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Biden, Harris named Time 'Person Of The Year'

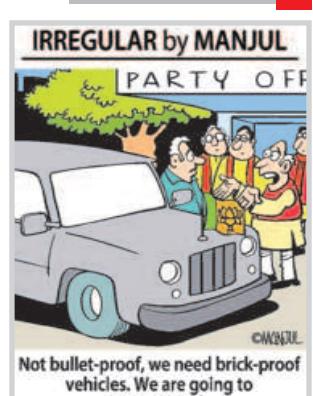
NEW YORK: US President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris were named Time magazine's 2020 "Person of the Year" on Thursday for their election victory over Donald Trump.

"For changing the American story, for showing that the forces of empathy are greater than the furies of division, for sharing a vision of healing in a grieving world," Time said, explaining its choice. The Democratic pair were chosen ahead of three other finalists: frontline health care workers and Anthony Fauci, the racial justice movement and President Trump.

Hina Nagarajan to lead India's biggest liquor company

BENGALURU: Hina

Nagarajan has been named as the next Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of India's largest liquor brand United Spirits (USL). Nagarajan will succeed Anand Kripalu, who has been MD and CEO since 2014. Kripalu will step down on June 30, 2021 and Nagarajan will assume charge on July 1, 2021. Nagarajan, an Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad graduate, is the first woman to lead USL and also the first woman leading a liquor company of such a large scale in the country.



Not bullet-proof, we need brick-proof vehicles. We are going to West Bengal.

3rd wave of Covid waning in Delhi

PURNA SINGH
NEW DELHI

DELHI Health Minister Satyendar Jain on Friday said the third wave of coronavirus disease was waning in the state with the positivity rate remaining below 5% for ten days in a row.

"The third wave of Covid-19 in Delhi is going down. We can now say that the peak was on November 7 when a positivity rate of 15.26% was recorded. Now, the positivity rate has remained below 5% for 10 days," said Jain in a press briefing.

He said, with over 70,000 tests a day, Delhi has been conducting one of the highest tests per million in the country. As of November-end, Delhi reported the highest test per million in the country at over 330,201. The national average stood at 100,159.

"Currently, the situation seems to be under control. But, people need to continue wearing masks and maintaining social distance. It is because people of Delhi have cooperated that we are seeing this

State still testing over 70,000 a day: Jain



result. I also want to thank the healthcare workers who have worked day and night," the minister said.

Delhi has tested over 71,741 samples a day on an average during December, compared to an average of 53,579 during November.

Nearly half of these tests were done using the more accurate RT-PCR method. In Delhi, the ratio of tests had been skewed towards the less accurate rapid antigen tests since it was rolled out in mid-June during the first surge in the number of cases.

'Scrap arbitrary farm laws'

Farmers move Supreme Court against three agri Acts

NEW DELHI

THE Bhartiya Kisan Union, spearheading the farmers agitation, has filed a petition in the Supreme Court asking it to scrap three agricultural laws passed by Parliament in September. The farmers have over the past three weeks been protesting against these laws, demanding the government to repeal them.

The Bhartiya Kisan Union's petition, filed by its president Bhupinder Singh, claimed that the three laws will lead to commercialisation and will throw the farmers at the mercy of corporates. Citing the ongoing farmers' protest along the national capital's borders, it said a "rail roko" agitation too, would begin soon.

Calling the new laws 'arbitrary', the petition alleges that they were passed without adequate discussion.

The Supreme Court has already issued notices to the Central government on a batch of petitions challenging the farm laws. These laws were first introduced in June as ordinances by the Central government.

Continued on Page 5



Bhartiya Kisan Union Spokesperson Rakesh Tikait along with farmers during a protest march against Centre's agri-laws, at Delhi-Meerut Expressway in New Delhi on Friday

Delhi-Jaipur NH blockade today

NEW DELHI

Farmers plan protests at toll plazas on Monday

authorities across the country.

Bhartiya Kisan Union leader Rakesh Tikait, who along with his supporters

are rallying at Ghazipur border, said: "On Saturday (December 12), we will block the Delhi-Jaipur road. On December 14, we will stage sit-in protests in front of DC offices, houses of BJP leaders and block Reliance and Adani toll plazas."

Continued on Page 5

BJP's mega plan to counter protests

700 press briefings, 100 meetings across India

NEW DELHI

WITH talks between the protesting farmers' unions and the Union government deadlocked, the BJP has now decided to go all out and counter the farm protests by reaching out to people across the country. As part of the mega strategy, the BJP plans to hold over 700 press briefings and nearly 100 meetings during which the party will campaign in favour of the three farm laws brought in by the central government. The party has drawn out an elaborate campaign plan to spread awareness about the farm laws. Under the plan, BJP leaders will address press briefings in 718 districts across the country. Apart from this, the party will also hold kisan sammelans/chaupals at 100 locations in different states. The dates of these press briefings and meetings will be announced soon.

KCR seeks Centre's help for flood relief

TIRUMALA



Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao meets Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi on Friday

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

Explains importance of MSP inclusion in farm laws to Shah

CHIEF Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao met Union Minister for Home Affairs Amit Shah for over one hour on Friday. The Chief Minister, according to sources, is said to have submitted a memorandum seeking Centre's assistance regarding the recent floods which ravaged Telangana state in general and Hyderabad

Cont'd on P5

abad city in particular. It is learnt that the issue of the ongoing farmers' agitation also figured during the talks. It may be mentioned here that the state government had opposed the three farm laws and even organised a state bandh on December 8. Cont'd on P5



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Over 120 warships deployed in IOR: Rawat

Race on for control over strategic bases in Indian Ocean

PURNA SINGH
NEW DELHI

HIGHLIGHTING the importance of the India-Pacific region, Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat on Friday said there are over 120 warships of extra-regional forces deployed in the Indian Ocean Region in support of various missions.

"Most of the countries in the region are seeking to reap the economic dividends through improved



connectivity and harnessing blue economy for which infrastructure is a pre-requisite. Residents' powers

and extra-regional power have shown a renewed interest in investing in infrastructure development in

Continued on Page 5

Styling different handbags with every outfit that you own

TEJAL SINHA

A good bag is a girl's best friend. A perfect accompaniment to one's ensemble, a handbag is an ideal accessory to complete a woman's outfit. With an unparalleled variety of options to choose from, the correct handbag choice can make or break your look.

Handbags are a fashion staple that every modern woman should have in their closet. As well as making it easy for you to carry around your daily essentials, these accessories are ideal for dressing up or adding visual intrigue to an outfit. There are a variety of styles available for different occasions and style preferences. How to choose a perfect pairing could stem from your personal style. Shivani Malik, Director of Da Milano shares a few tips to ensure a top-notch look with every outfit that you own.

Clutch

A clutch is the classiest choice to carry whilst at a party. Add a dash of bling or a pop of colour for an exciting contrast with your eveningwear. Pair it with a sophisticated evening gown or a little black dress.

Sling bag

A sling bag can make any outfit sing! Conven-



Shivani Malik



ient, stylish and uber chic, this style can be carried with just about any outfit! Pair a bold colour with a beautiful summer dress, or a classic solid with jeans and a t-shirt. Opt for prints with a pastel sweater and pants or even gold or silver to a night out of dancing with friends!

Tote

A tote is timeless and can fit within the world on the go! Ideal for day to day wear- a sizeable tote



Be more stylish

Whether you've been living in your loungewear or have been online shopping more than ever before, there have been plenty of changes in our approach to fashion this year. But, one positive of having more time at home on our hands is that we have an opportunity to get our wardrobes in order.

From holding onto old clothes that never get worn to panic buying pieces that won't have more than one outing, we are all guilty

of making less than sensible decisions when it comes to our wardrobes. But, it doesn't have to be that way.

Here, we break down some wardrobe resolutions to undertake now so that you can make space, save money and look the best you ever have.

Don't buy or keep something that doesn't fit

It's not uncommon to hold on to items that no longer fit you in

the hope that they will again one day. It's also not uncommon to buy something in a size too small as an incentive to lose weight or because it's in the sale and they don't have your usual size. However, holding on to these items - that you can't physically wear - is one of the worst things you can do if you're trying to reduce the size of your wardrobe. Be re-

A guide to buying less, shopping better and transforming your look in the process

alistic and honest with yourself. If it doesn't fit you, it's time to sell or donate it.

When you buy something, get rid of something else

An excellent way to keep your wardrobe at a sensible size is to adopt the one-in, one-out policy: every time you add something new, take a piece out (and sell it or donate it to charity). Not only will it keep your rails and shelves from overflowing, it also means you have to be much

more confident about what you are purchasing. You'll never buy something unless you completely love it, knowing that you are going to have to lose something special from your wardrobe.

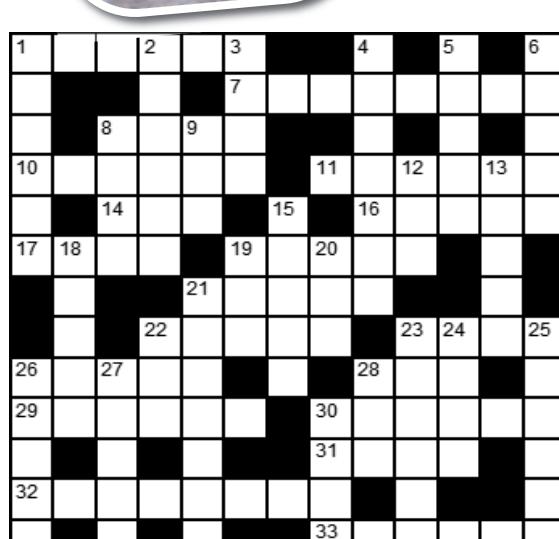
Know your wardrobe inside out

It sounds obvious, but it's easy to forget what's sitting in our wardrobes - and, for many of us, there will be great pieces hidden away that haven't seen the light of day for years, or that will have been forgotten about during lockdown. So, before you go ahead and buy something new, make sure that you have a very clear idea of what is in your wardrobe already. If you have a clear-out and declut-

ter, you will know what's in there and this will prevent you from accidentally buying things you don't need.

Invest in what you already own

So many of us are guilty of throwing pieces away as soon as they are damaged, but just because something is a little worn does not mean it needs to be discarded. Invest in the pieces that you already have in your wardrobe by knowing where to get things fixed in your local area, from a great seamstress to shoe and handbag restoration companies. It is worth spending a little bit of money to get things fixed rather than re-buying the same thing time and time again.



