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Womenia

Gourds and monsoon sets a delightful combination



Naini Setalvad

The smell of wet earth and piping hot rasam is a monsoon delight I yearn for. Eating all the delicious veggies is another treat I look forward to. You are probably wondering – veggies in the monsoon? Yes! You will be surprised that in the absence of leafy greens how the Gourd family shines and provides you with all the much needed immune boosting nutrients. From Bottle gourd to pumpkin, the gourd family has a variety of members, all differing in flavour but packed with nutrients. Let me introduce you to them all. We have the popular Bottle Gourd (Lauki), the frequently used Ridge Gourd (Tur), the monsoon special Ash Gourd (White Pumpkin),



the Bristly- spiny Gourd (Kantola), a southern favourite Pointed Gourd (Parwal), Ivy Gourd (Tendli), the sambhar staple Orange Pumpkin and last but not the least, an acquired taste; Bitter Gourd (Karela). There is no space for repetition when there are so many options to choose from. Besides variation, eating gourds during the monsoon have the following benefits. Weight watchers delight

If you are striving to lose weight, then gourds are your best friends! I always recommend it to my clients as gourds are majorly made up with water and are negligible calories. Packed with fibre, these can keep you satiated for long. So gorge on gourds without packing on the pounds. Digestive Doctor I can vouch for the fact that gourds are easily digestible. Gourds are known alkalising food that neutralize acid in the body, preventing

acid-reflux and ulcers. Due to their high fibre content, they add bulk to the food. This results in a smooth bowel movement. Did you know? Bottle gourd is even touted as a natural laxative. Nutrient treasure trove

Gourds are packed with vitamins and minerals. High on anti-oxidants vitamin A and C they reduce free radical damage in the body's cells, making them anti-inflammatory in nature. It is due to this property that they are used as liver and kidney detoxifiers. Though they are rich in zinc, magnesium and copper, they have a very small amount of sodium. This makes them ideal to consume for those suffering from hypertension. How to prepare gourds

It must be abundantly clear by now, that I love gourds. With all their wonderful benefits, gourds can be cooked and devoured in various ways. Stir-fry them in good quality fat and add on Indian spices or make them poriyal style. Elevate your sambhars and stews by generously adding gourds. You can even prepare a bake, stuff them or make a soup. The skies may be dull but your palate doesn't have to be. Add on gourds to your diet and gift yourself a rainbow of health.

'Miss Diva 2021' includes transwomen in the contest

The Miss Diva beauty pageant is all set to make history as it calls on transwomen to participate in the contest this year. The ninth edition of Liva Miss Diva will be held in a virtual format for which auditions have already started.

The selection process of these finalists entails an online registration process inviting specific audition task submissions on India's leading short video platform "MX TakaTak".

Thereafter, the shortlisted 20 finalists will undergo rigorous training and grooming in Mumbai to compete for the coveted crown at the Grand Finale in the month of October 2021. And this time, the height criteria has been eased to 5.4" for all the women.

The winner of LIVA Miss Diva 2021 will represent India at the Miss Universe 2021 and LIVA Miss Diva Supranational 2021 will represent the country at the Miss Supranational 2021.

India has won the prestigious title of Miss Universe more than once, with the recent win of Adeline Castellino who won the coveted title of LIVA Miss Diva 2020 that added India back on the global map of Miss Universe 2020 as the 3rd Runner Up.

The Grand Finale will air on MTV, one of India's popular Youth Channels.

Miss Universe 2020, 3rd Runner up Adeline Castellino, also shared her emotions about the pageant that proved life-changing



for her, "My crowning moment was extremely emotional, and I feel overwhelmed to think of passing it on to the next Miss Diva Universe. However, I'm also excited about witnessing the entire course of choosing the face of the country, this time from a different outlook and I wish all the luck to the girls aspiring to be LIVA Miss Diva 2021. I'd only like them to know that it's going to be a worthwhile phase regardless of victory or defeat."

Rajnikant Sabnavis, Chief Marketing Officer, Pulp & Fibre business, Aditya Birla Group, "We are very excited to join hands with Miss Diva for the second consecutive year. Liva encourages women to be uninhibited and unrestrained, so does

our fabric. Miss Diva, like LIVA, is a platform that allows women of today to live their dreams, unrestrained and we are happy to partner them."

Speaking about this association, Janhavi Parikh, Business Head, MX TakaTak, said, "We are delighted to associate with Miss Diva and drive synergies that leverage the power of digital media. MX TakaTak's wide and diverse user base will help unearth talent from different corners of the country. Sharing the vision of creating an inclusive environment, we strongly believe that alongside accessing budding talent, short videos can add a new dimension to beauty pageants that focus on various facets of the participant's life."

Amla & curry leaves adds benefit to your hair

Give your hair the love of trusted and traditional superfoods like amla and curry leaves known to infuse vitality into your crown. These powerful ingredients allow you to care for your hair without the stress. Amla helps in reducing hair fall by enhancing blood circulation in the scalp and strengthening hair fibre, follicles, and shaft, whereas curry leaves reduce hair thinning and accelerate hair growth. These two superfoods powerfully nourish and repair, while improving the overall hair quality.

Nykaa Natural's latest launch, Nykaa Amla & Curry Leaves Hair Care Range is a super charged duo of Amla and Curry Leaves in a shampoo, conditioner, and hair mask format, to especially address hair fall concerns. This is the latest addition, to the brands hair portfolio now offering three ranges to tackle major hair concerns Onion and Fenugreek to promote hair growth and Apple Cider Vinegar and Ginger, as an anti-dandruff solution.

Addressing a solution to one of the most common concerns, hair

fall, it has launched the perfect solution that combines international formulations with the science of 'natural ingredients', curated for all hair types. Be it the stress of working from home or the summer heat, your body takes a hit and so does your hair. A disciplined hair care routine is extremely crucial especially since our hair is exposed to pollution, stress, styling products, or heat on most days. The hair care range helps build a hair routine with the



BEAUTY FUNDA

shampoo to cleanse the scalp and the locks, conditioner to be used along the lengths, and the mask which can be used once a week from root to tips to deeply condition deep your mane.

Reena Chhabra, CEO, Nykaa Brands, "Over the last year, consumers have indulged a lot more in personal and hair care regimes rooted in self-care and wellness. There has been a clear shift towards products that focus on natural ingredients and are safe, gentle, yet effective when used. This encouraged us to add another offering to our existing hair range, Amla and curry leaves targets the most common hair concern of hair fall. We create rigorously researched, nature-friendly formulas that meet international standards and are free of harmful chemicals. The Nykaa Naturals Hair Care range features ingredient-led solutions, to tackle specific hair concerns while ensuring a healthy mane from root to the ends."

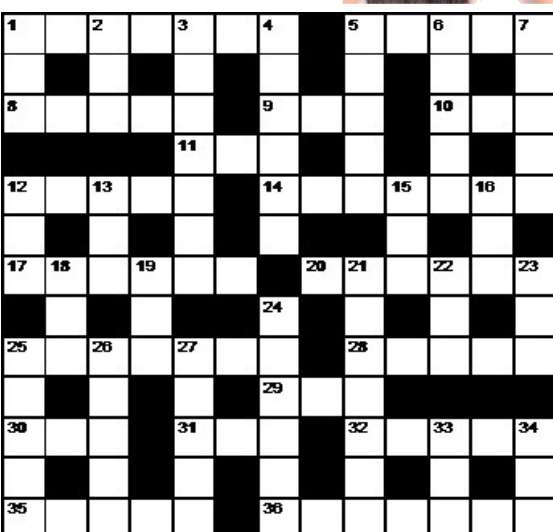
NEWS ROUNDUP

Jasmin Bhasin: If I start worrying about fame I'll lose myself

"Bigg Boss 14" star and actress Jasmin Bhasin says the fame that the show brought her hasn't affected her in real life.

"If I start worrying about fame and burden myself with responsibilities and expectations, I'll lose myself. I've always been straightforward, I don't have filters. So, I don't think I should change because this is how I'm and that's why I'm loved by my fans. I want to stay this way, real and responsible. I would never want to lose myself," says Jasmin. "I'm conscious about what I say 'yes' to. I want to take up work where I'm able to motivate people and live up to their expectations. That's why I'm taking time. I have four or five offers right now. There are other people who have made me what I'm today with their love and support. I don't want to disappoint them," she says. The actress features in singer Gurnazar's music video "Tenu Yaad Karaan", which dropped on Tuesday. "In this music video I'm shown as a simple village girl and have donned a no

make-up look. It's a very beautiful song that will remind you about the first time you fell in love, the first time you felt butterflies in your stomach, the first time you felt something that you never felt before. It is about that first love, which is innocent and naughty. I had a wonderful time working on this one. It brought back so many memories," shares Jasmin. The romantic track has been recorded in the voices of Gurnazar Chattha and Asees Kaur, on Gurnazar's lyrics and composition. The video is about romance blooming between a young boy and a girl at a Punjabi wedding, and features Jasmin with Gurnazar.



SOLUTION TO JUNE 16

CROSSWORD

Across

- 1 Cleaning cloth (7)
- 5 Craggy or mountainous (5)
- 8 Muslim princess (5)
- 9 Energy (3)
- 10 By way of (3)
- 11 Born in France? (3)
- 12 Brightly coloured lizard (5)
- 14 Soup made with beets (7)
- 17 Fly an aircraft (6)
- 20 Elevated land (6)
- 25 Utter suddenly (7)
- 28 Inactive (5)
- 29 Place in a location (3)
- 30 Press for payment (3)
- 31 Arabian garment (3)
- 32 Bevy of wives (5)
- 35 Corrodes (5)
- 36 Corrected or removed errors from a text (7)

Down

- 1 Expert (3)

2 Hang loosely (3)

- 3 Little bit left (7)
- 4 Summerhouse (6)
- 5 More mature (5)
- 6 Municipal (5)
- 7 Bread-making substance (5)
- 12 Rap sheet letters (3)
- 13 Black bird (3)
- 15 Actor Mineo (3)
- 16 Female bird (3)
- 18 Annoy (3)
- 19 Piercing tool (3)
- 21 Archaic term for please (7)
- 22 Monkey (3)
- 23 Commonly used pesticide (3)
- 24 Pierce (6)
- 25 Church official (5)
- 26 Edible ice-cream holders? (5)
- 27 Accumulate (5)
- 33 Laver of tennis (3)
- 34 Being at the middle (3)

SUDOKU

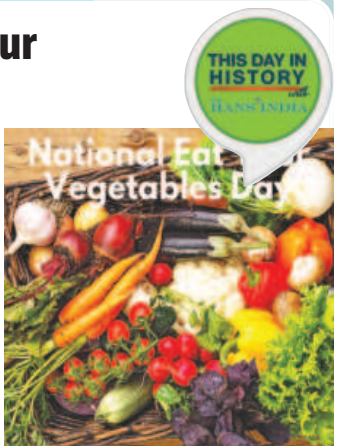


SOLUTION TO JUNE 16

National Eat Your Vegetable Day

The history of Eat Your Vegetables Day starts with an awareness of nutrition and the role it plays in a healthy lifestyle. Vegetables have always played an important role in the lives of humans, all the way back to when we were simply hunter-gatherers. Vegetables were one of the hallmarks of civilization, and are arguably the reason we settled and stopped being nomads, we couldn't travel anymore when we planted our crops, we had to be there to tend them as they grew. As we cemented our ability to produce them they stopped being an opportunistic part of our diet, and instead became a foundation part of our culture and cuisine. As time went on we established that there were benefits to eating them, better health and growth, but it wasn't until much later that science confirmed what we already knew. Vegetables have evolved and developed over time, and this is something that you need to think about moving forward. They have become such a hugely popular part of mealtime experiences that it is vital to embrace every part of Eat Your Vegetables Day as much as you can.

