



WINDOWS



President Ram Nath Kovind addressing the nation on the eve of 74th Independence Day in New Delhi on Friday

SC holds Bhushan guilty of contempt



New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday held advocate Prashant Bhushan guilty of contempt of court for his tweets criticising Chief Justice S A Bobde and the judiciary. The order was passed by a bench of Justices Arun Mishra, B R Gavai, and Krishna Murari. The apex court is yet to decide on the quantum of punishment, and the hearing on the sentence is scheduled on August 20. **P3**

NATION



'KADHA' STALLS, ANOTHER START-UP IN CORONA TIMES

P3

SPORTS



RB LEIPZIG STUN ATLETICO TO REACH CHAMPIONS LEAGUE SEMIFINALS

P8



Covid takes away spirit of freedom

- New Delhi restricts invite list to 250
- No participation of schoolchildren
- KCR to unfurl tricolour at Pragathi Bhavan

HANS NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi/Hyderabad: While the Independence Day, which is traditionally marked with a lot of pomp and gaiety, the 74th Independence Day will be a subdued one this year due to corona pandemic both at New Delhi as well as in Telangana.

In Delhi, there will be no participation of schoolchildren and instead of 900 to 1,000 invitees, this time the list has been restricted to only nearly 250 persons. Later in the afternoon, during the 'At Home' function in Rashtrapati Bhavan, the focus will be on India's 'Corona Warriors', with invitations likely to be extended to medical professionals and key figures in the health sector.

In Telangana, the Independence Day will be celebrated without the customary speech of the Chief Minister. The Union Home Ministry had issued safety advisory



A worker stands atop the historic Red Fort to check the flagpole on the eve of 74th Independence Day, in New Delhi on Friday

to all States asking them to maintain social distancing, wearing of masks, proper sanitisation, avoiding large congregations, protecting vulnerable persons and follow all Covid-19 guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health. As against

the normal practice of holding the celebrations at Golconda Fort, Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao will unfurl the national flag at Pragathi Bhavan on Saturday morning in the presence of a select few top officials. **Continued on Page 5**

TS-CENTRE STANDOFF LIKELY ON IRRIGATION PROJECTS

CWC fiat on DPRs irks KCR govt

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad: There appears to be a standoff between the Telangana government and the Union government on the issue of alleged illegal projects across Krishna and Godavari rivers being constructed by the two Telugu states.

The differences between the Telangana government and the Centre got deepened ahead of the Apex Council meeting following the instructions given by the Central Water Commission (CWC) to the state government to submit DPRs of all projects and status of ongoing projects taken up across Krishna and Godavari rivers.

Taken aback by this, state irrigation officials said the Commission's move to question Telangana projects was 'arbitrary'. The TS government has got clearances for the construction of the projects from the Central authorities in undivided Andhra Pradesh. The CWC itself has given its nod to many irrigation schemes, including the Kaleshwaram lift irrigation scheme. The Sitamma Sagar and Sitarama Sagar projects constructed on river Godavari in Khammam after coming to the conclusion that they were old and pending projects. **Continued on Page 5**

Gehlot govt wins trust vote in Raj Assembly

Jaipur: The Ashok Gehlot government in Rajasthan won the motion of confidence by voice vote during the special Assembly session convened on Friday. The special session was adjourned for two hours when it got underway.

As soon as it started at 1 pm, Rajasthan Parliamentary Affairs Minister Shanti Dhariwal moved a motion of confidence, which was accepted by Speaker C P Joshi, who allotted a three-hour slot for debate. After a lengthy debate, the Gehlot government won the confidence motion by voice vote.

A month after the rebellion from 19 dissident legislators of his party threatened the survival of his government, Gehlot sailed through the trust vote. The vote took place a day after Sachin Pilot attended the Congress Legislature Party meeting and declared that he is determined to act in the "interest of the people of Rajasthan and in accordance with the promises



Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot with Sachin Pilot after winning the trust vote in the Assembly on Friday

made". "The vote of confidence which was brought by the government has been passed with a very good majority in the Assembly. Despite various attempts by the Opposition, the result is in favour of the government," said Pilot after the voting. He added that this should put a full stop to all suspicions about the numerical strength of the government. Initiating the debate on the motion, Dhariwal blamed the Centre

for trying to "topple" the governments in Madhya Pradesh, Manipur and Goa, using money and power, but said a similar attempt in Rajasthan would not succeed. Referring to Akbar, he said the Mughal emperor had to taste defeat in Mewar of Rajasthan during his quest to expand his empire. Similarly, BJP's attempts to topple the Ashok Gehlot-led Congress government were defeated, he added.

Delhi govt to honour 7 'corona warriors'

New Delhi: The AAP government has invited seven "corona warriors", including an additional district magistrate, a doctor and an ambulance driver, for its Independence Day event, acknowledging their hard work in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, a statement said on Friday. According to the government, "corona warriors" working in the fields of administrative, medical, nursing, police, civil defense, and sanitation are serving the infected people

by risking their lives. Among those who have been extended special invitation by the government include ADM (Central) Rajeev Singh Parihar, Rajiv Gandhi Super Specialty Hospital's senior medical officer Hirdesh Kumar, LNJP Hospital's nursing officer Sonu, police constable Pradeep Chauhan, CATS ambulance driver Tej Bahadur, Civil Defence volunteer Dina Nath Yadav and municipal sanitation worker Ashok Kumar. **Continued on Page 5**

2 cops killed in ultra attack near Srinagar

Srinagar: Two Jammu and Kashmir policemen were killed and another was injured after a police party came under attack from terrorists on the outskirts of Srinagar on Friday morning, the police said.

The police party was on routine security duty at Nowgam Bypass area of the city when it came under heavy firing. After the attack, terrorists managed to escape. This is second attack on security forces in last three days. On Wednesday one army soldier was injured after a Quick Reaction Team (QRT) of army was attacked at Hygam along Srinagar-Baramulla highway. Friday's attack has come ahead of Independence Day when security is on all time high alert in Kashmir.

In a statement the police said three police personnel were injured in the attack and were shifted to hospital for treatment. **Continued on Page 5**



Security personnel stand guard at the spot after a militant attack, at Nowgam bypass in Srinagar, on Friday

Security heightened across Kashmir

Srinagar: The broad daylight killing of two local policemen by terrorists on Friday has forced authorities to heighten security across the Kashmir Valley.

The terror attack took place on the eve of Independence Day despite intelligence inputs about such a possibility. The two victims were part of a deployment party on the Srinagar-Baramulla national highway in Nowgam area of Srinagar district. Another policeman was also injured in this hit and run terror strike.

Pranab continues to be on ventilator

New Delhi: The condition of former president Pranab Mukherjee remains unchanged and he continues to be on ventilator support, the Army's Research and Referral hospital said on Friday.

Doctors attending on him said Pranab Mukherjee is under intensive care and added that the former President has stable vital parameters. "The condition of Mukherjee remains unchanged on Friday. He is under intensive care and continues to be on ventilatory support. His vital parameters are presently stable," a statement from the hospital said.

The former president was admitted to the hospital on August 10 and was operated upon for removal of a clot in the brain. Mukherjee also tested positive for coronavirus.

Mukherjee's son and former MP Abhijit Mukherjee said that the former president is slowly responding to medical treatment and all his vital parameters are stable.



S P BALU CRITICAL, ON LIFE SUPPORT

Chennai: Singer SP Balasubrahmanyam, who was admitted to MGM Healthcare here on August 5 after testing positive for coronavirus, moved to ICU as his condition worsened late on Thursday. Hospital authorities said SPB is on life support and his condition remains critical.

A statement released by the MGM Healthcare reads, "There has been a setback in the health of Balasubrahmanyam. In a late night development on Thursday, his condition had deteriorated, and based on the advice of the expert medical team attending to him, he was moved to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and he is on life support and his condition remains critical. **Continued on Page 5**



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74TH

CONGRATULATIONS INDIA WISHING YOU A HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY

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TEJAL SINHA

The pandemic has changed our entire way of living, from our thinking to our eating and our dressing. This pandemic has made people take a step towards sustainable fashion and a step away from fast fashion.

Sustainable fashion is what many fashion stylists and bloggers are now electing over others.

Sustainable fashion, make it last!

SUSTAINABLE FASHION HELPS YOU DESIGN A NEW OUTFIT WITH YOUR OWN AVAILABLE RESOURCES

One amongst them is a city-based fashion and travel blogger Chandni Lalwani, someone who is not over the top with her dressing but creates content which is wearable and sustainable.

Sharing about the same, Chandni says, "I have started with the things available at home, and by not spending so much. So my content and concept is very easy. I think people can relate to my content because they are something very basic, and DIY videos. This pandemic has in some way taught us we don't need loads of clothes, but few pieces which we can style in endless ways."

Since she completed her internship from a sustainable brand 'Button Masala', she is now doing her part towards a better life and environment by taking tiny steps toward sustainability.

"I personally felt I had to deny so many offers and collabora-



Chandni Lalwani

Social impact through blogs

She says, "At this very moment, I am someone who is making a small social impact, when I posted my DIY and internship work people loved the idea. And I have seen so many of them using those ideas, and it makes me so happy to see that. Everyone should try to invest in sustainable clothing, support small businesses."

Mask, a fashion statement

Face masks are now going to be a part of our life for a very long time. No matter where you go now you need to have a face mask along. There have been many brands with beautiful face masks. Whether they're printed or woven, denim or cotton, masks with a creative, handmade touch are trending. Many young women are opting for contrast styled masks.

DIY NON-SEWING FACE MASK FROM T-SHIRT

Cut the bottom 7 to 8 inches off of a T-shirt (cutting horizontally), so that you have a strip of material. Lay the material out flat in front of you, and turn it 90 degrees so that what used to be the bottom hem of the shirt is facing left or right.

Fold it from the bottom to the middle, and from the top to the middle. Repeat this step a second time. Loop a rubber band or hair tie around each end (left and right), leaving a few inches of fabric, so each side looks like a candy wrapper.

Fold the excess material over the band, with each side meeting in the middle, adding another layer to the mask. Put a band over each ear, making sure the material fits snugly to your face. The pressure on your face should keep the material and rubber bands in place.

India Beach Fashion Week goes virtual this year

PUJA GUPTA

Technology has a major role to play in the fashion industry today, as both shows and businesses need a platform to showcase and sell. India Beach Fashion Week goes virtual this year with its resort edit, which will have to be a unique combination of LiveTech, says Pallav Ojha, CEO and co-founder. The online event that starts on August 14 is a part of a three-day virtual feast called - 'Festival of Festivals' which will be home to upto 15 festivals across multiple genres and over 23 hours of live content. It aims to raise funds for artists across the live entertainment community impacted by the pandemic.

What made you come up with a virtual show of IBFW?

We at India Beach Fashion Week have believed in spreading fashion vibes, latest trends, and energy from the happy land of Goa. In the last five months, the fashion and textile industry has seen a major downturn, crumbling and living in constant pressure. IBFW resort edit is our effort to tell the industry - we are together, we are unbreakable and we will continue to innovate ourselves against all odds!

Tell us about the conceptualization

We feel fashion is real! We wanted the resort edit to be engaging, live and exciting as the world has been in digital fatigue and webinars have lasted so many months. We wanted to create the same magic of a real show. Keep it tropical, beach, resort centric and overall Goa in our concept as it's a major part of our brand DNA.

Tell us something about the preparations along with other festivals

We had to put in a lot of effort on models, designers, locations and overall fashion team as last 4-5 months things were shut, teams were skeptical, many people were not even sure how to show up with restrictions. But I think we did a pretty good job with our style partners at COMO Collective, Video and photo teams at Silhouette India and Hair & Make up partners Bina Punjani to create the perfect look!

The pandemic has caused major events to be postponed or canceled. How big is the impact on the event industry?

The fashion industry has been badly hit, there has been no shows, the models, designers, technicians and the entire ecosystem is waiting for the good times to come again when things were colorful, energetic and people really dressed up! We feel it's all about the energy and someone has to take that first step...which we at India Beach Fashion Week has taken.

What role technology can play in its revival in a post pandemic era?

I think technology has a major role to play as both shows and businesses need a platform to showcase and sell and if not completely physical it will have to be a unique combination of LIVETECH.

What changes can one expect in the Covid free era?

I think the industry will get more practical in their approach. People will realise the importance of multi-tasking and innovation in any business. The hustle and thrive to succeed will depend on how fast, innovative and technology centric one is, it will be a new creative world!

