggested that all the corporates consciously encourage whistle-blowing mechanism and provide adequate safeguards for the protection of whistle blowers.

Delivering the convocation address at the Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI), he stressed that it was important to ensure transparency and accountability in all matters of corporate governance to enhance the confidence of all stakeholders, including shareholders.

Stressing the need to protect public money, Naidu said that system has to be fool-proof to reduce the scope for any irregularity. Highlighting that the actions of a few have brought a bad name to Indian business, he urged young company secretaries to ensure ethics and accountability in corporate governance through their guidance and handholding. "This profession should be taken as a mission", he told them.

Expressing the hope that economy would rebound in the coming months, he urged India Inc to take the lead in making it robust.

Stating that the country has fared reasonably better than many others, including the developed ones, in the



Stressing the need to protect public money, the Vice-President says that system has to be fool-proof to reduce the scope for any irregularity. Highlighting that the actions of a few have brought a bad name to Indian business, he urges young company secretaries to ensure ethics and accountability in corporate governance through their guidance and handholding



• **AVital for transparency, accountability in corporate governance**



• **Urges corporates to encourage whistle-blowing mechanism**

fight against the novel Coronavirus and in taking steps to revive the economy, he referred to the recent remarks of IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva, who had said that India took very decisive steps to deal with the pandemic and its economic consequences.

Calling for concerted efforts by all stakeholders in making the economy robust again, Naidu said that institutions like ICSI would play a key role in putting the economy back on rails, with a focus on good corporate governance.

Stating that strong principles of corporate governance must be the driving force of any company, he said transparency, integrity and honesty must be upheld at all times and must

be reflected in every business activity. Observing that professionals like company secretaries will be playing a key role in reviving the economy, as India moves ahead in its journey of becoming 'Atmanirbhar' in various sectors, the VP urged them to always remain committed to upholding high moral values and ethics. "You should never swerve from the path of righteousness".

Describing company secretaries as the conscience- keepers of the corporate, he said it was imperative for them to be upright and not succumb to any pressure from the management.

Naidu said that professional bodies like ICSI must ensure that corporate entities were not only professionally

competent but law-abiding too.

Observing that Company Secretaries hold a distinguished place in the Indian economic scenario, the Vice President advised them to ensure good corporate governance by adopting the best professional practices.

Noting that the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code has opened up a new era in economic reforms, the VP said it was heartening that company secretaries are playing a pivotal role in the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process.

Mohammed Mahmood Ali, Home Minister, Ashish Garg, ICSI president, Ashish Mohan, ICSI secretary, Ankur Yadav, ICSI joint secretary, were among those present.

Take PM's message of development to every house in TS: Tarun Chugh

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

BHARATIYA Janata Party national general secretary Tarun Chugh, who is also party's state observer for Telangana, on Monday called upon the party workers to take Prime Minister Narendra Modi's message of development and progress to every house in the State and expose the inefficient and corrupt practices of the Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao-led government in Telangana.

Addressing the party leaders, Chugh said the KCR government was deliberately defeating all the Central schemes which had been launched by the Prime Minister for the benefit of poor. In fact, he said that KCR government was creating hurdles in the implementation of several schemes that were meant for people in villages. He accused the Chief Minister of promoting nepotism in

- **Asks the party's rank and file in TS to expose TRS government's corrupt practices**
- **Accuses the TRS government of creating hurdles in the way of implementation of Central schemes in the State**
- **Says KCR practicing nepotism and garnering votes on emotional grounds**

the State by projecting his family members as leaders of the party and added that KCR had broken all records of corruption by forming the government on emotional grounds.

Chugh said the message of the Modi government's governance, all that it has delivered to the people of the country in the last seven years, needed to be taken to every house and family in the State. He exhorted the party workers to expose the failures of the KCR government

because people in the State were agitated and disappointed. "People are looking for a new hope and a new era to set in and it is the duty of the BJP workers to fulfil their aspirations," Chugh said.

Lauding the Modi government for historic decisions like the abrogation of Article 370 and 35 (A) and initiating the construction of Sri Ram temple, Chugh said BJP must intensify its campaign in the State by promising the people good governance and transparent administration.

SCR health staff get Covid jab in phase-1

HYDERABAD

The first doses of Covid-19 vaccine were administered to the South Central Railway (SCR) frontline medical staff

at the Railway Hospital, Lalaguda on Monday, in the presence of General Manager Gajanan Mallya. The first vaccine shots were given to doctors, nurses and hous-

keeping staff. During the Corona pandemic the health-care staff of the zone had rendered yeoman service, putting their physical, mental and social well-being at risk.

Industrial Policy offers fiscal sops to SC/STs

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

IN order to encourage SC/ST entrepreneurs in the state, the department of industries and commerce announced fiscal incentives to the categories of micro, small and medium enterprises, large industries and mega industries in the Industrial Policy-2020-23 released recently. Industries and enterprises are divided into micro, small, medium, large and mega industries based on the investment and turnover. As per the government norms, enterprises with investment in plant and machinery or equipment not more than Rs 1 crore and annual turnover of up to Rs 5 crore is considered as micro enterprise. Enterprises with investment of up to Rs 10 crore and annual turnover Rs 50 crore are categorised as small industries. The medium industries are those with investment up to Rs 50 crore and the annual turnover of 250 crore.

Following are the incentives announced by the government under the Industrial Policy for 2020-23 to Micro and Small enterprises.

