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🔸 Simultaneously published from Hyderabad | Warangal | Tirupati | Amaravati | Visakhapatnam | Khammam | Kurnool | Delhi: RNI No: DELENG/2017/74095 🌑

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WINDOWS



A sparrow collects rice grain on World Sparrow Day, in Guwahati on Saturday

CJI Bobde told to recommend his successor

NEW DELHI: With a little over a month left before Chief Justice of India SA Bobde retires, the Union government has started the process of appointment of next CJI, asking the incumbent to recommend his successor. Law Minister

Ravi Shankar Prasad Friday sent a letter to Justice Bobde, who is set to retire on April 23, seeking his recommendation, sources said.

Hosabale replaces Bhaiyya Joshi as RSS general secretary

NEW DELHI: The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) on Saturday elected Dattatreya Hosabale its as its general secretary in Bengaluru. The 65year-old replaces Suresh Bhaiyyaji Joshi, 73, who completed four terms of three years each. Elected by nearly 1,500 members of the Akhil Bhartiya Pratinidhi Sabha (ABPS), RSS' highest decisionmaking body, Hosabale will hold the position for three years, after which the post will be open for re-election.▶ P3





Delhi reports over 800 Covid cases in 24 hours

Highest single-day spike this year

New Delhi

DELHI has been witnessing a steady increase in cases of the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) through the week, and on Saturday it broke all records of this year by registering 813 fresh cases of

the infection. according to latest figures released in the health bul-

Two people died of the viral disease in the last 24 hours, according to the health bulletin.

With the massive oneday jump in cases, the city's positivity rate stands at 1.07% while the cumulative positivity rate is at 4.71%.

The infection tally in the national capital has

gone up to 647,161 and a total of 10,955 fatalities due to the disease have been recorded so far. Of the total cases, 3,409 are active. As many 632,797 people have recovered from Covid-19 so far with 567 recoveries

> tween Friday and Satur-March 1 till March 11, the new cases in the city

recorded be-

were witnessing an upward trend but ranged between 150 and 370. However, the cases recorded in a single day on March 12 rose to 409 and has since remained above that except on

March 14 (407) and March 16 (368). On March 17, 18 and 19 the daily new cases soared to 536, 607 and 716, respectively. Continued on Page 4

INDIA, US PLEDGE TO **EXPAND DEFENCE TIES**

India is key partner in rapidly shifting international dynamics: Austin

Will work to realise full potential of global strategic partnership: Rajnath

New Delhi

INDIA and the United States on Saturday discussed ways to elevate their security ties against the backdrop of China's growing assertiveness, with US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin saying the defence partnership with India is a priority of the Biden-Harris administration.

Top defence officials from India and the United States have pledged to expand their military engagement, underscoring the strengthening defence ties between two countries concerned over China's growing influence in the Indo-Pacific region. Austin and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh met in New Delhi and agreed to deepen defence cooperation, intelligence sharing and logistics.

"India is an increasingly important partner in rapidly shifting international dynamics. I reaffirm our commitment to a comprehenforward-looking defence partnership with



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and US Secretary of Defence Lloyd James Austin III at Vigvan Bhawan in New Delhi on Saturday

Never considered India, China were on verge of war: Austin

New Delhi

JNITED States defence secretary Lloyd Austin said on Saturday that his country doesn't think that "India and China were at war". Speaking at a special briefing after holding talks with defence minister Ra nath Singh, Austin said the US will continue to work with 'like-

India as a central pillar of our approach to the Indo-Pacific region," Austin said. Austin is making the first

visit to India by a top member of President Joe Biden's administration

right things are done to main-

sponding to a question about the standoff in Ladakh between

which both Indian and Chinese

last year.

tain peace. Austin was re-

Continued on Page 4

DHOTIS SHIRTS BANIANS Available at Company Showrooms All Leading Textiles Shops

If 'chaiwala' doesn't understand your pain, then who will: Modi



Prime Minister Narendra Modi being presented an 'Assamese Japi' by Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal during a public rally ahead of Assam Assembly Polls, in Tinsukia on Saturday

GUWAHATI

ADDRESSING a gathering at Chabua, Prime Minister Narendra Modi accused the Congress government of neglecting the tea community during its regime and stated that the grand old party has been engaged in

ruining the reputation of the India's tea. Asserting that he himself coming from a humble background understands the plight of the tea workers and will help improve the standard of living of the people of the tea community.

Continued on Page 4

Corona vaccine should be able to give protection for 8-10 months: AIIMS chief

PURNA SINGH New Delhi

THE coronavirus vaccine should be able to give good protection from virus infection for 8 to 10 months, AI-IMS director Randeep Guleria said on Saturday.

He also said that no major side-effects of the vaccine have been recorded. "The vaccine should be able to give good protection from



Randeep Guleria

the infection for eight to ten months and maybe, even more," Guleria said at an

event organised by the IPS (Central) Association. The AIIMS chief said the biggest reason for the surge in cases is that people feel the pandemic is over and they are not following Covid-appropriate behaviour. "There are multiple reasons for the surge, but the main reason is that there is change in people's attitude and they feel coronavirus is over."

Continued on Page 4

India records 40,000 new cases

Biggest rise in Covid cases in 111 days

New Delhi

INDIA'S Covid tally witnessed the biggest rise in the active cases since September as it crossed the 40,000 mark on Saturday for the first time in 111 days. The single-day rise of 40,953 new infections, 188 fatalities pushes India's Covid-19 tally of cases to 1,15,55,284, death toll to

1,59,558. Meanwhile, 23,653 recoveries were reported in the last 24 hours which took the total number of recover-

ies to 1,11,07,332. As per the Union Health Ministry, the active Covid-19 cases in India recorded at 2,88,394, while 1,11,07,332 people have recovered from the disease so far. As many as 4,20,63,392 people have been administered the Covid vaccine across the country, so far. The number of people who

have recuperated from the disease surged to 1,11,07,332, while the case fatality rate stood at 1.38 per cent, the data stated. India's Covid-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30-lakh on August 23, 40-lakh on September 5 and 50-lakh on September 16. It went past 60 lakhs on September 28,70 lakhs on October 11, crossed 80 lakhs on October 29, 90 lakhs on November 20 and surpassed the one-crore mark on December 19.

According to ICMR, 23,24,31,517 samples have been tested up to March 19 with 10,60,971 samples being tested on Friday.

Massive earth quake of 7.2 magnitude rocks Japan, tsunami warning issued

AN earthquake measuring 7.2 on the Richter scale struck north-eastern Japan on Saturday, prompting authorities to issue a tsunami warning for Miyagi prefecture.

The Japan Meteorological Agency warned of up to a 1metre high tsunami in Miyagi and the first tsunami wave has already swept ashore in the city of Ishinomaki, dpa news agency quoted the national broadcaster NHK as saying. The warning prompted some residents in Miyagi to rush to higher ground ahead of the possible arrival of

jubilee discourse on 'un-

locking India's space po-

tential - geospatial data &

sented on virtual mode by

mapping', an event pre-



tsunami, NHK footage showed. There were no immediate reports of casualties or damage to property. The quake also shook buildings in Tokyo. The temblor occurred at

6.09 p.m. (local time), with its epicentre located at a latitude of 38.4 degrees north and a longitude of 141.7 degrees east, and at the depth of 60 km, the agency said

On March 11, Japan marked the 10th anniversary of a magnitude-9.0 quake and resulting tsunami that struck the same region in 2011, leaving about 18,400 dead or missing.

The twin natural disasters caused a triple meltdown at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, which spewed radioactive substances into the environment.

The nuclear emergency prompted hundreds of thousands of residents to flee their homes.

A month ago, a magnitude-7.3 quake also rocked the north-east, killing one person and injuring about 190 others.

Earlier, ISRO and French

space agency CNES have

missions 'Megha-Tropiques'

and 'Saral-Altika'. Currently,

they are working for the third

mission and have completed

the feasibility study to realise

satellite mission with thermal

undertaken two joint

the earth observation

India ranks 139 in

NEW DELHI: India ranked 139 out of 149 countries in the World Happiness Repor 2021, released by the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network. Finland was ranked the happiest country in the world, a feat the Nordic nation achieved year. In 2019, India was ranked 140th. The World Happiness Report is a land mark survey of the state of global happiness that ranks 149 countries by how happy their citizens perceive them elves to be. The World Hap iness Report 2021 focuses on the effects of Covid-19 and how people all over the world have fared.

the earth observation

satellite mission with

thermal infrared imager,

TRISHNA (Thermal in-

fraRed Imaging Satellite

for High resolution Natu-

ral resource Assessment)

and are working towards

finalising an implement-

ing arrangement for the

working with France on

commodation of scien-

joint experiments and ac-

Sivan said India is also

joint development.

PMLA cases independent of base offences: HC

ED probe can continue even after base offences are 'closed, compounded or quashed

New Delhi

THE Bombay High Court has ruled that investigation by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, can be continued "even if the base offences are closed, compounded or quashed".

The accused, promoters of Omkar Realtors and Developers, had sought their release on bail on

the ground of closure of the scheduled offence. They moved the High Court after the special PMLA court in Mumbai rejected their plea on February 15, 2021. Vijay Aggarwal submitted that the moment the scheduled offence comes to an end, the PMLA proceedings also come to an end, as per the report. The lawyer added that it was a settled legal proposition that if initial action does not align with law, all subsequent and consequential proceedings would fall through for the reason that the illegality strikes at its root and the

applicants could not have been remanded to further custody and were entitled to be released on bail. The report said that the Single Judge bench of Justice AS Gadkari rejected the argument, observing that the investigation under the PMLA is totally independent of the scheduled offence."Once an offence un-



der the PMLA is registered on the basis of a Scheduled

Offence, then it stands on its own and it thereafter does not require support of Predicate/Scheduled Offence. It further does not depend upon the ultimate result of the Predicate/Scheduled Offence. Even if the Predicate/ Scheduled Offence is compromised, compounded, quashed or the accused therein is/are acquitted, the investigation of ED under PMLA does not get affected, wiped away or ceased to continue.

India, France working on third joint space mission: ISRO chief feasibility study to realise

INDIA and France are working on their third joint satellite mission, even as the bilateral space collaboration is entering into multiple domains, including human spaceflight programme, ISRO Chairman K Sivan said.

Sivan, also secretary in the Department of Space, said many French companies are keen to tap into opportunities thrown up by recent reforms injected into the space sector by the government.

"France is the biggest partner of India in space", he said at the DST (department of science



Science and Technology

Communication and 'Vi-

According to officials,

gyan Prasar' on Friday.

ISRO and French space

infrared imager, TRISHNA agency CNES (Centre National dEtudes Spatiales) have undertaken two joint missions 'Megha-Tropiques', which was launched in 2011, and

'Saral-Altika' in 2013. "Currently, we are worksion)", Sivan said. Officials said Isro and

ing for the third one (mis-CNES have completed the

tific instruments in space missions. "Indo-French space collaboration is expanding into multiple domains including space exploration and human space flight programme," he said.



Edn crucial for women empowerment, says Guv

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

GOVERNOR Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan said that education was vital for women em-

powerment.

The Governor was virtually addressing the "Women Power Talk" programme organised by the State Bank of India as part of the International Women's Day celebrations on Saturday. She said, "Education, employment, entrepreneurship and self-confidence would contribute to the empowerment of

Their willpower will help them overcome the obstacles in their path," she added.

women.

Elaborating on the achievements of women in various fields, the Governor said that

women were now flying fighter jets, guarding borders and excelling as astronauts.

"Women should not desist from pursuing their dreams fearing obstacles. They should make it big in life," she added.

The Governor lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi for assigning key portfolios like Finance, External Affairs and Defence to women ministers and thus shattering the tradition of restricting women ministers only to portfolios like Women and Child Development.

She lauded that women medicos were now opting for specialisations like surgery, cardiology, nephrology, and orthopedics.

Many women officers of various ranks of the State Bank of India took part in the virtual Power Talk programme.

Budget not near to reality: Bhatti

- Says Telangana spends less from the budget
- Demands the State government to stop the construction of Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Project

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

CONGRESS Legislative Party leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka on Saturday said that the budget presented by the Finance Minister T Harish Rao was not close to reality and said that Telangana was among the States that spends less

from the budget in the country.

