

Womenia

TWEET PATROL


KAJOL
@ITSKAJOLD

When u can't see something head on, try looking at it sideways.
 #differentpointofview
 #differentworld



From a Lone Teen to a Jewel Tycoon



TEJAL SINHA

The saying, 'Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world,' goes well with the journey of this first-generation entrepreneur. Chinu Kala, founder of Rubans Jewels' with just Rs. 300 in her pocket, left her home when she was 15 years old.

She shares, "I had to pretty much fend for myself and grew up learning things the hard way. I am not sure whether or not I even knew the spelling of entrepreneurship at the time, but I was extremely determined and strong willed about being successful. The definition of success though, changed with time. During my initial days, success for me meant being able to afford meals thrice a day. Deep down, I wanted to be the best in whatever I did, be it being a door to door salesgirl sell-

ing knives and coaster sets or being a floor manager for an apparel store or being a part time waitress. As any first-generation entrepreneur - I learnt the lessons of management by deep diving and getting actively involved in the roles that were assigned to me which ultimately helped me scale my business to the level it is today."

She began her entrepreneurial journey with Fonte Corporate Solutions. While she was doing well, her interest was always in the space of fashion. In 2014, she started Fonte Fashions India Pvt Ltd, the parent company of Rubans Accessories.

Rubans was started out from a small 36 Sq. Ft Kiosk at a mall in Bangalore, which is now amongst India's leading fashion accessories brand with over a million happy customers across the country. Their portfolio includes over two thousand designs in various product categories, suitable for every occasion.

From Bangalore, they have expanded to different cities such as Hyderabad and Kochi. While in 2016, there was a massive internet boom in India and along came the ecommerce platforms that changed the whole face of the retail industry. It took her no time to understand that there was a tectonic shift waiting to happen in the buying habits of the consumers. She started the online business in 2017 and today all their revenues come from the online space. Their products are available on www.rubans.in, Myntra and Flipkart. We are also part of the exclusive Myntra Accelerator program.

Chinu shares, "Despite the Indian jewellery market being vast, I felt that there was a huge gap between customer expectations and what was being sold in the market. My friends and acquaintances would tell me that they often bought jewellery from abroad owing to the lack of op-

Chinu Kala, always had an interest in fashion even after working for years in different organization. It was in 2014 that she started her jewel brand, which is now a well-known brand in the Indian fashion industry



tions in the country. The consumers had two choices - either to buy fine jewellery or purchase from the unorganised sector, compromising on the quality of the product. There was a clear gap in the market, and this sparked the idea of Rubans Accessories."

She adds that the USP of Rubans is that they have jewellery for everyone, for every occasion at a price point that suits everybody.

"Our portfolio includes two thousand plus designs in western and ethnic jewellery ranging from bracelets, bangles, earrings, necklaces, maang tikkas, rings, and much more. Our jewellery designs provide high-fashion alternative to fine jewellery which makes the wearer look confident and feel beautiful. These are statement pieces which are affordable but also stay true to their promise of quality and glamour," adds Chinu.

Challenges are a part of every business

Rational thinking, taking timely decisions and making necessary changes, no matter how difficult, have helped me emerge victorious. This is definitely easier said than done.

According to her, she always focused on finding solutions. Sharing about one such instance, she says, "I woke up one morning to a phone call that my entire office had burnt down. I, immediately, jumped out of bed and rushed to the office only to see that everything that I had worked for in past so many years, burnt to ashes. I was devastated beyond words. However, I chose to snap out of it and go back to the drawing board. We literally built Rubans back from scratch

- my employees worked super hard and since we did not have a place to sit we worked from my house with borrowed laptops, we made calls to each and every vendor to explain them about our situation. Today when I look back, that entire experience has made me stronger, and more capable of managing adverse situations. Its just the right attitude that will helps you get past such challenges."

The Pandemic

The month of April 2020 got completely washed out and they started in mid of May 2020 which was again little slow as people were still trying to embrace the new normal. However, from June the demand picked up quite drastically and then the ongoing festive season only fueled the growth for online brands.

The fact is that most of us love dressing up even if it is for an online meeting or an intimate celebration. India being the land of festivals, jewellery becomes a key purchase that women make. And that is where they saw the demand beginning to spike again.

Consumers who previously swore by experiential shopping switched to and continued relying on ecommerce platforms to meet their needs, even after the malls reopened, which worked extremely well for us.

The Jewel Trend

It is safe to say 2020 was a very difficult year for most of us in our own ways. 2021 is going to be all about cautious optimism. People will be very selectively positive which will reflect in their choices as well. Fuss free fashion will continue to prevail and most of us will continue to opt for styles that are casual yet voguish and comfortable.

"With clothing being free and easy, I see exaggerated jewellery especially statement chaandbalis being a big favourite. Whether you pair them with an intricate chikankari kurta or a sublime silk saree, chaandbalis are here to stay and they are only getting bigger and better. I also foresee a lot of bright coloured jewellery. Bright, happy colours tend to have a positive impact on one's spirits and mood and it's only natural that this will translate into jewellery as well," concludes Chinu.

Look chic in these flat shoes

One of the most important style tips to consider when wearing flat shoes is how your outfit works proportionately. When wearing a skirt or dress with flat shoes, try not to wear anything that is longer than just under the kneecap. And definitely avoid any length of skirt or dress that finishes on your calf (unless you're super tall).

To ensure flat shoes don't make you look shorter; this is a really easy rule to follow. By showing more of the lower leg, we avoid looking shorter with flat shoes. The same rule applies to a cropped pant or jean. Avoid wearing pants that finish on your calf, and instead choose a style that finishes just above your anklebone. Again, this will create an elongated leg in spite of flat shoes.

Another factor to consider is the length of tops and jackets. Again, we want to avoid the eye falling too low down the body shortening the lower body.

A good example here is the length of a blouse with jeans. An easy measure is to ensure your top doesn't cover your bum. A long top will elongate the upper body, making the lower body look shorter, meaning the proportions are not in balance. If your top is too long, simply tucking the front into your pants (the front tuck) which will instantly elongate your lower body and restore balance.

Shoe Styles

The style of flat shoe you choose can make a huge impact on how your outfit looks from head to toe. Chunky shoes will always be harder to wear as they simply look heavy on the foot and again draw the eye downwards.

If you have to wear chunkier shoes for comfort, try to look for a style that exposes some of the upper foot. For example, you might choose a slip-on loafer or ballet flat rather than a lace up. Even a slip-on ballet style with a strap across the foot will be more flattering than a heavy lace up. By exposing the foot, the shoe will look less heavy.

Another tip is to avoid black shoes and instead choose neutral colours

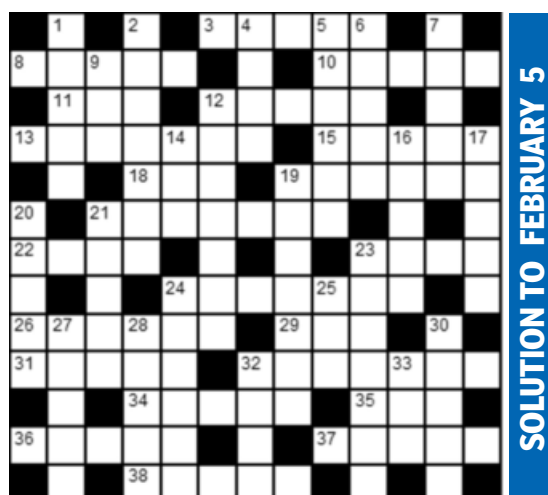
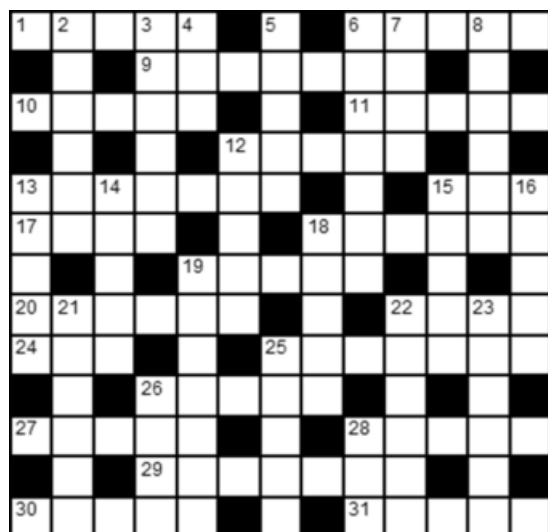
like taupe and tan. A heavier shoe in a neutral colour will look less 'chunky' in a light colour.

The Pointed Ballet Flat

The comfort of a classic ballet flat but with a more refined look. The pointed toe is dressier than a round toe and more flattering on the leg. The elongated toe will help to add length to your legs, particularly when no heel is involved. The pointed ballet is perfect with dresses and skirts for work as an alternative to pumps, as it will still look professional. It's the perfect compliment to a cropped slim pant also.

The Brogue

Brogues have been around for a few seasons now and they don't seem to be going anywhere soon. The brogue has also come a long way in terms of it's cut and shape. Look for a refined toe cap that is more almond in shape rather than round. Avoid an outsole that is wider than the upper part of the shoe as this will make the shoe look bulkier and wider on the foot. Again, the brogue is great worn with slim leggings, skirts and dresses, and casually with skinny or boyfriend styles jeans.



SOLUTION TO FEBRUARY 5

CROSSWORD

Across

- 1 Indian state with Patna as its capital (5)
- 6 Musical finales (5)
- 9 Stone Age relics (7)
- 10 Stretch of turf (5)
- 11 Metal mixture (5)
- 12 Basil-based sauce (5)
- 13 Mouths of volcanos (7)
- 15 Greek E (3)
- 17 Border (4)
- 18 Frenzied (6)
- 19 Smell (5)
- 20 Buys drinks (6)
- 22 Lifeless (4)
- 24 Collection (3)
- 25 Is able to spare ? (7)
- 26 Manage but not very successfully ? (3,2)
- 27 Dead Souls author (5)
- 28 Infectious agent (5)
- 29 Magic lamp owner (7)
- 30 Japanese martial art (5)
- 31 A type of quartz (5)

Down

- 2 Being toward the inside, center (6)
- 3 Purify (6)
- 4 Laver of tennis (3)
- 5 Fermented grape juices (5)
- 6 Prattle (7)
- 7 Norwegian capital (4)
- 8 A rabbit-like burrowing rodent (6)
- 12 Urges with a stick (5)
- 13 American coins (5)
- 14 Lace's end (5)
- 15 A type of anesthetic (5)
- 16 Sour and corrosive substances (5)
- 18 Easily offended (5)
- 19 Shakespearean tragedy (7)
- 21 Far away (6)
- 22 Over-affectionate (6)
- 23 Accommodate (6)
- 25 Tolerate (5)
- 26 Prod (4)
- 28 A word meaning 'by way of' (3)

SUDOKU

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

SOLUTION TO FEBRUARY 5

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

NEWS ROUNDUP

'Namak Issk Ka' actress Shruti Sharma spent minutes in coffin for an episode

Namak Issk Ka lead actress Shruti Sharma recently spent a couple of minutes inside a coffin to shoot an episode of the show, and she says it was definitely challenging.

"This is the first time that I have shot for a scene that was so spooky. Though it seems quite easy, it was definitely challenging for me to stay in the coffin for a couple of minutes, but I am glad that it all went well," said Shruti, who plays the role of a dancer named Chamcham in the show.

She added: "I had a memorable time shooting for it, and I am sure it is going to be a very interesting, action-packed track."

The series is about Chamcham, a dancer, who is looked down upon by society for her means of livelihood. However, the story takes a dramatic turn after Chamcham gets married into an affluent family.