Micro and small enterprises of SCs and STs will get reimbursement of 100 per cent on stamp duty and transfer duty paid by them on purchase of land meant for industrial use, reimbursement of 100 per cent stamp duty for lease of land/shed/buildings, mortgages and hypothecations, reimbursement of 100 per cent of net SGST accrued to state for a period of five years from the date of the commencement of the commercial production or up to realisation of 100 per cent fixed capital investment, whichever is earlier.

- In its recent Industrial Policy 2020-23, the State govt announced a slew of incentives to all categories of entrepreneurs



- They will get 100% reimbursement on stamp duty on purchase of land, lease of land besides cent percent reimbursement on net SGST accrued to state for a period of five years

- 15% investment subsidy on fixed capital investment limited up to Rs 20 lakh will be given if the enterprise after 3 yrs of continuous operation

According to department of industries and commerce, the government will offer 15 per cent investment subsidy on fixed capital investment limited up to Rs 20 lakh, whichever is lower. SC/ST entrepreneurs can avail these benefits till 2023. The subsidy will be released only after three years of continuous operation with at least 80 per cent efficiency in all parameters, i.e. employment and production.

Due to impact of lockdown, some small and micro enterprises could not continue production and they may get some difficulties to avail the subsidy. The government also decided to give interest subsidy of three per cent on the term loan taken for fixed capital investment by new micro and small enterprises for five years from the date of commencement of commercial production.

The government also announced reimbursement of 25 per cent land conversion charges for industrial use limited to Rs 10 lakh.

Since many entrepreneurs face problems in payment of power bills, the state government has decided to give fixed power cost reimbursement of Rs 1 per unit for a period of five years from the date of the commencement of commercial production to the SC/ST entrepreneurs. Land conversion is very important process in promotion of industries. The entrepreneurs have to pay charges for converting the agriculture land into non-agriculture purposes. So, the government has decided to reimburse 25 per cent land conversion charges for industrial use limits up to Rs 10 lakh.

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NELLORE

KOVUR legislator and YSRCP senior leader Nallapureddy Prasanna Kumar Reddy warned the superintendent of police Bhaskar Bhushan of immediate transfer for 'dancing to the tunes of the opposition leaders'. He made these serious remarks against the district top cop at a meeting held in Kodavalur mandal on Monday. He said that the SP had directed the police personnel not to register cases under SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act in haste.

The video of the ruling party MLA's demeaning remarks on the SP went viral on social media platforms as well as television channels drawing flak from various quarters. In the clip, he was seen asking the SP why he had directed his staff not to register cases under the SC/ST Act. "What he is thinking of himself? This is not correct and good. Will bring the issue to the notice of the Chief Minister. A former minister called him and reportedly directed him not to

- The ruling party MLA fumes at the SP for allegedly asking police not to register a case under SC/ST Act against a TDP leader without proper inquiry
- The YSRCP is seen alleging that the SP's instruction in the incident follows a phone call from a 'former minister'
- DCMS chief lodges a complaint against Kodavalur mandal president of TDP for making some comments against him in social media



Kovur MLA N Prasanna Kumar Reddy addressing a meeting where he warned the SP of transfer, in Kodavalur on Monday

register the case. Why he had obliged the request of an opposition leader? Does he know the YSRCP is in power? Do you think DGP saves you?"

Prasanna Kumar Reddy seen to be saying in the video.

He also said if a case is registered, the DSP conducts an inquiry and subsequently takes

proper action if the incident is genuine. He said that they wouldn't tolerate such acts supporting the opposition and registration of cases against the ruling party leaders.

It may be recalled that Prasanna Kumar Reddy warned the then collector M V Seshagiri Babu and SP Bhaskar Bhushan for registering a case against him for distributing essentials on April 10 violating the lockdown guidelines and the BR Palem police registered a case against him for violating the Section 144 on April 11 last year. He even staged a protest in front of the police station against the cases.

The incident is a fallout of a complaint lodged by DCMS president V Chalapati Rao, an SC, against Kodavalur mandal president Cheepinapi Balakrishna of the TDP for posting comments against him on social media. As per allegations of the legislator, SP Bhaskar Bhushan reportedly directed the police not to register a case under SC-ST Act without ascertaining the facts.

Thakur takes charge at RTC MD

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

SENIOR IPS officer R P Thakur took charge as vice-chairman and managing director of AP Road Transport Corporation (APSRTC) at the RTC House here on Monday. He was earlier the commissioner, printing and stationery and stores purchase department, Vijayawada.

Interacting with the executive directors and other senior officers of the RTC after taking the charge, Thakur took stock of the status of operations and financial position of APSRTC in the post-Covid-19

Promises to carry employees along and work to improvement corporation

lockdown scenario. The new MD said that he would carry the employees of APSRTC along and strive for improvement of the organisation, while paying attention to the welfare of the employees and also building up a good image for the government. Thakur thanked Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy for providing him the opportunity to serve the government and the general

public of the state in the post. He earlier worked in various positions, including the state DGP, DIG, Anantapur Range, and DIG, CISE. As IGP, he served in Rayalaseema and Warangal Ranges.

He also worked as director general, Anti-Corruption Bureau and received various prestigious police medals such as Indian Police Medal in 2003, Antrik Suraksha Seva Patak in 2004, Police Medal for Gallantry in 1999 and President Police Medal for distinguished service in 2011 and Ati Utkrishi Seva Patak in 2018.



