



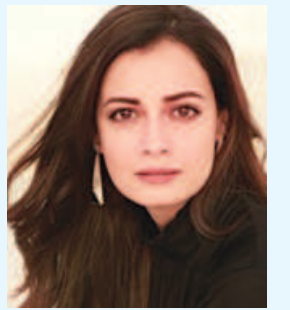


# Womenia

TWEET PATROL


**DIA MIRZA**  
**@DEESPEAK**

Over 20L Indian children call a street their home. Many lack access to identity, healthcare, education & protection. This #StreetChildrenDay, let's support @stc\_india make #TheInvisibles visible, by demanding #AccessForStreetChildren. Show your support at <https://t.co/F2wu0oKo04>



## UGADINEW BEGINNINGS AND TRADITIONS

# Festivals are unseen thread that keeps us rooted in life, so are women

Ugadi symbolises new beginnings, but this time around, it has its challenges and unfortunately, the pandemic has in a way restricted us from experiencing Ugadi to its fullest

VASAVI GOTETI

Ugadi is one of the important festivals celebrated in India, especially in Telangana, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Maharashtra. The festival is known by different names in different states. The Kannadigas and Telugus call it "Ugadi", the Marathis call it "GudiPadwa".

This festival symbolises new beginnings. Ugadi is traditionally referred to as Yugadi – yug meaning ear and Adi meaning beginning. The festival comes in springtime when new leaves make their appearance, branches are filled with flowers, the sun is bright, and the cuckoo song announces the advent of a new day. The spring season's arrival brings freshness, new beginnings, and glad tidings as nature get into celebratory mode.

Traditionally speaking, all the festivals in India are celebrated with a spirit of togetherness and unity. Ugadi symbolises new beginnings, but this time around, it has its chal-



lenges and unfortunately, the pandemic has in a way restricted us from experiencing Ugadi to its fullest.

Symbolically the festival is marked with new beginnings, so why not celebrate it with new traditions.

As "Art of Living" founder Sri Sri Ravi Shankar mentions, "The role of women in society's development is of utmost importance. Infact, it is the only thing that determines whether a society is strong and harmonious or otherwise. Women are the backbone of society."

With the lockdown in place, the definition of celebrations has

changed. It feels like a distant memory when we could have met our family and friends on special occasions. Like the word, Ugadi means starting afresh celebrating festivals have also turned a new leaf, and women's role has become even more critical.

### Building a stronger bond

She not only beautifies the house with mango leaves and marigolds. She brings the whole family together to pitch in the festivities and decorate the home.

### The waking up early ritual

Women wake up early to prepare for the day's lavish lunch and ensure that the family members also get a good healthy start for the day. Especially when summers around the corner, an early morning start keeps us motivated and active.

### Ugadi-pachaddi or Bevu Bella

It is a mixture of neem flowers or buds, jaggery, green

chillies, salt, tamarind juice and un-ripened mango. Having this on an auspicious just before we break for summer has multiple health benefits. It also symbolises that life is a mixed bag, and we prepare for all those experiences.

The neem flowers prevent skin allergies and kill germs and bacteria. Jaggery precludes the possibility of anaemia; chilli powder improves both our immune system and our eyesight; the tamarind helps with digestion; salt helps keep our body hydrated, and the un-ripened green mango improves our blood circulation.

### It is a day to adore vibrant colours and beautiful traditional clothes

The women in the family adorn themselves with silk sarees, and men wear silk dhotis. Ugadi works not only as a special occasion but also allows women to express themselves through clothing. (an excellent way of self-expression)

The delicious food prepared on Ugadi has all the love and affection plus the added benefits of boosting our immune system. The women in our house make sure that we are well-taken care of their courage, selflessness and dedication are humbling. There are no words to thank them adequately. But we can definitely share the load in preparing for the festivities and take time to appreciate them for all the hard work put in. Festivals are the unseen thread that keeps us rooted in life so are the women. We must protect them and cherish them.

## Pets eased children's loneliness in lockdown: Study

SIDDHI JAIN

Family pets help children better manage feelings of stress and loneliness, which have been greatly exacerbated by virtual schooling as a result of the pandemic, shows a new survey.

According to UNICEF, at least 1 in 7 children or 332 million globally has lived under nationwide stay-at-home policies for at least nine months since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, putting their mental health and well-being at risk.

The Mars Petcare survey of parents reveals that more than eight in 10 parents found that their family pet

**Nine in 10 parents reveal their pet has positively impacted their child's home-schooling experience**

helped their child feel less lonely during lockdown, with more than three-quarters feeling that day-to-day interactions with their cat or dog reduced their child's stress and anxiety. Parents agreed their pet supported their child during the unprecedented break from in-person schooling by improving their mood, providing companionship and giving much-needed emotional support.

For many families navigating the stress and challenges of home-schooling, pets have offered

children crucial support.

The survey also found that pets positively impacted a child's experience of virtual learning and academic performance across all ages – with nine in 10 parents seeing improvements in their child's emotional, social and core skill development including having more energy and improved concentration, providing a fun topic of conversation to engage with their classmates and teacher, and giving them a much-needed break away from the screen.

"There are proven benefits to having pets in the classroom when it comes to improving children's confidence, focus and reducing their stress, but this survey shows that pets also played an important part in helping children emotionally as they come to terms with this unprecedented time away from their peers," says Mary Margaret Callahan of the leading therapy animal organisation Pet Partners.

This increased bond between children and their pets has many benefits for the pet too. Three-fourth believed their pet is also calmer now that they spend more time with their child.



### FASHIONISTA

## Beauty of handlooms

Fashion designer Niharika Reddy announced her new venture, 'Shree Vaidiki Silks' Hub for Indian handlooms at Road no 71, film Nagar, Hyderabad.

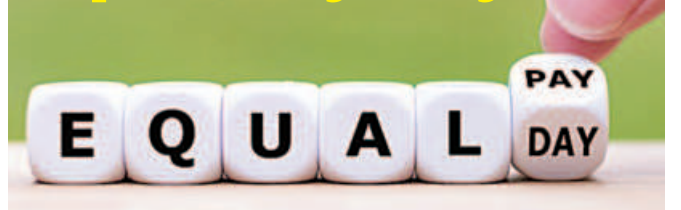
The venture was inaugurated by women safety wing CID, B.Sumathi, graced by Dr Devi Shree Gurus, Music director, Actor Raghu Kunche, Film artist Josh Ravi, film critic Mahesh Kathi saw the fashion fraternity graced the occasion. They turned up for the do in their stylish best and bonded with one another.

Designer Niharika said that her designs are loved by many people for its innovative designs since the last seven years, which designed costumes for many movie stars and celebrities. Now we are coming up

with handloom costumes with contemporary designs.

She further adds, "When the pandemic happened, many weavers were out of work and it almost destroyed their living. We are bringing forward all the handlooms of the two Telugu states with the intention of giving them a helping hand with the ultimate motto of gather long all the popular handlooms of our country under one tree. We would with support of everyone want to benefit weavers by getting handloom garments into our daily life. There is this need to introduce the beauty of handlooms to the next generation and we would with support of everyone want to benefit weavers by getting handloom garments into our daily life."

## Equal Pay Day



We know it's the 21st century, isn't it time that we finally set this 'women aren't paid equally' nonsense behind us and just give equal pay for equal work? That's what Equal Pay Day is all about.

Throughout the last century, there has been an ongoing and active fight to solve a problem that has existed far longer than that. Women have, for time out of mind, been paid lower wages for doing the exact same job.

Equal Pay Day encourages you to get out there and fight for true employment equality for everyone! Isn't it time women were paid what they were worth?

In 1996 the National Committee on Pay Equity decided that there must be a day dedicated to bringing awareness of the ongoing issue with the gender wage gap. The gap is actually caused by a number of factors, but they are factors that are directly related to the issues and choices created by society for women. One of the most prevalent factors in deciding who gets a job when two applicants are equally matched in all other aspects is gender, with men getting preferential treatment for positions when this comes up.

This is particularly true where the job in question is considered high pressure or high risk. All of this comes together to result in women earning just 79% as much as men in the same position.

If this were merely an American problem, it would still be

worth addressing. More concerning, however, is the fact that this issue exists in many of what are considered first world countries, including otherwise progressive Germany.

One interesting fact about Equal Pay Day is that it's date changes not just year to year, but country to country. Equal Pay Day is set on the day in the year when a woman would have finally caught up with her male contemporaries wages from the previous year. As this varies each year, and in each country, they don't always line up.

### How to celebrate Equal Pay Day

Equal Pay Day is best celebrated by helping to raise awareness of the ongoing struggle women have with getting equal pay for equal work. Poll your contemporaries at work and find out what their wages are, and if they are getting paid equally for the same job you do.

If you find any imbalances that are clearly gender-related, take it to your union rep or your employer and ask how this wage difference was determined and see about getting it remedied. Don't do this alone if there are others sharing your issue! Make it a company-wide (or at least location-wide) activity to help overcome this injustice! Equal Pay Day is your opportunity to have your wage grievances heard! Now get out there and fight sister!



# ‘Jal Sahelis’ to try electoral luck in UP Panchayat polls

ABHISHEK SHUKLA  
NEW DELHI

TILL 2017, women in a village of Jhansi district in Uttar Pradesh had to walk for miles to bring water as their pleas for the restoration of the main water source for the village, a pond built by the Chandel kings, fell on deaf ears. Geeta Devi, a resident of Manpur village in Jhansi's Babina block, decided to change the status quo in 2016, when she joined the movement of the "Jal Sahelis", which mean female friends of water, run by the Parmarth Samaj Sevi Sansthan, where she came to know about the works that can be done at

the panchayat level, rights of women and techniques to revive water bodies.

One of the first volunteers to join the water brigade, she started forming "Pani Panchayat committees" with the help of the organisation, where women chalked out strategies to put pressure on the village mandarins for reviving ponds and bringing piped water supply for drinking purposes.

After a number of petitions, endless rounds of offices of civic bodies, protests and "shram daan" (manual labour), the Chandela pond was finally revived, ending the



miseries of the women and enabling the cultivation of two crops a year, which was unimaginable for decades. A water tank was also

erected and at least 70 houses in Geeta's locality got piped water supply, Shivani Singh, state coordinator of the Parmarth Samaj

Sevi Sansthan, told PTI over the phone.

The panchayat polls on April 15 in the parched Jhansi district in the Bundelkhand region will see the maiden attempt of 11 "Jal Sahelis" including Geeta, who have been fighting for water conservation, of taking a plunge into an electoral battle normally dominated by cash, caste and liquor in order to bring the discourse back to the issue of water.

There are seven rivers in the Bundelkhand region, which spreads across Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, including prominent ones such as the Yamuna, the Ken and the

Betwa, with one of the largest concentration of dams in the region, yet the area has seen 13 drought years in the last 17 years, Sanjay Singh, secretary, Parmarth Samaj Sevi Sansthan, said.

The problem is in the topography of the area, which has extremely fertile land, but the river bed is made of granite, which does not allow any recharging of water, leaving very little ground water for use. Thus, the only solution is to conserve water in ponds, he said. The story of Meera Devi from Simrawari village of Babina block is no different.

## SWAMY'S PLEA IN HERALD CASE

# HC GRANTS TIME TO SONIA, RAHUL TO FILE REPLIES

NEW DELHI

THE Delhi High Court Monday granted time to Congress chief Sonia Gandhi, her son Rahul and others accused in the National Herald case, to file replies on a plea by BJP MP Subramanian Swamy seeking to lead evidence before the trial court.