Speaking during the discus-

sion on budget in the Assembly on, Mallu said there was a big gap between the allocation in the budget and spending by the government. While national average in terms of spending by the State governments was 17.9 per cent, the spending by the Telangana government was 9.5 per cent. He said that there



were no big allocations in important departments like Education, Health, Roads and Bridges and Rural Development

The CLP leader said that there were doubts on the income of the State as projected by the Finance Minister. He said that the government said that the non-tax revenue would be Rs 30,500 crore. However, if the records were seen in the last three to four years, the non-tax revenues have been around Rs 10,000 crore. How the government would bring the remaining Rs 20,000 crore? he asked. Similarly, the grant in aid has been around Rs 10,000 to Rs 12,000 crore but the State government is expecting Rs 28,000 crore. How the government

would bring Rs 48,000 crore? he sought to know. The debt repayment has been mentioned at Rs 9,000 crore, but the actual repayments are Rs 50,000 crore, he said adding that budget was not near to reality.

The CLP leader said that the government should take a stand and stop the construction of Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Project. He said that if the project was constructed, the water would not come to Srisailam and Nagarjunsagar. Already, the people in the said areas are deprived of water and if the project was completed, there would be no water at all, said Mallu, demanding the government to stop the project.

The Congress leader said that the Dharani software had glitches. The site has Part A and Part B and the problem lies in Part B where there are assigned lands belonging to weaker sections. He wanted the government to solve the problems and also demanded the appointment of Chief Commissioner of Land Administration

Will never contest polls again, says dejected Chinna Reddy

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

DEJECTED over the defeat in MLC elections, Former Minister and Congress senior leader G Chinna Reddy on Saturday said that he would never contest elections again, and also suggested people to not contest elections if they do not have money.

Talking to a news channel, Chinna Reddy said that if there was no money, no one should dare to contest the elections. He said it was painful to see graduates also selling their votes to the ruling TRS. He said he had to lose the election only because he could not distribute money, adding that he could only impress 32,000 persons. "There is no one in the country to compete with Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao in terms of spending money in the elections," he said.

Replying to a question, Chinna Reddy said that only K Jana Reddy could compete against K Chandrashekar I lost the election because I could not distribute money. There is no one in the country to compete with Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao in terms of spending money in the elections. Chinna Reddy



Rao in Nagarjunsagar bypoll and can win the election.

He said that his party leadership and Revanth Reddy made all out efforts for his victory and added that he would work for the strengthening of the party. "There is a need to save Telangana, which has been converted into a drunken and corrupt state," he said.

FIERY VICTORY

TRS activists trying to douse the flames at the Telangana Bhavan which erupted after the dry bushes on the premises caught fire on Saturday

Of 9 lakh applicants, only 3.5 lakh get white ration cards

HANS NEWS SERVICE HYDERABAD

CIVIL Supplies Minister Gangula Kamalakar on Friday

said that the State government till date issued 3,59,974 white ration cards of the total 9,41,641 applications.

He was replying to questions raised by members in the House during the Question Hour of the ongoing budget session of the State Assembly on Friday.

Speaking on the subject, Kamalakar said that 92,000 applications were rejected by the department so far for various reasons and the rest 4,88,775 applications were under



 44,734 white ration cards are provided to eligible in Hyderabad



process. He made it clear that issuance of food security cards was a continuous process and



 Another 97,000 cards are not issued due to corona pandemic

Replying to a question about

the number of food security

would keep on going.

cards distributed in the State capital, he informed that 44,734 white ration cards were provided to eligible in Hyderabad in the last three years, while another 97,000 cards could not be issued due to the ongoing corona pandemic.

"Pending applications will be verified soon and white ration cards will be issued to eligible citizens," he assured.

Speaking about the cancellation of cards, the Minister said that in case the beneficiary does not avail the card for three months, then it would be discontinued automatically. He further assured to solve the complaints about malfunctioning of white ration cards.

Training imparted to traffic cops to help accident victims

HANS NEWS SERVICE SHADNAGAR

CYBERABAD traffic police in association with Society for Cyberabad Council (SCC) and CIHS (Care Institute of Health Sciences) launched a first responder training course for traffic police to teach basic first aid skills so that they can help injured victims of road accidents. Cyberabad Police Commissioner VC Sajjanar participated in the training programme organised for Shadnagar batch on Saturday.

Speaking on the occasion, the CP said every month almost 25-30 persons die in hospitals while undergoing treatment for injuries sustained in road accidents. Keeping this in mind, Cyberabad traffic police in association with SCC and CIHS started the 'first responder'



training course. As part of this programme, on March 3, the first batch of training was conducted for 30 persons at CTC. On Saturday, the training was conducted to sixth batch con-

sisting 30 members of Cyberabad Highway patrol personnel and the staff so that they could save the lives of accident victions

Cyberabad Highway patrol

personnel and the staff from petrol bunks, dhabas, restaurants, shops, security guards along NH-44 in Shadnagar area also participated in the programme

Woman sanitation worker Killed; ornaments, cash stolen

HANS NEWS SERVICE PARIGI

A sanitation worker was brutally stabbed to death in Kulkacharla mandal of Parigi constituency on Friday midnight by unidentified persons. The victim, Maisamma (58), succumbed to injuries while undergoing treatment at the Osmania General Hospital on Saturday. According to the police, Maisamma sent her daughter to Hyderabad on the March 17 and came back home with essentials. Unidentified persons attacked her with a sharp weapon while he was sleeping in her house at night and later robbed jewellery

and cash from her house.
When Maisamma did not come to work in the village at 5 o'clock in the morning, Madhavi, her co-worker, reached Maisamma's house and noticed that she was lying in a pool of blood at home and informed her fellow workers.

Maisamma was immediately rushed to Mahbubnagar Government Hospital with serious injuries and later shifted to Osmania Hospital where she died while undergoing treatment.

Kulkacharla police have registered a case and are investigating. The police are investigating whether the murder was committed for the purpose of theft or any other reason.

3 lakh jobs in electronics sector in next 4 yrs: KTR

HANS NEWS SERVICE HYDERABAD

THE TRS government has aimed to create three lakh jobs in the electronics-manufacturing sector and plans are designed for the investments of Rs 75,000 crore in the next four years, said Minister for Information Technology and Industries K T Rama Rao.

He was replying to a question raised by the fellow members on the promotion of electronics-manufacturing sector and about jobs during a question and answer session in the Legislative Assembly on Saturday

Delivering the answer, he said the government has focused on electronics manufacturing, research and development to promote the industry and also to create jobs. To provide jobs to local youth, Telangana Academy of Skill and Knowledge centres have imparted training to 60,000 locals in Electronic System Design and Manufacturing stream and about 30,000 of them are employed in the electronics sector. He assured that more number of Telangana Academy of Skill and Knowledge centres would be brought in the State soon.

Elaborating about the establishment of electronics-manufacturing, the Minister said the State government was trying to turn Telangana as electronics-manufacturing hub and as part of the policy formulation, the government has launched a special electronic policy to The IT Minister says State government is trying to turn Telangana as electronicsmanufacturing hub

 Says special electronic policy launched to address specific needs of the industry

 Two manufacturing clusters identified to set up the industry

address the specific needs of the industry and an expert team has been constituted for research and development of

Two manufacturing clusters were identified to set up the industry, the Minister in-

"To make investments easy in the State, the government is providing a capital subsidy of Rs 2 to 30 crore, GST reimbursement, transport subsidy and also providing subsidy on power to the industries to attract the investors to the State. Special incentives are being provided to SC, ST and women entrepreneurs who are in the

electronics sector," he added.

Providing information about the industrial investments in the State, he said Rs 23,000 crore were invested in the electronic manufacturing sector in the last six years. As many as 40 new companies invested here even after pandemic and 1,60,000 jobs were created while only 50, 000 jobs were there in this sector in the erstwhile State.

Free training for jobless youth from March 31

HANS NEWS SERVICE
MAHESHWARAM

EDUCATION Minister Sabitha Indra Reddy released wall posters on free training classes for unemployed youth to help them get government jobs. The Minister released the wall poster on Saturday in Maheshwaram. Free training classes will start on March 31 from 9:00 am at Sri Kalavathi Gardens at

Speaking on the occasion, Sabitha said it was a good opportunity for the unemployed youth in Maheshwaram constituency and urged them to utilise the opportunity. She also said that under the auspices of Patlolla Indra Reddy Trust, free training and study material would be provided to the unemployed youth for recruitment of all types of gov-

ernment jobs in future. Indra Reddy Charitable Trust chairman Karthik Reddy, local TRS leaders and others were present.



PM'S B'DESH VISIT

'Mujeeb Jackets' to add sheen









New Delhi

KHADI "Mujeeb Jackets" will be the centre of attraction during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's two-day visit to Dhaka next week with dignitaries at the Indian High Commission wearing the signature garment honouring Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Bangladesh's Father of the Nation. The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has supplied 100 such custom-designed "Mujeeb Jackets" to the Indian High Commission in Dhaka. The garment will be the key attire of dignitaries during Prime Minister Modi's diplomatic visit to the nation on March 26-27.

"As Bangladesh celebrates 'Mujib Borsho', the birth centenary of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Cultural Centre of the Indian High Commission in Dhaka, had placed an order for 100 Mujeeb Jackets, ahead of the Prime Minister's visit," KVIC Chairman, Vinai Kumar Saxena said.

The "Mujeeb jacket" is an immensely popular outfit in Bangladesh. For the older generation, it is symbolic of the ideology of their great leader, while it has increasingly become a fashion statement for the youth of Bangladesh. Modi has always been particular about Khadi and its heritage and cultural value to strengthen diplomatic ties with foreign countries.

In 2016, the BRICS leaders, which also includes Modi, had attended the summit in Khadi jackets in Goa. "The Prime Minister always accorded top priority to Khadi during his diplomatic visits.

This is to carry forward the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi who always carried Khadi products specially a Khadi handkerchief with him and presented it to dignitaries during his foreign visits," Saxena said.

The specially designed "Mujeeb Jackets" have been made of highquality handcrafted Khadi fabric. The black Mujeeb Jackets have been designed with six buttons, two pockets on the lower half and a front pocket on the left, as worn by Rahman.

In keeping with the eco-friendly nature of the fabric, the zip-covers for these jackets too have been made of black cotton fabric with "Khadi India" logo embroidered over it. These jackets will be carried in specially designed white coloured waste plastic-mixed carry bags made at KVIC's Kumarappa

National Handmade Paper Institute (KNHPI) in Jaipur. "Mujeeb Jacket" is historically significant in Bangladesh and it is a matter of great pride that these jackets made of Khadi fabric be adorned during the Bangladesh visit of Prime Minister Modi who is the biggest brand ambassador of Khadi, Saxena said.

"Mujeeb jackets made of Khadi will add significantly to the historical and cultural values of the celebrations," he said, adding, this will also promote Khadi on the global and diplomatic platform in a big

Since the jackets were meant for diplomatic purposes, KVIC accorded top priority to it and delivered the consignment before time. Earlier KVIC sent its high-quality cotton and silk masks to various

NEW RSS TEAM ANNOUNCED

Ram Madhav returns, Arun Kumar is new joint general secretary

THE Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) on Saturday declared its new team. While Arun Kumar and Ram Dutt have been appointed as the new joint general secretaries, Ram Lal has been appointed the Akhil Bharatiya Sampark

Significantly, Ram Madhav has returned to the RSS fold from the BJP. Former BJP general secretary Madhav has found place in the RSS's All India Executive Council (Karyakarini Mandal). He was part of the RSS before becoming a general secretary in the BJP. The new team was announced after the appointment of Dattatreya Hosabale as general secretary earlier on Saturday at the the Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha (ABPS), the RSS's highest decision-making body, which is meeting in Bengaluru to discuss the new appointments, apart from deliberating on other important issues.

The five Sahsarkaryavahs (joint general secretaries) are Dr Krishna Gopal, Mukund C.R., Dr Manmohan Vaidya,



Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh newly-elected General Secretary Dattatreya Hosabale addresses a press conference during the 'Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha-21' in Bengalur on Saturday

Ram Dutt and Arun Kumar. Gopal, Mukund and Vaidya were looking after the same responsibility even earlier. Kumar and Dutt have been added to the select list.

Suresh Soni moves to be part of the All India Executive Council. Arun Kumar was the prachar pramukh (media head) before this and played a crucial role in forming public opinion on the abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and

Ram Lal, who returned to the Sangh from the BJP in 2019, has been elevated to Akhil Bharatiya Sampark Pramukh. Sunil Ambekar gets a promotion as well to become Akhil Bharatiya Prachar Pramukh (media head).

