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**BIZZ BUZZ**

SCAN ME

WINDOWS

View of a tram modified into a mobile art gallery, where work by various artists will be displayed as it runs across the city, in Kolkata on Friday

Suvendu Adhikari quits Didi Cabinet

KOLKATA: In what could be a blow to Bengal's Trinamool Congress ahead of next year's Assembly poll, senior minister Suvendu Adhikari has resigned from his post. The resignation letter to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee was submitted on Friday and a copy was sent to Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar. Adhikari has quit as minister for transport and irrigation, but remains a Trinamool MLA as he has not resigned from the Assembly. His resignation is being widely seen as a precursor for his exit from the party. ►P3

Mehbooba, daughter detained again

SRINAGAR: Authorities on Friday disallowed PDP president Mehbooba Mufti's press conference in Srinagar as the former CM was allegedly put under house arrest and not allowed to visit the Pulwama residence of party leader Waheed Para. "Their cruelty knows no bounds. Waheed was arrested on baseless charges & I am not allowed to even console his family. Even my daughter Iltija has been placed under house arrest because she also wanted to visit Waheed's family," Mufti said on Twitter. ►P3

NSA Doval calls on Lanka PM Rajapaksa

COLOMBO: Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa on Friday sought India's continued assistance to boost the bilateral ties as he met with National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, who also held talks with the country's defence secretary to further advance the "valuable" co-operation which contributes to peace and security in the region. Doval arrived here on Friday for a trilateral maritime dialogue among India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives. Sri Lanka will host the fourth national security advisor trilateral meeting on maritime security co-operation with India and the Maldives on Friday and Saturday.

Chahal concedes most runs in an ODI

LEG-SPINNER Yuzvendra Chahal has registered an unwarranted record to his name as he became the Indian spinner to concede most runs in an ODI. In the first ODI of the three-match series against Australia, Chahal on Friday returned with figures of 1/89 from his 10 overs at the Sydney Cricket Ground. The lone wicket he got was that of Marcus Stoinis who got out for a duck being caught behind by KL Rahul. ►P8

**IRREGULAR by MANJUL**

Our party never took pollution seriously. It helped. You people were ready with masks even before pandemic hit!

MODI ON 3-CITY VACCINE TOUR

PM to visit Bharat Biotech in Hyderabad today

HYDERABAD

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi will be visiting vaccine maker Bharat Biotech's facility in Hyderabad on Saturday as part of his three-city tour to take stock of the Covid-19 vaccine development work in the country. "As India enters a deci-

sive phase of the fight against Covid-19, Modi's visit to these facilities & discussions with the scientists will help him get a first-hand perspective of the preparations, challenges & roadmap in India's endeavour to vaccinate its citizens," said PMO in an official statement.

Modi is scheduled to land at the Hakimpet Air Force Station around 4pm

and from there he will reach Bharat Biotech's facility at Genome Valley,

where the work is underway on Covaxin, India's first indigenous vaccine for coronavirus being developed by the company in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research. The Prime Minister will go around the facility to understand the vaccine development process and the prepara-

tions by the Bharat Biotech to manufacture the doses in large numbers once the vaccine gets approval from the authorities concerned. The Bharat Biotech officials will explain to the Prime Minister various aspects of the vaccine development and their rollout plans.

Continued on Page 5

# Farmers invade Delhi

- Police tear gas agitators
- Chaos at borders
- Traffic jams in capital
- Centre firm on Dec 3 talks

NEW DELHI

THOUSANDS of farmers protesting over the three farm laws passed recently by Parliament were on Friday allowed to enter Delhi following day-long clashes with police at the borders with Haryana. The clashes saw the police using water cannon and tear gases to keep the crowds under control.

The Delhi Police said the protesting farmers would be escorted to the protest site at Burari on the outskirts of the national capital. The farmers entered the city as part of their 'Dilli Chalo' march to press for the withdrawal of the three farm Bills.

Clarifying the central government's stand, Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said the government is ready to discuss the issues of the farmers on December 3 while making an appeal to the protesters to end their agitation as this is the beginning of the cropping season.

Carrying food and essential supplies for their stay in Delhi, groups of farmers walked with their tractors from Haryana into Delhi after the police granted permission for a peaceful protest at the Niranankari Ground in Burari. The farmers started entering the city after 3 pm from the Tikri border. The farmers have come all the way from different districts of Punjab.

At the Singhu border, there was chaos with farmers, many of them wrapped in barbed wire, defied barricades and dug up trenches. Plumes of smoke were seen as security personnel fired multiple rounds of tear gas shells to disperse the protesters at the Singhu border. Angry farmers pelted stones at the police and broke barricades prompting action from the police leaving sev-



Farmers march towards Delhi during the 'Delhi Chalo' protest march against the new farm laws, on the outskirts of Amritsar on Friday

eral farmers injured.

The farmers protests disrupted traffic movement in parts of Delhi. The Delhi traffic police took to Twitter posting a series of tweets asking travellers to avoid the Outer Ring Road, Mukarba Chowk, GTK road, NH-44 and Singhu Border.

Tension defused after the Delhi police allowed the protesting farmers to gather at the Burari's Niranankari Ground and the farmer-leaders agreeing to be escorted by the security personnel till the protest site.

The farmers, who have come from Punjab, repre-

sending over 30 farm bodies, had announced their march to Delhi through several routes -- Lalru, Shambhu, Patiala-Pehowa, Patran-Khanauri, Moonak-Tohana, Ratia-Fatehabad and Talwandi-Sirsa.

After they were allowed entry into Delhi, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh welcomed the Central government's decision underlining that the government should also now initiate immediate talks to address concerns of the farmers on the farm laws without waiting for December 3.

PROTEST HITS DELHI METRO SERVICES

NEW DELHI

IN view of 'Delhi Chalo', a massive protest march by farmers from Punjab, Haryana and other parts of India, the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) on Friday announced the closure of entry & exit gates at six metro stations on the Green Line. The Delhi Metro authorities had earlier announced that services from neighbouring cities will remain suspended on Friday. "Entry & exit gates of Brigadier Hoshiar Singh, Bahadurgarh

City, Pandit Shree Ram Sharma, Tikri Border, Tikri Kalan and Ghevra stations on Green Line are now closed," the DMRC tweeted.

"As advised by Delhi Police, Metro services will be available only from Delhi towards the NCR sections. However, services from the NCR stations towards Delhi will not be available due to security reasons till further notice. However, metro services will be available from Delhi towards the NCR sections," DMRC had said.

## Ammonia levels rise in Yamuna

PURNA SINGH NEW DELHI

MILLIONS of people of Delhi are going to face water woes once again with ammonia levels rising in Yamuna river. This prompted the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) to issue an advisory that the supply may be affected in large parts of the city. The levels of the pollutant in the Wazirabad pond are high and on an increasing trend, DJB said. "The production at Wazirabad, Chandrawal and Okhla water treatment plants is likely to be affected and water may be available at low pressure in the morning and evening of Friday and so on, till the ammonia level in the Yamuna reduces to the treatable limit," it added.



## Strong winds give Delhi cleaner air

NEW DELHI

DELHI'S air quality improved to the moderate category on Friday morning due to favourable wind speed and is likely to get even better.

The city's air quality index (AQI), which was 302 at 4 pm on Thursday, improved to 131 by 9 am on Friday. On Wednesday, the 24-hour AQI was 413, which falls in the severe category.

An AQI between zero and 50 is considered "good", 51 and 100 "satisfactory", 101 and 200 "moderate", 201 and 300 "poor", 301 and 400 "very poor", and 401 and 500 "severe".

Stronger winds and a drastic reduction in the contribution of stubble burning were two major reasons for cleaner skies over Delhi.

V K Soni, the head of the India Meteorological Department's environment research centre, said the wind speed remained favourable throughout the night, leading to a better-than-predicted situation.

"Usually, winds remain calm at night. On Thursday night, favourable wind speed (8-12 kmph) led to better dispersion conditions," he said.

The maximum wind speed is predicted to be 14 kmph on Friday, according to the India Meteorological Department.

The share of stubble burning in Delhi's pollution has also reduced significantly as the harvesting season has ended.

# RDIF, Hetero ink pact to produce 100 m doses of Sputnik vaccine

HYDERABAD

THE Russian Direct Investment Fund, Russia's sovereign wealth fund, and city-based pharma group Hetero have agreed to produce over 100 million doses per year of the world's first registered Covid-19 vaccine Sputnik V, Hetero said on Friday.

The parties intend to start the production of Sputnik V in the beginning of 2021, through Hetero's biologics arm Hetero Biopharma, it said in a press release.

The Gamaleya Center in Russia and RDIF announced

on November 24 positive results obtained during the second interim data analysis of the largest double-blind, randomised, placebo-controlled Phase III clinical trials in Russia's history involving 40,000 volunteers.

Currently Phase III clinical trials are approved and are ongoing in Belarus, the UAE, Venezuela and other countries, as well as Phase II-III in India and requests for more than 1.2 billion doses of Sputnik V vaccine came from more than 50 countries.

Kirill Dmitriev, CEO of the



Russian Direct Investment Fund, said "We are delighted to announce the agreement between RDIF and Hetero that will pave the way to production of the safe and highly effective Sputnik V vaccine on Indian soil. The vaccines interim clinical trial results show 95 per cent efficacy on the 42nd day after the first dose.

B Murali Krishna Reddy, Director International Marketing, Hetero Labs Limited, said "We are pleased to collaborate with RDIF as a manufacturing partner for the most anticipated Sputnik V vaccine for the treatment of

Covid-19. While we look forward to the clinical trial results in India, we believe that manufacturing the product locally is crucial to enable swift access to patients."

Reddy further said the collaboration is another step towards Hetero's commitment in the battle against Covid-19 and realizing the objective of "Make-in-India" campaign as envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

As part of the partnership, RDIF shall supply 100 million doses of the vaccine to Dr Reddy's upon regulatory approval in India.



# Womenia

TWEET PATROL



**TAMANNAAH BHATIA**  
**@TAMANNAAHSPEAKS**

Covid affected many artisans all over India. To help them reduce the piled up stocks, 2 support ethical & eco friendly clothing, to ensure rural livelihoods lets support @ConnectIHMC a collective of >5000 artisans across India. <https://t.co/Zr3uCKUI5z> #Handmade #ethical #ecofriendly



## Handcrafted leather juttis with handwoven embroidery

A journalist turned entrepreneur Shirin started NeedleDust as an outcome of her own wedding

TEJAL SINHA

NeedleDust is 'Born of India' and is the first footwear label to 'reinvent and redesign' juttis and bring one of the best Indian handicrafts on the ever-evolving international fashion grounds. It offers a line of fine leather juttis, which are handcrafted and hand-sewed by India's finest artisans.

NeedleDust was an outcome of her own wedding. Shirin didn't want to pair her wedding lehenga with stilettos which was the norm. Hailing from Chandigarh, she identified a deep connection with traditional Punjabi juttis. Scouring the markets for the perfect pair, she came across juttis that were either too plain, boring or simply just uncomfortable. She then decided to design and get a pair made for herself. The outcome of which was an exquisite pair of gold, fuchsia and red juttis.

During this process, she spoke to the craftsmen and artisans to understand this delicate handicraft that is on the verge of extinction. NeedleDust came to fruition to revive this dying craft and bring

jutti's back to the global fashion scene.

Shirin shares, "NeedleDust is 'Born of India' and is the first footwear label to 'reinvent and redesign' juttis and bring one of the best Indian handicrafts on the ever evolving international fashion grounds. It offers a line of

fine leather juttis, which are hand-crafted and hand-sewed by India's finest artisans."

Shirin brought together artisans from various parts of North India, who excel in modern techniques of hand embroidery and shoe making while preserving age-old traditions and craft. They come from a lineage of superior craftsmen, the talent of which has been passed through

generations.

NeedleDust brings to you a line of bespoke fine leather juttis with hand embroidered designs, that speak the charm of a true old school artisan

with a desire to recreate fashion for those that wear, admire, preserve its elegance, class and culture. With love for the handicraft and passion for revival of the jutti, amalgamating the finesse of old royal moulds with innovative design and embroidery patterns.

Shirin shares, "NeedleDust started when I was looking for good quality and comfortable juttis for my wedding. I searched

around but there was nothing I could find that had incredible craftsmanship and quality. It was then that I realised the need for high quality juttis in the country. There were way more naysayers than people who encourage you. I had my own friends and



family say it was a bad idea, because people didn't wear Juttis anymore. The biggest issue was to find artisans who would make my designs. Jutti making is a highly skilled craft that comes down in generations of artisans. The artisans have lost their skills to daily wage-earning jobs, be-

cause the handicraft was on a huge decline. I wanted to revive the craft and instil confidence in the artisans and give them job security! Which was pretty tough back then because no one was doing high quality and design juttis for a niche clientele."

As a brand, NeedleDust has always attempted to do something new and create a path of our own. According to Shirin, they do not believe in following trends and instead aim to make footwear that is timeless.

She adds, "We were the first ones to revive the time-honoured jutti and present them with our take which was fresh and unique, and continues to remain that way. Also, we have had the opportunity to collaborate with some of the biggest names in the industry like Abu Jani and Sandeep Khosla and a global brand like Swarovski."

