

Trust, Reliability & Service
Synonymous with *Kapil Chits*

KAPIL CHITS

40 Years of **TRUST**

Visit Us: www.kapilchits.com

KAPIL CHITS

SMALL SAVINGS GROW BIG WITH **KAPIL**

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

● Follow @ [/thehansindia](#) | [/thehansindiaweb](#) | [/thehansindia](#) | [/thehansindia](#) | [/thehansindia](#) ●

WINDOWS

A devotee takes dip in the sacred pond at the Golden Temple on the occasion of 551st birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the founder of Sikh religion, in Amritsar, Monday

High drama in AP Assembly

14 TDP MLAs, including Naidu suspended

AMARAVATI: The winter session of the Andhra Pradesh Assembly began amid high drama with an unrelenting opposition led by N Chandrababu Naidu staging a sit-in in front of the Speaker's podium on the first day of the House on Monday, leading to the suspension of 14 TDP MLAs, including Naidu. They were protesting over lack of opportunity "to speak on farmers issues" during a short discussion on Agriculture initiated by its Minister Kannababu. The members were demanding immediate monetary compensation to the farmers and others.

Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy called the protest unprecedented and "never seen before". He said the opposition was indulging in unnecessary drama and said their upper compartment of the brain was empty. He also said Naidu feared corona and it was there in his initials "CBN Corona ku Bhayapade Naidu". He said the opposition leader did not go to farmers and was creating ruckus in the Assembly. This itself shows his concern for the farmers. The former called Jagan Mohan Reddy a "never before seen CM".

TDP deputy leader Nimmala Ramanaidu was allowed to speak later but he faced constant counter attack from the treasury benches. Jagan had earlier intervened to say that the government was determined to distribute input subsidy to affected farmers by the end of December. Chandrababu Naidu sought to counter the Chief Minister. He said the "TDP was resorting to rowdyism". The TDP chief was prevented from making his point. Speaker Tammineni Seetaram suspended the members after his repeated appeals for order went unheeded and Minister of Legislative Affairs Buggana Rajendranath moved the suspension motion. Chandrababu Naidu then led his legislators on a sit-in near the Assembly entrance. The MLAs suspended were K Atchannaidu, Payyavula Keshav, Gorantla Butchaiah Chowdary, Nimmala Rama Naidu, Adireddy Bhavani, Velagapudi Ramakrishna, Dola Bala Veeranjanya Swamy, Mantena Rama Raju, Yeluri Sambasiva Rao, Gadde Rammohan, Jogeswara Rao, Anagani Satya Prasad and Bendalam Ashok along with Naidu.

GHMC polls today

HYDERABAD: The stage is set for the prestigious battle for Baldia on Monday. While the TRS is making all-out efforts to see that it retains its 99 seats which it had won in the last elections, the BJP wants to make deep inroads. This had led to a high-voltage campaign resembling an Assembly or Parliamentary election with several top leaders, including Union Home Minister Amit Shah participating in the electioneering.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

We have no option but to follow Modi ji. Farmers are unwilling to talk to us and call us Godi media.

Shah to meet farmers today?

NEW DELHI

UNION Home Minister Amit Shah is expected to meet the protesting farmers in Delhi on Tuesday, after their repeated request for an unconditional meeting with the government in connection with the three agri laws passed by the Centre earlier this year.

Sources said the government could sent out an invite to farmers for talks any time. According to a report, the Union Home Minister, who had previously demanded that the protesters move to a 'structured' place to schedule discussions with the Centre, has finally agreed to meet the agitated farmers to hear out their demands.

The expected meeting comes a day after the farmers refused the Centre's offer to hold their protest at Delhi's Burari ground, terming it an 'open jail'. The farmers rejected the Centre's 'conditional' offer to hold talks, saying that they will not accept any conditional dialogue and threatened to block all five entry points to the national capital. Earlier on Sunday, Amit Shah held deliberations with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar and BJP president J P Nadda over the farmers' protest. In fact, a meeting of the protesting farmers' unions with the Centre has already been scheduled on December 3.



Oppn misleading farmers: PM

VARANASI

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Monday tore into the Opposition over the protests against new agri-marketing laws, accusing them of playing tricks against the farmers. The attack comes when thousands of farmers are gathered at the entry points of the national capital, seeking the repeal of the three laws, which Modi called

'historic'. "The farmers are being misled on these historic agriculture reform laws by the same people who for decades have misled them," he said, referring to the Opposition parties but not directly naming them. The Prime Minister was addressing a public meeting in his Lok Sabha constituency Varanasi, where he was scheduled to open several development works. **Continued on Page 5**



Protesting farmers want PM to listen to their 'mann ki baat'

NEW DELHI

THE ongoing protests by thousands of farmers against the Centre's new farm laws entered the fifth day on Monday, with the protesters threatening to block all five entry points to the national capital. Rejecting the Centre's offer to hold talks once they move to the Burari ground, the farmers said they will not accept any conditional dialogue and have called a meeting to

discuss their next course of action later in the day. Farmers, who had reached Nirankari Samagam Ground in Burari on Saturday, continued their protest there. Traffic continued to be disrupted in the city due to the protests. Taking to Twitter, the Delhi Traffic Police on Monday alerted commuters to take an alternate route since Singhu and Tikri borders continued to remain closed. **Continued on Page 5**



Biden to nominate PIO Neera Tanden as Budget chief

WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT-ELECT Joe Biden plans to nominate Center for American Progress Chief Executive Neera Tanden as director of the Office of Management and Budget and economist Cecilia Rouse as chair of the Council of Economic Advisers, the Wall Street Journal reported on Sunday.

Biden, a Democrat, also plans to pick Wally Adeyemo, a senior international economic adviser during the Obama administration, to serve as Janet Yellen's top deputy at the Treasury Department, the Journal reported, citing people familiar with the matter.

Economists Jared Bernstein and Heather Boushey will be nominated to serve as members of the Council of Economic Advisers, the report added.

A representative for the Biden campaign did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Tanden, Rouse, Adeyemo,



Bernstein and Boushey could not immediately be reached for comment on Sunday.

Before taking the reins at the Center for American Progress, a center-left think tank, Tanden was a healthcare adviser in former President Barack Obama's administration. She was also an adviser for Democrat Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign.

Rouse, a labour economist at Princeton University, whose research has focused on the economics of education, previously served as a member of Obama's Council of Economic Advisers. **Continued on Page 5**

Delhi air quality slips back to 'very poor' category

NEW DELHI

DELHI'S air quality turned very poor on Monday and is predicted to deteriorate further with calm winds and low temperature allowing the accumulation of pollutants. The city's air quality index (AQI) was 307. The 24-hour average AQI was 268 on Sunday. It was 231 on Saturday, 137 on Friday, 302 on Thursday and 413 on Wednesday.

An AQI between zero and 50 is considered "good", 51 and 100 "satisfactory", 101 and 200 "moderate", 201 and 300 "poor", 301 and 400 "very poor", and 401 and 500 "severe".

The winds were calm at night time. During the day, the maximum wind speed is expected to be 10 kmph, according to the India Meteorological Department.

Winds are predicted to slow down further. Therefore, Delhi's air quality is likely to deteriorate further and remain in the poor to very poor category over the next two days, it had said earlier. **Continued on Page 5**

PM PLANS ALL-PARTY MEETING ON DEC 4

NEW DELHI

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi will chair an all-party meeting on Friday to discuss the COVID-19 situation. The second all-party meeting, which comes amid a sudden spurt in COVID-19 cases will be held virtually at 10.30 am.

The meeting assumes significance as it is being held after the Prime Minister's visit to Bharat Biotech, Zydus Cadila and Serum Institute of India (SII) to personally review coronavirus vaccine development work.

The top brass of the government, including Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Home Minister Amit Shah, Health Minister Harsh Vardhan, Prahlad Joshi are expected to attend the meeting. Meanwhile, the number of COVID-19 cases reported in India in a span of 24 hours dropped below 40,000 for the seventh time this month, taking the infection tally to 94.31 lakh.



PM holds virtual meet with Covid vaccine developers

NEW DELHI

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Monday held a virtual meeting with three teams working on developing and manufacturing COVID-19 vaccine and urged them to take extra efforts to inform people in simple language about the vaccine and related matters such as its efficacy. These teams were from

Kejri govt caps cost of RT-PCR test at ₹800

PURNA SINGH
NEW DELHI

CHIEF Minister Arvind Kejriwal has slashed the price of RT-PCR tests - the gold standard for detecting Covid-19 - by two-thirds to Rs 800 in the city.

Though these tests are being conducted free of cost in Delhi's government hospitals, they can cost up to Rs 2,400 in private laboratories.

"I have directed that the rate of RT-PCR tests be reduced in Delhi. Whereas tests are being conducted free of cost in government establishments, this (price cut) will help those who get their tests done in private labs," Kejriwal tweeted.

Many states, including Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu, capped the cost of RT-PCR tests after India's top medical research body ICMR said in May it would no longer regulate the price, and that this would now have to be done by each state individually.

The cost of an RT-PCR test has come under the scrutiny of the Supreme Court, which is hearing a plea seeking directions to cap the cost at Rs 400 across the country. The plea claims that dif-



ferent rates are being charged across the country whereas the cost of the test actually works at just Rs 200. It said the cost of RT-PCR test was fixed between Rs 900 and Rs 2,800 by various state governments and Union Territories.

To increase testing amid the second wave in September, the Delhi government had said residents no longer needed a doctor's prescription to take a coronavirus test. People need to carry Aadhaar card as proof of their address in Delhi and fill up forms from the Indian Council of Medical Research, which is the country's nodal agency of the battle against coronavirus, the government had said.

Monday's move to slash price comes amid a third wave of coronavirus infections.

India may get Oxford Covid vaccine by Feb 2-shot vaccine likely to cost Rs 500 for public

NEW DELHI

INDIA might get its first lot of the Oxford University's coronavirus vaccine by January-end and early February as the Union government is planning to give Pune-based Serum Institute of India emergency approval for the vaccine.

The government is negotiating the price with the Serum Institute, which has tied up with British-Swedish pharmaceutical firm AstraZeneca to manufacture the University of Oxford's COVID-19 vaccine in India. Adar Poonawalla, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Serum Institute had recently said that his company might sell a two-shot COVID-19 vaccine for around Rs 500-600 for the general public. He also said that the government will get the vaccine at a lower price, probably around \$3-4 (Rs 220)-almost half of the MRP of the two-shot vaccine. **Continued on Page 5**

After Nivar, another storm brews in Bay of Bengal

PUNE/CHENNAI

ANOTHER cyclone, brewing in the southeast region of the Bay of Bengal, is headed towards southern Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka coasts.

On November 25, severe cyclone Nivar had hit near Karaikal and brought along extremely heavy rain over Puducherry, Tamil Nadu and coastal Andhra Pradesh.

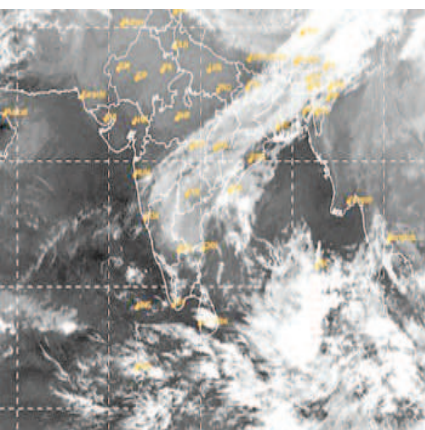
"We have noticed warmer sea surface temperatures recorded both in the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea," said Dr D Sivanand Pai,

head of Climate Research and Services at India Meteorological Department (IMD), Pune.

Such warming favour the development of cyclones. Meteorologists say that sea conditions during November remain most favourable for cyclone genesis in these two seas. Every year, about five cyclonic storms form in this region, four of which develop in the Bay of Bengal.

On Monday, the IMD set up a pre-cyclone watch. The Met office has said that a depression, which lay at about 1,120 kms east-southeast of

Likely to hit Tamil Nadu-Puducherry coasts tomorrow



Kanyakumari, is set to intensify within 12 hours and by Tuesday, it will develop as a cyclonic storm.

"It will also intensify into a cyclonic storm and move west-northwestwards and cross Sri Lanka coast around December 2," the special bulletin released by the IMD on Monday, stated. Once the system attains the strength of a cyclonic storm, it will be named 'Burevi'.

Under the influence of this approaching cyclone, the weather bureau has issued a 'red' alert warning of very heavy to extremely

heavy (more than 20cm) rain over southern districts of Tamil Nadu and Kerala on Wednesday. Rainfall will continue all through Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal, Mahe, coastal Andhra Pradesh and Lakshadweep till December 5.

Squally winds with speeds ranging between 55 to 65 kms/hr gusting to 75 km/hr are very likely during the next two days. With sea conditions likely to remain extremely rough, fishermen have been warned against venturing into the sea till the end of this week.

Womenia

TWEET PATROL

RAKUL SINGH @RAKULPREET
Happy gurupurab to all of you
#satnaamwaheguru
<https://t.co/meE5SB5sWJU>

Stay warm and don't lose your style

With these easy fashion tips, you'll stay warm in winter without losing style. Also, you can prepare for next winter by buying different scarfs, turtlenecks, and high boots

WHEN days are cold, you can undoubtedly remain warm utilizing layer after layer of garments. However, it's additionally testing to remain in style wearing your standard, worn out winter coat.

How to dress for winter climate without spending on new garments? Here are some colder time of year style tips that unquestionably you can apply to your closet. Keep in mind, the key is to utilize your innovativeness prior to utilising your wallet.

