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WINDOWS



In this January 9, 2017, photo, then President-elect Donald Trump stands with Alibaba founder Jack Ma as they walk to speak with reporters after a meeting at Trump Tower in New York. Ma hasn't been seen since he angered regulators with an October 2020 speech. That is prompting speculation about what might happen to the billionaire founder of the world's biggest e-commerce company

New TPCC chief only after Sagar bypoll

HANS NEWS SERVICE HYDERABAD

AT a time when it was being propagated that the AICC has decided to appoint T Jeevan Reddy as the new TPCC president and that official announcement would be made in the next couple of days, a new twist has taken place and it is being said that the AICC has withheld the announcement for the present. Party sources say that the former minister and senior most Congress leader K Jana Reddy has advised the AICC to keep the issue pending till the by-elections to Nagarjuna Sagar Assembly constituency was held. Reddy is said to have spoken to S S Bose Raju, in-charge AICC secretary of Telangana and informed him of such possibility. It is said that Jana Reddy had expressed apprehension that if the party high command announces the name of Jeevan Reddy at this point of time, it could lead to some internal dissension which may have impact on the by-election. It is being said that the party high command is examining this viewpoint and is likely to postpone the announcement of the name of the new TPCC president till the by-elections are over.

BUSINESS



India seeing V-shaped GDP recovery: FinMin

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SPORTS



Shardul or Saini big question; Rohit set to replace Mayank

P8



COVID CRISIS IN UK

BORIS JOHNSON CANCELS R-DAY VISIT TO INDIA

LONDON

BRITISH Prime Minister Boris Johnson called off his visit to India, sources said, hours after he announced a fresh lockdown over the new strain of coronavirus that has affected thousands of people in the UK. Johnson was to be the chief guest at this year's Republic Day parade in New Delhi, which was also to be his first bilateral visit after the UK's departure from the European Union in December. He had accepted the invitation last month.

"The Prime Minister spoke to Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi this morning, to express his regret that he will be unable to visit India later this month as planned," read a statement from his Downing Street office. "In light of the national lockdown announced last night, and the speed at which the new coron-

avirus variant is spreading, the Prime Minister said that it was important for him to remain in the UK so he can focus on the domestic response to the virus," the statement read.

"The leaders underlined their shared commitment to the bilateral relationship, and to continuing to build on the close collaboration between our countries -- including in response to the pandemic," it added.

Johnson's government has announced a complete lockdown for England's 56 million people, which could last until mid-February. The measures were taken amid a huge spurt in coronavirus cases which saw 80,000 fresh infections on one day in the end of December. If unchecked, the National Health Service will be overwhelmed, Mr Johnson had said while making the lockdown announcement, which came into effect on Monday night.



Budget Session from Jan 29

Union Budget on Feb 1



NEW DELHI: The Union Budget will be presented in Parliament on February 1, sources said, adding that President Ram Nath Kovind will address both the Houses - Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha - on January 29. The Budget Session will be conducted in two parts. The first phase of the session will begin on January 29 with President Kovind's address and end on February 15. The second phase will run from March 8 to April 8, sources said. The decision was taken by the Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs or CCPA.

The Centre had last month cancelled the winter session of parliament because of the coronavirus pandemic. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi had said in a letter to the Congress's Lok Sabha leader that all political parties were in favour of scrapping the session to avoid any Covid spread.

"I have informally contacted floor leaders of various political parties and they have expressed their concerns about the ongoing pandemic and opined of doing away with Winter Session. Continued on P5

In 2:1 verdict, SC nod for Central Vista Project

NEW DELHI

THE Supreme Court on Tuesday cleared the decks for the ambitious Central Vista Project, which covers a three-km stretch from Rashtrapati Bhavan to India Gate in Lutyens' Delhi, by upholding the environmental clearance and the notification for change in land use.

The Central Vista revamp, announced in September 2019 envisages a new triangular Parliament building, with a seating capacity of 900 to 1,200 MPs, that is to be constructed by August 2022 when the country will be celebrating its 75th Independence Day. The common Central Secretariat is likely to be built by 2024 under the project.

A three-judge bench headed by Justice A M Khanwilkar, by 2:1 majority, held that the grant of environmental clearance and the notification for change in land use for the project was valid.

Justice Khanwilkar, writing the judgement for himself and Justice Dinesh Maheshwari, also directed that the project proponent set up smog tower and use anti-smog guns at the construction site for the Central Vista project. Justice Sanjiv Khanna, the third judge on the bench, also agreed on the issue of award of the

project. He, however, disagreed with the judgment on change of land use and on the grant of environmental clearance for the project. In the majority verdict, the apex court said that prior permission shall be taken from the heritage conservation committee and other relevant authorities before the start of construction at new sites. On the aspect of change in land use, Justice Khanna said it



was bad in law and there was no disclosure for public participation on the issue. The top court's verdict came on several pleas on the issue, including the one filed by activist Rajeev Suri, against various permissions given to the project by authorities including the grant of environmental clearance and the nod to change of land use.

On December 7, last year the top court had allowed the Centre to proceed with the foundation stone-laying ceremony for the Central Vista project on December 10 after the government assured it that no construction or demolition work would commence till the apex court decides the pending pleas on the issue.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had laid the foundation stone for the new Parliament building and the construction is expected to be completed by 2022 at an estimated cost of Rs 971 crore.

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi had laid the foundation stone for the new Parliament building and the construction is expected to be completed by 2022 at an estimated cost of Rs 971 crore.

New Year New Hope

Covid vaccine set for Sankranti release

Ready to roll out vaccine by Jan 13, says Health Ministry

Giving more details on the first phase of vaccination drive, the Health Ministry said healthcare workers and frontline workers need not register themselves as their database has been populated on the Co-WIN vaccine delivery management system

NEW DELHI

THE Union Health Ministry on Tuesday said that it is prepared to roll out the coronavirus vaccine by January 13, paving way for mass vaccination drive in the country.

"We are prepared to roll out Covid-19 vaccines within 10 days of granting emergency use authorisation date, based on dry run feedback," said Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan at a press conference. Approval to two vaccines was given on January 3.

The Drug Controller General of India had, on Sunday, announced approvals to two vaccine - Oxford-AstraZeneca's Covishield manufactured by Serum Institute of India and Bharat Biotech's Covaxin - against coronavirus infection - for restricted emergency use.

The vaccine will be first offered to one crore healthcare workers, along with two crore frontline and essential workers and 27 crore elderly, mostly above the age of 50 years with co-morbidities.

Bhushan said: "The Union government has not banned the export of any one of the Covid-19 vaccines and this should be absolutely clear. When I say Union govern-

ment, it means there are three ministries --- Ministry of Health, Ministry of Commerce, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade with the Ministry of Commerce and Directorate General of Foreign Trade - which can initiate, in a hypothetical scenario, such an action," he said. Addressing the press meet

along with Bhushan, NITI Aayog member (Health) Dr VK Paul said an optimistic scenario is emerging with the pandemic situation in India consistently improving in terms of active cases and new deaths declining.

On Saturday, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan had announced that one crore healthcare workers, along with two crore frontline workers will get the vaccine for free.



TRUCE AFTER WAR

SII, Bharat Biotech pledge for smooth roll-out of vaccines

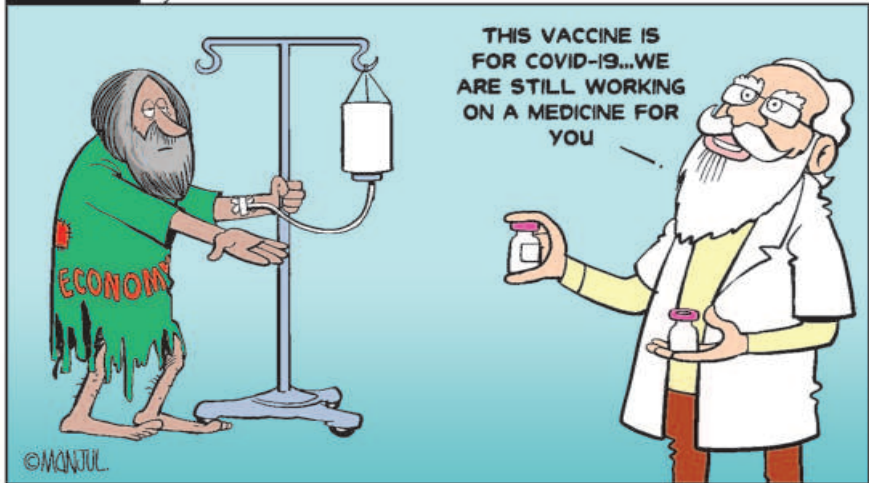
NEW DELHI: A day after Bharat Biotech slammed Serum Institute of India CEO Adar Poonawalla for his 'water' comment, both vaccine makers on Tuesday jointly pledged for a smooth rollout of the antidote, saying saving lives and livelihoods was the most important task at hand. In a show of solidarity, Serum Institute CEO Poonawalla and Bharat Biotech

Chairman Krishna Ella communicated their combined intent to develop, manufacture and supply the Covid-19 vaccines on their respective Twitter accounts.

"The vaccines are a global public health good and have the power to save lives and accelerate the return to economic normalcy at the earliest," the statement said.

Continued on P5

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Delhi gets rains for 3rd day on the trot

PURNA SINGH

NEW DELHI: The national capital received rains at some places on Tuesday for the third consecutive day and the city recorded

13.2 degrees Celsius, six degrees above normal, the India Meteorological Department said. The Safdarjung Observatory, which provides representative data for the city, recorded

4.7 mm rainfall between 8.30 am on Monday and 8.30 am on Tuesday. The weather stations at Palam, Lodhi Road, Ayazgar and Ridge recorded 12 mm and 4.8 mm, 8.9 mm

and 6.2 mm rainfall, respectively, during the period. The minimum temperature rose to 13.2 degrees Celsius as a result of cloud cover.

Continued on P5

Farmers to hold tractor rally tomorrow

NEW DELHI

THE farmers' unions protesting the contentious farm laws announced on Tuesday that they will take out a tractor march at four borders of Delhi, including eastern and western peripheral expressways on Thursday. The announcement comes a day after the seventh round of talks between the unions and the government ended in a stalemate and announcement for another meeting on January 8 was made. "This will be a trailer for what lies ahead on

PLAN 'DESH JAGRAN ABHIYAN' FROM TODAY

January 26," said Yogendra Yadav of Swaraj India. Yadav said the protests will be deepened across the country from Wednesday as their demands for repeal of the three farm laws and legal status for MSP remain unmet. "From Wednesday, for two weeks, 'Desh Jagran Abhiyan' will be started and protests will be deepened throughout the country," he said. Krantikari Kisan Union president Darshan Pal further announced the farmers'



Farmers burn an effigy during their ongoing protest against the new farm laws, at Chilla border in Noida, Tuesday

plans of tractor parade in the national capital on R-Day. "On January 18, Mahila Kisan Diwas will be held. On January 23, on the occasion of birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, Azad Hind Kisan Diwas will be celebrated. And on January 25 and 26, tractor parades will take place," said Pal. The protesting unions had earlier this week also announced their plans to enter Delhi with tractors and other vehicles on January 26 if the government doesn't meet their demands. "We intend to be peaceful and we told the government long ago during our talks that it has only two options - either repeal the three Central farm Acts or use force on us to evict us," said a statement by farmer's group Samyukta Kisan Morcha. They have been protesting at various border points of the national capital since November 26 against the three farm laws passed by BJP-led government at the Centre in September.

Lyricist, dialogue writer Vennelakanti no more

HANS NEWS SERVICE

NELLORE: POPULAR lyricist, dialogue writer from Nellore, Vennelakanti Rajeswara Prasad, 64, passed away in Chennai on Tuesday due to cardiac arrest. He is a well-known person in Nellore as an employee of the State Bank of India who worked here for many years. He, subsequently, shifted to Chennai with the encouragement of the noted playback singer SP Balasubrahmanyam who was also from Nellore. Continued on P5

Womenia

TWEET PATROL



MADHURI DIXIT NENE
@MADHURIDIXIT

Happiest birthday greetings
@deepikapadukone May
your year ahead be as amazing as
you are. Keep shining



Unwind to improve love, relationship

Stress impacts our love relationships more than we are aware of or acknowledge. Part of the problem is that stress is entrenched in our everyday. Stress has become such a normal part of daily life that partners become immune to the symptoms and warning signs.

Ignoring stress only ignites it. Even when a couple tries to ignore stress, like static in the air, it is felt and absorbed. If partners do talk about being stressed, they may not know what to do about it.

Stressed-out couples quarrel and fight more often, withdraw from each other, feel disconnected, sad, frustrated, angry. Ongoing unchecked stress can create bigger problems. Long-term stress can turn to depression and isolation resulting in a frozen and distant relationship.

