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Police not saluting me: Thrissur mayor

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The Mayor of Kerala's cultural capital Thrissur is peeved that police officials do not only salute him when he passes through the city in his official vehicle, but "also turn away". Not one to lie low, M.K.Varghese, a former air force official, has taken his complaint to the new state police chief Anil Kant with a demand that orders be passed to rectify this "mistake". "This salute is not for me, instead it is for the post that I occupy. In my defence career I have given and taken salutes. I have studied the protocols and it is very clear that in the Corporation area, according to the protocol, the Mayor is third in the list after the Governor and the CM," he said.

Poet Rana's son booked

LUCKNOW: A day after the UP Police raided the house of Urdu poet Munawwar Rana in Lucknow, the police said his son Tabrez Rana had allegedly staged an attack on himself to frame his relatives in a property dispute. Tabrez had claimed that he was attacked by unidentified persons, who opened fire at his SUV car on Monday evening near a petrol pump in the state capital's Tripura area. The attackers fired two gunshots and fled from the spot. The bullets hit Tabrez's SUV but he was left unhurt. In a statement released here on Friday, the Rae Bareilly police said that during investigation, it was found that Tabrez had a dispute with his uncles over a property.

UP scribe set on fire by lover's kin

PATNA: A journalist working with a private media organisation in Uttar Pradesh was set on fire in Bihar's Siwan district on Friday as the victim was in love with a girl whose parents disapproved of their relationship. The victim has been identified as Ramu, a native of Orai in Uttar Pradesh's Jalaun district. He had gone to the Kanhauli village in Siwan district, which comes under the MH Nagar Hasanpura police station, to meet his girlfriend Poonam Kumari on Friday morning. Jitendra Pandey, the Siwan block SDPO, said the victim was involved in a verbal duel with the family members of Poonam. "The situation turned so ugly that Poonam's family members allegedly poured oil over him and set him on fire. When Poonam tried to save him, she also received burn injuries," Pandey said on the basis of Poonam's statement to Bihar police.

RIISING COVID CASES: CENTRE RUSHES TEAMS TO 6 STATES

NEW DELHI

The Central government has rushed two-member expert teams to six states that have been showing increase in Coronavirus disease (Covid-19) case load, to assist in control and containment measures.

"The Centre has today deputed multi-disciplinary teams to Kerala, Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura, Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Manipur in view of the increased number of Covid-19 cases being reported by these

states," confirmed Union ministry of health and family welfare on Friday. The two-member high level team to these states consists of a clinician and a public health expert. Teams will be supporting the states in their efforts for targeted Covid response and management, and effectively tackling the pandemic.

The team to Manipur will be led by Dr L Swasticharan, additional DDG and director, emergency medical response EMR; team to Arunachal Pradesh will be led by Dr Sanjay Sadhukhan, professor, All India Insti-

tute of Hygiene and Public Health (AIHH & PH); for Tripura Dr RN Sinha, director-professor, (AIHH & PH); for Kerala Dr Ruchi Jain, public health specialist; for Odisha Dr A Dan, public health specialist (AIHH & PH); and for Chhattisgarh Dr Dibakar Sahu, assistant pro-

fessor, AIIMS Raipur, will lead the team.

The teams will visit the states immediately and monitor the overall implementation of Covid-19 management, especially in testing, including surveillance and containment operations; Covid appropriate behaviour and its enforcement; availability of hospital beds, sufficient logistics includ-

ing ambulances, ventilators, medical oxygen etc., and Covid-19 vaccination progress. They will monitor the situation and also suggest remedial actions, according to the health ministry.

The Centre has been deputing teams from time to time to visit various states and Union Territories. These teams interact with the state authorities and get a first-hand understanding of the challenges and issues being faced by them so as to strengthen their ongoing activities and remove bottlenecks, if any.



Drone spotted over Indian mission in Pak

INDIA LODGES STRONG PROTEST WITH PAKISTAN

NEW DELHI

A drone was spotted over the Indian High Commission complex in Islamabad last week and Pakistan has been asked to investigate the incident and prevent recurrence of such "breach of security", the external affairs ministry said on Friday. The Indian mission has also lodged a strong protest with Pakistan over the incident through a note verbale which is a diplomatic communication, people familiar with the development said. The incident came to light amid growing concerns in the security establishment in India after explosives-laden drones were used to carry out an attack on the Jammu Air Force station on June 27.

"A drone was spotted over the premises of the Indian High Commission in Islamabad on June 26. This has been taken up officially with the government of Pakistan. We expect Pakistan to investigate the incident and prevent recurrence of such breach of security," External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said at a media briefing. It is learnt that the drone was sighted within the complex when an event was being held at the mission.



Asked about the drone attack on Jammu airbase, Bagchi declined to comment, and only said that the investigation into it is in progress.

According to security officials, it was the first instance of suspected Pakistan-based terrorists deploying unmanned aerial vehicles to strike at vital installations in India. Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhadauria on Friday said the drone strikes in the Jammu airbase were an "act of terror" that was aimed at targeting key military assets. Army Chief Gen MM Naravane on Thursday said that

the easy availability of drones has increased the complexity of security challenges from both state and state-sponsored actors.

The Border Security Force (BSF) have fired at a quad copter from Pakistan to repulse it from crossing the International Border (IB) in the Arnia sector of Jammu, officials said.

"Alert BSF troops fired at a small quad copter belonging to Pakistan today morning at about 4.25 a.m. as it was trying to cross IB in Arnia sector," BSF said.

Man fakes own abduction to pay off debts in Delhi

NEW DELHI

A 28-year-old Delhi resident staged his own abduction to extort Rs 25 lakh from his parents to pay off his debts and went into hiding in Uttarakhand's Rishikesh, police said on Friday. The man works as a supervisor at a Panipat-based company and is in a relationship with a colleague's wife, who is also part of the conspiracy, they said. On June 29, the Aman Vihar police station was informed by the man's father that he had gone to attend a party in Rohini on June 25 and was missing since then, a senior officer said. During preliminary enquiry, it came out that the man was last seen in Rohini sector 22 at an Oyo hotel. A case was registered under section 365 (kidnapping or abducting with intent secretly and wrongfully to confine person) of the Indian Penal Code, said Pranav Tayal, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Rohini).

"During the investigation, it was learnt that a woman contacted the victim's parents on June 28 and stated that their son was in a debt trap and he needs Rs 25 lakh immediately to settle his debts. She also gave five account numbers of different persons in which the amount was to be deposited," he said. The woman was tracked down in a village near Tundala, Agra, and during questioning, she disclosed that the man was in Rishikesh and she was in constant touch with him, the officer said. A three-member team comprising Sub Inspector Manish and ASI Naveen was rushed to Rishikesh from where the man was brought to Delhi on Thursday, he said.



Delhi records 93 new cases, 2 deaths

NEW DELHI: Delhi recorded two more Covid-related deaths and 93 new cases on Friday with a positivity rate of 0.13 per cent, according to a health department bulletin. The number of active cases in the city decreased to 1,041 from 1,357 on Thursday. As many as 407 patients recovered from the disease in the last 24 hours, as the recoveries again outnumbered the new cases. The national capital had recorded four more COVID-19-related deaths and 91 cases on Thursday with a positivity rate of 0.12 per cent. A total of 73,565 COVID-19 tests, including 51,317 RTPCR/CBNAAT/TrueNat tests, were conducted in the last 24 hours. The rest of the tests were rapid antigen ones, the bulletin said on Thursday. The national capital had recorded 94 Covid cases at a positivity rate of 0.12 per cent and six fatalities on Wednesday. It recorded 101 fresh COVID-19 cases at a positivity rate of 0.15 per cent and four more deaths on Tuesday.

Two pediatric hospitals coming up along Yamuna Expressway

NOIDA: Two pediatric hospitals are coming up near Greater Noida along the Yamuna Expressway as authorities prepare for a possible third wave of the coronavirus pandemic, officials said.

Also, a medical device equipment park is in the offing in the region for which the Centre's approval is pending, Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA) officials said.

"Two hospitals dedicated for children are coming up in Yamuna Expressway Authority's Sector 18 and 20 in view of the likelihood of a third wave of the pandemic," YEIDA CEO Arun Vir Singh said. "These hospitals would come up within 10 months," Singh informed a group of reporters during an interaction held by UP Industries Minister Satish Mahana on Thursday. He said the YEIDA also supported upgradation of the local community health centres (CHCs) and primary health centres (PHCs) in their area of work along the Yamuna Expressway, including Jewar, where an international airport is coming up.

Spirits still high, say farmer leaders amidst soaring temperatures

NEW DELHI: Be it scorching heat or a spell of heavy showers, nothing can dampen the morale of farmers and they will not leave the protest sites at Delhi borders till their demand for repeal of the farm laws is fulfilled, a protester at Singhu said on Friday.

Farmer leaders said while the increasing heat is posing a challenge, no hurdle is difficult enough for them to give up on their fight, and that they have equipped themselves with all necessary facilities -- be it coolers, air conditioners or provision of cold drinking water. Delhi has been reeling under a searing heat wave for the past few days, though a spell of rain in some parts brought some relief in the evening.

"It hasn't rained at Singhu yet, but we are anticipating showers. We are farmers, and like we welcome rains in our fields back home, we will welcome the rains here too. We

have protested through rains during the winters, and now we are better prepared to continue our agitation through the monsoon as well," said Lakhbir Singh, vice president (Punjab) of the All India Kisan Sabha. "It is true that the heat is becoming unbearable, but farmers have also figured out ways to beat it. Farmers have installed coolers, air conditioners and fans according to their individual financial capacities," he said. Though electrical appliances were put in place a few months back in anticipation of the summer, what is posing an even bigger challenge is erratic electricity supply. According to Kirti Kisan Union (Punjab) general secretary Rachpal Singh, the frequency of power cuts have increased during the summer, with farmers having to survive the heat without electricity for "two to four hours everyday".

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman during her visit at the Institute of Bioinformatics and Applied Biotechnology, at Electronics City in Bengaluru on Friday



Sidhu mocks Punjab govt, asks it to follow Delhi electricity model

CHANDIGARH

MOCKING at his own government in Punjab over power outages, Congress leader and former Cabinet minister Navjot Sidhu on Friday asked the government to follow the AAP's Delhi model of extending subsidies to generation companies.

"There is no need for power cuts in Punjab or for the Chief Minister to regulate office timings or AC use of the Common People...If we act in the right direction," said a sulking Sidhu, who met Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Rahul Gandhi separately in New Delhi on June 30 and apprised them of the political situation in Punjab that will go to the polls early next year.

Facing severe electricity crisis, the Punjab government curtailed timings of government offices from Friday, and cut down power supply to high energy consuming industries with immediate effect to save crops and ease the domestic power situation.

Sidhu, in a series of back-to-back tweets, said, "Punjab already gives Rs 9000 crore power subsidy but Delhi gives only Rs 1,699 crore as power subsidy. "If Punjab copies Delhi model, we will get merely Rs 1,600-2,000 crore as Subsidy. To better serve the people of Punjab -- Punjab needs an original Punjab model, not a copied Model!"

Indirectly hinting at a nexus between the government and power generating companies by revealing the truth of



power costs, cuts, power purchase agreements and how to give free and 24-hour power to the people of Punjab, Sidhu said: "Punjab's revenue per unit of consumption is one of the lowest in India, due to gross mismanagement of the complete power purchase and supply system..."

"PSPCL pays Rs 0.18 per unit 'extra' on every unit supplied, even after receiving over Rs 9,000 crore in subsidy from the state."

Favouring investing in renewable energy, that he said, is becoming cheaper along with being environmental-friendly, Sidhu said, "But Punjab's potential from solar and biomass energy remains unutilised even though Central financial schemes can be availed for these projects.

"PEDA spends its time just on energy efficiency awareness". Speaking on the lines of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Sidhu explained that about the Punjab model for power by saying that the money spent on giving unreasonable and exuberant profits to private thermal plants should be utilised for welfare of people, i.e., giving power subsidy for free power for domestic use up to 300 units, 24 hours supply and to invest in education and healthcare.

According to Sidhu, Punjab is buying power at an average cost of Rs 4.54 per unit, while the national average is Rs 3.85 per unit and Chandigarh is paying Rs 3.44 per unit. "Punjab's over-dependence on three private thermal plants at Rs 5-8 per unit makes Punjab pay

more than other states."

Blaming the power purchase agreements (PPAs) that the previous Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD)-BJP government had signed with three private thermal power plants, he said till 2020 Punjab has paid Rs 5,400 crore due to faulty clauses in these agreements. It is expected to pay Rs 65,000 crore of people's money just as fixed charges.

Favouring the need to set aside the PPAs, Sidhu said the state can purchase power from the national grid at much cheaper rates. "But these Badal-signed PPAs are acting against Punjab's public interest. Punjab may not be able to renegotiate these PPAs due to them having legal protection from honourable courts. But there is a way forward."

Womenia

TWEET PATROL



Sometimes just lie down on the grass ... Look at the sky And laugh your heart out Laugh em' worries away #love #live #laugh
#sonalchauhan #dontworrybehappy #laughter
#laughteristhebestmedicine #pink #friday

SONAL CHAUHAN
@SONALCHAUHAN7



Indian textile sector stays afloat amid pandemic

PUJA GUPTA

Clothes are one of the basic needs of human existence, which is why even during lockdown, the apparel industry witnessed a steady demand. Demand from Western markets helped the Indian Textile sector stay afloat, says Avinash Mane, Commercial Director, South Asia, Lenzing Group.

