

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

HYDERABAD | WEDNESDAY | 9 DECEMBER 2020

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## VALUE HOUSING

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## WEATHER

Max: 30.5°C  
Min: 15.5°C  
RH: 28%  
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Partly cloudy.  
Mist or haze likely.  
Max/Min temp. 31/15 °C

## COVID-19 COUNT

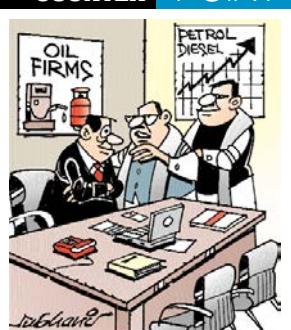
CASES	DEATHS
(+38,059)	(+472)
97,35,902	1,41,397
<a href="https://covid19india.org">covid19india.org</a>	
STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS	
(+682)	(+3)
TS: 2,74,540	1,477
(+551)	(+4)
AP: 8,72,839	7042

## CASES AROUND THE WORLD

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES	6,76,64,377
DEATHS	15,45,949

ASTROGUIDE
Sarvari: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Kartika Bahula Navami till 3.13 pm
Star: Uttara till 12.28 pm
Varjyam: 8.17 pm to 9.47 pm
Durmuhurmati: 11.46 am to 12.30 pm
Rahuakalam: 12 noon to 1.30 pm
HIJRI CALENDAR
Rabbi-ul Akhir 23, 1442 AH
PRAYERS
Fajr: 5.30 am
Zohar: 12.18 pm
Asar: 4.06 pm
Maghrib: 5.48 pm
Isha: 7.01 pm
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.35 AM
SUNSET TODAY 5.42 PM
MOONSET TODAY 1.30 PM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 12.55 AM

## COUNTER POINT



Hike prices as much as you want... people are busy with farmers!

## IN BRIEF

## Farm chemicals put Eluru on edge

Vijayawada: Residues of pesticides and preservatives that farmers use to keep vegetables fresh, and fish feed containing heavy metals like lead and nickel, were reported to have caused mystery illness, affecting nearly 536 people in Eluru in West Godavari.

Report on Page 5

## Mt Everest now taller by 86 cm

Kathmandu/Beijing: The world's highest peak is now taller by 86 centimetres. Nepal and China jointly announced on Tuesday after they remeasured Mt. Everest at 8,848.86 metres, over six decades after India conducted the previous measurement in 1954. The revised height puts an end to the decades-long dispute.

Report on Page 9

cmyk



Tweet wise



Banishing all the false narratives being propagated around the #FarmActs-GameChanger, by those with vested interests, here are a few myths - busted to let our people know, only the true purpose of these farmer friendly legislation.

— G. KISHAN REDDY  
Union Minister



The Stock Limit Under the 'Essentials Commodities Act' was set up to prevent the black market, has been amended in the new Laws. With this, there is a risk that traders create artificial shortages & inflate prices. This is detrimental to both farmers and consumers

— K.T. RAMA RAO  
TRS Minister



Congratulations to the kisans for their determined struggle and sacrifice and the people of India for their massive support in solidarity today. The Central Government must accept the legitimate demands made by this historic kisan struggle.

— SITARAM YECHURY  
CPM leader



We stand in support of our farmers and their call for #BharatBandh. Government must ensure that our farmers are secure.

— KAVITHA KALVAKUNTALA  
TRS MLC



Telangana witnessed a Farmer protest without Farmers in it. Farmers of Telangana have bluntly rejected TRS party's and government's desperate attempts to malign Farm Laws.

— ARVIND DHARMAPURI  
BJP MP



Hi Pakistan, we want Khalistan need your full support. I know you'll surely support this movement. #IndiaShutDown #BharatBandh

— DALIP SINGH  
Advocate for Peace, Justice

I congratulate our farmers and all the people of the State for a peaceful Bharat Bandh. It has been a great show of solidarity for the cause of farmers' protests. Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan!

— CAPT. AMARINDER SINGH  
Punjab CM

Media demands Justice for SSR, Justice for Kangana, Justice for Arnab but won't demand Justice for Farmers? Rhea's Whatsapp Chats got 100 times more 24/7 media coverage than millions of Farmers organising a #BharatBandh

— SRIVATSA  
(@SRIVATSAYB): Congress leader

# Bandh peaceful, business dull in Hyd

**Vegetable markets remain open but did not report too much sales; small traders suffer loss**

SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL  
| DC  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 8

as the examination scheduled for the day was postponed by Osmania University. But we were asked to attend college since it was not an official holiday," she said.

The Monda market was open and sellers operated without any disruption, but there were not many buyers, according to Sammaka. "Most of the canteens and food messes buy from us. But today they anticipate less than half of regular sales, so though the market was open, we did not have much business."

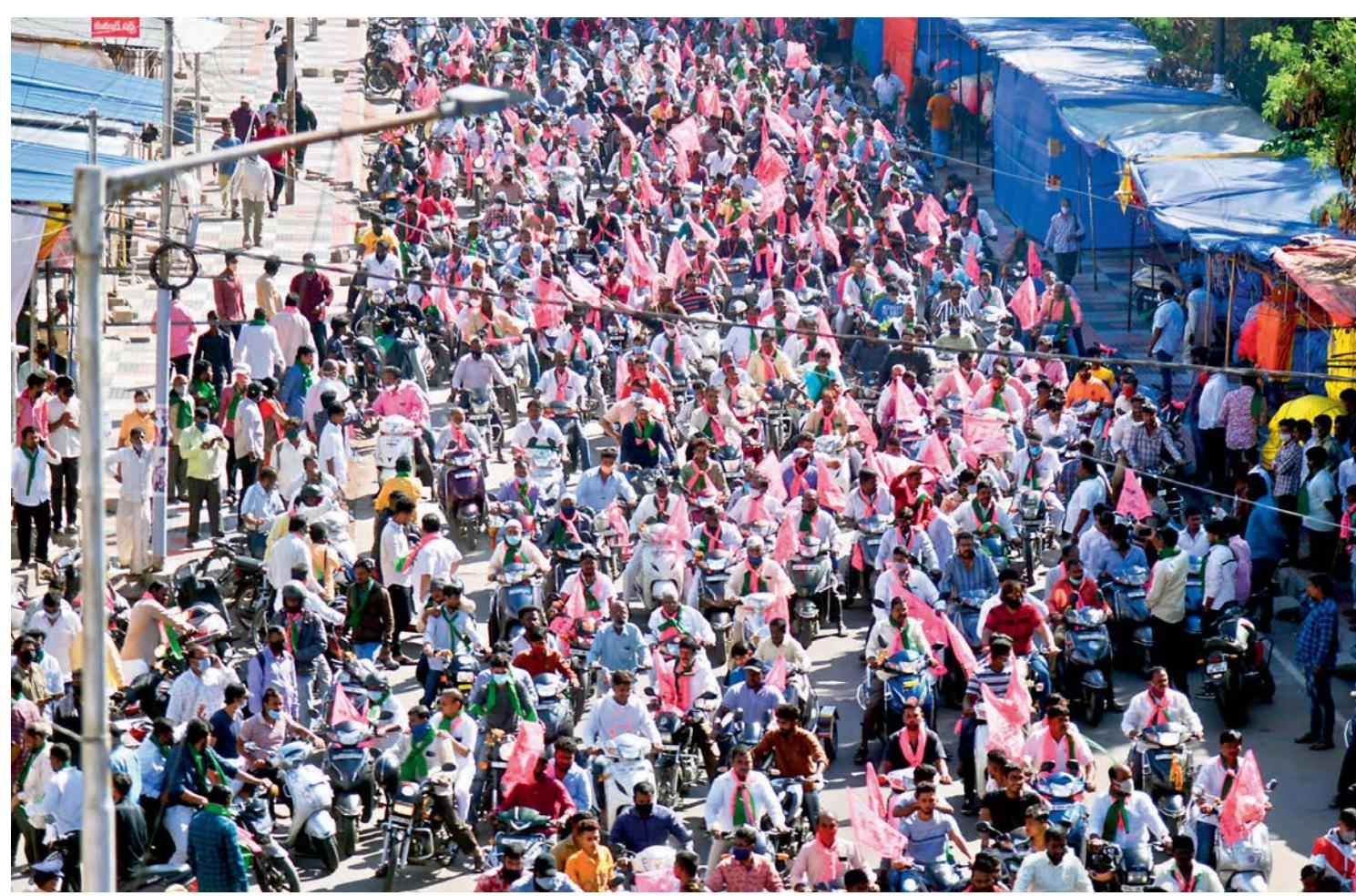
Santosh, of Navneet Electricals and Hardware, Kothapet, said, "initially we closed the shop. But later, after 12 noon, we started rolling up the shutters. Sales were normal, not markedly less than on regular days."

Marri Amarendar Reddy, Telangana Petrol Dealers Association, who owns and operates a petrol bunk at Bowenpally, said, "when protesters came and asked us to shut down in some place, we shut it down. But after a short while, it was business as usual." He added that protesters were polite and only "requested us" to close down our business.

Praveen Jain, proprietor, Sushil Tyres, located at Siddambar Bazaar, said, "the entire market was fully open. When protesters came and requested us, we closed down for a while and then reopened our shops."

Ironically, none of them could respond with much clarity what the issue was. "All we know is some farmers in Punjab and Haryana are protesting. We support farmers. We hope the government talks to them and resolves the issue."

Sindu Rajeshwari, who works as a lecturer, had to request someone in the family to drop her at the college, since RTC busses were not available. "Students did not turn up



Hundreds of TRS activists participate in a bike rally in support of the farmers agitation in Secunderabad on Tuesday without wearing helmets and violating social distance guidelines to prevent Covid-19.

— S. SURENDER REDDY



Shops remain closed at Ameerpet in support of Bharat Bandh on Tuesday.

— R. PAVAN

## City Sikhs back farmers agitation

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 8

"We are with the farmers. This government should take back its laws favouring corporate bodies."

Gurudwara member Hari Charan Singh said their community members started gathering around 11 am. They subsequently went around all the surrounding areas raising slogans against the BJP-led central government's anti-farmer laws.

At the Bhagat Singh statue in Ameerpet, they burnt an effigy of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Elderly men and women also took active part in this protest. According to Ameerpet Gurudwara Sahib president Bhagander Singh said,

### TRS MLA SEEN HITTING A COMMON MAN

From Page 1

Netizens, including those supporting the bandh call, were highly critical of the force unleashed by the ruling party.

In the most popular of such videos, a ruling party MLA was seen pushing and hitting a commoner who was complaining that the bandh was causing inconvenience to the public, in response to which several other party workers also pushed him. The police watched the whole incident.

Workers of Communist Party of India Marxist, Welfare Party of India, Movement for Peace and Justice, Youth Welfare Telangana, Montfort Social Institute and Ambedkar Phule Yuva Sangam, apart from social activists, demonstrated at Charminar, Mecca Masjid and Gulzar Houz.

Various organisations demonstrated at Charminar and Gulzar Houz in the Old City in solidarity with farmers as part of "Bharat Bandh" on Tuesday. The bandh was, however, partial as business establishments, including the Mandi Mir Alam, opened in the afternoon.

Buses of state-owned Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) remained confined to their depots including the Mahatma Gandhi Bus Station (MGBS), which looked deserted till about 2:00 p.m. Some commuters, who reached bus stations early in the morning, were disappointed.

Small establishments remained open in the entire Old City. Shops in Charminar, Lad Bazaar, Pathargatti, Patel Market, Madina Circle and Chatta Bazaar opened in the afternoon.

Workers of Communist Party of India Marxist, Welfare Party of India, Movement for Peace and Justice, Youth Welfare Telangana, Montfort Social Institute and Ambedkar Phule Yuva Sangam, apart from social activists, demonstrated at Charminar, Mecca Masjid and Gulzar Houz.

Journalists of the Old City, under the banner of South Zone Media, also demonstrated at Charminar, expressing their solidarity with farmers of India.

Social activist and managing trustee of Sankalp, Sheela Sara Mathew, charged the Modi government with enacting anti-people policies, right from

demonetisation then and now anti-farmer laws. She underlined that India is an agriculture-based economy with most of its people depending on farm activities; majority of them being small and subsistence farmers. "How will they manage if corporate bodies get into the picture," she questioned.

— Syed Jalaluddin Zafar Abu Wania of Youth Welfare, Telangana, said the central government is acting as though citizens are its slaves. Earlier, the BJP government tried to control food habits of the citizens. Now, they are going to control cultivation and farmers. The government is ignoring core issues confronting the common man but is facilitating the corporate sector, he stated.

## Centre bulldozed farm Bills: KTR

From Page 1

MLC K. Kavitha staged a rasta roko at Tekrial on NH 44. Many ministers also took part in the agitation in their respective districts.

Congress Legislator Party leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka led a rasta roko programme at Shamirpet while working president A. Revanth Reddy blocked traffic at the market committee in Shadnagar on Hyderabad-Bengaluru Highway. CPM and CPI workers held rasta roko programmes on the National Highway in Nalgonda.

Harish Rao demanded that the Centre immediately withdraw the three farm laws, saying, the laws will favour corporate organisations whereas farmers will be at receiving end. Kavitha said absence of MSP will lead to a direct entry of private players into the system.



IT minister K.T. Rama Rao participate in dharna in support of the farmers at Shadnagar on Tuesday.

### PARTIAL | BANDH

Shops in Charminar, Lad Bazaar, Pathargatti, Patel Market, Chatta Bazaar opened in the afternoon

## Old City protesters condemn Centre for farm laws



Protestors in a procession from Gulzar Houz to Charminar to express solidarity with the agitating farmers on Tuesday.

ATHER MOIN | DC  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 8

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**SHORT TAKES**  
**LVPEI BAGS GREENBERG AWARD**

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 8

The Greenberg Prize — End Blindness 2020 was awarded to L.V. Prasad Eye Institute on the initiatives taken by them to eliminate blindness. Dr Gullapalli N. Rao, founder-chair of LVPEI is being presented the award in the 'Outstanding Achievement Prize category'.

