



## KTR goes down memory lane; wants double-decker buses to ply again in Hyd

HANS NEWS SERVICE

HYDERABAD: Are the double-decker buses going to ply on the streets of Hyderabad again? It appears so as Municipal Administration Minister KT Rama Rao on Saturday asked Transport Minister P Ajay to examine whether the RTC can resume operating the yesteryears popular bus in the city. The issue came up after a Twitter user Shaker Hussain asked about the disappearance of the double-decker buses which used to run on the city roads in the past. The twitter user using a picture of a double-decker bus going on Tank Bund, questioned whether they remember '7 Z' from Zoo Park to Secunderabad via Afzalgunj and High Court. He wanted the minister to start it again for the city guide tourist or public bus. Replying to the tweet, Minister Rama Rao said that he had many good memories with this bus. "I have many fond memories of riding the double-decker bus on my way to St. George's Grammar School at Abids. Not sure why they were taken off the roads." He said he would ask the Transport Minister P Ajay Kumar whether there were any chances to bring the double-decker buses back. The twitter was then flooded with messages asking the minister to bring back the double-decker buses and operate them on different routes in the city. Replying to the Tweet of Rao, Transport Minister Ajay Kumar assured KTR that he would look into it. He said he would talk to the TSRTC MD on the possibility of operating double-decker buses on Hyderabad roads. The TSRTC used to operate buses during the nineties and the operations were stopped during 1997-98. There were four routes, including the popular one '7Z Secunderabad to Zoo Park' and the other routes were bus number 5, 65 and 8 originating from Secunderabad. However, the possibility of operation of these buses in the core area of the city looks impossible as the Metro stations would be coming in the way. The authorities would have to operate the double-decker buses where there are no hurdles like Metro stations and narrow roads.

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## BATTLE FOR BIHAR

# ADVANTAGE RJD

CM Nitish faces stiff challenge from RJD's Tejashwi

NEW DELHI

IT will be a tight race between the NDA and the RJD-led Mahagathbandhan with the latter having an edge in Bihar, exit polls have predicted soon after the third and final phase of polling for the 243-member Assembly concluded on Saturday. The majority mark is 122.

Tejashwi Yadav-led Mahagathbandhan (grand alliance) will win the most seats in Bihar and possibly cross the majority mark, with Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's National Democratic Alliance (NDA) placing second, an aggregate of opinion polls predicted on Saturday after three-phase voting completed in the state. NDTV's poll of polls says the Opposition coalition will win 124 of Bihar's 243 seats and the NDA, 103. Chirag Paswan's Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) is given six seats.

Times Now-C Voter gives 116 to the NDA and a slight lead for the Opposition Mahagathbandhan at 120. It says Chirag Paswan's party will win one seat.

## Exit polls predict majority for Mahagathbandhan



POLL OF EXIT POLLS BIHAR					SEATS 243
SOURCE	NDA	MOB	LJP	OTHERS	MAJORITY 122
CNN News 18 Today's Channel	86	180	0	0	
Dainik Bhaskar	109-127	71-81	12-23	19-27	
India Today-Axis My India	86-91	139-161	3-6	6-10	
News X-Dvsearch	109-111	108-123	4-10	9-23	
Republic TV-Jan Ki Baat	94-107	118-138	5-8	3-6	
Times Now-C Voter	116	120	1	0	
Poll of Exit Polls	99	128	6	10	

Republic TV-Jan Ki Baat gave 118 to 138 seats to the Opposition alliance and 91-117 seats to the ruling NDA. Chirag Paswan's party is likely to win five to eight seats, it says.

TV9-Bharatvarsh gives the Tejashwi Yadav-led alliance 120 seats and 115 seats to the NDA. The LJP could win four, it says. CNN News 18-Today's Chanakya predicts a landslide for Te-

jashwi Yadav's alliance at 180. The NDA, it says, will be restricted to 55 and the LJP, zero. News X-dvsearch gives the NDA 110 to 117 seats and the Opposition 108 to 123. The LJP is seen to win four to 10 seats.

Dainik Bhaskar is the outlier, giving the NDA 120 to 127 and the Opposition 71 to 81. The LJP is given 12 to 23 seats. An India Today-Axis poll on the preferred chief minister says 44 per cent picked Tejashwi Yadav and Nitish Kumar is second to his former deputy with 35 per cent.

# Modi, Xi likely to come face-to-face at SCO meet

NEW DELHI

COME 10 November, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will come face-to-face, albeit virtually, with Chinese President Xi Jinping for the first time since the border stand-off at Ladakh began this May as the two leaders participate in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisa-

tion (SCO) Summit.

This is the first time the SCO Summit, which is being hosted by Russian President Vladimir Putin, will be taking place in a virtual format. "The Prime Minister will lead the Indian delegation to the 20 Summit of the SCO Council of Heads of State, which will be held in the virtual format on

10 November ... This is the third meeting where we will be participating as full members," Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said Friday at a media briefing.

India became a full-time member of the SCO in June 2017, at the same time as Pakistan.

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# Delhi's air quality remains 'severe'

NEW DELHI

A WEEK ahead of Diwali celebrations, the pollution levels have continued to worsen in New Delhi. As of Saturday morning, the capital has recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) of 443, according to the System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR). AQI values above the 400-mark are categorised as 'severe'.

As per the SAFAR model, the air quality has declined despite moderate day time dispersion conditions. While both local pollution and sustained unusually high fire emissions are responsible for the pollution, the unusually calm surface winds in the morning have caused accumulation of pollutants near the surface. The share of stubble burning remains the prime concern as SAFAR ob-



Birds fly over the Bhalswa landfill as smog envelops the area in New Delhi on Saturday

served at least 4528 stubble fires in the neighbouring states of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand on Friday—the highest so far of this season. Overall, this sharp spike is said to have caused the sudden deterioration in Delhi's air quality, as it contributed to 32% of the total pollution in Delhi in the

last 24 hours. Within Delhi, Jahangirpuri locality recorded the highest pollution levels as of 10 a.m. Saturday with a 'severe' AQI of 458, followed by Punjabi Bagh (438), Rohini (433), Vivek Vihar (433), DTU (429), Mundka (425), and Dwarka (407).

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# Delhi now breeds more Covid cases

NEW DELHI

DELHI overtook Maharashtra and Kerala by reporting 7,178 COVID-19 cases in a span of 24 hours, becoming the largest contributor to the new 50,356 single-day infections, according to Union Health Ministry on Saturday.

Seventy-seven percent of these new cases of COVID-19 are from 10 states and union territories—Delhi, Kerala, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. Kerala recorded 7,002 new cases followed by Maharashtra at 6,870 new cases on Friday, the ministry said. A total of 50,356 new coronavirus infections were reported in a span of 24 hours, while 53,920 recover-



ies were being recorded during the same period, it said.

The trend of India's daily new COVID-19 recoveries exceeding the single-day cases for the last five weeks played a pivotal role in pushing down the active caseload which is presently pegged at 5.16 lakh cases and comprises 6.11 percent of total cases, the ministry said.

"This trend has been ob-

served for the last five weeks. This also played a pivotal role in pushing down the active caseload which is presently pegged at 5.16 lakh," the ministry said.

The last five weeks have seen a continuous decline in average daily new cases of COVID-19. The average daily new cases have dropped to 46,000 cases from more than 73,000 av-

erage daily new cases in the first week of October.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease has surged to 78,19,886, pushing the national recovery rate to 92.41 percent. The recoveries exceed active cases by 73,03,254. The ministry said that 79 per cent of the new recovered cases are observed to be concentrated in 10 states and UTs.

Maharashtra continues to have the maximum number of single-day recoveries. As many as 11,060 more recoveries have pushed up the state's tally to 15,62,342.

In keeping with the national trend, 18 states and UTs are reporting a higher recovery rate than the national average. Also, 577 case fatalities have been reported in a span of 24 hours.

## Armed Forces must be ready to combat hybrid threats: IAF chief

AIR CHIEF Marshal Rakesh Kumar Singh Bhadauria on Saturday said that the country's armed forces have to be prepared for hybrid threats emanating from multiple fronts. ► P3

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# IT'S BIDEN

America makes Joe President ■ Dumps Trump from White House

WASHINGTON

DEMOCRAT Joe Biden has become the new US President with Kamala Harris as the first female, Black and Indian-origin vice-president, ousting Donald Trump and Mike Pence from the White House.

Votes are still being counted in at least five states three days after election day, with mail-in ballots in the middle of a pandemic complicating an already unusual system. The painfully slow counting took a dramatic turn on Saturday when Joe Biden overtook Donald Trump in the battleground state of Georgia, which has been historically red.

Trump's hopes of retaining the White House were dashed when major US networks called Georgia for Biden, taking the latter to the magic mark of 270 in the state-by-state Electoral College votes. Trump needed to hang onto both Georgia and Pennsylvania, and to overtake Biden in either Nevada or Arizona.

Donald Trump has launched a tirade of unsubstantiated claims that he had been cheated out of winning the US election. "They are trying to steal the election," an increasingly isolated Trump said in an extraordinary appearance at the White House on



Thursday, two days after polls closed. Providing no evidence and taking no questions from reporters, Trump spent nearly 17 minutes making the kind of

incendiary statements about the country's democratic process that have never been heard before from a US president.

Continued on Page 4

## PIO Vivek Murthy likely to get key healthcare role

WASHINGTON

AMONG those expected to play a key healthcare role in a Biden administration is Vivek Murthy, a



former surgeon general under President Barack Obama, who has privately advised Democrat Presidential candidate Joe Biden for months on the pandemic and is expected to play a large public role as a face of the potential Democratic administration's response to the coronavirus, dispensing advice on mask-wearing and social distancing.

Joe Biden's advisers accelerated their transition plan-

ning on Friday as election results showed him with an advantage in battleground states that could hand him the presidency, with

the first senior officials in a potential Biden White House possibly named as early as next week. In Wilmington, Delaware, and Washington, Biden's advisers and allies are ramping up their conversations about who might fill critical posts, both in the West Wing and across the agencies, guided heavily by Biden's plan to assemble what would be the most diverse Cabinet in history.

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## INDIA ADDS ONE MORE EYE IN SKY

# ISRO launches radar imaging weather satellite

SRIHARIKOTA

INDIA on Saturday successfully placed into orbit one more eye in the sky -- a radar imaging earth observation satellite EOS-01 (Earth Observation Satellite, formerly RISAT-2BR2) -- and nine other foreign satellites in a textbook style.

India's new earth observation weather satellite up in the sky will send good clarity images which will be used for agriculture, forestry and disaster management support, said In-

dian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), the country's space agency. The images captured by the satellite will also be used for surveillance purposes while ISRO is silent on this aspect.

The EOS-01 with synthetic aperture radar (SAR) can shoot pictures in all weather conditions. The satellite can take pictures day and night and will be useful for surveillance as well as civilian activities. "Today extremely happy to declare the PSLV-C49 successfully placed



EOS-01 and nine customer satellites in 575 km orbit. The solar panels of EOS-01 got deployed," ISRO Chairman K Sivan said post launch.

Sivan said the rocket mission is special and unusual for ISRO. The space activity cannot be done working from home as people have to be in labs, office during the launch campaign. People have to travel from different centres and work at Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) here, he said. "Team ISRO rose to the occasion,

worked with limited staff, safely without compromising on the quality," Sivan said complementing all the Directors of various ISRO Centres.

Speaking about the upcoming missions, Sivan said the next rocket to fly will be PSLV-C50 with CMS-01 satellite (formerly GSAT-12R). It will be followed by the new small rocket Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV) carrying EOS-02 and Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle-F10 (GSLV) carrying EOS-3.



# Sanction loans to dairy farmers by Nov 11, Collector tells bankers

TS Vinay Krishna Reddy expresses displeasure over delay in sanctioning of loans to dairy farmers for purchase of cattle

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
SURYAPET

DISTRICT Collector TS Vinay Krishna Reddy on Saturday directed banks to sanction loans to the dairy farmers for purchase of cattle. Vinay Krishna Reddy along with Additional Collector Padmaja Rani participated in a Dairy Farmers Awareness Conference organised on the Mini Dairy Pilot Project Scheme.

Addressing on the occasion, he told the bank officials to expedite the clearance of loan applications made by the dairy farmers for purchase of cattle in various banks in the district as per the regulations.

About 589 eligible SCs applied for loans for cattle in various banks in the district. He advised societies working in the district, officials of the Department of Animal Husbandry to create awareness among the dairy farmers on the government schemes.

He instructed the bank officials to sanction the loans to dairy farmers by 11th of this month. The authorities con-



District Collector TS Vinay Krishna Reddy addressing the bankers in a meeting held in Suryapet on Saturday

cerned have been directed to make all arrangements for the grounding from the 15th of this month. He expressed his displeasure over the banks which did not sanction loan to a single dairy farmer so far.

The mandal teams were advised to be available to the dairy farmers and assist them during the purchase of cattle.

He said he would visit the banks which failed to grant loans on time and will do inspections.

The Collector said that there must be transparency in the pro-

curement of cattle and added that purchases should be made as per the choice of the dairy farmers. Insurance should be provided to every cattle purchased and 3 months feed should be provided for the cattle, he added. He said funds would be provided if dairy farmers set up sheds for cattle.

The Collector said that seed would be provided to the cattle that were given by the government. He reviewed the loan applications mandal wise.

L.D.M Jagadish Chandra Bose

explained that banks in the district got 589 applications from dairy farmers for the purchase of cattle.

About 125 documents were processed so far and another 25 documents are yet to be processed. As many as 439 documents would be processed by the 11th of this month.

In this meeting, JD Animal Husbandry Department Dr Venu Manohar, MPDOs, managers of various banks, society presidents, dairy farmers participated.