Slow down skin ageing

The health of your skin mirrors the health of your body. With a healthy diet and proper lifestyle, you can delay ageing, say experts

As a person ages, the skin goes through reduced activity of sebaceous glands which results in dry skin. Also, thinning of epidermis and dermis causes sagging and wrinkling and slower repair of skin tissue, and age also leads to reduced blood supply to the skin, causing slow repair and metabolic activity.

Here are some tips on how one can slow down the skin's ageing process:

Dietary changes

A healthy diet and lifestyle will go a long way in promoting collagen production. Your best bet to combat the natural decline that happens with age. A smart way for vegetarians and vegans to support collagen production is to eat fruits and vegetables plentiful in collagen boosting nutrients.

Include lots of a fresh

fruits, vegetables and nuts and seeds to keep your antioxidant levels and collagen levels high. Also reduce alcohol consumption and junk foods to maintain a healthy skin.

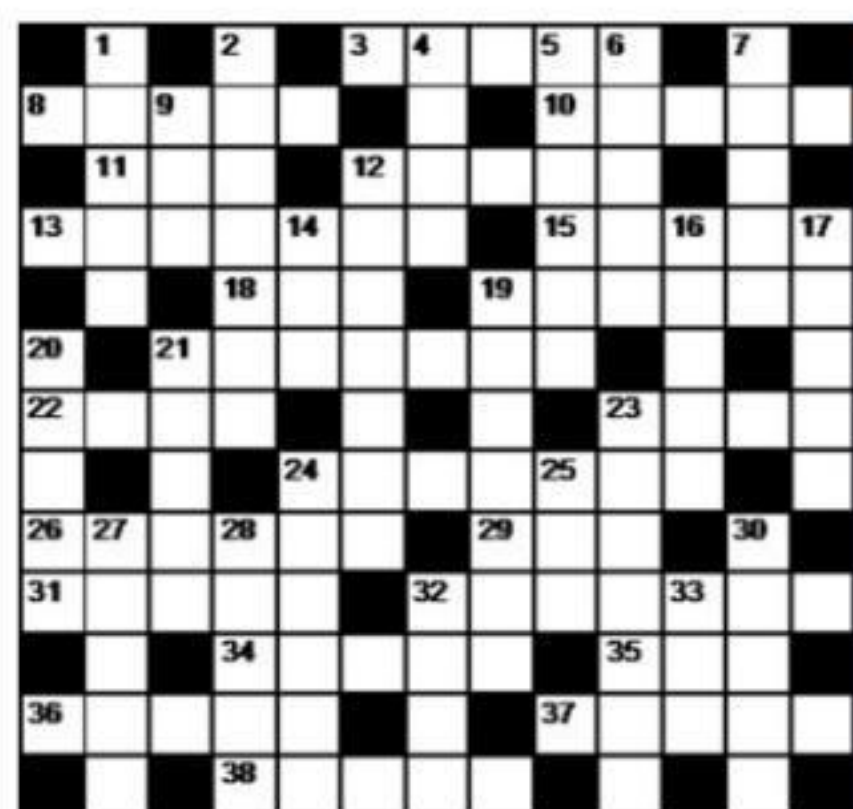
Sun protection

Use sun protection regularly so you protect the skin from UV radiation damage. Ensure you apply sunscreen at least 15 minutes before you go outdoors.

Hydration

It is extremely important to stay hydrated throughout the day. Use hydrating gel or moisturiser and organic lightweight oils like Jojoba oil to maintain the oil barrier of the skin.

- Avoid both active and passive smoking to keep your skin healthy and young for long.
- Incorporate organic skincare that nourish your skin with antioxidants, collagen protein and reduce skin damage.



SOLUTION TO AUGUST 14

CROSSWORD

Across

- Jaws (5)
- Sudden pains (5)
- Small branch (5)
- Light source (3)
- Revving up sound (5)
- Baltic republic (7)
- Column style, architecturally speaking (5)
- Small piece (3)
- Approved (6)
- Tirana its capital (7)
- Suffer from or be a source of a dull, continuous pain (4)
- As well as (4)
- Sister of Orestes (7)
- The large systems of stars (6)
- Ready, ___, fire (3)
- Make sense (3,2)
- Japanese art of arranging flowers (7)
- Daniel ___, Crusoe author (5)
- Give help (3)
- Language of India (5)
- Cove or bay (5)
- Academy award (5)

Down

- Outmoded (5)
- Dishonourable (7)
- Wife of Zeus (4)
- Russian sleigh (6)
- Pacific island group (5)
- Ms. Andrews of Sound of Music (5)
- Kernel (3)
- Crucially (7)
- Pen point (3)
- African antelope (5)
- Multimedia device (2-3)
- Cattle fodder (3-4)
- Goatlike antelope (5)
- "Get ___ of yourself!" (5)
- Brassard (7)
- Casts out, deports or dispels (6)
- Bond (3)
- Large, pale-coloured antelope (5)
- Relating to sound or its high-fidelity reproduction (5)
- Mountain range (5)
- Least amount (4)
- Be unwell (3)

SUDOKU



SOLUTION TO AUGUST 14

NEWS ROUNDUP

Payal Ghosh gives out sanitisers, masks, flags to celebrate Independence Day

Actress Payal Ghosh recently distributed bottles of sanitisers and masks to the underprivileged amid the Covid-19 pandemic. Along with safety aid, Payal also gave out Indian flags to celebrate the Independence Day spirit.

"It's the 74th Independence Day and we have come a long way. Thousands have laid their lives and let's just pray and wish for them. There are so many who still don't have masks and sanitisers. The virus is showing no signs of being controlled. The mask and sanitisers can save lives, so along with the Indian flag I thought I'd distribute these as well. I urge everyone who can, to come forward and help each other during these times," Payal shared.

Payal is best known for her role in the 2017 Bollywood comedy, "Patel Ki Punjabi Shaadi", starring Rishi Kapoor and Paresh Rawal.





‘Kadha’ stalls, another start-up in corona times

Lucknow (IANS): With a cure for coronavirus still not known, more and more people are turning to Ayurvedic ‘Kadha’ prescriptions to keep the virus at bay.

In a new start-up, kiosks selling Kadhas have sprung in at several places, especially those frequented by morning walkers. “We used to sell juices of bottle gourd, bitter gourd here, but now we have added Kadha and

the majority of our customers prefer a glass of this Ayurvedic concoction,” said Ramesh Sharma who sets up a stall near a park in Indira Nagar locality every morning.

Ramesh claims that his wife and mother prepare the Kadha by boiling various species, including cardamom, ginger, nutmeg, peppercorns, basil leaves, cinnamon, honey and turmeric. However, he admitted that he

was not aware of the quantity of spices that should go into the making of the decoction.

He sells a small glass of the concoction for Rs 40 and many customers even get it packed for home.

Swadesh Sharma, a septuagenarian, said, “I drink one cup and take home three cups. My wife and I drink this Kadha twice a day.”

Ravindra Kumar, another

morning walker and a regular Kadha customer, said that preparing the decoction at home was a cumbersome task.

“My wife and I go to work and we barely get time to cook a meal. Preparing the Kadha takes a lot of time so we drink a cup here,” he said.

Almost all the morning walkers who flock to the Kadha stalls, said that they had learnt about the benefits of this from TV and

newspapers.

Apart from this, packets of ready-to-brew Kadha are now available in the market.

“This is in a powder form and you simply have to boil it in water. The spices are in measured quantities and there is no need to even strain the decoction,” said Mohan Lal, who sells packets of the Kadha powder in his grocery store in Mahanagar area.

India’s recovery above 71%

New Delhi (IANS): India’s Covid-19 tally crossed the 24-lakh mark on Friday with 64,553 new cases in 24 hours, while the toll climbed to 48,040 with 1,007 more fatalities, said the Health Ministry.

Out of the total 2,461,190 cases, recoveries have surged to 1,751,555 with a record 55,573 more people recuperating in the past 24 hours, taking the recovery rate to nearly 71.17 per cent.

The actual caseload of the country is the active cases which currently stands at 6,61,595.

Notably, the case fatality rate, which is the proportion of people who die from the disease among individuals diagnosed, has dropped to 1.96 per cent, the ministry said.

The country had touched the 20-lakh mark on August 7 and added more than four lakh cases in seven days. The silver lining, however, is that the gap between recoveries and active cases is growing every day. Currently, recoveries are over 10 lakh more than the active cases.

As many as 8,48,728 samples were tested on Thursday, taking the total to 2,76,94,416 samples being tested till date, according to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).



I-Day: Multi-layered security around Red Fort

New Delhi: Multilayered security arrangements and a mandatory adherence to social distancing norms are in place for the 74th Independence Day celebrations at the Mughal-era Red Fort this year.

A security ring, including NSG snipers, elite SWAT commandos and kite catchers, will be placed around the Red Fort from where Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the nation.

Over 300 cameras have been installed for security and their footage is being monitored round the clock, police said. There will be around 4,000 security personnel at the Red Fort and they will stand in adherence with social distancing norms.

The security in and around railways stations has also been intensified.

“Security personnel have been deployed at railways stations and along the tracks. There will be no movement of trains from 6.45 am to 8.45 am on Independence Day on particular tracks near the Red Fort due to VVIP movement,” Deputy Commissioner of Police (Railways) Harendra Kumar Singh said.

Kerala CM, 8 Ministers self quarantined

‘State may witness 10K-20K cases per day’

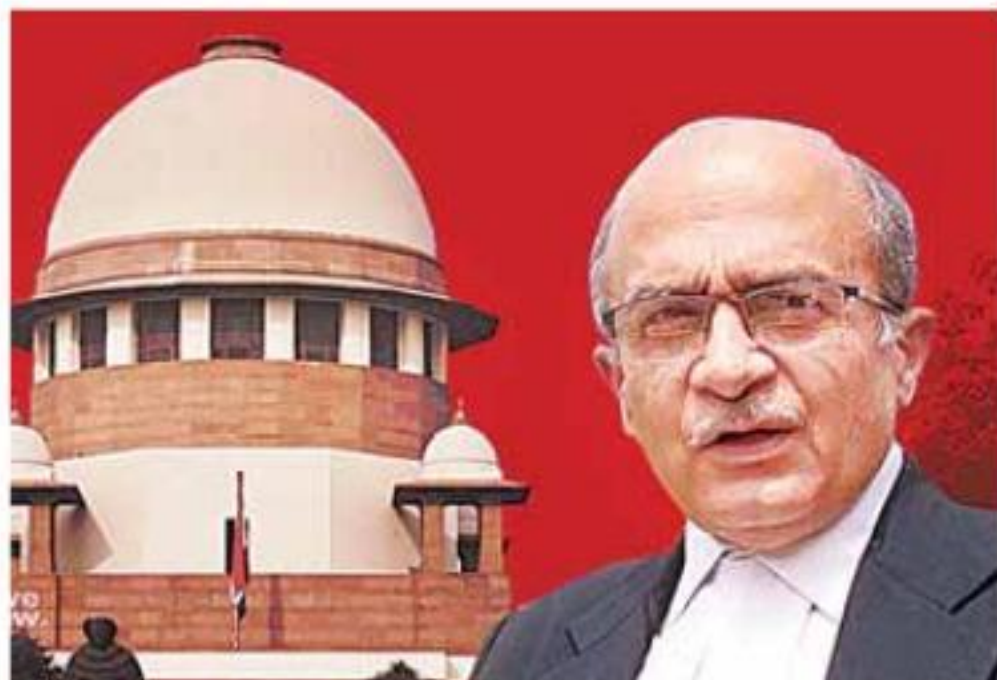
Kochi: Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and eight ministers, including Health Minister KK Shailaja, self quarantined themselves after they visited the site of the Air India Express plane crash in Karipur airport in Kozhikode. The move comes after 22 officials, including the Malappuram District Collector and District Police Chief, tested positive for the coronavirus.

Former Congress MP Surendra Prakash Goel passed away due to Covid-19 related complications in Delhi. The 74-year old had tested positive for coronavirus and was admitted for treatment on July 27 in Sir Ganga Ram Hospital in the capital. Kerala is likely to witness a sharp rise in COVID-19 cases in the months of August and September with daily infections expected to touch between 10,000 to 20,000, State Health Minister K K Shailaja said.



TWEETS AGAINST CJI, JUDICIARY

Prashant guilty of contempt: SC



New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday held activist-lawyer Prashant Bhusan guilty of contempt for his two derogatory tweets against the judiciary.

A bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra said it would hear on August 20 the arguments on quantum of sentence to be awarded to Bhusan in the matter.

A contemnor can be punished

with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend up to six months or with a fine of up to Rs 2,000 or with both.

The apex court had on August 5 reserved its verdict in the matter after Bhusan had defended his tweets, saying they were against the judges regarding their conduct in their personal capacity and they did not obstruct administration of justice.

