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WINDOWS



People watch the lava flow from an eruption of a volcano on the Reykjanes Peninsula in southwestern Iceland on Wednesday. Iceland's latest volcano eruption is still attracting crowds of people hoping to get close to the gentle lava flows

Recovering well after bypass surgery: **President Kovind**

NEW DELHI: President Ram Nath Kovind on Thursday said he is recovering well after his bypass sur-

gery and thanked doctors and caregivers. The president said he was touched by messages from citizens and leaders from across the country and abroad wishing him speedy recovery. "It's difficult to express in words my gratitude to you all!," Kovind said. Kovind, 75, had on Tuesday underwent a cardiac bypass surgery at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) here. "I've been recovering well after the bypass surgery, thanks to the amazing dedication of the doctors and caregivers. I'm touched by messages, from citizens and leaders from India and

abroad, wishing me speedy recovery. It's difficult to express in words my gratitude to you all!," the Rashtrapati Bhavan tweeted. Kovind had undergone a health check-up at the Army Hospital (R&R) here following chest discomfort Friday morning.

Hyderabad emerges as major healthcare hub

SHARON THAMBALA Hyderarad

ALONG with Delhi. Mumbai and other big cities in India, Hyderabad has emerged as a major healthcare hub for foreigners, attracting thousands of patients every year.

patients, Continental Hospital CEO Riyaz Khan said as many as 3 lakh patients used to visit the city for treatment during a normal year. "We used to get a good number of patients for all kinds of treatment like oncology, orthopedics, cardiology, spine surgery and others. ▶ P7



Govt withdraws cut in rate on savings schemes

New Delhi

FINANCE Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday said the government will rollback a steep interest rate cut on small saving schemes such as PPF and NSC saying it was an oversight, a move being seen as an attempt by the BJP to contain the fallout of a decision hitting the common man in the ongoing elections in West Bengal, Assam and three other states.

While the government routinely announces interest rates for small saving schemes at the end of every quarter, the Wednesday's decision to cut interest rate by up to 1.1 per cent across various small savings schemes, including the National Savings Certificates (NSC) and Public Provident Fund (PPF) came a day before the second phase of polling in West Bengal including the political hotbed Nandigram, from where West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee is contesting.

The decision to rollback citing "oversight" was taken hours after announcing the steepest cut in the rate on small savings schemes. "Interest rates of small savings schemes of GoI shall con-

POLITICKLE by MANJUL

tinue to be at the rates which existed in the last quarter of 2020-2021, ie, rates that prevailed as of March 2021. Orders issued by oversight shall be withdrawn," Sitharaman said in an early morning

Interest rate on Public Provident Fund (PPF) was reduced by 0.7 per cent to 6.4 per cent while National Savings Certificate (NSC) was to earn 0.9 per cent less at 5.9 per cent. The highest cut of 1.1 per cent was affected in the one-year term deposit. The new rate was brought down to 4.4 per cent as compared to 5.5 per cent. Interest rates for small savings schemes are notified on a quarterly basis.

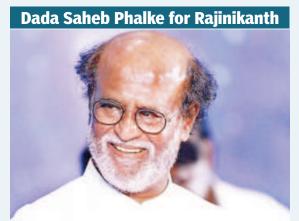
Taking a dig at the Finance Minister after she announced that the government will withdraw orders to cut interest rate on small savings schemes, the Congress on Thursday said one can imagine the functioning of the economy when such a duly approved order affecting crores of people can be issued by an "oversight".

Once restored, PPF and NSC will carry an annual interest rate of 7.1 per cent and 6.8 per cent, respectively.

Continued on Page 5

Congratulations Talaivar!

RESPECT and valedictory messages poured in on Thursday for southern superstar Rajinikanth, who will be honoured with the 51st Dadasaheb Phalke Award. Minutes after Union Information and **Broadcasting Minister** Prakash Javadekar made the announcement on Twitter, Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Rajinikanth with a tweet, "Congratulations Talaivar". Soon Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu too, tweeted.



"Hearty congratulations to Shri @rajinikanth on being conferred the prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke Award. Over the past many years, the versatile

people by portraying a vast array of roles depicting myriad hues of human experience and emotions. #Rajinikanth," said Naidu and added: "My best wishes for the renowned thespian's future endeavours! #Rajinikanth."

"Popular across generations, a body of work few can boast of, diverse roles and an endearing personality...that's Shri@rajinikanth Ji for you. It is a matter of immense joy that Thalaiva has been conferred with the Dadasaheb Phalke Award. Modi said.

Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao hailed the central government for conferring the prestigious and highest film award in the country on well-known southern film actor.

Rao said Rajinikanth, who evolved a unique style of his own in the film career, has crores of fans in the country and all over the globe and it is great and befitting that he is selected for the prestigious Phalke award.

Continued on Page 5

New Delhi

EVEN as the Covid-19 vaccination for all people aged 45 years and above commenced from Thursday, the Union Health Ministry sought to exponentially expand the countrywide anti-coronavirus inoculation drive, the Centre has decided to keep all public and private sector Covid-19 Vaccination Centres (CVCs) operational throughout April, including on gazetted holidays.

The Centre wrote to all states and Union territories on Thursday and asked them to make necessary arrangements for this, the Union Health Ministry said. "This step has been taken after detailed deliberations with the states and UTs on March 31 to optimally



Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy and his wife Bharati receive Covid-19 vaccination in Guntur on Thursday

utilise all Covid-19 Vaccination Centres across the public and private sectors to ensure rapid increase in the pace and coverage of Covid vaccination.

"This decision is in line with the graded and pro-active approach employed by the government of India along with the states and UTs for Covid-

19 vaccination," the ministry said. The vaccination exercise continues to be regularly reviewed and monitored at the highest level, it highlighted. The government opened up the Covid-19 vaccination drive to include everybody above 45

years of age on April 1 based

on a recommendation of the

Vaccine Administration (NEGVAC). A countrywide vaccination

National Expert Group on

drive was rolled out on January 16 with healthcare workers (HCWs) getting inoculated first, and vaccination of frontline workers (FLWs) started from February 2. The next phase of Covid-19 vaccination commenced on March 1 to cover people above 60 and those in the age group of 45-59 but with specified co-morbid conditions.

More than 6.5 crore (6,51,17,896) vaccine doses have been administered through 10,86,241 sessions across the country so far, as per the provisional report till 7 am, according to the

highest single day rise INDIA saw 72,330 new coro-

navirus infections being reported in a span of 24 hours, the highest single day rise so far this year, taking the Covid-🦸 19 tally of cases to 1,22,21,665. The

cases is the highest recorded since October 11, 2020, while the death toll increased to 1,62,927 with 459 daily new fatalities, the highest in around 116 days, the data updated at 8 am

single-day rise in

BEFORE ELECTION CAMPAIGN... Though the coronavirus pandemic has interrupted the flow of foreign





Sporadic violence mars second phase polling

NANDIGRAM/ KOLKATA

HEAVY voting amidst sporadic violence, marked the second phase of polling to the West Bengal assembly, as Chief Minister Mamata Baneriee slammed the Election Commission over inaction to complaints filed by her party. Sporadic violence

Mamata hits out at EC over inaction to complaints

and minor clashes were reported from various constituencies, including the high profile Nandi-

gram, where chief minister Mamata Banerjee is locked in a high-stakes electoral battle with her former lieutenant Suvendu Adhikari now with

An agitated Banerjee slammed the Election Commission for not taking any action despite lodging several com-

plaints and threatened to move court over it. Amongst the complaints were allegations of "booth capturing" and massive fake voting in Boyal. "We have lodged 63 complaints since morning. But not a single action has been taken. We will move court over it. This is unaccept-Continued on Page 5

Biden lets Trump era H-1B visa bans expire LALIT K JHA

WASHINGTON

US President Joe Biden on Thursday let the ban on foreign workers visa, in particular H-1B, lapse as the notification issued by his predecessor Donald Trump expired, a move which is

likely to benefit thousands of

Indian IT professionals. Amidst a national lockdown and the Covid-19 crisis, Trump in June last year issued a proclamation that suspended entry to the US of applicants for several temporary or "non-immigrant" visa categories, including H-1B, arguing that these visas presented a risk to the US labour market during the economic

recovery. On December 31, Trump extended the order to March 31, 2021, noting that an extension was warranted as the pandemic continued to disrupt American's lives, and high levels of unemployment and job loss were still presenting serious economic challenges to workers across

Thousands of Indian IT professionals to benefit

Biden did not issue a fresh proclamation for the ban on H-1B visas to continue after March 31. He had promised to lift the suspension on H-1B visas, saying Trump's immigration policies were cruel. The H-1B visa is a nonimmigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise.

Technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China. The expiry of the Trump's proclamation would now result in the issuing of H-1B visas by American diplomatic missions overseas that would result in US companies bringing in talented technology professionals inside the country.

Continued on Page 5

4 killed in **California** shooting

SAN FRANCISCO

AT least four persons were killed, and two others injured during a shooting incident in the US state of California, ac cording to authorities. The incident took place on Wednesday evening in the city of Orange, 55 km southeast of Los Angeles, Xinhua news agency reported.

The Orange Police Department said that they responded to reports of a shooting at around 5.30 p.m. and then found "multiple victims at the scene including fatalities" where shots were being fired. "The situation has been stabilised and there is no threat to the public. More details to follow," the Department tweeted on Wednesday night. The four victims were pronounced dead at the scene and two others were transported to nearby hospitals, according to the Metro City Fire Authority Dispatch, an emergency organisation providing fire and emergency medical services to over 1.2 million residents in Southern California. Video clips posted online by the local ABC 7 news channel showed a business complex, where at least two bodies lay down outside the building, one on a second floor walkway and the other in a courtyard. At the scene there were also bloody clothes and what appeared to be a weapon as officers investigated. A witness told ABC 7 that she heard two distinct sets of shots, one apparently the initial shooting and the other the gunfire exchange between the suspect and police. "I was just in my room hanging out. All of a sudden I

"And then I waited a couple minutes and the police came. And I heard a few more gunshots go off. It was a lot, quickly. Then the helicopter showed up and it was silent after that." Orange police said it was that city's deadliest shooting since 1997.

heard five to seven gun shots

go off," the witness said.

Pak links import of cotton & sugar with Kashmir Wednesday decided to buy day to import cotton and ror groups based in Pakistan.

SAJJAD HUSSAIN

ISLAMABAD

IN a volte-face, Pakistan's Cabinet on Thursday rejected the proposal of a highpowered committee to import cotton and sugar from India, with Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi asserting that there can be no normalisation of ties until New Delhi reverses its decision to revoke the special status of Jammu and Kashmir. The somersault came a day after the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) under newly appointed Finance Minister Hammad Azhar on

the two key items from India, lifting a nearly two-year long ban on their import from the neighbouring country.

Qureshi said the issue of import of cotton and sugar from India was discussed during the Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Imran Khan. "An impression is being created that relations with India have become normal and trade has been restored...," Qureshi said in a video message. "On this impression, the Prime Minister and the Cabinet had a consensus opinion that until India reviewed the unilateral

actions of Aug 5, 2019, it would not be possible to normalise ties with India."

Talking to reporters after the Cabinet meeting, Minister for Science and Technology Fawad Chaudhry said that the Cabinet discussed the issue of ties and trade with India and decided that things cannot progress until India revokes its August 5, 2019 move on Kashmir. "We want to cooperate with India but the first condition is that it should go back to pre August 5, 2019 position in Kashmir," he said.

Finance Minister Azhar's announcement on Wednessugar from India had raised hopes of a partial revival of bilateral trade relations. which were suspended after the August 5, 2019 decision of New Delhi to revoke the special status of Jammu and

Kashmir.

India is the world's biggest producer of cotton and the second biggest sugar manufacturer. Azhar's decision became doubtful since afternoon but officials kept mum and finally the first confirmation came from Minister for Human Rights Shireen Mazari, who is known for her hawkish stand on Kashmir.

"Today Cabinet stated clearly NO trade with India," Mazari tweeted soon after the Cabinet meeting. Mazari said that Prime Minister Khan, who chaired the first Cabinet meeting after testing COVID-19 positive on March 20, "made (it) clear (that) there can be no normalisation of relations with India until they reverse" their actions viz Kashmir of August 5, 2019.

Ahead of the Cabinet meeting, Mazari had said that all ECC decisions have to be approved by Cabinet and only then can they be seen as "approved" by the government. "Just for the record -All ECC decisions have to be approved by Cabinet & only then they can be seen as "approved by govt"! So today in Cabinet there will be discussion on ECC decisions incl trade with India & then govt decision will be taken! Media shd be aware of this atleast!" Mazari had tweeted.

In May 2020, Pakistan had lifted the ban on import of medicines and raw material of essential drugs from India amid the Covid-19 pandemic. Ties between India and Pakistan nose-dived after a terror attack on the Pathankot Air Force base in 2016 by terSubsequent attacks, including one on an Indian Army camp in Uri, further deteriorated the relationship. The ties strained further after India's war planes pounded a Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorist training camp deep inside Pakistan on February 26, 2019 in response to the Pulwama terror attack in 2019 in which 40 CRPF jawans were killed. India's move to revoke the special status of Jammu and Kashmir in 2019 angered Pakistan, which downgraded diplomatic ties with India

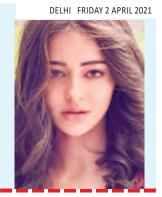
and expelled the Indian High

Commissioner in Islamabad.



ANANYA PANDAY @ANANYAPANDAYY

Back with a splash of colours □#OriginalsKeepMoving @SkechersIndia #StayTuned



DETOX YOUR HAIR



F you have an itchy, oily, or inflamed scalp, dry follicles, hair loss, or any scalp pain, it's time to detox. Nutritional deficiencies, environmental pollution, hormones imbalances and the stressful lifestyle leads to lackluster, thinning hair and hair

The use of chemical laden hair styling products like soaps, shampoo and hair masks clog our pores leading to dead, dull, greasy and life less hair.Too much styling and coloring at hair salons frequently leadto breakage, dull, and split ends. Regularly washing your hair is not enough to keep it clean. Shampooing alone does not cleanse your scalp deep enough to get rid of pollutant and dirt. A thorough cleansing of scalp with natural ingredients can revive your pretty, shiny hair and restore back hair health and

First of all, discontinue the procedures that lead to damage.Damaged hair is in a fragile condition, so treat it gently. Avoid brushes and use a wide toothed comb with smooth edges.

