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Sensex, Nifty scale new peaks; banking shares drive rally

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Amit Shah meets MPs amid Cabinet expansion buzz

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In brief

All applications for Haj 2021 cancelled: Haj Committee of India

The Haj Committee of India on Tuesday announced that all the applications for the pilgrimage this year stand cancelled as Saudi Arabia has stated that only a limited number of people residing in the Kingdom will be allowed to perform Haj due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In a circular, the committee said that the Ministry of Haj and Umrah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, has issued a statement informing that due to coronavirus pandemic conditions it has decided to allow citizens and residents inside the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia only to attend Haj this year in limited numbers and international Haj has been cancelled.

Twitter appoints interim Chief Compliance Officer

Twitter on Tuesday said it has appointed an interim Chief Compliance Officer and the details of the official will be shared with the IT Ministry directly soon. The Government had issued a notice to Twitter giving it one last chance to "immediately" comply with the new IT rules and warned that failure to adhere to the norms will lead to the platform losing exemption from liability under the IT Act. Following this, Twitter had assured that it is in advanced stages of finalising the appointment of chief compliance officer as required under the new IT rules, and that it will submit additional details within a week.

Exports jump 69.35% to USD 32.27 bn in May

India's exports rose by 69.35 per cent to USD 32.27 billion in May on account of healthy growth even as trade deficit dropped to an eight-month low of USD 6.28 billion, according to government data released on Tuesday. Exports stood at USD 19 billion in May last year and at USD 29.85 billion in May 2019, the data showed. Imports in May 2021 grew by 73.64 per cent to USD 38.55 billion, leaving a trade deficit of USD 6.28 billion for the month -- the lowest in eight months.

Taj Mahal to reopen today, 650 visitors allowed at a time

Only 650 will be allowed to enter the Taj Mahal at a time when the monument reopens for visitors on Wednesday, officials said. All centrally protected monuments, museums and sites closed for around two months due to the Covid pandemic will reopen on June 16, an Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) order issued on Monday said. While 650 tourists will be allowed inside the Taj Mahal premises at one point of time so that COVID-19 protocols are followed, such restrictions will not be in place for other monuments, Agra District Magistrate Prabh N Singh said on Tuesday. The monument premises will be sanitised three times a day, the ASI said.

TODAY

ALMANAC
Month & Paksham: Jyeshtha & Shukla Paksha
 Panchangam
Tithi : Shashthi: 10:45 pm
Nakshatram : Magha: 10:15 pm
Time to Avoid : (Bad time to start any important work)
Rahukalam : 12:16 pm - 01:54 pm
Yamagandam : 07:23 am - 09:01 am
Variyam : 09:58 am - 11:36 am
Gulika : 10:39 am - 12:16 pm
Good Time : (to start any important work)
Amritakalam : 07:47 pm - 09:25 pm
Abhijit Muhurtham : NIL

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Scattered thunderstorms
Temp: 33/23
Humidity: 50%
Sunrise: 05:41 am
Sunset: 06:51 pm
 Current Weather Conditions
 Updated JUNE 15, 2021 5:00 PM



Municipal Administration and IT Minister KT Rama Rao garlanding a bronze statue of martyred Colonel Santosh Babu, after unveiling it on Tuesday.

TS has overtaken Punjab, Konaseema : KTR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Municipal Administration and IT Minister K T Rama Rao has said that Telangana has overtaken Konaseema and Punjab in respect of paddy cultivation and become a leader in the country.

Addressing a gathering after lockdown hours on Tuesday at Nakrekal, KTR observed: "The

Food Corporation of India said that Telangana tops in paddy cultivation. We have overtaken Punjab. Once upon a time, in the neighbouring state Andhra Pradesh, the delta region - Konaseema areas of Krishna and Godavari districts, used to be shown as the reason for Andhra Pradesh becoming 'Annapurna (rice bowl)'.

Honorarium up for members of ZPTCs, MPTCs and sarpanches

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The State government issued orders on Tuesday increasing the honorarium of sarpanches as well as members of ZPTCs and MPTCs by 30 per cent.

It also issued orders revising the remuneration payable to contract/outsource personnel and approved the revision of remuneration payable to the following categories of personnel working on honorarium/incentive basis with 30 per cent enhancement: Home guards, Anganwadi workers/Assistants, Village Revenue Assistants, Village Organisation Assistant, ASHA workers and those engaged by the Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP).

Release of RythuBandhu brings cheer to farmers

ML MELLY MAITREY ■ HYDERABAD

Notwithstanding the financial crunch the State has been facing due to the lockdown and restricted economic activity in view of the raging Covid-19 pandemic, payments under the Rythu Bandhu investment assistance scheme commenced on Tuesday as announced by Chief Minister K Chandrababoo Naidu in the May 30th Cabinet meeting.

The May 30th announcement took many by surprise then, with some wondering whether the decision could be implemented in such a short span of time, given the revenue shortfall. Last time when the State was going through the first wave of Covid-19, the Rythu Bandhu assistance was released during July and August.

The second wave of the Covid has been more severe and the government had to brace up for unexpected expenditure towards ramping up medical and health infrastructure, pro-

Less than 12% of those affected in Covid waves in 1-20 age group

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Dismissing assumptions that children and the younger population were more affected in the second wave of Covid, the government on Tuesday said those in the 1-20 age group accounted for less than 12 per cent of the cases recorded during both the waves.

Those aged 1-20 years accounted for 11.62 per cent of the total cases during the second wave (March 15 to May 25) as against 11.31 per cent in the first wave (July 1 to December 31), indicating not much difference in the proportion of those infected in this age-group, according to the data shared by the government at a press conference.

The data showed that the 21-50 age group was the most affected category in both waves with the people from this category accounting for 59.74 per cent of the infections in the first wave as against 62.45 per cent in the second.

As for people aged above 61



years, the proportion was 13.89 per cent in the first wave and 12.58 per cent in the second wave.

Presenting age bifurcation of cases in first and second waves, Lav Agarwal, Joint Secretary in the Health Ministry, said the first wave saw 3.28 per cent cases coming

from 1 to 10 years age group while it is 3.05 per cent in the second wave.

The age group 11-20 years accounted for 8.03 per cent in the first wave and 8.57 per cent in the second wave.

Astra antibody cocktail fails to prevent Covid

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

AstraZeneca said on Tuesday a late-stage trial failed to provide evidence that its COVID-19 antibody therapy protected people who had contact with an infected person from the disease, a small setback in its efforts to find alternatives to vaccines.

The study assessed whether the therapy, a cocktail of two types of antibodies, could prevent adults who had been exposed to the virus in the past eight days from developing COVID-19 symptoms.

The therapy, AZD7442, was 33% effective in reducing the risk of people developing symptoms compared with a placebo, but that result was not statistically significant -- meaning it might have been due to chance and not the therapy.

A LA FLU SHOTS...

People need to take Covid-19 vax every year: Dr Nageswar

NAVEENA GHANATE ■ HYDERABAD

Like flu shots, people may have to take COVID-19 vaccine once every year as the antibodies do not last long, according to Asian Institute of Gastroenterology (AIG) chairman Dr D Nageswar Reddy. He highlighted this while addressing a session titled 'COVID-19: Lessons Learnt & Future Strategies' organised by the Telangana State Medical Council (TSMC) here on Tuesday.

Dr Reddy observed, "Duration of efficacy of vaccine - (for) up to 6 months' antibodies are still there. Based upon the T-cells study that we are doing, we may have the vaccine memory for about 12 months. Like the flu vaccine, we might have to take Covid vaccine once every year". He said, "In future, like every year we take the flu shot, we will also take Covid shot. Interestingly, there



worthwhile to think of taking a third dose after eight weeks. For others, two doses would be sufficient".

Even Dr Randeep Guleria, Director of AIIMS, who addressed the event, said that people might need a booster dose as well. Pointing to concerns raised about virus mutations and the duration of efficacy of vaccines, Dr Randeep Guleria said, "Future vaccines may need to be tweaked in order to provide more potent protection against variants. We may also need a booster dose. This has been done for influenza vaccine, which every year we do, and (it) can be done for RNA vaccines".

Speaking about the gap between the vaccine doses, Dr Reddy said there was a controversy around the interval. He said, "We believe that 3-4 weeks should be the gap.

Upset price fixed at Rs 25 crore per acre

Govt goes ahead with auction of govt lands

ML MELLY MAITREY ■ HYDERABAD

Although the opposition parties have stepped up their criticism of the decision to auction government lands for resource mobilisation, the State government on Tuesday issued a notification and launched a website to enable interested bidders to access the notification for e-auction of the identified parcels of lands.

The notification is available on <https://auctions.hmda.gov.in> and <https://www.mscecommerce.com>.

The State has asked all District Collectors to identify unutilised government lands measuring about 1,000 acres in each district and keep them ready in case the government decides to go for auction of those lands in future.

In the first phase, the government has decided to auction 64 acres of prime land - 49.92 acres under eight plots ranging from 1 acre to maximum of 8.94 acres in Neopolis and Golden Mile layouts at Kokapet under the Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority.

Another land parcel of 15.01 acres in Khanamet is under the Telangana State Industrial Infrastructure Corporation. The TSIIIC is auctioning it on behalf of the government as five plots in the range of 2.1 acres to 3.69 acres.

A pre-bid meeting will be held on June 25. The last date for registration is July 13 and the last date for payment of Earnest Money Deposit of Rs. 5 crore per plot is July 14. This is to ensure that only serious play-

WEBSITE LAUNCHED FOR E-AUCTION OF LANDS ON JULY 15.
HOPES TO MOBILISE ABOUT RS.2,000 CRORE TO RS.2,500 CRORE.
GOVT DECISION TO SELL LANDS TO FUND WELFARE SCHEMES EVOKES MIXED RESPONSE

ers participate in the auction. The upset price per acre is 25 crore and the minimum bid increment is Rs.20 lakh per acre or in multiples thereof.

The e-auction will be held on July 15 and the highest bidder (H1 bidder), if confirmed by the HMDA, will be made an offer within one week of the auction, sources said.

Once the allotment is confirmed, the entire amount should be paid in maximum three instalments - first instalment of 33 per cent of amount within one week, second instalment within 60 days, and the balance amount on or before October 25.

Given the strategic location of the plots/land put up for sale in the vicinity of HI-TEC City, Gachibowli, Financial District and the RG International Airport, the government hopes to raise anywhere between Rs.2,000 crore and Rs.2,500 crore in the e-auction to be held with transparency.

Anyone 18+ can walk-in for registration, vaccination: Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Anyone over the age of 18 can walk in to the nearest vaccination centre to get registered on the CoWIN digital platform and be inoculated against COVID-19, the Union Health Ministry said Monday afternoon.

It is not mandatory to pre-register online or book an appointment to get the vaccine, the government said, as it seeks to increase the pace of vaccinations and tackle the 'vaccine

hesitancy' it has blamed for the slow rollout of vaccines in parts of the country, including rural areas.

'Vaccine hesitancy', the government said last week, is "a globally accepted phenomenon and should be addressed by scientifically studying the issue at the community level". It said it was sharing a 'COVID-19 Vaccine Communication Strategy' with state/UT governments.

Hindujas announce sale of Churchill's old war office

PNS ■ LONDON

The Hinduja Group on Tuesday announced the launch of the sale of a series of luxury residences being created at a transformed site of former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill's Old War Office (OWO) building in the heart of London.

The OWO Residences by Raffles includes a range of 85 homes, from studios and one-bedroom apartments up to five-bedroom residences, with a two-bed apartment priced at around 5.8 million pound.

The London landmark is set to complete its modern-day transformation in 2022, when it will also comprise a Raffles hotel with 125-rooms and suites, a collection of nine restaurants and bars, and a



spa. "Launching sales of these extraordinary residences is a significant milestone for us as a family and for the project team at The OWO; it's one step closer to opening the storied building to the public for the first time where branded residences will sit along-



Chief Justice of India Justice NV Ramana, who planted a sapling as part of the Green Challenge at Raj Bhavan on Tuesday, greeted by the originator of the initiative and Rajya Sabha member Santosh Kumar.

side a flagship Raffles hotel," said Gopichand P. Hinduja, Co-Chairman of the Hinduja Group.

"London is one of the best cities in the world, steeped in history and tradition, and has been our home for over forty years. With our knowledge and experience in restoration of historic buildings, everything we do, and every decision made on The OWO is underscored by our passion and respect for the heritage of the building and long-term commitment to London," he said. The Old War Office, originally completed in 1906 and designed by British architect William Young, was formerly the site of the original Palace of Whitehall. The building has since witnessed world-shaping events while influential political and military leaders like Winston Churchill and David Lloyd George held office in the UK. Its grand architecture has also made the building a backdrop for James Bond films and, more recently, 'The Crown' Netflix series.

Freebies will impair fiscal health of Andhra Pradesh

Fiscal health of any state depends on the management of its available resources. If we take the case of Andhra Pradesh today, the moot question is: What would happen if the state dumps its financial resources in unproductive areas in the name of welfare? How can the state disown its noble responsibility of creating community assets? Is throwing crumbs at individuals preferable to creation of community assets? How can the future of such a state be sound if the 'dumping' continues unabated in the blind pursuit of making people smile by offering them freebies? There should be some soul-searching among the powers that be in AP to answer these embarrassing questions.



up by an elected government if they are part and parcel of prudent policies that are linked to efficient management of available resources. Thousands of people would benefit from say building a community hall, laying a road, or setting up a bore well. But in AP crores of people are getting individual benefits by way of direct transfers of money from the government in the name of welfare schemes. These include community pensions and Amma Vodi. People were previously happy to receive pensions of Rs. 500/- or Rs. 1,000/- and they used to spend that amount frugally for meeting their daily needs. In those days only Rs.200/- was paid in the form of community pension and that too,

Nobody would oppose welfare programmes taken up by an elected government if they are part and parcel of prudent policies that are linked to efficient management of available resources. Thousands of people would benefit from say building a community hall, laying a road, or setting up a bore well.

once in three months, with people waiting patiently for that occasion. But suddenly there have been three-fold increase in various types of pension amounts, following the politically motivated race between N. Chandrababu Naidu and YS Jaganmohan Reddy, leaders of the main warring political forces in the state. Some observers say people do not need freebies.

Referring to the distribution of subsidised rice through fair price shops, they ask: "Are people really in need of that rice?" Given the improvement in living standards, with almost five-fold increase in daily wages, they say daily wagers are now in a position to get at least Rs.500/ and yet they spend 35% of it on liquor consumption. Total prohibition, if



M D RATNA KUMAR Senior Journalist

achieved as promised in the election manifesto of ruling YSRC, will certainly help lakhs of families. Still, political compulsions are prompting the powers that be to take imprudent decisions. The seeds of the unscrupulous practice of luring BPL people were sown during the regime of Chandrababu

Naidu in the erstwhile state of undivided AP. Free distribution of LPG connections to members of self-help groups was one among those 'koti varaalu'(one crore blessings). Despite his poll gimmicks, he lost in the electoral battle. Of course, no government can afford to dispense with freebies completely. But in AP, there seems to be no limit on giving away freebies to various sections of people. Recently the AP government announced that money totaling Rs.95,000 crore had been deposited into the bank accounts of beneficiaries across the state and patted itself for its 'wise and tremendous' act to benefit people. Every rupee of this huge amount will be spent on unproductive purposes. After all this, they say they are 'struggling to fund' the Polavaram multi-purpose

project, which is considered the lifeline of AP. Choices make all the difference. Should it be individual benefit now or long-term community benefit? Should it be DBT or asset creation? A responsible government will make the right choices. This also explains why the Polavaram project, for which the foundation stone was laid by former chief minister T. Anjaiah back in 1981, has not seen the light of the day yet. Giving freebies to people drags government through a trapdoor. Once the government passes the door, it can't come out. Take the case of free power supply to farmers conceived by Dr. YS Rajasekhara Reddy, former chief minister of undivided AP. He could not touch it even after realizing that it was a millstone around the government's neck.

He thought the scheme was required only for about two agricultural seasons to enable farmers to come out of their debts. But then he realized the hard way that habits die hard. No government would invite the wrath of people by stopping such popular schemes. That's why governments elect to continue those schemes, irrespective of the fiscal strain. They are willing to borrow to finance such schemes. Thousands of crores of rupees are borrowed to meet even daily needs of the government. And then they look at ways of selling government lands in prime localities of various cities and towns. Do we need development that forces the government to disperse with our permanent assets at throwaway prices?

Eatala's new political journey begins in an inauspicious way

SNCN ACHARYULU HYDERABAD

The beginning of Eatala's journey in BJP has unfortunately failed to rise up to the hype that had been created before his joining the BJP, observers said, moreover it was a bad omen for Eatala, some felt as he averted a major plane accident while returning to Hyderabad from Delhi, following his joining the BJP. As had been expected by many Eatala was not inducted into the BJP in presence of the party's National President JP Nadda. There had been speculations that Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself will welcome Eatala into BJP. Eatala

however, joined the BJP in New Delhi on Monday in presence of Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and some other BJP leaders. This gave the TRS a handle to criticise Eatala. Former Deputy Chief Minister Kadiam Srihari alleged on Tuesday that Eatala joined the BJP to protect his properties. Kadiam also said that Eatala joined the BJP in presence of Union Minister and not in the presence of BJP National President JP Nadda and that showed the amount of importance and respect the BJP was giving to Eatala. There had been speculation in the Eatala camp before he joined BJP that he might even

be given a cabinet berth following his becoming a Rajya Sabha member from some other state. The TRS took a dig at that expectation of the Eatala camp by asking how could Eatala even think of a ministerial berth when even the BJP national president was not present during his joining the BJP. However, there has been another incident that has dampened the spirit of the people in Eatala camp. Eatala joined the BJP on Monday and returned to Hyderabad by a special flight that carried all his men with him, on Tuesday. Eatala and his men were fortunate enough to avert a major plane accident on their way

back from New Delhi. Just after Eatala's flight took off from New Delhi, the pilot of the plane detected a technical snag and flew back to the New Delhi airport, thereby averting a major accident. For record, in his 19 years of journey in TRS, Eatala had held several important positions. He was made the floor leader of TRS in the Assembly when Congress was in power in the undivided Andhra Pradesh. He was made minister twice. Except during the last few months Eatala's journey in the TRS had been smooth. Now, followers of Eatala are waiting to know how his journey will be in the BJP.

Less than 12% in 1-20 age...

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Amid fears about the possibility of children getting more affected if a third wave comes, the government said there appears to be no substantial evidence to indicate there will be severe infection among them but then highlighted that people of all age groups need to stay vigilant and follow precautions. Highlighting the improvement in the Covid situation in

the country, Agarwal further said that almost 85 per cent decline in daily new cases has been noted since the highest reported peak on May 7 and the number of districts reporting more than 100 daily cases have reduced from 531 as recorded in the week ending May 4 to 165 in the week ending June 13. There has been a decline of 75.6 per cent from the peak of Covid active cases recorded on May 10 across the county.

At present, there are 20 states and union territories where the Covid active case-load is less than 5,000 and a drastic reduction is being noted in almost all states. Due to the restriction being imposed at the field level in terms of containment activities, a sharp decline of 78 per cent has been noted since the highest reported weekly Covid case positivity of 21.4 per cent recorded between May 4-10 during the second wave.

Honorarium...

Continued from page 1 The Finance Department issued instructions to the departments concerned to send proposals for revising the remuneration payable to the above categories duly indicating the basic pay and other details to the Finance Department. MLC Kavitha and MLC Pochampalli Srinivasa Reddy expressed their happiness over the issuance of GO enhancing the honorarium of members of ZPTCs and MPTCs.

Close shave for Eatala, aides

PNS HYDERABAD

A special flight carrying 184 members from Delhi to Hyderabad, including newly inducted TS BJP members viz. former health minister Eatala Rajender, Enugu Ravinder Reddy, Tula Uma, Ramesh Rathod, Gandra Nalini, Ashwathama Reddy and BJP legislator from Dubbak M Raghunandan Rao, Telangana BJP core committee member Vivek and others, had to return immediately upon taking off at Delhi Airport on Tuesday morning after the pilot noticed a glitch in time. It was a close shave for the passengers. The alert pilot took the flight to the alighting point. After the glitch was fixed, the flight took off again after about an hour's delay. The flight reached Shamshabad Airport at 11.30 am, instead of 9.30 am. Party activists welcomed Eatala at the airport on a grand note. During the welcome, much cajoling of BJP activists took place with the police personnel showing unusual restraint.

