



## WINDOWS



Women buy 'rakhis' at a shop ahead of 'Raksha Bandhan' festival, in Bengaluru on Thursday

## Guinness honour for math genius Shakuntala Devi

**New Delhi:** Guinness World Records on Thursday honoured Indian math genius Shakuntala Devi with the long overdue record title for 'fastest human computation', four decades after she achieved the feat. The fastest human computation is 28 seconds and was achieved by Shakuntala Devi by successfully multiplying two randomly selected 13-digit numbers, at Imperial College London, UK, on June 18, 1980. The certification was received by Anupama Banerji, daughter of the late mathematician.



## Priyanka vacates Lodhi Estate bungalow

**New Delhi:** Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra vacated her official Lodhi Estate bungalow on Thursday. An official statement issued by the Congress said Priyanka Gandhi handed over the possession of her 35, Lodhi Estate bungalow, "previously allotted to her on security grounds", to the CPWD today. Sources close to her said she will be staying for a few days in her Gurgaon penthouse before shifting to central Delhi, where she has finalised a house on rent. Renovations are currently going on in her new house in Delhi, they said.

## NASA launches Mars rover for ancient life

**Cape Canaveral:** The biggest, most sophisticated Mars rover ever built — a car-size vehicle bristling with cameras, microphones, drills and lasers — blasted off for the red planet Thursday as part of an ambitious, long-range project to bring the first Martian rock samples back to Earth to be analyzed for evidence of ancient life.

## WOMENIA



## HOW TO GET DAZZLING EYE LOOK THIS BAKRID

P2



# India-Mauritius partnership is destined to soar high: PM

**New Delhi:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said the partnership between India and Mauritius is destined to soar higher in future.

The Prime Minister was inaugurating the Supreme Court building of Mauritius with his counterpart Pravind K Jugnauth via video conference.

The virtual inauguration took place in presence of senior members of judiciary from Mauritius and other dignitaries from both the countries. "Our partnership is destined to soar even higher in the coming years," the Prime Minister said after the in-

## Opens Mauritius SC building along with his counterpart Jugnauth



auguration of the building. The Prime Minister further said India and Mauritius jointly celebrated yet another landmark on Thursday as a symbol of special friendship between the two countries. "The new Supreme Court

Building in Port Louis is a symbol of our cooperation and our shared values," he said.

Modi said both India and Mauritius respect our independent judiciaries as important pillars of our democratic systems and

that this impressive new building, with its modern design and construction, is a mark of respect.

Modi reminded, "We had jointly inaugurated the landmark Metro project and a new state-of-the-art hospital a few

months back. I am happy to know that both these projects are proving useful for the people of Mauritius. It was in Mauritius that I had first spoken about India's vision of SAGAR - Security and Growth for All in the Region'. This is because Mauritius is at the heart of India's approach to the Indian Ocean region."

Modi said history has taught us that in the name of development partnerships, nations were forced into dependence partnerships and that it gave rise to colonial rule and rise to global power blocks.

Continued on Page 5

# Delhi govt to lower VAT on diesel by half

**New Delhi:** Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday announced a reduction in the Value Added Tax (VAT) on diesel from the existing 30 per cent to 16.75 per cent, saying the move will help propel Delhi's economy.

The diesel price will be reduced by Rs 8.36 in Delhi due to the VAT cut, Kejriwal said in a virtual press briefing. He said there was a serious challenge of reviving the economy of Delhi but it will be achieved together with co-operation of people. The diesel price will now come down from Rs 82 a litre to



Rs 73.64 a litre, he said and added that traders and industrialists in the city had demanded it. The decision was taken in a meeting of the Delhi Cabinet chaired by the Chief Minister.

## SETBACK FOR AP KRMB puts brakes on R'seema lift project

HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Amaravati:** The Krishna River Management Board (KRMB) on Thursday directed the Andhra Pradesh government to immediately put a halt to works on the Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Project.

In a letter to the Principal Secretary (Irrigation), AP government, KRMB member Harikesh Meena cautioned the government not to initiate any works on the proposed project without sanctions from the CWC.

The Board took the decision after AP went ahead and granted administrative sanctions for several projects on river Krishna without necessary approvals from the KRMB, Central Water Commission (CWC) and the Apex Council.

The Telangana government has already registered a complaint with the KRMB against the proposed project diverting Krishna water from the Srisailem reservoir stating that the project negates the provisions of the 2014 Bifurcation Act.

This comes as a setback to the AP government which is preparing to take on Telangana on August 5, at the Apex Committee meeting of the Water Resources Ministry to thrash out differences between the two Telugu States.

Continued on Page 5

# Galwan martyrs' names to be inscribed on War Memorial

**New Delhi:** The names of 20 Indian Army personnel, who were killed after valiantly fighting Chinese troops in Galwan Valley in eastern Ladakh on June 15, will be inscribed on the National War Memorial here, officials said on Thursday.

They said the process for inscribing the names of the Army personnel on the memorial may take a few months.

Chinese and Indian troops clashed in Galwan Valley for several hours on the night of June 15 in their deadliest brawl in the last five decades. Colonel B Santosh Babu, the commanding officer of the 16 Bihar regiment ailing from Telangana, was among the Indian Army personnel killed in the clash.

The Chinese soldiers used stones, nail-studded sticks, iron rods and clubs in carrying out brutal attacks on Indian soldiers after they protested the erection of a surveillance post by China around patrolling point 14 in Galwan Valley.



Col Santosh Babu

China has not disclosed the number of casualties its troops suffered. According to an American intelligence report, the number of casualties on the Chinese side was 35.

Last month, Army Chief Gen M M Naravane awarded 'Commendation Cards' to five soldiers for their bravery in dealing with Chinese troops during the Galwan Valley clash.

The incident significantly escalated the border tension in eastern Ladakh with India calling it "a premeditated and planned action by China".

## EC NOTIFIES POLL FOR ONE OF 2 VACANT COUNCIL SEATS IN AP

Election scheduled for Aug 24

HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Amaravati:** Only one of the two vacancies in the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council under the MLAs quota will be filled in a by-election to be held on August 24.

The Election Commission of India on Thursday announced the schedule for the by-election to fill one casual vacancy, caused by the resignation of the ruling YSR Congress member Mopidevi Venkata Ramana Rao on July 1. Though another YSRC member Pilli Subhash Chandra Bose also resigned along with Mopidevi, by-election to fill that vacancy was not notified ostensibly because the member's tenure was only till March 29, 2021. "Since the remaining tenure is only for a period less than a year, the vacancy is not being filled immediately," sources in the Election Commission here said. Continued on Page 5

# Lord Ram at Times Square on August 5

**New York:** Images of Lord Ram and 3D portraits of the grand Ram Temple in Ayodhya will be beamed across the giant billboards in the iconic Times Square in New York on August 5 to celebrate the temple's groundbreaking ceremony, with organisers describing the commemoration as a one-of-a-kind and historic event.

Prominent community leader and president of the American India Public Affairs Committee Jagdish Sewhani has said that arrangements are being made to celebrate the historic moment in New York on August 5, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to lay the foundation stone for construction of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya.

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A hoarding of PM Narendra Modi and other leaders put up beside a statue of Lord Hanuman, ahead of the foundation laying ceremony of Ram Temple, in Ayodhya on Thursday

## Ram temple is culmination of my dreams: Kalyan Singh

**Lucknow:** Former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Kalyan Singh has said that the 'bhoomi puja' of the Ram temple in Ayodhya is a culmination of his dreams. Singh was the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh when the Babri mosque was demolished on December 6, 1992. His government was dismissed after the demolition and he was later convicted for contempt of court. He even had to spend a day in jail and was fined Rs 2,000. Continued on Page 5



## OPERATION WESTEND

# HC relief to Jaya Jaitly

Earlier Delhi court awards 4-year jail term to ex-Samata Party chief

**New Delhi:** A few hours after being sentenced to jail for four years in a corruption case relating to a defence deal, the Delhi High Court in a major relief to ex-Samata Party president Jaya Jaitly, suspended the sentence awarded to her.

The orders were passed by a single judge bench of the High Court presided over by Justice Suresh Kumar Kait on Thursday after he admitted the appeal filed by Jaitly



through senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi seeking suspension of her conviction and the sentence awarded later. Jaitly's legal team moved the High Court soon after the sentence was pronounced.

Earlier in the day, a Delhi

court sentenced Jaitly to four years in jail in a corruption case relating to a defence deal. Two other convicts and Jaitly's former party colleague Gopal Pacharwal and Major General (Retd) S P Murgai were also awarded a similar jail term by the court.

While Jaitly approached the High Court on Thursday, the other convicts are likely to move the court on Friday.

Continued on Page 5

# COVID BLUES Livelihood of Ganesh festival-linked people in peril

**Mumbai/Hyderabad:** With the governments in Maharashtra, Telangana and other states calling for low-key Ganesh celebration this year in view of the COVID-19 pandemic, livelihood of people associated with the festivities, which generate a turnover of more than Rs 70 crore every year in Mumbai alone, has been adversely affected.

There are some 12,000 Sarvajanic Ganesh mandals here. Besides, nearly two lakh idols are installed by citizens at their homes

every year, Naresh Dahibavkar, president of the Brihanmumbai Sarvajanic Ganeshotsav Samanvay Samiti, an umbrella body coordinating between the civic body, government and Ganesh mandals, said.

"There is a small industry which works during the festival involving flower vendors, electricians, those selling items like bamboo for setting up mandaps, those providing transportation facilities, artisans and many more," he said.



"The business turnover during the festivities here is over Rs 70 crore and the government also gets taxes," he said, adding that the livelihood of those involved in the celebration-related works would be affected this year.

Ganeshotsav is the most popular festival in Maharashtra. The pandals set up by various mandals in Mumbai and other places in the state attract thousands of devotees during the 10-day festival, which begins on 'Ganesh Chaturthi'. This year,

'Ganesh Chaturthi' falls on August 22.

Over the years, Ganapati celebrations have grown by leaps and bound since it became a 'sarvajanic' (public) festival more than a century ago.

In 1896, the plague epidemic cast a shadow on the festival here. At that time also, the celebrations were subdued and people used photographs of Lord Ganesh on their wall calendars to offer prayers since the idols could not be made, Dahibavkar said.

Continued on Page 5



# Womenia

## CHANGES TO MAKE-UP DURING COVID-19



Shahnaz Husain

Makeup is known not only to enhance our external features but also give us a lot of confidence and positivity from within.

Since face masks cover a significant portion of face features, make-up enthusiasts are learning to adapt their beauty routines. As a result, those with more sensitive/oily skin have been facing the skin related complications, like acne breakouts, flare-ups of eczema or rosacea, or general skin irritation.

Mask wearers may experience chapped or dry skin, along with areas where the masks put extra pressure; under chin and beneath eyes and hence maintaining a good CTM (cleansing, toning and moisturising) day and night-time is vital important. I will suggest to take mask breaks and spray some moisture mist onto your face before putting the mask back on again, make sure to wash your cloth mask regularly and sanitise it appropriately, as per govt guidelines.

Apply gentle moisturizer, serums and creams rich in hyaluronic acid that is effective enough to combat skin flaking on



areas covered by masks. Hydrate your skin by drinking at least 8-10 glass of water, juice, soup, coconut water, lassi and water-rich foods in 24 hours times as hydrated skin doesn't produce much oil which helps keep your skin clean healthy and fresh looking. While the pandemic is worsening day by day and the situation is turning grim so naturally, make-up and the way we look have also changed. With half the face covered by a mask, the use of lipstick and also foundations has become less. With a mask on, a foundation can make matters worse, by making it feel heavy under the mask, and making it more difficult to breathe.

Many have stopped using foundation and use a powder compact or a highlighter on certain areas

of the face, like the cheekbones. If you must use foundation, make it a light, water-based one. Waterproof and smudge-proof products would be more suitable to wear under a mask.

Another major change is that there is less emphasis on lipstick and more emphasis on eye make-up. The trend is now to accentuate eye make-up. Kajal, eyeliner and eye shadows are becoming more popular. In fact, the prediction is that various shades of eye shadow will become the trend. Since the emphasis is on eyes, one must pay more attention to grooming the eyebrows on one's own, by plucking and shaping them. You may not be wearing your lipstick, but continue taking care of the skin on the lips, so that the skin of the lips

does not suffer under the mask.

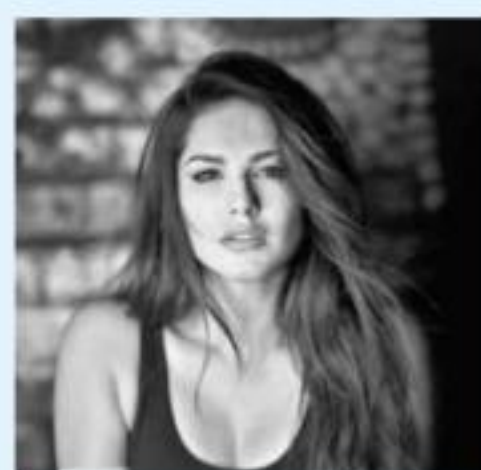
Wearing a mask for long hours, while being outdoors in the sun can lead to partial tanning of the skin, with the area outside the mask becoming tanned. So, carry out treatments that help to produce an even colour tone. Apply a sun-block cream on the exposed area before going out in the sun. If your skin is oily, use a sunscreen gel. Anti-tan sunscreens are available.

All said and done, make-up will never go out of fashion. Make-up not only makes one look good but also feel good. It is said that wearing lipstick actually lifts the look immediately and also lifts the mood. Therefore, we are all looking forward to the time when the pandemic will end and make-up will be popular again.

TWEET PATROL


**SUNNYLEONE**  
**@SUNNYLEONE**

challengeaccepted thanks for making me a part of this Jeeti, Nuria and Devina... Love you 3 so much and happy to be among strong women!! Love you!  
 #womenempowerment



## How to get dazzling eye look this Bakrid

Winged eyeliner (or cat eyeliner) is an incredibly popular look that mystifies many but the truth of the matter is that it's surprisingly easy to master.

The best part of every festival especially for the women is make-up. But, what can be more happening than having a perfect eyeliner. Here are a few tips for you to get a perfect winged eyeliner based on the shape of your eyes this Bakrid.

### Hooded eyes

If the crease of your eyelid isn't visible when your eyes are open, you likely have hooded eyes.