Justice Suresh Kumar Kait listed the matter for further hearing on May 18. Senior advocate R S Cheema and Taranum Cheema, representing the Congress leaders, told the court that they could not file replies as their office was closed due to Covid-19 and sought more time.

The high court had on February 22 issued notices and sought responses of Gandhis, AICC general secretary Oscar Fernandes, Suman Dubey, Sam Pitroda and Young Indian (YI) on Swamy's plea and had stayed the trial court proceedings in the case till then.

Swamy has moved the high court against a trial court order of February 11 declining his plea to lead evidence to prosecute the Gandhis and the other accused in the case. The trial



court had said that Swamy's application under section 244 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) to lead evidence would be considered after his examination in the case was over.

Swamy has sought summoning of certain witnesses, including the secretary general (registry officer) of the Supreme Court, a deputy land and development officer, and a deputy commissioner of Income Tax, and also directions to them to

prove certain documents which are part of the case. In a private criminal complaint in the trial court, the BJP leader had accused the Gandhis and others of conspiring to cheat and misappropriate funds by paying only Rs 50 lakh, through which Young Indian Pvt Ltd (YI) obtained the right to recover Rs 90.25 crore that Associate Journals Ltd, owner of National Herald, owed to the Congress. All the seven accused - the

Gandhis, AICC treasurer Motilal Vora, AICC general secretary Oscar Fernandes, Suman Dubey, Sam Pitroda and YI - had denied the allegations. Proceedings against Vora abated subsequent to his death, while the others were summoned by the trial court in 2014 for the alleged offences of misappropriation of property, criminal breach of trust and cheating, read with criminal conspiracy of the Indian Penal Code.

## Priyanka's son Raihan Vadra's photo exhibition from April 21

NEW DELHI

SON of Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Robert Vadra, Raihan Rajiv Vadra's solo photo exhibition - "Dark Perception" -- will begin from April 21 at Bikaner House here.

The weeklong exhibition will end on April 28.

The exhibition will begin with all Covid-19 precautions and the numbers will be limited to a maximum of five persons at a time. Online registration has been made mandatory for a visit.

Raihan Vadra tweeted, "Extremely proud to announce my first solo exhibition 'Dark Perception: An exposition of Light, Space & Time'."

He is into photography with a focus on wildlife and is also a football enthusiast, said close family friends.

Raihan accompanied his mother Priyanka Gandhi Vadra to Rai Bareilly during the 2019 General Elections. He was also seen with Rahul Gandhi during their visit to the Tirupati temple in February 2019.

Raihan had been asking on social media sites whether to go

ahead with the exhibition or postpone it in view of the surge in the Covid numbers, but finally decided to go ahead.

The budding photographer is excited about the programme, said close family sources.



The website of Raihan Vadra is filled with photographs of wildlife and other landscapes.

Though Priyanka is busy with political events, her son has so far chosen to pursue his passion for wildlife photography.

## Accused held for rape and murder of 5-year-old

BADAUN

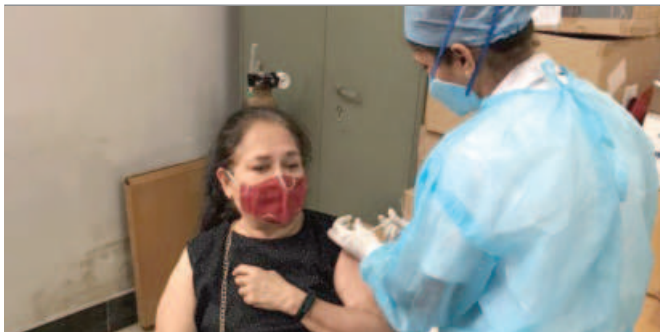
A 28-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly raping and then killing a five-year-old girl in a village here.

Badaun senior superintendent of police (SSP) Sankalp Sharma told reporters, "The accused was heavily drunk when we arrested him. The circumstantial evidence suggests that he has committed the crime. He is, however, not in a position to answer our questions."

The accused has been booked under section 376 (rape) of the Indian Penal Code and appropriate sections of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.

The incident took place on Sunday evening when the girl's parents were harvesting wheat and the girl was playing nearby.

The accused abducted the girl and raped her and then killed her. When the parents started looking for the girl, they found her body in the field. A heavy police force has been deployed in the village to prevent any untoward incident.



## Raj second state to vaccinate 1 cr people

JAIPUR

RAJASTHAN has become the second state in the country to have got more than one crore people vaccinated by Monday afternoon.

State medical and health minister Dr. Raghu Sharma congratulated the medical personnel of the state for getting more than one crore people vaccinated.

He also appealed to the people of the state to get vaccinated in large numbers.

Dr. Sharma said that till Sunday, 99,83,418 people had been vaccinated. On Monday morning, this figure crossed 1 crore.

Vaccination for people above 45 years of age has been started

from April 1. A total of 3380 government and 188 private sites in the state are providing vaccination facility, he informed.

An average of 4.70 lakh persons have been vaccinated every day since last four days. He said that a total of 5.44 lakh were vaccinated on 5th April, 4.84 lakh were vaccinated on 6 April, 5.81 lakh were vaccinated on 7 April, 4.65 lakh were vaccinated on 8 April, 4.21 lakh were vaccinated on 9 April, 2.96 lakh on 10 April and 1.11 lakh were vaccinated on 11 April.

A total of 1,11, 40,860 crore vaccine doses have been received by the Centre till 11 April, he informed.

## Ready to talk, but no change in demand: Tikait

NEW DELHI

FARMERS protesting the contentious new farm laws are ready to talk if the Centre invites them, BKU leader Rakesh Tikait said, maintaining that the dialogue would resume where it had ended on January 22 and the demands remain unchanged.

He said for the talks to resume, the government should invite the Samyukta Kisan Morcha, an umbrella body representing the protestors who are camping at the three border points of Delhi at

Singhu, Tikri and Ghazipur since November 2020.

"The talks with the government would resume from the same point where it had ended on January 22. The demands are also the same -- all three 'black' farm laws should be repealed, a new law made to ensure MSP (minimum support price) for crops," Tikait was quoted as saying in a statement issued by BKU media in-charge Dharmendra Malik.

The BKU national spokesperson's remarks came in response to Haryana Home Minister Anil Vij



urging Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar to resume talks with protesting farmers amid the coronavirus scare looming large. Maintaining that a surge in the coronavirus cases is being seen across the country and the situation is turning bad in Haryana too, Vij said he is worried about the farmers protesting on the state borders with Delhi.

## Police help couple marry in police station

JHANSI

THE police in Jhansi, for a change, helped a young couple get married at the police station and ward off parental pressure.

According to reports, a young couple, Surendra and Nandini, arrived at the Kotwali police station and claimed that they were both adults but their parents were opposing their relationship and had even threatened them. The couple said that they had already got married at a local Arya Samaj temple.

After verifying their documents related to age, the police got garlands

as one of the police personnel recited the 'mantras' and made the couple perform the rituals as solemnized during marriage.

Even as the marriage was being solemnized, the mother of the bride rushed to the police station to stop the marriage but was made to sit aside.

She was later counselled by police not to interfere in the life of the couple as they are adults and have the right to choose their partner. Station Officer Kotwali, Devesh Shukla said: "Since both of them are adults, they have the right to live together. We simply helped the couple."

## NCB unearths drug trafficking ring; over 30L narcotics seized

NEW DELHI

THE Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) on Monday claimed to have busted a psychotropic drugs trafficking network, that used the 'darknet' to ship consignments abroad, with the arrest of 4 people and seizure of over 30 lakh pieces of drugs and cough syrup.

The syndicate used to conceal the psychotropic drugs in herbal supplement packages, the agency said. "The operation, that is ongoing, has led to seizure of 30.5 lakh (pieces) of psychotropic drugs, 70,000 codeine-based cough syrups and 14.895 kg Amphetamine drug," NCB deputy director (operations) K P S Malhotra



said. "Four people have been arrested till now after raids were conducted in various parts of Delhi-NCR, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand by the Delhi zonal unit," Malhotra said. He added that this "module had a modus operandi of getting the orders through darknet (hidden and encrypted Internet) market host and it was delivered through dedicated shippers to create anonymity be-

tween the receiver of the order and logistics persons."

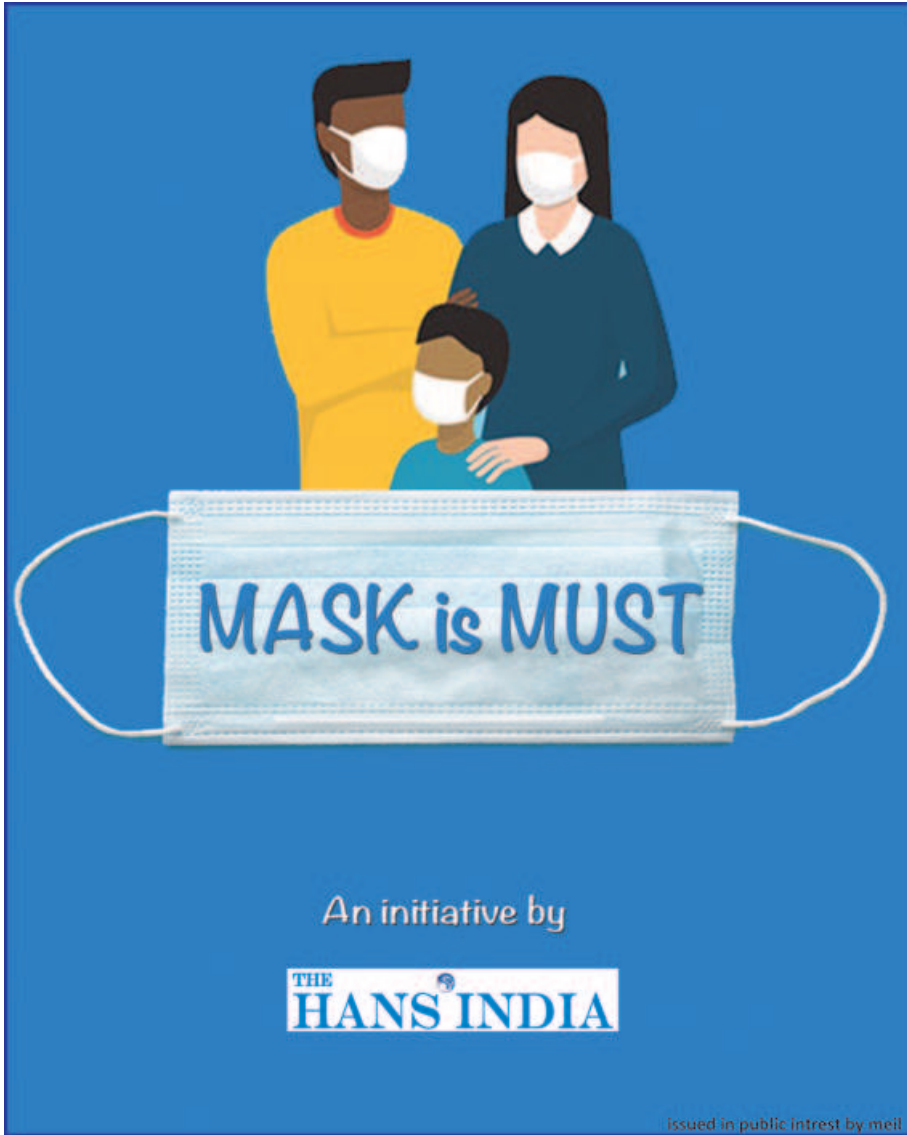
The destination of the consignments were primarily USA, UK, Europe and other countries, Malhotra said. The two arrested Agra-based alleged narcotics suppliers used to source the psychotropic drugs from a Haridwar (Uttarakhand) based pharmaceutical company.

