

● Follow @ [f/thehansindia](#) | [t/thehansindiaweb](#) | [in/thehansindia](#) | [in/thehansindia](#) | [in/thehansindia](#) ●

"Selling and storage of poultry or processed chicken meat by shops and restaurants has been banned in east Delhi area with immediate effect. Restaurants and hotels too are prohibited from serving such products," he said. Testing of samples of crows and ducks had con-

Womenia



SLAY IN BLACK

Makar Sankranti is the first festival after the commencement of the New Year, and one of the rare kinds to be celebrated all over India in myriad forms. While varying sets of rituals and clothes mark this day for different communities, in Maharashtra, the most significant one is the practice of wearing black.

Here are festive looks in classic black that will bring out your fashionable side on the auspicious occasion of Makar Sankranti.

Black festive saree

If you are taking the ethnic route in terms of clothing, go for a dazzling black saree with a traditional pallu. A bright and colorful border with Zari or embroidery will bring out your demure best for an evening event. However, try to avoid heavy fabrics and opt for fluid options.

Black kurta

Got an important meeting at work on the day of Makar

Sankranti? Don't let down your festive spirit. Wear the colour of the occasion in the form of a plain, black kurta and white palazzos to exude understated elegance.

Black workwear saree

Wear a saree to office for a graceful, ethnic look to kick start the Sankranti celebrations. However, if you don't prefer all-black, flaunt traditional patchwork, embroidery or prints with a hint of black to stay true to the occasion.

Black cape

Not a fan of ethnic? Take the fusion route and flaunt your stylish side in a black cape. Throw in a full or knee-length cape over a top or dress. Complete the look in sparkling statement jewelry.

Ethnic black dress

Dazzle in the evening of Makar Sankranti wearing an ethnic dress featuring shimmering embellishments on a black base. Keep it light and flowy in a fashionable dress.

Celebration of harvest



Naini Setalvad

Pongal is an ode to the unparalleled agriculture that the soil of our country vegetates. There are many delicious dishes that grace this celebration but the festival is incomplete without delectable Til-gud- Ladoos and Pongal rice

Very Happy Pongal, Bihu, Uttarayan, Lohri and Makar Sankranti to all! Memories of brightly coloured kites and scrumptious traditional goodies flood my mind as I reminisce of this vibrant harvesting festival. Touted as the Indian Thanks giving, Pongal is an ode to the unparalleled agriculture that the soil of our country vegetates. There are many delicious dishes that grace this celebration but the festival is incomplete without delectable Til-gud- Ladoos and Pongal rice. Here is why these dishes are my favourite –

Til Gud Ladoo



It's a cherry on top when your dessert is delicious as well as nutritious. The til gud ladoos are made of sesame seeds and jag-

gery, both having numerous benefits.

Sesame seeds: This crunchy seed is the oldest condiment known to man. The superior calcium content provided by sesame seeds helps prevent the onset of osteoporosis, arthritis and even colon cancer. I highly recommend sesame seeds to lactating mothers as it promotes milk flow. The extra boost of calcium is needed by menopausal women to avoid brittle bones. The good fat it provides is an added bonus.

Jaggery – This natural form of sugar is a less processed predecessor of white sugar. This sugarcane derivative contains a plethora of nutrients, especially with respect to minerals. Its high potassium levels lower blood pressure. Jaggery is rich in calcium too. The magnesium present in it can stabilise your mood and give you a good night's sleep.

Pongal Rice

This fluffy rice is endowed with whole pepper corns, curry leaves, turmeric and moong dal.

Rice: Rice is a wholegrain being consumed for generations in our country. This Indian staple may have garnered a bad reputation but in fact, makes for



a satiating meal, and is rich in minerals like magnesium and B vitamins. My preferred variant is Basmati as it is lower on the Glycaemic scale.



Moong dal: Adding moong dal to the preparation, makes it more wholesome. Protein, Fibre, B vitamins, magnesium and zinc are all added to the mix with this addition.

Pepper corns: This spice is the crucial flavouring agent of this dish. The phytochemicals in pepper are known to reduce in-

flammation and exhibit an anti-oxidant effect. It is also known to reduce blood sugar levels and may lower cholesterol levels.

Turmeric: This golden hued, master anti-inflammation agent adds an earthiness to the dish. Coupled with pepper, its anti-oxidant property is enhanced. This healing combina-

tion cannot be missed out on. **Curry leaves:** I am a huge fan of curry leaves and I add it to all my temperings. They have anti-bacterial and anti-fungal properties which make it great for oral health. Garnish chew. Enjoy these delicacies as we show gratitude for the abundant harvest, nutritious produce and prosperity.



Photo: SRINIVAS SETTY



AMI SATA

Pongal is a festival that is mostly celebrated by the people of Southern India, to commemorate the Harvest season and show gratitude to the Sun god for prosperity and blessings throughout the year.

The traditional ways of decorating your home for Pongal would be to hang Mango leaves at the entrance, make a Rangoli (flower or coloured powder art) on the lawn and serve food on banana leaves. In traditional homes, we see a series of three pots, placed on top of the other,

with overflowing rice to signify prosperity. Here we share a few tips to liven up your home with small decorations that are easy to arrange, eco-friendly and sustainable.

Rangoli

You could decorate the entrance of your home with gorgeous flower petals or powder rangoli. You could make amazing designs with any medium. You could paste rangoli stickers around your house as well.

Long sugarcane, pots, green leaves

In keeping with the most traditional decorations, you could bring some long sugarcane, arrange them in a triangular formation, and keep some pots at the center. Place three

or more pots on top of one another and decorate them. These pots with overflowing rice, milk and jaggery would bring warmth and prosperity to your homes.

String lights

Add some light in your home by hanging string lights in multiple colours in every window. You could also bunch them up and put them in glass jars and keep them on windowsills. You could also pot a plant and make things greener.

Paper decorations and recycled decorations

A sustainable and eco-friendly decoration is paper streamers. It is inexpensive and easy to arrange. You could recycle old sea shells, or trinkets and hang them. You could paint some clay trinkets and hang them too.

Hand painted bowls, napkins, and trays

An inexpensive and vibrant way of adding some depth and energy to your room is to place some hand-painted bowls, plates and spoons on the dining table. You could paint some quirky design on a vase or paint around a mirror, or place some magnets on the refrigerator to make your room look quirky and colourful.

Banana leaves as the primary decoration

Pongal is a festival that symbolises prosperity. Hence, the dominant theme in Pongal gathering would be green, or

yellow. You could place banana leaves on plates and wrap glasses with banana leaves to bring more green to the dining table. You could hang some banana leaves as streamers around the room too.

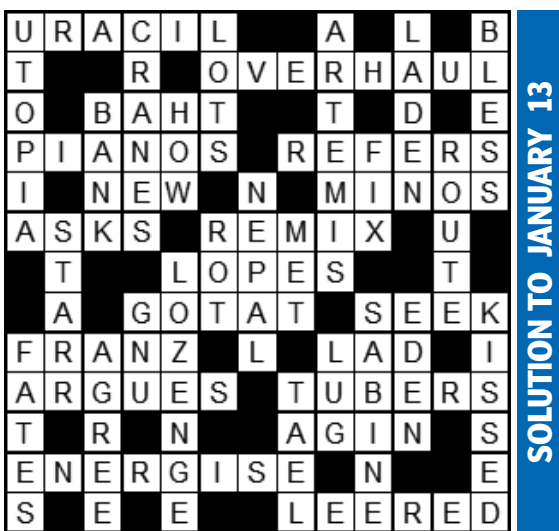
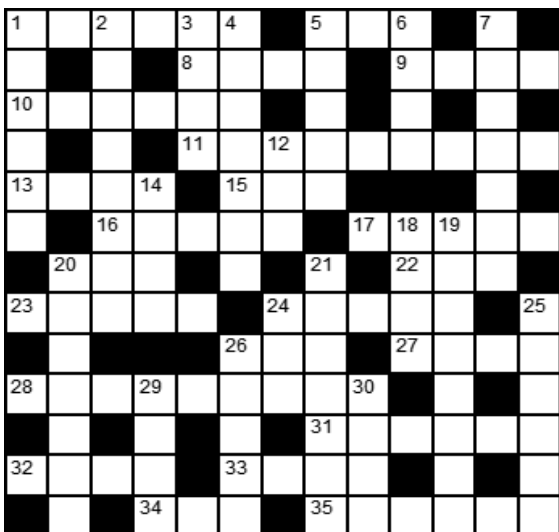
Diyas and candles

Hand-painted and handmade diyas add a very personal, aesthetic and Indian touch to any room. You ought to be careful with placing the diyas as they could potentially be a fire hazard. You could also make some candles or buy some scented candles for your room. It would light up the room, and also make the room smell aromatic.

Colourful Kites

Kids often fly kites during Pon-

gal. You could use these kites to decorate your room. Make sure to choose the most colourful kites and place them on walls or behind your sofas to turn your room into the most glorious colour spectacle. Like all festivals, during Pongal, family, friends, near and dear ones come together and celebrate. This is a festival of togetherness and love. If you feel like giving your loved ones something healthy and eco-friendly, you could opt for luxury organic cotton bed sheets and towels. This is carefully curated bedding that would help your loved ones have a safe and hearty bedroom. You could also gift them handmade cards or hand-painted goods. Here's welcoming 2021 with open arms.



SOLUTION TO JANUARY 13

CROSSWORD

Across

- 1 A complete failure (6)
- 5 Front part of an apron (3)
- 8 Polaris bear (4)
- 9 Epochs (4)
- 10 Set back, slacken or slow down (6)
- 11 One of the Magi (9)
- 13 Goya's "The Duchess of ___" (4)
- 15 Promissory note (3)
- 16 Amidst (5)
- 17 Sign up (5)
- 20 Resistance unit (3)
- 22 A snake-like fish (3)
- 23 Ligurian port (5)
- 24 Conflict (5)
- 26 Gloating cry (3)
- 27 Grasp (4)
- 28 Necessary (9)
- 31 Legitimate (6)
- 32 Taunt (4)
- 33 Saw (4)
- 34 Go wrong (3)

Down

- 1 Conventional (6)
- 2 German motorway (8)
- 3 Rein in (4)
- 4 Authorises, commands or decrees (7)
- 5 African language (5)
- 6 Alpha's follower ? (4)
- 7 A small umbrella (7)
- 12 Ship's record (3)
- 14 Gun shop purchase (4)
- 18 Bird's home (4)
- 19 Puts old material into new form with significant changes ? (8)
- 20 Unit of magnetic intensity (7)
- 21 Concealed or disguised, in a way ? (7)
- 24 Chinese dynasty (3)
- 25 Closer (6)
- 26 Not the same (5)
- 29 Cork's place (4)
- 30 Miner's discovery (4)

SUDOKU



SOLUTION TO JANUARY 13

NEWS ROUNDUP

Kajol decides to ignore things that make her fat

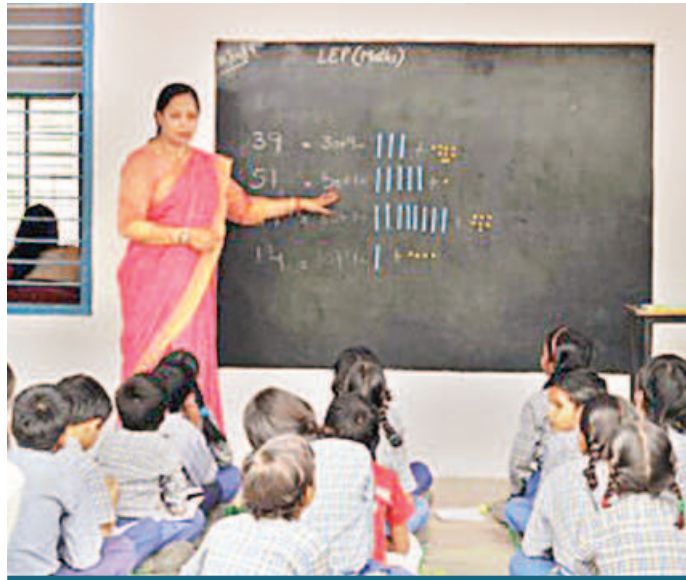
Bollywood actress Kajol on Wednesday shared a hilarious way to Bavoid all things that make her fat, and fans sure are amused. On Instagram stories, she shared a post that read: "I've decided I'm ignoring all the things that make me fat...Mirrors, Scales, Opinions..."

