

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
KARIMNAGAR | THURSDAY | 14 JANUARY 2021

WEATHER

Max: 30.9°C
Min: 17.6°C
RH: 42%
Rainfall: Nil
Forecast: Partially cloudy. Misty morning. Max/Min temp. 31/19 °C

COVID-19 COUNT

CASES (+8,790*)
DEATHS (+147*)
1,05,02,548 1,51,671
** Data not received from many states
Covid19india.org*

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+331) (+3)
TS: 2,90,640 1,571
(+203) (+1)
AP: 8,85,437 7,134

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

9,23,12,892
DEATHS 19,77,850
COUNTRIES AREAS WITH CASES 218
worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Uttarayana
Tithi: Pushya Shuddha Padyami till 9.03 am
Star: Shravanam till 5.04 am (Friday)
Variyam: 9.23 am to 10.57 am
Durmuhurtam: 10.34 am to 11.19 am and 3 pm to 3.44 pm
Rahukalam: 1.30 pm to 3 pm
HJRI CALENDAR
Jumadi ul-Awwal 29,1442 AH
PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.45 am
Zohar: 12.35 pm
Asar: 4.25 pm
Maghrib: 6.07 pm
Isha: 7.18 pm
SUNSET TODAY 6 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.49 AM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 6.51 AM
MOONSET TODAY 6.12 PM

COUNTER POINT



Not drugs, he is smuggling vaccine to other countries!

SHORT TAKES

Tunnel found near Pak border

Jammu: A 150-m tunnel constructed along the International Border (IB) to facilitate infiltration of terrorists into Jammu and Kashmir from Pakistan was detected by Border Security Force (BSF) personnel in Hiranagar sector of Kathua district on Wednesday. This is the third tunnel unearthed by alert border guards along the IB in the twin districts of Samba and Kathua in Jammu region over the past six months and ninth in the past decade.

LEGAL | SPACE

Centre moves SC on adultery

PARMOD KUMAR | DC
NEW DELHI, JAN. 13
The Centre on Wednesday moved the Supreme Court seeking to exclude armed forces personnel from the ambit of its 2018 judgment decriminalising adultery, who can be cashiered from service on the grounds of “unbecoming conduct” for committing adultery with a colleague’s wife.
A five-judge constitution bench had on September 27, 2018, in a landmark judgment, decriminalised adultery after striking down a

WORLD | 6

Pence refuses to use Article 25 on Trump

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DC wishes you Happy Sankranti



A girl flies a kite while her friends cheer her at Begum Bazaar on Wednesday, the eve of Makara Sankranti. — R. Pavan

HOLIDAY NOTICE: Deccan Chronicle wishes all its readers a happy Sankranti. The offices of Deccan Chronicle will remain closed on Thursday and there will be no edition on Friday.

Sanitation worker to get first Covid shot in state

BALU PULIPAKA | DC
HYDERABAD, JAN. 13

It will not be a doctor or a nurse who will get the first Covid-19 jab in the state. It will be a sanitation worker at Gandhi Hospital, the Covid-19 care centre of excellence in the city, when the vaccination drive begins on the morning of January 16.

At every one of the 139 vaccination centres, designated as session centres, in the state, it will be the *safai karmacharis* (sanitation workers) who will get the first dose of the vaccine.

According to health department officials, on day one of the vaccination drive, each centre will inoculate 30 persons with their first dose. The number of people receiving the vaccine will increase with each day. It is expected that the second day will see 50 persons receiving their first vaccine dose, followed by 100 on day three and so on.

Currently, the plan is to hold the vaccination drive

Bharat Biotech ships vaccine lot

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JAN. 13

Bharat Biotech on Wednesday became the second vaccine manufacturer in the country to airlift its Covid-19 vaccine to different states. The city-based company sent its Covaxin to 11 cities.

While one set of shipments was sent from the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport here in the morning, another set of deliveries was sent in the evening. Bharat Biotech received order for 55 lakh doses from the Centre. It

donated 16.5 lakh doses to the government. Each Covaxin vial contains 20 doses.

The company delivered 20,000 doses to Telangana state, sending the supplies to the state vaccine store at Koti here.

Wednesday’s vaccine deliveries were made to Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Delhi, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

■ Page 2: Covaxin is safer than others, says firm

ve for four days a week with the other three days dedicated to the normal vaccination programmes. Officials said as on Wednesday, 3.3 lakh

healthcare workers had registered their names to receive the vaccines.

■ Page 2: Normal public to get jab later this year

Farmers burn farm law copies to mark protest

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JAN. 13

A day after the Supreme Court stayed the three farm laws and formed a committee to “study” them, the agitating farmers who had declared that their agitation would continue, burnt copies of the three laws on Wednesday to mark the harvest season of Lohri.

The farmers’ agitation entered its 50th day on Wednesday.

With the next round of

talks between farmers and the Centre scheduled for January 15, minister of state for agriculture Parshottam Rupala said that dialogue is the only way forward to resolve the deadlock.

“It is only through dialogue that a way forward can be found,” Mr Rupala said on Wednesday.

Farmers unions have also shown willingness to attend the ninth round of talks but have insisted on a complete repeal of the farm laws.

The agitating farmers’ on Wednesday received a boost as a delegation of 1,000-odd Kerala farmers aligned with the All India Kisan Sabha’s Kerala unit decided to join the agitation at Delhi border on Thursday.

“It is the government’s propaganda that only Punjab farmers are impacted by the three laws. The truth is these laws will affect each and every farmer of the country,” said senior CPI(M) leader K.N. Balagopal.

By its 2018 judgment, the top court had said that Section 497 is a denial of the constitutional guarantees of dignity, liberty, privacy, and sexual autonomy, which are intrinsic to Article 21 of the Constitution.

“Mere adultery can’t be a criminal offence. It is a matter of privacy. Husband is not the master of a wife. Women should be treated with equality along with men,” then Chief Justice Dipak Misra had said in his judgment also speaking for Justice A.M.Khanwilkar.

SPORTS | 8

Oz coach blames IPL for Indian injuries

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TABLOID

Hindi actresses buy homes without advice



Vol. 20 No. 229 Established 1938 | 16 PAGES | ₹6.00

Centre clears purchase of 83 Tejas Mk-1A for IAF

HAL gets its largest-ever order, to boost aerospace industry

PAWAN BALI | DC
NEW DELHI, JAN. 13

In a big push to the government’s Make in India campaign, the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) on Wednesday approved the procurement of 83 Tejas Mk-1A fighter jets for the Indian Air Force (IAF) from the state-run defence firm Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL). This is the largest ever indigenous military aviation deal worth around ₹48,000 crore.

“The CCS today approved the largest indigenous defence procurement deal worth about ₹48,000 crores to strengthen the IAF’s fleet of homegrown fighter jet ‘LCA-Tejas’. This deal will be a game-changer for self-reliance in the Indian defence manufacturing,” tweeted defence minister Rajnath Singh.

The defence minister said Tejas — India’s indigenous Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) will be the backbone of the IAF fighter fleet in years to come.

“LCA-Tejas incorporates a large number of new technologies, many of which were never attempted in India. The indigenous con-

	INDIA'S TEJAS MK-1	US F-16C FIGHTING FALCON
Crew	1	1
Length	43.31 ft	49.21 ft
Width	26.9 ft	32.81 ft
Height	14.44 ft	15.75 ft
Payload	3,500 kg	4,315 kg
Installed power	20,200 lb	28,600 lb
Top speed	1,975 kph	2,120 kph
Range	3,200 km	4,220 km
Ceiling	54,134 ft	50,000 ft

tent of LCA-Tejas is 50 per cent in Mk1A variant which will be enhanced to 60 per cent,” said Singh. The deliveries are expected to begin in three years.

The CCS approved the procurement of 73 Tejas Mk-1A fighter aircraft and 10 Tejas Mk-1 trainer aircraft at the cost of ₹45,696 crore along with design and development of infrastructure sanctions worth ₹1,202 crore.

The IAF has bought 40 Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas Mk-1 aircraft. Tejas Mk1A cleared by the CCS on Wednesday is more advanced than Mk-1 with around 40 improvements.

The Light Combat Aircraft Mk-1A variant is an indigenously designed,

developed and manufactured state-of-the-art modern four-plus generation fighter aircraft.

The aircraft is equipped with critical operational capabilities of Active Electronically Scanned Array (AESA) Radar, Beyond Visual Range (BVR) Missile, Electronic Warfare (EW) Suite and Air to Air Refuelling (AAR) which would be a potent platform to meet the operational requirements of the Indian Air Force.

According to the minister, the manufacturing of the Light Combat Aircraft by HAL will give a further push to Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative and boost indigenisation of defence production and the defence

industry in the country.

“About 500 Indian companies, including MSMEs in the design and manufacturing sectors, will be working with HAL in this procurement. The programme would act as a catalyst for transforming the Indian aerospace manufacturing ecosystem into a vibrant Atma Nirbhar self-sustaining ecosystem,” the minister said.

“The HAL has already set-up second line manufacturing facilities at its Nasik and Bengaluru divisions. Equipped with the augmented infrastructure, HAL will steer Light Combat Aircraft Mk1A production for timely deliveries to the Indian Air Force,” said Singh.

Frozen lake



A boatman stands on the frozen Dal Lake in Srinagar on Wednesday. Kashmir Valley reeled under severe cold after witnessing sub-zero temperatures. — PTI

85 ARRESTED FOR 29 ATTACKS ON AP TEMPLES: DGP

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JAN. 13

AP Director General of Police (DGP) Gautam Sawang on Wednesday announced that the department has solved 29 of the total 44 attacks on temples and has arrested 85 persons.

The DGP said there have been attempts to undermine religious harmony but police checked it by taking all possible measures.

He said the AP police is first in the country to install CCTV cameras for round-the-clock surveillance at places of worship. Over 58,000 temples had been geo-tagged and 43,824 CCTV cameras installed.

Sawang said that attacks on temples are being widely publicised with social media distorting facts and spreading false information.

The DGP said it is not right to make accusations against the police for political reasons. Sawang found fault with certain people for questioning the police as to what they are doing while the temples are being attacked in the state.

HMs find schools are in bad shape

RAVINDRA SESHU | DC
KHAMMAM, JAN. 13

While the government plans to reopen schools from February 1, headmasters are faced with two urgent issues.

One is of cleaning the classrooms. The piling up of dust in the rooms is too heavy. “Who will clean the classrooms” asked a headmaster.

There are no sweepers and night watchmen for these schools. This is for the first time in history that schools remained closed for 10 months. The government did not give salary to these staff after the closure.

Teachers said some of the benches and chairs were having presence of pests and fungus, and many chairs have turned unusable.

Involving the students in the cleanup operation, as was done on occasions in the past, is not permissible after the introduction of the Right to Education Act. School teachers federa-

tion state president Devarakonda Saidulu said there was massive pile-up of dust in the classrooms and it took at least five days to clean them. He demanded that the government sanction ₹5,000 immediately for the cleanup operation.

“Some teachers are cleaning their schools on their own. It’s a stupendous task,” he said.

Secondly, the rice stocks meant for the Mid-day Meal Scheme have been piled up in school kitchens. They are rotten by now and germs and micro-organisms are visible in the rice packs.

Some headmasters concluded that it can be used only as fodder. There are three to five quintals of rice in every school and who would take a decision on their fate, a headmaster asked.

N. Bhaskar, a teacher in Konigerla mandal, suggested that the government should take a decision on these two issues before opening the schools.

IN MAOIST-HIT AREAS, THERE IS NO MONEY TO INSTAL CCTVs

PILLALAMARRI SRINIVAS | DC
KOMARAM BHEEM ASIFABAD, JAN. 13

The police are asking gram panchayats to install closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras in villages near forests and in the agency areas to keep a close watch on movement of strangers and militants in such areas.

Sarpaches say they are in a fix as arranging funds for this is a problem.

Each camera costs ₹15,000 to ₹20,000. The police will monitor data via the mobile app. Maoist sympathisers, formerly surrendered and released Naxalites and active militants are frequently moving about the interior areas in the agency, police say and want to keep an eye on them.

Sarpanches however add that they have no objection to installing cameras at certain locations to record the movement of the Maoists or other suspicious people. If the government or the police department supplies the equipment or funds for this, installation can be done, they say.

