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Satya Nadella

SATYA NADELLA IS MICROSOFT CHAIRMAN

New York, June 17: Microsoft's Hyderabad-born CEO Satya Nadella has been appointed as the technology giant's new chairman, an additional role in which he will lead the work to set the agenda for the board.

Microsoft Corp on Wednesday announced that the board's independent directors unanimously elected Nadella to the role of board chair.

In this role, Nadella, 53, will lead the work to set the agenda for the board.

Nadella, who has served as CEO since 2014, has helped transform the company into a leader in cloud computing, resulting in blockbuster earnings and a market cap of close to \$2 trillion. — *PTI*

HC orders TS to pay for encroached society land

Slum had come up on land at Yousufguda

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

The Telangana High Court has ordered the payment of compensation to the Kalyannagar Co-operative Housing Society Ltd in Yousufguda, after a 50-year legal fight over its purchase of 38 acres of land which was later encroached by people with political support.

The court directed the principal secretary for municipal administration and urban development to determine and pay the

compensation to the society within two months. Notably, the government had flouted several orders issued by the High Court on this land in the past.

The compensation should be calculated as per the provisions of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 for 38 acres and 2,121 square yards in Survey No.s 28/1 and 128/10 of Yousufguda. The calculation should be made as per the market value of the

land as it existed on June 2, 2021, the court ruled. As per the 2013 law, the compensation will be five times of the market value.

A division bench comprising Justice Ramachandra Rao and Justice Vinod Kumar issued the orders to the government as it had not implemented the court's earlier directions to allot alternative land to the Kalyannagar Society in lieu of the land that had been encroached.

■ **Page 2: Injustice was done to Kalyannagar: HC**

CBSE'S 40:30:30 MARKS PLAN GETS SC'S NOD

PARMOD KUMAR | DC
with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, JUNE 17

The Supreme Court on Thursday ruled out revisiting its earlier decision to cancel Class 12 Board exams and accepted the evaluation plan submitted by the CBSE and ICSE for awarding marks to students who are to appear for Class 12 exams.

Based on results of Class 12, 11 and 10 respectively, the CBSE has adopted a 40:30:30 formula to evaluate and mark students. The Council for the ISCE said it would consider the performance of students for the last six classes in finalising the results.

According to the CBSE formula, the theory marks of each subject will be computed using 40 per cent from the marks they got in the subject pre-boards or mid-term exams held by their schools earlier this year, 30 per cent from their Class 11 final exam marks, and 30 per cent from their Class 10 Board exam results.

■ **Page 2: School's past performance will be key**

Lockdown likely to end on June 20

State also considering 9 pm-7 am curfew plan

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

The state government is most likely to lift the lockdown entirely from June 20, except in a few places in Khammam and Nalgonda districts where Covid-19 cases are yet to come under control. The government is also considering a proposal to continue with a shortened night curfew from 9 pm to 7 am for few more days.

The ongoing lockdown from 6 pm to 6 am will end on June 19. Official sources said Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao was in favour of lifting the lockdown as the Covid-19 situation had come under control.

The health department is learnt to have submitted a report to the CM stating that the restrictions since mid-April have helped contain the spread of the Coronavirus. The daily Covid-19 case numbers have fallen below the

STATE PURCHASE OF PADDY HITS A NEW RECORD

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

The Telangana state government said it had set a new record by directly purchasing the highest-ever 1.4 crore metric tonnes (MT) of paddy from farmers in the recent kharif and rabi seasons. The rabi procurement season for the year has just concluded.

1,500-mark and nine districts have reported zero positivity rate.

The health department opined that the situation does not warrant extension of the lockdown. It also cautioned that that strict measures should be taken

to ensure that people follow Covid-19 norms like mandatory wearing of masks, social distancing and preventing mass gatherings.

Against this backdrop, the CM is likely to take a decision on lifting of lockdown from June 20.

The CM has also decided to undertake surprise visits of the districts from June 20 to inspect the progress of Palle Pragathi and Pattana Pragathi programmes besides inaugurating new collectorate complexes and launching several development programmes.

The CM also wants to revive economic activity in the state which was impacted due to the restrictions since April. Kharif agriculture activity has also picked up across the state due to incessant rains in districts.

Official sources said CM is considering all these factors before taking a final call on the lockdown.

■ **Full report on Page 4**





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TS to adopt AP scheme to revamp govt schools

Special committee submits recommendations to CM

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

A Cabinet sub-committee on education held a meeting with the state education minister Sabitha Indra Reddy on Thursday, to decide on steps to equip and strengthen government schools with infrastructure facilities on par with private schools in the state.

The committee has decided to submit its recommendations to Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhara Rao for further instructions, a circular released on Thursday said.

It is learnt that the state government will implement a scheme similar to the Andhra Pradesh government's flagship 'Nadu Nedu' scheme that uses an end-to-end encrypted software with Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) for their already

● **THE TELANGANA** state government has now written to the Andhra Pradesh education department seeking the same, to which, an official notification said, the AP government has responded positively.

● **TCS HAD** informed the TS government that a formal 'no objection' was required from the AP government to design a project on the lines of Nadu-Nedu, using the same software.

under-progress school revamp project.

The Telangana state government in its 2021 budget had announced a new scheme to upgrade government schools and had allocated an amount of

₹4,000 crore under which state-run schools were to be revamped over the next two years. Apart from providing basic facilities, the government will take up construction and repair of buildings and sanitation facilities, and provision of furniture and other amenities.

The state government has sought out TCS to use the software for the state as well, for which they will have to acquire a formal no-objection certificate from the AP government.

The Telangana state government has now written to the Andhra Pradesh education department seeking the same, to which, an official notification said, the AP government has responded positively.

A report from Vijayawada said TS principal secretary (education) Sandeep Kumar

Sultanania wrote a letter to principal secretary (school education) B. Rajasekhara, seeking information about the Nadu-Nedu programme for a similar project in Telangana.

The officials informed AP Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy of this at review meeting on the progress of Nadu-Nedu on Thursday.

TCS had informed the TS government that a formal 'no objection' was required from the AP government to design a project on the lines of Nadu-Nedu, using the same software.

Hence, the TS wrote to the AP education department seeking its consent, to which AP responded positively. Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy said, "If this is for the benefit of our Telugu people, we should provide them all the support they need."

FIGHT ERUPTS OVER FEW CHICKEN PIECES

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD JUNE 17

An argument between customers and the hotel staff over a plate of biryani having few pieces of chicken escalated into a brawl at Mailardevpally. According to the police, Srinivas Goud and his brother Prashanth Goud, who are in the travels business at Aramgarh, stopped by the hotel in Mailardevpally on Wednesday and ordered chicken biryani.

"When the dish was served, the brothers reportedly found very few pieces of chicken in the biryani. When the same was pointed out to the waiter, an argument broke and the hotel manager, Mukaram intervened. The argument escalated into a brawl between the manager, staff and the customers," said a police release.

Following a call from an onlooker, cops reached the spot and dispersed the crowd. The police booked two cases.

DC IMPACT



GHMC repaired the open manhole which was posing danger to road users at Padmarao Nagar after DC highlighted it on Thursday.

— S. SURENDER REDDY



GHMC fines pvt agency for neglect in road duties

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation has imposed a fine of ₹1 lakh on a private agency for neglect in executing its responsibilities with respect to upkeep of roads under the Comprehensive Road Maintenance Programme and suspended two personnel. The GHMC, reacting to the picture of an open manhole cover that was posing danger to road-users in Padmarao Nagar, Secunderabad, published in these columns on June 17, said it was penalising KNR Constructions, which has the contract for maintenance of the

stretch of road on which a manhole cover was missing.

Also, as part of action on the same issue, the GHMC suspended from duty an assistant engineer, M. Rajasekhara, working in the office of the executive engineer, Begumpet, in its division 30 office, for his alleged role in the negligent maintenance of the road.

The GHMC in its orders said that this official's "negligence" meant that "there is a danger to human life and compromising on safety on the Padmarao Nagar Road (stormwater drain), near Gandhi Hospital."

Also suspended was a works inspector of the

GHMC, Mohammad Yousuf, while the Begumpet division executive engineer R. Sivanand, and deputy executive engineer T.S.R. Anjaneyulu were issued memos seeking explanation over the negligence.

Earlier on Thursday, minister K.T. Rama Rao made it clear that any negligence of duty on part of any GHMC official or staff will not be tolerated. The GHMC action on the contractor and one of its engineers followed instructions from Rama Rao that those responsible for the state of affairs on the Padmarao Nagar Road should be identified and action taken against them.

School's past performance will be key, says CBSE

From Page 1

This will be added to the actual marks that they got in their Class 12 internal assessments and practicals for that subject. The results of Class 12 stand board examination by CBSE and ICSE will be declared by July 31, 2021.

"After perusing the scheme presented by the concerned Boards, prima facie, we have no hesitation in accepting the same and permit the Boards to proceed on that basis," said a vacation bench comprising Justice A.M. Khanwilkar and Justice Dinesh Maheshwari in their order.

However, Justice Khanwilkar in the order pronounced by him said that the scheme "must incorporate" providing for a "dispute resolution mechanism" in case the students apply for correction of the final results declared by the concerned Boards. The court made it clear that the conduct of optional examination would be subject to "conducive situation and logistical constraint".

Under the scheme framed by the CBSE, each school will constitute a five-member Result Committee to be headed by the principal.

Noting that the marks to be awarded will be based on the school-level assessment involving variations in the quality of question papers, evaluation standard, the mode of conduct of exams etc, in an important rider the CBSE said that the total marks awarded should be in consonance with the past performance of the school in Class 12 Board examinations.

The subject wise marks assessed by the school for 2020-2021 should be within a range of +/- 5 marks obtained by students in the school in the subject

in the reference year.

However, the overall average marks for the school assessed in 2020-2021, for all the subjects, should not exceed the overall average marks obtained by the school by 2 marks in the specific reference year.

Over an hour long hearing saw the court rejecting a plea by some students seeking revisiting the decision to cancel Class 12 exams. These students were seeking conduct of physical examination as there is a substantial decline in the number of Covid cases across the country.

"There is no question of reversing the earlier decision regarding cancellation of examination because no prejudice will be caused to the students as they can still appear in the optional examination to be concluded in due course," the court said in its order.

In any case, the court said that the students, "who want to appear in the examination for improvement of their marks, will get that opportunity under the scheme. That takes care of the concern of such students."

Meanwhile the top court sought response from Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Tripura and Punjab on a plea seeking the cancellation of board examinations to be conducted by them. Lawyer appearing for the petitioner Anubha Shrivastava Sahai and others told the court that out of 28 states, 18 have cancelled their exams, 6 have conducted and completed them and remaining four have not responded. In both the cases — CBSE/ICSE and in the matter relating to the cancellation of Class 12 examination in four states — the next hearing will take place on June 21, 2021.

Injustice done to Kalyannagr Soc.: HC

From Page 1

The encroached land had been classified by the government as a 'slum' colony. In 1989, the special court constituted under the AP Land Grabbing (Prohibition) Act directed the government to allot alternative land to Kalyannagar Society. Then, the HC had also on several occasions since 1995 asked the government to allot alternative land or evict the encroachers but the orders were not implemented by the government.

The court observed that injustice was done and fraud was played on the Kalyannagar Society with encouragement from the then Congress MLA P. Janardhan Reddy and that the society was suffering since then with the pro-

longed legal battles.

Quoting from the Constitution that the concept of equity, justice and good conscience is integral to Indian law, the bench declared that the damage done to the society should be compensated. The court also imposed costs of ₹2 lakh on the state of Telangana, to be given to the Kalyannagar Society within eight weeks. The court also declared the notifications issued by the government designating the area as a slum was null and void ab initio. As per the case, the Kalyannagar Co-operative Housing Society was registered as a co-operative society in 1963 with 350 members from the lower and middle class families. On 5.11.1964, the society purchased land from C. Rajya Lakshmi Devi and

another individual, an extent of 34 acres and 4,472 square yards.

In another sale deed, it purchased from A. Ramaswamy three acres and 2,489 square yards in Survey No. 128/1 and a part of Survey No. 128/10 of Yousufguda village.

On 1.3.1978, the director of town planning and the Municipal Corporation of Hyderabad (MCH) issued an approved layout to the society comprising 287 house plots in an area of 38. acres. However, the sale deeds could not be executed in favour of the members in view of the prohibition under the Urban Land (Ceiling and Regulation) Act, 1976 and the society was awaiting exemption from the provisions of the Act.

In the meantime, the land started being

encroached "with help from" (then) local MLA Janardhan Reddy. Even after the court issued injunction orders, the encroachers occupied the society land. With the help of the then, 503 huts were raised in the land belonging to the society. In 1988, the government deleted the land parcel from the excess holdings under the

WEATHER



Max: 32.6°C
Min: 23.8°C
RH: 52%
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Cloudy sky with light rain or drizzle.
Max/Min temp. 33/23 °C

ASTROGUIDE

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Star: Uttaraphalguni till 9.32 pm
Varjyam: 5.10 am to 6.43 am; 5.32 am to 7.04 am (Saturday)
Durmuhurtam: 8.22 am to 9.15 am; 12.43 pm to 1.35 pm
Rahukalam: 10.30 am to 12 noon
HIJRI CALENDAR
Zeeqad 6,1442 AH
PRAYERS
Fajar: 4.32 am
Zohar: 12.27 pm
Asar: 4.54 pm
Maghrib: 6.58 pm
Isha: 8.15 pm
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.42 AM
SUNSET TODAY 6.52 PM
MOONSET 11.32 PM
MOONRISE 12.19 AM

COUNTER POINT



This is the list of malls, restaurants and parks to visit... once the lockdown is lifted!

SHORT TAKES

COURT PULLS UP TVVP FOR BIASED PROMOTIONS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

A division bench of the Telangana High Court, comprising Justice M.S. Ramachander Rao and Justice T. Amarnath Goud, faulted the Telangana Vaidya Vidhana Parishad (TVVP) for not following the seniority list in effecting promotions.

The bench was dealing with a petition filed by Vijay Kumar, working as senior assistant in TVVP. He challenged the promotion of his junior as section officer. The said order itself very categorically stated that it is only an ad-hoc promotion and it is liable to be reviewed after final allocation of the employees of the APVVP and the TVVP.

Dr K. Lakshmi Narasimha, counsel for the petitioner, submitted that a final seniority list was finalised in 2016 and it was based on this list that the final allocations were made. In spite of the final allocation in 2019, very purposefully the TVVP had not conducted any review of the promotions which are contrary to law and contrary to their own policies, counsel pointed out. Though the issue had been raised earlier, the TVVP promoted her to the next higher post.

The bench posed a series of questions to the TVVP directing them to explain why no review was conducted. Taking serious exception to the attitude of the TVVP, the bench directed them to produce the final seniority list of all cadres with all relevant documents.

After unlock, Covid-19 SoPs must be enforced strictly

Experts suggest empowering local admin to prevent future waves

KANIZA GARARI | DC
HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

The process of unlocking after the second wave must be slow to control the Covid-19 situation, and lift of restrictions must not allow the formation of new variants of Sars-CoV-2, the Coronavirus strain which causes Covid-19. Experts state that if there is crowding and even small gatherings in poorly ventilated spaces, coupled with ignoring the face mask, there are chances of spread of the Coronavirus and Covid-19 superspreader events.

To prevent this from happening, the local administration must be empowered to take action. The measures that are to be taken were supported by lessons provided by the B i r h a n m u m b a i Municipal Corporation, Nandurbar district in Maharashtra and Kerala, where surveillance was used to control the second wave.

Effective surveillance helped in controlling panic by building faith among the people that the administration would provide them access to healthcare facilities and timely treatment. These models used technology to guide people on the availability of beds and oxygen concentrators and provided the right picture with regard to Covid-19 data which helped in handling the situation.

"These three models show that the local administration was able to build confidence in the people and reduce panic," explained Dr Rajan Shukla, associate professor of Indian Institute of Public Health.

"State and local administrations have to learn to pre-empt or nip panic in the bud. Hiding information does not help. Instead, it leads to mistrust and increases desperation in the community. Public health systems

Health officials increase focus on local surveillance

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

The number of Covid-19 cases have been declining over the last fortnight in Adilabad, Kamareddy, Komaram Bheem-Asifabad, Narayanpet, Nirmal and Nizamabad districts. These districts have shown single digit numbers, and there is stress on ensuring the remaining districts are also able to achieve cases in single-digit numbers.