Recognise stress symptoms

Couples often become so accustomed to unchecked stress that they barely recognize and often overlook the destructive ramifications.

There are two straightforward signs of stress. Firstly one or both partners are snappy, cranky, withdrawn, moody, pouty, teary, ornery, angry, restless, hyper, agitated, overly excited and lastly one or both partners are self-medicating with drugs, alcohol, food, etc.

Approach your partner

If you see signs of stress, ask

your partner what's going on in a kind and compassionate way. It could be as simple as, 'Are you having a difficult day, honey? Come sit by me and tell me all about it.'

Listen

Keep in mind that listening is a skill, and one that few people actually do well. It's the same with communicating with your partner.

Comfort first

Many partners forget to console their significant other and instead try to problem solve. Comfort each other first, problem solve second. That's because your partner might be looking for stress relief rather than a nitty-gritty brainstorming session.

Just hugging and gently touching your partner can provide that relief.

Ask your partner what you can do

An important way of supporting your loved one is to ask them flat-out how you can help. You might say, "Is there anything I can do to make your day go smoother?" If your partner isn't sure, notice what might be helpful and do that. It might be anything from doing a few chores to giving them a relaxing back rub.

Consider if there's anything else you can do

Of course you can't ease your partner's stress completely. But you can pay atten-

tion to whether they're happy and see how you can help. You can ask yourself, "Am I doing everything within my power to aid in my partner's happiness?" Unchecked stress can sabotage a relationship and lead to dissatisfaction and disconnection.

But there are many ways you can take action to alleviate your own stress and support your partner.

Earrings that you definitely should own

How many times have you repeated your tired-and-worn-n-number-of-times gold stud earring with every outfit? We, women, often miss updating our gold earrings, while the rest of our ensemble gets a refresh every day! One of the best ways to amp up your look could actually be by adding a new earring type with your OOTD.

Do you know how many types of earrings are there that can actually uplift your look? Have you found the earring styles that go with your LBDs? Or the various types of earrings that work well with your office wear?

Here are all the earring types that can make their way to your jewellery box for every outfit and every budget.

Studs

These are the types of small gold earrings you want for everyday wear. They have a single design unit without any dangling element. Different types of ear studs range from simple stud type earrings in gold, stud earrings with diamonds to the colourful enamel on gold stud earrings like the picture you see above. There are also various types of stud earrings in gemstones like blue topaz, lapiz and white sapphire that can add more colour to your look. If you are a pearl kind of person, simple pearl stud earrings in gold can add that classy touch to your everyday outfits. This is one no-fuss earring style that every woman should own. These stud type earrings work well with any look - with your denim and solid tees, your gym

wear and even your blazer days.

Drop earrings

As the name suggests, these earrings have single or multiple components dangling (usually a short dangle) and the top component is connected with either a hook or a post. Take a look at the many types of drop earrings in these pictures. Drop earrings are the ultimate style staples for your slightly dressy days when you want to stand out but not really get all eyes on you! These are minimal, lightweight designs that you can wear to your office parties, a day out with besties or a lunch date. When exploring drop earrings on Melorra, you can choose from so many types of pearl drop earrings, plain gold drop earrings and diamond drop earrings!

Long dangles

While these are similar to drops, they are longer earrings with the dangling elements! There are all types of tassel earrings, single strand long earrings, diamond encrusted dangle earrings and gemstone shoulder dusters that are perfect for days when you want to go a little OTT. While shoulder dusters usually brush against your shoulders, on Melorra, like all things simple and stylish, our shoulder dusters exceed more than 50 mm length but are not overtly long. These long dangle earrings and shoulder dusters are your go-to for a clubbing night, a cocktail party or even a best friend's bachelorette. Pair them with your bodycon dresses, gowns or a lacy off-shoulder number for a stunning effect.



Hoop earrings

A lot of women look for those ring type earrings in gold and we say 'just hoop it'. Hoops are large circular or oval shaped earrings that do not touch your earlobe. So many different types of hoop earrings... such little time to choose! The best types of hoop earrings are those that are minimal to go with your everyday wear and not look like a design from a heritage site not traditional, so that they match the aesthetics of your western outfits fit in your budget, so that you can buy multiple designs to refresh your look. Hoops go with every-

thing - from your dungarees to your dresses. Pair them with your casual, formal and party wear because they will fit right in.

Front back earrings

1 earring. 2 looks, these are modular earrings in which there is a front and back design. You can wear the front part as a stud separately and add on the detachable drop earrings to it when you want a dressier look. Perfect for working women who want to go from deadline to dinner! Pair the studs with your formal attire and add on the drops for an after hour party.

A beauty pageant spreads awareness about menstrual hygiene

PUJA GUPTA

National beauty pageant Diadem Miss India and Mrs India Legacy focused on women empowerment and spreading awareness about menstrual hygiene with the launch of its campaign #Masiksatya.

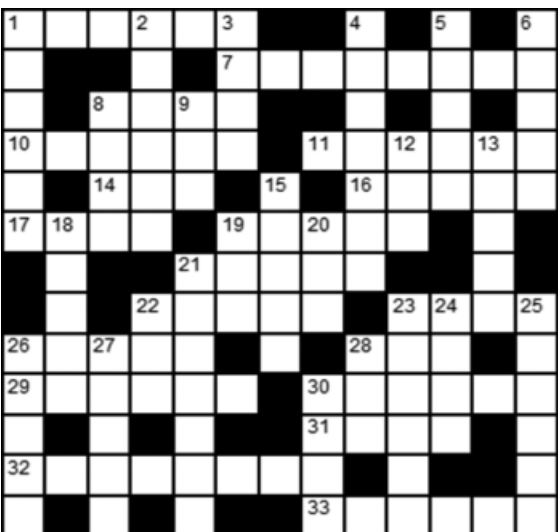
"Diadem comes with a social message and this year also we wanted to highlight importance of menstrual hygiene. Not only this, with the help of our social welfare partner Signature Global, we had organised medical camps for 1,000 workers before the show. It is an overwhelming feeling to know that girls across India believe in social development and want to join hands with us in this social cause," says its founder and Director Amisha Choudhary.

Nikita Jagdev was crowned Diadem Miss India 2020 while



Priyanka Juneja won the title of Mrs. India Legacy 2020 title at the grand finale recently held in Delhi NCR. The event was choreographed by Mumbai-based choreographer Khizar Hussain. The jury included Filmmaker and Music Producer Badraan Singh, International film producer Dr Mike Berry, Rita Gangwani, grooming expert and pageant coach who trained Miss World Manushi Chhillar and Miss Deaf World, Vidisha Baliyan among others.

Amisha adds, "I am delighted to share that we have successfully completed our third season of Diadem Miss and Mrs India Legacy 2020. All the contestants have been absolutely amazing and empowering and each year. I congratulate all the winners and I am sure we will all be able to bring a good change towards the society together."



SOLUTION TO JANUARY 5

CROSSWORD

Across

- Latin American dance (3-3)
- Resembling a bunch of grapes (8)
- Leave out (4)
- Shabby (6)
- Hold (6)
- Move very fast (3)
- Threescore (5)
- Small amount (4)
- Three-dimensional (5)
- Mentors (5)
- Overly publicized (5)
- Haze (4)
- A small drum (5)
- Fish (3)
- Crude (6)
- One of hypocritical affectation (6)
- Old Peruvian (4)
- High rank (8)
- Aquatic sport (6)

Down

- Investigates or | verifies (6)

- Consign (6)
- Showily pretentious (4)
- Retributive justice (7)
- A cleaning compound (5)
- British coin (5)
- Greek liqueur (4)
- Mischievous fairy (3)
- Spasmodic twitch (3)
- Units (5)
- Enticed (5)
- Indian rice dish (5)
- Drinking vessel (3)
- Baby blossom (3)
- Spun (7)
- A large pig (3)
- Capital of Russia (6)
- Opinion or view (4)
- Growing weary or bored (6)
- Entertainment unit - the idiot box (2,3)
- Ex-British PM Tony ____ (5)
- Scam (3)
- Jetty (4)

SUDOKU



NEWS ROUNDUP

BHUMI PEDNEKAR STARTS SHOOTING FOR 'BADHAAI DO'

Bollywood star Bhumi Pednekar has started shooting for the comedy drama Badhaai Do, co-starring Rajkumar Rao. The actress took to Instagram on Tuesday to share moments from the shoot.

Bhumi plays a character named Sumi in the film, and her recent posts have been shared with the tag #SumiDiaries.

In an Instagram Story she posted, the actress looks excited to go to the set, traveling in a car. In another post, she shared an image from her first day of shoot in Dehradun, Uttarakhand.

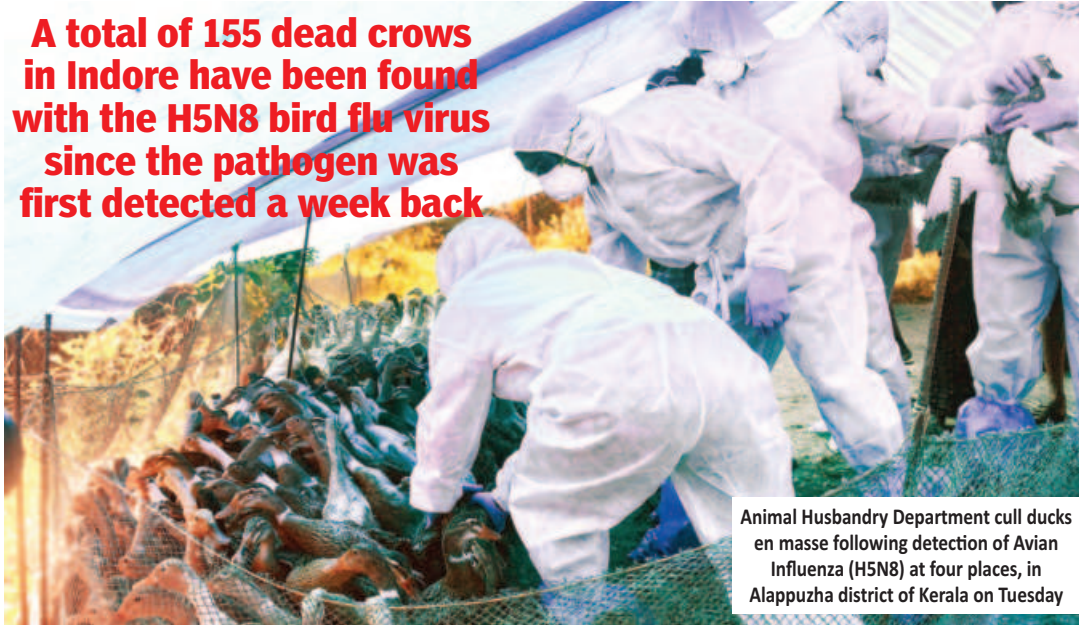
"Poori team ko #BadhaaiDo (Congratulate the entire team). To new beginnings," she wrote with the image.

Badhaai Do is the second instalment in the Badhaai Ho franchise. While the first film starred Ayushmann Khurrana and Sanya Malhotra, the new film will see Rajkumar and Bhumi taking the franchise forward. In the film, Rajkumar plays the only male officer in a mahila thana in Delhi. Pednekar will reportedly play a police officer and a PT teacher.

The film is directed by Harshvardhan Kulkarni, who helmed the Gulshan Devaiah-starrer comedy Hunterrr (2015), and is written by Suman Adhikary and Akshat Ghildial, who earlier wrote Badhaai Ho.



A total of 155 dead crows in Indore have been found with the H5N8 bird flu virus since the pathogen was first detected a week back



Animal Husbandry Department cull ducks en masse following detection of Avian Influenza (H5N8) at four places, in Alappuzha district of Kerala on Tuesday

Culling of bird begins in Kerala

ALAPPUZHA/KOTTAYAM

CULLING of chickens and ducks began on Tuesday in parts of two districts in Kerala to contain H5N8 strain of bird flu there, official sources said.

Rapid response teams, set up by the administration, began culling ducks, hens and other domestic birds in and around a one km radius of the affected areas in Alappuzha and Kottayam districts on Tuesday morning as per the guidelines issued by the government, they said.

The operation was launched a day after results of the samples tested at the National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases in Bhopal confirmed the outbreak of the bird flu in the two districts.

Alappuzha district authorities said culling of birds in four panchayats of Nedumudi, Thakazhy, Pallippad and Karuvatta in Kuttanad region,

where the outbreak has been reported, was expected to be completed by Wednesday evening.

In Karuvatta panchayat alone, around 12,000 birds will be culled, an official said.

In the affected areas of Neendoor panchayat in Kottayam district, the rapid response teams have culled some 3,000 birds so far, authorities said.

