



THE HANS INDIA

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

• Follow @ /thehansindia | /thehansindiaweb | /thehansindia | /thehansindia | /thehansindia •



SKANLife infinity

COMPLETE TELE-LIFECARE SOLUTIONS

HOME BUT NOT ALONE

Presenting SKANLIFE infinity, a complete remote health monitoring and respiratory support system for hospital assisted home care.

Skanray ensures that you get the best care from "Skanlife" connected hospitals without the fear of cross infections, long waits and frequent hospital visits through its Infinite possibilities.

SKANRAY

NOTHING IS OPAQUE

TELE-VITAL MONITOR | TELE-ORTHOPEDIC | TELE-CARDIOLOGY | TELE-ENDOCRINE | TELE-RADIOLOGY | TELE-PAEDIATRY | TELE-STRESS | HOME CARE | TELE-ENT | TELE-OB/GYN

TELE-GERIATRY | TELE-OPHTHALMOLOGY | TELE-PSYCHOTHERAPY | TELE-PULMONOLOGY | TELE-DERMATOLOGY | MEDICATION ALERT | TELE-NEUROLOGY | TELE-SECURITY

WINDOWS



'Legion of Merit' award for Modi

INDIA'S Ambassador to the US Taranjit Singh Sandhu accepting the 'Legion of Merit' award on behalf of Prime Minister Narendra Modi from US National Security Advisor Robert O' Brien at the White House. The US had conferred the award on PM Modi in recognition of his steadfast leadership and vision for India's emergence as a global power, and his exemplary contribution for advancement of India-United States ties and promoting global peace and prosperity.



A larger than life statue of Santa Claus is set up along a city street ahead of Christmas festival in Kolkata

US varsity sets up endowed chair in Jain, Hindu Dharma



WASHINGTON: A US university has announced establishing an endowed chair in Jainism and Hinduism, which will be an integral part of its religious studies programme. Over two dozen Indian-American families have contributed to creating a joint Endowed Chair in Jain and Hindu studies at California State University, Fresno. The Endowed Chair in Jain and Hindu Dharma will be housed in the Department of Philosophy in the College of Arts and Humanities and will be an integral part of the University's religious studies programme.



No CBSE board exams till February: Pokhriyal

- Exact exam schedule will be decided after February
- Board exams will be conducted on a reduced syllabus
- To have 33% internal choices in the exams
- Says CBSE trained 4.80 lakh teachers in online education

NEW DELHI

UNION Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' on Tuesday said the coming CBSE board exams will not be held until February 2021. A decision on when to start the exams will be taken by the government later, he said.

Pokhriyal held a live interaction with teachers on the upcoming board exams on Tuesday.

day. Prior to this, he had interacted with students regarding entrance exams and online classes.

Teachers across the country have been sharing their concerns and suggestions on Twitter by using #EducationMinisterGoesLive. Their main concerns are regarding upcoming CBSE and state board syllabus, exam patterns and exam dates. The

government has not shared the schedule for the CBSE Board examinations 2021 till now which has been making students and their parents anxious.

"The Classes 10 and 12 CBSE board exams 2021 will not be held in January and February. The exact exam schedule will be decided after February 2021," said Ramesh Pokhriyal.

Continued on Page 5

MUTANT COVID STRAIN NOT FOUND IN INDIA SO FAR: GOVT

NEW DELHI

A MUTATED and more aggressive strain of the novel coronavirus - which was first identified in the United Kingdom in September - has not been seen in India so far, the Union government said on Tuesday.

The new strain - initial data suggests it is at least 70 per cent more easily transmitted - has sparked concern worldwide, amid surging infection rates in the UK and fears the first lot of vaccines may not be as effective against the mutation.

"The new strain or mutation of (the) coronavirus in the United Kingdom has not been seen in India, so



PFIZER PARTNER BIONTECH SAYS 'CAN MAKE VAX IN 6 WEEKS'

NEW DELHI: German pharmaceutical company BioNTech is confident that its coronavirus vaccine will work against the mutated strain detected in Britain.

Continued on Page 5



far," Dr VK Paul, a member of government think-tank NITI Aayog, said. "(And) as of now, it has no impact on the potential of vaccines being developed in our country and (which) are available in

other countries," he added. India has joined over 25 other countries in imposing a temporary ban on all flights to and from the UK. The ban, however, begins on Wednesday midnight and will be in place till Dec 31.

Continued on Page 5

8 from UK test positive after arrival in India

NEW DELHI: Eight passengers who arrived in India on Monday night on two separate flights from London have tested positive for Covid-19, officials said on Tuesday.

This comes amid rising fears over a new strain of coronavirus that has been detected in the UK, leading to air traffic from that country being blocked by several nations, including India, in the past few days. India's ban on flights from the UK, however, will come into effect only from Wednesday, and will last till Dec 31.

Continued on Page 5

Mutant virus may put AP local body polls behind

HANS NEWS SERVICE AMARAVATI

THE State Election Commission's plans to hold elections to the local bodies in February may go for a toss with the emergence of a new strain of Covid-19 in Britain. This particular strain has already led to cancellation of air services to and from Britain by several countries. Some countries have gone ahead and declared lockdown for a week or two. Reports already suggest the entry of the new variant into India too. It is reported that recently around 280 or so passengers landed in Bengaluru International Airport from London and some of them are found to be positive for corona virus. However, it is not confirmed whether some of the infected are carrying the mutated virus. Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan has announced that a monitoring committee was being set-up to check the emergence of the new strain in the country.

Continued on Page 5

PM Modi calls AMU 'mini-India'

Says politics can wait but development can't

NEW DELHI

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) represents "mini-India" and has to its credit 100 glorious years of excellence in education.

Speaking at the university's centenary celebrations via video link, the Prime Minister also said politics cannot be above the nation's interests. "We must realise that politics is an important part of society, but there are many other issues in society besides politics... For a new



India, the core is that welfare must not be seen from the prism of politics. There are some elements who may have an issue with this. They can be found in all countries. They will spread negativity. But these people will be side-lined if we work for the betterment of the country keeping politics aside.

Continued on Page 5

Bharat Biotech recruits 13,000 volunteers for Covaxin Phase III trials

HYDERABAD

BHARAT Biotech on Tuesday announced successful recruitment of 13,000 volunteers, and continued progress towards achieving the goal of 26,000 participants for Phase III clinical trial of its coronavirus vaccine Covaxin across multiple sites in India. The Phase III human clinical trials of Covaxin began mid-November, targeted to be done in 26,000 volunteers across India.

Black flags greet Haryana CM

FARMERS CHARGE AT HIS CONVOY WITH STICKS

PURNA SINGH NEW DELHI

HARYANA Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar faced the anger of farmers protesting the Centre's three new contentious farm laws. As he was travelling to Ambala, the CM's convoy was met with a flurry of protesters.

Protesters reportedly charged at the vehicles in Manohar Lal's convoy with wooden sticks, except for the ambulance in his cavalcade. The Haryana Chief Minister escaped unhurt. The BJP-led Haryana government has been saying that only a few farmers are



Khattar

against agricultural laws. Manohar Lal was heading to Ambala to address a public rally in support of Dr Vandana Sharma, who is contesting a municipal corporation election.

Continued on Page 5

Ghazipur border closed from both sides

NEW DELHI: As their protest against the newly passed farm laws entered 27th day on Tuesday, farmers blocked the Ghazipur border (Uttar Pradesh) with tractors. The traffic from Delhi towards Ghazipur and Ghaziabad on Delhi-Meerut Expressway was affected as both side's carriageways were closed. "Ghazipur Border both carriageway are closed for traffic movement due to farmer protests," the Delhi Traffic police alerted the motorists through Twitter. Cont'd on P5

Aditya Nath Das appointed AP Chief Secretary

HANS NEWS SERVICE VIJAYAWADA

ADITYA Nath Das has been appointed as the Chief Secretary of Andhra Pradesh Government in the place of Nilam Sawhney, who is retiring on December 31 on attaining the age of superannuation. However, Sawhney has been appointed as the principal advisor to Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy.

The 1987 batch officer



Aditya Nath Das

Aditya Nath Das has worked in various capacities during his career in the civil services. In his earlier period, Das worked as assistant collector in Vizianagaram,

Nandyala and Vijayawada and later as joint collector in Krishna district and as collector in Warangal. Before appointment as the chief secretary, Das was the special chief secretary to the Water Resources department. He had also held several important positions in the undivided Andhra Pradesh.

The State government appointed Nilam Sawhney as principal advisor to the Chief Minister in the rank

of Cabinet Minister with effect from December 31. As principal advisor Nilam Sawhney will look after Health and Covid-19 management, Centre-State relations, and bifurcation issues, administrative reforms, including strengthening of village/ward secretariats and other institutions at various levels in the districts, district reorganisation, land survey and titling act and others.

Continued on Page 5

Delhi industries told to switch over to PNG

PURNA SINGH NEW DELHI

ALL the industrial units spread across 50 areas in Delhi have been directed to switch over to Piped Natural Gas (PNG) by January 31 next year. This move is aimed at reducing the city's air quality index which has been deteriorating regularly.

Considering the fact that the industrial sector is one of the major contributors to air pollution in Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR), the Commission for Air Quality management has issued notices to about 1,644 such industrial units which are running in different areas in Delhi.

Though a sizeable number of industries are using PNG, the Commission stressed the need for all identified industries in Delhi to switch to PNG. Indraprastha Gas Limited (IGL) and Gas Author-

ity of India Limited (GAIL) were impressed upon to complete the pipeline network, metering and associated infrastructure. "IGL, Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) and Delhi government were also asked to work in close coordination with the industrial units so as to target completion of infrastructure works and



complete switch over to PNG, by all the identified industrial units in Delhi, by January 31, 2021," said a statement from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. The DPCC was also directed to inspect and identify the industries using unapproved fuels and to take stringent penal action in case of non-compliance.

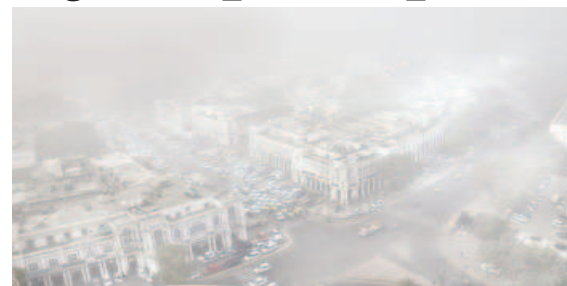
IMPACT OF AIR POLLUTION IN 2019

Delhi had highest per-capita economic loss: Lancet

SUMIT SAXENA NEW DELHI

AIR pollution woes have quadrupled for Delhi, as the state suffered the highest per-capita economic loss due to air pollution last year, a study in the peer-reviewed medical journal Lancet suggests.

For years, northern India -- especially New Delhi -- has been battling critical



levels of air pollution, which have remained consistently in the hazardous mark, for

many days at a stretch, during winters. This air pollution has already taken a big

toll on the health of the citizens and rattled the government, forcing it to devise new governance mechanism to address the menace of pollution in the capital. The study said the economic loss due to lost output from premature deaths and morbidity from air pollution was 1.36 per cent of the GDP in India in 2019. In Delhi, the loss due to lost output from premature

deaths and illness attributable to air pollution as a percentage of state GDP was 1.06 per cent.

Uttar Pradesh recorded highest loss to GDP at 1.34 per cent followed by Punjab at 1.22 per cent. "Delhi had the highest per-capita economic loss due to air pollution, followed by Haryana in 2019, with 5.4 times variation across all states," said the findings.

Womenia

TWEET PATROL

VAANI KAPOOR
@VAANIOFFICIAL
and it's a wrap to this beautiful story that nurtured us as we nurtured it will miss this A team !
@Abhishekapoor @ayushmannk @pragyakapoor_ #chandigarhkareaa shiqui #youhavemyheart

WHEN SHE IS A TEENAGER

The relationship that a girl shares with her mother can affect her sense of self-esteem, self-worth, sense of identity, and her ability to make friends. Children who are encouraged and praised (healthy praise, of course!) by their parents grow up to be confident individuals. If a child is not appreciated by her parents, she may seek validation from others.

When a girl is in her teenage years, she usually looks up to her mother. Her mother is her role model and she wishes to be like her. She gets her perfect image of a woman from her mother. But the relationship between a mother and daughter can go through many ups and downs. Many things can derail the harmonious relationship between a mother and her daughter. Temperaments, personality, experiences, hormones can all affect their relationship. Whatever may be the cause, it can be worked upon.

When a girl is in her teenage years, it can be a difficult time for her. A daughter needs her mother the most in her teenage years and also when she gets married. Here is what you will need to remember when your daughter becomes a teenager:

Be there for her

Adolescence can be a difficult phase for your girl because, at that time, she will try to find her identity and will struggle to cope up with the various physical and emotional changes she will go through. Make sure you provide her necessary guidance and support, and

hear her out. Do offer her advice, but don't command her as she might become rebellious. Just listen to her concerns and try to channelise her stress or anger positively.

Respect her feelings

Honour your daughter's boundaries. As much as you may prefer to be with her, if she desires some 'alone time', give that to her. On some days, you might make mistakes too. Be a bigger person and own up to your mistakes. Simply apologise and make amends. Respect her individuality and allow her to explore her inner worth and interests without inhibition.

Talk to her freely

Talk to your daughter about various worldly issues. You can share your pearls of wisdom while going shopping with her or while cooking meals. As a teenager, she may feel insecure about her body. Help her accept and be proud of her body. Talk to her about relationships, character traits like faith, integrity, perseverance, and courage. Let her know that these are the values she will need the most in her life. Empower and equip her with all your wisdom and life experiences.

Keep realistic expectations

As parents, it is normal to have certain expectations from children. But it is important to be reasonable. Remember your daughter is a separate individual who may have her dreams and aspirations. Give her space to grow and blossom

som by giving ample support and love.

