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Kalyan Singh's health improving

LUCKNOW: The health condition of former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Kalyan Singh, who is admitted to the Sanjay Gandhi Post-Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences here, is improving, the hospital said on Sunday. It said institute's Director Prof R K Dhiman is monitoring his treatment on a daily basis. "The vital parameters are under control. He is communicative with the staff engaged in his care. The senior faculty of CCM, Cardiology, Neurology, Endocrinology and Nephrology are taking rounds and are keeping a close watch on vital parameters and his daily investigations. Today, he is better than yesterday," the SGPGI said in a statement issued here on Sunday. Singh, 89, has also been the governor of Rajasthan.

Woman found dead in Delhi

NEW DELHI: The body of a 42-year-old woman with her throat slit was found in Dwarka's Amberhai village on Saturday evening, police said here. She was identified as Monika Sharma, a resident of the locality in Dwarka sector 19, they said. According to the police, a call regarding the murder was received around 7 pm. "Thereafter, police rushed to the spot and found Sharma's throat was slit with a knife. Her husband had died in February 2021," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Dwarka) Santosh Kumar Meena said.

Four-year-old boy sodomised

MATHURA: A four-year-old boy was allegedly sexually assaulted by a teenager in a village in Baldev area in Mathura. The police have registered an FIR and the 14-year-old accused has been sent to the juvenile home.According to the police spokesman, the 14-year-old spotted the boy playing outside his house on Friday. He lured the young boy to a secluded place where he allegedly sexually assaulted him. The teenager fled, leaving the young victim crying and bleeding. When the boy's mother asked the boy why he was crying, he narrated his ordeal. She immediately called and informed the police. The victim has been sent for medical examination. The police said the families of both, live within 100 metres from each other.

VIRGIN'S BRANSON FLYING OWN ROCKET TO SPACE

LONDON

BILLIONAIRE businessman and founder of the Virgin Group, Richard Branson, are finally headed into space aboard the first fully-crewed spaceflight of Virgin Galactic on Sunday evening. The UK billionaire is among the six crew members on board 'VSS Unity' of Virgin Galactic, which launched from New Mexico at 8.20 pm IST. The "Unity 22" mission is the 22 flight test for VSS Unity and the company's fourth crewed spaceflight. It is the first to carry a full crew of two pilots and four mission specialists in the cabin, including the company's founder.

This is only the fourth trip to space for Virgin Galactic. "Our first fully crewed rocket powered test flight is planned to take place on July 11th with two pilots and four mission specialists including Richard Branson onboard," Virgin Galactic said. If Richard Branson is able to complete the mission before July 20, he will become the first billionaire to fly into space, beating fellow billionaire and e-commerce giant Amazon founder Jeff Bezos in the new space race by nine days. The thrill-seeking billionaire joined five



company employees also assigned to the bid to reach the edge of space high above the New Mexico desert. "It's a beautiful day to go to space," Branson tweeted in the morning, posting a photo of himself with fellow billionaire and space-tourism rival Elon Musk. Ever the showman, Branson counted down the days to liftoff via Twitter. He viewed the brief up-and-down trip as a confidence builder in his space-tourism company — not only for the 600-plus people already holding reservations for a joyride but for others thinking of plunking down a few hundred thousand

dollars for a chance to leave Earth's atmosphere. The London-born founder of Virgin Atlantic Airways, who turns 71 in a week, wasn't supposed to fly until later this summer. But he assigned himself to an earlier flight after fellow billionaire Jeff Bezos announced plans to ride his own rocket ship into space from Texas on July 20. Virgin Galactic doesn't expect to start flying customers before next year. Bezos' Blue Origin has yet to open ticket sales or even announce prices, but late last week boasted via Twitter that it would take clients higher and offer bigger windows.

Taliban gaining control of Afghanistan 50 Indian diplomats, staff evacuated from Kandahar

NEW DELHI

INDIA has pulled out around 50 diplomats and security personnel from its consulate in Kandahar in Afghanistan in view of the deteriorating security situation and the Taliban gaining control of new areas around the southern Afghan city, people familiar with the development said on Sunday. A special aircraft of the Indian Air Force was sent on Saturday to bring back the Indian diplomats, officials and other staff members including a group of Indo-Tibetan Border Police personnel, they said. External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said India-based personnel have been brought back for the time being in view of intense fighting near Kandahar city. Describing the pull out of the India-based personnel as a temporary measure, he said the consulate continues to operate through the local staff members. He said India is closely monitoring the evolving security situation in Afghanistan. "The safety and security of our personnel is paramount. The consulate general of India



in Kandahar has not been closed. However, due to the intense fighting near Kandahar city, India-based personnel have been brought back for the time being," Bagchi said. He was replying to a media query on the issue. "I want to emphasise that this is a purely temporary measure until the situation stabilises. The consulate continues to operate through our local staff members,"

Bagchi said. He said arrangements are being made to ensure continued delivery of visa and consular services through the Indian embassy in Kabul. "An important partner of Afghanistan, India remains committed to a peaceful, sovereign and democratic Afghanistan," the spokesperson said. India's move to temporarily bring back its Indian staff came in view of Taliban fighters rapidly seizing control of a number of key areas in the region as well as in western Afghanistan triggering huge security concerns. On Tuesday, the Indian embassy in Kabul said there was no plan to close the embassy and the consulates in Kandahar and Mazar-e-Sharif. Two days back, the Ministry of External said India was carefully monitoring the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan and its implications on the safety and security of Indian nationals. "Our response will be calibrated accordingly," External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Bagchi had said at a media briefing on Thursday.

Twitter names grievance officer

NEW DELHI: Amid tensions with the government, Twitter has appointed a Resident Grievance Officer, days after it designated a chief compliance officer, as it also released its first India Transparency Report to meet the new IT rules. The US social media giant's website has listed Vinay Prakash as the new grievance officer, providing contact details and procedure for users to report potential violations of its rules and terms. Twitter had previously appointed Dharmendra Chatur as its interim grievance officer for India after the new IT rules came into force on May 26. However, Chatur stepped down within weeks of taking over the key role. California-based Jeremy Kessel was named as India's grievance redressal officer, on the platform's website - although the appointment did not meet the requirements of IT rules that clearly mandate key officers - grievance officer, chief compliance officer and nodal officer - to be resident in India.

Haryana Dy Speaker's car attacked

CHANDIGARH

HARYANA Deputy Speaker Ranbir Gangwa's car came under attack in Sirsa district on Sunday as farmers held protests at various places in the state targeting events of BJP leaders. Police said the rear wind-screen of the SUV broke as stones were pelted, but no one was hurt. The day saw protesters gather at various places across the state, raising slogans against the government and demanding a rollback of the contentious farm laws. Earlier in the day, at one such protest in Fatehabad, protesters removed metal barricades put up by the police as they marched towards

a venue where Haryana Cooperation Minister Banwari Lal and Sirsa MP Sunita Duggal were attending a party function. Duggal later travelled to Sirsa to attend another party event, where Gangwa, a BJP MLA from the Nalwa constituency in Hisar district, was also present. Farmers carrying black flags had assembled outside the Chaudhary Devi Lal university there during the day and raised slogans against the government. While the leaders were coming out after the function ended, protesters targeted Gangwa's car, the police said. Despite heavy police presence, some managed to surround the vehicle and banged against it with their hands.



Akali's posers to AAP on plea to close Punjab thermal plants

CHANDIGARH

The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) on Sunday asked the Punjab AAP unit to tell people of the state whether Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had taken it into confidence before filing a petition in the Supreme Court seeking the closure of the thermal plants of Punjab. It also asked AAP Punjab leaders to explain why it was maintaining silence on such a sensitive issue linked to the progress and prosperity of the state. In a statement here, SAD spokesman Daljit Singh Cheema said the Punjab AAP leaders, including state convener Bhagwant Mann, were in the habit of holding press conferences every day but had failed to react to the "anti-Punjab" step of Kejriwal till now. Cheema said the Punjab AAP unit owed an explanation to Punjabis. "They should tell whether they had been taken into confidence



before a petition was filed by the Delhi government seeking closure of the thermal plants in Punjab. If they had been informed about the same, they should tell Punjabis why they did not raise any objection and why they were keeping quiet till now. "The AAP leaders of Punjab should tell whether they had sold their conscience and were ready to even sell off the interests of

Punjab solely to save their positions in the party as well as secure their assembly tickets in the forthcoming election." The SAD leader claimed that it was now increasingly clear that Kejriwal had deliberately filed a petition in the apex court with the sole purpose of worsening the power crisis in Punjab by forcing the closure of its thermal plants.

IMD: Heavy rains expected in several parts of north India today

NEW DELHI

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Sunday said heavy to very heavy rains at isolated places are expected over several parts of north India including Delhi by Monday morning, but there was little relief from the un-forgiving heat throughout the day as the Southwest Monsoon has not still reached the remaining parts of the region. The IMD had said the Southwest Monsoon would hit parts of north India including Delhi on July 10, but it had not occurred till Sunday evening. IMD Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said the conditions are ripe for the advancement of the Southwest Mon-

soon over Delhi as humidity has also increased due to easterlies. He said the formation of a low-pressure area will also boost its advancement. "We are expecting light rainfall on Sunday and a good spell on Monday," he said. The IMD said, "Heavy to very heavy rainfall is likely at isolated places over Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh and Delhi, the Gujarat region, Madhya Maharashtra, coastal Andhra Pradesh and Yanam, Telangana, coastal and south interior Karnataka, Kerala and Mahe and Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal." It has also issued alerts for several north Indian states and a red warning for coastal Maharashtra. Wrong signals by models, difficulty in



predicting the outcomes of the interactions between the easterly and westerly winds were some of the major reasons behind the India Meteorological Department's monsoon forecast for parts of north India going haywire, experts pointed out as any relief from the oppressive heat eludes the region. The Southwest Monsoon has reached almost all parts of the country but has stayed away from parts of north India. It is yet to reach Delhi, Haryana, parts of west Uttar Pradesh and west Rajasthan. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) had predicted that monsoon is expected to cover these parts by June -- a little less than a month back, but its predictions are yet to come

true. In its forecast on June 13, the IMD had predicted that the Southwest Monsoon will reach Delhi by June 15. However, a day later it said conditions are not favourable for its further advancement in this region. Then began a long 'break-spell' during which the Southwest Monsoon was weak over several parts of the country. The bulletin also indicated that heavy rainfall is expected at isolated places over Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh, Gilgit-Baltistan and Muzaffarabad, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, east Rajasthan, west Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, sub-Himalayan West Bengal and Sikkim, Odisha, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Saurashtra and Kutch, Marathwada, Rayalaseema,

north interior Karnataka and Lakshadweep. It said thunderstorms accompanied by lightning and gusty winds (with a speed of 30-40 kilometres per hour) are very likely at isolated places over Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Telangana. Lightning at isolated places is also expected over Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh, Gilgit-Baltistan and Muzaffarabad, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Vidarbha, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Sikkim, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, central Maharashtra, Marathwada, coastal Andhra Pradesh and Yanam, Rayalaseema and Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal by Monday morning, the IMD added.

Womenia

TWEET PATROL



SHILPA SHETTY KUNDRA

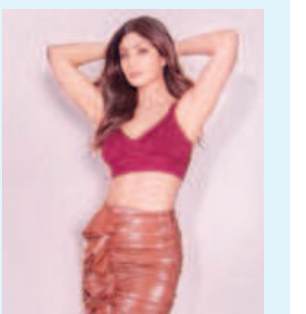
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#ReleasingOn23rdJuly #gratitude

#blessed #OOTD #LookOfTheDay



Digital concerts have the advantage of scale, says noted Thumri singer



Sveta Hattangdi Kilpady

Today, the world is slowly accepting the screen world and even remote music - **Sveta Hattangdi Kilpady**

SIDDHI JAIN

Indian Thumri singer Sveta Hattangdi Kilpady, known to have sung for movies like "Mr. India" under famed music directors like RD Burman and Laxmikant Pyarelal, says that from a marketing and listenership perspective, "digital concerts are definitely going to be the next big thing to take Hindustani Classical music to the next level".

The vocalist received her initial training at the age of three from her gurus and has also learned Thumri. Sveta is the founder of Aarohan Sangeet Gurgaon and co-founder of 'The Baithak Experience' Gurgaon. A performer in a virtual July HCL Concerts Baithak, Sveta says she is grateful for artists to have a platform in these times.

Talking about the challenges that the pandemic brought on to her musicianship, and how she overcome those, Sveta elaborates: "Initially the challenges were about not being able to do a live performance in front of a real audience. Nothing gives an artist greater satisfaction and pleasure than watching the reaction of audience while performing. While technology allowed seamless continuation of live concerts, the challenge was performing in front of a 'virtual' audience and not a real one." She adds: "But today, the world is slowly accepting

the 'screen world' with remote-working, remote-schooling, now even 'remote-music' has become the new normal."

Saying that it was difficult to understand technology, quality of sound a good frame more so for digital concerts, Sveta emphasizes that the music fraternity has been at it. "I attended various online workshops which taught us how to get the best sound for our concerts. Small steps in the direction of the new normal."

According to her, what has been the pandemic's impact on the listenership and appreciation of Indian classical music?