A man from Delhi and a grocery vendor from Balia in Uttar Pradesh have also been arrested under sections of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. Pharmaceutical products like Tramadol can be categorised as psychotropic drugs.

"It is used in the treatment of

moderate to severe pain. The analgesic effect is multi-modal and leads to mood enhancement," a senior anti-narcotics agency officer said. According to the WHO, Tramadol can produce physical dependence, with studies showing that this dependence may occur if it is used daily for some weeks. It is infamously called the 'ISIS pill' as it was taken by the terrorists of this banned global terror network to reduce pain and enhance endurance, he said.

The international trafficking route for Tramadol primarily starts from China and India, with Africa as a transit and subsequently to various parts of the world, the officer said.



Issued in public interest by mail



## Russia’s belligerence threat to Ukraine’s territorial integrity

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy visited Istanbul over the weekend to mark the 10th anniversary of his country’s strategic partnership with Turkey and shore up support from his Black Sea neighbour as tensions escalated with Russia over Ukraine’s simmering war in Donbas. The visit marks the Ukrainian leader’s second trip to Turkey in less than six months. In 2017, the countries created a passport-free travel zone and they are currently working on the implementation of a free-trade agreement, which leaders say will more than double the level of bilateral trade between them, reports suggest. Russia’s annexation of Crimea was a game-changer for Ankara’s relations with Moscow and how it viewed the balance of power in the Black Sea. Ankara’s purchase of the S-400 has become one of the most intractable elements of Turkey’s relationship with the West but placed outside its borders and in the hands of Russia, the missile system is also a serious challenge to Turkey’s security. When Russia seized Crimea in 2014, it immediately began deploying the S-400 there. It also built up its naval forces, stationing submarines

and ships with Kalibr cruise missiles capable of hitting targets 2,400km (1,500 miles) away. In 2016, Erdogan had remarked that the Black Sea was becoming a Russian lake and if action was not taken to stop the development, history would not forgive Turkey. He then went ahead and sought a stronger NATO presence in the region as Russia increased its naval fleet in the region. More recently, Turkey has looked at the Black Sea as a step towards greater energy independence. In October 2020, it announced the discovery of 405 billion cubic metres of gas off its coast, the largest finding in the country’s history. Recep Tayyip Erdogan has called for the “worrying” developments in eastern Ukraine’s Donbas region to come to an end after meeting his Ukrainian counterpart in Istanbul, adding Turkey was ready to provide any necessary support to Ukraine. Speaking at a news conference alongside Zelenskyy, Erdogan said he hoped the conflict would be resolved peacefully, through dialogue based on diplomatic customs, in line with international laws and Ukraine’s territorial integrity. Erdogan did make it a point to emphasise that the talks were not aimed

at any third country or third party. Zelenskyy’s visit to Turkey comes amid renewed tensions in eastern Ukraine, where Ukrainian forces and Russia-backed separatists have been fighting since 2014. In a visit to troops there this week, Zelenskyy said breaches of a July truce were increasing. Separatist authorities have also accused Ukrainian forces of violating the ceasefire. Russia has reinforced its troops along the border and warned Ukraine against trying to retake control of the separatist-controlled territory. The Russian military build-up has raised concerns in the United States and Europe. Turkey is a NATO member. But Erdogan and Putin have forged a close personal relationship, sealing energy and trade deals. They have also negotiated for opposing sides in conflicts, including Syria, Libya and Nagorno-Karabakh. The main factor destabilising the region is Russia with its policy of encouraging the separatists who seek to control the coal mines, metallurgical and chemical plants and banks and farms in Donetsk and Luhansk. As long as this continues, it will be difficult for Ankara to keep quiet.

## Ambedkar, a torchbearer of social transformation

RATTAN LAL KATARIA



MUCH revered Bodhisattva, Bharat Ratna, Baba Saheb Dr Ambedkar, the harbinger of social transformation and revolution imbibed in the ideas of great personalities like Buddha, Kabir, Mahatma Phule was born to divert the currents of the era and tides if time. The multifaceted personality of Baba Saheb is so deep, vast and diversified that, it would not be wrong to assert that, it would take years even for an erudite scholar to understand and fathom its depth. On the Occasion of the 130th birth anniversary of Babasaheb on April 14, 2021, the entire world in its heartfelt offering will seek inspiration from his indomitable spirit.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji inaugurated Dr Ambedkar National Memorial at Dr Ambedkar International Centre, 15 - Janpath, New Delhi and Babasaheb’s Mahaparinirvana Bhoomi 26, Alipur Road, New Delhi, in the year 2017-18. Following the instructions of the Prime Minister, today these centres are acting as vehicles of socio-economic transformation through research in the field of social and economic studies. It will also serve as an expert think tank with a focus on inclusive development and socio-economic matters. In fact, the aim of our government is to bring to light the vision of Babasaheb’s thoughts and philosophy to the new generation through these centres. The present generation is largely unaware of Babasaheb being the most educated person among his contemporaries which was the result and product of his long-term struggle, determination and hard work. The great man had himself experienced all the ills and inhuman evils which penetrated into the social fabric with time, such as untouchability, discrimination, contempt, etc. However, Babasaheb never resorted to violence, but burnt the candle of his life trying to unify society, by giving the disadvantaged class its due reputation in society. He was committed throughout his life to give a strong, self-reliant and dignified life to the downtrodden, exploited and deprived in the society. Babasaheb believed that social equality can be achieved only by creating social harmony. He said in Delhi on 24 November 1947, “We are all Indian mutual brothers - such a feeling is expected.” This is called Bandhu Bhava, which is lacking, resulting in increasing cases of envy and jealousy. Therefore, for the nation to exist, this barrier will have to be removed, only then the nation will exist, and brotherhood will flourish, if brotherhood fails to exist, equality, freedom too will become non-existent.

I believe that, just as our government today is working to re-establish India, as the Vishwa Guru, Babasaheb too made similar efforts of contribution in the process of nation building. He revered Bharat Mata not only in greatest esteem but was always concerned about the reestablishment of her honour. He opposed the prominence of competitive allegiance to religion, culture, caste and language, as he believed it to be a great hinderance in the cultivation of the feeling of Indianness and loyalty towards the nation. Opposing the formation of states on the basis of language, establishment of Hindi as the national language, education and quality of Sanskrit language, opposition to section 370, his views on conversion, idea of utility of religion, importance of labour policy, reform, urbanisation, equal citizens, The Code and the Hindu Code Bill, importance given to the Srimad Bhagavad Gita, sensitivity towards women, national commitment, economic plans, role in water and power policy, etc. are many topics that reflect Babasaheb’s national vision. Regarding the creator of the Constitution, Dr Rajendra Babu says on 26 November 1949 in the Savindhan Sabha, “Dr Ambedkar, the architect of Constitution of the independent India gave the country a new constitution at the cost of his intelligence, talent and merit. Profoundly rich men of such mental calibre, stature and eternal talent seldom appear in the world. On one hand bearing years of unending suffering and humiliation, while filled with compassion love, equality and non-violence on the other hand, Babasaheb gave the perfect example of his dedication for the country adopting Buddhism as an inseparable part of Indian culture. It is my belief that the present generation must learn from Babasaheb’s life lessons that for larger national interest, personal trauma needs to be and should be forgotten. On April 14, entire world will venerate and salute, the true son of Bharat Mata, Babasaheb. Entire India will evoke and remember his immense contribution for India. The world too will recall Babasaheb’s contribution, as the cause of inspiration to the millions of people. But I have a special message for the younger generation, that the patriot, humanist, pious and great saint of virtue Babasaheb’s ideals should not be merely followed on his birth anniversary but should be borne every moment to be assimilated into life.

With this, I convey my greetings of Babasaheb’s birth anniversary to my countrymen.

(The writer is the Union Minister of State, Social Justice & Empowerment and Jal Shakti)

### NOW HIGH COURTS TO WATCH MOVIES AND DECIDE!

## Centre’s ordinance: A big blow to cinema



AFTER imposing executive controls over the Over The Top (OTT) streaming media, the Centre has inflicted yet another blow on cinema medium.

The BJP-led Central government has taken a drastic decision on April 4 to replace the existing appellate authorities under the nine laws and vested those powers in the High Courts through an ordinance, the Tribunal Reforms (Rationalisation and Conditions of Service) Ordinance 2021.

The appellate tribunals under Cinematography Act, 1952, Trademarks Act, 1999, Customs Act 1962, Patents Act 1970, the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999, were scrapped and now all appeals should go to the High Courts.

The Tribunal under the Control of National Highways (Land and Traffic) Act, 2002, was also abolished and appeals are directed to civil court. The appellate board under Copyright Act, 1957 is replaced with Commercial Court or Commercial Division of a High Court. The Airport Appellate Tribunal under the Airports Authority of India Act, 1994 was abolished and the disputes now need to go to Central Government in some areas, while from the orders of eviction officers, the appeals must be taken to High Courts.

All this was done in the name of rationalisation of tribunals that began in 2015. The government has passed the Finance Act, 2017, to abolish seven tribunals or merged based on functional similarity and their total number was reduced to 19 from 26.

Censorship issues will add to cause list of high courts!

The ordinance has amended the Cinematograph Act, 1952, and replaced the word ‘Tribunal’ with ‘High Court’. The effect is that from now there can be no appeals from the orders of Censor Board to tribunals. Either the producer must silently suffer or move to High Court and wait years for ‘justice’. This is a new kind of censorship of effective medium, a burden on producer and a blow to cinema.

After being made, the films meant for distribution in theatres should be submitted for certification. They Central Board of Film Certification is require certifying film as ‘U’ (unrestricted public exhibition), ‘UA’ (unrestricted public exhibition subject to parental guidance for children below the age of 12), ‘A’ (restricted to adult audiences) or ‘S’ (restricted to specialised audiences such as doctors or scientists). The CBFC is an examining committee. There is a revising committee to relook into the decision of the CBFC.

The Film Certification Appellate Tribunal has been established in 1983 as a statutory body under the Cinematograph Act, headed by a member from the legal fraternity. Before the FCAT, filmmakers had no option but to approach the court to seek redressal against CBFC certifications or suggested cuts. The FCAT was

helping with quick decisions, and only when the FCAT decision was not satisfactory, the film makers were going to High Court.

The Film Certification Appellate Tribunal was a statutory body established in 1983 under the Cinematograph Act, 1952 by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting. The FCAT was hearing appeals filed under Section 5C of the Cinematograph Act by those aggrieved by the decision of the CBFC. The tribunals were deliberately starved of members, staff and funds besides not appointing or appointing ‘follower’ the judicial and technical members instead of field experts.

The need for FCAT is increased in recent times, because of peculiar orders of Censor Board of Film Certification. Had the FCAT not come to rescue in 2016, the movies like ‘Shaheb Bibi Golaam’ and ‘Lipstick Under My Burkha’ which were objected to by the CBFC would have ended up in cans only. The decision to deny certification to Shubhradeep Chakravorty and Meera Choudhary’s film ‘En Dino Mujaffarnagar’ was also unreasonable.

