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WINDOWS



Karnataka customs officials seized synthetic drugs worth Rs 1.2 crore, concealed inside a massager and sent as a parcel, in Bengaluru on Thursday

Modi, Biden will speak at convenient time

NEW DELHI

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi and United States president-elect Joe Biden will speak with each other in due course at a mutually convenient time, the Ministry of External Affairs said on Thursday and asserted that India-US ties enjoy bipartisan support in America. The MEA's assertion comes days after Biden defeated incumbent President Donald Trump in a bitterly-fought presidential election that attracted a record number of Americans to cast their votes. MEA Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said the prime minister had congratulated US president-elect Biden through a tweet and had also appreciated the former American vice president's contribution to strengthening India-US relations. Prime Minister Modi had also conveyed that he looks forward to working with him to take India-US relations to greater heights. Srivastava said at an online media briefing. Asked when will the two leaders speak with each other, he said it will happen in "due course at a mutually convenient time".



Air quality still 'very poor'

NEW DELHI

THE national capital recorded its air quality in the 'very poor' category on Thursday morning even as experts said the situation was "much better" compared to two days ago when pollution levels were above the emergency threshold.

A change in the wind direction -- from north westerly to north-north easterly -- was the reason behind the dip in pollution levels as it reduced the contribution of stubble burning significantly, according to government agencies and weather experts.

The city recorded an air quality index (AQI) of 315 at 9 am. The 24-hour average AQI was 344 on Wednesday and 476 on Tuesday. Delhi witnessed six "severe" air days on the trot from November 4 to November 9, according to Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data. The AQI in neighbouring cities of Faridabad (306), Ghaziabad (336), Noida

(291), Greater Noida (322), and Gurgaon (261), which fall in the National Capital Region (NCR), was also recorded in the "poor" and "very poor" categories.

An official of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said the "situation is much better compared to Tuesday". The wind direction has changed preventing the transport of smoke from farm fires in Punjab and Haryana, he said.

The official, however, said the air quality is likely to deteriorate marginally on Friday. The IMD said winds were calm in the morning and the minimum temperature was 11.6 degrees Celsius. Calm winds and low temperatures trap pollutants close to the ground, while favourable wind speed helps in their dispersion.

There was shallow fog in the morning and the visibility was 800 metres at the Safdarjung Observatory. The Ministry of Earth Sciences' air quality monitor, SAFAR, said the change in



Vehicles stuck in a traffic jam, owing to people shopping for 'Dhanteras' festival, at Yusuf Sarai Market in New Delhi on Thursday

transport level wind direction has led to a significant decrease in stubble burning-related intrusion in spite of high fire counts.

The share of stubble burning in Delhi's PM2.5 was almost negligible -- 3 per cent -- on Wednesday due to unfavourable trans-

port-level winds, it said. "Deterioration (in air quality) is expected on Friday towards the higher end of the 'very poor' category," it said.

The CPCB had on Wednesday ordered closure of hot mix plants and stone crushers in Delhi-NCR till November 17 in view of a

likely increase in pollution levels during the festive season. It also asked the governments of Punjab and Haryana to take immediate stringent actions to curb stubble burning and authorities in Delhi-NCR to strictly check biomass burning.

Give jobs, get subsidies: FM to companies

NEW DELHI

FINANCE Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday announced a new job creation scheme by giving subsidy to those establishments that make new hires. The subsidy would be to cover for retirement fund contributions by employees as well as employers for two years, she said.

Employees contribution (12 per cent of wages) and employer's contribution (12 per cent of wages) totalling 24 per cent of wages would be given to establishments for two years, she said.

Under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana, every Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)-registered establishment taking new employees would get this subsidy. The scheme will cover any new employee joining employment in EPFO-registered establish-



ment on monthly wages less than Rs 15,000. It would also cover EPF members drawing monthly wages of less than Rs 15,000, who made an exit from employment during Covid-19 pandemic from March 1, 2020 and is employed on or after October 1, 2020.

The scheme would cover establishments registered with EPFO if they add new employees compared to the reference base of employees as in September 2020.

Continued on Page 5



Prime Minister Narendra Modi (not in picture) virtually unveils the statue of Swami Vivekananda on JNU campus, in New Delhi on Thursday

Modi unveils Vivekananda's statue in JNU

NEW DELHI

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday unveiled a statue of Swami Vivekananda in the JNU campus, for long an ideological battlefield for the Left and Hindutva groups, and asserted that people's ideologies should be seen standing with and not against the country in matters of national interest.

Giving priority to one's ideology over national interest has harmed the democratic system of the country a lot, Modi said in

his address to students after unveiling the statue through video conferencing. "Everybody is proud of his ideology and this is natural. But our ideology should be seen standing with the nation and not against it in matters of national interest," he said. He spoke of the independence struggle and the movement against the Emergency to note that people of different ideological persuasions had joined hands for national interest without compromising their ideologies to make his point. Cont'd on Page 5

Navy's 5th Scorpene class submarine Vagir launched

MUMBAI

UNION Minister of State for Defence Shripad Y Naik on Thursday launched the fifth of the Indian Navy's Kalvari Class submarines under the ongoing Project-75 Scorpene programme at the Mazagaon Dock Ltd (MDL), officials said here.

The new submarine was named 'Vagir' by Naik's wife Vijaya S Naik. The launch ceremony was conducted through videoconference from Goa in the presence of top naval officers and other dignitaries, including offi-

cials from the Naval Group, France.

After the launch, 'Vagir' will be fitted with various equipment for the Harbour Acceptance Trials.

Speaking on the occasion, Naik lauded the stellar role of MDL in the 'Make in India' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiatives of the Centre.

He also appreciated the deep emotional bonds between ships and submarines and the crew which builds and man them as a "unique aspects of the Navy and shipyards". After comprehensive



The 5th scorpene class submarine 'Vagir' of Project 75 during its launch in Arabian Sea waters by Minister of State for Defence Shripad Naik via video conferencing, at Mazagaon Dock in Mumbai on Thursday

and rigorous set of tests and trials for over a year, the fully combat-worthy submarine capable of operations in all modes and regimes of deployment shall be delivered to the Navy. Dignitaries pres-

ent on the occasion included Vice Admiral SR Sarma (Chief of Material and CWP&A), Vice Admiral SV Bokhare (Inspector General Nuclear Safety), Vice Admiral RB Pandit (Chief of Staff

Western Naval Command), senior officials of the Ministry of Defence and the Indian Navy.

Two submarines of Project-75 programme at MDL -- Kalvari and Khanderi -- have already been commissioned into the Indian Navy.

The third submarine of the P-75 is undergoing the final phase of rigorous sea trials, the fourth Vela has commenced sea trials, the fifth 'Vagir' was launched on Thursday, while the sixth and last one is being readied for boot together.

Continued on Page 5

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



MANJUL



Nitish may take oath as CM for 4th time on Monday

PATNA

NITISH Kumar may take oath as Bihar chief minister for a fourth successive term next week but the date has not been finalised yet, a close aide said on Thursday. However, speculation is rife in political circles that he will be sworn in on Monday, the day 'Bhaiyya Dooj' festival will be celebrated, as it is considered an auspicious day. He will visit the state party headquarters later on

Thursday to meet the newly elected MLAs and other JD(U) functionaries.

Raj Bhavan sources said they have not received any communication about when the swearing-in ceremony will take place. Before he is sworn-in as the chief minister again, Nitish Kumar has to tender his resignation to the governor. The newly elected MLAs of the NDA are yet to meet formally and elect Kumar as their leader.

Continued on Page 5

India needs 1.7b Covid vaccine doses for adult population

SANJEEV SHARMA
NEW DELHI

THE key vaccines India is banking on are from Oxford/AstraZeneca, Novavax and J&J and the earliest efficacy data is expected by the end of November-December 2020 and in the best case, vaccines can be rolled out in January 2021.

According to a research by Credit Suisse, India needs about 1.7 billion Covid-19 vaccine doses to vaccinate majority of its adult population. It targets to administer 400-500 million doses by July 2021.

"The key vaccines India is banking on are from Oxford/AstraZeneca, No-

vavax and J&J (temperature range is 2-8-degree Celsius) and the earliest efficacy data is expected by the end of November-December and in the best case, vaccines can be rolled out in January 2021," the report said.

Credit Suisse said there is sufficient capacity for vaccine manufacturing (more than 2.4 billion doses) and various components like vials, stoppers, syringes, gauze, alcohol swabs, etc.

The bottleneck is cold storage infrastructure (especially refrigerated vans) and by using a part of the capacity of current immunisation programme (600 million doses) and the cold chain infrastructure of the private sector (250-300 million doses),

Serum Institute, ICMR complete enrolment in P3 vax trials

NEW DELHI

THE Serum Institute of India (SII) and ICMR on Thursday announced the completion of enrolment process of 1,600 participants in the phase-III clinical trials for Covid-19 vaccine Covishield in the country. SII and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) are collaborating on the clinical trials of the vaccine in the country. While ICMR has funded the clinical trial site fees, SII is taking care of other expenses for the Covishield. Currently, SII and ICMR are conducting phase II/III clinical trial of the vaccine at 15 different centres across the country, SII said in a statement. The entities have completed the enrolment of all 1,600 participants on October 31, it added.



potential vaccinations can reach 550-600 million doses annually. Manpower required for administering the vaccine will be less than 1 lakh.

Aurobindo's large viral vector vaccine facility (300 million doses) should be ready by March-April 2021. The pricing in export markets could be higher than in India and profitability could be at Rs 20-25 per dose and, therefore, on a 300 million dose capacity, Aurobindo could benefit from a potential EBITDA of Rs 6-7.5 billion (or 12-15 per cent of FY22E EBITDA).

Cadila also has facility for 100 million doses but it is for DNA vaccine and, therefore, would not be able to manufacture vaccine from global play-

ers in the near term, the report said.

Apollo Hospitals has infrastructure to administer 100 million doses annually and this can add Rs 2.5 billion EBITDA.

Diagnostic companies (Metropolis) should also benefit from an increase in demand for antibody tests (both before and after vaccination) but their pricing can sharply come down.

Higher vaccination will impact volumes of Covid-19 treatment drugs. Cipla and Cadila have benefited the most from the sale of Covid-19 treatment drugs (especially Remdesivir) in 2Q FY21 and the volume should substantially reduce in FY22 on increasing vaccination. Continued on Page 5



Beauty tips for perfect Diwali look

Most of us seek quick solutions to fix our beauty woes and tend to laden up the skin with numerous varieties of chemical laden costly cosmetics to look natural, youthful and evergreen.

As you indulge in family gatherings and step out to celebrate, It's time to get radiant glow with organic homemade ingredients for Diwali which is an absolute favorite with most Indians.

Here are simple things to shine brighter than the festive lights from comforts of your home.

Start taking care of the skin and hair a few weeks before. Nighttime cleansing is an absolute must, especially for city dwellers. Chemical air pollutants, dirt and grime hang in the air. They are potent skin irritants. Make up should also be removed at night. All these can cause dryness of the skin, or disrupt the normal acid-alkaline balance of the skin, leading to rashes and other eruptive conditions, like pimples and acne.

As Diwali approaches, the weather also changes. Seasonal changes also influence the skin. The humidity becomes less and the skin loses moisture to the atmosphere. So, one needs to keep the skin moisturised and also protect it from sun exposure. For normal to dry skin, cleanse twice a day, with a cleansing gel, containing ingredients like aloe vera.

Massage the cleanser lightly into the skin and remove it with

moist cotton wool. Then apply rose water or skin tonic, using cotton wool. During the day, use a sun-screen, before going out in the sun. Or, use moisturizer, if you are indoors. Moisturisers are available in cream and liquid form. For dry skin, at night, after cleansing, apply a nourishing cream and massage it on the face. Wipe off with moist cotton wool. You can apply a serum afterwards.

Oily skins also need moisture. But, if they apply creams, they can get pimples. To moisturise oily skin, mix one teaspoon pure glycerin with 100 ml rose water. Keep it in an airtight jar in the fridge. Use a little of this lotion after cleansing. This moisturizes the skin, without making it oily. Use cleansing milk or face wash to cleanse the skin.

