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Farmers hoist flags at the Red Fort during the 'tractor rally' amid the 72nd Republic Day celebrations, in New Delhi on Tuesday

CAPITAL CHAOS

Farmers swarm Red Fort, hoist flag

One killed, many hurt in clashes

NEW DELHI

PROTESTING farmers on Tuesday swarmed the Red Fort in New Delhi during a 'tractor rally' here on the Republic Day even as police tried to prevent them from driving towards central Delhi.

The farmers barged into the 17th century monument, climbed up its ramparts and waved farmer union flags and banners and even hoisted a pennant.

Police and other security personnel deployed at the Red Fort could be seen lathi-charging the protesters even as the former were clearly outnumbered by the farmers. A few youths climbed up the flagpole on the ramparts of the 17th century landmark and put up a saffron pennant with a religious symbol.



Union Home Minister Amit Shah speaks with Home Secretary Ajay Balla at Rajpath

More paramilitary forces being deployed in Delhi

NEW DELHI: In the wake of farmers' tractor rally turning violent, the Centre on Tuesday decided to deploy additional paramilitary troops in Delhi to restore peace and maintain law and order, officials said.

The decision was taken at a high-level meeting chaired by Union Home Minister Amit Shah and attended by Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla, Delhi Police Commissioner S N Shrivastava among others.

Military might, cultural diversity on display at R-Day parade

Parade begins with Prez Kovind taking salute; PM pays homage to martyrs

NEW DELHI

THE newly-inducted Rafale fighter aircraft was the show-stopper as India displayed its military might and vibrant cultural heritage on Rajpath on the 72nd Republic Day on Tuesday, with the ceremonial event this year being drastically scaled down in view of the Covid-19 pandemic.

India also displayed its key assets from the Army, including T-90 tanks and BrahMos missile system, BMP-II, two Pinaka multiple launch rocket system, two bridge laying tanks, electronic warfare equipment 'Samvijay' and one upgraded Schilka air defence weapon system, the last one being Captain Preeti Choudhary from 140 Air Defence Regiment (Self Propelled). The Rafale fighter aircraft featured for the first time in the Republic Day flypast as it carried out the 'Vertical Charlie' in a fitting finale.



CRPF tableau graced with a statue of Iron Man Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel goes down the Rajpath



First woman fighter pilot in R-Day flypast

NEW DELHI: Flight Lieutenant Bhawana Kanth, the first woman in India to qualify for combat mission in a fighter jet, on Tuesday became the first woman fighter pilot to participate in the Republic Day flypast. Bhawana Kanth joined the Indian Air Force fighter squadron in 2017 and flew her first solo flight on an MiG-21 Bison in March 2018.



Rafale jet makes R-Day flypast debut

NEW DELHI: A Rafale fighter jet - one of the eight inducted into the Indian Air Force over the last year - took part in the Republic Day celebrations for the first time as it carried out the demanding and spectacular "Vertical Charlie" manoeuvre alone and was part of the "Eklavya" formation with four other fighter jets.



AMAZING PAGDI!

Modi's turban pics go viral!

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is known for donning unique headgears. And, continuing the tradition on the occasion of 72nd Republic Day parade, the Prime Minister wore a special turban. Within moments, the pics of PM Modi sporting the unique pagdi went viral. In fact, his choice of turbans, particularly on the occasions of Independence Day and Republic Day, has made a distinctive statement of his personality. The colourful 'pagdi' he wore this time is a gift to Modi by the royal family of Gujarat's Jamnagar. The bright-coloured turban was complemented by his grey jacket and cream-coloured shawl. On the 71st Republic Day in 2020, Modi had worn a saffron bandhej headgear with a tail. On Republic Day 2019, the PM had worn a yellowish-orange turban which had a red tail.

200 artists, including kids, rescued near Red Fort

NEW DELHI



AROUND 200 artists, including children, who were part of the Republic Day parade, were rescued after they got stranded near Red Fort on Tuesday as the farmer's tractor parade turned violent and protesters broke barriers and stormed the Mughal era monument.

They were safely rescued by Delhi Police personnel after being stuck for almost two hours in the afternoon, provided refreshments and

subsequently escorted away, a senior officer said.

The tractor parade meant to highlight the demands of the farmer unions dissolved into anarchy on the streets of the national capital during the day as hordes of rampaging protesters broke through barriers, fought with police, overturned vehicles and delivered a national insult -- hoisting a religious flag from the rampart of the Red Fort, a privilege reserved for India's tricolour.

BUSINESS



IMF sees 11.5% growth rate for India this year

P7



Custody of CBI DSP extended by 3 days

NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has extended by three days the custodial interrogation of two CBI officials -- a deputy superintendent of police and an inspector -- along with an advocate, all three arrested in connection with an alleged bribery scam within the agency.

The CBI arrested one of its deputy superintendents of police, R K Rishi, and Inspector, Kapil Dhankad, along with advocate Manohar Malik, on January 19 in connection with an alleged bribery ring run by them within the agency to help companies accused of siphoning off bank loan funds worth Rs 4,300 crore. Special Judge Santosh Snehi Mann extended the CBI custody of

the accused persons on Monday, after they were produced before the court on expiry of their five day custody granted to the agency earlier.

"In the facts and circumstances of the case, considering the gravity of offence, nature of allegations, type of documents seized and volume of the incriminating material, I am of the opinion that there is no other way to elucidate the larger conspiracy and the truth as to what transpired between the accused persons, but through custodial interrogation," the court said.

"Therefore, accused Rajiv Kumar Rishi, Kapil Dhankad and Manohar Malik are remanded to police custody for 3 days," the judge said, noting that the investigation was still at the nascent stage.

Impeachment of Trump goes to Senate

WASHINGTON: Democrats marched the impeachment case against Donald Trump to the Senate Monday night for the start of his historic trial, but Republican senators were easing off their criticism of the former president and shunning calls to convict him over the deadly siege at the US Capitol. It's an early sign of Trump's enduring sway over the party.

The House prosecutors delivered the sole impeachment charge of 'incitement of insurrection,' making the ceremonial walk across the Capitol to the Senate. But Republican denunciations of Trump have cooled since the Jan. 6 riot. Instead Republicans are presenting a tangle of legal arguments against the legitimacy of the trial and questions whether Trump's repeated demands to overturn Joe Biden's election really amounted to incitement.

Traffic mayhem in many parts of Delhi

NEW DELHI

TRAFFIC went haywire on national capital roads on Tuesday as the tractor parade taken out by farmers spilled into many parts of the city and reached Central Delhi's ITO and Red Fort areas despite police raising barricades and checkpoints at multiple places. Wielding sticks and clubs and holding the tricolour and union flags, tens of thousands of farmers atop tractors broke barriers, clashed with police and entered Delhi from various points to lay siege to the Red Fort and climb the flagpole on Re-



public Day. The traffic on the city roads, though thin due to the Republic Day holiday, was thrown completely out of gear with hordes of protesting farmers deviating from the pre-designed rally routes and driving their tractors towards Delhi from Singhu, Tikri,

Ghaziपुर and other border points. With police and farmers involved in clashes at many places, some parts of the city were cut off with Traffic Police regulating movement of vehicles in view of presence of farmers at places such as ITO, Red Fort, Nangloi, Anand Vihar,

Mukarba Chowk and Akshardham. The Delhi Traffic Police took to Twitter to update commuters about situation developing on roads in different parts of the city. "Traffic is very heavy on GTK road, Outer Ring Road, Badli road, KN Katzu Marg, Madhuban Chowk, Kanjhawala Road, Palla Road, Narela & DSIDC Narela roads. Please avoid these roads.

Traffic is very heavy on Wazirabad road, ISBT road, GT road, Pushta road, Vikas marg, NH-24, Road no. 57, Noida link road. Please avoid these roads," it tweeted in the afternoon hours.

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TWEET PATROL

RAKUL SINGH @RAKULPREET

Happy republic day to all! I hope and pray that we understand our duties rights in true sense and exercise them to make our country an even better place to be in. Jai hind IN

Happy childhood may lower drink, drug risk among teens

If your teenage child has memories of a happy childhood, they are less likely to indulge in drinking or substance abuse and enjoy learning, a new study suggests.

The findings, published in the journal *Addiction Research and Theory*, indicated that positive attitudes towards the past, present and future put adolescents at lower risk of alcohol use, binge drinking and marijuana.

"Many teenagers also aren't engaging with online learning during Covid-19 or have lower engagement levels," said researcher John Mark Froiland from Purdue University in Indiana, US.

"But they are more likely to be enthusiastic learners and not use drink and drugs if teachers take time to build more positive relationships with them. They can help students see that everything they are learning is truly valuable. Parents have a role to play too," Froiland added.

For the study, the team assessed 1,961 students at a high school and half (53 per cent) of the pupils included in the study were female.

The researchers looked at responses from pupils where they rated how nostalgic they were of their childhood, current happiness levels in life and how much they look forward to future happiness.

They also analysed marijuana and alcohol habits over the past 30 days including binge drinking, and average academic grades. They analysed motivation levels, and behaviour in



lessons such as how much teenagers paid attention and listened.

Statistical techniques were used by the researchers to assess the associations between all these different factors and establish the key predictors for alcohol and marijuana misuse.

The researchers are calling on teachers and parents to help students develop more positive mindsets and become motivated to learn so they are less likely to binge drink or use marijuana.

The aim of this study was to establish how substance misuse and behaviour towards learning are affected by students' feelings about the past, present and future.

Secret of love is kindness

Commit to being in healthy relationships where you care for your partner and your partner cares for you. Turn in to your partner as the small things often matter more than the big things

Kindness is important in any relationship. But in a 'love relationship', it is even more important than in any other relationship. Because when you get so intimately involved with somebody, you tend to let down your best kept guards. You end up telling each other things you kept as a secret from most of the world for reasons best known to you.

When maintaining a healthy relationship with the person you're interacting with imperative, the give skill is prioritised.

Give stands for:
Gentle (Be)
Interested (Act)
Validate
Easy Manner (Use an)

Be gentle
We all respond more positively and less defensively when approached with gentleness. Being 'gentle' means not using attacks, threats, or judgments and shaming behaviour when the going gets tough. Being gentle helps keep people feelings like they're on the same team. Not making threats, especially in arguments, is paramount to creating a safe atmosphere for communication, as is being able



to tolerate a 'no' or boundary setting. Finally, avoiding judgments includes not using should statements, engaging in name-calling, or utilising a condescending tone.

Act interested
Pay attention. Get off of your phone, listen to what they're saying, avoid interruptions, and give that person space to communicate. Gottman's research focuses on turning toward your partner — it doesn't mean necessarily agreeing with everything that is being said, but genuine interest goes a long way in terms of others feeling supported, understood, and respected.

Validate
Validate the person's emotions, stated desires, and opinions. There

is a kernel of truth to be found in each situation, regardless of whether you may feel the same way, think the same way, or want the same things. This can be done by the aforementioned acting interested, reflecting back what you're hearing from them (verbally or non-verbally) to ensure you're understanding their perception and what they're trying to communicate, noting and observing that their experience makes sense based on their own vulnerabilities and past experiences, or because anyone would feel that way in that situation, or by being radically genuine in your responses.

Use an easy manner
Be light-hearted. Smile, use a gentle tone, relax your body posture. All of these things have both

a physiological impact on how you're feeling, and how the other person will perceive you. Show kindness and compassion to everyone you interact with friends, family, and strangers. Be kind to your partner. Be kind to your kids. Be kind to yourself. Don't settle for being mistreated. If you are not in a healthy situation, do something about it and take action.

Commit to being in healthy relationships where you care for your partner and your partner cares for you. Turn in to your partner as the small things often matter more than the big things. Anyone can be kind. Anyone can practice being kind. Anyone can be taught to be kind. Show it to others and expect it from others. Show your kids what it looks like to be in a loving relationship. It starts in our homes.

Be your child's best friend

Parenting is seen as an intimidating job to a lot of people. It is the responsibility of bringing up a child properly, to make him an independent, responsible and happy individual. And it is a tough job because sometimes you have to be authoritative to get the job done. Children can be pesky and disobedient and therefore, being strict with them can be useful in forcing them to be disciplined.