CROSSWORD

Across

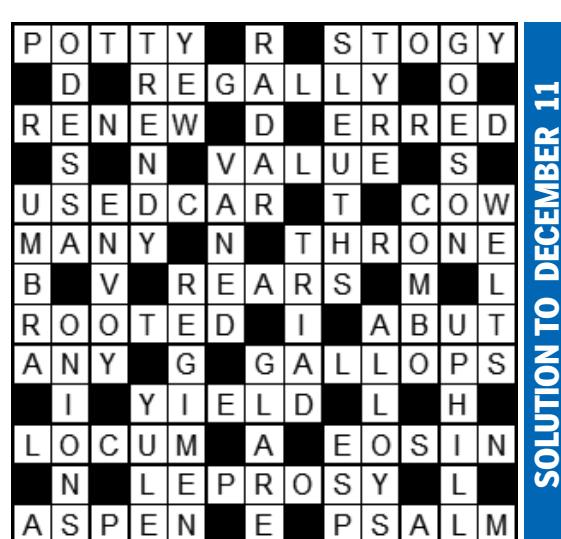
- Ran away and got married ? (6)
- Cloudy (8)
- To be ___ : to be brought into this world ? (4)
- Lawrence's milieu (6)
- Be ambitious (6)
- Baby goat (3)
- Leg bone (5)
- Greenish blue (4)
- Female ruler (5)
- Paper quantity (5)
- Popular princess (5)
- Portent (4)
- Exhausted (3,2)
- Rec. label (3)
- Armadas (6)
- Lemon and lime (6)
- Peak (4)
- Grass grown for forage (8)
- Food sampler (6)

SUDOKU

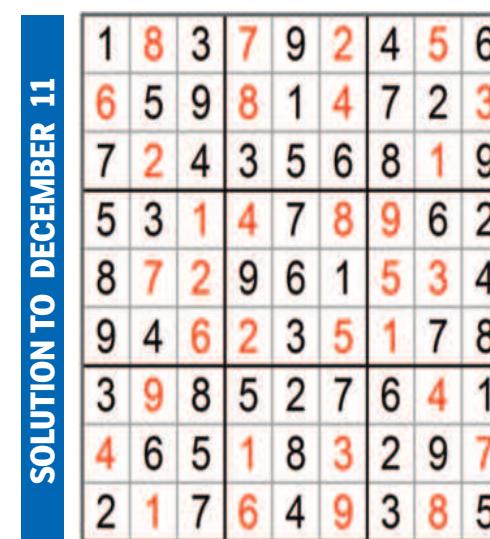
Down

- Listed mistakes (6)
- Irrational dread (6)
- Lady of Spain - "a nod" anagram ? (4)
- Depository (7)
- West Indian (5)
- Confused or bewildered (2,3)
- Capital of Azerbaijan (4)
- Disengumbered, free (3)
- ATM need (3)
- Salon service (5)
- Taking to court (5)
- Feather pen (5)
- Sine ___ non (3)
- Age or eon (3)
- Albanian coins (7)
- Decease (3)
- Groups of eight (6)
- German economist and socialist (4)
- More inquisitive (6)
- Blazing (5)
- Crowbar (5)
- Move precipitously or violently (3)
- Playbill listing (4)

SOLUTION TO DECEMBER 11



SOLUTION TO DECEMBER 11



NEWS ROUNDUP

Anushka Sharma on third anniversary: Three years of us and very soon, three of us

Bollywood actress Anushka Sharma on Friday shared a post on social media wishing hubby Virat Kohli on their third wedding anniversary.

Anushka, who is expecting her first child with her cricketer husband, also reminded that they are going to turn three very soon!

Anushka shared a photograph on her verified Instagram account where she can be seen hugging Virat from the back side.

"3 years of us & very soon , 3 of us. Miss you," the actress wrote on Instagram.

Virat Kohli also took to Instagram to share a wish for his wife on their third wedding anniversary. "3 years and onto a lifetime together," he wrote. Virat shared a black and white photograph from their wedding day.

Virat and Anushka tied the knot on December 11, 2017. The couple had a hush-hush destination wedding in Italy.

"Today we have promised each other to be bound in love forever. We are truly blessed to share the news with you. This beautiful day will be made more special with the love and support of our family, of fans and well-wishers. Thank you for being such an important part of our journey." Virat had shared in an Instagram post dated December 11, 2017. The couple is expecting their first child in January.

TWEET PATROL


**LAVANYA
@ITSLAVANYA**

Wearing - @manishmalhotra05
Jewellery- @vasundharadiamondfr
Styled by - @ashwin_ash1 @hassankhan_3
Pics - @eshaangirri

For #nischay #sangeetoutfit



YOGA FOR FIRM FACE AND GLOWING SKIN

Practising yoga daily is beneficial and helps eliminate toxins from your body through sweating, breath-workout and poses which detoxify the body and increase blood circulation. In our day-to-day beauty regime, psychological peace and spiritual balance play a relevant role. We never think but most of our skin problem are due to various imbalance in our body fluids, blood circulation, no exercise and stress too.

Apart from its innumerable health benefits, Yoga also helps to beautify skin. Practising yoga daily is beneficial and helps eliminate toxins from your body through sweating, breath-workout and poses which detoxify the body and increase blood circulation, points out cosmetic surgeon Dr Geeta Grewal. Here are a few yoga asanas that can help providing you a firm face and glowing skin:



seminating that amazing young-looking glow and improve your complexion drastically.

Reduce facial fat

At one point of time, you will stop liking the chubbiness of your cheeks and facial fat. Yoga pose for cheeks, lips and jaw can help you to tighten your skin and reduce your facial fat. The cheeks workouts are easiest workout that you can do anywhere anytime to tone and firm your facial muscles, cheeks and lips. Some of them are the V, smiling etc.

Increase blood flows to your face

</div



Ayurveda docs allowed to perform surgeries IMA protest call: OPDs, clinics shut

MUMBAI

Doctors affiliated to the IMA in Maharashtra and other States kept the dispensaries, OPDs and clinics shut on Friday in support of the organisation's call for protest against the Centre's move allowing post-graduate Ayurveda practitioners to be trained in performing surgical procedures. The Indian Medical Association (IMA), which had given the nationwide call on December 1, has demanded withdrawal of the government notification.

"However, emergency medical services were on," he said. The IMA has said that the notification by the Central Council of Indian Medicine (CCIM) to allow legal practice of surgeries by Ayurveda practitioners and the formation of four committees by NITI Aayog for integration of all systems of medi-

cine will only lead to "mixopathy". "We are not against any particular system of medicine, but the government's decision of mixing two systems and allowing Ayurveda practitioners to perform surgeries is highly risky."

Anything could go wrong if the surgeon is not experienced," an IMA member said. "Knowledge of diagnosis and medicines is one thing, but performing a surgery is altogether different. If anything goes wrong during the surgery, someone's life is at stake," he said.

Many doctors at several hospitals in the national capital, including AIIMS, on Friday sported black ribbons in support of the protest call of the IMA.

Around 1,500 doctors in Goa took part in the nationwide protest. "We had not planned any morna or dharna due to COVID-19 restrictions. But all

1,500 members participated in the protest, as part of which they attended only emergency cases." IMA's Goa unit president Dr A Samuel told PTI. An IMA delegation on Friday met Union Minister of State for AYUSH Shripad Naik, and submitted to him a memorandum seeking withdrawal of the notification that allows post-graduate practitioners of Ayurveda to be trained in performing surgical procedures, he said.

Over 30,000 doctors from Gujarat joined the nationwide protest. "Over 30,000 of our member-doctors from Gujarat, including 9,000 from Ahmedabad, have joined the protest today," said Dr Kamlesh Saini, secretary, IMA (Gujarat branch). "We demand withdrawal of the CCIM Act notification and the NITI Aayog committee for integration (of all medicine systems).

Attack on Nadda: MHA summons officials

Defiant Mamata not to send CS, DGP to Delhi

WB Govt sends report to Centre, asks Mamata not to play with fire

KOLKATA

A defiant West Bengal government on Friday decided not to send the state's chief secretary and police chief to New Delhi in compliance with Union Home Ministry's summons in the wake of a mob attack on BJP chief J P Nadda's convoy. Chief Secretary Alapan Bandopadhyay wrote to Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla, saying he has been directed to request to "dispense with the presence of the State officials" in the meeting convened on December 14.

The MHA had on Friday summoned Bandopadhyay and DGP Virendra asking them to present themselves on December 14 for an explanation on the law and order situation in the state, following Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar's report on the attack on Nadda's convoy by alleged supporters of the ruling TMC.

"Kindly refer to the letter whereby the Chief Secretary and the Director-General of Police, Government of West Bengal have been requested to attend a meeting on December 14, 2020, at 12.15 pm in your chamber to discuss the law and order situation in the State of West

Bengal including the incidents regarding certain Z-category proteetees," Bandopadhyay wrote in his letter. Listing out various steps taken by the West Bengal government to ensure the protection of Nadda's convoy, Bandopadhyay said the state is addressing the issue with utmost seriousness.

"While further reports are being obtained and compiled, in the circumstances, I am directed to request you to kindly dispense with the presence of the State officials in the meeting, considering that the State Government is already addressing this issue with utmost seriousness," he said in the two-page letter.

West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar said he has sent a report to the Centre about "extremely disturbing developments" in the state. "Finding the situation alarming, as my constitutional duty, I have sent a report to the central government about the extremely disturbing developments that do not augur well for democratic values, that are antithetical to rule of law, that sound death knell of constitutional parameters," he said.

The TMC reacted sharply to the governor's remarks, calling him a "conduit pipe" of the BJP. "The governor has made a habit of speaking to the press daily. We do not want to react to his statements, we can only say he is a conduit pipe of Bharatiya Janata Party," TMC MP Kalyan Banerjee told reporters.

The TMC supremo has on several occasions said that the BJP is bringing outsiders into the state for the upcoming assembly elections. Claiming that the BJP is bringing musclemen from outside and sending them to the villages in West Bengal, she had told a farmers' protest rally here on Thursday to challenge them and file FIRs against such entrants. "If you move away from the path of the Constitution, then my responsibility begins," the governor said. "The law and order situation in the state has been worsening with each passing day. Despite cautioning the chief minister and the administration nothing has happened," he said. Dhankhar said the non-responsive stance of the chief minister towards the Raj Bhawan is an indication that governance in the state is not in accordance with the Constitution.

REUSABLE MASKS?



A ragpicker collects disposed masks near the farmers' protest site at Singhu Border, in New Delhi on Friday

BJP, Cong join hands, ditch allies

JAIPUR

IN unlikely collaborations, rivals Congress and BJP came together at two places in Rajasthan to thwart local Bhartiya Tribal Party and Rashtriya Loktantrik Party leaders in the elections for zila pramukhs and panchayat samiti pradhans.

The BTP, a Congress ally which supported CM Ashok Gehlot during the revolt in his party earlier this year, is upset that the ruling party candidates chose BJP over it in the tribal Dun-

garupur district, where the small outfit is trying to expand its influence.

On Friday, it threatened to snap ties with the Congress in the state.

Similarly, the opposition BJP did not help its ally, Nagaur MP Hanuman Beniwal's RLP, bag a village head's post in Nagaur district. Instead, its candidates went for an independent nominee, supported also by the Congress.

In Dungarpur zila parishad, the newly elected Congress members voted Thursday for the BJP nominee

for the pramukh's post in the district board, thwarting a BTP-backed candidate's bid. Thirteen of the 27 seats in Dungarpur zila parishad were won by BTP-supported independent candidates. The BJP got six seats and the Congress eight. The BTP needed just one Congress member's vote for a nominee backed by it for the district board head's post. Instead, its ally supported BJP member Surya Ahari, who had filed her nomination papers as an independent candidate for the zila pramukh's post.

India, Uzbek standing firmly against terrorism: PM

NEW DELHI

INDIA and Uzbekistan are standing together firmly against terrorism and have similar concerns over separatism, extremism and fundamentalism, PM Narendra Modi said at a virtual summit with Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev.