CM will stand by Army families, says KTR after unveiling statue

PNS HYDERABAD

Municipal Administration Minister KT Rama Rao has said that the state government is fully committed to support the family of martyred Colonel Santosh Babu. The Minister on Tuesday unveiled a nine-foot bronze statue of Colonel Santosh Babu, who died while fighting valiantly for India on the Indo-China border. To mark the occasion, the Minister rechristened the Court Chowrastra as Colonel Santosh Babu Chowrastra. He participated and then spoke at the subsequent statue unveiling ceremony. KTR said that the country

would never forget the sacrifice of Colonel Santosh Babu. KTR said it did not appear as if a year had passed by. "It is not how long we have lived, but we should live in a way so that people will remember us," KTR remarked. He said that the honour given to Colonel Santosh Babu and the support extended to his family by CM KCR had given courage to the entire Indian Army. He said, "There are allegations that the CM helped Santosh Babu's family in a big way. But CM is determined to stand by every military family. We have unveiled the statue of Santosh Babu to inspire the people of Suryapet". The Minister con-

gratulated the sculptor of the statue, Srinivas Reddy, on the occasion. Speaking on the occasion, Col Santosh's wife Santoshi said, "The family was devastated by the Colonel's death, but the government has done a lot for the bereaved family". She said that CM KCR had helped the family of an immortal soldier in a way that no Chief Minister in the country had done. She said the CM helped with Rs 5 crore, gave her a house, and gave her a job in a Group I cadre. She said that she could never forget the day CM KCR invited her family for food and took care of her as if she were his daughter.

Astra antibody cocktail fails to prevent Covid

Continued from page 1

Results for a subset of participants who were not infected to begin with was more encouraging but the primary analysis rested on results from all participants. "While this trial did not meet the primary endpoint against symptomatic illness, we are encouraged by the protection seen in the PCR negative participants following treatment with AZD7442," AstraZeneca Executive Vice President Mene Pangalos said in a statement. The company is banking on further studies to revive the product's fortunes. Five more trials are ongoing, testing the antibody cocktail as treatment or in prevention. The next one will likely be from a larger trial testing the product in people with a weakened immune system due to cancer or an organ transplant, who may not benefit from a vaccine.

TS has overtaken Konaseema, Punjab: KTR

Continued from page 1

Today, Telangana has outdone the delta region and Punjab and is a role model for the country. This is a big win". KTR said that when the state came into being in 2014, paddy was being cultivated in 30 lakh acres. After six years now, due to new projects and Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao' vision, paddy was being cultivated in 1.06 lakh acres. KCR intro-

duced and implemented the Rythu Bandhu scheme in a smooth manner "like no other leader in the history of the world". Despite the financial crisis, the state government was buying grain from farmers. He then asked rhetorically whether any other state in the country was buying grain like Telangana. KTR said that the erstwhile Nalgonda district had become a role model for the state in terms of grain yield. Despite difficult situations like coron-

avirus, more than 2,670 Rythu Vedikas had been set up for farmers. Characterizing the Bharatiya Janata Party as a 'new beggar', KTR pointed out that the central government did not accord national status to even one project. There were 'anti development forces' and no money had been given for Mission Bhagiratha. KTR urged people to give a strong response to BJP in future also like what they did recently in Nakrekal.

Release of RythuBandhu brings cheer...

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The Finance Department raised Rs.5,500 crore from the market by notifying the RBI --Rs.2,500 crore on June 8 and Rs.3,000 crore on June 15 to mobilise the resources. The total outgo under the Rythu Bandhu during this season will be Rs.7,508 crore to 63.25 lakh farmers. As the farmers started getting messages from the banks on their mobile phones from the morning of Tuesday, it dawned on them and on people's repre-

sentatives alike that the government had kept its word. No wonder, there is a celebratory mood among farmers and TRS leaders in several villages and mandals. This season's Rythu Bandhu scheme brought under its fold 2.8 lakh new beneficiaries who got pattadar passbooks and those whose data could not be uploaded via Dharani Portal due to pending mutations, correction of errors in the passbooks. A special drive was taken up, with June 10th as the cut-off date, to enter the data pertaining

to these farmers' lands on the portal. On Tuesday, the first day of the release of the amount, Rs.516.96 crore was credited to the accounts of 16,95 lakh small farmers with land holdings under one acre. Agriculture Minister S.Niranjan Reddy said that 93 per cent of 63 lakh beneficiaries under Rythu Bandhu were small and marginal farmers with land holdings of one gunta to five acres, out of the total agricultural extent of 1,50,18,000 acres qualifying for Rythu Bandhu

scheme. The remaining seven per cent beneficiaries own above five acres to 25 acres. Those who own land above 25 acres number about 6,000 in the State. Finance Minister T.Harish Rao and Industry and IT Minister and TRS working president took to Twitter to announce the release of investment assistance -- an indication that the government considered the release of the amount as an achievement, given the devastating impact of the pandemic.

People need to ...

Continued from page 1

Covishield gap from (first dose to second dose) they should bring back from 16 to 8 weeks". He said that patients who already had Covid and took the vaccine have more protective antibodies, compared to those who were not infected. He said, "We believe a single dose will protect them for 12 months. Government is taking serious note of this, as it will improve vaccine availability". Speaking about herd immunity, Dr Reddy said, "70-80% of population should have immunity to develop herd immunity. Now you can confidently say that about 25-30 crore Indians are having immunity. We have 60 crore people to be vaccinated. We have to do 1 crore vaccinations per day over the next three months. By the end of the year, we can complete the full population". He pointed that the country was producing eight crore vaccine doses now, we have to reach 30 crore a month. Then by August we will be able to reach 20 crore and by September 30 crore. Dr Reddy added, "Even though there is intention,

Upset price fixed at Rs 25 crore per acre

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Meanwhile, market analysts are watching the proposed land auctions with interest to see the response. They are of the view that institutions and MNCs may be interested more than real estate developers. Major developers have enough land bank with them to acquire more land at the prevailing market price when the sentiment is still low among retail investors in the wake of the pandemic amid uncertainty about immediate recovery of the economy. The Covid-19 pandemic, which brought into vogue Work from home culture, has also changed the way institutions look at office space investment, they point out. Some developers suggest that land auctions should be carried out judiciously as enough land bank should be available with the government for future public infrastructure and other requirements. There are others who point out that in 2006 and 2007,

Koakapet lands were sold at Rs 14 crore per acre in the auction. Given the market value, general appreciation of land prices, infrastructure development, and the brand value of Hyderabad, the government had fixed the upset price reasonably and the auction should evoke good response. They, however, caution that the government, rather than auctioning the land to the rich for speculative purposes, should develop basic infrastructure and offer land as per the Master Plan for residential, commercial and industrial zones. Although government has defended its decision to sell land to fund welfare schemes for people, there is a view that the spiralling welfare expenditure can become unsustainable for any government. It will make sense as the government has now started spending on public health, education and skill development. That will help people in the long run to be able to eke out their livelihood, is what social activists say.

HYDERABAD BULLION RATES	
GOLD	₹ 49,630 (10 gm)
₹ 10	
SILVER	₹ 75,900 (1kg)
₹ 600	
CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹168
Without Skin	₹191
Broiler at Farm	₹116
EGG RATES ₹/100	
HYDERABAD	514
VIJAYAWADA	524
VISAKHAPATNAM	557
RETAIL PRICE	₹5.14

Hindujas announce sale of Churchill's old war office

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"It is a remarkable building that lends itself perfectly to a masterpiece such as The OWO. The inherent majesty and grandeur of this site is entirely in keeping with the Raffles brand and, to have unearthed an opportunity within such historic walls to deliver a flagship hotel and the first Raffles branded residences in Europe, marks a signif-

icant moment for the Accor group," said Sebastien Bazin, Chairman and CEO at Accor. Charlie Walsh, Head of Residential Sales at The OWO, added: "This is a turnkey lifestyle within a new world-class culinary destination not yet experienced in the UK, set within a building of remarkable eminence." Each residence is described as unique and

specifically tailored to suit its location in the building. In the residential offering, homeowners will also have access to all the facilities of a luxury hotel on their doorstep. The Hinduja Group have been associated with the site since its acquisition in 2014 and have since worked with a team of experts, including Historic England and Museum of London Archaeology, and

partnered with Raffles Hotels & Resorts for its luxury transformation. The sales of the residences will be handled by estate agents Knight Frank and Strutt & Parker, with the only starting prices so far confirmed being for a two-bedroom residence from 5.8 million pound. "The OWO will likely command the interest of international and domestic buyers who are looking for

a home in a truly integrated branded residence development that sets the standard of luxury, service and security," said Josh Ayres, Senior Director, Strutt & Parker. "On completion in 2022, I have no doubt that the development will immediately become a new central London destination of choice," added Ian Pidgeon, Partner, Knight Frank.

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

Tender Notice Date: 14.06.2021

Name of the Work: 06 Nos of Civil Works, Estimated amount (Rs. in Lakhs): 947.00

Start Date/Last Date & Time for Receipts of Bids Download Start Date 13/06/2021 @ 05.00 P.M. Last Date & Time for Receipt of Bids 22/06/2021@ 3.15 P.M. Name & Address: Officer Cell No. Sri B.Narsing Rao Superintending Engineer, Chairman Zone -GHMC Sarder Mahal Channarayn Ph - 9904405314 Further details can be seen at <https://tender.eprocurement.gov.in>

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA

PUBLIC HEALTH & MUNICIPAL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

Tender Notice Date: 15.06.2021

Construction of various drains in Kothaguda, Palvancha and Narasarpalli Municipalities - City of the State in Lakhs - 5-crores. The bid download start date 16-06-2021 and end date 23-06-2021. Further details can be seen @ e-procurement market place i.e. www.bidsindia.gov.in and for any further clarifications required, please contact office of the Superintending Engineer (PH), UNIT-1, TURIDC, Warangal. Officer inviting bids: Superintending Engineer (PH), UNIT-1, TURIDC, Warangal.

SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER/PHO

UNIT-1, TURIDC, WARANGAL

Banned tobacco finds its way to city

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The banned tobacco products, including gutka, are being smuggled into the city from Bidar and its surrounding areas in Karnataka and supplying them to shops in the city. Gutka and other prohibited products are finding their way into the city through smuggling. These smuggled products are being stored in the city outskirts. From there, they are being sent to provisional stores and pan shops.

The magnitude of the problem can be understood with the police confiscating the banned tobacco products worth Rs 20 lakh on a single day.

The traders are bringing the banned tobacco products to the city through backdoor. Fearing the action from police, the



smugglers have been lodging the smuggled products in houses on the city outskirts. They are bringing goods required for one week to one month and supplying them to provisional stores and pan shops in small quantities. The foreign cigarettes are

reportedly being imported from China, Malaysia, Switzerland and South Korea and then sold in Delhi, Hyderabad and other states at cheaper rates with heavy margins to the sellers, said the police on Tuesday. The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco

Rajasthan native held for selling banned cigarettes

A 22-year-old native of Rajasthan was arrested by the city police on Tuesday for selling foreign cigarettes illegally. The cops raided and busted his godown, after they received information about his operations at Aghapura.

According to the police, the accused, Akash Kumar Mali, was illegally procuring the foreign cigarettes from New Delhi and selling it to local merchants, pan shop vendors, kirana shops and petty vendors here. The other accused, Vikas Mali, 25, is absconding. After Akash's arrest, illegal imported cigarettes worth Rs 20 lakh have been seized from the accused.

Products Act (COTPA) has made it mandatory to have a graphic health warning on the 85 per cent space of the cigarette packet and the union government levies heavy taxes on the tobacco products to discourage sales of the same. The foreign cigarettes seized

by the police have no health warning on the boxes. The police said that the accused imported huge quantities of foreign cigarettes from Delhi on Monday and kept them at the Godown in New Aghapura in order to deliver them to local merchants.

Civic body makes good use of scrapped TSRTC buses in city

GHMC altering unused buses into mobile toilets

KAUSHIK GUNAGANTI ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana state government's move to set up mobile toilets in city and other parts of Telangana is yielding double benefit. On one hand, citizens are making good use of the mobile toilets, while on the other, the move is helping the Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) to dispose of its old and rickety buses faster, apart from generating some additional revenue for itself.

Generally, TSRTC takes off the old buses, which have completed 12 lakh kilometres of operations in rural areas and 15 lakh kilometres operations in GHMC limits, from service and the units of the vehicle are sold as scrap.

However, with the Municipal Administration and Urban Development department deciding to use slightly better buses, which still have considerable economic and operational service left in them, things are slowly getting better for the RTC.

The State Corporation is handing over buses, which still can be operated for another 50,000 km or a year, to the MA&UD department for converting them into mobile toilets.



The mobile toilets have two urinal sections separately for women and men including a feeding room for breastfeeding mothers. At the back of the bus, a small shop will be set up for the sale of snacks, cool drinks and water bottles. The management of this mobile toilet, which is equipped with a solar power system, will be handed over to outsourcing agency after completion.

Meanwhile, Greater Hyderabad Mayor Gadwal Vijayalakshmi inaugurated five new mobile toilets in Khairatabad on Tuesday, while 30 such mobile toilets are already available to use.

Speaking at the inauguration held at the parking yard in

Necklace Road, the Mayor said that the mobile toilets would be available for use in major intersections of the city where the crowd is high.

"The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) has set up seven new mobile toilets in major intersections of the city. Unused Telangana state RTC buses are beautifully altered to design these mobile toilets. For the first time, facilities for transgender are made in these mobile toilets," she added.

Over 70 old TSRTC buses, including 35 in the GHMC limits, have been fabricated into mobile toilets with many more likely to be put to the same use.

30-year-old man stabbed to death

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A 30-year-old man was stabbed to death, allegedly after a row over a road accident in Nehru Nagar under the Balanagar police station limits on Monday night.

In the afternoon, there was an accident in which a child was injured, after which there was an argument between the man who was driving the motorcycle and a relative of the child.

In the evening, on the pretext of discussing the issue, the relative called the other man out and stabbed him to death," said K Purushottam, Assistant Commissioner of Police (Balanagar).

The police have shifted the body to the Osmania General Hospital mortuary for autopsy.

A case under Section 302 of IPC has been registered by the police and investigation is on.

CISF takes over security of BB

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) on Monday took over the security of Bharat Biotech International Ltd's facility here to protect it against any terror threat or sabotage that may lead to a biological disaster.

The CISF deployed 64 personnel headed by an Inspector-rank officer as part of the security for Bharat Biotech, the

developer and manufacturer of Covaxin, India's first indigenously-developed vaccine for Covid. The contingent of the paramilitary force was inducted at a ceremony held at the facility located in Genome Valley, the cluster of biotechnology companies. Bharat Biotech Chairman and Managing Director Dr Krishna Ella, Joint Managing Director Dr Suchitra Ella, CISF Inspector General in-charge of

the southern sector Anjana Sinha, and Deputy IG, South Zone-II, Shyamala Dinavahi attended the induction ceremony. The CISF flag was unfurled on Bharat Biotech campus on the occasion.

The CISF will control access to the facility and its armed troopers, including a vehicle-borne QRT, will be stationed at vantage positions in case of a terrorist attack or sabotage. The cost of the security will be

borne by company. The decision to provide CISF security was taken recently in view of the increased threat perception to Bharat Biotech as the biotechnology company is considered vulnerable to threats from anti-nationals and saboteurs.

On the direction of the Union Home Ministry to provide armed security cover to the premises of Bharat Biotech, CISF officials recently carried out survey of the facility.

Eatala resigns as prez of Exhibition Society

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Exhibition Society has stated that former Health Minister Eatala Rajender has resigned as the president of Exhibition Society, Hyderabad due to personal reasons on Tuesday.

Eatala Rajender has been holding the post of the president to the Exhibition Society since 2014.

It may be remembered here that the former Minister has

also resigned as the TRS MLA on Monday. In a note issued by the secretary of Exhibition Society Dr B Prabha Shankar informed that the managing committee and members of the Exhibition Society acknowledge and place on record his contribution in the development of the society and the educational institutions sponsored and managed by it and its sister organisation Osmania Graduates' Association in Telangana.

CJI visits Yadadri shrine

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Justice of India N V Ramana visited the famed Yadadri shrine in the district on Tuesday and participated in pooja to Sri Lakshminarasimha Swamy at Balalayam. The CJI also went through the renovated main temple on the hill shrine.

Ministers Indrakaran Reddy and Jagdish Reddy welcomed the CJI at the VVIP suite on Yadadri hill. As per tradition, the temple priests welcomed the CJI with purna khumbam on his arrival at Balalayam. Chief



Justice Ramana and his wife participated in special pooja at Balalayam. He also inspected the works at the temple town and Presidential Suite.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
IRRIGATION DIVISION NO.3 NIRMAL

Tender Notice

Tenders were floated vide Tender Notice No.17/2021-22, Dt:02-06-2021 (2nd Call) and 2/2021-22, 4/2021-22, 6/2021-22 Dt:21-05-2021 (3rd Call) available from 14-06-2021 to 21-06-2021 for an amount of Rs.18.22 Lakhs. For further details can be seen @ <https://tender.telangana.gov.in>. Executive Engineer, Irrigation Division No.3, Nirmal.

HYDERABAD METROPOLITAN CORPORATION
13th Floor Swamijayanthi Commercial Complex, Ammerpet, Hyderabad.

Public Notification U/s 15 (3) of HMDA Act, 2008
(Government Memo No.10327/P/11/2020 Dt:12.04.2021)

In exercise of powers conferred by Sub-Section (1) of Section 13 of HMDA Act 2008 (Act No.8 of 2008), it is proposed to make the following draft variation to the land use envisaged in the notified Revised Master Plan - 2021 approved vide G.O.Ms.No.388/M&UD dt:03.04.2020.

The site in S.No. 1882/AA, 2052/AA of Madhavaram (V), Serilingampally (M) to an extent of 1858.254 Sq. mtrs., which is presently earmarked for Residential use zone as per the revised Master Plan - 2021 approved by the Government vide G.O.Ms. No.288/MA&UD dt:03.04.2020, is now proposed to be designated as Commercial use zone.

The details of the above are available in the site <http://tender.telangana.gov.in> and <http://tender.gov.in>. Objections/Representations should be considered from any person or body to the said proposals. They can submit objections/representations in writing either to the M.C. - HMDA or to the Principal Secretary, MA&UD Dept., Telangana Government, Hyderabad within fifteen (15) days from the date of publication of this notice.

R.O.No.-1896/PP/CL/AGENCY/ADVT/1/2021-22 34-For Metropolitan Commissioner HMDA



SCR delivers 3,000 mt medical oxygen to TS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Indian Railways continuous endeavor to find new solutions to serve the nation and overcome unexpected challenges has once again been strengthened with the supply of Medical Oxygen to the state of Telangana (within SCR) crossing 3,000 MT of Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO). As on Tuesday, a cumulative total of 3,052 MT of LMO has been delivered at Sanath Nagar in Hyderabad city for the State of Telangana through Oxygen Express trains.

In order to meet the Medical Oxygen requirement of the State in an effective manner, the Oxygen Express trains have been operated from both from the Eastern and Western parts of the Nation. As a result, till date

3,052 MT have been brought in 163 tankers through 33 trains to the State. While 1,885 MT of LMO (104 tankers) was supplied from the state of Odisha, Jharkhand - 680 MT (34 tankers), Chhattisgarh - 282 MT (14 tankers) and Gujarat - 205 MT (11 tankers) have supplied the rest of Medical Oxygen to Telangana.

To meet the Medical Oxygen requirements of the State within the fastest possible time, Indian Railways have been operating these trains along the Green Corridors to ensure minimum transportation time. Multi-disciplinary teams have also been formed to ensure that the Oxygen trains reach at the least possible time. As a result, the average time taken to transport these trains has been over 60 kmph.

Heavy rains lash parts of Hyderabad

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Since the onset of the monsoon in the city, Hyderabad has been witnessing regular rainfall during the evenings.

On Tuesday, several localities in the city including Serilingampally, Kapra, Tirumalagiri, Quthbullapur and Balanagar witnessed heavy rainfall. In some areas like Bowenpally and surroundings, the rains started lashing since the evening and continued till night.

According to the IMD, the city will continue to experience moderate rain or even thundershowers for a couple of days.

3,757 Haj applications cancelled in Telangana

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana State Haj Committee Executive Officer B Shafiqullah on Tuesday said that the Haj Committee of India has announced that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has announced the cancellation of conduct of Haj 2020 due to Covid.

Hence, all the application forms for Haj 2020 are cancelled for Haj 2020, the Telangana State Haj Committee received as many as 3,757 Haj application forms, a release here said.