To heal damaged hair, have detox treatments to help nurse the hair back to good health. First of all, have the hair trimmed to remove split ends. Then start with warm oil therapy. Mix one part castor oil with two parts coconut oil. Heat and apply on the hair. Remember to apply on the ends too. Then dip a towel in hot water, squeeze out the water and wrap the hot towel around the head, like a turban. Keep it on for 5 minutes. Repeat the hot towel wrap 3 or 4 times. This helps the hair and scalp absorb the oil better. Avoid vigorous massage and rubbing when you apply oil. Keep the oil on overnight and wash hair the next day, using a mild

The best way to disentangle the hair is to use a wide-toothed comb, starting at the ends and working upwards. Avoid hair dryers and styling rods for some time to allow the hair dry naturally.

Water is powerful detox ingredi-

ents and flushes out toxins and

Intake of seasonal fruit and

vegetables promotes digestion

and cleans digestive tract facili-

tating proper absorption of min-

erals, vitamins that keeps out

skin healthy and radiant. You can

add Amla, Aloe vera , Cow Ghee

and Beetroot in your diet for nat-

urally detoxifying your hair. The

best way to disentangle the hair

dirt out of body.

herbal shampoo. Avoid very hot water. After shampoo, wrap a towel around the head and allow it to absorb excess water.

You can use baking soda for hair detox. Sodium bicarbonate is an extraordinary cleanser and a great exfoliate that gently removes product buildup. Mix half cup baking soda in 3 cup hot water and massage your scalp with mixture for few minutes and later on rinse it out. It will remove oil accumulation on scalp and fight dandruff. You can use it once in a week.

Tea tree oil is natural antiseptic which eliminates bacteria, flakes and dandruff from scalp. Add few drops natural tea tree oil in your regular shampoo. Massage in your scalp and leave it for few minutes beforerinsing.

You can detox your hair with herbal tea. Brew the tea with one tablespoon herb of your choice like Amla, Shikakai, rosemary etc and one cup of boiling water. Keep it for few minutes to cool down and

Shikakai is

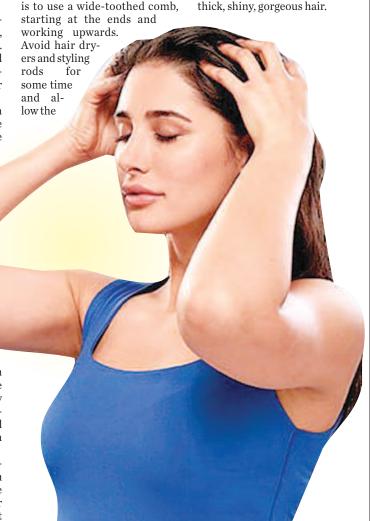
known for its deep cleansing properties. Just mix some Shikakai powder with water to form a paste. Massage this onto your scalp gently through the hair length in a circular motion for few minutes and let it dry naturally; Rinse off with fresh water.

Mixing egg whites with coconut oil works to strengthen hair, though it may not remove oils.Garlic may help with hair growth, but you need to dilute it with a carrier oil to avoid chemical burns

Keep hydrated by drinking hair to dry naturally. plenty of water in each season.

Brushing your hair before bed, a shower or a workout is a great start to removing debris and start the exfoliation process.If you have a detox programme from time to time, you can restore the health and beauty of the hair. Also, the hair is like a delicate fabric, so learn to treat it that way.

Detoxing your scalp will rejuvenate and renew the hair follicles and create a perfect environment for hair growth.A Healthy and Clean Scalp is the key to thick, shiny, gorgeous hair.



TV shows will never suffer, says Sonyaa Ayodhya

ASKARI JAFFER

ACTOR Sonyaa Ayodhya has been seen in television shows like Nazar, Kasauti Zindagi Kay, Shakti, Hero: Gayab Mode and she has recently made her digital debut with web series Hey Prabhu 2. She is also known with the other names Sonya Gupta and Sonya Pink on social media platforms. She is one of the well-known and popular newcomers in the television industry, with her looks and impressive acting skills, she is all set to rule the industry. Sharing about her character in the show Hey Prabhu 2, Sonyaa shares, "I am playing the role of Pia, who is a young 18 year old intern at a digital company around which the whole plot revolves around. She is innocent, sweet and positive. The character Pia is a teenager, so I just behaved exactly how I was in my teenage days- innocent and inexperienced. I have cousins who are in their teens and I'm usually someone who observes a lot, I learned a lot from their stories, gossips and mistakes. I wanted to plunge into the web for a very long time. I was also waiting to do a positive character and Pia in the show was the one and was such a character which I can re-

Sonyaa believes that actors are actors and nobody is a 'TV or Web actor'. She adds, "If you can mould yourself to fit any medium, then why would you stay limited to just one medium. I am looking forward to more web shows. I'm glad that I got to plunge into the web so early on in my career. I really don't like being limited to a particular medium. Unlearning is just as important as learning, I'm always willing to work on myself and work on polishing my skills."

Actor Sonyaa Ayodhya who has been seen in various television shows like Nazar, Kasauti Zindagi Kay, recently made her digital debut with the web series 'Hey Prabhu 2' talks to The Hans India about the OTT platforms



According to Sonyaa, the only difference between TV and OTT platform is that a TV show will go on for a year and require you to shoot longer, on the other hand the web show will require you to shoot for a couple of months. You can turn from a witch to a nun overnight

tv show. (laughs) "I don't think TV will ever suffer. As long as we continue to write good shows, tv will live on and it should live on. Infact, so many film productions are now plunging into TV. So, TV will never suffer,"

ends Sonyaa.

TOP TRENDS IN MATERNITY WEAR 2021

REGNANCY period is most beautiful phase I in life cherish it with extra happiness and extra cautions. Does this mean that a pregnant woman needs a very comfortable closet? "Yes! That is why maternity fashion is always concentrated on comfort, "Rajat Kapoor, Master Franchise India, Seraphine. One of the main concerns is 'what to wear in which tier?' to answer this question different outfits for different tiers of pregnancy phase may be tiring for some, multi-tier option gives the best option to mums. "Comfort to naïve mother in their pregnancy journey, is the utmost priority by adding feed-feasible dungaree to bump friendly leggings.

The evolving preference of the mother's specifically when it comes to the usage of natural fabric, stretchable outfits, multi-tier $dresses, fashionable \, and \, comfortable \, for \, both$ babies and mothers.'

1) Colour trends- Colours for most colourful phase

play important role in psychological and emotion stability. This year, natural and neutral colors are in domination like, off white, blue, grey, pink and different shades of light green, red.

Leggings are the most absolute option which not

only give comfort to big belly but also keep it in

perfect shape your tummy area, tunics with flower prints, fashionable lace with appealing colours.

4) Maternity jeans

that features a low-rise and sits below your bump

Flowing maxi or dresses are not the only option to design your adorable belly. There is plethora of other options that provide a



Winged eyeliner is tough because of the upward angle that you need to create on one end. If you can use a freehand, then you need to draw out the shape on your eyelids and then fill it up. The truth is that winged eye-

liner is not really rocket science. Here are three easy hacks to get a perfect winged eye-liner.

Use a tape

If you can't manage to get the angle right to create the wing then try and use a tape. Just cut out 2 cm tape and stick it at the edge of your eyes in an angle you would want the wings to be. Using the outline of the tape, draw the wing. Then extend the line along your upper lash to finish the look.

Use a swipe card

World Autism Awareness Day was established on December 18, 2007 by the United Nations. The General Assembly put together resolution 62/139, which consisted of four major elements. The participation of all UN organization and its member states, a dedication to raising awareness of Autism in the general community, and a standing request to the UN Secretary-General to move forth this message to all it the UN member states.

Autism affects approximately 1 out of every 150 children around the world. It is a neural development disorder that affects their ability to socialize normally by impacting their abilities to utilize verbal and non-verbal communication. Since 2012, there has been a 30% increase in the amount of children being affected with autism, and World Autism Awareness Day helps to bring awareness to this growing health concern. Autism first appears very early on, sometimes manifesting as early as infancy, in other times waiting until later in childhood. The disease progresses steadily without remission, its first symptoms generally appearing around six-months, and being firmly in place by age two or three. Rather than having one distinguishing characteristic, Autism is indicated by the coming together of three separate symptoms. The triad inIf you can't get hold of any tape or made a lastminute plan while at office,

don't worry. You can still rock the look by using a debit or swipe card. Similar to the tape, hold it at an angle at the edge of your eyes to draw the wing and then extend it neatly on

lash. Use a spoon

the upper

Yes, you heard us right! You can even make use of a tablespoon to draw winged eyeliner. Place the handle at the edge of your eyes to draw the wing, and then use the curved part of the spoon to complete your look on the upper lashes. Once you perfect these easy tricks, you may even find yourself drawing out a flawless winged eyeliner with free hand. Who knows? Practice makes one per-

your mas S onakshi Sinha on Thursday took to social media and urged everyone to wear masks as Covid cases crossed 72,000 in a day. The actress posted a picture on Instagram, where she is seen taking an elevator selfie, wearing an all-black ensemble and a mask. "It's April. But don't be a fool. Wear you mask," Son-

kshi captioned the image Sonakshi, who is known for her roles in the Daoangg series, Lootera, Akira and Mission Mangal is gearing up for her next release, Bhuj: The Pride of India. Besides Sonakshi, the film will also feature Ajay Devgn, Sanjay Dutt, Sharac

Kelkar, Ammy Virk, Pranitha Subhash and Nora Fatehi. The story is set against the backdrop of the Indo-Pak war of 1971. She recently announced her next project Bulbul Tarang, which will have an OTT release. The film has been directed by Shree Narayan Singh and is said to be inspired by a true story. The film also features

Sonakshi Sinha:

Raj Babbar and Tahir Raj Bhasin. Sonakshi is also gearing up for her web series debut in Fallen, which casts



cludes difficulty socializing, problems in communication, and a limited number of interests combined with repetitive behavior such as can-stacking. Autism is no longer classified as a single disorder, but rather an entire spectrum ranging in severity. Autism is the core of all of these syndromes, with its features being prevalent to varying degrees throughout, and includes such disorders such as Rett Syndrome and Childhood disintegrative disorder. One of the most commonly known disorders on the list, outside of Autism itself, is Asperger's. Asperger Syndrome is signified by the presence of Autism symptoms with no impairment of language development. Asperger Syndrome often leads to problems with social interaction with their peers. Common body language queues that are picked up on by those not on the Autistic Spectrum are often lost on those who suffer from AS. It is not uncommon among the Asperger community to hear them speak of their frustrations with non-Asperger people, as huge chunks of the conversation just

seem utterly lost on them. Things such as tone, context, and sarcasm have to be considered very carefully, as they are not often native to those with AS, and their frustration with communication often stems from this and other social queues.

However, much like anyone on the Autistic spectrum, they will present with areas of intelligence that are much stronger than that of others. These areas tend to be in the reading, language, music, or spatial skills, occasionally manifesting to such a degree that they may fall into the "gifted" range in those areas. This seems to be counterbalanced by significant delays in other areas of development.







2) Leggings - Comfy and stylish

3) Tops and tunics - Cute and multi-tier The oversized tunics, with pockets to embrace

Would be fashion forward mums choose a pair for a comfortable feel. As it isn't overly stretchy which helps in balancing top heavy pregnant fig-

5) Maternity skirts

flattering look such as skirts or style statement midi dresses.



UP extends Epidemic Act till June as Covid cases rise

LUCKNOV

WITH Covid cases continuously on the rise in Uttar Pradesh, the Yogi Adityanath government has extended the pandemic and enforced provisions of the Epidemic Act across the state till June 30.

Additional Chief Secretary (ACS) health, Amit Mohan Prasad said the decision was taken after reviewing the alarming situation in the state. He admitted that cases were going up daily and the coronavirus has hit the state again in pandemic form.

The ACS Health said that the Epidemic Act, which was enforced earlier till March 31, has been extended till June-end or till the situation arising out of the second wave is brought under control.

"In the public interest, the state government may cancel holidays of doctors, health workers and other government and private employees engaged in the duties to deal with the situation,"

said Prasad.

The ACS Health has also directed all health and frontline workers to take the second dose of the Covid-19 vaccine on priority to develop antibodies for carrying their duties safely.



The graph of infected patients increased further in the last 24 hours after 11 deaths and 1,230 more positive cases were reported from different parts of the state. What has caused concern to the state government is that the second surge of coronavirus has brought down the recovery rate from 98.25 per cent to 96 per cent

The state is heading back to the March and April 2020 pandemic situation. In March last year, the number of active cases were 2078 but by April 31, 2020, it had gone up to 9,848 positive cases. On March 1 this year, only 87 active cases were reported. Now the

number stands at over 1,230,

which is twelve times higher.

To fight against the second round of coronavirus pandemic, the state government has ordered to reopen all Covid Management Hospitals across the state with full capacity.

The KGMU has decided to slap a fine of Rs 200 on anyone roaming in the hospital campus without wearing a mask.

Lucknow is emerging as a Covid hotspot and the state capital recorded 361 cases in the past 24 hours-the highest in the state.

Micro containment zones have been created in seven major localities in Lucknow to check the second surge of coronavirus.

The state government has, once again, notified 45 hospitals from 30 districts as dedicated Covid facilities, said health officials.

Last month, the government had denotified nearly 240 hospitals after a dip in the number of Covid cases.

According to health officials, the state now has nearly 25,000 reserved Covid beds.

Prasad said, "We have added 45 hospitals across the state in the list of dedicated Covid facilities. These are among the hospitals that were earlier denotified. All these hospitals are of L2 and L3 category, as we now have 128 Covid facilities and close to 25,000 reserved beds. If we have even 25 per cent hospitalisation, we are prepared for around 1 lakh active cases. If needed, the number of dedicated facilities will be further increased like last year. The hospitals will be ready to admit Covid patients even on a very short notice."

State Surveillance Officer Vikasendu Agarwal said that with the increasing number of cases, they are going back to the basic strategy of aggressive contact tracing, surveillance, isolation and treatment. (AMNS)



Travel Delhi to Meerut in 45 minutes as Expressway opens for public

New Delhi

THE Delhi-Meerut Expressway has been finally opened for the public from Thursday. It will reduce travel time between the two cities from three hours to just 45 minutes.

