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Womenia

Ballet flats styling tips

Classically French and inspired by the delicate style of real ballet dancing shoes, ballet pumps are instantly recognizable as a style. Traditionally, ballet pumps are lightweight and flexible, giving the foot an almost-naked, free feel as you walk; just like ballet shoes. The design is usually rounded at the toe with low sides and a thin sole, often plain and unembellished, though sometimes decorated with a delicate bow at the front.

There are, thankfully, not too many ways you can go wrong with this most versatile of shoe styles. Here are our top tips on what to wear with ballet flats and how to wear ballet flats to make them look their best.

Avoid tights & socks

Wearing tights, stockings or socks with ballet pumps is a risky business as it creates the possibility for those unsightly pleats and wrinkles around the ankles. If you're going to brave it, keep a close eye on this area throughout the day, but we think barefoot is always best.

Be careful with strap styles

Ballet pumps with thick ankle straps can visually take a lot of length off your legs. If you have fairly short legs, we would recommend avoiding ballet pumps with straps or lace-up around the ankle and lower leg to keep the legs looking as long as possible.

Go nude

Nude-coloured ballet flats create a fantastic leg-lengthening effect when worn with bare legs, so invest in a pair of simple nude flats to take advantage of this simple visual illusion.

Show some skin

Ballet flats look most flattering when the lower leg or ankles are showing. Try to keep dresses and skirts above the knee or wear with cropped trousers that show your ankles for a super on-trend look. If you do want to pair with below-the-knee dresses and skirts, we recommend you go for loose, flowing skirt styles to set the look off best.

Accessorise it big

The simplicity of your ballet flats could always benefit from a touch of balancing-out. To achieve this, complete your outfit with several statement accessories such as chunky necklaces, a large clutch or a bold belt.



'Kasheer' in English voices diabolical betrayal of Kashmiri Hindus

Originally written by Sahana Vijayakumar in Kannada in 2018, "Kasheer: A Diabolical Betrayal of Kashmiri Hindus" in its English translation brings forth to a larger audience the story of Kashmiri Hindus and the unfortunate mass exodus of the community from their motherland in 1990, against the backdrop of Kashmir's Islamisation.

Translated into English after the abrogation of Section 370 in the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, the powerful book comes across as "the plaintive cry of the Kailash Pandit".

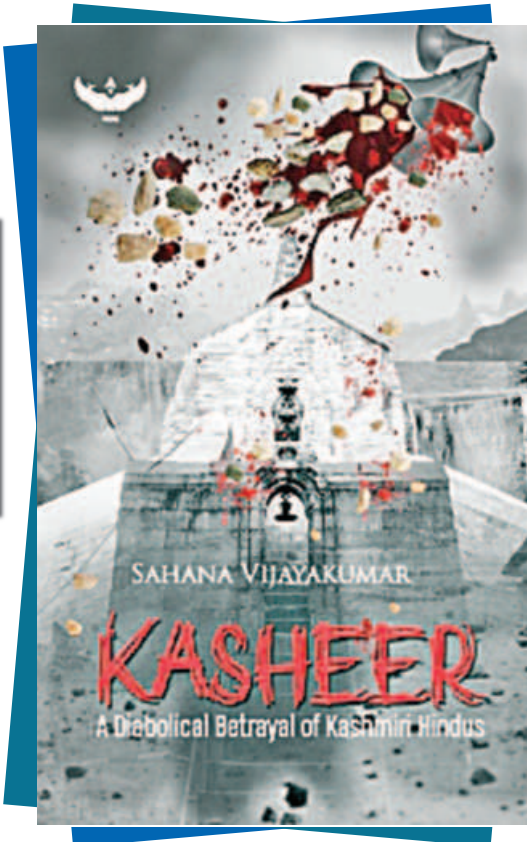
Contending that the reporting on Kashmir has whitewashed the human tragedy of Kashmiri Hindus, "Kasheer" retells the tale in a fictionalised account which is all too real, and catches the facts of deception, betrayal, propaganda and political ambitions that have all but erased the memories of oppression of Kashmiri Hindus from the nation's conscience. It extricates the truth of human tragedy and presents it with brutal honesty.

Vijayakumar undertook first-hand research during her visit to Kashmir and interviewed hundreds of locals for the book. According to her, the Kashmir issue cannot be understood without grasping the layers of traditionalism, reformism, secularism and fundamentalism within Islam.

"It is a travesty that some stories go untold, lost in the cacophony of dominant narratives and complex realities. The story of the Kashmiri Hindus is one such tale. As necessary it is to wish that the coming days are filled with optimism for Kashmir, it is equally essential to know the unfortunate story of the Kashmiri Hindus who were driven out of their mother-



Sahana Vijayakumar



land. This is their story. This is the story of Kashmir," she said about the book.

Covering the genesis of Kashmir and its progress from social, religious and political dimensions, the novel not only visualises both the contemporary and historical pictures of Kashmir, but also scrutinises the underlying philosophies of Sanatana Dharma and Semitic religions, she said.

The bold narration uses multiple metaphors, including that of Aarti Kaul's unconceived womb, to voice out what happened to Kashmiri Hindus.

The book derives its name from Koshur language, in which Kashmir translates to "Kasheer".

Noting that the author has synthesised the historical perspective and the contemporary reality pertaining to Kashmir very well, renowned Kannada scholar S.L. Bhyrappa, who has written

Author Sahana Vijayakumar undertook first-hand research during her visit to Kashmir and interviewed hundreds of locals for the book. According to her, the Kashmir issue cannot be understood without grasping the layers of traditionalism, reformism, secularism and fundamentalism within Islam

the book's foreword, said that she connected with the very few Kashmiri Hindus who have "returned home" and were living in ghettos, and witnessed all the places that bear testimony to thousands and thousands of religious conversions under intimidation, rape, murder and bloodshed.

According to Sankrant Sanu, the Founder and CEO of Garuda Prakashan, the book's story - having come from a South Indian writer - unites the discourse around Kashmir across Indian regions, and reinforces the idea that Kashmir is a national issue. The Kannada book was translated into English by Hemanth Shanthigrama, a London-based technology professional. It has been translated and published in Marathi and Hindi as well.

GET RID OF MARKS ON SKIN

Vitamin E is a nutrient your body needs to support your immune system and help your cells to regenerate. It also has antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties that make getting enough essential to your everyday health.

Vitamin E is most commonly known for its benefits for skin health and appearance. It can be applied topically to your face to reduce inflammation and make your skin look younger. Many people also swear by the effects of topical vitamin E when it's applied to the face overnight.

Vitamin E on face as overnight treatment

Vitamin E oil can be used on your face as an overnight anti-aging treatment. Since vitamin

E has a thick consistency, it's best to apply it before bed so that it can fully absorb.

If applied in the morning, you may have difficulty putting makeup or serums on top of it. Typically, you can apply a serum or oil mixture containing vitamin E as an all-over treatment on your face. This is different than using vitamin E to spot-treat a blemish, using a beauty treatment mask for a brief period of time, or taking an oral supplement that contains vitamin E.

Vitamin E masks

Beauty mask treatments that contain vitamin E may have skin-softening and anti-aging benefits. Masks with vitamin E tend to be paired with other ingredients, such as vitamin C.

Create your own vitamin E mask by combining vitamin E oil with skin-soothing almond oil, a squeeze of fresh lemon juice, honey, and mashed avocado. Leaving this mixture on your face for 10 to 20 minutes may boost your skin's clarity, brightness, and softness. Remember that vitamin E is fat-soluble, which means it can build up in your skin layer as well as in your body. To keep from clogging your pores or throwing off your skin's natural oil balance, don't use vitamin E treatments more than once or twice a week.

Vitamin E for face benefits

Using vitamin E oil for your face can help you in several different ways. Keep in mind the

evidence to back up these benefits varies, and some of it is largely anecdotal.

Hyperpigmentation

Dark patches on your skin can be caused by too much pigment (melanin), which is triggered by hormones or other causes, called melasma, this condition is believed to be treatable through the use of topical vitamin E.

Preventing aging and wrinkles on your face

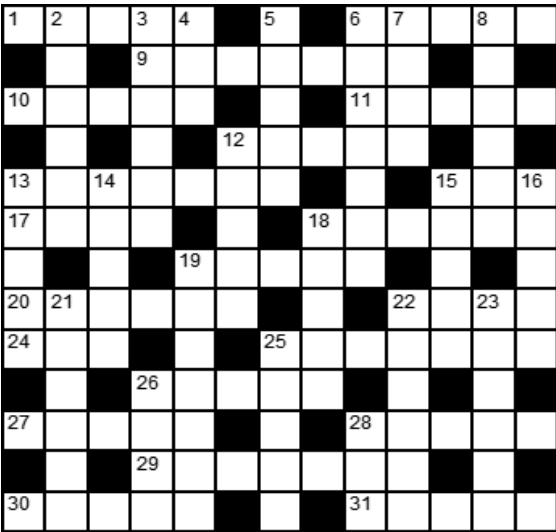
Vitamin E is high in antioxidants, and it affects blood circulation. That might be why people notice a difference in the firmness and structure of their skin after topical use of vitamin E oil.

Treating acne scarring

Some people swear by vitamin E as a treatment for acne scarring. However, studies to understand if vitamin E works for this purpose indicate it isn't as effective as one might think. While vitamin E does promote circulation, it doesn't appear to speed healing. That means that using it for acne scarring might not give you the results you want.

For smooth, soft lips

Topical vitamin E oil can be used to relieve chapped, dry lips. Since vitamin E promotes cell turnover and regeneration, using it on dry lips brings new cells to the surface faster. The thick and oily consistency of vitamin E oil can also prevent further irritation.



SOLUTION TO JANUARY 11

CROSSWORD

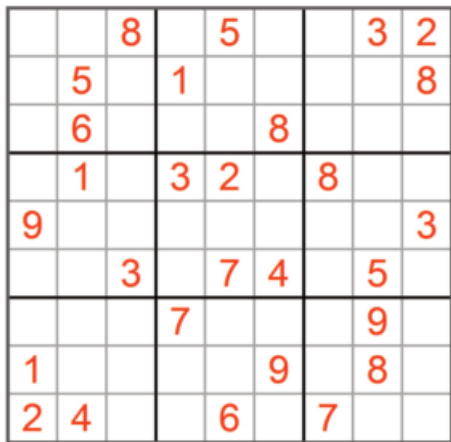
Across

- Unit of magnetic field strength (5)
- Circumferential measure (5)
- Employees (7)
- Distinguished, acclaimed or eminent (5)
- Portents (5)
- Watchful guardian (5)
- Jailbird (7)
- Asian honorific (3)
- Cleveland's lake (4)
- Fall of rain (6)
- Nerdy (5)
- Mementos (6)
- Prayer ending (4)
- Female sibling (3)
- Provide surplus income (7)
- Delete or rub out (5)
- Cranium (5)
- Very strange (5)
- Calls (7)
- Loafed (5)
- Severe (5)

Down

- One that unlawfully seizes an inheritance (6)
- Deflect or turn aside (6)
- Do lawn work (3)
- Go round (5)
- Sulky (7)
- Distinctive doctrines (4)
- Term of holding (6)
- Pinnacles (5)
- American coins (5)
- Notches (5)
- Slough (5)
- Sarcasm or ridicule (5)
- Dodge work (5)
- Twisted (7)
- Made a porcine sound (6)
- Bring to a halt (6)
- Simpler (6)
- City in central Japan (5)
- German river (4)
- Abstract being ? (3)

SUDOKU



SOLUTION TO JANUARY 11



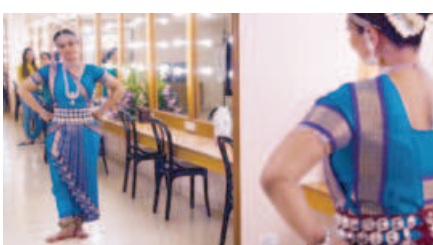
NEWS ROUNDUP

Kajol on working on women-dominated set of 'Tribhanga'

Actress Kajol enjoyed working on the women-dominated set of her upcoming digital film Tribhanga: Tedhi Medhi Crazy, and recalled how there was a time when men were not willing to participate in gender conversations.

