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WINDOWS



Goa prepares to welcome the 51st International Film Festival of India (IFFI-2021), in Panaji on Friday

SC allows IIMC to chop 29 trees

New Delhi

NEW DELHI: THE Supreme Court has allowed the Indian Institute of Mass Communication to cut 29 trees for construction of a new building for the academic and hostel blocks as also a guest house subject to the Central Empowering Committee's (CEC) conditions. A three-judge bench of Chief Justice S A Bobde and Justices A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian passed the order after noting that the apex court appointed CEC has examined the issue and recommended permission is subject to certain conditions.

Garima named digital director for Jill Biden

NEW YORK: A media strategist, Garima Verma, has been named digital director for Jill Biden, who will become the

First Lady next week. Making the announcement about Verma and other additions to her



Kerala FM presents Budget, focus on jobs

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Kerala Finance Minister TM Thomas Isaac on Friday presented the sixth Budget of the Pinarayi Vijayan-led LDF government in the Assembly, which focuses on education, jobs and technology. Isaac commenced his Budget speech with quotes from a poem written by Sneha, a Class 7 student of Kuzhalmandam

government school in Palakkad.



Time to give relief to consumers on oil prices

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

Talk with farmers again a success. Nothing emerged out of it!

No breakthrough

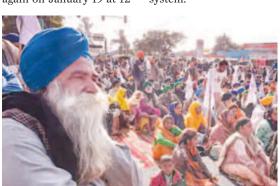
- Ninth round of talks fails to break the ice
- **Centre asks farmers to be more 'flexible'**
- Next meeting set for Jan 19 at 12 noon

 $N{\rm EW}\,D{\rm ELHI}$

IN their first meeting with the Centre after the Supreme Court appointed a committee to resolve the deadlock over the three contentious farm laws, the protesting farmer unions stuck to their main demand for a complete repeal of the laws even as the Union government asked them to be more flexible in their approach and expressed its willingness for necessary amendments.

This was the ninth meeting between the government and farmer unions since December last year. Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, Railways, Commerce and Food Minister Piyush Goyal, and Minister of State for Commerce Som Parkash, who is an MP from Punjab, held talks with the representatives of around 40 farmer unions for over five hours.

The two sides will meet again on January 19 at 12





Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Narendra Singh Tomar along with Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal and Minister of State Som Prakash addresses the media after the ninth round of

Thousands of farmers, mainly from Punjab, Haryana, and western Uttar Pradesh, have been camping at various border points of Delhi for nearly two months now against the three farm laws.

They fear that these legislations will lead to the weakening of the minimum support price (MSP)



talks with farmers' leaders on Saturday

DON'T BE ON WRONG SIDE OF HISTORY: FARMERS TO PANEL MEMBERS

NEW DELHI: Members of

the committee appointed by the Supreme Court to resolve farm laws' deadlock should follow the suit of Bhupinder Singh Mann and not be on the "wrong side of history", a farmers' union said. Mann, the national president of Bharativa Kisan Union, on Thursday expressed gratitude over his nomination into the four-member committee but recused himself saying he would give up any position to prevent farmers' interests from being compromised.

STAGE SET FOR SHOT

PM to roll out world's largest immunisation drive today

Centre lists do's and don'ts of vax drive, possible side-effects

New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi will kick off the world's largest immunization exercise on Saturday via videoconferencing, even as adequate doses of Bharat Biotech's 'Covaxin' and Serum Institute's 'Covishield' vaccines have been delivered across the country to all States and Union Territories.

Over 3,000 session sites across the country, will be virtually connected during the launch. A total of 3006 session sites across all States and UTs will be virtually connected during the launch.

Around 100 beneficiaries will be vaccinated at each session site on the inaugural day, the PMO said. Nearly 3 crore healthcare and frontline workers will receive the jab during the first phase of Covid-19 inoculation drive.

The list includes health workers, both from government and private institutions. along with sanitation workers, other frontline workers, defence forces, police and other paramilitary forces.

The vaccination programme will use CO-WIN, an online digital platform that will facilitate real time information of vaccine stocks, storage temperature and individualized tracking of beneficiaries for Covid-19 vaccine. "A dedicated 24x7 call centre - 1075 - has also been established for addressing the queries related to COVID-19 pandemic, vaccine rollout and the Co-WIN software."



Krishna District Collector Md Imtiaz along with other officials checking arrangements on Friday at Govt General Hospital where Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy will launch vaccination drive on Saturday, in Vijayawada

Delhi ready

New Delhi

A day ahead of the commencement of the world's biggest immunisation exercise, the National capital has completed all the preparations to innoculate its priority groups, with healthcare workers, who will be the first to receive the silver bullet, clearly excited.

The vaccination drive is slated to kick off on Saturday. The rollout is expected to cover three lakh frontline healthcare workers at 3,006 sites across India on the first

In Delhi, the vaccine will be administered to around 2.25 lakh healthcare workers at 81 immunization sites at Central government, Delhi Government and private hospitals, in Phase I of the drive. As many as 264,000 doses of Covishield and Covaxin vaccines have reached the city.

The doses are stored in bulk at a cold storage facility set up at the Raiiv Gandhi Super Specialty Hospital, from where they will be sent to cold chain points. and eventually to the vaccination sites. The government will provide a staff of 7-8 people at each vaccination site.

The staff includes security personnel, nurses, paramedics and a doctor.

THE CHECKLIST For Covishield The list of adverse events

following immunization

(AEFI) for Covishield:

- ▶ Injection site tenderness ▶ Injection site pain
- ▶ Headache fatigue
- Myalgia
- ▶ Malaise
- Pyrexia
- ▶ Arthralgia nausea

Symptomatic Medicine Paracetamol may be used to provide symptomatic relief from post-vaccination adverse reactions. Very rare events of demyelinating disorders have been reported following vac-

The vaccine should be given with caution to individuals with thrombocytopenia.

cination with the Covishield

EC wants govt to delete voter data after vaccination

New Delhi

THE Election Commission of India will extend its "full assistance" to the government in identifying targeted beneficiaries at the polling station level for the Covid-19 vaccination drive, but wants health authorities to delete the data once the inoculation exercise is over, sources privy to the development said on Friday.

On December 31 last year, Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla wrote to Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora requesting the commission's help in identifying people above 50 years of age at the polling station level, the sources On the issue of

data security, the home secretary wrote that the government is complying with the current best practices for ensuring cyber security. He has assured the poll panel that the data will be used only for the purpose of vaccination, the sources said.

The Election Commission, after detailed deliberations, wrote back to the Home Secretary on January 4, saying it has decided to render "full assistance" in the vaccination drive. But asked the government to ensure that the data is strictly used for the limited purpose for which it has been sought, the sources said.

The commission also said that the data should be deleted by health authorities once the vaccination exercise concludes, they

Some senior EC officials will be in touch with nodal officers of the Union Home Ministry and the Union health ministry to settle day-to-day issues, the sources



Major fire in Kadapa uranium plant

HANS NEWS SERVICE

KADAPA: A major fire broke out at Tummalapalli Uranium Plant in Kadapa late on Friday, According to preliminary reports, about 20 workers were said to be working on the site and there have been no causalities in the mishap. It is said that only a couple of them suffered minor injuries. According to information available, welding works were on and the sparkles that came out of welding fell in oil stored there and the fire in no time spread to the entire plant area. The fire equipment available there could not bring the situation under control. Fire Tenders from Kadapa were rushed to the site and after about nearly two hours the fire brigade succeeded in bringing the fire under control.

'Don't test our patience'

Army Chief warns China on LAC row

New Delhi

IN a blunt message to China in the midst of a lingering border standoff in eastern Ladakh, Army Chief Gen Manoj Mukund Naravane on Friday said India was committed to resolving the situation along the contested Line of Actual Control (LAC) through talks but no one should test India's patience. "We are committed to

resolving disputes through talks and political efforts. However, no one should make the mistake of testing India's patience," Naravane said during his customary Army Day address at a parade in Delhi Cantt where the force put up a display of its military might, including the maiden demonstration of an under-development drone swarming capability.

The border standoff in the Ladakh theatre is in its ninth month, with multiple rounds on military and diplomatic talks failing to break the deadlock.

The Army Chief has conveyed to China in unequivocal terms that India



tuality, said former Northern Army commander Lieutenant General BS Jaswal (retd).

"The message is clear --- if push comes to shove, India will take the necessary actions in the Ladakh sector," Jaswal added.

The Army Chief said India had given a fitting response to the (Chinese) conspiracy to unilaterally change the status quo in the Ladakh theatre where the Indian Army and the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) have deployed more than 100,000 combat-ready soldiers and advanced weaponry.

CENTRAL VISTA PLAN

Construction work of new Parl building begins

New Delhi

THE construction work of the new Parliament building started on Friday, over a month after Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for the project under the government's ambitious Central Vista redevelopment plan. The new Parliament building will have a triangular shape and is expected to be completed by the 75th anniversary of In-



dia's independence in 2022. The government plans to hold the monsoon session of Parliament in 2022 in the new building. "The construction work of the Parliament building has started," an official said. Excaavation work has started at the site where a sufficient number of labourers have been engaged to ensure that the project is completed on time, the official said. PM Modi had laid the foundation stone for the new

Parliament building on December 10 last year. Earlier this week, a 14-

member heritage panel gave its approval to the new Parliament building while also giving the go-ahead to the Central Vista redevelopment project. The Supreme Court had

asked the Centre to seek prior approval from the panel and other relevant authorities before starting the construction of the new building.

Great to see talent being recognised. Good luck everyone. You make us proud! @PurplePebblePic



Different styles of handbags to start your collection with

Handbags are a fashion sta-ple that every modern woman should have in their closet. As well as making it easy for you to carry around your daily essentials, these accessories are ideal for dressing up or adding visual intrigue to an outfit. There are a variety of styles available for different occasions and style preferences.

Shoulder bags

One of the most popular handbag options, the shoulder bag comes in a range of materials, designs, and hues. The holy grail of the shoulder handbag world is of the designer variety; these are usually flat and rectangular in shape, manufactured from high quality leather, and have dual handles. Even though it's called a "shoulder" bag, many have both short handles and longer shoulder straps; often women just prefer to hold the handles of this fashion accessory or wear it on their arm for a casual, effortless

Crossbody bags

Crossbody bags are huge on the handbag scene because they make life easier. They allow you to have your hands free while you're on the go or have other items to carry. These bags got their name as they have a long strap that's designed to be worn across the body. Some women also perch this strap on their shoulder to enhance the highfashion, thrown-together aspect of this accessory.

Satchels

Satchels are like crossbody bags but they are more specific in shape. Crossbody bags can be circular or square and have a zip or clasp fastening, whereas satchels are almost always rectangular in shape with an envelope flap and dual buckle fastening. Furthermore, as well as having the long crossbody strap, satchels tend to have a singular, short strap along the top that makes it easy to grab in a hurry.

The clutch

Clutch bags are perfect for nights on the town, date night, or more formal occasions. From beaded and boxy to soft and slouchy, there are plenty of options available to suit every budget and personal taste. The only downside with clutch bags is the amount of space that they have for your important belongings. You might find that you can only take the bare minimum with you to your special event, like your keys, cards, and phone.



The bucket

Bucket bags earned their name from their unique silhouette. Typically, they are fastened with a drawstring around the top and have a long, crossbody strap. Sometimes they have a shorter strap in addition to this. Whether you prefer the sturdy leather or cute embroidered versions, the bucket bag is a larger bag that tends to have plenty of storage for all your possessions, making it functional as well as fashion-

Hobo bags

Hobo bags are essentially shoulder bags with a particular silhouette. They are wellknown for their roomy practicality and chic aesthetic. Typically, this kind of handbag is slouchy in a half-moon or trapezoid shape with a single handle and curved zip fastening. However, other variations that are more boxy, have two handles, and fasten with a press stud are also extremely common.

Messenger bags

Loved by men and women alike, messenger bags are designed to suit certain lifestyle demands. Whether you're a school student, a business professional, or an on-the-go mom, these handbags are slim yet roomy and usually contain many pockets to help keep you organized. Messenger bags can be large or small in size depending on your personal requirements, are usually rectangular, and have a long strap so that they can be worn across the body for ease and comfort.

Showcase your personality

Even though handbags are practical first and foremost, they can also used as a fashion accessory to finish off or add interest to an outfit. Don't be afraid to experiment with different options to find out what works for you in terms of your lifestyle needs, your personality, and the occasion.

Herbs for your hair and skin

o get a healthy glow on your face many women these days are relying more on alternative therapies or remedies, and it's truly a wise decision. There are many miraculous herbs in the storehouse of Mother Nature to give you a glowing skin naturally. These herbs detoxify your skin making it glow like anything. So, it is often wise to resort to the herbal remedies rather than invest on costly skin cosmetics. Here are a few herbal beauty tips that every women need to know about:

Identify good natural coconut

Pure natural coconut oil should taste and smell of fresh coconut. It should be white in colour. Check if it is cold-pressed, since nowadays cold-pressed oils are available. Pure or Organic should be written on the label. It should be of a reputed company.