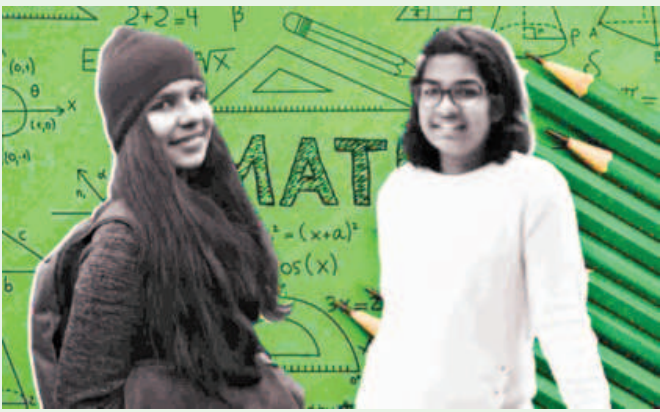


Sisters to represent India at Euro Girls' Mathematical Olympiad

Anushka Aggarwal(16) and Gunjan Aggarwal(14) from Faridabad are proud sisters who have been recently relishing the information that they are part of a four-member all-girls team set to represent India at the European Girls' Mathematical Olympiad (EGMO).

This sister-duo decided rather early on in their academic life that mathematics was for them. In this exclusive conversation with the girls and their mother, Bhawna Agarwal, they share their journey so far. "My daughters are now

used to being the only girls in most of the competitive platforms," says a visibly proud Bhawna. Anushka was in grade 4 when she first spoke about her keen interest in mathematics and says that "numbers have always fascinated me". It was a screening test in school that laid the foundation for Anushka and recalling the moment she says, "I topped that screening test and when my mother saw the question paper and the level it was set at, she was pleasantly surprised at my performance." It was after this that



Bhawna started spending more time with Anushka and found that her capacity to grasp was excellent. Inspired by her older sister, Gunjan also started showing an aptitude for mathematics. When asked how they keep track of such competitions, Bhawna says, "We relied a lot on the internet to search for competitions and rules of participation. I knew of the Olympiad but nothing else."

Adding to this Anushka said, "When I was in class 7, we took special permission to participate in the senior Olympiad because

in general students in classes 9 and above were allowed to participate. It was a matter of great pride for me given that I was competing with my seniors." Seeing the general atmosphere at home, Gunjan also started solving mathematical problems and enjoying them.

The girls also enrolled with Vedantu, a LIVE online interactive tutoring platform, during the lockdown. They say that their mentors helped them a great deal. "Having tutors who are so connected and involved with our de-

velopment has been a great boon for us. The teachers have always ensured that all our doubts are clarified and that we get the needed work for the competition," says Anushka.

Adding to this, Bhawna said, "The platform is so interactive that one does not feel like a child is learning virtually. There are various options and packages that one can choose from and each child is given what they need the most. Vedantu does not believe in a one-size-fits-all sort of solution."

Sisodia visits govt school, reviews Covid-19 protocols

NEW DELHI

DEPUTY Chief Minister Manish Sisodia visited a government school in Gandhinagar area and reviewed the COVID-19 protocols being followed there after schools in the national capital reopened for classes 9 and 11 on Friday.

"We had to take the decision of reopening schools now. We cannot wait for zero coronavirus case day because by then a lot of damage would be caused to our children's studies.

"If students follow the COVID protocols strictly, school life will also become normal," Sisodia, who also holds the education portfolio, said during the interaction with students at the school. The Delhi government earlier allowed all schools in the



national capital to reopen for Classes 10 and 12 from January 18 in view of the board exams.

"15 days ago the schools were opened for class 10 and 12 students. I am happy that our class 9 and 11 students have also re-joined the schools. I can see their happy faces. It is a challenge to open schools during the pandemic, but we have accepted it,"

Sisodia added. Schools reopened on Friday for classes 9 and 11 after they were closed in March last year to contain spread of novel coronavirus. Students will attend classes only with the consent of parents, physical attendance will not be compulsory and all schools and colleges will be expected to follow the COVID-19 guidelines.



India, US armies to take part in joint exercise in Raj

NEW DELHI

SOLDIERS from the Indian and the US armies will participate in land exercise 'Yudh Abhyas 20' from February 8 to February 21 this year at the Mahajan Field Firing Range in Rajasthan.

'Yudh Abhyas 20' provides excellent opportunities for professional and cultural exchanges that strengthen our partnership through shared learning and training.

Training commences with expert academic exchanges and professional development workshops that focus on training at the corps-level and below;

combat against conventional, unconventional and hybrid threats; humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

This exercise involves approximately 250 US Army and 250 Indian army soldiers.

The 11th Battalion of Jammu and Kashmir Rifles, and 2nd battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment of 1-2 Stryker Brigade Combat Team will carry out the exercise. This annual training exercise enhances combined interoperability capabilities through training and cultural exchange, which fosters enduring partnerships in the Indo-Pacific region through common defense objectives.

UP: Teacher beats up principal, held

MEERUT

IN a shocking incident, an assistant teacher allegedly thrashed the principal of a government inter-college for not being allowed to put his signature first on a register since that determines the seniority level. The principal, Mahender Singh, of Kisan Inter-College has been admitted to a hospital with injuries on the face.

According to reports, the principal had followed government guidelines which states that in case two persons have been appointed teachers on the same date, seniority will be determined by the teacher's age.

Assistant teacher, Amit Kumar, wanted to sign first on the register though he was younger to another teacher.

Daurala station in-charge Kiran Pal Singh said, "The accused Amit Kumar has been booked under IPC sections 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), 504 (insult and provocation) and relevant provisions of the SC/ST Act. He has been arrested and sent to jail."

'Chargesheet against guilty UP police personnel in false cases'

NEW DELHI

THE NHRC on Friday said that its persistent follow-up in a case from Balrampur district that involved "false implication and custodial rape" has resulted in "filing of chargesheet" by the Uttar Pradesh government against the guilty police personnel.

In a statement, the National Human Rights Commission also said its efforts has led to payment of relief to the three victims in the case. "The persistent follow-up by the NHRC has re-

sulted in filing of chargesheet by the government of Uttar Pradesh, u/s 376 (2), 506 Indian Penal Code, against a sub-inspector in a case of illegal confinement, torture, false implication and custodial rape by him in Laliya police station, Balrampur district. "In addition to this, departmental action has been taken against the then additional superintendent of police and the deputy superintendent of police, Balrampur due to the lack of proper investigation in the matter," it said. The commis-

sion has asked the state's chief secretary and the Director General of Police to see that the departmental proceedings are concluded against the "remaining delinquent police personnel, including the supervisory officers" in accordance with law expeditiously in the case.

"During the course of inquiry, the commission, under its case number 35244/24/11/2014-AR, had found that a young man and a girl from Balrampur district had eloped and got married in Mumbai in 2014. The girl's fa-

ther had lodged a complaint of kidnapping with police in the matter, following which the newly-wed couple was called to Mathura police post of Balrampur district," the statement said.

However, instead of taking a proper legal recourse in the matter, "both of them were detained in separate cells at the police post from August 12-13, 2014," it said. "The sub-inspector subjected the girl to sexual assault. When the girl complained about her sexual assault by the sub-inspector, no prompt.

18-yr-old held, juvenile apprehended for killing man

NEW DELHI

THE police have arrested a man and apprehended a juvenile for allegedly stabbing a 45-year-old person to death following a quarrel between them over a petty issue, officials said on Friday.

The victim, Manoj Kumar Jha who was in the transportation business, was stabbed to death by Abhishek Sharma (18)

and the juvenile on January 31, a day after they had a quarrel with the deceased, they said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Dwarka) Santosh Kumar Meena said a case was registered and using technical surveillance and information, the accused along with the juvenile were nabbed on Wednesday.

"During interrogation, both the accused confessed that they had a quarrel with the de-

ceased over a petty issue on January 30 following which they planned to kill him. When they saw Jha alone at a vacant plot on January 31, they stabbed him multiple times," he said. Jha was rushed to a nearby hospital where he was declared brought dead, he added. The police have recovered the knife and the clothes worn by the accused during the crime, he added.

Woman raped on pretext of marriage in Gurugram

GURUGRAM

A 35-year-old woman has alleged that she was raped by a man on the pretext of marriage over a period of two years, the police said on Friday.

The victim, a native of Kerala, was currently residing at the Sohna Road area in Gurugram.

In her police complaint, she said that she had taken mutual divorce from her husband around 15 days ago and was working as Ayurvedic consultant in a Shop located at Galleria market in Gurugram. In September 2019, She came in contact with Dimple Bhardwaj, who was the owner of the shop.

"In December 2019 the accused reached her house on the pretext of dinner and allegedly raped her against her wishes.



The accused threatened her that he will send her negative feed in the company and will fire her from the job," the woman told the police.

Thereafter, the duo de-

cided to get married. After this, the man again indulged in sexual relations in January 2020 in a hotel by promising to marry the woman, the victim told the police.

NIA arrests hawala operator

Manpreet in narco-terror case

NEW DELHI

A DAY after seizing Rs 20 lakh and 130 cartridges, the NIA on Friday arrested hawala operator Manpreet Singh from Punjab in connection with a narco-terrorism case involving Hizbul Mujahideen, officials said. An National Investigation Agency (NIA) official connected to the case told IANS: "The agency arrested Manpreet from Amritsar, where he had been residing for the last three months in a rented accommodation." He said that Manpreet will be presented in a Special NIA court to seek his custody.

The development comes a day after the NIA conducted searches at the premises of Manpreet in Amritsar and Gurdaspur. The accused is a close associate of co-accused Ranjit Singh aka Cheeta and Iqbal Singh aka SHERA.

The case relates to the arrest of Hilal Ahmad Shergoiji -- an over-ground worker of Hizbul and close associate of terror outfit's then commander Riyaz Ahmed Naikoo -- who had visited Amritsar to collect funds for terror activities in Jammu and Kashmir.

Delhi riots: HC prepones Jamia student's bail plea in UAPA case

NEW DELHI

THE Delhi High Court Friday allowed a plea by Jamia Millia Islamia student Asif Iqbal Tanha, arrested under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, seeking advancement of his bail petition in connection with a case related to larger conspiracy in the north east Delhi riots last year.

A bench of Justices Siddharth Mridul and A J Bhambhani advanced the date of hearing Tanha's petition from March 12 to February 25. The court allowed the early hearing application noting that special public prosecutors Amit Mahajan and Amit Prasad fairly did not oppose the plea. Advocate Sowjanya Shankaran, representing Tanha, sought advancement of the date of hearing of the petition on the ground that he is a student and has already undergone detention for 263 days.

Tanha has challenged a trial court's October 26, 2020 order by



which his bail application was dismissed on the ground that he allegedly played an active role in the entire conspiracy and that there were reasonable grounds for believing that the allegations against were prima facie true. Tanha was arrested in the case in May last year for allegedly being part of a "premeditated conspiracy" in the riots. The high court,

while allowing the early hearing application, directed the parties to complete the pleading before the next date, that is, February 25.

The high court has sought response from the Delhi Police on Tanha's bail plea. Tanha's counsel has sought bail saying that he has been in custody since May 2020 and even the charge sheet has been filed. The trial court, in its

October 26, last year order, had said that since there were reasonable grounds for believing that the accusation against accused Asif Iqbal Tanha were prima facie true, hence, the embargo created by Section 43D of Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) applied for grant of bail to the accused and the bail application was dismissed. Under section 43 D of UAPA, an accused should not be released on bail or on his own bond if the court was of the opinion that the accusation against such person was prima facie true. Tanha's counsel had claimed before the trial court that he was not present in Delhi during the riots and did not visit any of the protest sites where rioting and violence occurred.

Communal clashes had broken out in northeast Delhi on February 24 last year after violence between citizenship law supporters and protesters spiralled out of control leaving at least 53 people dead and around 200 injured.

