

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

KARIMNAGAR | FRIDAY | 18 DECEMBER 2020



NATION | 4

**Centre transfers
Bengal IPS officers**



WORLD | 5

**French prez tests
positive for Covid**

SPORTS | 8

**India lose advantage
after Kohli runout**



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KCR draws up plan to win Mayor poll without MIM

**S.A. ISHAQUI | DC
HYDERABAD, DEC. 17**

TRS president and Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao is said to have finalised a strategy for the election of GHMC Mayor and Deputy Mayor in such a manner that victory is achieved without the party appearing to seek the support of the MIM.

This will deny the BJP a chance to later allege that the TRS and the MIM were in an alliance, as there would be an election for the Mayor's post.

The TRS is the single largest party with 56 seats in the 150-member GHMC Council, the BJP is second with 48 and the AIMIM third with 45. Apart from 150 elected corporators, the GHMC Council also comprises MPs, MLAs, MLCs and Rajya Sabha members who are enlisted as voters in the GHMC area and they can also

● **THE OVERALL VOTER** strength in the GHMC Council is 191, together with the ex officio members. As per the GHMC Act, at least half of the members, or 96, must be present to achieve quorum for the election of the Mayor.

● **THE TRS** has around 30 ex officio votes, taking its voting strength to 86. The MIM with 10 ex officio votes has 55 members. The BJP tally stops at 50, with two ex officio votes.

take part in the election for Mayor as ex officio members.

The TRS has around 30 ex officio votes, taking its voting strength to 86. The MIM with 10 ex officio votes has 55 members. The BJP tally stops at 50, with two ex officio votes. The overall voter strength in the GHMC Council is 191, together with the ex officio members. As per the GHMC Act, at least half of the members, or 96, must be present to achieve quorum for the election of the Mayor.

Sources in the TRS disclosed that the TRS and

MIM would both field their candidates for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor posts. Voting will be by show of hands.

In case, the BJP boycotts or abstains, the TRS mayoral candidates will win based on the party's overall strength of 86, sources explained.

The TRS boss and the Chief Minister is planning to ensure that some MLCs who have not voted in any of the local body elections can enrol as voters in the GHMC so that there is no trouble at the eleventh hour, sources in the ruling party added.

MODI TO VISIT BANGLADESH FOR ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY

**SRIDHAR
KUMARASWAMI | DC
NEW DELHI, DEC. 17**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday held a virtual summit with Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina that included "comprehensive discussions covering all areas including connectivity

and trade, development cooperation, border management and river water sharing", after which it was announced Modi would visit Bangladesh in March 2021 to "join the celebrations on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Bangladesh's independence".

In all, seven agreements

were signed at the virtual summit between the two countries on hydrocarbons, culture, agriculture and development projects.

A decision was also taken "to expeditiously conclude the ongoing joint study on the entering into a bilateral trade deal.

■ Full report on Page 4

LAXMAN: OPPN ARE MISGUIDING ON AGRI LAWS

**DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 17**

BJP's OBC Morcha president Dr K. Laxman on Thursday accused Opposition parties of provoking the farmers with "wrong propaganda" against the new agricultural laws which they were projecting as being harmful to farmers.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP state office, Dr Laxman, a former president of the party state unit, alleged that some parties that were protesting against the farm laws were supporting middlemen who were cheating farmers and forcing them to sell their produce at unfair prices.

Dr Laxman said that the new laws have been very helpful to farmers and they have got the support price for their produce. He recalled that Communist parties had campaigned against the financial reforms which were undertaken by former prime minister P.V. Narasimha Rao in 1991.

Dr Laxman alleged that the Telangana Rashtra Samiti was obstructing national development under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

42nd comm satellite in orbit



**DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, DEC. 17**

India's 42nd communication satellite CMS-01 was placed in its designated spot in space after a flawless mission by a PSLV rocket from the spaceport in Nellore district on Wednesday. The Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle

(PSLV) C50 took off from the second launch pad of the Satish Dhawan Space Centre at Sriharikota range as scheduled at 3.41 pm. After a flight of 20 minutes and 12 seconds, the rocket released the CMS-01 into its designated orbit.

■ Full report on Page 2

WAIT 'N | WATCH

Mumbai, Dec. 17: Many Indians appear hesitant to get vaccinated for Covid-19 as infections have fallen sharply since a mid-September peak and some people are worried about possible side-effects here, according to a survey of 18,000 people released on Thursday.

India reported 24,037 new infections on Thursday — fewer than 30,000 for a fourth straight day — taking its total to 99.6 lakh, the second highest in the world. More than 1.44 lakh

people have died.

Until early last month, India had looked set to overtake the infection tally of the United States but the gap between them has since widened significantly. The cases in the US have now risen to more than 1.6 crore.

The government says it could soon approve some of the vaccines that have sought emergency use authorisation, including the Oxford-AstraZeneca one and the Pfizer/BioNTech shot, which is

● **ABOUT 69 PER CENT** of respondents in a survey saw no urgent need to get immunised because of limited information about side-effects and efficacy levels.

● **A LARGE** of people also believe that Covid-19 cannot affect them because of high levels of immunity.

● **MANY PEOPLE** believe that the country is moving towards herd immunity and therefore they do not need to get vaccinated.

already being used in the United States and Britain.

India wants to roll out vaccines in a few weeks, initially focusing on people more exposed to the virus

SC says go slow on farm laws, Centre is lukewarm

CJI says farmers have right to protest; floats panel to end row

**SANJAY KAW and
PARMOD KUMAR | DC
NEW DELHI, DEC. 17**

Acknowledging the right of farmers to hold non-violent protests, the Supreme Court on Thursday suggested that the Centre put on hold the implementation of its new agricultural laws, putting forward the idea of setting up an impartial and independent committee to end the impasse. The Centre said the farmers would not come forward for negotiations if the implementation of the farm laws was put on hold.

The Centre told the court it was not possible to hold implementation of the laws. While solicitor-general Tushar Mehta said it couldn't be done, attorney-general K.K. Venugopal said he would come with the response of the government on the proposition.

Chief Justice S.A. Bobde asked Mr Venugopal to give an assurance that the laws will not be implemented in the interim period "till we hear the matter".

The A-G, however, said this could stall the negotiations. To this, the CJI said a statement to this effect

by the Centre could only enable the discussions with the protesting farmers and resolve the stand-off.

Mr Venugopal then asked for time to discuss it with government officials and come back during the vacation, when the CJI indicated a bench will be set up to hear the matter even during the winter break. Friday is the last working day for the court before its 15-day winter recess, that ends on January 3.

The Supreme Court also refused to order eviction of farmers from Delhi's borders, where they are camping for 22 days, without hearing them. The court said farmers have the right to protest, but without inc-onveniening other people.

The court said it would ask the Centre if the manner of protest could be slightly altered so it doesn't affect citizens' right of movement. "Farmers have the right to protest. We won't interfere with it, but we will look into the manner of protest ... and slightly alter it so that it doesn't affect the citizens' right of movement," the judges said.

Legal tangles keep off hosps from Jeevandan

**DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 17**

The fear that they will be embroiled in medico-legal cases while dealing with organ donations is one of the constraints in getting more doctors and hospitals involved in Jeevandan, the government's programme of organ donations.

While large corporate hospitals are enrolled in the programme, small hospitals and institutions shy away due to possible legal and technical issues. Dr Swaranlatha, incharge of Jeevandan, the cadaver transplant programme of the government, said, "Within the medical fraternity, the fear of legal issues is perhaps one of the reasons restraining many from getting involved actively in the programme of organ

donation. An overarching law to protect doctors for action taken in good faith, similar to the protection provided to judicial officers, can help."

She said that there is a need to facilitate procedures faster which requires alternative and ancillary tests to be recognised in well-equipped hospitals in small cities from where organs can be donated.

There are only five organ donations per million population in Telangana state. In the last seven years of the programme, there have been 800 donations.

Experts believe that awareness is the key apart from dealing with the technical and legal issues that come to the fore. The green corridor system, where the police clears traffic for ambu-

lances to rush the donated organs to recipients, is one example of local and state-level coordinations for transporting organs.

There is a need to simplify laws which will allow government institutions to coordinate better; besides, co-ordination between private and public hospitals is required.

The definition of death in law needs to be looked at from the point of organ donation. The registration of Birth and Death Act is being amended and there is a need felt to include brain-stem death as a form of death.

The socio-cultural preferences of Indian society have to be considered while amending the Act.

There is also a need to distinguish between brain-stem dead and comatose condition.

CONG ATTEMPTS COMPROMISE WITH DISSENTERS

**DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, DEC. 17**

As the Congress' internal elections draw close, the top leadership wants to bridge the gap with the 23 letter writers demanding a change in the party's working style and an "active and present" leadership.

Insiders claim a meeting between Congress president Sonia Gandhi and some of the letter writers was expected by the coming weekend. Acting as a bridge between the two sides is former Madhya Pradesh CM Kamal Nath, who has in the last couple of days met the letter writ-

ers as well as Mrs Gandhi in a bid to find a middle path.

The parleys between the leadership and the letter writers had come to an abrupt end when senior leader Ahmed Patel passed away in late November.

■ Full report on Page 4

WEATHER

Max: 29.8°C
Min: 17.3°C
RH: 45%
Rainfall: Nil
Forecast: Cloudy sky. Moderate rains likely. Max/Min temp. 30/17 °C

COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+26,688)	(+342)
99,77,760	1,44,829
covid19india.org	
STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS	
(+509)	(+3)
TS: 2,79,644	1,505
(+534)	(+2)
AP: 8,77,348	7,069

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

7,49,30,920
DEATHS
16,62,532
COUNTRIES AREAS WITH CASES
218
worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Margasira Shuddha Chavithi till 2.28 pm
Star: Sravanam till 7.08 pm
Variyam: 11.14 pm to 12.53 am (Saturday)
Durmuhurtam: 8.55 am to 9.39 am; 12.34 pm to 1.18 pm
Rahukalam: 10.30 am to 12 noon
HUIRI CALENDAR
Jamadi-ul-Aakhir 2, 1442 AH
PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.35 am
Zohar: 12.23 pm
Asar: 4.10 pm
Maghrib: 5.52 pm
Isha: 7.06 pm
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.39 AM
SUNSET TODAY 5.45 PM
MOONSET TODAY 9.30 PM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 10.00 AM

COUNTER POINT



Before you give it to me, test it on my bodyguard!

SHORT TAKES

Weapons worth ₹28K cr okayed

New Delhi: The defence ministry on Thursday approved procurement of weapons and military equipment worth ₹28,000 crore for the three services, officials said. The officials said almost all the weapons and military hardware approved for procurement will be acquired from domestic industry. "The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) headed by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh approved proposals to procure equipment worth ₹27,000 crore from domestic industry," the defence ministry said in a statement.

■ Full report on Page 4

People report low taxable income

Mumbai: Advance personal income tax on the year-on-year basis this quarter declined 5.6 per cent to ₹31,054 crore from ₹32,910 crore, a source at CBDT said, adding the same so far this fiscal stood at ₹60,491 crore, down 10.4 per cent from ₹67,542 crore. Advance tax payment by companies, however, has shown a 49 per cent growth to ₹1,09,506 crore in Q3 this fiscal. The increase is primarily due to the low-base last fiscal when corporation tax rates were cut to 25 per cent in the Q3.

■ Full report on Page 4

demands of the farmers," he said.

He said the Centre should not be under the impression that the farmers camping at the protest sites will simply return to their homes, adding that in 1907, a farmers' protest continued for nine months till the British rulers repealed some laws.

"When asked about the benefit of the laws, every BJP leader says farmers can sell their produce anywhere in the country... But where should farmers go to sell their crop at minimum support price (MSP)?" the CM asked. He also claimed that due to the three new laws "big capitalists will sell produce at a higher price", which will lead to price rise.

After the Assembly passed the resolution with a voice vote, AAP MLAs trooped into the well of the House, tore off copies of the laws.

— PTI

TRIBAL SCHOOL UPGRADED TO A SAINIK GURUKUL

**DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, DEC. 17**

The state government has converted the tribal welfare school in Ashoknagar of Warangal Rural district into a gurukul sainik school to prepare tribal students for a career in the armed forces.

Inaugurating the country's first Tribal Gurukul Sainik School on Thursday, tribal welfare minister Satyavathi Rathod said that the school would provide a huge platform for Adivasi students to excel.

She said that the school would have horse riding facility.

Telangana has more gurukul schools than other States in the country. The government is spending ₹1.25 lakh on each student per annum, the minister said.

■ Full report on Page 3

TRS MLA POSTS AGAINST FOREST DEPT ON FB

**RAVINDRA SESHU | DC
KOTHAGUDEM, DEC. 17**

The Facebook posts by government whip and Pinapaka MLA Rega Kanta Rao against forest officials who are trying to get back forest lands encroached for podu cultivation by the Adivasis have caused trouble for TRS leaders in Bhadradri district. The high command and the government have not taken it lightly.

Kanta Rao was elected as a Congress MLA and joined the TRS last year. Through his tweets, he came down heavily on forest officials clearing podu land cultivated by the Adivasis for decades. Kanta Rao in a message on Facebook said, "There is no meaning in joining TRS if I did not protect adivasis whose lands being taken by the forest officials (sic)".

■ Full report on Page 3

IN BRIEF

HC adjourns Covid PILs to Dec. 31

Hyderabad: The Telangana High Court on Thursday adjourned to December 31, the hearing on a batch of 26 petitions filed on the state government's handling of the Covid-19 situation. Earlier, a division bench of Chief Justice Raghavendra Singh Chauhan and Justice B. Vijaysen Reddy took on record the 279-page report filed by the state government, enumerating the steps it has taken to contain the pandemic in the state. Chief Justice Chauhan said that he cannot adjudicate the petitions at this stage in view of his transfer to the Uttarakhand High Court as its Chief Justice.

EXCISE SUBMITS 2017 DRUG CASES PROBE REPORT

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 17

The excise department on Thursday submitted a report to the High Court stating that its investigation into 12 drug cases registered in 2017 had been completed.

Eleven chargesheets have been filed and another will be filed soon. There is no need to hand the cases over to central agencies as the investigation was complete, counsel for the excise department told the court.

A Telangana High Court division bench comprising Chief Justice Raghavendra Singh Chauhan and Justice B. Vijaysen Reddy was dealing with a plea of Congress leader A. Revanth Reddy, who urged the court to order a probe by either the Central Bureau of Investigation or any other central investigation agency into the drugs case as they involved celebrities and film stars.

On the other side, Enforcement Directorate (ED) told the High Court that the excise department was not providing details of the drugs case. Additional Solicitor General Rajeshwar Rao on behalf of the ED sought orders to the excise department to release the chargesheets and statements. The High Court adjourned the hearing of the case for two weeks.