"I feel humbled and honoured to accept this prestigious award on behalf of over the 3,000 strong family of L.V. Prasad Eye Institute and its numerous supporters all over the globe. Eliminating avoidable blindness by the year 2020 has been an aspiration of the global eye care community for over two decades. I want to place on record our gratitude to Stanford and Susan Greenberg End Blindness Foundation for recognising our contribution to this global effort. My heartiest congratulations to all the other winners," said a thrilled Dr Rao.

With \$3 million in prize money, the Greenberg Prize is the highwater mark of a historic joint effort by leading scientists and members from business, politics, culture, art, music and entertainment. LVPEI shares the award with another organisation in India.

**MANUU: EDUCATION RESEARCH MUST FOR DEVELOPMENT**

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 8

Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU) vice chancellor Prof. S. M. Rahmatullah observed that education, training and research are essential elements in development of a society.

Addressing a Workshop on "Action Research" organised by Centre for Professional Development of Urdu Medium Teachers (CPDUMT), and Dean, Research and Consultancy, MANUU, the VC said research is essential for human welfare too.

"It is important for Urdu-medium teachers to understand the significance and usefulness of education and training. At the same time, they must continue research to resolve problems that may arise while educating by consulting experts on action research," advised Prof. Rahmatullah.

In the first technical session of the workshop, MANUU registrar Prof. Siddiqui Mohammed Mahmood said the main aim of action research is to find immediate solutions to problems that may arise when resources available are limited.

CPDUMT director Prof. Mohammed Abdul Sami Siddiqui highlighted the aims and objectives of the workshop. Earlier, Prof. Salma Ahmad Farooqi, university's Dean, Research and Consultancy, welcomed the participants.

Dr Viquar Unnisa, associate professor, Department of Education and Training, who is the workshop coordinator; conducted the proceedings.

● **IT IS** important for Urdu-medium teachers to understand the significance and usefulness of education and training, advised Prof. Rahmatullah.

**STATE RECORDS 682 NEW CASES, THREE DEATHS**

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 8

Telangana state recorded 682 new cases and three deaths in taking the total numbers to 2,74,540 and 1477 deaths.

However, the number of active cases have come down to 7,696. While this is a good sign the worry is that the increasing political and social activity in the society is raising concerns about the spread of infection.

The movement of people without following the protocols of protection like masks and hand washing can allow for the easy spread of the virus, warn experts.

Those who attend social gatherings and are moving out on weekends must ensure that they follow the protocols of safety.

The number of tests in the state carried out were 55,645. The GHMC limits recorded 119 cases, Mechal Malkajgiri 64 cases and Ranga Reddy 47 cases.

Health officials have asked people to be careful as the cold in the state is intensifying.

# Youth power change: Modi

TiE has impacted 50K aspiring women entrepreneurs through mentoring

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 8

Intellect and intent of youth has powered India's transformation, which has witnessed unprecedented pace and scale in the last few years, underlined Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Addressing the TiE Global Summit on Tuesday, he pointed out that comprehensive measures with integrated approach have enabled a robust ecosystem for enterprise and innovation. This has given wings to ambitions and aspirations of the nation. The PM said: "Over the last six-and-a-half years, we have injected a new spirit through reforms in policies and governance, overcoming challenges in a post-Coronavirus world, thereby keeping up with emerging trends and opportunities, which are crucial for businesses and enterprises to stay relevant."



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— NARENDRA MODI  
Prime Minister

● **THE VICE** President also wanted a special drive launched for promoting entrepreneurship among women. There is a huge potential for promoting women entrepreneurs in the country.

force and demographic potential," he pointed out.

Speaking on the occasion, Nitin Gadkari said MSME is the backbone of Indian economy. "It contributes to 30 percent of our GDP. We would like to increase it to 40 percent.

Similarly, we will take exports from 48 per cent to 60 percent. MSME sector generates 11 crore employment. We will try and create five crore more jobs. Village industries contribute ₹80,000 crore. We must take this to ₹5 lakh crore in the next two years," Gadkari said.

Telangana IT minister K.T. Rama Rao, who also addressed the event, expressed his happiness to know that TiE is going to set up its global headquarters at Hyderabad. The minister enlisted some of the initiatives of

the state in fostering entrepreneurship.

He explained how some of the state's innovators rose to the occasion and created products, such as low-cost, highly accurate Coronavirus testing systems, low-cost, import substitute ventilator, and tracking and tracing mobile app.

Speaking at the event through video conferencing from Visakhapatnam, Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu emphasised that fostering student-entrepreneurship through innovation programmes is extremely

critical. "Universities need to establish close linkage with industries to mentor and handhold students with novel business ideas," he underlined.

The IndUS Entrepreneurs (TiE) is a Silicon Valley-based non-profit organisation supporting start-ups through networking. Its Summit - 2020 will be showcasing opportunities to get mega investments into India.

Mentioning that the youth comprise about 65 per cent of India's population, Venkaiah Naidu stressed that vast energies of talented youth should be tapped fully. Their mindset should be changed from being job seekers to job creators. The Vice President also wanted a special drive launched for promoting entrepreneurship among women. There is a huge potential for promoting women entrepreneurs in the country, he said. He expressed happiness that TiE has impacted 50,000 aspiring women entrepreneurs through mentoring.



M. Venkaiah Naidu

## Partial shutdown



Shoppers exit shop which was partially open at Yousufguda. Shops were closed in view of the 'Bharat Bandh' in support of farmers in the city on Tuesday.

— R. PAVAN

## GHMC washes its hands off financial relief

From Page 1

"We were completely engaged in GHMC poll work," they said.

Officials said that since then all direct benefit transfers (DBT) were done directly from the state treasury, "GHMC has no role to play" in it.

When asked why GHMC commissioner had issued an official statement promising that officials will visit homes to conduct verification of

affected families, after which money would be deposited directly into bank accounts, officials said that the "official statement was released without their notice".

They further said that they would conduct field verifications only after either state government's instructions or through official guidelines. "As of now, nothing has been communicated from higher authorities," they said.

Heavy rains and floods

Officials said the government was now "working on a mechanism to filter fake beneficiaries". Once done, field verification would be resumed.

As per official data, GHMC distributed ₹10,000 cash to about 4.13 lakh families while the government deposited money into bank accounts of 1.26 lakh families.

Official records say that overall 260 colonies were affected due to floods.

Heavy rains and floods

in October, in particular on October 14, had battered the city and the outskirts, killing 50 people and inundating hundreds of colonies.

Responding to criticism and allegations of fraud in cash distributions, municipal administration and urban development minister K.T. Rama Rao said on November 15 that those who have not received aid can apply through Mee Seva centres.

**PROGRESS | REPORT**

## Heads of Missions to visit biotech firms

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC NEW DELHI, DEC. 8

The Union Government will organise a visit for more than 60 Foreign Heads of Missions (HoMs) in India to Hyderabad on Wednesday to "give a flavour of India's robust and resilient progress in Covid vaccine development and in the trial process", sources said on Tuesday. The foreign envoys will be "taken to leading biotech companies in Hyderabad, Bharat Biotech and Biological E".

Sources said, "In continuation of Covid-19 briefing by Ministry of External Affairs on 06 November, a visit is being organised for Foreign Heads of Missions in India to Hyderabad on 9 December. More than 60 HoMs are being taken to leading biotech companies in Hyderabad, Bharat Biotech and Biological E. This is the first such visit and it will be followed by visits to facilities in other cities."

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, DEC. 8

Even as the world, on the verge of coming up with a vaccine to inoculate billions of people against Coronavirus, the Hyderabad airport is busy preparing its air cargo facilities to handle a spurt in vaccine and pharmaceutical cargo, to and from the city.

As vaccines are highly sensitive shipments, the cargo team at the airport is hoping to leverage learnings and efficiency

are being developed in coordination with manufacturers and supply-chain players to mitigate any risk during the process of transportation of vaccines from the manufacturers' facility to the final destination, a press release from GMR Hyderabad Air Cargo (GHAC) said.

As vaccines are highly sensitive shipments, the cargo team at the airport is hoping to leverage learnings and efficiency

in handling pharma in the last 12 years of operations to maintain an unbroken cool-chain, it claimed.

According to the Hyderabad Air Cargo officials, plans have been set in place to increase the storage capacity for various vaccine types and related accessories and supplies. It is working with cool container providers for maintaining large stock at its station.

Sources added, "We have been contributing significantly to global efforts against Covid-19 pandemic. There is a lot of interest in India's vaccine development efforts. India is the world's largest vaccine manufacturer. As PM said India's vaccine production and delivery capacity will be used to help all humanity in fighting this crisis."

It may be recalled that India had planned to "take a delegation of resident Ambassadors for a tour" of Indian "vaccine and diagnostic facilities". A few weeks ago, the Government had organised a briefing by senior bureaucrats in the

Union Government across several ministries for about 180 senior foreign diplomats and representatives of international organisations in the Capital on the measures taken by India in the past several months to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic and also the issue of vaccine development.

# Rising fuel price angers motorists

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, DEC. 8

The rise in the price of fuel left motorists angry. A litre of petrol was sold at ₹87.06 and a litre of diesel cost ₹80.60 on Tuesday. The steep rise in fuel prices have been registered during the last seven days.

The

IndUS

Entrepreneurs (TiE)

is a Silicon Valley-based non-profit organisation supporting start-ups through networking. Its Summit - 2020 will be showcasing opportunities to get mega investments into India.

The

Consortium

of Indian Petroleum

Dealers

, "The price has been increasing as the rate of consumption has risen proportionately. During the lockdown, there were very few vehicles moving about. So, fuel consumption was low. Now, there are more vehicles on the road and consumption has risen. This is the primary reason for the fuel price rise."

Similarly even B. Adreesh

of Shamirpet

noted that the

prices have been on a steady rise for the last five or six days.

"Providing such fuel would require modification of infrastructure. The price of the fuel being transported from the refinery, cost of ethanol and other criteria could prove detrimental for prices," he said.

For example if the refinery for BS6 is located away from the city, then the price of transporting the fuel would be higher, he justified. However, customers are unable to digest the continuous rise in prices. "The prices of petrol and diesel are rising faster than our spending capabilities. In these times, which is rife with layoffs and pay cuts, rising prices of fuel is not justified," said V. Unnikrishnan, a content writer and resident of Ameerpet.

Similarly even B. Adreesh of Shamirpet noted that the

prices have been on a steady rise for the last five or six days.

Speaking at the event through video conferencing from Visakhapatnam, Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu emphasised that fostering student-entrepreneurship through innovation programmes is extremely

critical.

Sufian Shaik, 24, and Raju Pandurang Ambekar, 49, all working as drivers and labourers in Mumbai.

The gang was involved in several cases of robberies, extortion and burglaries in Maharashtra since 2016. Dawood Shaik and Ambekar met in prison when they were arrested and remanded in a case in Mumbai. They decided to commit offences in Hyderabad to avoid being caught by the Mumbai police, Cyberabad police commissioner V.C. Sajjanar said.

The police recovered 113 mobile phones, all together worth ₹30 lakh from them.

The arrested persons were Mohd. Tabrez, Dawood Shaik, 38, Farhan Mumtaz Shaik, 33, Rasheed Mohd. Rafeeq Shaik, 29, Mohd.

Rashakonda police commissioner Mahesh M. Bhagwat invoked the Preventive Detention Act against Qamar Unnisa, a human-trafficking racketeer on Tuesday.

According to the police, Qamar Unnisa alias Maya alias Farzhana alias Shameem along with her associates procured women from West Bengal and forced them into flesh trade. She gave shelter to these women at her house at Jahanuma in Charminar, where she organised a flesh trade.

The gang posted pictures of women on social media and made deals online and carried out transactions only on e-wallets. She was recently arrested by the Anti-Human Trafficking Team along with the Abdullapurmet police in a decoy operation.

Those submitting application online should pay the registration fee of Rs. 100/- (non-refundable) online and those submitting application in person in the institute's office can pay the registration fee in cash. The last date for submission of filled in application online or in person along with scanned/photo copies of relevant certificates is 4.00 p.m. of 17.12.2020. The eligibility and admission under this category will be as per the Rules of the Govt. of Telangana and the Competent Authority. The tuition fee payable is Rs. 85,000/- per annum. For updates on the admission process the applicants are advised to regularly visit the institute's website www.pimhyd.ac.in

Dated : 09.12.2020

Secretary

**PENDEKANTI INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT**

(Private Unaided Non-minority Professional Institution)  
(Sponsored by Vasavi Academy of Education)

(Approved by AICTE and affiliated to Osmania University)

(Vasavi College of Engineering Campus)

9-5-81, Ibrahimbagh, Hyderabad 500 031, Telangana, India, Ph : 040-23146028

**ADMISSION NOTIFICATION - Category B**

Admission to M.B.A. 1st year under Category "B" seats (2020-21)

Candidates seeking admission to M.B.A. 1st year under Category B seats for the academic year 2020-21 can apply online or in person in the prescribed application form which is available along with detailed instructions on the institute's website www.pimhyd.ac.in

Course Intake Category "B" Seats

MBA 120 36

Those submitting application online should pay the registration fee of Rs. 100/- (non-refundable) online and those submitting application in person in the institute's office can pay the registration fee in

## IN BRIEF

**Tiger attack victims kin criticise govt**

**KOMARAM BHEEM ASIFABAD:** Minister for forest Allola Indrakaran Reddy has failed to convince the family members of the tiger attack victims and infuse confidence among the panicked villagers about their safety who are facing life threat from the increased tiger movement. The local Adivasis say the government, would have responded differently to the two deaths if the victims belong to other communities.

**REVANTH SLAMS KCR FOR 'FARMER DHARNA DRAMA'**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 8

TPCC working president and MP A. Revanth Reddy on Tuesday alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao both are culprits and working against the interests of farmers. He said this while participating in a bandh at Shadnagar market yard.

He said both Modi and KCR implemented and supported the same policies in their seven years regime, which were "against the interests of farmers", but "now KCR has started a new drama" in the name of farmers' issues. Reddy demanded that the Chief Minister should convene the Assembly and send a resolution against the new farmer laws introduced by the Centre if he was serious. "KCR has taken a sudden turn against Modi's decision after supporting him all along. It is a drama. In KCR's regime, 6,388 farmers committed suicide." He also expressed indignation saying, "there is no right for dharnas against TRS government, which blocked the Dharna chowk in Hyderabad for protests. Today, they claim to be in protest", adding, that only the Congress party will fight for farmers sincerely.