No quota is allotted, he said the Saudi Authorities have not allowed any pilgrims from outside the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for Haj-2021.

For more information, the intending Haj pilgrims are requested to visit official website www.hajcommittee.gov.in, Shafiqullah added.

In a circular, the committee said that the Ministry of Haj and Umrah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, has issued a statement informing that due to coronavirus pandemic conditions it has decided to allow citizens and residents inside the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia only to attend Haj this year in limited numbers. Last year also the government had decided that Muslims from India will not travel to Saudi Arabia for Haj after Kingdom conveyed that pilgrims should not be sent.

Minister inspects desilting works

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

With desilting of stormwater drains in the GHMC limits progressing, the Animal Husbandry Minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav went on an inspection of the works on Tuesday. The Minister, who had visited and reviewed the

work at Begumpet, inspected the desilting of the drain located near the Pension Office, Banjara Hills on Tuesday. He was accompanied by Nampally HUSBANDRY Minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav went on an inspection of the works on Tuesday. The Minister, who had visited and reviewed the

desilting works at Begumpet nala. Citizens with grievances pertaining to desilting of drains can WhatsApp the details to the Minister's office on 9848021665. They can also send pictures along with the location of the drains that need to be desilted or repaired, officials said.

Water Board draws plan to do away with water wastage

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana government has started taking steps to implement the new non-revenue water policy to graph the amount of water being brought to the city, supplied to the people and the amount wasted in the distribution.

The new water policy in Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWSSB) will list the expenses on water distribution to the people by the board.

In this action plan, it is known HMWSSB appointed fifteen DGMs to different zones in the city and further guidelines and other things will be prepared by the board shortly.



For record, nearly 38 per cent of the water got wasted without usage by any purposes in the city. Interestingly, during last year the board implemented the

walk- drive programme to reduce water wastage, but only two per cent decrease in water wastage was seen in one year. Focusing on zero water wastage,

HMWSSB has planned their work with focus on this new policy, along with new agendas. According to information received from reliable sources, the newly appointed 15 DGMs have already been given norms for non-revenue water distribution. These 15 DGMs will account for non-revenue water supply in the metro city.

Virtually, every division has a DGM. However, since they are generally in the maintenance department, working towards coordinating complaints from the public and public representatives, their tasks are confined to such activities as bill collection and other works. The role of the new DGM in the new non-rev-

enue water policy is to calculate the difference between the water supplied to the ward and the amount of tax collected towards the water through bills. The main focus of the newly appointed DGMs is on management of wastewater along with the calculation of the amount of water wastage, steps to be taken to do away with water wastage, and find the reason behind water wastage. This includes keeping tabs on overflow of tanks, reservoirs, meter repairs, leaks, illegal water connections etc..

Further, they have to look at water bill payments of big commercial complexes, companies and other private properties.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA

REVENUE (LAND ACQUISITION) DEPARTMENT FORM-VI (PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION)

(Section 11 (1) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 and as per the sub-rule 1 of Rule 19)

Collector's office file no. G1/321/2021 Dated: 11-06-2021
Revenue Divisional Officer's file no. 8/43/2021 Dated: 07-06-2021
Gazette Number 75/2021 Dated: 11-06-2021

The Government of Telangana District Collector, Siddipet has issued the preliminary notification to acquire Ac 6.27 guntas in Ibrahimnagar village of Chinnakodur mandal of Siddipet district for public purpose i.e. for Excavation of RD3-RWD-LSM9 sub minor canal under LMC of Sri Rangarajakavasa Reservoir under Kaleswaram project as per Section 11 (1) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013. However, by an order no.35, dated 30-09-2017 the Irrigation and Command Area Development have exempted impact assessment and food security under 10-A.

The following persons mentioned in the schedule-1 have been notified for acquisition of Ac 6.27 guntas in Ibrahimnagar village of Chinnakodur mandal of Siddipet district for the purpose.

SCHEDULE-1

Village:	Ibrahimnagar Mandal:	Chinnakodur District:	Siddipet					
Sl. No.	Area (Guntas)	Name of Patidar and Father's Husband name	Name of Employer and Father's Husband name	Acres	Compensation (Rs. in lakhs)	Other Benefits (Rs. in lakhs)	Total (Rs. in lakhs)	Remarks
1	0.07	Kornta Mallesh S/o Lakshmaiah	Kornta Mallesh S/o Lakshmaiah	0.07	480	20.24	480.24	Neem-10
2	0.35	1. Cheppala Pochanna S/o Rajash 2. Cheppala Chenna Mallesh S/o Ganesh and Others	1. Cheppala Pochanna S/o Rajash 2. Cheppala Chenna Mallesh S/o Ganesh and Others	0.35	480	20.24	480.24	Pipe line-1
3	0.04	Kasaboyina Kanakava S/o Mallesh	Kasaboyina Kanakava S/o Mallesh	0.04	480	20.24	480.24	Neem-2
4	0.07	Aakula Vijaya S/o Chinnakodur	Aakula Vijaya S/o Chinnakodur	0.07	480	20.24	480.24	Neem-2
5	0.08	Jetta Mallesh S/o Mallesh	Jetta Mallesh S/o Mallesh	0.08	480	20.24	480.24	Neem-2
6	0.08	Jetta Mallesh S/o Mallesh	Jetta Mallesh S/o Mallesh	0.08	480	20.24	480.24	Neem-2
7	0.07	Ummathala Mahendar Reddy S/o Ramreddy	Ummathala Mahendar Reddy S/o Ramreddy	0.07	480	20.24	480.24	Neem-2
8	0.18	Etagumta Rajreddy S/o Mallareddy	Etagumta Rajreddy S/o Mallareddy	0.18	480	20.24	480.24	Mango-33, Teak-2, Pipe line-1, Dhrt-1
9	0.15	Garipati Mahipal S/o Mallesh	Garipati Mahipal S/o Mallesh	0.15	480	20.24	480.24	Neem-4
10	0.15	Garipati Mahipal S/o Mallesh	Garipati Mahipal S/o Mallesh	0.15	480	20.24	480.24	Neem-10
11	0.09	Gundaboyina Mallesh S/o Ramiah	Gundaboyina Mallesh S/o Ramiah	0.09	480	20.24	480.24	Neem-10
12	0.04	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	0.04	480	20.24	480.24	Neem-10
13	0.04	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	0.04	480	20.24	480.24	Neem-10
14	0.04	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	0.04	480	20.24	480.24	Neem-10
15	0.04	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	0.04	480	20.24	480.24	Neem-10
16	0.04	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	0.04	480	20.24	480.24	Neem-10
17	0.04	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	0.04	480	20.24	480.24	Neem-10
18	0.04	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	0.04	480	20.24	480.24	Neem-10
19	0.04	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	0.04	480	20.24	480.24	Neem-10
20	0.04	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	0.04	480	20.24	480.24	Neem-10
21	0.04	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	0.04	480	20.24	480.24	Neem-10
22	0.04	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	0.04	480	20.24	480.24	Neem-10
23	0.04	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	0.04	480	20.24	480.24	Neem-10
24	0.04	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	0.04	480	20.24	480.24	Neem-10
25	0.04	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	0.04	480	20.24	480.24	Neem-10
26	0.04	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	0.04	480	20.24	480.24	Neem-10
27	0.04	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	0.04	480	20.24	480.24	Neem-10
28	0.04	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	0.04	480	20.24	480.24	Neem-10
29	0.04	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	0.04	480	20.24	480.24	Neem-10
30	0.04	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	0.04	480	20.24	480.24	Neem-10
31	0.04	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	0.04	480	20.24	480.24	Neem-10
32	0.04	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	0.04	480	20.24	480.24	Neem-10
33	0.04	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	0.04	480	20.24	480.24	Neem-10
34	0.04	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	0.04	480	20.24	480.24	Neem-10
35	0.04	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	0.04	480	20.24	480.24	Neem-10
36	0.04	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	0.04	480	20.24	480.24	Neem-10
37	0.04	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	0.04	480	20.24	480.24	Neem-10
38	0.04	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	0.04	480	20.24	480.24	Neem-10
39	0.04	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	Kavati Yadagiri S/o Veeramalla	0.04	480	20.24	480.24	Neem-10
4								

New Huzurabad district to honour PV?

PNS ■ JAYASHANKAR BHUPALPALLY

Which of the regions in erstwhile Karimnagar district are going to be made into a district is stirring a lot of interest among people of the erstwhile Karimnagar district in the run up to the by-elections to Huzurabad Assembly seat, vacated by former minister Eatala Rajender who resigned from TRS and joined the BJP in the centenary year of former Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao.

There are speculations over the state government making either Manthani or Huzurabad or Husnabad into a district as it is reliably learnt that the state government is keen to create a new district out of the erstwhile undivided Karimnagar district with an eye on the Eatala's vote bank. Not only the people of erstwhile Karimnagar district but also those of former



Warangal district are nursing hopes of a new district as the two districts are closely associated with PV Narasimha Rao. It is reliably learnt that the state government is conducting an exercise to name one of the regions in the two districts after PV Narasimha Rao creating a new district. The debate among the people veered

round which of the three areas - Manthani, Huzurabad and Husnabad - are going to be elevated into a district.

The locals of Huzurabad have launched agitations recently demanding the government to create Huzurabad district. They conducted several protest programmes under the title PV Zilla Sadhana Samiti. However, the government did not respond to the protests. In view of the forthcoming by-elections to Huzurabad seat, the PV district issue came to the fore.

The Chief Minister, K Chandrashekar Rao, was also understood to have been thinking of making Huzurabad into a district in place of Warangal Urban district.

For the TRS to gain upper hand in Huzurabad by-elections, creating Huzurabad district will be the best choice, according to public opinion.

Several TRS leaders from Karimnagar district also were reported to have aired the same view to the party high command.

According to reliable sources, in view of the PV Centenary celebrations lined up on June 28, the government is understood to have consulting all who matter on creation of PV district.

Soon after PV became the Prime Minister in 1991, protests were launched in Manthani demanding creation of a district with Manthani as headquarters. The youth of Manthani and students launched relay hunger strike. Though PV hailed from Vangara in erstwhile Karimnagar district, Manthani Assembly constituency took him under its wings.

Since 1957, PV Narasimha Rao represented Manthani constituency in the Assembly four times and went on to

become Minister in erstwhile AP government holding various portfolios and subsequently he became the CM of the state too. The locals of Manthani constituency have been agitating for the past 30 years to carve out Manthani district as the constituency elevated him to become a CM from the position of MLA.

During the Telangana Armed struggle, in the independent India, PV Narasimha Rao held camps in Chanda area of neighbouring Maharashtra and held political classes for leaders belonging to Manthani. In 1957, he contested as MLA for Assembly elections and got elected because of his familiarity with leaders who had taken part in the armed revolution. Then, the local people demanded the government for creation of a district with Manthani as headquarters.

TKHH: Officials cautious about negligence in upkeep of saplings

PNS ■ NAGARKURNOOL

Telangana government officials are taking the iconic mass tree plantation programme, Telanganaku Haritha Haram (TKHH), initiated six years ago by the government to increase the green cover of the state and which is in its seventh phase of implementation this year, very seriously, more so because of the allegations of field-level officers' negligence in maintaining the saplings and trees already planted as also of keeping 'wrong' records of the entire tree plantation drive, that have surfaced in recent times.

Beginning in 2015 the state government had taken all the preliminary steps to increase the greenery of the state following proper planning and strategizing through the Haritha Haram programme.



However, the available statistics in connection with the mass plantation drive have a different story to tell. According to sources, the impact of the drive had been diminishing year on year.

According to the revelations made by the Forum for Good Governance organisation, which verified statistics available on the Haritha Haram project, half of the plants planted in thirty-one

districts through this project have died due to lack of proper maintenance of the trees at the field level. Many plants - 20 percent of the trees planted - were mowed by the cows and buffaloes because the protective railings were not set up around the trees in many districts, the findings noted. In the last year some districts in the state even showed negative results concerning the Haritha Haram project, it was revealed.

KCR is not the owner of TS government lands: D Sraavan

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Expressing disapprobation over the TRS government's move to sell the precious government lands, AICC spokesperson Dr Dasoju Sraavan Kumar had demanded the government to withdraw its decision immediately or face the wrath of the public.

He, however, added that the family members of Chief Minister K Chandrashekar and some other leaders of the ruling party had indeed amassed assets including farm-lands worth hundreds of crores of rupees, while the government was trying to auction the lands in the name of revenue loss. It is a mystery, how Telangana Govt's Income reduced, while TRS top Brass



income drastically increased, alleged Sraavan. Addressing a press meet at the Gandhi Bhavan here on Tuesday, the Congress senior leader had lashed out at the TRS government and accused it of resorting to blackmail politics that they will stop welfare schemes as the Opposition was questioning the rationale behind its decision to sell the lands.

"On July 18, 2012, the TRS party leaders including KT Rama Rao and Padma Rao, staged a dharna in front of the HMDA office, Hyderabad, demanding the then government led by Kiran Kumar Reddy not to sell the lands. But now the TRS, forgetting the past, is going to sell the lands. It shows their hypocrisy and double standards. If they want to sell the lands, they should first accept that they did 'politics' over selling of the land at that time and also 'touch their nose to the ground' stating that they did make a mistake. Moreover, the government must remember that he is a trustee not the owner of the government lands," Sraavan said, adding that selling the lands is an economic offence.

TRS still running 'Gadi rule' in TS, says Bhongir MP

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Congress MP from Bhongir Komatireddy Venkat Reddy criticised the TRS government for not inviting him for the statue unveiling ceremony of Colonel Santhosh Babu in Suryapet on Tuesday.

Reiterating that it is a government programme, which comes under his Lok Sabha constituency and not a TRS party meeting, Venkat Reddy said he must be invited for the programme as per the protocol, adding that the TRS leaders did not invite him as they are scared to face the questions from the opposition about the mistakes of Ruling party.



CELEBRATIONS BEGIN

Farmers and TRS party activists across the state performed milk bath to Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao's portrait on Tuesday for transferring Rythu Bandhu amount to the farmers.

MLA inspects vax drive for SHG women

PNS ■ MEDCHAL MALKAJGIRI

Local legislator KP Vivekananda on Tuesday inspected the vaccination centre at St Martin's High School in 128th division and at Hindu Public School in 127th division in Chintal, set up for SHG women and high-risk takers, and described the response from beneficiaries as unprecedented.

GHMC zonal commissioner Mamata, local corporator B Vijay Sekhar Goud and others were present.

Later the MLA laid the foundation stone for the Rs 9.05 lakh compound wall for crematorium in Bhagatsingh Nagar of 128th division and to Rs 14.90 lakh works to rebuild the flood flow canals in the division. Addressing a gathering, he said that the objective of the government is to create better basic amenities in slums. Later, Om Manikantha Nayee Brahman Seva Sangh members, as a token of gratitude to government for supplying them free power up to 250 units a month, presented saplings to the MLA calling on him at his residence as a matter of courtesy.



'Will develop Jagitial library as role model'

PNS ■ JAGITIAL

Emphasising the need to establish an e-library, MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha promised to develop Jagitial library as a role model in the state.

Participating in the swearing-in ceremony of district library committee chairman Dr Chandrashekar Goud and felicitating of government body members here, Kavitha said Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao, who gained enormous knowledge by reading scores of books, played a vital role in achieving separate Telangana State.

Assuring all help to strengthen libraries in the district, she promised to make libraries accessible to the youths preparing for various competitive exams. Presently,

there were libraries in 15 mandals and another three mandals would get libraries soon.

MLC K Kavitha on Tuesday said change in society was possible only with education. "Education helped Mahatma Gandhi, Ambedkar, Jyothirao Phule to fight against injustice in society," she said.

The foundation stone for the construction of the new library building would be laid soon under the leadership of the newly appointed chairman, she informed. The state government has been asked to establish BC and SC study circles in the districts, she said, and hoped to get the nod from the government soon.

The MLC said it was the only party which was extending all help to BC communities.

Over 13,000 vaccinated so far in Mahabubnagar

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

District Collector S Venkat Rao has exhorted all those who are 45 years and listed under various categories of Covid affected groups should receive the vaccine without fail.

Inspecting the Covid vaccination centre set up Government Junior College for Boys here for Covid affected groups on Tuesday, he enquired the people gathered at the centre of their work and age.

He said that now it is the turn of these groups after administering the vaccine to the super spreaders. As part of the exercise, employees of banks, postal services, excise department, cab drivers and auto drivers are being given the vaccine.



At the Government Junior College, a vaccination centre for bank employees has been set up. So far, 13,429 have received the vaccine so far in the district.

On account of the series of measures initiated by the district administration to rein in the virus, Covid positivity rate has come down to 2.9 from 34.4. DMHO Dr Krishna, district immunisation officer Dr Sankar, junior college principal Bhagavanta Chary and others were present.

Big cat mauls cow to death

PNS ■ ASIFABAD

A cow was killed by a tiger in the forests of Loadpalli village in Panchikalpet mandal on Tuesday.

Forest department officials said a cow belonging to Muktyar Ahmed was mauled to death by the big cat on the fringes of the forest near the village. Pugmarks of the carnivore were seen at the spot. Awareness was being created among farmers and rural folks over the presence of tigers. People were requested to avoid sudden confrontation with the solitary animal, stated officials.

It is learned that a local raised alarm and tried to rescue the cattle, but in vain. The news went viral on social media platforms.

Cong demands medical college for Kamareddy

PNS ■ KAMAREDDY

Former Minister and Mohammed Ali Shabbir has accused Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao and his family of plundering the resources of Telangana.

Addressing a press conference at Kamareddy District Congress Committee office on Tuesday, Shabbir Ali strongly condemned the TRS government for its plan to sell off government lands to raise over Rs 20,000 crore in the next few days. "TRS Govt has already pushed Telangana into a huge debt crisis. The State Government has borrowed over Rs. 4 lakh crore in the last seven years. If we include the loans borrowed by various

corporations, then the overall debts will be of nearly Rs. 5 lakh crore. Presently, the government is not in a position to either repay the loans or their interest," he alleged.

The Congress leader demanded that the Chief Minister sanction one medical college and a super-specialty hospital for Kamareddy district.

Shabbir Ali also demanded that the Chief Minister sanction Rs 200 crore to complete the pending works of Kaleshwaram which would bring irrigation water to Kamareddy and neighbouring areas. He said that the previous Congress Govt had sanctioned Packages 21, 22 & 23 in the year 2007 as part of Pranahita Chevella Project.

KCR bearing marriage expenses of the poor like a brother: Harish Shadi Mubarak, Kalyana Lakshmi cheques distributed

PNS ■ SIDDIPEET

Minister for Finance T Harish Rao on Tuesday distributed Kalyana Lakshmi and Shaadi Mubarak cheques worth Rs 1,12,38,021 among 112 beneficiaries and Rs 30,03,480 among 30 persons in Siddipet urban mandal of Siddipet constituency.

Speaking after distributing the cheques among the beneficiaries at his camp office, he said that the Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao bears the burden of marriage expenses like elder brother in the families of the poor. In all, Rs 1,42,41,501 was distributed among 142 beneficiaries. He said that the scheme is unique to Telangana and is not in vogue in BJP ruled



Karnataka and Shiva Sena ruled Maharashtra. He said the government hospital at Siddipet is providing better treatment equipping it with most modern CT-Scan, ICUs, dialysis, diagnostic centres. There are Covid wards and special wards to treat patients suffering from black fungus.

He asked the people to not to waste their hard earned money by approaching private hospitals as the government is providing better treatment free of cost. He said that a waiting hall has been provided at the hospital for the relatives of patients and providing them piping hot food.

13.50 kg golden armour for Lord Sitaramaswamy

PNS ■ BHADRACHALAM

JV Ranga Raju couple belonging to Bangaluru on Tuesday presented golden armour, weighing 13.50 kg, to Lord Sitaramaswamy, the presiding deity at Bhadrachalam temple on Tuesday.

Noted goldsmith Kodandapani made the golden armour.

On Fridays, the temple priests will decorate the Lord with the armour, to the delight of the devotees.

The temple authorities say that the golden armour presented to the deity is unique of all gifts the deity received so far ever since the temple came into existence.

PR Minister inspects integrated Collectorate under construction

PNS ■ WARANGAL

Minister for Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Errabelli Dayakar Rao on Tuesday inspected the new integrated Collectorate building under construction at Subedari in Hanmakonda as Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao is going to inaugurate the building during the visit to Warangal on June 21.