On July 22, the top court had issued a show cause notice to Bhusan after initiating the criminal contempt against him after taking note of a petition.

While referring to the tweets by Bhusan, the apex court had earlier said these statements are prima facie capable of “undermining the dignity and authority” of the institution of the Supreme Court in general and the office of Chief Justice of India in particular, in the eyes of the public at large

Senior advocate Dushyant Dave, appearing for Bhusan in the matter, had said, “The two tweets were not against the institution”.

Bhusan has made immense contribution to the development of jurisprudence and there are “at least 50 judgments to his credit”, Dave had said, adding that the court has appreciated his contributions in cases like 2G scam, coal block allocation and in mining matters.



Time to look for ‘local solutions’ for drinking water needs: Experts

New Delhi: Scholars and Industry experts came together to discuss local solutions waste water management at a webinar organised by Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) on “Decentralised Wastewater Treatment and Local Reuse for City-wide Sanitation and Improved River Health.”

The discussion began with moderators Suresh Kumar Rohilla, Senior Director, CSE and Mahreen Matto, Programme Manager, CSE explaining the alarming situation arising because of lack of domestic sewage treatment in developing countries. Around 80% of the waste water generated in these coun-

tries is discharged directly into water bodies.

The keynote speaker, Rajiv Ranjan Mishra, Director General, Namami Gange said, “Local solutions are the way out not only for sewage treatment but also for drinking water needs as it cuts down the cost of pumping water to long distances.” He also explained that over the years the focus was only on constructions of Sewage Treatment Plants but in Namami Gange, priority is given to operation and management of the plant.

This has ensured establishing ownership of running the plant efficiently and has improved the process.

Majority of Russian docs wary of own virus vaccine

Moscow: A majority of Russian doctors would not feel comfortable being injected with Russia’s new COVID-19 vaccine due to the lack of sufficient data about it and its super-fast approval, a survey of more than 3,000 medical professionals showed on Friday.

Russia has said that the world’s first vaccine for the novel coronavirus will be rolled out by the end of this month, with doctors among those set to be administered with it on a voluntary



basis. The vaccine, called “Sputnik V” in homage to the world’s first satellite launched by the Soviet Union in 1957, has yet to complete its final trials and some scientists said they fear Moscow

may be putting national prestige before safety.

A survey of 3,040 doctors and health specialists, conducted by the “Doctor’s Handbook” mobile application and quoted on Friday by the RBC daily, showed 52% were not ready to be vaccinated, while 24.5% said they would agree to be given the vaccine.

Just a fifth of respondents said they would recommend the vaccine to patients, colleagues or friends.

Home Minister Shah tests negative

New Delhi: Home Minister Amit Shah tweeted he has tested negative for coronavirus. He had been staying at the private hospital Medanta in Gurgaon, near Delhi. “Today my coronavirus test report has come negative. I thank God and at the moment I express my heartfelt gratitude to all those who have blessed me and my family by wish-

ing me well. Will stay in home isolation for a few more days on the advice of doctors,” Shah tweeted. “I also thank all the doctors and paramedical staff of Medanta Hospital who have helped me in fighting Corona infection and who have been treating me,” the Home Minister tweeted.

ED finds no big transfers in A/Cs of Sushant, Rhea

Mumbai: The Enforcement Directorate probing the money laundering case involving the death of Sushant Singh Rajput has found no big transactions from the late Bollywood actor’s accounts to the bank account of his girlfriend Rhea Chakraborty.

However, the ED has found that Rs 15 crore was transacted from his account as alleged by his father K.K. Singh, said an ED source related to the probe. The ED source also said that the agency will try to ascertain besides Sushant, who was using his debit cards, internet banking,



credit cards and other financial transactions.

“We are mapping the transactions to ascertain the movement

of money from Sushant’s account to other accounts and for what purpose,” he added.

The agency said that it is collecting all the banking transaction details to study the mode of payments done via Sushant’s bank account. The source also pointed out that out of Rs 15 crore, approximately Rs 2.7 crore was paid as taxes by the late actor.

Another ED source, related to the probe also pointed out that Sushant and Rhea, who were in a relationship spent on each other. However, there is no such big transactions, he said.

B’luru riots: MLA’s kin admits to posting derogatory remark

Bengaluru (IANS): Karnataka Congress legislator’s nephew P Naveen has admitted to the posting of a derogatory remark on Facebook, which triggered riots in the city’s eastern suburb on August 11, police said on Friday.

Bengaluru police have arrested 60 more persons in connection with Tuesday night riots in parts of the city, official sources said on Friday.

“In the course of questioning, Naveen admitted to have posted



the derogatory remark after denying it earlier and claiming that his Facebook account was hacked, when he was arrested on August 12,” Bengaluru East Deputy Commissioner of Police SD Sharanappa told IANS here.

Naveen, 26, is a nephew of Congress MLA Akhanda Srinivas Murthy from Pulakeshinagar (reserve) segment in the city’s north-eastern suburb.

“Naveen is in our custody for investigation into the riots, as it was his provocative post on the social media that instigated a mob to commit violence, in which his uncle’s (Murthy) house was burnt and one of our police stations in the area (DJ Halli) was attacked and damaged,” Sharanappa said.

Australia’s new test to diagnose Covid-19 in just 20 minutes

Sydney (IANS): In an ongoing fight against the novel coronavirus, the researchers have developed a new test that can diagnose Covid-19 in just 20 minutes.

The findings, published in the Journal of Medical Microbiology, show the rapid molecular test called NI-STOP-LAMP, is 100 per cent accurate

in diagnosing samples containing SARS-CoV-2 at high loads.

“STOP-LAMP is what’s referred to as a ‘near care’ test, it is not intended to replace the current gold standard PCR testing,” said study lead author Tim Stinear, Professor at the University of Melbourne in Australia.

“It’s a robust diagnostic test

for the specific and rapid detection of Covid-19. But it’s important to note however, it trades some detection sensitivity for speed and ease-of-use,” he added.

According to the researchers, the test is highly accurate and easy to use, making it a prime candidate for use in settings with limited testing capabilities.

The method involves using a small portable machine, which can reliably detect SARS-CoV-2 from just one nasal swab.

In the race to control the Covid-19 pandemic, access to rapid, precision diagnostics is key, the research team said.

“We have developed an alternative Covid-19 molecular test that can be readily deployed in

settings where access to standard laboratory testing is limited or where ultra-rapid result turnaround times are needed,” said Stinear.

The study revealed that this new test uses only one tube and involves only a single step, making it more efficient and lower cost than many of the current tests for SARS-CoV-2.



Trump to gain from diplomatic ties in Arab world

Israel and the United Arab Emirates on Thursday announced establishment of full diplomatic relations in a US-brokered deal that requires Israel to halt its contentious plan to annex occupied West Bank land sought by the Palestinians. This is a win-win situation for all parties involved - Israel, UAE and Donald Trump. UAE has just become the third country to “mind its business more” and not get forever tangled in the Palestinian web, a solution for which seems to be elusive. The US expects more Arab countries to follow suit as the ice has been finally broken. The agreement makes the UAE only the third Arab country, after Egypt and Jordan, to have full diplomatic ties with Israel. How much of normality could be expected is to be seen on the ground, but certainly, this will lead to cooperation in areas like direct flights, tourism and embassies. This could happen over a time. Egypt was the first Arab State to normalise relations with Israel, fol-

lowed by Jordan in 1994. In Benjamin Netanyahu's words “we usher in a new era of peace between Israel and the Arab world... here is a good chance, we will soon see more Arab countries joining this expanding circle of peace.” But Netanyahu said the West Bank annexation plan was on “temporary hold”. What has brought these two countries together now to sign the agreement? We need to look to Iran for the answers. The coming together of interests of Israel and Gulf countries could be the result of the rise of Sunni Jihadists and Iran. There is frustration all around with the Palestinian cause forcing the Arab States seek more freedom to work for their own interests. The Covid-19 situation has only added to the craving. On the other hand, even Netanyahu was just waiting to grab any opportunity which boosts his own base back home. It was politically a wrong move on part of him to set a target - West Bank annexation after July 1. He could

neither move ahead on this count nor could he announce a withdrawal. He was in a bind to stir up his sagging image. He is eying Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Oman next. If he could normalise relationships with these, he becomes stronger than any other leader in his country while continuing his salami slicing in the West Bank. As for the UAE, it could also mean access to the American weapons which are sold only to the countries friendly with Israel. Be it Trump now or (in case) Joe Biden next, the UAE will not have to regret the move as it is also in the American interests. And key Arab States, including Egypt and Jordan, well know that the road to favour in Washington can run through Jerusalem. The UAE has chosen the best option unlike Saudi Arabia which got blasted by the US (including the Democrats) for the cold-blooded murder of Jamal Khashoggi, a journalist of Washington Post. A clean and neat operation is this one by the UAE. This would also give it a defence - that it could stop Israel from its annexation plans of the West Bank. Trump too benefits, as he brokered the deal ahead of his elections.



Covid blues: When even doctors feel powerless

DANISH SIDDIQUI

Guards armed with rifles escort Dr Kumar Gaurav as he makes the rounds at his hospital on the banks of the Ganges River. The guards are there to protect him from the relatives of patients, including those suffering from Covid-19. The relatives keep barging into the wards, even the ICU, to stroke and feed their loved ones, often without wearing even the flimsiest of masks as barriers against the novel coronavirus.

“If we stop them, they get angry,” he says. “They want to give home-made meals to their patients, and some even want to massage their patients. And they are taking the infections from our ICUs to the other people in the society.” He stops to tell the wife of a patient in the ICU she must leave. She obeys, only to return after a few minutes from another entrance. It's the monsoon season, and the humidity is reaching unbearable levels. But the few air conditioners in the hospital aren't working, and some relatives use hand fans to keep their loved ones cool in wards dirty with garbage and discarded protective equipment.

It wasn't supposed to be like this for Kumar. Nine years ago, the 42-year-old psychiatrist moved his family back to his hometown for a quieter life and better pay after three years in New Delhi. He accepted a job as a medical professor and consultant psychiatrist at the 900-bed Jawahar Lal Nehru Medical College and Hospital, named after India's first prime minister. Life was uneventful but rewarding, spent teaching classes and visiting his psychiatry patients.

Now, with some doctors struck down by the coronavirus and others refusing to work, he has been named the top official at the hospital, despite being one of its most junior consultants – and suffering from diabetes and hypertension, two risk factors for severe Covid-19.

But he says he felt compelled to volunteer for the job. “A lot of my colleagues refused,” he says. “I had to take up the responsibility.” In April, as the pandemic struck here in the eastern state of Bihar, the hospital was selected as one of just four Covid-dedicated hospitals for a population of 100 million people – at least in theory.

In practice, Kumar says the nearest hospital with proper critical-care facilities is around 200 kilometers (120 miles) away. And with proper healthcare in the surrounding rural areas difficult to find, general patients have nowhere else to go but his hospital.

In June, Kumar says, the district administration instructed the hospital to treat uninfected patients, too.

“In an ideal world, there should not be any non-Covid patients in this hospital,” Kumar says. The healthcare system in Bhagalpur, like many other parts of Bihar, is on the verge of collapse, he says.

Interviews with dozens of staff, patients and relatives at the hospital paint a picture of conditions that might shock those accustomed to images of hermetically sealed ICUs during the pandemic, with relatives not even allowed to touch their dying loved ones.

They tell of a chronic shortage of manpower and resources such as blood and medicines. All 37 beds in the ICU are occupied; on the floor next to one of the beds, a relative sits on a brightly coloured blanket he has brought from home, a water bottle by his side.

Kumar says he feels powerless to prevent the lapses in isolation of the Covid patients.

“We don't know who is positive and who is negative,” the psychiatrist says. “We don't know their status and we cannot wait for them to be tested. They just need the treatment. We are the most vulnerable population.” Spokesmen for the Bihar government, as well as several bureaucrats and Ministers responsible for healthcare at Central and State level, didn't respond to detailed requests for comment. Pranav Kumar, the top bureaucrat in Bhagalpur district, also didn't respond to a request for comment. As infections slow in many other countries, India is still reporting more than 50,000 cases per day. Its total of more than 2 million cases trails only the United States and Brazil, and cases show no signs of slowing. Since the pandemic struck India, more than 46,000 people have died.

Although India's major cities, such as New Delhi and Mumbai – the first to be hit by the virus – have registered a decline in cases, numbers in second-tier cities and rural areas continue to rise.

Bihar is India's third-most-populous state; if it were a country, it would be the 14th-most-populous in the world.