The use of facial scrubs helps to brighten the skin and add a glow. Use a facial scrub twice a week. Mix ground almonds or rice powder with curd and a pinch of Haldi. You can also add dried and powdered orange and lemon peels. Apply on the face and rub gently on the skin with small circular movements. Then wash off with water.

Nourish the hair with oil treatments once or twice a week. Heat olive oil and apply on the scalp and hair. Then dip a



Shahnaz Husain

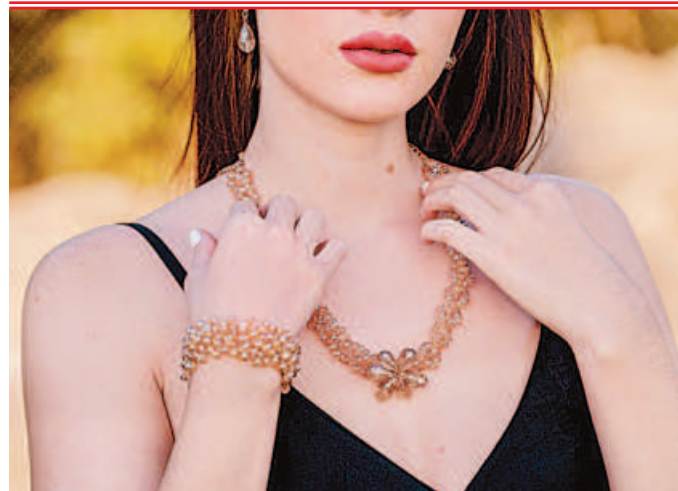


towel in hot water, squeeze out the water and wrap the hot towel around the head, like a turban. Keep it on for 5 minutes. Repeat the hot towel wrap 3 or 4 times. This helps the hair and scalp absorb the oil better. Egg white is a wonderful natural cleanser for oily hair and its protein content helps to add body. Apply egg white on the hair

about half-an-hour before your shampoo. To nourish dry hair, massage egg yolk or mayonnaise into the scalp. Leave it on for half an hour and then wash the hair. It helps to soften the hair and is very useful for hair that has suffered damage through colouring, straightening or perming.

If your hair is looking dull

give it a quick conditioning treatment before your shampoo. Mix one teaspoon each of vinegar and honey with one egg. Beat them together well. Massage the mixture into the scalp. Then wrap the hair in a hot towel for twenty minutes, before washing the hair. Your hair will have more body and look shiny and manageable.



PUJA GUPTA

It's that time of the year and festive cheer can be felt in the air! In addition to the merriment, most Indians look forward to buying products they have been eyeing all year. Considered to be an auspicious time to make big-

ticket purchases or begin a new venture, the festive season features discounts galore. One of the most common purchases made by consumers is jewelry.

Buying jewelry, particularly gold, has been woven into our tradition and is viewed as customary to buy gold jewelry during the festive sea-

Buying gold during festive season?

son. However, with volatile prices and COVID-19 continuing its onslaught, there are some key factors to weigh in before purchasing gold this year, says Rupesh Jain, Founder & CEO of Candere, an online jewellery brand.

Go digital

The days when people used to visit jewellery stores with their families to buy gold are long gone. COVID-19 has resulted in the world shifting towards contactless and digital purchases; buying gold is no exception. Purchasing or selling gold digitally has never been easier and people are gravitating towards digital buying amidst the pandemic. Since gold will always remain an asset to the buyer, they needn't be afraid to purchase it during this time. Although, one should always

check the price before purchasing to ensure that they are making a profit rather than paying more than they should.

Check the hallmark

When buying gold, a BIS (Bureau of Indian Standards) hallmark is the most crucial element. When purchasing gold jewellery, it is imperative to look for 22K, 18K, and 14K gold as advised by the BIS. Ensuring that the jewellery meets the standards set by the BIS will not only allow you to buy the best quality gold but also let its resale value be unaffected by quality issues, Jain points out.

Look for the best schemes

The world is going through challenging times and there may be some hesitancy surrounding the purchase of gold due to factors

such as viability, fluctuating prices, etc. Therefore, it is best to look for brands offering feasible plans, thereby making purchasing gold easier, he underlines. For instance, plans such as the DGRP (Double Gold Rate Protection) ensure that customers can purchase gold for the lowest price by freezing the rates and make the purchase later. Shopping online gives consumers the advantage of booking the rate of gold as per the booking date's prices, benefiting them more, and allowing them sufficient time to purchase after booking.

Buying gold will never become obsolete as gold offers financial security apart from being an accessory. Become a smart buyer by following the simple steps mentioned above and make the most out of your purchase.

Cheer up your home decor with sustainable products

Sustainability would be the face of the future. It is crucial to think of how things are made, how they are used and how they can be recycled. Nowadays, interior designers place a lot of importance on green design and sustainable decor. Sustainability is the process of using resources to meet the demands of the present generation without compromising the needs of the future generation. Sustainability begins at home. It implies using sustainable materials, recyclable fixtures and eco-friendly equipment to decorate your living space.

Anni Sata, founder of Amouve, organic bedding and bath brand in India said, "You may adopt a minimalistic or lovely clutter approach. You can bring sustainability through any design approach."

Houseplants and terrariums

A green space is very relaxing and airy. However, most houses are apartments with little or no greenery around. You could design your living space with small pots of plants hanging from the ceiling or include a diverse terrarium full of plants in your living room. They balance the lighting in the room and make the space more breathable. It flushes out the toxic elements from the room. It encourages you to be more nurturing, caring and patient. For those who live alone, fostering house plants are a great way to jazz up your living space and also develop a sense of responsibility.

Organic cotton bed sheets and towels

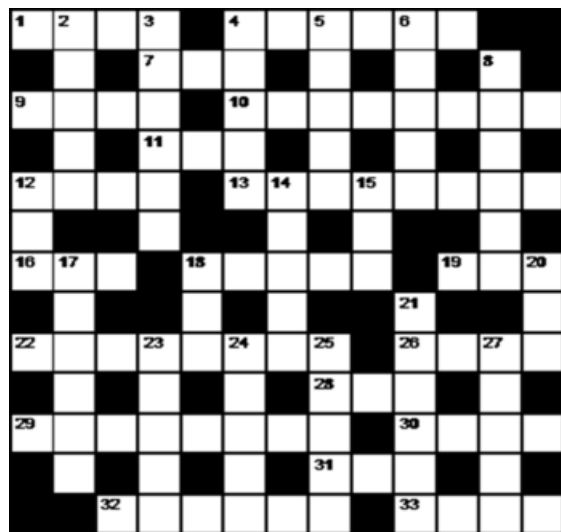
Organic cotton bed sheets are

made with utmost care, free from any toxic chemicals. Organic bed sheets are sustainable and recyclable. They are also very eco-friendly. They use up less resources during preparation and maintain their quality throughout use. They are the perfect touch of that pristine, crisp and neat flavor to your room. Along with pure organic cotton bed sheets, opt for organic pillows like those made of natural tree grown Kapok fiber and Neem infused herbs.

Organic cotton towels are also recyclable, sustainable and eco-friendly. They are manufactured without any harmful substances. They are available in a variety of colours. You could hang a string of lights or junk knick knacks over them or beside them. However, keep the colour combination of the room in mind. If your walls are in pastel shades, you ought to choose warm tones of towels.

Knick knacks and accessories

You could include a variety of recyclable and sustainable artifacts in your room. You could include lamp shades made of paper pulp, wooden jars or shelves made of reclaimed wood, handmade paper pads, rugs made of jute, etc. These would add a degree of oomph and class to your room. It would also fulfill your sustainability and environment goals. Installing a light dimmer would highlight parts of the rooms and also save energy. You could support your local artists by buying their artwork and keep craftsmanship alive. Sustainability is a choice. It is based on small changes. Little changes pave the way for a big impact.



SOLUTION TO NOVEMBER 12

CROSSWORD

Across

- 1 Recedes (4)
- 4 Brawl (6)
- 7 Able or competent (3)
- 9 Slightly open, "Raja" anagram ? (4)
- 10 Trowned, beat soundly (8)
- 11 Skater Midori (3)
- 12 Swallow nervously (4)
- 13 Best, to Buchanan (8)
- 16 Chap (3)
- 18 Ringo ____ of the Beatles (5)
- 19 Tokyo's former name (3)
- 22 Theatrical (8)
- 26 Injure (4)
- 28 Regret (3)
- 29 Of the third order (8)
- 30 Barbecue entree (4)
- 31 Each (3)
- 32 Set beforehand (6)
- 33 Jabber (4)

Down

- 2 Small, elegant (5)
- 3 Writing (6)
- 4 Composer ____ Dvorak (5)
- 5 Medium for debate (5)
- 6 Beasts of burden (5)
- 8 Stank (6)
- 12 A booking for musicians (3)
- 14 Fine fiddle (5)
- 15 Go wrong (3)
- 17 Unwind (6)
- 18 Body of water (3)
- 20 Table scrap (3)
- 21 Fortified wine (6)
- 23 Engine (5)
- 24 Melts (5)
- 25 Burial vault (5)
- 27 Violin's ancestor (5)

SUDOKU



SOLUTION TO NOVEMBER 12

NEWS ROUNDUP

Explore womanhood through 'myriad' stories

It was only after being faced with her own set of problems and struggles that author Vandita Mishra started taking the big and small conversations about womanhood seriously. "It was only then that I realised the myriad of complexities that can be associated with this one human gender," she writes in the preface of her novel 'Myriad of Personae' that takes a reader through the life stories of different women.

Narrating a series of stories inspired by the real lives of multiple women, the book is told by a narrator who, unhappy by her own life after her wedding, embarks upon this journey to meet many other women in order to learn more about womanhood.

The stories includes some which are heart wrenching and shocking and others which are more relatable to most women. It's the narrator's story which keeps the reader connected to the entire book. After having met these women who range from one who has been trafficked for prostitution, to another married to an IAS officer on the condition she'll be a housewife, the narrator is still not unable to find her own answers.

Meandering through the narratives of several women, the book begins to draw to a conclusion when the narrator goes to a key figure in her own life. Thus, the end takes her to her own grandmother, who as per her has lived the life of a complete woman. It is by learning more about her grandmother's life and discussing her own life issues with her that the narrator is able to understand womanhood better.



SC insulted in Arnab case: Comedian Kamra in trouble

MUMBAI

ATTORNEY General K K Venugopal on Thursday granted consent for initiation of contempt proceedings against stand-up comic artist Kunal Kamra for his tweets which allegedly criticised the Supreme Court after the top court granted interim bail to TV journalist Arnab Goswami. 'The tweets which I am extracting below are not only in bad taste but clearly cross the line between humour and contempt of the court,' said Venugopal in his letter.

1. The Supreme Court of this country is the most Supreme joke of this country.

2. The pace at which the Supreme Court operates in matters of "National Interests" it's time we replace Mahatma Gandhi's photo with Harish Salve's photo.

3. DY Chandrachud is a flight attendant serving champagne to first class passengers after they're fast tracked through, while commoners don't know if they'll ever be boarded or seated, let alone served.

4. All lawyers with a spine must stop the use of the prefix "Hon'ble" while referring to the Supreme Court or its judges. Honour has left the building long back

Actor Kangana Ranaut's lawyer Rizwan Siddiquee had earlier sought Attorney General KK Venugopal's permission for initiating criminal contempt proceedings against comedian Kamra over defamatory tweets against the Supreme Court

In his complaint, Siddiquee has stated that Kamra, through his words, had grossly undermined the authority of the Supreme Court through his Twitter account which has 1.7 million followers. He further added that if action is not taken against Kamra, it might empower other influencers with millions of followers to pass "reckless allegations and diabolical statements against the judges and the court who do not decide cases in their favour or in accordance to their liking and this trend would soon spell the death knell of an independent judiciary."

Kamra, in a series of tweets, had criticised the apex court's order of granting Arnab interim bail in abetment to suicide case.



