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PM invites world to be part of India's growth

\$82 bn invested in ports projects by 2035

NEW DELHI

INDIA will invest USD 82 billion in port projects by 2035, raise share of clean renewable energy source in maritime sector, develop waterways, augment seaplane services and boost tourism around lighthouses, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday urging global players to make India a "preferred investment destination".

As many as 400 projects with investment potential to the tune of USD 31 billion are ready for investors, who can be a part of India's growth trajectory, Modi said inaugurating the Maritime India Summit. "More than 574 projects at a cost of USD 82 billion or Rs 6 lakh crore have been identified under the Sagarmala project for implementation during 2030 and 2035... We will encourage private investment in the port sector... India's long coastline awaits you. India's hardworking people await you. "Invest in our ports. Invest in our people. Let India be your preferred trade destination. Let Indian ports be your port of call for trade and commerce," the Prime Minister said as he invited players to invest in Indian ports, shipyards and waterways.

The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways is ready with a list of 400 investable projects with investment potential of USD 31 billion or Rs 2.25 lakh crore, Modi said adding, this will further strengthen India's commitment of overall development of its maritime sector.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurates the 'Maritime India Summit 2021', through video conferencing, in New Delhi on Tuesday. Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy participated in the conference

Acceptance for free, safe Covid-19 vaccine high among Indian women

NEW DELHI

COVID-19 vaccine acceptance among pregnant women and mothers is the highest in India, the Philippines and some Latin American countries, according to a survey of 16 countries that asked questions premised on a safe and free preventive with 90 per cent efficacy.

The survey to assess the response of pregnant women and mothers of children younger than 18 years and their willingness to vaccinate themselves and their children was conducted by a led by team from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

The online survey was conducted between late October and mid-November 2020. Almost 18,000 women in 16 countries responded to questions about the hypothetical safe and free COVID-19 vaccine with 90 per cent efficacy, the Harvard researchers said. Vaccines for COVID-19 are being distributed around the world, but researchers have till now had little data about global COVID-19 vaccine acceptance. The findings, published in the European Journal of Epidemiology, indicate that vaccine acceptance was highest in India, the Philippines, and all sampled countries in Latin America. It was lowest in Russia, the US, and Australia, the researchers found.

tober and mid-November 2020. Almost 18,000 women in 16 countries responded to questions about the hypothetical safe and free COVID-19 vaccine with 90 per cent efficacy, the Harvard researchers said. Vaccines for COVID-19 are being distributed around the world, but researchers have till now had little data about global COVID-19 vaccine acceptance. The findings, published in the European Journal of Epidemiology, indicate that vaccine acceptance was highest in India, the Philippines, and all sampled countries in Latin America. It was lowest in Russia, the US, and Australia, the researchers found.



A medic administers the first dose of Covid-19 vaccine to Makkal Needhi Maiam (MNM) founder Kamal Haasan, during the second phase of a countrywide inoculation drive, at Ramachandra Hospital in Chennai on Tuesday

Indian-American to head WH Military Office

ARUL LOUIS
NEW YORK

US President Joe Biden has appointed Indian-American Maju Varghese, who was the Chief Operating Officer of his campaign, as his deputy assistant and Director of the White House Military Office.

After managing the logistics for the election campaign of Biden and Vice



President Kamala Harris, Varghese became the executive director of their inauguration -- the swearing-in ceremonies and the festivities around it. As the Director of the White House Military Office, he will oversee military support, which includes providing medical support, emergency medical services, and presidential transportation and organising official ceremonies and functions.

Amazon apologises unconditionally for Tandav

NEW DELHI

AMAZON Prime Video on Tuesday said it respects its viewers' "diverse beliefs" and apologises unconditionally to anyone who felt hurt by scenes in "Tandav", a starry political saga that found itself in trouble over allegations that it depicted Hindu gods in an objectionable manner.

In a statement, the streamer said it "deeply regrets" the fact that viewers considered certain scenes to be objectionable and added that those have already been removed.

It said it would continue to develop entertaining content with partners while "complying with the laws of India and respecting the diversity of

culture and beliefs of our audiences".

"Amazon Prime Video again deeply regrets that viewers considered certain scenes to be objectionable in the recently launched fictional series 'Tandav'. This was never our intention, and the scenes that were objected to were removed or edited when they were brought to our atten-

tion," the company said in its statement.

"We respect our viewers' diverse beliefs and apologise unconditionally to anyone who felt hurt by these scenes. Our teams follow company content evaluation processes, which we acknowledge need to be constantly updated to better serve our audiences," it added.

WINDOWS



Congress party workers raise slogans during a protest against hike in fuel and LPG prices, in Bengaluru on Tuesday. LPG prices have gone up by Rs 125 per 14.2-kg cylinder since the beginning of February

K'taka Minister in sex harassment case

BENGALURU: Karnataka Water Resources Minister Ramesh Jarkiholi courted controversy on Tuesday as a social activist lodged a police complaint alleging sexual harassment to a 'job aspirant' and threatening her and family of dire consequences. Even as the social activist Dinesh Kallahalli approached the Bengaluru Police Commissioner Kamal Pant, some news channels started airing Jarkiholi's purported intimate videos and photographs with the 'job aspirant.' The Minister was not immediately available for comments. After meeting Pant, Kallahalli told reporters that he has been asked to approach the Cubbon Park Police Station to lodge the complaint and to get a FIR registered there.



Family held hostage for feeding stray dogs

GURUGRAM

In a bizarre incident, a family from an upscale condominium at Vatika 21, sector-83 in Gurugram, were held hostage in their car by protesting residents of their housing society for feeding stray dogs.

The residents of the society alleged that the dogs had bitten children recently, said the police on Tuesday.

The neighbours allegedly surrounded the family's car when they returned home on Monday evening and did



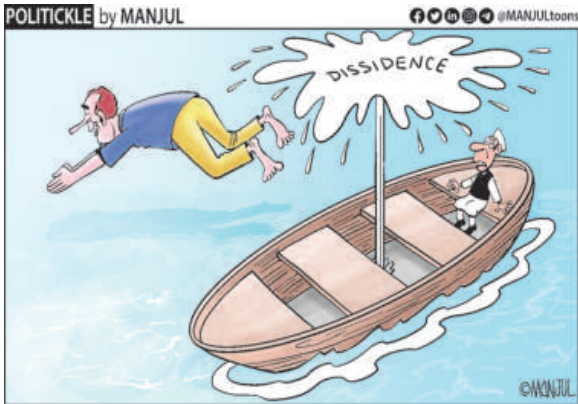
not allow them to come out of their vehicle.

"A resident of that residential society is a dog lover and frequently feeds stray dogs in their locality. The other residents of the society alleged that a few days back,

one of the dogs bit a resident. The resident along with his wife and their three-year-old daughter were returning home on Monday night when other people from the society surrounded their car and held them hostage," said

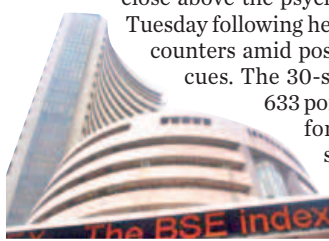
Preet Pal Sangwan, Assistant Commissioner of Police (Crime). In a video, the complainant Sumit Singla alleged that the "Resident Welfare Association (RWA) and various goons" surrounded his car, tried to "attack" his wife Kirti Gupta and his three-year-old daughter, and tried to enter into the car.

Sumit alleged that the protesters had also misbehaved and manhandled his family and the police reached the incident site after several hours.



Sensex reclaims 50,000 as market rises for 2nd day

MUMBAI: Benchmark BSE Sensex spurted by 447 points to close above the psychological 50,000-mark on Tuesday following hectic buying in auto and IT counters amid positive domestic and global cues. The 30-share index swung nearly 633 points during the session before ending at 50,296.89, showing a rise of 447.05 points or 0.90 per cent.



FULL REPORT P7

Joe Biden puts H1B on backburner

Focuses on 470,000 pending US immigrant visa cases

NIKHILA NATARAJAN
NEW YORK

PROCESSING of non-immigrant visas, including H1B cases are taking a backseat for now as the Joe Biden administration turns its attention to more than 470,000 immigrant visa cases currently pending in US consulates across the globe - a 7x year on year uptick in this category since January 2020, according to the latest data from US gov-

ernment. Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas was non-committal on whether Trump era bans on H1B (which expire March 31) would be lifted or how the Biden administration plans to proceed. "You know, I don't really -- I hate to end the questioning on a question, the answer to which I am not certain," he said at a White House briefing Monday. "Individuals fleeing persecution" is high priority, Mayorkas explained.

Pointing to the US job market meltdown during the pandemic, former President Donald Trump had frozen permanent residency for immigrants and halted temporary work visas for skilled workers, managers and au pairs in the H-1B, H-4, H-2B, L-1 and J categories.

On February 24, the Biden administration issued a proclamation revoking the Trump ban that blocked individuals from entering the United States on immigrant

visas but did not lift the freeze on H-1B, J-1, and L-1 visas, which remain in effect and are set to expire on March 31.

In two separate briefings on Monday, the Biden administration made it clear that non-immigrant visa cases are not the priority right now. "We have prioritized the processing of immigrant visas. Full stop," said Julie Stuft, Consular Affairs Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Visa Services.

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India's working women battle strongest gender bias

“Even though 66 per cent of people in India feel that gender equality has improved compared to their parents’ age, working women still contend with the strongest gender bias across Asia Pacific countries,” reads a report by LinkedIn’s Opportunity Index 2021 that was released on Tuesday.

When asked about their reasons for being unhappy with opportunities to advance in their careers, one in five i.e. 22 per cent working women in India said that their companies exhibit a ‘favorable bias’ towards men at work when compared to the regional average of 16 per cent.

LinkedIn commissioned independent market research firm GfK to conduct this research between January 26 to 31. The survey was conducted among 18 to 65 year olds via an online survey. It had more than 10,000 respondents across the Asia Pacific region from Australia, China, India, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines and Singapore. The survey covered 2,285 respondents in India, 1,223 of whom were males and 1,053 were females.

Based on it, the Opportunity Index 2021 highlights the difference in perception of available opportunities in the market for men and women. While 37 per cent of India’s working women say they get fewer opportunities than men, only 25 per cent of men agree with this. This disparity in perception is also seen in conversations about equal pay as around 37 per cent of woman say that they get less pay than men while only 21 per cent of men share this sentiment.

A deeper analysis shows that more women in India have experienced the impact of gender

on career development when compared to the A-Pac region. More than four in five Indian working women, 85 per cent claim to have missed out on a raise, promotion or work offer because of their gender compared to the regional average of 60 per cent. The top three job opportunities sought by both men and women are job security, a job that they love and a good work-life balance. But despite having similar goals, more women (63 per cent) think a person’s gender is important to get ahead in life when compared to men (54 per cent).

Similarly, Consumer sentiment from the report shows that more than 7 in 10 working women 71 per cent and working mothers 77 per cent feel that managing familial responsibilities often come in their way of career development.

In fact, about two-thirds of working women i.e. 63 per cent and working mothers 69 per cent, said they have faced discrimination at work because of familial and household responsibilities.

While job security is critical for working women across India, women are laying more emphasis on the type of employer they choose to work with, the recognition they will receive for the work they do, and the skills that will be utilized on the job.

As per the findings, they are actively seeking employers who treat them as equal 50 per cent while 56 per cent are looking to get recognition at work for what they do.

Lack of required professional skills and guidance through networks and connections are also some of the other barriers that get in the way of career development for working women in India.

Significantly, women have been disproportionately impacted amid Covid-19, and the expectations to juggle home and work life have wreaked havoc in their lives. As a result of the barriers faced by women at work, more than one in two women and working mothers in India expect organizations to offer reduced or part-time schedules and robust maternity leaves and policies to make the transition smoother.

Telecommuting or work-from-home has also been appreciated by women across the workforce in India during the pandemic, and it is seen as the top-ranking demand for women in the workforce today along with other flexibility programmes.

More than one in two women are also looking for more professional connections and mentors who can help them advance their careers, as 65 per cent women agree that lack of guidance through networks is a key opportunity barrier.

“Gender inequality at work and added domestic responsibilities amid the pandemic have collectively made women’s jobs more vulnerable at this time,” said Ruchee Anand, Director for talent and learning solutions in India at LinkedIn.

Anand also said that reduced and flexible schedules are more sabbaticals and new opportunities to upskill and learn are critical offerings that can help organizations attract, hire and retain more female talent. Besides highlighting the pandemic’s disproportionate impact on women, this year’s research also uncovers how an ailing economy and working in isolation continues to negatively impact the lives of the entire Indian workforce.



SIDDHI JAIN

Giving birth to a baby can be extremely challenging for the mother’s body, and yoga can help with both the elasticity and endurance power of expecting mothers, in turn increasing chances of a normal delivery, says a maternity yoga expert who runs a Gurgaon-based health and wellness yoga centre.

Dr Kedar Nath, Director of Maatriyoga says the aim of pregnancy yoga is to help the mother bring the unborn into the world with minimum hassle and completely no health complications. Positions and exercises practiced across the three trimesters of pregnancy can

differ with every phase.

