

Womenia

TWEET PATROL

KAJAL AGGARWAL

@MSKAJALAGGARWAL

Omg! None. Ever.

Mommies are the best

Kubbra Sait reveals her idea of perfect old age

‘Sacred Games’ actor Kubbra Sait says that in her sixties or seventies, she would like a tiny home with a little garden probably growing cabbage. “Oh yeah, if it faces the beach, then that will be amazing,” quips Kubbra.

The performer, who left behind a successful corporate career for a career in acting, recently featured on the ‘My 3 Secrets To Success’ audio series on Audible Suno.

Answering a question on what her 60s or 70s should look like, she adds:

“So, some clean air to breathe, a book to read and probably my fingers in twined with someone I love. I think that would be an ideal 60-70s to me. We’re not chasing every day. “I don’t think I’m chasing today either I’m thinking of the opportunities that come to me at the moment but there isn’t a chase anymore, and I think if you stop chasing things you automatically reach a point of calmness and that’s very different from being numb from the chase,” she told.

On the work front, Kubbra shared her excitement about ‘Foundation’ that’s about to release this year.

“It’s I think one sole project that I have put in about a year and a half of mine, and that feels extremely valuable.” She adds: “I don’t think today your currency is money. Your currency is time. So if I have been able to break out of that mental block and invest time in a project that I believe in, I think it’s going to pay off pretty well and I’m quite excited about it. Apart from that, I’ve got three work projects in process and when they come to realisation, I’ll share them with you. But otherwise I can say that, I’ve got a book coming, I’ve got a show coming out, I’ve been on this Audible podcast.” inally, speaking about her Zen mode: “I’m being in a state of solitude in a state of Zen. I am being that person. And it’s just allowing you to recognise the past, the present and the future as it’s going to be. I think it’s very important to be in a state of Zen so that you can allow the future to unfold. It’s exciting. So, what’s keeping me busy, my Zen is keeping me busy.”



“I don’t think today your currency is money. Your currency is time,”
—Kubbra Sait

Telangana artist showcases her art at Romantica

ASKARI JAFFER

Madhuri Srikanth, an Indian-origin artist, with her roots in the State of Telangana, has received a special invite to showcase her works at “ROMANTICA”, an international art exhibition, recently held at Milan (Italy).

Madhuri is the lone Indian artist to be invited to showcase her works at the exhibition organized by M.A.D.S., a contemporary art gallery, located in one of the main Milan districts.

Madhuri Srikanth is born in Nalgonda, and is a self-taught painter, and believes canvas is her medium to express her dreams. Inspired from her mother’s rangoli as a kid, Madhuri started dealing with colours from a young age. The innate talent in Madhuri was recognised during her days in school, when she received accolades at the national level, and ever since there has been no looking back.

A mother of two, and a professional technocrat, Madhuri believes painting is not a hobby or a means to unwind, but it is a serious passion that she lives with every day. Being a constant learner, Madhuri believes that Art is not what the artist sees, but what others feel. To date, Madhuri has done 120 paintings and counting across six forms of paintings. Some of her notable art works include Thanjore, Madhubani, Murals, Warli, Texture Painting and Oil Paintings.

Madhuri’s biggest inspiration is her



mother, she says “My mother is my inspiration. As a child, I used to watch her draw rangoli in front of our home. The colours and design used to mesmerise me the most. And it is these colours that attracted me towards painting. I started at a young age, and won first award for painting at the age of seven, while in school and never looked back after that.”

Speaking further about the show we came to know that these three Benevolent Buddha,

Golden Geish, and Shadow Swan are the fit into their exhibition criteria. On being invited for the program she says, “I consider this has a great opportunity for me to showcase the traditions and culture of India on an international platform. This festival opens doors to possibilities of showcasing art in a different light, with colours becoming the messengers of thought and memory. By setting an example, I would also like to encourage more girls of Indian

origin born or living in the United States to make painting their manner of expression.”

Madhuri is a strong woman who has faced many challenges in her life, speaking about them Madhuri says, “Like most artists, I too faced challenges. Sometimes it could be related to lack of time, or it could be lack of clarity in thought. However, I am blessed to have complete backing of my family, husband and kids. Sometimes I spend

long hours, entire night or a full through week-ends. My family, especially my kids, whom I feel are growing up quite fast, understand the passion I have for painting; and they do not disturb me when I am doing that. Also, I plan my routine efficiently to ensure my work-life-family- passion is well balanced. As a Vice-President at a prominent bank in the United States, my work is quite demanding; but I am able to manage it because of the ecosystem I have around me.”

Concluding about Madhuri’s life and journey she says that she wants to continue painting for as long as possible.

“I believe, painting is as good as dreaming. We do not like to stop dreaming, and so I do not want to stop painting. From basic oil painting to Tanjore works, I can paint across six forms. Going forward I want to learn more and spend as much time as possible with these colours. Also I am especially happy that like my mother inspired me, I am able to inspire both my children, especially, my daughter to paint. I wish like me, my daughter, and many girls of Indian origin here in the United States take up Indian art forms like Tanjore paintings and spread our culture far and wide,” Concludes Madhuri.

POSITIVE IN NEGATIVES

Often think, how we change our thoughts with age, environment, company and state of mind. Does that mean we are never permanent in our taste, behaviour, thoughts and opinions? Why change is so pertinent and obvious? Do we really think like a completely different personality, when we confront the situation alternatively?

They say ‘Change is the spice of life.’ I say the only constant thing in life that is seen is change. For a child the necessities are different, for the adults, self-taken responsibilities drive them and for the old age the priorities are completely based on need.

Sometimes we fail to understand that the only fine line with the thin roads of life is the little gesture for others to accept their state as they are. Love is not about dependence but about the freedom it gives to accept others as they are. To trust the capabilities of others to handle their life and



opinions in their own way without being judged, is love all about.

Let’s look at redefinition of life in today’s era where we must look at the life positively:

- Though the WhatsApp are full of home remedies people are still open to sending connects of hospitals and

other requirements like oxygen and rare medications.