Leather for the cold weather

No wardrobe is complete without a leather jacket. This cool wear is convenient in all seasons, and it tends to be a warm supplement to your outfit throughout the colder time of year. You can wear it with nearly anything.

At the point when the night is cold, mat up in a hoodie or a move neck jumper or, if the temperature isn't so terrible, wear an easy-going shirt underneath. Each mix you attempt will look awesome on the grounds that a calfskin coat is an immortal look.

Wear those showstopper high boots

Got a pair of killer over-the-knee-boots? Winter is the ideal chance to allow them to sparkle! This comfortable look can be coordinated with some pants or a jumper for a more easy-going outfit or attempt a skirt or small-scale dress and go out on an exquisite night. Low temperatures are no reason for going out with a dull wearing.

Make your layering play right

Of course, thick

and weighty garments will keep you warm in winter, yet at whatever point you go into a cooled room you'll be over-dressed and awkward.

Wearing a few layers of garments will tackle this issue and furthermore permit you to coordinate your outfit better. Attempt a turtleneck under a sweater that is under a coat or under a coat.

It never neglects to keep warmth in your body. Furthermore, obviously, on freezing days, keep convenient your old garments like tore pants to put them underneath the layers so nobody can see them.

Use those blanket-wrap scarfs

Investigate your closet and pull out all the scarfs you have. Maybe you notice some failed to remember ones, too large or extensive for you to use consistently.

Be that as it may, it's the ideal opportunity for those scarfs to hang gladly around your neck!

There are numerous approaches to wear a scarf: customary folded over neck, the more retro look of a scarf around the head, similar to a belt on top of garments, or even tied as a bunch on your shoulders.

Wrap yourself in a belted coat

Definitely, perhaps a belt in your jacket won't warm you more, however doubtlessly it is a brilliant method to change your abused winter

coat.

On the long chilly days, when you can try not to wear a similar thick and comfortable coat, put a belt around your abdomen and take a gander at how your garments increase new life.

Your companions will praise your "new" coat, ignorant that they have just observed you wear it throughout the week.

'Toxicity of narcissistic personality traits heighten Covid blues'

The usual attempts to self-correct and do self-work do not yield results and this leaves the affected person trying everything and still not finding peace and it leading them down a weary path of brain fog, self-harm, self-doubt, low self-esteem, altered sense of self and crushing emotional wounds

VISHNU MAKHLJANI

COPING with a toxic relationship -- that is, with a person with narcissistic personality traits who makes their partner feel emotionally stifled, lost, hopeless, stuck and damaged -- has not been the easiest in the best of times. It becomes even worse in Covid times as quarantined quarters can be too close for comfort, says author, life coach and pranik healer Kalpana Nair who has suggested a series of tools in a new book to help those affected cope better and even turn the tables around.

"Before Covid-19, when there was the luxury of space and privacy in the lives of narcissists;

they worked their partners the way they wanted. Carried on affairs, love-bombed other unsuspecting victims, gaslighted those they lived with and felt the self-importance that they so craved, any way they wanted," Kalpana said.

However, confined by Covid-19, narcissists may have found their mask dropped, their cover blown and life being difficult to manage when under constant observation and scrutiny by their partner or spouse.

"This would, in turn, increase their feelings of not being in control as well as aggravate the dis-

comfort they feel within themselves. They subsequently inflict this anger on their partner in an emotionally or physically violent manner. Either way, if the partner of this abuse has to heal, the reasons for this behaviour have to be processed with a different set of rules and tools than other relationships," Nair explained.

Noting that these are high functioning people, in good positions

and carry on this toxicity in the confines of their relationships. Any relationship with a narcissist is unmistakably malignant and causes deep psychological pain. A lack of awareness of this specific variety of toxicity may lead many unsuspecting people to confuse it with garden-variety personality traits of selfishness, thoughtlessness, casual self-centredness or the need for control.

The nature of this toxic relationship, Nair said, "is to confuse and control. The narcissistic partner causes intense psychological harm to their partner and this is the ultimate goal of the narcissist. They have been done unfairly by the world and they believe that the world owes them and the one that pays is their partner".

"The usual attempts to self-correct and do self-work do not yield results and this leaves the affected person trying everything and still not finding peace and it leading them down a weary path of brain fog, self-harm, self-doubt, low self-esteem, altered sense of self and crushing emotional wounds. The path to healing from narcissistic abuse is slow and partners have to be guided at each step of this recovery process to see not just healing but triumph," Nair said.

In this way, victims are able to see what they are 'Being' and this stack on the right side pushes them to be more of the things they have written about.

"It helps them in tuning back with themselves and strengthening their relationship with themselves so that they can protect their emotional space even though their physical space is limited and invaded by the narcissist. These exercises can be used for any toxic relationship and distressing thought or challenge faced by people during these tough times," Nair concluded.

Take care of your feet

Winter's chill makes it easy to forget about taking care of your feet -- but it's still vitally important! Here are some tips that can help stay healthy through the coldest months of the year:

Keep them clean

To avoid getting an ingrown toenail, fungus or other unpleasant things on your feet, make sure that you take the time to wash them thoroughly every day. Regular soap and water should work fine, or your foot doctor can give you a few tips about what to use. After washing your feet, take the time to dry them thoroughly before putting on your socks or shoes.

It is also a good idea to soak your feet every now and then, particularly if you are suffering from heel pain or general discomfort. Epsom salt and warm water works well for soaking your feet and can even help ward off infections. Make sure

that you do not use extremely hot water, however; this is especially important if your feet are very cold. To help avoid injury, use slightly warm water instead.

When washing your feet, you can take the time to carefully inspect them for ingrown toenails, foot fungus and other issues. If you find any of these problems, consider seeking the assistance of a podiatrist instead of trying to tackle them on your own. At-home remedies often do not work and can even be painful, but a physician can help.

Wear the right socks

Before putting on your winter shoes, take a minute to slip on the right pair of socks. Thick, warm socks can help prevent your feet from getting too cold and can keep them dry on snowy and icy days.

Moisturise regularly

Skin can get very dry during the harsh winter months. Although you might think about using lotion on your arms and hands,



however, you might forget about your feet. To help prevent cracking and discomfort, use a rich lotion or foot cream on your clean, dry feet on a daily basis.

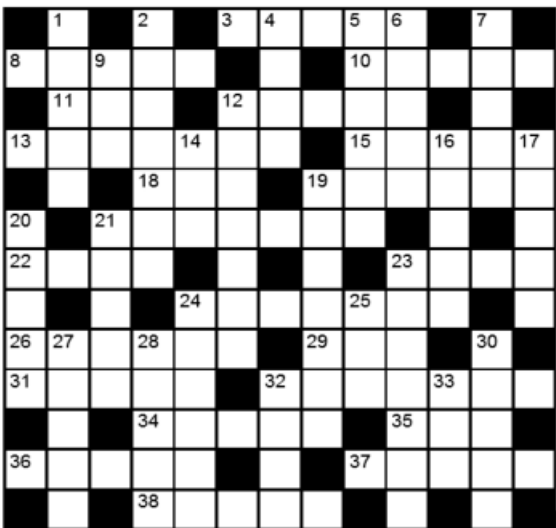
Wear the right shoes

Wearing the right shoes is very important to prevent injury and to stay as comfortable as possible during the day. Look for shoes that are designed for what you will be using them for; if you will be running, for example, you should look for running shoes. Also, make sure that your shoes offer plenty of

arch support; otherwise, you could injure yourself.

Give them a rest

Standing all day can be painful and even detrimental to the health of your feet. When possible, sit down and prop up your feet or soak them in a foot bath; giving yourself this rest will help prevent injuries. If you wear high-heeled shoes or other uncomfortable footwear, consider wearing comfortable flats at least a couple of days out of the week; your feet will thank you.



SOLUTION TO NOVEMBER 30

CROSSWORD

Across

- Each (5)
- Slang to acquire by begging (5)
- Large duck (5)
- Long March leader (3)
- Chop into very small pieces (5)
- Jettison (7)
- Put in office (5)
- Possess (3)
- One of the 12 apostles (6)
- Most hideous to look at ? (7)
- Forbid; not agree (4)
- Aboard ship (4)
- Resembling a fox (7)
- Newspaper chief (6)
- Attempt or essay (3)
- Malaysian dish (5)
- Authoritative orders (7)
- Simple, unadorned (5)
- Unwell, sick (3)
- Confuse or obscure (5)
- Eskimo boat (5)
- Revolt (5)

Down

- Comfortable (5)
- Science of environment (7)
- Empty (4)
- Fresh; newer (6)
- Capitulate (5)
- Sell stolen goods (5)
- Idiot (3)
- State neighbouring Assam (7)
- Night bird (3)
- Remove something written (5)
- Twist and pull (5)
- Sterile (7)
- Rims or borders (5)
- Not suitable (5)
- Being at any time (7)
- Long trip or journey (6)
- Annoy (3)
- Risked or braved (5)
- Small drum (5)
- Old-time strongman (5)
- Eat in style (4)
- Foreman foe (3)

SUDOKU



SOLUTION TO NOVEMBER 30

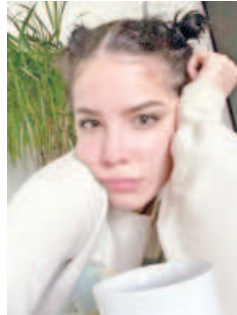
NEWS ROUNDUP

Halsey slams Grammys, calls for transparency

After being snubbed at the Grammy nominations this year, American singer-songwriter Halsey has called out the nomination process, criticising it for being about more than just releasing quality music or cultural impact. "I've been thinking and wanted to choose my words carefully because a lot of people have extended sympathy and apology to me since the Grammy nominations. The Grammys are an elusive process," she wrote on Instagram Stories. "It can often be about behind the scenes private performances, knowing the right people, campaigning through the grapevine, with the right handshakes and 'bribes' that can be just ambiguous enough to pass as 'not bribes'. And if you get that far, it's about committing to exclusive TV performances and making sure you help the Academy make their millions in advertising on the night of the show," she added.

The singer continued: "Perhaps sometimes it is (!!!) but it's not always about the music or quality or culture. Just wanted to get that off my chest. @theweeknd deserves better, and Manic did too (woman shrugging emoji) perhaps it's unbecoming of me to say so but I can't care anymore. While I am THRILLED for my talented friends who were recognised this year, I am hoping for more transparency or reform. But I'm sure this post will blacklist me anyway." Halsey has not received a single nomination for her 2020 album "Manic", which included the chart-topping single "Without me".

In a social media post last week, The Weeknd also accused the Recording Academy of being "still corrupt". His reaction got a response from interim Grammy chief Harvey Mason Jr., who insisted that the process is legitimate. "All the records get the fairest of fair shakes," he said to variety.com, adding: "We listen to all the music -- it's a long, arduous process and people take pride in it. The people in that room care: there's no agendas in there, there's no 'let's snub this person' or that person. It's about, 'Let's try and find excellence'." The 2021 Grammy Awards nominations were announced on November 24, with Beyonce leading the way with nine nods, followed by Taylor Swift, Dua Lipa and Roddy Ricch with six apiece.



Farmers say new farm laws bigger threat than coronavirus

NEW DELHI

THE shadow of the pandemic looms large and experts warn their agitation could well be a COVID-19 super-spreader but farmers, some in masks and many without them, protesting in Delhi and at gateways into the city say the new farm laws pose a greater threat to their survival.

As thousands of farmers, mostly from Punjab and Haryana but also from Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, protest at the national capital's border points and in north Delhi's Burari ground for the fifth day on Monday, COVID-19 continues its spread.

There have been few signs of social distancing during the protests that started last week with the farmers, banded under various organisations, leaving their

homes and moving towards Delhi.

"A protest is a mass gathering and thus from a public health perspective, I would urge protective and preventive behaviour against the spread of coronavirus infection, failing which a superspreading event might set in, cautioned Dr Samiran Panda, head of the Epidemiology and Communicable Diseases division at the Indian Council of Medical Research.

Seeking strict compliance with norms, he said it is important to note that SARS-COV-2 is a transmission efficient virus and such gatherings are conducive to its spread. Many of the farmers, threatening to block all five entry points into the capital, said they are aware the infection is still raging but the Centre's new farm laws are a bigger threat.

Gurmeet Singh from Faridkot in Punjab, for instance,



has been at the Burari ground, one of the largest in the city, for three days and counting.

And he has no intention of moving.

For him, and hundreds of other farmers at the North Delhi ground where they were allowed to congregate, the three contentious farm laws are a bigger disease.

"We may even survive corona, but how will we survive this cruel law that will take away our bread and butter," Gurmeet told PTI.

In another corner of the sprawling ground, a team of seven medics from Delhi's AAP government has tested over 90 farmers for COVID-19 since November 28.

"There have been no positives as yet," said a medical officer on the condition of anonymity.

"We tested 40 people on the 28th, then another team took over, and today we have tested 50 people so far,"

the officer said. Several e-rickshaws roamed the ground to create awareness of the disease and the necessity of wearing masks and maintaining hand hygiene.

But the message appeared to be getting drowned out in the slogans, protest songs and speeches.

Gursharanjeet Singh from Bilaspur, Uttar Pradesh, said his family is entirely dependent on produce from their six-acre farm.

"If we stay careful we won't get corona, but if we don't protest against these farm laws and this government we will definitely die of hunger," he said.

His desperation finds resonance at the Singhu and Tikri border points, where farmers have been camping in large numbers.

Some volunteers were distributing masks to the protesting farmers.