But not a lot of parents have considered the option of being best friends with their child! Being friends with your child may not necessarily mean that he will not obey you when he has to. So let's

take a look at the advantages of being good friends with your child!

Every child needs a friend
Growing up can be rough process for a child. All of us remember the numerous things we had to learn, little mistakes we made, and the many times that we needed help or advice. There are a lot of issues that children do not talk to parents about. This is because they are scared that the parent will get angry and scold them. Young children can be very scared of being reprimanded, which makes them remain quiet on many of their own problems and issues.

And some of these problems could be ones that require urgent attention. If your child is facing trouble in school or at home, he may not be able to discuss it immediately if you do not have a free and open relationship with him. Children think a lot before they talk, if they have strict parents.

If your child is having trouble with understanding his subjects in school, he may wait till the exam results to come out before he confesses to his problem. Similarly, bullying can be horribly traumatic for your child. Similarly, for other issues like peer pressure, first love, etc, if he is unable to discuss them with you, it may affect him in the long run.

And such situations can be avoided by having good communication with your child, by being friends with him.

Be friends with your child
Being friends with your child can make him a confident, secure person. A lot of parents do not identify with the lifestyle of their children, but it is vital that you make an effort to. It may not be easy to tackle the generation gap, but doing so can have its advantages. Allow your child space for mistakes so that he feels that it is alright to make mistakes as long as he learns from them.

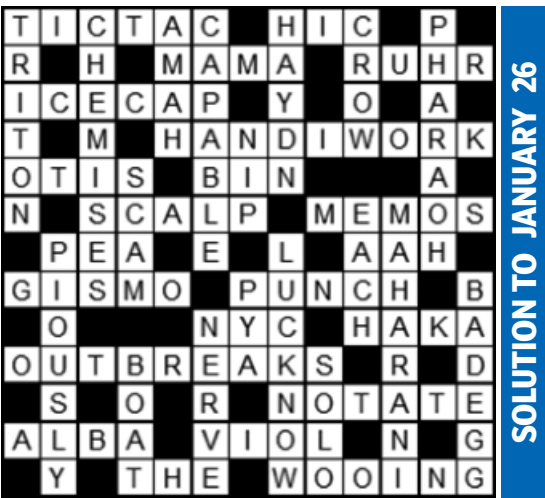
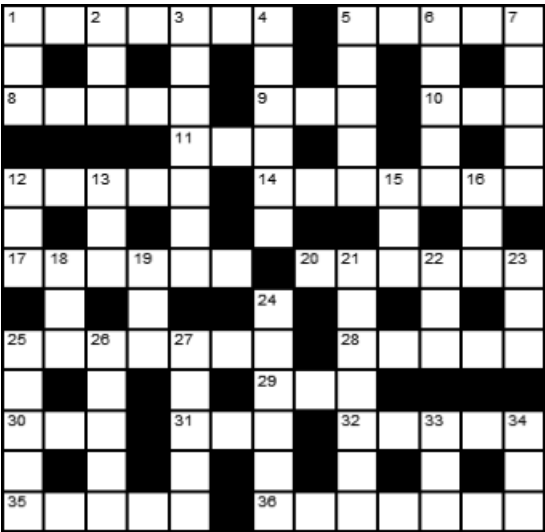
Resist the temptation to

correct him all the time. Also, listen with interest when he tells you about his day. Teach him to learn from his mistakes and also teach him good values so that he is able to take well-thought decisions. Let him know that you will always be there for him and that he can trust you enough to tell you his problems. Treat him as an individual when you discuss issues with him, so that he can realise it himself, if he is in the wrong.

By being friends with your child, it is not only his problems that he will share with you but also his most special secrets. This translates into many happy moments spent together as a family.



By being friends with your child, it is not only his problems that he will share with you but also his most special secrets. This translates into many happy moments spent together as a family



CROSSWORD

Across

1 A surety (7)

5 Resides (5)

8 Bracing (5)

9 At this time (3)

10 Head covering (3)

11 Staff, pole (3)

12 Egg-shaped (5)

14 Vacationer's haunts (7)

17 Hankered for (6)

20 Annoy (6)

25 Chosen disciple (7)

28 Wealthy one (5)

29 "Tea" in India (3)

30 Small child (3)

31 Management degree (3)

32 One who steals (5)

35 Ate (5)

36 Yield (7)

Down

1 Put in place (3)

2 Possess (3)

3 Discharge (7)

4 Cease to flow (3,3)

5 F1 driver ____ Hamilton (5)

6 Clergyman (5)

7 Clan divisions (5)

12 Kimono sash (3)

13 Curve (3)

15 Clod (3)

16 Large cask (3)

18 Exceed (3)

19 Hours, in short (3)

21 Zealot (7)

22 Go back like the tide (3)

23 Expert (3)

24 Rots and decomposes (6)

25 Played a role (5)

26 Ancient (5)

27 Bombastic (5)

33 Acknowledgement of debt (3)

34 Watch pocket (3)

SUDOKU

	3		9		2		5	
		8				1		
2			6		1			4
6	8			4			1	3
3								5
9	1			2			6	7
5			1		3			8
		6				5		
	4		8		7		9	

SOLUTION TO JANUARY 26

NEWS ROUNDUP

Priyanka: Fascinating to understand importance of women in leadership

Actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas is celebrating the women who helped in drafting the Indian Constitution, and says it has been enlightening to understand the importance of women in leadership.

"I've been researching and reading a lot about women in governance across the world and how their skills have impacted communities and countries. It's been enlightening, fascinating and so insightful to understand the importance of women in leadership," she wrote on Twitter on Tuesday.

She continued: "I'd like to share an interesting piece of information I came across recently and today seems to be the perfect day to post what I learned. Did you know that there were 15 women in the first Constituent Assembly of India & that they helped draft the Constitution of India?"

"So inspiring and also an apt day to celebrate the effort of all those who helped build the fundamental principles of India. Happy Republic Day," she added.

On the 72nd Republic Day of India, the actress shared a video tribute that has photographs of Annie Mascarene, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, Kamla Chaudhry, Hansa Jivraj Mehta, Sarojini Naidu, Sucheta Kriplani, Begum Aizaz Rasul, Renuka Ray, Ammu Swaminathan, Leela Roy, Malati Chaudhary and Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.

On the work front, Priyanka is currently seen in web film, *The White Tiger*. She recently wrapped up shooting of her upcoming Hollywood romantic film, *Text For You*.



Ayodhya on Rajpath: Ram Temple replica steals the show

NEW DELHI

CULTURAL heritage of ancient holy town Ayodhya, replica of a Ram temple, glimpse of 'Deepotsav' and various stories from Ramayana epic were depicted in the tableau of Uttar Pradesh in the Republic Day parade on Rajpath on Tuesday.

The bedecked tableau was fronted by a sitting model of Maharishi Valmiki and the temple model occupied a large portion on the rear side.

"Ayodhya is our holy place and the Ram temple issue has been an emotive one for the

faithful. Our tableau showcased the ancient heritage of the temple town, revered by countless people across the country," an official of the Uttar Pradesh government, accompanying the state team, said. A group of artistes, including a man dressed as saints accompanied the tableau.

Tableaux from a total of 17 states and union territories were showcased at the Republic Day celebrations, whose scale this year was severely curtailed on account of the COVID-19 pandemic. Strict safety protocols and social distancing

norms were in place.

"I am very excited and happy that Ayodhya and its heritage will be showcased in our tableau," Ajay Kumar, a member of the UP tableau team, had earlier said. "We have been waiting to see Ayodhya's heritage being showcased on Rajpath," said Kumar, a resident of Laxman-garh in Chandauli district, as he posed for photographers.

Ayodhya's Deepotsav celebrations, which found its name in the Guinness Book of Records, was depicted on one side of the tableau with earthen lamps, while other murals

showed embracing of Nishadraj by Lord Ram and eating of Shabri's berry by him, salvation of Ahilya, bringing of Sanjeevani by Lord Hanuman, Jatayu-Ram samvad, Ashok Vatika and other scenes.

On November 9, 2019, the Supreme Court had settled the fractious Ramjanmabhoomi-Babri Masjid issue, going back more than a century, and backed the construction of a Ram temple by a trust at the disputed site. It also had ruled that an alternative five-acre plot must be found for a mosque in the Hindu holy town.



Uttar Pradesh tableau passes Rajpath during the 72nd Republic Day celebrations in New Delhi on Tuesday

One has freedom to agitate, not to spread anarchy: Khattar

CHANDIGARH

IN an apparent reference to the farmers stir against the Centre's new farm laws, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Tuesday said one has the freedom to agitate, but not to spread anarchy.

In his Republic Day address after hoisting the tricolour during a function in Panchkula, Khattar said the Constitution talks about rights, but these rights do not give us the "freedom to do anything".

AAP strongly condemns violence

NEW DELHI

THE Aam Aadmi Party strongly condemned the violence during the farmers' tractor parade in Delhi on Tuesday, blaming the Centre for allowing the situation to deteriorate to such an extent.

In a statement, the AAP said the violence had "certainly weakened" the movement, which was going on peacefully and a disciplined manner. "We strongly condemn the violence seen in today's protest. It is regrettable that the Central govt allowed the situation to deteriorate to such an extent. The movement has been peaceful for the last two months," it said.

CHANDIGARH

PUNJAB Chief Minister Amarinder Singh said the violence during the farmers' tractor parade against the new agriculture laws in Delhi is unacceptable and urged the peasants to vacate the national capital.

All citizens have to abide by the Constitution, he said. Without directly mentioning about the farmers protest, the chief minister said, "We are a democracy... On Republic Day, we got our Constitution. The Constitution makers talked about various rights with which we can make our lives happier. But I want to remind one thing that under the Constitution, both our rights and duties have been mentioned. "... Our rights do not mean that we can do anything, there are some limits. And through these limits, we should remember that the Constitution which we have accepted, it becomes our responsibility to abide by it," he said.

Khattar also cautioned against exercising the fundamental rights without taking into account the duties that come with them. "We have right to freedom of speech and expression and we must use it, but that does not mean we will use it to abuse anyone. We should not hurt anyone's sentiments or insult anyone. We have the freedom to live our lives, but this does not mean we will do any

Amarinder says scenes in Delhi shocking

He said the violence will negate the goodwill earned by peaceful protesting farmers. "Shocking

scenes in Delhi. The violence by some elements is unacceptable. It'll negate goodwill generated by peacefully protesting farmers. Kisan leaders have disassociated themselves & suspended #TractorRally. I urge all genuine farmers to vacate Delhi & return to borders," Singh said in a tweet.

Govt orders temporary internet shutdown

NEW DELHI

THE government Tuesday ordered suspension of internet services in parts of Delhi-NCR as a tractor parade by protesting farmers turned violent at several locations in the national capital, officials said. The internet shutdown will be effective till midnight Tuesday in Delhi's Singhu, Ghazipur, Tikri, Mukarba Chowk, Nangloi and their adjoining areas. An order issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs said the decision has been taken in exercise of the powers conferred by section 7 of the Indian Telegraph Act 1855. It said the suspension of internet services was necessary and expedient in the interest of

20 metro stations closed

NEW DELHI

THE entry and exit gates of at least 20 metro stations were closed as chaos escalated due to the farmers' protest turning violent on Tuesday. Railway trains were also stopped as a precautionary measure for over two hours at the Tilak Bridge railway station after the protestors reached ITO in Central Delhi and clashed with police. The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation took to Twitter to inform the public about the temporary closure of metro station gates.

such act which causes harm to anyone else's life.

"Therefore, while we have the freedom to do agitation, it does not mean we have freedom to take this agitation to anarchy,"

he asserted. Notably, the Haryana CM has been targeted by farmer unions for supporting the new farm laws enacted by the Centre in September last year.

A Timeline: How things turned violent on R-Day

IANs brings the entire timeline of the farmers proposed 'Kisan Gantantra parade' that turned violent unexpectedly and went from peaceful to bloody becoming "Occupy Delhi" movement in no time.