The ‘Anti Indian’, the debut film of C Ilamaram was refused certification by Examining Committee of CBFC. It was referred to revising committee. FCAT used to charge normal fee, hold screening and pass judgements soon. Similarly, Tamil Film Gypsy by Raju Murugan could be released because of the Revising Committee which reduced the cuts. As he was pressed for time, he rushed to theatre avoiding journey through Tribunal with those cuts only. It is estimated that FCAT watches 20 movies a month to review the Boards’ decisions. Now the High Courts have to watch them.

Most of the decisions of the Central Board are subject to criticism because it has been allegedly filled by the personalities close to ruling party, whether Congress or the BJP. Some chairpersons were openly exhibiting their bias and taking drastic decisions against some movies like banning them or suggesting substantive cuttings of scenes and dialogues.

Leena Manimekela’s first film Sengadal, The Deadsea was banned and second movie Maadathy, An Unfair Tale was struck with refusal by CBFC. Now Leena must wage a legal battle or cut the movie into pieces as per the wishes of Board. The producer must risk more money and time while the already overburdened Constitutional courts should suffer more filings. If the producer fails to convince the Board, his expression will be curtailed. This is a different way of curbing the artistic expression.

There were Justice Mukul Mudgal and Shyam Benegal Committees that studied the FCAT and made several recommendations, but never suggested abolition of FCAT.

The Supreme Court bench of L Nageswar Rao, Hemant Gupta and Ravindra Bhat, JJ in Madras Bar association v Union of India (https://indiankanoon.org/doc/66126971/) on 27th November 2020 recommended constitution of National Tribunals Commission as an independent body to supervise the appointments and function-



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ing of Tribunals, conduct disciplinary proceedings against members of tribunals and also take care of administrative and infrastructural needs of the Tribunals. Instead of creating such umbrella organization the Government has ‘reformed’ tribunals by removal or amalgamation.

The SC was conscious about the case load on judiciary because of wrongful decisions of tribunals headed by non-experts of the subject. The judges wrote: Upon the tribunals has devolved the task of marking boundaries of what is legally permissible and feasible (as opposed to what is not lawful and is indefensible) conduct, in a normative sense guiding future behaviour of those subject to the jurisdictions of such tribunals. This task is rendered even more crucial, given that appeals against their decisions lie directly to the Supreme Court and public law intervention on the merits of such decisions is all but excluded. Also, these tribunals are expected to be consistent, and therefore, adhere to their precedents, inasmuch as they oversee regulatory behaviour in several key areas of the economy. Therefore, it is crucial that these tribunals are run by a robust mix of experts, i.e. those with experience in policy in the relevant field, and those with judicial or legal experience and competence in such fields. The function-

ing or non-functioning of any of these tribunals due to lack of competence or understanding has a direct adverse impact on those who expect effective and swift justice from them. The resultant fallout is invariably an increased docket load, especially by recourse to Article 226 of the Constitution of India. These aspects are highlighted once again to stress that these tribunals do not function in isolation but are a part of the larger scheme of justice dispensation envisioned by the Constitution and must function independently, and effectively, to live up to their mandate. The involvement of this court, in the series of decisions, rendered by no less than six Constitution Benches, underscores the importance of this aspect. The role of both the courts as upholders of judicial independence, and the executive as the policy making and implementing limb of governance, is to be concordant and collaborative. This court expects that the present directions are adhered to and implemented, so that future litigation is avoided”. But the government did not heed to this advice and decided to abolish the tribunals increasing the case load of High Courts.

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

## England reopens with pints pulled, shopping sprees

CARL RECINE, KATE HOLTON & SARAH YOUNG

CROWDS queued up outside shops, pubs started selling pints at midnight and hairdressers welcomed desperate customers on Monday as England started to reopen its economy after three months of lockdown. After imposing the most onerous restrictions in Britain’s peacetime history, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said the reopening was a “major step” towards freedom but urged people to behave responsibly as the coronavirus was still a threat.

Some folk lined up at bars after midnight or in the morning to raise a pint with fellow revellers.

“It feels good to be back,” Matthew McGuinness, a 21-year-old student told Reuters in the large garden of Wetherspoon’s Fox on the Hill pub in south London. “We planned it last night to come here for a breakfast, get a drink.” “I would not want to be working behind the bar here tonight. It’s gonna be ridiculous,” he said.



Getting people spending again is crucial for Britain’s recovery after official data showed that 2020 was the worst year for its economy in more than three centuries with a 9.8% decline in gross domestic product.

As the sun rose, dozens of people queued up outside Primark in English cities such as Birmingham and outside JD Sports on Oxford Street in London, undeterred by the unseasonably cold weather. The John Lewis department store chain said glassware and gifts had been the most popular items as shoppers prepared to host friends and families once again. In the run up to the reopening, John Lewis had also seen a more than 200% jump in sales of dresses.

At the Thorpe Park adventure site near London, visitors ran to the rides as it reopened. Drinkers in pub gardens said they had worn their thermals to be able withstand the cold. In north London, Maggie Grieve reopened the Beaucatcher hairdresser salon to work through the long list of bookings.

“I’m so excited to see my clients: to see how they are and give them that feeling that they get from having had their hair done,” Maggie Grieve, who manages Beaucatcher hairdressers in north London, told these correspondents.

“Today is going to feel like every hairdresser’s birthday. The well-wishers have already come in: emails, texts, WhatsApps, even neighbours in the street wishing luck and joy. It feels great.

Now can’t wait to get to the pub,” Grieve said.

Hundreds of thousands of businesses have been closed since early January when England entered a third lockdown to stem surging infections driven by the “Kent” variant of the virus. The UK has the fifth highest death toll in the world.

But a fast vaccination campaign that has delivered a first shot to well over half of adults has helped to cut deaths by more than 95% and cases by over 90% from the January peak, paving the way for a staggered reopening.

“I urge everyone to continue to behave responsibly and remember ‘hands, face, space and fresh air’ to suppress COVID as we push on with our vaccination programme,” Johnson said.

Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are reopening at a different pace, determined by their governments. Non-essential stores, such as home and fashion chains, will reopen in Wales as well as England on Monday, although those in Scotland need to wait until April 26. Pubs and restaurants will only be able to serve outdoors from Monday, with indoor service not allowed until May 17 at the earliest.



# Same breath analyser for scores raises eyebrows

“No need to worry, we are sanitising it,” assure the police



- A traffic cop says they are used only on suspect drivers, not for everyone. For each person, the device is being sanitised before use, he claims
- Doctors say this practice is not advisable. It is a risk factor and can spread the virus through respiratory droplets
- Last year, tests were stopped for a few months following Covid-19 outbreak. They resumed the tests from September

MOHAMMED HUSSAIN  
HYDERABAD

EVEN as authorities are trying to enforce ‘compulsory mask’ norm, traffic police are asking motorists to remove masks for breathalyser



test. Not only that they are also said to be using same breathalyser for a number of tests. This is causing jitters to motorists. A motorist stopped at a checkpoint at Jubilee Hills area on Saturday night, Mohammed Feroz, refused to blow air into the alcohol-detecting machine, but the police asked him to do it, claiming “no need to worry, we are sanitising it.”

At Mehdiptnam check-point, N Ganesh was wondering how

many people would have blown air into the same machine, as he was asked to undergo alcohol detection test. A few also alleged that the traffic police were throwing the used white straws on the road itself.

It may be recalled that in March 2020 the Hyderabad traffic police stopped the drunk-driving tests for a few months, following the Covid-19 pandemic. But after the State government gave permission for bars and

pubs to reopen, the police resumed the tests from September. A traffic policeman informed that they were using breathalysers only on suspect drivers, not for everyone. For each person, a new device was being used, he said.

Speaking to The Hans India, Dr R Pandu Nayak of OGH and head of anesthesia department, OMC said, “Using breathalyser for drunk-driving test is not advisable. It is a risk factor and can spread the virus, from one person to others.”

“It is dangerous for people and also for the traffic police personnel during this Covid-19 times, as cases are increasing in the city. Even though if the police is sanitising the testing machine, it won’t help as the same will be used for a large number of people in one night. It can lead to spread of the Covid-19 virus through respiratory droplets,” Dr Nayak told The Hans India. He suggested that a medical test be done for persons whom the cops find visibly drunk.



## SCR for halt of express trains at Malkajgiri

Many south-bound trains originate early morning and terminate at Kachiguda. It is very difficult to reach Kacheguda as there are no connecting local trains from Malkajgiri station and express trains don't halt there

The Suburban Train Travellers Association also urges railway authorities to run MMTS trains as early as possible from Umdanagar to Lingampally

MEGHNA NATH  
HYDERABAD

THE Suburban Train Travellers Association has approached the Railway authorities with the demand to include Malkajgiri in the list of stations, where South-bound express trains halt. Given the fact that most of the residents are natives of other States, they represented the matter for the provision and also to run MMTS trains as early as possible from Umdanagar to Lingampally.

According to locals, Malkajgiri railway station is one of the highest traffic offering stations in the north section of Hyderabad division and many south-bound trains originate early morning and terminate at Kachiguda. It is very difficult to reach Kacheguda as there are no connecting local trains that are plying from this station and also express trains don’t halt over here. Urging to resolve the mat-

ter, members of Association have submitted a Memorandum to officials of South Central Railways seeking halt of express trains at Malkajgiri.

“Around 20 express trains pass through the station, out of that only 10 trains halt here. Due to that, passengers are forced to opt for private transport for which passengers have to spend more than the train fare of their entire journey’s fare to reach Kachiguda railway station. So, it would be better if SCR arranges the stoppage of Ajanta, Rayalaseema, Repalle-Kacheguda Express trains at Malkajgiri station. On April 7, we submitted a memorandum regarding this matter,” said Noor Ahmed, the president of LT (long train ) & MMTS, Suburban Train Travellers Association.

He further said even passenger trains on these sections are cancelled or converted as express train services and also a huge

amount was spent on improving station buildings, extension of platforms and providing adequate drinking water arrangements, toilets but it would be better if railway department start the stoppage of express trains. They have also requested to run MMTS trains services as early as possible from Umdanagar to Lingampally.

“The passengers are forced to travel to Secunderabad and Kachiguda railway station, as express trains do not stop at Malkajgiri railway station. It would be better if SCR begins the stoppage of express trains as soon as possible,” said M Ramesh, a resident of Malkajgiri.

On the condition anonymity, a senior officer, SCR said, “it may not be possible to include Malkajgiri Railway station in the list of halts, as once the suburban trains starts plying it would create confusion if it starts halting at every station.”

## Pleas questioning TRS public meeting in Sagar declined

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD

THE High Court single judge bench headed by Justice Gandikota Sridevi refused to entertain the writ petitions seeking to stop the TRS party from conducting the public meeting at Anumula village in Nalgonda district to be addressed by Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao on April 14. Ch Saideiah, an independent candidate contesting the Nagarjunasagar bypoll and Dhanawath Kiran Kumar, a resident of Nalgonda district, ob-

jected to the public meeting to be conducted by the TRS on the ground of violation of Covid-19 guidelines.

Justice Sridevi, while adjudicating the petition, asked the petitioners Counsel Peri Prabhakar as to why the petitioners didn’t mention the names of any political party which was violating the guidelines issued by the Election Commission of India and did not make such political parties as parties in the writ petition.

Advocate General Banda Shiv-ananda Prasad submitted to the court that all political parties were

conducting meetings throughout India, as well as in the Nagarjunasagar. The Bharatiya Janata Party and the Congress have been conducting meetings and leaders have been participating in the election campaign, the Advocate General added.