Oil for oily hair

Oil should not be applied on oily hair. However, if there is sticky dandruff, heat pure olive oil and apply on the scalp, using cotton wool and rubbing gently to dislodge the flakes. During winter, if the hair is dry and scalp oily, olive oil or sesame seed (til) oil may be applied.

Dark brown pigmentation on

For dark brown patches on skin, apply a sunscreen with high SPF before going out in the sun. Mix rice powder with curd and use as a facial scrub once or twice

a week. Apply only on the dark patches and rub gently on the skin with tiny circular movements. Leave on for a few minutes and then wash off with water. Mix honey and lemon juice in equal quantities and apply daily only on the dark patches. Wash off after 15 minutes with plain water. Twice a week, apply face mask. Mix 2 teaspoons oats with one teaspoon each of ground almonds, honey, curd and lemon juice, or egg white; apply on the entire face, avoiding the lips and area around eyes. Wash it off after half an hour.

Natural face pack for open pores solution

Mix multani mitti with rose water into a paste and apply on the areas with open pores twice a week. Wash off when it is dry. Or, mix oats with egg white and apply on the areas with open pores twice a week. Wash off when it is dry.

Natural ingredients to treat facial hair

Home remedies do not remove facial hair but are said to lessen facial hair growth if used regularly over a period of time. Make a thick paste of sugar, lemon juice

and water and apply it in the direction of hair growth. Wash off when it dries. Apply it once or twice a week. Apply a paste of turmeric powder and milk and rub this on the skin with a circular motion. It is said to discourage facial hair, but it may leave a slight yellowish colour on the skin.

Side effects of eye liner, hair

If there is lead in the eyeliner, it can lead to allergies, itching or irritation. Hair dye can also cause allergies, as well as pigmentation or discolouration of the skin. It can also lead to dry hair, hair breakage, split ends and even hair

Natural ingredients can be used for hair and skin as daily

I condition my hair with henna once a week. Curd, oil, catechu (kathha) and 12 eggs are mixed with the henna paste. No water is added. The hair is fed by the nutrients in the blood stream, so I take a small bowl of sprouts daily. I also use a herbal hair tonic, which contains trifala.

Prevent acne and pimples

Pimples and acne occur on oily skin. So astringents are needed to reduce oiliness. Cucumber has an astringent effect. Apply cucumber juice by itself on the face and wash it off with plain water after 15 minutes. Or, mix cucumber juice with a little rose water, for an astringent-toner. Green tea works well as an astringent toner. Soak green tea leaves or a tea bag in hot water for half an hour. Cool and strain and use the liquid on the skin. Sandalwood paste can be applied on the pimples, acne and boils. Tulsi leaves and pudina (mint) leaves can used.

Boil a handful of leaves on a very low fire in 4 cups of water for one hour. Leave it overnight. Next morning, strain the water and make a paste of the leaves. Apply it on areas with pimples and rash. The water can be used for rinsing the area.

Ayurvedic solutions for personal care

PUJA GUPTA

new solution-based personal care range, A'Clovia Botaniqa', was launched, especially for mothers. The products are based on Ayurvedic formulation comprising of oils, body butters, face washes, face masks, shampoos, conditioner and serums that offer solutions for problems faced during and post-pregnancy such as hair-fall, tired or dull skin, stretch marks, dryness, acne as well as stress.

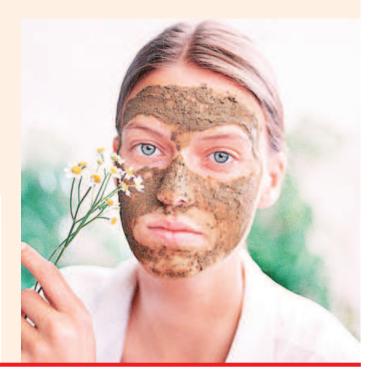
Suited to all skin types, the products are pHcontrolled plant-based remedies, making it safe to be around babies and therefore, apt for new mothers and pregnant women, said a spokesperson for the company.

The products are toxins, paraben or sulphate free and enriched with active ingredients derived from Moringa, Argan, Patouchali, Aloe Vera, Jasmine oil, Lavender, Jojobal, Olive Saffron, Matcha tea, Himalayan clay, etc that heal skin and hair naturally and from

Neha Kant, Founder and Director, Clovia said, "We believe in constant intomers. With the launch of this latest range, we aim to extend Clovia's problem solving expertise to our user's skin and hair as well. Over the years, we have received a great response from our customers across categories including lingerie, activewear, or nightwear and we are hoping to delight our customers with our new personal care range as well. The entire range is made with natural ingredients and uses Ayurvedic formulations. It is result oriented targeting their key issues. We have taken utmost care to keep it safe for new mothers."

novation and direct connection to our cus-







Across

- 1 A complete failure (6) 5 Front part of an apron
- Polaris bear (4)
- 9 Epochs (4)
- 10 Set back, slacken or slow down (6)
- 11 One of the Magi (9) 13 Goya's "The Duchess of
- 15 Promissory note (3)
- 16 Amidst (5)
- 17 Sign up (5)
- 20 Resistance unit (3) 22 A snake-like fish (3)
- 23 Ligurian port (5)
- 24 Conflict (5)
- 26 Gloating cry (3)
- 27 Grasp (4)
- 28 Necessary (9)
- 31 Legitimate (6) 32 Taunt (4)
- 33 Saw (4)
- 34 Go wrong (3) 35 More compact (6)

Down

1 Conventional (6)

CROSSWORD

- German motorway (8)
- 3 Rein in (4)
- Authorises, commands or decrees (7)
- 5 African language (5)
- Alpha's follower? (4)
- 7 A small umbrella (7) 12 Ship's record (3)
- 14 Gun shop purchase (4) 18 Bird's home (4)
- 19 Puts old material into new form with significant changes?
- 20 Unit of magnetic intensity (7)
- 21 Concealed or disguised, in a way?
- 24 Chinese dynasty (3)
- 25 Closer (6)
- 26 Not the same (5)
- 29 Cork's place (4) 30 Miner's discovery (4)

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NEWS ROUNDUP

Esha Gupta flaunts perfect hourglass figure in new post

ollywood actress Esha Gupta on Friday shared a stunning picture Dflaunting perfect curves in a post she has shared on social media. Esha posted a monochrome picture on Instagram, where she is seen standing on a beach. To caption the image, Esha wrote: "Flow."

Esha, who is known for her work in films such as Jannat 2, Rustom, Commando 2 and Baadshaho among many other films, often treats her fans with steamy images. In December, the actress posted a shirtless image on social media to bid goodbye to 2020. The actress was



DELHI GOVT DIVERTS COVAXIN TO 6 CENTRE-RUN HOSPITALS

NEW DELHI

THE Delhi government has rationed the tranche of two Covid-19 vaccines it has stocked in 81 hospitals finalised for the launch of a massive immunization drive against the novel coronavirus in the national capital on Saturday

However, the distribution pattern has raised a few evebrows as the Cvaccine by Bharat Biotech, Covaxin, has been allotted only to six Centre-run hospitals, including the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Safdarjung, and Ram Manohar Lohia (RML), a list of hospitals with

the vaccines allotted by the Delhi government revealed.

Meanwhile, 75 hospitals which include state-run and private hospitals, will receive Covishield, developed by Oxford/AstraZeneca with Serum Institute of India (SII), which is handling its marketing and production in the country.

While no official clarification or reason were presented by the Delhi government behind the distribution pattern of the vaccine, a top official from the state health department told IANS that it was done at the Centre's behest.



"The vaccine and its doses are allocated as per specific directions from the Central government," the official said.

However, the move is expected

healthcare workers already have a reservation against the Bharat Biotech's Covaxin which received approval for restricted emergency use in clinical trial mode by India's drug regulator efficacy data. Many healthcare workers who spoke to IANS also revealed their apprehensions towards the Covaxin. "I'm all in to get vaccinated but would not take Covaxin," an ENT specialist at the Centre-run Lady Hardinge Medical College (LHMC) said.

The healthcare workers of the LHMC will be offered Covaxin as its associated hospital Kalawati Saran is listed in the 6 Centrerun hospitals which would receive the Bharat Biotech's vac-

Jugal Kishore, Professor and Head, Department of Commu-

nity Medicine, Safdarjung, said that one vaccine candidate should have been provided to all centres to avoid any controversy.

"It would have been better if the government had provided one vaccine candidate to all the centres so that no confusion gets into the minds of the people," he

However, Kishore also concurred with reservations against the Covaxin seemingly among the healthcare workers.

He cited a statement of a leading clinical scientist, Gagandeep Kang, who is also a vice-chairperson of the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Inventions (CEPI), a global consortium facilitating promising vaccine candidates for Covid-19.

Kang had said that she "would not take Covaxin until its required efficacy data is made pub-

Covaxin has been in the spotlight of controversy since it was recommended for restricted emergency use by the Subject Expert Committee of the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO).

Later, it was approved on January 3 for the roll-out in Covid immunization programme.

3 killed in Delhi scrap shop fire

New Delhi

THREE people were killed in a fire that broke out at a scrap shop in Delhi's Kirti Nagar area, officials confirmed on Friday. The fire broke out at the shop at around 11 p.m. on Thursday night and soon it engulfed small shanties above it where a family of a worker lived.

"Seven fire tenders were rushed to the site to bring the fire under control," Atul Garg, Director Delhi Fire Service, said.

The fire was brought under control shortly and most of the family members were rescued, he added. After the fire was doused completely, three dead bodies, almost

completely charred, were recov-One victim is about 20 years and the second about 8-10 years.

The third victim is believed to be of one Rohit, a resident of Kamla Nehru Camp. "Prima facie it has come to notice that Rohit came to the spot when the fire started to douse it and meanwhile got trapped in the fire and fell in the drain. He is aged about 20 years of age and works as a driver," said Deepak Purohit, DCP West Delhi.



UPCC president Ajay Kumar Lallu being stopped by marching towards Rai Bhavan as oart of 'Kisan Adhikar Divas' protest march against Centre's farm reform laws.

in Lucknow on

Friday

UPCC chief, party men detained while marching to Raj Bhawan

Lucknow

UPCC president Ajay Kumar Lallu and several Congress workers were detained on Friday as they attempted to march towards Raj Bhawan to observe 'Kisan Adhikar Diwas'.

Lallu and his supporters were detained near

his house. The Congress had announced that it would observe Kisan Adhikar Diwas on Friday and gherao the Raj Bhawan in protest against the farm laws.

Scuffles between Congress workers and the police were reported from other places as well as party workers attempted

to reach Raj Bhawan. Talking to reporters, the UPCC chief said that the Yogi Adityanath government was infringing on their democratic rights to hold a peaceful

protest. "The Congress will continue its fight against this kind of oppression,"

40 AAP MLAs to tour UP as part of poll strategy

LUCKNOW

AAM Aadmi Party (AAP) legislators will now tour Uttar Pradesh to popularise the Delhi model of development, ahead of the assembly elections in the state.

The AAP legislators who have been asked to tour are those who have links with the state or have the highest number of voters from Uttar Pradesh and Purvanchal in their constituencies.

Vaibhav Maheshwari, AAP spokesperson, said: "The 40 odd MLAs have been assigned multiple constituencies which they have been asked to visit, interact with members, give them guidance and assess the party's strengths and weaknesses there. They will then pass on this information to the party leadership."

Former Minister Somnath Bharti's visit to Amethi and Rae Bareli was part of this strategy.

The AAP had announced its decision to contest the 2022 assembly elections in December, after which deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia came to Luc-



know for a debate with a representative of the Uttar Pradesh government over the Delhi and UP models of develop-

The party intends using its work in the health and education sectors as the basis for its campaign in the state.

"AAP won all seats with a high population of Purvanchal voters. Most of these are located in east Delhi areas like Shahdara, Mayur Vihar, Patparganj etc. MLAs from these areas have a strong connect with people from UP which can be used in the state itself. Among those who will be working in UP over the next few months are Manish Sisodia, Nitin Tyagi, Akhileshpati Tripathi, Rajendra Gautam, Rakhi Birla, Pawan Sharma, Ajesh Yadav, Naresh Yadav, among others," said Maheshwari.

After the MLAs submit their reports to the party leadership, the party will decide on a plan of action for the next phase of the campaign

Delhi court directs UP jailer to produce AAP MLA Somnath

NEW DELHI

A Delhi Court has directed jail superintendent of an Uttar Pradesh prison to produce AAP MLA Somnath Bharti before it on January 18.