Around 1,700 ducks had died in a farm in Neendoor due to the viral infection.

Officials have said around 40,000 domestic birds, including 34,000 in Kuttanad region alone, will be culled to check the spread of the H5N8 virus.

A total of 155 dead crows in Indore in Madhya Pradesh have been found with the H5N8 bird flu virus since the pathogen was first detected here a week back, an official said on Tuesday.

Veterinary Department Deputy Director Pramod Sharma said 155 crows were detected

with the H5N8 virus (a strain of avian influenza) in the Residency area here in the last eight days.

"Samples from 120 live hens and roosters from the area and 30 migratory birds from Sirpur Lake have been sent to a laboratory in Bhopal to check for bird flu. The reports are awaited," he informed. As neighbouring Himachal Pradesh reported cases of bird flu, Jammu and Kashmir has sounded an alert and started collecting samples to check the health of the winged guests flocking the Union territory during winters, officials said.

Tamil Nadu government on Tuesday stepped up surveillance on the inter-state borders and announced a contingency plan for the management of possible human cases

Karnataka Health Minister Dr K Sudhakar directed health officers in border districts of the state to remain vigilant in the view of avian flu outbreak in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.

20 MORE TEST POSITIVE FOR UK VIRUS STRAIN

NEW DELHI

TWENTY more people in India have tested positive for the coronavirus variant detected in the United Kingdom, the Hindustan Times reported on Tuesday, citing the health ministry. With this, a total of 58 samples have been found to be positive with the new virus strain.

A consortium of laboratories, set up by the Centre, conducted genome sequencing and released test results.

Among the sequenced samples, 19 cases have been detected in two Delhi labs, 25 in Pune, 10 in Bengaluru, three in Hyderabad, and one in Kolkata.

So far, the samples have been sequenced in six of the 10 designated labs across the country. Genome sequencing can provide crucial information about how a virus is evolving or if new variants are emerging, how the virus is spreading from one place to another and whether cases in a given cluster are linked to one another.

From November 25 to December 23, 2020, about 33,000 passengers arrived at various airports in India from the UK. All of them are being tracked and tested via RT-PCR or reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction tests.

"All these persons have been kept in single-room isolation in designated health care facilities by respective state governments," the health ministry said in a statement.



An empty street in London around tourism hotspots after UK announced complete lockdown

Complete lockdown in UK

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced another national lockdown from early Wednesday. The lockdown was declared following a continuing spike in the number of new Covid-19 cases. In an address to the nation, Johnson said the variant has been spreading at an 'alarming rate'. The country registered over 50,000 daily infections for seven consecutive days. The restrictions with the main message to 'stay at home' will last for six weeks.

Free test kits for students

With students set to return to studies over the coming week, University of California in San Diego has installed COVID-19 testing kits across its campus, from where students can pick up the kits for free.

UC San Diego officials have decided to offer COVID-19 tests -- used to determine if an individual is carrying the virus, whether or not they have symptoms -- as part of the organisation's "Return to Learn" programme.

Sourav Ganguly's ad taken off after healthy oil brand heavily trolled

KOLKATA

EVEN as Sourav Ganguly recovers from a heart surgery in a Kolkata hospital, Adani Wilmar has stopped all advertisements where the former Indian cricket captain is seen endorsing a well-known brand of a healthy cooking oil.

The company's move came in response to several posts on social media that disparaged the brand for endorsing heart health and immunity. "Sourav Ganguly undergoes angioplasty after suffering a heart attack even using adani fortune oil." "Remembering the ad, '40 ke ho gye to kya jeena chhod doge'. I wonder the condition of the brand manager of Fortune Rice Bran Oil. Get well soon dada!"



Cardiac surgeon Dr Devi Shetty interacts with the media after visiting Sourav Ganguly at a private hospital

Dr Devi Shetty monitors Sourav's health

Sourav is now stable with no complaint of chest pain or breathing issues, noted cardiologist Dr Devi Shetty said after monitoring the cricket icon's health. The former Indian skipper will be discharged from hospital on Wednesday, he said.

Ganguly was diagnosed with three blocked coronary arteries on Saturday, following which a stent was inserted in one to remove the blockage. Dr Shetty, who flew down to the city in the morning to check on the BCCI president, said the 48-year-old is an "asset" to the nation, and the mild heart attack that he experienced did not cause any damage to his health.

The cardiac surgeon, following his meeting with a team of 13 doctors at Woodlands Hospital here, also said that the batting great can return to normal, as "his heart is as strong as it used to be when he

Pak SC orders reconstruction of vandalised Hindu temple

ISLAMABAD

PAKISTAN'S Supreme Court on Tuesday ordered the Evacuee Property Trust Board (EPTB) to start reconstruction of a century-old Hindu temple that was vandalised and set on fire by a mob in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province last week, saying the attack has caused "international embarrassment" to the country.

The apex court, which took notice of the attack and ordered the local authorities to appear before the court on January 5, also directed the board to submit in court details of all functional and non-functional temples and gurdwaras across Pakistan, Dawn newspaper reported. The attack on the temple in Terri village in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's (KP) Karak district on Wednesday by members of radical Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam party (Fazal ur Rehman group) drew strong condemnation from human rights activists and the minority Hindu community leaders.

During the hearing on Tuesday, a three-member bench headed by Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed also directed the EPTB to clear encroachments from temples across the country and take action against officials involved in the encroachments.



Laxmi Ratan Shukla

WB Minister Laxmi Ratan resigns

KOLKATA

WEST Bengal Minister of State for Youth Services and Sports Laxmi Ratan Shukla resigned from his post on Tuesday, sources in the state secretariat said. Shukla sent his resignation letter to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and a copy of it to Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar, they said.

The former cricketer's resignation came almost a fortnight after state transport minister Suvendu

Adhikari had left the party and joined BJP.

Former captain of the Bengal Ranji team, 39-year-old Shukla, MLA of Howrah (Uttar), in his resignation letter to Banerjee expressed his willingness to "retire" from politics, the officials said.

Shukla, who was looking after the TMC affairs in Howrah district, however, has not given up his post as an MLA, they added.

Repeated calls to Shukla's mobile number went unanswered.

Kerala gold smuggling: NIA charge sheets 20

NEW DELHI

THE National Investigation Agency (NIA) has filed a charge sheet against 20 people, including Sarith P. S. and Swapna Suresh for their alleged involvement in smuggling 30 kg of gold worth Rs 14.82 crore in a diplomatic baggage into Kerala that is known as the Kerala gold smuggling case, an official said. The official said that during investigation 31 other persons, who had conspired and financed gold smuggling besides facilitating the disposal of the contraband and transfer of proceeds thereof to the UAE through hawala channels, for purchasing and smuggling more gold, with the intention of threatening the economic security of India, were arraigned as accused in the case.

SNOWFLAKES, EACH ONE A GEM



A pedestrian holding an umbrella walks on a snow-covered pavement during heavy snowfall, in Srinagar on Tuesday

'Don't enjoy much playing Mr Bean'

LONDON

THE 65-year-old star Rowan Atkinson - who originally created the iconic titular character for his beloved sitcom - is poised to don the famous suit and tie for another big screen appearance after the success of the animated spin-off's third series in 2019, but he hopes his time in the role is nearing its end.

Speaking to Radio Times, he said: 'Having made an animated TV series, we're now in the foothills of developing an animated movie for Mr Bean - it's easier for me to perform the character vocally than visually. I don't much enjoy playing him. The weight of responsibility is not pleasant. I find it stressful and exhausting, and I look forward to the end of it.' However, it's nothing personal - Rowan admitted he doesn't really like 'making anything', although there is one exception there.

'I don't actually like the process of making anything - with the possible exception of Blackadder, because the

responsibility for making that series funny was on many shoulders, not just mine,' he explained. Asked whether Edmund could return for a fifth series - which would be the first since 1989's Blackadder Goes Forth - it seems there is a sliver of hope for fans. 'It's certainly not impossible,' Rowan said. 'That's about as optimistic as I can be, and I'd rather not speculate on when it could be set. But Blackadder represented the creative energy we all had in the 80s. To try to replicate that 30 years on wouldn't be easy.' With his impressive legacy, Rowan has plenty of experience in the world of television comedy, but he insisted he isn't really into any UK series nowadays.



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સુ કલલકુ નાકારો

કોન્ક, ಬಂಧಾಲ ಕೊನಸಾಗುತುನೆ ಕುಂಬಾಯಿ...

Indian IT sector set for a growth phase

Amid every crisis, lies a great opportunity, and the Covid pandemic is no exception. In this perspective, the Indian IT industry is likely to see some favourable structural changes in the coming months. Firstly, negative events like an economic recession or a global pandemic usually lead to higher offshoring of IT services work by global enterprises. This was seen during the Y2K problem in 2000 when Indian programming talent was used extensively to solve the issue, leading to higher offshoring.

Similarly, the economic recession of 2008 didn't derail outsourcing but led to its uptick. As cost optimisation emerges as the key factor for driving growth during this Covid-induced slowdown, outsourcing will get a fillip. This has started to reflect with many large outsource-

ing deals being clinched by domestic IT biggies.

Last month, Infosys announced its largest deal ever worth around \$3.2 billion from German automotive manufacturer Daimler to transform its IT operating model and infrastructure landscape across workplace services. Similarly, Wipro bagged a five-year long outsourcing contract worth \$700 million from German retailer Metro that can potentially go up to \$1 billion over the following four years.

Secondly, the ongoing pandemic has resulted in the widescale adoption of digital services. Companies across geographies, big and small have embarked on a digitalisation path to mitigate the disruptions caused by this black swan event. Work from Home (WFH) has resulted in higher demand for cloud-related offerings.

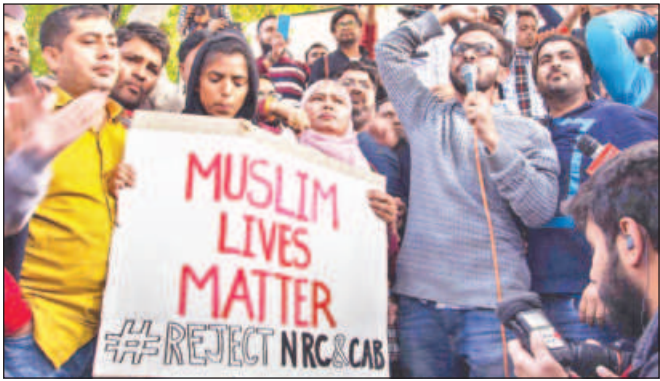
Similarly, enterprises' attempt to reach out to their customers digitally, has led to rising demand for app development. As the whole world transact digitally, the need for cybersecurity applications has also seen an uptick. So, the opportunity set for software companies has increased multi-fold. Against this backdrop, the scale of growth in the next 10 years for the Indian IT

services companies is likely to be very different from the last decade.

Sensing the opportunity ahead, the Nifty IT index hit fresh record highs last month. From IT biggies including Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys, HCL Technologies to mid-tier firms such as Persistent systems, and Mphasis among others; share prices of most IT firms continue to do well. According to a note by ICICI Securities, the Indian IT sector is going through the first phase of a multi-year technology transformation phase.

The brokerage house expects all top-five IT companies to register double-digit revenue growth in the next two financial years. As the Indian IT sector, which is one of the major exporters of services from the country, is expected to grow at a higher pace, it augurs well for the Indian economy. If the Indian IT companies clinch more deals, they will offer more new jobs.

Employment creation in the IT sector will have a multiplier effect as salaries are high. As a result, real estate and other sectors will benefit. The country needs such a multiplier effect at this crucial juncture to rev up its growth prospects.



Bharat needs a bullish bellwether

PAYAM SUDHAKARAN

It took a British nobleman to float an outfit to fight the colonial regime, way back in 1885. Indian leaders including Dadabhai Naoroji, Surendranath Banerjee, K Kamaraj, Pherozeshah Mehta, MG Ranade and others took the movement forward and with M K Gandhi at its helm, the Indian National Congress fought for freedom using nonviolence as its weapon. And the rest is history.

Though for the first 30 years of Independence the Congress remained the champion, in 1977, the party suffered a humiliating defeat under the leadership of Indira Gandhi in the general elections that followed the infamous 'Emergency'. For the first time in the history of India, a non-Congress government was formed by the Janata Party with Morarji Desai as the Prime Minister. But things did not shine bright for the Janata Party as it was founded on narrow religious sentiments rather than strong ideological fundamen-

The electorate voted in favour of the BJP Prime Ministerial designate Narendra Modi which propelled the saffron party back to power in Delhi with a comfortable majority signalling the beginning of the BJP dominance in the national spectrum of power politics. However, umpteen instances of mob lynching, cow vigilantism, rapes, atrocities on Dalits, unemployment, economy crunch, demonetisation, privatisation of several State-run establishments, Citizen's Amendment Act and the vile farm reforms that took away the basic rights of farmers in the country all prove beyond any doubt that the BJP's sole schema is a Hindu fascist India, and nothing less, nothing more. As democracy is in its deathbed, India needs a saviour who will protect the country's populace from corporate bullies and religious zealots

mentalism.