Modi also said that India wants to further deepen its development partnership with Uzbekistan, and cited growing cooperation between the two sides in diverse sectors including defence and agriculture.

Talking about convergence of views between the two countries on regional issues, he said an Afghan-led and Afghan-controlled process is required to restore peace in Afghanistan. Modi also said that it was important to preserve the gains of the past two decades in Afghanistan. "We have similar concerns over extremism, fundamentalism and separatism... We both are standing firmly together against terrorism," Modi said. Uzbekistan is a key country in Central Asia which India considers as its 'extended neighbourhood'. The bilateral ties now encompass a wider canvas of cooperation including in areas of defence and security, trade and investment, energy, agriculture.

For every bribe taker, there is bribe giver: SC

NEW DELHI

THE Supreme Court on Friday it cannot direct the Parliament to pass a law to award life term imprisonment in graft cases, as for every bribe taker, there was always a bribe giver.

A bench headed by Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul said: "Personally, I feel, in society should change our thinking. For every person taking money, there is a person distributing money."

The sharp observation came from the bench, which also comprised Justices Dinesh Maheshwari and Hrishikesh Roy, as it declined to entertain a PIL by advocate Ashwini Upadhyay seeking directions to confiscate 'Benami' properties and disproportionate assets in cases of corruption and also award life term to offenders.

The top court observed that the petitioner cannot expect the judiciary to take over all roles and asked him to withdraw the PIL and move the Law Commission.



The petitioner was represented by senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, who submitted before the bench that there were pending sentences under Acts such as Prevention of Money Laundering Act, which were yet to be executed. The bench replied the court cannot make laws, as it was the Parliament's job, and a mandamus cannot be issued to the Parliament.

As Sankaranarayanan insisted that the court could step in when there exists a vacuum, the bench noted that it is like coming to the court and telling it to clean up the country. "Are these meaningful prayers? Eradicate poverty, clean up the country..." Finally, the top court allowed the petitioner's counsel to withdraw the plea.

"Due to weak and ineffective anti-corruption laws, India has never been ranked even among top 50 in Corruption Perception Index but Centre has not strengthened them to weed out the menace of corruption, which brazenly offends rule of law as well as right to life liberty dignity guaranteed under Articles 14 and 21," said the plea.



Remo D'Souza suffers heart attack

MUMBAI

FILMMAKER-choreographer Remo D'Souza was admitted to a hospital here on Friday after he suffered a heart attack.

According to sources close to the family, the 46-year-old director is in the Intensive Care Unit of the Kokilaben hospital. "He had a heart attack. There was a blockage. For now, doctors have done angiography and he is currently in the ICU," sources told PTI. The hospital sources said the "Race 3" director was admitted today afternoon.

"He's stable now and under observation," sources added. D'Souza is one of the leading choreographers working in Bollywood, after having worked on films such as "Tum Bin", "Kaante", "Dhoorm", "Rock On" and "Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani". As a director, he has made movies such as "F.A.L.T.U.", "ABCD", "A Flying Jatt", "Race 3" and most recently "Street Dancer".

Officer who served in Indian Army, Navy, IAF turns 100

NEW DELHI

Colonel Prithipal Singh Gill, who may be the only man to have served in all three defence services -- the Indian Army, the Indian Navy and the Indian Air Force -- turned 100 years old on Friday.

Colonel Gill led a unique and what may be called the only military career of its kind having started as a pilot in the Royal Indian Air Force, then sailing the High Seas with Indian Navy, and finally witnessing the action as a Gunner Officer with the Indian Army in the 1965 War.

Finally, he had culminated as an Assam Rifles Sector Commander in Manipur.

Residing in Chandigarh now, Colonel Gill had joined the Royal Indian Air Force. He was commissioned as a Pilot Officer and stationed at Karachi, flying Howard aircraft. However, his family did not approve of the same, as flying was then considered unsafe and his family did not want their son to live the life of a Pilot.

This is when a British General, known to the Gill family, Gen Savoy, came to his help and was able to have Pilot Of-

Colonel Gill led a unique and what may be called the only military career of its kind having started as a pilot in the Royal Indian Air Force, then sailing the High Seas with Indian Navy, and finally witnessing the action as a Gunner Officer with the Indian Army in the 1965 War

ficer Prithipal Singh transferred to the Indian Navy, where he served on a mine sweeping ship and later he was on INS Teer, which was a Navy escort ship for cargo ships during the World War II.

As a Naval Officer, Sub Lt Prithipal Singh Gill was detailed to attend the Long Gunnery Staff Course at School of Artillery, Devlali, and he qualified as an Instructor in Gunnery (IG). He then sought a transfer to the Army, which was approved and he was posted to "Gwalior Mountain Battery" equipped with 5.4-inch Howitzers.

He later served with 34 Medium Regiment and later raised and Commanded 71 Medium Regiment. During the 1965 India-Pakistan War, four guns of his regiment were cut off by enemy action. Lt Col Prithipal Singh Gill personally led a successful mission to retrieve the four guns.

On promotion to the rank of Colonel, Prithipal Singh, Commanded an Assam Rifles Sector in Utkhr, Manipur. After his exceptional career in the Royal Indian Air Force, Indian Navy and the Indian Army (Artillery), Col Gill retired to farming the family lands at his native village Pakhi in Faridkot district.

This is when a British General, known to the Gill family, Gen Savoy, came to his help and was able to have Pilot Of-

2 years after appointment, SC panel begins work in ISRO spy case ISRO spy case surfaced in 1994 when Narayanan was arrested on charges of espionage

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

TWO years after the Supreme Court directed a three-member committee under retired SC judge D.K. Jain to probe if there was a conspiracy among the then police officials to falsely implicate top ISRO space scientist S.Nambi Narayanan, will have its first sitting in the state capital on December 14 and 15.

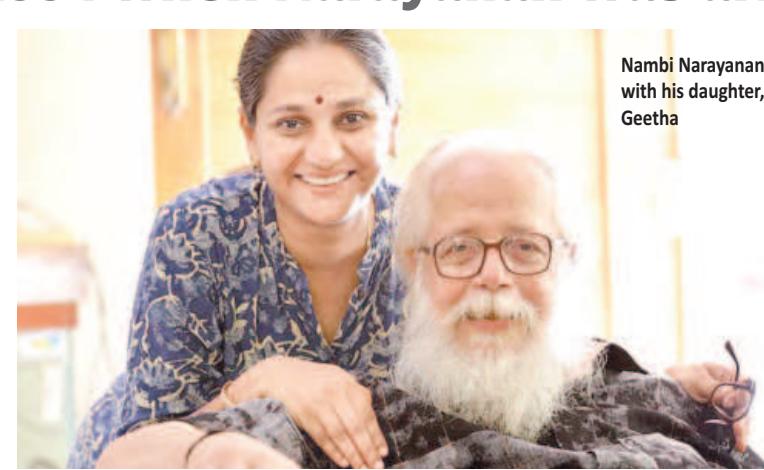
It was in 2018 a bench of the then Chief Justice D.P. Misra, Justice A.M. Khanwilkar and Justice D.Y. Chandrachud decided to appoint a committee under Jain and asked the Centre and the Kerala government to name one person each to the committee under Jain.

While the Centre appointed a top official -- D.K. Prasad, the Pinarayi Vijayan government appointed former Additional Chief Secretary V.S. Senthil.

Reacting to the news Narayanan said he is happy that the committee is going to have its first sitting here, next week.

"I do not know if I will be contacted as their job is to find out if there was any conspiracy and it's not just the three former Kerala police officials, as there are others also. Maybe the committee was doing the groundwork to help them go forward in their probe, I do not know," said the now retired scientist, when in 2019 the country awarded him the Padma Bhushan.

The ISRO spy case surfaced in



1994 when Narayanan was arrested on charges of espionage along with another senior official of ISRO, two Maldivian women and a businessman.

The CBI cleared him in 1995 and since then he has been fighting a legal battle against the then top police official Sibi Mathews and other officials which include S. Vijayan and K.K. Joshua, who probed the case and implicated Narayanan.

Sibi Mathews later reached the rank of the Director General of Police and took VRS, months before he was to have superannuated and became the Chief Information Officer of the state. He has since retired from that post and is now settled

in the state capital city.

Incidentally this case took place when the factional feud in the Congress party between the K.Karunakaran and the A.K. Antony factions led by Oommen Chandy was at its zenith. Karunakaran had to quit the office in 1995 after it was found out that he was shielding his close aide and senior police officer Raman Srivastava, who later became the state police chief and after retirement, he is today the advisor to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.

It now remains to be seen if the three-member committee as part of its probe will call up journalists, who then had written juicy tales about this case. The highlight of one such report was that consequent to the spy case, it would be doubtful if the ISRO unit here would even be able to function properly after many space secrets were leaked.

Herd immunity, the phenomenon protecting masses

BRITAIN began mass vaccinating its population recently to protect them against Covid-19. One could say that this is a part of the global drive that poses one of the biggest logistical challenges in peacetime history. Britain's medicine regulator said, "Anyone with a history of anaphylaxis to a medicine or food should not get the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine, giving fuller guidance on an earlier allergy warning about the shot." The Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) said there had been two reports of anaphylaxis and one report of a possible allergic reaction since rollout began. "Any person with a history of anaphylaxis to a vaccine, medicine or food should not receive the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine," MHRA Chief Executive June Raine said in a statement. "Most people will not get anaphylaxis and the

benefits in protecting people against Covid-19 outweigh the risks". Vaccines contain weakened or inactive parts of a particular organism (antigen) that triggers an immune response within the body. Newer vaccines contain the blueprint for producing antigens rather than the antigen itself. A vaccine works by training the immune system to recognise and combat pathogens, either viruses or bacteria. To do this, certain molecules from the pathogen must be introduced into the body to trigger an immune response. These molecules are called antigens, and they are present in all viruses and bacteria. By injecting these antigens into the body, the immune system can safely learn to recognise them as hostile invaders, produce antibodies, and remember them for the future. If the bacteria or virus reappears, the immune sys-

tem will recognise the antigens immediately and attack aggressively well before the pathogen can spread and cause sickness. Vaccines don't just work on at an individual level, they protect entire populations. Once enough people are immunised, opportunities for an outbreak of disease become so low even people who aren't immunised benefit. Essentially, a bacteria or virus simply won't have enough eligible hosts to establish a foothold and will eventually die out entirely. This phenomenon is called "herd immunity" or "community immunity", and it has allowed once-devastating diseases to be eliminated entirely, without needing to vaccinate every individual. This is critical because there will always be a percentage of the population that cannot be vaccinated, including infants, young children, the elderly, people with

severe allergies, pregnant women or people with compromised immune systems. Thanks to herd immunity, these people are kept safe because diseases are never given a chance to spread through a population. Clinical trials so far have not been designed to determine if an immunised person can still spread the coronavirus to someone else. Covid-19 vaccine makers focused trials on determining whether the drug stopped people from becoming ill. It will also be several more months before it becomes clear how long the vaccination will protect someone from the coronavirus. Since there is no evidence that the vaccine prevents transmission of the virus - and no vaccine is 100% effective - scientists call for continued vigilance, including mask-wearing, hand-washing and social distancing. Vaccination campaigns are unlikely to reach "a critical mass" until next spring or early summer. What happens after that is not clear yet. Patience is a virtue, anyway.