He said that new districts have been carved out as part of the greater decentralisation of administration and to ensure that the fruits of development and welfare schemes trickle down to the people.

He said that the Chief Minister is running the admin-



istration as per the expectations of the people.

Besides the Collectorate complex, the CM will lay the foundation stone for the 24-storeyed multi super-specialty hospital. He said that Rs 57 crore was spent so far to build the integrated Collectorate complex, which was proposed initially to take up at a cost of Rs 35 crore. The total floor area of the building is 1,57,000 sqft, he said adding that the

structure is being built using the state of the art technology.

He said the CM conceived small districts plan to solve problems of the people as early as possible and is trying to make the Telangana state, which is the result of several agitations, into Bangaru Telangana. He described TS as the state that overcome many hurdles and set an example for other states in the country to emulate. He said that the CM will gather opinion of the elected people's representatives on creation of Warangal and Hanmakonda districts. He lauded the CM for taking up construction of heritage structures which will go down the history as important landmarks.

Good response to vaccination drive for SCCL workers

PNS ■ PEDDAPALLY

Singareni Collieries Com pany Limited's Director Operations S Chandrashekar along with other directors and top authorities on Tuesday reviewed the progress of the vaccination drive for the Singareni workers in various mining areas of the colliery and expressed satisfaction over the progress.

He said that the SCCL chairman-cum-managing director N Sridhar was instrumental in fixing a vaccination drive for the SCCL workers in 18-60 years age group recognising them as the front line warriors.

'Withdraw GO 105'

PNS ■ MEDAK

Medak district Telangana Non-gazetted Officers' Association (TNGO) president Donta Narendar has demanded the state government to withdraw the GO No. 105 which he said is detrimental to the interests of the employees of the irrigation and catchment area development department.

Addressing media at TNGO Bhavan here on Tuesday, he said that the irrigation principal secretary Rajat Kumar by an order dated January 9,

2021 the newly created Medak irrigation circle has been attached to Chief Engineer, irrigation unit, Sangareddy, while a new division of Narsapur division has been included in the Medak circle.

To protect the interests of the farmers, the Chief Minister divided the irrigation department into 19 territorial units appointing an assistant engineer for every 5000 acres, deputy executive engineer for every 20,000 acres, executive engineer for every 1 lakh acres, superintending engineer for every 6-8 lakh acres.

PRC: Contract and outsourced employees stage demonstration

PNS ■ JAYASHANKAR BHUPALPALLY

Contract and outsourced employees working in various government departments resorted to black-badge demonstration in front of the government hospital here on Tuesday alleging injustice to them in the Pay Revision Commission. The Kataram PHC contract and outsourced

employees also took part in the protest demanding resolution of their problems immediately.

They contended that they have been working for the past 18 years on contract basis and claimed that they are being discriminated against on payment of wages. Moreover, they said that there were no transfers in the department and claimed to be working at one place for the past

several years. They said that they are living separately from their families and undergoing mental agony.

They urged the government to administer vaccine to the medical and health staff family members on a war-footing and sought payment of Rs 1 crore ex-gratia to the bereaved family members of medical and health employees who died of Covid.

Amit Shah meets MPs amid Cabinet expansion buzz

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union home minister Amit Shah's meeting with groups of BJP MPs, which generated speculation about a cabinet expansion, was part of an ongoing feedback exercise on the work of the government, Covid situation and other issues, sources said. Over the last five days, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had also held meetings with the ministers along with BJP chief JP Nadda.



Mr Shah had met MPs from Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat and some other states on Saturday and Sunday at his residence. Around 30 MPs and some ministers had visited him over the weekend.

Sources said political activities and physical meetings have resumed as the second wave of Covid has receded. The focus of the meetings this time is on the situation in the MPs' constituencies, the handling of Covid and their per-

formance during the pandemic, and the grievances of the people. Also any reshuffle in the ministry is usually preceded by appraisal and stock taking.

Over the last weeks, there has been talk of cabinet expansion with 28 berths remaining vacant. One was vacated by the death of Lok Janshakti Party chief Ram Vilas Paswan, who was in charge of the Food and Public

Janata Dal United is expecting a cabinet berth. Another seat in the Council of Ministers should go to Mr Paswan's Lok Janshakti Party.

Rewards are also expected in Madhya Pradesh, which came into BJP grasp after the churn in the Congress and changing of camp by Jyotiraditya Scindia with a chunk of his followers. Mr Scindia has already been given a Rajya Sabha seat, but there is speculation about a cabinet berth for him as well.

The exception could be Bengal, where the BJP, while failing to oust Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee from power, won nearly a third of the assembly seats. There is speculation that Bengal BJP chief Dilip Ghosh might get a cabinet berth.

Sources said whenever the expansion takes place, Bengal will be given more representation to send a message that it is top on the BJP's priority list.

Distribution portfolio.

At present, there are 21 Cabinet ministers, nine ministers of state with independent charge, and 23 ministers of state besides PM Modi.

An expansion is also expected to settle political tensions within the allies and giving due importance to states where the BJP came to power in assembly elections over the last two years.

From Bihar, Nitish Kumar's

Centre confirms 1 death due to vaccine

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A government report has, for the first time, acknowledged one death in India due to vaccination.

A 68-year-old man, fully vaccinated, died on March 31 and it has been labelled as "vaccine product related reaction" in a report assessing 31 severe cases reported since the government launched the vaccine drive in January.

The report is by the National Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFI) committee under the Union Health Ministry. Of the 31 cases, 28 are deaths.

"This is the first death where causality has been established, with vaccine resulting in an anaphylaxis reaction. But compared to the overall numbers, only a small number had a severe reaction. 31 cases were investigated and one death was due to vaccine, and among anaphylaxis cases, only two were found to be product-related. Most anaphylaxis reactions are managed," said NK Arora, Advisor, National AEFI Committee.

Risk of death following vax negligible: Centre

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The health ministry on Tuesday termed as "incomplete" and "limited understanding" media reports which stated that 488 deaths between January 16 and June 7 following vaccination were linked to post-Covid complications, and highlighted that the vaccination coverage during this period was 23.5 crore.

The number of deaths reported following COVID-19 vaccination in the country is only 0.0002 per cent of the 23.5 crore doses administered, and this is within the expected death rates in a population, it said.

In a population, deaths occur at a certain rate. The crude death rate in 2017, according to SRS data, was 6.3 per 1,000 persons annually, the ministry said.

It is also important and pertinent to note that the mortality rate for those testing positive for COVID-19 is more than one per cent and vaccination can prevent these deaths, it said.

"Therefore, the risk of dying following vaccination is negli-



gible as compared to the known risk of dying due to COVID-19," the ministry stated.

The ministry also referred to some media reports suggesting an increase in the cases of severe adverse events following immunisation (AEFI) that have also resulted in "succumbing of patients" post vaccination.

According to the media reports, 488 deaths following vaccination are linked to post-Covid complications between January 16 and June 7, when the total vaccination coverage was 23.5 crore.

"It is clarified that these reports are based on incomplete and limited understanding of the matter at hand. It may be noted that the term 'succumbed' insinuates causality i.e. the deaths were caused due to vaccination," the ministry said.

AEFI is defined as any untoward medical occurrence which follows immunisation and which does not necessarily have a causal relationship with the usage of vaccine. It can be any unfavourable or unintended sign, abnormal laboratory finding, symptom or disease.

INDIA CORNER

Ayodhya land deal: Cong seeks registration of FIR

A Congress leader from Madhya Pradesh has lodged a complaint with the Indore Police seeking registration of an FIR on the charge of "fraud" against officials of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust alleging they "misappropriated" Rs 16 crore in buying a piece of land for the Ram temple project in Ayodhya. MP Congress Committee general secretary and media in-charge KK Mishra on Tuesday said he had lodged the complaint on Monday night at Chhatrapur police station in Indore. Referring to media reports, Mishra said, "Officials of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust had misappropriated around Rs 16 crore while purchasing the land for the Ram temple construction project. For this act, an FIR should be registered against the officials of the Trust on charges of breach of trust and fraud under the Indian Penal Code".



"Will come and set AIADMK straight": VK Sasikala

VK Sasikala, the ousted chief of Tamil Nadu's AIADMK, was heard in a purported audio clip, saying that she will "come soon and set the party straight". The latest clip emerged a day after the opposition party sacked 15 people she spoke with recently. "Other elections are coming up. We've to win and protect Jayalalithaa's legacy. I am pained that party workers are expelled when we are in opposition," she is reportedly heard saying. "I have a responsibility. I am confident that I'd be able to set the party straight. My wish is that the AIADMK should be strong even if it turns 100 years. We would definitely bring Amma (Jayalalithaa) rule. I will meet all of you soon." The AIADMK on Monday sacked 15 functionaries including its spokesperson, Pugalendi, for "anti-party activities" and "bringing disrepute". Many of the expelled members had spoken with Sasikala on the phone recently.



Sukhbir Badal detained amid protest at Amarinder's House

Shiromani Akali Dal chief Sukhbir Singh Badal was detained this afternoon as he led a huge protest outside Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh's home in Mohali to demand the sacking of Balbir Singh Sidhu, the state's Health Minister. The BSP's Punjab president Jasvir Singh Garhi also joined the massive demonstration, days after the two parties forged an alliance for the state elections due next year. High political drama unfolded as hundreds of protesters - carrying party flags - marched together despite heavy police barricading. Water cannons were also used on demonstrators. Former Punjab minister and Akali Dal leader Bikram Singh Majithia was also detained. The Akali Dal chief, 58, has sought a CBI probe into the alleged irregularities in the sale of vaccines and procurement of medical kits for COVID-19 patients.



Prashant Kishor team gets Mamata contract till 2026

The Trinamool has extended its contract with election strategists I-PAC, or Indian Political Action Committee, to 2026 after a successful partnership saw Mamata Banerjee sweep the April-May Assembly polls and return as Chief Minister of Bengal for a third straight term. This version of I-PAC, however, will not be led in day-to-day operations by master strategist Prashant Kishor, who guided the Trinamool (and, in Tamil Nadu, the DMK-Congress alliance) to victory over the BJP (and its southern ally, the AIADMK) and then announced he wanted to "quit". It will be interesting to see how well I-PAC and its new nine-member leadership team can function without Mr Kishor, and how efficiently it can win elections for Trinamool and its other clients. The new contract says I-PAC will be involved in all state elections - panchayat and local body.



Delhi defies norms, doctors say brace for 'explosion' of Covid positive cases

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In national capital Delhi, thousands of commuters crowded into underground train stations and shopping malls on Tuesday, prompting some doctors to warn it could lead to a resurgence in COVID-19 infections. Major Indian cities have begun lifting strict lockdowns as the nationwide tally of new infections has dropped to its low-

est level in more than two months.

But disease experts and doctors have cautioned that a race towards resuming business as usual would compromise vaccination efforts as only about 5% of all 950 million eligible adults have been inoculated.

Doctors say Delhi's near-complete re-opening is concerning. The city's authorities have said they would reim-

pose strict curbs if cases rise.

Thousands died in the capital in May, as oxygen supplies all but vanished and families pleaded on social media over scarce hospital beds.

People paid 20 times the usual price to secure ambulances and hearses, many died in parking lots, and morgues ran out of space.

"Delhi's top #mall saw a footfall of 19,000 people last weekend - as soon as it

reopened. Have we gone totally mad? (sic) Ambrish Mithal of Max HealthCare in New Delhi said on Twitter. "Wait for #COVID19 to explode again - and blame the government, hospitals, country."

In the early hours of Tuesday, Delhi's underground rail network put out alerts on Twitter about peak traffic and longer waits, responding to angry commuters angry about long queues.

'Cong brass should not listen to Pilot camp'

PNS ■ JAIPUR

Rajasthan MLAs who had defected from the BSP to the ruling Congress objected to any move by the party high command to pacify dissenting legislators led by Sachin Pilot, saying it was because of them that the government was in crisis last year.

The MLAs said they should be rewarded as the government was saved by them and other Independents.

Former state deputy chief minister Sachin Pilot and 18 MLAs supporting him had last year rebelled against CM Ashok Gehlot. They were accused of the bid to topple the state government.

All BSP MLAs in the state - Lakhman Singh, Rajendra Gudha, Sandeep Yadav, Wajib Ali, Deepchand Kheria, Jogendra Awana - had defected to the ruling Congress in September 2019.



BB: Rs 150 per Covaxin dose not sustainable in long run

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The supply price of Bharat Biotech's COVID-19 vaccine Covaxin to the Central government at Rs 150 per dose is not sustainable in the long run, the vaccine maker said on Tuesday.

Hence a higher price in private markets is required to offset part of the costs, it said in a statement.

The Centre's supplying price is pushing the pricing structure

for the private sector upward, the firm said.

Fundamental business reasons ranging from low procurement volumes, high distribution costs and retail margins, among few others, contribute to higher pricing of Covaxin to the private sector, Bharat Biotech said, justifying the higher price when compared to other COVID-19 vaccines available for the private players.

Bharat Biotech is currently supplying Covaxin at Rs 150 per dose to the Centre, Rs 400 to the state government and Rs 1,200 to private hospitals.

"The supply price of Covaxin to the government of India at Rs 150/dose, is a non-competitive price and clearly not sustainable in the long run. Hence a higher price in private markets is required to offset part of the costs," it said in a statement.

UAPA defines terrorist Act vaguely, says HC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The definition of 'terrorist act' under the stringent anti-terror law UAPA is "somewhat vague" and it cannot be applied in a "cavalier manner" to criminal acts falling under the IPC, lest it unjustly sucks persons within its ambit, the Delhi High Court said on Tuesday.

The high court, after perusing various judgements of the Supreme Court, said it was of the opinion that the intent and purpose of Parliament in enacting the Unlawful Activities

(Prevention) Act (UAPA) and in amending it in 2004 and 2008 to bring terrorist activity within its scope, "was and could only have been, to deal with matters of profound impact on the 'Defence of India', nothing more and nothing less".

The high court said "foisting extremely grave and serious penal provisions", engrafted under the UAPA, "frivolously" upon people would undermine the intent and purpose of the Parliament in enacting a law that is meant to address threats to the very existence of our nation.

Husband's sacrifice makes me feel proud of him: martyr's wife

PNS ■ CHENNAI

A year after the Galwan skirmish, Vanathi Devi, widow of Havildar K Palani, still remembers her beloved was not able to keep his promise of returning home but his final moments and heroic sacrifice in the fight with Chinese troops makes her feel proud of him.

Not only his sacrifice in the mountainous Galwan Valley, but also those of others besides the lives of soldiers guarding the frontiers in high altitude region speak volumes of the untold sacrifices of the country's army men, she said.



last conversation she had with him..

"He told me his (retirement) papers were through and he would return home in a weeks time and asked me to go ahead with the house warming ceremony on June 3 which I did," she said.

Both hoped that they would reunite on their wedding day on June 6. But fate willed otherwise.

On June 15, she was informed about his sacrifice at Galwan Valley.

"Our wish that we would begin life anew in our newly constructed home never materialised," Vanathi said.

"Even after a year, my life continues to be gloomy due to his demise. It is a personal loss for me and my two children. But, his sacrifice for India makes me feel proud of him," Vanathi Devi told PTI on Tuesday.

Her voice quivering, she said she still remembers the

Why Chirag Paswan's uncle turned on him

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Pashupati Kumar Paras, the man behind the coup in the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP), could never quite get over the "humiliation" of nephew Chirag Paswan ordering him to retract a statement praising Nitish Kumar.

Yesterday, he may have salvaged some of his injured pride. Chirag Paswan waited for an hour and 45 minutes outside Pashupati Paras's door to meet him but returned disappointed.

For months, Paras had shared with close aides how he felt betrayed by "Deepu" just days after the death of his older brother Ram Vilas Paswan, Chirag's father.



"Tum mere khoon nahin ho sakte (you can't be my blood)," Chirag Paswan shouted at his uncle in front of his mother Reena Paswan, cousin Prince Raj and aide

Saurabh Pandey. Paras was reportedly shaken. He replied: "From today, your uncle is dead to you."

The 71-year-old, a first time MP and six-term MLA,

revolt against Chirag Paswan, Ram Vilas Paswan's chosen heir.

Any doubt that Paras may have had, only on the basis of the bond he shared with his brother, was apparently erased because of Chirag's "constant arrogance".

Party leaders said: "Chirag had never seen how fondly his father used to treat his uncles - he ensured they would face no financial difficulty."

Pashupati Paras was in charge of micro and macro-managing Ram Vilas Paswan's affairs and also those of their brother Ramchandra, who died in 2019. Mr Paras, though politically indispensable to Paswan Senior, stayed in the backroom.

"Party like mother, should not be betrayed"

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In his first reaction after his uncle Pashupati Kumar Paras ousted him as the leader of the party in Lok Sabha, LJP president Chirag Paswan on Tuesday likened the organization to a mother who should not be "betrayed".

In a tweet, he said he made efforts to keep the party founded by his father Ram Vilas Paswan and his family together but failed.

People are supreme in a democracy, Paswan said and thanked those who have kept faith in the party.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Family feuds

The bloodless coup against Chirag is not unique but such internal strife demeans politics itself

When a father gives to his son, both laugh; when a son gives to his father, both cry, said William Shakespeare. Ram Vilas Paswan, eternal Dalit leader and *pater familias* of the Paswan family, would have had no qualms agreeing with the English bard. A father and son ganged up against the son of another father. The father and father are both brothers, their brood, first cousins. That in short is the bloodless coup that happened in that Bihar political family the other day, stripping Chirag Paswan of his position and power in his own party, the Lok Janshakti Party. Five of the party's MPs have formed a separate group led by Chirag's uncle and supported by his nephew. Chirag remains the lone MP, a victim of dynastic arrogance or political *naivete*. The how and why of what happened is of academic interest when the moot point is how family feuds and dynastic intrigues have straddled Indian politics from times immemorial. They were understandable in times of monarchies, but in democratic India? The Nehru-Gandhi family has had the dubious distinction — unless circumstances went against them — of having kept leaders unrelated by blood from the apex position — the party president. There is hardly any political party in hardly any State today that is not headed by a family. The tradition is derisively called dynasty politics. What is problematic of such arrangements is that the party, its politics and relationship with people and power is determined by the internal strife



within the family. That demeans politics itself.

The schisms and the backstabbing, strangely but consistently, are timed to happen before major political happenings, like an election, a leadership change or a Cabinet reshuffle in a State or at the Centre. It is said the Paswan saga was brewing for some time — the young man apparently oblivious to all of it — coming to a fruition just as rumours of a reshuffle in Delhi picked up. Not dissimilarly, other family feuds are changing tack, more for the better than worse unlike the Paswan affair, in Uttar Pradesh, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. The Mulayam Singh Yadav family is closing ranks, the patriarch trying to patch up differences between his brother Shivpal Yadav and son Akhilesh Yadav which spoiled Samajwadi Party's image in the State. The family of undivided Andhra Congress leader YS Rajasekhara Reddy is trying to expand its influence into Telangana as well. While YSR's son Jagan Mohan Reddy "rules" Andhra Pradesh, his daughter Sharmila Reddy will form a party of her own in Telangana. The "overlord" of Telangana, K Chandrasekhara Rao, is already trying to keep peace between son and political heir KT Rama Rao and nephew and organisational wizard T Harish Rao. These family pots can overflow anytime even as Karunanidhis of Tamil Nadu, Pawars of Maharashtra, Bangarappas and Deve Gowdas of Karnataka await the next chapter in their family sagas.

PICTALK



Hungarian football fans march towards the Puskas Arena in Budapest, Hungary

Resistance to coup bleeds Myanmar

State administration has shut down due to rail, health, bank and civil servants being AWOL and the country's economy has collapsed



ASHOK K MEHTA

Military coups, if successful, have instant rewards. Failure produces retribution of the worst kind. In stable democracies, the military is seen to be under civilian control and acting as per the Constitution. In totalitarian States like China, the military acts under the political guidance of the Chinese Communist Party — power flowing out of the barrel of the gun. Finding the right civilian-military balance is not easy in developing countries. The most recent power friction was in Mali, the Colonel's coup, enacted twice in six months, by the same Colonel. One of the Sudan coups was triggered by civil society. Coups were rampant in South America, then Africa and south-east Asia. Pakistan is a rare balance of military-civil authority where military has always (except a brief period after 1991) called the shots. In Turkey, the Ataturk design has been overturned and military put in its place, its constitutional rights abrogated. South Korea and Indonesia make interesting case studies in transfer of power to civilian authorities. There is no template for a coup, only an SOP. Countries under the Commonwealth have fared better in fixing the right civil-military equilibrium.