The pre- and post-natal yoga sessions, now also conducted online, are focused on ensuring maternal comfort, training to deal with labor pain and manage birth outcomes. Most of all, pregnancy yoga done in the correct way can help mothers avoid complicated surgical procedures.

Envisioning a platform for women’s empowerment and promoting holistic well-being, the health center focuses on prioritizing self-care in pregnancy. The wellness services support expectants and new mums, and infants in the first 1,000 days of life.

He adds, “As per industry estimates, about 90 per cent of women prepare themselves for a normal delivery. However, only 65 per cent of them are able to achieve this. There are factors, such as eating habits and overall

well-being which hampers the natural delivery process.

Yoga not just helps in delivery of the baby naturally but also helps maintain the physical and mental well-being of the woman. Although it became a trend to do yoga for physical fitness but it has meditative and spiritual value also. It brings contentment, and gives peace to your mind. Yoga helps to fight with all the problems which

a woman faces during pregnancy. You need more oxygen during pregnancy, and your body adapts to meet this need in several ways. An increase in hormones, particularly progesterone, directly affects your lungs and stimulates the respiratory center in your brain. And while the number of breaths you take per minute actually changes very little during pregnancy, the amount of air you inhale and exhale with each breath increases significantly.”

For the first trimester, standing yoga poses are advised as this will help strengthen the legs, enhance circulation, generate energy, and may reduce leg cramps.

During the second and third trimester, you should focus on breathing and meditation. You may reduce your time spent practicing the asanas to prevent fatigue and overwork.

It is also not advised to practice from the tenth through the fourteenth week of pregnancy since these are crucial times. Do not overstretch the abdomen; the emphasis of your twisting poses should be on the shoulders and the upper back and not on the abdomen. He says, “Besides these yoga asanas you can do walking which is one of the cheapest ways to get fit. During pregnancy chances of constipation and high blood pressure are high. So walking 30 minutes twice a day prevents these problems. Walk slowly but walk daily.”

NEWS ROUNDUP

Neetu Chandra: Must include Maithili in Bihar school curriculum

Maithili language might get included in the curriculum of Bihar schools, and actress Neetu Chandra welcomes the move.

The actress, who produced the National Award-winning Maithili film Mithila Makhaan, says that the inclusion of the language is a life changing event.

“I believe that once a language dies, dies the whole society - be it the food, culture, music and clothes. Everything becomes extinct with the language. Therefore, I plead and urge that they should surely include Maithili, Bhojpuri, Magahi and the other regional languages of Bihar in the school curriculum. It’s very important. And to start with Maithili would be a great step ahead. If we include this, it will just not be a state changing affairs but also society and life changing event. It will open up a lot more scope for the people of Bihar,” she says.

She urges people to support the cause. Talking about the efforts she has made in getting more acceptances for the local languages, Neetu says, “I have been very proud of my brother Nitin Chandra who’s been fighting for the languages of Bihar for the past 10 years. Our YouTube channel titled as Bejod.in has been working on the different languages of Bihar by making short-films, music videos, documentaries etc. Champaran Talks is a production house, founded by brother Nitin Chandra and me, we are the first ones to get a national award for Bihar in the language of Maithili. There are five languages of Bihar -- Bhojpuri, Maithili, Magahi, Angika and Vajjika. Maithili is considered one of the most important languages.”



WE programme to boost women engineers

TalentSprint, a leading EdTech platform and NSE group company, announced the launch of the third cohort of the pioneering Women Engineers Program (WE) with support from Google.

TalentSprint WE was conceived in 2019 to address the gender disparity seen in the tech industry. Given the highly encouraging industry acceptance for previous cohort participants, the third cohort is being scaled up to accommodate 500 participants.

The cohort is aimed at first year women engineering students across India and will commence from May 2021. It is widely known that women were pioneers in the early days of computing. Lady Ada Lovelace and Admiral Grace Hopper, both women, are widely considered the world’s first computer programmer and software tester respectively.

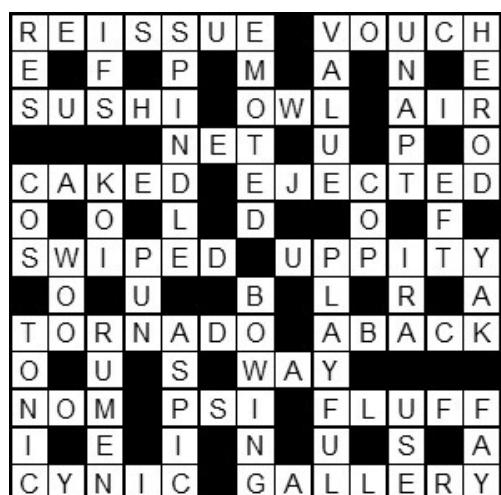
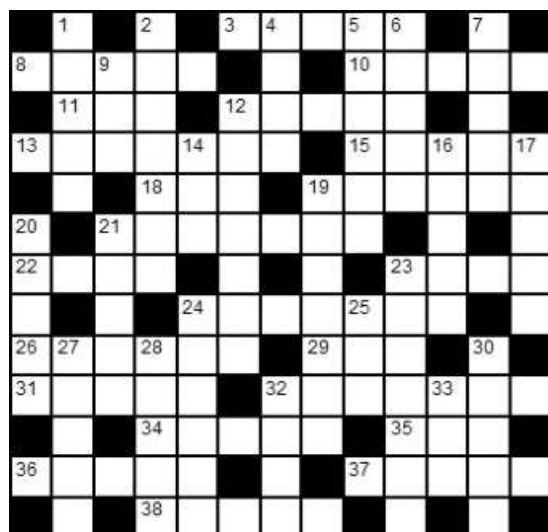
Despite these early role models, women professionals have lost ground in the technology sector and today represent a mere 26% of the global tech workforce. The TalentSprint WE program seeks to address this gender imbalance by selecting, training, and nurturing gifted women engineering students from across India, with diverse academic pedigrees and socio-economic backgrounds to fulfil their potential in the field of software engineering.

The first two cohorts received 27,000 applications, of which 220 participants were invited to join the program. Till date, more than 50 leading companies such as Google, Amazon, Flipkart, Microsoft, Goldman Sachs, Accen-

ture, Adobe, Capgemini, Oracle, Gojek, Mathworks, and others have extended prestigious internships or job offers to these participants, at compensation levels 150% higher than the market median for entry-level engineers. Admission to the third cohort will be through a rigorous multi-stage selection process, and students invited to join this cohort may receive partial or full financial aid, based on their merit and financial backgrounds.

Dr Santanu Paul, Co-founder and CEO at TalentSprint, said: “Since our inception, TalentSprint has run several path-breaking initiatives to close the gender gap in the hi-tech sector. The TalentSprint WE program was conceived in collaboration with Google in 2019. The program has been growing from strength to strength in the last two years, and received overwhelming interest from industry, academia, and young women students both for its unique design and exceptional student outcomes. We realize this is just the tip of the iceberg and a lot more work can and must be done to accelerate gender inclusion. We are therefore delighted to deepen our partnership with Google and work with them to create a much bigger pipeline of young, world-class women software engineers this year.”

Young women engineering students are encouraged to learn more about Talentsprint WE program at www.talentsprint.com and apply if they are eligible. Applications will start from March 1st and close on March 21st.



CROSSWORD

Across

- 3 Imperial decree from Russian (5)
- 8 Started (5)
- 10 Open, as a bottle (5)
- 11 Actor Gibson (3)
- 12 To use up (5)
- 13 Anxious (7)
- 15 Our Capital New ____ (5)
- 18 Pastoral sound (3)
- 19 Eagerness, zeal (6)
- 21 Constant grumbler or complainer (3,4)
- 22 Wings (4)
- 23 Alaskan outpost (4)
- 24 Chants (7)
- 26 Governess (6)
- 29 Limb (3)
- 31 Distant (5)
- 32 Develops in stages (7)
- 34 Article of furniture (5)
- 35 Poetic time of day (3)
- 36 Renaissance instrument (5)
- 37 Group of eight (5)
- 38 Stow away (5)

Down

- 1 Entice (5)
- 2 Diameter of bullet or shell ? (7)
- 4 Retained (4)
- 5 Various (6)
- 6 Concluded (5)
- 7 Hindu ascetic (5)
- 9 Acquire, procure (3)
- 12 Ms Azmi of Bollywood (7)
- 14 Merry or happy (3)
- 16 Company emblems (5)
- 17 Annoyed or irritated (5)
- 19 Exempt or excuse (7)
- 20 Bamboo eater (5)
- 21 Small role, sometimes (5)
- 23 Disregard (7)
- 24 Actually (2,4)
- 25 Modern prefix (3)
- 27 The destruction of tissue (5)
- 28 Short letters (5)
- 30 Heredity units (5)
- 32 Building wings (4)
- 33 Examine, check (3)

SUDOKU

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SOLUTION TO MARCH 2

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6	3	7	9	2	1	4	5	8
7	1	2	5	8	3	9	4	6
8	6	4	7	9	2	5	3	1
5	9	3	4	1	6	7	8	2

Delhi riots: Hundred suspicions don't make a proof, says judge

NEW DELHI

“FROM a hundred rabbits you can't make a horse, a hundred suspicion don't make a proof”, a Delhi court has quoted from the Russian classic “Crime and Punishment” while discharging two accused persons from the offence of attempt to murder in a north east Delhi riots case.

The court asked how case of attempt to murder can be made out against them when the victim himself is absent from the police investigation and has never been seen by the police. It said there is no statement on record by victim about his gun

shot injury or about any mob or rioters.

“That being the case, who is going to say that who shot whom and by whom and where,” said Additional Sessions Judge Amitabh Rawat while discharging Imran and Babu from the offences under sections 307 (attempt to murder) of the Indian Penal Code and Arms Act in the case in which one Rahul had allegedly received gunshot injuries during the riots in Welcome area.

The court, however, said there was ground for presuming that both the accused persons have committed the offences of



unlawful assembly and rioting and transferred the case back to a magistrate court as the of-

fences were not exclusively triable by the sessions court. Noting the prosecution's submis-

sions that the accused persons were part of the rioting mob and thus it was presumed that they allegedly committed the offence of attempt to murder, the court said presumption cannot be stretched to take the shape of proof.

“The criminal jurisprudence says that there must be some material against the accused persons to frame a charge. Presumption can't be stretched to take the shape of proof/evidence. The charge sheet depicts nothing for charging them under section 307 IPC or Arms Act. (Fyodor Dostoevsky in, 'Crime and Punishment' says 'From a

hundred rabbits you can't make a horse, a hundred suspicion don't make a proof'. Thus, both the accused persons are discharged of the offences under Section 307 IPC & Arms Act,” the court said in its order passed on March 1 (Monday). It further said the police have, after long investigation, concluded that the Rahul, who is stated to have been shot by the mob/rioters comprising the accused persons, had given a wrong address as also a wrong mobile phone number in his Medico Legal Case (MLC).

“The gunshot injury is stated to be caused to Rahul but where is he. His statement is not on

record... So by the time, police arrived at the hospital, the alleged victim Rahul had vanished. It is not as if Rahul gave any initial statement and then vanished. The State is categorical in saying that the police never saw Rahul. “That being the case, who is going to say that who shot whom and by whom and where. The alleged victim has never been seen by the police.

He has never given any statement about any gunshot injury or about any mob/rioters. So how is Section 307 IPC made out against the accused persons when the victim is absent from even the police investigation.

75 per cent jobs in pvt sector for locals in Har

CHANDIGARH

HARYANA Governor Satyadeo Narain Arya has given assent to the Bill providing 75 per cent reservation in the private sector to job seekers from the state, Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar said here on Tuesday.

The Haryana Assembly had late last year passed the Bill, a key poll promise made by the ruling alliance partner Jan Nayak Janta Party.

“The Haryana Governor today gave his assent to the Bill entailing 75 per cent reservation in the private sector to job seekers from the state. The government will notify it soon,” the CM told reporters at a press conference here. The Haryana State Employment of Local Candidates Bill, 2020 provides quota for local people in private sector jobs that offer a salary of less than Rs 50,000 a month.



The quota will initially apply for 10 years, according to the Bill. Apart from tackling unem-

ployment among local people, the state government said the law will discourage the influx of

migrants seeking low-paid jobs, which has a “significant impact” on local infrastructure and leads to the “proliferation of slums”.

The Bill covers private companies, societies, trusts and partnership firms in the state. It provides for training to eligible local candidates when qualified people are not available. It defines local candidates as those domiciled in the state. For the domicile status, a person should be born in Haryana or have lived there for at least 15 years.

Giving 75 per cent reservation in private sector jobs was a key poll promise by Dushyant Chautala's JJP, which is the BJP's coalition partner in the state. Chautala described the assent given by the Governor as “happiest moment for the youth of Haryana.” “The rules on this new law will be framed soon and published,” he said at Faridabad.