It has been declared operational from Thursday by Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari, who said, the government has fulfilled one of its promises by reducing travel time from Delhi to Meerut.

On the expressway, the speed limit for cars has been set at 100 km per hour. Freight vehicles can also run at a maximum speed of 80 km per hour. The problems of jams and vehicular pollution is also likely to end. The construction work of Delhi-Meerut Expressway has been completed at a total cost of 8,346 crore rupees. A total of 82 km long route work has been completed under the project, of which the total length of the expressway is 60 km and the length of the national highway is 22 km.

A total of 24 small and large bridges and 10 flyovers have been constructed under the project. Adequate arrangements have been made to light up the expresswaymore than 4500 lamps have been installed. Cameras have also been placed for security purposes. The expressway has been developed as a smart expressway. There are several gateways on the route while travelling from Delhi - Sarai Kale Khan, Akshardham Temple, Indirapuram, Dasna, Bhojpur and Meerut. (DANS)

Spurious liquor claims 4 lives in UP, probe ordered

PRATAPGARH

AT least 4 persons, including two brothers, have died in the past 24 hours after allegedly consuming spurious liquor in Uttar Pradesh's Pratapgarh district, police said on Thursday.

The deceased were identified as Sidhnath Kori ,70, Pradeep,35, his elder brother Dilip, 50, and Ram Kumar Prajapati ,45. While two other persons are undergoing treatment.

Pratapgarh Superintendent of Police, Akash Tomar has placed the Station House Officer, Uadipur, R.K. Prajapati under suspension on the charges of dereliction of duty and ordered a detained probe into the incident that took place at the Katria village. Inspector General of police (Prayagraj range) K.P. Singh told media that police have launched a thorough probe into the case.

He said that two joint teams of police and excise department have been constituted to locate the place from where these persons had purliquor. Police are also checking whether those persons have received any liquor during the campaign of the ongoing panchayat elections. The police said that condition of Dilip Kori, his younger brother Pradeep Kori and their maternal uncle Sidhanath had started deteriorating late on Tuesday night and the family members brought them to the nearest community health centre for treatment. The condition of another person, Ram Kumar Praiapati, also deteriorated and his family members brought him at the Sangipur CHC for treatment.

The doctors first pronounced Pradeep dead and referred three others to district hospital in Pratapgarh for treatment. However, the family members have brought them to different hospitals but these three died during their treatment on Wednesday. (IAMS)

Punjab sets record with zero pendency of bills after 15 years

CHANDIGARH

THE Punjab government said on Thursday that it has created a record with zero pendency in the state treasury during the 2020-21 fiscal after a gap of almost 15 years.

An official spokesperson said the Treasuries and Accounts of Finance Department has cleared Rs 3,556 crore related to payments to various departments during the last two days of the previous fiscal. The spokesperson pointed out that 10,295 bills were cleared on March 30 with an amount of Rs 1417.6 crore credited to 45,176 payees, while 12,484 bills were cleared on the last day of the financial year, i.e., March 31, with Rs 2138.5 paid to 301,356 payees. Notably, Chief Minister Amarinder Singh has directed all the departments to conduct a review of the status of their pending bills at regu-

BAGHPAT (UP)

A woman allegedly strangulated her

two young children after an alterca-

the accused, allegedly strangulated

tion with her husband in Baraut area

here on Thursday, police said. Anjum,

her son Omar (10) and daughter Alsifa

(5) at home in Kuraishian locality of



lar intervals to ensure zero pendency at the culmination of every fiscal. (AANS)

Woman strangulates son,

daughter after fight with husband

Mukhtar Ansari's ambulance creates another row

Lucknow

CONTROVERSIES, one after another, seem to be chasing mafia don and BSP MLA Mukhtar Ansari. Now it is the ambulance that took the jailed don to Punjab's Mohali court that has raised a storm.

The vehicle had a registration number belonging to Uttar Pradesh.

The registration number of the ambulance, UP41 AT 7171, belongs to Barabanki district and had expired in 2017. It has not been renewed since then. Also, the name of the hospital in which the ambulance was registered is dubious.

Barabanki RTO officials, who did not wish to be named, said that apart from the registration, the fitness of the vehicle had also expired in 2017. What is intriguing is why was an ambulance from Uttar Pradesh used to take Mukhtar Ansari to a court in Punjab from Ropar jail.

The Punjab Police, on Wednesday, had produced Ansari before the court in con-



nection with an alleged 2019 extortion matter.

Meanwhile, BJP MLA Alka Rai, said, "Who provided the so-called ambulance Mukhtar Ansari in which Mukhtar Ansari was presented in court? It should be investigated. Whether it was an ambulance or the luxury vehicle of the

mafia don should also be investigated. Under what circumstances did the vehicle of UP registration number reach Punjab and how is the mafia don roaming in this car?"

Mukhtar Ansari is charged with the murder of Alka Rai's husband Krishnanand Rai who was shot dead in 2005. (ANS)

UP panchayat polls: Ghaziabad to vote on April 15

GHAZIABAD

UTTAR Pradesh's Ghaziabad district will vote in the first phase of gram panchayat elections in the state on April 15 to elect 161 village heads. Voting will take place between 7 am and 6 pm at 958 polling booths on 311 polling stations. A total of 5,56,086 voters will exercise their franchise. Nominations will be filed on April 3 and 4, Dis-

trict Magistrate and Election Officer Ajay Shankar Pandey told PTI, adding that scrutiny of nomination papers will be done on April 5 and 6. Candidates will be allowed to withdraw their names on April 7 and on the same day, symbols will be allotted to the contestants. Uttar Pradesh gram panchayat elections will take place in four phases from April 15 to April 29. Votes will be counted on May 2. (PTD)

Kejriwal goverment issue notice regarding new academic session

PURNA SINGH NEW DELHI

AMID increasing cases of Covid-19, the Delhi government has asked schools not to call students of any class to school in the new academic session until further orders. The Directorate of Education issued a notice on Thursday ordering that the studies be conducted in digital mode for the academic session 2021-22.

According to the order,

only students of 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grade of academic session 2020-21 will be able to come to school for guidance. With the approval of their parents, these students will be able to come to school for examinations, practical, project work and internal assessment work. No students upto 8th grade will not be called to school under any circumstances.

The Directorate of Education issued a circular last month, directing all government schools to start a new session from April 1 and to conduct classes up to class 9th online.

The new session formally started in Delhi's government and private schools on Thursday, but due to the increasing cases of Coronavirus, the students stayed at home. Last year, schools were closed just days before the lockdown was implemented to prevent spread of Corona. In April last year, the new semester studies started online and in April this year, the situation is the same.

Gurugram: Wanted criminal, aide held

for murder of youth tip-off. During questioning,

WITH the arrest of a wanted criminal and his aide, the police here claimed to have solved the murder case of a 25-year-old youth Manish, who was allegedly gunned down in broad daylight on February 22.

The prime accused among those arrested was identified as Sanjay Panchal (31) of Gandhi Nagar in Gurugram, the police said on Wednesday. The Haryana Police had fixed a bounty of Rs 5,000 on his head. Panchal's accomplice was Yogender alias Yogi of Bhiwani, also a resident of Gurugram.

The duo were nabbed by the crime branch team after a

tip-off. During questioning, the culprits disclosed that the victim was an auto union president.

"The culprits had asked the victim to run an auto rick-shaw on the same stretch but the victim refused to run the auto rickshaws there. Following this enmity, the culprits had given contract of his killing to their accomplices and on their directions they eliminated the victim," said Preet Pal Sangwan, ACP (crime).

Sangwan said the culprits were produced before a local court on Wednesday.

On February 22, the entire incident was captured in a CCTV camera installed at the incident spot. (JANS)

IIT-K alumnus signs MoU to set up medical wing

KANPUR

said. He said Anjum's husband Gulab

works in Faridabad and the couple had

an argument on Wednesday night after

which the husband left for his home in

Later, on Thursday morning, Anjum

strangulated her son and daughter, the

police officer said. The bodies of the

victims have been sent for a post-

A charitable trust founded by IIT Kanpur (IIT-K) alumnus Muktesh Pant and his wife Vinita, have announced signing of an MoU with the alma mater to support the establishment of the School of Medical Research and Technology (SMRT).

The MoU with the Micky and Vinita Pant Charitable Fund, amounting to 2.5 million dollars, is the first such donation towards the development of the educational institute, according to a press statement.

"The vision of a world-class medical school at IIT Kanpur is extremely exciting. The current team, under the able leadership of Professor Abhay Karandikar, inspires great confidence," said Muktesh Pant, adding that "IIT Kanpur has always been renowned for



leading the way in engineering education and this focus on bringing engineering excellence to medical technology has the potential to create many healthcare miracles in future."

Pant, also known as Micky, is an Indian American alumnus of IIT Kanpur, where he received a B.Tech degree in chemical engineering in 1976. According to the press state-

ment, SMRT is an initiative by

IIT Kanpur that aims to revolutionise medical education in India by bridging the gap between medical and technology disciplines.

The first phase of the project would include setting up of various Centres of Excellence (CoE), oriented towards cutting-edge medical research and innovation along with a 500-bed super specialty hospi-

The CoE are expected to

work in confluence with the core clinical departments of the hospital and biomedical expertise of various engineering departments of IIT Kanpur. Additionally, SMRT will also contribute towards meeting the healthcare needs of the population in Kanpur as well as provide benefits pan-India.

"SMRT will bring together the expertise of engineering technologies, biomedical research and clinical set-up under a single umbrella to create a one-of-its-kind world-class medical school in the country," Prof Abhay Karandikar, director of IIT Kanpur, said.

"SMRT will produce outstanding medical professionals trained in state-of-art engineering technologies who can meet the future healthcare needs of our country. We hope that this contribution will motivate others also to contribute

to create a legacy," he stated.

Meanwhile, in a career spanning over 35 years, Pant has held various senior positions in premier multinational companies such as Hindustan Unilever, PepsiCo, Reebok and Yum Brands.

He is widely acclaimed for the phenomenal growth of Yum Brands' flagship labels such as KFC, Pizza Hut and Taco Bell in international markets including the UK, USA, China and India.

According to his profile on the IIT-K alumni page, the 65year-old is known for his success in managing companies through social awareness, human understanding and hu-

man relationships.
His mother, Shivani, is a famous Hindi novelist and his two sisters, Mrinal Pande and Ira Pande, are also well-known writers. (ANNS)

A notable breakthrough

SCIENTISTS have developed a new technique to track the huge bubbles of gas threaded with magnetic field lines that are ejected from the Sun, disrupting space weather and causing geomagnetic storms, satellite failures, and power outages. As the ejections from the Sun, technically called Coronal Mass Ejections (CMEs), cause various disturbances of the space environment, forecasting their arrival time is very im-

However, forecasting accuracy is hindered by limited CME observations in interplanetary space. Software named Computer Aided CME Tracking Software (CACTus), based on a computer vision algorithm, was so far used to detect and characterise such eruptions automatically in the outer corona where these eruptions cease to show accelerations and propagate with a nearly con-

stant speed. However, this algorithm could not be applied to the inner corona observations due to the vast acceleration experienced by these eruptions. This severely limited the capability to track the eruptions as CMEs accelerate in the lower corona.

Moreover, with the advancement in space technology, there has been a tremendous increase in the amount of data obtained from spacecraft. To identify and track the solar eruptions in huge number of images can become tedious if done manually. Research led by Indian scientists from Aryabhatta Research Institute of observational sciences (ARIES), Nainital, an autonomous institute, along with their collaborators from Royal Observatory of Belgium, has led to the development of an algorithm, CME's Identification in Inner Solar Corona (CIISCO), to detect and track the accelerating solar eruption in the lower corona.

CIISCO has been successfully tested on several eruptions observed by space observatories, including Solar Dynamics Observatory and Solar-Terrestrial Relations Observatory, PROBA2/SWAP launched by NASA and ESA, respectively. What is its significance for the common man? CMEs travel outward from the Sun at speeds ranging from slower than 250 kilometres per second (km/s) to as fast as near 3000 km/s.

The fastest Earth-directed CMEs can reach our planet in as little as 15-18 hours. Slower CMEs can take several days to arrive. They expand in size as they propagate away from the Sun and larger CMEs can reach a size comprising nearly a quarter of the space between Earth and the Sun by the time it reaches our planet. The more explosive CMEs generally begin when highly twisted magnetic field structures (flux ropes) contained in the Sun's lower corona become too stressed and realign into a less tense configuration - a process called magnetic reconnection. This can result in the sudden release of electromagnetic energy in the form of a solar flare; which typically accompanies the explosive acceleration of plasma away from the Sun - the CME.

These types of CMEs usually take place from areas of the Sun with localised fields of strong and stressed magnetic flux; such as active regions associated with sunspot groups. When these flux ropes reconfigure, the denser filament or prominence can collapse back to the solar surface and be quietly reabsorbed, or a CME may result. CMEs travelling faster than the background solar wind speed can generate a shock wave. These shock waves can accelerate charged particles ahead of them - causing increased radiation storm potential or intensity. The research is essential and important for our own survival.

Assaulted by humans and nature, Taj needs better care

BRIJ KHANDELWAL

THE 17th century monument of love, the iconic Taj Mahal in Agra, ▲ is feeling the heat of abruptly rising temperature, sand blasting by seasonal dust storms and human apathy.

"The temperature has gone up steeply in the last few days and there have been a series of sand storms," said Surendra Sharma, President of the Braj Mandal Heritage Conservation Society. Despite a series of directions by the Supreme Court and the National Green Tribunal, successive governments have been dragging their feet to rejuvenate the Yamuna river by containing pollution and maintaining flow of water round the year, complained green activist Shravan Kumar Singh. After a brief respite during the 180-day lockdown triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic last year, the Taj is again looking pale, notwithstanding the mud therapy and other measures to beautify the monument.

Heritage conservationists in Agra say that if the monument looks pale to the visitors, the reason is the dry and heavily polluted Yamuna that once formed an integral part of the Taj Mahal complex.