The Janata Party was apparently an offshoot of Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJP), the political outfit of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). The party was founded in 1951 by Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee with an aim to destabilise the Congress. Though it came to power with a stunning majority in 1977, internal conflicts and disgruntlement among its leaders led to the party's collapse in 1979. One year after, two of its prominent members - Atal Behari Vajpayee and Lal Krishna Advani - along with core members of the Janata Party, launched the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in 1980.

With Hindutva as its footboard, the party grew by leaps and bounds and three decades after, in 2014, it emerged as the largest

single party in the Lok Sabha. Narendra Modi, who has no regards for the Indian Constitution and democracy, was sworn in as the Prime Minister of India, heralding the death of secularism in the country. The fact that with an agenda of Hindutva nationalism, cow protection, Ram mandir in Ayodhya and citizenship amendment, the party and its allies do not have any interest in bridging the socio-economic inequalities nor the welfare of the common public is anybody's knowledge.

It may be recalled that Indira Gandhi's doggedness and arbitrary administration sowed seeds of disenchantment to the Congress among India's electorate, leading to gradual downfall of the grand old party. When Indira Gandhi was assassinated by her own security guards on October 31 in 1984, her son Rajiv Gandhi took charge of the party affairs and led the party to a thumping victory in 1984 general elections winning a record of 414 seats ostensibly due to the sympathy wave created by Indira Gandhi's assassination. But in the next elections, the Congress lost its dominance as it came under the cloud of Bofors scam.

The Congress returned to power after the 1991 Lok Sabha elections and ruled the country with a clear-cut mandate between 1971-1988 (barring the Janata Party rule) and remained the largest political outfit between 1989 and 1996. But as is the wont, the personality cult and dynastic rule dented the brand image of Congress, leading to the decline of its organisational structure and mass support base. Centralised leadership and allegations of massive corruption, coupled with lack of consensus in decision making, accelerated the fall of the Congress.

Following Rajiv Gandhi's assassination, the party's mantle was taken over by Sonia Gandhi, an Italian national by birth and an Indian by choice. General elections in 2004 helped the Congress to gain power at the Centre once again with Manmohan Singh being the Prime Minister of the UPA government. The leadership was diluted from a single person to Manmohan-Sonia-Rahul trio which worked well for five years (2004-09) and in the 2009 national elections was able to retain power winning over 200 seats on its own. The impressive performance of the Congress was due to the combined leadership of Manmohan Singh, Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS), farm loan waiver scheme, pro poor policies of the UPA government, confidence of stability and victory of secular forces.

However, numerous scams, high inflation and unemployment rates, price rise and the policy paralysis rocked the nation which resulted in total wipe-out of the Congress in the general election in 2014.

The electorate voted in favour of the BJP Prime Ministerial designate Narendra Modi which propelled the saffron party back to power in Delhi with a comfortable majority signalling the beginning of the BJP dominance in the national spectrum of power politics. However, umpteen instances of mob lynching, cow vigilantism, rapes, atrocities on Dalits, unemployment, economy crunch, demonetisation, privatisation of several State-run establishments, Citizen's Amendment Act and the vile farm reforms that took away the basic rights of farmers in the country all prove beyond any doubt that the BJP's sole schema is a Hindu fascist India, and nothing else.

As democracy is in its deathbed, India needs a saviour who will protect its populace from corporate bullies and religious zealots. As the BJP claims, its government is not elected by the majority of Indian voters. The government represents a few upper-class Hindus and a host of regional parties having mean and vested interests. The Congress cannot play an alternative to the ruling dispensation. Rahul Gandhi is perhaps the country's biggest disaster who seems to have lost his interest in national politics. The country's youth want change, but they don't have a leader nor a party with strong commitment to the people and the country.

The Congress, under Nehru was an omnibus party which co-opted the ideological shades of the right-centre-left and built a consensus to rule India giving no leeway to political parties of left and right orientation to spread their political and electoral wings. The leadership and party organisation were in equilibrium and equally strong with no major opposition to challenge its supremacy. Indira Gandhi was charismatic, but she banked on centralised and authoritative decisions to rule the country. Rajiv Gandhi was best as a pilot but not as Prime Minister. The party at present does not have a strong leader and workable structure and its ideological agenda of leftist-welfarist policies for the poor has been hijacked by the BJP which is using it cleverly to position itself as the single dominant party in Indian politics.

It is against this backdrop, the need to have a young, energetic and gritty leader gains prominence. The Congress cannot rewrite its ideological agenda and open the entry gates of the party for people with rightist views within its broad spectrum of secular politics to counter the BJP surge in the country. The party lost its cadres, foot soldiers and flag bearers at the grassroots level. A new party, based on strong political ideology and spotless integrity, led by a powerful leader only can save democracy and secularism in this country.

TAMILISAI SOUNDARARAJAN



THE Drugs Controller General of India's approval for the restricted emergency use to two vaccines is a historic milestone in the country's inspired fight against the Covid-

19 vaccine. This is one of the proudest moments for all of us and the scientists, who worked overtime to come up with effective vaccine candidate, deserve all the praise.

They have made India proud by coming out with Covid-19 vaccines with Made in India tag. This is a major step from the pharmaceutical sector towards the Atma Nirbhar vision and goal set by our Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji.

However, as a medical professional and as the Governor, it pains to find some sections of people, possibly with vested interests, unfortunately raising doubts about the approvals and the process of approvals. The people who create such controversies are doing disservice to the efforts of our proud Indian scientific community. The critics must realise that through their cynicism they are potentially undoing the greatest efforts of our scientific community and are affecting their morale.

It is very important that the unwarranted controversy about the approval also has the potential to create unfound panic among the common people about the vaccine and its use.

The critics must realise that more than 12 million doses of different vaccine candidates for Covid-19 prevention have already been administered all over the world till the January 3rd this year since the inoculation began on December 14th last year.

It is time that India with a population of more than 130 crore people should not lag behind in the vaccination process. Especially in the backdrop of the fact that, India has witnessed the second largest number of Covid-19 cases (10.03 million cases till January 3) in the world next only the USA. India has also recorded a massive 1.5 lakh deaths due to the Covid-19 infection.

There are many factors that huge population also creates potential for more vulnerability and other co morbidity conditions like diabetes, hypertension, cancer, and asthma, and kidney diseases.

For instance, India has the second largest number of diabetics (77 million) in the world and is next only to China (116 Million). It is stated that one in six people with diabetes is from India. This is in other words, God forbid, presents more severe co-morbidity condition in case if the Covid-19 infection spreads.

Regarding the baseless allegations against the Bharat Biotech's vaccine candidate Covaxin, developed in association with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), the doubts raised are unfortunate.

The Bharat Biotech has made a mark of its own in the field of vaccination not only in India but across the world. It has got the credit for producing 16 different vaccines for different disease prevention and has been conducting clinical trials in a total of 12 countries including the USA and the UK.



As a medical professional and as the Governor, it pains to find some sections of people, possibly with vested interests, unfortunately raising doubts about the approvals and the process of approvals. The people who create such controversies are doing disservice to the efforts of our proud Indian scientific community. The critics must realise that through their cynicism they are potentially undoing the greatest efforts of our scientific community and are affecting their morale

I have got the opportunity to visit the Bharat Biotech's research and development centre at the famous Genome Valley in Hyderabad and it was astounding to see the Bio Safety Level-3 (BSL-3) laboratory.

Bharat Biotech's founder and globally acclaimed scientist Dr Krishna Ella claims that even the UK and the US governments do not have the BSL-3 labs. Despite the fact that DCGI has given the approval for Covaxin on the basis of the valid recommendations submitted by the Covid-19 Subject Expert Committee (SEC) of the apex Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), it is unfortunate that controversy is being created.

Any rumour regarding the efficacy of the vaccine is likely to impact and intensify the vaccine-hesitancy among the people, especially the common people, who have some doubts over any kind of vaccination.

There were instances that some sections of people refrained to take or avoided getting vaccinated to prevent Polio. The Oral Polio Vaccine drops were misconstrued to affect the fertility among a section of the people. During my medical practice days, I still remember the Oral Polio Vaccine drops got the acceptance of the common people when they were promoted by film stars like Rajinikanth. People used to come to the hospital and ask for 'Rajinikanth drops' to prevent polio. This shows how important it is to promote right kind of awareness among the people about the need to get vaccinated to prevent some deadly disease in future. Before the massive immunisation programme to eradicate the polio, the disease used to cripple more than 50,000 kids in the country.

India took up the challenge and embarked on the world's biggest immunisation programme in 1995 to eradicate polio and succeeded in achieving the 90 per cent coverage by 2014, when it was declared as

the polio-free nation by the World Health Organisation and the UNICEF. And no wonder, India still remains the polio-free nation with no reported cases during the last five years.

As a gynaecologist, I do know pregnant women throwing the iron supplement pills in the dustbin thinking that they would affect the fairness of the child in the womb. Any immunisation programme is aimed at maintaining the public health at large and it is very vital to prepare them, motivate them and make them part of the immunisation programme by creating enabling eco-system for the immunisation. But the unnecessary controversies and doubts raised by some generalists, who are not subject experts, do not augur well for the proposed massive vaccination programme in our country.

In order to dispel the doubts among the people, Union Health Minister Shri Harsha Vardhan too made a fervent appeal to not to believe the disinformation and misinformation campaign about the efficacy and safety of the Corona vaccines. It is time that we put the things in right perspective as the World Health Organisation (WHO) too certified that India's vaccine regulatory authority is very much compliant with the international standards.

It is relevant to mention here that a team of international experts convened by the WHO found that the country's National Regulatory Authority (NRA) to meet the World Health Organisation's standards for vaccine regulation.

This vital authentication by the WHO unequivocally makes it clear that our country is well equipped to produce and monitor safe, effective and quality vaccines. The approval by the WHO allows the Indian manufactures to supply their vaccines globally through international procurement system.

the cricket series. There is already a lot of hue and cry raised regarding fourth test and quarantine rules imposed in Brisbane because of strict Covid rules, which is hosting the final test match in the on-going series.

Already much of the sporting activity has been lost due to unforeseen pandemic and the country and sport loving public can't be ready for anything more. In this context it is the responsibility of all the players to be more responsible in their behaviour, attitude in maintaining a bio-secure bubble especially in the current pandemic situation.

V Nagendra Kumar, Hyderabad

Farmers seem determined

THE seventh round of meeting between representatives of protesting farmers and the Central government failed to resolve the impasse against the three farm laws. The government remained firm on not repealing the contentious laws and is believed to have suggested a panel to take the matter forward for an amicable solution to the pressing problem.

The farmer groups also stuck to their demand for the repeal of the Acts. Camping at Delhi borders for over a month now, protesting farmers seem undeterred in the face of severe cold, rains and waterlogging, and firm on their demands for repeal of farm laws and legal backing

for MSP even as talks with the government remained inconclusive. The farmers had earlier threatened to intensify protest by shutting malls and petrol pumps if today's talks with the Centre fail. But the demands remain the same. With Lohri fast approaching an ultimate end to the agitation will come to a close with better counsel prevailing from the Central government.

Gundu Krishnamani, Coimbatore

Haste makes waste

THOUGH it's an emergency approval with lot of conditions, giving nod to public vaccination with Covaxin by the Indian regulatory authority is not convincing. As a pure indigenous product it deserves all support from the authorities. But it has not completed the mandatory phase three trials anywhere. So it is asked to follow clinical trial mode and is said to be a back up vaccine, which would be ready in case covishield is not adequate. In a haste to prove India is second to none in its successful research on Covid vaccine and to place with pride the indigenous one beside the abroad originated one, the regulatory authorities seem to have taken a chance, which is not right. The evidence for safety and efficacy of a drug should be beyond any doubt and it should be made public.

Dr D V G Sankararao, Nellimarla

LETTERS



Cricketers need to be cautious

IT is very heartening to hear that all the players involved in the restaurant episode have been tested negative for Covid-19 virus. Already Team India and its cricket administration crew are facing much problems with injuries to its bowlers like Mohammad Shami and Umesh Yadav, who are declared unfit to play rest of the series in Australia.