The court was hearing a matter related to an alleged assault case of a security staff at All India Institute of Medical Sciences here in 2016. Bharti is currently lodged in a UP jail in Sultanpur district. He was arrested in the state under section 505 (Statements conducing to public mischief) and 153 (wantonly giving provocation with intent to cause riot) of the IPC for his alleged objectionable remarks

Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Ravindra Kumar Pandev issued production warrant against Bharti on January 14 after the accused's advocate, Mohd Irshad, moved an exemption application on his behalf in the matter informing that he is currently lodged in judicial custody in a UP jail. Bharti was earlier granted bail in the present case by a Delhi court. The court observed that the present mat-



ter was at the stage of judgment and Bharti's presence was required before the judge.

"The production warrant be sent and served by DCP concerned to the Jail Superintendent concerned where accused is currently running in the custody through special messenger considering the fact that next date of hearing is January 18, 2021 at 2.15 pm and matter is at the stage of consideration/ judgement. "Jail Superintendent concerned is directed to produce the accused Somnath Bharti without any fail on next date of hearing," the judge said. The case was registered against Bharti and other accused under sections of rioting, damaging public property and obstructing



MCD councillors, officers living like lords, while Covid-19 workers don't get pay: HC

THE Delhi High Court on Friday said it intends to stop all non-essential, discretionary expenses of the three municipal corporations here, including the perks of councillors and senior officers "living like lords", so that salaries and pensions of COVID-19 front line workers -doctors, nurses and sanitation staff -- can be paid. The high court directed the civic bodies to give details of expenses incurred on top officials saying that if anyone in these corporations has to take a hair cut on their salaries, it has to be them, starting with the councillors. A bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Rekha Palli said that during the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic the payment of salaries of health workers, including doctors and nursing staff, and sanitation staff who are at the frontlines should be prioritized over other discretionary expenses, like perks of senior officers.

HANS NEWS SERVICE New Delhi

Moderate fog in Delhi, minimum temp rises to 6.7 degrees Celsius

A cloud cover over the national capital on Friday led to the minimum temperature rising to 6.7 degrees Celsius, a notch above normal, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said. However, moderate fog lowered visibility to 201 metres at Safdarjung and 300 metres at Palam in the morning,

an IMD official said. Dense fog is predicted in parts of the city on Saturday. Cold and dry northerly/northwesterly winds from the western Himalayas had brought the minimum temperature down in Delhi on Thurs-

The wind direction then changed to northeasterly. This, along with partly cloudy weather, resulted in an increase in the minimum temperature, Kuldeep Srivastava, the head of the IMD's regional forecasting centre said. On January 1, the city had recorded a minimum of 1.1 degrees Celsius, lowest for the month in 15 years. Delhi had been registering above-normal minimum temperatures till Monday, as a cloud cover persisted over the city under the influence of successive Western Distur-

a public servant from discharg-KGMU, Lucknow, to start genome sequencing for new Covid strain

LUCKNOW

THE King George Medical University (KGMU) in Lucknow is starting genome sequencing for a new strain of the novel coronavirus on a larger scale.

This exercise for the identification of strain, will not only assist in determining the variety and severity of the strain but will also help in providing better treatment and management of

Amita Jain, head of Department of Microbiology, had said that earlier that with the help of Genome Sequencer Machine, samples of 10 corona-positive patients have been examined. But after the purchase of reagent kits, sam-

ples on a larger scale can be examined. "We have tested ten samples of patients suffering from coronavirus, fortunately, not a single sample with new strain was detected. After the purchase of the reagent kits required to analyse the genetic material of novel coronavirus, we will be able to test more

samples every day. "This sample test will only examine the new strain of coronavirus in the patient," she said/



Jain explained that genome sequencing is mandatory to check which strain is present in the patient suffering from Covid-19.

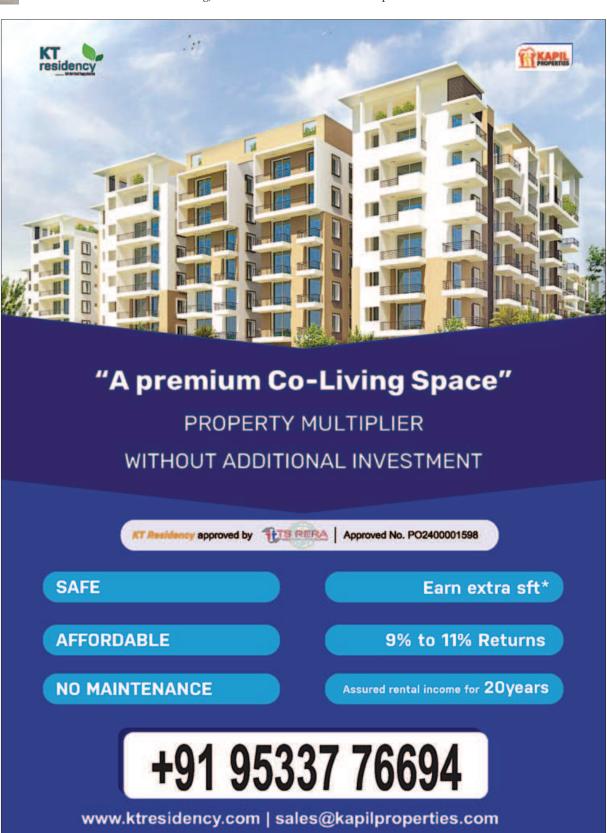
For this, firstly an RT-PCR test of the patient will be done, if the report comes positive then the sample will be examined to identify the strain present

Earlier, the samples were sent to Pune for the test but now after the availability of the reagent kits in Uttar

Pradesh, samples will be examined in the state. Apart from the KGMU, genome sequencing study will also start at the Bananas Hindu University, CDRI and NBRI.

The first COVID-19 test lab named 'BSL Level three lab', in Uttar Pradesh, was established in the Department of Microbiology, KGMU, Lucknow, which has set a record in Covid testing.

So far, over 11 lakh samples have been tested in the laboratory.



UK notes China's brazen human rights violation

The United Kingdom has accused L China of human rights violations amounting to "barbarism" against its Uyghur Muslim minority, as it unveiled new rules to ban imports of goods suspected of using forced labour. The abuses were "on an industrial scale", said the country's Foreign Secretary. This, of course, will not help improve the UK's ties with Beijing. The two are already sharpening knives over crackdown in Hong Kong. "It is truly horrific barbarism we had hoped lost to another era, in practice today as we speak, in one of the leading members of the international community," the official told Parliament. "We have a moral duty to respond."

The UK plans to bar British companies which have a role in the human rights violations against Uyghurs in Xinjiang province in Northwest China. The measures included a strengthening of the UK's Modern Slavery Act to introduce fines for businesses not complying with transparency rules, extending the act to the public sector, and an "urgent review" of export controls around Xinjiang. The move stands in contrast to a December trade deal between the European Union and China, which approved major investment and opened up the Chinese market to the 27-mem-

The deal was criticised because of widespread claims of forced labour in Chinese supply chains and put the EU out of step with like-minded partners including the US, Australia and the UK, which have all sought to check China's ambitions. The UK left the EU in January last year, and as of January 1 this year is no longer bound by its rules. It is hoping to use Brexit as a way to promote a more globally focused Britain beyond Europe. Its "Global Britain" strategy includes targeted sanctions against human rights violators, which so far has slapped restrictions on individuals and groups from Russia and Saudi Arabia to North Korea.

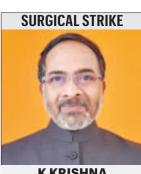
The UK is also 'watching' India to weigh its business deals as India seems to offer little in return. Earlier last month the United States banned cotton imports from a powerful Chinese quasimilitary organisation - the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC) - over forced labour concerns involving detained Uyghurs. The XPCC, founded in 1954 to settle China's far west, produces about a third of Xinjiang's cotton. But similar to Tibet, Xinjiang is a tightly controlled region of China. Many Uyghur communities also live in countries neighbouring China,

such as Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan.

An estimated 3,000 Uyghurs live in Australia. China's President Xi Jinping has overseen a hardline approach towards Muslim minorities living in Xinjiang, especially the Uyghurs. In recent years, the government has installed sophisticated surveillance technology across the region, and there has been a surge in police numbers. Recent reports have identified more than 100 Uyghur intellectuals including writers, poets, journalists and university professors are now among those detained. The persecution of intellectuals, who speak out against oppression, and continue traditional practice, occurs even if they are moderate in their views and working towards reconciliation.

Members of the Uyghur diaspora have been reported as requesting "proof of life" from Beijing over disappeared family members back in Xinjiang. Uyghurs in Australia have reported missing relatives.

America and politics of infamy



K KRISHNA SAAGAR RAO

HERE is a visible danger of USA turning politically unstable in the near term, with unprecedented politics of infamy at play. The political landscape since elections in November 2020 has transformed into a bitter ideological divide across the nation. For the first time since it is founded, USA is showcasing its worst politics and setting bad precedence for the entire world.

Americans for so long have been extremely proud of their democratic legacy, transparent electoral system, constitutionally protected personal-liberties and a functional federal republic. However, the ongoing politics seems to be beyond ideological differences and partisan overtures. It is moving towards rapid destabilisation of the great American core values.

All functional democracies are fundamentally rooted in differential ideologies of political parties at electoral play. Difference, dissent and deliberation are natural drivers of a healthy democracy. These three activities playout between incumbent and opposition parties, within an established legal-framework and Constitution.

Unfortunately, politics of USA has wrong tracked since 2016 election. It is natural that a strong leader with massive national agenda to implement, even if it is in the interest of his nation, will be projected as one who is trampling the democratic process. Mostly, the reasons for this accusation are change in the political status-quo, quicker decision-making, faster policy implementation and very less bipartisan appeasement. More so, when that leader is considered a political outsider and doesn't follow established 'politically correctness' like President Donald

President Donald Trump fits this profile perfectly. However, an elected national leader in a hurry to finish-up his agenda for a nation in four short years of his term, cannot accomplish much, if he doesn't do what President Trump did. Radically break the status-quo on many fronts, make massive decisions and not indulge in any bi-partisan appeasement, unlike a career-politician. But one cannot take away from President Trump, the 'USA-

First' development-agenda he delivered for USA, under his watch.

I will highlight four historic, infamous political mistakes both Democrats and Republicans have made in recent times, which will alter the fundamentals of American politics from

Personalised political attacks normalised

It is President Donald Trump who has started the new culture of 'Personalised Political Attacks' in the mainstream American politics during his run for Presidency, since 2015. After his spectacular win in 2016, it was officially mainstreamed.

If I were to advice, I would have asked President Trump to quit that dimension of his communication right from the first day in office at White House. It would have saved him the fall from Presidential grace all through his term and would have certainly earned him a decisive re-election in 2020. I am not writing this in retrospect, it was on my mind throughout his

Democrats have walked into this un-American method of communication, as if it is necessary to win the next election. They have bought the new communication model of President Trump, and applied it against him all across the current term, almost giving it authenticity and bi-partisan acceptance. Republican Party has neither admonished nor repudiated President Trump's personal attack model, there by ended up endorsing it. The grand old parties of a great democracy have together accepted, endorsed and even promoted the pathetic fall of 'political-discourse' in USA.

Media too has propagated and normalised the new 'careless communication' model as socially acceptable. In fact, the media and journalist discourse in USA has fallen way below the political discourse, and today looks like it has regressed beyond re-

There is no 'political correctness' left in the politics of USA as both parties have adopted this sensational communication method. There is no 'social correctness' left in communication of most regular Americans either, nor there is 'media-correctness' in the mainstream and so-

Unfortunately, it took USA just over five years to reduce their world renowned and respected 'careful communication' model, shockingly into unimaginable 'Careless-communication' laced with impoliteness, brazenness and hate. As I see. this is where it all began.

Social media mainstreamed

the 'Idiot Voice' America until recently was



considered a nation of intellect, innovation, enterprise and great social values. Social-media in the name of seamless expression for all, has exposed the dirty underbelly of USA, and in fact of the entire world. The underdogs, loud-mouths, social-amateurs, Identity-deprived, knowledgeless idiots have found a medium to voice, which they have successfully used, to drown all others. Especially the voice of those, who positively contribute to a nation, knowledgeable, meaningful and those who add realtime-value through their professions, have found themselves muted by massiveness of the 'Idiot-voice' being broadcasted both on mainstream-media and social media.

USA has inadvertently has led this regressive transformation not just within their nation but across the world, through innovative social media platforms like Face Book. Twitter. WhatsApp, Instagram and You Tube. This historic shift of balance has wrecked not just the quality of social interaction and expression in general but has irreparably damaged the quality of political expression and dissent.

Moderate expression with 'careful-communication' finds no resonance in either mainstream-media or social-media. in comparison to rabid, brazen, uncouth and hate filled expression which is always 'viralled' and consumed across board. The new leaders and heroes of the world today are those who clamor for number of likes, shares and retweets through sensationalism, careless communication and anti-social (national) behavior on social-media.