Standing tall in the scorching summer sun, the monument of love is enveloped in yellowish sand from the neighbouring Rajasthan deserts. Any discernible visitor can tell that the summer heat is taking its toll on the Taj Mahal, blasted by sand from the dry Yamuna bed and the dust-laden winds from the Rajasthan deserts.

The gaps left by illegal mining in the Aravali ranges has raised the SPM (suspended particulate matter) in Agra. Against a standard of 100 microns per cubic metre, it remains as high as 300, touching 500 during the summer months. The problem is that sandy particles rub against the monument and leave pox marks, making the surface rough, as has been pointed out in many studies.

However, conservationists say that the crisis the Taj confronts comes not merely from nature and pollution, but also from the people -- with too many tourists and vehicles visiting Agra.

The number of vehicles in the city has shot up from around 40,000 in 1985 when Firozabad too was part of the Agra district, to more than a million now. The opening of the Yamuna Expressway has increased vehicular traffic. The pressure of heavy vehicles on the Delhi-Kolkata, Delhi-Mumbai and Lucknow-Agra National Highways passing through Agra has increased phenomenally. Adding to its fatigue is the ever-increasing human load. From a few hundred tourists some decades ago, the Taj is now daily visited by thousands of people. The tourism industry that thrives on milking the Taj Mahal wants more sops for the visitors to attract them to Agra, but the conservationists want restrictions imposed to gradually reduce the human load.

Visitors who see the Taj Mahal for the first time never forget to ask the guides, "Is it turning yellow?" The explanation given by the guides is that it is the outcome of the natural ageing process and has nothing to do with industrial pollution, as all polluting industries in Agra region have been shut down by the Supreme Court.

To ensure its dazzling whiteness and remove the stains left behind by the pollutants on the Taj Mahal, originally called 'Bagh e Baahist', the Archaeological Survey of India carries out periodic 'multani mitti' (Fuller's earth) treatment. The white marble surface is washed with soap and water too on Fridays when the monument breathes freely to enjoy its weekly off. When thousands of tourists 'invade' the serene monument every day, leaving behind hand and foot marks on the white stones, and tonnes of noxious gases through breathing, the cumulative effect on the fragile structure is huge.

Only a few tourists are genuinely aware of the historic significance of the monument and its great heritage value, but there are hordes of others who care nothing for the sanctity of the Taj.

While the problem of human load will be sorted out shortly, as a number of studies are being conducted by the ASI, the sad state of the Yamuna river at the rear is a huge problem that defies solution. According to Ved Goutam, a tour guide, Agra has already become a desert.

"When you see the camels moving around on the dry river bed, you get the impression that Agra is in a desert, a part of the Rajasthan state,

The Archaeological Survey of India has restored the Mehtab Bagh at the rear of the Taj Mahal and the state forest department has developed

a dense green buffer along the river bank on the opposite side. But the major problem is the Yamuna, which has been reduced to a

'sewage canal'. Fears are being raised that if there is no fresh supply of water in the river that touches the Taj foundation to provide a shockabsorbing buffer to insulate the building from seismic movements, the monument could tilt, cave in or struggle for stability.

Ignorant scholars and hate-mongering in univs



K KRISHNA SAAGAR RAO

T is a fact that 'All educated are not wise, and all wise need not be educated'. This fact explains the situation in Indian universities, especially about some of the scholarly professors, who are self-declared watch dogs of secularism and democracy.

The resignation episode of P B $\,$ Mehta, the Vice-Chancellor of Ashoka University, subsequent resignation of Arvind Subramanian or frequent dramas at Jawaharlal Nehru University, Visva-Bharati and many others across India, highlight the deep rot in the education infrastructure.

Universities are supposed to be the pedestals of excellence to seek knowledge and skills for young people. These knowledge disseminating facilities should act as springboards for students to launch themselves in the real world, after their education in their chosen faculties. Universities should be positive enablers for youth, to ignite their curiosity for innovation, invention, knowledge application and productivity. However, many universities in India have become cesspools of anti-social and anti-national elements. These groups which are deeply entrenched in universities are full-time enablers of hate-propaganda, driven out of their selective political and ideological

The worst part in this worsening academic environment in the universities for decades, is the nexus between few professors and student groups. The self-appointed watch dogs of secularism and democracy have stopped their core-roles of 'teaching and learning' and have taken up fulltime activity of frivolous, shallow

and ignorant article-writing and speech-making about issues, which they have no knowledge about. I call them 'amateur watchdogs', there's nothing professional about them.

The downward spiral of many universities and their academic track record is indicative of professors and students' escapades with the unmandated and unwarranted non-academic, political activity. Salaries paid by the institution to Professors is not for indulging in peripheral activity by neglecting their core roles. Nevertheless, they continue unabashed wearing the mask of 'conscience keepers'.

Students who either pay the hard-earned money of their parents as tuition-fee or avail freescholarships and entitlements from the government, disparage their time, youthful energy and valuable national resources in fighting frivolous and purposeless battles, for blind ideological leanings. Not even 1 per cent of these students would ever make fulltime political careers out of these wasted youthful wake-hours and years on campus with full-time political preoccupation neglecting academic advancement; their

core-purpose There's an impending need for 'self-regulation and re-redirection' from the criminal deviation of stated purpose, for which universities are established. I don't think, any university is ever founded on a stated purpose like - 'This university is being established for the purpose of fighting street battles for mainstream political parties, and their ideologies on our campus.' Or 'This university is being established to incessantly criticise all incumbent governments, their policies and undertake mass protests, while

even stalling all academic activity." In fact, any university ever founded is always established for larger purposes of knowledge dissemination, skill-training, fundamental research and academic advancement. However, all these grand purposes seem to be over shadowed by frivolous, zealous lust for personal identity, ideological push, selfish-agendas and foolish self-destruction in many universities across the nation.



Below are few reasons to abhor the trend of unprofessional political pursuits by both Professors and Students in universities across India.

Resignations are welcome

I welcome the resignations of Ashoka University vice chancellor P.B. Mehta and Arvind Subramanian. In fact, more vice chancellors and professors who deviate from their core academic roles and responsibilities from across all universities in India should resign from their paid, official roles and pursue their personal political interests.

If senior academicians and institutional heads can't exhibit professionalism and integrity to deliver their expected, well-defined roles as teachers and institutional managers, they are wrong role models for students. Teachers and students dabbling with personal prejudices, political motivation, ideological loyalties and promotion of hate is not 'academic freedom'; as there's nothing academic in these antics.

Professors and wrong definitions

What good is a professor, if one cannot define and understand 'Secularism' factually. There are many ignorant professors who are highly educated, but their education hasn't taught them to question the 'definitions-by-propaganda'. If one falls for politically promoted definitions for 'democracy', 'academic-freedom', 'freedom-of-speech' etc... they lose out on understanding the factual meanings of these terms, they are

have taken up full-time activity of frivolous, shallow and ignorant article-writing and speech-making about issues, which they have no knowledge about. I call them 'amateur watchdogs', there's nothing professional about them

The self-appointed watch dogs of secularism and democracy

have stopped their core-roles of 'teaching and learning' and

blindly leading many others into a no-go zone.

The current situation in universities suits the metaphor of 'the blind, leading blind'. I question P B Mehta and

Arvind, if real secularism is to have 'religious-personal-laws' in a constitutionally stated secular nation like India? Have they ever objected to this brazen flaw, as it currently exists since 1955 after PM Nehru passed several religious laws in India mocking its secular credentials? Does any other secular State in the world have 'religious personal laws' gov $erning\,their\,justice\,system?$

What is the definition of 'academic freedom'? is it just about writing regular articles against PM Modi, his government and his party or does it have anything to do with academic or research pursuit?

What is the working definition of democracy, if applied to a political party? Is five generations of a family fiefdom over a party, and four generations of dynastic succession over a nation; real democracy? Not questioning these glaring deficiencies, as it does not suit one's personal and political agenda is 'Academic Integrity'? I challenge the sulking

professors to answer at least few

LETTERS

Professional protestors

of these questions.

Universities should not be the market places for professional protestors of any ideology. National institutions conceptualised and built for higher education cannot be allowed to become cesspools for rogues, petty-criminals, drug-abusers, alcoholics and professional protestors for paid political crusades.

A small section of deviant professors and students are consistently destroying the academic environment, peace and tranquility of beautifully designed, large academic spaces across the nation. Thousands of students who join these universities are negatively influenced, brain-washed and misdirected through mindless political narratives, these distracted groups profess.

It is time to completely overhaul the higher education system in India. The role of Universities in building academically brilliant citizens of a nation, should override the current frivolous and mis-directed path few universities have taken.

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

Dada Saheb Award for Superstar

NO doubt Rajinikanth is a public figure actor with huge fan following not only in India but also worldwide. He is great in acting gimmicks, stylish appearance and fighting with lots of people with single hand. But if you compare his acting to Kamal Haasan, you find the difference of commercial super star and talented actor. Yes Kamal is very much talented as an actor than Rajini. Now the question is why Rajini, why not Kamal?

Rajnikant is not in politics but his huge number of fans are there in Tamil Nadu. By giving this Dada Phalke award the BJP is trying to catch the fans as favourable voters for their party in this assembly election. That's the only reason why he has been announced as an awardee. Coming to Kamal Haasan, he has a political party, alliance with two other political parties and above all he is anti-BJP politician.

Similarly in Andhra Pradesh the Phalke award was not given to NTR (Senior) and awarded to ANR. If awards also become the ladder for power, then the words "impartial and unbiased valuation of art and culture" will be meaningless.

Dr T Mahadev Rao, Visakhapatnam

UNION Minister Prakash Javadekar announced on Thursday that Rajinikanth will receive the

country's highest film honour for 2019. The jury which picked him for the top award included singers Asha Bhosle and Shankar Mahadevan, actors Mohanlal and Biswajeet and filmmaker Subhash Ghai. Rajini is a versatile actor and brought up from the grassroot level. He made his presence as an actor in every film in Tamil and other languages. However, he was not able to hit a purple patch in Hindi film industry but compensated with his character role in Tamil cinema as a lead actor. He was confident and took each of his roles with force and made the Tamil audience to look at him as a superstar. He is a veteran actor and made a mark with his style, mannerism and much appreciation. He is a living legend and deserves Dadasaheb Phalke Award. Krishnan Ramani, Ghaziabad

Modi's campaign techniques, unique!

THE flair for coining slogans by our ■ Prime Minister Narendra Modi, with alliterations and acronyms has become widely known. The present Assembly elections in the state of Kerala and in the Union territory of Puducherry are the latest examples. In prime minister parlance, Kerala has five diseases viz., Corruption, Casteism, Communalism, Cronyism and Criminalism. Its proposed target of FAST, denoting F for Fishery and Fertilsers, A for Agriculture and Ayurveda, S for Skill development and Social justice and T for Tourism and Technology. Not

lagging behind Puducherry is promised to be made into BEST. B for Business hub, E for Education hub, S for Spiritual hub and T for Tourist hub. Seshagiri Row Karry, Hyderabad

Reopen schools

WHEN whole state is normally working, why should schools only be closed. The TS government must reopen all schools and colleges to run them immediately. The hostel students face problems. Managements of private schools and colleges find it difficult to pay salaries to teachers, staff, van drivers, rents to buildings, and to return fees paid by students without running them. The government should not pass any student without conducting examinations. Students will have satisfaction, only when they pursue learning in a studious environment, and writing exams in school to obtain pass marks.

J Vijay Kumar, Secunderabad

Mamata's moves untested

 $T^{\rm HE\ effort\ by\ TMC's\ supremo\ Mamata\ Didi\ to\ cobble\ up\ together\ a}$ united front to fight the BJP while the BJP wishing to hoist its saffron flag pan India could, I seem, turn out to be a vigorous battle . TRS, who initially started this exercise has toned down its pursuit. The TDP isn't willing into get into the heat of this ongoing exercise., perhaps realising that fighting BJP is an onerous task

Both TRS & TDP have their own valid reasons for this. The results of the ongoing assembly election will show the way to the opposition and could also help them chalk out their future strategies according to the outcome. The opposition has a huge task ahead of itself and has to work really hard to succeed. The electorate has to be convinced beyond all doubts about its promises which it proposed to put forward and prove that it will emerge as a more viable alternative than the present ruling dispensation if given an opportunity to rule the country Only then it can succeed. Will it happen, time can only reveal.

NR Raghuram, Hyderabad

OPPOSITION parties in the country have been divided time immemorial and this fact had made ruling parties fascist and the then regime of Indira Gandhi led Congress and the present Modi led BJP prove this point. We have no dearth of talented leaders in the opposition but their egoistic attitude marred the unity and comes as blessing in disguise to Modi government (Mamata calls for united fight against BJP, April 1). It is time opposition parties shed their reservations and come together in the interest of the nation. This is because a strong opposition is needed to counter strong

government in the democratic setup. Kshirasagara Balaji Rao, Hyderabad

WEST Bengal has become a boiling pot with leaders of the TMC, BJP, Congress and the Left indulging in allegations and counter-allegations among themselves. Further, the Assembly elections in Bengal are marred by violence and hate campaigns. Recently, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and her BJP rival Suvendu Adhikari stepped up the attack against each other, just days before their high-profile contest in Nandigram.

However, as the real fight is between the BJP and the TMC, the Left and the Congress are just trying their fortunes. The 'Grand Old Party' has lost ground and differences among its leaders will cost it dear. The Left, which has an alliance with the Congress, also has very negligible chances of resurgence in the State's politics. The BJP, on the other hand, is fighting Mamata aggressively. Nitesh Mandwariya, Neemuch

India and Myanmar

TNDIAN presence at the Myanmar Army Day parade was unfortunate and likely to cause a lot of misgivings especially in the west. It seems like an endorsement of the actions of the military on unarmed protestors. Now this government has gone several steps ahead and issued directives to neighbouring states not to give asylum to the refugees who are fleeing from the atrocities of the military. If true; reports that more than 100 were deported back must make our heads hang with shame, because it negates all that India has stood for. Even in India there is studied silence about the entire affair. The road we seem to be taking is not the one the founding fathers fought for.