SRISAILAM UNIT TO RUN AT FULL POWER IN JUNE

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 17

The Telangana Power Generation Corporation (TS Genco) has finalised its action plan to restart all the six units of the 900 MW Srisaillam Left Bank Power House to generate electricity in June next year.

The six units of the underground power plant were damaged during the fire accident at the plant in August, in which nine persons were killed.

TS Genco Chairman and Managing Director D. Prabhakar Rao inspected the revival work at the power plant and finalised the action plan.

According to TS Genco, operations in two units have resumed and 300 MW of power was being generated. Another unit would be ready by December-end, and two more by March next.

Works on the fourth unit of the plant, which suffered the worst damage due to the fire, will be completed by June 2021.

It was said that the generator and transformers for the fourth unit were being installed. When all units are ready, the hydel power project can generate 900 MW of electricity by the reversible pumping method.

AYESHA'S KIN TO MOVE HC TO SPEED UP PROBE

NAVEEN KUMAR | DC
HYDERABAD DEC. 17

More than a year after the exhumation and re-post-mortem, family members of Ayesha Meera, the 17-year-old B Pharmacy student who was raped and murdered in her hostel, are still waiting for the findings of the report with the case making no headway. Ayesha's mother was informed earlier this week that the case was handed over to Vizag CBI.

The family is now preparing to file a petition before the High Court for directions to expedite the investigation as the case has been dragged for close to 12 years. "We need them to fix a time-frame and to monitor the progress of investigation," said, Srinivas Rao, the lawyer fighting the case on behalf of the family.

Centre to implement 8 projects in TS: Kishan

Gadkari to dedicate 6 projects in state, KCR to join fete

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 17

Union minister Nitin Gadkari will dedicate to the nation, six projects worth ₹3,717 crore covering a length of 370 km in the state on December 21, Union minister of state G. Kishan Reddy said on Thursday. Gadkari will perform the bhoomi puja and lay the foundation stone for eight projects costing ₹9,440 crore and covering a length of 396 km in the state, Kishan Reddy said.

Addressing a press conference at Delhi, Kishan Reddy stated that Gadkari, Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao and he himself will join the programme online along with MPs, MLAs and MLAs from the state.

He explained that out of the total of 14 projects worth ₹13,157 crore, seven are being executed by National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) out of which one will be dedicated to the people while bhoomi puja will be held for six.



Minister of state for home G. Kishan Reddy inaugurated the Security Leadership Summit-2020 in PHD House in Delhi on Thursday. He praised that the role of private security guards in ensuring safety and presented awards to achievers.

The minister said that the Union ministry of road transport and highways is getting the other seven projects executed through the public works department.

Kishan Reddy explained that under the Bharatmala Pariyojana, India's largest

ever infrastructure development programme, 35,000 km of National Highways are being developed across the country. Out of this, 1,400 km of National Highways are being developed as a part of Bharatmala Pariyojana first phase. Kishan Reddy stated that

the National Highway length in Telangana state had now increased to 3,910 km, from 2,511 km before May 2014. This is an impressive increase of 1,399 km in Telangana state, he pointed out. In addition, 750 km of expressways will also be developed under the Bharatmala Pariyojana second phase in the state, Kishan Reddy said.

The Union minister stated that the increase in the length of the National Highways by 55.71 per cent reflects the commitment of the Union government under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for improving the road infrastructure in the country. Before the press conference, the minister inaugurated the Security Leadership Summit-2020 at PHD House at Delhi. He praised that the role of private security guards in ensuring safety and security of society and enterprises which he said is truly appreciated. Kishan Reddy handed over awards to achievers on the occasion.

UoH Student Union plans 5-day agitation

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC
HYDERABAD, DEC. 17

The University of Hyderabad Student Union has planned a five-day agitation on the campus, ahead of the Academic Council meeting scheduled on December 22.

The union has demanded redressal of grievances of students including the issue of filling up vacant seats for post-graduate courses, admissions for which were closed on November 19 before other Central universities. Citing UGC guidelines from September 2020, the Student Union said that the last date for admission to vacant seats was November 30, whereas the UoH closed admissions, much earlier adding to the woes of students seeking admissions amidst a pandemic.

The union added that while the Task Force has been issuing directives for an inclusive online pedagogy environment, it has done more harm to students than benefit them due to accessibility issues.

The student union demanded that an efficient health centre under Covid-19 protocols be set up urgently for the safety of students.

Abhishek Nandan, UoH Student Union president, said that two students were placed under quarantine at the guest house. Upon their discharge, the authorities did not let the students go until they paid the full amount, he said. "At

a time when students are barely making ends meet and struggling even to pay basic fees, charging extra money is nothing less than harassment," Nandan added. UoH official spokesperson Vinod Parvala, responding to these allegations, said, "The university is treading very cautiously in view of the pandemic, especially looking at what happened at IIT-Madras. We request students to be patient in this situation. We are looking at all possibilities and prioritising needs of all research departments slowly and steadily".

Reacting to the allegations of students being harassed into paying quarantine charges, he said that no coercion was being used, and the university was not geared with Covid-19 treatment facilities. "It is not even a quarantine charge, they are in fact basic guest house charges being levied. As far as we are concerned, we are not authorised as a public higher education institution to run a quarantine facility," he said. No student was being forced to pay the charges, he said.

One dead as bike rams divider on JH flyover

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 17

A BTech final year student was killed and two others were injured when their bike crashed into a road divider on the flyover leading to the Durgam Cheruvu cable-stayed bridge early on Thursday morning.

Police said they were riding under the influence of alcohol and going to see the bridge at 3.30 am after celebrating a birthday party at Yousufguda when they met with the accident.

The victim was identified as V. Shiva, 20, and the survivors as G. Vijay and Y. Prashant. Shiva, who was riding the bike (AP15 AH 2695) at the time of the accident, did not have a driver's licence. None of them had their helmets on.

Shiva's samples have been sent to a laboratory to check his blood alcohol count (BAC). The BAC of Vijay was measured at 54 and that of Prashant, whose birthday the trio was celebrating, 80.

Shiva was a native of Sircilla and staying with Shiva and Prashant, both unemployed graduates, at



The curve on the Jubilee Hills Road No. 45 flyover where the accident occurred in Hyderabad. — By arrangement

● **SURVIVORS WERE booked for culpable homicide not amounting to murder. They might face 10 plus years of jail time.**

● **RIDER DID not have a licence, no one wore a helmet.**

● **EYES OF victim donated by family.**

● **POLICE SAYS this is the third fatal accident at the same spot.**

Yousufguda, Madhapur inspector P. Ravindra Prasad said. He said the three of them sustained injuries and Shiva succumbed on the spot. Shiva's family donated his eyes after his death, the inspector said.

Following a complaint, cases were booked against Vijay and Prasanth by the Madhapur police under Section 304-II (culpable homicide not amounting to murder) read with 109 (abetment to commit offence) of the IPC along with Sections 184, 185 and 188 of the Motor Vehicles (MV) Act.

"The sections booked against the boys are non-bailable offences and they might face 10-plus years of jail time," police said.

Raghunandan Rao, Madhapur assistant commissioner of police, said this was the third fatal accident reported at the same place in the last two months. He said that GHMC officials were notified to check the engineering defects.

Etala takes stock of medical colleges in TS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, DEC. 17

With the two new medical colleges at Nalgonda and Suryapet being allowed to increase the number of seats, and renewal of permission for the 150 MBBS seats at the Mahbubnagar Government Medical College and Hospital, health minister Etala Rajender held a review meeting with the principals of government medical colleges, doctors and superintendents of hospitals in medical colleges on Thursday.

The minister sought to ensure that facilities in the government medical colleges were in line with the latest recommendations of the Medical Council of India.

He directed the superintendents of all medical college hospitals to keep the surroundings clean and ensure that sanitation problems do not arise.

He thanked the staff of medical colleges working through the Covid-19 period. "The medical health emergency department and medical health personnel worked even during bands and dharnas, serving the public to the fullest during the difficult Coronavirus times," he said. The minister congratulated

● **THE MINISTER sought to ensure that facilities in the government medical colleges were in line with the latest recommendations of the Medical Council of India.**

● **HE DIRECTED the superintendents of all medical college hospitals to keep the surroundings clean and ensure that sanitation problems do not arise.**

ed medical personnel for giving equal importance, without any interruption to patients with diseases like cancer and thalassaemia.

The minister added that arrangements were being made to provide treatment to patients suffering from minor ailments at primary health centres and area and district hospitals to prevent them from going to the bigger hospitals.

The minister asked the district medical colleges to provide all kinds of treatment. He also discussed infrastructure, faculty, staff, and other issues.

The meeting was attended by the health secretary, family welfare commissioner, Director of Medical Education, and managing director of the TS Medical Services and Infrastructure Development Corporation.

PSLV places comm satellite in orbit after perfect launch

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, DEC. 17

India's 42nd communication satellite CMS-01 was placed in its designated spot in space after a flawless mission by a PSLV rocket from the spaceport in Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh on Wednesday.

The Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) C50 took off from the second launch pad of the Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) at Sriharikota range as scheduled at 3.41 pm.

After a flight of 20 minutes and 12 seconds, the rocket released the CMS-01 into its designated orbit. The solar panels of CMS-01 were automatically deployed and Isro's Master Control Facility at Hassan assumed control of the satellite.

In the next four days, the satellite will be raised to its permanent orbit about 36,000 km above the earth. Isro Chairman Dr K. Sivan said after the mission that he was "extremely happy" with the success and appreciated the efforts of the satellite and launch vehicle teams in realising this mission amidst the pandemic.

The CMS-01 will replace the GSAT-12 that weighed

1,410-kg and was launched on July 11, 2011. According to Isro, CMS-01, which has a seven-year life span, is meant to provide services in the Extended C Band to cover the Indian mainland, Andaman, Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands.

The PSLV-C50 is the 52nd flight of the PSLV and 22nd of PSLV in the XL configuration with six strap-on motors. This was the 77th launch from the SDSC. No more launches are scheduled this year.

CMS-01 is the first communication satellite that Isro has launched under its new satellite naming scheme. Under the new scheme, Isro is nameings its earth observation satellites 'EOS' and communication satellites 'CMS'.

According to sources in Isro, two Indian satellites namely GISAT and Microsat-2A are ready for launch next.

The launch of the GISAT-1 satellite on board the GSLV was scheduled for March 5 this year but it was postponed because of technical reasons a day before the launch. The GSLV was dismantled.

Now Isro is planning to launch the GISAT-1 on board a GSLV rocket which is being readied again.



The PSLV-C50 rocket flies to space with the communication satellite CMS-01 after its launch from the spaceport at Sriharikota in Nellore district on Thursday.

— By ARRANGEMENT

OTHER STORIES

THREE DEAD
AS TRACTOR
TURNS TURTLEDC CORRESPONDENT
NIZAMABAD, DEC. 17

Three persons were killed and two injured when the tractor they were travelling on overturned at Chinna Devada village of Bichkunda mandal in Kamareddy district on Thursday. The deceased were identified as Tukaram, 26, of Chinna Devada, Sailoo, 25, of Bichkunda and Shankar, 25, of Madnour.

The victims had reached Chinna Devada to attend a marriage. The injured persons have been shifted to the government area hospital in Banswada. Bichkunda circle inspector Sajid Ali visited the village. Police registered a case and are investigating. It is believed that rash and negligent driver might be the reason for the mishap.

'DISOBEDIENT' DPO
SURRENDERS
BEFORE GOVTDC CORRESPONDENT
KHAMMAM, DEC. 17

District panchayat officer Addala Srikanth surrendered before the government on Thursday. There were several complaints against the Addala Srikanth, including dereliction of duties and other complaints. District collector R.V. Karnan had issued a notice to him to surrender to the government.

The DPO did not attend the programme of Minister for Transport Puvvada Ajay Kumar in Chintakani mandal on August 30, when the inaugurations of different Vaikuntadhamams were done. He further irked the collector by not attending the Grievance Day on December 14.

8-YR-OLD DROWNS
IN TEMPLE POND
IN HYDERABAD

Hyderabad: A third class student allegedly drowned in a pond beside a temple in Moosapet on Thursday evening. Police said Enni Naveen, 8, of Pragatinagar, went to the pond with five of his friends. "Though the others did not go deep into the pond, Naveen wandered off and allegedly drowned. As none of the kids knew to swim, they were not able to save him," said the police.



The winners, the Saurya Shakti PC receive their award from the NTPC CGM Sunil Kumar at NTPC Ramagundam in Peddapalli on Thursday.

PROFESSIONAL
CIRCLE MEET
HELD IN NTPCDC CORRESPONDENT
PEDDAPALLI, DEC. 17

The Chief General Manager (CGM) of the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC), Ramagundam, Sunil Kumar on Thursday stressed on the significance of improving the standard of work and skill enhancement of the Professional Circles (PCs).

Attending as a chief guest, he inaugurated the 20th Project Level Professional Circle Convention organised by the Business Excellence department at NTPC, Ramagundam in Peddapalli district.

Case studies on diverse subjects were presented by 15 Professional Circles (PCs). Out of which Saurya Shakti PC declared the winner, while FIT PC was declared the first runners up and SPECTRUC PC declared the second runners up based on their performance.

The GM (O&M), A.K. Samaiyar highlighted NTPC's focus on learning and innovation besides asking the youth to participate in large numbers.

The Director of Institutions and Industries interface cell, Dr E. Manohar and the general manager of the NTPC R.C. Pattanaik joined online as external judges. The general manager (Renewable Energy) NTPC, V. Anil Kumar was present physically as an internal judge and evaluated the presentation of each PC.

The programme was attended by the GMs and HODs along with others while adhering to the Covid-19 protocol.

India gets its 1st Tribal
Gurukul Sainik school

School to have horse riding facility, says Minister

ANUDEEP
CEREMILLA | DC
WARANGAL, DEC. 17

The state government has converted the Tribal welfare school in Ashoknagar of Warangal Rural district into a gurukul sainik school to prepare tribal students for a career in the armed forces.

Inaugurating the country's first Tribal Gurukul Sainik School on Thursday, Tribal welfare minister Satyavathi Rathod said that the school would provide a huge platform for Adivasi students to excel. She said that the school would have horse riding facility.

Telangana has more gurukul schools than other States in the country. The government is spending ₹1.25 lakh on each student per annum, the minister said.

Even though the Covid-19 pandemic had hit the economy, the government had continued funding the education sector, she said.

Referring to the success of 40 girl students from the SC community who secured admission in MBBS, she commended R.S. Praveen Kumar,



Minister Satyavathi Rathod and other public representatives stand in front of the army tank placed at the entrance of the Gurukula sainik school in Khanapur on Thursday.

— DECCAN CHRONICLE

ed R.S. Praveen Kumar, Telangana Tribal Welfare Residential Educational Institutions Society secretary.