"There was so much estrogen on 'Tribhanga' sets that we completely beat the testosterone. We had too much fun on the sets and cracked multiple dirty jokes, if you saw the BTS (behind the scenes) of this film -- you would be in splits," Kajol said.

"We were so entertained during the shooting that we rolled on the floor laughing -- it was a blast altogether. There was this one point where Renuka and I had this huge conversation about men and all of a sudden you could see there was utter silence on the set.



We realized that all the men around me had kept quiet and no one was willing to look up and participate in this conversation," she added.

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

Talking about her experience working with Kajol, Renuka said: "Kajol is a livewire, she keeps the atmosphere on the set alive. I was so glad to see her involvement while shooting, she made sure that each and every person on set felt comfortable and worked with ease."

"Working with her was really fun, there were multiple occasions where we were shooting for emotional scenes and before we used to cut, we burst out in laughter as if we hadn't just shot a serious scene. The trust she had in me and the way she has justified the role is beautiful and I consider myself lucky to find someone like her," she added.

"Tribhanga: Tedhi Medhi Crazy" will be released on Netflix on January 15.

Lucknow Zoo suspends bird exchange programme, closes aviary for visitors

LUCKNOW

THE Lucknow Zoo has suspended its bird exchange programme and closed its aviary for visitors after Uttar Pradesh confirmed outbreak of the avian influenza when samples of a couple of bird carcasses in Kanpur zoo were found positive for the disease.

The Kanpur Zoological Park has already been closed for visitors till further orders. The outbreak was confirmed in seven states -- Kerala, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh -- as on January 10. On Monday, bird flu has also been

confirmed in Delhi, Uttarakhand and Maharashtra.

"The bird section of the Lucknow Zoo was closed on Sunday and the bird exchange programme has been temporarily suspended. The bird-exchange programme is carried out on a regular basis. Last year, we had brought two to three birds in exchange," Director of the Nawab Wajid Ali Shah Zoological Garden R K Singh told PTI on Monday.

Vitamin content in the food for birds has been increased. Eggs and chicken given to birds have been stopped and replaced with mutton and more fruits," he said. Footwash containing potassium permanganate

has been kept at the entrance of the zoo, so that visitors do not bring any viral infection inside, Singh said. "All keepers in the zoo have been informed to immediately report unusual conditions found in any bird and isolate it immediately. The samples will be sent to Bhopal for testing," he said.

Meanwhile, in Shahjahanpur's Kalaan area locals claimed that three ducks were found dead on Friday morning. Additional Director of Animal Husbandry department Jeevan Dutt on Monday said, "We got information today. Sample from other ducks will be sent to Bareilly for testing." In Bareilly, senior scientist of

Indian Veterinary Research Institute V K Gupta said samples from Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand were being received by the lab for testing.

Deputy chief veterinary officer of Pilibhit said information about death of some hens were reported in the district, adding prima facie the birds died due to poisoning. Their samples have been sent for testing. In Ballia, carcasses of five crows were found on Sunday night in Sahatara police station area. Chief veterinary officer of the district Ashok Mishra said, "The forest department has taken all the carcasses in its custody and those were being sent to Bhopal for testing."



HC allows woman's plea to terminate 28-week pregnancy

NEW DELHI

THE Delhi High Court on Monday allowed a woman's plea seeking the termination of her 28-week pregnancy on the ground that the foetus suffered from a serious birth defect in which a baby is born with an underdeveloped brain and incomplete skull.

The order holds importance as the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act of 1971 prohibits abortion of a fetus after 20 weeks of gestation.

On January 7, a bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh had asked the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) to submit a report on the feasibility of terminating her pregnancy.

The woman told the court that an ultra-sonography at the gestational age of 27 weeks five days found that the fetus suffered



NEW DELHI

THE Delhi High Court on Monday directed the Delhi government to treat as representation a plea seeking postponement of the admission process for the nursery class for the 2021-22 academic session amid the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

A single-judge bench of the high court presided by Justice

HC on nursery admissions

Prateek Jalan disposed off the matter after recording the statement of the Delhi government's counsel. Delhi government counsel Ramesh Singh submitted before the bench that the information or opinion provided by the petitioner in his representation

from anencephaly which makes it incompatible with life.

The petitioner asserted that it was "perfectly safe" for a woman to abort a fetus at any point during her pregnancy with advances in technology.

The woman claimed, "The ceiling of 20 weeks is therefore arbitrary, harsh, discriminatory and violates Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution of India."

will be taken into account while framing guidelines or taking any decision with regard to nursery admissions.

The plea filed by advocate Rajat Vats states that outbreak of COVID-19 has led to threatening situation for the entire humanity across the world that resulted in deaths of lakhs of people and is creating hardship for millions of people across the globe.

Abhay Chautala gives 'conditional' resignation over farmers' unrest



CHANDIGARH

GRANDSON of former Deputy Prime Minister Chaudhary Devi Lal and Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) legislator Abhay Chautala on Monday sent a "conditional" resignation letter to the Vidhan Sabha Speaker, offering to resign from the assembly in Haryana if the Centre failed to repeal the new agricultural laws by January 26.

In his letter, Chautala said it should be considered a resignation from the Assembly if the

Khattar should quit for using force against farmers: Selja

GURUGRAM

THE Congress demanded that Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar resign in wake of the police using force against farmers who were protesting against the farm laws in the state's Karnal.

Congress' state chief Kumari Selja said: "The Chief Minister should resign as he has lost the

confidence of the people, especially farmers."

She said that this is not the first time Haryana Police has used force against the farmers.

Over 2,000 farmers, apart from a large number of officials and Cabinet Ministers, were present at the venue when protesters swarmed the site.

Central government failed to repeal the three farm laws by January 26.

He's the lone INLD legislator in the Vidhan Sabha.

His party's breakaway faction, the Jannayak Janta Party (JJP), is the crucial coalition partner in the state BJP government led by Manohar Lal Khattar.

JJP leader and Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala

has been maintaining stoic silence in public over the issue of farmers, who have been staging protests on the border of the national capital, demanding revoking of the agricultural laws, for the past 47 days.

The INLD and the JJP is primarily a rural Jat-centric party with the farmers as its core vote bank. The Jat, a dominant farming community, comprises 28 per cent of state's population.

BHEL secures order for steam power plant from NALCO

NEW DELHI

UNDER stiff competitive bidding, BHEL has secured a prestigious order for a Steam and Power Plant from National Aluminium Corporation Limited (NALCO).

Valued at around Rs.450 Crore, the order has been placed on BHEL by NALCO for its 5th Stream Alumina Refinery Expansion Project at Damanjodi, Odisha.

BHEL's scope in the contract includes design, engineering, manufacturing, supply, erection, testing and commissioning of 1x300 TPH Coal Fired Boiler, 18.5 MW Steam Turbine Generator and associated auxiliaries, including FGD and SCR.

With this order, BHEL has not only maintained its track record of supplying all of NALCO's power plants, for both their Smelter plant (10x120 MW) at Angul and Alumina Refinery plant (5x18.5 MW) at Damanjodi, but will also be contributing to the Govt. of India's 'Make in India' initiative.

BHEL is India's largest manufacturer of power generation equipment with an installed base of over 1,90,000 MW of power plant equipment globally. The company has a proven track record in providing customised solutions for industry specific steam and power requirements to all major industries including petrochemicals, refineries, fertilizers, cement, steel, chemicals, sugar, paper, etc. in India, and has footprints in almost all major industrial plants across the nation.

AAP MLA Bharti held in UP, youth hurls ink at him

AMETHI/RAE BARELI

AAM Aadmi Party MLA Somnath Bharti on Monday had ink hurled at him in Rae Bareli and was arrested later for allegedly making objectionable remarks last week. He was arrested for criminal intimidation and promoting enmity between groups, police said, following remarks allegedly referring to Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and the state's hospitals.

Minutes earlier, a youth hurled ink at the Delhi MLA when he was emerging out of a guest house. Superintendent of Police (of Rae Bareli) Shlok Kumar said, "Ink was thrown on the AAP MLA, and the matter is being probed." According to a purported video link, the AAP MLA recently said in Hindi, "Children are being born in hospitals, but they are of dogs."

Shortly after ink was flung at him, Bharti also retweeted a video clip in which he is heard using a derogatory term for Adityanath, while talking about "atrocities on women" in the state. Amethi police ar-



AAP leader Somnath Bharti faced an ink attack in Rae Bareli where he had gone to inspect government schools

rested Bharti, a former Delhi minister, in Rae Bareli on Monday morning, on the basis of a complaint filed by BJP worker Somnath Sahu over the alleged remarks made last week. The arrest took place less than an hour after the ink-throwing incident.

Reacting to the ink-throwing incident, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal hit out at Adityanath. "Yogiji, our MLA Somnath Bharti ji was going to see your government school. Ink was thrown at him? Are your schools so bad? If someone goes to see your school then why do you get so scared? Fix the school. If you do not know how to do, then ask Manish Sisodia," he tweeted.

"The schools which you are ashamed to show our children study there UP. Yogi ji. You are ruining the future of crores of children of Uttar Pradesh," Kejriwal said in another tweet. Shalabh Mani Tripathi, information advisor to the Uttar Pradesh chief minister, said, "Everybody has a right to contest polls and do politics in a democracy, and level allegations against each other, it is welcome."

DELHI RIOTS: BAIL GIVEN TO 5 ACCUSED IN TWO CASES

NEW DELHI

A Delhi court Monday granted bail to five persons in two separate cases related to the communal violence in north east Delhi in February last year.

Additional Sessions Judge Vinod Yadav granted the relief to them on furnishing a bail bond of Rs 20,000 with one surety each in the case related to the alleged vandalism and torching of a car showroom during the riots in Dayalpur area.

The court granted bail to Shebu Khan, Hamid, Shakeel and Jaan Mohd them bail on the ground of parity, saying recently as many as 13 co-accused persons were enlarged on bail in the case. It further noted that they were arrested in the case after about 10 months of the incident on February 25, 2020.



they had been falsely implicated in the matter and were not present at the alleged scene of crime on the date of the incident.

The court also granted bail to Mohd Tahir on furnishing a bail bond of Rs 20,000 with one surety of like amount in the case related to vandalism and looting of a shop allegedly by a riotous mob in Gokalpur area. It noted that Tahir has neither been named in the FIR nor there are specific allegations against him in the matter. It further said he was neither visible in any CCTV footage nor his call detail record location was available on record.

The court directed all the accused not to tamper with evidence and to install the "Aarogya Setu" app on their mobile phones. During the hearing, advocate Nasir Ali, appearing for Shakeel and Jaan, claimed

Work on Varanasi-Delhi bullet train project gains momentum

NEW DELHI



OVER three years after Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of India's first 508-km Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail corridor, the work on the second such rail corridor in the country -- on the Delhi-Varanasi route -- has gained momentum.

An aerial LiDAR survey of the 800-km Delhi-Varanasi High-Speed Rail (DVHSR) corridor has now been undertaken by the Railways as part of the project to connect Modi's parliamen-

tary constituency with the national capital through the bullet train.

