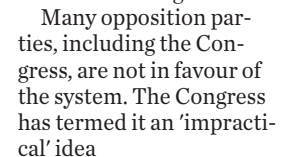


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Womenia

Weaving poetic narratives with augmented reality

Beatrice de Fays, artist from France, develops her creations using different media: paintings, installations... Her creation, between pictorial universe and digital space, questions this tipping point between concrete space and poetic experience. She is exhibiting "In-space..." in the ruins of the city world", her work online. In-space.ar is an exhibition of paintings weaving poetic narratives with augmented reality.

At the online Exhibition 'Inspace' by Beatrice de Fays and Mathieu Constans (France), Beatrice speaks about her journey in arts and her future plans



hazar Francois Tasson-Snel. The friendship between both was so deep that even after the death of Tasson Snel; Robie continued to give all his affection to the family. He bequeathed everything he owned to the Tasson Snel family in his will, the magnificent property and a large collection of paintings.

What is unique about your present collection?

These original paintings are animated through a tablet equipped with software that comes to life! They "sprinkle" out of their support and articulate through a vocal and musical narrative.

Each painting reveals the universe of a figure (a character or an entity): the granite rock, the Buddha, the dragonfly and so on. This universe consists of twelve paintings, twelve stories, twelve figures, all in search of their own truth. Inspace, a considerable achievement in the creative use of technology, opens up new and unusual possibilities for viewers

hazar Tasson and travelled extensively throughout Europe, visiting Italy, Spain, France and Germany, and further journeys took him to the Middle East. But he stayed for the longest time in India and described his travels in the book 'Les Debuts d'un Peintre', published in 1886.

Robie purchased a plot of land in the Chaussee de Charleroi in Saint-Gilles and it adjoined that of my great grandfather Balt-



DRESS UP STYLISHLY ANYTIME

Be it summer season or winter, wearing warm clothes doesn't mean loading yourself with thick sweaters and jackets. Here's an important tip as well - in winters, thin layering is essential than thick coats. This winter season is also all about being stylish and flaunting yourself with a trench coat and variety of jackets with thin warm layers. So, why don't you think of those classic biker jackets or long trench coats for a stylish look at a regular workday? Here are some tips must-have clothing items in winter!

Biker jacket

On days when you feel you're looking basic, slip into a burgundy biker jacket and get sassy. It can amp up your classic black sweater and denim duo.

Double denim

Think a little vintage! Layer your duos with a vintage denim jacket and get that up and urban look instantly.

Trench coat

Trench coats are timeless, so go easy yet impactful with your workwear this winter. Slip into a stylish mustard trench coat. Wear

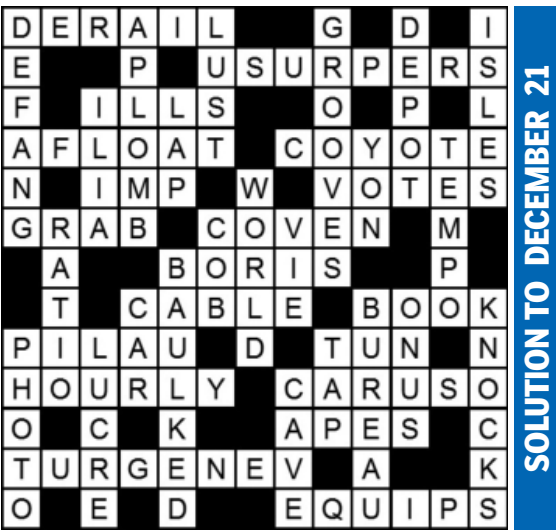
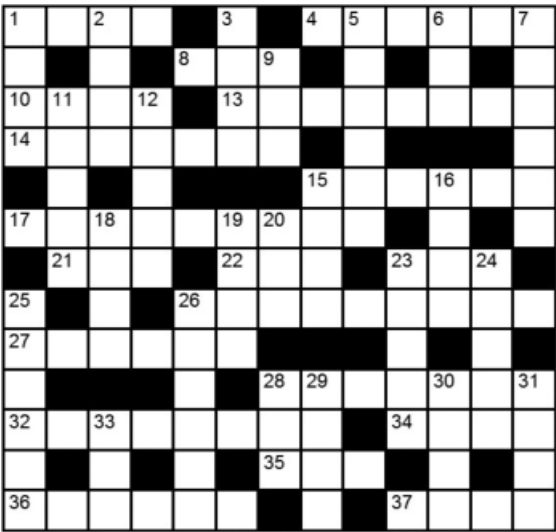
it with a pair of calf length boots or with black office pumps.

Woollen shrugs

It is not at all acceptable to look like a pile of clothes in such a good season. Wear warm hineck in solid colours and pair it up with stylish woollen shrugs to call it chic.

Trending corduroy

Corduroy makes a great fashion statement as it is extremely comfortable due to its soft and rich feel. You can opt for printed corduroy jackets or go for the ones with intricate embroidery or patches.



SOLUTION TO DECEMBER 21

CROSSWORD

Across

- Price exacted (4)
- "B" in BARC? (6)
- Legal thing (3)
- Not as new (4)
- Clapton for one, Jagger for another (4,4)
- Hazards, risks or perils? (7)
- Ineffectual (6)
- German city (9)
- Lump (3)
- Append or join (3)
- Moose (3)
- Teeming (9)
- Opulence (6)
- Time limits (7)
- Square head scarf (8)
- Pull abruptly (4)
- Legume (3)
- Scoffs (6)
- At what time? (4)

Down

- Tense (4)
- Lascivious look (4)

Across

- Saucy (4)
- Trekking (6)
- Gamble, lay odds (3)
- Concurred (6)
- Call for help (3)
- Shoulder motion (5)
- Star in Cygnus (5)
- Language similar to Hindi (4)
- Indonesian island (4)
- Sauce thickener (4)
- Newborn child (4)
- Tokyo, once - "doe" anagram? (3)
- Enlighten (5)
- Recognised (5)
- Fellows (6)
- Legendary king of Camelot (6)
- Brown-capped boletus mushroom (3)
- Flying saucers (4)
- Every one of a number (4)
- Hide (4)
- Cereal grass (3)

SUDOKU



SOLUTION TO DECEMBER 21

NEWS ROUNDUP

Swara Bhasker: Can't imagine how we'd have survived pandemic without internet and digital platforms

Actress Swara Bhasker is grateful for the emergence of OTT platforms, and says she cannot imagine how one would have survived the pandemic without the digital platforms.

This year, Swara delivered back-to-back releases in the OTT space, portraying a sensuous teacher in "Rasbhari", a police officer in "Flesh", and a runaway bride-turned stand-up comic in "Bhaag Beanie Bhaag". "This year has been a creatively exciting and fulfilling period workwise, having seen the back-to-back release of three series on streaming platforms. The overwhelming reception in this format has been wonderful," Swara said.

"It's been a strangely blessed year where despite the pandemic I've seen such success and warmth from the audiences... I'm grateful for the emergence of OTT platforms -- I cannot



imagine how we would have survived the pandemic without the Internet and digital platforms," she added.

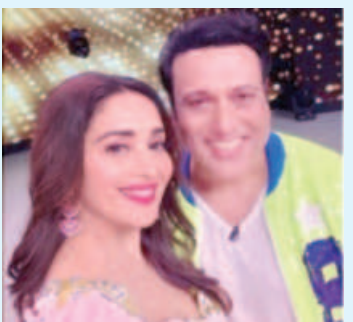
On the work front, Swara will soon be seen in LGBTQ+ drama "Sheer Qorma".

TWEET PATROL



MADHURI DIXIT NENE @MADHURIDIXIT

Your films, dance, dialogues... your presence alone brings a smile on everyone's face including mine :-)
Sending you my best wishes on your birthday. Happy birthday @govindaahuja21



Shilpa Shetty suggests yoga for self-confidence, fearlessness

Actress Shilpa Shetty on Monday shared yoga lessons for her fans that will boost self-confidence and fearlessness, apart from health benefits.

Shilpa shared a video on Twitter where she can be seen performing EkaPada Dhanurasana and Dhanurasana.

"Whether we're indoors all day or stepping out for work (with a mask), the to-do list is never-ending. Even on extremely busy days with 2 kids & working from home, it's a priority for me to start my day with #yoga. Yesterday, began with EkaPada Dhanurasana & Dhanurasana," Shilpa tweeted.

Sharing the health benefits of the asanas, the actress further wrote: "Apart from giving the back some much-needed stretching & strengthening; it improves the function of the pancreas, stimulates reproductive organs, and opens up the chest, shoulders, & neck. It also



helps develop an attitude of self confidence and fearlessness."

Shilpa Shetty, 45, is known for her penchant for yoga.

On the work front, she is all set to return to the screen with "Hungama 2" and "Nikamma" after a hiatus of 13 years.

How to apply lipstick flawlessly?

Even if you've found the perfect longwear lipstick or liquid lipstick in the most gorgeous shade, applying lipstick perfectly can seem downright impossible (particularly if you're attempting a bold shade like red or trying a new lip colour for fall). One side might go on thicker than the other, making lips appear lopsided, or you could over-line your lips too much, making them appear unnatural.

But it is possible to always apply lipstick like a pro. Here are some tips and tricks for applying lipstick. These insider secrets will leave you with a perfect pout, every single time:

Exfoliate and hydrate lips

Never put lipstick on without properly prepping beforehand, or your lips may end up looking uneven, flakey, or patchy. "Exfoliate your lips first and then moisturise them" with lip balm or lip primer. These steps ensure that your lips don't have any dry spots that may flake off, and create the perfect canvas for lipstick with all-day staying power.

Colour correct as needed

It may seem impossible for colours to come through on dark lips, but Fennell has a simple solution. For dark lips, start with adding a lighter foundation powder to mute out the colour of your lips. Once the colour is muted, you can then apply any lipstick shade in a much more true-to-colour way.

Trace and fill lips with liner

Apply lip liner around your



lips before you apply lipstick, and if you put lip liner all over your lips before lipstick (not just around the edges!) you can turn virtually any lipstick into a "longwear" formula. You can also finish with lip liner after lipstick to clean up the edges at the end and make the finish even more precise.

If you want a more muted lip, you can skip liner and apply the colour using your finger and then perfect it with concealer and a brush.

Layer on lipstick from the center outward

When putting on lipstick, place the lipstick in the middle of your lips and work outward. By concentrating your lipstick to the fullest part of your lips, you'll be able to control your application better and mitigate any mess-ups.

If you have trouble making your lipstick look even, try drawing an "X" on the cupid's bow with your lip liner. This will help

you get a well-defined cupid's bow, and also works as a guide to ensure that neither side ends up lopsided.

Use a lip brush for a precise line

All you really need for flawless application is a sharp lip pencil and pointed lipstick. Some people, however, may feel more comfortable applying lipstick with a lip brush, as it gives you a more precise and even application. Also, you could have your concealer and a flat brush on hand to clean up the line if you make a small mistake.

Blot and set your colour

Once your lips are perfectly coated and the formula is set, blot your lips at the end. Do this by gently squeezing lips together over a tissue or napkin to remove excess product and prevent slippage. Don't forget the corners! Then, use a translucent powder to set your lipstick. That prevents your lipstick from moving around all day.