Mahbubabad MP Maloth Kavitha said that she would strive to set up a sports complex by securing funds from the Centre.

Warangal Rural collec-

tor M. Haritha said the sainik preparatory school would enable students from the marginalised sections to have better representation in the armed forces.

She expressed the hope that Tribal students who are physically well built would perform exceptionally well

in the armed forces.

"There is a scope to avoid child marriages in the Adivasi community if more educational facilities are provided," the collector said. Narsampet MLA Peddi Sudarshan Reddy urged the authorities to give preference to the locals in admissions.

Harassed by land mafia, ex-MLA
seeks help from KCR, KTRPULI SHARATH
KUMAR | DC
KARIMNAGAR, DEC. 17

Former MLA of Choppadandi, Sana Maruthi released a statement on Thursday, alleging that the land mafia is trying to kill him and grab his four acres agricultural land worth ₹20 crore located on the outskirts of Bommakal village.

He urged Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao and Commissioner of Police V. B. Kamalasan Reddy to provide him security. Maruthi said that in 1971 he purchased seven acres of agricultural land present in survey numbers 723 and 724 in Bommakal area from one Velichela Thirupathi Rao.

"According to the Revenue Act, we got the land mutation and registration done in the name of my wife, Sana Lakshmi," he said.

For personnel needs, three acres of land, out of the seven acres, was sold to one Burra Narsaiah in 2003. A fence was put up, around the remaining four acres.

He said, "The passport and title lead, DD are enrolled in the Dharani website in the name of my wife Sana Lakshmi. For the past 50 years, from 1971 we are in possession of the four acres."

He added that, howev-

er, in the pahani, the records showed that former MLA, Nalamasu Kondaiah owned four acres and 20 cents of land in survey number 724 (which has a total of 13 acres of land) in Bommakal village.

But Kondaiah, who owns land in the survey number 723 and 725 never claimed he owned land on his name in Survey number 724 in Bommakal village.

With the enacting of the Land Ceiling Act in 1976, the then Revenue District Officer (RDO) identified about one acre 30 cents surplus land present in the name of Mr Kondaiah.

In 1986, the government allotted that land to some people from the weaker sections mistakenly in survey number 724.

He said, "We took the issue to the collector and submitted to the RDO a petition. After conducting an enquiry, the officials realised their mistake and made corrections giving a clear title in the name of my wife, Sana Lakshmi. When we approached the High Court, the judgement issued stated that the land belongs to Sana Lakshmi only."

Since the land value on the outskirts of Bommakal village has shot up enormously in recent times, some persons are trying to grab valuable land.

He said, "They



The compound wall in survey number 724 demolished by land mafia in Bommakal village in Karimnagar district.

— DC



Former MLA of Choppadandi, Sana Maruthi.

attacked the watchman and workers posted at the site, and are trying to create panic among my family members.

Being a former MLA, I am under mental stress and trying to protect my land. When this is my situation, what would be the situation of citizens who have purchased land?" He requested Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao, TRS party working president and IT minister K.T. Rama Rao, district collector and police commissioner, to intervene and give him justice while providing security to him and my family.

Govt Whip slams
forest dept on FBRAVINDRA SESHU | DC
KOTHAGUDEM, DEC. 17

The Facebook posts by government whip and Pinapaka MLA Rega Kanta Rao against the forest officials who are making efforts to get back the forest lands encroached for podu cultivation by the Adivasis have caused trouble for the TRS leaders in Bhadradi district. The TRS high command and the government have not taken it lightly.

Kanta Rao, was elected as a Congress MLA in 2008, joined the TRS a year back. Through his tweets, he came down heavily on forest officials clearing podu land cultivated by the Adivasis for decades. Kanta Rao in a message on Facebook said, "There is no meaning in joining TRS if I did not protect adivasis whose lands being taken by the forest officials (sic)".

Sources said that the outburst by the MLA comes as the forest officials have marked some lands that are under his possession in Karakagudem mandal. Some Adivasis who lost their podu lands had also approached the MLA.

In another message chal-

lenging the forest officials, Kanta Rao wrote, "I am committed to my words made against forest officials. File cases against me if I was found guilty. Can we stand as mere spectators as the forest officials seizing our lands. Are forest officials not part of the government. Which land pattas do you (forest officials) honour. Are forest officials ready for a CBI enquiry on it? (sic)"

Forest officials, however, continued their job. The issue was brought, to the notice of the Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao, who asked the MLAs and party leaders to wait for some time.

Forest officials, commenced a drive four years ago, to get back the reserve forest lands. The Forest Survey of India-2017, mentions that there has been a drastic fall in the forest coverage in Khammam and Bhadradi districts. The forest cover was 7.58 lakh hectares in erstwhile Khammam district. This came down to 7.43 lakh hectares in 2010. The forest loss from 2001 to 2010 is 15,000 hectares. Most of the land is in the hands of non-tribals, who encroached these areas under the pretext of being Tribals.

POLICE PUT UP WALL POSTERS
SEEKING WHEREABOUTS OF MAOISTSDC CORRESPONDENT
KHAMMAM, DEC. 17

The police department has put up wall posters with the slogan "Samacharam Maaku-Bahumathi Meeku" (Give me information-Get a gift) in the remote villages of Bhadradi-Kothagudem district.

The wall poster said that the Maoist leaders, including Bade Chokka Rao aka Damodar, Kurasam Mangu aka Bhadraru, Pandu Mangulu, Yalam Narender aka Sampat,

Boora Rakesh aka Siva, Magthu and Kovvai Ganga aka Mahesh are moving in the Karakagudem, Bayyara, Tadwai, Mangapet and Gundala forest areas.

Any person noticing them should inform the police.

The informers would receive a gift, and their names would not be revealed. Kothagudem district SP Sunil Dutt said that Damodar dalam is wandering in the forests and combing operations are ongoing in the area.

LEFT POLICIES
ONLY HOPE FOR
COUNTRY: CPMDC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, DEC. 17

The CPM state committee member J. Venkatesh has called on the people to consider the Left policies, as they address the problems of unemployment, poverty, privatisation of public sector enterprises and loss of employment rights in the country.

Addressing party leaders during a meeting in Bhupalpally on Thursday, he said instead of supporting the people during the Coronavirus pandemic, the BJP government has been selling off public sector entities and helping the corporate players grow. It also amended the labour laws in their favour.

It has also given away the defence sector to private individuals in the guise of patriotism.

"Now the corporates are eyeing agriculture. That is why the three agricultural laws are being brought," he said, adding that only the policies of the left will bring a change in the country and better the lives of the people.

OPP MISLEADING
FARMERS, SAYS
BJP CORE MEMBERDC CORRESPONDENT
NIZAMABAD, DEC. 17

BJP core committee member G. Vivek Venkatswamy alleged on Thursday said that Opposition parties were worried about their future after the implementation of new agriculture laws enacted by the BJP-led NDA government.

"They are bluntly opposing the agriculture laws and misleading farmers," said Venkatswamy, a former MP. After industrialisation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi wanted the farmers to prosper and had brought about the laws, he said.

Speaking to mediapersons at the district BJP office on Thursday, Venkatswamy said that the minimum support price (MSP) fund had increased from ₹3 lakh crore to ₹8 lakh crore under the NDA government.

He pointed out that then agriculture minister Sharad Pawar, the Congress and other parties had supported reforms in the agriculture sector. But, for political benefits, the Opposition parties were now demanding repeal of the agriculture laws, he said.

Venkatswamy said that no party would work to damage its own political prospects, and neither would the BJP.

The agriculture laws would benefit the farmers and double their income, he said, and asked farmers to support the Centre.

BJP district president Laxminarsaiah, state executive committee member Dhanpal Suryanarayana Gupta and others were present.

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SHORT TAKES

ADHIKARI LOYALIST
TIWARI QUILTS TMC,
TO JOIN BJP

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC
KOLKATA, DEC. 17

Former West Bengal minister Shubhendu Adhikari and his loyalist Jitendra Tiwari, also Pandabeshwar MLA, severed their long ties with the Trinamul Congress in a span of few hours on Thursday, over their revolt against Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

After dealing the double blow to their party, the duo, along with two-time Burdwan East TMC MP Sunil Mondal, is now set to join the BJP in the presence of Union home minister Amit Shah at a rally in Midnapore on December 19 upon his arrival on a two-day state tour this weekend.

Adhikari, who resigned as an MLA of Nandigram on Wednesday, wrote to Banerjee politely in a letter, “I am writing to tender my resignation as a member of All India Trinamul Congress as well as from all other positions held by me in the party and its associate organs with immediate effect. I am thankful for all the challenges and opportunities that has been afforded to me and I will always value my time spent as a member of the party.”

NCB ISSUES NOTICE
TO KARAN JOHAR
OVER VIRAL VIDEO

Mumbai, Dec. 17: The Narcotics Control Bureau has issued a notice to Bollywood filmmaker Karan Johar over a viral video allegedly showing drugs being consumed at a party at his house last year, NCB sources said on Thursday.

The notice has been sent to Johar to check the video’s veracity, an NCB official said.

The central agency is conducting an anti-drugs probe that began in connection with the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput in June this year.

The video, which also shows several top stars, is being investigated as part of NCB’s probe, the official said.

The NCB had received a complaint regarding the video of a party, which was attended by top Bollywood stars last year, the official said.

The complaint was about movie stars apparently seen in a ‘drugged’ state in the video.

CONG LEADERSHIP
WORKING TO END
INTERNAL TIFF

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, DEC. 17

As the internal elections in the Congress draw close the top leadership wants to bridge the gap with the 23 letter writers who were demanding change in the working style of the party and an ‘active and present’ leadership. Insiders claim that a meeting between Congress president Sonia Gandhi and representatives of letter writers is expected as soon as coming weekend.

Acting as a bridge between the two sides is the veteran party leader and former Madhya Pradesh chief minister Kamal Nath. In the last couple of days he has met with the letter writers and also with the Congress president in a bid to find a middle path to the internal strife going on.

The parleys between the leadership and the letter writers had come to an abrupt end when senior leader Ahmed Patel had contracted Covid in early October and finally passed away in late November.

SC UPHOLDS HC
ORDER ON
KAHEEL KHAN

New Delhi, Dec. 17: The Supreme Court on Thursday refused to interfere with the Allahabad High Court verdict which had quashed the detention of Dr Kafeel Khan under the National Security Act (NSA) and ordered his immediate release, saying it is “a good judgement”.

“We will not interfere in the judgement. However, the observation will not impact any other proceedings,” said the bench comprising Chief Justice S.A. Bobde and Justices A.S. Bopanna and V. Ramasubramanian. The bench was hearing the Uttar Pradesh government’s plea challenging the high court’s September 1 verdict. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the state, told the bench that observation made by the high court exonerates Khan in the criminal proceedings. “Criminal cases will be decided on their own merits,” the bench observed.

Chilling out



Workers warm themselves around a bonfire amid the snow-laden area at Sonamarg in Ganderbal district of Central Kashmir on Thursday. The minimum temperature across Kashmir plummeted several degrees below the freezing point on Thursday owing to a clear sky as the valley reeled under cold conditions, with Srinagar experiencing the coldest night of the season -6.4.

Modi to join Hasina in
March for ‘Bijoy Dibosh’

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC
NEW DELHI, DEC. 17

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday held a virtual summit with his Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina that included “comprehensive discussions covering all areas including connectivity and trade, development cooperation, border management and rivers water sharing” after which it was announced that PM Modi would be visiting Bangladesh in March next year to “join the celebrations on the occasion of 50th anniversary of Bangladesh’s Independence and 50 years of Bangladesh-India diplomatic relations”.

It may be recalled that the Pakistan Army had surrendered to the Indian Army in Dhaka on December 16, 1971, marking the liberation of the erstwhile East Pakistan which emerged as an independent nation Bangladesh.

In response to a question at a special MEA briefing on the summit in the evening regarding Sheikh Hasina’s recent reported statement that Bangladesh can never forget or forgive Pakistan for the atrocities committed in 1971 and also on demands for an apology from Pakistan, India

also took a dig at Pakistan, with New Delhi saying, “There is no denying that state-sponsored oppression against Bangladesh’s just war of oppression led to the death of more than 3 million, more than 2 lakh women were raped and tortured. We deeply respect and understand the sentiments expressed by PM Sheikh Hasina.”

In his remarks, Modi told Sheikh Hasina, “Following the Victory Day, our meeting today is of even more special significance. It is a matter of pride for us to celebrate the historic victory of Bangladesh over Anti-liberation forces as the Victory Day with you. Today, when Bangladesh is celebrating forty nine years of independence, I pay homage to the martyrs of both the countries who sacrificed their lives. On the occasion of Victory Day, yesterday I paid tributes at the National War Memorial in India and lit a ‘Golden Victory Torch’. These four ‘Victory Torches’ will tour all over India and will be taken to all the villages of our martyrs. Since 16 December, we are celebrating the ‘Golden Victory Year’, during which many events will be organised across India.”

The two Prime Ministers “jointly unveiled a com-

memorative postal stamp issued by the Government of India on the occasion of birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, while PM Modi also “thanked the Government of Bangladesh for issuing a stamp in honour of Mahatma Gandhi on the occasion of Gandhiji’s 150th birth anniversary celebrations earlier in September 2020”.

In all seven agreements were signed at the virtual summit between the two countries in the areas of hydrocarbon, culture, agriculture, high-impact community development projects. A decision was also taken “to expeditiously conclude the ongoing joint study on the prospects of entering into a bilateral Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement”. The joint statement said, Modi also “assured that (Covid) vaccines would be made available to Bangladesh as and when produced in India”.

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina “highlighted the need for early signing of interim agreement for sharing of the Teesta waters, as agreed upon by both the governments in 2011” and Modi “reiterated India’s sincere commitment and continued efforts in that regard”, a joint statement said.

DAC APPROVES
11 OFFSHORE
PATROL VESSELS

PAWAN BALI | DC
NEW DELHI, DEC. 17

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) headed by defence minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday in a meeting granted Acceptance of Necessity (AoNs) for proposals worth ₹28,000 crore including airborne early warning and control (AEW&C) systems for the Indian Air Force.

These airborne early warning and control systems will be designed and developed by DRDO. These are reported to be deployed on six Airbus aircraft to be acquired from Air India. AEW&C which are airborne help in detection and tracking of attacking enemy aircraft, missiles and drones much before ground based radars. They also provide crucial inputs during dogfights with the enemy fighter jets and give information on troops deployment by enemies on ground.

DAC also approved proposals for 11 next generation offshore patrol vessels for the Indian Navy and modular bridges for the Indian Army.

In a major push to Make-in-India, six proposals out of seven for which AoNs were granted will be sourced from the Indian industry.