# Kavitha's free meal camp completes three years

The newly elected MLC has been serving food to the needy despite several odds

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
HYDERABAD

THE free meal camp started by MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha at the Government Hospital in Nizamabad has completed three years on Saturday.

Kavitha had started the initiative of free meals camp in Nizamabad during her tenure as Nizamabad MP. The initiative was started at the Nizamabad Government Hospital and Nizamabad Library with an average feeds for more than 750 people per day. The free meal camp continued even during the lockdown period. Over the last three years, the free meal camp has been able to cater to needs of over 7 lakh people.

The motive behind this campaign was to address the problems faced by patients and their attendants at the Nizamabad Government General Hospital by providing hygienic, healthy and free meals. This was effective especially for those patients who could not afford to spend hundreds of



rupees a day for food along with other medical expenses.

Kavitha started the centre by bearing all expenditure. The distribution centre received massive support from the people that eventually led to the expansion of the scheme, which is feeding more than 1,500 people daily from all the centres.

During the lockdown, the free meal centres went

ahead and started serving at migrant centres, reaching out to migrants who walked back home, apart from its routine functions. The volunteers of free meal programme, led by Kavitha served over 2,500 food packets a day, over 700 people at their regular centres. The programme was further extended to serve frontline Covid-19 warriors who were serving for hours in the line of duty.

# NRI donates groceries to poor priests

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
BHADRACHALAM:



NRI Pendhala Bhaskar Rao and his family members donating rice and groceries to poor purohit families in Bhadrachalam on Saturday

ONE NRI Pendhala Bhaskar Rao donated Rs 6 lakh worth rice and groceries to poor purohiths' families in temple town Bhadrachalam on Saturday.

NRI Bhaskar visited Lord Rama temple and offered special pujas. He distributed rice and groceries to contract workers and temple priests who blessed him.

Later he also distributed groceries and rice worth Rs 2,500 to the purohiths at Godavari river.

Bhaskar said he started the distribution programme from the famous temple in Dharmapuri. After that he visited all famous temples and conducted the programme. In the global Covid pandemic a number of poor Brahmin families suffered a lot, he added.

# SP warns millers of stern action for purchasing cotton at lower rate

SP AV Ranganath inspects procurement of cotton from farmers in a mill located at Munugodu in the district

MUNUGODU (NALGONDA)

DISTRICT SP AV Ranganath warned of stern action against the millers for paying less amount than MSP to cotton produce of farmers.

The SP inspected the process of purchasing cotton from farmers in a mill located at Munugodu in the district. During interaction with the SP, some farmers informed that they got only Rs 4,000 per quintal for their cotton. Later speaking to millers, he advised them not to trouble the farmers by procuring the

cotton at less amount than recommended MSP in the name of low quality. He suggested them not to purchase the cotton from farmers within a range of Rs 400 to 500 less than MSP under special circumstances. He assured the millers that along with Collector and people's representatives, he will address the issues of millers and decide the allowable minimum purchase rate for cotton.

He was accompanied by task force CI Nageshwar Rao SI Rajanikar and staff.



SP Ranganath interacting with farmers during his visit to a cotton mill in Munugodu on Saturday

# MPP extends financial help of ₹25,000 to poor patient

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
MAHABUNNAGAR

BHOOTPUR Mandal Parishad president Dr Kadire Shekhar Reddy donated Rs. 25,000 towards the treatment of a poor patient from his village under treatment at SVS Medical College Hospital in Mahabubnagar on Saturday.

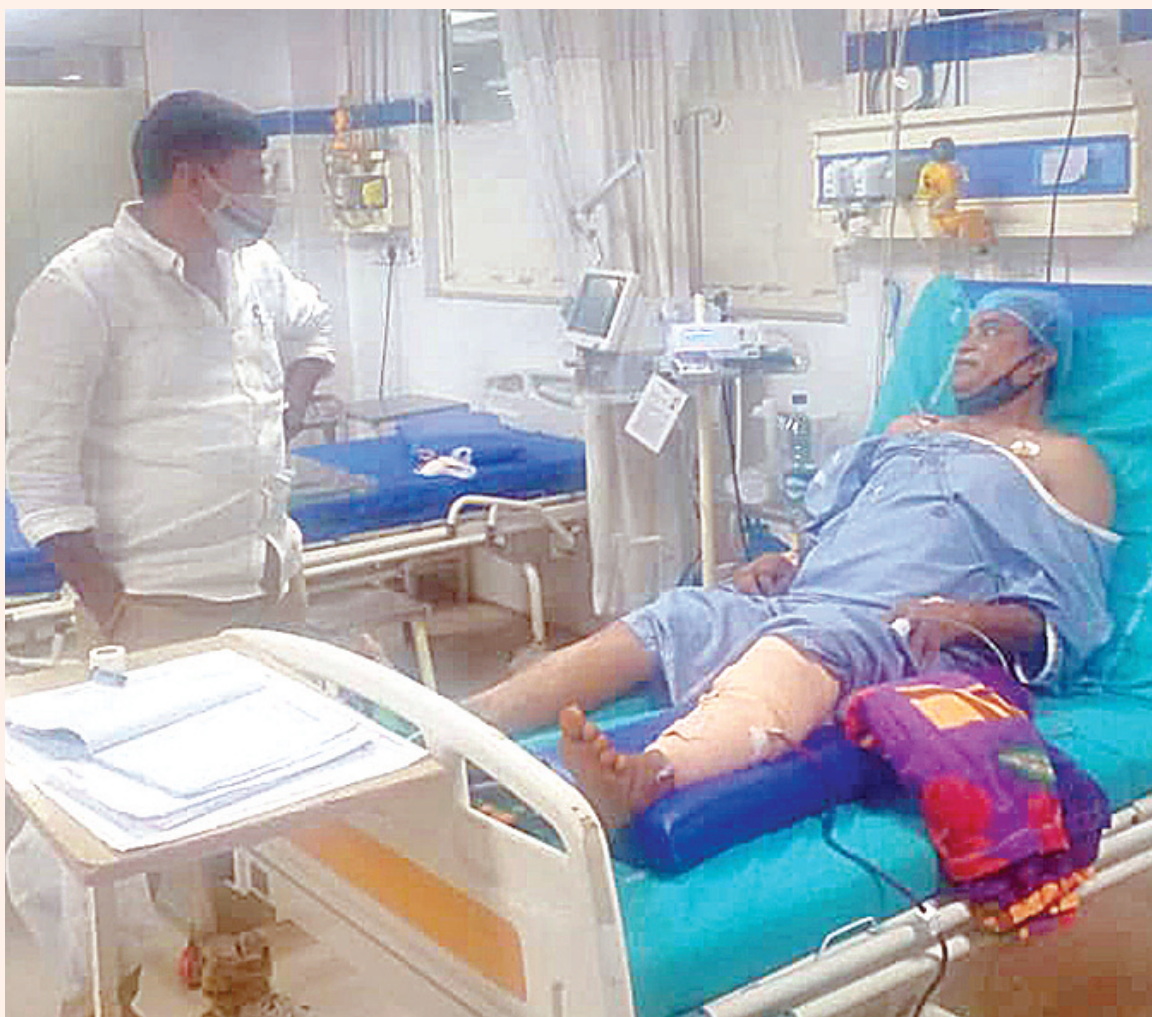
Earlier, Mohammad Jaleel Pasha, a poor resident of Mddigatla village in Bhootpur Mandal was admitted to SVS Hospital for treatment of knee joint pain.

The doctors diagnosed that Jaleel Pasha was suffering from acute

arthritis disease and told him that he needed immediate operation to replace his knee joint.

As the Jaleel Pasha is a poor man with no economic support, Bhootpur MPP, who came to know about the plight of the patient, immediately donated Rs 25,000 to the

patient for treatment. "Every person from my native village is dear to me and as a responsible public representative, I feel it is my duty to uplift the poor and rescue those in dire need of help. I wish, M.D. Pasha will recover speedily," said the MPP.



Bhootpur MPP Kadire Shekhar Reddy consoling patient Mohammad Jaleel Pasha at SVS Hospital in Mahabubnagar on Saturday

# Man commits suicide after tiff with wife

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
KODANGAL

A man who had married just 3 months ago, committed suicide after quarrelling with his wife over a petty issue in Husnabad village of Kodangal mandal on Saturday.

According to Kodangal Sub Inspector of Police Mahipal Reddy, three months back Raghavender (27) had married Ankita and were leading a happy life with their family in Husnabad. However, on Friday morning Raghavender and his wife entered into quarrel and fought with each other over some petty issue.

Though the family members tried to resolve the issue between the couple. But then Raghavender, who had taken the matter to his heart, left the house in the evening on Friday

and did not return. Even though his wife and family members searched for him in the village and in the surroundings, he was not found.

To their utter shock, the family members heard the news of suicide death of Raghavender, from the villagers, who had seen Raghavender hanging to a high-tension electrical poll in their agriculture field located on the outskirts of the village.

The police said that Raghavender who had gone out of the house in the evening was found hanging to a high-tension electrical poll in their field. "After receiving the news of suicide, we rushed to the spot and shifted the dead body to the Kodangal PHC for postmortem. A case has been registered and investigation is being taken up," informed the Kodangal SI.

# Irrigation DEE in ACB trap

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
WARANGAL

THE Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) officials on Saturday trapped a Deputy Executive Engineer of the Irrigation department red-handed when he was accepting a bribe of Rs 50,000 from a contractor to clear his bills. According to ACB DSP Madhusudan, contractor



Deputy Executive Engineer, Irrigation, with the tainted money

Guguloth Komurelli who had completed the renovation works of two tanks Jallivarikunta and Gorimallannakunta in Tarigoppula village under Mission Kakatiya phase-IV, had approached the DEE Ch Ravinder Reddy to clear his bills. When Ravinder Reddy demanded Rs 1 lakh bribe to clear the bills, Komurelli approached the ACB. As per the plan, Komurelli agreed to pay the bribe to Ravinder Reddy on Saturday. The ACB sleuths arrested the DEE while he was accepting the bribe.

The DSP said that the DEE would be produced before the ACB special court.

# BJP Councillors raise stink over negligence of sanitation in city

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
KAMAREDDY

BJP councillors on Saturday dumped garbage at the Municipal office gate and stage a dharna against the apathy of the civic body towards sanitation in the city. They said that the Municipality is not sending garbage collection vehicles to the 34th ward in Kamareddy Municipality.

Councilor Akula Sujithharat alleged that the garbage cart in 34 wards of Kamareddy town had been intercepted with conspiracy politics for the last 4 days. Councilor Akula Su-



BJP Councillors staging protest in front of the Municipal office in Kamareddy on Saturday

jitha Bharat criticised Municipal Commissioner and Chairman Jahnavi for contributing to the spread of the corona pandemic as

the sanitation issue escalated with dirty politics. The councilor complained to the Municipal Commissioner about the matter

but he did not respond.

They predicted that the number of corona patients would increase if the sanitation issues are not addressed. The Councilors said another rickshaw should be arranged along with the rickshaw now running without bothering the locals.

Councillors said the issue of drinking water in the ward was also not being addressed. Bharat said he had protested in front of the Municipal office Saturday to let the authorities know what would happen if the rubbish accumulates in the wards.





## Armed Forces must be ready to combat hybrid threats: IAF chief

NEW DELHI

AIR CHIEF Marshal Rakesh Kumar Singh Bhadauria on Saturday said that the country's armed forces have to be prepared for hybrid threats emanating from multiple fronts.

"Today's battlespace is highly complex and multi-dimensional with unpredictable security scenarios and high operational tempo. In such a battlespace, operational response and demand will be an integrated synergistic approach to all operations," he said. Bhadauria was addressing cadets of

the National Defence Academy (NDA) after reviewing the passing out parade of NDA's 139th course.

Lauding the NDA the air chief said, "the NDA is not just a cradle of leadership, but a true cradle of joint-manship. The vast experience of joint training at the NDA needs to be carried forward by the cadets to their respective academies."

"The bonds of friendship that you have forged here, with your course-mates and squadron-mates, should be maintained throughout your life, as you go into your service career and should translate into

better synergy at every stage of your career," Bhadauria advised the cadets.

The air chief also hailed the creation of the post of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) and the Department of Military Affairs (DMA) as the beginning of the "most historic phase of higher defence reforms" in the country. The convocation ceremony of 139th NDA course was held in Pune on Friday. A total of 217 cadets- 49 from the science stream, 113 from the computer science stream and 55 from the arts stream- were conferred with degrees an NDA official said.

## ONLY 50% STUDENTS WILL BE ALLOWED IN COLLEGES: UGC

NEW DELHI

THE University Grants Commission (UGC) has issued guidelines for the opening of universities and colleges. It has said that universities must ensure that not more than 50 per cent of the total students are present at any time.

As per the UGC guidelines, only a limited number of hostels can be opened, strictly following safety and health regulations. Not only this, no more than one student will be allowed to stay in a hostel room. Students with symptoms of Covid-19 will not be allowed to stay in the hostel under any circumstances.

Giving information on the UGC guidelines, Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' said, "If students want, they can study online by staying home and not attending classes. The institute will try to make online study material and e-resources accessible for the reading of such students."

Online classes will continue for all other programmes except Sci-

### 'Only a limited number of hostels can be opened'



ence, Technology and Research. Online and distance education will continue to be the preferred method as before and will be further promoted.

The UGC has issued new

guidelines to reopen universities and colleges after nearly seven months of lockdown. The UGC had issued guidelines twice earlier, keeping the lockdown in mind. The UGC issued the guide-

lines for the first time on April 29 and the second time on July 6. Many important topics like online education, conduct of examinations, admission process, academic calendar were included

in these guidelines. The existing guidelines have also been approved by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Home Affairs. These guidelines can be adopted by educational institutions, according to government directives and local circumstances.