Haryana DGP gets one year extension

CHANDIGARH

DESPITE the reservations of Haryana Home Minister Anil Vij, Director General of Police (DGO) Manoj Yadava, who was due to return to central deputation, on Tuesday got a one-year extension to continue in the state, said a notification by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). The state had sought a one-year extension of his tenure. On deputation from the IB to his parent cadre, Yadava was appointed for a two-year term beginning February 2019. Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Monday clarified that Yadava would continue to be the police chief.

Vij had asked the Home Secretary to send a panel of Indian Police Service officers who had completed 30 years of service to the UPSC for the selection of a new DGP.

Fuel price hike: Lawyer wants to ride horse to work

VARANASI

IN an interesting incident, a lawyer in Varanasi has sought admission in the horse riding training school being run by the mounted police unit.

In his application to the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), the lawyer Dr. Harish Chandra Maurya said that he has to cover a distance of around 20 kilometres to come to the court from his residence in the Sindhora area.

Owing to the increased price of petrol, he said he wants to buy

a horse. He has urged the SSP to allow him to train for horse riding at the police lines.

“I have submitted my application to the SSP office, and I am waiting for a response,” Maurya told reporters.

The horse-riding school, run by the traffic police, gives a 15-day training against a prescribed fee.

“Any enthusiast above 10 years of age can apply and get training by the mounted police,” said the sub-inspector and in-charge of mounted police unit Ram Kumar.

Delhi Assembly Budget Session from March 8

PURNA SINGH
NEW DELHI

THE Delhi Assembly's Budget session for 2021-22 will kick start from March 8, sources told IANS.

The session will end on March 16.

The Budget this year will

likely focus on green Delhi, EV policy, basic infrastructure of health and increasing number of public transport.

The AAP is also likely to highlight its new excise policy during the session along with many other policies proposed by the party's national convener Arvind Kejriwal.

Will urge Yogi for cleaning of Yamuna: Hema Malini

MATHURA

MATHURA MP Hema Malini on Tuesday said she will request Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to take necessary steps to reduce pollution in the Yamuna before the next “shahi snan” during the Vrindavan Kumbh.

The BJP MP told reporters that she will request the chief minister for the discharge of more Ganga water into the Yamuna during the second and third “shahi snan” on March 9 and 13, respectively. Heads of three religious groups on February 27 had said they would not take the holy dip in the river if it was not cleaned before the next “shahi snan”.

“In the next ‘shahi Snan’, we will take the holy dip in the Yamuna only if its water is clean,” Mahant Dharm Das, head of the



Ayodhya-based Maha Nirvani Akhara had said in the presence the chiefs of the Digambar Akhara and the Nirmohi Akhara. Hema Malini said since the state government has made commendable arrangements for the Kumbh, she would request the CM to tackle the problem of pollution in the river as they would not “like to annoy noted saints”

on the issue.

Expressing her commitment for a clean Yamuna, the MP said she will also write to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal for the cleaning of the river there. The MP said she will request the Kumbh, she would request the CM to tackle the problem of pollution in the river as they would not “like to annoy noted saints”

NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has directed the police to collect all CCTV footage of the alleged vandalism of Delhi Jal Board (DJB) office in December last year and conduct an investigation in an impartial manner to unearth the truth.

The court's directions came after two CCTV footage were played — one showing the police officials along with the SHO trying to protect the gate of DJB office and another showing police officials not resisting any member of the mob from entering the main building. It was hearing a plea filed by Delhi Jal Board vice chairman and AAP MLA Raghav Chadha seeking a court-monitored investigation in the case of alleged vandalism and attack on staff members.

“ACP (Assistant Commissioner

of Police), DIU (District Investigation Unit), is directed to collect all the CCTV footage, analyse the same and take appropriate action in the present matter. Investigation would be conducted in impartial manner to unearth the truth of the matter,” said Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Ganjender Singh Nagar in his order passed on March 1 (Monday).

The court directed the police to file a progress report on March 9. The application filed by Chadha has alleged that the attack was orchestrated by BJP Delhi president Adesh Gupta and party leaders Yogendra Chandoliya, Ravi Tanwar Upadhyaksh



and Vikas Tanwar. Advocate Prashant Manchanda, appearing for Chadha, contended that a fresh FIR may be directed to be registered on the complaint. The court's order noted that CCTV footage of main iron gate was played, from which it was apparent that police officials along with SHO trying to protect the gate, however, few persons from the mob scaled up the gate, jumped inside the premises, open the gate forcefully from inside, thereafter persons standing outside the gate came inside the premises despite there being resistance from the police.

“Another CCTV footage has been shown wherein it can be seen

that the mob is entering the main building of varunatalaya. This time police is there, but police officials are not resisting anybody,” it said. It also noted that ACP had pointed out that sections of rioting and unlawful assembly have been added in the charge sheet and the police was doing appropriate investigation in the case. The court had earlier directed the concerned DCP to file a report on why appropriate sections have not been added in the FIR despite there being videos and photographs in which more than five persons involved in the alleged vandalism. It had also directed the police to file the report on why for the period of one month, no witnesses present at the spot have been examined, why videos and photographs were not seized promptly when things were very much clear from them.

Father of molestation victim shot dead by accused in UP

LUCKNOW

A 50-year-old man was allegedly shot dead in Uttar Pradesh's Hathras district by an accused out on bail in a case of molestation lodged in 2018 against the victim's daughter, police said on Tuesday.

“The incident took place in Nozarpur village of Sasani area in Hathras on Monday afternoon when the daughters of Ambrish Sharma (50) had gone to a temple, where the wife and aunt of accused Gaurav Sharma were present. The women had heated arguments with each other after which both Gaurav and Ambrish also reached there,” Hathras Superintendent of Police Vineet Jaiswal said. Both Gaurav and Ambrish also had an argument after which the accused called some members of his family and shot Ambrish in a fit of rage, the SP said.

Ambrish was rushed to the hospital where he was declared



brought dead, the SP added. According to an FIR lodged by the victim's daughter, however, the incident took place in their family potato field. The Hathras SP said the FIR had been registered against Gaurav Sharma, Lalit Sharma, Rahitash Sharma, Nikhil Sharma and two others. Out of them, Lalit has been arrested while the main accused Gaurav is absconding.

In the FIR, it was alleged that the girl was there in her family potato field with her father Ambrish when Gaurav came in a white car with his accomplice and asked Ambrish to take back the case lodged against him. “Before my father could say anything, he opened fire on him. We rushed him to the hospital, where he died,” the girl said in the FIR. The victim had lodged

a case of molestation of his daughter two and a half years ago against Gaurav, who was jailed. Gaurav, then, came out on bail after a month and he had animosity with Ambrish since then, the SP added.

Taking note of the incident, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has ordered strict action to be taken against the accused and directed officials to invoke provisions of the stringent National Security Act (NSA) against them.

Meanwhile, the Samajwadi Party reacted to the incident with its president Akhilesh Yadav alleging that women in UP have lost hope of justice from the state government. “After ‘Hathras ki beti’, murder of a father who had complained of molestation of his daughter has taken place. UP's women has not lost hope from the government has stopped seeking justice from it,” Akhilesh said in a tweet in Hindi.

BJP factions stand united as Nadda visits Rajasthan

JAIPUR

BJP national president JP Nadda on Tuesday was accorded a warm welcome at 12 places on his way from Jaipur airport to the Birla Auditorium, as the state unit of the party presented a united face with different factions standing together to welcome him.

Speaking on the occasion, Nadda said that our priority is to strengthen the BJP which is a cadre-based party. “Hence, we need to strengthen the booth, panna pramukh (and sashakt mandal for which we should start working from today itself. We need to have a Panna Pramukh at each booth by the birthdate of former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee,” he said. “We won from the Surat seat with highest margin because our work at the booth level and Panna Pramukh level was the strongest here,” he added.

Earlier, Nadda inaugurated the BJP state working committee meeting at Birla auditorium. Nadda further said that workers



BJP National President JP Nadda at Rajasthan BJP State Executive Meeting at Birla Auditorium in Jaipur on Tuesday

must find solutions. “We need to become smart workers who visit the location where there is an issue but don't just work like postmen passing the message. We should remember that we take people along and care for every worker. There are many people who do not take people along but walk alone but it won't work. Ekla Chalo Re won't work, he added. Nadda also spoke on efficient handling of the Corona crisis by the central government.

Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas, a slogan given by our PM is basically a roadmap for our economic growth, he added further.

Nadda said that farmer leaders have done politics since the last many years. However new reforms shall change their destiny and fortunes. Attacking the Congress, he said that telling lies was in their culture and it was the responsibility of the BJP to bring forth each fact in front of the public.

A timely step for IT hardware sector

THE announcement of Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for boosting the production of IT hardware such as laptops, tablets, desktops, and many more is a welcome move. Combined with the PLI scheme for consumer electronics products that were announced earlier, these steps would take India towards self-reliance in the manufacturing of these digital products. Currently, only one-third of laptops or tablets are assembled in the country as compared to 95 per cent of mobile phones. Therefore, the import of finished hardware products is not only leading to higher outflows of foreign currencies, fuelling trade deficit; but it is also increasing India's dependence on other nations for procurement of these critical products. At a time when India is promoting the 'Digital India' mission, it is imperative to manufacture the hardware products within the country that will reduce the import bill apart from generating employment.

With a total outlay of Rs 7,350 crore over four years,

the scheme offers tax incentives between 4 to 1 per cent on net incremental sales of goods manufactured in the country. The Indian government eyes production of more than Rs 3 lakh crore of computer hardware products through this scheme out of which 75 per cent will be exported. If executed properly, this will create large-scale employment through hardware clusters apart from making India one of the hubs for Electronics System Design and Manufacturing (ESDM). The ongoing pandemic has prompted global enterprises to shift manufacturing bases from China. So, such a PLI scheme is definitely going to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into the Indian manufacturing sector.

The Indian hardware ecosystem is dominated by five major players including HP, Lenovo, Dell, Acer, and Apple. Similarly, Indian manufacturers including Redington, HCL Infosystems, TVS Electronics, D-Link India, and Compuage Infocom among others have significant market shares in the hardware space.

The PLI scheme is likely to benefit these companies which are expected to come up with plans to manufacture or assemble hardware products in India. Many experts believe that Apple is expected to start manufacturing its signature product iPad in India.

However, many feel that the outlay for the scheme could have been higher to boost the manufacturing of hardware products in a big way. Therefore, the government can consider increasing the investment amount in the future. At a time when India eyes to reach the \$5 trillion GDP mark by 2024, the success of the 'Digital India' mission is crucial to realise this target. In this perspective, respective State governments should aggressively attract investment through business-friendly measures. If the governments at the Centre and States succeed in attracting investments into the IT hardware and electronics segments, India will be able to emerge as the best alternative to China's dominance in this space. Furthermore, they should encourage and incentivise companies to achieve economies of scale in production. That will make Indian products cheaper, which will, in turn, lead to higher exports in the IT hardware space. That's what the country needs now.



Valuing your Emotional Quotient a necessity and a reward

VIIVECK VERMA

INTELLIGENCE and brilliance are buzzwords in today's world and are often employed as determinants in judging people's worth. Whether it is the scores we get on a test, or the speeches we deliver, or how we deal with work, there is a consistent iteration on the need to be good and smart at what we do.

While the intelligence quotient and outward excellence are undeniably important, in their heedless celebration, we often lose sight of the significance of emotional intelligence and well-being. A healthy emotional quotient indicates good mental health and substantial introspection which translates into better performance in a world that privileges the external. After all, how much can we contribute on the external front if our most intimate of foundations are shaky?

As we grow up, emotions seldom get the treatment they should. Most techniques of dealing with a child's emotions focus on ensuring repression instead of enabling articulation. Consequently, kids grow up to become emotionally repressed adults, who do not know how to deal with messy scenarios, and can respond with either aggression or more repression and can turn out to be emotionally volatile. In any case, the mental and emotional health of individuals gets unsparingly mishandled.

A high emotional quotient inevitably also yields good professional results. Forbes reports in a 2015 article that TalentSmart tested emotional intelligence alongside 33 other workplace skills, and found emotional intelligence to be the strongest predictor of performance at work, explaining a 58 per cent of success in all types of jobs. This barely comes as a surprise as once we can look inside unapologetically, we can also impact the outside domain in beneficial ways. If we understand ourselves well, we are likely to interpret work and responsibilities well since how we perceive them are narratives constructed by our own perspectives. To be productive employees, better citizens and rational social actors, we must remain in touch with our inner selves and pay heed to its requirements and responses to stimuli.

At a personal and spiritual level, having a strong emotional core can help combating stress, anxiety and exhaustion and make everyday

lives appear inviting, fulfilling and exciting. Imagine how easy it would be to rustle up your breakfast if you were not burdened by unwanted stress or repressed feelings. Utilising your emotional quotient is an act of self-securing and letting yourself cope with life in a healthy and dignified way.