It is a mother who educates her daughters about different things. It is a mother who teaches her daughter how to handle and carry herself in this world and how to deal with different sets of people and sail through various walks of life. A mother is the first friend of her daughter, who guides her throughout lives. If you have a daughter, make sure you be there for her always and support her in all walks of life.

Express your affection openly

Express your affection to her openly. If your daughter does something good, let her know that you are proud of her. This shows how much you love her. Nurture your bond with your daughter by sharing hugs, cuddles, and kisses. For example, you can incorporate extensive cuddle time during bedtime. These physical acts of love may teach your daughter to freely demonstrate and accept affection.

Share your experiences

The greatest gift you can give your daughter while she is young is your time. Take out time from your schedule to focus and spend some time with her to let her know that you value her as an individual. Make her feel special by sharing your joys and sorrows with her. Also, involve her in household chores from an early age to develop a sense of re-

sponsibility in her.

Set a routine

Spend some time with your daughter daily. Plan special week-end trips or getaways with your daughter. This will strengthen your bond. You can play dress up with your daughter, comb her hair, or brush her tooth while she is young - all these activities will bring you two closer. In case your daughter tries to imitate you, let her. Take it as an opportunity to model good behaviour. Also, encourage her to love her imperfections and try to find good in the negative things.

Her mother is her role model and she wishes to be like her. She gets her perfect image of a woman from her mother. But the relationship between a mother and daughter can go through many ups and downs. Many things can derail the harmonious relationship between a mother and her daughter



Manish Malhotra launches his skincare line

PUJA GUPTA

Fashion designer Manish Malhotra says it's his passion that leads the way in whatever he takes up. After launching the first-ever haute-couture make-up range from an Indian design house, the veteran designer has now launched a full-fledged skincare range.

He says, "As a costume designer, from the very start of my career, I've always been integrally involved in make-up for the film characters. Skincare and make-up go

hand-in-hand, and in fact, I feel I started off late." Manish Malhotra Skincare is based on the concept of farm to face, made with locally grown, natural ingredients from Himachal Pradesh.

Manish shares, "During the pandemic, we came closer to mother nature than ever before. Not only did we connect with our roots but believed in our Indian heritage and skin rituals that have been tried and tested for ages. We thought to celebrate this shift in attitude through our product, which we have always stood for. From locally sourced ingredients, to supporting and encouraging local artisans, this skincare range stands true in all capacity to the ethos of Manish Malhotra. Products in the Manish Malhotra Luxe Artisanal Skincare Range have been formulated using traditional Indian ingredients such as amla, methi, kesar, ginger along with others. Most of the products are water-based gel formulation that au-

tomatically raises their efficiency."

Manish Malhotra Skincare is based on the concept of farm to face. They have explored local farms of Himachal Pradesh to pursue ethically sourced, locally grown, natural ingredients that deliver unparalleled freshness and potency. The farm-to-face approach comprises home-made remedies for healthier skin. All the ingredients can be traced back to the traditional Indian households. As a brand, they focus on reviving Indian craftsmanship and heritage and that was the philosophy behind this range too - to revive Indian traditions of skin care. Since the range is inspired and made in India, it supports the nationwide call for #VocalforLocal. It brings the time-tested organic ingredients as a complete solution to our skincare concerns.

The brand is highlighting the concept of #skinheritance - Skin rituals that have been passed on to generations comprising time tested ingredients. Encouraging people to share and continue these age-old skin care rituals is an essential part of our brand strategy.

"As a costume designer, from the very start of my career, I've always been integrally involved in make-up for the characters. Skincare and make-up go hand-in-hand, and in fact, I feel I started off late. Manish Malhotra Beauty is the first-ever haute-couture make-up range from an Indian design house and we take pride in that, and we are leading the way with our skincare range," adds Manish.

Pick your category, not your pocket

Purses are much more than just an accessory. Because you hold them so close and they're such an integral part of your daily routine, the bag you choose to carry on a regular basis doesn't just tote your on-the-go essentials, it also carries clues to who you are. Our personality determines a lot of things, from our life choices to our whole look. Bags are one such part of our attire. They are not only utilitarian but can also add oomph to the whole ensemble.

Priyanka Ahuja, Partner at Shopaholics lists the different types of handbags and how they may define your personality.

If you carry a...

Shoulder bag

You're a Charismatic and Multi-Faceted Doer. In a word, your purse of choice is classic. Exuding timeless style, the shoulder bag takes you from workday to date night with no wardrobe change necessary.

Tote

You're a Far-Sighted Pragmatist. With its open top and single, roomy compartment, this bag style is literally a "carryall," hinting that you come more than ready to take on just about every situation.



The bag you choose as your daily regular carries clues to who you are

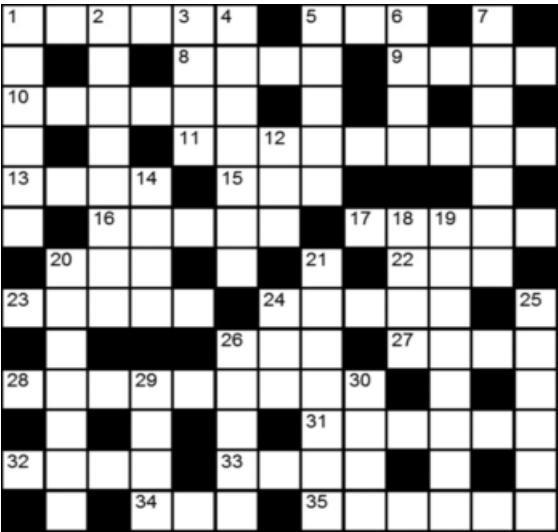
Clutch

You're a Visual Thinker. A fashionista's best friend, this demure hand-bag typifies elegance. Its small size makes it fairly inconvenient, hinting that you're more interested in its lines and contours. Drawn to beauty in all forms, be it art or decor, and a minimalist at heart, you gravitate to this subtle, stylish silhouette because you know that sometimes, less is indeed more.

Hobo

You're an Imaginative Dreamer. You're as much of a non-conformist to the stuffy status quo as your cool slouchy bag is to the strict confines of form and shape.

Creative and free-spirited, you love grabbing your purse and jetting off to wherever the wind may take you, whether you're headed on a solo road trip or meeting up with friends.



T O L L P B H A B H A
A E R E S I E G
U S E D R O C K S T A R
T H R E A T S I E
R N U N A B L E
N U R E M B E R G A D
G O B A D D E L K
B U A B O U N D I N G
L U X U R Y I O
O T C U R F E W S
K E R C H I E F Y A N K
E Y U P O D C I
S N E E R S S W H E N

SOLUTION TO DECEMBER 22

CROSSWORD

Across

- Chirpy insect (6)
- Concealed oneself (3)
- Polaris bear (4)
- Screen symbol (4)
- Capital of Maharashtra (6)
- Scene (9)
- Wee tippie (4)
- Author ___ Brown (3)
- Expiring (5)
- Complete (5)
- Tennis call (3)
- Jinx or curse (3)
- Soft and comfortable (5)
- Periods of time (5)
- Crew member (3)
- Of the ear (4)
- Shoot up abruptly (9)
- Peeper (6)
- ___ Lynn : the famous singer ? (4)
- First man according to the Bible (4)

Down

- Play on words (3)
- Snuggle (6)
- Humorous play (6)
- Fellow soldiers (8)
- Double (4)
- Theseus abandoned her (7)
- Joseph ___, Austrian composer (5)
- Platter (4)
- Convoluted (7)
- Find fault constantly (3)
- Legend or epic (4)
- Across, old-style (4)
- Tetchiest (8)
- More fortunate (7)
- Capital of Armenia (7)
- Talk at length (3)
- Meagre (6)
- Area in an atlas (5)
- Gather (4)
- Large book (4)

SUDOKU

		5	9				7	
8	9			5				4
1	7		2				9	
			2			1		9
				7				
9	4			8				
	5			4		9		3
4				6			2	7
	3				1	6		

6	4	1	3	9	8	7	5	2
5	8	2	7	1	4	3	6	9
3	7	9	5	2	6	8	1	4
9	6	8	1	3	7	2	4	5
2	1	4	6	8	5	9	7	3
7	5	3	2	4	9	1	8	6
1	3	5	4	7	2	6	9	8
8	2	6	9	5	1	4	3	7
4	9	7	8	6	3	5	2	1

SOLUTION TO DECEMBER 22

NEWS ROUNDUP

Jonita Gandhi unveils new version of 'This Christmas'

Singer Jonita Gandhi is in a festive mood. She has released a new version of 'This Christmas', in sync with Yuletide spirits.

Jonita collaborates with musicians David Joseph and Alok Merwin on the song.

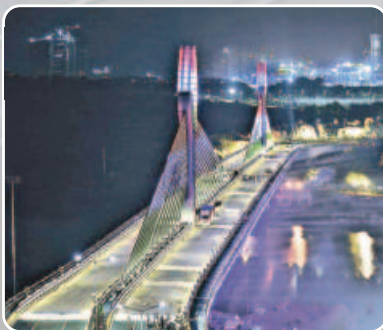
"Christmas has always been such a special time of year, especially growing up in Canada. No matter where you went, every radio station and mall would be playing non-stop Christmas songs from late November through to Christmas," she said.

"There's such a joyous feeling about Christmas time and especially this year, the world could do with all the cheer we can spread, so I thought what better way to do that than to share the spirit of Christmas through music? This year I've collaborated with two

incredible musicians, David and Alok, on a 90s vibe RnB version of 'This Christmas', and I'm so glad we were able to shoot the video together. We had a blast. I hope this

one gives you the same throwback feel it gives me," added singer. The song is available for streaming on digital platforms.





The year
that
wasn't



JAN >> << DEC

THROWBACK...

Our year started with focus on health and fitness as we had an opportunity to inaugurate the World's largest meditation centre at Kanha Shanti Vanam in Hyderabad, Telangana to mark the 75th anniversary of the formation of Shri Ram Chandra Mission (SRCM) and Heartfulness Institute on January 28, 2020.

JANUARY

With February approaching, we had another exciting surprise awaiting in Telangana as on February 07, 2020, Chief Minister of Telangana State K Chandrashekar Rao flagged off new metro line from Jubilee Bus Station



FEBRUARY

(JBS) to Mahatma Gandhi Bus Station (MGBS) connecting twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad, and the 11km stretch becoming India's 2nd largest Metro Rail Network with total operational distance of 69.2 kms, only next to Delhi Metro Rail Network having an operational distance of 231 kms.

After the success of Janata Curfew on March 22 (Sunday) announced by our Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao announced a total lockdown to

MARCH

be continued in the State till March 31, with the exception of essential services and commodities.



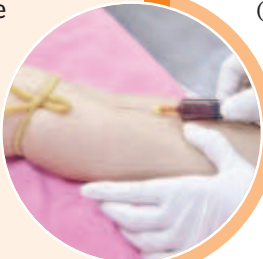
Though locked at homes people unlock ways through technology. Confined to four walls in the face of corona virus scare, people who were hesitant in the past, started to embrace digital ways of doing everything - from healthcare to education, online meetings while working at home to online education and procuring essentials at doorsteps.

APRIL

The month of May had some light of hope as the first Plasma injected patient recovered from Covid-19 and Gandhi doctors sent a list of 6 other patients to ICMR for their approval to continue the plasma therapy. The 44-year-old male

MAY

patient injected with plasma twice by Gandhi doctors in a gap of some days, showed good signs of recovery.



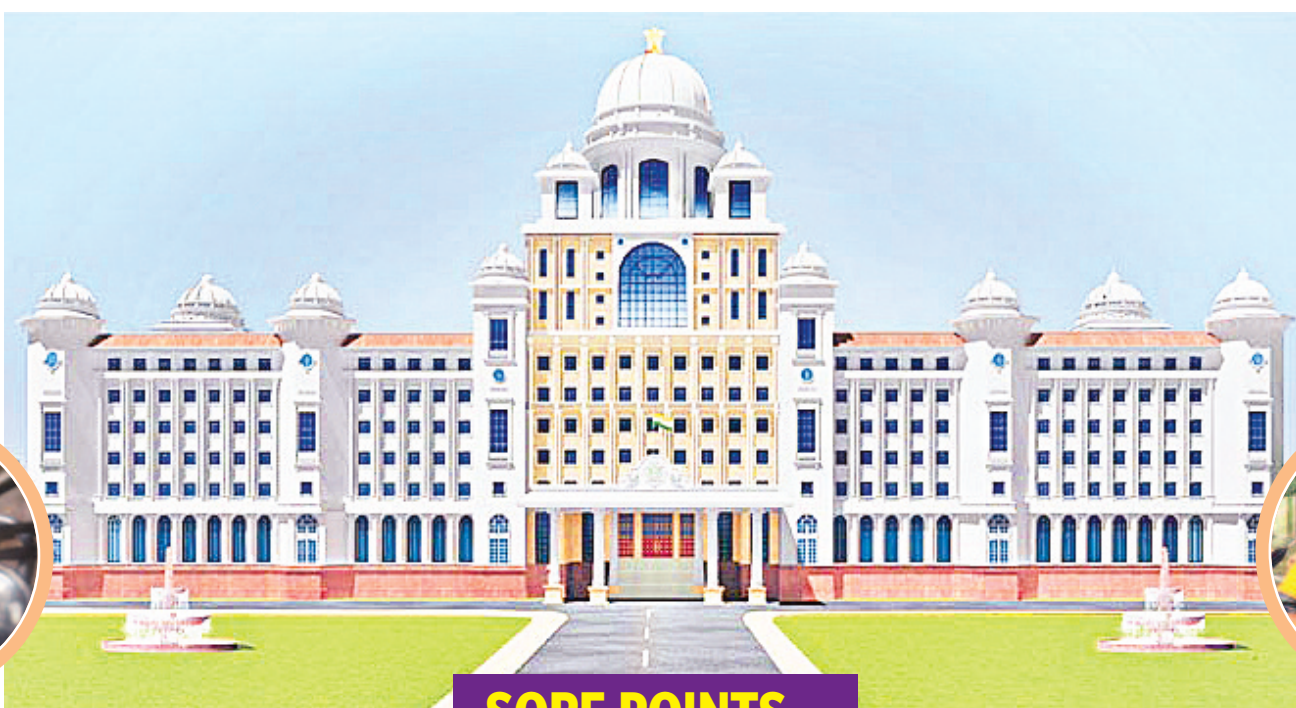
As Telangana State turned six, wishes poured in from across the country on June 2. President Ramnath Kovind, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Vice-President, M Venkaiah Naidu

JUNE

tweeted in Urdu and Union Home Minister Amit Shah were among those who greeted the Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao and the people of the State on Telangana Formation Day

TS govt treads path strewn with thorns

2020, the toughest year for TS govt



PATAN AFZAL BABU
HYDERABAD

THE 2020 was the toughest year for the State government to run the administration in all aspects since the formation of Telangana six years ago. The State has encountered many challenges all through the year.

Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao's crucial decisions like the introduction of Dharani portal for the registration of agricultural and non-agricultural lands, LRS (Land Regularisation Scheme), handling the corona pandemic and Hyderabad floods and the prevailing fiscal crisis has put the government in a fix. The High Court intervention in the government's every crucial decision, 52 days 'TSRTC employees' strike, strong opposition to the demolition of old Secretariat and construction of new state head office of the state administration during the corona crisis also played a spoilsport.

On the political front, the bonhomie witnessed between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh governments came to an end over river Krishna and Godavari water sharing and the disputes reached a pinnacle after the two states lodged serious complaints

SORE POINTS...

- ❖ Several government initiatives draw flak from people and earn their wrath
- ❖ Bonhomie between TS, AP comes to an end over river water sharing
- ❖ Government continues welfare schemes
- ❖ Borrows more than Rs 15,000 crore in just four months
- ❖ Dharani fails to gain people's trust

against each other with the Union government. The relations between Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao and his Andhra Pradesh counterpart YS Jagan Mohan Reddy soured and the friendly relations between the two States might not revive in near future.

Despite facing many challenges, the State government has succeeded in continuing all welfare schemes during the lockdown period in the current year. Perhaps, for the first time in the history, the

State government had borrowed the highest amount of more than Rs 15,000 crore in a just four months for State needs.

The government's decision to introduce Dharani portal for registrations drew strong criticism from all sections. After overcoming initial hiccups, the State succeeded in taking up farmland registrations on the portal. However, the new system for non-agricultural land registrations proved a futile exercise. On the High Court's directions, the government was forced to adopt the old CARD system during the non-farm registrations. The total halt in the land and property registrations for more than three months has caused a huge dent on the State exchequer.

The LRS scheme dented the government's image to some extent as the opposition parties projected the land regularisation scheme a deliberate attempt to fleece the people in the corona crisis.

Further, the State government's indifference towards addressing the RTC employees demand to hike the pay drew people's anger. The government mended its ways in resolving the issues with the active intervention from the court. The demolition of old secretariat also received strong criticism.

Even during the lockdown period, Telangana State has registered a phenomenal growth in the GST collections. Competing with other fast developing states like Gujarat, Maharashtra, Kerala, etc, Telangana's GST collections have crossed Rs 3,200 crore in June month registering a 3 per cent growth

JULY

over Rs 3,100 crore in the same month last year. In the first two months of lockdown in April and May, the GST collections were less than Rs 700 crore.



Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA) has received a mass fever screening system from the Central government.

With an objective to enhance the efficacy of the screening process, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India in coordination with Asian Development Bank, has provided Hyderabad International Airport with a state-of-the-art Thermal Scanner - a mass fever screening system, funded by UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund).

AUGUST

Municipal Administration and Urban Development Minister KT Rama Rao inaugurated the cable-stayed bridge constructed on Durgam Cheruvu at Madhapur besides the four-lane elevated corridor from road number 45, Jubilee Hills to Durgam Cheruvu.

SEPTEMBER



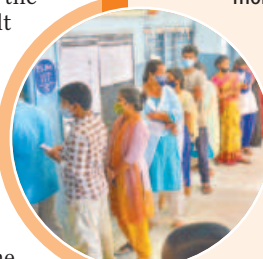
Hyderabad witnessed a record rainfall in 24 hours October that saw an extreme weather event that will be etched in the

memories of the people. Sudden spells of heavy downpour, cloud bursts and flash floods over a week and especially on the intervening night of October 13-14, exposed the fragile and inefficient urban infrastructure of the capital of Telangana.

OCTOBER

GHMC election announced The Telangana government on Tuesday took the opposition by surprise by giving its go-ahead to hold the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation elections and bringing forward the entire process by almost two months. The State

NOVEMBER



Election Commission announced the schedule on November 17 which said that the voting was to be held on December 1 and counting will take place on December 4.

GHMC results declared The Telangana Rashtra Samithi emerged as the single largest party in the GHMC polls 2020 by grabbing 55 seats while the BJP

DECEMBER

took a position as the main opposition with victory in 48 wards. Asaduddin Owaisi-led AIMIM got the third spot with 44 seats. Diplomats visit Covid vaccine mfg centres. More than 60 diplomats and ambassadors from over 60 countries visited the Bharat Biotech and Biological E manufacturing units.

Covid speed spread slows as TS gasps for vaccine jab

MAHESH AVADHUTHA
HYDERABAD

COMING to the end of 2020, all the talk is about the availability of Covid-19 vaccine in less than a month's time from now. However, if we look back at the year passed by, Covid-19 and the fight against it occupied the centre stage pretty much for the major part of the year. The whole world, including India was reeling under its impact, and Telangana state was no exception to it.

The first positive case in the country was reported on January 30 after a medic returned from Wuhan to her native place in Kerala. However, Telangana got its first positive case on March 2, from a man who had a travel history to UAE. Within a few days later, almost a dozen foreigners from Indonesia, who attended Tablighi Jamaat meet in New Delhi and later were touring in Karimnagar, tested positive in a gap of few days sending shock waves among the health department.

Health Minister Eatala Rajender had later stated that it was Telangana that alerted Centre about the Tablighi meet and infections detected later on forcing other States to take remedial

measures. Telangana's tally crossed 1,000 positive cases on April 26. Gandhi Hospital was designated to treat Covid cases and a majority of positive cases were admitted in this facility initially. King Koti hospital, Chest hospital, Fever hospital, TMS-Gachibowli were added to the list later on. After a few months, government hospitals in districts also started admitting and treating Covid patients.

Until mid-June, Telangana was only doing RT-PCR tests and that too in limited numbers that drew flak from medical experts and politicians and later High Court also directed the State government to put elaborate information and district-wise data of tests, positive cases and treating hospitals in the public domain.

Later RAT (Rapid Antigen Tests) were also added and the number of testing centres that were just under 20 were extended to three figures later covering all districts.

Like all other States in the country that are gearing up for Covid vaccination, Telangana has identified 80 lakh people for administering vaccine, including frontline staff from health, police, sanitation and panchayat raj wings along with people above 50 years of age. This process is set to kick start from the middle of January.



Saffron surge dents TRS success juggernaut

K CHANDRASHEKHAR
HYDERABAD

DESPITE winning a majority of municipalities in the beginning of the year, the ruling Telangana Rashtra Samithi had to face a jolt from the Bharatiya Janata Party in the form of Dubbaka defeat and its dismal performance in Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) elections.

The TRS started the year 2020 on a positive note by winning the municipal elections held in January. The elections were held for 120 municipalities and 10 corporations where the ruling party won majority of them. Party chief K Chandrashekar Rao had entrusted the responsibility to the Ministers and MLAs to make sure the party-supported candidates win the elections. He had in fact warned them that they would be axed if the performance was not good.

The party went to municipal elections with a

- TRS wins 109 out of 120 municipalities
- KCR turns down the demand of making KTR the CM
- Political activity comes to a standstill due to corona lockdown
- Tastes defeat in Dubbaka for the first time after 2014 elections
- GHMC poll verdict too waters down pink party's aspirations



plan as the Chief Minister gave details of the government schemes to the MLAs and asked them to contact the beneficiaries reminding them about the benefits they were getting. The Chief Minister did not contest and entrusted

the party leaders to make the party's working president KT Rama Rao as the Chief Minister. However, KCR turning down the demand said, "I have said in the Assembly that

I will be the Chief Minister. Don't you like me as the Chief Minister? I will get down if you don't want me to continue," said KCR, in a cheery reply to a reporter.

The party gave re-nominated party's secretary general K Keshava Rao for Rajya Sabha and also gave the opportunity to former Speaker of undivided Andhra Pradesh KR Suresh Reddy. At same time, Kavitha filed nomination papers for MLC seat

The pink party that started the year with a bang by winning the major municipalities had to taste bitter by the year end with Dubbaka defeat and dismal performance in GHMC polls

from Nizamabad Local Authorities Constituency in March. Political activity came to a standstill in the State because of the lockdown imposed due to corona pandemic. The party cancelled the grand celebrations of the Formation Day and asked the leaders to do social service following the social distancing norm. Party wanted to have grand celebrations of 20th anniversary, but had to do it away as a simple affair because of corona.

Several party leaders, including Ministers were affected with corona. At least half a dozen Ministers, MLAs and others were affected with the virus.

The GHMC elections during the end of the year saw intense battle between the TRS and the BJP. While the TRS chief KCR, working president KT Rama Rao and all the MLAs were in the field, the BJP brought the Union Ministers and Chief Ministers of other States to campaign in Hyderabad.

Labour reforms key to fuel mfg growth

THE incident at Apple's contract manufacturer Wistron's Narasapura facility in Bengaluru is a sad reminder of what ails the Indian system. It flags up the loopholes that need to be addressed, failing which India's aspiration to be a manufacturing hub for the world will remain only as a pipe dream. Preliminary investigations have found out that the ruckus created by workers was fuelled by non-payment of wages by labour contractors to temporary workers. It indicates complex labour rules which restrict companies to take temporary workers on an assignment or contract basis. Though the Industrial Relations Code, 2020 has a provision enabling industries to employ workers on a fixed-term contract for short-term jobs, it is still a prevalent practice to employ third-party labour contractors to hire temps. This practice has to be stopped

giving protection to workers in terms of working hours, wages, and other related matters. The resolution of the Wistron incident is critical for showcasing India as an attractive destination for global manufacturers. Apple's contract manufacturers - Wistron, Foxconn, and Pegatron (all are Taiwan-based firms) - remain key to making India a global component manufacturing and cell phone assembly hub. All three have committed investments worth up to \$850 million in India over the next five years under the newly announced PLI (production-linked incentives) scheme. So, expediting the resolution of the Wistron incident is vital for gaining the trust of foreign investors who are actively looking at diversifying their manufacturing base beyond China. Also, India has set ambitious goals of growth and employment by 2025, factoring in the successful implementation of the PLI scheme. For instance, India eyes 20 per cent share of GDP coming from the electronics manufacturing sector by 2025. Similarly, around three lakh jobs are likely to be generated from this initiative. If these goals are to be realised, then India's labour laws are to be simplified to suit the

emerging environment. Further, with the developed nations in general and the US in particular, trying to reduce their dependence on China in the wake of Covid pandemic which has its origins in the communist country, it's the right time for India to grab the opportunity and emerge as a manufacturing powerhouse for the world. That can only happen if the country takes up comprehensive reforms in labour laws and protects the interests of the workers. While the fiasco related to Apple's contract manufacturer has grabbed eyeballs, the ongoing labour unrest at Toyota Kirloskar Motors' manufacturing plant in Bidadi- outside Bengaluru- has been relatively less reported in the media. It shows there are many big and small manufacturers reeling under the labour issues. Usually, big names involving large MNCs get the government support in resolving issues, while many small and medium industries are left high and dry. If India has to be a manufacturing hub, the system also has to protect these SMEs through investment-friendly labour laws and other norms. Then only, the country can gainfully employ its burgeoning young population to cash in the demographic dividend.

Sr Abhaya murder case: How cops unravelled mystery

PAYAM SUDHAKARAN

IT took 28 years for the court of law to decide that the accused in the sensational Sister Abhaya murder case were the actual culprits. Shrouded in mystery right from the day one, the case has seen many twists and turns during the unusually protracted trial which hit many a roadblock over the years. Sister Abhaya, who was a Pre-Degree student at BCM College, Kottayam and an inmate of Pious Tenth Convent, was all of sixteen when she was brutally murdered by cassock-clad padres inside the divine premises of a nunnery. According to the case, on the star-crossed day of March 26, 1992, the two accused - Fr Thomas Kottoor and Sr Sephy - decided to eliminate the victim when she accidentally saw the two accused copulating inside the convent cellar. Sr Abhaya was on her way to the kitchen at 4:15 in the morning to collect some water as she wanted to prepare for an examination, but it proved to be fatal for the unsuspecting little bride of Christ. The accused, fearing scandal and blasphemy, hit Sr Abhaya's head with an axe with an intention to murder her. After confirming the death of Sr Abhaya, the accused dragged the body out and pushed it into a well on the premises with an intention to make the murder look like suicide. After carefully examining the charge-sheet and case records, the CBI court conducted the trial in the case, which took the case to its logical conclusion on Tuesday.



Interestingly, throughout the investigation, there were several attempts to dilute the case, yet the case lasted for 28 years as if an unknown power had been trying to keep the case rolling until it reached its logical conclusion. The case was closed and reopened many times by both the crime branch and the CBI, the country's premier investigative agency. What could have ended up as an accident or suicide, the case continued more than two-and-a-half decade to be proven by the court as cold-blooded murder at last



Even the artificial hymen sewn through surgery on the vagina of a nun accused in the case turned out to be one of the bizarre evidences in the rare case during the hearing. It was argued that Sr Sephy, one of the prime accused, underwent hymenoplasty surgery to prove she was a virgin and had not involved in sexual act with the priest, the virginity test conducted on Sr Sephy was one of the most dramatic exercise during the investigation. In the medical examination, it was proved that Sr Sephy, the third accused in the case, fixed the membrane to prove her virginity. The examination was conducted by police surgeon in the Alleppey Medical College and 29th witness in the case Dr Rama and 19th witness Dr Lalithambika Karunakaran, according to the prosecution.