Eventually, it was established that yes, they were a vital source of nutrients that were hard or impossible to get from an animal source. These nutrients can help to prevent heart disease and decrease bone loss, offset diabetes, and even improve the health of your hair and skin. It is so important to be able to make the most of this, and you need to understand how important it is to be able to eat vegetables on a much more frequent basis right now. Do what you can to take things to the next level, and this is something you are going to have to keep focused on where possible.



THIS DAY IN HISTORY

MUKHTAR ANSARI AMBULANCE CASE

Bullet-proof vehicle was used to carry firearms, another accused arrested

BARABANKI

THE bullet-proof ambulance in which don-turned-politician Mukhtar Ansari travelled from jail to Punjab court was also used for carrying firearms, police said on Wednesday, announcing another arrest in the case.

The accused, Anand Yadav, Ansari's aide, was arrested from

Faizabad road on the charges of forgery and cheating for his alleged involvement in the registration of the ambulance, Superintendent of Police Yamuna Prasad said, adding he had a reward of Rs 25,000 on his arrest.

The SP said that firearms were carried in the ambulance but didn't share detail in this regard. Doctor Alka Rai (of Mau's Shyam Sanjeevani Hospital),



who was arrested earlier in connection with the case, told police that that Ansari and his

aides, Mujahid and Rajnath Yadav, forced her to sign some documents for getting the ambulance transferred in the name of the hospital. She had also accused them of preparing her forged voter card to get the ambulance registered with the Road Transportation Office (RTO). Rajnath Yadav was arrested on April 4 from Mau and Shyam Sheshnath Rai on April

19. Anand Yadav has confessed the role of other people in this case, the SP said, adding efforts were on to arrest other accused in the case – Mujahid and Shahid – both carrying a reward of Rs 25,000 each. On Monday, a Barabanki court had remanded mafia don-turned-BSP MLA Mukhtar Ansari to judicial custody in a case of alleged forgery and cheating in the registration

of a bulletproof ambulance used to ferry him between courts and jail in Punjab.

Barabanki Chief Judicial Magistrate Kamalapati remanded Ansari to a 14-day judicial custody after the local police put the Mau MLA under arrest in the ambulance case and produced him in the court through video-conference from Banda Jail.

After having been brought from the Ropar jail in Punjab recently, Ansari was lodged in the Banda jail as an undertrial in a slew of criminal cases. The case against Ansari was registered after it was found that a bullet-proof ambulance with a Barabanki number was used to ferry him from Ropar jail to a Mohali court near Chandigarh in an extortion case.

4 held for abducting, raping 19-year-old girl in Rajasthan

KOTA

FOUR men have been arrested for abducting and raping a 19-year-old girl from their neighbouring village in Rajasthan's Jhalawar district, police said.

The four have been identified as Ishwar Singh Sondhya Rajput (23), Balu Singh (28), Meharban Singh (26) – residents of Peeplya Khurd village and and Govind Singh (26) of Pagarlya, they said.

The incident took place on Friday night and a case was registered in this regard on Saturday morning at Dag police station, they added. In a press note released on Tuesday, Superintendent of Police (SP) Kiran Kang Sidhu said Ishwar Singh abducted the girl on Friday when she was on her way to her village. He took her to a forest in the nearby area and raped her, she alleged, adding he then called his friends, Balu and Meharban, and took her to a deserted field on Ghanti road near Dag village where Meharban Singh sexually assaulted her and left.

Later in the night, Ishwar and Balu took her to Bhawani Mandi area, where their friend Govind joined them, according to the release. The three men raped her one by one overnight, it said, adding the victim managed to escape after a scuffle erupted among them near Harnawda Fanta, where two persons heard her cries and rescued her. The survivor's statements were recorded under Section 164 of the Criminal Code of Conduct (CrPC) and further investigation was underway, the SP said.

'Akhilesh worst performing MP from Uttar Pradesh'

LUCKNOW

UTTAR Pradesh BJP president Swatantra Dev Singh on Tuesday said with 36 per cent attendance and zero questions, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav is the "worst" performing MP from the state. In a tweet in Hindi, the BJP leader asked which MP from Uttar Pradesh had the most disappointing performance in the Lok Sabha. Replying to his question, he said, "With 36 per cent attendance and zero questions, Akhilesh Yadav ji remained the worst performing MP from Uttar Pradesh." Later, in a statement issued from the BJP headquarters, Singh said people who have always indulged in corruption and even opposed the construction of Ram temple, how can they have faith in the government that is building the Ram temple in Ayodhya. Earlier in the day, referring to the news of alleged scam in



purchase of land in Ayodhya, Yadav had demanded a fair investigation and resignation of all the members of the trust. The SP president had claimed that his party will form the next government with an overwhelming majority in the coming Assembly polls. Responding to Yadav's remarks, Singh said, "People who fired bullets at Ram devotees and did not go to Ramnagari Ayodhya due to fear of appeasement are talking about faith and loyalty." The state BJP chief also attacked Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over his remarks on the Ayodhya land deal.

AYODHYA LAND DEAL

Priyanka demands probe under SC supervision

NEW DELHI

CONGRESS leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Wednesday demanded a Supreme Court supervised investigation into allegations of corruption in a land deal of the Ram temple trust.

In a statement posted on her Facebook page, Priyanka Gandhi said any attempt to find an "opportunity in faith" is an assault on the faith of crores of Indians and a "big sin". The Shriram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust, she said, was formed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and has people close to him as trustees.

"It is the responsibility of the prime minister that every penny of the offerings by the devotees in the name of Lord Ram should be used in the collective work related to faith and not in any scam," the Congress general secretary said in her statement in Hindi. Noting that the trust has been formed on the instructions of the Supreme Court, Priyanka Gandhi said she demands on behalf of the people of the country that "the Supreme Court should get the entire scam investigated under its supervision".

Refuting the allegations of corruption and financial miscon-



duct, trust general secretary Champat Rai on Monday had asserted that the organisation is committed to full transparency. "We are applying full transparency in the purchase of land," he said, adding that the money is transferred online into the bank accounts of the sellers.

The trust is in charge of the construction of the Ram temple. Countering him, Priyanka Gandhi said that according to reports there is a "scam" in the pur-

chase of land by the Shriram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust. "On March 18, 2021, two people bought land in Ayodhya for Rs 2 crore. It is worth noting that this land is not for temple construction, but is away from the temple premises," the Congress general secretary in charge of Uttar Pradesh said. This land of Rs 2 crore was bought after just five minutes by the Trust set up by the prime minister for Rs 18.5 crore, Priyanka Gandhi alleged.

BSP MLAs joining SP an illusion: Mayawati

LUCKNOW

A day after reports of some suspended BSP MLAs meeting with SP chief Akhilesh Yadav surfaced, BSP chief Mayawati on Wednesday said it is an illusion.

In a series of tweets, she attacked the Samajwadi Party (SP) accusing it of being an expert in "narrow politics". "The Samajwadi Party, which is an expert in narrow politics of despicable manipulations, malice and casteism, is publicising through the media that some BSP MLAs are breaking away to join the SP. This is an intense illusion," she tweeted in Hindi.

The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief said that those MLAs were suspended from the party long back for colluding with the



SP and an industrialist during the Rajya Sabha elections for defeating a Dalit candidate. She added, "Had the SP been even a bit honest towards these suspended MLAs, it would have not kept them in lurch.

The SP knows that if these

MLAs join their party, then there will be a rebellion and disunity in SP, whose leaders are eager to cross over to the BSP." "The SP has always been anti-Dalit and they do not want to improve. This is why the SP government had stopped the welfare works undertaken by the BSP. Bhadohi was not made a new district as Sant Ravidas Nagar, which is extremely condemnable," Mayawati said in another tweet.

She alleged that the "drama" of publicising the meeting of suspended BSP MLAs with Yadav is a new "stunt" by the SP ahead of the upcoming zila panchayat elections. "BSP has emerged as a party to fulfil the aspirations of the people in Uttar Pradesh and it will continue to do so," she tweeted.

Raje stops attending BJP meets as rift with party widens

NEW DELHI

THE rift between former Rajasthan chief minister Vasundhara Raje and the BJP leadership seems to be widening with each passing day. Raje has stopped attending most of the meetings and has also not been participating in the activities organised by the state unit of the party.

"Hundreds of virtual meetings" have been organised over a period of time, but



Raje did not attend most of them, a senior BJP leader in the state said. The recent episode of Raje, also a BJP vice-president, being sidelined in the new posters that have been put up at the state headquarters in Jaipur has only brought to the fore the fault lines in the state unit, according to ThePrint

At the same time, many in the state unit claim Raje is trying to run a 'parallel system' with the focus only on her and not the party.

On 9 June, the state BJP launched a hashtag campaign aimed at the Ashok Gehlot government. While the entire state unit participated, Raje did not post a single tweet.

The new BJP hoardings have pictures of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, national party president J.P. Nadda, leader of the opposition Gulab Chand Kataria and state president Satish Poonia. Raje has not found a place.

Earlier, the main hoarding featured the former CM and deputy leader of the opposition Rajendra Rathore, apart

from Poonia and Kataria, besides the PM, Nadda and Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

In January, Raje supporters had formed an outfit called 'Vasundhara Raje Samarthan Manch Rajasthan'.

What raised eyebrows in the political circles was the fact that at a time when the BJP was concluding its 'Sewa hee Sangathan' programme, launched to help the needy during the Covid-19 pandemic, Raje was running parallel welfare programmes on her own.

Vasundhara Raje, who is considered close to veteran leader L.K. Advani, has had an uneasy relationship with the BJP high command ever since Narendra Modi and Amit Shah took centre-stage at the national level in 2014.

Live-in partner arrested under anti-conversion law, rape charge

NOIDA

THE police in Uttar Pradesh's Greater Noida on Wednesday arrested a 30-year-old woman's live-in partner over allegations of rape and coercing her into changing her religion for marriage, officials said.

The accused, who has been arrested by the officials of the Bisrakh police station, has been booked under the Prohibition of Unlawful Religious Conversion Ordinance, 2020, among others, they said.

"Accused Murtaza alias Mritunjay (33) is a native of Moradabad district in western UP and had been living in a rented accommodation in Bis-

rakh area. The accused and the complainant were in a live-in relationship," a police spokesperson said. "When the woman insisted him for marriage, the man forced her for religious conversion after which she approached the police with allegations of rape and forced conversion attempt," the spokesperson said.

The FIR, lodged at the Bisrakh police station, also invokes provisions under Indian Penal Code sections 323 (causing hurt), 504 (intentional insult to provoke breach of peace), 506 (criminal intimidation), 376 (rape), 406 (criminal breach of trust), the police said.