The actress is currently gearing up for the release of her next film, the Renuka Shahane-directed women-centric digital release, "Tribhanga: Tedhi Medhi Crazy."

The film, written and directed by Shahane, also features Tanvi Azmi and Mithila Palkar. It is a family drama about three distinct women, and their unconventional life choices.

"Tribhanga: Tedhi Medhi Crazy" release on Netflix on January 15.





UP's primary teachers to get corporate appraisal system

LUCKNOW

THE basic education department Uttar Pradesh has decided to introduce a system of 'corporate appraisal' for teachers and principals in primary schools.

Teachers will now have to 'earn' points for promotion in job or increment in salary.

According to the government spokesman, the basic education department has asked teachers and head teachers to fill in a self-evaluation form based on nine parameters on the Manav Sam-

pada portal latest by April 15.

While seven performance indicators are common for teachers and school heads, two are different.

In the self-assessment form, head teachers will have to provide information on upgrade of infrastructure and facilities provided in the school under Operation Kayakalp scheme.

If all 14 basic facilities curated by the chief minister's team are in the school, the head teacher will be awarded 10 points. In the absence of a single facility, the

head teacher will get no point. Head teachers will also be marked on whether they have made available report cards to the students. If all students have got report cards, 10 points will be given to head teachers.

Teachers will be marked on the number of out-of-school-children identified and enrolled by them in schools. If all such children identified by a teacher are enrolled in school, he/she will get 10 points.

An important parameter to assess teachers will be their partic-

ipation in training programmes.

Those who have attended full training sessions of Nishtha, a capacity building programme, will get 10 points.

The seven common parameters for teachers and school heads include use of Diksha portal, regular participation in meetings of the school management committees, use of library by students, and grades achieved by students.

"The questionnaire was never as objective as it is now. The process was offline and at the discretion of officers at block and

district level, which led to corruption," said the government spokesman.

The new format, however, has not gone down well with teachers who feel that there is no point blaming them for the work which is beyond their control.

"The entire Operation Kayakalp is done at gram pradhan level. Why penalise a head teacher if the pradhan does not get the work done," said Sudhan-shu Mohan, the Lucknow district president of the UP Primary Teachers' Association.

UP Cong leader's abusive video kicks up controversy

LUCKNOW

UPCC president Ajay Kumar Lallu has stayed the appointment of Kunwar Tauqeer Ali as district president of Bulandshahr after a video in which Ali can be seen using highly objectionable and derogatory language against Congress president Sonia Gandhi and MP Rahul Gandhi went viral on the social media.

The undated video is doing the rounds on various WhatsApp groups of the Congress, causing a furore in the party.

Tauqeer Ali, who was appointed to his post on January 8, is heard using highly abusive and filthy language against the party high command.

Party leaders now want action against those who appointed Ali to the post.

"Staying the appointment is no action. The state leadership should immediately expel Ali and lodge an FIR against him. This kind of behaviour is unprecedented and should be dealt with very firmly," said a former UPCC president.

HC: Why MCDs not providing cashless medical services?

NEW DELHI

THE Delhi High Court on Wednesday pulled up three municipal corporations and issued notice to them for not providing cashless medical services to the retired teachers and employees despite collecting subscription fees for it.

The petition, filed by Akhil Dilli Prathamik Shikshak Sangh, said the South, North and East Delhi Municipal Corporations had taken subscription from the retired teachers and employees for cashless medical facility but is yet to extend the facility.

"The employees have to deposit money first and seek reimbursement from the Health Department of the MCD later which takes a huge time. This act is absolutely unfair and illegal," the petitioner stated.

It added, "During this coronavirus pandemic period a large number of retired employees, who did not receive pension on time, had to face ex-



treme hardships in arranging money for their treatment as the hospitals did not provide cashless treatment."

The Bench of Justice D.N. Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh showed disappointment with the three municipal corporations and noted that retired em-

ployees were not only suffering because of the medical bills issues but have not been getting their pension amount since long.

"How can you take subscription fees for cashless medical facility, if you do not have tie-ups with hospitals," the court pulled up the municipal corporations.

The petitioner apprised the court that earlier a subscription of Rs 39,000 used to be taken, which has now been doubled. On this, the court issued notice to the three municipal corporations, directed them to file an affidavit with all details and listed the matter to January 22.



Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal visits a family member of late Dr Hitesh Gupta, who died of Coronavirus while working at a dispensary in New Delhi

Kejri gives ₹1 crore aid to doctor's family

NEW DELHI

DELHI Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday met the family of doctor Hitesh Gupta who died due to COVID-19, and provided a financial assistance of Rs one crore.

Kejriwal visited Gupta's residence in IP Extension and expressed gratitude for his sacrifice and service to the people of Delhi. The chief minister said Gupta's wife will be provided a government job. "We will try to help them in every possible

way," he said. Gupta succumbed to the coronavirus in November 2020. He was working in a Delhi government dispensary at Karkardooma. "Gupta...got infected while serving corona patients and unfortunately lost his life after being hospitalised," Kejriwal said. The Delhi government had announced a scheme to support the families of coronavirus warriors who lose their lives in the line of duty by providing them a financial assistance of Rs one crore.

NHPC SIGNS AGREEMENT



YK Chaubey (third from left), Director (Technical) NHPC, RP Goyal (second from left), Director (Finance) NHPC along with other senior officers from NHPC and PFC during signing of Definitive Agreement for implementation of the Approved Resolution Plan for takeover of 120 MW Rangit-IV HE Project of Jalpower Corporation Limited (JPCL) in Sikkim on Wednesday

Free vax if Centre doesn't: Kejri

NEW DELHI

DELHI Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday announced that his AAP government will provide free Covid-19 vaccine to city residents if the Centre "failed" to do so.

Kejriwal made the announcement amid preparations for the world's largest vaccination drive, to be launched across the country on January 16 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Kejriwal said that he had earlier appealed to the Centre to provide vaccine free of cost to the people across the country, considering the impact of coronavirus pandemic. "There are a lot of people who won't be able to afford the vaccine. I had appealed to the Centre to provide free vaccine to all the people of this country. If required, and if the Centre doesn't do it, my government will provide free vaccine to all Delhi residents," Kejriwal said.

He said the vaccine would first be administered to

'Corona Warriors' like health and frontline workers in the national capital.

Kejriwal hoped that the people's struggle in 2020 will come to an end and they would get some respite from the pandemic, which has so far infected 1,04,95,147 Indians, including 15,968 in the last 24 hours.

The Aam Aadmi Party leader appealed to the countrymen to not spread any misinformation on the two approved coronavirus vaccines, believing that the Centre along with scientists concerned have followed all protocols and safeguards before launching them. "There should be no doubt regarding it (vaccine)." Kejriwal's announcement comes days after the drug regulator gave the nod to 'Covishield' and 'Covaxin' for emergency use. The Oxford University and AstraZeneca have developed 'Covishield', which is manufactured in India by Serum Institute of India. Bharat Biotech has developed 'Covaxin'.



SC takes suo moto cognizance of pollution in Yamuna

NEW DELHI

THE Supreme Court on Wednesday took suo moto cognizance of pollution in the Yamuna river and also issued a notice to the Haryana government on a plea by Delhi Jal Board (DJB). The DJB had pleaded the top court, citing its inability to supply water to all areas of Delhi due to the high ammonia level in the river, which enters into it from the water coming from the Haryana side. Senior advocate Meenakshi Arora, representing the DJB, contended before a bench headed by Chief Justice S.A. Bobde that the sewage treatment plant (STP) in Haryana was not working properly. She said this has led to a high ammonia level in the water, making it unfit for drinking. She also emphasized that the pollutants released into the water are the major issue.

ACQUITTAL OF ACCUSED

Babri case: HC adjourns hearing for two weeks

LUCKNOW

THE Allahabad High Court on Wednesday adjourned for two weeks hearing on a plea against the acquittal of all 32 accused, including BJP veterans L K Advani and Murli Manohar Joshi, in the Babri mosque demolition case.

The Lucknow bench of the court adjourned hearing after the petitioners demanded some time to remove certain defects in their case file. The matter came up before a bench of Justice Rakesh Srivastava. The petition was filed on January 8 by Ayodhya residents Haji Mahmood Ahmad and Syed Akhlaq Ahmad.

Their counsel is All India Muslim Personal Law Board executive member Zafaryab Jilani, who has also been the convener of the Babri Masjid Action Committee. While filing the petition, Jilani had said the two Ayodhya residents moved court because the CBI has not yet appealed against the September 30 judgment. The petitioners have claimed that they are witnesses in the trial.

The trial judge had refused to accept newspaper clippings and video clips as evidence because the originals were not produced in court. He also held that the CBI could not produce any evidence that the accused had a meeting of minds with the 'kar sevaks' who demolished the structure. The petitioners have pleaded that the CBI court committed an error in not convicting the accused despite the presence of ample evidence on record.



"The trial judge did not appreciate the evidence of conspiracy in the right perspective," their petition said. The petitioners have sought that the record from the trial court be summoned, its judgment set aside and the all the 32 accused held guilty and punished accordingly. Former deputy prime minister L K Advani, the then Uttar Pradesh chief minister Kalyan Singh, former Union ministers Murli Manohar Joshi and Uma Bharti and Ram Janmaboomi Teerth Kshetra Trust president Nriya Gopal Das were among those cleared by the lower court.

The Babri mosque was demolished on December 6, 1992 by a mob of kar sevaks who believed that the 16th century structure stood at the birthplace of Lord Ram.

HC lets upper age vet course aspirant attend counselling

NEW DELHI

THE Delhi High Court on Wednesday allowed a 28-year-old man to participate in counselling for admission in Bachelors of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry degree course, whose upper age limit is 25 years. A division bench of Justice D.N. Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh asked the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying and the Veterinary Council of India to process the admission in accordance with the law. The matter is slated for February 15 for hearing.

Petitioner Gajanand Mishra, an aspirant, had challenged the upper age limit of 25 years as a criterion for admission to the course.

The age limit was brought by the government under Regulation 6 of the Veterinary Council of India Minimum Standards of Veterinary Education - (Bachelor of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry - Degree Course) Regulations, 2016.