NCB nabs 3 foreign nationals, seizes 8 kg heroin, 1 kg cocaine

NEW DELHI

IN a massive action against the international drug smugglers, the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) arrested three foreign nationals and also seized eight kg of heroin and one kg of cocaine, officials said on Friday.

NCB Deputy Director (operations) KPS Malhotra said, "The Delhi Zonal Unit of NCB in its bid to strike against the drug traffickers had seized eight kg heroin and one kg cocaine and arrested two Ugandan nationals and one Nigerian national."

Malhotra said that the Delhi unit was working on the intel received from the accused persons arrested in the month of December, from whom about 5.350 kg heroin was recovered.

"The information was developed, which led to a successful operation," he said, adding that a trap was laid and on January 28 this year and two Ugandan nationals -- Jascent Nakalungi, 42 and Sharifah Namaganda,



28, were intercepted at Indira Gandhi International Airport. He said, "Their luggage were thoroughly checked. In the luggage of both these ladies, there was false cavity. Four kg heroin and 500 gm cocaine were recovered from the luggage of each of them."

The changing contours of farmers’ agitation

AGITATING farmers around Delhi and the central BJP leadership are poles apart, not just in their understanding of the farm laws and their benefits, but also in their political perceptions. Understanding the imbroglio needs a careful study of the psychology of the two disagreeing sides. Those who are supporting the amendments made to the farm laws as well those who are opposing those know that farm law changes are inevitable.

No country can sustain the old laws pertaining to agriculture in a world of fast changing dynamics. India's agricultural scenario has undergone a rapid change over the decades and today ours is a grain surplus country. The reforms have been initiated in the 90s' in the country under the Congress rule

and there is little that one could do now except continuing the same. As we all know, the protests over the farm laws began in Punjab with the Congress government provoking them. The Punjab government looked at the political capital involved in the protests and extended a helping hand albeit discreetly initially and openly next.

The stir against the farm laws has been leaderless mostly and altogether 35 farm unions came together to organise their dharna in the borders of Delhi. As the numbers swelled, the Centre also understood that handling them would be difficult in the absence of proper leadership. The pulls and tugs of the agitation are such that from the beginning the wheat and paddy

growing Jat farmers of Punjab and Haryana came to the forefront and this one only got strengthened with the emergence of Tikait junior as the leader now.

Still, this is a 'two and one quarter state agitation' with the majority of the farmers comprising Punjab, Haryana and Western UP. Notwithstanding the claims of the farmers unions, a distinct political colour is visible to the same. Now that the agitation has brought together the Jats of UP, Haryana and Punjab to Delhi, it remains to be seen whether they could rightly claim to be the representatives of the country. The fight is between the 'Tikait line' of surviving on subsidies and the 'Sharad Joshi' line of open market benefits.

Farmers in the rest of the country

have a different take on their priorities. The agitation being supported by the anti-BJP Opposition in the country is being blown out of proportions by a section. In addition, we have social media kings and queens adding spice to the debate. All those blaming the BJP and joining hands with some stray Western voices should note that they are only rendering a great disservice to the country by arguing that it is indeed all about farmers' genocide just as those who are arguing that all the agitating farmers are terrorists.

The fact remains that the BJP instead of educating the farmers has just frozen its moves. And the farmers have embarked on a long fight. Soon, the movement will crystallise around the anti-BJP politics thanks to the intervention of the Opposition and the farmers will be forgotten soon. Already, signs of the farmers movement turning into a jat andolan are aplenty.



New trends in dairy industry

ATUL CHATURVEDI

INDIA'S journey from a milk deficit country to one of surplus has been momentous. Initiated in 1970, Operation Flood was arguably the world's most ambitious dairy development programme that transformed India into one of the largest milk producers.

India's milk production rate in the past few decades has, in many ways, been symbolic of the upward trajectory of the country's economy and influence. The per capita availability of milk in 2018-19 was 394 grams per day as against the world average of 302 grams.

Between 2016 and 2019, the annual milk production in the country registered a Compound Annual Growth Rate of 6.4 per cent. Today, with an annual production of 187.75 million tonnes (as per 2018-19 data), India accounts for about 22 per cent of the world's milk production.

However, India is yet to join the ranks of major milk exporting nations, as much of what we produce is directed towards meeting domestic demands. So, to unpack the issues facing our dairy sector, it is pertinent to dive deep and list out the factors that have been hampering the productivity levels of our cows.

The dairy sector assumes a great deal of significance on account of multiple reasons – for one, it has to do with the socio-cultural affinity towards cows and dairy products in large parts of the country, and as an industry, it employs more than 70 million farmers.

However, the crying need of the hour is for us to identify ways in which we can enhance the return on investment for our farmers. Recent data indicates that indigenous cows produce 3.01 kg of milk per cow

per day while the yield of exotic crossbred cows is 7.95 kg. This implies that, overall, the average productivity output of indigenous cattle (both non-descript and high yielding indigenous breeds) is only 1099 kg per animal per year, while for cross-bred cattle average productivity is 3073 kg per animal per year. So, the magic word is 'cross breeding'.

Cross breeding has taken off in a big way because of the advancements in reproductive technologies like In Vitro Fertilization (IVF), embryo transfer process, and artificial insemination. Out of these processes, IVF and artificial insemination have proven to be the most popular and effective methods.

The NAIP (Nationwide Artificial Insemination Programme) Phase-I was launched by Prime , Narendra Modi in Mathura on September 11, 2019. Every animal in the programme was assigned a 12-digit unique identification number under the Pashu Aadhar scheme to ensure accuracy in tracking – the animal is monitored continuously from the period of artificial insemination till the birth of the calf.

Building upon the first phase of the programme, NAIP Phase-II was initiated on the 1st of August 2020 with an allocation of Rs 1090 crore in 604 districts covering 50,000 animals per district and is on track to be completed by the May 31, 2021. Under the programme, 9.06 crore artificial inseminations will be performed in 604 districts and is expected to lead to the birth of 1.5 crore high yielding female calves. Consequently, 18 Million Metric Tonnes of additional milk will be produced, as average productivity will be enhanced from 1861 kg per animal per year to 3000 kg per animal per year.

Until now, Artificial Insemination (AI) technology has been the most used method in India, but its success hinges upon accuracy in heat detection and timely insemination. And this is where In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) technology will prove to be more effective. IVF has become a helpful tool in crossbreeding as under this technology semen from different bulls can be used to fertilise each oocyte from a collection, that in turn enables greater genetic diversity from a single cow. Projects for the establishment of 30 IVF labs have already been sanctioned, and 15 labs have been made functional thus far.

In the past six years, the Animal Husbandry and Dairying sector has received a great deal of impetus under the Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision of 'Make in India' and towards becoming an 'Aatmanirbhar (self-reliant) Bharat'. In keeping with our ethos of 'Jai Kisan, Jai Vigyan' the marriage of rural farming with the latest innovations in technology will usher in unprecedented transformations in our dairy industry.

(The writer is presently the Secretary at the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairy. Views expressed are personal)

IN MY OPINION V RAMU SARMA

THE pride of Andhra Pradesh, 'Visakha Ukku Andhrula Hakku' (Visakha Steel Plant) is set to slip into private hands. Our political leaders who keep chanting the mantra of Mahatma Gandhi, Atmanirbharta, Make in India etc do not seem to be having any consideration for the sentiments of the people of Andhra Pradesh. Vizag Steel Plant has become a symbol of Telugu pride as it became a reality after protracted struggle in which several people lost their lives.

Andhra Pradesh has lost special category status after bifurcation in 2014. Some of its major ports like Machilipatnam port, Krishnapatnam port and Kakinada SEZ have been privatised. It has lost a railway zone and now another symbol of Telugu pride and sentiment is going to be handed over to a private company.

"Agitations by political parties cannot stop from VSP going into private hands. The plant will not go to any other country, it will remain at the same place," is what the former Union Minister Sujana Chowdary said. Later he clarified that what he meant was management should not be the issue. If someone is willing to have tie up with iron ore mines and invest and run it more efficiently, capacity can be increased and it can become cost efficient. This apparently sets the tone for the arguments that are going to be made in favour of privatisation by the Centre and BJP leaders.

This statement assumes importance as it comes a day after the AP BJP which has always been taking a dual stand on contentious issues on Thursday stated that they had already sent their leaders including Sujana Chowdary to Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman urging her not to privatise the plant.

Regarding the special category status also, the State unit has been reiterating that it was for special category but finally there was nothing they could do and started singing the package song. A repeat performance is once again on the cards. It is also surprising that the state govern-

ment which has decided to set up integrated technology park in Vizag as well as high end skill university, incubation centre, labs, state data centre etc in the shore city, so far has not reacted to the proposal to privatise VSP. Even MPs did not raise any objection either on the floor of the Parliament nor did they submit any memorandum to the Prime Minister or Union Finance Minister.

The leaders of all parties seem to be more interested in being vociferous on trivial issues and fighting legal battles rather than trying to protect the steel plant. It seems people of Andhra have lost their fighting spirit or for some unknown reason have become too submissive. The Centre too appears firm on pushing ahead with its decisions in the name of putting economy on fast track.

It is now certain that unless people take the lead and convince the centre that VSP should not change hands, nothing can save it from being privatised. It's time all leaders in state and at centre recall the history of Vizag Steel Plant and why it has become pride of Andhra and save the plant from being privatised.

It is the first shore based Integrated Steel Plant in the country and is known for its quality products. It is a market leader and caters to the needs of diverse Industrial sectors. It is the first Steel plant to be certified ISO 9001:2008 (presently 2015), ISO 14001:2004 (presently 2015), OHSAS 18001:2007 and ISO/IEC 27001:2013 Standards. It is also the first PSE to be certified ISO 50001:2011 - Energy Management Systems and has acquired CMMI Level 3 Certification. CMMI is a process improvement approach that provides organisations with the essential elements of effective processes that ultimately improve their performance. An appraisal at maturity level 3 indicates the organization is performing at a "defined" level.

In the 1970s, Kurupam Zamindars donated 6,000 acres of land for Vizag Steel Plant. A new company Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL) was formed on 18 February 1982. Visakhapatnam Steel Plant was separated from SAIL and RINL was made the corporate entity of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant. This was the first project where sort of land pooling took place. People from 66 villages had given about 22,000 acres of land.

About 54 years ago nine Vizagites, including six students and three workers, died in police fir-



ing as the agitation for the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant picked up after the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi did not seem to honour the demand of the people of Andhra Pradesh.

Those holding top positions or on the verge of retirement in the VSP now were in schools when the agitation and police firing happened. Six were killed near AVN College and three near the old post office when people took to the streets in huge processions. People alleged that the police fired at peaceful protestors.

Over 40 were killed in different parts of the then undivided Andhra Pradesh during the "Visakha Ukku, Andhrula Hakku" agitation. Trains were stopped even in Telangana region in the undivided Andhra Pradesh as youth were in the forefront of the agitation demanding a major manufacturing industry in the State so that they could get employment.

About 70 legislators, including MPs and MLAs, resigned from their posts demanding for the PSU to be set up in Visakhapatnam. The demand gained further impetus as a foreign agency certified that Vizag was the most suitable place for shore-based steel plant, the demand became more louder. Many other states also tried to get it though they were not so qualified for it.

Finally the Union Government had to take a decision to set up the unit in Visakhapatnam. The old timers will agree that this was the beginning of a turnaround for Visakhapatnam which till then was a sleepy town.

That was the first step towards industrialisation and today it has emerged as a global city where the present government wants to have its "Executive Capital."

It remains to be seen whether the State Government would agree for privatisation of the steel plant even while it is in the process of shifting of capital to

the shores of Vizag or will it resist any such move.

About one lakh people are dependent on the steel plant, including 17,000 permanent employees and workers and 16,000 contract workers. It is now the biggest PSU in the state. The steel plant, launched with 1.7 million tonnes capacity, was later expanded to 7.3 million tonnes without any financial support from the Centre. VSP was paying tax to the tune of Rs 17,000 crores.