- The hospitals are running round the clock but still doctors are available to all who require them including online consultations.
- The covid warriors are helping by plasma whenever required and with open

heart.

- People are getting delivery jobs to meet their living even when others are losing existing jobs.
- Parted partners are coming together back for the business and friendships.
- Talking friends are helping to cope up with the grief and tension of lost lives.

- Support systems like maids, drivers, etc., are valued like never before.
- Online business is doing great right from groceries to any need.
- Its an all time high to look at health for every individual and people have become health conscious in every way.
- People are out of the rat race and getting to experience peace by being home and having all their time to themselves.
- Family bonds have increased due to valuable and quality time with loved ones.
- Everything is available at home and all wasteful commutations are avoided so saving in time, efficiency and cost in every way.
- All meetings are possible easily in person with video calls and along with being available for far away parents and relatives which has become easier.
- All the ambience is created

at home and lot of restaurant experiences are enjoyed at home without

much cost. It is really heart-warming to see so many positive changes which are visible with the big word “COVID” which is just defined as a life-threatening phase. I would say it has brought in a lot of changes in our mind set that everything is possible and we must be able to cease the day and moment though it looks difficult sometimes. -The writer is motivational and transformation trainer, life coach and author



NEWS ROUNDUP

Nora Fatehi’s wet-hair look sets mercury soaring

Actress-dancer Nora Fatehi looks like a million bucks in a new set of photos she has shared on social media on Monday. She posted the images with a cryptic caption.

Nora posted a series of pictures on Instagram in an embellished colourful blazer and identical pants. She looks seductively into the camera flaunting a wet-hair look.

“I know my enemy prey on me, so pray for me...” Nora captioned the image, which currently has over 9,38,900 likes on the platform.

On the work front, Nora plays a spy in the upcoming film, “Bhuj: The Pride Of India”, co-starring Ajay Devgn, Sanjay Dutt, Sonakshi Sinha, Sharad Kelkar, Ammy Virk, and Pranitha Subhash.

Eat what you want day

Many people spend time stressing over their diet, and what they should or shouldn’t eat, mainly because today’s world is filled with magazine covers sporting perfectly toned, perfectly tanned models that constantly make us feel inadequate.

The various health food fads that seem to come and go every few weeks definitely don’t help, either—as it turns out, a gluten-free diet is not particularly good for anyone who isn’t actually allergic to gluten, juice cleanses deprive us of the protein and fat our bodies need to function properly, and taking too many vitamin supplements just makes our urine expensive when our bodies flush the excess.

If you, like many people these days, are beginning to feel disillusioned with all of these things, you will be glad to hear about Eat What You Want Day.



Punjab Cabinet ministers seek action against Navjot Sidhu

CHANDIGARH

TAKING strong exception to the no-holds-barred 'attack' unleashed by Navjot Sidhu against Chief Minister Amarinder Singh, several Punjab Cabinet ministers in a joint statement on Monday urged the Congress high command to take strict disciplinary action against the dissident MLA.

The Cabinet ministers, including Brahm Mohindra, Sunder Sham Arora and Sadhu Singh Dharamsot, came out in strong criticism of Sidhu's actions and open criticism of the Congress



Chief Minister while being an elected MLA from the same party.

Terming Sidhu's onslaught on the Chief Minister as an act of

gross indiscipline and an attempt to undermine the Congress government, the ministers said the MLA's personal attack on Amarinder Singh was an anti-party act, which called for immediate disciplinary action.

Sidhu's recent spate of comments against the Chief Minister could no longer be dismissed as the rantings of a disgruntled member of a democratic political party, said the ministers, adding the open rebellion was damaging the interests of the Congress at a time when Assembly elections in the state were less than a year away.

Failure to take action against Sidhu now could trigger unrest in the party's state unit, which would be fatal for the party, which had suffered major electoral blows in the recently concluded Assembly polls in five states, the ministers warned.

They alleged Sidhu's intentions were nefarious and motivated by his vested personal and political interests. It was clear that the MLA, through his blatant accusations and allegations, was trying to fan dissent in the Punjab Congress against Amarinder Singh, who had suc-

cessfully steered the party to an unprecedented win in 2017 and in every major election in the state thereafter, they added.

Dubbing Sidhu's aggressive posturing on the social media as an attempt by the disgruntled MLA to pressurise the high command into succumbing to his unreasonable demands, the ministers said unless urgent steps were taken by the party to check his unbridled tirade, it would encourage other ambitious and rebellious members to raise their voice openly against the Congress leadership while continu-

ing to enjoy its patronage.

Pointing out that the Chief Minister had made several overtures in recent past to resolve any perceived differences on Sidhu's part, the ministers said it was clear that the latter did not want to be placated but only wanted to score political brownie points to further his personal ambitions.

They appealed to the party's central leadership to nip this insurgence in the bud so that the Congress does not lose out on the electoral advantage it has in Punjab and ends up losing a winning battle.

Gehlot asks people to follow lockdown guidelines

JAIPUR

AS a strict lockdown came into force in Rajasthan from Monday to curb the spread of coronavirus, Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot asked the people of the state to follow the guidelines with sincerity and responsibility.

Lockdown restrictions were already there in the state but the state government on last Thursday decided to make it more stringent from May 10 to 24. Gehlot tweeted the lockdown guidelines, saying there is a complete lockdown from 5 am on May 10 to 5 am on May 24.

He asked the people of the state to follow the guidelines with sincerity and responsibility. Under the complete lockdown, movement from one district/village to another district/village except in case of medical emergency, wedding functions, movement of all vehicles except those engaged in medical services are prohibited and several other restrictions are also there in addition to the guidelines issued earlier. The state government has called it "Pandemic Red Alert Public Discipline Lockdown". Places of



worship are also closed, MGN-REGA works have been suspended and movement from one city/village to another city/village within the state is prohibited, except medical emergency cases, under the lockdown. Those coming from outside the state will have to produce a negative RTPCR test report which should be not older than 72 hours. In case there is no negative report, the person will be quarantined for 15 days. In order to prevent migration of workers, works are permitted in factories, construction sites and industrial units have been asked to operate buses for workers.