A watchman on duty told the police that he saw another accused in the case Fr P Jose parking his scooter near the compound wall and jumping inside the convent at night around 9 and coming back at 5 am some three days prior to the murder of Sr Abhaya.

The prosecution pointed out that Sr Abhaya witnessing the sexual act of Fr Kottoor and Sr Sephy was the reason behind the murder.

Interestingly, throughout the investigation there were several attempts to dilute the case, yet the case lasted for 28 years as if an unknown power had been trying to keep the case rolling until it reached its logical conclusion. The case was closed and reopened many times by both crime branch and the CBI, the country's premier investigative agency. What could have ended up as an accident or suicide, the case continued more than two-and-a-half decade to be proven by the court at last.

It was in January 30, 1993, the crime branch submitted its report, claiming that Sr Abhaya's death was suicide. But when there were widespread protests by public and civil right organisations against the crime branch's report, the case was handed over to the CBI on March 30. However, Dy SP Varghese P Thomas who led the investigation resigned from his post as he was unable to make any headway in the most sensational and manipulated case in December same year.

Again in June 2, 1994, a special investigating team of the CBI took up the case, but sought to close the case as it could not find any substantial evidence to prove that the accused were the culprits in its report submitted in the court. On March 20, following a complaint by the victim's father, the court ordered the CBI to reopen the case. After two years, on July 12, the CBI could establish that Abhaya's death was nothing but murder. However, the CBI said as the evidences were destroyed, it would not be able to find the culprits.

The Kerala High Court directed the CBI to further investigate the case in May 2001. As the police failed to make any progress even after many years, a new CBI team was given the charge of investigation in 2007. After intensive and prolonged probe, the team finally could establish in the court that Sr Abhaya's death was a meticulously planned murder. On Wednesday, the CBI court will hand over the sentence in the case, putting the sensational murder case to rest and providing justice to Sr Abhaya. Still the sleaze, sex and murderers in holy outfit continue to thrive in the dark alleys of convents and seminaries. Several cases of sexual assaults and murders come out of closet by each passing day, yet most of the accused in spiritual garments manage to go Scot-free, thanks to the corrupt system that the populace put in place after every elections. May Sr Abhaya's soul rest in peace, finally! Amen!

How Adivasis of Jharkhand are trying to preserve ethnomedicine

DIBYENDU CHAUDHURI,
ARIJAT GHOSH, TEMBA
ORAON, VIVEK SINHA

JANA village is located in the Gumla district of Jharkhand. More than 90 per cent of its population is Adivasi or tribal. As such, most aspects of life here reflect Adivasi cultural and social mores. The old residents of the village recollect that their ancestors settled in the village centuries back. Earlier, they were mostly dependent on local resources for their life and livelihood. However, with time, modern amenities started reaching Jana. It didn't remain isolated from the new scientific and industrial developments - be it in agriculture, healthcare or lifestyle. Though the villagers still remember their traditional practices in agriculture to some extent, the ancestral knowledge of ethnomedicine has now been limited to only a handful of elderly people.

What is ethnomedicine?

'Ethnomedicine', as defined by George Foster and Barbara Anderson in their 1978 essay Medical Anthropology, is the totality of health, knowledge, values, beliefs, skills and practices of members of a society, including all the clinical and non-clinical activities that relate to their health needs. According to an estimate of the World Health Organization, approximately 88 per cent of people in developing countries rely chiefly on traditional medicines, mostly plant extracts, for their primary health care needs. However, like Jana, the knowledge of ethnomedicine and the natural ingredients, the plants and animals, is disappearing quickly throughout the world. In ethnomedicine practices, which mostly evolved in hunter-gatherer societies, ailments are seen as problematic changes that take place in the members of the group. Horacio Fabrega, in his article The Need for an Ethnomedical Science, argued that ethnomedicine is based on the principle that human beings are both physiological and cultural beings. This is the basic difference between it and modern allopathic medicine where human beings are

only considered as physiological beings (except probably psychiatric diseases). As a result, the diseases had been classified differently in both these systems. Ethnomedicine mostly used behavioural changes to diagnose. Further, cure of the disease also involved, in most of the cases, an entire village or a group of people. However, with the influence of allopathic medicine, ethnomedicine also started identifying diseases with the same name as modern medical science. Ethnomedical practices of the Oraon tribe in Latehar documented by Raphael Ranjit Marandi and S John Britto in their article Ethnomedicinal Plants used by the Oraon Tribals of Latehar district of Jharkhand, India shows names such as typhoid, diabetes, etc, that are no doubt an effort to adjust to the mainstream understanding of diseases. One aspect of ethnomedicine is that it is a group-based practice starting from diagnosis to treatment. The ailments are defined by change in social behaviour of the member of a group. A group of people gather the materials needed for the cure and prepare concoctions / decoctions and the treatment involves an elaborate process where a group of people, if not the entire village, participate and the main healer takes their help in the healing process. The other aspect is that it is based on practice of indigenous religion in which nature is worshipped. This kind of devotion and loyalty to natural objects is termed by John Wright as 'geopiety' in his book Human nature in Geography. A particular place or tree is considered sacred; for example, the Oraon tribes worship a place around a Shorea robusta tree (Sal) or Nauclea parvifolia (Karam) tree.

Crisis in ethnomedicine

Forests have been the major source of raw materials for ethnomedicine. However, ancient ethnomedicine practices had been largely affected after the forests went into the hands of forest departments. Timber became a significant source of revenue for the state. Anything other than timber species started becoming consid-



With 'civilisation' and 'modernity' having made inroads into India's tribal areas, its heritage of traditional tribal systems of medicine is increasingly under threat

ered as weeds. Many medicinal plants became weeds as a result of that. At the same time, massive deforestation continued for decades for mining, agriculture, industry, construction, etc. However, like the extinction of plant and animal species, the practitioners of ethnomedicine appear to be at a greater risk of extinction than even forests and other biomes. Knowledge of the use of plants and other species is disappearing faster than those species themselves. Loss of indigenous knowledge also has a significant impact on the development of modern medicine. Charles Anyinam, in his article Ecology and Ethnomedicine, wrote that folklore over the years had proved to be an invaluable guide in the present day screening of drugs. Many important modern drugs (for eg digitoxin, reserpine, tubocurarine, ephedrine, to name a few) have been discovered by following leads from folklore. As NR Farnsworth, in his article The Role of Ethnopharmacology in Drug Development, points out, about 74 per cent of the 121 biological active plant-derived compounds currently in use worldwide, have been discovered through follow-up research to verify the authenticity of information concerning the folk or ethnomedical uses of the plants. For centuries, healers and indigenous people have been collecting medicines from local plants and animals without creating any imbalance in the population dynamics of the species because of the low level of harvest. Commoditisation of plant medicine and animal parts was an insignificant aspect of the practice of ethnomedicine. In the last few decades, however, there has been a marked increase in the sale of herbal remedies. This led to large-scale harvesting of medicinal plants, factory-like production of herbal drugs, and animal poaching in many parts of developing countries. In our country, Patanjali Ayurved declared its annual turnover of 2016-17 to be estimated at Rs 10,216 crore (\$1.4 billion). This is destroying the population balance of the medicinal plant and animal species to a great extent. Jana's struggle Jana is a village located on the fringes of a forest and the villagers consider the jungle as part of their life. Earlier, they were dependent on this forest for biomass to use on their agricultural

land and for food, fodder as well as fuel. However, gradually, with modern amenities, these dependencies are getting reduced. An elderly villager, Mahadev Oraon, around 65-70 years, shared that the people of Jana had a rich knowledge of the forest, which was also a source of medicine for them. He added that there were many people in the village who had knowledge about healing, using plants or animal parts from forests. However, the ethnomedicine practices in Jana has also undergone many changes. Currently, most locals prefer allopathic medicines. They also mostly use allopathic names while mentioning diseases. The entire practice of ethnomedicine, on the other hand, has become dependent only on the healer rather than a group of people. The community, especially local women, expressed the need for documenting the knowledge of ethnomedical practices for future generations. They feared that all this knowledge from their ancestors would disappear with their generation. The villagers have documented 29 different types of concoction and decoction preparation methods using various parts of around fifty plants. The residents of Jana also still depend on ethnomedicines for treating their livestock.

(Courtesy: Down To Earth)

Himalayan blunder?

THIS refers to the news item 'Nepal PM stumps rivals, gets Parl dissolved', (The Hans India, December 21). Nepal's Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli on Sunday recommended that the lower house of Parliament be dissolved and fresh elections be held. The country's president acceded to the request and announced that elections will be held over April and May next year. The legality of the development is contested and the last word hasn't been said. The political turmoil comes at a difficult moment. Nepal has been hit hard by the fallout of the pandemic as tourism and remittances play important roles in the economy. In addition, there have been other challenges such as sugarcane farmers protesting in Kathmandu over unpaid dues. Oli, who has been in office for almost three years, has shown a pronounced tilt towards China in foreign policy. Simultaneously, the relationship with India deteriorated, with the cabinet's approval in May of an updated political map marking a low point. China, through the office of its ambassador to Nepal, has also played a direct role in domestic politics. The Indian government will watch the developments in coming days with interest. None of the differences between the two countries are irreconcilable. They have a unique relationship, as an open border and free movement of people between sovereign neighbours are rarely seen anywhere else in Asia. Nepal can ill afford political turmoil at this time. Hopefully wiser counsel will prevail.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, Bengaluru

Jagan sets off a revolution

KUDOS to the reformist zeal of Jagan's government which has taken one more bold step towards making AP, a "Ry-

LETTERS

thru Rajyam". Taking up this gigantic exercise of "Saswatha Bhu Hakku Bhu Rakshana Pathakam" (land survey) in partnership with Survey of India, across the state, with the aid of latest Drone / Rover technology, to ensure protection of lands, and to issue permanent title deeds to all farmers cum patetdars, is certainly a revolution. Telugu people will be witnessing, after a century. In this regard, it is an universal truth that the land has got emotional connect with the Telugu people and it is fondly hoped that this land reform, at the doorstep of the landholders, will herald a peaceful enjoyment of land and property, sans litigation and hassle. Further, this survey will ensure purification of land records and help to give a flawless Land administration to the people of AP. P H Hema Sagar, Secunderabad

A shaky welcome to 2021 As we prepare to welcome the new year 2021 after nearly a year of struggle battling coronavirus and still continuing to do so with Damocles' sword hanging over everyone's head of losing one's job at any time on account of economy still in the nascent stage and not recovered, people started feeling jittery as uncertainty stares at their faces. In this context, if we reminisce the year and analyse the life in pre-Covid times when it was peaceful with business and life moving at the usual pace with no restrictions placed on movement of transport and people from one place to another at any hour of the day. But with the outbreak of pandemic in late March, people least expected that it would turn

out to be deadly one and last longer were proved wrong as after striking, it not only changed the life style of everyone but left them in a state of daze when lockdown was clamped asking people to stay indoors and not venture out for any errands. With the roller coaster ride starting from day one of lockdown, it confined everyone at home for months until lockdown was slowly lifted phase by phase. Therefore, it is crucial for everyone to remain optimistic by focusing on the task on hand in order to ward off negative thoughts from our minds and as well to minimise the spread of virus. All said and done, after nearly a year of intense struggle, it seems that the world is finally entering the final phase of battling the coronavirus, let us hope the virus goes leaves as visualised by experts for everyone to heave a sigh of relief. K R Srinivasan, Secunderabad

II THREAT of another type of corona virus is spreading with lot of variants from other nations, initially from Britain and South Africa. This strain is struggling in its way. Our country should be more vigilant to keep it at bay by continuing precautionary protocols such as mask wearing, hand sanitisation and maintaining physical distance and less or no gatherings during festivals, marriages and any other events. Though Covid-19 fatality rate is stated to be very low at little over one per cent on Indian population, it is very high as more than one lakh patients succumbed to the pandemic which is to be taken in to account. A team of specialist doctors addressed in media that this new strain will cause more harm than covid-19. Governments should again jump into action to contain it at entry point itself. Dr NSR Murthy, Secunderabad

Political divorce?

WHEN one leaves a political party, we call it a political divorce but what happened in West Bengal is between a real married couple, which was a love marriage who incidentally opted for BJP and TMC. and became political opponents culminating in the husband serving divorce notice to his wife. This clearly shows the kind of people we have in politics who have no qualms to go for divorce leaving the family high and dry. Probably, politics is so lucrative that even marital relationships can be sacrificed at the altar of transient political marriages.

D S P Rao, Kakinada

Ramanujan, the genius

IT is heartening to know that the enigmatic mathematical work and greatness of Ramanujan continues to inspire generations of mathematicians (The greatness of Ramanujan, TH, Dec 22). The annual celebration of his birthday as "National Mathematics Day" should not be a mere 'academic' gesture but be used to encourage and perpetuate his mathematical genius in our youngsters. A National Award in his name should be initiated and be given to promising scientists and academicians. Again little is known about how he could acquire and showcase such phenomenal talent with little formal education in daunting penury. A thorough research in to this aspect is highly appreciated as it comes handy for generations to come.

M Somasekhar Prasad, Hyderabad

thehansreader@gmail.com

Focus on super speciality services in hospitals: AP CM

- ▶ Tells officials to speed up the process of construction of medical colleges at different places
- ▶ Tenders to be invited for the construction of a medical college in Machilipatnam by the end of December and 12 other colleges will come up at different places
- ▶ Jagan also instructs officials to complete the construction of YSR Village Clinics by March 31

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

CHIEF Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy on Tuesday said priority should be given to the execution of Nadu-Nedu works and also adequate funds should be allocated.