In respect of other writ petitions filed by Goli Saidi Reddy and Goli Srinivas Reddy seeking to restrain the TRS party from organising public meeting at their land admeasuring 56 guntas where the CM is going to address about 1 lakh gathering, the

judge informed Tera Rajinikanth Reddy, counsel for the petitioners, that this case file was not yet received and would direct the registry to post it before the appropriate bench (before Justice K Lakshman).

Though the petitioner submitted that this case as specific and challenging the holding of TRS public meeting at petitioners’ land without taking their consent, the judge didn’t incline to hear the matter and directed the registry to post these writ petitions before the appropriate bench.



## Perni accuses Oppn of lies in bypoll campaign

- Says BJP and TDP are in no position to ask votes from people as they failed to keep their promises and it is only YSRCP which has fulfilled its election promises
- Reiterates that Tirupati LS bypoll is the referendum on the 22-month rule of the Jagan govt

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
AMARAVATI

INFORMATION and public relations minister Perni Venkatramaiah (Nani) slammed opposition parties for making false allegations against YSRCP ahead of the Tirupati Lok Sabha bypoll. Speaking to media at party central office at Tadepalli on Monday, the minister said TDP and BJP have no agenda for campaign in Tirupati bypoll. He said BJP is not in a position to ask for votes explaining what it has done to people and TDP is indulged in propagating false information. It is only YSRCP that has fulfilled the promises made and asking for votes in the upcoming election, he added.



Minister for Information and Public Relations Perni Venkatramaiah ( Nani ) addressing a press conference at YSRCP central office in Tadepalli on Monday

In spite of being fully aware that Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy has cancelled his Tirupati public meeting due to the spike in Covid-19 cases, Naidu and Lokesh have been making false allegations with ulterior motives. He reminded that it was the father-son duo that left for Hyderabad fearing of Covid-19. He said it was TDP leaders who have been gathering crowds and spreading coronavirus in Tirupati. TDP followers and cadres have lost confidence in the leadership of Naidu and are looking for an alternative,

he claimed.

The minister said BJP is indulging in religious politics without social responsibility, and is instigating communal hatred in the state. He questioned why people should vote for BJP in Tirupati bypoll.

He asserted that Tirupati bypoll is a referendum for the 22-month governance of YSRCP government despite TDP and BJP accept the challenge.

He also appreciated the Chief Minister for his village and ward secretariat initiative and the recognition of their services in the form of awards.

## Nadda vows significant change in AP

- Addressing election rally, says victory of BJP candidate in Tirupati will open the gates for development and new era in State
- Points out many leaders from the Rayalaseema region who ruled the State for decades have failed to better the lives of people in the region
- Alleges that no one has been booked despite around 150 attacks on temples

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
NELLORE

BJP national president JP Nadda came down heavily on both ruling and opposition parties for their failure in addressing long-pending issues of Rayalaseema and said if the people support BJP candidate, it would be a good beginning for a significant change in the scenario in Andhra Pradesh.

Addressing a public meeting at Naidupet in the district as part of Tirupati Lok Sabha election campaign on Monday, he said the region had witnessed the ruling of



BJP national president JP Nadda addressing an election rally at Naidupet in Nellore district on Monday

NT Rama Rao, K Vijayabhaskar Reddy, N Chandrababu Naidu, K Kiran Kumar Reddy, and now Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy who belong to the region but failed to resolve its issues. Telugu Ganga, Handri-Neeva, Galeru-Nagari, and many other projects have been started decades ago and still were incomplete, he pointed out.

Nadda said the Centre had sanctioned Rs 30,000 crore under PM Awas Yojana for constructing around 20 lakh houses, extended 5.56 lakh crores for development

of the state besides announcing funding to make four cities as smart ones. Stating that the Centre had given more than Rs 3 lakh crores for Polavaram project, he wondered why the ruling party had failed to focus on other irrigation projects in Rayalaseema region on fast track.

He said the ruling YSRCP is mired in corruption, leading to bad governance. Many temples were attacked in around 150 instances and still, no one was booked which indicates their religious prefer-

ences and bias and said even conversions have been taking place without hindrance even though the party is claiming to be secular.

The BJP national president said the rampant corruption of the ruling party is related to land, sand, roads, ports, and all categories and they consider it as government-sponsored corruption. The state government utilised Rs 4 lakh crores of debts just within two years. He said the region witnessed regimes of TDP, YSR Congress and the BJP would change the state significantly in terms of development and the beginning should start with victory from Tirupati byelection. He sought support for the party nominee K Ratna Prabha and the Jana Sena-BJP front would work for the development of the region jointly. Former minister and party leader D Purandeswari translated the speech of the BJP president.

Party candidate, state president Somu Veeraj, party leaders Purnandeswari, T G Venkatesh, C M Ramesh, Vakati Narayana Reddy, GVL Naramsimha Rao and others were present.

### PROBE INTO PHONE TALK

## SC RELIEF TO EX-JUDGE ESWARAIAH

NEW DELHI

THE Supreme Court on Monday granted relief to former justice of the Andhra Pradesh High Court V Eswaraiah, in connection with an enquiry ordered by Andhra Pradesh High Court into the telephonic conversation between the former judge and a suspended district munsif magistrate.

A bench consisting of Justices

Ashok Bhushan and R Subhash Reddy said on Monday, on a plea by Justice Eswaraiah challenging the AP High Court order calling for a probe by retired Supreme Court judge Justice R V Raveendran into the telephonic conversation, “authenticity and genuineness of the transcript having been admitted to the extent as contained in Annexure P-16, we are of the view that the direction by the

High Court...need not be allowed to continue”.

The top court ruled that there was no occasion for the High Court to order an enquiry into the conversation involving the former judge considering the fact that the judge had already admitted to the conversation and also filed a corrected English transcript of the conversation.

The order by the High Court

was passed in an intervention application filed by a suspended district munsif magistrate in an unrelated public interest litigation petition seeking implementation of Covid-19 guidelines in the High Court. The Supreme Court held that the High Court should not have embarked on any other role other than the deciding on the maintainability aspect of the petition before it.



# Make remdesivir available to every patient, HC to Gujarat govt

## Why govt insisting that remdesivir should only be available at hospitals and not for home patients?

GANDHINAGAR

THE Gujarat High Court on Monday pulled up the state government for having such a system that put entire control of remdesivir injections under one agency, asking why was the crucial anti-Covid medicine not made available for everybody.

It also suggested that the government set up accountability at every booth level to keep a check on the out-break.

In wake of the rising number of coronavirus cases in the state and the worsening situation in healthcare facilities, the high court had taken a suo moto cognizance of the issue and filed a PIL, titled 'Uncontrolled upsurge and serious management issues in Covid control', with the Central and state governments made respondents.

The bench of Chief Justice Vikram Nath and Justice Bhargav D. Karia, set up to hear the matter, heard Advocate General, Kamal Trivedi, on behalf of the state government and posed a salvo of questions on various fronts due to which the present uncontrolled situation arose.

"Initially, when the pandemic struck last year, people were advised to home quarantine and also get treated at home. Now why have you changed it and insist on hospitalisation? Why are you insisting that remdesivir should only be available at hospitals and not for home patients quarantined who require the injections? Why is it not being available at all the hospitals? Why is it not available for anyone who needs it? Controlling these injections by supply from one outsourced agency is not at all in public interest," it said.



Accusing hospitals of exploiting the situation, the court said: "We have come to know that hospitals have refused to admit patients despite having beds available."

The court also noted that "right now it takes 5 to 7 days for a common man to get himself RT-PCR tested. By the time he or she gets results, has infected a lot many others".

"Why is it taking so long? We advise ramping up the testing facilities and centres," it said.

As the court asked the government what steps were taken to ensure the reduction of staff in various offices, the Advocate General said that only the paan shop owners association had come forward and voluntarily had decided to shut down for the weekends.

"Then they are acting with more wisdom and respon-

sibility," the court observed. The court also stressed that fighting this pandemic was impossible without the cooperation of people, but "the people had lost trust in administration".

"We are not happy with many of the policies of the government and there are some things which need to be corrected. At least people should feel that government is doing something. At present there is a total deficit in trust of people in the administration. That trust should be restored," it maintained.

The court also suggested reducing the number of people allowed in marriage functions from 100 to 50.

Justice Karia also suggested that just like during the election process, booth level micro level planning be done and a booth level official should be assigned accountability over a particular booth's Covid situation.

### WINDOWS



President Ram Nath Kovind being discharged from All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in New Delhi on Monday

### 'AAP will contest all 40 Goa seats'

PANAJI: The Aam Aadmi Party will not ally with any other outfit for the 2022 Goa Assembly polls and will contest all 40 seats on its own strength, the party's senior leader and Delhi Deputy CM Manish Sisodia said on Monday. He said his party was the alternative to the BJP in Goa at a time when the opposition in the state was weak and was doing "what the BJP wants them to do". During the day, he paid tribute to former chief ministers Dayanand Bhandarkar and Manohar Parrikar, and asked all those who want to see corruption-free politics to join AAP.

### INS Viraat 40% dismantled: SC

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Monday cited that 40 per cent of the India's decommissioned aircraft carrier INS Viraat has been dismantled and dismissed a plea by a private firm seeking to convert it into a museum. A bench headed by Chief Justice S.A. Bobde and comprising Justices A.S. Bopanna and V. Ramasubramanian told the counsel representing private firm Envitech Marine Consultants Pvt Ltd, "You are too late 40 per cent of the ship is already dismantled, how will you make it a museum." The firm's counsel argued that it can seek services of a reputed firm and conduct a survey and get to the top court in the matter.

# 3 Delhi HC judges test positive

NEW DELHI/MUMBAI/PATNA

THREE judges of the Delhi High Court have tested COVID-19 positive and are isolating at their residences, according to court sources.

The three judges, who were having mild symptoms, received their test reports, sources said, adding that they did not conduct the court on Monday. They said another judge is also suffering from fever, but the test report is yet to come out. Meanwhile, the Delhi High Court Bar Association has decided to close its office at the high court premises keeping in view the rising number of COVID-19 cases. The Delhi High Court, which had resumed full-fledged physical hearing from March 15, decided to again adopted the virtual mode of proceedings from April 9 to April 23, in view of alarming rise in cases in the national capital. According to the Delhi Health Department on Sunday, Delhi recorded 10,774 fresh COVID-19 cases, highest single-day spike so far, and 48 deaths.

44 Supreme Court staffers testing positive for Covid-19, the apex court judges will henceforth, conduct hearings through video conference from their residences. The apex court has about 3,000 employees.

### Maha HSC/SSC Board exams postponed

MUMBAI: In a significant move amid zooming Covid cases, the state government on Monday announced that it has decided to postpone the Maharashtra State Board of Secondary & Higher Secondary Education (MSBSHSE) final examinations for the current academic year. Education Minister Varsha Gaikwad said that while the HSC exams are now likely to be held in May-end, the SSC exams may be conducted in June to ensure the further education prospects, like various entrance exams for professional courses, of the students are not affected. The fresh dates and time-table for both the exams shall be announced soon, she added.

The announcement followed a series of meetings by the Maha Vikas Aghadi allies, an all-party meet over the past few days followed by sittings with the State Covid-19 Task Force, various tech giants, parents, teachers and other stakeholders in the academic world.

## 44 Supreme Court staffers test positive 2nd wave claims first cop in Mumbai



A health worker takes a swab sample of a passenger for Covid-19 tests at Dadar Railway Station, amid the ongoing surge in coronavirus cases, in Mumbai on Monday

### Long-distance trains full after Maha lockdown buzz

Amid talks of a complete lockdown in Maharashtra to arrest the COVID-19 surge, the passenger rush on outstation trains in Mumbai has increased since the last weekend, Railway sources said on Monday.