Fomer DGP R P Thakur taking a charge as Vice-Chairman and Managing Director of APSRTC at RTC Bhavan in Vijayawada on Monday

Seek Bharat Ratna to NTR, Raghu Rama to CM

AMARAVATI

NARASAPURAM MP K Raghu Rama Krishnam Raju on Monday wrote a letter to Chief Minister

YS Jagan Mohan Reddy requesting him to appeal to Central government to consider Bharat Ratna award to former chief minister N T Rama Rao. He asked the Chief Minister to make a personal representation on the issue. On the occasion of 25th death anniversary of Rama Rao, the MP described him as a great legendary politician and pride of Telugu people living across the world.

Ramatheertham temple to be renovated at a cost of ₹3 cr

- ▶ **Endowments Minister says TTD will send the Lord Rama idol damaged recently by miscreants**
- ▶ **Promises to raise salaries of priests in temples across the State**

AMARAVATI

MINISTER for endowments Vellampalli Srinivasa Rao said Sri Kodandrama Swamy temple at Ramatheertham in Vizianagaram, where the idol was beheaded by unidentified persons recently, would be reconstructed at a cost of Rs 3 crore. In a review with officials here on Monday, the minister said the TTD would supply the idol of Srirama for the 700

ft high temple. As part of the renovation, the steps route would be developed, he said adding the temple's pond (koneru) and other facilities would be developed and surroundings would be provided with electricity. Endowments secretary Girija Sankar, special commissioner P Arjuna Rao, SE Srinivas and regional joint commissioner Brahmaramba were present. Later, in a meeting with priests, Srinivas said that the state government was committed for the welfare of the priests. He said the government had conducted meetings with priests associations on welfare programmes. He promised to increase the wages of priests from Rs 5,000 to Rs 10,000 per month and Rs 16,500 for those who were getting Rs 10,000 at present. He said Rs 3,60,000 would be given to all temples under Dhooopa Deepa Naivedyam scheme.



Endowments Minister V Srinivasa Rao holding a review on Ramatheertham temple and other issues with officials of the department in Vijayawada on Monday

AP reports 81 Covid cases

AMARAVATI

A seven-month low of 81 Covid-19 cases were reported in the state, while 263 patients recovered from the infection and one succumbed in the state during the 24 hours ending 9 am on Monday.

The latest bulletin said 27,861 samples were tested during the period. The state Covid-19 chart showed the caseload at 8,86,066 with 8,77,212 recoveries and 7,141 deaths. The active caseload is now 1,713, according to the bulletin. Kadapa, which reported zero cases on Sunday, added the highest 19 on Monday.

Chittoor reported 15 and Guntur 13 new cases, while the remaining 10 districts added below seven cases each. Anantapuram saw zero addition in cases in 24 hours.



Delay in Mallya's extradition: UK not giving details, top court told

In Dec 2020, Foreign Minister Jaishankar raised the issue with UK Foreign Secretary Raab and most recently in Jan 2021, the Home Secy did it with the UK Permanent Under Secretary of Home, but UK govt refused to share the details of the confidential proceedings

NEW DELHI

THE Centre on Monday informed the Supreme Court that Vijay Mallya's extradition has been raised at the highest political level, but the UK government has refused to share the details of the confidential proceedings delaying his extradition.

"In December 2020, External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar raised the issue with UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab and most recently in January 2021, the Home Secretary of India

raised it with the UK Permanent Under Secretary of Home. UK's response remained the same", said Solicitor General Tushar Mehta before a bench headed by Justice U.U. Lalit.

Mehta added that in November last year the foreign secretary of India raised the issue of Vijay Mallya extradition with UK Home Secretary Priti Patel, who responded that the UK's legal complexities were preventing Mallya's quick extradition.

Mehta submitted that the Indian gov-

The top court had held him guilty of contempt as Mallya did not truthfully disclose the full account of his assets. In May 2017, the apex court held him guilty of contempt of court for transferring \$40 million to his children, and ordered him to appear on July 10, 2017 to argue on the quantum of punishment



ernment has been informed that there is a further legal issue that needs to be

resolved before Mallya can be extradited. "Under United Kingdom law, ex-

tradition cannot take place until it is resolved. As it is judicial in nature, the issue is confidential, and you will understand that Her Majesty's government cannot provide any more details", said Mehta citing official response from the UK.

Mehta submitted before the bench that his extradition has been pursued at the highest level and sought adjournment on the matter. The top court has fixed the matter for further hearing on March 15.

On August 31, the Supreme Court had

dismissed Mallya's plea seeking review of a 2017 judgment which held him guilty for contempt of court. The top court also sought Mallya's presence before the court on October 5.

The top court had held him guilty of contempt, as Mallya did not truthfully disclose the full account of his assets. In May 2017, the apex court held him guilty of contempt of court for transferring \$40 million to his children, and ordered him to appear on July 10, 2017 to argue on the quantum of punishment.

CHINESE VILLAGE IN DISPUTED REGION OF ARUNACHAL

We are watching the activities along border, says India
Village consists of 101 houses, 4.5 km 'within Indian territory'

NEW DELHI

CHINA is undertaking construction work along the border areas, the Indian government said on Monday while categorically stressing that all developments having a bearing on India's security are being closely watched.

Acknowledging the reports of construction by the Chinese along the Arunachal Pradesh border, the Ministry of External Affairs said "We have seen recent reports on China undertaking construction work along the border areas with India."