Jagan held a review meeting on Nadu-Nedu (Health) at his camp office at Tadepalli on Tuesday. He asked officials to remain vigilant in the wake of emergence of a second wave of the Covid-19 and focus on development of super speciality services in hospitals. Citing that Britain and some other countries have imposed new restrictions, the Chief Minister asked officials to be on the alert.

The Nadu Nedu works under health sector are estimated to cost Rs 16,270 crore. The officials



Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy holding a review meeting on Nadu-Nedu (Health) at his camp office in Tadepalli on Tuesday

said works of super speciality hospital in Palasa are in full swing and they would be completed by December next year and the works on Kadapa Super Speciality Hospital have started and are likely to be completed by June 2023.

The officials said they would call for reverse tendering in a week for the construction of five multi-specialty hospitals under ITDA and trying to conduct reverse tendering for construction of medical colleges at Paderu, Piduguralla and Pulivendula this week.

Tenders would be invited for the construction of a medical college in Machilipatnam by the end of December. The Chief Minister directed the officials to take steps for the construction of remaining 12 medical colleges at the earliest. He said the construction of the

YSR village clinics should be completed by March 31 and the works of YSR urban health clinics should start by the end of January. The officials said the works of Nadu Nedu in PHCs are expected to be completed by September 2021 and the works in area hospitals and community health centres would be completed by December 2021.

The Chief Minister reviewed the implementation of Aarogyasri scheme, distribution of health cards and measures being taken to clear the pending bills of Aarogyasri scheme. The officials said treatment is being provided for 2,436 procedures under the scheme as per the directions of the Chief Minister. They said that so far 836 procedures have been covered under YSR Arogya Asara and steps are being taken to include additional 638 procedures

under this scheme. He said the patients should be shown the amount of YSR Arogya Asara being deposited in their accounts at the time they get discharged from hospitals.

The Chief Minister directed the officials to get reports on the quality standards at government hospitals apart from private hospitals. He said the services of Aarogyasri and helpdesks should be improved on a daily basis.

He said the ANMs should be given training at Village secretariats on the process of referring and the protocol and procedures for calling ambulances for patients. He said CCTV cameras should be installed in all network hospitals. He said Arogya Mitras should have positive attitude towards patients and all the information and support should be provided by them as expected.

ONLINE MONEY LENDING APPS

Harassment of customers will not be tolerated: DGP

- Says the State police is keeping a vigil on loan apps
- Identifies the apps operating from Delhi, Noida and Gurugram
- Sawang lauds the invaluable services being rendered by AP Special Police to people in the State

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

DIRECTOR General of Police D Gautam Sawang has warned that stern action will be taken against those operating mobile loan apps if they harass the customers who take loans.

Sawang said the AP police were already keeping a vigil on these apps and identified the loan apps which are operating from Delhi, Noida and Gurugram. Interacting with the media at the AP Special Police head office at Mangalagiri on Tuesday, the DGP said the people have to come forward to lodge complaints against the loan apps if they face harassment from the micro finance companies.

The DGP has issued the stern warning in view of the suicide committed by one person in Hyderabad due to the alleged harassment by loan app finance company and other cases reported there. The DGP said the



DGP D Gautam Sawang presenting medals to APSP staff at their head office in Mangalagiri on Tuesday

loan apps were targeting mainly women customers and added that special drive will be conducted in the State to check the activities of these companies.

Referring to AP Special Police, the DGP said the State Special Police is similar to that of a para-military wing and it has been extending services to the people since pre-Independence times. He said the police department is presenting awards to the meritorious staff in Special Police to give encouragement.

He said the AP Special Police has network all over India and it has a record of doing service

in North Eastern States also. Sawang said the AP Special Police are backbone for Octopus, Greyhounds and security wings of the police department in the State and it has been rendering invaluable service to the people of the State.

Referring to Spandana programme conducted every Monday by the police to receive complaints from the people, Sawang said women constitute 52 per cent of the complainants in the State. He said Disha app is very useful to the women and appealed to women to download the app to get quick response from the police.

Religious fervour marks Koil Alwar Tirumanjanam

HANS NEWS SERVICE
TIRUMALA

THE traditional temple cleansing festival Koil Alwar Tirumanjanam was performed with religious fervour at Tirumala temple on Tuesday ahead of Vaikunta Ekadasi, a major religious festival being observed at the famed shrine.

Talking to mediapersons outside the temple after the fete, Additional EO A V Dharma Reddy said this traditional fete is observed four times in a year during annual Brahmotsavams, Vaikunta Ekadasi, Ugadi and Anivara Asthanam on the Tuesdays occurring before these major religious events.



TTD Additional EO A V Dharma Reddy and others taking part in Koil Alwar Tirumanjanam at Tirumala on Tuesday

8 from UK test positive after arrival in India

Continued from P1

Till then, the government has said, all passengers arriving from the UK will be tested on arrival at airports. Six passengers who tested positive on their arrival in India were among the 266 who travelled by the Air India Flight that landed in the national capital at 10.40pm on Monday. Government official Awanish Kumar, who is helping coordinate the tests at the New Delhi airport, said it was "unclear" if any of them had the new strain. "It is unclear...NCDC will confirm this," Kumar said, referring to the National Centre for Disease Control, to which samples of the passengers tested in Delhi have been sent. One of the six took a connecting flight to Chennai and tested positive there, according to an agency report.

Mutant virus may put AP local body polls behind

Continued from P1

This comes at a time when the country is gearing up to roll out its vaccination programme.

Andhra Pradesh has done remarkably well in containing the virus so far and its medical facilities have been upgraded. But, is the State ready for the local body elections? This is a far cry from the truth. There is little chance that anyone could talk of the conduct of elections with a new strain of corona virus stalking us. Secondly, this has to be coupled with the rolling out of the vaccination plan.

The State Government is awaiting the Centre's guidelines in this regard. These are the initial stages of the new strain but as it is expected to spread very fast, there is little that one could do except adopting precautionary measures.

The local body elections at this juncture would not be to the liking

of the State Government more than any. A litigation is already on this issue. The SEC has approached the AP High Court recently seeking cooperation from the State Government in conducting the elections in February. Upon receiving a favourable court order, the SEC knocked the doors of the AP Secretariat only to be rebuffed by the latter.

The State Government had submitted to the court its affidavit against the same but the HC ruled it out. The SEC has again filed a contempt petition in the country. Coming at this juncture, the news of this new strain, is not welcome news for the SEC. The Government which "is planning implementation of the vaccination protocol" is bound to raise this development in the court to seek an order against the conduct of elections.

'No CBSE board exams till Feb: Pokhriyal

Continued from P1

"Cancelling exams and promoting students without exam will put a stamp on these students. These students might face trouble in getting jobs and admissions at higher education level in future as they would be termed as Covid-era students. We do not want that for our students," he added.

The Minister said that the exam will be conducted offline as "we need a laptop and stable internet and electricity for each student which is a challenge." "A percentage of students do not have equal access to education. While we have used unique methods to teach students but having such methods for exams

might not be fair," he said.

The CBSE board exams will be conducted on a reduced syllabus. There will also be 33% internal choices in the exam, said Pokhriyal. 30% of the total syllabus has been scrapped and some states have also declared the same while others are likely to make an announcement soon. He informed about the training imparted to the teaching faculty across the nation to conduct online classes by the National Council of Education, Research and Training (NCERT).

The Minister said, "CBSE has trained 4.80 lakh teachers in online education teaching. Training of teachers in online education is critical. Schools are yet to re-

sume to their full capacities. Several platforms like 'Nishtha' has been launched for the benefit of teachers." "NCERT has been providing online content. Various regional schools and educational boards have uploaded their curriculum on DIKSHA platform", Pokhriyal added.

Various teachers have also complained about difficulties faced by them during the online classes including the internet connectivity, lack of access to proper mobile phones or laptops. They have also raised concern about lack of practical sessions held in 2020 and have requested to do away with the practical examinations for CBSE Board exams 2021.

Aditya Nath Das appointed AP Chief Secretary

Continued from P1

The GO stated that apart from this, she will also take up subjects and projects as allocated by the chief minister from time to time. During her tenure as the chief secretary, Nilam Sawhney weathered many storms, including attending the high court for contempt of court. Meanwhile, Y Sri Lakshmi, who has been shifted from Telangana recently and waiting for posting, has been appointed secretary of the Municipal Administration and Urban Development department in the place of Y Syamala Rao, who shall assume charge as secretary to the Water Resources department. Another IAS officer, Secretary to Finance department K Sunitha has been appointed secretary to the Social Welfare department. She will also take full additional charge as the vice-chairman and managing director of AP Scheduled Castes Cooperatives Finance Corporation.

Mutant Covid strain not found in India so far: Govt

Continued from P1

Meanwhile, the government has announced SOPs for all incoming passengers until then. The SOPs include mandatory RT-PCR tests for all arrivals and isolation for those testing positive, as well as institutional quarantine for contacts of passengers who test positive. According to the government, "contacts" will include all those within three rows of the infected passenger.

Pfizer partner BioNTech says 'can make vax in 6 weeks'

Continued from P1

"Scientifically, it is highly likely that the immune response by this vaccine also can deal with the new virus variant," said Ugur Sahin, the co-founder of BioNTech. However, "We don't know at the moment if our vaccine is also able to provide protection against this new variant," he added. Sahin said that the proteins on the UK variant are 99% the same as on the prevailing strains, and therefore BioNTech has "scientific confidence" that its vaccine will be effective.

Some scientists said that given vaccine shortages, the strategy should be studied to figure out whether it has an effect on managing the spread of the coronavirus. "But we will know it only if the experiment is done and we will need about two weeks from now to get the data," he said. "The likelihood that our vaccine works ... is relatively high."

He also stated that if needed, the pharma company could also provide a vaccine to combat the new strain of coronavirus in six weeks. "In principle the beauty of the messenger technology is that we can directly start to engineer a vaccine which completely mimics this new mutation - we could be able to provide a new vaccine technically within six weeks," he said.

A new SARS-CoV-2 variant was found in the United Kingdom last week. "Over the last few days, thanks to our world-class genomic capability, we have identified a new variant of the coronavirus, which may be associated with the faster spread in the South of England," UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock told the House of Commons on 14 December. Public Health England (PHE) announced that 1,108 cases with this variant have been identified as of 13 December. Outside

Britain, nine cases of the new strain have been reported in Denmark, as well as one case in the Netherlands and another in Australia, according to the WHO.

BioNTech joined hands with US drugmaker Pfizer to develop a vaccine against novel coronavirus. Their experimental vaccine has been authorized for use in more than 45 countries including Britain, the United States and the European Union. Moderna is also testing its coronavirus vaccine to see if it works against the new mutated version of the virus, CNN reported. "Based on the data to date, we expect that the Moderna vaccine-induced immunity would be protective against the variants recently described in the UK," Moderna said in a statement adding, "We will be performing additional tests in the coming weeks to confirm this expectation."

time managing the farmers who got angered when the turban of one of the protesters was tossed in the air during a scuffle. It is also worth mentioning that the farmers had declared their decision to protest against BJP and JJP leaders in Haryana by showing them black flags.

Black flags greet Haryana CM

Haryana government, the protesters also decided to show black flags to CM Manohar Lal's convoy. The administration even tried to divert the Chief Minister's convoy using an alternate route, but all such efforts went in vain. Police officials deployed along the route faced a tough

TODAY'S QUOTE

India, Bangladesh should collaborate

“India and Bangladesh should work with greater collaboration in the agriculture sector as it can be a game-changer for both the countries, bilateral cooperation in the sector can pave the way for overcoming the current economic challenges. The country has offered duty-free market access to Bangladesh in many products.

— Piyush Goyal, Commerce Minister



JOINT VENTURE

GIC, ESR JV to invest \$750 mn in India

Singaporean sovereign wealth fund GIC announced a joint venture with the Hong Kong-headquartered ESR Cayman to form a \$ 750 million joint venture which will develop and acquire industrial and logistics assets in India. GIC will be owning 80 per cent stake in the joint venture, while ESR will own the remaining 20 per cent.

FOREX (buy rates in ₹)			
US Dollar	78.27	South	
Euro	94.96	African Rand	5.82
UAE Dirham	22.11	Hong Kong Dollar	10.95
Thai Baht	2.81	Japanese Yen	0.82
British Pound	103.15	New Zealand Dollar	54.82
Australian Dollar	58.65	Saudi Riyal	21.64
Canadian Dollar	60.29	Swedish Krona	10.28
Swiss Franc	86.75	Singapore Dollar	58.15

DELHI WEDNESDAY 23 DECEMBER 2020

BIZ BRIEFS

Instagram's new features

INSTAGRAM on Tuesday announced the second edition of the 'Born on Instagram' programme, to discover, grow and give creators knowledge to best leverage Instagram with all new features added in 2020, especially focusing on Reels. In its long 10 years journey Instagram has a shift from a photo-sharing app, to adding Stories, Live, IGTV and now Reels in keeping the focus on young people. Manish Chopra, Director and Head of Partnerships, Facebook India, said, "Born on Instagram is a unique programme that creates an institutional learning environment for creators, so as to better understand and leverage Instagram. We're aiming to ignite the creativity and entrepreneurial spirit we're seeing from creators in Hyderabad, so as to facilitate the discovery of the next big digital content creators from India."

L&T MF digital campaign

L&T Mutual Fund has launched digital campaign called 'Late Lateef 2021' to reiterate the importance of investing early in equity linked saving scheme (ELSS) for tax saving with the theme to educate masses on avoiding procrastination every day. Through this digital campaign, the fund house plans to reach out to a larger pool of users, including millennials, who formed about 47 per cent of new mutual fund investors in FY19 as per the latest data provided by Computer Age Management Services Limited (CAMS). Fund house has created a page for ELSS.ltf.com/els, which includes details about the campaign video, benefits of investing in the ELSS funds etc for guiding investors to choose the right option. The campaign is on social media including YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

ITC launches students' book

ITC Classmate has launched Origami notebooks, the series of engagement-based notebooks, under its Classmate Interaktiv series with aim at encouraging students to learn through "Do It Yourself" activities. The Origami notebooks include specialized DIY Origami sheets and would focus on enhanced consumer engagements through videos, contests and so on. Classmate Origami Notebooks are available at select stationery outlets, Amazon, Flipkart and Big Basket. Vikas Gupta, Chief Executive, Education and Stationary Products Business Division, ITC Ltd., said, "In accordance with ITC's focus on continuous innovation, we believe in encouraging children to learn through experiential knowledge. Classmate through its Interaktiv series wants to ensure that kids enjoy the process of learning through curiosity and imagination."