**10,460 RTC BUSES GO OFF THE ROAD**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 8

As many as 10,460 buses of the TSRTC were confined to depots across state on Tuesday due to Bharat Bandh by the farmers against Central Farm Acts.

According to RTC authorities all since morning, all the 10,460 buses including (3,000) city buses remained in their respective 97 bus depots in the state. Similarly, all the statewide operations of nearly 3,000 buses from the Mahatma Gandhi Bus Station were suspended. The authorities said that bus services resumed after 3 pm partially. Due to non-operating of bus services, the corporation has lost a revenue of around ₹4.5 crore said RTC director of operations Yadagiri. He said that if all services in operation the RTC get ₹9 crores in a day.

Private transport services were also affected in city and state due to the Bandh. Though in some places autorickshaws and cabs operators tried to operate services but agitators stopped them.

# Political drama by TRS: Bandi

Says TRS supported Bharat bandh only to divert attention of people

**IREDY SRINIVAS REDDY | DC**  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 8



BJP state president and MP Bandi Sanjay along with MP D. Arvind addresses a press conference at the BJP head office in Nampally on Tuesday.

— S. SURENDER REDDY

BJP state president Bandi Sanjay Kumar charged that ruling TRS supported the state-wide bandh only "to divert attention of people".

Addressing a press conference, he asked if the Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao was so concerned about issues of farmers, why did he (CM) not come out of his farmhouse. "Why did KCR not take the agitation seriously if the new farm laws are against agriculture and farmers welfare," he asked; saying it is all a political drama enacted by the Chief Minister.

The state BJP president wondered about the sudden interest TRS is taking on farmers' issues and bandh and felt it could be the effect of GHMC election results.

He was addressing the press conference after several leaders, including TRS' Pembi Mandal ZPTC Janaki Ramesh and Nirmal ex-municipal chairman Ganesh Chakravarti joined the BJP at the party headquarters in Hyderabad in presence of MP Soyam Bapu Rao.

Sanjay said government employee associations supporting the bandh amounts to violation of their duty as pub-

lic servants. He asked why the same employee leaders are not fighting against the state government for PRC, which has been pending since years.

The state BJP president demanded that the state government distribute ₹10,000 compensation to flood-affected people across the state and not merely to those in GHMC.

Speaking to mediapersons at the BJP state office in Nampally, he declared, "I am ready to debate on farmers' bill with the Chief Minister and his cabinet ministers. KCR will soon face the same fate as the Libyan dictator Gaddafi."

Very soon, the farmers of Telangana will teach him a good lesson."

After removing the Dharna Chowk, does the TRS have any moral right to stage any protest, he questioned. He wondered if the Municipal Minister and TRS working president K.T. Rama Rao was "not satisfied" by the disaster of the GHMC elections and the defeat faced at the hands of the BJP.

"KTR and his sister Kavitha are not giving commissions in deals to various ministers and MLAs, which is why TRS

leaders are openly indulging in land grabbing throughout the state," Arvind alleged.

Ignoring the high production of turmeric in the state, the KCR government is buying turmeric from other states for the sake of commission, he said. "Now they are worried about their loss of crores of money through commissions."

If the Telangana government does not change their attitude, President's rule will be imposed here, he said. "We know more about the Constitution better than KCR," he said.

## Agri laws anti-farmer, KCR's concern fake, says Uttam

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 8



TPCC chief N. Uttam Kumar Reddy along with party leaders addresses a press meet at Gandhi Bhavan in Hyderabad on Tuesday.

— P. ANIL KUMAR

The Congress party salutes and supports farmers who are on an agitation-mode across the country against the anti-farmer pro-corporate laws enacted by the Narendra Modi government, said TPCC chief N. Uttam Kumar Reddy.

Speaking to mediapersons here at Gandhi Bhavan on Tuesday, Reddy said that the BJP-led Central government is favouring corporations and trying to render farmers weaker on their own agricultural land.

He said there has been an overwhelming participation of Congress party leaders and activists in making the Bharat Bandh a big success, in response to a clarion given by farmers.

The former Indian Air Force officer said, "before these laws were introduced by the Modi government, there was a provision allowing farmers to store food grains. But Prime Minister Narendra Modi has taken away that power from farmers at the behest of the corporate sector."

He was equally scathing of the "opportunist" response of the

TPCC chief for "staging a protest and dharna against the very farm bills and BJP government they have always supported in Parliament. This is shedding crocodile tears for the farmers. The TRS government is least bothered about farmers of Telangana," the Lok Sabha MP said.

In solidarity with farmers and their nationwide protest, the Congress party will not celebrate national party president Sonia Gandhi's birthday, Uttam Reddy said, and

he slammed Serlingampally MLA,

who shares the surname Gandhi for openly initiating violence against common citizens and beating people openly on the roads. "This is the kind of governance in Telangana state under KCR."

On a different topic, Uttam Reddy said that Telangana Congress in-charge Manikam Tagore would visit the state on Wednesday to initiate the process of selecting a new Congress chief for the state. "After taking suggestions from all leaders, the selection of a new PCC chief will take place," he added.

The officers are Shikha Goel (East Zone), Anil Kumar (West Zone), Tarun Joshi (Central Zone), Avinash Mohanty (North Zone), Comdt Murthy (South Zone), Madipati Srinivas (Panjagutta Division) and Srinivas Reddy CSW (Banjara Hills).

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## SHORT TAKES

## 277 DECOY OPS HELD IN NOV. BY SHE TEAMS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 8

The She Teams police of Cyberabad has received 147 complaints during the month of November and 31 cases were registered, including 11 criminal and 20 petty ones, said the officials. As many as 277 decoy operations were conducted at various places such as bus stops, shopping malls, railway stations, tutorials, colleges, etc and 237 awareness programs were conducted, which was attended by 9,322 individuals. Apart from this, She Teams has received 82 calls through Dial 100 Immediate Response Teams and all complaints have been acted upon and disposed of on merits. Cyberabad SHE Teams requests the women to approach them by sending WhatsApp messages to 9490617444 or directly call the respective SHE teams or send an email to sheteam.cyberabad@gmail.com.

## 20-YEAR-OLD ARRESTED FOR STEALING BIKES

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 8

The West Zone Task Force team on Tuesday apprehended a 20-year-old youth for stealing two bikes in Langer Houz area. Officials recovered two stolen bikes from his possession.

The accused, identified as Mohammed Khan alias Mammu, a resident of Khadeer Bagh of Nalanagar in Tolichowki, said the police.

He hatched a plan to steal bikes to fund his drug and alcohol addiction and stole two bikes parked in residential. After cases were booked for theft and an investigation was launched.

Meanwhile, on Tuesday, while Mohammed went to Langer Houz area to sell the stolen vehicles, the West Zone Task Force team apprehended him. He was later handed over to the Langer House law and order police for further investigation.

## MIN. ILLEGALLY OCCUPIED MY LAND: WOMAN

From Page 1

"In her complaint, Devi said her mother Ponnaboina Padmavathi is the pattadar of the 2.13 acres of land in Suraram village. Since the land is located between two hospitals owned by the minister, she claimed he demanded her to sell the land to him. When she refused to part with the land, Reddy's men occupied 20 guntas of land and added it to the minister's land, and constructed a compound wall. Even after this, his men continued to threaten her, demanding that she sell the land to the minister," police said.

"They frequently visit my house and threaten me with dire consequences. My mother and sister are dead. Now I am alone, facing a threat to my life," Shyamala Devi said in her complaint.

**THEY FREQUENTLY** visit my house and threaten me with dire consequences. My mother and sister are dead. Now I am alone, facing a threat to my life," Shyamala Devi said in her complaint.

## Pesticide residues, metals causes for Eluru illness

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC  
VIJAYAWADA, DEC. 8

Residues of pesticides and preservatives that farmers use to keep vegetables fresh and fish feed containing heavy metals like lead and nickel were reported to have caused mystery illness, affecting nearly 536 people in Eluru in West Godavari.

State health authorities said farmers use pesticides, preservatives and heavy metals extensively for vegetables and fish and these chemicals might have entered the body of the consumers, affecting their health.

In its preliminary report, New Delhi-based All India Institute of Medical Sciences confirmed the high presence of heavy metals like lead and nickel in the

## Ahead of New Year eve celebrations, task force officials tap informants

NAVEEN KUMAR | DC  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 8

Ahead of the New Year's eve, police forces are gearing up to curb the inflow of narcotics into the city. Special operations teams and task force officials are tapping their informants and monitoring habitual offenders. LSD, cocaine and MDMA are a big hit with the Hyderabad crowd and are usually in high demand during this time, officials said.

Police officials are scanning contacts of those who were previously caught in the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act cases to find the consumers and suppliers through them. "In the last three years, we noticed an increase in demand and supply of narcotics in the city during the year end. This time, we are trying to curb the sale by maintaining a strict vigil in and around the city," officials from Rachakonda police said.

"Most of the resorts and farmhouses fall under L.B.Nagar and Yadadri zone. In the recent past, there were allegations that

Number of drug seizures done by the Excise Enforcement teams in Hyderabad from January 1, 2020 till November 30, 2020:

Marijuana	- 257.3 kilos
Cocaine	- 296 grams
Diazepam	- 494 grams
Hashish oil	- 3.352 kilos
Charas	- 410
MDMA	- 108 grams
LSD blots	- 60 blots

star hotels and resorts are encouraging some illegal activities and we have issued orders for them to follow during the New Year's eve" added the official.

The organisers of new year programmes will be strictly warned that any person caught consuming or selling narcotics and psychotropic substances at parties and if management fails in preventing the same, it will lead to culpability of management and action will be

taken as per law, police said, adding that organisers should pay special attention to parking areas and other places where drugs can be clandestinely sold.

Meanwhile, Hyderabad city police said that they will be issuing notices to hoteliers to keep a vigil on drug peddlers and usage of drugs during the new year parties. CCTV coverage and footage is very important during the parties to detect foul play.

The Cyberabad Police will be conducting a meeting with the bars and restaurants, resorts, convention centres, pubs, hotels and event organisers regarding the New Year celebrations to issue guidelines to follow.

## Techie arrested for running drug racket

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 8

A techie who was running a drug racket through social media platform and was accepting payments in bitcoins was caught along with three others in two different cases by the Excise Enforcement team of Hyderabad who seized LSD blots and three kilos of ganja their possession on Tuesday.

The arrests were done following reliable information regarding illegal possession and transportation of LSD blots said the officials, adding that they then conducted a route watch near KFC Mehdiapet and Seized 55 LSD blots along with a scooter from Mohd Sohaib Khan, 22, a software employee from Rethi Bowli.

"He purchased 100 LSD blots for ₹50 per blot and was selling the same for ₹1,700 to 2,000 per blot. He reportedly absconding.

## Women roped in to hoodwink cops

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 8

ONE SUCH agent was caught by the Special Operations Teams of Rachakonda, who was caught smuggling 20 kilos of marijuana.

days back and was heading back to Mumbai via bus with the contraband when our teams caught her at Uppal crossroads. We found that she was carrying nine packets of dry marijuana, weighing about 2.25 kilos, packed in a brown paper cover," said the Police Commissioner of Rachakonda, Mahesh Bhagwat.

This is a new modus operandi used by the interstate smugglers to hoodwink cops, sources from the SOT revealed. "They hire a young female, usually in her 20's, and give her a makeover to 'look rich'. She is then ordered to follow instructions and is given a mobile phone with contact information of suppliers.

The mule is then given flight tickets to fly out and collect the drug consignment and get back via road in luxury buses," explained the official.

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 8

A local court here on Tuesday sentenced a man and his mother for seven years rigorous imprisonment in the dowry death case of his wife in June 2016. The court also imposed a fine of ₹6,000 on each of them.

The victim S. Leelavathi, a resident of Krishna district in Andhra Pradesh was married to S. Sashikiran Reddy, 35, a resident of Malkajgiri in October 2015.

At the time of marriage, parents of Leelavathi had given cash, gold, agriculture land and other material as dowry as demanded by Sashikiran and his

mother Usha. After marriage, the couple was happy for only a month, but later, Leelavathi was harassed for additional dowry.

From February 2016, the harassment increased with the duo not even providing food to Leelavathi. Unable to bear the harassment, Leelavathi committed suicide by hanging in the house in June 2016.

Based on a complaint from her father, the Malkajgiri police booked a case and arrested Sashikiran and Usha.

Rachakonda police commissioner Mahesh M. Bhagwat appreciated the investigating officer, public prosecutor and the court duty officials for their efforts in securing the conviction.

## Habitual property offender arrested

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, DEC. 8

Zone and detective inspector of Narsingi police.

"He commits offences single handed and strikes at locked houses between 10 am to 5 pm. He leaves on his motorcycle in the morning hours and keeps rod and cutting pliers inside with him to break open. He commits offences in apartments by disguising as an electrician or plumber with the colony or apartment security and only takes gold ornaments and cash," said the police, adding that he uses helmet and facemask to hide his identity.

The accused, identified as Mir Kazam Ali Khan alias Surya Anna, 28, was arrested by the sleuths of CCS Shamshabad along with SOT Shamshabad

mother Usha. After marriage, the couple was happy for only a month, but later, Leelavathi was harassed for additional dowry.

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## VIVAD SE VISHWAS SCHEME 2020

## Resolving Disputes, Reinforcing Trust

Avail this Golden Opportunity... Settle your Income Tax Disputes

## ELIGIBILITY

- Appeals/writs filed on or before 31.01.2020 and pending.
- Orders for which time for filing appeal has not expired on 31.01.2020.
- Cases pending before Dispute Resolution Panel (DRP) on 31.01.2020
- Cases where DRP issued direction on or before 31.01.2020 but no order has been passed.
- Cases where assessee filed revision (Section 264) on or before 31.01.2020.
  - Search cases if the disputed tax is less than Rs. 5 Crore in a year.
  - The appeals/writs filed either by taxpayers or the Department.
- Disputes where the payment has already been made shall also be eligible.
- Cases in Arbitration in India or abroad.

