

The high court was hearing CBI's plea challenging a trial court's October 23, 2020 order by which its plea to examine C Edmond Allen, a foreign national, was dismissed.

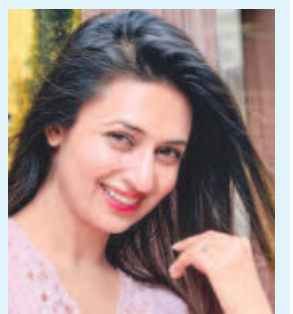
Womenia

TWEET PATROL



DIVYANKA T
DAHIYA@DIVYANKA_T

Thanks for your attention towards details and the compliment. My show styling intends to show me courageous and beautiful the way I am. Hence, successful! Anything beyond will draw your attention away from serious life situations. Clothes won't change the world. You & I will!



Identify birth defects well in time

IMPORTANT TIPS TO HAVE A HEALTHY PREGNANCY

Birth defects can be structural or functional abnormalities that develop during the development of the baby in the uterus. Most of the time these can be identified during pregnancy or at birth. The prevalence of birth defects in our country is 6-7% which accounts to 1.7 million birth defects annually. Common defects include congenital heart disease, congenital deafness and neural tube defects.

Dr Sunil Eshwar, Lead Consultant, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Aster RV Hospital shares, "The month of January is recognized as Birth Defects Prevention month. The theme for the year 2021 is "Best for you. Best for baby".

Taking care of yourself and doing what is best for you is also best for your baby. Not all birth defects are preventable. But here are a few tips that can increase your chances of having a healthy baby."

Preconceptional Folic Acid supplementation

Folic acid is a vitamin that helps in prevention of major birth defects of baby's brain and spine. It is recommended that this important vitamin that is 400mcg of FA is started 3 months prior to pregnancy and continued until 12 weeks of pregnancy. High dose of 5mg FA is recommended in those with previous neural tube defects and certain other risk factors. Obesity increases your risk of certain birth defects and pregnancy complications. Optimizing your body weight prior to conception therefore plays an important role in preventing birth defects. Preconceptional counselling is a must for all couples planning pregnancy.

If you are on certain regular medications for medical conditions such as antiepileptic, antihypertensive, anticoagulants these need to be changed to safer medications and doses optimized prior to conception.

For those with Diabetes mellitus, adequate control of blood glucose levels prior to pregnancy reduces incidence of anomalies in baby.

Maternal infections such as rubella, chicken pox, syphilis, Zika virus are also causative agents for birth defects. Taking measures to avoid infections such as vaccination, Preconceptional screening for infections and finally avoiding travel to regions where there is outbreak of infections known to cause birth defects. It is prudent to avoid substances such as alcohol and smoking which are known to cause birth defects.

Taking care of yourself and following all preventable measures can prevent Birth defects in your baby to a large extent.

Covid-19 paralysed everything but not music



P KRISHNA RAO

COVID-19 pandemic has changed everything from all the corners of the world. However, the pandemic has led to a positive impact on music. People during the pandemic got even more close to music and heaved a sigh of relief, observes Dandamudi Sumathi

Ramamohana Rao, woman mridangam artiste, who received Padmashri award.

The septuagenarian said that though she received the highest award, she being a top A grade woman mridangam artiste feels that there should be competition. More number of women should reach such a high position as mridangam artistes.

More and more women should reach highest positions in music: Padmashri awardee Sumathi Ramamohana



Stating that her expertise in mridangam is nothing but a gift of God, the woman mridangist said that she learnt the mridangam from his father Nidumolu Raghavaiah, a maestro of mridangam and got inspiration towards the art through her husband Dandamudi Ramamohana Rao. The couple attained the fame of top grade Mridangam couple of India. Sumathi was a student of

Ghantasala Venkateswara Rao Govt college of Music and dance, Vijayawada and got a privilege of working as a lecturer and Principal of the same college.

Stating that Fine Arts became secondary in present day busy life of people both young and old, she said music should be introduced in schools. She said more and more woman should gain expertise in music. The woman Mridangist ear-



lier received several awards including best mridangist award twice from Madras music academy. She is the lone Mridangam artiste to receive the prestigious Kendra Sangeetha Natak Academy from former president Pratibha Patil and Ugadi Puraskaram during 2015 from Govt of Andhra Pradesh. She also received Pratibha Puraskaram from Potti Sriramulu Telugu University in 2015 and Palani Subrahmanya Pillai memorial award in 2016 from Percussive Arts centre in Bangalore. Expressing her love towards music, the woman Mridangist named her only daughter as Laya.

RICE FOR YOUR GOOD HEALTH

What is one of the first foods you had as an infant? - Mine was rice and dal. Rice is one of the safest, most easily digestible foods and hence given to infants. It is quite literally part of our constitution. Wonder why it's given such a villainous role in the health saga. Let's get you familiarised with this Indian staple-

The whole truth

Every health article or column, including mine; professes that you include whole-grains in your diet. Little do we know that rice is a whole-grain as well. Whole grains contain higher amount of fibre which makes digestion easy. Unpolished rice and basmati contain higher fibre than other varieties. It is also a gluten free wholegrain that can be used by those with allergies or intolerances for the same.

Not just carbs

Rice is categorised it as an 'empty carbohydrate' but there is so much more to it. Rice contains B vitamins that enhance brain function and give you a much-needed energy boost. Rice contains zinc and magnesium as well. To set the record straight, carbohydrates are not all that evil. You need a them to provide your brain and body with energy.



Naini Setalvad

Mood stabilizer

Ever had one of those tiringly stressful days at work? I know I have. And there is nothing that soothes my soul than a bowl of piping hot dal -rice. Besides the nostalgia the tryptophan from the rice helps release the chemical mood stabilizer -serotonin;

it calms you down and helps you face the rest of the day with ease.

Complete meal

For all of us on the run, a one pot meal is a great way to get in our nutrition as well as save up on time. One such example is the humble Khichadi. The

precursors of white rice. It is chewier and is lower in glycaemic index. The basmati rice is long grained fragrant rice that is higher on nutrients than other variety of white rice. Red rice has a lovely hue that is attributed to the anti-oxidant anthocyanin.

Now that you are abreast with this information, do not shy away from your Pongal or Biryani

Gado-Gado Rice

Ingredients

- 300 gm-Cooked Rice
- 150 gm Coloured capsicum, cut in long strips
- 100 gm Cucumber, cut in long strips
- ½ tsp Extra Virgin Olive Oil

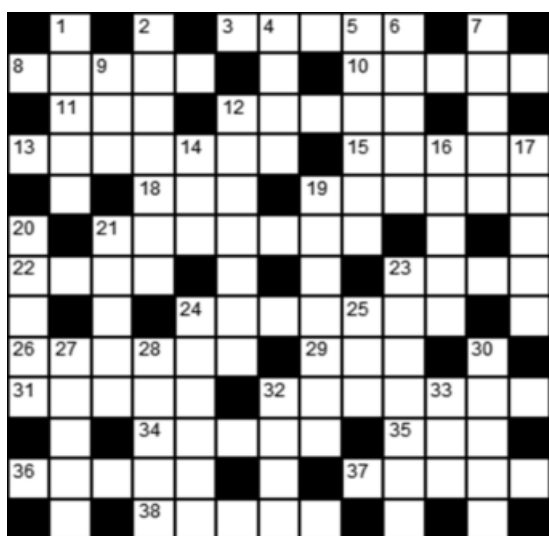
Salt to taste

Ingredients for Peanut Sauce

- 5 tbsp Peanut Butter
- 4 tbsp Water
- ¾ tsp Red Chilli Flakes
- ½ tsp Red Chilli Powder
- 1 tbsp Jaggery

Method

1. Blend all the ingredients for the sauce to make a paste. Thicken the paste over a flame.
2. Sauté the rice and vegetables in a wok.
3. Add peanut sauce to rice and serve hot.



SOLUTION TO JANUARY 27

CROSSWORD

Across

- 3 Fine cross-stroke at the end of a letter of print (5)
- 8 Robbery (5)
- 10 Shouts out, names (5)
- 11 Clod (3)
- 12 Inhabitant of Cambodia (5)
- 13 Water buffalo (7)
- 15 Very (mus.) (5)
- 18 Informally swindle (3)
- 19 Banished (6)
- 21 Like a lion (7)
- 22 Travels on long slender runners, as for sport. (4)
- 23 Foot fraction (4)
- 24 Loving or cherishing (7)
- 26 Non-violence to Gandhiji (6)
- 29 Printing measures (3)
- 31 Musical finales (5)
- 32 Quickly (7)
- 34 Reach; imply ? (3,2)
- 35 Chatter (3)
- 36 Thighbone (5)
- 37 Cry of delight (2,3)

Down

- 38 Sprinkle (5)
- 1 Reef (5)
- 2 Rubs or wipes out (7)
- 4 Resound (4)
- 5 Everest climber's aid (3,3)
- 6 Language of Iran (5)
- 7 Pond scum (5)
- 9 Head of grain (3)
- 12 Language of Karnataka (7)
- 14 Jeering cry (3)
- 16 Over the shoulder (5)
- 17 NW US state (5)
- 19 Beg earnestly (7)
- 20 Gravity discoverer Newton (5)
- 21 Enraged (5)
- 23 Perspicacity (7)
- 24 Declare (6)
- 25 Little devil (3)
- 27 Residences (5)
- 28 Wizard (5)
- 30 Thrust or jostle one's way in or out of a crowd (5)
- 32 Good review (4)
- 33 Expert (3)

SUDOKU



SOLUTION TO JANUARY 27

NEWS ROUNDUP

Anita Hassanandani enjoys 'Beyonce vibes' until mommy vibes kick in

Actress Anita Hassanandani on Wednesday shared a photograph channelling her inner Beyonce and flaunting a blooming baby bump. In a monochrome picture she posted on Instagram, Anita is seen wearing a black leotard and striking a sexy pose for the camera.

"Enjoying 'Beyonce vibes' until 'mommy vibes' kick in," she wrote as the caption.

Beyonce famously posed for a photo-op when she was pregnant in 2017. The shoot was declared Instagram's most liked photo of the year.

Anita announced her pregnancy in October on social media. She shared a video where the 39-year-old actress and her husband Rohit Reddy re-live their romance, with shots that include moments of their engagement and the exchange of wedding vows. Rohit is seen kissing Anita's baby bump at one point.

Anita and Rohit tied the knot in Goa on October 18, 2013. Speaking about her work, Anita and Tusshar Kapoor will co-star in a new film, after almost two decades.

The two actors, who were seen together in the 2003 films "Kuch To Hai" and "Yeh Dil", unite for the mystery thriller "Maarich", which also stars Naseeruddin Shah.



Farmer who died had returned from Australia to celebrate his wedding

RAMPUR

HE had returned from Australia to his hometown in Uttar Pradesh's Rampur to celebrate his recent wedding. And there was a gathering indeed at his home at Dibdiba village in Bilaspur on Wednesday. But no celebration.

Navreet Singh's family and friends were mourning his death a day earlier. The 27-year-old farmer got crushed underneath the tractor he was driving after it toppled on the road when he tried to break through a police barricade at central Delhi's ITO

during a farmers' tractor parade, police have said.

A police officer told PTI the body reached Rampur Tuesday night and post-mortem was conducted. Navreet had come to his native place from Australia to throw a wedding party after he tied the knot abroad some time back, his family members said.

Persuaded by his uncles, Singh visited the national capital on Republic Day to participate in the farmers' protests against the Centre's agriculture laws and drove a blue tractor at high speed, according to footage circulating on social media.



"We came together to participate in the parade but never knew it would happen," a neighbour said. A rumour spread like wildfire that Navreet fell to a police bullet, but the Delhi Police

denied it saying the CCTV footage did not record any gunshot sound.