Chandigarh extends curfew by another week

CHANDIGARH

AMIDST the continuous spike in Covid-19 cases in Chandigarh, the Union Territory administration on Monday decided to extend the week-old curfew by another week.

Non-essential shops will continue to be closed. The daily night

curfew from 6 p.m. to 5 a.m. will be implemented. Only daytime movement will be allowed.

However, the residents are advised to avoid non-essential travel. While morning walkers will be allowed from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. in parks, the famed Sukhna Lake will remain closed for the public.

The decisions in this regard

were taken at a review meeting chaired by Chandigarh Administrator V.P. Singh Badnore here.

It was decided that the maximum number of guests will be 20 in marriages. For this permission from the Deputy Commissioner is a must. For funeral, the number will be restricted to 10 with no permission.

Wife not admitted to hospital for over 3 hours, claims UP MLA

FIROZABAD

AN Uttar Pradesh BJP MLA has claimed that his coronavirus positive wife was not admitted to an Agra hospital for over three hours, with officials citing non-availability of a bed.

Upset over this, Firozabad's Jasrana MLA Ramgopal Lodhi made a video over the issue and posted it on social media. His wife was given a bed at the hospital following the district magistrate's intervention, the MLA claimed. Lodhi, however, alleged that his wife was not given medicine and water on time. The MLA's video had surfaced on social media on May 8 when his wife was referred Agra's SN Medical College.

"What would happen to a common man when an MLA's wife cannot be given proper care," Lodhi said in the video, alleging that his wife had to lie on the floor and was not admitted to the hospital for over three hours. Lodhi had too tested positive for coronavirus and had returned home after recovering from the infection on May 7.

750-bed Covid hospital set up by DRDO opens in Varanasi

Lucknow: A 750-bed hospital set up by the DRDO for COVID-19 patients on Banaras Hindu University's campus in Varanasi opened on Monday, an official statement said here.

Currently, a 250-bed ICU facility is functional and the capacity of the Pandit Rajan Mishra Covid Hospital will gradually be expanded to 750 beds with anticipated patient inflow. All beds at this temporary facility set up by the Defence Research and Development Organisation



(DRDO) will be provided with oxygen as the hospital is well-equipped with 40 KL of oxygen stored in three tanks, the statement said. Medicines and food will be provided free of charge to all patients.

There will be no direct walk-in admissions to the hospital and all admissions

will be managed through referrals by the Integrates Command and Control Centre, Varanasi under the State administration. The armed forces are providing specialists, doctors, nursing and other medical staff who are moved from across the country on a war footing to run the hospital in co-ordination with Banaras Hindu University and the civil administration, the statement said. The medical staff has been trained in COVID protocols and all equipment has been checked for serviceability and quality control, it said. The state government has facilitated all major functions such as supply of essential amenities to run the hospital, including oxygen, dedicated power supply, bio-medical and other waste management system and patient management system. "Amid the ongoing second wave of COVID-19, the Ministry of Defence has come forward to support the fight against the pandemic by setting up and manning the operations in various Covid Hospitals across the country," the statement said. After Delhi, Ahmedabad and Lucknow, the Varanasi hospital was made functional, it further said.

Tikri border rape accused will be brought to justice: Vij

CHANDIGARH

ALL the six accused named in an FIR for allegedly sexually assaulting a 25-year-old woman from West Bengal who was associated with the farmers' agitation at the Tikri border would be brought to justice, Haryana Home Minister Anil Vij said on Monday.

He also described the crime on the pretext of agitation as unfortunate.

"Each and every accused would be arrested," Vij told the media in Ambala city. The state police have registered a case against six people on the complaint of the victim's father, who alleged that the accused, who were associated with the Kisan Social Army, travelled with her in a train from West Bengal on April 10.

In his complaint, he said the woman was sexually harassed while travelling and on reaching the border she was gang raped.

On the night of April 25, as per the police, she was admitted to a private hospital in Bahadurgarh for treatment of coronavirus. She died there on April 30.

In his complaint, the victim's father



alleged the main accused -- Anil Malik and Anup Singh -- also tried to kidnap her.

The other accused are Ankush Sangwan, Kavita, Jagdish Barar and Yogita. A Special Investigation Team (SIT), headed by the DCP (Bahadurgarh), has been formed by the government to conduct a probe into the matter.

Demanding justice for the victim, the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM), a group of protesting farmers unions, has said in a statement that it "stands with the struggle for justice for our deceased woman colleague and is committed to taking this fight for justice to its logical conclusion."

It said the tents and banners, etc., of the so called Kisan Social Army have been removed.

"The accused were barred from participating in the movement and public appeal issued for their social boycott. The SKM has made it clear that the Kisan Social Army was never the authorized social media voice of the SKM and none of its handles have anything to do with the movement. In addition to these steps, from day one the SKM has assured the family of the deceased colleague that it will extend them every possible support in any legal recourse that they prefer," said its statement.

"The SKM will extend full cooperation to the police in bringing out the truth of this matter. No one shall be spared," added the statement.

Navy brings large amount of medical supplies from abroad

NEW DELHI

THREE Indian Navy warships are bringing to India on Monday 80 tonnes of liquid oxygen, 20 cryogenic oxygen tanks, 3,150 cylinders and a large amount of other medical supplies from abroad as the country reels under a severe second wave of the coronavirus pandemic.

The medical supplies being brought by the ships included 900 oxygen-filled cylinders and 10,000 rapid antigen COVID-19 test kits, 54 oxygen concentrators, 450 PPE (personal protective equipment) kits, Indian Navy spokesperson Commander Vivek Madhwal said.

Indian Navy ship Airavat is reaching Visakhapatnam from Singapore carrying eight cryogenic oxygen tanks each having a capacity of 20 metric tonnes of oxygen and other supplies. Another warship, INS Kolkata, is arriving at New Mangalore port carrying 40



metric tonnes of liquid oxygen, 400 Oxygen cylinders and 47 oxygen concentrators from Qatar and Kuwait, Commander Madhwal said. INS Trikanth is reaching Mumbai with 40 tonnes of oxygen from Qatar, he said.