While the decline in Covid-19 cases is slow, there are only five districts where the numbers continue to be high — Hyderabad, Ranga Reddy, Khammam, Nalgonda and Karimnagar.

Health officials state that there will be greater attention being paid to these districts as the movement of people will lead to sporadic cases and controlling the outbreaks is important.

The epidemiology wing of the government has

DAILY COVID BULLETIN DATA		Update: Cases Deaths	
		Fresh Cases	1,492
		Deaths	13
		Tests Done	1,19,464
		Active Cases	19,521
		Total Cases	6,09,417
		Total Deaths	3,534
Highest New Cases		Lowest New Cases	
GHMC (Hyderabad)	166	Komaram Bheem-Asifabad	1
Khammam	129	Adilabad	3
Nalgonda	115	Kamareddy	6
Ranga Reddy	92	Nirmal	7
Bhadradi Kothagudem	91	Nizamabad	8

been asked to carry out constant surveys and follow-up whenever there are more than 10 cases in a given area.

A senior health official explained, "We are laying stress on increasing surveillance locally. This has seen a setback due to the work-from-home mode during the different phases of lockdown. We are also

studying the models of other states and will take them up accordingly."

The crux, according to officials, is to be prepared for the third wave and that is driving the administration to equip government hospitals with infrastructure and medical devices and provide training to healthcare workers to deal with the cases.

What experts say HOW TO HANDLE THE 'UNLOCK' PROCESS

● Reach out to recovered patients to understand gaps in health-care system

● The hurdles that volunteers and family members faced must be revisited for better understanding to create effective systems.

● Weekly tests per million population and test positivity rate are important parts of the surveillance scheme

● Unlocking from the second wave must be measured with the behaviour of people and it must be slow.

● Preparing for the next wave till vaccinations are completed must be the goal as till maximum people are vaccinated safety will be a challenge.

Inputs by Heart Care Foundation of India
Dr K.K. Aggarwal
Research Fund



Major General Alok Joshi, General Officer Commanding, Bison Division, hands over pledges of organ donation given by soldiers to an official of the Indian Red Cross Society.

Bison Div. holds blood, organ donation camp

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

To commemorate the 75th Independence Day, the Bison Division of the Indian Army organised an organ donation pledging camp and blood donation camp at the Secunderabad Military Garrison on Thursday. A total of 750 soldiers of the Bison Division pledged at the camp to donate their organ.

The initiative is coordinated by the Armed Forces Organ Retrieval and Transplantation Authority and the conversion rate of organ donation in the Army is amongst the highest in the country.

A blood donation camp in

collaboration with the Indian Red Cross Society was held at the garrison where 75 units of blood were collected by the medical team.

The Bison Division has undertaken similar initiatives and drives to support the civil administration on numerous occasions in the past, it said. The organ donation pledge and blood donation drive emphasised the importance of caring and sharing life with pride.

Major General Alok Joshi, General Officer Commanding, Bison Division, complimented the participants of the donation camp for their selfless service in helping the needy.

HC not to stop panel from land grab probe

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

The Telangana High Court on Thursday declined to restrain the government committee probing the encroachment of Sri Seetharamachandra Swamy temple land at Devarayamjal from entering the properties in Medchal-Malkajigiri district and taking up a survey. Justice T. Amarnath Goud was dealing with a writ petition filed by Sada Kanitha and another person who claim ownership of 20 acres and 15 guntas of temple lands. They were seeking suspension of the GO through which the committee was constituted. They

● JUSTICE GOUD refused to suspend the GO and asked the petitioners to cooperate with the committee by furnishing documents to substantiate their claim on the land.

also wanted the committee to issue notice in case the officials intended to take up a survey of the land.

Justice Goud refused to suspend the GO and asked the petitioners to cooperate with the committee by furnishing documents to substantiate their claim on the land. The judge also directed the committee to issue notice to the land occupiers before conducting the survey.

Jab gathering



Residents of Shantinagar Colony wait for their turn to get vaccinated at the Veterinary Association Hall, in Hyderabad, on Thursday.

Cops arrest 2 for chain snatching

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

Two chain-snatchers were arrested by the Rachakonda police who recovered 70 grams of gold ornaments and a bike, all worth ₹4.1 lakh, from the accused.

According to the Meerpet police, K. Narsingh alias Nari, 25, a resident of H a s t h i n a p u r a m, and his cousin Vignesh, 19, an engineering student from Balapur, were arrested for robbery and chain snatching.

ings.

Police said they targeted elderly women and those walking alone in secluded lanes of residential colonies. Depending upon the situation, they would either snatch chains or commit robberies.

Following a complaint from a woman, the police booked a case and, with the help of CCTV footage, identified and arrested Sarsingh and Vignesh on Thursday and remanded them to judicial custody.

MEDICAL | RACKET

Nine persons were arrested during the investigation

2 gangs selling black fungus drugs busted

NAVEEN KUMAR | DC
HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

The Hyderabad city police busted two gangs involved in procuring and selling in the black market, injections for mucormycosis, from SR Nagar and Banjara Hills on Thursday. These injections cost between ₹7,400 and ₹7,858 which the gangs were planning to sell at ₹35,000 to ₹50,000 per vial, police said.

Nine persons were arrested during these busts and officials from the Commissioner's Task Force, West Zone, recovered 28 vials of amphotericin B used for treating mucormycosis or black fungus disease.

In the first bust, the accused G. Srikanth, 39, regional sales manager and K. Shashi Kumar, 33, medical representative, both from MSN Labs, B. Venkata Suresh, 33, R. Niranjan, 36, a representative of Brinton



Commissioner of police Anjani Kumar inspect the seized injections used for treating mucormycosis from different parts of Hyderabad on Thursday.

Pharmaceuticals, and tericin B injection vials. "One Vinod, who is reportedly absconding, was held with 13 amphotericin B injections from different places to sell at

₹35,000 per vial. Based on a tip-off, we laid a trap near Balkampet in SR Nagar and nabbed them," said Hyderabad police commissioner Anjani Kumar.

The accused persons, along with medicines, were handed over to SR Nagar police for further action," Anjani Kumar said.

In the second case, T. Balaswamy, 31, Mohd Abdul Khadeer, 33, an employee at a medical agency at Manikonda, B. Ranjith, 39, and B. Anvesh Kumar Reddy, 33, a medical distributor of Suma Enterprises, were held with 15 antifungal injection vials.

"The gang illegally procured the injections from different places and hatched a plan to sell it for ₹35,000 per vial. They were nabbed from Suma Enterprises in Jubilee Hills and handed over to Banjara Hills police for further action," Anjani Kumar said.

Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya
National Institute for Persons with Physical Disabilities (Divyangjan)
4-Vishnu Digamber Marg, New Delhi-110002
(An autonomous Institute under Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Government of India)
Affiliated to University of Delhi

ADMISSION OPEN

The Institute invites online applications for admission to the following courses for the session 2021-22.

Bachelor of Physiotherapy (BPT) 4½ Years
Bachelor of Occupational Therapy (BOT) 4½ Years
Bachelor of Prosthetics & Orthotics (BPO) 4½ Years
Master of Prosthetics & Orthotics (MPO) 2 Years

The candidates seeking admission to BPT/BOT/BPO/MPO courses 2021-22, must register themselves online in the prescribed form available on the PDUNIPPD Website www.iphnewdelhi.in, www.pdunippd.in along with the registration fee. The fee for the registration to the courses will be 1200/- for General, EWS and OBC candidates and 600/- for SC, ST & PWD candidates.

Important dates for Admission into BPT/BOT/BPO:

1. Starting date of submission of Online Application Forms 14th June, 2021 (Monday)
2. Closing date of submission of Online Application Forms 16th July, 2021 (Friday)
3. Date of entrance Test 8th August, 2021 (Sunday)
4. Contact email id pdunippdmissions@gmail.com

Important dates for Admission into MPO:

1. Starting date of submission of Online Application Forms 19th July, 2021 (Monday)
2. Closing date of submission of Online Application Forms 7th August, 2021 (Saturday)
3. Date of entrance Test 29th August, 2021 (Sunday)

• Candidates are advised to keep visiting the website www.iphnewdelhi.in, www.pdunippd.in for any further information in this regard.

Davp 38103/11/0003/2122

Director

IN BRIEF

Bank staffer arrested

Hyderabad: Tadaboina Ravi Kumar, 30, an outsourcing employee of a bank, was arrested for inappropriately touching a woman while she was crossing the road. Police said Ravi, who was on a bike, had slapped her on the hip while she was crossing the road on June 11 with four children. "It was while watching CCTV footage that we could identify and nab him," said the police.

PLUMBER DIES IN AIRPORT DRAIN MISHAP

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

A plumber died at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport in Shamshabad after inhaling fumes from acid that was poured into drainage pipes to unclog them, on Thursday.

The deceased, Narasimha Reddy, 42, an employee of Faber Sindoori Facility Management Services, was checking a drainage leak at the arrival point of the airport.

"He was accompanied by two others and they had taken the help of a ladder to reach the ceiling. When they poured acid into drainage pipes to clear the blockage, there were fumes," said DCP of Shamshabad, Prakash Reddy.

Narasimha Reddy apparently inhaled the fumes and died on the spot while the other two are reported safe.

MAHINDRA VARSITY OPENS PH.D PROG

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

Mahindra University is inviting applications for admission into its PhD programme in engineering, applied sciences, humanities and social Sciences for the 2021 academic session. The last date for submission of applications is June 30, and the session will commence in September-October. The details of the full-time PhD programme, qualifications and experience are available on <https://www.mahindraecole-centrale.edu.in/programs/phd>. Full-time PhD scholars will get an assistantship of ₹25,000 per month plus free boarding and lodging on the MU campus. They will have to perform teaching assistantship of eight hours a week. The last date to apply is June 30.

AP OKAYS 2AC FOR SINDHU'S ACADEMY

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JUNE 17

The AP government on Thursday issued orders alienating two acres of land at Chinagadili in Vizag city to badminton star P.V. Sindhu for establishing an academy and sports schools free of cost.

The allocation was promised by Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy when Sindhu was crowned the women singles world champion in 2019.

The Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh verified her application and said the land will be registered after she completes registration of the trust. The academy will be constructed in two phases at an expenditure of ₹5 crore in each phase.

ZOO HIGHLIGHTS ROLE IN CROC CONSERVATION

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

On the occasion of World Crocodile Day, officials of the Nehru Zoological Park highlighted the need to save the endangered species.

Zoos, among them the Nehru Zoo, carry out ex-situ conservation breeding programmes to improve the population of the reptiles in the wild.

The Nehru zoo houses four species of crocodiles — the mugger, saltwater, gharial and spectacled caiman.

A crocodile breeding station was set up in the zoo in the 1980s, to improve the mugger populations and rehabilitate them in the wild, which it has done successfully. The zoo currently has 65 mugger crocodiles, two saltwater crocodiles, 11 gharials and two spectacled caiman.

Traffic in lockdown mode



Traffic crawls at Greelands just before the lockdown kicked in in Hyderabad on Thursday. The stretch from Punjagutta saw traffic flowing much even after the lockdown. — R. PAVAN

Property auction to fetch ₹13K-cr: TSHB

Move part of govt's plan to increase revenue

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

The Telangana Housing Board and Rajiv Swagruha Corporation have submitted a report to the state government that they own 3,000 acres besides 1,200 Rajiv Swagruha flats in major cities and towns across the state, which would fetch nearly ₹13,000 crore if auctioned.

The Cabinet sub-committee on resource mobilisation headed by finance minister T. Harish Rao and comprising of ministers K.T. Rama Rao and V. Srinivas Goud met in Secretariat on

Thursday to finalise the auction of Housing Board lands and flats. The committee was given the task to recommend measures to raise revenues for the government to tide over Covid-induced financial crisis since March 2020.

The state government on June 16 allowed the HMDA to issue a notification to auction 65 acres to raise ₹2,500 crore with the minimum bid price fixed at ₹25 crore per acre.

Official sources said the stage is now set to issue notification to auction Housing Board lands and Rajiv Swagruha flats.

The cabinet sub-committee also discussed increasing the land value across the state as there is a wide gap between the government prescribed values and market value.

The increase of land values will result in increase in registration charges and stamp duty and contribute to high-

er earnings for the state government from the stamps and registrations department.

In its report, the Housing Board estimated that the auction of its 3,000 acres would fetch up to ₹12,000 crore. This apart, the auction of Rajiv Swagruha flats in Bandlaguda, Pocharam, Jawaharnagar and Gajularamaram would fetch another ₹1,200 crore. The committee asked officials to take steps to clear pending legal disputes if any on these lands and flats in courts at the earliest and see that no problems crop up during auctioning.

Paddy of 1.4cr MT is highest ever, says TS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

The Telangana state government said it had set a new record by directly purchasing the highest-ever 1.4 crore metric tonnes (MT) of paddy from farmers in the recent kharif and rabi seasons. The rabi procurement season for the year has just concluded. The food grain purchases by the state have increased by 576 per cent in the seven years since the formation of Telangana state in June 2014, the government said.

TS Civil Supplies Corporation (TSCSC) chairman Mareddy Srinivas Reddy released the details of kharif and rabi procurement for the season. At a media briefing, Reddy said the largescale irriga-

tion facilities created by the government like the Kaleshwaram project, the TRS government's schemes like Rythu Bandhu, Rythu Bhima, the 24x7 free power to agriculture have led to a phenomenal increase in the area under crop and foodgrains production.

"When Telangana State was formed in 2014, just 24.30 lakh metric tonnes of paddy was procured in

kharif and rabi. This time, we have procured 49 lakh metric tonnes in kharif and 90 lakh metric tonnes in rabi, totalling 1.4 crore metric tonnes, which is highest-ever. This proves how the agriculture sector has grown by leaps and bounds in Telangana in the last seven years," Reddy said.

The previous record was 1.11 crore metric tonnes for the 2019-20 season, which was broken this year.

Out of 32 districts, paddy was procured from farmers of the order of 100 per cent in 21 districts; worth ₹16,878 crore. Of this, ₹13,753 crore was credited to the bank accounts of farmers. The government said ₹2,000 crore was paid to farmers on Thursday alone.

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SHORT TAKES

OU LAW DEPT
SEEK INTERNSHIPS
IN SC FROM CJIDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

The Osmania University department of law on Thursday requested the newly appointed Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana to provide internship and judicial clerkship for OU law students in the Supreme Court.

The department in a letter to the CJI also appreciated the efforts of Justice Ramana in increasing the number of judges in the Telangana High Court from 24 to 42, and encouraging the use of Telugu as the court language.

They said that this would serve the cause of justice and encourage young advocates to excel in the legal profession.

JAMAAT-E-ISLAMI
URGES TS TO ALLOW
PRAYERS IN MASJIDDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

Moulana Hamid Mohammed Khan, state president of the Jamaat-e-Islami, on Thursday asked the government to allow people to worship in masjids.

When the lockdown was relaxed till 5 pm, and almost all commercial establishments have been allowed to do their business, why should religious places not be allowed to open for prayers, he asked. The logic behind continuing the ban on the public participating in worship in religious places is hard to understand, Moulana Khan said.

He said the government should allow the public to attend daily prayers in masjids with immediate effect with a condition that they should follow Covid-19 protocols. He also appealed to the people to maintain Covid-19 rules to contain the pandemic.

PROTEST BY
SUPPORT STAFF
ENTERS 3RD DAYDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

Government hospital workers of the sanitation, patient care and security wings continued their protest for the third day on Thursday by wearing black badges and raising slogans throughout the state.

They are demanding a pay hike, which the government had promised to them but had not implemented till date.

Staff at all the 24 government-run hospitals and primary health centres in Hyderabad were active in this protest. There has been no response from the government's side, as of now.

Hasen Begum, working in patient care at Niloufer Hospital, said "There are 400 persons in this hospital falling in this category. It is sad that the Chief Minister has failed to honour his promise to us."

M. Narsimha, state president of Telangana Medical Contract Employees and Contract Works Union, said, "Many sanitation, patient care and security personnel, who are working in government-run hospitals, are working for the past 15 to 16 years. They are drawing a meagre monthly salary of ₹9,400. During the pandemic, they have been risking their lives and also of their families."

He added, "There is a Supreme Court guideline, which states, 'equal work equal pay'. Even that is ignored. We have corresponded this matter to the director of medical education, but there is no response from the government."