However, since there is little emphasis on interiority and emotions in our usual scenarios and the world expects back-breaking work from us, what do we do to keep ourselves emotionally secure while keeping ourselves productive and participating in our everyday existences? To begin, it is best to inaugurate a culture of self-awareness in our lives and let it materialize in uplifting ways. This entails simply looking at ourselves and how we respond to what life presents us with. Do I respond to anger with anger, or do I turn my back on it? Do I let it derail my plan to talk to my parents, or do I process it to let my plans unfold as expected? These seemingly small questions need to be pondered, to comprehend what damage has been done, how we need to heal and how well we have done in messy situations.

Linked to the last concern is the necessity of self-affirmation. A constricted selfhood irrevocably causes compromised personas, and ruins possibilities of effective engagement with people and rational responses to events. We must prize, cherish and assert our selfhood and dignity to learn about ourselves, as self-care cannot occur without a necessary emphasis on the self. If I do not think I am worth preserving, what can I sustain through self-knowledge? Therefore, it is important to give ourselves credit for surviving tough times and our accomplishments and believe that we are worthy to dream and feel better.

While understanding and affirming ourselves, we should also put knowledge of the self to immediate and good use. This is a fundamentally transformative idea as it is about changing behavioural patterns which did not work for us and replacing them with modes of acting that do justice to our capabilities. An emotionally intelligent person remains dynamic and responds to situations as they unfold and is consequently better prepared for situations of conflict and disappointment.

If we know ourselves and are secure in that knowledge, we can battle conflict without apology or doubt, communicate effectively and place ourselves in self-fuelled powerful positions in the stickiest of circumstances. A good emotional quotient enables ending trouble in neat ways, while keeping ourselves away from unnecessary anguish.

Existence without an emotional anchor is a sinking ship, and thus, we must cultivate a strong, self-aware emotional foundation to keep ourselves afloat. To quote Tara Meyer Robson, "When awareness is brought to an emotion, power is brought to your life." Therefore, no matter what the world demands of us, we need to privilege what we feel and how we feel it and learn from it. We must avoid running away from inner selves and channel our emotions to build a scintillating path to success, contentment and peace.

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

Indo-Pak 'ceasefire agreement' will achieve nothing

SREEMOY TALUKDAR

FOR an 'agreement' that sounds off on almost everything — from timing, drafting, aftertaste to its promise — the current India-Pakistan 'ceasefire' has triggered inexplicable enthusiasm in certain quarters. We are told it "would be pathbreaking," that it will "reduce violence and allow both countries to tell the international community that they are taking steps to stabilize Kashmir." One report speculated that New Delhi may even let the SAARC meet happen in Islamabad. Good thing that no one has claimed yet that it will reverse global warming.

The tactical step of a limited agreement that seeks only to calm the borders and lessen shelling and artillery exchanges has been imbued with such lofty goals that the move is likely to get crushed under the weight of expectations. Those with even a shallow familiarity with Pakistan's perfidious behaviour have seen this sordid drama played out before, but the flying of peace kite with a terror-sponsoring nation whose raison d'être is the endless fight against Hindustan is apparently an irresistible urge for some. It also sounds suitably 'progressive' to call for peace with a nation that not only uses terror as state policy but also uses every dirty trick — such as an attempted revival of the Khalistani movement — to keep India destabilised.

Far too much is being read into "peace overtures" by Pakistan. The comments presented as "evidence" of Pakistan's "softening tone" are more a projection of media's expectations than reality. Pakistan army chief Gen Qamar Bajwa's "hand of peace" speech early in February says nothing to indicate that there has been a shift in Pakistan's stance on Kashmir. In fact, Bajwa stressed in that very address that "Pakistan and India must also resolve the longstanding issue of Jammu and Kashmir in a dignified and peaceful manner as per the aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and bring this human tragedy to its logical conclusion." A slightly more civil way of saying the same thing that Pakistan has been saying since inception.

We are so used to vitriolic rhetoric from Pakistan that even a slight change in tone turns Indian media into excitable kids at a candy store. Just three days after Bajwa's speech, that media in India interpreted as "change of heart", Pakistan prime minister went to Muzaffarabad and unleashed his schoolboy fantasy.

"I want to tell the Kashmiris on both sides of the divide that after you will decide in favour of Pakistan [in a plebiscite], you will be given a right by Pakistan to choose whether you want to remain as a part of Pakistan or as an independent nation... This will be your right," thundered Khan. This was widely reported in Pakistani media but peaceniks in India never got the memo.

In fact, just to make it official that he has nothing to do with any peace deals with India — lest Rawalpindi later hangs him with that rope — Khan put the onus on peace on India with some tough-worded tweets where he made it clear that "India must take necessary steps to meet the long-standing demand & right of the Kashmiri people to self-determination acc to UNSC resolutions."

For good measure, he also threw in a reference to Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman. Meanwhile, Khan's spokesperson Moeed Yusuf, Pakistan's NSA equivalent, was found furiously denying any "back channel" diplomacy with India on the agreement.

It is a strange agreement that no one in Pakistan wants to take credit for. Also worth noting is that when the two nations were parleying behind the scenes, they were at loggerheads at the UNHRC in Geneva on 24 February, a few hours before the "ceasefire agreement" was announced.

The tactical step of a limited agreement that seeks only to calm the borders and lessen shelling and artillery exchanges has been imbued with such lofty goals that the move is likely to get crushed under the weight of expectations



Lt Gen (retd) Syed Ata Hasnain, former commander of the Srinagar-based 15 Corps, in his column for The Asian Age writes, "this appears to be Pakistan's way of trying to prove the initiative didn't come from it but rather from India. In other words, that Pakistan had minimal compulsion to call for a ceasefire and attaches little importance to it. That is usually a ploy by a country known to resort to violations of international norms."

Heaven help us if unbridled optimism around a "reset" of ties between India and Pakistan rests on Bajwa's change in tone, Moeed Yusuf's "desire for conversation" expressed during an interview with an Indian media outlet, New Delhi's permission for overflight to Khan's airplane and a badly drafted 'joint statement' that recommends to 2003 ceasefire agreement.

The joint statement, released in India by the defence ministry, states that "the two DGsMO agreed to address each other's core issues and concerns which have the propensity to disturb peace and lead to violence. Both

sides agreed for strict observance of all agreements, understandings and cease firing along the Line of Control and all other sectors with effect from midnight 24/25 Feb 2021." It is strange because neither India — that considers cross-border terrorism as a core issue — nor Pakistan, that still hopes to wrest Kashmir from India, have indicated that these "core issues" are up for negotiation.

As far as the prospects for peace is concerned, one expects the ceasefire to achieve little beyond a temporary breather. The 2003 ceasefire pact remained technically in place during 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks in 2008, India's 2016 cross-border surgical strike in retaliation for the terrorist attack in Uri, or the Balakot airstrikes carried out by the Narendra Modi government in 2019 after a terrorist attack by Pakistan-backed operatives killed 40 Indian soldiers in Kashmir.

Nor has the security situation in the Valley or across the border has shown dramatic improvement. The Hindu reported on 19

February that three policemen and three terrorists were killed in three separate incidents in the Kashmir Valley on Friday, and one of those terrorists was a Lashkar-e-Taiba operative.

ORF senior fellow Sushant Sareen observes that Indian security forces are gearing up for a 'hot summer' as the snow melts. "Pakistanis have been adopting and adapting terror tactics from other theatres — drones to drop weapons not just in J&K but also in Punjab, tunnels to infiltrate terrorists, and introducing 'sticky bombs' (used to devastating effect in Afghanistan in recent weeks). Simply put, the terror factory in Pakistan is back in business. This is hardly conducive to any kind of move towards putting the bilateral relationship back on track." Amid this context, the exhilaration over a 'ceasefire agreement' between two DGsMO defies rational explanation.

(This article was first published at <http://www.firstpost.com>. Reprinted with their permission)



The energy they expend on evaluating Rahul Gandhi's leadership could have been better spent on stalling India's retreat from the values enshrined in the Constitution. It would have been more creditworthy if the so-called reformist leaders endeavoured to conscientise the people on the importance of the bread-and-butter-issues of politics and protecting themselves from falling prey to the attempt at polarizing them along religious lines. The soft corner these leaders have for the BJP betrays their affinity for soft Hindutva.

It is intriguing that Azad eulogised Modi from Jammu and Kashmir despite his abrogation of Article 370. Modi and Azad revealed the line of communication they kept when tourists from Gujarat came under attack in Jammu and Kashmir, but said nothing on if they kept a similar line at the time of the Gujarat pogrom.

Anand Sharma's finding that the Congress compromised on secularism by its alliance with the Indian Secular Front in West Bengal elicited the retort that it was meant 'to please someone who could be his future boss'. These disgruntled leaders, if they are true Congressmen and are wedded to what it represents, should strengthen the hands of Rahul Gandhi, a solid bulwark against BJP's communal politics.

G David Milton, Maruthancode, Kanyakumari Dt

LETTERS

New IT rules spell doom for privacy and freedom of expression

THE recently notified Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, which cover social media intermediaries as well as the digital news and OTT Platforms, have raised several red flags.

Under these rules, the social media platforms are required to preserve data for 180 days — double the time period prescribed earlier — ostensibly for investigative purposes. The data has to be preserved even after a user has deleted their accounts, require the rules. They also provide for government and courts to force the platforms to identify the originator of specific information, even though it is still unclear how this kind of identification will be verified.

It is important to note that, in the absence of a data protection law and any kind of oversight on how surveillance operates in India, these requirements have a vast potential for abuse at the hands of intrusive state machinery. Used together with Information Technology Decryption Rules, the rules will allow the government to break any type of end-to-end encryption to gain knowledge of who sent what messages and also get to know its contents. The requirements will also break existing protocols for the deployment of end-to-end encryption that has been built through rigorous cybersecurity testing over the years.

The rules have come at a time when several litigations are challenging the government over its stance on surveillance and privacy. Excessive governmental control over digital news, OTT content and other such areas require much more deliberations and wide-scale consultation with the experts and different stakeholders.

Students Islamic Organisation of India (SIO) demands that the government immediately withdraw these rules and initiate broad-based consultations and deliberations before redrafting them. We further urge civil society to constantly engage in dialogue on the subject of digital privacy and freedom of expression.

Kidiyoor Nihal Saheb, National Secretary, Students Islamic Organisation of India (SIO), New Delhi

G-23 should rally behind Rahul

DISGRUNTLED leaders within the Congress known as G-23 seem to be more interested in finding fault with their own leadership than fighting the BJP. They are harsh on their own party and soft on the BJP. They would have done better to campaign in poll-bound States than to adopt political posturing in Jammu to embarrass the party.

G-23 is a band of leaders endowed with intelligence. Still they do not see the woods for the trees. It does not seem to occur to them that the overarching appeal of Hindutva has catapulted the BJP to power and keeps it in pole position. They are too preoccupied with calling for 'organisation overhaul' to check the party's decline while the need of the hour is to pool resources to wean away the masses from the Hindu revivalist forces.

The likes of Ghulam Nabi Azad, Anand Sharma and Kapil Sibal enjoyed the spoils of high office when the UPA was in power and conducted themselves in deference to the Gandhis. Now they have no qualms about needling the leadership when the party is out of power. For them power seems to be the be-all-and-the-end-all of politics. They seem to be dissatisfied with the denial of 'favours' like membership of Rajya Sabha.

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Kishan gets Covid jab, allays fears on vaccine

Appeals to people to follow all safety measures like wearing face mask, sanitisation and social distancing

HYDERABAD

UNION Minister of State for Home Affairs, G Kishan Reddy, on Tuesday said that nearly 10,000 vaccination centres in government hospitals have been opened to provide free vaccines to the people. He took a vaccine shot as a part of the second phase of the vaccination drive against COVID-19 at Gandhi Hospital here.

Speaking to the media he said, "Nearly 10,000 vaccination centres in the government hospitals have been opened to provide free vaccines to the people. The Indian government aims to make the count of vaccination centres reach 20,000. The vaccine shots given in government hospitals are free and people need not pay any amount, while the private hospitals that are assigned as vaccination centres charge Rs 250 per vaccine dose."

He further said that the second phase of vaccination drive against COVID-19 has started from March 1, 2021, targeting



individuals who are above 60 years of age and above 45 years of age with comorbidity. As a part of the vaccination drive, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has taken the vaccine jab.

The minister also appealed to all the people to come forward and participate in the vaccination drive without any fear. He also said that everyone must take utmost care and follow all the safety measures required.

"India has fought the battle with COVID-19. So, I appeal to everyone to follow all the safety measures like a face mask, sanitization and social distancing."

As per the Health Ministry, a total of 1,48,54,136 people in the country have been vaccinated against COVID-19. (ANI)

India commenced its third phase of the COVID-19 vaccination drive to inoculate people above 60 years and those

over 45 with comorbidities against the coronavirus from March 1. The eligible beneficiaries who are entitled to receive the Covid-19 vaccine from March 1, were able to register themselves on the Co-WIN platform from Monday onwards.

The Central government has created the Co-WIN application dedicated to monitor real-time management of Covid-19 vaccination across the country. The cumulative number of COVID-19 vaccine doses administered in the country crossed 1.47 crore on Monday, according to a statement by the Union Health Ministry. 15,510 new COVID-19 cases and 106 deaths were reported in India in the last 24 hours, the Union Health Ministry informed on Monday.