China built a new village, consisting of 101 homes, in Arunachal Pradesh, about 4.5 km "within Indian territory of the de facto border", NDTV reported while citing satellite imagery from Planet Labs, a private US-based imaging company.

The village is located on the banks of Tsari Chu river in Upper Subansiri district, an area along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). This was the same area where five people were detained by Chinese troops last September.

Comparing two satellite images provided by Planet Labs, NDTV reported the village had been built sometime in the past 15 months. The first image, from August 26, 2019, did not show any construction activity, while the second, from November 1, 2020, depicted the village with dozens of rows of small and medium-sized

The first image, from Aug 26, 2019, did not show any activity, while the second, from Nov 1, 2020, depicted the village with dozens of rows of small and medium-sized structures, roads



structures and roads. The MEA said that they are taking all the necessary measures to safeguard the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. "China has undertaken such infrastructure construction activity in the past several years. In response, our government too has stepped up border infrastructure including the construction of roads, bridges etc which has provided much needed connectivity to the local population along the border," the ministry said.

The government remains committed to the objective of creating infrastructure along the border areas for the improvement of livelihood of its citizens, including in Arunachal Pradesh, the ministry said.

"The government keeps a constant watch on all developments having a bearing on India's security and takes all the necessary measures to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity," the ministry stressed.

Indian Army Chief General Manoj Mukund Naravane on January 15 had stated the forces are maintaining a high level of operational readiness to deal with all eventualities along the 3,488-km Line of Actual Control, from eastern Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh.

India and China are engaged in a nine-month-long standoff along the LAC in eastern Ladakh. Despite several levels of dialogue, there has not been any breakthrough and the deadlock continues.

UP health worker succumbs after receiving Covid shot

'Mahipal was not suffering from any ailment other than fever and cough,' family blames death due to vaccination

MORADABAD/LUCKNOW

A 46-year-old health worker died in Uttar Pradesh's Moradabad district a day after receiving the coronavirus vaccination, with the autopsy report attributing the death to "cardio-pulmonary disease", officials said on Monday.

The family of Mahipal, who was working as ward boy in state-run Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Hospital, said he was not suffering from any ailment other than fever and cough, and blamed his death on vaccination.

But the Uttar Pradesh government said the man died due to septicemic shock and cardiac arrest and the death was not related to the COVID-19 vaccination.

"An adverse event following immunisation (AEFI) committee probed the death of the man in Moradabad. The cause of death was septicemic shock and cardiac arrest and it has nothing to do with the vaccination," the state's Additional Chief Secretary (Health) Amit Mohan Prasad told reporters in Lucknow. He said that some persons were spreading false news regarding the vaccine and vaccinations, and people should not trust them. "The two vaccines (Covishield and Covaxin) used in the country are safe," Prasad added.

After Mahipal died on Sunday night, Moradabad District Magistrate Rakesh Singh said that a high-level med-

ical inquiry would be held. "The case of Mahipal is exceptional and a high-level medical inquiry will be ordered," he said while asserting that the vaccines are fully safe and no major side effects have been reported among others vaccinated.



Representational image

Chief Medical Officer Milind Chandra Garg said that the cause of death was a cardiac problem. "Deceased Mahipal's heart was found enlarged and it had blood clots, according to the postmortem report," he said. The report of the postmortem, conducted by three doctors, stated that the death was caused by "cardio-pulmonary disease" and there was "no relation with corona vaccine", the CMO said. He said that some employees were suffering from fever after taking the shots.

"They were facing general problems but not like Mahipal," he said. Mahipal's son Vishal said that his father called him to the hospital as he was having breathing difficulty. "My father was suffering from cough, but after vaccination he had a fever and felt a heaviness in breathing. On Sunday, he was admitted in the government hospital where he expired at night," he said. Mahipal's family members claimed that he never had any cardiac problem and was "quite healthy except for the fever and cough". "My father did not suffer from corona even when he performed his duty properly during the pandemic," his son said.

WHO chief lambasts vaccine profits, demands elderly go first

LONDON

THE World Health Organisation chief lambasted drugmakers' profits and vaccine inequalities, saying it's "not right" that younger, healthier adults in wealthy countries get vaccinated against COVID-19 before older people or health care workers in poorer countries and charging that most vaccine makers have targeted locations where "profits are highest". Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus kicked off WHO's week-long executive board meeting -- virtually from its headquarters in Geneva -- by lamenting that one poor country received a mere 25 vaccine doses while over 39 million doses have been administered in nearly 50 richer nations.

"Just 25 doses have been given in one lowest income country -- not 25 million, not 25,000 -- just 25. I need to be blunt: The world is on the brink of a catastrophic moral failure," Tedros said. He did not specify the country, but a WHO spokeswoman identified it as Guinea.

"It's right that all governments want to prioritise vaccinating their own health workers and older people first," he said. "But it's not right that younger, healthier adults in rich countries are vaccinated before health workers and older people in poorer countries," said Tedros.

Arnab knew Balakot strike beforehand? Oppn demands probe

NEW DELHI

AMID outrage over leaked WhatsApp conversations of TV anchor Arnab Goswami, submitted by Mumbai Police to a court, the Opposition has demanded an investigation into chats linked to the 2019 Balakot air strike in retaliation for the terror attack on a security convoy in Pulwama.

The transcripts are a part of the Mumbai Police charge-sheet on the ratings scam, in which Arnab Goswami's Republic TV and two other channels are accused of gaming TRPs or Television Rating Points by manipulating households metred for viewership, according to NDTV report.