Security upgrade



Workers arrange iron grills on the divider in front of Pragathi Bhavan at Greenlands on Thursday in Hyderabad.

— R.PAVAN

Wakf neglects
audit of assets

Activists angered by indifference

ATHER MOIN | DC
HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

The Wakf Board is taking scant interest in the maintenance of accounts of Auqaf (Wakf properties) and has failed to audit the accounts of about 35,000 institutions, each having its own attached properties totalling to thousands of acres.

The Board has not been submitting detailed reports of each institution under its direct control, a Wakf activist alleged.

The Wakf Act provides that every mutawalli (caretaker) has to keep regular accounts of institutions and audit in a prescribed manner. Every mutawalli hav-

ing a net annual income of ₹5, 000 has to pay a seven per cent contribution to the Board.

Syed Farees Ahmed, a Wakf activist, alleged that mutawallis were not submitting true statements of the accounts to the Board for its audit, while some are paying Wakf Fund to the board. It is the Wakf Board's responsibility to examine the audit report and recover the amount of illegal or improper expenditure or failure to recover money or other property caused by neglect or misconduct.

Wakf Board in recent years never bothered to examine the audit reports submitted by the mutawallis. Ahmed in a letter to

the secretary of minorities welfare department drew his attention to the gross negligence and requested him to ensure strict implementation of Chapter VI of the Wakf Act, which deals with maintenance of accounts of Auqaf.

He contended that the finances of an organisation play an important role in administration, improvement and development. There are 77,000 agricultural lands apart from other lands in urban areas in the state that are attached to 35,000 Wakf institutions. "If we count ₹1 lakh annual income of each institution, the Wakf Board will receive ₹24.5 crore as Wakf fund.

Notice issued to Twitter
over Meera Chopra caseDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

The Hyderabad cyber-crime police issued notice to Twitter India on Thursday in a case related to the threats made to, and abuse of actress Meera Chopra on the platform.

Following a complaint from the actress, a case had been registered for the obscene content posted on Twitter.

Cybercrime officials said that cases had been registered against those who made derogatory comments on Meera Chopra on Twitter. The cases were registered under Sections 67 and 67A of

the Information Technology by the Telangana police.

Officials said that they have once again given notices to Twitter to give details of those who put the comments against Meera Chopra on Twitter.

On June 5, 2020, minister K.T. Rama Rao responded to actress Meera Chopra's police complaint against

fans of Junior NTR, who she alleged had abused her online besides threatened her with gang rape and acid attacks.

In a response on Twitter to the actress, the minister said that

he had requested the DGP and the Hyderabad city police commissioner to take stern action as per law against those responsible, based on her complaint. Following this, Hyderabad police had filed an FIR in the case. Meera Chopra said she was hoping that it would be investigated thoroughly for the sake of the safety of women.

The Hyderabad cybercrime police had also ensured the removal of abusive tweets against Meera Chopra. The police has identified the Twitter accounts of those who made objectionable comments.

Help at hand for cancer-hit
children at St Jude CentreT.S.S. SIDDHARTH | DC
HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

For the families of 20 cancer-hit children, the St Jude India Childcare Centre in Banjara Hills is extending a helping hand. It is providing these poor parents from rural Telangana a chance to have their children get quality treatment. June is celebrated as 'Cancer Survivors Month'.

"We are looking after the children. But, due to the pandemic, they have been advised to minimize their exposure. They are coming here only when they have to consult a doctor or require medicines," Kamlesh Mehta, a member of the city team from the care centre, told *Deccan Chronicle*.

Amid the lockdown, all these children were advised to stay away from hospitals as far as possible because of their special vulnerability to secondary infections. For stocking up on essentials, the St Jude has also been offering provisions such as eggs, fresh fruits and vegetables to the young residents and their families. It has also been procuring medicines and conducting virtual activities like classes and tutoring sessions.



Sonali, a survivor

As for education, all the activities at the centre have become virtual – from teachers holding classes on whatsapp to online tutoring for older children. Even their virtual volunteering initiative allows anyone willing to spend some time with the children in remote mode.

One such survivor is 10-year-old Sonali, who came to the centre at a very bleak point in her life. The family had taken Sonali to Mumbai on the advice of their general physician after sporadic rounds of hospitalization. As her symptoms persisted, blood and marrow tests were done. The reports alarmed the general physician and he advised a visit to Tata Memorial Hospital (TMH) without delay. In Mumbai, Vishwambar and Savita's worst fears came

true: Sonali was diagnosed with Acute L y m p h o b l a s t i c Leukaemia (ALL); that is, blood cancer. Sonali's cornea had to be removed. Counseling, play therapy, nutritional supplements and the positivity in the environment helped give Sonali the confidence to continue her battle with cancer. She was ready to go home.

However, a fungal infection persisted. This time, the treatment cost was more prohibitive.

"Sonali went back to school, unmindful of her missing eye and wearing her zany dark glasses, and she even gave her exams to go ahead to the next class. She returned to the centre for a check-up in May 2007 and was put on a maintenance dose. Two months later, the doctors were happy to find that her reports were completely normal. They declared her 100 per cent cured," said Vishwambar, the child's father.

Now a healthy 24-year-old and a commerce graduate, she is preparing for competitive banking exams. Sonali also conducts tutorial classes for local school-going children. She says it helps her feel empowered and independent.

2 TD leaders killed

DC CORRESPONDENT
KURNOOL, JUNE 17

Two Telugu Desam leaders were killed and three seriously injured by their political rivals at Pesaravali village in Gadivemula mandal of Kurnool district on Thursday. The deceased were former village sarpanch Nageswara Reddy and his brother, former KDCC bank director Pratap Reddy.

The two were close associates of TD Nandyal parliamentary constituency president Gouru Venkata Reddy. The police said eight persons were involved in the attack. Three persons were seriously injured and admitted to a Nandyal hospital. They were Vaddu Venkateshwar Reddy, Vaddu Subba Reddy, and Venkateshwar Reddy.

The assailants were suspected to be activists of the

YSR Congress. They used a sports utility vehicle (SUV) to hit the two victims. When they fell down, they were done to death with knives and other sharp objects, the police said.

It is learnt that the gang of eight lay in wait to execute their plan on the outskirts of the village. "The family came out of their home and walked by foot on their way to the burial ground to perform some rituals for a close relative. The four-wheel vehicle hit the two brothers. The gang got out of it and killed the two with their hunting knives," as per the police report. The victims fell down and died on the spot. After killing the targeted two, the assailants fled the scene by vehicle.

Nandyal DSP Chidananda Reddy rushed to the spot and took charge of the situation.

PLUMBER DIES AFTER INHALING ACID

Hyderabad: A plumber died at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA) in Shamshabad after inhaling fumes from acid that was poured into drainage pipes to unclog them, on Thursday.

According to the police, the deceased, Narasimha Reddy, 42, an employee of Faber Sindoor Facility Management Services, was checking a drainage leak at the arrival point of the airport.

"He was accompanied by two others and they had taken the help of a ladder to reach the ceiling. When they poured acid into drainage pipes to clear the blockage, there were fumes," said DCP of Shamshabad, Prakash Reddy.

भारत सरकार / GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
परमाणु ऊर्जा विभाग / DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY
नाभिकीय ईंधन संयंत्र / NUCLEAR FUEL COMPLEX
ईसीआईएल डाक, हैदराबाद - 500062
ECIL POST, HYDERABAD - 500 062

ई-निविदा आमंत्रण हेतु सूचना NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER
निविदा सूचना संख्या Tender Notice Nos.: M/492/2021

भारत की राष्ट्रपति की ओर से, ऑनलाइन (ई-टेंडर) के माध्यम से स्वतंत्र और पर्याप्त अनुभव रखने वाले पात्र ठेकेदारों से निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु एकल चरण प्रणाली में मदद कर निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं।

On behalf of President of India, on line(e-tender) Single Part item rate tenders are invited from competent and well experienced eligible contractors for the following work.

कार्य का नाम Name of the Work	अनुमानित लागत Estimated Cost	बयाना जमा राशि Earnest Money Deposit	देके की अवधि Duration of contract	निशुल्क देखने और ई-निविदा को डाउनलोड करने की अवधि Period for free view and downloading of e-tender	बोली की ऑनलाइन प्रस्तुत करने की देय तिथि Due date for online submission of bids	हार्ड प्रतियों को प्रस्तुत करने की देय तिथि Due date for submission of hard copies	बोली खोलने की तिथि Date of opening of bid
Engaging JCB, Tractor and other machineries for removal of debris around the various plants of NFC, Cutting and removal of wild and vulnerable tree branches at NFC, Hyderabad.	Rs. 97.19 Lakhs	BSD shall be submitted.	12 Months	18.06.2021 to 28.06.2021	07.07.2021	14.07.2021	14.07.2021

विस्तृत निविदा नोटिस और पात्रता मानदंडों को नाईसट www.nfc.gov.in पर देखा जा सकता है। The detailed tender notice and eligibility criteria can be seen in NFC Website www.nfc.gov.in. निविदा दस्तावेजों को कंपन www.tenderwizard.com/DAE की वेबसाइट से डाउनलोड किया जा सकता है। Tender documents can be downloaded only from website www.tenderwizard.com/DAE. इच्छुक बोलीकर्ताओं के पास वेब क्लार-।। डिजिटल हस्ताक्षर होने चाहिए तथा निविदा को डाउनलोड तथा भाग लेने हेतु उन्हें www.tenderwizard.com/DAE में अपना नाम दर्ज करवाना होगा। The intended bidders must have valid Class-III digital signature and should enroll with www.tenderwizard.com/DAE for downloading the tender and participation. संपर्क- सूत्र - दूरभाष संख्या Contact: 040-2718040/16/4677/4202, even@nfc.gov.in

हस्ता Sd/- अधीक्षक अभियंता (सी एम एस एवं ई एम् एस) /
Superintending Engineer (CMS & EMS)

HONEST ACTION

Returns lost bag with valubales in vehicle

Auto driver Fareed wins hearts

SANJAY SAMUEL
PAUL | DC
HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

Authorickshaw driver Md Fareed won many hearts in the city on Thursday as news spread of how he returned a bag containing valuables that was left in his vehicle by two passengers in the morning.

Anup Dhage, a physical therapist, and his sister came down from New York to perform their father's last rites after he died of Covid-19 in a local hospital. While they were at the hospital to claim the body,



they realised that their bag, which contained over ₹1 lakh, gold ornaments and some dollars, as also their passport, was lost. Dhage and his sister hired the autorickshaw

from their residence at Himayatnagar to a hospital at Chapel Road, Nampally.

As soon as they realised the bag was missing, they informed the security offi-

cer at the hospital and rushed to Abids police station to lodge a complaint. As they were about to enter the police station, they got a call from their neighbour saying an autorickshaw driver had come with a bag saying the passengers from this home had left it in his vehicle. All items in the bag were intact.

Dhage said, "He is a 'farishta' (an angel)." He added, "My father, Ananth Kishan Dhage, was 83 years old. He has been reading *Deccan Chronicle* for the past 70 years, it was his favorite daily."

— DC

DECCAN Chronicle

18 JUNE 2021

Pragmatism in Geneva as Biden, Putin stabilise ties

America's President Joe Biden and Russia's boss Vladimir Putin, showing a remarkable order of statesmanship and good sense, avoided any temptation to offer drama and guaranteed failure in their first (business-like) meeting in Geneva on Wednesday, an outcome which may have pleased the liberal extremists of America, no matter how bad it may have been for the world.

Instead, they provided a low-key, "pragmatic", way forward in their bilateral relationship which can probably only move forward in cautious, incremental steps, so deep is the mutual mistrust accumulated in the three decades since the collapse of the USSR and the birth of Russian capitalism which does not privilege a political system that exalts Western-style individualism.

With the perpetually drunk Boris Yeltsin the new czar in Moscow when Communism ended, the US sensed they had in the bag the only country, which was its military equal and exercised geostrategic influence as well. With his early exit and the arrival on the scene of Mr Putin, a former middle-rank KGB agent, expectations from the new Russia faded as this leader fortified himself on the plank of Russian nationalism.

President Biden has played his hand with finesse. He planned his first face-to-face contact with Mr Putin very early in his presidency — and not long after calling the Russian leader "a murderer". This bolstered his liberal credentials (and his constituents loved it), and situated him as an emphatic counterpoint to his disastrous predecessor, Donald Trump, who had foolishly given credence to Moscow's assessments on bilateral issues over those of his intelligence agencies, making the West squirm. But the choreographed personal insult led Mr Putin to withdraw the Russian ambassador in Washington and a tit-for-tat recall of the American ambassador followed. The dyke in relations widened. In this background, the course that the intense three-hour long conversation between the two leaders with their key foreign policy and national security aides in tow, can only be viewed positively — more than just a glass half-full.

At separate press conferences, they confirmed this. Mr Biden used "positive" and "good" to describe the event. Mr Putin, responding to an ambush question from a prominent US news outlet, denied that the talks were marked with "hostility", and said the leaders had a "constructive" conversation. Both Presidents called the outcome "pragmatic". Mr Biden also said that Russia was not looking for "a new Cold War". A "joint communiqué" issued after the separate press conferences noted that talks will commence on restoring "strategic stability" in order to prevent unintentional conflict. At their meeting, the two leaders decided to send back their ambassadors. This is important in conducting state-to-state relations.

An important American concern was met when the Presidents agreed to institute a committee of experts to look into the issue of cyber-attacks that the US has attacked Russia for, including in meddling with its elections. Mr Biden wisely indicated that "the proof of the pudding was in the eating" and that it would become clear in a relatively short time if Moscow meant business on this. It appears the leaders of America and Russia have hinted at being constructive in dealing with trouble spots such as Afghanistan and Libya, although Syria can be more difficult.

Mr Biden was adroit. He took Mr Putin for what he was and was not out to change him or Russia, but rather to reach preferred goals. Mr Putin quoted Tolstoy to suggest "there is no happiness in life, there is only a mirage on the horizon, so cherish that". This is a realistic start. If US-Russia hostilities remain restricted, a country like India can have a broader bandwidth to operate in.

Women priests: TN's bold move

Welcoming women to the sanctum sanctorum, Tamil Nadu's minister in charge of temples, P.K. Sekar Babu, recently heralded the breaking of another glass ceiling on the distaff side. Knowledge of Agama Sastra alone will be the qualifier to be a priest and not gender, he declared, opening a Pandora's Box. Out came the naysayers with their own objections based on custom, least considering the fact that women priests are already there in substantial numbers in the country.

Apart from performing priestly duties in small temples in the state, women have also been solemnising weddings for celebrities in big cities. Very recently, Bollywood actor Dia Mirza's wedding to Vaibhav Rekhi in Mumbai was conducted by a woman priest. Earlier on, actor Aparna Sen's daughter was united in wedlock by a woman priest. Closer home, a woman who stepped into the shoes of her deceased father and took over as priest of an Amman temple near Madurai in 2006 got her right to succession ratified by the Madras high court. When the presiding deity is an Amman with the form of a woman, why should a woman not perform pujas, the judge had asked.