BJP ally threatens to quit coalition over farm laws

Prominent sportspersons from Punjab, Haryana back protesting farmers; why is Centre adamant, not listening to farmers, asks Amarinder Singh

NEW DELHI

AFTER the Akali Dal broke off ties with the ruling BJP, another ally has threatened to quit the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) over farm laws. In a tweet addressed to Home Minister Amit Shah, Rajasthan MP Hanuman Beniwal, chief of the Rashtriya Loktantrik Party (RLP), has demanded that three new agricultural laws at the core of massive farmer protests near Delhi be scrapped.

Mr Beniwal also urged the BJP-led central government to talk to the farmers immediately instead of Thursday, when a second round of ministerial talks has been scheduled over the protests.

Prominent sportspersons from Punjab and Haryana have extended their support to them, while some others have implored them to assist the Central government in finding a solution to the contentious issue.

"Everyone should be the voice of 'anna data' farmers who fill everyone's stomach and are fight-



Farmers light candles on the occasion of birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev at the Singhu border in New Delhi on Monday

ing for their survival. Do your politics later. We are the sons of farmers. Our conscience is still alive," wrote India's top wrestler Bajrang Punia, who belongs to Haryana.

Terming the farmers' fight against the farm laws as just, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh asked the Centre why it was being adamant on the issue and not listening to the farmers.

"It is the job of the government to listen to its people. If farmers are joining the agitation from so many states, then they must be really upset," said the Chief Minister while interacting informally with the media during his visit to the historic town. Bihar CM Nitish Kumar said that they should talk to the Centre to sort out the confusion over the new agri bills.

130 khap panchayats to join stir

CHANDIGARH

AT least 130 khap panchayats (community courts) of Haryana on Monday announced that they will join the ongoing farmer agitation on Delhi borders from Tuesday.

"All khap men are first farmers and then leaders," 'khap' spokesperson Jagbir Malik told the media.

"They are associated with the farmer agitation from the day one. As the Haryana Chief Minister (Manohar Lal Khattar) said there farmers of the state were not associated with the agitation, it is wrong statement. The farmers of Haryana have been associated with this agitation," he said. The farmers of Haryana have also been appealing to the Central government to listen to the farmers.

Malik said all khaps of Haryana have unanimously decided to support protesting farmers by all means.

Haryana MLA quits post in support of farmers

NEW DELHI

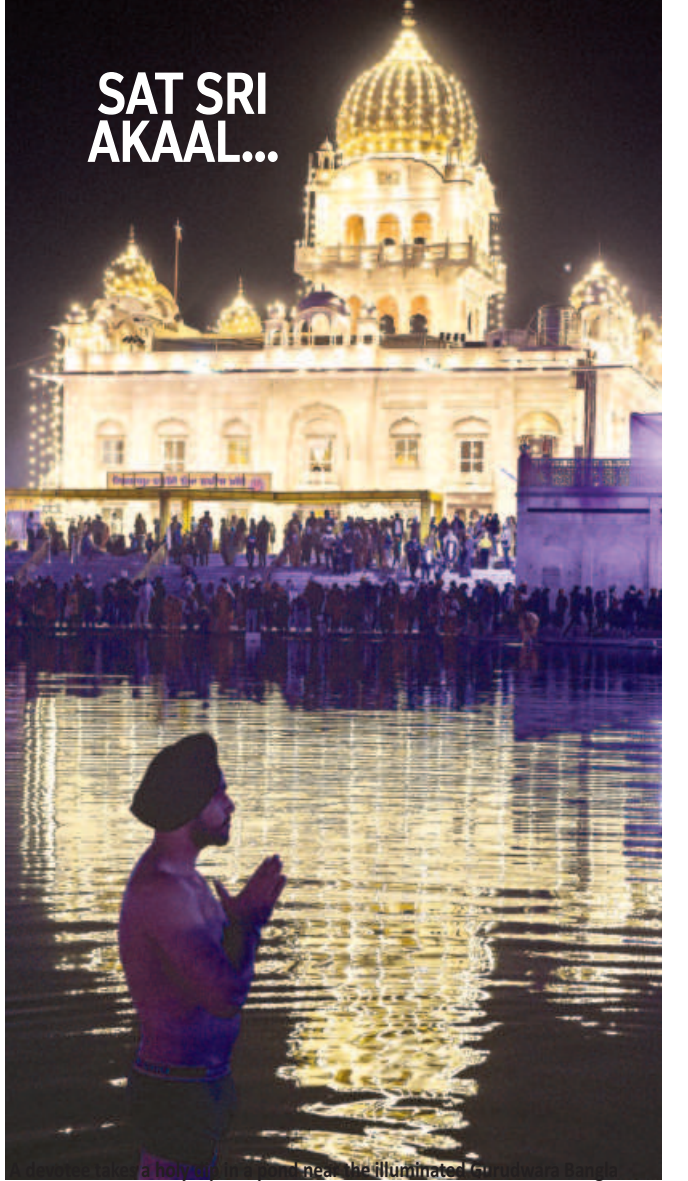
EXTENDING his support to the farmers gathered at Delhi's borders protesting the Centre's new farm laws, Haryana MLA Sombir Sangwan on Monday tendered his resignation as chairman of the State Livestock Development Board.

Sangwan is an Independent MLA supporting the Bharatiya Janata Party-Jannayak Janata Party coalition government in the state.

In the letter to Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, he said, 'I have resigned from my post in support of farmers. Like the entire country, farmers from my assembly constituency Dadri are also protesting against these laws. In this situation, extending my full support to them is a priority for me and my moral duty too.'

'I have given the farmers full support after listening to my inner conscience,' the MLA wrote.

On Sunday, Sangwan had said Haryana's many 'khaps' have decided to respond to the agitating farmers' 'Delhi Chalo' call and march to the national capital to support their protest against the three central farm laws.



Sahib on the occasion of birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev, in New Delhi on Monday

Baba Amte's grand daughter kills self

CHANDRAPUR

REOWNED social worker Dr. Sheetal Amte-Karajgi - the grand-daughter of the legendary Baba Amte - committed suicide at the famous Anandwan Ashram here on Monday morning, police said. As per preliminary information, she reportedly injected herself with some unknown substance, said police official P. Pendarkar from Warora Police Station.

She was rushed to the Warora Rural Hospital nearby where she was pronounced dead, he said, adding further enquiries are underway.

The grand-daughter of the Magsasay Award laureate, Murlidhar D. Amte, alias Baba Amte, Amte-Karajgi was the CEO of Maharogi Sewa Samiti which has done commendable work among leprosy patients in the state and elsewhere.

In her 40s, she is survived by her parents Dr Vikas B. Amte and Dr Bharati V. Amte, besides her husband Gautam and a minor son. Though the motives behind her actions are not clear, her family issued a joint statement claiming she had been facing "mental tensions and depression" since some time.



Actor-turned-politician Rajinikanth gestures at his fans after meeting with the senior functionaries of Rajini Makkal Mandram (RMM) to decide on political plunge, in Chennai on Monday

Decision to enter active politics soon: Rajini

CHENNAI

After brainstorming with his followers here, Tamil superstar Rajinikanth on Monday said he would make known his decision on entering politics as soon as possible. The top star said he met the district secretaries of his 'Rajini Makkal Mandram' and deliberated the possibility of his political foray today. While the office-bearers expressed their opinions, he conveyed his views on the matter to them, he told reporters outside his Poes Garden residence after winding up consultations with RMM secretaries at Raghavendra Kalyana Mandapam. "They (functionaries) told me that they are with me whatever my decision may be. I will make known by decision (on political foray) as soon as possible," he said and raised both his hands to gesture 'Vanakkam' in his inimitable style. Assembly elections are due in Tamil Nadu during April-May 2021. Last month, Rajinikanth had for the first time disclosed that he had undergone a kidney transplant in 2016 in the United States and that the doctors were against him venturing into politics in view of the coronavirus pandemic.

Raj BJP MLA Kiran dies of corona

JAIPUR

BJP's Rajsamand MLA Kiran Maheshwari has died in a Gurugram hospital in Haryana, with leaders cutting across party lines condoling her demise. She was 59.

Rajasthan's BJP leader Kiran, a three-term MLA, had tested positive for coronavirus and was undergoing treatment at the Medanta Hospital for over a fortnight. She passed away late Sunday night. PM Narendra Modi, CM Ashok Gehlot, BJP leader Vasundhara Raje, Jodhpur MP Gajendra Singh Chauhan, and Nagaur MP Hanuman Beniwal were among prominent persons who conveyed their condolences on her demise.

Modi said in his message: "Pained by the untimely demise of Kiran Maheshwari ji. Be it as an MP, MLA or Cabinet Minister in the Rajasthan government, she made numerous efforts to work towards the progress of the state and empower the poor as well as marginalised. Condolences to her family. Om Shanti."

Gehlot said: "Saddened to know of the untimely demise of BJP leader and Rajsamand MLA Kiran Maheshwari ji. My heartfelt condolences to her family members and supporters in this most difficult time. May God give them strength to bear this loss. May her soul rest in peace."

Modi celebrates 'Dev Deepawali' in Varanasi

VARANASI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi lit the first 'diya' on 'Dev Deepawali' and set off celebrations for the festival that is marked by lighting lakhs of earthen lamps on the banks of the Ganga here.

Addressing the gathering, the Prime Minister said that 'Dev Deepawali' is special this year because it marks the return of 'Maa Annapurna'.

"The statue of Maa Annapurna which was stolen from India over 100 years ago is coming back to the

country. This is a fortunate moment for Kashi. If this effort was made earlier, many such statues would have been brought back to India. However, some people's thinking is different. For us, inheritance means heritage. For some, inheritance means their own family," he said.

The Prime Minister said that the power of Kashi did not allow it to change even when a lot changed elsewhere amid the Corona pandemic. Modi began his speech with a smattering of Bhojpuri and wished people 'Kartik Purnima' and 'Gurpurab'.



Illuminated Kashi Ghat during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit on the occasion of 'Dev Deepawali' festival, in Varanasi on Monday

Pakistan has highest breast cancer rate in Asia: Report

ISLAMABAD

PAKISTAN has the highest rate of breast cancer in Asia, as approximately 90,000 women are diagnosed with the disease every year out of whom 40,000 pass away, a media report said on Monday.

The revelation was made by speakers at a webinar, "Breast cancer awareness: give hope, save lives", organised by the Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South (Comsats) here on Sunday, the Dawn news report said.

According to estimate, one in 10 Pakistani women could develop breast cancer in their lifetime. Retired ambassador Fauzia Nasreen, who is also an adviser at Comsats, emphasised on the importance of measures that need to be taken in order to overcome the lack of knowledge, appropriate facilities, family support and fear related to cancer in society.

An early diagnosis and timely access to affordable medical care are the cornerstones of beating the disease, she said, adding women must educate themselves about techniques of self-examination.

'Chennai volunteer for Serum wanted probe, but company intimidating'

'It is evident that the intention behind the spreading of such malicious info is an oblique pecuniary motive'. The Serum Institute of India will seek damages in excess of ₹100 crore for the same and will defend such malicious claims'

CHENNAI

THE 40-year old volunteer, who works as a business consultant had wanted to investigate the cause of him contracting severe neurological health complications he had suffered after being vaccinated with Covid-shield shots under development at Serum Institute of India, but the company was intimidating him with a threat of over Rs 100 crore damage suit, said his advocates. "We are yet to get any reply for the legal notice sent to various parties, including Serum Institute. We have seen news reports about Serum Institute threatening our client with a suit for over Rs 100 crore," N.G.R. Prasad, Advocate, Row & Reddy, told IANS.

"Our client had restricted his claim only for Rs 5 crore and wanted investigation to start as to the cause of him

suffering severe neurological problems and stop the vaccine from affecting other people," Prasad added.

On the other hand, Serum Institute without getting into the root cause is intimidating its volunteer with a threat of over Rs 100 crore damage suit. "The client is ready to fight it out legally if needed," R.Rajaram, another Advocate for the volunteer told IANS.

The two advocates said this will be a medico-legal case and the evidence of medical professionals will be obtained in support of their client.

"The volunteer was a healthy male prior to being vaccinated. He was tested only for coronavirus infection before being vaccinated with Covidshield. He was found negative for coronavirus infection," Prasad said. "No other medical tests were done to ascertain his health condition," Prasad added. He said in case of any ad-



verse reaction, investigation into the issue should have been carried out immediately-whether it is related to the vaccine or not. "But it was not done despite the severe neurological health complications our client had developed," Prasad said.

Reacting to the volunteer's legal notice, Serum Institute in a media statement on November 29 said: "The claim is malicious because the volunteer was specifically informed by the medical team that the complications he suffered were independent of the vaccine trial he underwent. In spite of specifically being made aware of the same, he still chose to go public and malign the reputation of the company."

The company is silent on what basis the medical team told the volunteer that his neurological problems are independent of the vaccine trial that he underwent.

According to Prasad, no other medical tests were done on his client to ascertain his pre-vaccination health status and other pre-existing ailments.

"The allegations in the notice are malicious and misconceived. While the Serum Institute of India is sympathetic with the volunteer's medical condition, there is absolutely no correlation with the vaccine trial and the medical condition of the volunteer. The volunteer is falsely laying the blame for his medical problems on the Covid vaccine trial," Serum Institute had said.

"It is evident that the intention behind the spreading of such malicious information is an oblique pecuniary motive. The Serum Institute of India, will seek damages in excess of 100 crore for the same and will defend such malicious claims," the company issued a counter threat.