MHA transfers 3
WB IPS officers

Mamata Banerjee govt refuses to accept the
Centre’s order; likely to challenge it legally

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC
KOLKATA, DEC. 17

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has accused the Narendra Modi government of “colourable exercise of power” after the Union home ministry ordered the central deputation of three IPS officers of her government on Thursday. The Trinamul Congress supremo also refused to accept the Centre’s order which her government, according to sources, may challenge legally.

Banerjee, who is now in North Bengal, Tweeted, “Go! order of central deputation for the three serving IPS officers of West Bengal despite the state’s objection is a colourable exercise of power and blatant misuse of emergency provision of IPS Cadre Rule 1954. This act is nothing but a deliberate attempt to encroach upon state’s jurisdiction & demoralise the serving officers in WB.”

● **BANERJEE SAYS** Centre’s order despite the state’s objection is a colourable exercise of power and blatant misuse of emergency provision of IPS Cadre Rule 1954.

She added, “This move, particularly before the elections is against the basic tenets of the federal structure. It’s unconstitutional & completely unacceptable! We wouldn’t allow this brazen attempt by the Centre to control the state machinery by proxy! West Bengal is not going to cow-down in front of expansionist & undemocratic forces.”

The IPS officers are Rajeev Mishra, inspector general (South Bengal), Praveen Kumar Tripathi, deputy inspector general (Presidency Range) and Bholanath Pandey, superintendent of police (Diamond Harbour Police District) in South 24 Parganas.

In August last year a video of Mishra, touching

the feet of the CM at Digha in East Midnapore went viral.

The Centre has assigned Mishra, a 1996 batch officer, to the Indo-Tibetan Border Police. Tripathi, of the 2004 batch, has been sent to Sashastra Seema Bal while Pandey, from the 2011 batch, has been deputed to the Bureau of Police Research and Development. All the three organisations are under the ministry of home affairs headed by Amit Shah. The officers came under the MHA’s scanner for security lapses after Trinamul workers attacked the convoy of BJP president J.P. Nadda last week at Diamond Harbour.

The MHA, the nodal controlling authority of the IPS cadre, requisitioned them for central deputation while asking the state government for their release. Furious, the Chief Minister then held them back which only prompted the MHA to act this time strongly.

PM to address MP
farmers’ today

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, DEC. 17

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will virtually address farmers in Madhya Pradesh on Friday even as some farmer unions have been protesting at Delhi borders against the three recently passed farm sector-related legislations. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will also distribute relief amount for crops loss to around 35 lakh farmers during the event which will be attended by around 20,000 farmers across the state.

Meanwhile, Union agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar, home minister Amit Shah, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman and railways minister Piyush Goyal held a meeting with some BJP general secretaries at the party headquarters on farmers issue.

During the meeting, sources said, Shah reviewed the party’s out-

● **CHIEF MINISTER** Shivraj Singh Chouhan will distribute relief amount for crops loss to around 35 lakh farmers during the event.

reach programme through press conferences and “chaupals” across all districts of the country to allay fears on the new farm laws. The party has been holding chaupals at all districts across the country highlighting the three legislations and how they are aimed at benefiting farmers, mainly small and marginal farmers and countering the propaganda by some farmer unions and opposition parties against the legislations and how MSP and APMC will continue to exist.

The meeting at the BJP headquarters was held on the day the Supreme Court heard a plea related to the farmers’ protests against the Centre’s three new agriculture laws.

CORONAVIRUS
CASELOAD
CROSSES 99.56L

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, DEC. 17

With 24,010 fresh cases in a day, the country’s Covid-19 caseload crossed 99.56 lakh, while the number of people who have recovered from the infection surged to 94.89 lakh. According to the Union health ministry, the total Coronavirus cases mounted to 99,56,557 and the death toll rose to 1,44,451 with 355 new fatalities in a day.

As per the health ministry data, active recoveries outnumbering new cases on a daily basis have ensured a high recovery rate among patients. The total recovered cases are nearing 95 lakh (94,89,740). The recovery rate has improved to 95.31 per cent on Thursday. The gap between recovered cases and active cases is also increasing consistently, and presently stands at 91,67,374. The Covid-19 case fatality rate stands at 1.45 per cent.

Modi, like RSS, is not dogmatic on economy. But, he is
close to a Gandhian socialist, claims author Sitapati

SRIRAM KARRI
HYDERABAD

The economics of the Sangh parivar and of Prime Minister Narendra Modi are not based on dogmas or ideology; the RSS is actually like a rainbow coalition of all kinds of economic views. Modi takes his decisions based more on politics than economics, per se, argues Vinay Sitapati in this concluding part of this interview.

● **Everybody today tries to guess the deep rooted economic policy impulse, inclination and instinct of Narendra Modi. Some argue he is pro-free markets or pro-corporates. The farmer bill agitation currently hinges on it. You explore the evolution of RSS, the Jan Sangh and now BJP for hundred years. Is RSS, and consequently Modi, socialist or pro-free market?**

As I trace in my book, the RSS is a loose umbrella coalition when it comes to economics. They do not have a fixed ideological view on it. Throughout its history Hindu nationalism has articulated so many different views of economics. In Deen Dayal Upadhyaya’s work, *Integral Humanism*, which is very close to RSS thinking, a vast welfare scheme and

uplift of the downtrodden is strongly articulated. You have free market supporters like Balraj Madhok and Dr. Subramanian Swamy as much as centrists like Vajpayee. It also included someone like Nanaji Deshmukh, whose personal life was peerless and who would raise funds from businessmen, including say Nusrat Wadia, grandson of Jinnah.

Even though Prime Minister Vajpayee was one of the greatest economic reformer we ever had, he only continued the economic direction that P.V. Narasimha Rao started.

In essence, the Hindu nationalist ideology was around organising and uniting the Hindu society but had little view on the modern state, or issues that we refer to as ‘governance’. The Sangh looks at economics as a flexible tactical political issue, in which the quest for votes is more significant. So Modi’s assertion that least governed is best governed is his slogan rather than an RSS ideology.

Modi has a certain view of economics, certainly, but it is that state must play a role and it is crucial. A visceral Gandhian socialist view. In contrast to Modi’s economic policies, you can see ideological fervour in Modi’s changing of Article 370 or the Citizenship Bill. These are in the ideological realm, with a long genealogy.

Incidentally, they have no strong ideological view on foreign affairs either. Yes, there are vague assertions like Vasudeva Kutumbikam or a goal of becoming a Vishwa Guru, but they are not substantial. And arguments of Akhand Bharat mean nothing in modern geopolitics.

● **Why does it look today that Modi’s BJP with the backing of the RSS is so hard to defeat in elections?**

They win for many reasons, but a big one is teamwork and unity. This RSS teamwork is a response to the history lesson that Indians are terrible team players. They fight among themselves and split into factions. RSS uses this simple but deep insight to create organisational unity. Only one other man did it before them — Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. The RSS has created in a sense a very un-Indian ideal of unifying Hindus, to habituate them into team work as an ideal. BJP leaders too have lots of internal bickering and differences, but they rarely divorce and split the party.

Vajpayee was able to use this trait to get rid of two of his earliest rivals — Madhok and Subramaniam Swamy — who were very individualistic and unafraid to air their differences in public.

Even Veer Savarkar was an opinionated individual, whereas Hedgewar and Golwalkar were committed to the sangh above all. This is what I call Hindu fevicol, and it is a hard bond to break.

Congress in that sense is typically Indian organisation. They fight it out in the open and sabotage their own larger cause for a pettier goal. Congress is not a uniquely nepotistic party but a typically Indian-minded family party. Every Indian wants to hand over their power to their son or daughter. In that sense there is a Nehru-Gandhi in all of us.

In contrast, when Indians see Narendra Modi, a man without a family to benefit, they are in respectful awe but it is so unlike them. That sense of sacrifice is what puts Modi above others in the minds of common Indians.

● **Talking of Gandhi, we can see a strand of commonality between him and Vajpayee and Modi... idea of Brahmacharya, extending the logic of sacrifice of family and material concerns, at least in perception. Does this favour a Yogi Adityanath to inherit the mantle from Modi?**

It is a very powerful appealing idea, the old Hindu tradition of adopting Brahmacharya. Our psyche puts those who accept the monastic life in

position of reverence. This is the appeal of Yogi Adityanath also. It obscures many legitimate criticisms of his politics. It definitely gives him an upper-hand if he enters the race to become prime minister one day.

● **Many say that despite being from the RSS, Vajpayee was a moderate acceptable to all whereas Modi is a Loh Purush (iron man). Did the incarceration in Emergency play a role in giving the BJP leaders like Advani and Vajpayee a different experiential perspective in the issue of personal liberties?**

Yes, while Modi was underground in Gujarat during Emergency, Vajpayee and Advani (and a plethora of others), developed a strong view about personal liberties because they were the worst victims of state atrocities during Emergency. Had Modi been arrested then, who knows what kind of a different viewpoint he would have had?

But it was also about the coalitions. The participation of Vajpayee-Advani in the Janata Party government and their later leadership of NDA shows they were willing to engage with a range of people — from a socialist like George Fernandes to aristocrat like Jaswant Singh. Modi has been electorally

freed from the need for a coalition.

● **Coming to Vajpayee and Advani, your jugalbandi book, how did their relationship evolve?**

Advani began as a fan to the star Vajpayee. Their personal backgrounds were very different — Vajpayee was a communicator, poet, orator, very Hindi heartland, lower middle class, whereas Advani was from Karachi, highly cosmopolitan, very English, but introverted and serious.

Vajpayee, like Syama Prasad Mukherjee before him, had charisma and magic. He could mean different things to different people. Advani was also under-confident but he had other strengths. He was loyal, disciplined, always willing to make a self-sacrifice. He was for most part underrated. They were great friends too. They are the kind who would go watch Bollywood movies, cry over some scenes and eat pani puri on the roadside.

● **Did Advani stick to Vajpayee through thick and thin because he was too scared by Partition and even the idea of a separation was very heavy on him?**

(Hmm). I wish we had spoken before writing the book. Could be. But to answer another question of yours, Advani, the rich

scion was comfortable with jail life and never complained of difficulties whereas Vajpayee despite being from a poor background found it hard — because of Partition. Advani lost everything, his home, his comfort and material wealth, his beloved Sindh... all in one go. Partition was an event for Vajpayee but a lifelong trauma for Advani.

● **In the end, What’s your appraisal of Vajpayee and Advani? How do they differ from the Modi-Shah duo?**

At heart, Vajpayee and Advani were both romantics, even children at heart. No one would say that about Modi and Shah. Their jugalbandi is very different. They won’t be seen eating pani puri in public or crying while watching Bollywood movies.

The other difference is their understanding of India. Unlike Vajpayee or Advani, Modi and Shah have never served for a single day before taking power in 2014. They have no background of compromising with smaller and regional parties in Parliament. They were also not shaped by Partition or Emergency. They have been shaped by caste and religious politics in the Hindutva crucible of Gujarat. But the two jugalbandis share more than we imagine. All four of them are team players. That’s why the BJP wins.

SHORT TAKES

'21 BERLIN FILM FEST MAY GO VIRTUAL

Los Angeles, Dec. 17: The Berlin International Film Festival might be held virtually for its upcoming 2021 edition.

Sources told *Variety* that the festival organisers are expected to delay the festival due to resurgence in Coronavirus cases in Germany. They will be announcing their plans later this week. As of now, the 71st edition of the film gala is scheduled to run as a physical event from February 11-21, but the organisers are now rethinking their strategy.

The festival is now looking to stage a competition section in a virtual format in early March, with the European Film Market running as a digital event at the same time. The organisers are also thinking of holding a mini-festival with a series of onsite world premieres for early June.

US JOINT CHIEFS CHAIRMAN MEETS TALIBAN

Kabul, Dec. 17: The top US general held unannounced talks with Taliban peace negotiators in the Persian Gulf to urge a reduction in violence across Afghanistan, even as senior American officials in Kabul warned that stepped-up Taliban attacks endanger the militant group's nascent peace negotiations with the Afghan government. Army Gen. Mark A. Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, met for about two hours with Taliban negotiators in Doha, Qatar, on Tuesday and flew Wednesday to Kabul to discuss the peace process with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani.

Milley's meetings came amid a new drawdown of US troops, although under current US policy a complete pullout hinges on the Taliban reducing attacks nationwide. "The most important part of the discussions that I had with both the Taliban and the government of Afghanistan was the need for an immediate reduction in violence," Milley said.

CYCLONE YASA: FIJI IMPOSES EMERGENCY

Suva, Dec. 17: Fiji imposed a nationwide curfew Thursday after urging people near the coast to move to higher ground as the island nation prepared for a major cyclone to hit.

Cyclone Yasa was expected to hit the two main islands of Viti Levu and Vanua Levu later Thursday or early Friday. Authorities imposed an overnight curfew and declared a state of natural disaster. The National Disaster Management Office warned the cyclone could bring waves as high as 16 metres (52 feet) in some places and sustained winds of up to 250 kilometres per hour (155 mph), with gusts hitting 350 kph (217 mph).

In the capital Suva, many residents were experiencing power cuts.

Michael Cheer, who owns the Samabula Cake Shop, was moving cakes into his car so he could take them home and put them into a cooler, rather than driving them across the island to deliver them to another town.

CHINA PROBE BRINGS HOME MOON SAMPLES

Beijing, Dec. 17: China's Chang'e-5 probe successfully touched down on Earth in the early hours of Thursday, bringing home the first samples of the moon in over 40 years. The spacecraft landed in Siziwang Banner in north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region at 1:59 AM (local time), according to the China National Space Administration (CNSA).

Zhang Kejian, head of the CNSA, declared the Chang'e-5 mission a success. It marks a successful conclusion of China's current three-step lunar exploration programme of orbiting and landing, and bringing back samples which began in 2004, state-run *Xinhua* news agency reported.

President Xi Jinping congratulated scientists on the complete success of the Chang'e-5 mission. As China's most complicated space project, President Xi in his message to the CNSA said, the Chang'e-5 mission "is another major achievement in overcoming difficulties by giving full play to the advantages of the new system of pooling national resources and strength, marking a great step forward in China's space industry".

Record cases, deaths in Calif.

Most of state's 40 mn residents under stay-at-home orders

Los Angeles, Dec. 17: California has reported more than 53,000 new Coronavirus cases and 293 deaths, setting new records as hospitals struggled to keep up with the surge.

State health officials said Wednesday a change in data processing added 15,337 previous cases to the count, but the new virus cases remained a daily record. The state has been grappling with soaring cases and hospitalisations. Most of California's 40 million residents are under stay-at-home orders because of dwindling intensive care unit capacity.