Yet minister Sekar Babu's idea is facing opposition. Even if he has made it clear that women priests would be given leave on the five days of their menstruation, their storming Agama temples is not that easy. Even the locus standi of a secular government in taking such a decision has been questioned. But in the land of Periyar E.V. Ramasamy, a woman inside the sanctum sanctorum might just become a reality.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

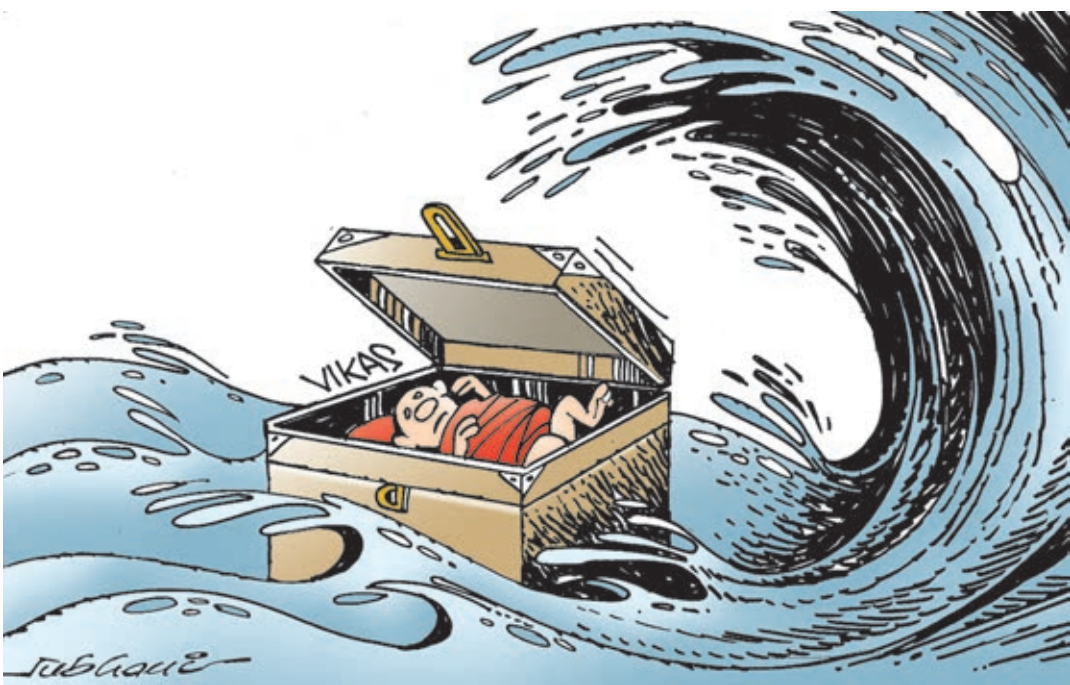
KAUSHIK MITTER
Editor

K. SUBHAKAR
Printer & Publisher

DECCAN CHRONICLE offices are located at:

Hyderabad: 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad - 500 003, Ph: 040-27803930-4; Fax : 040-27805256
Vijayawada: No.C-3 & 4 Patamata, Industrial Estate, Auto Nagar, Vijayawada (A.P.), Ph: 0866-2555284/2555287; Telefax: 0866-2555234
Visakhapatnam: Survey No.1/3A Beach Road, Near Kailasagiri Ropeway, Sector-9 MVP Colony, Visakhapatnam - 530 017 (A.P), Ph: 0891-2552333/2552334; Fax: 0891-2755285
Rajahmundry: Vemagiri, Dhawaleswaram Rd, Rajahmundry, Ph: 0883-2417618/2417208; Telefax: 0883-2417208
Anantapur: Thapovan colony, Bangalore By-Pass Road, Anantapur - 515004, Ph: 08554-276903; Fax: 08554-276904
Karimnagar: Survey No.1341, Vavilalpally Colony, Jagityala Road, Karimnagar - 505 001, Ph: 0878-2228908; Telefax: 0878-2220433
Nellore: Survey No.527/2, Burrampur Village, Venkatachalam (M), Chennudugunta Panchayat, Nellore, Ph: 0861-2348581/82; Telefax: 0861-2348580
Chennai: SP-3 Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, Ph: 044-22254747/48/50/51; Advt Fax: 22254765/22254766/42305325
Coimbatore: 77, Vivekananda Road, Rammagar, Coimbatore - 641 009, Ph: 0422 2231255
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Subhani



RSS, BJP & Yogi factor: Key to 2024 lies in UP



Anand K. Sahay

Far & Near

The summoning of Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath to New Delhi recently in the wake of widespread anxiety being expressed in the state BJP over its Assembly poll prospects in a few months, given the CM's disastrous Covid-19 management, naturally became a high-profile political event. The stakes were rightly deemed to be high. A slip in UP can ricochet at the Centre, and who knows how the pieces will fall.

The CM showed up when called — but after that the story dries up. It didn't matter that the UP leader had held really long conversations with those at the very top — Prime Minister Narendra Modi (well over an hour), home minister Amit Shah (even longer), and BJP president J.P. Nadda. Here was rich material to be tapped for political reporting, speculation, or comment, but no one did — as if on cue.

For comparison, look at Punjab, whose CM and MLAs were recently summoned to Delhi by the Congress leadership because there seems to be a crisis brewing. The news pages were filled with plausible and implausible stories or just plain repetitions for want of anything new to say. "Hold the dateline!"

In the case of UP, however, there was nothing at all — not even the regurgitating of back-ground as is frequently done, or clever words extolling the power duo at the Centre about how well they had handled the UP crisis (since nothing less than gushing praise will do in

their case). It is noteworthy that there was resounding silence on this front even after the chief minister returned to Lucknow. Top-rung BJP politicians who had just days earlier bitterly complained to their high command — and above all to the RSS bosses — about Yogi's general high-handedness, his arrogant mismanagement of the Covid crisis, and his many caste-slanted actions, seemed clueless about what had transpired in Delhi, or preferred to stay quiet if they knew. Busy newshounds, who had waxed eloquent about a PM-CM tussle and other such astounding things, fell silent.

Is the overall motif of silence in this important matter a part of a well thought out strategy crafted by the BJP, or indeed the RSS, since it is the RSS cadre on the ground who will be required to do the heavy lifting at election time? After all, it is the RSS — rather than the formal shell of the BJP — which really exercises supervision or control over the main body of legislators, and typically it is the low-key RSS organiser who plays pastor. The pastor offers counsel and keeps his superiors informed about the goings-on. He meddles, but not in full view.

Evidently, since senior BJP leaders in UP had publicly complained against the CM's mismanagement and his autocratic style, it wouldn't have done to keep quiet and do nothing; hence the directive to the CM to go to Delhi to explain himself to the big shots. This was a triumph of form over substance, and also careful choreography and convenient optics.

If any action — or concession — follows at Yogi's end as a consequence of the Centre's supposed advice, it is likely to be only about as cataclysmic as tinkering with his council of ministers. And look at what Yogi has got in return. His actions say it all. The man had the gumption to calmly hand his three principal interlocutors, as well as the President of India, some so-called Harvard University report commending his management of the pandemic which no one believes, but that's hardly the point.

The point is that Yogi was summoned but was also pandered to. He was permitted to create the impression that he was on a goodwill mission to New Delhi, and not summoned as a boy to be chastised, which is usually the fate of erring CMs of the same party as the one that rules at the Centre. It is well understood that UP is Mr Modi's first line of defence. It has already fallen in the recent panchayat elections, with BJP performing poorly. If it falls in the Assembly election too, reputations can roll in Delhi, and the fallout can be uncertain.

There are also other reasons why Yogi couldn't have been ticked off. He is an extreme egoist, a far-right maverick, who runs his own outfit, the Hindu Vahini. He is not of RSS-BJP stock. He is a stranger to institutional or collegial functioning. If he is stung, he can fight the Assembly election on his own if

only to spite the BJP and deny it the votes of the ultra-right Hindu constituency. Confident of his ability to do so, the saffron-robed monk CM did not need to bend or genuflect in Delhi.

Whatever the UP BJP, or the national BJP, may think of Adityanath and his usefulness to the party in UP, the RSS's assessment of this matter is not known. It may or may not be exactly the same as that of the BJP. Indeed, the RSS's assessment of the performance of the Union government under the present leader, especially on the handling of the pandemic, steep unemployment and inflation, surrendering of territory to China in Ladakh, and worsening relations even with Nepal, is also not known.

On this subject, of no little importance, we have just one clue. A few weeks ago, in a well-publicised address, the RSS chief, Mohan Bhagwat, held the people, the administration, as well as the government, responsible for the surge in the Covid second wave numbers and the exceptionally high death figures. This forced the government to stop in its tracks in the planning of a false propaganda blitz on the handling of the pandemic.

But the Prime Minister did not fail to fire a riposte at Mr Bhagwat in his June 7 address to the nation. Without any reference to the latter, he sang his government's praises and ran down its opponents and critics. Such an open, daring, even insolent, defiance of the RSS *sarsanghchalak* by a BJP or Jan Sangh leader, mounted in full public view, has not been encountered before.

It will be interesting to know how Mr Bhagwat has taken the insult, and whether the RSS organisation is behind him foursquare. The untangling of this puzzle can tell us something about how things might shape in UP, or indeed in Delhi.

If Yogi is stung, he can fight the Assembly election on his own if only to spite the BJP and deny it the votes of the ultra-right Hindu constituency. Confident of this ability, he did not need to genuflect in Delhi.

LETTERS

LUXURY CARS

It is a shame that money is being squeezed from the common man in Telangana state to fund an extravagant lifestyle for additional collectors (CM gives SUV surprise to officials, DC, June 14). This at a time when the GHMC staff were not paid and small hospitals are being banned for excess billing so that corporate hospitals will have more footfall. Is such spurge of public money unquestionable?

A. Fernandes
Hyderabad

GREEN COVER

In its ambitious plan to implement the Haritha Haram this year, I hope the GHMC will take care not to plant saplings along roadsides and central medians (TS eyes 33% green cover, DC, June 17). Over the years, a number of pipelines, cables and drains have been laid under them. Also, when the trees are mature and fully grown, they will interfere with overhead power cables and disrupt power supply after thunderstorms.

Wg Cdr Satinder Singh (retd)
Secunderabad

PETROL PRICES

Whenever elections are around, the common man's *mann ki baat* is heard and petrol prices start dropping. Hedging against short public memory is the trick.

Ramakrishna
Secunderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN

DECCAN Chronicle

Charminar to be lightened

By a staff reporter

HYDERABAD, June 17. The historic Charminar is to be lightened within two months.

Two points have not been finalised from where light would be focussed on the monument from Mecca Masjid side and a point next to the bus stand. Internal illumination is also being arranged.

The Charminar was constructed in 1591 by the founder of Hyderabad, Quli Qutub Shah. There has been public clamour that the monument should be beautified by laying parks around it as it was visited by thousands of tourists.

Mohan Guruswamy



India's culture & how it evolved... Yoga is exercise, it's not Hinduism

Most of India's culture has been much influenced and shaped by the successive waves of invasions from the northwest. How we look at it depends on how far back we want to go. The northwestern waves were a continuous process till continental Indian power was consolidated by the rise of the British in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

These hordes were mostly not encumbered by religious ideology or cultural baggage and the Brahminical elite quite willingly assimilated them into the Hindu fabric and gave them a place in the Hindu social hierarchy. Possibly the last of these hordes were the Buddhist Kushans led by Kanishka who established their dominance over the Aryavarta region, stretching from the Indus to Pataliputra. Kanishka was a descendant of Kujula Kadphises, founder of the Kushan dynasty that ruled much of Central Asia, including Afghanistan. Buddhism and Brahminical Hinduism had a long history of theological intermingling and cultural exchange.

The waves after this came armed with Islam and the process of complete assimilation ceased. The Afghan and Mughal kings of Delhi too shared pret-

ty much the same geographical origins as Kanishka and those before him. But Islam made them different. This difference gave rise to a new era of, for lack of a better description, separate development, which was what apartheid was also meant to be. That separateness can be seen even today. But it wasn't as if racial and cultural intermingling ceased. While it was common, it was no longer the norm. Yet the pre-British story of India was how these two great theologies and cultures fused to give the region new languages, art forms, literature, music and architecture. Among the greatest exponents of our ragas and sanget were Muslims, just as Hindus like Firaq Gorakhpuri (Raghupati Sahay) and Ram Prasad Bismil became great writers in Urdu. Only our theologies became impervious and separate dogmas. Bade Ghulam Ali Khan and Bismillah Khan were not singing Hindu songs and playing Hindu ragas, just as Wadali Brothers, Puranchand and Pyarelal, were not singing Muslim songs. Unfortunately, of late we have seen an acceleration towards separation when with time we should be seeing more creative fusion.

The All-India Muslim Personal Law Board, the VHP's Muslim version,

opposes the celebration of International Yoga Day on June 21. This is utterly misguided, unfortunate and silly. It calls yoga a religious symbol. It is not. Today it's just a school of balance-focused exercises, pure and simple. Like Tai Chi. I wonder what they would say about Hyderabad's Nawab Sadiq Jung Bahadur "Hilm", who wrote: "*Kanhaiya yaad hai kuch bhi hamaari*"; or Mah Laqa Bai or Chanda Bibi, who had a diwan or collection of poems in Dakhni called "Gulzar-e-Mahlaqa"?

Yoga, like jihad, takes different meanings by what is prefixed or suffixed to it. Jihad is an Arabic word that just means "striving" or "struggling", especially with a praiseworthy aim. It was meant as self-betterment, but in the Islamic context it has acquired very different meanings. Yoga as exercise is a physical activity — mainly of postures in sequences that are sometimes accompanied by breathing exercises. It's this yoga that has become familiar worldwide, especially in Europe and the United States. It is derived from the postures used in the medieval spiritual discipline of Hatha Yoga.

The AIMPLB specifically cites Surya Namaskar as offensive, but it's just a common sequence of asanas. Most

Hindus revere the Sun as it is the giver of life and sustenance. Due to this, some Hindus set aside a part of their daily worship for salutations to the Sun by prostrations. This method of adoration affords them so much muscular activity that it takes to some extent the place of physical exercise. Muslims can practise these same asanas without worshipping the Sun. But before they reject the Sun salutation, they'll do well to recall Allama Iqbal, who wrote: "*A'iaaf-taab! Hum ko zia-e-shaoor de/ Chasm-e-khird ko apni tajjati se noor de.*" (O radiant one! Grant us the grace of wisdom/Let our eyes see reason in your resplendent glow.)

I only hope some of the "grace of wisdom" will penetrate the dark recesses of minds in the AIMPLB. Muslims as whole will do well to listen to saner voices in the community like Prof. Mohd Abbas Niazi of AMU, who said: "Yoga is an exercise, and no religion is against a healthy lifestyle." Or quietly just don't do yoga, without making a hullabaloo over it. But don't dismiss it as unsecular. Yoga is no extension of Hinduism, just as a raga isn't. The Brihaddeshi describes raga as "a combination of tones which, with beautiful illuminating graces, pleases people".

Modern yoga practices' only link

with Hinduism is that it evolved in India. By this standard, they must oppose many mathematical principles that evolved in ancient India and think of algebra as an exclusive Islamic discipline. Yoga is a non-sectarian physical and mental health-oriented set of exercises. If yoga is Hindu, then karate is Buddhist, kung fu is Confucian and taekwondo also Buddhist. Will the AIMPLB seek a ban on them too?

The RSS and BJP governments all over India are trying to impose yoga as an exercise in schools. Like any exercise, this too should be optional. Those who want to skip yoga can use it for some other form of exercise. But exercise is a must. When I was in school, we used to have an exercise period every day. Some played soccer, others played kabaddi, some just marched about, drilled by the NCC instructor. We didn't have yoga then. It was still a Western fad.

The writer, a policy analyst studying economic and security issues, held senior positions in government and industry. He also specialises in the Chinese economy.

Monday, June 21, is International Yoga Day

SHORT TAKES

PASHUPATI KUMAR ELECTED AS LJP PRESIDENT

NAYEAR AZAD | DC
PATNA, JUNE 17

Hajipur MP Pashupati Kumar Paras, younger brother of late union minister Ram Vilas Paswan was elected as Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) national president on Thursday amid an ongoing rift with his nephew Chirag Paswan.

The decision was taken during the party's national council meeting in Patna which was chaired by former LJP MP Surajbhan Singh. Chirag's cousin Prince Raj who is in the soup over allegations of sexual harassment did not attend the meeting, party leaders said. The development comes after Paras along with four other MPs of the party staged a political coup against Chirag Paswan and deposed him as LJP president.

On Sunday four LJP MPs — Veena Devi, Chandan Singh, Chaudhary Mahboob Ali Kaiser and Prince Raj had backed Pashupati Paras as their leader. Pashupati Paras had reached Patna on Wednesday and filed a nomination on Thursday, party insiders told this newspaper that he was elected unopposed.

"I assure you that there is no dispute within the party. I have been given a big responsibility to carry forward the work started by my elder brother Ram Vilas Paswan. Therefore, it's my duty to work for the backward and downtrodden people," Pashupati Kumar Paras told reporters after he was elected as LJP's national president on Thursday.

RAUT JUSTIFIES ATTACK ON BJP WORKERS

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC
MUMBAI, JUNE 17

A day after the clash between the Shiv Sena and the BJP workers, the Shiv Sena said that the Sena Bhavan in Mumbai is not just a head-quarter of a political party but pride of Maharashtra. The Sena spokesperson Sanjay Raut said that those who try to attack the Sena Bhavan will be rebuffed in the same manner.