Anthony Henriques, Mumbai

Pak move welcome

DAKISTAN'S decision to allow imports from India is a welcome move. Pakistan is finally permitting the import of yarn and five lakh tonnes of sugar from the country. This will help India to explore the market and reduce carry overstock for the following sea-

Pakistan had stopped the import of cotton and yarn from India after a political fallout over the abrogation of Article 370 in Kashmir. Pakistani textile manufacturers have been demanding that imports from India be allowed, as it would be a cheaper option for them. Both nations should come forward to encourage bilateral trade by creating livelihood for the people.

Amit Singh Kushwaha, Satna (MP)

thehansreader@gmail.com

Say 'no' to corruption, AP CM exhorts new civic chiefs

- States that YSRCP govt has ensured social justice to weaker sections and women by offering more posts than normal
- Seeking opinions of mayors and chairpersons to improve ward secretariats, he says the mayors can communicate directly to CMO
- Says the govt is developing 17,000 layouts to provide house sites to the poor and is planning to provide house sites to urban middle class by developing model layouts

HANS NEWS SERVICE **A**MARAVATI

CHIEF Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy said that the state government ensured social justice to weaker sections and women by providing more number of posts in municipal corporations and municipalities. He said the government offered 67 posts accounting for 78 per cent, to SC,ST,BC and Minorities in municipalities as against the normal 45 posts. With regard to women, the Chief Miniser said that 52 civic chief posts were offered to them, 61 per cent, as against the normal allotment of 42 posts.

Participating as the chief guest at the concluding session of two-day workshop organised for newly-elected mayors,



Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy addressing the concluding session of two-day workshop for newly-electd mayors and chairpersons in Vijayawada on Thursday. (Below) The mayors and chairpersons who participated in the workshop.

deputy mayors, municipal chairpersons and vice-chairpersons at Vijayawada on Thursday, the Chief Minister advised the new mayors and chairpersons to 'say no to corruption'. He said the mayors and chairpersons should not show discrimination in delivering benefits of welfare schemes to people. He also sought opinions of newlyelected mayors and chairpersons to further improve the ward secretariats, adding that the mayors can communicate directly to Chief Minister's Office.

The Chief Minister said that the state government has been giving top priority to cleanliness and 8,000 garbage collection vehicles will be provided state wide. The government initiated steps to supply protected drinking water to every house, he said and asked the mayors and municipal chairpersons to work hard to meet the expectations of people as they gave massive mandate for them in the elections.

The Chief Minister said that



the state government has been developing 17,000 layouts to provide house sites to poor. Beautiful colonies should be developed in the layouts by providing underground drainage and power supply cables, parks. He said that the government was planning to provide house sites to urban middle class people by developing model layouts.

The Chief Minister said that

the state government spent Rs 1 lakh crore in the past 22 months under various welfare schemes under direct benefit transfer to the people. He said that the government has taken up improving infrastructure in schools and hospitals in a big way under Nadu Nedu programme. In addition Rytu Bharosa centres were set up for the benefit of

Jagan, wife receive Covid jab

- Calls upon all the eligible people above 45 years of age to get vaccinated as the statewide vaccination programme will end in 90 days
- Village and ward volunteers along with Asha works will carry out door-to-door survey to see that every person gets vaccination

 G_{UNTUR}

CHIEF Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy and his wife Y S Bharati took the coronavirus vaccine on Thursday here and initiated the statewide vaccination programme.

Setting an example for the need to get vaccinated, the couple underwent inoculation at the 140th ward secretariat at Bharatpet in the city.

Following the vaccination, Jagan Mohan Reddy was put under medical observation for a while. He later interacted with the doctors and the ward secretariat

The Chief Minister urged all the eligible people above the age of 45 years to get vaccinated and said that the statewide vaccinaChief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy launches Covid vaccination for those 45 years

and above at ward secretariat at Bharat Nagar in Guntur city on Thursday

tion programme will end in 90

He reiterated that it is inevitable for people to coexist with coronavirus and pointed out that vaccination is the only way to ward off infection.

'The government has mooted this massive vaccination programme like nowhere else in the country by taking it through village and ward secretariats, standing up as a role model for other states," he said.

He said that the village and ward volunteer system, a grassroots governance distribution system, will conduct a door-todoor survey along with Asha

workers to ensure that every eligible person in every household gets vaccinated.

"Volunteers would be collecting the details, enrol and give a vaccination date, an ambulance will be made available along with the doctors and other medical staff at the secretariat, which will be taken as a unit and vaccination would be carried out like a 'yagana" the Chief Minister noted

The Reddys vaccination event was attended by Ministers All Kali Krishna Srinivas, Mekathoti Sucharita and Sriranganadha Raju, along with MLAs Ambati Rambabu, Alla Ramakrishna Reddy and others.

AP DAILY COVID CASE COUNT ZOOMS TO 1,271

AMARAVATI

THE state reported 1,271 fresh Covid-19 cases, 464 recoveries and three deaths in 24 hours ending 9 am on Thursday. The latest bulletin said the gross positives now climbed to 9.03 lakh after 1.51 crore tests, at an overall rate of 5.98 per cent.

The total recoveries increased to 8.87.898 and toll to 7.220, it said.

The state's active caseload is now 8,142. The four major hotspot districts Chittoor, Guntur, Visakhapatnam and Krishna continued to report higher number of new cases while Vizianagaram and West Godavari maintained the lowest streak.

Chittoor crossed the 90,000 total mark on Thursday, the third in the state after East Godavari (1.25 lakh)

and West Godavari (94,500), as it

added 285 in a day.

Incidentally, Chittoor now has the highest number of 1,537 active cases. Its toll count of 867 is the highest in the state so far.

Guntur reported 279, Visakhapatnam 189 and Krishna 161 fresh cases in 24 hours.

Kadapa and Prakasam added 63 each, Anantapur 61, Kurnool 52, Nellore 43, East Godavari 27, Srikakulam 21. Vizianagaram 15 and West Godavari 12, according to the bulletin.

Anantapur, Guntur and Visakhapatnam reported one fresh Covid-19 fatality each.

TDP demands fresh notification for MPTC, ZPTC polls

HANS NEWS SERVICE **A**MARAVATI

TDP politburo member Varla Ramaiah wrote a letter to State Election Commission (SEC) demanding fresh notification for Mandal Parishad Territorial Constituency (MPTC) and Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency (ZPTC) elections.

In his letter, he alleged that the YSRCP resorted to irregularities by making the elections unanimous for 24 MPTCs and 19 per cent of ZPTCs, during earlier notification issued in March 2020. He said that former too SEC complained on this to the

Union home secretary. The TDP leader alleged that

Biden lets Trump era

H-1B visa bans expire

No new proclamation was issued by Biden till Wednesday mid-night, result-

The Wall Street Journal reported that the White House will not renew a ban

Covid-19 pandemic that is set to expire on Wednesday. Meanwhile, a Republi-

can Senator from Missouri on Wednesday urged Biden to issue a fresh procla-

mation to continue with the H-1B visa ban. "I write today to urge you to extend the freeze on temporary foreign worker entries into the United States

that, without intervention, will expire today," Senator Josh Hawley wrote in a

letter to Biden. "The presidential proclamation suspending entry of certain

temporary workers into the US has protected Americans suffering from the pandemic-induced economic crisis. With millions of struggling Americans out

of work - and millions more desperate to make ends meet - now is not the

American workers for scarce jobs and resources," he wrote.

Continued from P1

6.9 per cent.

One-year term deposit

scheme to earn a higher interest

rate of 5.5 per cent during the

first quarter of the current fiscal

while the girl child savings

scheme Sukanya Samriddhi Yo-

jana account will earn 7.6 per

cent as against reduced rate of

Accordingly, the interest rate

for the five-year senior citizens

savings scheme would be re-

tained at 7.4 per cent. The inter-

time to open the floodgates to thousands of foreign workers competing with

Govt withdraws cut

in rate on savings

schemes

est on the senior citizens'

scheme is paid quarterly. Inter-

est rate on savings deposits to

be restored at 4 per cent annu-

ally from the reduced rate of 3.5

per cent. Term deposits of one

to five years will fetch interest

rate in the range of 5.5-6.7 per

cent, to be paid quarterly, while

the interest rate on five-year re-

curring deposits will earn a

higher interest of 5.8 per cent

as against the reduced 5.3 per

on H-1B and other work-based visas imposed last year in response to the

ing in the automatic end to the ban on issuing of fresh H-1B visas.

Varla writes to SEC pointing out alleged forced withdrawals and unanimous elections last year

the ruling YSRCP conniving with the police made several MPTC and ZPTCs unanimous with forcible withdrawals. He said YSRCP leaders resorted to threats and attacks on the contestants to make them withdraw their nominations posing threat to democratic norms.

Ramaiah said to instil confidence among people on democratic electioneering system, the SEC should issue fresh notification for MPTC and ZPTC elections.

Put up pressure for SCS, Lokesh demands CM

HANS NEWS SERVICE Amaravati

TDP national general secretary and MLC Nara Lokesh on Thursday demanded Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy to start mounting pressure on the Central government for conferring the Special Category Status (SCS) on Andhra Pradesh in fulfilment of the AP Reorganisation Act promises.

Lokesh asked how the AP SCS could become a closed chapter when the special Union Territory status was being promised to Puducherry in the latest BJP election manifesto itself. It was a fact that the fake Chief Minister of AP has sent his party MPs and leaders to support the BJP in the ongoing election campaign there, he alleged.

In a statement here, the TDP MLC advised Jagan Mohan Reddy to stop his double game and start making genuine efforts to ensure justice for the people of AP. At the time of the 2019 election, Jagan Mohan Reddy has vowed to bend the necks of the Centre in order to bring the rightful special status to the state. After coming to power, the Chief Minister has fallen totally silent without



- Asks how the AP Special Status can become a closed chapter when UT Puducherry is being promised SCS by BJP now
- Says CM is tarnishing the image of his post by stooping to the level of getting baseless **April fool stories** in media against TDP

showing any commitment to industries and jobs for the youth.

Lokesh asserted that the Chief Minister should realise the fact that he would not be able to continue his secret jour-

more. The people have seen through the unholy friendship between the two. It was high time that Jagan should not sacrifice the SCS for the sake of his multi-crore illegal assets cases. The latest manifesto in the Puducherry election has exposed the secret deal between Jagan and the BJP, he said.

The TDP leader strongly critcised the Chief Minister for misusing his party friendly blue media to spread falsehoods against the TDP at the time of the 2019 election. Even now, he and his blue friends were continuing their misinformation and cheap campaigns. However, the YSRCP "lying squads" were biting the dust eventually after their false campaigns became exposed in front of the people, he said.

Condemning the false reports, Lokesh deplored that CM Jagan Mohan Reddy was tarnishing the image of Chief Minister post by stooping to the level of getting baseless April fool stories in media to take political revenge against the TDP. It was unfortunate that some media were compromising their standards without any ethics, he

RINL sales turnover reaches ₹18,000 crore

- The achievement is second highest in the history of plant
- The firm records a 13% growth as the sales volume reaches
- 4.45 million tonnes RINL registers a net profit of Rs 740 cr in the past four months

HANS NEWS SERVICE VISAKHAPATNAM

the 100 per cent disinvestment of Visakhapatnam steel plant (VSP), the company registered sales turnover of Rs 18,000 crore, second highest since its inception till the just concluded financial year.

Sharing details, chairman and managing director of RINL, which owns the plant, PK Rath, said with this, the company recorded a 13 per cent growth as the sales volume reached 4.45 million tonnes, the best ever production figures exceeding the capacity of 6.3 million tonnes per year. In the past four months, RINL registered a net profit of Rs 740 crore.

In March, the company achieved a sales turnover of Rs 3.300 crore and sales volume of 7,11,000 tonnes for the first time in the history, the CMD said, congratulating the RINL employees for their stupendous performance

in all areas of operations. "During the year, we achieved

export sales of 1.3 MT (million tonnes) which is 261 per cent higher than the previous year. In addition, 35 out of total 57 ocean export contracts were finalised with 100 per cent advance payment terms," Rath stated. He said that recruitment of 245 management trainees (Technical) is under process and added that the production at the Forged Wheel Plant at Raebareli is expected to start in a week.

He called upon the employees for focusing on some of the important aspects like increase in PCI (pulverised coal installation) in all the three furnaces, cost optimisation in all the areas, utilisation of waste like metallurgical waste, etc., Director (commercial) D K

Mohanty, director (projects) K K Ghosh, director (operations) A K Saxena, among others participated.

Congratulations Talaivar!

Political party leaders in Tamil Nadu greeted actor Rajinikanth for being conferred with the Dadasaheb Phalke. Chief Minister K. Palaniswami in a tweet said he had wished Raiinikanth over phone. "The Dadasaheb Phalke Award is the

recognition for your hardwork in the movie industry," the Tamil Nadu CM said. Palaniswami also said he would pray for Rajinikanth to get more awards and for a long life. DMK President MK Stalin in a Facebook post said he was happy to hear Tamil movie world's incomparable artiste and his friend Rajinikanth getting the Dadasaheb Phalke Award. "He should have been given this award long back. It is being given belatedly. My wishes to Rajini who not only in acting but has also set an example in friendship," Stalin said.

Actor-turned-politician Kamal Haasan also greeted Rajinikanth with a tweet. The highest award fits Rajini 100 per cent as he has proved that by mere presence on the screen one can win over fans.

Rajini is called Talaivar or "Style Mannan" in the Tamil movie industry.

Calling Rajinikanth "one of the greatest actors in the history of Indian cinema", the I&B

awarded for his contribution in the field of acting, production and screenwriting for Indian cinema. Posting a picture of the actor, Javadekar wrote: "Happy to announce #Dadasaheb Phalke award for 2020 to one of the greatest actors in history of Indian cinema Rajnikant ji His contribution as actor, producer and screenwriter has been iconic I thank Jury @ashabhosle @SubhashGhai1 @Mohanlal @Shankar_Live #BiswajeetChatterjee."

Andhra Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy also congratulated the film star, who enjoys a demigod status, made his debut in Tamil cinema with "Apoorva Raagangal". Among his numerous hits are films like "Baashha", "Sivaji" and "Enthiran". He is known as Thalaivar or leader by his fans.

Widely regarded as one of the most popular cinematic icons in India. Raiinikanth has also been honoured with the Padma Bhushan in 2000 and the Padma Vibhushan in 2016 by the Government of India.