7 a.m.: Delhi-Haryana Tikri border: Farmers enter the national capital after breaking barricades.

8.30 a.m.: Delhi-Haryana Singhu border: Thousands of farmers enter Delhi after breaking barricades at Singhu border.

9.30 a.m.: Delhi-Uttar Pradesh Ghazipur border: Hundreds of farmers driving tractors, motorcycles and cars enter Delhi.

10 a.m.: Farmers clash with Delhi Police personnel near Sanjay Gandhi Transport Nagar. Police fires tear gas shells on the agitating farmers at Sanjay Gandhi Transport Nagar.

10.30 a.m.: Farmers clash with Delhi Police per-

sonnel near Akshardham intersection. Farmers damage the vehicles parked on the road and also damaged DTC buses near Akshardham intersection.

11 a.m.: Police fires tear gas shells and resort to mild lathi-charge. While some farmers armed with swords clash with police. Farmers move towards Sarai Kale Khan after deviating from the route assigned to them before the conclusion of the Republic Day parade at Rajpath. The Farmer Gantantra Rally was scheduled for 12 to 5 p.m.

12 p.m.: Farmers clash with Police near Mukarba Chowk. Farmers reach near ITO intersection in central Delhi and damage vehicles and DTC buses. Farmers also attack police personnel. Police fires several rounds of tear gas shells and resort to lathi-charge on multiple occasions. Farmers chase police with their tractors, again

damage several DTC buses near ITO as they are prevented from moving towards the Red Fort. Hundreds of farmers riding tractors, bikes and cars reach Red Fort portico and enter its premises and hoist the farmer union flags and saffron pennant with a Sikh religious symbol on the first rampart of the iconic 17th century monument.

1 p.m.: A farmer named Navneet Singh dies after a tractor in which he was travelling turns turtle. However, the farmers claimed that he was shot dead. Farmers sit with the dead body at ITO over the death of the farmer. Police enters Red Fort premises and tries to remove the farmer union flags. This is exactly from where Prime Minister hoists the national flag every year on Independence Day.

2.30 p.m.: Farmers keep on clashing with police personnel near ITO intersection as well as Red Fort -- there's stone pelting.

Locals perch on rooftops, balconies to witness tractor parade

NEW DELHI

IT was a never seen before moment for thousands of people who gathered at roadsides and perched on the rooftops and balconies watching the tractor parade taken out by farmer unions on Tuesday in protest against the Centre's farm laws.

The parade taken out from Tikri, Singhu, Ghazipur and other border points of the national capital received a warm welcome with locals showering flower petals, offering food and water and greeting them with slogans and cheers.

"I have never seen a tractor parade such as this. This is New India for me. I am recording this for my grandchildren who are too little to understand its importance now. I am sure they will thank me for this later," said Anita Batwal, 62, retired school teacher.

Many bystanders who witnessed



Farmers shower flower petals on fellow farmers riding on their tractors after breaking the police barricades at Singhu border during the 'Kisan Gantantra Parade' on Republic Day, in New Delhi, on Tuesday

the parade termed the farmers their brothers and guests who were fighting for their rights. "My husband and I have come to welcome them. They are our guests. We lost our land in UP in a court battle, we know their pain," said Kamla from Boodhpur Delhi. A large number of people near Anand Vihar railway station lined the roadsides

and recorded the tractor parade as farmers from Ghazipur drove past. People cheered and waved at the farmers riding tractors and those walking on foot.

"It is bigger and better than what we expected. Local people cheering for us throughout the route has motivated us further. We will take what is our. Ab Delhi door nahi," said 23-year-old Jaspal Singh from Gurdaspur in Punjab, taking part in the parade. Local people showered flower petals at the cavalcade of tractors and other vehicles passing through Mundka village and offered food and water to the farmers.

"They are our brothers. Will do whatever it takes to help them in their struggle. They are fighting for all of us. This is just a little contribution from our end to tell them we stand by them," said Chant Singh, 45, a local distributing food and water.

Covid plays dampener for children's R-Day spirit

NEW DELHI

WITH coronavirus playing a dampener this year, it wasn't a usual Republic Day morning for children as they weren't allowed entry at the celebrations at Rajpath.

School children, who turn up in large numbers at the Republic Day parade every year, were confined to their homes this time, hooked to their TV sets to watch the festivities.

They did not get the opportunity to dress up and take part in cultural celebrations as schools continue to be closed due to coronavirus. Few schools had organised online essay writing competitions on Republic Day and activities such as flag colouring for primary classes. In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, this year the spectator strength at the parade was brought down from 1.15 lakh to 25,000 and children below 15 years were not allowed.

Few children accompanied their parents, who were not aware of the norms, to the parade but were turned away by security personnel from different check points. Children, whose siblings were participating in the cultural programme at the parade, could not see their performance.

"I came with my parents and elder brother but now they are not allowing me. I was so excited about the parade. I was even wearing a mask and gloves to follow the protocols. Since I cannot go, my parents are also going back with me," said 12-year-old Shrutika, who could not attend the parade. Her father, Ram Bhargav, said, "Why did they issue a pass if she was not allowed in the first place? Nobody told us then. I had an argument with the police personnel but they did not allow."

Abhinav Shukla, 7, said, "I was waiting a whole year to go to the parade but due to the virus they did not allow children. I am now watching it on TV. Tableaux and military displays are favourite part of my parade".

"Usually I would dress up as a freedom fighter for celebrations at school or take part in patriotic dance but this year we have been asked to watch the parade and write an essay on it," said his 5-year-old brother



Tableaux of Biotechnology department showing Covid-19 vaccine passes through Rajpath in New Delhi on Tuesday

Shivang Shukla. Preeti Gaur, whose younger sister was participating in a dance on the theme "Aatma Nirbhar Bharat" (self-reliant India), had to watch her performance on TV though her parents went to the parade.

"It was a proud moment for us. I wish I could see her performance in person but since I wasn't allowed, my parents went and I watched it on TV," she said. The 72nd Republic Day Parade witnessed several major changes owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

For the first time in 55 years, no foreign dignitary attended the January 26 parade. This year, the contingents only marched for a distance of 3.5 km instead of the usual 8.5 km.

Likely rise in IT spend positive sign

TATA Group's flagship IT services company Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has surpassed global IT firm Accenture to emerge as the most valuable information technology firm in the world again. While TCS' market valuation stood at \$169.25 billion at Monday's close of trade, Accenture's m-cap was at \$168.68 billion. This is heartening news for the Indian IT industry. Currently, four Indian IT services companies figure in the top 10 m-cap league globally. Apart from TCS at the top, India's second-largest IT company Infosys is the fifth most valuable IT services firm globally with an m-cap of \$77.3 billion. Similarly, HCL Technologies is at the number seven position with a valuation of \$35.25 billion, followed by Wipro at the eighth position with an m-cap of \$34.15 billion. With such a stellar line-up, India can take pride in being the IT capital of the world.

Such an order of valuation has come at a time when

global consultancy firm Gartner comes up with the forecast that global IT spending is expected to increase by 6.2 per cent in 2021 to reach \$3.9 trillion as compared to a contraction of 3.2 per cent in 2020. Businesses are prioritising digital initiatives that are directly related to enhancing their customer engagement with a shorter return-on-investment window, the consultancy firm said. Even India as geography is fast catching up with enterprises increasing IT spends. Gartner projects India's spend on information technology (IT) likely to reach \$88.8 billion in 2021, up 6.8 per cent from 2020. In 2020, IT spending has declined 2.7 per cent as CIOs prioritised spending on technology and services that were deemed mission-critical during the initial stages of the pandemic. However, the rise in demand scenario across segments will fuel the overall IT spending in India this year. The consultancy major in its report also stated that businesses will have to

push their plans for digital expansion by five years to tackle the Covid-19 impact.

When the IT spend is set to rise this year, Indian IT services firms are in a sweet spot to clinch more outsourcing deals. Even Indian enterprises are likely to give more work to domestic firms. In this perspective, the m-cap of the Indian IT pack is expected to do well this year if the domestic IT firms play their cards well.

With this year's Budget around the corner, Centre can look at the provision to sustain this growth trajectory. Tax incentives, clarity on 'intermediary services', and special provision of funds for digital initiatives are some of the aspects that the Budget can look into. Apart from global IT biggies, India is home to many technology-based startups that are coming up with innovative solutions to India-specific problems. Indian IT biggies should handhold these startups to make the country an innovation hub in the coming decade. That will help the Indian IT companies grow bigger and garner a higher pie of the global IT spend. That will lead to more revenues from IT companies and more IT jobs in the country.

PADMA VIBHUSHAN AWARDEE NARINDER KAPANY



Unsung hero who coined term 'fibre optics' and touched billions of lives

VISHWAM SANKARAN

FIBRE optics – say the words and people think of high-speed internet cables. More knowledgeable ones might also know it is the science of transmitting light through flexible fibre. But very few would even have an inkling that the man who coined the term "fibre optics" was born and educated in India. Fewer still realise that the contributions of Narinder Singh Kapany find application in the lives of billions of people on this planet, in ways big and small.

Kapany, who has been honoured with the Padma Vibhushan, India's second highest civilian award, died in the US last month, a trailblazer in the field of fibre optics, a role model for optical engineers but an unsung hero, unknown to so many whose lives he touched with his innovations. Kapany, 94, passed away peacefully in Redwood City, California, a world away from Moga in Punjab where he was born and the hill town of Dehradun where he grew up. He graduated in 1948 from Agra University, later receiving his doctorate from Imperial College London in 1955.

The wide applications of the field that has gone on to revolutionise the internet age stand on the shoulders of Kapany who demonstrated that light transmission is possible with flexible fibre bundles. Credited with coining the term "fibre optics", Kapany was a true visionary in his field who earned over 100 patents, say scientists. His seminal research in fibre optics, lasers and solar energy have found applications in biomedical instruments, defence, communications and pollution-monitoring.

Inspiration struck early. "When I was a high school student at Dehradun in the beautiful foothills of the Himalayas, it occurred to me that light need not travel in a straight line, that it could be bent. I carried the idea to college," Indian physicist Shivanand Kanavi quoted Kapany as saying in his 2003 book "Sand to Silicon: The Amazing Story of Digital Technology".

Kanavi is among the several scientists who believe Kapany's contribution may have gone unnoticed by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences which grants the Nobel Prize. While Chinese scientist Charles K Kao was one of the recipients of the Nobel Prize for Physics in 2009 "for groundbreaking achievements concerning the transmission of light in fibres for optical communication", it was Kapany who first demonstrated successfully that light can be transmitted through bent glass fibres, Kanavi said.

In his illustrious career as scientist, engineer and entrepreneur, Kapany authored four books on fibre optics and entrepreneurship. In 1999, Fortune named him one of seven 'Unsung Heroes' in their 'Businessmen of the Century' issue. The first breakthrough came in 1953 when Kapany, along with his PhD guide Harold Horace Hopkins at Imperial College London, became the first to successfully transmit high-quality images through fibre bundles.

With Hopkins, Kapany carefully assembled 10,000 to 20,000 fibre bundles, each the diameter of 1/1000 of an inch, as fine as a single strand of the average human hair, and showed light guidance and imaging through a 75-centimetre-long fibre. The duo published their results in the journal Nature on January 2, 1954, and there was no looking back after that.

Following this pioneering feat, he came up with the term "fibre optics" in a famous article for Scientific American in 1960. "If light is directed into one end of a glass fiber, it will emerge at the other end. Bundles of such fibers can be used to conduct images over a tortuous path and to transform them in various ways," Kapany wrote, describing the potential applications of the field.

Kapany realised that bundles of thin glass fibres could bend more easily. "Initially my primary interest was to use them in medical instruments for looking inside the human body. The broad potential of optic fibers did not dawn on me till 1955. It was then that I coined the term fibre optics," he told Kanavi, who is an adjunct faculty at the National Institute of Advanced Studies in Bengaluru.

The principle behind fibre optic technology is the concept of total internal reflection in which light, when beamed through a glass slab at specific angles, reflects it back completely. Indian Institute of Technology professor Deepa Venkitesh explained that optical fibre is nothing but hair-thin silica glass drawn to kilometres of length. "Now if you launch light correctly into this fibre, the light bounces multiple times at the interface and is trapped in the fibre, propagating until it reaches the far end of the fiber," the fibre optics researcher told PTI.