"The pandemic has opened a lot of opportunities for the 'Rasiks' or listeners. On one hand, there is disappointment of not being able to physically attend 'baithaks' or live concerts. But on the other hand, this has led to an increased desire in using various technology platforms to explore and listen to music. More and more 'Rasiks' are attending Facebook, YouTube live concerts in order to continue listening to Hindustani Classical music. 'Rasiks' are also using the opportunity to research online for rare interviews and old recordings of famous artists."

The best thing that has happened? "There has been a renewed interest of Hindustani Classical music among younger 'Rasiks' who are more digitally-

savvy."

Going forward, as a performer, can a hybrid model of digital and physical concerts could work? "Any musician will say that they prefer performing in front of a real, physical audience. But moving forward, there would be a hybrid model."

Sveta stresses that as the situation improves, physical concerts will re-start with norms of social-distancing and limited audiences attending. Advocating for digital concerts, she says that these virtual 'baithaks' have an advantage of reaching a larger target audience, across the globe.

"Digital concerts have the advantage of scale and reaching people who physically cannot attend. From marketing and viewership, digital concerts are definitely going to be the next big thing to take Hindustani Classical music to the next level."

In the HCL Baithak, Sveta was accompanied by Babar Latif Khan on Tabla and Sumit Mishra on Harmonium. Both being established accompanists have had the honour of accompanying legendary artists of India. She sang compositions in various ragas, including 'Kajri', a form of Thumri Gayaki sung in the monsoon and a Kabir bhajan. HCL Concerts are dedicated to nurturing and promoting talent rooted in the glorious heritage of Indian classical performing arts.

Of glamour and celebration

PUJA GUPTA

Veteran fashion designer Manish Malhotra has collaborated with Blenders Pride to design its limited-edition pack. He says his legacy, built over 30 years, is highlighted on the packaging, which embodies a seamless "blend of fine craftsmanship" that reflects his "signature style of glam and romance".



Manish Malhotra

We spoke to the design maestro to know more:

Tell us about your collaboration with Blenders Pride for the limited edition?

The limited-edition pack, in collaboration with Blenders Pride, is a true representation of my vision and spirited style, and brings together the precision and the bold, rich character of Blenders Pride on the same canvas. It embodies a seamless blend of fine craftsmanship that persuades the consumers to 'taste the real stardom' so one can celebrate the exquisite taste and unmatched quality of the pack.

How it resonate with your personal style?

The pack reverberates with a contemporary design that represents glamorous curations, something that has been synonymous with my personal style for a long time. Inspired by the skillfully crafted smooth blend, the limited-edition design is adorned with intricate patterns with warm metallic accents and tones that build a sense of glamour and celebration. My legacy, built over 30 years, is highlighted on the pack, which embodies a seamless blend of fine craftsmanship that reflects my signature style of glam and romance.

Has the pandemic changed how fashion is perceived today?

The pandemic has changed a lot of things in the world and the fashion industry is no different. The pandemic saw the arrivals of lounge sets and comfort dressing. Minimalistic is the route most people are taking today.

Did the pandemic bring any change to your design aesthetics in any way?

I got a lot of time to catch up on my reading. I read books on design and the old Indian crafts. I also went through all my previous work. Some of the craft I'm bringing back and some new creations that I've worked on. I launched my collection 'Ruhaaniyat' and 'Nooraniyat' soon after the lockdown ended. These were the work of my ideas during that time.

What do you think will be the aftermath of the pandemic on Indian fashion industry?

The fashion industry, like every other industry, has been affected by the pandemic and it will take a while till things get back to normal. But the most paramount priority is to make sure that all our loved ones and all are okay and healthy. I pray that everything should get back to normal soon and we are again looking forward to fashion shows, red carpets, movies and the magnificent weddings that our Indian fashion industry is known for. For now, we just need to think positively and hope for everyone's well-being.



Manish Malhotra's last year Blenders Pride collection

TARA SUTARIA IS MISSING HOME

It seems that Bollywood actress Tara Sutaria is homesick, going by her latest update on social media. Tara on Sunday afternoon posted a picture on her Instagram story. The picture features a perfectly decorated dining table.

The actress, who is currently busy shooting for "Ek Villain 2", wrote on the image: "Missing home and the lunches and dinners together (sad face emoji)."

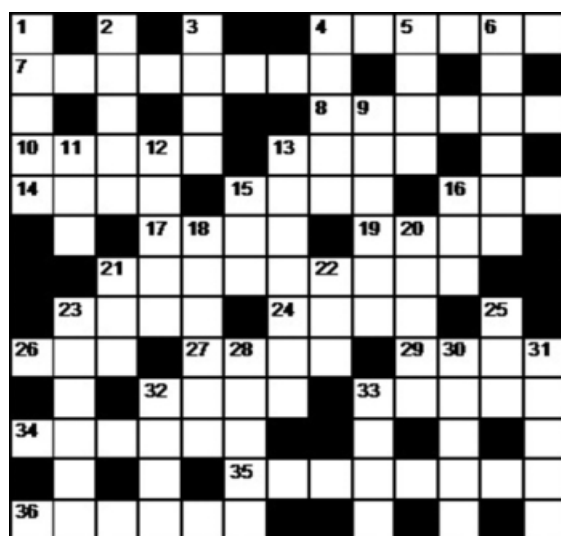
"Ek Villain 2" is a sequel to the 2014 film "Ek Villain". It is co-produced by Ekta Kapoor and Bhushan Kumar.

The sequel features John Abraham, Disha Patani and Arjun Kapoor in pivotal roles. The film is slated to release on February 11 next year.

She also has "Tadap", directed by Milan Luthria. The film is a remake of the Telugu hit "RX 100". She is paired opposite Suniel Shetty's son Ahan, who makes his Bollywood debut in the film. She has also been roped in for the second instalment of "Heropanti", starring Tiger Shroff.

Choreographer-director Ahmed Khan will helm the film.

NEWS ROUNDUP



SOLUTION TO JULY 10

CROSSWORD

Across

- 4 Grownups (6)
- 7 Cairo native (8)
- 8 Likenesses (6)
- 10 Alchemist's mercury (5)
- 13 Ark builder (4)
- 14 Food shop (4)
- 15 Avec's opposite (4)
- 16 An enemy (3)
- 17 Thailand money (4)
- 19 Winglike (4)
- 21 Cabaret (9)
- 23 Howl (4)
- 24 Persia today (4)
- 26 Refuse-container (3)
- 27 Like congers (4)
- 29 Precious metal (4)
- 32 Extremely (4)
- 33 Midlands city (5)
- 34 Chinese building (6)
- 35 More worthless (8)
- 36 Accustomed (4,2)

Down

- 1 A sixth (5)
- 2 Alpine region (5)
- 3 Hankering (4)
- 4 Charged atom (5)
- 5 Mormon state (4)
- 6 Shudder (6)
- 9 Indian spice mixture (6)
- 11 Japanese Buddhist philosophy (3)
- 12 A bone of the leg (5)
- 13 Smartly (7)
- 15 Librarian's admonition (3)
- 16 The ___ four: The Beatles of course (3)
- 18 Consented (6)
- 20 Thrust forward (5)
- 21 Not, as a prefix ? (3)
- 22 Be upset (3)
- 23 Antagonists or contestants (6)
- 25 Long-sleeved linen vestment (3)
- 28 Muse of poetry (5)
- 30 Circular path (5)
- 31 They change colours of fabrics (5)
- 32 Empty (4)
- 33 Powdery matter (4)

SUDOKU



SOLUTION TO JULY 10

New Conversations Day

Awkward Silence presents the inaugural New Conversations Day. New Conversations Day is the opportunity to open up exciting new conversations, learning new things about those we know best and dreaming up new ideas. Awkward Silence owner & chief writer Steven Benbow explains why New Conversations Day will be such an impactful day.

"Many are so in the habit of making lazy conversation about weather & sport that we don't take the opportunity to ask interesting questions and have rewarding conversations" said Mr Benbow. Awkward Silence are suggesting a number of alternative conversation starters that people can use including 'Which birthday tradition should change?', 'How would you feel about your partner doing kissing scenes in a film?', and 'What do you want to achieve with your life?'.

"Conversation is extremely powerful. It's the where ideas blossom, it's where connections are made, it's the life-blood of relationships" he said.

Yet despite how impactful it is, people tend to under-value its worth." "This is why New Conversations Day is so important, it's to help people wake up to how rewarding new conversations can be." Mr Benbow explains how people can celebrate the day. New Conversations Day is about not waiting until tomorrow to have the conversations we could be having. Like asking each other what we should be doing with our lives & making decisions, or talking to our parents & discovering their stories, or simply sharing the big ideas on our hearts" said Mr Benbow.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



‘300 units of free power to every family, waiver of old bills in U’khand’

DEHRADUN

IF elected to power in Uttarakhand, the Aam Aadmi Party will ensure free electricity up to 300 units per month to every family, waive old bills and give free electricity to farmers, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Sunday.

Making the announcements in the hill state where assembly elections are due next year, Kejriwal said his government has done it in Delhi and can do it in Uttarakhand also as the state generates power.

“These things are guaranteed if we come to power in the state. If we can do it in Delhi, then why can’t we do it in Uttarakhand, which not only produces electricity but also gives it to other states,” Kejriwal said at a press conference here.

“There will be no power cuts. Free electricity doesn’t mean long

There will be no power cuts. Free electricity doesn’t mean long outages. When we took over in Delhi 7-8 hours long power outages were common. We set that right: Arvind Kejriwal

outages. When we took over in Delhi 7-8 hours long power outages were common. We set that right,” said the AAP leader who recently promised free electricity to every household in Punjab that consumes up to 300 units of power if his party forms government in the state next year.

Kejriwal had last year announced a 100 percent subsidy for those households which consume up to 200 units of electricity in Delhi. Consumers of 201-400 units received approximately 50 percent subsidy.

In Uttarakhand, he said, every household will be provided 300 units of free electricity if the AAP forms the government. The freebies announced on Sunday are being seen as his attempt to woo vot-

ers and steal the ruling BJP’s thunder by going one step ahead of it. Uttarakhand Power Minister Harak Singh Rawat had recently announced that the state govern-

Kejriwal says his government has done it in Delhi and can do it in Uttarakhand also as the state generates power

ment will give free electricity to people of the state up to 100 units. The AAP leader remembered how he and his ministers went door-to-door to get transformers and wires replaced.

He claimed that AAP workers touring different areas of Uttarakhand have found that exaggerated bills have been issued on a large

scale to people “deliberately to dupe them”. “So we have decided to waive the old bills and start afresh if elected to power. We will also give free electricity to farmers for agricultural purposes,” Kejriwal said.

The AAP, which has not been able to win a single seat in the state in the past elections, has plans to emerge as an alternative to both Congress and BJP in the next assembly polls. Kejriwal said he will announce the party’s chief ministerial candidate during his next visit to the state.

He alleged that the BJP and the Congress have led Uttarakhand “to doom” and the people of the state have fallen victim to their design. The two parties have a “good setting” between them, he claimed.



Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal along with Uttarakhand state AAP in-charge Dinesh Mohaniya (left) and Colonel Ajay Kothiyal (right) address a press conference in Dehradun on Sunday

“Look at the record from the year 2000 onwards. We loot for one term, you loot for another. That

seems to be the arrangement between them,” Kejriwal said, referring to the pattern in successive

elections in Uttarakhand where power changes hands between the two parties every five years.

India’s first cryptogamic garden opens in Dehradun

DEHRADUN

INDIA’S first cryptogamic garden housing nearly 50 species of lichens, ferns and fungi was inaugurated in Uttarakhand’s Dehradun district on Sunday.

Located in the district’s Chakrata town, the garden was inaugurated by social activist Anoop Nautiyal.

Around 50 species have been grown in the garden at Deoban in Chakrata at a commanding height of 9,000 ft, Chief Conservator of Forest (research) Sanjiv Chaturvedi said. “We chose to locate the garden, which is spread over three acres, at Deoban because of its low pollution levels and moist conditions which are conducive for the growth of these species,” he said. Deoban has pristine majestic forests of Deodar and Oak which create a natural habitat for cryptogamic species, he added.

Cryptogamiae means “hidden reproduction” referring to the fact that no seed, no flowers are



produced. Thus, cryptogams represent the non-seed bearing plants, Chaturvedi explained. Algae, bryophytes (moss, liverworts), lichens, ferns and fungi are the best-known groups of cryptogams that require moist conditions to survive, he said.

Expatiating on the cryptogamic groups present in the garden, Chaturvedi said algae comprises the most primitive organisms which are predominantly aquatic, both in marine as well as freshwater habitats.

Bryophytes are the simplest and primitive land plants that occupy an intermediate position between algae and pteridophytes. Lichens are a complex life form that is a symbiotic partnership of two separate organisms, a fungus and an algae, he said.

Ferns are the largest living group of primitive vascular plants while fungi is a kingdom of usually multicellular eukaryotic organisms that are heterotrophs, he said.

Curfew imposed in Raj district after teen’s murder

KOTA

A curfew was imposed and internet services suspended for 24 hours in the Baran Municipal Council in Rajasthan following the brutal murder of a teenage boy, police said on Sunday.