Virat Kohli who is on paternity leave, after the Melbourne test, is also not available for the remainder of

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- CM tells officials in Spandna that construction of houses will also start on the date
- Out of 17,000 YSR Jagannanna colonies, pattas have been distributed in 9,668 colonies so far
- Makes it clear that the colonies should have pleasant environment, not as slums

AMARAVATI

CHIEF Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy said the distribution of house site pattas and start of construction of houses programme was extended till January 20 and 39 per cent of house site pattas were distributed across the state.

During a review on distribution of pattas and launch of construction houses, as a part of Spandana video conference here on Tuesday, the Chief Minister said house site patta distribution was completed in 9,668 YSR Jagannanna Colonies out of around 17,000 colonies and the rest should be completed. He directed the district collectors to ensure pending cases related to house sites distribution are resolved as soon as possible and said the cases which were booked with malicious intention should be resolved expeditiously.

He said that governance is at its peak in the state as the state government has promised to allot house sites within 90 days to eligible beneficiaries who apply afresh. The government promised to resolve the applications seeking ration card and pension in 10 days, Aarogyasri cards in 20 days, and housing applications in 90 days. Every eligible beneficiary should receive house site, he said adding that the applications should be examined carefully and pattas distributed in fixed timeline.

He said the construction of houses in the layouts is one aspect while developing infrastructure in those layouts is another. Basic infrastructure like roads, electricity and drinking water should be provided. Other social infrastructure such as schools, anganwadi centres, parks, village, ward secretariats and vil-

Justice Aroop Goswami to take oath as AP HC CJ today

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

JUSTICE Aroop Goswami will take oath as the Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh High Court here at 10 am on Wednesday. The district administration made necessary arrangements at Kshetraiha Kalakshetram.

Born in Jorhat of Assam on March 11, 1961, Justice Goswami graduated from Cotton College under Guwahati University in 1981 and did his LLB from the Government Law College, Guwahati, in 1985. He enrolled as an advocate in Bar Councils of Assam, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Manipur, Tripura, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh in August 1985 and practiced mainly on civil, criminal, constitutional and service matters. He was appointed an Additional Judge of the Guwahati High Court in 2011 and became a permanent Judge in November 2012.

From September 6, 2018 to October 20, 2018 and again from May 24, 2019 to October 6, 2019, he was the Acting Chief Justice of the Guwahati HC. He was appointed the Chief Justice of HC of Sikkim on October 15, 2019.

The chief justice is also a sportsperson who played for Assam cricket team in Ranji Trophy and also represented the East Zone in Under-19, Under-22 and at the senior level.

Lyricist, dialogue writer Vennelakanti no more

Continued from P1

His father Vennelakanti Koteswara Rao, who was residing in Pappula Street area of Stone House Pet in Nellore city, worked as production chief of Pratibha Films owned by Nellorean Ghan-tasala Balaramaiah.

Balaramaiah was the producer and director who introduced Tollywood stalwarts such as Akkineni Nageswara Rao and many others. He was the grandfather of popular music director S Thaman. After completing his

Distribution of pattas extended up to Jan 20



Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy addressing District Collectors and SPs as part of Spandana at Tadeipalli on Tuesday

Spare no one in vandalism cases, AP officials told

AMARAVATI

CHIEF Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy directed the officials to be more vigilant in facing the 'political guerrilla warfare' in the state and take strict action against those involving in vandalism to hamper religious harmony.

The Chief Minister during the Spandana video conference with district collectors and SPs here on Tuesday, instructed the officials not to spare anyone whoever tries to disturb religious harmony in the state and conduct an in-depth investigation into the incidents of idol destructions and display information about them to the public. He criticised that some people under political influence are intentionally demolishing temples with no fear or devotion towards God while a section of media is constantly publicising and propagat-

ing them on social media. "Unable to face the government directly which is gaining popularity by welfare schemes, some elements out of sheer jealousy are resorting to such attacks to defame the government," the Chief Minister said and instructed the police to carefully assess the situation. Jagan Mohan Reddy made it clear that over 36,000 CC cameras were installed in temples, but still, the incidents were taking place in the remote areas at late hours when no one was around, especially in private temples owned by political leaders. "In fact, there has never been a situation like this before. In these circumstances, the police have to take stern action, get into the details without sparing anyone," said the Chief Minister stressing to ensure that no one would dare to repeat these incidents in future.

phere, roads should be built in innovative way, elevation should be good and innovative methods should be applied in setting up street lights and electric poles, he said adding that precautions should be taken while constructing colonies to ensure they turn out to be beautiful colonies and not slums.

Panchayat raj minister Ped-

Road repair tenders to be finalised on Jan 10

AMARAVATI

CHIEF Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy said the tenders for road repairs with a cost of Rs 560 crore will be finalised by January 10 and the second round of Amma Vodi scheme will be implemented on January 11.

Addressing Spandana video conference, the Chief Minister said the state government was focusing on repairing roads at a cost of Rs 2,000 crore. He said Amma Vodi date has been changed to January 11. The beneficiaries' lists will be displayed in every village and ward secretariats from December 21. The schedule of schools' reopening, taking Central government guidelines into consideration, will also be announced on the same day.

The Chief Minister said the Nadu-Nedu works in schools should be completed by February. Collectors and joint collectors should pay attention and regularly monitor the progress of the works. He said land acquisition should be completed for all the Anganwadi centers pending construction. Anganwadi centers will be converted into pre-primary schools. He praised collector of West Godavari district for completing the identification of required sites for Anganwadi centers.

direddy Ramachandra Reddy, municipal and urban development minister Botcha Satyanarayana, education minister Aadimulapu Suresh, housing minister Cherukuvada Sri Ranganadha Raju and officials were present.



Somu Veerajulu being arrested in Vizianagaram on his way to reach Ramateertham on Tuesday

and arrested him along with party cadres and sent them to I Town police station. Similarly, R Pavani, district president of BJP, was also stopped and sent to police station at Nellimarla. Madhav was detained and sent to Gurla police station.

Police imposed Section 30 at Ramateertham surroundings and are filming every movement of the people and political leaders with drone cameras. All the routes leading towards Ramateertham were barricaded and every person is being thoroughly checked.

Later, Veerajulu speaking to media all the governments that ruled the state so far have considered the Hindu temples as sources of income but have not concentrated on security aspect. "Even this government is giving importance to some religious but ignoring Hindus. All these inci-

dents of vandalism are happening due to inefficiently of the government but we, the BJP, will protect the Hindu temples. Endowments minister should step down for all these atrocities regarding temples," he said.

The BJP state chief said TDP was seeing all these incidents in a political point of view but they were looking at them in Hindu perspective.

"I seriously condemn the state government's act for restraining the leaders of BJP and its ally Jana Sena, from marching towards Ramateertham temple. This is an example of the state government's cowardice," he said.

He alleged that the YSRCP had colluded with TDP national president N Chandrababu Naidu, which is evident from the way he and Rajya Sabha MP V Vijayasai Reddy were accompanied to the temple by the police.

WHAT EMPLOYEES WANT FROM UNION BUDGET?

As Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is preparing the Union Budget-2021 amid the crisis sparked by pandemic and resultant financial slowdown, *The Hans India* spoke to employees on their expectation from the Budget. Many employees, mainly from the public sector, are almost unanimous in their demand for increase in Income Tax slabs and reduction in tax rates to provide a relief to the middle class.

The Centre should consider increasing the tax slabs and also bring down the tax rate by 5 per cent making the maximum slab rate at 25 per cent keeping the inflation in view as a solace to the common man. The Centre has to increase the deduction limit for medical insurance premium under Section 80D from Rs 25,000 to at least Rs 50,000 for self and family, and for senior citizens, dependent parents from Rs 50,000 to at least Rs 75,000. Need to reintroduce the deduction for investment in infrastructure bonds up to Rs 50,000. Dr Kota Neela Manikanta, assistant professor, Vikrama Simhapuri University



Income tax slabs should be increased for a relief to lower and middle-income groups. Section 80c limit should be enhanced from 1.50 lakh to Rs 2.50 lakh. Reduction in long-term capital gain tax should be fixed from 10 per cent to 5 per cent. Tax should be exempted up to 50,000 interest earned on deposits held at banks which will increase deposits in banks. Garlapati Harish Kumar, manager, Indian Bank, Narayanareddypet, Nellore



Some incentives for the welfare of the Teachers should be incorporated into the Union Budget. The allocation for education sector should be increased, National Education Policy 2020 should be withdrawn, two cents of land should be allotted to teachers at the time of retirement if they don't have any land. They should also be given risk allowance, the permanent fund for supporting the girlchild of the teachers should be set up and schoolchildren should be provided with breakfast from the Central funds. Income tax exemption for teachers should be raised considered up to 2 lakh and special TA provision and permission for visiting Parliament should be ensured for the teachers. K Venkateswara Rao, general secretary, AP Teachers Federation, Nellore



With regard to top-up second phase of housing loans, the existing 30 per cent income tax rebate should be enhanced to 70 per cent for the benefit of employees, who takes housing loans. Because of existing 30 per cent rebate, the employees are facing problems. The salaries sections are also expecting other relief measures in the ensuing budget. P V B Ramana Rao, municipal corporation employee, Rajamahendravaram



Savings limit should be increased at least to Rs 3 lakh from the existing Rs 1.50 lakh in I-T, as the present limit is not enough. At the same time, there is a need to reduce income tax rate from the existing 10 to 15 per cent, which is burdening the employees and in March, the entire salaries of employees are deducted as income tax. R C H Venkata Rao, Gazetted Librarian, Gowthami Regional Library.



Middle class and the poor are expecting a lot from the forthcoming Union Budget. Centre should announce measures for the benefit of poor and middle class people, instead of rich and corporates. Last year, budget disappointed the two sections. K Satyanarayana, vice-principal, Rajamahendri Degree and PG College for Women.



Around 75 per cent of state and Central government employees will file income tax returns every year. It is no wonder that all such employees will eagerly expect maximum relaxation in Income tax deduction. I appeal to the Central Finance Minister to hike the income limit at least up to Rs 10 lakh this year. N Udaya Kumar, secretary, Zilla Grandhalaya Samstha, Chittoor.



The Centre should consider enhancing the savings limit eligible for income tax rebate. Now it is Rs 1.50 lakh and if hiked to Rs 2.50, lakh, it will give much relief to salaried class. Unlike western countries, it is the saving that help the economy stabilise and also coming to the rescue of people in India in difficult times like the pandemic in India. Vijay Simha Reddy, government employee, Tirupati



Central government needs to provide more benefits in the upcoming Budget to employees who are paying taxes without default. Sops are required for employees for availing loans through banks for house construction, purchase, etc., by reducing interest rates and providing subsidy which will help middle class employees. As medical expenses have increased, employees required a special health scheme in the Union Budget through government insurance companies. Pydi Srirama Murthy, government teacher, Srikakulam.



Income tax slabs must be revised in the current inflation atmosphere as prices of all services and goods are in increasing. Tax exemption limit must be enhanced to Rs 10 lakh from the present Rs 5 lakh. Tax must not cross five per cent up to Rs 20 lakh and 10 per cent tax can be imposed up to Rs 30 lakh annual income. These three measures will be provide more relief to the employees working in both government and corporate sectors. G Vasanthi, assistant professor, private engineering college, Tekkali.



SII, Bharat Biotech pledge for smooth roll-out of vaccines

Continued from P1

"We are fully aware of the importance of vaccines for the people and countries alike, we hereby communicate our joint pledge to provide global access for our Covid-19 vaccines," the statement said.

"Both companies respect the great work being carried out by each other and put behind us the miscommunication and misun-

derstanding caused during the past week. We are fully aware of the importance of vaccines for people and countries alike, we hereby communicate our joint pledge to provide global access for our Covid-19 vaccines," they said in the joint statement. There had been some allegations by Bharat Biotech on Monday blaming Serum Institute and the quality of trials. They said, the more impor-

tant task in front of them is saving the lives and livelihoods of populations in India and the world.

Now that two Covid-19 vaccines have been issued EUA (emergency use authorisation) in India, the focus is on manufacturing, supply and distribution, such that populations that need it the most receive high quality, safe and efficacious vaccines.

Delhi gets rains for 3rd day on the trot

Continued from P1

Clouds trap some of the outgoing infrared radiation and radiate it back downward, warming the ground.

The weather department said Delhi may witness light to moderate rain, and thunderstorms with winds gusting up to 30 kmph during the day. A hailstorm is also predicted in parts of the capital. The rains, under the influence of a strong Western Disturbance, come on the back of a 'severe' cold wave that gripped Delhi in the run-

up to the New Year. On Friday, the mercury plummeted to 1.1 degrees Celsius, the lowest in 15 years, and "very dense" fog lowered visibility to "zero" metres. On Sunday, intense rains, thunder and lightning lashed the city. The Safdarjung Observatory recorded 39.9 mm rainfall between 8:30 am on Saturday and 2:30 pm on Sunday. The Western Disturbance is causing widespread snowfall in the hills. Once it withdraws, the mercury will fall again to 4 to 5 degrees Celsius, the official said.