Tourists delighted after Taj Mahal reopens after two months

AGRA

A 40-year-old woman from Brazil was one of the early tourists to step inside the Taj Mahal premises as the monument reopened on Wednesday after being closed for around two months due to the Covid pandemic.

Melissa Dalla Rosa shared with PTI that it was a "special moment for her to see the Taj Mahal during sunrise and being totally alone at the wonderful place".

The Archaeological Survey of India had announced the reopening of all centrally protected monuments, sites and museums from Wednesday. However, the Agra administration capped the number of visitors at the Taj Mahal to 650 people at a time.

Melissa, who was on a nine-week Yoga tour in India when the lockdown was announced, said, "I came to Agra yesterday from Lucknow only to explore the city as I knew monuments were closed due to the pandemic. But I got information from locals that Taj Mahal will be reopened from



Wednesday so I rushed to book my entry ticket."

"I managed to book a ticket by afternoon and today, I came here very early and was the first tourist who stepped inside the premises," said Melissa. "The experience was magical. Thank you In-

dia for this opportunity," she said. Another tourist, an Indian couple from Lucknow, shared that it was a pleasant experience as there were few tourists. "I've visited the Taj Mahal many times but today's visit was memorable. I booked tickets online and was able to see

the most beautiful white marble mausoleum in the world," said Amir.

"It was a 'waah Taj' moment as it looked so beautiful, birds were chirping, the sun was rising and the premises was clean," he added. Magma Tomar, who travelled from Ghaziabad along with her family members, said they had been waiting for a long time to visit the monument.

"Me and my other family members clicked photos from the central tank and captured every moment on our mobile phone," she shared. Tourists at the Taj Mahal were asked to follow Covid protocols and were thermal screened and sanitised before entering the premises. Masks were mandatory for everyone and a staff member was available to assist tourists book tickets. On the first day of its reopening, everyone seemed enthusiastic. Nearby shopkeepers were busy arranging items and cleaning their shops while tourist figures were also spotted at the Shilpgram parking with a smile on their face.

Sanskriti University holds webinar on black fungus

Sanskriti University's School of Medical & Allied Science conducted a webinar on Maxillofacial Prospective of Mucormycosis (Black Fungus) awareness amongst students and faculty members of Sanskriti University. Black fungus is beginning to grow into an epidemic amid the already persistent Covid-19 pandemic. The resource person for the webinar was Dr. Mohit Aggarwal, BDS (King George University), Lucknow.

The infection emerged during the second wave of Corona and its symptoms and ways to prevent were discussed. Dr Mohit started the session with popular manifestations of Covid -19 which included bone necrosis, maxillary bone involvement and mucormycosis. During the session, he acquainted the students with the theories of developing mucor, its symptoms, types, diagnosis and also preventive measures of the disease.

Dr Mohit said that is the need of the hour to understand the



type of mucormycosis because it is not a common disease. It is one of the rare diseases. Rhinocerebral (sinus and brain) mucormycosis has seen highest occurrence in people with uncontrolled diabetes and in people who have had a kidney transplant.

Pulmonary (lung) mucormycosis, gastrointestinal mucormycosis, cutaneous (skin) mucormycosis occurs after the fungi enter the body through a break in the skin (like after sur-

gery, a burn, or other type of skin trauma). Disseminated mucormycosis occurs when the infection spreads through the bloodstream to affect another part of the body.

He recommended everyone to use fresh masks, big screens, eat right, adopt correct sitting posture and urged to maintain good oral hygiene and last but not the least to "Live stress free". He also clarified the student's doubts regarding 'Ocular Health'.

Improving the lot of fisherfolk

WITH monsoon setting in, the 61-day ban on fishing activities has come to an end and the fishermen are ready to go into the sea. Normally they wait for this day with high hopes of a great catch. But this year, their spirits seem to have been dampened by the surge in fuel price, ice and essential supplies which has poured cold water on the plans of fishermen as most of them defer fishing until the situation improves.

In all there are over 2,000 mechanised boats in Andhra Pradesh and of them about 700 boats operate from Visakhapatnam fishing harbour, about 600 from Kakinada and others operate from Machilipatnam, Nizampatnam, Krishnapatnam and Vodarevu fishing harbours.

Normally, each mechanised boat catches 400-500 kg of shrimp and two to three tonnes of fish in a 15-day voyage. But since the last two fishing seasons, there has been a decline in the shrimp catch. Fishermen claim that the catch had come down by more than 50 percent

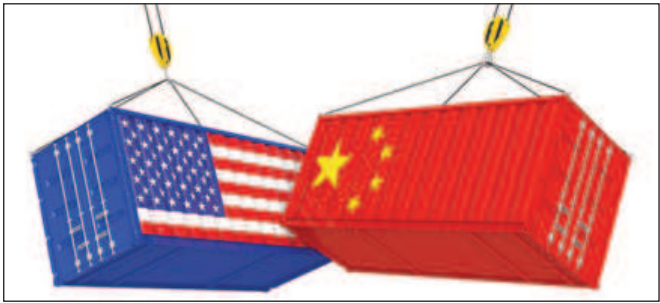
and this had led to severe losses to the boat operators. The operational cost of boats has also shot up from Rs four lakhs to about Rs 10 lakhs per trip. This has forced the operators to cut down on the number of boats to be operated this season.

Normally depending on the count of the shrimp, the fishermen get about Rs 350 per kg on an average. But for the past two years it has been observed that the catch has come down while the operational expenses have been increasing. Another major problem is that of marketing. The fishermen feel that the government should focus attention on measures to reduce their operational costs and improve marketing possibilities.

They rue that all successive governments focus more on giving some cash doles under fancy names and fail to focus attention on long term measures that need to improve their prospects. Another major problem is lack of retail outlets. Chennai and Bengaluru have large number of outlets. Andhra Pradesh should study

the marketing and other systems that are in place in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and other states and ensure that the fishing once again becomes a promising profession.

Its time, the governments stop looking at fishermen as vote banks and dole out some sops and come up with viable strategies to improve their fishing techniques and create better marketing opportunities. If that is done even without sops, fishermen can be a potential vote bank for any ruling party. Its time, a change takes place in the mindset of the political executive and the bureaucracy too advises the government appropriately on those lines.



Is the world headed for Cold War 2?

VISHNU MAKHIJANI

IS the world headed for Cold War 2 more than three decades after the collapse of the Soviet Union? The contours were first visible just before the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic in a bitter trade war that erupted between the US and China and seemed to have taken a backseat as the world struggles to control the spread of the virus. However, US President Joe Biden's remarks backing NATO and QUAD to control China has again stoked the fires of what could happen in the 'new normal'.

Five years after he wrote "Pisoners of Geography" that showed how every nation's choices are limited by mountains, rivers, seas and concrete, Tim Marshall is a leading authority on foreign affairs with more than 30 years of reporting experience, in its sequel, "The Power of Geography" (Simon & Schuster), says that since then, the geography hasn't changed, but the world has. "It is apparent that we have entered deep into a 'multi-polar' era. This means the world's second-tier powers have more room to act independently of the major powers, especially as there is no 'world policemen' as there was during the Cold War. I believe we will eventually head back into a form of Cold War, this time between China and the USA," Marshall told IANS in an interview.

"It won't be the same as the previous one, but there will be similar pressures to choose sides. (India successfully resisted such pressures in the Soviet/USA era, but this time the geography of the new competition means India will probably not be as 'non-aligned' in the future.)

It is apparent that we have entered deep into a 'multi-polar' era. This means the world's second-tier powers have more room to act independently of the major powers, especially as there is no 'world policemen' as there was during the Cold War. I believe we will eventually head back into a form of Cold War, this time between China and the USA

So, I wanted to look at the geography of some second-tier countries/regions and how that influences not only their current behaviour in this multi-polar world, but also what role they might play in a future Cold War. It's clear, for example, that the UK and Australia have made their choice and will stick with the Americans," Marshall added.

Some of it was looking back at his own experiences in the regions (other than the chapter on Space of course). "The basis though is starting with the geography of the subject -- which way do its rivers flow, where are the borders, what are its ports like, what are the demographics, etc. Then a study of history and current affairs, supplemented with interviews with experts in the region," he explained, detailing the 10 regions -- Australia, The Sahel, Greece, Turkey, the UK, Iran, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia, Spain and Space -- that are likely to shape global politics and power.

"All countries and regions in some way influence current affairs, but not all could be covered in the space of one book. Australia is interesting not just because of its size, but because it's a clear example of how geography constrains a country's ability to increase the size of its population, given that so much of it is uninhabitable. It is also the best example of a country making its choice ahead of the coming Cold War competition. "Iran and Saudi Arabia are both being impacted by the slow withdrawal of the USA from the Middle East as it pivots towards the Indo-Pacific region, and both countries also have their own domestic challenges to balance against this. The UK was an obvious choice because of Brexit. Greece and Turkey have entered into a period of intense competition for gas and oil in the Adriatic Sea.

"The Sahel region was chosen because the problems created by colonialism, climate change, poverty, violent Islamism, conflict and migration are all coming together, making it a very volatile region. Ethiopia is in because technology may finally allow it to harness the power of the Blue Nile and alleviate poverty, but that is causing tensions with its neighbours. Finally, Space is there because I believe it is a geographic area over which there will be competition and cooperation in the future, and it is important to prepare for that," Marshall elaborated.

Marshall was diplomatic editor at Sky News, and before that was working for the BBC and LBC/IRN radio. He has reported from 40 countries and covered conflicts in Croatia, Bosnia, Macedonia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Israel. He is the author of the Sunday Times bestseller "Prisoners of Geography: Ten Maps that Tell You Everything You Need to Know About Global Politics" and the founder and editor of the current affairs site TheWhatandtheWhy.com.

"I was lucky enough to report from as many as 40 countries and learn about different peoples and cultures. What I learned is that although different people can think in different ways, which are sometimes hard to follow, at heart we are all the same. I also learned early on that peace is fragile, that there are always a few people with ill intent who will seek to provoke tensions between others in order to profit from it. Sadly, we are susceptible to anxieties about the 'other'. "It has given me a somewhat 'realist' hardline approach to international relations and has also persuaded me of Churchill's truth that democracy is the least worst political system by which to organize societies," Marshall concluded.

Has Twitter actually lost its 'legal shield' in India?

NISHANT ARORA

WITH IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad slamming Twitter once again, ironically in a series of tweets, leading experts on Wednesday began a debate on whether the micro-blogging platform has actually lost its "legal shield" in the country from prosecution over posts.

There is no doubt that India needs to ensure that the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 do not become a mere paper tiger and are effectively implemented.

However, can the country stipulate stringent liabilities against social media firms like Twitter for failing to comply with its directions?

By virtue of Rule 7 of the IT (Intermediary Guidelines) rules 2021, the moment any intermediary including any significant social media intermediary does not comply with the IT rules, they automatically lose their statutory exemption from legal liability.

"Further, they become liable for being punished for various offences under the Information Technology Act, 2000 and the Indian Penal Code, 1860. In this case, Twitter by not complying with the IT rules 2021 has lost its statutory immunity after the expiry of 90 days from February 25," leading cyberlaw expert Pavan Duggal told IANS.