Healthy soil required to cultivate wholesome food

To feed 10 billion people in a healthy and sustainable way, we must rethink how we produce and consume food. The World Economic Forum (WEF) suggests regenerative farming is key to healing the planet and feeding the world with healthy food. Accordingly, consumers have the power to be part of this transition, by eating plant-rich and diverse diets, and slashing and repurposing waste, it said in one of its latest reports. Let us have a closer look. It is a foregone conclusion that food is why we're all here. It sustains life, spreads joy and brings us together. However, the population of the world is neither diminishing nor steady. It is only increasing day by day, rather, minute by minute. But if we are to feed 10 billion people in a healthy way within planetary boundaries, the way in which we produce and consume food needs to change, experts of the World Eco-

nomics Forum feel and do so rightly. As the coronavirus pandemic puts food security and nutrition at risk in many countries and hurts the livelihoods of small producers, a re-evaluation of the food systems is a must. It is equally important to take note of what we are eating and how much of it every day. As consumers, we have the power to be part of this transition. Informed and empowered consumers send a powerful message to producers and policymakers alike. During the last century, the focus on crop yields and making food accessible and affordable has contributed to immense progress, with reductions in hunger, improved life expectancy, falling infant and child mortality rates, and decreased global poverty. Still, nearly 700 million people – equivalent to half of India's population – are undernourished. At the same time, 2 billion adults are overweight or obese and 1 in 5 deaths around the world are related to poor diets. Unhealthy diets have become a leading cause of mortality, killing more people globally than drug, alcohol and tobacco use combined. What is more, this singular focus on yield and efficiency has come

at a significant cost for our planet. Today's food systems contribute up to 37% of global greenhouse gas emissions and are a leading driver in the dramatic decline in biodiversity, putting us in the midst of a sixth mass extinction. Beneath our feet another crisis is unfolding - soils are being turned to dirt. Soil is a living system bursting with life forms that play important roles in delivering nutrients to plants, maintaining soil fertility, retaining water and fighting climate change. Replenishing and protecting the world's soil carbon stores could help offset up to 5.5 billion tonnes of greenhouse gases every year. But currently, about one-third of the world's soil is degraded in large part due to intensive farming practices. Scientists predict that share will jump to 90% by 2050, if nothing changes. Without healthy soil, we face increased risks of desertification, dust storms and flooding. We also lose productive land. The WEF is drawing up strategies to be taken up at their May meet next year to tackle the impending crisis. There is not much time and all countries should draw focus on the strategy without delay.

Covid-19: The fight is far from over

NELAPATLA ASHOK BABU

As the world remembers the first anniversary outbreak of novel coronavirus (in Wuhan, China) on November 11 last year, the three-pronged approach of the government of India namely: 1) Early identification 2) Prompt isolation and 3) Effective treatment has been a successful talisman for the treatment of Covid-19 patients in India. The recovery rate has been increased to 93.76% and the fatality rate has been reduced to 1.46%. The relentless efforts of the political executives, administrators, doctors, nurses, paramedical personnel, police and innumerable voluntary organisations resulted in a dismal percentage of active cases when compared to recovered patients in the country (the recovered cases are about 20 times of active cases which is considered to be one of the lowest in the world).

The testing capacity of India reached 15 lakh tests per day with a vast network of 2134 labs (including 968 in private). The total number of cumulative tests reached 13 crores odd (approximately 10% of the total population which is a remarkable achievement keeping in view of country's global position in economy).

However, the Emergencies Director of the World Health Organisation (WHO) warned the world ready to face the second wave of coronavirus without vaccines. As if his word was under realisation, there was a sudden spurt in the number of cases in National Capital Territory (NCT), Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Manipur. With the surge in daily cases and spike in daily fatalities the spill over effect was seen in the neighbouring Haryana and Rajasthan States. The Central government has dispatched high level teams to all these States for effective containment, surveillance, effective testing, infection prevention, control measures and efficient clinical management.

In Canada, cities like Toronto are brought under lockdown again. In order to control the accelerated coronavirus in the capital of Britain and the important financial centre of Europe, London has undergone stricter lockdown since October 15.

In India, States like Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh re-imposed night curfew in many cities. In Ahmedabad, Surat, Vadodra and Rajkot in Gujrat, lockdown has been re-imposed from every Friday night to Monday morning. As well the curfew has been imposed on the movement of people from 9 pm to 6 am. The situation is the same in Bhopal, Indore, Jabalpur and Vidisha of Madhya Pradesh and Raipur of Chhattisgarh. 13 districts in Chhattisgarh have been on and off under strict lockdown rules. Even the District Medical & Health Officer of Raipur has recommended to carry on tests on each and every one entering into their district. In Himachal Pradesh, four major cities namely Shimla, Mandi, Kangra and Kullu are under night curfew till December 15.

States like Maharashtra re-imposed restrictions on travelling particularly air travel. Now the passengers flying from Delhi, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Goa are supposed to submit the negative report to the airport authorities or they have to undergo the RT PCR tests. Bihar started a 15-day special campaign to drive home the three points: compulsory wearing of facemask, maintaining safe distance and repeated sanitisation of hands with soap or sanitiser. Karnataka announces from January 2021 all medical tests including Covid-19 will be done freely in all government hospitals/facilities. Of late, the Chief Minister of Rajasthan declared that the Covid is moving towards 'dangerous situation' reflecting the alarming situation.

Overall, States/ UTs namely NCT Delhi, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu are leading the tally as far as number of positive cases are concerned. All efforts are being made by the governments to ensure continuous supply of oxygen and ventilators. A total 160 oxygen plants are under various stages of commissioning. 10 RT PCR mobile Covid-19 testing labs started to function in NCT Delhi which can test around 3,000 samples each and give results within six hours. The total beds dedicated to Covid have been increased to 6,000, 500 additional oxygen connected beds and 250 additional ventilators (supplied by BEL, Bengaluru) are provided to NCT Delhi. Moreover, 45 doctors and 160 paramedics working with Central Armed Forces have been deployed in various government dedicated Covid hospitals in Delhi to counter the severe situation. In cities like Surat the number of beds has been increased by four times to handle crisis like situation.

As far education is concerned, gradually many State governments are opening schools, colleges, institutes and universities. Bangalore University has been opened after many months. In UP, though colleges have been opened, the attendance marked was hardly 10-25%. In Himachal Pradesh, the schools will remain closed till December 31. In Maharashtra, the government declared to open the schools except in the Municipal Corporations Mumbai (BMC) and Pune (PMC& PCMC).

Overall, though in many States the educational institutions are opened for the students of 9th standard and above, parents and their wards are



worried about attending the classes physically. Still, 90% students prefer online classes only. Particularly the primary school kids are being affected seriously, mainly their eyesight due to continuous clinging on to the screen (of laptop/mobile). One international report recently revealed that

due to the complete change of working style (work from home using laptops), online classes for students and distinct entertainment (confined to watch movies on mobile) increase the 'screen dependency' 10 times. During my interaction with famous ophthalmologist of Pune Dr Samita Moolani on this issue, she has revealed many interesting factors which would be helpful to all across the sections and different age groups.

When we continuously look at the screen, we tend to forget to blink eyes. It leads to dryness of the eye and thereby redness, pain, feeling of sand in the eyes, blurring and strain together with headache. Increased near vision has been associated with increase in minus in children resulting in progression of myopia/short sightedness. Digital screens emit all kinds of lights, particularly the blue one. In order to curb the negative effects of this, ophthalmologists suggest glasses which function opaque to this. However, the results are scientifically yet to be proved. Excessive screen time affects neck, back and sleeping patterns also. Hence Dr Samita suggested to limit the screen time whenever and wherever it is possible. She also suggests to sit in a well-lit room with an ergonomically well-designed chair. Windy air evaporates tear very fast hence not to expose our faces directly to wind/fan air.

To reduce the effects of screen time, the rule 20-20-20 can be followed i.e. to take a break after 20 minutes, to look beyond 20 meters and to blink your eyes 20 times. To maintain pigeon blink, keep blinking 10 times per each minute. Dehydration causes dry eyes, hence one has to take plenty of water to prevent this. To have omega 3 fatty acids, consume fish or flax seeds which keep oil glands in the eyelids healthy. The farther and larger the screen from eyes, the lesser the strain. For entertainment i.e. for watching movies and other videos, better avoid mobile and tablets. Never use a brighter screen in a dark room as it damages the delicate membrane/retina permanently. In the meanwhile, ever confident Prime Minister held a review meeting with higher level officials and the Chief Ministers of many States on the preparedness of vaccine manufacturing, storage and judicious distribution. The Health Minister also expressed confidence that by the initial months of next year the vaccine would be ready to administer. Even the Bharat Biotech announced phase 3 trials with 26,000 volunteers throughout the country in collaboration with ICMR and NIV Pune. The Oxford-Astrazeneca, Pfizer-BioNtech and Sputnik- Moderna also are showing good results in advanced stages.

All said and done, the battle is not yet over; better to follow the three simple principles namely continuous wearing of facemask, safe distance and sanitisation of hands repeatedly.

The writer is Joint Commissioner of Income Tax & Inspection Authority into exorbitant medical bills on Covid-19 patients by Corporate Hospitals in PCMC, Pune. With inputs from Dr Samita Moolani, MD (Ophthalmology)



Madabhushi Sridhar Acharyulu

When the people have successfully defended our freedom of speech and expression. Kerala Governor signed the withdrawal of controversial ordinance. But the question is: Can a State bring a law in breach of the Supreme Court Judgment? The ordinance was facilitating reincarnation of Section 66A of Information Technology Act that was declared void ab initio as unconstitutional.

Making law against the profound judgment of Supreme Court should be the real contempt of apex court.

The cancelled ordinance says, if you share an opinion on Facebook, like or love it, or forward in WhatsApp, you face a threat of ending up in prison for three years minimum and paying Rs 10,000 as penalty. If the government or those in power feels that that there is a threat, insult, defamation, abuse, humiliation of a person or class of persons in any comment on social media platforms.

This draconian penal provision - Section 66A of Information Technology Act 2000 - was brought by Indian Union in 2007. This provision criminalised speech over internet, computers, or communication devices if such a communication was (a) "grossly offensive or menacing"; (b) where the author knows the information "to be false and meant for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience, danger, obstruction, insult, injury, criminal intimidation, enmity, hatred or ill will" or "meant to deceive or mislead the recipient about the origin of such messages, etc, shall be punishable with imprisonment up to three years and with fine." There is a similar anti-free speech provision 118D which also was struck down by SC along with S 66A.

Catch-all expressions used again

Section 118-A was inserted in the Kerala Police Act, by an ordinance almost a similar penal provision with ambiguous 'catch-all' expressions of social media expression crime. This means that a person can face three years in jail and a fine of Rs 10,000 for any social media post that is considered "offensive" or "defamatory". Those who write, share the post, like or forward are threatened with this new penal law, which even Lord Macaulay did not dream of imposing on Indians during British slavery times.

Expression 'grossly offensive or menacing', 'annoyance, inconvenience, danger, obstruction, insult' in 66A IT Act is found in Sec 118-A as 'threatening, abusing', 'humiliating'. 'Insult' in 66A became 'humiliating' in 118-A. And in both Sections the expression 'knows to be false' is common. Kerala's Section 118-A is more draconian as it also extends to 'injury to mind, property or reputation. What does this mean?

How 66A was misused?

The history of misuse of Section 66A of IT Act from 2007 to 2015, till it was struck down, and extended up to 2019 in spite of striking down, is documented. Some examples are here. Two girls - Shaheen Dhada and Rinu Shrinivasan - were arrested in Palghar in Thane district after one of them posted a comment against the shutdown in Mumbai following Shiv Sena leader Bal Thackeray's death and the other 'liked' it. This was brought to the notice of the SC by a law student Shreya Singhal in 2012. Netizens and social media writers were harassed by various Governments. In the wake of numerous complaints of harassment and arrests, the apex court had on May 16, 2013 issued an advisory that a person, accused of posting objectionable comments on social networking sites, cannot be arrested without police getting permission from senior officers like IG or DCP. A boy was arrested for allegedly posting on Face-

Section 118-A was inserted in the Kerala Police Act, by an ordinance almost a similar penal provision with ambiguous 'catch-all' expressions of social media expression crime. This means that a person can face three years in jail and a fine of Rs 10,000 for any social media post that is considered "offensive" or "defamatory". Those who write, share the post, like or forward are threatened with this new penal law, which even Lord Macaulay did not dream of imposing on Indians during British slavery times. Expression 'grossly offensive or menacing', 'annoyance, inconvenience, danger, obstruction, insult' in 66A IT Act is found in Sec 118-A as 'threatening, abusing', 'humiliating'. 'Insult' in 66A became 'humiliating' in 118-A. And in both Sections the expression 'knows to be false' is common. Kerala's Section 118-A is more draconian as it also extends to 'injury to mind, property or reputation. What does this mean?

book calling it 'objectionable comments' against senior Samajwadi Party leader Azam Khan.

Struck down by SC

The Supreme Court has struck down Section 66A Shreya Singhal's PIL in 2015 (2015) 5 SCC 1.) saying that it was contrary to both Article 19 that guaranteed Freedom of Speech and Expression and Article 21 that ensured Right to Life and Personal Liberty. Describing liberty of thought and expression as "cardinal", a bench of justice J Chelameswar and justice RF Nariman said, "The public's right to know is directly affected by section 66A of the Information Technology Act." Bench of SC said, "When judicially trained minds can reach on different conclusions" while going through the same content, then how is it possible for law enforcement agency and others to decide as to what is offensive and what is grossly offensive, the bench said, adding, "What may be offensive to a person may not be offensive to the other." In Para 82 of the Judgement, SC held: "... Expressions such as "grossly offensive" or "menacing"

are so vague that there is no manageable standard by which a person can be said to have committed an offence or not to have committed an offence."

"Further, the judgment and final order in the Shreya Singhal case had rendered all investigations, prosecutions, and convictions based on Section 66-A IT Act illegal, and it forestalled any use of Section 66-A IT Act after the decision was rendered. Section 66A which was added in 2007, made posting of "offensive" comments online a crime punishable by three years of jail.