Mane shares his views on the challenges the Indian textile industry faced due to the pandemic and what role technology has to play in the future of the apparel industry.

How has the Indian textile industry responded to the challenges experienced by Covid-19 over the past year?

The textile sector is one of the biggest contributors to the national economy and a large employment generator. India's textile sector is unique with it being one of the finest in the world producing around 15 per cent of total industrial production and contributing around 30 per cent to total exports.

The sector did face its share of challenges over the last year. While the domestic retail went on pause last summer, the export orders from European and American region also dried. But despite the issues, the industry has kept afloat. Specially post the first



Covid-19 has given rise to a new type of consumer thus pushing products and services to recreate themselves. Do you believe this is true for textile apparels as well?

The Covid-19 crisis gave rise to a more conscious consumer. There has been a significant change in consumer attitudes and shopping behaviour and most of these are expected to remain post-pandemic. The lockdown forced consumers to analyse their shopping habits, including cost consciousness, preference for local products, evaluating the impact of their purchases, which ultimately leads to making sustainable choices. Consumer preferences sharply realigned away from lifestyle to health, hygiene and personal care. Value of hygiene increased significantly thus paving the way for products that promote hygiene assuring consumers with greater safety from the virus.

What is interesting to note that fibre features such as microbial resistance became a key focus for the textile manufacturers and brands. These were earlier considered as add-on features, the use of which was restricted to special segments like sportswear.

Do you feel that the Indian textile industry has fared better than other regions in terms of business? If yes, why?

The Covid-19 pandemic also put a spotlight on the untapped textile potential of South Asian region. It has given an opportunity to countries like India, Bangladesh, Indonesia to become a potential global centre for textile and clothing exports. Availability of abundant and cheap labour, water and other raw materials for textile manufacturing processes, large production of cotton, nearness to growing markets have further helped this.

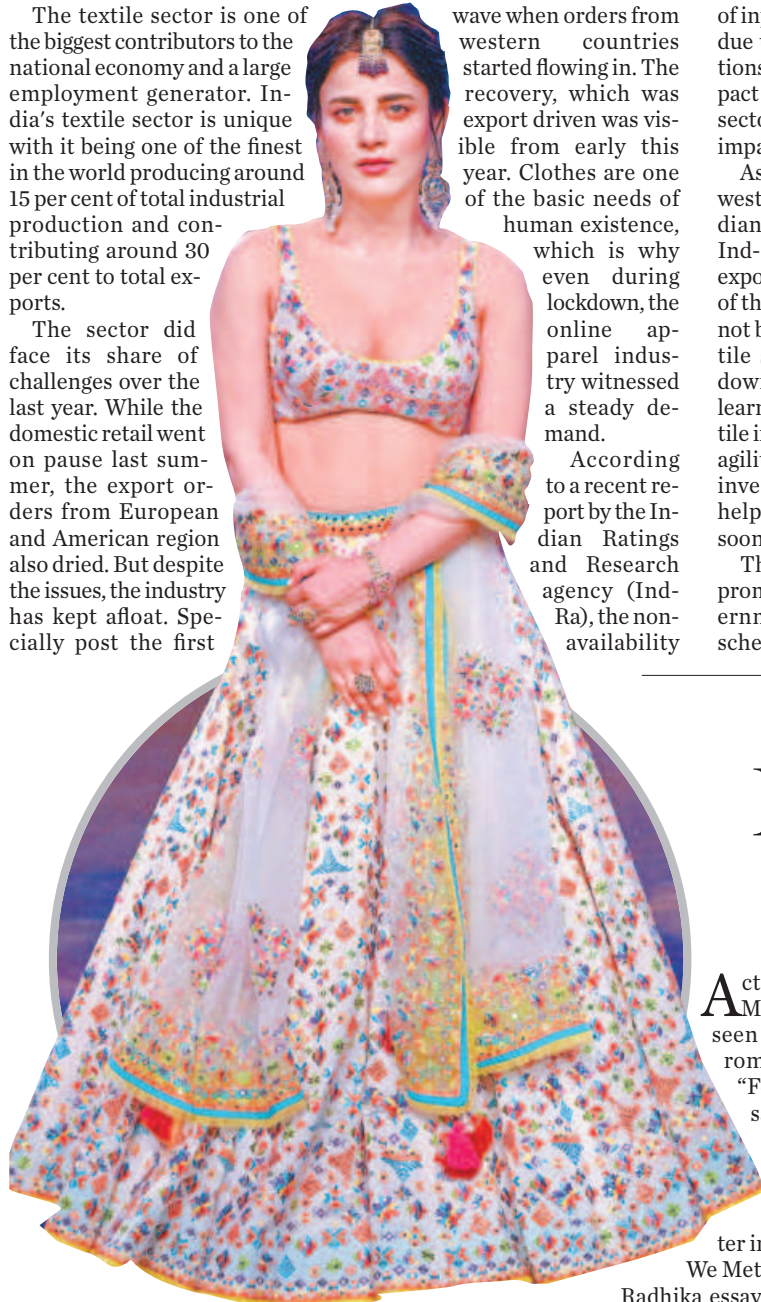
of inputs such as fabric, yarns etc due to lockdown related restrictions may cause a short-term impact on the finished output in the sector, however it is unlikely to impact the Indian textile sector.

As mentioned, demand from western markets helped the Indian Textile sector stay afloat. Ind-Ra stated that due to strong export markets, the first quarter of the current financial year may not be a 'lost quarter' for the textile sector. Covid-19 and lockdown have also been a deep learning experience for the textile industry who responded with agility by working out adequate inventory and we believe will help the sector bounce back sooner than expected.

The sector has also received promising support from the government through innovative schemes such as planned mega

wave when orders from western countries started flowing in. The recovery, which was export driven was visible from early this year. Clothes are one of the basic needs of human existence, which is why even during lockdown, the online apparel industry witnessed a steady demand.

According to a recent report by the Indian Ratings and Research agency (Ind-Ra), the non-availability



Radhika essays Avni in director

NEWS ROUNDUP

Radhika Madan opens up on her 'Feels Like Ishq' role

Actress Radhika Madan, who will be seen in the upcoming romantic anthology "Feels Like Ishq", says her character Avni is a modern-day Geet, referring to Kareena Kapoor's character in the 2007 hit "Jab We Met".

Radhika essays Avni in director

Ruchir Arun's segment of the anthology, titled "Save The Da(y)te". She features opposite Amol Parashar.

"I think the best way to describe Avni would be a modern-day Geet. You know, a social media era Geet, a Gen-Z Geet, where you have influencers. And she's really vibrant. She's really quirky," Radhika said.

She added, "She knows how to get things done. She has her own ways. I love her. So, I connected with Avni straightaway, and, yeah, I'm excited to

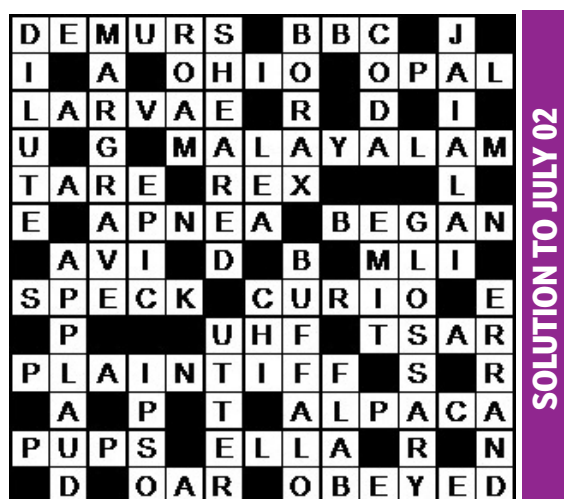
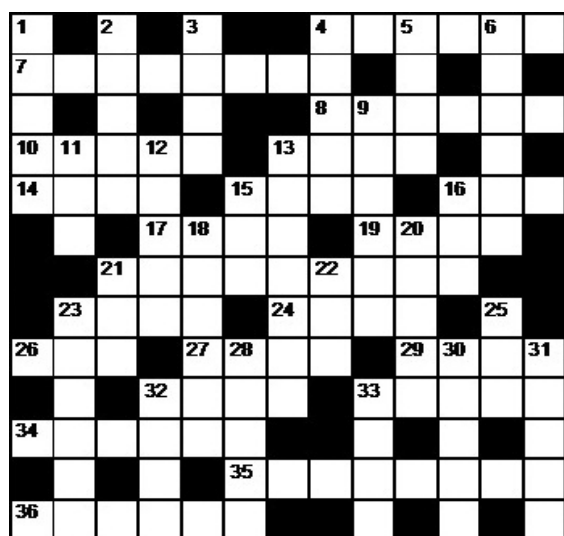
play her."

"Feels Like Ishq" brings together six directors, Ruchir Arun, Tahira Kashyap Khurrana, Anand Tiwari, Danish Aslam, Jaydeep Sarkar, Sachin Kundalkar and Devrath Sagar.

The anthology stars Kajol Chug, Mihir Ahuja, Simran Jehani, Rohit Saraf, Saba Azad, Sanjeeta Bhattacharya, Zayn Khan, Neeraj Madhav, Tanya Maniktala and Skand Thakur in leading roles. The film will be streaming on Netflix from July 23.



Mira di happened, a miracle happened," she signed off.



SOLUTION TO JULY 02

CROSSWORD

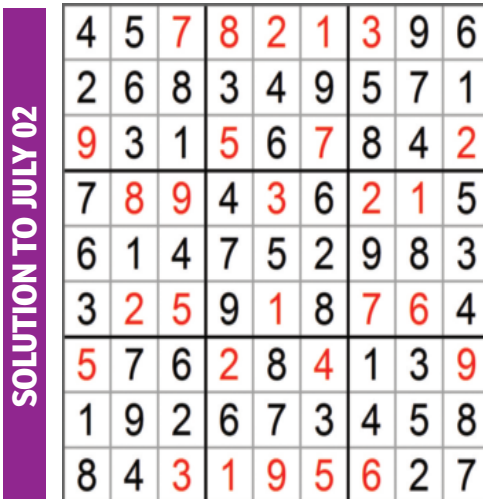
Across

- 4 Bribe, corrupt (3,3)
7 Cold vegetable soup (8)
8 Astonished (6)
10 High-IQ society (5)
13 Mine products (4)
14 Aid and ____ : a legal phrase for help given in perpetuating a crime ? (4)
15 Failures; clothes (4)
16 Bombay stock exchange in short (3)

Down

- 35 Chance event (8)
36 Unmoving, stationary (6)
1 Brightly coloured lizard (5)
2 Atmospheric gas (5)
3 Small yeast cake (4)
4 A wooden plank (5)
5 Supporting votes (4)
6 Most independent (6)
9 Salutation abbr. (6)
11 Subside (3)
12 Begin (5)
13 ____ by : surpassed by ? (7)
15 Noise or clamour (3)
16 Carton (3)
18 Impress deeply (6)
20 Use effectively (5)
21 Alcoholic liquor (3)
22 Small stocky dog (3)
23 Rue (6)
25 Hang loosely (3)
28 SF writer Asimov (5)
30 Consumed (5)
31 Small salamanders (5)
32 Discharge (4)
33 Our continent (4)

SUDOKU



SOLUTION TO JULY 02

National Chocolate Wafer Day



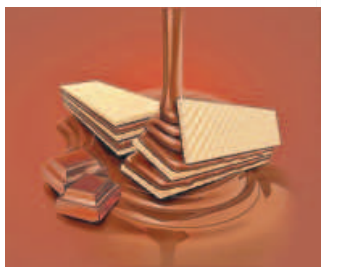
If you love chocolate, National Chocolate Wafer Day on July 3rd allows you to indulge in a delicately sweet cookie with a history. Have one for breakfast, lunch, or dinner.

Also called sugar wafers, these delicate snacks melt in your mouth. Made since the mid-1800s in the United States, makers called the cookies many names; wafer cookies, sugar wafers, sugar biscuits, fairy wafers. While many enjoyed them as snacks, they also became favorite after-dinner treats or served during teas. Lightly flavored and layered with a creamy filling, the thin cookies delight folks of all ages.

Numerous companies produced them in North America. Regardless of the company, each one considered the production of these cookies an art form. They took pride in everything from their ingredients to the employees and the recipe to the packaging. Over time, companies merged. By the 1930s, the number of production companies dwindled.

Today, they remain an American favorite. With a waffle surface pattern and thin layers, these cookies make an excellent addition to ice cream. Use them as an ingredient in cakes and cheesecakes. While you're baking, use them to decorate, too. If you prefer pie, crushed wafers make a delicious chocolate crust. There are so many ways chocolate wafers can be enjoyed. If you've never tried them, this holiday is the time to give them a whirl.

No matter where or how you are eating your wafers, these tasty treats are positively worth celebrating!



U'khand abuzz with speculation over another change of guard

DEHRADUN

UTTARAKHAND is abuzz with speculation over another leadership change, given the possibility that the Election Commission may not hold a bypoll in the state enabling Chief Minister Tirath Singh Rawat's election to the state assembly.