Romesh Pappa and Alok are the two new All India Sah Sampark Pramukhs and Mahendra will take up the responsibility of Regional Pracharak for Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. (IANS)

Plea in SC terms PIL against 1991 law on places of worship as 'mischievous'

A plea has been moved in the Supreme Court challenging a PIL against a law fixing August 15, 1947 as the cut-off date to maintain the character of a place of worship. The application moved by a Lucknow-based co-manager of a mosque said the PIL filed by advocate Ashwini Upadhyay is "mischievous", which aims at isolating the Muslim community as a separate category from the other major religious communities in India. On March 12, the Supreme Court had issued a notice to the Centre on a PIL challenging the validity of the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991, which barred litigation on any place of worship for change of its character as it existed in 1947. The matter assumes significance in the backdrop of demands to resume litigation on Kashi-Mathura related to temples of Lord Shiva and Lord Krishna, respectively. The Act did not include the Ayodhya Ram Janmabhoomi case, which was decided by the top court in 2019. The application argued that the country has been progressing unitedly but certain individuals, including the petitioner, was making attempts to divide people on the basis of religion. "The language of the petition is shocking. The petitioner has sought to set up an allegedly factual case of fundamentalist barbarians coming to India and destroying places of worship without providing any facts, sources or setting up a case that any such places of worship have indeed been destroyed," said the application.

THE COLOURS OF FESTIVITY



Women smear colours at each other during Holi celebrations in Nadia district on Saturday

Parties do not send their best talents to Parliament'

NEW DELHI

FORMER Supreme Court judge A K Patnaik on Saturday said political parties do not send their best talents to Parliament due a variety of reasons, including a lack of internal democracy in their functioning.

Speaking at an event, he said lack of funds to contest elections without the support of a political party has discouraged many capable and meritorious persons from seeking an opportunity for election to Parliament. Justice

Patnaik, who retired as a SupremeCourt judge in 2014, said he has been listening to the debates in Lok Sabha Rajya have been

reading about them in newspa-

"I appreciate the quality of debates on the national issues and some of the criticisms that the opposition members make in Parliament. For such debates and criticisms, parliamentarians need to be rewarded," he said. He also referred to criticism by the opposition on the issue of "seditious acts". "This is what Parliament should do. The government should respond. This is how democracy is kept alive," he said. He said he was "not quite sure" whether Parliament in India today is represented by people who are the best amongst their party members in their constituencies and their state.

"I am of the view that our political parties do not send their best talents, with merit and integrity, to Parliament for various reasons," he said. The first reason, Justice Patnaik (retd.) said, was that there is no internal democracy in political parties. "In a democracy, a political party should give an opportunity to its members to participate in the debates on the formulation of the programmes of the party.



laws of various other countries," he said. The second reason is that persons with merit and integrity who want to contest Lok Sabha election do not have the funds for campaigning for their

"Considering the huge resources required by a candidate in an election for parliamentary seat, a prospective candidate has to either depend on a political party for such funds for election or has to organise his own funds as an independent candidate." he said. This has discouraged many capable and meritorious persons from contesting elections for seats in Parliament, he opined. (PTI)

Kamal Haasan on bed rest after leg pain during TN campaign



COIMBATORE

POPULAR southern superstar and founder of Makkal Needhi Maiam, Kamal Haasan's campaign trail hit a roadblock on Saturday when he developed pain in his right leg after concentrated canvassing in the Coimbatore South constituency over the past few

The development took place when an unidentified person allegedly stepped on the MNM leader's foot while he was out on a routine morning walk during which he interacted with locals.

The thespian who is making his political debut in the Tamil Nadu Assembly polls is contesting from Coimbatore South assembly constituency, and is camping here.

People surround him during his morning walks and take selfies, shake hands and interact with him. It was during one such interaction that someone reportedly stepped on Kamal Haasan's foot.

Immediately after the incident, Kamal Haasan was taken to a local hospital where doctors took an X-ray of the injured leg. Party sources said that Kamal Haasan's condition is stable and he is currently taking rest.

In January this year, the 66-yearold actor had undergone surgical treatment for an infection in his right leg bone. With the same leg getting hurt on Saturday, the actor-politician was forced to curtail his campaign plans. The party is preparing to reschedule their leader's public events in the city. (IANS)

GIFT A PLANT AND MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE

THE International Day of Forests is on March 21 and the emphasis is on planting trees and saving the environment. At a time when deforestation is rampant, pollution is making our cities not worth living and climate change is causing natural disasters, experts are recommending a simple way to make the world greener and healthier.

Here is a platform which can be used for planting trees in the country on barren land. The platform provides opportunities to gift a plant on special occasions such as birthdays and other happy moments to plant trees on your behalf which will be planted across India and looked after by the company.

If you don't have time to go out or the land to plant trees, you can do your bit through Grow-Trees.com. In its new project it will plant trees on 500 acres across 19 villages of the Laylam and Luabasa Panchayats in East Singhbhum district of Jharkhand and Jamukeswar Panchayat in Mayurbhanj district of Odisha.

This will not only expand the green cover but also enhance animal habitat. Over 2.6 million trees were planted in 2020 across the country, providing rural

Today is International Day of Forests

employment during the pandemic. The platform charges Rupees 85 for planting one tree. Since it came into being, the platform has planted about 7.5 million trees. Explains Pradip Shah, the cofounder and director of Grow-Trees.com: "The company has earned the trust of thousands of individuals and hundreds of companies for planting millions of local trees on community lands in projects benefiting local communities, tribals, and wildlife. All plantings are audited and undertaken after permission of authorities." Grow-Trees.com's eco-planner and environmental expert Supriya Patil says, "It is time to go back to the basics and simply plant more trees. Let me give you just five reasons why we should though there are a million more.

She says: "Trees create the muchneeded carbon sinks, absorb CO2 and even sequester pollutants like nitrogen oxide, ammonia and sulphur dioxide. It is a commonly known fact that just one tree can absorb nearly 10 pounds of polluted air annually. Thriving forests and green lung spaces are critical to the health of the planet as they are the most

effective eco-warriors and natural oxygenerators."

Experts say a lot of natural disasters occur because there is an imbalance between what we take from nature and what we give back. "Trees prevent soil erosion, curtail fires, floods and even landslides. They also sustain biodiversity, protect animal habitats and even slow down the filtration of water into the drainage networks of concrete jungles. Increased vegetation in any region improves moisture conservation and also enhances the water table in the region," adds Patil. Denuded forests mean more industrialisation and pollution and less space for wildlife. Shrinking wildlife corridors have resulted in increased animalhuman conflicts, elephants being electrocuted or hit by trains.

The platform has initiated several projects to support the locals and tribal communities in Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, and many other Indian states. "When trees mature, they serve as a sustainable source of income for rural communities,"adds Patil. (IANS)



New sand policy to bring ₹765 cr per year for AP

HANS NEWS SERVICE **A**MARAVATI

THE state government announced upgraded sand policy on Saturday, which is expected to generate about Rs 765 crores revenue per year.

The director, department of mines and geology entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on January 4, this year with M/s MSTC Ltd, a Central government undertaking to select the eligible agency to undertake sand mining, storage and sales for a period of two years in a transparent and impartial manner.

The MSTC Ltd confirmed that M/s Jayaprakash Power Ventures Ltd became the successful bidder as they announced the highest price for all the three packages for two years at the end of the phase of accepting technical and financial bids. The package-wise details offered by Jayaprakash Power Ventures Ltd for two years are: Package-1: Rs 477.50 crore, Package2: Rs 745.70 crore and Package-3 Rs 305.60 crore.

Jayaprakash Power Ventures Limited is part of the Jaypee Group, which has a leading infrastructure in India and is headquartered in New Delhi.

Under the existing policy, the government has earned a net income of Rs 161.30 crore



- The State govt announces upgraded sand policy under which a private entity of Jaypee Group will undertake sand mining, storage and sales
- New system will provide several facilities to customers, including opportunity to check the quality of sand directly at the ramps, pay the money at the reach of their choice and take the required quantity in the vehicle they have set up

for the financial year 2019-20 and Rs 380.00 crore for the current financial year (2020-21) i.e. up to February 2021. It is expected to generate about Rs 765 crores per year under the upgraded sand policy.

This upgraded new policy will provide several facilities to customers, including opportunity to check the quality of the sand directly at the ramps, tie up the money at the reach of their choice and take the required quantum of sand in the

vehicle they have set up. There will be same price at

each reach across the state and a price with upper ceiling is determined regionally based on distance. Details of the phone numbers to complain about the higher rates will be made available to the public. Strict action will be taken on such complaints. There is no need to ap-

ply online. Those who cannot afford to make the vehicle available, they will have the option of obtaining sand through a transport conglomerate. Sand excavation is no longer permitted on patta (graded) lands.

LEAKAGE OF COMMUNICATION TO GOVERNOR IN AP

SEC moves HC for CBI probe

- In a petition filed in HC, he also refers to motion of breach moved by two Ministers against him to **Assembly Speaker based** on one of such leaked communications
- Names the Union Home Secretary, AP CS, the Governor's Secretary, CBI, **State Ministers Peddireddi** Ramachandra Reddy and **Botcha Satyanarayana and** a private person as respondents
- Says there has been no action despite his several requests to the Chief Secretary and the Secretary to the Governor to probe the leak of 'privileged communication' to the Governor

AMARAVATI

STATE Election Commissioner Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar filed a petition in the High Court on Saturday seeking a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) into the alleged leak of "privileged communication" between him and the Governor. The SEC also mentioned about the motion of breach of privilege moved by two ministers against him to the



Assembly Speaker, "based on one such privileged communication between me and the Governor", and a subsequent letter addressed to him by the Legislature secretary in the matter.

He named the Union home secretary, AP chief secretary, the Governor's secretary, CBI, state ministers Peddireddi Ramachandra Reddy and Botcha Satyanarayana (both of whom moved the motion of privilege) and a private person as respondents in the petition.

The SEC pointed out that as the state government has been trying to interfere with the conduct of elections, he had approached the Governor on several occasions for redressal of issues through confidential letters.

"The letters are written in strict confidence and are not for public consumption and ought not to have leaked to the general public or media. However, these confidential and privileged communications are constantly being brought into the public domain by



certain individuals having vested interest," the SEC said.

Ramesh Kumar, while citing certain communication between him and the Governor since January this year, submitted that such communications were supposed to be protected against all possible leaks. Referring to a private person, whom he made a respondent in the case, the SEC pointed out that a petition was filed in the High Court based on a letter he had written to the Governor on March 12. "This respondent does not disclose the source from which he obtained such privileged communication and chose to rely upon it to seek a Mandamus against me," the SEC

Noting that such communications were between two constitutional bodies, the SEC referred to certain judgments of various courts in this regard. "Leakage of such communications had severely hampered the functioning of the petitioner (SEC) and if such



have serious consequences in the democratic polity and governance. It would hamper functioning of the constitutional bodies and, hence, is liable to be dealt with an iron fist," Ramesh Kumar contended. The SEC said he made several requests to the chief secretary and the secretary to the Governor to investigate into the leak of "privileged and confidential communication".

"However, the secretary to the Governor failed to act upon the requests," he added. Ramesh Kumar requested the court to direct the Union home secretary, AP chief secretary, secretary to Governor and the CBI to investigate the leak of privileged communication. He made a plea that the court direct the CBI to file an interim report within 72 hours. Taking up the petition, Justice Rao Raghunandan Rao of the High Court asked the registry to refer it to the Chief Justice for appropriate listing and hearing.

Delhi reports over 800 Covid cases in 24 hours

A Central government panel has attributed the grim figures to superspreader events like weddings. "We must understand that there is still a large section of population that is vulnerable, especially in villages. We cannot afford to lower our guard at this stage and should avoid mass gatherings as it can become superspreading events," said Dr VK Paul, member (health), Niti Aayog.

Delhi is also among the eight states contributing most to the nation's daily Covid-19 count. Other states showing rising trajectory of daily new cases are Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka and Haryana.

Chief minister Arvind Kejriwal led-Aam Aadmi party government said it is ready to vaccinate all adults in the city against the coronavirus disease. Kejriwal has appealed to the Centre to make vaccines open for all who are 18 years of age and above. "Walk-in centres should be opened for all. I urge the central government to take this up on a war footing. If this is allowed, we can vaccinate everyone in Delhi (18 years and above) in three months," he said earlier this week.

Corona vaccine should be able to give protection for 8-10 months: AIIMS chief

Continued from P1

"People should still restrict non-essential travel for some more time," the official asserted.

NITI Aayog member (Health) V K Paul said the chain of transmission has to be stopped and for that vaccine is one tool but another is containment and surveillance strategy. "Not following Covid-19 behaviour and laxity is major reason for the surge," he said.

Responding to a question on vaccinating more people, Paul said the issue is vaccines are limited and that is why, prioritisation has been done. "If we had unlimited supply, we would open the vaccination for everyone. That is the reason, not everyone, is getting vaccinated. Most countries in the world are not able to go beyond priority group because of this reason," he said.