LOST SHARE CERTIFICATE(S)
NOTICE is hereby given that Share Certificate(s) Cert.No.8841, Equity Shares bearing Distinctive Nos. 1605301-1605400 Cert.No.26213, Distinctive Nos. 5397667-5397717, Cert.No.30879, Distinctive Nos. 8076311-8076385, of M.N. Aswathanarayana Setty C/o NFDC Ltd. Room No.401, 4th Floor, Sanchana Bhawan, Lodhi Road, New Delhi-110003 standing registered in the name of Company Kanpur Plastipak Ltd. Registrars Sky Line Financial Services Pvt. Ltd. D-153 A First Floor, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase-1, New Delhi has/have been lost and that application for the issue of a duplicate share certificate(s) in lieu thereof has been made to the Company. Any person who has/have any claim in respect of the said Share Certificate(s) should lodge such claim with the Company at its registrar office at the address given above within 15 days from the date of this announcement.

Schools in Delhi to open for classes 10, 12 from Jan 18

NEW DELHI

THE Delhi government issued a circular on Wednesday saying that students of classes 10 and 12 would be able to attend schools in the national capital again from January 18. During this time, the students of classes 10 and 12 would get help from teachers in their projects, practicals and counselling regarding the upcoming board examinations.

According to the circular released by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government, only students of classes 10 and 12 could be asked to come to school. For this written permission from the parents of the children, who are due to appear for board exams this year, would also be required. However, those schools in Delhi located in the containment zones due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic would remain closed. The students, teachers and other people living in such restricted areas would not have to come to school.

The Delhi government has also prepared a Standard Operating Procedure



(SOP) for all Delhi schools and it would be mandatory for schools to follow these SOPs. The schools need to maintain a record of how many children are coming to schools. However, this record would not be used as a means of marking attendance of students.

Giving information on this issue, Delhi

Education Minister Manish Sisodia said, "In view of the upcoming Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) board examinations and practical exams in Delhi, permission is being granted to open schools for practicals, projects, counselling etc. for students of classes 10 and 12 from January 18. Children will be

called to schools only with the due consent of parents without forcing them to come to schools."

The upcoming CBSE board examinations for classes 10 and 12 would be conducted in May this year. The board exams would commence from May 4 till June 10. The results of these examinations would be declared by July 15.

According to the Delhi government, no student, teacher or school staff found infected with symptoms of coronavirus would be allowed to enter the schools. Thermal screening would be done at the entry gates of the schools. Facilities such as hand sanitisation would have to be arranged at places like the schools' main gates, classrooms, laboratories, etc.

The practical and internal assessment exams for class 12 would be conducted from March 1 as per the exam schedule decided by the CBSE. The pre-board exams for class 12 could be held from March 20 to April 15 while the pre-board exams for class 10 could be conducted between April 1 to 15.

Adultery in armed forces a complex subject

THE valour, dedication and love for the country and countrymen of Indian soldiers have been always regarded with high esteem and we are very proud of our armed forces. Since Independence, the three wings of Indian military have been guarding us from intruders, terrorists and other external attacks. They also come to our help whenever there is a natural calamity. Once enrolled in the armed forces, a soldier makes up his mind to sacrifice his life if the situation demands. The inspiring words of Capt. Vikram Batra, PVC, “Either I will come back after hoisting the tricolour, or I will come back wrapped in it, but I will be back for sure,” continue to motivate every soldier in the country. However, the sexual needs of these soldiers, who live away from families and most of the time in harsh weather conditions, have made headlines now and then. With the country’s paramount

court of justice on Wednesday agreeing to examine the Central government’s request to keep adultery a crime in the armed forces, the issue has once again become a topic of discussion. It may be recalled that in September 2018, a Constitution bench of the Supreme Court junked the 158-year-old law that made adultery a crime in India. Under section 497 of the IPC, a man cannot be punished for an affair with a woman who is not his wife. As a matter of fact, there is no offence specified as ‘Adultery’ in the entire Army Act or the Rules made thereunder. In the pre-constitutional Military Manual, codified by the British, obviously also prior to the enactment of the present Army Act, 1950, there appears to be a reference to ‘stealing the affection of a brother officer’s wife’ in the Armed Forces. Whether the said act fulfils the ingredients of ‘Adultery’ as previously appearing in Section 497 of

the Indian Penal Code, is not clear, since what constitutes ‘stealing the affections of’ another’s wife is quite puzzling. The word ‘stealing’ indicates lack of consent and will of the other person. But statistics in this regard demonstrate that many officers have been prosecuted for having consensual relationship with the wife of a brother officer. Admittedly, the concept resonates logic and good faith, especially in the peculiar nature of environment and hierarchal working of the army. Undoubtedly, the peace and harmony of the environment of a regiment or a unit will be adversely affected if the Commanding Officer or any superior officer is in a relationship with the wife of a subordinate officer or any other member of the armed forces. The entire working of the unit will suffer and may result in a complete destruction of faith and confidence which is required for the unit to discharge its duties as a cohesive unit,

in the face of the enemy and in the interests of the security of the nation. However, whether all such consensual relationships have to be looked upon as an offence is likely to have caused any ‘prejudice’ to any other person subject to the act or has caused damage or injury to the environment in the regiment/unit, where the offender is posted or attached, is a moot question which needs to be looked at objectively. Suppose an officer is alleged to be in a relationship with a lady married to an ex-serviceman, who is not remotely connected with the place of service of the so-called offender, it is unfair to convene a General Court Martial to prosecute such officer, especially if there is no indication of any prejudice being caused to any other person subject to the army act nor any adverse ramification in the environment of the working of the unit, since the husband or the complainant is not even a part of the unit and hence there can be no disruption or disturbance in the working of the organisation.



Salary to housewives Vs counting women’s unpaid work

JEEMOL UNNI

HASAN’S political party in Tamil Nadu promised salaries to housewives as part of its electoral campaign. And the idea was welcomed by Congress politician Shashi Tharoor. Today, the media is also celebrating the longest flight and the first from San Francisco to Bengaluru manned by an all women crew of pilots and co-pilots led by Captain Papagiri Thanmai and Captain Zoya Aggarwal.

How do these headlines grabbing news comparing to the long drawn out battle by feminist statisticians and economists to get better estimates of women’s work in the national labour statistics? As well as document her full contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country by counting her paid and unpaid work?

In 1988, ‘Shramshakti’, the report of the National Commission on Self-Employed Women and Workers in the Informal Sector, noted that “all women are workers because they are producers and reproducers. Even when they are not employed, they are involved in socially productive and reproductive labour all of which is absolutely necessary for the survival of the society. Women’s work as home-makers must be recognised as social/economic production”.

There has been major debate around the measurement of women’s work participation over decades. It is alleged that the traditional labour force statistics collected by government statistical divisions ignore the unpaid work of women. The definitions and standards of

the measurement of work are set through resolutions by the International Labour Organisation in its International Conference on Labour Statisticians (ICLS). The 13th ICLS in 1982 set the early definitions and criteria for the economically active population, employment, unemployment and underemployment, amended in the later ICLS in 1987, 1998 and 2008.

The System of National Accounts of the United Nations, which provides the international guidelines for collection of data on the GDP, recommends that women’s social reproduction work or unpaid care work should be counted and accounted in satellite accounts to the national accounts of the country. The logic is that including the value of unpaid work in the national income will distort the estimates of the flow of income in the country. ILO’s 19th ICLS is supposed to have created more gender sensitive standards for measurement of work. The traditional definition divided the labour force into three categories, employed, unemployed and out of the labour forces (or inactive).

The 19th ICLS agreed on an international statistical definition of ‘work’ that included five major activities in which individuals can be involved. The first major change was that ‘work’ included paid and unpaid activities to produce goods and services. The five activities constituting ‘work’ were: Production (including goods and services) i) for own use, ii) for use

of others for pay or profit (normally included in labour force statistics), iii) for use of others NOT for pay or profit within which there were three categories: a) unpaid trainee work, b) other unpaid work and c) volunteer work.

The second major change was that an individual can be involved in more than one activity at the same time. The National Sample Survey (NSO) uses the traditional definition to measure women’s work in its labour force surveys, the earlier Employment and Unemployment Survey (EUS) and its recent avatar the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS). The expert body in economic statistics is still to grapple with the idea of the use of the new 19th ICLS definitions and the NSO has to figure out if it will and can put the new definitions into practice in its collection of labour force statistics. Till then we have abysmally low women’s work force participation which has been declining.

The decline was particularly sharp in rural areas falling from 48 per cent in 2004-05 (EUS) to 23 per cent in 2017-18 (PLFS) for women above 15 years of age. Women’s participation in urban areas was low initially but dropped further from 23 per cent in 2004-5 and to 18 per cent in 2017-18.

There is, however, a silver lining in the newly released Time Use Survey (TUS), 2019, collected by the National Sample Organisation. Unfortunately, it is extremely difficult, time consuming and costly to conduct time use survey frequently. The last TUS was conducted twenty years ago in six states in 1999. Statement 5 in the TUS, 2019 is presented here. If we use the five-activity definition of work of the 19th ICLS, we arrive at very high work participation of women as per the first major change of including paid and unpaid activities using the TUS.

Percentage of women participating in each of the five activities in rural + urban areas are as follows: i) for own use, 20 per cent; ii) for use of others for pay or profit, 18.4 per cent; iii) for use of others NOT for pay or profit within which there were three categories: unpaid trainee work + volunteer work, 2 per cent, and other unpaid work, 81 per cent + 27.6 per cent.

As per the second major change highlighted above, an individual can be involved in more than one activity at the same time. It is clear that these estimates, using the TUS, cannot be compared with the work participation rates by the traditional labour force survey, PLFS. It is also clear that the process of computing work participation of women who often engage in multiple paid and unpaid work at the same time is difficult through a standard questionnaire method of traditional surveys.

(The writer is professor of economics at the Ahmedabad University)

Money does good things, but it can harm too!

TALKING OF MANY THINGS

Dr Mohan Kanda

FAMOUS American actress and singer Liza Minelli was famously reported to have said, “money makes the world go round.” While, of course, thanks to the pioneering investigations of great scientists such as Aristarchus of Samos, Ibn Yunus, Aryabhata, Copernicus, Galileo Galilee and Isaac Newton, we know that this is not quite true, it still remains a widely accepted point of view! A somewhat similar sentiment was expressed by great Chanakya in his Artha Sastra when he said Dhanam Moolam Idham Jagat... The word ‘Jagat’ refers to the earthly world. ‘Dhanam Moolam’ means wealth is the root or the base. Freely translated, it means - the Vedas are the foundation of the effort to attain divine knowledge, the housewife is the fulcrum of the home, agriculture provides food, and wealth leads to pleasure.

That money and wealth play an important role in the happiness of human beings is evidenced by the fact that references to it are found in the scriptures of major religions of the world as well as in the depiction wealth in the shape of Gods and Goddesses. In the Hindu religion for instance, Goddess Laxmi stands for prosperity and wealth, while Brutus is the God of riches in Greek mythology. The Holy Quran preaches that “giving of your wealth is the source of true prosperity”, while the Holy Bible tells us, “for what will you profit, if you gain the whole world and lose your own soul”?

On a more down to earth note, the legendary ‘Beatles’ of the 1960s sang memorable numbers which went, “money can’t buy me love” and “... give me money that’s what I want”. In a some-

what more serious vein, Marvin Germa, author, said that money was a “tool to make a difference in the lives of people... a starting point to write your passion...”.