Farmers on Facebook shutting down Kisan Ekta Morcha page

'Godi media' never shows reality, social media crucial for stir

NEW DELHI

A day after Facebook temporarily shut down a page on the ongoing farmers agitation against the Centre's new farm laws, the protestors on Monday said social media was crucial for their movement as it allowed them to tell the "truth in their own words".

The social media giant had shut down the page of 'Kisan Ekta Morcha' that shares "official updates" on the agitation, only to restore it three hours later following social media outrage. The Kisan Ekta Morcha's Instagram page was also temporarily suspended. "Social media plays an important role in our movement. While all kinds of media are writing about us, social media helps us tell our truth in our own words."

The 'godli' media will never show the reality, but on social media, we can share what is actually happen-

ing," Himmat Singh, a farmer camping at Singhu border, said. He came to the protest site from Punjab's Kapurthala four days ago. Before arriving here, he said his main source of information about the agitation was social media. Himmat said he used to take the help of social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to stay abreast of the various developments of the protest.

The farmer added that ever since he came to the protest site, he has been posting short videos of the agitation on his Facebook page. He also termed the shutting down of the Facebook page of Kisan Ekta Morcha as an "attempt to silence them". "I think it was done by the government. It is not a big deal for them to shut down something they do not like," the protestor rued. Facebook had on Sunday said the farmers protest community page was blocked because it violated the



virtual platform's "community standards". The social media site, however, clarified on Monday that it was an automated action which happened because of "increased activity" on the page. Three brothers from Punjab's Gurdaspur said social media was their go-to medium for all kinds of updates on the protest, not just at Singhu border, but also other sites like Tikri and Ghazipur.

"We have been completely dependent on social media for information about the protest, whether it is about what the government is saying or what our leaders have been planning. "Likewise, we keep watching Youtube to listen to our leaders' speeches," Jitender Singh, a class 12 student, said. His brother Maninder Singh said they have been posting at least 50 stories on Snapchat everyday along with putting up a post on Instagram every other day. "It helps us to let the people

of the country and the world know what our protest is about. It is because of social media that so much help is coming in for the farmers," he said.

The third brother, Pratap Singh, said he had logged into his Twitter account and posted details of the protest after Facebook shut down the farmers' protest page.

The three brothers have been camping at Singhu border for the past five days. Another protestor, Jagjit Singh, also underlined the importance of social media in the ongoing agitation by the farmers. "Everything is on social media only. Who watches television now, and where will we watch TV here?" he asked. Jagjit, who has been protesting at Singhu border for the last 20 days, said he has subscribed to several pages on both Facebook and YouTube to keep himself updated about the agitation.

FARMER ATTEMPTS SUICIDE NEAR SINGHU BORDER

Youth Cong demonstrate, demand justice for farmers

NEW DELHI

A 65-year-old Punjab farmer protesting against the Centre's agriculture laws attempted suicide by taking some poisonous substance near the Delhi's Singhu border on Monday, a police official said. Niranjana Singh, who hails from Punjab's Tarn Taran, was admitted to the Rohtak's PGIMS and his condition is stated to be stable, the official said.

"We are in the process of recording his statement," the official said when asked about the reason behind the suicide attempt.

The incident comes close on the heels of a Sikh preacher, Sant Ram Singh, allegedly committing suicide near the Singhu border last week as he was unable to bear the pain of the farmers. On Saturday, a 22-year-old farmer had allegedly committed suicide in Punjab's Bathinda after returning from a protest site near the Delhi border. Farmers are protesting against the Centre's three contentious laws enacted in September this year.

Congress' youth outfit IYC on Monday demonstrated against the Centre's agri laws at the Krishi Bhawan here and demanded justice for the farmers who have died during the over three week long stir at Delhi borders.

The farmers have gathered at all the borders of Delhi in the biting cold and are demanding that the government repeal the "black laws".



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

Scrapping laws will hurt democracy: Athawale

PANAJI

Union Minister Ramdas Athawale said if the Centre starts withdrawing laws passed in Parliament bowing to protests, then the parliamentary democracy and the Constitution "would be in danger". Athawale, whose Republican Party of India(A) is a constituent of the NDA, also expressed confidence that the BJP will win more than 200 seats in the Bengal Assembly elections and form the next government in that state.

Special Kerala Assembly to discuss farm laws

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The CPM-led LDF government in Kerala on Monday decided to convene a special session of the state assembly on December 23 to discuss the three contentious farm laws enacted by the Centre recently. The decision in this regard was taken at the cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan this morning. The cabinet also decided to recommend to the Governor to convene the special session, CMO said.

11 grenades dropped by Pak drone recovered

CHANDIGARH

PUNJAB Police said it seized 11 hand grenades, suspected to have been dropped by a drone flying in from Pakistan, from a field near the International Border in Gurdaspur district.

The consignment was found in a field in Salach village, located about 1 km from the border, in Gurdaspur district, Gurdaspur Senior Superintendent of Police Rajinder Singh Sohal told PTI over the phone.

The grenades were hidden in a box and it was attached to a wooden frame, he said, adding the recovery was made Sunday evening. Sohal said the Border Security Force had seen the movement of a drone on the intervening night of December 19 and 20 and had even fired at it.

"We conducted a search operation with the BSF personnel on Sunday and recovered grenades," he said.

The first incident of dropping arms and weapons through drones from Pakistan came to light in Punjab in August 2019 when police recovered AK-47 rifles, magazines and rounds of ammunition, hand grenades, fake currency and other items in Tarn Taran district.

'Marriage over,' BJP MP tells wife after she joins TMC

KOLKATA

SUJATA Mondal Khan, wife of BJP MP Saumitra Khan, switched over to the TMC from the saffron camp on Monday, claiming that she did not get her due recognition even af-

ter taking several risks to get her husband elected from Bishnupur during 2019 Lok Sabha elections. Shortly after, incensed by his wife's action, Khan said he

would be sending a divorce notice to Sujata, and urged her not to use his surname anymore.

Earlier in the day, at a press meet, Mondal Khan said that "misfit and corrupt leaders" are getting more importance in the saffron camp than the loyal ones. "Despite enduring physical attacks, sacrificing so much to get my husband elected to Parliament, I got nothing in return... I want to work under our beloved leader Mamata Banerjee and our dada Abhishek Banerjee," she said,

after joining the party in the presence of TMC MP Saugata Roy and its spokesperson Kunal Ghosh. Asked if her decision would, in any way, influence her husband, who is also the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) state unit chief, she

said it was up to him to decide his future course of action. "I hope he would realise one day..."

Who knows he might be back in the TMC one day," the newly inducted leader of the Bengal's ruling party said. Khan told a hurriedly called press meet a little later that he is sending a divorce notice to Sujata, "severing our 10-year relationship". "You are being used by some people who did not hesitate to create rift between a husband and wife who stood by each other during the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. Yes, you were my pillar during the Bishnupur Lok Sabha campaign."



Mansi Ganga to be cleaned with cow dung, 125 herbs

NEW DELHI

Delhi social worker and founder chairman of Smriti Trust Manoj Jha, has taken the initiative to cleanse the fallen Pavani Mansi Ganga at Govardhan in Mathura in collaboration with the local body for making it clean by Vedic Kaunomics method.

Development of Mathura Vrindavan in carrying out the campaign to make Mansi Ganga clean. Mathura Vrindavan Development Authority Vice Chairman, Nagendra Pratap and Chairman of Govardhan Nagar Parrish, Khemchand Sharma, have a major contribution in this venture in collaboration with Manoj Jha, Chairman of Smriti Trust. Mansi Ganga is watery, filthy and deodorant, after having a look at this pathetic condition Jha took the initiative to clean it. Manoj Jha said that "Mansi Ganga will be cleaned through Vedic Kaunomics method in which 125 herbs will be used



along with cow dung. One liter solution prepared by Vedic Kaunomics will be mixed with 10,000 liters of water. Vedic Kaunomics method is being effective in making clean to the lake, rivers and ponds of the country clean and serene, before

the Mansi Ganga, this method has been used in the Rohini lake park and pond at Prasad Nagar in Delhi, Motipur Lake at Rajnandgaon Chhattisgarh, Mandakani river at Satna, Chitrakoot in Madhyapradesh has been successfully cleaned.

UK's new Covid virus strain may not be deadlier: Vivek Murthy

WASHINGTON

Indian-American physician Vivek Murthy, US President-elect Joe Biden's pick for Surgeon General, has said there is no evidence to suggest that a new and more contagious coronavirus variant reported in the UK is any deadlier.

Murthy, 43, said that there was no reason to believe that the coronavirus vaccines that have already been developed would not be effective against the new strain as well. "This news from the UK appears to be about a new strain of the virus that's more transmissible, more contagious than the virus we've seen prior to this," he said.

"While it seems to be more transmissible, we do not have evidence yet that this is a more deadly virus to an individual who acquires it," Murthy told NBC News. Several countries have announced restrictions on UK travel and suspended flights amid growing concerns of an "out of control" new variant of coronavirus spreading at a much faster pace in parts of England. It is thought the variant either emerged in a patient in the UK or has been imported from a country with a lower ability to monitor coronavirus mutations.

"The bottom line is if you're at home and you're hearing this news, it does not change what we do in terms of precautions as individuals that can reduce the spread of this virus. It turns out that masking, that keeping



"It does not change what we do in terms of precautions as individuals that can reduce the spread of this virus. It turns out that masking, keeping physical distance, washing our hands - these are still the pillars of preventing COVID transmission," Murthy said.

Asked if he agreed the vaccine would be rolled out by spring in the US, he said: "I think when it comes to the vaccine timeline, we all want the vaccine to be delivered as quickly (and) as fairly as possible". "But we also want to be realistic about

the timeline. I think that if everything goes well, we may see a circumstance where, by late spring, people who are in lower-risk categories can get this vaccine, but that would really require everything to go exactly on schedule...We want to be optimistic but we want to be cautious as well," he said.

Biden nominated Murthy as his Surgeon General this month, exuding confidence that the renowned Indian-American physician will be a key voice on his response to the coronavirus pandemic to restore public trust and faith in science and medicine. After his nomination, Murthy had said that he will dedicate himself to caring for every American, will be driven always by science and facts, by head and heart - and be endlessly grateful to serve one of the few countries in the world where the grandson of a poor farmer in India can be asked by the president-elect to look out for the health of the entire nation.

"That is a testament to the promise of America - one that I will work to fulfill every day as Surgeon General," he had said. Murthy served as Surgeon General of the United States during the Obama administration and had to leave abruptly when Donald Trump became the US President.

Murthy was born in Huddersfield, Yorkshire to immigrants from Karnataka. In 1978, the family crossed the Atlantic to Newfoundland, where his father worked as a District Medical Officer.

MUMBAI

FOR the second time in a month, the Narcotics Control Bureau on Monday grilled model-turned-actor Arjun Rampal in the ongoing probe into the drugs nexus with Bollywood being probed by the central agency,

NCB grills Arjun Rampal for 2nd time

officials said here. Rampal, 47, was summoned last week, but he had written to the NCB seeking time till December 22, citing



some 'personal' commitments. Earlier, he was interrogated for nearly 7 hours on November 13 after the NCB raided his home and took away nearly a dozen electronic gadgets besides some (medical) tablets.