Environmental

Education test on

March 27

Ethics and Human

Values exam for

Inter 1st yr students

on March 24

HANS NEWS SERVICE

GUNTUR

ETHICS and Human Values ex-

amination for Intermediate first year students will be conducted on

March 24 from 10 am to 1 pm. Sim-

ilarly, Environmental Education

examination will be held on March

27 from 10 am to 1pm. The Board

of Intermediate Examination sec-

retary V Rama Krishna issued or-

ders to this effect. The students

who don't qualify in these exams

will not be issued pass certificates.

He further said that the first year

students of 20-21 academic year

should appear with first year hall

ticket number and old students

who did not appear and not qual-

ified should write above exami-

nation with previous Intermedi-

ate hall ticket number. The BIE

has decided to conduct these ex-

aminations with online question

paper. The instructions to down-

load the question paper through

online will be posted in the BIE

website.

Never considered **India, China** were on verge of war: Austin

Continued from P1

"We are working with India, Australia and Japan in the Indo-Pacific region to ensure that freedom of navigation is maintained, and to keep the Indo-Pacific region free and open. There are a lot of capabilities in these countries," said Austin. "Working with likeminded countries which have shared interest is the only way to check any aggression and we look forward to continue to do that in the future," he added.

Austin further said that the US has a lot of common things with Quad countries like India and Australia in terms of defence perspective and President Joe Biden's administration will continue to build on that. Austin's visit to India is first by a top member of Biden's administration. His visit follows a meeting last week between leaders of Australia, India, Japan and the United States, which together make up the four Indo-Pacific nations known as the Quad.

defence ties Continued from P1 His visit follows a meeting last week between leaders

India, US pledge to expand

of Australia, India, Japan and the United States, which together make up the four Indo-Pacific nations known as the Quad.

The Quad is seen as a counterweight to China, which critics say is flexing its military muscle in the South China Sea, East China Sea, Taiwan Strait and along its northern border with India.

Singh said the talks were focused on expanding military-to-military engagement. "We are determined to realize the full potential of comprehensive global strategic partnership," he said.

Austin arrived in New Delhi on Friday and met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and National Security Advisor According to a statement from the Prime Minister's Of-

fice. Modi "outlined his vision for the strategic partnership between the two countries and emphasized the important role of bilateral defence cooperation in India-US ties." Before the talks on Saturday, Austin visited the National

War Memorial and was accorded a ceremonial guard of

The timing of Austin's visit, which follows talks between high-ranking US and Chinese officials in Alaska amid a bitter exchange of words, signals the importance Biden

places on New Delhi as a security ally.

If 'chaiwala' doesn't understand your pain, then who will: Modi

 $Continued from {\it P1}$

"If a 'chaiwala' doesn't understand your pain, then who will. I assure that the NDA govt will work extensively to improve the standard of living of people working in tea garden areas," said Modi. While accusing the Congress government of ruining the image of the tea sector, he said that the party has indulged in defaming Assam's tea. "A toolkit has been circulated that will defame Assam's tea. Congress party supports this toolkit makers & then has the audacity to ask for votes in Assam. Can we forgive them?" he added. Launching a scathing attack on the Congress, the PM stated the party uses pictures of tea gardens from Sri Lanka and Taiwan claiming it to be from Assam and circulating on social media is an insult to the state.

While assuring that the NDA government is working for the betterment of the tea community, Modi said, "The government has allotted land patta to the tea garden workers. Rs 1,000 crore only for the tea garden community. The NDA government is committed to increase the salaries of the tea garden workers."

₹2.5 cr worth red sanders seized

- SEB and Chittoor police chase two vehicles which did not stop during vehicle checking at Penumuru-Chittoor junction
- 4 persons have been arrested, 182 logs seized

HANS NEWS SERVICE **C**HITTOOR

SPECIAL Enforcement Bureau (SEB) personnel and Chittoor police in a ioint operation seized two vehicles carrying 182 red sanders logs worth Rs 2.50 corer and nabbed 4 red sanders smugglers on Saturday

Speaking to media here on Saturday, district SP S Senthil Kumar said V Sivaiah, 31, of Kadapa district, K Krishnaiah, 63, of Nellore district, A Kiran, 25, of Tirupati rural mandal and V Balaji, 19, of Tamil Nadu were arrested while carrying red sanders logs in two vehicles. The vehicles were in-



in Chittoor on Saturday gling unitedly as per the directions of

Chittoor SP

Kumar (left)

with seized

red sanders

S Senthil

chase them. He said that the police of Chittoor, Kadapa, Anantapur and Tirupati Urban districts have been coordinating their efforts to curb red sanders smug-

tion on Chittoor-Tirupati highway on

Saturday morning. According to him,

the vehicles proceeding towards Ben-

galuru did not stop when police

stopped them and the police have to

Anantaur IR Kranthi Rana Tata. There have been intensified efforts to nab interstate smugglers transporting the percious wood mainly from Seshachalam forest limits, he added. Preventive Detention Act has been

invoked against several red sanders smugglers in the district, the SP said adding SEB has been doing a great job in curtailing red sanders and sand smuggling.

SRM launches new online degree programmes

KATTANKULATHUR

SRM Institute of Science and Technology (SRMIST), Kattankulathur, launched new online degree programmes approved by UGC in response to high demand for online education to boost GER and employability. This is done through the Directorate of Online Education.

The launch of online degree programmes approved by UGC are MBA specialisation in Finance/HR/Marketing/Business Analytics, MCA, BBA specialisation in Digital Marketing, BCA specialisation in Data Science. SRMIST has developed an online delivery robust cloud based technology stack, called SRM Online Learning Platform. It provides the flexibility to learn from anywhere, anytime supported by live interactive sessions and powerful online assessment system.

Admissions are pen for Feb/March 2021 Academic Session. One can apply at

AP sees surge in Covid cases 380 new infections, two deaths reported in 24 hrs

AMARAVATI

AS many as 380 fresh cases of coronavirus were reported on Saturday in the state, the highest since December 22, pushing the caseload to 8,93,366. The number of active cases again touched 2,083, the highest since January 16 when it fell below the 2.000 mark.

The new cases came from 30,978 tests in the 24 hours ending 9 am on Saturday, while the 402 cases on December 22 came from 56,425 tests, indicating a higher infection rate now. The latest bulletin said a total of 1.47 crore sample tests were carried out in the state so far, at the rate of 2.75 lakh per million, with an overall positivity rate of 6.08 per cent. In the 24 hours, the state saw 204 recoveries and two deaths, taking the cumulative to 8,84,094 and 7,189

respectively. The virus seems to be spreading fast in Guntur, Kurnool, Visakhapatnam districts, while in Chittoor and Krishna it

has been maintaining steady pace. Anantapur and Nellore districts are also moving into the fast lane now, along with East Godavari. Guntur reported the highest 70, Chittoor 60, Kurnool 51. Krishna 44, Visakhapatnam 43, East Godavari 26, Anantapuramu 22, Nellore 21 fresh cases in a day. Srikakulam was behind with 15 new cases while the remaining four districts added less than 10 each. Seven districts in the state now have active cases in triple digits, ranging from 105 to 491. Only West Godavari (31) and Vizianagaram (35) districts have active caseload of less than 50 each. Kurnool and Prakasam districts reported one fresh COVID-19 fatality each.

AP CM told not to misuse SC, ST Act

AMARAVATI

TDP leader Saptagiri Prasad on Saturday urged the Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy government and the ruling YSRCP leaders to stop misusing the SC, ST atrocities Act to take political revenge against former chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu and the TDP leaders. Dr Saptagiri asserted that the atrocities law was enacted at the national level with the sole purpose of protecting the sacred rights of the Dalits and tribals but not to help the leaders like Chief Minister to harass their political rivals. But in a very shameless manner, the state officials filed an FIR under the atrocities act against Naidu based on a complaint given by a

 TDP leader Saptagiri Prasad says the law was brought to protect sacred rights of Dalits and tribals, but not to help leaders like Jagan to take revenge against their rivals

 Alleges that Jagan and his family still possess around 600 acre assigned lands in the 800-acre Idupulapaya estate

at party state office in Mangalagiri, the TDP leader reminded the YSRCP leaders that only the Dalits and tribals were qualified to file the SC, ST atrocities cases but not everybody. When the High Court asked for prima facie evidence against Naidu in the assigned lands case, the govern-

and unable to give a valid argument on why the case was filed without prima facie evidence. The Jagan Reddy regime was the only government in the entire country which had the dubious distinction of filing the atrocities cases against the SC, STs them-

Jagan Mohan Reddy and his family who were still in posses-

sion and enjoyment of over 600 acre assigned lands in the 800acre Idupulapaya estate in the Kadapa district. A proper case should be filed against the Chief Minister in this respect. Instead of cleaning his own dark record, Jagan was trying to implicate the TDP chief. YS Rajasekhar Reddy and Vijayamma have also tried to implicate Naidu in the past but their attempts also totally failed, he said.

He said Jagan had such a bad record that his government brought GO 25 only to transfer assigned lands to his near and dear ones in the name of solar power projects. Instead of this, the Chief Minister should give 10 acres out of the 600 acres assigned lands for developing a solar power project in his Idupulapaya estate. Dr Saptagiri asked how the YSRCP govt was asking proofs from the same persons against whom it was filing cases without any preliminary probe. The YSRCP leaders once said that Amaravati was named capital to benefit only one particular caste but now they were saying that Dalits had got their own lands there.

non-SC, ST MLA. Addressing a press conference

ment advocates put up a pale face

Dr Saptagiri said that it was

INBOX thehansreader@gmail.com

The ugly side of online classes

WHILE India enjoys a wide geographic and cultural diversity, it also suffers from a huge socio-economic divide. Only a small part of the Indian population has access to online education right now. Interrupted power supply, weak or non-existent internet connectivity, and un- affordability to buy necessary devices are major concerns. "In a Class of 40 students, after two months of online classes, around 20 students regularly attend class with whatever device and connection they have. Around 5-8 students are completely absent till date and rest are fluctuating", says a schoolteacher in Ratnagiri in Maharashtra. A teacher in a government-aided school from the small town of Chamba in Himachal Pradesh says, "It is a frustrating experience to engage students of lower classes in online mode. There are network issues on both teachers' and students' ends".

To deal with internet connectivity and device availability issues, 'classes' in many places are happening via sharing of videos by teachers over What-



sApp or YouTube, so that students can watch them at their convenience. This too, however, comes with difficulties in understanding the lessons and promotes rote learning. The same is true of pre-recorded sessions aired on the television (e.g., Swayam Prabha DTH channels) and radio (audio lessons, through All India Radio),

although they do cater to a wider student population that cannot avail live online classes.

That is not all. With limitations of livelihood in a family, the first ones to receive a blow are often girls. In a recent survey of 733 students studying in government schools in Bihar, only 28 per cent of the girls had smartphones in their homes, in contrast to 36 per cent of the boys. These smartphones almost always belonged to male adults, often being lesser accessible to girls than boys, and half of these families could not afford internet data packages. Therefore, lessons aired on television was the main option for a majority of the students participating in this survey. How-

ever, girls were found to spend a disproportionately longer time on household chores than boys, which often overlapped with the time of telecast of these lessons. Such gaps in education could worsen the already wide gender gap in employment in India. Students with disabilities are

among the most dependent on in-person education and hence least likely to benefit from distance learning. A survey by Swabhiman (an NGO working mainly in Odisha), in association with the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People, indicated that 73 per cent of the students with disabilities had concerns regarding the availability of study material in appropriate formats. Also, 79 per cent of their teachers were apprehensive about teaching effectively without use of touch to students with learning disorders, autism and low vision. The lack of effective education may further aggravate the high dropout rates of these children from schools (nearly 50 per cent pre-Covid) in developing countries.