Central Vista, a need more than an expense

IN MY OPINION



V RAMU SARMA

LAND grabbing and encroachments go on unhindered in our country and everyone knows how it happens and the people behind such acts and why the executive is unable to stop the menace. But when it comes to constructing a new Parliament building to meet the present and future needs, opposition parties have started raising thousand objections. If they feel what the government is doing is wrong, they should offer an alternative solution to it. That, unfortunately, no one does.

All those who are objecting to the construction of new Parliament building should explain how many times they had changed their houses and why? How many times they have got their office interiors changed and why? If they want upgradation of their properties, why not have a new building for Parliament where if new facilities are properly used, they contribute to the growth of the country in a much-efficient manner. It's time the political parties stop looking at everything from the view of their political narrow mindedness.

Those who have seen the present Parliament building and have been privy to work from there, whether it be the law makers, the officials or the media very well know the existing problems as the building is more than 100 years old. The law makers who come in chauffeur driven cars may not know the problems of parking but for all others it is a daily nightmare. Fire safety is certainly a major concern since lot of load had to be added over the years to meet the growing demands. Lot of external wiring also had to be done. Acoustics is another concern.

Both the Houses have witnessed members breaking mikes. The century-old building though looks strong from the outside had to undergo many changes in the last seven decades. Electrical, air conditioning, plumbing systems are inadequate. Even security management in the old building is a matter of concern. The seating arrangements are cramped and



It's time the country's lawmakers turn progressive and proactive. The present Parliament building cannot accommodate even if there is an increase of one more member. With the number of seats in Lok Sabha likely to be increased after 2026, it becomes imperative that a new building with all modern amenities be constructed. Currently, the Ministries are spread over 47 buildings and there is a shortfall of 3.8 lakh sq mts of office space. So, this aspect also needs to be taken into account. Once the number of seats go up, the size of the cabinet will also increase. Where will the new ministers sit? Under the trees in the Central Vista?

cumbersome, there are no desks beyond second row and movement is extremely constrained.

To top it all, the political parties, which have been demanding that the number of Lok Sabha constituencies be raised to 1,000 from present 543 and a corresponding increase in Rajya Sabha's strength arguing that the India has a disproportionate representation of elected representatives should answer where the new members will sit. The present Parliament building cannot accommodate even if there is an increase of one more member. With the number of seats in Lok Sabha likely to be increased after 2026, it becomes imperative that a new building with all modern amenities be constructed.

The government says, currently, the Ministries are spread over 47 buildings and that there is a shortfall of 3.8 lakh sq mts of office space. So, this aspect also needs to be taken into account. Once the number of seats go up, the size of the cabinet will also increase. Where will the new ministers sit? Under the trees in the Central Vista?

The additional office space in the newly constructed Parliament Annex and library building is "insufficient to meet the requirements". The House of Commons has a library which is an information resource of the lower house of the British Parliament. The library in the existing Parliament house also has great treasure of information and was used more regularly by veteran leaders like Indira Gandhi, Somnath Chatterjee, LK Advani, Atal Behari Vajpayee, Jaipal Reddy, Pranab Mukherjee and many others. If it has to be further improved and if it has to meet the growing needs of the members, who would like to use the facility to enhance the quality of debates and discussions in the Parliament (though the number of such law makers has reduced), it is necessary to have an ultramodern library facility.

According to official records, "The existing Sansad building saw many twists and turns, akin to a racy thriller. Herbert Baker, the British architect, initially proposed on this triangular plot a plan with three wings. The present proposal of the new Parliament House is an uncanny throwback to this proposal. Lutyens, however, disapproved of Baker's design and instead proposed a circular, colosseum-like plan. Lutyens prevailed and Baker had to rework his original design."

The plan of the Parliament House is based on a circle that has an outer diameter of 174 metres. The three chambers were meant to house the Legislative Assembly, the Chamber of Princes and the Council of State. These are located within this circular plan with a 120-degree separation with intermediate courts between them.

The building was a technological marvel 100 years back and incorporated several elements of Indian architecture. The chambers were well designed and even had acoustic tiles to ensure that any speaker was heard by everybody in the house.

Post-independence, the Council House was renamed the Parliament House or Sansad Bhavan and the three main chambers namely the Legislative Assembly, the Chamber of Princes and the Council of States were repurposed as the Lok Sabha, the Rajya Sabha and the Library. The Central Hall was used for joint sittings.

The Parliament House is a living heritage site and has been witness to several historical moments, including Jawaharlal Nehru's 'Tryst with Destiny' and BR Ambedkar's Grammar of Anarchy speeches. The Central Hall has witnessed intense debates and discussion during the drafting of the Indian constitution. The richly embellished porticos have had several generations of distinguished parliamentarians passing through. Some prominent national figures are also immortalised here as busts, statues and portraits.

To meet the requirements of the changing situation, over period, several changes and upgrades have been carried out to the Parliament House. A building to house the Parliament library and an extension to the Parliament House Annex have also been built to accommodate the changing requirements. But still, the members have been facing several problems in discharge of their duties.

Yet unfortunately, objections are being raised citing trivial issues without any proper reason. Some say that the ultrasonic waves to assess the structural

siously being persuaded into accepting something that is unacceptable. By the time they realised, unfortunately it became too late. We only hope that this curse will not haunt our future generations.

DSP Rao, Kakinada

Waste of taxpayers money

I am sure common man's aspirations are good job opportunities, hospitals, universities, law and order and peaceful living, but not lavish buildings, statues, bullet train and mandirs as perceived by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It is unwise to waste taxpayers' money on luxuries at a time when the country is struggling with lowest GDP, highest unemployment and coronavirus. Improvements are needed in the quality of business conducted inside the Parliament building, rather than its construction.

Kshirasagara Balaji Rao, Hyderabad

Gloom in the soccer world

THE sudden demise of the celebrated Italian footballer, Paolo Rossi, who rose from the depths of bribery scandal to World Cup glory, has cast a pall of gloom on the soccer world. The legend's death comes at a time when football buffs are still mourning the

death of Argentina icon Diego Maradona, who died late last month. Rossi's remarkable run in the 1982 World Cup in Madrid where he slotted in six goals, including a hat-trick, against Brazil and a brace against Poland reads like a fairy tale. He scored Italy's first goal in the final to set up a stunning 3-1 victory over favourite West Germany and drag Enzo Bearzot's Azzurri to a third World title. A fleet-footed forward and a finisher par excellence, his death has robbed the sport of yet another great player.

N Ravi Chander, Bengaluru

Lateral entry that can prove lethal

THE attempts to integrate Ayurveda, especially surgery, into mainstream medicine must be one of the worst decisions across time and space for any government. Surgery in modern medicine has specialised and sub-specialized to high levels. It is disconcerting to see the government trying to encourage Ayurvedic doctors what most allopathic practitioners see as an inappropriate and highly questionable 'lateral entry'. There are huge medical, ethical, and legal implications for such moves. These are not political institutions to allow lateral entry. There are certainly better ways of doing this 'integration' to improve the health of the nation, but the present efforts are not doing any service to either Ayurveda or Allopathy. The bureaucracy and the political thinktank should work towards evolving better ways of integrating, instead of simply allowing Ayurveda practitioners to do surgeries which requires allopathic set-ups and highly complicated anaesthesia techniques.

Dr Pingali Gopal, Warangal



Farm laws: Anti-farmer and pro-corporates?

DR M SURESH BABU

FARMERS have long been seen as the heart and soul of India, where agriculture supports more than half of the country's 1.3 billion people. However, the farmers have also seen their economic clout diminish in the last 30 years. Once accounting for a third of India's Gross Domestic Product, they now produce only 15 per cent of the country's \$2.9 trillion economy. Farmers often complain of being ignored and hold frequent protests to demand better crop prices, more loan waivers and irrigation systems during dry spells. For the last two months, farmer unions have rejected the laws, which were passed in September, and have camped out on highways in Punjab and Haryana states. They say the measure could cause the government to stop buying grain at guaranteed prices and result in their exploitation by corporations that would buy their crops cheaply. The government, however, says the laws are needed to reform agriculture by giving farmers the freedom to market their produce and boost production through private investment.

What are the three laws?

The laws which aim to change the way agricultural produce is marketed, sold and stored across the country were initially issued in the form of ordinances in June. They were passed by voice-vote in both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha during the delayed monsoon session, despite the Opposition's vociferous protest. The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020, allows farmers to sell their harvest outside the notified Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) mandir without paying any State taxes or fee. The Farmers' (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020, facilitates contract farming and direct marketing. The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020, deregulates the production, storage, movement and sale of several major foodstuffs, including cereals, pulses, edible oils and onion, except in the case of extraordinary circumstances. The government hopes the new laws will provide farmers with more choice, with competition leading to better prices, as well as ushering in a surge of private investment in agricultural marketing, processing and infrastructure.

Will farmers get Minimum Support Price?

Most of the slogans at the farmers' protests revolve around the need to protect MSPs or Minimum Support Prices, which they feel are threatened by the new laws.

More than half of all government procurement of wheat and paddy in the last five years has taken place in Punjab and Haryana, according to Agriculture Ministry data. More than 85% of wheat and paddy grown in Punjab, and 75% in Haryana, is bought by the government at MSP rates. Farmers in these states fear that without MSPs, market prices will fall. These states are also most invested in the APMC system, with a strong mandi network, a well-oiled system of arthiyas or commission agents facilitating procurement, and link roads connecting most villages to the notified markets and allowing farmers to easily bring their produce for procurement.

also demanding that MSPs be made universal, within mandis and outside, so that all buyers — government or private — will have to use these rates as a floor price below which sales cannot be made.

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What are some other concerns?

One of the major concerns raised by regional political parties and non-BJP State governments is that agriculture falls in the State list, arguing that the Centre should not be making legislation on this subject at all. They are concerned about the loss of revenue from mandi taxes and fee, which currently range from 8.5% in Punjab to less than 1% in some States.

Some economists and activists say both Punjab and Rajasthan are considering legal measures to expand the bounds of their APMC mandi yards to ensure that they can continue collecting taxes on all agricultural trade within their State's borders. States such as Chhattisgarh and Odisha have only seen procurement increase over the last five years after the implementation of decentralised procurement. Paddy farming has received a major boost with procurement at MSPs and farmers fear their newly-assured incomes would be at stake.

The majority of agricultural marketing already happens outside the mandi network, with only 7,000 APMC markets operating across the country. Bihar, Kerala and Manipur do not follow the APMC system at all. However, most private buyers are currently small traders at local mandis. The removal of stock limits and facilitation of bulk purchase and storage through the amendment to the Essential Commodities Act could bring large corporate players into the agriculture space. Although they will bring much-needed investment, they could also skew the playing field with small farmers unlikely to match them in bargaining power.