As a CSR activity, NeedleDust sponsors the education of its artisans' children, with a goal to help children build a career of their own choice and fulfil their dreams. The foundation of NeedleDust lies in its workers and managers, and Shirin Mann Sangha strives each day to help make a good difference in their lives.



NeedleDust created special Mehendi tokens for Deepika and Ranveer's wedding at Lake Como. Deepika specially selected the designs and the packaging of the special potlis created for Forever Love and Mayfair juttis by NeedleDust. These lovely tokens of love were for loved ones attending the functions. Silver and gold organza potlis with sari tie ups. Silver potlis for silver juttis and gold potlis for Gold juttis.

Priyanka Chopra was styled in Abu Jani Sandeep Khosla X NeedleDust juttis for her Mehendi function, A special market place was created at Priyanka Chopra's wedding in Jodhpur where NeedleDust created an exclusive pop up showcasing the new styles as well as the Abu Jani Sandeep Khosla X NeedleDust collection.



### Essentials to add for your winter wardrobe

A new season calls for new outfit refreshments, but for many, it brings with it a slew of outfit dilemmas. As the temperatures begin to dip, you feel the slight nip in the air and you know that it's time to swap your trusted summer dresses, tank tops, lightweight linen in favour of heavier fabrics and knits. From comfy cardigans to leather jackets, here are some winter wardrobe must-haves that will get you cold weather ready, but in style.

#### Leather jacket

A statement leather jacket is just too cool to pass. Throw this utilitarian piece over a jumpsuit to dress up a casual look on your next night out.

#### Cable knit

Your winter capsule is incomplete without a cozy knit. End your search for the perfect piece with this cable knit jumper that can easily be worn, 9-5 and beyond.

#### Floral bomber

Bomber jackets hold a prominent place with the fashion set. Pair this floral number with your go-to LBD to glam up your look.

#### Sweater

Give your Sunday-brunch a feel-good quotient with this patterned sweater, that's equal parts chic yet comfortable. Wear it on its own or use it as a layering piece when the temperatures begin to dip.

### NEWS ROUNDUP

#### Shilpa Rao thrilled about collaboration with Anoushka Shankar getting Grammy nod

Singer Shilpa Rao says this is a special week for her, because her collaboration with sitar player Anoushka Shankar earned them a Grammy nomination in the Best Global Music Album category.

Shilpa has teamed up with Anoushka on the track "Those words" that featured on the album "Love Letters", which has received the Best Global Music Album nomination for the Grammy Awards 2021.

Singer-songwriter-cellist Ayanna Witter-Johnson is also part of the collaboration on the song "Those words".

"This week is very special as the album 'Love Letters' by Anoushka Shankar, in which I have a very sweet song 'Those words', has been nominated for 63rd Grammy Awards. Anoushka Shankar, what should I say, thank you for all the love and hard work you have put into this album and thank you so much for this beautiful collaboration. Big love to everyone who is part of this album. This is one step closer to the dream." Shilpa had shared earlier that "Those words" is a non-film song she enjoyed working on.



## For a healthy and glowing skin

Trust the power of nature to heal and naturally beautify your skin. As a woman, it is essential to have a few natural face beauty tips and tricks up your sleeve to enhance your beauty when you don't have time for invasive procedures and treatments. Here are few tips which will work for every skin type...

#### Papaya to get rid of dead skin

Infused with a natural enzyme called papain, papaya naturally exfoliates the skin leaving it smooth and soft. Unripe papaya has higher levels of papain, so if you get one of those you can use it to gently exfoliate and get rid of dead skin cells and other impurities. Those with sensitive skin types can also use papaya as it is less likely to trigger a reaction. Scoop out 1/4 cup papaya flesh and blend it with 1 tablespoon of fresh pineapple to form a smooth mixture. Apply evenly and leave on for 5 to 15 minutes before rinsing off.

#### Gram flour for face tan

Gram flour or besan is used as a natural, mild exfoliator to get rid of dead skin cells, tan and sunburns. If you want clear, soft and naturally glowing skin here's the natural face beauty tip you need to know. Take equal amounts of gram flour and curd in a bowl and mix them well to form a paste. Apply this paste evenly on your face and neck, let it dry for half an hour before rinsing off with water. It will gently lift away dead skin cells and deep-set dirt, thereby lightening your skin tone and making it even.

#### Tomatoes to control excess oil on face

Excessive oil on the face doesn't only affect those with oily skin, in a country like India where the

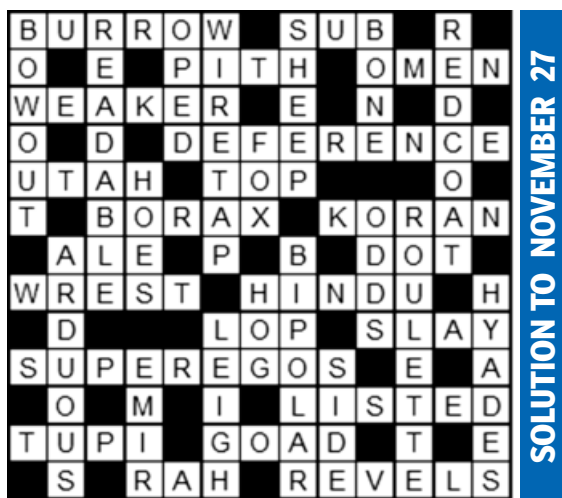
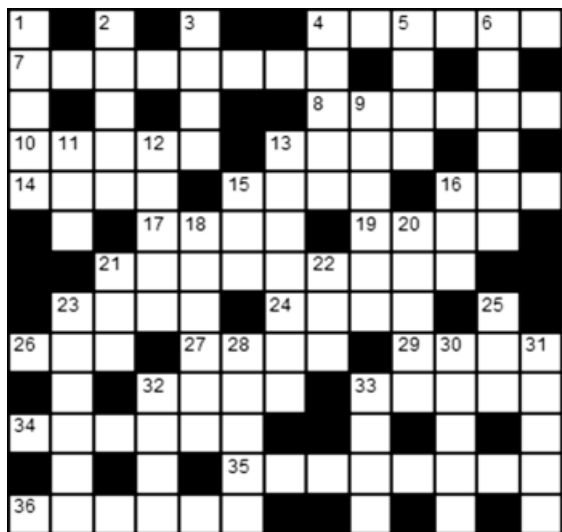
weather is humid in most parts, excessive oil is quite common. Enriched with lycopene, tomatoes contain anti-oxidants along with great cooling and astringent properties. It helps balance the natural oils of the skin and gets rid of any excess oil that you may be struggling with. This natural face beauty tip is also used for reduces signs of aging such as wrinkles and fine lines. Scoop the pulp one tomato and apply evenly on your face. Allow it to dry for 15 minutes and wash off with warm water and reveal naturally glowing skin.

#### Cucumber and lemon for skin blemishes

We all struggle with blackheads and blemishes, these make your skin look dull and tired. To get rid of blemishes and blackheads naturally and get a brighter and even looking skin tone, use a concoction of cucumber and lemon juice. Take equal amounts of cucumber and lemon juice and apply on your face before taking bath. Let it stay for 10 minutes before washing it off. Regular use of this natural face beauty tip will brighten your skin tone and lighten blemishes. The best part, it is suitable for all skin types!

#### Apple for open pores

Enlarged pores make your skin look mature, oily and attract a lot of dirt causing skin problems. An easy and effective natural face beauty tip is to place thin apple slices on the face and leave it for 15 minutes. Alternatively, you can prepare a paste of apple peel, vinegar, honey and some Multani mitti and some rose water. Let it dry on your skin for 30 minutes and then wash off. Apple soaks up excess oil from your face and closes pores, tightening your skin and making it look healthy and radiant.



### CROSSWORD

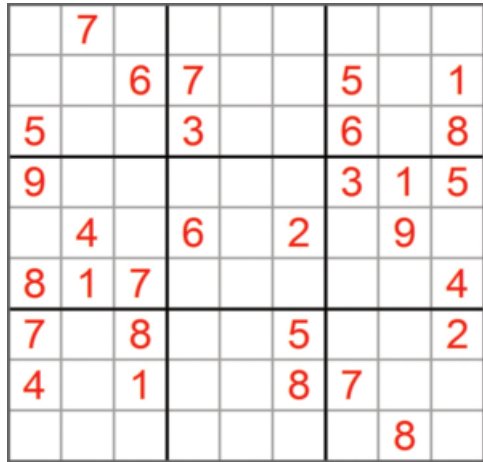
#### Across

- Locating (6)
- Censure (8)
- The dark continent (6)
- Inactive (5)
- Stiffly formal (4)
- Anecdotal knowledge (4)
- Fencing sword (4)
- Poke (3)
- Hard fatty tissue (4)
- Journey round (4)
- Exposed to the elements (9)
- Prefix for small (4)
- A pointed missile (4)
- Large or bulky (3)
- A wharf or a pier (4)
- Sacred bird (4)
- Coal dust; anthracite coal of poor quality (4)
- Extent (5)
- Rabbit's run (6)
- The art of flying aircraft (8)
- Valley in a hillside (6)

#### Down

- Fragile (5)
- Situated above (5)
- Market amount (4)
- Puppeteer Lewis (5)
- A specified period of time (4)
- The drink of the gods (6)
- Strain (6)
- Eggy beverage (3)
- Pine exudation (5)
- Site of a historical conference in Germany (7)
- Gave food (3)
- Project (3)
- Be unlike any other (6)
- Of the eye (5)
- Hairpiece (3)
- Method (3)
- Japanese emperor (6)
- Place to sleep in (3)
- Forearm bones (5)
- Type of acid (5)
- Parisian river (5)
- Fill overfull (4)
- Kill (4)

### SUDOKU





# 3 soldiers killed in ceasefire violations

JAMMU

THREE Indian soldiers were killed in ceasefire violations on the Line of Control (LoC) by Pakistan troops in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch and Rajouri districts, official sources said on Friday.

Naik Prem Bahadur Khatri and Rifleman Sukhbir Singh were critically injured on the LoC in Sunderbani Sector of Rajouri district during firing by Pakistan troops on Friday. "Both injured soldiers later succumbed to their injuries," Defence Ministry spokesman Colonel Devender Anand said. Meanwhile, Subedar (JCO) Swatantra Singh -- critically injured on the LoC in Poonch district on Thursday -- succumbed to his injuries on Friday. "Subedar Swatantra Singh, Naik Prem Bahadur Khatri and Rifleman Sukhbir Singh were brave, highly motivated and sincere soldiers. The nation will always remain indebted to them for the supreme sacrifice and devotion to duty," the spokesman said. At both these places the Indian Army responded strongly to enemy fire.

## NIA gets Parra's 15-day custody

PDP leader Waheed Parra was remanded to 15 days of National Investigation Agency (NIA) custody on Friday following his arrest earlier this week for allegedly conspiring with Hizbul Mujahideen terrorists to get their support during the 2019 parliamentary elections.

Parra was taken to Jammu and produced before a designated NIA court in a case related to his alleged "close links" with Irfan Shafi Mir, who was arrested along with Hizbul Mujahideen terrorist Naveed Babu and suspended Deputy Superintendent of Police Davinder Singh earlier this year, officials said. After his arrest on Wednesday, the NIA produced Parra in a Delhi court on Thursday and sought a transit remand for his production before a designated court in Jammu, the officials said. According to the officials, during the investigation into Singh's association with Hizbul Mujahideen terrorists, the NIA came across phone records of Mir which showed that he was in close contact with Parra.

# 'Demolition at Kangana's house illegal'

MUMBAI

THE Bombay High Court on Friday held that demolition carried out by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) at actor Kangana Ranaut's bungalow here was illegal and smacked of malicious intent. The court appointed an assessor to evaluate the damage caused so as to decide Ranaut's claim for compensation.

The high court also came down heavily on Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut over his tirade against Ranaut. The Bollywood actor termed the decision as a "victory of the democracy". But in the ruling, the bench of Justices S J Kathawalla and R I Chagla also advised Ranaut to observe restraint while expressing herself.

The BMC started demolition of alleged unauthorized construction at Ranaut's Palli Hill bungalow on September 9 following a controversy over her tweet comparing Mumbai to Pak-occupied-Kashmir. She moved the HC on the same day, seeking to declare the action illegal.

The HC stayed the BMC's action but by then a part of Ranaut's bungalow had already been pulled down.

Following Ranaut's tweet, Sanjay Raut had threatened to teach her a lesson. Soon thereafter the BMC issued a stop-work notice under section 354 A of the Municipal Corporation Act. It rejected Ranaut's reply and next day part of the bungalow was demolished. The photos from the site, documents on record and the chain of events showed that the BMC's action was "predetermined," "malafide," (with dubious intentions) and in breach of a citizen's rights, the HC said on Friday. "The manner in which the action was carried out leaves no doubt that using section 354 was unauthorized, bad in law and aimed at preventing the petitioner from taking recourse to preventive legal action," the bench said. "Irresponsible statements made by a citizen in an individual capacity, however distasteful, are best ignored ....Illegal and colourable action/s on part of the state or its agencies vis-à-vis a citizen, is far too serious and damaging to society to be overlooked," the HC said.