The Dadasaheb Phalke Award is India's highest honour in cinema. It is presented annually at the National Film Awards by Directorate of Film Festivals of the Information and Broadcasting ministry of the Government of

tress Devika Rani. Recent recipients include Amitabh Bachchan, Vinod Khanna, filmmaker K Vishwanath and Manoj Kumar.

The Dada Saheb Phalke award jury consists of Malavalam super star Mohanlal and Tamil music composer and singer, Shankar Mahadevan, besides veteran singer Asha Bhosle, and moviemaker Subhash Ghai.

Rajnikant is very popular in all the southern states and also Bollywood. All his movies are invariably dubbed in Telugu, Malayalam, Hindi and has set the silver screen on fire for many generations.

Tamil Nadu villages and cities bursted with joy on the announcement of Rajini's feat. People took to streets and hundreds reached Poes Garden residence.

At Salem people celebrated Rajini's Phalke win by distributing sweets and lighting crackers. The Information and Broadcasting minister when asked whether this award was given to Rajinikanth to influence Tamil Nadu elections, Javadekar said: "This is in no way related to Tamil Nadu elections".

Congratulatory messages continue to pour in from political leaders, actors, directors and social workers, besides people from all walks

Sporadic violence mars second phase polling

Continued from P1

The EC is working as per Amit Shah's instructions." she said while sitting outside booth number 7 in Boyal in Nandigram, where her partymen alleged many voters were unable to cast their ballot. "Goons from other states are creating ruckus here," she said.

Protesters also blocked the road in Nandigram's Block 1, alleging Central forces stopped them from going to the polling stations. "The CRPF personnel accompanying Suvendu Adhikari stopped us from casting our votes," a protester said. On the other hand, Suvendu Adhikari's car, was attacked, and stones were pelted while he was visiting booths in the assembly constituency. Two separate stone-pelting incidents took place in Takapura and Satengabari in Nandigram. His vehicle was gheraoed at various locations as TMC supporters shouted slogans against the BJP leader. Security forces patrolling the area dispersed the mob. "I am used to such protests by TMC goons. They are all followers of Mamata begum (Mamata Banerjee). Let them do whatever they want till the results are out on May 2," Adhikari told reporters. Meanwhile, BJP candidate from Keshpur assembly constituency Tanmay Ghosh's vehicle was vandalised allegedly by the Trinamool Congress supporters, police said. Three persons have been arrested in connection with the incident, they said. More than 75 lakh voters will decide the fate of 191 candidates in the 30 constituencies for which voting ends at 6.30 pm.

Rajini dedicates Dada Saheb Phalke award to those responsible for his rise

CHENNA

SUPERSTAR Rajinikanth on Thursday dedicated the prestigious Dada Saheb Phalke Award announced by the Centre to be conferred on him to those who made him what he is now, including a bus driver friend and his mentor who launched him in cinema, the late K Balachander.

Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar had announced on Thursday that Rajinikanth will be bestowed with the Dada Saheb Phalke award for the year 2019, making him the third from Tamil cinema after the late thespian Sivaji Ganesan and late director Balachander, his mentor, to have been chosen for the award.

Congratulatory messages poured in from various quarters to the veteran. Those who greeted him were his long-time friend and contemporary Kamal Haasan, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister K Palaniswami, his deputy O Panneerselvam, DMK President M K Stalin and various other political leaders. The 70-year old actor thanked the Centre for conferring the prestigious award and said he dedicated it to his friend Raj Bahadur, elder brother Sathyanarayana Rao and all those who made him the Rajini that is now.

"I dedicate this award to my friend and bus driver Raj Bahadur, who discovered my acting talent and encouraged me, my elder brother Sathyanarayana Rao Gaekwad, who sacrificed a lot to make me an actor while struggling with poverty, my guru K Balachander, who created this Rajinikanth," he said. In a statement he also dedicated the award to producers, directors, technicians, distributors, the-



Artist Sudarshan Pattnaik gives finishing touches to a sand sculpture congratulating superstar Rajinikanth on being awarded the Dadasaheb Phalke Award for 2019, in Puri on Thursday

atre owners, media, the Tamil people, "who have given me my life, and my fans across the world."

Rajinikanth said he thanked the Indian government and Prime Minister Narendra Modi for conferring him the "Indian cinema's highest honour." "My heartfelt thanks to the government of india, respected & dearest @narendramodi ji, @PrakashJavdekar ji and the

jury for conferring upon me the

prestigious #DadasahebPhalkeAward. I sincerely dedicate it to all those who have been a part of my journey. Thanks to the almighty," he tweeted.

The star thanked Palaniswamy, Panneerselvam, Leader of Opposition Stalin, "my friend Kamal Haasan," national and state politicians, his friends, his friends in the film industry and my well-wishers. "Long live Tamil people! Long live Tamil Nadu! Jai Hind!!," he said. Congratulating the actor over phone, Palaniswami said the Dada Saheb Phalke Award recognises his hard work in the film industry. "I pray to God that you will receive many more awards and live long," the chief minister said.

His long-time friend and

Makkal Needhi Maiam founder Kamal Haasan said the award, highest to be bestowed on a performing artiste, is 100 per cent appropriate for Rajinikanth while Stalin said that though 'delayed' the recognition was welcome. "It is a great pleasure that the highest award, the Dada Saheb Phalke Award, has been announced to Rajinikanth, the supreme star and my dearest friend. The award is 100 per cent appropriate for Rajini, who has proven that he can win over fans by appearing on screen," Haasan tweeted.

Stalin described Rajinikanth

as a "dear friend" and an "unparalleled performer" and expressed joy over him being selected for the award. "Delayed but welcome," he said in a tweet. He wished that Rajinikanth, "a symbol of acting and friendship," continues with his journey in filmdom PMK leader and former union minister Dr Anbumani Ramadoss congratulated the superstar. "Actor Rajinikanth has been honored with the Dada Saheb Phalke Award, the highest award of the film industry in India.

Award winning close friend @rajinikanth Congratulations," he tweeted. AMMK leader TTV Dhinakaran, BJP state president L Murugan, national award winning lyricist Vairamuthu, popular comedian Vivekh and a number of film personalities greeted the actor on being selected for the award. (PTD)

With just 5 days left, Vijayan trying to put up a brave face

SANU V GEORGE THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

WITH just five more days left for the Assembly polls here, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's body language from that of a sure winner appears to have dimmed and is now aggressively targetting the Congress-led UDF. He is trying his best to harp on the alleged link the Congress has with the BJP-led NDA and that it is out to stop the development of Kerala.

Incidentally, this sudden change has happened in the past one week, after the arrival of Rahul Gandhi and it peaked when his sister and Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra went around on her whirlwind trip across the southern and central districts. After getting a tremendous response during her 2-day visit, Priyanka is returning for a few more road shows on Saturday in the state capital.

Vijayan was sitting pretty till a few days back and was riding on the few pre-poll surveys which predicted an easy walkover, but things turned with the arrival of a report of the state intelligence



and the central intelligence which predicted that the Congress-led UDF would have an easy victory.

On Thursday, Vijayan met the media in his home turf at Kannur and said that of late there have been lots of lies and canards that have been spread against the Left and he tried to defend it by citing a report of Transparency International, which rated Kerala as

the least corrupt state and added that Rajasthan, which is ruled by the Congress is the most corrupt.

"Of late several new campaigners have come and are trying to attack the Left and it includes even personal attacks. These people who have come from outside are just airing the statements of the state leaders. None will forget it's these parties who were responsible for the scams like Bo-

fors and 2G. While the Congress was at the centre of the carnage of the Sikhs in Delhi, Muslims were slayed in Gujarat besides the brutal killing of Graham Staines and his two young sons," said Vijayan.

He also warned that in the coming days more canards are expected to come in the form of forged documents and fake voice messages. (AANS)



Winning all 7 Assembly seats in Wayanad, prestige issue for RaGa

The seven assembly con-

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

FOR Rahul Gandhi ensuring victory in all the seven assembly constituencies that comes under his Wayanad Lok Sabha constituency has become a prestige issue.

"Yes, he is leaving nothing to chance and he is going to be there to ensure that not a single seat goes to the Left because in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, he won with a staggering record breaking victory margin of 4,31 lakh votes that came from the seven assembly constituencies," said a top Congress leader who did not wished to be identified.

stituencies are spread over three districts -- three each in Wayanad (Kalpetta, Manathavady and Sultan Battery); Malappuram (Wandoor, Nilambur and Eranadu) and one in Kozhikode (Thiruvambady).

Elections to the 140 member Kerala Assembly is scheduled on April 6.

In the 2016 assembly polls, four went to the Left, and three to the Congress-led UDF.

On Thursday, Rahul Gandhi faced the sweltering heat as he began his road show from Manathavady but by noon he covered

all the three assembly constituencies in Wayanad district. Later in the day he is scheduled to touch down at the other ones -- all this in his third phase of campaigning in Kerala.

He had reserved his campaign and road shows in his district till the last phase. The latest news is that his sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra is arriving on Sunday -- on the final day of the campaign to join him, for one last round of campaigning.

Her two-day campaign in the central and southern districts of the state had given a huge boost to the Congress-led UDF. (MANS)

SEEKING RELIEF



Beach goers lay on the sand just north of the Huntington Beach Pier as summer-like temperatures reached nearly 90 degrees inland on Wednesday in Huntington Beach, California

FOR REMARKS AGAINST TAMIL NADU CM

EC debars A Raja from campaigning

New Delhi

THE Election Commission on Thursday delisted DMK MP and former Minister A. Raja from the star campaigners' list and debarred him from campaigning for 48 hours with immediate effect for making a "derogatory and scandalous" speech against Tamil Nadu Chief Minister K. Palaniswami.

The commission also advised Raja to be "watchful and not to make intemperate, indecent, derogatory, obscene remarks and lower the dignity of women in the future during the election campaign".

The commission's action came a day after it found Raja's reply unsatisfactory regarding the allegations charged against him. Raja has submitted his reply to the EC on Wednesday denying all charges against him after the commission in a notice on March 30 directed him to explain his position in this re-



gard. In its Thursday order, the Commission said, "You (A. Raja) had submitted your interim reply on March 31 denying the allegations. It is requested to give you an opportunity to give detailed reply and personal hearing with your advocate.

"Your reply was not found satisfactory. It was also observed that asking for more time to represent is an attempt to buy time which the Commission cannot afford to give in the midst of elections." After considering all facts, documents, reports and your reply on March 31, the commission further said, "it reprimands you for violation of model code of conduct".

"The commission delists your name from the list of star campaigner of DMK and debars you from campaigning for 48 hours with immediate effect. The commission also advises you to be watchful and not to make intemperate, indecent, derogatory, obscene remarks and lower the dignity of women in future during election campaign."

The commission received a complaint on March 27 through Chief Electoral Officer Tamil Nadu from All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK), wherein it was alleged that Raja had made derogatory and scandalous speech against the Chief Minister during the election campaign on March 26 at Thousand Lights Assembly constituency.

After considering the statements and reports, the commission found the contents of the speech only derogatory but also obscene and lower the dignity of motherhood of women. The poll panel said it is a serious violation of the provisions of model code of conduct. (AANS)

Rly services to pre-Covid levels likely over next 2 months

New Delhi

THE Railways is likely to restore its train services to pre-Covid levels over the next two months, provided the state governments give their nod and the coronavirus pandemic is under control, sources said Thursday.

They also said these are likely to be special trains only and not regular services. Currently 66 per cent of trains are operational, albeit as special trains. The special trains being run by the railway have

Currently 66% trains operating

marginally higher fares, offer no concessions except in certain categories and operate as fully reserved services. All regular passenger services of the Railways remain suspended since the lockdown was announced in March last year. But the national transporter started special train services in a phased manner since May 2020. As of now, 77 per cent of mail, express trains are in service, 91 per cent of subur-

ban trains are running while only 20 per cent of passenger trains are currently on tracks.

"Over the next two months, we would like to reach the pre-Covid level of services with our special trains. However, this depends on approval from states as well as the status of the coronavirus pandemic," said an official. The pre-Covid average of mail, express trains was 1,768 per day, now it is 1,353 per day,

while before the pandemic, 3,634 passenger trains were running daily, only 740 are in service per day currently.

However, while pre-Covid, 5,881 suburban trains were in operation per day, now, 5,381 trains are on track. India recorded its highest daily rise in COVID-19 cases this year with 72,330 new infections being reported in a span of 24 hours, taking the total tally of cases to 1,22,21,665, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Thursday. The single-day rise in cases is

the highest recorded since October 11, 2020, while the death toll increased to 1,62,927 with 459 daily new fatalities, the highest in around 116 days, the data updated at 8 am showed.

data updated at 8 am showed.
Registering a steady increase for the 22nd day in row, the active cases have increased to 5,84,055comprising 4.78 per cent of the total infections, while the recovery rate has further dropped to 93.89 per cent, the data stated. As many as 74,383 new infections were recorded in a span of 24 hours on October 11, 2020. pro

BJP leader's security guard killed in Srinagar attack

Srinagar

THE police security guard of a mid-rung BJP leader was killed in a militant attack on Thursday in the outskirts of

Srinagar city.
Police sources said that
militants attacked the residence of Anwar Khan in Aribach area of Newstern

agh area of Nowgam.
"The BJP leader was not present at his residence when the militants struck.

Ramiz Raja, the police constable guarding Khan's residence was injured in the attack

"He was shifted to a city hospital where he succumbed to critical injuries.