The shallow posts, illiterate comments, un-informed statements, peripheral judgements leading to abusive and foul expression. Many with almost no fundamental understanding of issues, knowledge in the relevant area make superlative hate comments, and mostly even unrelated to their personal and professional lives. If these kind of individuals voice, opinions and positions shape of our future world, imagine where a nation or the world will be in a decade

from now! Thoroughness and

well-informed political dis-

course have died a billion deaths

in the last five years in USA and

Gross deterioration of legislative discourse

the world.

At least, the legislative discourse in the House and Senate should have been spared of the cheap expression and low value tactics prevailing in the virtual world. However, there seems to be neither introspection nor even a thought given to legislative the conduct of the House and Senate representatives.

It's evident by now, that everyone is trying to capture the fingers and eye-balls of the massive size of 'Idiots' on social media. Only hate-laced, derogatory, sensational or abusive statements can lead up to a 'great speech' even in legislative chambers with thousands of likes and shares. The proof of this communication pattern is in the unimaginable crass speeches being broadcasted from the House and Senate in session. The quality and depth of most speeches have

touched rock bottom already. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi is supposed to set an example and lead from the front. for exemplary conduct in the House. However, she chooses words like 'domestic terrorists' for protestors and claims the President of the United States poses 'clear and present danger to United States' - There can't be anything more beneath, than these kinds of speeches from the

House of Representatives. Unfounded, shallow, illiterate and cheaply dramatic street discourse is being spelt out on the House floor, by Speaker of the House of a celebrated democracy, exhibits the future stature and disbelief.

has peaked in the recent years, even in the most respectable legislative chambers of USA, which are supposed to be the apex avenues for a democratic republic.

The visible plot of Democrats possibly with help from some key Republicans to disgrace President Trump to a point of no return is evident. The road ahead for Trump's conviction looks imminent. Democrats controlled Senate later this month might impeach and convict Donald Trump, to disqualify him from running for President in future. Both these acts look more like personal revenge against Donald Trump, than process-oriented constitutional action against President of United States.

dential Impeachment' has lost its sanctity, seriousness and dishonour it constituted earlier for a President. It now looks merely like a partisan political weapon, which can be used anytime control of House, Senate or both.

I foresee a huge possibility, that President Trump might float a new party disturbing the two-party equilibrium, which dominated the historic timeline of USA politics till now. The severity of hounding President Donald Trump in the next seven days and immediately after, will determine the strength of the new party Trump might initiate sooner than later.

Unfortunately for those like me, who admired the social and political construct of USA for decades, the steep fall from grace in social and political spheres is quite shocking. The torch bearer nation for a healthy, functional democracy in the world, is clearly sliding into a chaotic, anarchic, un-exemplary facade, There's still a little time to make course correction for USA, to not slip into an abyss of political instability and civil-disorder with current politics-of-infamy.

Disclaimer: This column in written in my professional capacity

(The author is the chief spokesperson of the BJP Telangana State, an organisational strategist & a leadership coach)

going into the House Speaker's crass conduct of tearing the speech papers of the nation's elected President, after his address to a joint session, while the entire nation viewed in shock

Sensationalism and crassism

Two party dominance in USA might end soon

An active pursuit of 25th amendment, which did not progress further with Vice President Mike Pence not taking the bait, and a hurried impeachment of President Trump for a second term, has certainly hurt and widened the 'people divide' in

With these antics, the 'Presiagainst US President by those in

as an Organisational Strategist



Australian cricket is racial, unsporting

Dr Duggaraju Srinivasa Rao

 $T^{\rm HE}$ just drawn third cricket test between India, Australia at Sydney ground will be remembered not only for great heroic rearguard action of Indian cricketers and also for the unacceptable racial behaviour of the Australian spectators, and also the condemnable unsporting behaviour of the Australian cricketers, including its current captain Paine and former captain Smith. The year ban imposed on Australian cricketers including the then captain Smith, involved in 'sandpaper gate' scandal in 2018, seems to have not changed the mindset, 'winning the match through hook or crook' of Australians.

Team Australia may be producing great cricketers but certainly not producing players with good sportsmanship. Australian cricketers are liked for their skill in the game but hated across the cricket playing nations because of their on-field behavior and their unprovoked 'verbal diarrhoea'. Their beastly bowling prowess and ferocious batting talent gave them the number one position in cricket arena for a long time. As other nations also grew in cricket and started producing great bowlers and batsmen the Australians have been challenged in their own game. Team Australia frustrated with their performance with both bat and ball seems to have developed the unsporting and cheating ways to win back the lost position in Test rankings.

Australian cricketers are established experts in sledging. The other cricketing nations, overwhelmed at the way the Australian teams were performing, largely failed to challenge their sledging for the

Australian cricketers are established experts in sledging. The other cricketing nations, overwhelmed at the way the Australian teams were performing, largely failed to challenge their sledging for the fear of getting the label of bad losers. Taking advantage of this, the Australian cricketers successfully made sledging as part and art of cricket. Thus the game of gentlemen suffered because of that. Their chatter behind the stumps and from the slips is so unbearable that some of the Pakistan cricketers reacted violently at times. Indian players like Sachin, Rahul and VVS are so gentlemanly that they refused to react but replied with bat. The sole aim of sledging was to disturb the concentration of the batsman and force his to commit a mistake while batting

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The sledging and wordy duel on the field and off the field seems to have ingrained in the blood of the Australians. For, there appears a pattern in the way the cricketers of past and present start mouthing out unnecessary words whenever a series is approaching. The retired

greats of the Australia start writing columns and comments in the channel interviews running down the visiting teams, whether it is India or England, with the kind of negativism which we rarely see

It happened even at the beginning of the current tour of Indian team. The retired cricketers wrote columns labelling 'this Indian team as weakest, "they can't repeat this time what they did in the last tour" and "the Australian team will crush the Indian team" as they can't stand the pace battery of Australians were some of the words they used. Then they start a campaign like situation aiming at hitting the confidence of the visiting team batters and bowlers. Lot is written and said about at the weaknesses of those visiting cricketers using all their 'past experience', in fact some of them using the visuals of past dismissals. This is all intended to effect the morale of the players and also to inject some sort of suspicion in their art of batting and bowling.

The crushing defeat of Indians in the first test at Adelaide, where Indian team was bundled out for 36, their lowest total in recent test cricket gave the past and present Australian cricketers to exhibit "we said so" attitude. Never to lose a chance to hit the morale of the visiting teams the Australian commentators went overboard in writing in "sympathetic way" on the performance of Indian team in the rest of the three tests more so when their aggressive captain and best batsman left on paternity leave.

The Indian team seems to have hit Australians both in the ground and outside by outperforming the team Australia in all the fields of the game and scoring an emphatic 8-wicket victory in second test in Melbourne. The Australian 'experts' were silenced as they gave Indian team no chance to win except in Adelaide, where they lost badly and scored victory in Melbourne where the expert prediction was no chance.

It is in this background that the team Australia couldn't stomach the spirited performance in the third test. The racial abuse by the spectators started almost on the second day and went into fourth day, the new star Siraj and seasoned lion Bumrah were targeted with 'brown dog', 'go home' like words. That the other spectators have not objected to those insulting words confirms the racial mentality of the Australians. Till the players talked to their captain and umpires the abuses went on and even though the racial abuse is a punishable offence in Australia, those six suspected abusers were not booked but simply asked to leave the stands.

That unruly spectators when compared to the seasoned Australian cricketers is certainly innocent. The players have crossed all the decency which is expected of player representing his nation. The captain Tim Paine was leading his team in sledging. His frustration at the way the Ashwin and Hanuma Vihari fought brought out the typical Australian cricketer's 'toxic culture' out and started sledging to unsettle Ravichandran Ashwin. As the stump microphone has picked up Tim Paine's series of verbal jabs the Australian captain was forced to condemn himself about the behaviour.

The 'sandpaper gate' ball tamper leader Smith has not learnt any lesson from his punishment of earlier offence but went with his unsporting act of 'scuffing up' the batsman Rishabh Pant's guard at the batting crease. But there is no remorse in Smith despite being caught on camera about his scuffing act and netizens lambasting him as a habitual offender on the cricket field.

The sledging gang is exposed, the Australian captain Tim Paine who tried to disturb the concentration of Ashwin himself lost the focus and dropped three catches and helped India to draw the test. These are small things when compared to the wider issue of sporting image of cricket Australia and that seems to be unchanged for the

LETTERS

Stop this anti-society move

 $F_{
m are\ occasions\ for\ family\ gatherings}^{
m ESTIVALS\ like\ Sankranti\ and\ Diwali}$ /unions. Millions travel from cities where they work to villages to meet relatives and friends and keep up relations . This must be encouraged. On China's new year day. the government encourages and facilitates such travel by running special trains at reduced fares, holding family bonds should be preserved. Indian Railways and State Road Transport Corporations (SRTC) do

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run special trains but increase fares including for platform tickets. The RTC increase fares by 50 per cent. This increase in fares is undue profiteering and anti-society. Indians cherish family bonds and their villages. This is a cultural value. Therefore Railways and SRTC's must not increase fares; on the other hand they should reduce the fare and run maximum number of trains and buses.

Dr T Hanuman Chowdary, Secunderabad

Vaccination unrolls

 $\mathbf{1}^{6^{\text{TH}}}$ January,2021 is a red-letter day in the annals of Indian medical history in the view of launching Covid-19 vaccine on this day all over India in a phased manner.

I feel that the death toll in India on account of Corona is relatively less when compared to US, Europe etc and the Indian initiative to contain this otherwise devastating disease is praiseworthy ,still the use of vaccines without finishing third phase of clinical trial may not be warranted and it got to be waited till the trials are over.

I am afraid that the fears of yet another viral affront on humanity much more disastrous than what has besieged. The universal competitiveness on the front of vaccine arena with claims and counter claims may be unwarranted. But, in this current scenario the country has got to be more cautious and more assuring to the people with claim either available vaccine is equally effective and not to be choosy.

Dr T Ramadas, Visakhapatnam

Housewives should be paid

THE idea of payment of salary to the ■ unemployed housewives by the MNM party of Kamal Hasan is novel to India, Income earned by a family member should be used for purposes like family health and children's education. So instead of crediting the funds to the account of the housewife it is better to pay directly to the beneficiary concerned, the school management or a nursing home as the case may be, so that hard earned money is not wasted by dominant male members of the family, if any.

M Ramakrishna, Anantapur



Tributes paid to MKVVG **Trust Board** ex-chairman

HANS NEWS SERVICE **HYDERABAD**

MUNNURUKAPU Vidyarthi Vasathi Gruham (MKVVG) Trust Board, Kacheguda, condoled the death of Myadam Kishan Rao, former chairman of the trust board. The board met on Friday and passed a resolution lauding the services rendered by Kishan Rao towards the uplift of the community in the Telangana State.

 $\overline{\text{Trust Board members Prof}}$ M R Venkat Rao, Akula V Panduranga Rao, Gampa Chandramohan and Pannala Vishnuvardhan and Jelli Siddaiah paid rich tributes Kishan Rao, who initiated slew of welfare programmes for the betterment of the poor community brethren. They conveyed heart-felt condolences to the bereaved

India's youngest State turns rice bowl of India

- Rice production reaches 1.3 cr tonnes in 2019-20
- Completion of new irrigation projects yields results

HYDERABAD

TELANGANA is on way to emerge as the rice bowl of India with the rice production reaching 1.3 crore tonnes during 2019-20.

With completion of new irrigation projects and increase in irrigation land, the production increased by more than 20 per cent over the previous year.

Telangana, which grows rice in about 14.19 lakh hectares, saw huge improvement in production ever since it was carved out of Andhra Pradesh in 2014. The rice production, which stood at 29.6 lakh tonnes in 2015-16, rose to 51.7 lakh tonnes in 2016-17 and to 62.5 lakh tonnes in 2017-18.

India's youngest state also accounted for about 63 per cent of Food Corporation of India's (FCI) total paddy procurement across the country till date. According to a report by Federation of Telangana Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FTCCI), the State recorded a big jump in rice production, mainly due to the fact that more than 60 lakh acres of additional land were brought under irrigation.

This was possible with the completion of many major and minor irrigation projects such

According to a report by FTCCI, the State has recorded a big jump in rice production, mainly due to the fact that more than 60 lakh acres of additional land were brought under irrigation



as Kaleshwaram project, Devadula Project and revival of tanks under Mission Kakativa. In a report titled as 'Rice exports from Telangana: Opportunities and way forward' the industry body said availability of water coupled with 24X7 free power supply to farmers contributed to substantial improvement in productivity and production of food grains and

Considering the record paddy production, Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao recently directed the officials to construct

an additional 40 lakh tonnes capacity warehouses and form 2,500 farmer groups. "Under projects, tanks and borewells, there is a possibility of having two crops in 1.45 crore acres and three crops in 10 lakh acres. Then the Telangana State will become the rice bowl of India. The yield will be doubled in the years to come," he said.

The FTCCI report, however, noted that despite the high level of rice production, when it comes to exports, the state's figures are negligible compared to other States. The report identified high transportation cost for exporters, high levels of pesticide residue in rice produced here, lack of proper warehousing facilities and the shift in cultivation of paddy variety from long grain to short grain as the main reasons for low exports from the state.