Many folks with hooded eyes get anxious about eye makeup, especially since most makeup tutorials only feature eyes where the crease is exposed. Don't fret: it's super easy to apply flawless winged eyeliner to hooded eyes.

To make sure the liner isn't concealed by your lid, create the outer wing tip where the lid's hood starts. Work your way inward, applying your liner in thin strokes and widening as desired.

### Small eyes

If you have close-set eyes, here is a simple makeup trick that will play up their prettiness: widen your eyes by drawing a double wing. Draw liner along your upper lash line, then make a small flick outward. Mirror this on the bottom lash line, but make sure you don't apply liner any further in than the middle of your eye, otherwise you'll give the appearance of even closer-set eyes. Apply a touch of concealer between the two wings to



really make 'em pop.

For this look, it is recommended using a powder to draw your desired shape, then intensifying it with liquid. If you make a mistake, just use this handy makeup removal trick to clean it up.

### Downturned eyes

If the corners of your eyes slope toward your cheekbones, you have downturned eyes.

For downturned eyes, applying your eyeliner from the inner corner to the outer corner in a thin line. Extend your wing up toward the crease, using the outer corner of your eyebrow as a guide (don't extend further!). Give your overall look a pop of color by picking a pretty shade that complements your irises.

### Monolid eyes

If you have a very minimal or nonexistent crease, you likely have eyes with monolids. A thin winged look is ideal.

To get the look, you don't have much space with a monolid, so you want to maximize it by making

sure the liner is crisp and straight. For the thinnest line possible, place the tip of the eyeliner on the lash line at the pupil, then draw to the outer corner. Then, start from the inner corner and draw it to meet the middle point.

### Round eyes

If you can see around your iris (on the bottom or top), you have round eyes. For round eyes, starting from the outside corner using an angled brush and cream eyeshadow or liner, then drawing at a downward angle toward the eye's outer corner. Apply the liner inwards, stopping at the center of your lid where your pupil is when you're looking straight ahead.

### Almond-shaped eyes

If your eyes are oval-shaped with narrow corners, you likely have almond-shaped eyes. For almond eyes, take advantage of your lid space. Draw your eyeliner from the inner corner all the way across the lash line, then flick it out, stopping at the tip where your crease starts.

-Womenia Desk

## Ensure foot hygiene with these easy tips

PUJA GUPTA

While we focus on washing our hands at regular intervals, let's not forget that it's important to maintain foot hygiene as well. As we continue to juggle work from and for home, your feet bear the brunt as many have either settled to wear slippers or go about our business as foot.

However, not taking proper care of your feet can be detrimental to overall health, as they are the structural foundation of our body. Practicing good foot hygiene is essential in ensuring your overall wellbeing.

Matteo Lambert, an expert from Bata India Limited, shares with us some easy but effective tips to help you do just that:

### Wear shoes that fit

Overall health and hygiene of your feet is directly related to the footwear you've been wearing. While the design should appeal to your fashion sensibilities, it is equally important to ensure the shoe fits you perfectly. Wearing the wrong size can lead to various issues. Be sure to pick shoes crafted with a good-quality insole to prevent your feet from sweating and oozing bad odour.

### Avoid sharing footwear

People don't think twice before borrowing or lending shoes. However, sharing shoes can actually lead to fungal infections. Be very particular about your shoes and refrain from sharing shoes, it is especially paramount in COVID times.



### Wash your footwear at regular intervals

Invest in footwear that can be easily washed and sanitised. Be sure to always wash and sanitize your footwear at regular intervals in order to get rid of bacteria and germs.

### Wear shoes that allow your feet to breathe

In order to keep your feet dry during the monsoon, stick to wearing leather shoes when you go outside. Leather shoes allow better air circulation. However, if you are prone to

excessive sweating, wear shoes made out of mesh fabric.

### Be particular about socks

It is important to wear socks with shoes to prevent them from direct cuts and blisters. Wear socks that are made with rich-quality cotton that will allow your feet to breathe and remain cool.

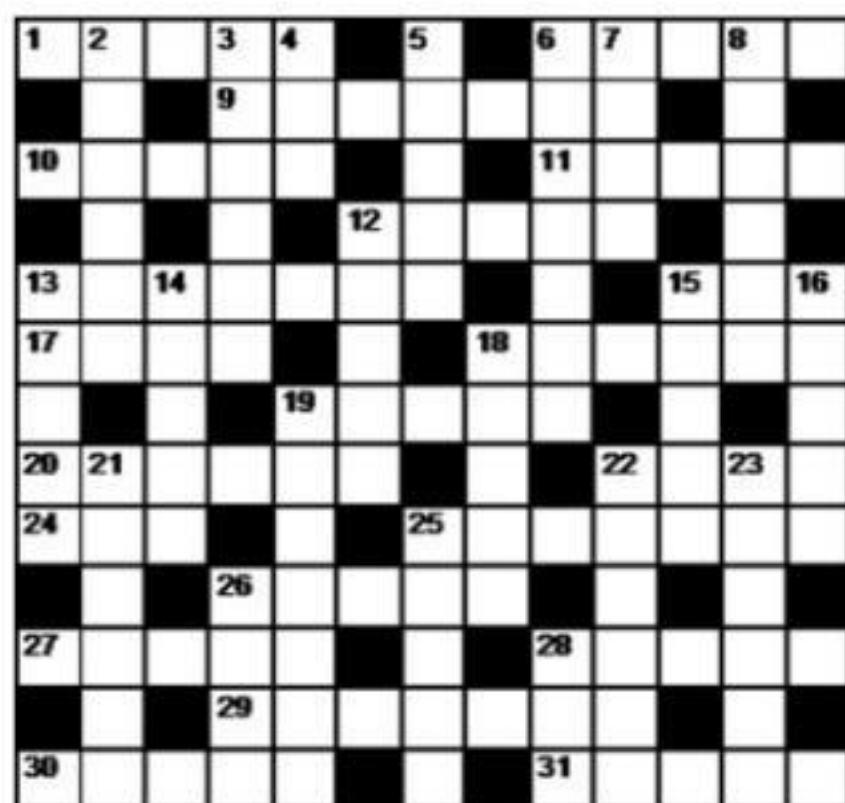
### Prevent your feet from extreme conditions

Extreme weather conditions can be harmful for your feet. It is recommended to always keep your feet snug by wearing socks to protect them from cold weather, but make sure the socks are not too tight. Also, don't skimp on applying sunscreen on your feet when you step out in the sun.

TODAY

## Raspberry Cake Day

Raspberries are a fruit that is undeniably fun among the wide variety of fruits out in the world; with a sweet tartness and a seedy interior, raspberries make desserts a different experience entirely. Raspberry Cake Day celebrates just one example of the sweet concoctions that is delightful to experience. Today, we're celebrating the history of raspberries, cakes, and their fantastically sweet combination that'll make your taste buds ecstatic!



SOLUTION TO JULY 30

### CROSSWORD

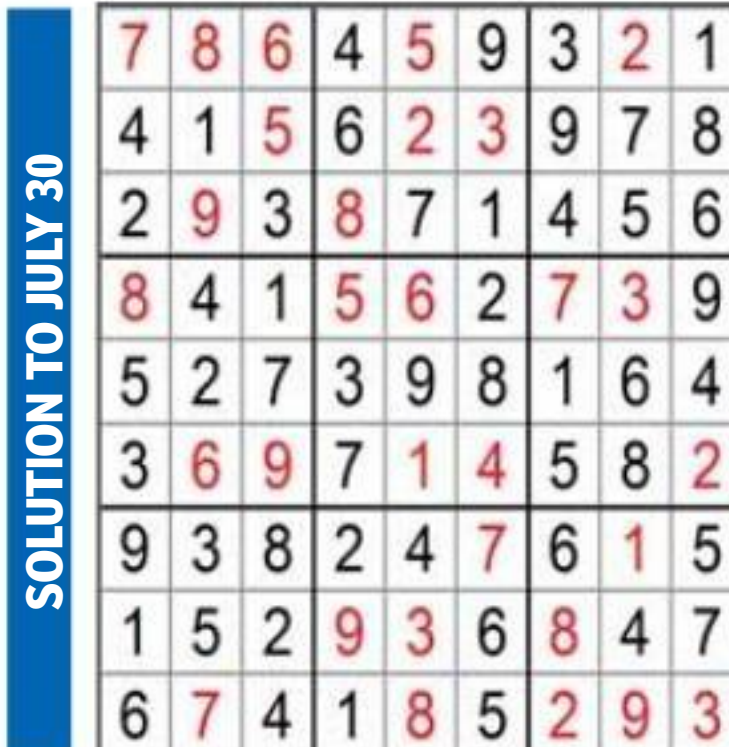
#### Across

- 1 Embrace (5)
- 6 Confronted (5)
- 9 Betrayer (7)
- 10 House of snow (5)
- 11 Complete (5)
- 12 Urges (5)
- 13 Ghosts (7)
- 15 Swindle (3)
- 17 Insular land (4)
- 18 Prickly (6)
- 19 "Star Wars" creator (5)
- 20 Nonsense (6)
- 22 Cooperative group (4)
- 24 Abstract being ? (3)
- 25 Tough and thin (7)
- 26 Springs or jumps (5)
- 27 Citric fruit (5)
- 28 Companies or business houses (5)
- 29 Make slightly damp (7)
- 30 Awry (5)
- 31 Nothing (5)

#### Down

- 2 Bar orders (6)
- 3 Cheap cigar (6)
- 4 In favour of (3)
- 5 Walks haltingly (5)
- 6 Quarters (7)
- 7 Wiles, skills (4)
- 8 Novelist Waugh (6)
- 12 Lift shoulders (5)
- 13 Willow twig (5)
- 14 Medical astringents (5)
- 15 Norwegian composer (5)
- 16 A very small person (5)
- 18 Dusting powders (5)
- 19 Capital of Uttar Pradesh (7)
- 21 Except when (6)
- 22 Food paste (6)
- 23 Asexual (6)
- 25 Paroxysm (5)
- 26 Not all (4)
- 28 Turkish headwear (3)

### SUDOKU



SOLUTION TO JULY 30

### NEWS ROUNDUP

## RADHIKA MADAN SHARES HER 'RIGHT PROFILE'

Actress Radhika Madan has given fans a peek of her right profile on social media.

Radhika took to Instagram, where she shared a picture of herself. In the image, she is flaunting her side profile and flaunting her perfect skin.

Alongside the image, she wrote: "Right profile."

Radhika, an avid social media user, has been keeping her fans entertained with her pictures and the captions. Recently, she shared a picture of herself on Wednesday and borrowed a line from the song "Om shanti om" picturised on late actor Rishi Kapoor.

"Kya tumne kabhikise se pyaarkiye? Kabhikisikodil diya?" Radhika will next be seen in the upcoming romantic comedy "Shiddat", which also stars Mohit Raina, Diana Madan and Sunny Kaushal, and is directed by Kunal Deshmukh of "Jannat" fame on a script by Shridhar Raghavan and Dheeraj Rattan.





# Not holding final year exams will damage students' future: UGC

**New Delhi (IANS):** The University Grants Commission (UGC) has told the Supreme Court that it is not possible to alter its July 6 guidelines mandating universities across India to conduct their final year examination by September end.

The UGC informed the court that the expert committee, headed by Prof R.C. Kuhad, submitted a report recommending that terminal semester examinations should be conducted by universities/institutions by the end of September.

This report was deliberated and



approved by the UGC in a meeting held on July 6. The Union Ministry of Home Affairs had also permitted the schedule of exams by

universities and institutions.

"It is submitted that the UGC has issued such guidelines to protect the academic future of stu-

dents across the country which will be irreparably damaged if their final year/terminal examinations are not held, while also keeping in mind their health and safety," said the academic regulator in its affidavit.

The 50-page affidavit said that the final year/terminal semester examinations are important because the "learning process is a dynamic interaction where the only way to figure out what students know is to seek evidence of their knowledge and to evaluate it".

The UGC contended that guidelines issued on July 6 adequately

account for the evolving situation of the Covid-19 pandemic, as they provide sufficient time till the end of September to conduct the exams and give sufficient flexibility to institutions to conduct exams through online, offline or blended route.

It also added that in case, students are unable to appear, then they would be given a chance of a specially-conducted exam at a later date.

Emphasising that the academic evaluation of terminal semester/final year students is a very important milestone in any

education system, it insisted on non-interference of courts on these policy matters. It is well-settled that courts of law do not ordinarily intervene in academic decisions and policies involving standard and quality of education, the UGC said.

It also criticised the decision of certain state governments (Maharashtra and Delhi) to either cancel the final year exam for UG/PG students and to graduate such students and confer degrees without appearing for the exams. "Such a decision directly affects the standard of

higher education in the country and will be an encroachment of legislative field of coordinating and determining the standards of education that is exclusively reserved for Parliament," said the affidavit.

The UGC urged the top court to dismiss the batch of pleas opposing July 6 guidelines, with the lead petition in the matter being a plea filed by 31 students from Indian universities across the country. Other pleas include one by the Shiv Sena's youth wing, the Yuva Sena, headed by Maharashtra minister Aditya Thackeray.

## BIRDS OF SAME FEATHERS



Rosy pelicans swim in a pond inside an enclosure, at Assam State Zoo cum Botanical Garden in Guwahati on Thursday

# Bihar floods worsen, 38 lakh people affected in 12 districts

**Patna (IANS)** The flood havoc in Bihar is continuously worsening as people in 12 districts are bearing the brunt of floods due to overflow in almost all major rivers and tributaries in the state. Over 38 lakh people of the state are affected by the floods, while 11 people have died so far in various incidents.

Meanwhile, the government is claiming relief and rescue work is on. The report of the Department of Water Resources states that Kosi has a trend of increasing the water level. The water level of Kosi near Veerpur Barrage was 1.83 lakh cusecs at 6 am on Thursday, which has increased to 1.86 lakh cusecs. Water level of the Gandak river remains stable. The drainage of Gandak has reached 1.91 lakh cusecs at 8 am at Balmikinagar Barrage.



Almost all the rivers of the state are flowing above the danger mark. Ganga, Bagmati, Budhi Gandak, Kamala Balan, Mahananda are flowing above the danger mark in many areas.

Additional Secretary of Disaster Management Department

Ramchandra Do said that 901 panchayats of a total of 102 blocks of 12 districts of Bihar have been affected by the floods. About 38 lakh population in these areas have been affected by the floods.