The State has a rich history, including the site where the Buddha is said to have attained enlightenment beneath the shade of a Bodhi tree. But today, Bihar has a reputation as one of India's problem-plagued States. Based on indicators including infant nutrition, Bihar's level of development has more in common with sub-Saharan Africa than India's prosperous southern states. Almost half of children under 5 in the state are stunted from malnutrition, with more than four in 10 underweight for their age, according to federal data.

Bihar also has the highest population growth in India, and one of the worst education systems, scoring poorly on indicators including adult literacy, the percentage of children attending school and exam results.

The healthcare system was overburdened even before the pandemic struck. Dr. Sunil Kumar, the Bihar secretary of the Indian Medical Association – the main healthcare union in India – said more than half the doctors' posts in the state are unfilled. That's because many doctors don't want to serve in rural areas, according to Bihar's top court, which urged the state government to do more to fill the roles in a ruling in May.

Psychiatrist Kumar's hospital backs onto the Ganges River, the holiest in India and swollen by the summer monsoon. Next to water buffalos bathing on the banks, private ambulance operators wash their vehicles with clanking buckets.

On the approach road to the hospital, there is a huge pothole, and vehicles carrying patients often get stuck there. Outside the main doors, relatives sit with the bodies of their loved ones waiting for private ambulances to take them for burial or cremation. The workers who push the trolleys carrying incoming patients to the general emergency wards don't know the history of the new arrivals, most of whom haven't been tested yet for the virus. Often wearing only gloves as protective gear, the workers wheel them inside, take their oxygen levels and leave them on trolleys in the corridor, where some people are treated until they can find a bed. In the corridor, an exhausted woman rests her head on a wall as her husband's blood sample is collected while he lies on a stretcher next to her. Inside one of the emergency wards, a woman drags her husband from a stretcher to his bed as their relative holds an IV bottle.

Kumar tries to be visible, touring the wards to motivate patients and staff. But it's a game of constant mental arithmetic. Patients expect to be seen by a senior doctor, but it isn't always possible.

Born in Bhagalpur, Kumar moved to the northern city of Chandigarh for his medical training, where he met his wife, Mili Jaswal, a psychologist. After marrying, the young couple moved to New Delhi, where they adopted a street dog, Faith.

Kumar worked in a private hospital but couldn't handle the culture. Kumar watched cases in the district slowly rise over a number of months, but the call to take over the running of the hospital last month came suddenly. The previous hospital superintendent had tested positive for the virus, and to Kumar's surprise, he says some of the more senior doctors refused the post. Attempts to get comment from the doctors were unsuccessful, but lower-ranking doctors at the hospital confirmed Kumar's account, and an official letter from the previous superintendent cited one of the refusals. He thought about his extended family, whom he stopped visiting as the virus began to spread through the district. Who would run the hospital if they were admitted, if not him?

“For the people of Bhagalpur and nearby districts, it was my responsibility,” he says. “That is why I raised my hand.”



Politics surrounding Amaravati, foundation for which was laid by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi when the BJP and TDP were alliance partners, is getting curiouser by the day. The then government acquired 33,000 acres of land under land pooling and signed MoU with farmers. The capital city was notified in the Gazette and the Centre included it in the map also. But things changed once the YSRCP government came to power.

For about last 300 days, the issue has been witnessing several twists and turns as the present government announced that they would have three capitals, Legislative, Executive and Judicial in different locations. While the farmers continued with their protests, some knocked the doors of the High Court and it got mired in legal battle.

At a time when the government passed a resolution in the Assembly twice and decided to shift executive capital to Visakhapatnam, the AP High Court applied brakes by asking the government to maintain status quo till August 14 and again the full bench of Andhra Pradesh High Court comprising Chief Justice Jitendra Kumar Maheswari, Justice M Satyanarayana Murthy and Justice AV Seshu Sai on Friday refused to lift the status quo on the Decentralisation Act and repeal of CRDA Act.

On the political front, the situation is such that while the ruling party is clear that it wants to shift the executive capital to Vizag, all non-BJP parties are one side opposing the three-capital formula. Of course, they are not under one single umbrella that is a different issue. But what is interesting is that the BJP which claims to be working in the direction of filling the “political vacuum” in the State and dreams of emerging as the main Opposition has been making somersault on the issue of capital.

It is always said that a national party cannot have two different views on any issue. Once the highest decision-making body takes a decision, it must be followed by all down the line. But

since politics is a “dynamic” situation, the national parties have now adopted the policy of confusing the people since situations are such that they cannot convince the people and win.

Initially, the then State BJP president Kanna Lakshminarayana categorically stated that the BJP was opposed to three capital formula and would not allow it to be shifted. He participated in protests by farmers who are opposing the shifting of the capital. He even submitted memorandum to the Central party leadership on the issue.

The State party at its meeting in which some Central leaders like G V L Narasimha Rao also passed a resolution opposing the move to shift the capital. At that time, the political circles said that this issue had created a rift in the State unit as there was no unanimity on whether to outrightly oppose the move to shift the capital or not. Different voices from within the party were heard. Some started speaking in two voices.

This internal bickering continued and suddenly, the party leadership decided not to allow its spokespersons to participate in any television debate on this issue. Within a couple of days of this development, the Central party leadership decided to replace Kanna with another senior leader Somu Veeraraju. It is a known fact that Veeraraju has always been highly critical of the TDP even when it was the ruling party. This led to several speculations that the BJP at the Centre had decided to support the YSRCP government's stand on three capitals.

But in his first media interview, the new State president, however, categorically stated that there was no question of allowing the government to shift the capital from Amaravati. Interestingly, a day after that, when he went to Delhi to meet the Central leaders to thank them for his elevation as the party's State unit president, something happened there and after coming out, he sang a new song before the media. He said that the Centre has no role to play on the issue of capital and it was for the State to decide.

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Culprits in Vijayawada fire mishap should be punished

The fire tragedy at Ramesh Hospital that claimed 10 lives is extremely sorrowful and the culprits should be severely punished since the management of the hospital collected huge amounts from patients in the name of Covid-19 treatment though they were not affected by it so far and created panic among the patients taking it as a chance in corona times. Another side of the coin is that the Medical Council of India directed the police officials not to take action against Ramesh Hospital Management although the nation knows that it is responsible for the horrible tragedy. From the incident, we should understand that almost all private hospitals in the country and the doctors in those hospitals are doing such criminal activities to earn huge amounts from patients due to their ignorance. Everyone believes that doctors give correct information and treat them as God since they give life to those who are fighting with the epidemic. The government should check all the patients' health reports in private hospitals throughout the country and assure them that they need not take any treatment and send them to their homes happily otherwise it will be an irreparable loss to the poor and middle-class people.

Narasimha Charyulu Gomatam,
MPPS Rajupalem, Prakasam dist, AP

Proposed tax reforms a big relief

As proposed to the article 'Modi's push to big ticket tax reforms' (Aug 14), the unveiling of a new transparent

LETTERS

taxation platform by the Prime Minister is a big boon for the honest taxpayers of the country. Due to the complexity of the earlier tax system, flourishing of black and white money was easy. Transparency, proper tax assessment and to make the life of the taxpayers easier have been the main focus of the government. This reform is also a good step towards the digitalisation of the country and is a process to overhaul colonial era tax laws.

Utkarsh Kapoor, Agra

We shall overcome the pandemic

This time even though our Independent Day falls at a time the country is fighting against coronavirus (Covid-19) epidemic, let us hope India will get rid of the virus soon and the country will resume all the activities normally as it was in the past. More than the country fighting with coronavirus, this time India under the leadership of Modi gave a fitting reply to China by almost winning the war over China at the India border. This proves that India is a good nuclear power and is intelligent in operating any type of cross border terrorism or war. US president Trump extending supporting to India when Modi met him to congratulate on America's Independence Day is a good sign for Indians and its troops are at the Indian border. Let us mourn the death of Indian troops at the border during the faceoff with China at the Indian border. The Central and the State governments on

Independent Day should once again remember and praise the sacrifices of Indian troops who died at Indian border during clash with China.

V Bhagirath Kumar, Kukatpally, Hyderabad

Let's celebrate I-Day in a humble way

For the first time after India won Independence, the country is set to celebrate the 74th Independence Day in a different way as the celebration is greatly restricted in view of the prevailing Covid-19 protocols. The coronavirus has been impacting all walks life across the globe for the last six months. It will not leave the humanity until effective vaccine is invented. Coming back to Independence Day celebrations, this year's celebrations will not witness students in schools. Generally, students view this as a grand festival, but the virus throws water on their enthusiasm. In educational institutions, students would like to give speech on the occasion, but they cannot do it this year. However, we have to move according to prevailing circumstances with a great hope on future. I strongly believe that we will celebrate the ensuing Republic Day without fearing about coronavirus. So, I earnestly urge my fellow citizens not to make celebrations by violating Covid-19 protocols intentionally.

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Rayapati family alleges harassment

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Vijayawada: Family members of former TDP MP Rayapati Sambasiva Rao alleged that police investigating the fire mishap at hotel Swarna Palace were harassing them.

It may be recalled that 11 persons perished in the mishap that occurred at Swarna Palace which was converted into Covid hospital by the management of the Ramesh Hospital. The police had already taken into custody three employees of the hospital for investigation. They say that a few more employees would be arrested soon.

The police served notice to Dr Mamata, who is working in the Ramesh Hospital at Guntur to attend an inquiry into the fire mishap.

Dr Mamata, wife of Rayapati Ranga Babu, son of the former MP, is working in the Guntur branch of the Ramesh Hospital and she has nothing to do with the hospital at Vi-

- Police summon former TDP MP Rayapati Sambasiva Rao's daughter-in-law to Vijayawada for questioning on Swarna Palace fire
- Her husband questions how can she be linked to the incident when she is only working at Ramesh Hospitals in Guntur

jayawada, the Rayapati family members said. Ranga Babu questioned as to how Dr Mamata could be responsible for the mishap at Vijayawada when she is working in Guntur. He said that Mamata recently recovered from coronavirus infection and it is not proper to interrogate her. In spite of the protests from the family members of the former MP, the police called Dr Mamata to Vijayawada for interrogation and she went there.

Every mandal to have cold storage unit

- Reviewing warehouses and cold storage facilities, CM asks officials to draw action plans to build godowns and cold storage units keeping future demands in view
- Says food processing should begin from village level
- PM Kisan CEO and Agriculture Infrastructure Fund Director Vivek Agarwal explains the CM about the salient features of the newly formed AIF through video conference

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Amaravati, Aug 14: Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy said that warehouses and cold storage units should be built keeping in view the future needs while Rythu Bharosa Kendras (RBKs) should address all issues of farm-



Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy reviewing warehouses and cold storage facilities with officials at his camp office in Tadepalli on Friday. (Inset) PM Kisan CEO and Director of newly-created AIF explaining to CM about the fund through videoconference

ers. During a review meeting on warehouses and cold storage facilities held here on Friday, the Chief Minister said that the warehouses and IQFs (Individual Quick Freezers) should be developed keeping future demands in view while food processing should begin from village level and every mandal should have a cold storage unit.

Lauding the initiatives of efforts of Chief Minister for providing subsidies and facilities as well to the farmers, PM Kisan CEO and director of Agriculture

Infrastructure Fund (AIF) Mission, Vivek Agarwal apprised the Chief Minister about the salient features of the newly formed AIF through video conference.

The Chief Minister said that the state has 10,641 Rythu Bharosa Kendras (RBKs) which will solve all the issues of farmers besides providing quality seeds, fertilisers and pesticides and e-cropping by village secretariat staff who will ensure loans, crop insurance, MSP and MIS wherever there are price fluctuations and Janata Bazaars will come up

soon. Pre-processing and grading would be done at the godowns at village level and perishable goods like tomato, banana, chini, mango and others, purchased from farmers would be sent for food processing. Food processing units and clusters would be formed at constituency level. "We will buy the produce from farmers and value addition will be done. We hope that the Central schemes will be useful for our line of approach," the Chief Minister said.

He said that they had signed an

MoU with Amul and with the YSR Cheyutha and Asara schemes, SC, ST, BC, Minorities women should be benefiting by taking up diary farming and improve their living standards. We have to set up more milk procurement centres, he said and added that in tribal areas, godowns and cold storage facilities should be created.

He told officials to prepare an action plan for creating infrastructure and draw up a financial plan keeping these in view. No farmer should be telling that he is unable to sell his produce hereafter. Special focus should be laid on marketing and food processing for crops like paddy, groundnut, red gram, maize, black gram, sorghum which are sown in large extent of land, he said.

There are some issues in fisheries and aquaculture, which should be addressed to, he said. Special chief secretary, agriculture, Poonam Malkondiah, finance secretary S S Rawat, marketing department commissioner Pradyumna and other officials participated in the review meeting.