Arnab withdraws bail plea

MUMBAI

JOURNALIST Arnab Goswami on Thursday withdrew his bail plea filed before the sessions court at Alibaug in Raigad district in connection with an abetment of suicide case of an interior designer. Meanwhile, Additional Sessions Judge R G Maleshetti on Thursday adjourned till November 23 order on the revision application filed by the Alibaug police challenging a November 4 local magistrate's order refusing police custody of Goswami and the other accused,

and sending them to judicial remand. The sessions court will on November 23 also hear the regular bail pleas filed by the two other accused Feroze Shaikh and Nitish Sarda. Lawyers of the accused persons told the sessions court that since the trio has already been granted interim bail, the revision application has become infructuous. The prosecution, however, argued the court could still pass its order on the revision application. The police, in their application, had sought the sessions court to remand the three accused to police custody for interrogation.

NCB quizzes Arjun Rampal's girlfriend

MUMBAI

FOR the second consecutive day, the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) on Thursday grilled South African model Gabriella Demetriades for six hours, while her boyfriend, actor Arjun Rampal, is likely to be questioned on Friday, official sources said.

Gabriella, 33, was also questioned for over six hours on Wednesday as part of the NCB's ongoing investigations into the Bollywood-drugs mafia nexus which is under a scanner since the past three months.



A doctor instructs a student (not in pic) on how to self-administer a rapid COVID-19 test at Weber State University in US

TN cancels decision to reopen schools

CHENNAI

DAYS after seeking the views of parents, the Tamil Nadu government on Thursday reversed its move to reopen schools from November 16 for classes 9-12 and said they shall continue to remain closed. While colleges were also earlier scheduled to function from November 16, the government said colleges and varsities shall reopen from December 2 only for research scholars and final year postgraduate students of science and technology streams.

"The opening of colleges for all other courses will be announced later," the government said in an official release, adding hostels would be opened only for those students who shall resume studies from next month. Disclosing the outcome of state-wide consultations held with parents of private, government and aided schools on November 9 on starting classes for the 2020-21 academic year for higher standards, the government said the opinion was divided. Parents of some schools wanted the institutions to reopen, but others were against such a move in view of the coronavirus pandemic and the school education department analysed the opinions holistically.

BJP MLA passes away

THE BJP MLA from Salt in Almora district, Uttarakhand, Surendra Singh Jeena, who was undergoing treatment for Covid-19 at a hospital in New Delhi, died early Thursday, a party leader said. The 50-year-old Jeena was admitted to the Sir Gangaram Hospital nearly a week ago.

India's tally inches closer to 87 lakh

WITH 47,905 new coronavirus infections and 550 deaths in the past 24 hours, India's overall tally stood at 86,83,916 on Thursday as the fatality toll touched 1,28,121, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare said. Currently, there are 4,89,294 active cases, whereas 80,66,501 patients have been cured and discharged so far.

The recovery rate stands at 92.79 per cent, and the fatality rate is 1.48 per cent, the Ministry said. The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) conducted 11,93,358 sample tests on Wednesday, taking the total tested samples to 12,19,62,509.

US hits new all-time high

THE United States hit a record-setting 136,325 new daily cases of the novel coronavirus disease, the latest data from Johns Hopkins University revealed. The US has reported more than 10.3 million cases of COVID-19 and more than 240,800 deaths caused by the disease, data showed on Wednesday. The third wave of COVID-19 is underway in the US as winter approaches. Numerous US states are facing strained resources at medical facilities, such as shortages of medical personnel and hospital beds, forcing additional lockdowns in the communities considered hotspots.

MIM's entry in WB may spell trouble for non-BJP parties

NEW DELHI/KOLKATA

BUOYED by its good showing in the 2020 Bihar Assembly elections in which it won five seats, the AIMIM is now planning to throw its hat in the electoral ring in the West Bengal Assembly elections slated in the first half of 2021, which could spell trouble for non-BJP parties in the eastern state. All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimin or AIMIM, led by Asaduddin Owaisi, put up an impressive show in Bihar by bagging more than 1.24 per cent votes while contesting 24 seats.

The AIMIM not only won five seats in Bihar, but also played the political spoilsport in an

equal number of Assembly constituencies, which could have tilted the balance in a tight situation like in the new Bihar Assembly.

This prompted Congress West Bengal unit President Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury to say that "the Grand Alliance in Bihar lost because of AIMIM". The AIMIM's entry in West Bengal will make the Trinamool Congress, the Congress and the Left jittery as a resurgent Owaisi, after winning seats in Seemanchal area of Bihar bordering West Bengal, could now cut into their poll prospects in the latter state.

As many as 90 segments in 294-member West Bengal Assembly have sizeable Muslim voters, who can be a deciding factor in any poll

battle. Even if the AIMIM may not win many seats in Bengal, it can surely play a Bihar-like spoilsport for the TMC and the Congress.

Chowdhury's sentiments are echoed by the TMC leaders who allege that Owaisi is out to benefit the BJP. On the other hand, Owaisi denies the charge and said that he was running a political party and will contest elections wherever the party wishes. Muslims in West Bengal account for 27 per cent of the total voters, a majority of them going along with TMC and the Congress. The BJP won 18 Lok Sabha seats in the 2019 general elections and any further division of Muslim votes in Assembly elections will only benefit it.

Will try early supply of S-400 to India, says Russia

NEW DELHI

RUSSIA on Thursday said it was working "very hard" to advance the supply of the S-400 surface-to-air missiles to India even though the delivery of the first batch of the weapons system is scheduled by the end of next year.

At an online media briefing, Russian Deputy Chief of Mission Roman Babushkin also said that both sides are working on a mutual logistics support agreement and close to seal a multi-billion dollar deal under which an Indo-Russian joint venture will produce 200 Kamov Ka-226T attack helicopters for the Indian Army.

'Paatal Lok' actor Basra found hanging

DHARAMSHALA

ACTOR Asif Basra, a familiar face in several movies and TV shows including "Jab We Met", "Kai Po Che!" and "Paatal Lok", was found hanging in a private residential complex here on Thursday, police said.

He was 53. "He hanged himself around 12-12.30 today. We are investigating the matter. We have sent the body for post-mortem... Prima facie it is a case of suicide," Kangra Senior Superintendent of Police Vimukt Ranjan told reporters here. The actor's body was recovered by police officials, he said. Further details are awaited, Ranjan added.

Basra had reportedly leased a property in McLeodganj, Upper

Dharamshala, about five-six years ago and visited the place regularly. The news of the sudden death of the character actor, which comes months after Bollywood star Sushant Singh Rajput was found hanging at his residence in Mumbai on June 14, led to shock in the industry with several of his colleagues expressing their grief. "What? This is too shocking!! Shot with him just before Lockdown!!! Oh My God!!!" tweeted actor Manoj Bajpayee. Director Hansal Mehta was equally stunned. "Asif Basra! Can't be true... This is just very, very sad." In his over two-decade career, Basra played supporting parts in many critically-acclaimed features such as "Black Friday", "Parzania" and "Outsourced".

UK PM's top aide resigns

LONDON

THERE are widespread reports of a power struggle at the heart of the UK government as one of Prime Minister Boris Johnson's closest aides has announced his resignation as the Director of Communications.

Lee Cain, 39, announced he would step down as Johnson's top media aide on Wednesday night after ministers and advisers, including Johnson's finance Carrie Symonds, are said to have protested over his planned promotion to Chief of Staff.

Cain is also a close aide of fellow Brexiteer and Downing Street Chief Strategy Adviser Dominic Cummings, another one of Johnson's most influential and high-profile top team members. "After careful consideration I have this evening resigned as No. 10 Director of Communications and will leave the post at the end of the year," reads Cain's resignation letter.

NDA won by deceit, claims Tejashwi

PATNA

RJD's Tejashwi Yadav was on Thursday elected the leader of the Grand Alliance legislature party and promptly hit out at the NDA, claiming it won the assembly elections through "deceit".

Yadav mocked Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, whose JD(U) has been relegated to the third position in terms of seat tally, and wondered whether the latter would "heed his conscience and give up his attachment to the chair".

He was obviously referring to Kumar resigning and snapping ties with the Grand Alliance before returning to the NDA fold in 2017 after Tejashwi's name had cropped up in a money launder-

ing case. Kumar had then said he was stepping down after heeding his conscience (atma ki awaaz). Yadav claimed the people's mandate was for a change but it was manipulated.

"It was undoubtedly a mandate for change. The NDA won by dhan, bal and chhal (money, muscle power and deceit)," he alleged.

Asked whether the Mahagathabandhan would try to muster numbers to form its own government, he said, "We will go to the people who gave the mandate. If they express such a wish we will act accordingly."

Quoting election data, he claimed the NDA got only 12,270 votes more than the Mahagathabandhan.

Arundhati's book dropped: Varsity flayed

CHENNAI

THE DMK on Thursday condemned the decision of the Tirunelveli-based Manonmaniam Sundaranar University to withdraw Arundhati Roy's book 'Walking With The Comrades' from its syllabus. The University withdrew the book on a complaint by the BJP's student wing Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) that the book supports violence and Maoists.

In a statement issued here, DMK's Deputy General Secretary A.Raja said it is for the Vice Chancellor, professors and education experts to decide as to what should be included as the syllabus.

He said the book was there for three years and has been removed after a complaint by the ABVP.

www.kapilchits.com

SINCE 1981
మీ కలలకు సాకారం

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

Return of the pandemic in Italy

CALL it a second wave or even the third, but, Coronavirus has come back with vengeance in Italy sending alarm signals loud and clear to the world that it is no push over. The total number of confirmed coronavirus cases in Italy passed the symbolic one million mark in November.

Italy recorded almost 33,000 new infections in the last 24 hours to reach 1,028,424 in total since the pandemic began. Deaths are also rising fast, with another 623 reported, taking the total to 42,953. Italy, one of the nations first hit during the pandemic, saw its deadliest day in over six months with 580 reported deaths on November 6. And that record has been broken this week. Italy was the first in Europe to be hit by the outbreak earlier this year, spark-

ing an unprecedented national lockdown that curbed infection rates but devastated the economy.

After a lull over the summer, cases have been on the rise again in recent weeks, in step with much of the continent. Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte's government last week brought in a nationwide overnight curfew and early closing for bars and restaurants, shutting them altogether and further restricting residents' movements in regions where the infection rates are highest. These measures are not enough to keep the infection under check.

In fact, Italy seems to know this and yet is afraid to invite people's backlash by the imposition of yet another lockdown. Several regions, including hard-

hit Lombardy, have been declared "red zones" and placed under rules similar to those seen in lockdown. But medical experts are pushing for tougher national measures, amid warnings that health services are already buckling under the pressure. Italian media reports the government is looking at whether or not lockdown may now be necessary.

In an interview with La Stampa newspaper Conte said he was working "to avoid the closure of the entire national territory". "We are constantly monitoring the evolution of the contagion, the reactivity and the capacity of our health system to respond," he said. "Above all we are confident that we will soon see the effects of the restrictive measures already adopted."

Italy is the 10th country to pass the million cases mark, after the United States, India, Brazil, Russia, France, Spain, Argentina, the United Kingdom and Colombia. The problem is not only with the onset of winter, but also with the indiscriminate opening of the bars and restaurants. People have started flocking the 'party times' from the day one of the reopening of the cities and marriages have become the normal crowded affairs. Italians have forgotten that they have the highest fatality rate on the continent, at over 4.18 per cent.

This should not only be an eye-opener for Italy but for India too. The way we are reverting to our pre-Covid-19 lifestyle is so alarming that we too might encounter a similar situation. Delhi is reeling under a new wave already. Let us be cautious. Economy should be taken care of, no doubt. But, life is more precious.



Indian sunflowers from Bengaluru bloom in Uganda

N B HOMBAL

INDIAN sunflowers are blooming in Uganda, thanks to University of Agricultural Sciences in Bengaluru (UAS-B) transferring their hybrid seed know-how to the East African country, an official said on Wednesday. "We have recently transferred the germplasm technology of hybrid sunflower variety (KBSH-53) to Uganda, as another variety (KBSH-41) is already popular in the African country," the university's Research Director Y.G. Shadakshari told IANS here. The seed know-how was transferred under an agreement between the two countries through the National Bio-diversity Authority at Centre and the state. With modified equatorial climate, Uganda is a landlocked country around Kenya, Sudan, Congo, Rwanda and Tanzania in East-Central Africa.