Now, looking at the commodity of money from the point of view of day to day life of the human beings, one finds that it means different things to different kinds of people. For some people, it is simply a means of survival, nothing more. As, for instance, it was to the Vicar, described by Oliver Goldsmith in his famous poem ‘The Deserted Village’ as “passing rich, on forty pounds a year”. Then there are others for whom it becomes obsession and accumulation signifies accomplishment. Then there are those for whom it is an insurance against future adverse events. Such people put away a part of their earnings so that it can come in handy on a rainy day. There are many others for whom it is the means to being able to afford to pursue some favourite hobbies in addition to leading a comfortable life.

And nearly everyone would like to have enough money to bequeath to future generations. Very few, fortunately, belong to the category of spendthrifts who splurge vast sums on extravagant luxuries, and subscribe to the philosophy of instant gratification, believing that, after all “you can hardly take it with you”. Those are the people who belong to the category of ‘nouveau riche’, or those to whom money is a recently acquired commodity. In contrast, people who have inherited what is known as family wealth have a much more sensible attitude towards money and, without being stingy, are frugal, as they realise the value of the commodity.

When all is said and done, there can be no argument about the fact that, given good intentions, the possession of money in abundance gives one to the ability to spread happiness or as PG Wodehouse would have it, “spread sweetness and light”. Mere possession of money, however, can only go that far and no more. There is, after all, the law of diminishing marginal utility. Beyond a point, money can no longer continue to have the same value, which had till then. A little like the air that we breathe, we may not be able to live without money but cannot live only on it.



It is widely accepted that money is the lubricant that smoothen and facilitates the exceptions between desirable features of a good life such as health, wealth and relationships. They are interconnected and each possesses the ability to weaken or strengthen the other two. One must remember that money can be a tool, an instrument, and not more than that. And just as a scalpel can, in the hands of a surgeon, do as much good as it can harm. What money can result in depends, to a large extent, on the intentions of the person from whose hands it is flowing. And then the perception of money as a commodity in that person’s mind is clearly a function of value systems and cumulative life experience. As Jonathan Swift said, in the ultimate analysis, wise people should have money “in their head, but not in their heart”.

Life is much more than what money can give. While money has its role in everyday life, it also can take away the ability to be warm and compassionate towards fellow human beings. Money, in other words, is money. And life is life. Mixing the two can be a dangerous combination.

It is widely accepted that money is the lubricant that smoothen and facilitates the exceptions between desirable features of a good life such as health, wealth and relationships. They are interconnected and each possesses the ability to weaken or strengthen the other two.

One must remember that money can be a tool, an instrument, and not more than that. And just as a scalpel can, in the hands of a surgeon, do as much

good as it can harm. What money can result in depends, to a large extent, on the intentions of the person from whose hands it is flowing. And then the perception of money as a commodity in that person’s mind is clearly a function of value systems and cumulative life experience. As Jonathan Swift said, in the ultimate analysis, wise people should have money “in their head, but not in their heart”. It must also be realised that, no matter what the end result, money must come out of a source where it was accumulated with noble intentions and in a morally acceptable manner. The means, as Gandhiji emphasised, are as important as the ends. Tainted money can hardly have intended results even if spent on the noblest of purposes.

And we cannot rest the case of money without mention of the fascinating history its form has gone through over the ages after the barter and gift economies of 9000 BCE vintage were gradually replaced, first by metal objects around 5000 BCE by coins.

Time was when money in the form of currency or coins was stored in steel vaults, heavy affairs with fancy locks and keys. Its value increases over time, as it was largely used for the purpose of lending on interest. The tinkling of coins, and the crinkling of paper, provided no end of happiness to the possessor. One recollects, in this context, the nursery rhyme, “sing a song of sixpence...”, where the King was supposed to be in the counting house counting all his money. Then came banks and, with them, the habit of opening accounts, in which money earned interest. Those were the days of cheque-books and tokens given out at banks and then encashed after a long wait. That era, in turn, gave way to the realm of plastic money or bank cards, credit or debit as the case maybe. And now crypto currencies (Bitcoin, Ripple or Litecoin to name a few), have taken over, a form of digital money, ‘mined’ and stored in a ‘digital wallet’. One wonders what the next innovation will be!

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

LETTERS

Test Cricket is still alive

TEST match cricket is a different cup of tea. Tough minds like steel adding to the grit and determination play a great role. Concentration is the hallmark of Test Cricket. Indian cricket team displayed important quality and that ultimately helped to save the Test match at Sydney chasing 400 plus score. This Test at Sydney had everything: Courage, Conviction, Controversy and Cricket. Cricket is a team game where performance plays a pivotal role. After all the heroics from the blades of Pujara and Pant, we were up to the task of saving the game as Jadeja was seriously injured and a long tail to follow hats off to Ashwin and Vihari. They battled with great courage and conviction, battling injury, new ball, bouncers, a 5th day track, time, a well-primed bowling attack and a lot more. They played out almost half the number of overs of the day to leave the Aussies licking their wounds. The draw seemed unlikely early in the day. By evening the draw was a win by itself. India’s batsmen, Pujara, Pant, Ashwin and Vihari battled the odds to ensure

thehansreader@gmail.com

that India would go into the last Test on an even footing. What a day’s play! What a great Test of character! Test cricket is still alive.

C K Ramani Mani,
Anna Nagar West, Chennai

Union Budget should assuage lockdown blues

THIS is with reference to your editorial ‘Centre unlikely to go for sops in budget’ (Jan 13). The Union Budget for 2021 - 22 slated for February 1st is going to be definitely different, which will have the impact of the lockdown of many organisations due to Covid-19. Some sectors like manufacturing shrank by 1.7 percent and there is a need to allocate more funds for these sectors. The Finance Minister may allocate more budgets for the sectors where growth is certain and also should not neglect the sectors having sluggish performance. There should be a monitoring cell in the Finance Ministry to get feedback about performance of each sector on weekly basis. Wherever the performance is done not as planned, immediate actions should be taken to reach the targets to ensure economic growth of the country.

G V N Murthy, Qutbullapur,
Hyderabad

Bumrah, a real boost to Indian team

THE 3rd Test match between India and Australia has ended in a draw. The new Indian team proved its mettle with excellent batting and bowling. But it is necessary to maintain the same momentum and try to win the 4th Test match being held in Brisbane. Our Indian cricket team consists of old and new players and that is the advantage of the team. But we hear that Jasprit Bumrah will be out of the Brisbane Test, really a cause of concern. He is a world class bowler and his presence in the team gives boost to other players. But we have to win the Brisbane Test match and the series by 2-1. Hope our Indian team will put the best effort to win the fourth Test match.

Syed Nissar, Malakpet, Hyderabad

Ban manjhas to save birds

EVERY year on January 14, we celebrate Makar Sankranti festival with flying of kites. Lots of birds are injured during the three-day kite flying festival around Makar Sankranti. Birds injuries are mostly on the wings and range from fractures, ligament and muscle separation and, worst of all, complete amputation of the wing. Thousands of manjha

criss-cross the sky in India during this festival and a lot of birds die. It is necessary to conduct awareness campaigns among revellers, schoolchildren, vendors selling manjha and local kite flying clubs with the aim to encourage use of uncoated cotton kite string which is significantly less harmful to birds.

Gautam S R, Bhopal, MP

Leave Rajinikanth alone

SUPER star Rajinikanth has already announced “NO” to politics, due to old age (70 years) and health reasons. Despite this, it is surprising to see that his fans are putting pressure on their matinee idol to enter politics, to fulfil their wish to see him as the future Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. To the fact, I too like him. But it is ridiculous to prompt him to enter politics. After undergoing so many struggles to reach the level of the super star, now he needs relaxation and rest at this age. Further, his good health is important than politics. The mindset of the fans need to be changed. There are many IAS officers, professionals and others interested to enter active politics and wish to strive for the development of Tamil Nadu. Fans may think of selecting one among them to encourage to enter active politics.

D N Rao, Hyderabad

NO HOLDS BARRED

TRS, BJP ENGAGE IN BITTER WAR OF WORDS

Leaders stoop to abusive, personal onslaught

- “We are ready to bury the KCR’s family-run government,” threatens TS BJP chief Bandi Sanjay
- TRS MLA B Suman warns Sanjay of ‘peel of skin’ if he does not stop abusing TRS leaders
- Social media teams of two parties unleash barrage of verbal missiles at rivals

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

THE ongoing war of words between the ruling TRS and the opposition BJP leaders has reached another level. Personal onslaught has marked the political rhetoric of the two party leaders these days. On the social media also, the two parties are indulging in abusing and targeted the rival leaders to defame their personality.

In a fresh attack, state BJP unit



President B Sanjay warned Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao of facing dire consequences if the assault on BJP leaders and party workers continued in the Telangana. The party would not hesitate to lay siege the farm house and take out the TRS chief from his personal place. “We are ready to bury the KCR’s family run government,” he said questioned the state government for not taking action against the police officials and municipal authorities who allegedly manhandled the BJP

workers at a dharna place in Jan-gaon municipality. “We will definitely take revenge against the government if the latter maintains silence,” Sanjay said.

In a quick reaction, the local TRS leadership also warned BJP of action if the saffron party leaders continued creating law and order problem and create political nuisance on petty issues. TRS MLA B Suman already warned Sanjay of ‘peel of skin’ if the BJP leader did not stop abusing the TRS leaders. He asked the state BJP chief to

Supporters of Bandi Sanjay and MP D Arvind and TRS working president KT Rama Rao followers lock horns on Facebook, sharing morphed photos and objectionable content

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

THE University of Hyderabad Teacher’s Association (UHTA) in a release on Tuesday condemned illegal encroachment of the university land by private organisations. The association demanded the police to unconditionally withdraw all cases filed against the students who were protesting against the land grabbing issue. UHTA in the release appealed to Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao to intervene for the protection of the university land which has been granted with a vision of making University of Hyderabad as a top-rated university at the global level. Keeping the vision of future growth of the university which provides affordable education to the society, it is the responsibility of the state government to protect the land.

UHTA insisted that the university administration take all the initiatives to protect the land through appealing to the President of India, visitors of university, Governor of Telangana, the Rector and Chancellor of the university, ministry of education and University Grants Commission. They urged the university authorities to demand the state government to properly fix the boundaries of the university land and grant the title deed of the land to the university. “This not only ensures the land to be saved from greedy private interests, but also protects the precious biodiversity of the campus. A joint action committee is likely to be formed consisting of faculty, students and non-teaching staff to continue the struggle for the transfer of land mutation to the university,” they added.



Parents’ body wary of reopening of schools

SABYA SINGH
HYDERABAD

THE Hyderabad School Parents Association (HSPA) has demanded that the State government introduce a blended instruction if it has decided to reopen schools from February 1.

Reacting to the State government decision to running regular classes for students of Class 9 and above from February 1, HSPA working president Seema Agarwal suggested conduct of online polls to understand the requirements of parents. Meanwhile, several parents took to Twitter to express their disappointment over the decision.

Seema said that the government should ensure all safe measures for students at schools. “Every time we had conducted a poll, nearly 92% were against the restarting of schools. There’s a group of 4,500 parents and we have taken their views and none of them wants their children to go to schools. There should be no compulsion of Offline classes,” she said.

The association conducted an online survey which showed that a majority of parents were not willing to send children without first undergoing vaccination and wanted continuation of vir-

- Says not confident of safety measures being fully enforced
- Want to wait till children complete the vaccine dosage
- Demands that govt hold online classes for some more time

tual classes. The parents were also eagerly waiting for a decision on the pandemic fee relief.