Myanmar is a unique case of military-guided democracy where the third coup has just crossed 135 days and follows a 2008 military-drafted Constitution designed to produce a "disciplined democracy" via the military-supported Union Solidarity Development Party. According to the UN Human Rights office, 873 civilians have been killed and approximately 5,000 protestors detained and Myanmar has gone from being a fragile democracy to "human rights catastrophe". Popular resistance to the coup has resulted in closure of State administration due to rail, health, bank and civil servants being AWOL and collapse of economy with criminal networks taking over underground markets. The junta claims law and order is under control, fewer protests and killings and military returning to employing non-lethal pacification methods. Dissent is less visible on the



streets and in military's estimate, resistance has peaked though it will not acknowledge this publicly.

The resistance, comprising a shadow National Unity Government, Civil Disobedience Movement and a People's Defence Force supported by at least four ethnic armed organisations, has not lost steam even after four months. Attacks on military and police posts in the border States of Shan, Chin and Karen have attracted brutal reprisals. Unless the junta is reined in, Myanmarese fear an implosion (civil war) or/and explosion that would produce hundreds upon thousands more refugees fleeing to Thailand, India and China. Sanctions by the international fora — instruments to regulate the behaviour of the military — have not worked. A regional process of conflict termination and dispute resolution has made no headway even in selecting the Asean envoy eight weeks after it held a meeting in Jakarta on April 24, which produced a wobbly five-point consensus — locating an exit strategy for the military based on constructive dialogue, release of all prisoners, ceasefire and restoration of normality. The UN, G7 and India,

among others, have supported the Asean peace initiative.

China has signalled its willingness to help if and when the regional process fails. Suspicion about Chinese hand in the coup is rampant in the country as Beijing's stakes are very high. Most of the arson is of Chinese assets which two months ago was estimated at \$37mn. Over the years, a love-hate relationship has developed between China and the military. But, more recently, China had established very productive relations with the NLD leadership. It is clear the junta will not allow the Chinese to meddle in its internal affairs, especially when anti-China sentiment is high and rising. This is a Godsend for military supreme Gen Min Aung Hlaing who has removed the retirement age of 65 for him to serve indefinitely beyond July.

The kangaroo court set up by him to try NLD leaders, including Aung San Suu Kyi, met for the first time on May 24 and again on Monday. Her lawyer Khin Maung Zaw said that she's being charged with "sedition and corruption to keep her out of the scene and smear her prestige" — euphemistically banning Suu Kyi and her party from poli-

tics and despatching her into oblivion is the junta's exit strategy for her. The UN rights office has called the charges absurd and bogus. In its latest report, the Asian Network For Free Elections monitoring group has said that the results of the 2020 general elections were by and large representative of the will of the people.

Gen Hlaing pines for the Thai model and is an ardent admirer of Thai Generals. He has an excellent backchannel with former General and now Prime Minister, PM Prayuth Chan-o-cha. Gen Hlaing has said elections will be held when the situation will permit.

At play are two exit strategies with different endgames. The regional process or Asean initiative seeks to restore the hybrid power-sharing model through a negotiated solution as exit for the military. The General's endgame is to debar NLD and retire Suu Kyi to ensure a USDP electoral victory. In the Burma coup, it is advantage Gen Hlaing.

(The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff. The views expressed are personal.)



THE RESISTANCE, COMPRISING A SHADOW NATIONAL UNITY GOVERNMENT, CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT AND A PEOPLE'S DEFENCE FORCE SUPPORTED BY AT LEAST FOUR ETHNIC ARMED ORGANISATIONS, HAS NOT LOST STEAM EVEN AFTER FOUR MONTHS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TAKE CARE OF STREET VENDORS

Sir — If at all there is any one group of financially backward communities in our country that has to be helped on a priority basis by any Government for that matter, it is certainly the street vendors' group whose life has been terribly thrown out of gear due to the COVID pandemic for the past two years. These people were just surviving on the money borrowed from unscrupulous moneylenders who used to recover their instalments from them on a daily basis, sometimes using force.

No Government, State or Central, has bothered about these small income earners during the lockdown because the powers-that-be just did not have the time to think about the existence of these poor people and neither did they have any record of such vendors at different locations. It is high time that all States should immediately arrange to go to the residences of these street vendors and identify them/collect their information/data by registering them on a particular website of the Government.

The Government has to create a basic data of these people along with their activities immediately on the particular website. It is really a good step by the RBI in advising banks to increase lending working capital loans of ₹10,000 to all the street vendors but then it is not a charity because public money is being used. Proper identification and follow-up of these loans by the banks/Government is very much essential so that the real, honest borrowers can be further financed to increase their businesses and income, raising their standard of living. After all, good money cannot be allowed to become bad money, whether through an individual or through a corporate head.

Katuru Durga Prasad Rao | Hyderabad

G7 ALSO WORRIED ABOUT CHINA

Sir — The combined declaration proposed by the G7 nations during their 2021 meeting at the Carbis Bay summit reveals the joint worry of the developed nation about the rising new superpower, China. India is an invitee party at the G7 Summit, whose timing in June reminds India about the

COVID test fraud during Kumbh



Just days after a preliminary probe by the Uttarakhand Health Department suggested that many of the four lakh COVID test results issued during the Kumbh festival in Haridwar were fake, a detailed investigation shows that at least one lakh test reports were forged by a private agency. In one instance, a single phone number was used to register over 50 people while one antigen test kit (which has an exclusive number and is meant for single use) was shown to have tested 700 samples. The addresses and names were fictional.

Almost 530 samples were taken from "House Number 5" in Haridwar. Is it possible for a house to have over 500 residents? According to the investigation official, bizarre addresses

have been given: "House number 56, Aligarh; House number 76, Mumbai". The official added: "The phone numbers were fake, too. People in Kanpur, Mumbai, Ahmedabad and 18 other locations shared the same phone number."

The sample collection agencies were tasked to conduct tests by the State Government after the High Court directed Uttarakhand to carry out at least 50,000 tests daily during Kumbh. The festival was held from April 1 to 30 in Haridwar. The four lakh tests during this period were conducted by nine agencies and 22 private labs. A majority of these were antigen tests. The State department also conducted its own tests through Government labs. Of the one lakh tests conducted by the agency under the scanner, 177 were "COVID positive", a positivity rate of only 0.18 per cent. In contrast, the positivity rate in Haridwar in April went up to 10 per cent. The agency was paid ₹350 per antigen test and higher for RT-PCR tests, which means the scam runs into crores. Test results by other agencies are also being probed now.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

bloody flashback of Galwan.

The G7 are also tensed with the rising power of China. This is the same condition with India also. The Galwan clash has completed over a year now. The irony is that both the emerging economies have failed over any viable solution to bring this border issue to an end. It becomes hard for India to counter China alone. For us, multilateral support is a must requirement. And G7 is one such platform that can advantage us.

We, both India and the G7 nations, have the same problems: The China issue, terrorism, climate change, and so on. A robust partnership between us and the G7 countries can bring about improved solutions for us and the other stakeholders.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

PRESERVING ENVIRONMENT IS A MUST

Sir — In the last few days, commendable action has been taken by the States. A few

days back, the Maharashtra Government passed an action plan to protect and preserve the trees that are older than 50 years in urban areas and these have been termed "Heritage trees". It seems to be the need of the hour. On the one hand, while the Centre is attempting to increase the forestation and decrease the desertification and increase the carbon sink area also, the Maharashtra Government's step seems to be allowing it although this is not a new concept.

Recently, the Rajasthan Government announced that it is going to set up a Vedic education and Sanskrit board. The very purpose of this board is to connect the knowledge of ancient Sanskrit scriptures with the learnings of Vedas and science in yoga. It's a praiseworthy step towards the education sector.

Mohit Rawal | Ujjain

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

Having patiently waited for the Government to come clean about the circumstances in which the unprecedented (Galwan) incident happened...no clarity is yet available.



Congress interim president — Sonia Gandhi



What is needed from the new Israeli Government is to start acting on ending the occupation and settlement in Palestine.

Palestinian Prime Minister — Mohammed Ishtayeh

A film like *Gadar* cannot be released on OTT. It is a movie that was made to be watched around people.



Director — Anil Sharma



We lacked tranquility. We were unable to control possession and play faster, which they did.

Argentine footballer — Lionel Messi

I have printed the first *Real Quran*, how it should have been after Prophet Muhammad. I will send this copy to AIMPLB chief to study.



UP Shia Central Waqf Board member — Waseem Rizvi

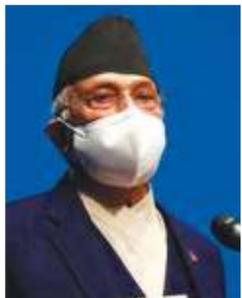
Good together

Considering decades of bonhomie, Nepal would do well to embrace India and shun Chinese lies

The 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship between India and Nepal had one very strong element — mutual respect for the sovereignty and integrity of each other.

With 70 years gone, the treaty has proved to be a milestone in bringing India and Nepal closer. However, the same treaty has time and again got the two neighbours face to face on certain issues. Does this make the bilateral relations strained? Probably not. It is because the present nature of India-Nepal relations is merely seen through the lens of politics. Understandably, Nepal stands very critical to geostrategic rivalry and competition between India and China, and often its location surpasses all other considerations. Yet, people-to-people ties between India and Nepal have stood firm. Further, the political instability in Nepal requires a people-centric approach. While the borders across South Asia are contested, such as India-Pakistan and India-China, India shares an open border with Nepal. Despite the large scale of risks involved, India has supported the idea that it is a gateway to people, culture and civilisation. By bringing these factors into account, the heated moments in India-Nepal relations may see an immediate resolution.

Meanwhile, there is another narrowed aspect of seeing the India-Nepal relations through the prism of social media. The hashtags #GoBackIndia #BackOffIndia during the 2015 earthquake and border disputes in the last two years were seen as defining moments that weaken the bond. However, if social media were to result in India-Nepal relations, China would be the only player in Nepal considering alleged paid pro-China social media campaigns. To date, Nepal has a vast digital divide. While affording high-speed internet is still a challenge, access to smart phones in southern Nepal (Madhesh) is yet to meet national parity. Therefore, India's longstanding people-to-people ties, especially those between India's Uttar Pradesh and Bihar and Nepal's Madhesh region, are a testimony to the brighter side. On the other hand, the looming hype of the rising status of China in Nepal has its proven short-term validity. Chinese interests in Nepal are primarily focused on handling pro-Tibet voices, encroaching Nepalese territory for an extended strategic depth and leasing out critical areas of interests within Nepal. To achieve these, China has one tool: fabricated facts, lies and social media manoeuvring.





FIRST COLUMN

DESTROYING SOCIAL TABOOS

Odisha's Raja festival celebrates womanhood and calls to fight patriarchal notions on menstruation



N SOUMIK

Odisha is often considered as India's best-kept secret. The state is quiet about its bountiful nature, its scenic sea shore, mighty archaeological wonders, thick forests and lakes, a place where nature gets its salvation. It is also a state with a rich history of social consciousness and awareness, transferred from generation to generation through cultural festivals with embedded meanings. One of the most prominent festivals is the one that helps break the social taboo over the menstrual cycles in women. Amongst countless festivals of Odisha, the most pious one that celebrates the importance of womanhood is: Raja (pronounced: Raw-Jaw). A festival of young women that has been setting up an example by wiping out the long taboo on menstrual cycle of women. This festival empowers women as well as teaches the men to respect them. The festival is celebrated for three consecutive days with lots of enjoyment and festivities involved. It is generally observed during the second week of June. The first day is famously called 'Pahili Raja' (first Raja). The second day is called, 'Raja Sankranti' or 'Mithun Sankranti'. On this day the advent of Ashada (monsoon) occurs. The third day is called 'Basi Raja' (last Raja).



One day prior to the festival, the houses and kitchens are cleaned and the young girls prepare themselves for three days of festive proceedings. During these three days girls are not imposed to do any household work. They visit their friends' houses, eat sweets and enjoy together. They wear new clothes, especially saris, and adorn themselves with colourful 'bindi' and ornaments. Music is played in villages, dancing together, sharing food items and playing board games and singing lyrical folklores of Raja. Everywhere, variety of swings are decorated with flowers for girls to play. Savoury foods are served along with *paan* (betel leaf with stuffings), the most significant mark of Raja festival. This tradition has evolved with a mythology that people heartily believe. It is said that, Lord Jagannath's wife, Bhudevi, also known as Vasundhara; the goddess of earth, undergoes menstrual period during the three days of Raja. To mark her sacredness and to give rest to goddess Bhudevi, no agricultural practices are performed for these three days. It is believed that, during the peaceful three days, with the arrival of monsoon, the goddess Bhudevi quenches her thirst. Women are also advised not to walk with naked feet, not to cut or tear anything. Even though we live in the 21st century, menstruation is a topic still talked about in hushed tones and details shared in darkness. It will not be wrong to say that this topic has not gained the freedom to be accepted by the world. Some communities consider this phase as unholy and have made unscientific justifications to back their arguments. The renowned poet and activist, Judy Grahn said: "Menstrual blood is the only source of blood that is not traumatically induced. Yet in modern society, this is the most hidden blood, the one so rarely spoken of and almost never seen, except privately by women." Educated people also sometimes shy away from talking about it. Everyone must understand that it is an integral process of the female anatomy and it is absolutely healthy for women after certain age to undergo menstruation. There's nothing unholy about it. It is time for the country to adopt the call of the Raja festival of Odisha, which sends the message to break the meaningless social taboo and thus contribute to a changing world.

The author is pursuing graduation in BJB College, Bhubaneswar. The views expressed are personal.

Italian marines case proceedings closed

The closure of the marines' case sets a bad precedence for trying future crimes by foreigners on Indian soil in the Indian courts



J GOIKRISHNAN

Yesterday, June 15, the Supreme Court of India quashed the proceedings in the long-drawn Italian marines case (delete has)—has agreed with the Government of India for closure of the controversial Italian Marines case where in which two fishermen were shot down by two Italian soldiers from a foreign ship off the Kerala coast in 2012. The Narendra Modi government agreed to the for ₹10 crore compensation,— better termed as blood money in some quarters,— offered by the Italian shipping company at the International Arbitration tribunal. —sentence is not complete. This is not as simple and not a question of ₹10 cr. It has bilateral relationship issues involved.

Ironically, Irony is it was Narendra Modi who till May, 2014 kept raising the marines case, spoke on this case, accusing charging the then Congress government of allowing the marines to leave India and asking Congress President Sonia Gandhi (accusing of what) if that amounted to "defending the country's interest". He and promised to bring the two killer —two Italian marines before the India's courts/criminal law. Why this abject surrender to Italian Government's pressure?

While it appears so, it is far from either capitulation by India or the country happily agreeing to monetary compensation. The robust bilateral ties between India and Italy nearly became undone because of the tensions the case caused in Delhi and Rome. The Italian foreign minister had to resign after the marines were initially sent back to India while Italian envoy in Delhi was barred from leaving India after the marines refused to return following a furlough. The case came up when India needed Italy's help in probing the corruption charges in the AgustaWestland case and assistance in finalizing the EU investment agreement.

As someone covering a Home Ministry beat covering journalist for the past 11 years, I knew this case very well, and I am going to disclose the origin of this case. On February 15, 2012 around 5 pm, we journalists were in Union Home Secretary RK Singh's room at North Block. The same RK Singh who is now the Union Power Minister. It was a regular debriefing and while we were in a freewheeling chat, we journalists noticed a news break flashing in TV about the killing of two fishermen from a foreign ship off the Kerala coast. We alerted RK Singh and he just picked the phone and connected to P. Prabhakaran, then Director-General of Coast Guard.

Singh ordered the head of Coast Guard to seize the foreign ship and hand it over to Kerala Police. As a journalist, I along with my colleagues were as witnessing one of the rarest speedy actions of the Mmanmohan Singh regime. In no time, the Italian ship, Enrica Lexie, was seized by the Coast Guard and two Italian Marines were arrested by Kerala Police. They were Italian Navy soldiers - Massimiliano Latorre and Salvatore Gironcighired by the ship for security from sea pirates. They Italian soldiers were charge-sheeted for murder by the Kerala Police, and they landed in the trial court in Kollam district of Kerala in their uniform.

According to my information, the tussle between the ship and the boat, named Saint Antony, from Kerala started on the price of the fish. Normally Ships usually buy purchase sea food and groceries from local fish from the boat-to stock groceries and meat. The fishermen in the boat and the sailors in the Italian ship argued, engaged in an argument leading to firing from



IT IS FAR FROM EITHER CAPITULATION BY INDIA OR THE COUNTRY HAPPILY AGREEING TO MONETARY COMPENSATION. THE ROBUST TIES BETWEEN INDIA AND ITALY NEARLY CAME UNDONE BECAUSE OF THE TENSIONS THE CASE CAUSED. THE ITALIAN FOREIGN MINISTER HAD TO RESIGN AFTER THE MARINES WERE INITIALLY SENT BACK TO INDIA WHILE THE ITALIAN ENVOY IN DELHI WAS BARRED FROM LEAVING INDIA AFTER THE MARINES REFUSED TO RETURN FOLLOWING A FURLOUGH

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the marines. All kind of Much lobbying took place was going to settle this case, while the two accused killer marines were languishing in Kerala's local jail.

First, the Italian Embassy operated through the local Church. The two victims fishermen— Ajeesh Pink and Valentine Jelastine— were also Christians. Within two months their families of the two fishermen accepted ₹1 crore each and wrote to the pPolice and cCourt that they hadve pardoned the two Italian mMarines. The Italian Embassy, while providing legal help to the accused, also produced a letter from the families that "in the name of Jesus" they have pardoned the accused.

The Kerala Police objected saying that in criminal law, families have no role and their pardon cannot matter before laws of India. The Kerala High Court reminded that blood money system and obtaining pardon from the victims' families will never be entertained. Then lobbying started in Delhi and claims started floating that the incident happened in international waters and not in territorial waters. The Italians approached the Supreme Court, and Harish Salve was the lawyer complaining about the high-handedness of Kerala's prosecutors. At In the end of 2012, then Chief Justice of India (CJI) Altamas Kabir ordered the shifting of the case from Kerala and allowed the Italian marines to be kept in Delhi's Embassy. Soon CJI Kabir allowed them parole to visit Italy for Christmas celebrations. Shockingly, before the next hearing on April, 2013, the Embassy filed an affidavit that the two accused were are not coming back to India. Then Janata Party President Subramanian Swamy intervened in the case seeking contempt of court proceedings against Italian Ambassador and there was a heated argument between CJI and

Swamy. Sensing danger, Italy returned the marines and kept them in their Delhi Embassy. Meanwhile, Harish Salve relinquished the case and his friend Mukul Rohatgi took up the case of Italian Embassy.

This time country was a facing Lok Sabha election heat and BJP and its Prime Ministerial candidate Narendra Modi were accusing Congress and its President Sonia Gandhi for of reportedly surrendering India's interests before Italy. Modi was roaring in his speeches asking Sonia Gandhi all kinds of questions on this matter. Modi even Tweeted on March 31, 2014: "Italian marines mercilessly killed our fishermen. If Madam is so 'patriotic' can she tell in which jail the marines are lodged in?" Modi was outraged that expressing anger over putting the killer marines were lodged in Embassy guest house in Delhi instead of jail.

Modi became Prime Minister in May, 2014. As time passed, the advocates of the Italian marines' advocate Mukul Mukul Rohatgi became India's Attorney General and their marines' first advocate Harish Salve got Padma Bhushan an year later in 2015. The anger was gradually fizzling out and the marines were allowed to go back to Italy, and in 2016, India agreed to contest the Italian petition at the ad-hoc tribunal constituted to settle disputes related to the United Nations Convention for the Law of the Sea (which petition) at the UN Tribunal on international shipping matters even as the Supreme Court was handling the criminal case. Why did India agree for the international tribunal's and arbitrations when a criminal case was pending in Indian courts? The same thing happened in Vodafone and Cairn tax evasion issues when cases were going on in Indian courts. And in international tri-

bunals India lost the case ultimately after spending huge legal expenses running over millions of dollars.

In July 2020, as expected, the international tribunal ordered that India can only contest for compensation and criminal cases will be tried only in Italy. The Union government informed the Supreme Court that it had accepted the decision of the Permanent Court of Arbitration that the marines cannot be tried in India as they enjoyed immunity because they were exercising official duties when the incident occurred. The PCA said India was entitled to compensation for the loss of life of the fishermen and the marines' violation of the right of navigation.