Moreover, in 2011 Parliament standing committee recommended that iron ore be given to them. In 2015 union minister R K Singh committee also recommended that mines be allocated. According to RINL annual report 2019, RINL had shown a turnover of Rs 21,000 crore. For last 20 years the company has been showing increase in turnover. The Centre got money from it as taxes but never invested anything from its pocket. It has assets worth Rs 36,000 crore.

Hence, the Centre's argument that it has decided to privatise because VSP had incurred heavy losses in 2017 and 2018 does not hold ground.

According to the report submitted by the Union Ministry of Steel, Vizag Steel Plant is the only steel-manufacturing PSE in the country that has no captive iron ore mine. The losses were majorly due to the lack of captive mines due to which the RINL is procuring the iron ore supplies at market price, resulting in a loss of at least Rs 5,000 on every ton produced.

Where there is will there is a way says the adage. If the Centre really wants to bring a turnaround, it can do so. It can take a decision to allot some captive mines for VSP and see that it once again becomes a profit-making unit. The loss of about Rs 3,600 crore is not a very big amount.

LETTERS

Don't privatise Vizag Steel Plant

VIZAG Steel Plant (owned by Rashtriya Ispat Nigam), a dream came true in 1971 earning crores of profit with crores of on-hand orders is going to be sold by the Central Government led by the BJP. In its bid to achieve sanction of the plant by the then GOI, AP witnessed a big agitation in 1969-70 with the slogan 'Visakha Ukku...Andhrula Hakku...', in which , we were also a part before our pre-University studies and so many people lost their lives in the agitation.

A Nava Ratna company owned by the GOI, Vizag Steel which qualifies for furtherance in every aspect for its performance for a long period is going to become a part of history because of the antagonistic and begudging BJP government and it is beyond doubt that the BJP government with its PSU privatisation spree, is going forward to close some industries in AP. The recent merger of Andhra Bank in Union Bank is one such example of the backbiting disinvestment policy of the Centre.

One of the important reasons for its loss, is

thehansreader@gmail.com

that the government has not allotted any captive mines to Vizag Steel Plant. Vizag Steel has been a feather in the cap of AP, since so many decades. On flimsy grounds, BJP top brass are depriving AP State of the jewels in its crown...one after the other.....

K Sai Prasanna, Tadepalligudem

BJP is guilty of misusing social media

I was amused to read the article "Social media: A new global pandemic?" (THI 5 Feb). If BJP is so much concerned about social media pandemic, why not the party take the lead and get out of all social media forums? Why does the BJP IT cell keep a count of PM Modi's followers, likes etc in social media. In fact, if one goes into the use of social in political battle it was BJP which took a lead and then other political parties followed.

How can we forget selfie with Modi, Beti Bachao and so on. The fact of the matter is the Chief of BJP IT cell is quite famous for the way he uses and misuses it for propaganda. The IT Chief has been specially assigned for West Bengal elections to keep attacking the TMC government. The BJP government has not left any official portal where Modi's image is not seen. Even



the Diksha portal which is used by lakhs of teachers from central and state government, the portal has Modi's image and every day the number of users are counted.

Since the same social media users are speaking against the government's wrong policies, it has come to bite them, the author was forced to call social media a pandemic. If social media is used sensibly to spread the message of unity, peace and harmony, it would go a long way to control social unrest. Anything in excess is always not good and social media is no exception.

NNagarajan, Hyderabad

Establish US Consulate in Bengaluru

BENGALURU City and Karnataka state has witnessed a growing demand of visitors to the United States of America. A US visa applicant from Karnataka state is compelled to visit its Consulate office located only in Chennai or Hyderabad to obtain and apply for various types of visas especially B1 and B2 category visas. The move to travel to Chennai and Hyderabad every time causes an inconvenience resulting in administrative/logistical hardships to the visa applicants.

It should be otherwise noted that the facility to travel to almost all the other nations including Canada, Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, Suriname, Brazil, France, Mexico, Finland, Ireland, Peru, Japan, UK, etc. exists through the presence of full-fledged Honorary Consulate offices conveniently located in Bengaluru for the benefit of Karnataka domicile visa applicants.

Further, it is suggested to establish a new full-fledged US Consulate at Bengaluru for the benefit of Karnataka's domicile residents. A new US consulate now at Bengaluru, Karnataka will largely benefit many business professionals, visitors, and students who otherwise face

administrative/logistical hardships to obtain a visa from its existing consulates located in Chennai and Hyderabad. The suggested move for a new US consulate now at Bengaluru will otherwise help to expedite visa application requests quickly.

Varun Dambal, Bengaluru

Houses for migrant workers

THE Surat Urban Development Authority has decided to provide nearly 400 houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) on rent to migrant workers. The Affordable Rental Housing Scheme (ARHC) has recently been approved by the Union Ministry of Urban Affairs and Housing. The ARHC is a sub-scheme of the PMAY announced last year, and Surat will be the first to be implementing it. The proposal to convert 396 houses built under the PMAY (urban). The labourers stay in rented premises sharing rooms with other labourers in the colonies to reduce the expenses of house rent. This is a welcome initiative. Hope that all State governments should construct more houses for the migrant workers. Such housing facilities may also help to prevent reverse migrations of workers.

Amit Singh Kushwaha, Satna

TRS chief to sound Sagar bypoll bugle on Feb 10

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

TRS supremo and Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao is all set to sound the bugle for by-election to the Nagarjuna Sagar Assembly Constituency on February 10, as the ruling party is organising a public meeting in Halia which is one of the biggest towns in the poll-bound assembly segment. At the public meeting, the CM is likely to announce a slew of sops to the Sagar constituency.

As part of the half-day visit to the old Nalgonda district, the TRS chief would address the public meeting to be attended by all senior leaders, ministers, MLAs and MLCs of the district. Before attending the meeting, KCR would lay a foundation for the Nellikallu lift irrigation scheme being taken up at the cost of Rs 3,000 crore and other lift

schemes in the district to fetch the irrigation needs of Devarakonda, Sagar, Munugodu, Kodad and Mahbubnagar assembly constituencies.

Leaders said that KCR has taken a serious note of the by-elections as the TRS suffered a jolt in the Dubbaka by election and the recently held GHMC



polls. "The CM did not conduct any poll campaign in Dubbaka and Greater Hyderabad and this time KCR would prepare the poll strategy and monitor personally the poll campaign," said the party leaders adding that a special team was already constituted to look after the local party affairs during the poll campaign.

M-wallet glitches leave motorists red-faced

K CHANDRASHEKAR
HYDERABAD

TECHNICAL glitches in the M-wallet mobile application, brought by the transport department are leaving the motorists red faced as the problems of the users were not solved even for two to three days.

The M-wallet services were launched in the transport department during March 2016. The mobile application was brought to enable the motorists to store their documents like driving license, registration certificates and other documents in their mobile phones and these can be shown to the enforcement authorities when asked. The traffic challans can also be paid through the app. The app was hailed by the motorists as they could store their documents in their phone and save their originals at their home. The NITI Aayog too had praised the initiative of the transport department.

However, of late, there have been technical glitches in the application. The motorists say that the problem is not being solved even for two to three days. A motorist L Srikanth said that he has



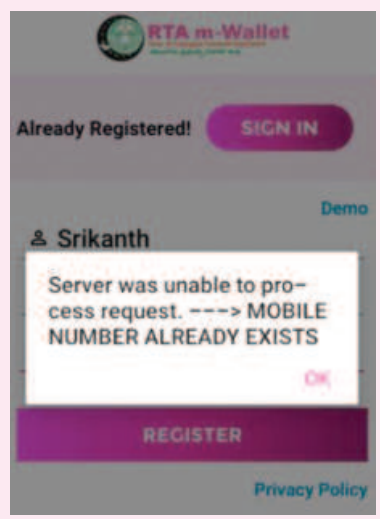
- It enables motorists to store driving licence, RC etc in their mobiles
- These could be shown to traffic officials when asked for
- However, of late users are unable to login and access services

been trying to login but unable to do it for the last three days. The application says, "Server was unable to process the request. Mobile number already exists."

Apart from this the users are unable to generate the one time password (OTP). Another user Sai Kiran said that he was unable to sign with the OTP process. While I am trying to get my RC info, it raises an error saying "server was unable to process

request.' Another user Sandeep said that his RC was saved in the app earlier but when he tried to open it, the application gets closed. The user uninstalled and reinstalled the app to check if it works but the user was unable to login. The motorist said that earlier it was functioning well but now there were more technical glitches.

The motorists say that the app should show necessary documents



when it is checked because these are checked by the traffic police. If the app does not open, the authorities would have doubts on the genuineness of the papers of the motorists. The authorities should sort out the issue immediately, said Sandeep.

When this was brought to the notice of the officials in the Transport department, the authorities said that they would look into the problem and solve it.

Ponnala slams Modi's comments on budget

HYDERABAD

FORMER PCC president and former minister Ponnala Laxmaiah on Friday slammed Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his comments that his predecessors at the Centre prepared budget only to face elections.

Ponnala condemned the comments and said that they were unfortunate. Speaking to the media here, he asked Modi whether the BJP would have come to power if the Congress-led Central government prepared the budget for elections. He alleged that Modi was trying to get votes based on caste and religion and added that the budget was also prepared by the Central government by keeping in view its votes. Reminding the PM that he had promised Rs 5 lakh-crore package to Bihar before the State elections, he asked whether the package was given. Making it clear that BJP promised reorganisation of Andhra Pradesh, Ponnala asked if Modi had fulfilled all the promises made in the AP Reorganisation Act 2014. He alleged that Modi failed to honour his promise of Rs 15 lakh to every citizen of the country and providing two crore jobs.

CM calls for internet to every village

AMARAVATI

CHIEF Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy directed the officials to focus on expanding internet network and providing internet access to every village, setting up internet library in villages and improving skills in IT and other technological aspects.

During a review on Information Technology and Electronic Policy at camp office here on Friday, the Chief Minister said it was important to provide internet facility in all villages within three years to develop IT industry, and network should be strong failing which the targeted goals will not be achieved.

He said internet facility should be provided and internet library should be setup in every village and the facility should be useful to one and all. A building should be constructed for internet library and 'work from home' facilities. He said secretariats and Rythu Bharosa Kendras (RBKs) in a village should be connected with Internet and extended to domestic purpose as well.

The Chief Minister approved setting up of Integrated Technology Park in Vishakhapatnam and said high-end skill university, incubation centre, labs, COES, IT, EC department office, state data centre, and IT towers should be present in the park. Emerging Technologies University will be



Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy reviewing Electroncis and IT at his camp office on Friday

- Directs officials lay stress on internet access to all villages, setting up of internet libraries, during a review on IT policy
- Proposes IT concept cities in Visakhapatnam, Tirupati and near Bangalore in Andhra
- Approves setting up of Integrated Technology Park in Visakhapatnam

set up in Visakhapatnam with aim of teaching and research on IT applications in the fields of robotics, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, blockchain technologies, data analytics sciences, advanced electronics, education, health, agriculture, water resources, etc.,

The officials said experts from various technological institutions, including IITs, would submit a report on this university soon. The university should help the students of engineering and other technical studies to improve their skills and added that all the IT related departments including the university should be in one place. The Chief Minister instructed the officials to setup

IT Concept cities in at least 2,000 acre in three places near Visakhapatnam, Tirupati and Bangalore (in AP limits). He said the infrastructure in these concept cities should be of high standards and the architecture in construction should be unique and added that each concept city should have a special master plan.

Every aspect in the policy should be transparent and contribute to IT progress and help the development of the state, he said. He said 'work from home' has increased in the wake of Covid pandemic and it should be promoted.