According to the survey on twitter by the HSPA and on Telegram, only 14% of parents are in support of reopening schools and nearly 86% felt that schools should remain shut till the vaccine is available. Many said they not confident of schools following safety protocols.

Sumithra, a member of HSPA, said that her child is in Class 10 and was refrained from going to school. “My child is in the 9th standard but I haven’t thought of sending him,” said Mrudula Alamuru, another member of HSPA.

Another Chinese held for loan app fraud

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

THE cybercrime wing of Rachakonda police arrested a Chinese national and an Indian from Mumbai and brought them to the city on prisoner transit warrant in furtherance to the ongoing frauds of instant

loan apps. The accused were identified as, Hei Jian alias Mark, a citizen of China and a resident of Mumbai, and Vivek Kumar, a resident of Mumbai. Mahesh Bhagwat, the Rachakonda Police Commissioner, said, “The arrests were made based on the confession of the Chinese couple who were arrested earlier. The couple

Parusha Ram Lahu Takwe, director of Jia Liang Infotech Pvt Ltd, Pune, and his wife Liang Tian Tian, and one Aqub Shaik, an employee, had admitted the role of Jian alias Mark, a Chinese national, and Vivek Kumar, as both of them were associated with Ajaya Solutions Pvt Ltd run by Parusha Ram Lahu.”

“Jian came to India in July

2019 on a business visa and joined as a representative on behalf of Chinese nationals Xu Nan, Xu Xinchang and Zhao Qiao, who are the directors of micro finance loan app companies. The accused were operating a call centre at Pune for providing services to instant loan apps companies including Ajaya Solutions Pvt Ltd, in Thane,” added the officer.

Former top cop Thakur appointed RTC MD

- He will replace Principal Secretary (Transport) M T Krishna Babu who is holding full additional charge as RTC MD
- Thakur was transferred from DGP post hours after Jagan took over as CM in May 2019

AMARAVATI

IN a surprise development, the Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy government on Wednesday brought back director general of police-rank IPS officer Ram Prawesh Thakur into the limelight, posting him as the vice-chairman and managing director of the AP State Road Transport Corporation. Thakur would replace principal secretary (transport) M T Krishna Babu, who had been holding full additional charge as RTC MD for the past few months. The 1986-batch officer, who was the state DGP (head of police force) during the previous TDP government, was removed from the post on May 30, hours after Jagan assumed charge as Chief Minister in 2019. Thakur was posted as commissioner of printing and stationery and stores purchase department, a posting that is reportedly treated as a punishment after he allegedly made light of

the knife attack on Jagan inside the Visakhapatnam airport in 2018.

Authoritative sources said the Chief Minister has “forgiven” the officer, who is set to retire from service on May 31 this year, paving the way for his return with chief secretary Aditya Nath Das issuing an order appointing him in the new post.

The chief secretary’s order said the IPS officer would also hold the post of Commissioner, Printing and Stationery, as a full



R P Thakur who was appointed as APSRTC Vice-Chairman and Managing Director, meets Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy to thank him at Tadepalli on Wednesday

additional charge.

Meanwhile, the chief secretary issued another order posting 2015-batch IPS officer Malika Garg as additional superintendent of police (administration) of Krishna district. Malika was recently transferred to the AP cadre from West Bengal and had been waiting for a posting.

DGP denies conspiracy angle behind attacks on temples

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

DIRECTOR general of police D Gautam Sawang said the state police cracked 29 out of 44 cases of attacks on temple in 2020-21 and arrested 80 persons. He said so far, police found no conspiracy behind any of these incident. Strongly denying the “false propaganda” being carried out in social media and other platforms that the attacks on temples had increased in the state in recent months, he said the number of attacks on the temples in the state were nearly the same for the last five years and assured that the police would take all measures to protect the temples and other places of worship besides maintaining communal harmony.

Addressing media at the state police office on Wednesday, the DGP crimes in temples were committed with different motives like treasure hunt, for attention diversion, to settle scores over disputed ownership, or acts of unsound mind and or by persons in an inebriated condition.

Sawang said the state police would keep a close watch on the social media



DGP Gautam Sawang and other officials addressing a press conference on attacks on temples at DGP office in Mangalagiri in Guntur district on Wednesday

and take action against the persons for the ‘false propaganda’ regarding incidents involving the temples.

“A total of 44 incident of attacks on temples took place in the state in 2020-21. Police have cracked 29 cases and arrested 80 accused in these cases. Of them, it has been found that in six cases, attacks on temples were carried out by property offender for treasures and 42 persons were arrested in these six cases,” he explained.

According to him, one offence was committed for attention diversion, three offences were committed to settle scores over dispute of ownership, one attack on the temple was made in belief of superstition, one case

involves wild animal, one attack was made by a person with unsound mind, four cases involved drunkards and two cases were found to be accidents.

Stating that 15 cases of attacks on temples were yet to be solved, Sawang said the police were using modern technology to crack the cases and nab offenders. Saying that misinformation was being spread systematically to create tension, he warned of stern action against those elements indulging in this activity.

The DGP said 58,871 religious places were surveyed, mapped, geo tagged and security audit was made in the state to ensure their protection. Peace

committees will be formed soon under the limits of all police stations and 43,224 CC cameras were arranged at the places of worship. He said meetings will be conducted with the stakeholders to maintain communal harmony and for protection of temples and other places of worship.

He said it was unfortunate that some political leaders were attributing caste and religion to the incidents and added that he had never seen such incidents in 35 years of his service in the police department. He said 15,394 village protection squads were already set up and 7,000 more such squads will be formed across the state.

From singing in trains to Tollywood glory



Folk singer Bonela Asirayya with his accompaniment ‘budadudaka’

RANI DEVALLA
VISAKHAPATNAM

FOR a person who lived in poverty for decades, life took an unexpected turn one fine day.

Though it appears quite close to chapters of a fairy tale, Srikakulam-based Bonela Asirayya says that his destiny has certainly changed when his folk songs drew the attention of music composer, singer and actor Raghu Kunche.

And that’s when Asirayya got a chance to compose the title song of the Telugu period action thriller ‘Palasa 1978’ and also sing, including parts of the foot-tapping number ‘Naadi nakkileesu golu’ in the film.

A beggar by profession, Asirayya sings in trains to earn a living, by travelling from Palasa to Ponduru. “I earn around Rs 300 to Rs 400 a day by singing in passenger trains. But now most of them are yet to resume their service,” says the resident of Valteru village, who came to the city a few days back.

The accompaniment ‘buduku’ or ‘jamilika kunda’ or

- Bonela Asirayya got a chance to compose ‘Palasa 1978’ title song
- A beggar by profession, he lived in poverty for decades
- Folk songs are his passion as he narrates a story through them

‘budadudaka’ is something that never leaves Asirayya. After learning the nuances of ‘jamakula’ songs from his Guru Surya Narayana, Asirayya says he fell in love with the genre. “Earlier, I used to sing for ‘Yellamma Thalli sambaralu’ (village festival) and community functions.

Folk songs have an old charm and I derive a sense of pleasure when I sing them and also make money in the process,” shares the singer with The Hans India.

With his meagre income, Asirayya says that he was able to fund the education of his elder daughter and son and got his three daughters married. “I grew up in a family of farmers. Though I continued farming in the initial days of my life, I want my children to lead a comfortable life unlike me,” says the 65-year-old folk singer.

Asirayya considers himself fortunate for getting an opportunity in Telugu film industry through ‘Palasa 1978’ and hopes to bag more offers in future.

Sankranti sans Haridas and Gangireddu

PV SATYANARAYANA
KHAMMAM

WE cannot imagine Sankranti festival without Haridas and Gangireddu but due to low earnings and new generation shifting to other professions people will be missing them this Sankranti in the erstwhile Khammam district.

When the Sankranti festival comes, Haridas, who knows every household in the villages, blesses them for good health and prosperous life. But for the last few years, Haridas visits have gradually come down and the glow of the festival is fading.

Now during this corona pan-

demic, it is unlikely to witness visits by Haridas. K Venkateswarlu (60), resident of the temple town Bhadrachalam village in Kothagudem district belongs to Haridas community, said: “This profession ended with my generation. My children are not showing interest to this profession as they want to settle in other areas. There are 10 Haridas families in the village and they all used to visit each and every house but now no one has patience to visit house-to-house by walk.”

He said earlier joint families used to stay together. They used to donate generously and other items but now families



are also reduced only parents are here and children are in other places. Nobody is interested in giving donations much like earlier. Many of the Haridas quit this practice and opted to do other works.

According to information, there are nearly 10,000 Haridas community families in the district.

Out of them only 500 families are pursuing the profession and remaining have left the practice. Many of the youngsters got educated and obtained small-time jobs.

A Seetha Maha Laxmi, a housewife of Kothagudem town, said “a few years ago we

were waiting for Haridas and Gangireddu since we wanted to show our culture to our grandchildren but for the last few years they are not coming.”

P Rama Rao, a senior citizen of Khammam, expressed worry about the vanishing culture and opined that the government as well as people should protect Haridasu and Gangireddu culture. “My grandchildren don’t know who Haridas is and how he is said to be. Due to the Covid pandemic we are not celebrating a single festival from March last year.”

Coronavirus may resemble common cold in future, say scientists

Four common cold-causing coronaviruses have been circulating in humans for a long time. Natural infection in childhood provides immunity that protects people later in life against severe disease, but it doesn't prevent periodic reinfection, says Jennie Lavine

NEW DELHI

SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, may resemble the mild cold-causing coronaviruses that currently circulate in humans if it becomes endemic and most people are exposed in childhood, according to a study. The modelling study, published on Tuesday in the journal Science, is based on research of the four common cold coronaviruses and SARS-CoV-1. The analysis of the immunological and epidemiological data for these viruses helped the researchers to develop a model

to predict the trajectory of SARS-CoV-2 as it becomes endemic, when the virus circulates in the general population. The researchers noted that four common cold-causing coronaviruses have been circulating in humans for a long time and almost everyone is infected at a young age. Natural infection in childhood provides immunity that protects people later in life against severe disease, but it doesn't prevent periodic reinfection, said Jennie Lavine, from Emory University in the US, first author of the study. The research suggests that endemic

115 new cases in China

Beijing: The Chinese mainland reported 115 newly confirmed Covid-19 cases, of whom 107 were locally transmitted and the rest arrived from outside the mainland, the National Health Commission said on Wednesday. Of the locally transmitted cases, 90 were reported in north China's Hebei Province, 16 in Heilongjiang Province and one in Shanxi Province, Xinhua news agency reported citing the Commission.



SARS-CoV-2 may become a disease of early childhood, where the first infection occurs between 3 and 5 years old, and the disease itself would be mild. Older individuals could still become infected, but their childhood infections would provide immune protection

against severe disease, according to the researchers. How fast this shift comes depends on how fast the virus spreads and what kind of immune response the SARS-CoV-2 vaccines induce, they said. The model suggests that if the vaccines induce short-lived protection against becoming reinfected but reduce the severity of the disease, as is the case with other endemic coronaviruses, SARS-CoV-2 may become endemic more quickly. "This model assumes immunity to SARS-CoV-2 works similar to other human coronaviruses. We don't really know what it

would be like if someone got one of the other coronaviruses for the first time as an adult, rather than as a child, Lavine said. The model predicts that the infection fatality ratio for SARS-CoV-2 may fall below that of seasonal influenza (0.1 per cent), once an endemic steady-state is reached. "We are in uncharted territory, but a key take-home message from the study is that immunological indicators suggest that fatality rates and the critical need for broad-scale vaccination may wane in the near term," said Ottar Bjornstad, a professor and epidemiologist at Penn State.