The National High-Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL) launched the LiDAR survey for the Delhi-Varanasi route from Uttar Pradesh's Greater Noida, wherein a helicopter fitted with state-of-the-art aerial LiDAR and imagery sensors will capture data related to the ground survey along the proposed route.

NHSRCL spokesperson Sushma Gaur said that the light detection and ranging survey

(LiDAR) technology helps gather all ground details and data in three to four months as against normal time period of 10-12 months through the traditional method.

She said that the ground survey is a crucial activity for any linear infrastructure project as it provides accurate details of the geographical areas around the proposed railroad alignment. "This technique uses a combination of laser and GPS data, flight parameters and actual photographs to give an accurate survey data," she said.

Gaur said that the LiDAR survey will capture data of 300 metres (150 metres on either side) of the proposed railroad alignment area. Thereafter, three-dimensional (3D) topographical map of 50-metre corridor on either side of the proposed alignment on a scale of 1:2500 will be made available to design vertical and horizontal alignments, structures, location of stations and depots, land requirement for corridor, and identification of project-affected plots/structures, and right of way etc.

The NHSRCL official said

that as per nine standard benchmarks set by the Survey of India in this field, 86 master and 350 secondary control points have been established. These coordinates are used to fly the chopper on the Delhi-Varanasi HSR corridor route.

"To provide clear pictures of structures, trees and other minute ground details, 60 megapixel cameras have been used in the LiDAR survey," she said, adding that the NHSRCL has been entrusted to prepare the Detailed Project Reports for seven high-speed rail corridors.

Return of the virus in China

CHINA is seeing the Coronavirus comeback. Chinese authorities have seen scores of Covid-19 cases in Hebei province bordering Beijing. This is the most serious in recent times, it is said. The country has ordered people not to travel for the Lunar New Year celebrations. Schools closed a week early and conducted testing on a massive scale. The NHC reported 76 new asymptomatic patients for all of mainland China, up from 27 a day earlier. China does not count these individuals, who are infected with the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes the disease but not exhibiting symptoms, as confirmed Covid-19 cases.

Total number of confirmed Covid-19 cases in mainland China now stands at 87,536, while the death toll remained unchanged at 4,634. The Hebei outbreak has raised particular concern because of the province's proximity to the nation's capital. Parts of the province are under lockdown and interprovincial travel has been largely cut off, with those entering Beijing to work hav-

ing to show proof of employment and a clean bill of health, reports suggest. Hebei has recorded 265 confirmed cases and at least 181 asymptomatic cases over the last eight days. More than a year after the first cases were reported from Wuhan, the virus is back to test the resolve of the Chinese authorities again. And it's getting the same treatment.

The problem, however, is that the virus might have escaped too far and wide this time to be stopped by a lockdown. This is shaping into China's greatest viral challenge since Wuhan. Swift and drastic measures such as mass testing, extensive contact tracing and strict lockdowns have defined China's response to sporadic local outbreaks. Last October, the eastern port city of Qingdao tested more than 10 million people in just four days over a dozen locally transmitted cases. In late October, the prefecture of Kashgar in the far western region of Xinjiang rolled out mass testing for nearly five million people and imposed lockdown measures after a single asymptomatic coronavirus case was reported.

But this time around, some public health experts in China said the re-emergence of the virus in Shiji-

azhuang was detected too late. Rural China seems to be the weakest link in the chain. The Chinese authorities have neglected the rural areas. Anyway, news does not flow freely in the country and no news comes from rural China at all. Chinese authorities had completely barricaded the rural population's movement and interaction with the cities when the Wuhan virus began spreading. Another major set-back for the health programme of the country came from lack of adequate tests.

Epidemiological investigations conducted by the city's local health authorities showed that many coronavirus patients who developed symptoms had first gone to local clinics, which are not equipped to conduct nucleic acid tests or give them proper treatment. As the virus spread silently, villagers continued to take part in gatherings. Local health authorities have found that many infections were linked to funerals, weddings and other social gatherings. Coming as it did, this year's virus comeback poses a real challenge to China in view of the festival season as well due to its neglect of the rural population.

Indian agriculture at crossroads



MARKET, STATE OR COLLECTIVE ACTION?

DR RAMESH CHENNAMANENI



FARMERS are protesting against laws that deregulate the sale of crops, allowing private buyers freer rein in a marketplace that has long been dominated by government subsidies. Farmers say the reforms to laws that have long protected small landholders' place in the market will put them at risk of losing their businesses and land to big corporations.

However, what is surprisingly missing in this narrative is the culpability of the market in the mess that the agricultural profession is in today, as well as evidence on whether, and how, the state and market have responded to the agrarian crisis that germinated over six decades. The results after decades of agriculture development suggests that farmers continue to be vulnerable to frequent episodes of losses in their economic activity that neither the state nor the markets have been able to mitigate.

Market and State

In his book, *Wealth of Nations* (published in 1776), Adam Smith explains that in a market economy, guided by the motive of self-interest, individual decisions collectively determine economy's allocation of scarce resources through free markets for the social good. The concept of "self-interest" has been at the core of his economic theory postulated as "invisible hand" of the market.

Nobel Laureate Joseph E Stiglitz says pointing to Adam Smith's "invisible hand" that the reason that the invisible hand often seems invisible is that it is often not there. Whenever there are "externalities"—where the actions of an individual have impacts on others for which they do not pay, or for which they are not compensated—markets will not work well.

Operation of demand-and-supply forces, through perfectly competitive market, results in optimal allocation of resources. That is why it is said that a perfect market leads to social efficiency and maximum social welfare. But, in the real world, perfect competition is not so 'perfect' as it appears at first. That means unless demand and supply reflect, respectively, all the benefits and all the costs of producing and consuming a product, the prices determined in perfect competition may not necessarily be 'perfect' or 'right' ones. If so, perfect competition cannot ensure maximum social welfare or markets fail to achieve social efficiency.

Economists call this 'market failure'. In ordinary sense, market failure means that prices fail to provide the proper signals to economic agents—consumers and producers—so that the market does not operate in the traditional way. This is also precisely reflected in agriculture markets in India, where neither the producing farmers nor the consuming citizenry is satisfied with the prices.

However, government policy interventions, such as taxes, subsidies, wage and price controls, and regulations, may also lead to an inefficient allocation of resources, or government failure. Given the tension between the economic costs caused by market failure and costs caused by "government failure", policymakers attempting to maximize economic value are sometimes faced with a choice between two inefficient outcomes, i.e., inefficient market outcomes with or without government interventions.

Government should play an important role in banking and securities regulation, channel its investment support through direct transfers, to enforce contracts and property rights. The real challenge today is about finding the right balance between the market and government and to explore own institutions beyond the market and the state.

Collective action

The collective action or cooperative approach demonstrated by Elinor Ostrom and others challenges the current economic orthodoxy that there are indeed alternatives to state, privatization and markets in generating wealth and human wellbeing. As is known, between the individual/market/government a range of voluntary, collective associations, producer organizations, cooperatives, and producer companies can evolve efficient and equitable rules to get the most out of common resources. We know that today there is an alternative secure, stable and sustainable model of business owned and controlled by 800 million people worldwide. Agriculture cooperatives with over 400-million-member farmers are responsible for over 50% of agricultural production and marketing in the world. It is no coincidence that the world's most successful and stable economies generally also happen to have the world's most co-operative economies.

Farmer collectives are therefore viewed as an important element in linking smallholders with modern markets (input and output) as they provide many benefits for this interface. Further, primary producers' organizations or collectives are being correctly argued to be the only institutions which can protect small farmers from ill-effects of globalization or make them participate successfully in modern competitive markets.

Producers' organisations not only help farmers buy or sell better due to scale benefits but also lower transaction costs for sellers and buyers, besides providing technical help in production and creating social capital. A striking example is The Gujarat Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation whose Amul brand is a household name transfers 82% of its retail price to farmers in the supply chain. A number of successful cooperatives are running today in India and the need to promote them in the interest of small and marginal farmers is immense.

A unique initiative of Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), which are member-based farmers' institutions with the objective of integration of smallholders into agricultural value chain was taken by Government of India, NABARD over the last 10 years. About 5000 FPOs were formed out of which around 3200 FPOs are registered as Producer Companies which require not only technical handholding support but also adequate capital and infrastructure facilities including fair market linkages for sustaining their business operations. Such basic model of "beyond markets and states", is possible in communities with high levels of autonomy and internal trust when people have a reasonable expectation of influence over the things that affect their lives.

This is because unlike market or state it is only collective action and cooperation where efficiency and equity can be combined and the profits arising out of their business are returned to those who trade with the business, thus keeping the wealth generated by local businesses in the local community for the good of the local environment and families.

(The author is MLA and Humboldt Expert in Agriculture, Environment and Cooperation)

Farm Acts emasculate protective laws



Madabhushi Sridhar Acharyulu

The Supreme Court recently said that farmers have every right to protest the Farm Acts. On a different occasion, most recently SC expressed concern that farm agitation is going beyond reasonable time. The Centre after failing to break

deadlock in talks with farmers, stated that the matter should be left to the Supreme Court. What is the Supreme Court expected to do? One possibility is that it can declare the three Acts unconstitutional, which should fulfil the demand for nullification of these laws.

Three Farm Acts could be unconstitutional because they are made by Parliament upon the subjects which are exclusively in the domain of states. This is the Constitutional truth. Centre used expression 'food stuff', which is placed amidst subjects of industry and industrial production, in the concurrent list, but Parliament in fact encroached upon the 'agriculture' and 'markets and fairs'. This is misinterpreting the language to suit the Centre and businessmen. Centre is campaigning that farmers' income will be doubled with these laws.

Parliament has no power

Parliament has no power to make any law on agriculture. If Centre makes law conceding the farmers demand to make law on MSP or marketing, they also will be unconstitutional, because of the same reason. Legally, it must be left to the States. The Centre can issue a model legislation, convene, and convince the states to follow.

Calling 'Aadhaar bill' as money bill, was considered fraud on Constitution, in a dissent judgment of Justice D Y Chandrachud. Using concurrent List to deny the States exclusive, plenary legislative domain of States List (II) is against the original scheme of distribution of powers in Indian Federal Constitution. Three lists (Union, States and Concurrent) are crucial for securing the sovereign powers of States. In fact, Concurrent List is innovation of Indian Constitution makes that reduced the rigour of strict mutual exclusion of States and Centre's powers. The three Ordinances made in Covid-19 pandemic were passed during pandemonium in Parliament. Rajya Sabha's support to these laws is 'half-truth' as Deputy Chairman refused to count votes.

Parliament, despite its Constituent power under Article 368 to amend the Constitution, cannot legislate on state subjects, even if two-thirds of its members and half of states agree. Leaving agriculture to States is substantive part of federal character which is basic feature of the Constitution. The doctrine of basic structure laid down by Supreme Court in 1973 prevents Parliament to tamper with share of states sovereignty.

Several laws are made by states using



Parliament has no power to make any law on agriculture. If Centre makes law conceding the farmers demand to make law on MSP or marketing, they also will be unconstitutional, because of the same reason. Legally, it must be left to the States. The Centre can issue a model legislation, convene, and convince the states to follow

Entries 14, 18, 28 of List III for facilitating the support to small and marginal farmers, which the centre cannot abrogate calling farm produce as 'food stuff'. Even after these three farm laws, Constitutional powers of states do not vanish. The states can develop a policy, or law and enforce it.

Encroaching on State subjects

Entry 14, 18 & 28 of List II are: "14. Agriculture, including agricultural education and research, protection against pests and prevention of plant diseases".