The Railway administration, however, attributed the passenger rush to the summer season which sees a large number of people travelling to their native places.

The sources said though the rush on outstation trains has gone up since the state government announced fresh COVID-19 curbs earlier this month, the weekend saw a steady flow of passengers on long-distance trains originating from different stations in the metropolis.

Speculation is rife about the Maharashtra government mulling a "complete lockdown" to curb the current surge in COVID-19 cases, which registered an all-time high spike of 63,294 infections on Sunday.

### Shortage of Remdesivir haunts Maharashtra

MUMBAI: Crisis over the shortage of Remdesivir injection in Maharashtra continued on Monday with relatives of some of the patients in Pune alleging that hospitals and COVID-19 care centers are asking them to arrange the drug from chemist shops located outside. This is a repeat of what had happened last year when patients' relatives had to run pillar to post to get Remdesivir.

People, in large numbers, were seen staging a protest outside a chemist shop in the Shukrawar Peth area over the shortage of Remdesivir injection.

"My father-in-law has been admitted at a Covid-19 care center. Doctors have made him call us for Remdesivir injection," a family member of a COVID-19 patient Madhuri Parekar said.

"The helpline number of Remdesivir Control Room launched by the Pune district is constantly busy," she added.

Another patient's relative Tofik Shaikh, who came from Solapur to buy the Remdesivir injection, said, "Infor-

mation is circulating on WhatsApp that the COVID-19 drug is available here but there is no sign of it. My brother is in serious condition, if something happens to him, who will be responsible?"

"Doctors are asking us to make the injection available to them, how will I arrange it?" another patient's relative said. Remdesivir injection is available at big hospitals but not in the small health centers, another patient alleged.

A sub-inspector died due on Monday, becoming the first victim from the Mumbai Police force of the second wave of the viral infection, an official

### Living patient declared dead in Bihar

PATNA: A case has come to light at Patna Medical College Hospital (PMCH) where a living person infected with Covid-19 was declared dead and a death certificate issued to his family members. A doctor at PMCH said Chunnun Kumar, a resident of Bihar's Mohammadpur near the Barh police station, was admitted to the hospital on April 9 after suffering a brain haemorrhage. He underwent a coronavirus test for which he tested positive during the course of the treatment. He was then admitted to a corona ward and treatment was started. The victim's wife and brother were informed by the hospital administration on Sunday that Chunnun had died. In a rush to remove the body after the death, the hospital administration sealed the body of the patient and handed it over to Chunnun's brother Manoj Kumar and also issued a death certificate.

They were taking the body for cremation under the supervision of the hospital administration when the wife of the deceased insisted on seeing her husband for the last time. According to the family members, when the covering cloth was removed from the body, it was found to be of a person other than Chunnun.

### Union Minister Balyan hit by virus

NEW DELHI: Union minister Sanjeev Balyan said he has tested positive for coronavirus following which he has isolated himself.

In a tweet on Sunday night, he said, "I got tested for COVID-19 after showing some symptoms while campaigning for West Bengal elections. The report is positive and I have isolated myself."

Battling for coronavirus vaccine for all, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday said it is the need of the country as everyone has the right to a safe life.

He said this as part of "SpeakUpForVaccinesForAll" campaign launched by the party on social media, demanding vaccine for all citizens to protect them from the virus. "Corona vaccine is the need of the country. You all should also raise your voice for it. Everyone has the right to a safe life," he said in a tweet.



Supporters get ready for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's election rally in North 24 Parganas on Monday

## TMC being wiped out: Modi

BARDHAMAN / KALYANI

DRAWING a cricket analogy, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Monday the people of Bengal have hit so many fours and sixes in the first four phases of the assembly polls that the BJP has already completed its century and the TMC is on course to being wiped out. Modi, who is on a whirlwind election tour of the state addressed rallies in Bardhaman and Kalyani, where he came down hard on Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, accusing her of instigating people against central forces on election duty in the state. The Prime Minister also launched a blistering attack on Banerjee, saying she did not care to express regret after a "leader very close to her" called Scheduled Castes "beggars".

Reacting to the allegation of Mamata that central forces were working on Union Home Minister Amit Shah's instructions during the state assembly

polls, the Director-General of Central Reserve Police Force Kuldip Singh on Monday clarified that all the paramilitary forces were working as per Election Commission's directions.

Modi went to Bangladesh for votes and now there is violence. Why is EC not taking suo moto cognizance? Modi, you went to Trump to play the trump card and now to Bangladesh to play Bengal card," Mamata said in Dum Dum. Mamata, in an apparent jibe at state BJP leaders, said on Monday that those threatening of more Cooch Behar-like killings should be banned politically.

She wondered what kind of human beings are politicians who say that there will be more Sitalkuchi-like incidents and that the death toll should have been higher. Four people were killed in CISF firing after they "attempted to snatch the rifles of the central forces" while voting was underway in Sitalkuchi in Cooch Behar district in the fourth phase on Saturday.

## Rainfall in next 4-5 days: IMD

NEW DELHI

SEVERAL parts of the country are likely to receive rainfall

in the next five days due to different cyclonic circulations, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Monday. According to the National Weather Forecasting Centre of the IMD, under the influence of trough and cyclonic circulations over the south peninsula, scattered to fairly widespread rainfall with thunderstorm, lightning and gusty winds of 30-40 kilometres per hour are very likely over southwest peninsular India in the next five days. The IMD said isolated heavy rainfall is also likely over south and ghat areas of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Mahe, coastal and south interior Karnataka during April 14-16. Another cyclonic circulation lies over southwest Madhya Pradesh and neighbouring



areas. Under its influence, isolated rainfall with thunderstorm, lightning and gusty winds (30-40 kmph) is very likely over Madhya Pradesh, Vidarbha, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, Gangetic West Bengal and Odisha during next 4-5 days and over Jharkhand during next 24 hours. The IMD said a fresh active western disturbance is very likely to affect the western Himalayan region during April 14-17 and adjoining plains during April 15-17. It is very likely to cause scattered to fairly widespread rainfall with thunderstorm, lightning and gusty winds (30-40 kmph) during April 14-17 over western Himalayan region, and light, isolated to scattered rainfall with thunderstorm, lightning and gusty winds (30-40 kmph) over adjoining plains during April 15-17.

# From watchman to IIM prof: The remarkable journey of Ramachandran

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

RANJITH Ramachandran, an Assistant Professor at IIM Ranchi, is a role model today. His struggle to get a good education and the fight to sustain himself to see his dream getting realised is being regarded as an inspiration to the society.

Ranjith lived in a dilapidated single room mud hut and worked as a night watchman for survival. His father is a tailor and mother a daily wage earner under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).

He did his graduation at St Pious College, Kanhangad in northern most Kerala and worked as a night watchman at the BSNL exchange in Panathur, Kasargod district.

He graduated in Economics honours and went on

to study a doctoral degree at IIT Madras, one of the premier institutes of the country.

Ranjith, who writes himself as Ranjith K. Panathur, said that he was totally desperate after getting into IIT Madras as he knew no other language other than Malayalam. As communication was difficult, he wanted to quit, said Ranjith. However Dr Subhash, his professor at IIT Madras encouraged him to continue, and now Ranjith has got a posting as Assistant Professor in the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Ranchi.

After his doctoral degree from IIT Madras, Ranjith joined Christ University, Bangalore for two months and he got a posting at IIM Ranchi. In between he was also in the merit list for the selection of professors in Calicut university but could not make it.



In a Facebook post, Ranjith wrote extensively on the trauma and the tough life he had faced to meet two ends together and dedicates his success to the poor parents, who had given everything to make him what he is now.

His Facebook post turned viral with more than 37,000 likes and Ranjith while speaking to IANS said, "I never thought that my Facebook post would go this viral, I had posted it to be an inspiration for each and everyone who are fighting with their backs to the wall and I wanted to be an inspiration, nothing more."

The story of Ranjith, who comes from a remote village in the northernmost part of Kerala, is being appreciated as ahugely inspiring one, and he is being projected as a role model.

Kerala Finance Minister and a Doctorate in Eco-

nomics from the Centre For Development Studies, Dr. Thomas Issac while speaking to IANS said, "Ranjith is an inspiration and from the moment he felt he was defeated, he turned his life and achieved success. He is an inspiration and role model, we have seen the likes of former President Late K.R. Narayanan who had defeated his circumstances with extraordinary will power and attained success."

He adds, "Ranjith has used education as a tool to overcome the social and economic backwardness and climbed up the ladder of success and he is an inspiration, enabler and a role model for all the young children who seeks to attain success in life and they must understand that education is a major tool for success and to open newer pastures."





## BIZ BRIEFS

### Dr Batra's book on healing

Dr Batra's has launched Healing People, changing lives Coffee table book to commemorate the birth anniversary of Dr Samuel Hahnemann the founder of homeopathy. The brand is opening its doors to provide free consultation to all patients till April 22. This book features over 100 patient stories that highlight the efficacy of homeopathy in treating rare and difficult illnesses. The book was unveiled by Chief Guests Rajiv Bajaj, Managing Director, Bajaj Auto and Sharad Marathe - Chairman, AVUSH Taskforce. Dr Mukesh Batra, Padma Shri recipient and founder, Dr Batra's Group of Companies, said: "As leaders in the field of homeopathy in India, I am delighted to present Healing People, Changing Lives that is an amalgamation of rare and difficult to treat cases that our team of over 400 doctors across seven countries has treated successfully."

### Inorbit Mall's new collection

Inorbit Mall has offered a safe festive season shopping experience with new fashion collections to choose from international brands like M&S, Calvin Klein, H&M, F21, Aldo and many more. The mall has left no stone unturned to ensure all the Covid safety measures which are followed to give consumers an undisruptive fun and shopping experience. The mall authority has complimentary services like hands-free shopping where the shoppers can submit their bags at the counter or info desk to enjoy a hassle-free shopping experience at the mall. Besides, they have table service zone to sit and relax and order their meals. Above all, there is a complimentary valet service for women drivers or riders on all days.

### Axis Bank's initiative

Axis Bank has launched its Send money abroad feature on the Axis mobile App. This initiative is in line with the Bank's dil se philosophy to build sharper customer focus and greater convenience through constant innovation. Customers can now send money abroad through a simple two-step process in over 100 different currencies. They can send up to \$25,000 per transaction for various purposes such as education fee payment, family maintenance, health related expenses, etc. Sathesh Krishnamurthy, EVP and head, private banking and third-party products, Axis Bank, said: "Forex transactions are traditionally viewed to be complex transactions, involving lengthy documentation. However contrary to this belief, in most cases, it's as simple as a domestic transfer. Our Mobile App journey demonstrates this by offering a frictionless and simplified process."

### iQOO partners with Amazon.in

iQOO has announced that its iQOO 7 series will be available in India on Amazon.in. The iQOO 7 series will have two devices in the line-up: iQOO 7 Legend and iQOO 7, both offering the best performance with flagship Qualcomm Snapdragon 8 series processors. The iQOO 7 Legend will be powered by the latest Snapdragon 888 series chipset, providing unmatched gaming experience and enhanced photography capabilities. Continuing iQOO's commitment to 'Make in India', the iQOO 7 series has been manufactured at vivo's Noida facility. Gagan Arora, Director-Marketing, iQOO said: "Our endeavour at iQOO is to offer products with superior performance and unmatched experience. Our partnership with Amazon is a step further in that direction."