Rawat needs to be elected as an MLA in the next two months to continue in the post, which he got after the BJP leadership removed Trivendra Singh Rawat from the helm. But observers say with the term of the assembly in any case coming to

an end in less than a year, the EC may not order a bypoll for the vacant seats in Uttarakhand.

Scathing criticism by the courts of the string of elections held during the coronavirus pandemic may also contribute to the EC decision on Uttarakhand bypolls, it is felt. Speculation over a change of guard in the state was fuelled by Chief Minister Tirath Singh Rawat being summoned suddenly on Wednesday to Delhi, where he meet the BJP's top leaders including party president J P Nadda and Union Home Minister



ter Amit Shah.

He was supposed to return here on Thursday itself but stayed back. According to the

Constitution, Rawat, an MP from Pauri Garhwal who was sworn in as CM on March 10, needs to become a member of

the state assembly before September 10 to continue in office. Section 151A of the Representation of People Act, 1951 mandates the Election Commission to fill vacancies in Parliament and the state legislatures through bypolls within six months from the date of their occurrence, provided that the remainder of the term of a member in relation to a vacancy is one year or more.

The term of Uttarakhand Assembly is scheduled to come to an end in March, only about nine months away. Going by some Uttarakhand BJP leaders' interpretation, however, the law neither prevents nor makes it mandatory for the EC to hold bye-elections in such circumstances. "It is within the scope and ambit of the Election Commission to take a call on whether or not to hold a bypoll in the state. Everything depends on the Election Commission of India," said Munna Singh Chauhan, BJP MLA from Vikasnagar and former spokesperson of the party's state unit. Rawat has little to worry if a bypoll is held but doubts are being cast on its constitutional feasibility as the

current assembly completes its tenure in less than a year. There are two vacant assembly seats in Uttarakhand -- Gangotri and Haldwani. Gangotri fell vacant after the death of BJP MLA Gopal Singh Rawat and Haldwani after the death of Leader of Opposition Indira Hridayesh. Even if there are no constitutional hurdles, the Election Commission may not find it easy to go for a bypoll in Uttarakhand, observers here said, recalling court observations against the EC for "risking" people's lives through elections amid a pandemic.

Chautala released from Tihar Jail

NEW DELHI

FORMER Haryana chief minister Om Prakash Chautala, who was serving a 10-year prison term in a teacher recruitment scam case, was released from the Tihar Jail here on Friday after completing due formalities, prison officials said. The 86-year-old Chautala, who was already out on parole, reached Tihar on Friday to complete formalities after which he was released from jail, they said. Director General (Delhi Prisons), Sandeep Goel, said, "After necessary formalities, he (Chautala) has been released".

Last month, the Delhi government had passed an order granting a six-month special remission to those who have served nine-and-a-half years of their 10-year prison sentence to decongest jails in view of the Covid-19 pandemic.

According to officials, since Chautala has already served nine years and nine months of his sentence, he was eligible to get out of prison.

Chautala was jailed in 2013 in connection with the teacher recruitment scam case. He was on emergency parole



Former Haryana CM and Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) supremo Om Prakash Chautala after being released from jail in Gurugram on Friday

since March 26, 2020, due to the Covid pandemic and was scheduled to surrender on February 21, 2021.

However, his parole had been extended by the high court, a senior jail official had

said earlier. As on February 21, he had two months and 27 days of jail time left which has been counted as remitted. O P Chautala, his son Ajay Chautala, and 53 others, including IAS officer Sanjiv Kumar, were

convicted and sentenced in the case of illegal recruitment of 3,206 junior basic teachers in 2000. They all were sentenced to varying jail terms in the case by a special CBI court in January 2013.

BJP's Jwalapur MLA accused of rape by former party colleague

DEHRADUN

BJP'S Jwalapur MLA Suresh Rathore has been accused of rape by a former party colleague, according to police here. A case of rape was lodged against the MLA at the Bahadarabad police station of Haridwar on Thursday night after a lower court's order.

Rathore is the second BJP MLA from Uttarakhand after Mahesh Negi against whom such serious charges have been levelled. Rathore has been accused of rape and criminal intimidation by the complainant, police said.

The woman in her complaint said she met Rathore two-and-a-half years ago and he had asked her to join the BJP's Mahila Morcha, police said.

The woman, who said she had earlier been the Mandal Mantri of Jwalapur, also accused the MLA of having her arrested in the past using his political clout. When contacted, state BJP's media incharge Manveer Singh Chauhan said the complainant had already been expelled around two months ago from



the party by its Haridwar district unit after she was caught conspiring against the MLA.

Last year, MLA Negi was accused of rape by a woman. She had also alleged that he was the father of her daughter.

The matter is under investigation at present. Uttarakhand Congress vice-president Suryakant Dhasmana said it is not for the first time that a BJP leader in the state has been accused of such an offence.

"Before Rathore, Mahesh Negi and state BJP's organisational general secretary Sanjay Kumar have also been slapped with rape charges. The BJP took no action against them," Dhasmana said. "I think the BJP should now replace its slogan of 'beti bachao, beti padhao' with 'BJP ke नेता aur vidhyakon se beti bachao'," he said. Terming it as a heinous crime, Dhasmana asked the state government to immediately arrest the MLA and the BJP to expel him. The Congress Party will launch an agitation if it was not done, he said.



First case of Delta Plus variant found in Himachal

SHIMLA

THE first case of the Delta Plus variant of COVID-19 has been found in Himachal Pradesh's Kangra district, officials said on Thursday.

A 19-year-old woman from Gopalpur in Palampur subdivision of Kangra had tested positive for COVID-19 on May 25. Her sample has come back positive for the Delta Plus variant of COVID-19, they said.

However, the officials said, her sample that was sent for genome sequencing was collected on May 26, when the state was under a lockdown.

The woman's aunt had also tested positive for COVID-19 on May 17. Now, her sample is also being sent for genome sequencing, Kangra Deputy Commissioner Nipun Jindal told PTI.

Till Monday, according to reports of 1,113 samples received from the National Centre for Disease Control in Delhi, no case of Delta Plus variant had been detected in Himachal Pradesh, the officials said. Of the 1,113 samples, 109 had tested positive for the variant prevalent in the UK, eight for the Kappa strain and 76 for the Delta strain, they said.

Will ensure force is sensitive, connected to people: UP DGP

LUCKNOW

MUKUL Goel, who took as the new Uttar Pradesh Director General of Police on Friday, said he would focus on crime control and ensure that policemen are sensitive and connected to people in the state. He also battled for effective use of technology by the police force.

"I will ensure that law and order is maintained. We will focus on crime control with the help of people -- it is not possible without their help. Policemen should be sensitive and connected to people so that gap between them reduces and crime is controlled," Goel told reporters after taking charge as the new DGP of the state. He said that many times police ignore petty crimes that create bigger law and order problems later.

"We will ensure that this does not happen. I would like officers to remain in the field," Goel said, advocating for effective use of technology in police work to build an efficient system for policing. When asked about the



Bikru case, where eight policemen were killed last year on this day, the DGP said, "I was not in the state that time but it was in discussion. There was criminal-police nexus. Had it been looked into, this would not have happened."

On religious conversion cases, he said he will need time to learn about them. "Those found guilty will not be spared and innocent will not be harassed." About assembly elections scheduled to take place next year, Goel said, "A study of arrangements will be made with our team and we will do whatever is required."

On farmers' agitation, the DGP

said the police's role comes only into play when there is a law and order problem. Goel, a 1987 batch IPS officer, took the joining in the afternoon here. He was appointed as the UP DGP on June 30 after the retirement of H C Awasthy.

Earlier, He was posted as the Additional DG Operations in the Border Security Force (BSF). Hailing from the state's Muzaffarnagar district, Goel was born on February 22, 1964, and has done BTech in electrical engineering from IIT, Delhi. He also has a certificate of proficiency in French and a diploma in disaster management. Goel earlier worked as SP/SSP in Almora, Jalaun, Mainpuri, Hathras, Azamgarh, Gorakhpur, Varanasi, Saharanpur and Meerut districts of the state. He was also posted in the Indo-Tibetan Border Police and the National Disaster Response Force. Goel was awarded the Police Medal for Gallantry in 2003. He handed over the charge of ADG BSF in Delhi on Thursday and got repatriated to his parent cadre.

Uttar Pradesh govt allows opening of gymnasiums, multiplexes

LUCKNOW

FURTHER easing the coronavirus curbs, the Uttar Pradesh government has allowed the opening of gymnasiums, cinema halls, multiplexes and sports stadiums at 50 per cent of their capacity from Monday.

A government spokesperson said on Friday that Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath announced the relaxations in view of improving Covid situation in the state. Under the new guidelines, which will come into effect from 7 am on July 5, all gymnasiums, cinema halls, multiplexes and sports stadiums will be allowed to open between 7 am and 9 pm five days a week with strict compliance of Covid-19-appropriate behaviour, the spokesman said. However, these will

be allowed to operate at 50 per cent of their capacity, the CM said at a Covid review meeting, according to the spokesperson. The gyms in containment zones will remain closed.

The CM directed the installation of posters or banners telling about preventive measures at all public places, the spokesman said. The chief minister said the government's focus is on restoring normalcy in the state with an aim to save both lives and livelihood while staying they are ready the possible third wave of the pandemic.

The CM also instructed to set up helpdesks close to public places to ensure the compliance of the coronavirus protocol, the spokesman added. Till Thursday, the state has reported 22,601 infection deaths and 17,06,252 cases.

Leopard kills man, 3rd in Uttarakhand

PAURI

A 28-year-old man was killed by a leopard in Uttarakhand's Pauri, the third such incident in the district in less than a month, officials said on Friday.

Prithvi Chand of Bagi village in Dwarikhali was attacked by the leopard on Thursday when he had gone to the fields to graze his cattle, Revenue Officer Kunwar Prakash said. Villagers began looking for him late in the evening as he did not return, he said.

The man's partially eaten body with deep wounds to the neck, thighs and around the eyes was recovered around 9.30 pm, Prakash said. A trap has been set to capture the big cat, DFO, Garhwal range, Mukesh Kumar said, adding that a compensation of Rs 50,000 has been given to the victim's family. This is the third such incident in Pauri in 22 days. A 55-year-old woman was killed by a leopard in Dabra village of Pokhra block on June 10 and a young man in Bhaisora village of Bironkhal block on June 22.

Memorial in UP villages for Covid victims

LUCKNOW

UTTAR Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has said that a memorial, in the memory of those who have lost their lives to Covid, will come up in each Gram Panchayat in the state. The Chief Minister, according to the government spokesperson, has said that a Smriti Vatika should be set up in each Gram Panchayat where people can pay respects to those who have died due to Covid.

He has further appealed to the people to plant trees in memory of their loved one and nurture them.

The memorials proposal will be finalized by the Gram Panchayats and should be in conformity with the local landscape. The Chief Minister said that the tree plantation programme this year should include trees of the Ramayana era. The state plans to plant 30 crore saplings this month. The Ramayana mentions about 88 species of trees that were found between Ayodhya and Chitrakoot. Thirty of these species will be taken up for plantation this year. Trees that have been selected include Saal, mango, Ashok, Kalprishka, Mahua, Kathal and Asan among others.

The state forest department has identified 35-acre land in different places for the plantation drive.

19 Congress MLAs seek leadership change, key role for Hooda

CHANDIGARH

NINETEEN Congress MLAs from Haryana sought a "strong leadership" for the party in the state, favouring a key role for former chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda.

The suggestion was made by the opposition legislators at a meeting with the party's Haryana incharge at the All-India Congress Committee (AICC) in New Delhi on Thursday, according to a participant.

The Congress has 31 MLAs in the state. The MLAs also raised the issue that the party does not have district unit chiefs for the past eight years. After the meeting, Bansal told reporters in Delhi that as the MLAs had not



met due to the Covid pandemic for a long time, it was decided to take their feedback about the political situation in the state and seek suggestions about the party's organisational structure and upcoming panchayat polls.

A senior Haryana Congress leader, who attended the meeting, said the MLAs said there should be a "change of leader-

ship at the Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC)-level" to strengthen the party. "It was conveyed that we need a strong leadership in the state and a powerful leader who will swing the prevailing political circumstances in the state to the party's advantage. For this, a key role for Hooda was suggested," the leader said on Friday.

He said more MLAs would have attended the meeting but could not do so as they were unavailable, including one of them taking an anti-Covid vaccine on Thursday. Reacting to the meeting of the legislators with Bansal, Haryana Congress president Kumari Selja on Friday sought to play it down, saying, "The MLAs can meet their party

in-charge."

"I don't see any indiscipline if party legislators go and meet the party's state unit incharge and say something. It is their right. Bansal sahab has later clarified what the meeting was all about," she said. "I never felt that the 19 MLAs were meeting the state unit incharge against the state unit president, nor has any such statement or indication come from anyone," she said. The developments in the Haryana Congress have come amid infighting in the Punjab unit of the party, where senior leader Navjot Singh Sidhu is at loggerheads with Chief Minister Amarinder Singh. In Haryana, the Congress is out of power since 2014.

Who cares for Anganwadi workers?