With this, the total number of cases reported in the country now stands at 1,10,96,731, including 1,68,627 active cases and 1,07,86,457 recoveries. The death toll now stands at 1,57,157.

One death, 163 new Covid cases in TS

HYDERABAD

TELANGANA recorded 163 new coronavirus cases, pushing the total caseload to 2.99 lakh, while the toll rose to 1,635 with one more fatality. The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) accounted for the most number of cases with 27, followed by Medchal Malkajgiri and Rangareddy districts with 13 and 12 respectively, a state government bulletin said on Tuesday providing details as of 8 PM on March 1. The cumulative recovered cases stood at 2,95,544, while 1,907 were under treatment. The bulletin said 40,181 samples were tested on March 1. Cumulatively, the number of samples tested was 87,61,207. The samples tested per million population was 2,35,389, it said.

The recovery rate in the state was 98.81 per cent, while it was 97.1 per cent in the country, it said. The case fatality rate in the state was 0.54 per cent, while it was 1.4 per cent at the national level.

Meanwhile, vaccination for people aged 60 and above and those over 45 years of age with co-morbidities continued in the state on the second day. Union Minister of State for Home G Kishan Reddy received the vaccine at the state-run Gandhi hospital in the city. It has been one year since the first case of COVID-19 was reported in Telangana and state Health Minister Eatala Rajender felicitated Covid warriors at the Gandhi hospital, which served as nodal centre for COVID-19 care for long during the year.

TENDER, LOVING CARE

Photos: Adula Krishna



A flock of ducks seen leading chicks in an open place on outskirts of the city at Nanakramguda on Sunday

AP CM WANTS GOVT HOSPITALS AS GOOD AS CORPORATE ONES

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

CHIEF Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy directed the officials to ensure that services in government hospitals are on par with corporate hospitals and complete the initiative within a specified timeline as there would be no dearth of funds.

During the review meeting on Nadu Nedu (Health) here on Tuesday, the Chief Minister instructed the officials to focus on the maintenance of existing hospitals, newly-constructed hospitals and teaching hospitals. If there are any issues related to land acquisition or any other regarding Nadu-Nedu works, the Chief Minister said they should be brought to his notice for immediate solution.

He further directed the officials to ensure that all the government hospitals meet the standards of corporate hospitals in terms of infrastructure, maintenance, cleanliness and strict standards must be adhered to make quality services available in state-run hospitals. In regard to this, the officials were asked to prepare a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for better execution, to provide the best medicine, the best management, the best standards to the poor in government hospitals.

In addition to these, the Chief Minister emphasised maintenance of proper sanitation and a clean environment in the hospitals, right from changing bed-sheets to the food being provided in the government hospitals. He told the authorities to prepare SOP on actions to be taken and procedures to be followed for maintaining proper sanitation in hospitals. Similarly, with regard to the hospital infrastructure and staff, he told the officials to recruit the staff needed and maintain the



Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy reviewing Nadu-Nedu (Health) at his camp office in Tadepalli on Tuesday

equipment in a proper way. Also, every hospital should have the best management arrangements with an effective mechanism that manages each hospital.

The Chief Minister asked the authorities to bring in experienced professionals in hospital management and said hospital administration and medical services are two different things and added that it should be implemented from village clinics to teaching hospitals.

Reviewing YSR health clinics, the Chief Minister said 10,011 YSR health clinics are being setup in the state, including the renovation of 1,426 old clinics and directed the officials to ensure there would be no problems in these works. He said the construction of clinics should be completed by September.

The officials said that selection process of sites for construction of new primary health centres (PHCs) was completed adding that the renovation works in old PHCs and construction of new ones would be completed by October. The Chief Minister asked them to prepare an action plan to complete renovation works in old PHCs and construction of new PHCs in urban areas very soon and directed the officials to en-

sure the works will be done on a war footing. The Officials said Nadu-Nedu works in area hospitals and community hospitals would be completed by December.

The Chief Minister also reviewed the works related to construction of medical colleges, multi specialty hospitals and new medical colleges including Paderu, Pulivendula, Piduguralla, Machilipatnam, and multi-specialty hospitals in tribal areas, etc. He directed the officials to complete the land acquisition and payment for construction of medical colleges and hospitals by March-end. The officials said tender process for construction of new medical colleges would be completed by May 15 and the tender process for the development works in existing medical colleges would be completed by April-end.

Reviewing COVID-19, the officials briefed the Chief Minister on the prevailing situation of COVID across the state. The officials said a total of 9,625 beds are still available in 69 hospitals and they are on high alert.

Deputy Chief Minister (Medical and Health) Alla Kali Krishna Srinivas (Nani), Chief Secretary Adityanath Das, Health Principal Secretary Anil Kumar Singhal,

Aarogyasri network hospitals get ₹39.18 cr dues

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

THE state government on Tuesday remitted Rs 39.18 crore towards pending bills to 668 Aarogyasri network hospitals till October 15, 2020, according to Aarogyasri Trust CEO Dr A Mallikarjuna. The Aarogyasri Trust CEO said that the state government is giving priority to the health of employees and pensioners and releasing amount to network hospitals. He appealed to employees and pensioners to call 18004251818 regarding any issues related to Aarogyasri for immediate redressal of their grievances.

Andhra Pradesh Medical Services and Infrastructure Development Corporation (AP-MSIDC) VC and MD V Vijayarama Raju, Commissioner f health Katamaneni Bhaskar, Aarogyasri CEO Dr A Mallikarjuna and other officials were present.

Uttam fires salvo at TRS, BJP govts for neglecting Old City

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

TELANGANA Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) president and Nalgonda MP N Uttam Kumar Reddy accused both the TRS and BJP governments of neglecting Hyderabad's Old City in the last seven years.

Addressing a series of meetings in the Old City on Tuesday as part of campaign for party MLC candidate G Chinna Reddy, Uttam said that Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao neither visited Old City nor he conducted a single review meeting since 2014. He added that the Chief Minister never tried to understand or resolve the problems of Old City residents although he had promised to develop this region as the next Istanbul.

"Graduates from this region have no jobs and they face discrimination at their places of work due to their area of residence," he said.

The TPCC chief, along with Chinna Reddy and others, performed a puja at Mahankali temple in Lal Darwaza and then addressed a meeting at a private functional hall near Charminar. They also visited



- Says CM never visited Old City in the last seven years
- No new development project launched since 2014
- TRS, AIMIM wants Old City to remain backward
- BJP at the Centre did not release any funds for the development of Hyderabad

Dargah Yousufain at Nampally and addressed a meeting in Musheerabad constituency later.

Uttam alleged that the TRS government behaves as if the Old City does not exist in the State. "Not a single project was launched in the Old City since 2014, while the projects like Charminar Pedestrianisation and Musi River Rejuvenation remain incomplete due to shortage of funds and official lethargy," he said.

He strongly condemned TRS for delay in the Metro Rail work in Old City. "TRS and MIM parties have altered the routes and did not allow the Metro Rail in Old City," he alleged. Both TRS and MIM apparently want Old City to remain backward and reduce it to a slum, he added.

He also alleged that the BJP government at the Centre did not release a single rupee for the development of Hyderabad.

MP Komatireddy seeks sun temple makeover

HYDERABAD

THE Congress Party MP from the State Komatireddy Venkat Reddy today wrote a letter to Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan and urged her to take steps for the restoration of the lone Sun (Surya) temple which dates back to 11th century AD.

In his letter, he mentioned that the temple was located in Shali Gouraram area of Nalgonda district of the State and added that it was now in dilapidated condition. He said that it was the only sun temple of the State and added that the temple was older than Arasavelli sun temple. He said that there had been demands from the devotees of the state for the restoration of the temple for a long time. He also urged the governor to take steps to provide road facility

The temple located in Shali Gouraram area of Nalgonda district is in a dilapidated condition. It is the only sun temple in the State and is older than Arasavelli sun temple

to the temple. The MP also urged the state government to take steps to take the statue of the temple to the notice of the central government and ensure that the restoration works began at the earliest. He said that the officials of the archaeology department of the State and the district administration had sent a report to the central government on the status of the temple in October last year following the directions of the governor. He said that the temple was thronged thousands of devotees every year.

Governor couple gets Covid jab

AMARAVATI

GOVERNOR Biswa Bhusan Harichandan and his wife Suprava Harichandan received coronavirus vaccine shots on Tuesday in the third phase of vaccination.

They received the first doses of the vaccine at the new government hospital in Gunadala, Vijayawada. Harichandan said he did not feel any inconvenience in getting inoculated and advised all eligible people to come forward and take the vaccine as it helped in curtailing the spread of the virus. The Governor and his wife were administered Covaxin, manufactured by Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech pharma major. "Indian scientists have demonstrated to the world the country's capability in the field of vaccine research and development," he said.

Harichandan appreciated the scientists responsible for the development of Covaxin in such a



Governor Biswa Bhusan Harichandan and his wife Suprava Harichandan receive vaccination at Govt General Hospital at Gunadala in Vijayawada on Tuesday

short period of time and enabling saving the lives of the people.

Following the vaccination, doctors informed the Governor that the date for their second dose of vaccination will come after March 30. Meanwhile, a health official said that eligible people interested in going for

vaccination can register themselves in any of the 456 government hospitals and 90 private hospitals networked to the Aarogyasri scheme listed on the CoWin website.

The state continues to vaccinate healthcare and frontline workers for the virus.

TORCHING RATNACHAL EXPRESS

Mudragada, other Kapu nadu leaders attend railway court

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

THE VII metropolitan magistrate court for railways, Vijayawada, on Tuesday posted the next hearing of the case of attack on train at Tuni by Kapu Garjana agitators to March 16 when the copies of charge sheet would be furnished to those against whom Railway Protection Force (RPF) registered cases. As the railway court summoned 40 persons involved in the incident, the first accused and Kapunadu leader Mudragada Padmanabham and 38 others attended the court on Tuesday. Tuni MLA D Ramalingeswara Rao and another person could not attend the court citing ill-health. Summons were not served to one more



Kapunadu leader Mudragada Padmanabham and 38 other Kapu leaders attend the railway court in Vijayawada on Tuesday

accused in the case named Prabhakar. VII metropolitan magistrate court for railways magistrate Justice K Suresh Babu posted the next hearing to furnish the copies of charge sheets to all the accused in the case.

It may be noted that Kapu Garjana meeting convened at Tuni on

January 31, 2016, to demand BC reservation for Kapus turned violent and the agitators squatted on railway track between Tuni-Hamsavaram railway stations and set fire to passing train Ratnachal Express. The RPF registered a case against 41 persons on the charges of arson and attack on train.

Justice Bodbe asks rape accused if he is willing to marry the victim Brinda Karat writes to CJI urging him to withdraw remarks

NEW DELHI

CPM Politburo member Brinda Karat has written to Chief Justice of India SA Bobde urging him to withdraw his remarks made during the hearing of a case where he asked a rape accused if he was willing to marry the victim, saying that courts should not give an impression of supporting such "retrograde" approaches.

Karat was referring to remarks made during the hearing of a plea filed by a public servant, who is accused of repeatedly raping a girl, against the Bombay High Court February 5 order which had cancelled his anticipatory bail. The Left leader said that these questions, words and actions have se-

rious implications in granting of bail in cases of rape of minors. "Please reconsider and withdraw these comments and questions... Please uphold the judgment of the Aurangabad High Court which rules that bail granted to him by the lower court was 'atrocious'," she said.

When the hearing on the plea commenced on Monday, the bench also comprising Justices A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian, asked the accused "Are you willing to marry her?" "If you are willing to marry her then we can consider it, otherwise you will go to jail," observed the bench adding "We are not forcing you to marry." The counsel appearing for the petitioner said the accused was initially willing to marry the girl but she had



refused and now he was married to someone else.

As the counsel said that the accused is a public servant, the bench said, "You should have thought this before seducing and raping the girl. You knew that you are a government servant". The apex court granted the accused protection from arrest for four weeks to allow him to apply for regular bail in the trial court. In the letter, Karat said, "The girl was gagged and raped by this criminal, when she was just sixteen years old. He repeated his crime 10-12 times. The girl tried to commit suicide. Does this show consent? "In any case, in the case of a minor, as this girl was, the law is clear that there is no issue of consent."

She also asked the CJI to consider the effect such questions will have on the psyche of victims. The message given is that a rapist can escape jail if after the crime he "agrees" to marry his victim whether she wants to or not, she said.

"There is a prevailing retrograde social approach that the victim of rape is a 'bad' woman and if the rapist marries her, she gains respectability in the eyes of society. Comments of the apex court should not give the impression of supporting such approaches," she said.

Karat said that the processes of justice must keep the interests of the rape victim at the centre. "Unfortunately in this case, the opposite has happened," she said.

Priyanka vows 200 units free power

CAA will not be implemented if the Congress is voted to power in Assam

TMC 'Ram-drohi', BJP will bring law against love jihad once in power: Yogi

NEW DELHI

CONGRESS leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Tuesday unveiled the party's five-guarantee campaign for the upcoming Assembly elections in Assam.