Scores of locals reached the bereaved family's home Wednesday to pay homage as the body was kept at Dibdiba village for pre-cremation rites. Security has been beefed up in Rampur district with senior police officials getting on ground to review law and order.

"ADG Bareilly Zone Avinash Chandra along with Rampur SP Shogun Gautam visited Bilaspur area of the district to review the law and order situation. Necessary instructions were

given to personnel on the ground," the police official added. Navreet's grieving family members, who described his as a "shahid (martyr)", said he had gone to Australia for higher education and got married there recently.

He came home to celebrate his wedding, they said. After the Tuesday incident, protesting farmers draped the body in the Tricolour and kept it at the ITO crossing, not allowing the police to send it for post-mortem. They kept insisting on taking back the body to the village at the earliest and also lashed out at the mediapersons covering the incident.

Speaking about the incident, a senior Delhi Police officer said some farmers were driving their tractors rashly in an attempt to hit security personnel.

"We saw the tractor hitting the barricades. Our personnel went to rescue him, but a group of agitating farmers stopped them," he said. The farmers, however, denied the police version and claimed that the Navreet died after being shot by the police. "The police fired a teargas at Navreet, one of the shells hit him on the head and he lost control of the steering wheel. The police didn't even help him," a farmer alleged.

'BJP planted stooge Sidhu to create chaos in tractor rally'

NEW DELHI

THE Aam Aadmi Party on Wednesday alleged that the BJP planted its "stooge" actor Deep Sidhu to create "chaos" in farmers' tractor parade in Delhi on Republic Day.

The tractor parade on Tuesday that was to highlight the demands of the farmer unions to repeal the three new agriculture laws descended into anarchy as tens of thousands of protesters broke through barriers, fought with police, overturned vehicles and hoisted a religious flag from the ramparts of the iconic Red Fort.

Clashes broke out in multiple places, leading to violence in well-known landmarks of Delhi and its suburbs, amid waves of violence that ebbed and flowed through the Republic Day. Punjab actor Deep Sidhu has been blamed by the farmer union leaders and politicians for inciting violence during the tractor rally.

AAP spokesperson Raghav Chadha, while questioning the connection between Sidhu and



Film actor Deep Sidhu who led violent mob in Delhi

BJP, showed several photos purportedly of the actor with various BJP leaders. "The BJP planted their stooge Deep Sidhu to create chaos in farmers' tractor parade," Chadha said. Sidhu was among protesters at the Red Fort where flags were put up.

He was an aide of Deol when the latter contested from the Gurdaspur seat in Punjab during the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. Deol, who is now a BJP MP, had distanced himself from Sidhu in December last year after he joined the farmers' agitation.

Amid a massive outrage over protesters hoisting a religious flag at the Red Fort during the tractor rally on Republic Day, Sidhu defended their action, saying they did not remove the national flag and had put up the 'Nishan Sahib' as a symbolic protest.

BJP MLA blames Sonia, Rahul for violence

BALLIA

BJP MLA Surendra Singh has alleged that violence during the farmers' tractors parade in the national capital had taken place on the directions of Congress President Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi, and demanded that a case of sedition be lodged against those involved in the violence. Hitting back, Uttar Pradesh Congress media coordinator Lalan Kumar charged that the BJP government was responsible for the violence and said the BJP MLA's statement shows his "mental bankruptcy". The BJP MLA said, "The act of violence during tractor parade is condemnable. A case of sedition should be lodged and strict action should be taken against those involved in the act".

Relationship with Amethi that of a family: Priyanka

AMETHI

CONGRESS general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Wednesday said the relationship with Amethi is not political but that of a family, and family ties can never be weakened.

She was addressing party workers in Jomo block here. "The relationship with Amethi is not political, it is that of home and family. It is an old relationship, and a strong one. The relationship, which we had with the people of Amethi, the same is intact today, and it will be the same in future," Gandhi said. She told party workers that "building the organisation



is the first priority of all of us". Pradeep Singhal, president of the district unit of the party, said the Congress general secretary also discussed the contentious farm laws enacted by the Centre last year.

"Priyanka Gandhi discussed the farm laws, and said that the 'anti-farmer' laws are not only dangerous for the peasants, but for the entire country. She asserted that the government was

not giving any attention towards the farmers protesting at the Delhi borders for the past two months against the laws. "She also talked about various steps taken in the interest of farmers in the Congress-ruled states of Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and others," he said.

Singhal said Gandhi also sought information about problems faced by the people of Amethi. "The Congress general secretary noted that the party had to be strengthened till the booth level, and asked the party workers to reach out to the poor, farmers, small traders and the helpless," he added.

Yogi govt to prepare health cards in rural areas

LUCKNOW

TAKING forward its commitment to provide better health services and prevent spread of the corona infection in the rural areas, the Yogi Adityanath government will now prepare a health report card of the people living around the wellness centres.

These health wellness centres are run by the Ayush Department in the rural areas and also offer traditional medicinal facilities.

According to the government spokesman, the health cards will be prepared with the help of the Anganwadi workers and the Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANM) by going from door to door and collecting data about health status of the residents.



On the basis of the health card, the Ayush department will be imparting knowledge on how to prevent diseases with the help of Ayurveda and will also encourage people to plant medicinal plants.

Dr. Ashok of the Ayush department said, "Ayurvedic medicines have played an important role in preventing the corona infection even as the country's oldest medicinal system has gained popularity during the pandemic. The Ayush department's health card

in the rural areas for the people living around wellness centres will help improve the health profile of a particular area."

People will also be told about the benefits of Yoga and its importance in preventing diseases. Through awareness programmes, people will also be told about the ways to prevent serious diseases, he added.

The Ayush department will also be planting medicinal plants, including Tulsi and Aloe Vera in the houses of villagers and they will also be informed about the diseases in which these plants can be used.

"Medicinal plants are very useful in treating minor diseases and very helpful for the digestive system. They are also a good health supplement in daily life," the spokesman said.

ED files money laundering case against BSP MLA, others

LUCKNOW/NEW DELHI

THE ED has filed a money laundering case against BSP MLA from Uttar Pradesh Vinay Shankar Tiwari and some others to probe an alleged fraud of over Rs 750 crore against a consortium of banks led by the Bank of India (BoI), official sources said on Wednesday.

The central probe agency's Lucknow zonal office has filed an ECIR or the enforcement case information report under various sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act against the MLA from Chillupar (Gorakhpur) and Gangotri

Enterprises, a company based in the Uttar Pradesh capital.

Tiwari, 54, is the son of former minister and strongman from Gorakhpur Hari Shankar Tiwari. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) studied a CBI FIR of October last year filed against Tiwari, his wife Rita, Gangotri Enterprises among others to register its ECIR, the ED equivalent of a police FIR, the sources said.

The CBI had also carried out raids in Lucknow and Noida after filing this complaint. The alleged fraud perpetrated against the BoI-led consortium of banks involves Rs 754.25 crore.

HANS CLASSIFIEDS
CHANGE OF NAME
I, PRAMOD SONI S/o Late Shri Khem Chand Soni R/o B-1/156, Paschim Vihar, New Delhi. My name has been recorded as PRAMOD KUMAR SONI in Bank record. I have changed my name as **PRAMOD SONI** in place of my previous name PRAMOD KUMAR SONI. In future I will be known by my new name i.e. **PRAMOD SONI** for all purposes.
(TH_Karun Sharma)

Case against 3 scribes for report on plight of children at govt event

LUCKNOW

THREE local journalists working with a news channel have been accused of public mischief and criminal intimidation in an FIR filed against them for airing a news report on school children allegedly exercising in biting cold conditions without winter wear at a government function, a police official said.

The FIR lodged by a Basic Shiksha Adhikari (BSA), an official who takes care of primary education in government schools, also accused the journalists of threatening him.

"The case was registered on Tuesday against three journalists--Mohit, Amit and Yasin on complaint off Basic Shiksha Adhikari (BSA) Sunit Dutt at Akbarpur police station of Kanpur Dehat under IPC Section 505 (statements conducing to public mischief) and Section 506 (criminal intimidation)," Station House Officer (Akbarpur), Tulsiram Pandey, said. He said the journalists aired the news report which alleged that several government school students "shivered in biting cold while government officials were busy with an event. The BSA also alleged that the three journalists were not present at the event.

Officials concerned claimed the children were made to take off their winter wear only for the exercises.

The videos was of a function held to



mark the UP foundation day on Sunday and was attended by state minister for technology, Ajit Pal Singh, several MLAs and government officials, including DM Kanpur Dehat Dinesh Chandra.

The video, after being aired by the journalists, also went viral on social media on Tuesday in which students were seen braving the biting cold, dressed in cotton shirts and knickers.

In the FIR, the BSA said the children wore woollens after the drill and the videos were shared with mala fide intention.

He added that the journalists also hurt the sentiments of yoga teachers, who were insulted in the process.

District Magistrate, Kanpur Dehat, Chandra, told reporters, "It was painful that some journalists who were not

present here spread such news. You all know that yoga cannot be performed wearing sweater, coat and pants. The students did good performance and we all appreciated them."

One of the journalists, Amit Singh, said making the children do yoga in inadequate clothing in harsh winter conditions could not be justified and authorities could have been more careful.

Superintendent of Police (Kanpur Dehat), Keshav Kumar Choudhary, said that FIR has been registered against three local journalists for airing news reports by allegedly misrepresenting facts conducing to public mischief and threatening the BSA.

The instructions have been issued to the Investigation Officer to probe the charges in a fair manner, he said.





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Congress’ support to Delhi violence ridiculous

THE streets of Delhi witnessed unprecedented mayhem on India’s 72nd Republic Day. This was perhaps the most violent one after the 1984 anti-Sikh riots. While in 1984 antisocial elements and hooligans targeted Sikh community, in Tuesday’s violence, men in khaki were hounded and targeted. About 5,000 tractors had a free run, breaking the barricades, chasing the police and people on the road and even trying to run over them and Red Fort was taken under siege. Cops on duty at the Red Fort were forced to jump from 15 feet wall to save their lives and iconic fort came under siege of these unruly elements who used swords, iron rods and lathis to lynch the men in uniform. What is most unfortunate is the Opposition parties, instead of condemning such violence, are blaming the government. The attitude of the main Opposition party Congress indicates that the party has forgotten the history of freedom struggle and has

resorted to another political misadventure. The Congress so far did not say a word on the insult and desecration caused to the iconic ramparts of Red Fort. When 1984 riots took place, some Congress leaders then said it was natural. The parties should learn to separate politics from reality. While the debate on whether the farm laws are pro farmer or anti farmer will continue, by no means can they justify their support to the violence that was witnessed on the streets of Lutyens Delhi. The Congress should refresh their knowledge. When Mahatma Gandhi launched a fight against the British, he never allowed violence in his agitations. Freedom fighters were always at the receiving end only because he knew that if it had used violence, the struggle would have gone out of control and it would lose its sanctity. The farmers were allegedly told to break into the barricades and go to the Red Fort. Why Red Fort? Because, the Republic Day Pa-

rade concludes there and all artistes including children who participate in the parade are housed inside the fort before they are taken back to their respective camps. Targeting the Red Fort apparently was to unleash terror. A video had gone viral in which the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) leader Rakesh Tikait was seen saying, “Bring your lathis and flags as the government is not listening.” Tikait however justified this saying that he had only asked the farmers to bring lathis to carry the flags. But it was not just the lathis that were used. Certainly, it was not the farmers who created the mayhem. The Nihangs, in their battle-gear, were carrying swords while marching into the city, fought with police, overturned vehicles and hoisted a religious flag on the ramparts of the iconic Red Fort. This is not the way farmers protest. Though the farmers have been on agitation for almost three months over the farm laws and the government has

been holding talks with them, never did they resort to any violence. The Congress which holds the government responsible for the mayhem seems to have forgotten what the Congress government did 32 winters ago. On October 25, 1988, at Boat Club which is within the earshot of North and South Blocks and Parliament, farmers led by Mahendra Singh Tikait began to trickle and within hours it became a flood. About five lakh farmers on trucks, tractor-trolleys, bullock carts and motorcycles showed up at the gates of Delhi and camped. They had taken over Boat Club for about a week. The farmers sat out nights, policemen kept watch. There were attempts to wear them out. The Rajiv Gandhi government used every trick in the book to tire out the protestors. Loud music, at times western, was played at night to unsettle the farmers and their cattle and make them leave; water supply in and around the area was stopped, so was delivery of food packets to feed the vast gathering. But there was no violence as no outside elements could enter.