## BLACK MONDAY: INVESTORS LOSE ₹8.77 LAKH CR

# Virus wave triggers selling across board

Sensex, Nifty crash 3.5%; Steep fall in home currency dampens mkt sentiment

### MUMBAI

THE BSE Sensex plummeted 1,708 points, while the NSE Nifty crashed below the 14,350-level on Monday as investors pressed the panic button amid the massive second wave of Covid-19 infections across the country.

The second wave is turning out to be much worse than expected, and participants are now reassessing their recovery forecasts amid increasing localised lockdowns, traders said. An unabated fall in the rupee sapped confidence further, they added. Posting its biggest fall since February 26, the 30-share BSE Sensex sank 1,707.94 points or 3.44 per cent to end at 47,883.38. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty plunged 524.05 points or 3.53 per cent to finish at 14,310.80.

Barring Dr Reddy's, which climbed 4.83 per cent, all Sensex stocks closed in the red. IndusInd Bank was the top loser, tanking 8.60 per cent, followed by Bajaj Finance, SBI, ONGC, Titan, M&M, Axis Bank, ICICI Bank and Bajaj Finserv. Investors lost Rs 8.77 lakh crore in the session, with the market capitalisation of BSE-listed stocks declining to Rs 200.85 lakh crore.

Global markets retreated from record highs as investors awaited corporate results and macroeconomic data. Elsewhere in Asia,



■ Barring Dr Reddy's, which climbed 4.83%, all Sensex stocks closed in red

■ Market capitalisation of BSE-listed stocks declined to ₹200.85 lakh crore

### PRESSING PANIC BUTTON

■ All sectoral indices ended with heavy losses

■ Looming doubts over economic growth in Q1 of FY22

■ Rupee fell for 6th straight session as it came down by 32 paise and settled at 75.05 per \$

bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Tokyo were in the red, while Seoul ended with mild gains.

Stock exchanges in Europe were largely trading on a positive note in mid-session deals. Meanwhile, international oil benchmark Brent crude was trading 0.57 per cent higher at \$63.31 per barrel. The rupee fell for the sixth straight session and settled 32 paise down at 75.05 against the US dollar.

India recorded yet another peak in daily Covid-19 cases with 1,68,912 new cases, the highest single-day rise since the pandemic began, taking the total tally to 1,35,27,717, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Monday. The national Covid-19 recovery rate has fallen below 90 per cent.

"Further implementation of lock-

downs and all-time high Covid cases have dragged the market to a monthly low. This is expected to impact the economic growth in Q1 of FY22 more than thought earlier. Implications to the banking and discretionary sector are presumed to be the highest, drifting market to defensives like IT, Pharma and FMCG. This trend may happen for a couple of trading weeks, down a few weeks Covid cases are likely to reduce, bringing growth back," said Vinod Nair, head (research) at Geojit Financial Services.

All sectoral indices ended with heavy losses, with BSE Realty tanking 7.70 per cent, followed by industrials, metal, auto, power, finance and bankex. Broader BSE midcap and smallcap indices nosedived up to 5.32 per cent.



### Petrol, diesel prices remain unchanged for 13<sup>th</sup> day

### NEW DELHI

FUEL prices in the country remained unchanged on Monday with oil marketing companies continuing the pause mode and keeping petrol and diesel prices static for the 13th consecutive day. Accordingly, pump price of petrol and diesel remained at previous days level of Rs 90.56 and Rs 80.87 a litre respectively in the national capital.

Petrol and diesel fell by 22 paise and 23 paise per litre respectively on March 30 in wake of global softening of oil prices. OMC have decided to pause price revision since the as they want to watch the crude price movement that has now fallen to around \$62.5 a barrel from remaining above this level in much of the previous weeks. Across the country as well, the petrol and diesel price remained static on Monday, but its retail levels varied depending on the level of local levies on respective States. In Mumbai petrol continues to be priced at Rs 96.98 a litre and diesel at Rs 87.96 a litre. Premium petrol, however, continues to remain over Rs 100 a litre in the city as is the case with several cities across the country.

## Flipkart enters into strategic partnership with Adani

### NEW DELHI

FLIPKART, India's leading home-grown e-commerce marketplace, Monday announced a strategic and commercial partnership with the Adani Group, India's largest multinational infrastructure company.

In this two-pronged partnership, Flipkart will work with Adani Logistics Limited, the largest diversified end-to-end logistics service provider in the country and a wholly owned subsidiary of Adani Ports & Special Economic Zone Limited, to strengthen Flipkart's supply chain infrastructure and further enhance its ability to serve its rapidly growing base of customers.

In addition, Flipkart will set up its third data centre at AdaniConnex Private Limited Chennai based facility, leveraging AdaniConneX's world-class expertise and industry-leading data centre technology solutions. AdaniConnex Private Limited is a new Joint Venture formed between EdgeConneX and Adani Enterprises Limited.

As part of this partnership, Adani Logistics Limited will construct a massive 5,34,000 sq. ft. fulfilment centre in its upcoming logistics hub



in Mumbai that will be leased to Flipkart to address the growing demand for e-commerce in Western India and support market access of several thousands of sellers and MSMEs in the region. Leveraging State-of-the-art technologies, the centre is expected to be operational in Q3 2022 and will have the capacity to house 10 million units of sellers' inventory at any point. In addition to strengthening Flipkart's supply chain infrastructure to support MSMEs and sellers, the facility will enhance local employment and create 2,500 direct jobs and thousands of indirect jobs. The other prong of the partnership will see Flipkart developing its third data centre at the AdaniConneX facility as a part of one of the largest private cloud deployments in the country, thereby further strengthening its growing marketplace e-commerce business in India.

### NEW DELHI

PASSENGER vehicle sales in India declined by over two per cent in the 2020-21 fiscal as the Covid-19 pandemic has put brakes on the sector which has already been witnessing a structural slowdown over the last few years, industry body Siam said on Monday.

As per the latest data by the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM), in the 2020-21 fiscal, passenger vehicle wholesales declined by 2.24 per cent to 27,11,457 units as against 27,73,519 units in 2019-20. Similarly, total two-wheeler dispatches during the last fiscal by companies to their respective dealer partners declined by 13.19 per cent to 1,51,19,387 units, as compared to 1,74,16,432 units in 2019-20. Total commercial vehicles sales declined by 20.77 per cent to 5,68,559 units last financial year, as against 7,17,593 units in 2019-20. Dispatches of three-wheelers saw a drop of 66.06 per cent in the 2020-21 fiscal at 2,16,197 units, as against 6,37,065 units in 2019-20. Vehicle sales across categories declined by 13.6 per cent to 1,86,15,588 units, as against 2,15,45,551 units in the year-ago period. "On the sales front, a deep structural slowdown in the industry even before the pandemic, combined with the im-

## PV sales in India decline by 2% in FY21

PV wholesales declined to 27,11,457 units as against 27,73,519 units in 2019-20, says Siam



part of Covid-19 in 2020-21, has pushed all vehicle segments back by many years. Recovery from here will require time and efforts, by all stakeholders," Siam President Kenichi Ayukawa said. There is uncertainty in the value chain owing to semiconductors, lockdowns and raw materials, he added. "In an environment of uncertainty, instead of trying to predict the future, we will all work hard to create it," Ayukawa noted. Siam has cited

data in the past to show that the pandemic is not the only reason for the auto sector slowdown, which is facing deeper structural issues that need attention. According to the findings of a research conducted by the industry body, compounded annual growth rates of all segments, including passenger vehicles, commercial vehicles, three-wheelers and two-wheelers have witnessed a continuous drop over the last three decades.

## Byju's raises \$455 mn as part of \$1 bn round

### NEW DELHI

LEADING ed-tech company BYJU'S has raised \$455 million from investors that include Baron Funds and Facebook cofounder Eduardo Saverin's B Capital Group, as part of a \$1 billion 'Series F' round, the media reported on Monday. Citing government filings by the company, Inc42 reported that existing investors like Silver Lake Management, Owl Ventures, and T. Rowe Price etc are also participating in the round. The latest fund-raising comes after the BYJU'S announced to acquire Aakash Educational Services Ltd (AESL) through a strategic merger. The deal size is also pegged at close to \$1 billion, according to a person familiar with the transaction.

"Our complementary strengths will enable us to build capabilities, create engaging and personalised learning programmes. The future of learning is hybrid and this union will bring together the best of offline and online learning, as we combine our expertise to create impactful experiences for students," Byju Raveendran.

## Pandemic, fuel prices put brakes on fishing in Vizag



Visakhapatnam is the largest fish landing centre in India with annual export turnover of ₹8,000 cr

activist from Pudumadaka, the largest fishing village in AP, told Bizz Buzz. Fishing ban is enforced every year in the Exclusive Economic Zone beyond territorial waters on the East Coast comprising West Bengal, Odisha, AP, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu, Andaman & Nicobar Islands and on the West Coast consisting of Daman

and Diu, Karnataka, Goa, Maharashtra, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Lakshadweep Islands separately for conservation and effective management of fishery resources and sea safety reasons. The ban will be implemented on the West Coast from June 1 to July 31. The ban is applicable for all motorised boats.

While thanking the YSRCP Government for enhancing the compensation being given to each ban-affected fish worker from Rs.4,000 to Rs.10,000, fishermen associations have sought an increase in compen-

sation in view of prolonged loss of livelihood due to the pandemic.

"During the current season, only a few boats could go fishing for just two to three months. I have not sent my boat even for a single day as it is not viable and the pandemic has cast its spell on the fishing community creating a lot of insecurity among them. Jalaripeta, the largest fishermen locality in the city became a hotspot for coronavirus last year as it is heavily populated with no scope for social distancing," said Ch Satyanarayana Murthy, president of Dolphin Boat Operators' Welfare Association. He said it would be better to give rice and other provisions to fish workers due to corona-induced loss of livelihood.



## PNB celebrates 127<sup>th</sup> Foundation Day

Punjab National Bank (PNB), on its 127th foundation day, donated wheelchairs for patient to medical fraternity at Railway hospital, Secunderabad. Ashutosh Choudhury, general manager and zonal head, Telangana, conducted quiz competition 'PNB-127 A Revisit' highlighting several PNB milestones in its 127 years of journey. Further during the day, MSME and Agri-Investment customer meet was conducted and to customer inputs for ease-of-business in these focus areas were discussed. The celebrations concluded with a cultural show by the PNB Parivaar at zonal office, Hyderabad.



Young Indian players rule first 3 days of IPL

NEW DELHI

THE start to this year's Indian Premier League has been dominated again by young Indian players who are looking to catch the eye of national selectors through their performances.

RCB pace bowler Harshal Patel, who became the first bowler to take a five-wicket haul against MI, KKR batsman Nitish Rana, who made 80 off 56 against SRH and DC pacer Avesh Khan, who took two wickets and bowled tightly in the middle overs against CSK, haven't yet played for India although they have been playing domestic cricket for quite some time.

If they continue performing in this season's IPL with consistency it won't come as a surprise if they make the India team very soon.

The national selection committee, in the recent past, hasn't been reluctant to give opportunities to IPL performers. Washington Sundar, T Natarajan (who debuted in all formats in Australia recently), Rahul Chahar, Deepak Chahar in recent past and Jasprit Bumrah a few years back all proved their credentials in the Indian Premier League before shining in India colours.

The franchise that has contributed massively in recent times are Mumbai Indians. Apart from Chahar and Bumrah, they recently supplied Suryakumar Yadav, Ishan Kishan to the Indian team. Both the batsmen proved successful in the limited-overs series against England, winning games for India.