Mondelez unveils new snack

Mondelez India, the maker of snacking brands Cadbury Dairy Milk, Bournvita, Oreo, etc., announced its foray into the wholesome biscuits segment with the launch of Bournvita Crunchy. With this new launch, the company is further strengthening its 'Better for You' product offering, fulfilling the constantly evolving snacking needs of consumers looking for balanced indulgence. Bournvita Crunchy is available on shelves, across the country. Sudhanshu Nagpal, Associate Director, Marketing (Biscuits), Mondelez India said, "Our endeavour has always been to provide unique eating experiences and a broad range of product offerings to our consumers – from indulgent to wholesome."

Vaccine rollout uphill task: Bharat Biotech

Hyd firm already produced 10mn doses of its still-in-trials Covaxin shot

CHRIS KAY

THE developer of India's main homegrown coronavirus vaccine is already producing millions of doses of its yet-to-be-authorised candidate but says the thought of supplying enough shots for half the country's nearly 1.4 billion people is daunting. "It's nightmarish," said Suchitra Ella, Joint Managing Director of Bharat Biotech International Limited. "Sometimes, I get goosebumps ... sometimes I wake up early in the morning wondering where are we. What are we doing? How do we get there?"

Bharat has already produced about 10 million doses of its still-in-trials Covaxin shot, ahead of an anticipated roll out by the middle of next year. It has a current annual capacity of 300 million vaccines and expects the first 100 million to be deployed by India, which has partly financed the development.

"We have started producing at risk because we know that it will be an uphill task ... in the Indian context it's small," Ella said in an interview. "That's a huge challenge in front of us when we think of the hundreds of millions of doses even if half the country needs to be vaccinated."

Bharat has spent about \$70 million so far for developing Covid vac-



“It's nightmarish. Sometimes, I get goosebumps ... sometimes I wake up early in the morning wondering where are we. What are we doing? How do we get there?”

— Suchitra Ella, Jt MD, Bharat Biotech

cines, and Ella said that early trial data suggested Covaxin has efficacy rates of at least 60%, which was a "conservative" projection. That may improve in the final human study, she said. The trial has recruited half of its 26,000 volunteers, and going into 2021 Ella expects licensing to allow inoculations for public use by May or June.

The lack of Phase-III trial data didn't stop Bharat from applying for emergency use authorization this month, though the company and Serum Institute -- which has submitted final-stage trial numbers -- have been asked by Indian regulators to provide additional figures on safety, efficacy, and immunogenicity.

The shot from Bharat Biotech could be crucial in making up any shortfall given the fierce competition for the limited supply of global front-runners.

Although India has secured access to over 2 billion vaccine doses, only 85% of its people can count on those shots.

Ella voiced confidence in the scale and ability of India's public immunisation system to deploy any Covid shot. Ella also pointed to India's polio programme, which uses a vaccine requiring -20 degrees Celsius storage. "That has been handled very effectively in India," she said. "It goes to show how strong and robust this mechanism is." (Bloomberg)

GDP recovery heading towards Q4 level of FY20

NEW DELHI

THE continuous improvement in the key economic and business indicators signals that the worst is behind us and expectations of a positive GDP growth at 0.1 per cent to 2 per cent in Q3 and 2 per cent to 4 per cent in Q4 FY 2020-21 are becoming strong with a higher growth trajectory in FY 2021-22 at 7.7 per cent, according to PHDCCI EBM Index (Economic and Business Momentum Index).

The series of stimulus announcements by the Government in last 9 months under the AatmaNirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan 1.0, 2.0 and 3.0 along with the calibrated measures undertaken by the RBI have pulled the economy from the lows of Q1 FY 2020-21 (-) 23.9 per cent in Q1 2020-21 to (-) 7.5 per cent in Q2 FY 2020-21, said Sanjay Aggarwal, President, PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry in a press statement issued on Tuesday.

The overall growth for the FY 2020-21 is expected to contract by (-) 7.9 per cent, said Aggarwal. The growth trend of PHDCCI EMB Index suggests that economy has potential to rejuvenate at more than 7.7 per cent growth trajectory in the next financial year 2021-22. (IANS)

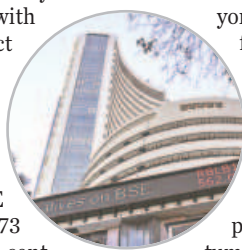
Markets bounce back on firm European cues

IT STOCKS HOG LIMELIGHT, SENSEX GAINS 452.73 POINTS

MUMBAI

THE Sensex made an emphatic comeback on Tuesday following the previous session's massive selloff, as European markets reversed losses amid expectations that the Covid-19 vaccines will be effective against a new virus strain in the UK. IT stocks led the recovery on Dalal Street, with pharma and select banking stocks also witnessing robust demand. After gyrating 968 points in a volatile session, the 30-share BSE Sensex ended 452.73 points or 0.99 per cent higher at 46,006.69. On similar lines, the broader NSE Nifty climbed 137.90 points or 1.03 per cent to 13,466.30.

HCL Tech was the top gainer among the Sensex companies, rallying 5.09 per cent, followed by Tech Mahindra, Infosys, PowerGrid, Sun Pharma, Nestle India and L&T. Only five index constituents finished in the red - Kotak Bank, Bajaj Finance, HDFC, RIL and IndusInd Bank, which slipped up to 0.94 per cent. European markets witnessed a sharp recovery after German pharmaceutical company BioNTech said it was confident that its



coronavirus vaccine would work against the new UK variant.

The variant, detected mainly in London and the southeast of England in recent weeks, has sparked concern worldwide because of signs that it may spread more easily. While there is no indication it causes more serious illness, numerous countries in Europe and beyond have restricted travel from the UK as a result. The US Congress approving a \$900 billion stimulus package also bolstered market sentiment, traders said. "Market took an unexpected positive momentum in the afternoon, during a see-saw trading day, following the positive opening of the European market, which recovered from yesterday's sell-off. The sectorial rally was led by IT and Pharma stocks with other sectors also supporting the up move. "Volatility is expected to stay high in the near-term due to strict lockdown impacting economic recovery.

However, the market is expected to remain bullish in the medium to long term, backed by overall progress in economic activity in 2021," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services. (PTI)

Corporates to step up hiring in 2021

DHRITI RANJANA RAY
NEW DELHI

ADAPTING to the new hybrid normal of remote and office work, cautiously optimistic corporates are looking to hire more people and provide better appraisals in the forth coming year as they step out of the pandemic-ravaged 2020. The coronavirus pandemic emerged as the biggest inflection point for the Indian job landscape. For the corporates, work-from-home and remote workers became the new normal and for the professionals, online learning and digital skills took centre stage. In 2020, most companies "deprioritised" their hiring plans amid uncertain economic outlook, while industries like travel, hospitality, retail, aviation, real estate, construction and automobile were severely hit.

Nevertheless, there is a cautious optimism among corporates and it is getting reflected in their recruitment plans for next year. "Yes. The market is showing positive signs of recovery with almost all the industries showing growth in hiring but with caution. Overall, the intent to hire recovered smartly from 11 per cent during the lockdown period to 18



per cent for HY (half year), and this number is growing," said Deval Singh, Business Head (mobilisation, hiring) at TeamLease Services.

While there is a caution in hiring, the market is displaying optimism. According to Singh, there is a 50 per cent increase in employment opportunities from the lockdown days. Pay cuts have been reversed since Diwali in most organisations and bonuses were issued in few. Some technology companies even declared early appraisals, Singh noted. The latest ManpowerGroup Employment Outlook Survey, which covered 1,518 employers across the country, showed that corporate India is showing "healthy signs of recovery" and plans to hire more people in the first three months of 2021 compared to the quarter ending December.

Pvt thermal power cos likely to get ₹40k-cr liquidity boost

Govt has decided to liquidate overdue receivables from State discoms

MUMBAI

PRIVATE sector thermal power plants are in for better times with a likely Rs 40,000-crore liquidity boost coming in from government initiatives along with Coal India decision to offer longer term credit to them, says a report.

While the government has decided to liquidate the overdue receivables from state discoms under a rescue package, national miner Coal India has decided to allow private thermal power plants to get coal on 90-180 days credit.

These two measures can help them with a liquidity support of Rs 40,000 crore, improving their overall credit profiles, Crisil said in a report on Tuesday. The government support is by way of Rs 1.2-lakh-crore loan scheme to enable discoms to pay outstanding dues to generators. The scheme requires the first tranche, accounting for half the package, to be disbursed immediately and the balance upon discoms committing to operational improvements. Delayed payments by state discoms and the weakening cash flows due to the lockdowns have the overdue to private generators to the tune of Rs 59,000 crore as of October.



ber. The overall overdues run up to Rs 90,000 crore as of March 2020. This includes overdue to Central, state and private capacities and also across coal, gas, hydro and renewables.

To reduce the overdues, discoms have already begun signing into this loan scheme. As of end-November, nearly half of the first tranche has been disbursed. Given the policy thrust, we expect full disbursement by March. Private coal-based power plants should see a liquidity relief of about Rs 30,000 crore given that half of the overdues are owed to them, says the report.

In addition, generators received relief from Coal India which caters to 80

per cent of their coal demand, which form nearly three-fourths of a generator's operational costs.

As against cash advances for these coal purchases, Coal India has begun allowing letter of credit facility of 90-180 days.

Even with a three-month credit period, coal payments worth Rs 1,00,004 crore can be deferred by power generators, helping better cash-flow management, according to the analysis by the agency.

Together, these two measures--relief to discoms under the loan package, and credit period by Coal India can provide a Rs 40,000 crore liquidity boost to generators, says the report. (PTI)

Direct selling sector to employ 18mn by 2025

NEW DELHI

THE direct selling sector is poised to employ more than 18 million by 2025. As per the industry estimates, the direct selling industry in India, which currently ranks No 15 globally, is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of about 4.8 per cent to reach Rs 15,930 crore by 2021.

This proves that the direct selling industry is flourishing, and illustrates its potential with the continued rate of growth increasing at an impressive rate of 12.1 per cent, year-on-year. Another interesting trend that is noticeable is that the sector has been instrumental in employment generation for nearly 122 million Indians who lost their jobs due to the pandemic.

Gautam Bali, Managing Director, Vestige Marketing Private Limited, said, "Direct selling is one of the fastest-growing sectors in India today. Despite these challenging times, the sector has witnessed spectacular growth in the last three quarters. "At Vestige, we have provided an alternative career opportunity to millions during the pandemic period. We are looking forward to 2021 and we hope to continue to be a key player in the Direct Selling Industry's rapid growth by empowering people."

Small firms in India Inc feeling Covid pinch

Less than 20% of small companies registered revenue growth in H1FY20

RITWIK MUKHERJEE
KOLKATA

WHEN it comes to India Inc, the smaller the company, the more excruciating the pain they suffered caused by the pandemic. For the record, less than 20 per cent of the smaller 400 companies logged revenue growth, as against nearly 35 per cent of the top 100 companies that grew in the first half of the fiscal, so suggests the latest study by Crisil Research. In fact, in consumption, and commodity-linked sectors, most large players logged growth in the second quarter, while their smaller counterparts de-grew.

If the most recent Crisil Research is to be believed, the revenue of corporate India, excluding banking, financial services and insurance (BFSI) and oil companies, which had



fallen nearly 29 per cent on-year in the first, remained stable on-year in the second quarter this fiscal. While large players saw muted revenue growth, small players, which are typically low on bargaining power and cash-crunched, remained in the red.

Going by the Crisil study, among exporters, smaller textile businesses -- readymade garments and cotton

yarn -- suffered chronic pain, while IT services showed resilience with both large and small players showing steady sequential growth.

While breaking it down among sectors, it suggested that export-linked sectors such as IT and pharmaceuticals outperformed in the first half of the fiscal due to rupee depreciation and good demand in the

export markets, chemicals witnessed a 21 per cent decline owing to weak demand and lower average realisations. The fertiliser sector's revenue dropped close to one per cent, despite robust demand, on account of reduced subsidy bill caused by lower gas pooled prices and lower nutrient-based subsidy rates, which impacted revenue of urea and non-urea players. Consumer discretionary sectors such as auto-components, airlines, hotels and consumer durables were hit hard by multiple lockdowns, which impacted sales volume, persistent supply issues and lower discretionary spend.

Quite understandably, travel-linked sectors such as airlines and hotels were the worst impacted. Their revenue de-grew nearly 79 per cent owing to travel restrictions and social distancing norms, which curtailed peoples' movement.

EV market in India to touch 63L units by 2027

NEW DELHI

THE electric vehicle (EV) market in India is expected to hit over 63 lakh unit-mark per year by 2027, according to a report by India Energy Storage Alliance (IESA).

As per the findings of the report, which covers the present scenario and forecast of EV, EV batteries and the public charging infrastructure market in the country, demand for the batteries is also going to rise substantially over the same period.

"In the base-case scenario, the EV market is expected to grow at a CAGR of 44 per cent between 2020 and 2027, and is expected to hit 6.34-million-unit annual sales by 2027,"

the IESA report said. Similarly, the annual battery demand is forecast to grow at 32 per cent to hit 50GWh by 2027, of this, 40-plus GWh will be on lithium-ion batteries, it added.