The importance of looking within

VIIVECK VERMA

EVERY new day brims with fresh challenges and in 2021, when we are up against a world battling a pandemic, these are unforeseen times which have brought unexpected trials and tribulations to us. What has not changed is the value of human resilience, which has enabled us to sail through the most difficult of circumstances. However, in this battleground, happiness and contentment often appear elusive. Ideas and efforts inevitably fail sometimes, and personal and professional lives have their lows. Where do we look when things do not go our way? What do we do when people and projects disappoint us? The answer, to put it simply, is to look within.

Disappointments can beset our lives in several ways. A cup of tea can lack the desired punch, a friend can sometimes be unresponsive, work at the office can be unfulfilling. One way to cope is to blame externalities, and attribute our disenchantment to things outside us, things beyond our control. This, from a long-term perspective, does not lead us to any worthy destinations. While external factors certainly impact what we do and what comes out of it, happiness, success and fulfilment are not entirely caused by them. Even when we think that a good meal makes us happy, it is we who do the thinking. Therefore, when things do not turn out the way they ideally should, it is again, we who do the thinking and notice what makes us disillusioned. Joy and sorrow, then, are part of our mental landscape, and not necessarily dependent on phenomena outside us.

To care for oneself and to make failures and setbacks, steppingstones to achievement, we must locate responsibility within ourselves. To quote Sharon Salzberg, “Taking responsibility for oneself is by definition, an act of kindness.” To be kind to ourselves and to make the most of the abilities we are endowed with, we must look within and act responsibly. If we cannot control things outside us, we are all we have, and therefore, we must master our inner selves. We must not assign to ourselves a history of victimhood and passivity but take responsibility wherever we can and change things in our favour. We are not simply a function of what happened to us, but we are what we make of life.

The problem with a myopic perspective that makes us blame external reasons solely for debacles is that it leads us to a state of stagnation and non-reflection. The moment we construct ourselves as victims who cannot help their situation, we get rid of agency. No empowering transformation can occur in this case, because we stagnate into a state of non-action and refuse to reflect on what we did wrong and what we can do to make things better. This can lead to a string of disasters which can make bouncing back seem like an impossibility.

The other route, which is about looking at ourselves and searching within our souls, makes space for empowering reflections, actions and possibilities. If we do not engage in a blame game, and critically think about our circumstances,

we are likely to change them favourably. For instance, if my current equation with my colleagues is unsatisfactory, what I can do is build new bridges and try interacting in friendlier ways. If I am not making a good bowl of pasta, I can measure what ingredients I am putting and in what quantity. Whether or not we meet desired ends, we inevitably improve when we choose this path.

A quote by Dietrich Bonhoeffer sums up the link between looking inside responsibly and acting profitably: “Action springs not from thought, but from a readiness for responsibility.” Thoughts can be of all kinds, including those that confine us to despondency and inaction. Responsibility, however, emerges out of insight that we gain when we look at ourselves without evading things that may scare us. Once we know what we did not do right, we will know how externalities hamper our efforts and we can work towards changing them. The moment we realize that despite other people and things outside us, we are inextricably tied to what happens to us, we can spin wonders out of the most dismal situations. Moreover, there is so much to do when we choose the emancipatory path of soul-searching and responsibility. We can keep our senses open, stay dynamic, appreciate things and people around us and cherish ourselves. Happiness, as is often said, is a state of mind. The opposites of happiness, thus, also exist in the same domain. Therefore, when the problem is inside me, I must enquire within and find solutions inside me. This is the most liberating way to go about our everyday lives and keeps us open to exciting possibilities. We must stop identifying ourselves as people who suffer defeats and setbacks but imagine ourselves as people who can make good things happen and transform our personal and professional worlds, and the world we inhabit.

Looking within ourselves goes beyond immediate gratification and success. It is a commitment to one’s well-being and selfhood. The key to self-fulfilment is nearer than it seems, as all we need to do is to look inside, take responsibility for ourselves and let go of what limits us. Such a self-affirming path cannot merely enliven our everyday existences but allow the most radical and empowering changes we can imagine.

(The author is founder, Upsurge Global, and Senior Advisor, Telangana State Innovation Cell)

PART-1

Looking at crime and punishment

TALKING OF MANY THINGS



Dr Mohan Kanda

CRIME has existed since the dawn of time. However, methods chosen by society to combat and contain it have, at different times, responded to the imperatives of varying demands. While, on some occasions, such response was a reflection of the socio-cultural imperatives, at other times it was just an example of humanity at play. Crime and punishment, on one hand, and the development of humanity, on the other, have always been interlinked.

Originally, mankind saw revenge as a valid form of punishment. Over time, the rules of law and justice systems guided humanity, which comprised societies which were civilised entities. The ‘eye for an eye’ approach not being an acceptable way of dealing with those who infringed the provisions of law, reliance on criminal justice systems which played a huge role in society, came to stay as their primary aim was to reduce crime by bringing criminals to justice.

In early times punishments were often doled out by the victims of crimes as revenge or pay-back. But punishment often was too severe, and resulted in the victims turning criminals, seeking revenge on their own. That vicious cycle led to blood feuds between families, not unlike what happens between the so-called ‘factions’ in the Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh, even to this day.

Over time, however, people realised that families seeking revenge on each other was not a healthy system and brought in laws regarding crime and punishment, laws so designed that punishment matched crime. The code of Hammurabi became one of the first legal codes to be established, and modern criminal justice is still influenced by it.

The thinking of early Greek philosophers, such as Plato and Aristotle, majorly influenced the manner in which crime and punishment are looked at today i.e. based on the tenets of jurisprudence and the principles of natural justice. They also helped humanity understand that the reasons for the commission of a crime such as this intention and the provocation, should be an important factor in deciding how severe the punishment should be. They also emphasised the preventive value of punishment – as a measure that deterred repetition.

Roman philosophers recognised crime and punishment as purely human traits. While, historically, punishing the criminal was seen as ‘doing God’s work’, and that committing a crime was the same as sinning, Romans saw crime as an insult to Society as a whole. Roman law was established to bring order to Society. Many of the basics of those laws are still practiced in civil law and criminal justice in the 21st century.

Similarly Italian writer Cesare Beccaria, in his book ‘On Crime and Punishment’, postulated that punishment should match the severity of a crime, and should be a way of scaring others



away from committing crimes. Belgian statistician Adolphe Quetelet was one of the very first people to study crime statistics.

First published in 1872, they showed that increased emphasis on moral education was needed, which meant breaking down some of the social conditions that pitted against each other in favour of a just Society, in which no one went without. In the same vein Italian psychiatrist Cesare Lombroso studied physiological and biological characteristics of criminals. His theories on how biology impacts the potential to commit crimes greatly influenced modern criminology.

Biology and the environment are considered two of the staples of criminology today and criminologists assist governments and enforcement agencies by studying biological, psychological and environmental characteristics of criminals to provide advice on legal policies.

It was not until Saint Thomas Aquinas wrote his ‘Summa Theological’, a treatise on low crime and punishment, that the history of punishment started turning towards secularism. Aquinas explained that there is a God – given ‘natural law’ that existed, and that humans are naturally designed to do good. Secularism has popped up, and disappeared, several times through the history of crime and punishment. But the eventual

separation of Church and State brought around new way of thinking about crime and punishment, a way that has come to stay.

Gradually it began to be understood that the objective of punishment was not so much to retaliate, or to deter repetition, but to reform the criminal through a process of rehabilitation. The philosophy of the justice system, in other words, has transitioned from being ‘retributive’ to ‘reformative’.

What we need to understand clearly is the fact that just as morality does and the code of ethics does, the concepts of crime and punishment were, and are will be functions of time and space subject to variations which can, sometimes, be significant.

Now to take a look at the evolution of the judicial systems in India. The Members of the Constituent Assembly saw the Judiciary as the bastion of rights and justice. They wanted to insulate the Courts from attempted coercion from forces within and outside government. Ambedkar was perhaps the greatest apostle in the assembly what he described as ‘one single integrated judiciary’ having jurisdiction and providing remedies in all cases arising under the constitutional law, the civil, or the criminal law, essential to maintain the unity of the country.

India has a single unified and

integrated judicial system and the Supreme Court is at the apex of it. The regulating act of 1773 established, for the first time, the Supreme Court of Fort Williams in Calcutta in 1774. The ambiguities in that act led to frequent spat between the Supreme Court and the Governor General in Council. In 1781, this was remedied by substantially curtailing the powers of the Supreme Court in favour of the Governor General in Council.

The Indian High courts act of 1861 was passed by British parliament to authorise the British monarch to create high courts in India. The story of India’s modern judiciary begins with the Mayor’s Courts. The Charter of 1726 created Mayor’s Courts at all the three presidencies that is Madras, Calcutta and Bombay thus, for the first time, establishing a uniform judicial system. The Mayor’s Court established under the Charter of 1687 enjoyed both civil and criminal jurisdiction.

A Federal Court was established at Delhi by the government of India act 1935. It’s served as the immediate precursor to the current Supreme Court. The Indian judiciary is the last hope for citizens of India but people are losing faith in it largely on account of unacceptable number of pending cases.

An estimate has it that there are more than three crore cases pending in different courts of India. Many of these cases are pending for more than 10-20 years. The arrears in Tribunals and Commissions are staggering too and most cases directly impacted the common citizen, and in everyday life. To use a much worn out cliché, ‘justice delayed is justice denied’.

(The writer is former Chief Secretary, Government of Andhra Pradesh)

LETTERS

Data Privacy Day

JANUARY 28 is celebrated as ‘Data Privacy Day’ in several countries including India, to create awareness and promote privacy and data protection. The main motto is to enhance awareness among businesses and users about protecting the privacy of their personal information online. Recently there has been a hue and cry from different sections of people when WhatsApp has announced data transfer of its users to its parent organisation the Facebook.

Ever since the advent of smart mobile and Internet, privacy of individuals has gone for a toss. If the ‘Location’ feature of smart mobile is kept ‘on’ then the movements of persons are recorded with each and every second continuously by the search engine ‘Google’. When the personal data is transferred into the hands of anti-social elements then there is every possibility of harm occurring to the safety of individuals’ information.

There are innumerable cases being reported where the individuals are duped by cyber thieves. They will send unsolicited links to the personal mobiles and if the mobile users click the same unknowingly their mobile is hacked and their personal information like passwords of debit card/UPI are hacked. We have seen nowadays everyone is getting message alerts onto their mobiles from cell phone providers, money transferring apps, different banking sectors that at any time they will never ask eKYC details, Aadhaar details etc.,

Now it is the duty of every individual to remain alert by not sending their personal information through social media, not to

undertake banking transactions through their mobiles/Laptops by using the public Wi-Fi system and change their PINs/password very often, Set screen lock/ Log in passwords to their gadgets to escape from cybercrimes.