Last week, the Indian Navy deployed nine warships to bring liquid medical oxygen and other supplies from several countries in Persian Gulf and south-east Asia. The Navy said it has stepped up its

efforts as ships from all three naval commands in Mumbai, Visakhapatnam and Kochi were deployed to bring oxygen and other medical equipment under operation 'Samudra Setu II'.

Last year, Indian Navy had launched Operation Samudra Setu as part of the Vande Bharat evacuation mission under which it brought back to India around 4,000 stranded Indians from Maldives, Sri Lanka and Iran.

Woman jumps in front of train along with 3 kids

JAIPUR

A woman allegedly committed suicide with her three minor children by jumping in front of a moving train in Rajasthan's Dausa district on Monday, police said. The incident occurred in Mandawar police station area when Vinita (34) jumped in front of the goods train along with daughters Radhika (10) and Amni (8), and two-year-old son Payas. "The reason for the suicide is not yet clear and the matter is being probed," police said. The deceased woman's husband is the railway gateman, police said, adding that the bodies have been handed over to family members after post-mortem.

The Jammu and Kashmir Bank
General & Estates Department
Zonal Office North Delhi
Sector 44, Gurugram Haryana, 122 003

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Deepening tension in South China Sea region

CHINA has drilled deep in the South China Sea to retrieve sediment core from the seabed, amid tensions over disputed waters with rival claimants Taiwan and the Philippines, even as the United States increases its naval presence in the region. Chinese scientists on a marine research vessel used China's homemade Sea Bull II drilling system to obtain a sediment core 231 metres (757 feet) long at a depth of 2,060m (6,760ft), the official Xinhua news agency has reported.

The system can help explore natural gas hydrate resources in the seabed, Xinhua added, referring to the solid ice-like crystals formed from a mixture of methane and water that are touted as a promising source of energy. It was unclear exactly where the drilling took place in the South China Sea, approximately 90 percent of which is claimed by Beijing as its territorial waters. Beijing often invokes its so-called "nine-dash line" to justify its claims over most of the South China Sea but the International Court of Arbitration at The Hague has declared that claim as without legal basis.

But, it has been so with China which treats all neighbours with contempt and lays claims to neighbours' lands and waters. Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, Vietnam and Brunei also lay claim to parts of the sea, which has vast oil and gas potential in the region. One-third of the world's trade estimated at more than \$3 trillion passes through the South China Sea annually. Several countries, including the US have expressed concern at the renewed tensions in the region. The US-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty obliges both parties to support each other in the event of an incursion by external parties. Canada, Australia, Japan and others have also voiced concern about China's intentions.

In 1995, China also started to build a fishing shelter in Mischief Reef, only to expand the facility and reclaim land – turning it into their largest naval and airbase in the South China Sea. Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, tensions in the South China Sea (SCS) have been on the rise. This is mainly for

China's continued assertive actions and for the sharp deterioration in US-China relations over China's massive territorial claims in the SCS. Tensions in the SCS have risen sharply in recent times, especially in the past few weeks given the general deterioration in the relations between the US and China.

What would be worthwhile here is to weigh this ongoing turf war and its impact on the others. An example of this was the conducting of naval exercises by both the US and China in the disputed area around the same time as was seen in July 2020. What has been the impact of this US-China spat on the South China Sea issue? Has the US-China clash helped the Southeast Asian claimant countries in handling the dispute in a better way? Or have these countries been stuck in the middle of this big power rivalry? What stand should the Association of South-east Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries be taking in this ongoing US-China tussle regarding the South China Sea dispute?

EC and its role as Covid superspreader



Madabhushi Sridhar Acharyulu

THE Election Commissioners who decided to conduct elections during pandemic super spread, and especially for spreading the risk over eight phases in Bengal should have resigned with shame after the Madras High Court found it solely responsible for 'murder' of thousands of people. But Advocate Mohit D. Ram, Standing Counsel representing Election Commission of India (ECI) resigned from his post in the Supreme Court stating that his values are not in consonance with the working methodology of the ECI. He wrote: "I have found that my values are not in consonance with the current functioning of the ECI; and hence I withdraw myself from the responsibilities of its panel counsel before the Supreme Court of India". The Election Commission was litigating for imposing gag order on media from reporting oral observation of the High Courts, which it found to be 'disparaging'.

Should we stitch the mouths of Judges and throttle the throats of media? Justice Chandrachud gave answer to this question: "The unfolding of the debate in the court of law is equally important and media has a duty to report. It is not only our judgements that are significant, but the dialogue also is." The Supreme Court explained this common sense to the Election Commission of India . It must be an eye opener for that Constitutional institution to know the constitutionally guaranteed powers of judiciary and the people.

An Election Commission that wants eight phases and prolonged campaigning for more than a month for assembly elections in West Bengal, claims that it is ready to conduct elections for all states and Lok Sabha simultaneously. It must be over confidence or their interest to fulfil the desire of the rulers. If some research or investigation finds the EC's eight phase election saga is the cause of super spread of virus resulting in genocide, why not they stand in box to answer this nation.

HC censures EC

"You (ECI) are the only institution responsible for the situation that we are in today. You have been singularly lacking any kind of exercise of authority..You have not taken measures against political parties holding rallies despite every order of this court saying maintain Covid pro-

tocol, maintain Covid protocol like a broken record". These anguish-filled-remarks are not from opposition parties. The Madras High Court used this language against ECI on 26th April .

The Court further said: "the significance of adhering to such protocol may have been lost on the EC going by puerile silence on the part of the Commission as campaigns and rallies were conducted without distancing norms being maintained and in wanton disregard of other items of the protocol....Public health is of paramount importance and it is distressing that constitutional authorities have to be reminded in such regard. It is only when a citizen survives that he will be able to enjoy the rights that a democratic republic guarantees. The situation is now one of survival and protection and everything else comes thereafter."