# Bengal Transport Min resigns

## BJP's doors open for Suwendu Adhikari, says Dilip Ghosh

KOLKATA

SENIOR Trinamool Congress leader Suwendu Adhikari, who has been at odds with the party's leadership, tendered his resignation as the state's transport minister on Friday amid speculations over his next political move.

Adhikari, the face of the Nandigram movement that catapulted Mamata Bannerjee to power in 2011, sent his resignation letter to the chief minister by fax, which he then forwarded to Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar by e-mail.

"I do hereby tender my resignation from my office as Minister. Steps may be taken for its immediate acceptance. I am simultaneously by e-mail this to His Excellency-Governor of West Bengal, for doing the needful at his end," Adhikari said in the resignation letter. "I thank you for giving me an opportunity to serve the people of the state, which I did all through with a commitment, dedication and sincerity," he added. Adhikari also resigned as the chairman of the Haldia Development Authority, the agency that oversees development works in the industrial town of Haldia and its adjoining areas in the East Midnapore district. On Wednesday, he had resigned as the chairman of the Hooghly River Bridge Commis-



File pic: Suwendu Adhikari with Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Bannerjee

## TMC MLA 'joins' BJP

TRINAMOOL MLA Mihir Goswami headed to Delhi to be formally inducted into the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), reported India Today.

Mihir Goswami, the disgruntled TMC MLA from Coochbehar Dakshin, left for Delhi with BJP MP Nishi Pramanik on November 27. The two had met in October sparking speculations over what his next move would be. According to a Times Now report, BJP MP Saumitra Khan had confirmed that Goswami will join the saffron party today itself. He said: "We thank Mihir da for his decision to join the BJP. He is expected to join us within an hour."

sioners (HRBC), which is the custodian of several bridges and flyovers of Kolkata, including the iconic Second Hooghly Bridge. Adhikari also shunned his Z-category security cover provided by the state government, sources said.

The BJP said that the resignation was a reflection of the anger of TMC leaders against the party's top brass. BJP national general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya, however, declined to comment on speculation that Adhikari was joining his party. State BJP chief

Dilip Ghosh said that Adhikari's resignation indicated the "end of Trinamool". "The exit of Suwendu from Trinamool was only a matter of time. There are several leaders of the ruling party who are disgruntled with its way of functioning. We have kept our doors open," he told reporters.

"The party (TMC) will cease to exist," Ghosh said on the development. Sources close to Adhikari, who has not attended state cabinet meetings over the last few months, said that he was unhappy with the

organisational rejig, effected a few months ago. MPs Sougata Roy and Sudip Bandopadhyay were deputed to talk to him and address the grievances, even as he continued to tour the state and lead rallies organised by his supporters but without the TMC's banner, an unusual for the party.

Reacting to the development, Roy said he was hopeful that Adhikari will continue to remain in the party as he has not given up its membership or resigned as an MLA.

## MiG crashes into sea; 1 pilot rescued, search on for another

NEW DELHI

A MiG-29K trainer aircraft of the Indian Navy crashed into the Arabian sea on Thursday evening following which one pilot went missing while another was rescued, Navy officials said on Friday.

The incident took place at around 5 pm, they said. "One pilot has been rescued and search by air and surface units is in progress for the second pilot," said an official.

An enquiry to investigate the incident has been ordered," Navy spokesperson said in a tweet.

The Indian Navy has a fleet of over 40 MiG-29K fighter aircraft based out of Goa and also operated from the INS Vikramaditya aircraft carrier. The Navy has deployed surveillance aircraft and ships to locate the missing pilot. Sources said the Russian-origin jet had taken off from aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya. A high-level inquiry has been ordered to investigate the incident, the officials said.

The INS Vikramaditya was part of the recent Malabar exercise involving the navies of India, the US, Australia and Japan. The Indian Navy has a fleet of around 40 MiG-29K fighter jets and some of them operate from the aircraft carrier.

## 5 Corona patients die in Guj hospital fire; SC takes note

AHMEDABAD

FIVE coronavirus patients died after a fire broke out in the ICU of a designated COVID-19 hospital at Rajkot in Gujarat on Friday, officials said. The Supreme Court took cognisance of the fire incident and sought a report from Gujarat government on the issue. Gujarat Deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel said 26 patients at the hospital were rescued and shifted to other facilities. The fire broke out around 12.30 am in the ICU ward located on the first floor of the four-storey Uday Shivanand Hospital in Anand Bungalow Chowk area, where around 31 patients were admitted, Patel added.

Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani expressed grief over the incident and ordered a probe into it. He also announced a compensation of Rs 4 lakh to the kin of each deceased.

The Supreme Court took cognisance of the fire outbreak in the ICU of a designated COVID-19 hospital at Rajkot in Gujarat in which five patients have died, and came down heavily on states for not taking any concrete action to mitigate the problem despite repeated instances. Terming the incident as "shocking", the apex court said this is a "very serious thing" and it reflects the situation of designated government hospitals as similar instances have taken place in other places also. A bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan said the incident showed that there are no proper fire safety measures in place there to deal with such situation. "We are taking suo motu cognisance. This is a very serious thing," said the bench, also comprising Justices R S Reddy and M R Shah, and asked the Gujarat government to submit its report on this by December 1.



Rescue workers and hospital staff move COVID-19 patients to a safer place

## JAMIA STUDENT RELEASED ON PAROLE TO SIT FOR EXAMS

NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Friday released Jamia Millia Islamia student Asif Iqbal Tanha -- who was arrested under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act for allegedly hatching a conspiracy to organise riots in North-East Delhi in February this year -- on three-day custody parole to appear for his compartmental examination in December.

Tanha, who is pursuing his B.A. (Hons) in Persian, had moved the court seeking interim bail from November 30 to December 7 to prepare for three backlog exams scheduled to be held on December 4, 5 and 7.

"The court deems it fit to allow the accused on custody parole for appearing in the said examinations. Accordingly, custody parole is granted to accused Asif Iqbal Tanha on December 4, 5 and 7," Additional Sessions Judge Amitabh Rawat ordered.

The court said that clearing the exams is necessary for Tanha to pursue M.A. in Persian, and that leniency must be shown to the accused by allowing him to appear for the said exams.

## Mufti, daughter put under house arrest, disallowed Press meet

SRINAGAR

KASHMIR is an "open air prison" where no one has the right to express their opinion, PDP president Mehbooba Mufti said on Friday after the authorities barred her from holding a press conference at her residence here where she was allegedly placed under house arrest in the morning.

The former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister said she was not allowed to visit the Pulwama residence of party leader Waheed Parra who was arrested by the NIA earlier this week.

"Press has been barred from entering my residence in Srinagar. This despite no written orders explaining my arbitrary detention. Kashmir is an open air prison where no one has the right to express their opinion," Mufti said on Twitter. She accused the administration of using "fear and intimidation" to "muffle" any form of opposition just a day before the commencement of the District Development Council (DDC) polls. "We are one day away from DDC polling & its evident that the admin here is using fear & intimidation in tandem to muffle any form of opposition," she said in a tweet.

A posse of policemen stopped journalists about 100 metres away from Mufti's 'Fairview' residence in Gupkar area of the city here, where she was scheduled to address the media. The police said the presser of the PDP president was not allowed as per the orders from the higher ups. Mufti had invited journalists for the press conference this morning after she was allegedly put under house arrest.



## COVID-19 in India climbs to 93,09,787

NEW DELHI

INDIA'S COVID-19 tally of cases climbed to 93.09 lakh with 43,082 new cases in a day, while 87,18,517 people have recuperated so far pushing the national recovery rate to 93.64 per cent on Friday, according to the Union Health Ministry data.

The total coronavirus cases mounted to 93,09,787 and the death toll climbed to 1,35,715 with the novel coronavirus virus claiming 492 lives in a span of 24 hours in the country, the data updated at 8 am showed.

The COVID-19 case fatality rate has further declined to 1.45 per cent.

There are 4,55,555 active cases of coronavirus infection in the country which comprises 4.89 per cent of the total caseload, the data stated. According to the ICMR, a cumulative total of 13,70,62,749 samples have been tested up to November 26 with 11,31,204 samples being tested on Thursday.

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh on August 23 and 40 lakh on September 5. It went past 50 lakh on September 16, 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11 and crossed 80 lakh on October 29 and 90 lakh on November 20.

## Treat Hindu girls as sisters, SP MP tells Muslim youths

MORADABAD

SAMAJWADI Party MP S T Hasan has asked Muslim youths to be aware of the new law against forced religious conversions and save themselves from torture. Hasan said, "I advise Muslim youth to consider Hindu girls as their sisters. They should not get lured, because a law has been framed under which they can be subjected to tremendous torture. I ask the Muslim youth to save themselves from the temptation of love." He said that "Love jihad is a political stunt. Many times, Hindu girls marry Muslim boys of their free will and then when social pressure mounts, they conveniently claim that they were duped."

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SINCE 1981  
మీ కలలకు సాకారం

సరైన సమయంలో చక్కని నిర్ణయం మంచి ఫలితాలను అందించింది  
నా ఎంపిక కపిల్ చిట్స్ ఇప్పటికీ వెన్నంటే ఉంది.



## A far-reaching decision

In its order granting interim bail to Republic TV Editor-in-Chief Arnab Goswami, the Supreme Court today called upon all courts in the judicial hierarchy to address the issue of bail applications not being heard and disposed of in a timely manner. The judgment delivered by a Bench of Justices DY Chandrachud and Indira Banerjee referred to National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) statistics on the number of bail applications pending before the high courts and the subordinate courts.

The number of bail applications pending before the High Courts is 92,568 and that of the district courts, 1,96,861. The Apex Court had no special love for Arnab but simply followed the

law and interpreted it in letter and spirit. Human liberty is a precious constitutional value, which is undoubtedly subject to regulation by validly enacted legislation. As such, the citizen is subject to the edicts of criminal law and procedure. Section 482 recognizes the inherent power of the High Court to make such orders as are necessary to give effect to the provisions of the Cr PC or prevent abuse of the process of any Court or otherwise to secure the ends of justice.

In emphasising that the High Court must exercise this power with a sense of restraint, the decisions of the Supreme Court were founded on the basic principle that the due enforcement

of criminal law should not be obstructed by the accused taking recourse to artifices and strategies. The public interest in ensuring the due investigation of crime is protected by ensuring that the inherent power of the High Court is exercised with caution. That indeed is one – and a significant – end of the spectrum.

The other end of the spectrum is equally important: the recognition by Section 482 of the power inhering in the High Court to prevent the abuse of process or to secure the ends of justice is a valuable safeguard for protecting liberty. The Code of Criminal Procedure of 1898 was enacted by a legislature which was not subject to constitutional rights and limitations; yet it recognised the inherent power in Section 561A.

Post-Independence, the recognition by Parliament of the inherent power of

the High Court must be construed as an aid to preserve the constitutional value of liberty. The writ of liberty runs through the fabric of the Constitution. The need to ensure the fair investigation of crime is undoubtedly important in itself, because it protects at one level the rights of the victim and, at a more fundamental level, the societal interest in ensuring that crime is investigated and dealt with in accordance with law.

On the other hand, the misuse of the criminal law is a matter of which the High Court and the lower courts in this country must be alive. The Supreme Court said “...the misuse of the criminal law is a matter of which the High Court and the lower Courts in this country must be alive”. Now is the time for the pending bail applications to get the traction needed to grant the same liberties to others.

## High expenditure on medicines



## Is it preventing affordable healthcare?

DR PALASH BARUAH, D L WANKHAR

NO one would have ever thought or anticipated that Covid-19 would shake the world to such an extent that it is impacting, and perhaps changing and re-defining, every aspect of our lives. It also proved that no country is invincible, no matter how developed, rich and powerful and it demolished the notion that these nations would have the best defence for its citizens, keeping in mind the best standards in healthcare systems that these countries boast off.

One area where we shall see predominant changes are, no doubt, in how we redefine our health policies and strategies by the public health experts, scientists, medical experts, strategists, healthcare providers, governments, healthcare organisations and pharmaceutical industry. Some of these stakeholders, more often than not, have their own diverse, and sometimes, conflicting interests to serve.

The current Covid-19 pandemic is an indication that inter-linkages exist between the healthcare systems and overall economic development. This will, in a way, force all the stakeholders to stand up and collaborate. There is perhaps no other option.

In the long run, countries with good, efficient, responsive and affordable healthcare systems would be able to tackle not only such pandemics but any form of health disasters. However, there are no short cuts and it will be a long drawn and tedious process to evolve appropriate systems.

Public authorities and private medical service providers across the world should be conscious of the fact that they have the obligation to ensure better healthcare systems through preventive and curative measures. Adequate attention is warranted to understand the ability of the general population at large to meet the rising healthcare cost. The fact that some State Governments (Delhi and Maharashtra) had to step in to put price caps on how much Covid-19 patients should be charged is one pointer to the fact that healthcare cost do become unaffordable for the population.

In general, it would be of interest to analyse which are the components of healthcare cost which are having a bearing on the individuals' capacity to afford? To have an understanding of some of these issues, we refer to a country-wide survey which will give us some indication and perhaps throw light on (i) how affordable is India's healthcare system; and (ii) which components of healthcare cost negatively impact patients the most.