Many gram panchayats don’t have sufficient funds even to take up development and sanitation works and are solely depending on the money coming in from the Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS).

The sarpanch of a gram panchayat in Komaram Bheem Asifabad district said local police asked him to install CCTV cameras to control crime and ensure the safety and security of the villagers, especially women.

“At least ₹60,000 is needed for this,” he said.

■ Many gram panchayats don’t have funds to take up development and sanitation works and depend on the money coming in from the MNREGS.

ASTROGUIDE

[For Friday]

Sarvari; Uttarayanam

Tithi: Pushya Shuddha Vidiya

till 8.06 am

Star: Dhanishta till 5.16 am

(Saturday)

Varjyam: 9.06 am to 10.42 am

Durmuhurtam: 9.06 am to 9.50 am

and 12.47 pm to 1.31 pm

Rahukalam: 10.30 am to 12 noon

HILIRI CALENDAR

Jumadi ul-Akhir 1 Year-1442, Al Hijri

PRAYERS

Fajar: 5.45 am

Zohar: 12.35 pm

Asar: 4.26 pm

Maghrib: 6.07 pm

Isha: 7.18 pm

SUNSET FRIDAY 6.01 PM

SUNRISE SATURDAY 6.49 AM

MOONRISE SATURDAY 8.35 AM

MOONSET FRIDAY 8.11 PM

SHORT TAKES

NOVOTEL TO HOLD 4-DAY HARVEST FOOD FESTIVAL

DC CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD, JAN. 13

Novotel Hyderabad Airport will organise a four-day Harvest Food Festival to celebrate Makar Sankranti, from January 14 to 17.

The hotel has a horticultural space it calls the 'Patch' where a mix of herbs, ornamentals, fruits, flowers and vegetables are grown. The hotel's executive chef, Varun M.B., has used produce from the 'Patch' and curated the menu for the food festival.

The menu includes few specialties like makkhi ki roti with saag, pindi chole with bhature, kalagaya koora, ulava charu pulao, royyala iguru, bhatti ka ghost among several others.

Rubin Cherian, the hotel's general manager, said, "The Harvest Food Festival is an amalgamation of North and South Indian cuisines. The menu curated by our executive chef Varun is not one to be missed. To rejoice in the spirit of Makar Sankranti, we invite all of our guests to join us in this unique fusion food festival."

COVAXIN SAFER THAN OTHERS: FIRM

From Page 1

Covaxin is an indigenous Covid-19 vaccine developed in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research's National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune. The vaccine, the company said, has demonstrated long-term immune responses to multiple viral proteins and its ability to potentially reduce or eliminate escape mutants of the virus.

With respect to safety, Bharat Biotech said Covaxin demonstrated a "safety profile, which is significantly lower than that of several other vaccines." Earlier, the company also announced it has entered into an agreement with Brazil for the supply of its Covid-19 vaccine.

STATE IMPLEMENTS SCHEMES TO BOOST DALIT COMMUNITY

DC CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD, JAN 13

Social welfare minister Koppula Eshwar said that many programmes were being implemented in the state to boost the confidence of the Dalit community.

He said that the Centre for Dalit Studies, being constructed at a cost of ₹26 crore, is being readied for launch on the occasion of Ambedkar Jayanti on April 14. He recalled that Chief Minister K. Chaudrashekar Rao had laid the foundation stone on Dr B.R. Ambedkar's 125th birth anniversary. The centre will have all facilities for those preparing for civil examinations.

Minister Eshwar along with Whip Balka Suman, MLAs G. Balaram, Aatram Sakku, Kale Yadaya, Maganti Gopinath and deputy mayor Baba Fasiuddin inspected work at the Centre for Dalit Studies at Rehmathnagar.

On behalf of the Dalit community, the minister thanked Chandrashekar Rao for providing such an excellent centre. Suman said the centre was being set up with the intention of illuminating the lives of Dalits by designing programmes. It would be a focal point for studies to improve the living standards of Dalits.

High on festivities



A child gives offerings to Gangireddulu in front of Bhogi mantalu in the early hours on Wednesday.

— R. PAVAN

MLC K. Kavitha participates in Bhogi mantalu celebrations at Charminar, in Hyderabad on Wednesday.

— DC



People celebrate Lohri at the Secunderabad Gurudwara.

—DEEPAK DESHPANDE

WOMAN HELD FOR ABDUCTING 1-YR-OLD BABY

DC CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD, JAN. 13

A 25-year-old woman was arrested by the West Zone Task Force on Wednesday for kidnapping a one-year-old boy with an intention to sell him. According to the police, the accused, Tabbasum Begum, kidnapped the boy on Saturday from a homeless woman who had three children.

"The boy, Mohd Zubair, was abducted from Tolichowki in Golconda and taken to a couple in Lakdikapul. Tabbasum told the couple that the boy was donated by his parents at the Government Maternity Hospital in Petlaburj and that she is willing to sell him for ₹1 lakh," police said. "However, the couple scolded her and asked her to leave them alone. Since then, she has been travelling in the Old City looking to sell the boy," police said.

Nation's first paramotor centre in Mahbubnagar

DC CORRESPONDENT

MAHBUBNAGAR, JAN. 13

The first-ever air show here got off to a flying start on Wednesday as tourism minister V. Sreenivas Goud announced that India's first aero sports paramotor adventure training centre would be set up in the district.

The geography of the district is suitable for flying activities as it has several water bodies, plains and hillocks and helps in safe navigation, he said.

The five-day Air Show and National Paramotor Championship with participation from 10 states attracted 1,500 spectators, a large number of them children, excitedly watching the events. All roads led to the district sports complex, venue of the air show.

The winners would represent India at the Thailand international event, collector S. Venkat Rao said. This event has put Mahbubnagar on international map, he said.



Paraglider seen enjoying during the five-day Air Show in Mahbubnagar on Wednesday.

— By Arrangement

resent India at the Thailand international event, collector S. Venkat Rao said. This event has put Mahbubnagar on international map, he said.

"I was thrilled," said a 12-year-old girl from

Jadcherla who came along with her brother and parents to watch the event. "Mahabubnagar is transforming," echoed another. This would keep the district in a different league, said another spectator.

MINUTE | SHAKES

Reason for tremors could even be quarry blasts, says expert

Kukatpally wakes up to tremors

T.S.S. SIDDHARTH | DC

HYDERABAD, JAN. 13

Residents of Kukatpally woke up on Wednesday morning to a feel of tremors. They rushed out of their homes in desperation.

"I was fast asleep, then suddenly the earth started shaking and I woke up. I went outside to check if it was only my building or if the residents in nearby buildings too felt it," said resident

● "TOWARDS the end of last year, the city has witnessed minor quakes measuring 1.7 on the Richter scale. The quakes in Borabanda do not have any relation with the tremors felt in Kukatpally," D. Srinagesh said.

Ch Satya Experts from the National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI) who maintain a seismograph

quakes say that these could be minute tremors. "The reason for the tremors could even be quarry rock blast. Since Borabanda experienced tremors last year, chances are that small bursts of energy are still being released," D. Srinagesh, chief scientist, Department of Seismology, NGRI, told *Deccan Chronicle*.

The country falls into four seismic zones. While zone two receives quakes

up to 5 on the Richter scale, Zones three, four and five record quakes up to 5.7, 6.3 and 7.0 or more on the Richter scale.

"Towards the end of last year, the city has witnessed minor quakes measuring 1.7 on the Richter scale. The quakes in Borabanda do not have any relation with the tremors felt in Kukatpally," he said.

At the time, officials from the NGRI visited Borabanda and installed

Colourful rangolis, kites light up city

SANJAY SAMUEL

PAUL | DC

HYDERABAD, JAN. 13

Drawing rangolis and flying kites turned out to be the hallmark of three-day Bhogi, Sankranti and Kanuma festivities this year, for more than one reason.

While these activities mark the festival, this was perhaps the first occasion in a long time where there was no reason to crowd in indoor spaces: People in smaller groups stepped outside into the warm winter sun to celebrate.

Kavuru Hemalatha, who is seventy-two years old, is still passionate about the art of "muggu", as rangoli is referred to in Telugu. "I

● NANDURI ACHYUTA, a resident of Marredpally, has organised 'bommalakolu' (festivities of toys) at her home.

Haridasulu and Gangireddulu, the decorated bulls, went around the localities. "Hyderabad is continuing its traditions at its best," Achyuta remarked.

learned the art from my mother. I used to help her when I was a kid. Even now, this festival gives me immense joy when I put the rangoli," Hemalatha observed.

Kanuru Sumalatha, another enthusiast, says rangolis are made with dif-

ferent themes. "My whole family has been involved in making the rangoli. Children playing all around and campfire in the night adds to the joy," she said.

Nanduri Achyuta, a resident of Marredpally, has organised 'bommalakolu' (festivities of toys) at her home. Haridasulu and Gangireddulu, the decorated bulls, went around the localities. "Hyderabad is continuing its traditions at its best," Achyuta remarked.

Laxman Chugani, resident of Motilal Nehru Nagar, Begumpet, said, "The whole family is charged up flying kites. After a long gap, we have been able to enjoy ourselves so much," he stated.

TS govt begins sending Covid vaccines to dists

Those vaccinated need to certify job taken voluntarily

BALU PULIPAKA | DC

HYDERABAD, JAN. 13

A day after Telangana state received 3.64 lakh doses of Covishield vaccine from the Pune-based Serum Institute of India (SII), the city-based Bharat Biotech, which began shipping its Covaxin to various states, delivered its first consignment of 20,000 doses to the state health department on Wednesday.

While each multi-use vial of Covishield contains 10 doses of the vaccine, Covaxin vials carry 20 each.

With the Covid-19 vaccines hard to come by because of the tremendous demand, the health department has made it clear to all health teams that will be inoculating people to account for empty vials, which would have to be returned to the State Vaccine Store here.

With activities relating to the vaccination drive pick-

NORMAL PUBLIC TO GET JAB LATER THIS YR

From Page 1

This sector of employees, both in government and private hospitals, will be the first to receive the vaccines, followed by staff in other frontline departments such as the police, and then those older than 50 years and those younger than 50 but with comorbidities. The turn of the normal public will only come after that, possibly some-

time late this year. With the safety of the vaccines — both Covishield from Serum Institute of India and Covaxin from Bharat Biotech — yet to be fully understood though both were approved by the Drugs Controller General of India as being safe, the state health department has set up separate Covid-19 Vaccine ICU beds to handle any odd adverse reaction.

ing up further, Wednesday saw a video conference of health department officials and hospital heads that reviewed the process, the precautions and ways to make it smooth. Everyone who receives a Covid-19 vaccine will be required to sign a form agreeing that the jab is being taken voluntarily. Health department authorities began sending

the vaccines to all the districts after repacking the vials as per the designated requirement of each district.

The carefully packed vaccine vials — in containers that ensure the vaccines stay in the required temperature range of 2° to 8° Celsius — were dispatched to the districts with police escorts.

COPS ARREST NINE MEMBER INTER-STATE DACOITY GANG

DC CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD, JAN. 13

A nine-member inter-state dacoity gang was apprehended on Wednesday in a joint operation conducted by the Cyberabad police who recovered stolen property worth ₹55 lakh along with a gun and ropes that were used in burglaries.

The arrests were made by the Dundigal police with the assistance of police from Medchal and the Special Operations Teams of Balanagar and Shamshabad. The gang was involved in three dacoities in Dundigal, RC Puram and Shankarpally, three house breaking at RC Puram, Narsingi and Shankarpally and one theft case.

Police said Pradeep Kushwaha, the mastermind, along with his associates, procured a car and conducted reces of residential areas in Shankarpally, Mokila, Kondakal, Narsingi, Mallampet and RC Puram under the guise of asking for employment at construction sites. Upon selecting a target, he would assemble the gang members who reside in Delhi, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh and carry out the burglary.

BURGLAR WITH 66 CASES HELD, JEWELS SEIZED

Hyderabad: An alleged burglar accused of involvement in 66 cases since 2006 was apprehended by the East Zone Task Force on Wednesday. Officials recovered 23 tolas of gold and diamond ornaments worth ₹12 lakh from his possession.