It has castigated the EC for the surge in Covid-19 cases during the second wave of the pandemic. When HC held the Commission "singularly" responsible for the spread of the viral disease, people found reason behind it. The HC reminded EC that it was the "the most irresponsible institution" and even said its officials may be booked under murder charges. People feel that unless someone tells EC in strong words, the need for accountability will not go into the minds.

Causing death by negligence or recklessness by refusing to see the killer virus is murder strictly as per the definition in IPC. Please read Sections 299 and 300 of Indian Penal Code which is working in India since 1860 which these IAS officers must have by hearted for their UPSC examinations. Murders are of two types . One is intentional murders and the other is reckless or negligent causing of death, if not with intention. When such cases are booked against Tablighi Jamaat in Delhi, for negligently spreading corona, why not Commissioners are booked for their decision to conduct prolonged elections which is as mad as a fanatic religious congregation is? What is wrong in Madras High Court's observation? EC should be happy that it was only an observation and not the judgment.

Instead of responding to these remarks in a responsible way the Election Commission has reacted with litigation. It is not their money anyway, to spend on lawyers and travel to Chennai. It pressed its advocates to plead with the HC on next day of hearing 30th April to restrain media from reporting. Chief Justice Sanjib Banerjee and Justice Senthil Kumar Ramamoorthy rejected the repeated requests to stop media from reporting. The EC wanted the media to confine to report observations from written orders and not



the oral remarks during the hearings. The EC felt that Judges' remarks caused grave prejudice to the Commission and police complaints were being filed against their commissioners .

EC's language

Election Commission says the comments of HC were "uncalled for, blatantly disparaging and derogatory." These expressions were used by EC in its appeal to Supreme Court . If an individual faces baseless defamatory insinuation, he may approach court with these expressions. An institution like ECI, which is a 'state' under Article 12 of Constitution and a significant public authority with huge task of conducting elections without bias, is claiming that the comments are derogatory. If their decisions and actions are scrutinized and reviewed by judiciary and civil society, EC must correct itself. State institutions do not have 'reputation' to be protected under Section 500 of Indian Penal Code (criminal defamation) or claim huge compensation in torts cases. If they do not perform their constitutional duty, it is in fact Constitutional crime. Fortunately for them, Constitution of India did not prescribe jail terms for this kind of abdication of duties.

The Bench of Justice DY Dhananjay Y Chandrachud and Justice M R Shah emphasised that high courts must get "complete freedom" to decide issues before them, and that the "media is a very important and powerful watchdog of the judicial processes". Though mainstream TV media has totally forgot this duty, the civil society through some print media and in social media, is rightly exercising this freedom. How could EC come to Supreme Court on this point? Is it not far-fetched plea to restrain media about

reporting observations of judges?

The questions raised by Madras High Court are unasked statements of the people. Neither EC nor the Government has any moral or legal right to criticise Tablighi Jamaat or Kumbhmela when they did not care to push millions of people into high risk of coronavirus in five states. It's a shame that all political leaders and parties joined these Kumbh Melas of the Elections. They should bear the joint liability for joining, behaving in a hazardous manner, as if none has any respect for common man's life.

We need to draw a comparison with IPL also. They might have not the culprits of organising huge people's congregations like these politicians, but they risked top players of cricket globally and organising staff. Until several persons tested positive, the cricket with high density of commerce with diluted sporting spirit was not postponed. Recklessness about the life.

Judges further explained: 'In today's time, we cannot say that media won't report contents of discussion in a court and only orders. Since the discussion is of equal public importance, we will put it on the same pedestal like our orders. There is a dialogue between the court and the lawyers and when they are reported, people get to know about the judicial process.

To sustain democracy, we need independent Election Commission. The Commission cannot be independent as long as the 'loyalty' is the foremost qualification to become its members. Incidentally, this is the problem of the Information Commission also. The EC should know that the third estate Judiciary shall question, and fourth estate media shall report.

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



J&K sponsors pilot training, IT and journalism to boost jobs

AHMED ALI FAYYAZ

THE Tribal Affairs Department of the Government of Jammu and Kashmir has initiated the process to select and sponsor 250 students at various levels for skill development courses in different fields of employment opportunities. These include training and license for commercial pilots, air hostess/cabin crew, medical diagnostics, Information Technology (IT) and Information Technology enabled services (ITeS), nursing and journalism.

The department will sponsor 10 students from the Gujjar and Pahari communities for commercial pilot training at a leading aviation academy. A batch of 20 students will be sponsored for training of cabin crew, air hostess and ground staff in aviation. A senior official said that it would be the first government-sponsored initiative to support the academically-challenged tribal community students in the high-profile aviation, hospitality, media and IT in Jammu and Kashmir.

Some of the training academies approved by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) have been contacted for course modules and the Union Government's Civil Aviation Department has been approached for designing the framework for screening process to shortlist candidates for the sponsorship to avail commercial pilot license training. It has also been proposed to make available aviation courses in the Union Territory's higher secondary schools for interested candidates to provide them an opportunity to understand the requirements of highly professional training.

Another batch of 100 girl students will be sponsored under the Skill Development programme for undergoing nursing and multipurpose healthcare worker courses. In view of Covid-19 pandemic, new employment opportunities have emerged particularly in wake of the need felt for strengthening the primary healthcare system. In line with this, another batch of 50 youths will undergo the training of medical technicians and diagnostics. These courses will be implemented in coordination with universities and J&K Skill Development Mission. In the field of journalism, a batch of at least 10 students will be sponsored this year for undergoing diploma courses for which leading colleges and universities have been approached. Students will undergo digital media training as well.

Further, one batch of 60 students will be screened and short-listed for sponsorship to skill development training in Information Technology, IT Enables Services, Coding, Data analytics, data operators, cyber security and other sub-specialisations.