The opening of educational institutions is being stepped up. In view of the proliferation of Covid-19, the State and Union Territory governments have also been consulted to open universities and colleges outside the containment zones. Educational institutions can be opened across the country in a systematic manner after consultation with the governments of the state and union territories.

It will be mandatory to follow the UGC guidelines to open educational institutions. For this, the UGC has prepared a standard procedure (SOP), which will be mandatory to follow. The UGC has made all the rules and regulations flexible so that there is no impediment in the conduct of academic work.

## India records 50K fresh infections, 577 deaths

NEW DELHI

INDIA'S COVID-19 caseload mounted to 84,62,080 with 50,356 infections being reported in a day, while the number of people who have recuperated from the disease crossed 78 lakh pushing the national recovery rate to 92.41 per cent, according to data updated by the Union Health Ministry on Saturday.

The coronavirus death toll climbed to 1,25,562 with 577 new fatalities, the data updated at 8 am showed.

A total of 78,19,886 people have recuperated from COVID-19 so far pushing the national recovery rate to 92.41 per cent, while the case fatality rate has further declined to 1.48 per cent.

The number of active cases of COVID-19 remained below 6 lakh for the ninth consecutive day.

There are 5,16,632 active cases of coronavirus infection in the country as on date

which comprises 6.11 per cent of the total caseload, the data stated.

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh on August 23 and 40 lakh on September 5.

It went past 50 lakh on September 16, 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11



and crossed 80 lakh on October 29.

According to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), a cumulative total of 11,65,42,304 samples have been tested up to November 6 with 11,13,209 samples being tested on Friday.

The 577 new fatalities include 161 from Maharashtra, 64 from Delhi, 55 from West Bengal, 52 from Chhattisgarh, 35 from Karnataka, and 27 each from Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

## 'You should work to bring ease of living for poor': Modi to IIT grads

NEW DELHI

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said the country will ensure 'ease of doing business' for its youth while they should work for providing 'ease of living' to people, particularly the poorest of the poor, through innovations. Addressing the 51st annual convocation of IIT Delhi via video conferencing, he said that the post-Covid-19 world is going to be very different and technology will play the biggest role in it.

Covid-19 has taught the world that globalisation is important but self-reliance is equally important, the prime minister said.

"India is fully committed to give its youth ease of doing business so that the youth through their innovation can bring about a change in the lives of crores of people of the country," Modi said addressing the

graduating students of IIT Delhi. "The country will give you ease of doing business but you do one thing, through your expertise, experience, talent and innovation... ensure ease of living for the poorest of the poor citizens," he said.

Modi also urged the graduating students to focus on quality, never compromise, and make their innovations work at a mass scale. "Your work will give global recognition to our products. Your efforts will lead to swifter recognition of Indian products," Modi told the students, calling them the best brand ambassadors of Brand India. The nation has seen how technology can provide good governance and reach the poor and the needy in the last few years, he said.

Technology has made last mile delivery of services efficient and reduced the scope of corruption, the prime minister said.

## Patients report HCQ shortage

NEW YORK

PATIENTS with rheumatic diseases across Africa, Southeast Asia, the Americas and Europe had trouble filling their prescriptions of hydroxychloroquine, during the 2020 global coronavirus pandemic, when antimalarials were touted as a possible Covid-19 treatment, says a new study.

Antimalarial drugs are taken regularly by most people with lupus, as well as many with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) and other rheumatic diseases.

In the early weeks of the global pandemic, two antimalarial drugs often used to treat lupus and RA, hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine, were touted to potentially prevent or treat Covid-19 infections despite a lack of data to support this use, leading to worldwide shortages of both. A team of international researchers launched this study to assess the effects of antimalarials on Covid-19 infection and the impact of drug shortages on people with rheumatic disease.

## Case against Milind for running nude on beach

PANAJI

MODEL-ACTOR-FITNESS enthusiast Milind Soman has been booked by the South Goa district police for promoting

obscurity after he shared a photo of himself running nude on the beach. This comes after an FIR was registered against Poonam Pandey followed by her arrest for shooting an 'obscene video' in Goa.

## Sharif a 'jackal' trying to create 'rebellion' in Pak Army: Imran

LAHORE

PAKISTAN Prime Minister Imran Khan on Saturday lashed out at three-time former premier Nawaz Sharif, describing him as a "jackal" who is trying to create "rebellion" in the army by accusing it of involvement in the country's politics and calling for a change in the military as well as the ISI leadership.

Sharif, the 70-year-old supreme leader of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz who was ousted from power in 2017 by the apex court on graft charges, had last month for the first time directly named Army chief Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa and ISI head Lt Gen Faiz Hameed for interfering in the general elections of 2018 to ensure victory of Khan.

Sharif had made the comments virtually on October 16 during a joint rally organised by the Opposition parties under the banner of Pakistan Democratic Movement, formed to oust the Khan-led Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government.

Prime Minister Khan said that Sharif is sitting in London "like a Jackal" and targeting the army.

Hitting out at Sharif, Khan said the former prime minister was "trying to stir up a rebellion in the Pakistan Army by alleging it is involved in politics and calling for changing the army and ISI chiefs," Khan said while addressing a public gathering in Mingora in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

The powerful army, which has ruled Pakistan for more than half of its 70 plus years of existence, has hitherto wielded considerable power in the matters of security and



foreign policy. However, the army has denied meddling in the country's politics.

Prime Minister Khan also denies that the army helped him win the election in 2018.

Khan said that Sharif had run away from the country under the pretext of illness, adding that he was a "money worshipper" and had amassed his wealth by looting the country, the Dawn newspaper reported.

The PML-N chief, currently out on bail, is facing multiple corruption charges.

The Islamabad high court had allowed him to go to London for medical treatment in November last year for a period of eight weeks for medical treatment.

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# Registration for Ayyappa devotees

VIJAYAWADA

IN view of the prevailing corona pandemic situation across the country, the state government is taking all possible measures for the safety of the pilgrims, who are planning to visit Sabarimala for the darshan of Lord Ayyappa.

Secretary of the revenue (endowments) Girija Shankar and endowments commissioner P Arjun Rao, who attended the virtual conference chaired by the chief secretary of the Kerala government, later informed the media that pilgrims, who want to visit Sabarimala will have to register themselves with the police on the virtual queue portal <http://sabarimaonline.org>.

Only 1,000 pilgrims per day on week days and 2,000 on week-end days will be allowed to register on this portal on a first-come-first-served basis, they said. "The pilgrims will get the clearance for the visit to the temple town only if they upload Covid negative certificate obtained 48 hours before registration."

Girija Shankar and Arjun Rao said that all the pilgrims will have to undergo an rapid antigen test at the entry points of the pilgrim town at their own expense. Children below the age



- Only 1,000 pilgrims a day on week days and 2,000 on week-end days can register on the portal on a first-come-first-served basis
- Revenue (Endowments) Secretary and Endowments Commissioner have take part in a virtual conference chaired by Kerala CS
- All the pilgrims will have to undergo rapid antigen test at the entry points of the pilgrim town at their own expense

group of 10, senior citizens above 60 years and those with comorbidities will not be allowed for the darshan, they added.

Pilgrims should carry with them the ration

card and the Ayushman Bharat card with them, the officials said. "Green Abhishekam and bathing at the Pampa river are strictly prohibited. Besides, night halt at the Pampa river, Sanidhanam and the Ganapathi Kovil are also not allowed and pilgrims can enter the temple town only through Erumeli and Vadaserrikara routes," they said.

The senior officers said that all the district assistant commissioners of endowments in the state are directed to identify soon at least 15 Guruwamys in their respective districts and hold a meeting with them to bring awareness on these guidelines among the swamis while visiting Sabarimala. The assistant commissioners are also asked to erect boards displaying all these norms at all the railway stations under their purview to bring better awareness among the pilgrims.

The AP transport commissioner, too, has been asked to issue necessary instructions to the travel agencies in the state not to allow pilgrims below the age of 10 and above 60 years and insist on Covid negative and registration certificates before they board the vehicles, the senior officers observed.

# ₹143 cr released under Kapu Nestham Phase-2



BC Welfare Minister Chelluboyina Venugopala Krishna releasing amount to Kapu beneficiaries under Kapu Nestham, at Tadepalli on Saturday

- BC Welfare Minister Venugopala Krishna credits the money into the accounts of beneficiaries
- The eligible Kapu women left out of the scheme in June, have been added now
- A total of 3,30,605 women got benefited through Kapu Nestam and Rs 495.87 cr has been credited to their accounts
- Venugopala Krishna and Kapu Corpn chairman Jakkampudi Raja attack TDP chief and former CM Chandrababu Naidu for 'betraying' Kapus with false promises

AMARAVATI

MINISTER for BC welfare Chelluboyina Venugopala Krishna on Saturday credited Rs 143 crore to 95,245 beneficiaries under Kapu Nestam scheme second phase, covering those who could not make it in first phase.

Speaking on the occasion, the minister said that the state government is committed to the welfare of Kapus and thus all the eligible women from Kapu, Balija, Ontari and Telaga communities who were not included in the scheme earlier in June will be receiving Rs 15,000 as financial assistance under Kapu Nestam.

Although the scheme was launched in June, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy gave an opportunity for those who were

left out to apply within a month, and now all those eligible women are provided with the financial assistance, he said and added that a total of 3,30,605 women were benefited through Kapu Nestam scheme and Rs 495.87 crore has been credited to their accounts. Minister Vegopala Krishna urged the women to use the money for economic empowerment.

He stated that over Rs 5,542 crore was spent on the Kapu welfare through Kapu Corporation in the last 16 months, which was way more than the actual amount promised by the Chief Minister during elections. In the previous government, Kapus were neglected and were used for the cheap politics by TDP leaders. Former chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu promised to provide reservations to Kapus even though it was not in his hand and created a rift between BCs and Kapus, and even tried to benefit

from the situation, he alleged. Meanwhile, Kapu Corporation chairman Jakkampudi Raja said that Chief Minister Mohan Reddy had fulfilled almost 90 per cent of the poll promises in just 16 months of forming the government, prioritising the backward classes, Kapus and minorities.

In Praja Sankalpa Yatra, he witnessed the plight of poor people and brought solutions right from his heart, he said and criticised TDP chief Naidu for "betraying" Kapus during his rule, by failing to keep his promise of allocating Rs 1,000 crore for Kapu welfare. He said that Naidu used BCs and Kapus for the sake of elections and left them after securing the power and thus people rejected him. While Naidu deceived the Kapu community in terms of reservations and poor allocations of funds, the Chief Minister had gone beyond the manifesto to benefit the Kapu community, he claimed.

## Jagan failed to get sops from Centre: Narayana

TIRUPATI

CPI national secretary K Narayana criticised that Andhra Pradesh government has failed in getting benefits due to the state under AP Reorganisation Act from the Central government.

Addressing the media on Saturday here, Narayana said the Narendra Modi-led BJP government was using border conflicts to benefit electoral benefits in Bihar. "The usual trick of BJP is to divert people's attention from its failures and pushing border conflicts into centre stage in elections," he said. He demanded the state government to hand over the TIDCO houses built two years to the beneficiaries. He said Jagan Mohan Reddy government had failed in solving various issues in the state.

# TTD begins gold plating of Varaha Swamy temple



HANS NEWS SERVICE  
TIRUMALA

TTD has taken up gold plating work on Sri Varaha Swamy temple at Tirumala hill shrine at a cost of Rs 14 crore. As per Tirumala mythology, devotees should visit first Varaha Swamy temple before going to Lord Venkateswara's darshan. This practice has been going on for many centuries. Varaha Swamy has a prominent place in the history of Tirumala. In view of this, TTD has decided to develop this temple too. After many years, the TTD has come forward to give a facelift to the Vimana Gopuram of Varaha Swamy temple and the board sanctioned Rs 14 crore. Its engineering wing has started gold plating works on the top of Garbh-

- ▶ Board allocates Rs 14 cr for a facelift to Vimana Gopuram of the temple
- ▶ Devotees' entry into Varaha Swamy temple for darshan will be banned for six months till the works are completed
- ▶ 42 kg gold and 1,800 kg copper are being used for the coating

agudi (sanctum sanctorum) with 42 kg gold and 1,800 kg copper employing specially skilled artisans.

The darshan has been stopped since the start of work two days ago. The works are likely to continue for six more months.

As per the temple customs, priests stopped the day to day rituals to the deity Varaha Swamy and are performing kainkaryams to replicas of the main deity. It may be noted that the TTD stopped the darshan to devotees following the Covid-19 regulations in March this year.

In case of Varaha Swamy temple, there will be no darshan for six more months or until gold plating is completed.

## It's Biden

Continued from P1

Joe Biden will become the 46th president of the United States, after a victory in the state where he was born put him over the 270 electoral votes needed to win. With Pennsylvania's 20 electoral votes, Biden now has a total of 284 electoral votes.

Before becoming the Democratic presidential nominee, Biden served as vice president under former President Barack Obama. He is also Delaware's longest-serving senator.

Throughout his campaign, Biden has argued that the "soul of the nation" is at stake and has promised that he would seek to heal a country fractured by Trump's presidency.

As of Saturday morning, 16 out of 43 Trump tweets, or 37%, had been labeled by Twitter cautioning users that "some or all of the content shared in this Tweet is disputed and might be misleading about an election or other civic process."

Ellen Weintraub, with the Federal Election Commission, denied any incident of fraud regarding the US elections. In a statement, Weintraub said, "State and local officials and poll workers throughout the country really stepped up. And there have been very few complaints about how this election was run," Weintraub said.

Another in a line of repeated attacks on the vote counting process in various states where Joe Biden has taken the lead, Donald Trump said that "bad things were happening" inside counting centres. "...Bad things took place during those hours where LEGAL TRANSPARENCY was viciously & crudely not allowed. Tractors blocked doors & windows were covered with thick cardboard so that observers could not see into the count rooms. BAD THINGS HAPPENED INSIDE. BIG CHANGES TOOK PLACE!," he said in a post on Twitter.