18. Land, that is to say, rights in or over land, land tenures including the relation of landlord and tenant, and the collection of rents; transfer and alienation of agricultural land; land improvement and agricultural loans; colonization.

28. Markets and fairs". 'Agriculture' in entry 14 etc, includes all aspects of agriculture in its wide scope such as land, the agricultural operations, seeds etc., as well as the produce and 28 includes Markets and Fairs". It will be obnoxious to say 'agriculture' will not include 'farm produce'. The APMC laws define "farm produce" as "produce of Agriculture".

The 'Entry 26 and 27 of List II are subject to entry 33 of list III which says:

Entry 33. Trade and commerce in, and the production, supply and distribution of, — (a) the products of any industry where the control of such industry by the Union is declared by Parliament by law to be expedient in the public interest, and imported goods of the same kind as such products;

(b) foodstuffs, including edible oilseeds and oils;

The expression 'industry' only covers manufacturing but not its product. Similarly, under Entry 26 and 27, trade and commerce, supply and distribution are separately specified. Unlike "industry", the Entry 14 of List II 'agriculture' is comprehensive and includes the agricultural produce. The sale and purchase of agricultural produce will squarely fall under Entry 28 list II – "markets and fairs". This Entry 28 is not subject to any other Entry of the Concurrent List or the Union List. The states draw all independent and plenary legislative power from this entry.

When centre said that MSP was never law, it is true, it was all through a strong policy separately implemented by all the states and centre facilitated the fixation of MSP. Restrictions on inter-state trade in farm produce are lifted now, which will harm the local farmers and liberate traders to deny the state and even the centre from having stocks of food grains. Facilitating big farmers or giant corporates may lead to export of grain threatening the food security of states and nation as a whole. Telangana has 90 per cent of small farmers holding below 5 acres while they are 80 per cent in country, for whom these three are harm laws, with trader-friendly formulas.

The Constitution under Article 246 says the Centre's law will prevail over contradictory provisions of state law on subjects in concurrent list. But there is an important exception to this rule of repugnancy, if the State's bill is assented by the President, State's law will prevail and override the Centres law in that particular state [Hoechst Pharm Ltd. v. State of Bihar, (AIR

Ensure data security

IT is a matter of grave concern that The Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) has objected to the new WhatsApp privacy policy through which all kinds of personal data, payment transactions, contacts, location, and other vital information of a person who is using WhatsApp will be acquired by itself and can be used for any purpose by WhatsApp. The mobile applications have enabled users to access information and services smoothly, but its providers create trouble by misusing the subscriber's personal data for different purposes. The Government has also constituted laws to ensure cybersecurity. The need of the hour is that the Government should develop a strong mechanism to secure the personal data of people and ban such applications that are not following the laws. People need to be aware and adopt safeguards for data security.

Amit Singh Kushwaha, Satna (MP)

Need for healthy democracy

THE editorial of Jan 11 brought out to the fore, the aspects that mar and stand in the way of healthy democracy in the country, owing to a single party rule in the state, with no worthwhile Opposition in place to question. The dillydallying on conduction of local body election in Andhra

1983 SC 1019, <https://indiankanoon.org/doc/703764/>). The three Bills which are made under concurrent list can be effectively surpassed by the States.

Another power, the States are ignoring is that their law on List II subjects will not attract doctrine of repugnancy at all. If states are courageous enough to make the policies and laws using these provisions, the three laws could become ineffective. However, outcome depends on the legal battle and possibility of objective judicial interpretation of these profound Constitutional principles of equal plenary powers to two tiers of Governments.

Why States surrendered?

The States surrendered and agreed to the Constitution 101st Amendment Act 2016, which added 246A to empower Centre to make GST law covering the States also. This is a major assault on the powers of States and the fiscal federalism of the nation, consequences of which were witnessed when state finances dwindled because of mounting dues, some of states were 'permitted' by centre to take loans for compensating shares of states left unpaid.

The State Agriculture Market laws were primarily intended to support and protect the farmers realizing their weaker positions in the profit-manipulative commercial market. The lambs are left in competition before the wolves. For instance, section 7 of the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020, removes the welfare/support 'umbrella' over the farmers, offered by the State Acts. This Farmer's Empowerment (so called) Act gives overriding effect to the farm agreements. The agreement between farmer and trader, if conflicts with state law, agreement will prevail and not the law, which means the States are surrendering their power not only to the Centre, but also to the corporate dominated agreements.

Tobacco Board case

The Bihar Act rightly listed tobacco as Agriculture produce and APTMC Monghyr levied heavy market fee which ITC Ltd has challenged. The Supreme Court's constitution Bench of CJI G B Pattanaik, YK Sabharwal, Ruma Pall, Brijesh Kumar, held in ITC vs APMC & others: "The State legislatures are competent to enact legislation providing for the levy and collection of a market fee on the sale of tobacco in a market area. Consequently, the Market Acts enacted by the States are valid. The State legislations and the Tobacco Board Act, 1975, to the extent that they relate to the sale of tobacco in market areas, cannot co-exist and the former prevail over the latter". (<https://indiankanoon.org/doc/1783658/>). The states should take lead in making better laws for the welfare of farmers, which is their fundamental duty under Article 37 and 39.

(The writer is Professor of Law, Bennett University and former Central Information Commissioner)

Pradesh on the pretext of Covid situation, and the Covid vaccine roll out in the country is farcical. Elections in several states had taken place even during the peak Covid time, like Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, J&K and Kerala. The recently held local body elections in Kerala, were conducted in three phases in the state, with efficiency, by following rules prescribed under Covid precautions.

Another reason cited for the deferment of the poll in Andhra Pradesh as the grapevine is that the ruling party is rather nervous to have these elections at this juncture as the public mood is clearly against the establishment for series of temple disreputations that the state has witnessed in the recent times. Perhaps the Jagan government took cue from the setback that the TRS suffered in the GHMC polls, in the aftermath of the floods in Hyderabad, in which the TRS came a cropper, giving more elbow room for the BJP to reconsolidate its position from the humble 4 to 48.

It is impossible to imagine Indian electoral scenario without being overshadowed by caste, religion and cash equations. But, the freebies and sops alone cannot give a strong and sustained administration, about which the electorate must be educated in choosing a talented and efficient candidate during the election.

KV Raghuram, Wayanad

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LETTERS

The Covaxin politics

CHHATTISGARH state is well within its right when it pooh-poohs the use of Covaxin in the absence of phase 3 trial data. Like many things in India, the science of vaccine approval too has also been made the politics of chest-thumping nationalism. The hasty nod given to the vaccine has raised eyebrows of the scientists and healthcare experts about a public rollout of a not-fully tested product. There is each and every reason to panic that the hastiest and most hurried launch of drug may culminate in dangerous developments.

E Sethuramalingam, Kollam

A controversial draw to Sydney Test

RACISM rearing its head again in Australia with a hostile crowd at Sydney cricket ground targeting Indian players and in particular Siraj and Bumrah by hurling racist abuses during the third test between India and Australia. As racism and heckling of players is rampant even after several complaints in the past.

However Cricket Australia coming out with a statement that abuse of cricketers by the crowd is unacceptable and going ahead with investigation into the whole

episode is a step the right direction but it must be followed by taking strict action against the culprits so that such ugly incidents do not recur in order to keep aloft the spirit of the gentleman's game.

As India team played with grit throughout, in the end, valiant fight back by Hanuma Vihari and Ashwin ensured a draw in the racism marred test. Overall, it can be said that it is a "victory for India in draw" with a reminder to Australia that there is no place for racism in today's civilised society.

K R Srinivasan, Secunderabad

India shows its mettle

A great fight back from Indian cricket team at Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) with injuries to its many players. After conceding big first innings lead to Aussies in the first innings nobody expected to turn around the things for India in the second innings especially when Jadeja, Pant, Vihari etc., got injured.

Most of the time we appreciate a player for scoring 100 + runs. For a change let's appreciate the players for surviving 100+ balls (Pujara - 200+ Balls, Pant - 110+ Balls, Vihari - 160+ Balls, Ashwin - 120+ Balls) on the final day of the test match against world class bowling of Kangaroos. It is astonishing that both wicket keepers Saha (Sub) & Pant excelled in the same match, one behind and the other in front of the stumps.

V Nagendra Kumar, Hyderabad

FIESTA FOR AVIATION BUFFS

AHOY! HOMETOWN

Sankranti airshow set to sizzle Palamur skies

Scintillating 5-day airshow and paramotoring championship from tomorrow in Mahabubnagar

Air sports, adventure games and others will be cynosure on the occasion to be enjoyed by the youths, students, sportsmen and women and alike

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

TELANGANA Tourism and Vertical World Adventure and Aero Sports would organise Sankranti Air Show and National Paramotoring Championship from January 13 to 17 at Mini Tank Bund in Mahabubnagar.

Addressing a press conference here at the Minister's Quarters on Monday, Tourism Minister V Srinivas Goud said that there will be adventure sports like skydiving, hot air balloons, paramotors, RC drones at the event to be held for five days in Mahabubnagar. He said that they had planned the event at Parade Grounds in Secunderabad but the authorities denied permissions for various reasons hence Mahabubnagar was selected.

He said that though the aerosport was a new form of youth activity, the government had already organised other events during the Telangana Formation Day. The entry is free

THRILLS WITHOUT FRILLS...

MAHABUBNAGAR IS A UNIQUE PLACE FOR ORGANISING SUCH PROGRAMMES



One of the main highlights of the show is adventure sports like skydiving, hot air balloons, paramotors, RC drones at the event

The entry is free for the visitors but the price for joy rides is fixed at Rs1,500 for ten minutes paramotoring activity and Rs 500 for air balloon joy ride

for the visitors but the price for joy rides is fixed at Rs1,500 for ten minutes paramotoring activity and Rs 500 for air balloon joy ride. There will be expert teams for takeoff to safe landing. The aviation lovers, youth, students can experience the sporting experience.

Srinivas Goud said that it was a happy moment for having the national level championship taking place in Mahabubnagar.

He said that earlier, the programmes like paramotoring aerosports used to be organised in metropolitan cities but now the same is being organised in Mahabubnagar which is a unique place for organising such programmes. He said that the team which won the bronze medal in the Thailand International Paramotoring Championship would take part in Mahabubnagar. The participants

who stand in first and second place in this championship are eligible to participate in the international paramotoring championships in future.

He called upon the people to utilise the opportunity being provided on the occasion of Sankranti. There are chances of organising many such national and international level sports activities in Mahabubnagar, said the minister.



With Sankranti just around the corner, people from different parts of Hyderabad throng Secunderabad Railway Station to board their destination trains, on Monday.
Photo: Ch Prabhu Das

Court blow to Akhila Priya, bail plea junked

Gives her custody to police for 3 days as against 7-day plea

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

THE city civil court at Secunderabad on Monday rejected the bail plea of Bhumika Akhila Priya and gave her custody to police for three days.

The court allowed police custody of Akhila Priya, the main accused in the Bowenpally kidnap case, from Monday 1.30 pm to Wednesday 12.30 pm. The police however, sought seven days of custody of the former minister and stated that they need more time because the department has less time on hand for detailed questioning due to the quick arrests.

The police department in their report to the court added that there were more things to be investigated, including the whereabouts of her husband M Bhargav Ram Naidu and other suspects, who were still absconding and the property

documents on which the victims Praveen Rao and his brothers were allegedly made to sign were also yet to be recovered. Apart from it, a scene reconstruction of the kidnap episode with the suspects was also to be done.

However, the court in its order on Monday granted only three days of police custody of Akhila Priya. After gaining custody, the Bowenpally police took her to the Women Police Station in Begumpet from Chanchalguda prison for further questioning.