V Nagendra Kumar, Hyderabad

Discipline in public life

WHAT I do not understand is whether the State government or the employees are obliged to cooperate with SEC in discharging the Commission’s constitutional responsibilities or are they bound to their duties as an elected Government and its employees who are paid by the Government for the duties they tender. If they fail to do intentionally or otherwise unwilling not to do so, are they are not violating the conduct rules and the Constitution? Can someone give a clear-cut clarity on this for the information and knowledge of the people?

In my opinion, it is binding on them as government employees/servants who and every one are bound by the Constitution. In a democracy if such things are not happening, it is utter indiscipline and the very concept of democracy is defeated. If so, how can we in the nation take the pride or credit to be the largest democracy in the world? It is highly known thing that discipline should flow from the top and not otherwise. Water cannot flow from downstream to upstream. Let us put all efforts to be a disciplined nation.

Y G Krishna Swamy, Rajahmundry

US and Iran affairs

WITH the Biden-Harris team now taking the office in the White House, there are plenty of issues to resolve. The most pressing issue that the Biden admin-

istration faces is America’s relation with Iran given the concern that the present scenario may upend Washington’s non-proliferation strategy and increase tensions in the energy rich Gulf region.

In 2018, Mr. Trump unilaterally withdrew the US from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and imposed sanctions on Iran, especially on shipment of Iranian oil through the infamous Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) to put maximum pressure on Tehran to force it to accept America’s maximum demands that went far beyond the agreement. It is noteworthy that the Trump’s policy of exerting maximum pressure has brought Iran much more closer to weaponisation which is alarming for all the nations. Once bitten twice shy, Iran now seems to be more vigilant and has rightly cautioned Joe Biden for rejoining the nuclear deal shortly. After four years of Trump’s egregious policies and isolationist rhetoric, general public can now breathe a sigh of relief.

Tushar Anand, Patna

Farmers in full form

IT is unfortunate that for the first time in the history of independent India that the traditional Republic day celebrations were marked by a state / an atmosphere of violence and lawlessness. There has been an anomalous distortion of the manner in which the 72nd Republic day proceedings were held on account of a low key preparation / arrangements following Covid related protocol and restrictions that downsized the number of participants unlike as in the case of previous Republic day events and due to a chaotic situation created by the protesting farmers who tried to intrude into the capital city for carrying out their tractor rally on Janpath

during the formal proceedings of the event were taking place at the Red Fort. There seems to be a strong reason behind the security forces preventing / obstructing the farmers from entering into the capital from across the Haryana - Delhi border at Singhu, as certain apprehensions were afloat that in the context of farmers taking out a rally particularly on the Republic day, there is suspected back-up or support propped up by some terrorist groups of Pakistan to disrupt the event of celebration that was dangerously a threat / detriment to India’s security in all eventuality.

Bh Indu Sekhar, Hyderabad

II

FARMERS tractor rally in the national capital against Central farm laws is unethical and illegal. Police did a good job by using tear gas to disperse the dangerous farmers armed with iron rods, swords, lathis and other weapons. This attack by farmers is to be condemned and required action should be taken against the protesting farmers. The Central Government should take necessary action to avoid these types of incidents in future because these types of incidents create panic in the people especially on the Republic day. Republic day events every year are celebrated peacefully, but on this 72nd republic day farmers tractor rally that turned violent is a historic event in the history of India that is to be written and remembered. PM Modi should hold talks with the farmer unions to resolve the disputes in the Central farm laws. This protest by farmers may be a Congress party encouraging political gimmick.

V Bhagirath Kumar, Hyderabad

thehansreader@gmail.com

Corporators jittery over taking oath on Amavasya

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

MANY corporators in the newly-elected Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) are likely to give a miss to the oath-taking ceremony on February 11, thanks to the selection of inauspicious day selected by the authorities.

While most of the corporators feel they would like to skip attending on the first day, some say that they would have to follow the party's orders. The State Election Commission has finalised 11 am February 11 as the time and day of oath-taking for the elected corporators. However, as Amavasya falls on that day, the corporators consider it inauspicious and want to avoid taking oath.

The term of the existing body is ending on February 10 and the Election Commission has taken a decision to have oath-taking on the very next day. The party strengths in the 150-division Corporation are - TRS with 56 seats, BJP with 48, MIM with 44 and Congress with 2. One corporator-elect, A Ramesh Goud of Lingojiguda died of ill-health recently.

cently.

After the oath-taking by corporators, elections would be taken up for mayor and deputy mayor at 12:30pm. As per the tradition, Hindus generally avoid starting a new work on the day of Amavasya.

"It is Mouni Amavasya on that day and generally many don't talk and keep silent (Mounavaratham) and we have to take oath in front of the mike. It is a difficult situation. If the party directs me to take part in the oath-taking ceremony I will definitely attend and complete the process," said Lal Singh, the Goshamahal corporator.

The Moosapet corporator Mahendar said that the corporators would have to follow the given date for the oath-taking ceremony. "I believe that the day the results were announced was a good day," said Mahender.

There are some who do not care whether it is Amavasya or any other day. "I don't follow all those sentiments whatever the day it may be. I will attend the oath-taking ceremony on the date given," said Sabitha Kishore, corporator of Venkatapuram.

KCR's new drama in name of fitment: BJP

Questions why govt took 3 years for 7.5% fitment, demands 43% as wished by the employees

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

TELANGANA BJP chief Bandi Sanjay on Wednesday alleged that Chief Minister K Chandrababhai Rao has started a new drama in the name of PRC fitment to employees.

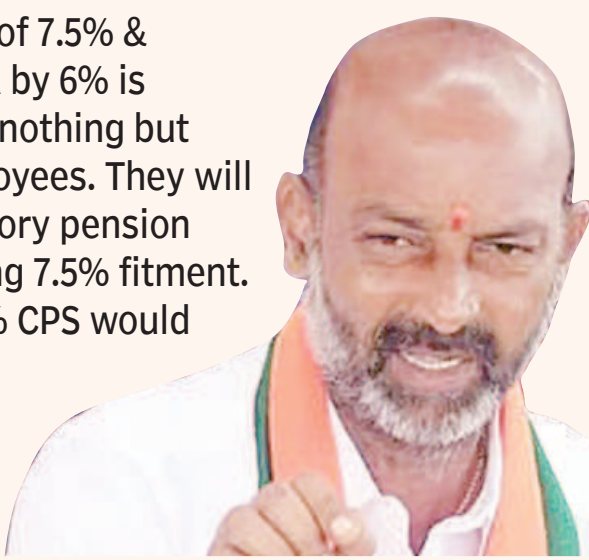
He questioned as to why the government took three years for announcing a fitment of 7.5 per cent. Does the government need three years for this announcement, he asked, stating that it was not correct to cut HRA by six per cent. At a time when rents were increasing every day, the government decreased HRA, he said, demanding 43 per cent fitment, as wished by the employees.

Sanjay said, as per its practice, the government should give interim relief (IR) when PRC is delayed, but there was no effort to give IR. He alleged that KCR who deceived youth, in the name of employment and unemployed allowance, and farmers, in the name of procuring 'sanna vadlu,'



Giving fitment of 7.5% & decreasing HRA by 6% is deplorable and nothing but deceiving employees. They will decrease CPS (contributory pension scheme) by 10% by giving 7.5% fitment. An employee having 30% CPS would get 2.5% less salary

- Bandi Sanjay Kumar, TS BJP president



has deceived the employees.

"Has the government allowed the PRC committee, headed by CR Biswal, to work or not or have they forced them to give less fitment and get a report in their favour," questioned Sanjay. Never in the history of undivided Andhra Pradesh such a low fit-

ment was given. Even in the undivided AP employees never got less than 25 per cent fitment, he said.

The BJP chief asked KCR whether he prepared the PRC report by sitting in his farmhouse. "Giving fitment of 7.5 per cent and decreasing HRA by six per

cent is deplorable and nothing but deceiving the employees. They will decrease CPS (contributory pension scheme) by 10 per cent, by giving 7.5 per cent fitment.

The employee having 30 per cent CPS would get 2.5 per cent less salary," he pointed out.

More trauma care centres on ORR

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

FOLLOWING a tweet by MA&UD Minister KT Rama Rao that existing trauma care centres on ORR interchanges were providing great service and saving lives, the Principal Secretary, Arvind Kumar stated that more such facilities would come in near future.

KTR on Wednesday tweeted: "The 10 trauma care centres set up by HMDA on the ORR interchanges are proving to be of great service to people. More than 29 lives saved so far & many others attended to and requested Principal Secretary to increase the number to 16 to ensure we have one per every 10 km." Reacting to this, Arvind Kumar responded and replied "Noted sir will have it increased as suggested" and even Hyderabad Growth Corridor Limited responded to the tweet by replying "Instructions Noted sir."

Active corona cases fall below 3K in TS

147 new cases, 399 recoveries; 98.49% recovery rate as against 96.9% nationally

HYDERABAD

WITH more recoveries than new coronavirus infections in a day, Telangana's active cases dropped below 3,000 to further improve its recovery rate, health officials said on Wednesday. During 24 hours between Tuesday and Wednesday, the state logged 147 new cases and 399 more recoveries.

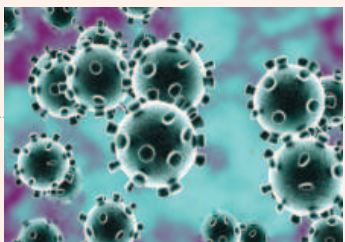
The new cases pushed up the cumulative tally to 2,93,737. The cumulative recoveries in Telangana increased to 2,89,325, and the recovery rate improved further to 98.49 per cent as against the national average of 96.9 per cent.

The active cases now are 2,819, including 1,295 patients in home or institutional isolation. One more fatality during the last 24 hours ending 8 pm on Tuesday took Telangana's COVID-19 death toll to 1,593. The declining trend in cases continued though fewer tests

► Greater Hyderabad region reports 32 new cases between Tuesday and Wednesday.

► Ranga Reddy logs 12 cases while the count in remaining 31 districts was in single digits

► Fatality rate remains at 0.54 per cent as against the national average of 1.4 per cent



were conducted. Only 16,486 tests were conducted in the last 24 hours, apparently due to holiday on Republic Day.

According to the Director of Public Health and Family Welfare Department, daily count of new cases in Greater Hyderabad have remained below 50 for over a week. The state capital reported 32 new cases between Tuesday and Wednesday.

Rangareddy district logged 12 cases while the count in remaining 31 districts was in single digits. According to officials, 70 per cent of positive cases reported in the state so

far are asymptomatic. The data shows that 63.90 per cent of positive patients are aged between 21 and 50, 22.91 per cent are above 51, and 13.18 per cent are below 20.

Telangana's fatality rate remained at 0.54 per cent as against the national average of 1.4 per cent. While 44.96 per cent of the deaths occurred due to COVID-19, 55.04 per cent had comorbidities. As many as 8,012 of the 8,577 beds for corona patients in 62 government hospitals are vacant. Similarly, in 218 private hospitals, 6,785 of the 7,744 beds are vacant.

CM puts pattas distribution on fast track, stresses on quality



Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy in a review on houses for poor at his camp office on Wednesday

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

CHIEF MINISTER YS Jagan Mohan Reddy directed the officials to expedite distribution of house site pattas. During the review held at camp office here on 'Navaratnalu - Pedalandariki Illu' (houses to all the poor) on Wednesday, the Chief Minister said the distribution of pattas should be completed soon and the distribution of title deeds of the houses would be a continuous process. He reiterated that all eligible applications should be

• Directs officials to complete distribution of house site pattas soon

• All applications for sites should be cleared within 90 days of application
• Tells officials to ensure internet facility in Jagananna colonies

cleared within 90 days. Volunteers and staff of the village secretariats must complete physical verification within 12 days of receiving the application for the house site, he said adding beneficiaries should be identified through social audit.