President's Police Medals announced

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Amaravati: President's Police Medal for Distinguished Service from Andhra Pradesh were announced on Friday.

A Ravishankar, additional director general of police, Mangalagiri and Kumar Vishwajeet, principal secretary, home.

The following got Medals for Meritorious Service:

L V Srinivasa Rao, SP, Visakhapatnam, N Venkata Reddy, regional vigilance enforcement officer, Vijayawada, K Eswar Reddy, SXO, Chittoor, M Mahesh Babu, assistant commandant, SARCP, V Nethaji, SI, women police, Srikakulam, S Sarah Kumari, SI, Ongole, K Vakalaiah, assistant reserve SI, Machilipatnam, M Venkateswara Rao, Armed Reserve SI, Vijayawada, J Sreenivasulu, assistant reserve SI, PTC, Anantapur, Ch Ranga Rao, HC, ACB, Vijayawada, K gurprayya Babu, Armed Reserve HC, Visakhapatnam, A Suryanarayana Reddy, Armed Reserve HC, Vijayawada and D Mouali, Armed Reserve HC, Home Guards Unit, Vijayawada.

2 cops killed in ultra attack near Srinagar

Continued from P1

Two of them died during treatment, police said. "Terrorists fired indiscriminately upon police party near Nowgam Bypass 3 police personnel injured. They were shifted to hospital for treatment where two among them attained martyrdom. Area cordoned off. Further details shall follow," Kashmir Zone police tweeted, giving update on the incident.

Vijay Kumar, Inspector General Police, Kashmir said that Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) is responsible for carrying out the attack. "Two terrorists came and started firing on police personnel in which two cops were killed and one suffered injuries. We have cordoned off the whole area. Prima facie, it seems there is a hand of Jaish-e-Mohammad. We are identifying it," Kumar said.

Endowments Dept to lease out commercial lands

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Vijayawada: Endowments department has embarked on a massive plan to lease the commercial lands in urban areas that have been lying idle throughout the state in order to bring them into proper utilisation.

Addressing the assistant commissioners of the department of all the 13 districts in the state through a video conference on Thursday evening, endowments commissioner P Arjun Rao asked them to first identify such lands in urban areas in the state that have not been in proper utilisation and offer them for long-term lease in a transparent manner. He, however, told the assistant commissioners that they can, under the supervision of the deputy commissioners of their respective districts, take an independent decision on leasing out the lands up to an extent of 2,000 square yards.

- Commissioner Arjuna Rao tells Assistant Commissioners of various districts to first identify such lands
- They can decide upon leases for the lands to the extent of 2,000 sq yards, but have to obtain permission of Endowments Commissioner for lands above 2,000 sq yards
- The Commissioner says the revenue through these leases in urban areas will help respective temples to sustain themselves



P Arjuna Rao

But they were asked to obtain prior permission of the endowments commissioner for leasing out the lands having an extent of above 2,000 square yards. Maintaining that this move is aimed at generating revenue to the temples located in the respective districts during this corona pandemic, Arjuna Rao hoped that the leasing out of the commercial lands will certainly make the temples self-sustainable.

He admitted that the revenue of all the temples in the state, in-

cluding the major places of worship, has drastically come down due to the outbreak of Covid-19. He felt that the leasing out of the commercial lands in urban areas will largely help the respective temple administrations to be self-sufficient.

Observing that it has come to his notice that large tracts of land in various districts has been encroached upon, the commissioner also directed the assistant and deputy commissioners to identify such lands and submit a

Call for united fight to save democracy in State

- CPI State secretary Ramakrishna calls on tonsured Dalit youth Vara Prasad and gang rape victim
- Says a series of agitationas by party to protect democracy in State will begin in Vijayawada on Aug 17
- Alleges that attacks on Dalits have increased since the YSRCP govt came to power in State

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Rajamahendravaram: CPI state secretary K Ramakrishna said that opposition parties and people's organisations should come together to protect democracy in the state.

He was here to console a Dalit youth Vara Prasad whose was tonsured by Sitanagaram police in July and a Dalit girl who was gang raped.

Participating in a dharna in this connection at Gokavaram



CPI state secretary K Rama Krishna participating in a dharna at Gokavaram bus station in Rajamahendravaram on Friday

bus station here on Friday, Ramakrishna said protest programme for protecting of democracy would begin at Vijayawada on August 17.

He said a sadistic rule was going on in the state with increasing attacks on Dalits since the YSRCP government came to power in the state. The cases of Dr Anitha Rani and Dr Sudhakar were glaring examples for the attacks on Dalits, he said.

"Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy shattered the hopes of people with his anti-people policies. The tonsuring incident

in Sitanagaram police station is a blot on the government, of which it should be ashamed," the CPI leader remarked.

He noted that though President of India responded promptly to the letter by tensure victim for justice, there has been no response from the state government.

Ramakrishna demanded the arrest of persons who were responsible for the incident and release of call data of police officials concerned. CPI leader R Venkiah, Rafi, TDP leaders K Kumar and others were present.

S P BALU CRITICAL, ON LIFE SUPPORT

Continued from P1

He is currently under observation by the team of experts from critical care and his haemodynamic and clinical parameters are being closely monitored."

Last week, Balasubrahmanyam posted a video on Facebook revealing that he was diagnosed with COVID-19. However, he said, the infection was mild in nature and he would be out of the hospital in no time. "Since Tuesday, I was having discomfort. Chest congestion which for a singer is nonsense. I also had phlegm formation, cold and fever. These three things. Otherwise, I didn't have any problem. I did not want to take it easy so I went to the hospital to get myself checked. They said it is a mild case of corona. I was asked to stay home and self-quarantine," SPB said in the video. And yet he preferred to get hospitalized just to put the mind of his family at ease. "Thank you so much for your concern. Please don't bother calling me. I am fine. I will be fine," he added, before ending the video.

‘At Home’ at Raj Bhavan cancelled

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Vijayawada: In view of the prevailing Covid-19 pandemic situation, Governor Biswa Bhushan Harichandan has decided not to hold the 'At Home' function at Raj Bhavan on the occasion of Independence Day this year. It is a customary practice for the Governor to host the 'At Home' function at Raj Bhavan every year on the occasion of Republic Day and the Independence Day, in which the Chief Minister, the Ministers, the members of the judiciary, senior officials, public representatives, freedom fighters, senior defence personnel, award winners and media persons would participate. Governor Harichandan called upon the people to follow health protocols and guidelines issued by the authorities to prevent spread of coronavirus.

Jr doctors threaten complete boycott from Aug 17

Amaravati: More than 8,500 health professionals consisting of junior doctors, PG doctors and interns have been protesting in the state demanding quality N95 masks, PPE kits, health insurance coverage, ex gratia to the families of doctors died of Covid-19, dedicated isolation centres for virus infected doctors and hike in their stipend.

They also demand recruitment of additional doctors and other health care professionals to provide better services to the increasing number of patients and reduce burden on existing staff. The AP Junior Doctors' Association (APJDA) threatened to boycott even emergency services, if their grievances were not addressed.

APJDA president Dr Deepchand A M C said they had been discharging their duties round the clock wearing the black ribbons as a sign of protest for the last seven days. But, to their dis-

appointment, they have received only a little response from the state government in the form of 23 per cent hike in stipend as against their demand for 45 per cent to the interns, PGs, SS and MDs which is not satisfactory. Deepchand said they had been boycotting general OPDs and wards from August 10 to August 13 and would continue it till August 16. He said they would boycott emergency services such as casualty, labour room, ICUs too from August 17 to 20 if their demands were not sorted out.

Dr Bhanumurthy Koushik, general secretary of the association explained that they had been demanding quality N95 masks and PPE kits, special Covid-19 insurance coverage and dedicated health care space for the doctors, apart from the hike in their stipend. Attempts to contact chief secretary, health and medical department, K S Jawahar Reddy did not succeed.

Delhi govt to honour 7 ‘corona warriors’

Continued from P1

These "corona warriors" will represent the people of their fields during the Independence Day event to be held at the Delhi Secretariat on Saturday. "Due to their hard work, effort and dedication, timely treatment, food, and other relief materials could be provided to the affected people and the Delhi model was recognised all over the world," the government statement said.

These seven representatives say that the Kejriwal government has given them a lot of respect by honouring them with the title of "Corona Warrior", according to the statement. Earlier this week, Labour Minister Gopal Rai, who also heads the general administration department, had said there will be no cultural programmes during the I-Day function this year. The Delhi government's Independence Day celebrations will be a low-key affair this year and its guest list has just 80-100 people including cabinet ministers, all city MPs, MLAs, three mayors and top bureaucrats. Kejriwal will hoist the national flag at the main event.

Covid takes away spirit of freedom

Continued from P1

There will be no cultural programmes and no tableaux. Even police gallantry award distribution has also been cancelled. Ministers and Government Whips have been asked to organise the celebrations without much fanfare in the districts. State Assembly Speaker Pocharam Srinivas Reddy will hoist the national flag in Kamareddy Col-lectorate and Legislative Council Chairman G Sukhendhar Reddy will participate as chief guest in I- Day celebrations in Nalgonda district. Schools and all educational institutions have been exempted from celebrations. Sanitization teams have been deployed at Pragathi Bhavan to sanitize the entire area ahead of the celebrations. In view of intelligence inputs that the opposition parties were planning to hold a dharna against the government policies. Heavy police forces were deployed at the Pragathi Bhavan and vehicle movements will be restricted all along the main road passing through the CM official residence on the Independence Day.

TS-Centre standoff likely on irrigation projects

Continued from P1

The officials pointed out that the government would not have got institutional loans from the banks to construct the projects if they were illegal. The financial institutions approved loan amount only after the required clearance certificates were submitted. All these issues, including the CWC's insistence for DPRs of the projects and the status of construction of the irrigation schemes will be brought to the notice of the Apex Council.

A decision on whether to submit DPRs again to the commission will be taken by Chief Minister K Chandrababhan Rao after reviewing the contents of the letter sent by the CWC, officials added.

HC refuses to lift status quo order on 3 capitals

MV SYAM SUNDAR

Nelapadu (Amaravati): The full bench of Andhra Pradesh High Court comprising Chief Justice Jitendra Kumar Maheswari, Justice M Satyanarayana Murthy and Justice A V Sesha Sai on Friday refused to lift the status quo order on the Decentralisation Act and CRDA repeal Act. Earlier, filing the affidavit on behalf of the state government, senior advocate Rajesh Dwivedi appealed to the full bench to lift the status quo order. The full bench rejected the proposal outright and declared that the status quo would continue till August 17.

- Govt counsel in his affidavit rejects 'legitimate expectations' contention of petitioners saying that such expectations are subject to public interest
- Claims decision on three capitals and CRDA abolition has been taken with due diligence on the basis of various studies, not arbitrarily
- Full bench posts next hearing to Aug 27



The state government referring to the "legitimate expectations" mentioned in the petition against the Acts, contended in its affidavit that there cannot be

any legitimate expectations on the basis of master plan which could be modified at any time. In any event, even if there was any legitimate expectation, it

has to make way for the protection of public interest. It also stated that the state's economic capacity is a relevant criterion for continuance of an earlier decision in public interest and bona fide rational grounds which are present in the present instance.

Referring to the contention of the promissory estoppel, it said the decision was not taken arbitrarily but it was taken on the basis of various studies that were carried by various expert bodies.

The counsel for the state government pointed out that the subject matter of the legislation is within the competence of the

BIZ BRIEFS

Pitti posts ₹61 cr revenue

Hyderabad: Engineering firm Pitti Engineering Limited posted Rs 61.55 crore revenue for the first quarter ended June 30, 2020, down from Rs 149.69 crore in the corresponding quarter a year ago. The company reported a loss of Rs 9.78 crore in the quarter under review against a net profit of Rs 4.49 crore a year ago. The Ebitda was down to Rs 2.08 crore against Rs 21.37 crore. The quarter was marred by the impact of global pandemic Covid-19. Lockdowns and migration of labour has impacted the operating levels of the company, resulting in reduced revenue and profits, the company said in a statement. Akshay Pitti, the company's Vice Chairman and Managing Director: "Our operations were substantially impacted due to lockdown during the first quarter which resulted in decline in our revenues and profitability".