Legal Zombie

Authors of study report by Internet Freedom Foundation coined a new expression "Legal Zombie" which means a mysterious post-death existence for a provision that was struck down. Their paper made a shocking revelation that about 65 to 70 cases cumulatively in different legal databases existed which shows abuse of the provision that is supposed to have been void ab initio i.e., from the date of its insertion in 2007 by amendment to IT Act. Obviously, these are cases which reached courts, which means it was a tip of an iceberg and there could be several fresh cases registered in police stations, investigated and thereafter, considered by lower Courts. This means a serious failure of the executive, legislature, and judiciary to respond to the judicial development. Each of the violator should have been punished for contempt of court, not for non-enforcement of Supreme Court order, but for abusing a draconian penal provision which was struck down as unconstitutional. The public servants of three estates have committed an unconstitutional 'criminality' by harassing people who exercised constitutional right of free speech, for a crime which was not a crime.

The Supreme Court was shocked to hear that authorities still continue to book people under the now extinct and draconian provision when this was brought to its notice of Supreme Court by People's Union for Civil Liberties in a PIL in 2019. The PUCL sought a direction to ensure implementation of Supreme Court's decisions, as well as to raise legal awareness, and the copies of SC judgment be provided for by the Supreme Court to all High Courts, for further dissemination to the District Courts under their jurisdiction. Finally, the application requested that the High Courts pass necessary orders in all pending cases of 66A to ensure disposal. The PUCL request was allowed on 15.2.2019.

(The writer is Professor of Law, Bennet University and former Central Information Commissioner)

Kashmir polls: BJP to build alternative to dynasties

DEEPIKA BHAN

The maiden District Development Council (DDC) elections in Jammu and Kashmir, being held in eight phases, are no doubt historic but they are also of existential consequence for the entire political spectrum in the Valley. The regional parties, which have dominated Valley politics for decades and have been finding themselves on a sticky wicket since the abrogation of Article 370, are trying to reclaim their ground. For the BJP, the elections are no less than a mission to break free Jammu and Kashmir politics from the Valley's dynasties and carve out an alternative reckoning.

Finding a mission in the local body elections may seem far-fetched. But for the BJP, the first DDC polls in Jammu and Kashmir are like one. For some time now, the party has been desperately trying to build an alternative to the two prominent dynasties -



the Abdullahs and the Muftis. A couple of years ago, it tried to push Sajjad Lone, Engineer Rashid, and now this is an open secret that it is backing Altaf Bukhari's Apni Party. The Apni Party is being projected as a third front initiative while the opposition in the Valley refers to it as the 'King's party'.

The local polls are an opportunity for the BJP to spring up new faces that can then be groomed for the Assembly prospectus. The conditions for this are not unfavourable. Compared to just a few years ago when it was unimaginable that the BJP could have a cadre in the Valley, the party has been gradually getting members into its fold. Even though some have been targeted by the terrorists to instil fear, new ones are not hard to be found. The Panchayat elections, which were boycotted by the regional parties - the National Conference (NC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) - provided the much-needed op-

portunity for the party in the Valley. It could install its Sarpanches at some places.

In the DDC polls, the BJP wants to get as many berths as possible. It is fielding its own candidates and at places is backing independents as well. Former Chief Ministers and alliance partners Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti have alleged that their candidates are not being allowed to campaign freely and are being locked up on the pretext of security. Parties allege that in the name of security the candidates have been put up in hotels and are being allowed to campaign between 12 noon and 3 p.m. only. While the administration says security of the candidates is paramount, Omar Abdullah has said the administration is helping the BJP.

Formed a day before the abrogation of Article 370 was announced on August 5, 2019, the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) - an alliance of six regional Valley-based parties formed to seek the restoration of the erstwhile state's special status - sprung a big surprise when it decided to participate in the

local body polls. In fact, it disrupted the BJP's strategy to get its people elected in the absence of any contest.

The NC and the PDP had boycotted the Panchayat elections in Kashmir, which had given a walkover to the BJP. Both the NC and the PDP realized the mistake, and hence, the decision to fight the DDC polls.

The sole aim of the PAGD is to prevent the BJP from recording a facile win in the upcoming elections in the UT, valley in particular. And the BJP, which changed the face of Jammu and Kashmir, wants to dig in its heels.

After the BJP's high noise about Congress's links with the 'Gupkar Gang', the Congress has officially chosen to distance itself from the PAGD. But on the ground there seems to be a tacit understanding between the two. For instance, PAGD is not contesting in Anantnag as the Congress has put up its candidate there. Similarly, in Jammu the Congress is not making much headway among the people. The Congress is silent after its flip-flop on its alliance with the PAGD. Many of its tall leaders, like Ghulam Nabi Azad, seem to be absent from the scene.

AP Assembly passes Panchayat Raj Bill for second time

AMARAVATI

THE Assembly passed the Andhra Pradesh Panchayat Raj (Amendment) Bill 2020 by voice vote.

Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy intervened when the noisy Opposition tried to raise objection while panchayat raj minister Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy was tabling the Bill and explaining the salient features.

"The Bill was earlier passed by this House and was sent to the Council which has returned it with some amendments. This is the second time the Bill is being tabled in the House and it is just a formality to get it passed. There is no reasoning on part of the Opposition to make it an issue," the Chief Minister said.

"There is no scope for again negating the Bill. What was decided by this House by the majority of 151 members will prevail and the same Bill in its original form is before the House for consideration and passing remains a formality. The Opposition is acting as if the Bill has been just introduced and is unaware of it," Jagan Mohan Reddy said.

The Bill has a provision to check the malpractices in elec-

■ The legislation aims at checking malpractices in elections, including money power and cutting election process by expediting the schedule

■ It also allows action even after the election results are announced

■ CM criticises Oppn for trying to obstruct the Bill which was earlier passed in Assembly but returned by Council

tions, including money power, and reducing the election process by expediting the schedule, besides allowing action to be taken even after the election results are announced. The Chief Minister said as the Council had sent it back they were passing it in the Assembly for the second time and it being passed is just a formality.

The panchayat raj minister explained the features and the House passed the Bill with a voice vote.

The amendments proposed by the Council were rejected by the House and the Bill was passed in the same format as it was introduced earlier.

Bills on fisheries, gaming, civic laws introduced

AMARAVATI

MINISTER for animal husbandry, dairy development and fisheries, Seediri Appalaraju introduced the AP Fish Feed Bill in Assembly here on Monday.

Besides introducing the AP Fish Feed (Quality Control) Bill 2020, the minister also introduced the AP Aquaculture Seed (Quality Control) (Amendment) Bill, 2020, the AP Fisheries University Bill, 2020, and AP Animal Feed (Regulation of Manufacture Quality Control Sale and distribution) Bill 2020. Home minister M Sucharitha tabled the Andhra Pradesh Gaming (Amendment) Bill 2020 while the minister for municipal administration Botcha Satyanarayana introduced the Andhra Pradesh Municipal Laws (Second Amendment) Bill 2020.



Ruling YSRCP and Opposition TDP leaders attending the Business Advisory Committee meeting at Assembly on Monday

CYCLONE NIVAR

Crop damaged in 6,59,000 ha

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

AGRICULTURE minister K Kannababu announced in the state Assembly that the enumeration work on crop damages caused by Cyclone Nivar would be completed by December 10 and the input subsidy would be released to farmers by December 31. The minister participated in the discussion on the agriculture in Assembly on Monday, the first day of the five-day winter session.

Kannababu said the enumeration work on the crop damage had already started and would be completed by December 10. According to preliminary estimates, the crop was damaged in 6,59,000 hectare in the state and the exact figures would come out after enumeration. The minister announced that discoloured paddy would be purchased by the government as per the in-



► Agriculture Minister lambasts TDP chief for shedding crocodile tears for farmers while utterly neglecting them during his rule
► After completion of enumeration of losses by Dec 10, the amount will be released to farmers by month-end
► Says YSRCP govt has cleared thousands of crores dues left by Naidu govt

structions of Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy. He said the Chief Minister had conducted review meetings regularly during the cyclone period and enquired about the crop damages and problems faced by the farmers due to cyclone.

The agriculture minister informed the House that the state government had released subsidy in October for the crop damage caused by heavy rains from June to September and

again released input subsidy in November for the losses incurred due to heavy rains in October, 2020.

Referring to crop insurance, Kannababu said of Rs 1,030 crore was paid to the companies for the release of insurance. He alleged the previous TDP government had not paid Rs 510 crore related to the crop insurance and the present YSRCP government had cleared it to benefit the farmers. He alleged

the Leader of Opposition in Assembly N Chandrababu Naidu was shedding crocodile tears on helping the farmers suffered due to cyclone. He alleged the previous TDP government did not pay power dues of Rs 8,500 crore towards free power to farmers and did not pay Rs 398 crore for purchase of seeds. He said the YSRCP government was paying the dues, which were pending since the TDP rule.

Referring to the subsidies, Kannababu said during the 16 months of YSRCP government, Rs 13,463 crore were subsidies were provided to farmers as against the Rs 12,731 crore during five-years of TDP rule.

The minister alleged that input subsidy related to the year 2015-16 was not released by the TDP government adding that the YSRCP government was now releasing the subsidies, which were not released by the previous government to farmers.

Assembly condoles Pranab, SPB and former members

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

ANDHRA Pradesh Legislative Assembly condoled the demise of former President Pranab Mukherjee, popular playback singer SP Balasubrahmanyam and former members of the legislature, who passed away during the intervening period of the Assembly sessions.

Immediately after the House assembled, Speaker Tammineni Sitaram read out the names and their contribution and the House observed two-minute silence as a mark of respect to the departed leaders and personalities.

The condolence motion moved by the Speaker said, "This House places on record its deep sense of sorrow at the demise of Dr Pranab Mukherjee, former President of India and conveys its deep sense of sympathy to the member of the bereaved

family members".

The services of multifaceted Pranab Mukherjee were recalled during his five-decade public life under various capacities. The country's highest civilian award Bharat Ratna was conferred on him besides international Awards and he had a place in international agencies IMF, World Bank, and other such institutions, the House observed.

This House also expressed its sorrow at the demise of SP Balasubrahmanyam, who won six national awards and was a prolific singer par excellence in various facets of cinema and conveyed its deep sense of sympathy to members of the bereaved family.

The House also expressed condolence to the family members of Tirumala Srinivasulu MLC besides former members of the legislature Janardhan Tatraj (Kurupam), Dr Ravindranath (Bapatla), K Venkatachandra Mohan Rao (Pitapuram), P Manikyala Rao (Tadepalligudem), D Rajagopal Reddy (Darsi), P Ammi Raju (Kadiyam), B Narayanaswamy (Tekkali), K Veeraraghavendra Rao (Penugonda W.G), B Durugaprasada Rao (Gudur, who was also elected to Tirupati Lok Sabha in 2019), P Mangapati Rao, Dronamraju Srinivas, Mocherla Johar (Achanta), K Sivananda Reddy (Kadapa), YT Raja (Tanuku) and D A Satyaprabha (Chittoor).

Speaker reads out the names and their contributions soon after the House is assembled



Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy releasing poster and brochure for '100-day Women's March' at Assembly on Monday. AP Women's Commission chairperson Vasireddy Padma, Women and Child Welfare Minister Vanita, APIIC Chairperson R K Roja, DGP D Gautam Swang other senior officials are seen.

CM releases Women's March brochure

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

CHIEF Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy released a brochure on the '100-day Women's March' in his cabin at Assembly here on Monday. The march, initiated by AP Women's Commission, to create awareness about government programmes, will be held for 100 days till March 8.

During the march, the women will organise various programmes

■ Under the initiative taken up by AP Women's Commission, various programmes will be held for 100 days till March 8 to create awareness on govt schemes

to create awareness on the warfare schemes of the State which include Navaratna, prohibition in phases, Disha app and the like.

The commission will hold

awareness seminars on cybercrime for college students in all districts across the state for 100 days.

Women and child welfare minister Thaneti Vanita, DGP D Gautam Sawang, Women's Commission chairperson Vasireddy Padma, APIIC chairperson R K Roja, agriculture special chief secretary Poonam Malakondaiah, women and child welfare chief secretary A R Anuradha, Women's Commission director R Suyaz were present at the event.



TDP chief and Leader of Opposition in Assembly N Chandrababu Naidu addressing a press conference at party office in Mangalagiri on Monday. Party State president K Atchannaidu is also seen.

Naidu justifies staging stir at Speaker's podium

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

TDP national president and former chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Monday launched a blistering attack on Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy, for throwing traditions to the wind in the House and refusing a meaningful debate. Naidu, who was suspended along with 13 of his MLAs in the House for staging a sit-in near the Speaker's podium, defended his move terming it "in the interest of the farming community".

"I have done this for the first time in my long career. I never did it earlier. I was left with no options and hence, did it now," he said calling the Chief Minister "a fake CM" who had no commitment to the people.

"People had fallen for Jagan's fatu-

► Says he has no option as he wants to highlight the plight of farmers

► Describes Chief Minister Jagan as 'fake CM'

► Warns the party will not keep mum if attacks on downtrodden sections go on

ous statements and gave him 151 MLAs out of 175 in the state," he said.

Talking to the media at party state office at Mangalagiri, the TDP chief said he never foresaw himself entering the podium. "For the first time in my long career, I faced suspension. I faced this for the sake of the farmers who were suffering greatly on account of severe crop losses. Crop losses were there in over 20 lakh to 25 lakh acre in the past one- and

a-half years. The Chief Minister is not taking any steps to mitigate their problems."