Meanwhile, the court also dismissed the bail petition filed by Akhila's defence counsel as the bail was sought citing health issues as one of the main reasons. In the counter petition to Akhila Priya's bail petition, the police replied that, if she was granted bail, she could communicate with her henchmen who would not hesitate to carry out physical attacks on the victims' family.

Covid tally crosses 2.9 L in Telangana

HYDERABAD

TELANGANA'S Covid-19 tally crossed 2.90 lakh on Monday after the state reported 224 new cases during 24 hours between Sunday and Monday. One more person succumbed to the virus, taking the death toll to 1,566. According to director of public health and family welfare, 44.96 per cent of the deaths occurred due to Covid and 55.04 per cent had comorbidities. The fatality rate remained 0.54 per cent against the national average of 1.4 per cent. A total of 461 people recovered from the virus between Sunday and Monday, taking the cumulative number of recoveries to 2,83,924. The recovery rate improved to 97.90 per cent against the national average of 96.4 per cent. The number of active cases in the state are 4,518 including 2,439 who are in home or institutional isolation.

For a seventh consecutive day, Greater Hyderabad recorded less than 100 new Covid cases. The state capital logged 56 new cases. Rangareddy district recorded the second highest number at 26 followed by Medchal Malkajigiri (13), Karimnagar (13), Sangareddy (11) and Warangal Urban (14).

AP steps up bird flu alert

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

AS the bird flu (avian flu) cases spread more states in the country, the state government is on high alert. An amount of Rs 65 lakh has been released for steps towards the preparedness at the rate of Rs 5 lakh for each district and control rooms have been set up in all the districts.

The Union government is giving guidelines to the states and Union Territories on the preparedness on bird flu since outbreak in some parts of the country. So far, bird flu cases were reported in Rajasthan, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat.

The animal husbandry department in the state conducted a three-day training session to the veterinary doctors, compounders and the staff to deal with the cases, if reported, anywhere in the state. Training was also given to the staff on culling birds, which were hit by the flu. The animal



■ Sets up control rooms in all the districts to respond to farmers in case of suspicious deaths of birds

■ The Union govt is updating the situation regarding the disease to States from time to time

■ Animal Husbandry Dept holds a 3-day training session to the vets, compounders and the staff on ways to deal with outbreak

husbandry department is working in co-ordination with the forest and panchayat raj departments to tackle the disease.

Control rooms were also opened in all 13 districts and staff from the animal husbandry department were posted for the duty. The control room will clarify the doubts of the callers. If birds die in large number in suspicious circumstances, the local people should alert local veterinary doctor or veterinary hospital staff or the veterinary hospital for

further action. Following are the list of control rooms in the state. Srikakulam 9989932801, Vizianagaram 9989932825, Visakhapatnam 9989932834, East Godavari 9966224818, West Godavari 9989932851, Krishna 9989932863, Guntur 9989932872, Prakasam 9989932872, Nellore 9989932893, Chittoor 9989997067, Kadapa 9441614704, Anantapuram 9985030053 and Kurnool 9989997251.

Govt gives choice of cash benefit or laptop to Amma Vodi students

Volunteers to visit students' houses who bunk classes

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NELLORE

THE beneficiaries of Amma Vodi scheme will have an option to either take Rs 15,000 or prefer a laptop.

Launching the second phase of Amma Vodi programme, Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy said the students of ninth class to twelfth class are eligible for the choice.

He said last year the government had provided the support for 42-lakh beneficiaries and this year it has been increased to 44.48 lakh. The Chief Minister claimed that the number of students, who migrate from private schools to the government schools, has increased significantly because of the programme.

The Government, he said, had focussed on mid-day meals and improved the quality of food, and introduced the English medium in government schools for the convenience of the poor who cannot afford education in corporate educational institutions. The Chief Minister said that they have started improving conditions in the schools spending huge money on infrastructure. Hereafter, volunteers will visit the houses of the students who fail to at-



Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy releasing the Amma Vodi second phase payments at a public meeting in Nellore on Monday

tend school for 2 to 3 days. This would increase responsibility among parents and follow up on the attendance of the students.

Quoting the UNICEF report, the Chief Minister said that about 12-22 per cent of girls were dropping out of school due to lack of toilets. Hence, the government was deducting Rs 1,000 from

the Amma Vodi money of Rs 15,000 per student and was giving it for maintenance of toilets in schools. He called upon the students and parents to bring to the notice of the government if schools do not provide toilet facilities.

State ministers, MPs, MLAs, and district collector along with other leaders of YSRCP were present on the occasion.

AP High Court suspends panchayat poll schedule

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NELAPADU

TO hold local body elections in Andhra Pradesh or not continues to be a seesaw battle between the State Election Commission and the State Government.

Justice M Ganga Rao of the Andhra Pradesh High Court on Monday suspended the gram panchayat election schedule issued by AP State Election Commission. The court observed that in the interest of public health, the impugned orders are suspended. In a quick reaction to the judgment delivered by Justice M Ganga Rao of AP High Court suspending the election schedule issued by the State Election Commission, AP Election Commissioner Nimma-gadda Ramesh Kumar appealed to the Division Bench of the High Court late on Monday. Aswin Kumar, counsel for the SEC, filed the

petition. Appealing to the division bench to immediately hear the petition, the SEC stated that the judgment suspending the election schedule was against the Supreme Court guidelines delivered earlier. The argument of the SEC is that the process of vaccination would take a long time and for that the constitutional obligation of holding elections should not be stopped. It may be noted that the SEC released the schedule for panchayat elections on January 8. Earlier, it held a meeting with the officials led by Chief Secretary Aditya Nath Das. This meeting was held following the directions of the High Court. During the meeting, the Chief Secretary expressed the inability of the state government in view of the Covid vaccination programme as all the frontline staff must undergo vaccination first.

The state government challenged

the decision of the State Election Commission in the High Court on January 9 and the leaders of various state-level employees' associations also warned a boycott of the panchayat election in protest against the unilateral decision of the SEC. The employees' association also filed an implead petition on this issue stating that participation of the employees poses a threat to their health amidst the pandemic situation and also they have to play a key role in Covid vaccination. Advocate-General S Sriman argued on behalf of the state government and Aswini Kumar on behalf of the State Election Commission.

The High Court observed that the SEC has not taken an objective decision in the subject matter. The court is of the view that the election programme would hamper the vaccination programme.

Veteran journalist Turlapati no more

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

SENIOR-MOST journalist in the two Telugu-speaking states Turlapati Kutumba Rao breathed his last in the early hours of Monday due to a massive heart attack. After he felt uneasy he was rushed to a hospital where he suffered a massive heart attack. He was 89.

He is survived by a son and a daughter. His wife, noted danseuse Krishna Kumari, died nearly four decades back. Born in Vijayawada in 1933, Turlapati Kutumba Rao started his journalistic career at an early age 14 by writing essays and articles to various magazines and newspapers. Throughout his long career he recorded his every public speech and every article published earning him a place in the Telugu Book of Records which mentioned 4,000 biographies and 16,000 public speeches.

His memoir on his personal experience with 18 chief ministers of the state of Andhra Pradesh right from the first chief minister Tanguturi Prakasam Pantulu to Nara Chandrababu Naidu earned him accolades. He published his auto biography in 2012 with the title 'Naa Kalam-Naa Galam' (My Pen-My Voice).

He was honoured by the Central government with the fourth highest civilian award Padma Shri in 2002.



He was bestowed with a number of titles including Pratibha Puraskar, Kala Prapoorna from Andhra University, Guardian of Telugu, International Man of Year, World Lifetime Achievement Award, National Citizen Award and the President's Gold Medal among others.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy and Governor Biswa Bhusan Harichandan condoled the death of Kutumba Rao. "A prolific writer and good orator, the multi-faceted Kutumba Rao is a winner of numerous awards and his contribution to Telugu literature and journalism is rich," said the Chief Minister as he conveyed his condolences to Rao's bereaved family. Harichandan expressed profound grief and sadness at the passing away of Rao on Sunday night in Vijayawada. "Rao is well known for his contribution to Telugu journalism with 4,000 biographies and 16,000 public speeches which won him a place in the world records," he said. Rao served as the chairman of AP Grandhalaya (library) Parishad and received several awards and honours for his contribution to Telugu journalism and literature.

The Governor prayed for the departed soul to rest in peace as he offered heartfelt condolences to Rao's family members.

TDP president N Chandrababu Naidu said, "Andhra Pradesh lost a multi-faceted talent in the demise of Rao. The numerous awards and accolades he won, reflected Rao's immense talents,"



'Don't lecture us on patience': CJI's top 5 observations on farm laws

SUMIT SAXENA
NEW DELHI

THE Supreme Court on Monday appeared determined on staying the implementation of the three farm laws, and during the hearing, made many critical observations on Centre's inability to settle the issue through negotiations with protesting farmers staying put at various Delhi borders.

Here are five of the CJI Sharad Arvind Bobde critical observations during the hearing.

1. "We don't know whether you are part of the solution or the problem. There is not a single petition filed here which says the laws are beneficial," the Chief Justice said as Solicitor General Tushar Mehta attempted to make some submissions insisting on the implementation of the farm laws.
2. "All of us have a heavy responsibility to ensure

things don't go wrong. We don't want blood of any one on our hands," the Chief Justice said, underscoring that any stray incident in the peaceful protest can lead it to the opposite direction, which may lead to loss of life and property.

3. "Sorry to say, we are because you, as the Union of India, did not take responsibility. You were not able to solve the problem... You should have been able to solve the strike, but you did not," the CJI said as the Attorney General, reacting to his statement: "We will stay implementation if the Centre doesn't do it", said the court may be on the brink of a drastic decision.
4. "Right to protest is intact. Right to protest should be exercised like Mahatma Gandhi's Satyagraha. Do it peacefully," the Chief Justice said, while declining to entertain Centre's arguments on the course of evolution of farm laws in the previous



CJI Sharad Arvind Bobde

governments, on the grounds that they cannot blame the previous governments.

5. "... we are disappointed in the way you're handling this situation. States are up in rebellion against you," CJI Bobde told the government, stressing that the ongoing farmers' protest is a delicate matter.

Meanwhile, ahead of its protest on January 15 against the farm laws, the Congress has reached out to opposition parties to devise a joint strategy to press the demand for the withdrawal of the legislations.

Interim President Sonia Gandhi has sought support from like-minded parties on the ongoing agitation by the farmers, sources said. According to the sources, she spoke to NCP supremo Sharad Pawar, and CPI-M General Secretary Sitaram Yechury, and they, in turn, are likely to speak other opposition

party leaders to mobilise support. Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Monday flayed the BJP-led central government and said the way it is being insensitive towards farmers and showing a defiant attitude is a direct insult to the 'Annadata' (farmers).

The Congress welcomed the Supreme Court's observations on the three farm laws while hearing a bunch of petitions, and demanded that the government should repeal the contentious laws.

Speaking to IANS over phone, Congress Lok Sabha MP and former Union minister Manish Tewari said, "The Supreme Court should stay the operation of these farm laws and hear the constitutionality of these laws on a daily basis."

He said that the Supreme Court should do this because this impacts 65 per cent of the population of the country.

10 STATES HIT BY BIRD FLU Prime Minister Modi asks all States to be on high alert Delhi Govt imposes ban on sale of packaged chicken

NEW DELHI

THE Centre on Monday said bird flu has been confirmed in 10 States so far and stressed on increased surveillance around water bodies, live bird markets, zoos and poultry farms.