Addressing a rally in at Tezpur in Assam, Priyanka said that 200 units of electricity will be given free of cost every month and the CAA will not be implemented if the Congress, is voted to power in the state in the upcoming polls.

The All India Congress Committee (AICC) general secretary, who is in poll-bound Assam on a two-day visit, also claimed that her party will hike daily wages of tea garden workers to Rs 365 from the existing Rs 167, and provide at least 25,000 government jobs to youth.

"People of Assam were cheated by a party (BJP) five years ago that promised them 25 lakh jobs but gave them CAA instead. Our party is not making empty promises but undertaking five guarantees," the Congress leader, who sported a traditional "gamocha" around her neck with the letters CAA crossed out on it, said.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address 20 rallies in poll-bound West Bengal and six rallies in Assam, responding to the huge demand of local BJP leaders of these two states.

ttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi



All India Congress Committee (AICC) General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra joins tea workers at Sadhuru tea garden in Biswanath in Assam on Tuesday

Adityanath on Tuesday called the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress 'Ram-drohi' and said the BJP will ban illegal slaughter houses, cow smuggling and 'love jihad' (a term used by right wing outfits to describe marriages between Muslim men and Hindu women)

within 24-hours if voted to power in Bengal.

Addressing a huge public gathering at Gazole in Malda district, Adityanath said, "Today, I am honoured to be here in the land of Jiva Goswami (Gaudiya Vaishnava saint). Banerjee is doing

5-guarantee campaign in Assam

- Ensure, CAA will not be implemented in Assam
- Free 200 unit of electricity.
- 2000/per month to homemakers in Assam.
- Minimum wage of 365/day to Tea Garden Workers.
- Generation of 5 lakh jobs in the State.

appeasement politics in Bengal. Today, I would like to assure you that within 24 hours of forming a government in Bengal, we will ban illegal slaughter houses and we will act sternly against cases of love jihad and cow smuggling in the state. In Uttar Pradesh, we did the same thing."

He further said it is unfortunate that Banerjee is angered by 'Jai Sri Ram' slogan. "Once upon a time (hinting at Mulayam Singh Yadav's government), the same resentment was there against Lord Ram in Uttar Pradesh and we all know what happened there. Today, a Ram temple is coming up. I can feel that same thing is going to happen here in Bengal."

BJP MP who tested Covid positive, dies

BHOPAL/NEW DELHI

NAND Kumar Singh Chauhan, BJP Lok Sabha member from Khandwa in Madhya Pradesh, died at a Gurugram hospital, family sources said on Tuesday. The 69-year-old six-term MP had tested coronavirus positive and was

airlifted to the hospital in Gurugram last month in a critical condition. Chauhan, who died late Monday night, is survived by wife, a son and two daughters.

The last rites will take place at his ancestral place Shahpur in Burhanpur district. Starting his political career in 1978 from the Shahpur Municipal Council, Chauhan was elected as member of the Madhya Pradesh Assembly and was an MLA during 1985-96. He was elected to the Lok Sabha in 1996 and won again in 1998, 1999, 2004, 2014 and 2019 polls. Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed his anguish at Chauhan's demise, and said the former Madhya Pradesh party president will be remembered for his contributions to parliamentary proceedings and organisational skills.

Following initial cases on February 23, 330 monks tested so far for COVID-19 and 153 monks have tested positive at Gyuto monastery in Himachal Pradesh, informed said Dr Gurdarshan Gupta, Chief Medical Officer, Zonal Hospital, Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh.



More than 50 students of a school in Haryana's Karnal have tested positive for the coronavirus disease (Covid-19), prompting authorities to suspend classes and other academic activities, a senior medical official was cited as saying by news agency ANI on Tuesday. Senior Congress leader Prithviraj Chavan on Tuesday questioned the Centre's move to allow private hospital charge people Rs.250/ for the Covid-19 vaccine dosage, the Phase-2 of which was launched nationwide on March 1.

A person aged above 45 with comorbidities or over 60-years old can get inoculated at a designated private centre for Rs.250 per dose in the second phase.



Platform ticket price raised to ₹50 in Mumbai

MUMBAI

THE Central Railway has increased the price of platform tickets at some key stations in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) to avoid over-crowding during the upcoming summer season in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, an official said on Tuesday.

A platform ticket now costs Rs 50 instead of the previous rate of Rs 10 at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus, Dadar and Lokmanya Tilak Terminus in Mumbai, and neighbouring Thane, Kalyan, Panvel and Bhivandi Road stations, CR's chief public relations officer Shivaji Sutar said. The new rate came into force on February 24 and will remain effective till June 15 this year, the official said. "The decision was taken to prevent over-crowding at these stations during the summer travel rush," he said. Since the second week of February, there has been a surge in daily COVID-19 cases in Mumbai.

Agri Bills protest: Farmers destroy crops in UP village

LUCKNOW

IN a tragic incident, farmers from Umraya village in Uttar Pradesh destroyed crop in a four-acre area in protest against the centre's three farm laws. RLD state vice president Kunwar Narendra Singh said, "With the consent of a majority of villagers, crops grown in the four-acre area was ploughed on Monday."

He claimed that such acts by farmers would lead to an acute shortage of cereals, forcing the government to go for import.

"Repeat the three farm laws without further delay to prevent such suicidal steps of the farmers," Singh demanded,

"We are forced to take such steps as the government is not understanding our problem," Megh Shyam, a farmer of the village, said.

Subdivisional Magistrate Hanuman Maurya said no such incident had come to his notice, advising the farmers to desist from taking such steps.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi reiterated his stand on the need for new farm laws and reforms in agriculture sector. He said it is time that farmers get better price for their produce.

Meanwhile, one side of the Ghazipur border, the site of the farmers' protest, was opened for traffic on Tuesday. The border had been since January 26 following the Republic Day violence. The movement is allowed only for those entering UP from the national capital. The vehicular movement from Uttar Pradesh to Delhi is still not allowed.

The security at the Ghazipur border in the national capital was increased after violence erupted on Republic Day during the farmers' tractor rally. Delhi Police had also cemented nails near barricades at Ghazipur (Delhi-Uttar Pradesh) and Tikri (Delhi-Haryana) borders.



Can't use language like 'Tom, Dick, Harry' in petition: HC

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has expressed displeasure over usage of sentence like "Tom, Dick and Harry" in a petition raising grievance relating to National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) and said such "slang language" is not permissible in the pleadings before a court of law.

The high court, which declined to entertain the petition, said it was refraining from imposing costs at this stage since the petitioner was appearing in person. Justice Prathiba M Singh said the petitioner appeared to have drafted the petition on his own and perusal of a paragraph showed that "there is slang language being used in the petition".

"The said paragraph reads as under: '(f) The AA / NCLT cannot permit any person - Tom, Dick, and Harry to represent and defend the respondent under section of IBC (Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code), as the rules does not permit it.' Such language is not permissible in pleadings before the court. Accordingly, this petition is liable to be dismissed," Justice Singh said. The petitioner, in his plea, has raised a grievance against the NCLT and the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) alleging that wrong procedures are being adopted by the said tribunals.

Indigo plane lands in Pak, passenger dies

KARACHI/NEW DELHI

An Indigo flight from Sharjah to Lucknow made an emergency landing at the Karachi airport in Pakistan on Tuesday morning after a passenger on board fell sick and later died.

An official of the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority said the landing permission was granted to the Captain of the

Lucknow-bound IndiGo flight 6E1412 after an elderly passenger - identified as 67-year-old Habib ur Rehman - fell seriously ill. "The passenger unfortunately expired on the plane even though the Indian aircraft was given permission to land at the Karachi airport," the official said. In a statement, IndiGo said the passenger who had the medical emergency could not be revived and was declared dead on arrival by the airport medical team.



Inquiry into BJP IT cell, says Maharashtra Home Minister

Tendulkar and Lata's tweets in support of the Centre and its handling of the farmers' protest

MUMBAI

MAHARASHTRA Home Minister Anil Deshmukh and former Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis traded sharp words Tuesday on the political row that has erupted over Sachin Tendulkar and Lata Mangeshkar's tweets in support of the centre and its handling of the farmers' protest.

Responding to allegations the ruling Shiv Sena is more concerned about acting against two Bharat Ratna awardees than ex-Alligarh University student Sharjeel Usman, Deshmukh shot back: "We are not enquiring against Lata Mangeshkar or Sachin Tendulkar but against BJP IT cell..."

Earlier Fadnis had attacked the Maharashtra government for lacking courage to take action against Usman, whom the BJP has accused of "promoting enmity be-

tween different groups" during a speech at a recent Elgar Parishad conclave.

"He insults Hindus and you take no action against him. Even members of Elgar Parishad support his statements but you have no guts to take action against them. But you can take action against Bharat Ratna Sachin Tendulkar and Lata Mangeshkar..." he said on the floor of the Assembly. "What have they tweeted as such?" he demanded of Deshmukh.

"For a moment let's assume I asked them to tweet that way... so what's my charge here? If my party has asked them to tweet in support of India, we are proud of that," he said, declaring, "We are not scared of your enquiry".

To this attack the Home Minister replied: "We are enquiring against BJP IT cell. We are not enquiring against Lata Mangeshkar or Sachin Tendulkar... but against BJP IT cell."

Centre dragging feet on CCTVs in probe agencies: Top court

On Dec 2, the top court had directed the Centre to install cameras at the offices of NIA, CBI, ED, DRI

NEW DELHI

THE Supreme Court on Tuesday pulled up Centre for dragging its feet by seeking more time for installing CCTV cameras in the offices of Central probe agencies like the CBI, NIA, ED and others. On December 2, the top court had directed the Centre to install CCTV cameras and recording equipment at the offices of investigating agencies -- NIA, CBI, ED, DRI, etc. -- which have the power of arrest and to carry out interrogations.

On Tuesday, the matter came up for hearing regarding the compliance of the order. The Centre, repre-

sented by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, sought adjournment in the matter. Expressing its displeasure, a bench headed by Justice R.F. Nariman told the Centre's counsel that it is setting an impression that the Centre is dragging its feet in the matter. Mehta replied that adjournment was sought, as the matter may have ramifications. The bench replied it is not concerned about ramifications. "This concerns the right of citizens. We are not accepting the excuses", said the bench. The top court also queried Mehta on the aspect of allocation of funds for installation of CCTVs in Central probe agencies. Mehta urged the bench to ignore the note seeking adjournment and sought some time to file an affidavit



in the matter. The top court gave three weeks to the Centre to file an affidavit citing financial outline for allocation of CCTV cameras and timeline for installation.

The bench also examined the chart submitted by amicus curiae senior advocate Sidharth Dave in connection with the timeline sought by various state governments following court's order.

The top court has granted 5 months to the state governments to install CCTV in police stations.

For poll bound states -- West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Assam and Puducherry -- the top court directed the implementation of CCTVs in police stations till December end this year. The bench gave 9 months for Ut-

tar Pradesh and 8 months for Madhya Pradesh to comply with its order on installation of CCTV cameras. The top court has scheduled the matter for further hearing after Holi vacation. The top court had noted that whenever there is information of force being used at police stations resulting in serious injury and/or custodial deaths, it is necessary that persons be free to complain for a redressal of the same.

"As most of these agencies carry out interrogation in their office(s), CCTVs shall be compulsorily installed in all offices where such interrogation and holding of accused takes place in the same manner as it would in a police station", the top court had said.

TODAY'S QUOTE

Encourage startups to experiment

“OUR startups need to be encouraged to experiment, to go beyond the run of the mill thinking. We need to ensure that our startups are not afraid of failure. I believe that the country should celebrate failure because it is only when somebody fails, he knows how not to do something.”


— Piyush Goyal, Union Minister



PETROLEUM

Fuel demand to rebound in 2021-22

INDIA's fuel consumption is likely to rise nearly 10 per cent in the fiscal year beginning April 1, as a reflating economy drives petrol and diesel demand, according to Oil Ministry's projections. Petroleum product consumption in 2021-22 could hit 215.24 million tonnes.

FOREX (buy rates in ₹)			
US Dollar	77.69	South	
Euro	92.86	African Rand	5.59
UAE Dirham	21.95	Hong Kong Dollar	10.86
Thai Baht	2.78	Japanese Yen	0.79
British Pound	106.42	New Zealand Dollar	55.95
Australian Dollar	59.61	Saudi Riyal	21.48
Canadian Dollar	60.59	Swedish Krona	10
Swiss Franc	83.77	Singapore Dollar	57.85

DELHI WEDNESDAY 3 MARCH 2021

BIZ BRIEFS

IIFL to raise ₹1,000 cr

IIFL Finance will open a public issue of bonds on March 3, 2021. Through this, it aims to raise Rs 1,000 crore, for the purpose of business growth and capital augmentation. These bonds offer up to 10.03 per cent yield. The Fairfax and CDC Group backed IIFL Finance will issue unsecured redeemable non-convertible debentures (NCDs), with a base of Rs 100 crore, and a green-shoe option to retain over-subscription up to Rs 900 crore (aggregating to a total of Rs 1,000 crore). The NCD is available in various options like monthly, annual and at maturity. Rajesh Rajak, CFO, IIFL Finance said, "Through a strong physical presence of 2,500 branches across India and a well-diversified retail portfolio, IIFL Finance caters to the credit need of under-served population."