- Vasavi Raju Barde, Nagpur

worship which are also getting

lots of monies not taken over by

government? Hindus are always

lenient to Indian rulers. Preva-

lence of politics spoils the sanc-

tity. Unauthorised entry into

shrine with the aid of authorised

late but at least now temples

such as Tirumala, Srisailam,

Annavaram, Bhadrachalam,

Yadadri should be handed

Ensure Hindus control temples

THIS has reference to the article on "Free temples from government control " (Mar 20). It is the first and foremost duty of any government, for that matter, is to govern. It has no business in peeping its nose in the matter of if any religion by taking over and managing administration of particularly temples in a state of Hindu reli-

Initially the revenue by the government from the Hindu temples are huge. Temple properties lies in the form of land, money, Jewellery, agricultural income, rent from land and buildings and shops. The revenue thus earned is not set apart either to improve the Hindu culture nor the temple itself which is in a dilapidated condition. But for certain famous Hindu temples like Tirupati in AP, Sabarimala in Kerala, Palani in TN and the like rich revenue earning temples small temples are not taken over by the government for the best reasons open to all. Also vote bank politics has a role to play. The income of other small temples is very meagre. Even paltry salaries of priests could not be paid in certain temples, leave alone lighting a lamp in the small temple daily. Low rent payment on land and buildings, looting of money, antique statues and Jewellery are some of the ills of our Hindu

It is very sad that 14 per cent

of the funds in government controlled temples go as administrative expenses. Politicians are appointed as Executive officers and staff. They take away half the income as their salaries. Government takes over only the administration of high revenue earning temples. Non-revenue earning temples are left to fend for themselves. It is a matter of concern that only Hindu temples and that too high revenue yielding Hindu temples are taken over by the government. The temple EO, who is a politician, enjoys unlimited powers. In TN the temple properties like antique statues, Jewellery, lands, shops and all have disappeared in a large scale due to political interference. This is highly regrettable. Our culture is also eroded by keeping the control of the Hindu temples in the hands of the corrupt politicians. The state of affairs of the Hindu temples is pathetic in the hands of our politicians. This really needs a check.

Secondly this act of taking over the administration of the Hindu temples stands partial. But for Hindu temples, the temples of no other religion is taken over by the government for administration.

Sravana Ramachandran,

Temples should be out of govt control

THIS refers to 'Free temples from government control' by V Ramu Sarma (THI March 20) which has given elaborate notes to governments. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that government's business is not doing business. Is it right? Truly false.

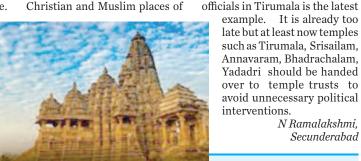
It is also doing more business than business by collecting taxes in various methods, etc. In days of yore, Hindu temples were under private trusts. There was only one temple in each village and today every street has a temple. Gods and Babas have be-

V RAMU Sarma in his column had wellarticulated on why temples need to be freed from government, though he had portrayed the other side also. The most common argument by the proponents of freedom to temples is that places of worship of other religions are not under government control and why should it be so for Hindu temples? It may be noted that the number of temples is vast and varied. Unlike other religions, unity of control becomes difficult here. In the spectrum, there are so many Matts and Peetams who don't see eye to eye. Then is it possible to bring administration of all temples under one umbrella? When different seers are brought under one roof, they may pull and push in different directions leading to total disarray.

Another argument is about expenditure. Can we avoid the expenditure by simply taking them out of the purview of government? There may be no substantial difference in expenses of ad-

come more and it leads to cultural diversification to leaps and

Huge flow of income in certain temples has become eyesore and as such they were brought under government control. Why are Christian and Muslim places of



avoid unnecessary political interventions. N Ramalakshmi, Secunderabad ministration and salaries. It is said- service to Man is service to God. What is wrong if the tem-

trol and administration. We have seen how some seers in control of vast temple funds have driven themselves to infamy by their acts in Karnataka. This is not at all to say that there is no lacuna in administration of temples by government. It is bad but alternative will be worse. Of late, we are worried not because we lack but because others have it. Freeing temples from government and handing over to religious bodies will be like falling from pan into fire, considering the magnitude of funds and inherent divisions within.

ple funds are spent for education, health and im-

proving the living standards of poor? Handing

over to private bodies will fuel feuds among re-

ligious heads within the Hindu religion for con-

Vinay Bhushan Bhagwaty, Hyderabad

PAST AND PRESENT

The school that is only in memories now...



ELIZABETH KOSHY

THE old village high school, which was the only one around within a radius of several kilometres at one time, where generations have studied and passed out, sits pretty even today, occupying a prominent place just a stone's throw away from the major junction in our small town where four roads intersect each

other at perfect right angles. Today the road is a busy state highway bustling with traffic. A new concreted Higher Secondary wing has been added to the old school, sporting the insults cum injuries, by way of broken window panes and foul graffiti, in keening with the modern mindsets of the children, who seem to sport more of a destructive streak than good behaviour. After all what are seniors if not a bit rebellious, they seem to say. In contrast the old tiled structure stands as it stood more than a century or so ago.

Coming to the school, many illustrious alumni have learnt to cross their 't's and dot their 'i's from this grand old institution. some of whom constitute the who's who of the place. From the 103- year-old bishop Mar Chrysostum who headed the Marthoma Church, to professors, doctors and engineers (including my husband), this school was the launch pad for many who made it big in their individual capacities, simply because there was no other to speak of in the vicinity.

There is another personal reason connecting me to the school. It was one of my husband's lady teachers coming from our area. who played the 'matchmaker' between the two families, which ended in our marriage. Since I hail from a place within a radius of two kilometres from my husband's house, which is in the vicinity of the school, many of my relatives and neighbours of a certain age group have passed in front of our house, walking to school. They have all claimed to have eaten the fruits of our grand old rose apple tree in our front courtvard which has borne witness to generations of schoolgoing kids helping themselves to its juicy pink and white fruits,

sometimes facing stones and brickbats in the process. Another feature of our small

town is that almost everyone knows each other in some way or the other, School drop-outs who didn't make it up the ladder of success, may sometimes come face to face with their classmates who have become 'professionals' (as if what their less educated friends do is not profession but work!). The best part is there are no inhibitions between them. a coconut plucker may address a government executive engineer as 'eda', a term used among equals, as they were classmates in school. They would know each other only by their official names, as per the school register. The goodwill among classmates have to be seen to be believed. In some cases well- to- do classmates living abroad may send dollars or dinars in large sums to help their less fortunate classmates either to build houses or get their daughters married. The bond between them is special and cannot be understood by

In sharp contrast to its old significance, the school now stands shorn of its former glory, as a symbol of 'mediocrity', among the dying schools of the state, where even the poor will not dare to tread for fear of poor results, even though education is free. Ironically, the children of teachers teaching there study elsewhere, while they go from door to door canvassing for kids. This is the bane of government aided schools as there are private English medium schools by the dozen in every nook and corner. Though the vernacular language is being promoted by poets and cultural activists, the ground reality is that even the poor want to send their children to English medium schools! One can only hope that the school is restored to its former glory by the government by making the necessary upgradations, employing result - oriented teachers and improving the standard of the school. This will make the students want to study in there and one day proudly say to their children, 'That is my Alma Mater', like their older counter-

VALUING WATER IS AN IMPERATIVE FOREVER

V NAGENDRA KUMAR

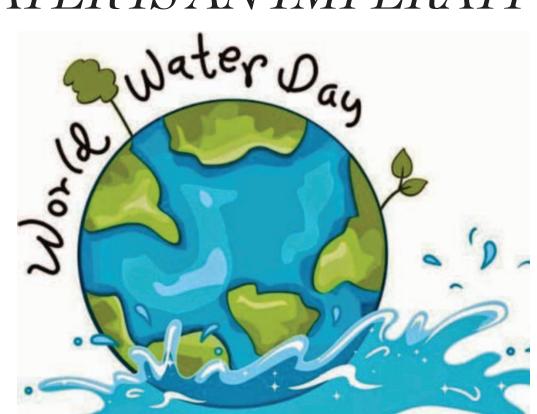
WORLD Water Day is celebrated on March 22 every year to raise awareness about the importance of water, the magnitude of challenges we face and the need for urgent action. More than 70 per cent of the surface of the earth is covered by water out of which only 3 per cent of water can used for consumption. Right from the beginning of this program, the United nations has all the responsibility of celebrating World Water Day. It also decided the theme of World Water Day every year to spread the global message. The theme of World Water day this year is 'Valuing water'. One of the most popular and easy ways to save water is rainwater harvesting. There should be educational awareness campaigns on how to use water judiciously both on domestic level and on a business level.

Water is made of two molecules of hydrogen and one molecule of oxygen. Every year the World Water Day is celebrated by India, U.S.A., Indonesia, Pakistan, Japan, Ghana, Bangladesh, Germany, Nigeria, Egypt and United Nations member countries around the world with a theme in order to focus the attention of the public about the value of fresh water in human life. It inspires people around the world to share ideas about water related issues and take some concrete action in terms of preservation and conservation of water resources.

Encroachment of water bodies like lakes, rivers and ponds has increased due to the burgeoning population in urban areas. Photography exhibition, community walk, interviews, talk shows etc., are organized on a national level on World Water Day. Schools organise various competitions like painting, documentary screening, essay writing and quiz competition on this day. The school students, academicians, scientists participate in the event organised at various places in India to celebrate World Water Day.

On this day, people around the world, governments and nongovernment organizations, vouth, and the general public come together and celebrate the occasion. The aim of the celebration is to create awareness of water and its resources which are crucial for the survival of living beings on earth. The government should also focus on problems related to water and more efforts should be taken to encourage people and officials to understand their duties. Water is important to our family lives, cultural practices, wellbeing etc., This day raises awareness about billions of people living without access to safe water.

It is a known fact that without water humans cannot survive. Water is complex because it is linked to almost everything in the world. Water is a precondition for human existence and for the sustainability of the planet. We need water to stay clean and healthy,



to grow food, to run business etc., Billions of gallons of untreated sewage and wastewater are discharged into the environment, polluting our waterways. Rivers are running dry and lakes are turning into dust beds due to unsustainable water withdrawals.

Climate change is also drastically affecting our water systems worsening existing water problems. In many parts of the world, human demands for water have

outstripped the sustainably available supply. We know the value of water when we don't have access to it. In addition to water supply challenges, we also have water quality challenges. More quantity of wastewater is released back into the environment without any treatment which causes severe health hazards both for people and ecosystems. Water has besuch an essential commodity that we have witnessed water wars between states in the process of sharing of river waters. On this day, all of us should take a pledge that we have to save water from getting polluted in any way and also take care of our environment.

We have been witnessing serpentine queues just to get one vessel of water. In this aspect it is very much essential for every one of us to conserve water which will be useful for others as well. By

conserving water judiciously, we are not only saving on utility bills, but also giving a chance of using the water for our future generations as well. The water on earth is of three categories namely saltwater, brackish water and freshwater. Enough resources have to be allocated for research and development to convert saltwater into freshwater.

A most popular way to save water is recycling of used water treatment plant set up in local communities. Rainwater harvesting is found to be an important method to save water and recharge groundwater table. In rural areas, sprinkler irrigation to be used to reduce wastage of water. The population explosion, rapid industrialization, globalization and economic growth around the world are taking a toll on the limited resources of natural water on the planet. There are certain African nations who are already suffering from drought because of irresponsible use of water for the last few years.

In India too, the states of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and parts of Maharashtra and Karnataka are facing drought every year because people of these regions are not inculcated to proper use of water resources. In cities like Hyderabad and Bangalore, which doesn't have seasonal rivers flowing in, rainwater harvest and building of embankments should be done so that they become independent from river usage. The construction of artificial tanks and lakes should be encouraged so that the water collected in these can be used for domestic purposes in cities.

Steps to conserve water

pits.

- Leakages in water pipes should be immediately attended • Dug out percolation pits to
- allow access to rainwater to flow into it. Water thrown out after washing clothes, dishwashers has to be diverted into percolation
- Don't brush your teeth and wash your utensils while keeping the tap open. Instead use one container to store water which can be used for brushing your teeth.
- Water used for cleaning of milk packets, vegetables has to be used for watering plants during the corona pandemic period.
- While taking showers in the toilet, see that your bath is finished before a song is completed ie, say 3 minutes to minimise excess usage of water unnecessarily.
- Arrange float valves to water tanks that will cut-off the water supply after filling up of water tanks.

It is easier said than done. So, we have to preach what we practice. So, water conserving methods have to be given topmost priority to preserve the

OPERATION FLUSH OUT

Rajasthan police seize phones, shift dons to other jails

ARCHANA SHARMA

THE scale is impressive. More than 10,330 intensive searches were conducted in Rajasthan under Operation Flush Out in which 185 mobile phones, 83 SIM cards, 33 chargers, 23 earphones, 19 data cables, opium, charas, tobacco, bidi and cigarettes and other prohibited material were seized from jail-birds, according to DG Prisons Rajeev Dasot.

Dasot told IANS that as many as 68 notorious dons, including the top 10 criminals of the state and prisoners using prohibited material, were transferred to other jails for the purpose of breaking their networks.

Dreaded criminal Lawrence Bishnoi, who threatened Bollywood star Salman Khan from jail premises, for instance, was

shifted from Bharatpur prison to the Ajmer Jail.