He claimed that 19 relief

camps have been opened in these areas, where more than 25,000 people are staying. Apart from this, a total of 989 community kitchens are being run in the flood-affected areas, in which more than five lakh people are getting food daily.

He said that NDRF and SDRF teams are doing relief and rescue work in all flood-affected districts. He said that teams of NDRF and SDRF have so far evacuated more than three lakh people trapped in the floods.

Due to floods, the problems of people have increased in the flood-affected areas. People are leaving their homes and taking shelter on the roofs of pucca houses or other high places. The situation in Sitamarhi,

Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga, Gopalganj, East Champaran is quite grim.

## Karnataka lifts Sunday lockdown

**Bengaluru (IANS):** Karnataka will not have any lockdown on Sundays or night curfew from August 1 under unlock 3.0, a top official said on Thursday.

"In accordance with the unlock 3.0 guidelines from the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, Sunday lockdown on August 2 has been lifted along with night curfew from August 1 between 9pm and 5am," state Chief Secretary T.M. Vijay Bhaskar said in an order.

The state government imposed total lockdown on Sundays since June 5 across the state and re-imposed a 9-day lockdown in Bengaluru urban and rural districts from June 14-22 to contain the corona virus spread.

"With more relaxations of lockdown restrictions, gyms and yoga institutes will be allowed to reopen from August 5 across the state," said Bhaskar.

Schools, colleges, theatres, bars, entertainment parks, auditoriums, assembly halls and swimming pools will, however, continue to remain closed till August 31 to prevent the virus spread.

# 3 ASSAM RIFLES SOLDIERS KILLED

**New Delhi (IANS):** Three Assam Rifles personnel were killed and five injured in an ambush near India-Myanmar border at Chandel area in Manipur on Wednesday night.

A senior government officer said that a group of 15 soldiers were returning from an area dominance patrol at Khongtal in Chandel area when an improvised explosive device exploded.

Thereafter they came under heavy fire from the members of an insurgent group.

"On 29 July, 2020, an area domination patrol in Khongtal, Chandel dist, Manipur. At 18:45 hrs the patrol party got ambushed on their way back," said a senior government officer.

The incident happened about three kilometers from the India-Myanmar border. They were returning to their post after three days of operation along the international border.

The deceased have been



identified as Havildar Pranay Kalita, Rifleman Y.M. Konyak and Rifleman Ratan Salim. The five jawans who sustained "minor injuries" have been shifted to the military hospital. The government has stated that no insurgent group has so far claimed responsibility for the attack.

"The local administration and intelligence agencies are working to identify the insurgent group which carried out the attack on the patrolling party," said a senior

government officer.

Assam Rifles, a paramilitary force under Union Home Ministry, comprises of Indian Army soldiers and officers and their own cadre officials and officers.

On June 23, a report published by the European Foundation for South Asian Studies (EFSAS) stated that Indian insurgents from the country's north eastern states, who have been sheltered for years in Myanmar, present security challenges for India.

## Video of Raj Speaker, CM's son goes viral

**Jaipur (IANS):** A huge controversy erupted in Rajasthan soon after a video of a conversation between Assembly Speaker C.P. Joshi and Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot's son Vaibhav Gehlot went viral in which the Speaker was heard talking about how 30 MLAs could have toppled the state government as the situation was tough. He is also seen discussing the fate of the Congress government while saying that had 30 MLAs left the Gehlot camp, the government would have been toppled.

The purported discussion between the two can be heard with Joshi saying, "Nothing could have been done had 30 MLAs left the camp. Then, you could have done nothing and they could have toppled the government."

Sources said that it was Joshi's birthday on Wednesday and the video was shot at his official residence when Vaibhav Gehlot went to wish him. Meanwhile, the BJP has insisted that the Speaker should resign on moral grounds as he appears to be biased in the video when as a Speaker he should be impartial.

## RHEA'S PLEA TO TRANSFER PROBE

# Sushant's father files caveat in SC

**Patna:** The family of Sushant Singh Rajput on Thursday filed a caveat in the Supreme Court on Rhea Chakraborty's petition seeking transfer of the investigation in the actor's death case to Mumbai Police. A caveat is a legal process, in which the party, which had filed it before the concerned court, shall have to be heard definitely before the court concerned will pass any order in future.

Let nothing to be done in the above mentioned matter without prior notice to the undersigned, said the caveat, filed by Rajput's father KK Singh in the apex court. This comes a day after actor Rhea Chakraborty moved a petition in the top court seeking directions to transfer the investigation in the FIR filed by Rajput's family in Bihar to Mumbai Police. An FIR had been registered against Chakraborty by Rajput's father at Rajiv Nagar police station in Patna under various sections, including abetment to suicide. Earlier, Chakraborty had demanded a CBI probe in the case.



## CBI case against 4 Navy officials

**New Delhi:** The Central Bureau of Investigation has registered a case against four Navy officials and 14 others for allegedly submitting fake bills in the name of supplying IT hardware. The accused had allegedly submitted fake bills worth Rs 6.76 crore in the name of supplying IT hardware to the Western Naval Command. Officials said on Wednesday that the investigating agency has registered a case against Captain Atul Kulkarni, Commander Mandar Godbole and RP Sharma and Petty Officer LOG (F and A) Kuldeep Singh Baghel in the case. --ANI

## CBI takes over probe into Kerala musician's death

**Thiruvananthapuram (IANS):** Almost 22 months after the death of hugely popular young musician Balabhaskar in a road accident, near here, the CBI has taken up the probe, for which an FIR has now been lodged by the CBI.

The Kerala government sought a CBI probe in December last year, after the request came from his father.

Balabhaskar, 40, was travelling with his wife and two-year-old daughter from Thrissur to the state capital, when their car met with an accident in the wee hours of September 25, 2018, on the outskirts of the capital city.

While the daughter died on the spot, Balabhaskar passed away on October 2. His wife and driver escaped with injuries. Soon after the incident occurred, doubts surfaced on who was driving the car, when it met with the accident, when some reports said it was driven by the driver, some other reports mentioned that it was driven by the musician himself. Incidentally the first revelation came a few days later, when popular



stage artiste Kalabhavan Soby said it was not an accident, as he noticed 'certain things' at the accident site, when he passed through that way, soon after the incident took place.

One reason why this new CBI probe will attract more attention is the alleged presence of one person, now arrested in the gold smuggling case, soon after the accident took place.

It was the musician's father C.K. Unni, who first raised apprehensions in the Kerala Crime Branch Police probe, then, as he felt it was a probe that lacked conviction as despite their requests, a few things were not being looked into, by them.

**New Delhi:** An Ayurvedic doctor, who was allegedly a mastermind in over 50 murder cases of truck and taxi drivers across Delhi and neighbouring states, was arrested from Baprola area where he was living after jumping parole in January, police said.

Citing previous media reports, the police claimed he may have been involved in more than 100 murder cases but could not confirm the exact figure as the cases registered against him in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Rajasthan were investigated by the state police concerned.

Devender Sharma, 62, a BAMS degree holder, hailed from Purreni village in Uttar Pradesh's Aligarh district and he was apprehended by Delhi Police's Crime Branch team on Tuesday, six months after jumping parole in a murder case, they said.

The police said Sharma was convicted in several cases of kidnapping and murder. He was arrested twice earlier for running a

# 'Lost count after 50 murders,' says ayurvedic doctor held in Delhi



fake gas agency in Uttar Pradesh and was also jailed for running a kidney racket in different states.

"Sharma was serving life sentence in Central Jail, Jaipur in a murder case and was out on parole for 20 days in January this year after spending 16 years in jail. But he jumped parole and stayed at his native village for a while before moving to Delhi in the beginning of March.

"Earlier, he was living in the house of an acquaintance at Mohan Garden and then, he moved to Baprola where he married a widow. Our team arrested him after we received information about his hideout on Tuesday," said Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime) Rakesh Pawariya.

Sharma had come to Delhi with the intention of starting afresh and got married to his dis-

tant relative who knew about his criminal background, he said.

He then entered property business and was currently mediating in the sale of one Marshal House located at Connaught Place to a property dealer in Jaipur, he added.

His interrogation started on Tuesday and continued till Wednesday morning and he remained very calm and cooperated with the team. In fact, he disclosed the details about his previous involvement in crime himself, the police official said.

During interrogation, he also confessed to being the mastermind of more than 50 murders.

He was arrested for several murder cases reported in 2002-2004 but was convicted only in only six-seven cases. His wife and children left him in 2004 after they came to know about his activities, he added.

When police questioned Sharma about the media reports, he told them that he had lost

count after 50 murders and it had become difficult for him to remember the exact number of the killings executed till date.

Sharma received his BAMS degree from Siwan, Bihar, and he started his clinic in 1984 in Jaipur. Later in 1992, he invested Rs 11 lakh in a gas dealership scheme but was cheated and suffered a financial crisis. So in 1995, he started a fake gas agency at Chhara village in Aligarh and later got involved in criminal activities, he said.

In 1994, Sharma also got involved in an interstate kidney transplant racket which was running in Jaipur, Ballabgarh, Gurgaon and other places. He and several other doctors were arrested in 2004 in the Gurgaon kidney racket case, the officer said.

From 1994 to 2004, he claimed to have carried out more than 112 kidney transplants done for which he got Rs five to seven lakh per case, he said.



## AP BJP: Kanna’s loss, Veerraju’s gain

Somu Veerraju, the new BJP State President of Andhra Pradesh, has a clear-cut job on hand. The replacement of Kanna Lakshminarayana with Veerraju has come as no surprise to anyone. Kanna turned out to be a miserable failure from the BJP’s viewpoint in his capacity as the president of the party in steering it effectively. The BJP is struggling to establish itself as a strong Opposition in the State, having played a second fiddle to the TDP from the latter’s inception, on its own volition. Though it got separated from the TDP in between, it could not gain much, thanks to the caste dynamics in the State. There have been whispers that powerful local BJP leaders did not have much say in the party affairs and that they were un-

able to dictate an independent course for the party. Bifurcation of the State too did not infuse the desired strength in the party as it again became an ally of the TDP. During the 2019 elections, the party was left to fend for itself with even the TDP distancing itself from the NDA. The BJP faced a problem in identifying itself with any particular social group all along till the Jana Sena joined hands with it in the recent past. Even Pawan Kalyan’s debut as an ally could not alter the image of the BJP in Andhra Pradesh as Kapus (Pawan’s identity) were never a monolith vote block in politics and never used their numbers to change the course of political parties much. Chiranjeevi and Pawan Kalyan could gather impressive crowds during electioneering but could not consolidate their position in Andhra politics. While Chiranjeevi preferred sailing with the Congress in the latter times, Pawan Kalyan chose to adopt an anti-YSRCP stand and preferred the BJP now. Kanna was expected to give a worthy fight to the YSRCP as well the TDP after he

became the BJP president. However, either Kanna did not read the BJP policy correctly or deviated from his brief in due course deliberately, to fall out of his Central leaders’ favour. As for the BJP, its line has always been clear - that it would take on both the TDP and the YSRCP simultaneously in the State notwithstanding the fact that the Centre was seeking YSRCP’s support in the Parliament on several issues. It also needed the support of its members in the Rajya Sabha to tide over the Opposition in getting its Bills passed. But it never said it was either going soft on the YSRCP or that the latter was its ally. If any, the YSRCP needed the BJP more on its side due to the pending cases of its leaders. Again, the BJP’s first priority is to become the main Opposition and replace the TDP in the position before the 2024 elections. Hence, it encouraged defections from the TDP into its fold at all levels. Perhaps, this is where Kanna failed in his understanding of the party’s line. It is to be seen how far Veerraju would succeed in the process.

# PM Modi & a historic education reform



In contemporary times we live in, it is the education which directly impacts the socio-economic position of an individual, a society and a nation. Nations which have not prioritised education have lost out on massive economic opportunities and ended up in painful social unrest and economic suffering. India, being the second most populated nation cannot afford to make the mistake of underprioritising education.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with his vision for ‘New India’ has unveiled a ‘New Education Policy’ and this is an essential reform which was long due.

For over 70 years, India has been making only peripheral changes in its educational system without having to envision the need for massive overhaul. Leadership of a nation is about guiding it towards glory, through empowerment of its citizens. A nation with a literacy rate of 74%, certainly requires pushing forward a larger agenda of 100% literacy in the near term. 100% education should be the next national agenda for a decade or two.

Education is the most economically efficient empowerment initiative for a nation. Every other form of social empowerment requires large fund availability. It also entails possibility of wastage, leakage and above all no guaranteed results.

The New Education Policy has clearly highlighted the priorities of this government. PM Modi has delivered an essential reform which BJP was demanding every government for over six decades. BJP strongly believes, it’s the education which shapes the national values, protects spirit of nationalism and enables nation building. Education singularly impacts socio-economic activity of a nation through rise in employment and productivity. These are some of the key



drivers of the New Education Policy:

### Single Regulator

Multiple regulatory agencies have succeeded in lowering the education standards for decades with regulatory overlaps, policy paralysis, execution delays, corruption and lack of enterprise spirit.

Single regulator will bring much needed breather for educational institutions to operate with more agility, free from regulatory hassles and project delays. It will also enable market orientation to the entire education system, instead of an oppressive regime breathing heavy over administration of institutions.

### Medium Of Instruction

There has been a lot of confusion and debate over what is an effective medium of instruction in India? for decades. With half-baked understanding of India’s demography, geography, history and cultural heritage, this debate led by Communists with the help of Congress has led Indian education system to disrespect and disown Indian languages and promote of English as a core medium of instruction.

The enslaved colonial mindset, disguised as elitists and pragmatists have succeeded so far, driving the narrative of ‘Employability’ as the reason for English medium instruction for all. Some states in India

The New Education Policy provides portability of curricular credits throughout the higher education timeline, which empowers students with enormous choice of subject combinations, and ease of moving in and out of educational phases for prioritising their personal and professional needs. Allowing inter-disciplinary shifts through the higher education timeline of a student, also allows back tracking on individual subject priorities or making progressive changes to one’s education profile, as they go up the higher education ladder. It also allows students to choose multiple specializations from subjects of their choice even at the top of their educational pursuit like a Ph D programme

have even adopted this mindless and prejudiced advocacy. India is a multi-lingual, multi-regional and multi-cultural heterogeneous nation. The 22 recognized languages of India represent the respective region’s cultural heritage, dating back to centuries. A language is a strong enabler of self-worth, belongingness, regional identity and impacts regional pride.