Union Budget on Feb 1

Continued from P1

The government is willing to have the next session of Parliament at the earliest. It would be appropriate to have the Budget Session, 2021 in January, keeping in mind the unprecedented circumstances created by Covid-19 pandemic (sic)," the letter read.

The Congress had, however, said that it was not consulted and that the Winter Session was cancelled by the Centre to avoid questions on the ongoing farmers' protest against three central laws. "We wanted to raise the farmers' issues in Parliament and wanted a solution. The way the farmers are protesting in the cold is not good for the country's image," Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chaudhary said.

TODAY'S QUOTE

Govt will make India mfg powerhouse

“The central government is taking requisite steps to make India a powerhouse for manufacturing and exports. Now, the manufacturing sector will be broad based. We are expanding the domestic manufacturing base and diversifying international trade. Nature of global economy has changed.”


— **Anurag Thakur, Minister of State for Finance**



ASPIRATIONAL DIST

Jharkhand's Ramgarh tops the list

RAMGARH in Jharkhand has topped the list of aspirational districts ranked by the government think tank Niti Aayog in November 2020. Yadgir (Karnataka), Gadchiroli (Maharashtra) have been placed at the second and third positions, respectively. Dumka and Sahibganj of Jharkhand have been ranked at fourth and fifth positions, respectively.

FOREX (buy rates in ₹)			
US Dollar	77.57	South	
Euro	94.37	African Rand	5.66
UAE Dirham	21.91	Hong Kong Dollar	10.85
Thai Baht	2.81	Japanese Yen	0.82
British Pound	103.41	New Zealand Dollar	55.44
Australian Dollar	59.31	Saudi Riyal	21.45
Canadian Dollar	60.33	Swedish Krona	10.26
Swiss Franc	86.48	Singapore Dollar	58.28

DELHI WEDNESDAY 6 JANUARY 2021

BIZ BRIEFS

Olectra declared L-1 bidder

OLECTRA Greentech announced that as on date Evey Trans Private Limited (EVEY) has been declared as L-1 (least quoted) bidder for another 350 electric buses from one of the State government undertakings. The tender for 350 buses is for the supply of the electric buses on gross cost contract (GCC) / OPEX model basis for a period in the range of 10-12 years. “Once Letter of Award is received by EVEY for 350 buses, it shall procure these electric Buses from the Olectra Greentech Limited. Value of this tender is approximately Rs 700 crore. The transactions between the company and EVEY are to be considered as related party transactions,” Olectra said.

Oyo releases Travelopedia

OYO Hotels & Homes released its third annual year-end travel index - Oyo Travelopedia 2020 on Tuesday. According to the index, Hyderabad emerged as one of the top choices for business travellers. December 2020 saw the most demand. The company witnessed a single user staying at Oyo hotels 128 times in 2020 and another spent nearly 50,000 seconds. Its branch in Shahjahanpur and another in Chennai record an average occupancy of 100 per cent. Approx 73,000 repatriated Indians completed their institutional quarantine at Oyo across India. Rohit Kapoor, CEO, Oyo Hotels & Homes, India & South Asia, said, “We’ve all heard the saying ‘safe travels’ hundreds of times, but today, we understand the true value of those two words. The findings of Oyo’s Travelopedia is a testament that India is ready to travel again and we are here along with our partners ready to welcome them again.”

Inbound M&As fall to \$73.6 bn

DESPITE Reliance Group closing a slew of equity divestments in its telecom and retail arms to the tune of \$23 billion in 2020, the overall inbound M&As failed to notch up the 2019 tally with the value falling 7 per cent to \$ 73.6 billion last year, according to a report. Last year, outbound M&As touched \$ 4.4 billion, up 58.4 per cent compared to 2019 and over 80 per cent of the money landed in US assets, according to a tally of Mergers & Acquisitions (M&As) by global financial markets data provider Refinitiv. Overall inbound deals faltered due to the pandemic, pulling down the deal value by 7 per cent and down 11.5 per cent in volume over 2019. With \$ 73.6 billion worth inbound deals, M&A value last year was below the all-time high.

BSE-listed cos' market cap

MARKET capitalisation of all listed companies on BSE zoomed to a record high of Rs 192.87 lakh crore on Tuesday helped by continuous rally in the equity market. Markets recorded tenth straight session of gains on Tuesday. During this period, the BSE Sensex jumped 2,883.82 points or 6.33 per cent and closed at 48,437.78 on Tuesday. The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms jumped a whopping Rs 14,08,195.89 crore to a record Rs 1,92,87,518.94 crore in 10 trading sessions. “Continued improvement in Covid recovery rates along with likely commencement of vaccination drive shortly and sustained improvement in key economic data defied weak global markets,” Binod Modi, Head Strategy at Reliance Securities.

India seeing V-shaped GDP recovery: FinMin

The improvement began from June with the gradual easing of lockdown

NEW DELHI

INDIA has been witnessing a ‘V-shaped’ recovery since June with the gradual easing of restrictions on economic activities, said a Finance Ministry report.

“The sustained improvement in high frequency indicators ignite optimism of an improved performance in second half of the year,” it said.

The Monthly Economic Recovery for December by the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) also noted that the impending vaccination is set to spur the momentum in economic activity globally.

“The effective management of Covid-19 spread despite the festive season and onset of winter season, combined with sustained improvement in high frequency indicators and V-shaped recovery along with easing of lockdown restrictions distinguish Indian economy as one riding against the Covid-wave,” it said.

The agricultural sector remains the bright spot of Indian economy, with healthy year-on-year growth of 2.9 per cent in rabi sowing, accelerating tractor

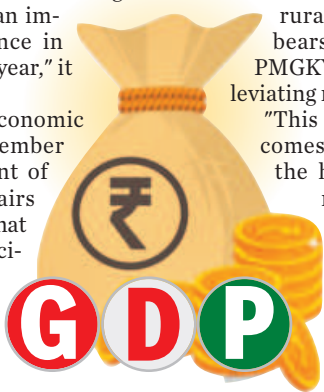
sales, and reservoirs’ live storage at 122 per cent of decadal average.

As per the DEA report, rise in minimum support prices accompanied by record procurement, and accelerated wage employment generation through MGN-

REGS, bodes well for rural incomes and bears testimony to PMGKY’s success in alleviating rural distress.

“This rise in rural incomes is mirrored in the healthy, though moderated, sales in passenger vehicles, two and three wheelers and tractor, and a rebound in vehicle registrations for the first time after March 2020,” it added.

Further, the industrial production growth ran parallel to the festive fervour of October and rose to an eight-month high, led by manufacturing and electricity sector. The core industries registered slight decline in November driven by natural gas and cement, while coal production, electricity and fertilizers’ production registered growth. (IANS)



Demand picking up significantly: PHDCCI

NEW DELHI

THE business sentiment and demand momentum in India has improved tremendously since September 2020, according to PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry’s Economy GPS Index.

A report by the industry body said that as a result of recovering investor sentiment, the ‘PHDCCI Economy GPS Index’ stood at record 124.1 in December 2020.

It noted that this is the all-time high value of PHDCCI Economy GPS Index as measured across the last three financial years, indicating an improvement by 14.9 with regard to its value in December 2019.

“The analysis of the movement of PHDCCI Economy GPS Index over the years shows that there has been tremendous improvement in the business and demand momentum in the economy since September 2020,” it said.



This higher trend of PHDCCI Economy GPS Index reinforces the positive outlook for the Indian economy and further the PHDCCI’s view that the economy is in a V-shaped recovery, as per the report.

The industry body has developed a composite index of three lead economic and business indicators with base year at 2018-19 with base index at 100, which can be used to measure the broad economic and business activity.

The index is based on the monthly value of three high frequency indicators - GST collection, passenger vehicle sales, and daily average of Sensex. (IANS)

Audi A4 new version drives into India

NEW DELHI

GERMAN luxury car maker Audi on Tuesday launched the new version of its popular sedan A4 in India with prices starting at Rs 42.34 lakh (ex-showroom).

The new fifth generation Audi A4 has a new design and is equipped with a 2.0-litre petrol engine that generates 190 hp of power. It can accelerate from 0 to 100kph in 7.3 seconds and can attain a top speed of 241 km/hr, the company said in a statement.

Commenting on the launch, Audi India head Balbir Singh Dhillon said, “we are extremely happy to start the year with the launch of the latest version of one of our best-sellers, the new Audi A4.” In its fifth generation, the new Audi A4 is equipped with the latest technology and sets a benchmark with the features on offer, he said adding, “the mid-size luxury sedan segment is competitive and we are confident that the new Audi A4 will be a game-



changer in the arena”.

The new Audi A4 is available in two trims - Premium Plus and Technology, with customisable interior features. It is also equipped with features such as keyless entry, gesture-based boot lid opening, power front seats with memory feature for driver’s seat and three zone climate control. The car also has a 12V mild hybrid system that minimises fuel consumption.

The system comes with a belt alternator starter that shuts off the engine while coasting up to 10 seconds between 55 kmph and 160 kmph. On the road ahead for the new year, Dhillon said, “2021 will see a host of new launches and we are very excited with what lies ahead. With a well-established petrol strategy in place, we are now geared to kick-off our EV strategy in India.”

Practically raises \$4 mn in a pre-Series-B round

HYDERABAD

PRACTICALLY, a product of 3rdFlix Visual Effects Pvt Ltd, on Tuesday announced that it has raised \$4 million in a pre-Series-B round.

The round was led by Siana Capital, a deep tech investor, with participation from existing investors YourNest Venture Capital and Exfinity Ventures. The company had previously raised Series-A funding of \$5 million in 2019. The funds will be invested in expanding the operations of Practically, the Hyderabad-based start-up announced. Practically is an intelligent, interactive and immersive learning app for students of classes 6-12 with a focus on STEM learning. It is the only experiential learning app that brings learning alive through immersive videos, interactive augmented reality and 3D simulations.

“This pre-Series B funding showcases the extreme faith our investors have reposed on Practically,” said Subbarao Sidabattula, Founder & CEO, Practically.

Traders’ body seeks lower tax on partnership firms

KOLKATA

OWNERS of small businesses have demanded imposition of a special tax of five per cent on online retailers and lowering of income tax rate to 22 per cent on partnership and LLP firms in the next Union budget to help them survive, a traders’ body said on Tuesday. Traders and retailers, who have been going through a tough time in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, contribute about 22 per cent to the country’s GDP

and provides employment to lakhs of people, Federation of All India Vyapar Mandal (FAIVM) claimed in its budget proposal to the Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. “The traders’ community of India has been in a miserable condition after the demonetisation and the complex GST system were implemented. The growing



The traders’ body also claimed that the online retailers have experienced a surge in their revenue and reported sales of \$ 4.1 billion in a week of October 2020 during the festive season

of survival of nation’s brick and mortar trade. So it is very important to impose a special tax of five per cent on the total business of online retailers,” FAIVM general secretary V K Bansal said. The traders’ body also claimed that the online retailers have experienced a surge in their revenue and reported sales of \$ 4.1 billion in a week of October 2020 during the festive season. “An in-

come tax on partnership firms and limited liability partnership entities should be levied at 22 per cent, instead of 30 per cent at present. This will bring it at par with income tax applicable to corporate,” he said. The FAIVM has also requested the government to offer an interest subvention scheme for loans being provided to traders so that they can continue their businesses under the present circumstances. Service sector retail businesses should also be given all benefits which are being extended to MSMEs, including the issuance of Udhog Adhaar. (PTI)

Bezos tops list of richest charitable gifts

SILVER SPRING (US)

THE world’s richest person made the single-largest charitable contribution in 2020, according to The Chronicle of Philanthropy’s annual list of top donations, a \$10 billion gift that is intended to help fight climate change.

Amazon’s founder and CEO, Jeff Bezos, whose “real-time” worth, according to Forbes magazine estimates is roughly at \$188 billion, used the contribution to launch his Bezos Earth Fund. The fund, which supports non-profits involved in the climate crisis, has paid out \$790 million to 16 groups so far, according to the Chronicle.

Setting aside Bezos’ whopping gift, though, the sum total of the top 10 donations last year - \$2.6 billion - was the lowest since 2011, even as many billionaires vastly increased their wealth in the stock market rally that catapulted technology shares in particular last year.

Donates \$10 billion to help fight climate change

According to the left-leaning Americans for Tax Fairness and the Institute for Policy Studies, from March 18 through Dec. 7, 2020, Bezos’ wealth surged by 63 per cent, from \$113 billion to \$184 billion.