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The Covid menace and 2021 polls

THE United Kingdom is causing a lot of concern throughout the world over the new strain of Covid-19 that has emerged in it of late. This one is said to be a 'super spreader' and dangerous to contain. Several countries are withdrawing air services to and from the UK. Other countries and territories to announce restrictions on UK travel include Hong Kong, Israel, Iran, Croatia, Argentina, Chile, Morocco and Kuwait. UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson is taking stock of the situation as a huge backlog builds up on the border with France after even trucks and ferries were blocked at the ports. European Union (EU) member states are gearing up to hold a meeting in Brussels to discuss a more coordinated response as the number of coronavirus infections in the UK jumped to 35,928 on Sunday, down to the much faster spreading new mutation of the novel coronavirus, with the country's

death toll rising by 326 to hit 67,40. Meanwhile, asking people not to panic, Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan on Monday said the government was on alert about the new strain of coronavirus that has emerged in the United Kingdom. Whether India country would again go under a lockdown is not yet known. But, if the situation demands, there is every possibility of the same happening. After all, this is winter and if a new strain of the virus lands here, we will have an emergency on hand.

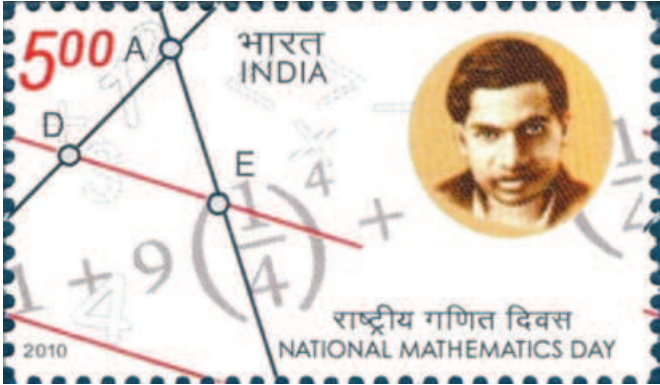
So far, more than one crore and 55 thousand people have been infected with the virus. With 333 deaths reported on Sunday, the toll touched 1,45,810. There are as many as 3.03 lakh active cases in the country, while 96,06,111 people have recovered from the disease. Kerala is the only state to report more than 5,000 cases. As for the vaccine, one is only hopeful of its availability by early next year.

The effectiveness of the vaccines to be launched or already launched like that of Pfizer is not established fully. In other news, even as India's top regulator asked three vaccine manufacturers for addi-

tional data on late-stage trials to consider clearing their candidates for emergency use, Vardhan on Sunday said he "personally" believed India could be in a position to begin administering the vaccine "maybe" next month.

A major concern for us is our elections. Five States, Assam, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala and Assam will go to polls next year. As is known to all, our elections are a messy one and no one will be following any Covid-19 protocols or norms to prevent its spread.

Moreover, the democratic competition only means rivaling the others with bigger rallies and meetings. Then we have the tendency to fudge statistics and hide the truth. There is also little chance of the State governments heeding to the advice of the Centre as usual. The election heat will only make things more complicated. India may be doing well as of now as far as the coronavirus is concerned. But, the tendency to relax quickly is in our DNA. The government should wake up and warn the people of the consequences more stridently. Prevention is always better than cure!



Rejoicing Maths Day

Today is National Mathematics Day

ABHISHEK TANDON

AS it's rightly said - mathematics is what you make of it. Perhaps, mathematics is more of Arts than Science and the art lies in how skillfully an educator can teach the concepts of the subject to a student. If the teacher is good, students love mathematics; but if the teacher is lackadaisical, the students become scared of the subject.

Today, on December 22, mathematicians and students around the world are remembering the contribution of Srinivasa Ramanujan to the field of mathematics. The legendary Indian mathematician who was born on this date in 1887 and quite correctly, India marks its National Mathematics Day on his birth anniversary. It is a good day to remember his works, teach them to our young generation, and encourage students to make strides in the field of mathematics like the great Ramanujan himself.

To recall his feats, Ramanujan was one of the youngest members of Britain's Royal Society and the first Indian to be elected a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge University. His contribution to mathematical analysis, infinite series, continued fractions and number theory was immense. Ramanujan is most popular for his contribution in analytical theory of numbers, elliptic functions, continued fractions, and infinite series.

According to government data, Ramanujan also discovered his own theorems and compiled as many as 3,900 results independently. Academicians across the globe agree that his theories transformed 20th century mathematics and continue to shape the subject in the 21st century.

Besides Ramanujan, our great land has produced several gems in the field of mathematics - including Satyendra Nath Bose, CR Rao, PC Mahalanobis, Shakuntala Devi, and the young Manjul Bhargava who is the first person of Indian origin to win a Fields Medal. And while Ramanujan was undoubtedly among the world's greatest mathematicians in the 20th century, even in the years before him, India was always ahead of the world in mathematical inventions.

India's tryst with the subject began in the ancient era itself. The discoveries relating to the times of the Indus Valley Civilization (that existed around 3000 BC) have confirmed practical applications of mathematics. For instance, excavations at Harappa, Mohenjo-Daro reveal that people manufactured bricks whose dimensions were in the proportion 4:2:1 and produced accurate weights in regular geometrical shapes.

Another Indian discovery, Vedic mathematics also flourished in India a little ahead of Indus valley Civilization. Vedic maths is hailed by the world for its contribution in solving mathematical arithmetics in an easier and faster way. The 16 sutras (formulae) and 13 sub-sutras (sub-formulae) laid down in Vedic Mathematics are instrumental in solving the problems of arithmetic, algebra, geometry, calculus, and conics.

Now cutting to the period between 400 AD and 1200 AD, Indian scholars like Aryabhata, Brahmagupta, Bhaskara II, and Varahamihira transformed mathematics with their findings. It is a well-known fact that if it wasn't for Aryabhata, the world wouldn't have known the number '0'. He also gave the value of pi up to four decimals. Significantly, he was the first to calculate the number of days in a year.

Later on, Brahmagupta invented the Fibonacci identity and also discovered the first general formula for solving quadratic equations. He also tabulated the sine table as well as the Pythagorean Triples. Similarly, mathematician and astronomer Bhaskara (or Bhaskaracharya) was a pioneer in discovering calculus and an expert in arithmetic, algebra, the mathematics of planets and spheres. Not to forget, famous Jain philosopher Hemchandra worked with the cadences of length 'n' and described the Fibonacci sequence even before Fibonacci himself.

All young students in India must be aware of these brilliant minds and also keep in mind that their inventions were not just limited to academia but had real life implications as well.

We all know the basic daily life uses of mathematics without which transacting any business would be unimaginable, to say the least. The calculation of value of a good (or service) and payments is an exercise that we all - be it literate, semi-literate, or even illiterate - undertake almost regularly without even realizing the significance of mathematical formulas in our life.

Going a step further, our economists, statisticians, and mathematicians make use of the different concepts of mathematics to ascertain growth of companies, shares, bonds, and even countries. Forget the tangible things; we are even able to measure intangible assets like goodwill of a company, happiness index of a country using mathematics.

In more recent examples, epidemiologists were able to predict the peak of Covid-19 infection in places using sophisticated mathematical modeling. Similarly, the several successful launches by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) in recent years has also been a testament to how mathematics can be put to the right use and change lives of people for better. Mathematical analysis coupled with rocket science helped ISRO launch satellites that tell us about our surroundings, save us from our enemies, and alert us regarding any forthcoming natural or man-made disaster. Further, the usage of mathematics in areas of defence and business are also magnanimous.

The recently-introduced National Education Policy of 2020 lays special emphasis on mathematics, applied mathematics, and Vedic mathematics. The draft reads, "On the curricular side, there will be an increased focus on counting, arithmetic, and mathematical thinking - throughout the preparatory and middle school curriculum."

The draft further adds, "All efforts will be made in preparing high-quality bilingual textbooks and teaching-learning materials for mathematics." The introduction of coding in early years, as suggested in the NEP, will be the beginning of bringing mathematics to real life application during school years.

While these steps give the right nudge at introductory steps, the NEP also talks about encouraging students to take up mathematics at an advanced level. "It is recognized that mathematics and mathematical thinking will be very important for India's future and India's leadership role in the numerous upcoming fields and professions that will involve artificial intelligence, machine learning, and data science, etc.," says the draft.

Young students often ask me - how will this topic of mathematics help them? And I tell them that each and every topic in mathematics is of great value in all walks of life. It is thus upon our educators to make sure that they teach students in a manner that they fell in love with the subject. The NEP also acknowledges the role of pedagogy saying, "Capacities of teachers in the teaching of mathematics will be developed".

At the risk of sounding panglossian, I would say India is poised to become the cradle of next-generation big inventions and mathematics is going to be at the root of these discoveries. Our country lost a few crucial years due to a few governments ignoring reforms in the education sector, but things look back on track with the NEP now. So, to every student, teacher, and guardian - make learning a celebration, not a compulsion; and love mathematics, I promise it will love you back.

(The writer is President, Akhil Bhartiya Vidyarthi Parishad, Delhi and PhD in Applied Mathematics. The views expressed are personal)

People's movements symbolise people's power

ASAD MIRZA

ARAB Spring and Shaheen Bagh sit-out emerge as two examples of popular and strong people movements in the recent history. The past week marked the tenth and first anniversary of two different events, both starting off as a protest against the ruling regime and in turn snowballing into massive movements.

The first, the so-called 'Arab Spring' marked its tenth anniversary and the second, the Shaheen Bagh sit-out its first anniversary. Let's have a look how these two movements started and what did they achieve.

Arab Spring

Ten years back when a young street vendor named Mohamed Bouazizi in the Tunisian town of Sidi Bouzid set himself on fire on 17 December 2010, he started a revolution, which spread across his own country and later to most of the Middle Eastern countries.

Due to the protests Tunisia has transformed in many ways, it has held numerous elections. Form of government to strengthen the parliament has been affected; a new constitution that enshrines civil liberties and women's rights while limiting the power of the armed forces has been adopted.

The protestors had hoped for change, dawn of a new era of prosperity and freedom. But ten years later, that spectacular moment of joy and liberation has faded away to reveal a sober reality. A small country struggles to find its way despite economic stagnancy, persistent corruption and stark political and cultural polarisation.

Though Tunisia is widely celebrated as the sole success of the Arab Spring for a transition to democracy and the revolution might have achieved its first aim of winning political freedom for the country, yet the economic prosperity still eludes it.

Western view of the Arab Spring

The Western media viewed the Arab Spring and its results through its out-dated and flawed Orientalist prism. The mise en scene of the event instigating the Arab Spring constructed in the Western media theorised the outbreak of the Arab uprisings not as a logical reaction to despotism and natural drive for freedom and democracy, but as a product of perceived Arab irrationality and impulsiveness.

Second, Western media and scholarship have reduced the Tunisian revolution to a story of success or failure. And has done much to validate the tired trope that Arabs are not ready for democracy.

Aftereffects of the Arab Spring

The ten years of the "Arab Spring" the last of which is the year of COVID-19 have brought many Arab countries to the edge of an abyss. The food shortage, the unending wars in Libya, Syria, Iraq and Yemen, the Iranian expansion and global apathy have worsened the distress of the Middle East.