She said the importance of fibre optics has grown in this era of working from home. "The backbone that enables high-speed connectivity in front end mobile devices is in fact the humongous fibre optic communication network that spans the globe," Venkitesh said. "Kapany's key contributions are the demonstration of a system utilising optical fibres for the purpose of transmission of an image over a reasonable distance and the coining of the term fibre optics and sort of introducing the field to a wider audience through an article in the Scientific American," added V R Supradeepa, associate professor, Centre for Nano Science and Engineering, Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru.

He said it is hard to find areas which have not been affected by advances in fibre optic communication. "Any application which involves the internet and similar computer networks is built upon fibre optic communication. The field has come a long way since the early demonstrations by Dr Kapany. From his demonstrations of the first static optical fiber link over a fiber bundle, we now have multi terabits (1 trillion bits) per second communications over a single fibre strand," the IISc scientist added. Science writer Jeff Hecht noted in his book "City of Light: The Story of Fiber Optics" that Kapany was the lead author on 46 scientific papers and co-author of 10 more in the years between 1955-65. "That represented a staggering 30 per cent of all the papers published on fiber optics during those years, including reports on medical treatment," he said.

After migrating to the US, Kapany first worked at Rochester University, then at the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago. In 1961, he founded Optics Technology Inc. successfully taking it public in 1967 -- the first Sikh Indian to take a company public in Silicon Valley. He created the Sikh Foundation in 1967 which pioneered the display of Sikh arts at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, DC, and at the Rubin Museum in New York. Kapany, who is survived by his wife Satinder Kaur, two children and four grandchildren, was witness to the horrors of the partition of the subcontinent during his years in Dehradun. Sharing his first-hand accounts with the 1947 Partition Archive, a non-profit organisation, he recalled a mob turning up at their home and demanding that he hand over a Muslim domestic help. "They were shouting and said, 'You have a Muslim living here, give him to us,'" he recalled in his interview with the organisation. But he was prepared to use his double-barrel gun to protect the house help. "I think there were some wise people there who found that I meant it. I wasn't going to let anybody hurt him," he said. Kapany's last book, a memoir titled "The Man Who Bent Light", is expected to be available in spring this year.

K P PRABHAKARAN NAIR

THE propaganda minister of Adolf Hitler, Joseph Goebbels, believed that when a lie is told a hundred times, it becomes the truth. Similarly, a factoid is an item of unreliable information which is reported and repeated so often that it becomes accepted as fact.

This, in a nutshell, explains the conundrum of the minimum support price (MSP) on which there is an ongoing farmers' strike around New Delhi. The MSP sets a floor below which prices for agricultural commodities do not fall.

There are 23 agricultural commodities listed by the central government under the MSP. Most Indians, with an agricultural background or not, think that the MSP concerns only wheat and rice, the two pillars on which the heavy chemical fertiliser-centric farming, euphemistically termed the 'green revolution' rests.

That such a very heavy chemical fertiliser-centric farming has led to enormous environmental hazards seems to be no one's concern. In over half a century, when the green revolution, primarily in its 'cradle' Punjab and subsequently in Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh, held sway, soil degradation has been rampant.

Of the 328.73 million hectares of geographical area in India, more than 120.4 million hectares -- about a third -- now have degraded soil, mostly in the 'green revolution belt'. This can be brought back to normal-for-cultivation only with very heavy investments in soil reclamation.

Groundwater reservoirs sank rapidly leading to water shortage because of free electricity provided. Also, the water was made non-potable by excessive nitrate ions emanating from unbridled urea used to prop up wheat and rice yield. The local biodiversity vanished and inherent soil fertility was depleted due to monocropping of wheat and rice.

Indiscriminate use of chemical pesticides and herbicides led to spread of cancer -- Gurdaspur district in Punjab, which has become India's 'cancer capital', is a classic example.

These are all components of the heavy price India paid for a farming system, which for decade and a half saw farmers harvesting a lot of grains and the government storing it as 'buffer



There are 23 agricultural commodities listed by the Central government under the MSP. Most Indians, with an agricultural background or not, think that the MSP concerns only wheat and rice, the two pillars on which the heavy chemical fertiliser-centric farming, euphemistically termed the 'green revolution' rests. Of the 328.73 million hectares of geographical area in India, more than 120.4 million hectares -- about a third -- now have degraded soil, mostly in the 'green revolution belt'. This can be brought back to normal-for-cultivation only with very heavy investments in soil reclamation

stock'. In the Food Corporation of India storage bins, however, there was considerable spoilage of stored grains which were rendered unsuitable for human consumption -- the aftermath of 'green revolution'.

But all that has now changed. Yields, principally of wheat and rice, despite the application of 'recommended' fertiliser doses have all plateaued or declined. And the farmers are in a tizzy. No doubt, the clamour for continuing the 'MSP Syndrome' continues.

A brief history of MSP

The concept of MSP was first mooted in 1966-67, the heyday of the green revolution, to incentivise the Punjab farmers to use the dwarf 'miracle' wheat varieties. These were imported from International Centre for Maize and Wheat Research in Mexico (American-controlled) and cross-bred in India, primarily at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute in New Delhi, where this author was a PhD student at the time.

The MSP was fixed at Rs 54 per quintal of wheat (one quintal is 100 kg). The aim was not just to multiply the dwarf wheat varieties with alien blood in India but also to ensure that Indian farmers grew only the dwarf wheat varieties extensively.

The dwarf wheat varieties and later, rice varieties (when the Ford Foundation-funded International Rice Research Institute in Philippines came into the picture carrying alien blood) succumbed to rust and brown plant hopper, respectively. Vast stretches of wheat and rice were wiped off in the green revolution belt.

These dwarf wheat and rice varieties were highly fertiliser-responsive. India at the time had no fertiliser manufacturing factories and large quantities of fertiliser had to be imported, straining the economy.

The MSP concept had no legal sanction then nor does it have now. It was merely an idea mooted by the government in power to spread the dwarf wheat and rice varieties. MSP can be

legally challenged even now.

An environmental audit vis-à-vis Indian farming

When a urea molecule hydrolyses in soil, it releases a gas into the stratosphere called nitrous oxide (N₂O). It lingers in the atmosphere for as long as 350 years and contributes approximately 35 per cent to global warming.

The common belief is that carbon dioxide from industrial activity is the main culprit for global warming. But the idea of N₂O contributing to global warming was first suggested by this author as early as in 1980, while researching as a Senior Alexander von Humboldt Fellow at the very prestigious Institute of Plant Nutrition affiliated to the famous Justus von Liebig University -- the seat of world chemistry -- in Germany.

But, the fertiliser lobby shot down the idea. However, now the Intergovernmental Panel For Climate Control (IPCC) of the United Nations has accepted this idea. These aspects are dis-

LETTERS

Farmers need to be heard now

THE tumultuous turn of events on Republic Day in Delhi was a corollary of the widening trust deficit between the government and the farmers. Now is not the time for making accusations and counter-accusations now is the time for defusing the volatile situation. The protesting farmers are our compatriots to say that by entering the ramparts of the Red Fort they violated India's sacred space.

Farmers in their thousands poured into the streets and demonstrated the intensity of their opposition to the three new farm laws. They challenged the government's assumption (and refrain) that it knows what is in their best interests and made it clear that they would not be settled for anything less than the repeal of the laws passed to their disadvantage and corporate behemoths' advantage.

Clashes between the police and the protesters at some places cannot detract attention from the real cause for the dra-

matic and disturbing developments, the three black laws enacted in the guise of deregulatory reforms. The country does not need a set of laws that puts farmers at the mercy of 'big players' and subordinates farmers' interests to corporate interests.

There could be different points of view on the laws, but few would disagree that they will make the farmers vulnerable to big corporations. The much-vaunted people's mandate garnered from its USP of Hindutva is not a carte blanche to bring in laws without consulting the stakeholders and building consensus. The government must make a gesture towards the farmers' demand for the repeal of the laws and resolve the issue peacefully and redeem the situation in the country's overall interest.

G David Milton

Maruthancode, Tamil Nadu

Tribute to Burgula

THIS refers to the report Burgula Narsing Rao often been called a legitimate son of Telangana. A great creator of stories who kept listeners rapt and making it easy for anyone to follow it. His elaborations were tracked with keen perception of feudal exploitative systems, British politics and the challenges thereafter. The foundation laid of these accounts was a fervent commitment to the area and the first-hand

experience of having lived through these times and participated whole heartedly in the struggles they embodied. The desire in his eyes when he recounted the details of the students agitation of which he was a dominant leader, changed easily to same as he recounted how he had to negotiate the fact that he was the nephew of the ruling Chief Minister Burgula Ramakrishna Rao, against whom they were making their demands.

Raju Kolluru, Kakinada

Padma awards

GIVING Padmasri to Kanaka Raju, a great dance master working to save Gussadi with Lachu Patel is worthiest honour for the great Adivasi dance. Telangana cultural organisations under government should support the dance financial and popularize to make children to learn and perform in cultural activities in school.

D Kishan Prasad, Thimmapur Mandal

II

BE it parents or poets or artists - true mark of respecting them is to honour them in a befitting manner when they are alive rather than after their death (Singer SP Balu among 119 Padma winners for 2021, January 26). It is amusing SPB is awarded with Padma Vibhushan posthu-

mously but there was no proper recognition when he was alive. Sadly, no prominent leader from Delhi attended his last rites citing lockdown restrictions but the BJP leaders carried out political activities in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu violating coronavirus protocols.

Kshirasagara Balaji Rao, Hyderabad

State, Centre caught in ego battles

THE ego battles we are seeing be they at State level or Central level are causing more harm to the country in general. Look at the way the AP government has been mauled by the HC and SC time and again in a simple issue which should have been amicably sorted out with the diplomacy the State government and the SEC richly and mutually deserved. So is the case with the Centre regarding farmers' issue. It is the ego which is preventing the Centre to acquiesce totally when it has reached a stage where it said it would keep the laws in abeyance. Keeping the laws aside is as good as repealing them. The farmers too have a severe problem of trust deficit because of which issues seem to get out of control.

D Nagarjuna, Hyderabad

Guv felicitates wife of martyr Santosh Babu

Prez Police Medal winners, Lt Gen TSA Narayanan, wonder boy Hemesh also honoured

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

GOVERNOR Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan felicitated martyr Col Santosh Babu's wife, Santoshi, and other awardees from the State on the occasion of Republic Day.

In view of the announcement of Maha Vir Chakra, the second highest gallantry award, posthumously to Col Santosh Babu, who laid down his life fighting the Chinese incursions last year at Galwan valley, the Governor felicitated Santoshi and her children in Raj Bhavan.

She also felicitated Shikha Goel, Additional Commissioner of Police, and N Shiva Shankar Reddy, IGP Nizamabad Range, on being selected for the prestigious President's Police Medals.

Dr Tamilisai also felicitated Chadalavada Hemesh (13) in recognition of his getting awarded the Pradhan Mantri



Rashtriya Bal Puraskar for his innovation in developing a wearable device that helps those afflicted with Alzheimer's disease. Among those honoured by the

Governor was Lt Gen TSA Narayanan, Commandant of Military College of EME, Secunderabad, for getting the award of Ati Vishishta Seva Medal.

The Governor appreciated their dedicated services and thus bringing laurels to the State and the country, according to an official release.



IMBIBING
PATRIOTIC
SPIRIT

A tiny tot holding the national flag aloft along with a young girl goes round the Police Parade ground during Republic Day celebrations on Tuesday
Photo: Gokarapu Shyam Kumar

Not '100% satisfied,' says father of Santosh Babu

HYDERABAD

THE father of late Colonel Santosh Babu on Monday said he was "not 100 per cent satisfied" with the Mahavir Chakra posthumously awarded to him for his acts of gallantry against the Chinese attack in Galwan Valley in eastern Ladakh in June 2020, and that he should have been honoured with the Param Vir Chakra.