## SALIENT FEATURES... PAYMENT TERMS

## DISPUTES COVERED

- All disputes, subject to some exclusion, in relation to the:
  - i. Disputed tax
  - ii. Disputed penalty
  - iii. Disputed interest
  - iv. Disputed Fee
  - v. Disputed Tax deducted at source (TDS) or Tax collection at source (TCS)

## Payment made on or before

31st March, 2021

## Appeal relates to disputed tax

25% of the disputed penalty or interest or fee

## Payment made on or after

1st April, 2021 but on or before the last date to be notified

## Appeal relates to disputed tax

Appeal relates only to disputed penalty or interest or fee

## 110% of the disputed tax (135% in search cases) such that it does not increase total demand

30% of the disputed penalty or interest or fee

If an issue in taxpayer's pending appeal is already decided in taxpayer's favour by an appellate forum or if Department has filed appeal on an issue, amount payable is 50% of aforesaid amounts.

## VIVAD SE VISHWAS SCHEME 2020 - KEY DATES:

FILE YOUR DECLARATION BY  
31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER, 2020MAKE PAYMENT WITHOUT ADDITIONAL AMOUNT BY  
31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH, 2021Visit: [www.incometaxindia.gov.in](http://www.incometaxindia.gov.in)  
[www.incometaxindiaefiling.gov.in](http://www.incometaxindiaefiling.gov.in)Income Tax Department  
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davp 15401/13/0003/2021

# DECCAN Chronicle

9 DECEMBER 2020

## Court rap over Central Vista: Rethink in order

The Supreme Court's rap on the knuckles of the Narendra Modi government for its unseemly hurry to forge ahead with its plan to disfigure the most iconic vista of New Delhi, built between 1921 and 1927 by architects Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker, and leave the exchequer poorer by at least ₹20,000 crores — though this is likely to escalate — is well-received. Worryingly, the Modi government had taken advantage of the lockdown it had ordered to push ahead with what is being dubbed as the PM's vanity project despite the matter being sub judice. The bench of Justices A.M. Khanwilkar, Dinesh Maheswari and Sanjeev Khanna has rightly put a lid on it, as of now.

The 64,500 square metre Central Vista redevelopment plan was hatched on the frivolous basis of putative cost-benefits of integrated offices, as the government sought to play up the walking distance between various departments in terms of traffic jams and blame on architecture delays due to politics, red tape and work culture. The requirement of carrying out occasional repairs in the Parliament building was seen as an insurmountable problem, but the structure is only 100 years old and by no means worn out as it is being claimed to be. It needs care, of course, given its Grade I heritage status. The plan also goes against the Delhi Master Plan, which states that no new offices should be built and every effort made to decongest it.

There are well-founded suspicions that the project is indeed a gravy train for the regime's favourite babus and builders

Besides the very real threats to heritage and the environment, as hundreds of trees must now be translocated leading to the loss of biodiversity, not to mention the city's most popular space for public recreation, almost every other aspect of the redevelopment plan — its clearances, public consultations and aesthetics — is problematic. For one, no heritage assessment analysis was done. The environmental impact assessment report as well as the Central Vista committee report was rushed. The DDA changed the land use after a perfunctory hearing on 1,300 public objections. The tender to build the new Parliament building, that went to a Gujarat-based architecture firm, was hastily awarded. There are well-founded suspicions that the project is indeed a gravy train for the ruling party's favourites. All this forms the substance of the bunch of 10 petitions the Supreme Court is currently hearing.

It is also learnt that the plan entails the demolition of four bhavans built in the 1960s — the iconic National Museum, Vigyan Bhavan, the fairly recent IGNCA, and the very new and expensive external affairs ministry buildings. That flies in the face of the basic tenets of sustainability.

But what shows the Centre's move in the most terrible light is that it's being done as lakhs of Indians lack food security and the nation's medical infrastructure needs strengthening on an urgent basis.

Government sources claim that a belief that the current Parliament House was "unlucky" and anticipation of delimitation — the new building can house 1,224 instead of 790 members — are among the real reasons for the exercise. The Supreme Court has, meanwhile, in its order Monday, given the green light to hold the foundation stone laying ceremony for the project, albeit conditionally, on Thursday, December 10. This will be accompanied by a religiously coloured bhoomi pujan, which should have had no place in an institution that serves a secular republic. Doubts may well be created in the minds of our citizens about the future outcome of the lawsuit.

## Anju's inspiring secret

It may take just a microsecond to post a composed tweet but in that instant our estimation of the long jump athlete Anju Bobby George went up a billion fold. While her revelation in a Twitter bombshell that she has had only one kidney since birth is remarkable enough, what lends her narration an incredible dimension is her reticence to say this during her career. In choosing to let out the secret at a difficult time for humanity during the coronavirus pandemic, she has timed well the telling of her inspirational tale of success against seemingly insurmountable odds.

It is at the drop of a hat that professional athletes are known to complain about the state of their body and mind during competition, the conditions in which they compete and the problems they face in their sporting career and life.

Anju may have come face to face with her true condition only in 2001 when she consulted doctors because of excessive fatigue. Remarkably, her best years in athletics came soon after with medals in Asian, Commonwealth and World competitions. Her battle against her body was made worse by her allergy to painkillers but she never trotted out an excuse in public.

Women in sport are an inspiration because they face additional difficulties in their physiology and hormonal balance.

Their spirit shines through as they compete, with mothers seen going on to win medals and even tennis grand slams. Besides stereotypical sporting challenges, women also have had to battle racial discrimination like the Williams sisters and male domination and chauvinism like Billie Jean King.

While a batsman might let on that he is colour blind or an athlete talk freely about his heart condition, women stars are known for their patient and silent determination to achieve. Given such a background, Anju's achievements gain a lustre, as does her husband, coach and sportsman Robert George's contribution to her career.

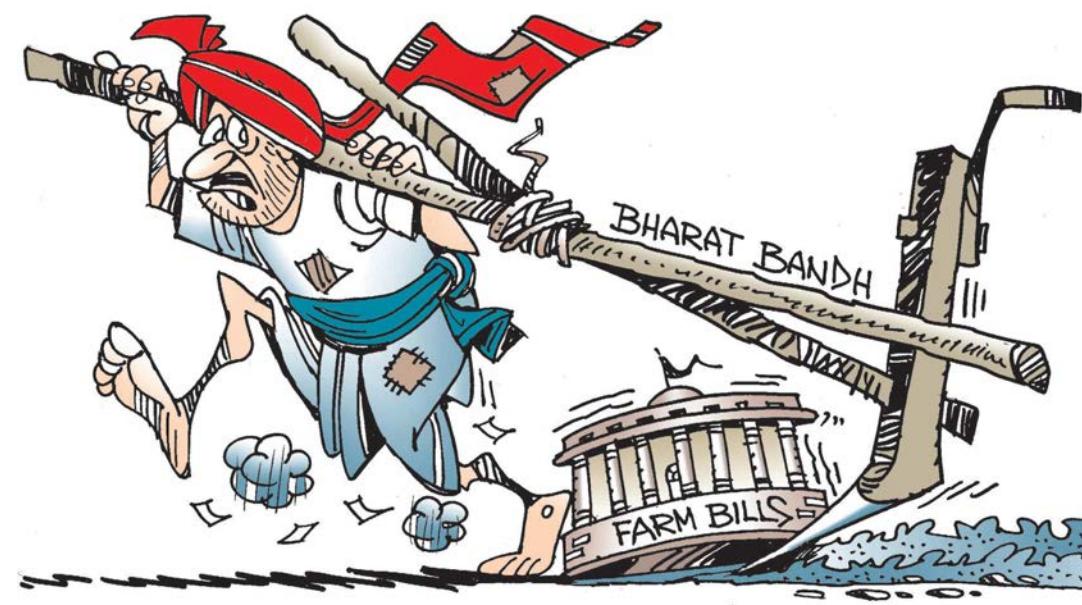
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Subhani



## At the Singhu border: An agitation like none other

Anand K. Sahay

### Far & Near

The farmers' movement rocking the Delhi region, with its ripple effects spreading, appears unique due to its patterns of participation and mobilisation, which lend it spectacular social energy articulated in wholly peaceful fashion. Whether it has the potential for wider political impact will depend on its staying power.

The Narendra Modi government's efforts to discredit it as a "Khalistan" plot — as Sikh farmers are its most visible element — or the devious result of the Congress' machinations have been brought together for that very purpose by its BJP-RSS core. It wore the clothing of an anti-corruption campaign as Dr Singh was perceived as a man of unshakeable integrity.

Manmohan Singh government, appeared to have been brought through the ordinance route and then passed with unseemly haste in Parliament without discussion and rushed through the Upper House bypassing established voting procedures. But it's not just Punjab's farmers who are at the Singhu border, every section of Punjab society and many from Haryana are out there laying siege to the nation's capital.

While every state in India is primarily agricultural in terms of population, in Punjab and Haryana non-farmers appear closely linked to the farm sector. There appears something emotional and organic about this, unlike in other states. It's this link that gives the agitation its all-of-community character instead of a single occupation colour.

In sharp contrast, while the entirely peaceful anti-CAA movement of last year, mostly involving Muslim women — usually seen as home-bound — in urban settings across the country, did gain international attention, it failed to receive wide national endorsement, although it campaigned with rare courage on a very important national issue — the communal changes made by the Modi government in citizenship laws.

The present government, with its religion-based orientation, and near monopolistic influence on the media and social media, demonised this movement and harassed and punished many of those involved, with the judicial system remaining quiescent and lackadaisical.

Based on a broad appreciation of these historical events, in which this writer was a keen professional observer, it's not hard to see that the truly massive mobilisation of farmers at Delhi's Singhu border with Haryana at the national capital's northern end, from where the road leads to Punjab, has characteristics that separate it from anything in recent decades.

Perhaps its most noteworthy feature is its participation and mobilisation quotient. The movement eschews political links and is about the farmers' demands alone.

The Anna Hazare movement, which led to the undoing of the

It challenges laws that were first brought through the ordinance route and then passed with unseemly haste in Parliament without discussion and rushed through the Upper House bypassing established voting procedures. But it's not just Punjab's farmers who are at the Singhu border, every section of Punjab society and many from Haryana are out there laying siege to the nation's capital.

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### LETTERS

#### FLOOD VICTIMS

GHMC Commissioner Lokesh Kumar ON Monday announced that GHMC staff arranged to collect the applications from flood victims door to door but HS still not arranged the staff. Why? (See *Seva offices close doors on flood victims*. DC, December 8). Thousands line in serpentine queues from 3 am for financial help. Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao and minister K.T. Rama Rao must not ignore the suffering people.

**Vikas Om Vishal Raj**  
Hyderabad

#### BREATHING BETTER

It brings great relief to Hyderabadis to breathe pollution-free air after a long time (*Air quality in Hyderabad found good in Nov., DC, Dec. 7*). Partial credit also goes to the lockdown which in a way kept people indoors resulting in less vehicular movement.

**Tajunissa Amin**  
Secunderabad

#### GREAT LOSS

Among prominent educationists of Hyderabad late janab Arifuddin sahab was an exemplary personality who spent his entire life with the pious mission of providing best education to the poor section of society (*Eminent educationist Arifuddin passes away*, DC, Dec. 8). Indeed his demise is a great loss and may his soul rest in peace. Hope the legacy and noble thoughts left over by him in the shape of colleges and schools will be continued by his children with the same spirit for benefiting the society at large.

**Wasim Ahmed khan**  
Secunderabad

#### Tenancy Bill passed as Opposition walks out

By a staff reporter

**HYDERABAD**, Dec. 8.

The state Assembly today adopted the Andhra Pradesh (Andhra area) Tenancy (Amendment) Bill, by voice vote.

During the second reading of the Bill, members belonging to TUF, Cong-O, Swatantra, CPM, CPI, Jana Congress and independents staged a walkout expressing their "displeasure" at the Bill, which, they said would serve no purpose. Jana Sangh members also walked out later. The Bill seeks, among other things, to reduce the maximum rent payable by the tenants to the landlords and ensure security of tenure to tenants?

that the IAS cadre rules stipulated that a non-cadre officer may be appointed temporarily (maximum three months) to a cadre post if no suitable cadre officer is available. Continuing an officer for a longer period requires prior approval of the Centre. He urged Mr Vardhan to refer the cases of IPS, IRS and IFS officers appointed on the cadre posts of IAS officers to the central government.

And Mr Khemka is not a solitary voice, it turns out that he has now been joined by the Haryana Civil Service Association whose president Dr Vandana Disodia, too, has highlighted the issue. It is not going to die down.

**EMPANELMENT BLUES** The trend of reduced representation at the joint secretary level has got the "heaven born" worried. But none are more worried than

the 2003 batch of IAS officers, whose wait for empanelment is getting inordinately prolonged even by the standards of the Modi sarkar.

Sources say that since August 2019 only one fresh round of 37 officers of the 2002 batch and 25 officers from previous batches have been empaneled as joint secretaries. But the 2003 batch officers continue to await their turn. Meanwhile, four fresh batches of IAS (from the early 1990s) have been empaneled as additional secretaries and two batches (1987 and 1988) have been empaneled as secretaries.

Further, only 17 per cent of the empaneled officers are from the IAS, with the lion's share going to non-IAS officers. This trend is likely to stay in the back of the minds of senior IAS officers even as the 2003 batch continues to hope that

their empanelment happens sooner rather than later.

#### CLEARING THE AIR ON COVID VACCINE

In October, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said the government was preparing to reach every single citizen with the Covid vaccine. In the run-up to the Bihar Assembly elections, the BJP even promised free vaccine to the state's voters in lieu of their support.

The election done and dusted; the government has now changed its stance. Union health secretary Rajesh Bhushan has "clarified" that the government never spoke about vaccinating the entire country! He said that it is important that the discussion be based "only on factual information". Mr Bhushan said that the average daily positivity rate in India is 3.72

per cent and India has the lowest number of cases per million count among all major countries, with 211 cases per million.