The estimates from the 75th Round of the National Sample Survey Office (NSS) on “Household Social Consumption: Health, 2017-18” is to put forth analysis. In view of space constraints, we limit to analysing the expenditure on account of hospitalisation for two chronic diseases – Cancer and Diabetes.

As per NSS data, the average medical expenditure per case of hospitalisation for cancer was Rs. 61,215. Under medical expenditure component, around 30 per cent of the cost goes into purchase of medicines while the balance 70 per cent goes into expenditure on the package component of treatment (31.40 per cent), doctor's/surgeon's fee (11.41 per cent), diagnostic tests (10.88 per cent), bed charges (7.85 per cent), other medical expenses (7.9 per cent).

On the other hand, average medical expenditure per case of hospitalisation for diabetes was Rs. 16,091. Under medical expenditure component, 32.25 per cent of the cost goes into purchase of medicines while the balance goes into expenditure on the package component of treatment (19.28 per cent), doctor's/surgeon's fee (13.71 per cent), bed charges (13.29 per cent), diagnostic tests (12.64 per cent), other medical expenses (8.83 per cent).

Thus, we observed that purchase of medicines accounts for a substantial share of expenditure in case of cancer and diabetes hospitalisation. This is more so when treatment of these diseases involves medication beyond hospitalisation.

Why this analysis is of importance is also the fact that high price of medicines has been cited as a major reason for the substantial 'out of pocket expenditure' in healthcare cost. The nature of pricing pattern of medicines are such that they are 'demand inelastic', i.e., prices do not inversely respond to changes in demand.

Because of asymmetric information, patients have little or no option to make purchase preference on the basis of price. It presents a striking example of a 'seller's market'. In this scenario, not surprisingly, high price medicines, often called 'blockbuster' drugs, generates huge revenue for firms.

Not only this, we also often observed wide variation in the prices of medicines across various therapeutic categories which point to an obvious fact that perhaps medicine prices do not reflect the actual production cost of medicines. Surprisingly, we observed the same nature of variation in prices of medicines which are regulated under the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM) whose prices are fixed / revised as per the Drug Price Control Order (DPCO) of 2013.

Most doctors/physicians in India prescribed medicines by brands not by generic name. There is no option but to purchase medicines of a brand prescribed by doctors, thus eliminating the element of informed choice making behaviour whatsoever. Even in a situation where the doctors / physicians prescribed medicines by generic name, the consumer would still be dependent on the pharmacies who would invariably dispense the higher price medicines (equated as being of higher quality) as it commands a higher trade margin for them.

It also begs the question as to whether high priced medicines are of comparatively higher quality in terms of its therapeutic benefits when manufacturing process of firms are subject to stringent and uniform application of the statutory approvals, inspections and quality controls?

One major factor that contributes to high medicine prices in India is the unreasonably high margins that the trade offers. Of late though, the Government has also recognised this and hence in order to cap the high trade margins, the NPPA (regulatory body) vide its notification dated 27.02.2019 had put a cap on trade margin of 30 per cent on 42 anti-cancer medicines.

Whether there will be similar policy stand for the sale of other medicines remains to be seen. One of the steps that can be quickly initiated to provide cheaper medicines is public procurement of medicines which have seen success in States like Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, etc.

We feel that holistically, there should be a conscious and justified approach on how we balance private profit and public benefit when it comes to life-saving and life-extending medicines. Balancing the pricing of healthcare cost and at the same time providing a decent justified profit for the stakeholders is the need of the hour. Policies and standards would have to be re-worked to ensure timely accessibility, quality and affordable healthcare systems.

(Views and opinions expressed in this article are personal)

(Dr Palash Baruah is Senior Research Analyst, National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), New Delhi and D L Wankhar is a retired Indian Economic Service officer)



V RAMU SARMA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi pitching in for one nation one election (ONOE) on Thursday has once again raised a debate in the political circles. He has given a clear indication that the Centre is determined to move ahead on this front. It is clear that government would amend the Constitution in the days to come and may be by end of 2022, it would go in for polls. Are we ready for such a dramatic shift?

Modi's argument was that every few months, there are elections happening in some or the other states. It hampers the developmental work. ONOE would speed up development and would reduce the burden on the exchequer as it would help in reducing the expenditure to conduct the polls. He felt that a common voter list can be used for holding simultaneous elections at every level—Lok Sabha, Vidhan Sabhas or local panchayat level.

“Why're we wasting time and money on these lists? Now, everyone above the age of 18 is eligible to vote. Earlier there were a few changes but now everything is clear. The time for complete digitisation is here. The common man must have data for the functioning of every House and every House in the country should also have such data,” he said.

There is certainly justification to hold simultaneous elections to Lok Sabha and Assembly since the cost to the Government of India for conducting Lok Sabha elections has seen a significant jump in the recent years. Ac-

cording to NITI Aayog, compared to the cost incurred for conducting 2009 Lok Sabha elections at about Rs. 1115 crores, the same for the year 2014 more than tripled to about Rs. 3870 crores.

As elections happen frequently in some States or the other, political parties particularly worry about need to keep inflow of funds and contributions continued. This whole cycle is consequently blamed as one of the key drivers for corruption and black-money in the country. Hence, from the perspective of candidates and political parties, simultaneous elections could open possibilities to address the above systemic problems that impact the overall fabric of Indian economy and polity adversely.

The concept of ONOE is not new to India. Post adoption of the Constitution, the elections to Lok Sabha and all State Legislative Assemblies were held simultaneously between 1951 till 1967 when the cycle of synchronised elections got disrupted. The first general elections to Lok Sabha and all State Legislative Assemblies were held together in 1951-52. That practice continued over three subsequent general elections held in the years- 1957, 1962 and 1967.

However, due to the premature dissolution of some Legislative Assemblies in 1968 and 1969, the cycle got disrupted for the first time. This is one issue the NDA government needs to address before introducing ONOE.

The proposal to revert to this idea was initially introduced in 1983 by the Election Commission. Even though it was mentioned in the Law Commission Report in 1999, the pace started picking up after its mention in the BJP manifesto for the 2014 Lok Sabha polls.

The idea of simultaneous elections has its advantages and disadvantages. On the face of it, the idea is appealing. Particularly



**The concept of ONOE is not new to India. Post adoption of the Constitution, the elections to Lok Sabha and all State Legislative Assemblies were held simultaneously between 1951 till 1967 when the cycle of synchronised elections got disrupted. The first general elections to Lok Sabha and all State Legislative Assemblies were held together in 1951-52. That practice continued over three subsequent general elections held in the years- 1957, 1962 and 1967. However, due to the premature dissolution of some Legislative Assemblies in 1968 and 1969, the cycle got disrupted for the first time. This is one issue the NDA government needs to address before introducing ONOE.**

since, at present, the election codes of the Election Commission of India (ECI) curtail some powers of an incumbent government during elections, resulting in delays in implementing welfare schemes which are already underway.

It can also avoid the kind of clash between the government and State Election Commission as we have been witnessing in some states like Andhra Pradesh. First the SEC objected to the government's proposal to hold elections in view of corona pandemic and now the government is objecting to the suggestion of the SEC citing the same reason though the country is in unlock-down mode and polls are being held in other States.

The arguments against simultaneous elections include that it amounts to diluting federal system and facilitates one-person domination without the country opting for such a system formally. This also means a dilution

of the federal system in favour of centralisation. This leads to homogenisation of the country, instead of bringing equity, sustaining plurality, and promoting local and regional leadership.

ONOE can be welcomed provided it can really check the growth of a parallel economy and curb usage of black money. More specifically, the reasons given for simultaneous polls are that frequent polls hurt the economy and slows down development. Yes, elections do cost huge money. But along with that what is most important is that all parties should demonstrate an exemplary attitude and should not succumb to vote-getting compulsions.

If the Centre does not go in for major electoral reforms and ensure that people with criminal records are not kept out of the electoral arena and candidates and political parties resort to inducements in a competitive way, barring some saving on the

money that is spent in conducting polls, there would not be much of change and the concept of speedy development would remain confined to paper.

It is not just enough to have good ideas, there should be clear road map to ensure that revolutionary changes are brought in so that real development can be seen by the next generations. Holding simultaneous polls alone cannot be a panacea for the ills that we are witnessing in the elections across the country.

This is what should worry the nation more. Also, it is important to remember that what is spent on polls in the country in all is much less than what the union government and the State governments spend on unproductive publicity and advertising yearly with all kinds of claims and promises. The government has been going in for regulatory mechanism on media and on other sectors. But there is no effective regulatory mechanism which can bring transparency in electoral system. They should also be brought under the framework of Right to Information Act.

Another issue that needs to be examined is can bringing down duration of campaign reduce expenditure? Practical experience shows that it does not happen so. The candidate would be spending the same amount in 15 days adopting innovative methods. It is also a known fact that all parties (without exception) give note for vote.

There have been instances where voters in one village had refused to go to polling station because they got less than the neighbouring village. Can the ONOE stop this practice? What is important is the new system should bring in more effective governance and it should not undermine the importance of regional parties. It should stop at ONOE and not lead to one nation one party if the federal structure of India has to be protected.

## LETTERS

### Modi's 'one nation, one poll's idea' worth considering

THE Prime Minister is the well-known votary for the idea of one nation and one poll. The idea itself is worth contemplating and deserves in depth examination. If the nation goes to poll mode repeatedly in one state or other, the attention may be diverted from its serious business. The costs for preparations may be more. But the process makes the party in power to keep informed and responsive with people's concerns and makes the opposition to live with hope. Thus both camps will try to be friendlier with masses. Whatever the process may be, free and fair elections should be ensured. There are umpteen lacunae present in existing system, right from voter registration. Lakhs of eligible voters could not exercise their right in every election not to their fault. The anti-defection law has been turned a mockery, thanks to the overambitious parties. The poll reforms are more needed than mere poll scheduling now.

Dr D V G Sankararao, Nellimarla

### II

BJP is contemplating to come to power pan India by creating some sort of wave and by polarising the votes on the basis of religion and this will be possible only when elections are conducted on a single day across the country (PM pitches for 1 Nation, 1 Poll, November 27). Government should go for conducting elections digitally if it wants to save money and time, besides checking malpractices in polls. So Modi's "one nation, one election" policy is to strengthen BJP and not in the interest of the nation.

Kshirasagara Balaji Rao, Hyderabad

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### III

THE idea of "One nation one poll" is laudable what Narendra Modi says is correct and it is being debatable and we need to see the pros and cons of its implementation on the whole as PM has said rightly people are and political leaders are busy in every month in one election or other and the development certainly may be hindrance and the expenditure to have separate voter list for each states for municipal, state legislative and parliament elections are different and we need to focus on these issue. We need to change our mindset for the better prospectus of the country. The think tankers and eminent subject experts should debate it and should suggest the government what PM has floated. Let's hope we move with the changing face of the 21st century.

Kanagiri S N Prasad, Hyderabad

### IV

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi has once again reiterated on the idea of "One nation, one election" formula and emphasised the need to introduce the formula to save time and money of the country. The Prime Minister said that "One nation, one election" is not a matter of debate only but is the need for the nation.

Elections being held in every season in different regions affects governance, consumes a big amount of money and manual work. Besides, smooth functioning of governance is not possible as planned and it hampers the developmental work. Modi has been reiterating the idea of "One nation, one election" since he first became Prime Minister in 2014. Though there may be some impediments in making this idea a reality once the doubts, differences and difficulties are sorted out the "One nation, one election" policy is definitely one that can give an impetus to the progress and development of the nation.

It would reduce the cost of holding elections, and limit all elections to a single season. Preparing separate lists, as it is done now, for different level of elections are a wastage of resources. A single list can avoid wasting time, money and manual power. Smooth governance at all levels will

be possible and elected members and leaders can stay focussed on public welfare assignments, fulfill the promises made and make their developmental plans a reality.

M Pradyu, Kannur

### The usual game of vote-mongering

A municipal election reaching a crescendo with each party coming out with a manifesto with freebies by completely sidelining pressing civic issues which need to be attended on priority is baffling. The BJP making big promise to change the face of old city, fiefdom of MIM, when nothing has changed since decades appears hollow with an eye on votes.

What is starkly contrasting than earlier polls is that BJP has brought national and state leaders belonging to other states to campaign leaving out prominent local leaders and promising youth who know the pulse of the city to highlight issues? This is utterly disgusting because the star campaigners of BJP from other states totally ignorant of local issues were only highlighting national issues while mocking at the functioning of state government.

As the polls nearing, the language employed by MIM and BJP is intimidating, it is increasingly clear that these parties playing to the raw emotions of people only appear to incite violence to polarise communities to garner votes than coming out with a plan and strategy to build a brand Hyderabad to show case to the world. To say the least, the manifesto released by BJP is nothing new with more or less a replica of promises made by other parties in the poll fray and adding a few more to make it appear a novel initiative in a bid to woo voters.

Thus, it is obviously clear that major parties have made big and enticing promises in their manifestos only to win the polls by hook or crook in the midst of motor mouths throwing fresh challenges on issues neither related to polls nor bring succour to the sufferings of people of the city due to crumbling civic infrastructure, it is time all parties stick to only local issues and time-frame to improve it because any development cannot hinge on big promises and false hopes.