Also Papla Gujjar, who escaped from Behror, was shunted to Ajmer jail from Kishangarhbas. Gujjar had escaped from Behror police station on September 6, 2019, after his aides opened fire with an AK-47 gun at the policemen on duty. He was subsequently arrested on January 27 where he was hiding in his girlfriend's home at Kolhapur.

"With this operation, we've sent out a strong message of zerotolerance against connivance, corruption and criminal activities in jail and breaking the criminal nexus inside Rajasthan's jails," Dasot told IANS.

Operation Flush out was launched across 144 jails throughout the desert state in November 21 last year under the

directions of Dasot in which around 150 jail employees were rewarded while disciplinary action was taken against 200 staff members for conniving with criminals.

"We were receiving tip-offs that criminals were conducting their activities right from the jail premises. This was a major challenge addressing which was the first priority for us.

"We were informed that prisoners sitting in their comfort zones in the prison were conducting mafia operations in connivance with our own staff. They either entered the jail by hiding phones, or else our staff gave them phones. Keeping this in mind, we started Operation Flush Out," recalled Dasot.

The operation started on November 21 last year with a high-

level search operation to stop criminal activities operated by jailed criminals.

Notably, disciplinary proceedings were carried out against 99 officers and 25 officers who were supporting such criminal activities at the jail level and outside the network were found guilty.

Additionally, 54 officers were transferred the basis of suspicious complaints. On the other side, about 145 honest officer were also awarded for their honesty and rendering the best service under the Operation Flush Out. CM Ashok Gehlot has closely observed this operation and appreciated the efforts of department, hoping this will will help control crime in the state.

The campaign has been extended till March 31, 2021, informed Dasot.



Batting at an innovative stage in cricket

Yajurvindra Singh

CRICKET has always had the aura of being an elite sport that stood for values appreciated in different walks of life. This is precisely why it has been a popular game for so long. The players in white amid the village greens, or at the stadium, were looked up to as gritty warriors representing a community, village, city, or a country, all aiming to succeed.

The cricket stars who shone as knights in white armour were revered, loved and idolised from the game's inception to our present-day heroes. The rules and the playing conditions over years were tweaked to make cricket more attractive and absorbing. Similarly, cricketers' innovation in the art of batting, bowling, fielding, and even field placements has kept the game in mo-

One marvelled at the way W G Grace mastered the defensive stroke as well as his lusty hits in front of the wicket. Then arrived the Indian magician, Ranjitsinhji, whose supple and subtle skill invented the glance, and his wristy strokes left many a spectator spellbound.

The great Don Bradman, unanimously considered as the best batsman ever to play the game, played it traditionally in a conventional way to make batting an art that brought about character and consistency.

Test cricket for a century was played imbibing the style of the 'Don' of cricket rather than innovating in the art of batsmanship. Cricketers practiced and played to master the defence and stroke play left behind by the Australian legend.

Limited overs cricket has changed the approach and the skills required by a batsman completely. One may sit and rue



the fact that cricket as played traditionally has changed for the worse, but if one evaluates it without malice, cricket has progressed by leaps and bounds.

Mike Gatting's reverse sweep that cost England a possible World Cup win in 1987 and the leg side scoop of Misbah-ul-Haq of Pakistan in the first T20 World Cup final in 2007 against India were frowned upon. Today, these two shots have become a part of a cricketer's armoury and one that youngsters want to learn at the kindergarten stage.

The reverse sweep was in existence since the late 70's. Javed Miandad, the master blaster of leagues had a laugh at my expense, and I felt ashamed to be swept on both sides of the wicket for boundaries. However, we were all quite enchanted by the stroke and none of us ever ventured to ever try it out even in the nets, as we felt it was too risky.

Looking back, Ramnath Parker, the Indian opening batsman of the 70's, was one player who at times played unconventionally. He played the falling down sweep, very similar to the legside scoop being played now. which was made famous by the West Indian batting legend Rohan Kanhai. He also played the uppercut to a short rising fast

third man for a six in the 2003 World Cup in South Africa. Since then, every batsman around the world has learnt to either hit it forcefully or glide the ball in that area. A shot that was risky to play earlier has become a good scoring shot because of the thick wooden, well-pressed bats being used at present.

The bats have made hitting sixes an everyday affair and one can see even mishits and edges flying miles high into the stands. The last decade has brought a sea of change and innovation in the art of batsmanship. Batting has blossomed as never before. The aggressive and positive attitude is that conventional players like Virat Kohli, Cheteshwar Pujara and Kane Williamson are still successful playing in the traditional way, compared to Rishabh Pant, Hardik Pandya and many other uncharacteristic batsmen around the world.

Pant's success in Test cricket has been a revelation. His reverse scoop against the bowling of Jimmy Anderson and later against Jofra Archer had one gobsmacked. For him to do so in an international game was astounding. His success is what will be the new benchmark for players of the future. A batsman's stroke-play is now a 360-degree

The bats have made the game totally skewed in favour of the batsman. The field restrictions that were put in place to make the limited overs version attractive needs to be closely looked into by the ICC. The juniors as well as the women are hitting balls into the spectators' stands. The fielder at the boundary, at most times, is becoming a mere onlooker, even when batters have mishit a shot. The players field restrictions need to change to make it a more even contest between the bat and the ball.

T20 has made cricket very exciting. Very shortly one may see a batsman hit it straight over the bowler's head for a six by playing the reverse bat. This one may seem an incredible shot but so were the glance, the late-cut, the reverse sweep, and the legside scoop as well as the upper-cut and glide. But for a batsman to hit a fast-speeding ball over his head from a good length ball for a boundary, still takes one's breath away. Hats off to Rishabh

Exploring the world of publishing from behind the scenes

THE Indian publishing industry is thriving with a wave of new publishers, international contracts, and authors but the average Indian reader and first-time author knows very little about the intricacies of the publishing process.

In an attempt to bridge this gap between readers, writers, editors and publishers, Mumbai-based literary company Bound's 13-episode podcast, "The Book People", will be exploring Indian publishing through the eyes of the people who work in it.

Each episode will include series-host Aishwarya Javalgekar in a conversation with an industry expert about their role, experience and opinions about the industry and its future. Prominent guests include Ishani Butalia (Zubaan Books), Sayantan Ghosh (S&S India), and Harshad Marathe (Designer), to name a few. Packed with industry insights and fun book conversations, each episode in the series will be released every Thursday, starting March 18.

'Bound' founder Tara Khandelwal said she started the company because I noticed a lack of infrastructure for creative people to learn and form communities in India. Creative and artistic fields like writing, podcasting, etc. have always struggled to be taken seriously, but with a growing audience waiting to consume content across platforms, writers and storytellers of all kinds are more important than ever before. Our interactions with writers during our retreat, classes and services revealed the sheer lack of information available about books and publishing in India".

"In the last 6 months, we have combined our experience and extensive primary and secondary research to create two comprehensive projects that make publishing transparent and accessible to everyone: content creators, curators and consumers.

"With 'The Book People', they can get to know the people working behind the scenes, and understand their roles and opinions about the industry. We hope that together these projects will demystify



publishing for writers, readers, aspiring professionals, and people and organizations working in and around publishing', she added.

Aishwarya Javalgekar, the podcasthost, commented: "As a writer, reader and an editor, I found the publishing and literarv world to be an echo-chamber, with

conversations that were inaccessible to me due to lack of context or data. There was no information available on how to get published or work in the industry. 'The Book People' is my attempt to show that behind all the processes and data and lack of information are real people with a love for stories and books. Just like the audience, I want to understand what they do and how they feel about books

HIS journey as Chief Minister has been no less than a roller-coaster ride with appreciable highs and depressing lows. Yogi Adityanath was named as the Chief Minister in March 2017 after the BJP came to power in Uttar Pradesh with a massive majority but not many political pundits were ready to

bet on him. Yogi Adityanath managed to turn the challenges into opportunities and silenced most of his critics -- not only in the opposition but also within his own party

-- with his performance. Yogi Adityanath's first challenge came from his own constituency Gorakhpur in August 2017 when more than 60 children died due to disruption in oxygen supply at the BRD Medical Col-

Yogi came down heavily against those responsible for the tragedy and within a year, he even managed to contain the Encephalitis deaths in the region to a large extent. Hundreds of children had been dying of Encephalitis since the past four decades and the governments had watched on helplessly.

Yogi Adityanath turned around the situation with a public awareness campaign that was supported by a massive sanitation and hygiene drive.

A 64-page booklet titled "Chunautiyon main talaashe avsar" (Challenges turned into opportunities) that has been brought out to mark his four years in office claims "four years of service and good governance" and lists his achievements

From pushing forward the state's economy with investor summits, defence expo and

Pakistan batting, played this shot bowlers' delivery. of T20 cricket as well as one-day to my slow off-spin during our This shot became a signature (Yajurvindra Singh is a matches has been instrumental shot when Sachin Tendulkar in making Test cricket attractive. practice game in England during former Test cricketer. the 1979 World Cup. My col-The wonderful aspect of it all Views expressed are personal) smashed Shoaib Akhtar over the and publishing." (IANS)

Yogi is now the longest serving BJP CM in UP When Yogi Adityanath completed four years in office on last Friday, he broke a record by becoming the longest serving Bharatiya Janata Party Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh

ground breaking ceremony to aggressively attempting to check rampant corruption in the state machinery and cracking down on organised crime-the booklet says it all.

Yogi Adityanath's biggest challenge that finally turned out also to be his biggest achievement was the Corona pandemic.

In a state that was thoroughly deprived of medical infrastructure, the Chief Minister relentlessly worked to build up a medical management system that could deal with the pandemic.

Covid hospitals were set up within days and the safety protocols were strictly enforced during the lockdown.

The government, however, faltered when workers' migration began and that is mainly because the entire focus was on the medical aspect of the pandemic and the state was apparently not prepared for the large-scale migration that took place.

The Chief Minister used the Central and state schemes to provide temporary succour to a large section of population that had migrated to their home state. The relief was in the form of financial assistance and free food.

The migration created another problem -- that of unemployment



and Yogi Adityanath effectively used his flagship scheme of 'One District One Product' to solve the problem

The ODOP, with assistance from the MSME sector, has emerged as the biggest driving force in the state, stretching its wings from traditional arts and

crafts to modern-day start-ups. The Yogi government has primarily focused on education, health and infrastructure devel-

Several steps were taken to increase the quality of education. More than 1.30 lakh teachers were recruited under a fair and

opment

transparent process.

So far, 1.35 lakh primary schools have been rejuvenated and equipped with basic facilities. The enrolment of the children was done by motivating the parents and reducing the dropout

Three state universities, 51 new

government colleges, 194 new government secondary schools, 28 engineering colleges, 26 polytechnics, 79 ITIs, 248 inter colleges, and 771 Kasturba schools have been set up in the Yogi

Recognition of 28 new private universities is under process. A state university is to be opened in every unserved division and a new Sainik School in Gorakhpur will be set up.

Atal Residential Schools have been established in 18 divisions for the free education of the children of labourers. In another first, the Abhyuday scheme has been launched for free coaching for students appearing in competitive examinations.

In the first phase of the scheme, more than 52,000 candidates have been registered. The health infrastructure in Uttar Pradesh was developed during Yogi's tenure with an unprecedented speed.

Uttar Pradesh was at the forefront of the country by providing 1.75 lakh Covid beds. Contact tracing of about 16 crore people was done in two lakh localities. ICU, ventilator, TRUnat machines were arranged in all district hospitals.

By carrying out 1.75 lakh Covid

tests every day, the state topped the country. The country's largest plasma bank was established in Lucknow. More than 64,000 Covid help desks were also set up in the entire state.

In infrastructure development, the state government is ensuring massive development of rail, road and air connectivity. The construction of five expressways with a total length of 4,322 kms is being ensured. Traffic will start soon on the 344-kilometre long Purvanchal Expressway.

Construction work of 297 kms long Bundelkhand Expressway is also going on a war footing. The process of land acquisition for the 594 km long Ganga Expressway has started and the work of 94 km long Gorakhpur Link Expressway is also in progress.

The roads on the international/interstate borders of the state and all the district headquarters have been connected by four-lane roads. Such tehsils and development block headquarters, which were not connected by two-lane road till now, are now being rapidly connected.

Air connectivity is also being increased. The international airport in Kushinagar is almost ready. The process of construction of international airports at Jewar and Ayodhya is in progress. Five international airports will be available in the state as soon as they are completed.