Tanla reports ₹78.6 cr net

Hyderabad: Software firm Tanla Solutions Limited reported Rs 78.6 crore net profit for the first quarter ended June 2020. The company's revenues stood at Rs 455.5 crore while gross margin was at Rs 105.3 crore during the quarter. "Tanla's quarterly performance bucks the trend amidst the raging pandemic disrupting global economies," said Uday Reddy, CMD, Tanla. Our unique market standing as a leading digital and cloud communications player have resulted in robust topline and bottom-line growth both Y-o-Y and Q-o-Q, he said. Commenting on Trai's directive for commercial launch of DLT services from Sept 1, 2020, Reddy said: "With the commercial roll-out of TruBloq slated for September 1, this blockchain enabled platform has the traction to become the gold standard in its space. For regulators, Telcos and enterprises alike, spams and mobile fraud risks can be mitigated and provide the end users with the power to choose".

Centre gets ₹57k cr from RBI as dividend

Apex bank transferred Rs 1.76 lakh cr last year, including ₹1.23 lakh cr dividend

Mumbai: The Reserve Bank of India board on Friday approved a dividend payout of Rs 57,128 crore to the central government, a move in line with the Budget expectation but may not help plug a huge revenue hole created by the pandemic and slowing economy.

The surplus transfer of Rs 57,128 crore for the accounting year 2019-20 compared with Rs 1.76 lakh crore transferred last year, which included Rs 1.23 lakh crore as dividend and Rs 52,637 crore excess provisions identified as per the revised Economic Capital Framework (ECF). In a statement, the RBI said its central board headed by Governor Shaktikanta Das "reviewed the current economic situation, continued global and domestic challenges and the monetary, regulatory, and other measures taken by RBI to mitigate the economic impact of Covid-19 pandemic". "The Board also approved the transfer of Rs 57,128 crore as surplus to the Central



The central government is facing a larger-than-expected shortfall in revenue as the economy heads for its first full-year contraction since 1979

Government for the accounting year 2019-20, while deciding to maintain the Contingency Risk Buffer at 5.5 per cent," it said. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the budget for 2020-21 had provisioned receipt of Rs 60,000 crore in dividend from the RBI and other banks to bridge the fiscal deficit. But, government officials had expected more from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

The government is facing a larger-than-expected shortfall in revenue as the economy heads for its first full-year contraction since

1979. With the Covid-19 pandemic disrupting businesses, it is widely speculated that tax collections will miss the target. At the same time, the government is being forced to spend more to cushion the blow from the pandemic, straining the budget deficit.

The central bank largely earns profit through its trading of currencies and government bonds as well as printing of notes and coins. Part of these earnings is set aside by the RBI for its operational and contingency needs, while the rest is transferred to the government

in the form of dividend. RBI's financial year runs from July-June at present and is scheduled to be harmonised with the government's April-March fiscal starting FY22. In the current year, the RBI will have a nine-month financial year, ending in March. The central bank's payout to the government last year was more due to a one-time transfer on account of the adoption of a new economic capital framework that calls for maintaining the level of the contingency risk buffer, or realised equity, at between 5.5 and 6.5 per cent of RBI's balance sheet.

The RBI board decided to maintain the buffer at 5.5 per cent. Prior to the adoption of former RBI Governor Bimal Jalan panel recommendation on the level of realised equity, the buffer stood at 6.8 per cent. The surplus is commonly called 'dividend'. RBI had in 2018-19 transferred Rs 65,896 crore, Rs 50,000 crore in 2017-18 and Rs 30,659 crore in 2016-17. (PTI)

Wholesale inflation falls -0.58% in July

However, food items have turned costlier



New Delhi: The wholesale price-based inflation declined 0.58 per cent in July, even as food items turned costlier.

WPI inflation in June was at (-) 1.81 per cent, while for the month of May and April it was (-) 3.37 per cent and (-) 1.57 per cent respectively.

"The annual rate of inflation, based on monthly WPI (Wholesale Price Index), stood at (- 0.58 per cent) (provisional) for the month of July, 2020 as compared to 1.17 per cent during the corresponding month of the previous year," the commerce and industry ministry said in a statement.

Inflation in food articles during July stood at 4.08 per cent, as against 2.04 per cent in June. However, fuel and power basket inflation fell 9.84 per cent in July, compared to 13.60 per cent

in the previous month. Manufactured products, however, witnessed inflation of 0.51 per cent in July, as against 0.08 per cent in June. The RBI in its policy review last week, kept interest rates unchanged and said it sees an upside risk to inflation.

The apex bank expects retail inflation to moderate in October-March period. July retail inflation was at 6.93 per cent, as against 6.23 per cent in June.

Exports slip 10% to \$23.64 bn

New Delhi: Contracting for the fifth straight month, India's exports slipped 10.21 per cent to \$23.64 billion in July, on account of decline in the shipments of petroleum, leather and gems and jewellery items, according to the government data released on Friday. The country's imports too dipped 28.4 per cent to \$28.47 billion in July, leaving a trade deficit of \$4.83 billion, compared to a shortfall of \$13.43 billion in the same month last year, as per the data. The outward shipments in July, however, recovered from a steeper decline of 60.28 per cent in April, 36.47 per cent in May, and 12.41 per cent in June.

Stock markets plunge amid global selloff

Mumbai: Domestic equity benchmark Sensex plunged 433 points on Friday, tracking heavy losses in banking, consumption and auto stocks amid a selloff in global markets.

Tanking 663 points from the day's high, the 30-share BSE index settled 433.15 points or 1.13 per cent lower at 37,877.34. The broader NSE Nifty slumped 122.05 points or 1.08 per cent to close at 11,178.40.

Axis Bank was the top loser in the Sensex pack, falling around 3 per cent, followed by SBI, M&M, Bajaj Finance, ITC, HDFC Bank,



HCL Tech and IndusInd Bank. On the other hand, Sun Pharma, NTPC, Tata Steel, Titan and Infosys were the gainers.

According to traders, key indices made a U-turn after trading on a positive note in the first half of the session following massive losses in European equities.

SBI unveils new feature on Yono Krishi platform

Hyderabad: State Bank of India (SBI), the country's largest lender, has introduced a new feature called Kisan Credit Card Review or KCC Review option on Yono Krishi. With this added feature, farmers will no longer need to travel the distance to visit the bank branch to apply for a revision in their credit card limit. "KCC Review option on Yono Krishi will help farmers apply for the same in just four clicks from the comfort of their homes without any paperwork," SBI said. Recognizing the fact that not all farmers may have access to smartphones, SBI said it has also streamlined the KCC review process at its branches.

High value transactions on I-T radar

New Delhi: The central government may have eased tax compliance measures through its 'transparent taxation' initiative but it proposes an extensive drive to enhance the country's tax base by aggressively pursuing reporting of high value expenditure that qualifies persons to disclose their income and pay taxes.

Accordingly, if a person makes payment to hotels of over Rs 20,000, or pays life insurance premium over Rs 50,000 or purchases white goods, jewellery, marble or paintings, or consumes electricity above Rs 1 lakh per annum, all the expenses would be reported to the Income



Tax Department by the entity receiving the payment. "These measures have been introduced so that the country's tax base gets expanded. Only about 6.5 crore people file returns and just about a third or less pay taxes. Some of the transactions were being tracked by the department earlier as well and few more

would be done now," said a tax expert from one of the four big audit and consultancy firms, asking not to be named.

The long list of expenses qualifying for proper reporting, also includes payment of property tax exceeding Rs 20,000, business-class airline travel (whether domestic or foreign), deposit of over Rs 50 lakh in current accounts and Rs 25 lakh in non-current accounts, payment of educational fee of over Rs 1 lakh per annum, health insurance premium above Rs 20,000 and share transactions with Demat account, as per a communication from the income tax department.

COVID CRISIS

Realty developers need to adopt more digital tools

Real estate developers should make investment in digital adoption for reducing their operational cost and improving end-products to deal with the challenge posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, according to consultancy firm Bain & Company.

The outbreak of Covid-19 has adversely impacted the already weak consumer sentiment in the residential property market and the "demand is likely to be muted until there is economic stability and job security", it said.

Bain & Company recently released its report "Residential Real Estate in India - Unlocking Efficiency and End-Product Efficacy Through Digital." "In these pressing times, it is imperative that

Demand likely to be muted until there is economic stability, job security: Report



real estate companies make investments in digital adoption to stay ahead," the report said.

Internet of things (IoT), digital engineering, advanced project management tools, improved connectivity, data proliferation and adoption of smart phones and hand-held devices, are some technolo-

gies that will change operating models in the near term, it added. Other current technology, such as 3D printing and robotics, will also have a long-term effect on the industry, the consultant said.

Bain & Company noted that project delivery and timelines have been affected due to disruption in construction activities because of the lockdown, labour shortage and supply constraints.

With subdued demand, it said that developers would face increased constraints in working capital and cash flow. In these challenging times, Bain feels that the priority for developers would be to operate with maximum efficiency and reduce operational costs and leakages.

HANS BUSINESS

With the staggered lifting of the nationwide lockdown, construction activity in the real estate sector has gradually picked up. However, developers and sector experts say the local lockdowns in several states and the lack of construction workers, who mostly returned to their villages during the initial phase of the lockdown, is impacting the pace of construction.

Anuj Puri, Chairman, Anarock Property Consultants, said that construction activity across the country is yet to pick up its usual pace because issues like liquidity and labour shortage, especially in major cities, still persist. "Also, social distancing norms are a bit of a dampener because major cities are still the worst-affected by the pandemic and cases are still increasing. Some local developers have been able to resume a degree of construction activity using in-site labour," he said. On the labour shortage, Puri said that while some have returned to the cities at the behest of some developers, many are yet to come back. Labour shortage is looming large in the real estate sector, he said.

President of the National Real Estate Development Council (Naredco), Niranjan Hiranandani is of the view that most of the construction workers are likely to return by Diwali.

Jaxay Shah, the Chairman of the Confederation of Real Estate De-



velopers' Associations of India (Credai), however, noted that given the sowing of crops was completed early this year due to the large number of migrant labourers back in their villages, many have started coming back starting June. According to Ram Raheja, Director of S. Raheja Realty said as things are coming back to normal and as work across industries picks up, the return of the construction workforce will also see a rise. "Even as of now most migrant construction workers are gearing up to return and come back to work," he said.

Along with the ongoing shortage of labour, another hindrance on construction activities is the frequent local lockdowns and restrictions to curb the spread of Covid.

Puri of Anarock Property Consultants noted that due to the pandemic, most construction sites across the country are still not operating at full capacity. "Local lockdowns, though doubtlessly required, have been a real spoilsport for construction activities. For instance, there was more than a weeklong lockdown imposed in the state of Karnataka in July. Resultantly, all construction activity halted," he said. Puri noted that even if work is stopped for just 7-10 days, it takes almost double the number of days to fully re-mobilise construction work at a site.

As per Ram Raheja, at the onset of the resumption of construction post-lockdown, sourcing building materials like ready-mix concrete

Social distancing norms are a bit of a dampener because major cities are still the worst-affected by the pandemic and cases are still increasing

and steel was challenging, but now things are coming back to normal.

Industry body, Credai's Jaxay Shah also noted that the supply side concerns regarding raw material have eased. Despite the slowdown and hindrances, industry players say that enquiries for residential properties are pouring showing improvement in demand.

Shah said that enquiries have significantly increased in comparison to the initial months of the lockdown. He also said that there is a major demand for plotted development on the outskirts of major cities and sub-urban areas. Enquiries for properties on the outskirts and golf townships has been "enormous, highest in around a decade", he said. (IANS)

NoBrokerHood adds Covid security steps

NoBrokerHood, real estate services app of NoBroker.com, has added multiple features to its existing suite of services, enabling society residents to be well-equipped to mitigate the risk of catching or spreading infection.

While information about the rise and decline in the number of cases in the vicinity is



being dispersed by a few apps and news channels, none of them give micro-level data. The Covid Tracker feature in NoBrokerHood gives details of the containment zones near a society. So, in case, a domestic help or a driver is coming from any of the containment zones near the society, residents will be alerted and can choose to deny entry to them. Along with that, the app is also integrated with Aarogya Setu app that determines risk status of a visitor or domestic help by scanning through a database of known cases across India.

PAKHALA BRIMMING WITH WATER



With rains continuing to batter, Pakhala lake near Narsampet in Warangal Rural district started to overflow on Friday. The water level in the tank reached full to its capacity 31 feet in the afternoon



The high level bridge across Jampannavagu, a tributary of river Godavari, at Medaram in Mulugu district is in spate following incessant rains in the catchment areas on Friday

Expert suggests TS to follow WHO mantra for Covid test

- ▶ Rapid tests comprise 2/3rd of Telangana's daily testing figure
- ▶ Nizamabad GMC Associate Professor says testing is a crucial aspect of containment strategy
- ▶ Says RT-PCR system should be a second-line strategy to confirm false negatives of rapid tests

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad: Even as debate continues whether the governments should or should not over depend on the rapid testing in comparison to the more accurate RT-PCR method to identify the Covid-19 infection, WHO backed the former method if testing is being done on a large scale. RT-PCR results take a long time which is not ideal as chances of viral load rapidly increasing in an affected and report-waiting individual cannot be ruled out and also, there are chances of others in contact with him further getting infected in the meantime.