Naidu was surprised that the House did not convene till Jagan arrived. "The Assembly or Parliament would not wait for any leader as they have a Constitutional sanctity. In addition, the Chief Minister was laughing at our deputy leader," he said.

Giving details of crop damage, he said the government did not have a plan for crop insurance. He said Parliament records said that AP claimed crop insurance and no one knows where it had gone. Whatever are the challenges, the TDP shall continue to fight for the farmers welfare, he said.

He reminded the Chief Minister that YSRCP "can not continue its atrocities against BC, SC and ST and minorities and expect us to keep quiet."

India may get Oxford Covid vaccine by Feb

Continued from P1

Poonawalla said if things go according to the plan, the coronavirus vaccine will be available for vulnerable populations by January or February. And, in March or April, the vaccine will enter the market for the general public.

The SII will apply for the emergency use authorisation at the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) for the vaccine in December after receiving approval in the UK. The Serum Institute has finished its phase-3 trial in the country and follow-up data is likely to start soon.

If that gets possible then soon the much-needed COVID-19 vaccine will be available in the market by January 2021. The first lot of anti-Covid shots will be given to frontline workers, like doctors, nurses, and municipal staff.

Moreover, the indigenously developed coronavirus vaccine, Covaxin, by Bharat Biotech might also get an emergency nod from the Centre after the company submits its data from phases 1 and 2. At present, the Hyderabad-based biotechnology firm has started its phase-3 trials across 25 centres in the country.

Biden to nominate PIO Neera Tanden as Budget chief

Continued from P1

Adeyemo was a senior White House national security adviser for international economics during the Obama administration, as well as a top aide to former Treasury Secretary Jack Lew. He is currently president of the Obama Foundation Bernstein, one of Biden's closest aides, served as his chief economic adviser as Biden, then the vice president, and Obama fought to pull the United States out of the Great Recession.

Oppn misleading farmers: PM

Continued from P1

Modi said apprehensions and protests are being whipped up by those opposing the Acts. They are misleading society, he said. "These same people have in the past played tricks with farmers in the name of MSP, loan waiver and fertiliser subsidy," he said. Farmers have been duped for quite a long time, he added. He said the new farm laws are efforts to double farmers' incomes. They will now have access to more options to sell their crops.

Protesting farmers want PM to listen to their 'mann ki baat'

Continued from P1

Over the last five days, thousands of farmers, braving water cannons, tear gas and barricades of the Haryana police, have reached the borders of Delhi. While some of them have managed to enter the city, the rest are sitting at the border areas, saying they are ready to do what it takes to see the end of the three farm laws passed by parliament earlier this year.

Farmers protesting against the Centre's new farm laws said on Monday that they have come to the national capital for a "decisive battle" and asserted that they will continue their agitation until their demands are met. Addressing a press conference at the Singhu border, a representative of protesting farmers said

that they want Prime Minister Narendra Modi to listen to their "mann ki baat".

Tractor-trolleys and key farm equipment have turned into temporary shelters for thousands of farmers who have assembled at the borders of Delhi to protest against the Centre's new farm laws. As temperatures have dipped, the farmers demanding that the laws be repealed are spending the chilly nights inside their tractor-trolleys covered with tarpaulin, which they have turned into temporary shelters. Most of the farmers have brought at least two trolleys with each tractor with one of them carrying ration and other essentials and the other being used to accommodate the protesters.

PM holds virtual meet with Covid vaccine developers

Continued from P1

"The PM advised all the departments concerned to engage with the manufacturers and seek to resolve matters so that the efforts by these companies bear fruit in order to serve the needs of the country and the entire world," it said.

The Prime Minister appreciated the efforts being taken by scientists in these companies to come out with a vaccine solution to tackle COVID-19. The statement also said that the potential of various platforms for vaccine development was discussed.

TODAY'S QUOTE

Hope GDP will be positive in next quarter


“ We hope that the GDP will be back to positive territory in the next quarter, after two consecutive quarters of contraction. Prime Minister Narendra Modi worked hard for the economic recovery and had also announced a package after the crisis due to coronavirus. — Union Home Minister **Amit Shah**



RESULTS

Bharti AXA posts 10% rise in renewal premium

Bharti AXA Life Insurance said it has registered a 10 per cent increase in renewal premium at Rs 594 crore in the first half of the current fiscal year. The company's renewal premium stood at Rs 541 crore in April-September of fiscal year FY20.

FOREX (buy rates in ₹)			
US Dollar	78.49	South	
Euro	93.11	African Rand	5.57
UAE Dirham	22.17	Hong Kong Dollar	10.99
Thai Baht	2.81	Japanese Yen	0.82
British Pound	102.57	New Zealand Dollar	54.6
Australian Dollar	57.3	Saudi Riyal	21.71
Canadian Dollar	59.88	Swedish Krona	10.05
Swiss Franc	85.33	Singapore Dollar	58.14

DELHI TUESDAY 1 DECEMBER 2020

BIZ BRIEFS

Mohanlal endorses Mankind Pharma

MANKIND Pharma has announced its association with Malayalam superstar Mohanlal as their corporate brand ambassador. The megastar is one of the finest actors in our country, who has starred in over 400 movies. The goal of the ambassadorship is to drive visibility for Mankind Pharma and its efforts to reach the masses in south through the superstar and providing them quality and affordable medicine. Mohanlal said, "I am glad to partner with Mankind Pharma as their corporate brand ambassador. The pharma company truly represents the spirit of Atmanirbhar Bharat and has touched upon the lives of people living in the remotest part of the country."

BAFTA invites applications

THE British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) on Monday announced that applications are now open for BAFTA Breakthrough India, supported by Netflix. The initiative marks BAFTA's first steps into India, showcasing and supporting the next generation of creative talent in film, games and television globally alongside the UK, USA and China. Noted music director AR Rahman is the ambassador for BAFTA Breakthrough India 2020-21. Rahman said: "I am happy to be working with BAFTA to discover some of the amazing talent that India has to offer in film, games and television. This is a unique opportunity for promising artists to be supported by a world-renowned organisation, to not only make connections with other talented creatives across the world but to be mentored by BAFTA-winners and nominees."

Clensta launches Covid lotion

CLENSTA has launched Clensta Covid-19 Protection Lotion. This lotion is effective in keeping one safe from the virus for 24 hours. The product is very easy to use and needs to be applied three times a day to secure the 100 per cent protection from the virus, bacteria, and fungi. Priced at Rs 298 for the 100 ml size, this product provides a solution for battling the novel Covid-19 virus. Puneet Gupta, CEO & Founder, Clensta International, stated "I decided it is the time that we became Atmanirbhar and came out with the solution to fight Covid-19 in our best possible way. A complete Make in India product, it is technically engineered and formulated with three advanced active ingredients that form a triplet complex of the nanoparticles (AgNPs), biosurfactant, and acid."

Pegasystems' initiative

SEVA Bharathi has been continuously provide relief measures to the under-privileged communities & migrants labourers in the state of Telangana by distributing food kits, sanitary kits and home isolation kits throughout the pandemic. In this endeavour, Pegasystems India has come forward as a financial partner to support the Covid-19 relief efforts which in turn will help the Seva Bharati team to expand the distribution of relief benefits to the communities and families who have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. Suman Reddy, MD, Pegasystems India, said, "At Pega, we want to inspire our communities to fight the Covid-19 crisis with hope, resilience, and by being each other's support system. These are uncertain times, where as an ecosystem it is crucial to stand together with compassion to support our not so fortunate brethren & try to minimize the disparities."

No more big buybacks from Indian IT firms

Peer group firms unlikely to follow TCS, Wipro: Experts

DEBASIS MOHAPATRA
BENGALURU

DESPITE large buyback announcements by Tata Consultancy Services and Wipro, other peer group companies are unlikely to follow suit as capital conservation remains the key focus amid the ongoing Covid pandemic. Even newly introduced buyback tax makes dividend payout a better option to distribute surplus cash among investors over the share repurchase option, industry watchers said.

They, however, opined that the decision to distribute tax through buyback option would depend on the capital allocation policy of an individual company.

"IT services firms are coming up with buyback programmes as these firms are sitting on surplus cash without any significant deployment. Usually, the acquisitions done by IT firms are smaller in size. However, with buyback tax, this instrument no longer remains tax-friendly. So, dividend payout could be the preferable route going ahead," said V Balakrishnan, Chairman of Exfinity Venture Partners and former chief financial officer and board member at Infosys.

"In the case of TCS and Wipro, the situation is different as the promoters have a large stake. For other IT services firms, announcements like special dividend are more likely," he said.

ODDS AGAINST SHARE BUYBACK

- Cash conservation key focus
- Buyback tax a major deterrent
- Dividend payout better route
- 2 buybacks from TCS in 2017, 2018



Both TCS and Wipro announced buyback of shares last month in their bids to return surplus cash to investors. While TCS announced a buyback of up to Rs 16,000 crore, the Azim Premji promoted Wipro has rolled out a share repurchase programme worth up to Rs 9,500 crore.

Mumbai-based TCS had previously done buybacks worth around Rs 16,000 crore each in 2017 and 2018 as part of its capital allocation policy. The second-largest IT services firm Infosys completed a buyback worth Rs 8,260 crore last year. In 2017, Infosys had bought back shares worth Rs 13,000 crore. Similarly, Wipro had last year announced a share buyback of up to Rs 10,500 crore, and comprising 3.69 percent of its total paid-up equity capital. The country's third-largest IT

services firm HCL Technologies had done Rs 4,000 crore share buyback. Not only IT biggies, but also many mid-tier IT firms had conducted a share purchase programme in past years.

However, with the imposition of a share buyback tax of 20 per cent from this fiscal, the landscape for such programme has changed. Under the new tax provisions, if an investor has subscribed to a company's shares in IPO (initial public offering) stage at Rs 100 and subsequently the firm announced a buyback at Rs 500 per share, the company would have to pay the buyback tax at 20 per cent on Rs 400.

Some experts, however, said that conducting a buyback would depend on the individual companies than on the taxation provisions.

LOAN TO ADANI

Amundi threatens to divest SBI bonds

NEW DELHI

ONE of the State Bank of India (SBI)'s investors, French giant Amundi has announced that it would sell off its SBI green bonds if the bank grants a Rs 5,000 crore loan to Adanis Carmichael coal mine in Australia.

"We consider SBI should not finance this project. Ultimately it's their decision but we've been extremely clear on the fact that if they decide to do it, we would immediately disinvest," Director of the Institutional Corporate Clients Division & ESG, Jean Jacques Barberis, was quoted as saying by a global wire service.

"Financing the mine would be in "total contradiction" to the SBI activities financed through its green bond, he added.

"We have engaged SBI asking them not to participate (in the loan)



and now we are waiting for their answer", he was quoted as saying.

Amundi, which holds the bond in its Amundi Planet Emerging Green One fund, said it had learnt this week that SBI was considering financing the Carmichael thermal coal mine in Australia.

The Adani Carmichael project has been opposed by climate activists due to the issue of carbon emissions.

Reports said the move from

Amundi demonstrates that some financial institutions understand the serious reputational risks associated with supporting a new thermal coal project like Adani's mega mine, especially in the middle of a global pandemic and intensifying climate disasters.

Amundi is Europe's largest asset manager and ranks in the top 10 globally. It manages assets worth 1,650 billion euros.

Responsible investment has been the starting point in Amundi's investment policy. When it was created in 2010, Amundi made social and environmental responsibility one of its four founding pillars. It was one of the founding signatories of the Principles for Responsible Investment.

Paytm Money for IPO investments

NEW DELHI

FINTECH major Paytm on Monday said its wholly-owned subsidiary Paytm Money will now facilitate investments in Initial Public Offers (IPOs). The move is aimed at benefiting retail investors with wealth creation opportunities, as they will be able to seamlessly apply and join the growth story of rapidly expanding companies, a statement said.

The company has made the process of IPO application completely digital and simple for retail investors to apply for public offers, and will continue to add new tech-savvy features for enhanced user experience, it added. The company is aiming to capture "8 to 10 per cent of applications market share in the first year of launch", the statement said. Paytm Money has enabled investors to instantly apply for all the latest IPOs via UPI ID, linked to their bank accounts to quickly complete the application process. The platform offers an interface to make changes, cancel or reapply the bidding application.

Banks will see decline in capital: Moody's

NEW DELHI

MOODY'S Investors Service on Monday said the bank capital will moderately fall in emerging Asia over the next two years, with India seeing larger capital decline without further infusion.

In a report, Moody's said the uncertain trajectory of asset quality is one of the biggest threats for emerging market banks, as operating conditions remain challenging amid the current Covid pandemic. The 2021 outlook for banks in emerging markets is negative, while the outlook for insurers is stable, it said.

"In the Asia Pacific region, banks' rising nonperforming loans and insurers' volatile investment portfolios are in focus. Capital will moderately fall in emerging Asia over the next two years, and banks in India and Sri Lanka will post larger capital declines without public or private injections," Moody's said.

It said non-performing loans (NPLs) will rise most for banks

Uncertain trajectory of asset quality is one of the biggest threats for emerging market banks

in India and Thailand because of the greater shock to their economies and historically poor performance of certain loan types. In India, stress among non-bank financial institutions will also curtail their capacity to lend, Moody's noted. "Profit growth will be modest because of low-interest rate and subdued lending, but lower loan volumes should aid capital," Moody's Managing Director Celina Vansetti-Hutchins said in the 'Emerging Markets Financial Institutions Outlook' report. (PTI)

Consumer spending to return to growth in 2021

NEW DELHI

AFTER a Covid-19 pandemic-led contraction in consumer spending in 2020, household spending will return to growth in 2021, expanding by as much as 6.6 per cent, Fitch Solutions said on Monday.