"Militants decamped with the service rifle of the injured police guard," sources said. Police has registered an FIR and investigations are underway to identify the militants involved in the attack. (GANS)



TODAY'S QUOTE

No Tax on income earned in Gulf countries

Amendment in the Finance Act, 2021, has merely incorporated general definition of the term 'liable to tax' in the Income Tax Act to provide clarity. This amendment has not altered the taxability of salary income earned by non-resident Indian citizens in Gulf countries. Their salary income earned in Gulf countries would continue to be exempt in India - Nirmala Sitharaman, Finance Minister



REVENUE BUOYANCY

FinMin releases ₹45,000 cr to States

The Finance Ministry on Thursday said it has released Rs 45,000 crore to the states as additional devolution in the 2020-21 fiscal following revenue buoyancy in the March quarter. As per the Revised Estimates for 2020-21, Rs 5,49,959 crore, being 41 per cent of the shareable pool of taxes and duties were estimated to

FOREX (bu	n ₹)		
JS Dollar	73.83	South	D. BY
Euro	86.67	African Rand	5.72
UAE Dirham	20.5	Hong Kong Dollar	10.81
Thai Baht	2.57	Japanese Yen	0.76
British Pound	101.75	New Zealand Dollar	51.52
Australian Dollar	55.86	Saudi Riyal	21.43
Canadian Dollar	58.61	Swedish Krona	9.61
Swiss Franc	78.04	Singapore Dollar	55.39

BIZ BRIEFS

Ovo's initiative for employees

OYO Hotels & Homes has announced that it would be covering vaccination costs for all employees in India and their families. The employees can choose to get the vaccination done at any centre convenient to them and the costs would be reimbursed in full by Oyo. The company was one of the first Indian startups to announce a five-day work week and is now offering free annual health checks, 24X7 doctor consultation, Covid-19 test booking. Dinesh Ramamurthi, Chief Human Resources Officer - Oyo Hotels & Homes said: "We are trying our best to win the fight against Covid-19. As part of our commitment to keep our employees and their families safe, we are happy to facilitate the cost of their Covid-19 vaccinations."

Haier unveils new range

aier has unveiled 17 new variants of big bottom mounted refrigerators. The new series allows temperature to be controlled between a wide range of +9°C to -24°C to cater to the unique requirements of different food items for retaining their freshness and nutrition for longer duration. The new range is available in 346L and 376L capacity and has features such as triple inverter, dual fan and extra space, also allows more energy savings and reduces noise. Eric Braganza, President, Haier Appliances India said: "In line with our motto of Inspired Living, our new line-up of big bottom mount refrigerators provides the customers with the option of choosing multiple modes of cooling while reducing the bending to up to 90 per cent."

Soch's 1st store in Nizamabad

Soch has launched its first store in Nizamabad. The marks a step to establish its footprint in the State and reinforce its pan-India presence. The store will showcase the brand's newest range such as fluid silhouettes, breezy structures and lightweight fabrics for the summer season and range of sarees, salwar suits, kurtas, tunics, kurtis and dress materials. Vinay Chatlani, Executive Director & CEO, Soch Apparels said, "we're very excited to launch our first store in Nizamabad and further establish our reach in Telangana. We currently have 11 stores in the State. We aim to bring to our consumers in this region a plethora of sartorial options starting with our new Summer Collection."

CoinDCX launches Go investment app

oinDCX recently launched Capp Coin DCX Go is trying to bridge the gap between those challenged by knowledge on crypto and those who are concerned about the safety and security of their investments. The app is available both for Android and IoS devices and has been downloaded more than 1,50,000 times. On the app, a user can buy or sell crypto, while easily navigating through its secured backdrop and finish his business on the platform as he finishes his coffee or tea. The app only features 14 out of some 4000+ crypto assets that exist in the market. Neeraj Agarwal, Co-Founder, CoinDCX said: "CoinDCX has partnered with Bitgo, the most trusted crypto custodian in the world, to ensure users' crypto funds are completely safe and insured on the Go app. In addition, CoinDCX also partnered with Onfido to protect users against user identification fraud."

MCA tweaks norms to ensure transparency

Companies now shall disclose shareholding of promoters and current maturities of long-term borrowings

KUMUD DAS **M**UMBAI

A host of changes has been brought in by Ministry of Company Affairs (MCA) effective from April 1, 2021, to ensure more and more transparency. Schedule III of the Companies Act-2013 contains the general instructions for preparation of Balance Sheet and Statement of Profit and Loss of a Company.

Now, the companies have to round off the figures appearing in the financial statements, hitherto it was optional. Further, the criteria for rounding off shall be based on 'total income' in place of 'turnover'.

Company now shall disclose shareholding of promoters, and current maturities of long-term borrowings shall be disclosed separately. Trade Payables ageing schedule and trade receivables ageing schedule has to be given.

"These changes will lead to increased disclosure in the Financial Statements of the Companies and auditors will be required to be more vigilant on such disclosures now," says an I-T expert and CA, Abhishek Aneja.

The changes will be quite helpful to the users of financial statements such as shareholders, regulatory authorities, banks, lenders, vendors



Ministry of Corporate Affairs

सत्यमेव जयते Goverments of India

and customers as they will be able to get a clear position of Company in respect of its assets, liabilities, obligations, utilisation of funds, receivables and performance of the company by going through such disclosures, he said.

HANS BUSINESS

The regulatory authorities such as Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Income tax and others will now be able to look out for the non-compliance of Corporate and taxation laws by going through these additional disclosures, he added. There are several other changes which have been made by the government. Security deposits shall not be disclosed under 'long-term loans and advances' but disclosed under 'Other non-current assets'.

Moreover, the company will have to disclose the reason of utilisation of funds for the purposes other than for which they were borrowed and shall also disclose the purposes for which the funds were utilised.

Company needs to disclose if the books of accounts are tallied with the quarterly or monthly returns filed with banker in cases where company has borrowed funds from banks on the basis securities of current assets, or else a separate reco statement

needs to be provided. The story doesn't end here. The company will have to provide the details of all the immovable property (other than properties where the Company is the lessee and the lease agreements are duly executed in favour of the lessee) whose title deeds are not held and where such immovable property is jointly held with others, details are required to be given to the extent of the company's share.

In cases where revaluation has been done in case of Property Plant and Equipment, the company shall disclose if the valuation was done by registered valuer.

It has been mandated that disclosures to be made where Loans or Advances in the nature of loans are granted to promoters, directors, KMPs and related parties (loans given to promoters as a percentage

of total loans). In case of capital-work-in progress, ageing schedule shall be given. On the other, for intangible assets under development, aging schedule has to be given.

In a view to tighten its noose against benami transactions, the government has said that disclosure of any proceedings initiated or pending against the company for holding any benami property under the Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Act, 1988 to be made. Whenever a company is declared as wilful defaulter by any bank or financial Institution or other lender, details relating to that are to be provided. In the event of any charges or satisfaction yet to be registered with Registrar of Companies beyond the statutory period, details and reasons thereof shall have to be

Following ratios to be disclosed:

- Current Ratio
- Debt-Equity Ratio
- Debt Service Coverage Ratio
- Return on Equity Ratio Inventory turnover ratio
- Trade Receivables turnover ratio Trade payables turnover ratio
- Net capital turnover ratio
- · Net profit ratio
- Return on Capital employed · Return on investment

DELHI ERIDAY 2 APRII 2021

Interups Inc buys 49% stake in Trujet

The US-based firm agrees to pump in funds in the Hyd-based budget airlines

HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

IN a significant development, citybased Turbo Megha Airways Pvt Ltd, which owns and operates Trujet airlines, received a big financial boost to expand its operations, with US-based Interups Inc buying 49 per cent stake in the budget airlines. Financial details of this transaction have not been disclosed. Turbo Megha Airways is a part of MEIL Group.

The funds raised through 49 per cent FDI in the company, will be utilised to expand its operations pan India and explore the newer opportunities in the civil aviation sector. We will finalise the exact final amount at a later stage," KV Pradeep, Group Director, MEIL and Palepu Lakshmi Prasad, Chairman, Interups Inc, said in a joint statement.

This FDI in Trujet assumes significance in the wake of the aviation sector going through unprecedented turbulent times triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic.

A successful operator on UdeDeshkaAamNaagrik (UDAN) routes, Trujet, which commenced its operations in July 2015, currently operates flights to 21 destinations, including tier-2 cities. The destinations include Hyderabad, Mumbai, Aurangabad, Chennai, Goa, Bangalore, Tirupati, Vijayawada, Kadapa, Rajahmundry, among others. It is the only airline operating in the Hyderabad-Aurangabad sector.

According to the joint statement issued by the company, TruJet has carried 28.19 lakh passengers to different parts of the country since its inception. "It is trying to put the remote places on the national aviation map by connecting them with the rest of the country. Launched on July 12, 2015, with two aircraft, TruJet now has seven aircraft," the statement added.

Macrotech IPO to open on Apr 7

Realty major, formerly known as **Lodha Developers,** sets price band at ₹483-486



NEW DELHI

REALTY major Macrotech Developers, formerly known as Lodha Developers, on Thursday said it has fixed a price band of Rs 483-486 a share for its initial share-sale, which will open for public subscription on April 7.

The issue will close on April 9 and bidding for anchor investors will be open on April 6, Macrotech Developers said in a statement. The initial public offer (IPO) is a fresh issuance of equity shares aggregating up to Rs 2,500 crore. This includes a reservation of equity shares of up to Rs 30 crore to employees.

The Mumbai-based realty firm plans to utilize about Rs 1,500 crore from the net proceeds towards repayment of outstanding borrowings, up to Rs 375 crore for acquisition of land or land developmental rights and for general corporate purposes. This would be the third attempt by Lodha Developers to launch a public issue and list its shares on the stock exchanges.

The company had filed its preliminary papers for the first time in September 2009, to raise about Rs 2,800 crore. It had received Sebi's nod in January 2010 but later shelved the plan due to unfavourable market conditions post the global financial crisis.

Hysea's 2nd edition BizSummit on Apr 9

HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

HYDERABAD Software Enterprises Association (Hysea) announced the second edition of 'BizSummit' with the theme on 'Expanding Growth Horizons in the new Normal' and it's scheduled for April 9, 2021.

"Hysea strives to enable the small and mid-sized companies to grow to the next level and collectively derive value through many of our initiatives, including focussed events like Biz-Summit. We work with all the stakeholders including the government to identify opportunities and promote our member companies and the overall IT ecosystem in Hyderabad," said Bharani K Aroll, president, Hysea. The one-day summit will have two keynote and one leader note addresses, 25 plus speakers, and four panel discussions in



physical and virtually mode. The summit focuses on the emerging opportunity landscape and the impact of the pandemic on mid and small enterprises. "The Biz Summit focuses on unveiling the impact of the pandemic on overall growth trajectory of IT and technology sector, especially on IT MSMEs," said Kiran Cherukuri, Vice President, HY-SEA, SME Forum Leader and CEO. TechEra.

"I am glad to state that we have very eminent speakers deliberating on various aspects such as market trends and analysis, business development, operational excellence investor expectations and emerging opportunities, etc," Aroll added. Rajesh Nambiar, chairman and managing director, Cognizant Technology Solutions, India, will be chief guest for the summit and Jayesh Ranjan, Telangana IT Secretary, as guest of honour. The summit will have a special keynote address by Saurabh Gaur, Joint Secretary, Ministry

of Electronics & IT, India.

Wipro acquires Aus firm Ampion for \$117mn

BENGALURU

GLOBAL software major Wipro on Thursday announced buying Australia-based Ampion for \$117 million (Rs 858 crore), as it provides cyber security, Dev Ops (software development and IT operations) and engineering services.

"The transaction is expected to be completed during the quarter ending June 30, 2021, subject to regulatory approvals," said the city-based listed firm in a regulatory filing. The buyout in cash is for 100 per cent acquisition of Ampion's shares. Headquartered in Melbourne, Ampion was formed through a merger of IT services providers 'Revolution IT' and Shelde in 2019.

Revolution IT was an IT services firm founded in 2004 and Shelde was a digital IT security company set up in 2010.

"Ampion has 500 consulting and technology specialists. It posted US\$85.5-million revenue for the year ending June 30, 2020," said the filing. The Australian market is undergoing disruption through the adoption of cloud, DevOps, analytics and resilience related digital capabilities, across enterprises and public sector entities.

"Our combined offerings, powered by engineering transformation, DevOps and security consulting services will bring scale and market agility to respond to the growing demands of customers," said the outsourcing firm on the occasion.

NSE trims Nifty lot size to 50

New Delhi THE National Stock Exchange (NSE)

has slashed the market lot size for derivative contracts on Nifty 50, a move that will reduce the burden of excessive upfront margins for retail traders. The lot size has been reduced to 50 from the existing 75, NSE said in a circular on Wednesday. The reduction in the lot size for Nifty will reduce the margin requirements for futures trading by one-third, stockbroking firm Fyers CEO Tejas Khoday said. Currently, traders need approximately Rs 1,73,000 to trade one lot, he said. From July onwards, the margin requirement will reduce to approximately Rs 1,16,000 (at current Nifty prices). This is a great move by NSE to reduce the burden of excessive upfront margins for retail traders, he added. "Only the far month contract i.e. July 2021 expiry contracts will be revised for market lots. Contracts with maturity of May 2021 and June 2021 would continue to have the existing market lots. All subsequent contracts (i.e. July 2021 monthly expiry and beyond) will have revised market lots," NSE said.

According to the bourse, the day spread order book will not be available for the combination contract of May-July 2021 and June-July 2021 ex-

Sensex reclaims 50k mark on positive global cues

INDIAN equities started the new fiscal on a strong note on Thursday, with the BSE Sensex surging over 520 points to settle above the 50,000-level on across-the-board buying by participants amid positive global cues.

At the closing bell, the 30-share BSE index quoted 520.68 points or 1.05 per cent higher at 50,029.83, driven by gains in banking, IT and energy stocks. Of the Sensex stocks, 25 closed in the green.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty rose 176.65 points or 1.2 per cent to settle at 14,867.35. IndusInd Bank, Kotak Bank, ICICI Bank, Sun Pharma, Bajaj Finance and Ultratech Cement were prominent gainers. State-run

SBI rose 1.7 per cent amid a rally in public

sector banks. On the other hand, HUL, Nestle, HDFC Bank, TCS, Titan and Tech Mahindra suffered "Domestic equities shrugged-off Covid-19 spikes on favourable global cues and recovered sharply mainly led by strong buying in financials and automobile stocks. Strong monthly volume for March helped auto stocks attract investors' interest," Binod Modi, Head - Strategy at Reliance Securities, said. Meanwhile, the global oil benchmark Brent crude was trading 0.6 per cent lower at \$63.95 per barrel. Elsewhere in Asia, bourses clocked gains as the announcement of US infrastructure stimulus plan boosted investor sentiment globally.