According to him, the government's aim now is to vaccinate a critical mass of people and break the transmission of the virus, this not having to vaccinate the entire population, which by itself would be a challenging exercise. This ties in with the view of the World Health Organisation (WHO) experts who say that 65 to 70 per cent vaccine coverage rate is sufficient to reach herd immunity.

But the question is whether the voters of Bihar will get the vaccine first as promised in the BJP's poll manifesto or was it just another *jumla*?

*Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@Twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect.*



Dilip Cherian  
Dilli Ka Babu

**Babus angered by Haryana IAS cadre post appointments**

**A**s noted in an earlier column, there is a degree of discontent among Haryana babus over what many consider is a consistent attempt by the Manohar Khattar government in the state to allow the "usurping" of IAS cadre posts by other services. The Haryana government has appointed several IPS, IFS and IRS officers to the cadre posts of the IAS.

Now Haryana IAS officer and well-known whistleblower Ashok Khemka has entered the fray with his take on the issue. Not known to mince words, a habit that has often landed him in trouble, Mr Khemka has reportedly written to chief secretary Vijai Vardhan and demanded that such cases should be referred to the Centre for consideration.

Those in the know say that in his letter the IAS officer pointed out

that the IAS cadre rules stipulated that a non-cadre officer may be appointed temporarily (maximum three months) to a cadre post if no suitable cadre officer is available. Continuing an officer for a longer period requires prior approval of the Centre. He urged Mr Vardhan to refer the cases of IPS, IRS and IFS officers appointed on the cadre posts of IAS officers to the central government.

And Mr Khemka is not a solitary voice, it turns out that he has now been joined by the Haryana Civil Service Association whose president Dr Vandana Disodia, too, has highlighted the issue. It is not going to die down.

**EMPANELMENT BLUES** The trend of reduced representation at the joint secretary level has got the "heaven born" worried. But none are more worried than

## SHORT TAKES

**BJD TREADS CAUTIOUSLY ON FARMER PROTEST**

AKSHAYA KUMAR  
SAHOO | DC  
BHUBANESWAR, DEC. 8

Odisha's ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD), an arch rival of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), on Tuesday did not participate in the nationwide 'Bharat Bandh' called by the farmers against three farm laws by the Centre. The party, however, extended "moral support" to the agitation.

No clear explanation or clarification was given by the leaders of the regional party with regard to their stand on the farmers' agitation.

In the Parliament, the BJD had taken a 'diluted stand' on the farm laws — it supported passing of the bills in Lok Sabha while it opposed them in Rajya Sabha.

As almost all the non-BJP ruled states and many political parties opposed the farm laws and extended support to the farmers' agitation and 'Bharat Bandh' call, it was expected that the BJD would follow suit.

In fact on Monday, senior BJD leader Debi Prasad Mishra had hinted about the party's opposition to the farm laws and said a final call on extending support to the 'Bharat Bandh' would be taken by the party president and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.

Sources said the BJD deliberately tried to tread cautiously on the issue of farmers' agitation and 'Bharat Bandh' not to earn the displeasure of the BJP which is baying for its blood on the multi-crore chit scam and mining irregularities.

**DIVISIVE FORCES MISLEADING FARMERS: SHIVRAJ**

RABINDRA NATH CHOURHURY | DC  
BHOPAL, DEC. 8

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Tuesday said divisive and disruptive forces were trying to trigger unrest among farmers in the country by misguiding them on the three farm laws passed in the parliament recently.

In a series of twitter posts, Chouhan said a motivated campaign against the three farm laws was launched by some parties as part of their political agenda and cautioned people not to walk into their trap.

He said the farm laws would bring reforms in the agriculture sector and ensure prosperity for the farmers.

The farm laws would attract investment in the agriculture sector leading to establishment of cold storages and food processing units, yielding benefits to the farmers.

He said the prevailing system of procurement of food grains on their minimum support prices (MSPs) and 'mandis' (agriculture markets) would continue and farmers could also avail other options to sell their produce following the farm laws.

Talking to reporters, Chouhan said Congress was maintaining double standards on the issue since it was during the UPA regime, reforms in the Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) Act were recommended to attract private investment in the development of infrastructure in the agriculture sector.

He cited a letter written by former union agriculture minister Sharad Pawar to him in 2011 in this regard, to drive his point home. "Congress is doing politics in the name of farmers. Farmers are well aware of it", he added.



Farmers protest at Tikri border in New Delhi on Tuesday against Centres farm reform laws.

— PTI

**Plough, tractor trend on Twitter****Many users shared videos of deserted markets to show the impact of the stir**

New Delhi, Dec. 8: Social media was abuzz on Tuesday with messages of solidarity with the agitating farmers on 'Bharat Bandh' day as netizens made ploughs, tractors, crops and 'Kisan' trend on Twitter in support of the protesters' demands.

A nationwide agitation was held on the call of December 8 'Kisan hai toh Desh hai'. #AajBharatBandhHai," tweeted user @gschahal, and shared a photo from the main protest site at Delhi-Haryana border.

As the agitation picked up in the morning, the hashtag #Aaj\_Bharat\_Bandh\_Hai was trending till late afternoon. Other hashtags widely used by the netizens were #TractorToTwitter, #IST-

andWithFarmers, #Kisan, #FarmersProtest and #NoFarmersNoFood. Many users also shared videos of deserted markets in cities in Gujarat, Maharashtra and other states to show the impact of the stir.

"I stand with Farmers and strongly support ..Kisan hai toh Desh hai.. #AajBharatBandhHai," tweeted user @gschahal, and shared a photo from the main protest site at Delhi-Haryana border.

Images of ploughs locking a door drawn in the shape of India's map and tractors triumphing over odds were widely shared to convey the idea of bandh and farmers' struggle. Punjabi singer Diljit Dosanjh, who recently had an ugly spat with

actress Kangana Ranaut over the farmers' protest issue, shared posters of 'Bharat Bandh' and the trending hashtag #AajBharatBandhHai.

Many other Twitter users posted posters, pictures and videos to convey their solidarity with the farmers. "Finally Thumbs upThumbs upThumbs up Worldwide trending on number 1 #Aaj-BharatBandhHai," wrote @JowanjotKaur while sharing an image of a Punjabi 'kisan' holding a flag atop the hood of a tractor.

Bharat Kisan Union tweeted bilingually: "Keep supporting! Strengthen Farmer's Voice! Maximum Retweet! #8December #Bharat\_Bandh #FarmersProtestDelhi2020 #FarmersDelhiProtest

#FarmersDilliChalo #AajBharatBandhHai," #RepealBlackLaws #FarmersProtest2020."

Another user @JAafia tweeted: "I stand with Our Kisan Brothers I support #bharathbandh Raised fist Farm laws need to be revoked and Justice should be done to our Farmer Brothers Raised fist Agree = Retweet Down pointing backhand index #i stand with farmers #FarmerProtest #NoFarmersNoFood #AajBharatBandhHai."

The user posted an image of a lock and chain over the map of India to represent the nationwide stir.

"Farmer is the only man in our economy who buys everything at retail, sells every-

thing at wholesale. No Farmer No Food Ear of rice Ear of rice I stand with Our Farmer Brother," said @Mukeshku-marsRES.

Another Twitter user @TiwanaAmann shared an image of Muslims and Sikhs praying at a protest site, side by side, and wrote: "It feels so proud to see how this movement has made people united all over the world. Nobody might have thought farmers would trend today." User @VenkatBhandari3 used an image of a plough figuratively locking the 'door of India' and tweeted: "Farmers are backbone of country they give us food on plate but they get tear gass, water canons and sticks on them #Istandwithfarmer."

— PTI

**Not against farm sector reforms, but new laws don't reflect changes: Cong**

because it is a must to protect the interests of farmers.

He alleged the farm laws brought in by the Centre were passed without any consultation with farmers, and that the government pushed them through as the Coronavirus pandemic raged across the country.

"The government should immediately withdraw these acts. If they want reforms, they should call Parliament, discuss it and then implement it and take all stakeholders into confidence. While passing these acts, nobody was consulted. During Corona period they were passed in Parliament without discussion and stakeholders were not taken into confidence," he told a press conference.

"We are not against reforms but the current laws must be repealed and a fresh reform process initiated after discussion and consultations with all stakeholders," he said.

Senior Congress leader and former Haryana chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda said agriculture reforms should be discussed afresh in Parliament and new laws enacted after consulting all stakeholders.

His assertions came even as farmers observed a 'Bharat bandh' on Tuesday to press for their demand of repealing the three laws. Hooda also said the Minimum Support Price mechanism needs to be incorporated in the law

repealed and a fresh reform process initiated after discussion and consultations with all stakeholders," he said.

Hooda also asked as to why the government did not agree to the opposition demand of bringing another law to punish those buying farm produce below the MSP. The Congress leader said let the private investment come, but farmers' interest should be protected at all costs.

Hooda also brushed aside the BJP's charge that the Congress was fuelling the agitation and said no political party is leading this agitation.

"We are supporting farmers' demand. I am not leading, no party is leading. Now all parties are supporting, because that is their genuine demand. It needs to be maintained."

— PTI

**Maha APMCs remain shut in support of stir**

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC  
MUMBAI, DEC. 8

Agriculture Produce Market Committees (APMCs) remained closed in many parts of Maharashtra to support the Bandh called by protesting farmer unions. Public transport services in Mumbai, including suburban trains and buses, and in other parts of Maharashtra largely remained unaffected.

The Bharat Bandh received the support from ruling parties of Maharashtra — Congress, NCP and Shiv Sena — whose workers took to streets to express solidarity with the protesting farmers. However, trains, public and

private buses, taxis and auto-rickshaws operated as usual. However, the state-owned MSRTC curtailed some services due to the agitation and lack of passengers' response.

Shivaji Sutar, CPRO of Central Railway said that there was no impact of Bandh on suburban services as well as outstation trains on the CR.

Although the ruling parties had supported the Bandh but appealed to protesters not to disrupt public transport services.

In a tweet in Marathi, NCP leader and MP Supriya Sule said it is the moral responsibility of the government to resolve a problem through dialogue if there is anger in any section of the society.

CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury said representatives of 11 parties wanted to meet the President, but Rashtrapati Bhavan allowed only five leaders due to Covid-19 protocols. NCP supremo Sharad Pawar, Congress' Rahul Gandhi, DMK's TR. Baalu, a CPI representative and Yechury are likely to be part of the delegation.

Pawar said: "Tomorrow five-six people from different parties will sit, discuss and take a collective stand... We have a 5 pm appointment with the President. We will present our collective stand before him."

The veteran leader also put out a clarification as an old letter in which he, as Union agriculture minister, had sought reforms in the farm sector to bring in more private participation was called out by the ruling BJP.

Pawar had written to chief ministers like Sheila Dikshit (Delhi) and Shivraj Singh Chouhan (Madhya Pradesh) asking them to amend the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) Act in their states. BJP leaders pointed out, as the letter was circulated online.

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA | DC  
NEW DELHI, DEC. 8

High-voltage political drama was witnessed outside Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's residence on Tuesday where AAP leaders alleged that they were not being allowed to meet the party supremo as he had been placed under "house arrest" by the Delhi Police since he met with the protesting farmers at the Delhi-Haryana border.

"I had planned that today I would go to the border not as CM but as a common man to express my solidarity with the farmers. I think they came to know about my plan and they

did not let me go," Kejriwal later said in an address to party workers at his residence.

"I am glad Bharat Bandh was successful. I prayed for protesting farmers while sitting inside," he added.

The Delhi Police, however, denied the charge. Sources said that police has tightened security around Kejriwal's residence where BJP councillors led by three mayors have been protesting since Monday for the release of funds due to the civic bodies.

Deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia also said that he was not allowed to enter Kejriwal's residence.

The AAP leader later

addressed a press conference outside the CM's residence.

Addressing a press conference earlier, AAP spokesperson Saurabh Bhadrav claimed the city police has put Kejriwal under house arrest. "On the direction of the ministry of home affairs, the Delhi Police has put Arvind Kejriwal under house arrest ever since he visited farmers at Singhu border. No one has been permitted to leave or enter his residence and he has not been allowed to meet anyone. When our MLAs went to meet the CM, they were beaten and thrown on the streets. The party volunteers were also not allowed to meet," he said.

The AAP leader later

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Bid calling date: 09-12-2020, Clarifications, if any, to be requested through e-mail by date: 16-12-2020, 03:00 PM. Bid Document Fee: Rs 10,000/-, Contact person: General Manager: srinivasrao.tg@gov.in, Manager (OAP): ksckshet-ts@telangana.gov.in, JCES, TSPC: jces-spcc@telangana.gov.in, TSTS Reference No. TSTSIOAP/595/TS/PCB-Lab-Instrument/2020										
For further details regarding detailed Tender Notification, specifications and digital certificate please visit <a href="http://www.tsits.telangana.gov.in">www.tsits.telangana.gov.in</a> or <a href="https://tender.telangana.gov.in">https://tender.telangana.gov.in</a>										
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GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA REVENUE DEPARTMENT FORM-C NOTIFICATION										
(Under Section 11 of the Act where 10A Exemption is given)										
(See Rule 6(1))										
Collector Office File No.G2/3824/2018 Date: -10-20-2020 LAO/ RDO Office File No.B/74/2018 Date: 13-10-2020 Gazette No. VKB-04/2020 Where it is issued to the Government of Telangana Collector that a total of 10,000/- is required in respect of the project of Bhashankot Mandal Vikarabad District for public purpose namely Construction of High Level Bridge at KM 5/8 on Basheerabad - Karankot Road in Vikarabad District Therefore it is notified that for the above said project in the Jeengi Village, Bhashankot Mandal Vikarabad District for Ac-16.00 Hectare measuring more or less Ac. 10.00 Gts. acres Viz. hectare of standard measures, whose detailed description is as following is proposed for acquisition:										
Village: Jeengi Mandal:Basheerabad Sl. Sy. No./Type of land N S E W Boundaries Total Extent of land under acquisition Structures/Trees & Ay. Remarks										

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## SHORT TAKES

**MODI'S PUBLIC ENGAGEMENTS UP 25% IN SEPT-NOV**

New Delhi, Dec. 8: Amplifying his public engagements considerably during the Covid-19 pandemic, Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended 101 events using technology between September and November this year, averaging more than one programme every day, official sources said on Tuesday.