He directed the officials to prepare the policy, including government support to IT sector

considering work from home in the wake of pandemic. He said to focus on bringing as many industries as possible and create employment in Kopparthi electronic park in Kadapa district.

Information technology minister Mekapati Goutham Reddy, higher education special chief secretary Satish Chandra, Chief Minister's chief advisor Nilam Sawhney, finance principal secretary SS Rawat, IT principal secretary G Jayalakshmi, IT special secretary B Sundar, energy principal secretary Nagulapalli Srikanth, technical education commissioner M M Nayak, APFSL managing director M Madhusudan Reddy and other senior officials were present.

UNANIMOUS ELECTIONS

SEC asks Chittoor, Guntur collectors not to declare results

- The two districts see high number of unanimous elections
- SEC seeks report from the Collectors of two districts on elections
- Says it will take action in case of failure by any functionary

AMARAVATI

THE State Election Commission (SEC) sought reports from collectors of Chittoor and Guntur districts, where a large number of unanimous elections have been reported, not in consistent with the state trend.

The SEC directed both the collectors not to go ahead with the declaration of unanimous results and put them on hold till the commission gives clearance. The SEC asked the collectors to send detailed reports and the commission will take a decision after examining them. The commission stated that it intends to take action in case of any failures with regard to any functionary.

State Election Commissioner N Ramesh Kumar said that the SEC toured all the 13 districts and reviewed the preparedness of dis-

Don't use e-Watch till Feb 9, HC to SEC

- State govt in a petition expresses apprehensions over the app
- Court tells SEC not to use the app till AP Technology Services issued security clearance certificate

AMARAVATI

THE Andhra Pradesh High Court on Friday directed the State Election Commission (SEC) not to use 'eWatch' mobile app developed by the commission for monitoring of panchayat elections monitoring till February 9.

The State Election Commissioner N Ramesh Kumar launched the e-Watch app on February 3. The SEC officials said that the app services will be available to citizens from February 4. However, the state government

filed a petition in High Court expressing apprehensions about the security aspects of the app as it was developed by a private company. The petitioners on behalf of the state questioned the need to develop a new app while government apps were already available and expressed doubts over its security. The petitioners argued that the app should not be used until it received security audit report.

The responsibility of security audit report of the app has been given to AP Technology Services which needs five days to issue the certificate. It is expected to be issued by February 9.

The advocate of SEC stated that as per the State Election Commission permission the app was developed. The High Court posted the next hearing on the subject to February 9.

district administration for conducting panchayat elections and observed that the arrangements were satisfactory. Of the total 3,249 panchayats going for poll in the first

phase, 517 panchayats elections became unanimous, with Chittoor reporting highest number of 112 panchayats and Guntur district in second place with 67 panchayats.

Metro to Falaknuma remains in limbo

M M FAROOQUI &
MEGHNA NATH
HYDERABAD

EVEN as Hyderabad Metro Rail Limited (HMRL) began its operations on the Corridor II, the 11-km stretch between Jubilee Bus Station (JBS) and Mahatma Gandhi Bus Station (MGBS), in February last year, the connectivity towards Falaknuma remains in limbo. The officials still remained unclear about the progress and tight lipped as it is believed that the lack of political will has become a major hindrance.

Even as connectivity to two major bus stations of the city turned one year, the residents of Old City have once again started questioning about the progress of the 6-km stretch from MGBS to Falaknuma.

"The times have changed. The Old City and the people are eagerly waiting for a metro service. Several developmental projects are being taken up in other sides of the city including metro service, but the purana sheher remains the same," said Mohammed Tariq in frustration. He said he has been waiting for the Metro in Old City for the last 5-6 years, but it seems it was just a political gimmick."

"Earlier, the people in Old City were unaware of major developments. When compared to other areas, the Old City areas are still



- Metro Corridor II between JBS and MGBS began in February last year
- Metro works on MGBS to Falaknuma stretch faces inordinate delays
- Old City feels neglected; no major development has taken place
- In November 2018 around 1,100 properties identified for acquisition
- Beyond that no further developments have been taken up
- Citizens claim that lack of political will is the cause for delay

a decade old. Now there should be a metro corridor in the Old City," said Venkat Reddy, an IT employee.

Many properties including residential and commercial assets in the stretch from Darulshifa, Mir Alam Mandi, Moghalpura via Shalibanda, Shamsheergunj to Falaknuma were marked for land acquisition. "Since the project was started, the government is only paying lip service, but nothing concrete has happened. We

demand the authorities to announce the date of metro rail project and start project work in Old City," said K Venkatesh, senior Congress leader and JAC member.

According to the GHMC's Town Planning wing, last they heard about the metro and its developments was in November 2018 and began process of land acquisition of properties in collaboration with HMRL in full swing. After identifying some 1,100 properties for land acquisition and marking the properties also issuing notices, still no further developments have been taken up.

ET Narsimha, CPI leader and Old City Metro Jail JAC convenor, said that the government gave an assurance in several assembly sessions for the commencement of the metro corri-

dor in Old City, but no initiative has been taken up. "It has been a year since the Corridor-II started functioning, there is no further progress. The government is keeping the project pending," he added.

It may be mentioned here that in the last assembly session in March 2020, Minister K T Rama Rao also assured about the Metro corridor in Old City and stated to hold a meeting with the area MLAs but, no further progress. But it is believed that the lack of political will has put the issue under cold storage and local activists have also showed pessimism in completion of the stretch.

When contacted, NVS Reddy, Managing Director, Hyderabad Metro Rail, said that the matter was under consideration of the State government.



K Ramu of Guntur donating pickles to TTD chairman Y V Subba Reddy at Annarasadam Complex in Tirumala on Friday

2 tonne pickles donated to TTD

TIRUMALA

A donor hailing from Tadepalli of Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh K Ramu donated two tonne of various pickles to TTD on Friday. He handed over the stock to TTD Annadanam authorities through TTD chairman YV Subba Reddy at Annarasadam Complex at Tirumala. HDPP Co-option member Penchalaiah was also present.

YV Medical Youth with the support of Sri Rajeswari Medicals from Vijayawada donated Rs 6 lakh worth sanitizers, soaps, vitamin tablets and face shields to TTD on Friday.

They have donated the materials to Subba Reddy at Annarayana Bhavan at Tirumala. YV Youth representatives Chandrasekhar Reddy, Sitaramanjaneyulu, Suresh, TTD health officer Dr R R Reddy were also present.

JEO Basanth Kumar transferred

His accompanying SEC during his recent visit to Tirumala said to have angered the govt

HANS NEWS SERVICE
TIRUPATI

TTD Tirupati joint executive officer (JEO) Basanth Kumar was transferred by

the state government immediately after State Election Commissioner Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar's visit to Tirumala.

It may be noted that on February 3, SEC visited Tirumala and Tiruchanuru as part of election arrangements review.

During his visit, JEO Basanth Kumar accompanied SEC in his tour. In fact, the JEO is presently deputed to election duties in Nellore district. He rushed to participate in SEC Tirumala tour from Nellore, which was taken seriously by the government. On Friday, he was asked to report at general administration department, Vijayawada but was allowed to continue as election observer in Nellore district. Chief secretary Aditya Nath Das issued orders to this effect.

R-Day violence: ‘Tikait cannot get away by shedding tears’

NEW DELHI

Stating that hoisting a religious flag at the Red Fort was "treason", BJP leader and former Union minister K J Alphons on Friday said in Rajya Sabha that farmer leader Rakesh Tikait cannot get away by shedding tears after the violence during their tractor parade seeking the repeal of new farm laws.

Defending the three farm laws, Alphons said there was nothing wrong in them. Farmers protesting against the laws at border points of Delhi faced criticism after the violence during their January 26 tractor rally. However, Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) leader Tikait's emotional outburst provided a fresh momentum to the agitation. "If you are leading an agitation Tikait, and you tell people take rods with you and

then you finally shed tears and say sorry 'I didn't know'. Have a backbone," Alphons said during a discussion on Motion of Thanks on Presidential Address.

He also accused the Opposition of sowing the seeds of dissent and hatred against the government. "When you sow the seeds of hatred against the government...you are sowing the deep seeds of extremism. What happened at Red Fort is treason. If not treason, tell me what was it?" he told the House.

Interjecting on this issue, Congress leader Digvijay Singh challenged the BJP leader for a debate on the issue of minimum support price (MSP) for crops. De-



fending the new agri laws strongly, BJP leader Neeraj Shekar asked the protesting farmers to recognise people who have boycotted the presidential address and now participating in the debate to give speech on injustice meted out to farmers.

Senior Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad wore a black face mask in the Rajya Sabha with 'I am with farmers' written on it in white letters.

The Leader of Opposition sat sporting the mask in the Upper House, which earlier saw heated exchanges as both the treasury and opposition benches attacked each other on the issue.

Congress leader Anand Sharma said that it was a

"black day" when the farm laws were passed last year even though the House was "not in order".

He demanded an inquiry by a Supreme Court Judge into the January 26 violence in Delhi during the farmers' tractor rally.

"The way the farm ordinances were brought in during the coronavirus pandemic was not normal. What was the hurry? Why were these not sent to the select committee? It was a black day when these farm laws were passed in the Rajya Sabha," former Union Minister Sharma said.

He also claimed that there was a "conspiracy" behind the January 26 incidents. "I condemn it. There should be a judicial inquiry by a Supreme Court Judge as how a few tractors reached the Red Fort and who allowed them in."

‘I am with farmers’: Azad wears mask in RS

Farmers defy Section 144

Nails on roads will turn out to be nails in ‘political coffin’ of BJP

‘Won't be silenced’: Niece of Kamala Harris on protest over her tweets

SHAMLI/NEW DELHI

A large number of farmers gathered at Shamli in Uttar Pradesh for a farmers' panchayat on Friday that was denied permission by the State's BJP government.

Thousands of farmers sat on the ground as songs prepared for the protests blared out of mics. One of these songs implored Prime Minister Narendra Modi to listen to the voice of farmers.

The district administration in Shamli had cited a Covid-spurred restriction on large gatherings until April and "chances of unruly behaviour" by farmers while denying permission for the panchayat, but the organisers, including the Bharatiya Kisan Union and the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD), said they would not be deterred.

"144 reasons why I will go to Shamli!" - tweeted RLD leader Jayant Chaudhary, apparently referring to Section 144, which is used to ban large gatherings.

Jayant said the government's "strong arm tactics" will not work against the tillers and the nails being laid on roads for them would turn out to be the nails in the "political coffin" of the BJP.

American lawyer Meena Harris, the



Farmers in large numbers attend the 'Kisan Mahapanchayat', in Shamli district on Friday

niece of Vice-President Kamala Harris, has shared a photo of a protest against her over her posts in support of the farmers' agitation.

"I spoke out in support of human rights for Indian farmers, and look at the response," Meena Harris tweeted on Thursday, sharing a photo by Reuters journalist Danish Siddiqui.

"I won't be intimidated, and I won't

be silenced," she added in a pinned tweet.

The 36-year-old, also an author, has been tweeting regularly since an international media report on the farmer protests and the government's crackdown led to posts from pop star Rihanna, climate activist Greta Thunberg and many others on Tuesday.

Amid controversy over international

criticism on the ongoing farmers protests in India, government sources have said that there was a possibility for a "favourable environment" to find resolve even as the impasse continued for months.

A Bharatiya Kisan Union official in Ghaziabad filed a complaint alleging that some miscreants have opened a fake Facebook profile page of farmer leader Rakesh Tikait and posted obnoxious photos on its feed.

Meanwhile, spikes on the roads, cement walls and multiple barricades at a farmer protest site at the Ghazipur border have drawn international attention over the past few days. The protesting farmers today added flowers to the picture.

A day before a planned nationwide "chakka jam" or road blockade in support of the farmers' agitation, farmer leader Rakesh Tikait sought to change the optics by planting flowers alongside the heavy barricading at Ghazipur, delivering a pointed message.