## PIO Vivek Murthy likely to get key healthcare role

Continued from P1

As coronavirus infections hit new highs, Biden's aides are planning for the first critical transition decisions to focus on health care and addressing the pandemic, the central theme of his campaign in the final months. They have assembled an internal group of roughly two dozen health policy and technology experts to look at the development and delivery of a vaccine, improving health data and securing supply chains, among other issues. "We're not waiting to get the work done," Biden said in a speech on Friday night.

Among those expected to play a key health care role in a Biden administration is Vivek Murthy, a former surgeon general under President Barack Obama, who has privately advised Biden for months on the pandemic and is expected to play a large public role as a face of the potential Democratic administration's response to the virus, dispensing advice on mask-wearing and social distancing.

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
AMARAVATI

RESPONDING to a call given by former chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu, the TDP organised the 'Na Illu-Na Sontham' (I Want My House) all over the state on Saturday. Activists along with beneficiaries raised slogans demanding handing over of the TIDCO houses to the poor beneficiaries who have paid their contribution already.

The TDP leaders accused the YSRCP government of barring the beneficiaries from entering their houses just because this would bring a good name for the previous Chandrababu Naidu government. Though over 2.62 lakh houses were completed during the TDP rule and were ready for occupation, the YSRCP regime was creating obstacles, they alleged.

The Opposition leaders held a protest at dharna chowk in Vijayawada



TDP MLA Gadde Rammohan Rao, former MLA Bonda Umamaheswara Rao and other leaders staging a dharna seeking handover of TIDCO houses completed during TDP government to the beneficiaries, at Dharna Chowk in Vijayawada on Saturday

under the leadership of Vijayawada East MLA Gadde Rammohan.

Speaking on the occasion, he said that over 8,000 completed houses were ready for occupation in Vijayawada city limits but the government was creating needless obstacles. The government was deliberately denying the benefit to the poor families to take possession of their own houses for which they paid their contribution.

The TDP protests were also held in Eluru, Tirupati and other places in the state. TDP Eluru Parliamentary constituency committee president Ganni

Veeranjaneyulu termed it as unfortunate that the ruling party leaders were spreading a misinformation against the TDP on the TIDCO houses. The TDP gave two cents house site while the YSRCP was now promising to give just one cent house site. Even in this, there was a lot of corruption.

Tense situation prevailed in Tirupati, as the police tried to obstruct the TDP protesters in the name of traffic regulations. The TDP leaders asked whether they had no democratic right to protest even for half an hour on the national highway for the sake of house sites for the poor.

# MODI, XI LIKELY TO COME FACE-TO-FACE AT SCO MEET

Continued from P1

The SCO is an inter-governmental organisation with eight members — India, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Its aims include maintaining peace in the region and "strengthening mutual trust and neighbourliness among the member states", while promoting cooperation in politics, trade, economy, research, technology and culture, as well as education, energy, transport, tourism, environmental protection, and other areas".

Prime Minister Modi's participation at SCO was confirmed just as the eighth round of military-level talks between New Delhi and Beijing

came to an end at Chushul near the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

The current stand-off is the first since 1975 that has seen soldiers on both sides die. Despite multiple rounds of dialogue, the situation at the border remains tense, with both sides set to deploy soldiers in Ladakh's forward areas through the region's bitter winter, something that has never been done before.

While Prime Minister Modi and President Xi also participated in the UN General Assembly in September 2020 — which was again held virtually — they spoke on different days.

According to Srivastava, India will also host a SCO heads-of-government meeting on 30 November

where the Prime Ministers of SCO member countries, including Pakistan's Imran Khan, will come together.

In September, the foreign ministers of SCO met in person in Moscow, where External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar held a meeting with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi to discuss the border stand-off. The last SCO Summit was held at Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, in June 2019, where Modi held a separate bilateral meeting with President Xi. It is there that Modi invited Xi for a second round of their informal summit — the first was at Wuhan in 2018 — and it culminated in the October 2019 Mamallapuram informal summit.

# Delhi's air quality remains 'severe'

Continued from P1

The SAFAR model adds that the boundary layer wind direction is north-westerly, which is favourable for the fire-related intrusion to Delhi NCR region. Moreover, the surface

winds are expected to decrease on November 8 as well and therefore, the air quality will continue to remain in 'severe' quality.

The AQI for Sunday is expected to stand at around 414.

The quick recovery from 'severe' air

quality is expected only when the number of fire counts in the neighbouring states of NCR is reduced.

Therefore, no significant change is likely to be visible for the next two days and the AQI will remain in 'severe' to the higher end of 'very poor'.

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
VIJAYAWADA

DIRECTOR general of police (DGP) D Gautam Sawang on Saturday or-





# US elections and its impact on world politics

IT is a well-known fact that the President of the United States (POTUS) holds an important position in world affairs. As the US is the wealthiest nation among all nations of the world, the dollar currency sets a benchmark when compared to all other currencies. In the backdrop of such economic supremacy, the role of the President of America is an esteemed and coveted preposition in establishing and consolidating relations with other countries.

The US which is the oldest democracy in the world has so far had 45 Presidents who served the office of Presidency for one or two terms since 1789. The recent election held in 2020 which gave Joe Biden more number of electoral college votes than in case of the incumbent President, Donald Trump by shunning him from a second term re-election, has seen

a great contrast as compared to previous elections for oval office as it raised a great deal of suspense with the race between the democratic and Republican



electors having gone down to the wire.

The race between Joe Biden and Trump was marked by a photo finish that was unprecedented in the history of America. For the non-whites and immigrants living in the US, the dethronement/defeat of Donald

Trump from power and election of Biden to power has been a foregone conclusion.

Trump did not live up to the expectations of the people of America, especially of the immigrants etitled in that nation. His incitement of dubious racism has been a setback to his victory.

While the defiant Trump was overambitious and overconfident about his own victory, the Presidential candidate Biden has been cool until the last moment of his success in suspense ridden States that were in the race for White House.

The main factor responsible

for Trump's defeat in many crucial States was due to his failure in wielding administration that disenchanted the voters besides his negligence to control the Covid-19 pandemic which affected the modus operandi of the conventional electoral

process by dividing it into early postal / mail and in person ballots that came to an end of 3rd November.

Due to the pandemic effect, many voters have resorted to exercise their franchise by mail or postal ballots even before the day of election set for Nov.3. The postal ballots made the process of counting very difficult and delayed, especially in case of States crucial for both groups of contestants in the fray. Counting of votes was virtually a herculean task for the officials as the number of votes was exceedingly large in States where the contest was neck to neck between Biden and Trump who mainly differed on counting of ballots.

- Bh Indu Sekhar , Hyderabad

## PAST & PRESENT

### In harmony with nature



N J RAVI CHANDER

WHEN the pandemic forced us indoors, I embarked on a new pastime - bird watching. My balcony overlooks an African Tulip tree that serves as a haven for a host of avian creatures and squirrels. The 'tall green friend', reduced to a skeleton post the leaves shedding in summer, now sports a spectacular green and red canopy. The kids play with the flower buds, squirting the water on to each other. Birds and bats gorge on the blooms and transform the street into a colourful carpet.

A pair of copper barbets have made the tree their abode. These exotic birds dwell in a cavity of the tree trunk and glide in and out of their hideout. The male bird can turn hostile and will not hesitate to swoop and attack any intruder who dares to approach the nest. They feed on the nectar of flowers and make a distinctive sound, "kutrook-kutrook-kutrook". A pair of kites are busy raising their chicks in their nest on the upper reaches of the tree. The raptors work all day, tirelessly, going out in search of feed for their young. One bird always stays behind to guard the young, while the other ventures out seeking small prey. The field glasses that we bring out before sunset help us get a close look at the family.

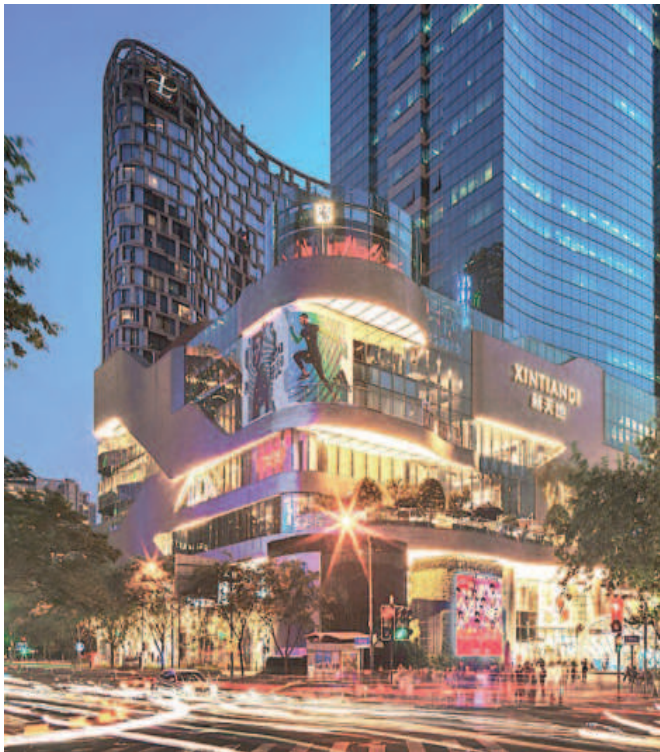
Ravens, parakeets, koels, hummingbirds, wood pigeons, hawks, mynahs and bats, complete the list of avian visitors. The parakeets, boisterous as ever, create a racket at sundown before going home to roost. Dusk sees the bats launch a foray. They hang inverted from the tallest branches and resemble gymnasts doing handstands.

Despite the profusion of fallen petals left behind by our avian visitors on the balcony, their presence always delights us.

The early morning calls of the koels and the ravens serve as a natural alarm, enabling us to rise and shine. The ravens love the flatbread that my significant other bakes and they keep alighting at intervals - beginning from 6 am - to pick them up from the ledge where we place them. Hesitant at first to come close, they have now grown accustomed to us and welcome the feed we offer them. The bread has caught the squirrels fancy too, as they scurry in and out from the nearby trees. Most often, this leads to the ravens getting a run for their money.

A pair of stray cows and a pack of dogs are also the beneficiaries of our hospitality. The bovines trudge in at 11 am, while a bag of vegetable shavings and banana peels await them. They herald their arrival with loud cries of "moo-moo". After a contented meal, they guzzle water from the plastic tub placed near the gate, sometimes knocking it over with their heads.

A pack of five dogs led by their skipper, King, are the last of our animal friends who nudge us for food. The furry friends think that the street belongs to them and will not spare any canine intruder who barges into their area of control. They hang by our gate after the cows go home, waiting for their daily meal of rice and chicken. The 'brownies' ever grateful for our act of kindness, keep a vigil on the house after dusk and have nicely fitted into the role of best friends. These daily rendezvous with our friends from the natural world make our day.



## China making advance moves to forge ahead

THE deliberations and outcome of the 5th plenum of the 19th Congress of the Chinese Communist party are indicative of how the party leadership and Chinese government intends to position itself in a rapidly changing geopolitical landscape. President Xi Jinping has described China's intention for future as the China Dream of a great rejuvenation of the country. He said that the economy would be double in size by 2035 and the country could reach high-income status in the next five years.

China has recognised the challenges that must be overcome to reach the 2035 goal. China would adopt strategies to tackle the challenges. The domestic market would be taken as the base for development but Chinese economy would be open to foreign trade and investment. The focus is on greater self-reliance through developing domestic consumption. The

government acknowledges the fact that technological innovation is essential for growth. China wants to become a global leader in artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, cloud computing and quantum computing. A huge amount of R&D expenditure has been allocated to these sectors and greater efforts will be made to achieve self-reliance in these sectors.

China is making amazing recovery from the pandemic while advanced economies are still struggling to contain it. China firmly believes that its economic advancement and self-reliant strategy of growth aided by technological advancements will enable it to emerge as the most powerful country. In such a scenario, India's relations with China may become more complex and it will have to search for stronger and more credible coalitions than the Quad to counter Chinese aggression.

- Venu G S, Kollam

THE US presidential election 2020 is unprecedented in many ways because it is for the first time since 1900, a record turnout of over 100 million votes were polled with nearly half of the votes cast ahead of the actual date and an equally large number were via mail-in ballots due to covid-19 plaguing the nation.

When the world has always been looking at the US in awe to provide good leadership on various critical issues ranging from climate and environment, terrorism and security, shockingly, Trump's poor record on these counts not only raised doubts about his temperament but also many pertinent questions whether his style of functioning be able to bring turnaround in a second term. Even as counting continue, Trump mocking at Joe Biden by stoking misinformation campaign by coming out with outrageous statements like democrats are stealing polls adopting fraudulent methods and further demand-

ing to halt the counting and then declaring himself as the victor even before conclusive outcome in the keenly contested states exposes his lies and desperation.

Though nothing can be said as certain till the counting is completed, still, it is important that in the end, it is the total electoral votes that will determine the final outcome. Further, unlike Trump, Biden sought to build as wide a coalition as possible in his campaign by avoiding racial appeals and addressing issues of growing economic inequality, promote racial harmony and Justice which helped to garner votes from cross-section of voters.

As Biden inches forward overtaking Trump while maintaining a lead in Pennsylvania and Georgia to cross past the magical figure to win the race, it is baffling that Trump way behind Biden is refusing to concede defeat. Instead fuming with anger, filing law suits in various courts in US to put road-

THE Kejriwal government's decision to ban bursting of crackers in Delhi is to be welcomed as the people are preparing to celebrate this year's Diwali. With Covid-19 pandemic cases reaching more than 6,000 in one day, the Delhi government on Thursday announced a complete ban on the sale, purchase and the use of fire-crackers ahead of Diwali. The rationale behind the imposition of ban is to prevent lung infections and breathing problems that may lead to higher infections due to air pollution.