The Sena and BJP workers had clashed on Wednesday outside the Sena Bhavan after the BJP youth wing held a protest march against "offensive" remarks in Sena mouth-piece *Saamana* about a land deal controversy in Ayodhya. Accusing the Sena workers of hooliganism, the opposition party BJP in Maharashtra had also alleged that they had assaulted a woman member of the party.

The Sena leader defended his party activists for their behaviors and actions saying that they are certified goons as far as Maharashtra's identity and Hindutva are concerned. "We do not need anyone's certificate to prove that we are goons. We are certified goons. Mumbai is in Maharashtra because of *goondagiri* of Marathi *manoos* (Marathi speaking people). As we do *goondagiri*, therefore, the voice of *Marathi Manoos* is at a high level in Maharashtra. If anyone tries to suppress our voice, we will have to do *goondagiri*," he added.

2-DAY ARMY COMMANDERS MEET STARTS

PAWAN BALI | DC
NEW DELHI, JUNE 17

Amidst stand off with China, Indian Army's crucial two days Army Commanders Conference began on Thursday at the Army Headquarters in the national capital to review the operational situation on Northern (China) and Western Fronts (Pakistan).

The conference is being attended by all top commanders of the Army in the county and is being chaired by Army chief Gen M.M. Naravane. Typically Army Commanders Conference besides, operational situation also discuss administrative issues, modernisation, and HR among other issues.

However, this time focus of the conference is only on operational situation at the borders.

The conference is being held on the eve of the first anniversary of the Galwan Valley clash on June 15 when 20 Indian soldiers were killed in brutal hand to hand fight with the Chinese troops.

India has deployed 50,000 soldiers at Ladakh as there are no signs of de-escalation by China in near future at the LAC.



People crowd at Chandni Chowk market in New Delhi that reopened after state government eased some restrictions on Thursday.

— PTI

Twitter India MD questioned over 'Covid-19 toolkit' case

Maheshwari was questioned on May 31; Cops did not divulge further details

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 17

Twitter India MD Manish Maheshwari was questioned by the Delhi Police in connection with the probe into the alleged 'Covid toolkit' matter, officials said.

A team of Delhi Police's Special Cell which is probing the matter was sent to Bengaluru where the Twitter India MD was questioned on May 31 in connection with the alleged 'Covid toolkit' matter, a senior police officer said.

The police, however, did

● **DELHI POLICE** had also issued an official statement earlier saying the statements by Twitter on the ongoing probe in the 'toolkit' case were 'mendacious', and designed to impede lawful enquiry & seek 'dubious sympathy'.

not divulge further details of the questioning but said he was also questioned about the company's policy behind flagging tweets as "manipulated".

The Delhi Police had also issued an official statement earlier saying the

statements by Twitter on the ongoing probe in the "toolkit" case were "mendacious", and designed to impede the lawful enquiry and seek "dubious sympathy".

The strongly-worded statement, which also termed Twitter's conduct "obfuscatory, diversionary and tendentious", came after the social media firm Thursday called the recent "visit" by a Delhi police team to its offices a form of "intimidation". Twitter also said it was concerned about its employees and the potential threat to freedom of expression.

The row over the purported 'Covid toolkit' escalated after the Delhi Police's Special Cell visited two Twitter India offices on May 24 and served a notice, asking it to share information based on which it had classified a related tweet by Sambit Patra as "manipulated media".

The police action drew sharp criticism from the opposition Congress and Left which accused the government of trying to stifle free speech and indulge in intimidation.

Last month, Twitter was labelled as "manipulated

media" a tweet by Patra on the alleged 'toolkit'. Twitter says it "may label Tweets that include media (videos, audio, and images) that have been deceptively altered or fabricated".

The Congress had claimed it was a vindication of its stand.

But the government had asked Twitter to remove the 'manipulated media' tag as the matter is pending before the law enforcement agency, and made it clear that the social media platform cannot pass judgment when the issue is under investigation.

India slams Pak's Bill on Jadhav

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 17

Slamming Pakistan's Review and Reconsideration Bill 2020 passed recently by the Pakistani National Assembly as violating the judgement of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the case pertaining to imprisoned former Indian naval officer Kulbhushan Jadhav, India on Thursday said the Bill "does not create a machinery to facilitate effective review and reconsideration" of the Jadhav case, "as mandated by the judgement of the ICJ". According to reports, the Bill was passed in the Pakistani Parliament last week to provide a right to appeal to Jadhav who was sentenced in 2017 by a Pakistani military court to death on charges of "espionage and sabotage".

India called upon Pakistan to take appropriate steps to address the shortcomings in the Bill and to comply with the judgement of the ICJ "in letter and spirit". Explaining its position, New Delhi said the "Bill

invites the municipal courts in Pakistan to decide whether or not any prejudice has been caused to Jadhav on account of the failure to provide consular access". This, the MEA said, was "clearly a breach of the basic tenet that municipal courts cannot be the arbiter of whether a State has fulfilled its obligations in international law". New Delhi took strong objection to the fact that the Pakistani Bill "further invites the municipal court to sit in appeal, as it were, over the judgement of the ICJ".

It may be recalled that in a major victory for India two years ago, the ICJ at The Hague in the Netherlands had on July 17, 2019, held Pakistan guilty of violation of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations for its failure to give India consular access to Jadhav while directing Pakistan to provide "effective review and reconsideration" (of death penalty) awarded earlier by a Pakistani military court to Jadhav.

Student-activists walk out of Tihar, thank Delhi High Court

SHWETA SINGH & SANJAY KAW | DC
NEW DELHI, JUNE 17

Two days after being granted bail by the Delhi high court, student activists Natasha Narwal, Devangana Kalita and Asif Iqbal Tanha walked out of Tihar jail in Delhi on Thursday, but only after a sessions court ordered their immediate release, ignoring Delhi Police's plea for more time to verify their permanent addresses.

Pinjra Tod activists Natasha Narwal and Devangana Kalita, and Students' Islamic Organisation activist Asif Iqbal Tanha had been booked under the UAPA anti-terror law for their alleged role in the Delhi riots last year. They were arrested in May 2020.

While granting bail to the student activists on Tuesday, the high court had observed that "in the anxiety to suppress dissent, the state has blurred the line between right to protest and terrorist activity" and if such a mindset gains traction, it would be a "sad day for democracy".

The Delhi Police, which is the investigating agency



Student activists Natasha Narwal, Devangana Kalita and Asif Iqbal Tanha outside Tihar prison in New Delhi on Thursday.

— PTI

in the case, has challenged the high court bail order in the Supreme Court, which is expected to come up for hearing today.

"This shows the desperation of the government... We are women who are not scared of them... We survived because we received tremendous support from friends, from well-wishers. I thank them all," Kalita said soon after she came out of the prison.

Refusing to comment on the case, Kalita said, "We would like to thank the

Delhi High Court for upholding what we believe in. Any such protest that we have done is not terrorism. It was a democratic protest, led by women."

"They won't be able to threaten us with jail. If they threaten to incarcerate us, that will only strengthen our resolve to carry on our fight," said Narwal, whose father died of Covid in May this year while she was in jail. Her brother, who came to receive her, said they miss their father, who if alive

SII to begin Novavax trials on kids from July 15

DC CORRESPONDENT
with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, JUNE 17

There was a slight rise in the daily Covid-19 infections in India, with 67,208 cases reported in the last 24 hours, along with 2,330 deaths. There is, however, a continuous fall in the country's active caseload, that stood at 8,26,740 on Thursday. This is the lowest decline in active cases after 71 days.

The health ministry said a net decline of 38,692 cases was seen in the last 24 hours, and active cases are now only 2.78 per cent of the country's total positive cases.

Delhi reported 158 new cases and 10 deaths, as its positivity rate dipped to 0.20 per cent. However, after a brief respite, Mumbai's Dharavi has started reporting fresh cases again.

While it may be too early to predict another wave now, health experts say that crowding and not using masks at public places after the unlocking can prove to be disastrous.

However, the next wave is unlikely to disproportionately affect children than adults, a sero-prevalence study by the World Health Organisation and All India Institute of Medical Sciences has revealed.

The SARS-CoV-2 seropositivity rate among children was high and was comparable to the adult population in the survey, that was held in five states with a total sample size of 10,000.

The data of 4,500 participants were taken for the results of the time of the mid-term analysis from four states of India and more results are likely to come in the next two-three months.

It was found that in resettlement colonies in South Delhi urban areas, which have a very con-

MP REPORTS 1ST DELTA PLUS CASE

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC
BHOPAL, JUNE 17

Madhya Pradesh has reported the first case of Delta Plus, a new variant of coronavirus.

The advanced Delta variant was detected in a 65-year-old woman in Bhopal during the genome sequencing of samples sent from Madhya Pradesh to National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), a senior health department officer said here on Thursday.

State medical education minister Vishwas Sarang has confirmed the report.

"A new variant of coronavirus has been detected in Bhopal", Mr Sarang said, citing a report of NCDC. This was the first case of Delta Plus in Madhya Pradesh and seventh in India detected till June 7, the health department officer said.

Madhya Pradesh on Thursday reported 145 new cases taking the tally of cases to 7,88,954.

gested population, there was a very high (highest reported yet in any sero-assessment) seroprevalence of 74.7 per cent, said Dr Puneet Misra, professor of community medicine at AIIMS, who led the survey.

The Serum Institute of India says it will begin Novavax trials on children from July 15 and hopes to introduce its Indian version — Covavax — by September.

Sputnik V has said it will soon offer a booster shot, adjusted to work against the Delta Covid variant, to other vaccine manufacturers.

IN ODISHA TOWN, 'NO JABS MEAN, NO BUSINESS FOR TRADERS'

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, JUNE 17

Odisha's Sundargarh Municipality authorities have come out with an idea to create mass awareness regarding Covid-19 vaccination.

In order to motivate more and more people to take jabs to defeat Coronavirus, the district administration has announced that owners of businesses houses and shops of the town who have not taken vaccines shall not be allowed to open their establishments.

"Shopkeepers will be made aware that those who have not received jabs and also not ensured vaccination to the sales executive working under them will not be allowed to open their businesses," Sundargarh Sub-Collector Abhimanyu Behera said on Thursday.

"The first norm of the Covid management protocol is that it is executed for the welfare of the public, so people need to be aware and cooperate with the authorities be it for enforcement of guidelines or vaccination. The initiative is aimed at motivating people to align with the norms of the government, especially some sections of people who are hesitant to the inoculation drive," he said.

A few days ago, in one such step to shake off reluctance among the general masses to take the vaccine and create greater awareness about the importance of vaccination, some shopkeepers in Hinjili area in Ganjam district were seen offering a discount of at least 5 per cent to fully vaccinated people upon purchase of grocery items.

VACCINE | HESITANCY

Campaign poster reads vaccination is a religious, human obligation to save lives

Kashmir clergy launch drive to end 'jab fears'

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR, JUNE 17

Islamic religious leadership of Kashmir is formally launching a Valley-wide campaign on Friday to end the Covid-19 vaccination timidity and encourage people to get vaccinated to protect themselves against the deadly virus.

The campaign under the banner of 'Mutahida Majlis-e-Ulema' (MMU), an amalgam of religious organisations and leaders, will begin with special sermons to be delivered by

the imams and preachers before congregational Friday prayers to highlight the importance and urgency of the vaccination.

"At each masjid (mosque) and other places of worship the aima (Islamic leaders) will tell the faithful the wellbeing and safety of human lives is a religious and human obligation. In fact, Shariat (Islamic canonical law based on the teachings of the Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad often referred to as Hadith and

Sunna) lays special emphasis on it," said Kashmir's chief Muslim cleric Mirwaiz Umar Farooq who is also the head of the MMU. He added that the Friday prayers would be offered strictly under the Covid guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

The amalgam has also issued a poster carrying a passionate appeal to the people to shun 'vaccine hesitancy'. Mirwaiz Umar said this is being done as many people are reluctant to take vaccines

apparently because of some false illusions or hearsay.

The poster written in Urdu says that in view of the surge in the number of deaths due to Covid-19 and positive cases and in order to defeat the virus it is imperative to get vaccinated by one and sundry. It also says vaccination is neither us-Islamic nor is there any baseness in it under the Sharia law but, in fact, it is a religious and human obligation to save human lives.

Referring to official sta-

istics, it says that less than 50 per cent of the population of Srinagar district has got vaccinated against Covid-19, so far. It points out that about one thousand people have died of Covid-19 in Srinagar city alone and 98 per cent of them had not been vaccinated.

Expressing serious concern over the reluctance of the majority of people in Srinagar to get vaccinated against Covid-19, the MMU has stressed upon the masses to "shun vaccine hesitancy and get

administered for the shots to save themselves, their fellows and society from the deadly virus".

It said that the amalgam has, on the directions of Mirwaiz Umar Farooq who remains under house detention since August 5, 2019, in order to spread awareness regarding the importance of vaccination started a campaign through posters and social media "so that the people realise the seriousness of the issue and not exhibit any kind of carelessness in this regard".

SHORT TAKES

LOCAL LEADER BOOKED FOR GH'BAD VIOLENCE

Ghaziabad, June 17: The Ghaziabad Police has booked a Samajwadi Party worker here over a “communal video” of an elderly Muslim man alleging attack by some young men, with the FIR also mentioning that Facebook let the “misleading” clip circulate without making efforts to verify it.

The FIR, however, does not mention Facebook as an accused in the case in which opposition Samajwadi Party’s worker Ummaid Pehelwan Idrisi has been charged with promoting enmity and breach of peace by circulating the video on social media and giving it a “communal colour”.

On his Facebook account, Idrisi identifies himself as a Samajwadi Party worker and has posted purported pictures of him with party chief Akhilesh Yadav.

Requesting anonymity, an SP office-bearer confirmed that Idrisi was a member of the Ghaziabad Development Authority (GDA) board during the SP government, and is still a party worker.

The case was lodged at the Loni Border police station Wednesday evening, a day after the Ghaziabad police booked Twitter, a news web-site, some journalists and opposition Congress politicians, in a separate FIR over circulation of the video.

HC EXTENDS STAN SWAMY’S HOSPITAL STAY

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC MUMBAI, JUNE 17

The Bombay High Court on Thursday once again extended 84-year-old activist Father Stan Swamy’s stay in a private hospital till July 5, for medical treatment considering his medical report that said he continues to be critical and required intensive care.

Swamy has been admitted to the Holy Family Hospital in Bandra and this hospital in its report said that Swamy has been shifted to ICU and his condition was critical and hence he required further intensive care due to serious medical issues.

The NIA claimed before the division bench of Justice S S Shinde and N J Jamadar that this report was not conclusive proof of alleged Parkinson disease or lumbar spondylosis.

The NIA also disputed the medical documents of September 2019 and submitted that he be put to strict proof of facts as alleged in the documents. The NIA council Sandesh Patil told the court that the probe agency would peruse the medical report and respond to it in two weeks. The bench directed the registry to give the report of the hospital to NIA, state prison authorities with the consent of Fr Swamy’s counsel. The bench then fixed July 13, for further hearing on the bail plea filed by Swamy.

COPS PROBE PLAINT AGAINST SWARA BHASKAR

New Delhi, June 17: The Delhi Police has received a complaint against actress Swara Bhaskar, Twitter India MD Manish Maheshwari and others in connection with social media posts about an attack on an elderly Muslim man in Ghaziabad on June 5, officials said Thursday.

Police said the complaint was received at Tilak Marg police station.

“We have received a complaint against Swara Bhaskar, Manish Maheshwari, MD Twitter, and others at Tilak Marg police station. It is under inquiry,” a senior police officer said.

Further details about the complaint were not immediately available.

In a video uploaded on social media, the elderly Muslim man had accused four people of beating him up, chopping his beard and asking him to chant *Jai Shri Ram* in the Loni area of Ghaziabad.

The Ghaziabad police had said it has already registered an FIR in connection with this alleged incident which took place on June 5, but was reported to police two days later.

Ghaziabad Senior Superintendent of Police Amit Pathak had said the victim, Abdul Samad, a Bulandshahr resident, had not made any allegation of being forced to chant Jai Shri Ram or the chopping up of his beard in his FIR lodged on June 7.

The Uttar Pradesh Police has filed the FIR against Twitter Inc, Twitter Communications India among others.

Rescue op.