LETTERS

Exhibition of callous attitude

IT is hard to believe that the ruling BJP would stoop to such level and hurry with the Central Vista project even without waiting for the court verdict. The project cost pegged at Rs 20,000 crore is sure likely to get increased in the due course. One wonders when the country is hit by the pandemic, where the scene is marked by millions getting affected by the virus, lakhs succumbing to it, crores of helpless migrant workers and others losing livelihood, the Prime Minister launching PM CARES in a hurry to mobilise funds to face the challenges thrown by Covid-19 and the GDP of the nation falling, how such a costly project can be taken up on priority? Either it is a case of misplaced priority or exhibition of callous attitude towards the issues of the people or display of arrogance or preparation for next election to show case the structure as a great monumental achievement of BJP's 10 years rule.

AG Rajmohan, Anantapur

Accustomed to dynasties

THE people of our country got accustomed to dynastic rule both in politics and cinema. Over the years, the politicians and the leading actors took impeccable care to see that alternatives are not available to people. It took a long time for the people to realise that they were uncon-

sciously being persuaded into accepting something that is unacceptable. By the time they realised, unfortunately it became too late. We only hope that this curse will not haunt our future generations.

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death of Argentina icon Diego Maradona, who died late last month. Rossi's remarkable run in the 1982 World Cup in Madrid where he slotted in six goals, including a hat-trick, against Brazil and a brace against Poland reads like a fairy tale. He scored Italy's first goal in the final to set up a stunning 3-1 victory over favourite West Germany and drag Enzo Bearzot's Azzurri to a third World title. A fleet-footed forward and a finisher par excellence, his death has robbed the sport of yet another great player.

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Dr Pingali Gopal, Warangal

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Jagan urges bankers to focus on farm sector



Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy taking part in the State Level Bankers Committee meeting at Tadepalli on Friday

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

CHIEF Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy urged the bankers to extend support in implementing government welfare schemes and help in strengthening the rural economy. Speaking at the 213th State Level Bankers Committee (SLBC) meeting held here on Friday, the Chief Minister said it was gratifying that 7.5 per cent growth was registered in the last quarter and 99 per cent of crop loans were given. He asked the bankers to focus on doubling farmers' income, reducing investment costs, providing proper market facilities for the crops, and support farmers at the time of natural disasters.

The Chief Minister said the government has started various initiatives to reduce the investment cost to farmers like Rythu Bharosa Scheme. Half of the farmers have less than half-an-hectare of land in the state and 80 per cent of investment cost to those farmers would be covered through this scheme. Stating that the state government paid all arrears of previous government pertaining to interest free loans and encouraging farmers to take interest free loans, he said no burden was laid on farmers regarding premium of crop insurance as the government was paying it.

The Chief Minister said the bankers should support micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) as they play a key role in financial sector. The banks should assist in restructuring of loans for MSMEs. The govern-

- Asks them to lay stress on doubling farmers' income, reducing investment costs, providing market facilities, come to their rescue during times of disasters
- Expresses dissatisfaction over paying 3% interest on Rs 7,500 cr deposited by women's groups in their accounts in 2020-21 but collecting 11% interest on
- SLBC president G Rajkiran Rai says banks extended Rs 1,85,075 cr, accounting for 42.61% of the total loans, to agricultural sector

ment has paid Rs 1,100 crore subsidy amount pending to industries from 2014 and also fixed electricity charges during Covid were waived, he said.

The Chief Minister said the state government brought in Cheyutha, Asara schemes to empower women belonging to SC, ST, BC and minorities and signed MoUs with the reputed companies like Amul, Allana, ITC, Procter & Gamble, HUL, and Reliance to empower women. He said committees were setup at village and ward level to support them.

Jagan Mohan Reddy said the Self-Help Groups have deposited Rs 7,500 crore in their accounts for 2020-21. However, the interest paid by banks is only 3 per cent, but the same banks have been charging an interest of around 11 per cent and 13 per

cent. He asked the bankers to consider the fact that the government itself has been paying interest on timely paid loans.

The Chief Minister said the state government has been implementing Jagananna Thodu scheme through which Rs 10,000 was provided as interest-free loan to street vendors. The government will pay the interest of the loans taken by the vendors from banks; he said and urged the bankers to come forward to support the street vendors. The Chief Minister said the state government has been working to complete the construction of TIDCO houses at earliest and asked the bankers for their support.

Meanwhile, speaking at the conference, G Rajkiran Rai, SLBC president and MD of Union Bank of India hailed the state government's initiatives and said the activities of banks and the financial assistance provided reached the targets in time. He said the banks have given Rs 2,80,519 crore as loans in primary sector as on September this year and it's 64.60 per cent of total loans. Loans to the agricultural sector stood at Rs 1,85,075 crore and this is 42.61 percent of the total loans, he said.

Ministers Botcha Satyanarayana, Kurasala Kannababu and Melkati Goutham Reddy, chief secretary Nilam Sawhney, NABARD CGM Sudhir Kumar Janawar, SLBC convenor V Bramhananda Reddy and RBI regional director K Nikhila were present at the meeting. UBI GM Lal Singh, UBI MD, CEO Raj Kiran Rai joined through video conference.

One hurt as YSRCP, TDP activists clash in Chittoor



A car damaged in the incident

- Two vehicles of TDP leaders were damaged in the attack allegedly by YSRCP activists
- The visit of TDP leaders to console bereaved families of party activists Kuppum Swamy and Sankar Naidu, who died recently in Angallu village, led to a heated altercation between the two sides

TIRUPATI

YSRCP and TDP activists clashed with each other in Angallu village, 10 km from Madanapalli in Chittoor district on Friday leaving one TDP activist injured and two vehicles belonging to TDP leaders damaged in the attack allegedly by YSRCP activists. It all started when the YSRCP activists tried to stop a group of senior TDP leaders, who came to the village in Kurabalakota mandal of Tamballapalli constituency on national highway to visit the two be-

reaved families of party activists Kuppum Swamy and Sankar Naidu, who died recently.

The YSRCP activists tried to prevent the TDP leaders including party vice-president Nallari Kishore Kumar Reddy (brother of former CM Nallari Kiran Kumar Reddy), who came to the village along with party activists leading to a heated altercation between the two rival party activists. The verbal fight ultimately resulted in the two party activists clashing with each other even as the Mudivedu police tried to separate

the warring groups and to restore peace.

YSRCP activists from other places also converged at the spot and vowed not to allow TDP leaders. The vehicles of the TDP leaders were damaged in the attack by YSRCP activists while a TDP activist Konda Madhu Babu was injured in the clash. He was admitted in Madanapalli hospital.

TDP leaders along with party activists resorted to sit-in on the road and raised slogan against the YSRCP activists highhanded behaviour.

Jal Shakti Minister agrees to Polavaram visit

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

STATE finance minister Buggana Rajendranath Reddy and irrigation minister P Anil Kumar Yadav here on Friday submitted a memorandum to the Jal Shakti minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat on the Revised Cost Estimates (RCE) of the Polavaram project at 2017-18 price level.

Speaking to the media later, Anil Kumar Yadav said that the Central minister had responded favourably to the AP government's request. "The Union minister accepted our invitation and agreed to visit the Polavaram project in the next 15 days," he said.

The irrigation minister said that the government was in the process of rectifying the wrongs committed during TDP government, a memorandum to the Union minister with the RCE for the construction of the Polavaram project was submitted for his approval, to which he had responded positively, he added.

"We have been meeting Union ministers and officials from various

departments since the past three days. Today, we met the Central minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and submitted a representation by our Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy to approve the revised estimates of the Polavaram project. The minister said that he had a clear understanding on these issues and promised to act upon it soon," he said.

"As part of the memorandum we have also requested that the component related to drinking water in the Polavaram project, which was earlier removed, be added under Section 14 of the Act," he said.

According to Anil Kumar Yadav, the Union minister also said that he would do the needful about the Rehabilitation and Resettlement (R&R) component package, as stated in the revised estimates.

The Central minister had heeded our request to visit Polavaram in the coming two weeks to see the progress of the Polavaram dam construction for which the state government is earnestly working to complete by 2021," he said.

He explained that the entire exercise of the RCE was because Chandrababu Naidu had entered into a special agreement under Special Package Scheme on September 8, 2016. As part of that deal in 2016 the original facilities were altered causing various issues, which the current government had resolved step-by-step, he explained. "We are giving high priority to the Polavaram project for which the state government is earnestly working to complete by 2021," he said.

SHOULD COW BE DECLARED NATIONAL ANIMAL?

Cow is a sacred animal for Hindus for ages. India's neighbour Nepal declared cow as National Animal. An intense debate has been going on in our country too on the need for according such status to the cow. Many States in the north India brought stringent laws against cow slaughter and now Karnataka too joined them. In this backdrop, **The Hans India** spoke to a cross section of people on the subject.



In our country, the majority of people worship cow as Goddess Lakshmi. Yajurveda mentioned that cow is the only animal which has unlimited beneficial qualities, incomparable virtues, and mythological significance. Milk, ghee, curd, and even dung from the sacred animal has medicinal values. Cow products are antimicrobial and rich in nutritional values. Vedas say having a cow gives us a lot of satisfaction with positive vibes around people. Slaughtering a cow is inhuman, and this step is essential.

- Akumalla Sahithi, software professional, Nellore



The Union government should have declared cow as national animal long time ago. If the BJP takes the decision, opposition parties may create disturbances because of vote bank politics. But protecting the cow population is the responsibility of every human being, especially of the Hindus. TTD is also promoting the idea of protecting the cow population taking up a massive programme of donating cows to the temples. The cow is a sacred animal as per Vedas and declaring it as the national animal of the subcontinent is totally appropriate.

- SV Mallikarjunan, Retired Bank Manager, Nellore



We consider cow as a mother, hence we call her Gomatha. For ages, the animal has been respected by Hindus and unfortunately, cow slaughtering is reducing the population. We feed even small kids with cow milk which gives nutrition and medicinal values. Cow urine is being used as medicine in cancer care in Ayurveda and still, the animal is being considered as a food source for other religions. Declaring it as the national animal is the need-of-the-hour decision. Only then India becomes true subcontinent with rich Vedic traditions and ancient culture.

- Ch Kotireddy, farmer, Nellore

The Centre which has taken many bold decisions in protecting the beliefs and traditions of people should consider declaring the cow as the national animal. The cow is not an animal to Hindus, a living Goddess whose products such as milk, and ghee are sacred and have medicinal values. Cow urine is being used as medicine in cancer care in Ayurveda and still, the animal is being considered as a food source for other religions. Declaring it as the national animal is the need-of-the-hour decision. Only then India becomes true subcontinent with rich Vedic traditions and ancient culture.

- Suvanam Srinivasulu, Retired Govt official, Nellore



There is an absolute need to declare cow as a national animal. While followers of other faiths drive them to slaughterhouse inhumanly, the national animal status will be a permanent solution for protecting them. At least all Hindus with one voice should demand this. I strongly hope that Prime minister Narendra Modi would certainly accord National Animal status to the cow.

- M Pulla Rao, Manager, Honey process centre, Chittoor.



Farmers are not seeking to make the cow as a national animal. Such things will never help them to come out of their woes. It was purely a political demand which should not be taken into consideration in the present circumstances. Cow is no doubt a sacred animal and everyone should worship it. But it does not mean that it has to be made a national animal.

- Mangati Gopal Reddy, State president, Federation of Farmers Association of AP, Tirupati



Cow has a sacred place in Hindu sanatana dharma. It is as important as our own mother. Even in mythology cow was given prominence indicating that everyone should worship it along with God. It is time now to make it a national animal which is nothing but respecting the sacred animal.