Tikait, one of the organisers of Saturday's blockade, announced after a meeting that farmers of Uttar Pradesh would "take a break" and would not participate in the three-hour "chakka jam". He cited sugarcane harvesting and the non-stop protests since November-end.

SC grants bail to comedian Faruqui

NEW DELHI

THE Supreme Court on Friday granted interim bail to comedian Munawar Faruqui, who had challenged the Madhya Pradesh High Court order, which refused to grant him bail in a case where he allegedly hurt religious sentiments.

A bench headed by Justice Rohinton Fali Nariman noted that the Madhya Pradesh Police flouted the top court judgment in Arnesh Kumar versus Bihar of 2014, during Munawar's arrest. The bench also issued notice to Madhya Pradesh government in the matter Faruqui's counsel argued that allegations are vague.

The top court also granted him protection from being arrested by Uttar Pradesh police, which lodged a separate case, by staying the production warrant issued against him.

The High Court had observed that after taking into consideration the material seized and the statements of the witnesses along with the ongoing investigation in the matter, no case is made out for grant of bail.

"Munawar, a resident of Gujarat, was arrested on January 2 along with four others on the allegations that he made derogatory remarks against Hindu gods during a recent stand-up show. The other arrested persons were identified as Edwin Anthony, Nalin Yadav, Prakhya Vyas and Priyam Vyas.

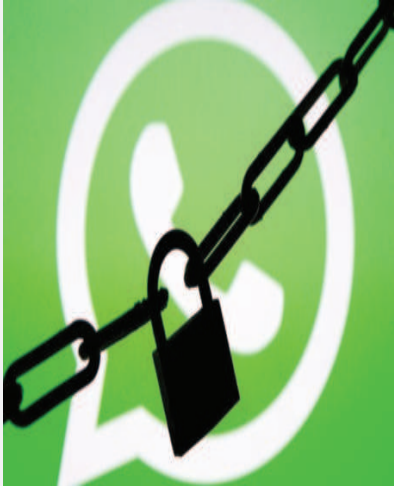
SC refuses plea against new WhatsApp policy

NEW DELHI

THE Supreme Court on Friday refused to entertain a plea which had sought a direction to instant messaging platform WhatsApp to roll back its new privacy policy on grounds that it is allegedly violative of laws and can impact the country's security.

A bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde observed that this issue is already being heard by the Delhi High Court and the petitioner can choose the suitable remedy. The bench, also comprising justices A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian, was hearing a plea filed by the Confederation of All India Traders which had sought a direction to the Centre to intervene in the matter and frame guidelines to govern large technology-based companies such as WhatsApp Inc., Facebook Inc. and Facebook India Online Services Private Limited. The plea, filed through advocate Vivek Narayan Sharma, had said that the public interest litigation (PIL) was necessitated due to the alleged failure of the Centre in carrying out its constitutional duty and responsibility to protect the rights to privacy and freedom of speech and expression of the citizens of India.

"The respondent no.1 -- Union of India -- has granted permission to respondent nos 2 to 4 to run the WhatsApp application in India, but has failed to play the role of a guardian to protect the fundamental rights of citizens in as much as WhatsApp, which is rendering essential public services by enabling citizens to communicate, has recently imposed unconstitutional privacy conditions which are not only violative of the law but can impact the national security of the country," it had claimed.



Molester released from jail, rapes, kills child

BHOPAL

A five-year-old girl was allegedly raped and killed in Morena district of MP by a man, who was recently released from jail after spending six months there on the charge of molesting the minor's aunt, police said on Friday.

The incident took place on Thursday evening in the area located under the Sabalgarh police station limits, they said. The accused, identified as Bunty Rajak (36), was arrested for the offence, Sabalgarh police station in-charge Narendra Sharma said.

The five-year-old Dalit girl disappeared on Thursday evening. Her family members failed to find her anywhere in the village, following which they started searching her on the outskirts. They found her lying in a pool of blood in a farm," he said.

A police team reached the spot and launched a probe. During the investigation, the accused was arrested from the village, he added.

Rajak confessed to his crime and he was booked for the rape and murder of the girl. Relevant sections of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention Of Atrocities) Act, and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act were also slapped against him," the official said.

Pro-farmer slogans on wedding cards

GURUGRAM

FARMERS in Haryana have discovered a unique way to extend their support in the ongoing agitation, led by thousands of farmers' against the Centre's new agri laws at Delhi borders. Some farmers are getting catchy slogans like "no farmers, no food" and photos of peasant leader Sir Chhotu Ram printed on their wedding invitation cards.

Several photos of freedom fighter Bhagat Singh too are finding their way on to the invitation cards amid peak wedding season, according to a printing press owner in Haryana's Kaithal district.

"We are getting requests from many farmer families and some others as well to have slogans like 'no farmers, no food' and photos of Sir Chhotu Ram and Bhagat Singh printed on the wedding cards," said the owner.

Slogans coined by several farmers' unions to highlight their struggle have played a pivotal role in

helping the agitation resonate with the masses especially the city dwellers.

Prem Singh Goyat, a farmer from Dunderhri village is among those who has got the slogan printed on his son's wedding invitation card.

Sir Chhotu Ram was born on November 24, 1881 and is regarded as a messiah of peasants. He was instrumental in empowering farmers in pre-independence era and fought for their rights during the British rule.

"Thousands of farmers are protesting against these laws and we stand in solidarity with them. My son

was getting married and it struck me... why not have pictures of Sir Chhotu Ram and Shaheed Bhagat Singh printed on the invitation card," Goyat said.

The farmer's son is set to tie the knot on February 20.

He said farmers have been protesting peacefully and the government should accept their demand to repeal the three laws.



Aero India 2021 a great success: Prez

BENGALURU

PRESIDENT Ram Nath Kovind on Friday said Aero India 2021 is a living proof of India's ever-growing strength in the defence and aerospace sectors at the global level as curtains came down on the three-day event. He said the event will contribute significantly towards strengthening India's self-reliance in the defence sector as well as establishing India as a manufacturer for the world, and it has exhibited that the global confidence in the country's capabilities is growing steadily. "Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, I am happy that Aero India 2021 has been organised successfully. It has been held without compromising its spirit while following the COVID-appropriate norms," Kovind said. Speaking at the valedictory function of the Aero India-2021 at Air Force Station Yelahanka, he praised the "courage and bravery" of the Indian Air Force pilots for displaying exemplary professionalism in protecting India's skies and strengthening the country's defence. "Aero India 2021 has been an unprecedented success. I am told that high-level delegations from 43 countries and exhibitors from 530 companies have participated in the event," he said.



IAF's aerobatic team 'Suryakiran' performs on the last day of the 13th edition of Aero India 2021, at Yelahanka Air Base in Bengaluru on Friday



Rajasthan BJP MLA booked for rape

UDAIPUR

A BJP MLA in Rajasthan's Udaipur has been booked for allegedly raping a woman on the pretext of marriage.

The FIR against Gogunda MLA Pratap Lal Bheel (52) was registered at Sukher Police Station on Thursday. "The medical examination of the victim, who is aged around 35 years, was conducted and statements were recorded yesterday (Thursday)," SP Udaipur Rajeev Pachar said. The case was referred to the CID for investigation, he added. "The victim is from Madhya Pradesh and has alleged that the MLA promised to marry her and then raped her on several occasions.

They belong to the same community and have been in touch for a few years," another police officer said. The MLA was not available for comment

‘Involvement’ of BJP activists in attack on protesting farmers on Jan 29

Farmers in jail are bigger victims, says arrested scribe Mandeep

NEW DELHI/LUCKNOW

JOURNALIST Mandeep Punia, who was arrested by the police from the farmers' protest on the outskirts of Delhi and released on bail, has said he is under-terred by the brutal treatment in custody and will go back to report on "people persecuted by those in power".

Mandeep said he was beaten and forced by police to sit under a fan without woollens on a winter night, but the journalist's takeaway from his spell in custody was that the farmers he shared the jail with were bigger victims than him.

He also expressed the hope that people would be as vocal for imprisoned journalists like Siddique Kappan as they were for his release.

Kappan, a reporter for Malayalam news portal

Azhimukam, faces terrorism charges in Uttar Pradesh after being arrested in October while travelling to cover the aftermath of the gang rape and murder of a Dalit teen, according to The Telegraph report.

Punia, a 26-year-old freelancer, said he intended to complete his investigation into the alleged involvement of BJP activists in an attack on the protesting farmers at Singhu on January 29 — the investigation that apparently got him arrested.

Recounting his arrest, he said: "I was at the Singhu border (on January 30) around 6pm-7pm to attend a press conference of the Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee when I saw police abuse some workers who were passing by and send them back (from the barricades that flank the protest site). I took out my video camera.



"Another journalist, Dharmendra (Singh, from YouTube channel Online News India) was also filming. They suddenly grabbed him. When I said, 'What you are doing is wrong', they turned towards me and said, 'Yeh raha (This is) Mandeep Punia!' Then they began to cane me."

Dharmendra was released later that night. Punia says the cops — Delhi police and the CRPF — recognised him as he had interviewed many of them that day and the previous day and had uploaded a video on Facebook describing the events of January 29.

Forty-four agitating farmers had been arrested on the charge of injuring six policemen during the January 29 clash, which took place between the farmers and people the police describe as "local villagers" but who Punia and many others suspect were BJP workers. Delhi's ruling Aam Aadmi Party has identi-

fied three of these "local villagers" as BJP activists from other parts of the capital.

"They (policemen) took me to a tent and hit me on my leg. They broke my mirror-less Canon camera on which I was recording (scenes and conversations)," Punia said.

Punia added: "They deleted videos from my phone and continuously hit me. They said, 'Zyada reporter ban raha hai; hum banate hain tere ko reporter (Trying to be too much of a reporter? We'll make you one)'."

"They also broke my phone and threw away my wallet with my old ID cards (from previous employers), which were proof that I am a journalist.... They took me in a white Scorpio into Delhi after 8pm and beat me up in transit, stopping in three different buildings."

TODAY'S QUOTE

No more urea crisis for Bengal farmers

Farmers of West Bengal will no longer face any crisis in urea supply after the Matix fertiliser plant is commissioned here. GAIL'S 348 km long Dobhi-Durgapur natural gas pipeline, which will be dedicated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday will facilitate the fertiliser plant.


— Dharmendra Pradhan, Union Minister



LOSS

M&M Q3 profit slips by 6%

Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd (M&M) on Friday reported a 6 per cent fall in its consolidated profit after tax from continuing and discontinued operations to Rs 159.6 crore for the December 2020 quarter. The company had posted a consolidated profit after tax from continuing and discontinued operations of Rs 170.69 crore in the corresponding period.

FOREX (buy rates in ₹)			
US Dollar	77.3	South	
Euro	91.73	African Rand	5.6
UAE Dirham	21.84	Hong Kong Dollar	10.82
Thai Baht	2.79	Japanese Yen	0.79
British Pound	103.89	New Zealand Dollar	54.81
Australian Dollar	58.31	Saudi Riyal	21.38
Canadian Dollar	59.86	Swedish Krona	9.92
Swiss Franc	84.01	Singapore Dollar	57.23

DELHI SATURDAY 6 FEBRUARY 2021

BIZ BRIEFS

Realme unveils 5G devices

Realme has introduced the newest additions to its X series family, the realme X7 5G and realme X7 Pro 5G. The latest addition features two feature-packed smartphones - realme X7 5G and realme X7 Pro 5G, taking realme one step closer to its dream of becoming a 5G leader in India. Both the smartphones are powered by laudable MediaTek chipsets ensuring par-excellence performance and feature bold, futuristic designs. Realme X7 5G is India's first smartphone to be powered by the latest MediaTek Dimensity 800U chipset, benchmarking at over 340,000. Madhav Sheth, Vice President, realme, India and Europe said, "Bringing new and advanced technologies to masses has always been at the heart of realme. Continuing with the same, we have set our vision for 2021 to become a 5G leader in India".