The accused, Shaik Abdul Jaffar alias Ahmed, 50, was an autorickshaw driver by profession. He was involved in 12 burglaries in Hyderabad, 14 in Rachakonda, 38 in Cyberabad and two in Warangal.

● The gang was involved in three dacoities in Dundigal, RC Puram and Shankarpally, three house breaking at RC Puram, Narsingi and Shankarpally and one theft case.

OTHER STORIES

BURGLAR HELD, PROPERTY WORTH ₹10.5L SEIZED

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JAN. 13

The South Zone Task Force, along with the Santosnagar police, apprehended a burglar who was involved in three property offences and seized stolen property worth ₹10.5 lakh from him.

Police said the accused, Habeeb Azmath, 28, used to team up with one Shaik Sharooq, 24, who is absconding. Sharooq was involved in more than 30 cases in Hyderabad, Cyberabad and Rachakonda.

Police said the duo wakes up early and targets houses of devotees who go to perform the Fazar namaz in mosques while leaving the doors open. While Sharooq enters the house, Habeeb keeps a watch. They make off with gold ornaments, cellphones and cash, police said.

ARMED FORCES VETERANS DAY TOMORROW

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JAN. 13

Armed Forces Veterans Day will be celebrated as a mark of respect and to recognise the services rendered by the veterans to the nation. This year is being commemorated as ‘Swarnim Vijay Varsh’ to mark the jubilee of the 1971 Indo-Pak War. The fourth Armed Forces Veterans Day last year was attended by over 900 veterans at Secunderabad, this year the event has been impacted adversely due to the Covid-19 pandemic and has been reduced in scale.

The celebrations have been clubbed with the Army Day fete on January 15 at Veerula Sainik Smarak. The solemn occasion will be attended by a limited number of serving military personnel and veterans of the 1971 Indo-Pak War residing in Secunderabad.

A wreath-laying ceremony will be conducted at the memorial and the veterans will be felicitated by Major General R.K. Singh, general officer commanding, Telangana and Andhra Sub Area.

Senior military officers of the Secunderabad station and senior veterans will lay wreaths at the memorial to pay their respects to all ranks of the three services who laid down their lives in the service of the nation.

● **This year** is being commemorated as ‘Swarnim Vijay Varsh’ to mark the jubilee of the 1971 Indo-Pak War.

Ranganatha Swamy Kalyanam



Goda Devi and Ranganatha Swamy Kalyanam is performed in the Bhadrachalam temple on Wednesday. The devotees from various places involved in the ritual following Covid-19 guidelines.

Bandi seeks action on cops over lathi charge

Police are indiscriminately attacking BJP leaders, says Sanjay

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, JAN. 13

BJP state president Bandi Sanjay on Wednesday visited Jangaon to take stock of the situation following a police baton charge against BJP activists on Tuesday. He took out a huge rally to protest the baton charge, from the town's main centre to the government hospital.

A tense situation prevailed when the party leaders tried to break open the gates of the DCP office but they were dispersed by the police. Sanjay visited the BJP workers and others undergoing treatment in the hospital.

Speaking to reporters later, Sanjay alleged that the police were working only to protect the interests of the ruling party leaders.

He criticised the government's “reckless actions” in preventing the conduct of the Swami Vivekananda jayanti celebrations.

“It is wrong on the part of the municipal commissioner to remove the banners set up by the BJP but not touching



BJP TS president Bandi Sanjay at Jangaon government hospital on wednesday. — DC

those put up by ruling party leaders. The Chief Minister, who has confined himself to the farmhouse, is still not responding to state issues,” Sanjay claimed.

“In places where the BJP is gaining in strength, the police are indiscriminately attacking their leaders. We will put an end to the tyrannical rule of K Chandrasekhar Rao. It is very sad to see our party workers being beaten.

Will the CM keep quiet if his family members were baton-charged,” he wondered.

Sanjay demanded that the DGP take action



Scuffle between police and BJP activists at DCP office in Jangaon. — DC

against Jangaon circle inspector Mallesh and other police personnel and suspend them immediately. “If not, we will call for a siege of the DGP's office,” Bandi

Sanjay warned. Erstwhile Warangal, Karimnagar and Jangaon district presidents as well as local leaders took part in the agitation.

ADIVASIS’ DEVOTIONAL PILGRIMAGE INTO DEEP FOREST

DC CORRESPONDENT
ADILABAD, JAN. 13

Many Adivasi families have embarked on pilgrimage to their sacred religious places where adivasi tradi-

tional gods and goddesses are placed in caves and hillocks at various places in erstwhile Adilabad district. Adivasis in many villages have already begun their pilgrimage in poos maas

which is considered as auspicious month. Adivasis visit their religious places ‘Demmal Rajul’, ‘Jangubai caves’ and ‘Bheemal Pen’. All these places are located in the deep forests.

STF DEMANDS ₹5000 PER SCHOOL TO CLEANUP

RAVINDRA SESHU I DC
KHAMMAM, JAN. 13

While the government plans to reopen schools from February 1, headmasters are faced with two urgent issues.

One is of cleaning the classrooms. The piling up of dust in the rooms is too heavy. “Who will clean the classrooms” asks headmasters. There are no sweepers and night watchmen for these schools. This is for the first time in history that schools remained closed for ten months. The government did not give salary to these staff after the closure. Teachers said some of the benches and chairs were having presence of pests and fungus, and many chairs have turned unusable.

Involving the students in the cleanup operation, as was done on occasions in the past, is not permissible after the introduction of the Right to Education Act.

School teachers federation state president Devarakonda Saidulu said there was massive pile-up of dust in the classrooms and it took at least five days to clean them. He demanded that the government sanction ₹ 5,000 immediately for the cleanup operation. “Some teachers are cleaning their schools on their own.

It's a stupendous task,” he said. Secondly, the rice stocks meant for the Mid-day Meal Scheme have been piled up in school kitchens.

They are rotten by now and germs and micro-organism are visible in the rice packs. Some headmasters concluded that it can be used only as fodder. There are three to five quintals of rice in every school and who would take a decision on their fate, a headmaster asked. N. Bhaskar, a teacher suggested that the govt should take a decision on these two issues before opening the schools.

यूनियन बैंक ऑफ इंडिया
Union Bank of India

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(FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTY)

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Restrain yourself, Errabelli tells Bandi

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, JAN. 13

Panchayat Raj minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao has once again appealed to state BJP Telangana state president Bandi Sanjay to not provoke people with his utterances.

“Those in positions of responsibility are advised to have a humane touch. Sanjay, who is an MP, must not speak recklessly,” he said.

The minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao was addressing the media after handing over double bedroom houses to bene-



Minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao speaking in a meeting at in Mylaram village in Rayaparthy mandal of Warangal rural district on Wednesday. — DC

ficiaries in Mylaram village in Rayaparthy mandal of Warangal rural district.

“People laugh at you when you speak words that undermine democratic values,” Dayakar Rao said. He said that power is not the ultimate and public service, but welfare of the people was paramount.

“Bandi's words are provocative. He must be ready for a formal meeting to let the people know who did what if the wanted to know about development activities,” he said.

21 passengers injured, drivers critical as two RTC buses collide

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, JAN. 13

At least 21 passengers suffered injuries when two RTC buses collide in which they were travelling collided head on near Vallabhapur village of Elkathurthy mandal in Warangal Urban district early on Wednesday.

Warangal depot driver Rajesh was severely injured in the accident. According to police, the accident occurred when the bus proceeding to Nizamabad from Warangal suffering a failure resulting in the driver losing control of the vehicle. It collided with the RTC bus coming from Karimnagar. The injured were shifted to the government hospi-



Damaged RTC buses which collided at Vallabhpur. — DC

tals in Huzurabad and MGM Hospital in Warangal for treatment. The local police and RTC officials visited the spot and started an investigation into the incident.

Traffic police came to a standstill for up to a kilometre on either side of the accident spot on the busy National Highway-563 between Karimnagar and Warangal. The police

cleared the traffic.

Elkathurthy sub-inspector G. Uma said that except for the two RTC drivers, none of the passengers was severely injured in the incident happened.

STAGE SET FOR VACCINATION IN ADILABAD

DC CORRESPONDENT
ADILABAD, JAN. 13

Medical and health department officials have prepared for administering covid-19 vaccine on January Around 16. 19,000 frontline warriors from various departments have been identified for the vaccination in the erstwhile Adilabad.

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DECCAN Chronicle

14 JANUARY 2021

Election fever grips TN as early hustings begin

It is a bit early for Tamil Nadu to go into election mode with at least four more months left for the All India Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) to relinquish power. But it has happened as the principal contender to the throne, the DMK, launched an all-out war to storm Fort St George quite early, forcing the ruling dispensation to quickly respond. Thus, the battle lines have been drawn between the two traditional rivals, who have been ruling the state alternately since 1967, after that indistinct threat that loomed for about a year in the form of actor Rajinikanth dissipated and the other actor, Kamal Haasan, with his Makkal Needhi Maiam, is not expected to play a big role.

Of course, Mr Haasan is around and has already started going around spouting rhetoric and another actor, Seeman, with his Naam Tamilar Katchi is, as usual, spewing chauvinistic vitriol. But there is no scope for a third front to take on the might of the DMK and AIADMK as a plethora of smaller parties in the state, which include the BJP and the Congress that are otherwise political giants at the national level, have started rallying around the Dravidian majors, in the run-up to the state Assembly elections. But the same small parties are now promising to provide scope for some political drama.

Another thorn in the flesh of the AIADMK is the PMK bargaining for an assurance to provide 20 per cent exclusive reservation for the Vanniyar community that it represents to remain in the alliance

getting the desired number of seats.

In the past, as it happened in 2016, disillusionment over seat allocation had united small parties to form alternative alliances. But this time there is no sign of such rebellions as the small parties seem to be prepared to accept whatever is given, though they have started asserting themselves in a different way. Almost all the parties want to retain their individual identity by contesting in their own symbols and names. Since that goes against the wishes of both the alliance leaders, who want smaller allies to opt for their popular election symbols, thus marking ally candidates, at least in Election Commission records, as their representative, there is bound to be friction and action.

Another thorn in the flesh of the AIADMK is the Pattal Makkal Katchi (PMK) of Dr S. Ramadoss bargaining for an assurance to provide 20 per cent exclusive reservation for the Vanniyar community that it represents to remain in the alliance. How the AIADMK deals with the belligerent PMK and how both the lead partners coax their allies to settle for a smaller number of seats would form the next act of the long-drawn electoral drama, whose climax is, as said earlier, four months away.

Policy not court's domain

The value of the committee of four experts appointed by the Supreme Court in arbitrary fashion in an effort to defuse the national political crisis caused by the prolonged agitation by tens of thousands farmers is questionable.

The farmers are knocking on Delhi's gates to protest three farm laws recently passed by the Narendra Modi government. In such haste was the regime that it first brought the legislations in the form of ordinance — or executive fiat — in mid-June and then rushed these through Parliament in three days flat by the end of September, short-circuiting and bypassing norms and procedures.

The top court waded into the delicate situation caused by the agitation, which has attracted world attention, when neither the government nor the farmers called for its help, although during negotiations the government's ministers did tell the farmers' representatives to try their luck in the Supreme Court if they weren't satisfied with what the government was offering. The farmers didn't take the bait. But the court stepped in anyway.

The Supreme Court has held the three laws in abeyance. Maybe, this is in order to appear even-handed. But this is not cutting ice outside government circles. The farmers' demand is the repeal of the laws, which they see as bad policy, adversely impacting their lives. Evidently, the top court does not understand this. Nor does the Supreme Court see that it has no role in determining policy, which is the exclusive domain of the executive.

As per the Supreme Court, the committee it has brought into being will hear all sides and help the apex court understand whether the farm laws are in the "public interest". This self-given assignment is outside the top court's remit. The job of the Supreme Court is to determine the constitutionality or otherwise of a legislation, not whether it is in the public interest. That is for the people to decide. When court-appointed experts seek to do so, it is the ayatollah syndrome that looms.

For the sake of record, all the four experts in the committee are strongly pro-government on the agri laws, and yet the Chief Justice of India expects farmers' representatives to appear before this committee. Instead of seeming the honest broker, the CJI may be courting disdain. What a pity!