However, the Arab Spring and the political movements spawned by it were rejection of decades of failed governments and aspiration for a democratic styled governance, in most countries. The uprising in Syria, for example, began as small regional protests calling for political reforms, not the downfall of the dictatorship. It was only after the initial calls were met with overwhelming violence that those calls eventually changed.

But other than geographic proximity and a shared history of living under dictatorship, the Middle Eastern uprisings had very little in common, besides the chant that spread collectively across the region: "The people want the downfall of the regime."

Oz Katerji, a British-Lebanese freelance journalist sums it up by saying that the Arab Spring may be over, but the civilian uprisings in the Middle East have barely begun. The Middle East now finds itself in the state of flux that Karl Marx described as permanent revolution, the aspirations of its people permanently churning but never fulfilled. There is no way for dictatorships to turn the clock back to 2011, and there is no desire from their populations to accept a status quo that permanently disenfranchises them. The powder is drier than it has ever been; all that is missing now is the next spark.

Shaheen Bagh sit-out

The Shaheen Bagh sit-out started very quietly on the



The Arab Spring and the political movements spawned by it were rejection of decades of failed governments and aspiration for a democratic styled governance, in most countries. The uprising in Syria, for example, began as small regional protests calling for political reforms, not the downfall of the dictatorship. It was only after the initial calls were met with overwhelming violence that those calls eventually changed. But other than geographic proximity and a shared history of living under dictatorship, the Middle Eastern uprisings had very little in common, besides the chant that spread collectively across the region: "The people want the downfall of the regime."

night of 16 December 2019, when late at night four men and six women, with some children in tow, moved from the lanes of Shaheen Bagh, a Muslim ghetto in South Delhi, onto the main road connecting Delhi to the neighbouring state of Uttar Pradesh. They silently sat on the road, few hundred metres away from the spot where earlier in the evening the police had dispersed a crowd of youngsters protesting against the controversial Constitutional Amendment Act (CAA) and National Register of Citizens (NRC), violently. The location of the sit-out made it stronger as it affected the traffic between the capital city and its neighbouring state to a large extent, and the resultant chaos lent it more publicity.

From the night of 16 December onwards, these handful women were joined by hundreds of protesters, mostly women, both young and old. Their main grouse was the exclusion of Muslims from the controversial Constitutional Amendment Act (CAA) and the plethora of complexities which will be thrust on the shoulders of Muslims to prove their identity, as and when the NRC-NPR are rolled out in the country, besides raising their voice against the barbaric police action on students of Jamia and AMU, and in several other cities of UP, days before. The Shaheen Bagh demonstrators who took their cue from the bird Shaheen, and were full of determination to get the government listen to them, and had a clear view of the trials and tribulations to unfurl for the Muslims to comply with, once NRC-NPR are rolled out, like Shaheen-the-bird.

Shaheen is a Persian origin word in Urdu, referring specifically to the Barbary falcon. In Persian, Shaheen literally means 'majestic' or 'like a king', besides symbolising victory in regard to a decision that has already been made. The vibrant bird also signifies strength, as though small in size yet it preys on larger birds.

In Urdu, renowned poet Allama Iqbal, in his youth-focused poetry, has used the word Shaheen symbolically to motivate and inspire the young and old alike to provide

a leadership which leads the nations to the heights of self-determination, and is best exemplified in his concept of the perfect man (Mard-e Mo'min).

Providentially the women protesters at Shaheen Bagh proved to take upon the qualities of the bird on which their locality had also been named. They proved that they were visionary, resolved, determined and tenacious like the free bird. And were ready to take on the might of an unresponsive establishment through their silent protest.

Within months, this sit-out, which was removed by authorities in late March earlier this year - when the countrywide lockdown was implemented, became a symbol of unwavering voices against what has been perceived as a discriminatory law, against the minorities, landless, illiterate and the downtrodden.

These women described their fight as a fight to save the Constitution of the country. They became a symbol of resolve and tenacity, just like a mother who can move mountains for the welfare of her children. Similarly, they felt that they were fighting to secure a dignified and proud future for themselves and their children as enshrined and guaranteed in the Indian constitution.

Parallels between Arab Spring and Shaheen Bagh

The two events though separated by thousands of miles had quite a few similarities between them. Both were spontaneous actions, with no pre-planning and no idea what will be the ultimate result of their action. Yet, both were able to involve a large number of people and were able to influence the future actions of the rulers and the ruled. Both found unparalleled support and adulations besides attracting the attention of the world and this shows the strength of people and the power of their silent protests charting a whole new path for their countries and fellow citizens through peaceful and sometimes violent reactions to prevailing conditions.



ABBAYYA CHOWDARY K

DECEMBER 25 this year will mark a new dawn in the welfare governance by any

authority in the world. Under the leadership of visionary chief minister Y S Jagmohan Reddy, history is being created in Andhra Pradesh with free housing site pattas to 31 lakh beneficiaries. In addition, the construction work of 15 lakh houses will also start on the same day. Generally people think that it is an only a welfare scheme but there is much more to it.

In fact, the Chief Minister is providing free homes to almost 25 per cent of population i.e., 31 lakh individuals are receiving a house, and if we calculate four persons as a family own houses are provided for 1.24 crore people.

In this backdrop it's time for all progressive governments to analytically think, and

focus more on the housing for poor like such schemes that can establish a sustained progress for the good of economy.

Taking reference from 'Urban Transformation through Housing for All: One Crore and More', its high points are for every government to take a cue as per their strength. The project cost was Rs. 6.13 lakh crore, which means capital infusion into market, with duration of five years. This has created a demand for cement and steel straight away approximately 17 million metric tonnes of each. Though there were over one crore direct beneficiaries of the project if we count them as a family it works to four crore of population provided with a home.

Such a large housing project also creates opportunity for 21 allied sectors like, banking, transport, brick industries, electrical accessories, plumbing, frames and furniture, paints, construction equipment, tiles and others. Direct employment generation was estimated for labour inputs per unit

house 30 sq.m.: labour 289 person days) translating into huge opportunity for labour employment.

There is ample opportunity for solar generation, too, as 30 sqm space is available on each roof top. That's not all, once the families set in the houses, it will also create a huge opportunity for local employment and businesses right from small vendors to big corporate houses and generate income for government in the form of taxes. Thus, a housing project can inject life and bring back an economy to a progressive state from a dormant situation. Though the above project had individual's monetary contribution but states like AP have been also doing free projects across with different sizes of space.

Another important reason to build houses is for migrant labours. During the Corona lockdown, India witnessed millions of workers in a pitiable condition were forced to walk thousands of kilometers away to their places. It's time to think

for their housing, provide them with an asset and security to remain there in any catastrophic condition.

During the Covid spread, it's noted that poor people were hit hard as everyone was advised to stay in their homes. But the fact remains many poor people were infected as they did not have a place to stay and were forced to move out. This was also a reason for the massive spread of disease and cost of life.

Back at AP's free housing, whatever be the political mileage, but Jagan Mohan Reddy, feels that it's not just own house he is offering, he is creating a benchmark for house owner's life style. An own house will make people more responsible and they tend to be more committed for their growth and lead a hard-working life. This, at gross level, will lead to a productive economic activity and transforms in to states wealth.

(The author is MLA from Denduluru constituency in West Godavari district)

JAGAN A ROLE MODEL CM, SAYS PUSHPASREEVANI

Lauds various welfare schemes launched by the Chief Minister

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIZIANAGARAM

DEPUTY Chief Minister P Pushpasreevani described Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy as a role model Chief Minister.

The Deputy Chief Minister along with her husband Pareekshith Raju, president of YSRCP for Araku Lok Sabha constituency, took part in the birth day celebrations of the Chief Minister organised at Merangi of Kurupam constituency. Pushpasreevani said Jagan was putting his entire efforts to make AP the No.1 State in all sectors. The YSRCP organised a blood donation camp on the occasion.

Sreevani said Jagan came to know about the needs of different sections of people during his Padayatra in the State. Now, after becoming the Chief Minister, he was implementing several welfare schemes for their benefit.

She said the State govern-



Deputy Chief Minister P Pushpasreevani taking part in the birthday celebrations of Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy in Kurupam constituency in Vizianagaram district on Monday

ment was taking care of various sections of people including farmers, women, students, auto-workers, tailors, self help groups and others. Financial support is being extended under Rythu Bharosa to lakhs of farmers and the government would soon distribute house site pattas to the poor, the Deputy Chief Minister pointed out.

The Chief Minister introduced the novel concept of village and ward volunteer system to ensure that benefits under the welfare schemes are delivered at the doorsteps of people, she added.

Governor greets CM on his birthday

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

GOVERNOR Biswa Bhushan Harichandan conveyed his wishes to Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy on his birthday on Monday. The Governor in a message conveyed his heartiest felicitations and warm greetings to the Chief Minister and wished that Lord Jagannath and Lord Balaji shower their choicest blessings on Jagan for his happiness and good health and to lead the

■ Wishes that Jagan leads the State on the path of development with his dynamic leadership

State of Andhra Pradesh on the path of development and prosperity with his dynamic leadership. Governor's personal secretary B C Behera and ADC to Governor S V Madhava Reddy met the Chief Minister and handed over the letter and a plant to him on behalf of Governor Biswa Bhushan Harichandan.

Active cases drop below 4,000 mark

■ State completes 1.13 crore sample tests

AMARAVATI

ANDHRA Pradesh on Monday saw the addition of 214 fresh Covid-19 cases, which pushed its overall tally to 8,78,937, while the active cases skid below the 4,000 mark. The latest bulletin said 422 patients recovered and two more succumbed in the 24 hours ending 9 am on Monday.

The active cases dipped to 3,992 after a total of 8,67,867 recoveries and 7,078 deaths, it said. All districts reported less than 50 new cases each as a total of 40,295 samples were tested.

Guntur and Krishna reported one coronavirus death each in a day, the bulletin added.

The State so far completed a sum of 1.13 crore sample tests, at the rate of 2,11,631 per million population, with an overall infection positivity rate of 7.78 per cent against the national average of 6.20 per cent.

Biden to receive Covid vaccine jab on live TV

Continued from P1

Republican President Donald Trump, who lost the November 3 election to his Democratic rival, frequently downplayed the severity of the pandemic and oversaw a response, health experts say, was disorganized and cavalier and sometimes ignored the science behind disease transmission. Trump was infected with the virus in the fall and multiple members of his inner circle and White House staff have also been infected. The outgoing president, making unsubstantiated claims of widespread electoral fraud, has focused on trying to overturn his election loss in recent weeks, even as daily Covid-19 deaths soared.

On Sunday, Trump's campaign said it had filed a petition again asking the US Supreme

Court to upend the election results by overturning Pennsylvania court rulings involving mail ballots. Some members of Congress, where agreement was reached on Sunday on a new relief package in response to the pandemic, dismissed the challenge.

"I think based on the 57 cases and the initial rulings, you know, any fair-minded person would have to conclude that there's a narrow, there's a narrow path for the election to be overturned," said Republican Senator John Kennedy.

After the United States authorized a vaccine developed by Pfizer Inc and German partner BioNTech SE on December 11, distribution of a second approved vaccine, made by Moderna Inc, began on Saturday.