WE have the world's largest Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) programme for early childhood care and development, with over 158 million children (2011 Census) in the 0-6 years age group, and pregnant and lactating mothers in the country coming under its umbrella. It offers six services: supplementary nutrition, preschool non-formal education, nutrition and health education, immunisation, health check-up and referral services, through 1.36 million functional anganwadi centres spread across all the districts in the country. (The number could vary slightly now).

However, the treatment meted out to the Anganwadi workers in the country by the governments' is callous. For months together payment is withheld often despite protests and demonstrations. The problem faced by the Anganwadi workers and helpers in

Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh is far greater and their voices do not even reach Delhi. Like elsewhere, these Anganwadi workers and helpers are the grass root level functionaries imparting supplementary nutrition, health and referral services to the pregnant women, lactating mothers and children under six years and pre-school education to the children under six years.

The contribution made by these nearly 27 lakh women workers throughout the country in reducing malnutrition, child and maternal mortality rates, thus determining the quality of India's biggest wealth, its human resource, is well recognised. However, in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh where acute malnutrition, stunting, wasting and anaemia are prevalent among the children, their services reaching out to the remotest places are

most crucial. They are paid far below the minimum wages. In spite of this, they are also performing additional duties of various departments like health, panchayati raj etc. They along with the ASHA workers are playing a very crucial role in the fight against Covid-19 pandemic in the country.

But it is unfortunate and most inhuman that these grassroot level women functionaries are not paid even their meagre wages regularly. This year, so far, from January 2021, the wages of Anganwadi workers and helpers are not at all paid in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, reports suggest. At a time when the country is facing the pandemic, lockdown and huge job and income losses, it has become a life threatening issue for the families of nearly 50 thousand women here.

Not many are aware of the fact that unlike their colleagues from other re-

gions of the country, these workers here who are mostly from socially backward sections are the lone breadwinners of their families. This apart, there are pending wages too from 2019. It is not for the first time that the Anganwadi workers and helpers are facing such a crisis. It is a continuous affair that the wages are not paid for months together and the wages for a period in between are withheld for no reason at all.

No one needs to elaborate on the situation in the region and the less said about the job opportunities, the better. Unlike in other areas, these Anganwadi workers and helpers here do not even have the opportunity to explore other avenues of income. This programme is one of the best to integrate the mothers of Kashmir psychologically with the rest of the country. Why do the Governments ignore them?



Water war or political pow-wow?

IN MY OPINION

V RAMU SARMA

ARE interstate problems particularly the issue pertaining to sharing of river waters so serious that they cannot be resolved through talks between the two Telugu States or is there a different agenda behind it? Why are they getting embroiled in water war?

What happened to the initial bonhomie between the two Chief Ministers? What really is intriguing is that on one hand inflow of water has just started into the projects due to early rains in the upper riparian States and still both the States are creating a situation as if they had gone totally dry and are accusing each other of violating the rules. Both now want immediate intervention of the Centre.

When Y S Jaganmohan Reddy became the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, the chemistry between the two CMs had left all awestruck. KCR invited Jagan along with his family for lunch at Pragati Bhavan and both the Chief Ministers had marathon discussions and later Jagan and KCR praised each other. Jagan had stated in the Assembly that KCR was a man of great magnanimity. Both declared that all the contentious issues between the two Telugu States, especially water disputes, would be solved across the table.

KCR always claims that it was his initiative of going to Maharashtra and holding talks with his counterpart there led to resolving the contentious issues between the two States and had helped in speedy construction of irrigation projects. He also claimed that none of his predecessors in the undivided Andhra Pradesh ever thought of such friendly moves.

But now KCR, regrets that the AP government had taken a uni-

lateral decision to construct Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Project (RLIP) at a time when Telangana was extending a friendly hand. He said river waters should be utilised for the benefit of farmers in both the States setting aside all the differences and disputes of the past.

"I have taken the initiative by saying there should not be any ego or water basin problems in utilising the water. It is very painful that despite this, the AP government declared a new scheme without even consulting with the Telangana state to lift water from Srisailem project unilaterally. This dented the very spirit with which water should be utilised by the two States with cooperation," he said.

This triggered a war of words between the two States and ministers of both the States started indulging in verbal attack against each other and made certain comments against the former CM of united AP Y S Rajasekhara Reddy. In retaliation, AP Minister Botsa Satyanarayana said that if Telangana leaders make such remarks for political gain, then people will teach them a lesson.

"We don't have the intention to use vulgar language like Telangana ministers," the minister said. According to him the government has a clear stance on the issue of water controversy. (He did not spell out what the strategy was but his statement appeared to be loaded with political connotations.) The AP Water Resources Minister Anil Kumar Yadav too expressed his anger over the TS ministers for making certain remarks against YSR.

Unfortunately, the tone and tenor of both sides is certainly provoking. Both claim that they are most disciplined and were utilising the water as per the allocations made by the Krishna River Management Board. If that is the case why this Kolaveri?

AP accuses Telangana Government of taking unilateral decision to go in for hydel power generation at Srisailem, Pulichintala and Nagarjuna Sagar.

Unfortunately, the tone and tenor of both sides is certainly provoking. Both claim that they are most disciplined and were utilising the water as per the allocations made by the Krishna River Management Board. If that is the case why this Kolaveri? AP accuses Telangana Government of taking unilateral decision to go in for hydel power generation at Srisailem, Pulichintala and Nagarjuna Sagar. TS government alleges that AP was constructing illegal project on River Krishna and that would adversely affect the interests of the state. Both want Centre's intervention which everyone knows how it would be

TS government alleges that AP was constructing illegal project on River Krishna and that would adversely affect the interests of the state. Both want Centre's intervention which everyone knows how it would be.

The Centre which could have spoken to the two Chief Ministers and facilitated visit of team from KRMB to visit Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation project site did not do so. The KRMB has now taken a stand that AP government was not cooperating and sought the help of Ministry of Home Affairs to provide central forces to visit the RLIP.

All this leaves the common man in state of confusion as to what exactly is happening and what the controversy was about? Well it is difficult to say except that both the States blame each other for using excess water from River Krishna. Interestingly, we are into a system of governance where the officials reel out figures claiming that the respective States had not violated any rule. But still the controversy continues.

Officials of Telangana Government claim that the state was utilising 299 TMC of water allocated temporarily after the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh. Their argument is that though the new state is entitled to utilize more than 299 TMC of water it was showing maximum restraint and was abiding by the instructions of the KRMB.

They say, the available water levels at Nagarjuna Sagar, Srisailem, Jurala and Pulichintala was enough to generate power

and there was no need to seek permission of KRMB for hydel power generation. They claim AP was raising hue and cry only to deprive TS of its share of water.

Telangana officials say that AP cannot utilise more than 599 TMC of water per year but so far it has utilised about 620 TMC of water while TS could not utilise more than 50 TMC as it does not have enough sources to store water. Hence, they feel that the objections being raised by AP in regard to the ongoing irrigation projects on river Krishna does not hold any ground. Moreover, the ongoing projects were sanctioned in undivided Andhra Pradesh and now they have been redesigned to suit the needs of the new state. TS also alleges that KRMB was being partial to Andhra Pradesh.

AP officials say that they are at a disadvantageous situation since it happens to be the lower riparian state. They alleged the TS in addition to excess drawing of water from Krishna was illegally constructing - Palamuru Ranga Reddy Lift Irrigation Scheme, Dindi Lift Irrigation Scheme, Bhaktha Ramadas Lift Irrigation Scheme, Water Grid Project taken up under Mission Bhagiratha, Thummilla Lift Irrigation Scheme, enhancing the scope of the Mahatma Gandhi Kalwakurthi Lift Irrigation Scheme (MGKLIS) and the Nettempadu Lift Irrigation Scheme on River Krishna and nine projects on River Godavari.

The AP Chief Minister Y S Jaganmohan Reddy shot off a let-

ter to Prime Minister alleging that TS was resorting to excess drawal of water from Srisailem, Pulichintala and Nagarjuna Sagar for power generation and this had upset the water release schedule of AP as water released from Pulichintala by TS had reached Prakasam barrage much ahead of schedule and had gone waste into the sea as the Krishna delta farmers were yet to start agriculture operations. They said because of insistence of TS to go in for hydel power generation, AP had lost 3.07 TMC of water as it had to be released into Bay of Bengal.

Amid this growing water row, opposition parties like the BJP and the Congress in Telangana and TDP and Congress in AP believe that these are diversionary tactics by both KCR and Jagan. They say both KCR and Jagan are hand-in-glove on the matter and are hoodwinking the public.

Interestingly, Jagan's sister YS Sharmila, who is set to launch her political party in Telangana initially maintained silence but later said that as daughter-in-law of Telangana she would fight for the rights of the TS. This led to farmers from Rayalaseema landing at her Lotus Pond house and stage a dharna.

The way accusations and counter accusations are getting shriller, it gives credence to the opposition charge that all this high drama has strong political overtones. Probably, KCR feels that if the tempo water dispute between the two States can be systematically raised, it can rekindle the sentiment 'Neellu' (water) which was one of the main points on which the agitation for separate State was fought and this could help the TRS not just in the by election for Huzurabad but also in the next general election.

There is strong speculation in political circles that since the strategy of KCR to advance general election in 2019 worked wonders for the party, he may prefer the same strategy in 2023 and all this was a warming up exercise for the main battle of ballot.



China takes notice of India's ballistic missile test

ATUL ANEJA

CHINA has noticed with concern India's test of its home-grown "aircraft-carrier killer" ballistic missile, Agni-P, which has left Beijing wondering whether New Delhi has found an equaliser to its once feared DF-21 D missile.

The Hong Kong based South China Morning Post (SCMP), while raising the question on whether India's nuclear capable Agni-P medium range ballistic missile test-fired from an island in the Bay of Bengal matches China's DF-21D "aircraft carrier killer" weapon, it has, nevertheless, also sought to underplay its significance.

The daily pointed out that the Agni-P would not be able to target major Chinese cities, Beijing or Shanghai. But citing Indian media reports, it said that the new weapons could, nevertheless, strike enemy armadas in the Indo-Pacific region.

Analysts point out that so far China has self-congratulated itself for developing two unrivalled "aircraft carrier killer" ballistic missiles—the DF-21D and DF-26B. The DF-26D, said to be the world's first anti-ship ballistic missile, can target aircraft carriers within a range of 1800 kilometres with conventional warheads. But the more potent DF-26 B, with a reach of around 5000 kilometres, can attack with atomic warheads. Not only can it target aircraft carrier task forces, it can also strike the US concentration of forces in the island of Guam. Netizens therefore also call the DF-26 B as "Guam killer" or "Guam Express".

But the testing of the Agni-P missile overturns the strategic equation. The Agni-P has a range of between 1,000 and 2,000km (621-1,242 miles). It can be transported on trucks or by rail, greatly increasing its mobility and response time.

The SCMP quoted former PLA instructor Song Zhongping, as saying that the Agni-P "probably does not aim at the big cities of China or Pakistan, but tactical targets like armoured vehicle clusters or airports, for which it could do a better job."

Yet, he did not doubt India's will to turn the Agni-P into its full-fledged "carrier-killer" role. "Hitting a warship with a ballistic missile is a complex systematic project. It takes not only the missile itself, but also many other support systems – such as satellite navigation, terminal target identification, guidance and manoeuvring systems," he said. "I believe India has this demand and willingness to work hard towards this goal, but it will take time."

China has developed the DF-21D and DF-26 B to undermine the US domination in the Indo-Pacific region on account of its much larger fleet of aircraft carriers, which can carry out offensive missions and exercise "sea control" in the region.

Unsurprisingly, the US, with the support of Russia, wants these two weapons to be scrapped under a new Intermediate Nuclear Force (INF) treaty, by drawing arms control commitments from China. The previous INF treaty, now defunct, was an arms control agreement between the US and Russia to eliminate all missiles below the range of 5000 kilometres. But with China now developing its own arsenal of intermediate missiles, and a new cold war on the horizon, the US insists that China should also be a party to a new INF treaty. A conversation of a new INF treaty is likely to be a part of future talks between the US and Russia following last month's meeting between President Joe Biden and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in Geneva.

In rural MP, people shed hesitancy towards vaccination

SANDEEP POURANIK

WITH the focus on spreading awareness to make people shed misconceptions about the vaccination drive, especially in the rural areas of Madhya Pradesh, the people have started realising that vaccination is the only potent weapon to stop the spread of the Covid-19 infection. The evidence of this shift in attitude among the rural population towards vaccination in the state has emerged with the 100 per cent vaccination already carried out across several Gram Panchayats in the state.

Vaccination drive is taking place in full swing in Madhya Pradesh with more than two crore people having been vaccinated till now. At the starting of the vaccination drive in rural areas, several hurdles were faced by the administration and the people conducting the vaccination drive. In many places, incidents of misbehaving with the



vaccination teams also came to light. It was a challenge before the government to eliminate the confusion among the people residing in villages as they felt that vaccination could lead to death or cause impotency. To deal with these situations, different strategies were prepared and implemented at the district level. In Betul district, the priests of the tribal population came forward to tell the people that vaccination is the only way to prevent coronavirus infection and the misconceptions spread about it were false. This effort had a ripple effect and the tribals received the vaccine jabs.