DECCAN CHRONICLE

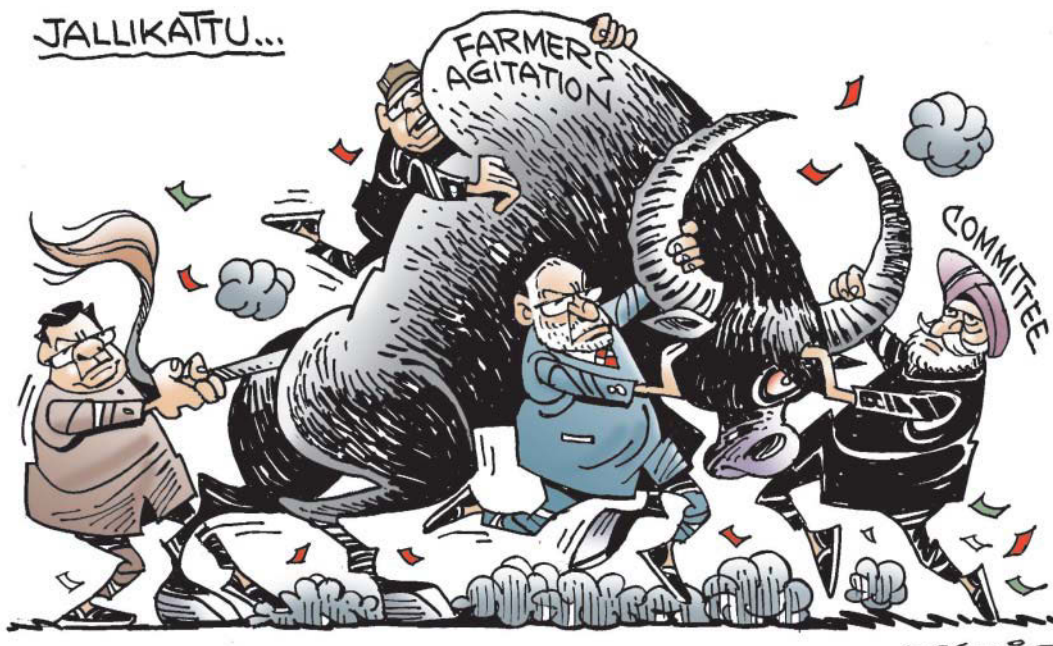
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Subhani



Is 'new normal' really a return to the old ways?



Patralekha Chatterjee
Dev 360

Poverty. Inequality. Precarity. Vulnerability. These are mere words, until they hit us directly or confront us in a way which makes it difficult to look away.

A flood of images of migrant workers walking down national highways burst into middle class India's living rooms following the nationwide lockdown announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in March last year. The lockdown came into effect with barely four hours' notice. All economic activity came to a grinding halt; and there was no transport.

Those searing images of migrant workers —men and women reduced to collateral damage for the State in its battle against the coronavirus — jolted many people.

Suddenly, everyone was talking about the heart-breaking conditions in which all daily wage earners — the face of the country's vast informal sector — lived and worked.

For a fleeting while, optimists wondered if the Covid-19 pandemic had sledgehammered some fundamental lessons about the need for solidarity between the "formal" and "informal" sectors, if not for anything else but enlightened self-interest.

Almost a year down the line, as we get ready for the vaccine rollout and for the economy to recover fully, what really has changed?

Are we trying to do science and fix the economy in a way that factors in the needs and rights of our most vulnerable? Or is our "new normal" really going back to the old ways?

Last week, once again, images of precarity and poverty came together through the testimonies of desperately poor people who had volunteered to participate in the ongoing clinical trial of Bharat Biotech's Covid-19 vaccine candidate, Covaxin, in Bhopal.

Covaxin, as everyone knows by now, has been cleared by India's drugs controller for restricted emergency use. This means, along with Covishield, the Serum Institute of India's coronavirus vaccine, it is part of the vaccine rollout.

Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech has given safety and immunogenicity data. But there is no efficacy data yet. This data is expected in a couple of months.

Meanwhile, the ongoing trial has attracted a lot of public attention after the allegations of irregularities and violations of ethics. Many questions are being asked about the manner in which People's Hospital in Bhopal, one of the trial sites, enrolled participants for the Covaxin trial.

Once again, we are face to face with stark images of vulnerability.

The video testimonies arranged by a Bhopal-based human rights group in the wake of the death of a participant in the trial made it clear that those who had signed up to participate in the trial had little idea of what it entailed. Bharat Biotech says the post-mortem analysis has revealed that the death was not related to the vaccine. The family of the deceased feel differently.

Most of those who offered their testimonies on camera are victims of the horrific Bhopal gas tragedy, the world's largest industrial disaster in December 1984; and many said that they could not read or write.

What leaps out from among the many statements they made is the stark reality of "informed consent" when it comes to poor people with no education and little bargaining power.

As is widely known, there are four key parts of informed consent in a clinical trial — information, comprehension, voluntariness and documentation. "Giving information does not mean it

has been comprehended. According to the new clinical trial rules in India, there should be an 'impartial witness' while informed consent is being taken from an illiterate participant," says Dr Anant Bhan, a well-known researcher in global health and bioethics.

Additionally, for vulnerable participants, there is a requirement for audio-visual documentation of the process, Dr Bhan points out.

"The recent testimonies of volunteers, many of whom are illiterate and poor, for a Covaxin trial site in Bhopal, show big gaps in oversight in the regulatory process," he adds.

Doing science must not mean playing with the basic human rights of vulnerable people, says Dr Bhan emphatically. Clearly, this is in no one's interest and will also raise questions on the quality of data coming out of such trials.

"The seriousness of the allegations made by some volunteers in public in full view of the national media raises a question about whether audio-visual recordings of the informed consent process were done in line with the protocol laid down by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO)," says Amar Jesani, another leading expert on ethics, rights and health systems and editor, *Indian Journal of Medical Ethics*.

"This is not filming a wedding party," says Jesani acerbically. "There is a specific protocol on how these situations need to be filmed. Many of the volunteers are from highly vulnerable groups who did not know their rights. But just because someone does not know his/her rights does not mean rights don't exist."

There are many legitimate questions. Do audio-

What leaps out from among the many statements in the Bhopal Covaxin trial is the stark reality of 'informed consent' when it comes to poor people with no education and little bargaining power

visual recordings of the informed consent process exist for all trial participants from vulnerable groups? Or was it done for only a few? Why?

"This also raises questions about the role of the local ethics committees. Have they investigated whether the audio-visual recordings were done and according to protocol? If such video recordings exist, they can be made public by blanking the face and identity of participants who have not on their own publicly identified as participants," Jesani adds.

The face of vulnerability is equally stark when it comes to the green shoots of economic recovery.

"There are reasons to fear that economic recovery from the pandemic, like the 'growth story', will be shouldered by precarious labour. An already deep employment crisis is worsening further," wrote SOAS academic Dr Subir Sinha in a recent essay in *Open Democracy*, a website covering international affairs.

So, is there any reason for hope?

Mukta Naik, an architect and urban planner working with the Centre for Policy Research, acknowledges that many informal workers face "worse terms" as the Indian economy seeks to recover. The images of the long march of migrant workers, she says, sensitised many among India's middle class, but sadly, the lockdown months made them retreat into their individual bubbles.

However, she points out, many states are now talking about social protection for the vulnerable. There is an appetite for discussion on the subject.

But pathways and mechanisms to operationalise this vision are still not clear, Ms Naik says.

That much-needed clarity could make all the difference.

India doesn't have to let millions lead a precarious existence. It could use its resources to build back better.

The writer focuses on development issues in India and emerging economies. She can be reached at patralekha.chatterjee@gmail.com.

LETTERS

WELCOME SHOT

The arrival of vaccines for Covid-19 in India is exciting ('Safety must even after the vaccination,' DC, Jan. 13). However, the people should follow Covid-19 safety measures even after the vaccination. During the process of vaccinating the entire population, the people must remain calm.

Madiha
Hyderabad

PAPER DEALS

If the government allows for sada bainama registration, many people can fraudulently grab government and private land and get it registered in their name, by bribing the officials (*Sada bainama to benefit TRS leaders: BJP MLA*, Jan. 13). The government should withdraw this plan and not allow land to be easily grabbed.

John Samuel
Secunderabad

WHY NOT NUMAISH?

Every new year has started with Numaish for almost eight decades but, this time, Hyderabadis are missing it due to the Covid-19 pandemic. But, when malls, cinema theatres, Metro Rail and flights, where people are in closed air-conditioned spaces, are permitted, why is the All India Indian Exhibition which is held outdoors in the open not permitted?

T. Kailash Ditya
Hyderabad

SCHOOL INTERVIEWS

Though I agree with Devi Kar that admission into nursery classes should not be based on interviews (*Educational activism of a different kind is needed*, DC, Jan. 13) we cannot entirely blame the school authorities. Thousands of applications for admission are received for a limited number of seats. There must be a way to short-list the children for admission.

S. Nageswara Rao
Hyderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN

DECCAN Chronicle

5 City players in India team

HYDERABAD, January. 13 It was a red-letter day in the sports circle here today. Never before in its history have five players been selected from Hyderabad to represent the country.

The sixteen-man India cricket team to tour West Indies next month, which was announced by the Board of Control for Cricket in India at the city, will have M.L. Jaisimha, Abid Ali, Krishnamurthy, Govindraj and Jayanthilal.

Dilip Cherian
Dilli Ka Babu



K'taka home secy shunted out for calling Safe City 'scam'

IPS officer D. Roopa, who was the first woman home secretary of Karnataka was been transferred as the managing director of Karnataka State Handicrafts Development Corporation amid her public spat with another IPS officer Hemant Nimbalkar, who, too, was transferred. Mr Nimbalkar was the additional commissioner (administration) in Bengaluru before being transferred to the internal security department.

Public spats are rarely pretty and the one between these two senior IPS officers of Karnataka over the tender process to procure CCTVs has brought out in the open the intense rivalries in the service. The two IPS officers locked horns after Ms Roopa accused Mr Nimbalkar of irregularities in the tender process of the ₹619 crore Bengaluru Safe City project under the Nirbhaya scheme. Mr Nimbalkar, on the other hand, accused Ms Roopa of interfering with the tender process without jurisdiction.

Ms Roopa had written to state chief secretary T.M. Vijaya Bhaskar alleging that Mr Nimbalkar was trying to favour a private company in the Bengaluru Safe City Project and demanded a probe against Mr Nimbalkar, alleging, in turn, that while the Home Department has started an enquiry against her, it has hesitated to do the same against Mr Nimbalkar, even after months since the CBI sought sanction for his prosecution.

According to sources, Ms Roopa wrote to the chief secretary after media reports that suggested she was under investigation by the chief secretary for allegedly "impersonating" the home secretary and interfering with the tendering process for the multi-crore project. It is unclear where the question of impersonation arises, as Ms Roopa was the home secretary of Karnataka. The content of the report is on the lines of a complaint written by Mr Nimbalkar to

the Karnataka chief secretary.

As the two trade charges, sources say that the government has started an inquiry in the matter. Expect more salvos in the days ahead!

KHEMKA DIGS IN HIS HEELS

Haryana IAS officer and whistleblower Ashok Khemka never gives up on his first principles.

Now principal secretary in the state's archaeological department, the indefatigable Mr Khemka continues to pursue the case which brought him into the national limelight. Last year, Mr Khemka had appealed to the Haryana State Information Commission under the Right to Information Act.

He had sought information relating to the inquiry commission that probed the grant of change of land use licences in Gurugram during the Congress government's tenure, including the alleged role of Robert Vadra, son-in-law of Congress interim president Sonia Gandhi. He informed the information com-

mission that the complete information sought had not been provided to him.

The commission has now issued notice to the office of chief secretary (political department) and the town and country planning department to give their response to the rejoinders filed by Mr Khemka. Sources say that the IAS officer has sought "penal action" under Section 20 of the RTI Act against those who failed to provide the information he had sought, claiming there is a "cover-up attempt". This, too, is the letter of the law.

J&K BABUS DEFY INSTRUCTIONS

The government has taken serious note of several IAS officers of the Jammu and Kashmir cadre openly flouting instructions on the online filing of immovable property returns (IPRs). Non-compliance can lead to disciplinary proceedings and denial of vigilance clearance.