According to him, Twitter no longer has the "suraksha kavach" or statutory exemption from legal liability.

"This effectively means that they are liable to be sued in civil and criminal actions across the country and they are liable to defend each one of them for third party data or information made available by them," Duggal added.

However, according to non-profit Internet Freedom Foundation, the "intermediary status" is not a registration that is granted by the government.

Being alone in the era of social media



TALKING OF MANY THINGS

I have shared with the readers on an earlier occasion, my reservations with regard to active participation on social media platforms. Somehow, for one reason or other, I recently started using the WhatsApp on my phone. The original idea was to confine its use strictly to facilitating my writing work, and communications relating to that activity. But, then, as Oscar Wilde said, I can resist anything but temptation! So one read the occasional post and, occasionally, began responding to it. While doing that, I came across an interesting piece which went like this:

'God created man and endowed him with wisdom, strength, courage, confidence and foresight. Then God developed a fear that man would, with those qualities, become a danger to nature. He then decided to hide man's strength in a place where it would be difficult to find. An Eagle approached God, and offered to hide man's strength in the sky. God declined, fearing that, one day, man would conquer the skies. A fish then offered to hide it in water. God had a similar reservation.

Next, a mouse offered to bury man's strength deep underground. God felt that man would easily dig and find it there. Then, finally, a monkey came forward, and suggested, cleverly, that all the strength of man should be hidden within man himself! God agreed, knowing that man would go everywhere, and conquer all frontiers, but would never think of, or be able to, go deep enough within himself to find the strength hidden there. Ever

since then, man's main strength lay hidden deeply within himself, yet to be found!'

Most people look at being alone as a negative state. As a matter of fact, it helps to drop one's "social guard", now and then, and enjoy the freedom of introspection, without being swayed by the thoughts, and feelings, of others.

There are mysterious treasures, as well as exciting pleasures, to be discovered in the deepest recesses of one's own inner self. They have to be experienced to be believed. Which is probably why the statement, "I am never less alone than when alone....", (quoted from Scipio by Cato and recorded by Cicero), has, for long, left a deep impression upon me. There is an apt Tamil expression which also conveys a similar sense. "aalai vutta podum", meaning all one wants is to be left to one's devices.

Studies have it that 'alone - time' can cause a feeling of greater empathy towards the people around one. It creates an opportunity to connect with nature, and to challenge your body, mind and soul. Peaceful solitude results in many psychological and physiological benefits from improving attentiveness to relieving stress.

In these days of intense competition, be it between countries, races, cults, religions or even individuals, the need to get away from it all and discover the true value of being a human being cannot be over-emphasised.

And the art of being by oneself can be practiced in various forms. Easily the most effective, though somewhat difficult to master, is the practice of meditation. It comes in many forms and the one I came across, seeing my friends and relatives trying it, is what is called Transcendental Meditation. I must confess that I, myself, have never learnt it. But I understand that it gives one a sense of deep peace, and serenity and detachment from worldly worries and tensions.

In my own case, I have found that the three spells of prayer, that are part of my daily routine, serve the purpose of making me



There are mysterious treasures, as well as exciting pleasures, to be discovered in the deepest recesses of one's own inner self. They have to be experienced to be believed. Which is probably why the statement, "I am never less alone than when alone....", (quoted from Scipio by Cato and recorded by Cicero), has, for long, left a deep impression upon me. Studies have it that 'alone - time' can cause a feeling of greater empathy towards the people around one. It creates an opportunity to connect with nature, and to challenge your body, mind and soul. Peaceful solitude results in many psychological and physiological benefits from improving attentiveness to relieving stress

lose the connection with the external world. What is more, as I am used to combining prayer with exercise, the body and mind are totally engaged in such intense activity, that the conscious mind becomes completely oblivious of the surroundings. Even when exercise is not possible like, for instance, when I am travelling, I have found it possible to just shut my eyes and become oblivious of connection with the surroundings as soon as I begin to pray.

Another method, much easier to learn, and to put into practice,

is one of playing games. The famous card game 'Solitaire' (now available in various versions as a computer game) is one which I like best. One can spend hours and hours completely lost in the permutations and combinations the patterns of cards offer, as one clicks the mouse. Reading, listening to music, watching movies and playing a musical instrument are also very engaging forms of solitary activities. The habit, however, can sometimes take an undesirable form such as soliloquy, which is actually a disorder requiring treatment.

And when one emerges from a spell of physical exercise and intense mental activity, one feels a sense of great relief; a feeling of being purged of the toxic effects of exposure of body and mind to the environment.

Extolling the virtue of exploring the inner self should not be taken as detracting from the value of companionship and relationships. They are essential for living in harmony with fellow human beings in society. And a healthy degree of communication also helps one retain a sense of comfort and balance.

It is because man, essentially, is a gregarious being -- a social animal comfortable in company, that the value of being alone is rarely recognised or understood. If one looks at the issue dispassionately, all living beings are in the ultimate analysis, by themselves. They enter this world, spend their lifetime, and exit, essentially by themselves.

Being by oneself has the effect of bringing one close to the inner being, and can help unravel the creative and intuitive qualities otherwise lying hidden. Therefore the greatest gift you can give yourself is your own time and energy! After all, one can hardly have a healthy relationship with others, if one has yet to come to terms with oneself!

(The writer is former Chief Secretary, Government of Andhra Pradesh)

LETTERS

Why big cars for Babus?

IT refers to media-reports about Opposition criticising and rightly so, purchase of a fleet of 32 new luxury cars priced at Rupees 30 lakhs each for use of Additional Collectors. Both central and state governments together with their public-sector-undertakings should take lesson from a viral video of Mexican Ambassador in India allegedly having an official three-wheeler rather than diplomatic car for official movements in Delhi. Video may be true or not but the message is very important for central and state government together with their public-sector-undertakings (PSUs) where especially ordered air-conditioned three-wheelers may replace official cars for those entitled for official cars. Step will not result in big saving of fuel, but will also reduce purchase-cost on vehicles and ever-increasing congestion on roads apart from checking pollution. Introduction of air-conditioned three-wheelers will be popular amongst middle-income small families to switch over from cars to three-wheelers. Otherwise also all possible steps should be taken to discourage big and costlier cars. Discouraging sale of big cars will provide extra space on roads and parking-sites in the city. Costly and big cars should be allowed in government for use of President, Vice President, Prime Minister and foreign dignitaries only.

Subhash Chandra Agrawal, Delhi

Don't hesitate to vaccinate...

THE cases in India are decreasing dramatically. It's a sign of relief that we are getting out of second wave. But un-



fortunately we are headed towards third wave. It is not government's duty to tell the public to wear masks, imposing lockdowns, it is about our health and we should take care about ourselves....

However so many citizens who are eligible for inoculation drive aren't getting vaccinated due to fear and hesitancy. So many people are vaccinated all around the world and nothing happens to them. Please get vaccinated to stop the effect of third wave... Otherwise cases would escalate again and we all would be crippled due to third wave.

Pavan Sagar, Paderu

Epic title clash

AMID pandemic, Roland Gaross witnessed one of the epic finals between world number one Djokovic and the rising star from Greece - Tsitsipas. They say nothing is over until it is over and unfortunately this bitter truth has to be digested by Tsitsipas. It was he who called all the shots in the first two sets and led two sets to none. But in the third set and thereafter the champion - Djokovic showed his class, calmness, intensity, serenity, mental, emotional and physical strength to overpower Psitsipas who was

playing only his first grand slam final to lift the coveted trophy and thereby winning his 19th grand slam title which many experts reckon as one of the greatest comebacks ever made in the history of French open final.

Dr Vinay Kumar MS, Hosapete

Ram Janmabhoomi land issue

ALL forms of media are agog with regard to a piece of land priced at Rs. 5.80 crores that was sold by two persons to another two persons at Rs. 2 crores at 7.10 pm undervalued by Rs 3.80 crores. In five minutes, barely 300 seconds, the same piece of land was bought by the Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust at a whopping Rs.18.50 crores. First time in the annals of global history, Ayodhya has broken a world record in escalation of real estate value by an astronomical figure of Rs. 5.54 lakh per second from Rs. 2 crores to Rs.18.50 crores. This was the allegation put forth by AAP and SP leaders in two separate press conferences. If this is proved to be true, how should a normal devotee of Lord Ram view this. Should this be seen as a direct miracle of God or should it be seen as something when money is at stake, even God is not spared?

As the transactions are documented, it is now the onus of the Trust to come out with total transparency and honour the devotees with every detail of the entire sale agreement in buying the said land. The general secretary, while not denying the allegation, said he would talk only about what happened in the Trust's meeting and nothing else. He further added

that the Trust believes in fair transactions and has nothing to hide. The quicker the right answer comes out of this, the better it is as the issue is directly linked not only to the sentiments of ardent devotees of Lord Ram but from the fact that the issue demands complete accountability from all stake holders. While there is no rebuttal to a devotee donating unconditionally, definitely what is at stake is the sanctity of the temple from all angles.

D Nagarjuna, Hyderabad

India should play for a win

CRICKET is a team game, where performance is the name of the game. Indian think tank is trying to make a match of the WTC final by picking a balanced and strong side to match with the Kiwi side. The players to miss out from the original 20-member squad that has toured England are: Axar Patel, KL Rahul, Shardul Thakur, Mayank Agarwal, Washington Sundar. Axar was too good at home against England and both Shardul Thakur and Washington Sundar earned name as bowling all rounders in the side in the famous win on the Australian soil. But suddenly the faith in these three workhorses is totally ignored to accommodate the senior cricketers in the side. When we try to balance batting then we let down bowling. But the team was consistently inconsistent in fielding and that is a major let down for a team aspiring to win an ICC sponsored tournament after a long gap. Anyway, the batting should click first in English conditions to provide the bowlers sufficient runs to fight the final match. Good luck Team India. The aim should be to play for a win in a do or die game.

CK Ramanathan, Ghaziabad

thehansreader@gmail.com

TRS men raise a stink on Eatala to cosy up to KCR

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

THANKS to Eatala’s episode, the Telangana Rashtra Samithi leaders these days are competing with each other to hog limelight and to get into the good books of party president and Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao. The leaders who seldom spoke on the issues were now raising their voices against the Former Minister.

There is a talk in the party circles that the leaders are not allowed to talk on issues, and, if needed, they would be given a note and the leaders should stick to that note. The leaders of the opposition parties often allege that the TRS leaders talk as per the script given

- Many of the Ministers, MLAs and MLCs have taken the Eatala episode as an opportunity to get into good books of Chief Minister
- Party sources say several leaders are trying to please the party chief by slinging mud on Eatala to grab the Council seats

by Pragathi Bhavan, the Chief Minister’s Office. Even Eatala, after coming out of the party, accused the leaders of reading out script handed over by Pragathi Bhavan.

However, in the recent times, the leaders have been competing with one another to talk about Eatala severing ties with the TRS and switching loyalties to the Bharatiya Janata Party. During the entire episode, several party leaders, including Ministers, MLAs and other leaders have

talked openly at several press conferences and meetings.