11K BIRDS CULLED IN LATUR

Unnatural bird deaths reported from J&K and Jharkhand
Restaurant owners, meat shops in many States worried

AURANGABAD

OVER 11,000 birds have been culled in Kendrewadi and Sukni villages in Latur district of Maharashtra to stop the spread of bird flu infection, a senior official said on Wednesday. He said report on the sample of birds found dead in Vanjarwadi village, also in Latur district, is awaited. "The administration has culled 11,064 birds in Kendrewadi and Sukni villages in the radius of one-km of the area where samples of birds had tested positive for bird flu. The culling process in these two villages is complete. We will send a report to the state government by tomorrow," Latur collector B P Prithviraj told PTI. Bird flu has been confirmed in 9 states and 1 Union Territory so far while cases of unusual mortality have been reported in some districts of Jharkhand and Jammu & Kashmir. The decision to ban sale and storage of poultry or processed chicken meat left the owners of meat shops and restaurants in many States worried as they termed the order "needless" and said it would cause a huge loss to their businesses.



A vendor carries chicken at a livestock market, in Prayagraj, on Wednesday. An alert has been sounded in several States following the detection of bird flu cases in 11 States of India

Cases reported in many districts of Uttar Pradesh

KANPUR: In Uttar Pradesh, bird deaths were reported from Jalaun district and avian flu cases from Kanpur. Samples taken from two dead crows in Kanpur have tested positive for bird flu and with these, the number of confirmed cases of the influenza has increased to four in the city, forest officials said. In Jalaun, five birds, mostly crows, were found dead and their samples have been sent for testing, while in Fatehpur district two peacock carcasses were found in a forest. However, officials ruled out bird flu as the cause of death of the peacocks. Chief Veterinary Officer Dr Rajendra Kumar Sharma said as per the postmortem report, the birds died due to cold.

Bird flu detected in Kadaknath chickens

BHOPAL: Cases of bird-flu infection have been detected in MP's famous Kadaknath chickens in the Jhabua district, authorities confirmed on Tuesday. A Kadaknath chicken at a farm in Jhabua's Rudipanda village was found to be infected by the H5N1 virus. "The National Institute of High-Security Animal Diseases (NIHSAD) Bhopal has confirmed the presence of H5N1 virus in the samples of Kadaknath chickens," said Veterinary Department director Dr RK Rokde in an official letter. As per the Centre's Bird Flu Action Plan, all excreta, fodder, eggs etc from the infected birds will be destroyed and the farm will be sanitised and disinfected.

Cop absconds after raping colleague

GONDA

In a shocking incident, a constable in Uttar Pradesh's Gonda district has alleged that she was raped by a policeman on January 10. The constable has alleged that her colleague raped her on Sunday after he requested her to follow him on the pretext of showing her his room, Superintendent of Police Shailesh Kumar Pandey said adding that the accused has been absconding lately, and efforts are being made to trace him. A case was registered in this regard on Tuesday night, Pandey added. Based on her complaint, a case was registered against the constable, the SP said. Pandey said the woman constable has been sent for a medical examination. In another shocking incident, a 15-year-old rape survivor, who was seven months pregnant, died of pregnancy-related complications at a district hospital in Uttar Pradesh's Bareilly. The minor victim was admitted to the hospital on Saturday night and passed away on Thursday night. According to PTI, Senior Superintendent of the hospital Dr Subodh Sharma said the girl was brought to the hospital in serious condition and her health deteriorated further.

Adultery in armed forces Centre plea in top court against decriminalisation

NEW DELHI

THE Supreme Court Wednesday issued a notice on a plea of the Centre which urged that the 2018 judgement of a five-judge constitution bench decriminalising adultery under the Indian Penal Code be not made applicable to the armed forces. A bench comprising Justices R F Nariman, Navin Sinha and K M Joseph, after issuing the notice to the PIL petitioner and others on the Centre's plea, referred the matter to Chief Justice S A Bobde for setting up of a five-judge Constitution Bench which can clarify the position. In a path-breaking verdict, a five-judge Constitution bench headed by the then CJI Dipak Misra unanimously struck down Section 497 (adultery) of the Indian Penal Code and declared that adultery is not a crime and the penal provision was unconstitutional as it denied the individuality of women and treated them as "chattel of husbands". The apex court, in a September 2018 judgment, however had said that adultery would continue to be a ground for seeking divorce in matrimonial disputes. The Centre, in its interim plea filed in a disposed of PIL of Joseph Shine, has sought clarification and a direction that the judgement be not made applicable on special statutes and rules governing the armed forces which take actions on its personnel for indulging in adulterous relationships to ensure discipline in forces. It has been said when jawans and officers are posted in forward inhospitable areas, their families are taken care of at base camp by other officers and the laws and rules, providing actions for indulging in adulterous or promiscuous activity, help in maintaining discipline.



'Act against rape accused Maha Min'

MUMBAI

The Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party on Wednesday urged Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray to take action against a Minister Dhananjay Munde, accused of alleged rape by a woman. BJP women's wing leader Chitra Wagh demanded that Munde should be asked to resign and the police should conduct an impartial probe. Similarly, ex-MP Kirit Somaiya shot off a complaint to the Election Commission of India (ECI) demanding a probe into and appropriate action against Munde for suppressing information about "his two wives and all children and properties in their names" in his 2019 assembly election affidavit. Munde, 45, has been under fire after a woman lodged a written complaint with Mumbai Police on January 11 accusing him of raping her for the last several years. While the Oshiwara Police have not yet taken cognizance or lodged a First Information Report in the matter, Munde, who is the nephew of late BJP leader Gopinath Munde and quit the BJP to join the NCP, late on Tuesday sought to clear the air in a detailed social media post.

DANGAL AAJ KAL



Farmers watch a wrestling meet during their protest against the new farm laws, at Tikri border in New Delhi on Wednesday

Petrol touches new high in Delhi

NEW DELHI

PETROL price on Wednesday touched a new high of Rs 84.45 per litre in the national capital after state-owned fuel retailers hiked prices after a five-day hiatus. Petrol and diesel prices were hiked by 25 paise per litre each, according to a price notification from oil marketing companies. In Delhi, petrol now costs Rs 84.45 per litre and diesel is priced at Rs 74.63. In Mumbai, petrol comes for Rs 91.07 a litre and diesel for Rs 81.34. This is the highest ever price of petrol in Delhi, while diesel is at a record high in Mumbai. State-owned fuel retailers -- Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) -

had on January 6, resumed daily price revision after nearly a month-long hiatus. Rates were hiked on two consecutive days - totalling 49 paise for petrol and 51 paise for diesel - before they hit a pause button again. The price increase cycle resumed after international oil prices rose for the seventh day. US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) was up 1.3 per cent at USD 53.88 a barrel, while Brent crude was up 79 cents at USD 57.37. Both benchmarks are trading at the highest since February, before the coronavirus outbreak in China began spreading across the world, forcing lockdowns that shaved off demand. Petrol price had scaled to an all-time high of Rs 84.20 per litre on January 7. The previous highest ever rate of Rs 84 a litre for petrol in Delhi was touched on October 4, 2018

United States executes first woman in nearly 7 decades

Montgomery was convicted in 2007 in Missouri of kidnapping and strangling Bobbie Jo Stinnett, then eight months pregnant. Montgomery cut Stinnett's fetus from the womb, but the child survived. She was pronounced dead at 1:31 am on Wednesday

WASHINGTON

THE United States executed convicted murderer Lisa Montgomery, the only woman on federal death row, on Wednesday, after the Supreme Court cleared the last hurdle by overturning a stay. Montgomery was the first female prisoner to be executed by the US government since 1953. Challenges were fought across multiple federal courts on whether to allow the execution of Montgomery, 52, who was put to death by lethal injection of pentobarbital, a powerful barbiturate in the Justice Department's execution chamber at its prison in Terre Haute, Indiana. The US Supreme Court, with its conservative majority, cleared the way for her execution after overturning a stay by the 8th US Circuit Court of Appeals. Kelley Henry, Montgomery's lawyer, called the execution "vicious, unlawful, and unnecessary exercise of authoritarian power." "No one can credibly dispute Mrs. Montgomery's longstanding debilitating mental disease - diagnosed and treated for the first time by the Bureau of Prisons' own doctors," Henry said in a statement. She was pronounced deceased at 1:31 a.m. EST (0631 GMT) on Wednesday, the Federal Bureau of Prisons said in a statement. Montgomery was convicted in 2007 in Missouri of



kidnapping and strangling Bobbie Jo Stinnett, then eight months pregnant. Montgomery cut

Montgomery's lawyers asked for Trump's clemency last week, saying she committed her crime after a childhood in which she was abused and repeatedly raped by her stepfather and his friends, and so should instead face life in prison

Stinnett's fetus from the womb. The child survived. Some of Stinnett's relatives traveled to

witness Montgomery's execution, the Justice Department said. As the execution process began, asked by a female executioner if she had any last words, Montgomery responded in a quiet, muffled voice, "No," according to a reporter who served as a media witness. Federal executions had been on pause for 17 years and only three men had been executed by the federal government since 1963 until the practice resumed last year under President Donald Trump, whose outspoken support for capital punishment long predates his entry into politics. Montgomery's lawyers asked for Trump's clemency last week, saying she committed her crime after a childhood in which

she was abused and repeatedly raped by her stepfather and his friends, and so should instead face life in prison. It was one of three executions the US Department of Justice had scheduled for the final full week of Trump's administration. Two other executions scheduled for Thursday and Friday have been delayed, for now at least, by a federal judge in Washington, to allow the condemned murderers to recover from COVID-19. The American Civil Liberties Union and some liberal lawmakers had previously opposed the government's plans to execute Montgomery, with ACLU saying her life had been "marred by unthinkable trauma that resulted in documented brain damage and mental illness".

TODAY'S QUOTE

29 cr farmers enrolled for crop insurance

“Crop insurance is the only ‘suraksha kavach’ for farmers from any crop losses arising due to natural disasters. So far, 29 crore farmers have insured their crops under the scheme. Farmers, who have not yet got their crop insured, to get one today itself and secure crops from natural disasters.”


— Narendra Singh Tomar, Agriculture Minister



COVID

Vaccine delay could impact GDP

A delay in Covid-19 vaccine distribution could impact GDP growth prospects in the next fiscal year and the Reserve Bank may cut policy rates by 50 basis points by June as inflation cools down, BofA Securities, a foreign brokerage firm, said. It expects GDP growth at 9 per cent in 2021-22.

FOREX (buy rates in ₹)			
US Dollar	77.59		South
Euro	93.7		African Rand5.5
UAE Dirham	21.92		Hong Kong Dollar10.86
Thai Baht	2.8		Japanese Yen0.81
British Pound	104.17		New Zealand Dollar55.41
Australian Dollar	59.61		Saudi Riyal21.45
Canadian Dollar	60.37		Swedish Krona10.16
Swiss Franc	85.83		Singapore Dollar58.02

DELHI THURSDAY 14 JANUARY 2021

BIZ BRIEFS

RBI panel on digital lending

The Reserve Bank on Wednesday constituted a working group to suggest regulatory measures to promote orderly growth of digital lending. The RBI said that the recent spurt and popularity of online lending platforms/mobile lending apps has raised certain serious concerns which have wider systemic implications. The working group, chaired by RBI Executive Director Jayant Kumar Dash, will consist of both internal and external members, and submit its report within three months. “Against this backdrop, a Working Group (WG) is being set up to study all aspects of digital lending activities in the regulated financial sector as well as by unregulated players so that an appropriate regulatory approach can be put in place,” the central bank said.