According to sources, online fil-

ing of IPRs was introduced in 2017. In terms of the extant rules, the babus have to necessarily file IPRs electronically as there is no provision for manual submission.

But much to the disappointment of the department of personnel and training (DoPT) and the general administration department (GAD), several IAS officers have not acted on the instructions issued repeatedly since 2017. Now, sources say, the commissioner secretary of GAD, Manoj Kumar Dwivedi, has issued a circular stating that failure to comply would "constitute good and sufficient reason for the institution of disciplinary proceedings". The IAS officers have been advised to follow the instructions in letter and spirit or face the consequences. The government has clearly decided that it will not give further leeway to the defaulters.

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@Twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect.

IN BRIEFS

MP hooch tragedy toll mounts to 20

Bhopal: The death toll in Tuesday's hooch tragedy in Morena district has mounted to 20 with 8 more people, who had fallen ill after consuming spurious liquor, succumbing in the hospital on the intervening night of Tuesday and Wednesday. All the 20 deceased hailed from the villages of Manpura under Baghchini police station and Pahawali under Sumaoli police station in the district, official reports reaching from Morena said on Wednesday. Preliminary police investigation has revealed that the victims had purchased liquor from an authorised person, who was also hospitalised after consuming the same liquor, at the rate of ₹50 per bottle. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan who took stock of the situation at a high level official meeting here in the morning, ordered transfer of Morena district collector Anurag Verma and local superintendent of police Anurag Sujatia.

Major blaze in Kolkata

Kolkata: A major fire broke out at a slum in Kolkata's Bagbazar area on Wednesday evening. At least 24 fire tenders were pressed into service as the blaze engulfed several houses in the slum on Kshirode Vidyavinode Avenue beside the Bagbazar Women's College near the Chitapore Lock Gate Bridge. Blasts were heard in the slum which police suspect to be of gas cylinders at the houses on fire, officials said. There were no reports of any casualty as most of the people were evacuated on time, they said. The blaze also spread to the adjacent Sarada Mayer Bari as the firefighters escorted the saints out, an officer of the fire department said. "The reason for the fire is not yet known. The firemen are fighting it tooth and nail and hopefully, it will soon be under control," an officer of the Kolkata Police said.

BADAUN CASE: PRIEST REMANDED TO POLICE CUSTODY

Badaun (UP), Jan. 13: A temple priest and his accomplices accused of raping and killing a 50-year-old woman here have been remanded to one-day police custody by a local court. Circle officer of Bilsil, Anirudh Singh, said on Wednesday that, "The three accused persons in the Ughaiti incident have already been sent to jail. But there are some questions which need to be answered. For this, it is necessary to take the three accused on remand". A request through video conferencing was made to the court of the chief judicial magistrate for police remand on Tuesday and the request was granted. The family members of the woman had accused the temple priest and his accomplices of raping and killing the woman, an anganwadi worker. A case was registered against the accused and two of them identified as Vedram and Jaspal were arrested on January 5. Later the priest was also arrested.

150-m cross-border tunnel found in J&K

This is the 3rd tunnel unearthed by alert BSF guards

Jammu, Jan. 13: A 150-metre tunnel constructed along the International Border (IB) to facilitate infiltration of terrorists into Jammu and Kashmir from Pakistan was detected by Border Security Force (BSF) personnel in Hiranagar sector of Kathua district on Wednesday, officials said.

This is the third tunnel unearthed by alert border guards along the IB in the twin districts of Samba and Kathua in Jammu region over the past six months and ninth in the past decade.

"A nearly 150-metre-long tunnel was detected by a BSF patrol party during an anti-tunnelling operation in Bobiyaan village of Hirnagar sector on Wednesday morning," Inspector General of BSF, Jammu frontier, N.S. Jamwal told reporters at the scene. He along with other senior officers rushed to Bobiyaan soon after the detection of the tunnel.

"The opposite of this side is Pakistan's Shakergarh which is notorious for having launch pads and bases of terrorists. We have inputs available with us as a result of that we are sensitive to whatever is happening here," the BSF officer said, assuring that all necessary measures are in place to counter Pakistani designs.

He said sand bags with Pakistani markings are evidence of the hand of Pakistani establishment in the construction of this tunnel, which is identical to the previously detected tunnels hav-



Security officers investigate near the mouth of a 150-metre underground tunnel, constructed allegedly by Pakistan beneath IB, at Hiranagar sector of Kathua district on Wednesday.

ing a depth of 25 to 30 metre with two to three feet diameter.

Asked whether this tunnel was recently dug or it's an old one, the BSF officer said it is a matter of investigation.

However, he said some of the sand bags recovered from the tunnel have 2016-17 year of manufacture which suggest that it is an old tunnel.

"We were searching for this tunnel for a long time and its detection was the effort of the anti-tunnelling operation which is underway all along the IB. Whether any infiltration had taken place through this tunnel in the past can be said after completion of

our investigation," he said.

Jamwal, however, said the BSF is sure that no infiltration had taken place through this tunnel in the recent past.

"We are undertaking some development works here and have strengthened the security in view of the anti-tunnelling drive, he said.

Referring to the killing of two Pakistani infiltrators in Surankote area of Poonch district and an encounter in Srinagar last month, the IG said Pakistan is always looking for an opportunity to push terrorists into Jammu Kashmir, whether it is through Line of Control (LoC) or

IB. "They are continuing with the attempts but we are fully alert to the situation. Our alertness resulted in detection of underground tunnels and shooting down of a Hexa-copter loaded with a huge cache of arms and ammunition," he said, adding the border protection grid comprising army, BSF and police are working jointly to scuttle Pakistan's attempts to push terrorists and weapons into this side.

Last year, the BSF detected two such tunnels in Samba district on August 28 and November 22 following successful infiltration by two groups of terrorists who were subsequently neutralised in separate encounters along Jammu-Srinagar national highway while they were enroute to Kashmir in trucks.

While three Pakistani terrorists affiliated with Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) were eliminated in a gunfight in Nagrota area near Jammu after they were intercepted aboard a Kashmir-bound truck in January last year, another group of Pakistani terrorists armed with weapons and a large quantity of grenades were killed at the same spot on November 19.

Investigations suggested both the groups infiltrated into this side through underground tunnels.

Meanwhile, Pakistani Rangers violated ceasefire by resorting to unprovoked firing on forward posts and villages in the Border Outpost area of Gurnam in Hiranagar sector, the officials said.

HC: Mandate of 30 days notice under Spl Marriage Act optional

Lucknow, Jan. 13: In a judgement that is likely to bring relief to inter faith couples, the Allahabad High Court on Wednesday declared as optional the mandatory publication of notice of intended marriages under the Special Marriage Act, saying it violated the right to privacy.

Making such publication mandatory would invade in the fundamental rights of liberty and privacy, the Lucknow bench of Allahabad High Court said.

It would also affect the couple's freedom to choose

marriage "without interference from state and non-state actors", Justice Vivek Chaudhary said.

He said it shall be optional for the parties to the intended marriage to make a request in writing to the marriage officer to publish or not to publish such a notice.

If the couple did not intend so, the marriage officer has to solemnise their marriage forthwith without publication of 30 days notice, the court said.

A section of the Special Marriage Act, 1954, requires

an inter-faith couple to give written notice of the marriage to the district marriage officer.

The court was considering a habeas corpus petition alleging that an adult girl is being detained against her wishes to marry her lover who belongs to a different religion.

The judgement comes against the backdrop of a recent controversial law enacted by the Uttar Pradesh government which prohibits forcible conversion for the sake of marriage.

—PTI

Mother of murdered 5-year-old moves SC

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, JAN. 13

In a development in the case involving the brutal murder of a five-year-old girl from Jadupur village in Odisha's Nayagarh district, the mother of the victim on Wednesday moved the Supreme Court seeking Central Bureau of Investigation CBI investigation.

Admitting the petition, the apex Court sent notices to the Odisha government and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to put forth their views.

Saudamini Sahoo, the mother of the victim filed a writ petition under Article 32 of the Constitution of India in exercise of her right to Constitutional remedies.

Soudamini has been opposing the investigation into the case launched by a Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the Odisha Crime Branch apprehending a shoddy probe on account of the alleged involvement of influential politicians belonging to the ruling party in the crime.

She had earlier raised doubts over the veracity of the probe, especially when the sleuths overlooked her complaint in bringing the "main accused" under the ambit of the investigation. She had identified Babuli Nayak, a close associate of

● **ADMITTING THE** petition, the apex Court sent notices to the Odisha government and the CBI to put forth their views.

● **SAUDAMINI SAHOO**, the mother of the victim, has been opposing the investigation into the case launched by a SIT of the Odisha Crime Branch apprehending a shoddy probe on account of the alleged involvement of influential politicians.

Minister Arun Sahoo as the "main accused" behind the crime who, she said, was not properly investigated by the SIT.

She had repeatedly punched holes in the findings of the SIT and alleged that the probe team had falsely implicated a juvenile in the case while the real culprits were moving scot-free.

The little girl, daughter of Ashok Sahoo and Soudamini Sahoo, was allegedly kidnapped on July 14 while playing in front of her house in the afternoon.

Her skeletal remains were recovered from the backyard of her house on July 23.

The parents of the girl alleged the girl was kidnapped and killed by one Babuli Nayak, a close aide of minister Arun Nayak.

Ashok alleged that Babuli ran an organ trade racket in the area.

SC/ST ACT: HC FIXES TIMELINE FOR BAIL PLEAS

Allahabad, Jan. 13: In a significant order, the Allahabad High Court has directed that bail pleas under the SC/ST Act have to be placed before the court seven days after a notice is served to the government advocate.

Noting that bail applications should be processed expeditiously and placed before the court for hearing in a reasonable and definite time frame, a single bench of Justice Ajay Bhanot gave a slew of direction on the agency and mode for service of notice on bail pleas under the Act as well as the timeline to be followed.

Section 15 (A) (3) and (5) of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989 provide that a victim or his dependent shall have the right to reasonable, accurate, and timely notice of any court proceeding under this Act.

—PTI

Airline official's murder in Patna raises political heat

NAYEAR AZAD | DC PATNA, JAN. 13

Nitish Kumar led NDA government facing attack over rising crime graph in Bihar was in for another setback when a private airline official Rupesh Kumar Singh was gunned down in Patna Tuesday evening.

The incident occurred outside his residential complex in Patna's crowded Punaichak area under Shastri Nagar police station.

According to the police, he had returned from the airport after duty and was entering into his residential building when criminals started firing indiscriminately and pumped at least six bullets from the window of the car. He was rushed to a hospital for treatment where doctors declared him brought dead.

While investigating the case police found that CCTV of the building was not working and the security guard was not



Nitish Kumar

present when the incident occurred.

According to police officials, "A special investigation team has been formed to probe the case. We are also trying to find a motive behind the killing".

However, according to reports, the police on Wednesday found some vital clues in the murder of Rupesh Kumar Singh. Sources said that CCTV from the nearby building suggests that there were two motorcycle-borne assailants and they appeared to be following him from the airport.

The incident has triggered sharp reactions from across the political spectrum in Bihar. BJP leader and Rajya Sabha

MP Vivek Thakur raised questions on the law and order scenario of the state said that "the police should either reach some conclusion or hand over the case to the CBI without delay".

BJP is a part of Nitish Kumar government in Bihar. The harsh statement issued by the ruling alliance leader has aroused political temper-ature in the state.

On the other hand RJD leader, Tejashwi Yadav on Wednesday demanded Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's resignation over his failure in controlling rising crime graph in the state.

"Criminals protected by those in power in Bihar killed airport manager Rupesh Kumar Singh in Patna outside his residence. He was affable and friendly. I am deeply saddened by his untimely death. It seems that now criminals are running the government in Bihar", Tejashwi said in a tweet.

SC TAKES SUO MOTU COGNIZANCE OF RISING POLLUTION IN YAMUNA RIVER

PARMOD KUMAR | DC NEW DELHI, JAN. 13

The Supreme Court on Wednesday took suo motu cognizance of the rising pollution level in river Yamuna in the national capital and appointed senior counsel Meenakshi Arora as amicus curiae to assist the court in the matter.