In a daredevil sea-air coordinated operation in inclement weather and rough sea conditions, Indian Coast Guard (ICG) 2 Chetak Helicopters ex-Daman and Ship Subhadra Kumari Chauhan rescued 16 crew from Barge MV Mangalam reported aground off Revdanda. All crew safe. — PTI

BJP MLAs to ask Speaker to disqualify Mukul Roy

Shuvendu has asked Roy to quit as MLA as he left BJP and joined TMC

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, JUNE 17

In what may land veteran politician Mukul Roy in a major trouble, the West Bengal BJP MLAs are going to submit their petition seeking his disqualification under the anti-defection law to Assembly Speaker Biman Banerjee on Friday morning for switching as Krishnanagar North MLA from their party to the ruling Trinamul Congress recently.

Leader of the opposition Shuvendu Adhikari said on Thursday, “Our process for the petition against Mr Roy has been completed. I went to the Assembly today and signed it also. But there was no one present at the receiving section of the Assembly. So we informed the Assembly secretary about our move officially. At around 11 am on Friday we will submit our petition at the receiving section of the Assembly. If no one will be available then and there,

● THE NANDIGRAM BJP MLA, who earlier gave Mr Roy an ultimatum to resign as an MLA after his return to the TMC on June 11, held a meeting with two lawyers and some party legislators in his chamber of the Assembly during the day to prepare the petition since Mr Roy did not quit the legislator’s post.

we will send it to the Assembly Speaker via email according to the law.”

The Nandigram BJP MLA, who earlier gave Mr Roy an ultimatum to resign as an MLA after his return to the TMC on June 11, held a meeting with two lawyers and some party legislators in his chamber of the Assembly during the day to prepare the petition since Mr Roy did not quit the legislator’s post.

Mr Roy was not available for comments.

However TMC state general secretary Kunal Ghosh said, “The law will take its own course. I can not say beforehand what papers the BJP will submit and on what topic. But I definitely feel that Mr Adhikari is not suited to talk about the anti-defection law because he enjoyed the power of party post and minister-ship from TMC before switching to the BJP.”

“However his father, Sisir Adhikari, won as a TMC MP in Lok Sabha but defected to the BJP ahead of the Assembly Election here. Our party also gave a petition to the Lok Sabha Speaker for his disqualification as an MP. While he is facing the anti-defection law, his son is giving lectures on the same! This reflects the politics of double standards within the same family. Let Mr Adhikari give a sermon to his father first. If he moves any petition, it will be looked into by the Assembly Speaker,” he said.

Sena hints at alliance only with NCP

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC MUMBAI, JUNE 17

The Shiv Sena has hinted at a possibility of striking an alliance with the NCP in saying both the parties will have to fight together in future in the interest of Maharashtra.

The Uddhav Thackeray-led party’s stand has come on the backdrop of Maharashtra Congress chief Nana Patole announcing that his party will contest forthcoming polls on its own.

“The BJP and Congress are preparing to contest elections on their own. If every party is trying to do so, then Shiv Sena and NCP, keeping in view the interest of Maharashtra,



Uddhav Thackeray

will contest the elections in alliance. Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and NCP chief Sharad Pawar have also indicated the same,” an editorial in Sena mouthpiece *Saam-ana* said on Thursday. Though the Congress is



Sharad Pawar

in alliance with the Shiv Sena and NCP in the Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) Government, it has announced that it will fight the elections alone in the state. “Congress will contest

the Maharashtra assembly elections alone. I am ready to be the chief ministerial face if the high command decides,” Mr Patole had said.

However, Maharashtra deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar of the NCP had snubbed Mr Patole saying that Congress leader Sonia Gandhi, Sharad Pawar and Uddhav Thackeray have the final say on the state elections.”

The Sena editorial said, “Parliamentary democracy is a game of numbers. Those who win the game will sit on the throne. There is nothing wrong in desire and ambition in politics. But in the end, if you don’t have the majority,

then there is no point in only talking.”

Shiv Sena also ruled out an alliance with the BJP. “BJP leader Raosaheb Danve has said that the BJP-Shiv Sena alliance is not possible in future. Therefore, BJP will have to contest elections on its own,” it said.

Meanwhile, state NCP chief Jayant Patil has also said that people in Maharashtra want his party and Shiv Sena to stay together.

“The MVA Government is made up of three parties and they should keep their alliance intact. But if anyone wants to contest separately, the other two parties will definitely remain together,” he added.

Severed body of 6-yr-old found

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, JUNE 17

The Odisha police have recovered the severed body of a six-year-old girl who was raped and killed by a relative on June 12 at Dhundugadia village in Nayagarh district.

The accused identified as Sagar Dalei alias Sagar Mallick had kidnapped the girl while she was playing in the courtyard of her house.

The body was found at an isolated location near the village, 200 metres away from the girl’s house, Nayagarh superintendent of police Sidhharth Kataria informed on Thursday.

The autopsy of the body was conducted by a team of doctors at Daspalla Hospital on Thursday afternoon.

The SP said the body was traced following five days of intense interrogation of a suspect who was picked up on June 12 evening.

The SP said the accused had recently returned from Chennai where he worked as a daily-wage earner. As he had easy access to the girl’s house, he allowed her to play games and view other contents on his smart-phone that he had bought in Chennai.

Taking advantage of the absence of girl’s parents during the day time as they go to work as agri-labourers, Sagar started showing the girl obscene and pornographic contents. On the fateful day, Sagar took the girl to a banana farm where he

JILTED KERALA YOUTH KILLS WOMAN

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JUNE 17

A jilted youth murdered a woman and stabbed her younger sister at Perinthalmanna in Malappuram district of Kerala on Thursday.

The brutal incident took place at around 8.30am when the accused identified as Vineesh Vinod, 21, barged into the victim’s house and stabbed her repeatedly.

Her 13-year-old sister also sustained stab injuries while trying to save her sibling.

Earlier on Wednesday night the accused had set on fire the fancy store owned by victim’s father.

raped her then strangled her to death with a nylon rope fearing that she might reveal the crime to her parents.

Police swung into action after the family members on June 12 evening lodged a complaint alleging kidnapping of their minor daughter. Though the police picked Sagar on June 12, he never confessed to the crime until Wednesday.

Following interrogation by the SP, the accused confessed to the crime and showed the place where he had dumped the body.

Former encounter specialist arrested

SHAHAB ANSARI MUMBAI, JUNE 17

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Thursday arrested Pradeep Sharma, former encounter specialist and Shiv Sena member in connection with industrialist Mukesh Ambani bomb scare case. Later in the day the special court remanded him to NIA custody till June 28.

When Sharma was produced before the court, special judge Prashant Sitre asked him if he had anything to say. Sharma replied that there were factions within the police force and he was being framed by them.

Sharma also said that he is a retired police officer and he wouldn’t have been sleeping at his house if he was really involved in the case.

Sharma also said that he knows only one of the four accused i.e. Santosh Shelar because he’s been his informer for the past more than a decade.

“I don’t know these two

people in the dock, you can ask them. There are no phone calls between Waze and me, either,” said Sharma.

Apart from Sharma the NIA also arrested two more persons identified as Manish Soni and Satish Muthikari.

According to the probe agency, both the accused had murdered Thane based businessman Mansukh Hiran with the help of two others in a Red Tavera Car. Hiran was in possession of the car that was found parked near Mukesh Ambani’s residence in South Mumbai.

Soni and Muthikari were also produced before the court along with Sharma and all the accused were remanded to NIA custody together.

While seeking Sharma’s custody the probe agency contended that he was involved in the conspiracy to kill businessman Mansukh Hiran, whose body was removed from the Mumbra creek on March 5.



Former encounter specialist Pradeep Sharma arrested by NIA in connection with the Antilia bomb scare case in Mumbai on Thursday. — PTI

Rajnath inaugurates 12 strategic roads constructed by Border Roads Organisation

India is capable of replying to aggression: Rajnath

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, JUNE 17

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday said that though India is a peace loving country, it was capable of responding to any aggression.

Inaugurating 12 strategic roads constructed by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO), Mr Singh described India as a “priest of world peace” but warned any serious disturbance to peace and tranquillity in border areas would have adverse implications.

“We seek world peace. If someone shows us an

aggressive attitude, we will respond to them in their terms,” said Mr Singh while pointing out as to how the new roads would help in securing international borders.

The defence minister who was here to dedicate strategic roads, mostly adjoining China, to the nation, also paid his tribute to Indian soldiers who displayed exemplary courage and valour in Galwan Valley in Ladakh a year ago.

Mr Singh said that the 12 strategic roads including 10 in Arunachal Pradesh and one each in Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir,

inaugurated during the day, would not only give a boost in connectivity but would also facilitate faster movement of troops along the International Border.

“The capability of BRO in constructing world class roads despite challenges, in tough and hilly terrain underlines the mantra of Atma Nirbhar Bharat,” said Mr Singh.

He said the road projects are part of the Act East Policy, envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. “The budget for BRO has increased manifold since 2013 and today stands at ₹11,000 crore. The BRO since 2014 had



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh during the inauguration of Kimin-Potin Road in Lakhimpur district. — PTI

developed a record 4,800 kilometres of border roads in the country,” the

Defence Minister said. According to BRO officials, out of the 12 roads

SHORT TAKES

CHINA CREWED
SPACESHIP DOCKS
WITH SPACE STN

Jiquan (China), June 17: State media say a Chinese spaceship carrying a three-person crew has docked with the country's new space station at the start of three-month mission.

The Shenzhou-12 craft connected with the Tianhe space station module about six hours after takeoff Thursday. The crew will carry out experiments, test equipment, conduct maintenance and prepare the station for receiving two laboratory modules next year. The mission brings to 14 the number of astronauts China has launched into space since 2003.

SHIP SINKS,
PROMPTS LANKA
POLLUTION FEAR

Colombo, June 17: A container ship carrying chemicals sank off Sri Lanka's capital on Thursday nearly a month after catching fire, raising concerns about a possible environmental disaster, officials said.

The ship's operator said the wreck of the Singapore-flagged X-Press Pearl "is now wholly sitting on the seabed at a depth of 21 metres (70 feet)". A salvage crew was at the site to deal with any debris and report any spill, X-Press Feeders said.

The head of Sri Lanka's Marine Environment Protection Authority, Darshini Lahandapura, also confirmed that the ship had sunk.

She said it was currently unsafe to remove the wreck because of rough monsoon seas. "The sea is very violent. In the rough season, we can't do anything," she said.

DOZEN KILLED IN
BHUTAN, NEPAL
MONSOON RAINS

Thimpu, June 17: At least a dozen people have been killed in Bhutan and Nepal and several others are missing as torrential monsoon rains hit the region, triggering landslides and inundating homes, officials said Thursday.

The annual monsoon season is crucial to replenish water supplies across South Asia, but it also causes death and destruction. Ten collectors of cordyceps — a fungus valued for its alleged aphrodisiac properties — died when their remote mountain camp north of Bhutan's capital Thimpu was washed away early Wednesday.

Five others were injured and were in a stable condition in hospital, officials said.

Bhutan's Prime Minister Lotay Tshering offered his prayers and condolences and said a rescue team had been sent to the site.

ONE LIFE LOST
IN BALTIMORE
SHOOTING

Baltimore (US), June 17: One person was killed and five others were wounded when gunmen walked up a street and opened fire on a Baltimore block from an intersection, the city's police commissioner said.

Commissioner Michael Harrison said the shooting on Wednesday erupted in a west Baltimore neighbourhood and the conditions of the five wounded ranged from serious to critical. He declined to release the identities of those who were shot.

Officers responded to reports of gunshots after 2 pm Wednesday and found two people shot, Harrison said. Those two were taken to hospitals, and the four others arrived separately in private vehicles, he said. So far investigators have learned that the six people were together on the tree-lined block of rowhouses when at least two or three people began firing.

13 WORKERS DIE
IN CHINA IRON
MINE ACCIDENT

Beijing, June 17: All 13 workers, who were trapped in an iron mine in north China's Shanxi Province, have been confirmed dead, according to the local authorities. The bodies of the workers were lifted out of the well that flooded the Dahongcai iron mine in Daixian County on June 10. A rescue team comprising 1,084 people worked for six straight days.

The DNA confirmation has been completed, according to the local rescue headquarters. Police have detained 13 suspects. An investigation into the cause of the accident is underway, the state-run *Xinhua* news agency reported on late Wednesday night.

Chinese coal mines are one of the deadliest in the world. In 2009, China had the most mining accident fatalities in the world, with a total of 2,631 coal miners dying in accidents.



People have dinner in Tokyo's Shinjuku area on Thursday, after Japan announced that a virus state of emergency in Tokyo and several other regions will be lifted on June 20. — AFP

Delta variant infections in
England doubling in 11 days

London, June 17: The number of people infected with the Coronavirus is increasing rapidly in England, doubling every 11 days, which coincides with the Delta variant of Covid-19 becoming dominant in the country, a new study reports on Thursday. The Imperial College London led Real-time Assessment of Community Transmission (REACT-1) analysis, based on over 100,000 home swab tests taken between May 20 and June 7, estimates that 0.15 per cent of people have the deadly virus, or roughly 1 in 670.

It found that the link between infections, hospitalisations and deaths had been weakening since February, but since late April, the trend has been reversing for hospitalisations. "We found strong evidence for exponential growth in infection from

W.H.O. WARNS OF FRESH INDONESIA
SPIKE FED BY CORONAVIRUS STRAINS

Jakarta, June 17: Indonesia's president ordered authorities to speed up the country's vaccination campaign as the World Health Organisation warned Thursday of the need to increase social restrictions in the country amid a fresh surge of Coronavirus infections caused by worrisome variants.

We need vaccination acceleration in order to achieve communal immunity, which we hope can

stop the Covid-19 spread, President Joko Widodo said in a remarks while visiting a vaccination center just outside the capital, Jakarta.

Widodo said he ordered his cabinet ministers and local governments to increase the number of people vaccinated each day to 1 million by next month. He said Indonesia is currently vaccinating half a million people a day. — AP

late May to early June in the REACT-1 study, with a doubling time of 11 days on average for England," said Professor Paul Elliott, director of the REACT programme from Imperial's School of Public Health.

"These data coincide with the Delta variant becoming dominant and show the importance of continuing to monitor infection rates and variants of concern in the community," he said.

The findings come days after UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced a month-long delay to an end to lockdown restrictions, citing the rising number of cases of the Delta variant — first identified in India. "These findings highlight the stark context in which we took the difficult decision to delay Step 4 of the roadmap out of lockdown," said UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock. "Cases are now rising, but thanks to our incredible vaccination programme and enhanced response package, including surge testing, we have the tools to curb the spread of this virus. We all must hold our nerve that little bit longer as our vaccine rollout continues and I urge everyone to keep observing hands, face, space and fresh air, and make sure you receive both doses," he said. — PTI

S'PORE TO SACK
LECTURER OVER
RACIST REMARKS

Singapore, June 17: A lecturer at a polytechnic in Singapore is being sacked for serious misconduct for allegedly making racist remarks against an Indian-Chinese descent couple, according to a media report on Thursday. Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) said it is in the process of sacking senior lecturer Tan Boon Lee for serious misconduct. This comes after a video posted on June 6 of Tan making racist remarks to an interracial couple in Orchard Road went viral online. Tan was captured in a video arguing with Dave Parkash, a Singaporean who is half-Indian and half-Filipino. — PTI

Oli defends dissolution,
says courts can't name PM

Kathmandu, June 17: Nepal's embattled Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli on Thursday defended his government's controversial decision to dissolve the House of Representatives and told the Supreme Court that it is not up to the judiciary to appoint a premier as it cannot undertake the legislative and the executive functions of the state.

President Bidya Devi Bhandari, at the recommendation of Prime Minister Oli, dissolved the lower house for the second time in five months on May 22 and announced snap elections on November 12 and November 19.

Prime Minister Oli is

● ON JUNE 9, the apex court issued a show-cause notice to the Office of the Prime Minister and the President's Office to furnish a written response within 15 days.

heading a minority government after losing a trust vote in the House.

On June 9, the apex court issued a show-cause notice to the Office of the Prime Minister and the President's Office to furnish a written response within 15 days.

Furnishing a written reply to the Supreme Court on Thursday as demanded by the Constitutional Bench, Oli said the

court cannot appoint a Prime Minister as it cannot undertake the legislative and the executive functions of the state.

The apex court received Oli's response via the Office of the Attorney General. "The Court's duty is to interpret the Constitution and the existing laws, it cannot play the role of the legislative or the executive bodies," 69-year-old Oli said in his response.