In Telangana, the number of tests being done per day is in the range of 20,000, out of which two-thirds are rapid tests while the remaining one-third are being done through RT-PCR method. According to WHO, the ideal way is to use rapid antigen testing first so that you have the RT-PCR based testing as the secondary test.

It is said that if we have the test results in four or five days or even longer that is not going to help us. So, rapid tests which give results quickly are a positive thing.

Getting time in hand from testing to confirming the status of the patient is the single most important thing at present. There's no point having a test result a week later when public health action is late, WHO officials said.

If there is a limited capacity in laboratories, the focus should be on detecting suspect cases and confirming those cases along with isolating them, quarantining those in contact, and following it up with all the required measures. That is the most efficient use of testing at the current time.

The world health body said that difficulty with antigen tests was that they tend not to be sensitive enough and miss infections. So, the best procedure is to use the antigen tests first and the authorities can isolate those who are positive or are very likely to be positive and start taking necessary action. Those who are negative can go on to have a second test, that is an RT-PCR test which allows you to use an antigen test more effectively. Testing is a crucial aspect of containment strategy, stated Kiran Madala, Associate Professor, GMC, Nizamabad.

"Telangana is conducting 394 tests per million per day. We should encourage rapid testing which will give results in a short period. False or negative results should be dealt with as per the ICMR guidelines. RT-PCR system is robust. It should be reserved as a second-line strategy to confirm false negatives of rapid tests," Kiran added.

Covid-19 stigma: Tested positive, man kills self

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Warangal: Tested positive for the coronavirus, a man ended his life by jumping into a well in Narsampet of Warangal Rural district. Although Md Mahboob Ali committed suicide a couple of days ago, the incident came to light on Friday.

A native of Madipalli village, Ali migrated to Narsampet along with his family some time ago to eke out a living. According to reports, he underwent the Covid-19 test three days ago. Thereafter, he went missing. Following a complaint from his family members, the police launched a massive search operation. Against this

backdrop, he was found dead in a well behind his house.

His family members and friends suspect that Ali might have committed suicide over fear of social stigma.

Narsampet MLA Peddi Sudarshan Reddy assured Ali's family members of possible help. He said that there is no need to panic as the coronavirus disease is very much treatable. "All that those Covid-19 patients need is self-confidence and positive thinking besides restricting themselves to home quarantine and consuming nutritious food. We have a free quarantine facility in the town that offers food and healthcare."

Mobile lab for Covid tests inaugurated

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Nizamabad: District Collector C Narayana Reddy stated that a mobile lab has been arranged to conduct Covi-19 tests at the people's doorsteps, after inaugurating Covid-19 testing mobile van here on Friday, set up by district Municipal Corporation.

The Collector said the mobile lab will visit all areas within Nizamabad city limits to conduct tests on everyone with corona symptoms as many people were afraid to come to the hospitals for conducting the test. Stating that corona positive cases in the city are increasing, he urged the people to wear masks and observe physical distance and to wash their hands with soap or sanitizer from time to time.

The mobile van equipped with Rapid

Antigen kits and supplies along with medical personnel will tour various areas and will perform tests to all along with nine-month pregnant women and aged above 55 years and also those, who were in contact with Covid patient for more than eight days near their place of residence.

The Collector directed the Asha workers working in the areas where the mobile van visits, to identify those, who need to be tested in those areas and provide information to the medical officers. They perform rapid tests in the van itself. Patients tested positive will be sent to the isolation centre immediately after giving necessary instructions, he explained.

City Municipal Commissioner Jitesh V Patil, mobile van in-charge medical officer Dr Anjana and others were present on the occasion.

Teenager carves Tricolour on rice

ADEPU MAHENDER

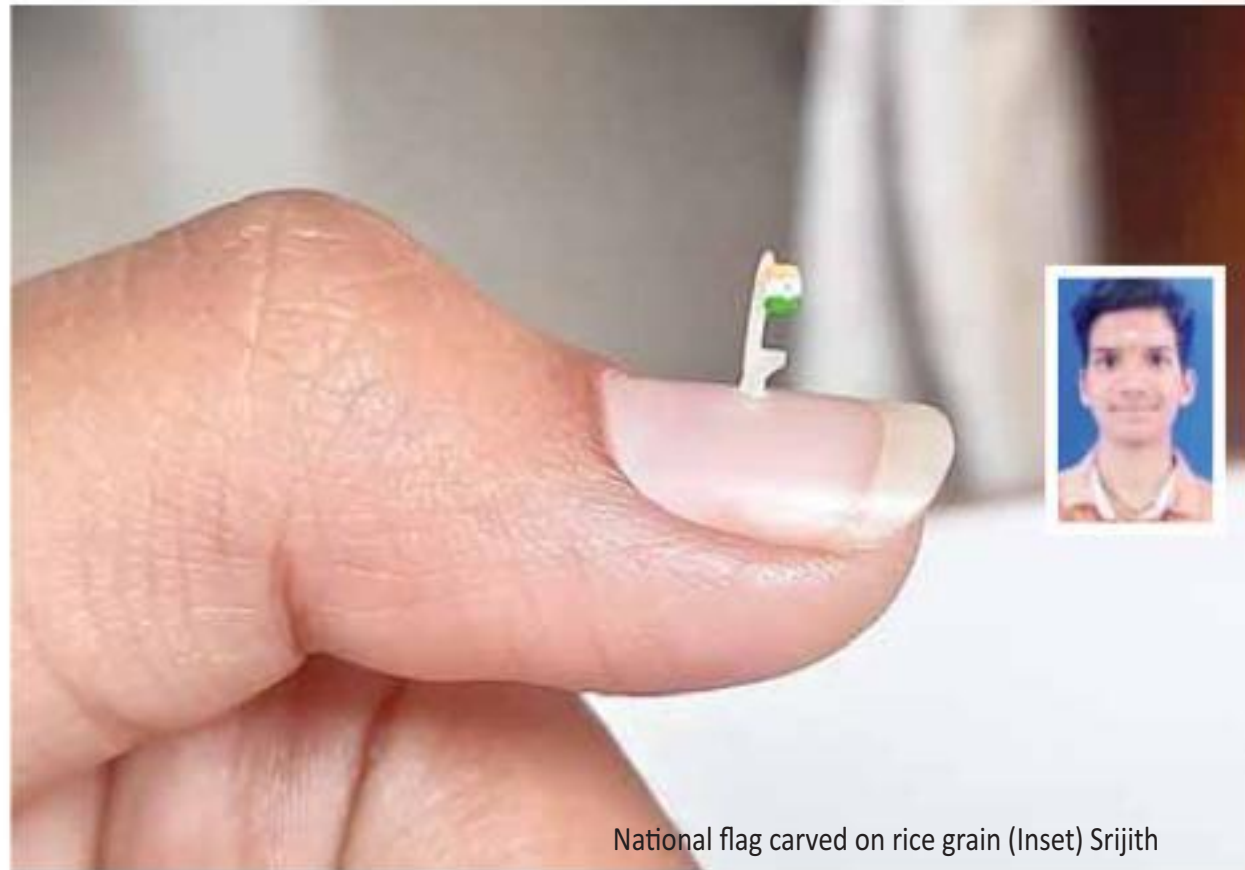
Warangal: Never short of talent, Warangal, the cultural capital of Telangana, has produced quite a few artists and artists. Joining them was 16-year-old Thatikonda Sriji, who chose to make a name for him in the micro-sculpture. He carved the national flag on a rice grain measuring just 2 mm in length on the eve of 74th Independence Day.

Sriji says, "It took me 45 minutes to carve the national flag. Earlier, I sculpted the flag on the tip of a pencil which was 3 mm in height in one hour." Sriji's works include several fascinating carvings on the leads of pencils, chalk and rice grains. Some of his works have earned him a place in the Credence Book of World Record.

The teenager, who is pursuing diploma second year in a private polytechnic college in Rampur, developed interest in micro sculpting from a tender age. In fact, Sriji started to carve sculptures when he was studying sixth standard.

Like his predecessor Mattewada Ajay Kumar, a renowned micro artist who made his name at national level, of Warangal, Sriji drew inspiration from the works of Willard Wigan of England, a renowned micro craftsman who mastered smallest hand-made sculptures typically placing them in the eye of needles.

Sriji thanked his parents - Srinivasulu and Premalatha, and his uncle Muthoju Raju, a goldsmith, for their constant encouragement. Sriji lives in Arunodaya Colony of Hanamkonda.



National flag carved on rice grain (Inset) Sriji

Foundation stone laid for temple at Mupkal

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Nizamabad: Minister for Roads and Buildings Vemula Prashanth Reddy, along with his wife, participated in foundation stone laying ceremony for the construction of Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple at Mupkal mandal headquarters in the district on Friday.

Addressing the participants, Minister Prashanth said State Endowment department had sanctioned Rs 34 lakh for the temple construction.

Stating that people of all religions are enjoying cultural freedom with secular expression in Telangana State, Minister for Roads and Buildings Vemula Prashanth Reddy advised the people to respect each other and work together to move fast towards economic development.

Cong party will contest Dubbaka by-polls: Uttam

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad: Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) President and Nalgonda MP N Uttam Kumar Reddy on Friday announced that the Congress party would contest the by-elections in Dubbaka assembly constituency.

He was speaking on the occasion of joining of Telangana Jana Samithi (TJS) Secretary Bhavani Reddy into the Congress party at Hyderabad on Friday. Bhavani Reddy had contested the Assembly election from Siddipet constituency in 2018 on TJS ticket which had alliance with the Congress party. He said Bhavani Reddy was highly educated and qualified and she had a bright future in politics. He hoped that her entry would strengthen the Con-

gress party in Siddipet.

Announcing that the Congress party would contest the Dubbaka Assembly by-polls, he asked DCC President Narsa Reddy to take immediate measures to strengthen the party at Mandal level and also convene a constituency-level meeting. He asked the party cadre to gear up for the by-elections.

Uttam Kumar Reddy expressed concern over the increase in attacks and atrocities on Dalits across Telangana State. He said a Dalit farmer, Narsimhulu, committed suicide in Gajwel, CM KCR's constituency, after his land was forcibly taken away by the government. Similarly, another Dalit youth committed himself in the police station after he was subjected to harassment by the police men at



TPCC chief and MP N Uttam Kumar Reddy welcoming Bhavani Reddy, TJS Secretary and MLA candidate from Siddipet into the party fold in Hyderabad on Friday

the instance of ruling TRS leaders. He said Chief Minister K

Chandrashekhhar Rao has remained a mute spectator to the

atrocities on Dalits and Girijans in the State.

Participate in mass pledge against BJP govt: Left parties

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Karimnagar: The leaders of the Left parties and TDP appealed to the people to participate in the mass pledge to fight against the anti-peoples' policies adopted by the Central government on Independence Day, at Geetha Bhavan Chowrasta here on Saturday.

A meeting was held under the leadership of CPM district leader Bandari Shekar with the leaders of CPM, CPI and CPM ML (New Democracy) along with TDP at CPM party office in Karimnagar on Friday.

Speaking at the meeting, CPM ML (New Democracy)

leader G Prasad alleged that the Central government has utterly failed in preventing the spread of coronavirus across the State. The BJP government is playing with the lives of the innocent people with their thoughtless actions and irresponsible behaviour, he criticised.

The government did not help small and middle scale industries also because of which many people working in such industries lost their employment and facing a lot of hardships.

It also failed in providing employment, food and health security to migrant labourers in their respective native places, he pointed out.

Rains around, dilapidated structures pose threat

ADEPU MAHENDER

Warangal: With the Greater Warangal civic body turning a blind eye, a whopping 900 odd structures aged above 100 years and declared unfit for habitation continue to exist in the city. The city already drenched in down-pour for the last few days and more thundershowers forecast for the next three days, the likelihood of these structures crumbling at any time is on the cards.

According to the survey conducted by the Engineering and Town Planning wing of the Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation (GWMC), there are 900-odd buildings unfit for occupancy. The authorities then served notices to the landlords to vacate the buildings as they were unsafe for habitation. It's alleged that some of the landlords got a leeway with the authorities exempting them with a few modifications to their dilapidated structures.

The latest data of the GWMC suggests that 411 of the 902 buildings are safe and it had demolished 67 buildings. While 14 buildings were got repaired, the others have been issued notices to vacate the buildings.