K R Srinivasan, Secunderabad



NIVAR CYCLONE

Paddy crop bears the brunt

- Standing crops in 4,30,780 ha valued at Rs1846.85 cr are estimated to have damaged
- Paddy crop damaged in 2,80,829 ha with maximum damage reported in Guntur and Krishna districts
- Bengal gram crop was affected in 57,234 ha and black gram in 36,671 ha
- Govt has to pay input subsidy of Rs 580.28 cr to affected farmers

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
GUNTUR

CYCLONE Nivar caused huge devastation by damaging the standing crops in 4,30,780 hectare in the state. Paddy farmers are the most affected followed by those who cultivated red gram, Bengal gram, cotton and other crops. According to preliminary estimates by the office of the com-



A farmer showing the damaged paddy crop in Repalle mandal in Guntur district on Friday

missioner of agriculture, the crop loss is 8,32,969 metric tonne. In terms of value, the loss is estimated at Rs 1,846.85 crore. The government has to pay input subsidy of Rs 580.28 crore to the farmers whose crops were damaged due to cy-

clone Nivar..

Paddy crop was damaged in 2,80,829 hectare with Guntur suffered highest loss in 1,02,890 hectare, Krishna in 63,503 hectare, followed by 30,146 hectare in East Godavari district. Crop damage is

meagre in other districts compared with these three major cultivators.

Similarly, Bengal gram crop was destroyed in 57,234 hectare in the state. Maximum crop damage in 45,113 hectares was reported in Kadapa district and crop was damaged in 11,871 hectare in Prakasam district.

Black gram crop was affected in 36,671 hectare in the state. Highest extent of damage, in 16,360 hectare, is in Prakasam district followed by 12,966 hectare in Nellore district. Red gram crop was damaged in 18,608 hectare in all the districts. The maximum damage of 18,179 hectare was in Prakasam district, followed by 349 hectare in Kadapa district. Cotton fields were damaged in 16,878 hectares in the entire state with Prakasam district reporting damage in 13,188 hectare followed by 1,202 hectare in Kadapa.

Tobacco was hit in 7,972 hectare, green gram was damaged in 3,561 hectare in the state.

COVID CARE CENTRE FIRE

HC allows custodial grilling of Dr Ramesh

The court instructs that the questioning shall be in the presence of his lawyer



HANS NEWS SERVICE  
AMARAVATI

THE Andhra Pradesh High Court on Friday issued orders to proceed with the custodial investigation against Dr P Ramesh Babu, the managing director of Ramesh Cardiac and Multispeciality Hospitals, in relation to the Swarna Palace Covid Centre fire accident in Vijayawada.

After the orders were issued, AP police took Dr Ramesh into custody and will question him from November 30 to December 2. Justice C Manavendra Nath Roy, however, also instructed that his interrogation be done in the presence of his lawyer.

It may be recalled that 10 patients died and 21 others suffered injuries when fire broke out in Hotel Swarna Palace which was

turned into Covid care centre located on Eluru Road in Vijayawada, on August 9 this year.

The Supreme Court in September allowed the AP government to proceed with the investigation against Dr P Ramesh Babu and non-executive chairman Sitarama Mohan Rao in the case pertaining to the Swarna Palace hotel fire mishap.

The court had issued its orders on the Special Leave Petition (SLP) filed by the state government to vacate the interim orders of the AP High Court, which in August last stayed the proceedings against them. The duo had earlier approached the High Court seeking a stay on their arrest and quashing the case registered by the Vijayawada city police against the hospital management.

DEE lands in ACB net

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
KADAPA

ACB officials arrested deputy executive engineer (DEE) Damodara Mohan Gandhi of Chitravathi balancing reservoir while accepting bribe from one on Friday. According to sources, one K Leevathi of Anantapur district has got Rs 21 lakh compensation for her inundated house under Chitravathi Balancing reservoir in Parnapalle village of Lingala mandal in Kadapa district.



In this connection, the accused demanded her Rs 2 lakh as bribe for completing the necessary procedures to clear the amount.

Vexed with the attitude of DEE, the victim approached the ACB officials and lodged a complaint. Acting on tip-off, the ACB sleuths laid trap and arrested the DEE while accepting bribe from the victim at Riti Gold shop in Anantapur town on Friday.

53 women prisoners released with riders

- The State govt invokes executive powers to release the prisoners so that they can lead a normal life as they learnt some life skills during in the jail
- Of the total, 19 were released from Rajahmundry central jail, 27 in Kadapa, 2 in Vizag and 5 in Nellore

AMARAVATI

THE state government set free 53 women prisoners sentenced to life imprisonment with conditions in a first-of-its-kind gesture on Friday. The state government invoked its executive powers in releasing the women to enable them to lead a normal life as they had also picked up some life skills during their imprisonment.

"The standing committee constituted under the chairmanship of the principal secretary to government and home department have reviewed the list of eligible female prisoners as per the state government guidelines," said an



Women prisoners released from Kadapa central prison on Friday

official. Later, the director general of prisons and correctional services sent the list of 53 eligible women for early release.

Of the 53 prisoners who were released, 19 were serving their sentence in the special prison for women in Rajahmundry, 27 in a similar facility in Kadapa, two in Visakhapatnam central prison and five in Nellore central prison.

"The AP government has ensured that these women can live a dignified life by releasing the female prisoners who have completed degrees while serving life sentences and others learnt tailoring, embroidery, baking and other skills," the official noted.

However, the government placed some conditions on the released women to ensure that they do not revert to a life of crime. All the 53 were made to execute a personal bond of Rs 50,000, and are also required to present themselves before a probation officer and respective police station every quarter, until the completion of the balance period of their sentences. In the event of any of them committing a crime again, they will be rearrested.

The government took the decision of releasing the eligible women prisoners some weeks ago and acted on it on Friday.

Parts of Kadapa flooded by Buggavanka

- Water surrounds many areas in the city suddenly after authorities release water from Buggavanka dam
- Houses in about 20 colonies come under water
- But officials swing into action immediately and shift people from low-lying areas to relief camps

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
KADAPA

RESIDENTS of city went into a panic mode as the city was suddenly surrounded by floodwaters late on Thursday night following irrigation officials released 3,000 cusecs of water downstream as it received excessive inflows.

Houses in around 20 localities including Old Bustand, Nagarajupet, Ravindranagar, Tarakaramanagar, Rajivnagar, Mochampet, Habibullah street, Yanadhi Colony, Dwarakanagar, Balajinagar have come un-



Flooded houses in Nagarajapet in Kadapa city on Friday

der water.

People narrowly escaped drowning in floodwaters as rescue teams immediately swung into action and shifted 450 people to relief centres. District SP K N N Anburajan is personally monitoring the situation.

However, there was no human or property loss as rescue operations were launched immediately, he told The Hans India.

It may be recalled that a

dozen people were washed away in 2001 floods when water was released from Buggavanka.

In a related incident, a car was washed away in water at Ramireddypalle village it was crossing Tummavanka stream at Vempalle mandal. But locals rescued the driver.

Following lifting of Annamiah dam gates, water entered Hemadripuram village in Rajampet mandal. Several villages

were inaccessible with many streams are in spate. Meanwhile, CK Dinne SI Rajeswara Reddy along with men rescued 15 Ayyappa devotee sleeping in Sivalayam located near Buggavanka project as floodwaters surrounded the temple on Thursday night.

Officials declared high alert in the villages located on the banks of Chitravathi, Papagni, Penna and other rivers as they are overflowing with floodwaters. Police rescued 27 people in Rajampet and Porumamilla who were trapped in the floodwater on Thursday.

Deputy Chief Minister Amzath Basha and collector Ch Harikiran visited flood affected areas in Kadapa city on Thursday night.

Visiting the relief camps on Friday, the Basha said that district administration had made necessary arrangements at the relief camps and the victims can stay till water recedes from the houses.

He said that control rooms were set up at Kadapa collector office, Jammalamadugu RDO office, Rajampet sub-collector office.

TDP seeks entry to all media to Assembly

AMARAVATI

A team of the TDP MLCs met and requested the Chairman of the Legislative Council to permit all sections of the media into the Assembly to cover the proceedings.

TDP MLCs P Ashok Babu, Buddha Venkanna and Mantena Satyanarayana Raju asked for the Chairman's permission to allow some media organisations and their reporters to enter the Assembly in the coming session. It was a violation of Article 15 not to permit the media to cover the House proceedings, they contended.

The MLCs pointed out that the media was one of the pillars of democracy and it should not be undermined under any circumstances. It was wrong to permit only the ruling party's

- A group of MLCs requests Council Chairman to allow all media to cover the proceedings
- They say banning some media outlets for political reasons is a violation of Article 15

own and favourite media into the Assembly while barring others for political reasons.

It may be recalled that the main Opposition party has been demanding a level playing field for all sections of the media in the Assembly coverage. The TDP has been demanding lifting of the ban on some media houses, saying that such undemocratic practices were not in the best interests of the state.

Lokesh flays 'repression' of Dalit farmers

AMARAVATI

TDP national general secretary Nara Lokesh on Friday condemned the 'high-handed behaviour and arm-twisting tactics' of the YSRCP government to suppress the Amaravati farmers' agitation against the arbitrary 3 capitals plan.

Lokesh termed it as highly condemnable that the SC, ST atrocities cases were filed against the Dalit farmers themselves in Krishnayapalem in Amaravati. On its part, the TDP would extend all kinds of support to the farmers from weaker sections who were waging a relentless struggle against the oppressive government, he said.

The Krishnayapalem farmers, who were jailed and later released on bail, met Lokesh at Undavalli and narrated their harrowing experiences. They thanked him for the TDP's support when the government

- Alleges SC/ST atrocities cases are being registered against Dalit farmers themselves who are agitating against 3 capitals
- Krishnayapalem farmers who were jailed and let off narrate their woes to the TDP leader

meted out injustice to them. They said that they did not resort to any unlawful activity but just that they obstructed those coming from outside to enter the capital city area.

Speaking on the occasion, Lokesh said that the fact that this government had no humanity or decorum was exposed when the farmers were handcuffed and sent to jail. Though the complainant with-

drew his police complaint, the government shifted the farmers to jail which was highly unpardonable. He alleged that from day one, the YSRCP was implementing anti-farmers policies as was evident from the inordinate delay in the Polavaram project works. Both Amaravati and Polavaram landmark projects were undermined in this rule.

He asserted that the day would come when the ruling party leaders would pay a heavy price for all the atrocities and injustices they were committing against the BC, SC, ST and Muslim minorities. The Jagan regime had lost its moral right to govern the state going by how it was committing one mistake after another only to cover its continuing failures and incapacities. By running a repressive Police Raj, the ruling party would not be able to silence the voice of the people against its misdeeds, he said.

PM to visit Bharat Biotech in Hyderabad today

Continued from P1

The company is currently conducting phase III clinical trials of the vaccine at various centres across the country.

Modi is likely to spend an hour at the vaccine making plant and return to Delhi at 5.10pm, official sources said.

Before reaching Hyderabad, the Prime Minister will be visiting the facilities of Zyds Cadila in Ahmedabad where ZyCoV-D is being developed and Serum Institute of India facilities in Pune where AstraZeneca-Oxford vaccine will be manufactured. Modi is likely to arrive at

Zyds Cadila plant around 9.30am. Modi will then proceed to Pune, where he will visit the Serum Institute of India, which has partnered with global pharma giant AstraZeneca and the Oxford University for the vaccine, a senior official said.

The Prime Minister will reach Pune around 12.30 pm, he said.

There have been speculations that Modi will campaign for the BJP in Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) elections, but sources said his programme includes no political activity.

Withdraw false cases, demands HRF

Members of the Human Rights Forum allege that the content of FIRs filed against its members is nothing but a litany of lies

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
VISAKHAPATNAM

The accusations contained in the two FIRs at Munchingput police station in Visakhapatnam district and Piduguralla in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh against VS Krishna of Human Rights Forum (HRF) and functionaries of several other rights, literary, and Dalit organisations is clearly an exercise in intimidation to stifle lawful dissent and protest, the HRF representatives mentioned. They said the content of the FIRs was nothing but a

litany of lies.

In the Munchingput FIR, AP and Telangana Coordination Committee member of HRF VS Krishna is accused of influencing the Vakapalli rape survivors to depose falsely against the policemen. This, the HRF members felt, is an atrocious allegation. Thirteen accused police personnel are presently on trial. While two of the Vakapalli women had died in the intervening years, the remaining nine came to Visakhapatnam and deposed in court.

The trial is continuing in the SC,

ST Special Court at Visakhapatnam.

HRF, along with several other organisations have provided them food and shelter to be able to depose in the trial. It is because of this solidarity and sustained rights activism that the police are now seeking to intimidate VS Krishna in what we believe to be a clear case of vindictiveness, they stated.

In the recent past, HRF AP and TS coordination committee members S Jeevan Kumar and A Chandrasekhar said the UAPA was invoked against three HRF functionaries - Telangana State

HRF vice-president Atram Bhujana Rao, Adilabad district HRF president A Suguna and HRF Komaram Bheem Asifabad district president Kanaka Venkatesh - in a FIR lodged at Tadvai police station in Mulug district of Telangana on November 2, 2020.