AP land survey to protect rights of owners

Continued from P1

The survey will be conducted by the State Government in association with the Survey of India and related departments. The survey will be taken up in three phases in a fool-proof manner by enlisting over 16,000 surveyors. "The State Government will bear the cost of the survey to the tune of Rs 1,000 crore," the CM said.

The survey will ensure transparency by providing a Unique Identity Number to the lands and award a permanent property title with an assurance from the state government. In addition to this, a revenue village map, land parcel map will be provided and secures the

land by placing boundary stones. The pilot project was held at Takkellapadu where the details are displayed. The survey will be conducted across the state in a manner with continuous operating reference stations (CORs) connected to GPS, by using drones and rovers. In case if the landowner faces any difficulty with his land after securing the land title, the government shall compensate the owner. From now on, all the village secretariats will also function as registration offices for immovable properties.

He granted funds for some of the issues raised by local MLA S Udayabhanu and announced immediate sanction of

Rs 5 crore for constructing ESI hospital, Rs 3 crore for bringing up a trauma care centre and Rs 15 crore towards tourism development in Jaggayapet constituency. Also, Rs 5 crore has been announced for developing Yerrakalva and Vepalavagu in the constituency and promised to put efforts for getting a railway line.

Deputy Chief Minister Dharmana Krishnadas, Ministers Peddireddi Ramachandra Reddy, Botsa Satyanarayana, Chief Commissioner of Land Administration Neerabh Kumar Prasad, local MLA S Udayabhanu and other officials were present at the event.

BIRTHDAY BOY



Chief Secretary Nilam Sawhney greeting Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy on his birthday at his camp office in Tadepalli on Monday. Senior YSRCP leader and TTD chairman Y V Subba Reddy is also seen.

COVID-19

Nine-member task force to oversee vaccination in Vij

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

IN an attempt to speed up the process to distribute Covid-19 vaccine particularly in urban areas, the State government formed the task force with nine members headed by the Municipal Commissioner in the city.

It may be recalled that the government had already formed task forces at the State and mandal level. Changing the pattern of the State task force, the government issued orders on Monday including six more members in it making it 16 members. Likewise, the district-level task forces also will have 34 members henceforth.

■ The city to have 580 vaccination centres
■ At the district-level, the task force will have 34 members

It is apt to recall that the training for ANMs, health workers and volunteers was started after the completion of training for medical officers. In the next phase, the private medical personnel would be given training for the distribution of vaccines.

According to the health department officials, the medical personnel were told to observe four issues – verification, registration, vaccination and observation. The targeted persons

would be taken to the vaccination centres with separate entrance and exit.

The names of the targeted persons' would be verified with the list and after confirmation they would be sent for the registration.

Later, they will be administered vaccine and make them sit for half-an-hour to see any adverse effects. Subsequently, they would be sent home.

The vaccinated persons would be observed for a few days at their homes.

It is said that about 580 centres would be set up in Vijayawada urban region out of the proposed 2,580 centres across Krishna district.

Alert India halts UK flights

Continued from P1

"The earlier procedure of up-loading RT-PCR reports of tests undertaken within 72 hours, will no longer be valid because if there's a new strain, and a passenger has picked up the virus in the period between 72 hours and now, no purpose will be served with the other report," he clarified. Earlier, a message posted by the ministry's official Twitter handle said, "Considering the prevailing situation in UK, the government has decided that all flights originating from the UK to India to be suspended till December 31, 2020 (23.59 hours)."

"This suspension (of flight operation) will start wef 23.59 hours, December 22, 2020. Con-

sequently, flights from India to the UK shall stand temporarily suspended during the above said period," it said. This decision does not apply to international all-cargo operations and flights specifically approved by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), the Civil Aviation regulator said.

The announcement followed a letter that Union Health and Family Welfare Secretary Rajesh Bhushan wrote to his counterpart in the Civil Aviation Ministry, Pradeep Kharola advising him to suspend flight operations to and from the UK. Hardeep Puri said the Civil Aviation Ministry will review the situation in a few days' time to see if the sus-

pension of flight operations needs to continue or it can be dispensed with. For passengers, who already have booked to fly to or from the UK during the period of flight suspension, Hardeep Puri said, "They will have to await reopening of the air bubble."

Air bubble refers to the bilateral arrangements that India has made with various countries, including the UK, after resuming flight operations in the post-Covid-19 period.

The DGCA, meanwhile, has also asked airlines operating flights between India and other countries, to ensure they don't board any passengers coming from the United Kingdom.

Four held; ₹1 cr unaccounted cash; 29.4 kg silver ornaments seized

VISAKHAPATNAM

DURING joint raids conducted on Monday, the Special Enforcement Bureau (SEB) and Duvvada police arrested four persons and seized Rs 1 crore cash and 29.415-kg of silver jewellery. Sharing details with the media, Task Force ACP Prem Kajal said two persons were arrested and 29.415 kg of silver jewellery was recovered at a lodge near Allipuram during the joint inspections. The

accused were identified as Him-math Singh Rathod and Sohan Singh. During another search in a hotel in the same area, Rs 1 crore unaccounted cash was seized from two other persons. Bharat Kumar Purohi and Chhota Ram were taken into custody. In another case, police arrested two persons for smuggling 100-kg of ganja and transporting it in a car. Two persons U Subba Reddy and J Gouram were taken into custody in this regard.

Night curfew back in Maharashtra

Continued from P1

Passengers from European countries other than the UK, or any in the Middle East, will be sent to 14-day institutional quarantine, and others must adhere to a similar period of home quarantine, the state government said late Monday evening, after Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray held a meeting to discuss the mutant virus strain. Earlier in the day, the Centre announced a ban on all flights from the UK till December 31. The decision to impose a night curfew marks a U-turn by the Chief Minister.

Ready for talks, but need concrete solution: Farmers

Continued from P1

"We have studied their proposals clause by clause, and we have repeatedly told them that we want the laws to be repealed," Rarra said. The farmer leaders are expected to meet on Tuesday to discuss the next plan of action, said Gurmeet Singh of Krantikari Kisan Union. "We have already sent them our proposals and pointed out the issues we had with the government's proposal. They need to respond to what we have already told them."

Asked why the talks with the government have failed to yield any re-

sult, he alleged that the three laws were "anti-farmer" and the government was "favouring the corporates" over the farmers and the common man.

"We will meet tomorrow (Tuesday), deliberate and then see what has to be done, but our demand remains the same – we want the laws to be repealed or we won't move," said Ram Singh, Haryana State President of Ambedkar Sangharsh Morcha. Thousands of farmers have been camping at several Delhi border points against the new farm laws for the last 26 days.

TODAY'S QUOTE

Cut stamp duty to boost housing sales

“

The Maharashtra government's decision to reduce stamp duty on registration of properties has helped boost housing sales in the Mumbai region during this pandemic and other States should follow suit to give a flip to the real estate sector

—Niranjan Hiranandani, Naredco president



MSME

Invoicemart discounts ₹10k-cr invoices

Invoicemart, an Axis Bank-backed digital invoice discounting marketplace, on Monday said it has facilitated MSME invoice discounting worth Rs 10k crore. The trade receivable discounting system (TReDS) platform said that it has facilitated funding for more than 5,80,000 invoices of MSME vendors.

FOREX (buy rates in ₹)			
US Dollar	78.2	South	
Euro	94.11	African Rand	5.7
UAE Dirham	22.09	Hong Kong Dollar	10.94
Thai Baht	2.82	Japanese Yen	0.82
British Pound	101.36	New Zealand Dollar	54.36
Australian Dollar	57.95	Saudi Riyal	21.62
Canadian Dollar	59.92	Swedish Krona	10.1
Swiss Franc	86.17	Singapore Dollar	57.85

DELHI TUESDAY 22 DECEMBER 2020

BIZ BRIEFS

Bijak enters AP market

After already being present in 22 states, agri commodity trading startup 'Bijak' is expanding its operations to Andhra Pradesh. The traders and suppliers of agricultural commodities in the State will be able to use Bijak's online marketplace to discover verified buyers and sellers to trade over 90 commodities. With its expansion, Bijak aims to target 5,000 buyers and sellers in Andhra Pradesh. The app will be available in the regional language, Telugu, for a user-friendly experience. Nukul Upadhye, co-founder of Bijak said, "B2B traders control 75 per cent of India's agri value chain, but are plagued by limited access to technology, information, and credit. By going to the grassroot level of trading in India, we are aiming to digitize physical mandis, commission agents, brokers, loaders, mills, and middlemen".

Cyient gets award

Hyderabad: IT firm Cyient received '2020 Supplier Performance Award' from Thales. The company received the award at the Thales Virtual Annual Supplier Conference held recently for achieving on-conformity delivery performance excellence. Thales issues the award annually to recognize suppliers across different categories for achieving excellence in execution. The award demonstrates Cyient's dedication and consistent commitment to delivering value to its business partners and customers. Rajendra Velagapudi, Managing Director and CEO, Cyient DLM, said, "We are delighted to receive this award and are deeply appreciative of the strategic relationship between Cyient and Thales. This signifies our joint contribution toward the building of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' and is a testament to the commitment and dedication of our associates and suppliers/partners". We look forward to scaling our relationship with Thales to new heights, he added.

Indian Oil's new plant

UNION Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas & Steel Dhamendra Pradhan inaugurated IndianOil's lubricant blending plant in Kolkata. The new plant is a step towards making India self-reliant in its lubricants requirement, the company said. With an investment of Rs 142 crore, this project generated a total of 72000 man days. Not only will this project meet requirements of the ever changing industrial domain but will also ensure quality products creation with the help of its NABL accredited laboratory and top notch product evaluation techniques, it added. "The plant is another stride towards an 'Energy Secured Atmanirbhar Bharat' and will contribute to the economic growth of the country," said IndianOil Chairman Shrikant Madhav Vaidya. IndianOil is fully geared up to provide its customers a wide variety of lubricants, he added.

Antony

Waste's IPO

ANTONY Waste Handling Cell's initial public offering was subscribed 1.98 times on the first day of subscription on Monday, he company has joined the likes of Burger King India and Mrs Bectors Food Specialities to have received oversubscription in a few hours of opening for subscription. The initial public offering (IPO), to raise about Rs 300 crore, received bids for 1,32,00,749 shares against 66,66,342 shares on offer, according to NSE data. The qualified institutional buyers (QIBs) category was subscribed 63 per cent, non-institutional investors' portion 8 per cent and retail individual investors (RIIs) 3.56 times. The IPO comprises a fresh issue of Rs 85 crore and an offer for sale of 68,24,933 shares.

New coronavirus strain stings stock markets

Sensex crashes 1,407 points; Investors lose ₹6.59 lakh crore

MUMBAI

SNAPPING its six-session record-setting streak, equity benchmark Sensex crashed 1,407 points on Monday as a new strain of the coronavirus in the UK clobbered global markets and cast a cloud over the economic recovery expected next year.

A sharp drop in the rupee and profit-booking after the recent rally added to the selling pressure on Dalal Street, traders said. The 30-share BSE Sensex plunged 1,406.73 points or 3 per cent to close at 45,553.96. This was its biggest single-day fall since May 4 this year.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty tanked 432.15 points or 3.14 per cent to finish at 13,328.40. All Sensex components ended in the red, with ONGC leading the pack by tumbling 9.15 per cent. IndusInd Bank, M&M, SBI, NTPC, ITC, Axis Bank and PowerGrid shed up to 6.98

per cent. The market capitalisation of all BSE-listed companies dropped by Rs 6.59 lakh crore to stand at Rs 178.79 lakh crore.