"Uganda has shown interest in our variety of sunflowers, whose edible oil is used for cooking a variety of dishes. Seed varieties KBSH-53 and KBSH-78 were developed as part of the agreement. The new variety (KBSH-53) will be used for cultivation after it is cleared through field tests," said Shadakshari.

Once the Ugandan regulator certifies the Indian variety, its seeds will be given to the local farmers for growing the sunflowers, which bloom and blossom facing the sun. "The sunflower sector in Uganda made a significant contribution to its economy, as is evident from 2017 data, when 2.4 lakh hectares of land was used for growing the edible flowers," recalled Shadakshari. Sunflower is used to make assorted oils, animal feeds and its seeds are used as snacks.

"Though sunflowers are popular in India as cooking oil and animal feed, its seeds are used for snacks in Uganda, where the demand for the Indian variety has been growing," asserted Shadakshari.

As the maturity period of sunflowers is 120-150 days after sowing and planting, the farmers have to factor the growing period for harvesting the crop, but the new variety KBSH-53 can be harvested within 85-90 days. It is also pest resistant.

"Sunflowers grow best on well drained, high water-holding capacity soil with a neutral pH 6.5-7.5. The optimum soil classification for them is loam, silty loam and silty clay loam soils," the director pointed out. He added that the University has not demanded any royalty from them, instead it has issued a licence for a fixed sum to allow them to use this technology for a period of five years.

Another UAS-B scientist on the condition of anonymity said that the technology had to be transferred due to cultivation of sunflower drastically came down from somewhere about 50 lakh hectares about a decade ago to mere 1.7 lakh hectares but still Karnataka is the largest sunflower growing state in the country.

"Over the last one decade, farmers who were sowing sunflower have migrated to other profitable less work intensive crops like cotton and maize, as a result of this the UAS-B could not supply the required quantity of seeds that were in demand by Uganda," he explained.

Uganda's seed procurement demand was annually about 350 to 400 quintals as sunflower farmers switched over to other crops, the university thought it was appropriate to transfer its seed technology to Uganda. Sunflower production performance on reduced agricultural capacity soil, such as those affected by salinity, drought or wetness is not ideal, the director added.

Dec 14



The logical end to Donald Trump's stolen election fantasy

NIKHILA NATARAJAN

IF the centre holds, US president Donald Trump's ongoing wrecking ball act on the legitimacy of the 2020 election comes with a sell-by date smack in the middle of his lame duck tenure: December 14.

Although Trump's use of the awesome power of the White House to question Joe Biden's election victory remains firmly in the category of a mighty sulk, it retains the razor-thin potential to become "menacing," legal experts are warning.

First up, December 8 is the deadline for resolving election disputes at the state level.

The people behind the 538-member electoral college math that sank Donald Trump in the US 2020 election must ink a decisive sign off on the final count by December 14 and then the US Congress counts it all up on January 6, 2021 in a joint session.

Although three states - North Carolina, Georgia and Arizona - are yet to be called, Biden has already won more than 270 electoral votes, the winning number.

Georgia, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, Nevada will all have certified results on the ready by November 30 or earlier. Georgia is in the thick of a hand recount.

January 6 will be the day when the current vice president announces the results and refers to Kamala Harris, America's first-ever Indian and Black American woman in the White House as "Madam Vice President."

Even if Trump continues to rail that "I won by a lot" and attack what he calls a "rigged" election, the December 14 and January 6 dates are the equivalent of documents signed in triplicate by both sides.

"No, it's not ultimately going to work, at least not if working is defined as allowing President Trump to maintain power in the face of expressed voter will," writes Benjamin Wittes, editor of Lawfare, in a November 11 blog titled "How Hard Is It to Overturn an American Election?"

Yet, Wittes cautions that things could spin out of control. One way that could begin to turn is if electors stonewall on certifying the results: "It would be, in other words, a very heavy lift. And Republicans would have to pull it off in at least two states in order to get Trump across the finish line."

As of Thursday morning, EST, more than 77 million Americans have voted for Biden, while Trump has the support of more than 72 million. Both these numbers have shattered all American election turnout records so far. America's news networks called the election for Joe Biden at 11:30 am on November 7. Both Biden and Harris delivered their victory speeches the same night at Wilmington, Delaware.

Dubbaka by-election - a game changer



Taraka Rama Rao, senior party leader T Harish Rao have learnt no valuable lessons from their losses in 2019 general elections. It is not very easy to learn, while in power. There will be ample time to reflect, when one loses it all.

KCR and KTR did not even campaign in Dubbaka with misplaced confidence that victory would be a 'cake-walk'. Not considering an election unworthy to campaign is sheer arrogance. Especially, if one is the president or working president of a political party.

To slight an election, to under estimate opposition parties, to presume victory before hand, often leads to such political failures. Arrogance in politics, is quite expensive and certainly suicidal.

One doesn't lose every time

In a democracy, when one fights an election and loses, it doesn't mean he will lose every time. M Raghunandan Rao has lost couple of elections in this assembly, but he can't be written off forever. Voters can turnaround, if they find a candidate is more persuasive than the others. This has been proven many times in the past, and it has been proven all over again in this election.

BJP's winning spirit

BJP state president Bandi Sanjay's full-scale push to win this seat and party cadres resolve to give their very best have yielded this result, apart from the candidate's diligence. This win also established the fact, BJP can override Congress in Telangana State as a clear alternative to TRS in the future elections.

BJP across the nation in around 12 states has adopted the same persuasive grit with voters, to win most of the seats in byelections. Winning back Bihar to form the state government is a phenomenal feat. BJP's rise over its partner JD (U) in seat share, highlights its increasing foot print in Bihar.

Congress - a liability

Congress party has lost its



BJP across the nation in around 12 states has adopted the same persuasive grit with voters, to win most of the seats in byelections. Winning back Bihar to form the state government is a phenomenal feat. BJP's rise over its partner JD (U) in seat share, highlights its increasing foot print in Bihar. The party has a treasure of experiences from across the nation in 40 years of its play in the political ecosystem of India. Rising from two MP seats in 1984 General Election to 303 MP seats in 2019, BJP has come a long way

voter-base across the board. Dubbaka byelection has established that Congress no more has 'vote-banks' it can bank on. The erosion of its traditional vote base is complete. Even across the nation, Congress has lost its support and is struggling to survive. Congress party electoral strike rate is at its worst ever.

In Bihar, Congress party has become a liability to alliance partner RJD with its ultra-weak performance. If this trend continues, no regional

party would want to be in alliance with Congress in future elections. Congress party's negotiating power in alliance seat-share has plummeted to a new low, after Bihar elections.

There are red flags all over the place for Congress party, as massive migration of leaders to other parties and BJP is a certainty now. Congress can blame no one than their own national leadership at the helm for the ongoing devastation of party's construct.

TRS party decline

What goes up, has to come down. It applies to everything and everyone. TRS party has seen stupendous rise since 2014 and has even won a full mandate for the second time in Telangana in 2018. If KCR and his family considers this rise as a 'perennial phenomenon', they will be woken up from that dream sooner or later.

TRS party has massive internal bickering and is moving towards an implosion. GHMC elections will be 'a mid-term test' for TRS to prove everything is right inside the party. If leaders don't align seriously towards the party's objective, TRS is bound to lose GHMC elections. When that happens, it would be the beginning of the end for TRS regime in the state of Telangana.

BJP is confident that it will ride on the wave of Dubbaka election result into GHMC elections. BJP has found a chink in the armour of TRS and more mistakes from the incumbent party, along with incremental ground swell will lead BJP into more victories ahead.

(The writer is the chief spokesperson of BJP, organisational strategist & internationally reputed leadership coach)

LETTERS

Festival feelings...

IN these dark times
Of corona virus
When the whole humanity
Is in the fatal grip
Of lurking fear
Of the haunting virus,
Festivals come unnoticed,
Festivals go uncelebrated,

But Deepavali comes
Hailed to be celebrated
With its festive splendour
And radiant charm,
For it's the festival of lights
That, with rows of lamps
In all homes, dispels
All gloom, brightening all lives,
Bringing smiles to the visages
Of people of all ages,

Deepavali celebrates
The triumph of light
Over the dark,
The victory of the good
Over the evil;
Let's all come out
Of gloom, fear, negativity
And pessimism
And light the lamps
Of hope, positivity
And fortitude to drive away
The murk enveloping
Human lives plagued
By the pandemic

With firm, unshakable
Faith in the power
And grace of the divine,

May this Deepavali
Usher in the radiance
Of happiness, peace
And prosperity into all lives!
Dr Venugopala Rao Kaki, Kakinada

Supreme Court and Arnab Goswami case

IN the issue of interim bail to Arnab Goswami, editor in chief, Republic TV, there are two things which need serious concern by all. One is conflict of interests within the law pursuits, especially Judges. And the other is the indiscriminate inapplicability of law for all the citizens.

It is unfortunate that Supreme Court remarks on High Court of Maharashtra were more or less a castigation. There was clear division in the opinions of High court and Supreme Court. This belittles the sanctity of law and justice in India. Judiciary must never become part of executive.

Home minister, a constitutional authority came on to media and openly opposed the action by another constitutional body, Maharashtra police. How far it is desirable? Home Minister's stand is vindicated by SC judgment! One thing must be kept in mind that Arnab Goswami is neither a famous politician nor a most wanted criminal. He was arrested as a normal person not as a journalist. Hence special consideration to him paved way for genuine questions.
Dushyant Dave, President, Bar Associ-

ation of Supreme Court, has rightly pointed out on the procedure followed by the Registrar, Supreme Court of India, in allowing Arnab Goswami bail petition on an urgent basis. Dave specifically mentioned about several other cases which are awaiting the Registrar's nod for listing in the same court.

For example; Stan Swamy, Dalit rights activist, 84-year-old, who was arrested in Bhima Koregaon case made an appeal to court seeking a direction to jail authorities to provide him a straw to sip water and liquid food as he was a patient of Parkinson disease and unable to hold the glass or plate with shaking hands. But court sought one month time. Hence equality before law as per Article 14 of our constitution must be upheld by supreme court first.

G Thirupathaiah, Hyderabad

II

THE Supreme Court on Wednesday granted interim bail to Republic TV Editor-in-chief who was arrested last week by Alibaug police in connection with an abetment to suicide case. Earlier he was denied bail by the Bombay High Court. The Apex Court in its ruling said that the personal liberties of citizens and the duty of the constitutional courts to protect them from whimsical individual caprices and arbitrary state action. "The high court erred in rejecting the bail application for grant of interim bail to Arnab Goswami", the Supreme Court said.



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2.72L more women get Cheyutha

- Ministers Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy and Botcha Satyanarayana release Rs 510 cr under Phase-2 to those beneficiaries who were left out in the first phase
- Under the first phase, the govt credited Rs 18,750 each to 21,00,189 beneficiaries coming to total of 3,937.90 cr
- Ministers say the State govt has taken the responsibility of empowering women and turn them into entrepreneurs by encouraging to start small scale businesses

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

MINISTERS Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy and Botcha Satyanarayana on Thursday credited Rs 510 crore to 2.72 lakh beneficiaries under YSR Cheyutha second phase, covering those who couldn't make it in first phase.

Speaking on the occasion, panchayat raj and rural development minister Ramachandra Reddy said that Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy has redefined welfare and empowerment of women with the implementation of various welfare schemes. Pre-



Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Minister Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy releasing YSR Cheyutha assistance to beneficiaries at Panchayat Raj Commissioner office in Tadepalli on Thursday. Municipal Administration and Urban Development Minister Botcha Satyanarayana, Panchayat Raj Commissioner Gopal Krishna Dwivedi are also seen.

vious governments had provided welfare initiatives only for the women in the age group of 25-45 years or pension support to elderly women but never considered to support the middle-aged women. The Chief Minister identified the lapse and thus brought in YSR Cheyutha scheme providing financial assistance to women between 45-60 years belonging to SC, ST, BC and minorities.