And the Indian Government agreed to this curious order of the tribunal and now tells the Supreme Court to close all criminal cases as the "nation" has agreed to the International Tribunal proposal. Italy paid compensation of ₹4 crore each to two fishermen's families and ₹2 crore to the boat owner. Why did the Government of India agree to accept ₹10 crore and avoid criminal cases in India, akin to the blood money system? In India trial courts have to pass judgment including conviction of the accused and pass orders for compensation to victims. Accepting blood money and obtaining pardon for the accused from victim's family is valid in Arabic jurisprudence.

The Kerala High Court was right on the conduct of the trial but was over-ruled by the Supreme Court. The then Opposition party, BJP, did a u-turn after coming to power. A bad precedence has been set for the trial of any misdemeanor or crime committed by foreigners on Indian territory. How can we justify a foreigner killing an Indian in Indian terrain and allow his criminal trial to be conducted on foreign soil?

POINT COUNTERPOINT

REACHED AGATTI AND MET WITH THE OFFICIALS. INSPECTED AND REVIEWED THE STATUS OF VARIOUS ONGOING DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS. — LAKSHADWEEP ADMINISTRATOR PRAFUL KHODA PATEL



WITNESSING A FURORE FOR OVER A MONTH NOW, PEOPLE HAVE BEEN PROTESTING AGAINST CERTAIN DECISIONS BY THE ADMINISTRATOR. — LAKSHADWEEP MP PP MOHAMMED FAIZAL

Disturbing dissent in both national parties

While the BJP, as the ruling party at the Centre, can crack the whip, the Congress, being in the Opposition, does not have that luxury

Both the Congress party and the BJP — the two main national parties — are facing internal problems in the states where they rule. The basic difference between them is the Congress is on the decline while the BJP is growing to replace Congress of the latter's heydays. Once proud of its exemplary discipline and organizational unity the BJP is at present facing internal feuds. It is not that other political parties have not seen their leaders working at cross purposes. But it makes news when this happens in BJP. Why is it happening when the party is claimed to be passing through a golden period in its history? Although Narendra Modi has emerged as the strongest Prime Minister since the days of Indira Gandhi, the



KALYANI SHANKAR

The author is a senior journalist. The views expressed are personal.

second wave of the Coronavirus outbreak has dented his image though he continues to be popular. The vaccine policy, bed shortage, and oxygen shortage have added to the confusion. The Modi magic has not worked in the recent Assembly elections. The first problem is that the BJP has admitted many defectors in poll-bound states. There is heartburn among BJP workers that while they have been slogging for years those who entered the party yesterday are getting the rewards. This is what has happened in UP, Karnataka, Assam and Uttarakhand. In UP the stakes are very high. In 2017, the BJP won a massive majority. The dissidents have many issues. A.K. Sharma, a retired Gujarat cadre officer

who worked in the Prime Minister's Office has been made an MLC early this year. He is expected to be made a minister soon. The old-timers see him as a threat as he has the ears of the Prime Minister. Some dissidents are demanding a change of chief minister. There is also some strain in the relationship between Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Modi. As for West Bengal, the defectors from the Trinamool Congress are in the process of returning to the TMC starting with the BJP's big catch Mukul Roy. In the past, he had been a blue-eyed boy of chief minister Mamata Banerjee. There are rumblings in the local BJP unit about the poll strategy. Governance in Karnataka is suffering due to internal feuds.



Chief Minister Yediyurappa is facing indiscipline and there is a demand for his replacement. Dissidence in Tripura has once again reared its ugly head. A few MLAs, most of the Congress turncoats have been demanding Chief Minister Biplav Kumar Deb's ouster. In Rajasthan, former chief minister Vasundhara Raje is refusing

to heed the new state leadership. All these go to show that all is not well with the BJP at the local level. However, these are not beyond control. The Congress is at present driven with simmering discontent, mutual bickering, and intraparty disputes. When the leaders are weak, naturally, the state units are emboldened to raise their voice. Only last August some 23 leaders including Ghulam Nabi Azad, Anand Sharma and B. S. Hooda had sent a letter to Congress president Sonia Gandhi seeking urgent reorganization of the party. In Congress-ruled states of Punjab and Rajasthan rebels are demanding the removal of the chief ministers. Cricketer-turned-politician Navjot Sidhu

has launched a scathing attack against Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh. The high command has decided to accommodate both factions in party and government. Rajasthan faced a rebellion last year when Sachin Pilot raised the banner of revolt against Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot but he was pacified by the high command. Pilot is accusing the central leadership of not keeping its promises. One by one 'Team Rahul' is getting dismantled. Two of Rahul's trusted lieutenants Jyotiraditya Scindia and now Jitin Prasads have joined the BJP. Sachin Pilot is debating whether to leave Congress. So is Milind Deora. It is nobody's case that there has never been indiscipline and

factionalism in both parties. It is only a question of how soon these rebels are contained. While the BJP, as the ruling party at the centre, can crack the whip, the Congress, being in the opposition does not have that luxury. Today the Congress party's chances of acquiring power in New Delhi in the immediate future appear bleak, and therefore different factions can make credible threats to exit the organization. How it deals with the dissidents is to be seen. New parties are born when people get disenchanted with the existing parties. But internal problems arise because the party men feel there is no future for them in that party. It is for the party leaders to manage the emerging competition among the factions.

Financial wealth jumps 11% in pandemic year to \$ 3.4 tn

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Financial wealth in India grew 11 per cent to USD 3.4 trillion in 2020 despite the coronavirus pandemic, a global consultancy estimated on Tuesday. The 11 per cent growth in financial wealth was at par with the compounded annual growth rate for the five years to 2020, the report by BCG said. Financial wealth is defined as the total wealth excluding real assets and liabilities held by adult individuals. It can be noted that after a sharp correction in the early days of the pandemic, there has been a continuing rally in stocks since April last year, which has led to concerns being expressed across quarters. Concerns are also being expressed about a greater disparity in incomes and the pandemic widening the divide. The report noted that the next few years will also see a faster

expansion in financial wealth, but the rate of expansion will slow down marginally to 10 per cent per annum to take the number to USD 5.5 trillion by 2025.



The report reveals growth in prosperity and wealth significantly through the crisis and is likely to expand in the next five years," an official statement from the consultancy firm said. India is expected to lead the percentage growth of individuals

with fortunes of over USD 100 million till 2025, it said, adding that the number will almost double to 1,400 in the next five years. Indians' cross-border wealth, which is defined as financial wealth booked in a jurisdiction that is different from the jurisdiction of domicile, grew to USD 194 billion in 2020 which is 5.7 per cent of the financial

wealth. The proportion is set to increase to 6.3 per cent by 2025 as per its estimates. On the asset allocation side, nearly half of the onshore deployment of the financial wealth is in currency and deposits, followed by equities and life insurance. From a real assets perspective, which includes real estate, consumer durables and valuables like non-monetary gold and other metals valued at current prices, there was an over 14 per cent increase to USD 12.4 trillion in 2020, as compared to the year-ago period. The real assets are expected to grow by 8.2 per cent per annum to USD 18.5 trillion by 2025, the report estimated.



Gold jumps Rs 303, silver gains Rs 134

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold in the national capital on Tuesday rose Rs 303 to Rs 47,853 per 10 grams reflecting overnight recovery in the global precious metal prices, according to HDFC Securities. In the previous trade, the precious metal had closed at Rs 47,550 per 10 gram. Silver also gained Rs 134 to Rs 70,261 per kg, from Rs 70,127 per kg in the previous trade. In the international market, both gold and silver were trading flat at USD 1,864.50 per ounce and USD 27.65 per ounce, respectively. Securities Senior Analyst (Commodities) Tapan Patel said gold prices fluctuated as the market is awaiting the outcome of the US Federal Reserve meeting.

Sensex, Nifty scale new peaks; banking shares drive rally

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmarks Sensex and Nifty rose for the fourth straight session to settle at fresh life-time highs on Tuesday as investors shrugged off concerns over rising inflation to focus on positive cues coming from global markets.

At the closing bell, the BSE Sensex quoted higher by 221.52 points or 0.42 per cent at a new peak of 52,773.05. The index also hit its all-time intraday high of 52,869.51 during the session.

Likewise, the broader NSE Nifty rose 57.40 points or 0.36 per cent to settle at a fresh high of 15,869.25. The NSE gauge too marked its life-time intraday high of 15,901.60.

On the Sensex chart, Asian Paints was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rising over 3 per cent, followed by Axis Bank, ICICI Bank, Hindustan Unilever, IndusInd Bank, Infosys and HDFC Bank.



On the other hand, Bajaj Finserv, Dr Reddy's, Titan, Sun Pharma, Bajaj Finance and PowerGrid were among the laggards.

Of the 30 shares in the Sensex, 15 closed in the green. Sectorally, BSE Realty index rose the most with 1.55 per cent gains. It was followed by consumer discretionary goods, bank and FMCG indices.

In the broader market, smallcap and midcap indices outperformed the benchmark. Largecap index rose 0.35 per cent. "Indian bourses continued its gaining streak tracking

optimism from global peers, which is despite the rising inflation concerns. The global market is eagerly awaiting the two-day Fed policy meeting's decision to see if the central bank would signal any change in policy," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

He further said that domestic retail inflation jumped to 6.3 per cent in May breaching the RBI's comfort zone on account of higher food and energy prices, which is expected to ease due to the opening of the economy. Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Tokyo and Seoul ended on a positive note, while Shanghai and Hong Kong were in the red.

Equities in Europe were trading with gains in mid-session deals.

International oil benchmark Brent crude was trading 0.32 per cent higher at USD 73.09 per barrel. Meanwhile, the rupee slipped 2 paise to close at 73.31 against the US dollar.



Gems, jewellery exports fall by 5% due to Covid

PNS ■ MUMBAI

India's gems and jewellery exports in May 2021 declined by 5 per cent to Rs 21,188 crore (USD 2.89 billion) compared to the same month in pre-pandemic 2019, due to the disruptions caused by the second Covid wave across the country, according to the Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC). In 2019, the overall gem and jewellery exports in May stood at Rs 22,388 crore (USD 3.20 billion), according to the GJEPC data. India's gem and jewellery exports in May 2021 slipped into negative territory due to the severe disruption in manufacturing activity caused by the outbreak of the second Covid wave across the country, the GJEPC said in a statement. The mix of partial and com-

plete lockdowns in different states led to limitations on workforce capacities and related manufacturing activities, it added.

However, gems and jewellery exports grew by 4 per cent during April and May 2021 to Rs 46,414.38 crore (USD 6.31 billion) compared to the same months during the pre-pandemic year in 2019.

India's April-May 2021 export growth was driven mainly by the Domestic Tariff Area (DTA), which witnessed a 15 per cent growth in exports compared with the 31 per cent decline in exports recorded from Special Economic Zones (SEZs), it added.

The revival of exports has happened due to the opening of international markets, resurgent demand and strong unstinted support from the government on various issues.

84K employees, kin given first dose of vaccine so far: Vedanta

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Vedanta on Tuesday said that over 84,000 employees, business partners as well as their family members have been inoculated with first dose so far, and it expects to complete the vaccination drive across all its locations by August.

The company said it also plans to provide the first jab across locations to the visitors who have not been inoculated so far.

"In one of the largest COVID-19 vaccination drives carried out by corporate India so far, Vedanta Cares has administered one dose of vaccine to over 84,000 employees, business partners as well as their family members," the company said.



Anarock ties up with Upflex for coworking booking platform

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

US-based co-working booking platform Upflex has tied up with real estate consultant Anarock to enter the Indian market.

Mumbai-based Anarock said in a statement that "it will make Upflex, a hybrid booking platform with the largest global network of flexible workspace, available to companies in India.

Anarock has signed a formal agreement to deploy Upflex's services across tier 1, 2, and 3 cities in India.

The agreement combines Upflex's technology, processes, and corporate mandates with Anarock's national distribution platform to offer a highly customisable workspace programme. "The unique workspace solution that Upflex offers is highly relevant today, when the country is still coming to grips with the pandemic," Anarock Chairman Anuj Puri said.

The Upflex solutions portfolio is designed to replace traditional leasing models with a low-touch, single-vendor alternative, streamlining real estate, reducing overheads, conserving resources, and improving the employee



experience, said Rohin Shah, Director, Anarock.

Via the intuitive Upflex mobile app, employees can search thousands of workspaces across 1,600 cities and 75 countries, and book conveniently located desks, offices, and meeting rooms on demand.

Employers can track usage activity for their distributed workforce, see detailed utilisation data, and handle all bookings across thousands of spaces and space operators in one invoice. "We are proud to join forces with Anarock. Combining our leading-edge technology and global network coverage with Anarock's unparalleled expertise of the Indian market is a winning for-

MONEY MATTERS

JLR developing prototype hydrogen fuel cell EV

Tata Motors-owned Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) on Tuesday said it is developing a prototype hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicle (FCEV) based on the new version of its premium SUV, Land Rover Defender. The 'New Defender FCEV' concept is part of JLR's aim to achieve zero tailpipe emissions by 2036 and net zero carbon emissions across its supply chain, products and operations by 2039, in line with the 'Reimagine' strategy announced last month, the company said in a statement. It is being developed under the company's advanced engineering project, known as Project Zeus, which is part-funded by the government-backed Advanced Propulsion Centre. "To deliver Project Zeus, Jaguar Land Rover has teamed up with world-class R&D partners, including Delta Motorsport, AVL, Marelli Automotive Systems and the UK Battery Industrialisation Centre (UKBIC) to research, develop and create the prototype FCEV," the company added.



HOP Electric Mobility unveils two new EV scooter models

EV maker HOP Electric Mobility on Tuesday launched two new scooter models and said it plans to roll out five vehicles, including an e-bike, by the end of this fiscal year. The company said it is also looking to set up charging stations, starting from Jaipur and further expanding them to other parts of the country. At present, HOP has three market-ready vehicles, two e-scooters and one e-motorcycle and in the long-term, the brand plans to launch at least ten new products in the next three years, it said. The two new up to 125 km range e-scooter models, LEO and LYF, are priced at Rs 72,500 and Rs 65,500 onwards, respectively, come with features such as Internet, GPS, mobile app, 72V architecture and high-performance Motor to climb any slope with loading capacity of 180 kg, among others, the company said in a release. To address the growing demand for e-vehicle solutions HOP Electric Mobility is gearing up to launch at least five e-vehicle solutions by the end of this financial year, the company said in the release.



Digital adoption rising but privacy, security remain top concern: IBM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In growing signs of digital adoption, a survey has showed that interactions of people in India with all types of businesses through websites and mobile apps grew further during the COVID-19 pandemic, though privacy and security remained their concerns. According to a survey report of IT company IBM, respondents over 35 saw the largest increase in digital interactions during the pandemic, though all age groups saw at least some increases. "Indian respondents interacted with all types of businesses/organisations through websites and mobile apps more during COVID, especially banking (65 per cent) and shopping/retail (54 per cent). The survey conducted between March 12-26, however, found that more than half



of respondents remove tracking permission of apps if it tracks activity of users across other apps and websites.

"The big takeaway from this survey is that consumers have become accustomed to the convenience of digital interactions during the pandemic, and this trend is expected to continue even after society returns to pre-pandemic

norms," Prashant Bhatkal, Security Software Sales Leader, IBM Technology Sales, India and South Asia, said in a statement. Indian respondents, the survey revealed, created about 19 new online accounts during the pandemic across all categories, and on average, created 3 new accounts for social media and entertainment.

India extends \$108.28 mn soft loan to Eswatini

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Government has extended a soft loan of USD 108.28 million to Eswatini (Swaziland) for construction of their new Parliament building, Exim Bank said on Tuesday.

With the signing of this line of credit agreement, Exim Bank has now in place 272 Lines of Credit (LoC), covering 62 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the CIS, with credit commitments of around USD 26.84 billion, available for financing exports from India, Exim Bank said in a release.

The soft loan agreement was signed between Nirmitt Ved, General Manager, Exim Bank, and Neal H Rijkenberg, Finance Minister, Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini (Swaziland).



CSIR-IICT, pharma firm join hands for anti-corona drug

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The CSIR-Indian Institute of Chemical Technology (IICT) here and Bengaluru-based Anthem Biosciences Pvt Ltd have entered into an agreement for technology transfer and manufacture of anti-COVID drug 2-DG. Studies have shown that 2-DG demonstrated quick recovery and reduction in oxygen dependence among moderate

and severely affected COVID patients. This drug, in the form of powder formulation, was earlier launched by Dr Reddy's Laboratories in India, IICT said in a release. Under the terms of the licence agreement, Anthem Biosciences Pvt Ltd, an integrated pharmaceutical company, gets non-exclusive licence for the process know-how for synthesis of 2-DG (2-Deoxy-D-Glucose), it said.

Office leasing may remain flat or grow slightly in 7 cities

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Net office leasing across seven major cities is likely to remain flat or may grow slightly from 25.6 million square feet achieved in 2020, as corporates have not shelved their expansion plan amid the second wave of the COVID-19, according to a senior JLL India official. In an interview with PTI, Rahul Arora, Head of office leasing advisory, JLL India, said the year 2021 started on a strong note with net absorption of 5.5 million sq ft of office space across seven cities -- Delhi-NCR, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, Pune and Kolkata -- during January-March quarter. However, he said, the leasing momentum was affected in the second quarter of the current cal-



endar year due to the second COVID-19 wave.

On the net leasing outlook for 2021, Arora said: "We expect the absorption to remain similar to 2020 or perhaps better in case we do not face another lockdown in

H2 of the year".

Net absorption fell sharply to 25.6 million sq ft in 2020 from a record 46.5 million sq ft in the previous year because of the pandemic. "In a nutshell, office leasing did show a fair amount resilience in

2020 and was back almost 55 per cent of 2019 - which was an exceptional year for the leasing market," Arora said.

He highlighted that the year 2021 started on a very strong note, with over 15 million sq ft of space requirements floated through RFPs (request for proposals sent by corporate occupiers to developers). "Even though Q1, 2021 witnessed the robust absorption of almost 5.5 million sq ft, there was an immediate impact of lockdown 2.0. However, the ray of hope for the sector was the fact that corporates didn't shelve but just delayed these requirements.

"Closer to the re-opening 2.0 across the country, we have several clients enquiring about various opportunities, considering flex vs permanent, furnished vs unfurnished," he said.

Arora said corporate occupiers are undertaking various measures to ensure the eventual come back to the office is safe, sustainable and productive.

"All are concerned about the wellbeing of their employees and hence we have seen several extremely successful vaccination drives for all employees and their families. While WFH (Work From Home) will continue for a while, perhaps until most are vaccinated, the market will witness the hybrid workplace strategies in the coming months," he observed.

From an office leasing perspective, Arora said it is evident that the companies do not intend to implement WFH owing to various challenges. "Tech giants continue to hire. We expect a more focussed approach on hybrid return to work - some

close to house centres, along with the main office with only a fraction of people allowed to visit offices.

"Flex space is expected to witness an increased demand in the near term. We expect to see a larger workforce return to office in 2022 (only post vaccinations)," he said. The consultant said that the supply of new offices has been affected due to the non-availability of labour and lack of funds.

Arora said rentals are expected to remain stable in key micro-markets. JLL India, part of US-based real estate consultancy firm JLL, is one of the leading property consultants in India with dominance in commercial leasing and facilities management businesses. JLL India's revenue stood at around Rs 4,000 crore in 2018-19. The turnover of 2019-20 and 2020-21 have not been disclosed.

SAT reduces Sebi's penalty on CARE Ratings to Rs 10 L

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Securities Appellate Tribunal (SAT) has reduced the penalty imposed by Sebi on CARE Ratings to Rs 10 lakh from Rs 1 crore in a case related to lapses in assigning credit rating to non-convertible debentures of Reliance Communications (RCom). The tribunal has affirmed the regulator's order with regard to the violation by CARE Ratings under the provisions of the Sebi Act and the CRA (Credit Rating Agency) rule. However, the penalty has been reduced from Rs 1 crore to Rs 10 lakh, according to a SAT order dated June 9. "It was a case of lack of due diligence for not having acted in a timely manner... we are of the opinion that the maximum penalty of Rs 1 crore is highly excessive, harsh and arbitrary and does not commensurate with the violation," SAT said. Further, the tribunal said the charge is one of lack of due diligence and it is not a case where ratings were not downgraded. The ratings were downgraded by CARE Ratings but not in a timely manner. "There could be a case of carelessness or sluggishness or laxity in the manner in which the downgrading was done by the appellant (CARE Ratings) but it is not a case of oversight," SAT noted.