Azad, a resident of Shramik Colony in Talab Para area in Baran district, was allegedly killed on Saturday evening by a group of men over a one and half-year-old dispute, they said, adding the prime accused, Hemant Rathore and his two accomplices were arrested.

“The brutal murder is the result of personal enmity and rivalry between two groups with no communal angle,” ASP Vijay Swarnkar said. The victim was



shot twice by the prime accused outside Baran Grain Mandi gate, police said. Then, Rathore and his accomplices attacked him using iron rods while “panic-stricken” passers by remained mute spectators. A CCTV footage shows the ac-

cused thrashing Azad till his body goes lifeless, they said.

The accused strolled up and down the street for around 5 minutes after committing the crime, they added. A video of the incident was posted on the internet on Saturday night,

following which, the district administration imposed a curfew under Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) and banned internet services for 24 hours till 3 am on Monday in a periphery of Baran Municipal Council.

A case under Section 302 (murder) of the Indian Penal Code was lodged against the three arrested accused and some unidentified persons on the complaint of the victim’s family, Station House Officer (SHO) Mangilal Yadav said. The victim’s body was handed over to his family after post-mortem late on Saturday night, police said, adding efforts were on to identify and nab others involved in the case.

Farmer dies of electrocution at Singhu border protest site

CHANDIGARH

A farmer from Punjab died of electrocution on Sunday near the Singhu border of the national capital where protests against the contentious agriculture laws have been going on for over seven months now, police said. The body of Sohan Singh, 42, was found near an electric transformer close to Singhu border in Kundli area of Haryana’s Sonapat district.

“He died of electrocution. We have sent the body for post-mortem,” an official of the Kundli police station



said. Singh had come to the protest site to join the stir last month. Farmers, mainly from Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh, have been protesting in huge numbers at Delhi’s borders since November

2020, demanding the repeal of the three farm laws.

Enacted in September, the three legislations have been projected by the Centre as major reforms in the agriculture sector that will remove the middlemen and allow farmers to sell their produce anywhere in the country. The protesting farmers, on the other hand, have expressed

apprehension that the new laws would pave the way for eliminating the safety cushion of the Minimum Support Price (MSP) and do away with the APMC markets, leaving them at the mercy of big corporates.

BSP HAS LOST ITS IDENTITY, AZAD SAMAJ ALTERNATIVE IN UP: AAZAD

ASIM KAMAL
NEW DELHI

ACCUSING the Bahujan Samaj Party of going soft on the Centre for the fear of central probe agencies, Azad Samaj Party chief Chandra Shekhar Aazad on Sunday pitched his new political outfit as an alternative to the Mayawati-led party which he said was losing its identity by working against the principles of its founder Kanshi Ram.

The Bhim Army chief, whose political outfit Azad Samaj Party launched last year is seeking to establish itself as a defender of the rights of Dalits, other backward classes and minorities, said a “grand alliance” is the need of the hour for the Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls next year and all those who are serious about stopping the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) from coming back to power must join hands.

In an interview with PTI, Aazad said he has no qualms in aligning with anybody, including the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), provided the objective is to forge a strong alliance to defeat the



Yogi Adityanath government which he alleged was running a “dictatorial” administration. “We are in talks with all (opposition) parties. When any problem confronts the state and the country all parties discuss matters. In our party, the core committee is the supreme body and it will take a call on alliances,” the Azad Samaj Party chief said, adding that his party has not formalised any tie-ups as of now for the assembly polls.

“Our efforts are directed at forging a grand alliance to take on the BJP for the sake of the people. This misrule must come to an end. So a grand alliance

should be formed to stop the BJP,” the 34-year-old leader stressed. Calling for a common minimum programme, he battled for having a coalition government in UP, saying when parties get a hold over power alone then dictatorial situations arise “as it is happening now”.

Asked about the barbs directed at him by BSP chief Mayawati, he said if someone criticises him, he is not perturbed by it. “I am not scared of criticism and allegations,” Aazad said. To a pointed query on whether he was open to an alliance with the BSP for the assembly polls, he said he was open to an alliance with all

“anti-BJP” parties. However, Aazad was also scathing in his criticism of the Mayawati-led party, while adding that his differences with it were ideological and not personal.

“The BSP has lost its identity and it is because of its own actions, not due to anyone else. Look at 2012 (UP assembly polls), 2014 (Lok Sabha polls), 2017 (assembly polls) and 2019 (LS polls), they are in decline,” Aazad, also known as ‘Raavan’, said. “Look at other states, now they (BSP) are getting less than 1 per cent votes, be it in Kerala, Assam, West Bengal. The BSP is in decline because its leaders don’t want to work on the ground level and only go to the people during elections and the people are understanding this,” he claimed. Alleging that the BSP was ignoring its founder the late Kanshi Ram’s ideals, Aazad alleged that the Mayawati-led party was working against those principles.

The BSP became a national party in 12 years on the basis of those principles but its national party status is also in danger now, he said. Pointing to the BSP’s “de-

cline”, he said the Azad Samaj Party was not there in 2012, 2014, 2017 and 2019 polls, and the BSP was itself to blame for it. “We have given an alternative to the people and showed our mettle with our work on the ground. We pledge to be with people before and after elections,” the Azad Samaj Party chief said. He also accused the BSP of going soft on the Centre on various issues for the fear of central probe agencies. “When you have cases of CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation), ED (Enforcement Directorate), you are caught in the stranglehold of the Centre and you cannot put forward your views strongly,” Aazad said.

“There are several such cases (on Mayawati) and also her brother,” he alleged, while asserting that his party was playing the role of a responsible opposition despite being just over a year old. Asked about the Congress as a potential ally in UP, Aazad said there was no rift with the party but his outfit was raising its voice wherever deprived were wronged and did so recently in Congress-ruled Rajasthan.

NGT directs HP CS to stop grabbing govt land in Shimla

NEW DELHI

THE National Green Tribunal has directed the Himachal Pradesh chief secretary to ensure removal of encroachment on government land in Shimla’s Narkanda area.

A bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel said in view of the long delay which has already taken place, irrespective of the question whether land is forest or non-forest government land, the state authorities must ensure further action.

“We note that order dated August 3, 2019 for eviction was passed under the H.P. Public Premises and Land (Eviction and Rent Recovery) Act, 1971 but the same is not being given effect to on account of further orders which, in view of the report of chief secretary are not sustainable.

“Let the matter be monitored by the chief secretary, HP to en-

sure compliance of rule of law and protection of the government property,” the bench said. The chief secretary told the NGT that land was found to be “Gair Mumkin Sadak” (agricultural land where there are wells and water channels) in revenue papers and thus is non-forest land.

“The fact remain that the land is covered by the definition of ‘public premises’ and encroachment is required to be removed. The report of the chief secretary does not mention the timelines for further action,” the NGT noted. The tribunal’s direction came on a plea filed by Shimla resident Sher Singh alleging illegal encroachment on the government land in Himachal Pradesh.



The threat of third wave is real

TELANGANA issues guidelines for marriages, funerals; prohibits all other gatherings. The maximum number of persons allowed for wedding should not exceed 100 and the maximum persons allowed for funeral gatherings are 20. Telangana extends night curfew by a week, imposes curbs on public gatherings. Delhi bans public gatherings. Prohibits all types of gatherings, reduced size of weddings and funerals, running of public transport at half seating capacity and scaled down presence in government offices amid a surge in Covid-19 cases here.

Himachal reimposes curbs: Not more than 50 people at weddings, funerals, all other gatherings banned. These were some of the screaming banners in news papers both during the first and second wave of Covid.

When things went from bad to worse, everyone started saying that lowering down of Covid protocols had led to this pathetic situation. But the trillion dollar question is did the politicians and people learn any lesson? The answer is BIG NO. When the country was hit by first wave, people were caught unawares and did not know how to protect themselves till national lockdown was imposed. But once the lockdown was lifted people started behaving as if the Coronavirus does not exist anymore.

The politicians also started holding public meetings throwing all precautions to winds. We have seen the result. World Health Organisation and number of other studies have issued alerts of possible third wave. Some countries are already witnessing third wave and

countries like Pakistan are into fourth wave.

But unfortunately people here in our country seem to refuse to learn any lesson though the number of deaths were fairly high during second wave and people suffered both in terms of health and wealth as they had to spend lakhs and lakhs of rupees on hospitals which were the only ones which made huge money and did not show any kind of humanitarian considerations even when the patient did not survive. While the extraordinary services rendered by the doctors and para medical staff needs to be admired and deserves standing ovation, the managements attitude was rather not so patient friendly.

Let us take for example of celebrations of day one of the Golconda Bonalu festival in Hyderabad. About one lakh

devotees participated in the celebrations. The interest they had shown in taking selfies standing in front of Bonalu was not visible in following the safety norms like wearing masks or maintaining social distancing.

The Telangana government which imposed restrictions on gatherings for marriage and funerals surprisingly does permits holding of public meetings by party leaders. No social distancing is maintained at these meetings and again masks are the biggest casualty here.

The leaders may justify that such a situation prevails across the country. True, but by doing so are we not inviting the third wave. Why is it that the politicians and people are being so insensitive? Will the administration wake up at least now?

Increase consumption by Indians, not foreigners

THE WAY AHEAD



Dr Bharat Hunjunhwal

Chief Economic Adviser Arvind Subramanian has said that India's domestic market is small hence it is necessary to focus on increase in exports to jumpstart the economy. There is no gain saying that provision of national resources for consumption by our own people is "domestic consumption" while providing the same resources for consumption by foreigners is "export."

International bank J P Morgan has agreed with this prognosis and added Government expenditures, especially investments, can help.

Our record of exports in the recent past does not augur well for exports. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has reported that the exports of China increased by 25 percent in first quarter of 2021 compared to the first quarter of 2019. The exports of South Asia—in which India is the dominant country—declined by 2 percent in this same period.

Last year in 2020 analysts had expressed great hope that the negative sentiment against China due to the emergence of the Covid virus in Wuhan would lead to a reduction of imports from- and investment into China. It was hoped that India would be able to capture the markets and investments exiting from China. This hope has not only been belied but the opposite is taking place. Instead of capturing the markets opened by the exit of China, we are slipping even from our own markets.

In my assessment our dismal performance is mainly due to the obstructions and rent seeking by our bureaucracy. Indeed, exporters laud the present Government for introducing certain online facilities. At the same time they lament the great harassment they face. One exporter from Mumbai narrated to me that he had to ship a consignment before a particular date. The container reached the port in time. The customs officer, however, would not clear it. He said that he wanted to weigh each of 1600 jenkins of 25 kg each to make sure that the quantity declared was correct.

Now, such weight would take at least two days. That would lead to the exporter missing the deadline for shipment and he would incur a huge penalty. Left with no other option, he paid bribe of Rs 50,000 and the consignment was cleared

promptly. At the same time, the same exporter also lauded the present Government for forcibly retiring number of allegedly corrupt officials and promoting honest officers. The ground reality remains extensively corrupt despite this action on the top as indicated in the above experience. Therefore, the Government will have to take steps to make the ground level bureaucracy responsive and accountable.

This cannot be done from the top alone. A pincer movement with appointment of honest officials from the top combined with people's pressure from the bottom alone will beget smooth exports. If, for example, the harassed exporter could have called the PMO and complained against the customs official, and the PMO could have immediately cleared the consignment, then alone can our exports grow. The hope of an export-led growth will remain a mirage in absence of such an approach.

Both the Chief Economic Adviser and J P Morgan do not think that domestic consumption can lead the economy. We need to place their despondency in perspective. Our growth rate has been declining continuously since 2014; while the Sensex has been going up and up. We need to understand the reasons thereof. Pray, what can be the reasons of booming share markets when the economy is going down the hill? The Sensex reflects the profitability of the largest companies in the country. Thus, we may say that the economy is contracting but big industries are booming.

The reason for this are the economic policies implemented by the Government. Demonetization hit the small industries hard because they operated in cash. Large industries emerged unscathed. The GST facilitated the movement of goods from one state to another. However, it is mostly if not entirely the large industries that engage in interstate trade. The large industries could reach their products across the country. Previously, the difficulties faced by large industries in obtaining "C" forms and negotiating octroi led to small in-state industries securing a competitive advantage.

A curtain manufacturer from Haridwar told me that he was thrown out of the Uttarakhand market because manufacturers from Surat were able to reach their products easily after GST. The huge investments made by the Government in making highways have had the same effect. Small industries use them less than large industries. Thus, the small industries' cost of reaching the goods to the market has declined less while the large



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industries' cost of reaching the goods to the market has declined more.

The materials and machines used to make highways also created demand of equipment like JCBs and materials like cement and steel that are made by large industries. The killing of small industries has led to reduction of employment and translated into lack of demand in the domestic economy. The despondency of the CEA regarding the lack of domestic demand is, therefore, the direct result to the policies advised by him.

The situation is grim in the services sector as well. According to the India Brand Equity Foundation the Purchase Managers Index for March 2021 declined 54.6 from 55.3 in February. This is hugely serious because the services sector accounts for nearly 80 percent of the economy in the developed countries. We have large numbers of English speaking youth that can export services such as tutorials and music. However, our education system provides incentives such as mid-day meals to youth to encourage them to study in substandard govern-

ment schools.