"It is not that I am unhappy. But I am not 100 per cent satisfied (with the award of Mahavir Chakra). There is scope for honouring him in a better way. But my opinion is that Santosh Babu should have been named for the highest military award Param Vir Chakra for the gallantry he displayed while discharging his duties," Babu's father B Upendra said. He said the valor shown by



'He should have been named for the highest military award Param Vir Chakra'

his son had inspired many people, including those working in the defence forces.

Colonel Babu, the commanding officer of the 16 Bihar regiment, was among 20 Indian soldiers who laid down their lives in the fierce hand-to-hand combat

on June 15 last year in the Galwan Valley, an incident that marked one of the most serious military conflicts between the two sides in decades. Upendra said his son, overcoming the challenges posed by the climatic conditions of the area where he was posted, fought with Chinese troops. "My son and his men fought barehanded. He proved that India is superior and stronger than China by killing more enemy soldiers," he said.

According to him, Col Babu's family did not get anything more than the departmental benefits that are usually given to the families of martyred soldiers, from the Centre. The Telangana Government gave Rs five crore ex-gratia to Santosh Babu's family, besides Group-I post to his wife and a residential plot.

Republic Day on a grand note at higher edu bodies

HANS NEWS SERVICE

HYDERABAD: The 72nd Republic Day was celebrated with patriotic fervour the sacrifices made by the freedom fighters were recalled on the day on which the Indian Constitution came into force, at several higher educational institutions (HEIs), Telangana State Council of Higher Education (TSBIE), universities and the Telangana State Board of Intermediate Education (TSBIE).

At the Telangana State Council of Higher Education (TSCHE), the Council Chairman, Prof T Papi Reddy hoisted the national flag on the occasion. And, the vice-chairmen and the office staff participated in the celebrations. At Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, Hyderabad (JNTU-H), Prof Dr A Govardhan, Rector and Dr Manzoor Hussain, Registrar, garlanded the statues of Dr B R Ambedkar and the country's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru.

BJP trying to divide country on communal lines: Uttam

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

TELANGANA Pradesh Congress Committee president N Uttam Kumar Reddy on Tuesday lashed out at rival Bharatiya Janata Party and alleged that the saffron party was trying to divide the country on communal lines. He also alleged said that the party was hatching conspiracies to execute its plans of communal polarisation in the country. Speaking to the media persons, Uttam alleged that the BJP-led Central government was ignoring the ongoing agitation of farmers with regard to its three controversial farm laws and had adopted double standards on the issue. Targeting the party rule of Telangana Rashtra Samithi, he alleged that the State was witnessing a feudal rule in the State.



'Awards not new to me, but I am happy with Padma honour'

P V KRISHNA RAO
AMARAVATI

NOTED Carnatic violinist Annavarapu Ramaswamy, 95, is happy on being conferred with Padma Shri award.

He said it is an honour to music world itself. Being the senior most violinist, he received hundreds of awards, both at national and international ones, and toured around the world giving concerts.

When *The Hans India* visited his residence in Suryaraopet in Vijayawada on Tuesday evening to know his reaction on receiving one highest civilian awards of the country, the nanogenarian invited politely.

"Awards are not new to me. But the national level award Padma Shri made me happy, at the age of 95 years," he shared. The violin maestro said that the state government should protect and encourage the ancient cultural arts. He opined that music should be introduced in all elementary schools and a music college should be set up in each district to promote the art.



Annavarapu Ramaswamy during an interview with The Hans India at his home in Vijayawada on Tuesday

The violinist said that he is connected to the music for the past 82 years. He was also honoured during previous N Chandrababu Naidu government with Balamuralikrishna Award which carries Rs 10 lakh cash and he was taken on a palanquin.

The untiring teacher

OLDEST among all the Padma awardees, the internationally acclaimed violin maestro Ramaswamy has been providing free violin training for six decades.

Born on March 23, 1926, Annavarapu is a classical Carnatic violin maestro. Mangalampalli Balamuralikrishna and Annavarapu learned Carnatic music under Parupalli Ramakrishnayya Pantulu. He accompanied Carnatic musicians such as Parupalli Ramakrishnayya Pantulu, M Balamuralikrishna, Arayakudi Ramaniya Iyyengar, Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar. He invented new ragas and talams such as Vandana Ragam, Sri Durga Ragam, Tinetradi Tala and Vedadi Tala. He is teaching students free of cost.

With a sense of satisfaction, he showed all the awards he received so far mounted on walls of his room and declared that his journey on the path of music would continue as long as he breathes.

GPS TO GET MORE INCENTIVES FOR UNANIMOUS ELECTIONS

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

THE state government increased financial incentives to the gram panchayats where elections would be unanimously and appealed to all stakeholders to strive for unanimous elections as they are being held on non-party basis to preserve peace and harmony in the villages.

Addressing media here on Tuesday, panchayat raj and rural development minister Peddireddi Ramachandra Reddy said the state government released GO Rt No 34, increasing the financial incentives to panchayats where elections would be unanimous. As the elections were being held on non party basis it would be prudent to encourage unanimous elections so that the political interference

would be reduced, violence would be decreased and peace and harmony would exist in the villages.

He said in 2008, gram panchayats with population up to 15,000 were given Rs 5 lakh and panchayats having population above 15,000 were awarded Rs 15 lakh and in 2013, it was Rs 7 lakh for panchayats with population up to 15,000 and Rs 20 lakh for panchayats having population above 15,000.

SEC shifts Dwivedi, Girija Sankar

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

THE State Election Commissioner N Ramesh Kumar issued proceedings on Tuesday transferring panchayat raj officials, including principal secretary Gopal Krishna Dwivedi and commissioner M Girija Sankar for failing to fulfilling the assurance placed before the court on preparing 2021 electoral rolls.

The State Election Commissioner in his proceedings said that as a result of the intransigence and wilful failure to go ahead with the election schedule, the commission had no other option but to fall back on 2019 electoral rolls instead of 2021 electoral rolls which were its rightful intention all along. As a result of the failure of panchayat raj officials, 3.62 lakh young voters who attained the age of 18 years have failed to get voting right due to conduct of panchayat elections based on 2019 electoral rolls.

The commissioner stated that Dwivedi and Girija Sankar are squarely to be held accountable as well as responsible for



M Girija Sankar

- Panchayat Raj Principal Secretary and Commissioner have been shifted for failure to publish 2021 electoral rolls
- The State Election Commissioner in his proceedings observes that because of their failure, around 3 lakh new voters have lost the opportunity to vote in the current panchayat polls
- Commission appoints an IG level special officer to deal with complaints of irregularities in unanimous elections



Gopal Krishna Dwivedi

the contributory failure of the department and the state in this regard.

The proceedings further said that the SEC chose it fit and appropriate to administer the censure in case of Gopal Krishna Dwivedi and Girija Sankar. The SEC under the circumstances is compelled to observe that the continued presence of both the officials not only counterproductive but also will be deleterious on the functioning of grass root

democratic institutions.

Meanwhile, inspector general of police Sanjay on Tuesday met the State Election Commissioner and assumed charge as special officer to deal with any irregularities regarding the 'unanimous elections' in panchayat polls. The commissioner earlier said in a press conference he would lay special focus on complaints of forced unanimous elections by appointing an IG level special officer as local police officials may

not be above pressures.

In another development, leaders of various employees association met chief secretary Aditya Nath Das on Tuesday evening. The chief secretary said to have discussed with them the process of panchayat elections. The employees leaders stated that they were ready to cooperate with the State Election Commission in conducting panchayat elections honouring the Supreme Court judgement.

Ashok diverts donation to Ayodhya temple

AMARAVATI

TDP senior leader and former Union minister P Ashok Gajapathi Raju diverted his rejected donation for Ramatheertham to Ram Mandir construction in Ayodhya on Tuesday. "Now that I have been denied my right as a bhakt (devotee) and a member of the founder family to offer my donation to Lord Rama in Ramatheerthalu, I have passed on the donation which to my mind now belongs to Lord Rama to the Bhavya Rama Mandir in Ayodhya," said Raju.

He asserted that he is now at peace after diverting the donation of Rs 1,01,116 to Ayodhya.

Raju shared a picture of the cheque he donated to Ram Mandir.



In this picture posted on his Twitter handle on Tuesday, P Ashok Gajapathi Raju handing over cheque to RSS functionaries

Earlier, the Andhra Pradesh government rejected his donation

to Ramatheertham temple, following an attack by unidentified mis-

creants in December who decapitated Lord Ram's idol and dumped the head in a nearby pond.

Subsequent to that crime, a massive controversy erupted over the secluded hilltop temple's attack with fingers being pointed at the government for allegedly neglecting the security of temples.

Endowments minister Vellampalli Srinivas criticised Gajapathi Raju for neglecting the temple's security as he was a caretaker, which kicked up another row.

The state government has formed a special investigation team (SIT) to probe temple attacks and also allocated Rs 3 crore to renovate the Ramatheertham in Nellore district. (IANS)

TRACTOR ‘TERROR’ RALLY

I feel ashamed and take responsibility: Yogendra

Swaraj India president Yogendra Yadav said he felt "ashamed" of the way the farmers' tractor parade turned out on Tuesday, and took responsibility for it.

"Being a part of the protest," he said, "I feel ashamed of the way things proceeded and I take responsibility of it." The tractor march meant to highlight farmers' demands dissolved into anarchy on the streets of the national capital as hordes of rampaging protesters broke through barriers, fought with police, overturned vehicles and delivered a national insult -- hoisting a religious flag from the rampart of Red Fort, a privilege reserved for India's tricolour. "Violence impacts any kind of protest in a wrong way. I cannot say at the moment who did it and who did not, but prima facie it looks like it has been done by the people that we kept out of the farmers' protest," Yadav told a TV channel. "I appealed continuously that we stick to whatever route was decided and not deviate. Only if the movement goes peacefully, we will be able to win," said Yadav.



Farmers, cops exchange roses

NEW DELHI: Even as tension soared in Delhi amid the farmer protest that took a turn for the worst in the heart of the city, heartwarming scenes were witnessed at the Chilla border point between the national capital and Uttar Pradesh where the agitating crowd exchanged roses with state police personnel. Noida Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police Ranvijay Singh was presented with roses by Yogesh Pratap Singh, the UP President of Bharat Kisan Union (Bhanu). He even ate the meals prepared by the protesters.

Protesters removed from Red Fort premises; farmers’ unions distances itself from violence; broke pre-decided conditions for parade: Police; Rahul Gandhi says violence is not a solution

NEW DELHI

POLICE removed protesting farmers from Red Fort premises on Tuesday where they had barged in after deviating from their planned route for the tractor parade and hoisted flags at the iconic monument in the national capital.

The Palwal police chief and another officer had a narrow escape Tuesday as some protesting farmers allegedly drove their tractors dangerously and tried to break barricades to force their way into Delhi through a non-designated route at Palwal-Faridabad border, police said.

Earlier, wielding sticks and clubs and holding the tricolour and union flags, tens of thousands of farmers atop tractors broke barriers, clashed with police and entered the city from various points to lay siege to the Red Fort. While farmer leaders, who have been spearheading the two-month protest at the national capital's border points to demand a repeal of the farm laws, disowned the protesters.

ITO resembled a war zone with a car being vandalised by angry protesters and shells, bricks and stones littering the wide streets, testimony to the fact that the farmer movement that had been peaceful for two months was no longer so. As the day progressed and thousands of farmers roamed restlessly, thousands more congregated at the Red Fort -- on foot, tractor and some even on horses -- about four kilometres from ITO. The government ordered shut down of internet services



A farmer seen with a gun



A protester throws a stone towards the riot police



Police lathicharge farmers

in parts of Delhi NCR. A government order sent to telecom service providers directed temporary suspension of internet services in areas of Singhu, Ghazipur, Tikri, Mukarba Chowk and Nangloi and their adjoining areas in the NCT of Delhi from 12.00 hours to 23.59 hours on the Republic Day. A government order sent to telecom service providers directed temporary suspension of internet services in areas of Singhu, Ghazipur, Tikri, Mukarba Chowk and Nangloi and their adjoining areas in the NCT of Delhi from 12.00 hours to 23.59 hours on the Republic Day, according to the Department of Tele-

com. The tension was mirrored elsewhere in the city too. Police baton charged farmers at Chintamani Chowk in Shahdara when they broke barricades and smashed window panes of cars.