"Public safety is paramount. The officials need to identify the structures unsafe for the occupancy in the tri-cities including the 42 merged villages and carry out the demolition at the earliest," Mayor Gunda Prakash Reddy, who recently reviewed the situation, strictly instructed the officials.

On the hand, a senior official of the civic body said that they have been under pressure due to



Old buildings in Warangal city



staff crunch. 'Moreover, it's not that easy to raze the old buildings with the occupants are unwilling to vacate. In addition to his, we have to face political pressures.'

Forum for Better Warangal President Pulluru Sudhakar told The Hans India: "It is mandatory for the civic body to maintain a

register of the dilapidated structures and alert the occupants from time to time after checking the structural compliance of a building. Although the GWMC has power to demolish those buildings unsafe for living, its hands are fastened under political pressure."



‘More women in officiating job, thanks to Hockey India’s pro-activeness’

Bengaluru (IANS): Hockey India introducing the open application and registration process for tournament officials on their member unit portal has largely helped several young and upcoming umpires and technical officials apply and register, feels 40-year-old Rohini Bopanna who was recently promoted to the FIH Technical Official - Advancement Panel.

In June this year, Hockey India introduced a user-friendly, easy-to-access process where a tournament official candidate can submit his or her application through the Hockey India member unit portal. Once the application is submitted, the concerned Hockey India regis-

tered member unit under which the tournament official is submitting will approve following which the national federation will provide final approval to confirm the registration.

“Earlier, there would be times when interested umpires and technical officials would send in physical forms to their state member units but it would either get misplaced or the office would forget to forward the application to Hockey India. It was also very time consuming and required constant follow-ups but this new process is very easy and in a way, puts us directly in touch with the national federation.

The system is very transparent and hence it has generated a lot of interest,” stated Bopanna who began umpiring in 2014.

Bopanna feels the federation’s proactive approach has encouraged several women to take up umpiring and technical officiating either as a part time or a full-time occupation. “Back when I began, there were a few women from Delhi in umpiring, but regular seminars and workshops conducted by Hockey India encouraged more women from Mumbai, Haryana and other states to register and take up officiating at the domestic level.”

“Earlier there would mostly be men officiating at women’s

national but now the scenario has changed and this proactive approach by Hockey India is encouraging many state-level players to get certified as umpires or technical officials,” she said.

With no tournaments yet, Hockey India continues to engage the umpires and technical officials with regular webinars either conducted by the national governing body or the Asian Hockey Federation/FIH. “We all thought we won’t have anything to do till 2021 due to COVID-19 but with these regular interactive sessions, we are kept busy and it has been very helpful,” she added.



Michael Jordan's rare sneakers fetch \$615,000 at auction

London (IANS): NBA legend Michael Jordan’s game-worn sneakers have fetched \$615,000 at an online auction.

In partnership with Stadium Goods, Christie’s hosted the ‘Original Air: Michael Jordan Game-Worn and Player Exclusive Sneaker Rarities’ from July 30-August 13.

The sneakers were a pair of Nike Air Jordan 1 Highs, described as the “rarest of the rare”, and were used by the Chicago Bulls star in an exhibition game in 1985, reports the BBC.

A total of nine pairs of Jordan’s shoes were sold by Christie’s to celebrate his 14-year career with the team, the report further said.

Christie’s said the shoes were the “greatest” collection of the historic Michael Jordan footwear ever offered at one time. “Put simply, Michael Jordan and his signature line of footwear set the foundation for modern basketball and the worldwide phenomenon of sneaker collecting.”

RB Leipzig stun Atletico to reach Champions League semifinals

Lisbon (IANS): RB Leipzig, competing in the UEFA Champions League for the second time, stunned Atletico Madrid 2-1 to enter the tournament’s semi-finals for the first time.

On Thursday, both sides played conservatively in the first half, failing to create clear-cut chances, reports Xinhua news agency.

However, everything changed in the second half when the German team returned with renewed energy and with a clear mission to go in search of the decisive goal.

In the 50th minute, Dani Olmo gifted RB Leipzig the 1-0 lead, scoring in a beautiful move assisted by Marcel Sabitzer.

In need of a draw, Atletico coach Diego Simeone fielded in his young Portuguese hope Joao Felix who changed the team’s performance and leveled for Atletico on 71 minutes from a penalty.

As both teams looked to the penalty shootout, RB Leipzig midfielder Sabitzer landed a spectacular pass to Angelino Tasende who served Tyler Adams at the edge of the area. Adams kicked and saw the ball deflect into the net in the 88th minute.

RB Leipzig will take on Paris Saint-Germain, who defeated Atalanta on Wednesday, in a semifinal match scheduled for the August 18.



‘Lewandowski a great player but Messi is from another planet’

Lisbon (IANS): FC Barcelona coach Quique Setien has compared Lionel Messi to Bayern Munich forward Robert Lewandowski and he insisted that the Pole “is not at the level of Leo”.

On Friday, Barcelona will face Bayern in the Champions League quarterfinal in Lisbon. The match is announced as an encounter between Messi and Lewandowski, who leads the top scorer classification with 13 goals.

However, Setien told the pre-match press conference on Thursday that the Argentinian is a better player, reports Xinhua news agency.

“Lewandowski is an extraordinary and dangerous scorer. He is a great player but I think he is not at the level of Leo, as Messi is from another planet,” he said.

“Lewandowski has scored 13 goals in the Champions League and he’s well assisted by a lot of teammates around him.



FIFA U-17 Women's WC

England, Germany & Spain book tickets

New Delhi (IANS): UEFA have confirmed that England, Germany and Spain will represent Europe in the FIFA U-17 Women’s World Cup to be played in India in 2021.

The final round of UEFA U-17 Women’s Championship has been cancelled because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Three teams with the highest coefficient ranking have been confirmed as the participants in the World Cup. These three teams will join India, Korea DPR, Japan and New Zealand - who have already qualified for the tournament slated to be held from February 17 to March 7 next year.

Meanwhile, Asia’s upcoming qualifying matches for the 2022 FIFA World Cup and 2023 Asian Cup have been postponed to next year because of the COVID-19 pandemic which has wreaked havoc across the entire world.

ON THIS DAY

Tendulkar scores 1st international hundred in 1990

Mumbai (IANS): He went to score 99 more, a record still unmatched and standing tall like the Himalayas. But ask Sachin Tendulkar and his first international century will always be the one he will remember very fondly.

On August 14 in 1990, an unbeaten 119 against England at the Old Trafford in Manchester marked the beginning of the Tendulkar era. His knock in the second innings emerged as the biggest talking point from the Test.



batsman to have played the game since Don Bradman.

Tendulkar, who retired from international cricket in 2013, scored 15,921 and 18,426 runs respectively in 200 Tests and 463 matches he played for India.

Chasing 408 for victory, India were down in the dumps at 183/6, when Tendulkar showed superb composure as a teenager and exhibited his repertoire of exquisite drives on the off-side against English pacers.

Sharing a 160-run partnership with Manoj Prabhakar, Tendulkar remained unbeaten on 119 and helped India draw the match. The Master Blaster was just 17 when he hit that magnificent knock - the third-youngest batsman ever to register a Test century.

The rest was indeed history as the Mumbai batting masterclass went on to become a ‘demigod’ in India and arguably the greatest

Serena ousts Venus in thrilling Top Seed Open encounter

Lexington (IANS): Twenty three-time Grand Slam champion Serena Williams overcame a stern test from elder sister Venus to make it to the quarter-finals at the inaugural Top Seed Open.

Serena, No. 1 seed, defeated Venus 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 in a thrilling match that lasted for two hours and 19 minutes on Thursday played at the Centre Court. “I’ve lost a few tight sets lately, so I was telling myself I really wanted to win this one and try to focus on those last two games,” Serena said in her on-court interview as per the WTA website.

“I’m super relaxed. Having no crowd sort of makes things more relaxing. I’ve practised in louder places than this court!”

ENG VS PAK 2ND TEST AT LUNCH

Babar, Rizwan steady Pakistan ship

Southampton (IANS): Star batsman Babar Azam neared a half century as Pakistan reached 155/5 against England at Lunch on a rain-affected Day 2 of the second Test here on Friday.

At the break, Babar was batting on 45 with wicketkeeper Mohammad Rizwan on 12 as the overnight pair hung on managing 29 runs in the truncated first session.

Resuming at 126/5, Babar and Rizwan showed caution in their approach and steadied the ship after England’s pacers brought them to their haunches on Day 1 which was also marred by intermittent rain.

Only 21 overs could be bowled in the second session of the first day at the Ageas Bowl. England’s fast bowlers were all over the Pakistan batting lineup before the umpires took the players off the field after the dense clouds that had been hovering over the stadium opened up.



dium opened up.

The session got off to a delayed start and through the course of it, Pakistan lost captain Azhar Ali, Abid Ali, Asad Shafiq and Fawad Alam, who was making his comeback into Test cricket after an absence of 11 years.

Azhar fell to James Anderson when one of the many edges that he had got finally flew high enough for a fielder at slip to hold on to. A little under three overs later, the umpires called the players off as

rain started pouring down on the stadium. Abid was the first to go after the restart, having scored a precarious 50. One of his many edges landed in the hands of Rory Burns at slips off the bowling of Sam Curran.

Asad Shafiq replaced him but did not last long, succumbing to Broad off the 13th ball that he faced as he reached out for a wide delivery and edged it to third slip.

Fawad Alam then made his entry into a cricket field in Test whites for Pakistan for the first time in over a decade and took guard with his unconventional stance. He lasted only four balls, with Chris Woakes hitting him on the pads. The umpire initially shook his head but England successfully reviewed the decision.

Brief scores: Pakistan 155/5 (Babar Azam 45 batting, M Rizwan 12 batting; James Anderson 2/40) vs England.

DISCOVERY PLUS TO SHOWCASE MOTOGP WORLD C’SHIP LIVE

Mumbai: Discovery Plus, India’s first aggregated real-life entertainment streaming app, will showcase MotoGP World Championship LIVE starting with the Austrian Grand Prix scheduled from August 15. With 11 races more to go this season, Discovery Plus aims to build a passionate community of racing enthusiasts in the country. Eurosport, the official broadcaster of MotoGP-World Championship, will continue to showcase the championship on linear network.

Speaking on the occasion, Is-

sac John, Business Head, Digital, Discovery – South Asia, said: “We are delighted to super-serve fans of MotoGP with the live coverage of the upcoming races. This has been an action-starved year for all racing fans and the addition of MotoGP is a significant step up.”

The 2020 MotoGP World Championship has already sprung up many surprises with defending world champion Marc Marquez not being able to compete in the second and third race after a crash in the Spanish GP.



London (IANS): England and Australia will play three T20Is and as many ODIs beginning September 4, confirmed England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) and Cricket Australia on Friday.

While the T20I series will be played at the Ageas Bowl in Southampton on September 4, 6 and 8, the ODIs will be played at the Old Trafford in Manchester on September 11, 13 and 16. The three ODIs will form part of the ICC Men’s Cricket World Cup Super League. All the matches will be played behind closed-doors.

The Australian squad will arrive into the UK on August 24, travel-

ling to Derbyshire’s The Incora County Ground before transferring to The Ageas Bowl after England’s third Test match against Pakistan on August 27, said the ECB.

Australia will then play a 50-over intra-squad practice game and three T20 practice matches before the start of the T20I series. ECB Chief Executive Officer, Tom Harrison, said: “We owe a significant debt of gratitude to the players, staff and administrators of Cricket Australia for their efforts in getting this tour under-way.”

“Their co-operation to ensure

these matches are staged is crucial to cricket in this country. It will also provide much-needed financial aid at all levels of cricket in England and Wales as we work through the challenges in front of us.” The rivalry between England and Australia is the pinnacle of sporting competition. The T20I series and ODI Series will be thrilling contests and a perfect way to culminate the men’s international season in this extraordinary summer.

Australia head coach Justin Langer said: “It’s vital for cricket that we do everything we can to keep the game going in these

tough times.

Meanwhile, Cricket Australia have also announced a 21-member squad for the tour in which they have named three-uncapped players - Josh Philippe, Daniel Sams and Riley Meredith.

Australia squad: Aaron Finch (capt), Sean Abbott, Ashton Agar, Alex Carey, Pat Cummins (vc), Josh Hazlewood, Marnus Labuschagne, Nathan Lyon, Mitchell Marsh, Glenn Maxwell, Riley Meredith, Josh Philippe, Daniel Sams, Kane Richardson, Steven Smith, Mitchell Starc, Marcus Stoinis, Andrew Tye, Matthew Wade, David Warner, Adam