The Government is faced with problems on all three fronts: exports-, domestic- and services. Exports are down because of the stranglehold of the bureaucracy. Domestic market is down because of the policies of the Government. Services are down because education system sells certificates instead of teaching. My assessment is that taming the bureaucracy will be difficult given the dependency of the political parties on the same bureaucracy. It may be easier to change the domestic policies.

The direction of investment in infrastructure should be changed in favour of small towns instead of metropolis such as making roads and providing electricity in slums and small towns. The educational system should move from secured employment of teachers to a voucher system wherein the students can buy education from an institution of their choice.

(The author is former professor of Economics at IIM, Bengaluru)

Caught in Covid crisis, Tripura tribals grow Apple Ber, first in NE region

SUJIT CHAKRABORTY



HIT by the economic crisis triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic and enthused by a tribal youth, some tribal farmers in Tripura are scripting a new story by cultivating Apple Ber, a variety of horticultural fruit. It is being done for the first time in the entire north-eastern region.

Bikramjit Chakma in northern Tripura's Pencharthal encouraged his relatives to cultivate two varieties of Apple Ber -- Sinduri Apple Ber and Kashmiri Apple Ber on their lands instead of the traditional horticultural crops.

"Many tribals in Tripura for the past many years are cultivating rubber while many others are doing unscientific 'jhum' cultivation (slash and burn method of cultivation). Some tribals are cultivating traditional horticultural crops and some are doing betel nut.

"But rubber and betel nut take several years to give financial benefits. But from Apple Ber, anyone can get financial gains within a year or so," the 32-year-old told IANS.

He said that he convinced some of his relatives that instead of potato, brinjal, 'patal' (pointed gourd), cucumber, tomato and other horticultural crops they should cultivate different varieties of Apple Ber for easy profits.

They could also avoid other problems like storage, transportation and marketing.

"My relatives, influenced by my proposals, agreed and last year started cultivating the two varieties of Apple Ber -- Sinduri Apple Ber and Kashmiri Apple Ber.

"I helped them to collect the saplings of the Sinduri Apple Ber and Kashmiri Apple Ber from outside the state," said Chakma, who got his Bachelor of Arts degree from a Tripura college in 2011 and is now in a government job.

When asked how he came to know about the cultivation of Apple Ber and to make profits by marketing the crop, he said: "During my internet chats in the Covid induced lockdown period, I found out about these varieties of produce in various government and non-government websites.

"I have also found that these crops are not only being cultivated in Kashmir but also in northern Indian states and in neighbouring Bangladesh with very good yields. If these are grown outside Jammu and Kashmir and in a high tropical atmosphere, why not in Tripura? Then I, along with my relatives, started an experiment last year which yielded good results within a year."

Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb was also impressed by what Chakma and his relatives were doing.

"Bikramjit and his relatives earned a profit of Rs 6 lakhs in a year by cultivating the two varieties of Apple Ber in a little over two acres of land," Deb said.

The Chief Minister said that Bikramjit and his relatives' success would encourage others in Tripura and the other northeastern states to become self-reliant and to be an employer.

According to the officials of the Tripura Horticulture Department, Bikramjit and his relatives' efforts have written a new chapter in Apple Ber cultivation, not just in Tripura, but in the entire northeastern region comprising eight states.

The specialties of the Sinduri Apple Ber and Kashmiri Apple Ber, both hybrid varieties, is the size of the fruit which are bigger than other varieties, taste very sweet, are drought resistant, consume less water and require less insecticides. They are sustainable in hot temperature too, an official of the Horticulture Department said.

Agricultural expert Sekhar Paul said that Sinduri Apple Ber and Kashmiri Apple Ber are rich in vitamins, and have medicinal value for pregnant and lactating women.

"These varieties of the Apple Bers have minerals such as calcium, phosphorus and iron. Ber is considered the fruit of the poor and is available in many varieties. These varieties of bers were found in Thailand and Malaysia and other countries," Paul told IANS.

He said farmers could earn good returns by farming these varieties of Ber without much investment and hard work. (IANS)

With beaches closed, Goa's waterfalls beckon

WITH beaches out of bounds due to the ongoing monsoons, fun seekers appear to have made a bee-line for Goa's waterfalls, which are abundant in the state's hinterland in the lower reaches of the Western ghats mountain range during the rainy season.

Popular waterfalls like Dudhsagar, Charvane, Surla, Bamonbudo, Hirvem, have seen a steady stream of visitors, even amid the ongoing state-level Covid-19 curfew, where the pounding of streams of white, cascading water provides a perfect contrast in the oppressive pandemic season.

"Bathing under a waterfall with nature all around is a very therapeutic activity for me and it refreshes me physically and mentally. I also end up waking up early around 6 a.m. when I visit these waterfalls and I feel it's the best start to my day," says Jigyassaa Malhotra, a Goa-based travel content creator, who relishes an opportunity to take a dip in the outdoors.

Bathing in waterfalls is a popular penchant for those who love the outdoors in Goa, especially in the monsoons, when water-logged streams channel their way down their ancient course, emptying into canyons.

The Dudhsagar waterfall, for instance, almost charmed its way into Daniel Craig-starring James Bond film "Skyfall" in 2011, before security issues and complexities related to shooting permissions in the Bhagwan Mahaveer Wildlife Sanctuary, put paid to the prospects.

Of late however, with the state's numerous seasonal waterfalls emerging on the tourist radar, promising the prospects of witnessing the majesty of an 'unexplored Goa' have dented the sheen of the picturesque water bodies.

To prevent indiscriminate littering, social media influencer Flexia Dsouza, who regularly documents her waterfall outings urges potential visitors to take their garbage back with them.

"If you happen to carry food or booze, please make sure you take back the plastic packets and bottles. It's a humble request. Every little effort counts. If everyone starts taking back their plastic, there won't be trash at pretty spots in Goa's hinterlands," she says. Over the last week, the increasing number and frequency of tourists to the waterfalls have forced villagers in more remote parts of Goa like Sattari and Canacona, to ban entry of outsiders or blocking roads. As stunning as the picture postcard backdrop of a waterfall appears, drownings at these water bodies are unfortunately a frequent occurrence.

Drishti Marine, a private lifeguard agency appointed by the state government, mans the lifeguard station at the Dudhsagar waterfall located near South Goa's Collem railway station.

Since 2014, 59 incidents related to drowning have occurred at the waterfall, which is popular with tourists as well as locals and residents of Karnataka which lies in close proximity), in which 67 persons were rescued and three succumbed. According to Navin Awasthi, operations head at Drishti Marine, some basic precautions could help in preventing mishaps during a waterfall outing. "Whilst swimming stay within the demarcated swim zone, don't lean on the railings, do not venture towards the edge of the falls, do not take selfies near the edge or on rocky areas. One also should not jump into the water without knowing what is underneath the surface. It could lead to injuries or death," he said. (IANS)

LETTERS

UP's example worth emulating

THIS is with reference to the news published in your reputed newspaper about 'UP to reward 2-child parents (July 10)'. We appreciated the efforts of UP government to give the incentives to the parents those have two children. Actually no government has taken the sincere efforts to control the menace of population in the country. During the regime of former Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi the measures was taken to control the population but after that no government was serious to take measures for controlling the increasing population in India. To lure the voters, the Union government or State government does not show any interest to control the population. But now, UP government is taking a brave effort to control the population boom. There is a need for other states to follow the UP government and take serious measures to stop the increasing in population. If government would not take necessary steps to control population then the future generation can face many problems like employment, drinking water, housing and it would be difficult to survive. Hope the States and UTs to follow the steps of UP government and stop the population boom.

Syed Nissar Mehdi, Hyderabad

UP government's plan of controlling population is welcome but to achieve the same, people needs to be educated and convinced instead of punishing them with harsh measures such as "stoppage of welfare benefits" (U.P. population draft bill, July 11). Whether the population is an asset or liability depends on the policies of governments. While provision of education, health care and promotion of hardwork culture make people "asset", freebies, subsidies, loan waivers make them lethargic, thereby a "liability" for the nation. So, what matters is

quality but not numbers of population.
Kshirasagara Balaji Rao, Hyderabad

Can't Monorail project wait?

KTR's announcement of investing Rs 3000 crore for Monorail will definitely add a feather to the rapidly developing Hyderabad. But would it not be ideal if there is a rethinking on this issue because of the following reasons:

- Pandemic has brought in a paradigm shift in the way people are commuting.
- Existing Metro is seeking refuge from government to overcome its losses.
- The extension of Metro to old city which is in dire need is still pending.
- The IT sector and its surroundings where Monorail is being planned is not sure when the employees would resume attending their offices getting away from WFH. It may take a year or even more depending on the contours the pandemic would take.

The envisaged Monorail can wait till we recover completely from the uncertainty posed by the pandemic, particularly when government is in acute need of funds. Moreover, the ROI may not be feasible as expected in the present day situation.

D Nagarjuna, Hyderabad

Treat women cricketers equally

Now-a-days women are also participating in all fields. And also competing equally along with the men. But Unfortunately there is no value for women. If we see Dhoni, Virat in TV ads we can easily recognise them. But how many of us can recognise women cricket players. The same happens to the Mithali Dorai Raj. She also broke many records nationally and internationally. Then What is the difference. We had entered into 21st century. But still there are differences between women and men. How many of us know Mithali Raj who was born in December 1982 Jodhpur,

Rajasthan has reached milestones aplenty in her storied international career spanning more than two decades. It was on August 16, 2002, when Mithali Raj became the first Indian women's player to score a double century in the longest format of the game. She achieved the feat against England at Taunton, and at that time, Mithali's knock of 214 was the highest score in women's Test cricket. Mithali, who was just 19 at that time. She is the only Indian cricketer to have scored more than 10,000 runs in Women's international cricket.

She is the first player to score seven consecutive 50s in ODIs. Raj also holds the record for most half-centuries in WODIs. She played a key role to bring Indian team to finals for two times. She had many successes. She was awarded Padma Shri and Arjuna award and some International awards. We have to give the same respect and value for Mithali Raj as we are giving to Sachin, Dhoni, Gavaskar, Virat Kohli and others. If we encourage them then all women also show their talents in different fields. Our country will be famous and also develops.

T V S Suchitra, Khammam

End of an era

IN the death of centenarian Dr PK Warriar, India has lost a doyen of Ayurveda and a champion of the poor. Dr Warriar introduced modern practices and methods to Ayurveda and took special care to preserve rare medicinal plants. The Kottakkal Arya Vaidya Sala Kottakkal (AVS), which started essentially as a village clinic a century ago, flourished under him and became a household name. Kottakkal town also became synonymous with this ancient Indian system of medicine. The government recognised his contribution to Ayurveda by decorating him with the Padma Shri in 1999 and Padma Bhushan in 2010. His demise marks the end of an era.

N J Ravi Chandar, Bengaluru

thehansreader@gmail.com

AP Fibernet under CID scanner

HANS NEWS SERVICE

AMARAVATI

THE State Government issued an order on Sunday to probe the irregularities in the Andhra Pradesh State Fibernet Limited (APSFL) following the report submitted by the chairman and managing director of APSFL P Goutham Reddy.

Goutham Reddy alleged that there were irregularities in finalising the contract. Prima fa-

cie there was evidence that some big people who held high positions in the previous government were also involved in it. He said he would come out with more details in the next one or two days.

The APSFL chairman in his report had requested the government to entrust the case to the investigating agency for a detailed inquiry preferably by the Crime Investigation Department.

Accordingly, Secretary to En-

ergy Department Nagulapali Srikanth issuing the GO directed the additional Director-General of Police of the CID to investigate the irregularities and submit a detailed report to the government.

It may be recalled that the TDP government formed the APFSL to provide Internet, cable network and telephone services to every household at a nominal price. The APSFL developed a fibre network throughout the State and had

even given some connections in a few districts. However, with the change of the government, the programme hit a block.

After YSR Congress leader P Gautam Reddy was appointed as its chairman, it started once again its activities recently. It has been alleged that the erstwhile TDP government issued contracts in favour of a person who is close to the top party leaders causing loss of several crores of rupees to the exchequer.

RANI DEVALLA

VISAKHAPATNAM

NOTWITHSTANDING the harsh lessons learnt during the first and the current second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is overcrowding again as usual in various parts of the city as the curfew hours got eased. People continue to throng places like Rythu Bazars, shanties, Beach Road, retail stores, shopping malls, liquor outlets and meat shops. Unmindful of social distancing, following safety etiquettes took a backseat and wearing of masks became a 'passe'. The biggest challenge now lies in how long it will take before the district grapples with another wave of the pandemic. While the district administration is taking a big leap towards hospital preparedness, increasing the beds with oxygen supply and ventilators, experts say

WE'RE LIKE THIS ONLY

Learning a lesson from pandemic seems to be a far cry

that the public behaviour is the key to control the third wave of the Covid-19. "The other primary factors include the variants and the percentage of people getting inoculated. These are the top determinants of the third wave," explains PV Sudhakar, District Covid Special Officer and Principal of Andhra Medical College (AMC).

After a long time, since people were locked indoors due to the curfew restrictions, Dr Sudhakar opines, the public behaviour is bound to go astray once the curfew gets eased.

"Though some have genuine reasons to come out of their houses, in most cases there will not be any particular reason to step out and that too in large numbers," the AMC Principal observes. He recommends staggered timings to visit markets so that crowding can largely be avoided.