Increff's CSR initiative

INCREFF joined hands with Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail Limited (ABFRL), to donate over 14,000 garments to the underprivileged across different regions of the country. Company's distribution partners, three prominent NGOs (Goonj) (Bengaluru), RK Foundation (Bengaluru), and Marwari Mahila Manch (Jharkhand), helped to execute this initiative successfully. With ABFRL, this is a step forward towards bringing change and redefining the retail industry's approach towards sustainability. "We believe that it is our shared responsibility with our partner customers, to follow-through both environmental and societal duties. Access to good quality clothes is a fundamental right of each individual, says Anshuman Agarwal, Co-Founder, Increff.

ITC brand completes 10 yrs

SUNFEAST'S Dark Fantasy, cookie brand from ITC, announced plans to expand its flagship product 'Dark Fantasy Choco-Fills' which completed 10 years of its existence. The cookie brand had disrupted the market by creating an indulgent product segment is now valued at around Rs 1,000 crore. Sun-feast Dark Fantasy is pushing the envelope of newer experiences in its second decade, starting with exciting additions and a holistic revamp of the portfolio. "The latest launches stem from our constant drive to develop and redefine categories. With these new and more exciting offerings we also aspire to widen the consumption occasions for the brand," said Ali Harris Shere, Chief Operating Officer, Biscuits & Cakes Cluster, Foods Division, ITC.

Cess, surcharge share doubles

THE share of cesses and surcharges in the gross tax revenue of the Centre has nearly doubled to 19.9 per cent in 2020-21 from 10.4 per cent in 2011-12, leading to the 15th Finance Commission to recommend a higher grant-in-aid and lower tax devolution to the states, according to a report. Under the existing Finance Commission (FC) framework, the cesses and surcharges collected by the Centre are not part of the tax devolution. And, the massive spike in the same has forced the FC to suggest higher grant-in-aid to the states to compensate for the low growth in tax devolution which is pegged at 41 per cent during the operation of the 15th FC award, India Ratings said on Tuesday in the report. The key reason for higher growth in grants-in-aid and lower growth in tax devolution to the states is the increase in the proportion of the central cess and surcharges as they are not part of the tax devolution to the states, said agency's Principal Economist Sunil Kumar Sinha.

Ambani, Adani get richer despite Covid-19 crisis

India has added 40 billionaires in 2020; Byju Raveendran and family's wealth has gone up by 100%

MUMBAI

FORTY Indians entered the billionaires' club in the pandemic-stricken 2020 to take the number of those in the coveted list to 177 people, a report said on Tuesday. Mukesh Ambani continued to be the wealthiest Indian with a networth of \$83 billion. The head of Reliance Industries witnessed a 24 per cent jump in fortunes and climbed up one spot to be the eighth richest globally, as per the Hurun Global Rich List. Gautam Adani from Gujarat, who has had a spectacular rise in fortunes in the last few years, saw his wealth almost doubling to \$32 billion in 2020 and climbed 20 places to be the 48th richest person globally and the second wealthiest Indian. His brother Vinod's wealth grew 128 per cent to \$9.8 billion. The report compiles individual or family wealth in the year to January 15. It can be noted that the Indian economy is set to contract by over 7 per cent because of the impact of the pandemic, which had forced governments to go for lockdowns that had a debilitating impact on the poor.

The report comes at a time when concerns are being raised about a 'K-



Mukesh Ambani



Gautam Adani

shaped' recovery being underway, where a select few prosper. Hurun India's Managing Director and Chief Researcher Anas Rahman Junaid said Indian wealth creation is dominated by cyclical or traditional industries compared to tech-driven wealth creation in the US and China. "When the tech-driven wealth creation reaches full potential, India could potentially beat USA in terms of the number of billionaires," he added.

IT company HCL's Shiv Nadar was the third wealthiest Indian with a fortune of \$27 billion while some peers in the tech industry domi-

nated the list of fastest growing wealth. Jay Chaudhry of software company Zcaler saw a 274 per cent rise in networth to \$13 billion during the year while Byju Raveendran and family saw a 100 per cent increase in its wealth to \$2.8 billion, the report said. Diversified corporate house Mahindra Group's head Anand Mahindra and family also saw a 100 per cent increase in wealth to \$2.4 billion, it said.

Among those who saw a decline in their networth during the year was Acharya Balkrishna of Patanjali Ayurved at \$3.6 billion, down 32 per cent. The financial capital continues

Mumbai, the financial capital, continues to lead in the country from a concentration perspective, being home to 60 of the 177 Indian billionaires, followed by New Delhi at 40 and Bengaluru at 22 billionaires

to lead in the country from a concentration perspective, being home to 60 of the 177 Indian billionaires, followed by New Delhi at 40 and Bengaluru at 22 billionaires, it said. From a gender perspective, Kiran Mazumdar Shaw of Biocon leads with a networth of \$4.8 billion (up 41 per cent), Smita V Crishna of Godrej at \$4.7 billion and Lupin's Manju Gupta at \$3.3 billion.

A majority of 118 billionaires were classified as self-made ones in the ranking, as against 932 of the 1,058 billionaires in neighbouring China, which is home to the highest number of billionaires. Globally, the list is led by Elon Musk of Tesla with a fortune of \$197 billion followed by Amazon's Jeff Bezos at \$189 billion and Frenchman Bernard Arnault of fashion house LVMH at \$114 billion.

Sensex reclaims 50,000 as market rises for 2nd day

MUMBAI

BENCHMARK BSE Sensex spurted by 447 points to close above the psychological 50,000-mark on Tuesday following hectic buying in auto and IT counters amid positive domestic and global cues. The 30-share index swung nearly 633 points during the session before ending at 50,296.89, showing a rise of 447.05 points or 0.90 per cent.

Likewise, the NSE Nifty climbed 157.55 points or 1.07 per cent to settle at 14,919.10, extending gains to a second day. Among Sensex stocks, Mahindra & Mahindra was lead gainer rising by 4.98 per cent. NTPC rose by 3.83 per cent, Bajaj Auto by 3.53 per cent, and Tech Mahindra by 3.44 per cent. TCS, Maruti, Infosys, HCL Tech, Nestle and Bharti Airtel were among the gainers. On the other hand, ONGC, HDFC, Dr Reddy's, PowerGrid and SBI suffered losses.

Of the Sensex constituents, 25 shares ended with gains. Sectorally, BSE auto surged the most with 3.18 per cent gains, followed by IT (2.85 per cent), teck (2.84 per cent) and industrials (2.20 per cent). All the 19 sectoral indices closed in the green. Broader smallcap, midcap and largecap indices too rallied

Sensex zooms 447 pts, Nifty jumps 157 pts; IT, auto stocks shine

1.60 per cent, 1.55 per cent and 1.11 per cent, respectively - outperforming the benchmark. Analysts said investor sentiment remained upbeat due to encouraging GDP numbers for the third quarter as well as re-turning of calmness in global bond markets after the last week's turmoil.

Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services said, "An improved outlook post-February auto sales numbers resulted in continued buying in auto stocks with IT sector also being a major contributor in the rally". S Ranganathan, Head of Research at LKP Securities said that markets exhibited buoyancy today despite its share of volatility in afternoon trade. IT stocks and auto stocks led the rally while

the broader market saw keen interest in paper stocks on rising product



prices. A strong buying was seen in midcap and smallcap packs and outperformed broader indices as visible earnings recovery is attracting investors in this space. Notably, the volatility index contracted sharply for the second consecutive day by over 6 per cent, Binod Modi, Head - Strategy at Reliance Securities said.

"Concerns pertaining to rising bond yields appear to have softened a bit after central bankers across the world have begun to push back against higher rates." This should offer some comfort to Indian equities and INR as rising bond yields in the USA and declining spread between USA Treasury yields and India's GSec yields had started putting pressure on Rs," Modi said.

Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong closed with losses after a selloff in US Treasury debt eased. Meanwhile, Brent Futures rose 0.71 per cent to trade at 63.76 per barrel. On the forex market front, the rupee surged by 18 paise to close at 73.37 against the US dollar on Tuesday.

Reliance Jio top spectrum buyer

NEW DELHI

INDIA'S largest telecom operator, Reliance Jio, on Tuesday said it has successfully acquired spectrum in all 22 circles in the just-concluded auctions, and that its owned radiowave footprint has risen significantly by 55 per cent through the acquisition. Jio - which emerged as the top buyer picking up spectrum for Rs 5 7, 1 2 2 . 6 5 crore in the auctions - said it has well-balanced spectrum for services and future upgradation to 5G technology. In all, India's first auction of telecom spectrum in five years fetched Rs 77,814.80 crore.

Reliance Jio said its acquired spectrum can be utilised for transition to 5G services at the "appropriate time", where it has developed its own 5G stack. Jio - which had 408.7 million subscribers as on December -- has acquired spectrum in 800 MHz, 1800 MHz and 2300 MHz bands in the spectrum auc-



tions that concluded on Tuesday. Airwaves come in different propagation characteristics for transmission of voice and data. For instance, lower bands like 800 MHz and 900 MHz support a good indoor coverage while higher bands like 2300 MHz have a good carrying capacity. The airwaves are also sold in quantities measured as MHz. The auctions allows companies to use Government owned airwaves for carrying signals for data and voice, for a particular period of time. In a statement, Mukesh Ambani, Chairman, Reliance Industries, said: "With our increased spectrum footprint, we are ready to further expand the digital footprint in India as well as get ourselves ready for the imminent 5G rollout." Jio has revolutionised the digital landscape of India, with the country becoming the fastest adopter of digital life, he said.

KIMS files papers for ₹700-cr IPO

HYDERABAD

KRISHNA Institute of Medical Sciences Ltd (KIMS) has filed preliminary papers with capital markets regulator Sebi to raise Rs 700 crore through an initial share-sale. The initial public offering (IPO) comprises a fresh issue of shares aggregating up to Rs 200 crore and an offer for sale of up to 21,340,931 equity shares from promoters and existing shareholders, according to draft red herring prospectus filed with Sebi.

A total of 1,39,77,991 equity shares would be offered by General Atlantic Singapore KH Pte Ltd under the offer for sale, up to 7,75,933 equity shares by Bhaskara Rao Bollineni, up to 11,63,899 equity shares by Rajyasri Bollineni, up to 3,87,966 equity shares by Bollineni Ramanaiah Memorial Hospitals Pvt Ltd. The offer includes a reservation for subscription by eligible employees. According to merchant banking sources, the IPO is expected to fetch Rs 700 crore. The proceeds from the fresh issue will be used to repay debt of the company and its subsidiaries.

KIMS is one of the largest corporate healthcare groups in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana in terms of the number of patients treated and treatments offered. It operates nine multi-specialty hospitals under the 'KIMS Hospitals' brand, with an aggregate bed capacity of 3,064, including over 2,500 operational beds as of December 31, 2020.

NMDC's output rises by 19%

HYDERABAD

NMDC, the country's largest iron ore producer, has witnessed a spectacular growth during the month of February 2021 both in production and sales performance over the CPLY.

Iron ore production for the month of February 2021 stands at 3.86 MT as against the 3.24 MT of ore mined in the corresponding month in February 2020, and registered a growth of 19 per cent over the same.

Sales during February 2021 increased by 12 per cent at 3.25 MT as against the 2.91 MT done in the month of February 2020.

The Bailadila Projects at Chhattisgarh has produced 3.15 MT in February 2021 as compared to last year's production of 2.93 MT in the month of Febru-

ary, and registered a growth of 8 per cent in production.

The total sales of iron ore from Bailadila projects in the month of February 2021 is 2.62 MT against 2.42 MT in February 2020, which is 8 per cent higher than the previous year.

Speaking about the production and sales numbers of February 2021, Sumit Deb, CMD, NMDC, said, "These production and sales figures definitely display NMDC's strong character to bounce back in spite of operational challenges.

This achievement is possible only due to the hard-work and commitment demonstrated by the employees. We foresee a gradual rise in numbers and will continue to set new records."

NMDC has recently restarted the operations at Donimalai mines.

₹3-cr Lamborghini Urus SUV sales zoom

Sells 100 units of the luxury vehicle in India; SUV accounts for Lambo's 50% sales

NEW DELHI

ITALIAN super luxury car maker Lamborghini on Tuesday said its SUV Urus has crossed the 100 units sales milestone in India since its launch in September 2018.

The model, which is priced from Rs 3.15 crore (ex-show-room) onwards, has been the mainstay of the company in India ever since it hit the roads, contributing over 50 per cent of sales.

Commenting on the milestone, Lamborghini India Head Sharad Agarwal said, "The Urus has created a unique position for itself in the super luxury car segment in India, not just by creating a completely new category but, more importantly, growing

the entire segment." In India, he further said, "Urus has proven to be a game changer for Lamborghini and currently contributes to over 50 per cent of the brand volumes in India."