"Till January 11, 2021, Avian Influenza has been confirmed in 10 States of the country," the department of animal husbandry and dairying said in a statement. The outbreak was confirmed in seven states -- Kerala, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh -- as on January 10. On Monday, bird flu has also been confirmed in Delhi, Uttarakhand and Maharashtra.

PM Narendra Modi asked all States to remain alert and ensure that local administration keeps a constant vigil near places like water bodies, zoos and poultry farms.

Bird flu is causing the deaths of crows in MP, according to a report. Meanwhile, the flu has gripped at least 18 districts in the state. The Delhi government imposed a ban on sale of processed and packaged chicken brought from outside the city.



Horticulture team bury dead birds amid avian influenza scare in the national capital after samples of eight ducks tested positive for bird flu, at Sanjay Lake in New Delhi on Monday

900 hens die in Maha

AURANGABAD: Bird flu has been confirmed as the cause of death of around 900 hens in the last few days at a poultry farm in Maharashtra's Parbhani district, a senior official said on Monday. The district administration has now decided to cull nearly 8,000 birds in Murrumbilla village where these hens died, Collector Deepak Muglikar told PTI. Earlier, Muglikar on Saturday said around 900 hens had died at a poultry farm, run by a Self-Help Group (SHG), in the village and their samples were sent for testing. "The cause of the death has been confirmed as bird flu. Hence, we have decided to cull all the birds in one-km radius of the place where these deaths took place," the collector said.

4,324 migratory birds dead

SHIMLA: Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur said that 4,324 migratory birds have fallen victim to the bird flu in the hill state so far, while emphasising on sensitising the people on the steps to check its further spread. Chief Minister said that Himachal had banned ferrying of poultry products from other states for a week to contain avian influenza. He said that 4,324 migratory birds had died of bird flu in the Pong Dam wetland. Sixty-five rapid response teams were regularly monitoring the Pong wetland and adjoining areas. The Chief Minister said that 1,000 dead poultry birds were found dumped in Dharampur in Solan district, which have since been disposed of scientifically.

WHO's probe team for Covid origin heads to China

BEIJING

AN international expert team from the World Health Organization (WHO) is set to arrive in China on Thursday to conduct joint scientific research with Chinese scientists on the origin of the novel coronavirus, the National Health Commission said on Monday.

China Daily reported that further details have not been disclosed in the brief statement released on the commission's website.

Zeng Yixin, the vice-minister of the commission, said at a news conference that China has attached high importance to tracing the origins of the novel coronavirus and supports cooperation between China and the WHO on the issue.

This comes after the World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus expressed disappointment over China not finalising the permissions for the arrival of the team that was to investigate the origin of the coronavirus last week.

He added, "I am very disappointed with this news given that two members had already begun their journeys and others were not able to travel at the last minute. But I have been in contact with senior Chinese officials and I have once again made clear that the mission is a priority for WHO and the international team."



A member of All Bengal Teaching Association being detained after a clash during a protest rally pressing for their demands against the State Government, in Kolkata on Monday

PAINED

Godse's library in Gwalior

GWALIOR

THE Akhil Bharatiya Hindu Mahasabha opened a library (Gyanshala) dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi's assassin Nathuram Godse.

The library will inform the young generation about aspects of the partition of India and it would provide information and knowledge about various national leaders, Dr Jaiver Bhardwaj, National Vice-President, Hindu Mahasabha told ANI on Sunday.

"Today we want the young generation to know the truth and understand their responsibility towards nationalism. We opened the library to inform the youth why Godseji opposed partition and why he retaliated against it," he said. He added that the Mahasabha had given sacrifices for the freedom of the country while Congress was responsible for 'partitioning' of the country. He further said, "Akhil Bharatiya Hindu Mahasabha had given sacrifices for the freedom of the country. Congress partitioned the country for making Nehru and Jinnah Prime Ministers. Hindu Mahasabha opposed this. Hindu Mahasabha inaugurated Godse Gyanshala at its Bhawan in Gwalior."

"Godse took training in Gwalior and purchased a pistol. Later, he went to Delhi to execute his plan. In the first attempt, he was not successful... When Gandhiji met Godse, the latter fulfilled his resolution to retaliate against him. Since then we have said that you partitioned the country and you have to bear the consequences. No matter how big the leader, we stand by Godse's act," he added.

Kerala mom 'sexually' assaults 14-yr-old son

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

HARSHITHA Attaloori, Inspector General of Police, South Zone, will investigate the child abuse case under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act in which a 35-year-old woman was arrested and jailed following a complaint by her husband that said their 14-year-old son was allegedly sexually assaulted by her.

The woman is in Attakulangara women's jail.

However proceedings took a curious turn with the relatives and friends of the woman came together and formed an action council which demanded a proper investigation by the police.

The action council leader Vakkom Pradeep, while speaking to IANS, said: "The local police at Kadakkavoor police station was over-enthusiastic to register an

FIR and did not take into consideration all aspects of the case. This woman and her husband are estranged and he has remarried without divorcing her and the child had lodged the complaint following immense pressure from this person."

In a related development, the woman's 11-year-old younger son told the media that their father used to beat them up cruelly and his brother was forced to make such a statement by their father.

The couple have three sons and a six-year-old daughter. The mother of the accused also said her daughter was innocent. "My daughter is innocent and everyone who knows the family does not have an iota of doubt on the same. The case was forced upon her by her estranged husband who had forcibly taken their children and was living in the Middle East with another woman without formally divorcing my daughter".



China moves back 10,000 troops from depth areas

NEW DELHI

IN a significant development, the Chinese Army has moved back around 10,000 troops from the depth areas near the Line of Actual Control in Eastern Ladakh.

However, the deployment in the frontline areas has remained the same and the troops from both sides remain in an eyeball to eyeball situation at several locations in that sector.

Government sources told ANI that the Chinese Army has moved back around 10,000 troops from its traditional training areas opposite Eastern Ladakh sector and areas near it.

The Chinese traditional training areas are around 150 kilometres and beyond the Indian side of LAC.

The Chinese had maintained these troops there since April-May timeframe last year.

The heavy weaponry brought in by the Chinese Army in the deployment close to Indian border has also remained in the area, the sources said. Sources said the reason for moving troops away from the depth areas may be due to the extreme winters and they may be finding it difficult to deploy a large number of troops in that extremely cold region. It is difficult to say whether they will bring back the troops once there is a rise in temperature after February-March this year, the sources said.

Balakot airstrike: Did ex-Pak diplomat really admit 300 deaths?

NEW DELHI

MORE than 20 Indian media organisations picked up a doctored video last week about the Balakot airstrike and went on to report falsely about the number of Pakistani casualties in the February 2019 incident, according to an investigation by Alt-News.

News platforms on January 9 claimed that the former Pakistani diplomat Zafar Hilaly admitted to the speculation that the Indian airstrike on February 26, 2019, killed 300 people on the Pakistani side in Balakot.

After the incident, there was international speculation about the number of reported casualties, with even Defense Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that the casualty figure will not be provided. Media reports had placed this number at 300 citing "top government sources".

On the other hand, international media reported

that no one had died as a result of the strikes due to lack of official confirmation.

Last week, a video of the Pakistani diplomat ceding to the number of deaths in the airstrike was reported by media platforms. Originally an ANI story, most of these were republished by ANI, Republic, The Times of India, Moneycontrol, WION, Hindustan Times, NE Now, Odisha TV, Jagran, Swarajya, Lokmat, Oneindia, Deccan Herald, Business Today, Livemint, DNA, The Quint, News18 India, HW News, India Today, CNBC TV18, ABP News, NDTV, India TV among others.

Their reports, however, were based on a clipped panel discussion that surfaced on social media.

The media reports identify Hilaly saying this at a TV news debate: "India crossed the international border and did an act of war in which at least 300 were reported dead. Our target was different from theirs. We targeted their high command. That was our legitimate target because they are men of the



military. We subconsciously accepted that a surgical strike -- a limited action -- did not result in any casualty. Now we have subconsciously told them that, whatever they will do, we'll do only that much and won't escalate."

AltNews looked for the provenance of the video, which was uploaded by HUM news on YouTube, as part of a program called "Agenda Pakistan". The original video was, however, cited by none of the media organisations.

In the report published by Republic and NE Times, a Twitter video of the programme was embedded. On comparing the original video and the one embedded by Republic, AltNews found the video that sourced the false claim to be doctored.

In response to a question about surgical strikes, Zafar Hilaly begins to speak at 4:17 minutes. At about 5:14 minutes, he says: "What you did, India, was an act of war. India ne jo kiya, international

boundary ko cross karke ek act of war. Jisme kam se kam 300 logo ko unhone marna tha." (What you did, India was an act of war. By crossing the international boundary India committed an act of war in which they intended to kill at least 300 people.)

At 5:29 minutes, in the next sentence Hilaly says that the Indian operation had failed: "Ittifaqaan vo nahi mare, humne [India ne] ek football field ko bomb kiya. (Coincidentally, they [Pakistani people] did not die and India bombed a football field.)"

The vide on Twitter was found to have an abrupt cut around 0:7-0:9 seconds. AltNews found that the 'n' pronunciation in the word "marna (to kill)" had been edited out, making it sound as if Hilaly said "mara (killed)".

Zafar Hilaly took to Twitter to confirm that the recorded clip was doctored, saying that "the Indian government has gone to cut, splice, and edit the tape."

TODAY'S QUOTE

Do not shut mandis over bird flu scare

“No scientific reports on transmission of bird flu to humans; consumers should not be scared. States, including Delhi, should not shut mandis or restrict sale of poultry products. Till January 11, 2021, Avian Influenza has been confirmed in 10 states of the country.”


– **Giriraj Singh, Animal Husbandry Minister**



TRAVELLING

Domestic air traffic down by 45%

Domestic traffic declined around 45 per cent to about 71 lakh passengers in December last year over December 2019 even as passenger traffic was up 12 per cent sequentially over November 2020, ratings agency ICRA said. The international passenger traffic has been around 17.7 lakh for the period May 7, 2020 to December 31, 2020.

FOREX (buy rates in ₹)			
US Dollar	77.78	South	
Euro	93.71	African Rand	5.45
UAE Dirham	21.97	Hong Kong Dollar	10.88
Thai Baht	2.8	Japanese Yen	0.81
British Pound	103	New Zealand Dollar	55.4
Australian Dollar	59.47	Saudi Riyal	21.5
Canadian Dollar	60.34	Swedish Krona	10.2
Swiss Franc	85.77	Singapore Dollar	57.94

DELHI TUESDAY 12 JANUARY 2021

BIZ BRIEFS

Heritage wins awards

Heritage Foods has won 1st, 2nd prizes and Certificate of Merit in All India National Energy Conservation Awards 2020 in dairy sector for its processing units at Tirupati, Bayyavaram in Visakhapatnam district and Bangalore for the effective energy conservation methods. Bureau of Energy Efficiency, Ministry of Power, Government of India presented the awards in the presence of Minister of State for Power R K Singh. Nara Bhuvaneshwari, Vice Chairman and Managing Director, Heritage Foods, said: “Heritage Foods Limited is committed to conserving energy in all its units spread across India. We continue to provide resources and acquire technical expertise to achieve this goal. As a responsible and progressive organization, we strive to create benchmark standards in the Dairy Industry in all aspects.”

Vivo launches Y51A series

Smartphone maker Vivo on Monday announced the expansion of its Y series portfolio with the launch of all-new Vivo Y51A in India. It offers 48MP rear camera along with other modes like Ultra Stable video, Super Night mode and Macro mode. The device boasts a long-lasting battery of 5000mAh with 18W fast charge ensuring an unstoppable smartphone experience along with reverse charging feature. The product is priced at Rs 17,990 for the 8GB RAM + 128GB ROM (expandable upto 1TB). The Vivo Y51A is available for purchase in two attractive colour options - Titanium Sapphire and Crystal Symphony - on Vivo India E-store, Amazon, Flipkart, Paytm, Tatacliq, and across all partner retail stores.