Telangana, which exported 10,425 tonnes during 2019-20, accounted for just 0.21 per cent of the total exports of 5.08 million tonnes at national level. Andhra Pradesh, during the same period, exported 16.9 lakh tonnes, which is 33.6 per cent of the total ex-

First direct flight from Chicago lands in Hyd

HYDERABAD

AIR India's first non-stop flight on the Hyderabad-Chicago route arrived from the US city at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA) here on Friday. A few hours later, the first flight from the city to Chicago departed.

Flight AI-108 landed at 01.00 hours with 237 passengers and 16 crew members. The same aircraft - a Boeing 777LR - took off from Hyderabad to Chicago with 226 passengers and 16 crew around 12.50 hours amid much

The flight AI-107 from Hyderabad to Chicago will operate every Friday, departing from Hyderabad at 1250 hrs (IST) and land in Chicago at 1805 hrs (CST/Local US time) the same day. The return flight AI-108 from Chicago to Hyderabad will operate every Wednesday, leaving Chicago at 2130 hrs (CST/Local US Time) and land in Hyderabad at 0140 hrs (IST). Air India will operate B777-200LR aircraft and cover the 13,293 KM in 16 hours 45 minutes while flying from Hyderabad to ORD and take 15 hours 40 minutes to cover the return

We are delighted that our very own national carrier Air India has commenced this service to bring the two destinations closer for all our passengers, who were waiting eagerly for a direct flight from Hyderabad to the US," said Pradeep Panicker, CEO, GHIAL.

"A strong connectivity with India's centre of innovation is not only exciting for business in Chicago, but also prove to be a fruitful asset for our partners conducting business throughout



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North America," said Michael Fassnacht, Interim President and CEO at World Business Chicago.

Hyderabad-USA-Hyderabad has been the largest unserved market between India and the US, with over 7,40,000 passengers annually. Also, Hyderabad is a gateway to south and central India and a preferred and the largest transit hub. It offers convenient proximity for passengers originating from the nearby cities like Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam, Nagpur, Bhubaneswar, Rajahmundry, Bhopal, and Tirupati with an additional demand of approximately 2,20,000 passengers annually.

AP CM participates in Gopuja

- TTD conducts the ritual in 2,679 temples across the State
- Jagan performs the PUJA as per Hindu tradition, presents silk robes, garlands the cow and calf after puja

HANS NEWS SERVICE NARSARAOPETA

CHIEF Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy participated in Kaorganised by TTD here on Fri-

The traditional fete took place amidst pomp and gaiety with people turning in large numbers to cherish the unique fete held at the spacious Sports Authority Stadium Grounds.

The Chief Minister extended Sankranti greetings to all the



Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy performing Kamadhenu Gopuja at Narsaraopet in Guntur district on Friday

people present on the occasion. He performed the rituals as per Hindu tradition and presented silk robes, garlanded cow and the calf after puja. The puja was performed to 108 cows at the

As part of the Hindu Dharma campaign, the state endowments department along with TTD conducted Gopuja at 2,679 temples across the state.

The TTD has taken up unique programme called Gudiko Gomata recently presenting a cow and calf to every temple as a part of the mission. According to Hindu Sanatana Dharma, cow has got a prominent place and being revered as an embodiment of 33 crore

Cow has the potential to absorb and emanate the Principles of all these deities. To protect and promote the cows, this year, the Kanuma Gopuja was observed in a big way across the state in all the temples on the festival day.

Ministers Vellampalli Srini-Rao, Mekathoti Sucharitha, Cherukuvada Sriranganadha Raju, TTD chairman Y V Subba Reddy, Deputy Speaker Kona Raghupathi, MPs, MLAs, MLCs, public representatives, TTD officials and vedic scholars were present at

SAFETY OF TEMPLES DGP condemns 'false campaign'

by some political parties

 Claims accused include 17 supporters of TDP and 4 of BJP

• Says police found a conspiracy by 'some parties' to disturb communal harmony

AMARAVATI

DIRECTOR general of police D Gautam Sawang said that people sorting to false propaganda regarding attacks on temples to disturb the functioning of the government.

Speaking to media persons at Mangalagiri on Friday, the DGP said that there was no truth in the campaign of some political leaders that there was no safety and security to temples and reiterated that there was no increase in cases of attacks on temples during last year. "Of the 44 cases of attacks on temples, 29 cases have been solved and 81 persons were nabbed. Twenty-one people from

AMARAVATI

STATE police Criminal Investiga-

tion Department (CID) arrested a

pastor, Praveen Chakravarthy, for

allegedly featuring in a 7-year-old

video in which he declared that he

had kicked tree Gods and stone

coastal superintendent of police



DGP D Gautam Sawang and other officials addressing a press conference on temple: at DGP office Mangalagiri on Friday

different political parties, including 17 from TDP and 4 from BJP, are involved in nine cases of attacks on temples. Of them, 15 have been arrested so far. Police detected a conspiracy by some political parties to disturb communal harmony," he said.

As part of providing additional security to temples, the DGP said 44.521 cameras were arranged in 13,296 temples and 18,050 village protection committees were formed. As many as 4,643 persons

Pastor held for derogatory video on Hindu gods

were bound over and 337 persons were arrested related to communal incidents, he added.

Sawang said SIT was formed to investigate the cases of attacks on temples and a phone number: 9392903400 was allotted to receive information from public.

Appealing to political parties not to instigate people with communal feelings and spread rumours on social media. He warned of stern action on those who spread false rumours.

AP has total 4.05 cr voters

AMARAVATI

THE total number of voters in the state touched 4.05 crore, up from 3.93 crore during the general elections in April 2019, at the end of the Special Summary Revision (SSR) on

State Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) K Vijayanand published the final electoral roll here on Friday. Andhra Pradesh now has

2,04,71,506 female electorate 1,99,65,737 male voters and 4,135 third gender voters, according to a release from the CEO. The state has 66,844 service elec-

tors and 7,070 overseas electors, as per the final SSR.

The gross number of voters was 4,05,08,222, including 2,83,301 first timers in the 18-19 age group.

The state's elector-to-population ratio was 752, and gender ratio 1,025, the CEO said.

East Godavari topped the list with 43.12 lakh voters while Vizianagaram was at the bottom with 19 lakh. Vijayanand said the number of polling stations in the state has been increased from 45,836 to 45,917 with 1,500 voters each as the upper

"We have rationalized the polling stations by creating 84 new and

merging three," he added. The CEO said the draft electoral roll was published on November 16 with 4,00,79,025 voters. There were 4,25,860 inclusions and 63,507 deletions since the draft publication. Thus, there was a net increase of 3,63,353 voters in the final roll.

Red sanders worth ₹ 1 cr seized near temple city

HANS NEWS SERVICE TIRUPATI

IN a major haul, the Red Sanders Anti-Smuggling Task Force (RSASTF) on Friday seized 49 red sanders logs and also a truck near the SV Nagar graveyard of Perumallapalli panchayat, near here. The red sanders logs which were kept ready for transportation were worth about Rs 1 crore in the international market while the huge catch amply revealed that the smuggling of red sanders remaining still far from being controlled from the Seshachalam forests.

Acting on a tip-off, Red Sanders Task Force personnel had been keeping a watch in the forest area behind SV Zoo Park since Thursday evening and seized precious wood as also a truck stationed near the grave yard away from the village, for illegal transportation of the logs that were brought by the smugglers from the deep forests for smuggling them outside the

Task Force DSP Venkataiah said that the waiting Task Force team found the smugglers loading the logs they brought from the forest in the truck, near the graveyard, early in Friday morning and tried to nab them but in vain. The alert smuggler escaped

• Task Force says it recovered the precious wood as it was being loaded into a vehicle by smugglers but it could not arrest the culprits

Huge quantity of rations were also found at the site indicating smugglers were set for a long stay in Seshachalam forests

leaving behind the logs which were later recovered by the Task Force in the searches in the forest fringe area.

The smugglers were sparing the Sankranti festival which is popular in Tamil Nadu as Pongal indicate that either they were in dire need of earning big money or tried to take advantage of the festival believing the Task Force personnel engaged in festivity, Venkataiah said adding that the alert task force outwitted the smugglers. He said the searches are on in the forest to trace the escaped smugglers, he said along with the red sanders logs, task force also seized huge quantities of provisions including five bags of rice indicating that the smugglers were readying to go back



sanders logs and provisions into the forest after loading the

logs in the vehicle for a longer stay of three or four weeks there for cutting the trees in the deep forests, for smuggling them. He appreciated the team involved in the major operation, including RSI Vasu, Suresh and FBO Johnny Bash who, despite Sankranti festival, engaged in the combing resulting in the capture of big quantity of red sanders

Venkataiah, along with divisional forest officer (DFO) Hima Sailaja, reached SV Nagar probing from where the smugglers were able to bring the logs in big number in the forest and also steps to intensify the vigil on all the entry and exit points in to the

Gods. "We arrested him on Tuesday night itself at Kakinada. We brought him here (Guntur) and on the next day we produced him in the Court," R. Vijaya Paul, CID

(SP) confirmed.

Paul said that the video is seven years and from 2013. "That's what he said. We have written the same in his confession statement. That's of 2013," said Paul. Police arrested the pastor under Indian Penal Code (IPC)

relevant ones The SP said the video is inflammatory in nature and police officials are verifying his bank transactions, including checking if any more such video were made.

Sections 153 A, 294, 124 and other

Though the video emerged in 2013, before even the bifurcation of united Andhra Pradesh, Paul said no case has been filed against this video all these years.

The thing is that if somebody makes a complaint then we are there to verify it. This is not a suo motu case. Somebody has made a

following a complaint as the content of the video is offensive In the footage, the pastor is

boasts that he had 'kicked tree Gods and stone Gods' BJP national secretary and AP

co-incharge Sunil Deodhar points out that there are 3,600 pastors under Chakrvarthy who work along with him, they allegedly received Rs 90 cr



complaint, we verified it. We got him (Chakravarthy) and asked him, he said it is his own voice, said the senior police officer.

Paul clarified that though the video is not from the current time, it is still offensive and said that the CID is acting on this case for the first time. "We are not taking the punishment second time. This is the first time. On this video, nobody has taken any action," he ob-

served. As the supervising officer in this case, Paul said the investigating officer has clearly mentioned that the video is more than five years

Meanwhile, BJP national secretary and AP co-incharge, Sunil Deodhar, released a video statement questioning Chief Minister

Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy over the video which emerged during the time when Nallari Kiran Kumar Reddy was the CM of united AP, before N Chandra Babu Naidu be-

came the chief minister in 2014. "He (Chakravarthy) claims that he has converted 699 villages of AP into Christ villages. What is going on Jagan Mohan Reddy garu in your state?" posed Deodhar.

According to Deodhar, there are 3,600 pastors under Chakrvarthy, who work along with him and they allegedly received Rs 90 crore.

"And they have received more than Rs 90 crore, claiming that more than 40,000 children are rescued. Where are these children, where is the exact data. It is your duty to find out," he added.

What's up, WhatsApp? New policy frightening for Indian users

WhatsApp users in India will soon have no other option than sharing their data with Facebook and other group platforms, the

messaging app has clarified that its policies on data-sharing remain unchanged for users in Europe

New Delhi

WHATSAPP has been facing severe criticism worldwide after introducing new data privacy rules. According to the latest update, the messaging platform will share user data with Facebook and says the change is necessary to help it integrate better with other Facebook products.

In order to continue using WhatsApp, users will have to accept the new data sharing policy by February 8, 2021. By using the messaging platform, users may be sharing with it their usage data, as well as phone's unique

identifier, among other types of metadata. WhatsApp's policy of rolling out separate privacy and data sharing policies for Europe and India has raised fresh demands for a stringent data protection law in India from legal and privacy rights experts. While WhatsApp users in India will soon have no other option than sharing their data with Facebook and other group platforms, the messaging app has clarified that its policies on datasharing remain unchanged for users in Europe. Niamh Sweeney, Director of Policy for WhatsApp, Europe said "there are no changes to WhatsApp's data-sharing prac-

Cheers! Signal, Telegram

London:Signal saw a significant jump in new sign-ups after Elon Musk's tweet advising his followers to use the privacy-focused app, in the wake of concerns about WhatsApp's new privacy policy where it says it would share user data with Facebook. If you're using either Signal or Telegram you know that dozens of your contacts have been signing up for the messaging apps, and many WhatsApp groups are filled with conversations about switching platforms too..

tices in Europe arising from this update. It remains the case that WhatsApp does not

share European Region WhatsApp user data with Facebook for the purpose of Facebook

ads", according to India Today report.