- K Giribabu, private business, Tirupati



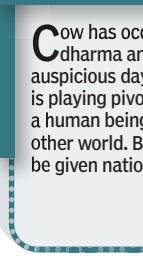
Yes, making cow as national animal would go a long way in protecting the animal from slaughter. We can also increase the cattle in the country. So the government should recognise the importance of the animal and make it as national animal. We have number of desi breeds but most of them are endangered. If it is made a national animal, it would protect them.

- P Balaji, private school administrator, Vizianagaram



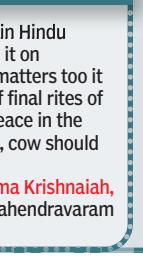
Making cow national animal would threaten its position as a key player in agriculture. So the animal should be given more priority as a contributor to agriculture. Declaring cow as national animal may not be accepted by some other section of people in India.

- B Babjee, President, PVG Raju Kalavedi, Vizianagaram



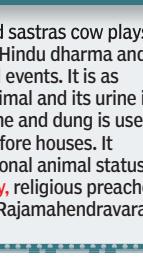
Cow has occupied an important place in Hindu dharma and Hindus perform pujas to it on auspicious days and events. In spiritual matters too it is playing pivotal role and even as part of final rites of a human being, cow is donated to find peace in the other world. Because of various features, cow should be given national animal status.

- K Rama Krishnaiah, farmer, Rajamahendravaram



As per epics and sastras cow plays a pivotal role in Hindu dharma and also in devotional events. It is as multi-purpose animal and its urine is used as a medicine and dung is used to kill bacteria before houses. It deserves the national animal status.

- M Sastry, religious preacher, Rajamahendravaram



Hindus treat cow as divine and perform pujas to it on every Friday and on other important days. In housewarming ceremonies, cow is be taken into new house with a belief that it is Goddess Lakshmi Devi. Cow milk, dung, urine, etc., have a place in Hinduism and the government should make it the national animal.

- B Rajya Lakshmi, housewife, Rajamahendravaram

519 new cases reported in AP

AP crosses 2 lakh tests per million population, only major State to achieve the milestone in the country

AMARAVATI

STATE on Friday crossed another milestone in Covid-19 management as it accomplished over two lakh sample tests per million population (TPM). A gross of 1,06,99,622 tests for coronavirus had been done in the state so far at the rate of

2,00,367 per million, turning out an overall positivity rate of 8.17 per cent. Andhra Pradesh is the only major state to cross the two lakh TPM while Kerala is behind with 1.89 lakh and Karnataka 1.80 lakh, government data here showed.

In the 24 hours ending 9 am on Friday, 64,425 tests were carried out and that turned out 520 positives for Covid-19, taking the states' infection count to 8,74,515.

Only two fresh deaths were reported while 519 more patients re-

covered from the infection, the latest bulletin said. The gross recoveries now touched 8,62,230 and the deaths 7,049, according to the bulletin. The active caseload was 5,236, a mere 0.6 per cent. Chittoor reported the highest 108 new coronavirus cases in a day while all other districts saw less than 100 each. In fact, five districts added less than 20 new cases each. Krishna and Visakhapatnam districts reported one fresh fatality each, the bulletin said.

Over 120 warships deployed in IOR: Rawat

Continued from P1

"In recent years, China's economy and military rise coupled with competition to increase the influence in the region has attracted a great deal of interest. At present, there are over 120 warships of extra-regional forces deployed in the Indian Ocean Region in support of various missions. Till now, the region, by and large, has remained peaceful albeit under contest-

tation," Rawat said. "In the military field, technology must be a means of deterrence not a source of destruction. Our approach to security hence needs to shift from unilateral to the multilateral mode which mandates increasing training engagements with partner nations in order to fortify future," he said. He further said governance and security are under constant threat of being undermined by non-state actors and also naval competition among the states. "Governance and security are under constant threat of being undermined by non-state actors and naval competition among the states. To protect peace, prosperity and sovereignty it is important for us to keep a sea line of communication secure at all times with a stronghold on the security dimension of this region," Rawat said.

KCR seeks Centre's help for flood relief

Continued from P1

He also submitted a memorandum to Amit Shah asking the Union Minister to come to the rescue of the T state which suffered a big financial crunch in the corona pandemic. Soon after the floods, KCR had written a letter to the Centre seeking Rs 1,350 crore as immediate relief and estimated total damage across the state to the extent of Rs 10,000 crore. The issue of pending release of funds under various centrally-sponsored development programmes to the State also figured in the meeting with Shah. It is learnt that KCR during his

meeting with Amit Shah explained his view point and why he had objected to the farm laws. He is said to have told him about the need for incorporating compulsory minimum support price (MSP) in the farm act. It now remains to be seen if the Chief Minister will meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi or not during his present visit to Delhi. The Prime Minister has not been giving appointments in view of the corona pandemic. The Chief Minister will be in Delhi till Sunday evening.

The meeting with the Prime Minister assumes political significance in the backdrop of the ongoing farmers' agita-

Delhi-Jaipur NH blockade today

Continued from P1

The protest would be against the Central government and the corporates. "On Monday, all District Magistrates across the country will be handed over memorandums by our supporters to be forwarded to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to seek repeal of the three new farm laws," he added. He asserted that the protesting farmers would also hold 'Kisan Kranti March' at 11 am daily to lodge their protests till the Centre did not agree to their demands. Banners and posters regarding various farmers' issues would be put up at the Ghazipur border to make the public aware of the matter.

'Scrap arbitrary farm laws'

Continued from P1

The three contentious laws are: Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020; Farmers' (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020; and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act. Over the past many weeks fierce



THE

HANS BUSINESS

TODAY'S QUOTE

Amazon now biggest buyer of renewable energy

Our company has become the largest-ever corporate purchaser of renewable energy after it added 26 new wind and solar energy projects totaling 3.4 GW of electricity production capacity. The addition of 26 new wind and solar projects globally takes number of projects to 127.

- Jeff Bezos, founder & CEO, Amazon



TAX REFUNDS

CBDT releases ₹1.45L cr to 89L taxpayers

The Finance Ministry on Friday said the Income-Tax (I-T) department has issued refunds worth Rs 1.45 lakh crore to about 89 lakh taxpayers this fiscal so far. This includes personal Income-Tax (PIT) refunds during this period. CBDT issues refunds of over Rs 1,45,619 crore to more than 89.29 lakh taxpayers between April-December 8, 2020.



FOREX (buy rates in ₹)

US Dollar	78.07	South
Euro	93.81	African Rand
UAE Dirham	22.05	Hong Kong Dollar
Thai Baht	2.81	Japanese Yen
British Pound	101.35	New Zealand Dollar
Australian Dollar	58.29	Saudi Riyal
Canadian Dollar	60.62	Swedish Krona
Swiss Franc	86.35	Singapore Dollar

DELHI SATURDAY 12 DECEMBER 2020

BIZ BRIEFS

TRA rewards LG Brand

LG Electronics has been recognized for its continuous quest to bring most innovative and superlative approaches in technology. The brand has been awarded with a prestigious honor of being the 'Most Trusted Brand' for refrigerator & washing machine, in TRA's Brand Trust Report 2020, an independent study conducted with 1,711 consumer influencers released by the TRA Research. LG Refrigerator and Washing Machine were ranked No. 1 in the study that spanned across 16 Indian cities, amongst 8,000 unique brands across industries and categories. Vijay Babu - VP, Home Appliances, LG Electronics India said "We are extremely delighted at this recognition for two of our most popular and market leading products viz., LG Refrigerator and Washing Machine".

Ficci webinar for farmers

East-West Seed, Ficci, and the Embassy of The Netherlands in India, organized a webinar titled 'How to lift India's smallholder farmers out of poverty,' with three distinguished World Food Laureates of agriculture, nutrition, and innovation Dr. Simon Groot, Dr. Rattan Lal, and Dr. Surinder Vasal. The session was moderated by Meghna Ravishankar, Director, International Borlaug Dialogue. The webinar's premise was aimed at spotlighting each of the World Food Prize laureates' exceptional, lifetime contributions to agriculture that helped alleviate smallholder farmers' lives. Dr. Simon Groot said, "Smallholder farmers have an intimate knowledge of the land they work, often passed down over multiple generations. The goal of our Knowledge Transfer from East-West Seed is to honor those traditions while showing farmers how quality seeds more value."

BANKING REGULATOR GETS INTO ACTION

RBI slaps penalty on HDFC Bank

KUMUD DAS
MUMBAI



THE Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed a fine of Rs 10 lakh on the private sector lender HDFC Bank for bouncing of SGL, which led to shortage of balance in certain securities in the bank's CSGL account on November 19, 2020.

Subsidiary General Ledger (SGL) contains details of all transactions happening in a bank, and a certain threshold of balance should be always present there. According to the notifications issued by RBI, this penalty was imposed on HDFC Bank as they failed to maintain minimum capital required in SGL, which resulted in bouncing of SGL.

The bank received the order on December 9 and the disclosure was made on December 10, after market hours. HDFC Bank received the letter from RBI on December 9.

In their notification, RBI said: "A monetary penalty of Rs 10 lakh has been imposed on the bank for bouncing of SGL, which lead to shortage of balance in certain secu-

rities in the bank's CSGL account on November 19."

Recently, the HDFC Bank's stock valuation declined after RBI announced a halt on the launch of the bank's digital business generating activities planned under its program Digital 2.0 and sourcing of new credit card customers.

HDFC Bank informed analysts that improving the architectural efficiency of its IT systems would take three months while it would take six weeks to automate switchover to disaster recovery system.

Talking to Bizz Buzz, a source at the HDFC Bank said that said it was just a mechanical error while feeding the input, for which the bank will have to pay the price in the form of penalty.

...restricts Kotak Mahindra Bank from paying dividend on PNCPS

HANS BUSINESS
MUMBAI

THE Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has restricted the private sector lender Kotak Mahindra Bank from paying out dividend on perpetual non-cumulative preference shares (PNCPS) as well.

In the notification issued by it on December 9, the RBI asked the bank not to make any dividend payment on equity shares from the profits pertaining to the financial year ended 31 March, 2020. RBI has referred to its earlier letter written to the bank dated December 4.

In this regard, RBI has clarified in its letter dated December 9 that this restriction on dividend distribution will also apply to PNSPS. The bank, on its part, has confirmed the development through its regulatory filing.

Factory output at fastest pace in 7 months

IIP rises 3.63% in Oct

NEW DELHI

INDUSTRIAL production rose 3.63 per cent on y-o-y in October, mainly due to better performance of manufacturing and electricity generation sectors, official data showed on Friday. The IIP had been in the negative territory from April to August FY21 due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown to curb its spread.

According to the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) data, manufacturing and electricity generation sectors registered a growth of 3.5 per cent and 11.2 per cent, respectively. The mining sector witnessed a contraction of 1.5 per cent in October. The IIP had contracted by 6.6 per cent in October 2019.

India's industrial production as captured by the IIP shrank by 6.6 per cent in October 2019.

The provisional figures, released by the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI), give hope as it points to a sustained recovery across sectors.