Forevermark's new collection

Forevermark, the diamond brand from De Beers Group, presented its expertly crafted traditional setting collection to celebrate the harvest festival. The collection is made with less than 1 per cent of the world's natural diamonds and the finest blend of timeless tradition which is perfect for today's contemporary Indian woman. The elegant collection comprises bangles, rings, necklaces, pendants, and earrings in precious yellow and rose gold. “Joy and exuberance is in the air as the first festival of the year is about to begin in various parts of the country. To celebrate this spirit, Forevermark's Traditional Setting collection is a great purchase for women,” said Sachin Jain, Managing Director, De Beers India

Himalaya supports NGO

Himalaya teamed up with The Akshaya Patra Foundation to reach out to communities in Karnataka that are worse hit by the pandemic. The company sponsored 7,146 ‘Happiness Kits’ or dry ration kits and contributed approximately Rs. 4 crores for the mid-day meal programme, since 2016. Through this donation, over 36,300 children have benefited, and 80 lakh mid-day meals have been served. Incidentally, the largest school feeding programme is run by The Akshaya Patra Foundation. Jayashree Ullal, Chief Operating Officer & Chief Financial Officer, The Himalaya Drug Company, said: “Himalaya has always had a strong will to undertake community service. In collaboration with Akshaya Patra, Himalaya aims to bring joy into the lives of children through the distribution of Happiness Kits. We hope these kits provide children and their families the much-needed nourishment to stay healthy and safe.”

Dalmia Cement's CSR initiative

Dalmia Cement (Bharat) Ltd, a subsidiary of Dalmia Bharat Limited, has pledged support to His Royal Highness Prince Charles, for the newly launched green initiative Terra Carta a sustainable roadmap to 2030 for businesses to move towards an ambitious and sustainable future. The Terra Carta is based on a series of recommendations developed by a coalition of global business leaders in almost every sector and outlines ten areas for action and comprises nearly 100 actions for businesses to build a truly sustainable future. Mahendra Singh, MD & CEO, Dalmia Cement (Bharat) Limited, said: “We are proud to be a part of ‘Terra Carta’ as we broadly have the same approach to that of Sustainable Markets Initiative (SMI).”

INFY BEATS ESTIMATES AS Q3 NET RISES 16.6%

Q3 net profit at ₹5,197 cr; IT major ups revenue growth guidance to 4.5-5%

DEBASIS MOHAPATRA
BENGALURU

BEATING estimates, India's second largest IT services company Infosys on Wednesday reported a 16.6 per cent rise in consolidated net profit at Rs 5,197 crore for the third quarter ended December 2020. Gross revenue for the quarter rose 12.3 per cent YoY to Rs 25,927 crore. It was up 5.5 per cent on a sequential basis.

In constant currency terms, revenue growth was 6.6 per cent on year-on-year basis and 5.3 per cent on sequential basis, which was the highest in the eight years. In dollar terms, revenues were at \$3.51 billion, which was 8.4 per cent higher than the same period last fiscal.

For the whole fiscal, the Bengaluru-headquartered firm increased its revenue growth guidance to 4.5-5 per cent in constant currency term. During the last quarter, the IT firm reported operating margin of 25.4 per cent, year-on-year improvement of 350 bps. For the whole fiscal, the company increased its operating margin guidance to 24-24.5 per cent. Digital revenues grew by 31.3 per cent and overall digital revenue crossed more than half of total revenues during this period. (Continued from P1)

“The Infosys team has delivered another quarter of excellent results. Execution of client relevant strategy focused on



Wipro Q3 profit up 20.8% on deal wins

NEW DELHI

IT services major Wipro on Wednesday posted an about 21 per cent increase in consolidated net profit at Rs 2,968 crore for the December 2020 quarter. The net profit attributable to shareholders in the year-ago period was at Rs 2,455.9 crore, according to a regulatory filing by Wipro. Its revenue from operations grew nearly 1.3 per cent to Rs 15,670 crore from Rs 15,470.5 crore in the quarter ended December 2019. Wipro, which gets a bulk of its topline from IT services, said it expects revenues from that business to be in the range of \$2,102 million to \$2,143 million in the March 2021 quarter. This translates into a sequential growth of 1.5 per cent to 3.5 per cent for the March quarter. For the December quarter, IT services revenue grew 3.9 per cent sequentially to \$2,071 million, exceeding the forecast that had been

given by the company in October. In October, Wipro had said it expects its revenue from IT services business to be in the range of \$2,022-2,062 million for the December quarter, a sequential growth of 1.5-3.5 per cent. “Wipro has delivered a second consecutive quarter of strong performance on order booking, revenue and margins. Five of our sectors grew over 4 per cent sequentially. We closed our largest ever deal win in Continental Europe,” Wipro CEO and Managing Director Thierry Delaporte said in a statement. The demand environment is steadily improving, especially for digital transformation, digital operations and cloud services, he added. The company's revenue from IT products during the quarter was about Rs 160 crore (\$21.3 million), while that from Indian state run enterprises business was Rs 240 crore (\$32.8 million). The company has declared a dividend of Re 1 per equity share.

digital transformation continues to drive superior growth, well ahead of the industry. The

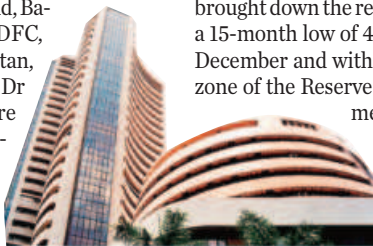
scale of new client partnerships with leading global companies such as Vanguard, Daimler and

Sensex breaks 3-day winning streak

MUMBAI

SNAPPING its three-day record-setting run, the BSE Sensex closed marginally lower after a choppy session on Wednesday as investors pocketed gains in banking and finance stocks amid mixed global cues. Participants also kept their powder dry ahead of some key corporate results, traders said. After gyrating over 721 points during the day, the 30-share BSE index ended 24.79 points or 0.05 per cent lower at 49,492.32. It scaled a record intra-day peak of 49,795.19. The broader NSE Nifty inched up 1.40 points or 0.01 per cent to its fresh closing record of 14,564.85.

The index touched a lifetime high of 14,653.35 during the day. M&M was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rallying 6.24 per cent, followed by SBI, ITC, NTPC, Bharti Airtel and Axis Bank. On the other hand, Bajaj Finance, HDFC, Bajaj Finserv, Titan, Sun Pharma and Dr Reddy's were among the laggards, tumbling up to 2.85 per cent. According



to Binod Modi, Head-Strategy at Reliance Securities, domestic equities were volatile and gave-up early gains as profit booking was visible in a large number of stocks.

“While contraction in November 2020 IIP data indicates more measures by FM in the budget to stimulate economic activities, better than anticipated softening in CPI data for December 2020 negates the looming concerns over low interest rate scenarios. “We continue to believe that that a sharp rebound in high frequency key economic data for December 2020 indicates demand revival, which bodes well for the markets. Further, 3QFY21 corporate earnings are progressing well and are expected to sustain growth, which along with weak dollar and soft monetary policy of global bankers should continue to attract FPIs into domestic equities,” he said. Declining vegetable prices brought down the retail inflation to a 15-month low of 4.59 per cent in December and within the comfort zone of the Reserve Bank, government data showed post market hours on Tuesday.



Hemant Ghai

Sebi bans CNBC Awaaz show host from cap markets

NEW DELHI

REGULATOR Sebi on Wednesday barred CNBC Awaaz show host Hemant Ghai, his wife and mother from the capital markets for indulging in fraudulent trading practices. Hemant Ghai had the advance information about the recommendation to be made on the ‘stock 20-20’ show, co-hosted by him, and that he directly or indirectly used it to his advantage, Sebi said in an interim order.

The show features recommendations on certain stocks to be bought and sold during the day. In addition, he has been directed to cease and desist from undertaking any activity related to giving investment advice, publishing of research reports related to the securities market, till further directions.

Motilal Oswal realty arm to raise ₹800 cr fund

ARCHANA RAO
NEW DELHI

WITH change in consumer behaviour in the 3rd and 4th quarter of 2020 towards housing and residential space, real estate in India is gaining momentum rapidly with firms looking to raise funds.

Motilal Oswal Real Estate (MORE), the real estate private equity arm of Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd., is one such firm looking to raise up to Rs 800 crore through its recently launched fifth real estate fund called “India Realty Excellence Fund V (IREF V).”

“What we are witnessing now is euphoria, and the positive influence is coming in. As the lockdown started getting lifted and the views started forming that it (the Covid-19 pandemic) is not as destructive or as fatal as it was thought to be, residential market has been doing exceedingly well,” Sharad Mittal, Director and CEO of MORE, told mediapersons here on Wednesday.

The mortgage rate, which stood between 8-8.5 per cent in the pre-Covid-19 and pre-lockdown period, has now come down to 6.7 per cent.

“In the last six months follow-



ing the nationwide lockdown, we have seen a strong recovery in demand fuelled by multi-decade low mortgage rates, five-year stagnated prices, reducing demand-supply gap in inventory, government support through stamp duty reductions and the genuine need of staying in an owned home during the Covid pandemic. These factors will lead to a resurgence in residential demand over the next few years. We believe that this is an opportune time to launch our next fund, which will focus on construction finance and post-approval funding,” Mittal said.

The firm is aiming to strengthen its ties with existing investors, with whom they have been associated for four years, including Casagrand Group (11 investments), ATS Group (seven investments), Shriram Properties (three investments) and Kolte-Patil Developers (11 investments).

IFRC's IPO opens next week

NEW DELHI

THE initial public offering (IPO) of Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC), worth over Rs 4,600 crore, will open on January 18 and close on January 20. The price band of the IPO will be of between Rs 25 and Rs 26 per share.

“IRFC is coming up for listing with an over Rs 4600-crore issue in a price band of Rs 25-26 per share. A n c h o r b o o k o n January 15 and the Main book from January 18-20,” said Tuhin Kanta Pandey, Secretary, Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) on Twitter. Established in 1986, the dedicated financing arm of the Indian railways is a public sector enterprise under the administrative control of the Ministry of Railways.

The Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) would utilise the proceeds of the IPO for augmenting equity capital base to meet future capital requirements and general corporate purposes. (IANS)



Fintech firms seek more credit from banks

DEBASIS MOHAPATRA
BENGALURU

FINTECH companies seek provision in the upcoming Budget for higher credit flow from banks and non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) for these new-age players. According to company officials, carving out special liquidity and guarantee schemes for fintech firms in the Budget will ensure higher credit flow from this segment. “We expect the Budget for FY2022 to outlay liquidity and guarantee schemes which can help in increasing the credit supply and help to make capital more accessible to NBFCs. We are anticipating the NBFC sector to grow at a moderate rate and are hoping that the sector also gets fresh funding to support the moderate growth in the coming year,” Rohit Garg, Co-Founder and CEO of SmartCoin.



SmartCoin is an app-based micro-lending platform providing small-ticket loans to the deprived sections of society. He also said the upcoming Budget should promote more banks and larger NBFCs to partner with new-age NBFCs and fintechs who are providing credit to those who are not served by the banking system.