"The estimated battery market potential is \$580 million in 2019 and is forecast to grow to \$14.9 billion by 2027," it noted. The EV sales in India stood at 3.8 lakh units in 2019-20, and the EV battery market stood at 5.4GWh during the year. The electric two-wheelers were the highest selling in the entire segment last fiscal.

As per the report, low and medium-speed electric two-wheelers (up to 40 kmph) with conventional lead-acid batteries were dominating the market.



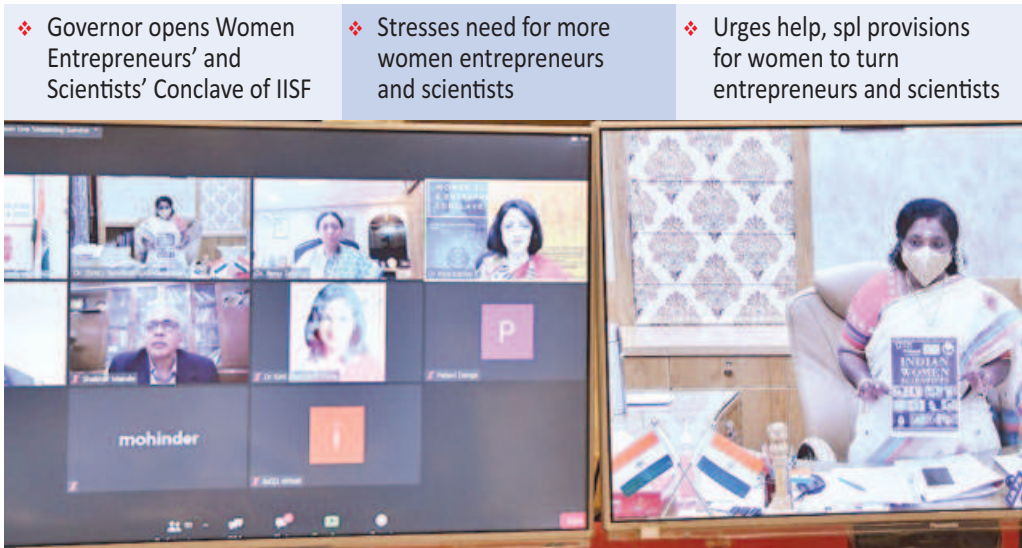
Women's role very key to Atma Nirbhar India: Governor

HYDERABAD

GOVERNOR Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan virtually addressed the inaugural of the three-day "Women Entrepreneurs' and Scientists' Conclave" held at the India International Science Festival (IISF), organised by the CSIR-NEERI, New Delhi on Tuesday.

She stated that women's role is vital in achieving the goal of Atma Nirbhar Bharat, the self-reliant India. "It is disheartening to find that the women's representation is less than 20 per cent among the total entrepreneurs in our country. Similarly, women constitute less than 15 per cent of the scientists in the country. If all the women who are not into remunerative work enter the workforce, our country will be at least 27 per cent richer. It will lead to equal, equitable and inclusive society," she added.

The Governor also calls for increased seats for women in engineering and technical institutions and more number of fellowships to encourage women scientists



Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan addressing the virtual session of Women Entrepreneurs and Scientists Conclave held as part of India International Science Festival on Tuesday

Elaborating on the importance of promoting entrepreneurship among women in our country, the governor said that women-owned enterprises have the potential to create 150-170 million new jobs. "They have the capability to transform

the employment in the country. Women's equality and closing the gender gap are likely to help the country's GDP gain 16 per cent by 2025," she added, suggesting special provisions, increased funding, and the creation of exclusive institutions to promote entrepreneurship among women in our country. She called for increased seats for women in engineering and technical institutions and more number of fellowships to encourage women scientists.

Union Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani was the guest of honour. Ministry of Science and Technology Secretary Dr Renu Swarup, CSIR Director-General Dr Shekhar C Mande, NEERI Director Dr Rakesh Kumar and IISF Principal Coordinator Dr Atya Kalpley were among others who spoke at the inaugural. A host of women entrepreneurs and scientists from across the country took part in the programme.

Uttam accuses TRS govt of browbeating PR bodies Cong leaders conduct day-long 'Satyagraha'

HYDERABAD

TPCC president and MP N Uttam Kumar Reddy on Tuesday alleged that the TRS government was using Panchayat Raj (PR) institutions and urban local bodies for "corruption." He was addressing a day-long 'satyagraha' at Indira Park organised by the Rajiv Gandhi Panchayati Raj Sangathan to highlight the neglect of PR institutions and urban local bodies and their elected representatives by the government.

The deeksha was also addressed by CLP leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, MLAs Seethakka and Jagga Reddy, former PCC presidents V Hanumanth Rao and Ponnala Lakshmaiah, former leader of Opposition in the council Mohd. Ali Shabbir, working in the president Ponnamm Prabhakar, AICC secretary G Chinnna Reddy, former minister Dr J Geeta Reddy, sangathan State In-charge Kiran, State convenor Dr Palvai Harish, among



TPCC president and MP N Uttam Kumar Reddy addressing a day-long 'satyagraha' organised by the Rajiv Gandhi Panchayati Raj Sangathan at Indira Park on Tuesday

others. Uttam Kumar Reddy said that the TRS government turned the elected representatives of local bodies into symbolic entities with no say in the decision-making process. He said Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao had completely crushed gram panchayats and other institutions by ending their relevance. The TPCC leaders alleged that

the government was harassing the elected representatives of Congress party, especially in rural areas. They also alleged that TRS leaders were looting the gram panchayats by taking commission from agencies for purchase of tractors, LEDs and other items. "Panchayats are being forced to purchase tractors through selective contractors. The government has been making claims of constructing Rythu Vedikas and Shamshana Vatikas, but no bills have been released so far," they said and demanded that the State government permit direct funding for Panchayat Raj institutions to ensure development in rural areas.

Uttam Kumar Reddy said that the TRS government turned the elected representatives of local bodies into symbolic entities with no say in the decision-making process

'Protect interests of migrant workers'

HYDERABAD

STATING that the recent circulars issued by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) reducing minimum referral wages (MRW) by 30 to 50 per cent was a cause for concern, Municipal Administration & Urban Development Minister KT Rama Rao on Tuesday urged the MEA Minister S Jaishankar to protect the interests of migrant workers.

The MEA had issued the circular fixing minimum referral wages (MRWs) in different countries. The MRW in Bahrain, Oman and the UAE is \$200 and in Saudi Arabia, it is \$324. Similarly, MWR in Qatar is \$200. In Kuwait, it is \$245 for work visa holders in Kuwait and \$196 for domestic workers.

KTR took to Twitter and said, "the recent circulars issued by MEA reducing Minimum Referral Wages by 30-50%, as reported, are a cause for huge concern, as wages of lakhs of migrant workers from Telangana working in the Gulf countries will get adversely impacted. Already there is considerable distress among all migrant workers due to wage losses as a result of Covid and lockdowns.

VRC PHANIHARAN
HYDERABAD

IT is one of its kind of classic case that showcases how people have to face lathis, bundled into police vans or get stamped and end up in the courtrooms for the failure of the government authorities to act in time.

Dr Vijaya Lakshmi (name changed), a senior faculty member at a private engineering college in the city has been struggling to clear loans taken from banks based on salary she draws. The college in which she has been working has not cleared the salary dues for the several months and whenever it did, she was paid only half the salary with no fixed date once in 45 to 60 days.

"The college management has been citing that it has not got the fee reimbursement from the State government and hence not in a position to pay the salaries. When pressing for salaries, many were shown the door," she said. "My husband and I have taken hand loans from friends and relatives to pay the school fee of our kid. We also had to sell the last gold chain left in the house to

make part payment of fee to admit our elder daughter in an engineering college," she rued, adding that the third party agents of the banks were now giving nightmares to her. She wanted to restructure her pending loan. However, the banks were insisting on clearing the pending EMIs first to avail the same. Vijaya Lakshmi's case is not alone as tens and thousands of teaching and non-teaching staff working in about 180-engineering, pharmacy and management colleges in the State are facing similar issues.

Speaking to The Hans India, A Santosh Kumar from Telangana Schools Technical Colleges Employees Association (TSTCEA)

Many teachers take loans from banks and moneylenders hoping to repay with their salaries

- ❖ With almost 50% cut in salaries, they cannot even pay the school and college fee of their children leave alone the EMIs
- ❖ Constant humiliation at the hands of collection agents is taking a toll on teachers, their social standing and reputation



said, "The claims of private engineering, pharmacy, management and few other colleges is a lie. We have a credible information that the State government had released fee reimbursement for the academic year 2019-20. Except a very few, funds were released to all the colleges. Particularly in the case of SC, ST students, the fee reimbursement was cleared in full," he added.

"When the lecturers are staging protests, the police is called in to act against for asking salaries for the work they have done. Sometimes we are even slapped with cases," he lamented.

Part-time instructor Kanukuntla Krishna Hari said,

said, "The claims of private engineering, pharmacy, management and few other colleges is a lie. We have a credible information that the State government had released fee reimbursement for the academic year 2019-20. Except a very few, funds were released to all the colleges. Particularly in the case of SC, ST students, the fee reimbursement was cleared in full," he added.

"When the lecturers are staging protests, the police is called in to act against for asking salaries for the work they have done. Sometimes we are even slapped with cases," he lamented.

Part-time instructor Kanukuntla Krishna Hari said,

markedly below normal by -5 deg C or less in some parts.

While Medak chilled at 7.2 deg C, Hyderabad registered 10.4 deg C, the lowest of the seasons so far. The other temperatures recorded elsewhere in the State were: Dundigal & Ramagundam 10.8 each, Hanamkonda 11, Nizamabad 11.8, Hakimpet 13.4, Khammam 14, Bhadrachalam 14.2, Mahbubnagar 14.5, Nalgonda 15.

INAE innovative project award for UoH faculty

HYDERABAD

UNIVERSITY of Hyderabad (UoH) faculty Dr Jhansi Jadav bagged "Innovative Student Project Award-2020" for her thesis titled "Assessment of precipitation, deformation and fracture behavior of Superni 263 Ni base superalloy under tensile and low cycle fatigue conditions". She was presented with this award in

the virtual annual convention organised by the Indian National Academy of Engineering (INAE).

She carried out the work under the supervision of Prof Koteswararao V Rajulapati and Dr N Eswara Prasad (Director, DMSRDE, DRDO). Dr Kartik Prasad of DMRL and Prof K Bhanu Sankara Rao were instrumental in providing her experimental assis-

tance and in-depth discussions.

Dr Jhansi obtained her B Tech (Metallurgical Engineering) from JNTU, Hyderabad and M Tech (Metallurgical Engineering) from IIT, Roorkee. Subsequently she was offered a faculty position in Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Technology (MGIT), Hyderabad and she has pursued PhD while working as a faculty.



Cold wave warning renewed for today

HYDERABAD

THE IMD on Tuesday renewed the cold wave warning for December 23 saying that such conditions would prevail at one or two places in the northern and western districts of Telangana. The department bulletin said mainly low-level North-Easterlies prevailed over the State during the last 24 hours ending at 8.30 am on Tuesday.

Hyderabad chills at 10.4 deg C

According to the forecast, the night temperature in Hyderabad on Wednesday would be 11 degrees Celsius, with fog or mist occurring early in the morning, while it would be 12 deg C each on December 24 and 25. During the next three days 13 deg C would prevail. The outlook would be partly cloudy sky with haze.

The IMD bulletin said cold wave conditions prevailed at isolated places in Adilabad, Hyderabad and Medak districts during the last 24 hours. The lowest minimum temperature of 5.7 degrees Celsius was recorded in Adilabad. There was a marked fall in the temperatures by -4.1 degrees Celsius or less in some parts of Telangana. They were

Teachers, employees demand PRC, promotions

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

TELANGANA Prantha Upadhyaya Sangham (TPUS) State president Hanumanth Rao and general secretary N Suresh and BJP Retired Teachers, Employees Cell (BJP-RTEC) chairman and former MLC B Mohan Reddy and BJP MLC N Ramchander Rao met State Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar on Tuesday and submitted separate representations seeking the State government intervention to address the grievances of the employees and teachers. Ramchander Rao said that the teachers, lecturers and other non-teaching staff of the private educational institutions were the worst affected during the Covid pandemic, the consequent lockdown and the closer of educational institutions.

The teaching and non-teaching staff were not paid their salaries besides the employment of several terminated.

He said reports indicated several of them lost their jobs have committed suicide and took up odd

jobs like labourers, selling vegetables etc for their livelihood. He called for State government's intervention to direct the management of corporate private educational institutions to reinstate their employees and pay their salaries and extend financial assistance as it has been done in case of others. Besides, to exempt the budget schools and colleges from paying property tax and other required payments to the government.

Setting a deadline of December 31 to resolve the pending issues, the TPUS in its representation with 16 point-demands asked the State government for implementation of PRC with 63 per cent fitment and scrapping of Contributory Pension Scheme and restoring the old pension scheme.

The TPUS asked to take immediate steps for the promotions to the categories of SGTS, SA, GHM and MEOs, and general, inter-district and inter-state transfers. It sought to take up the categorisation of the district, zonal, multi-zonal and state posts following the new Presidential Orders following the creation of new districts in the State.

PRIYANKA BHUMBAK
HYDERABAD

IN an exclusive chat with The Hans India, Telangana Jana Samithi chief Professor Kodandaram, who is contesting the Warangal-Khammam-Nalgonda segment MLC polls to graduate constituencies, shares his thoughts about several issues, including growing unemployment, Covid, policies of State government among others.

Speaking about the farmers' agitation against the new farm laws of the Centre, the professor said instead of new laws he suggested the government to take stringent action against the sellers of spurious seeds and outdated pesticides. Further, he

Telangana Jana Samithi chief Professor Kodandaram says that it is high time the State government focus on jobs, health services and education lest disappear into oblivion



stated that the farmers needed a law to empower them to negotiate with banks and revenue departments to get the required loans, and eliminate middlemen from the agricultural markets.