"The issue needs to be looked at, in detail, given that concerns have been raised by a large section of users including some top business leaders." The same was also updated on WhatsApp Europe's FAQ webpage. WhatsApp official further said that its terms of service and privacy policy update did not require users in the European Region to agree to the sharing of data with Facebook in order to continue using the service. So, what forces WhatsApp to give concession to European citizens and what allows it to get away

with a more stringent policy in India? Meanwhile, a single judge bench of the Delhi High Court on Friday recused from hearing a petition against the Facebookowned instant messaging application, WhatsApp's upcoming data and privacy policy, on the grounds that it violates the right to pri-

vacy of citizens of India. Justice Pratibha M. Singh directed that the petition filed by advocate Chaitanya Rohilla shall be listed before another single judge bench subject to the orders of the Chief Justice. "Let the matter be treated as a PPIL," the bench suggested.

CBI OFFICERS SEARCH ITS OWN HEADQUARTERS

Agency officials received kickbacks from companies: FIR **Companies accused of siphoning crores of public money**

NEW DELHI

CBI officials booked for graft by the Central probe agency were not only receiving regular kickbacks for compromising investigation, but were also acting as conduits to bribe their peers on behalf of companies accused of siphoning off crores of public money from banks, the FIR against them al-

According to the allegations levelled in the eightpage FIR, made public on Friday after the completion of a search operation by the agency, Inspector Kapil Dhankad received at least Rs 10 lakh each from his superiors, Deputy Superintendents of Police RK Sangwan and RK Rishi, who were soliciting favours for Shree Shyam Pulp and Board Mills, accused in a Rs 700-crore bank fraud, and Frost International, accused in a Rs 3.600-crore bank fraud.

The embarrassing tale of corruption in the FIR says Sangwan, Rishi, Dhankad, and stenographer Sameer Kumar Singh, in a conspiracy with advocates Arvind Kumar Gupta and Manohar Malik and certain other accused, "have been compromising the integrity of investigation of certain cases on extraneous pecuniary considerations".

"The CBI has a zero-tolerance policy towards corruption, be it other departments or within the organisation. The case is a result of strict vigil and action on any input which indicates involvement of our officials in corrupt practices," an official of the agency said. The Central Bureau of Investigation

Shree Shyam Pulp and Board Mills, accused in a Rs 700-crore bank fraud, and Frost International,



(CBI) has booked four of its officers -- Sangwan, Rishi, Dhankad and Singh -- besides Malik and Gupta, additional director of Shree Shyam Pulp and Board Mills Mandeep Kaur Dhillon and directors of Frost International Sujay Desai and Uday Desai in the case. After registering the case, the agency carried out searches at its own headquarters, where some of the accused officers are posted, its academy, where Rishi is posted, and 12 other loca-

tions across the country, officials said. It is alleged that Dhankad, after receiving a bribe of Rs 10 lakh from Sangwan on behalf of Dhillon, conveyed confidential information relating to a probe against Shree Shyam Pulp and Board Mills to Sangwan, the former investigation officer of the case, with an intention to favour the accused.

Rishi, another DSP now posted in the CBI Academy, also paid Rs 10 lakh to Dhankad in a separate case of Frost International to gain vital information and protect the accused, the FIR alleges. Rishi paid the bribe to Dhankad on behalf of Sujay Desai and Uday Desai for extending favours to Frost International Private Limited, it alleges. "...Rishi received Rs 15 lakh twice through two advocates namely Manohar Malik and Arvind Gupta (having office in Defence Colony) to extend favours to a Chandigarh-based company against which a corruption case was being investigated by CBI," the FIR alleges. It alleges that Dhankad twice received Rs 2.5 lakh from Gupta for having brokered the deal through Rishi.

US executes **Covid positive** gang killer

TERRE HAUTE

THE US government executed a drug trafficker for his involvement in a series of slayings in Virginias capital city in 1992, despite claims by his lawyers that the lethal injection would cause excruciating pain due to lung damage from his recent COVID-19 infection, Corey Johnson, 52, was the 12th inmate put to death at the federal prison complex in Terre Haute, Indiana, since the Trump administration restarted federal executions following a 17-year hiatus. He was pronounced dead at 11:34 p.m. When he was asked if he had any last words, Johnson appeared surprised and distracted, focusing on a room to his left designated for members of his family. Still, glancing around, he responded to the question, "No. Im OK."

Several seconds later, he said softly while gazing intently at same room, "Love you." Johnsons execution and Fridays scheduled execution of Dustin Higgs are the last before next weeks inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden, who opposes the federal death penalty and has signalled hell end its use.

Both inmates contracted COVID-19 and won temporary stays of execution this week for that reason, only for higher courts to allow the lethal injections to move forward.

No Covaxin to those below 18 yrs: Centre

ASHISH SRIVASTAVA New Delhi

IN a major shift of narrative, the government has now disapproved the authorisation of Bharat Biotech's Covid vaccine to people below 18 years of age whereas earlier, it was approved for children above the age of 12 years by the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI).

A letter from the office of additional secretary at the union health ministry carrying a comparative factsheet for the two Covid vaccines approved for emergency authorisation revealed that the government has "not recommended" their authorisation to people below 18 years of age.

The DCGL after approving Bharat

Biotech's Covaxin for EUA, had allowed its authorization to children above 12 years of age. The document of permission to the Hyderabadbased pharmaceutical firm signed by the DCGI clearly states that "active immunization against Corona Virus Disease (Covid-19) for age above 12 years when administered in two doses interval of day 0 and day 28".

At the same time, another Corona vaccine, Covishield by Serum Institute of India (SII), was permitted to people above 18 years of age, permission letter to the SII showed.

However, when IANS approached CDSCO with the query upon this, the



officials said that the provision was soon withdrawn and revised by the drug licensing authority. The sources privy to the development told IANS that this certain condition approved for Covaxin was flagged to the drug regulatory authority and soon it was rebuked. "We were flagged about the provision and soon it was revised with a condition that the vaccines would only be administered to beneficiaries above 18 years of age," a senior official said. Covaxin has been in the spotlight of controversy since it was recommended for restricted emergency use by the subject expert committee of CDSCO. It's approval for Covid immunization programme has drawn flak from public health advocacy groups, researchers, scientists and activists in the domain.

Nitish loses cool after being asked about rising crime

PATNA

BIHAR Chief Minister Nitish Kumar lost his cool on Friday after he was asked questions about the rising

While inaugurating the 6.7 km long elevated road between R-block and Digha in Patna, Kumar was asked about the rise in criminal activities in the state, espacially the recent murder of Indigo airlines state head Rupesh Singh, a case which is yet to be cracked.

An agitated Kumar said that investigation into the case is currently underway and the miscreants will be put behind the bars very

"Every incident of crime has some reasons. In case of Rupesh Singh's murder, the police are working on the case. The miscreants will be put behind the bars soon. We will take the strongest action against them and also conduct speedy trial in this case to provide justice to the victim's family," Ku-

When asked about the rising crime graph in Bihar, Kumar said: "Before accusing the government, you should look at the tenure of the Lalu Prasad-Rabri Devi regime that ruled Bihar for 15 years."

"According to the NCRB (National Crime Records Bureau) data, Bihar is placed 23rd in the country," he said.

TRP scam's leaked chats Javadekar useless, will 'prefer' Irani as I&B Min: Arnab

MUMBAI

MUMBAI Police this week submitted a 3,400-page supplementary charge sheet in the TRP case against BARC (Broadcast Audience Research Council) and Republic TV among others. It had earlier submitted a 1.400-page charge sheet in November. according to National Herald report. While senior advocate Harish Salve appeared for Republic TV, Mumbai Police was represented by Kapil Sibal, who objected to Salve's submission that if the Enforcement Directorate's findings turn tout to be contrary to the findings of Mumbai Police, it would prove that Mumbai Police is unduly harassing Arnab Goswami.

More than 50 pages of Goswami's WhatsApp conversations are said to be part of the supplementary charge sheet in the Republic TV-TRP fixing case. These chats show how Arnab Goswami abused his access to PMO, I&B ministry and 'AS' to fix his business interests. At various instances Arnab boasts off his access to PMO, NSA and I&B ministry.

Chats show the two collaborating on a strategy to trip rivals and boost the ratings of Republic TV. This in-



cluded Partho sharing confidential BARC data with Arnab over WhatsApp and email and seeking help from the PMO in return. Dasgupta also claims in these chats that he has helped the government several times in the past.

In the chats, both seem unhappy with the new I&B minister Prakash Javdekar, in one of the chats he was called useless. Arnab is also seen making fun of IndiaTV chief Raiat Sharma and NBA, claiming that Sharma had no access to the PMO.

However, in later chats he tells that he preferred Smriti Irani because she was a "great friend".

NCP leader **Eknath Khadse** grilled by ED

MUMBAI

Senior Nationalist Congress Party (NCP)leader Eknath Khadse went to the Enforcement Directorate (ED) for questioning in a Pune MIDC land deal case, official sources said here on Friday.

Khadse, who has just recovered from Covid-19, arrived at the ED office in south Mumbai, nearly three weeks after he was first summoned in the alleged landgrab case.

Last month, a team of ED had gone to Pune to scrutinize evidences and gather documents pertaining to the alleged irregularities in the deal, which forced Khadse to quit as minister in the erstwhile BJP-led government in

Subsequently, the ED recorded the statement of the whistle-blower activist Aniali Damania in the matter in which she had moved the

Damania had also submitted documents and other evidences concerning the land deal which the State Anti Corruption Bureau had probed, given a clean chit to Khadse and later closed the

MIRACULOUS ESCAPE



Tamers attempt to get on to the hump of a bull as part of the traditional 'Jallikattu' festival, in Madurai district on Friday. Seven

Kota's coaching biz set to reopen

Кота

THE Kota coaching industry is set to restart from January 18 following the Rajasthan government's nod to reopen schools and other educational institutes with some restrictions after almost 10 months due to the coronavirus outbreak. Home to at least 10 big coaching giants and 50 other institutes, the city has around 25,000 paying guest (PG) facilities and 3,000 hostels to cater to nearly 1.50 lakh students from across the country every year.

The coaching business in Kota has an annual turnover of Rs 3.000 crore and employs at least 5 lakh people, according to those in the industry. The Kota district administration has formed 11 teams, including health and police

officials, to ensure compliance of the standard operating procedure (SOP) for COVID at the coaching institutes. They are fully prepared for the resumption of classes in coaching institutes and schools with proper compliance of the coronavirus protocol from January 18 and have constituted 11 teams to oversee it, Kota Collector Ujjawal Rathore told PTI on Friday. He said the teams will visit every coaching institutes to ensure the compliance of the quidelines. According to the SOP, the number of students in a teaching session has been restricted to 50 per cent of total strength. Students will be checked for body temperature before being allowed to attend a class. Classrooms will have to be sanitised after every teaching session and wearing of masks will have to be ensured.

Offensive drones now part of Army's autonomous weapon

Army carries out a live demonstration of Drone Swarming capability using 75 indigenously designed and developed drones which executed an array of Artificial Intelligence (AI) enabled simulated offensive missions and close support tasks

SUMIT KUMAR SINGH New Delhi

FROM artificial intelligence to autonomous weapon systems to quantum block chains and now robotics, the Indian Army is now

into offensive technology. For the first time, the force demonstrated use of offensive drone technology during the Army Day Parade held at Delhi Cantonment on Friday. The Indian Army has, in fact, also bought offensive drones since August last year. In August, 2019, the force procured five drones, in October 20 drones and

in December 35 drones. These drones carry out automated, randomised sonic missions to the target area through use of artificial intelligence and onboard adaptive computers driven by continuous satellite feeds. They have a mother drone and child drones attached to it.

On Friday, Indian Army carried out a live demonstration of Drone Swarming capability using 75 indigenously designed and developed drones which executed an array of Artificial Intelligence (AI) enabled simulated offensive missions and close support tasks.

This demonstration is a recognition of the Indian Army's steady embrace of emerging and disruptive technologies to transform itself from a manpower-intensive to a technology-enabled force to meet future secu-



rity challenges.

These drones can fly deep into enemy territory upto 40 kms. The Indian Army is investing heavily into Artificial Intelligence (AI), Autonomous Weapon Systems, Quantum Technologies, Robotics, Cloud Computing and Algorithm Warfare in order to achieve a convergence between the Army's warfighting philosophies and military attributes of these technologies.

The Indian Army has undertaken a wide array of technology initiatives in coordination with Dreamers, Startups, MSMEs, Private Sector, Academia, Defence Research and Development Organisation

(DRDO) and Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs).

One such project is the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Offensive Drone Operations which has been incubated with an Indian Start Up. This project symbolises the beginning of the Indian Army's tryst with autonomy in weapon platforms and showcases the Army's commitment towards merging the cutting edge of digital tech-

These offensive drones are part of the capability development road map.

nologies with its human resource.

These combat drones shown during the demonstration carry out a series of autonomous tactical missions.