The transcripts of chats between Arnab Goswami and Partho Dasgupta, the former CEO of ratings agency BARC (Broadcast Audience Research Council), have the TV anchor saying three days before the Balakot strike that "something big will happen". The chats reveal he

said it would be "bigger than a normal strike" and "the government is confident of striking in a way that people will be elated."

When the ex-BARC chief asked if it was about "Dawood", the Republic TV anchor replied, according to the leaked transcript: "No sir Pakistan. Something major will be done this time."

The conversation is dated February 23, 2019, three days before India sent Air

Force jets to Balakot in Pakistan to destroy a Jaish-e-Mohammed terror training camp.

"Did a journalist (and his friend) know about the retaliatory strike on Balakot camp three days before the actual strike? If yes, what is the guarantee that their 'source' did not share the information with others as well, including spies or informers working for Pakistan? How did a 'For Your Eyes Only' decision find its way to the government-supporting journalist?" tweeted Congress leader P Chidambaram.



Sushant case: Media trial obstructs justice: HC

MUMBAI

IN a significant verdict having ramifications on the Indian media, the Bombay High Court on Monday said that 'media trial' impacts investigations, violates laws, obstructs administration of justice besides amounting to a contempt of the court. A division bench gave the ruling in a bunch of public interest litigations filed by a group of IPS officers and activists vis-a-vis the case concerning the high-voltage coverage following the death of Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput in June 2020. "Media trial violates the programme code under the Cable TV Network Regulation Act. We have held that the media trial runs counter to the programme code", said the judges.

Dawood relocates key family members outside Pakistan

New Delhi: As global pressure mounts on Pakistan to dismantle terror networks on its soil, India's most wanted fugitive Dawood Ibrahim, operating from Karachi, has reportedly relocated key family members, including his son and the children of two younger brothers. Earlier Dawood had arranged Portuguese passports for his eldest daughter Mahrukh, married to Pakistani cricketer Javed Miandad's son Junaid, Indian intelligence sources revealed to IANS. Sources said that Dawood's younger

FRIENDLY BITE



An Icelandic horse (left) and a Shetland pony play at a stud farm in Wehrheim near Frankfurt in Germany on Monday

brother Mustakeem Ali Kaskar is already settled in Dubai and looks after D-company's "legitimate" business in United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Qatar. Mustakeem, who runs a garment factory in UAE, reportedly takes care of a few close relatives of the D-family who were recently flown to Dubai from Karachi. Intelligence sources said that Dawood's brother Anees Ibrahim who lives in Defence Housing Area in Karachi, has also gone off the radar for the past two weeks.

Will contest poll from Nandigram, says Mamata

NANDIGRAM/KOLKATA

MAMATA Banerjee on Monday declared she will contest the upcoming assembly election from Nandigram, as she took her battle for West Bengal to the home turf of BJP heavyweight Suwendu Adhikari, who promptly accepted the challenge and asserted he will defeat her or quit politics.

That Banerjee chose Nandigram to make the big announcement reflects the TMC supremo's determination to take the BJP, which has launched a spirited campaign to unseat her after a decade-long stint in power, head on. Addressing a rally here, Banerjee said she is not worried about those joining rival parties as they were hardly around when the TMC was formed. Banerjee said these leaders left the ruling party to protect the money "they have looted" in the last few years. "I have always started my campaign for the assembly polls from Nandigram. It is a lucky place for me. So this time I feel that I should contest the assembly polls from here. I request our state party president Subrata Bakshi to approve my name from this seat," Banerjee said.

CRPF gets DRDO-developed Rakshita for insurgency-hit areas

It is built on a Royal Enfield Classic 350CC bike. It comes with a quick fit in and fit out casualty evacuation seat (CSE) that has customised design reclining, hand immobiliser and harness jacket, physiological parameter measuring equipment

NEW DELHI

FROM Monday onwards, 'Rakshita' -- a bike ambulance developed indigenously -- will save lives of injured CRPF personnel deputed in remote and inhospitable areas like the Maoist-hit states or insurgency affected Northeast regions of the country.

Carefully custom built to the needs of emergency evacuation, 'Rakshita' is built on a Royal Enfield Classic 350CC bike.

It comes with a quick fit in and fit out casualty evacuation seat (CSE) that has customised design reclining, hand immobilizer and harness jacket, physiological parameter measuring equipment with monitoring capa-

bility and auto warning system for driver.

Dashboard mounted LCD for measuring vital parameters, air splint medical and oxygen kit, saline and oxygen administration on the move, adjustable footrest, and hand and foot strap for safety are among the other features of 'Rakshita'.

These equipment make 'Rakshita' an on the spot medical care and injured transport system which is not just indigenous and cost effective, but can also reach inaccessible or remote locations by traversing unmotorable roads, narrow streets, congested or unpaved roads that are otherwise inaccessible by the conventional four wheeled ambulances, CRPF Deputy Inspector General M. Dhinakaran told



IANS. The bike ambulance is developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation's (DRDO) Nuclear Medicine and Allied Sciences (INMAS) in collaboration with Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) for golden-hour lifesaving aid and evacuation.

Similar 21 'Rakshita' bike ambulances were inducted into the CRPF -- a 3.5 lakh strong force, on Monday. These bike ambulances were launched at the CRPF Headquarters in presence of CRPF Director General A.P. Maheshwari and A.K. Singh, DS & DG (LS), DRDO.