A group of 'Nihangs' (traditional Sikh warriors) clashed with security personnel near Akshardham Temple. And at Nangloi Chowk in west Delhi and at Mukarba Chowk farmers broke cemented barricades and police used tear gas to disperse them. As chaos reigned with flashpoints aplenty, farm union leaders distanced themselves from what was going on. "We condemn violence

against farmers, appeal to all to maintain peace," Balbir Singh Rajewal, one of the leaders, told PTL. The Delhi Police said protesting farmers violated the conditions pre-agreed for their tractor parade and resorted to violence and vandalism, leaving many police personnel injured.

In a statement, the police also claimed the force did all due diligence in following the conditions for the rally, but the protesters began their march much ahead of the scheduled time and extensive damage to public property was caused.

The CPM lashed out at the Centre over the treatment meted out to protesting farmers during their tractor rally, and said tear gassing and lathicharging them is "unacceptable".

"Tear gassing & lathicharging Kisans is unacceptable. Why, after the Delhi Police & Samyukt Kisan Morcha agreement? Why is the government provoking a confrontation. They must allow the peaceful, agreed tractor parade to continue," CPM general secretary Sitaram Yechury said in a tweet.

Reacting to the unprecedented seige by farmers at the Red Fort and clashes with the police at the national capital on Republic Day, senior Trinamool Congress leader Sougata Roy said violence cannot solve any problem and demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi inform the nation about the Centre's stand on repeal of the three farm bills.

Union Minister of Tourism and Culture, Prahlad Patel condemned the actions of a section of farmers. "The Red Fort is a symbol of the dignity of our democracy. The farmers should have stayed away from it. I condemn the violation of this dignity. It is sad and unfortunate," Patel said in a tweet.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said violence is not the solution to any problem and sought repeal of the three farm laws in "national interest".

"Violence is not the solution to any problem. If anyone gets hurt, the damage will be done to our country. Take back the anti-agricultural laws in national interest," he said in a tweet in Hindi.

Vintage tractors at farmers’ parade

GAURAV SAINI
NEW DELHI

BHAVJIT Singh's 53-year-old Soviet-era tractor swaggered along the parade route on Tuesday, matching the pace of others that just rolled out of the showroom. Singh, taking a break from his job in the IT sector in Sydney, Australia, has been running a Twitter campaign promoting the struggles of farmers in India. His family-owned 1968 model DT-14 tractor, manufactured in Russia, was one of the oldest tractors that strode up the roads elegantly during the farmers' parade against the farm laws.

"My family has been using it for the last 25 years. All

its parts are original, barring the steering wheel," Singh said. Amarinder Singh's Mahindra B-275 tractor was first rolled out in 1970. "My father purchased it in 1978 when I was born. Almost everyone in my village has used it at least once," the man from Punjab's Tarn Taran district said. The paint had faded, but all its parts are in an excellent condition, he said.

On Tuesday, Amarinder gave the vehicle a bath and put a garland on its bonnet before it hit the road to Delhi. Gajraj Singh rode on its family-owned John Deere 4020 tractor, which was launched in 1964. "We have three tractors of the same company, but this one has its own style and extravagance," the 32-year-old from Punjab's Jalandhar district said. "It's hulk and can pull a

bus. Though technology has changed over the years, but it was one of the most popular tractors of its time." The green-coloured tractor carried posters of Sikh gurus and freedom fighter Bhagat Singh. Akalpreet Singh paraded his bedecked HMT 5911 on GT-Karnal road, as the song 'Mera Rang De Basanti Chola' blaring from the speakers mounted over it. "My father, Gurnam Singh, had purchased in it 1981. At that time, it cost him Rs 80,000. Now, it's worth around Rs 8 lakh," the 41-year-old said. The farmer from Haryana's Ambala said he had recently sent the tractor to a workshop to prepare it for the parade. "I have literally grown up driving it. I am proud of it. I have another tractor and a car, but this is closet to my heart," he said.



Teacher who won \$1mn award now teaches rainwater harvesting

MUMBAI

AS the day-long Mission Paani event commenced on the 72nd Republic Day of India, many including water warriors, politicians, union ministers and celebrities came together on Network18 to take the pledge of water conservation. And among the many who took the pledge was Ranjitsinh Disale, the schoolteacher from Maharashtra who went viral on social media after winning a \$1 million prize.

Disale, who became a household name in December 2020 after winning the coveted Global Teacher Award, graced the day-long Mission Paani Waterthon initiative undertaken by News18 and Harpic India. The event aims to bring the conversation on water conservation to the forefront of civil society discourse by encouraging and felicitating water warriors and environmentalists like Disale.

Though his fans know Disale as a teacher, not many know that he is also an environmentalist at heart. Disale, who is from Parite-wadi village in Maharashtra's Solapur district, has been encouraging water harvesting techniques



among the students in his village to preach water conservation during the coronavirus lockdown last year.

"During the lockdown, we started an observation seat to monitor how much water and electricity is used by each student at home," Disale told News18. "Based on data, students prepared a plan of action to understand for how long the water available in the village can be used," he added.

"They also devised a plan B in case there is a rainfall deficit. Students have now started using water judiciously," Disale said. Disale won the \$1 million annual Global Teacher Prize 2020 in recognition of his efforts to promote girls' education and trigger a quick-response (QR) coded textbook revolution in India. The schoolteacher believes that teachers are the world's "real changemakers", had promised to share half of the prize money with the other finalists.

Disale and other change-makers like water warrior Amla Ruiya and Dr Fawzia Tarannum, child environmentalist Licipriya Kanjugam and actors like Akshay Kumar, came together to support the cause of water conservation.



Three Sukhoi Su-30MKI fighter aircraft fly over Rajpath in 'Trishul' manoeuvre during the 72nd Republic Day Parade, in New Delhi, on Tuesday

SKY-HIGH

The Sukhoi Su-30MKI is a twinjet multirole air superiority fighter developed by Russia's Sukhoi and built under licence by HAL for the Indian Air Force. A variant of the Sukhoi Su-30, it is a heavy, all-weather, long-range fighter

Don't commit sin of using force against protesters: Pawar

MUMBAI

IN the wake of violence during the farmers' tractor parade, NCP president Sharad Pawar on Tuesday said what happened in Delhi is indefensible, but one also cannot ignore reasons which led to the situation as he warned against use of force on protesters.

The former Union Agriculture Minister asked the Centre to hold a dialogue with cultivators seeking scrapping of the new agri-marketing laws giving up its "extreme position" on the issue.

A tractor march meant to highlight farmers' demands dissolved into anarchy on the streets of the national capital, as hordes of rampaging protesters broke through barriers, fought with police, overturned vehicles and hoisted a religious flag from the rampart of Red Fort, a privilege reserved for the tricolour. Interacting with media persons here, Pawar said Punjab may head towards restlessness if the Centre uses force against protesters and asked the Modi government to not commit that sin.

Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut condemned the violence. Raut said it is the arrogance of the Central government which has led to the deteriorating situation in Delhi and asked it to introspect as to why the law and order in the national capital collapsed. Raut said resignations would have been demanded had such violence erupted on some other party's watch at the Centre. A tractor march meant to highlight farmers' demands dissolved into anarchy on

Centre to be blamed: Mamata

KOLKATA

WEST Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said on Tuesday that the Centre's "insensitive attitude" and indifference towards farmers are to be blamed for the violent protests in Delhi, maintaining that she was deeply disturbed by the situation. Banerjee urged the Centre to engage with the farmers and repeal the new farm laws, which she termed draconian. "Deeply disturbed by worrying and painful developments that have unfolded on the streets of Delhi. Centre's insensitive attitude and indifference towards our farmer brothers and sisters has to be blamed for this situation," she tweeted.

the streets of Delhi on Tuesday as hordes of rampaging protesters broke through barriers, fought with police, overturned vehicles and delivered a national insult -- hoisting a religious flag from the rampart of Red Fort, a privilege reserved for India's tricolour. Without naming the BJP, he asked whose resignation the ruling party will now seek and sarcastically said if it will pitch for US President Joe Biden, Congress chief Sonia Gandhi or ask Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray to step down.

TODAY'S QUOTE

ESG shouldn't be box-ticking exercise

“It is in the interest of everyone to grow businesses sustainably. The biggest growth opportunity for companies comes from serving the bottom of the pyramid. We need to stop seeing ESG (Environmental, social and governance) as a trade-off - it's not a box-ticking exercise.”

— Anand Mahindra, Chairman, Mahindra Group



BUDGET

Govt likely to promote e-com exports

The government in the budget next week is expected to announce measures such as extending the facility of bulk clearance for e-commerce imports and exports with a view to promoting the growth of this fast-growing segment in the country. A significant volume of products is imported into and exported out of India through this platform.

TWITTER LAUNCHES 'BIRDWATCH', ASKS USERS TO FACT-CHECK TWEETS

NEW DELHI: TWITTER has launched a new community-based pilot programme called Birdwatch that allows people to identify information in Tweets they believe is misleading, and write notes that provide informative context. In this first phase of the pilot, notes will only be visible on a separate Birdwatch site. On this site, pilot participants can also rate the helpfulness of notes added by other contributors. “These notes are being intention-



ally kept separate from Twitter for now, while we build Birdwatch and gain confidence that it produces context people find helpful and appropriate,” Twitter said in a statement late on Monday. There will be about 1,000 users in the US to start with the Birdwatch programme. “Eventually we aim to make notes visible directly on Tweets for the global Twitter audience, when there is consensus from a broad and diverse set of contributors,” Twitter said.

DELHI WEDNESDAY 27 JANUARY 2021

BIZ BRIEFS

GAIL to launch pipeline InvIT

STATE-OWNED gas utility GAIL (India) Ltd plans to launch an InvIT of its two gas pipelines between Dahej and Bengaluru ahead of a proposed splitting of the pipeline business from the gas marketing function. The nation's top gas marketing and transportation firm plans to monetise Dahej-Uran-Panvel-Dabhol pipeline and Dabhol-Bengaluru pipeline by setting up an Infrastructure Investment Trust (InvIT), two sources with direct knowledge of the matter said. InvITs are like a mutual fund, which enables direct investment of small amounts of money from possible individual institutional investors in infrastructure to earn a small portion of the income as return. GAIL will retain majority stake in the pipelines that run from Dahej in Gujarat to Dabhol in Maharashtra and from there to Bengaluru in Karnataka.

Koo App in demand

KOO App is a micro-blogging platform like Twitter, in Indian vernacular languages. It helps people express themselves in their mother tongue. The App was launched in March 2020 from then it has been made available in Telugu, Hindi, Kannada, Tamil, Gujarati, Marathi and Bengali and recently declared as one of the winners of the AatmaNirbhar App Innovation Challenge held by the government. Prime Minister Narendra Modi also encouraged Indians to use Koo to express themselves in Indian languages. Aprameya Radhakrishna, CEO & Co-founder of Koo said: “We are very happy to become the largest Telugu micro-blogging platform. There is a thrust and a strong sentiment from the government and citizens to be self-reliant and to use apps that are made in India.”

CallHealth's home dialysis

CALLHEALTH and NephroPlus two Hyderabad based Startups in the healthcare space has announced the launch of a joint initiative, 'At Home Dialysis', to render dialysis services at the doorstep for chronic kidney patients. An MoU was signed to start the initiative and have initially rolled it out in Hyderabad. NephroPlus will bring its enormous expertise in dialysis care within the access for home dialysis while CallHealth will focus on customer convenience. Together, they will provide service to the patients for diagnostics, patient support, dialysis and post dialysis care. Dialysis patients are highly susceptible to infections and are facing immense challenges with the Covid-19 conditions, obviously they dread visiting hospitals.