The Chief Minister directed the officials to take steps to ensure uniformity and quality in

the structures and to furnish full details on facilities provided and their mode of construction in a colony. Internet facility should be provided in YSR Jagananna colonies and appropriate arrangements should be made in this regard. He said bio mining should be conducted for dumping yards and it should begin as soon as possible. Out of 30,06,673

house site pattas, distribution of 26,21,049 pattas is completed, accounting for 87.17 per cent, and distribution of sites was completed in 90.28 per cent of YSR Jagananna colonies.

The officials briefed the Chief Minister on the steps being taken to create infrastructure in the YSR Jagananna colonies. They said detailed project report regarding creation of infrastructure in would be completed by March 31 and various government departments were involved in it. They said, as directed by him, steps were being taken on structures like anganwadi centres, YSR clinics, primary health centres, schools, bus stops, etc., as per the population in the colonies.

Housing minister Cherukuvada Ranganatha Raju, chief commissioner for land administration Neerab Kumar Prasad, principal secretary for municipal and urban development Y Srilakshmi, principal secretary for housing Ajay Jain, principal secretary for revenue Usharani, principal advisor to the Chief Minister Nilam Sawhney and others were present.

ATTACKS ON TEMPLES

DGP calls for coordination between cops, temple officials

- Participates in an awareness meet organised by the Endowments Dept at Durga temple
- Executive officers of various temples apart from police and the departments concerned attend the meet

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

STATE director general of police (DGP) D Gautam Sawang stressed upon the need for the co-ordination between the temple administrations and police to check the attacks on the temples and desecration of idols. The DGP participated in an awareness programme organised by the endowments department at the Mahamandapam of Durga



DGP D Gautam Sawang addressing an awareness meet on prevention of attacks on temples at Durga temple in Vijayawada on Wednesday. (Left) Executive officers and other officials of various temple who attended the meet.

temple here on Wednesday. Executive officers of temples and other officials attended the programme.

Sawang explained that police department was taking steps for the installation of CC cameras in and around the temples, forming village defence squads, peace

committees in all police station limits to prevent attacks on the places of worship and maintain communal harmony. Commissioner of endowments P Arjuna Rao, Durga temple executive officer M V Suresh Babu, temple priests and others have welcomed the DGP.

Additional DGP (law and order) Ravi Sankar Ayyanar, Vijayawada commissioner of police B Srinivasulu, joint director of the ACB G V G Ashok Kumar, DIG, technical services, Pala Raju, Vijayawada DCP Vikrant Patil and others attended the awareness meet.

the former MLA, Bhuma Brahmananda Reddy asked Mallikarjuna to support them at the elections. When he did not agree, he was kidnapped and was confined for 20 days at an unknown place. However, he managed to escape from their confinement and reached the police station and lodged a complaint alleging the four persons were responsible for kidnapping him.

complaint stating that he was kidnapped by the former MLA Bhuma Brahmananda Reddy, Narayana Reddy, Veerabhadra Reddy and Baleeshwar Reddy. The CI said the complainant Mallikarjuna was a board member of Kurnool District Milk Producers Mutually Aided Cooperative Union Limited for which elections were being conducted after 26 years. The four persons including

HANS NEWS SERVICE
KURNOOL

NANDYAL III Town police registered a case of kidnap on TDP former legislator Bhuma Brahmananda Reddy and three others. Speaking to media here on Wednesday, Nandyal CI Mohan Reddy that one Mallikarjuna, a resident of Chabolu village, lodged a

Kidnap case filed against TDP ex-MLA

Poll panel to develop app to monitor voting

- Commissioner holds video conference with district officials along with CS, DGP and other senior officials
- Warns of action against tahsildars if issue of relevant certificates to contesting candidates is delayed



State Election Commissioner N Ramesh Kumar taking part in a videoconference with district officials in Vijayawada on Wednesday. Chief Secretary Aditya Nath Das, DGP D Gautam Sawang, Panchayat Raj and other officials are seen.

AMARAVATI

STATE Election Commissioner N Ramesh Kumar asked the officials to see that the panchayat elections are conducted in a free and fair manner with transparency.

Addressing a video conference with chief secretary Aditya Nath Das, director general of police D Gautam Sawang and district collectors on Wednesday, the SEC advised the officials to dedicate more time to conduct the elections in a fool-proof manner. He said the SEC will develop an app to

monitor the election process at the polling booths. Any one can file complaints through the app. He warned of action on tahsildars if there was any delay in issue of caste and income certificates to the contesting candidates.

Speaking on the occasion, chief secretary Das said that the state government had been taking measures to conduct the panchayat elections and Covid vaccination programme simultaneously.

DGP Sawang said the police force would be vaccinated before deploying for polling du-

ties. He said special teams would be formed to maintain law and order.

Panchayat raj principal secretary Gopal Krishna Dwivedi and commissioner Girija Sankar asked the district collector to train the polling staff in advance and make the polling stations ready.

Commissioner of medical and health K Bhaskar said that vaccination would be completed for polling staff and necessary precautions would be taken at polling booths. He said sanitisers would be made available at polling booths.

NO SEXUAL ASSAULT IF THERE IS NO SKIN-TO-SKIN CONTACT: MAHARASHTRA HC VERDICT

Supreme Court stays order acquitting man under POCSO

The HC verdict says that since the man groped the child without removing her clothes, the offence cannot be termed as sexual assault, but it does constitute the offence of outraging a woman’s modesty under IPC Section 354

NEW DELHI

THE Supreme Court Wednesday stayed the Bombay High Court order which acquitted a man under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act saying “groping a minor’s breast without ‘skin to skin contact’ cannot be termed as sexual assault”. A bench of Chief Justice S A Bobde and Justices A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian stayed the high court order after Attorney General K K Venugopal mentioned the matter. The top court also issued notice to Maharashtra government and permitted the AG

to file an appeal against the January 19 verdict by Justice Pushpa Ganediwala of the Nagpur bench of the Bombay High Court.

Venugopal, while mentioning the matter before the bench, submitted that the judgment of the high court is “unprecedented” and is likely to set a “dangerous precedent”. The verdict said that groping a minor’s breast without “skin to skin contact” cannot be termed as sexual assault as defined under the POCSO Act.

It said that since the man groped the child without removing her clothes the offence cannot be termed as



sexual assault but it does constitute the offence of outraging a woman’s modesty under IPC section 354. The high court had modified the order of a sessions court, which had sentenced a 39-year-old man to three years of imprisonment for sexually assaulting a 12-year-old girl.

The sessions court had sentenced the man to three years of imprisonment for the offences under the POCSO Act as also under IPC section 354. The sentences were to run concurrently. The high court, however, acquitted him under the POCSO Act while upholding his conviction under IPC section 354.

“Considering the stringent nature of punishment provided for the offence (under POCSO), in the opinion of this court, stricter proof and serious allegations are required,” the high court said.

The court, in its verdict, had held that this “physical contact” mentioned in the definition of sexual assault must be “skin to skin” or direct physical contact. “Admittedly, it is not the case of the prosecution that the appellant removed her top and pressed her breast. As such, there is no direct physical contact i.e. skin to skin with sexual intent without penetration,” the High Court had said.

Delhi seize: Blame game begins

No link with Deep Sidhu, says BJP MP Sunny Deol

‘BJP’s decisive role in turning resentment of farmers into anger’
UP BJP MLA announces resignation over farmers’ unrest

CHANDIGARH/NEW DELHI

BJP MP Sunny Deol has clarified that he or his family members have no links with actor Deep Sidhu who was among protesters at the Red Fort during farmers’ tractor parade in Delhi. Deol said he had clarified earlier also that he had no link with Sidhu.

“I have already made it clear through Twitter on December 6 that I or my family have no links with Deep Sidhu,” Deol said in a tweet. Punjabi film actor Deep Sidhu was among protesters at the Red Fort where flags were put up. Sidhu was an aide of Deol when the latter contested from the Gurdaspur seat in Punjab during the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. Sidhu had defended their action, saying they did not remove the national flag and had



File pic: PM Modi with Sunny Deol (left) and actor Deep Sidhu (2nd from right)

put up the ‘Nishan Sahib’ as a symbolic protest.

The ‘Nishan Sahib’ flag, a symbol of Sikh religion, is seen at all gurdwara complexes.

BJP MLA from the Meerapur Assembly seat in Muzaffarnagar,

Avtar Singh Bhadana, has announced his resignation from the party protesting against the Centre’s stand on the three farm laws. Bhadana, a former MP from Meerut and Faridabad, has been sulking off late and had

started visiting the protesting farmers in various parts of Uttar Pradesh.

Congress spokesperson Ran-deep Singh Surjewala launched a scathing attack on the ruling BJP and home minister Amit Shah, saying that instead of book-ing farmer leaders, home minister Amit Shah should be sacked for the violence that took place on Republic Day. “This is the second time in less than a year that under Shri Amit Shah’s leadership national capital of Delhi has been pushed to the brink of unabated, unchecked, uncontrolled violence. Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Wednesday held the BJP-led central government responsible for turning farmers’ “resentment into anger” and demanded immediate withdrawal of new agri laws.

Haryana MLA Abhay resigns

CHANDIGARH

THE lone legislator of Haryana’s Indian National Lok Dal Abhay Singh Chautala on Wednesday resigned from the Assembly over the three new farm laws and registration of cases against farmer leaders for the violence in Delhi on Republic Day.

Chautala reached the assembly here riding a tractor and handed over his resignation to Speaker Gian Chand Gupta, who accepted it.

In his resignation, he cited the reason as non-acceptance of the demand of the protesting farmers seeking roll back of all the three farm laws.

“Shri Abhay Singh Chautala, who represents Ellanabad assembly constituency, he came to me personally and tendered his resignation. I believe that the resignation that he has submitted is correct in all technical aspects. I have accepted it.

“He has referred to his earlier two letters that he had sent to me citing union government’s refusal to accept farmers’ demands,” a statement by the Speaker said.

SFJ case: Deep Sidhu skipped NIA summons

NEW DELHI

PUNJABI actor and singer Deep Sidhu, who is accused of instigating the farmers to hoist a pennant on the Red Fort, did not appear before the National Investigation Agency (NIA) last week after he was summoned in connection with the Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) case, sources said on Wednesday.

Sidhu was seen with a group of agitating farmers while hoisting a pennant on a flagpole at the ramparts of the Red Fort on Tuesday afternoon.

The NIA source said that Sidhu was asked to appear before the agency on January 17 as a witness. “But he did not appear despite a summons issued to him,” the source said.

When asked if the NIA has served any fresh summons to him, the source said, “No fresh summons have been issued to him as of now.” To a question if the agency will summon him again, the source declined to comment. The source further said that Sidhu was summoned by the NIA as the probe is based on a suspicious transaction report (STR) compiled by the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) highlighting several abnormalities in banking transactions in the last few months which was shared with the anti-terror probe agency.

The NIA had registered a case on De-

cember 15 last year after a notification from the government under several sections of the IPC and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA). In the FIR, which has been viewed by IANS, the NIA alleged that SFJ, an unlawful association and other Khalistani terrorist outfits including but not limited to Babbar Khalsa International, Khalistan Tiger Force and Khalistan Zindabad Force along with their frontal organisations, have entered into a conspiracy to create an atmosphere of fear and lawlessness and to cause disaffection in people and to incite them towards rising in rebellion against the government.

The FIR also said that huge funds are being collected abroad for on-ground campaign and propaganda against Indian missions in countries like US, UK, Canada, Germany and so forth. These campaigns are being spearheaded by designated terrorists Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, Paramjit Singh Pamma, Hardeep Singh Nijjar and others.