Hospitals are filling up so fast that officials are rolling out mobile field facilities and scrambling to hire more doctors and nurses. — AP

2 health staff develop allergic reactions to Pfizer's Covid vaccine

New York, Dec. 17: Two healthcare workers, who received Pfizer's Coronavirus vaccine, developed "concerning reactions", even as the US rolled out the vaccine to frontline healthcare workers and high-risk individuals amid increasing Covid-19 infections across the country. A report in *The New York Times* said the two healthcare workers at Bartlett Regional Hospital in Alaska developed concerning reactions just minutes after receiving Pfizer's Coronavirus vaccine this week.

One staff member was hospitalised for a few days. One of the healthcare workers, a middle-aged woman, had no history of allergies but had an anaphylactic reaction 10 minutes after receiving the vaccine. She experienced a rash over her face and torso, shortness of breath and an elevated heart rate, the *NYT* report said adding that anaphylaxis can be life-threatening, with impaired breathing and drops in blood pressure. The second worker received his shot on Wednesday and developed eye puffiness, lightheadedness and a scratchy throat 10 minutes after the injection, the hospital said. — PTI

RO KHANNA IS DEM VICE CHAIR OF INDIA CAUCUS

Washington, Dec. 17: Indian-American Congressman Ro Khanna, who represents the Silicon Valley in the US House of Representatives, has been named as the Democratic Vice Chair of the Congressional India Caucus. The seat has been created for the first time since its formation in 1994.

Khanna, 44, who was recently elected for a third consecutive term from the congressional district representing Silicon Valley, is being considered as a potential contender to fill the US Senate seat from California that will fall vacant in January after Kamala Harris is sworn in as the country's vice president.

"I believe Ro Khanna would be an outstanding Democratic Vice Chair," Congressman Brad Sherman, Democratic Co-Chair of the Caucus, said in an email. — PTI

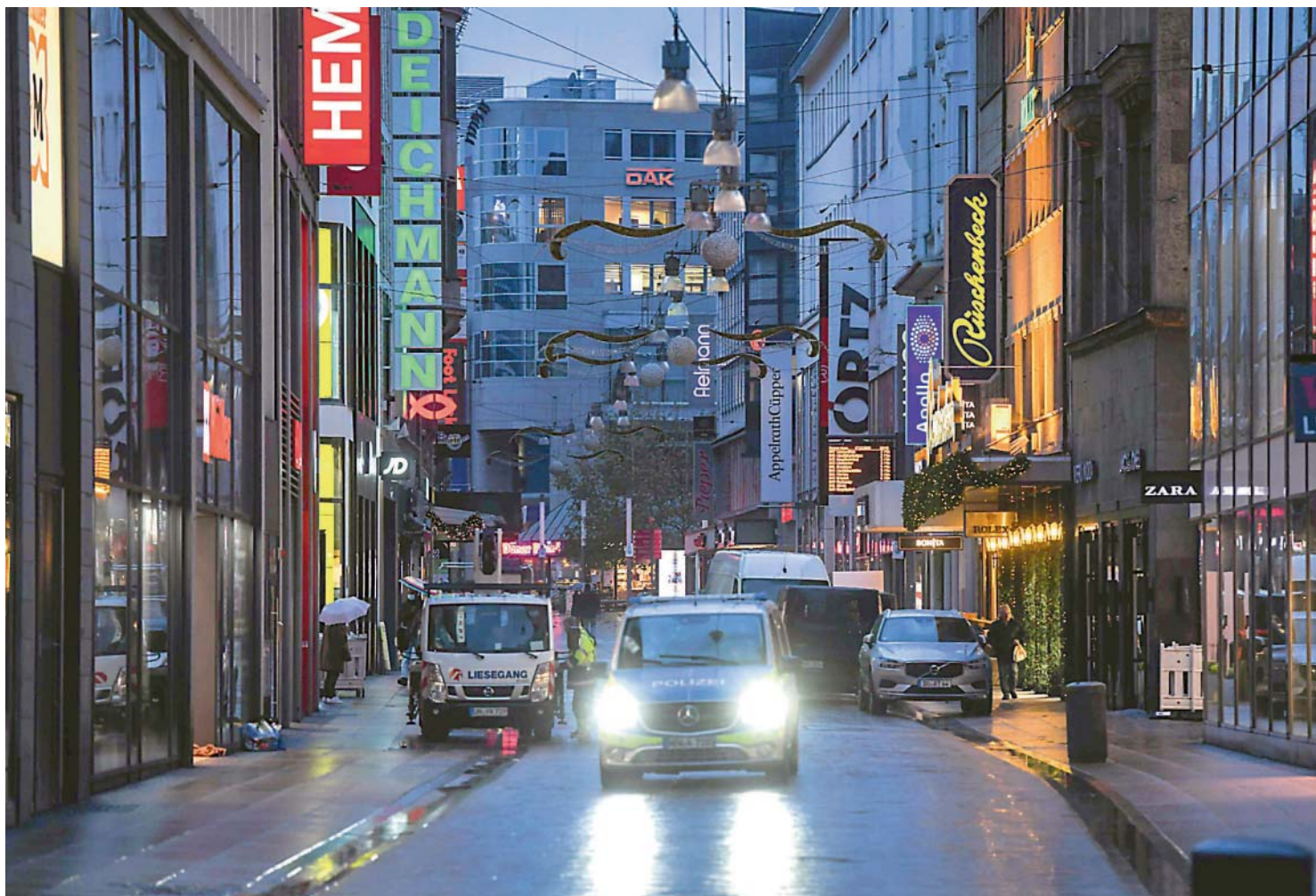
UN | PRIZE

Vidyut Mohan helps farmers earn extra by converting waste farm residues into value-added chemicals

Indian among 'Young Champions of the Earth' winners

United Nations, Dec. 17: A 29-year-old Indian entrepreneur is among the seven winners of the prestigious "Young Champions of the Earth" 2020 prize given by the UN environment agency to global change-makers using innovative ideas and ambitious action to help solve some of the world's most pressing environmental challenges.

Vidyut Mohan, an engineer, is the co-founder of "Takachar", a social enterprise enabling farmers to prevent open burning of their waste farm residues and earn extra income by converting them into value-added chemicals like activated carbon on-site, UN Environment Programme (UNEP) said in a statement on Tuesday.



A police car drives at the empty pedestrian zone at early morning in Dortmund, western Germany, on Thursday, at a partial lockdown to curb the spread of the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic. — AFP

Macron latest to test +ve for Covid

Paris, Dec. 17: French President Emmanuel Macron is the latest world leader to test positive for Covid-19, joining a growing list of others just as inoculation drives against the illness are beginning in a number of countries.

Macron, 42, has repeatedly said he is sticking to strict sanitary protocols during the pandemic, including not shaking hands, wearing a mask and keeping distance from other people. The Elysee Palace announced on Thursday that Macron would be isolating for seven days.

President Donald Trump announced in October that

he and his wife, first lady Melania Trump, tested positive for the Coronavirus. At 74, the US president was the oldest head of state to become infected with the virus to date, and his age put him at higher risk of serious complications from Covid-19.

British PM Boris Johnson was the first major world leader confirmed to have Covid-19, after facing criticism for downplaying the pandemic. Prince Charles, the heir to the British throne, also tested positive in March and showed mild symptoms.

Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro announced his

illness in July and used it to publicly extol hydroxy-chloroquine, the unproven malaria drug that he'd been promoting as a treatment for Covid-19 and was taking himself.

Honduras president Juan Orlando Hernandez announced in June that he had tested positive, along with two other people who worked closely with him. Hernandez said he had started what he called the "MAIZ treatment," an experimental and unproven combination of microdactyn, azithromycin, ivermectin and zinc. He was briefly hospitalised and released.

The president of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko, who dismissed concerns about the virus as "psychosis" and recommended drinking vodka to stay healthy, said in July he had contracted it himself but was asymptomatic.

Others who were infected include Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin, Prince Albert II of Monaco, Guatemalan president Alejandro Giammetti, Bolivian interim president Jeannine Anez, president of the Dominican Republic Luis Abinader. — AP

Despite US sanctions, Turkey not to step back on Russian S-400s

GREECE TO PAY \$2.8 BN FOR FRENCH RAFALE JETS AMID TURKEY TENSION

Athens, Dec. 17: Greece's government said on Thursday that it will pay 2.32 billion euros (\$2.8 billion) for the purchase of French-made Rafale fighter jets and an upgrade of compatible missiles, under a major military overhaul amid tensions with neighbouring Turkey.

Delivery of the 18 jets will begin in mid-2021 and be completed over two years, government spokesman Stelios Petsas said.

Greece has earmarked 11.5 billion euros (\$14.1 billion) to modernise its armed forces over five years amid deteriorating relations with NATO ally Turkey over offshore energy rights in the eastern Mediterranean.

The Rafale jets will include 12 aircraft currently in service with the French military and six new planes to be built by Dassault Aviation. — AP

als may have in US jurisdiction and bar their entry into the US. They also include a ban on most export licences, loans and credits to the agency.

It is the first time that CAATSA has been used to

penalise a US ally. "If we were to step back we would have done so before now," Cavusoglu said in response to a question on whether Turkey would cancel the S-400 deal with Russia. Cavusoglu added:

"Now we are assessing the impact of these sanctions in great detail...and will take steps accordingly."

The minister also described the sanctions as "wrong both legally and politically," arguing that Turkey's purchase of the Russian system in 2017 predated the CAATSA law. Cavusoglu said that an improvement of relations between Turkey and the United States would be conditional on President-elect Joe Biden's ability to address Ankara's grievances.

Ties between the two have been plagued by numerous disputes, including the jailing of American citizens and local consular staff. US support for Syrian Kurdish fighters considered to be terrorists by Turkey and the continued US residence of a Muslim cleric accused of masterminding the 2016 coup attempt in Turkey. — AP

VACCINATION IN ASIA-PACIFIC BY MID/LATE '21: WHO

Jakarta, Dec. 17: The World Health Organisation said Thursday that countries in the Asia-Pacific region are not guaranteed to have early access to Covid-19 shots and urged them to adopt a long-term approach to the pandemic. "The development of safe and effective vaccines is one thing. Producing them in adequate quantities and reaching everyone who needs them is another," WHO Regional Director Dr. Takeshi Kasai told reporters in the Indonesian capital, Jakarta. — AP

Navalny poisoning: No role, says Putin

Moscow, Dec. 17: Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday rejected allegations that the Kremlin was behind the poisoning of his top political foe, opposition leader Alexei Navalny, and accused US intelligence agencies of fomenting the claims. Speaking via video call during an annual marathon news conference, the Russian leader countered the accusations by saying that if the Kremlin wanted to poison Navalny it would have pressed the attack home.

"If there was such a desire, it would have been done," Putin said with a chuckle. Navalny fell sick on Aug 20 during a domestic flight in Russia, and was flown while he was in a coma to Germany for treatment two days later. Labs in Germany, France and Sweden, and tests by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical

CHARLIE HEBDO HIT: 30 YRS' JAIL FOR I.S. WIDOW

Paris, Dec. 17: The fugitive widow of an Islamic State gunman and a man described as his logistician on Wednesday were convicted of terrorism charges and sentenced to 30 years in prison in the trial of 14 people linked to the January 2015 attacks in Paris against the satirical Charlie Hebdo newspaper and a kosher supermarket.

The verdict ends the three-month trial linked to the three days of killings across Paris claimed jointly by the Islamic State group and al-Qaida. During the proceedings, France was struck by new attacks, a wave of Coronavirus infections among the defendants, and devastating testimony bearing witness to bloodshed that continues to shake France.

All three attackers died in police raids. The widow, Hayat Boumeddienne, fled to Syria and is believed to still be alive. The two men who helped her out of France were tried in absentia, may be dead, though one received a sentence of life in prison. — AP

'88 LOCKERBIE BOMBING: NEW CHARGES BY U.S.

Washington, Dec. 17: The Justice Department plans to unseal new charges in the coming days in connection with the 1988 bombing of a Pan Am jet that exploded over Lockerbie, Scotland, killing 270 people, according to a person familiar with the case.

The bombing of Flight 103, whose victims included dozens of American college students, spurred global probe and produced sanctions against Libya, which surrendered two intelligence officials for prosecution before a Scottish court sitting in the Netherlands. The New York-bound flight exploded over Lockerbie less than an hour after takeoff from London on Dec. 21, 1988. — AP

Weapons, established that he was exposed to a Soviet-era Novichok nerve agent. Russian authorities have vehemently rejected the accusations of involvement in the poisoning.

On Monday, the investigative group Bellingcat and Russian outlet The Insider released a report alleging that operatives from the FSB, Russia's domestic security agency, which is a top KGB successor, followed Navalny during his trips since 2017, had "specialised training in chemical weapons, chemistry and medicine" and "were in the vicinity of the opposition activist in the days and hours of the time-range during which he was poisoned." The investigation, conducted by Bellingcat and The Insider in cooperation with CNN and Der Spiegel, identified the supposed FSB operatives. — AP

tonnes of crops, UNEP said. Mark Radka, chief of the energy and climate branch at UNEP's Economy Division, said the open burning of agricultural residues is a big source of air pollution in many parts of the world and "Takachar's innovative technology can help farmers turn what is currently thought of as waste into a valuable resource while helping clean up our environment."

"Slowly and gradually all funding streams available and support services are turning towards sustainability. Companies are going to lose if they don't become sustainable in the long run," Mohan, a 2019 Echoing Green Fellow and a 2020 Forbes 30 Under 30 awardee, said.

The other awardees are 29-year-old Nzambi Matee from Kenya, a materials engineer and head of Genge Makers, which produces sustainable low-cost construction materials made of recycled plastic waste and sand; 29-year-old Xiaoyuan Ren from China who leads MyH2O, a data platform that tests and records the quality of groundwater across a thousand villages in rural China into an app so residents know where to find clean water; Lefteris Arapakis, 26, from Greece founded the start-up Enaleia, through which the team trains, empowers and incentivises the local fishing community to collect plastic from the sea, allowing both fish stocks and the

ecosystem to recover; 30-year-old Max Hidalgo Quinto from Peru founded Yawa, building portable wind turbines that harvest up to 300 litres of water per day from atmospheric humidity and mist. Niria Alicia Garcia, 28, from the US coordinates the annual Run 4 Salmon event using virtual reality to bring to life the historical journey of the Sacramento chinook salmon along California's largest watershed, raising awareness of this invaluable ecosystem, the species and people it supports; 24-year-old Fatemah Alzelzela from Kuwait started Eco Star, a non-profit recycling initiative that exchanges trees and plants for waste from homes, schools and businesses. — PTI

● **UN SECRETARY-GENERAL Antonio Guterres said in a message that in the middle of a global pandemic, "we need to act boldly and urgently to repair our relationship with nature and take the path of sustainable development".**

profound opportunity," Andersen said.