NTECL pays dividend

NTPC Tamil Nadu Energy Company Limited a JV Company of NTPC Limited & TANGEDCO paid interim dividend of Rs. 47.55 crore for the year 2020-21 towards NTPC's 50 per cent share. NTECL has paid the dividend for the first time since inception. The Interim dividend is also been paid to other Joint Venture partner viz. TANGEDCO on its shareholding of 50 per cent in NTECL. Ramesh Babu V. Chairman, NTECL & Director NTPC presented the cheque to Gurdeep Singh, Chairman & Managing Director, NTPC Ltd. A K Gautam, Director Finance, NTPC, Dillip Kumar Patel, Director HR, NTPC, C V Anand, RED South, NTPC & Director, NTECL, Basuraj Goswami, CEO NTECL, Rajiv Srivastava, CFO, NTECL, Nandini Sarkar, Co. Secretary, NTPC and Amit Garg, Co. Secretary, NTECL were also present on the occasion.

IMF sees 11.5% growth rate for India this year

Lauds measures being taken by govt to revive the economy despite the pandemic. Puts India ahead of China

WASHINGTON

THE International Monetary Fund (IMF) projected an impressive 11.5 per cent growth rate for India in 2021, making the country the only major economy of the world to register a double-digit growth this year amidst the coronavirus pandemic.

The International Monetary Fund's growth projections for India in its latest World Economic Outlook Update released on Tuesday reflected a strong rebound in the economy, which is estimated to have contracted by eight per cent in 2020 due to the pandemic. China is next with 8.1 per cent growth in 2021 followed by Spain (5.9 per cent) and France (5.5 per cent). Revising its figures, the IMF said that in 2020, the Indian economy is estimated to have contracted by eight per cent. China is the only major country which registered a positive growth rate of 2.3 per cent in 2020.

India's economy, the IMF said, is projected to grow by 6.8 per cent in 2022 and that of China by 5.6 per cent. With the latest projections, India regains the tag of the fastest developing economies of the world. Early this month, IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva had said that India “actually has taken very decisive action, very decisive steps to deal with the pandemic and to deal



with the economic consequences of it.”

India, she said, went for a very dramatic lockdown for a country of this size of population with people clustered so closely together. And then India moved to more targeted restrictions and lockdowns.

“What we see is that transition, combined with policy support, seems to have worked well. Why? Because if you look at mobility indicators, we are almost where we were before Covid in India, meaning that economic activities have

What we see is that transition, combined with policy support, seems to have worked well. Why? Because if you look at mobility indicators, we are almost where we were before Covid in India, meaning that economic activities have

been revitalized quite significantly,” the IMF chief said.

Commenting the steps being taken by the Indian government on the monetary policy and the fiscal policy

side, she said it is actually slightly above the average for emerging markets. “Emerging markets on average have provided six per cent of GDP. In India this is slightly above that. Good for India is that there is still space to do more,” she said, adding that she is impressed by the appetite for structural reforms that India is retaining. (PTI)

Mercedes-Benz eyes ‘substantial’ growth in India

NEW DELHI

GERMAN luxury carmaker Mercedes-Benz expects ‘substantial’ growth in India this year driven by a lineup of 15 products and sustained demand recovery being witnessed from the fourth quarter of last year, according to a top company official.

The company, however, sees reaching its peak level of 2018 in India, only in 2022, due to supply-chain constraints especially in Europe. “Overall, I think we can really assume that the momentum which we have seen in the fourth quarter is continuing... With the reduction of Covid cases a lot of normalcy has happened. We have seen very strong demand in all our range. “I would think the festive season plus new products have triggered that, and would continue in 2021,” said Mercedes-Benz India Managing Director and CEO Martin



Schwenk.

He was responding to a query on the company's outlook for the ongoing calendar year. Schwenk further said, “We have 15 products in our pipeline. With (the ongoing) demand we should have a good chance for recovery and substantial growth in 2021.” In 2020, the company had reported 43 per cent decline in sales at 7,893 units in India, as compared to 13,786 units sold in 2019. Giving a perspective of how the demand recovery has been steady and strong in the second half of 2020, he said, “We have seen in the fourth quarter of 2020, a 40 per cent increase compared to the third quarter.”

In the first quarter of 2020, the company had sold 2,386 units and it plummeted to just 563 units in Q2 due to the lockdown.

It sold 2,058 units in the third quarter and in the fourth quarter clocked 2,886 units, a growth of 40 per cent as compared to the preceding quarter.

BITCOIN LIKELY TO EXCEED \$50,000 IN LONG-TERM

ERIC LAM & GREGOR STUART HUNTER

BITCOIN's price could exceed \$50,000 over the longer term as the digital asset vies with gold for investment flows, according to cryptocurrency exchange Luno and brokerage OSL. “We're talking about Bitcoin over the next three, five, 10 years slowly inching away at gold's market capitalisation,” Vijay Ayyar, head of Asia Pacific with Luno in Singapore, said on Tuesday. If that happens, ‘you are way over \$50,000,’ he said.

Bitcoin quadrupled last year, eventually reaching an all-time high of almost \$42,000 in early January, before sliding back by about \$10,000. While Bitcoin has been popular for trading, “Increasingly the new-to-market money that we are seeing is buying Bitcoin as a hedge to inflation and as digital gold,” said Matt Long, head of distribution and prime brokerage OSL in Hong Kong. Predicting a price for Bitcoin is challenging but it's likely to rise longer term as funds and family offices assign 0.5 per cent or 1 per cent of their portfolios to it, Long added. (Bloomberg)

Vizianagaram: Industry reeling under pressure

KOPPARA GANDHI VIZIANAGARAM

VIZIANAGARAM, one of the backward districts in Andhra Pradesh, is home to some major and mega industries. It has around 38 large and mega industries, and 4,288 micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Of the total major and mega industries, around 25 are minerals, metals and ferro alloys based industries, while two are jute mills. The district also has one sea food exporter and a few agri products units like cashew processing plants. Two sugar industries along with a major pharmaceutical manufacturing facility, Mylan, are also operating from this district.

Unfortunately, jute mills are facing severe crisis as they have competition from the plastic industry. Polythene bags became a threat to the jute mills. On the other hand, non-availability of raw material for jute mills is the primary cause for closure of these mills. All these con-



sequences have been forcing those units to shut down. Nellimarla Jute Mill was once the biggest unit in the State with more than 3,500 workforce for the past few years. However, it is now running with less than 2,000 workers. Other units like Uma Jute Mills, Aruna Jute Mills and Andhra Fibers, Gopalakrishna Jute and Twine Mills have closed down shutters due to operational losses. The ferro alloy units, which have been providing a significant number of jobs here for the past few decades,

too, could not sustain. Ferro Alloy Corporation of India (FACOR) at Garividi, a large unit that has been operational in the district with more than 2,500 workforce for the past few years, is now faced with several operational problems.

Even Jindal Stainless at Kothavalasa has announced layoffs and Andhra Ferro Alloys was closed down. Some other small scale ferro units in Bobbili Growth Centre are struggling to recover from operational losses.

Edtech sops, GST reforms on Hyd startups' wishlist

K RAJANI KANTH HYDERABAD

WITH the Union Budget just around the corner, Hyderabad-based startups are expecting a slew of measures from the Centre to offset Covid-induced losses and help them tread on the growth path. And, at the top of the list is allocation of sufficient government funds, rationalisation of GST rates, and facilitation of NBFC loans with low interest rates, among others, which they expect could give a booster shot to their ailing businesses and turn the tides in their favour. According to Charu Noheria, Co-founder and COO of Practically, an interactive and immersive learning app, given that there has been a significant surge in e-learning, the government must extend support by allocating sufficient funds and devise strategies to make digital education accessible by ensuring availability of internet connectivity, laptops, tablets, smartphones, etc, either



through direct government programmes or via public-private partnership model.

“This will provide the impetus required for the upgradation of school infrastructure with state-of-art technology and will help meet the demands of jobs in the future,” he says.

Echoing similar views is Jerold Chagas Pereira, Executive Director and CEO of learning platform

mPowerO. “The pandemic-led lockdowns have shown the relevance and efficacy of online learning as a supplement to traditional forms of learning. Unfortunately, many could not benefit due to the digital divide,” he says, adding that the Budget is a good opportunity to narrow this divide by introducing schemes that could make e-learning more widespread through incentives to schools

and students who invest in smartphones and other digital learning tools. “Similarly, removal of GST on e-learning applications and courses should be on the agenda. The Government should invest in technology enablement and programmes to digitally reskill and upskill India's workforce as it gears up for an Atmanirbhar Bharat,” he opines. Expectations from the government are high on the taxation front, too. BigLeap Technologies, a city-based staffing and recruiting startup, expects the present Budget to incentivise their sector by rationalising the GST rates to the sub-15 per cent slab to increase the service income and make the sector a preferred one for industries to outsource their manpower needs.

Vinay Kotra, Co-founder of BigLeap, says manpower services should be recognised as a priority sector and that the government should instruct the banking channels to supply more working capital lines to this industry under priority lend-

ing. At present, it is considered under least priority for lending due to lack of material assets.

“Despite contributing close to 50 per cent to the GDP (by being part of gross services contribution), we have always been an under-acknowledged sector. It is high time that the government simplify the complex labour laws and ease the compliance burden on the companies for various labour, finance, operational reporting, Registrar of Companies (RoC) reporting, etc, to let companies focus on doing their actual business and not get stuck in being compliant all the time,” Kotra adds.

Corporate transportation is one of the badly affected sectors due to the pandemic, and even though it is close to a year already, it sees no major recovery possible in the short-term. According to Rakesh Munnanooru, Founder and CEO of employee transportation startup WhistleDrive, tax exemption for a couple of years could help a lot of businesses like theirs.

SRiX gets ₹5.25-crore Central govt seed grant

HYDERABAD

SR Innovation Exchange (SRiX), Technology Business Incubator in SR University, Warangal on Tuesday announced Rs 5.25 crore NIDHI-SSS seed grant from the Department of Science & Technology (GoI) to nurture early-stage startups.

NIDHI-SSS grant empowers the startups financially in meeting varied needs that include successful positioning of the product in the market, test marketing, acquiring new customers, team building, revenue management, technology and business mentorship, business planning, design & marketing support, and IPR expertise. Seed funding or seed stage funding is a very early investment which aims at helping a business grow and generating its own capital. Investments from venture capitalists/ Angels are highly competitive and not every startup has access to the right platform at the right time.

Sindhu, Srikanth look to turn tide at BWF World Tour Finals

BANGKOK

PREMIER Indian shuttlers PV Sindhu and Kidambi Srikanth need to shrug off the disappointments of the last two weeks as they gear up for the highly-competitive HSBC BWF World Tour Finals, beginning here on Wednesday.

World champion and Olympic silver medallist Sindhu, who had won the prestigious title in 2018, has been clubbed in Group 'B' alongside top-ranked Tai Tzu Ying of Chinese Taipei and home favourites Ratchanok Intanon and Pornpawee Chochuwong.

Sindhu's comeback to international badminton after the coronavirus-induced break was not as good as she would have expected.

The Indian, who has been

training in London for the last few months, couldn't go the distance after losing a close opening match in Thailand Open, the first of the Asia leg.

In the second event last week, Sindhu suffered a demoralising straight game defeat against former world champion Ratchanok in the quarterfinals and she will have to gather herself as she opens her campaign against magician Tzu Ying, who reached the finals in both the Thailand Opens.

Former world number one Srikanth, on the other hand, has been clubbed in Group 'B' with Denmark's Anders Antonsen, Chinese Taipei's Wang Tzu Wei and Hong Kong's NG Ka Long Angus. Srikanth, who had reached the semifinals of BWF Super Series Masters Finals in 2014, couldn't spend enough time on the court.

He had pulled out of the first Thailand Open ahead of the second round due to a calf muscle pull, while he was forced to withdraw after the opening round last week after his roommate B Sai Praneeth tested positive for COVID-19.

Placed 17th in the Road to Bangkok Final ranking after the first event, Sindhu jumped to number 10 after a quarterfinal finish last week and qualified for the season finale due to two rules laid down by the BWF.

First, only two players from a nation can make it to the singles draw, which ruled out

Thailand's Busanan Ongbamrunphan as higher-ranked Rathchanok and Pornpawee made the cut.