Directing the medium of instruction to be of the regional language or mother tongue until 5th standard in school education is a path breaking reform, which protects the national heritage and culture.

### Inter-Disciplinary Enabler

The New Education Policy provides portability of curric-

ular credits throughout the higher education timeline, which empowers students with enormous choice of subject combinations, and ease of moving in and out of educational phases for prioritizing their personal and professional needs.

Allowing inter-disciplinary shifts through the higher education timeline of a student, also allows back tracking on individual subject priorities or making progressive changes to one’s education profile, as they go up the higher education ladder. It also allows students to choose multiple specializations from subjects of their choice even at the top of their educational pursuit like a PHD programme.

### New Grading System

Moving away from memorised learning and ranking through academic marks, the new education policy drives a powerful change through a grading system, which evaluates and grades students through a full spectrum of curricular and non-curricular competencies, knowledge and skills.

This reform is a life saver for many young people, as it reduces the unfair advantage few students hold over many, with just memory capability and not necessarily a knowledge edge. The new system also encourages students to get out of their academic silos and acquire more social and vocational skills right from their school education timeline.

### Vocational Skill Focus

While education must enable knowledge, it should also ensure employment. Education without employment will be an overrated and resource pilfered exercise, especially in a nation of 1.3 billion, where over 12% live in poverty.

PM Modi and his government has initiated ‘Make in India’ agenda to transform India into a self-reliant nation, which can produce what it consumes, and not depend on imports for its domestic consumption of goods and services. However, without an educated, skilled manpower availability, ‘Make in India’ initiative cannot be fueled to fulfil this grand national ambition.

Prioritising vocational skills from the school education timeline, enables the focus on learning ‘skills to earn a living’, and ensures millions of economically and socially backward communities to be empowered in a generation or two. This initiative can alleviate millions of poor, from the unwarranted pain of poverty.

There are many such reformatory initiatives in the new education policy. Each of the new initiatives are necessarily relevant to face and overcome the challenges faced by India.

India’s ‘New Education Policy’ is a path breaking, essential reform. If implemented well, it has the power to transform India into a truly self-reliant nation, without unemployment and poverty.

(The author is the chief spokesperson of the BJP, an organisational strategist and a global leadership coach)



## Trump’s tough-on-crime message does not go well in US suburbs

As President Donald Trump’s support in the US suburbs erodes amid concerns about his handling of the coronavirus pandemic, he has returned to a familiar campaign theme: trying to scare voters away from backing Democrat Joe Biden in November.

From deploying federal agents to confront protesters in cities such as Portland, Oregon, to releasing ads portraying a lawless and dangerous America under a Biden presidency, Trump has positioned himself as the candidate who will keep the country safe.

But an media agency’s polling this month shows white suburban Americans are far more worried about the economy and healthcare than crime, a sign that Trump’s strategy could be at odds with the priorities of the critical voting bloc he narrowly won in 2016 and must win back to secure a second term.

Asked what is “the most important problem facing the United States today,” 21% said the economy and 21% said healthcare. Only 6% said crime, according to the July 15-21 national opinion poll, which included 1,603 U.S. adults who identified as white and living in the suburbs.

But concern about Covid-19 and Trump’s management of it ran deep. Among white Americans in the suburbs, 81% said they were personally concerned about the spread of the virus. Forty-one percent of those suburban white Americans approved of the way Trump has handled the coronavirus, down 12 points from a similar poll that ran in March. While 42% of all Americans thought Biden would be better at dealing with Covid-19 compared with 33% who said Trump was better, white suburban Americans were more closely split over which candidate was better equipped to lead the nation out of the crisis, with 40% saying Trump and 38% saying Biden.

The data suggests Trump, who trails Biden in national polls, could shore up his support in the suburbs and improve his chances of winning the Nov. 3 election with stronger leadership on the health and economic crises rather than doubling down on assertions that the country would be less safe with Biden in the White House.

“His law-and-order message seems more geared towards resuscitating his base than winning over swing suburbanites,” said Dave Wasserman, a non-partisan analyst with the Cook Political Report. “There is no way Trump can win the election unless he turns around his numbers on the handling of Covid-19.”

The Republican president’s advisers insist his tough-on-crime message resonates with suburban voters after months of protests over racial injustice and police brutality against Black Americans and calls from progressives to “defund” the police.

“The violence, the lawlessness, is sickening. This is what Joe Biden and the Democrats stand for,” said Rick Gorka, a senior member of the Republican National Committee and part of Trump’s re-election campaign. “Our data shows this is an extremely moving issue, especially with suburban voters and those that are undecided.”

Gorka, who declined to share the data, said the president had been involved in the messaging and ad strategy.

Biden does not support defunding police departments. Yet one Trump campaign television ad that portrays an older woman being attacked by burglars while she waits on hold trying to call emergency services ends with the slogan: “You won’t be safe in Joe Biden’s America.”

“Biden will destroy your neighborhood and your American Dream,” Trump said in a tweet directed to “Suburban Housewives of America” last week. “I will preserve it and make it even better!”

In his latest bid for suburban support, Trump said on Wednesday his administration was rescinding an Obama-era regulation aimed at combating discriminatory housing practices and segregation.

Critics attacked the move, with Democratic Senator Elizabeth Warren describing it as “racist fear-mongering.”

Trump’s focus on fear echoes his 2016 campaign, when he depicted immigrants from Mexico as criminals. This time around, he warns of “anarchists and agitators” whom he says Democratic-led cities have been unable to control. Oregon’s governor said on Wednesday the federal government had agreed to withdraw agents from Portland, while the Justice Department said it would send law enforcement officials to Cleveland, Milwaukee and Detroit - all in crucial battleground states - in an expansion of a separate program aimed at curtailing a surge of violent crime in some cities.

Kyle Kondik, a non-partisan analyst at the University of Virginia Centre for Politics, believes Trump ordered federal police into Portland “to create scary images for suburban voters.”

“But it’s kind of beside the point. In order for the message to resonate, it needs to feel more relevant to more people,” Kondik added.

According to the polling, Trump’s net approval in the suburbs declined by 17 percentage points from March to July as the coronavirus swept the country. Biden leads Trump by 11 points in the suburbs, up from a 6-point advantage four months ago.

Trump is “stoking confrontation and conflict” to divert Americans’ attention from his failed leadership on the pandemic, Biden spokesman TJ Ducklo said. “Clearly Americans aren’t buying it.”

Trump’s response to the anti-racism demonstrations was viewed favorably by Republicans in a Reuters/Ipsos poll conducted on Monday and Tuesday, with 78% saying they approved, up from 67% in mid-June. Suburban voters were more suspicious of his motives. Some 44% of suburban Americans said they thought the federal agents were being used for political purposes, while 37% thought they were mostly there to restore law and order.

Mary Aponte, 38, a mother in suburban Bucks County, Pennsylvania, said she was not a Trump supporter but agreed police need support and criminals should face consequences.

“I fear for what will happen in major cities if we get Biden in office when it comes to the police,” she said, adding she remained conflicted about her choice in November because she also has sympathy for the Black Lives Matter movement. Tricia Kalmar, a 45-year-old suburban mother in Delaware, Ohio, said she did not think Trump’s law-and-order messaging would work in her community.

“I don’t feel like any of the moms here feel threatened by the protests,” said Kalmar, who voted for Democrat Hillary Clinton in 2016 but has also regularly voted for Republicans. “Even those who don’t support the protests, they are not concerned about their safety here in the suburbs.”

## Governor should clear Rajasthan imbroglio

Propos the report ‘Gehlot govt wants session on July 31’ (July 29), it seems that Rajasthan is heading towards a tussle between the government and the Governor. The Gehlot government wants to end this uncertainty and fears horse trading if more time is given to floor test. Governor’s contention that due to Covid-19 threat, large assembly of people is not advisable does not hold much water. Despite social distancing norms, all these legislators are eating and watching movies in resorts. How come PM Modi will lay foundation stone ceremony in Ayodhya for temple, though 150 people gathering there is highly untenable. The Governor should not delay the process and must clear the clouds of uncertainty sooner than later.

Ashok Goswami, Mumbai

## Why not a digital Bhumi Pujan?

As we know, on August 5, 2020, there will be Bhoomi Pujan ceremony of Ram Temple in Ayodhya by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. For this ceremony, nearly 100 to 200 people are going to be invited. The main point is that in these corona pandemic period, is it necessary to do the physical Bhoomi Pujan? No doubt, after a legal fight of so many years this ceremony is going to happen and with this ceremony, many people are going to fee good. But at the same time, we witness day by day tremendous increase in number of corona patients. Also, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on July 26, said corona is as fatal today as it was in beginning. So, we cannot deny the danger of Covid-19 on the Bhoomi ceremony. As an Indian citizen, I would like to suggest the govern-

ment that a digital Bhoomi Pujan will be the best way. Also, ‘Digital India’ is the vision of PM Narendra Modi and through digital Bhoomi Pujan, the Prime Minister can send a great message to the citizens of India. Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray also suggested the way of e-Bhoomi Pujan. Everyone is saying that we have to live with this coronavirus for a long time and for this we have to change our daily or conventional habits. Then why we are not implementing the new technological methods? I think digital Bhoomi Pujan will be a great use of technology. If Narendra Modi accept the use of this kind of technology, then this will be not only a great start but also will encourage many of us to do social events digitally.

Harshal Suresh Desale, Pune, Maharashtra

## Governments apathetic to flood victims

The flood situation in north Bihar has gone from bad to worse. Floodwater entered Purnia district during the last 24 hours. The water continued to flow through Madhepura town and low-lying areas. Over 19 lakh people from 725 villages spread across 263 panchayats in 24 blocks of Madhepura, Araria, Supaul and Saharsa districts, had been reeling under the impact of the Kosi flood. It is not the first time that the different parts of Bihar have been affected by floods. But the people of these areas are affected by such floods every year. Hundreds of people lost their lives and lakhs of properties were damaged due to the floods. I have been unable to

understand that why the State and Central governments do not take suitable steps to combat the floods in affected areas. Is the government of India unable to prevent the floods from Bihar or is it the result of government’s negligence? Indeed, floods can be controlled by retaining walls levees, excavating lakes, dams, reservoirs or retention ponds etc. Unfortunately, the administration takes some steps only after the people had been affected by floods and promise people to take a long-term plan for combating flood damage in future. But after the floods are over, they forget to fulfil their promise.

Noor Ahmad, Hyderabad

## Centre’s new education policy a welcome move

The NEP launched by the government on Wednesday has a lot of changes in the policy. The policy was drafted after 34 years. The policy has many pros like early education system and multidisciplinary facilities. The policies increase early school education and implementation of preparatory module for pre-schools. This policy helps children to develop their skills towards their interest and persuade their career as well. The new policy aims at holistic development. The students will have the choice to choose their subject of interests. The policy also emphasises the mother tongue/local and regional language as the medium of instruction preferably until class 8 and further. Hence the new policy brings a lot of change in the Indian education system.

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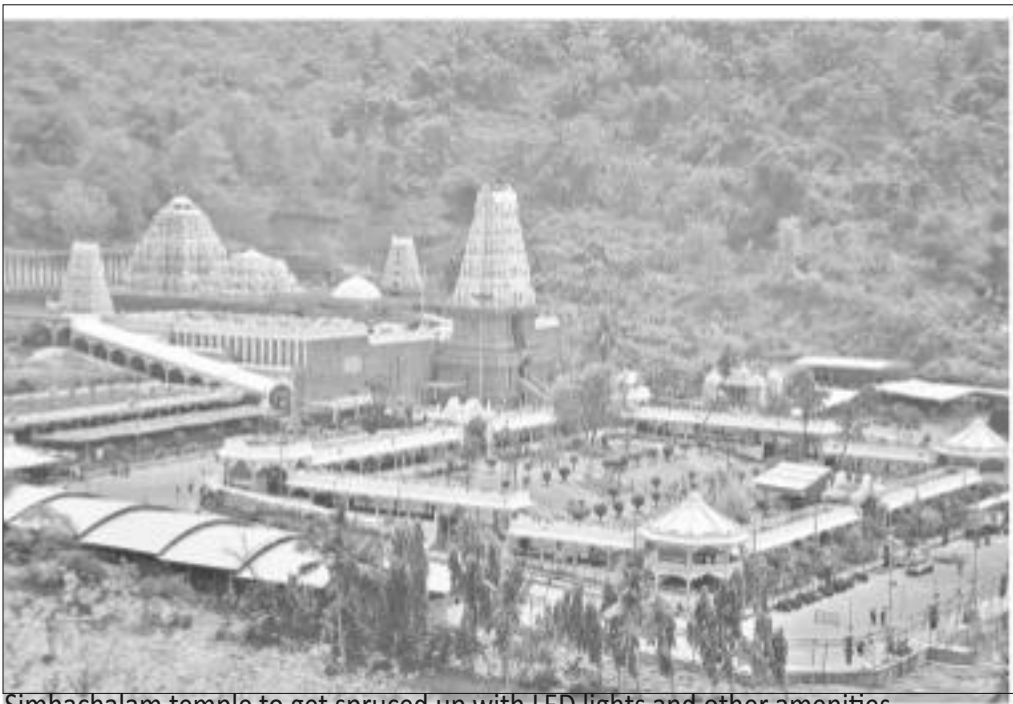
# SIMHACHALAM TO GET SPRUCED UP WITH LED LIGHTS

- Under the Rs 241 crore master plan, construction of dormitories, kalyanamandapams, commercial complex and new 'tholipavancha' and queue complex along with the road widening and renovation of trekking route towards the temple (metla margam) got wrapped up
- The Endowments Department is taking up measures to build suitable infrastructure to cater to the temple's future needs and expected surge of devotees
- Facilitating LED lights on the premises, road-widening up to 2-km, introducing electric buses, charging stations and landscaping are some of the development works will be taken up by the concerned authorities

VASU POTNURU

**Visakhapatnam:** With Sri Varaha Lakshmi Narasimha Swami Devasthanam getting allotment under the PRASAD (National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive) scheme, devotees to get improved amenities in future.

In addition to this, the Rs 241 crore masterplan projects have also gained momentum. While a part of the masterplan projects



Simhachalam temple to get spruced up with LED lights and other amenities in Visakhapatnam.

has been completed, some of the works are in progress.

According to the temple authorities, the master plan works will be carried out in four phases. In connection with this, construction of dormitories, kalyanamandapams, commercial complex and new 'tholipavancha' and queue complex along with the road widening and renovation of trekking route towards the temple (metla margam) got wrapped up.