Penalising the violators is another means to optimise Covid appropriate behaviour

among people, the health officials suggest.

Thankfully, the meat shops were kept closed during weekends for almost a month, starting from the last Sunday of May till the third weekend of June. "The corporation's main objective was to go for a month-long weekend closure of the meat shops to control overcrowding. But since Sunday remained closed, the gathering became unbearable on Saturdays," says KSLG Sastry, Chief Medical Officer of Health, GVMC.

Besides, the strict enforcement of partial curfew across the district have kept the daily caseload substantially under check in the past few months. On Sunday, the positivity rate in Visakhapatnam recorded an all-time low of 2.2 percent. The health officials plan to bring it to below one percent. And for this to become a reality, they say, public behaviour plays an imperative part.

Harish welcomes Huzurabad student leaders into TRS

- Says govt committed to provide employment to youth
- Assures that youngsters will get jobs in private sector too

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

FINANCE Minister T Harish Rao on Sunday said that the State government was committed to provide employment to youth. He welcomed student leaders from PDSU, SFI and TNSU of the Huzurabad Assembly segment into the TRS party fold in his presence at a programme here. Rao offered party shawls to the student leaders.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister stated that Chief Minister K Chandrababhai Rao had directed officials to fill 50,000 posts. "Our State is for water, jobs and resources," he reiterated.

"We recently filled up 30,000 posts. Another 50,000 posts will be filled soon," he announced. "Youth and students are real wealth of the State, who have to contribute for its development," he added.

He asked them to take welfare and development programmes to people. "The government will keep its promises on jobs and welfare schemes, Harish said, assuring the students of providing all support.

Adding that the State was attracting more investments, the Finance Minister said big companies were opening their operations in the State and the students and youth were set to get lakhs of private jobs.

Meanwhile, a few student leaders alleged that former Health Minister Eatala Rajender had foisted false cases against them and sent them to jail. "Now we joined the TRS fold and work for TRS and State development as Rajender joined the BJP," they said.

AP records 2,665 new cases, 16 deaths

AMARAVATI: The gross Covid-19 toll crossed the 13,000 mark in Andhra Pradesh as 16 deaths were reported on Sunday, the lowest in a day in over three months. The State reported 2,665 fresh cases of coronavirus and 3,231 recoveries in 24 hours ending 9 am on Sunday. A health department bulletin put the total positives so far at 19,22,843, recoveries at 18,81,161 and toll 13,002. The active cases slid further to 28,680, it added.

In 24 hours, East Godavari reported 529, Chittoor 353, West Godavari 293, Prakasam 285, Krishna 281 and Guntur 223 fresh cases.

Newly-wed jawan killed in road mishap

HANS NEWS SERVICE
TIRUPATI

IN a tragic incident, a jawan was killed in an accident when a car hit a two-wheeler at T Rangampeta cross near Puthalapattu late on Saturday night. According to Puthalapattu police, soldier

Manoj was going on his two-wheeler to his native village T Rangampeta, when a car coming in the opposite direction and proceeding towards Tirupati hit his bike. The soldier died on the spot. The police after registering a case sent the body to Chittoor government hospital for

post-mortem. The jawan was working in Jammu and Kashmir regiment and came to his native village T Rangampeta three months back and got married. He was supposed to rejoin duty on July 25 and report in Punjab. He had decided to take his wife along with him to Punjab.

SWACHH BHARAT CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED AT RAILWAY STATION

- The fortnight-long campaign has been rolled out by the Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited, Visakh Refinery, in association with the Waltair Division of East Coast Railway
- Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) Chetan Kumar Shrivastava administers Swachhata pledge

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VISAKHAPATNAM:

WALTAIR Division organised an awareness programme 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' among the public to ensure maintenance of cleanliness of their surroundings.

The fortnight-long campaign, launched at Visakhapatnam railway station on Sunday, was rolled out by Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited, Visakh Refinery in association with Waltair Division of East Coast Railway.

The Swachh Bharat volunteers, housekeeping staff at the station participated in the campaign to create awareness among the passengers to keep the work-places and public places clean.



Swachh Bharat volunteers creating awareness on cleanliness at Visakhapatnam railway station on Sunday

A Swachhata pledge was administered by the Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) Chetan Kumar Shrivastava to the gathering at Visakhapatnam railway station.

Addressing the gathering, the DRM said that 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' is the most powerful tool to make India the cleanest

nation. The mission helped in containing the pandemic to a great extent. Using a mask, maintaining physical distance and adopting a hygienic way of living in the pandemic time should be followed, he added.

Chief General Manager (I/C) / HPCL, Visakh Refinery Ramanathan Ramakrishnan appre-

ciated the efforts of railway authorities in keeping the railway premises and trains clean and for bagging several awards on Swachhata.

General Manager (HR), HPCL K Nagesh, lauded the services of railway officials for maintaining high standards of cleanliness at stations.

V-P roots for better prices, timely credit to farmers

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

VICE President M Venkaiah Naidu on Sunday said that providing better prices for agricultural produce and timely, affordable credit to farmers are crucial to sustain agriculture in the country. Citing a UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) report about an impending global food crisis, he said that "if we provide timely assistance to our farmers, India would not only remain self-sufficient, but also feed the world in the years to come".

Praising farmers for increased foodgrain production last year despite the severe hardship caused by the pandemic, Naidu was quoted in an official release as saying that there was a need to focus on increasing the storage capacities, remove restrictions on crop transportation and encourage food processing to make agriculture more remunerative.

Releasing a book 'Palleku Pat-



tabhishekam' by former MP Yalamanchili Sivaji here, he said that villages and agriculture are intrinsically connected and "we must address their issues holistically to bring 'Gram Swarajya' to our villages".

"Farmers need to focus on cost-cutting, along with increasing production. We also need to utilise our resources such as water and electricity more judiciously",

Naidu said. The Vice President suggested the creation of strong lab-farm links to ensure fruitful outcomes to the farmers.

He urged scientists to develop climate and drought-resistant seed varieties. Referring to the growing urban-rural divide, Naidu said that villages should not be seen as mere "factories supplying food to the cities". In order to achieve Mahatma Gandhi's dream

of 'Gram Swarajya', he called for a renewed national effort through collaboration of civic society, agriculturalists, agronomists, students and researchers to make agriculture profitable and villages thriving economic hubs. He wanted people to return to their roots and work with fellow villagers on solving long-standing problems.

With rising costs of inputs in agriculture, Naidu suggested that natural and organic farming offers great potential in cutting down costs and generating a steady income for farmers. Increasing demand for organic products provide an opportunity to farmers to take up natural farming in a big way, he said. Naidu also wanted farmers to diversify into allied sectors like poultry, dairy farming, fisheries, horticulture, aquaculture and pisciculture to ensure regular income. On the role of youth, Naidu called for greater participation of the new generation in agriculture - as farmers, researchers, scientists and entrepreneurs.

Salakatla Anivara Asthanam at Tirumala on July 16

- During the religious fete, the Archakas on behalf of the Lord hand over the temple keys to Pedda Jeeyar Swamy and to the TTD Executive Officer to indicate the renewal of the authority for another year

HANS NEWS SERVICE
TIRUMALA

THE annual Salakatla Anivara Asthanam will be observed at Tirumala temple on July 16. The religious fete which will be observed on the beginning of Dakshinayana Punyakalam was for formal renewing of authority of Jeeyangar (the religious head) and Executive Officer (administrative head) of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) administering the famed Sri Venkateswara temple, Tirumala.

During the religious fete, the Archakas on behalf of the Lord hand over the temple keys to first Jeeyangar and later to Executive Officer to indicate the renewal of the authority for the year i.e. till next Anivara Asthanam.

In the religious event, the symbolic presentation of budget to give the previous year's ac-



counts of the office will also be presented before the deity by the principal officers and are taken back to signify that Srivaru finds the officers fit enough to hold the office in their respective capacities.

New books will also be issued for recording finances of the next fiscal. In the Agamic jargon, the entire process is called Asthanam which will be performed inside sanctum sanctorum near Bangaru Vakili in the presence of processional deities of Sri Malayappa Swamy and His two

consorts Sridevi and Bhudevi on Sarvabhoopala Vahanam accompanied by Viswakshena seated on another platform.

In connection with this fete, the TTD has cancelled all Arjitha Virtual Sevas including Kalyanotsavam, Unjal Seva, Arjita Brahmotsavam, Vasanthotsavam and Sahasra Deepplankara Seva on that day.

The procession of Pushpa Palaki will take place in the evening on that day at 6 pm.

TS sees drop in black fungus cases

- Only 20 cases being reported daily
- Doctors carry out minor surgeries on those infected with fungus

MOHSIN ALI
HYDERABAD

AFTER Covid, the black fungus cases are on the decline in the State. Most registered cases were being treated with medicines. Similarly, the surgeries have come down in comparison to last month with the ENT Hospital performing 20 surgeries a day. Only 20 cases of black fungus are being reported in government hospitals daily.

There are 100 patients under treatment in Gandhi Hospital. While 50 are being given post-surgery treatment, another 50 are yet to be operated. The number of patients has come down apparently from 300, who underwent treatment in Gandhi Hospital last month. The black fungus cases in the ENT Hospital have also fallen to 70, as against 200 in June last week. Most surgeries are minor; no critical cases are being reported. Dr Raja Rao, Superintendent, Gandhi Hospital said, "We are working continuously to discharge patients who are suffering from black fungus. The treatment is being done on war-footing and we hope by end of July, we will get rid of fungal infection."

Dr Rao added that treatment after surgery was more important as a



patient needs injections during recovery. "We need to accommodate the patient for it and the situation may come under our control soon," he said. Sharing statistics, Dr Shankar, Superintendent of ENT Hospital informed, "We are performing 10 fungal surgeries a day. All are minor. No critical cases are being reported. Only 10 surgeries are being performed daily, while pending cases are only 35." He added that the normal ENT surgeries were being done, while the ENT out-patient services were being continued. "We are referring patients to the Sarojini Devi Eye Hospital for complicated eye surgeries," Dr Shankar added.

Referring to black fungus cases, Superintendent of Sarojini Devi Hospital, Dr Raja Lingam, said only one or two patients were being referred daily.

Director of Medical Education Dr Ramesh Reddy said, "The department is closely monitoring the situation. All medicines are available and being supplied regularly to hospitals treating black fungus."

Kishan to focus on fast-paced development of North-East



- Reviews developmental activities and ongoing projects with senior officials of the DoNER

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

UNION Minister of Culture, Tourism and Development of North-Eastern Region (DoNER) G Kishan Reddy said that the socio-economic devel-

opment of the entire North-Eastern Region at a fast pace would be his key focus area. The Minister said this after a 2-day review meeting on various developmental activities and programmes being implemented in the North-Eastern Region, that concluded on Sunday.

Kishan Reddy directed the senior officials that all ongoing projects should be completed in a time-bound manner, and

all pending projects should be resolved at the earliest through a proper consultation mechanism with other ministries.

Secretary DoNER Dr Inderjit Singh and senior officials gave a comprehensive presentation to the Minister about all the projects, schemes and policies of the Ministry of DoNER during the two-day review session.

Earlier, after taking charge

of the Ministry of DoNER on Thursday, Kishan Reddy said that kind of transformation that took place in the North-Eastern Region in the last seven years in all spheres of life under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi was both incredible and unprecedented. He said under the guidance of Modi he would try to complete all the pending projects in the region within the time frame stipulated.

IIT Delhi alumnus beats Covid, scales Mt Everest

GUNJAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI

Neeraj Chaudhary tested positive for COVID-19 on the day he was to start from Kathmandu for the Mount Everest but that did not deter the IIT Delhi alumnus who returned to the base camp within weeks of his recovery and ultimately managed to hoist the institution's flag, besides the tricolour, atop the summit. While the country was reeling under the aggressive second wave of COVID-19, Chaudhary's family members in Rajasthan were hooked to their phones waiting for an update about his well being.

Chaudhary, 37, did his MTech in Environmental Sciences and Management at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi during 2009-11 and he is currently working with the Rajasthan government's Water Resources Department. He took to mountaineering in 2014, and in 2020 got selected as a member of Indian

Mountaineering Foundation (IMF) Everest Expedition under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. However, the expedition was postponed due to the outbreak of coronavirus.

This year, amid the uncertainty posed by the pandemic, he reached Kathmandu with the team to begin the expedition. "But I hit a roadblock when I tested positive for Covid and had to return to Jaipur. I was feeling fatigued since a few days but I had no other symptoms," Chaudhary told PTI.

"In that moment as well, I wasn't really thinking of Covid. All I could think of was how much effort I had put in and the preparations I had done to reach there and that was my chance to complete it. I think that motivation of not having a second chance anytime soon helped me push my body harder and there I was," he added. He tested positive on March 27 and was back in Kathmandu in April itself. He managed to scale the peak on May 31. Chaudhary recalls that once



It wasn't easy mentally, and mountaineering is not just a physical effort. When I reached there, then also it took me three attempts within 36 hours to ultimately reach the top, but once there, it was the best feeling. I managed to scale the peak on May 31: Neeraj Chaudhary

he was back in Kathmandu, after recovering from the infection, the news updates from India about the Covid situation worried him, while his family was on tenterhooks due to updates of cyclones in subsequent weeks.