Phil Knight, who with his wife, Penny, made the second- and third-largest donations last year according to the Chronicle, increased his wealth by about 77 per cent over the same March-to-December period.

Knight and his wife gave more than \$900 million to the Knight Foundation and \$300 million to the University of Oregon. Fred Kummer, founder of construction company HBE Corporation, and his wife,

June, gave \$300 to establish a foundation to support programs at the Missouri University of Science and Technology.

Facebook’s founder Mark Zuckerberg and his wife, Priscilla Chan, delivered the fourth-largest donation on the Chronicle’s list: A \$250 million gift to the Center for Tech and Civic Life, which worked on voting security issues in the 2020 election.

Zuckerberg, whose wealth nearly doubled to \$105 billion in the March-to-December period according to Americans for Tax Fairness and the Institute for Policy Studies, has been widely criticized and been called to testify before Congress for his company’s handling of disinforma-

tion in the runup to the 2020 presidential election.

In the fifth spot was Arthur Blank, co-founder of Home Depot, who gave \$200 million through his foundation to Children’s healthcare of Atlanta to build a new hospital.

Bezos and the Zuckerbergs made up the next spots on last year’s top 10 list, with \$100 million donations — Bezos for Feeding America to aid food banks across the country and the Zuckerbergs to the same election security group. They were followed by Stephen Ross, founder of real estate firm Related Companies; David Roux, co-founder of Silver Lake Partners, a private-equity firm, and his wife, Barbara; George and Renee Karfunkel, real-estate investors; Bernard Marcus, co-founder of Home Depot; and Charles Schwab, founder of Schwab Financial Servi ces, and his wife, Helen.



Toll collection through FASTag up by ₹201 cr

NEW DELHI

TOLL collection in December 2020 through FASTags reached Rs 2,303.79 crore in December 2020, recording an increase of Rs 201 crore over the preceding month, the NHAI said on Tuesday.

Similarly, toll transactions through FASTags recorded significant growth of 1.35 crore in December 2020. The increased revenue comes after the government announced mandatory rollout of FASTag from January 1, 2021, though it has allowed hybrid lanes on National Highways till February 15 to avoid inconvenience to people.

“Toll collection through FASTag in December increased significantly by over Rs 201 crore to Rs 2,303.79 crore, as against Rs. 2,102 crores in November 2020,” the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) said in a statement.



The monthly transactions through FASTag increased significantly by 1.35 crore in December. “FASTag recorded 13.84 crore transactions in December, which is 10.83 per cent more as compared to 12.48 crore transactions in November 2020. Similarly, With more than 2.30 crore FASTag users, it contributes over 75 percent of the total toll collection,” the statement said. It said the dedicated efforts of NHAI, receptive approach of highways users and other stakeholders has led to stupendous increase in adoption of digital mode of transaction at toll plazas.

Complete promotions by Jan-end, CS tells Collectors

- Asks them to take up compassionate appointments without any delay
- Somesh Kumar holds video conference on promotions, compassionate appointments, revenue-related issues, etc

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

CHIEF Secretary Somesh Kumar on Tuesday directed all the Collectors to complete promotions of all cadres working in the districts by January 31 and to take up the compassionate appointments without any delay.

He held a video conference from BRKR Bhavan with all district collectors on promotions of all categories, compassionate appointments, Revenue-related issues, 'Rythu Vedika', 'Palle Prakruti vanams', 'Vaikunta Dhamam', segregation sheds, village nurseries, MGNREGS and drying platforms. The Chief Secretary informed



Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar holding a video conference with district collectors on Tuesday

the collectors that Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao had given directions to complete the process of promotions on a priority basis. He directed them to conduct a meeting at district level with all departments to ascertain the number of vacancies to be filled through promotions. He asked the DCs to conduct meetings every Monday and complete the process of promotions and compassionate appointments by January 24.

Somesh Kumar congratulated all officials concerned for crossing 14.10 crore mandays under MGNREGA. He also advised the collectors to make plans for next three months. He asked them to

complete the construction of 'Rythu Vedikas', 'Palle Prakruti Vanams', 'Vaikunta Dhamams', drying platforms, segregation sheds and plantation in nurseries on a priority basis. Ramakrishna Rao, Principal Secretary, Finance, Vikas Raj, Principal Secretary, GAD, Sandeep Kumar Sultania, Secretary, Panchayat Raj & Rural Development, S A M Rizvi, Secretary, Health & Family Welfare, Seshadri, CIG/Secretary to CM, Siva Shankar, senior consultant, Raghunandan Rao, Commissioner, PR & RD, G T Venkateshwar Rao, MD/TSTS, and other officials were present.

Fire mishap in Kukatpally

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

FIRE broke out in a TV repairing shop at Kukatpally here on Tuesday afternoon. Short circuit is stated to be the cause for the accident. As flames went up, there was panic among the locals. Fire fighting staff reached the spot on receipt of information and doused the fire. There was no loss of life. As a precautionary measure, police closed the nearby shops.

Police foil BJP corporators' protest bid

HYDERABAD

THE city police on Tuesday foiled the attempts of newly-elected BJP corporators who tried to barge into Pragati Bhavan alleging that the government was delaying in formation of GHMC council. The corporators also alleged that though it has been a month, the government was purposely delaying the formation of GHMC council. However, their attempts were foiled by the police who were deployed in huge numbers and the protestors were taken away in a DCM vehicle to different police stations.

CISF constable from Peddapalli shoots self in Madhya Pradesh

PEDDAPALLI

A CISF constable, Laisatti Srinivas (30), shot himself to death in Madhya Pradesh on Monday while on duty. Srinivas, his wife Swathi and nine-month-old son Riyan were staying in Madhya Pradesh.

Srinivas is suspected to have committed suicide after having a quarrel with his wife over some issue. Rajesham, the victim's father, broke down after learning of his only son's sudden demise.

Srinivas visited his native place for Diwali festival with his wife and son and returned after the festival.

Breach on canal bund creates flutter

HANS NEWS SERVICE
WARANGAL

THE breach that developed on Kakatiya Canal of Sri Ram Sagar Project (SRSP) bund threatened to submerge the neighbourhood of Gundla Singaram village on Tuesday. The timely response from the irrigation officials, who lifted the gates and diverted the waters to the main canal, averted the threat, but not before the floodwaters created flutter among the residents of Indiramma Colony.

Floodwaters started to flow into Indiramma colony after the canal bund developed a crater. The officials had a tough time in opening the gates, however, they managed to lift them.

The residents of Indiramma Colony said that it was not the first time they were facing such a situation.

They said that poor quality of work led to the breach. Even though modernisation of the canal took place a year ago, maintenance of the canal was poor, the locals said. They

also alleged that canal bund had weakened due to illegal constructions near the canal.

SRSP, Warangal, Deputy Executive Engineer (DEE), Balakrishna Kalakuntla said that due to the movement of heavy vehicles, a part of canal bund caved in.

An earthmover was pressed into service to repair the damage, he added.

Meanwhile, both the Ministers Errabelli Dayakar Rao and Satyavathi Rathod directed the irrigation officials to address the problem with immediate effect.

KTR invited for WEF summit

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

STATE IT and Industries Minister KT Rama Rao has received invitation from the World Economic Forum (WEF) for its Global Technology Governance Summit in Japan from April 5 to 7 this year.

Inviting KTR to the summit, WEF president Børge Brende in the letter said "under your forward-looking leadership, Telangana has been at the forefront of using emerging technologies for societal benefits. Thank you for your support of the AI4AI: (Artificial Intelligence for Agriculture Innovation) and G20 Smart Cities Alliance. It will be a pleasure to work together to further deepen



their impact."

"The emerging technologies of the fourth industrial revolution have a vital role to play as countries recover from and rebuild following the Covid pandemic," he added.

The GTG summit will build on the forum's pioneering work on global technology governance and bring stakeholders from the government, business and civil society to identify how to harness and regulate the technologies to accelerate growth, encourage innovation, and build resilience.

The summit will also aim to help scale public-private initiatives to nurture the development of fourth industrial revolution technologies while mitigating their risks.

WHAT WOMEN WANT FROM UNION BUDGET?

As the Union government intensified its preparation to present the budget 2020-2021 on February 1, women from several walks of life in the State have come forward to demand and address their grievances by earmarking sufficient funds in the new budget outlay

The Central government needs to focus on women entrepreneurship by including incentives and freebies in its Budget. The Centre has to give impetus on skill development on par with industry-needs in a planned manner.



Shivani Basiri, Budding Entrepreneur, Hanamkonda

It's time to give priority to the women entrepreneurs in the Union budget. Besides offering loans, the Centre should also think about allotting sites for the industries. Tax benefits and other incentives may lure women to enter business.



Srilatha K, MBA Faculty

Central government have to give top priority to women who engaged in self employment by providing loans, skill development programmes, motivation seminars, marketing techniques to get self sufficiency



Cheedella Manjula, Grocery shop owner, Nalgonda

People are not able to pay the rents of shops and electricity bills since the announcement of lockdown since March 2020, in view of this Central government need to provide interest free repay loans ranging from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 3 lakh for a period of 2 to 3 years to come out from the economic crisis and to run businesses smoothly.



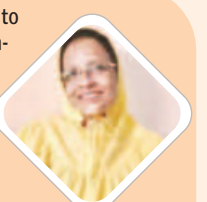
Pilli Anjamma, shop owner, Nalgonda

the government should consider giving special reliefs to businessmen and taxpayers. There should be schemes to encourage women entrepreneurs, Make in India projects and more importantly savings schemes for entrepreneurs and homemakers to ensure financial independence.



Sudha kimtee, Chief secretary JITO Ladies Wing, Hyderabad

I would personally like to see a focus on women entrepreneurs having more scope to flourish and women benefiting equally from India's economic growth. There should be special allowances for women which should be easily accessible, the start-up regulations should be simplified.



Shehrebanu, Author, Hyderabad

I am a freelance writer, author, blogger, and Youtuber. What I'm hoping from this year's budget is an increase in the exemption limit, hopefully to around Rs 5,00,000. It would be a blessing for people like me!



Sonali Dabade, Freelance writer, Hyderabad

I am expecting a tax benefit on interest payment of the home loan in the upcoming budget. For the first-time buyer of a home, the government has extended the tax benefit available to March on interest payment of the home loan but it would be helpful for a common man if the government extended it for more a year taking the pandemic into consideration.



K Akhila, Entrepreneur

We expect a reduction in basic custom duty on the raw materials like anthracite coal, metallurgical coke, coking coal, and graphite electrode in the upcoming Budget. The non-availability of these items in good quality and quantity hinders the growth of the steel industry and pushes the lives of steel industry workers behind.



CH Gowthami, Entrepreneur

The expectations from the Union budget will be reliefs for the State government. The State governments have almost worked like front line warriors for its citizens. They have faced the lash of the pandemic if not more than almost at par with the Centre. Hence all State governments are expecting more grants and subsidies from the Centre.



Shubhra Maheshwari, Chartered Accountant Vice Chairperson, FICCI Ladies Organisation, Hyderabad

We can expect more funds for the development for the women schemes from the Union budget. Giving 70% loans with subsidy for the small scale industries and food processing industries for the SC, ST and BC women. We have a big hope on NDA government giving the priority to women

-CH Vijaya, Khammam

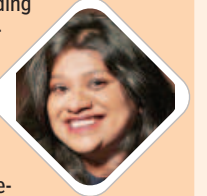
Women expect more friendly and supportive budget to be presented by women Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman. The government should support more in education and skill enhancement area for empowering women.

Ch Shobha Rani, Asst prof, GDCW, Karimnagar

We are expecting a new budget which allots more individual loans for women. The government has given work to women organisations under the NREGS works not involved in State government.

Mandapally Uma, Social worker, Kothagudem

In order to revive the economy, the government has to concentrate and invest over the labor oriented sectors such as agriculture, construction, infrastructure. The nation has to come up with higher spending budget compared to the past years to not just revive but to repair the damage caused and also to strengthen the economic system for the future.



Sowjanya Kothawar, principal architect, Vivogue Design Studio

CENTRE, STATE PULLED UP FOR NON-ROLL OUT OF EWS QUOTA

Court grants four weeks' time to file counter affidavits

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

THE High Court on Tuesday issued notices to the State and the Central governments directing them to file a counter affidavit with regard to non-roll out of reservations to Economically Weaker Sections in the State.

The High Court bench comprising of Justices A Rajasekhara Reddy and Bollam Vijayendra Reddy heard the plea filed by A Bhasker Raj, president, Telangana OBC Morcha and Anand Gupta, who alleged non-implementation of 10 per cent of reservation to EWS candidates in the State in educational institutions and jobs in the government sector.