The NIA FIR also alleged that SFJ and other pro-Khalistan elements involved in this conspiracy, through their incessant social media campaigns and otherwise, are radicalising and recruiting impressionable youth to agitate and undertake terrorist acts for creation of a separate nation of Khalistan after secession from India.

104 injured in cops-teachers clash in Tripura

AGARTALA

AT least 87 teachers and 17 police personnel were injured in a pitched battle on Wednesday with the security forces knocking down the tents in which thousands of Tripura government school teachers, who had lost their jobs following the court’s verdict, have been holding sit-in protest for the past 52 days demanding restoration of their jobs. Inspector General of Police (Law and Order) Arindam Nath told IANS that 223 agitating teachers were arrested as they assembled near the official residence of Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb.

West Tripura District Magistrate and Collector Shailesh Kumar Yadav, before the gathering of the teachers near the CM’s residence, had promulgated prohibitory orders 144 Cr Pc in the entire Agartala Municipal Corporation areas banning assembly of five or more people.

“In all 87 teachers and 17 police personnel were injured in today’s (Wednesday) incidents (police lathicharge, use of water cannon and burst of tear gas shells). The agitating teachers also damaged four police cars. Considering the situation, the prohibitory orders were extended for another 48 hours,” Yadav told the media.

Collegium’s recommendations SC takes strong note on delay by Centre

NEW DELHI

THE Supreme Court Wednesday took strong note of the delay on the part of the Central government in acting on the collegium’s recommendations clearing names for appointment of judges in higher judiciary, saying “it is a matter of great concern”.

The apex court said that as on date 189 proposals on appointment of judges are pending and sought an update on the latest position from the government. A bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde asked Attorney General K K Venugopal to apprise it as to how much time would be needed for the Ministry of Law in responding to the collegium’s recommendations for appointment of judges in high courts.

“If you do not give comments for five months on collegium recommendations, it is a matter of great concern,” said the bench, which also comprised justices S K Kaul and Surya Kant.

“We need the update on pending names as on January 29 and suppose you have reservation and you send back names and then we can reiterate. But if you do not give comments for five months on col-

legium recommendations then it is matter of great concern,” the bench remarked. It said in some cases, the Centre has taken more than a year in responding to the recommendations and usually refer to their pendency with the in-



telligence bureau or with state governments. “We need to put the house in order,” the bench said and posted the matter for hearing after two weeks. The observations came on a transfer plea of PLR Projects Pvt Ltd originating in 2019 from Odisha, where lawyers were then observing strike in several districts demanding circuit benches of high court in other parts of the state.

JD(U) to go alone in 2022 UP polls

LUCKNOW

THE Janata Dal (United) has decided to contest the 2022 Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls independently.

JD(U) national General Secretary K.C. Tyagi has been entrusted the responsibility of strengthening the party organization ahead of the assembly elections next year.

Tyagi recently held meetings with party office bearers in this regard.

According to a party functionary, “JD(U) is keen to expand its base outside Bihar and the party will contest assembly elections in other states too.”

The JD(U) decision to contest the Uttar Pradesh assembly elections could add to BJP’s woes since the JD(U) is planning an OBC-centric campaign which will directly hit the BJP game plan for the next assembly elections.

“Nitish Kumar is known for policies that benefit the most backward sections of society and we will base our campaign on this. If it hurts other parties, we are not concerned,” the functionary said.

The JD(U) plans to raise the demand for reservation for extremely backward classes (EBCs) in Uttar Pradesh. “In Bihar every party celebrates Karpoori Thakur’s anniversary. We will now take it to UP and raise the demand for reservation for EBCs in the state based on the Karpoori Thakur formula,” the JD(U) leader said.

Sasikala released after serving 4 yrs in prison

Bengaluru: Expelled AIADMK leader V K Sasikala was released on Wednesday after serving four years imprisonment in a corruption case at a prison here.

The formalities for her release were done at the state-run Victoria Hospital, where she is undergoing treatment for COVID-19 infection, which she had contracted a week ago, along with her sister-in-law J Ilavarasi.

“Yes, she has been formally released,” Parappana Agrahara Jail Superintendent V Sheshamurthy told IANS.



People gather in large numbers during the inauguration of the Jayalalithaa Memorial, in Chennai on Wednesday

Soldier killed, 3 injured in attack

SRINAGAR

AN Army jawan was killed and three other soldiers were injured in an IED blast that targeted a Road Opening Party (ROP) in south Kashmir’s Kulgam district on Wednesday morning, officials said.

Police said the IED blast took place at Subhanpora area of Kulgam.

Police said preliminary investigation revealed that a rudimentary IED with a low powered explosive and ball bearings was planted in an abandoned building inside the school premises where the Army

jawans used to visit on a routine basis.

“The IED was planted by terrorists probably during the night hours. In this incident, four jawans of 24 RR sustained injuries and were evacuated to a nearby hospital for the treatment of their injuries. Among the injured one jawan succumbed to his injuries and attained martyrdom,” the police said.

Police said an FIR has been registered and investigation is in progress to establish the full circumstances of the terror crime.

“The area has been cordoned off and search in the area is going on,” the police said.

Indian Institute of Technology Madras study

Plastic burning main reason behind visibility reduction over Delhi

NEW DELHI

CHLORIDE-RICH particles resulting from plastic burning may be primarily responsible for haze and fog formation in Northern India, including Delhi, during the winter months, according to an international study led by researchers from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras.

The study, published in the journal Nature Geoscience, may help develop better policies to improve the air quality and visibility in North India.

Many studies in the past have identified particulate matter or aerosol particles with diameter less than 2.5 micrometres (PM2.5) as a major pollutant, responsible for haze and fog formation

over Indo-Gangetic plain, including Delhi. However, the role of PM2.5 and detailed chemistry of haze and fog formation over national capital was poorly understood.

The new study found that chloride-rich particles were the highest inorganic fraction in particulate matter, primarily responsible for haze and fog formation in the region. “We realised that despite absolute PM2.5 mass burden over Delhi being much less than other polluted megacities around the world, including Beijing, the pollution and atmospheric chemistry of Delhi is much more complex to understand,” said Sachin S Gunthe, Associate Professor, Department of Civil Engineering, IIT Madras, who led the study.

“This work put forward importance of meas-



urements and modelling approaches to scientifically conclude that half of the water uptake and visibility reduction by aerosol particles around Delhi is caused by the hydrochloric acid (HCl) emissions, which is locally emitted in Delhi potentially due to plastic contained waste burning and other industrial processes,” Gunthe said.

The latest study greatly enhances our understanding about the precise role of PM2.5 in chemistry of fog formation, which will help policy makers to frame the better policies for improving the air quality and visibility over the national capital. The researchers noted that during winter season, most of the Indo Gangetic Plain invariably is engulfed in a dense fog and haze, particularly during the months of December and

January. Over the national capital, dense fog negatively impacts the air and surface transport resulting in huge financial losses and jeopardise human lives, they said.

The study explained that complex chemical reactions involving HCl, which is directly emitted in the atmosphere from plastic contained waste burning and few industrial processes, is primarily responsible for high PM2.5 chloride and subsequent haze and fog formation over Delhi during chilly winter nights. The team, including researchers from the Harvard University, US, and Manchester University in the UK, deployed state-of-the-art instruments to measure the chemical composition and other important properties of PM2.5, and the relative humidity and temperature in Delhi.

TODAY'S QUOTE

Promote cultivation of fruits, flowers

“ICAR should collaborate with the commerce ministry to collect date on food items being imported in the country. We import floriculture worth Rs 230 crore and fruits worth Rs 5,000 crore every year these agriculture, horticulture and floriculture crops should be promoted in the country. ICAR should focus on new inventions to modernise agriculture. — **Piyush Goyal, Union Minister**



PROFIT

Axis Bank Q3 net slips 36% to ₹1116 cr

Private sector lender Axis Bank on Wednesday reported a 36.4 per cent decline in standalone net profit to Rs 1,116.60 crore for the third quarter ended December 2020. The bank had posted a net profit of Rs 1,757 crore in the corresponding period of the previous fiscal. Total income during the quarter under review slipped to Rs 19,274.39 crore.

FOREX (buy rates in ₹)			
US Dollar	77.3	South	
Euro	92.81	African Rand	5.52
UAE Dirham	21.84	Hong Kong Dollar	10.82
Thai Baht	2.8	Japanese Yen	0.81
British Pound	104.14	New Zealand Dollar	55.3
Australian Dollar	59.12	Saudi Riyal	21.37
Canadian Dollar	60.17	Swedish Krona	10.07
Swiss Franc	85.41	Singapore Dollar	57.73

DELHI THURSDAY 28 JANUARY 2021

BIZ BRIEFS

FDI into India up by 37%

FOREIGN direct investment (FDI) into India increased by 37 per cent to \$ 43.85 billion during April-November 2020, according to data by the commerce and industry ministry. Total FDI inflows including reinvested earnings during the eight-month period of the current fiscal grew by 22 per cent to \$ 58.37 billion. FDI equity inflow received during 2020-21 April to November 2020 is \$43.85 billion. It is the highest ever for the first 8 months of a financial year and 37 per cent more compared to the first eight months of 2019-20. The Ministry said that FDI is a major driver of economic growth and an important source of non-debt finance for the economic development of India.

Policybazaar's sales on rise

Online insurance platform Policybazaar.com has achieved a significant milestone by insuring 10 lakh lives between April-Dec 2020. Policybazaar sold 4 lakh health insurance policies amounting to a total sum insured of over Rs 7 lakh cr. This is driven by steep jump in demand for health insurance in the aftermath of the coronavirus pandemic, introduction of new innovative higher sum insured products, flexible payment options and simpler processes which makes buying health Insurance a lot simpler and cheaper. “This milestone is a clear reflection of the immense trust and faith that people have in the Policybazaar brand. We always put the needs and requirements of a customer ahead of everything else. This helps us build healthy lifelong relationships with our consumers,” says Sarbvir Singh, CEO, Policybazaar.com.

Survey held on Covid impact

AI powered communication platform myjen.ai conducted the survey ‘Pivoting to the New Normal’ to comprehend the impact of pandemic on learning and development of professionals. The participants included learning & development heads, people managers and other function leaders of organizations from across 30 different industries including education, technology, infrastructure etc. The survey had equal representation from junior, middle and senior management. The key finding of the survey is 50 per cent people used pandemic time for self-development while honing technical skills, innovation skills, communication skills. Shammil Pant, Co-Founder, myjen.ai, said: “Our survey is an attempt to capture metamorphosis taken place in learning & development space due to the unprecedented pandemic. The uptake of digital platforms and growing role of technology is having a profound impact on workplaces, cultures and mind.”

ED arrests Rana Kapoor

The Enforcement Directorate has arrested Yes Bank co-promoter Rana Kapoor in a fresh money laundering case linked to an alleged Rs 4,300 crore fraud at the PMC Bank in Maharashtra, official sources said on Wednesday. Kapoor, 63, was already in judicial custody after he was arrested by the central probe agency in March last year in connection with alleged financial irregularities and purported kick backs paid to him and his family members in lieu of certain loans provided by the Yes Bank to a number of high-profile borrowers. In the latest case, sources said, Kapoor was placed under arrest in jail as per provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). He was later produced before a special PMLA court that sent him to ED custody till January 30 in the second money laundering case filed against him, they said.

Markets crash amid foreign outflows

SENSEX TANKS 938 PTS; NIFTY FALLS BELOW 14,000 LEVEL

MUMBAI

THE BSE benchmark Sensex crashed 938 points to slip below the 47,500-mark and the NSE Nifty plunged below the psychological 14,000-level due to rampant selling across counters amid foreign fund outflow. Marking its fourth straight session of loss, the Sensex tumbled 937.66 points or 1.94 per cent to settle at 47,409.93 – taking the aggregate four-session loss to 2,382.19 points or 4.78 per cent. Intraday, the BSE gauge swung 1,117.65 points.