Launched by the CRPF and INMAS, the bike ambulance will be used for evacuation of injured personnel of the Central Armed Police

Force, which is mandated to ensure internal security in the country.

"In its endeavour to provide an impenetrable internal security to the nation, CRPF is actively deployed across the country. Most of these deployments are in remote and inhospitable areas like LWE affected areas and Northeast where evacuation of sick or battle injured personnel becomes a challenge.

"Many times, late evacuation results in loss of precious lives of CRPF bravehearts. To mitigate this, in 2018 CRPF approached INMAS with the idea of developing an ambulance on motor bikes which is frequently used by CRPF for patrolling in these theaters," Dhinakar said.

BIZ BRIEFS

Maruti hikes prices

The country's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India on Monday said it has increased the price for select models by up to Rs 34,000 to offset adverse impact of rising input costs. The company is increasing the price for select models owing to an increase in various input costs. The new prices are effective from January 18, 2021, Maruti Suzuki India said in a regulatory filing. The price change varies across models and ranges up to Rs 34,000 (ex-showroom-Delhi), it added. While the company did not specify the models, according to dealer sources the price hike impacts most of its models but select variants of certain models have left untouched by the increase in prices.

Tata Tele unveils Smartflo

Tata Tele Business Services has introduced Smartflo, a future-ready cloud communication suite that has been innovatively designed to support today's hybrid work culture. It allows uninterrupted connectivity between all stakeholders, internally within employees and externally with customers through seamless communication, anytime and anywhere and suitable for enterprises across industries. The setup is quick with zero installation charges and no capex investment. Kalidas Ks, Vice-President, Tata Tele services said: "Smartflo truly defines our vision of product innovation that empowers enterprises to Do Big. Smartflo is an anytime, anywhere, flexible suite of cloud communication solutions. It optimizes connectivity, helps build operational resilience and enables businesses to deliver better customer experiences across channels. With its comprehensive and advance features, it is well equipped to fulfil the emerging needs of enterprises."

Baring invests in Lohum

Baring Pvt Equity Partners and others invested \$7 million in Lohum, an innovative lithium-ion battery pack manufacturer and battery recycling company. The company's high growth over the last year led to the launch of its second manufacturing unit in Greater Noida with the production capacity of 300MWh divided evenly between pack production and recycling. The company is achieving an annualized run rate over \$8 million with the target of \$90 million within three years. Arul Mehra, Partner, Baring Pvt Equity Partners said: "Lohum's vision to create global leadership in li-ion battery recycling with a multinational team and global footprint is inspiring. Baring India is proud to support them in this endeavor and wish them the best"

Plastic expo from today

The virtual plastic packaging exhibition Plastiworld is being organized from January 19, 2021. This event has been conceptualized by the All India Plastics Manufacturers Association. This exhibition aims at generating business worth Rs 1,000 crore with participating stakeholders with the objective of the virtual exhibition and B2B event is to increase exports of plastic products from India and also to ensure reduction of imports of such products thereby helping the industry to become 'Atmanirbhar'. Ajay Desai, Chairman, Plastiworld 21, said: "Packaging is the 5th largest sector in India's economy and is one of the highest growing sectors in the country. However, the time has come for the Indian Plastic Packaging Industry to create an even bigger impact."

Covid fails to slow down Chinese GDP

China's economy grew 2.3% in 2020 even as Covid-19 ravaged the world

BEIJING

CHINA's economy, which was the first to be hit by the coronavirus pandemic and early to recover from its impact, grew 2.3 per cent in 2020, registering the lowest annual growth rate in 45 years, but bucking the trend of slowdowns being experienced by major world economies. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the world's second-largest economy grew by 2.3 per cent, expanding to \$15.42 trillion in dollar terms in 2020, according to the data released by China's National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) on Monday. In the local currency, the GDP exceeded 100-trillion-yuan (\$15.42 trillion) threshold to 101.5986 trillion yuan, it said.

The Chinese economy which suffered a 6.8 per cent slump in the first quarter in 2020 after it went into lockdown following the emergence of the deadly coronavirus in Wuhan staged a steady recovery after quickly containing the Covid-19, while the virus turned into a global pandemic, hitting all major economies around the world, including India. Aided by strict virus containment measures and emergency relief for businesses, the Chinese economy staged a steady recovery. In the fourth quarter of 2020, China's GDP expanded 6.5 per cent year on year, faster than the 4.9 per cent growth in the third quarter, the NBS said.

The country's economic operation



has recovered steadily with employment and people's well-being effectively guaranteed, the NBS said, adding that the major tasks of economic and social development have been completed better than expected. Partly, China's global exports of medical supplies, specially relating to coronavirus, has also contributed to growth in manufacturing and exports. China's job market grew at 5.6 per cent but below the government's annual target of around six per cent.

According to the data, a total of 11.86 million new urban jobs were created in 2020, completing 131.8 per cent of the target set for the whole year, the NBS said. In December, the surveyed urban unemployment rate was 5.2 per cent, flat with the same period of the previous year. But the emerging new clusters of coronavirus in the country prompted China to strengthen controls, casting a shadow over higher growth projections for this year.