Keeping the expected surge of devotees in view, the Endowments Department is taking up measures to build suitable infrastructure to cater to the temple's future needs.

Besides, the Central government has sanctioned Rs 53 crore under the PRASAD scheme of the Tourism Ministry. Along with Simhachalam Dev-

asthanam, Annavaram temple too vied for the scheme. However, as Simhachalam temple falls under the State Tourism Minister Muttamsetti Srinivasa Rao's constituency, the temple was able to get allotment under the PRASAD.

In line with this, an estimated cost of Rs 18.21 crore will be spent on works at Simhachalam uphill, while Rs 27.86 crore will be spent on foothills. Facilitating LED lights in the premises, road-widening up to 2-km, introducing electric buses, charging stations and landscaping are some of the development works to be taken up by the concerned authorities.

With the temple getting spruced up, there is a wider scope for large number of devotees visiting the ancient shrine in future.

## Sanchaitha expresses happiness over Simhachalam development

**Visakhapatnam:** Simhachalam



Simhachalam Trust Board chairperson Sanchaitha Gajapathi Raju

Trust Board chairperson Sanchaitha Gajapathi Raju once again fired a salvo on her paternal uncle and former trust board chairman Ashok Gajapathi Raju and former Chief

Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu. In her video tweet, she expressed her joy over the development of the Simhachalam Devasthanam being included in the PRASAD (National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive) scheme. She questioned as to why the previous government did not take any step towards such development. This is the only way, Sanchaitha said, she wanted to respond to those for pointing accusing fingers towards her and prove them wrong. The chairperson of the Devasthanam board sought co-operation from the people to achieve many such developments in future.

# Crowds at SROs defeat purpose of online pay

- The State govt made it must to pay fees online for services under Stamps and Registrations Dept to prevent use of currency notes for prevention of Covid-19 spread
- But jostling of people at Mee Seva centres as well as SROs to pay money and submit them respectively is defeating the objective of the measure

HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Srikakulam:** In the wake of Covid-19 pandemic, the state government made cashless

transaction mandatory at all offices under stamps and registrations department to prevent spread of virus through currency notes.

To get adhesive and impressive stamps, encumbrance certificates, search reports, market value statements and public copies, customers need to pay fees in online mode at approved Mee Seva centres and submit receipts at the sub-registrar office (SRO) concerned.

In Srikakulam district, which has 14 SROs, officials allowed only one Mee Seva centre under each SRO. As a result, crowds of customers are seen at SROs across the district. Frequent network failures and interruptions

in registrations department website are making customers eager to finish their work to gather without any social distance, thus defeating the purpose of online payments.

This overcrowding reportedly led to an employee of the registration office at Palakonda catching the disease.

Officials of stamps and registrations department have not made any arrangements to prevent crowds at either Mee Seva centres or SROs. "We have given clear instructions to our SROs and staff to make arrangements to remove crowding at one place in the wake of Covid pandemic," said district registrar R Satyanarayana.



Cusotermers standing closely to each other at sub-registrar office in Srikakulam district headquarters on Thursday

## VARALAKSHMI PUJA

# Physical distance norm goes for toss

HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Vizianagaram:** Hundreds of people particularly women customers thronged the market area in the district on Thursday a day ahead of Varalakshmi Puja to purchase puja material violating the Covid protocol guidelines.

Even the jewellery malls and cloth shops received good response from the customers. None of people have observed physical distance norm and most of them came to market without wearing mask. Though the district has been reporting hundreds of cases in recent days and the health and police staff creating awareness, the people are not bothered about following the covid norms and

simply come to the market to purchase the cloths, fruits, flowers and gold without wearing masks.

K Kavitha, a housewife said, "It is our custom and tradition to perform puja at my home every year. So, this year also I purchased some gold, sarees and others to offer the goddess. I am aware of this social distance norm but here today it is not possible to observe the norm. Let's see what is going to be happened."

A gold merchant said, "We have been waiting for this day as we shut our shop for last four months. We are facing problem to maintain shop with staff due to lack of business. So obviously we are eyeing on this occasion to recover some losses."

## Lord Ram at Times Square on August 5

*Continued from P1*

Sewhani said that among the prominent billboards that are being leased for the occasion are the giant Nasdaq screen and the 17,000-square-foot wrap-around LED display screen, considered among the largest continuous exterior displays in the world and the highest-resolution exterior LED screen in Times Square.

Beginning from 8 am on August 5 till 10 pm, images of the words 'Jai Shri Ram' in Hindi and English, Lord Ram's portraits and videos, 3D portraits of the temple's design and architecture as well as pictures of the laying of the foundation stone by Prime Minister Modi will be displayed across

several billboards, which are among the most striking and popular features of Times Square, one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world.

Sewhani said that members of the Indian community will also gather at Times Square on August 5 to mark the celebration and distribute sweets. "This is not a once-in-a-lifetime or a once-in-a-century event. This is an event that comes once in the life of mankind. We had to give it a befitting celebration and what better place than the iconic Times Square to commemorate the 'Ram Janma Bhoomi shilanyas' (ground-breaking ceremony), Sewhani said.

## KRMB puts brakes on R'seema lift project

*Continued from P1*

The KRMB in its letter pointed out that the project was against the provisions of section 84, Para 7 of the Act which stipulates that any new project proposed by either State must seek clearance from the KRMB, CWC and the Apex Council by submitting all Detailed Project Reports (DPR). The Board found fault with AP for not following the norms and further warned the government that any violation can be construed as against the law. The AP government was elated with the southern bench of the NGT giving permission to it to go ahead with the preliminary work of the LI project recently. It had also called for tenders for the same.

# Ram temple is culmination of my dreams: Kalyan Singh

*Continued from P1*

Talking to a news channel, he said, "The structure was demolished, my government was dismissed on that day and the foundation for the temple had been laid the same day. If the structure had not been demolished, the court verdict may not have been what it finally was." He said that he had no regrets over the fact that his government was dismissed in 1992. "This was a small sacrifice for the issue of Ram temple. I had no regrets then and I have no regrets now. The aspirations of millions of Hindus are being fulfilled now and

my dream is also being fulfilled," he said.

Singh, who is among the invitees for the 'bhoomi puja' ceremony in Ayodhya on August 5, further said that he had tremendous faith in Lord Ram. "Power does not matter when the issue is related to Lord Ram. For me, faith is supreme and power is transitory," he added. Asked whether he had any regrets about not fulfilling his duty of protecting the disputed structure in Ayodhya on December 6, 1992, Singh said that four battalions of central forces had arrived in Faizabad and when the magistrate asked for

the forces, he moved them.

"However, the forces could not move beyond the Saket Mahavidyalaya where about three and a half lakh devotees had gathered and were not allowing the forces to move ahead. The district administration asked me if they should use force and even said that if they opened fire, there would be a bloodbath. I ordered that there should be no firing because I could not put lives of the people at risk. I knew if people died in Ayodhya, there would be violent reactions in other parts of the country," he recalled.

# Wedding feast gets home-delivered

- Due to coronavirus pandemic, the wedding ceremony that involves a large gathering has now been confined to a few persons
- As per Covid guidelines, only 20 guests can attend weddings rather than the initial count of 50
- Devising a strategy to resolve wedding woes, one of the city-based grooms plans to serve the wedding feast to 1,000 persons which turned out to be a pleasant surprise to many

RANI DEVALLA

**Visakhapatnam:** Amid Covid-19 restrictions on the big fat weddings, the organisers are embarking on innovative ways to serve the feast to their near and dear ones.

If chanting Vedic mantras and following the wedding rituals is



A view of the caterers armed with PPE kits serving food in a recently-concluded wedding.

one part of the auspicious event, satiating the taste buds of those, who arrive to bless the couple, equally plays an imperative part of the once-in-a-lifetime ceremony. But the ceremony that involves a large gathering has now been confined to a few persons due to the coronavirus pandemic. According to the revised guidelines, only 20 guests can attend weddings rather than the initial count 50.

Besides the restrictions in place, another concern that bothers the marriage parties at the moment is the possibility of infection getting spread when the crowd gets

swelled. "If any person tests positive for virus after attending the wedding, we need to live with the guilt for the rest of our lives. Instead of regretting later, it is better to take all the precautionary measures before and during the wedding, following the guidelines," says G Venkatesh, whose daughter is getting wedded in a few days. Devising a solution to resolve wedding woes, one of the city-based grooms planned to serve the wedding feast to 1,000 families even in times of the pandemic.

Considering the precautionary measures, K Srinivasa Rao, a resident of Arilova, decided to treat

## LIVELIHOOD OF GANESH FESTIVAL-LINKED PEOPLE IN PERIL

*Continued from P1*

This year, in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, there was a proposal to postpone the festival to February next year. But, from January 1, 2021, use of Plaster of Paris will be banned. "What to do with the idols already made?" he said. Meanwhile, idol makers, who are usually much in demand in the run up to the festival every year, are also facing the heat of the pandemic. Brihanmumbai Ganesh Murtikar Sangh president Gajanan Tondvalkar said they had asked the civic body to allow idols of less than five feet to be made almost a couple of months before the actual decision for idols of four feet was taken.

"Most of the workers live in tiny homes and they need open spaces for making idols. Not all have their own space. We have been demanding a single window clearance system for setting up

mandaps for idol-making.

"But, that has not happened for last 15 years. We need permission from the local police station, traffic police, environment department, fire brigade and health department. This year these permissions were waived off. But we got only 35 days to start work on the idols," he said. Referring to their other problems, including use of material for making idols, Tondvalkar said clay idols take time to dry. "If the permission for open spaces is given on time, we will make only clay idols. Because of the time constraints, we can't complete all the orders this year," he rued. "We got clay from Gujarat in five containers. Due to the lockdown, we had difficulty in getting these vehicles into the city. Doesn't the condition of Ganesh idol makers matter to the decision makers? Livelihood of lakhs of people is dependent on the Ganesh festivities," he said.

## EC notifies poll for one of 2 vacant Council seats in AP

*Continued from P1*

The other member's tenure is up to March 29, 2023 and hence the by-election, the sources added. Both Pilli and Mopidevi, who were ministers in the YS Jagan Mohan Reddy Cabinet, resigned from their posts upon their election to the Rajya Sabha last month. According to the schedule announced by the ECI, notification for the by-election to fill one vacancy under MLAs quota will be issued on August 6 and the last date for filing nominations is August 13. Polling, if required, is scheduled for August 24. It will be only a mere formality as the YSRC, with a brute majority of 151 in the 175-member Assembly, will effortlessly win the seat.

## Prison officials, inmates test positive for corona

**Visakhapatnam:** Over 25 inmates and a few staff from Visakhapatnam Central prison were tested positive for coronavirus.

Prison officials were alarmed with inmates at the Visakhapatnam Central Jail getting tested for positive. Om Prakash, who was accused in the Moddu Sreenu murder case, recently died while undergoing treatment for kidney disease. He was later tested positive for coronavirus.

The police accompanied Om Prakash while shifting from King George Hospital and the prison for the treatment. However, with the swab test of Om Prakash reported positive, the Jail authorities conducted Covid-19 tests for the staff as well as the inmates. Over 25 inmates were tested positive and a few staff members were also said to be infected with the virus, according to Deputy Inspector-General I Srinivasa Rao. He further stated isolation facilities will be provided for them in the prison premises.

## India-Mauritius partnership is destined to soar high: PM

*Continued from P1*

He said India is making development partnerships that are marked by respect, diversity, care for the future and sustainable development. For India, Modi said, the most fundamental principle in development cooperation is respecting our partners. "This sharing of development lessons is our only motivation. That is why our development cooperation does not come with any conditions," the Prime Minister said. Modi said that India's development partnerships are diverse from commerce to culture, energy to engineering, health to housing, IT to infrastructure, and sports to science and that India is working with nations across the globe. The Prime Minister said if India is honoured to help in the Parliament building in Afghanistan, it is also proud to be associated in the making of the Mahatma Gandhi Convention Centre in Niger.

"India is not only proud in helping you, we consider it our privilege to help you create a better future for your youth, your next generation. That is why, training and skilling is such an important part of our development cooperation." He said the future is about sustainable development. "Human needs and aspirations cannot be in conflict with our natural surroundings. That is why, we believe in both human empowerment and care for the environment."



## TODAY'S QUOTE

### Fully digital single-window nod soon

“The central government is genuinely working to create a true Single Window System which is completely digital and provides for unified and integrated business procedures. In addition, we will also encourage risk based self-regulation and third party certifications

-Industry Minister **Piyush Goyal**



## COVID JOLT

### US Fed keeps interest rates near zero

The US Federal Reserve kept its benchmark interest rate unchanged at the record-low level of near zero amid a recent resurgence in Covid-19 cases nationwide. Economic activity and employment have picked up somewhat in recent months but remain well below their levels at the beginning of the year, Fed said

## FOREX (buy rates in ₹)

US Dollar	79.33	South	
Euro	92.29	African Rand	5.12
UAE Dirham	22.41	Hong Kong Dollar	11.1
Thai Baht	2.74	Japanese Yen	0.82
British Pound	101.02	New Zealand Dollar	52.05
Australian Dollar	56.07	Saudi Riyal	21.95
Canadian Dollar	58.59	Swedish Krona	9.8
Swiss Franc	85.1	Singapore Dollar	57.11

DELHI FRIDAY 31 JULY 2020

## BIZ BRIEFS

### Zoom speeds up hiring

**New Delhi:** As part of its commitment to expand and innovate further in India, US-based video meet app Zoom is fast recruiting DevOps engineers, IT, security and business operations personnel in the country. Zoom, which has an office in Mumbai and data centres in Mumbai and Hyderabad, recently announced to open a technology centre in Bengaluru. "We are excited to hire key talent. Employees will work from home until it is safe to move into the new facility," Velchamy Sankarlingam, President of Engineering and Products at Zoom, said in a blog post. "We continue to invest significantly in supporting global audiences, and India will play a critical role in that," he added.

### Dalmia Bharat gets award

**Hyderabad:** Dalmia Bharat Group has won an award for environment sustainability at 18th FICCI CSR award ceremony, organized by FICCI. The award recognizes efforts of companies in integrating and internalising Corporate Social Responsibility. Anurag Thakur, Union Minister of State for Finance & Corporate Affairs, presented the award to Mahendra Singh, MD & CEO, Dalmia Cement (Bharat) Ltd. and Vishal Bhardwaj, Group Head, CSR, Dalmia Bharat Group, who represented the company at this virtual ceremony. Mahendra Singh, said, "We are extremely honoured by this recognition. As a responsible corporate, we firmly believe in doing our bit and giving back to the society in the best possible manner. Enabling communities to use their natural resources in order to build sustainable environment is important for enhancing their livelihood".