Chief Justice Sharas A. Bobde heading a bench also comprising Justice A.S. Bopanna and Justice V. Ramasubramanian took suo motu cognizance of the pollution level in the river Yamuna in the course of the hearing of a plea by Delhi Jal Board complaining that Haryana was discharging untreated wastewater in the river which has resulted increase in the ammonia level in the river.

While taking suo motu cognizance of the pollution in river Yamuna, the top court also issued notice to Haryana on a plea by Delhi Jal Board.

Arora appearing for Delhi Jal Board told the court that the sewage treatment plants for treating waste water set up by Haryana government at different points on the river Yamuna were not working as a consequence untreated wastewater was flowing in the river contributing to an increase in the ammonia level.

Arora told the court that due to an increase in the ammonia level in river Yamuna, it was becoming unfit for consumption and ammonia mixing with other pollutants had the potential to cause cancer.

Coupled with this, she told the court that the rising ammonia level was impacting the working of the water treatment plants installed by the Delhi Jal Board for the treatment of waste water.

— *With inputs from Sonu Shrivastava, Gilvester Assary, Manoj Anand, Akshay Kumar Sahoo, Rabindra Nath Choudhary & Rajib Chowdhuri*

WEST BENGAL

A vehicle carrying Covid-19 vaccine was stuck in a traffic jam in Burdwan

COVID FIGHT

Maha says it has got fewer doses of the vaccine than it requires

States all set to start vaccination

DC CORRESPONDENTS HYDERABAD, JAN. 13

Ahead of the January 16 vaccination deadline, states have started receiving the vaccines from the Central government to be administered to the front-line health workers on priority basis among others.

MAHARASHTRA

Even before the inoculation of Covid Vaccine began, Maharashtra health minister Rajesh Tope on Wednesday alleged that the state has received less doses of the vaccine than its requirement. Mr Tope said that the state has received only 9.63 lakh vials of Covishield vaccine from the SII (Serum Institute of India) and only 20,000 vials from the Bharat Biotech, while the require-

ment of the vaccines in Maharashtra is 17.5 lakh in first phase.

KERALA

With the first consignment of Covishield vaccine from Serum institute of India arriving in Kochi on Wednesday, the state is all set to launch its vaccine drive. Kerala will receive a total of 4,33,500 doses of Covishield.

ASSAM

Assam government has completed the preparation for rolling out the vaccine on January 16 as it received the first consignment of the vaccine at the Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport. A SpiceJet freighter ferried over 730 kg of cargo in 20 boxes having doses to be

distributed for Assam and Meghalaya. A senior health official said that in the first lot the state got 2,01,500 doses.

ODISHA

A day after receiving 4.08 lakh doses of Covid-19 vaccine Covishield from Serum Institute of India, Odisha on Wednesday got the first consignment of Bharat Biotech's Covaxin dispatched from Hyderabad. The consignment of 20,000 doses of Covaxin landed at Biju Patnaik International Airport.

MADHYA PRADESH

The first consignment of 94,000 doses of Covishield vaccine reached Bhopal airport from Mumbai on Wednesday. The vaccine vials were transported to

the state vaccine Centre in Bhopal from Raja Bhoj airport in an insulated van of state health department, an official of state public relations department said.

CHHATTISGARH

As many as 3.23 doses of Covishield reached Raipur in Chhattisgarh from Pune on Wednesday afternoon to kick off the first phase of vaccination in the state. "The vaccine vials were shifted in refrigerated vans to the state vaccine Centre in Raipur", Chhattisgarh's Mission Director for National Health Mission Priyanka Shukla said.

Career Chronicle

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US Covid toll hits new daily record of 4.5K

Washington, Jan. 13:

The US death toll from Covid-19 hit a new daily record of nearly 4,500, Johns Hopkins University said Tuesday evening. As the health crisis rages out of control in the US, this was the first time the toll in the country hardest hit by the pandemic surpassed 4,000 in 24 hours. The US recorded more than 235,000 new cases of Coronavirus infection and 4,470 deaths, according to the Johns Hopkins tally as of 8:30 pm (0130 GMT).

Around 131,000 people are now hospitalised in the US with Covid-19, said the Covid Tracking Project. The weekly average of fatalities is at its highest level since the pandemic started, it said.

Faced with these grim numbers and the presence of the new, more contagious Covid variant, authorities announced Tuesday that people wishing to fly to the US must show proof of a negative Covid test prior to departure.

The country, where health restrictions vary drastically between states and compliance can be spotty, is ultimately counting on a massive vaccination campaign begun in mid-December to bring the health crisis to an end.

But the effort is running behind, with just 9.3 million people having received the first of two injections of the two vaccines authorized in America. That is less than 10 percent of the population. —AFP

VIRUS TEST FOR PASSENGERS LANDING IN U.S.

New York, Jan. 13:

Anyone flying to the US will soon need to show proof of a negative test for Covid-19, health officials have announced. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention requirement expands on a similar one announced late last month for passengers coming from the United Kingdom.

Covid is already widespread in the US, with more than 22 million cases reported to date, including more than 375,000 deaths. The new measures are designed to try to prevent travellers from bringing in newer forms of the virus that scientists say can spread more easily.

The CDC order is to take effect in about two weeks, on January 26. It requires air passengers to get a Covid-19 test within three days before their flight departs to the US, and to provide written proof of the test result to the airline. Travellers can also provide documentation that they had the infection in the past and recovered.

Airlines are ordered to stop passengers from boarding if they don't have proof of a negative test or a prior infection. "Testing does not eliminate all risk," CDC Director Robert R. Redfield said. —AFP

Pence refuses to invoke 25th Amendment

Washington, Jan. 13: US Vice President Mike Pence told House leaders Tuesday he does not support invoking the 25th Amendment process to remove Donald Trump, all but guaranteeing an impeachment vote against the besieged president. "With just eight days left in the President's term, you and the Democratic Caucus are demanding that the Cabinet and I invoke the 25th Amendment," Pence wrote to House Speaker Nancy

Pelosi, referring to the process that would declare Trump unable to fulfill his duties and install Pence as acting president for the remainder of the term. "I do not believe that such a course of action is in the best interest of our nation or consistent with our Constitution," he said. Democrats mobilised rapidly to begin the process to have Trump removed after he encouraged his supporters last Wednesday to

"march" to the US Capitol and "fight." In a violent insurrection, the rioters stormed past outnumbered police, rampaged through and ransacked the building, and interrupted Congress as it was certifying Joe Biden's election victory.

The Democratic-controlled US House of Representatives, which is rushing ahead towards impeaching Trump over the unprecedented Capitol Hill attack, has passed a resolu-

tion urging Vice President Mike Pence to invoke 25th Amendment to remove him from office.

The resolution was voted by 223 to 205 votes on Tuesday night. The voting was mostly on party lines, with one Republican voting in favour of the resolution and five abstaining.

Earlier in the day Trump said the 25th Amendment was of "zero risk" to him.

—Agencies

CAPITOL HILL RIOTERS: 160 FBI PROBES

Washington, Jan. 13: The FBI has opened more than 160 investigations against the January 6 Capitol Hill rioters, officials said here, and asserted this is just the tip of the iceberg. The agency has worked hand-in-hand with the United States Attorney's Office and law enforcement partners in DC and across the country to arrest and charge multiple

individuals who took part in last week's breach of the US Capitol, FBI Washington Field Office Assistant Director In-Charge Steven M D'Antuono said.

"In six days, we have opened over 160 case files, and that's just the tip of the iceberg," he said, adding the FBI has received more than 100,000 pieces of digital media. —PTI



Despite threats, Navalny to fly home

Moscow, Jan. 13: Top Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny said Wednesday he would go home to Russia over the weekend despite the Russian prison service's latest motion to put him behind bars for allegedly breaching the terms of his suspended sentence and probation. Navalny, who has been convalescing in

Germany from an August poisoning with a nerve agent that he has blamed on the Kremlin, charged that Russian President Vladimir Putin was now trying to deter him from coming home with new legal motions. The Kremlin has repeatedly denied a role in the opposition leader's poisoning. —AP

SEARCH ON FOR VOICE RECORDER

Jakarta, Jan. 13: Divers searching for a crashed jet's cockpit voice recorder were sifting through mud and plane debris on the seabed between Indonesian islands on Wednesday to retrieve information key to learning why the Sriwijaya Air jet nosedived into the Java Sea over the weekend. Indonesian navy divers on Tuesday recovered the flight data recorder from the jet that disappeared on Saturday, minutes after taking off from Jakarta with 62 people aboard. The information on both black boxes will be key to the crash investigation.

The 26-year-old Boeing 737-500 had resumed commercial flights last month after almost nine months out of service because of flight cutbacks caused by the Covid pandemic. The US Federal Aviation Administration sent an airworthiness directive requiring operators of various Boeing 737 aircraft models, including the 737-500, to carry out engine checks before they can be flown again after being out of service.

The order followed reports of engines shutting down in mid-flight because of corrosion in a key valve. Director General of Air Transportation Novie Riyanto said the plane was inspected on December 2, including checks for engine corrosion, and was declared airworthy by Indonesia's Transportation Ministry on December 14. It resumed commercial flights on December 22, according to ministry data.

After returning to service, the plane made 132 flights, including the last one, according to aviation-data firm Flightradar24. Aviation experts said planes that are parked for long stretches can be returned to flight safely. —AP

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quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	49,492.32	-0.05
Nifty 50	14,564.90	0.01
S&P 500*	3,809.67	0.22
Dollar (₹)	73.14	0.15
Pound Sterling (₹)	100.13	-0.49
Euro (₹)	89.16	-0.10
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	48,877*108	0.22
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	56.24	-0.60
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.947	0.27
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.107	-2.72

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Foxconn sets up auto arm as Apple car looms

Apple Inc's Taiwanese partner Foxconn Technology Group is setting up a car venture, strengthening its automotive capabilities amid reports that Apple is considering making its own electric vehicles. Many technology companies are looking to expand in vehicles. Foxconn is joining forces with Chinese car-maker Zhejiang Geely Holding Group Co to provide production and consulting services to global automotive enterprises.

Adani Green's promoter sells ₹1,840-cr shares



Adani Trading Services LLP, a promoter entity of Adani Green, sold 2 crore shares of Adani Green Energy Ltd worth over Rs 1,840 through open market transactions. Block deal data with the BSE shows Adani Trading Services had divested 2,00,96,000 scrips in the price range of Rs 906 to 916.15, amounting to Rs 1,840.20 crore. The shares were purchased by Acme Trade and Investment Ltd.

Registration fee for investment advisors reduced

The Sebi has cut down application and registration fees for individuals and corporates seeking a registered investment advisor status. Now, individuals and firms (partnership) will have to pay Rs 2,000 while applying for an investment advisor certificate instead of Rs 5,000 so far. The application fee for corporates, including LLPs, has been brought down to Rs 10,000 from Rs 25,000.

CESC net profit increases 25% to ₹328 crore in Q3

CESC Ltd posted a 25 per cent jump in consolidated net profit at Rs 328 crore for December quarter against Rs 263 crore in the year-ago quarter. Total income rose to Rs 2,581 crore from Rs 2,377 crore. The board declared an interim dividend of Rs 45 per equity share, or 450 per cent. The board has also decided to reorient and reorganise the distribution business under Eminent Electricity Distribution Ltd, a subsidiary.



■ Q3 net profit rises 17% to ₹5,200 cr
Infy raises FY21 revenue outlook

New Delhi, Jan. 13: Infosys on Wednesday posted a 16.6 per cent rise in consolidated net profit at Rs 5,197 crore for the December 2020 quarter, and increased its revenue growth guidance for FY21 to 4.5-5 per cent on the back of large project wins and strong deal pipeline.

The Bengaluru-based company, whose large deal total contract value rose to an all-time high of \$7.13 billion in the quarter under review, had registered a net profit (after minority interest) of Rs 4,457 crore in the year-ago period. Infosys' revenue grew 12.3 per cent to Rs 25,927 crore in the quarter ended December 2020 from Rs 23,092 crore in the year-ago period. Buoyed by the strong performance, Infosys increased its FY21 revenue growth forecast to 4.5-5 per cent in constant currency terms from its previous guidance of 2-3 per cent growth.