"It wasn't easy mentally, and mountaineering is not

just a physical effort. When I reached there, then also it took me three attempts within 36 hours to ultimately reach the top but once there, it was the best feeling. I managed to scale the peak on May 31," he said. Crediting IIT Delhi for shaping his career and the alumni association for helping him start a fundraiser of Rs 24 lakh for the expedition, Chaudhary took the IIT flag with him.

A flag in ceremony was held at IIT Delhi on Friday to mark the achievement. "It's a matter of great pride that an alumnus of IIT Delhi Neeraj Choudhary, MTech, (Shivalik hostel) successfully scaled Mt Everest summit (8848.86m AMSL) on May 31. Neeraj carried the IIT Delhi flag with him and hoisted it on Mount Everest. "He started the summit push directly from Camp-II (6400m AMSL) on May 30 and after the summit on 31st, returned directly to Camp-II in a continuous effort of almost 36 hours," IIT Delhi Director V Ramgopal Rao said.

WINDOWS

Jaya's close associate joins DMK

CHENNAI: P.R. Sundaram, one of the four AIADMK MLAs in the Tamil Nadu Assembly after the party's rout in the 1996 Assembly elections, and a close associate of late J. Jayalalithaa, on Sunday left the party and joined the DMK. Sundaram has not been keeping a good relation with the present leadership of the party after he was denied a Lok Sabha ticket in 2019. The veteran leader joined the DMK at the party's state headquarters, Anna Arivalayam in the presence of Chief Minister M.K. Stalin. He has been a vocal supporter of the AIADMK during the troubling times for the party and his exit will not be taken well by the party cadres.

2 terrorists held in Lucknow

LUCKNOW: The UP Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS), in a major operation, has arrested two alleged terrorists, linked to Al Qaeda, from Kakori on the outskirts of Lucknow on Sunday.

The two alleged ultras were reportedly hiding in a house in Kakori area. UP ATS IG G.K. Goswami, who led the seven-hour operation, told reporters that the suspects were planning serial blasts in the state capital and other cities in the coming days.

He said that arms, as well as live bombs including pressure cooker bombs, detonators and 6 to 7 kg of explosives had been recovered from the house

Yogi terms rising population hurdle to development, unveils policy to stabilise it Sharad Pawar backs population control

NEW DELHI

AS Uttar Pradesh released the draft of the proposed population control bill, Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar on Sunday said that the population needs to be controlled so as to sustain the country's economy, healthy living standards and a balanced environment.

His statement in favour of population control shows that the matter is being resonated in other parties as well.

"The message of population control needs to reach far and wide to sustain the nation's economy, gross national income, healthy living standards, and a balanced environment. Every conscious citizen should make a commitment to contribute to population control on the occasion of World Population Day," said Pawar on the occasion of World Population Day.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday unveiled a policy aimed at stabilising the population in Uttar Pradesh and reducing maternal and infant deaths in a time-bound manner as he termed rising population a "hurdle in development".

The Uttar Pradesh Population Policy 2021-2030, unveiled on the occasion of World Population Day, also aims at bringing down the gross fertility rate among women to 2.1 by 2026 and to 1.9 by 2030.

A few days ago, a draft bill on population control was put up on the website of the Uttar Pradesh law commission inviting suggestions from the public till July 19. It says people having more than two children in Uttar Pradesh will be debarred from contesting local bodies polls, applying for government jobs or receiving any kind of subsidy. It also seeks to prohibit promotions in government jobs for such people, while offering incentives to those limiting their children to two.

Unveiling the population policy on Sunday, Adityanath said, "Across the world, concerns have been raised from time to time about increasing population being a hurdle in development. Discussions on it have been going on for the four decades." "The countries and states which have made efforts in this direction have seen positive results.



SAMBHAL: Where will India get manpower in case of a war if people are not allowed to procreate, asked Samajwadi Party MP Shafiqur Rahman Barq on Sunday as Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath unveiled a population policy for Uttar Pradesh.

The parliamentarian from Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal was apparently referring to a draft population control bill that has been put up on the website of the Uttar Pradesh law commission inviting suggestions from the public till July 19. He said it is Allah who decides the number of lives on earth and no amount of checks can control that.

Taking a jibe at the BJP government over the issue, Barq said, "As far as Y o g i

(Adityanath), PM (Narendra) Modi and (RSS chief) Mohan Bhagwat are concerned, do not have children. "Now, if entire India is not allowed to procreate and a situation arises that we have to face another country, from where we get men? This (draft population control bill) will prove to be a loss-making deal." According to Islam, the world has been created by Allah. It is He who decides the number of lives on earth, he said, adding, "A child who has to be born, will be born. You can make a law, but when a child takes birth, who can stop it?"

Former Maharashtra chief minister Devendra Fadnavis on Sunday welcomed the Uttar Pradesh government's new population policy for 2021-2030 and said if needed, such a law should be formulated for the entire country.

Talking to reporters here, the BJP leader said such a law should be there in states where there is a huge "population explosion".

Replying to a query on it, Fadnavis said, "I feel that if needed, such a law should also be framed for the entire country." "We don't want to do it like China, but at the same time we need to control our population. We live in a democracy and if we implement such a law through incentives, then we can certainly control our population," he said.

Notably, the UP government has said that as part of its new policy, it will incentivise people to help in population control.

Kerala struggles with rising Covid cases

KOCHI

RISING Covid-19 cases in Kerala, coupled with the recent outbreak of the Zika virus, is causing concern to the health authorities here as the southern state battles to bring down the fresh infections. After winning accolades for its "Kerala model" of combating the contagion about a year ago, the state is now seeing daily fresh cases between 12,000 to 15,000 with no end in sight to the 'prolonged surge', as some experts put it.

The state had reported 14,087 fresh covid infections on Saturday and 109 deaths taking the total caseload to 30,39,029 and toll to 14,380. The active cases touched 1,13,115. Health Minister Veena George had recently said the virus numbers spiked due to certain unlock measures and that they were expected to go down.



Tourists pose for photographs before river rafting in the Beas river, as Himachal Pradesh sees increase in inflow of tourists due to relaxation in Covid-induced restrictions, in Kullu, on Sunday

India logs 41,506 new cases

With 41,506 people testing positive for coronavirus infection in a day, India's total tally of COVID-19 cases rose to 3,08,37,222, while the active cases declined to 4,54,118, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Sunday. The death toll has climbed to 4,08,040 with 895 fresh fatalities. The active cases comprise 1.47 per cent of the total infections, while the national COVID-19 recovery rate has increased to 97.20 per cent, the data updated at 8 am showed. A decrease of 915 cases has been recorded in the active COVID-19 caseload in a span of 24 hours. As many as 18,43,500 tests were conducted on Saturday taking the total cumulative tests conducted so far in the country to 43,08,85,470.

PM seeks public suggestions for Padma awards '22

NEW DELHI: Noting that India has many talented people, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday invited people and those doing exceptional work at the grassroots to nominate for Padma awards 2022.

The Padma awards are one of the highest civilian honours of India announced annually on the eve of Republic Day. The awards are given in three categories: Padma Vibhushan (for exceptional and distinguished service), Padma Bhushan (distinguished service of higher order) and Padma Shri (distinguished service).

The award seeks to recognize achievements in all fields of activities or disciplines where an element of public service is involved.

The Padma Awards are conferred on the recommendations made by the Padma Awards Committee, which is constituted by the Prime Minister every year. The nomination process is open to the public. Even self-nomination can be made.

Taking to Twitter to invite people for making their nomination for the award, the Prime Minister said: "India has many talented people, who are doing exceptional work at the grassroots. Often, we don't see or hear much of them. Do you know such inspiring people? You can nominate them for the #PeoplesPadma. Nominations are open till 15th September. <https://padmaawards.gov.in>."

UP Block Panchayat polls

Police officer slapped

LUCKNOW

A video of an Uttar Pradesh Police officer telling his senior over the phone that he had been slapped by BJP workers amid the violence during the elections for block panchayat heads has gone viral. Polling for the 476 posts of block panchayat chiefs was held in UP on Saturday with scattered incidents of violence reported from 17 districts during the election process.

Several purported videos of clashes between supporters of rival parties, and police and workers of political parties were also posted on social media. In one such video, which was also shown by news channels, Additional Superintendent of Police (city), Etawah, Prashant Kumar Prasad is heard telling a senior over the phone, "Sir, I have been slapped. BJP workers have also brought bombs." Etawah Police spokesperson confirmed the incident on Sunday.

The incident took place in Barhpura block of the district. A case has been registered against one identified person and some unidentified people, he said. Incidents of stone-pelting and police resorting to baton-charge to disperse mobs were reported from different parts of the state during the election process. Police personnel were injured in some of these incidents.

Orders have been issued to respective district heads to take strict action against those responsible for the violence, police said. The BJP on Saturday claimed

victory on 635 of the total 825 seats of block panchayat chiefs in the state. The panchayat election results are an important morale-booster for the BJP ahead of the assembly polls next year in the politically crucial state as it had drawn a lot of flak over its handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. In Unnao's Miyaganj supporters of a candidate contesting for the block panchayat chairman's post tried to forcibly shove a voter into a vehicle but was rescued by police, during voting on Saturday.



Action against 14 cops

BASTI : Fourteen policemen, including three sub-inspectors have been suspended for a gala farewell to suspended inspector Shamsher Bahadur Singh at Gaur police station in Basti. The policemen have, however, been charged with flouting pandemic protocols and an FIR has been lodged against them.

Basti Superintendent of Police, Ashish Srivastava, said action was taken based on video evidence in which the policemen were seen dancing to loud music with their suspended inspector in violation of Covid norms. The two 30-second videos which went viral on social media showed the policemen organising a lavish party and grooving to music and in the second clip, they were spotted dancing on the main crossing near Gaur police station, beating drums and playing raucous music.

Drone attack on IAF base: Pressure fuse in bombs points to Pak role

SUMIR KAUL
JAMMU/ NEW DELHI

THE 'pressure fuse' used in the bombs that were dropped on the Indian Air Force station in Jammu through drones in a first-of-its-kind attack indicates that some elements of the Pakistan army or the ISI helped terror group Lashkar-e-Taiba in fabricating the IEDs, according to security sources.

The improvised explosive device (IED) that pierced the rooftop of one of the IAF buildings at the Jammu airport carried less than one kg of RDX and a cocktail of other chemicals whereas the one that was dropped on the ground contained a little over one kg of the

deadly explosives along with some ball bearings, they said. The sources said the IED used in the June 27 attack on the IAF station "definitely" used the technical expertise of the Pakistani military.

The 'pressure fuse' used is similar to the ones used by the Pakistani army. A 'pressure fuse' is generally used in minefields, anti-tank mines and those dropped by the air force in the fuselage between the explosive and main detonator of a shell or an IED. The explosive devices are activated by the pressure of either falling on the ground with force or some individual or vehicle passing over it.

However, in these sophisticated IEDs, the 'pressure fuse' had been deployed at the nose



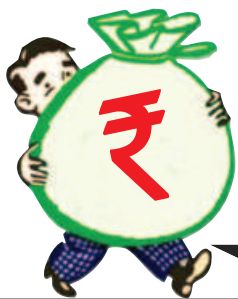
of the bombs so that they trigger with a force after falling on the ground, the sources said. Most of the artillery shells and mortar bombs have this type of fuse and that's why they don't explode in the air but on impact, they explained. Director General of Jammu and Kashmir Police Dilbag Singh had said earlier that Pakistan-based terrorists of Lashkar-e-Taiba were suspected to be behind the bombing of the IAF station in Jammu through drones, which may have come from across the border.

The National Investigation Agency took over the investigation into what was the first instance of Pakistan-based terrorists deploying drones to strike vital installations in In-

dia on June 29. Two IAF personnel were injured in the explosions that took place within six minutes of each other. The first blast ripped off the roof of a single-storey building at the technical area of the airport manned by the IAF in Satwari on the outskirts of Jammu. The second one was on the ground. It is mentionable that Pakistan has been procuring armed drones from China and Turkey of late.

The sources said drones can fly up to three hours and can be monitored and manoeuvred remotely through Global Positioning System technology. The aerial distance from the Jammu airport to the international border is 14 km.

“It’s not whether you’re right or wrong that’s important, but how much money you make when you’re right and how much you lose when you’re wrong — George Soros



Delta fears: FPIs pull out ₹2,249 cr so far in July

MUMBAI

FOREIGN Portfolio Investors (FPI) were net sellers in the Indian equity segment so far in July. FPIs withdrew net investments worth Rs 2,249 crore from the equities in July, showed data on the NSDL site. The concerns over the ‘Delta’ variant of Covid-19 and rising oil prices have weighed on the investor sentiments, analyst said.

Kotak Securities’ executive vice-president (equity technical research), Shrikant Chouhan, said: “FPIs have been net seller in Indian equities in July 2021 till date. All key emerging markets and Asian markets have seen FPI outflows this month to date. We expect FPI flows to India to remain vulnerable to US Fed monetary policy and rising crude oil prices. Markets going ahead will keep a watch on inflation, oil prices, bond yields and spread of Covid Delta variant.”