While it offers the versatility of an SUV, it offers the driving dynamics and emotions of a super sports car, Agarwal said adding, "It has also, remarkably, helped penetrate into the tier 1 and 2 cities, gaining significant popularity among our group of clients."

The Urus is powered by a front-mounted, 4.0 liter V8 twin-turbo engine with a power of 650 hp. It can accel-

erate from 0-100 km/h in 3.6 seconds, 0-200 km/h in 12.8 seconds and has a top speed of 305 km/h. Lamborghini is banking on the Urus to continue to drive its sales in India.

The company expects its overall sales in India this year to be more than the 2019 levels of a total of 52 units

after witnessing good traction in the later part of last year, recovering from the pandemic-induced disruptions.

Agarwal had earlier stated that demand for Urus remained very strong with waiting time of 8-9 months with many of the consumers first time buyers of Lamborghini cars. He had said that people who came to the "Lamborghini family through Urus" wanted to have a second car, which is a sports car from the company thus helping it to increase the customer base as newer people who never bought a Lamborghini were buying and helping it to grow in the super sports car segment.



Six Hyderabad FC players called up for national camp

35 probables named for India's friendlies; HFC players most represented

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

IT is a proud day for Hyderabad FC as six of its players have been named in the 35-member probable squad announced by Indian National Team Coach Igor Stimac for the friendly games against Oman and UAE which will be held in Dubai on March 25 and 29 respectively.

As part of the preparation for the two matches against Oman and UAE and to get the players acclimatised a preparatory camp will be held in Dubai itself from March 15 onwards. The camp will be held under the aegis of coach Stimac.

With attackers Halicharan Narzary, Liston Colaco, midfielders Hitesh Sharma, Mohammad Yasir, and defenders Chinglensana Singh

and Akash Mishra in the national probable team, Hyderabad FC becomes the most represented club in the camp.

While Narzary has been a regular for the Men in Blue in recent times, defender Sana Singh marks his return to the national set-up after a strong season at Hyderabad. Midfielder Hitesh Sharma, who was part of the youthful squad that played in the SAFF Championship in 2019, will be part of the senior setup for the first time.

The national team call up is a first at the senior level for Mohammad Yasir, Akash Mishra and Liston Colaco, all of whom have stamped their authority over Manolo Mar-

quez's side this season, among 10 first-time inclusions in the list in response to their performances in the Indian Super League (ISL) this season. They've not just become regulars in the side, but they've also put in impressive performances throughout the campaign.

Hyderabad has contributed a number of players to the national

football team back in 50s-60s and HFC has now brought about the same enthusiasm for football. Hyderabad FC's focus on youth and impressive performances has helped provide a top platform for players and the club seeing the most players get called up for the national team in just their second year bare testimony to this fact.

"We have kept 35 players in the list as a cushion in case any player picks up an injury during the ISL playoffs," said Stimac.

The Croatian said that Bran-

don Fernandes, Rahul Bheke, Sahal Abdul Samad and Asish Rai do not feature in the list as they are recovering from injuries.

India's last match ended in a 1-0 defeat to Oman in the 2022 FIFA World Cup qualifier on November 19, 2019. While they were scheduled to resume their World Cup qualification campaign with a match against Qatar in March, it was eventually postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The qualifiers are now scheduled to resume in June with India facing Qatar on June 3, Bangladesh on June 11 and Afghanistan on June 15.

35-MEMBER PROBABLE SQUAD

GOALKEEPERS

Gurpreet Singh Sandhu (BFC), Amrinder Singh (MCFC), Subhashish Roy Chowdhury (NEU), Dheeraj Singh (FCG), Vishal Kaith (CFC).

DEFENDERS

Seriton Fernandes (FCG), Ashutosh Mehta (NEU), Akash Mishra (HFC), Pritam Kotal (ATKMB), Sandesh Jhingan (ATKMB), Chinglensana Singh (HFC), Sarthak Golui (SCEB), Adil Khan (FCG), Mandar Rao Dessai (MCFC), Prabir Das (ATKMB), Mashoor Shereef (NEU).

MIDFIELDERS

Udanta Singh (BFC), Rowlin Borges (MCFC), Lalengmawia (NEU), Jeakson Singh (KBFC), Raynier Fernandes (MCFC), Anirudh Thapa (CFC), Bipin Singh (MCFC), Mohammad Yasir (HFC), Suresh Singh (BFC), Liston Colaco (HFC), Halicharan Narzary (HFC), Lallianzuala Chhangte (CFC), Ashique Kuruniyan (BFC), Rahul KP (KBFC), Hitesh Sharma (HFC), Farukh Choudhary (JFC).

FORWARDS

Manvir Singh (ATKMB), Sunil Chhetri (BFC), Ishan Pandita (FCG).



Kom, Panghal one win away from medal in Spain as draws unveiled

NEW DELHI

SIX-time world champion M C Mary Kom and Asian Games gold-medallist Amit Panghal are among 12 Indian boxers who stand just a win away from securing medals at the Boxam International Tournament in Castellon, Spain after finding themselves in quarterfinals when draws for the event were unveiled. The tourney features all of India's nine Tokyo Olympics-bound boxers along with five others. Mary Kom (51kg), competing for the first time since qualifying for the Olympics last year, will take on Italian Giordana Sorrentino in her opening bout on Wednesday.

Panghal (52kg), who won a gold medal at the Cologne World Cup in Germany in December last year, will be facing local



favourite Gabriel Escobar in his quarterfinal clash after getting an opening-round bye. Vikas Krishan (69kg), another strong medal contender for Tokyo, is also in the quarters after getting a bye and will take on Vincenzo Mangiacapre of Italy.

Also through to quarters due to the relatively small size of the draw were Asian silver-medallist Ashish Kumar (75kg), and Sumit Sangwan (81kg), who is returning to competition after enduring a period of turmoil due to a doping suspension that was later lifted after he was cleared of any wrongdoing.

Of the two, Ashish is bound for Tokyo along with Satish Kumar (+91kg), the first super heavy-

weight from the country to qualify for the quadrennial showpiece. Satish is also in quarters at this tournament. Joining them in the tender for Tokyo, is also in the quarters after getting a bye and will take on spot and making a comeback after an injury layoff, did not get a bye and will fight Spaniard Abdellaoui Raddouane for a place in the quarters on Tuesday. Also in action would be Mohammed Hussamuddin (57kg), who will be up against another local hope in Joan Manuel Torres. (PTI)

National Level Women's 20-20 Cricket Tournament gets underway in Khammam

HANS NEWS SERVICE
KHAMMAM

THE National Level Women's 20-20 Cricket Tournament got underway at Sardar Patel Stadium here on Tuesday.

Six teams from five states, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and a team from Vidarbha region of Maharashtra, Nepal and Bangladesh are taking part in the tournament.

The tournament was organised by Telangana Women 20-20 Cricket Association. The tourna-



Telangana Women 20-20 Cricket Association state organising committee president Dr. K Pradeep launched women T-20 cricket tournament in Khammam on Tuesday

ment organising committee president Dr. Kurapati Pradeep launched the event at a ceremony at the stadium.

Speaking on the occasion he said the event was being organised in association with Rotary Club of Stambhadri, Sardar Patel Stadium

was the best cricket stadium after Hyderabad's Uppal Stadium and the stadium is equipped with state-of-art facilities, he noted.

Dr. Pradeep informed that their association has organised two women T-20 cricket tournaments in the last two years and

this year's event was the third one. He wanted all the players to take part in the tournament with sportsmanship and display the best of their skills.

On the first day Uttar Pradesh won the match by 78 runs by beating Vidarbha team.

'Pitch will help turn like it did in 2nd, 3rd Tests'

AHMEDABAD

INDIA and England are both bracing themselves for a square turner in the fourth and final Test - a surface that will be dry with puffs of dust.

After England's Ben Foakes said on Sunday that the pitch would aid vicious turn from the start in the fourth Test, India vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane too admitted, "the wicket will be similar to those in the second and third Tests."

India's insistence on having a surface like it was in the second and third Tests also confirms that England have not filed any official complaint. The visitors have not even criticised it in media briefings with spinner Jack Leach saying that it will be bad to take anything away from India.

"I think the wicket is very similar compared to what it was in the third Test as also the second Test that we played in Chennai. The wicket (for fourth Test) will be similar. A spinning track," Rahane told the media on Tuesday.

Things though may not be as tough as it was in the third Test since this Test sees a return to red-ball cricket after the pink ball Test last week



ended inside two days.

"The pink ball was coming much quicker off the wicket compared to the red ball. That is the adjustment we made but as I said the wicket will be a lot similar to the ones in the last two matches," added Rahane.

While Rohit Sharma has been the standout performer, others have struggled to get a big score even though batsmen like Rahane and skipper Virat Kohli have scored some fighting half-centuries. Rahane attributed it - especially the poor show in third Test's first innings - to lack of cricket by India at home.

"You know that and we have not played too many games in India in the last 2-3 years. I think we last played a Test (against a top team) in India against South Africa in 2019. When we practiced, we decided to focus on playing spin bowling. Because in India you get those wickets," he said, and conceded that they have not had enough matches at home under their belt in recent years.

"When you play on spinning tracks, you have to play the line. It all about playing the line rather than thinking about it. Backing your defence and backing your ability on spinning and seam wickets is the key."

(IANS)

Ashwin, Root, Mayers in ICC Player of Feb shortlist

NEW DELHI

INDIA off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin, England captain Joe Root and West Indies batsman Kyle Mayers are in the shortlist for the International Cricket Council's (ICC) Player of the Month award for February. England's Tammy Beaumont and Natalie Sciver and New Zealand's Brooke Halliday are in the

list for the women's player of the month.

Ashwin, 34, has been in stellar form since India's Test calendar restarted with their tour of Australia. He played a crucial role with both bat and ball as India won the series 2-1, which included them becoming the first team since 1988 to beat Australia in a Test match at the Gabba in Brisbane.

England captain Joe Root scored three

back-to-back Test centuries against Sri Lanka and India, two of which were double hundreds. He has scored a total of 333 runs and took 6 wickets overall in the 3 Tests that he played against India.

Mayers scored an extraordinary unbeaten 210 in the fourth innings of his debut Test to lead West Indies to a record chase of 395 in their first Test against Bangladesh.

Indian coaches can compete with foreign counterparts: Khalid Jamil

NEW DELHI

KHALID Jamil seems to be a man with a Midas touch. In the 2017 I-League season, Jamil took over the reins of Aizawl FC, a team that was supposed to be relegated the previous season but due to the withdrawal of Goan teams, it got reinstated.

The team went on to create history by becoming the first northeastern team to win the championship, under the able guidance of Jamil, who is presently coaching the NorthEast United FC (NEUFC) in the Indian Super League (ISL), becoming the first Indian head coach of an ISL side.

Jamil, an AFC Pro licence holder coach, has lived up to his reputation in the ISL too, taking NEUFC to the semifinals in the ongoing season of the league after finishing third in the group stage. In the last four stage, NEUFC will take on ATK Mohun Bagan. While Jamil has coached several teams, including the big guns like East Bengal and Mohun Bagan, he seems to be more successful with the northeastern sides.

Speaking to IANS, Jamil gave all credits to his players when asked whether he has some special bonding with the northeastern teams.

"It is not that I have done anything special with these boys. In northeast, the local boys are very hard working. They give their 100 per cent for the team. Also, the team combination has been very good with the right mix of foreign and local players," Jamil told IANS. "It feels good when as an Indian coach you become successful," Jamil said, adding that it is a stop-gap arrangement and he has to wait and see how things shape up.

"See, this is a stop-gap arrangement. We have been able to reach the last four stage. We still have a long way to go. Yes, it is good that we have been able to reach thus far," Jamil said, who took over as head coach of NEUFC midway into the league after Spaniard coach Gerard Nus stepped down. Jamil is of the opinion that given an opportunity, Indian coaches can compete with foreign coaches.

"Foreign coaches are good, no doubt. But then, Indian coaches should also be given an opportunity to showcase their talent. However, I will repeat that this time, it is a stop-gap arrangement. Will wait and watch for the next edition of the competition," Jamil signed off. (IANS)



WC qualifying revised in Asia again amid pandemic

KUALA LUMPUR: Australia's World Cup qualifying match against Nepal on March 30 has been postponed, leaving only three games to be played in Asia this month as organizers consider central locations to finish the second round by mid-June.

The Asian Football Confederation announced last month that all but four of the region's remaining second-round qualifiers for the 2022 World Cup had been postponed to May and June. With AFC's latest revision on Tuesday, it's now down to three.

Mongolia is set to play Tajikistan on March 25 in Group F before traveling to Tokyo to play Japan on March 30. Saudi Arabia is scheduled to host Palestine in Group D, also on March 30. The race is now on to finish the round before the June 15 deadline. Most countries have played five of their scheduled eight group games. The AFC said it has "opened the invitation" to member associations to host their respective groups in a centralized format. No second-round qualifying matches have been played since November 2019, with multiple postponements caused by travel restrictions amid the COVID-19 pandemic. (AP)