This is more than 25 per cent higher as compared to the same period of the previous year when the Prime Minister had 78 domestic engagements, they noted. In these three months of 2020, Modi has extensively used technology to interact with all sections of society, from rural India to investors and from youth to CEOs. He has inaugurated and launched various schemes in rural India, while also participating in virtual summits with international leaders, the sources added. The Prime Minister participated in 26 programmes of launch or inauguration of some project or initiative between September and November this year.

With the government focussing on helping the deprived sections of the society, the poor's welfare was the main theme in his interactions, sources said, noting that Modi interacted with street vendors and also beneficiaries of the 'PM Awas Yojana', a housing scheme for the poor.

**FIVE ALLEGED TERRORISTS SENT TO 4-DAY CUSTODY**

New Delhi, Dec. 8: Five persons suspected to have terrorist links and arrested after an encounter here were remanded for custodial interrogation of four days by a Delhi Court on Tuesday. According to the police, Shabir Ahmad, Md Ayub Pathan and Riyaz Rather were allegedly affiliated with terrorist organisation Hizbul Mujahideen while Gurjot Singh and Sukhdeep Singh were accused of being involved in the killing of Shaurya Chakra winner Balwinder Singh in Punjab. All the five were arrested on Monday after an encounter from Shakarpur locality in east Delhi.

They were produced before Metropolitan Magistrate Sahil Khumri, who allowed their police custody till December 11. The police had sought their remand for eight days saying it was required for further investigation in the case.

According to the police, Ahmad, Pathan and Riyaz were from Kashmir and they were allegedly supplying money to the other two from Punjab to carry out targeted killings. The five have allegedly revealed Pakistani spy agency ISI's attempt to link Khalistani operatives with terror outfits in Kashmir, police said. Advocate Qausar Khan, appearing for the accused, said two of the accused have been charged under the NDPS Act and three have been booked under relevant sections of the Arms Act.

**HC DISMAYED OVER NAVLAKHA'S SPECTACLES ROW**

**SHAHAB ANSARI | DC**  
MUMBAI, DEC. 8

Observing that humanity is most important, the Bombay High Court on Tuesday referred to alleged theft of activist Gautam Navlakha's spectacles inside Taloja prison and called for the need to conduct a workshop for jail officials to sensitise them on the needs of prisoners.

Navlakha is an accused in the Elgar Parishad-Maoist links case and the issue of theft of his spectacles was also heard on Tuesday when it was hearing two petitions filed by activists, Ramesh Gaichor and Sagar Gorkhe, challenging their arrest by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in the Elgar Parishad-Maoist links case.

Navlakha's family members on Monday claimed that his spectacles were stolen on November 27 inside the Taloja prison, where he is lodged. They claimed that Navlakha is "almost blind" without the spectacles and yet, when they sent a pair of new spectacles to him by post earlier this month, the prison authorities refused to accept it and sent it back.

"Presently Gautam Navlakha is in acute distress, is unable to see things around him and consequently his blood pressure has shot up," read a statement circulated on Monday evening by Navlakha's lawyers that was signed by the activist's wife Sahba Husain.

**Snowtime again**

People walk on a snow-covered road after fresh snowfall near Atal Tunnel in Lahaul-Spiti district on Tuesday. Snowfall continued in many areas in the higher reaches of the valley with Gulmarg recording about seven inches of fresh snowfall. They said other areas like Gurez, Mughal Road and Zojilla axis on Srinagar-Leh road also received fresh snowfall.

**BJP men killed worker with shotgun: Police**

**RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC**  
KOLKATA, DEC. 8

The West Bengal Police has put the blame of BJP worker Ulen Roy's death on "shotgun fire" by "armed persons", who it alleged, were brought by the saffron party to its rally to Uttar Kanya, the North Bengal state secretariat in Siliguri, on Monday with a "malafide intention to create violence."

It added, "This is unprecedented. Bringing armed persons in protest programs and inciting them to fire is unheard off. There was a malafide intention to create violence by the use of firearms. CID West Bengal has been asked to investigate. Truth will come out and strong action will be taken against all those who planned and executed the heinous crime."

In a veiled reference to the incident, West Bengal and Trinamul Congress supremo and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee told a meeting in Burdwan West, "BJP holds its rallies but kills own workers to peddle lies...They just killed someone firing pallets so easily!"

Calling the incident "unprecedented" and "unheard" the police has entrusted the criminal investigation department (CID) for a probe though the BJP, which observed a 12-hour North Bengal bandh on Tuesday in protest of its worker's death, rejected it's allegations.

The police, which earlier rejected the BJP's claims of lathicharge as the cause of Roy's death, stated, "As per the post mortem report 'death was due to the effects of shotgun injuries.' Police do not use shotguns. It's

obvious that during yesterday's protest in Siliguri, armed persons were brought and they fired from firearms. The deceased received pellet injuries from a shotgun fired from close range by a person standing near the deceased in the protest program."

It added, "This is unprecedeted. Bringing armed persons in protest programs and inciting them to fire is unheard off. There was a malafide intention to create violence by the use of firearms. CID West Bengal has been asked to investigate. Truth will come out and strong action will be taken against all those who planned and executed the heinous crime."

Countering the police version, state BJP president Dilip Ghosh said, "I found at least ten more workers, who were on the front of the rally, suffered similar gunshots like Roy's. The police provoked them to come towards them. When they moved ahead, the firing began suddenly. Roy alone had around 10 wounds from gunshots. Who, if not the police, opened the fire then? Who were with the police there? Were they Trinamul Congress workers in the police uniform? We find them with the cops everywhere to attack us."

**High voter turnout in Kerala civic polls**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DEC. 8

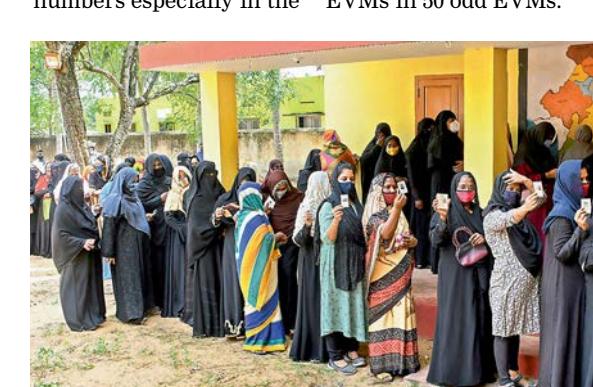
forenoon to exercise their franchise. The voter turnout hinted at a tight contest with the ruling LDF making every effort to retain its hold in the local bodies and opposition UDF and BJP giving a tough challenge.

The total poll percentage recorded in the first phase till 6.05 pm was 72 per cent. Thiruvananthapuram - 68.59, Kollam 72.35, Pathanamthitta - 69, Alappuzha 76 and Idukki 73.57 per cent. The percentage is likely to go up further in the final count.

The ruling CPM led LDF, opposition Congress led UDF and BJP led NDA are keeping their fingers crossed over the high voter turnout.

Long queues were seen outside polling stations in Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Pathanamthitta, Alappuzha and Idukki districts since morning for the polls which are considered semi finals before the crucial Assembly elections next year.

Despite strict Covid-19 safety protocol in place, voters came out in large numbers especially in the



Residents stand in a queue to cast their votes in Thiruvananthapuram on Tuesday.

— PTI

**Covid crisis has stabilised with active cases showing a clear-cut declining trend****Mobile tech to be used for vaccination drive: PM**

New Delhi, Dec. 8: With the chances of a Covid-19 vaccine being available soon increasing, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said that mobile technology will be used for mass inoculation against the pandemic.

Speaking at the India Mobile Congress, he said mobile technology has enabled benefits worth billions of dollars to reach the deserving and also helped the poor and vulnerable during the pandemic.

At a press briefing, NITI Aayog member (Health) VK. Paul said the Covid-19 situation in India has stabilised with active cases showing a "clear-cut declining trend" even though the pandemic situation in many other countries is becoming quite serious. The concern and anxiety that arose following an increase in daily cases of infection in Delhi has also settled now, he said.

Asked what steps would be followed by the DCGI in the absence of a water-tight emergency use authorisation law for granting licence to vaccine makers, Union health secretary Rajesh Bhushan said not all countries' regulatory framework or rules and acts mention emergency use authorisation.

"So, the fact that this phrase is not used in the national regulatory framework of any country does not mean that specific country does not have an enabling provision to accord an approval which is early and which is distinct from a regular market approval. India's regulatory framework has a specific provision for

grant of emergency use authorisation. Although this phrase is not used," he said.

The New Drugs and Clinical Trials Rules, 2019, clearly specifies that under specific special situations, relaxation, abbreviation, omission, or deferral of data including local clinical trial data may be considered for

approval.

"This is our law. Similarly other countries also have their legislations," Bhushan said. Giving a bird's-eye view of the Indian landscape of Covid-19 vaccines, Bhushan mentioned that eight vaccines are at different stages of development.

One is Covishield, which is being manufactured by Serum Institute of India in collaboration with AstraZeneca. Phase two and three clinical trials of this vaccine is underway and the firm has applied for emergency use authorisation.

Another is Covaxin, which is being indigenously developed by Bharat Biotech in collaboration with Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and is presently in phase three of clinical trials. It has also applied to the DCGI seeking emergency use authorisation.

The third one is Zycov-D, being developed by Cadila Healthcare Ltd in Ahmedabad in collaboration with central government's Department of Biotechnology and is in phase two of the trials.

— PTI

**19 Bangladeshi fishermen rescued**

**RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC**  
KOLKATA, DEC. 8

The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) has rescued 19 Bangladeshi fishermen from a boat which suffered a machine breakdown in the Bay of Bengal away from the West Bengal coast.

On Monday night an ICG aircraft, on an operational task in the sea, noticed the Bangladeshi fishing boat: Rana with 19 crew members aboard, drifting in the Indian exclusive economic zone after its machine broke down.

This is part of the Narendra Modi government's strategy to boost ties in the region. It is also significant as the UAE and Saudi Arabia have close relations with Pakistan. Of late, however, the Saudi relationship with Pakistan has come under a strain.

During the visit, Gen. Naravane will meet his counterparts and the senior military leadership of the two countries. The Army Chief will visit the UAE on Dec. 9 and 10, when he will call on senior military officials and discuss avenues for enhancing India-UAE defence ties.

He will then travel to Saudi Arabia for the second leg of his tour from Dec. 13 to 14. He will take forward defence cooperation between India and Saudi Arabia.

● An ICG aircraft noticed the Bangladeshi fishing boat: Rana with 19 crew members aboard, drifting in the Indian exclusive economic zone after its machine broke down.

● The 19 fishermen, found exhausted with no ration onboard, were provided with first aid, food and water by ICGS Varad.

The boat had left Coxabazar (Bangladesh) on November 15 for fishing and remained adrift for long.

"The boat was contacted on VHF radio to which no response was received. The aircraft passed the information to Indian Coast Guard Ship (ICGS)

Varad that was deployed in Bay of Bengal on another operational mission. The ship immediately approached towards the boat factoring wind and sea conditions and located the boat in early hours of Tuesday," the ICG stated.

The 19 fishermen, found exhausted with no ration

onboard, were provided with first aid, food and water by ICGS Varad.

The Bangladesh Coast Guard has been requested under the existing memorandum of understanding with the ICG to make necessary arrangements to take over of the stranded fishing boat along with the crew at the pre-designated location in vicinity of International Maritime Boundary Line.

The stranded boat is being towed by the ICGS to hand it over to the Bangladesh authorities.

— PTI

**SC: Centre does not require prior clearances at the time of acquiring lands for NHs****SC nod for 8-lane Chennai-Salem highway**

**PARMOD KUMAR | DC**  
NEW DELHI, DEC. 8

The Supreme Court on Tuesday gave its nod for 277 km long eight lane Chennai-Salem greenfield express highway holding that there was no legal infirmity in the Central government declaring it as part of Bharatmala highway.

Holding that the Central government can under the National Highways Act, 1956 notify any road not forming a part of existing highway.

Speaking for the bench, Justice Khanwilkar said that the requirement of a

national highway within the country as a whole and state-wise, in particular, is to alleviate evolving socio-economic dynamics, and there is nothing in the Constitution of India or for that matter, the National Highway Act, 1956 to limit that power of the central government only in respect of existing roads/highways within the state. To say so would be counter-productive and would entail in a piquant situation that the central

government cannot effectively discharge its obligations under Part IV of the Constitution. Part IV of the constitution spell out the directive principles of state policy."

The court also made it clear that the central government does not require to take prior environmental and other clearances including forest, at the time of acquiring lands for the expansion of existing road as national highway or constructing a new

road to be a part of the national highway.

The court said that the question of taking environment and forest clearance will arise only at the stage when National Highway Authority of India would arrive at the stage of executing a highway project.

The Madras High Court by its April 8, 2019, order had quashed the land acquisition proceedings holding that the environmental clearance for the project was necessary as construction of express highway would adversely impact the environment.



**SHORT TAKES**  
**BLASTS DAMAGE TWO POLISH SUPERMARKETS**

Aalsmeer, Dec. 8: Two Polish supermarkets in the Netherlands were badly damaged by explosions early Tuesday, police said. Nobody was injured in the blasts in Aalsmeer, near Amsterdam, and in a small town in the North Brabant province.

It was not immediately clear if the explosions were linked. Both stores were called Biedronka, but are not part of a large network of budget stores of the same name in Poland. Amsterdam police appealed for witnesses to the blast in Aalsmeer, which happened around 3 am (0200 GMT) and caused major damage to the store and nearby buildings as well as setting a parked car ablaze.

**IRAN UPHOLDS DEATH SENTENCE AGAINST SCRIBE**

Tehran, Dec. 8: Iran's Supreme Court upheld the death penalty of a once-exiled journalist over his online work that helped inspire nationwide economic protests three years ago, Iranian media reported on Tuesday.