### Agami Prize's 2nd edition

**Hyderabad:** Agami, an initiative that creates opportunities to radically reshape systems of law and justice by supporting innovation, is inviting applications for the 2nd edition of the Agami prize. The biennial prize, conceived in 2018, serves to support and catalyse innovations in three categories - industry, citizenship and idea. Partners to the prize include highly regarded individuals and institutions in social innovation, business, philanthropy and policy. Sachin Malhan, co-founder, Agami, said: "We've long felt that the law and justice sector in India needed a whole new story. A story that can inspire and enlighten everyone to walk the pathways of change. The essence of the Agami Prize is telling this new story. By shining a light on powerful ideas to transform the legal industry, we want to inspire millions of others".

### SIDBI, CIBIL unveil platform

**Hyderabad:** The Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) in association with TransUnion CIBIL has launched a comprehensive financial education and knowledge platform for micro, small and medium enterprises. The one-stop knowledge portal- MSMEsSaksham, will guide MSMEs (micro, small and medium enterprises) seeking seamless and quick access to finance and will also support them in managing their credit obligations, a release said. "SIDBI (Small Industries Development Bank of India) is happy to partner with TransUnion CIBIL in empowering MSMEs by making them financially aware and loan-ready so that timely and affordable financial support is realised," SIDBI's CMD Mohammad Mustafa said.

# Covid takes sheen off gold demand in India

Demand for yellow metal falls 70%, jewellery sales plunge 74% during April-June: WGC

**Mumbai:** Gold demand in India plunged 70 per cent during the April-June quarter to 63.7 tonne compared with the same period last year mainly due to the nationwide lockdown to prevent the spread of Covid-19 and high prices, according to a World Gold Council (WGC) report.

This is the second lowest quarter after the first quarter (January-March) of 2009 when, soon after the Lehman crisis, demand for gold in India fell to 40 tonne.

Overall gold demand in the country was 213.2 tonnes during the second quarter of 2019, WGC said in its 'Q2 Gold Demand Trends' report.

In terms of value, India's gold demand during the second quarter of this year was Rs 26,600 crore, down by 57 per cent compared to Rs 62,420 crore in the corresponding period of 2019. The total jewellery demand in India for the second

- Jewellery demand falls to 44 tonne
- Jewellery demand in value terms plunges to ₹18,350 crore
- Gold recycling down 64% to 13.8 tonne



quarter of 2020 decreased by 74 per cent at 44 tonnes compared to 168.6 tonnes in the same quarter of 2019. Jewellery demand, in value terms, fell by 63 per cent during the April-June this year at Rs 18,350 crore from Rs 49,380 crore in the corresponding period last year. Total gold recycled in the country also saw a decline of 64 per cent during April-June quarter at 13.8 tonnes from 37.9 tonnes in Q2 of 2019 as refineries were closed due to the nationwide lockdown. Similarly,

total gold imports in India in Q2 2020 sank 95 per cent to 11.6 tonnes during the quarter compared to 247.4 tonnes in Q2 2019 due to no movement.

"The second quarter of 2020 was defined by lockdowns and high prices, both of which acted in combination to keep India's gold demand record low at 63.7 tonnes, down 70 per cent," WGC Managing Director, India, Somasundaram PR said.

Sales trend during the window of opportunity, afforded by relaxation of lockdown in se-

lect cities, do point to healthy latent demand that should surface once Covid-19 turbulence is behind us, he added.

"Overall, gold demand in India in H1 2020 was 165.6 tonnes, plummeting 56 per cent in comparison to H1 2019," he stated.

Going forward, he said, India's Covid-19 journey in H2 will chart the course and pace of economic revival of which gold demand is an integral part.

"A sense of optimism is developing amongst trade, however, that, by Dhanteras, Covid-19-related disruptions may matter less as society learns to live with it, with a possible upside following some positive news on treatment.

"This should spur consumer confidence, and jewellery demand will play a big role in bringing things to normalcy. Fast rising gold prices could act as headwinds though," he added.

## Gold prices rising on ETF inflows

**World Gold Council (WGC)** on Thursday said that increased inflows in gold-backed ETFs (Exchange Traded Funds) have fueled rise in gold prices around the world.

While overall gold demand fell, record inflow was witnessed into gold-backed ETFs of 734 tonne. The global response to the pandemic by central banks and governments, in the form of rate cuts and massive liquidity injections, fuelled these record inflows, said Somasundaram PR, Managing Director for India at WGC said. Inflows into gold ETFs accelerated in Q2 (April-June 2020), taking H1 inflows to a record-breaking 734 tonne. First half inflows surpassed the previous annual record from 2009 of 646 tonne and lifted global holdings to 3,621 tonne. Further the US dollar gold price gained 17 per cent in H1, following a 10 per cent increase



during Q2. Strong inflows into gold-backed ETFs fuelled the rise. The gold price reached record highs in numerous other currencies, including euro, sterling, rupee and renminbi, among others. The price is currently a life-time high of over Rs 50,000 per 10 grams, a key milestone and response is naturally mixed - with content investors and wary consumers and to put it in perspective, gold prices have risen by 60 per cent since January 2019 and 20 per cent since January 2020, income growth or expectation have not kept pace with this, Somasundaram said.

## Markets down on Q1 results, globe cues

**Mumbai:** Disappointing quarterly results, along with the global markets' downturn, depressed the Indian equity market on Thursday.

The global markets were impacted as the Federal Reserve's pledge to use all its tools to support the US economy failed to reassure investors about a stalemate on fiscal support and rising coronavirus cases.

Index-wise, the NSE Nifty50 closed at 11,102.15, down by 100.70 points or 0.90 per cent from its previous close.

The Sensex closed at 37,736.07, lower by 335.06 points or 0.88 per cent from the previous close of 38,071.13. It had opened at 38,262.83 and touched an intra-day high of 38,413.81 and a low of 37,678.42 points. Investors were also wary ahead of data that is likely to show that the US economy



Sensex sheds 335 points while Nifty down 101 pts

shrank during the second quarter at the steepest pace since World War II. Consequent to derivatives expiry, the key equity indices fell sharply during a volatile trade session. Besides, market breadth was negative on both the BSE and the NSE.

Sectorally, the top gainers were the BSE Healthcare and IT indices, while top losers included BSE Telecom, Oil and Gas, Bankex and Power indices.

## Reliance Q1 net profit zooms to ₹13,248 cr

However, its consolidated total income at Rs 1,00,929 cr during April-June period

**Mumbai (Agencies):** Beating estimates, energy-to-telecom conglomerate Reliance Industries on Thursday reported a 30.60 per cent rise in consolidated net profit year-on-year (YoY) at Rs 13,248 crore for the quarter ended June 30. The rise in net profit was driven by a major 54 per cent YoY growth in other income at Rs 4,388 crore.

The company booked a one-time gain of Rs 4,966 crore on an investment by British oil major BP in its fuel marketing business - Reliance BP Mobility Services.

The company also managed to bring down total expenditure by about 42 per cent YoY to Rs 87,406 crore from Rs 1,50,858 crore in Q1FY20.

At the same time, its consolidated total income was at Rs 1,00,929 cr. The company stated that the group's operations and revenues for the quarter were impacted by the Covid-19 disruption.



Consolidated EBITDA declined 11.80 per cent YoY to Rs 21,585 crore against Rs 24,486 crore reported for the same period last year. "The severe demand destruction due to global lockdowns impacted our hydrocarbons business, but the flexibility in our operations enabled us to operate at near-normal levels and deliver industry-leading results," said Mukesh Ambani, Chairman and Managing Director, RIL. Our consumer-facing businesses became the life-line for individuals and businesses with our Retail and Jio teams working hard to ensure millions got essen-

**The severe demand destruction due to global lockdowns impacted our hydrocarbons business, but the flexibility in our operations enabled us to operate at near-normal levels**

- Mukesh Ambani, CMD, RIL



tial goods and services through the lockdown. We completed the largest fund raise in Indian corporate history in this quarter, he added

"I thank the millions of individual investors who supported our rights Issue and welcome all our new partners to an exciting new phase of growth at Reliance," he said. Reliance Jio Infocomm, the group's telecom arm, reported 182.82 per cent growth in net profit at Rs 2,520 crore for the quarter against Rs 891 crore reported for the same period last year.

The company, however, said Reliance Retail's EBITDA was positive and resilient despite the limitations of the quarter, and cost management initiatives led to savings on fixed cost, which in turn helped cushion the impact of lower profits from lower sales. Revenues from the petrochemicals business declined 33 per cent to Rs 25,192 crore, primarily due to lower price realisations due to the Covid-19 disruptions in local and regional markets. The segment's EBITDA declined 49.7 per cent YoY to Rs 4,430 crore.

## Amazon Prime Day to see 1,000 new products

**Bengaluru:** Over 100 small and medium-sized businesses and startups on Amazon.in will be launching more than 1,000 new products across 17 categories on Prime Day in India that starts at midnight on August 6 and will run for 48 hours, the e-commerce giant said on Thursday.



Startups and small businesses from Amazon's Launchpad programme will be launching differ-

entiated products across categories like health and personal care, beauty and grooming, grocery and home products.

Launchpad is a global programme that curates, showcases, and delivers unique and differentiated products from startups and emerging brands to millions

of Amazon customers. Government emporiums, APCO handlooms from Andhra Pradesh and Mrignayanee from Madhya Pradesh will be showcasing hand-woven apparels ranging from Mangalgiri, Venkatgiri and Chirala to Maheshwari and Chanderi this Prime Day.

## TSMDC plans to open 6 granite mines

P MADHUSUDHAN REDDY

**Hyderabad:** As a part of its efforts to spread its wings beyond sand quarrying, the Telangana State Mineral Development Corporation (TSMDC) is gearing up to set up six granite mines in Telangana. "We applied for six granite mines, got permissions for two. The process of obtaining permissions is at various stages for four other mines," Dr G Malsur, Vice Chairman and Managing Director, TSMDC, told The Hans India.

The corporation has submitted plans to take up granite mining in government lands at Kothagattu village in Shankarapatnam mandal of Karimnagar district and Vanthadupula village in Narasimhapeta mandal in Mahabubabad district. It will set up two mines for maple red variety of granite at Kothagattu village while Kakatiya white variety will be produced at the mine at Vanthadupula village. Besides, two of the cor-

### Corporation also focusing on mineral exploration in a big way



poration's granite mines will come up in forest lands. One will be set up at Tallapusapalle village in Kesamudram mandal of Mahabubabad district, where black granite will be produced. The second quarry in forest land will be established at Namilikonda village in Kodimial mandal in Jagityal district. Tan brown variant will be quarried at this mine.

"We have received permissions for one mine each in Mahabubabad and Karimnagar districts. Once we get environmental clearance for these two, we will go ahead and start op-

erations," Dr Malsur explained. Apart from granite mining, the corporation is also focusing on mineral exploration in a big way. "We are fast emerging as a mineral exploration unit. The corporation has undertaken mineral exploration with NMET (National Mineral Exploration Trust) funds. The projects are at various stages of exploration," he said. The corporation completed G-4 (reconnaissance stage) exploration in 10 limestone clusters including eight in Telangana, one each in Jharkhand and Odisha at a to-



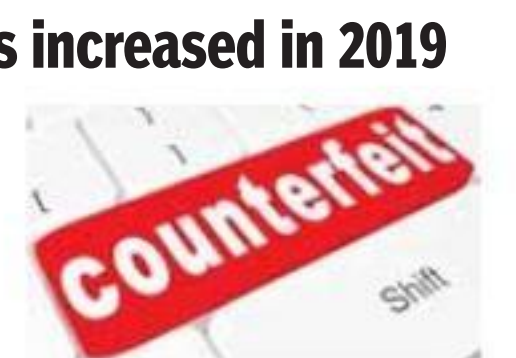
tal cost of Rs 30.89 crore. It will take up exploration of manganese reserves in Adilabad district and molybdenum in Karimnagar and Siddipet districts. At present, the corporation gets over 98 per cent of its total revenues from the sand. Of Rs 805 crore total revenues of the corporation in FY20, non-sand operations contributed just Rs 13 crore. "Before bifurcation in 2014, the corporation operated most of mines in the Andhra region. So, TSMDC doesn't have many mines under its fold now," the TSMDC chief said.

### HDFC's Q1 net profit at ₹3,052 cr

**Mumbai:** Mortgage lender HDFC on Thursday reported a standalone net profit of Rs 3,052 crore for Q1FY21.

The company had reported a net profit of Rs 3,203 crore during the like period of the previous year. According to the mortgage lender, the profit numbers for the quarter under review are not directly comparable with that of the previous year.

"To facilitate a like-for-like comparison, after adjusting dividend, profit on sale of investments, net gains on de-recognition of assigned loans, provisioning and the impact of negative carry on account of higher liquidity, the adjusted profit before tax for the quarter ended June 30, 2020 is Rs 3,265 crore compared to Rs 2,684 crore in the previous year, reflecting a growth of 22 per cent," the mortgage lender said in a statement. The mortgage lenders' 'Total Comprehensive' Income for the quarter ended June 30, 2020 was Rs 5,070 crore compared to Rs 3,465 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous year, representing a growth of 46 per cent.



Bihar and Rajasthan. The three states represent nearly 45 per cent of the total counterfeit incidents reported in India in the last two years.

## Counterfeit incidents increased in 2019

**New Delhi:** Incidents of counterfeiting in India have steadily risen over the last few years and increased 24 per cent in 2019 as compared to 2018, according to a report by Authentication Solution Providers' Association (ASPA). Titled 'The State of Counterfeiting In India - 2020', the report said that Uttar Pradesh led with the highest number of counterfeiting cases, followed by





World Health Organisation (WHO) Chief Scientist, Dr Soumya Swaminathan, leaves after a meeting on Covid-19 with Tamil Nadu CM Edappadi K Palaniswami (unseen) and panel members comprising an expert committee on infectious disease control, in Chennai on Thursday

## UK extends isolation period

**London (IANS):** People who test positive for the novel coronavirus or show symptoms in the UK must now self-isolate for at least 10 days, rather than seven, it was announced by the country's chief medical officers on Thursday. The change comes as Ministers were trying to avoid a resurgence of the virus, reports the BBC. Until now, those showing key symptoms - a new continuous cough, a temperature or loss of taste or smell - have had to self-isolate for at least a week. The new advice is in line with World Health Organisation guidance. The chief medical officers said the change is "particularly important to protect those who have been shielding and in advance of the autumn and winter when we may see increased community transmission".