"Forming governments on the basis of parties is the fundamental characteristic of the parliamentary system and the Constitution does not imagine party-less practices," he added. — PTI

India's \$100 mn aid
for Lanka projects

Colombo, June 17: India has extended a \$100 million Line of Credit to Sri Lanka to help the island nation finance various projects in the solar energy sector and ensure that the country's 70 per cent power requirements are fulfilled by renewable energy sources by 2030.

An agreement signed between the Sri Lankan government and the Export-Import Bank of India was exchanged by High Commissioner of India to

Sri Lanka Gopal Baglay and Secretary to the Treasury S.R. Attiyagalle in the presence of Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa on Wednesday.

It will help finance various projects in the solar energy sector, including those announced during the Founding Conference of the International Solar Alliance held in March 2018, such as rooftop solar photo-voltaic systems for households and government buildings. — PTI

PIO to lead US EPA's water office

Washington, June 17: The US Senate has confirmed Indian-American water issues expert Radhika Fox as head of the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Water. The Senate, bitterly divided on party lines, confirmed Fox's nomination on Wednesday by 55 to 43 votes after seven Republican Senators supported her candidature. Two Democratic Senators did not cast their votes. "Ms Fox brings with her an impressive professional record of service and accomplishment, spa-



Radhika Fox

nnings over two decades, working on water issues at the local, state and federal level," Senator Tom Carper, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, said. "We have the oppor-

tunity today to confirm a truly gifted leader and put her to work serving our country right away," he added. On April 14, President Joe Biden nominated Fox for the post of Assistant Administrator for Water, Environmental Protection Agency. Fox currently serves as the Acting Assistant Administrator for Water. The EPA's Office of Water works to ensure that drinking water is safe, waste water is safely returned to the environment, and surface waters are properly managed and protected.

Prior to joining EPA, Fox served as the Chief Executive Officer for the US Water Alliance, where she established herself as a widely recognised national thought leader on complex water issues, from equitable water management to investing in the nation's water infrastructure. Her work has helped address the most salient water issues facing the US, including climate change, affordability, equity, governance, innovative finance and the evolution of the One Water movement. — PTI

DUTCH | CONTROVERSY

The carriage underwent extensive restoration in September 2015

Golden Coach exhibition revives racism debate

Amsterdam, June 17: On a blustery autumn day in 2015 Dutch King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima for the last time stepped out of the golden coach which traditionally transported them to the opening of parliament.

Nearly six years later, the monarch was back on Thursday to unveil a newly restored carriage — but this time as the centrepiece of an exhibition at the Amst-

erdam Museum exploring the Netherlands' troubled relationship with its colonial past.

The horse-drawn carriage called the "De Gouden Koets" has been embroiled in a racism controversy over a picture on the left-side panel of the opulent coach, which has undergone an extensive refit.

Called "Tribute of the Colonies", the image depicts kneeling PoC people

handing over produce like cocoa and sugarcane to their white masters — including to a young white woman on a throne representing the Netherlands.

Next to her, a young white man is seen giving a young PoC boy a book as he is presented by his subservient father, an image which painter Nicolaas van der Waay in 1896 said was meant to portray "civilisation."

Margriet Schavemaker, artistic director of the Amsterdam Museum, said the carriage used by the Dutch royals for baptisms, marriages and other occasions "has also become an object of controversy."

"In ongoing debates it has become known that one of the panels depicting the Dutch colonial past is making a large group in the Netherlands uncomfortable," Schavemaker said.

The carriage underwent extensive restoration in September 2015 shortly after its last parliament trip, in a day marked by pomp and ceremony when the Dutch royals are traditionally driven through the streets of The Hague.

Last year the government announced that, amid the controversy, its return to ceremonial duties would be postponed following the refit and it would go on

show at the museum instead. The Amsterdam Museum show also comes as the Netherlands faces a reckoning with its history as a colonial and slave-trading power in Asia, the Caribbean and South America.

Several other Dutch museums have launched similar projects, including the famed Rijksmuseum which recently opened an exhibit entitled "Slavery". — AFP

Net outages hit
websites, apps

As most services come online, probe on

Hong Kong, June 17: A wave of brief internet outages hit the websites and apps of dozens of financial institutions, airlines and other companies across the globe Thursday.

The Hong Kong Stock Exchange said in a post on Twitter Thursday afternoon Hong Kong time that its site was facing technical issues and that it was investigating. It said in another post 17 minutes later that its websites were back to normal.

Internet monitoring websites including ThousandEyes, Downtetector.com and fmg.com showed dozens of disruptions, including to US-based airlines. Many of the outages were reported by people in Australia trying to do banking, book flights and access postal services. Australia Post, the country's postal service, said on Twitter that an "external outage" had impacted a number of its services, and that while most services had come back online, they are continuing to monitor and investigate. Many services were up and running after an hour or so but the affected companies said they were working overtime to prevent

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● BANKING SERVICES were severely disrupted, with Westpac, the Commonwealth, ANZ and St George all down.

further problems.

Banking services were severely disrupted, with Westpac, the Commonwealth, ANZ and St George all down, along with the website of the Reserve Bank of Australia.

Services have mostly been restored. Virgin Australia said flights were largely operating as scheduled after it restored

access to its website and guest contact centre. "Virgin Australia was one of many organisations to experience an outage with the Akamai content delivery system today," it said.

"We are working with them to ensure that necessary measures are taken to prevent these outages from reoccurring." Akamai counts some of the world's biggest companies and banks as customers. Calls to Akamai, which is headquartered in Cambridge, Massachusetts, but has global services, went unanswered. The disruptions came just days after many of the world's top websites went offline briefly due to a problem with software at Fastly, another major web services company.

The company blamed the problem on a software bug that was triggered when a customer changed a setting. Brief internet service outages are not uncommon and are only rarely the result of hacking or other mischief. But the outages have underscored how vital a small number of behind-the-scenes companies have become to running the internet. — AP

HK pro-democracy
paper editors held

Hong Kong, June 17: Hong Kong police used a sweeping national security law against a pro-democracy newspaper for the first time Thursday, arresting five editors and executives on charges of collusion with foreign powers. Police said they had strong evidence that more than 30 articles published by *Apple Daily* played a "crucial part" in a conspiracy with foreign countries to impose sanctions against China and Hong Kong, in response to a crackdown on civil liberties in the semi-autonomous Chinese city.

Apple Daily has often criticised the Chinese and Hong Kong governments for tightening control over the city and walking back on promises by Beijing that the territory could retain its freedoms when it was handed over from Britain in 1997.

Apple Daily founder Jimmy Lai is currently serving a 20-month prison sentence for his role in unauthorised assemblies in 2019, during a period when Hong Kong saw massive anti-government protest calling for universal suffrage and democratic freedoms. Police also froze \$18 million Hong Kong dollars (\$ 2.3 million) worth of assets belonging to three compa-

● APPLE DAILY has often criticised the Chinese and Hong Kong governments for tightening control over the city and walking back on promises by Beijing that the territory could retain its freedoms when it was handed over from Britain in 1997.

nies linked to *Apple Daily*, said Li Kwai-wah, a senior superintendent at Hong Kong's National Security Department. More than 200 police officers were involved in the search of *Apple Daily*'s offices, and the government said a warrant was obtained to look for evidence of a suspected violation of the national security law.

Those arrested included *Apple Daily*'s chief editor Ryan Law, Next Digital CEO Cheung Kim-hung, the publisher's chief operating officer and two other editors, according to *Apple Daily*, the *South China Morning Post* and other local media. Hong Kong Security Minister John Lee told a news conference that police will investigate both people in the *Apple Daily* companies and others to establish if they have assisted in instigating or funding the offences. — AP

U.S. CONGRESS
NOD TO MAKE
JUNETEENTH A
FED. HOLIDAY

Washington, June 17: The United States will soon have a new federal holiday commemorating the end of slavery. The House voted 415-14 on Wednesday to make Juneteenth, or June 19th, the 12th federal holiday.

The bill now goes to President Joe Biden's desk, and he is expected to sign it into law. Juneteenth commemorates June 19, 1865, when Union soldiers brought the news of freedom to enslaved PoC people in Galveston, Texas — two months after the Confederacy had surrendered. That was also about 2 1/2 years after the Emancipation Proclamation freed slaves in the Southern states.

It's the first new federal holiday since Martin Luther King Jr. Day was created in 1983.

"Our federal holidays are purposely few in number and recognise the most important milestones," said Rep. Carolyn Maloney, D-N.Y. "I cannot think of a more important milestone to commemorate than the end of slavery in the United States."

Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, D-Texas, speaking next to a large poster of a PoC man whose back bore massive scarring from being whipped, said she would be in Galveston this Saturday to celebrate along with Republican Sen. John Cornyn of Texas.

"Can you imagine?" said the rather short Jackson Lee.

— AP

SC DISMISSES
CHALLENGE TO
OBAMACARE

Washington, June 17: The Supreme Court has dismissed a challenge to the Obama era health care law, preserving insurance coverage for millions of Americans.

The justices, by a 7-2 vote, left the entire law intact Thursday in ruling that Texas, other Republican-led states and two individuals had no right to bring their lawsuit in federal court. The Biden administration says 31 million people have health insurance because of the law known as "Obamacare."

Major provisions include protections for people with pre-existing health conditions, a range of no-cost preventive services and the expansion of the Medicaid programme. — AP

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	52,323.33	-0.34
Nifty 50	15,691.40	-0.48
S&P 500*	4,224.04	0.01
Dollar (₹)	74.07	-1.03
Pound Sterling (₹)	103.51	-0.02
Euro (₹)	88.53	0.42
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	46,863	861 1.83
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	72.73	-2.23
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.019	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.504	-0.065

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Top 5 IT firms to add over 96,000 staff: Nasscom

Nasscom said the sector continues to be a net hirer of skilled talent, and that the top five Indian IT companies are planning to add over 96,000 employees in 2021-22. "With the evolution of technology and increasing automation, the nature of traditional IT jobs and roles will evolve overall leading to creation of newer jobs. The industry continues to be a net hirer of skilled talent, adding 1,38,000 people in FY2021."

Tariff value for edible oil import slashed



The government has reduced the tariff value for import of edible oil, including palm oil, by up to \$112 per tonne, a move which can lower domestic prices. The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs, through a notification, has cut the tariff import value of crude palm oil by \$86 per tonne, and of RBD and crude palmolein by \$112 per tonne each. It also reduced the base import price of crude soyabean oil by \$37 per tonne.

Mis-selling: HDFC Bank to refund GPS commissions

HDFC Bank announced a refund of the controversial 'GPS device commission' charged to auto loan borrowers for six years. The bank's then chief executive Aditya Puri had last year admitted to irregularities in the auto loan disbursements by its team. The bank was also fined Rs 10 crore by the RBI earlier this year. The lender announced the refund in a public notice published in newspapers.

UP gets ₹13,408 cr investment proposals in mfg

Uttar Pradesh has emerged as the top investment destination and has received 98 investment proposals worth Rs 13,408.19 crore in the manufacturing sector during the past three-and-a-half years, an official statement said. "Big industrialists of the country and abroad are investing in infrastructure, food processing, textile, electronic manufacturing, real estate, power and manufacturing sectors in UP in a big way," they said.

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Rupee loses 76p, to remain weak Hawkish US Fed comments trip ₹

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, JUNE 17

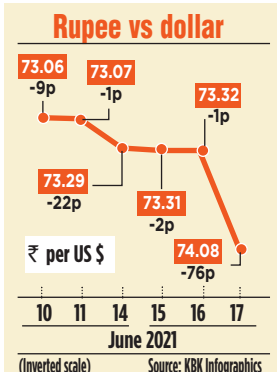
The rupee fell sharply on Thursday breaking the 74-mark after the US Federal Reserve held rates unchanged but turned a little hawkish in its monetary policy commentary, indicating two rate hikes in 2023.

Federal Reserve chairman Jerome Powell said that there had also been initial discussions about when to pull back on the Fed's \$120 billion in monthly bond purchases, a conversation that would be completed in coming months as the economy continues to heal.

The surprisingly hawkish tone drove US treasury yields and the dollar up, weakening the Indian currency to its lowest level since early May and making it a top loser among Asian emerging market currencies.

The Fed's comments came in conjunction with the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) reiteration of its forex stance in its latest bulletin, in which it indicated that India's record \$600 billion foreign exchange reserves might not be good enough, as it falls short on some measures, including import cover and liability outflows. Analysts expect the rupee to remain an underperformer among emerging market currencies.

At the interbank forex market, the domestic unit opened weak at 73.65 against the American currency, then lost further



ground and finally closed at 74.08, losing 76 paise over its previous close.

On Wednesday, the rupee had settled at 73.32. The domestic currency has lost 128 paise in the last eight trading sessions.

Weakness in global equity markets—after the Fed surprised investors by signalling faster-than-expected rate hikes—and the sharp drop in the rupee sapped the risk appetite of stock traders in Mumbai. The Sensex ended 0.34 per cent lower at 52,323.33 and the Nifty-50 declined 0.48 per cent to 15,691.40.

The Dollar Index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, rose 0.6 per cent to 91.67.

"While foreign exchange reserves provide cushions against unforeseen exter-

nal shocks, levels are often deceptive," RBI researchers, led by deputy governor Michael Debabrata Patra, wrote in the RBI Bulletin for June 2021, released on Wednesday. "A better gauge of external vulnerability is an assessment of specific indicators."

Forex reserves surged to \$605 billion in the week to June 4 as the RBI mopped up dollars flowing into the nation's booming stock market as well as via foreign direct investments. The pile is the world's fifth-biggest after China, Japan, Switzerland and Russia, and is enough to cover 15 months of imports. But that's less than the 39 months cover offered by Switzerland's reserves, 22 by Japan's, 20 by Russia's and 16 months by China's pile, said the RBI researchers.

"This (the Fed's comments) comes in conjunction with RBI's reiteration of its FX stance in yesterday's bulletin, where it indicated that FX reserves are still not adequate enough when seen in the light of cross country comparison ratios, high net international investment position of (-)12.9 per cent of GDP and random shocks amid heightened global uncertainty—all of it implying that RBI's tactical forex intervention in forex will be biased towards dollar purchases, keeping INR subdued/EM underperformer even in case of healthy EM flows," said Madhavi Arora, lead economist, Emkay Global.

OIL TUMBLES 3% FROM MULTI-YEAR HIGHS

SCOTT DISAVINO SINGAPORE, JUNE 17

Oil prices slumped nearly 3 per cent from their highest level in years on Thursday as the US dollar strengthened after the Federal Reserve signalled it might raise interest rates as soon as 2023 and hopes the United States and Iran could come to a nuclear agreement.

But an upcoming election in Iran on Friday could scuttle the nuclear talks and leave US sanction on Iran's oil exports in place.

Brent futures fell \$2.07, or 2.8 per cent, to \$72.32 a barrel by 12:22 pm EDT (1622 GMT), while US crude fell \$2.00, or 2.8 per cent, to \$70.15.

On Wednesday, Brent settled at its highest since April 2019 and WTI at its highest since October 2018.

The US dollar strengthened to its highest since mid-April against a basket of other currencies after the Federal Reserve signalled it might raise interest rates at a much faster pace than assumed.

A firmer greenback makes oil more expensive in other currencies, which could dent demand.

Indirect talks between Tehran and Washington on reviving the 2015 Iran nuclear deal have come closer than ever to an agreement, but essential issues remain to be negotiated, the top Iranian negotiator said on Thursday. —Reuters

CII pitches for ₹3L cr stimulus to spur growth

INDUSTRY VOICE

■ Economy requires ₹3 lakh crore fiscal stimulus, including cash transfer to households through Jan Dhan accounts to spur growth



T. V. Narendran

■ A 'Vaccine Czar' be appointed for speedy vaccination coverage

■ Other suggestions include enhanced MNREGA allocations; short-term GST cuts to boost demand; time bound tax relief/interest subvention/stamp duty concession for home buyers

New Delhi, June 17: The Indian economy requires a Rs 3 lakh crore fiscal stimulus, including cash transfer to households through Jan Dhan accounts to spur economic growth amid the pandemic, industry chamber CII said on Thursday and pitched for appointment of a 'Vaccine Czar' for speedy vaccination coverage.