Secretary Tribal Affairs Department, Dr Shahid Iqbal Choudhary said that the skill development training landscape needed to be reoriented with emergent requirements and employment markets. The aviation sector, he said, is a fast growing field facing acute shortage of commercial pilots and flight staff particularly in South Asia which is a great employment opportunity for skilled and trained youths for which annual batch of 10 commercial pilots and 20 cabin crew members will be sponsored by the Department. Dr Shahid said that in view of the covid-19 pandemic, there's a need to diversify the health sector and strengthen primary healthcare for which department is sponsoring students for various courses providing them self-employment opportunities.

Dr Shahid said that students shall also be sponsored for various courses like Masters in journalism, business administration, computer applications, engineering, IT, ITES as well as Research and Development. The new skill development courses will be launched within a month calling applications from students having requisite qualification and interest in the subject fields. He asked the youths to come forward with their areas of interests for which they need support from the department.

The new courses have been proposed on the 90:10 formula with 90% course fee to be sponsored by the Tribal Affairs Department and 10% student contribution which would also be offered as student loan. The Department will be launching a host of various courses for which scholarship will be provided to undergo professional degrees and diploma courses. All these courses will begin from the current year academic session.

Aviation in particular has become a craze for the young women from Jammu and Kashmir after videos of Captain Sami Ara Sarury and stories about Ayesha Aziz appeared in the media in the last over 10 years. For many of them it was an incredible breaking of the glass ceiling as aviation was considered to be 'only for men' until late in the State.

Even as Sami had joined aviation as a cabin crew in 1989 and she began flying as a commercial pilot in 2004, most of the people in J&K knew only about Idrees Lone of Shopian and five or six others who were all males. They included Wasim Khateeb who had a commercial pilot licence from the USA and died as a militant in an encounter with security forces in Jammu's Reasi district. Now 51, Sami from Sumbal Sonawari of Bandipora district got a commercial pilot licence from Texas, USA, in 1994. She was reportedly the first Indian Muslim woman who became a commercial pilot. In 2004 she began flying Indian Airlines Airbus and in 2018 she was flying Indigo's Airbus as commander.

Ayesha Aziz of Mumbai with her mother from Baramulla Kashmir was awarded a student pilot licence by the prestigious Bombay Flying Club when she was just 15. She too became an inspiration for some female youngsters in Kashmir. Meanwhile, there were stories about Jammu's Shivani Manhas with three other women pilots flying 16,000 kilometres without stopping from San Francisco in the United States to Bengaluru. Manhas too joined Air India as a pilot. Subsequently, Kashmiri Muslim women Iram Habib too joined as a commercial pilot. Newspapers also reported 20-year-old Farhan Majeed of the militant-infested Awantipora area of Pulwama district becoming Jammu and Kashmir's youngest male pilot. Officials believe that more than 300 young boys and girls from Jammu and Kashmir have attained training and different licences in flying and many of them are working as cabin crew in different domestic and international airlines. However, none of them was reportedly from a tribal background.

The project of sponsoring young boys and girls from tribal areas for training in aviation and hospitality is the brainchild of the young Indian Administrative Service officer Dr Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, who himself is a Gujjar from Rajouri district and has recently joined as Secretary Tribal Affairs in the Jammu and Kashmir Government.

LETTERS

Confusion over second dose vaccination

A PART from a shortage of vaccines, the Government of India has created a huge confusion over interval of first and second doses. When Covishield was first administered the gap between the first second dose was 4-6 weeks (28-42 days). Later in March, Government of India revised the same to 6-8 (42-56 days). However, the vaccination certificate issued for continues to mention the second dose due 28 days. Whereas in the FAQ of CoWin Portal on second dose vaccination for Covishield the recommended interval is 4-8 weeks (28-56 days), while an interval of 6-8 weeks gives enhanced protection.

On the other hand the Arogyasetu information on the vaccination appointment, the second dose Covishield should be taken between 28 days to 56 days (4-8 weeks) after the first dose. Under this situation when the Central government issued directives to the state to focus on the second dose, the state government has hurriedly announced a second dose special drive between 8-12 May for walk-in vaccination.

After reading the news, I and my spouse like thousands of others visited the government centre and were told we have to complete 42 days (6 weeks) and few other people who have passed 4

weeks (28 days) got vaccinated. It is not clear why the government of India while accepting the expert advice to retain the lower limit of 4 weeks (or 28 days) and only extended the upper limit to 8 weeks (or 56 days). I would urge the state government to allow all those who have crossed 4 weeks (28 days) to take the vaccine as part of a special drive and extend this until the end of May so that maximum people waiting for the second dose are cleared to avoid crossing 56 days period.

N Nagarajan, Hyderabad

II

THE government and the people should be well prepared before the invasion of the third wave, now that the medicines for the Indian double and UK variant have been discovered. Our country has a huge population. All are to be vaccinated. The Central and the State governments should take quick action to augment the vaccine supplies to the hospitals. Opening of additional vaccination centres will of immense help. Formulate a strategic plan to vaccinate people. Initially there was medical hesitancy among the masses but now it has become a non-existent factor among the people.

But a physiological fear has been created among the people. Vaccination seems to be the one and the only answer for the virus. Still front line workers and adults over sixty years of age are to be vaccinated. Vaccination for 18 to 45 age group is yet to start. Only some 16 percent of the people are reported to have been vaccinated so far. It is far from satisfactory.

We the people, in the meanwhile, should increase our body immunity power. Yoga and Pranayama will be of help. We should avoid gatherings, use masks and maintain social distancing besides keeping neat and clean our hands often sanitising it. There is no use in pointing our fingers to the PM or CM. We should stand united, this is for opposition party too, follow the SOPs to true letter and spirit to keep the virus at bay.

Sravana Ramachandran, Chennai

Let's help the needy

NOW India is passing through a very turbulent situation. All the people are in a state of depression. Both the Central and most of the States are doing their level best to save the people. In this process there may be some lapses and shortfalls here and there. As responsible citizens we have a duty to lend our helping hand to the needy. Instead of criticising the governments, we have to contribute our level best to help the country come out of this pandemic. People should restrain themselves from passing meaningless comments which may weaken our administration.