The second one was the week-long mandatory quarantine period for players, which ruled out Chinese and Japanese players as they had withdrawn from the Asia leg due to COVID-19. Srikanth was rewarded for his quarterfinal finish at Denmark Open Super 750 last October as he sneaked into the top-8 and managed to maintain his position, despite playing just the first rounds in the last two events.

The Indian duo will have a tough task taming their rivals in the tournament, going by their recent performances and head-to-head records. Sindhu has a dismal 5-15 record against Tzu Ying, who beat the Indian in their last two meetings, while Ratchanok humiliated her last week in a lop-sided quarterfinal to enjoy a 5-4 record.

Against Pornpawee, her third opponent in the group, Sindhu has a 3-1 record but the Thai had defeated the Indian in their last clash in 2019.

In men's singles, Srikanth has beaten his first-round opponent Anderson in 2017 but the Danish is a far more improved player now, having reached the world number three. Against Wang, whom he plays next, Srikanth has a 3-0 record, while he holds a 2-2 head-to-head count against Angus.

The delayed Season finale, with a prize money of USD 1.5 million, features only the top players in men's and women's singles and eight pairs in the three double events, divided into group stages. It will be followed by the knockout, with the top two players/pairs from each group making it to the semifinals. The draw for the group stage was conducted in Bangkok on Tuesday by BWF and Badminton Association of Thailand (BAT) officials while observing COVID-19 protocols.



Mohammad Moutameen of Udbhav tops the charts of the Republic Day Regatta at Hussain Sagar on Tuesday

Light winds mar Day 2 of Republic Day Regatta

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

THE extremely light winds hit hard on the conduct and results of races on Day Two of the Republic Day Regatta 2021 here on Tuesday. More than 80 per cent of the Sub Junior Main Fleet retired from the race as they were compelled to break the rules and paddle towards the finish line in a hurry to finish.

Mohammad Moutameen of Udbhav School topped the ranks with consistent performances and a win in the 5th race. Ganesh Peerkatta and Shyam Bellapaly of Eureka Model School bagged the 2nd and 3rd overall. Yesterdays winner Chirandeep dropped to 6th position overall after a lack luster performance in the 4th race.

Vaishnavi Veeravamsham, India No.2, of Udbhav School made a protest and the entire fleet retired en masse fetching an automatic top spot while the top performers finished behind her due to penalties.

The Race Officer managed to conduct 3 races for the Main Sub Junior Fleet consisting of national sailors and a total of 5 races including one from yesterday for the Green Fleet.

The Republic Day Regatta has been extended due to inclement weather conditions and will now conclude on January 29 and the Yacht Club of Hyderabad hopes to conduct another 5 races with a target of at least 10 races including the Junior fleet of Lasers which is yet to see an outing on the water.

DAY 2 RESULTS

Sub Junior Main Fleet (Optimist)

Vaishnavi Veeravamsham (Udbhav)	17 pts
Tanuja Kameshwar (Udbhav)	33 pts
Teja Kethavath (Bowenpally School)	46 pts

Sub Junior Green Fleet (Optimist)

Mohammad Moutameen (Udbhav)	22 pts
Ganesh Peerkatta (Eureka Model)	25pts
Shyam Ballapally (Eureka Model)	30 pts

Ashwin, Sundar, Kuldeep may be India's spinners for 1st Test against Eng

NEW DELHI

IN December 2016, when England last travelled to India for a Test series, Ravindra Jadeja and Ravichandran Ashwin combined to capture 54 of the 93 English wickets to fall as the team romped to a 4-0 series win in the five-Test series.

This time, though, Jadeja's absence from the first two Tests due to a thumb fracture will mean India will have to pair either one, or two, of Kuldeep Yadav, Washington Sundar, and Axar Patel with Ashwin against the visiting England side.

Jadeja, a left-arm spinner, has taken 157 of his 220 wickets in In-

dia. He has bagged seven of his nine five-wicket hauls at home. The Saurashtra spinner's ability to pick wickets with variations in pace and accuracy has made him successful on Indian pitches on which there is turn right from the first day of matches.

But his unavailability in the first two Tests will put the responsibility on India's reserve bench that has very little Test experience.

India have picked off-spinner Washington Sundar (one Test), left-arm spinner Axar Patel (no Test) and chinaman Kuldeep Yadav (six Tests) along with veteran off-spinner Ashwin for the first two Tests.

The combined Test experience of the three spinners -- excluding Ashwin -- is just seven Tests.

With Virat Kohli's playing XI likely to include five specialist bowlers for the first Test in Chennai, which begins on February 5, there is a possibility that India might field two pace bowlers and three spinners, including Sundar.

Sundar provides an all-round option and performed well with both bat and ball in his debut Test in Brisbane earlier this month.

The team management had also hinted that it would play Yadav in the home series, with both skipper Ajinkya Rahane and bowling coach Bharat Arun saying that the wrist spinner, who

INDIAN SPINNERS vs ENGLAND		
INDIA HAVE PICKED THREE SPINNERS -- R ASHWIN, KULDEEP YADAV, AND WASHINGTON SUNDAR -- FOR THE FIRST TWO TESTS AGAINST ENGLAND IN CHENNAI, BEGINNING FEBRUARY 5. HERE'S A LOOK AT THEIR RECORDS AGAINST ENGLAND AND THEIR CAREER PERFORMANCE.		
R ASHWIN	KULDEEP YADAV	WASHINGTON SUNDAR
2012 IN INDIA: 4 TESTS, 14 WICKETS	2016 IN ENGLAND: 5 TESTS, 3 WICKETS	VS ENGLAND: NO TEST
2014 IN ENGLAND: 5 TESTS, 20 WICKETS	2016 IN INDIA: 5 TESTS, 20 WICKETS	OVERALL: 1 TEST, 4 WICKETS
2016 IN ENGLAND: 4 TESTS, 11 WICKETS	OVERALL: 6 TESTS, 24 WICKETS	
CAREER (vs ALL COUNTRIES): 74 TESTS, 377 WICKETS		

did not get a chance in Australia, has been working hard at the

series against England. The chinaman bowler has not played a Test for over two years now and in the last first-class game he played in Sydney against Australia A, he went wicket-less in 16 overs.

series against England.

The chinaman bowler has not played a Test for over two years now and in the last first-class game he played in Sydney against Australia A, he went wicket-less in 16 overs.

But if Yadav gets a look-in along with Sundar and Ashwin -- the MA Chidambaram Stadium is the home ground of latter two -- India will have to leave out Patel.

India also have left-arm spinner Shahbaz Nadeem and leg-spinner Rahul Chahar among reserves. Nadeem, 31, has played just one Test, against South Africa in 2019 while Chahar has played one T20I.

AFC cancels U-16, U-19 2021 c'ships

KUALA LUMPUR: The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) has decided to cancel a number of competitions, including AFC U-16 Championship Bahrain 2020 and the AFC U-19 C'ship Uzbekistan 2020, amid the ongoing Covid-19. The next editions of both events will be allocated to the same hosts in 2023 when the Uzbekistan Football Association will host the AFC U20 Asian Cup and Bahrain Football Association will stage the AFC U17 Asian Cup. "The AFC, taking into consideration the uncertainty and risks in view of the current pandemic, has decided to cancel a number of competitions to safeguard the interests of all stakeholders," AFC said in a statement.



KBFC goalkeeper Albino Gomes looks to continue his top form against JFC

Kerala, Jamshedpur looking to break into top four

BAMBOLIM (GOA)

K E R A L A Blasters and J a m s h e d p u r have a chance at inching closer to a top-four spot when they face each other on Wednesday in the Indian Super League (ISL) at the GMC Stadium.

Both sides find themselves in the wrong half of the table and after 13 games, are level on points, with ninth-placed Kerala one spot below their opponents.

Kerala have shipped the most goals in the league (22) and have kept just one clean sheet in their previous 10 games. Kerala assistant coach Ishfaq Ahmed, who will be

filling in for their suspended coach Kibu Vicuna, is hopeful of more clean sheets coming their way.

"We had two clean sheets and the reason is, other teams also play football and they want to score," he said. "In the first half of the season, we know that we didn't have a great start. We missed some crucial players in many matches but that is in the past now. We have been playing better football now. It's always a personal goal for our team and the goal-keeper (Albino Gomes) to keep more clean sheets as they can make you win the championship. Albino is trying and he is doing his job. Hopefully, the whole team will support him and we manage to keep more clean sheets by the end of the season."

Despite shipping goals often, Kerala will be proud of their exploits in the attacking third with only Mumbai City FC and FC Goa having scored more goals than them. Also, nine different players have been among the goals -- most by a team.

RESULTS

NorthEast UTD FC beat
ATK Mohun Bagan 2-1

TODAY'S MATCH

Kerala Blasters FC vs Jamshedpur FC
at GMC Stadium Bambolim 7.30pm

PHILEM DIPAK SINGH
NEW DELHI

IT was a long time coming, over three decades to be precise. For 88-year-old O M Nambiar, the man who nurtured one of India's greatest athletes in P T Usha, the announcement of his name in the list of this year's Padma Shri awardees is a case of "better late than never".

"I feel very happy for this award though it could have been many years back. Still I am happy. Better late than never," Nambiar, who is battling the Parkinson's disease, told PTI in an interaction from his home in Kozhikode.

Usha was conferred the Padma Shri in 1985 while Nambiar, who was presented the Dronacharya that year, had to wait for another 36 years before the nation's fourth highest civilian honour came his way.

His affliction will, however, not allow him to receive the honour in person when the President gives it away at the Rashtrapati Bhawan later. But that's not lessened his joy. "Every medal won by my trainees gives me immense satisfaction. I consider my Dronacharya Award, Best Asian Coach award and now Padma Shri as recognition of my hard work and dedication," said the legendary hailing from Kerala.

Looking back in time, an Olympic medal for his most famous ward -- Usha -- was Nambiar's "lifetime dream" and he recalled being devastated when she missed the bronze in the 1984 Los Angeles Games by a whisker. The man, who moulded Usha into one of India's finest athletes during his men-



torship from 1977 to 1990, said he couldn't stop weeping once Usha was done with that race.

"It is absolutely true that I wept when we knew that Usha missed the bronze by one-hundredth of a second in 400m hurdles in 1984 Olympics. I was inconsolable," Nambiar said. "I cannot forget that moment. An Olympic medal for Usha was my biggest lifetime dream," he added.

Usha was beaten by Romanian Cristeana Cojocaru for the bronze medal in a photo-finish, denying India what could have been its first Olympic medal in athletics. The Romanian clocked 55.41 seconds while Usha recorded 55.42 seconds. Nambiar's son Suresh said that someone from the family will collect the award for him when the ceremony is officially held.

Nambiar was with Indian Air Force for 15

years and retired as a Sergeant in 1970. He got a coaching diploma from the NIS-Patiala in 1968 and joined the Kerala Sports Council in 1971. He was tasked with finding talented athletes in the state.

Besides Usha, some of the international medal-winning athletes he coached include Shiny Wilson (four-time Olympian and 1985 Asia Championships gold winner in 800m) and Vandana Rao.

Recalling the momentous day in Los Angeles 37 years ago, Usha said, "My name came out first on result board but later it was announced that there was some issues. I went to dope control room and there I saw photo finish footage on TV. I was declared fourth."

"I was crying inside but not outwardly. When I came out I saw Nambiar sir crying inconsolably. I consoled him. He was probably more hurt than me. He is a gem of a person and a father figure to me."

It was in 1977 when Usha won a race in the selection trial of a sports school at Kannur that she came under the tutelage of Nambiar. It was also Nambiar who prepared Usha for 400m hurdles in 1984. She had been a 100m, 200m and 400m runner earlier.

Usha also won four gold medals in the 1986 Asian Games (in 200m, 400m, 400m hurdles and 4x400m relay) under the tutelage of Nambiar. Usha said her coach should have been conferred with the Padma Shri long back. "He should have got it long time back. I was feeling bad because I got the Padma Shri in 1985 and he had to wait for it. He is the most deserving person for the award," she said.