SLG Hospitals' new initiative

SLG Hospitals, a new-age multi superspecialty hospital, introduced a much-needed service designed specifically to cater to the health needs of senior citizens aged 60 years and over. This Golden Age health card stores individual's medical records for easy retrieval and also entitles the card holder to benefits such as complementary health check-ups, dedicated doctors, offline & online consultations, discounts on services & pharmacy, pick-up & drop and medicine delivery services and much more. D Siva Rama Raju, Chairman & Managing Director, SLG Hospitals, said: “This new initiative reaffirms our promise to serve the healthcare needs of the community. We envisage the Golden Age card to not only lend a sense of independence to the elderly but also reassure their children that the health of their parents is being taken care of.”

GATE educator joins Unacademy

Unacademy on Monday announced that it has on-boarded the country's most acclaimed GATE exam educator Ravindrababu Ravula, as an exclusive teaching partner on the platform. Ravindrababu Ravula is among the most sought-after educators for GATE exams in India and has a highly successful track record of producing top rankers. At least 300 of his students rank among the Top 1000 in the GATE exams every year. “Technology has changed the way we learn, making education accessible and affordable. Today anyone can learn the basics of computer science and use cloud computing to start their own companies,” said Ravindrababu Ravula, founder and chief educator, Raudra Eduservices.

TCS RESULTS SIGNAL TURNAROUND FOR IT

Rising pace of digitisation, higher offshoring to set Indian IT industry on growth trajectory

**DEBASIS MOHAPATRA
BENGALURU**

THE stellar Q3 performance of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) is an indicator of a turnaround for the Indian IT industry, and its positive rub-off effect will be seen across domestic IT services firms. Experts and brokerage firms are of the opinion that the rising pace of digitisation and higher offshoring will set the Indian IT industry on a growth trajectory in the coming years.

“TCS Q3 results are reflective of the high demand for digital transformation, and Cloud migration among enterprises. While only 15 per cent of the global enterprises are currently on the Cloud, the rest is showing serious intent to do so. This puts the Indian IT services industry on a firm footing,” said Sanjeev Hota, Head of Research at Mumbai-based brokerage firm, Sharekhan. Indian IT firms are bagging more number of cost takeout deals on the back of rising offshoring amid the Covid pandemic, he added.

Last week, TCS reported its strongest third quarter performance in nine years on the back of large deal wins and broad-based growth across verticals and geographies. The company that never



M-cap rises past ₹12 lakh cr mark

NEW DELHI

SHARES of Tata Consultancy Services on Monday closed with nearly 2 per cent gain after the company reported a 7.2 per cent jump in December quarter net on a consolidated basis. The stock closed at Rs 3,175.05, a gain of 1.75 per cent after rising 3.32 per cent to Rs 3,224 - its fresh record

high — on the BSE during the day. On the NSE, it gained 3.49 per cent to Rs 3,230 — its all-time high - during the day and later closed at Rs 3,170.45, up 1.59 per cent. The company's market valuation rose to Rs 12,09,768 crore during morning trade on the BSE. At close of trade, its market valuation was at Rs 11,91,400.91 crore.

issues any guidance on its expected performance also announced that it is confident of getting back on a double-digit growth trajectory in FY22 as it anticipates a multi-year technology transfor-

mation cycle. In a traditionally weak quarter, the Mumbai-headquartered firm also reported a 40 basis points improvement in its operating margin at 26.6 per cent on a sequential basis despite

rolling out wage hikes. “This is a sign of a turnaround for big firms as they are the biggest beneficiaries of large cost takeout deals. In a declining market, some companies are also able to grow better due to vendor consolidation,” said Pareekh Jain, an IT outsourcing advisor and founder of Pareekh Consulting. “Overall, the rising pace of virtualisation, offshoring, and remote work will benefit the Indian IT industry over the coming years,” he added.

While large IT firms are emerging stronger from the ongoing Covid crisis, analysts pointed out those mid-tier firms with niche offerings will also see traction in the coming years. “Due to the pandemic, the market is expanding on the back of rising digitisation. When the market is expanding, every company will have its own shares,” Hota of Sharekhan said. According to Jain of Pareekh Consulting, though growth prospects of mid-tier firms will be company-specific, higher offshoring will benefit all. While analysts remain optimistic about the revenue growth trajectory, they opined that margin expansion seen in past quarters may not sustain. This is mainly due to the rising office and administrative expenses once employees come back to the office.

RBI sees capital shortfalls at banks

GNPAs may rise to 14.8% in worst case scenario: RBI Financial Stability Report

MUMBAI

RESERVE Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das said the Covid-19 pandemic “threatens” to result in balance sheet impairments and capital shortfalls at banks, especially once regulatory reliefs are rolled back. In his foreword to the bi-annual Financial Stability Report (FSR), Das said easy liquidity and financing conditions have shored up the financial parameters of banks, but made it clear that the “available accounting numbers obscure a true recognition of stress.”

He asked banks to exploit the current conditions to augment capital and also alter their business models, which will help in the future. The RBI had declared a six-month moratorium, which ended in August and later announced a one-time loan recast package to help borrowers.

Many banks, especially the private sector ones, have already raised safety capital in the early days of the pandemic. Fiscal authorities are witnessing revenue shortfalls and the resultant expansion in the market borrowing programme of the government has “imposed additional pressures on banks,” Das said.

The disconnect between cer-

tain segments of financial markets and the real economy has been accentuating in recent times, he said, warning that the stretched valuations of financial assets posed risks to financial stability. Das asked banks and financial intermediaries to be cognisant of these risks and spillovers in an interconnected financial system. Financial stability is a precondition for supporting the mission of restoring economic growth and livelihoods, Das said, conceding that “we have been scarred by the Covid-19 pandemic.”



Gross NPA

Banks' gross non-performing assets may rise to 13.5 per cent by September 2021, from 7.5 per cent in September 2020 under the baseline scenario, according to Financial Stability Report (FSR) released by the RBI.

If the macroeconomic environment worsens into a severe stress scenario, the Gross NPA (GNPA) ratio may escalate to 14.8 per cent, the report said. “The stress tests indicate that the GNPA ratio of all scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) may increase from 7.5 per cent in September 2020 to 13.5 per cent by September 2021 under the baseline scenario,” the FSR report added. (PTI)

MassMutual plans ₹1k-cr global centre in Hyd

HYDERABAD

US-based insurance major MassMutual will be setting up its global capability centre in Hyderabad with an initial investment of Rs 1,000 crore.

Telangana's Minister for Industry and Information Technology KT Rama Rao shared the news on Monday. “What better way to start the week than to welcome a top Fortune-500 company Delighted to announce that BFSI major US based @massmutual is setting up their Global Capability Centre in Hyderabad, Telangana,” tweeted the IT Minister. He said this will be the company's first centre outside the US with initial investment of Rs 1,000 crore.

The Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company, also known as MassMutual, is a Springfield, Massachusetts-based life insurance company. MassMutual provides financial products such as life insurance, disability income insurance, long-term care insurance, retirement and annuities.

MassMutual is the latest marquee name to announce invest-



ments in Hyderabad, which is also emerging as a key hub for the banking, financial services and insurance (BFSI) sector. Investment banking firm Goldman Sachs in October last year announced that it will set up its global shared services location in Hyderabad. The new office is expected to become functional in the second half of 2021 with about 500 employees, and has the potential for future growth.

Hyderabad, which has an exclusive cluster called ‘Finance District’ for the BFSI sector, is considered the preferred location for several banks and financial organisations. The city is already home to international organisations like Franklin Templeton, JP Morgan Chase Bank, State Street Corporation and HSBC. ICICI Bank has its biggest campus in Hyderabad with over 15,000 employees.

Sensex captures record 49,000-mark on earnings

IT stocks, HDFC twins shine; Nifty surges 137.50 pts

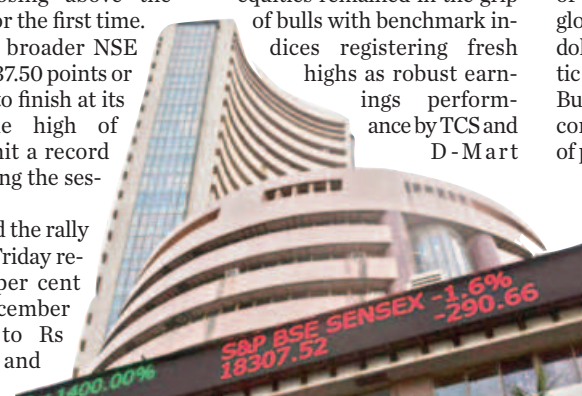
MUMBAI

EQUITY benchmarks Sensex and Nifty soared to lifetime highs for the second straight session on Monday as encouraging corporate earnings prompted investors to accumulate IT, finance and auto stocks.

After touching a record intra-day high of 49,303.79, the 30-share BSE Sensex ended 486.81 points or 1 per cent higher at 49,269.32, closing above the 49,000-level for the first time. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty surged 137.50 points or 0.96 per cent to finish at its fresh lifetime high of 14,484.75. It hit a record 14,498.20 during the session.

IT stocks led the rally after TCS on Friday reported a 7.2 per cent jump in December quarter net to Rs 8,701 crore and

projected double-digit revenue growth for FY22. HCL Tech was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, vaulting 6.09 per cent, followed by Infosys, HDFC, Maruti, Tech Mahindra, Bajaj Auto and M&M. On the other hand, Bajaj Finserv, Bajaj Finance, Reliance Industries, L&T, Kotak Bank and SBI were among the laggards, shedding up to 1.92 per cent. According to Binod Modi, Head-Strategy at Reliance Securities, domestic equities remained in the grip of bulls with benchmark indices registering fresh highs as robust earnings performance by TCS and D - Mart



bolstered investors' confidence.

“Continued improvement in Covid-19 recovery rates and announcement of vaccination process from January 16 offered comfort to markets. Further, expectations of sharp recovery in corporate earnings led by sustained rebound in key economic data may propel market to witness fresh highs in the near term,” he stated. FPI flow may continue to remain favourable given status of global economy, stance of global central bankers and weak dollar, he said, adding that domestic equities can also witness pre-Budget rally in the coming weeks considering broad expectations of pro-growth measures.

Sector-wise, BSE IT, tech, auto, FMCG, realty, telecom and healthcare indices rallied up to 3.63 per cent, while energy, metal, capital goods, power, basic materials and bankex closed with losses.

Gaming app Zupee raises \$10 million

**HANS BUSINESS
HYDERABAD**

ZUPEE, a Gurugram-based skill-based mobile gaming platform, has raised an additional capital of \$10 million, taking its total fund-raising to \$19 million to date. This latest round is led by US growth equity firm WestCap Group, with participation from existing investor Matrix Partners India.

This is the second round of funding secured by Zupee within the last 12 months, with the first being \$8 million raised in April 2020. This new capital will go towards further scaling up the venture, expanding market reach, enhancing user penetration for Zupee's platform, and focusing on delivering an exceptional user experience.

Founded in 2018 by IIT-Kanpur graduates, Dilsher Singh Malhi and Siddhant Saurabh, Zupee enables users to play live quiz tournaments on their smartphone devices. Zupee Gold has over 2,000 live quizzes covering a broad range of topics from spellings, movies, slang and general interest topics.