## Min distributes Ayurveda drug

**Bengaluru (IANS)** As prevention is better than cure or treatment, Karnataka's Rural Development Minister K.S. Eshwarappa has decided to distribute Ayurvedic tablets or decoction to boost immunity against the infection in the Shivamogga city. "With vaccine still in the making to fight the coronavirus pandemic, the minister has set up an organisation (suraksha pade) to distribute Ayurveda tablets and decoction to every house in his home town Shivamogga in the state's central region," a department official told IANS here on Thursday. Shivamogga in the picturesque Malnad region is around 310km northwest of Bengaluru.

## National registry of patients: ICMR

**New Delhi:** The Indian Council of Medical Research, in collaboration with the Health Ministry and All India Institute of Medical Sciences, plans to roll out a project to create a rigorous database of Covid-19 patients admitted in hospitals across the country in an effort to understand how treatment can be improved. The project, a national clinical registry, will also serve as a crucial platform to conduct clinical trials to study the effectiveness of newer therapies being used as part of treatment for this disease. Around 15 institutions are expected to help create this network and get hospitals and medical colleges on board as part of the exercise, which is awaiting clearances from a common ethics committee of the ICMR.

## 29 new cases in Taj city

**Agra (IANS):** The spurt in fresh cases in the past two weeks, continues to worry the district health task force battling Covid-19 in the Taj city. A total of 29 fresh cases and a death took the tally to 1,730 and fatalities to 99 on Thursday. District Magistrate P.N. Singh said that 21 Covid-19 patients were discharged taking the number of recoveries to 1,401. So far 46,641 samples have been collected in the district. With the new cases reported, the number of active cases now is 229 in Agra. The state government appointed nodal officer for the district, Alok Kumar, after visiting several hot spots in the city instructed the police officials to issue challan to all those found without masks.

## 'US failed to recognise threat'

**Washington (IANS):** The US has failed to recognize the coronavirus threat from Europe in time, Robert Redfield, Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), has said. Since the country's COVID-19 pandemic broke out, the US has reported over 4.4 million confirmed cases and over 150,000 deaths, reports Xinhua news agency. "The introduction from Europe happened before we realized what was happening," Redfield said in an interview with ABC News. "By the time we realized (the) Europe threat and shut down travel to Europe, there was probably already two or three weeks of 60,000 people coming back every day from Europe," he said.

## US diplomat in Cambodia infected

**Phnom Penh (IANS):** Cambodian authorities on Thursday confirmed that a US diplomat has tested positive for COVID-19, raising the total number of cases in the Southeast Asian country to 234. The Health Ministry said the senior diplomat had recently travelled from the US to Cambodia, reports Xinhua news agency. "On the 13th day of his quarantine, his samples were tested for the COVID-19 for the second time, and the result released on Wednesday showed that he was positive for the virus," it said. "The patient has been placed in an isolation ward at the American embassy in Phnom Penh, receiving treatment from the US doctors to the mission," it added.

## EU signs deal for Remdesivir supply

**Brussels (IANS)** The European Commission said that it has signed a 63 million-euro contract with American pharmaceutical company Gilead to secure doses of Veklury, the brand name for Remdesivir, for the treatment of COVID-19. The Commission said in a statement on Wednesday that batches of Veklury will be made available to the EU member states and the UK from early August, reports Xinhua news agency. The distribution will be coordinated by the European Commission. Remdesivir was the first medicine authorized at the EU level for treatment of COVID-19 after the European Commission fast-tracked the request for authorization earlier this month.

## India gears up for I-Day amid crisis

The Covid-19 pandemic has been the biggest spoiler of the year, affecting economies, cores of industries and businesses along with dampening spirits. The crisis is likely to affect this year's Independence Day celebrations as well. The ramparts of the Red Fort will not be the same as on August 15 every year. The government has made many amendments to this year's celebrations and plans to make arrangements keeping preventive measures in mind in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

# Virus may increase risk of blood clots in pregnant women



**Boston (PTI):** COVID-19 may increase the risk of blood clots in pregnant women, or in those taking estrogen with birth control or hormone replacement therapy, say scientists who call for the development of innovative animal experiment models to further study this association.

According to the researchers, including those from the Tufts University School of Medicine in the US, one of the many complications of COVID-19 is the formation of blood clots in previously healthy people.

They said the female hormone estrogen also increases the chance of blood clots during pregnancy, and in women taking birth control pills or hormone re-

placement therapy.

If infected with COVID-19, the risk of blood clotting could be even higher, and these women may need to undergo anticoagulation therapy, or discontinue their estrogen medicines, noted the research, published in the journal Endocrinology.

The scientists believe further research is needed to understand the effects of the novel coronavirus on coagulation, answering if the virus aggravates the risk of blood clots and strokes associated with oral contraceptive pills, other estrogen therapies, and pregnancy-associated risks.

"During this pandemic, we need additional research to determine if women who become

infected with the coronavirus during pregnancy should receive anticoagulation therapy, or if women taking birth control pills or hormone replacement therapy should discontinue them," said Daniel Spratt, the study's corresponding author from Tufts University School of Medicine in Boston, US.

"Research that helps us understand how the coronavirus causes blood clots may also provide us with new knowledge regarding how blood clots form in other settings and how to prevent them," Spratt said.

However, the scientists said understanding the cause of blood clotting in COVID-19, including the intersecting effects of estro-

gen therapy or pregnancy, has several hurdles and will require innovative animal and tissue models.

"The emergence of this pandemic and the curious impact of this virus on hypercoagulability emphasise the continuing need for additional research into coagulation pathology in women," they wrote in the study.

According to the researchers, collaborative efforts between clinicians and basic researchers, and between endocrinologists and hematologists are necessary to understand the interactions between the novel coronavirus and pregnancy or estrogen therapy that could guide clinical management.

# Over 52K cases for first time in 24 hrs



## Herd immunity not a strategic option: Govt



**New Delhi:** In a country like India, with 138 crore people, herd immunity cannot be a strategic option without a vaccine. It would come at a very high cost without a vaccine bringing the healthcare system to its knees, the Centre said. More than 1 million people have recovered from Covid-19 in the country, the Health Ministry said on Thursday. "This landmark recovery has been achieved because of the selfless work and dedication of our doctors, nurses and frontline workers," Rajesh Bhushan, Secretary of Ministry of Health said. Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray visited Pune to oversee the Covid-19 response in the state, amid spiking cases in the city.

## 21 US States in 'red zone'

**Washington (IANS)** Twenty-one US states have been placed in the government's "red zone" due to a massive surge in the number of COVID-19 cases and deaths, according to a new federal report. Those states have been designated as in the "red zone", because they had more than 100 new cases per 100,000 people in the week ending July 24, reports Xinhua news agency. America's coronavirus death toll was 150,676 as of Wednesday -- more than a fifth of the world's recorded deaths, according to Johns Hopkins University. The US also had over 4,426,000 confirmed cases, making it the world's worst-hit country. The first death in the US was reported on February 29. The country reached 50,000 deaths 54 days later on April 23, and 34 days later, on May 27, crossed 100,000 deaths. It has taken 63 days to add another 50,000 to reach the 150,000 mark, CNN reported.

**New Delhi (IANS):** A total of 52,123 cases of Covid infection across India was reported in the last 24 hours, stated the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on Thursday pointing out that more than 70 per cent of deaths are "due to comorbidities".

Till date, a total 34,968 people have lost their lives to the virus that originated from China's Wuhan and gripped the entire world. India is the third worst-hit na-

tion by the pandemic. The total number of Covid cases reported till date is 15,83,792 and the number of people who recovered from the virus stands at 10,20,582.

Even as COVID-19 cases continue to surge in various parts of India, more than 1 million people have recovered and discharged till now, informed Rajesh Bhushan, Secretary, Ministry of Health, here on Thursday. The ministry stated that in the last 24 hours, 775 people

have lost their lives which is about 32 deaths every hour. It also pointed that 18,795 new active cases were reported from across the country. The worst hit state Maharashtra has 1,46,433 active Covid cases so far. In the last 24 hours, 1,435 people got infected with the virus. So far 2,39,755 people have recovered from the virus. A total 14,463 people have lost their lives and in the last 24 hours 298 died of the virus in Maharashtra.

## Global cases surpass 17mn

**Washington (IANS):** The total number of global coronavirus cases surpassed the 17 million mark on Thursday, while the deaths have increased to more than 667,000, according to the Johns Hopkins University. The overall number of cases currently stood at 17,029,155, while the fatalities rose to 667,011, the University's Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) revealed in its latest update. The US accounted for the world's highest number of infections and fatalities at 4,426,982 and 150,713, respectively, according to the CSSE. Brazil came in the second place with 2,552,265 infections and 90,134 deaths.

## China sees over 100 new cases

**Beijing:** China's COVID-19 cases have crossed the 100-mark for the second consecutive day, belying the hopes that the country managed to contain the deadly contagion. The National Health Commission on Thursday said that 105 new coronavirus cases, including 102 domestically transmitted ones, were registered in the country on Wednesday, mainly in the Muslim Uyghur majority Xinjiang province which reported a sudden spike in cases. The NHC on Wednesday said that 102 cases were reported on Tuesday, crossing the 100 mark for the first time in three months after it was controlled in Wuhan where the virus first emerged in December last year, sparking fears of a second wave of the COVID-19 attack in the country.

# TN extends lockdown till Aug 31

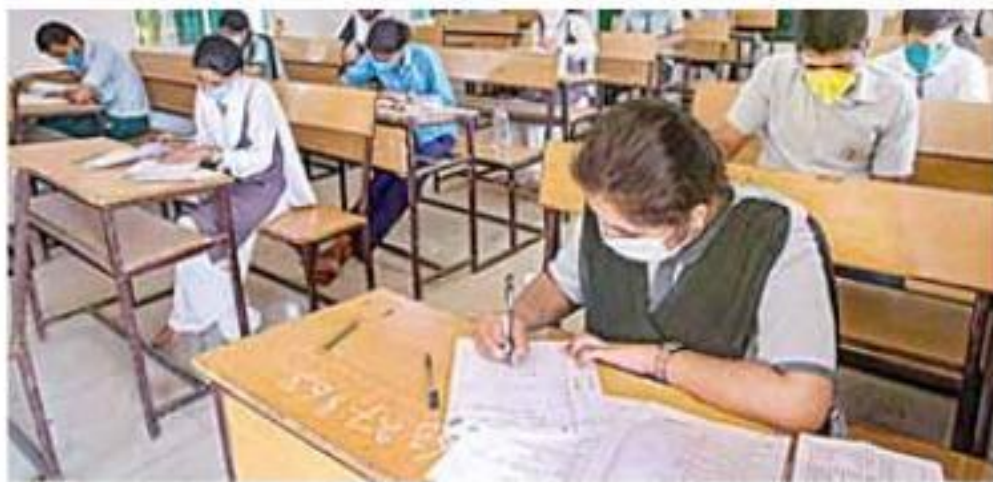
**Chennai (IANS):** Tamil Nadu Chief Minister K. Palaniswami on Thursday announced the extension of Covid-19 lockdown till Aug 31, with certain relaxations in the existing restrictions. In a statement issued here, Palaniswami said based on the discussions held with District Collectors on Wednesday, with the medical experts on Thursday and with senior ministers the Covid-19 lockdown which was supposed to come to an end on July 31 has been extended till August 31 across the state.

# 40 Covid +ve students write CET in Karnataka

**Bengaluru (PTD):** As many as 40 students who have tested positive for coronavirus were among the 1.94 lakh students appearing for the Karnataka Common Entrance Test, which began on Thursday, Deputy Chief Minister Dr C N Ashwath Narayan said.

Taking a cue from the SSLC examination and the pre-university examination conducted by the Department of Public Instruction, the Karnataka government decided to proceed with the CET for PUC students.

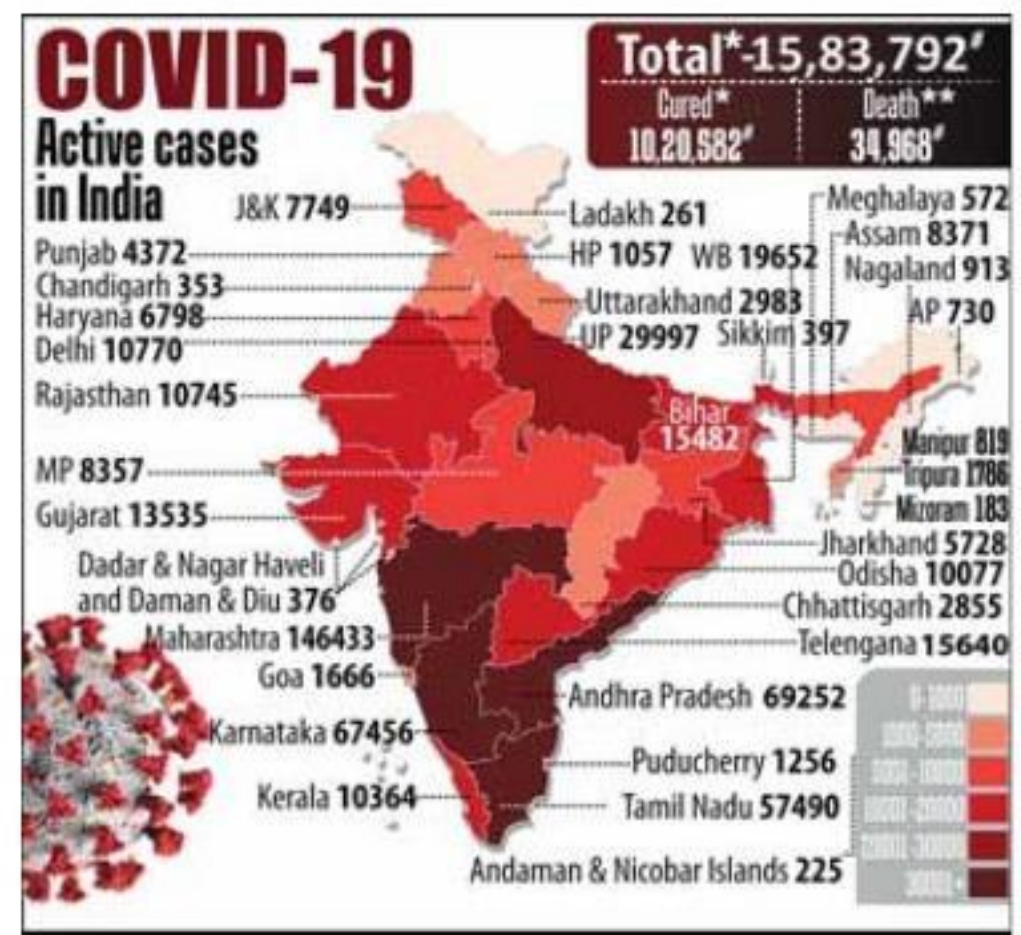
The two-day examinations on Thursday and Friday are being



conducted at the 497 centres across Karnataka, the Deputy Chief Minister, who holds the higher education portfolio, said after visiting a few of the exam-

ination centres.