Both these MI players were picked on the back of their brilliant IPL 2020 in the UAE and did well for India in the limited-overs series against England last month. All-rounder Krunal Pandya too did well and showed no nerves.

Former India pace bowler Zaheer Khan, who is the director of cricket operations of Mumbai Indians (MI) was on Monday asked about Kishan, Yadav



Harshal Patel of Royal Challengers Bangalore appeals for the wicket of Hardik Pandya of Mumbai Indians during Vivo IPL 2021 match at M. A. Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai on Friday

and Krunal. "I think giving them the freedom to express themselves (is the key behind their performance). They (players) do well when the mind isn't cluttered," he said.

A player going through the entire IPL and performing is deemed to be mentally tough enough to handle the pressure of international matches since the pressure in IPL games too is a lot.

At the IPL franchise level, the Indian domestic players will be sharing the dressing room with a lot of top foreign players and coaches and get a chance to evolve themselves.

Zaheer spoke on the responsibility of a franchise to nurture players.

"As a group, we do have healthy, constructive... on how they can add to the game and how they can better themselves. As athletes, as cricketers, you look to evolve yourself and understand the game better. That process we can fast-track," added Zaheer.

India have a hectic Test season ahead and following that they will have the T20 World Cup. There will be places up for grabs. (ANS)

Indian Premier League

Clinical KKR hope to get it right against nemesis MI

CHENNAI

FRESH from their clinical display against Sunrisers Hyderabad, two-time champions Kolkata Knight Riders will look to set the record straight against nemesis Mumbai Indians in their second IPL match here on Tuesday.

Having missed the last two playoffs, KKR looked a completely different unit, in the manner in which they defeated SRH by 10 runs in their IPL opener here on Sunday. Be it the aggression shown by the top-order or the explosive finish by Dinesh Karthik, KKR's displayed a fearless approach under skipper Eoin Morgan.

Morgan's intent was evident right at the toss when he chose to leave out their most-trusted lieutenant, Sunil Narine. The left-right opening combination of Nitish Rana and Shubman Gill started to attack right from the first ball, clearly indicating that the new approach had Morgan's success mantra written all over it.

Boasting of a solid middle-order in Andre Russell, Karthik and Morgan, 2020 was a season of promise for KKR but some rudderless planning did not help their cause.

This time KKR have further bolstered their middle-order by adding Bangladesh superstar Shakib Al Hasan, while Morgan, in his full season as skipper, gives a new dimension to the side. Rana's deft wrist work and brute power was on full display on Sunday and it ensured that they stayed ahead despite Rashid Khan's twin blows in the form of Gill and Russell.

After Rana's 56-ball 80, it was underfire Karthik who hit an unbeaten 22-run cameo from nine balls to propel KKR to a winning total of 187 for 6. And KKR would look to come out all guns blazing against the five-time champions on Tuesday.

They have won just once in their last 12 games against MI, and have an overall lopsided 6-21 head-to-head record. But eventually it will all boil down to battle of wits between

tween Morgan and Rohit Sharma, under whose captaincy MI has won a record fifth IPL title last season in UAE.

MI will pose real challenge for KKR as the title holders would be desperate to secure their first win of the season after their two-wicket loss to Royal Challengers Bangalore in the IPL opener on Friday. KKR found it easy against SRH bowlers, which lacked firepower but in Jasprit Bumrah and Trent Boult, MI attack will be a completely different proposition.

Gill's struggle to bat at T20 pace has been a concern for KKR and it will be interesting to see the young opener's approach against the finest in the business. Often known as slow starters, MI lost the other day due to individual brilliance of RCB's Harshal Patel and AB de Villiers on a two-paced wicket here.

In his debut match for MI, Chris Lynn was their top-scorer, albeit with some stroke of luck as he survived some edges and mishits. If Quinton de Kock is still in quarantine, MI may have to persist with Lynn at the top, otherwise they may go back to their preferred left-right opening combination of Rohit and de Kock.

MI's explosive middle-order consisting Suryakumar Yadav,

SQUADS

**Kolkata Knight Riders:** Eoin Morgan (c), Dinesh Karthik, Shubman Gill, Nitish Rana, Tim Seifert, Rinku Singh, Andre Russell, Sunil Narine, Kuldeep Yadav, Shivam Mavi, Lockie Ferguson, Pat Cummins, Kamlesh Nagarkoti, Sandeep Warrier, Prasidh Krishna, Rahul Tripathi, Varun Chakravarthy, Shakib Al Hasan, Sheldon Jackson, Vaibhav Arora, Harbhajan Singh, Karun Nair, Ben Cutting, Venkatesh Iyer, Pawan Negi.

**Mumbai Indians:** Rohit Sharma (c), Suryakumar Yadav, Anmolpreet Singh, Chris Lynn, Saurabh Tiwary, Dhawal Kulkarni, Jasprit Bumrah, Rahul Chahar, Trent Boult, Mohsin Khan, Hardik Pandya, Jayant Yadav, Kieron Pollard, Krunal Pandya, Anukul Roy, Ishan Kishan, Quinton de Kock, Aditya Tare, Adam Milne, Nathan Coulter Nile, Piyush Chawla, James Neesham, Yuvraj Charak, Marco Jansen, Arjun Tendulkar.

Ishan Kishan and the Pandya brothers -- Hardik and Krunal -- also failed to fire to be restricted to 159 for nine. (PTI)



Match starts at 7.30pm

Kolkata Knight Riders players react after winning the Vivo Indian Premier League 2021 match against Sunrisers Hyderabad at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai on Sunday. They won by 10 runs.

Bengaluru FC to forget past, look ahead with hope: Chhetri

GOA

SUNIL Chhetri and his boys will look to forget the disappointments of the last season and make a fresh start when the Indian Super League (ISL) club Bengaluru FC takes on Nepalese side Tribhuvan Army FC in the AFC Cup Preliminary Round 2 clash in Bambolim, Goa on Wednesday.

Bengaluru FC, who won the ISL in 2018-19, finished seventh in the previous season -- their worst showing since becoming a part of the ISL in 2017-18. Under new German coach Marco Pezzaiuolo, the side would want to script a new chapter in the prestigious continental competition.

On his team's chances, Bengaluru FC skipper Chhetri said that despite being very ambitious and positive about the



upcoming outings, the team would take "one game at a time and not take the opposition lightly".

"We are taking it one game at a time. Generally, when I say this, we are the dominant side and it is meant to make us stay humble. But this time, I'm saying it and I mean it. We watched Tribhuvan in their last game, and they play quite well. You could see their unity in training. They must have stayed together for a long time," Chhetri, who is now fully recovered from a bout of Covid-19, said on Monday.

The striker, who missed India's two international friendlies, against Oman and UAE late last month due to Covid-19, added, "We are not thinking about the group stages or who we are going to play next. It's about one game. And right now, it's more about what the coach wants from us than about what the other team is doing." (ANS)

FIH PRO LEAGUE

India crush Argentina 3-0 to jump to 4<sup>th</sup> spot



BUENOS AIRES

THE Indian men's hockey team registered a comprehensive 3-0 win over reigning Olympic champions Argentina in the second match of the FIH Pro League here to jump to the fourth spot in the points table.

Goals from Harmanpreet Singh (11th minute), Lalit Upadhyay (25th) and Mandeep Singh (58th) on Sunday gave the visitors a deserved triumph over Los Leones, adding three more points to the two they had claimed against the hosts in Saturday's shoot-out, which earned them a bonus point. By virtue of this win, India, with 15 points from eight games, climbed up to fourth place in the FIH Hockey Pro League standings, moving one point ahead of Australia having played the same number of games.

India, Argentina and Australia will play against each other at the forthcoming Olympic Games, where they have been drawn in Pool A alongside Spain, New Zealand and home favourites Japan.

Argentina sit sixth in the FIH Hockey Pro League standings, with 11 points from 12 games. Argentina started brightly and would have been ahead had it

not been for some excellent saves from India goalkeeper Krishan Bahadur Pathak, who twice denied Martin Ferreiro.

Harmanpreet then converted India's first penalty corner of the game in the 11th minute. Lalit doubled India's lead when he showed lightning quick reactions in the second quarter, pouncing on a save from Argentina custodian Juan Vivaldi to slot home.

The strike gave the visitors a deserved reward after a lengthy period of probing possession. The result was confirmed two minutes from the final hooter when Mandeep fired home from close range, losing his footing but keeping his composure to guide an backhand effort into the net.

"I think we defended well," said India goalkeeper Pathak, who was named Player of the Match. "They are good in defence but we created a lot of chances. We scored the goals, so that is good for us. We have to work on a lot of things, in defence, in midfield also. "We have to learn from this match. Today we did a lot of good things, but we still have to work (to do)." India will next travel to Great Britain for the two-leg tie on May 8 and 9. (PTI)

Hyderabad FC end 1<sup>st</sup> phase of Youth Trials in the city

HYDERABAD

SCHEDULED over four days, Hyderabad FC completed the local Youth Open Trials in the city on Sunday. Hyderabad FC, who are the first top-flight club from the region, attracted a lot of attention from several aspirants for their trials which began on April 8 at the MB Sportz Arena in Bandlaguda Jagir.

Spread over three age categories -- U13, U15 and U18, Hyderabad FC began search of potential players for their youth teams. The first three days saw a strong response from each age category, while the shortlisted players attended the finals of the Youth Trials on Sunday.

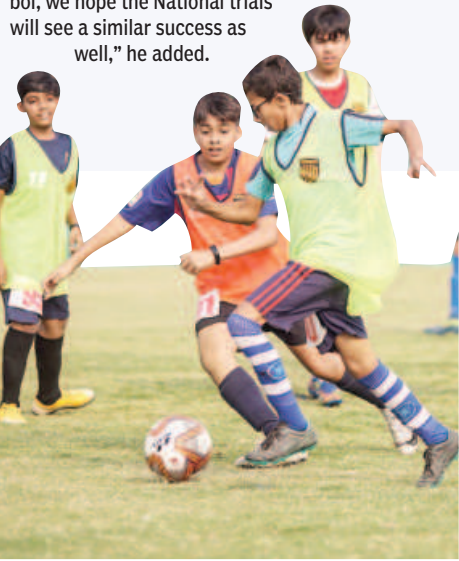
First Team Assistant Coach and Technical Director of Youth, Thangboi Singto and U18s Head Coach Shameel Chembakath were impressed with the talent and potential on show on all the days.



"The trials in Hyderabad went ahead better than planned. The plan was to give players more time on the pitch while we assess their technical and tactical ability," said Shameel. "We started off with small-sided games, to give us time to look at every player individually, before we got them to play 11 v 11 on the final day."

Hyderabad FC to move on to the next leg of the National Youth Trials as they travel to Aizawl and Imphal in search of potential in the coming days.

"In the next phase of the trials, we will be focusing on the reserve team and the U18s in these trials. We want to make the transition from the reserve team to the first-team easier at HFC as we saw in the recent ISL season. So, we are focusing on the best talents in most states," said coach Shameel.

"We are happy with the success of the local trials and with the help of Coach Thangboi, we hope the National trials will see a similar success as well," he added.








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Printed and Published by K. Hanumanta Rao, on behalf of Hyderabad Media House Pvt. Limited, Flat No.609, 6th Floor, Kirti Shikhar Building, Plot.No.11, Dist.Center, Janakpuri, New Delhi- 110058. and Printed at M/s. Marutimanta Printers & Publishers, A-15, Bara Bagh, G.T Karnal Road, Industrial Area, New Delhi - 110033. Editor: V Ramu Sarma. RNI No: DELENG/2017/74095