In the first phase of Cheyutha, the state government had credited Rs 18,750 financial assis-

tance each to 21,00,189 beneficiaries and released a total of 3,937.90 crore. The Chief Minister had asked all those who were left out in the first phase to apply within a month, and now all those eligible women are provided with the financial assistance, he said.

A total of 23.72 lakh women were benefited through YSR Cheyutha and Rs 4,447.91 crore has been credited to their accounts.

Municipal administration minister Botcha Satyanarayana

said the government has also taken the responsibility to empower women and turn them into entrepreneurs by encouraging them to start small scale businesses. In regard to this, the state government made pacts with top companies like ITC, Amul, Reliance, and Procter & Gamble and coordinated with banks for granting loans, to give a helping hand to women entrepreneurs. He urged the women to use the money for economic empowerment.

Modi unveils Vivekananda's statue in JNU

continued from P1

So, when the question is about the national integrity and interests, then taking a decision under the burden of one's ideology harms the nation, Modi said.

"It is wrong to believe that one will think and act in a certain framework in matters of national interest solely because this is what one's ideology says," he said. Jawaharlal Nehru University has long been considered a citadel of the Left, with student unions affiliated to it calling the shots in the campus.

The BJP and Hindutva groups, including RSS' student wing ABVP, have often claimed that groups with "anti-national" sentiments have found support from the Left-affiliated groups in the campus. There have been violent clashes between them at times in past. The decision to instal a life-size statue of Vivekananda, a widely-respected Hindu monk who the prime minister considers an idol, in the campus is imbued with rich symbolism.

The statue, Modi expressed confidence, will teach people

immense dedication to the nation and intense love for our country which, he added, is the prime message of Vivekananda's life. The statue will inspire us to realise his dream of a strong and prosperous India, Modi said, noting that he had said at the start of 20th century that the next century will belong to India.

Referring to the renowned university's culture of debate and discussion of different ideas, he said they can now also do it in the statue's shadow. In his address, Modi said good reforms were earlier considered bad politics but now it is good politics because his government's intentions and commitment are pure, and it has prepared a "protection shield" for the poor and other vulnerable sections before carrying them out.

People have endorsed our reform measures with their votes, he said, suggesting JNU students to undertake research on how reforms undertaken by his government have drawn popular support unlike earlier.

In a swipe at earlier governments, he said the poor were

given only slogans but efforts to include them in financial and other system were never made, and they remained "neglected, unconnected and financially excluded". His government has provided them with houses, electricity, drinking water, digital banking, fast internet connection, Modi said, describing these measures protection shield for the poor which has given wings to their aspirations.

The prime minister said the statue in the campus will inspire everyone and instill courage and compassion that Swami Vivekananda wanted to see in everyone. "Swami Vivekanda wanted that education in the country should be such that it provides self-confidence to individuals and makes them 'atmanirbhar' in every way. The new National Education Policy is on the same line and has inclusion at its core," he added. India's young population is its brand ambassador across the world, he said, adding that they are expected to be not merely be proud of its its ancient identity but also to carve a new identity for the country in the 21st century.

The statue's unveiling by Modi drew protests from the JNU Students Union. Students flashed posters of "Modi go back" and "we want answers" ahead of the unveiling of the statue by him. He has chosen this university for installing the statue but whenever students raise their voice on any issue, everybody comes "hounding" and demands that the university should be shut, said JNU Students Union president Aishe Ghosh, who was leading the protest at the varsity's north gate.

N Sai Balaji, former JNUSU president and national president of left-backed All India Students Association (AISA), asked, "Why is the PM not coming to inaugurate a hostel on the campus? Why is he not making a speech about students who have not got their scholarships? Our library has had a 80 per cent budget cut. Why is he not coming to announce that the funds will be sanctioned?" Earlier in the day, the union had written an open letter to the prime minister saying they have profound disagreements with his idea India.

BJP warns against taking over of Appanna lands

- ▶ Party State president Somu Veerajulu alleges that the YSRCP govt is eyeing Simchal temple lands for tis proposed capital in Vizag
- ▶ Declares that BJP will not allow an inch of temple lands to be taken by the govt
- ▶ Veerajulu and Sunil Deodhar call upon the BJP cadres to get ready to repeat Dubbaka Dhamaka in Tirupaty Lok Sabha byelection too

TIRUPATI



Andhra Pradesh BJP president Somu Veerajulu along with other leaders of the party addressing the media in Tirupati on Thursday

ALLEGING that the state government is eyeing Simhachalam temple lands for the purpose of the capital city proposed in Vizag, BJP state president Somu Veerajulu said that his party will not allow taking of even an inch of the temple lands for its purposes.

Speaking to the media here on Thursday, the state BJP president accused YSRCP government of following the footsteps of previous TDP government with regard to Appanna temple lands. The TDP tried to give the temple lands to the encroachers in the name of regularisation and now it is the turn of YSRCP regime to take away the temple lands for its purposes.

In this connection, the senior BJP leader said that the endowments department turned inimical to Hindu temples and stressed on freeing the temples from the control of the department for their independent functioning to serve the pilgrim interests and promoting Sanathana Dharma more. "If BJP comes to power, we will even consider doing away with the endowments department," he said criticising both TDP and YSRCP for keeping the temples under government grip.

Demanding that the TTD management enhance the allocation for Sanathana Hindu Dharma Pracharam to Rs 500 crore as against the current Rs 100 crore, he suggested setting up of a committee of Hindu saints, religious leaders and those keen on promoting Hinduism as members of the committee to finalise a series of programmes for promotion of Hinduism in a big way.

He said his party would oppose TTD investing its deposits in government sureties.

Replying to a question, he reiterated his party's commitment for completion of Polavaram project and observed that they would see the project is complete with Central funds.

Earlier, Veerajulu along with party national secretary and AP state co-in-charge Sunil Deodhar addressing party activists called on them to be prepared for repeating the Dubbaka Damaka in the Tirupati Lok Sabha byelection. "Jana Sena-BJP alliance will contest the byelection and see that the alliance win Tirupati seat

continuing the party's winning spree in the two Telugu states," he said amid loud cheers from the party workers.

Lashing out at the YSRCP government, the two BJP leaders said that the government miserably failed to perform and stinking with rampant corruption.

Alleging that red sanders smuggling has increased manifolds while the sand mafia and land mafia were thriving in the YSRCP rule, Deodhar said the TDP and YSRCP were one and the same in looting the state and indulging in corruption.

Citing the increased attacks on temples and vandalising of Hindu places of worship, he said Hindu Sanathana Dharma is in danger in the state under YSRCP rule.

Without mincing words, he told the activities that mere zindabad will not fetch victory to the party in Tirupati Lok Sabha by election and wanted them to rededicate themselves to work tirelessly to win the election to see the party become a formidable force in the state.

GIVE JOBS, GET SUBSIDIES: FM TO COMPANIES

continued from P1

The condition would be adding a minimum of two new employees for establishments with up to 50 employees. Those establishments with more than 50 employees, would have to give a minimum of five new jobs.

The scheme would be operational till June 30, 2021. The Finance Minister also announced an extension of the Emergency

Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) till March 31, 2021. Under the scheme, fully guaranteed and collateral-free loans are provided to small and micro enterprises. Sitharaman also announced a guaranteed credit scheme for supporting stressed sectors.

The scheme would cover entities in 26 stressed sectors identified by the Kamath Committee plus healthcare sector

with credit outstanding of above Rs 50 crore and up to Rs 50 crore as on February 29, 2020. Additional credit of up to 20 per cent of outstanding as on February 29, 2020, would be given to entities in these sectors, she said. Tenor of additional credit would be five years, including one year of moratorium on principal repayment. Scheme would be available till March 31, 2021.

India needs 1.7b Covid vaccine doses for adult population

Continued from P1

The key vaccines India is banking on are from Oxford/AstraZeneca, Novavax, and J&J as the temperature range of these vaccines is about 2-8-degree Celsius (vs -20-degree Celsius for Moderna and -70-degree Celsius for Pfizer).

The key bottleneck is likely to be cold storage capacity. The Covid-19 vaccination will have to use a part of the infrastructure of the current immunisation programme (27,000 cold chain points catering to 600 million doses) and would need support of the private sector too.

Organised private cold chain companies can at best handle 250-300 million doses (bottleneck is refrigerated vans rather than storage). Further, the reach of private sector cold storage doesn't extend to the hinterland and for that another solution needs to be devised.

"Overall, with bottleneck on cold chain infrastructure, we estimate annual vaccinations may be just around 550-600 million doses. Skilled manpower required to administer 550-600 million doses is less than 1 lakh which should not prove to be a bottleneck," the report said.

"Our demand estimate for population to be vaccinated assumes 25 per cent of the population already being infected by March 2021 (most sero-studies already pointing to 20 per cent plus positive infection rate). Most of the global vaccines have done trials only on population set of above 12-15 years, as per current protocols,

and requirement of two doses per person (the exception is J&J vaccine which is a single dose vaccine). These assumptions lead to requirement of 1.7 billion doses, assuming that no repeat vaccinations are needed," the report added.

The government has already started preparing the database of priority beneficiaries. It has issued an advisory at district and state levels to prepare a database of both public and private healthcare workers, and subsequently upload it to the Covid-19 Vaccine Beneficiary Management System, which is currently under works.

The database of healthcare workers is expected to be finalised shortly, whereas the database of people above 50 years and frontline workers is already in place.

However, the key challenge would be to prepare the database of people with comorbidities, where the data is currently limited to screening of people at 48,000 health centers.

The number of Covid-19 cases in India currently stands at 8.6 million, but the growth in new cases has considerably slowed down to 0.6 per cent 5-day CDGR.

The average number of daily cases in the trailing week has dropped to 46,000 (vs 92,000 at peak), the report said. The recovery rate has also increased to 93 per cent, and the total number of active cases is less than half of the peak. These metrics point to a moderation in pandemic severity.

However, this may not reflect the actual underlying dis-

ease burden given that the latest nationwide sero-prevalence study, conducted between August 17 and September 22 in 70 districts across 21 states, found that 6.6 per cent of the total participants were exposed to SARS-CoV-2, while reported cases then were 0.3 per cent (of total population). This indicates that the actual infections could be 25 times the reported cases.

However, from India's perspective, the success of mRNA candidates would have little impact since they have more stringent cold chain requirements, with the Pfizer candidate requiring cold chain to operate at as low as -70-degree Celsius.

The Serum Institute of India has mentioned that it has already been producing about 40-50 million doses per month and, therefore, it has stockpiled initial inventory for Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine.

Hence, this should be the first vaccine available in IQ CY21 in India (unless Indian government provides an Emergency Use Authorisation to any other company). Thereafter, 2QCY21 onwards, multiple plants are expected to come online and Serum's manufacturing capacity could also get augmented to 100 million doses per month by around June 2021.

In terms of availability, Serum said that Oxford/AstraZeneca's ChAdOx1 nCoV-19 vaccine candidate, named Covishield in India, can be provided regulatory go-ahead as early as December 2020 provided the trial results are suc-

cessful. Serum is currently conducting Phase II/III trials of Covishield among 1,600 participants across 17 sites in India, aged 18 to 55.

Biological E is working on capacity to manufacture 1.4 billion vaccine doses annually, comprising 400 million doses for J&J and 1 billion doses for its vaccine developed with US-based Baylor College of Medicine (BCM).

In addition, Biological E has signed a licensing agreement with BCM under which the latter would facilitate technology transfer for recombinant protein-based Covid-19 vaccine.

Biological E would undertake further development, conduct clinical trials and manufacture -1 billion doses annually. In order to augment its capacity, it had recently acquired Akorn India's facility in Paonta Sahib in Himachal Pradesh, which has capacity to produce 135 million doses annually. Biological E has received approval for conducting Phase I/II clinical trials among 400 participants in India.

Bharat Biotech has developed Covaxin - India's first vaccine candidate for Covid-19 - in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research, and the National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune.