Moreover, the Covid situation is deteriorating in Delhi due to rising air pollution and people are required to cooperate with the government by not bursting crackers. It may be noted that Delhi high court expressed displeasure over the rising Covid-19 cases in Delhi and the Court also



expressed apprehension whether the capital of the country could soon become the 'corona capital.'

Last year during the Diwali celebrations, massive toxic fumes generated on bursting of crackers and fireworks on Diwali night had literally turned Delhi into a gas chamber. Despite several attempts made to curb the menace of air pollution, a layer of haze enveloped the national capital a day after Diwali as the city's air quality plummeted to the severe category for the first time that season.

This tragedy for Delhi was rather wilfully courted by the revellers who comfortably forgot the highly vulnerable condition of the environment while celebrating Diwali. The Delhi government also seemed to have been less strict in enforcing the rules. Rampant bursting of crackers had pumped ultra-fine particles, less than 2.5 microns, into the air making it difficult to breathe, especially for kids and the elderly. Now the Delhi administration realised of its immediate implementation of prevention of bursting of crackers.

For revelers of Diwali, the ban on bursting crackers may come as a dampener. But it may be understood that the real spirit of Diwali does not limit to bursting crackers alone. Moreover, spending huge amounts of money on such unproductive purposes is really a

waste too though admittedly it is an occasion of joyous celebration.

The restriction to keep the environment clean and green may come in as an opportunity to divert our money earmarked for spending on crackers to help those who are needy and poor. So, let us fine-tune our heart to fit into the occasion and make it memorable of a lifetime by doing better things than bursting crackers during this Diwali. Kindly remember that in case we burn crackers, we will be playing with health of our children and our family and by doing so, we will be doing irreparable damage to their health.

Not only firecrackers but stubble burning also causes acute air pollution in Delhi especially during October and November months when the stubble after harvest gets disposed of by burn-

ing. Actually, farmers do not want to burn stubble because it kills the good bacteria on the farmlands, makes the soil infertile and causes major pollution. But they become helpless to dispose of the stubble through other ways than stubble burning which is the cheapest way. But there is glad news for farmers.

The Delhi government has taken a crucial step in association with the Pusa Institute, which had developed a chemical to use on the fields. When it is used on the fields, the stubble turns into manure in just 20 days. Now the farmers all across the country can use this chemical for disposing of the stubble without resorting to burning. Undoubtedly, it is hoped that this chemical can put an end to the air pollution in a greater way.

- T K Nandanam, Kochi

# INITIATE STEPS TOWARDS CLEAN INDIA

AMIT SINGH KUSHWAHA

ONCE, I was travelling by train. The train had traveled just 50 kilometers from its starting station. I found out that the washbasin is dirty. Many people spit into it after chewing gutkha and paan. Sighting it, a passenger said, "Railway is not aware of sanitation". "Should not it be cleaned because we have paid the fare for traveling?" I wondered after listening to this comment.

In the same way, I have to move to my office by passing a railway foot-over bridge every day. The bridge looks dirty because many people are spitting at that place. The cleaning staff cleans it up using acid and water. The bridge is just a hundred meters long, but individuals are not taking care of it.

At present, when I have to go to the bus stand I feel afraid. I imagine anyone sitting in the bus could spit out from the



window. That's why I go there carefully. I have witnessed a quarrel about this on the bus stand many times when a passenger accidentally spits on a

passer-by.

In our community, every family makes an effort to maintain their residence clean and beautiful, but the same person

when in public places has a different attitude. Using plastic carry bags and not disposing of properly, is common.

Sometimes, people would

throw garbage, leftover food, pointed items, broken glass, and poisonous substances openly in plastic bags. This behaviour is harmful to our environment and creates a threat to animals, birds because they may unknowingly eat it and die. The garbage collection authorities are requesting people to collect dry and wet waste in different dustbins, but many of us do not follow it seriously.

The conditions of public conveniences are also inadequate. It is found dirty and people do not use it decently. Even, I saw in government offices that the toilets were untidy. No one could lead the initiative to clean the toilet.

In 2017, the Hindi language comedy-drama film "Toilet: Ek Prem Katha" was released and became a success. The movie delivered a solid message to improve sanitation conditions, with an emphasis on the eradication of open defecation, es-

pecially in rural areas. It expresses the actual situation of rural areas, where women are facing numerous troubles due to the unavailability of toilets.

This year, the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic vindicates the significance of sanitation and personal hygiene. Many people follow the guidelines and preventive measures issued by the government. At the same time, many others violate the protocols involving the wearing of masks and social distancing, which is the best way to avoid this pandemic. The state governments have banned spitting in public places, but citizens are still not taking it thoughtfully.

Swachh Bharat Mission is a revolutionary movement introduced by the Government of India. The mission displays positive results continuously. For the year 2020, Indore was adjudged India's cleanest city for the fourth straight year,

while Surat and Navi Mumbai grabbed the second and third positions respectively, as the Centre announced the results of its latest annual cleanliness survey.

The father of the nation - Mahatma Gandhi said once, "Sanitation is more important than independence". Today, after seven decades of independence, his dream of a clean India is still unfulfilled. Sanitation is not a personal issue, it is indirectly reflected in our socio-economic development and to reach the identity and dignity of the forthcoming generations. Cleanliness is not a responsibility of the government only, it is also our duty to live healthily. Positive and collective steps can change society's attitude towards sanitation. Our responsibility is necessary to sustain the country's beauty.

(The author is a rehabilitation professional and a freelance writer based in Madhya Pradesh.)



BOOK REVIEW

Stephen Hawking’s memoir salutes the indomitable human spirit



VISHNU MAKHLJANI

STEPHEN Hawking was just 21 when he was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), a degenerative disease of the motor neurons that almost always causes death within two to five years after diagnosis, with only one in 20 patients living for 20 or more years.

He lived with it for 55 years and is noted for his breakthrough research on black holes, described as “some of the strangest and most fascinating objects in outer space” - and seminal books like “A Brief History of Time” and co-author of “The Grand Design”.

He was confined to a wheelchair for the major portion of his life, with a “peg” inserted in his belly through which his “carers” injected fluids and vitamins -- he took 80 pills a day -- directly into his stomach and fed him through an oversized spoon. He communicated through a speech-generating device, using a single cheek muscle to type out words and sentences on a computer.

A lesser mortal would have long thrown in the towel but not Hawking, as Leonard Mlodinow, himself a theoretical physicist and co-author of “The Grand Design”, writes in “Stephen Hawking -- A Memoir of Friendship and Physics” (Allen Lane/Penguin Random House) -- a heart-warming saga of what a human being can achieve, no matter what the odds.

“After his diagnosis, it took about a year of intense emotional struggle for Stephen to come to grips with is fate. In defining an ever-growing universe of physical activities he could not do, his disease magnified the value of the mental activities he could. It left him with a choice of wasting away in spirit as well as body or finding a world of the mind in which he could still function. Where some in his situation would have found God, Stephen found physics. He decided to finish his Ph. D. (from Cambridge). He found to his surprise, that he liked the work,” writes Mlodinow, who closely worked with Hawking for 11 years on the condensed “A Briefer History of Time” and “The Grand Design”.

*Hawking’s career started after his doctoral dissertation, written in 1966, when he was 24.*

“In that work, he showed that Einstein’s general relativity required that the universe had begun with the big bang. That made him famous in the cosmology world, but not yet the dominant figure that he would later become. His dominance grew out of his next project, in which he combined general relativity and quantum theory, conflicting theories that presented vastly different conceptualizations of the universe, of the nature of space and time, of force, of motion, even of the sense in which the present affects the future.

“It was in his embrace of the contradictions in those two theories that one sees the roots of his ideas about mode-dependant realism. And in deftly moving back and forth between those two theories, he became the first to apply both to the same important physical process, thus leading the way for others. That work was his research on black holes, culminating in his discovery of

what is now called Hawking radiation,” Mlodinow, who constantly shuttled between Caltech, where he taught, and Cambridge during the collaboration, writes.

“Hawking radiation was important because it represented the first important instance in which general relativity and quantum theory were applied to the same system. We still have no complete theory of quantum gravity, but by having black holes as a mathematical laboratory for mixing general relativity and quantum theory, physicists have been able to learn something about the properties and principles of that elusive theory,” Mlodinow writes.

*So, how is it that Hawking was never considered for the Nobel prize?*

“One consistent principle the Nobel committee seems to adhere to is that a theoretical advance will not bring a prize unless it is confirmed by observation or experiment” and indirect evidence supporting Hawking radiation finally came only in 2019, a little more than a year after his death.

“Had Stephen survived, that might have been enough for the Nobel committee, but another thing, the Nobel committee does not do is make posthumous awards,” Mlodinow rues.

*Interspersed with all this, is the human element.*

“That Stephen attracted nurturing (from a veritable army of carers, friends and admirers) was easy to understand. But he also attracted affection. I felt that for him almost from the start. Part of it was his eyes, blue and full of character. They could impart great warmth. They could speak to you. They could make you feel connected. To those who were his friends, they were affectionate. To those who didn’t know him, they were inviting. To those who were annoyed with him, they were disarming. When he was in pain, he’d scrunch them up, and you’d feel that, too. And if you made him angry, his eyes made you wish you hadn’t,” Mlodinow writes.

*That’s not all.*

“There are many words one could use to describe Stephen. Courageous. Stubborn. Skeptical. Visual. Passionate. Playful. Determined. Brilliant. Fun-loving...In the eyes of the public, Stephen quickly became not one of the greatest physicists of his generation, but one of the greatest minds since Plato...Stephen’s fame didn’t go to his head. He’d always had a certain arrogance as do most people who are that smart and accomplished e but he also appreciated that, smart as he was, nature is smarter, as all theorists know from experience,” Mlodinow writes. Thus, the completion of “The Grand Design” was the “end of an era” in Mlodinow’s life and he wondered whether their paths would cross again.

“After being together in the trenches for years, writing two books, arguing cooperating sharing our meals and our thoughts would our connections now fade,” he wondered.

In fact, due to their differing schedules, they rarely met in the four years after the completion of the second book and Hawking’s death on March 14, 2018.

“His passing has left a black hole in the lives of all who were his friends,” Mlodinow concludes.

JAYANTA GHOSAL

ON October 9, jewellery brand Tanishq circulated an advertisement that showed a Hindu woman and her Muslim mother-in-law. This 45-second ad on YouTube was named Ekatvam. It conveyed how the woman was married into a household where her in-laws treated her as if she was their own daughter. For the sake of the daughter-in-law they performed rituals they would not do usually. It was the union of two religions and the beautiful unification of their cultures.

Soon after the advertisement was posted, Congress leader and writer Shashi Tharoor welcomed it with praises. Along with Richa Chaddha, several actors sent their congratulations for the ad. Their opinion was that this was an amazing message for Hindu-Muslim unity.

But on the other side, on social media, an uproar began against this advertisement. BJP’s former MP Geetha and BJP’s information and technology and social media committee member Khemchandra Sharma strongly criticized the advertisement. All those who criticized the advertisement found the ‘love Jihad’ virus in it. A Muslim family performing a Hindu baby shower ritual -- they found this scene provoked and encouraged Hindu-Muslim matrimony.

The situation went to the point that Tanishq had to take down the advertisement. Titan, a Tata company, issued a statement saying the advertisement was not intended to hurt religious sentiments. Yet, for the sake of all, the ad was withdrawn.

Despite the withdrawal of the ad, the controversy over it persisted. The renowned adman, Prahlad Kakkar, stated that none of those ‘trolling’ the ad on social media were everyday people.



Trolling was premeditated. In most of the cases, it was done on behalf of a political party.

In 2019, there was a similar controversy over a Surf Excel advertisement. It depicted a Muslim boy on Holi, anxious that he would be splashed with colours by some Hindu boys. A little Hindu girl protects him by soaking in all the colours splashed by them. She is later seen taking the boy -- his white shirt without a blemish -- on her cycle to the mosque.

This controversy has a counter explanation as well. It is being said that our society is yet to be modernized to the extent that ‘cultural transfusion’ is easy. When the ‘unification of the mind’ does not take place in reality, this sort of ‘forcible societal reformative ad’ from outside has a negative effect on society. And hence companies like the Tatas have to step back with such advertisements.

So, what does the majority of this country want, even I am not aware. It is true that in Varanasi, the Kashi Viswanath temple is attached to the old mansions of Hindu Brahmin families -- along with it the Muslim settlement at Madanpura is historic as well. These two societies stay harmoniously, but the question persists whether each religion is aware of the other’s customs, rituals and

festivities. I was a student at the Ramakrishna Mission school in Narendrapur. Both sons of Kazi Aniruddha studied there. The elder son, Kazi Anirban, two years our senior, was a student of Fine Arts. He ranked first in his batch. I never thought of him as a Muslim. Again ‘Bangabandhu’s’ close colleague’s son, Sapan Jamal, was in our batch. We would eat together and move around all the time. Hindu or Muslim? Whoever asked that question? A few days ago I heard from the General Secretary of Belur Math, Swami Surivrandana, that a young Muslim man from Afghanistan had once become a monk. He was still alive -- nearly 95-years-old now. Again, many Hindus are converted as Muslims. This, in no way, is an issue of the government or the state. This is an entirely personal and societal issue.