Takachar buys rice husks, straw and coconut shells from farmers and turns them into charcoal, saving the debris from the fires, which are also a driver of climate change. Since Takachar was launched in 2018, Mohan and its co-founder Kevin Kung have worked with about 4,500 farmers and processed 3,000

"We must listen. As we enter this decisive decade where we work to cut emissions and protect and restore ecosystems, UNEP Young Champions demonstrate that all of us can contribute, starting where we are with what we have. Every single act for nature counts, and we need the entire spectrum of humanity to share this global responsibility and this

"I've always been passionate about energy access and creating income opportunities for poor communities," Mohan was quoted as saying in the statement. "(That) is at the heart of finding answers to the difficult question of balancing economic growth and climate change mitigation in developing countries," he said.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in a message that in the middle of a global pandemic, with societies struggling, economies stretched to their limits and an escalating biodiversity and climate crisis, "we need to act boldly and urgently to repair our relationship with nature and take the path of sustainable development".

DECCAN Chronicle

18 DECEMBER 2020

Covid not a good reason to scrap Winter Session

While the Opposition parties have cried foul, and complained of not being consulted by the government on the decision to not hold the Winter Session of Parliament this year, the Constitution is clear that they cannot demand discussion or consultation as a matter of right. That right belongs to the government alone, and the President summons Parliament to meet when advised to do so by the government. The Narendra Modi government is absolutely in the clear on this score.

There is only one constraint under which the government labours, constitutionally speaking. It must ask the President to summon Parliament at least once every six months. While recently announcing that there would no Winter Session in 2020, the government has hinted that the Budget Session would be commenced in January. There is nothing out of the ordinary about that.

The minister for parliamentary affairs, Pralhad Joshi, has claimed that he has consulted leaders of the leading Opposition parties on the scuttling of the Winter Session, and there was general agreement that the session be given the

go-by in view of the Covid pandemic. Apparently, MPs were chary of travelling to Delhi. Jairam Ramesh of the Congress claims no consultation was held with his party. None of this matters, however, since the decision rests with the government alone.

Nevertheless, giving Covid as the reason for skipping the traditionally three-week long Winter Session is hardly a persuasive argument. The government and the BJP had seemed eager to hold the Bihar election when it was due recently,

rather than respect the sentiment of the Opposition parties to defer it by a few months. The election to the Hyderabad Municipal Corporation was also held recently. Covid-related considerations did not come in the way. The pandemic is raging in America but the US stuck to the schedule for its recently concluded election for President. The US Congress and the British Parliament have met as scheduled. The British Parliament did not skip meetings even during the Second World War. In November 1962, our Parliament was in session when the Chinese invaded in NEFA.

It is the widest impression today that the government has run away from the Winter Session because questions will be raised about the three-week old farmers' protest on Delhi's borders. Moreover, the Modi government has set a precedent in this regard. Future governments may also act similarly — skip a session whenever expedient. And this is hardly good for our democracy where important questions crop up all the time, often unexpectedly. A bloody-minded government may hold a session of Parliament only when it wishes to pass laws, not otherwise. This is the best way to avoid noisiness in Parliament and be an "orderly" country.

Even if the pandemic was seemed a matter of serious concern, the Winter Session could have been held online. This was done in Britain recently. MPs who could not be physically present attended on-line. India is technologically capable and this could have been organised if the government had the mind to make it happen.

While the Winter Session stands scuttled, the government can still attest to its bonafides by holding a brief session of two or three days to go over proposals for "reform" of the farm sector with which all may be invited to engage. Whatever the outcome, it is not unlikely that the farmers' protest may be defused through such a denouement.

Post-pandemic bonding

The choice of Boris Johnson to be the chief guest at India's Republic Day celebrations is interesting, not the least because he will be the first British Prime Minister to be bestowed the honour since John Major in 1993. Much water has flowed down the Ganga and the Thames since the time India was just emerging as a fledgling player in the free markets after pathbreaking economic reforms. It might appear the UK needs its old friends as trading partners much more now as it seeks to exit the EU as soon as possible, deal no deal. The time to strike a trade deal with the UK in the form of a FTA is ripe enough.

The world has changed post-pandemic and the shared experiences of grief and economic woes should form a sombre backdrop to what should be more sober festivities in the coming R-Day. Johnson is not the dominant figure he was projected to be when he had just staged a notable coup in the Tory Party and emerged as the champion in British eyes who would steer the island on an independent course. Just as the shadow of Covid-19 on Christmas celebrations as the UK struggles to tamp down a second coronavirus surge, the Indian Prime Minister is challenged by striking farmers who expect a "fair deal" at home.

It would be presumptuous to believe mighty geopolitics is guiding the choice of guest at this time back to Britannia and the land of colonial masters. But, in a new world order shaped by the blows of the pandemic, of which BoJo has experience since he was personally pushed to the very brink, it would be realistic to examine ways of promoting ties, particularly as India might have much to contribute in IT and ITeS. Britain as well as India's ardour for Chinese goods and 5G technology has also dampened considerably and so even this crisis-ridden time smells of opportunity to get ties right.

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KAUSHIK MITTER
Editor

K. SUBHAKAR
Printer & Publisher

DECCAN CHRONICLE offices are located at:

Hyderabad: 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad - 500 003, Ph: 040-27803930-4; Fax : 040-27805256
Vijayawada: No.C-3 & 4 Patamata, Industrial Estate, Auto Nagar, Vijayawada (A.P.), Ph: 0866-2555284/2555287; Telefax: 0866-2555234

Visakhapatnam: Survey No.1/3A Beach Road, Near Kailasagiri Ropeway, Sector-9 MVP Colony, Visakhapatnam - 530 017 (A.P), Ph: 0891-2552333/2552334; Fax: 0891-2755285

Rajahmundry: Vemagiri, Dhawaleswaram Rd, Rajahmundry, Ph: 0883-2417618/2417208; Telefax: 0883-2417208

Anantapur: Thapovan colony, Bangalore By-Pass Road, Anantapur - 515004, Ph: 08554-276903; Fax: 08554-276904

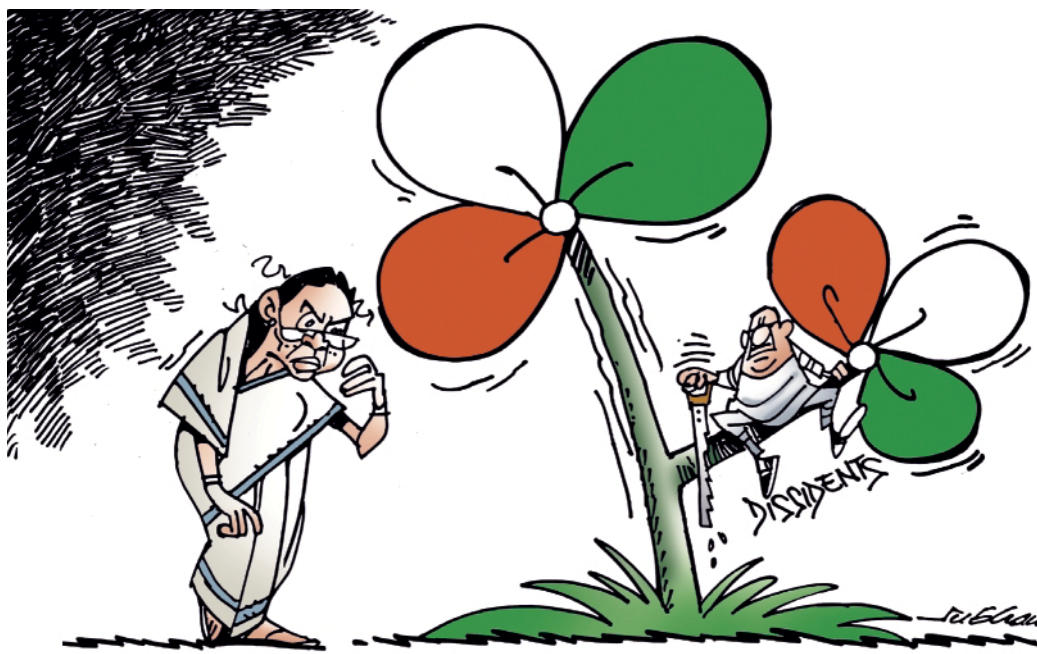
Karimnagar: Survey No.1341, Vavilapally Colony, Jagityala Road, Karimnagar - 505 001, Ph: 0878-2228908; Telefax: 0878-2220433

Nellore: Survey No.527/2, Burranpur Village, Venkatachalam (M), Chennudugunta Panchayat, Nellore, Ph: 0861-2348581/82; Telefax: 0861-2348580

Chennai: SP-3 Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, Ph: 044-22254747/ 48/50/51; Adv Fax: 22254765/22254766/42305325

Coimbatore: 77, Vivekananda Road, Ramnagar, Coimbatore - 641 009, Ph: 0422 2231255
Gram: CHRONICLE Postal registration no: No. H/SD-348/2006-08

Subhani



How rise in inequality distorts Indian society



Mohan Guruswamy

The nature of the institutions determines outcomes, not the means of production or processes

In 2013 the French economist Thomas Piketty released *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, a magnum opus on income inequality. It was an event book very much like Stephen Hawking's *A Brief History of Time*. Hawking's book sold as many as 10 million copies, by comparison Piketty's tome had 2.4 million buyers so far. Such event books are more often than not read by only a fraction of the buyers. Speaking for myself, I still have somewhere a slightly read copy of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, still considered by the cognoscenti as the foremost work of modern literature. It is said that an analysis of Kindle readers of the Piketty book revealed that a typical reader got through 26 of its 700 pages. But have no fear, those first 26 pages have all you need to know. They encapsulate the rationale and results of Piketty's monumental work.

I once asked a well-known economist who had reviewed Piketty's *Capital* about what the main proposition of the book was. He encapsulated it quite brilliantly. He just said that Piketty had set out to prove that R was greater than G, where R is the return on capital and G is the growth of the economy. There is much empirical evidence to back this up. In the eight years between 2006 and 2014, the US benchmark index S&P 500 gained 45 per cent, an average simple growth rate of 5.6 per cent, four times higher than the average GDP growth rate of around 1.5 per cent. The consequence of this, of course, is the explosion in income inequality, which is the hallmark of the post-World War II era, and particularly after the

advent of globalisation. Oxfam has informed us that in the past two decades 73 per cent of the growth has been cornered by just one per cent of the population. Oxfam has a known tendency to exaggerate a bit to prove its point, but this proposition, that few people benefited the most during this period of huge economic expansion, is undisputable.

Paul Krugman wrote: "What excited them was Piketty's novel hypothesis about the growing importance of disparities in wealth, especially inherited wealth, as opposed to earnings. We are, Piketty suggested, returning to the kind of dynastic, 'patrimonial' capitalism that prevailed in the late 19th century." We only need to look around us to see that most of the wealthy today are inheritors, and without doubt many of them are building on those inheritances to further accentuate the income inequality. What is really troubling about this growing concentration of wealth is the concentration of political power in the hands of very few who are able to influence politics and policies.

According to Marx an individual's position within a class hierarchy is determined by their role in the production process and argues that political and ideological consciousness is determined by class position. He saw a class as those who share common economic interests and are conscious of those interests. Classes, according to Marx, were inherently antagonistic and in a state of constant struggle.

In his new book *Capital and Ideology*, Thomas Piketty argues, with far greater validity, that inequality is driven by human institutions, which in turn reflect the

dominant ideology. Piketty defines his thesis very succinctly thus: "Inequality is neither economic nor technological: it is ideological and political. In other words, the market and competition, capital and debt, skilled and unskilled workers, natives and aliens, tax havens and competitiveness — none of these things exist as such. All are social and historical constructs, which depend entirely on the legal, fiscal, educational, and political systems that people choose to adopt and the conceptual definitions they choose to work with. These choices are shaped by society's conception of social justice and economic fairness and by the relative political and ideological power of contending groups and discourses."

Does this mean Marx was wrong? The times in which Marx and Piketty lived are very different. Marx saw the distortions and inequity in society and wondered why? He came up with explanations. His prescriptions were limited by the knowledge and evidence available to him then. The world has moved on and moved very far since then. When Karl Marx began writing his first three volumes of *Das Kapital* (1867-1883), it was the early days of electricity. Marx couldn't contemplate the massive leaps of productivity made possible in the 1900s, when the world witnessed a monumental expansion of knowledge and, with it, capital. Piketty's study relates to how both capital and knowledge came to be inequitably allocated because of the institutional arrangements within societies. To understand how institutional arrangements determine outcomes, just

think of India's educational system. We now have two or possibly three parallel educational streams. The two urban upper classes largely benefit from a higher standard and quality of education imparted in English in schools with high quality teaching and facilities. This is the stream that produces India's managerial classes (both government and industrial). The working class stream flows out of our government schools, with its emphasis on vernacular education and indifferent standards. There is a third stream of rural education from which escape even into the next higher class becomes even more difficult, if not impossible. The flow into the upper reaches of Indian society from these three streams is vastly unequal. What Piketty is saying is just this. The nature of the institutions determines outcomes, not the means of production or processes.

Capital and Ideology is rich in references to India and draws inferences about the institution of castes (*varnas*) and the rising role of brahmins, after the advent of Muslim rule, leading to the diminution of the role of Kshatriyas. The role of the brahmins expanded to an even more dominant status under the British. Piketty lauds the determined "affirmative action" policies after Independence that vastly increased the upward mobility of the lower castes, like most of us do. He also notes that the benefits could not be fully realised due to the low standards of education and its unevenness in towns and the hinterland and between regions. So, what's new? Most Indians with even an elementary understanding of post-independence India know this. The question is — what is to be done now?

The writer, a policy analyst studying economic and security issues, held senior positions in government and industry. He also specialises in the Chinese economy.

LETTERS

FARMERS' PANEL

The Supreme Court's decision to set up a committee is the best solution (SC for setting up panel to resolve farmers' stir, DC, Dec. 17). Farmers must believe in the apex court instead of dragging on with the strike against the three agriculture laws. The Centre and the farmers must agree so that a solution is arrived at.

Vikram Raj Vivan K.N.
Hyderabad

COVID-19 VACCINE

Though companies manufacturing Covid-19 vaccines are claiming their products to be more effective percentage-wise, none of them is giving 100 per cent assurance. People are in two minds whether to go in vaccination as doubts linger in their minds on the efficacy.

Dr G.V. Kumar
Hyderabad

MAKE IT ZERO YEAR

The year 2020 was full of Covid-19 fear, lockdowns and floods and can be called the worst year in human history. Universities and colleges for their own interests started sub-standard online classes with collecting fees with reduced syllabus. No practicals were conducted. Both the parents and students are losers, students more. As a parent I urge the UGC, Central and state governments to declare 2020 as a zero academic year.