With net outflow so far in this month, the net FPIs investments in 2021 stands at Rs 58,095 crore. In June, net investment into the equities segment stood at Rs 17,215 crore.



Consolidation may continue this week

Nifty returned 45.1% in 2020 and is up 12.2% so far in 2021. Recent past returns always impact future expectations

CHERUKURI KUTUMBA RAO

W eighed by unsupportive global cues, concerns over progress of monsoon, and worries over the third coronavirus wave; the stock markets ended marginally lower during the week. The BSE Sensex was down 0.19 percent, while the Nifty fell 0.2 percent for the week closing at 52,475 points and 15,799 points respectively. However, the BSE Mid-cap index was up 1.3 percent, and the BSE Small-cap index was up 1.2 percent. It is pertinent to observe that the FIIs were net sellers of more than Rs 2,000 crore worth of shares, taking the total outflow to Rs 4,256.45 crore in the month of July so far.

However, DIIs net bought Rs 1,903.45 crore of shares in July. Smoke signals of trouble are visible from different parts of the country, in the increasing Covid-19 cases, reduced pace of vaccination and the shortfall in vaccine supplies.

A break in the south-west monsoon early in June has affected Kharif sowing in many parts of the country this year, with the overall coverage falling 10 per cent until July 8 compared with the same period a year ago. Track the progress of monsoon warn market watchers.

Many investors accumulate stocks of firms emerging from bankruptcy, lured by stray cases of windfall and

without understanding the inherent risk in such investments. Market observers expect the consolidation in stock markets to continue in the coming week. Near term direction will be dictated by developments on the new variant of Covid-19, international crude oil prices, Q1 earnings, macro-economic data, monsoon progress and global cues. Stock-specific action could continue as companies unveil their June quarter earnings

Near-term direction will be dictated by developments on the new variant of Covid-19, international crude oil prices, Q1 earnings, macroeconomic data, monsoon progress and global cues. Stock-specific action could continue as companies unveil their June quarter earnings



MARKET Khabrein

STOCK PICKS

Cochin Shipyard Limited is one of the leading shipbuilding and repair yard in India, which has an infrastructure that combines economy, scale, and flexibility, and has ISO 9001 accreditation. CSL also has an exclusive area set for off-shore construction and future expansion. As one of the India’s top 10 public sector undertakings, CSL has been rated excellently by the Government of India, four times in a row for achieving the targets set for the yard under the MOU system.

As a technology leader in India, CSL has adopted the Japanese Integrated Hull Outfitting and Painting system (IHOP) for its new construction, which gives a clear

edge to CSL in the field of fabrication of commissioning of accommodation modules & topside modification.

Why we are recommending

■ **New Dry-dock.** CSL is in the process of setting up a new dry-dock. The new dry-dock measuring 310 x 75/60 x 13 m with a 600T Gantry crane will be capable of handling vessels upto Suezmax, Aircraft Carriers of 70000T displacement, Jack-up rigs, LNG vessels etc.

■ **CSL Mumbai Ship Repair Unit (CMSRU)** at Mumbai ramping up operations and increasing momentum. CSL Kolkata Ship Repair Unit (CKSRU) at Kolkata became operational and has

will perform in the years to come. Disappointment is bound to follow. Optimism is as Indian as Vada Pav and Idli Sambhar.

What if you happened to pick a big winner? The top performers consist mainly of companies you’ve probably never heard of, either 10 years ago or now – Avanti Feeds, Caplin Point Labs, Vaibhav Global, Alkyl Amines and Tasty Bite.

The biggest winner of all over the 10 years through the end of 2020 was Avanti Feeds, up 214 times.

Quote of the week: “We don’t prognosticate macroeconomic factors, we’re looking at our companies from a bottom-up perspective on their long-run prospects of returning; Melody Hobson.

It’s very difficult to predict when the next recession or stock market crash will come, so many of the best investors don’t even try. Instead,

since completed three projects. CSL moving into Andaman & Nicobar with the inauguration of the CSL Andaman & Nicobar Ship Repair Unit (CANSRU) at Port Blair.

■ **Aircraft carrier** the final sea trial is happening in next few weeks. This is a big event, which will be a big event for the country and for the project. Also building a vessel for the defense research, vessel is completed and will be able to go to sea in next few weeks.

Buy between Rs380-390 for price target of Rs485 (in 6 to 9 months) and Rs600 (in 12 to 18 months). Keep a stop loss below Rs445. Risk /Reward Ratio is 1:5.

look for good companies with the strength to make it through the occasional challenging economic environment.

F&O/sector watch

Stock-specific action marked the trading pattern in the derivatives segment. On option front, maximum Put Open Interest was seen at 15,000 followed by 15,700 and 15,600 strikes, while maximum Call Open Interest was seen at 15,800 strike followed by 15,700 and 16,000 strikes. Call writing was seen at 15,700 strike then 15,800 and 16,200 strikes, while minor Put writing was seen at 15,700 strike then 15,000 and 15,600 strikes. Techies expect the ongoing result season to provide some trigger for the Nifty to move out of the prevailing range of 15,600-15,900 levels. The Implied Volatility (IV) of Calls closed at 12.56 per cent, while that for Put options closed at 14.07 per cent.

The Nifty VIX for the week closed at 13.56 per cent. PCR of OI for the week closed at 1.32. Technical indicators suggest that volatility is likely to continue in the markets in near term. Nifty likely to face strong hurdle at 15,850 levels, while 36,000 level for Bank Nifty would continue to remain crucial.

Stock futures looking good are Alkem Labs, Biocon, InduSind Bank, Tata Steel, Torrent Power, Shriram Transport and Zee Entertainment. Stock futures looking weak are Aarti Inds, McDowell, Tata Motors, TVS Motors and Wipro.

(The author is a stock market expert. He is former vice chairman of AP Planning Board)

Navigating debt landscape in post-Covid world



K Naresh Kumar

The past one year has witnessed a rollercoaster life for every one of us and so is the volatility among all the asset classes. While equity market has hogged the limelight and so are the shenanigans of the crypto markets, occasional views are covered about debt markets. Just little over a year back, the debt market issuers and regulators were trying to instill confidence among the participants. This was just on the back of a large fund house closing some of their debt schemes due to the lack of liquidity among their invested securities.

The event has created tremors among the investors and has spilled across the mutual fund industry. Also, the stringent lockdown in the previous quarter had casted doubts on the resilience of the credit worthiness of the corporate India with possible defaults staring into the future. There were lots of actions by both the central bank, RBI and the central government to ease the situation. But the loan moratoria announcements only aggravated the assumptions and the forecasts leading to further panic among the investors.



It’s ideal to stick to a roll-down strategy and those of floating interest rate fund to make better out of capital

The interest rates were brought down to the decadal lows and were staring at increased infection rates and mortality post the lockdown. In the hindsight, we managed to conquer all those fears and stood victorious with corporates improving their productivity, streamlining operations and retaining profitability. From a fragile situation, the overall corporate behaviour was enhanced and the results are evident from more credit related up-grades than downgrades by the rating agencies at the end of the fiscal.

Despite the second wave of the pandemic impacting the normalcy, the business world successfully maneuvered around the situations to remain formidable. Though, it’s too early to paint a picture of niceties, it still needs to be acknowledged. The price rally in the input materials like metals, oils, cement and other materials has seeped the inflation into mainstream. The debate is still alive whether it’s only tenuous or tenacious, it certainly is evident and biting currently.

This has led an increased pressure on both the central bank and the govt.

While banks are being flushed with deposits enjoying double-digit pace, the credit growth is languishing at about five per cent in the last few quarters. Also, the risk-taking ability being subdued with the banks, capital remains unproductive. On the macro front, Indian economy is mixed with stretched balance sheets and extended fiscal deficits. But, bolstered by forex reserves and surplus current account, the rupee also has been defiant considering the onslaught of oil prices in recent weeks along with headwinds of dollar flight.

With this background, what should be the strategy of risk-averse investors to make productive gains on their investments. The debt MFs have buried the last year’s debacle behind and are well equipped for the challenges. The new auction by RBI for the 10-year GSec has gone about 6.6 per cent which is higher than the current prevailing

yields which is a comforter for the markets that the central bank is loosening the grip on the rate direction. Still, the spread for the medium-term paper of 4 to 6 years is attractive for opportunity.

Existing investors in various schemes shouldn’t act in haste and should stick to their initial goal timelines so that the intermittent volatility is normalized. For investors taking fresh exposure to debt could ideally stick to the shorter end of the curve and stick to portfolios with lower maturities as the interest rate could be on an ascend in near future. Though, a rate hike would be the last in the order of the events, one could take a cue when the adjustment of the repo-reverse repo rate begins.

The current growth is still nascent, but with an upward bias is a point of solace for now. Any fresh wave of infections and the intensity would define the pace of rate hikes in the near future. Credit as a category of investment is also appealing for those with higher risk appetite as a tad lower rated papers are still at a steep discount. For those willing to stretch that extra in risk could be amply rewarded through credit risk funds at this juncture. For the rest, it’s ideal to stick to a roll-down strategy and those of floating interest rate fund to make better out of their capital.

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Time to reduce positions, avoid aggressive long or short bets

T BRAHMACHARY

The equity markets were resilient to fall or hesitant to rise during the last week. The benchmark indices ended on a flat note. The NSE Nifty lost just 32.4 points or 0.2 per cent during the last week. The BSE Sensex also lost 0.2 per cent. The broader market indices outperformed the benchmark indices. The Midcap-100 and Small-cap-100 indices up by 1.3 per cent and 1.2 per cent respectively. These two indices scaled to a fresh lifetime high. On the sectoral front, the Nifty Realty registered a fresh breakout with a 6.3 per cent gain and closed at near to 2018 high. The Metal up by 2.8 per cent, and the Media index advanced by 1.1 per cent. The Auto, PSU Bank indices closed 2.5 per cent and 2.1 per cent lower. The institutional participation is at low as the FIIs sold Rs. 4256.45 crore, and DIIs bought Rs1903.45 crore during the current month (7 trading sessions). The Advance decline ratio is mostly negative.

The NSE Nifty continued its ambivalent moves and not given its intentions about the trend. For the last 14 trading sessions, it is trading between 15,670-15,900 zone. It failed to make a decisive move beyond these levels. It formed a perfect Doji candle on a daily chart. On a weekly chart, it formed a long upper shadow can-



dle. The 20DMA began to trend down on contracting Bollinger bands. This is the first sign of a probable downside move. Even though it broke the trendline support, the benchmark index has not made a lower low for now and not even retraced 23.6 per cent of the prior uptrend. This shows that the market is not in a trending phase, is in consolidation. The consolidation is in a tight zone and with many indecisive candles. It traded in the same price zone for the last two weeks and formed a parallel bar.

The short-term and magnet of the marker or even a mean average, the 20DMA started trending down with volatility contractions. Longer the contraction period, the sharper the expansion. For the last 10 days, the Bollinger bands narrowed (contracted) expect a bigger and sharper move. Already an uptick in India VIX during the last week has resulted in high volatile moves. The VIX rose by 7.05 per cent to 12.94.

The negative divergences in the RSI on daily and weekly charts still present. The daily RSI failed to move above the prior major

swing high and fell below the prior swing low. This lower top and lower bottom trend divergent from the price, making parallel tops and bottoms. The histogram shows an increase in bearish momentum in the last two days. The -DMI is above the +DMI is a negative sign. The 50DMA (15415) support is just 1.78 per cent away, which is placed at 18th June swing low. The divergences will confirm, once the price declines below the 50DMA. The market breadth is weak as the number of advancing stocks are declining. The increase in distribution days, along with the breach of 50DMA, will result in a clear trend reversal. The decline below 15500-415 support will signal the trend reversal, where it can test at least a 38.2 retracement level of 15241. We can’t project more than this level for now. But, a bounce and close above the Friday high 15,730 points, may lead to a retesting or an upside breakout, which is impulsive in nature. Avoid aggressive long or short positions. An uptick in implied volatility is also indicating the probable surge in daily price ranges. To take directional bias on the market, it should come out of the present tight consolidation zone.

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DERIVATIVES OUTLOOK

DASARI SREENIVASARAO

The options data on NSE after trading hours on last Friday (July 6) holds 15,800 strike as resistance level for a consecutive second week, while the support level at 15,000 strike continued for four weeks in a row. The 15,800 strike has the highest Call OI followed by 15,700/15,900/16,200 strikes. Further, 15,700 strike recorded maximum Call OI addition along with 15,800/ 16,000/16,200/15,800 strikes. Coming to Put side, 15,000 strike recorded the highest Put base followed by 15,700/ 15,400/ 15,600/15,500 strikes.

Dhirender Singh Bisht, senior research analyst (derivatives) at SMC Global Securities Ltd, said: “From derivatives front, Call writers remained active at 15,700 and

Options data points to strong resistance levels

India VIX declines 4.55% to 12.94 level; Significant option writing at ATM strikes

15,800 strikes, while Put writers held maximum Open Interest at 15,600 strike.” The first week of the July derivatives series remained lacklustre. Despite positive US equities, emerging markets remained under pressure as the Dollar index moved sharply higher.