The Covid-19 strain was isolated by NIV and transferred to Bharat Biotech. It received go-ahead for Phase I trials in July, which was subsequently conducted among 375 volunteers across 12 sites. After assessing the safety data, the company-initiated Phase II

trials among 380 volunteers. Post assessing safety and immunogenicity data from the two trials, the company is progressing with Phase III trials, which will involve 28,500 subjects across 19 sites in 10 states.

The report said that the private players, in anticipation of possible demand, have begun ramping up capacity to distribute Covid-19 vaccines en masse when ready. The largest private player - Snowman Logistics - has capacity to store 650 million doses.

However, this assumes that all of the capacity is used only for vaccine storage. Practically, capacity available for vaccine distribution will be only 10-15 per cent of this or about 100 million doses for Snowman.

For the organised private cold chain storage industry, total vaccine storage capacity would be -250-300 million doses.

"Our interaction with the industry suggests that bottleneck is not in the storage but in the number of refrigerated vans. The organised sector does not have reach extending to the hinterlands in the country and for those regions, it is likely that the government may utilise existing fruit and vegetable cold storage to achieve the purpose," the report said.

The key domestic logistics players with substantial cold storage business are Snowman Logistics, Gati Kausar, Transport Corporation of India, Mahindra Logistics and Future Supply Chain Solutions. IANS

129 SC/ST atrocity cases settled in Kadapa

HANS NEWS SERVICE
KADAPA

THE district administration has settled 129 cases by paying Rs 1.45 crore to 134 victims under the SC/ST (Prevention of atrocities) Act cases till November 6 in the district.

District Level Vigilance and Monitoring Committee (DLVMC), chaired by collector Harikiran on Thursday expressed satisfaction over transparent and speedy probe by police administration in the atrocity cases.

Speaking on the occasion, Harikiran stressed on the effective implementation of Act meant to eradicate discrimination against SCs/ STs in the dis-

trict. He also directed the officials to ensure all basic infrastructure in 18 villages which were identified under the Prime Minister Adarsa Grama Yojana (PMAGY) in the district.

SP K K N Anburajan said the victims must approach the police station immediately after they faced any kind of discrimination or atrocity so that police could rush to the scene of offence and begin probe in a speedy manner.

Jammalamadugu revenue divisional officer Naganna, SC/ST Monitoring Committee members J V Ramana, Vijayakumar, Ramakrishna, Vijayalakshmi Subbarayudu, Saraswathi and others were present.

Navy's 5th Scorpene class submarine Vagrir launched

continued from P1

Leading the nation's indigenous warship building programme, the MDL has till date constructed varied ranges of

combat platforms like Leander and Godavari class frigates, Khukri class corvettes, Coast Guard OPVs, 1241 RE class missile boats, Delhi and Kolkata class destroyers, Shivalik class stealth frigates, SSK submarines and the P-75 submarines under its belt.

Recently, the MDL went in for an IPO which was oversubscribed 157.42 times. (IANS)

Nitish may take oath as CM for 4th time on Monday

Continued from P1

However, with top BJP leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, strongly endorsing Kumar as the chief minister, there are no doubts over a fourth straight term for him in the high office. Chief Electoral Officer H R Srinivas, meanwhile, submitted the list of winning candidates in the assembly elections to Governor Phagu Chauhan at Raj Bhavan. PTI

BIZ BRIEFS

Hyundai's new initiative

HYUNDAI Motor India Ltd on Thursday commenced its 'Grameen Sanitization' drive under 'Hyundai Cares 2.0 initiative. This activity is aimed at creating a safe and secure environment for the rural community. This drive is to be implemented across 292 rural locations across India and will be initiated by Hyundai branded sanitization vehicles which will go around public places sanitizing the areas including schools, nursing centre, rural mandis, panchayat locations and government offices. Tarun Garg, Director Sales, Marketing & Service, said, "Taking our global vision of progress for humanity forward, we intend to extend more support to the Covid warriors in Tier III and IV towns and villages who have actively stood up and supported the entire community during this unprecedented times."

Tata Tele holds meet

TATA Tele Business Services hosted the CXO Talk titled Hyderabad- Rising to the Challenge with Tech Advantage. The virtual platform is a stage for the industry leaders across various sectors to share a plethora of insights on the role of technology to help enterprises maintain business efficiency in these unprecedented times. TTBS led the discussion on how collaboration and connectivity solutions are the two pillars to help the enterprises recover from the challenges faced while working in the new normal. Kalidas KS, vice president, SME Operations, Tata Teleservices, said: "The rapid digitalisation and new normal of remote working has catalysed the enterprises to boost productivity and realign their concept of work to a hybrid model of working."

RLG announce 'e-safai'

RLG India and GIZ India announced a joint e-waste management initiative 'E-Safai'. This three-year public private partnership project, also known as "Setting Up Innovative Value Chain for e-waste management" is being supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The primary objective of this landmark programme is to cultivate awareness regarding safe and sustainable handling of e-waste among various stakeholders, including Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs), schools, retailers and bulk consumers. Radhika Kalita, Managing Director, RLG India, said, "E-Safai is yet another step in our consistent and continuous efforts to create an efficient e-waste management ecosystem to deal with this growing global challenge. This initiative is an inclusive approach to work in a balanced manner with all the stakeholders such as producers, recyclers/dismantlers, consumers."

Hitam in pact with Smartron

HITAM has signed a MoU with Smartron Ends, an initiative on a critical mission of 'aggregation' and 'acceleration' of innovation on the back of the IoT wave; to groom and sharpen the skills of students to be industry ready. This understanding will leverage the niche expertise of both the partners to build a robust mechanism for seamless transition of students from academics to career. "Hitam is setting out on an ambitious plan to bridge the skill gap of students and equip them to be adept with the emerging technologies. Our endeavor through this partnership is to make the students industry ready and are productive from day one," says Vinod Ahuja, Head of Center of Excellence, IoT, HITAM.

PNB eyes 12% biz growth in Hyderabad Zone

Hyd ZM Choudhury confident of achieving the growth target this fiscal year

P MADHUSUDHAN REDDY HYDERABAD

PUNJAB National Bank (PNB), the country's second largest public sector bank, is eyeing 12 per cent business growth this financial year in the newly created Hyderabad Zone which handles the bank's operations in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

"We have set a target to achieve 12 per cent business growth in this financial year. We are hopeful of achieving it," Ashutosh Choudhury, Zonal Manager, Hyderabad Zone, PNB, told *The Hans India*. According to him, though there was no growth during April-June period (first quarter) due to Covid, but bank witnessed traction in the second quarter, clocking 5-6 per cent upswing in credit

Our bank registered very good growth in vehicle loan portfolio in October as there was lot of demand. Home loans will also pick up

—Ashutosh Choudhury, Zonal Manager, Hyderabad Zone, PNB

business. In Hyderabad Zone, the bank is focusing on home, auto and education loans. "Our bank registered very good growth in vehicle loan portfolio in October as there was lot of demand. Home loans will also pick up once registrations begin in Telangana," he explained.

As Hyderabad is a hub for the phar-

maceutical sector, the bank is eyeing this key sector as well. "We are also expecting good credit offtake from medical and healthcare sector, especially in the mid category. We tied up with several hospitals in Hyderabad. We will also focus on this segment in Bengaluru and Visakhapatnam," he said.

On bank's growth plans in the next financial year, he said it would depend on the performance in current and next quarter. "Given the challenging environment now, it's very difficult to predict the growth in the next financial year,"he maintained.

PNB created Hyderabad Zone to strengthen its operations in the three key States in South India in which it gained substantial presence post the merger of the Oriental Bank of Commerce and United Bank of India with it. Prior to the merger, the bank had only Chennai Zone which looked after its operations in five Southern States.

"The establishment of new Hyderabad Zone is expected to drive higher growth in the three States. That's the reason why we have opened the new zone. The bank will definitely see more growth and more quality

growth. We will also acquire more customers," he said.

The bank has 448 branches in three States, with Telangana accounting for 141 branches. It operates 125 branches in Andhra Pradesh and over 160 in Karnataka. Its network includes two large corporate branches.

"We undertook organisational restructuring post the amalgamation which took place on April 1 this year. Under this, we established PNB Loan Points (PLPs) for the marketing of our loan products. loan processing, disbursement, collections," he said, adding that PLPs handle loans from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 1 crore.

PNB's total business in Hyderabad Zone stood at Rs 76,000 crore by the end of September. Excluding large corporate business, the bank's business was Rs 51,500 crore with credit

accounting for Rs 25,500 crore. "We have a fair mix of credit. Retail credit represents 20 per cent of our total credit while agriculture accounts for 10 per cent. The rest is MSME sector," he said. Asked whether there was any rationalization in the branches post the merger, he said rationalization was undertaken in two ways. "Where two branches are nearby, we merged them into one. At the same time, we used the license to open a branch where there is business potential. As consequence, the number of branches has not come down", he said.

He mentioned that there was no spike in non-performing assets (NPAs) in Hyderabad Zone. "Recovery is really good in the zone. Our current NPAs are lower than those in March quarter", he added

Inflation soars to over 6-year high of 7.61%

COSTLIER VEGGIES, EGGS PUSH RETAIL INFLATION DURING OCTOBER

Retail inflation has remained above 7 per cent for the second month in a row

NEW DELHI

COSTLIER vegetables and eggs pushed up retail inflation to a nearly six-and-a-half year high of 7.61 per cent in October, keeping it significantly above the comfort zone of the Reserve Bank.

Retail inflation stood at 7.27 per cent in September 2020, according to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) data released by the government on Thursday.

Retail inflation has remained above 7 per cent for the second month in a row. The earlier high was 8.33 per cent in May 2014. The Consumer Food Price Index (CFPI), according to the data, rose to 11.07 per cent in October from 10.68 per cent in the previous month of September. It was 4.62 per cent in October 2019. Vegetable prices rose 22.51 per cent in October on year-to-year basis. Inflation in protein-rich meat and fish quickened to 18.70 per cent, while in eggs it rose to 21.81 per cent during the month. In September, the respective inflation prints were at 17.60 per cent and 15.47 per cent. The inflation print in 'fuel and light' category softened a tad at 2.28 per cent during the month (from 2.87 per cent in September). Price rise in 'milk and products' also reduced to 5.20



per cent (from 5.64 per cent).

The RBI, which mainly factors in retail inflation while arriving at key policy rates, has been mandated by the government to keep inflation at 4 per cent (+, - 2 per cent).

Aditi Nayar, economist at ICRA, said: "While a base effect and some softening in vegetable prices may pull down the CPI inflation in the ongoing month, it is expected to recede below 6 per cent only in December 2020. With the level of the headline and core CPI inflation, and the internal dynamics in October 2020 remaining worrying, a rate cut in the December 2020 policy meeting appears to be ruled out. Moreover, the likelihood of a Repo cut in February 2021 seems rather low at this juncture," she added.

Retail inflation in October 2020 rose to a 77-month high of 7.61 per

cent. As a fallout of COVID-19, inflation from health and recreation and amusement inflation has increased and are unlikely to ease in next few months, said Devendra Kumar Pant, Chief Economist, India Ratings and Research.

"While India Rating expected inflation to decline in 3Q FY21, it appears, while food inflation may decline with onset of winter and arrival of fresh onion crop, core inflation is likely to remain elevated in FY21.

"Monetary Policy Committee is in a difficult situation with inflation breaching 6 per cent (for) three consecutive quarters, growth being low and India having a recession (two consecutive quarters of negative growth) once 2Q FY21 GDP numbers are released. India Ratings expects an extended pause on policy rates," Pant said.

Stock markets snap 8-session rising streak

MUMBAI

THE Sensex and Nifty snapped their eight-session rising streak on Thursday as the new set of stimulus measures announced by the finance minister failed to stem profit-booking in banking, IT and energy stocks. Lacklustre global cues and a weakening rupee further weighed on sentiment, traders said. After dropping 466.12 points during the day, the 30-share BSE Sensex ended 236.48 points or 0.54 per cent lower at 43,357.19. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty slipped 58.35 points or 0.46 per cent to 12,690.80. SBI was the top loser in the Sensex pack, shedding 3.16 per cent, followed by Kotak Bank, IndusInd Bank, NTPC, ICICI Bank, Axis Bank, HDFC Bank and ONGC.