Consumer spending is forecast to have contracted by 12.6 per cent in 2020.

"While growth will return to positive in 2021, we do note the recovery will be slower than most countries, as a result of the significant contraction over 2020," it said.

"Unemployment will remain heightened, while the effectiveness of government support measures is questionable," Fitch Solutions forecast a return to pre-Covid-19 levels only over the second half of 2021 and 2022. "We forecast household spending in

India to return to growth in 2021 after the Covid-19 pandemic led to a contraction in consumer spending in 2020," it said.

In nominal terms, total household spending will only be 1.2 per cent higher than what it was in 2019 (Rs 123 lakh crore in 2021, compared to Rs 121.6 lakh crore in 2019), indicating the extent of the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on consumer spending. Fitch Solutions said all of the main consumer spending categories will return to positive growth in 2021.

However economic impact of 2020 has created a significant base effect across a number of categories. Food and non-alcoholic drink spending were prioritised in household budgets in 2020 and so growth in spending of these items, while remaining positive, will be slightly lower than in 2020.



'Vaccine will help tide over economic crisis'

Union Minister Gadkari says India offers lot of opportunities to investors

NEW DELHI

UNION Minister Nitin Gadkari on Monday expressed confidence that India will get a Covid-19 vaccine "as early as possible" and overcome the pandemic to win the economic war. The Minister for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and Road Transport & Highways said that currently, "majority of countries are not interested to deal with China"; they are rather interested in India. He said such a situation is advantageous for the country's manufacturing sector to ramp up its capabilities to boost exports from India.

"I am confident that we will get a vaccine as early as possible and 100 per cent we will win this war against Covid-19 and also win economic war," Gadkari said this at a virtual event organised by Dun & Bradstreet. He said disbursement of loans to the tune of Rs 1.48 lakh crore has been completed so far, out

of the Rs 3 lakh crore worth of collateral-free automatic loans for businesses announced by the Centre earlier.

"We have already reduced our imports from China and already our (India's) exports are increasing. The trends are positive, and I am expecting good results in this field," said the minister. He said the MSMEs are doing an excellent job despite facing an economic crisis. Eligible borrowers for the scheme include MSME units, business enterprises, individual loans for business purposes and MUDRA borrowers.

Talking about schemes for the MSME sector, he said, "We have sanctioned

tioned some 93 schemes and more than 100 schemes are in the pipeline. We want to clear them as early as possible." He said efforts are underway for reducing India's dependence on import of items such as crude oil. The minister said emerging areas where MSMEs can work include artificial intelligence, robotics, sustainability, green manufacturing, waste to wealth, development of smart villages, e-mobility, and virtual reality-based solutions.

Gadkari said the MSME ministry is working on setting up a number of centres of excellence in collaboration with educational and research institutions like IITs and NITs. Pointing out that the current annual turnover of the khadi and village industries stands at Rs 80,000 crore, he said the plan is to increase this to Rs 5 lakh crore in two years. At a separate event, the minister said the whole world, including India, is facing the crisis of Covid-19 and the situation is challenging. "We need to create positivity and self confidence in the mind of the people. Negativity and suspicion will create more complication," Gadkari said this at the Virtual Horasis Asia Meeting 2020.

He also said that on the basis of the latest statistics, "we can say that we are coming to the normal situation". At the same time in the manufacturing sector also, particularly trade and business, a lot of opportunities are up, he said.



Cyberabad CP reviews polling stations for GHMC polls



HANS NEWS SERVICE
RANGA REDDY

IN view of upcoming GHMC elections, the Cyberabad Police Commissioner VC Sajjanar along with other officers reviewed the security arrangements near Madhapur Zone areas on Monday. CP visited KPHB phase-IV, Malaysian Township and reviewed Bandobast arrangements.

To create a sense of confidence among the public CP along with other officers visited the polling locations. CP asked everyone to cast their vote. In Democracy, voting is the responsibility of every citizen of India. Democracy is considered important to ensure that voters are well informed, enabling them to vote according to their own interests.

Madhapur DCP Venkateshwarlu, SOT ADCP Sandeep, Kukatpally ACP Surender, ACPs Laxminarayana, Kishore Kumar, KPHB Inspector Laxmi Narayana and Kukatpally Inspector Narsing Rao were also present.



Karthik Purnima celebrated in RR

HANS NEWS SERVICE
RANGA REDDY

THE Karthik Purnima celebrations are going on in full swing at all temples in the district on Monday. The Chilkur Balaji temple, Rameswaram temple (called South Kashi at Shadnagar) and Vendikonda Siddeshwara Swamy temple at Shamshabad and other temples too were crowded with devotees in the district. Special prayers were performed on the eve of Karthik Purnima. Devotees flocked the temple in large numbers to celebrate the same and waited in long queues for the darshan. Devotees also flocked at the Shiva shrines across the district. Women offered prayers and performed Mukkantishtuni. They also lit up Karthik lamps in the temples to worship the deity.

Meanwhile, the temple officials had been seen taking strict measures in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak. Devotees were advised to follow the social distancing norm and the temples authorities across the district had made the arrangements for the devotees in view of Covid-19.

Leaders wooing voters with money, liquor

SRINIVAS GUDUPALLI
RANGA REDDY

THE candidates contesting in GHMC elections are trying to lure the voters to cast them to their respective parties by offering them money and liquor in return. Several incidents have taken place in the suburbs divisions in Ranga Reddy district. Even though the police assured that they have taken measures to eradicate all these actions, several leaders are still distributing liquor and money.

The public found crates of liquor in Chaitanyapuri and handed it over to the police. The police said that they are investigating the case but, not even a single case has been registered regarding the issue. In Upparpally, activists had been caught red-handed while distributing money to the people. A video of activists in Mailardevpally

distributing money to the public has gone viral in social media. The public has got hold of the activists and handed them over to the police but, the police are not taking any action against them.

Even after handing over the activists to police who have attempted to distribute money and liquor to the public, the police are not taking any action against them. The BJP leaders alleged that the police are not taking any actions against the wrongdoers. The ruling party leaders in suburbs like Serilingampally, Mansurabad, Hayath Nagar have made arrangements to distribute money and liquor to the public. The BJP leaders demanded the officials to take strict action against the leaders and activists who are trying to lure the public by distributing money and liquor.

AICTE circular puts varsities in a bind

VRC PHANIHRAN
HYDERABAD

STATE universities found themselves at the receiving end, following a recent circular of All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) washing away its hands on the issue of equivalence certificates to the technical qualifications.

Speaking to The Hans India, a senior official from the Andhra Pradesh State Technical Education department said that there are several engineering colleges not considering those who have completed MCA with PhD to teach IT and Computer Sciences for BTech students. Similarly, the MCA, MSc IT, electronics students were not allowed to take admission into PhD programmes in the Computer Sciences and Information Technology branches. But, the applicants stress that their qualifications fall under the

- Engineering colleges are not considering those who completed MCA with PhD to teach IT and Computer Sciences for BTech students
- AICTE notification reads: It is up to the employer and higher educational institutions to figure out suitability for employment and admission



allied branches and they are eligible for admission in the PhD course.

"This problem is not faced only in Andhra Pradesh, but also with candidates applying for jobs and admissions in several other states," he added.

Against this background, numerous requests are being sent to

AICTE for the issue of equivalence certificates, for their qualifications, to enable them to apply for jobs and research admissions.

Clarifying on this, the AICTE sent a new circular that mentioned, it had already notified the major and core branches of engineering and technology and their relevant and appropriate courses

leading to a degree in engineering technology, for the purpose of recruitment positions. But, the council continues to receive requests from the faculty members and the governments and directorates of technical education on the issue.

However, as per the current policy, it does not provide for the

AICTE to issue, "Equivalence to the qualifications obtained from AICTE's approved institution / departments at any level for higher education purpose as well as for employment purpose."

It further said that it is up to the employer and the higher educational institutions to figure out the suitability for the employment and admission as per an earlier notification issued by the council.

When asked, Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, Hyderabad (JNTU-H), Registrar, Manzoor Husain said that those who have completed their MCA before 2010 are only eligible for teaching CSE and IT for BTech students in the engineering colleges as per the AICTE norms. If there are any issues related to the equivalence, then, "the case will be presented to the Board of Studies to figure out to what extent equivalence could be issued," he added.

BJP spreading fake news on social media: Harish

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

SENIOR TRS leader and Finance Minister T Harish Rao on Monday hit out at the BJP for carrying out misinformation campaign on social media for the GHMC polls.

Addressing a press conference at Patancheru area in the city, he lashed out and said that the BJP is resorting to belittling politics for just a few seats and some votes. Out of their frustration for the polls BJP is resorting to a misinformation campaign, he alleged.

The Minister took serious exception to the BJP for hate and religious provocations besides bad campaign. Harish Rao accused the frustrated BJP of making undemocratic moves by bringing in its national chief and 12 central ministers of no use. It turned the social media into the fake media and it is unwelcomed, the Minister said. Is it right to bring the central ministers for local polls, he questioned and pointed out that the BJP national leaders abstained from coming to the city when it was in flood waters and denied funds.

He said that Chief minister K Chandrashekar Rao has ap-

pealed time and again for the funds, to help the flood victims but the Centre did not respond. Now, for the sake of GHMC polls, they are making false promises, he charged. The centre is partisan towards our State and KCR has offered Rs 650 crore to the flood victims, he said. The government in the Centre denied timely help and we will

spend about Rs 400 cr to help the flood victims, he assured. They have prepared false logos stating that he and other TRS leaders are changing the parties, he fumed and said that this was done during Dubbaka by poll and the BJP cannot do such violations.

The Minister ridiculed the BJP and said that the party has roped in several union ministers and belittled the democratic norms. Even the Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the city, though he did not address any BJP programme, it was a poll strategy, he opined.

The BJP has turned the social media into anti-social media and are mocking democracy, Harish fumed and said that the people in the city will teach BJP a fitting lesson as they are ready to reject them.



TRS files complaint against news channel to SEC



TRS general secretaries M Srinivas Rao, Bharat Kumar Soma and others coming out of the office of State Election Commission after submitting a complaint against a local news channel, on Monday

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

TRS leaders on Monday lodged a complaint with the State Election Commission (SEC), demanding action against Raj News channel alleging that wrong and fabricated news was being telecast deliberately against the State government and Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao.

The TRS leaders led by MLC M Sreenivas Reddy met the SEC C Parthasarathi on Monday and gave a representation. They alleged that the Raj News

was indulging in a deliberate biased campaign against TRS party among the voters of GHMC by continuously broadcasting rumours, false and concocted stories with the solve intention of portraying TRS party as negative party, though the facts were otherwise. The party leaders alleged that the partisan campaign was being conducted to do favour to BJP. They alleged that both Raj News and BJP violated the model code of conduct which prohibits campaign after 5 pm on November 29.

The party listed out some of

the objectionable captions like- 'Chetakani Mukhya Mantri Neeku Dammu unte Manifesto tho raa,' 'Manakoddu ee farm house mukhya mantri, madhyam tagi car nadapadam pramad, madhyam taagi rashtram nadapdam marintha pramadam.'

The party also lodged complaint with the cybercrime demanding initiation of action against unknown offenders for morphing pictures and creating fake videos of KCR and circulating the same in social media by defaming his image and reputation.

Nizam's kin condemns Amit Shah's statement

HYDERABAD

THE family members of Nizam VIIth Mir Osman Ali Khan on Monday objected to the remark by Home Minister Amit Shah on naming Hyderabad's culture 'Nizami culture,' and asked political leaders to avoid distorting information about the Nizam for political gains.

Najaf Ali Khan, Nizam VII's grandson, said politicians were purposely tarnishing the reputation of Nawab Mir Osman Ali Khan Bahadur whenever elections were held and said spreading negativity was a cheap attempt to win votes.

To draw publicity, renaming the city or promising to free the State from 'Nizami culture' is

- Najaf Ali Khan, Nizam VII's grandson, says politicians were purposely tarnishing the reputation of Nawab Mir Osman Ali Khan Bahadur whenever elections were held and said spreading negativity was a cheap attempt to win votes
- Renaming the city or promising to free the State from 'Nizami culture' is nothing more than a gimmick. But these politicians will not alter the Ganga Jamuna Tehzeeb, which for centuries has been part of the culture of the people of Hyderabad



nothing more than a gimmick. But these politicians will not alter the Ganga Jamuna Tehzeeb, which for centuries has been part of the culture of the people of Hyderabad.

During his regime, which had stability, tranquility and was renowned for secularism as its basic mode of governance, he said that the Nizam valued all religions and united them.

In the 1940s, under the Nizam, Hyderabad was greater than most western nations. Throughout history, his huge donations were surpassed by any other monarch. Calling a ruler who constructed the NIMS Hospital a 'looter' from his own private purse is sacrilege and an attempt to harm

Mir Osman Ali Khan's portrait,' Khan said, asking those who were tarnishing the reputation of the Nizam what they had done for the country themselves.

He said that Nizam had donated to the National Defense Fund five tonnes of gold. "His significant contribution to a variety of institutions of all faiths and communities acknowledges his secular image," Khan said, adding that political standards had nosedived with many leaders who lacked basic knowledge of their own nation's past.

Amit Shah, at a public meeting here on Sunday, said that if the BJP won the GHMC elections, the BJP would end the 'Nizami culture' in Hyderabad.