“We also propose partnerships with established banks and NBFCs with fintech players, which will cre-

ate an environment receptive towards initiatives such as Sahmati-account aggregator among others,” Garg added. Officials of other fintech firms said that expanding the scope of the co-origination model will give a fillip to disbursal in the system.

“There has been a widening scope of the RBI's co-origination model, and now the Finance Minister is asking banks to use this model to collaborate with fintechs and share

lending risks equally. If this measure comes into effect, it will reflect a growing and necessary acceptance of the key role that fintechs play in the world of banking and finance,” said Nityanand Sharma, Co-Founder, and CEO of digital payment solution provider, Simpl. Similarly, specialised fintech players such as RevFin, which lends to customers buying electric vehicles apart from providing personal loans, said the Budget should carve out special funds for promoting the electrical vehicle segment.

“We expect the Budget for FY2022 to enable the EV industry to grow and become one of the largest contributors to the GDP. For the industry, the biggest challenges are access to credit and the cost of credit,” said Sameer Aggarwal, Founder & CEO of RevFin.

Trujet rolls out festive fare at ₹921

HANS BUSINESS
HYDERABAD

REGIONAL air carrier Trujet announced massive festive fares at Rs 921 (excluding taxes). Passengers can book tickets till January 15 for the travel period till October 30, 2021. Trujet provides air connectivity to a wider part of India, beyond the traditional hubs, in response to the central government's initiative under the Regional Connectivity Scheme to provide commercial air services to un-served and under-served air routes, the airline said in a press release.

Cities like Belgium, Salem, Mysore, Vidyannagar, Jalgaon, Kandla, Porbandar and Jaisalmer are now served by



Trujet under the UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagarik) scheme, making it one of the pioneers in reaching the depth of India's heart, and making ‘Sky for All’ a possibility, it added.

“Trujet, in support of our nations struggle to revitalize our economy while battling the Covid, is now giving Indians a new reason, with a scintillating offer of exclusive fares starting from 921 plus taxes, to pack their bags and take to the skies again,” it added.

Saina, Srikanth ease into 2nd round, Prannoy out

BANGKOK

OLYMPIC bronze medallist Saina Nehwal and former world no.1 Kidambi Srikanth cruised into the second round of Thailand Open Super 1000 tournament on Wednesday. While Saina will face Thailand's Busanan Ongbamrungphan, Srikanth faces Malaysia's Lee Zii Jial, who beat India's HS Prannoy in the final match of the day.

Saina registered a 21-15, 21-15 win over Malaysia's Kisona Selvaduray while Srikanth beat compatriot Sourabh Verma 21-12, 21-11.

In a match that lasted 36 minutes, Saina was dominant after the score was 4-4 in the first game. Her opponent saved a couple of game points but Saina finished the first game off in 17 minutes. She then raced to a 11-5 lead in the second game and, eventually, saw it through to the end.

Commonwealth Games gold medal winner Srikanth continued the good form he found at the Denmark Open in October as he comprehensively took down Sourabh in 31 minutes. Sourabh's brother Sameer Verma later lost his first round match to Indonesian Shesar Hiren Rhustavito 21-15, 21-17.

Prannoy lost to Malaysian Lee Zii Jia in 21-13, 14-21, 8-21 in a match that lasted 55 minutes. He was dominant in the first game and controlled much of the first half of the second. However, Jia pulled away after 9-9, soaring to an

18-12 lead. Prannoy could take only two more points in the game before Jia squared it off.

In the decisive third game, Prannoy remained competitive until 7-7, after which Jia won nine consecutive points. Prannoy won one more point and before the Malaysian finished the match.

Star men's doubles pair Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy fought back to beat their South Korean opponents Kim Gi Jung and Lee Yong Dae 19-21, 21-16, 21-14 in a first-round match that lasted one hour and eight minutes.

Parupalli Kashyap exited from the tournament after he retired in the third game of his first-round clash against Canada's Jason Anthony Ho-Shue owing to a calf injury.

After losing the first game 9-21, Kashyap made a comeback in the second game to clinch it 21-13. The third game

saw Ho-Shue lead 14-8, but the Indian decided to retire and as a result, the Canadian progressed to the second round. MR Arjun and Dhruv Kapila narrowly lost their men's doubles opening round contest 21-13, 8-21, 22-24 to Malaysian pair Ong Yew Sin and Teo Ee. Mixed doubles pair Sumeeth Reddy and Sikki Reddy bowed out after losing 20-22, 17-21 to Tang Chun Man and Tse Ying Suet in their first round clash.

On Tuesday, in a dramatic turn of events, Saina Nehwal, Kashyap, and Prannoy were cleared to compete in the tournament, just hours after they were forced to withdraw from the event.

Saina and Prannoy had been forced to withdraw from the tournament after they tested positive for Covid-19. Kashyap, the husband of Saina, also had to withdraw as he was sharing a room with his wife and was asked to self-quarantine. (HANS)

BWF working over testing row

BANGKOK: Badminton World Federation on Wednesday said it is working with Thailand Open organisers to ensure "comfortable" COVID-19 testing conditions during the tournament after Indian shuttler Kidambi Srikanth was left with a bloodied nose following a test.

Former world number one Srikanth on Tuesday got a bloodied nose after undergoing multiple COVID-19 tests and miffed at the poor treatment of health officials at Thailand Open, the Indian called it "unacceptable". The BWF said the Badminton Association of Thailand explained the reasons behind the bleeding. "Kidambi Srikanth got a bloodied nose after undergoing multiple COVID-19 tests. The athlete had been swabbed three times earlier with the most recent one possibly causing irritation and fragility of the capillaries," the BWF said in a statement. (PTI)

THAILAND OPEN



Goa FC looking to close gap on top in match against Jamshedpur

MARGAO (GOA)

FC Goa may be third on the table at the halfway mark of the Indian Super League (ISL) season but they are 10 points behind leaders Mumbai City FC. They will be looking to close down that gap when they take on Jamshedpur FC at the Fatorda Stadium on Thursday.

Goa finished top of the table last season but have struggled to get desired results despite dominating possession in most of their games. Ferrando's men conceded the first goal in eight out of their 10 matches.

Goa took all three points in their last match against Jamshedpur thanks to a late winner from Igor Angulo.

However, coach Juan Ferrando seemed confident that he had addressed the issues in the concerned departments. "It's (Jamshedpur) a good team and have very good players. For us, it's a new chapter and we are working every day to improve some details in defence and some details in attack. We are not going to repeat the same problems against Jamshedpur,"



RESULT
Odisha FC lose to Chennaiyin FC
1-2

Jamshedpur need to further solidify their defence after conceding 3 in their last game

said Ferrando.

Jamshedpur are yet to find a player who can get them goals apart from Nerijus Valskis. The Lithuanian has scored 8 out of 12 goals for Jamshedpur this season. Jamshedpur coach Owen Coyle is well aware his side cannot make any mistakes against FC Goa, who dominate possession and are lethal in attack.

Saha could come in as a specialist wicketkeeper and bat at No. 7 while Rishabh Pant could play as a pure batsman at No. 6 with Agarwal in at No. 5.

But if Agarwal is unfit or if India think of bolstering their bowling as they may not have the services of Jasprit Bumrah and could even feature a semi-fit R Ashwin, it may prompt India to go for someone who can bat and bowl a bit much in the mould of Ravindra Jadeja.

In case India bring in Sundar, the eleven may be: Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane, Rishabh Pant, Wriddhiman Saha, Washington Sundar, R Ashwin, Mohammed Siraj, Navdeep Saini, Shardul Thakur/Jasprit Bumrah/T Natarajan. The line-up with Washington Sundar will ensure that India's batting runs till No. 8 while they will also have five bowlers.

If they choose to bring in Agarwal, they will definitely have a quality batsman but they will feature a bowler less.

India's pace department without Bumrah, who is under an injury cloud, could at best have a combined Test experience of four matches as compared to Australia's 150. And if spinners are included, Australia's experience shoots up to 249 Tests against India's 78, including that of off-spinner R Ashwin. In case Ashwin is not fit to take the field, and Chinaman Kuldeep Yadav does, India's combined bowling experience would at best be an abysmal 10. (HANS)

Daruvala to drive for first all-Indian team at Asian F3 Championship



MUMBAI

FORMULA 2 driver Jehan Daruvala and British Formula 3 runner-up Kush Maini will be

"Our goal is to take Indian Motorsport to new heights. Asian F3 is just the beginning," Navjeet Gad-hoke, owner of Mumbai Falcons, which came into existence just last year, said. "With Jehan and Kush, we have the best driver line-up on the grid. We are confident of going all the way and winning the Championship," he added.

The Asian F3 Championship is the continent's most competitive racing event, with nine strong teams boasting of multiple F2 and F3 drivers, competing. The five-round 15-race long season will kick off in Dubai on January 29 and conclude on February 20 in Abu Dhabi. (HANS)



Chettri, Ashalata find place in fans' Indian teams of the decade

NEW DELHI

SUNIL Chhetri and Ashalata Devi have found a place in the respective men's and women's Indian teams of the decade chosen by fans.

The All India Football Federation (AIFF) had invited fans to vote for creating a team of the decade for the Indian men's team on December 31. Fans voted from list of 29 players for the men's team who represented India over the past decade. AIFF had said that "this will be followed by the fans voting to choose their women's national team of the decade".

"Choosing from a list of 29 players, fans can vote for their picks in each position, namely - goal-keeper (1), full-backs (2), centre-backs (2), wingers

(2), centre-midfielders (2) and strikers (2) - to form their first XI. The players with the most votes in each position will then enter the fans' team of the decade," the AIFF had said.

Men's team of the decade: Gurpreet Singh Sandhu; Subhash Bose, Sandesh Jhingam, Anas Edathodika, Pritam Kotal; Halicharan Narzary, Anirudh Thapa, Rowlin Borges, Udanta Singh; Sunil Chhetri, Jeje Lalpekhlua.

Women's team of the decade: Aditi Chauhan; Roja Devi, Ashalata Devi, Sweety Devi, Dalima Chhibber; Ranjana Chanu, Bem-bem Devi, Ratana Devi, Dangmei Grace; Bala Devi, Anju Tamang. (HANS)



Sundar emerges as a balancing option after he bats, bowls at nets

BRISBANE

INDIA'S weakness in the lower middle-order batting as well as bowling could present an opportunity to all-rounder Washington Sundar in the fourth and final Test that begins at the Gabba here on Friday.

The right arm off-break bowler and left hand batsman, who has played 21 T20 Internationals but just one ODI and no Test, stayed back as a net bowler after the white ball series in which he played all the three T20 matches. The early hints of his inclusion came on Wednesday when he did everything at the nets at the Gabba. He bowled and batted for a reasonable amount of time.

With KL Rahul returning home due to a wrist injury and Mayank Agarwal hit on the hand at the nets, India face a dilemma as they look to bring in someone to replace Hanuma Vihari, who injured his hamstring during the third Test and is unlikely to play at the Gabba as the No. 6 batsman. There is talk that Wriddhiman



"A premium Co-Living Space"

PROPERTY MULTIPLIER
WITHOUT ADDITIONAL INVESTMENT

KT Residency approved by Approved No. PO2400001598

SAFE

Earn extra sft*

AFFORDABLE

9% to 11% Returns

NO MAINTENANCE

Assured rental income for 20years

+91 95337 76694

www.ktresidency.com | sales@kapilproperties.com