The committee members said the HRF will continue to work for the protection of constitutionally/internationally recognised rights of the people and demanded that the 'fabricated accusations' in the FIRs be immediately withdrawn.

Ammonia levels rise in Yamuna

Continued from P1

Civil Lines, Hindu Rao Hospital and its adjoining areas, Kamla Nagar, Shakti Nagar and its adjoining areas, Karolbagh, Paharganj, NDMC area, Old Rajendra Nagar, New Rajendra Nagar, East Patel Nagar, West Patel Nagar, Baljeet Nagar, Prem Nagar Indrapuri and its adjoining areas, Kalkaji, Govindpuri, Tughlakabad, Sangam Vihar, Ambedkar Nagar, Prahladpur and its adjoining areas, Ramliila Maidan, Delhi Gate, Subhash Park, Model Town, Pink Bagh, Punjabi Bagh, Jahangirpuri, Moolchand, South Extension, Greater Kailash, Burari, Cantonment Area will be affected.

In addition, the water supply will be disrupted in some areas of South Delhi. The water pressure in these areas will be low or there will be no water supply. Due to increasing amount of ammonia in Yamuna, people had to face trouble in many areas of East Delhi.

Farmers invade Delhi

Continued from P1

Union Agriculture Minister Tomar said the government has already invited the farmers for discussion on December 3 and sought suggestions from the farmers' unions for the same. He said the government has already held two rounds of discussion over the farmers' concerns.

Of the three Bills passed by Parliament, one was the Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill. It authorises farmers to sell their produce outside APMC mandis. The agitating farmers say this law impacts the assured income of the farmers under the existing scheme of the Minimum Support Price (MSP). They are demanding the repeal of the law and be replaced by a new law that guarantees them the MSP.





## TODAY'S QUOTE

### Doing more with less helped us during Covid-19

“Resilience and doing more with less were two key tenets followed by BigBasket during the Covid-19-induced lockdown that helped the online grocery retailer sail through and grow. We hired over 12,000 people in 16 days to meet the surge in demand


– **Hari Menon, CEO, BigBasket**



## RESULTS

### Spinny reports 20 pc rise in sales

Online used car retailing platform Spinny on Friday said its peak festive season sales surged 20 per cent to 1,000 units this year, and the total sales till October stood at 6,000 units. The company also that Mumbai, Chennai, Lucknow, and Ahmedabad set to be the next destinations.

FOREX (buy rates in ₹)				
US Dollar	78.49	South		
Euro	92.69	African Rand		5.61
UAE Dirham	22.17	Hong Kong Dollar		10.99
Thai Baht	2.81	Japanese Yen		0.82
British Pound	102.67	New Zealand Dollar		54.57
Australian Dollar	57.33	Saudi Riyal		21.7
Canadian Dollar	59.82	Swedish Krona		9.99
Swiss Franc	84.91	Singapore Dollar		58.08

DELHI SATURDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2020

## BIZ BRIEFS

### Spencer's Black Friday sale

Spencer's announce Black Friday Sale in all 160 outlets across India from November 27 to 29, 2020. The retail offers 50 per cent flat discount and more on 1500 products at Spencer's. Also, customers can avail cash-back offers up to Rs 750 per cent with HDFC credit cards. Devendra Chawla, CEO, Spencers Retail, and Nature Basket, said "At Spencer's, our constant endeavour has been to ensure savings for our customers every time they shop with us. With Black Friday sales, our customers can avail one of the lowest price drops of the year across online, phone delivery & instore channels."

### WizKlub's initiative

WizKlub has announced an international olympiad to gauge cognitive skills of lakhs of participating children. The assessment will cover logical thinking skills, comprehension skills, critical thinking skills, quantitative & problem-solving aptitude and offer scholarships of up to Rs. 65 lakh worth to winners. The test has three stages- prelims at school level, quarter finals at zonal level and the grand finale at an international level. Amit Bansal Founder & CEO, WizKlub, said, "It is too late to assess a student's core strength areas when they are past 9th grade. With the HOTS Olympiad, we want to create awareness among parents and schools on the critical nature of cognitive assessment at an early age. The format of HOTS Olympiad is fun, visual based and in interactive quiz format for kids, and not like any other exam".

# GDP claws back faster than expected in Q2

ECONOMY CONTRACTS 7.5%, DOWN FROM -23.9% IN Q1; DROP IN FALL AUGURS WELL FOR GDP

## NEW DELHI

INDIA'S economy recovered faster than expected in the September quarter as a pick-up in manufacturing helped GDP clock a lower contraction of 7.5 per cent and held out hopes for further improvement on consumer demand bouncing back.

The gross domestic product (GDP) had contracted by a record 23.9 per cent in the first quarter of 2020-21 fiscal (April 2020 to March 2021) as the coronavirus lockdown pummelled economic activity. The second straight quarter of contraction pushed India to its first technical recession.

The GDP contraction of 7.5 per cent in July-September compared with a growth of 4.4 per cent in the same quarter last year, according to data released by the statistics ministry on Friday.

With the gradual opening up from June, the economy picked up momentum. Manufacturing clocked a surprise 0.6 per cent growth in July-September after it had shrunk by a massive 39 per cent in the preceding quarter.

Continuing its good showing, the agriculture sector grew by 3.4 per cent, while electricity and gas

## INDIA ENTERS TECHNICAL RECESSION

■ From lows of the pandemic-induced lockdown, the country for the very first time since Independence entered into a technical recession

■ Q1 & Q2 recorded negative output

■ Drop in purchasing power, tax revenue, capex may result in more defaults



We should be cautiously optimistic and the caution is warranted because the economic impact is primarily due to the pandemic: CEA

ter's performance. Giving outlook for the near future, he said, "We should be cautiously optimistic and the caution is warranted because the economic impact is primarily due to the pandemic."

In the first half, India's GDP contracted by 15.7 per cent compared to a growth of 4.8 per cent in the same period last fiscal. Though the contraction in July-September pushed India into its first technical recession, based on records going back to 1996, a sharp recovery held out hopes for the economy turning around before the end of the fiscal year. Analysts said the recovery was 'V' shaped.

Post Q2, there has been a pick-up in consumer demand for autos, non-durables and rail freight during the festival season as prospects grew for Covid-19 vac-

expanded 4.4 per cent. Financial and real estate services shrank 8.1 per cent in the second quarter of FY21 from a year ago, while trade, hotels, transport and communication declined 15.6 per cent. The construction sector, which is the second-largest employer in the economy, contracted only 8.6 per cent in Q2 versus (-) 50 per cent in Q1. Public spending was down 12 per cent. Analysts and economists, who have projected the economy shrinking for the full fiscal, had expected a wider contraction in Q2. China's economy grew by 4.9 per cent in July-September this year, faster than the 3.2 per cent growth in April-June 2020.

Chief Economic Adviser Krishnamurthy Subramanian said the GDP numbers were "quite encouraging" given the pandemic and compared with the previous quar-

## Fiscal deficit zooms to 120% of annual target

## NEW DELHI

THE Union government's fiscal deficit further widened to Rs 9.53 lakh crore, which is nearly 120 per cent of the annual budget estimate, at the end of October of the current financial year, according to official data released on Friday. The deficit widened mainly on account of poor revenue realisation. The lockdown imposed to curb spreading of coronavirus infections had significantly impacted business activities and in turn contributed to sluggish revenue realisation.

## Core industries' output contracts 2.5%

## NEW DELHI

CONTRACTING for the eighth consecutive month, the output of eight core infrastructure sectors dropped by 2.5 per cent in October, mainly due to decline in production of crude oil, natural gas, refinery products and steel.

The production of eight core sectors had contracted 5.5 per cent in October 2019, data

released by the Commerce and Industry Ministry showed on Friday. While coal, fertiliser, cement and electricity recorded positive growth, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products and steel registered negative growth in the month under review.

During April-October, the sectors' output declined by 13 per cent as compared to the growth of 0.3 per cent in the same period of the previous year.



# Markets end marginally lower

RIL, IT STOCKS WEIGH; MARKETS POST WEEKLY GAINS

## MUMBAI

EQUITY indices closed marginally lower after a choppy session on Friday, dragged by losses in Reliance Industries and IT counters despite a firm trend in global markets.

Investors also remained on the sidelines ahead of the release of Q2 GDP data, traders said. The 30-share BSE Sensex closed 110.02 points or 0.25 per cent lower at 44,149.72. The broader NSE Nifty slipped 18.05 points or 0.14 per cent to 12,968.95. PowerGrid was the top laggard in the Sensex pack, shedding 2.63 per cent, followed by HCL Tech, ONGC, Axis Bank, TCS, M&M, Reliance Industries and Infosys.

On the other hand, Asian Paints, Titan, Tech Mahindra, Tata Steel, Bajaj Finance and Bajaj Auto were among the gainers, spurring up to 2.85 per cent. During the week, the Sensex advanced 267.47 points or 0.60 per cent, while the Nifty gained 109.90 points or 0.85 per cent. Global markets remained in the positive territory on Friday, shrugging off questions surrounding the trial data of AstraZeneca's Covid-19 vaccine candidate. "Today's market momentum was driven by uncertainty related to efficacy of Covid vaccine and expectation of Q2 GDP data. Although GDP is expected to improve compared to the previous quarter, the recovery in in-

dian economy is likely to be lower in comparison to its global peers. "Recently, broader markets are outperforming main benchmark showing a shift in demand to mid and small cap. From these high levels, for the market to stay resilient and mid-caps to outperform, the economy has to normalise and more stimulus has to be announced, which will take some more time based on the government's plan and availability of vaccine," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

Sector-wise, BSE energy, tech, IT and telecom indices lost up to 1.06 per cent, while realty, consumer durables, auto, utilities and healthcare closed with gains. Broader BSE midcap and smallcap indices outperformed the benchmarks, rallying as much as 2.40 per cent.

Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Tokyo and Seoul ended on a positive note. Stock exchanges in Europe were largely trading with gains in early deals. Meanwhile, Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, was trading 0.67 per cent higher at USD 48.11 per barrel. The rupee snapped its five-day winning streak to finish 17 paise lower at 74.05 against the US dollar on Friday. Foreign institutional investors remained net buyers in the capital markets, purchasing shares worth Rs 2,027.31 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data. (PTI)

## Kenkoh partners with Centro

## HYDERABAD

KENKOH Massage Footwear India Private Limited announced its partnership with Centro. The partnership will give Centro's consumers in Hyderabad and Vijayawada access to Kenkoh's range of therapeutic sandals. Over time, Centro and Kenkoh are looking into bringing this concept to all major cities across Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. Rola Sullivan, Managing Director,

Kenkoh Massage Footwear India Private Limited, said: "South India has an extremely rich heritage steeped in culture and tradition and the same applies for Kenkoh as a company. We are proud to partner with Centro to kick-start this expansion as they are South India's largest footwear retail chain and one of the most reputed brands in the space. Our goal is to help our Indian customers experience the healing and invigorating benefits of Kenkoh everyday."

# REAL CORNER

## States told to slash stamp duty on housing

HOUSING SECY ASSURES THAT REVENUES WILL NOT FALL AS SALES VOLUMES SWELL

Maharashtra and Karnataka governments have reduced stamp duty that has led to rise in housing sales, says Housing and Urban Affairs Secretary Durga Shanker Mishra

## NEW DELHI

HOUSING and Urban Affairs Secretary Durga Shanker Mishra on Friday asked states to reduce stamp duty on registration of properties, saying their revenues will not be impacted due to sales boost. He further expressed confidence that the objective of 'Housing for All' will be achieved by 2022.

Addressing a virtual conference organised by industry body Assocham, Mishra said the ministry had twice written to the states/UTs to reduce stamp duty. He said the Maharashtra and Karnataka governments have reduced stamp duty that has led to rise in housing sales.

Mishra said he will again hold a video conference with chief secretaries of all states/UTs and try to convince them for reduction in the stamp duty.

He said that overall revenue of states will not be affected as number of sales will increase.



The secretary said housing sales have revived in the last few months because of measures taken by the Centre as well as stamp duty cut by some states.

Mishra said builders have started taking advantage of recent tax relief announced by the government. This will help increase housing sales and clear unsold stocks.

Recently, the government relaxed income tax rules to allow primary or first sale of housing units of up to Rs 2 crore at a price that can be 20 per cent below the stamp duty circle rate. Earlier, the law restricted differential between circle rate and agreement value at 10 per cent.

Mishra said the government's Affordable Rental Housing Complex (ARHC) Scheme for migrants, which was launched a few months ago, has picked up well.

He asked Assocham members to participate in this programme to build small homes with all basic amenities, which can be given to people on cheaper rents.

# One-time restructuring not a panacea for every developer

Many realtors may not meet eligibility criterion: HDFC

Experts don't expect overnight drop in non-performing loans (NPL). It might even see an inching up in the real estate sector in next 2 quarters before things stabilise

## MUMBAI

ALL real estate developers may not be able to avail the benefit of Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) one-time restructuring scheme as they might not meet the required financial ratios and have the necessary credit rating, HDFC Ltd vice-chairman and CEO Keki Mistry said.

"Restructuring may not necessarily help every developer because not too many will be able to meet the criteria laid down in terms of meeting the various ratios and getting credit ratings," Mistry said, while speaking at a real estate and infrastructure investor summit organised by Naredco.