LG launches new products

With increasing awareness among consumers towards health and hygiene, LG Electronics on Friday expanded LG Tonefree lineup with introduction of its most advanced wireless earbuds - HBS-FN7 and HBS-FN6. Equipped with UVnano charging cradle with ultraviolet light that sanitizes the earbuds, eliminating 99.9 per cent bacteria while charging, the earbuds make the listener feel fresh and jam throughout the day. The case comes with LED lighting on the top, making it easy to monitor charging level and UVnano status. "Hygiene has become an important parameter for consumers while taking a decision when buying a new product. We are happy to announce our latest launch of the LG Tone-free wireless earbuds with the unique UVNano and Meridian Technology, that will provide the perfect solution for audiophiles," said Hak Hyun Kim, Director- Home Entertainment, LG Electronics India

RBI keeps interest rates unchanged

MUMBAI

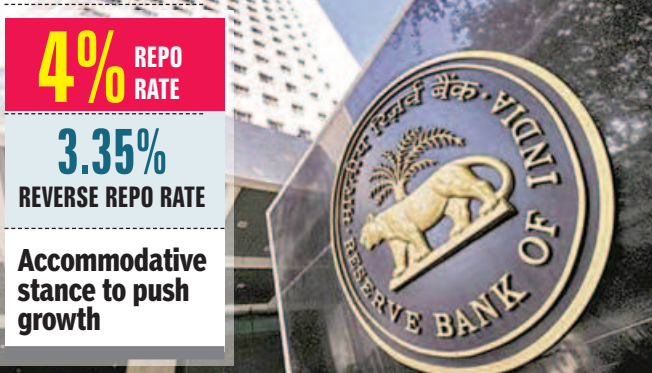
THE Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday kept interest rates on hold for the fourth time in a row but vowed to support growth as long it is needed even as it began withdrawing some pandemic-era policies.

While the Union Budget 2021 earlier this week laid out an expansive fiscal strategy over the medium term to strengthen the growth engine in the economy, the RBI affirmed its support to such a plan through appropriate monetary tools.

The six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) kept the repurchase or repo rate unchanged at 4 per cent, Governor Shaktikanta Das said. Consequently, the reverse repo rate will continue to earn 3.35 per cent for banks for their deposits kept with the RBI. The central banks had last year cut borrowing costs by 115 basis points before hitting the pause button in mid-2020 over inflation worries. All six members of the MPC voted to continue with the accommodative stance as long as it is necessary to revive growth and mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the economy while ensuring that inflation remains within the target.

Signalling rollback of pandemic-era policies, the RBI announced a gradual increase in the Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) - the amount of deposits lenders must

Low inflation forecast to 5.2%; sees GDP growth at 10.5% in FY22



set aside as reserves - to 3.5 per cent by March and to 4 per cent by May. The cash returning to the central bank can be used by it for open market operations and other liquidity measures.

To absorb higher government borrowings, the central bank provided retail investors a direct option to invest in government securities. Acknowledging the strengthening signs of recovery, the RBI applauded the Union Budget 2021-22 for providing a strong impetus for revival while

stating that the near-term inflation outlook has turned favourable.

RBI expects Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for next year to grow by 10.5 per cent, a tad lower than 11 per cent predicted by the government's Economic Survey last week. The growth compares to an estimated 7.7 per cent contraction in the economy during the current fiscal ending March 31.

The inflation forecasts are pointing to a decline

Going forward, the Indian economy is poised to move in only one direction and that is upwards

— Shaktikanta Das, Governor, RBI



Integrated ombudsman scheme from June

MUMBAI

THE Reserve Bank on Friday announced it will be integrating consumer grievances redressal under a single ombudsman as against three schemes working at present.

There are dedicated ombudsman schemes devoted to consumer grievance redressal in banking, non-bank finance companies and digital transactions, respectively, at present. "To make the alternate dispute redress mechanism simpler and more responsive to the customers of regu-

lated entities, it has been decided to implement, inter alia, integration of the three Ombudsman schemes and adoption of the 'One Nation One Ombudsman' approach for grievance redressal," Governor Shaktikanta Das said on Friday.

The move is intended to make the process of redress of grievances easier by enabling the customers of the banks, NBFCs and non-bank issuers of prepaid payment instruments to register their complaints under the integrated scheme, with one centralised reference point, he said.

LIC felicitates lockdown heroes

HYDERABAD

THE era of the global pandemic brought the whole world to a standstill. But the wheels of Central Railway, Mumbai did not stop. When the whole world was confined to their homes due to corona, the lockdown heroes drove the train and transported the necessary materials from one place to another. Vipin Anand, MD, Life Insurance Corporation of India at a function held at the heritage building of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus, pre-



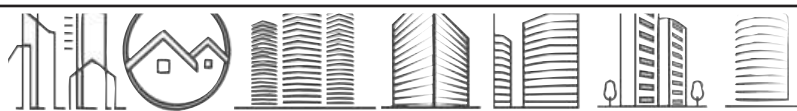
sented certificates of honour to motormen, technical staff and security officers of central railway, Mumbai in the presence of Vikas Rao, Zonal Manager,

LIC, Western Zone and Rajivan Nair, Executive Director, Corporate Communications and Shalabh Goel, DRM, Central Railway.

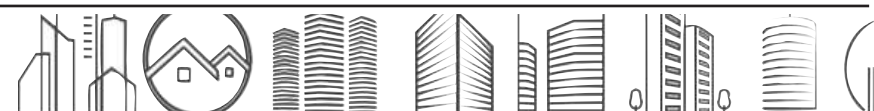
... clocks ₹1L-cr premium income in FY21

HYDERABAD

LIC's Pension and Group Schemes vertical, looking after group schemes and superannuation business of the corporation created a record by clocking more than one lakh crores premium income during the first 10 months of the current financial year. This is first time ever any single vertical of the insurer has crossed such a gigantic premium income figure successively for two years.



REAL CORNER



Realty industry hails RBI's status quo on key policy rates

NEW DELHI

REAL estate developers and consultants on Friday said the RBI's decision to keep key policy rates unchanged means low interest rate on home loans will continue but felt that further reduction could have boosted housing demand that has shown signs of recovery in the last few months.

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said the MPC (Monetary Policy Committee) voted unanimously to leave the policy repo rate unchanged at 4 per cent. In his statement, Das also mentioned that data for sales and new launches of residential units in major metropolitan centres reflect a renewed confidence in the real estate sector.

Housing sales were badly impacted during the April-June quarter of this fiscal year because of the lockdown to control the Covid-19 pandemic. However, sales recovered on pent-up and festive demand along with a low home loan interest rate of around 7 per cent during October-December 2020.

"Under the given market scenario and circumstance, the RBI's direction on unchanged repo rate is very much on the anticipated lines though a rate cut would have been better to combat the negativity of pandemic-led economic crisis across the industry," Naredco President Niranjan Hirani said. Sanjay Dutt, MD & CEO, Tata Realty and Infrastructure, welcomed the apex bank's decision to keep policy rates unchanged for the fourth time in a row. "Maintaining this accommoda-

Expects low home loan rate regime to continue



tive outlook is extremely crucial, especially with the green shoots of recovery being visible now."

The RBI maintaining status quo for the fourth time in a row is a positive step towards spurring consumption, Anshuman Magazine, Chairman & CEO, India, South East Asia, Middle East & Africa of CBRE said.

Anarock Chairman Anuj Puri said the real estate industry always aspires for reduced interest rates. "Housing demand is reviving, and this demand needs to be fostered. However, the RBI's current stance is absolutely justified given the unique circumstances.

We are certain that rates will be adjusted favourably once the pandemic exigencies ease," he said.

Dhruv Agarwal, Group CEO, Housing.com and PropTiger, said the decision of RBI to keep the repo rate unchanged along with accommodative stance is understandable at this juncture. "Although a further cut in the key rates would have given a boost to current demand uptick that we have seen recently," he added.

The measures announced by the RBI Governor today for liquidity enhancement in the economy are indeed a good step and was much required, he said.

Realty firm Gaurs Group MD Manoj Gaur said RBI's decision is in line with the expectation of the markets. "The headline inflation is on a downward spiral now which gives hope that RBI will be able to bring down repo rates as the year progresses," Ramesh Nair, former CEO of JLL India, said the expectation from the real estate industry was deeper cuts in policy rates. "Given that RBI has not cut rates, they should now try and ensure that the previously announced rate cuts are fully transmitted to end users and developers and also focus on increasing the quantum of overall credit available for the real estate sector," Nair said. Knight Frank India CMD Shishir Bajjal said the decision is in line with expectations, and added that the measures on enhanced bank funding window for NBFCs will also benefit the stressed sectors including real estate. "As seen in the past few months, housing markets in the country have responded well to low home loan interest rates".

Bengaluru-based developer Puravankara Ltd MD Ashish Puravankara said the RBI's decision to keep the repo rate unchanged will certainly reassure home buyers looking to invest in property and will create a latent demand for homes across the country as the interest rates are at its decadal lowest. Samantak Das, Chief Economist and Head of Research, JLL India, said the status quo on the policy rates is a welcome step for the home buyers as they can take advantage of the prevailing lowest mortgage rates.

PropTiger 'Right to Home' expo from today

HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

AFTER the roaring success of its first virtual edition in 2020, online real estate brokerage firm PropTiger.com has announced the launch of the second edition of its national 'Right to Home' expo, which will also cover Hyderabad. Scheduled for February 6 and 7, 2021, the Hyderabad chapter of the two-day event will be held at the Radisson Hyderabad, Hitech City, between 10 am and 10 PM, a media release said.

The expo will showcase a total of 1,730 housing units in various price segments, primarily falling in the range of Rs 45 lakh to Rs 2 crore.

Commenting on the launch, Rajan Sood, Business Head, PropTiger.com, said "A record low interest rate regime along with the extension of Section 80EEA (deduction on interest paid on home loans) for another year in the recent Budget, makes 2021 a very opportune time to invest in a residential property.

Keeping these factors in view and an improvement in the buyer sentiment, as reflected in our consumer sentiment survey recently, we are launching the second edition of the 'Right to Home' event, covering Hyderabad, to enable homebuyers to bag great discount offers from the leading brands in the industry, he said.

"Our team of property experts will handhold the buyer throughout this exciting-yet-legally and financially complex process," Rajan added.

With participation from some of the leading brands in the industry, the event will provide prospective homebuyers and investors to select an ideal property



from one destination while also enjoying attractive discount offers without having to pay any brokerage charge. The event will help buyers grab attractive offers on purchase of RERA-approved projects, including on-spot offers, lowest price guarantee, tailor-made payment plans, GST and stamp duty waivers, assured gold coin on bookings and home loan assistance.

The leading developers in the Hyderabad housing market that are participating in the expo to showcase their projects include Brigade, Prestige, Ramky, Sumadhura, Urbanrise, Sreenidhi, Fortune, Incor, BSCPL, etc. The expo will showcase a host of properties catering to various segments, from affordable to mid-segment to luxury housing.

In its first edition conducted nationally in August 2020, the virtual event saw participation from over 30 developers, attracting over 12,000 registrations, the release added.

ENGLAND'S ROOTS FIRM

Skipper hits 3rd ton in row in as many Tests as visitors reach 263/3 on Day One of first Test

CHENNAI

SKIPPER Joe Root won the battle of attrition against Indian spinners with a classy century in his 100th Test as England reached a comfortable 263 for three at stumps on the opening day of the first match here on Friday.

A modern-day great, Root (128 batting, 197 balls) showed his mastery over slow bowlers during his 20th hundred and third in as many Tests, becoming the ninth player in the history of the game to score a ton on his 100th appearance.