"We have had an exceptionally strong quarter across multiple dimensions...We achieved the highest large deals win in our history with the deal value of \$7.1 billion. This includes the largest deal in our history and what we believe is the largest deal in the history of the Indian IT services industry," Infosys CEO and MD Salil Parekh told reporters in a virtual conference. He added that overall large deal value for the nine-month period of this financial year was at more



WIPRO Q3 NET PROFIT UP 20.8%

New Delhi, Jan. 13: IT services major Wipro on Wednesday posted an about 21 per cent increase in consolidated net profit at Rs 2,968 crore for the December 2020 quarter. The net profit attributable to shareholders in the year-ago period was at Rs 2,455.9 crore. Its revenue from operations grew nearly 1.3 per cent to Rs 15,670 crore from Rs 15,470.5 crore. Wipro, which gets a bulk of its topline from IT services, said it expects revenues from that business to be in the range of \$2,102 million to \$2,143 million in the March 2021 quarter. This translates into a sequen-

than \$12 billion, and the net new large deal value for the same period was over \$8 billion which positioned the company "very strongly" for the quarters ahead. "Looking ahead, we continue to see momentum in our business, strong mar-

ket share gain and increased speed of digital transformation for our clients...for next year, we remain extremely confident, we clearly see that we will have double-digit growth in the next financial year," he added.

TEXTILE SALES RECOVERING EVEN AFTER FESTIVE SEASON

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, JAN. 13

The domestic textile sector, which started recovering during the festive season, is keeping up the momentum even in Q4. "People are buying on e-commerce platforms and they have started going out also. Vaccine is acting as a feel-good factor. The recovery momentum would continue till the end of the fiscal," said Sidharth Rajagopal, executive director of Texprocil. Rating firm Icrs too finds that the recovery will be supported by the opening up of economies and markets, improved consumer confidence levels and continued pick up in discretionary spending. This builds on the growth seen in the recent months due to pent-up demand and festive buying. However, the growth in some segments involving discretionary spends or aspirational buying such as formal, party wear and mid to high-value casual wear, is likely to remain lower compared to other essential product categories such as active/lounge wear and affordable-to-medium value casual apparels, given the shift witnessed in consumer usage and preferences. Within fabrics, the cotton knitted fabric segment as well as blended fabrics are likely to perform better, given their higher usage in casual or lounge wear.

PAYTM MONEY TO OFFER F&O TRADING

New Delhi, Jan. 13: Paytm Money, a subsidiary of fintech major Paytm, on Wednesday said it will provide futures & options (F&O) trading on its platform, as it eyes facilitating daily turnover of Rs 1.5 lakh crore in next 18-24 months. The platform—which also offers services around stocks, direct mutual funds, ETF IPO, NPS, and digital gold—is focussed on bringing "wealth services to 100 million Indians," Paytm founder and CEO Vijay Shekhar Sharma said during the online launch of the F&O trading service. "We are on a mission to bring wealth services to 100 million Indians and this launch will provide further acceleration. This product has been made keeping in mind the mobile-first experience," he said. Paytm Money will charge brokerage at Rs 10 for all F&O trades, which is in line with its intraday charges of Rs 10 and free for delivery.

Sebi bans CNBC Awaaz show host from market

New Delhi, Jan. 13: Regulator Sebi on Wednesday barred CNBC Awaaz show host Hemant Ghai, his wife and mother from the capital markets for indulging in fraudulent trading practices. Hemant Ghai had the advance information about the recommendation to be made on the "stock 20-20" show, co-hosted by him, and that he directly or indirectly used it to his advantage, Sebi said in an interim order. The show features recommendations on certain stocks to be bought and sold during the day. In addition, he has been directed to cease and desist from undertaking any activity related to giving investment advice, publishing of research reports related to the securities market, till further directions.



Hemant Ghai

Further, the Sebi has also directed to impound the proceeds of Rs 2.95 crore generated by fraudulent trades. Sebi, prima facie, found that Hemant along with his wife Jaya Hemant Ghai and mother Shyam Mohini Ghai employed a scheme to conduct fraudulent or unfair trading based on the advance information pertaining to recommendations to be

made in the show "stock 20-20". On analysis of the trading pattern in the trading account of Jaya Hemant Ghai and Shyam Mohini Ghai for the period between January 1, 2019, and May 31, 2020, high correlation of their trades was observed with the stocks recommended in the show. It thereby generated the proceeds of Rs 2.95 crore by carrying out fraudulent trading in respect of recommended stocks. The regulator found that shares were consistently purchased in the trading accounts of Hemant Ghai's wife and mother, one day prior to the day of recommendation on the show. Hemant was prima facie using the trading accounts of his wife and mother.

Global export growth seen at -5.6%

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, JAN. 13

The United Nation's trade body has upwardly revised its projection of global merchandise trade for 2020 from a double-digit decline to a single-digit drop. However, it would still be the lowest growth for merchandise export volumes since the 2008 financial crisis. In June, Unctad had predicted that merchandise trade would see an annual decline of 20 per cent in 2020. In the second quarter, trade had dropped by 27

per cent. However, there has been a recovery in the third quarter and the fourth quarter over the previous quarters. Taking this recovery into account, Unctad now predicts that global merchandise export values and volumes for 2020 are expected to be -5.6 and -8.7 per cent lower than levels seen in 2019. The third quarter saw a robust recovery in values, which grew by 20.1 per cent from the bleak second quarter. Third quarter official statistics have not yet been released for merchandise export volumes, for

which growth is nowcast by Unctad at 8.1 per cent quarter-over-quarter. The recovery in merchandise export values and volumes is likely to continue in the fourth quarter, though not at quite the same pace. Values and volumes are nowcast to grow in the fourth quarter by 11.6 and 3.3 per cent quarter-over-quarter, respectively. This growth comes despite the continuing spread of Covid-19, especially in the US and Europe, which has necessitated the reinstatement of lockdown measures.

Amazon starts ₹89/month mobile video plan with Airtel

SARITHA RAI JAN. 13

Amazon.com Inc. is starting its first mobile-only Prime Video plan, targeting the hundreds of millions of entertainment-hungry smartphone users in India as the country's streaming market surges. The single-user plan is available to wireless carrier Bharti Airtel's prepaid customers for as low as Rs 89 (\$1.20) a month after a 30-day free trial. The streaming plan comes with 6 gigabytes of data, which can also be used on other services. Amazon and rivals Netflix Inc., Google's YouTube and Walt Disney Co are ramping up streaming services in the world's second-biggest smartphone market, where mobile internet prices are among the lowest on the planet. The companies are plowing hundreds of millions of dollars into creating original shows in multiple lan-

AMAZON ACADEMY TO COACH FOR JEE

Chennai, Jan. 13: Amazon has entered into edu-tech space with the launch of Amazon Academy to help students preparing for the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) for entrance to engineering colleges. In addition to the JEE, those preparing for BITSAT, VITEEE, SRMJEEE, and MET exams will also benefit from the free content resources.

Amazon and rivals Netflix Inc., Google's YouTube and Walt Disney Co are ramping up streaming services in the world's second-biggest smartphone market, where mobile internet prices are among the lowest on the planet. The companies are plowing hundreds of millions of dollars into creating original shows in multiple lan-

guages and buying rights to Bollywood film premieres and cricket games. "We want to democratise the access to content and through this unique offering reach hundreds of millions of users," Gaurav Gandhi, director and India head for Amazon Prime Video, said in a phone interview. About 85 per cent of internet access in India is via mobile devices and nearly 90 per cent of all mobile users that access data are on prepaid plans, he said. Prime Video already has customers in more than 4,300 cities and towns in India and the new plans will help Amazon push deeper into the hinterland. In the next few years, India will have as many streaming-service users as TV viewers and that calls for innovation on the product and distribution fronts, Gandhi said. The Seattle-based e-commerce giant's streaming service is available in about 240 countries and territories while its Prime membership is available in 19 countries including India. The nation of 1.3 billion is the first where a Prime Video standalone plan is available aside from the Prime membership.

RBI sets up panel on digital lending

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, JAN. 13

After warning borrowers on availing loans from unregulated digital lending websites and mobile apps last month, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Wednesday announced that it is forming a working group (WG) to study all aspects of digital lending activities in the regulated financial sector as well as by unregulated players so that an appropriate regulatory approach could be put in place. The group has to submit its report within three months. Recently there were several incidents where borrowers committed suicides due to harassment from the recovery agents of these digital lending platforms. The working group will consist of both internal and external members and will be chaired by Jayant Kumar Dash, executive director, RBI. The external members of the panel are Vikram Mehta, co-founder, Monexo Fintech and Rahul Sasi, cyber security expert and founder of CloudSEK.

IRFC's mega IPO opens on Jan. 18

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, JAN. 13

The Indian Railway Finance Corporation's Rs 4,600-crore initial public offering will open for bidding on January 18. The issue, in the price band of Rs 25 to Rs 26 per equity share of Rs 10 face value, will close on January 20. IRFC is the dedicated market borrowing arm of the Indian Railways. It raises financial resources for the expansion and running of Indian Railways through capital markets and other borrowings. The IPO of over 178.20 crore equity shares comprises a fresh issue of over 118.80 crore shares and an offer for sale (OFS) of up to 59.40 equity shares. The public issue will constitute up to 13.64 per cent of the post-issue paid-up capital. The net proceeds from the fresh issue will be utilised for augmenting the firm's equity capital base.

DOOMSDAY | GOSPEL

Book that forecast US's decline due to domestic conflicts 30 years ago now sells for \$2,500

America against America is most sought after book in China

Jan. 13: After chaos engulfed the US Capitol last week, some Chinese intellectuals found themselves searching for copies of an out-of-print book to make sense of events. "America Against America" forecast the US's decline due to domestic conflicts more than 30 years ago. Among the things driving demand was the author: Wang Huning, the Communist Party's No. 5 leader and top political theorist to three Chinese presidents. Some copies have surged to more than 16,600 yuan (\$2,500) on Kungfuzi, an online marketplace for antiques. That's more than 3,000 times its original asking price in 1991, when Japan was more widely seen as America's big economic rival. "The interest in the book is the result of a renewed desire to understand a US that is in the midst of a civil cold war," said Wang Wen, executive dean

of Renmin University's Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies. "China's doubts about the US will certainly increase in light of recent events." The Capitol Hill turmoil is being read in Beijing as the most powerful sign yet that societal fissures in the US are behind increasingly erratic foreign policy shifts. That's feeding Chinese apprehension about reaching agreements on trade or other politically charged disputes with president-elect Joe Biden. "The instability of a negotiation partner means that its public credibility is on the decline and the risk of breaking contracts or promises is greater," Wang Wen said on Tuesday. Such skepticism illustrates how Washington's political strife is compounding Biden's challenge of stabilising US relationships around the world after four years of shocks and



surprises under President Donald Trump. Among his most difficult tasks will be convincing China's Xi Jinping to make concessions that go beyond the "phase one" trade deal announced by Trump a year ago. Not only did that agreement fail to address most of the Trump administration's biggest trade grievances, including government support for strategic industries and stronger action on state-run enterprises, but China has purchased little more than half of

the \$172 billion worth of US goods it agreed to buy last year under the deal. Disputes between the two countries have since spiralled into everything from microchips to Taiwan, as Trump increasingly sought to blame China for his election year difficulties. Meanwhile, Xi appears to have moved on, buoyed by early success against the coronavirus and a resilient economy. Xi has lately emphasised "self-sufficiency" and girded for a prolonged struggle, urging local officials earlier this week to "not only dare to fight, but also be good at fighting," according to the official Xinhua News Agency. State media accuses the US of abandoning four decades of engagement in favour of containment. As Washington was gripped by one of the most divisive presidential transitions ever, Xi finalised a long-sought investment deal with the European

Union that touches on many of the issues left out of the US pact. The agreement had been championed by German chancellor Angela Merkel, a key American ally who early in the Trump presidency declared that Europe could no longer rely on others. "While both sides have paid a price for the trade war, the US will suffer more in the long run because it damaged its position and reputation as the central pillar of global trade and commerce," said Mei Xinyu, who is with a research group under the Ministry of Commerce in Beijing. Wang Huning's book, which was written during an academic visit to the US in 1988, predicted that America's emphasis on "individualism, hedonism and democracy" would eventually cause rifts that sapped its competitive drive. Countries like Japan—built on "collectivism, selflessness and author-

itarianism"—had the upper hand, said Wang Huning, who's now one of seven people on the politburo's supreme Standing Committee. That thesis hasn't stood up so well over the past three decades: of the US's two main rivals of that era—Japan and the Soviet Union—one collapsed and the other saw its economy stagnate. That left the US as the world's undisputed superpower, and today it still boasts the world's most powerful military and biggest economy, powered by waves of successive innovation-driven technology booms. But confidence is growing in China that the balance may be shifting. Besides the transition chaos, the US's struggles against the coronavirus, racial justice protests and gun violence—subjects featured prominently in China's state-run media—have fed the narrative of American decline.