"Markets across the globe were boosted by (US President) Biden's \$2.3 trillion spending plan. The rally in the domestic market was led by positive cues from global peers, strong buying in metal stocks and recovery in the banking sector. Metal stocks outshined other sectoral indices on re-

ports of possible price hike." Vinod Nair. Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services-

Hyderabad emerges as major healthcare hub

The city offers healthcare at 30 to 35% lesser cost compared to Delhi or Mumbai

SHARON THAMBALA

HYDERABAD

ALONG with Delhi, Mumbai and other big cities in India, Hyderabad has emerged as a major healthcare hub for foreigners, attracting thousands of patients every year.

Though the coronavirus pandemic has interrupted the flow of foreign patients, Continental Hospital CEO Riyaz Khan said as many as 3 lakh patients used to visit the city for treatment during a normal year. "We used to get a good number of patients for all kinds of treatment like oncology, orthopedics, cardiology, spine surgery and others. Patients used to come from West Africa and Middle Eastern countries like Yemen, Oman, some parts of Saudi Arabia and Bangladesh," said Khan.

According to the doctor who is managing the 750-bedded JCI accredited hospital located in the financial district, there are myriad reasons for the city of pearls to emerge as a major destination for foreign clientele. Quality of service,



There are myriad reasons for the city of pearls to emerge as a major destination for foreign clientele. Quality of service, affordability, local connections, direct flights, culture, cuisine and ease of getting services are some of them

affordability, local connections, direct flights, culture, cuisine and ease of getting services are some of them. Cost of healthcare in India is still

lesser when compared to Singapore or Thailand, proving to be one of the key reasons for this popularity. When Hyderabad is pitted against other cities within India, Khan said the IT city offers healthcare at 30 per cent to 35 per cent lesser cost compared to Delhi or Mumbai.

Besides the cost factor. Khan said the ease of arriving in Hyderabad, finding hospitals, local cuisine and culture are also major pull factors.

Multiple educational institutions and universities such as the University of Hyderabad, Osmania University, EFLU and others host a good number of foreign students from these countries, all of whom spread the word about the city's medical infrastructure.

'Sindhu needs to pay more focus to recovery between matches to win Tokyo medal'

NEW DELHI

WORLD champion P V Sindhu remains India's best Olympic medal prospect but



she has to give more attention to her recovery process between matches to achieve the feat at the Tokyo Games, believes former India badminton coach Vimal Kumar.

Sindhu didn't have a good outing in the three events in

Thailand in January and even though she reached the finals at Swiss Open or the semifinals at All England, she suffered demoralising losses to Olympic champion Carolina Marin and Thailand's Pornpawee Chochu-

"I feel the best (Olympic) medal prospect is Sindhu, she can and there is still time. She showed some glimpses against Akane Yamaguchi (at All England

quarters). But she needs to give more attention to recovery to be ready for next match because there will not be 24 hours to recover," Vimal told PTI.

"May be ice bath, there are so many ways to get rid of the lactic acid accumulation after a tough match. If she can look into those aspects, she will be all right. I don't think she has any fitness issue."

At the Swiss Open final, Sindhu was blown away by Marin 12-21 5-21, while Chochuwong beat the Indian 21-17 21-9 in the semifinals at All England. However. the Indian showed great intensity during her win over Japan's Akane Yamaguchi in the All England quarterfinals. "She has been very sluggish against Marin and Pornpawee. Between matches what you do, that matters, it is sometimes tough to recover due to the schedule. Look at the tennis players, after 5-6 hours of gruelling matches, they again play five-setters. So recovery really matters," Vimal said.

"Some top players take ice bath immediately after a match and also before going to sleep. It is very

common in international level...But I think you need to give her some space and she will come back.'

Asked about London Olympics bronze medallist Saina Nehwal, who is racing against time to qualify for her fourth Olympics, Vimal said it will very tough for her to make it to Tokyo given her recent results.

"Saina is still injury-prone but she can qualify and it all depends on India Super 500, she has to do well here. It is a very tough job, after India Open, she also has to do well in Malaysia and Singapore," said Vimal who coached Saina from 2014 to 2017.

Another Indian player who is struggling to find form is Rio Games quarterfinalist Kidambi Srikanth. He had claimed four super series titles in 2017 to eventually hold the world no. 1 position briefly in 2018 but he is now desperately looking for ranking points to book a Tokyo Olympics berth.

"He lost to a young french

It was also decided that the interim

COVID-19 regulations that were in-

troduced in 2020 to allow interna-

tional cricket to resume will continue

to be followed. It means that home

umpires will be asked to officiate

player (Toma Junior Popov) in Orleans Masters and at All England he lost to a Vietnamese guy from Ireland (Nhat Nguyen). For his standards these are poor results, he needs to find some sort of tactical inputs, employ some strategies, he looks clueless when playing," Vimal said.

"He was always a player who would come to the net quickly, it was difficult to read his shots when he would jump, he seldom uses those now." Srikanth had pulled out of Yonex Thailand Open due to a calf injury while he was forced to withdraw from Toyota Thailand Open after his roommate B Sai Praneeth had tested positive for COVID-19.

"Srikanth seems to be under a lot of pressure, I also don't see the joy in his face, he seems to be tensed always. These factors are letting him down," Vimal

said. "It is becoming difficult for him (to qualify for Olympics). At India Open, he has to get to semifinals. He has to reach semifinals and finals at Singapore and Malaysia to make it to Olympics." (PTI)

Decision Review System

'UMPIRE'S CALL' WILL REMAIN, RULES ICC

DUBAI

THE contentious 'Umpire's Call' will continue to be a part of the Decision Review System, the International Cricket Council's Board ruled on Thursday, but introduced a few changes to the current DRS protocols.

Called "confusing" by India captain been a subject of controversy for a while now. As per the existing rule, 50 per cent of the ball should be hitting at least one of the three stumps for the batsman to be adjudged LBW on review in case an umpire's not out call has been challenged.

"The Cricket Committee had an excellent discussion around Umpire's Call and analysed its use extensively," ICC's Cricket Committee head and former Indian captain Anil Kumble said in statement issued by the governing body after the end of its board run that meetings on Wednesday.

"The principle underpinning DRS was to correct clear errors in the game whilst ensuring the role of the umpire as the decision maker on the field of play was preserved...Umpire's Call allows that to happen, which is why it is important it remains," he added.

Kohli had argued that the batsman should be declared out if the ball is hitting the stumps, even if marginally. The ICC introduced three minor changes to the DRS and third Umpire been protocols.

"For LBW reviews, the height mar-called and correct any error prior to gin of the Wicket Zone will be lifted to the next ball being bowled." the top of the stumps to ensure the same Umpire's Call margin around the stumps for both height and width," the

This means that the review, which until now covered till the base of the bails, will extend to the top of the bails Virat Kohli, the Umpire's Call has as well, effectively increasing the height of the wicket zone while

> A player will also be able to ask the umpire whether a genuine attempt has been made to play the ball before





SENIOR, JUNIOR & SUB-JUNIOR NATIONAL TRACK CYCLING C'SHIP-2021

14 previous records broken as event draws to a close

HANS NEWS SERVICE HYDERABAD

14 old records were broken and new ones established as the Cycling Federation Of India's 72nd Senior, 49th Junior & 35th Sub-Junior National Track Cycling Championship-2021 concluded in the city on Wednesday evening.

In the Mens Elite Category - Team Sprint event, the team from Manipur comprising of K. Jemsh Singh, Y. Rojit Singh and Ronaldo Singh new a record by breaking their own record of 01:03,977 set in 71st NTCC Jaipur. The new record is

In Mean Elite Category - Sprint ESOW, Andaman and Nicobar set a new record of 10.433 against their own record of

In Men Elit category - Team Pursuit, SSCB Team of Manjeet Singh, Dinesh Kumar, Dinesh and Mularam set new record by clocking 4:29.971.

In the same category Individual Pursuit event, Anil Manglaw from RSPMset a new record 4:48.778. In 1 km Time Trial, Amarjeet Singh from Punjab registered a new record time of 1:05.943.

In Women Elite Class - Individual Pursuit event, Swasti Singh broke the record of N Chaoba Devi and set a new time of 4:05.547. In the same category in Team Pursuit event, RSPB players comprising of Megha Gugad, Nayana Rajesh P, Matoulebi Devi and Vaishnavi Gabani broke the previous record of 5:23.454 set by Kerala Team.

Men Juniors broke four records. In Individual Pursuit, Vishavjeet Singh of Punjab sets new record by clocking 3:33.336; In Team Pursuit, Rajasthan's team of Vinod Gat, Ganesh Ram Benipal, Mahendra Saranin and Aayush Jakkar broke the previous record set by Punjab Team by clocking 4:43.841. In 1 km. Time Trial and Sprint events, David Becham



of Andaman & Nicobar set new records. He broke the old records set by Sahil of Haryana and Esow of Andaman and Nicobar. He clocked 1:07.300 and 11.032 respectively in two

In Women Junior category a new record was established. Chayabika Gogoi of Assam broke five years old record by registering 2:43.132 in 2km Individual Pursuit.

In Sub Juniors Boys category, Niraj Kumar of Haryana established a new record in 2km Individual Pursuit event by breaking five years old record set by Venkappa Kengalgutti-KAR. The new record is 2:23.942

Jayesh Ranjan, Principal Secretary, Govt of Telangana, who is also the President of Telangana Olympic Association, was the chief guest at the closing ceremony and gave away medals to the winners and record holders. S. Onkar Singh, Sec. General, Asian Cycling Confederation; Chairman of Cycling federation of India and Joint Secretary of Indian Olympic Association graced the Championship.

 $Impressed\ over\ the\ arrangements, Onkar\ Singh\ expressed$ the desire that Hyderabad could host Asian Tack Championship. Accordingly Telangana Cycling Association (TSA) was asked to be ready to host the Asian Track Championships in October this year.

Kohli, de Villiers, reach Chennai for RCB camp

CHENNAI

ROYAL Challengers Bangalore (RCB) captain Virat Kohli and star batsman AB de Villiers have arrived in Chennai, the Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise said on Thursday.

de Villiers and Kohli will quarantine for seven days before joining the rest of the squad in the training camp at the at the Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education and Research.

Yuzvendra Chahal, Navdeep Saini, Mohammed Siraj, Harshal Patel, Shahbaz Ahmed, Pavan Deshpande, Mohammed Azharuddeen, Rajat Patidar, Sachin Baby,

Suyash Prabhudesai and KS Bharat are currently attending the camp.

The nine-day conditioning camp is taking place under Mike Hesson, director of cricket operations and Simon Katich, head coach of the team. Sanjay Bangar, S Sridharan, Adam Griffith, Shankar Basu and Malolan Rangarajan are the other members of the coaching staff.

RCB face defending champions Mumbai Indians in the opening match of the season on April 9. They qualified for the playoff and finished fourth last season, losing to SunRisers Hyderabad in the Eliminator by six wickets.

for 2023 Women's WC

SYDNEY: Football's global governing body FIFA on Thursday announced nine host cities and 10 stadiums across Australia and New Zealand as venues for

Eden Park in Auckland will host the opening match of the tournament on July 10 with Stadium Australia in Sydney selected to host the final on August 20. The other stadiums that have been announced as host venues are Hindmarsh Stadium (Adelaide), Brisbane Stadium (Brisbane), Dunedin Stadium (Dunedin), Waikato Stadium (Hamilton), Melbourne Rectangular Stadium (Melbourne), Perth Rectangular Stadium (Perth), Sydney Football Stadium (Sydney) and Wellington Stadium (Wellington).

Both Australia and New tralia, New Zealand and around

he further said. (IANS)

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Germany handed shock defeat in WC qualifier

Duisburg (Germany)

JOACHIM Loew's final World Cup qualifier as Germany coach ended in a shock defeat to North Macedonia as Eljif Elmas struck late to give the visitors a 2-1 win.

Elmas nudged home from close-range, with the aid of a slight deflection, five minutes from time after veteran Goran Pandev had given North Macedonia the lead in first half injurytime on Wednesday, DPA news reports.

Ilkay Guendogan levelled from the spot midway through the second half and Timo Werner mis-kicked a rare chance with the goal at his mercy to give Germany the lead.

"I don't know how to explain it," said Guendogan, who was captain in the absence of the injured Toni Kroos.

"It's not easy to do. We knew that we couldn't underestimate the opponent and I don't think we did that. We just weren't good enough tonight and have to be better in front of goal, otherwise we extend the invite in games like this," he said.

But North Macedonia will feel their win was

deserved, especially as Emre Can escaped a blatant handball in the box and with no video review referee available their protests were ignored. "The guys have once again made our nation proud, against

the four-time world champions, and threetime European champions," said North Macedonia coach Igor Angelovski.

"Our team are our heroes, they have brought the nation to its feet."

The win takes North Macedonia second in Group J on six points, above Germany on goals scored, three shy of shock leaders Armenia, who beat Romania 3-2 to have a perfect nine points from the opening triple-header.

Iceland won 4-1 at Lichtenstein in the other game. Loew will end his 15-year reign as national coach, which included the World Cup win in 2014, after Euro 2020 delayed to summer because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Italy continue perfect record in WC qualifiers In Vilnius (Lithuania), Italy continued their winning streak in the 2022 World Cup qualifiers as it beat Lithuania 2-0 on Wednesday, claiming the third consecutive win without conceding a goal.

Azzurri have beaten both Northern Ireland and Bulgaria 2-0 in the previous two games, and coach Roberto Mancini rotated the starting line-up, as Stephan El Shaarawy, Federico Bernardeschi stepped in while Rafael Toloi made his debut, Xinhua news reports.

Italy was utterly dominant in the first half but failed to find the net as Lorenzo Pellegrini and Emerson Palmieri's attempts was denied. Mancini introduced Stefano Sensi after the break and the Inter Milan midfielder quickly

gathered the ball from Manuel Locatelli to drill

made the impact in the 48th minute as he

home on the edge of the box.

FIFA announces 10 host stadiums

2023 Women's World Cup.

Zealand will also host one semifinal each with the full match schedule for the World Cup to be announced later this year. "The appointment of the 9 Host Cities represents a major milestone for the next FIFA Women's World Cup 2023, as well as for players and football fans across Austhe world," said FIFA president Gianni Infantino.

"Building on the incredible success of France 2019 both on and off the pitch, the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 and 9 Host Cities across Australia and New Zealand will not only showcase the world's very best players, but will also provide a powerful platform to unite and inspire people, transform lives and create a lasting legacy for women's football in Australia and New Zealand and around the world,"