The semi-official Tasnim news agency quoted judiciary spokesman Ghohamhosseini Esmaili as saying that the country's Supreme Court confirmed Ruhollah Zam's death sentence. It was not clear precisely when the court made its ruling. It is also not clear when Zam's sentence will be carried out.

Under Iranian law, Zam has another chance to appeal and the judiciary chief has the power to cancel the ruling and order a retrial if he finds it in violation of Shariah law. In June, a court sentenced Zam to death, saying he had been convicted of "corruption on Earth," a charge often used in cases involving espionage or attempts to overthrow Iran's government.

**POPE MAKES SURPRISE VISIT IN RAINY ROME**

Rome, Dec. 8: Pope Francis on Tuesday made a surprise early morning visit to the Spanish Steps in Rome to pray for people worldwide struggling in the pandemic.

The Vatican last week said that due to social distancing concerns Francis was cancelling the traditional December 8 afternoon visit to the square that draws big crowds.

Instead, with rain falling and dawn breaking, Francis popped up in the square at the foot of the Spanish Steps at 7 am (0600 GMT), two hours after the end of Italy's overnight curfew.

Francis left a bouquet of white roses at the base of a towering column which is topped by a statue of the Virgin Mary, prayed, and less than 15 minutes later, left. Except possibly for some dog-walkers and other early risers, few people were out and about in downtown Rome at the hour, since December 8, a feast day devoted to Mary, is an official holiday in Italy, as well as at the Vatican.

**LANKA PRISON RIOT: INMATES TO FACE QUESTIONS**

Colombo, Dec. 8: Sri Lankan probe panel, which has been set up to investigate the prison riot that left 11 inmates dead last month, will interrogate the inmates to figure out what led to the incident.

The riot broke out on November 29 over rising coronavirus infections in the Mahara prison on the outskirts of Sri Lanka's capital Colombo when some inmates tried to escape, prompting the authorities to use force.

The incident happened as pandemic-related unrest has been growing in Sri Lanka's overcrowded prisons. Police spokesman Ajith Rohana said they would seek medical consultant's opinion on the alleged use of drugs prescribed for mental illness, thus making them violent.

R. de Silva, one of the panellists who also is an advisor to the ministry of justice, said the inmates would be interrogated on Tuesday. De Silva said the panel's interim report was handed over to the minister of justice on Monday.

The panel headed by a judge was appointed as the opposition demanded that full information on the cause of the riot needs to be made public.

# 90-year-old Maggie world's first to get anti-Covid jab

'Landmark moment' as the UK kicks off biggest-ever vaccine campaign

London, Dec. 8: A 90-year-old British grandmother, Margaret "Maggie" Keenan, on Tuesday became the first person in the world to receive the Pfizer/BioNTech jab against Covid-19 as the UK kicked off its biggest-ever vaccine campaign in history. At 6:31 am GMT early riser Margaret, known to family and friends as Maggie, was given the life-saving jab by nurse May Parsons at her local hospital in Coventry to mark what the National Health Service (NHS) has dubbed a "landmark moment" on V-Day or Vaccine Day in the fight against the deadly virus. Maggie is among the first set of people contacted in advance by the NHS for the jab based on a predetermined health risk criteria.

The second person vaccinated was 81-year-old William Shakespeare from Warwickshire, who said he was "pleased" to be given the jab.

"I feel so privileged to be the first person vaccinated against Covid-19, it's the best early birthday present I could wish for because it means I can finally look forward to spending time with my family and friends in the New Year after being on my own for most of the year," said Maggie, who turns 91 next week.

The former jewellery shop assistant who retired four years ago has a daughter, a son and four grandchildren and is looking forward to being able to go out again once she receives the top-up booster dose 21 days later. "I can't thank May and the NHS staff enough who have looked after me tremendously, and my advice to anyone offered the vaccine is to take it - if I can have it at 90 then you can have it too," she said.

"It's a huge honour to be the first person in the country to deliver a Covid-



Senior nurse Dilhani Somaweera (R) administers the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine to Josephine Faleye (C), 80, at the Royal Free hospital in London on Tuesday at the start of the UK's biggest ever vaccination programme. — AFP

19 jab to a patient, I'm just glad that I'm able to play a part in this historic day," said nurse Parsons.

"Today marks a huge step forward in the UK's fight against coronavirus, as we begin delivering the vaccine to the first patients across the whole country. I am immensely proud of the scientists who developed the vaccine, members of the public who took part in trials, and the NHS who have worked tirelessly to prepare for rollout," said British Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

However, he struck a note of caution to say that mass vaccination will take time, and therefore there was a need to remain "clear-eyed" about the challenges that remain. Since the Pfizer vaccine got the

green light from the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) last week, the NHS said.

Its workers have been working around the clock to manage the huge scale logistical challenge of deploying the vaccine. Over the weekend, hospitals have begun inviting over 80s in for a jab and work with care home providers to book their staff into vaccination clinics. "We will look back on today, V-day, as a key moment in our fight back against this terrible disease, and I am proud our health services across the United Kingdom are about to embark on our largest ever vaccination programme," said UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock.

— PTI

## Shukla, wife 1st PIO vaccine recipients

London, Dec. 8: An 87-year-old man and his 83-year-old wife from the north east of England on Tuesday became the first Indian-origin couple in the world to get a vaccine against Covid-19, after they got injected with their first of two doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech jab at a hospital in Newcastle. Dr Hari Shukla and his wife Ranjan have become the first two patients at Newcastle Hospitals — and two of the first people in the world — to receive the Covid-19 vaccine. Newcastle Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust said. — PTI

## Saudi royal divorce: Judge against appointing receiver

Dover (US), Dec. 8: A Delaware judge has refused to appoint a receiver to manage and oversee the sale of a multimillion-dollar mansion in Beverly Hills, California, that is at the heart of a bitter divorce feud between a Saudi prince and his ex-wife.

The judge ruled on Monday that the request for a receiver was improper because it was not authorised by a manager of the Delaware limited liability company set up to buy the property in 2011. The motion was filed by a lawyer for Princess Fahdah Husain Abdulrahman Al-Athel on behalf of New Generation Ideas LLC, but Vice Chancellor Paul Fioravanti noted that the princess has denied that she is a manager of that entity.

The judge also noted that her former husband, Prince Faisal Bin Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, did not authorise the request for receivership as a manager of the LLC. The couple married in 2001. Their divorce was finalised in Saudi Arabia in 2016. The princess asked for a receiver after a ruling by a judge in the

Cayman Islands, where she has filed a petition to dissolve a corporation that is controlled by her and her ex-husband and is the sole member of the Delaware LLC.

The Cayman Islands judge told the warring ex-spouses earlier this year that the Delaware court needs to rule first on the prince's claim that he is owed about \$42 million from the LLC for loans he provided to buy and renovate the property.

The Cayman Islands judge has set the value of the property within the range of \$31 million to \$40.5 million, according to court records. Jason Jowers, an attorney for the prince, noted that if the liabilities of the LLC, including the purported loans from the prince, fall into disrepair, resulting in utility shutdowns along with fines, and the threat of foreclosure, by a homeowners association.

The homeowners association represents the "creme de la creme of American corporate society," and its clients are "particularly unhappy" with the Saudi royals for buying "a plaything" in their neighbourhood and letting it go to "hell in a hand basket," he added.

According to court records, the estate was purchased for about \$17 million. — AP

## Everest 8,848.86 m tall: Nepal, China

Kathmandu/Beijing, Dec. 8: The world's highest peak is now taller by 86 centimetres. Nepal and China jointly announced on Tuesday after they remeasured Mt. Everest at 8,848.86 metres, over six decades after India conducted the previous measurement in 1954.

The revised height of Mt. Everest puts an end to the decades-long dispute between the two neighbours on the height of the world's tallest mountain that straddles their shared border. The exact height of Mount Everest had been contested ever since a group of British surveyors in India declared the height of Peak XV,

as it was initially called, to be 8,778 metres in 1847.

Mt. Everest stands on the border between China and Nepal and mountaineers climb it from both sides. Mt. Everest known as Sagarmatha in Nepal while in China it is called as Mt. Qomolangma, the Tibetan name for the world's highest peak.

The Nepal government decided to measure the exact height of the mountain as some geologists suggested that there might have been some changes due to various reasons, including the devastating earthquake of 2015. The 7.8 magnitude earthquake killed nearly 9,000 people in Nepal. — PTI

### CYBER THREAT

**There is no evidence of any intrusions that made use of these vulnerabilities**

## Millions of smart devices vulnerable to hacking

Boston, Dec. 8: Researchers at a cybersecurity firm say they have identified vulnerabilities in software widely used by millions of connected devices — flaws that could be exploited by hackers to penetrate business and home computer networks and disrupt them.

There is no evidence of any intrusions that made use of these vulnerabilities. But their existence in data-communications software central to internet-connected devices prompted the U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency to flag the issue in a bulletin.

Potentially affected devices from an estimated 150 manufacturers range from networked thermometers to "smart" plugs and printers to office routers and healthcare appliances to components of industrial control systems, the cybersecurity firm Forescout Technologies said in a report released on Tuesday.

Most affected are consumer devices including remote-controlled temperature sensors and cameras, it said.

In the worst case, control systems that drive "critical services to society" such as water power and automated building management could be crippled, said Awais Rashid, a computer scientist at Bristol University in Britain who reviewed the Forescout findings.

In its advisory, CISA recommended that users take defensive measures to minimize the risk of hacking. In particular, it suggested cutting off industrial control systems from the internet and isolating corporate networks.

The discovery highlights the dangers that cybersecurity experts often find in internet-linked appliances designed without much attention to security. Sloppy programming by developers is the main issue in this case, Rashid said.

Fixing the problems, which could afflict millions of impacted devices, is particularly complicated because they reside in so-called open-source software, code freely distributed for use and further modification. In this case, the issue involves fundamental internet software that manages communication between internet devices via a technology called TCP/IP.

It is up to the device manufacturers themselves to patch the flaws and some may not bother given the time and expense required, she said.

Some of the compromised code is embedded in a component from a supplier — and if no one documented that, no one may even know it's there. "The biggest challenge comes in finding out what you've got," Rashid said.

## Give fresh impetus to SAARC: Oli

Kathmandu, Dec. 8: Nepalese Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli on Tuesday urged the SAARC member states to give fresh impetus to the stalled regional body, saying that time has come to move forward with "concrete action" on the ground and with needed political will and commitment.

SAARC has not been very effective since 2016 as its biennial summits have not taken place since the last one in Kathmandu in 2014. The 2016 SAARC summit was to be held in Islamabad. But after the terrorist attack on an Indian Army camp in Uri in Jammu and Kashmir on September 18 that year, India expressed its inability to participate in the summit due to "prevailing circumstances".

"Time has come to move forward with concrete action in the ground with needed political will and commitment," said Oli, whose country has been holding the Chairmanship of the SAARC grouping since 2014.

"Giving fresh impetus to

the stalled SAARC process including through the early convening of the Summit can rekindle hope among our people and provide ground to move forward," he added.

SAARC has not been very effective since 2016 as its biennial summits have not taken place since the last one in Kathmandu in 2014. The 2016 SAARC summit was to be held in Islamabad. But after the terrorist attack on an Indian Army camp in Uri in Jammu and Kashmir on September 18 that year, India expressed its inability to participate in the summit due to "prevailing circumstances".

The summit was called off after Bangladesh, Bhutan and Afghanistan also declined to participate in the Islamabad meet. SAARC summits are usually held biennially and hosted by member states in alphabetical order.

— PTI

## Lawmakers, Sikhs back Indian farmers

Washington, Dec. 8: Several US lawmakers and eminent members of the Sikh community in America have voiced their support for farmers agitating in India against the new farm laws and urged that they be allowed to protest peacefully.

His wife, Ranjan,

then volunteered for the jab as she also falls within the first phase of people aged 80 and over, care home workers as well as NHS workers at high risk eligible to receive the "life-saving jab". Hari Shukla and his wife Ranjan have become the first two patients at Newcastle Hospitals — and two of the first people in the world — to receive the Covid-19 vaccine.

— PTI

and protection from misguided, manipulative government regulations," Congressman Doug LaMalfa said on Monday.

"Punjabi farmers must be allowed to protest peacefully against their government without fear of violence," said the Republican lawmaker who represents Californian's first Congressional district. India has called the remarks by foreign leaders and politicians on protests by farmers as "ill-informed" and "unwarranted" as the matter pertained to the internal affairs of a democratic country.

"India is the world's largest Democracy — they owe it to their citizens to allow peaceful protest. I encourage these folks and PM (Narendra) Modi to have peaceful, productive discussions," Democratic Congressman Josh Harder said.

Congressman T J Cox said India must uphold the right to peaceful demonstration and ensure their citizens' safety.

— PTI

## NZ mosque shooter had been to India

Melbourne, Dec. 8: Brenton Tarrant, the Australian-born attacker who killed 51 Muslim worshippers at two mosques in Christchurch, travelled extensively around the world, including India where he spent nearly three months before moving to New Zealand to carry out the country's worst massacre in 2019, according to a detailed report into the shootings released on Tuesday.

Five Indians were among those killed in the terror attack on March 15 last year that also left dozens of others wounded and had shaken New Zealand, regarded as one of the most peaceful countries in the world.

The 792-page Royal Commission of Inquiry report notes that after leaving school, the 30-year-old attacker worked as a personal trainer at a local gym until 2012 when he suffered an injury. "He never again worked in

paid employment. Instead, he lived off the money that he had received from his father and income from investments made with it... With the money from his father, the individual travelled extensively. First, in 2013, he explored New Zealand and Australia and then between 2014 and 2017 he travelled extensively around the world," it said.

Between April 15, 2014, and August 17, 2017, the individual travelled extensively and always alone, except for his travel to North Korea as part of a tour group. "The longest visit to any one country was to India where he stayed between November 21, 2015, and February 18, 2016. The countries that he visited for periods of about a month or more included China, Japan, Russia, South Korea among others," said the report that took about 18 months to compile. — PTI

## CRIMES AGAINST NON-SERBS: 7 HELD IN BOSNIA

Sarajevo, Dec. 8: Bosnian police on Tuesday arrested seven former Bosnian Serb police and army fighters on suspicion of committing atrocities against non-Serbs during the country's devastating 1992-95 war.