Why just Hindus and Muslims -- it is good to have matrimonial bonds with those from other religions too. A few days ago I read my friend, journalist Suman Bhat-tacharya’s book, ‘A letter from a Hindu father to his Muslim daughter’. After reading Suman’s letters to his daughter, Kritika Tabbasum, I wondered where was the Hindu-Muslim controversy? Suman’s life partner’s daughter, his daughter -- this was human re-

lationship. After reading the book, I learnt that Suman knew nothing about the Gayatri Mantra or Saraswati Mantra -- he learnt them from his wife, even though she was Muslim. This is our India! They have offered sheets (chadar) at Haji Ali in Mumbai and sipped on lassi on the ghats of Varanasi.

Why did Sara Ali Khan worship at the Kashi Vishwanath Temple and why was she present during the evening prayer on the Ganges! Regarding this as well controversy arose. Sara’s father, Saif Ali Khan, is a Muslim by religion and her mother Amrita Singh, a Hindu. The UP Brahmin association was extremely unhappy that the temple authorities had allowed them to worship there.

What if this identity of ‘Hindu’ and ‘Muslim’ gets another identity, where is the problem? This pressure is not new to BJP or the Sangh Parivar. The RSS believes that every Indian is Hindu. However, Atal Bihari Vajpayee told me, “I prefer the term Indian nationalism more because what if a few people misunderstand when I say Hindu nationalism? Then what is the point of screaming Hindu nationalism by force!”

Vajpayee had said the same thing on national news media in interviews when he was Prime Minister -- although Lal Krishna Advani was in favour of the term Hindu nationalism.

My own thought process has gone through various changes. Today I feel India is the melting pot of various identities and, hence, India has remained and will remain integrated throughout. What’s the need for running the steam roller over Muslim religious entity and forcibly calling them ‘Hindu’?

At Sri Ramakrishna’s Sadhan Marg, there was Islam as well. He took religious teachings on Islam from Sufi saint Govinda Ray. He

would perform the namaaz everyday. Mentally, he transformed himself into a Muslim. He even wanted to consume beef but Rashmoni’s son-in-law Mathura Mohan forbade him from such an act. But Sri Ramakrishna did consume the ‘forbidden food’ of the time, that is chicken.

Conflict, violence and riots will take place if Muslim entity is not respected. The way a Muslim woman can become Hindu by marrying a Hindu man, in the same way one must remember that a Hindu woman can become an Indian Muslim by marrying a Muslim man.

At Narendrapur, in our prayer book, where the verses of all religions were written, there was Sri Sri Muhammad Sangeet. A few of my friends used to say this was Islam’s Hindu perspective. But even for Islam, it was necessary to keep the viewpoint towards Hinduism. If the concept of Majority and Minority is not abandoned then how will ‘Akhand Bharat’ form?

Sameena Dalwai, a professor at Jindal Law School has, in a newspaper column, has written that her parents had never heard of the term ‘Love Jihad’. Sameena’s parents met for the first time in 1971. They were members of the Yuvak Kranti Dal. Both would protest against exploitation of labour. Her mother was the daughter of Nalini Pandit and her father was a Konkani Muslim. There was consternation in the Hindu household about the marriage, many people warned that Muslims had the custom of triple talaq, and the marriage would not last! So returning to where I began: Tanishq’s advertisement! What was wrong with it? What was so erroneous in this advertisement?

*(Jayanta Ghosal is a senior journalist. The views expressed are personal)*

Difficulty of bureaucratic reforms in Haryana

K. YATISH RAJAWAT & SHABDITA TIWARI



A river can erode the biggest boulder in its path, but it does not stop or wait for the erosion, it flows around the rock. Over time, the boulder breaks down and disintegrates as dust to flow with the river. Reforms have to be like a river, they have to flow around the obstacles they cannot stop because of them. The best time for reforms is a crisis.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi understands that the crisis is the best time to reform systems and has pushed several administrative, legislative and process reforms in the last six months. State leaders who recognise this opportunity are following it. The Manohar Lal Khattar government in Haryana is trying to improve governance by restructuring and reforming the administrative set up.

On September 30, 2020, Vijal Vardhan, the new Chief Secretary took over the Haryana government and last week the CM reorganised the administrative structure in his office. These changes may not attract attention, but they are part of process reforms needed to improve efficiency. Even on the governance index, Haryana is slipping down, as shown by the Public Affairs Index where it is ranked 22nd while Goa is ranked number one and even smaller states like Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand are ranked higher at 3rd and 15th rank respectively. One factor that contributes to this low rank can be the paucity of IAS officers in the state with just 177 IAS officers, that is one officer for over two lakh people. The Haryana administration is in need of serious administrative reforms. The coronavirus pandemic triggered a slowdown in growth, combined with reduced state revenues affects the state government’s capacity to invest in growth. One important change is that the state government’s investment will become an important factor in growth. This is because private sector investment will remain low and the Central government has already given a Rs 20 lakh crore stimulus. But the state government’s impact depends on the capacity of its system to execute crucial schemes. Hence, it boils down to the administrative system -- IAS officers in the state. Will they rise to this challenge or will it become a power struggle with the IPS and the HCS officers?

The state has a low ratio of administrative officers to population, a historical anomaly not corrected by successive administration. This means one IAS officer handling multiple departments, sometimes 5-6 departments, a complex

task in normal circumstances. An impossible task in a crisis. It is almost impossible to handle more than one department for any officer, however, capable or hard working. But the power struggle is such that officers take pride in being given more departments, only a few say no. Acquiring prestige by getting multiple departments does not result in efficiency and delivery.

Recently on October 28, 34 IAS officers were transferred within the administration, it later rescinded some of the transfers and later the rescissions hinted at an attempt to reform a system not accepted by the bureaucracy.

For instance, the reforms in the Regional Transport Authority (RTA) is a classical case study of opposition to the administrative reforms in Haryana. It is a citizen facing an organisation that has often faced the ire of the public. Has many complaints of corruption highlighted by the government’s own flying squad. The charge of the RTA has been granted to officers from the Haryana Civil Services to combat corruption in the department. Further, even IPS officers and IFS officers in Haryana are being given administrative responsibilities in the government to fill the gaps due to paucity of the IAS officers in the state. This has resulted in a power struggle. The conflict is against the interest of the state and its citizens and will impact the recovery and economic growth on the state

Administrative system is not a physical or biological being; it only exists because it allows people to collaborate and execute. It does not exist otherwise, and if the political system and executive cannot collaborate and function fully, it will affect not just the citizens but may cause forcible reforms or change. Any lobby that destroys the ability of the system to collaborate will cause lasting damage to the survival of the system. In a Covid environment, this may even involve a Central government intervention to ensure the system accepts reforms.

While in a crisis everything may seem like a priority, especially as it’s a health-care crisis. But to sustain lives, liveli-

hood has to be there. People in the Agriculture and MSMEs are facing livelihood challenges and need the state government’s intervention. These two sectors contribute to 15 per cent and 22 per cent of GDP of the state, support over 59 lakh jobs. Job opportunities lost in the MSME and agricultural sectors during the Covid period amount to 30 million nationally, people who shifted from agriculture to the rural employment during Covid period. Total impact of this on the state GDP’s fall by 3.7 per cent, revenue loss to the state of 28.5 per cent. The services sector growth fell from 8.8 per cent to 5 per cent, it has over 50 per cent share in the state’s GDP. The migration of white collars workers from Gurgaon is adversely affecting real estate pricing, rentals, and other elements.

The government also needs to defuse the opposition plans to create a Punjab like agitation among farmers in Haryana. This is not a communication problem but an execution challenge for the various departments under the ministry of Agriculture. Several recent schemes announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi like PMMSY and PDKCC have to be executed fully. These are schemes which have large subsidy components, hence successful execution matters both for allocation share of the state and impact on farmers’ livelihood. These schemes need execution oriented officers in charge at all levels from the state capital to district and block level. If they cannot find these officers in the IAS then the state government has to find alternatives from other cadres.

The MSME problem is an ecosystem revival challenge combined with a liquidity crisis. Hence, it has to be tackled at multiple levels. It may need the state level banking committee to be cajoled and convinced to increase its lending to this sector, almost like monitoring the priority sector lending.

The executive may not be used to this new role of being a facilitator and enabler. It is a sea change from making things work through coercion and penalties. Some people will adapt and others will get swept away as this becomes the new normal. The river of change may slow down because of the opposition by incumbents. But reforms are natural and cannot be delayed for long, the river of reforms will find a way around it.

*(K. Yatish Rajawat is a public policy expert and runs a public policy think tank. Shabdita Tiwari works as a public policy researcher. The views expressed are personal)*

Crumbling urban infrastructure: Need for greenfield urban centres

I Y R KRISHNA RAO

MORE than anything else monsoon exposes the shortcomings and gaps in the urban infrastructure in India. It has now become normal for Mumbai to come to a grinding halt for a few days on heavy rainy days in the monsoon. Normally cities located away from the coast escape this type of a deluge though traffic snarls and inundated roads are common in all these cities on any rainy day. But this year it was unusual in Hyderabad when the city received one fourth of its annual rainfall in one day resulting in large-scale inundation and rain water entering houses and office complexes. Information technology offices of companies like Infosys and others are also not spared.

At the root of the problem is the reluctance of the State government to invest adequately in urban infrastructure. All State governments look at urban centres



as milch cows generating surpluses for distribution to their electoral lobbies not necessarily the most deserving, and for taking up projects which can generate kickbacks for their electoral funds. But this neglect of urban infrastructure can end up as killing the goose that lays the golden eggs. With competition from across the globe to attract investments the urban centres in India will have to compete globally to attract investments. Given creaking urban infrastructure it’s only a matter of time before investment starts looking for alternative urban centres in other countries. Government of India is trying to improve the urban infrastructure in terms of certain specific programs like smart cities, Amrut etc but unless the State governments own up the urban centres start investing substantially on infrastructure facilities in these cities they may not improve to a level where they can internationally compete to attract investments. Cities like Hyderabad and Bangalore attract substantial investments in spite of the poor urban infrastructure because of huge talent pool that exist in these big cities. That is one reason why mostly back offices get located in these cities while the headquarters and regional offices always get located in

places like Singapore and Hong Kong. Calcutta, Chennai, Mumbai which were the capitals of the British presidencies had a unique multilingual cosmopolitan culture under the British. India had an opportunity of declaring them as union territories at the time of independence and invest in them as major growth engines. The states bifurcated on linguistic basis could have been advised to set up their own capitals as per their choice. But that opportunity is lost and today all these presidency capitals are under the control of respective states organised on linguistic lines. It would be worthwhile for Government of India to explore the possibilities of setting up greenfield urban centres initially one on the East coast

and the other on the West coast. They should develop as union territories with a dedicated port and defined hinterland which can be an industrial area. Necessary arrangement can be worked out with State governments for procurement of land by getting into an agreement to share the revenues generated by these urban centres with those States.

Other than sharing of revenue state should not have any say in running these union territories. Since the urban centres are going to be green field the development will not be constrained by the existing urban agglomerations hence they can be built to compete with any of the best urban agglomerations in the world. That is the only way India can remain competitive in providing the necessary quality urban infrastructure to attract investments.

Let us not forget when Mumbai was a thriving port city and was a major hub in the East Singapore and Hong Kong, Dubai were nowhere in the picture. It just took few decades of good leadership and adequate investment in urban infrastructure to make these cities major commercial hubs in the East while cities like Mumbai, Kolkata went from bad to worse.



# Jewellers bet on Dhanteras for better gold sales this yr

Expect to clock up to 70% of last year's business during this festive season

Jewellers are betting on recovery and are optimistic that a rebound in the economy and pent up demand will help boost sales during this 'Dhanteras' and the industry is likely to do up to 70 per cent of last year's business.

Notwithstanding the ruling high gold prices and ongoing Covid-19 uncertainties, jewellers are expecting a revival in retail sales this festive season as the yellow metal has always been an integral part to festivals in India, particularly so during Dhanteras, Diwali, and the ensuing wedding season.

"There has been a gradual growth in both footfalls and sales since the beginning of the festive season which has grown even more since the last few days despite the ongoing uncertainties over Covid. This has made us hopeful that we will be able to do 70 per cent of last year's business during Dhanteras," All India Gems and Jewellery Domestic Council (GJF) Chairman Anantha Padmanabhan.

Gold prices have been ruling in the range of Rs 52,000 per 10 grams in the country. "Millions of Indians believe that purchasing gold during the auspicious occasion of Dhanteras will usher in good fortune and wealth. Reflecting this sentiment, this year, Dhanteras is likely to mark the onset of a modest buying period, providing some respite after a prolonged phase of suppressed demand and subdued activity due to the current pandemic," World Gold Council Managing Director, India, Somasundaram PR said.

Digital gold providers like SafeGold, Augmont and MMTC-PAMP and other online platforms could find this period very conducive for increasing volumes and for broadening the



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—Somasundaram PR, World Gold Council-India MD



consumer base, he said adding that "the higher savings following drop in consumption expenditure of many households as a result of lockdown could flow to gold."

According to CapitalVia Global Research product manager, commodities, Kshitij Purohit, the US dollar remains a crucial driver for the precious metal going forward. In anticipation of festive demand, gold has taken a new stage in Indian markets and in August it showed a month-on-month gain of 107 per cent, he said adding that focusing on the current data, it is unlikely to cool off the prices of gold, despite being the continuing pandemic.

"Technically, MCX Gold December has jumped above Rs 52,000 per 10 grams, where it holds a strong support at Rs 51,200. All uncertainty due to Covid-19 and festive demand from the India gold price will remain firm. We are also expecting follow up buying due to marriage season also," he added.

PNG Jewellers Chairman and Managing Director Saurabh Gadgil stated that this festive

season the footfalls are fairly regular, and the market seems to be in a revival mode.

"We are seeing a clear trend of agri-business backed families spending more. Rural India is showing more consumption appetite than the metros. Gold is still the most favoured purchase for the festive season.