CII president T. V. Narendran also said the chamber expects GDP to grow at 9.5 per cent in 2021-22 as the strong growth in the second half of the fiscal year will be supported by robust external demand and large-scale coverage of vaccination, allowing resumption of economic activity.

He also advocated for appointment of a "Vaccine Czar" for speedy vaccination coverage.

The new president said suitable fiscal measures to alleviate the stress of people impacted by the second wave of Covid-19 are the need of the hour.

The Indian economy is a consumption-led economy and the pandemic has impacted the consumer demand and due to this, the chamber has called for measures such as cash transfer as a number of actions are needed to deal with this demand shock, he told reporters.

"Fiscal stimulus of Rs 3 lakh crore is required...There is room for administering additional fiscal stimulus of up to Rs 3 lakh crore," he said adding the RBI should expand its balance sheet to accommodate the increased stimulus so that lending costs are contained. Measures suggested by it

include enhanced MNREGA allocations from the budgeted amount; short-term and focused GST cuts to boost demand; time bound tax relief/interest subvention/stamp duty concession for home buyers; LTC cash voucher scheme like last year; and extension of the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana till March 31, 2022.

Narendran also asked for ensuring timely payment to companies, including MSMEs; accelerating public works programmes to ensure implementation of NIP; hiking ECLGS (Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme) amount to Rs 5 lakh crore, reduction in excise duty on fuel and

inclusion of ATF (aviation turbine fuel) and other fuel products in GST (Goods and Services Tax). On vaccination, he said there should be minimum 71.2 lakh average daily vaccination doses from now till December 2021 to cover the entire adult population.

"The Vaccine Czar (or minister) should be empowered to undertake actions like in the UK on a daily campaign to track domestic vaccine production and import supplies; equitable distribution of vaccines; track progress on vaccine deployment and administration; and using a dashboard approach and share progress reports daily," he said.

He said vaccination is a complex process as it needs coordination among different agencies, states, Centre, private and public sectors. "Lot of players are involved in the process... So for all that a single person contact is required with whom everyone can deal with," the CII president, who is also CEO and MD of Tata Steel, said.

He also called for incentivising people to get vaccinated—at the bottom of the pyramid, there should be cash/ food/ insurance incentive for those taking two doses and for the relatively better off, the government could offer rebate on air/train travel within the country.

He said the cumulative impact of the two Covid waves on incomes and consumer sentiment, coupled with the rise in household medical expenses in the second wave, may affect consumer demand for some time. —PTI

More Telangana firms plan public issue

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, JUNE 17

Companies from the Telangana State are queuing up for stock market debut after the recent successful listing of Gland Pharma and MTAR Technologies.

Hyderabad-based KIMS Hospitals and Doodla Dairy's initial public offerings (IPOs) are currently open for subscription.

Vijaya Diagnostics Centre, Gemini Edibles &

Fats India and MedPlus Health Services may tap the primary market in the near future to raise about Rs 3,850 crore, according to market sources.

Vijaya Diagnostics filed the draft red herring prospectus with the Securities and Exchange Board of India in early June. It has a network of 80 diagnostics centres and 11 reference laboratories across 13 cities and towns in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, NCR and Kolkata.

Vijaya Diagnostics' Rs 1,000 crore public offer is an offer for sale by promoter S. Surendranath Reddy and private equity investor Kedaara Capital.

Hyderabad-based edible oil company Gemini Edibles & Fats India produces and markets rice bran oil. The company is looking to raise around Rs 850 crore from the primary market, sources said.

Hyderabad-based MedPlus Health Services, an online pharmacy and

general store, is planning to raise around Rs 1,500 crore from the primary market and has shortlisted merchant bankers for the public offer. The company may file its draft offer document by August.

MedPlus Health Services was started by Dr. Madhukar Gangadi in 2006 with its first pharmacy store in Hyderabad. MedPlus is the second largest pharmacy retail chain in the country with over 2000 pharmacy stores.

Tide turns for banker who quit and got \$1.6 mn in litigation

GASPARD SEBAG JUNE 17

A Paris banker who quit Mediobanca SpA's Messier Maris & Associates won a 1.3 million euros (\$1.6 million) payout after convincing judges he'd been unfairly treated by the M&A boutique.

But that was 2018. Last week, a Paris court put the finishing touches on a costly turnaround that left Laurent Azout losing all but a fraction of his award and even owing the

company thousands of euros for not working his three-month notice period.

The legal saga puts the spotlight on a French provision called a "prise d'acte," often used by white-collar workers to complain that their employer's behaviour is so egregious they simply can't stay. In effect, employees can quit while blaming their bosses for their departure and subsequently collect unfair-dismissal payouts in court.

The provision allows a

employee to terminate a job contract if the employer carries out "sufficiently serious breaches," the Paris judges had ruled.

After joining Messier Maris in 2011 to run the newly created structure's telecom, media and technology sector, Azout got nearly 1.7 million euros over four years through a so-called guaranteed-bonus programme. The awards were meant to ensure his pay was sufficient as he built up a new clientele after leaving

Lazard Ltd and until he started collecting performance-based "origination" bonuses.

The judges considered in their ruling that the phasing out of the guaranteed bonus was justified given that Azout had received a 1.1 million-euro origination bonus in 2015.

The 43-year-old was ordered in the Paris appeals court last week to pay Messier Maris 54,999.99 euros for not working his three-month notice period. —Bloomberg

Adani juggernaut will roll on but it needs quality investors

ANDY MUKHERJEE JUNE 17

Gautam Adani's debt-fuelled empire received a jolt this week when the *Economic Times* reported that three of the six Mauritius-based funds that have invested most of their money in the Indian billionaire's stocks had seen their accounts frozen by the national share depository.

The Adani Group refuted the report as "blatantly erroneous," helping to put a floor below plunging share prices. But not before \$6 billion of wealth was lost on Monday. The jitters returned the next day and continued through Thursday.

A temporary bout of nervousness in the stock market won't shake Asia's second-richest man, who

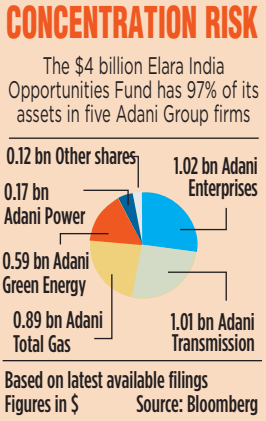
has managed to sustain - without any visibility on future profit - a decade-long entanglement in a controversial and costly coal mine investment in Australia. Behind that confidence lies the workhorse of the group. Adani Ports & Special Economic Zone Ltd. is spewing \$1 billion of cash annually, a nine-fold jump from 2014.

All that the businessman needs to make his bets pay off is a decade-long dream run in which India goes from lower-middle-income economy status to higher-middle-income nation.

That jump in per capita income may have been delayed even before Covid-19. Still, when the growth spurt eventually comes, it should trigger a hunger for commodities similar to what China witnessed between 2006 and 2016. By supplying electricity to 1.4 billion Indians when they're sleeping, providing them with piped gas when they're sitting down for breakfast, and hosting their data when they're browsing the Internet and waiting for a flight to take off from one of his airports, Adani will collect the cash that will justify the estimated \$20 billion debt in the group's listed companies.

That's why the turbulence this week isn't entirely without significance. In case of lingering damage to investor confidence, the conglomerate may need to taper its breathless expansion, lest financiers turn skittish as well. And that won't do for Adani.

In less than three



decades, his low-key trading firm has transformed itself into a massive owner of energy and transport assets in the country. Now the businessman wants to expand into cement manufacturing, presumably making

use of the fly ash produced by his power plants. An initial public offering for the airport business may also be on the cards.

It would be a typical move. To grab the capital-guzzling opportunities that have come its way, the original firm, Adani Enterprises Ltd, has spun off several units into the public market. But the list of shareholders

of these stocks, which have risen 200 to 900 per cent in value in the past year, need some explaining. Take Adani Green Energy Ltd, which wants to be the world's largest renewable energy producer by 2030. Earlier this year, the firm sold a 20 per cent stake to Total SE. That's a solid name. As are Vanguard Group Inc

and Blackrock Inc, which have small shares.

Sandwiched between them, however, are the likes of Elara India Opportunities Fund. The \$4 billion investment vehicle seems to have found most of its opportunities in Adani group shares. Look beyond the 97 per cent of the fund's assets that are parked in five of them, and it

doesn't hold even a \$1 million stake in what other fund managers would typically buy in India.

Elara isn't alone. Six Mauritius-based offshore funds have put more than 95 per cent of their assets (\$2 billion to \$4 billion) into Adani's firms.

In an interview with CNBC, Jugeshinder Singh, the CFO of Adani

Group, said that more high-quality institutions will come as the firms establish a longer track record in public markets. He also argued that the questions that are being asked of him about obscure fund managers should ideally be answered by the investors themselves. Trouble is, where do we find them? I could have asked analysts, but I couldn't find a single one who covers the Adani Green stock the market values at \$25 billion.

The Adani juggernaut will roll on. However, as the group gets bigger—and more covetous of cash-generating assets—it would need larger dollops of outside equity. It would be helpful if it comes from investors who at least have a website.

—Bloomberg

SHORT TAKES

Shafali, Smriti lead India's fightback

Bristol: Shafali Verma and Smriti Mandhana provided India Women a confident start after England Women posted a mammoth 396 for 9 in their first innings in the one-off Test, here on Friday. It was the highest-ever total scored by a team against India in Test cricket and the visitors are still trailing by 333 runs with Shafali (35 not out) and Mandhana (27 not out) taking India to 63 for no loss at tea on the second day. — PTI



Sports Authority of Telangana State Chairman Allipuram Venkateshwar Reddy (right) meets newly appointed Supreme Court Chief Justice N. V. Ramana at Raj Bhavan in Hyderabad on Thursday.

Reckless doctors 'killed' Diego

San Isidro, Argentina: A lawyer for a nurse under investigation in the death of Argentine football great Diego Maradona said on Wednesday that doctors killed him through negligence. "They killed Diego," attorney Rodolfo Baque said after his client, nurse Dahiana Gisela Madrid, was questioned by prosecutors. "In the end, there were many warning signs that Maradona was going to die, give or take a day. And none of the doctors did anything to prevent it," Baque said. — AFP

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India captain Virat Kohli (right) and his New Zealand counterpart Kane Williamson pose with the World Test Championship trophy on Thursday, eve of the final beginning in Southampton. — ICC

ULTIMATE TEST

Kohli eyes legacy, Kane prize for consistency in WTC final

Southampton, June 17: Virat Kohli carries the expectations of a billion while cricket romantics will pin their hopes on Kane Williamson when India and New Zealand engage in a battle to create a lasting legacy in pristine whites in the inaugural World Test Championship final starting here on Friday. For the connoisseurs of the glorious game, Test cricket is the ultimate format and despite its aura, the 144-year-old history needed a facelift along with a context which the World Test Championship provided despite various bottlenecks, including the Covid-19 pandemic. For Kohli, India's most successful Test captain, a trophy-less cabinet doesn't do justice to the champion performer that he has been for over a decade.

Lest one forgets, he has been a fine leader in his own right even though Mahendra Singh Dhoni

Live on TV

World Test Championship Final: India vs New Zealand from 3 pm on Star Sports 1

may forever remain a sentimental favourite. Kohli needs a global triumph. Every captain needs it but perhaps the Indian captain wants it more. It's how history will remember him just like it remembers Dhoni with a lot of respect and utmost fondness for those heroic World title wins. Williamson stands in his way with a bunch of fine cricketers and the most amiable set of players that one would come across in international cricket. — PTI

India's Playing XI: Virat Kohli (captain), Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane, Rishabh Pant, Ravindra Jadeja, R. Ashwin, Jasprit Bumrah, Ishant Sharma and Mohammad Shami.

NUMBERS GAME

- The second-ranked India take on the No.1 Test side New Zealand in the ICC World Test Championship Final at the Hampshire Bowl in Southampton from Friday (June 18).
 - It will be the 60th Test between India and New Zealand and first in England. India have won 21, lost 12 and draw 26 in 59 previous Test matches played against New Zealand.
 - India enter the final by finishing top with 520 points from 17 matches while New Zealand qualify for the Summit Clash by finishing second with 420 points from 11 matches.
 - The winners of this final will take home \$1.6 million, as well as the Test Championship Mace, while the losing team will get \$800,000. If weather prevents a winner from being identified despite the reserve day, the two teams will split the total prize money of \$2.4 million.
- INDIA-N. ZEALAND TESTS**
- Highest Innings Totals**
India: 583/7 declared at Ahmedabad 1999-2000
New Zealand: 680/8 declared at Wellington 2013-14
- Lowest Innings Totals**
India: 81 at Wellington 1975-76
New Zealand: 94 at Hamilton 2002-03
- Highest Individual Scores**
India: 231 Vinoo Mankad at Chennai 1955-56
New Zealand: 302 Brendon McCullum at Wellington 2013-14
- Best bowling performance in an inning**
India: 8-72 S. Venkatraghavan at Delhi 1964-65
New Zealand: 7-23 Richard Hadlee at Wellington 1975-76
- Best bowling in a match**
India: 13/140 Ravichandran Ashwin at Indore 2016-17
New Zealand: 11/58 Richard Hadlee at Wellington 1975-76
- FOR THE RECORD**
● Ravichandran Ashwin, who took 48 wickets at an average of 16.97 in 11 innings of six Test matches, needs just two wickets to become the fourth Indian bowler to complete a half century of wickets against New Zealand. — S. PERVEZ QAISER

NADAL PULLS OUT OF GAMES, WIMBLEDON

Paris, June 17: Rafael Nadal said on Thursday he was withdrawing from Wimbledon and the Tokyo Olympics in a bid "to prolong my career". The 35-year-old Spaniard, who won Olympic gold and Wimbledon in 2008, triumphing again at the All England Club two years later, revealed his decision on Twitter. "I have decided not to participate at this year's Championships at Wimbledon and the Olympic Games in Tokyo," he tweeted. "It's never an easy decision to take but after listening to my body and discuss(ing) it with my team I understand that it is the right decision."

"The goal is to prolong my career and continue to do what makes me happy, that is to compete at the highest level and keep fighting for those professional and personal goals at the maximum level of competition," said Nadal. The former world number one said the shorter break between the French Open and Wimbledon this year — Roland Garros was pushed back by a week — had influenced his decision. "The fact that there has only been 2 weeks between RG and Wimbledon didn't make it easier on my body to recuperate after the always-demanding clay court season. They have been two months of great effort and the decision I take is focused looking at the mid and long term," he said.

OLYMPIC CHAMPION

Nadal is a double Olympic champion, having won gold in singles in Beijing in 2008 and in doubles with Marc Lopez in Rio in 2016, when he also carried Spain's flag in the opening ceremony. "The Olympics always meant a lot," he said. — AFP



Hyderabad Cricket Association president Mohammed Azharuddin gestures as he speaks to reporters about the Show Cause notice served to him by members of the Apex Council, at the Gymkhana ground in Secunderabad on Thursday. — DECCAN CHRONICLE

Azhar asserts he's in-charge of HCA

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

A day after being served a Show Cause Notice by five members of the Apex Council that he heads, Hyderabad Cricket Association president Mohammed Azharuddin on Thursday termed the SCN infructuous and refuted claims of misconduct. The very meeting at which the decision to serve a notice to him was taken is invalid, Azhar reiterated. "I am controlling the Association," he asserted, before continuing "I am in-charge, they are all charged — there is an enquiry pending against them by the Ombudsman for holding multiple clubs. They have also been charged by the Anti-Corruption Bureau for misappropriation of funds."

"What they are doing is totally illegal. They cannot hold meetings without the concurrence of the president. Five of them have held meetings behind my back and arrived at this

decision to issue a Show Cause. I am elected by the General Body. The Apex Council has no right to suspend or ban me," Azhar explained. Also, "they cannot have another AGM after the president has closed the meeting," Azhar said referring to the appointment of a parallel Ombudsman by the rival faction at the Annual Meeting in April. "I am not going to cow down to blackmailing tactics. I want to clear the mess accumulated in the Association over the last 25 years. If it does not happen now, Hyderabad cricket will never improve," Azhar said, adding, "we must remember that the game is greater than the ones who play it and the institution is bigger than those who run it." Asked if this stalemate could lead to resignations and fresh elections, Azhar said: "I am always ready." However, there is a slight scope for compromise. "If they do the right things, there can be one, otherwise there's none," Azhar said.

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