At present, 8 airports are operational in Lucknow, Agra, Varanasi, Gorakhpur, Kanpur, Prayagraj, Hindon, and Bareilly. As many as 43 other airports and an airstrip are being developed. (IANS

HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

INFRASTRUCTURE has been one of the main focal points of the Union Budget 2021-22. Government has committed Rs 5.54 lakh crore towards infrastructure in 2021-22 as against Rs 4.39 lakh crores in 2020-21, a growth of 26 per cent. This clearly shows government's commitment to make infrastructure a key enabler for the GDP growth.

The central government has given special focus to Telangana and has allocated funds worth Rs 13.169 crore. This is specifically towards road and highway development projects and will give a boost to the construction equipment demand



"We are expecting an increase in demand for construction tyres given the government's thrust on infrastructure development," said Dinesh Dhariwal, CEO, Dhariwal and Co. Dhariwal has been associated with Ceat for last six years.

"Ceat Specialty offers an established range of off-highway tyres to service varied needs of the customers in construction segment. Tyrock XL and Grip Master ND are designed to provide reliable performance and are best suited for backhoe loaders. Ceat Specialty has always been at the forefront in providing best in class service to our customers," Dhariwal added.

Tyrock XL offers the excellent traction and stability on all terrains. It provides resistance to stone trapping and puncture which makes it suitable for backhoe loaders. Grip Master ND is a heavy duty tyre, which offers resistance to heat and cuts. It is best suited for construction equipment working in

Grassroots innovation: India's real upsurge in opportunities

Innovative, profitable endeavours not merely the contribution of an urban elite, but also rural communities and individuals

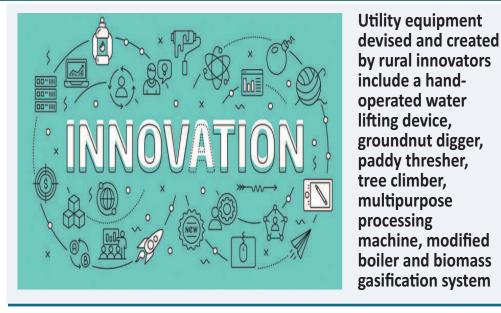


Viiveck Verma

tories of innovation in India tend to demonstrate a city-centrism of sorts. Innovation is linked to technological advancements in select 'developed' pockets and those are the most fervently repeated and reported stories in the mainstream. When there are reports on innovation at the grassroots level, the hegemony of urban forces continues as the researchers and people who weave the narrative continue to have urban origins and a detached, ill-grounded perspective on the actual conditions in the rural context.

A top-down model does not do justice to a domain which can significantly uplift emerging economies with problems around the scarcity and management of resources. Consequently, there needs to be more attention diverted to grassroots innovators and they should be integrated into any mainstream imagination of the economy.

As a group of researchers including Sonal H Singh and Bhaskar Bhowmick write in the November 2019 issue of the Routledge journal Innovation, there is a scarcity of literature on grassroots innovation and a lack of empirical studies which explore the conceptual boundaries of grassroots innovation. They note that grassroots innovators who are equipped with traditional knowledge and skills create local, bottom-up solutions for sustainable livelihood and the do-



main has potential for entrepreneurial opportunities.

This is a pertinent observation, as grassroots innovations are often marked by exceptional organisational acumen, deft deployment of available resources and an immediacy towards the local context. Inventions and developments at the grassroots level can radically boost an economy like India with its consistent race towards managing resources to provide for a gigantic population. A number of factors are crucial

in this regard. The first change we require is an alteration in approach towards grassroots innovation. Urban investigators, critics and mediapersons must not operate with biases against rural and local communities and position them as people with creative and informed agencies who contribute importantly towards national growth and welfare. Similarly, any conception of grassroots innovation must not be superficial and focus merely on getting details but should be an attempt to understand and highlight the grassroots story.

As the urban sphere broadens its comprehension of the rural, better correspondences and understandings between the two can be forged.

The National Innovation Foundation, in its report on grassroots technical innovations listed new techniques and startups devised and created by rural innovators.

These included a hand-operated water lifting device, groundnut digger, paddy thresher, tree climber, multipurpose processing machine, modified boiler and biomass gasification system. All of these innovations were conceptualised, designed and manufactured at the most immediate, local levels and happen to be incredibly sophisticated in their contribution to the rural

Such innovations did not just cut down costs and provide ecofriendly and energy conserving alternatives but also led to massive turnovers. For instance, the modified boiler, which recycles used steam, leading to lesser fuel and water consumption had a turnover of Rs 1 crore. Innovative and profitable endeavours, thus, are not merely the contribution of an urban elite, but also rural communities and individuals.

There is also an enormous ethical imperative in focussing on grassroots innovation, namely, staying true to the will and the aspirations of the people. If development has to be genuine and inclusive, it must not privilege knowledge from certain origins over others. The sphere of advancements and innovations needs to be democratised and we need stories from the silenced rural milieus to be heard for the same.

For this, we must encourage a dialogue with rural innovators and abandon the patronizing project of reporting from the grassroots and allow agents at the grassroots level to represent themselves and ask for their due.

This will also enable a muchneeded awareness in dealing with problems which plague rural India alongside a sensitisation towards the concerns of the local populace in different regions.

Poverty and unemployment can be tackled head-on if we allow people to vocalise their own local narratives instead of weaving stories around them from the detachment of the urban space.

For example, if a certain industrial project is causing harm to people in a village and affecting their livelihoods, a network that is built on communication between rural and urban areas will reveal the situation as it is, and enable swift resolution of the

Similarly, if a grassroots innovation gets the right degree of coverage and a worthy platform, it can transcend its origins and find takers in urban and international sectors. For example, as National Innovation Foundation reports, the tree climber referred to earlier, created by Venkat DN from Coimbatore was exported to countries like Australia, Mauritius, Phillippines, USA and France.

On the whole, the radical transformative potential of grassroots innovation is undeniable. It provides an unparalleled opportunity for sustainable and inclusive development that does not marginalize local communities and can provide a new lease of life to the Indian economy, apart from widening the avenues for greater employment and acknowledgment of India's diverse traditional practices and ideas.

Grassroots innovation represents the possibility of radical strides for India and promises boundless rewards if dealt with correctly. So, let us decide to identify, promote and support one grassroots innovator each with all our means and energies to enable India to accomplish its next upsurge moment.

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

Aditya Birla Sun Life launches customisable term plan

HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

ADITYA Birla Sun Life Insurance (ABSLI), the life insurance subsidiary of Aditya Birla Capital Limited (ABCL), launched a hyper-personalized term plan, ABSLI DigiShield Plan, to cater to the protection needs of customers.

This single plan will offer multiple plan options, added benefits linked to life stages, joint life protection, critical illness cover and rider options to tailor-make a distinctive protection solution, offering a comprehensive financial safety net for the customers and their loved ones.

People have various protection needs during different stages of their life and the hyperflexibility offering of this plan helps to curate a protection strategy that aligns with their



specific needs. Besides offering death benefit and acting as an income replacement tool, the new term plan assists in comprehensive financial planning.

Unlike traditional term plans, this plan allows a customer to enjoy its benefits during their lifetime through the survival benefit option. Further, it provides a unique flexibility to reduce the sum assured at a predefined retirement age, allowing customers to align their cover as per their outstanding liabilities and the life stage. This whole-life cover with sum assured reduction feature is a first-of-its kind in the life insurance industry which offers life coverage until age 100 years, the company said.

Along with these fully customizable offerings, this plan also provides various premium paying terms, policy tenures and death benefit pay-out options to satisfy unique customer requirements.

ULIPs good bet for long term savings

The demand in this category continues to be robust because of rising awareness and the pandemic, says G Murlidhar of Kotak Mahindra Life

KUMUD DAS

nance Minister has proposed to hike FDI limits from 49 per cent to 74 per cent. How do you see impact on the industry?

Increase in FDI limit from 49 per cent to 74 per cent is a positive development and will attract additional capital to the industry. We will have to wait and observe how the effects will unfold, but it is certainly a sign of confidence of the government in the industry and a signal that it expects the industry to expand and deepen insurance penetration in the country. India continues to be under-penetrated and any additional capital can be expected to strengthen the balance sheets of insurers & help them scale up their distribution

With the new tax rule in ULIPs in the recent Budget, will there be demand now in this segment?

As per the new tax rule, if the annual premium of a ULIP policy is more than Rs 2.5 lakh, the returns on the investment will no longer be tax exempt. Hence the ULIPs below that threshold will continue to enjoy complete tax exemption as earlier, which is great news for retail investors. As per our experience, a huge majority of regular premium ULIP customers (well over 90 per cents in our case) fall below the threshold and hence will continue to enjoy the exemption. Therefore, we see no significant change in demand. We expect this segment to grow further.

Above the threshold, the tax rule is broadly in line with other savings instruments. Hence there is no relative disadvantage for large-ticket ULIP investors. Most importantly, customers should keep in mind that, regardless of taxation rules, ULIPs are great instruments for long-term savings and wealth-creation for planning for life goals along with protection/life cover, along of a unit-linked insurance plan (ULIP) policy is more than Rs 2.5 lakh, the returns on the investment will no longer be tax exempt. "Regardless of taxation rules, ULIPs are great instruments for long-term savings and wealthcreation for planning for life goals along with protection/life cover, along with various riders like waiver of premium benefit and critical illness benefit," says G Murlidhar, MD & CEO, Kotak Mahindra Life Insurance Company, in an exclusive interview with Bizz Buzz

As per the new tax rule, if the annual premium

with various riders like waiver can disclose personal health of premium benefit and critical illness benefit. What was the impact on claim

process in cases where people have hidden facts during purchase of life insurance? Insurance is a contract based

on the principle of "Uberrima Fides", a Latin term meaning "Utmost Good Faith". It is the proposer's responsibility to disclose full information regarding their health history and financial facts so that the insurer has a fair understanding of the risk; this in turn makes the processing of claims smooth in case of any eventuality. In case of wilful suppression of material information, it does affect the claims process; such cases may require investigation and may lead to repudiation of claim, keeping in mind implications on pricing and interests of genuine policyholders.

Insurance products are all about sum assured, that is there is an assurance of value that will be paid at time of policy maturity or death of the policyholder. KLI is committed to bringing assurance to people's lives and claims is one such important commitment. Keeping this doctrine in mind, we aim at settling each and every claim. Therefore, we have put in place various checks to ensure complete disclosures at the onboarding stage, such as a video call facility where the customer

history (with the assistance of a medical professional where required), integration with external sources like credit bureaus to verify financial/insurance history of proposer, and analytical modelling to predict high risk proposals.

Have term insurance rates fallen?

Term rates started falling around 2013-14 across the industry as a result of competitive pressures and fell by around 30 per cent-35 per centover the following few years, before stabilising around 2017-18. In the last twelve months or so, there have been some increases in the term premium rates across the industry, largely driven by the mortality experience of the insurers and reinsurers. However, the demand in this category continues to be robust, driven in part by rising awareness and the pandemic. Overall, we are seeing an increase in the demand for 'protection' category of products, including term plans, riders like critical illness benefit and permanent disability benefit, and our recently launched health plan Kotak Health Shield.

How has the claims settlement ratio been during Covid-19 at

We have always ensured that settlement of claims is a top priority. During initial stages of the pandemic, we geared up our systems and processes to ensure uninterrupted services to existing customers, particularly timely claim settlement. Digital platforms for claim intimation were strengthened for seamless customer experience, and we fast-tracked the settlement of Covid related claims. Overall, claim settlement ratios have been at par with pre-Covid lev-

What changes have you brought at Kotak digitally dur-

ing Covid-19? During the lockdown, we were able to continue uninterrupted services to our customers without the need to visit our branches. We also enabled our distributors to operate remotely through various digital tools. We have taken various digital initiatives significantly enhancing customer experience. We have been able to make personalised pre-approved offers to customers using data and analytics, enabled paperless and hassle-free customer on-boarding, easy buying of policy through eSigning using Aadhar, enhanced servicing capabilities through selfservice portals, WhatsApp, insta-servicing bots etc. For our distributors, we have completely re-defined our processes: our distributors today are on-boarded digitally, trained on digital platforms, manage their sales leads digitally, log-in policies through mobile based apps, get instant commission, and even track their performance on mobile apps. We continue to be among the largest recruiters of agents and we also have large number of tie-ups with banks and digital partners. We will continue to innovate with a view to ensure superior experience for customers as well as distributors.

How do you see the demand for bite size /sachet insurance? Will such products increase insurance penetration across India?