Petitioner's counsel T Rajasekhara informed the court that already the State had been implementing 10 per cent reservations in medical admissions, but was not extending the same to other courses such as engineering etc. He stated that though the State was issuing EWS certificates and en-

abling students get admissions in other States, the same was not practiced in Telangana.

Justice Rajasekhara Reddy queried with Government Pleader P Nageshwar Rao and sought to know why the State government was not implementing the EWS



LEGAL NOTES

reservation policy in the State, and by what time it intended to implement.

Justice Rajasekhara Reddy issued notices to the Union government, represented by Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment; Chief Secretary, Telangana; Special Chief Secretary, Education; Principal Secretary, GAD and Principal Secretary, Social Welfare and directed to file the counter affidavits within four weeks.

HC hears Cong plea against flood relief distribution by TRS govt

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

THE High Court division bench comprising Justice A Rajasekhara Reddy and Justice Bollam Vijayendra Reddy on Tuesday heard a public interest litigation filed by Dr Dasoju Sravan, spokesperson, AICC, urging to inquire into the alleged excesses perpetrated by the MLAs, corporators and ward-level leaders of the ruling Telangana Rashtra Samithi while disbursing amounts intended for flood relief measures. Further, Sravan alleged that the State government has been blatantly violating the GO and resorting to illegal and immoral practices instead of distributing the promised flood relief amount of Rs 10,000 through cheques to identified beneficiaries. He alleged cash was being distributed arbitrarily in many cases with just Rs 2,000 to Rs 3,000 being

- Accuses the TRS leaders of resorting to illegal and immoral methods of handing over flood relief money to the beneficiaries
- HC directs State government to file counter affidavit; to hear the matter after Sankranti vacation

handed over to victims, which was illegal. In his plea, Sravan urged the court to direct the Chief Secretary of the State to apprise the court of the procedure formulated by the State government pertaining to disbursement of funds earmarked for flood relief victims. The High Court issued notices to the State government to file counter affidavit and directed the Registry to list the matter after Sankranti vacation.

JUBILEE HILLS HOUSING SOCIETY ELECTIONS

High Court orders to hold polls within 2 months

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

THE High Court division bench headed by Justice MS Ramachandra Rao on Tuesday issued key directions on Jubilee Hills Housing Society elections.

Two writ petitions were filed seeking to direct the State government authorities

to conduct an impartial and free and fair election to the managing committee of the Jubilee Hills Co-operative Housing Society only after preparing/ finalising the voters list by including all the eligible members of the Society, including the petitioners herein by strictly following mandatory procedure envisaged under Telangana State Cooperative Societies

Act, 1964 and Telangana State Cooperative Societies Rules, 1964, particularly Rule 22 of TSCS Rules. Justice MS Ramachandra Rao directed to prepare and publish a new list with eligible voters and to complete the election process within two months. After the completion of two weeks from the date of publication, the High Court would receive any objections

and claims. The final voters list should be released after the final scrutiny by the Personnel In-Charge Committee and have to send the voters' list to the Telangana Registrar/ Co-operative Society.

The High Court has directed the Registrar Cooperative Societies to certify the changes if any in the list. The voters list approved by the Registrar should be submitted to the Personnel In-charge Committee/State Cooperative Election Authority. The High Court has directed to complete the election process within two months from Tuesday.

Shardul or Saini big question; Rohit set to replace Mayank

SYDNEY

THE Indian team management is weighing its options for the third pacer's slot with Shardul Thakur and Navdeep Saini in contention but Rohit Sharma is certain to replace Mayank Agarwal at the top of the order against Australia in the third Test starting here on Thursday.

While Agarwal's axing was only a matter of time after seven failures in last eight Test innings, the choice for the third pacer's slot has got a bit tricky with divergent opinions emerging on who could fit the role best in absence of an injured Umesh Yadav.

A few days back, Mumbai seamer and useful lower-order batsman Shardul Thakur was considered a favourite but it is learnt that there are some senior players, who feel that Saini, India's fastest bowler by a distance, could be used to unsettle the wobbly Australian batting line-up with his raw pace.

The Indian team had a net session at the overcast Sydney Cricket Ground



Rahul ruled out of last 2 Tests

SYDNEY: Right-handed batsman KL Rahul has been ruled out of the remaining two Tests of the ongoing four-match series against Australia and will fly home after he sprained his left wrist while batting in the nets at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

A statement from the Indian cricket board (BCCI) on Tuesday said, "KL Rahul sprained his left wrist while batting in the nets at the MCG during Team India's practice session on Saturday. The wicketkeeper-batsman will not be available for the remaining two Tests of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy as he will need about three weeks' time to recover completely and regain full strength."

"He will now return to India and head to the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru for further rehabilitation of his injury," the statement added. Though part of both the white ball and red ball squads, Rahul was kept on the bench for the first two Tests. He was likely to play the third Test starting Thursday, either in place of Mayank Agarwal as opener or instead of Hanuma Vihari in the middle-order.

His injury comes as another blow for Team India who have already been weakened by the absence of pacers Mohammed Shami and Umesh Yadav and regular skipper Virat Kohli.

mat appearance was in January, 2020 against Railways on a rank-turner at the Chepauk where Railways were all-out for 76 and 90 largely due to the exploits of spinners Ravichandran Ashwin and R Sai Kishore.

Natarajan bowled a total of 11 overs in that

India's captain, Ajinkya Rahane (center) talks with head coach Ravi Shastri as Indian players train in Sydney on Tuesday, ahead of their Test match against Australia starting on Thursday



New Zealand captain Kane Williamson celebrates on scoring yet another double century on Day Three of the second and final Test against Pakistan at Hagley Oval, Christchurch, New Zealand on Tuesday

CHRISTCHURCH

CAPTAIN Kane Williamson's purple patch with the bat continued on Tuesday as he scored yet another double century to put New Zealand on the ascendency in the ongoing second and final Test against Pakistan at the Hagley Oval.

Williamson's 238, along with 157 from Henry Nicholls and unbeaten 102 from Daryl Mitchell, helped the Black Caps declare their first innings on 659/6 in reply to Pakistan's 297 compiled on the first day of the Test match.

Resuming the third day at 286/3, the hosts swelled up their lead as Williamson and Nicholls shared a mammoth 369-run partnership for the fourth wicket, during the course of which Williamson scored his fourth double ton while Nicholls reached his seventh hundred.

However, the cherry on the top was the maiden Test hundred from Mitchell as he helped New Zealand take a 362-run lead.

After a superlative batting performance, New Zealand bowlers then came out hungry and preyed upon opener Shan Masood, who went for a duck after facing 25 deliveries. Right-arm fast bowler Kyle Jamieson accounted for his wicket and looked fierce in the couple of overs that he bowled before Stumps were called with Pakistan 8/1 on the scoreboard.

Abid Ali and Mohammad Abbas remained unbeaten at 7 and 1 respectively as the visitors still trail by 354 runs.

2ND TEST

BRIEF SCORES

Pakistan 297 and 8/1 at Stumps on Day Three (Abid Ali 7*, Mohammad Abbas 1*; Kyle Jamieson 1/1), trail by 354 runs, New Zealand 659/6 dec (Kane Williamson 238, Henry Nicholls 157; Mohammad Abbas 2/98).

South Africa cruise to 10-wicket win over Sri Lanka in 2nd Test

JOHANNESBURG

SOUTH Africa openers Aiden Markram and Dean Elgar helped the hosts to a dominant 10-wicket win over Sri Lanka in the second Test in Johannesburg after Lungi Ngidi and Lutho Sipamla helped the hosts dismiss the visitors for 211 runs on Day 3.

This left SA with a target of just 67 runs which Markram and Elgar chased down in just over 13 overs.

Sri Lanka started the day on an overnight total of 150/4. Captain Dimuth Karunaratne fell to Anrich Nortje shortly after scoring his ninth Test century. Sipamla and Ngidi then made quick work of the rest of the batting lineup to ensure that Sri Lanka were all out within the first session.

Elgar and Markram then got South Africa to 24/0 before Lunch was called. The pair completed the victory shortly after

resumption of play in the second session with Elgar ending the match on 31 off just 27 balls.

Proteas have thus completed a 2-0 whitewash over Sri Lanka in the series, having won the first Test by an innings and 45 runs. (IANS)

Brief scores: Sri Lanka 157 & 211 (Dimuth Karunaratne 103, Niroshan Dickwella 36; Lungi Ngidi 4/44) vs South Africa 302 & 67/0 (Aiden Markram 36 not out, Dean Elgar 31 not out; Asitha Fernando 0/20)

Telangana Cricket Association pick U-23 State Team probables

HYDERABAD: The Telangana Cricket Association (TCA) on Tuesday named the probables selected for the Under-23 State Team on the basis of the players performances in the recently concluded TCA

NAME (DISTRICT)	
1 K Ravi (Bhadradri Kothagudem)	18 B Sai Kumar (Adilabad)
2 K Raviteja (Bhadradri Kothagudem)	19 Ch Raju Yadav (Nalgonda)
3 Rajesh Bolle (Bhadradri Kothagudem)	20 Naga Pravarthan Naidu (Nalgonda)
4 Ramesh Rammi (Yadadri)	21 M Shankar (Nalgonda)
5 Akshay (Yadadri)	22 Nikhil Nakirekanti (Nalgonda)
6 Md Bhasha (Gadwal)	23 DSDK Praise (Nalgonda)
7 Bhavish Kumar (Warangal Urban)	24 Mahesh (Nirmal)
8 Saikumar (Warangal Urban)	25 S Ramu (Nirmal)
9 Manoj (Warangal Urban)	26 Yashwanth (Nirmal)
10 Aditya (Warangal Urban)	27 Md Feroz (Mahabub Nagar)
11 Sidhu (Warangal Urban)	28 Jagadeesh Chada (Karimnagar)
12 N Naveen Kumar (Medak)	29 Usmad (Suryapet)
13 Sumith Reddy (Kamareddy)	30 Avinash Kailas (Suryapet)
14 Sameer (Mulugu)	31 Manish (Suryapet)
15 Siddharth (Mulugu)	32 Raghu (Suryapet)
16 Y Vinay Kumar (Adilabad)	33 G Shashi Vardhan (Vikarabad)
17 J Ganga Prasad (Adilabad)	34 Kalyan Pawar (Vikarabad)
	35 Sai Abhinav (Warangal Rural)

Djokovic, Nadal to headline star-studded ATP Cup field

SYDNEY: Top ranked tennis players Novak Djokovic and Rafael Nadal will lead the field for the 2021 ATP Cup scheduled to be played at the Melbourne Park from February 1 to 5.

Djokovic's Serbia and Nadal's Spain will compete against Austria, Russia, Greece, Germany, Argentina, Italy, Japan, France, Canada and Australia in the 12-team competition, as per an ATP media release.

Qualification for the tournament is based on the ATP ranking of each country's top-ranked single player, while Australia qualifies by virtue of a host wildcard.

"Last year we launched the global tennis season with the inaugural ATP Cup. It was a huge success with both players and fans, and we are excited to present the second edition in Melbourne in 2021," said ATP Cup Tournament Director Tom Larner.

"The players are looking forward to stepping up and representing their countries again, and the field, including defending champions Serbia and finalists Spain, is strong. This is a format that shows off the passion of the players and we're expecting some spectacular tennis action," he added. (IANS)

East Bengal face FC Goa, look to keep momentum from 1st win

VASCO (Goa)

EAST Bengal started the new year by finally recording their first win in the Indian Super League (ISL), brushing aside Odisha FC. They will now be looking to show that the victory was not just a flash in the pan

as they prepare to face FC Goa at the Tilak Maidan Stadium, Vasco on Wednesday.

Both sides are set to clash for the first time and find themselves at opposite ends in the ISL table. East Bengal are placed second from bottom while Goa have jumped to third after late comeback victories over Jamshedpur and Hyderabad.

Goa will start favourites but with

the monkey finally off the back for East Bengal, Robbie Fowler's side will certainly fancy their chances.

"We want to win games," said Fowler, whose side has been unbeaten in the last three games. "The lads are in a better space now than what we were a few weeks ago. But like I said to them, we got to go out and play the way we can. If you can play the way you can, you will win games. We are not a million miles away. We've won a game but we won't get carried away. Likewise, when we lost a game early in the season, we

MATCH RESULT
Bengaluru FC lose to Mumbai City FC 1-3

weren't getting carried away then."

Fowler expects his team not just to nullify Goa's threat but also to cause them problems. "Goa will have a little bit of possession but it's up to our players to work hard. Hopefully, we'll put the ball in the back of the net and give Goa something to worry about. It's not all about what we can do to stop Goa but we've got a team to play, we've got games that we will try to win," he added. (IANS)

TODAY'S MATCH
SC East Bengal vs FC Goa
at Tilak Maidan Stadium 7.30pm

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