T. Kailash Ditya
Hyderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

VENUS-7 TRANSMITTER SILENT

MOSCOW, DEC. 17. According to latest reports the Venus-7 transmitter shut off after 35 minutes and there was no indication that it still could function.

The Soviet news agency Tass said Venus-7 sent data that was being processed and studied but gave no indications of any findings.

The Venus-7 entered the planet's atmosphere at 8.02 am Moscow time and on command from ground controllers, the descent craft was separated.

After a skip entry into the thick atmosphere, the descent module had slowed to a speed of 820 feet a second. Ground crews then popped open its parachute system.

Mahir Ali



On 250th birth anniversary, Beethoven still holds his own

IF music be the food of love, play on; Give me excess of it..." The opening lines of Shakespeare's Twelfth Night might have entered the thoughts of the uniquely privileged Viennese audience that witnessed Ludwig van Beethoven premiering his Fifth and Sixth Symphonies in the Austrian capital on Dec 22, 1808.

For good measure, the artistic showcase also featured the first performances of his Piano Concerto No 4 and Choral Fantasy. A 20th-century equivalent would have entailed The Beatles, say, unveiling 'Sgt Pepper' and 'Abbey Road' simultaneously in a live performance. Incidentally, the latter album's Because is based on reversing the chords of the Moonlight Sonata. It wasn't the only time turned up in the pop pantheon.

By 1808, Beethoven was already viewed as the most fascinating composer of his age. He was born in Bonn, probably precisely 250 years ago today. He first visited Vienna as a teenage prodigy, and may have been tutored by Mozart. He was obliged to return to Bonn

to attend to his dying mother, but went back to Vienna at Haydn's invitation five years later and remained there for the rest of his life.

I cannot claim to be an aficionado of Western classical music — the temporal investment it requires has always been a hard slog. Yet there are compositions that insinuate themselves into the subconscious, from Mozart's Eine Kleine Nachtmusik to Strauss's Blue Danube, Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake, Ravel's Bolero and Chopin's etudes.

I would make a particular exception, though, for Beethoven. It dates back, perhaps, to a presentation on the weekly Disney show featured on PTV in the early 1970s, where a dramatised biography of Beethoven showed the opening chords of the Fifth Symphony being inspired by a debtor banging on the door of the composer's rented accommodation. Those dramatic notes are more often described as the knocking of Fate.

The show was possibly more accurate in its depiction of a deaf Beethoven being swung around by

a soloist after inaugurating his Ninth Symphony to witness the rapturous response. The Ninth came almost a decade after the Eighth, which had been unveiled before an audience of international leaders at the Congress of Vienna in 1814.

That particular segment, now the official anthem of the European Union, has stood the test of time in more ways than one. Beethoven's death centenary in 1927 was widely commemorated across Europe, from Britain to the Soviet Union. As a German, though, he was also appropriated by the Nazi regime, which continued to honour him despite determining that he was 'mixed race'. Based on Beethoven's looks, the suspicion of African ancestry has persisted, albeit without any firm foundation.

His politics have also served as the basis of much conjecture. Beethoven famously rescinded the dedication of his Third Symphony, Eroica, to Napoleon after the latter emerged as a potential tyrant. And there is a tale, possibly apocryphal, about how he, while out for a walk

in a park with Goethe, encountered a royal party and strolled right through it, even as Goethe stepped aside to bow and scrape.

For all his antipathy towards authority, Beethoven relied for much of his life on the sponsorship of European nobles, and many of his compositions were dedicated to princes, counts and barons. But he regularly fell out with patrons, and occasionally detested royals. Yet his Symphony No 8 was unveiled before the crowned heads of Europe at the Congress of Vienna in 1814.

He never compromised his art, though, confessing at the turn of the century that his devotion to music had prevented him from suicide. His personal life was a shambles, littered with unrequited love or romances doomed by the social rules of the era. Yet, despite a handful of detractors, few who heard his compositions could fail to be moved by them.

And the legend only grew after his demise in 1827, just three years after he had inaugurated his magnificent Symphony No 9, whose glorious final movement, a setting for Schiller's Ode to Joy, has been

appropriated for political purposes throughout the past two centuries, and serves today as the European Union's official hymn.

Not surprisingly, the German Nazi regime picked Beethoven as an avatar (despite concluding that he was mixed race). However, a century earlier Friedrich Engels had waxed eloquent about the Fifth Symphony, and some six decades later Vladimir Lenin declared he could listen to the Appassionata sonata every day. "What astonishing, superhuman music," he is quoted by Maxim Gorky as saying. "It always makes me proud ... to think that people can work such miracles."

But perhaps the pianist and conductor Daniel Barenboim summed up Beethoven best a few years ago by pointing out that "he freed music from hitherto prevailing conventions of harmony and structure", and that much of his work could be paraphrased "by saying that suffering is inevitable, but the courage to fight it renders life worth living".

By arrangement with Dawn

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	46,890.34	0.48
Nifty 50	13,740.70	0.42
S&P 500*	3,717.43	0.44
Dollar (₹)	73.58	0.01
Pound Sterling (₹)	99.96	0.50
Euro (₹)	89.98	-0.15
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	49,455,194	0.39
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	51.38	0.30
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.952	0.008
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.895	-0.025

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Economy seems bottoming out: Credit Suisse

After years of downgrades to the country's medium-term growth outlook, the estimates are likely to be upgraded now, Credit Suisse said in a report. The country's economy is showing signs of bottoming out, it said. The consensus forecasts of GDP growth for FY22 over FY20 stopped falling after October 2020 (currently at (-) 1 per cent). Analysts at Credit Suisse expect these estimates to be revised upwards.

Puravankara to get ₹556 crore from IFC, EAF



IFC, a member of the World Bank group, and IFC Emerging Asia Fund (EAF) will invest Rs 556 crore in an affordable housing platform of Puravankara Ltd to develop up to four projects. IFC and IFC EAF have partnered with the Puravankara Group to invest in the development of up to four residential projects under the Puravankara group's affordable housing brand 'Provident'. Two of these four projects are planned in Kochi and Bengaluru.

Redmi 9 Power smartphone sales from next week

Redmi India unveiled Redmi 9 Power which will be sold online from Dec. 22. Redmi said the new smartphone comes with a 6,000 mAh battery that last for two days after a single charge. Redmi business head Sneha Tainwala said the year has been phenomenal for Redmi India, and the company is further pushing boundaries with Redmi 9 Power. Redmi 9 Power's two variants are priced at Rs 10,999 and Rs 11,999.

Blockchain-led solar power trading in UP

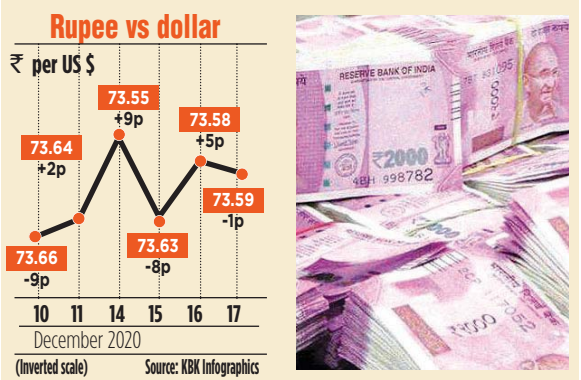
US-based tech services firm Abjayon Inc has partnered with India Smart Grid Forum (ISGF) to support the integration of blockchain platform with UP Power Corporation's (UPPCL) billing system. UP has launched India's first blockchain-enabled peer-to-peer trading of rooftop solar power on a pilot basis in Lucknow. UPPCL, Madhyanchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam and UP New & Renewable Energy Dev. Agency will host the project.



■ Fallout of US placing India on watchlist
RBI may go slow on forex interventions

FALAKNAAZ SYED
MUMBAI, DEC. 17

The US adding India to the watchlist for currency manipulation could keep the Reserve Bank of India guarded on aggressive forex intervention and may help the rupee gain, according to experts. The United States Treasury report once again included India in its monitoring list of countries with potentially "questionable foreign exchange policies" and "currency manipulation" after the RBI relentlessly bought dollars to forcibly keep the rupee weak to boost exports. Abheek Barua, chief economist at HDFC Bank told *Financial Chronicle*, "The RBI will have to consider the ramifications of continuing with their action (of massive dollar buying), what possible penalties or the cost of ignoring the US altogether be? It's a difficult call but I believe that the RBI will have to take their foot off the intervention pedal a little going forward given this new development." "This is rupee positive and bond yields should go down theoretically, but sentiment is a critical factor in the very short term and let's see how that is perceived. There will be pressure on the RBI to stop buying dollars at the rate they have been both in the spot and in the forward market...So we will just have to see. I don't think it will have a major



impact but certainly it will have some near-term impact from tomorrow onwards," added Barua. Ashutosh Khajuria, executive director at Federal Bank told *FC*, "In case the RBI takes the development seriously then it will reduce or stop the intervention and so the rupee may have a tendency to appreciate against the dollar unless the foreign flows reduce or stop." The rupee is headed for the third yearly decline against the US dollar. So far this year, the rupee has depreciated 3 per cent to 73.52 a dollar, the worst performance among Asian currencies. The underperformance was on the back of the central bank's dollar buying and weaker domestic economic activities following the Covid outbreak. India's forex reserves have increased by \$117.4 billion to a record high of \$ 574.82 billion from April till date against the previous year's \$457.47 billion. Part of this increase can be attributed to dollar weakness against other currencies such as sterling, euro, yuan and yen. In the first nine months of 2020, the RBI bought a whopping \$57 billion just in the spot market. Its purchases through forward contracts are around \$12.6 billion. The US Treasury Department's report said that the Indian central bank's interventions added up to 2.4 per cent of the country's GDP, breaching one of the thresholds that the US monitors. India was last included in the currency watchlist in October 2018, but removed from the May 2009 list. A currency manipulator tag is given by the US to countries that deliberately keep their currency low against the dollar to gain export advantage. The treasury report, published twice a year, warns of any unfair currency practices. The US has included India, Taiwan and Thailand to its monitoring list.

IFC invests \$30 million in Biological E

New Delhi, Dec. 17: International Finance Corporation, a member of the World Bank Group, on Thursday said it is providing a loan of up to \$30 million (around Rs 220 crore) to Biological E Limited. The loan will support the pharmaceutical firm's expansion of low-priced, generic vaccines for routine immunisation of children and to boost capacity for manufacturing any future Covid-19 vaccine, it added. An investment in one of India's top vaccine manu-

facturers, BioE, will expand access to low-cost vaccines for children in developing countries and help increase the production of a Covid-19 vaccine when developed, a key step in saving lives and restarting economies, IFC said in a statement. The IFC financing package aims to support the production of new vaccines and boost the company's capacity for manufacturing any future Covid-19 vaccine, the statement said. IFC interim managing director and executive

HFCL begins production of FTTH cables

Hyderabad, Dec. 17: HFCL on Thursday said it has begun the commercial production of fibre-to-the-home (FTTH) cables from its new facility in Hyderabad, involving a fresh outlay of Rs 40 crore. So far the company has invested Rs 300 crore in the Hyderabad facility as part of its expansion road map. HFCL said it has become the largest manufacturer of FTTH cables in India.

With this new facility, HFCL along with its subsidiary company HTL Limited has become the largest manufacturer of FTTH cables in India with a capacity of 6 lakh kms per annum. The company had earlier invested Rs 260 crore in the Hyderabad plant, for manufacturing optical fibre, that was commissioned in January 2020. "This new...automated high-speed FTTH cable

UK's largest Rolex retailer lifts forecast as demand improves

CORINNE GRETLER
DEC. 17
Watches of Switzerland Group Plc raised its revenue forecast after a stronger-than-expected first half, providing a glimmer of hope for the battered Swiss watch industry. The company, which is the UK's largest watch retailer, forecast full-year sales of 900 million pounds (\$1.2 billion) to 925 million pounds. Demand was better than anticipated in the six months ended October as well into the start of the Christmas holiday period. The stock rose as much as 10 per cent Thursday morning in London. The upbeat outlook reflects some improvements for the Swiss watch industry as it suffers from store closures and a virtu-

al standstill in travel. Swiss watch exports slipped 3.2 per cent last month, continuing a gradual moderation of declines caused by the coronavirus pandemic that's led to a slump of 24 per cent so far this year. "There is more demand," Watches of Switzerland chief executive officer Brian Duffy said in an interview. "That gives us the luxury of being able to conduct our business a fair bit better than others." The company's previous sales forecast was for 880 million pounds to 910 million pounds. The number of people working in Switzerland for the watch industry dropped by about 1,550 in the year through September, an industry group said Wednesday. — Bloomberg

Mrs Bectors Food IPO subscribed 198 times

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, DEC. 17

After the grand listing success of initial public offerings by Burger King India and Gland Pharma in the recent past, Rs 540-crore public issue of biscuits and bread maker Mrs Bectors Food Specialities has also received overwhelming response, getting subscribed over 198 times on the last day of the public offer. In fact, the public issue got oversubscribed on the very first day after opening for subscription on Tuesday. As per details made available by stock exchanges and sources working closely with the merchant bankers, total subscription as per the last update was 198.02 times shares on offer. The qualified institutional buyers portion has been subscribed 176.85 times, non-institutional investors or high net worth investor portion was subscribed 621 times and the retail individual investors portion was subscribed more than 29 times. Earlier on Monday, the company raised Rs 162 crore from the anchor investors. The price band for Mrs Bector Food Specialities public offer has been fixed at Rs 286-288 per share of Rs 10 face value.

Soaring LNG prices worsen gas crunch in Asian nations

JESSICA JAGANATHAN
SINGAPORE, DEC. 17

Surging spot prices for liquefied natural gas (LNG) are exacerbating a gas supply crunch in key fast-growing emerging markets in Asia just as a cold spell in other parts of the region boosts demand for the fuel. Companies from Pakistan to China have cancelled a flurry of LNG tenders this week, several trade sources said, as lofty prices risk pushing up the input costs of industries, which could make energy more expensive for consumers. Benchmark Asia spot LNG prices have soared seven-fold since May to six-year highs, driven by production losses in Australia, Malaysia, Norway and Qatar combined with accelerating use in China, India and elsewhere. "Buyers with no alternatives are now paying top-dollar for prompt cargoes in January," said Chong Zhi Xin, a director at consultancy IHS Markit. The state buyer for Pakistan—one of the

In rare move, Japan sells gold to fill budget hole

TETSUSHI KAJIMOTO
TOKYO, DEC. 17

Japan has sold 80 tonnes of gold used for minting coins to another arm of the government to fund part of its huge stimulus package to combat the coronavirus crisis, government officials told Reuters. Saddled with public debt twice the size of its economy and tax revenues hit by the pandemic-induced recession, the finance ministry is under pressure to find non-tax revenues to cover the rising cost of spending to deal with the health crisis. The ministry usually taps reserves set aside as special accounts, and profits the Bank of Japan (BOJ) and other agencies return to state coffers after they close their annual books. This time, the ministry resorted to a rare



arrangement involving the central bank. Under the move, the ministry's division in charge of international affairs sold a portion of dollar reserves to the BOJ. With the yen it received, the division bought gold from another division of the ministry in charge of debt management. From the gold sale, the division in charge of debt management gained proceeds worth 500 billion yen (\$4.84 billion) that would be used to finance a

new fund aimed at boosting research and development at universities, two officials told Reuters on condition of anonymity. The BOJ announced on Wednesday it would buy dollars from the ministry as a precaution against any market disruptions caused by the pandemic. But some analysts say the arrangement may have been initiated by the finance ministry, which wanted to avoid issuing too much debt or using taxpayers' money for the fund. "From the standpoint of fiscal consolidation, this deal may be described as effective use of state property," said Yoshimasa Maruyama, chief market economist at SMBC Nikko Securities. "It sounds reasonable for the BOJ to top up dollar funds. But it was probably the government, not the BOJ, that pulled the trigger," — Reuters

Smartphone market up 42% in Oct.