European markets swooned while safe-haven assets like gold and the US dollar strengthened after the UK government reported a new strain of the coronavirus that was up to 70 per cent more contagious.

The UK imposed a fresh lockdown in London and southeast England,

Adding fuel to fall

► Sharp drop in rupee

► Profit-booking after recent rally

► Global markets in red zone

warning that the potent new strain of the Covid-19 virus was "out of control".

Several European countries, including France, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Austria and Italy, have banned flights from the UK. India, too, has suspended all flights from the UK till the year-end.

"Indian equities tumbled as new strain of coronavirus in the UK created panic among the investors. Also, the overhang on Brexit talks has added to negative sentiments. Further lack of depth in the

market owing to holiday season aided to the big fall today," said Sanjeev Hota, Head of Research, Sharekhan by BNP Paribas.

"We expect equities market to witness further volatility in the near-term. Nevertheless, correction after big rally is always a healthy sign for the market and provide good opportunity to add quality stocks for investment purpose. We continue to remain positive on equities for next 2-3 years owing to weakness in USD coupled with pro-growth government policies and dovish fiscal policies," said.

All sectoral indices ended in the red, with BSE metal, oil and gas, utilities, realty, basic materials, industrials, power and bankex plunging as much as 6.05 per cent. Broader BSE midcap and smallcap indices sank up to 4.57 per cent. Stock exchanges in Paris, Frankfurt and London were trading up to 2.50 per lower in early deals. Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Hong Kong and Tokyo ended in the red, while Shanghai and Seoul settled with mild gains. Global oil benchmark Brent crude futures slumped 5.30 per cent to \$49.49 per barrel. The rupee depreciated by 23 paise to settle at 73.79 against the US dollar.

Bank of Baroda signs MoU with armed forces

Launches 'Baroda Military Salary Package'

HANS BUSINESS

HYDERABAD

BANK of Baroda, a public sector bank, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Indian navy, Indian coast guard and renewed its existing MoU with the Indian army, to offer specially customized banking services through 'Baroda Military Salary Package'.

The bank has made the same arrangement with Indian air force also, thereby covering all the four armed forces under Ministry of Defence. A similar package has been introduced by the bank for the central armed police forces also.

Services under 'Baroda Military Salary Package' will be offered to serving and retired personnel of Indian armed forces through the bank's network of over 8,200 domestic branches and around 20000 BC touch points.

The package offers very attractive benefits including free personal accidental insurance



cover, permanent total disability cover, partial disability cover and air accident insurance cover of sizable amounts, as well as higher education cover and girl child marriage Cover on death in case of serving personnel.

Executive Director of the bank, Vikramaditya Singh Khichi said "We are pleased to associate with our armed forces and with this initiatives, it is our endeavor to offer an enhanced banking experience for the serving and retired Indian Armed Forces personnel. The in-built features and facilities offered under the 'Baroda Military Salary Package' make it one of the best-in-class salary and pension packages available in the banking industry."

Rupee falls to 73.79 against \$

MUMBAI

THE rupee depreciated by 23 paise to settle at 73.79 against the US dollar on Monday following a massive selloff in domestic equities and strong American currency overseas.

However, softening crude prices and persistent foreign fund inflows restricted the rupee's fall, forex dealers said. At the interbank forex market, the domestic unit opened steep lower at 73.74 against the greenback. It swung between a low of 73.81 and a high of 73.63 during the session. It finally settled at 73.79, down 23 paise against its previous close. On Friday, the rupee had strengthened by 3 paise to close at 73.56 against the US dollar.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, surged 0.94 per cent at 90.80.

R-Cluster heralds new phase in gas sector

Expected to produce plateau gas of 12.9 mcmd in CY21, says Axis Capital

NEW DELHI

RIL-BP announced start of gas production from first of its three cluster fields in KG-D6 basin which heralds a new phase in India's domestic gas.

Axis Capital said in a note that this is India's deepest (more than 6,560 ft) gas project and expected to produce plateau gas of 12.9 mcmd in CY21.

RIL sold first 5 mcmd of this gas at 8.4-8.5 per cent of slope to dated Brent in late FY19. It expects peak gas of 30 mcmd from all cluster fields by CY23, contributing 25 per cent to total domestic gas production, the report said.

"We are impressed with the execution of KG-D6 project which involved development of complex deep water fields. We assume 20/22.5 mcmd gas production from the basin in FY22/23 at 8.5



peak gas of 30 mcmd from KG-D6 basin by CY23. RIL's KG-D6 gas has pricing freedom subject to ceiling Owing to complex nature of the deep water projects at KG-D6 basin.

RIL sold first 5 mcmd of R-Cluster gas in late 2019 for five years to Essar Steel (2.25),

per cent and 9 per cent slope to dated Brent crude price," the report said.

R-Cluster first gas gets the ball rolling for \$5 billion KG-D6 cluster projects. RIL-BP combined are investing \$5 billion to develop R-Cluster, satellites cluster and MJ fields in KG-D6 basin. First gas at R-Cluster to be followed by first gas at other two cluster projects targeted in FY22 and FY23.

RIL sees plateau gas of 12.9 mcmd at R-Cluster in CY21 and

GSPC (1.2), HPCL (0.35), Adani Group (0.3), Mahanagar Gas (0.3) and GAIL (0.3) and rest to GSPC/GNFC at 8.4-8.5 per cent of dated Brent crude price. This currently amounts to \$3.7/mbtu, which is lower than ceiling price of \$4.06/mbtu. However, crude price of more than \$48/bl will enable RIL to charge ceiling price. RIL highlighted earlier that future gas sales from the projects could happen at higher slope, the report said. (ANS)

APPLE'S INDIA-SPECIFIC ROLLOUTS MAY BE DELAYED

Wistron attributes timeline extension to uncertainty over reopening of its Bengaluru facility

DEBASIS MOHAPATRA

BENGALURU

APPLE Inc is unlikely to face delays in its global product launches despite labour issues at its contract manufacturer Wistron's Karnataka unit this month. However, according to sources, the India-specific launches may see the extension in the timeline due to uncertainty over the timing of the reopening of Wistron's Narasapura facility in Bengaluru.

"Global product launches will not be delayed after the incident in Wistron's facility as Apple's other contract manufacturing units in India, Vietnam, Taiwan and China have not been affected. However, some of the products assembled in Wistron's Narasapura facility may face some de-

lay," a person familiar with the development said.

Cupertino-based Apple Inc is planning to manufacture its latest model iPhone 12 from India.

As this model is being manufactured by Apple's another contract manufacturer Foxconn, the timeline of launching it by February 2021 is expected to be met. However, the plan of manufacturing iPhone mini may face delay as the Wistron facility has been assigned with the work, sources said.

On December 12, temporary workers employed at Wistron's Narasapura facility in Bengaluru

vandalised the factory premises over non-payment of regular and overtime dues by the company. According to a filing by Taiwan Stock Exchange, Wistron has pegged the extent of damages caused at its

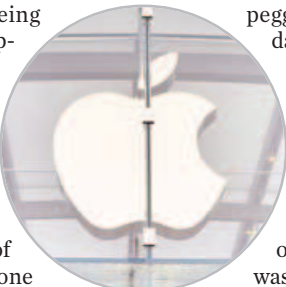
Kolar plant in the range of Rs 26-52 crore.

Post this incident, Apple has placed Taiwanese tech giant Wistron on probation as it was found that the contract manufacturer failed to implement proper working hour management processes. It has also said that Apple will not give any new business to Wistron till labour issues are resolved. The tech giant also hired auditors to

investigate the matter.

On the reopening of the Wistron facility, a spokesperson of Apple's India unit said that it would depend on the contract manufacturer. "We have nothing more to add," said the spokesperson. The incident has come at a time when Foxconn, one of the three contract manufacturers of iPhones, is planning to invest more to expand its factory in Tamil Nadu.

"India has announced the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for boosting manufacturing in India. Such incidents can potentially dent India's image when the country is trying to attract global giants to set up units here," said Pareekh Jain, an IT outsourcing advisor, and Founder of Pareekh Consulting.



At \$8.1 bn in Nov, FPI inflows highest in 12 yrs

MUMBAI

FOREIGN portfolio investors (FPIs), which own more than 24 per cent of the domestic market, pumped in a record \$8.1 billion last month, highest in 12 years, and at \$5 billion to date, December also looks to get record inflows, says a foreign brokerage report.

At \$8.1 billion, India has received the highest FPI inflows among the emerging market peers in November, as Brazil got only \$6.2 billion, South Korea (\$5.2 billion), Taiwan (\$4.5 billion) and Thailand at \$1.1 billion. This inflow had the valuation premium of India to other emerging markets in the MSCI Index shooting up by 5 percentage point to 46 per cent and is 5 per cent above the long-term average, says Bank of America Securities in a report on Monday. Meanwhile, with over \$2 billion pullout, the domestic funds turned negative on the market in November. At over \$8.1 billion,



FPIs inflows are the highest in 12 years in November, while with over \$2 billion redemptions, domestic funds were net sellers in the month. The fund inflows were driven by active funds, BofA Securities said. Even in August, FPIs had pumped in a record \$6.3 billion into equities. FII inflows of \$5 billion in December to date is exceptionally strong. According to BofA, FPIs parked their maximum funds in financials at \$4 billion, followed by discretionary stocks at \$854 million and industrials at \$687 million and had the least interest in it where they picked up on stocks worth \$104 million and real estate wherein they pulled out \$58 million.

PROPERTY REGISTRATIONS

Old CARD system spurs spike in realty business across TS

Property buyers, sellers flood Registrar offices

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

WITH the State government resuming property registration in the old Computer-aided Administration of Registration Department (CARD) system from Monday, the realty business picked up in Telangana. While the sub registrar offices were flooded with buyers and sellers of the properties, the realtors started filing fresh applications for new housing and layout ventures in majority of the urban local bodies.

It may be mentioned here that the State government had halted non-agricultural property registrations from September 8 and introduced new registration process which came into effect from December 14. After the courts strongly objected the government for seeking Aadhaar, family members and cast details as mandated in the new system, the State introduced card system again for the property registrations.

PICKING UP THE THREADS...

- Karimnagar, Warangal, Nizamabad, Khammam and Adilabad municipal corporations receive good number of applications from realtors
- Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar instructs Stamps and Registration Department to depute additional workforce if required and speed up registrations process mainly in Greater Hyderabad limits
- More than 2,000 registrations done on the day registrations resumed with CARD system



The municipal authorities said that the agencies engaged in the property construction

and plot ventures approached the officials for approvals to take up new projects. Karimna-

gar, Warangal, Nizamabad, Khammam and Adilabad municipal corporations received good number of applications from the realtors. The grade one municipalities were also abuzz with the realty activity on the first day of the property registrations resumed at all the 141 sub registrar offices in the State.

Barring the lands pending for regularisation under the LRS scheme, officials said that the property sellers waiting since four months made a beeline before the registrar offices for registrations. Reports said that more than 2,000 registrations were done by evening. Officials said that no technical glitches were reported in the functioning of the card system. Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar instructed the Stamps and Registration Department to depute additional workforce if required, to speed up the registrations process mainly in Greater Hyderabad limits where the property sales are comparatively high in the State.