RGIA keeps up as 2 best-connected airport

HANS NEWS SERVICE
RANGA REDDY

THE operations at the GMR Hyderabad International Airport are normalising and the footfall in a single day touched the 37,000 mark for domestic operations post-lockdown in the month of November 2020. Even with the relaxation of quarantine norms, the guidelines on the medical profile of the passengers and RT-PCR medical report are still asked by many states, but thanks to the new Covid-19 testing facility at the airport, RGIA has made air travel, the safest mode to travel. From about 3,000 domestic passengers coming daily in the first few weeks post recom-

mencement, the passenger footfall now has increased to over 30,000 daily, that is 10 times more. Hyderabad has also seen uptick in the Air Traffic Movement (ATM) from about 40 daily ATMs in the first few weeks of the restart. The number of domestic passengers in a single day touched 37,000 mark recently, the highest since the recommencement of domestic operations. With three new destinations, RGIA is now connected to 54 domestic destinations. GHIAL also started an on-site coronavirus testing laboratory at the RGIA, giving travellers the added facility for a safe journey. GHIAL has partnered with Mapmygenome, an ICMR and NABL certified lab for the same.

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

WITH the GHMC poll scenario turning heated following provocative speeches by rabble-rousers from opposition, particularly BJP, Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) leaders are now focusing on increasing polling percentage in the polls on Tuesday in the city. They are busy holding deliberations, making telephone calls enquiring about the mood of voters.

The TRS has been talking about increasing the voting percentage in the city as denizens have not shown interest to vote in the civic elections during the last few elections. TRS Working President KT Rama Rao was seen making fervent appeals to professionals to come out and vote.

TRS pins hopes on raising polling %

The party feels higher voting percentage will benefit it; beseeching voters in districts to go visit city to caste vote. It is said that conveyance is also being arranged by leaders

He told them to at least vote for NOTA if they did not like to vote for any political party but wanted their presence in the polling booth.

According to the party leaders, the party feels that any increase in polling stations would benefit the

TRS. It is using all strategies to pull the public to polling booths. Leaders are calling up people who have gone to their native villages nearby Hyderabad. They are even arranging vehicles to get them back to city. The district leaders who cam-

paigned as in-charges in the divisions are taking lead in identifying city voters in their areas and arranging their travel. "Their conveyance will be taken care of and they will also be provided food. Their job is to cast their vote and return to their native place," said a party leader.

The party leaders are worried that the corona pandemic would have an impact on the voting percentage in the city on Tuesday. Many professionals are still availing the facility of work from home and they have gone to their native place. "It would be a challenge for us to bring them to the polling booths. Some will fear the spread of Corona and some take the advantage of holiday and go out for leisure," said another leader.

New ICC chief differs with BCCI's 'Big Three' formula

NEW DELHI

THE International Cricket Council (ICC) should not underestimate the contribution that India -- a country of 1.3 billion people and companies based there provide financial support to the world body -- makes to world cricket, said new ICC chairman Gregor John Barclay on Monday. He, however, doesn't subscribe to the 'Big Three' formula that the Indian cricket board initiated a few years ago.

It is estimated that multi-national companies and local corporate houses based in India contribute well over 70 per cent of financial might to the ICC through sponsorship. Also, India has one of the most glamorous teams that helps generate revenues through participation in ICC tournaments. "I don't subscribe to the Big Three concept. I know that there were arrangements back in 2014 put in place that you could consider favoured, in some respects, the more powerful three countries. But they were all rolled back quite a few years ago. Back in 2016, they changed England, by and large, and Australia certainly get the same amount of money than anybody else under the distributions (from the ICC)," Barclay said in a virtual media interaction.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) led the formation of the 'Big Three' model that provided a lion's share of ICC money for the BCCI, England, and Australia. The three argued that they contribute to the ICC more than any other members, so they deserved the biggest share of the money. However, that formula was dismantled in 2015 when India's Shashank Manohar succeeded Srinivasan as ICC chairman, and brought about a more acceptable method of distribution of money from the ICC kitty.

"India gets more, and I understand why, a point of view of note. What I would say is that the money flows as a consequence of getting a whole lot of other things done. I think we need to sit down and finish the ICC's global strategy for the coming eight to ten years, once we finalise and agree what that strategy might look like. Then I think we need to start to build the bilateral program (between countries) to have a look at what moneys might flow out of that," said 59-year-old Barclay. New Zealander Barclay, who took over the reins on November 24, said that one area that needed investment was women's cricket.

"Looking back at the strategy, we (ICC) need to decide what we can distribute. One of the areas clearly, if we need to grow the game globally, we need to invest in women's cricket. (But) I don't think we should underestimate the contribution that India makes to the game and the importance that India have - a country that has 1.3 billion people," he said. "And New Zealand, for example, has five billion people. You can understand that there's a slight difference in the way you look at distributions. But it's just one aspect. Let us get through the strategic path worked out, and what a funding model might look like," Barclay added. (ANS)

ICC favours Ind-Pak bilateral cricket, but can't ensure that: Barclay

NEW DELHI

THE International Cricket Council (ICC) would like to see traditional rivals India and Pakistan play bilateral series regularly, and in each other's territories, said chairman Gregor John Barclay on Monday, but he also pointed out that he didn't have the mandate to ensure that it actually happens.

India-Pakistan bilateral series always depends on the political relations that the two Asian neighbouring countries have, and they haven't played a Test series against each other for 13 years. That was when Pakistan toured India in 2007 for a three-Test series while India's last tour to Pakistan took place 14 years ago.

Then, Pakistan visited India for a short ODI and T20I series in late 2012, and four years later toured India again for the 2016 T20 World Cup, an ICC event.

"I would love nothing more than for India and Pakistan to be able to continue cricketing relations as they were previously. I am also enough of a realist to understand that there are geopolitical issues at play here that are way beyond my jurisdiction. I think all we can do at the ICC is to continue to help and support in any way that we can to bring about outcomes that would see India and Pakistan in a position where they can play



cricket regularly against each other and in their home territories," Barclay said in a virtual media interaction.

"Beyond that, I do not think I have a mandate or an ability to influence outcomes more than that. That is really being done at a level way beyond where we would be operating," pointed out the New Zealander.

Barclay, 59, however, said the ICC would play the role of a facilitator while the final say rests with the governments of both India and Pakistan. "Rest assured that, as they say, from the cricketing point of view, we would love to get those countries back together again on a regular basis. The ICC will do whatever it can to help facilitate and support an outcome that might see that happen," he averred. Now, the issue of Pakistan touring India will come up again as the ICC T20 World Cup next year and the 50-over World Cup in 2023. (ANS)

Four Oly-quota winning boxers inducted in TOPS, Zareen out of Core group

NEW DELHI

FORMER Youth World boxing championship gold medallist Nikhat Zareen (women's 51 kg) of Hyderabad, Sonia Chahal (women's 57 kg) and Shiva Thapa (men's 63 kg) have been moved out of the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) Core Group and included to the Developmental Group while Simranjit Kaur, 2018 World Championship bronze medallist, is among the four boxers who have been included in the TOPS, the Sports Authority of India (SAI) informed on Monday.

The 24-year-old Zareen participates in the same weight category as Mary Kom who has won the Olympic quota while Thapa participates in the same weight category as Manish Kaushik who has also earned a quota.

Along with Simranjit (60 kg), Ashish Kumar (men's 75 kg), Satish Kumar (men's 91+ kg) and Pooja Rani (women's 75 kg) are the other three boxers included in the TOPS. All four boxers won the quotas for the Tokyo Olympic Games at the Asian

Boxing Qualifiers held in March earlier this year.

The decision to include them in the scheme was taken at the 50th Mission Olympic Cell meeting held on November 26.

2012 Olympic bronze medallist and six-time world champion MC Mary Kom, who participates in women's 51 kg, is among the six boxers retained in TOPS after a performance review, SAI further said in a statement.

The other boxers retained in the scheme include Kavinder Singh Bisht, Amit Panghal, Manish Kaushik, Vikas Krishan and Lovlina Borgohain.

The TOPS scheme is a flagship program of the sports ministry which is an attempt to provide assistance to country's top athletes.

As per the SAI website, the scheme looks to "add a premium to the preparations of these athletes so that they can win Olympic medals in 2020 and 2024 Olympics". (ANS)



'World Test C'ship format needs a review'

NEW DELHI

FOUR days after India captain Virat Kohli described the new percentage points system of the much-debated World Test Championship (WTC) as "very confusing, very difficult to understand why", ICC chief Gregor John Barclay said on Monday that its format needed a review after the Covid-affected maiden edition is completed.

The ICC recently introduced points system that ranks teams on percentage of points (PCT) instead of the overall points earned, after several series/matches could not take place due to Covid pandemic around the world.

"Some of the issues that we have already got around the calendar, I do wonder whether they came from adjusting and attempting to develop a

Test Championship, which was clearly designed to drive interest back into Test cricket," Barclay, who took over the ICC reins on Wednesday, said during a select virtual media interaction.

Barclay, 59, said his personal view is that once the WTC is completed the ICC could go back to the drawing board and review its structure taking everything into consideration. (ANS)

MATCH RESULT
FC Goa 1
Northeast United FC 1

Mumbai to take on East Bengal with another win in sight

GOA

AFTER securing their first win of the Hero Indian Super League Season 7, Mumbai City FC will be keen to build on the momentum when they face SC East Bengal at

the GMC Stadium here on Tuesday.

The contest promises to be an intriguing one with both teams adopting a possession-based style. Sergio Lobera's side has averaged 511 passes per match so far while

SCEB completed 476 passes in their opening game, which they lost to ATK Mohun Bagan.

Although Mumbai dominated possession in both their matches, they struggled to score. The Islanders have registered just one

goal so far, joint-least among teams who have played two matches.

The pair of Adam Le Fondre and Hugo Boumous will once again be key for Mumbai's attack. It remains to be seen though if

Bartholomew Ogbeche gets his place in the starting eleven.

Lobera believes East Bengal's inexperience in the league won't matter much as their strength in depth will make them difficult to beat. (ANS)

Senegal World Cup hero Papa Bouba Diop dies aged 42



LONDON

LEGENDARY Senegal midfielder Papa Bouba Diop has passed away at the age of 42.

Diop, who won 63 caps for Senegal, scored the goal which secured a historic 1-0 win over France in their opening FIFA World Cup match in 2002, a tournament where Senegal made it to the quarterfinals.

"FIFA is saddened to learn of the passing of Senegal legend Papa Bouba Diop. Once a World Cup hero, always a World Cup hero," FIFA confirmed the news on Sunday evening on their official Twitter handle.

"Among Diop's many accomplishments, he will always be remembered for scoring the opening goal of the 2002 World Cup. RIP, Papa Bouba Diop," a tweet from FIFA read.

Senegal president Macky Sall also paid tribute on Twitter, saying: "The death of Pape Bouba Diop is a great loss for Senegal."

"I pay tribute to a good footballer, respected by all for his courtesy and his talent, proudly reminding us of the Lions saga in 2002. I offer my heartfelt condolences to his

family and to the football world," he added.

The midfielder joined Fulham from Lens two years later and excelled as a powerful defensive midfield enforcer and was affectionately known as the 'Wardrobe' due to his stature.

"We are devastated to hear news reports this evening that Papa Bouba Diop has passed away, aged 42. Rest well, Wardrobe," tweeted Fulham FC.

Current Senegal international Sadio Mane wrote on Instagram: "Pape Bouba, it was with a broken heart that we learned of your (death). Know that you will forever remain in our hearts even if you left without saying goodbye to us."

Diop went on to make 98 Premier League appearances for Fulham and scored 10 goals. He played a further 53 times in the top flight after joining Portsmouth in 2007 where he became an FA Cup winner 12 months later. He then had a spell with Aek Athens before returning to sign for West Ham United in 2011 and enjoyed a brief stint at Birmingham City. (ANS)

Maradona's personal doctor under investigation

BUENOS AIRES

DIEGO Maradona's personal doctor is under investigation for possible manslaughter after the football legend's death last week, Argentine prosecutors have said.

Police raided the home and private clinic of Leopoldo Luque on Sunday to determine whether there was negligence on the part of the physician, reports Xinhua news agency.

Maradona died of a heart-attack at his home near Buenos Aires last Wednesday, less than a month after undergoing surgery to remove a blood clot on his brain. Prosecutors said the search was ordered by a judge following preliminary investigations, which included evidence from Maradona's daughters Dalma, Giannina and Jana. "By virtue of the evidence that was collected, it was considered necessary to request searches at the home and office of doctor Leopoldo Luque," a statement from a local prosecutor's office said.

Argentine state news agency Telam said investigators were trying to establish if Maradona had received 24-hour care from medical staff in the days before his death, one of the conditions of his discharge from hospital on November 12.

On Thursday, Maradona's lawyer Matias Morla called for a probe of the 1986 World Cup winner's death, citing an alleged delayed response from emergency services. (ANS)



Warner, Cummins to miss rest of white-ball games vs India

SYDNEY

AUSTRALIA opener David Warner has been ruled out of the remaining white-ball matches against India after injuring his groin during the second ODI of the ongoing three-match series.

D'Arcy Short has been called in as Warner's replacement in the T20I squad for the three-match series which begins Friday. Additionally, right-arm pacer Pat Cummins has been rested from remainder of white-ball matches in a bid to keep him fresh for the Test series. Warner suffered a groin strain in Australia's 51-run win on Sunday night and returned home to begin his rehab. (ANS)

KAPIL KAVURI HUB

KAPIL PROPERTIES

EARN EXTRA SFT*

LIFE LONG RETURNS

SAFE

AFFORDABLE

NO MAINTENANCE

COMMERCIAL PROPERTY MULTIPLIER

WITHOUT ADDITIONAL INVESTMENT

High yield monthly income + Long term wealth asset

The legendary opportunity is here

Limited units left, grab the advantage today

+91 95337 76694

www.kapilkavurihub.com

sales@kapilproperties.com

upto 9% + returns