As the pace of the vaccination campaign increased, the efforts made to spread awareness among the people living in the rural areas started showing positive outcome. In Jabalpur district, the vaccination data that has emerged from the rural areas has given a boost to the administration and the state government. Hundred per cent vaccination has been undertaken across the 33 Gram Panchayats in Jabalpur. In rural areas of this district, a greater number of vaccinations have been done than the target set by the state government.

Calling positive thinking behind the awareness spread among the people in the villages, Jabalpur District Magistrate Karmaveer Sharma said this was possible only due to the joint efforts of the Health, Revenue and Rural Development Department, including Anganwadi workers, public representatives and members of Village Disaster Management Committee, as well as villagers coming forward for vaccination.

Similarly, Jamui Gram Panchayat of Shahdol district has also been 100 per cent vaccinated.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said vaccination is a potent way to prevent Covid-19 infection. Every Gram Panchayat in the state needs to undergo vaccination as a protective shield just like the Jamui villagers of Shahdol district.

CM Chouhan said, "Coronavirus has not been eliminated yet but we all have to learn to live in this pandemic. According to experts, there is a possibility of a third wave of Covid-19 hitting the state. The state government is fully prepared for handling the third wave effectively and all necessary arrangements are being made in advance for this purpose. At the same time, there are incidents of chaos, overcrowding by people and non-availability of vaccines at vaccination centres reported from many areas. Expressing concerns about the overcrowding by people in the state for vaccination, former Chief Minister Kamal Nath said, "There have been reports of huge crowd gatherings and stampede-like situations in many areas during the vaccination drive undertaken in the state. The state government should increase the number of vaccination centres and the days of conducting vaccination. To gather people at a particular place amid fear of a third wave of Covid-19 is putting their lives at a risk."

LETTERS

Is the aviation sector reviving?

WHEN the Indian sky got wounded with financial injury due to inefficient aviation operation leading to bleeding of the balance sheet of all companies, it was thought to be recovered with government intervention with some significant policy change. Alas, the sector hits another roadblock of pandemics, making it more challenging to come back soon. This aviation industry was neglected for a long time, and many business innovations could not give the required fillip. Class to the mass transformation of this segment increased the traffic, though, but the

balance sheet did not recover and rather became further worse.

In the last couple of decades, we lost many airlines from Vayudoot, Daman Airways, King Fisher, Sahara, Jet, Decan, Paramount to East-West. The list is too long if we include many other small regional players too. The reason for failure was never reconciled by the ministry of aviation in India. It was always thought to be a cash cow, and therefore this sector is heavily burdened with operational costs, right from fuel, lease rental, unnecessary hovering above destination runway, exorbitant parking fees, and so on. All put together; it was never a good business opportunity. The passenger, on the other hand, is very price sensitive. The fares are constantly under the pressure of losing customers. Airline service being an intangible

product, service quality is paramount and therefore provides less elbow room for reducing cost.

An alternate mode of transport is the railway that too, without exception suffering from service quality and commercial viability. Even AC first-class coaches are way behind people's expectations. Sometimes corporate honchos prefer overnight travel by rail to save on hotel accommodation costs. But the unacceptable service quality makes it less preferred than air travel. Adequate government intervention for service quality improvement may bring in some positive movement, but a paradigm shift is required to the railway management mindset.

Aviation, on the other hand, needs a commercial tax restructuring to make its business model sustainable. It will

be a potential business opportunity segment to attract many business leaders to invest. The failure of Sahara, Kingfisher & Jet was not their mistake alone. These companies were pursuing the government to restructure fuel costs hitting their bottom line. Flights were hovering above the destination airport, wasting costly fuel need be addressed during peak hour. Now the reappearance of old aviation partners with the number 9W is bringing a turnaround sentiment in the Indian economy. It seems the fate of the Indian economy is coming back with a good fortune with two positive news which is coming back of 9W & PMC bank.

SK Nag, Mumbai

thehansreader@gmail.com



Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy reviews Disha Act at his camp office on Friday

Play pro-active role, CM tells women cops

Jagan seeks support of Smriti Irani for Disha bills

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

REVIEWING the progress of the Disha and Abhaya projects, Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy on Friday directed the officials to ensure women police in Village/ Ward Secretariats take a pro-active role in creating confidence among women so that they could approach women police instead of going to the police stations to lodge complaints.

The Chief Minister wrote a letter to Union Minister of Women and Child Development Smriti Zubin Irani seeking support in getting approval of Parliament for the AP Disha Bill 2020 (special courts for specified offences against women and children) and AP Disha-criminal law bill 2019 for speedy justice.

Explaining the highlights of the Act, the CM stated that Disha has garnered national recognition in the form of four SKOCH awards and one Governance Now award.

The impact of the initiatives has been quite encouraging.

During the review meeting, the Chief Minister said the Zero FIR initiative should be widely given. He said women may hesitate to go to the police station for complaining and they should be provided with the option to complain through women police in villages. Women police should be trained accordingly, he said.

He asked the District Collectors and SPs to review women's safety once in two weeks and send a report to the government.

The Chief Minister directed the officials to focus on setting up 18 special courts for crimes against women and 19 special courts for crimes against children.

The Chief Minister directed officials to fill regular Public Prosecutor posts in existing designated courts by end of the week and ensure that 181 women's helpline was linked to the Disha App. The Chief Minister approved a proposal to recruit additional staff to strengthen Disha Call centres. He also agreed to fill 61 posts in the Forensic Department and directed the officials to complete the construction of Centre for Excellence labs in Tirupati and Visakhapatnam. He further directed the officials to take strict action against transportation and supply of marijuana.

Water Resources ENC condemns Telangana action

Standoff continues over Krishna projects

AMARAVATI

Tension continues at irrigation projects on border with Telangana state, as the Telangana continued power generation despite pleas of the Andhra Pradesh government to stop the generation keeping in view the existing low water levels. Both the states have deployed police forces at the projects.

The Telangana police thwarted the efforts of AP officials to submit a memorandum to TSGenco officials at Nagarjunasagar and Pulichintala requesting a halt to power generation.

As the Telangana officials are releasing water for power generation at Srisaillam, Nagarjunasagar and Pulichintala, Prakasam barrage in Vijayawada received 6,500 cusecs of water from Pulichintala. In addition, the Prakasam barrage received 1,900 cusecs of water from the Krishna catchment area. As already 3.07 tmc ft of water is stored at Prakasam barrage, the irrigation officials have released 8,500 cusecs of water from the barrage into the sea by lifting 20 gates as they have no alternative.

Water resources department executive engineer AR Swaroop Kumar said that they were forced to release water as excess water was coming from Krishna upstream. He said that they will continue to release the water until the inflows come down. The present water level at Nagarjunasagar stands at 534 feet and storage stands at 1,76.05 tmc ft. The Telangana officials are releasing 30,675 cusecs for power generation.

At Srisaillam, the water level stands at 822.30 feet and storage at 42.60 tmc ft. The power generation is going on left bank hydel power project by Telangana.

Water Resources ENC condemns Telangana action

AMARAVATI: AP water resources department engineer-in-chief C Narayana Reddy said Telangana has been violating AP Reorganisation Act and KRMB guidelines paving the way for water disputes between the two states. Speaking to media persons here on Friday, there will be no problem if Telangana starts power generation during release of water from projects. With the hasty actions of Telangana, both the AP and Tamil Nadu will face drinking water problem, he said.



Irrigation authorities release 8,000 cusecs of water from Prakasam barrage on Friday as inflows from Pulichintala continue due to power generation by Telangana Genco

- Police personnel still remain at projects on border with Telangana
- The neighbouring State continues power generation and release of water downstream despite pleas from AP
- In view of inflows from Pulichintala due to power generation by TSGenco, irrigation authorities release 8,500 cusecs of water from Prakasam barrage into sea

Sajjala suspects role of 'some forces'

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

GOVERNMENT advisor (public affairs) Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy expressed suspects role of some "forces" behind the present water disputes between Andhra Pradesh Telangana. He said if necessary, the AP government will ask the Centre to take over the management of irrigation projects.

Ramakrishna Reddy said that Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy is trying to prevent water disputes with neighbouring Telangana state by maintaining good relations. The Chief Minister wrote letters to Prime Minister and Union Jal shakti minister to solve the dispute amicably, he added. The government advisor said

there is no scope to draw water from Pothireddypadu until the water level reaches 881 feet. As the flood season is not more than 15 days, AP is unable to draw water from Pothireddypadu.

He reminded that Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao promised to provide justice to Rayalaseema. "KCR said there should be give and take policy between both the states.

But now I am unable to understand the present comments of KCR on water sharing. Telangana started power generation at 800 feet level and the Telangana ministers began attacking Andhra with their comments," he said.

Ramakrishna Reddy alleged that the opposition TDP is behaving irresponsibly on the issue.

ZONAL SYSTEM WILL GIVE JOBS TO LOCALS, SAYS KTR

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

MUNICIPAL and IT Minister KT Rama Rao on Friday said that the government approved new zonal system to help locals get jobs. He thanked Chief Minister for giving his nod for the system.

The minister stated that the zonal system "will ensure jobs to local people without any bias. Locals can now get jobs without any problems. The government has set up to seven zones and two multiple zones paving the way for jobs and education facilities in the State."

"With this zonal system in place only Telangana can give jobs to locals like never before. No other State is able to give jobs like our State", KTR

- Students can get opportunities in education and jobs
- There will be no problem for locals to get jobs as per eligibility and qualifications



claimed.

He stated that the government approved the new zonal system enabling locals to get jobs in a hassle-free manner. "Students and people can get opportunities in education and jobs. There will be no problem

for locals to get jobs as per their eligibility and qualifications".

The minister said that the zonal system was in place as per the aspirations of people. Narayanapet and Mulugu districts were formed for administrative services to people di-

rectly. "The government gives respect to people's aspirations and includes Vikarabad district in the Charminar Zone and Narayanapet in Gadwal-Jogulamba respectively, he minister pointed out.

With this the government and private sector will give a boost to employment opportunities, he noted, adding that 1.33 lakh jobs were offered in the State and about 16 lakh in the private sector. Private companies in the State will get support and priority if they offer jobs to locals, KTR stated.

Meanwhile, he asserted that the decision and vision of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao is coming true as the State government is providing jobs and opportunities to the local youth.

NHAI plans to take up plantation on airport road

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

CHIEF Secretary Somesh Kumar held a meeting with the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and GHMC officials at BRKR Bhavan on Friday and directed them to take up extensive plantation all along the stretch from Aramgarh (PNR Expressway) till the connecting road of Shamshabad airport.

He directed the GHMC officials to take up multi-colour/multi-layer avenue plantation (MLAP) on either side of the road dotted with flowering plants to give green experience to people travelling on the stretch.

Earlier, Kumar planted saplings as part of the "Haritha Haram" programme and inspected the multi-level avenue



plantation taken up by the GHMC at Budvel on the main road leading to the airport.

Sunil Sharma, Special Chief Secretary, TR&B, Lokesh Kumar GHMC Commissioner, Sandeep Kumar Sultania, Secretary, PR & RD, S A M Rizvi,

Secretary, Health and Family Welfare, Ganapathi Reddy, ENC, R&B, and NHAI officers S K Khushwa, Regional Officer, Ministry of Roads and Transport, Dharma Reddy, Executive Engineer and others attended the meeting.

TELUGU GIRL TO FLY INTO SPACE WITH BRANSON

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

IT is going to be a dream come true for Telugu-origin woman, Sirisha Bandla who always wanted to go into space.

Sirisha is now part of the team of Virgin Galactic which is launching its test spaceflight on July 11. Bandla will be the backbone of this operation and she will accompany the company's founder Richard Branson into space. Aiming to beat fellow billionaire Jeff Bezos into space, Branson's com-



pany announced the launch of its fourth test flight to space. The winged rocket ship will soar from New Mexico and will be the first flight carrying a full crew of company employees. Branson is being accompanied by mission specialists of Virgin Galactic who include chief astronaut instructor Beth Moses, lead operations engineer Colin Bennett and government affairs VP Sirisha Bandla. Pilots Dave Mackay and Michael Masucci will fly the VSS Unity spacecraft.

Naidu slams privatisation of TTD seva counters

- Says seva counters are being handed over to private agencies for commissions
- Laments commercialisation of activities on sacred Seven Hills
- Remarks that Tirumala has become a hub of controversies and disputes

HANS NEWS SERVICE
MANGALAGIRI

TDP national president N Chandrababu Naidu on Friday expressed serious concern that the vested interests were sowing the seeds of commercialisation and privatisation even in the highly-revered and sacred hill-top temple of the TTD.

The former chief minister strongly objected to the privatisation of Sri Vari Seva Counters, saying that it was initiated just for the sake of collecting commissions even in a place of divinity like the Seven Hills. A centre of undiluted devotion

like Tirumala temple was being turned into a hub of needless controversies and unsavoury disputes under the present rulers.