TODAY'S QUOTE

Eye BIMSTEC nations for startups

BIMSTEC nations will certainly experience unprecedented growth in the post Covid pandemic world and start a golden era of development. I would encourage both Indian capital and Indian investors to look at the BIMSTEC region and work towards greater engagement through investments. - Union minister, Piyush Goyal

HANS BUSINESS



TELECOM Bharti Airtel shares jump 4%

Shares of Bharti Airtel extended its gaining momentum for the fifth day and further gained nearly 4 per cent. Defying a weak broader market trend, the stock jumped 3.84 per cent to close at Rs 602.50. During the day, it gained 5.13 per cent to Rs 610. It was the biggest gainer among the BSE

			4
FOREX (bu	ıy rates iı	n ₹)	
JS Dollar	77.45	South	
Euro	94.13	African Rand	5 . 5
JAE Dirham	21.88	Hong Kong Dollar	10.8
Γhai Baht	2.8	Japanese Yen	0.8
British Pound	103.64	New Zealand Dollar	55.1
Australian Dollar	59.41	Saudi Riyal	21.4
Canadian Dollar	60.44	Swedish Krona	10.0
Swiss Franc	85.63	Singapore Dollar	57.7

DELHI SATURDAY 16 JANUARY 2021

BIZ BRIEFS

Itel launches new product

Itel on Friday announced the launch of smartphone, Vision 1 PRO, which comes with bigger screen, 6.52inchHD+ Waterdrop display, bundled with trendy features like Triple AI Camera, multi-functional fingerprint sensor, 4000mAh Li-Polymer battery and 2GB RAM + 32GB ROM, face unlock for its discerning customers in India. Arijeet Talapatra, CEO, Transsion India, said: "Our previous offering Vision 1 with its communication 'Naye India Ka Naya Vision' received an overwhelming response from consumers and aligned with providing innovative features backed with affordability, we have launched Vision 1 PRO with key communication message of 'India Badhega Aage Naye Vision Ke Saath' - which accords with our Vision 1 PRO smartphone in a newer power packed and bigger

YFLO's initiative to save water

YFLO Chairperson Apurva Jain and committee members are looking to focus on the noble cause of saving water and on the same subject conducting virtual event on January 20, 2021 which is available at national level on Youtube. They have invited Amla Ruia, an Indian social activist known for her work in water harvesting. She has set up Aakar Charitable Trust to create water sources for drought-stricken villages of India and built 350 check dams benefitting 400 villages. She has now set a goal of completing 3,000 dams in her lifetime. Hyderabad FLO Chairperson Usha Rani Manne and National FLO President Jahnabi Phookan will be key speakers during

Time to give relief to consumers on oil prices

PETROL AND DIESEL RATES REACHED RECORD HIGHS PLACING A BURDEN BOTH ON CONSUMERS AND TRANSPORT INDUSTRY

SUSHMA RAMACHANDRAN

OIL prices are rising rapidly at the retail level. Petrol and diesel rates have reached record highs recently placing a burden both on consumers and the transport industry. The reason for the sudden uptick, according to the public sector oil marketing companies, is owing to firming up of global crude oil prices. This is only partly true. Consumer prices of petrol and diesel are much higher than they should be if based on a linkage with international market prices. The fact is, as much as 60 per cent of the cost of petrol and diesel is due to high taxes.

Much of this tax burden was imposed last year in April when global oil prices crashed owing to the world wide pandemic and sudden fall in demand. From 70 dollars per barrel in September 2019, the benchmark Brent crude prices fell to about 18 dollars per barrel in April 2020.

This should have led to a matching decline in domestic prices as petrol and diesel are supposed to be linked to world prices. Instead, the government decided to mop up resources, recognizing that the lockdown would mean a decline in revenues during the rest of the year. It went ahead to raise excise duty on petrol and diesel by Rs. 13 and Rs. 15 per litre respectively. This had a minimal impact on consumers at the time as the overall retail price did not change. The benefit was due to the base price having fallen owing to the dip in world markets.

The global crude oil scenario has changed vastly since then. Prices are now hardening in anticipation of widespread vaccinations and resumption of normal economic activity bringing about revival in demand. Brent crude prices which

For India, hardening had been hovering around Rs. of world oil prices is

never good news. It needs

to be remembered that the

country imports over 80 per

comprises the biggest

chunk of its import

India, which is the third biggest im-

porter of crude oil in the world after

China and Japan, consumption has

risen back to pre-Covid levels.

Hopes are being pinned on the ef-

fect of widespread vaccinations,

stimulus packages unveiled in

many countries and the fact that

Saudi Arabia has agreed to cut out-

put. The cumulative effect of these

factors is expected to result in oil

prices reaching nearly 60 dollars

For India, hardening of world oil

prices is never good news. It needs

to be remembered that the country

imports over 80 per cent of its fuel

needs and oil comprises the biggest

chunk of its import bill. The cost of

per barrel by the end of 2021.

40 to 45 dollars per barrel over the last six months are now over 50 dollars per barrel. Currently prices have spiked to 56 dollars per barrel, leading to the latest round of petrol and diesel prices hikes in the domestic

The international oil markets still have large inventories though these are recently reported to have been drawn down by 5.8 million barrels, much higher than anticipated earlier. The last meeting of the oil cartel, the Organisation for Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) along with Russia, resulted in Saudi Arabia announcing further production cuts. Saudi Arabia is one of the biggest oil exporters and reducing output is one way of boosting prices. Along with the vaccination news, this has led to a growing bullishness in the

As for the coming year, it looks as if oil prices will continue to rise in tandem with the pickup in the global economy. Share prices of oil majors like Exxon, Shell and BP have already gone up in the past few weeks in the hope that consumption will continue to rise. Even in oil imports was 102 billion dollars in 2019-20. It will be far lower in the current fiscal with one projection being 65 billion dollars. This is partly due to falling world oil prices and partly due to decline in oil products consumption owing to the lockdown and disruption in economic activity.

It cannot be denied that this is a year when the government needs to marshal all available resources, given the fact that industrial output had been disrupted during the lockdown and revenues are lower than ever before. It also has to try and balance the forthcoming budget, even if the fiscal deficit is al-

lowed to widen considerably. But the increase in excise duties on petrol and diesel has raised prices steeply for consumers at a time when many are undergoing severe hardcent of its fuel needs and oil ship owing to the fallout of the

pandemic. The impacts will also being felt on prices soon as inflation may have eased to 5.9 per cent in December but this follows a rise to 7 and 7.6 per cent in the previous two months.

It is time for the government to give some relief to consumers by curbing further price hikes of petrol and diesel at the retail level. While it may not be possible to roll back the existing rates of excise duty on these oil products, at least the burden of rising international oil prices should not be placed on consumers. This should be borne by the exchequer for the time being. The consumer has already faced nearly ten months of stress and strain during the pandemic and unemployment levels have been rising despite the revival of economic activity. It is now high time to provide some relief to the common man and also reduce inflationary pressures on the economy.

Markets plunge on profit taking

Sensex sheds 549.49 pts, Nifty tumbles 161.90 pts

Mumbai

EQUITY indices sank deep into the red on Friday as concerns over stretched valuations and a bearish trend in global markets triggered across-the-board selling.

Investors preferred to book profits at higher levels despite a good start to the earnings season, traders said. The 30-share BSE Sensex slumped 549.49 points or 1.11 per cent to finish at 49,034.67. The broader NSE Nifty tumbled 161.90 points or 1.11 per cent to 14,433.70. Tech Mahindra was the top loser in the Sensex pack, shedding 4.35 per cent, followed by HCL Tech, ONGC, Asian Paints, Ultra Tech Cement, HDFC and HUL. Only four Sensex components closed with gains - Bharti Airtel, ITC, Bajaj Auto and Bajaj Finance, spurting up to 3.84

per cent. During the week, the Sensex advanced 252.16 per cent while the Nifty rose 86.45 points or 0.60 per cent. Global equities were on the back-

foot on Friday even as US Presidentelect Joe Biden unveiled his widelyanticipated \$1.9 trillion stimulus package as investors fretted over possible tax hikes and higher interest rates. "Markets began circumspect amidst weak job data in the US even as Joe Biden unveiled details of the \$1.9 trillion rescue package.

Friday's afternoon trade saw profit taking in IT stocks despite the biggies putting out positive commentary with large deal wins as MCAP to GDP crossed 100 per cent, leading to volatility," said S Ranganathan, Head of Research at LKP Securities. Sector-wise, BSE oil and gas, IT, realty, capital goods, utilities, energy, power and consumer durables indices fell up to 2.43 per cent, while telecom rallied 3.68 per cent. In the broader markets, the BSE midcap and smallcap indices skidded up to 1.25 per cent. Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Shanghai and Hong Kong ended on a positive note, while Seoul and Tokyo were in the red. (PTI)

IMF chief predicts brighter outlook for India

WASHINGTON

INTERNATIONAL Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva on Thursday predicted a

less bad outlook for India in the upcoming World Economic Update due to the steps taken by it. "When I called on everybody to stay tuned for January 26, that applies very much to India. You would see a picture in our update that is less

Kristalina Georgieva,

IMF, MD

nomic consequences of it," she said. The IMF is scheduled to release its World Economic Update on January 26. "What the government has done on the monetary

pandemic and to deal with the eco-

policy and the fiscal policy side is commendable. It is actually slightly above the average for emerging markets. Emerging markets on average have provided six per cent of the GDP. In India, this is

slightly above that. bad. Why? Because the country ac- Good for India is that there is still tually has taken very decisive action, space to do more... If you can do very decisive steps to deal with the more, please do," Georgieva said.

REAL CORNER Beating odds, housing realty

sees uptrend during Oct-Dec

HYDERABAD, PUNE, AND MUMBAI WERE THE TOP THREE CITIES IN TERMS OF

HANS BUSINESS NEW DELHI

RESIDENTIAL real-estate sector has recorded significant growth in 2020, a year which was marked by global pandemic, lockdowns and subsequent restrictions. According to a recent report by PropTiger.com, a leading digital real estate advisory firm in the country, new homes' supply and sales showed a significant improvement in the fourth quarter of 2020 (Oct - Dec) owing to factors such as changing preferences of the buyers in major cities.

The company surveyed eight major cities in India namely Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Delhi NCR (Delhi, Gurugram, Noida, Greater Noida, Ghaziabad, and Faridabad) and Mumbai MMR (Boisar, Dombivli, Mumbai, Mazagaon, Panvel, Thane West), and Pune, to highlight the upwards trend in residential sector.

According to the report, Real Insight Q4 2020, by PropTiger.com, 54,329 new residential units were launched during the three months, amidst the phased easing of restrictions put in place in India. New launches grew by 173 per cent quarter-on-quarter (QoQ) 19,865 units that were launched in the eight key markets during the July-September period.

The report also reflected a 12 per cent year-on-year (YoY) growth over the 48,530 new units that were launched in the December quarter in 2019. Signalling a turnaround in the residential real-estate in the southern part of the country - Bengaluru, Chennai and Hyderabad - showed signs of revival, with new launches as well as sales



the October-December period of 2020.

In terms of new launches, the report also shows quarterly increase in the October-December period across markets, except Ahmedabad. Hyderabad, Pune, and Mumbai were the top three cities in terms of new launches. The spike in supply numbers could be attributed to the increase in home-buying interest in the aftermath of the coronavirus pandemic and also the fact that new launches were muted over the prior three quarters. Some cities like Mumbai and Pune, driven by stamp duty cuts by the Maharashtra government, overall low interest rates, stagnant housing prices and attractive of-

fers by developers. "While the trends point to a market recovery and positive news, given the imminent launch of a vaccine that will ease the pandemic concerns, our optimism should be cautious. Buyers continue to expect low home loan rates, extension of developer offers and prefer ready-to-move inventory than those under construction," said Mani Rangarajan, Group COO, Housing.com, Makaan.com and Proptiger.com, while

launching the report.

ernment should continue to support the sector through moves such as lowering stamp duty, re-evaluating circle rates and increasing tax deduction limit for interest on home loans to ensure that the sector continues to revive. The sector is digitizing at a rapid pace and more than 90 per cent of potential home buyers have moved online to shortlist properties to buy. We have seen a strong growth in online booking throughout 2020,".

Hyderabad leads in new launches forthe fourth quarter standing at 12,720 as compared to 2019 which recorded at 2,410 (Q4). While cities such as Pune, Mumbai, Bengaluru and Delhi NCR recorded (new sales) 10,770, 10,070 and 6,100 respectively, Chennai, Ahmedabad and Kolkata came last at 4,890, 3,000, 1660 respectively

In terms of residential space preference, 2 BHK spearheads the market, with 45 per cent of the total sale of 1,82,640; 4 BHK preference was recorded at mere 4 per cent of the total sales of 2020. The survey report suggests that in view of work from home, 47 per cent of (surveyed) potential buyers were looking forlarger homes.

Real estate lobbies for tax relaxation, SWAMHI Funds

ARCHANA RAO New Delhi

WITH Union Budget scheduled to take place in the next two weeks, real-estate sector in India is lobbying for additional support from the government through initiatives such as tax relaxation and establishment of SWAMIH Funds.