Uttarakhand CM rolls out Olectra electric bus

HANS BUSINESS
DEHRADUN



FOR the first time, the citizens of Dehradun will now be able to travel in zero emission and noiseless electric buses launched by Olectra Greentech Ltd, a leading player in electric public transport system in India. Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat flagged off the e-buses here on Friday. Speaking on the occasion Rawat said: "We're planning to start these 30 eco-friendly electric buses in this financial year. These buses will run in hill terrains of Dehradun, Mussoorie, Rishikesh and Haridwar."

After deployment of the buses, Olectra Greentech in a release said: "Olectra is proud to operate its state-of-the-art electric buses in one more state in the country. Our buses would now contribute to preserving the rich ecology of Uttarakhand. Olectra committed to its efforts to reduce the pollution levels through an efficient electric public transport system. We are sure that, like other states, our 30 buses will be successful in the state. Our electric buses have already proved in reliability and efficiency as it has been successfully deployed at Hyderabad, Mumbai, Pune, Nagpur and Kerala."

Festive demand drives domestic PV sales

NEW DELHI

PASSENGER vehicle (PV) sales in India increased by 12.73 per cent to 2,85,367 units in November as against 2,53,139 units in the same month last year riding on the back of festive demand, auto industry body Siam said here on Friday. According to the latest data by the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (Siam), two-wheeler sales rose 13.43 per cent to 16,00,379 units, compared with 14,10,939 units in the same month last year. Motorcycle sales were at 10,26,705 units as against 8,93,538 units in November 2019, up 14.9 per cent.

MSMEs get ₹2.05L cr credit line: FinMin

NEW DELHI:

in First Supplementary Demand for Grants for FY 2020-21," a tweet said.

Announcing Aatmanirbhar Bharat Package 3.0 last month, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had said that Rs 2.05 lakh crore sanctioned and Rs 1.52 lakh crore disbursed under ECLGS I.0. "As part of the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan 3.0 (announced on November 12), ECLGS Scheme has been extended through ECLGS 2.0 for the 26 stress sectors and health care sector with credit outstanding of above Rs 50 crore and up to Rs 500 crore as on February 29, 2020," a tweet said.

While, 40 lakh MSME accounts have received Rs 1,58,626 crore till December 4, the Finance Ministry said in a series of tweets. "Rs 3 lakh cr Collateral-Free Guaranteed Loans - Budgetary provision of Rs 4,000 crore made for the Scheme

Indices hover at all-time highs

MUMBAI

EQUITY indices resumed their climb on Friday after a day's pause as bank, energy and FMCG stocks show robust buying amid persistent foreign fund inflows.

Subdued global markets and a flat rupee capped the gains, analysts said. After touching its all-time intra-day high of 46,309.63, the 30-share BSE Sensex dipped into the negative zone in late-afternoon trade. However, it staged a comeback to end 139.13 points or 0.30 per cent higher at 46,099.01, just shy of its closing record. On similar lines, the broader NSE Nifty rose 35.55 points or 0.26 per cent to 13,513.85. It hit a lifetime high of 13,579.35 dur-

ing the session. ONGC topped the Sensex gainers' chart, rallying 5.68 per cent, followed by NTPC, Tata Steel, ITC, ICICI Bank, Titan, Bajaj Auto and SBI. On the other hand, Axis Bank, M&M, Tech Mahindra, HCL Tech, Bajaj Finserv and Infosys were among the laggards, skidding up to 2.19 per cent. During the week, the Sensex vaulted 1,019.46 points or 2.26 per cent, while the Nifty surged 255.30 points or 1.92 per cent.

World stocks wobbled as prospects of a no-deal Brexit and uncertainty over US stimulus talks sapped risk appetite. "Market opened well, but in between it lost

all the gains and turned negative, fortunately in the last trading minutes, it made a good attempt to bounce back and closed marginally above. Gains made in sectors like energy, FMCG and metals were countered by selling in Pharma and IT stocks. "This muted momentum was due to a weak global trend. Despite European Central Bank announcing an increase in the stimulus package, European markets fell as it was weighed by increasing chance of a no-deal Brexit, rising virus cases and moderate usages of the announced stimulus plan," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

REAL CORNER

Home prices: India's global rank slips to 54

Falls by 7 notches in Q3 of 2020 from 47th rank in Q3 of 2019

MUMBAI

INDIA has moved down seven spots in the global home price index to 54th rank in Q3 2020 against 47th in Q3 2019, with a decline of 2.4 per cent year-on-year (YoY) in home prices, international property consultant Knight Frank said in its latest research report - Global House Price Index Q3 2020.

According to the index, the ranking of India remained unchanged to 54th spot amongst 56 countries compared to previous quarter Q2 2020.

The Global House Price Index (GHPI) tracks the movement in mainstream residential prices across 56 countries and territories worldwide using official statistics.



The Global House Price Index (GHPI) tracks the movement in mainstream residential prices across 56 countries and territories worldwide using official statistics. In Q3 2020, Turkey continues to lead the annual rankings with prices up by 27.3 per cent YoY, followed by New Zealand at 15.4 per cent YoY and Luxembourg with 13.4 per cent YoY. Morocco was the weakest performing territory in Q3 2020, with home prices fallen to 3.3 per cent YoY. The report highlighted in Q3 2020, Ire-

GHPI Q3 2020 top performing countries

Turkey	27.3%
New Zealand	15.4%
Luxembourg	13.4%

2020. New residential unit launches increased by 4.5 times to 31,106 units in Q3 2020, compared to 5,584 units in the previous quarter.

Mainstream residential prices across 56 countries and territories worldwide saw a slight price correction, which stood at an annual rate change of 4.5 per cent on average, compared to Q2 2020 at 4.7 per cent.

According to the report, 16 per cent of the surveyed global countries and territories registered a decline in yearly price growth. In Q2 2020, many housing markets remained frozen and saw a sharp rebound in sales and prices in Q3 2020, including New Zealand, the UK and the US, while others witnessed only a marginal impact on pricing, including China, France and Germany. (IANS)

Fortune Group enters uPVC windows, doors segment

Sets up manufacturing plant at Patancheru

HANS BUSINESS

HYDERABAD

CITY-BASED paints company Fortune Group has entered the uPVC windows and doors segment. The company markets its products under Fenetre brand, and recently established a new manufacturing facility at Patancheru industrial area, Phase-2, near Hyderabad. Fortune Group has invested Rs 5 crore for this unit, which has a capacity of 25 lakhs sq ft per annum.

Akuri Srinivas Reddy, Founder, Fortune Group, said: "We will expand pan India within 3-5 years. We would like to establish manufacturing units in 4-5 locations in different states within five years including Vizag in Andhra Pradesh to cater to pan India clients."

Fortune Group has its brand presence in Hyderabad, Chennai, Vizag, Vijayawada, Guntur, Kurnool and Bengaluru. Fortune Group manufactures paints under Techno Paints brand. The company has successfully completed over 100 pilot projects in the span of two years.

Till date Fenetre has completed orders worth 3 lakh sq ft and supplying to 100 plus clients.

Patancheru plant created employment for 70 skilled and unskilled staff. Current order on hand is 6 lakh sq ft, said company Technical Director A.S.N. Reddy.

360 Realtors joins Rising Straits Capital to launch ₹100-cr fund

NEW DELHI

REAL estate brokerage firm 360 Realtors has partnered with Rising Straits Capital to launch a Rs 100 crore stress fund to provide last mile financing to builders to complete their residential properties.

The company has started the process to raise money and the Rs 100 crore fund will be launched next month, said Ankit Kansal, the founder and Managing Director of Gurugram-based 360 Realtors.

"We have tied up with Rising Straits Capital to launch a real estate dedicated Alternate Investment Fund (AIF)," he said.

The two partners would have an equal stake in the joint venture firm 360 Rising Straits Management Pvt Ltd which would act as an investment manager of the fund, Kansal said. "We will put in about Rs 10 crore amount in this fund and the remaining will be raised from retail investors, HNIs and NRIs," he added.

The JV firm has already identified a few projects in Noida and Greater Noida in Uttar Pradesh where it would provide last mile funding, Kansal said, but refused to name the builders and the projects.

Besides Noida and Greater Noida, he said the company is looking at projects in Mumbai, Pune and Bengaluru.

Senior Congress netas lobby for TPCC chief post

HYDERABAD

SENIOR Congress leaders eyeing the TPCC chief post are have begun lobbying. It may be noted that AICC In-charge for Telangana Manickam Tagore has been engrossed in this exercise for the last three days camping in Hyderabad. He took views of all senior leaders including some of the front runners to the post. Senior leaders from Forward Castes (Reddy, Brahmin), Backward Classes (Goud, Yadav, Kapu) and SC communities have expressed their interest to take up the post in their individual meeting with Tagore already.

The AICC in-charge collected views of DCC presidents and heads of various Congress affiliated bodies on Friday. It was learnt that some of the leaders had made calls to DCC presidents and requested them to recommend their name during their one-on-one meeting with Tagore.

Speculations are also doing rounds that Congress high command already made its choice on the next TPCC Chief to succeed Uttam Kumar Reddy. However, sensing that announcing name directly would lead to a dissent among other hopefuls the national party took up this opinion collection exercise, which it is doing for the first time in Telangana or in the previous combined Andhra Pradesh State.

TRS govt trying to sell off prime land of 11 industrial parks: Cong

Senior Congress leader Mohd Shabbir Ali alleges State government wants to convert 11 industrial parks within the ORR into IT parks

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

SENIOR Congress leader and former minister Mohammed Ali Shabbir alleged that the TRS government was attempting to sell off prime land of 11 industrial parks in and around Hyderabad to private companies in the name of IT parks.

Shabbir Ali, in a media statement on Friday, pointed out that the ITC&C Department issued G.O. Ms. No. 16 on December 10, 2020 for guidelines on Hyderabad GRID (Growth In Dispersion) Policy. The State government wants to convert 11 industrial parks within the ORR into IT parks. They include in-

COVID TESTS CROSS 60L IN TELANGANA STATE

The recovery rate stands at 96.71 per cent against the national average of 94.8 per cent. The State now has 7,604 active Covid cases and of them 5,511 are in home or institutional isolation

HYDERABAD

TELANGANA crossed a milestone on Friday in its fight against Covid-19 as the state so far conducted over 60 lakh tests. With 56,178 samples tested during the last 24 hours, the cumulative tests mounted to 60,29,209. Samples tested per million population ratio rose further to 1,61,988. The daily testing target for the state is 5,600 per day as per the World Health Organisation (WHO) benchmark of 140 per million per day, officials said.

Eighteen government-run laboratories, 54 private laboratories and 1,076 Rapid antigen test centres are conducting the tests in the state. During the last 24 hours, 56,178 samples were tested -- 52,718 in government-run laboratories and 3,460 in private labs. According to the Director of Public Health and Family Welfare, the State reported 612 positive cases, taking the cumulative tally to 2,76,516. Out of the total positive cases so far, 70 per cent (1,93,561) were asymptomatic while the



remaining 30 per cent (82,955) were symptomatic.