In a statement here, the TDP chief termed it as unacceptable that the seva counters for laddu distribution, "Kalyana Katta" and Vykuntham queue complex tickets scanning were handed over to a private agency. All these seva counters were till now operated as free service counters by the national banks, devotees and voluntary organisations, who did not collect a single rupee from the TTD for rendering those sevas. Chandrababu Naidu asked how the free services, being given to the TTD, could be converted into paid services. Because of this, the TTD would have to pay for the services being provided by the private agency. From now on, lakhs of devotees coming to render free services as Sri Vari Sevaks would have no chance for the same. They would also be denied the incidental benefit of having free darshan of the Lord.

Webinar on start-ups in NI-MSME

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

THE National Institute for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (NI-MSME) is conducting many programmes for youth and unemployed desirous of upgrading their skills and those who are looking for jobs during the pandemic.

The institute, in collaboration with Osmania TBI and Bank of Baroda, on July 6 is conducting a webinar on topic "Funding options for start-ups". The main aim of the programme is to provide information on setting up of start-ups, registration process, preparation of bankable project report, funding options. As part of this it is conducting a loan 'mela' in association with the bank on July 8 on NIMSME campus. For registration and details G Sudarshan (94949-59108) may be contacted.

Special officers' rule extended in mandal, zilla parishads

The State govt issues GO to this effect in view of ongoing litigation on mandal, zilla parishad elections which have been held but counting has not been taken up

AMARAVATI

WITH the election process stuck in court litigation, the state government on Friday issued an order extending the special officers' rule in the mandal parishads and zilla parishads up to six months.

Though elections to the mandal and zilla parishads were completed on April 8, counting of votes was not taken up due to an order of the High Court.

The High Court posted the case to July 27 for further hearing. As the elected bodies could not be in place, the government had no option but to extend the rule by special officers and per-

sons-in charge. "The special officers and persons-in charge will discharge the duties and perform the functions of the zilla parishad for a period of six months or till the date of assumption of office of the members and office bearers elected in accordance with due process, whichever is earlier," panchayat raj and rural development principal secretary Gopal Krishna Dwivedi said in an order.

The extension would come into force from July 5, he said. He issued a similar order in respect of mandal parishads as well, which would come into force from July 4.

TDP scoffs at Telugu CMs' 'fake' water fight

- Ex-Minister Alapati Rajendra Prasad says that Jagan and KCR are trying to derive political advantages through the drama
- Questions silence of AP Ministers despite a barrage of abuses by TS Ministers

HANS NEWS SERVICE
MANGALAGIRI

FORMER minister and TDP leader Alapati Rajendra Prasad on Friday slammed the chief ministers of the two Telugu states for 'enacting' a drama on the inter-state water disputes only to derive narrow political gains.

Rajendra Prasad said that the so-called water wars being fought by the two CMs were nothing but fake without an ounce of genuineness.

In a statement here, the TDP leader asked why the ministers were keeping totally silent when their Telangana counterparts were making non-stop comments. "Why the YSRCP MLAs and the ministers are unable to give strong counters like they would do at the slightest chance towards the Opposition leaders in AP? Suspicions are arising whether the ruling party leaders are afraid of Telangana CM K Chandrashekar Rao since they had to protect their properties in Hyderabad," he said.

Rajendra Prasad termed it as unfortunate that the Telugu CMs were diverting the public attention from the important burning issues of the people by running their fake water wars. Before coming to power, Jagan Mohan Reddy said that if Telangana constructed the Kaleshwaram project, it would turn AP into a desert. Now, the AP CM completely took a U-turn, he alleged.

Rajendra Prasad described as a lame excuse the statement of Jagan Reddy that he was not able to criticise Telangana in order to protect the interests of AP people living in Hyderabad.

Deciding cases not easy, need to focus on repercussions too: CJI

‘The little discretion that is given to us is the area in which a judge has flexibility to display his philosophy’

NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana on Friday said deciding cases is not easy, and it is also important to take into account the repercussions of the judgment and the precedent it will set up.

In his address at the virtual farewell function of Justice Ashok Bhushan, organised by the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA), he said: "Deciding cases is not an easy task. We not only have to focus on the law and precedents surrounding the issue before us, as well as the facts of the case, but also the repercussions of what we decide and the precedent we may be setting."

CJI Ramana stressed that this makes it necessary for judges to be logical, objective and theoretically

sound. "However, we should not lose sight of the people and their difficulties behind the cases. The little discretion that is given to us, is the area in which a judge has flexibility to display his philosophy," he added.

He noted that it is Justice Bhushan's philosophy which sets him apart from everyone else and he, with his remarkable judgments, has not only left an indelible mark in the history of the Indian judiciary, but, by virtue of being a humanist judge, has also left a mark in the minds and hearts of the people.

"The Bar is the protector of the institution. Lawyers must respect the institution and protect the judiciary from any onslaught which is likely to affect the functioning of the judicial system," he added.

Attorney General K.K. Venugopal said that compas-



N V Ramana

sion is the most important quality to be possessed by the judge of the apex court or any other. Citing Justice Bhushan's judgement for providing dry ration and community kitchens to migrant workers continuously till the pandemic continues, Venugopal said it is an example of a judge filled with compassion.

Senior advocate and SCBA President Vikas Singh said it is a very emotional farewell and described Justice Bhushan as a fine gentleman. He said that Justice Bhushan wrote the famous addendum to the Ayodhya title dispute judgment and cited his immense knowledge on Hindu culture. Justice Bhushan said after serving in the Supreme Court for five years, he was really moved by love and affection showered on him by judges and members of the Bar.

While he was supposed to retire on July 4, a virtual

farewell ceremony was held for him on Wednesday as he had to attend the last rites of his mother, who passed away recently at Prayagraj.

On Friday, the SCBA and various Bar members of the top court organised a virtual farewell for him. Born on July 5, 1956 in Jaunpur district of Uttar Pradesh to Chandrama Prasad Srivastava and his wife Kalavathi Srivastava, he graduated in Arts in 1975 and obtained his law degree from the Allahabad University in 1979. He enrolled as an advocate in Uttar Pradesh on April 6, 1979. After more than 20 years of successful practice, he was elevated as a permanent Judge of the Allahabad High Court on April 24, 2001. After a stint as the Chief Justice of the Kerala High Court, he was elevated as a Judge of the Supreme Court on May 13, 2016.

WINDOWS

Branson to make spaceflight on July 11

LONDON: UK billionaire and founder of the Virgin Galactic company Richard Branson says he will make a spaceflight on July 11, earlier than Amazon founder Jeff Bezos. "I've always been a dreamer. My mum taught me to never give up and to reach for the stars. On July 11, it's time to turn that dream into a reality aboard the next @VirginGalactic spaceflight," Branson wrote on his Twitter page on late Thursday.

The company confirmed the information and published a video, presenting six crew members of the next spaceflight, including Branson.

"Join us July 11th for our first fully crewed rocket powered test flight, and the beginning of a new space age. The countdown begins," the company wrote on its Twitter page

No stay on sedition case against Ayesha

KOCHI: Lakshadweep film personality Ayesha Sulthana, who has been in news ever since her controversial remark on a local TV channel, on Friday suffered a setback when the Kerala High Court refused to stay a sedition case registered against her by the Kavaratti police. Though she has been given anticipatory bail by the court, she approached the court again with a fresh petition to quash the FIR registered against her, for which she was in the island last week and presented herself for three days before the police for their questioning. On Friday when her petition came up before the high court, the Centre presented that the investigation has only just started. The court then observed that the investigation is in the preliminary stages and hence it was not possible to quash the case nor could a stay be given at the present moment.



Safdarjung Hospital nursing staff protest outside Health Minister Harsh Vardhan's residence in New Delhi; (Right) Gynecologist Dr. Shweta Joshi receives Sputnik V vaccine at DY Patil Hospital in Navi Mumbai on Friday



Top LeT commander among five militants killed

JAMMU

At least five militants of terror group Lashkar-e-Taiba, including their district commander Nishaz Lone, were killed by security forces during an encounter in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama district on Friday. One army soldier was also injured during the encounter and later succumbed to his injuries at a hospital.

Based on a tip-off, the security forces launched a cordon and search operation in Hanjan Village of Rajpora in South Kashmir's Pulwama district on late Thursday, an official said.

An encounter broke out when the hiding militants fired at the security personnel during the search, the official added.

IGP Kashmir Vijay Kumar called the operation a big success. He said the district commander of LeT, Nishaz Lone, and one Pakistani terrorist were among the terrorists killed by the security forces.

The recent incident of drones dropping bombs on the Indian Air Force base in Jammu is "very serious and very dangerous", and there is an urgent need to develop technology to counter this challenge, Border Security Force chief Rakesh Asthana said on Friday.

He said the force, which guards over 6,300 kms of India's land border with Pakistan in the west and Bangladesh on the east, is faced by four main challenges on the security front.

These are detection of underground tunnels along the international border with Pakistan, presence of electronic devices used by anti-national elements in the frontier areas, emergence of drones and issues of poor mobile connectivity in remote areas.

‘Pregnant eligible for vaccination’

NEW DELHI

PREGNANT women in India are now eligible to get vaccinated against Covid with the Union Health Ministry on Friday giving the approval based on recommendations of the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunization (NTAGI).

The decision empowers pregnant women to make an informed choice on taking the Covid vaccination, the ministry said, adding these women can now register on CoWIN or walk-in to the nearest Covid vaccination centre to get themselves inoculated.

The decision has been communicated to all the states and union territories to implement it under the ongoing National Covid Vaccination Program, it said in a statement.

India's Covid vaccination program incorporates recommendations of the foremost experts in the field of immunization, public health, disease control and information technology.

UAE bars India travel

NEW DELHI: The UAE government on Friday prohibited its nationals from traveling to 14 countries, including India and Pakistan, in a major step to arrest the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The UAE's ministry of foreign affairs and international cooperation and the National Emergency Crisis and Disasters Management Authority announced that its citizens are prohibited from travelling to India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Namibia, Zambia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Sierra Leone, Liberia, South Africa, and Nigeria.

The UAE's ministry of health and prevention on Thursday reported 1,675 new Covid-19 cases along with 1,556 recoveries and 8 deaths.

‘AZ 92% effective against Delta’

WASHINGTON: US top coronavirus adviser Dr Anthony Fauci said that most Covid-19 vaccines are highly effective against the rapidly spreading Delta variant and reiterated his request for people to get vaccinated as soon as possible.

Fauci said: "...From Public Health England, from June 14, the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine was 96 per cent effective against hospitalization from the Delta variant after two doses, and the AZ (AstraZeneca) was 92 per cent effective against hospitalization after two doses."

"Since these vaccines -- the AZ and the J&J (Johnson & Johnson) are based on very similar platforms, one could anticipate and make a reasonable assumption that the results against the Delta variant would be at least similar, perhaps even better."

India records 46,617 new Covid cases

NEW DELHI: India saw a single-day rise of 46,617 new coronavirus infections, taking the tally of COVID-19 cases to 3,04,58,251, while the national recovery rate has crossed 97 per cent, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Friday. The death toll due to COVID-19 rose to 4,00,312 with 853 daily fatalities. Over 34 crore vaccine doses have been administered under the nationwide vaccination drive so far, it said. The active cases have further declined to 5,09,637, comprising 1.67 per cent of the total infections, while the national COVID-19 recovery rate has improved to 97.01 per cent, the data updated at 8 am showed. A net decline of 13,620 cases has been recorded in the total number of active COVID-19 cases in a span of 24 hours.

Bengal post-poll violence: HC orders second autopsy of BJP leader's body

KOLKATA: Taking note of an interim report of an NHRC committee ordered by it to probe post-poll violence in West Bengal, the Calcutta High Court on Friday directed a second autopsy of a BJP labour wing leader and is-

sued a show-cause notice to a deputy commissioner of the Kolkata Police as to why contempt proceedings will not be initiated against him.

The BJP trade union leader was allegedly killed in the post-poll violence

in Kolkata. A five-judge bench hearing a bunch of PILs alleging atrocities in post-poll violence in the state, accepted a request by the committee for further time to carry out investigation, while maintaining that early

action in the matter is expected as delay may result in destruction of evidence.

"Let a notice be issued to Rashid Munir Khan, Deputy Commissioner of Police, South Suburban Division,

Kolkata to show cause as to why proceedings for contempt be not initiated against him for violation of the order passed by this court on June 18, 2021," the bench ordered. The interim report mentioned that

Atif Rasheed, a member of the committee was obstructed from discharging his duty when he and his team members were attacked by goons on June 29 in Jadavpur area which falls under the city police's South Subur-

ban Division, the court noted. The high court on June 18 directed the NHRC to set up a committee to examine all cases with regard to alleged human rights violations during post-poll violence in West Bengal.

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SINCE 1981

మీ కలలకు సాకారం

సరైన సమయంలో చక్కని నిర్ణయం మంచి ఫలితాలను అందించింది

నా ఎంపిక కపిల్ చిట్స్ ఇప్పటికీ వెన్నంటి ఉంది.

TODAY'S QUOTE

Centre brings retail, wholesale trade under MSMEs

“The inclusion of retail and wholesale trade under MSMEs as per which they will also now get the benefit of priority sector lending under RBI guidelines. The retail and wholesale trade sector were left out of the ambit of MSMEs. The revised guidelines will benefit 2.5 crore retail and wholesale traders.

— Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister



INSURANCE

Investments in ULIPs gaining traction

Affinity of investors to park money in unit-linked insurance plans (ULIPs) has gone up during the coronavirus pandemic, mainly because of flexibility to manage the funds, according to a survey report by Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance. The insurer said two out of three Indians intend to invest in ULIPs in the coming year.

FOREX (buy rates in ₹)			
US Dollar	75.77	South	
Euro	89.6	African Rand	5.48
UAE Dirham	20.78	Hong Kong Dollar	10.11
Thai Baht	2.44	Japanese Yen	0.77
British Pound	104.22	New Zealand Dollar	52.69
Australian Dollar	56.49	Saudi Riyal	21.94
Canadian Dollar	60.91	Swedish Krona	9.23
Swiss Franc	81.7	Singapore Dollar	56.33

DELHI SATURDAY 3 JULY 2021

BIZ BRIEFS

Cigniti opens office in S'pore

Cigniti Technologies, one of the leading independent quality engineering and software testing services company, announced the opening of its first office in Singapore. With this new expansion, the company further extends its global footprint in the Asia Pacific region to meet the growing digital transformation needs of leading enterprises based in the region. Nanda Padmaraju, Cigniti's head of RoW business said: "Cigniti is recognised globally for its innovative approach to assisting enterprises in their quality engineering and digital transformation initiatives leveraging proprietary IP, AI & ML driven frameworks and highly agile and DevOps development methodologies". As more and more enterprises in the Asia Pacific region look towards aligning their transformation roadmaps to leverage the benefits of next-generation technologies, Cigniti is committed to providing customers with the insights, advisory and services they need to accelerate their digital transformation, he added.

Spencer's unveils sales offer

Spencer's retail stores in Vijayawada and Guntur announced biggest savings sale from July 2 to July 4 on entire range of grocery, daily needs, home essentials, fashion and electronics. Customer can avail 15 per cent cash back on purchase of Rs2,999. Customer who shops for Rs2,000 worth fashion will get an additional shopping of Rs2,000 merchandise free. This year, shoppers can save even more than regular offers. Also, customers can avail 5 per cent cashback on SBI Cards. The retail chain company brings maximum savings for customers by presenting the biggest and the best unlock biggest savings sale of the year. "Get ready to experience another shopping extravaganza at your nearest Spencer's store or online. This offer is valid only for three days.

Exports zoom 47% to \$32.46 bn in June

Sectors such as engineering, gems and jewellery lead this growth; trade deficit at \$9.4 bn

NEW DELHI

THE country's exports rose by 47.34 per cent to \$32.46 billion in June on account of healthy growth in sectors such as engineering, gems and jewellery and petroleum products, even as trade deficit aggregated at \$9.4 billion during the month, according to the data released by the commerce ministry on Friday. Exports in June last year stood at \$22 billion and \$25 billion in June 2019.

In May 2021, the outward shipment was worth \$32.27 billion, while in April this year, it was \$31 billion. Imports in June 2021 grew by 96.33 per cent to \$41.86 billion, from \$21.32 billion in June last year. In June 2019, imports stood at \$41 billion.

"India is thus a net importer in June 2021 with a trade deficit of \$9.4 billion, widened by 1,426.6 per cent over trade surplus of \$0.71 billion in June 2020 (India was net exporter in June 2020) and narrowed down by 41.26 per cent over trade deficit of \$16 billion in June 2019," the ministry said in a statement. Exports during the April-June quarter this



Exports during the April-June quarter this year jumped to a record \$95.36 billion as against \$51.44 billion in the same period last year

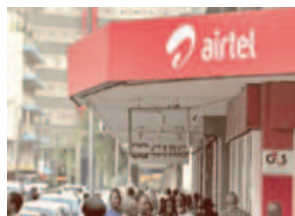
year jumped to \$95.36 billion as against \$51.44 billion in the same period last year. "Exports during the April-June period are the highest ever merchandise exports in a quarter in history of India," Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said briefing the media here. The merchandise exports were recorded at \$82 billion during April-June 2018-19 and \$90 billion during the last quarter of 2020-21, he said.

He also said the ministry will

work with all the stakeholders concerned to achieve the target of \$400 billion exports in this fiscal year. Imports during April-June 2021 were at \$126.14 billion, an increase from \$60.65 billion in the corresponding three months last year. Oil imports in June this year rose to \$10.68 billion, as compared to \$4.97 billion in June 2020.

"Oil imports during April-June 2021 were \$31 billion, a positive growth of 136.36 per cent compared to \$13.12 billion in April-June 2020 and a negative growth of 12.33 per cent compared to \$35.36 billion in April-June 2019," it said.

Exports of engineering, petroleum products and pharma during the first three months of this fiscal stood at \$25.9 billion, \$12.9 billion and \$5.8 billion, respectively. Goyal also said that simplification of procedures, extension of timelines and licences resulted in the record performance of exports. On services exports, he expressed confidence that the exports would touch \$350 billion by 2025, and may even go up to \$500 billion very soon.



Airtel unveils new payment plan

HANS BUSINESS

NEW DELHI: Airtel has launched its new payment plan 'Airtel Black', a one-stop solutions, for its customers to integrate their mobile services, broadband and DTH services under one bill. The company announced four different bundle plans starting from Rs 2,099, under which a customer can avail three mobile connections, one fibre connection and one DTH connection to a minimum of Rs 998 with two mobile connections and one DTH.

Airtel said that its customers may avail zero-switching and installation costs coupled with free service visits for life or if they choose to pay Rs 1,500 security deposit they can upgrade to Xstream-set-top box which gives access to satellite content and OTT services on television screens. "There are two kinds of plans, first one is the flexibility at the hands of the customers to create their own plans and choose from their market operating plans. And those customers who do not want to spend time understanding the details of the plan, we've made it convenient for them by offering these four bundled fixed plans which offers recurring savings to our customers month after month," said Airtel spokesperson.

Mkt snaps 4-day losing streak to close in green

MUMBAI

MARKET gauges Sensex and Nifty broke their four-session losing run on Friday as emergence of buying in financial, pharma and IT stocks negated losses in metal counters. After a range-bound trading through the day, the BSE Sensex ended 166.07 points or 0.32 per cent higher at 52,484.67.

Likewise, the broader NSE Nifty advanced 42.20 points or 0.27 per cent up at 15,722.20. On the Sensex chart, ICICI Bank was the top gainer, rising over 1.5 per cent, followed by RIL, SBI, Titan, HDFC, Axis Bank, Bajaj Finance and Infosys. On the other hand, Tata Steel, PowerGrid, Bajaj Auto, Asian Paints and Sun Pharma were major laggards. Of the 30 Sensex constituents, 16 shares ended with gains and 14 suffered losses. Sectorally, BSE consumer durables, energy, healthcare, telecom, realty, bankex and finance indices rose up to 1.23 per cent. On the other hand, power, metal, utilities and capital goods indices ended in the red.

Broader midcap and smallcap indices outperformed the benchmark, rising up to 1.01 per cent. During the week, Sensex declined by 440.37 points or 0.83 per cent, while Nifty fell 138.15 points or 0.87 per cent. "Domestic equities continued to trade in a

Sensex gains 166 pts, Nifty up 42 pts; buying in financial, pharma negated losses in metals

range-bound with benchmark indices witnessing marginal gains. While financials, pharma and realty indices recovered modestly today, profit booking was visible across metals and FMCG counters," Binod Modi, Head-Strategy at Reliance Securities, said. Notably, midcap and smallcap indices continued to outperform as improved earnings visibility attracted investors towards this space, he noted. Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said, "Amid lack of domestic triggers, main indices traded flattish and ended with minor gains... Domestic banking stocks gained although RBI in its Financial Stability Report indicates that Gross NPA percentage could climb to a baseline of 9.8 per cent by March 2022."

Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Seoul closed in the red, Tokyo ended with gains. Equities in Europe were trading on a positive note in mid-session deals. Meanwhile, international oil benchmark Brent crude was quoting marginally lower at \$75.79 per barrel.



NCC receives ₹2,149 cr orders

HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

INFRASTRUCTURE major NCC has received five orders from central and State governments, totalling Rs 2,149 crore in June month. Out of the total orders, two valued at Rs 1,254 crore pertain to water and environment division and one valued at Rs 729 crore pertains to buildings division and other values Rs 166 crore pertain to mining division. These orders have



been received from PSU/central/State Government agencies and do not include any internal projects.

LIC HFL slashes home loan rates to 6.66%

MUMBAI

MORTGAGE financier LIC Housing Finance on Friday said it has reduced its interest rates to 6.66 per cent for home loans up to Rs 50 lakh.

The revised rates, valid till August 31, 2021, will be offered to new salaried individuals, a release said. The rate of interest will be linked to the borrower's creditworthiness, as reflected by their CIBIL scores, it said.

"Considering the impact of

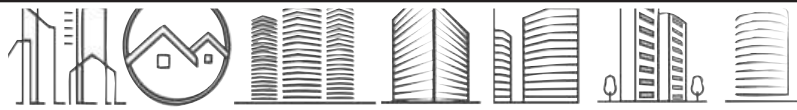


the pandemic, we wanted to offer an interest rate that would help in uplifting the overall sentiments and aid more individuals to fulfil their dream of owning their own house. We hope that this reduction in home loan interest rate will further boost cus-

tomers confidence and help in early revival of the sector," its Managing Director and CEO Y Viswanatha Gowd said in the release. At 6.66 per cent, the housing finance company has offered its lowest ever rate of interest on housing loans with a maximum tenure of 30 years, the release said. One can apply for home loans through the lender's app - HomY and can get the approvals online. Customers can track their loan applications without visiting LIC HFL offices, the release said.

VIL in talks to raise funds

NEW DELHI: Cash-strapped Vodafone Idea (VIL) on Friday said it is in active talks with potential investors for fund raising and asserted that "floor price" remains the "best and most preferred" fix for industry's woes arising from tariff-related issues. VIL confirmed that it has approached government to extend moratorium on spectrum instalments. The company highlighted that sector's biggest pain point comes from pricing issues and conceded that tariff hike is 'absolutely' essential to revive the sector, which is under stress.



REAL CORNER



'HYD REALTY ON GROWTH PATH DESPITE COVID 2.0'

Lower property prices, uncertainty in AP over capital city, driving Hyderabad realty's growth, says PS Reddy of Naredco TS

P MADHUSUDHAN REDDY

The second wave of Covid-19 that hit the country in March and continued for over three months, crippled every sector in the country as most of the States imposed lockdown to contain the deadly, Chinese-born coronavirus which had since turned more dangerous. But has Covid 2.0 left any adverse impact on the Hyderabad real estate sector? Naredco Telangana chief says 'no'.

"Frankly speaking, Covid's second wave has not crippled the real estate business in the city. It's true that site visits dropped due to the lockdown. To that extent, there was some dip in the sales growth. But it was a temporary phase. And it's business as usual now," PS Reddy, president, Telangana Chapter of the National Real Estate Development Council (Naredco), told The Hans India.

According to him, the growth momentum will continue in the residential and commercial real estate sectors. "The Hyderabad market is doing well even in bulk land sales. The overall realty market is upbeat as people are keen on buying new properties here," he remarked. Asked why the real estate

There is nothing wrong in selling an undivided share of a land and again entering into a development agreement with the buyer. Such transactions don't violate any RERA provisions. The Telangana government should come out with a policy framework for farmland sales



— PS REDDY, president, Naredco Telangana

sector is doing well in Hyderabad when other cities are facing challenging times due to the Covid crisis, he cited lower prices as one of the prime reasons. "Prices are low in Hyderabad when we compare it with other cities. Further, it's the best cosmopolitan city. So, people are interested in investing in the Hyderabad realty market," he maintained.

The Naredco Telangana chief further said that uncertainty in Andhra Pradesh was also driving real estate sales in the City of Pearls. "People including NRIs invested in the Amaravati area after it was declared as the capital. All

those investments got stuck now. Most of the real estate investors from AP shifted their focus to Hyderabad now. Companies like Aparna completed a project in Amaravati, but there are no sales. What they will do?" he pointed out.

Reddy, who is also Managing Director of Silpa Homes Private Limited, said that the Hyderabad real estate sector witnessed brisk business from September last year to March this year after the Covid's first wave receded. "Property registrations data is a clear indicator of the activity in the sector. The State witnessed record registrations on Dharani portal and out-

side of it in the last few months," he explained.

According to him, farmland sales also zoomed near Hyderabad. "Due to Covid, people living in apartments are now looking for independent houses. Farmlands are also in demand now as many families want more lung space. Farmland sales more than doubled in the last one year. Further, prices went up by 20-25 per cent. This trend will continue in the future too," he said. He urged the Telangana government to come out with a concept and policy framework for farmland sales. "I already submitted a memorandum



New office space supply up 75% this year

Hyderabad sees 3% rise in new supply to 3.84 million sq ft in 2021

NEW DELHI

NEW supply of office spaces increased 75 per cent year-on-year to 25.11 million sq ft across seven major cities during the first six months of this calendar year despite the Covid-19 pandemic, as realty firms remain bullish on revival in workspace demand, according to JLL India.

New office space supply stood at 14.38 million sq ft during January-June 2020 across seven cities - Delhi-NCR, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Pune, Kolkata, Hyderabad and Chennai. "Completions during H1 2021 were recorded at 25.11 million sq ft, an increase of 75 per cent year-on-year, show that developers are confident of a strong revival in office leasing activity once business as usual is reinstated," said JLL India Head (Office Leasing Advisory) Rahul Arora.