Likewise, the NSE Nifty plunged 271.40 points or 1.91 per cent to close the session at 13,967.50. Over the last four sessions, the 50-share index has lost 677.20 points or 4.62 per cent. On the Sensex chart, 24 shares closed in the red and 6 in the green. Axis Bank, Titan, IndusInd Bank, HDFC Bank, Dr Reddy's, HDFC and Asian Paint were major losers, shedding up to 4.05 per cent. On the other hand, Tech Mahindra, TITC, PowerGrid, UltraTech Cement, HCL Tech and Nestle India rose up to 2.57 per cent. Of the 19 sectoral indices, barring FMCG index all ended with losses. Among the major losers were banking (2.93 per cent), finance (2.72 per cent), metal (2.54), realty (2.28) and auto (2.11 per cent).

Broader smallcap, midcap and



largecap indices fell as much as 1.87 per cent. Analysts said investors of late have preferred taking profits off the table ahead of the Union Budget and futures and options (F&O) expiry. Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) sold equities worth Rs 765.30 crore on a net basis in the Indian capital market on Monday, exchange data showed. “It is well-known that a fall in FIIs inflows will be the biggest risk to the liquidity-driven rally. Indian bourses mirrored mixed sentiment from global peers with a downward rally owing to consecutive days of FII selling,” said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

Global markets were mixed today ahead of the US Fed meeting amid uncertainty over the US stimulus, he said, adding that higher volatility in the coming days is expected, given pre-budget event risk. Indian equity markets were closed on Tuesday for the Republic Day. Elsewhere in Asia on Wednesday, stocks ended mixed as

Investors' wealth plunges over ₹8 lakh cr in 4 days



INVESTORS' wealth eroded by more than Rs 8 lakh crore in four consecutive sessions of stock market loss. Recording its fourth straight session of loss on Wednesday, the Sensex tumbled 937.66 points or 1.94 per cent to close at 47,409.93. In the four straight sessions, the benchmark has fallen by 2,382.19 points or 4.78 per cent.

Tracking the muted sentiment, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms declined by ₹8,07,025.09 crore to ₹1,89,63,547.48 crore in these four days. “Volatility is normally higher on the last two days of monthly expiry but this time the fall with higher volatility show cautiousness amongst market participants before the Budget event. Earnings are coming out better-than-expected but profit-booking is seen in most companies that have declared results so far,” Rusmik Oza, Executive Vice President and Head of Fundamental Research at Kotak Securities said.

Covid taken a big toll on capacity utilisation: Kotak

NEW DELHI

PRIVATE investment, which has been muted for a long time, will start trickling in once the overall capacity utilisation in the system goes beyond 75 per cent that, in turn, will help unleash ‘animal spirits’, CII President Uday Kotak said on Wednesday.

The Covid-19 pandemic gave a shock to capacity utilisation and as companies go to capacity utilisation above 75 per cent, they will start looking at expansion and making investments, Kotak told PTI in an interview. “The second and the third points for getting private investment...a stable interest rate, and a stable tax regime. Additionally, if capacity utilisation goes up and we keep up stability on interest rates and taxation, and also policies of entry and exit from different sectors, we can actually create a positive environment for getting people's animal spirits back,” he said. The term ‘animal spirits’ was coined by celebrated economist John Maynard Keynes to refer to investors' confidence in taking action in terms of investment.

To encourage fresh investment from the private sector, the government in September 2019 cut corporate tax to one of the lowest in the world.

In the biggest reduction in 28 years, the government slashed corporate tax rates up to 10 per cent points as it looked to pull the economy out of a six-year-low growth with a Rs 1.45-lakh crore tax break.

Textile industry requests sops from Central govt

Seeks tax relief for three years for textile traders, abolition of duty on PTA



ASL NARASIMHA RAO HYDERABAD

As the day for presenting the Union Budget for 2021-22 is nearing, the appeals from different sections of the society are pouring in. The expectations are high from traders, especially in textile, readymade garments and fashion industry.

They have been facing many challenges since March 2020, initially because of the Covid-19 lockdown and later on due to lack of demand, job cuts, capital issues, among others. Srikanth, a Hyderabad-based Classic Polo outlet owner, says: “The pandemic has impacted our business, which is down by 40 per cent. Our expenditure, however, remained the same. Our capital is drying out and we are not able to invest in new products.”

He feels that govt should announce some measures for textile and garment industry. He says, “Cotton prices have gone up by 18 per cent in international market recently, which is an extra burden for

manufacturers. Hence, small and medium manufacturers now need financial support from government without the interest burden.”

Telangana State Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Trade (TSFCCT) president Ammanabolu Prakash expects the government to help the traders especially in textile and garment businesses, who have been facing many challenges ranging from lack of demand to capital woes. He says, “The Union Budget should announce three years' income tax rebate for traders who are affected by Covid-19 pandemic. The government should provide special financial package to small and medium traders and give bank loans at 6 per cent for big and corporate traders. The way the loans are being offered to MSMEs under SIDBI now,” he adds.

Prakash further says, “Textile industry has been demanding abolition of duty levied on Purified Terephthalic Acid (PTA) to remain globally competitive.

Bank of Baroda Q3 profit at ₹1,159 cr

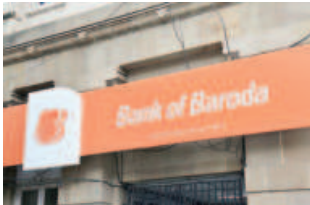
NEW DELHI

BANK of Baroda on Wednesday reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 1,159.17 crore for the third quarter ended December 31, 2020.

The state-owned bank had posted a net loss of R 1,218.87 crore for the same quarter a year ago. Total income of the bank fell to Rs 22,070.52 crore during October-December period of 2020-21 from Rs 23,134.67 crore in the year-ago quarter. Bank of Baroda said in a regulatory filing.

The lender improved on its asset quality with gross non-performing assets (NPAs) falling to 8.48 per cent of the gross advances by December-end 2020 from 10.43 per cent by the same period a year ago. In value terms, gross NPAs or bad loans fell to Rs 63,181.55 crore as against Rs 73,139.70 crore.

Net NPAs also came down to 2.39 per cent (Rs 16,667.71 crore) from 4.05 per cent (Rs 26,504 crore). Provisions for bad loans and contingencies for the third quarter fell to Rs 4,618.88 crore from Rs 7,233.62 crore in year-ago period.



On standalone basis, the lender logged a net profit of Rs 1,061.11 crore in December quarter, 2020-21. It had a loss of Rs 1,406.96 crore in the year-ago period. Standalone income during the period under review was also down at Rs 20,664.23 crore from Rs 21,809.07 crore.

Among others, the lender said it has made provisions of Rs 10,128.04 crore, 100 per cent of the total outstanding, for the accounts covered under the provisions of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), as on December 31, 2020. Besides, the bank made provisions of Rs 1,709.35 crore as on December 31, 2020 towards the potential impact of Covid-19.

The provisions held are in excess of the RBI prescribed norms, it said. Bank of Baroda stock closed 0.14 per cent lower at Rs 73.70 on BSE.

IMF favours extension of Covid support measures

WASHINGTON

AHEAD of India's annual budget presentation next week, IMF's Chief Economist Gita Gopinath has favoured the extension of the pandemic support measures, thrust on investment in infrastructure and expanding health sectors programmes like Ayushman Bharat, and a very credible divestment path for commercially viable companies.

The Indian government has provided a lot of schemes for small and medium enterprises, most of which is in the form of liquidity support, Gopinath said on Tuesday. “And you want to revisit it and see how effectively that is working and see whether additional support may need to be provided,” she said while responding to a question on her recommendations to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, ahead of her presentation of the annual Union Budget on February 1. It would be a good time for banks and Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) to raise capital given the attractiveness of financing conditions at this point, she said.

“We have to also keep in mind that as these pandemic measures

BUDGET 2021



The Indian govt has provided a lot of schemes for small and medium enterprises, most of which are in the form of liquidity support, says IMF Chief

are lifted, there would very likely be an increase in non-performing loans. Even the RBI (Reserve Bank of India) has projected that,” Gopinath said. But there might also be a need for the capital support to be provided by the government for public sector enterprises. That has been long on the table which is to improve governance of public sector banks, she said. Observing that there is a need for more public infrastructure spending, she said that the government has expressed an

intention to do that. “There are needs to make more public investment. That would be another area that would require thrust,” she said, adding that health is another sector which needs renewed focus. “In this pandemic, there has been spending but if you look at the health needs of the country, health capacity has to be increased. We can also see an argument for expanding Ayushman Bharat programme for instance and also increasing the number of medical personnel,” Gopinath said.

Aadhar Housing Fin files for ₹7,300-cr IPO

MUMBAI

BLACKSTONE-BACKED Aadhar Housing Finance Ltd has filed for an initial public offering worth up to Rs 7,300 crore.

The offering would include equity shares aggregating up to Rs 1,500 crore and offer of sale of up to Rs 5,800 crore by the promoter BCP Topco VII Pte Ltd.

In its draft red herring prospectus, the company said that it would utilise the money raised through the IPO towards augmenting its capital base. The offering gains significance as it joins the bandwagon of IPOs amid the pandemic, which have benefitted from the surge in stock markets.

A recent EY report showed that proceeds from initial public offerings (IPOs) in the country surged 61 per cent last year to over \$4.09 billion. It said that the fourth quarter of 2020 saw a strong rebound in IPO activity and market sentiment remains positive.

Srikakulam: Blessed with minerals, but lacks industries

The district is a fertile ground for industrial expansion as it's home to long seacoast, rivers and natural resources

CHOWADARI LAKSHMAN RAO SRIKAKULAM

SRIKAKULAM district is endowed with plenty of natural resources and is blessed with features such as seacoast and mineral resources that are essential for industries to take root. But the district lacks adequate industrial ecosystem, forcing locals to migrate to other districts and States in search of employment. Therefore, to put the industrial growth in the district on a fast track, the State government should create more industrial infrastructure and offer incentives, say local entrepreneurs.

According to official data, the total indus-



trial units in Srikakulam district are 5,893. The total investments that all these units invested is to the tune of Rs 6,741.45 crore. These industrial units provide employment to 63,675 people across the district.

Out of the total industrial units, 31 are large and mega units set up with an investment of Rs 5,821.62 crore. These units provide employment to 19,348 people. Most of these 31 large and mega units are located in Ranastalam, Laveru and Etcherla mandals in Etcherla segment. Besides, the district is



Unemployed youth need to be trained to become skilled workers so that MSMEs can employ them

home to 5,862 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). The investment that went into these industrial units totals to Rs 919.83 crore and these units provide employment to as many as 44,327 persons across the district.

Large and mega industrial units are dedi-

cated to jute, pharmaceuticals, pesticide, sugar, pistons, piston rings, craft paper manufacture, besides beach sand mineral plants that are engaged in extraction of minerals from sand.

MSME units in the district include, rice mills, granite mining, units engaged in cutting and polishing activities, stone crushers, cashew processing, fishnets making, paper plates and cups making, making of poultry feed, cotton ginning, electrical poles manufacturing, cement bricks, food processing,



BIZZ TAKE

On various investment opportunities in districts

ANDHRA PRADESH

drinking water units, metal works,

coir products units, and saw mills.