The prosecutor's office said the group is suspected of crimes against humanity over the imprisonment and torture of some 150 Bosniak and Croat civilians around the central Bosnian town of Donji Vakuf in the spring and summer of 1992.

— AP

**SHORT TAKES**  
**AVALANCHE**  
**WARNINGS AFTER**  
**SNOWFALL IN OZ**

Berlin, Dec. 8: Authorities in Austria issued avalanche warnings on Tuesday for the east of the country as 4,000 homes there were without electricity and one man was injured while on a back-country skiing tour.

After several days of heavy snowfall in East Tyrol and other parts in the Austrian Alps, several roads were still closed in Tyrol and some valleys were cut off from the rest of the country. Electricity provider Tinnetz said several electrical lines were snapped either by snow or by fallen trees, public broadcaster ORF reported. A 23-year-old German man was injured Monday in the Hahnenkamm skiing region in Tyrol when he went skiing on a closed slope.

**PAKISTAN**  
**ARRESTS TWO**  
**ISIS MEMBERS**

Lahore, Dec. 8: Pakistan's security agencies on Tuesday arrested two members of the Islamic State (ISIS) terror group on the charges of terror financing in Punjab province.

According to the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) of Punjab police, it received a credible source information that two terrorists were collecting funds for the ISIS in Model Town Bahawalnagar, some 400 kms from Lahore.

"An intelligence-based operation was conducted by CTD at Model Town Bahawalnagar. It arrested the two terrorists of ISIS. Funds collected for terrorism financing and literature have been recovered," a CTD spokesperson said in a statement here on Tuesday.

The terrorists are identified as Mohibur Rehman and Usman Ghani alias Abdul Rehman. A case has been registered in CTD Police Station Multan.

**THAI DISSIDENT'S**  
**KIN MEETS JUDGE**  
**IN CAMBODIA**

Phnom Penh, Dec. 8: The sister of an exiled Thai dissident who was reportedly abducted in Cambodia earlier this year appeared before a judge in Cambodia's capital on Tuesday to offer evidence that she hopes will lead to an official investigation into her brother's disappearance.

A group of armed men snatched Wancharleam Satsaksit, 38, off the street in front of his apartment in Phnom Penh, the capital, in early June before taking him away in a black car, according to human rights groups and fellow activists, citing witness accounts and security video at the building.

Sitamai Satsaksit, the dissident's older sister, was joined by her lawyers at the office of the investigating judge at the Phnom Penh Municipal Court and said she hoped the meeting would prompt a formal investigation into her brother's whereabouts. Cambodia has denied that any abduction took place and said no investigation was planned.

**UN URGES RUSSIA**  
**TO WITHDRAW**  
**FROM CRIMEA**

United Nations, Dec. 8: The UN General Assembly has approved a resolution urging Russia to immediately withdraw all its military forces from Crimea "and end its temporary occupation of the territory of Ukraine without delay."

The vote in the 193-member world body was 63-17 with 62 abstentions, close to the vote on a similar resolution adopted last year. The measure, which is not legally binding but a reflection of world opinion, was supported on Monday by Western nations and their supporters and opposed by Russia and its supporters including China, Cuba, Venezuela, Iran and Syria.

Russia sent troops into Crimea and annexed the peninsula in 2014. It has supported separatist rebels in eastern Ukraine in a six-year war that has killed 14,000 people. An uneasy cease-fire has been in effect since late July. The resolution condemned the occupation of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol by Russia and reaffirmed "the non-recognition of its annexation."

It affirmed that "the seizure of Crimea by force is illegal and a violation of international law," and said it must be "immediately returned."

## Don calls US '3rd world country'

**Washington, Dec. 8:** President Donald Trump has likened the US to a "third world country" as he blasted the "rigged" election, reiterating his unsubstantiated claims about widespread voter fraud in the presidential polls. The election was a "disgrace to our country," Trump told reporters at the Oval Office of the White House on Monday during a ceremony to present the Presidential Medal of Freedom to wrestler and coach Dan Gable. "It's like a third-world country — these ballots pouring in from everywhere, using machinery that nobody knows ownership, nobody knows anything about. They have 'glitches', as they call them. Glitches. The glitches weren't glitches. They got caught sending out thousands of votes — all against me."

— DONALD TRUMP  
US President

Biden's transition to power but has not yet conceded defeat, alleging massive voter fraud and electoral malpractice. However, state election officials and the media have denied such large-scale fraud.

Electoral officials in key battleground states have declared Biden the winner, giving him an unofficial 306-232 edge in the Electoral College that determines the outcome of US presidential contests. The Trump campaign has filed multiple lawsuits in several states. — PTI

## Austin selected as defence secretary



Lloyd Austin

Biden's decision to pick Austin comes amidst increasing pressure from the African Americans to name one of them to the top four positions — Secretary of State, Treasury Secretary, Defense Secretary and Attorney General, according to political observers.

Austin was the Commander of the US Central Command from 2013 to 2016. — PTI

## Religion: Both Pak, China worry US

**Washington, Dec. 8:** The US has designated Pakistan and China among eight other countries that are of particular concern for violation of religious freedom, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said. Pakistan and China along with Myanmar, Eritrea, Iran, Nigeria, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan were placed in the list for engaging in or tolerating "systematic, ongoing, egregious violations of religious freedom," Pompeo said in a statement on Monday.

The US also designated al-Shabaab, al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, the Houthi, ISIS, ISIS-Greater Sahara, ISIS-West Africa, Jamaat Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimeen and the Taliban as "Entities of Particular Concern."

Pompeo said the US did not renew the prior "Entity of Particular Concern" designations for al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and ISIS-Khorasan due to the total loss of territory formerly controlled by these terrorist organisations.

"While these two groups no longer meet the statutory criteria for designation, we will not rest until we have fully eliminated the threat of religious freedom abuses by any violent extremist and terrorist groups," he said.

— PTI

The State Department placed the Comoros, Cuba, Nicaragua and Russia on a Special Watch List (SWL) for governments that have engaged in or tolerated "severe violations of religious freedom."

"Religious freedom is an unalienable right, and the bedrock upon which free societies are built and flourish. Today, the United States — a nation founded by those fleeing religious persecution, as

well as those who simply want to exercise this essential freedom," Pompeo said in a statement on Monday.

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## quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	45,608.51
Nifty 50	13,392.95
S&P 500*	3,695.19
Dollar (1)	73.52
Pound Sterling (1)	98.17
Euro (1)	89.20
Gold (10gm)* (1)	49,430▲816
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	48.87
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.939 -0.001
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.903 -0.025

\* As of 8:30 PM IST

## Post-sale, BPCL's LPG business to be in new SBU

Privatisation-bound BPCL's new owner will after three years of takeover get a right to decide on retaining the business of selling subsidised LPG, which in the intervening period will be transferred into a new unit to continue the flow of government subsidy, a top official said. Government subsidy will continue to be given to BPCL customers if the new owner chooses to retain the business after three years, the official said.

## Bengal has 6,000 acres in land bank for industry



The West Bengal government has put 6,000 acres of land meant for the industry in the WBIDC land bank for greenfield investment or expansion of existing operations, officials said. The 6,000 acres of developed and underdeveloped industrial land is readily available in the land bank of West Bengal Industrial Development Corp. Paschim Medinipur and Paschim Bardhaman have the highest developed land parcels.

## Godrej Properties acquires 18 acres in Bengaluru

Godrej Properties said it has bought an 18-acre land parcel in Bengaluru to develop a housing project. Property consultant Anarock facilitated the deal. In a regulatory filing, Godrej said "it has entered into an outright transaction to purchase a well-located land parcel in Whitefield, Bangalore." Sources said the per acre cost in the Whitefield area would be around Rs 13-15 crore, pegging the deal value at about Rs 250 crore.

## Indoco Remedies wins ₹140-crore German tenders

Indoco Remedies said it has won tenders worth Rs 140 crore in Germany for supply of allopurinol tablets, used to treat gout and kidney stones. In a regulatory filing, the firm said the revenue expected from this business is Rs 70 crore per annum. "The supplies to Germany will begin from January 2021 and continue till end of 2022," it said. Aditi Kare Panandikar, MD, said: "This is Indoco's first own label product in Europe."

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■ Firm to use locally developed network and hardware

## Jio's 5G rollout in second half of '21



New Delhi, Dec. 8: Reliance Industries chairman Mukesh Ambani has urged the government to accelerate the rollout of fifth-generation (5G) telecom services and scrap outdated 2G technology, run mainly by rivals Bharti Airtel Ltd and Vodafone Idea Ltd.

"As many as 300 million mobile subscribers in India are still trapped in the 2G era," Ambani said in a speech on Tuesday at the India Mobile Congress. "I assure you that Jio will pioneer the 5G revolution in India in the second half of 2021."

Ambani's push for these policy measures will give an unparalleled edge to Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd, Ambani's telecom unit which disrupted the sector in 2016 with an intense tariff war and is now the country's top wireless operator.

Being a new network built for data-heavy services, Jio doesn't have 2G wireless phone users, unlike Bharti and Vodafone Idea. Ambani has often said that Jio is ready for 5G while its competitors-indebted and loss-making-will find it harder to keep up with such investments.

Ambani also wants deeper penetration and easier availability of smartphones. "Urgent policy steps are needed to ensure that these underprivileged people have an affordable smartphone," he said on Tuesday. Reliance Industries had

### INDIA-SPECIFIC 5G STANDARD AN EXISTENTIAL THREAT: AIRTEL CEO

New Delhi, Dec. 8: The idea to develop India-specific 5G standard is an existential threat to the country's top wireless operator.

He also said the development of a separate 5G standard will impact innovation. "There are sometimes talks that India must have its own 5G standard. This is an existential threat which

asked local suppliers to ramp up production capacity in India to as many as 200 million smartphones over the next two years, Bloomberg reported in September. The group was then in talks with domestic assemblers to make a version of its Jio phone that would run on Google's Android and cost about Rs 4,000.

Ambani also pitched for developing hardware manufacturing in India, saying it is affordable and available everywhere," he said on Tuesday.

Jio's 5G will be powered

by the indigenously developed network, hardware and technology components. "Jio's 5G service will be a testimony to your inspiring vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat."

Jio and other service providers such as Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea offer 4G services. The country however also has a 2G network that supports only voice calling and text messaging.

"I can say with utmost confidence that 5G will enable India to not only participate in the Fourth Industrial Revolution but also to lead it," he said.

As the digitalisation of the Indian economy and Indian society picks up speed, the demand for digital hardware will grow enormously.

Stating that many leading global companies are coming to India to set up manufacturing facilities, he said the country has developed world-class strengths in chip design.

"I clearly foresee India becoming a major hub for the state-of-the-art semiconductor industry," he said. Jio Platforms, with its family of over 20 start-up partners, has built world-class capabilities in artificial intelligence, cloud computing, big data, machine learning, the internet of things and blockchain.

"We are creating compelling home-grown solutions in education, healthcare, agriculture, infrastructure, financial services and new commerce," he said. —Agencies

imports in a critical area. 5G enables connecting virtually everyone and everything together, including machines, objects, and devices.

India, he said, is today among the best digitally connected nations in the world.

"In order to maintain this lead, policy steps are needed to accelerate the early rollout of 5G, and to make it affordable and available everywhere," he said.

Jio's 5G will be powered

around that system is phenomenal."

Indian digital payments took off after the government pushed demonetisation in 2016. The Unified Payments Interface, or UPI, has taken off, thanks to booming smartphone use and wireless data rates among the lowest in the world.

India also mandates that companies use its UPI platform so payments can be sent among all services, including those from Facebook Inc., Amazon.com Inc., Walmart Inc., Paytm, and any new startup. Zero user fees are also required.

"India is a great example," the co-chairman of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation said during the virtual conference.

—Bloomberg

## India's digital finance a global model: Gates

YOOLIM LEE  
SINGAPORE, DEC. 8



Tech pioneer Bill Gates praised India's policies for financial innovation and inclusion, saying his philanthropic foundation is working with other countries to roll out open-source technologies modelled on India's effective implementation.

The country has built ambitious platforms for money transfers and reliable identification, including the world's largest biometric database and a system for sending rupees between any bank or smartphone app. Gates said those policies have drastically reduced the cost and friction of money distribution to the poor in the country, especially during the pandemic.

"If people are going to study one country right now, other than China, I'd say they should look at India," Gates said at the Singapore Fintech Festival on Tuesday. "Things are really exploding there and innovation

around that system is phenomenal."

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—Bloomberg

MICHAEL GONSALVES  
PUNE, DEC. 8

Passenger vehicle (PV) retail sales in November reported a year-on-year rise of 4.17 per cent to 2,91,001 units, as the Diwali-Dhanteras period led to a spike in vehicle registrations in Asia's third biggest economy, the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations, or Fada, said on Tuesday.

Fada, which collected vehicle registration data from 1,265 out of the 1,472 regional transport offices (RTOs), said PV sales stood at 2,79,365 units in November 2019.

However, two-wheeler sales dropped 21.4 per cent to 14,13,378 units last

month compared to 17,98,201 units in Nov. 2019.

While registrations during Navratri were tepid,

people came out in good numbers to purchase their dream vehicles during the Dhanteras-Diwali period,

Source: Federation of Automobile Dealers Association/KBK Infographics

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## Redemptions from equity, hybrid MF schemes soar

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD  
MUMBAI, DEC. 8

Equity mutual funds saw huge redemption in November, with Rs 12,917.36 crore outflow from equity-oriented schemes and Rs 5,249.18 crore from hybrid schemes, monthly data released by industry body Association of Mutual Funds in India (Amfi) showed.

However, a huge rally in the equity market as well as inflows of around Rs 45,000 crore in debt mutual fund schemes helped net industry assets under management (AUM) to hit the Rs 30-lakh crore mark for the first time.

Kaustubh Belapurkar, director, manager research, Morningstar India said,

redemptions picked up as markets made new highs, suggesting investors looked to book some profits given the higher market valuations," he said.

Investors are booking profit in equity mutual funds and investing in the debt mutual fund schemes, according to N. S. Venkatesh, chief executive, Amfi.

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