New set of stimulus measures announced by the Finance Minister failed to stem profit-booking in banking, IT and energy stocks

On the other hand, HUL, ITC, L&T, Bajaj Finserv, Tech Mahindra and Bajaj Finance ended with gains of up to 2.89 per cent. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday announced tax relief on select home sale deals, enhanced credit guarantee programme for small businesses and provide incentives for new job creation as the government widened stimulus measures to boost the economy.

The measures, that also included additional fertilizer subsidy and already announced production-linked incentive scheme for manufacturing units, totaled Rs 2.65 lakh crore, taking the cumulative stimulus package announced since lockdown to almost Rs 30 lakh crore, or 15 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP).

Dhanteras High prices may take sheen off gold sales

NEW DELHI/MUMBAI

PRE-DIWALI Dhanteras sales of gold and silver kicked off on Thursday but overall business is likely to be a muted affair in view of sharp rise in prices and subdued demand due to the Covid-19 induced economic hardship, according to jewellers and industry experts.

Although the buying sentiment has improved after the Covid-19 curbs were relaxed, consumers are still wary of investing in precious metal at current high rates, they said. Jewellers also said they are recycling old jewellery stock to meet the festive and wedding season demand. Besides, a caution still prevails among people while coming out of their homes for shopping amid rising Covid-19 cases in key consuming markets across the country, and consumers in view of the pandemic have made advanced booking through online jewellery platforms, they added.



Although the buying sentiment has improved after the Covid-19 curbs were relaxed, consumers are still wary of investing in precious metal

Dhanteras, considered the most auspicious day in Hindu calendar for buying items, ranging from precious metals like gold and silver to utensils, is being celebrated for two days on Thursday and Friday this year. Gold prices are ruling in the range of Rs 51,000-53,000 per 10 grams, more than 35 per cent higher than Rs 38,096 per 10

gram prevailed on Dhanteras 2019. Similarly, silver prices have shot up to over Rs 62,000 per kg.

World Gold Council (WGC) Managing Director (India) Somasundaram PR said, "The foot falls are better and people are interested. Sales are recovering but it will not be as good as last year during the same period.

The organised players will have better market share, bars and coins will do better." Digital gold and other online platforms could find this period very conducive for increasing volumes and for broadening the consumer base, he said. Echoing similar views, All India Gem and Jewellery Domestic Council Chairman Anantha Padmanaban said the market is recovering gradually and the consumer sentiment is positive. Jewellers are seeing increased growth in footfalls since morning but need to see whether the pent-up demand will translate into sales, he said, adding that the buying momentum is expected to pick up by evening across the country.

Natco Pharma Q2 net up 73% to ₹204 cr

HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

DRUG firm Natco Pharma on Thursday reported a 73.23 per cent increase in its consolidated net profit to Rs 203.9 crore for the quarter ended September mainly on account of robust sales.

The company had posted a net profit of Rs 117.7 crore for the corresponding period of the previous fiscal, Natco Pharma said.

Consolidated total income of the company stood at Rs 827.9 crore for the quarter under consideration. It was Rs 518.9 crore for the same period a year ago, it added.

The board of directors has recommended a second interim dividend of Rs 3 per equity share of Rs 2 each for the financial year 2020-21. Shares of Natco Pharma were trading at Rs 902.00 per scrip on BSE, up 0.52 per cent from its previous close.

RTA services in Hyd take a beating due to dud servers

Transactions at RTA offices stop as servers fail to generate OTPs

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

THE services at the RTA offices in the city were affected due to technical glitches during the last two days as the system failed to send one-time password (OTP) for taking up the transactions.

According to official sources, the system could not generate the OTPs for completion of transactions in the RTA office as there have been problems with the servers. While the OTPs were not generated the entire day on Wednesday, on Thursday the services were hampered at regular intervals. If the OTPs were not generated, the transactions would not be completed, slots would not be booked for the transactions, said an official.



- ▶ While OTPs were not generated the entire day on Wednesday, the services were hampered at regular intervals on Thursday
- ▶ Sources say no efforts are being made to increase the capacity of servers as the transactions are still done on old servers
- ▶ Officials cite lack of funds for not changing the servers that have not been replaced for the last 10 years

The online system was started on a pilot basis at Secunderabad RTA office in 2002

when Chandrababu Naidu was the Chief Minister of united Andhra Pradesh. Later the sys-

tem was introduced in the district offices and a three-tier system was followed as more online servers were added and data was kept in the main server.

Sources said that there were no efforts made to increase the capacity of the server as the transactions were done on old servers. The servers were not changed in the last 10 years, said the officials, adding that they had no funds to increase the capacity of servers.

Apart from this, there is a huge shortage of smart cards, and as a result of this lakhs of cards are pending. The cards are used in driving licence, registration certificate books and other documents. The citizens who undergo tests are made to wait for two months to get their licence because of shortage of cards, the officials noted.

BJP leaders gripe about phone tapping; Central team to probe

Party leaders including MLA elect M Raghunandan Rao smell something 'phony' during the Dubbaka by-election campaign and after

V R C PHANIHARAN
HYDERABAD

A team of Central officials are expected to look into the complaints of illegal phone tapping and mobile surveillance of the BJP leaders in the State.

The decision comes in the wake of BJP leaders, including MLA elect from Dubbaka M Raghunandan Rao, complaining that their mobile phones were put under surveillance, all through the election campaign and even after the elections were over and the results were out. Raghunandan Rao said he was shocked when one of his party leaders had called him ahead of the poll campaign from his own mobile number. He wondered how one could receive a call from one's own mobile number. He was not the lone case and it was not an isolated incident.

According to party sources, besides Raghunandan Rao, several



BJP leaders had similar experiences. They also said they had received from their own mobile numbers. Sensing something fishy, the BJP leaders, including Raghunandan Rao, had to stop receiving calls from their own mobile numbers. Speaking to The Hans India, a party leader said several BJP leaders were suspecting that their mobile phones were under surveillance and they were subjected to phone tapping. Thus, instead of receiving calls on their mobile numbers, they had to depend on other party activists' numbers to talk to leaders and others.

Though the elections are over

and results have been out, the BJP leaders in Siddipet and Dubbaka Assembly constituencies are apprehensive about using their mobile phones. They fear that their mobile phones are still under surveillance.

Following these developments, they reportedly briefed their woes to Union Minister of State for Home Affairs G Kishan Reddy. "Complaints were also lodged alleging that the State and district authorities are illegally kept BJP leaders' phones under surveillance," the leader said. The BJP leaders are seeking the intervention of the Union Home Ministry to probe into these incidents of phone tapping.

Against this backdrop, a team of officials from the Central agencies are expected to look into the contents of the complaints before suggesting the kind of action that the Central agencies can initiate as per the laws.

Ponguleti: Development, welfare go hand-in-hand under Modi's governance

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

THE credit in the comprehensive implementation of the development and welfare schemes in the countries goes to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Reiterating the recent enactment of agriculture sector laws by the Centre are beneficial to the farmers, BJP State Core Committee member Ponguleti Sudhakar Reddy said, "The Con-

gress party campaign to collect signatures and tractor rallies against the agriculture laws is a mere political stunt."

The election results in Bihar and by-polls in several States shows that people are satisfied with the good governance and delivery of Prime Minister, BJP and NDA government at the Centre.

However, without realising the peoples' view the Congress and opposition parties have been try-

ing to project the agriculture laws detrimental to the farmers.

He said that the tractor rally and signature campaign of the Congress in Khamma is nothing more than a political stunt. He said that the farmers have now freedom sell their agricultural produce freely anywhere they want for remunerative prices. He asked the Congress and opposition parties that it is high time that they should end to their political drama.

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

UNION Minister of State for Home Affairs G Kishan Reddy said that just as the Yoga has been adopted as a way of life across 200 countries in the world, efforts should be made to see that the benefits of Ayurveda reach all sections of people.

He was addressing a gathering while attending the National Ayurveda Day celebrations held on the occasion of Dhanwantari Jayanti, organised by Vishwa Ayurveda Parishad and Aarogya Bharati of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) at His Holiness the Chinna Jeeyar Swamy's Ashram at Munchital in Rangareddy district here on Thursday.

The Union Minister said that the Ayurveda system of medicine has been separated from the department of health, and a separate AYUSH Ministry has been formed recognising its importance. Besides, funds have been allocated to it by the Centre, he added.

Kishan Reddy said that Ayurveda was part and parcel of the way of life for people of the



Union Minister of State for Home Affairs G Kishan Reddy inaugurating National Ayurveda Day celebrations held on the occasion of Dhanwantari Jayanti, organised by Vishwa Ayurveda Parishad and Aarogya Bharati at Chinna Jeeyar Swamy's Ashram at Munchital in Rangareddy on Thursday

- ▶ Says it is the duty of State governments, civil societies and people to encourage and popularise Ayurveda
- ▶ States the importance of Ayurveda has gone up during the Covid, with many households adopting Ayurvedic practices to remain healthy and fight the virus

▶ Pleas to State Health Minister Eatala Rajender to increase the number of Ayurveda medical colleges and Ayurvedic medicine producing units in the State

country for centuries, and the Centre has recognised the importance of promoting it. Every year, the Centre has been presenting Dhanwantari Puraskar for prominent practising doctors in the Ayurveda medical system and Ayurveda farmers.

He reminded that late Dr Venkatachary from Warangal, who had provided medicines even to Pandit Deenadayal Upadhyaya was one among those who were conferred with

Dhanwantari Puraskar.

Kishan Reddy said that the National Ayurvedic Mission has been allocating funds to all the States.

However, it was the duty of the State governments, civil societies and people to encourage the medicinal system. He said that the importance of Ayurveda has gone up during the covid with many households adopting Ayurvedic practices and hundreds of doctors from

the places like Delhi submitting applications for their medicines to treat covid. "It shows that many are conducting research on the Ayurveda. We need to popularise the same for the prevention of ailments," he said, urging the State Health Minister, Eatala Rajender, attending the ceremony to increase the number of Ayurveda medical colleges and more number of Ayurvedic medicine producing industries in the State.

Massive fire breaks out at oil mill

HANS NEWS SERVICE
RANGA REDDY

IN a tragic incident, a massive fire broke out at Mayuri feed oil mill on Thursday in Mankal village in Maheshwaram mandal. Officials said that short-circuit is the reason behind the accident. Five fire extinguishing teams reached the spot and trying to douse the fire. No casualties have been reported as the mill was closed for a long time. The Kandukur RDO Ravinder Reddy, along with Maheshwaram MRO Jyothi, Tukuguda Municipal Commissioner Gnaneshwar reached the spot and inspected the situation. The police reached the spot and started investigating the matter.



Vivek pitches for probe into KCR's stash

Former MP says Dubbaka by-poll result opened up new avenues for political realignment in State

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

Former MP and BJP leader Vivek Venkataswamy said the outcome of Dubbaka by-elections had exposed how people were frustrated with the misgovernance of Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao.

Addressing media here on Thursday, he said it was a big lesson to the dictatorial regime of Chandrashekar Rao and the ensuing GHMC elections would be fought on similar lines. The defeat of Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) in the by-poll opened up several avenues and new combinations for political realignment in the State, he added.

Stating that people were no longer ready to accept Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao's



"Tughlaq" style of administration, the former MP said the TRS chief was neglecting woes of people and pushing the State into a debt trap. "Telangana State's debt has shot up from Rs 60,000 crore to Rs 4 lakh crore in the last six years. At the same time, his assets have increased manifold," Vivek said.

He said he had requested the Central government agencies to institute a probe into Chan-

drashekar Rao family's illegal assets that he earned by looting Telangana. Whatever money was available, had been diverted to the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Scheme (KLIS). The project pegged at Rs 36,000 crore, on which already Rs 11,000 crore has been spent. Yet, on the pretext of redesigning, the project cost had been inflated to Rs 1 lakh crore for commissions, the former MP said. "Similar is the fate of Mission Bhagiratha. The superstitious Chief Minister has demolished existing Secretariat to rebuild a brand new one. That too, at a time when people have been suffering from Covid-19 and needed an isolation facility," he said.