In August, RBI had allowed one-time restructuring for personal loans and for non-MSME corporate borrowers having an aggregate exposure of greater than



Rs 25 crore and who were affected by Covid-19 related stress. The key financial parameters to be factored in for implementation of restructuring are total outside liabilities, adjusted tangible net worth current ratio, etc. RBI specified 26 sectors, including automobile, power, tourism, cement, chemicals, gems and jewellery, logistics, mining, manufacturing, real estate, and shipping, among others, for one-time restructuring.

Mistry advised the developer community to stay well capitalised and control the amount of leverage they take. "From a developer's

perspective, the important learning, not just post-Covid, but pre-Covid, is to just strengthen the balance sheet. Bring in more equity and do not over-leverage. The market will reward you for not over-leveraging. The more you leverage, the more pain you will face in the days to come," he said.

Mistry said over the last eight months, markets are clearly distinguishing between stronger players and weaker players. Interest rates are a function of perception of credit risks, he said, adding that "I think quality developers will, even today, be able to access

money, not at 6.8 per cent or 6.9 per cent because the risk premium on a developer loan even from a prudential perspective is higher than what it is for an individual, but at relatively good rates."

However, weaker developers will find it difficult to raise money unless they improve the quality of their balance sheets, he emphasised. Mistry said compared to six months ago, demand for residential properties now has picked up as people are beginning to believe that this is the best time to buy a property due to lower interest rates and as property prices have gone up in the last few years. At present, it is difficult to say whether non-performing loans (NPLs) in the real estate sector will come down in near future, he said. "I don't think that it is going to be that easy where suddenly overnight NPL are going to come down. You might even see an inching up of NPLs in the real estate sector, not significantly but slightly in one or two quarters before things stabilise, lets say two or three quarters down the line," Mistry said. He said consolidation in real estate sector can happen and should happen going forward, but the problem is that it happens at project levels and not necessarily at entity level.

## Cement prices to remain strong in H2

## NEW DELHI

THE Covid-19 pandemic changed the trend in cement pricing this year. Contrary to historical trends of the lower cement prices QoQ in the third quarter of the calendar year due to softness in the demand owing to the festive season (Diwali) as well as the lower exit prices in Q2 on account of the Monsoon, cement prices have surprised by rising this year.

In the third quarter of FY21, average cement price is up 0.8 per cent QoQ so far across India as against a decline of 1.1 per cent - 0.7 per cent QoQ seen in the past 5-10 years. The same is up 7 per cent YoY to Rs 360/bag.

According to the cement report from Motilal Oswal Financial Services, cement volumes are growing over 10 per cent YoY in North, East and Central India. While demand has remained weak in the South and Maharashtra, it has recovered strongly from the 15-20 per cent YoY decline seen in 2QFY21.

Prices in South India have been particularly strong and are up 18 per cent YoY (flat QoQ). Prices in North/West/Central are up 7 per cent/6 per cent/5 per cent YoY and 3 per cent/1 per cent/2 per cent QoQ. Non-trade prices have also recovered, particularly in the North where it had fallen sharply, as institutional demand (from urban real estate, infrastructure, etc.) has been improving.

The brokerage said that Even as variable costs rise, cement spreads (price minus power and fuel and freight costs) are expected to remain strong in 2HFY21 on expected pricing strength.



WHO DO YOU WANT TO ELECT?

# NAME-CHANGERS OR GAME-CHANGERS?

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
HYDERABAD

ALLEGING religious politics by the BJP, the TRS working president KT Rama Rao on Friday asked people of the city to choose what they want among name changers or game changers.

The TRS leader was reacting to the BJP leaders' announcement of changing the name of Hyderabad as Bhagyanagar in a 'Real Estate Summit 2020' on Friday. "They are announcing to change the name of the city. Will it become gold if the name of Hyderabad is changed to Bhagyanagar? Decide what you want... name-changers or game-changers. Don't get tempted and carried away with their propaganda," said Rama Rao admitting that the TRS too had talked ferociously before the formation of Telangana but after formation the party did not lose balance.

Admitting that there was a problem in the non-agriculture properties, he said, "I know when a big change is brought a few difficulties will arise. I assure the reform will change the way the country is going to think about land registration and mutations. Have patients, if nothing hap-

pens within two-three days, if not solved, we will continue the old system," said Rao.

Rao said that the Dharani portal was brought to unlock land value of Telangana. There are 66 lakh acres of land. The non-agriculture properties in rural areas have no papers. The government wants to unlock the value of these 66 lakh acres. Apart from these the Hyderabad has about 25 lakh properties but taxpayers were 16 lakh properties. With this initiative, the government can get revenue in the form of property tax, he added. He assured the builders of solving all their problems.



## Due importance to all communities: KTR

ADDRESSING a meeting of the Arya Vysya community in the city, KTR said that they had implemented welfare and development programmes irrespective of the caste and communities. He said that Chief Minister KCR was ruling the State by giving equal importance to implementation of welfare programmes and development programmes. He urged the voters of the city

think about the leader who is taking the state on the path of development. KTR urged the Arya Vysya people to get into politics. Responding to a request of the representatives of the community for the formation of Arya Vysya Corporation he said that he would take their request to the notice of the CM.

Who let Rohingya into India? Rama Rao, pointing out the

comments of BJP leaders on the presence of Rohingya refugees in the city, asked what the Centre was doing when the Rohingya arrived in the country. "What are Home Minister Amit Shah and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh doing if infiltration and illegal immigrants exist? How were Rohingya Aadhaar cards and voter ID cards given to them?" he asked.

## CS lauds Fisheries Dept for bagging first prize from Union government

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
HYDERABAD

CHIEF Secretary Somesh Kumar congratulated Fisheries Department for getting first prize under Best Inland Quasi - Government Organisation/ Federation/ Corporation/ Board from the Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Government of India on the occasion of World Fisheries Day.

The Telangana State Fisherman Co-operative Societies Federation Ltd. got a memento, certificate and Rs 5 lakhs cash prize from the Union government under Inland category.

He also informed that with increase water spread due to

major irrigation schemes like Kaleshwaram and regular availability in tanks etc., inland fisheries has a huge potential. Chief Secretary asked the officials to continue with



State Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar congratulating Anita Rajendra, Secretary, Animal Husbandry, on winning the first prize from Union government, on Friday

the same spirit in future endeavours of the Fisheries Department.

Anita Rajendra, Secretary, Animal Husbandry and other officials were present.

## One held for extortion, impersonation

KHAMMAM

A 20-YEAR-OLD youth who was extorting money from people in the guise of police was arrested by Kusumanchi police in the district on Friday. The accused, Guguloth Akhil Naik belongs to Anjanapuram thanda in Morampalli Banjar Gram Panchayat of Burgampahad mandal in Kothagudem district. In a bid to earn easy money he was wearing the uniforms of police, forest and railway departments and was threatening commuters to collect money, said Inspector of Police (CI) K Sathish.

## Errabelli strikes a chord with voters

MAHESH AVADHUTHA  
Hyderabad

PANCHAYAT Raj Minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao is standing out from the rest with his unique style of campaigning for GHMC elections. Ever since Rao has been appointed as the in-charge for Meerpet HB Colony (Division 4) that falls in the Uppal Assembly constituency, he has toured every residential colony in the division as part of the poll campaign.

Not only he announced adopting the ward to resolve its issues and undertake development works over the next five-year period, the Minister was seen being holding door-to-door visits. While campaigning, he is leading from the front along with TRS candidate J Prabhu Das, who is relatively new to elections.

The Minister, who has a great election track record of



registering six consecutive wins in the Assembly elections and one win in parliament election during his distinguished political career, has been greeting voters, enquiring about their issues and assuring them of solving. When told about people's surprise reactions to his campaign, Dayakar Rao stated that he has been used to this style of campaigning in his constituency in Warangal district and has been following the same for the GHMC elections with more focus on connecting to each voter in the division.

# TRS, BJP, MIM intimidating voters to win GHMC polls, charges Uttam

- TPCC chief Uttam Kumar Reddy holds the TRS and BJP governments responsible for growing corona cases in the State and the country
- Voters should desist from voting to TRS, BJP for the unplanned lockdown that caused hardship to everyone

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
HYDERABAD

TELANGANA Pradesh Congress Committee chief N Uttam Kumar Reddy strongly condemned the TRS and the BJP for linking Covid vaccine with the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) elections and alleged that both the parties were trying to intimidate the voters by indirectly conveying that those who did not vote for them would be denied the vaccine dose, when available.

Addressing the voters during road shows at MS Makhta, Malakpet and other places as part of GHMC election campaign on Friday, Uttam said that both the Central and the State governments were responsible for nearly 3 lakh cases and about 1,500 deaths due to coronavirus in Telangana, especially Hyderabad. "Lakhs of people who lost their



TPCC president N Uttam Kumar Reddy campaigning for Congress in B S Makta in Khairatabad division on Friday

jobs due to Covid pandemic must not vote for TRS, BJP and MIM as they are responsible for imposing an unplanned lockdown. All others who suffered due to lockdown should also reject these parties. While the BJP government did not extend any help, the TRS government washed off its hands after distributing just Rs 1,500 among a few thousand BPL families," he said.

Uttam said that thousands of people have lost their entire savings to get Covid-19 treatment in private hospitals for themselves or their loved ones. "Despite repeated requests by the Congress party, Chief Minister K Chan-

drashekar Rao did not include Covid-19 treatment in AarogyaSri scheme. Private hospitals were given a free hand to loot common people and nothing was done to regulate the cost of treatment. Consequently, thousands of people lost their life savings while a few hundreds lost their loved ones. BJP government remained a mute spectator to back KCR and did not intervene to help the people. Today, both the parties are trying to intimidate the voters by promising a free Covid vaccine. Are they trying to say that those who do not vote for them would be denied a dose of Covid vac-

# Can use of religious statements in polls be justified?

VRC PHANIHARAN  
HYDERABAD

ARE making statements like 'Rama Lakshmana Janaki Jai Bolo Hanuman Ki' and 'Insha Allah', and the like offensive in the process of electioneering? Why politicians are engaging people invoking certain religious connotations to woo the voters? To what extent the police and election authorities can claim such statements offensive or stoking communal passions to create disturbances?

The issue has become intriguing for the academicians from the law, political science, public administration, philosophy and religious studies and allied fields.

However, the lack of funding is what the academicians say deterring them from carrying out research projects on such trends in the process of elections.

Some faculty members consider that such issues are important for the study. On the other, students claim that they don't have proper guidance and resources to pursue such areas of studies. When asked whether being students they were

## CORONAVIRUS DETECTION

# CCMB dry swab test gets ICMR approval

Their technique avoids leakages from samples, which render those batches untestable and unsafe in handling

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
HYDERABAD

CENTRE for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad, has been testing samples for coronavirus since April 2020. Working closely with healthcare workers of Telangana, it identified some of the key issues that slow the testing process. The researchers developed a dry swab RNA-extraction free testing method for the COVID-19 virus.

In the conventional testing method, nasopharyngeal or oropharyngeal swab samples are collected by sample collection centres. These are transported to testing centres, sometimes even hundreds of kilometres away. The swab samples are generally placed in a liquid called Viral Transport Medium (VTM). To avoid leakage, the samples are packed heavily that adds on to sample processing times at both the sample collection and testing centres. Despite this, there are leakages from samples, which render those batches untestable and unsafe in handling.



The researchers at CCMB have found that VTM can be totally avoided and dry swab technique also does not require RNA extraction process, and can be directly used for RT-PCR testing with sensitivity and specificity similar to the current gold standard. This method has now received ICMR approval for use in settings where automated RNA extraction is not available.

The researchers at CCMB have found that VTM (Viral Transport Medium) can be totally avoided and dry swab technique also does not require RNA extraction process, and can be directly used for RT-PCR testing with sensitivity and specificity similar to the current gold standard

Dr Kreshna Mishra, Director, CCMB, adds, "RNA extraction, even with automation, takes 4 hours for roughly 500 samples. VTM and RNA extraction both add a significant burden on money and time required for mass testing for coronavirus. We believe the technique's merit holds for all kinds of settings and has the potential of bringing the costs and time of testing by 40-50%. It is a game-changing technology as with the existing infrastructure, the throughput of COVID-19 screening can be enhanced several-fold with immediate effect while, at the same time, making the whole process safer."

## Rohingyas continue illegal construction in Gurram Cheruvu

SRINIVAS GUDUPALLI  
RANGA REDDY

The revenue officials have been quietly going about identifying illegal structures that have come up over the years on lake bed of Gurram Cheruvu in Balapur village, Ranga Reddy District built by Rohingyas. The Municipal Administration had announced plans to demolish these structures after making amendments to Municipal Acts. Recently, Rohingyas started illegal construction in Gurram Cheruvu and built boundary wall for their construction. However, the Chandrayangutta police reached the spot demolished the illegal constructions on complaint received by revenue officials on November 25 and arrested the person who illegally constructed the boundary wall.