Bite-sized insurance offers risk coverage for a short period of time at small premiums with almost no underwriting, making the process easy and quick. The demand could be fuelled in part by very young earners, when they look for very shortterm covers for specific purposes, along with ease of buying. In a sense, it does increase insurance penetration, but if one takes a closer look, it will increase penetration only if this is bought by people having no insurance earlier, and even so. the size of cover may only be a fraction of the customer's needs. Hence, bite-size insurance may help increase insurance penetration but may not reduce the protection gap.

How do you see the growth in insurance sector in the upcoming

months in FY2021-22? Insurance demand is seeing recovery post-Covid, with growth in new business premiums in the last few months. As economic recovery picks up, we expect life insurance industry growth to return to normalcy in the next financial year and continue to grow by around 15 per cent per annum over the next few years. Key growth drivers would be increasing customer awareness, an underpenetrated market, and favourable demographic factors like a young population and growing working age group with rising incomes.

HANS BIZ QUIZ

'Thomas Jefferson - Founding Father of the United States'

1. Thomas Jefferson holds an important place in the United States' history. On 22nd March, Jefferson was appointed as the first **United States Secretary of State. Which year** was it?

c) 1780

2. Thomas Jefferson was a man of many faces. He was fond of Astronomy and Mathematician. Which of the below hobbies describe Jefferson?

a) He was a gourmet and Horticulturist b) He was a bibliophile and wine expert c) He was a Bird keeping, Violin Playing

d) All of the above

3. Jefferson helped popularize the Neo-Palladian style in the United States. Where can you find the iconic rotunda designed based on Jefferson's blueprints?

a) His Monticello home

b) University of Virginia c) Virginia State Capitol in Richmond

d) All of the above 4. Thomas Jefferson enjoyed archaeology, the study of history through fossils. He had

the bones of which animal which went extinct about 40 million years ago?

a) Tasmanian Tiger b) Woolly Mammoth

c) Mastodon

d) Dinosaurs

5. Jefferson authored several books. Which book is considered perhaps the most influential American book published before the 19th century?

a) The Declaration of Independence b) The Jefferson Bible: The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth

c) Autobiography of Thomas Jefferson d) Notes on the State of Virginia

6. Jefferson was an architect. Jefferson designed and built his house with 33 rooms on four floors, and many of the rooms are octagonal. How many years did it take Jefferson to complete his home 'Monticello'?

a) 40 years c) 11 years

b) 23 years d) 2 years

7. In 1776, Jefferson wrote 'The Declaration of Independence, a formal statement an-

c) 1 December 1802 d) 1 January 1804

a) 4 July 1802

b) 1 May 1803

and military learning?

10. In 1802, Jefferson, the third president of the United States, had arranged to purchase which of the below from France?

nouncing that the United States was no

longer a part of the British Empire. Under

which President's administration. Jefferson

8. In 1777, Jefferson drafted the Virginia

Statute for Religious Freedom, which dis-

established the Church of England in Vir-

ginia and guaranteed freedom of religion to people of all religious faiths. Jefferson

served as wartime Governor of which of

9. In 1801, shortly after his inauguration as

President, Jefferson directed to establishing

the United States Military Academy at West

Point, New York. When did the USMA formally start as an institution for scientific

b) Virginia

d) Michigan

served as the Vice President of the USA?

a) James Monroe

d) James Madison

c) John Adams

the States?

a) Florida

c) Georgia

b) George Washington

a) Alaska b) Ohio d) North Carolina c) New Orleans

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

IB 3D 3D 4C 2D 64 7C 8B 9A 10C

INDIA REIGN

Host beats England by 36 runs; wraps up 5-match T20I series 3-2

AHMEDABAD

INDIA defeated England by 36 runs in the fifth Twenty20 International to claim the series 3-2 here on Saturday, thanks to some splendid bowling both with the new ball and at the death by Bhuvneshwar Kumar after Rohit Sharma's sensational 64 and skipper Virat Kohli's wellcrafted 80 powered India to a massive 224 for two, their best ever total against England. In reply, England managed to score only 188 runs for the loss of eight wickets in the stipulated 20 overs.

Earlier, after losing the toss for the fourth time in the series, India were predictably put in to bat by Eoin Morgan. Preparing themselves for

success in all conditions ahead of the T20 World Cup, India thrived under the pressure of a series-decider to produce their best total of the Jofra Archer and Mark Wood

had troubled the Indians with their extra pace in earlier games but Rohit and Kohli sent them to the cleaners on way to their 94-run stand. The other major contributions came from Suryakumar Yadav (32 off 17 balls) and Hardik Pandya (39 not out off 17 balls).

The hosts hammered 67 runs in the last five overs to give the innings a perfect finish. Barring Ben Stokes and Adil Rashid, all England bowlers leaked more than 10 runs per over with Chris Jordan (0/57) being the most expensive. India decided to drop

opener K L Rahul to accommodate an extra bowling option in left-arm pacer T Natarajan for the all important game. With no Rahul at the top, Virat Kohli

moved himself up the order to open with Rohit. The move worked wonders with Kohli and Rohit sharing a 94-run stand off 54 balls.

Rohit did the bulk of the scoring in

their partnership as

Chris Jordan 4-0-57-0, Sam Curran 1-0-11-0, Ben Stokes 3-0-26-1. **England** Jason Roy b Kumar.. Jos Buttler c Pandya b Kumar 52 Dawid Malan b Thakur...... Jonny Bairstow c Yadav b Thakur 7 Eoin Morgan (c) c sub (KL Rahul) b Ben Stokes c Pant b Natarajan14 Chris Iordan c Yaday h Thakur11 Jofra Archer run out (Yadav/Pant)1

Sam Curran not out

5TH T20I SCOREBOARD

Suryakumar Yadav c Roy b Rashid..32

Total (For 2 wickets in 20 overs)....224

Bowling: Adil Rashid 4-0-31-1, Jofra

Archer 4-0-43-0, Mark Wood 4-0-53-0,

Rohit Sharma b Stokes

Hardik Pandya not out.... Extras (LB-3,WD-6)..

Fall of wickets: 1-94, 2-143.

Virat Kohli not out

Adil Rashid not out.... Extras (lb 9, w 11)... Total (For 8 wickets in 20 overs) 188 Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-130, 3-140, 4-142, 5-142, 6-165, 7-168, 8-174 Bowling: Bhuvneshwar Kumar 4-

0-15-2, Hardik Pandya 4-0-34-1,

Rahul Chahar 3-0-33-0

Washington Sundar 1-0-13-0, Shardul

Thakur 4-0-45-3, T Natarajan 4-0-39-1,

was more than happy to enjoy a sensational display of stroke-making from the other end. Rohit, who was rested for the first two games and did not get much in the next two, enhanced his reputation of a big match player on Saturday.

Most of his five sixes were his trademark shot, the seemingly effortless pull over deep square leg. Also a treat to the eye were his rasping straight drives off a seriously quick Mark Wood in his

> India's Rohit Sharma greeted by skipper Virat Kohli after scoring half century during fifth and final T20 match against England at the cricket stadium in Sardar Patel Sports Enclave, Ahmedabad

Yashaswini shoots gold, silver for Manu

New Delhi

INDIA'S Yashaswini Singh Deswal personified consistency and calmness on her way to winning the gold medal in the women's 10m air pistol ahead of the more celebrated Manu Bhaker in the ISSF World Cup here on Saturday.

Deswal shot 238.8 to comfortably finish on top of the podium in the eight-women final while Bhaker managed 236.7 to settle for the silver medal. Viktoria Chaika of Belarus bagged the bronze medal with 215.9 at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range.

The other Indian in the final, Shri Nivetha, started well but had to eventually settle for the fourth place with 193.5.

Sindhu loses in **All England Open semis**

BIRMINGHAM

REIGNING world champion P.V. Sindhu crashed out of the All England Open semi-finals. losing to Thailand's Pornpawee Chochuwong in straight games here on Saturday.

The Thai player, seeded below the Indian in the tournament, won 21-17, 21-9 in 45 minutes.

Chochuwong's dominance was quite evident with the total points won by her -- 42 to Sindhu's 26 out of the 68 points played.

Even though the world No. 7 Sindhu had a better head-tohead record (4-1), her 23-yearold world No. 11 put up a dominant show to tame her.

In the first game, both the players were level at 4-all. However, Chochuwong won two successive points to steer clear. Sindhu tried to catch up but the Thai player stretched the lead to four games, going up 9-5. From then on, Sindhu had to play catch-up.

Although the Indian shuttler did try to narrow the gap on three occasions -- 15-13, 17-15 and 17-16, Chochuwong was too good to let her get ahead.

Bosphorous Boxing tournament

Nikhat, Gaurav crash out in semis

ISTANBUL

INDIAN boxers Nikhat Zareen (51kg) and Gaurav Solanki (57kg) settled for bronze medals after going down in their respective semi-finals at the Bosphorus Boxing Tournament on Friday.

Asian Championship bronze-medallist Nikhat, who defeated world champion Paltceva Ekaterina of Russia in pre-quarterfinals and two-time world champion Nazym Kyzaibay of Kazakhstan in the quarter-finals in her last two bouts was up against the 2019 World Championship silver medallist Busenaz Cakiroglu of Turkey in the semi-final.

The opening round saw both the boxers playing a waiting game but the subsequent rounds saw both of them go into attack mode. But the home favourite landed more punches and secured a unanimous 5-0 win over the Indian pugilist.

Meanwhile, Commonwealth Games goldmedallist Gaurav Solanki, who notched up impressive wins in the previous rounds, faced . Argentina's Nirco Cuello.

Gaurav fought hard and displayed attacking prowess from the start but conceded clear punches in the dying minutes to lose 0-5 and

bow out of the tournament. Other Indian boxers, Sonia Lather (57 kg), Parveen (60 kg) and Jyoti





Dона pair of Sharath and Manika turned the

INDIAN pair of Achanta Sharath Kamal and Manika Batra confirmed their maiden mixed doubles qualification for the 2021 Tokyo Olympics after they surprised the world No. 5 Korean pair of Sang-Su Lee and Jihee Jeon 4-2 in the finals of the Asian Olympic Qualification Tournament on Saturday.

India are now certain to be represented in the men's singles, women's

Kamal-Manika earn Olympics berth in mixed doubles

doubles categories in table tennis at the Olympics that begins on July 23.

The most impressive part of this final encounter was the way the world No.18

game in their favour after starting the match 0-2 (11-8, 11-6) down against their higher-ranked Korean counterparts.

The Indian pair won six points in a row in the third game and scripted a slow but steady comeback.

"I can tell you this is nothing short of phenomenal. It is one of the biggest victories for Manika and me. I have

singles and mixed been sleepless since 5 am in the morning and was under a lot of pressure as this was our only shot to qualify for the Olympics," said an elated Sharath.

The reigning Asian Games bronzemedallist in the mixed team event added. "We started off with two losses but this victory against such topranked players will surely give us the confidence and belief of being strong medal contenders for the Tokyo Games.'

While the mixed team event is being introduced at the Olympics, the Indian duo had a 1-1 head-to-head count before this encounter. Sharath and Manika had defeated Lee and Jeon during the 2018 Asian Games before

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Hyderabad to host 72nd National Track Cycling Championship

5-day event begins on March 27; is first-ever to be recognised by UCI

CYCLING Federation of India's 72nd National Track Cycling Championship-2021 is to be held in Hyderabad from March 27 to 31 at Velodrome SATS, Osmania University. The five-day event will be hosted by Telangana Cycling As-

Minister of Sports V. Srinivas Gound, SATS Chairman Shri A. Venkateshwar Reddy unveiled the brochure and trophy of the event. The Minister assured all the help in or-

ganising the event. The organising committee, in a press note, said that Telangana State is privileged to host the National Track Cycling Championship and it is the first Championship registered with UCI (Union Cycliste Internationale) which is a history in the making and it will be recognised

internationally. This is the first-ever Indian National Championship to be recognised by the UCI and as such has been listed in the UCI World Track Cycling Calendar.



Sports Minister V Srinivas Goud unviels the Trophy of 72nd Nationa Track Cycling Championship Hyderabad

More than 700 cyclists, both men and women from across India are expected to take part in the National Track Cycling Championship which comes to Hyderabad after a gap of 14 years. They will compete in Individual Time Trail, Individual Sprint, Individual Pursuit, Point Race, Keirin, Scratch Race, Team Pursuit, Team Sprint and Flying Lap. The organizing committee comprises of Malla Reddy, president; Katkam Dattatraya, secretary; Rajkumar Kacharla, chairman; three Co-Chairmans Anurag Rai Saxena, Vijay K and Dr Maxwell Trevor; Vijay Kanth and Venkat Khumbam.