He also admirably guided young opener Dom Sibley (87 off 286 balls), who showed commendable game awareness and enormous doggedness during their 200-run partnership for the third wicket before Jasprit Bumrah (2/40) got him in the final over of the day.

Root's innings was an exhibition of how to construct an innings on a low, slow track while countering a hostile post-lunch spell from Ishant Sharma (15-3-27-0) where he got the ball to reverse swing.

Root's speciality, the sweep shot, was also brought out of the closet once Indian spinners started altering the length. There were full-blooded slog sweep in front of the square, conventional sweep towards square, the paddle sweep behind the square and also switch-hit sweep where he changed the grip against Shahbaz Nadeem.

And towards the end, first six of the match, was also a slog sweep off Ashwin. This was after he had almost lost five litres of fluid in sapping Chennai heat. Root and Sibley knew that they had to tire Ishant, Ravichandran Ashwin (1/56) and Bumrah out as Virat Kohli at some point would have to pay the price for Washington Sundar and Nadeem's relative inexperience.

With no purchase from the track, it became easier for Root and Sibley to use their feet and big stride to dominate the two spinners, who looked clueless. Unlike a lot of batsmen, who in a pre-meditated fashion, come down the track, Root and Sibley waited for the Indian spinners to toss up the ball before they took the plunge.

An on-drive off

Ashwin and a pull

shot when he

dropped one short along with a late cut off Nadeem were for the keeps. There were 14 boundaries in all and each one aesthetically brilliant.

Nadeem and Sundar for most part couldn't hit the right length and the abrasive surface of the track meant that the Red SG Test ball, which as per media reports was supposed to retain its hardness and seam for a longer duration, got soft and scuffed up by the 40th over.

The softness meant that both England batsmen got extra time to adjust their footwork against both spin and pace. Save the two dismissals in the first session, England controlled the game during the next two sessions on a lifeless track, which will certainly become difficult for batting as the game progresses.

With India slated to bat fourth in the game, the first innings score by both teams will go a long way in deciding the course of this game.

The Chepauk track with its red clay soil content usually offers good bounce on the first day which becomes variable as the cracks start opening and spinners coming into the play.

But this was one such track, which was devoid of any pace and the edges were not even carrying half the distance to first slip or keeper Rishabh Pant.

Such was India's plight that Rohit Sharma got his helmet and came up half way to Ishant's deliveries which weren't medium pace by any means. Ashwin was brought into the attack as early as seventh over but Sibley and Rory Burns during the first 90 minutes were solid, putting on 63 runs for the opening stand.

Sibley in particular would shuffle towards off-stump to cover the line of the deliveries while waiting for the loose ones. Burns was ready to tuck anything on his pads as there was no juice in the track to assist the new ball bowlers.

It was a moment's indiscretion on the part of Burns that brought about his downfall. Burns tried a non-existent reverse sweep which lobbed off his gloves for Pant to complete the formalities after having dropped him down the leg-side.

As Sachin Tendulkar had predicted, there was reverse swing on offer as early as first session with Bumrah getting the shiny side to dart in, trapping Dan Lawrence (0) plumb. But things turned for worse during the next two sessions as Indian bowlers with three spinners in their line-up bowled as many as 11 no-balls. (PTI)

Indian fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah celebrates the dismissal of England batsman Dan Lawrence with captain Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma during the first Test match at MA Chidambaram Stadium, in Chennai on Friday

SCOREBOARD

England 1st Innings

Rory Burns c Pant b Ashwin -----33
D Sibley lbw b Bumrah -----87
D Lawrence lbw b Bumrah ----- 0
Joe Root batting -----128
Extras: (LB-4, NB-11) -----15
Total: (For 3 wkts in 89.3 overs) -----263
Fall of Wickets: 1-63, 2-63, 3-263
Bowling: Ishant Sharma 15-3-27-0, Jasprit Bumrah 18.3-2-40-2, Ravichandran Ashwin 24-2-68-1, Shahbaz Nadeem 20-3-69-0, Washington Sundar 12-0-55-0.



'To get a 100 in 100th Test is special but hope more follows'

CHENNAI

ENGLAND captain Joe Root, who became only the ninth player to score a century in his 100th Test on Friday, said he wanted to stay on the crease as long as possible to get used to the 'unusual looking surface' at the MA Chidambaram Stadium during the first Test against India.

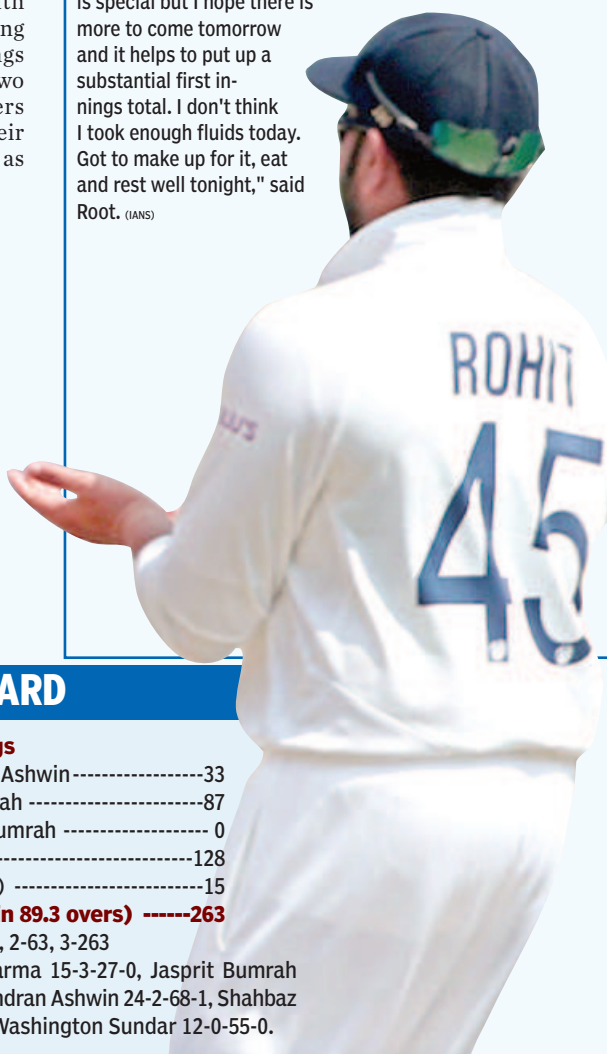
"It's an unusual looking surface but it played pretty well... I was just trying to get used to the surface, get used to the bounce. And as I got in, I found it easier. The longer you are in, the easier it becomes. It was about trying to build a partnership and take it as deep as we could into the day," said Root after the first day's play.

Root had to fight cramps towards the end of the day at the end of which England, who were going well are 263/2 with a 200-run partnership, lost the wicket of Dom Sibley in the final over of the day.

"I need to get some fluids into me, was cramping towards the end. We need to make sure tomorrow that we make use of a strong first day... It was a good contest and India have some good bowlers, made us work hard for our runs. It is a good first day but we know we have to back it up with something similar," added Root.

The England captain said that getting a century in the 100th Test is special.

"To get a hundred in my 100th Test is special but I hope there is more to come tomorrow and it helps to put up a substantial first innings total. I don't think I took enough fluids today. Got to make up for it, eat and rest well tonight," said Root. (IANS)



TODAY'S MATCH
Odisha FC vs ATK Mohun Bagan
at GMC Stadium Bhubaneswar 7.30pm



RESULT
Bengaluru FC draw with Chennaiyin FC 0-0

ISL STANDINGS

CLUB	M	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
Mumbai City FC	15	10	3	2	22	8	14	33
ATK Mohun Bagan	14	8	3	3	16	9	7	27
FC Goa	15	5	7	3	21	16	5	22
Hyderabad FC	15	5	7	3	20	16	4	22
NorthEast United FC	15	5	7	3	21	20	1	22
Bengaluru FC	16	4	7	5	19	19	0	19
Jamshedpur FC	15	4	6	5	14	17	-3	18
Chennaiyin FC	16	3	8	5	11	16	-5	17
Kerala Blasters FC	16	3	6	7	20	27	-7	15
SC East Bengal	15	2	7	6	12	20	-8	13
Odisha FC	14	1	5	8	13	21	-8	8

Root, Starc out; Shakib, Sreesanth among 1,097 players for IPL auction

CHENNAI

ENGLAND Test skipper Joe Root and Australian speedster Mitchell Starc opted out while tainted Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan and India's S Sreesanth were among the 1097 players who registered for the much-awaited IPL auction to be held here on February 18.

Left-arm pacer Arjun Tendulkar, son of the legendary Sachin Tendulkar, also enrolled in the auction with a base price of Rs 20 lakh. A total of 814 players from India and 283 from overseas - registered for the auction with most entries coming from the West Indies (56) followed by Australia (42) and South Africa (38).

While Starc, who last played in the T20 league in 2015, misses out once more, Root too didn't enroll for the second successive time, joining fellow England players Harry Gurney and Tom Banton, who also did not register.

Shakib, who served a suspension by ICC for not reporting corrupt approach, listed at the highest base price of Rs 2 crore, while Sreesanth, who returned to cricket after seven years by featuring in Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 for Kerala, set his base price at Rs 75 lakh, according to ESPNcricinfo.

Harbhajan Singh, Kedar Jadhav, Steven Smith, Glenn Maxwell, Moeen Ali, Sam Billings, Jason Roy, Mark Wood, Liam Plunkett and Colin Ingram -- all set their base price at Rs 2 crore. Hanuma Vihari (Rs 1 crore) and Cheteshwar Pujara (Rs 50 lakh),

who played pivotal roles in India's incredible 2-1 Test win over Australia, also registered for the auction.

The player registration deadline closed on Thursday and the list comprises 207 international players including 21 capped Indians.

Twenty seven players will represent the associate nations and 863 uncapped cricketers, including 743 Indians and 68 overseas. The number of uncapped Indians who have played at least one IPL game stands at 50 and two for overseas uncapped players.

"If every franchise were to have the maximum of 25 players in their squad, 61 players will be taken in the auction (of which up to 22 may be overseas players)," read the IPL statement.

The auction, scheduled a day after the second Test between India and England, will start at 3pm local time. Kings XI Punjab to go into the auction with the biggest purse available at with Rs 53.20 crore, followed by RCB (Rs 35.90 crore), RR (Rs 34.85 crore), CSK (Rs 22.90 crore), MI (Rs 15.35 crore), DC (Rs 12.9 crore) and Rs 10.75 crore each for KKR and SRH.

The 2020 edition was held in the UAE due to the pandemic but the upcoming edition is likely to be played in India. Country-wise breakdown of 283 overseas players who have registered: Afghanistan (30), Australia (42), Bangladesh (5), England (21), Ireland (2), Nepal (8), Netherlands (1), New Zealand (29), Scotland (7), South Africa (38), Sri Lanka (31), UAE (9), USA (2), West Indies (56), Zimbabwe (2). (PTI)

Aus Open: Nagal to face Berankis in first round

MELBOURNE

ACE India tennis player Sumit Nagal will face Lithuanian Ricardas Berankis in the men's singles first round of the 2021 Australian Open which begins on February 8.

The draw for the first Grand Slam of the season was held on Friday. Nagal, ranked 139 in the world, faced 72nd ranked Berankis in his last match as well at the Murray River Open. Berankis had won the match 6-

2, 6-2. He will face either Russia's Karen Khachanov or Australia's Aleksandar Vukic in the second round.

Nagal is the only Indian in the draw having received a wild card entry into the first round. The 23-year-old tennis player had previously won in the first round of the US Open in his last appearance in the main draw of a Grand Slam. It was the first time an Indian had progressed beyond the first round of a Grand Slam in singles since Somdev Devvarman in 2013.



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నా ఎంపిక కపిల్ చిట్స్ ఇప్పటికీ వెన్నంటే ఉంది.