D V Seshasai, Narasaraopet

Naidu, Jagan both at fault

BOTH Jagan and Naidu are blaming each other where the people of AP are staring at a bleak future due to Modi government not keeping many of its promises with regard to Polavaram project, Amaraavathi Capital, Revenue deficit and Special status. Surprisingly both Jagan and Naidu are tight-lipped over the apathetic and dis-

TS health secys since 2017 turn ceremonial heads?

- Show no interest in implementing SQA and QI plan
- State Quality Assurance of health services policy came into effect from December 1, 2017
- TVVP still shows the availability of bed strength of January 23

VRC PHANIHARAN
HYDERABAD

ARE successive State health secretaries acting like ceremonial heads and won't act unless the chief minister, chief secretary or the courts remind them of their job? If the goings-on are of any indication, the State health administration has pulled up its socks only after the courts' intervention and the Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao's intervention to step up and gear up the fight against Covid in the second wave as the deadly coronavirus intensified its ugly pangs more infectiously in the State.

Speaking to The Hans India, sources in the Telangana Vaidya Vidhana Parishad (TVVP) says, the State might be well prepared, if not, at least in a better position to minimise the adversities and challenges posed by the second wave, had the health administration implemented its own plan of action of State Quality Assurance (SQA) policy planning.

The SQA has come into effect from December 1, 2017, a comprehensive action for providing quality health care services across the



TVV hospitals in the State.

"The SQA has a State Level Committee (SLC) as well as District Level Committees (DLCs). The main objective of it was Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Improvement (QI) to provide the highest possible level of health services to all people in Telangana through the delivery of promotive, preventive, curative, palliative and rehabilitative health services at all levels."

Accordingly, it has come up with a 56-page Quality Improvement Manual (QIM) has come into force three years ago. And, the programme, which was brought into force in line with the guidelines of the National Health Mission (NHM) to provide quality health care services across the health facilities.

Comprehensively it covers quality assurance of input, process and outcome.

The plan of action claims that it has been developed by the State

Quality Assurance Team and implemented by various committees, DQAM and other personnel. Quality assurance and continuous monitoring programme covering: accident and emergency, nutritional rehabilitation centre (NRC), laboratory services, out-door department, operation theatre, radiology and USG, labour room, postpartum unit, pharmacy, maternity ward, intensive care unit, auxiliary services, paediatric ward, indoor patient department, mortuary, sick newborn care unit (SNCU), blood bank and general administration.

A senior district health official from Jayashankar-Bhupalapally district said that the action plan, its implementation and reporting structure was comprehensive even non-availability of let alone an oxygen cylinder even non-availability of a stool, an instrument at the TVV hospital could be known to the highest state of office in just one day's gap. In the

case of unexpected and emergencies of safety and security of all the stakeholders of the hospitals, the officials come to know about it within less than 6 to 12 hours, indicated the issue-reporting time specified by the action plan.

But, there is hardly any serious attention paid by the top bosses including the chairman of the SLC in its implementation and continuous performance review. And, "while success rates of its implementation vary depending on the staff and officials implementing it, definitely, it keeps the staff in the public health care sector agile and active at all levels," said a TVVP official. But, the sorry state of affairs is such that people might be shocked to see the laxity on the part of the TVVP amidst the second wave of the corona. Its TVVP official website still highlights the availability of beds across the district hospitals as of January 23.

TEMRS schools invite applications

Last date for sending applications online is May 31

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

TELANGANA State Ekalavya Model Residential Schools Society (TES) has invited applications for admission into Class 6 in the 23 EMSR schools in the State for 2021-22 academic year. There are 60 seats in each of the 23 schools. Those who wish to apply should have passed Class 5 from any recognised school and family's annual income should not exceed Rs 1.5 lakh in villages and Rs 2 lakh in towns. While those belonging to OC and BC classes should have been borne between 01-09-2009 and 31-08-2011, the SC, ST candidates between 1-09-2007 and 31-08-2011 are eligible to apply. Selection will be through screening test. Applications should be sent online and the last date for online applications is May 31, 2021. Interested can apply on the given website www.telanganamrs.in

Shadnagar MLA accepts Green India Challenge



HANS NEWS SERVICE
SHADNAGAR

AT the call of Rajya Sabha member Joginapally Santosh Kumar, Shadnagar MLA Anjaiah Yadav planted saplings on Monday as part of the Green India Challenge and on occasion of his birthday in Aclasskhanpet village of Shadnagar constituency. Speaking on the occasion, Anjaiah Yadav said that he felt very happy to plant the saplings on the occasion of his birthday. MLA also urged the people of constituency to plant more saplings and also take care of them till they are on their own.

Later, the MLA also praised the Rajya Sabha member and congratulated him for launching the Green India Challenge. Shad-

Plants saplings on the occasion of his birthday

nagar TRS party leaders, activists and others were present.

Oxygen cylinders distributed Meanwhile, Murali Krishna Yadav, son of Anjaiah Yadav, along with Shadnagar ACP Kushalkar distributed oxygen cylinders to Covid patients on the day.

The free oxygen cylinders were distributed at the TRS party camp office in Shadnagar. Speaking on the occasion, Shadnagar ACP said that everyone should collectively fight the pandemic and extend help to the poor and the needy. He also urged people to follow Covid

precautions and step out only if necessary.

Later, Murali Krishna Yadav said that people in Shadnagar constituency could contact the camp office if they urgently needed oxygen. He said that a new Covid ward would be set up at Community Health Centre in Shadnagar soon. On the day, Murali Krishna Yadav donated Rs 1 lakh, Municipal chairman Narendar donated Rs 50,000 and another person, Kishore, donated Rs 21,000 for setting up the Covid ward.

Municipal vice-chairman Natarajan, former Municipal chairman Vishwam, councilors Srinivas Goud, Pratap Reddy, Kanugu Anthaiah, GT Srinivas and Venkat Ramreddy and others were present.

TS govt asked to replicate AP model on Covid-19 under AHS

- Union minister Kishan Reddy urges TS to notify journalists as frontline warriors and extend facilities to address their woes
- Visits AIIMS, Bibinagar and reviews the international aid allocated to Telangana

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

UNION Minister of State for Home Affairs, G Kishan Reddy asked the Telangana State government to include the Covid treatment under the Arogyasri Health Scheme (AHS) on the lines of the neighboring State of Andhra Pradesh.