—Bloomberg

SHORT TAKES

Saina, Srikanth win, Kashyap hurt

Bangkok: Shuttler Saina Nehwal and former world number one Kidambi Srikanth entered the second rounds of their respective events but Parupalli Kashyap made an early exit from the Thailand Open Super 1000 tournament here on Wednesday.

Saina got the better of Selvadurai Kisona of Malaysia 21-15, 21-15 in the women's singles opening round to set up a clash with Thailand's Busanan Ongbamrungphan. Earlier in the day, Srikanth took just 31 minutes to prevail over compatriot Sourabh Verma 21-12, 21-11 in the men's singles, but Kashyap was forced to retire midway in his opening-round match against Jason Anthony Ho-Shue of Canada after pulling his calf muscle while trailing 8-14 in the third game.

Kashyap had lost the first game 9-21 before making a comeback to take the second 21-13. — PTI

Manchester Utd on EPL table top

Burnley: Paul Pogba sent Manchester United to the top of the English Premier League by scoring with a deflected volley in a 1-0 win at Burnley. United came into the match at Turf Moor knowing at least a point would move the team into first place for the first time at this stage of the season since Alex Ferguson was in charge of the title-winning 2012-13 side. Pogba met a cross from Marcus Rashford with a first-time effort from the edge of the box that deflected off Burnley defender Matt Lowton and through the legs of goalkeeper Nick Pope in the 71st. It gave United a three-point lead over Liverpool heading into their meeting at Anfield on Sunday. The video assistant referee provided the main talking point, with Burnley's last man, Robbie Brady, avoiding sanction for bringing down Edinson Cavani outside the area because of a foul by United left back Luke Shaw. — AP

Live on TV

BADMINTON

Thailand Open: Pre-quarterfinal matches from 7.30 am on Star Sports 2 HD, 3

CRICKET

Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20 Tournament: Odisha vs Tamil Nadu from 11.55 am; Hyderabad vs Bengal from 6.55 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

Australia vs India: Fourth Test, Day 1 from 5.30 am (Friday) on Sony Six, Ten 1, HD

Oz coach blames IPL

Langer says 2020 edition cause for growing injury list

LIMPING INDIA TRAIN AHEAD OF BRISBANE TEST

Brisbane, Jan. 13: He loves the IPL but Australia coach Justin Langer on Wednesday questioned the timing of the last year's edition, which he believes could have been a contributing factor in the injury setbacks that both his and the Indian team have endured in the ongoing series.

The IPL was held in the September-November window in 2020 in the United Arab Emirates due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The lucrative tournament is usually held in India during the April-May window.

"It is really interesting how many injuries (it) has been throughout this summer. I can't help and think that the IPL this year (2020) was in reality, probably wasn't ideal timing for anyone, certainly for such a big series like this," Langer said.

The latest addition to the Indian injury list is Ravindra Jadeja and Jasprit Bumrah. For Australia, David Warner was a big blow but he recovered in time for the last two Tests.

Langer was all praise for the IPL saying it helps in development of young players but was critical of the previous edition's timing. "I love the IPL, I look at IPL now like I used to look at county cricket for our young players. They go and play county cricket and it helps them (in) their cricket development enormously, I think it is the same with the IPL, helps their white-ball development. But the timing of it probably wasn't ideal, and I wonder whether that is having an impact on the injuries that we are seeing for both teams," he said.that. — PTI

The injury-ravaged Indian team on Wednesday underwent their first training session at the Gabba here, hoping to field 11 fit players in the series-deciding fourth Test against Australia.

Ruled out of the last Test with an abdominal strain, pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah still accompanied the visiting team for its training session.

The likes of Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill, skipper Ajinkya Rahane and others were seen in their training kits. Bumrah, though, was not in his training outfit as he got involved in a discussion with bowling coach Bharat Arun.

"After an epic fightback in Sydney, it is time to regroup. We have begun our preparations for the final Test at the Gabba," the BCCI tweeted.

Chinaman bowler Kuldeep Yadav was seen bowling at the nets and there is a chance that he could be picked for the match with influential all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja, ruled out due to a fractured thumb.

Also at the session were seamer Shardul Thakur and all-rounder Washington Sundar. Either T. Natarajan or Shardul is likely to replace Bumrah in the playing XI at Gabba, forming a new-look pace attack alongside Mohammed Siraj and Navdeep Saini. — PTI



Australia's David Warner (left) and coach Justin Langer attend a training session at the Sydney Cricket Ground in this file photo. — AFP

Jaisimha and his lion-hearted battle in Brisbane

DC CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD, JAN. 13

With the Indian cricket team battling injuries before the Brisbane Test starting on Friday, here's a Hyderabad connection to the venue as well as bruises. M. L. Jaisimha will be most remembered for his epic endeavour at Brisbane over half-a-century ago. His knocks of 74 and 101 saw the chase for India's first victory overseas fall agonisingly short by 39 runs.

Omitted from the original touring side for the

1967-78 series in Australia, he was called up after B. S. Chandrasekhar had to return home with an ankle injury. The lead-up to that leap across continents was anything but pleasant.

From the depths of despair to being hailed by dozens of cricket and its writing, the career-defining journey is recounted in *My way — The biography of M. L. Jaisimha* (Amazon, Apple Books).

Leg spin legend Bill O'Reilly noted: "Indian cricket must be possessing riches... if it could afford



M. L. Jaisimha

to overlook a performer so abundantly gifted as Jaisimha."

O'Reilly's Bodyline teammate Jack Fingleton was even more effusive.

"Jaisimha is a naturally good cricketer. He must be so to bat so assuredly today after not even one good net practice. Jaisimha is an extremely pleasant batsman to watch, with correct upright stance, free and flawless backswing of the bat with strokes on all sides. His footwork is exemplary. So one fell to wondering why this debonair and elegant batsman shaping excellently in a crisis was not in India's original side," he observed.

To later generations who

do not know the 'Victorious Lion,' that his name translates to, 'Jai' packed a panache all his own, be it as Test player, South Zone captain, Indian team manager, national selector and TV commentator.

His famed acumen always placed team interests above his own. Post-playing days, that same keen sense saw him alone forecast a tie in the 1986 Chennai Test against Australia. On July 7, 1999, the dashing Hyderabad took his last walk to that great pavilion in the sky.

Punnaiah, Varun best performers

Ronald, Chaitanya, Kaustab, Nitesh, Takshit, Vidyanand also do well in top league



Sai Varun



G. Arjun



Chaitanya



Ronald



Vidyanand

DC CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD, JAN. 13

Fast bowler B. Punnaiah hogged the limelight at the Hyderabad Cricket Association's A-1 division three-day league matches with an excellent eight-wicket haul on Wednesday.

Punnaiah of MP Colts ripped through the Cambridge XI line-up to bowl them out for a paltry 77 in the second innings but could not save his side from losing the game despite fantastic figures of 8-1-28-8 as Cambridge capitalised on their strong first innings total of 432.

Y. Sai Varun took the batting honours. He scored 150 in 119 balls with the help of 20 fours and two sixes to fashion Continental's win over Ensonce.

Leg-spinner G. Arjun took 4 for 32 to add to his first innings effort of 7 for 48 for a match haul of 11 wickets to bowl Balaaji CC to victory over Charminar CC. Arjun has taken 26 wickets in three matches so far — 4/34 & 4/58 against Jai Bhagwathi, 7/13 vs Mahmood CC and 7/48 & 4/32 against Charminar CC.

Ronald Rodrigues (110) of Union Bank of India; Y. Chaitanya Krishna (107) of Central Excise; K. Nitesh Reddy (101) of R. Dayanand; Kaustab Rao (5/38) and A. Takshit Rao (101) of Secunderabad Nawabs and E. Vidyanand Reddy (5/42) of Deccan Chronicle were the other performers of the day.

Brief scores (Day-3):

A-1 DIVISION (Three-Day)

Group-A

■ Deccan Chronicle 421/7 in 90 overs & 27/0 in 3 overs bt Central Excise 242 in 63.2 overs & 205 in 38.4 overs (Y. Chaitanya Krishna 107 — 11lb, 5x4, 3x6, PS Chaitanya Reddy 38, E. Vidyanand Reddy

5/42 — 7.4-0-42-5, Rahul Reddy 4/23). Points: Deccan Chronicle 8, Central Excise 0.

■ R. Dayanand 251 in 75.4 overs & 203/6 in 40 overs (K. Nitesh Reddy 101 — 12lb, 12x4, 2x6, B. Yathin Reddy 39, Raju Yadav 3/40) lost to Income Tax 395 in 80.1 overs & 61/2 in 10.3 overs. Points: Income Tax 6, R. Dayanand 0.

■ Budding Star 482/8 in 90 overs & 207 in 40 overs (Mir Jaweed Ali 41, Amol Shinde 3/40, Neeraj Bist 3/27) bt Union Bank of India 410 in 87.3 overs (Arjun Yadav 83) & 251/9 in 40 overs (Ronald Rodrigues 110 — 104b, 6x4, 2x6, Abhinav Kumar 60, Amol Shinde 35, Mir Jaweed Ali 4/52). Points: Budding Star 6, UBI 0.

■ Jai Hanuman 457/9 in 90 overs & 239/2 decl in 39.5 overs bt BDL 120 in 34.1 overs & 154 in 40 overs (Hima Teja 50, KKS Harish 30, Rohit Rayudu 3/26). Points: Jai Hanuman 6, BDL 0.

Group-B

■ Cambridge XI 432/8 in 90 overs & 77 in 20.5 overs (B. Punnaiah 8/28 — 8-1-28-8) bt MP Colts 286 in 83 overs & 193 in 38.3 overs (A. Akash 66, Rahul 46, Abhishek 4/35). Points: Cambridge XI 6, MP Colts 0.

■ Continental 419/7 in 90 overs & 248/7 in 40 overs (Y. Sai Varun 150 — 11lb, 20x4, 2x6, Sankarath G 40, Atul Vyas 3/41) bt Ensonce 365/6 in 90 overs & 263/8 in 40 overs (Sai Vrat Reddy 36, Md Junaid Ali 32, V. Sahasra 69, Owais Abdul Wahed 53, S. Nikhil 4/42). Points: Continental 6, Ensonce 0.

■ AOC 113 in 36.1 overs & 297/4 in 40 overs bt Combined Districts 177 in 52.2 over 8/10 in 25.4 overs (A. Ruthwik Surya 37, G. Ganesh 46, G. Rahul Singh 4/28). Points: AOC 6, Districts 0.

Group-C

■ Khalsa 342 in 80.5 overs & 124 in 28.4 overs (Harshit C 42, Kaustab Rao 5/38 — 8-1-38-5, Takshit Rao 3/15) lost to Secunderabad Nawabs 236 in 67 overs & 234/7 in 38.1 overs (A. Takshit Rao 101 — 64b, 19x4, Jaiyed Goud 90). Points: Secunderabad Nawabs 6, Khalsa 0.

■ Mahmood CC 264 in 85.3 overs & 228 in 34.2 overs (Tanay Nemani 88, Ranjit Kumar 34, Amin Bin Ali 4/49) lost to Apex CC 431/8 decl in 82.1 overs & 62 for no loss in 10.3 overs. Points: Apex 8, Mahmood 0.

■ Balaaji CC 145 in 43.2 overs & 236/6 in 40 overs bt Charminar CC 178 in 43.2 overs & 193/8 in 40 overs (Ali Diamond K 46, Md Omer Rizwan 36, B. Gopinath Reddy 32, G. Arjun 4/32). Points: Balaaji CC 6, Charminar 0.

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