Hyderabad

the pioneer

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Wednesday
June 16, 2021

With the pandemic resulting in huge losses for even the biggest of hotels, *The Pioneer's* SHIKHA DUGGAL writes about how hoteliers have been innovating to ensure both, minimal loss and customer safety and satisfaction, at the same time.



HOTELIERS UP THEIR GAME!

The ruthless Covid-19 has brought throughout the globe a human tragedy — a tragedy that's having a growing impact on the global economy. The World Travel and Tourism Council warned that the pandemic could lead to a cut of fifty million jobs worldwide in the industry and the fear came true. The lockdown ate up even some famous five-star hotels like Hyatt Regency in Mumbai and now, most of its employees are unemployed at the moment. But with the industry being a competitive one, experts feel, they aren't going to give up! They are still keeping up with the latest hospitality trends of contactless payment and robots in hotels.

"2020 was a challenging year indeed. Covid's impact has been devastating and unprecedented for the hospitality and tourism industry. The first lockdown was announced in March 2020 and that was followed by a flood of cancellations of events planned, not just during the lockdown but for the entire year, and no hotel was prepared for this. However, F&B offerings came to the rescue as this was the only source of revenue and cash flow for many hotels, and a lot of innovation was seen here to engage with the guests for those wanting to enjoy the comfort and safety of their homes and for many who wanted to come and experience at the hotels. We had to quickly adapt to the social distancing norms, contactless menus, payment options, quick check-in and check out options and put in place some of the best practices the hospitality industry has ever seen, to ensure the safety of everyone," shares Manish Dayya, General Manager Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre and Hyderabad International Convention Centre.

There is an evolution at the societal level! Shifted values in the aftermath of the pandemic and increased consumer awareness of all things sustainable and purposeful has set new benchmarks for hospitality enterprises. Say, for example, staycations has

become a booming tourism part because the surging online content promising to create a balcony haven or a garden oasis to be proud of is a sign of the times. "As with every crisis, new opportunities surface and we focused on innovative revenue-generating ideas. Allot of promotions have been activated to attract individual travellers and families with a host of recreational activities being introduced to engage the guests of all ages to promote staycations and workstations at the property once things open up and that's how the industry plan to tide the market. Introduction of technological advancements is also an embracing factor. To tide this pandemic, we started with the initiative 'Missed Celebration' which gave the opportunity to the guests who missed celebrating their important occasions due to the lockdowns followed by 'For the Love of Travel' which gave the opportunity to the domestic travellers to break away from the monotony of work from home and stay with us," he adds. The industry only recently



Manish Dayya, General Manager Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre

began its journey of recovery from the long bout of lockdowns but has once again been forced to shut down. They're seeking ways to fit into the current scenario and attempting to settle a fraction of their mounting losses! For instance, Zostel, a country-wide hostel chain has converted some of its properties into quarantine and isolation centres even as they launched the Zostel Bubble to offer long-stay travellers and digital nomads a safe environment.

The general manager from the popular chain of hotels in Hyderabad also believes traveller behaviour showed a positive trend late last year and in the early part of 2021, particularly with staycation and locals coming out for food and leisure activities! Weddings also provided significant growth in business. At present, the focus is on long stay guests and social event segment as weddings are the only events allowed as per the latest government directives. If digitised guest experience was on the hot list last year, today, contactless services have gained new momentum in the form of mobile check-in, contactless payments, voice control, and biometrics. Now, the fine dining experience is being emulated at home including extra atmospheric candles, QR-code playlists, and unexpected freebies.

Also, having knowing guests have an affinity towards snapping pictures to post on social media, hospitality is again stepping up their game. With a view to leveraging this free publicity, owners are paying greater attention to photogenic table settings and decor backdrops! Entire meals are served as irresistibly beautiful vignettes that demand to be shared.

The pandemic has triggered the rise of cloud kitchens! Why is this? Changes in technology and in consumer habits, of course, led to this. With hotels' footfall at an all-time low and sales down as much as 90%, according to CRISIL research — takeaway has become a vital source of revenue

for many hotels. CRISIL estimates that the recovery of the 1.5 trillion rupee sector will take at least a year after lockdown is lifted. According to Swiggy, a cloud kitchen initiative eliminates large costs associated with real estate and serving staff from a conventional hotel thereby enabling a hotel to focus on cooking great quality food alone. This model enables easier expansion for hotel partners across geographies both within the city and to newer cities at a fraction of the cost-reducing the risk and commitment normally required for them to begin operating in a new location. "The future trends in the hospitality industry show that the guests' expectations for special care and customised experiences will be increasing with time! Hotels have to focus on planning and creating a genuinely compelling and differentiated offering, especially in our industry segment wherein we have seen a growing trend of people opting for home deliveries over coming out to drink and dine, and to satiate that demand we have started home deliveries of the same delicacies served at our restaurants," Manish concludes.

The most notable lesson learned from the last year is the importance of preparedness. The pandemic has accelerated several trends which were already being experienced in the hospitality sector! Therefore, it is more important than ever for hoteliers to invest in the best practices, adopt the necessary changes to bounce back stronger post the pandemic.



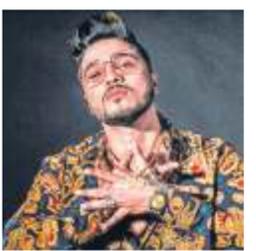
Sherni is all set to roar



Ahead of the release of *Sherni*, an unconventional drama featuring Vidya Balan, *Main Sherni* has been unveiled! A rip-roaring song that features some unique personalities alongside Vidya Balan, it celebrates the stories of resilience, and this special soundtrack has vocals by AKASA and Raftaar. It salutes and applauds the courage of these *shernis* who have stood their ground, beaten the odds and have carved their niche by not conforming to the traditional.

Speaking about the powerful music video, Vidya Balan said, "The music video *Main Sherni* is our tribute to all the women across the globe who have this indomitable spirit of never giving up. *Sherni* is special for all of us and with this film and music video, we are celebrating women who have shown us that there is nothing a woman can't do. Just like Vidya Vincent, my character in the movie, we want to show that women are fearless and powerful and that you don't have to roar to be a tigress. This is what we have tried to capture in this anthem."

The music video stars F4 Racer and Driver Coach Mira Erda, body positivity influencer and yoga trainer Natasha Noel, social media influencer and hula-hoop dancer Eshna Kutty,



and one of Karnataka's first transgender doctors Trinetra Haldar, frontline warrior Jayshree Mane, Riddhi Arya, a student who delivers food to frontline warriors, Anita Devi, a security guard, Seema Duggal - teacher, and Archana Jada, a house help, along with Vidya Balan. Penned by Raghu, *Main Sherni* is composed by Utkarsh Dhotekar!

Singer AKASA said she couldn't be more proud to be a part of a song that celebrates women, and their strengths. "With this soundtrack, we are hoping to awaken the inner shernis inside every woman around the world and motivate them to never give up, chase their dream and always keep working hard. I have always been all about woman power and am truly honoured to be a part of *Sherni* and sing a song that will be remembered for a very long time. As always it was awesome working with Raftaar on this powerful track. The lyrics and melody truly spoke to me and I am sure that listeners will get to experience what the movie is all about through the song," she shared.

Calling it an interesting project, rapper Raftaar said, "SHERNI, there is such undeniable power in that one word, and to be able to showcase the vitality of that word in a song was a tall order! I hope Akasa and I have managed to do that. I am really happy with how this passion project has panned out, as Akasa and I have invested our heart and soul into it."



Shayaan Bhat aka rapper SHEN B from Jammu, who has released his latest hip hop track *Zamaana*, speaks with *The Pioneer* about how he got into music and the challenges he faced.

'With little exposure, rap culture in Jammu is slow'

What is *Zamaana*, the EP, about?

Basically, the EP has all the songs that are really close to me. They talk about things that have happened and experiences that I have been through over the course of time that I have been doing music like bullying, censorship and my faith in God. It is a mix of many things. When I am writing a song, it has many things; it is a journey. I ask myself a set of questions. For example, it could be about society. I then answer these myself. That is how *Zamaana* was born.

The songs highlight issues the youth face

like bullying, censorship, self-esteem, corruption and faith. Why choose these subjects?

I have faced a lot of bullying when I was growing up because the way I used to think about the world. My interests were different when I was in school. I was an introvert. I would bunk my school to go to learn music. I loved to spend time playing the instruments.

Others kids would make fun of me and say that I was weird. I was fat too that led to bullying as well. Body shaming was so common. People would look down upon me because I



am an artist. Where I come from Jammu. There is only one acceptable job, a government job. People don't understand art here. I was pressurised to take up a government job but I rode all that.

From Shayaan to Shen B, how did that happen?

I gave this name to myself. I could have just gone with Shayaan; I love my name. But I wanted to create a totally different persona for myself — one who is expressive and is an extrovert. When I became Shen B, it gave me the power to express myself. I had a few friends who sup-

ported me. I had left music for four years to do my masters. I went to Mumbai and worked there but then I came back home because I wanted peace in my life. My friends encouraged me to get back to music and here I am.

How did you get into music?

It has been with me since I was a toddler. My grandparents were musicians so I would say that music is in my blood. I come from an orthodox Muslim family and they don't encourage music. But I continued to learn. It was only when I turned 22 when my mother told me about our family's legacy but they stopped due to religious reasons. I got into music because I saw a few people play guitar. I was hooked. I was in Class VIII. I joined them, became a drummer and was part of their band.

Why hip-hop?

If I could sing, I would. Unfortunately, I don't have the voice of a singer. I can just express myself. I had made a rap about a man

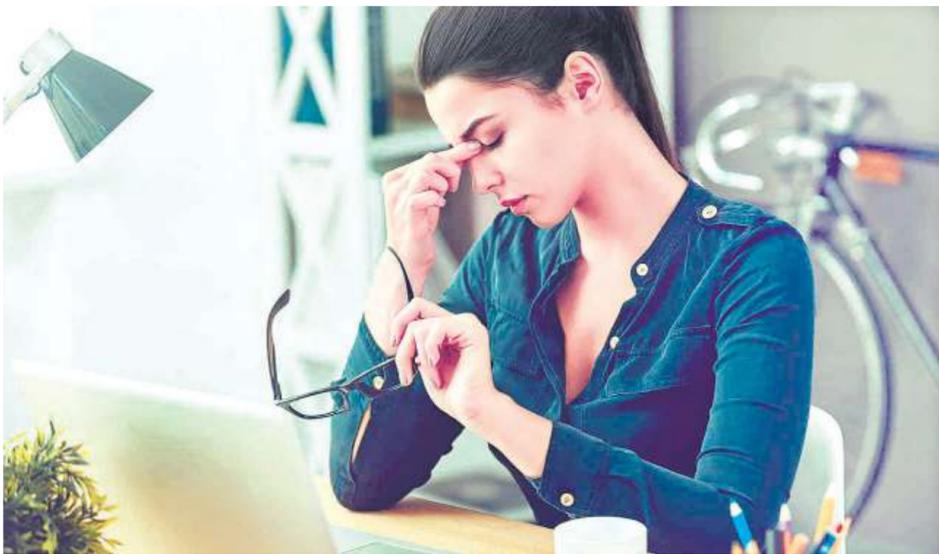
who had bullied me and it went viral in Jammu and that got me more interested.

What is the hip-hop scene in the city?

It is growing but sadly, those in underground rap have never left the city. There is lack of exposure. But we are slowly getting there. We have gatherings; rappers from other cities come. Since there is no club culture, the rap scene is slow.

What are the challenges faced to be a singer?

When I came back home in 2019, I didn't know much about rap but I started putting up my music. During the lockdown, we had no internet. I had to look for locations where I could get good reception to post my music. I lost my mother due to Covid-19. She was my only supporter so things changed for me after that. I also don't get many gigs. But I am a graphic designer and earn enough to work on my music.



Do you have digital eye strain?

Two-thirds of respondents in a recent survey said they experienced some degree of eye discomfort every day and nearly a quarter say their eyes feel worse now than they did a year ago. All that is adding up to a new sense of urgency: 90 percent say it's important to take care of their eyes — starting now.

If you have felt increased screen time is doing a number on your eyes and potentially contributing to digital eye strain, a survey shows you're not alone. Findings show that 80 percent of respondents say pandemic-prompted screen time put their eyes in "overdrive". In fact, two-thirds of respondents report experiencing some degree of eye discomfort every day and nearly a quarter say their eyes feel worse now than they did a year ago. All that is adding up to a new sense of urgency: 90 percent say it's important to take care of their eyes — starting now.

Over half of the respondents report looking at a computer most of the day, every day, say the findings, adding that nearly 2 in 3 experience some degree of eye discomfort on a daily basis.

Eighty percent would be willing to schedule routine computer breaks to relieve digital eye strain, while roughly 1 in 5 prioritise pay-

ing regular visits to the eye doctor.

In the survey, more than half of respondents defined a 'digital detox' as a break from screen time.

However, there are other ways to relieve your eyes other than stepping away from screens completely:

Finding relief from digital eye strain: Digital eye strain can occur from prolonged and frequent use of screens, which engages our near vision, and exposes us to the blue light emitted by screens. Symptoms can appear as watery, dry, sore eyes, blurred vision and headaches.

Although around 65 percent report experiencing eye discomfort on a daily basis, half of Americans sometimes miss their annual exam or never go, according to the survey.

Even if you have perfect vision, prolonged screen time — pandemic-related or not — can tire out your eyes.

During an eye exam, your eye doctor may suggest a computer lens or a blue light-reducing, anti-reflective lens coating that can help reduce

your exposure and combat digital eye strain. If you don't wear prescription glasses, non-prescription lenses with a blue light-reducing, anti-reflective coating can be used.

In the 20-20-20 rule, where every 20 minutes, you take 20 seconds to look at something 20 feet away. This will help to reset your focus and help your eyes feel less fatigued due to digital eye strain. Blinking more frequently also helps to relieve discomfort by moistening your eyes.

Keeping an eye out for kids: The survey found that more than half of parents are worried about the effects of their children's increased screen time. Men are more likely than women to be worried about their children's eyes and, when it comes to millennial dads, 6 in 10 are concerned about their children's vision due to increased screen time.

Eye care is health care, and through a comprehensive eye exam, an eye doctor can detect early signs of serious health conditions like diabetes and hypertension.

The pandemic has left a lasting impact on lifestyles across the country, including a reconnection with the Ayurvedic way of life. According to Swati Sutaria Vakharia, an entrepreneur who aims to bring back age-old ayurvedic remedies using Grandma's 'nuskha' (tips and tricks) in people's lifestyles, Indian grandparents had plenty of such recipes which worked well for our well-being and healthy upbringing.

With this pandemic, people recollected our roots and the power of ayurveda. It is a 5,000-year-old asset and gift to India that our ancestors have given us, by using herbs and plants in recipes to live healthy with purity. With time we shifted to other chemical based products due to comfortable packaging, accessibility and time. I think the ease of the usage and convenience had a major role in shifting us to low quality products, Swati told a news agency, explaining the power of natural recipes.

"When we talked to our grandmothers, we heard about this and followed many such 'Nuskhe' in our lives to get rid of the issues.

Bringing grandma's remedies to daily life



Child, spread this 'hing ka lep' around your navel if you have stomach ache, it will get cured in minutes. Apply turmeric with cream on your skin and it will glow. But in the current age, we are unable to get the right quality ingredients," she adds.

In India, there are multiple cultures and religions, and every group has their own

home remedies, she notes. The Ayurveda enthusiast says: Many healing remedies and herbs are present in our kitchen, but we are not aware of the real usage for the same.

"Nuskha is willing to bring those age-old recipes into our lives again by manufacturing them in a lab with effective formulation and

ingredients to heal with the power of Ayurveda! We are willing to modernise our ancient way of healing to take them back into our new-age lifestyle," she says.

Nuskha has a range of products, including raw forest honey, ayurvedic and natural oral care kits. They also have a three-drop therapy for belly button oils.

LET'S WORK IT OUT

Coming back to exercise can be a task, especially after a long break. VAIBHAV SOMANI shares easy tips that can help you get back into the exercise routine.

If you are in the lockdown mode at your home or struggling with making time from work commitments, family obligations and doing household chores, it may seem daunting and impossible to accelerate anything else on the plate. As a consequence, people tend to give up the one thing they don't wish to do — exercise. And long before you know it your non-workout days would have extended into weeks or months.

Whatever the reason of your business, there are ways to tug yourself out of a workout rut and make an enduring routine. So irrespective of whether you are

a sports person, a regular housewife or a fitness enthusiast, its never a bad idea to shake your self up and get back into the exercise routine.

Here, are the few points that will help you get back on track.

Planning: One of the first steps, before you dive back into an exercise routine, is to plan out what you want to achieve, how you want to get there, and what you want your routine to look like. It is always advisable to start small and not undertake any aggressive exercises if its been quite a while since you last worked out.

Setting up a goal: One thing lockdown has assured is that most of us have gained weight. If you have put on a lot of weight during this time, then you need to set a target, what you're expecting and how much weight you want to achieve. The setting goal will always give you a holistic approach

that includes stretching, cool down and workout sessions.

Schedule your workout like you schedule your meeting: Discipline is a must in this case. As you ease back into your fitness routine, don't forget to make a schedule for your workout session. There is a high possibility that your mind will subconsciously look for excuses to not work out and look out for distraction to deter from your plan. Schedule a time that you won't get easily distracted, if you know you can get caught up with work in the evening then schedule your time for a workout in the morning or vice versa.

Start with an easy workout: As they say, the journey of a thousand miles begins with one step. Getting started is sometimes the hardest part, as you feel less motivated and don't know where to start. It is better to start the exercise routine at a slightly less intense pace and

gradually increase the momentum with time. The high intense routines initially will exhaust you quickly and may eventually feel like too much to deal with, so start small but practice consistently.

Eating right to get back into shape: If you listen to your grandparents most of them would tell you to avoid eating out of a 'ready made packet', which means avoiding junk food and eating mindfully.

Eating a well-balanced diet can assist you to get the calories and nutrients you require to fuel the daily activities and help you reach your workout goals.

Things to avoid: People tend to overdo the exercise initially and end up being hurt or injured as the body. So, don't set too many unrealistic goals at once and ditch the all-or-nothing mind-set.

(The writer is the Director of Gravolite)

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



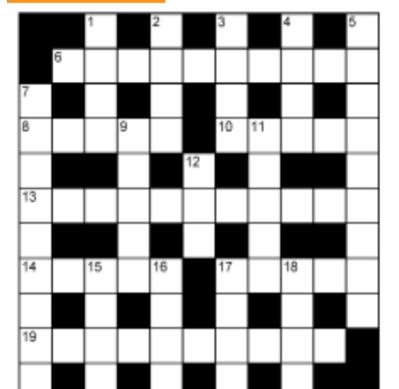
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU

OFF-TRACK BETTING: MY PREDICTION IS SHE'LL BE COMIN' AROUND THE MOUNTAIN WHEN SHE COMES. I'LL DO YOU ONE BETTER! I BET SHE'LL BE RIDIN' SIX WHITE HORSES WHEN SHE COMES!

LOST: YOU COULD HAVE JUST SAID YOU WANTED ME TO SPEND MORE TIME AT HOME.

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

Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

- Each row and column can contain each number (1 to 9) exactly once.
- The sum of all numbers in any row or column must equal 45.

ACROSS

- Broken down, not working properly (3,2,5)
- A word for a taxi driver
- A sung musical drama
- Saying you are sorry
- Light soft modelling wood
- Part of a poem or song
- Follows seventeenth
- These ring at churches
- Stick wallpaper on with this
- The number of years someone has lived
- Use these when running
- Small busy insects
- An opinion
- Animals like large mice

DOWN

- A round underground part of some plants
- A small type of horse
- A toy that spins around a held string (2-2)
- The part along the side or end
- Three-sided figures
- A way of cooking eggs

SOLUTION

S	T	A	R	T	I	D	O	L		
I	U	S	R	I	C	A	G	E		
K	U	N	A	M	T					
I	S	R	A	E	L	L				
O	T	H	E	D	O	N				
X	T	I	G	N	O	R				
Y	H	A	M	E	R					
G	U	E	S	T	I	E				
E	A	V	E	R	A					
N	I	N	E		P	A	S	T	R	Y



ALL SET TO FLY HIGH



Donal Bisht, who wowed audiences with her work in films like *Ek Deewana Tha*, *Roop*, *Dil To Happy Hai Ji* and more, talks to *The Pioneer's* K RAMYA SREE about her upcoming film *Dare to Sleep*.