Ning Jizhe, the head of the NBS, said that "The main targets of economic and social development (in 2020) have been completed better than expected". "China is expected to become the only major economy in the world to achieve positive economic growth throughout the year," he said, adding that quarterly GDP growth "has returned to the normal level". Analysts say with global bodies like the International Monetary Fund projecting growth rate above eight per cent this year, China's economy could be picking up pace. (PTI)

Skootr leases 3 lakh sft office space in Hyd

HYDERABAD

SKOOTR, India's foremost premium managed office space operator has inked the largest office space leasing with managed space operations in Hyderabad - which will include private offices, a managed collaborative space with meeting rooms, F&B services and among other offerings. The company aims to cater to large multinational clients who want customized office space.

About the expansion, Rajat Johar, country head, Skootr said, "With the Covid-19 outbreak, employees' priorities have changed to health, safety and hygiene. This has led to occupiers shifting their base from Grade B assets to Grade A office space. With Skootr providing space as a service' wherein enterprises get the benefits of a hassle-free, fully customized, flexible office space with a negligible CapEx while meeting all compliance requirements and an additional focus on safety, sanitisation and contactless technology suiting the occupier and the employees' requirements." On



the back of various policy initiatives, widening customer base and increasing corporate requirements, Hyderabad has seen a healthy growth in office space in the last few years, which has triggered growth prospects in the managed workspace. In a first of kind concept in Hyderabad for workspaces, Skootr has come up with a model focused on the design with true functionality and aesthetics in place for the end-users. To enhance more productivity there are outdoor seating clusters and an art garden with multiple collaborative space revolving around nature ensuring for a well-ventilated workspace. Leaving behind the traditional spaces, some unconventional zones are provided for mutual interaction and recreation.

Market slumps for 2nd day as bears tighten grip

MUMBAI

EQUITY benchmarks wilted under selling pressure for the second consecutive session on Monday as investors stayed on the back foot amid lacklustre global cues.

A sharp drop in the rupee further sapped risk appetite, though gains in market heavyweights RIL and HDFC Bank cushioned the fall. After a choppy session, the 30-share BSE Sensex ended 470.40 points or 0.96 per cent lower at 48,564.27.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty tumbled 152.40 points or 1.06 per cent to 14,281.30. ONGC was the top loser in the Sensex pack, slumping 4.59 per cent, followed by Sun Pharma, IndusInd Bank, PowerGrid, Bajaj Finance, Bajaj Finserv, SBI and NTPC. Only four index stocks closed in the green - Reliance Industries, Titan, HDFC

Sensex tanks 470.40 pts, Nifty drops below 14,300; HDFC Bank shines after Q3 show

Bank and ITC, climbing up to 2.37 per cent. HDFC Bank spurted 1.15 per cent after the country's largest private sector lender on Saturday reported a 14.36 per cent jump in consolidated net profit to Rs 8,760 crore for the December quarter, driven by a surge in core income.

Global markets retreated as rising Covid-19 cases clouded optimism over economic recovery, even as Chinese shares rose after positive GDP data. "Domestic equities witnessed pullback for second consecutive day as weak global cues continued to weigh on investors' sentiments...While underly-

ing strength of markets remains intact considering rebound in key economic data, sustained growth in corporate earnings in 3Q FY21 with upbeat managements' commentaries and commencement of vaccination process. "Additionally, favourable monetary policies of global central bankers, weak dollar and large fiscal stimulus in the US are expected to ensure sustain FPIs flow in domestic equities.

However, for the week market is expected to be volatile ahead of some crucial global events. Further, as Union Budget is just two weeks away, rotational trading might be visible in the market," said Binod Modi, Head - Strategy at Reliance Securities. BSE metal, utilities, telecom, healthcare, basic materials, auto and power indices lost up to 4.14 per cent, while energy and consumer durables ended higher.



Visakhapatnam Special Economic Zone (VSEZ) Development Commissioner A Rama Mohan Reddy recently visited Divi's SEZ



Beating Covid, Divi's SEZ records 27% growth

SANTOSH PATNAIK
VISAKHAPATNAM

DIVI's Laboratories Limited's sector-specific Special Economic Zone near Visakhapatnam has achieved an export turnover of Rs 2,701 crore till December 31, 2020 as against previous year's Rs 2126 crore, accounting for a growth rate of 27 per cent. The Divi's SEZ is spread over 350 acres. It is the first sector specific SEZ to commence production in the country in 2006 after the SEZ Act and Rules came into existence.

Visakhapatnam Special Economic Zone (VSEZ), Duvvada, Development Commissioner A Rama Mohan Reddy, who recently visited the SEZ, told *Bizz Buzz* on Monday that the lockdown imposed to control Covid-19 pandemic notwithstanding, Divi's SEZ had achieved an impressive export turnover with an encouraging growth rate. The SEZ has provided employment to 6,641, mostly local

youth.

Stating that the Divi's SEZ had a bright future, he said since it launched its operations, it had registered a total export turnover of Rs 23,847 crore.

Reddy lauded the work ethics and safety measures being implemented at the SEZ, which has many distinctions like producing 80 per cent of the world's requirement of Naproxen Sodium, the oldest known analgesic in the world. The SEZ has to its credit the CSR activities carried out in education, health and social sector in the neighbouring villages. The total investment made is to the tune of Rs 2,086 crore.

Reddy said, "One of the earliest and most successful sector specific SEZs in pharma sectors, Divi's SEZ was set up in 2006-07 and had been producing more than 18 varieties of bulk drugs and nutraceuticals. It commenced commercial production in the same year. The Divi's SEZ is located at Chippada

village near Bheemili consisting of three units. All the units are under operation.