New Delhi, Dec. 17: India's smartphone market grew 42 per cent, with shipments of 21 million units in October—the second highest for a month—driven by multiple online sale events, research firm IDC said on Thursday. IDC said it expects the smartphone market to see a single-digit decline in final consumer sell out in 2020 on a full-year basis. According to IDC, the growth in October was driven by multiple online

sale festivals and continuing pent up demand from the third quarter of 2020.. "This is the highest ever October shipments and second highest for a month, following 23 million units in September 2020, an all-time high for a single month," it added. Online platforms accounted for 51 per cent share of the shipment, and the channel grew 53 per cent year-over-year (YoY). Offline channels, especially in smaller

towns and cities, also saw a healthy 33 per cent YoY, IDC said. The low-mid range segment (\$100-200) grew by 60 per cent YoY and its share increased to 58 per cent of the total market in the said month, it added. The premium segment (\$500-700) witnessed multi-fold growth with high shipments of the iPhone XR, 11 and OnePlus 8 driven by affordability schemes/offers. — PTI

Antony Waste's ₹300-crore IPO from Monday

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, DEC. 17

Antony Waste Handling Cell's Rs 300-crore IPO opens on December 21 in the price range of Rs 313 to Rs 315 per equity share of Rs 5 face value. Antony Waste Handling is the second largest player in the Rs 5,000-crore municipal solid waste management industry, with a 19-year track record. The company has undertaken more than 25 projects, of which 18 were ongoing as at November 15, including projects for the municipal corporations of Greater Mumbai, Navi Mumbai, Thane, Pimpri Chinchwad, Nagpur, North Delhi and Mangaluru, besides Noida and Greater Noida Industrial Development Authority. The company had a fleet of 1,147 vehicles and close to 7,400 full time employees to handle municipal solid waste management. The public issue comprises a fresh issue of Rs 85 crore and an offer for sale worth Rs 215 crore by financial investors.

VIRUS | FATIGUE

Ticket sales in Japan have reached pre-Covid levels in last 3 months

Imax doubles down on China as theatres buzz again

SHIRLEY ZHAO
DEC. 17

Imax Corp sees the potential to add at least 400 theatres in China by 2023, as the cinema chain operator looks to expand its footprint in a country that's emerged as the largest movie market this year. The Ontario, Canada-based firm known for massive screens in its movie halls, has signed a deal with its Chinese partner Guangzhou Jinyi Media Corp for five new locations and upgrades at seven existing ones, it said in an email. Imax, which has about 700 theatres in China, sees the possibility of expanding its network by 50 per cent over the next three years, it added.

The theatre chain is stepping up its commitment in China as the Asian country rebounds strongly from the coronavirus pandemic-induced slowdown while the outbreaks continue to ravage the US and Europe. While both US and China contributed about a third of Imax's global box office in 2019, the latter has surpassed the US as the world's top film market this year, underscoring its importance for movie hall operators. "One big vote of confidence in the Chinese market is that a number of our Chinese leading exhibitors are adding more theatres to their Imax footprint," Imax chief executive officer Rich Gelfond



said in an interview. The company has also "been on a trajectory to release more local language Chinese films," he said. China's box-office gross revenues touched 16.4 billion yuan (\$2.5 billion) this year, compared with about \$2 billion ticket sales in the US, according to data from ticketing platform Maoyan Entertainment

and market tracker Box Office Mojo. "Imax's exposure to China's quick box office rebound gives it a leg-up against regular theatres that have a greater presence in North America and Europe, where the recovery has been tepid," Bloomberg Intelligence analysts Geetha Ranganathan and Amine Bensaid wrote in a Nov. 17 note. Box office revenues in China are now at 75 per cent of the levels seen last year, owing to local-language blockbusters such as "The Eight Hundred," — also the world's top-grossing movie this year — Gelfond said. The pandemic has also accelerated the company's commitment to releasing more Chinese-

language films, he said. While China has become an increasingly important movie market, it has also become a tricky one as it witnesses a heightened sense of nationalism. As people get fatigued with social distancing and vaccine initiatives become more widespread, Imax expects movie watchers to return in hordes. And not just in China. Ticket sales in Japan in the past three months have reached the same level in the year before while South Korea too has seen a strong comeback, according to Gelfond. "When people feel safe going to the movies, they are coming back in very large numbers," he said. — Bloomberg

SHORT TAKES

Australian Open moved to February

Melbourne: The Australian Open was pushed back to February 8 on Thursday after weeks of negotiations as coronavirus disruption hits a second Grand Slam tennis season. Men's qualifiers will be held in Doha but Australia will host a series of build-up events including the flagship ATP Cup, the men's ATP Tour said, announcing its early 2021 schedule. The three-week delay to the season's opening Grand Slam comes after this year's Wimbledon was cancelled — for the first time since World War II — the French Open was postponed and the US Open was played behind closed doors.

Fans are expected to be allowed at Melbourne Park, the tournament's venue, as the coronavirus is under control in Australia, but players will need to undergo 14 days of quarantine. — *AFP*

Silva, Chhetri propel Bengaluru

Goa: Bengaluru FC piled on further misery on Odisha FC with a 2-1 win in the Indian Super League at GMC Stadium, Bambolim, on Thursday. Cleiton Silva (79') scored the match-winner for Bengaluru after Steven Taylor (71') had cancelled out Sunil Chhetri (38') first-half lead for the Blues, who remained unbeaten in their six matches this season. Bengaluru were dominant from the start but were lucky not to fall behind early in the game. Diego Mauricio played a delightful through ball for Manuel Onwu, who managed to get the ball past Gurpreet, but his celebrations were curtailed, as the assistant referee signaled it offside. Odisha had their moments in the game with Onwu and Jerry Mawihmingthanga creating problems for the Bengaluru defense but failed to test their keeper.

Cavani charged by FA over racist post

London: Edinson Cavani has been charged with misconduct by the Football Association for a now-deleted social media post containing a Spanish phrase that is offensive in some contexts and for which the Manchester United star apologised.

The 33-year-old Uruguayan striker's Instagram post thanked a friend for his congratulations after scoring twice as United came from 2-0 down to beat Southampton 3-2 last month and included the Spanish word "negrito" (small black person). He later deleted the post and apologised when it was pointed out the meaning that could be attached to it. Both United and the player said at the time that the word was clearly used in an affectionate manner and has different connotations in South America. — *AFP*

Lakers edge Suns in pre-season bow

Los Angeles: LeBron James and Anthony Davis eased into the NBA's pre-season on Wednesday as the Los Angeles Lakers scored a 112-107 victory over the Phoenix Suns. James, who barely two months ago led the Lakers to their NBA Finals triumph in Orlando, bagged 11 points with two rebounds and two assists during 15 first half minutes in Phoenix. Davis added 10 points with four rebounds in 18 minutes on court. Both James and Davis were rested for the second half. New Lakers signing Marc Gasol added three points in a 21-minute appearance. Kyle Kuzma led the scoring for the Lakers with 23 points. The coronavirus-interrupted 2019-2020 campaign — which shut down for four months between March and July — eventually wrapped up in Florida in October. With the new season tipping off on December 22, it means teams will have the shortest off-season in NBA history. — *AFP*

Live on TV

CRICKET

Australia vs India: First Test — Day Two from 9.30 am on Sony Ten 1, 3, Sony Six, HD

Big Bash League: Sydney Sixers vs Adelaide Strikers from 5.40 am (Saturday) on Sony Ten 1, HD

FOOTBALL

Indian Super League: North East United vs Jamshedpur from 7.20 pm on Star Sports 2, 3

WWE

Smackdown: Bouts from 6.30 am (Saturday) on Son Ten 1, HD



Australia's Mitchell Starc (third from right) celebrates with teammates after bowling out India's Prithvi Shaw on the opening day of their first Test at the Adelaide Oval in Adelaide on Thursday.

— AP

AUSTRALIA GET A GRIP

India end Day One at for 233/6

SCORECARD

India 1st Innings: Prithvi Shaw b Starc 0, Mayank Agarwal b Cummins 17, Cheteshwar Pujara c Labuschagne b Lyon 43, Virat Kohli run out 74, Ajinkya Rahane lbw Starc 42, Hanuma Vihari lbw Hazlewood 16, Wriddhiman Saha (not out) 9, Ravichandran Ashwin (not out) 15. Extras (b-2, lb-7 nb-7, wd-1). **Total (For 6 wks, in 89 overs) 233.**
FoW: 1-0, 2-3, 3-100, 4-188, 5-196, 6-206.
Bowling: Mitchell Starc 19-4-49-2, Josh Hazlewood 20-6-47-1, Pat Cummins 19-7-42-1, Cameron Green 9-2-15-0, Nathan Lyon 21-2-68-1, Marnus Labuschagne 1-0-3-0.

NUMBERS GAME

KOHLI'S SECOND RUN OUT IN TESTS

● On the opening day of the first Test against Australia at Adelaide, India skipper Virat Kohli was run out for the second time in 146 innings of 87 Test match. He was dismissed run out for the first time against the same opponent at the same ground in January 2012.

● It was also Kohli's maiden run out in 91 innings of 56 Test matches as skipper.

● Kohli became the eighth Indian batsman to make 12 or more fifty plus scores against Australia in Tests. His 74 was his 12th fifty plus innings in 35 innings of 20 Test matches against Australia.

— S. PERVEZ QAISER

88-run partnership with Rahane (42 off 91 balls) during the final session nearly put India on even keel but fortunes tilted once Kohli was back in

the pavilion.

Rahane was soon snapped with the second new ball by Mitchell Starc (2/49).

Earlier, Pujara's ultra-defensive approach became his own undoing as India literally crawled during the first two sessions.

So intent was Pujara on blocking anything and leaving everything for the better part of his innings, that a 68-run stand for the third wicket with Kohli couldn't release pressure going into the second break of the evening.

In the morning, Prithvi Shaw's (0) poor technique was once again exposed by Starc while Mayank Agarwal (17) got a beauty from Pat Cummins.

The Australian pace troika of Starc (2/49 in 19 overs), Josh Hazlewood (1/47 in 20 overs) and Pat Cummins (1/42 in 19 overs) bowled a very steady line comprising mostly of fuller deliveries.

— PTI

WRESTLING | WORLD CUP

Grappler Anshu bags silver as biggies flop

Belgrade, Dec. 17: Young Anshu Malik was the lone Indian woman wrestler to win a medal at the individual World Cup, grabbing a silver in the 57kg category, here.

Anshu, who is coming up from the junior ranks, clinched her third medal at the senior level from as many tournaments. She lost the gold medal bout 1-5 to Moldova's Anastasia Nichita on Wednesday night.

She had won a bronze at the Asian Championship early this year in New Delhi and a silver at Mattio Pellicone event in Rome in January.

She is gradually making the 57kg category her own despite presence of World championship medallist Pooja Dhand and experienced Sarita Mor in the same weight class.

Anshu began with a 4-2 win over Azerbaijan's Alyona Kolesnik and followed it up with 3-1 victory over Germany's Laura Mertens in the quarterfinals.

In the semi-final, she outplayed Russia's Veronika Chumikova, recording a

PANGHAL MAKES FINAL OF BOXING WORLD CUP

New Delhi, Dec. 17: Amit Panghal (52kg) stormed into the final after three other Indian boxers were assured of medals at the World Cup in Cologne, Germany on Thursday even as a positive Covid-19 case among the support staff caused some anxiety in the contingent.

Asian Games champion Panghal defeated Frenchman Billal Bennama, a bronze-

medallist from the world championship 5-0 in the semi-final clash.

Earlier, three Indian women were also assured of medals after finding themselves in semifinals when draws were unveiled.

Pooja Rani (75kg), Manisha (57kg) and Simranjeet Kaur (60kg) made the last four due to the small size of their respective draws.

— PTI

victory by fall.

Another Indian grappler Pinki also did well to reach the 55kg semi-finals, where she lost to Belarusian Iryna Kurachkina.

She later lost the bout for bronze to Russia's Olga Khoroshavtseva by technical superiority.

Sarita (59kg), Sonam Malik (62kg) and Sakshi Malik (65kg) could not go beyond quarterfinals in

their respective categories.

Veteran Gursharanpreet got a repechage round in the 72kg but lost that by technical superiority to Evgeniia Zakharchenko.

Nirmala Devi (50kg) and Kiran (76kg) fizzed in the Qualification round, losing 6-9 to Poland's Anna Lukasiak and Canada's Erica Elizabeth Wiebe respectively.

— PTI

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In this Feb. 23, 2014 file photo the Russian national flag (right) flies after it is hoisted next to the Olympic flag during the closing ceremony of the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia.

— AP

No Russia flag at next two Games

Geneva, Dec. 17: Russia was banned on Thursday from using its name, flag and anthem at the next two Olympics or at any world championships for the next two years.

The Court of Arbitration for Sport's ruling also blocked Russia from bidding to host major sporting events for two years.

Russian athletes and teams will still be allowed to compete at next year's Tokyo Olympics and the 2022 Winter Games in Beijing, as well as world championships including the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, if they are not implicated in doping or covering up positive tests.

The punishments are

less than the four-year ban the World Anti-Doping Agency had proposed. One small win for Russia is the proposed team name at major events. The name "Russia" can be retained on uniforms if the words "Neutral Athlete" or "Neutral Team" have equal prominence, the court said.

Still, the court's three judges imposed the most severe penalties on Russia since allegations of state-backed doping and cover-ups emerged after the 2014 Sochi Olympics.

The CAS process was formally between Wada and the Rusada.

Rusada was also ordered to pay \$1.27 million to Wada. — *AP*

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