He added that in the second half of the year, if the country can ensure that most of the active workforce gets fully vaccinated, the shift back to office premises will be more feasible and sustainable.

According to the data, new office space supply in Bengaluru jumped over two-fold to 9.53 million sq ft in January-June 2021, from 3.35 million sq ft in the year-ago period. In Chennai, fresh supply dropped six per cent



to 0.5 million sq ft, from 0.53 million sq ft a year ago. New supply increased 35 per cent in Delhi NCR to 5.23 million sq ft, from 3.88 million sq ft.

Hyderabad saw a three per cent rise in new supply to 3.84 million sq ft from 3.73 million sq ft. In Mumbai, new office supply more than doubled to 4.73 million sq ft during the first six months of the calendar year 2021, from 2.29 million sq ft in the corresponding period of the previous year. Pune, too, saw a jump of over twofold to 1.28 million sq ft as against 0.6 million sq ft. Interestingly, there was no fresh addition of office space in Kolkata during the January-June period of this year as well as 2020.

Regarding office demand, JLL India reported that the net leasing of office space fell 19 per cent to 9.63 million sq ft in the first half of 2021, from 11.94 million sq ft in the year-ago period. JLL India, part of US-based JLL, is one of the leading players in office leasing consultancy services in the country.

WIMBLEDON CHAMPIONSHIP

Federer, Zverev advance; Nishikori, Dimitrov ousted

LONDON

EIGHT-TIME champion Roger Federer advanced to the third round at Wimbledon with ease, getting the better of Richard Gasquet of France in straight sets on Thursday.

Sixth seed Federer, who along with Rafael Nadal has won 20 Grand Slam singles titles, the most in Open Era, was in great form as he defeated his French opponent, 7-6, 6-1, 6-4, spending nine minutes less than two hours at the Centre Court.

The Swiss maestro sent down 10 aces, had no double fault, and won 84% points on his first serve. He also slammed 50 winners as compared to 20 by Gasquet.

Though the 39-year-old world No.8 Swiss had 26 unforced errors, Gasquet could not capitalise on that as he himself committed 23 errors. Overall, it was a clinical display by Federer, who had finished runner-up here in 2019 and is hoping to claim his ninth title here.

Federer, who had undergone surgery twice on his troublesome right knee in 2020, gave the Australian Open a miss and lost in the fourth round at Roland Garros.

Earlier on Thursday, the Wimbledon campaign of unseeded Japanese Kei Nishikori came to an end with his defeat to Jordan Thompson of Australia.

Nishikori, a two-time quarter-finalist here in 2018 and 2019, lost

to Thompson in four sets, 5-6, 4-6, 7-5, 3-6.

The seasoned Japanese served five double faults and made 49 unforced errors as compared to 22 by his opponent. Though he put in a better first serve than his opponent, Nishikori could win only 64% points on his first serve as compared to 81% by Thompson.

Earlier in first round, he had defeated Alexei Popyrin of Australia 6-4, 6-4, 6-4.

No.18 seed Grigor Dimitrov of Bulgaria too was dumped the way-side on Thursday. He was shown the door by Alexander Durr of

Kazakhstan, who won 6-4, 7-6, 7-6. The Kazakh slammed 34 aces to four by Dimitrov.

Spanish eighth seed Roberto Bautista Agut lost some steam after winning the first two sets in his second round match. He advanced after winning a nerve-jangling five-setter against Miomir Kecmanovic of Serbia -- coming through the bruising contest 6-3, 6-3, 6-7, 3-6,

6-3. Earlier, World No. 6 Alexander Zverev defeated American Tennys Sandgren 7-5, 6-2, 6-3 in one hour and 45 minutes to advance to the third round. However, 13th seed Gael Monfils fell to Spanish Pedro Martinez in four sets.

Zverev, who lost in the sec-

ond round of Halle Open, hammered 13 aces and committed only two double faults. Tennys Sandgren hit eight aces and committed as many as six double faults.

The 24-year-old German, who is yet to win a Grand Slam title, converted five of the 10 break points. The seventh seed Matteo Berrettini scored a hard-fought 6-3, 6-4, 7-6(4) victory over Botic Van de Zandschulp to advance to third round. The Italian fired 20 aces against de Zandschulp's seven. He also won 83 per cent points on first service.

Although he could convert only two of the seven break points, he was still better than the Dutch player who failed to convert even one of his nine break points.

The 17th seed Cristian Garin of Chile reached the third round at

Ankita Raina, partner bow out in first round of women's doubles

Ankita Raina's maiden appearance in Wimbledon's main draw ended in disappointment as the Indian and her American partner Lauren Davis lost in straight sets to the US pair of Asia Muhammad and Jessica Pegula. The 14th seeds disposed off the challenge from the Raina-Davis pair beating them 6-3 6-2 in 70 minutes during a late evening match on Court No.11.

Ankita, however, will be pairing with compatriot Ramkumar Ramanathan in the mixed doubles event where they would meet their country's seasoned pair of Sania Mirza and Rohan Bopanna.

Sania and her American partner Bethanie Mattek-Sands are through to the second round of women's doubles while Bopanna and Divij Sharan are already out, having lost their men's doubles opening round encounter. (PTI)

Wimbledon for the first time in his career after he overcame Australian Marc Polmans 7-6(3), 6-2, 2-6, 7-6(5) in four sets.

Martinez surprised 13th seed Frenchman Monfils 6-3, 6-4, 4-6, 7-6(5) to advance to the third round. Though Monfils's game was power-packed as he fired 21 aces as against six from Martinez and also won more on first serve, he still failed. (IANS)

Ranatunga criticises SLC for hosting '2nd string Indian team'

COLOMBO

SRI Lanka's World Cup-winning former captain Arjuna Ranatunga has slammed the country's cricket board for agreeing to host a "second string Indian team" in a white-ball series later this month, saying that it is nothing short of an "insult".

India and Sri Lanka are due to compete in three ODIs and as many T20 Internationals beginning July 13. With India's major stars like skipper Virat Kohli and his limited-overs deputy Rohit Sharma in England for an upcoming Test series, the team here is being led by opening batsman Shikhar Dhawan and features half a dozen uncapped players.

"This is a second string Indian team and their

coming here is an insult on our cricket. I blame the current administration for agreeing to play with them due to television marketing needs," Ranatunga, a government minister until two years ago, told reporters at his residence.

"India sent their best team to England and sent a weaker side to play here. I blame our board for that," added the legendary batsman, who led Sri Lanka to the 1996 ODI world title.

The visiting team has just completed its compulsory quarantine and would play the

home team in the first ODI on July 13. India's National Cricket Academy chief and celebrated former captain Rahul Dravid is the head coach for the tour. Ranatunga also spoke about the current poor run of the Lankan team in the international arena.

Sri Lanka lost their fifth T20 series in a row when they went down 3-0 to England last month. They were also forced to send back three senior players from the on-going tour of England for breaching bio-bubble protocol.

Ranatunga said the lack of discipline was also the fault of the administration and when he was at the helm, he did not allow any misconduct. He demanded the overhauling of the local administration and advocated the appointment of an interim committee to manage Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC). It was only mid May that the current SLC administration was elected. Ranatunga was the head of an interim committee politically appointed in 2007-08. (PTI)



ODI: India to fight for pride against England

WORCESTER

THE Indian women's team will look to fight for pride on Saturday in the third and final ODI against England, who have already taken an unassailable 2-0 lead in the series.

India lost by eight wickets in the first game, which turned out to be a one-sided affair. Mithali Raj's team though put up a fight while defending 221 in the second match but the total proved too little. India have struggled with the bat as well as with the ball in the two matches.

Apart from Mithali, who scored half-centuries in both the matches, no other batter has clicked. While Shafali Verma made a notable contribution in the second ODI after failing in the first, her debut ODI, the other opener Smriti Mandhana failed to click in both matches.

The biggest concern for Indian women is the form of Harmanpreet Kaur. The right-

handed batter has aggregated 20 in two innings and her failure is one of the reasons why the Indians haven't gone on to post a big score.

Squads

ENGLAND: Lauren Winfield Hill, Tammy Beaumont, Heather Knight (captain), Natalie Sciver, Amy Ellen Jones (wicketkeeper), Sophia Dunkley, Katherine Brunt, Sarah Glenn, Sophie Ecclestone, Anya Shrubsole, Kate Cross, Fran Wilson, Natasha Farrant, Freya Davies, Mady Villiers, Emily Arlott.

INDIA: Smriti Mandhana, Shafali Verma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Mithali Raj (captain), Harmanpreet Kaur, Deepti Sharma, Sneha Rana, Taniya Bhatia (wicketkeeper), Shikha Pandey, Jhulan Goswami, Poonam Yadav, Radha Yadav, Priya Punia, Arundhati Reddy, Indrani Roy, Punam Raut, Pooja Vastrakar, Ekta Bisht.

(IANS)

CWG ARCHERY Shooting championships cancelled due to Covid-19

BIRMINGHAM

THE 2022 Commonwealth archery and shooting championships, which were scheduled to take place in Chandigarh in January next year, have been cancelled due to the problems posed by Covid-19 pandemic.

The decision, taken by the Commonwealth Games India (CGI) Executive Board "with the support" of the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF), was made "after careful consideration of several factors, including the continued uncertainty created by the on-going global pandemic".

Maana becomes third Indian swimmer to make it to Olympics

NEW DELHI

FEMALE swimmer Maana Patel will compete at this month's Tokyo Olympic Games in the women's 100m backstroke as she has earned a Universality quota place, the Swimming Federation of India (SFI) said on Friday. The 21-year-old from Gujarat is the third Indian swimmer to get a ticket to Japan. Last month, Srihari Nataraj (100m backstroke) and Sajjan Prakash (200m butterfly) had cracked the Olympic A qualification mark to earn automatic berths in their respective events.

Maana's first international competition of the season was the Uzbekistan Open Swimming Championships in April. She had



clocked 1:04.47 seconds for gold medal in women's 100m backstroke.

Last month at the Sette Colli Trophy in Rome, Sajjan Prakash became the first ever Indian swimmer to achieve Olympic A qualification time in men's 200m butterfly. The 27-year-old had clocked 1 minute 56.38 seconds

in the men's 200m butterfly event which was better than the Olympic A qualification time of 1:56.48.

Nataraj was the second Indian swimmer to achieve Olympic A qualification time.

He clocked 53.77 secs during the time trial at Sette Colli Trophy in Rome which was better than the Olympic A qualification mark of 53.85 secs. (IANS)

De Silva's knock for Lanka in vain as England clinch ODI series

LONDON

SRI Lanka batsman Dhananjaya de Silva struck a run-a-ball 91 in the second One-day International (ODI) against England at The Oval but his efforts went in vain as Joe Root and Eoin Morgan smashed unbeaten half-centuries to defeat the visitors by eight wickets and take a 2-0 lead in the three-match series.

Despite de Silva's knock, Sri Lanka were restricted to a modest 241/9 in 50 overs, thanks mainly to Sam Curran's maiden international five-wicket haul (5/48 in 10 overs) and left-arm David Willey's 4/64.

With three England batsmen — Jason Roy (60), Joe Root (68 not out) and Eoin Morgan (75 not out) — scoring half centuries, the hosts lost two wickets on way to 244 with seven overs remaining.

Put in to bat, Sri Lanka started disastrously, losing four wickets for 21 runs in 29 balls with skipper Kusal Perera trapped leg-before for duck, Pathum Nissanka for 5, Avishka Fernando for 2 and Charith Asalanka for 3, with the first three wickets going into Curran's account.



BAKU

FROM the despair of seeing a teammate suffer cardiac arrest to the European Championship quarterfinals, somehow Denmark keeps on going.

Denmark will face the Czech Republic on Saturday, exactly three weeks after midfielder Christian Eriksen collapsed on the field in the team's opening game and had to be resuscitated with a defibrillator.

While Eriksen recovers — initially in the hospital and now at home — Denmark has improved at Euro 2020.

A 4-1 win over Russia got Denmark out of the group stage after two losses. Beating Wales 4-0 in the round of 16 matched the team's best showing since "Danish Dynamite" won the 1992 European Championship.

"Culture-wise, there's similarities. Values of sticking (together), one for all and all for one," Denmark midfielder Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg said Thursday. "There's this pride also to be playing for your country and all these values that I don't think have changed too much since 1992.

"But my biggest respect to the guys in '92 because they went on to win it. We

haven't done anything yet." Since the "shock" of Eriksen's sudden collapse, Hojbjerg said, Denmark has gone through huge emotional ups and downs.

"Now we're in the quarterfinals, so it's been a bit of a rollercoaster, a big one," he said. "And the good thing is that we are still hungry. We're still determined to push for more."

More than half of the 26-man squad was not yet born when Denmark beat Germany 2-0 in the 1992 final. The only European quarterfinal appearance since then came in 2004, a 3-0 loss to the Czech Republic. Hojbjerg was 8 years old back then and recalls he was "not very happy" he couldn't watch the match because of a school trip.

Denmark takes on Czechs for spot in Euro 2020 semis

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