Vivek denounced the KCR government for misusing police machinery in the State. "During the recent Dubaka by-elections, Hy-

derabad Police Commissioner Anjani Kumar held a press conference and dragged my name and my company, Visaka Industries, into a controversy. Intending "to ruin my image by accusing me and the BJP of buying votes," he added.

The TRS had distributed huge sums of money and liquor in the Dubbaka elections, he said adding, "I must say that the money was supplied from the Chief Minister's farmhouse and Pragati Bhavan, but the police were mute spectators to all these. Since I have been working against the dictatorial rule of Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao since joining the BJP, he wants to threaten me and my colleagues by filing false cases against us. But, they won't stop me, and I will not succumb to threats," he said.

CCI to start procuring cotton after Diwali, says Kishan Reddy

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

UNION Minister Kishan Reddy said that 293 ginning and spinning mills, will start functioning across Telangana after Diwali and the Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) will start procuring cotton.

Addressing media here on Thursday after a review meeting with the CCI, NAFED, FCI and Telangana State Marketing Officers, he directed the CCI DGM, Amarnath Reddy to take stern action against the officials who are negligent in the procurement of cotton.

He asked officials that cotton procurement should benefit farmers and no brokers or private traders should be allowed. He said that the CCI is conducting awareness programmes for farmers through handouts to ensure that the moisture content in the cotton brought to the market is low. "We are using Aadhaar-based cash transfers in cotton procurement and, this will be a transparent process," he added.

He asked to make available moisture measuring machine at every procurement center and assured farmers that there will not be any delay in the procurement process. Despite lower cotton yields this year, he assured the farmers that the authorities would buy cotton at a minimum supportive price with due diligence. He urged farmers not to sell cotton to private traders at low prices in panic.



Union Minister Kishan Reddy addressing media on the procurement of cotton in Telangana in Hyderabad on Thursday

- ▶ Says 293 ginning and spinning mills will start functioning from Monday after Diwali
- ▶ Directs the CCI DGM to take stern action against the officials who are negligent in the procurement of cotton
- ▶ Says that cotton procurement should benefit farmers and no brokers or private traders should be allowed

During his review with the FCI officials on paddy procurements, he said many farmers in the State had cultivated a fine variety of paddy following the State government instructions. Also, reminded that it promised to procure all the paddy. He urged the State government to take the responsibility for the same and do justice to the fine rice variety cultivated farmers.

He said that the guidelines to procure paddy across the country are same and there would be no discrepancy in the procurement of grains for implementing the Food Security Act. The FCI would procure grains only based on quality MSP.

He asked the State government to amass the paddy har-

vested by the farmers in Telangana. He also reminded everyone that the Chief Minister had promised to pay bonuses and requested the State government to implement them now.

The Minister has urged all the States to implement the new agriculture laws for the benefit of the farmers and to protect their interests.

He predicted that the new farmer acts would increase demand for agricultural products over the next two years. Also mentioned that the Central government has already taken steps to export agricultural products overseas. He said the food processing industry would benefit from the product-based incentive scheme announced recently.

'Zero clarity' on Rohit's fitness: Manjrekar

NEW DELHI

THERE is "zero clarity" on the fitness issue of Rohit Sharma -- an automatic starter in the Indian team in all formats of the game -- who was controversially dropped initially from all three Indian squads without explanation, says cricketer-turned-commentator Sanjay Manjrekar.

Sharma, was, however, later added in the Test team by the national selectors for the four-match series, to be played between December 17 and January 19, after the issue snowballed into a major controversy. He has, however, been "rested" from the ODI and T20 series.

Sharma is said to have a hamstring injury, but so far the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has been silent on the nature of his injury even as it has explained for the other injured players.

"There's zero clarity on the issue of Rohit Sharma's fitness. I am sure there must a stand of BCCI and similarly that of Rohit. And when people don't get information then speculation arise. So, I absolutely have no clarity whatsoever what's going on there," Manjrekar said while speaking on Pakistani YouTube channel CricCast.

Interestingly, Sharma, who apparently had a hamstring injury, turned out for Mumbai Indians (MI) franchise in the Indian Premier League (IPL) recently even as he was ignored by the national selection committee. Sharma led MI to the IPL title on Tuesday. The BCCI has given no reason for Sharma's axing while India coach Ravi Shastri, and former India captains Sunil Gavaskar, Virender Sehwag, and Gautam Gambhir got involved in the controversy as they reacted to the selectors' decision.

The 32-year-old was first not included in any of the three squads for the Australia tour due to a hamstring injury. However, later on, he featured



India cricket team donning the new kit for upcoming ODIs and T20s matches against Australia

in the playoffs of the just-concluded Indian Premier League where he led Mumbai Indians to their fifth title.

On Monday, while granting paternity leave to skipper Virat Kohli -- he will return to India after the first Test -- the BCCI named Rohit in the Test squad for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

The Indian players left the UAE for Australia on Wednesday. But Sharma wasn't part of it; he would be joined the team only before the Test series.

Manjrekar also felt that four-five players, including Suryakumar Yadav, who was not included in any of the three squads, would get a chance to play during the long tour Down Under due to maybe injuries or other reasons.

"When a team is announced for a big tour, like the one of Australia where the Indian team will be there for almost three-four months, we think that is the squad that will be playing. However, as we are talking, slowly and slowly

we will get to see that, by the end of the tour, many of the players who are there in India, they would have played in Australia," said the former India batsman.

"I have no doubt that Rohit Sharma will be playing when he gets fit. Suryakumar Yadav will also get a chance somewhere on the tour as is often happens that some injuries take place and replacements are called. I think four-five players who have not been selected for the tour due to fitness or some other issues, they will be playing in the upcoming tour," he felt.

Yadav was one of the shining stars for MI, scoring 480 runs for the five-time champions. However, despite his great form, he failed to find favour with the national selectors.

The Indian players, wearing new PPE kits and masks, left for Australia on Wednesday night for Sydney where they will be undergoing quarantine.

MELBOURNE

AUSTRALIA batsman Usman Khawaja has thrown his weight behind incumbent opener Joe Burns who will fight out with Will Pucovski for a place in Australia's starting XI for the upcoming four-Test series against India beginning December 17.

Burns and the uncapped Pucovski both have been named in Australia's 17-man squad for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy as well as an Australia A squad that will play two warm-up

matches against India in Sydney prior to the first Test at the Adelaide Oval. Pucovski has presented a very strong case to find a spot in Australia XI by scoring back-to-back double-centuries in the opening rounds of the Marsh Sheffield Shield, which he completed with a batting average of 247.50.

On the other hand, Burns has averaged 11.40 across his five completed innings for the Bulls with a top score of 29.

"If you look at Joe Burns' record over the last 10 years, he's one of the most prolific runs scorers in Shield cricket," Khawaja, who has not been included in the Test squad, told cricket.com.au.

"He's done it consistently over a long period, so I wouldn't really look at the last three

games and say 'Joe Burns is not a class player' because we all know you don't lose your class. Burnsey's been scoring a lot of runs for Queensland for a long time to force his way into the Australian team, and he made (180) and then lost his position. So he's had some tough calls made on him," he added.

Burns, who made his Test debut in 2014 against India, has so far played 21 Tests for Australia in which he has scored 1,379 runs, including four hundreds and six half-centuries.

According to the left-handed batsman, Burns deserves to be there in the playing XI because of his record. "...I'm pretty confident he'll continue to score runs if he gets his chance at the next level." (IANS)

Team India arrive in Sydney

SYDNEY

THE Indian men's cricket team arrived here on Thursday for a lengthy series against Australia beginning November 27.

Virat Kohli's men, in their customised PPE kits and masks, had departed from Dubai on Wednesday night after taking part in the Indian Premier League (IPL).

Along with the Indian contingent, the Australian players who were part of the IPL, including the likes of Steve Smith and David Warner, have also reached the city.

The players will now undergo mandatory two-weeks quarantine. The tour will commence with the three ODIs at the Sydney Cricket Ground (November 27, 29) and Manuka Oval, Canberra (December 2). That will be followed by the three-match T20I series at Manuka Oval, Canberra (December 4) and the SCG (December 6, 8).

After that, the teams will participate in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy beginning with the pink-ball Test at the Adelaide Oval from December 17. It will be followed by Tests at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (December 26), the SCG (January 7) and the Gabba (January 15). (IANS)

Khawaja backs Burns to come good in India Tests



INRC 2020 to have first ever all-women rally team

HYDERABAD

IN a first for Indian motorsports, Indian National Rally Championship (INRC) 2020 will have a woman owner promoting an all-women's rally team in the championship proper.

Vasundhara Diamond Roof Pvt. Ltd, a Vijayawada-based jewellers promoted by Vasundhara, will own the team comprising renowned women rallyist Bani Yadav of Gurugram and Pragathi Gowda of Bengaluru.

Named as 'Team Vasundhara', they will be competing in the INRC 3 classification as well as aim for glory in the overall championship.

"It is a huge moment for Indian motorsports as for the first time we have a woman team owner promoting an all women's team. As a promoter we have always strived for more women participation and this association is seriously a stepping stone towards bringing in more women enthusiasts into motorsports," Vamcy Merla, promoter of INRC and director of Champions Yacht Club said.

INRC 2020 will begin on December 15 in Arunachal and after two rounds in the northeastern state, it will move to South with three rounds in Coimbatore, Hampi and season-finale in Bengaluru.

"We are pleased to have this opportunity to be part of an all women's team and are glad to have been able to convince Bani, a legend in her own right and the youngster Pragathi," Ashish, director of operation, Vasundhara Diamond Roof said. (IANS)



Pragathi Gowda



Bani Yadav

Staying inside bio-bubble 'isn't easy', admits Chhetri

NEW DELHI

INDIAN football captain Sunil Chhetri, who is gearing up for the upcoming Indian Super League where he will be leading Bengaluru FC, has stated that staying inside a bio-bubble "isn't easy".

In a video posted on his Twitter handle, Chhetri on Thursday revealed that during the last three weeks of the team's quarantine, he has been keeping himself busy by doing double training sessions, reading books, watching renowned broadcaster and historian Sir David Attenborough's 'A Life On Our Planet'.

"This is our third week inside the bio-bubble and I must confess it isn't easy but, of course, needed. We are doing double time session and we are trying our best as a team to be as fit as possible before the tournament starts," Chhetri said in a one minute-16 second video.

"It's just 10 days left and I am pretty sure all of you are waiting for the ISL as I am and the whole team is," he added.

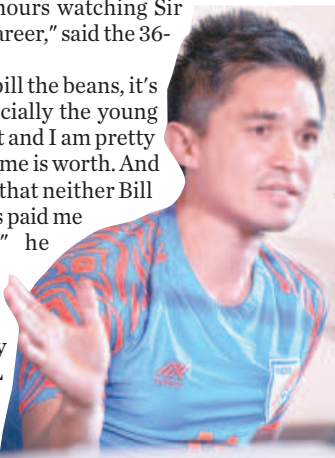
The 2020/21 season of the ISL will start on November 20

with all matches to be played in three bio-secure venues across Goa amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Among all this, I am trying my best to find some time for myself I just finished reading a lovely book - The Body by Bill Bryson - and I highly recommend this. Also me and wife we just finished Sir David Attenborough's 'A Life On Our Planet' and it's outstanding. We spend so much time on social media and watching television, I recommend you guys to spend one and half hours watching Sir David Attenborough's career," said the 36-year-old.

"You watch, I won't spill the beans, it's an amazing series, especially the young ones. Please indulge in it and I am pretty sure you will find your time is worth. And I must confess or admit that neither Bill Bryson nor Sir David has paid me anything to do this," he added.

Bengaluru FC won the tournament in 2018 and will be looking to lay their hands on the ISL trophy for a second time in the upcoming season. (IANS)



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