The officials identified many illegal structures around Gurram Cheruvu lake and told all the illegal constructions will be demolished. The Gurram Cheruvu is spread over 40 acres in which 3.5 acres costs Rs 20 crore, which is already occupied by illegal constructions. The rains in October had several of the 2,857 lakes within Greater Hyderabad limits breaching full tank levels. The colonies built illegally on the lakebeds inundated during flooding because the construction over the nala (which link the lakes to one another) slowed the receding of the flood water. The revenue department officials have begun the process of identifying the encroachers to take legal actions and demolish illegal constructions.

Congress party is seeking votes to serve the people, while TRS, BJP and MIM are seeking votes just to win the elections and serve themselves - Uttam Kumar Reddy, president, TPCC

cine?" he asked. The TPCC chief said that the MIM, an open ally of TRS and secret partner of BJP, has no moral right to seek votes as it betrayed the people of Hyderabad to serve the interest of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Chief Minister. Shockingly, all three parties together conspired to polarise the GHMC elections to evade questioning over Covid-19 and flood relief measures, said Uttam, reminding that the Congress leaders had served the people with whatever resources they could mobilise both during the lockdown period and during the floods.

"Congress party is seeking votes to serve the people, while TRS, BJP and MIM are seeking votes just to win the elections and serve themselves," he said.

- The issue of bringing the religion into elections by the contesting political parties has become intriguing for the academicians from the law, political science, public administration, philosophy and religious studies and allied fields
- However, lack of funding is what the academicians say deterring them from carrying out research projects on such trends in the process of elections

failing to take up such projects, SFI State president and secretary R L Murthy pointed out lack of resources and guidance was what stopping the students from pursuing the research. Similarly, another ABVP leader admitted that there is a failure on the part of students and researchers in their primary responsibility to conduct studies and research, and to reflect upon such trends and identify, and suggest solutions in dealing with them.

A senior faculty member from Journalism department of a reputed State university pointed out, "Firstly, the students should have the drive to come up with research

proposals to study. Secondly, if any faculty member has to ask their student to deploy as research investigators, then, they should have minimum resource backup to pay to do such activity."

"There is a lack of funding from successive governments resulting in academic activity taking a back seat. Even doctoral admissions have not taken place in the universities," said another faculty member from the Osmania University. Another issue that comes to the fore is the way the police and enforcement authorities, and the election authorities airing their views on elections,

law and order and religion.

When asked whether such perceptions were not an outdated and colonial interpretation of religion in India? A senior faculty member from the Post Graduate Law College pointed out every political party is playing the religious card.

"Not just in the GHMC elections, earlier also, we have even seen the same in the Bhainsa elections and elsewhere in the State and the country," he pointed out. Such trends form important and relevant issues to the policing, election process and enforcement etc. But, neither the police nor the election commission is ready to launch projects and ready to fund such projects for the universities to take up.

When asked about such trends, Prof G B Reddy, a senior faculty in the constitutional law from the Osmania University, clarified that the issue at hand could be studied as an interdisciplinary area. The stakeholders dealing with such issues need to relook and should have a different approach to such issues, he added.



## INDIA TOUR OF AUSTRALIA

## Australia outscore India

SYDNEY

AUSTRALIA defeated India by 66 runs in the first One-day International at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Friday to take a 1-0 lead in the three-game series.

Though there was a rear-guard action from Hardik Pandya, who got his highest ODI score (90 off 76 balls) and added 128 runs for the fifth wicket with opener Shikhar Dhawan (74 off 86), Australia's total of 374 for six wickets in 50 overs, their highest against India in one-dayers, proved too daunting. India finished at 308 for eight wickets in 50 overs.

India lost their first three wickets inside the first 10 overs to lose momentum. Both Agarwal and fellow opener Shikhar Dhawan had given India a turbo-charged start with a 53-run opening stand in just over five overs. But then Hazlewood struck with three short-pitched deliveries to dent India's march, picking Mayank Agarwal, Virat Kohli, and Shreyas Iyer.

Earlier, skipper Aaron Finch and Steve Smith scored centuries to lead Aussie charge, after Australia won the toss.

Finch made 114 from 124 deliveries with the help of nine 4s and two 6s while Smith scored 105 off just 66 balls -- with 11x4s and four 6s -- as the hosts took heavy toll on hapless Indian bowlers who had no option to fall back on.

Leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal was the most severely hit, going for 89 in his 10-over spell. He could pick just one wicket. Chahal's are the most number of runs conceded by an Indian spinner on ODIs, going worse than 85 that another leg-spinner, Piyush Chawla, conceded in his 10 overs against Pakistan in 2008.

Electing to bat, the hosts started steadily with both Finch and David Warner taking

## Hosts take 1-0 lead in 3-match ODI series

their time to adjust to the pitch. However, once they got settled, there was no looking back as the pair shared a 156-run opening wicket partnership in 27.5 overs.

During the course of the partnership, Finch became the second-fastest Australian to score 5,000 ODI runs (126 innings, 11 more than Warner).

India got their first breakthrough as Warner got out against Mohammed Shami after playing a well-

rounded 69-run knock, with the help of six 4s. Smith, who came in next, started right from the word go and scored runs quickly, adding 108 runs with Finch.

Finch, the Australia skipper, was dismissed by Jasprit Bumrah after he got to his 17th ODI hundred.

Glenn Maxwell, who had failed miserably in the IPL, came good and smashed the Indian bowlers. Maxwell used switch-hit and reverse sweep to good effect as he scored 45 runs off just 18 balls (five 4s, three 6s) before getting caught at the long-on boundary off the bowling of Shami. With Marnus Labuschagne getting dismissed soon after, former Australia captain Steve Smith ensured that he kept his team on course for a big total. He stuck to one end, kept scoring

boundaries at will and brought up his 10th hundred in just 62 balls -- the third fastest by an Australian in ODIs. The

former Australia skipper was bowled in the final over of the innings, but not before inflicting huge damage to the Indians.

Among India bowlers, only Mohammed Shami could go for under six runs an over.

In reply, India got off to a horrible start losing three wickets, Agarwal, Kohli, and Iyer, in the first 10 overs. They then lost

KL Rahul in the 14th over. However, Pandya and Dhawan kept the hopes alive. Pandya scored very quickly and was particularly severe on the spinners.

However, the pressure got to them. Dhawan fell to a dismissal, giving a catch off Adam Zampa to short mid-off and a few overs later Pandya too fell to Zampa, holing out to long on.

At the time of Pandya's dismissal, India still needed 128 in 11 overs and they had no batsman, other than Jadeja (25 off 37) to take them. Eventually, they fell short by 67 runs. (IANS)

## Chahal concedes most runs by Indian spinner in an ODI



Before Chahal, the record was held by leg-spinner Piyush Chawla who had conceded 85 runs in his 10 overs in an ODI against Pakistan in 2008.

Right-arm medium fast bowler Bhuvneshwar Kumar holds the record for conceding most runs by an Indian bowler in ODIs. In 2015, Kumar had conceded 105 runs against South Africa in Mumbai.

Overall in international cricket, Mick Lewis of Australia has the unwarranted record of conceding most runs in an ODI to his name. Against South Africa in 2006, Lewis can return with figures of 0/113 from his 10 overs in Johannesburg.

He is followed by Pakistan's Wahab Riaz (110 in 10 overs against England in 2016) and Afghanistan's Rashid Khan (110 runs in nine overs against England in 2019). (IANS)

SYDNEY

LEG-SPINNER Yuzvendra Chahal has registered an unwarranted record to his name as he became the Indian spinner to concede most runs in an ODI.

In the first ODI of the three-match series against Australia, Chahal on Friday returned with figures of 1/89 from his 10 overs at the Sydney Cricket Ground. The lone wicket he got was that of Marcus Stoinis who got out for a duck being caught behind by KL Rahul.

## SCOREBOARD

## Australia

D Warner c Rahul b M Shami-----69  
A Finch c Rahul b Bumrah-----114  
S Smith b M Shami-----105  
M Stoinis c Rahul b Chahal-----0  
G Maxwell c Jadeja b M Shami-----45  
M Labuschagne c Dhawan b Saini-----2  
A Carey not out-----17  
P Cummins not out-----1  
Extras (B-1, LB-6, NB-2, WD-12)-----21  
Total (For 6 wickets in 50 overs)-----374  
Fall of wickets: 1-156, 2-264, 3-271, 4-328, 5-331, 6-372.  
Bowling: M Shami 10-0-59-3, J Bumrah 10-0-73-1, N Saini 10-0-83-1, Y Chahal 10-0-89-1.

## India

M Agarwal c Maxwell b Hazlewood 22  
S Dhawan c Starc b Zampa-----74  
V Kohli c Finch b Hazlewood-----21  
S Iyer c Carey b Hazlewood-----2  
KL Rahul c Smith b Zampa-----12  
H Pandya c Starc b Zampa-----90  
R Jadeja c Starc b Zampa-----25  
N Saini not out-----29  
M Shami b Starc-----13  
J Bumrah not out-----0  
Extras (lb-2, w-15, nb-3)-----20  
Total (For 8 wickets, 50 Overs)-----308  
Fall of Wickets: 1-53, 2-78, 3-80, 4-101, 5-229, 6-247, 7-281, 8-308  
Bowling: Starc 9-0-65-1, Hazlewood 10-0-55-3, Cummins 8-0-52-0, Zampa 10-0-54-4, Stoinis 6.2-0-25-0, Maxwell 6.4-0-55-0.

“Finchy (Aaron Finch) and Davey (David Warner) played very well early on. We could come in and be aggressive. I wasn't thinking too much out there, just seeing the ball and hitting it. I was seeing the ball well. It was a good surface. Nice to contribute to a good win,”

- Steve Smith

Australia's Steve Smith celebrates after scoring a century against India on Friday

## Ferguson, Neesham star as NZ beat WI in 1st T20I

AUCKLAND

INCREDIBLE performances from pacer Lockie Ferguson and all-rounder James Neesham helped New Zealand beat West Indies by five wickets, via Duckworth-Lewis-Stern Method, in the first T20I at the Eden Park on Friday. In a rail-curtained 16-over match, the Black Caps chased down the 176-run target with four balls to spare to take a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

Put into bat, Windies put 180/7 in their innings, thanks to a magnificent 75 not out from skipper Kieron Pollard. Pollard faced 37 deliveries during which he scored four fours and eight sixes. Apart from him, Andre Fletcher and Fabian Allen made notable contributions of 34 and 30 each.

However, the highlight of the innings was New Zealand's Ferguson who picked up his maiden T20I five-wicket haul and finished with figures of 4/21 in his four overs. Skipper Tim Southee also chipped in with two wickets, conceding 22 runs in his three overs.

Chasing a stiff target of 176 after the application of the DLS Method, the hosts found themselves reeling at one stage, losing four wickets with 63 runs on the board. However, Devon Conway and Neesham stitched a 77-run partnership to bring the Black Caps back into the game.

Conway departed after scoring 41 -- a 29-ball knock studded with five fours and a six. Mitchell Santner, who came in next, joined Neesham and the duo stitched together an unbeaten 39-run stand to take the team home. While Neesham contributed with unbeaten 48 (24 balls; five 4s and three 6s), Santner remained not out at 31 (18 balls; three 6s).

The two teams will now face each other in the second T20I at the Bay Oval in Mount Maunganui on Sunday.

**Brief scores:** West Indies 180/7 (Kieron Pollard 75\*; Lockie Ferguson 5/21) lose to New Zealand 176/5 (James Neesham 48 not out; Oshane Thomas 2/23) by five wickets via DLS method. (IANS)

## Premier Badminton League postponed due to Covid-19

NEW DELHI

THE sixth season of the Premier Badminton League (PBL), which was scheduled to take place in late December, has been postponed due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the organisers said on Friday.

They said fresh dates for "early next year" are being worked out.

The league, which attracts top international badminton players every year, cited international travel restrictions as the main reason for the postponement.

"Also, safety of all players and stakeholders involved is of prime concern. However, with the sporting world gradually returning on track, the organisers are keen to roll out the season next year," the organisers said in a statement.

"The usual window for PBL is December end to January. This year, as the world deals with the Covid-19 pandemic we have been monitoring the situation closely. Health and safety of all is of paramount importance. After carefully considering all guidelines, protocols and commitments, and post discussions with Badminton Association of India (BAI), we have decided to rework fresh dates for 2021," said Prasad Mangipudi managing director of SportzLive, the official license holder of the tournament. (IANS)

## Hyd hope to build on good start against Bengaluru



MARGAO

HYDERABAD FC will be looking to build on the encouraging start they got to the season when they face 2019 champions Bengaluru FC at the Fatorda Stadium on Saturday in the Indian Super League (ISL). They started the season with a 1-0 win over Odisha

team, which also marked the team's first ever clean sheet in the league.

Liston Colaco impressed for Hyderabad in that match, coming on as a second-half substitute. Coach Manuel Marquez hinted the 22-year-old Goan could make it to the starting eleven against Bengaluru, who come into the game on the back of a frustrating 2-2 draw against FC Goa. The draw came after Bengaluru squandered a two-goal

lead and coach Carles Cuadrat will be demanding an immediate response from his side. The presence of Joao Victor and Odei Onaindia in Hyderabad's defence and goalkeeper Subrata Paul, who has 27 clean sheets in ISL, will make it difficult for Bengaluru to score.

While Bengaluru have no injury concerns ahead of the game, Francisco Sandaza will not be available for Hyderabad. (IANS)

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