Meanwhile, a TRS leader, on the condition of anonymity, said that several leaders were talking about Eatala just to please KCR and gain a seat in the Council. As many as seven Council seats, which are under MLA quota and Governor’s quota, are going to get vacant soon and these leaders were eyeing those posts.

Several leaders, including Ministers, former ministers,

former MLAs, MLCs have expressed their views in open against Eatala in the last fortnight. Among the leaders who spoke include Ministers Gangula Kamalakara, V Srinivas Goud, Koppula Eshwar, Satya-vathi Rathod, MLA D Vinay Bhaskar, former minister Kadiyam Srihari, Gutha Sukender Reddy and former speaker of Telangana Assembly S Madhusudhana Chary. Party leaders who were associated with Eatala during the Telangana agitation have also not spared.

Party leaders said that since there was a talk of reshuffle, some of the leaders want to hog the limelight so that they can get rewarded with better posts.

TSRTC employees protest over delay in salary

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

THE Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) employees on Wednesday protested with black badges at various depots demanding the management to provide salaries on the first of every month. The TSRTC employees have expressed concern that it has been 15 days in June but still they did not receive their salaries for the month of May. The RTC employees took up protests with black badges at all the depots, on the call given by the Telangana Jathiya Mazdoor Union (TMU). The TMU leader K Hanumanthu Mudiraj said, “The RTC workers are made to wait for the salaries every month. The management should stop this policy and release the salaries on the first of the month.”



The Telangana Mazdoor Union (TMU) also gave the call for protest. TMU leader A R Reddy said, “The management should provide at least half of the money from the Credit Cooperative Society (CCS). The employees contribute money to the CCS every month from their salary

so that they can take loans whenever they need. However, the CCS has a due of over Rs 900 crore and many employees have applied for withdrawing of the membership. The management should release at least Rs 500 crore to settle the dues of the employees.”

Heavy rain lashes Kamareddy district

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

AS the Southwest Monsoon turned normal over Telangana, heavy rain occurred at isolated places in Kamareddy district during the last 24 hours ending at 8.30 am on Wednesday, according to IMD bulletin.

The chief amounts of rainfall (in cm) were: Tadwai (dist Kamareddy) 7, Varni (Nizamabad) 6, Bhuvanagiri (Y. Bhuvanagiri) 4, Chennur (Mancherial) 3, Kotagiri (Nizamabad), Thollada (Khammam), Atmakur (Y. Bhuvanagiri), Serilingampally (Ranga Reddy), Kodakandla (Jangaon) 3 each, Kamareddy, Hyderabad, Kaleswaram (J. Bhupalpally), Konijerla (Khammam), Zaffer-gadh (Jangaon), Mancherial, Navipet (Nizamabad), Yadagirigutta (Y. Bhuvanagiri) 2 each.

The bulletin said there was one cm rain each in Gandhari (Kamareddy), Chandurthi (Rajanna Sircilla), Kothakota (Wanaparthy), Dubbak (Siddipet), Gudurl (Mahbubabad), Bachhanapet (Jangaon), Jajireddigudem (Suryapet), Devaruppal (Jangaon), Tandur (Vikarabad), Dharmapuri (Jagtial), Ranjal (Nizamabad), Dandepalle (Mancherial), Shamirpet (M. Malkajgiri), Chennaraopet (Warangal-Rural), Khammam Urban, Birkoor (Kamareddy), Nizamabad, Dichpalle (Nizamabad), Karimnagar, Kondapak

- Serilingampally records 3 cm, Hyd 2 cm
- 1 cm rain each in Dubbak, Tandur, Shamirpet, Kondapak & Peddamul
- IMD warns of thunderstorms with lightning, gusty winds (30-40 kmph) lashing on June 17-18 all districts; heavy rain to lash 12 districts
- Rain or thundershowers forecast in City on June 17, 19, 20, 21 & 22

(Siddipet), Peddamul (Vikarabad), Kotapalle (Mancherial), Balkonda (Nizamabad).

Meanwhile, the IMD warned of thunderstorms with lightning and gusty winds (30-40 kmph) very likely to occur on June 17 and 18 at isolated places in all districts of Telangana. It said heavy rain is very likely during the day in Adilabad, Kumaram Bheem Asifabad, Mancherial, Nirmal, Nizamabad, Jagtial, Rajanna-Sircilla, Karimnagar, Peddapally, Jayashankar-Bhupalpally, Mulug, Bhadradi-Kothagudem districts.

The forecast for Hyderabad: generally cloudy sky with one or two spells of rain or thundershowers on June 17, 19 and 20. Rain likely on June 21 and 22.

KCR for Siddipet on June 20: Harish Rao

To take part in some development programmes

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

FINANCE Minister T Harish Rao stated on Wednesday that Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao will participate in several development programmes in Siddipet district on June 20.

He inspected the programme site and asked officials to prepare for the inauguration of the integrated Collectorate building, the Police Commissioner’s Office and the MLA camp office by KCR. The CM will launch several development programmes and to address a public meeting.

Rao said the government spent Rs 81 crore for the integrated buildings built with modern facilities. The eco-friendly district office complex will offer better services to people.

The minister stated that the police commissioner’s office was built in 20 acres near Siddipet in green environment with all amenities. He asked officials to see that the programme is conducted as per Corona protocol.

Officials taken to task for laxity in Palle Pragathi, Pattana Pragathi works

Government initiates action against a total of 378 officials from Rangareddy district and 239 officials from Vikarabad district

GUDUPALLI SRINIVAS
RANGAREDDY



THE State government has initiated action against a total of 378 officials in Rangareddy district and 239 officials in Vikarabad district for showing negligence in implementing the Palle Pragathi and Pattana Pragathi programmes. It can be recalled that the State government had launched the Palle Pragathi and Pattana Pragathi programmes to improve the quality of life in the rural and urban areas. And to monitor the works under these programmes, the government constituted 50 flying squads (FSO) consisting senior officers from the government. These officers have submitted a report to the government seeking action

against several MPOs, panchayat secretaries, Sarpanches and vice-Sarpanches for dereliction of their duties.

Soon after receiving the report, the Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao had directed the district authorities to initiate action against the officials for the laxity in implementation of programmes.

Earlier, the Chief Minister also

held a review meeting on rural and urban progress with Additional Collectors, Panchayat Raj and Municipal officials of various districts and ordered to expedite the development works taken up under the Palle Pragathi and Pattana Pragathi programmes.

Rangareddy district has 551 villages in 21 zones. Till date, show cause notices have been served to 19 MPOs, 174

Sarpanches and vice-Sarpanches. Three of the MPOs, 19 Sarpanches and vice-Sarpanches have been suspended for not showing any improvement in their performance. The show cause notices were also issued to 185 panchayat secretaries in the district and seven of them were suspended, while one was fired.

There are a total of 566 gram panchayats in 18 mandals of Vikarabad district, of which 119 Sarpanches and vice-Sarpanches have been served show cause notices. While one of them was suspended, action was taken up against 102 panchayat secretaries and nine of them were suspended. The show cause notices were also served to 18 MPOs in Vikarabad district.

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

CHIEF Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy directed the district collectors, joint collectors to monitor at least 10 per cent of e-cropping, failure of which can be considered as failure on the part of officials. He discussed a wide range of issues including e-cropping, housing, Spandana griev-

ances, and other welfare schemes, during the Spandana videoconference with district collectors and SPs here on Wednesday.

During the interaction, the Chief Minister emphasised on e-cropping booking and said that farmers must be given a receipt

along with digital acknowledgment listing out all e-crop details, as input subsidy and crop insurance will be provided based on these details.

He stated that farmers should not be facing hassles because of the officials’ mistakes, and must be cautious during the registra-

tion. In case of any doubts, farmers should have the right to question the authorities, thus providing a physical receipt along with digital acknowledgement.

He said that collectors should focus on registering every acre, every crop with e-cropping, even though they are disputed lands.

Centre ready to set up petro corridor in AP

- State IT and Industries Minister Mekapati Goutham Reddy presents the project report to Union Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan
- Says the corridor will be set up at a cost of Rs 25,000 cr near Kakinada
- Anticipates creation of 50 lakh jobs in the next few years on completion of the project

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI/NEW DELHI

INDUSTRIES minister Mekapati Goutham Reddy on Wednesday said the Central government is in favour of establishing a petro-chemical corridor at Kakinada in the state.

He said the corridor will be set up at a cost of Rs 25,000 crore.

The minister presented the project report on the petro-chemical complex to the Centre. “Met Dharmendra Pradhan and proposed revival plan for PCPIR project in AP. This plan will pave the way for all round industrial development coupled with employment in the region. Also speedy implementation of VCIC corridor by our government to give fillip to investments,” said Goutham Reddy.

On completing the project, he believes that as many as 50 lakh jobs can be created, including investments flowing into the



State IT and Industries Minister Mekapati Goutham Reddy submits petro-chemical project report to Union Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan in New Delhi on Wednesday

petro-chemical field in the coming 2-3 years.

Reddy said up to Rs 30,000 crore of investment can be expected in the East coast corridor.

Including the participation of allied industries and the plans of the state and Central governments getting executed as decided, the minister said up to Rs 2 lakh crore investments are expected.

The industries minister is also anticipating investments in the ethanol sector, considering the Centre raising ethanol blending in petrol to 20 per cent from 10 per cent recently.

Gautham Reddy, chief secretary Aditya Nath Das and special CS, industries and commerce, R Karikal Valaven met Dharmendra Pradhan and Tarun Kapoor, secretary, ministry of petroleum and natural gas and had detailed discussion on establishment of

petrochemical cracker complex in the state by HPCL-GAIL consortium, given the recent regulatory changes.

Goutham Reddy said the Centre gave the green signal for a Rs 1,000 crore greenfield refinery to produce ethanol from molasses arriving from sugar factories.

Likewise, the state and Central officials will prepare a plan for the viability gap funding.

AP chief secretary and industries secretary will prepare the plan of action and the project work will start after receiving the Centre’s assent.

Following his meeting with the minister, Pradhan said, “Delightful meeting Goutham Reddy. We had detailed discussions on strengthening oil, gas and petrochemical infrastructure in the state to give a boost to employment and economic growth.”

BJP stages protests across AP against tax hikes



BJP State president Somu Veerraju along with party leaders stages a protest against property tax hike, in Rajamahendravaram on Wednesday

- Party cadres and leaders stage dharnas at municipal corporations, municipalities and nagar panchayat offices in all districts
- Party State chief Somu Veerraju demands the Jagan govt to withdraw new tax policies

AMARAVATI

BJP on Wednesday held statewide protests against the property tax hike by the state government and alleged that it was doing so to fund the freebies.

Senior BJP leader and Rajya Sabha member G V L Narasimha Rao alleged that the state government was doling out freebies on the one hand and raising taxes on the other.

“Doling out freebies on the one hand and raising taxes on the other hand, the YSRCP government is breaking the back of

the common man. BJP has organised a state-wide protest to oppose these anti-public policies,” said Rao.

As part of the protest, the BJP leaders and cadres protested at municipal corporations, municipalities and nagar panchayat offices across the state.