Donal Bisht, who is already a popular name in the Hindi television world, will soon be seen making her debut in Tollywood alongside Sunil with the film *Dare to Sleep* (DTS).

The actress is known for her work in *Ek Deewana Tha*, *Roop*, *Dil To Happy Hai Ji* and more. Talking about DTS and her role, Donal shares, "The film is a suspense thriller story and I play the role of Mona, who is always up for something different and creative. Many stories came my way but I chose this because the character I play is not in the film just to be glam doll, she moves the story forward. I have been waiting for such a story for a while now. When I signed DTS, I was very thrilled about the action part of the film. It has all the grandeur an action film should have."

The actress who also made her web debut recently, feels that the Telugu film industry makes best use of their day without wasting time when at work. Sharing her experience working in Tollywood, she tells us, "This is my first south film and I loved the experience working for Tollywood, mainly because of the pro-

fessionalism people have. Not just during the shoot, even during our workshops, people here have been extremely friendly and professional."

For Donal, actor Prabhas is her ultimate crush with whom she can't wait to work. "I love Prabhas. I've watched *Baahubali* and fell in love with him. He has a different kind of charm and charisma on his face. I really want to work with him," shares she.

The actress has been subject to trolls over her name. Many even advised her to change her name when she joined the industry, but the actress is super proud of what it is. Donal explains, "I am very proud of what I am, especially my name. Some said, I deliberately named myself Donal. My mother gave me this name when I was born. The meaning of this name is even more beautiful. It is a Scottish word meaning 'master of universe'. There were people who came to me and sought my permission to name their daughters Donal. My name is very special to me."

Like many others, even Donal's plans were dampened due to Covid.

The actress who couldn't wait to get onto sets says, "Two hours before my flight, I got a call saying lockdown has been announced in Telangana and the shoot is not happening. I am eagerly waiting to get back to sets. Our third schedule is abroad. Hoping for things to settle down, so we can resume to our normal lives." Meanwhile, Donal says the lockdown has helped her as an actor as she could work on her craft by watching a lot of films and series.



VD first south star to feature on Dabboo Ratnani's calendar

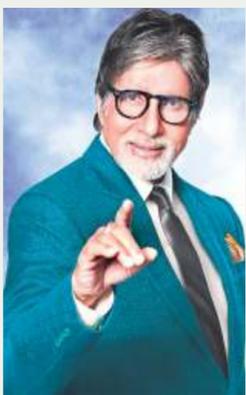
Rowdy Star Vijay Devarakonda is scaling new heights with each passing day. Looks like even the sky is not the limit for him. Vijay Devarakonda, according to the latest news, became the first South Indian actor to feature on the most popular and renowned Dabboo Ratnani's Calendar.

Vijay Devarakonda sharing the picture posted "Your Best Boy!#DabbooRatnaniCalendar2021". Vijay Devarakonda looked stylish and royal in a

white vest with dusted marks and a Triumph Bike. Vijay, sharing his experience, revealed that it was fun shooting for Dabboo's calendar. He hoped that everyone would like it.

Vijay Devarakonda recently became India's second most desirable man after the late Sushant Singh Rajput. He retained the most desirable man south title for the third consecutive time, setting a record. Devarakonda is set to make his Bollywood debut with *Liger* romancing Ananya Pandey under the direction of Puri Jagannath.

Amitabh Bachchan releases *Son of India's* first song



Mohan Babu renowned as Collection King is starring in the lead role after a long time in his upcoming entertainer *Son of India* under the direction of Diamond Ratnababu. On Tuesday, the makers kickstarted the film's musical promotions in a grand manner. Bollywood super star Amitabh Bachchan released the film's first song *Jaya Jaya Mahavera*. Releasing the song, Amitabh congratulated the team, posting, "Two greats of Indian Cinema .. Veteran Telugu Actor M Mohan Babu & maestro Sri Ilayaraja come together to pay homage in an ode to the valour of Lord Ram in a song 'Raghuveera Gadhyaam' .. the film 'SON of INDIA' My best wishes." Mohan Babu thanked Amitabh Bachchan saying "Shri. @SrBachchan ji, You are

the most distinguished actor not only in India, but entire world. There is no role that you haven't acted, I have learnt a lot of things from you. I thank you immensely for releasing the Song *Raghuveera Gadhyaam* from #SonofIndia and for the best wishes." Rahul Nambiar sang the song in which Mohan Babu himself penned the story and the screenplay for the film which stars Srikanth, Tanikella Bharani and Ali in an important roles and is bankrolled by Manchu Vishnu on 24 Frames Factory Banner.

Urvashi Rautela prepping hard for her next

Uppcoming Tollywood actress Urvashi Rautela took to social media to encourage her fans to workout and improve their fitness.

The actress shared a video on Instagram where she can be seen performing a type of ab workout using a punching bag. In the video, Urvashi bends her upper body

downward grasping the punching bag with her legs, while her trainer supports her holding her feet.

"I GOTTA WORK HARDER Beyond the usual 180 DEGREES ab workout has some major body benefits. Banging upside down from a punching bag (upper body strength). When you perform a crunch from an over-extended position you may be able to tap into

your innermost abdominal muscles," Urvashi wrote alongside her video.

Just a few days ago, the actress had shared a video of getting punched repeatedly in the gut by her trainer.

On the work front, the actress is all set to feature in the upcoming web series starring Randheep Hooda!



PRIYAMANI AND I ARE DISTANT COUSINS: VIDYA BALAN

The latest season of the Amazon Prime show *The Family Man* has received rave reviews from fans. Actress Priyamani, who plays Suchi in the show, has been trending for the past few days.

However, another reason she recently made headlines was after it was revealed that she is actress Vidya Balan's cousin.

In a recent interview, Vidya was asked about her equation with Priyamani and she said, "Yes, but can you believe we've met only once in our lives! We are distant cousins. We met on a film award stage once because our families are



not that close." She added, "I'm given to believe that she's a wonderful actor, and she's doing really well for herself. More power to her." When asked if she has watched the acclaimed show yet, Vidya said, "No, I haven't watched it yet. But I'm waiting to."

On the work front, Vidya will be next seen in the Amazon Prime film *Sherani!*

No spot for Shardul, Mayank & Sundar in WTC

PTI ■ SOUTHAMPTON

Veteran speedster Umesh Yadav pipped Brisbane Test hero Shardul Thakur as the 15th member of the Indian squad that will take on New Zealand in the World Test Championship final starting here on June 18.

Umesh, along with Mohammed Shami, and Hanuma Vihari all of whom got injured during the Australia tour, were back in the 15 that needed to be announced as per ICC squad protocol.

Apart from Shardul, the notable names to miss out were Mayank Agarwal, and Washington Sundar, who were in the playing XI for the Test match against Australia.

England series hero Axar Patel also missed out.

The other big player to have missed out in the final squad is senior batsman KL Rahul, who was in fact Virat Kohli's opposition captain in the team's intra-squad practice game.

Rahul seemed in good touch during the game but a look at the squad will indicate that all those who were first choice during the start of the Australia tour are back in the mix. The Indian team management's policy since Kohli took over has been to honour the first choice players in the squad

Ball will swing even without saliva: Ishant



PTI ■ SOUTHAMPTON

Senior India speedster Ishant Sharma believes that the ball will swing even without saliva during the World Test Championship final against New Zealand here and somebody from the team will need to maintain it through the match starting June 18.

The 32-year-old, a veteran of 101 Tests, is expected to lead the Indian bowling attack when the team takes on New Zealand in the marquee clash. "I think the ball will swing even without saliva and somebody needs to take responsibility to maintain the ball," Sharma said on Star Sports show 'Cricket Connected'.

"And if the ball is maintained well in these

conditions, then it becomes easier for the bowlers to take wickets in these conditions," he added but did not get into specifics.

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic last year, the International Cricket Council (ICC) has prohibited bowlers from applying saliva to the ball.

According to Sharma, who has 303 Test wickets to his name, adjusting to lengths is important in England.

"You need to train differently and adapt to the change. In India, you get the reverse swing after some time, but in England, the length is fuller because of the swing.

"So, you have to adjust to the lengths. It is not easy to force that and the weather here is cooler so it takes time to acclimatize to the weather," said Sharma.

"And the quarantine makes it difficult...The way you train in the gym and the training on the ground is very different, so you have to adjust to that and it takes time," he added.

Meanwhile, young India opener Shubman Gill said that to survive in England, the batters need to leave the loose balls.

"When I toured England with India A and the Under-19 team, everyone asked me to play a certain number of balls if I wanted to score runs. "But I feel, your intent to score runs should never go on the back seat and you should look to survive," said the 21-year-old, who has played seven Tests so far.

"When you are looking to score runs, the bowlers get to the back foot and you can put some pressure on the bowler. I think, at times to survive in England you have to leave the loose balls," he added.

and even if the reserves do well, it is understood that they get a chance only when a senior player gets injured.

Hence Umesh got preferred over Shardul, who had a half-century and seven wickets in the series winning Brisbane Test against Australia. Ravichandran Ashwin is the lone off-spinner and Ravindra Jadeja's return means that there was no place for Axar Patel.

Rahul and Mayank Agarwal are also currently not in the mix and would be considered only once the team management has given enough chances to both Rohit Sharma and Shubman Gill. In case of Wriddhiman Saha, the ICC rule of being able to replace a wicketkeeper with a substitute keeper was reason for a look-in.

INDIA SQUAD:

Virat Kohli (captain) Shubman Gill, Rohit Sharma, Cheteshwar Pujara Ajinkya Rahane, Rishabh Pant (wk), Ravichandran Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Md Shami Jasprit Bumrah, Ishant Sharma, Mohammed Siraj, Wriddhiman Saha (wk), Umesh Yadav,

'Williamson available to lead NZ in WTC'

PTI ■ SOUTHAMPTON

Kane Williamson will be available to lead New Zealand against India in the World Test Championship final, head coach Gary Stead announced on Tuesday as he unveiled a 15-man Hanuma Vihari squad for the marquee clash starting June 18.

Wicket-keeper BJ Watling, who too had missed the second Test due to a back injury, has also been named in the squad.

"Kane and BJ have certainly benefitted from their week of rest and rehabilitation and we expect them to be fit and available for the final," Stead said at a press conference after the team's arrival here for the WTC final starting June 18.

"Playing in a World Cup Final is a really special occasion and I know the guys are looking forward to getting into their work here in Southampton," he added.

Stead said their victory over England notwithstanding, it is going to be a tough challenge facing India.

"India are a world class outfit who possess match winners all through their line-up, so we're under no illusion about how tough they will be to beat," he said.

New Zealand will go into the clash with one specialist spinner in 32-year-old left-arm spinner Ajaz Patel and all-rounder Colin



de Grandhomme.

Will Young is their specialist batting cover, while Tom Blundell is the back-up wicket-keeper.

"We've gone with Ajaz as our specialist spinner after an impressive outing at Edgbaston and we believe he could be a factor at the Ageas Bowl," Stead said.

"Colin's been an integral member of our Test set-up for many years and it was great to see him return at Lord's after a long injury lay-off.

"He's a proven performer at the top level and we back him to do a job with the bat or the ball if called upon."

"With our squad being reduced, Heinrich and our second physio Vijay Vallabh will return home to New Zealand on June 16, along with Jacob, Rachin and Mitchell. We wish them well and thank them for their efforts," said Stead.

New Zealand Squad:

Kane Williamson (C), Tom Blundell, Trent Boult, Devon Conway, Colin de Grandhomme, Matt Henry, Kyle Jamieson, Tom Latham, Henry Nicholls, Ajaz Patel, Tim Southee, Ross Taylor, Neil Wagner BJ Watling and Will Young.

Seven year wait ends

Indian women return to Test cricket with clash against England

PTI ■ BRISTOL

A favourable record in England and "positive mindset" despite inadequate preparation time will spur the Indian women's cricket team when it takes on the seasoned hosts in its first Test engagement in nearly seven years here from Wednesday.

After multiple quarantines in India and UK, the Mithali Raj-led squad got little over a week to prepare for its first red ball game since November 2014.

Mithali was among the seven current players, who were a part of that victorious eleven against South Africa in Mysuru.

While experienced players like the skipper, her deputy Harmanpreet Kaur, Smriti Mandhana and Jhulan Goswami have not played red ball cricket at all in recent times, it will be an even tougher test for the younger lot who don't get to play first-class matches in domestic cricket.

There is a good chance that



17-year-old batting sensation Shafali Verma opens in the game alongside Mandhana.

England vs India
Live from 3:30 pm IST
STAR SPORTS 2 NETWORK

She goes into the game with no baggage and could well make a big impact at the top of the order.

The experienced trio of Mithali, Harmanpreet and Punam Raut will be expected to do the job in what will be challenging conditions for them also.

There could be some respite in store for the batters with England choosing Kookaburra over Dukes ball, which does more, for the game as the home team builds up to the Ashes Test against Australia later in the year.

It also remains to be seen if veteran pacers Jhulan Goswami and Shikha Pandey would be able to bowl long spells, having not done so for a long time.

The spinners, who had a forgettable time at home in the limited overs series against SA, would be itching to make amends.

'Took advice of other cricketers to prepare for Test against England'

PTI ■ BRISTOL

India women's team captain Mithali Raj on Tuesday said she took advice of other cricketers to better prepare for the longest format ahead of the one-off Test against England starting here on Wednesday.

"I have played lesser Tests than ODI and T20, I would have liked more Test matches. I wouldn't really get down to thinking whether my game is evolved in this format, but the preparation has been very similar," Raj said at the match eve virtual press conference.

"And probably talking to many other cricketers, trying to get how they prepare for the longer format has helped

The visitors can surely take heart from their past record in England where they have not lost in eight games, having won two out of them.

England's star all-rounder and newly-appointed vice captain Nat Sciver is among the six squad members who played in

me to prepare for this Test match," said Mithali, without taking names of the cricketers, whom she had spoken to.

Raj said she would not want rookie players to be burdened with expectations and would advise them to enjoy the game.

"Well, we did brief them (players) about how the long format is played and clearly for someone who is making a debut, you don't want to burden them with expectations and responsibility.

"So, it is just that I would brief together as a team, support them on the field and they should just enjoy playing this format," the skipper added.

their last Test match against India back in August 2014.

The tourists had won that game in Wormsley by six wickets.

England remain the favourites to win the upcoming contest but Sciver expects India to play fearlessly.

India hold vital point

PTI ■ DOHA

India scored from an own goal by Afghanistan goalie as they ended their World Cup Qualifiers campaign with a 1-1 draw to book a berth in the next qualifying round of the Asian Cup here on Tuesday.

A howler by Afghanistan goalie Ovays Azizi handed India a 1-0 lead in the 75th minute but Hossein Zamani equalised in the 81st minute in a match marred by poor refereeing.

The two sides had also played out a 1-1 draw in the first leg match in Dushanbe in 2019.

It was an open and fast-paced game with the Afghans playing a more physical game in a match strewn with fouls and referee Ali Reda failing to discipline the players.

Both sides were almost equal in ball possession and India had 10 shots on target as against seven from Afghanistan. But the Afghans committed 16 fouls as against nine by the Indians. Three Afghan players were shown yellow cards as against one of India.

With seven points from



eight matches, India finished third in Group E behind toppers Qatar and Oman, and ahead of Afghanistan.

India under Igor Stimac ended the World Cup qualifying campaign with one win, four draws and three losses. Besides the win against Bangladesh in their previous match, the first leg 0-0 draw against Asian champions Qatar here in 2019 was the highlight of the campaign.

India dominated the early period with captain Sunil Chhetri having a go at the opposition goal in the 10th minute off a pass from Glan Martins but his left-footed shot from a difficult angle was col-

lected by the Afghan goalie.

The Afghans grew in confidence and were the better side in the later part of the first half and they had a few shots on target but none gave any difficulties to Indian custodian Gurpreet Singh.

Five minutes before the breather, Ashique Kuruniyan was on the clear on the top left edge of the box but his low cross failed to reach Chhetri with an Afghan defender clearing it.

Chhetri, who had scored twice against Bangladesh, could not repeat that performance and he was substituted in the 69th minute. Midfielder livewire Brandon Fernandes was also replaced in the 62nd minute.

The Afghans looked better early in the second session but India took the lead in the 75th minute.

Kuruniyan sent a high cross from the left which Suresh Wangim tried to reach for. Afghan goalie Azizi rose for what should have been an easy collection but the ball dropped down his hands and slipped in between his legs into the empty goal.

Sweden hold Spain to a goalless draw



AP ■ SEVILLE

The chances came and went but neither Spain nor Sweden managed to put any of them in the net.

Spain dominated possession and kept the pressure on the opposing area for most of the match but the Swedes held on for a 0-0 draw Monday at the European Championships.

Sweden managed only a few chances at La Cartuja Stadium, but they were some of the most dangerous ones.

Alexander Isak, who plays for Spanish club Real Sociedad, had a shot from inside the area hit the post after deflecting off Spain defender Marcos Llorente in front of the goal line.

Early in the second half,

Moreno, and he had already stopped another close-range header by Dani Olmo in the first half.

"The way we earned that point today, the entire team, the way the guys ran in the heat, it wasn't just me who earned this point," Olsen said.

"It was an incredible team effort. We didn't play our best game. It's not the most well-deserved point we've ever taken. But we battled. We showed that we wanted it." Spain ended with 75% of possession and had 17 total attempts, with five on target. Sweden missed the target on its four attempts.

"We played against a rival that decided to defend and tried to create some danger with long balls, and it actually had the chance the win the match," Spain coach Luis Enrique said.

"It's a disappointing draw for us." Spain had failed to score in only one of its last 14 group matches at European Championships.

Sweden hadn't drawn any of its last 17 international matches, since a tie against Spain in qualifying for Euro 2020.

"If you come here and play Spain in 32 degree heat (90 degree F) and think you're going to out-play them, you're totally naive," Sweden coach Janne Andersson said. "I'm not at all ashamed of this point. If we want to take points from these types of teams, we have

to play this way."

In the other group match, Slovakia defeated Poland 2-1 in St. Petersburg.

Spain's matches at Euro 2020 are being played in Seville instead of Bilbao - the original host city for the continent-wide tournament - because of the high contagion rate of the virus in the northern city wouldn't allow for many fans to attend games.

Sweden, which hasn't advanced past the group stage at the European Championship since 2004, next faces Slovakia on Friday in St. Petersburg. The Swedes will also play in Russia

against Poland.

Both teams were without players because of the coronavirus. Spain lost captain Sergio Busquets and Sweden was without Mattias Svanberg and Dejan Kulusevski. They were all still in isolation after testing positive for COVID-19 last week.

The entire Spanish team was vaccinated just days before its opening match.

Luis Enrique started with Rodri Hernandez in Busquets' position, with youngster Pedri and Koke Resurrección alongside him in the midfield. The 18-year-old Pedri became Spain's youngest ever player at the tournament.



Christian Eriksen sent his first public message from the hospital on Tuesday, thanking supporters for their "sweet and amazing" well-wishes after his collapse at the European Championship.

Messi's Argentina draws with Chile



AP ■ RIO DE JANEIRO

Lionel Messi scored a stunning free kick, repeatedly dribbled through the Chilean defense and created opportunities regularly for his Argentina teammates.

Despite Messi's intense performance, Argentina was held 1-1 by Chile in its Copa America opener. The game at the Nilton Santos stadium in Rio de Janeiro was also marked by a tribute to Argentine football great Diego Maradona, who died in November at age 60. Messi, who turns 34 this month,

might have one of his final chances of winning a title with Argentina at the Copa America.

Argentina appeared to be ready to start giving Messi what he craves. Coach Lionel Scaloni's lineup wasted three clear opportunities between the 16th and 18th minutes, one from Lautaro Martinez and two for Nicolás González.

And then Messi opened the scoring in the 33rd after a free kick that Chilean goalkeeper Claudio Bravo couldn't stop despite getting a touch on the ball to his left. Argentina continued to pressure Chile, which was missing injured striker Alexis Sanchez.

But Chile transformed into a more attacking team in the second half and earned a penalty after video review. Arturo Vidal's shot from the spot was stopped, but Eduardo Vargas nodded into the empty goal to level the scoring in the 57th.

Messi continued to create opportunities until the end of the match, but his teammates showed the same difficulty to deliver goals as they did in the 2-2 draw at Colombia in a World Cup qualifier in Barranquilla last week.

The superstar also complained about the apparently irregular pitch at the stadium.

Chile's Vidal said getting a draw despite Messi's performance was a good result for his team, which is in transition with new coach Martin Lasarte.