As per ICICI Direct.com, trading in Nifty futures remained muted last week as well. However, FIIs created fresh shorts in the index, while their net longs declined from 90000 contracts to just 56,000 contracts since June settlement. Hence, some short bias from FIIs is building up. “Bears tried to keep Indian markets under pressure and Nifty indices once again could

not manage to breach the key psychological level of 16,000 points and closed near the unchanged line on a week on week basis. However, metal and banking counters along with mid-caps gave support to markets in the week gone by.”

BSE Sensex closed the week ended July 9, 2021, at 52,386.19 points, a net loss of 98.48 points or 0.18 per cent, from the previous week’s closing of 52,484.67 points.

Registering a minute decline of 32.4 points or 0.20 per cent, NSE Nifty ended the week at 15,689.80 points from 15,722.20 points a week ago. Bisht forecasts: “Technical indicators suggested that volatility is likely to grip markets in the coming

| F&O TRADING | | | |
|---------------|-------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Product | Contracts | Turnover (Rs/cr) | Premium (Rs/cr) |
| Index Futures | 2,97,036 | 24,786.49 | -- |
| Stock Futures | 5,89,410 | 48,099.22 | -- |
| Index Options | 3,17,23,540 | 31,04,534.44 | 15,069.19 |
| Stock Options | 18,11,163 | 1,55,421.40 | 2,813.36 |
| F&O Total | 3,44,21,149 | 33,32,841.55 | 17,882.55 |

Source: NSE/As on July 08, 2021

week as well. Nifty is likely to face strong hurdle at 15,850 level, while 36,000 level for Bank Nifty would remain crucial. On the downside, the 15,550-15,500 zone is likely to provide support.” Due to continued range-bound movement and declining IVs, option writers hold maximum positions at ATM strikes. For the coming week as well, 15,700 Put and 15,800 Call hold the highest option base where 15,800 Call holds more than 40 lakh shares. Derivatives analysts believe the result sea-

son may provide some trigger to move out of the prevailing range of 15,600-15,900 levels.

“The Implied Volatility (IV) of Calls closed at 12.56 per cent, while that for Put options closed at 14.07 per cent. The Nifty VIX for the week closed at 13.56 per cent. PCR of OI for the week closed at 1.32,” remarked Bisht.

India VIX fell 4.55 per cent from 13.80 to 12.94 level. India VIX continued to move lower and declined sharply in the last few sessions.

From the reading of above 15 seen during the June settlement, it has declined near 12 in just over a week, indicating significant option writing at ATM strikes, according to data from ICICI Direct.com. A small trigger can infuse sharp volatility where a directional move of 3-4 per cent can’t be ruled out.

Bank Nifty

NSE’s banking index closed the week at 35,071.95 points, a net loss of 262.05 points or 0.75 per cent, from the previous week’s closing of 34,809.90 points. The Bank Nifty remained under pressure since mid-May due to aggressive Call writing in most private banks. However, the July F&O series acted as a turning point where the index managed to close at a six-month high. Broad based participation was seen from most private banks whereas PSU

banks continued their upward journey, says ICICI Direct.com. Bank Nifty recorded a sharp reversal on expiry day and managed to hold firm above its sizable Put base of 35,000 points. Despite sharp moves in Implied Volatility, volatility remained choppy due to which option writers are shifting position towards ATM strikes. The OI in the Bank Nifty remained lower since July. However, in the last two days, it saw addition as the index reverted from 35,800 points.

ICICI Direct.com observes that short positions formed in the index. Once it manages to close above its sizable Call base of 36,000, aggressive covering is expected. Despite a sharp reversal from higher levels, OI position in 35,000 and 34,500 Puts remained intact. For the week, highest OI buildup is placed at 34,500 strike, which remains the strong support. Till the index does not violate this level, outperformance in banking stocks should continue, added ICICI Direct.com.

COPA AMERICA

Messi fifth time lucky as Argentina lift title



Teammates lift Argentina's Lionel Messi after beating Brazil 1-0 in the Copa America final soccer match at the Maracana stadium in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on Sunday. (Inset) Messi and teammates celebrate with the trophy

RIO DE JANEIRO

WHENEVER Lionel Messi walks into the sunset now, he won't carry with him the jibes and criticism of having failed to win a title for Argentina, his national team. Sunday's 2021 Copa America final, in which he led Albiceleste to a 1-0 win over arch-rivals Brazil, ensured he was fifth-time lucky in the final of a major international tournament and he will have something to show to those who questioned his commitment to the national team. Angel Di Maria struck in the 22nd minute, off a long ball by Rodrigo De Paul, as he lobbed the ball over goalkeeper Ederson to score the winning goal. Apart from that strike, which was helped by slipshod defending

from Renan Lodi, the Argentines weren't that successful in breaching the Brazilian defence in the first half. They had only three shots in the period. De Paul, however, was the shining star in midfield. Messi himself shot wide off the goal in the 32nd minute as he couldn't dribble past Brazilian defence completely and shot from outside the box. The visitors were set back in the 52nd minute as Richarlison netted the ball. However, relief came for Messi & Co soon as the strike was deemed off-side. Argentina survived anxious moments even after that as Brazil came close to equalising. But



goalkeeper Emiliano Martínez, who had made his international debut only this year and impressed in the semi-finals against Colombia saving three penalty kicks in the shoot-out to help his team enter the final, once again proved to be the hero. In the 57th minute, Richarlison had an opportunity to draw level from point-blank range. However, Martínez was up to task as he blocked the shot. In the 86th minute, the 28-year-old parried a strike from Gabi to keep the home side at bay. A minute later though, Messi was on the prowl but just as luck has failed him in the previous

"This trophy is also for the lads who tried to win it and couldn't. That generation of footballers left a legacy. I'm convinced that whoever had been in my position would have done the same,"

- Lionel Scaloni, Argentina head coach

fi-nals - the 2007, 2015, 2016 Copa America as well as the 2014 World Cup -- this time too he couldn't get past goalkeeper Ederson. It appeared to be an easy chance by his standard but the 34-year-old messed it up against an approaching Ederson. But that didn't cost anything to Argentina since minutes later, when the whistle blew, the entire Albiceleste jumped on a teary-eyed Messi. Six years ago, after losing the final of Copa final to Chile in penalties, he wept even as the bus reached the team hotel. A year later, in the 2016 Copa final, he just couldn't take any further criticism and decided to retire only to come back to fulfil his dream and fill the lacuna five years later. The criticism from Argentina may have been harsh but understandable. The last time Argentina had won a major international trophy -- the Copa America itself -- was way back in 1993 when Messi was just six and Di Maria was only five. And the last time Albiceleste had scored in the Copa final, was in 2004. (ANS)

Argentina deserving Copa champions: Brazil's Thiago Silva



RIO DE JANEIRO

BRAZIL defender Thiago Silva said Argentina deserves Copa America champions after the Albiceleste's 1-0 victory over the tournament host in Saturday's final.

"We have to congratulate our opponents," Silva told a local television channel after the match at the Maracana Stadium. "Ar-

gentina neutralised our players and it was very difficult to come back after going a goal down." The 36-year-old added: "We weren't able to play the way we wanted to in the first half and in the second they defended very well. We tried our best but things didn't go our way."

Despite stumbling at the final hurdle here, Silva insisted Brazil would not be discouraged by the result. "Overall, I think we had a good campaign. We have to hold our heads up high and we should still be proud of the runners-up medal. That's football and we have to deal with it." The result broke a 13-match unbeaten run for Tite's men and gave Argentina their first major title since 1993. (ANS)

Elise, Hsieh clinch Wimbledon women's doubles title

LONDON

NO.3 seeds Elise Mertens of Belgium and Hsieh Su-wei of Chinese Taipei saved two match points to defeat the unheralded Russian pair of Veronika Kudermetova and Elena Vesnina 3-6, 7-5, 9-7 in a thrilling doubles final here at Wimbledon.

From 3-6, 3-5 down, the No.3 seeds came all the way back, giving Hsieh her third title at the All-England Club and Mertens a third Grand Slam title overall on Saturday evening. "It was such a tough match. They had match points, I think a couple, so we just kept going. We said to each other, 'Just keep going,'" Elise told wtatennis.com.

"We never gave up. That's the fighting spirit we had today that maybe made with the difference. Of course, there were nerves, but still we managed it well at the end. She's defending champion, champion again. It's unbelievable."

The Belgian previously won the Australian Open in February with Belarus' Aryna Sabalenka and now



Belgium's Elise Mertens (left) and Taiwan's Su-Wei Hsieh leap as they pose for the media with their winners trophies after defeating Russia's Elena Vesnina, and Russia's Veronica Kudermetova in the women's doubles final on day twelve of the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in London

has just a French Open title missing from her set, while Hsieh won Wimbledon in 2013 with China's Peng Shuai and 2019 with Czech Republic's Barbora Strycova.

On winning the title with a third different partner, Hsieh added, "It's always not easy to play in the final, and the opponents will fight super hard. We all know it's the last match so we will fight until the last point definitely. "All the partners, they are amazing to help because sometime I get on the court at the beginning, and I (do) not start very well. Really good job to help, so

it helps a lot." "It was definitely disappointing that we had some matches that we didn't finish, couldn't finish some chances," Elise said.

"But I think the best thing to do is to learn from it. If you're keeping negative about it, you're not going to go any further, you're not going to go forward, not going to grow as a team.

The victory also assures Elise of a return to the doubles world No.1 ranking. She first held the top spot for one week this May, and secured her return just by reaching the final. (ANS)

Messi calls family right after Copa triumph

RIO DE JANEIRO

ARGENTINA striker Lionel Messi video called his family immediately from the Maracana Stadium after Argentina won the Copa America Cup for the first time since 1993. The adorable moment has since gone viral on social media. Messi called his wife Antonella Rocuzzo after Argentina beat Brazil 1-0 in the Copa America final on Sunday. It is a well-known fact that Messi is extremely close to his wife and three children, who are currently residing in Camp Nou, Barcelona. In the middle of the pitch, Messi was on a live video call with Antonella, flaunting his winners' medal with a lot of happiness and pride. Sharing the screen-shot of the video on Instagram, Antonella wrote "Your happiness is mine! Congrats, my love." Antonella also shared a video on Instagram of their three children -- Thiago, Mateo, and Ciro - singing a celebratory song after Argentina ended their wait of 28 years for a Copa America title. The video with the caption "Vamos Argentina" has clocked more than three million views in just two hours. The Copa America trophy marks Messi's first-ever title at the international arena, something which eluded him for a long time. Messi couldn't score a goal in the final. But he still edged Neymar for the Golden Boot award. He scored five goals in the tournament and had an equal number of assists. (ANS)

Mancini's attacking ploy in Italy's resurgence

LONDON

FOUR years ago, when they failed to qualify for the 2018 Football World Cup for the first time in 60 years, Italian football was staring in the dark. The 2006 World Cup winners losing their play-off against Sweden to miss the flight to Russia for the biggest football event shocked not just the Italian fans, but everyone around the world. However, massive comebacks have happened on the football field: France missed the 1994 World Cup, before they won the 1998 edition, the Netherlands missed the 1986 World Cup before winning the 1988 Euro, and Italy themselves missing the 1992 Euro and then playing the 1994 World Cup final.


So, a resurgence was not out of reach. There were plenty of examples in the past to draw inspiration from. All that the Azurri, four-time world champions, needed was someone to guide them. That someone was ex-Italy footballer Roberto Mancini who did more than just guide them. He changed the way Italians played the game and has taken them to an unbeaten streak of 33 games that stretches back to 2018. They need two more wins to equal the record streaks of Spain of the late noughties and early 2010s, and Brazil of the 1990s. Former Dutch star Johan Cruyff had once described Italy's defensive style of play quite aptly in his words. "The Italians can't beat you, but you can certainly lose to them," he had said while explaining how the rock-solid Italian defence could wear everyone out. But Mancini has changed that and taken Italy beyond Catenaccio, which means door-bolt and refers to Italy's habit of down-

ing shutters and stalling the opposition. He has employed attack as a policy. While the defence manned by Leonardo Bonucci, Giorgio Chiellini and Francesco Acerbi remains unbreachable (conceded just three goals), their midfield comprising Jorginho, Marco Verratti and Nicolò Barella are dictating the game and creating chances for forwards Ciro Immobile and Lorenzo Insigne. Italy have scored 12 goals. Unsurprisingly, Italy have become only the second side in Euro history, after the 2000 champions France to have at least five players score more than one goal during the tournament.

"The desire to rebuild, to relive a tournament as a protagonist is immense," defender Giorgio Chiellini had said before the start of the Euro. "The defeat in Milan against Sweden [in the 2018 World Cup qualifying play-off] stuck with us. We can never forget it. But we managed to turn disappointment into enthusiasm and the desire to do well," he had added. Former England and Liverpool player Jamie Carragher told Sky Sports that Italy have a winning mentality, the reason behind their victory. Analysing Italy's semi-final against Spain, he said, "Spain gave a great performance, no doubt, but I always just felt Italy would win. I felt Spain's goalkeeper may just let them down whereas Gianluigi Donnarumma is a huge plus point for Italy along with the two centre-backs Giorgio Chiellini and Leonardo Bonucci. "Spain were unlucky, there is no doubt about that, but it goes back to my point about teams getting through tough moments, tough games and coming through adversity. Italy have done that a couple of times so there is a real winning mentality with the unbeaten run that they are on." (ANS)







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