Party state president Somu Veerraju participated in the protest programme at Rajamahendravaram, where he demanded that the Y S. Jagan Mohan Reddy led the government to rescind the new tax policies. “Doling out freebies for vote bank and raising taxes for currency,” alleged Veerraju.

Meanwhile, Navataram Party founder Rao Subramanyam attacked the BJP for questioning the government’s freebies to the poor people. “It is incorrect on the part of BJP leaders to be intolerable towards free schemes for the poor. There would be no problem if they protested tax hike but why are BJP leaders crying when AP government is

Butchaiah demands withdrawal of hike

HANS NEWS SERVICE
MANGALAGIRI

TDP senior leader and Rajamahendravaram (Rural) MLA Gorantla Butchaiah Chowdary on Wednesday strongly objected to the YSRCP government’s adamant attitude to go ahead with the new property tax system despite all-round protests from the public and civil society organisations.

He termed it as laughable the contention of municipal administration minister Botcha Satyanarayana that the property tax hike was only about 15 per cent or so of the existing rate.

In a statement here, the TDP MLA asked how Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy government could cancel the age-old system of calculating property tax based on the rental values. Quite arbitrarily, the new system was introduced to calculate tax based on the values of the property concerned.

giving free schemes to the poor,” questioned Subramanyam.

He also questioned if the free schemes being doled out by the BJP are also wrong.

According to the Navataram

- TD P senior leader says assessment of tax based on property values unacceptable

This was placing a heavy burden on the people. Especially the

house owners in the urban areas were greatly disturbed at this new taxation, he said.

Chowdary demanded the government to reconsider its decision before the people stepped up their protests. The ardent

pleas from different sections of society were falling on deaf ears in the present Jagan Mohan Reddy rule, he observed.

The TDP MLA criticised that the YSRCP government has been on a mission to break the backs of middle class and poorer sections in the state since it came to power. A select few in the ruling party were becoming richer while all other sections were becoming poorer and more disadvantaged, he remarked.

Party president, it is the right of poor people to receive free schemes from the government and quizzed the BJP leaders if they do not know this simple fact.

Expert had warned Dr Paul of new variant in March

‘The Central government allowed election rallies, religious festivals and other mass gatherings’

A VETERAN public health expert warned top Indian officials in early March that a new variant of the coronavirus was spreading quickly in a rural district in Maharashtra and that the outbreak required urgent attention.

Health authorities failed to respond adequately to that warning, Dr Subhash Salunke, who has 30 years of experience in public health in India, Indonesia and the US, told Reuters.

The variant, now known as B.1.617, triggered a catastrophic wave of coronavirus cases in India and has since spread to more than 40 other countries. In May, the World Health Organisation (WHO) termed it a “variant of concern”, citing its high transmissibility.

Salunke, a former WHO official advising the Maharashtra government, said he alerted some of India’s

most senior health officials in early March. He spoke to Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s main coronavirus adviser, V.K. Paul, and the head of the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), Sujet Kumar Singh.

In response to Reuters’ questions, Paul said he had spoken with Salunke but described the conversation as Salunke conveying information rather than issuing a warning.

The variant’s first impact had been detected months earlier in Maharashtra’s Amravati district, where health authorities recorded a rapid increase in coronavirus infections in early February, even as cases fell elsewhere in India.

Salunke told Reuters he had warned both Paul and Singh that the virus was showing signs of mutating in Amravati, that its transmissibility was increasing, and



Dr Subhash Salunke

requested federal help in sequencing more samples to establish how the variant was behaving. Reuters could not independently confirm what was said in those conversations. “In spite of a public health person like me giving them a sound warning, they did not take heed,” Salunke told Reuters.

Paul rejected Salunke’s accusation that he did not take heed, saying he had requested that India’s National Institute of Virology (NIV) study the variant more closely, and told the Maharashtra government to intensify its existing response to the virus. Reuters could not determine if the NIV carried out any such study. The NIV directed Reuters’ questions to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), which did not respond. The government strengthened the sequencing and clinico-epidemiological studies, Paul told Reuters.

The government intensely, repeatedly, from multiple fora, emphasised the need for containment using all the tools even more vigorously and optimising testing. The NCDC’s Singh and the Union health ministry did not respond to questions from Reuters about Salunke’s warning.

Despite Salunke’s flagging of the problem, and a further warning in early March from a forum of scientific advisers that the new variant was taking hold in the country, the central government allowed election rallies, religious festivals and other mass gatherings to proceed, and failed to take measures to halt the spread of the virus. Within 80 days, the variant went from Amravati to dozens of countries around the world, including the UK, US and Singapore, presenting a setback to global efforts to contain the disease.

WINDOWS Militant killed in encounter in Nowgam

SRINAGAR: An unidentified militant was killed in an encounter with security forces in Nowgam area of Jammu and Kashmir’s Srinagar on Wednesday, police said.

Security forces launched a cordon and search operation in Wagoor in Nowgam late on Tuesday night following information about the presence of militants there, a police official said. The search operation turned into an encounter in which one militant was killed. The identity and group affiliation of the slain militant are being ascertained, he said. Search operations are underway in the area as security forces had received information about the presence of two militants, the official said.

Police question Mithun

KOLKATA: The Kolkata Police on Wednesday began virtually questioning actor-turned-BJP leader Mithun Chakraborty in connection with a complaint accusing him of inciting post-poll violence in West Bengal through his speeches. Officers of the Manicktala police station in north Kolkata began questioning the actor, who is currently in Pune, at 10.20 am.

“Till the last information was received, the questioning was still underway,” an officer told PTI. An FIR lodged at the police station alleged that the actor had used dialogues like ‘Marbo ekhane lash porbe shoshane’ (Will hit you here and the body will land in the crematorium) and ‘Ek chobole chobi’ (A snakebite will turn you into a photograph, meaning will kill you) at a rally in Kolkata after joining the BJP on March 7. The complainant alleged that these dialogues caused post-poll violence in the state. The Calcutta High Court had directed Chakraborty to provide his email address to the state so that he can make himself available by way of video conference for questioning in connection with the complaint where he has been accused of promoting enmity between different groups.

US, EU block students who got Covaxin jab

Modi govt denies approval to probe deaths caused by oxygen shortage, says Sisodia

NEW DELHI

THE RSS-affiliated Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) has submitted a memorandum to Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan drawing his attention to the fact that those students who have been inoculated with Covaxin are being treated as ‘unvaccinated’ by foreign universities. They also drew his attention towards those students below the age of 18 years who have got admission in foreign varsities but do not fall within the vaccination bracket.

Many countries, including the US and European countries, are treating Indian students vaccinated with Covaxin as ‘unvaccinated’, the memorandum said.

“Such treatment is a source of grave inconvenience and academic loss to the Indian students,” it said. Apart from this, many higher secondary students apply for admissions to foreign universities. Students aged below 18 who have passed SAT for admissions to American or British Universities have not yet been covered under the vaccination policy, which makes them prone to academic loss, it added.

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Wednesday said the Centre has denied approval to a committee set up by the Delhi government to probe deaths caused by the lack of oxygen during the second wave of Covid-19 and award compensation to the families of the deceased.

The Delhi government had sent the file seeking approval for the four-member committee to LG Anil Baijal. Sisodia said, “The Centre has refused to grant approval for the formation of the committee. The Centre only interferes with the work of state governments. Why doesn’t it allow the state governments to function?”

India reported 62,224 new cases of the coronavirus disease and 2,542 related fatalities, taking the caseload and death toll to 29,633,105 and 379,573 respectively, according to the Union health ministry.

The central government is now pushing states to conduct death audits, in order to arrive at a more realistic estimate, and has asked the director general of health services (DGHS) to look at the latest deaths data from the civil registration system (CRS), which accounts for all deaths.

In the two-week period between 1 June and 15 June, daily positives have more than halved (53 per cent) from 1,32,788 to 62,224, but there has not been a proportionate decrease in the daily deaths — daily Covid fatalities have reduced from 3,207 to 2542, a decrease of about 20 per cent.



A bartender arranges liquor bottles on the shelves at a bar, ahead of its reopening after authorities eased restrictions of Covid-induced lockdown, in Kolkata on Wednesday

India records 62,224 new Covid cases in 24 hours

Centre now pushing states to conduct death audits

Milkha stable, out of ICU

CHANDIGARH: Legendary Indian sprinter Milkha Singh is “stable” and he has been shifted out of COVID ICU to another section of the PGIMER hospital. The 91-year-old had contracted the dreaded virus last month. “Milkha ji is stable and is out of the COVID ICU, but is in the Medical ICU,” a spokesperson of the Milkha family said. “Thank you for your continued prayers and good wishes,” it added. PGIMER sources said that Milkha Singh was “fine, stable and recovering”. “He has tested COVID negative after which he was shifted out of the COVID ICU,” the sources said. The sources further said that a medical team comprising senior doctors of the institute were closely monitoring his daily health progress.

Another lion dies of Covid in TN zoo

CHENNAI: Another lion at the Arignar Anna Zoological Park (AAZP) in Vandalur near here, succumbed to SARS-CoV-2 on Wednesday morning. Confirming the death of the Asiatic male lion named Pathbanathan, aged 12 years, Deputy Director of AAZP said the lion was housed in the safari area of the park.

“Samples of the said lion had tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 as per the report of National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases (NIHSAD), Bhopal, communicated on June 3. The lion has been under intensive treatment since then,” he said in a statement.

This is the second tragedy that struck the zoo which lost a nine-year-old lioness Neela due to Coronavirus on June 3.

Gol cleared PM’s pic on certificates

PUNE: The much-castigated decision to print the photos and a message of PM Modi on crores of Covid-19 Vaccination Certificates, was apparently taken by the ‘Government of India, a RTI reply has revealed. A Pune-based activist Prafulla Sarda had filed a RTI query in May seeking details and circumstances that culminated in the PM’s photo plus message figuring on all the privileged, but provisional, Covid Vaccination Certificates (CVC), issued in the name of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MOHFW). “The due procedure has been followed at Government of India level to use and affix the photograph and name of PM on the vaccination certificate to provide message on Covid-19 appropriate behavior.”

HC slams ‘messiah’ Sonu Sood for Covid aid

MUMBAI

THE Bombay High Court on Wednesday directed the Maharashtra government to scrutinise the role that local Congress MLA Zeeshan Siddique and actor Sonu Sood played in procurement and supply of anti-Covid drugs to citizens, following their SOS calls and appeals on social media.

The high court also observed that “these people (celebrities) projected themselves as some kind of messiahs without verifying if the drugs were spurious or if the supply was legal”.

A bench of Justices S P Deshmukh and G S Kulkarni issued the direction to the Maharashtra government after state Advocate General Ashutosh Kumbhakoni told the HC that it had registered a criminal case at the Mazgaon metropolitan court against a charitable trust, BDR Foundation, and its trustees for supplying anti-Covid drug Remdesivir to Siddique even though the trust did not have requisite licence.

Kumbhakoni said that Siddique had been merely diverting the drug to citizens, who had approached him, so no action had been taken against him yet. He further said that Sonu Sood had received the drugs from several pharmacies located inside the private Lifeline Care Hospital in Goregaon. Pharma company Cipla had supplied Remdesivir to these pharmacies and inquiry into it was still going on, Kumbhakoni said. He was responding to previous orders of the high court passed while hearing a bunch of public interest litigations (PILs) on several issues related to the management of drugs and resources required to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic.