With regard to Central Vista project, the professor felt that there was no need for the new Parliament building, instead the money should

be diverted to rejuvenate the Indian economy, which has been crippled under the corona impact. He demanded the State government to consider underground mining by adopting the required technology which would generate more jobs and do away with open cast mining which is expensive.

"The unemployment rate in the State is very high. In 2013-14, it was 1.2% to 1.3% and now it is over 7%. It is very high among women in urban areas and the youth, and this

needs to be addressed. Further, the expenditure on health and education are also high. The State government should provide health services and education free of cost so that the savings by people increase," he said.

Commenting on the TRS tasting bitter in Dubbaka and Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation elections, Kodandaram said the people of the State have communicated their displeasure with the government. "If the government still ignores jobs, health services and employment, it is sure to see more defeats in the State," he said, adding that the TJS would conduct meetings to discuss the lopsided State government policies ahead of MLC polls.

Indian batsmen need to learn to adapt, move feet, says Gaekwad

NEW DELHI

FET movement is the malaise plaguing Indian batsmen at the moment, and the ability or inability to move the feet is all part of the mindset, said Anshuman Gaekwad, a former India batsman who stood tall against a barrage of short-pitched bowling by the West Indies pace attack in 1970s.

"Back in our day we didn't have any fast bowlers or bouncy wickets at home when we landed up in the West Indies. We had nothing. These boys have at least played in all these countries where these conditions are prevailing," Gaekwad, who opened the innings in that Kingston Test and was part of the Indian Test team between mid-70s to mid-80s, told IANS.

Indian batting's recent collapses, in New Zealand and Australia following some below par batting performances in England in 2018 have set the tongues wagging.

This batting line-up was supposed to have

mastered all conditions having toured overseas, including Australia, New Zealand, England, South Africa quite recently and more frequently than earlier teams not just with the Indian senior teams but also on A tours.

But their inability to play the moving ball has been exposed time and again with the latest being the debacle at Adelaide Oval where they were shot out for 36, their lowest total in Test history and just 10 more than the lowest-ever Test score of 26 made by New Zealand back in 1955.

Gaekwad, who faced a Windies pace attack led by Michael Holding at Kingston Jamaica in the 1976 Test to score 81, was surprised that despite such exposure the Indians haven't been able to adapt.

He touched on two aspects of technique -- one is getting closer to the ball, which comes through feet movement, and then go besides the ball against deliveries that are short.

"What I can understand, and I have gone through all this, is that you need to use your

feet, you cannot stand and deliver. You have to move your feet, front or back, get closer to the ball. Also you have to get besides the line of the ball (against short balls). That's very important," said Gaekwad.

He added that the ability to leave the ball is very important.

"In all these countries where the bounce is more, the pace is more, you need to have your technique sorted -- where you can play the ball and where you can leave, it is more leaving than playing till the bowler really gets at you, tries something else," added Gaekwad.

The former India batsman, who played 40 Test matches and over 200 first class matches, added that adapting quickly to the country you are touring is the key. He said that every country, every pitch and condition demands a different style of play.

The Adelaide Test was played as a day-nighter with the pink ball unlike on previous India tours. The ball this time moved prodigiously

and the wicket at the start looked spongy before getting a bit quicker.

"It is about the basic technique and adjusting to the conditions. What you play in India, you cannot play in England, what you play in England, you cannot play in Australia, or what you play in Australia, you cannot play in New Zealand," he said.

"It varies from time to time, country to country and depends on the season -- like in colder weather, the ball swings more. If there is sponginess in the wicket you can't play the same shots which you usually play," he added.

"What the boys need to understand is that they need to adapt. Why all countries come and struggle in India, because these are different conditions. Why we go out and struggle, it is also because of different conditions. Conditions are going to be there but the fact remains you need to adjust and adapt and change your technique and you have to move your feet," said Gaekwad, 63.

Gaekwad, who was known for his ability to stick to the wicket for long time, added that the secret of knowing the off-stump lies in the mindset.

"Knowing the off-stump is about the mindset, you need to guard the off-stump," he said before adding, "if you stand in crease you won't survive abroad. You can't stand and deliver like in India."

He also said the player needs to know his limitations and look to improve.

"When Sunil and I opened in West Indies, I could not do what Sunil could, but I did what I could looking at Sunil to survive. So I did. You cannot go out there and say that this is the only thing I know (being inflexible), you may struggle then. You need to think of improving," he said. (IANS)



Qualification for Tokyo Olympics to end with India Open

BWF announces calendar for 1st half of 2021

KAULA LUMPUR

THE Badminton World Federation (BWF) has announced the tournament calendar for the first half of 2021, which includes 17 tournaments that will serve as qualification tournaments for the Tokyo Olympic Games.

The new-look BWF tournament calendar sees a number of tournaments postponed from Q1 and Q2, and a handful of Grade 2 tournaments cancelled.

The season will start with the Yonex Thailand Open 2020 from January 17-21 and will conclude with the Russia Open on July 25.

The Olympic Qualifying period for the Race to Tokyo will restart in 2021 and the first tournament counting for qualification will be the Yonex Swiss Open 2021 to be held from March 2-7.

The qualification period will last till the India Open 2021 to be held from May 11-16 in New Delhi.

Qualification will be determined from the Race to Tokyo Rankings published on May 18, said BWF. BWF Council decided that this will also be used for seedings the Tokyo Olympics.

The BWF world rankings will reopen following the World Tour Finals 2020 to be held from January 27-31 in Bangkok. The calculation of the next BWF world rankings list will be announced on February 2.

"These deadlines have been set due to the uncertain nature of Covid-19 and the extra time needed to conduct tournaments with the Covid-19 safety protocols required," said BWF Secretary General Thomas Lund.

BWF said it is working with the IOC to update the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games qualification system whereby the final updated regulation will be shared mid-January following formal approval by the IOC.

Meanwhile, BWF confirmed the Thomas and Uber Cup Finals 2020, postponed from earlier this year, will now take place in Aarhus, Denmark in October.

BWF also announced its Covid-19 support package for tournament hosts that provides financial assistance and details cost relieving initiatives to ensure tournaments can continue.

"The support will help hosts cover the costs of implementing BWF Covid-



Sindhu hopeful of travelling to Thailand from UK despite increasing travel bans

NEW DELHI

UNFAZED by the worsening COVID-19 situation in England where she is training right now, world champion shuttler P V Sindhu on Tuesday told PTI that she remains hopeful of travelling to Thailand for tournaments in January despite countries increasingly banning flights from the UK.

Sindhu, who has qualified for the Tokyo Olympics, has been training in London for the last two months and is scheduled to play her first tournament since the break in Thailand. She will have to be in Bangkok by January 3 to compete in the two Super 1000 events (January 12 to 17 and January 19 to 24).

"I plan to travel in the first week of January. There is no travel ban from UK in Thailand, so I can travel from Doha. The idea is to use the Gulf route to reach Thailand," said Sindhu, who is managed by sports management firm Baseline Ventures.

Several countries around the world, including India, have imposed bans on flights from the UK because of a new and seemingly more contagious strain of the coronavirus in England.

The 25-year-old had left for London in October to focus on her nutrition and fitness at the Gatorade Sports Science Institute (GSSI) and also has been training alongside British shuttlers Toby Pentty and Rajiv Ouseph at the National Training Centre.

"Thankfully, my training is going on pretty well. The national centre is not closed. It is run as a bubble center, so I have been able to practice ahead of the events in Thailand," Sindhu said.

The Thailand leg will mark the return of international badminton but the country has been dealing with pro-democracy protest movements and has recently seen a spike in COVID-19 cases as well. Last Saturday, health officials in Thailand reported 548 new cases, most victims being migrant workers of the seafood industry in Samut Sakhon province, 34 kilometers southwest of Bangkok.

"Cases in Thailand are also increasing, so there is uncertainty about Thailand event too, we really hope that things are under control and the event goes ahead. We need badminton to restart just like other sports," said Yashwanth Biyyala, Director - Athlete at Baseline Ventures.

The Sports Ministry had recently approved Sindhu's request to have her personal physio and fitness trainer accompany her to three tournaments in January.

Sindhu last competed in March when she participated in the All England Championship, following which all tournaments were either cancelled or postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In October, Sindhu had pulled out of the Denmark Open, one of the only two events to be held since March. The other event was SaarLorlux Open Super 100 event in Germany. (PTI)

19 protocols which includes testing, arrangements around hotel safety, cleaning, provisions of face masks to participants, and sanitising equipment," said Lund.

"There is also the possibility to re-

duce total minimum prize money for 2021 in the effort to reduce costs, but BWF would encourage all hosts to keep minimum prize money levels as high as possible for the benefit of our top players," he added. (IANS)

Star-studded Racing Team India formed with an eye on 24 Hours of Le Mans

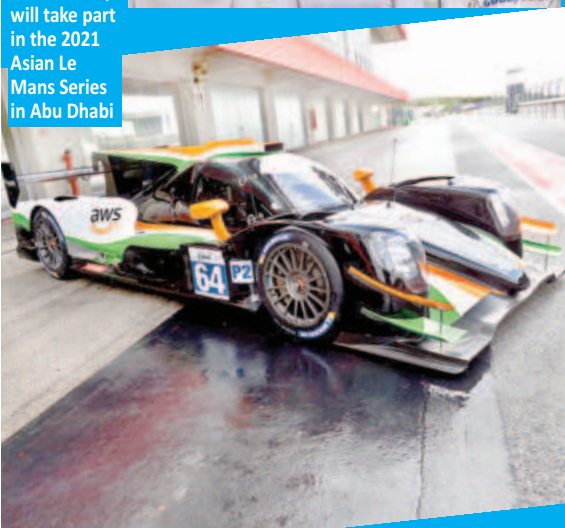
MUMBAI

RACING Team India is set to create history by becoming the first team to feature an all-Indian drivers line-up globally, in the world of endurance racing at the 2021 Asian Le Mans Series to be held in Abu Dhabi in February next year.

A star-studded line-up of drivers, including Narain Karthikeyan, Arjun Maini and Naveen Rao, will spearhead Racing Team India's campaign in the 2021 Asian Le Mans Series with an eye on competing in the prestigious 24 Hours of Le Mans later in the year.

The Asian Le Mans Series, to be held at the Yas Marina Circuit in Abu Dhabi on February 5-6 and February 19-20, comprises of four races spread over the two race weekends, with each race lasting four hours, a media release stated.

The Indian team will drive an ORECA 07 car in the LMP2 class, and have technical support from the Championship-winning Algarve Pro Racing Team. "I have been dreaming of going back to Le Mans for a few years now. This is probably the most exciting project in my career as a racing driver," India's first Formula One driver Karthikeyan said. (PTI)



Goa to face revitalised Jamshedpur

VASCO (GOA)

JAMSHEDPUR FC will look to extend their six-match unbeaten run in the Indian Super League (ISL) when they take on FC Goa at Tilak Maidan, Vasco, on Wednesday.

After their opening day defeat against Chennaiyin FC, Owen Coyle's men have put up a strong fight and have managed to remain unbeaten in the last six games. They have conceded just one goal in the last three



MATCH RESULT

Odisha FC draw with NorthEast United FC 2-2

matches, keeping two clean sheets.

Coach Coyle was delighted with the work rate and the attitude his squad has shown so far. "Every game, the boys have been stronger. We have tried to look into areas we had to address. And the boys have responded. When you have a group like that, you can achieve good results," he said.

The match will see a clash between the two top scorers of the ongoing season -- Igor Angulo and Nerijus Valskis, who are tied on 6 goals apiece. Both players are crucial for their respective sides. Both Angulo

TODAY'S MATCH

Jamshedpur FC vs FC Goa at Tilak Maidan Stadium 7.30pm

Sarin, Gukesh & Rakshitta enter finals of FIDE c'ships

CHENNAI: Three Indians, including Grandmaster Nihal Sarin, reached the final of the FIDE Online World Youth and Cadet Rapid Championships in their respective categories on Tuesday. While Sarin beat Francesco Sonis 1.5-0.5 in the Open under-18 section, GM D Gukesh and WIM Rakshitta Ravi also made it to the finals of the boys under-14 and girls under-16 categories respectively. Gukesh and Rakshitta beat FM Denis Lazavik and WGM Leya Garifullina by 2-1 and 1.5-0.5 margins respectively. The highly-rated Sarin drew the first game before winning the second to secure a final berth. He will take on Armenian GM Shant Sargsyan in the title clash. The Indian player was initially scheduled to take on Narayana Hepler Ramirez in the semifinal. However, Ramirez was found to have violated the tournament's fairplay policy and was disqualified. As a result, Sarin faced IM Sonis of Italy. (PTI)

Djokovic, Federer, Nadal, Tiafoe win ATP awards for 2020

LONDON: Novak Djokovic, Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal and Frances Tiafoe were among the winners of the ATP's top awards for 2020. Djokovic was the year-end No. 1 for a record-equaling sixth time after winning four titles including a record eighth Australian Open. U.S. Open champions Mate Pavic and Bruno Soares are the doubles No. 1s. Federer, who played only six singles all year, was the singles fans' favorite for a record-extending 18th straight year, and Nadal received the Stefan Edberg Sportsmanship Award for the third year straight and fourth time overall after winning a 13th Roland Garros crown. Andrey Rublev of Russia was the most improved in rising from No. 23 to a career-high 8 after winning five titles, more than anyone else on the tour. Tiafoe was given the Arthur Ashe Humanitarian Award for his social activity. The American auctioned signed memorabilia to Athletes for COVID-19 Relief and posted a video that united the Black tennis community in the wake of George Floyd's killing. (AP)

"A premium Co-Living Space"

PROPERTY MULTIPLIER
WITHOUT ADDITIONAL INVESTMENT

KT Residency approved by Approved No. PO2400001598

SAFE

Earn extra sft*

AFFORDABLE

9% to 11% Returns

NO MAINTENANCE

Assured rental income for 20years

+91 95337 76694

www.ktresidency.com | sales@kapilproperties.com