The district has conditions conducive to the industry, such as long seacoast, rivers, fertile lands. Besides, natural resources such as mines and mineral deposits are available in abundance. With an aim to promote ease of doing business in the district, the government offered permissions since the year 2018 to 365 units in MSME sector which are to be set up with a total investment of Rs 300.52 crore. Those units would provide employment to the 2,023 people. Of the proposed units, only 104 units started in this sector so far. Remaining 261 units in the MSME sector are yet to see the light of the day. General Manager for District Industrial Centre (DIC), B GopalaKrishna told Bizz Buzz.

We need to train the youth as skilled employees to run these units under the MSME sector, Gopalakrishna said.

ICC ODI rankings

Kohli, Rohit stay on top

DUBAI

INDIA captain Virat Kohli and senior batsman Rohit Sharma retained their number one and two position respectively in the ICC rankings for ODI batsmen, while pacer Jasprit Bumrah remained at the third spot in the bowler's list. Kohli, who had scored 89 and 63 against Australia in his last two ODI appearance, has 870 points to his kitty.

Rohit, who missed the tour of Australia due to an injury and has not featured in any one-day game since the Covid-19 pandemic began, remained at the second spot, five points ahead of Pakistan skipper Babar Azam (837). New Zealand's Ross Taylor (818) and Australia skipper Aaron Finch (791) round up the top five in the



batsmen's list. Ireland all-rounder Paul Stirling gained eight slots to reach 20th place after scoring 285 runs against Afghanistan which included centuries in the second and third matches.

Afghanistan's Hashmatullah Shahidi (70th to 66th), Rashid

Khan (96th to 89th) and Javed Ahmadi (103rd to 99th) have also gained in the rankings for batsmen. Among the bowlers, Bumrah remained the best placed Indian, occupying the third spot with 700 points. New Zealand pacer Trent Boult (722) and Afghan spinner Mujeeb Ur

Rahman (701) occupy the top two spots.

Bangladesh spinner Mehidy Hasan Miraz, who was the most successful bowler in the recently concluded series against the

West Indies, has progressed nine spots to take fourth position after grabbing seven wickets, including a haul of four for 25 in the second ODI that won him the player of the match award. Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman's six

wickets in the series has lifted him from 19th to eighth position.

Other Bangladesh players to gain in the latest rankings update include Shakib Al Hasan (up 15 places to 13th among bowlers) and Mushfiqur Rahim (up one place to 15th among batsmen) after their player of the match performances in the first and third matches respectively. (ANI)

Ganguly stable after visit to hospital



KOLKATA

INDIAN cricket board president Sourav Ganguly was stable after he was rushed to Apollo Hospital here on Wednesday following uneasiness and chest pain the previous night.

The former India captain was admitted to the hospital under the supervision of state-run SSKM Hospital's cardiology department head Saroj Mondal, sources said.

"Mr Sourav Ganguly, 48 years old male, has come for a checkup of his cardiac condition. There is no change in his parameters since his last hospitalisation and his vital parameters are stable," read a statement from the Apollo Gleneagles Hospital, Kolkata.

Ganguly, 48, had suffered a blackout while working out at his personal gym on January 2 and was taken to Kolkata's Woodlands Hospital.

He underwent angioplasty and other related tests there and was discharged from the hospital on January 7. (IANS)



Hyd, B'luru square off in a big game at Vasco

Three crucial points on offer in promising Thursday-night clash

PANAJI

AFTER three consecutive draws, Hyderabad FC will be in search of a positive result in Round 14 of the Indian Super League, when they host Bengaluru FC at the Tilak Maidan in Vasco on Thursday.

Both sides played out a goalless draw when they met at the Fatorda Stadium earlier in the season. And with just four points separating the two sides going into this clash, the three points on offer on the night could prove to be crucial, come the end of the campaign.

"I think tomorrow is another difficult game for my side. Bengaluru are a very strong team and I can only speak good about them.

They have been unlucky with a few results recently but are one of the many teams in the hunt

for top-4. So, we need to be at our best, going into this game," said Manolo Marquez, HFC's Head Coach, ahead of this crunch clash.

Hyderabad FC have also picked up just three points from their last three games but are in a decent position, 13 games into the season. They go into this game in the fourth place and will look to consolidate their position in the league table.

Bengaluru can potentially reduce the gap to the top-4 to just a point with a win in this game. But a victory for Hyderabad FC will see them jump to 3rd place making this a crucial clash for both sides.

The game kicks off at 7:30 pm on Thursday and will be telecasted live on the Star Sports Network with live streaming on Disney+ Hotstar and JioTV.

Pant, Ashwin in contention for new ICC awards

DUBAI

INDIA'S senior off-spinner R Ashwin and swashbuckling wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant would be in contention for the newly-introduced player of the month awards announced by the International Cricket Council on Wednesday. Besides Ashwin and Pant, two other Indians -- Mohammed Siraj and T Natarajan -- are also in the



fray. All of them played a stellar role in India's recent historic Test series win against Australia. The world body said the

awards will recognise the best performances of both male and female cricketers across all forms of international cricket throughout the year. Other players named for the awards for January are England captain Joe Root, star Australia batsman Steve Smith, Rahmanullah Gurbaz of Afghanistan, Marizanne Kapp and Nadine de Klerk of South Africa and Nida Dar of Pakistan.

Online Rummy: Kerala HC notice to Kohli

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

THE Kerala High Court on Wednesday issued a notice to Indian cricket team captain Virat Kohli, actors Tamannah and Aju Vargheese on a petition seeking ban on online rummy after victims alleged brand ambassadors play a significant role in getting youth addicted.

Sindhu, Srikanth lose opening matches in World Tour Finals

BANGKOK

STAR Indian shuttlers P V Sindhu and Kidambi Srikanth fought their hearts out before suffering close defeats in their respective group 'B' openers at the USD 1.5 million HSBC BWF World Tour Finals here on Wednesday. A week after a demoralising defeat at the Toyota Thailand Open quarter-finals, world champion Sindhu produced a much-improved performance but still lost to world number one Tai Tzu Ying of Taiwan 21-19 21-17-21.

"It was a good match, there were no easy points. In the third game I came back and it was just one point difference at one stage. I broke my racket strings twice (during rallies) and that made a difference," Sindhu said. "It's a tough group. I have to give 100 per cent." It was Sindhu's 16th defeat to Tzu Ying in



21 meetings. Former world number one Srikanth too squandered an opening game advantage, losing 21-15 16-21 18-21 to world number three Anders Antonsen of Denmark in a gruelling 77-minute contest. "I can't say I'm happy with the

way I played today, because I was playing much better in training before I came here," Srikanth said. "I had my chances today, I could have won from 17-16 in the third. Main motto for me is to play as many matches as possible, because I haven't been winning matches over the last two years. So, I really want to play matches with the top-eight players."

Alam century leads Pakistan to 308-8 vs SA

KARACHI

FAWAD Alam's third test century put Pakistan in charge on the second day of the first test against South Africa on Wednesday. The 35-year-old Alam hit nine fours and two sixes in a patient 109 off 245 balls, compiled in just under six hours, to help his team reach 308-8 at stumps. Faheem Ashraf also scored a fluent 64 off 84 balls as Pakistan opened up a first-innings lead of 88 runs on a slow wicket.

He and Alam shared a stand of 102 for the seventh wicket. Debutant Nauman Ali was 6 not out and Hasan Ali, who was bowled by Keshav Maharaj off a no-ball late in the day, was unbeaten on 11. Alam, who bats in an unorthodox style and exposes all three stumps to the bowler, was out in the last session when he flicked a ball from Lungi Ngidi (2-55) straight to mid-wicket.

Pakistan was in trouble overnight on 33-4 after South Africa had been skittled out for 220 on an eventful first day when 14 wickets fell on an uneven wicket. (AP)



Pakistan's Fawad Alam celebrates after scoring century while his teammate Faheem Ashraf watches

SA women beat Pak, win 3-0

DURBAN

THREE-WICKET hauls by Shabnim Ismail, Sune Luus and Ayabonga Khaka helped South Africa women complete a 32-run win over Pakistan in the third and final One-day International (ODI) and with it seal a 3-0 series whitewash at the Kingsmead here on Tuesday.

Fast bowler Ismail claimed three for 22, fellow seamer Khaka took three for 29 and captain Luus nabbed her 100th wicket for South Africa with her three wickets for 35.

Those strikes ensured the hosts defended 201 by restricting the tourists to 169, and in the process secured their biggest win of the three-match contest.

Sanaa ECube Premier League takes off

HYDERABAD

EVENT industry's biggest cricket league, Sanaa ECube Premier League—Season 5 kicked off in the city on Tuesday at Vijay Anand Cricket Ground, near Shiv-rampally. On Day 2 today, three matches were held between NM Page 3 Warriors VS Deccan Strikers; Page 3 Panthers vs Alankritha Knight Riders and NM Page 3 Warriors vs Rocky Riders 11.

In first match held on day two between NM Page 3 Warriors with Rocky Riders 11, Rocky Riders won by four wickets. They made 113 for 6 wickets in 15 overs. NM Page 3 Warriors made 112 for 10 wickets. Rehaman of Rocky Riders 11 was adjudged as the

player of the match for making 28 runs and taking 2 wickets.

In a second match held between Page 3 Panthers versus Alankritha Knight Riders, Page 3 Panthers won by 13 runs. They made 127 for 9 in 15 overs. In reply Alankritha Knight Riders made 114 for 9 in 14.4 overs. Bakkolla Mahesh of Page 3 Panthers declared as Players of the match.

In a 3rd match held between NM Page 3 Warriors and Deccan Strikers, NM Page 3 Warriors won by 76 runs. They made 158 for 7 wickets in 15 overs. In reply Deccan Strikers made 82 only by losing 7 wickets in their quota of 15 overs. Anwar of NM Page 3 Warriors bagged player of the match award. It is a limited 15 over league game.



Anushriya Gulati wins rare double in National Racing Championship

NEW DELHI

AHURA Racing's Anushriya Gulati scored a rare double in the JK Tyre FMSCI Indian National Racing Championship, claiming the LGB-4 Rookie crown as well as the Women's Category title over the weekend in Coimbatore. An all-round sportsperson,

Anushriya has represented India in shooting and her home state Uttarakhand in basketball while also being an accomplished biker with many firsts to her name.

"I took up formula racing only one year back and am truly thrilled to win two titles in the national racing championship in just my second year," a delighted

Anushriya said. "It wasn't easy as the competition was very tough, with many boys in fray in the Rookie category and some experienced ladies in the Women's category," she added.

Anushriya had set herself up for the Rookie title by sweeping a whopping 46 points in the opening round, winning three races and finishing second in two others. In the final round, despite struggling with a truant car, she still managed to finish second in one race and third in three races to garner 31 points for a cumulative tally of 77 points.

The 25-year-old held off a strong challenge in the Women's category too, pipping Mira Erda and Phoebe Nongrum to the title. Founded by former racer Sarosh Hataria, Ahura Racing had created history by launching an all-women's racing team three years back, featuring young talented girl racers from across the country.



Tennis camp at HPRC courts concludes

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

THE junior high performance free tennis camp, under the auspices of Academia Sports Village, concluded on a grand note in their courts at Hyderabad Polo and Riding Club (HPRC) commemorating Republic Day at Aziz Nagar on Tuesday. In a

touching moment, the trainees were given certificates by 90-year-old Chief Patron of RR Foundation Khurshed Begum. Also present on the occasion were head coach Shankar, United Nations Photo journalist based in the United States Mohammed Jaffer and CFO of Academia Sports Village Durdana Arshi. Seven-year-old Master

Drona Raju, the youngest trainee along with sports village CFO Durdana Arshi receiving certificate along with coach Shankar and mother Raju on Tuesday which concluded on a grand note in their courts at Hyderabad Polo and Riding Club (HPRC) commemorating Republic Day at Aziz Nagar on Tuesday