The industry, which suffered period of stagnation due to Covid-19 and subsequent lockdown, is pacing its way back in the country with many rejoining the workforce.

In the wake of upcoming financial budget, India's apex real-estate body National Real Estate Development Council (Naredco) under the ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, has submitted a letter to the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, expressing measures to combat the ongoing economic crisis in the country and suggestions for upward growth trend for the real-estate sector.

The wishlist includes reforms such as relaxation of taxes to avail home loans, affordable rental housing schemes, establishment of SWAMIH fund for Rs 25000 crore to rescue the stalled projects, liquidity measure, Special Economic Zones, and revoking the ban on Subversion Scheme.

Niranjan Hiranandani, President of Naredco, in a press conference said, "The economy is on the right path to recovery



The industry is pacing its way back in the country with many rejoining the workforce after stagnation due to lockdown

and the Prime Minister has focused on rebuilding the country. Initiatives such as Atmanirbhar Bharat, proves that India is ahead of other developing nations in a lot of things.

The fiscal impetus announced under Aatmanirbhar Bharat has renewed consumer demand that led to the emergence of green shoots in Indian economy and real estate sectors. The laudable measures like tax rationalisation, additional stress fund and ample liquidity tools will keep the momentum going and propel India towards a \$5 trillion economy."

Hiranandani said that it is plausible for the nation to achieve 10 per cent additional growth in GDP by the year end of 2021, keeping in mind the target of creating \$5 trillion economy. With Digital Bharat initiatives being a success, Naredco President hopes revolution in the education and housing sector through a greater push by the government.

On establishment of SWAMHI Funds, Naredco welcomed the special reserve of Rs 25,000 crore to help real estate sector. The letter suggests that allowing more such stress funds will help facilitate the last mile funding for stressed and stalled projects.

"Industry demands estimated Rs 1,25,000 crore via many HFCs / NBFCs who are ready to establish such funds for ailing real estate sector. This will allow for faster appraisals

and sanctions," the Naredco let-

ter adds.

"Interest on housing loans should be fully allowed under Income Tax deduction without any ceiling. The current limit of interest deduction under Section 24 of IT Act 1961 on housing loan of INR 2 lakh should be removed to incentivise home buyers and spurring overall demand. Also, loss from house property should be fully allowed to be adjusted against other heads of income. In case of unadjusted loss, it should be fully allowed to be carried forward to subsequent years," Raieev Talwar, Chairman of Naredco said.

The letter has expressed confidence in housing schemes such as affordable rental housing through enhancement in HRA Tax Exemption and an increase in depreciation rate for the rental projects like in commercial buildings. In addition to this, Naredco explained, in the letter, that the deduction of 30 per cent from the annual rental income (for purpose of maintenance) should be increased to 50 per cent which would further improve ROI.

"The RBI, through a notification in 2017, allowed a loan tovalue ratio (LTV) of up to 90 per cent for home loans for affordable houses of Rs 30 lakh or less. Same facility should be permitted for other housing including MIG and HIG as well," Talwar

Sundar, Siraj abused by Gabba crowd, called grub

BRISBANE

RIGHT-arm fast bowler Mohammed Sirai on Friday once again found himself at the receiving end of rude behaviour from spectators as he was repeatedly labelled a "grub" by a group on the opening day of the fourth and final Test between Australia and India at the Gabba.

A report in Sydney Morning Herald quoted a spectator as saying that Siraj was repeatedly called a "grub" by vocal spectators in front of Section 215 and 216 at the stadium.

'Grub', an Australian slang, is used for a person who is unclean or who has messy habits.

According to the spectator, debutant off-spinner Washington Sundar was also subjected to the same chat from the unruly section.

"The guys behind me have been calling -- shouting -- both Washington and Siraj grubs," a spectator named Kate was quoted as saying in the report.

"They started targeting at Siraj and it was a chant similar to the SCG one [in which fans sung to the tune of Que Sera, Sera but substituted the lyrics with Que Shiraz, Shiraz]. But this time it was Siraj. I suspect it's not a coincidence that it's Siraj being targeted post the SCG stuff," she added.

The report further said that the spectator was seated in a section of the stadium where several men dressed as lifeguards had a beer snake dismantled by security guards and another man was escorted out of the ground for standing on his seat and starting an "Aussie. Aussie, Aussie" chant.

This is not the first instance when Indian players have been targeted by spectators. During the drawn third Test in Sydney, Siraj and Jasprit Bumrah had complained about racial abuse they were subjected to by a section of the crowd at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Day Three and Four. These incidents were condemned by all across the cricket spectrum. (IANS)

Natarajan put brakes on Oz charge

BRISBANE

THE incredible underdog fairytale of Thangarasu Natarajan got better with his twin strikes on debut headlining a commendable effort from an inexperienced Indian bowling attack, which reduced Australia to 274 for 5 despite a stylish hundred from Marnus Labuschagne on the opening day of the final Test here.

Marnus Labuschagne on Friday once again lived a charmed life as he went on to score a brilliant ton to hand Australia a slight edge over India stumps, w h i l e Matthew Wade and Steve Smith also made

notable contributions of 45 and 36 respectively Earlier, electing to bat, the hosts didn't get off to a good start as both David Warner and Marcus Harris went back to the dressing

room with just 17 runs on the scoreboard against a very inexperienced Indian bowling line-up. Warner was the first

wicket to fall as he got caught in the slips in the very first over of the innings bowled by Mohammed Siraj. Rohit Sharma took a good, low catch at second slip to send the left-handed batsman back in the Australian dressing room at his individual score of just 1.

Harris, playing his first match of the series as he replaced injured Will Pucovski, then tried to stitch a partnership Labuschagne but got

out on the first ball bowled by Shardul Thakur in the ninth over. At his individual score of 5, Harris was caught as square leg by Washington Sundar. However, Labuschagne and Smith took control over the innings and stitched a useful partnership as Australia went into

the Lunch break without losing any further wickets. Resuming the second session at 65/2, both Smith and Labuschagne scored freely and collected boundaries whenever the Indian bowlers erred in their line and lengths.

However, just when Australia looked to be in control, debutant off-spinner Washington Sundar claimed the big wicket of Smith at his individual score of

36, getting the prolific batsman caught at short midwicket by Sharma. India could've their

DAY 1 SCOREBOARD

D Warner c Rohit b Siraj ---M Harris c W Sundar b Thakur -----M Labuschagne c Pant b T Natarajan 108 S Smith c Rohit b W Sundar ------3 6 M Wade c Thakur b T Natarajan ------4 5 Cameron Green batting ----Tim Paine batting

1-4, 2-17, 3-87, 4-200, 5-213 Bowling: Mohammed Siraj 19-8-51-1, T Natarajan 20-2-63-2, Shardul Thakur 18-5-67-1, Navdeep Saini 7.5-2-21-0, Washington Sundar 22-4-63-1, Rohit Sharma 0.1-0-1-0

wicket soon after that had skipper Ajinkya Rahane not dropped the catch of Labuschagne at gully against Navdeep Saini. What added to the wounds of the Indian team was that Saini suffered injury in his groin after that incident in the 36th over and was taken off the field, only to be send for scans later in the day.

Wade, who came to bat after the fall of Smith's wicket, started off slowly but once he got set, the lefthanded batsman stitched a brilliant partnership with Labuschagne. The pair added 113 runs before Wade became the first Test scalp of T Natarajan in the final session of the day.

Natarajan, playing his first Test, then removed Labuschagne and brought India back into the game. However, Paine and Green then played cautiously and stitched an unbeaten 61-run partnership to help

the hosts end the opening day of the series decider, having the upper hand. (IANS/PTI)

> 'Net bowler' Natarajan becomes first Indian to make int'l debut in 3 formats on same tour

> > BRISBANE

PACER Thangarasu Natarajan, who came to Australia as a net bowler, on Friday became the first Indian cricketer to make his international debut across all three formats during the same tour.

The 29-year-old Tamil Nadu player was one of the rookies named in the playing eleven of the injury-ravaged Indian team against Australia in the fourth and final Test which started here on Friday.

He made his international debut in the third ODI against Australia on December 2 in Can berra, which India won by 13 runs.

Natarajan made an immediate impact by taking two wickets for 70 runs from his 10 overs. Natarajan then played his part in India's 2-1 series win in the subsequent threematch T20 International rubber by taking six wickets during the series.

"Welcome to Test cricket ... Thangarasu Natarajan becomes the first Indian player to make his International debut across all three formats during the same tour," the ICC tweeted.

The Tamil Nadu player, whose mother worked as a daily wager, picked up two wickets in the 20 overs he bowled on the day, conceding 63 runs.

"The stuff dreams are made of. A perfect treble for @Natarajan_91 as he is presented with #TeamIndia's Test No. 300. It can't get any better! Natu is now an all-format player,"

6 Indians in top-10 of BWF world junior rankings

New Delhi

INDIAN shuttlers Varun Kapur and Samiya Imad Farooqui, along with four other Indians, have attained top-10 spots in the recently announced junior world rankings by Badminton World Federation (BWF).

Starting 2021 on a high, Varun moved four places ahead in the men's rankings while Samiya took a six-spot jump as the youngsters achieved their career-best junior rankings and became world num-

Varun had a great run last year as he picked his sixth junior title when he won the XII Portuguese International 2020 in November. While the 17-year-old Hyderabadi, a U-15 Asian Badminton Championship winner, Samiya has been one of the consistent performers at the junior circuit.

"It's great to see many junior shuttlers doing so well. We currently have 10 Indians in the top-20 and the juniors have shown a lot of promise. This ranking will work as a desired boost for each of them and surely motivate them to work harder as it has been tough year for Covid-19 affected sporting world and badminton is trying to make a comeback after almost a year's break," Badminton Association of India (BAI) president Himanta Biswa Sarma said in a statement.

Earlier BWF had frozen the world junior rankings as of March 17, 2020, owing to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, with the recommencement of some international junior tournaments, BWF stated that they have decided to add subsequent international junior tournament results to the world junior rankings without deducting points from previous weeks thereby creating a rolling ranking until such time as the world junior rankings can be fully unfrozen.

The BWF rankings released earlier this week, especially in the women singles category, saw Indian domination with three more shuttlers-Tasnim Mir (4), Treesa Jolly (8) and Aditi Bhatt (10)earning themselves a place in the top-10.

In the women's doubles category, Tressa (8), Tanisha Crasto (9) and Aditi (9) are among the Indians who are placed inside top-10.

"BAI executive council meeting and AGM is scheduled for January 30 in Delhi. We will be finalising the detailed plan on how the domestic tournaments as well as the key junior tournaments that BAI plans to send its players this vear. We will also be discussing the future plans related to coaching and training for junior shuttlers," said BAI general secretary Ajay Singhania. (IANS)



all walks of life. His death had en attributed to a heart atthat caused arguably the greatest It is this point that the Discovery Plus documentary "What Killed

Maradona?" tries to put across. It features interviews with writers and journalists who have followed Maradona's life along with his former

'What killed Maradona?' shows the flipside of life of a football god

Napoli team mate and captain Giuseppe Bruscolotti. It also features interviews with health experts and psychologists who give a perspective on the kind of toll the rough nature of the sport in the era that Maradona was playing in, the rudimentary manner in which he was medicated for his injuries and his addiction to alcohol and cocaine kept chipping away at his health, particularly the strength of his heart.

Additionally, it also gives a brief insight into the mental and physical toll that comes with the kind of adulation that Maradona received. One of the ways in which he coped with it is by separating himself into two different individuplay football and take care of his family while "Maradona" is the larger than life figure that people in Naples and Argentina adore.

Just over 40 minutes long, the assortment of individuals that lend their voices along with footage from Maradona's playing days and after helps the documentary paper over the repetitive nature of the footage and, towards the latter stages, a few abrupt editing cuts. It isn't quite the same territory as Asif Kapadia's account of Maradona's years in Italy but gives enough information to provide a sense of closure to those fans of the legendary forward who still suspect foul play in his death. (IANS)



Hyderabad FC face high-flying Mumbai City

BAMBOLIM (GOA)

HYDERABAD FC recorded dominant wins against Chennaiyin and NorthEast United in their last two matches

but now face the daunting prospect of facing the high-flying Mumbai City FC at the GMC Stadium on Saturday.

Mumbai hold a five-point lead at the top of the table that has come from a run of nine unbeaten matches since they lost 1-0 to NorthEast in their opening game in November. They have won eight of these matches, and have conceded just two goals in their last five games. Coach Sergio **SC East Bengal draw with Kerala Blasters FC 1-1**

RESULT

Lobera, while being happy with the performances, knows that maintaining this level is the difficult part. "I am very happy with the results so far. It's very difficult to keep this situation (going) but the most important thing for us is not the table but improving our performance," stated Lobera.

The Islanders have scored in each of their last nine games wherein they also remained unbeaten. During this run, Mumbai scored (17 goals) in each of their last 9 matches. (IANS)