Divi's SEZ Director MS Rao Divi and Koteswara Rao from Administration Department later briefed the Development Commissioner about the activities and performance of the units located in the SEZ and the EoUs. During the visit, Reddy taking cue from Centre's decision to observe the diamond jubilee celebrations of the country's Independence on August 15 in 2022, discussed various activities to be included under "The India@75 Project" with the SEZ management.

He said that VSEZ had resolved to take up many activities in all 61 operational SEZs under its jurisdiction in the field of reduction in energy and water use, handling waste, better quality of life, easy access to buildings for differently-abled persons, increasing captive solar energy generation, and plantation activities.

Total inks \$2.5-bn deal to buy 20% in Adani Green

TOTAL SE has agreed to a \$2.5-billion deal that includes a minority stake in India's renewables giant Adani Green Energy Ltd. as it expands its efforts to diversify beyond oil.

Paris-based Total will acquire 20 per cent of Adani Green, take a board seat, and add a 50 per cent stake in a portfolio of operating solar assets with capacity to transmit 2.35 gigawatts of power to consumers, the company said Monday in a statement. That confirmed an earlier Bloomberg News report that Total and Adani Green were in advanced talks on a deal. "India is the right place to put into action our energy transition strategy based on two pillars: renewables and natural gas," Total CEO Patrick Pouyanné said in the statement. The deal is the third in a week for Total in the renewables area, following the acquisition of a French biogas producer and of a stake in a large US solar portfolio. The oil and gas giant and its European peers are increasingly focusing on clean power and renewable fuels.

Chittoor poised for big industrial leap

G SRIDHAR
TIRUPATI

THE border district of Chittoor is poised for a big leap in industrial growth with the district included in the ambitious

Visakhapatnam-Chennai Industrial Corridor (VICIC) providing scope for large-scale industrial development coupled with the existing excellent facilities available in the district proving itself to be one of the most congenial platforms in the State for investors. With its proximity to Bangalore and Chennai, the district has huge potential for IT, automobile and food processing units. When it comes to connectivity, it has excellent road, rail and air links as it is located equidistant to Krishnapatnam and Chennai ports. The four-lane Chennai-Chittoor-Bengaluru (NH-4); Bengaluru-Chennai Express Highway, Tirupati-Naidupet (NH-71), Madanapalli-Tirupati (NH-71) are contributing much to the industrial development in the district, which is also connected to the entire country by railway network.

It is needless to say that besides land and water, availability of skilled, semiskilled and unskilled workforce is an added advantage to the investors to turn their eyes on the district.



There are nine major potential activities for the investors, including food processing (milk chilling and processing, fruit processing, mango pulp, mango juice, tamarind concentrate, packaged foods etc); Automobile sector (auto components, accessories manufacturing and 2-wheeler spares), textile (readymade garments, technical textiles, textile household products such as door mats, kerchiefs, towels, lungis, computerised embroidery works, masks, PPE

kits, cotton carrybags and nonwoven carry bags) and electronics products including mobile accessories and mobile assembling.

Other products that are on the list include MS wire, furniture manufacturing, dish antennas, roofing sheets, agricultural implements, wiremesh barrels, aluminium hard ware, paper-based corrugated boxes, paper plates and cups, paper carry bags, mobile /TV packaging boxes, paper napkins, plastic and rubber-based industrial gloves,



On various investment opportunities in districts

ANDHRA PRADESH

industrial hubs in the country. The SEZ, spread across an area of 100 square kilometres, offers a number of multiple investment options and stands out as an example of a holistic business city with investments close to Rs 45,000 crore and exports exceeding Rs 9500 crore.

As of now, there are 185 industrial units offering employment to over 50,000 people. It plays a pivotal role in the mission 'Make in India', and its contribution towards substituting imports by significantly multiplying exports is conspicuous.

The existing industries in the district

which include Amara Raja

Batteries, Srikalahasthi Pipes Ltd, Dixon, Isuzu, Greenply, Colgate Palmolive, Jain Irrigation, Thermox, Shahi Exports, Mondelez (Cadbury), Foxconn, Pepsico, Hero Motors, Apollo Tyres, Flora Khajara ceramics, Kurlon, Gokaldas Exports, Parle, Continental Coffee, Britannia, Karbonn Mobiles, Voltas and TCL are doing great in business as well as generating employment.

District Industrial Centre (DIC) general manager Pratap Reddy said there are already 17 mega projects, 149 large enterprises and 8,969 MSMEs with a total investment of 29,080 crore providing employment to about 1.92 lakh, while 117 more enterprises including 8 mega, 44 large and 125 SMSEs with a total investment of Rs 9,362 crore and an employment capacity of 46,289 are almost ready for operation which would bound to add momentum to the industrial growth. For VICIC, 12,000 acre land was already acquired for its implementation, throwing enormous opportunity to the investors world over, while the Phase-II of the mega project in the same extent of another 12,000 acre will see the entire eastern belt of Chittoor district from Satyavedu to Tirupati comprising 9 mandals becoming a major industrial hub in the country.

Printed and Published by K. Hanumanta Rao, on behalf of Hyderabad Media House Pvt. Limited, Flat.No.609, 6th Floor, Kirti Shikhar Building, Plot.No.11, Dist.Center, Janakpuri, New Delhi- 110058.
and Printed at M/s. Marutinandan Printers & Publishers, A-15, Bara Bagh, G.T Karnal Road, Industrial Area, New Delhi - 110033. **Editor:** V Ramu Sarma. RNI No: DELENG/2017/74095