A lot of people including Millennial and first-time investors are favouring gold as an investment option. We are also seeing strong bookings in light-weight and wearable jewellery to be picked up for Dhanteras and Diwali besides bullion products," he said.

He further added that "we are expecting to do business of around 85 per cent of last Diwali in quantity terms and most certainly we will exceed last year's business in value terms since gold prices have risen in these last 12 months."

"Consumers are looking to bring in auspiciousness to their lives whilst shopping with care and, therefore, have valued the safety standards that we have established in our stores. Our new collection offers good value

and freshness in the wearable, affordable, lightweight category as well as in the bridal jewellery category that we owe to our karigars whose skills have come to the fore beautifully this festive season," Titan Company Tanishq VP- Category, Marketing and Retail, Arun Narayan said.

Senco Gold and Diamonds CEO Suvankar Sen said, "this Dhanteras, we are expecting similar sales levels in value terms as last year. In volume terms, there might be a 15-20 per cent decrease compared to last year. The pandemic and the subsequent rise in gold prices has reinforced customers' trust in gold as an asset class", he opined.

We should get back to pre-Covid levels once there is stability in the market and more certainty in people's minds.

Bridal jewellery is doing well since it's an Indian tradition of buying jewellery for weddings. Also designs that look heavy but weigh lighter, and daily wear jewellery in diamonds and platinum are doing well, he added. (PTI)

# Rising corporate fund inflows to strengthen ₹

Analysts have predicted the rupee to range between 73.60 and 74.40 with a 'appreciation bias' from last week's band of 73.80 to 74.88

ROHIT VAID

RISING corporate fund inflows along with buoyant equities are expected to strengthen the Indian rupee in the coming week. Analysts have predicted the rupee to range between 73.60 and 74.40 with a 'appreciation bias' from last week's band of 73.80 to 74.88.

"Increase in corona cases globally shall keep casting risk on markets, while vaccine development shall keep the hopes high. Besides, the US Fed's vow to keep rates low should help market buoyancy," said Sajal Gupta, Head, Forex and Rates, Edelweiss Securities."

Another big announcement with regard to Reliance Retail stake sale shall help keep the rupee at a strong footing, and we expect these tranches flowing in at regular intervals for the next two months, Gupta added.

Last week, the rupee closed at 74.08 to a greenback. "We expect the rupee to halt its current bout of appreciation near the 74-mark and consolidate near that levels for the next week," said Devarsh Vakil, Deputy Head of Retail Research at HDFC Securities. On the upside, 74.4 will act as a resistance, Vakil added.

Besides, analysts said that an early outcome of the US presidential elections will buoy sentiments. On the domestic front, market participants will keep an eye out for the inflation and industrial production numbers.

According to Gaurang Somaiya, Forex and Bullion Analyst, Motilal Oswal Financial Services: "Expectation is that inflation could inch higher and that could keep rupee gains in check. At the same time, volatility for the rupee has been curtailed as the RBI has been intervening to curb any major appreciation or depreciation of the currency.

"Investors will be awaiting for more clarity on the US presiden-



tial election results and that could trigger volatility for major crosses." In addition, Somaiya expects

the rupee to trade positive against the US dollar and quote in the range of 73.50 and 74.50.

## Global push, local cues to accelerate equities' rise

Fast paced economic recovery along with healthy earnings results are expected to accelerate the rise of India's main benchmark equity indices during the upcoming trade week.

Besides, analysts opined that positive global cues such as an early outcome of the US Presidential elections will buoy sentiments. On the domestic front, healthy reading in high frequency data on factory output data, along with better than expected quarterly results with a rise in auto sales volume and robust GST collection will continue to support the upward trajectory.

"The overall structure of the market remains positive. With the economic activity recovering fast, more earnings upgrade cannot be ruled out," said Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

"Further strong global markets

can keep the liquidity abundant in the system, thus providing support to the overall market." In terms of the US Presidential election, Deepak Jasani- Head of Retail Research at HDFC Securities pointed out the process was still unresolved going into the weekend, but even "if Biden is declared winner, close votes and lawsuits are likely to result in recounts".

"Technically apart from positive global cues and FPI flows, the local corporate results give one more reason to cheer going into key festive week," Jasani said.

"Nifty is just 167 points away from its all-time high. Though it does not seem difficult at all going by the momentum seen over the last few days, global markets show signs of slowing down. However Q2 results from Indian corporates may lead Indian markets to outperform for some time."

QUIZ NO. 147

## HANS BIZ QUIZ

### 'Christie Hefner'

1. Christie Hefner was born on 8 November 1952 in Chicago, graduated from Interlochen Arts Academy, and then an English Literature major from Brandeis University. She was elected to Phi Beta Kappa, the national scholastic honour society. With which publication she began her writing career?

- a) The New York Times newspaper
- b) Boston Phoenix newspaper
- c) Penthouse magazine
- d) Playboy magazine

2. At Brandeis University, after not wanting to be associated with Playboy and didn't want people to know the identity of her father, Christie Hefner changed her name to Christie Ann Gunn. Where did she pick up the last name 'Gunn' from?

- a) Her Mother's maiden name
- b) Paternal grandmother's name
- c) Stepfather's last name
- d) A random last name

3. Christie Hefner began working at Playboy fresh out of college. In 1982, she was made president of Playboy Enterprises and became chairman and CEO in 1988 and held that position until 2009. She relinquished her position at Playboy in January 2009. Who had been the guiding light and inspiration to her charity work and social service?

- a) Martin Luther King Jr. b) Mother Mary Teresa
- c) Barack Obama d) Bill Gates

4. When did Christie Hefner establish "The Hugh M. Hefner First Amendment Award" to honour persons who made contributions in the vital effort to protect and enhance First Amendment rights for all Americans?

- a) 2005 b) 1999 c) 1995 d) 1979

5. Christie Hefner was a year old in 1953 when her father started Playboy. Christie Hefner's father, Hugh Hefner, will forever be remembered as the crowned head of luxury living and the soft-porn king always surrounded by beauties and bunny girls. When did she launch the Playboy Television Channel?

- a) 1 November 1982 b) 8 November 1996
- c) 24 December 2002 d) 1 January 2007

6. Christie worked tirelessly to expand Playboy's franchise, and, as a result of her efforts, the magazine acquired more consumers and fans than at any time in our history. How many localized foreign editions of Playboy magazine were published during Christie's tenure?

- a) 6 b) 12 c) 25 d) 32



7. Christie Hefner served as CEO of Playboy Enterprises for two decades, the longest-serving female CEO of a listed company, where she oversaw the transformation of a single publication into a brand-driven global multi-media company. When did Christie launch of Playboy.com, the first national magazine to launch a website?

- a) 1991 b) 1994 c) 1998 d) 2000

8. Christie is heavily involved in multiple political initiatives focusing on first amendment issues, women's rights, and treatment for people living with HIV/AIDS. With which of the below she did not associate or serve as the advisory board member?

- a) R D Offutt Company, a multi-billion-dollar agricultural conglomerate
- b) Edge Beauty, niche fragrance brands
- c) Christian Dior, French fashion and accessories brand
- d) Newlight Technologies, Environmental Tech company

9. During her tenure, over 40% of employees at Playboy were women. For three consecutive years, she was voted as the "Most Powerful Women. Identify the company on whose board Christie served?

- a) The Center for American Progress Action, the public policy think tank
- b) Springboard Enterprises, a non-profit accelerator for women tech entrepreneurs
- c) Hatchbeauty Brands, a brand incubator
- d) All of the above

10. William Marovitz, a former state Senator and former husband of Christie Hefner, had to settle civil charges of insider trading in Playboy Enterprises Inc's shares, the iconic company his wife once led. Despite warned by Christie, Marovitz allegedly bought and sold Playboy shares at least five times. Which of the below company tried to acquire Playboy in 2009?

- a) Iconix Brand group b) Vogue Magazine
- c) News Corporation d) Elle Magazine

The Hans Biz Quiz has been compiled by **Sunil Dhavala**, CEO, The Third Umpire Media. He had held senior management roles at Bertelsmann, NGC, Fox Broadcasting, Star TV and others. He is an alumnus of Indian Institute of Foreign Trade

KEY

1B 2C 3C 4D 5A 6C 7B 8C 9D 10A

# Domestic air passenger traffic on a gradual rise

The capacity is expected to go up to 70-75% due to festive season

Domestic air travel demand continued on an upward trajectory month-on-month, with the October volume witnessing a 33 per cent growth to 52 lakh passengers over September, Icara said.

On a year-on-year basis, however, the domestic travel demand declined 58 per cent and internationally the fall was 87 per cent, it said. The Indian aviation industry has witnessed continued recovery in domestic passenger traffic in October with a sequential growth (over September) of around 33 per cent to around 52 lakh passengers, Icara said. Icara further noted that the capacity deployment in October 2020 at around 52 per cent over the same month last year, is a significant increase over the around 33 per cent capacity deployed in August and around 46 per cent ca-



The average number of passengers per flight during October 2020, was 106, as against an average of 131 passengers per flight in October 2019

capacity in September this year.

The Civil Aviation Ministry in June had permitted increasing the capacity to 45 per cent with effect from June 27 from a maximum of one-third at the time of resumption of domestic flights from May 25, which was further scaled up to 60 per cent from September 2. The capacity is expected to go up to 70-75 per cent in the coming days in view of the festive season, the government had said.

According to Icara, the cumulative domestic passenger volumes since the resumption of domestic flight services in a graded manner from May 25, till October 31, was around 16 million. "The number of flights departing has also gradually increased from 416 on Day 1 to 1,749 on Day 156 (October 26, 2020). For October, the average daily departures were around 1,574, significantly lower than the average daily departures of 3,031 in

October 2019, though better than around 1,311 in September 2020," said Kinjal Shah, Vice President, ICARA.

Also, the average number of passengers per flight during October 2020, was 106, as against an average of 131 passengers per flight in October 2019, she said. Therefore, it is expected that the domestic aviation industry operated at a passenger load factor (PLF) of around 68 per cent in October 2020, as

against 83.6 per cent in October 2019, that too on a low capacity, she added.

PLF or seat factor is a measure of how much of an airline's passenger carrying capacity is used or average percentage of seats filled in an aircraft. According to Shah, the PLF for October was higher than 63.2 per cent in September, despite the increase in capacity deployment by around 24 per cent.

Under the Vande Bharat Mission, the international passenger traffic, both (inbound and outbound, was 10,96,709 between May 7 (when the services commenced) to October 31, as per Icara. The international passenger traffic declined 87 per cent to 255,075 year-on-year, though sequentially it improved by about 22 per cent, Icara said.

# Reliance Retail secures over \$6bn since Sept

Public Investment Fund (PIF) Saudi Arabia has invested in Reliance Retail Ventures Limited (RRVL) at a pre-money valuation of Rs 4.59 trillion (\$62.4 billion), which is 7-9 per cent higher than earlier investments in RRVL.

According to a research by financial services firm Bernstein, Silver Lake's initial \$1 billion investment and the KKR investment were at a pre-money equity value of Rs 4.21 trillion (\$57.3 billion) and others were at a pre-money valuation of Rs 4.28 trillion (\$58.3 billion). PIF's investment is at a pre-money valuation of Rs 4.59 trillion (\$62.4 billion), 7-9 per cent higher than earlier investments.

The PIF Saudi Arabia sovereign wealth fund has invested \$1.3 billion in the holding company of RRVL for a 2.04 per cent stake. RRVL has raised more than \$6 billion since Sep-



tember 2020 by diluting 10.3 per cent stake. Other investors include GIC (\$750 million, only retail), Silver Lake (\$1.25 billion), KKR (\$750 million), Mubadala (\$830 million), ADIA (\$750 million), General Atlantic (\$500 million), and TPG (\$250 million).

Earlier this year, PIF had invested \$1.5 billion in Jio Platforms for a 2.32 per

cent stake. In a related development, WhatsApp Pay has got approval to go live on the UPI platform. WhatsApp Pay will begin scaling up the users with a maximum of 20 million initially.

In April, WhatsApp had entered into a separate commercial partnership with Reliance Retail/JioMart. Like WeChat in China, What-

sApp could become a 'Super App' that allows Reliance to bundle commerce solutions, payments/Fintech and media/content solutions, benefiting Reliance Jio/FB customers.

As per the research, Reliance Retail is the largest retailer in India and operates 12,000 stores, with 640 million footfalls across core categories of grocery, consumer electronics and apparel. Revenue for Reliance Retail in FY20 was Rs 1.63 trillion (\$21.7 billion). Reliance Retail saw a strong recovery in Q2FY21, aided by easing of lockdowns.

JioMart, the e-commerce platform, was launched in May 2020. Reliance aims to digitise kirana stores through its new commerce business. In Q2FY21, JioMartkirana partnerships were expanded to 20 cities and orders grew four times compared to Q1FY21.

## 'India to become fastest growing economy'

India is expected to become the 'Fastest Growing' major economy from FY22, PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry said on Saturday.

According to Sanjay Aggarwal, President, PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the country's economy is "going to attain its fastest growth trajectory from the next financial year 2021-22 onwards".

In a recent growth estimate by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), India is projected to become the fastest growing economy among the top 10 major economies in the world economic system from 2021 to 2025. "The average GDP growth of Indian economy in next five years from 2021 to 2025 will be at 7.8 per cent, highest as compared with top 10 economies including 6.2 per cent of China, 3 per cent of France, 2.9 per cent of United Kingdom, 2.9 per cent of Canada, 2.4 of United States, 2.3 per cent of Germany, 2.3 per cent of Italy, 2.3 per cent of Brazil and 1.4 per cent of Japan," Aggarwal was quoted as saying.



# Resurgent Sunrisers to take on erratic Delhi Capitals

ABU DHABI

PEAKING at the right time and with all their boxes ticked, Sunrisers Hyderabad are certain to hold sway over a dishevelled Delhi Capitals in the second Indian Premier League qualifier here on Sunday.