FROM CLASSROOM TO STREETS...

Lack of academic activity turns boon for politicians

VRC PHANIHARAN
HYDERABAD

DOES lack of academic activity turned into a boon for the politicians to take advantage of students and rope them into electioneering? Cutting across their political affiliations, leaders of students unions stated that they could not deny it as the post-lockdown scenario has pushed them into vulnerable situation.

Speaking to The Hans India, a senior professor from the Osmania University said, "It is such a sorry state of affairs prevailing not only in case of OU, but also in several other campuses of the State universities. Several departments are conducting online classes. But, the students from the poor and underprivileged backgrounds are still unable to access the online classes due to various factors like lack of smartphones, affordability, poor signal coverage and the like."

The state office bearer of a students' union affiliated to left pointed out that there was no activity to do in the villages unless in the case of those families who have one or two acres of land. Staying in the villages had turned into a burden on the family. "We have not been receiving scholarships for the several months. Even the fellowships from the University Grants Commission (UGC) are delayed,"

- Many political leaders cashing in on the vulnerable situation of students rope them for electioneering offering good sums of money and facilities
- Delay in scholarships, fellowships and closure of campus hostels forces students to take part in election works



he added.

It was against this backdrop, the students who have reached the city to find a way to survive have approached the local leaders of various political parties and urged them to rope them for election works.

"The political leaders pay huge sum, besides taking care of daily expenses like food, transport etc. And, some even provide accommodation to stay. That is how a local MLA from the city had engaged students in the just concluded Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) elections offering a price," an ABVP leader said.

Another curious aspect is that there are also some faculty members from different colleges who have proximity to the MLAs and other political leaders. They serve

them during elections, the students said.

State president of Students Federation of India Murthy said, "We have been asking the university authorities to open the university hostels as per the Centre's guidelines as it was done in case of the University of Hyderabad. However, the university officials refuse to do so stating that they have to get an order from the State government for reopening of campus hostels."

He added that the students' unions have also made representations to Education Minister Sabitha Indra Reddy and the officials of the State Higher Education department. But, till date, there has been no response. "We are left with no other option but to launch state-wide agitation to press for our demand," Murthy said.

MPs plea to Gadkari seeking road expansions, repairs

Union Minister responds positively to their requests

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

PEOPLES representatives from Telangana have urged the Centre to take up several infrastructure development projects. They made these requests to Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari who laid the foundation stones to several national highway projects in Telangana and dedicated few others, on virtual mode on Monday.

Responding to the requests, the Minister said the Secunderabad MP and Union Minister G Kishan Reddy had requested for repairs to the damaged national highways during recent unseasonal rains and floods in the Hyderabad city. The Ministry's secretary Giridhar Aramane had taken immediate action and funds were released for the same, Gadkari informed.

Member of Parliament B Venkatesh Netha requested the Centre for widening of 2/4-lane with paved shoulder from Rasoolpally to Arjunagutta of NH-63 on Nizamabad Jagadalpur road on EPC mode under NH (O) in Telangana. For this, he was informed that the work has been awarded ensuring road safety of the concerned project.

Similarly, another MP Ko-

matireddy Venkat Reddy sought sanction of the proposal for widening of existing carriageway width to 6/8 lanes from LB Nagar to Malkapur (from 15 km to 40km) on the outer of Hyderabad city on NH-65.

Komatireddy was told that the project with a provision of about Rs 600 crore, with the project's DPR was under finalisation stage and it was included in Annual Plan 2020-21. Sanction of the same would be done by January 2021, he said.

That apart, several other MPs have requested for sanction to give approval for widening of the existing carriageway on national highway from Hyderabad to Vijayawada section of NH-65 connecting Telangana State capital with Vijayawada financial capital of Andhra Pradesh. The Union Minister said that a DPR for the same was under progress.

BB Patil, another MP, requested for carrying out repairs to general service road leading to Sadashivanagar and Ramareddy mandal on NH-44 Hyderabad-Nagpur highway. Taking the request into consideration, the MP was told that NHAI has already taken up the matter with the concessionaire to start the restoration work and shall complete the work in due course of time.

Procure more red gram for MSP: State to Centre

- Agriculture Minister S Niranjan Reddy says the orders for the procurement of 25 per cent of the crop production with MSP is not appropriate
- Assures to procure entire cotton produce through CCI



Agriculture Minister S Niranjan Reddy holding a review meeting on agriculture and marketing in Hyderabad on Monday

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

AGRICULTURE Minister S Niranjan Reddy said that the Central government's restrictions to procure agriculture produce with Minimum Support Price should change. He said that the pro-agriculture policies of Telangana government have increased the crop production. But, it is unfortunate that the Centre has not taken it into consideration.

Following this, the Minister said that it was decided to write a letter to the Centre to increase the quota for procurement of

red gram. He said that the Centre was taking an average of five years and issuing orders for the procurement of 25 per cent of the crop production with MSP. This was not a proper method, he pointed out.

He insisted that the Centre should take into consideration the crop yields of red gram during the current year for the procurement offering MSP. Niranjan Reddy said that farmers can make a profit only when they need not wait to sell their agriculture produce.

Reviewing the plan of action for Rabi season, the Minister asked the officials to prepare an

action plan for the procurement of red gram in advance. He said that farmers in the State have cultivated red gram in 10.80 lakh acres, in response to a call given by Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao to go for regulated farming. Conducive weather conditions indicate that the crop yields are expected to go up. Already, cutting of red gram crop has started in Narayanpet area. The Minister asked the Markfed to ensure that the procurement centres are opened by the current weekend. The Minister also reviewed the requirement and positioning of fertilizers for the Rabi season. Appreciating farmers experimenting milling paddy and selling the same, he said the farmers were requested not to worry about the paddy procurement. Currently, the paddy is procured at Rs 2,200 to Rs 2,400 per quintal in the market, he said. The Minister assured to procure entire cotton produce through CCI. For this, an additional 300 procurement centres have been opened this year, he informed.

Niranjan Reddy said that officials from the agriculture and horticulture would hold district-wise awareness workshops for Rythu Bandhu and Rythu Bandhu Samiti members.



Nalgonda MP and TPCC chief N Uttam Kumar Reddy examining the national highway works in Huzurnagar constituency on Monday

Uttam inspects NH works in Huzurnagar

Says he will take special interest for the development of all municipalities in his parliamentary constituency

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HUZURNAGAR

NALGONDA MP and Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee president N Uttam Kumar Reddy has inspected the ongoing national highway works in Huzurnagar constituency on Monday.

Speaking on the occasion, Uttam said Rs 1,000 crore was sanctioned by the Central government for Jadcherla-Devarakonda-Mallepally-Nidamanoor-Miryalguda-Nereducharla-Huzurnagar-Kodad national highway. Adding that the highway

works would be completed in a year, the Congress MP said he played a key role in Centre sanctioning of Rs 370 crore for the national highway from Nakrekal to Nagarjunasagar via Nalgonda.

Later, addressing the general body meeting of Nereducharla municipality in his parliamentary constituency, Uttam assured that he would take special interest for the development of all municipalities in his parliamentary constituency, including the issue of safety divider on new national highway in Nereducharla.

Farmer attempts suicide before Suryapet Collectorate

HANS NEWS SERVICE
SURYAPET

CHAPPIDI Krishnaiah, farmer from Kodandaramapuram of Munagala mandal, attempted suicide by consuming pesticides while explaining his problem to District Collector T Vinay Krishna Reddy during Prajavani programme at Suryapet Collectorate on Monday.

According to sources, the farmer took the extreme step as Munagala Tahsildar office staff were not addressing his land encroachment issue for the past three years. Krishnaiah was reportedly fed up with the attitude of revenue officials of Munagala and attended prajavani programme. While explaining the mental trauma he faced for the past three years due to the negligence of the officials, he attempted suicide.

Collector Vinay Krishna Reddy was shocked and pulled the pesticide bottle from the farmer's hand. He shifted the unconscious farmer to Government Hospital in the car of Additional Collector. The health condition of the farmer was said to be critical.

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

MUNICIPAL Administration Minister KT Rama Rao announced that the people of Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation (GWMC) would get water on a daily basis from Ugadi festival.

The Minister, who conducted a meeting with the Ministers and public representatives of Warangal in Hyderabad on Monday, said that providing drinking water on a daily basis would be taken up on an experimental basis. The Minister reviewed the progress of developmental works in the Corporation limits with the heads of various departments. He directed the officials to fix targets to provide drinking water to people on a daily basis.

"Get ready with the entire infrastructure needed for providing drinking water on a daily basis from Ugadi. The government has already taken up many steps to improve the water supply in Warangal city. Basic facilities are being provided for supplying water

through the Mission Bhagiratha. Earlier there was only 30 MLD of water supply and now there is 168 MLD," said the Minister.

The Minister further said that while there were pipelines in the stretch of 1,400 km earlier, now another 500 km pipeline was laid. He said that under Mission Bhagiratha, Rs 1,000 crore was being provided to take up various programmes. The works are likely to get completed by next Ugadi.

Rama Rao said that for the appointment of 200 personnel to strengthen the supply of drinking water in the city, the government would take the help of National Academy of Construction in Hyderabad. He asked the municipal administration engineering ENC to supervise the works by physically being in the city every week. There are 1.70 lakh house connections in Warangal and connections to remaining houses would also be given as soon as possible. He asked the officials to make people aware about the connection charges of Re 1 and

- Municipal Administration Minister KT Rama Rao directs the officials concerned to make the arrangements for providing water daily

- Reviews construction of double bedroom houses and Smart City works
- Minister Satyavathi Rathod calls for setting up of industrial parks, textile parks, and food processing units in Mahabubabad district



Municipal Administration Minister KT Rama Rao holding a meeting with Ministers and public representatives of Warangal in Hyderabad on Monday

also advised the public representatives to take the responsibility.

The Minister also reviewed the 3,700 double bedroom

houses being constructed in the corporation. The officials informed that already about 800 houses were completed and the remaining were in the

final stages. The Minister said that very soon the completed houses would be given to the beneficiaries. Rama Rao asked the officials to continue the programmes taken up in the Pattana Pragathi like Vaikunta Dhamam, Urban Parks and Sports Complex in the Corporation limits. He said that the government was providing Rs 7.33 crore every month and till now Rs 81 crore were given to the corporation.

He also reviewed the Smart City works and also the conservation of historical sites, sanitation and strengthening road networks. The Minister would soon conduct another meeting in the Municipal Corporation office in Warangal.

Minister Satyavathi Rathod said that the newly-formed Mahabubabad district has more population of tribals and they were without livelihood. She wanted the Municipal Minister to set up industrial parks, textile parks, food processing units for providing employment to them. She said that they have identified about 800 acres of land in the district to set up the units.

'New farm laws will make agri markets idle'



HANS NEWS SERVICE
NALGONDA

MINISTER for Energy G Jagadish Reddy stated that Market Committees and Agricultural Markets will become idle with the Central government's new farm laws. Along with MLA Kancharla Bhupal Reddy, he participated in foundation laying ceremony for additional classrooms at NG College, road expansion works from Mariguda bypass road to the Collectorate and oathtaking function of the newly elected Market Committee of Nalgonda, on Monday.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Jagadish Reddy said Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao has addressed the issues of farmers and made agriculture profitable in the State. The credit of allocating more than half of the funds to agriculture in the State budget goes to CM KCR, he added.