He also said of the 1.94 lakh students enrolled for the test, 40,200 are appearing in Bengaluru at 83 centres.



# Sonu Sood announces 3 lakh jobs for migrants

**Mumbai:** On his 47th birthday on Thursday, actor Sonu Sood announced three lakh jobs for migrant labourers on the job portal 'Pravasi Rojgar' that he had launched earlier this month.

The 'Dabangg' actor who has launched several initiatives for helping migrant labourers of the country made the announcement about the additional three lakh jobs on his Instagram account.

Sood posted two flyers of the employment application and shared that the jobs came with additional benefits like PF and ESI.

"On my birthday a small initiative from my side...3 lakh jobs tied up for PravasiRojgar.com. All these will provide good wages, PF, ESI, and other benefits," he wrote in the caption.

He further went on to thank the organisations that had partnered with him for the initiative.

"Thank you AEPC, CITI, Trident, Quesscorp, Amazon, Sodex, Urban Co, Portea, and all others for creating these opportunities with me. #AbIndiaBanegaKamyaab @pravasirojgar," he wrote.

Hailed as the 'messiah' of migrant labourers, Sood has helped hundreds of thousands of migrants to reach their native places amid the coronavirus induced lockdown when many like them were walking back to their homes.

Besides labourers, he has also helped students and other people stranded in different parts of the country amid the lockdown.





# MPCA cricket committee’s U-turn on Pandit’s appointment shocks State body

**New Delhi (IANS):** Confusion with regards to implementation of Lodha Committee reforms have surfaced in recent times not just in the BCCI, but also in state associations. Ugly power struggles seem to have become the norm as a lot of state associations are battling some dispute or the other within itself. The latest is the ongoing dispute in the Madhya Pradesh Cricket Association (MPCA) between the cricket committee and the office bearers.

The cricket committee has done a sudden U-turn and raised questions on the validity of the appointment of Chandrakant Pandit as head coach. Pandit is one of the most celebrated coaches on the domestic

circuit and a former chairman of the junior selection committee of the BCCI. In fact, prior to this he was the coach of the Vidarbha team which won the Ranji Trophy and had offers from three teams to take up the role of head coach.

Speaking to IANS, a source close to the development said that until recently everything was going smoothly but it seems that someone has misled the cricket committee.

“Everything was going quite smoothly till recently with a lot of healthy discussions with the cricket committee on the head coach, performances etc. It was quite shocking when they suddenly tried to pull the plug on all of this. Clearly they seem to



be misled by someone but that is hardly a justification,” the source said.

The cricket committee is of the view that even administrative decisions pertaining to

cricket fall within their purview while the office bearers are of the view that if that was the case, the administration would have no work to do. Legal luminaries who have been involved in the matter in the Supreme Court are of the view that the cricket committee is clearly overreaching their jurisdiction.

The cricket committee of the MPCA was elected by their General Body and as per documents available with IANS, they were not only consulted on the selection of the Head Coach of MPCA but were even involved with the planning and organisation of a joint camp of the senior, u23 and u19 age groups that was proposed by none other than Pandit.

This stand of the cricket committee after having earlier suggested the name of Pandit among others and initially working on the suggestions of Pandit has shocked the members and they are now seen to be unprofessional, extremely unreliable and cantankerous.

“We have seen the documents and communications and it is shocking to see their approach and their change of stance. They are coming across as unprofessional, extremely unreliable and cantankerous. This is not how an organisation is supposed to function. They will have to answer to the General Body for this,” a senior member told IANS.

When contacted about this

ugly spat, a BCCI official said: “Someone raising a question on appointment of Pandit as head coach is actually doing disservice to the game. Pandit’s laurels speak for himself, any organisation should be proud of having him in their squad. It seems that their cricket committee is ill-advised because they seem keen to discredit a great decision for which they would be ones getting the credit.”

It seems that amidst this conflict, it is the game of cricket that is the loser. MPCA has signed a contract with Pandit for two years and that has put the association in a safe place and it could do without any controversies in the matter.

# SPORTS AWARDS LIKELY TO BE DELAYED

## Rashtrapati Bhavan instructions awaited to take final decision: Ministry official

**New Delhi (PTI):** The National Sports Awards ceremony this year is likely to be delayed by a month or two due to the COVID-19 pandemic but a final decision will be taken only after receiving guidance from the Rashtrapati Bhavan, a Sports Ministry official has said.

The National Sports Awards include the Rajiv Gandhi Khel-Ratna, the Arjuna, Dronacharya and Dhyan Chand honours, conferred every year by the President of India at the Rashtrapati Bhavan on August 29.

The ceremony coincides with the birth anniversary of hockey legend Major Dhyan Chand. But this year, it might be delayed due to the pandemic, although a final decision is still awaited.

“We haven’t heard anything from the Rashtrapati Bhavan yet. We are waiting for a communication with regard to the Sports awards. So, at this point of time, it is very difficult to say what will happen,” the ministry official told PTI.

“Currently, public gathering is prohibited across the country due to COVID-19 so no functions are being organised at the Rash-



trapati Bhavan.

“In the past also, the awards ceremony has been organised with delays, so in case it cannot be held on August 29, we can hold it one or two months later. The well-being and safety of all should be the priority right now,” he added.

The pandemic had last month forced the sports ministry to extend the deadline for submission of online applications for the awards. It also allowed athletes to self-nominate in view of the “difficulties” being faced by them to find recommenders amid the lockdown. The self nomination has resulted in a huge number of

applicants for the awards but the sports ministry is yet to form a committee to select the eventual winners with just a month left for the ceremony if it is held on time.

It has been learnt that the ministry is yet to start screening of the applications and a delay is inevitable.

“The sports awards this year will definitely be delayed because screening of applications is a tedious task which is yet to begin,” a ministry source told PTI.

“But the awards will definitely be given away. There is no question of denying deserving athletes and coaches their due recognition.”

## MUTE SPECTATORS



About 1,500 cardboard cutouts of fans are in seats, near the end of the Atlanta Braves’ 7-4 win over the Tampa Bay Rays in a baseball game, the Braves’ home-opener in Atlanta

## Murray calls for more mixed events in tennis

**London (IANS):** Former world no.1 Andy Murray has said that tennis is missing a trick by not getting more mixed gender events. Murray is currently taking part in the Battle of the Brits exhibition featuring male and female players.

Murray said that tennis is a sport where both the male and female players have similar stature and the sport should exploit that further. “The Hopman Cup, for example, was a brilliant event in my opinion,” Murray

a little bit more, not necessarily every single week, but at times it would be great. I would like to see Rafa (Nadal) on the court with some of the top female players.”

The Briton also said that he is expecting to see a few upsets to happen whenever tennis returns due to the lack of match time that most players have got amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Coach tests Covid-19 +ve at Karni Singh, training to continue

**New Delhi (IANS):** A coach posted at the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range in the national capital has tested positive for COVID-19, the Sports Authority of India said in a statement on Thursday. The development puts further doubt on a proposed national camp for Olympic-bound shooters scheduled to take place in August.

“The result of the test was intimated to the authorities by the coach on July 30,” said SAI. “The coach had visited the centre’s administrative department only on July 24, 2020.

“She did not visit the Field of Play or interacted with any athlete training at the centre. All actions as per protocol have been taken. The centre has been sanitized and training of shooters will be not be affected.”

SAI had opened the range for Olympic-bound shooters on July 8. Subsequently the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) had after a meeting on July 14 planned to start a national camp for 32 select shooters from August 1.

It had said that attendance for the selected shooters will be compulsory but shooters and coaches were not happy with that caveat.

“We did not get a formal mail or something regarding this. Even if all safety procedures are there, still will anyone take responsibility if someone gets COVID-19?” a top Tokyo-bound shooter told IANS earlier this month on the condition of anonymity.

# Cagliari stun Juventus, Milan crash Sampdoria

**Rome (IANS):** Cagliari snapped their winless streak as they beat defending champions Juventus 2-0 while AC Milan continued their unbeaten run with a 4-1 victory over Sampdoria in the ongoing Serie A.

The Bianconeri claimed their ninth consecutive victory on Sunday, so Maurizio Sarri made several changes to the starting line-up on Wednesday evening.

Juventus dominated with 34 attempts but it was Cagliari who found the net as starlet Luca Gagliano took center stage with one goal and one assist, helping his side snatch their first three points since July, reports Xinhua news agency.

Elsewhere, AC Milan were up by three goals before the hour mark with Zlatan Ibrahimovic’s brace and Hakan Calhanoglu’s volley.



Torino’s Alejandro Berenguer (right) celebrates after scoring during a Serie A soccer match between Torino and Roma, at the Grande Torino stadium in Turin, Italy

Gianluigi Donnarumma performed well to deny a penalty but could do nothing to stop Kristoffer Askildsen’s screamer. Rafael Leao sealed the match in the dying minutes with a curler from

the edge of the box.

Roma secured fifth place on the table as the Giallorossi edged past Torino 3-2 as Edin Dzeko, Chris Smalling, and Amadou Diawara were on target.

## Rohit is an exceptional batter, I’m a huge fan: Ferguson

**New Delhi (IANS):** New Zealand speedster Lockie Ferguson has said it is challenging to bowl to Rohit Sharma as the Indian batting ace picks up the length very quickly. In an interview with Sportskeeda, Ferguson was asked to name the batsmen he finds difficult to bowl at. “Good question, there’s quite a few. Rohit, I’ve found him very challenging,” Ferguson said. “With him, if you don’t get him out quickly, he tends to go big. He picks up the length very quickly and where my strengths lie, batters play the wrong shot. He’s a world-class batter,” Ferguson added. “Rohit, I’m a huge fan of him, I think he’s an exceptional batter.” The Kiwi gun-quick also added Australia stars Steve Smith and David Warner alongside India captain Virat Kohli to the list.

## Ganguly’s former trainer Ashoke Mustafi passes away

**Kolkata (IANS):** Former Bengal cricketer and renowned coach Ashoke Mustafi, who trained former India captain and BCCI President Sourav Ganguly during his formative years, passed away on Thursday after prolonged illness. He was 86 and is survived by his daughter, based in London.

He was the coach of Dukhiram Cricket Coaching Centre and guided several Bengal Ranji cricketers including Ganguly. It was Ganguly’s father who had sent the southpaw to learn under Mustafi in his early days.

The Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) President Avishek Dalmiya said: “I am shocked and sad at the demise of Ashoke Mustafi Sir. His contribution to cricket, especially in shaping up careers would be remembered forever. Deepest condolences to his family. Pray to Almighty for his soul’s eternal



peace.” He played two matches for Bengal, but also went on to become a renowned coach.

Recently, the CAB’s non-permanent staffer Chandan Das recovered from coronavirus as the 37-year-old tested negative, after a 10-day stay at hospital and 14-day home quarantine.

After being discharged from the hospital on July 12, Chandan was in home quarantine for 14 days and on Monday his second test report came negative.

The Kolkata Police have also set up quarantine facilities under the galleries of E and F Blocks of the Eden Gardens in the wake of the pandemic.

# After Rio heartbreak, only dream has been to win medal in Tokyo: Gurjar

**Jaipur (IANS):** For the past four months, the Sawai Mansingh Stadium has been home for double world champion Sundar Singh Gurjar. The top Indian para-javelin thrower has not only been training but living at the boys’ hostel inside the stadium, which has been his training home since he took up para-athletics in 2015.

While all trainees of the stadium hostels (both boys and girls) returned to their homes before the nationwide lockdown was imposed in March, Gurjar chose to continue his training alone inside the walls of the stadium, famous for hosting international cricket matches.

“Since lockdown, I have been

staying at the Sawai Man Singh Stadium in Jaipur. I didn’t return home and haven’t even stepped out of the Stadium walls for the past four months. As I am training alone, my friend (Ahmet Singh Gurjar) is helping me with my diet and other help. I was also in touch with my coach (Mahavir Prasad Saini) on video call initially and now he is at the stadium daily to supervise me personally,” Gurjar told the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI).

With the Tokyo Paralympic Games little more than one year away now, Gurjar was happy to have continued his training without a break.

“After the Rio 2016 disappoint-



ment, my only dream has been to win a medal at Tokyo 2020. Now that the Games are just one year away, it is an important time to continue the process. And I was

lucky enough to have the chance to continue my training here, which will also give me an advantage than my fellow competitors,” said the taciturn Gurjar, who

missed out on competing at the Rio 2016 Paralympics owing to disqualification for failing to register on time.

For Gurjar, who secured the Tokyo 2020 slot in men’s F46 Javelin with his second World Championship title (61.22 metres) at Dubai 2019, the focus for the past couple of months has been on his overall workout of his core strength, technique and fitness.

“I have been working on my core body. As I am confined to the stadium, training is the only thing I have been doing all these months. And as a result, I am able to attain 68-70 metres throw now. In the past, I also have achieved the India record with a distance of 68.42m

at a National meet in Panchkula, Haryana. And I am confident I can attain this mark at the Paralympic Games.”

India’s only double Paralympic gold medalist Devendra Jhajharia currently holds the world record of 63.97m in men’s F46 javelin event achieved at the Rio 2016 Games. Asked if hot and humid conditions will be a cause of concern at Tokyo during the Games time next year, Gurjar didn’t sound worried.

“As Rajasthan witnesses one of the hottest weathers in India, I am used to training in such conditions. The weather will not be a concern for me. My main focus will be on my throw on that particular day.