The past couple of weeks have been a picture in contrast for the two franchises. After an underwhelming first half, Sunrisers Hyderabad started pushing the envelope with the mercurial David Warner marshalling his resources well.

Capitals, on the other hand, looked like serious contenders till their first nine games, winning seven in that phase before an inexplicable slump saw them lose five out of their next six matches with skipper Shreyas Iyer looking all at sea.

The current situation notwithstanding, young Iyer would want to lead the Capitals to their first summit clash in 13 editions while Warner wouldn't mind adding another silverware to his 2016 triumph. In fact, if he can win the next two games, Warner could boast of guiding comparatively one of the more inexperienced teams in this IPL.

For Capitals, the biggest worry has been their top-order woes -- especially the first three slots where Shikhar Dhawan (525 in 15 games) has shone the brightest. Prithvi Shaw's (228 from 13 games) technique against top quality fast bowling has left a lot to be desired and Ajinkya Rahane (111 from 7 games) has had only one knock of note so far. Something that would definitely worry coach Ricky Ponting is the number of ducks by the top-order -- nine.

Dhawan has four, Shaw has three and Rahane didn't bother the scorers twice. However, the bowling unit has done well save a few occasions like the first qualifier, where Mumbai Indians batting took them apart. Kagiso Rabada (25 wickets), Anrich Nortje (20) and Ravichandran Ashwin (13) have done exceedingly well in most of the games.

Sunrisers' batting line-up, which has gathered momentum over the last few games, is well aware of that, and 'Orange Army's' premier all-rounder Jason Holder acknowledged the fact. "What we have done in batting is that we have been aggressive upfront. David has obviously led the charge, well supported by (Wriddhiman) Saha.

"Jonny (Bairstow) has done an outstanding job and Manish (Pandey) has kept the momentum going," Holder said when asked about their strategy to face DC attack. "And then we have the level headedness of Kane (Williamson). Being good to come and finish games. So we don't play names, we see the ball and strike the ball," Holder said.

Saha's groin injury, which ruled him

out of the eliminator, might also keep him out of the second qualifier. "We have faith in (Shreevats) Goswami. He has been around for some time and we need to give confidence," said Holder, whose 13 wickets in six games along with crucial middle-order contributions, has been the 'x factor' for his side.

Rashid Khan's parsimonious economy rate of less than six runs per over, the unheralded T Natarajan's subtle variations and S a n d e e p Sharma's ability to get some swing upfront only add to the strengths of Warner's team.

For the Capitals however, the weak spots which

## IPL Qualifier 2

they can exploit is the inexperience of two middle-order players -- Priyam Garg and Abdul Samad -- who are playing some of the biggest matches of their nascent careers. In the event Capitals make early inroads, it will be a test of character for the young but talented duo. Daniel Sams' poor show with the ball so far is a concern for the Capitals and they might explore the option of bringing back Shimron Hetmyer in place of the left-arm seamer, which will also add some batting firepower. In that case, Marcus Stoinis might have to bowl his full quota of overs alongside Rabada, Nortje, Ashwin and Axar Patel. Teams (from): Delhi Capitals: Shreyas Iyer (c), Kag-i s o

Rabada, Marcus Stoinis, Sandeep Lamichhane, Ishant Sharma, Ajinkya Rahane, Ravichandran Ashwin, Shikhar Dhawan, Shimron Hetmyer, Alex Carey, Mohit Sharma, Prithvi Shaw, Lalit Yadav, Avesh Khan, Axar Patel, Tushar Deshpande, Rishabh Pant, Harshal Patel, Keemo Paul, Amit Mishra, Anrich

Nortje, Daniel Sams. Sunrisers Hyderabad: David Warner (C), Jonny Bairstow, Kane Williamson, Manish Pandey, Shreevats Goswami, Virat Singh, Priyam Garg, Wriddhiman Saha, Abdul Samad, Vijay Shankar, Mohammad Nabi, Rashid Khan, Jason Holder, Abhishek Sharma, B Sandeep, Sanjay Yadav, Fabian Allen, Prithvi Raj Yarra, Khaleel Ahmed, Sandeep Sharma, Shahbaz Nadeem, Siddharth Kaul, Billy Stanlake, T Natarajan, Basil Thampi. .



Royal Challengers Bangalore skipper Virat Kohli and Moeen Ali greet Kane Williamson and Jason Holder of Sunrisers Hyderabad after the latter's win in the eliminator match of the Indian Premier League (IPL), at the Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi on Friday

## With 4 intl captains, SRH prove they have the edge

NEW DELHI

SUNRISERS Hyderabad (SRH) are making the most of the presence of four international captains in their line-up with two of them, Jason Holder and Kane Williamson, combining to lead the team home in a tricky chase against Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) in Friday night's Eliminator.

Both Kane Williamson, who leads New Zealand in international cricket, and Jason Holder, who captains West Indies, added unbeaten 65 runs for the fifth wicket on a tricky spin-friendly surface to lead their team to a six-wicket win over RCB.

Earlier, Holder picked three wickets for 25 to lead the bowling which also had Afghanistan captain Rashid Khan who bowled miserly again with figures of 4-0-22-0. The duo helped restrict RCB to 131 for seven in 20 overs.

Ever since Holder has joined the team, on October 22,

SRH have won five of their six games, and now are just two games away from the Indian Premier League title.

While Holder has picked 13 wickets in six matches besides his couple of cameos with the bat, the other three -- Williamson, Rashid and former Australia skipper David Warner, who is leading SRH in IPL, too have contributed to the team's cause.

Williamson's fifty (50 not out off 44 balls) against RCB was his second match-winning contribution this IPL after a 26-ball 41 against DC in an earlier game, but his presence in the middle-order is beginning to materialise now. SRH had benched him in between, but had to bring him back after they realised that the middle-order was vulnerable without him.

"We have calmness, level-headedness with Kane in the middle," Holder said after the partnership between the two



on Friday. Williamson repaid the compliment after the game saying, "He (Holder) is cooler than me. The all-rounder role in the team has been well held by him."

Leg-spinner Rashid Khan is the leading wicket-taker for SRH with 19 scalps and more importantly, has the best economy rate in this season's IPL with 5.30 runs per over.

"Rashid is the leader of the attack. I am running out of superlatives for both - Williamson and Rashid," added Holder.

Skipper Warner is the second highest run-getter in the IPL this season with 546 runs and is 124 runs behind KXIP skipper KL Rahul in the race for Orange Cap. He has scored four half-centuries, two of which have come in the last four games when SRH have turned it on to surge back into the competition. (IANS)

## Kohli's captaincy reaches new low, but no sign of change at RCB

NEW DELHI

ON a day when Virat Kohli's captaincy in the Indian Premier League came under fire from former cricketers, there seemed to be no sign of change at the helm of the franchise. The coaching staff comprising Mike Hesson and Simon Katich did not say anything about change in captaincy in their interaction with the media for the 2021 IPL season which could be just five months away.

Kohli, who became RCB skipper in 2013, has had the longest run at helm of a franchise after Chennai Super Kings' MS Dhoni. However, unlike Dhoni or Rohit Sharma and even Gautam Gambhir he has failed to win a single title. Friday's defeat to SunRis-ers Hyderabad in the IPL Eliminator is the



eight season in which RCB have failed to win a title under Kohli's captaincy.

Among the four big Indian captains in IPL, he has the lowest success percentage and is the only one among them to have a success rate of below 50%.

Former cricketers Sanjay Manjrekar and Gambhir, while speaking to ESPNcricinfo, called for a change with Gambhir saying that eight years without a title is a long time and that Kohli should quit himself taking responsibility. Manjrekar added that while Kohli won't quit by himself, the owners of the franchise will have to take the hard decision.

While both Hesson and Katich said on Saturday that Kohli has led the team well, is very well respected, and invested in the group and, with his wife Anushka Sharma, has spent plenty of time with the group, encouraging the players, the India skipper's on-field decisions have attracted criticism. Even as former cricketers Brian Lara and Graeme Swann spoke against him opening the batting against SRH on Friday, Virat went in and in the process shook the batting order with specialist Australian opener Aaron Finch moved to No. 3.

The move to open the innings seemed negative as it came after concerns over his slow batting in the middle-overs where he hasn't scored freely due to slowing surfaces and with Rashid Khan looming in the

SRH line-up, he felt he would use the pace in powerplay. Unfortunately for RCB, he was dismissed early.

Kohli's strike rate this season has been his slowest since he took over regular captaincy in 2013.

"Once he went to open, that changed the whole dynamics and the batting order," admitted Katich.

Earlier in the tournament, his decision to demote AB de Villiers to No. 6 -- just after a match in which he had scored a 33-ball 73 at No.4 -- too had attracted criticism as the South African didn't get enough deliveries to bat and RCB failed to post a possibly winning total and lost the match. Hesson added that the batting struggled on slower surfaces and the team "got sub-par scores in the last four-five games" which was not enough for the bowling side.

While some of his decisions like opening the bowling in a game with Mohammed Siraj seemed to have paid off, there seemed to be no excuse for the changes in batting order which according to the coaches was carefully planned with batsmen picked ahead of the season to complement each other. (IANS)

## Kuldeep picked for ODIs on past performances

NEW DELHI

CHINAMAN bowler Kuldeep Yadav had been at the forefront of India's spin attack since June 2017 when skipper Virat Kohli decided to draft him and leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal in place of R Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja, even leading them to a historic ODI series win over South Africa in 2018. But over the past one year, his form and luck have waned.

His past performances and captain Kohli's preferences seem to have influenced selectors to pick him in the India ODI side for Australia, although his form of late hasn't been good in that format. Kuldeep hasn't been included for the subsequent T20 series.

Since his thrashing at the hands of England in the 50-over World Cup last year when he gave away 72 runs in 10 overs, the left-arm unorthodox spinner has failed to make as good an impression in the ODIs as he earlier had.

Between his debut on June 23, 2017 till June 29, 2019, a day before he got thrashed by England in the World Cup, he had picked 91 wickets in 49 matches at an average of 23.06 and returned an economy rate of 4.88. He got a wicket after every 28.3 balls.

Compared with this period, the next phase recorded his decline. Between July 1, 2019, i.e. a day after England thrashing, till February 5, 2020, when he played his last ODI, he picked 12 wickets in 10 matches at an average of 45.83. In this period, he conceded 5.97 runs per over and bagged a wicket every 46th ball.

He got whipped for 84 runs in 10 overs in the last ODI he played, in Hamilton. Even in the four ODIs before that -- all at home against Australia and WI -- he conceded runs without taking many wickets.



Clearly, his skills in the ODIs have waned, of late, and the only reason he could be travelling with the team is that there aren't many other experienced wrist-spin options for India in the ODIs.

Although on Australia's bouncy surfaces, wrist spin will hold the key, India could have tried experienced off-spinner R Ashwin, who has had an impressive IPL outing with Delhi Capitals by taking 13 wickets in 13 matches. Ashwin picked many of his wickets through pure traditional, off-spinner's skills.

Kuldeep's chances of making a comeback in India's T20 side, where he had been reasonably good until his last two internationals, has been hindered by his franchise Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) not playing him much this season as they already had two quality bowlers who could dish out mystery spin.

A look at the list of wicket-takers in the IPL this season shows Kuldeep at the 70th position. Even in the five games he played, he took only one wicket.

Ahead of him in the wicket-takers' list are not just Yuzvendra Chahal, Varun Chakravarty, Rahul Chahar, R Ashwin, Ravi Bishnoi, Rahul Tewatia, M Ashwin, Shreyas Gopal, Krnal Pandya, Ravindra Jadeja, and Shahbaz Nadeem but also ageing spinners like Piyush Chawla, Karn Sharma, and Amit Mishra.

Will he pick up the gauntlet and deliver? (IANS)

## Rs.67.32cr for upgradation of six centres for Khelo India: Sports Min

NEW DELHI

RS 67.32 crore has been set aside for upgradation of six centres across the country for Khelo India Centre of Excellence (KISCE) for financial year 2020-21 and four subsequent years, the Sports Ministry announced on Saturday.

The ministry said it has approved upgradation of States Sports Academy, Sarusajai, Guwahati for which Rs 7.96 crore has been allotted; JNS Complex, Shillong (Rs 8.39 cr); Paljor Stadium, Gangtok (Rs 7.91 cr); New Sports Complex, Silvassa (Rs

8.05 cr); Madhya Pradesh State Academy (Rs 19 cr); and, Shree Shivchhatrapati Sports Complex, Balewadi in Pune (Rs 16 cr).

The support provided to the centres will include upgradation of infrastructure along with setting up of sports science centres and providing "quality coaches and sports science human resources like physiotherapists, strength and conditioning experts and so on". The academies will also be provided with a "high performance manager to ensure quality of sports science input and performance management".

## I-League to begin on Jan 9 in Kolkata

NEW DELHI

THE 14th edition of I-League football tournament will kick off on January 9, 2021, in Kolkata. Eleven teams will need to enter the bio-secure bubble 14 days prior to their first match according to the schedule, which will be announced shortly.

The matches will be telecast live on ISports.

Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the previous edition of I-League came to an abrupt halt before football action resumed once again in India through I-League Qualifier 2020 in October this year. The government of



West Bengal and Indian Football Association (IFA) joined hands with All India Football Federation to organise the qualifiers successfully.

All eleven teams will face each other once in the first leg of the league before they are divided into two groups. Top six teams,

according to the points table, will face each other once again to decide the winner whereas the other five teams will play against each other in a one-leg league format.

The team with maximum points (cumulative points collected from all 15 matches) will be the winner of I-League 2020-21.

The entire tournament will be hosted in accordance with COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedure released by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and no spectator will be allowed inside a stadium during any match.