The HC had directed the state government and the Centre to probe how celebrities and politicians had managed to procure and distribute anti-coronavirus drugs to the public when the supply of the same was scarce and was supposed to be allocated to states by the Union government.

Sena, BJP workers come to blows over Ayodhya row

MUMBAI: Clashes broke out between Shiv Sena and Bharatiya Janata Party workers in Dadar area in Mumbai on Wednesday after the youth wing of the BJP took out a protest march against ‘offensive’ remarks in the Sena mouthpiece Saamana about the land deal controversy in Ayodhya. The police used force to disperse the supporters of the two parties which were once allies.

Sena workers assaulted a woman member of the BJP, the latter alleged.

The trouble started after the Bhartiya Janata Yuva Morcha took out a protest march to-

wards Shiv Sena Bhavan in Dadar, the Sena’s headquarters, over a Saamana editorial which demanded probe of a ‘suspicious’ land purchase deal by the Ram Mandir trust in Ayodhya.

The trust has denied the allegations.

Following the fisticuffs, police took several persons in custody.

A first information report (FIR) was being registered, said an officer of Mahim police station. BJP leaders Ashish Shelar, Mangal Prabhat Lodha, Pravin Darekar and others reached the police station and demanded action against Shiv Sena activists.

Chirag attacks JD(U) for split in party

NEW DELHI

LOK Janshakti Party leader Chirag Paswan on Wednesday blamed Janata Dal (United) for engineering the split in his party and rejected the decisions taken by the faction headed by his uncle Pashupati Kumar Paras, saying the party’s constitution does not authorise them any such power. In his first interaction with media after the split in the party, he struck a combative note by describing himself as “sher ka beta” (lion’s son) and asserted that he will fight for the cause of the party founded by his father Ram Vilas Paswan. While blaming the



JD(U) for the split, he steered clear of questions regarding the role of the BJP in the development and added that what has happened is also an internal matter of his party for which he will not target others. He, however, replied wryly when asked if “Hanuman” who is in trouble now will seek help from “Ram”, a reference to his projection of his relationship with Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the Bihar assembly polls as that between the two famous characters of epic Ramayan. “If Hanuman has to seek help from Ram, then what good is Hanuman and what good is Ram,” he said in Hindi. It is going to be a long battle, Paswan said.

Farmer dies by suicide at protest site in Haryana

CHANDIGARH: A 58-year-old farmer died allegedly after consuming poison at a site of protest against the Centre’s three farm laws in Jind district in Haryana, the police said on Wednesday. The deceased farmer has been identified as Pala Ram, Uchana police station SHO Ravinder Singh said. “He consumed poison late Tuesday night and on Wednesday morning we received information that a farmer has died,” he said, adding that no suicide note has been found from the spot. At the protest site at Khatkar toll plaza, 500-700 protesters usually gather during the

day, while only a few stay there overnight, according to the police. “While two to three people slept on mats outside on Tuesday night, Pala Ram went to sleep in a tent erected at the site and consumed poison,” Singh said.

Pala Ram used to serve food and tea to the protesting farmers at the toll plaza for the past few months.

Farmers at the protest site told the police that he seemed dejected for the past few days as the demands of the peasants agitating against the farm laws for over six months now had not been met.

Tensions rise in South China Sea, Rajnath calls for negotiations

NEW DELHI

DEFENCE Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday said that the Code of Conduct negotiations will lead to positive outcomes in the South China Sea as tension escalated in the waters, causing concern all the nations in the region and beyond.

The minister asserted that India supports freedom of navigation, over flight, and unimpeded commerce in these international waterways.

Singh was referring to escalating territorial tensions in the South China Sea in recent weeks. China lays claim to nearly all of the South China Sea while other countries also claim parts of the region leading to territorial disputes in the region.

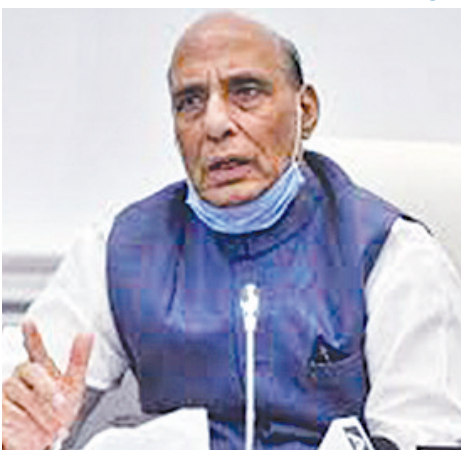
China’s sweeping claims of sovereignty over the sea have antagonized competing claimants Brunei, In-

donesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam. Earlier this month, Malaysia scrambled jets to intercept Chinese aircraft it accused of breaching its airspace.

The persistent presence of Chinese vessels in its economic zone, Philippines has protested. Seeing threats from China, Vietnam expanded its maritime forces and Indonesia decided to bolster its Navy.

Addressing the 8th meeting of defense ministers from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Singh said India calls for a free, open and inclusive order in the Indo-Pacific, based upon respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations, peaceful resolution of disputes through dialogue and adherence to international rules and laws.

The ministers gathered online for a meeting hosted



by Brunei, this year’s ASEAN chair.

“India has strengthened its cooperative engagements in the Indo-Pacific based on converging visions and values for promotion of peace, stability, and prosperity in the region,” the minister said.

Premised upon the centrality of ASEAN, India supports utilization of ASEAN-led mechanisms as important platforms for implementation of our shared vision for the Indo-Pacific, he asserted.

India’s engagement with the South East Asian region, of which ASEAN has been a primary component, is based on its ‘Act East Policy’ announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in November 2014.

Key elements of this policy are to promote economic cooperation, cultural ties and develop strategic relationships with countries in the Indo-Pacific region through continuous engagement at bilateral, regional

and multilateral levels.

“Maritime security challenges are another area of concern to India,” the minister said.

The Sea lanes of Communication are critical for peace, stability, prosperity and development of the Indo-Pacific region. In this regard, developments in the South China Sea have attracted attention in the region and beyond, Singh said.

“India supports freedom of navigation, over flight, and unimpeded commerce in these international waterways,” he said.

India hopes that the Code of Conduct negotiations will lead to outcomes that are in keeping with international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and do not prejudice the legitimate rights and interests of nations that are not party to these discussions.

TODAY's QUOTE

Penalise Twitter for non-compliance

CENTRE should penalise Twitter for non-compliance with intermediary guidelines. The microblogging platform has become ideological, biased and is no longer neutral. Almost all companies have complied and there is nothing special about Twitter or any company. The sovereignty and laws of India are more important.


- TV Mohandas Pai, IT industry veteran



COVID VAX

Vaccination to shape GDP recovery: RBI

SPEED and scale of vaccination against Covid-19 will shape the path of economic recovery which has the resilience and the fundamentals to bounce back from the pandemic and unshackle itself from pre-existing cyclical and structural hindrances, said RBI in an article on the 'State of economy' report.

FOREX (buy rates in ₹)			
US Dollar	74.06	South	
Euro	89.74	African Rand	6.13
UAE Dirham	20.56	Hong Kong Dollar	10.86
Thai Baht	2.59	Japanese Yen	0.77
British Pound	104.53	New Zealand Dollar	52.91
Australian Dollar	57.07	Saudi Riyal	21.5
Canadian Dollar	60.79	Swedish Krona	10.08
Swiss Franc	82.36	Singapore Dollar	56.39

DELHI THURSDAY 17 JUNE 2021

BIZ BRIEFS

Aragen, FMC ink pact

Hyderabad-based Aragen Life Sciences has announced a strategic partnership with FMC Corporation, a global leader in innovative agricultural science that provides solutions towards crop protection, plant health, and professional pest and turf management. Through this collaboration, Aragen will support FMC's global discovery and development needs, including discovery chemistry, discovery biology, and chemical process development. "It has been our privilege to have been able to assist FMC, one of the global leaders in crop science, accelerate its R&D, through this long term partnership. The expansion of this collaboration through all facets of discovery and development is a testimony to the trust and confidence that FMC has in Aragen- we look forward to driving several more success stories for our partner," said Manni Kantipudi, CEO, Aragen.

Vivo unveils new device

Vivo has announced the launch of Vivo Y1s 3GB storage variant in India. The product features 3GB RAM + 32GB ROM which is expandable up to 256GB, packed with 4030mAh battery, the phone has 15.79cm (6.22) Halo full view display with an 88.6 per cent screen-to-body, AI camera setup, 5MP selfie and 13MP rear camera along with Bokeh mode which creates distinct contrast by smoothly separating portrait subjects from backgrounds. The smartphone also has a dark mode that switches during night for a pleasant viewing experience; this feature also helps in saving battery for long lasting usage. The vivo Y1s is priced at Rs 9,490 and will be available for purchase in two attractive color options Aurora Blue and Olive Black on vivo India E-store and others.

Home Credit's Covid help

Home Credit India has pledged to lend support to the impacted communities and has partnered with Don Bosco Network and Earth Saviours Foundation. The company is providing medical and hygiene kits to around 10,000 affected people. The beneficiaries include slum dwellers, daily wage earners, migratory population, old and poor, and abandoned people in home for destitute. As prescribed by AIIIMS, each medical & hygiene kit provided to a family consists of Pulse oximeter, digital thermometer, N95 face masks, hand sanitizer, essential medicines like paracetamol, vitamin C, zinc etc. Ondrej Kubik, CEO, Home Credit India, said: "We are saddened by the magnitude of humanitarian crisis at this hour. We are at this juncture where the Covid-19 pandemic has taken a toll on human lives and has turned out to be devastating"

Relief for jewellers

In a relief to jewellers, the Centre said no penalty will be imposed till August on those who do not comply with the mandatory hallmarking of gold jewellery and artefacts that came into force from Wednesday in 256 districts across the country. However, action will be taken on consumer complaints as per the law. The complaints can be filed on the BIS CARE APP or consumer engagement portal of the Union consumer affairs ministry, it said. So far, gold hallmarking in the country was voluntary in nature. Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) Director-General Pramod Kumar Tiwari said: "This is a massive change that is happening in the ecosystem of the industry. There are lakhs of jewellers, including small jewellers, who have to register themselves".

Net direct tax mopup doubles to ₹1.85 lakh cr

Advance tax collection grows 146% in June qtr to ₹28,780 cr; Refunds worth ₹30,731 cr issued so far this fiscal

NEW DELHI

THE net direct tax collection has doubled to over Rs 1.85 lakh crore so far this fiscal, mainly driven by personal income tax and advance tax mop up, the I-T department said on Wednesday.

"Despite extremely challenging initial months of the new fiscal, the Advance Tax collections for the first quarter of the FY 2021-22 stand at Rs 28,780 crore against Advance Tax collections of Rs 11,714 crore for the corresponding period of the immediately preceding Financial Year, showing a growth of approximately 146 per cent," the CBDT said.