Reforms key to incentivise coworking sector

Corporates making beeline to coworking spaces to cut costs and capital expenditure

MANAS MEHROTRA

THE demand for coworking office spaces has seen tremendous growth in the last few years and the post-lockdown scenario is bringing in a wave of new opportunities for the coworking players. Medium-to-long-term fundamentals remain sound as companies seek out alternative options to reduce costs and capital expenditure. Now, more than ever, flexibility is crucial and hence coworking spaces, with their natural flexibility and inherent readiness to add value are best positioned to adapt and redefine the future of work and workspace. Companies will strive to be agile and prefer to build more flexibility into their real estate portfolios. As companies look to resume business, redesigning and restructuring



ing of existing real estate will pose yet another challenge, however coworking spaces will be able to respond to design changes required post-Covid-19 quicker and more efficiently than traditional office spaces. However, we have some important expectations from the upcoming Budget 2021 to further propel the growth in the sector.

Coworking has changed the very concept of the workplace today and the market scenario of the real estate industry. As coworking is playing a vital role in the economic growth of the country, the Government should recognise it under special schemes like REIT and provide tax benefits to handhold the industry for bet-

ter growth. Financial support to start-ups would also create greater demand for coworking spaces. As several entrepreneurs who opt for coworking solutions are early and mid-startups, the government could look at reducing the present rate of registration charges and stamp duty to register documents at registrar offices as high rates additionally burden them. This will give a fillip to both start-ups and coworking spaces. Presently, the rate of TDS applicable on coworking services is 10 per cent as coworking companies provide renting of both movables and immovables. As the industry is going competitive, it will be good if the rate of TDS on coworking services is reduced.

(The author is founder of 315Work Avenue, a coworking firm)

The Taste Company forays into ready-to-eat market

**THE HANS BUSINESS
HYDERABAD**

HYDERABAD-BASED The Taste Company on Monday announced its foray into the ready-to-eat market. The company makes high-quality, tasty and hygienic all-natural ready-to-eat Indian meals. “The Taste Company is the first company in India to offer non-veg ready-to-eat meals. It has seen tremendous traction during the pilot in the last six months and has gained trust among thousands of consumers already,” said Raju Vanapala, Founder and CEO.

The company offers two non-veg meal boxes - chicken curry rice and exotic prawn rice, along with vegetarian meal options such as classic dal rice, special veg rice and dal khichdi. The com-



pany also has a ready-to-eat breakfast product range. The Taste Company has established a new factory with an advanced dehydration and freeze drying technology unit at Patancheru in Hyderabad that can produce two million meal boxes per month. The company has spent close to Rs 22 crore on infrastructure and R&D. “Today, we are launching these products in almost 500 modern retail outlets across Hyderabad and Bengaluru. We are targeting to expand this to 3,000 outlets,” Raju Vanapala said.

VIHARI, ASHWIN PULL OFF REMARKABLE DRAW

148-run fifth-wicket partnership of Pant and Pujara set ground to draw the Test or an improbable win

SYDNEY

CONTRASTING half-centuries from Rishabh Pant and Cheteshwar Pujara, followed by an exemplary display of grit and determination by Hanuma Vihari and Ravichandran Ashwin helped India draw the third Test against Australia at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

Chasing a mammoth target of 407, India reached 334/5 after batting for 131 overs before both the teams decided to shake hands on the final day of the Test match. Vihari, who batted with a sore hamstring throughout the course of his innings, showed great resilience and remained unbeaten on 23 after facing 161 deliveries. He was supported brilliantly by Ashwin who also suffered a lot of blows on his body but didn't throw away his wicket and remained not on 39 from 128 deliveries.

Earlier, Pant and Pujara shared a 148-run partnership for the fifth wicket after the visitors lost skipper Ajinkya Rahane (4) very early in the day. The duo scored runs at a brisk pace and in fact, not only put India in a position to draw the Test, but also gave the visitors an unlikely hope of an improbable win.

But Pant -- after scoring 97 runs off just 118 balls with the help



I thought we created enough chances to win the game. This one's a tough one to swallow. Our bowlers were superb, Lyon bowled well. Just that we (especially me) didn't hold onto our catches. There were a few positives for us, our bowlers created plenty of chances. Today was a whole-hearted effort from the boys, just that things didn't go our way
—Tim Paine
Australia captain

of 12 fours and three sixes -- got out against Nathan Lyon in the second session and provided Australia an opening. The game tilted further in Australia's way when Pujara -- who scored his second half-century of the match during his 77-run knock -- got out bowled, courtesy a peach of a delivery by Josh Hazlewood.

However, it was then that Vihari and Ashwin came into their own and first helped India end the second session at 280/5 on the final day.

The experienced pair continued to show great character during the final session as well and survived some nervy moments during the course of their unbeaten 62-run partnership which saw the team

Paine loses focus while trying to sledge Ashwin, drops 3 catches

SYDNEY: Australia captain Tim Paine was on Monday seen and heard trying to sledge India's Ravichandran Ashwin, who was involved in a solid, match saving partnership with Hanuma Vihari on the fifth and final day of the third Test here. But not only was Paine unsuccessful in provoking Ashwin, he dropped three crucial catches -- one each of Rishabh Pant, Ashwin, and Vihari -- that probably cost his team a win.

On the other hand, Ashwin and Vihari batted on bravely while bearing body pain and remained unseparated after putting on 62 priceless runs for the sixth wicket as the match ended in a draw.

Paine's first mistake came in the 40th over of the Indian innings, when Pant had scored just three. The bowler to suffer was off-spinner Nathan Lyon, and India were at a not-too-healthy 110 for three wickets while chasing 407 for win. Paine dropped Pant a second time when the left-hander was on 56 (off 71 balls) and India were at 174 for three.

Lyon was the unlucky bowler. Pant went on to score an almost game-changing 97 off 118 balls. Before Paine committed his third mistake of the day, substitute fielder Sean Abbott, in for Will Pucovski, put down a catch of Ashwin off fast bowler Pat Cummins, when the batsman was on 15. Ashwin remained unbeaten after a magnificent innings.

Paine, who was constantly needing Ashwin, dropped the third catch, this time of Vihari when he had scored just 15 (off 135 balls) and India were on 319 for five. The bowler to suffer was speedster Mitchell Starc. Despite the dropped catches Paine continued his attempts to distract India batsmen. During his innings, Ashwin was seen backing away from his stance on a couple of occasions and looking at Paine during Lyon's over as the Australia wicketkeeper-captain tried to break his concentration even as the game progressed towards a draw.

end the match in a historic draw. Both the batters batted for more

than three hours each during the course of their innings and declined Australia with an opportunity to go 2-1 up in the ongoing four-Test series.

Openers Rohit Sharma and Shubman Gill also made notable contributions in the second innings by scoring 52 and 31 runs respectively and helped India gain some confidence as they began their chase of the gigantic target on Day Four.

Australia had posted 338 in their first innings and then bowled out India for 244, thus attaining a 94-run lead. The hosts declared their second innings at 312/6, setting a 407-run target. (ANS)



Indian batsmen Ravichandran Ashwin and Hanuma Vihari (blue helmets) react as Australian players look on at the end of play on the final day of the third Test match at the Sydney Cricket Ground, Sydney, Australia on Monday. The series is at 1-1 all with one Test to go. It will be played at the Gabba in Brisbane from January 15 to 19, Cricket Australia has confirmed

SCOREBOARD

Australia 1st innings: 338

India 1st innings: 244

Australia 2nd innings: 312/6 declared

India 2nd innings

Rohit Sharma c Starc b Cummins -----52
Shubman Gill c Paine b Hazlewood -----31
Cheteshwar Pujara b Hazlewood -----77
Ajinkya Rahane c Wade b Lyon -----4
Rishabh Pant (wk) c Cummins b Lyon -----97

Hanuma Vihari not out -----23
Ravichandran Ashwin not out -----39
Extras (lb 3, w 2, nb 6) -----11
Total (5 wickets, 131 overs) -----334
Fall of Wickets: 1-71, 2-92, 3-102 71-1, 250-4, 272-5
Bowling: Mitchell Starc 22-6-66-0, Josh Hazlewood 26-12-39-2, Pat Cummins 26-6-72-1, Nathan Lyon 46-17-114-2, Cameron Green 7-0-31-0, Marnus Labuschagne 4-2-9-0.

NorthEast, Bengaluru eye revival

GOA

THERE aren't many things to separate NorthEast United and Bengaluru FC at this stage of the Hero Indian Super League season. Both sides started strong, maintaining their place in the top four before a bad run of results saw them slide down the table. As they take on each other at the Tilak Maidan Stadium on Tuesday, both sides will aim to recapture the momentum that they had lost earlier in the season.

The Highlanders find themselves a point adrift of sixth-placed Bengaluru who have accumulated 12 points. Both teams have conceded more goals than

RESULT
ATK Mohun Bagan lose to Mumbai City FC 0-1

they have scored and while Bengaluru have lost four games on the trot, NEUFC are winless in six while suffering three losses.

The last time the two met, NEUFC fought back to earn a 2-2 draw, despite trailing by two goals.

And NorthEast assistant coach Alison Kharsyntiew, who will be filling in for the suspended Gerard Nus, hopes the Guwahati-based can turn the corner and start afresh.

"The main thing is that we not only focus on the negatives but the positives also," he said.

TODAY'S MATCH

NorthEast United FC vs Bengaluru FC
at Tilak Maidan Stadium 7.30pm

Hyderabad FC name Phab as Associate Sponsor, Official Nutrition Partner

HYDERABAD: Indian Super League side Hyderabad FC on Monday announced Phab as the Club's Associate Sponsor and the Official Nutrition Partner for the 2020-21 season.

Phab works to dispel myths about fitness, well-being and the sacrifice of taste in the quest for nutrition. Phab's team of nutritionists, scientists and chefs work seamlessly to craft foods that are not only delicious, but also very healthy and conscious of today's nutritional challenges.

Ankit Chona, Founder and Managing Director, Phab, said, "We're delighted with our association with Hyderabad FC and look forward to a super successful season."

Varun Tripuraneni, HFC co-owner, said, "We are happy to welcome Phab on board. Like us, they are a young and enthusiastic brand, and we're very happy to partner with them in their first association with sports."

I-League season starts with new record by Komron

KOLKATA

THE I-League witnessed its fastest goal ever in history in the TRAU vs Real Kashmir FC match in the ongoing season which kickstarted last Saturday.

TRAU's Tajikistan national team striker Komron Tursunov's strike from outside the box on Sunday in the ninth second etched his name in the history books. His strike was four seconds quicker than the record held by Katsumi Yusa of 13 seconds against Churchill Brothers in the 2018-19 season.

The goal currently stands as the fastest goal in Indian top-tier league football.

And Komron did come close to the fastest ones ever scored. Comparatively, the fastest goals in the English Premier League is 7.69 seconds, while in LaLiga and Serie A it is 7.82 and 6 seconds respectively. Meanwhile, the Bundesliga shares its fastest goal scored with the I-League at 9 seconds, as per a media release shared by I-League.

For the Tajik forward, the goal was more about taking a half chance.

"You can say that. My job is to help my team and coach. My coach has told me, 'Komron, I need goals from you.' I saw it, and had to pull the trigger. That's my job," Komron stated. "I saw a yawning gap and thought to myself, why not? As a striker, you need to take on those half-chances."

Leaving no stone unturned in his praise for the Tajik, TRAU coach Nandakumar said: "It was according to our training routine and we knew how to execute it. It was all according to our game plan and I am satisfied that it worked out perfectly. Credit where it's due, Tursunov strike was a thing of beauty and I am very happy to have a player who can score absolute bangers in my team."

Real Kashmir's David Robertson believes that the early goal caught them off guard.



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