The data shows that 63.9 per cent of those tested positive so far were aged between 21-50 years. As many as 22.91 per cent were aged above 51 years. The positive cases include 13.18 per cent who were below 20 years. Of the total cases, 60.44 per cent were male and 39.57 per cent fe-

male. Three more persons succumbed to the virus during the last 24 hours, taking the death toll to 1,485. The fatality rate stands at 0.53 per cent against the national average of 1.5 per cent. According to the director of public health and family welfare, 44.96 per cent of the deaths were due to Covid while the remaining 55.04 were on account of co-

morbidities. Officials said 502 people recovered from the virus during the last 24 hours, taking the cumulative recoveries to 2,67,427. The recovery rate stands at 96.71 per cent against the national average of 94.8 per cent. The state now has 7,604 active Covid cases and of them 5,511 were in home or institutional isolation.

During the last 24 hours Greater Hyderabad logged 144 new cases. Rangareddy district saw the second highest number of new cases at 73 followed by Medchal Malkajgiri (60), Warangal Urban (29), Karimnagar (28), Nalgonda (21) and Khammam (18).

Over 90 per cent of beds in the government-run hospitals treating Covid-19 in the state remained vacant. Out of 8,561 beds available in 61 government hospitals treating Covid, 7,774 beds were vacant. A total of 787 people were undergoing treatment in these hospitals. Similarly, in 220 private hospitals treating Covid, only 1,306 beds were occupied. Out of 8,476 beds, 7,170 were vacant.

Should cow be made national animal?

In the wake of growing demand to promote cow as India's national animal instead of tiger, the Hans India spoke to different sections of people from the two Telugu States - Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. People express their views on whether a 'cow' should be named as India's national animal or tiger remain to be the face of a national animal.

	<p>Policy decisions must be made in a way that respects the sentiments of the broader population in the country. Declaring the "cow" as a national animal is not appropriate in the current circumstances.</p> <p>S Jyothi, school principal Nizamabad</p>		<p>problems of the natives, instead of debating on whether the cow should be a national animal. By giving my opinion on this subject, I don't want to add on to this narrative as that would place this issue on a high stand.</p> <p>Vipanchika Shastri, MA in Political Science, JNU</p>		<p>Cow cannot be the national animal of India as it symbolises the discourse of BJP government. There is ample evidence in history that even Brahmins consumed cow meat.</p> <p>Vineeth Srivastava, PhD scholar, University of Hyderabad</p>		<p>Cow as a national animal in the place of a Tiger looks like a good idea but is not advisable. A national animal should be indigenous to a specific nation and elite to the country's identity.</p> <p>KJ David, artist, Kothagudem</p>
	<p>It is high time that the Cow is announced as India's national animal on the lines of Nepal which declared Cow as its national animal and banned cow slaughter in the country. Cow since the Vedic times has been an integral part of India's heritage, culture and tradition.</p> <p>M Vinay Kumar, resident of Khammam</p>		<p>Cow is a sacred animal. It's better to have Cows as our National Animal instead of Tigers. India taught the world tolerance, non-violence and universal acceptance. In our country, we believe that the cow is representative of divine and natural benefice.</p> <p>Mamidala Ramchander, Self-employed, Kazipet</p>		<p>The gau mata (cow) symbolises a life of nonviolent generosity. We consider the Cow as a holy animal that cannot be harmed. Even if we make Cows as our National Animal, it should not be seen as a controversial topic.</p> <p>BV Rajagopal, Teacher, Hanamkonda</p>		<p>There are certain respectful feelings towards Cows in our country. All the products of a cow are environment-friendly and the cow dung contributes a lot in increasing the fertility of the soil.</p> <p>Mahesh, a social activist of Jagtial district</p>
	<p>Central government's move to replace our National Animal symbol Tiger with Cow is completely uncalled for. The 'Tiger' symbolises the internal strengths of various communities living together with tranquility and brotherhood.</p> <p>Mittu, Businessman and Social Organisation representative from Jagcherla, Mahabubnagar</p>		<p>Centre's move to replace Tiger is not acceptable. There is no need for such a thing at this juncture when the entire country is under a healthcare crisis. This will only rouse sentiments among the people.</p> <p>Kommu Amruth, resident of Mahabubnagar</p>		<p>Replacing Tiger with Cow as national animal is a good move made by the Central government. As India is a Hindu majority country, representing Cow with Tiger will definitely justify it and will further help in protecting the Cow slaughtering in the country.</p> <p>Anusha, Asst Professor from JPNCE</p>		<p>Declaring Cow as a national animal is a very sensitive matter as it is linked with the religious sentiments of people in India and abroad. In Ayurveda too, cow urine is considered as an important ingredient in preparing medicine. Since India is a secular country, it has to think twice before taking such a decision judiciously.</p> <p>MV Gona Reddy, Educationist and Teachers Union leader, Nalgonda</p>
	<p>Cow is a sacred animal and Hindus perform cow puja as a God's representative. As per my opinion, there is nothing wrong in considering Cow as a National Animal.</p> <p>Vinod Reddy, Chit Fund association State president, Nalgonda</p>		<p>Rajasthan High Court Judge recommended cow be declared as a national animal instead of Tiger because Cow is lord Krishna's pet animal and it gives us milk which is consumed by 80 per cent of Indians.</p> <p>Jadhav Ashok, a teacher in Adilabad mandal</p>		<p>In 1979 Royal Bengal Tiger was declared as the Indian National Animal because of its beauty, power and Royalty. The tigers are limited to tiger reserves and zoos parks. Now, the time has come to change the National Animal from Tiger to Cow.</p> <p>Lakkakula Thukaram, Advocate, Nirmal district</p>		<p>Tiger is useful only to entertain tourists in tiger reserves, forests and zoo parks. In many incidents, Tigers have attacked even small kids and recently, it has killed two tribals in Asifabad district. So, I want to say that Cow should be declared as our national animal.</p> <p>A Naveen Kumar, an employee of Adilabad</p>
	<p>Tiger is a powerful animal and symbolises India and the Indians appropriately. National animal of any country should represent what that country is, Tiger gives a very majestic message to the world.</p> <p>Krishna Kumar, Swimming coach</p>		<p>Cow occupies an important place in the Hindu religion and Hindus offer pujas to it on auspicious days and events. Spiritually it also plays an important role. Because of various reasons, Cow should be given National Animal status.</p> <p>K Rama Krishnaiah, farmer from Rajamahendravaram</p>		<p>As per the epic and shastras, Cow has always played a pivotal role in the Hindu religion and also in the devotional events. Cow is a multi-purpose animal and its urine is used as a medicine and its dung is used to kill bacteria outside houses and it deserves the National Animal status.</p> <p>M Sastry, Religious Preacher</p>		<p>Hindus treat Cow as God and perform pujas to it on every Friday and on other important days. On Griha Pravesh, Cow is taken into the new house with a belief that it is Goddess Lakshmi Devi. The government should give the National Animal status to Cow.</p> <p>B Rajya Lakshmi, a homemaker</p>

New road safety plan for ORR on the anvil

Chief Secretary chairs a meeting with top officials on minimising accidents and fatalities



HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

IN the wake of rising accidents, the State government will unveil a separate road safety plan for the Outer Ring Road (ORR). Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar on Friday instructed officials to prepare the safety plan which includes installation of cameras, speed guns and enforcement measures.

Similarly, a committee is to be constituted to study issues relating to having a unified ambulance network, trauma centres, equipping hospitals to treat emergency management and trauma cases. The committee has been asked to submit its report within a week for the Chief Minister's approval.

The Chief Secretary conducted a meeting on road safety measures, the CS stated.

Foundation laid for zero liquid discharge CETP

HYDERABAD

RAMKY Enviro Engineers Limited on Friday organised foundation-laying ceremony for a zero liquid discharge common effluent treatment plant (CETP) in Pashamylaram. Ramky Enviro has entered into a joint partnership with Pharma companies from IDA Pashamylaram to treat wastewater generated by the industries in IDA Pashamylaram, Hyderabad. The foundation stone laying ceremony was presided over by TSIIIC Vice Chairman & MD Venkat Narasimha Reddy, Goutham Reddy, MD & CEO of Ramky Enviro, Durga Prasad, MD of Sri Chaitanya Chlorides Ltd, Chidambaram, Executive Vice-Chairman of Sigachi Industries, Bhaskar Raju, Director of Lakshmi Saras Chemicals, and Chandu Kumar Potti, Director, Versatile Industries.

Goutham Reddy said on the occasion: "Given the enhanced focus towards Zero Liquid Discharge, there is a dearth of capacity for CETPs with Multiple Effect Evaporators, TSIIIC and the Industries have identified the need and conceptualised a project of high need. CETP will be an environmentally friendly plant as the treated waste water will be reused by the industries to address their process requirements." Venkat Narasimha Reddy said there has been a demand for the secondary effluent treatment plant at Pashamylaram for the industries as the previously established plant in the area is insufficient to meet the rising industrial needs.

with all top officials concerned here. The officials underlined the need for making concerted efforts to minimise road accidents and fatalities in the State.

Kumar stressed the need to improve data collection mechanism, which includes developing an app to capture and record information with geo coordinates and photographs whenever accidents happen. He asked officials to identify accident-prone locations and ensure that proper sign boards are put in place.

The EMRI was asked to scale up training of volunteers for active bleeding control (ABC) which will have a much bigger impact in saving lives. A proper training programme for both government and institutional drivers will be conducted to sensitise them on road safety measures, the CS stated.

Cong rips into KCR for 'unsavoury' statement

Madhu Yashki says Sonia Gandhi had taken the bold decision to create Telangana, keeping in mind the sacrifices made by the youth for the Statehood

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

TELANGANA Congress took serious exception to Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao's statement in Siddipet public meeting that if not for him Telangana would not have been there. Senior leaders Jagga Reddy, Madhu Yashki Goud, G Nirjanan among others reacted sharply to the CM's remarks.

Madhu Yashki alleged that KCR took to Telangana slogan and agitation for his political future.

He said Sonia Gandhi took the bold decision to create Telangana State keeping in mind the sacrifices made by Telangana youth for the Statehood. The former MP questioned KCR how could Statehood dream be achieved with 2 MPs by TRS, if

not for Sonia Gandhi.

Former Minister Balram Naik also lashed out against KCR for not doing enough for unemployed youth who played a key role in the Statehood movement.

Sangareddy MLA Jagga Reddy felt that one part of KCR's statement was correct. KCR would not have been there if not for Siddipet. But to say that Telangana was not there but for KCR was untrue. Jagga Reddy felt that CM had become so arrogant that he did not even thank Sonia and Rahul for giving Telangana.

Senior leader G Nirjanan said that KCR's arrogance reached a stage that he would see his downfall in the near future. He said that Telangana Statehood demand came into the picture much before K Chandrashekhar Rao was in politics.

Dejected lovers end life in Munagala

MUNAGALA (SURYAPET)

In a tragic incident, a couple committed suicide by hanging to a tree in Moddula Cheruvu village of Munagala mandal in the district, which came to light on Friday. According to sources, Orsu Naveen (21) of Chandupatla village of Chivemla mandal fell in love with a minor girl of the same village. However, when the family came to know about their love affair, they rejected it. Depressed, the two on Thursday evening left their houses and hanged themselves to a tree on the outskirts of Moddula Cheruvu village. Locals found them hanging and informed the same to the police. After completing all the formalities, the police shifted the dead bodies to the hospital for post-mortem examination. A case has been registered and probe initiated, informed SI Satyanarayana.