Sindhu, Saina, Praneeth in squad for Thai tourneys

BAI names full-strength team for three events, including the prestigious BWF World Tour Finals

NEW DELHI

INDIA'S top shuttlers PV Sindhu and Saina Nehwal will be seen in action for the first time since the coronavirus-forced break when they compete in three upcoming tournaments in Bangkok, including the prestigious BWF World Tour Finals.

With Olympic qualifications in mind, the Badminton Association of India (BAI) on Monday announced a strong eight-member squad to participate in the three upcoming tournaments, scheduled in January.

The team, consisting of Olympic-bound shuttlers Sindhu, Saina, B Sai Praneeth, Kidambi Srikanth, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy, Chirag Shetty, Ashwini Ponappa and N Sikki

Reddy, will begin their campaign with Yonex Thailand Open from January 12-17. That will be followed by Toyota Thailand Open (January 19-24) and the prestigious HSBC BWF World Tour Finals which is rescheduled for January 27-31.

After the coronavirus outbreak in March disrupted the sporting world resulting in cancellation or postpone-



players, apart from Srikanth, will feature in any international tournament. The former World No. 1, Srikanth had made a comeback when he played the Denmark Open in October.

"We are very happy to see badminton finally getting back on the court. It gives us hope that tournaments can eventually make a steady comeback in near future. Most of our players haven't played tournaments in the last 7-8 months," BAI general secretary Ajay Singhania said.

"However, they have been training to the best of their abilities at the camp. The purpose of sending a full-strength

team in these tournaments so that players can get the much-needed tournament practice ahead of the Olympic qualifiers," he added.

The team will also be accompanied by singles foreign coaches Agus Dwi Santoso and Park Tae Sang and doubles coach Dwi Kristiawan alongside support staff consisting of Kiran Challagundla, Johnson, Evangelina Baddam and M Srikanth.



India men end 2020 at 4th spot in FIH rankings, women at 9



LAUSANNE

THE Indian men's hockey team are placed at the fourth spot in the latest FIH team rankings while the women's team are placed at the ninth position.

Belgium men and the Netherlands women will finish the year at the top of the rankings, confirmed the International Hockey Federation on Monday.

In the men's rankings, reigning world and European champions Belgium (2496.88 points) sit at the summit in front of Australia (2nd place - 2385.70), Netherlands (3rd place - 2257.96) and India (4th place - 2063.78).

Olympic champions Argentina (1967.39) are in fifth, followed by Germany (6th place - 1944.34), England/Great Britain (7th place - 1743.77), New Zealand (8th place - 1575.00), Spain (9th place - 1559.32) and Canada (10th place - 1417.37).

In women's rankings, The Netherlands (2631.99 points) are 457 ranking points ahead second placed Argentina (2174.61), with Germany (2054.28) occupying third position, climbing one place following their Pro League results against Belgium in September.

Australia (2012.89) finish the year in fourth place, with England/Great Britain (1952.74) and

New Zealand (1818.98) fifth and sixth respectively. Spain (7th place - 1802.13), Ireland (8th place - 1583.09), India (9th place - 1543.00) and China (10th place - 1521.00) complete the top ten.

In January, FIH had introduced its new match-based model for the calculation of the world rankings, with the Pro League matches that were played in early part of the year seeing regular fluctuations in the standings before the Covid-19 global health pandemic brought the competition - and all international hockey - to a standstill in March.

The brief return of the competition between September and November saw further exchanges of points between the men's and women's national teams of Belgium, Germany, Netherlands and Great Britain.

The Indian men's hockey team's campaign in the ongoing Pro League is scheduled to restart on April 10 and 11, 2021 with a tie against Argentina away from home. They will then play Great Britain away from home on May 8 and 9 before travelling to Spain where they play on May 12 and 13. They then face Germany away on May 18 and 19 and will finally play a home tie on May 29 and 30 against New Zealand.

The Indian women's team is not part of the Pro League tournament. (HANS)

2 Wheeler National C'ships: Ahamed wins in Pro-Stock 301-400cc category

CHENNAI

TVS Racing's KY Ahamed has been declared rider champion in the premier Pro-Stock 301-400cc category of the MRF MMSC fmsci Indian National Motorcycle Racing Championship 2020 held at the Madras Motor Race Track (MMRT).

The result was withheld on Sunday evening due to a protest questioning the legality of a part (radiator) used in Ahamed's motorcycle. The Race Direction, following a scrutiny of the vehicle, turned down the protest, declaring the part (radiator) legal and that the modification was in line with the prescribed technical regulations.

Ahamed, 23, who had two wins, finished with a tally of 121 points in the championship, just

five ahead of Bengaluru's Anish Damodar Shetty (Race Concepts). Shetty, 26, had four wins in eight starts, but drew blank in two races in the final round which cost him dear.

List of national champions of 2020 season:

Pro-Stock 301-400cc - Rider: KY Ahamed (Chennai, TVS Racing). Team: TVS Racing. Pro-Stock 165cc Open - Rider: Jagan Kumar (Chennai, TVS Racing). Team: TVS Racing. Manufacturer: TVS. Novice (Stock 165cc) - Rider: Mohan Babu (Chennai, Privateer). Team: Sparks Racing. Manufacturer: Yamaha. Girls (Stock 165cc) - Rider: Anne Jennifer (Chennai, Sparks Racing). Team: Gusto Racing. Manufacturer: Yamaha.



One-Make Championship: TVS Open: Abhishek Vasudev (Bengaluru). Novice: Navaneeth Kumar (Puducherry). Girls: Jagruti Kiran Penkar (Kalyan). Idemitsu Honda India Talent Cup - Open (NSF 250R): Sarthak Chavan (Pune). Novice (CBR 150R): Shyam Sundar (Chennai). (HANS)

SYED MUSHTAQ ALI TROPHY

Azhar visits Kolkata, discusses bio-bubble protocols

KOLKATA

FORMER India captain Mohammed Azharuddin, now president of the Hyderabad Cricket Association, discussed issues related to the upcoming Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20 tournament beginning on January 10 in six cities simultaneously.

Hyderabad will play their league matches of group Elite B in Kolkata, against hosts Bengal, Odisha, Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu, and Assam.

"Azharuddin visited Eden Gardens ahead of Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, and discussed logistical issues and bio-bubble norms with Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) president, Avishkek Dalmiya," said a CAB statement.

On Thursday, a camp for 25 probables chosen for the Syed



Mushtaq Ali Trophy began at Jadavpur University Second Campus ground while maintaining strict Covid protocols. CAB Vision 2020 consultant VVS Laxman is supervising the camp while Arun Lal is the Bengal head coach.

Later, Pradipta Pramanik joined camp, taking the number of probables to 26. Ishan Porel's rehab is going on at the National Cricket Academy in Bangalore, and he should join camp by last week of December.

Also involved in the camp/training session are Director (Cricket Operations) Joydeep Mukherjee, bowling coach Ranadeb Bose, spin-bowling consultant Utpal Chatterjee, and trainer Sanjib Das.

Arun Lal feels the teams can't afford to have even one off-day.

"We have got a pretty tough group. We have to play Tamil Nadu, Assam, Odisha, Jharkhand and Hyderabad. The problem for every team in this tournament is going to be that only one team qualifies from each group and when you have that you can't have an off day. If you lose one game your chances of qualification are almost finished. So, you have to be on top of your game and win all five matches," the former Test batsman had said at the start of the camp. (HANS)

Odisha seek maiden victory, NorthEast look to bounce back

BAMBOLIM



WITH only a point in their kitty from six games, Odisha FC will be desperate to turn their fortunes around when they face NorthEast United in the Indian Super League here on Tuesday.

The Bhubaneswar-based side is lying at the bottom of the table having suffered five defeats this season -- the most in the league. They will face stiff challenge from fourth-placed NorthEast, who will be aiming to bounce back after witnessing their unbeaten run end in the previous game.

Odisha will need to find form soon, having struggled in both attack and defense. They have shipped in nine goals, the second-worst tally in the league, and have a tendency of conceding first -- seven of the goals scored against them came in the first half.

In attack, Stuart Baxter's men have scored the joint-lowest goals (3) and created the least number of chances (42). Odisha will need to ensure they don't let the mo-

NEUFC's Idrissa Sylla looks to make amends after missing a penalty kick in their last game



Match Result: ATK Mohun Bagan beat Bengaluru FC 1-0

mentum slip again in the first half by conceding first. To do that, they will have to keep a tight leash on forwards Idrissa Sylla and Kwesi Appiah, who lead NorthEast's scoring charts with two goals each.

The NorthEast team has got quite a few players who are quick. They play back to front quickly and get the ball to their strikers, so we defend as a team," Baxter said on the eve of the match. "Whatever

solutions we're planning will be as a team, it won't be based on an individual marking a man closely. It will be about giving each other support and making sure we shove them into the spaces where we can manage them," he added.

The Highlanders have similar concerns as four of their six goals conceded have come in the first half and their attacking threat has also begun to wear out. (PTI)

Babar Azam ruled out of 1st NZ Test, Rizwan to lead Pak

NAPIER

PAKISTAN captain Babar Azam and opener Imam-ul-Haq have been ruled out of the first Test of the two-match series against New Zealand starting Saturday, the Pakistan Cricket Board announced on Monday. In Babar's absence, Mohammad Rizwan will captain the Pakistan side at the Bay Oval in Mount Maunganui.

Babar had fractured his right thumb a day after Imam had fractured his left thumb during training sessions in Queenstown last week. Both are yet to return to nets with the team's medical staff closely monitoring their progress.

Decision on their participation in the second Test, which commences in Christchurch from January 3, will be made closer to the time, a PCB statement read.

Pakistan have already lost the ongoing three-match T20I series with a game left to be played on Tuesday. (HANS)

death tie-break). The Tamil Nadu player won the first game and appeared to have the advantage before his opponent capitalised on a blunder to draw level.

In the Armageddon that followed, Iniyan's mistake on the 56th move cost him dear. Russia's Andrey Espenko, the top-ranked player in the fray, lost to Iran's Mahdi Gholami Orimi 0.5-1.5. (PTI)

Sarin, Gukesh enter semis of Online World Cadets and Youth Rapid meet

CHENNAI

FOUR Indians, including Grandmasters Nihal Sarin and D Gukesh, advanced to the semifinals of the FIDE Online World Cadets and Youth Rapid Chess C'ships in their respective categories on Monday.

Only four of the 12 Indian players who made the quarterfinals stage in various

categories managed to reach the last four. The highly-rated Sarin (Elo rating 2620) was in impressive form as he beat Justin Wang (USA) 1.5-0.5 in the last eight clash of the open under-18 section.

Grandmaster P Iniyan, the other Indian in the last eight of the under-18 event, lost to Armenian GM Shant Sargsyan 1-2, going down in the Armageddon (sudden



fantastic job."

The second Test will be played at the Melbourne Cricket Ground from Saturday and will be telecast live on Sony Ten 1, Sony Ten 3 and Sony Six. (HANS)