The net direct tax collection also includes corporate income tax (CIT) collection at Rs 74,356 crore and Personal Income Tax, including Security Transaction Tax (STT) at over Rs 1.11 lakh crore. The net direct tax collections (after adjusting refunds) between April 1-June 15 stood at Rs 1,85,871 crore, compared to Rs 92,762 crore over the corresponding period of the preceding year,



representing an increase of 100.4 per cent over the collections of the preceding year, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) said in a statement. Refunds amounting to Rs 30,731 crore have been issued in current fiscal. The gross collection of direct taxes for this fiscal stood at over Rs 2.16 lakh crore, compared to Rs 1.37 lakh crore in the corresponding period of the preceding year. The gross corporate income tax (CIT) mop up stood at Rs 96,923 crore and personal income tax (PIT) stood at over Rs 1.19 lakh crore. While Advance Tax mop up stood at Rs 28,780 crore, Tax Deducted at Source was at Rs 1,56,824 crore. Self-Assessment Tax stood at Rs 15,343 crore and Regular Assessment Tax at Rs 14,079 crore.

IT COs SET TO SLASH 30 LAKH JOBS BY 2022

MUMBAI

WITH automation taking place at a much faster pace across industries especially in the tech space, domestic software firms that employ over 16 million are set to slash headcounts by a massive 3 million by 2022, which will help them save a whopping \$100 billion mostly in salaries annually, says a report. The domestic IT sector employs around 16 million, of them around 9 million are employed in low-skilled services and BPO roles, according to Nasscom.

Of these 9 million low-skilled services and BPO roles, 30 per cent or around 3 million will be lost by 2022, principally driven by the impact of robot process automation or RPA. Roughly 0.7 million roles are expected to be replaced by RPA alone and the rest due to other technological upgrades and upskilling by the domestic IT players, while it the RPA will have the worst impact in the US with a loss of almost 1 million jobs, according to a Bank of America report on Wednesday. Based on average fully-loaded employee costs of \$25,000 per annum for India-based resources and \$50,000 for US resources, this will release around \$100 billion in annual salaries and associated expenses for corporates, the report says.

"TCS, Infosys, Wipro, HCL, Tech Mahindra and Cognizant and others appear to be planning for a 3 million reduction in low-skilled

Automation will take a toll Cos to save \$100 bn in cost: Report



roles by 2022 because of RPA upskilling. "This is a \$100-billion in reduced salary and other costs, but on the flipside, it offers a likely a USD 10 billion boon for IT companies that successfully implement RPA, and another a \$5 billion opportunity from a vibrant new software niche by 2022. Given that robots can function for 24 hrs a day, this represents a significant saving of up to 10:1 versus the human labor," says the report.

Robot process automation (RPA) is application of software, not physical robots, to perform routine, high-volume tasks, allowing employees to focus on more differentiated work. It differs from ordinary software applications as it mimics how the employee has worked instead of building a workflow into technology from ground up and thus minimising time to

market and greatly reducing cost over the more traditional software-led approaches.

Offshoring helped domestic IT sector to grow from around 1 per cent of GDP in 1998 to 7 per cent today, a highly strategic sector for its economy and has also significantly outgrown their Western peers (mainly Accenture, Capgemini and Atos) with an annual revenue growth of 18 per cent between 2005 and 2019.

Another key reason for the RPA-driven job losses is that many countries that had offshored their work in the past are likely to bring the jobs back to their own home markets. Developed countries will also look to increasingly bring back offshored IT jobs and either use native IT workers or domestic software robots like RPA to secure their digital supply chain and en-

Of these 9 million low-skilled services and BPO roles, 30 per cent or around 3 million will be lost by 2022, principally driven by the impact of robot process automation or RPA

- Bank of America report

sure future resiliency of their national technology infrastructure, reasons the report.

Software offshoring began in the 1970s and the 1980s when the personal computer began to gain traction when major world players began shifting focus to trade liberalisation. However, despite such massive automation, major economies like Germany (26 per cent shortage), China (7 per cent), India (5 per cent) Korea, Brazil, Thailand Malaysia and Russia will likely face a labour shortages, warns the report, adding on the contrary South Africa, Greece, Indonesia and the Philippines will have surplus labour for the next 15 years.

According to the report, faster automation is driven by the shrinking talent pool of high-skilled jobs in developing economies, the need for which will only jump, but the global high-skill talent pool is shrinking and exposing outmoded immigration systems.

Sensex, Nifty retreat from record highs

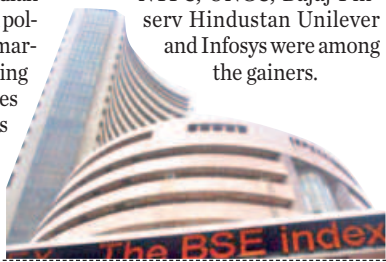
MUMBAI

KEY benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty retreated from record-high levels on Wednesday following intense selling in Reliance and HDFC twins as investors turned cautious ahead of the outcome of the US Federal Reserve's policy meeting.

The 30-share BSE index ended 271.07 points or 0.51 per cent lower at 52,501.98. It had closed at an all-time high of 52,773.05 on Tuesday. The broader NSE Nifty retreated from a record and declined 101.70 points or 0.64 per cent to 15,767.55. Vinod Nair, head (research) at Geojit Financial Services, said, "Indian indices slipped ahead of the Fed policy announcement as global markets turned cautious. Weakening MoM sales data and rising prices in the US are adding concerns to ongoing inflationary trend. But Fed maintaining an accommodative policy and a calm comment on short-term

inflationary pressure can drive the markets ahead." "Metal stocks are witnessing profit booking from the intra-day high after the news came that China will soon release some base metals from state stockpiles.

As per the recent media report the activity is picking up in the passenger vehicle market after several weeks as states have started unwinding restrictions," adds Mohit Nigam, Head, PMS - Hem Securities, said. PowerGrid was the top laggard in the Sensex pack, shedding around 2 per cent, followed by IndusInd Bank, Reliance, L&T, UltraTech Cement and Bajaj Finance. On the other hand, Nestle, NTPC, ONGC, Bajaj Finserv Hindustan Unilever and Infosys were among the gainers.



JLR launches new Range Rover Velar

NEW DELHI: Jaguar Land Rover (JLR)

India on Wednesday said it has launched an updated version of Range Rover Velar with price starting at Rs 79.87 lakh (ex-showroom).

The new Velar is available in the R-Dynamic S trim with two-litre petrol and diesel powertrains. The model now comes with various new features like air suspension, 3D surround camera and cabin air ionisation with PM2.5 filter. "Range Rover Velar is one of the most aspirational SUV's in India because of its peerless blend of avant-garde design, luxury and technology. In its latest avatar, with the introduction of new technology and convenience features, the Range Rover Velar has become more desirable than ever," JLR India President and Managing Director Rohit Suri said in a statement. The Land Rover range in India includes the Range Rover Evoque (starting at Rs 59.04 lakh), Discovery Sport (starting at Rs 65.30 lakh), Defender 110 (starting at Rs 83.38 lakh), Range Rover Sport (starting at Rs 91.27 lakh) and Range Rover (starting at Rs 2.10 crore). JLR sells its cars from 24 dealerships across the country.

Malabar Investments shifts to DIFC

HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

MALABAR Investments, an arm of Malabar Gold & Diamonds, has redomiciled the company with the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) and the registration of its shares of international operations with Nasdaq Dubai's Central Securities Depository (CSD).

Malabar Group's Chairman M P Ahmed rang Nasdaq Dubai's market opening bell, in the presence of Essa Kazim, Governor of

the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) and Chairman of Dubai Financial Market (DFM) and other representatives were present.

"As Malabar Gold & Diamonds continues to grow internationally, it has become imminent that the holding company be based in a jurisdiction like Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) with high international standards of transparency, regulations and compliance. The board has also recognised the requirement of

having an independent regulated authority as the registrar of shares (being Nasdaq Dubai) with share transfer occurring through a more formalised and transparent process," said M P Ahmed, Chairman, Malabar Group

The group's entry into the Nasdaq Dubai private market enables its 300 plus shareholders from international operations to buy and sell shares with the approval of the board of directors through brokerage companies like Emirates ENBD Securities.

Data Centre capacity in Hyd to go up 3x by 2023

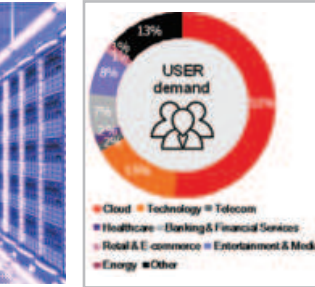
HYDERABAD

HYDERABAD is emerging as the upcoming data centre hub backed by favourable State data centre policy acting as a catalyst. The city is expected to add 66 MW during 2021-23 as per a JLL report titled '2020 India Data Centre Market Update.' "Hyderabad is emerging as the new data centre hotspot owing to regulatory incentives, competitive construction costs and a large user market. The city which currently accounts for 7 per cent share of colocation data centre capacity is expected to reach 10 per cent share by 2023. The growth potential of the city is backed by an upcoming greenfield data centre campus being set-up by one of the leading global cloud players in Hyderabad," said Sandip Patnaik, MD & Head Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, JLL.

"India's colocation data centre industry witnessed unprecedented absorption of 102 MW during 2020, notching higher absorption than most key markets of Europe and America. Fuelled by longer-term trends of rising cloud adoption, increasing digitalisation



and progressive legislation, we anticipate increased demand for colocation space nationwide. Rising demand led data centre operators and developers to pursue ambitious expansion plans, while some adopted the acquisition route to enter Indian markets, which we expect to continue. Colocation capacity grew by around 28 per cent to reach 447 MW in 2020 from 350 MW in 2019," said Rachit Mohan, Head-Data Centre Advisory (India), JLL. As the data centre landscape continues to evolve, the industry is expected to grow exponentially



to reach 1,007 MW by 2023 from its existing capacity of 447 MW. With the growing reliance on digital connectivity, demand is likely to ramp up further due to the imminent rollout of 5G rollout, IoT-linked devices, data localisation and cloud adoption. India's data centre sector will require an investment of \$3.7 billion over the next three years to fulfil the 6 million sq. ft greenfield development opportunity for the industry.

Mumbai and Chennai are expected to drive 73 per cent of the sector's total capacity addition during 2021-23, while other cities

Dodla Dairy IPO subscribed 1.40 times

HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

DODLA Dairy's initial public offering was subscribed 1.40 times on the first day of subscription on Wednesday.

The initial public offering (IPO) received bids for 1,19,38,955 shares against 85,07,569 shares on offer, according to NSE data. The qualified institutional buyers (QIBs) category received two per cent subscription, non-institutional investors 14 per cent and retail individual investors (RIIs) 2.73 times. The IPO comprises a fresh issue of Rs 50 crore and an offer-for-sale of 1,09,85,444 equity shares. Its price range is at Rs 421-428 per share.

At the upper-end of the price range, the IPO is expected to fetch Rs 520.17 crore. Dodla Dairy, a leading dairy company



in southern India, on Tuesday said it has raised a little over Rs 156 crore from anchor investors. The proceeds from the issue will be used for payment of certain borrowings, funding capital expenditure requirement of the company, and for general corporate purposes. The company's operations in India are primarily across the four States - Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Its international operations are based in Uganda and Kenya. ICICI Securities and Axis Capital are the managers to the offer.