Addressing media after visiting the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Bibinagar, here on Monday, he said his office is flooded with requests for allotment of beds, oxygen facility and reduction of bills handed over to them for undergoing treatment for Covid.

"The Ayushman Bharat Scheme of the Centre is being implemented across several States in the country to provide the much needed relief for the



poor to avail Covid treatment in the private hospitals. But, Telangana is not extending similar relief to the people here. It has not included the Covid treatment under AHS, making people to face troubles during the current hard times posed by the second wave of the corona."

Similarly, he also reminded that the Centre has notified journalists as the frontline warriors of Covid, and asked the State government to do the needful to address their woes creating separate facilities for them.

Earlier, the Union Minister visited the Covid-19 dedicated ward at AIIMS, Bibinagar, and he also reviewed medical facilities, including the Central government's sanctioned oxygen concentrator that produces 1,000 litres of oxygen per minute.

The minister discussed the immediate steps to augment beds

and oxygen supplies at a review meeting with the hospital administration.

The Central Minister also inspected the oxygen cylinders and other medical supplies received from different countries and allocated by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, to Telangana state, during his visit to AIIMS, Bibinagar.

He interacted with people at the Covid-19 Vaccination Centre at the hospital and reviewed the vaccination drive. The Central Minister distributed fruits to health workers and people who came for inoculation on the occasion.

Kishan Reddy said that the State government has not handed over the buildings of the AIIMS, Bibinagar to the Centre so far. However, steps have been taken to ensure the creation of facilities at the hospital.

Regular summer temperatures, isolated showers predicted

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

THE State is likely to witness normal summer temperatures with partly cloudy and isolated showers from May 12 to 19. A low pressure is likely to be formed between May 20 and 25 over south Telangana and north coastal Andhra Pradesh.

Another low pressure area will be formed over Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat. A T-Square would be formed among Sun, Moon & Jupiter over AP & Telangana states. As a result, Telangana, north and south coastal AP and Rayalaseema regions will experience above normal temperatures with pockets of acute heat wave. In the evening, sudden changes in weather with isolated thunder-

storms, lightning, strong gusty winds with moderate to heavy rains and dust storms can be seen over dry areas of south coastal AP and Rayalaseema.

Between May 26 and June 1, a low pressure system would be formed over Central India and is likely to cross south coastal AP coast near Krishna, Guntur region and move in north and north-westerly direction. Pre-monsoon severe thunderstorms are very likely over north coastal Andhra Pradesh, north Telangana with medium to heavy rains at times isolated but very heavy rains.

By June 1, normal onset of southwest monsoon to Kerala, Arabian Sea and south Tamil Nadu with moderate moist winds and isolated thunder-showers are predicted.

Common entrance exam for army candidates put off

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

IN view of growing Covid infections, the Common Entrance Examination (CEE) that was originally scheduled on May 30 at Arty Centre, Hyderabad for successful candidates of Army Recruitment Rally held at Telangana State Sports School, Hakimpet has been postponed. The exam was to be held for the successful candidates of the Army Recruitment Rally between March 4 and March 24. Fresh date of the CEE will be intimated later through www.joinindian-army.nic.in, after the situation improves, according to an official release here on Monday. Candidates will have to physically report to the ARO, Secunderabad and obtain fresh admit cards once the fresh date is finalised.

No loss to TRS if Eatala quits: Kamalakar

- BC Welfare Minister says TRS will win Huzurabad Assembly segment just by using KCR's photo, if bypolls are conducted anytime

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

BC Welfare and Civil Supplies Minister G Kamalakar on Monday said that the TRS will win Huzurabad Assembly seat anytime if polls held.

By using the photograph of Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao, the TRS will win Huzurabad Assembly segment if bypolls were conducted.

Speaking to the reporters on Monday, the Minister asserted that the TRS will win the polls

even if Eatala Rajender quits the party and resigns as the MLA from Huzurabad segment. The Chief Minister sacked Eatala following land grabbing allegations and a probe by the officials concerned.

Even if former minister and senior TRS leader Eatala quits the party, the TRS will not suffer any loss, he remarked.

The Minister said that Eatala Rajender might be the senior leader in the segment he said adding that the TRS will win the polls in Huzurabad. The Minister said that Rajender is like a drop in the ocean of the TRS which will steer the government for development and welfare.

As the TRS has leadership expelled him from the cabinet after taking his health portfolio by the chief minister, the minister slammed Rajender for his com-

ments and allegations against the chief minister.

He denied reacting on the land grabbing charges and high court slamming the government for speedy probe in a day. I will not talk on the matter as the court is looking into it, he said.

However the minister accused Rajender of resorting to anti party activities which led to present situation.

Despite any situation the TRS will win the polls as was the case with the polls that held in Nagarjuna Sagar Assembly segment Kamalakar said.

The TRS will field a suitable candidate and win on KCR photo if the elections are held for Huzurabad he said. The minister said that the TRS is strong in the segment and will not bother if Rajender quits, he said.

AICC condemns stopping of Covid patients at TS border

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

ALL India Congress Committee (AICC) secretary Gidugu Rudraraju in a letter to Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao appealed to him not to stop the Covid patients, particularly from Andhra Pradesh, who were coming for better treatment in Hyderabad at the border.

He expressed surprise over the sudden decision taken by the Telangana police not to allow the ambulances carrying the Covid-19 patients from AP to Hyderabad without any prior intimation. Moreover, the police are insisting on a prior bed confirmation letter from the hospitals. The attendants who were rushing the patients for better treatment at Hyderabad are shocked with the sudden decision and they are running from pillar to post to save the lives of the patients.

- Secretary Rudraraju writes to Telangana CM objecting to the action by TS police

Recalling that patients from other state are also coming to Hyderabad which is one of the best cities with super specialty and critical medical care facilities, Rudraraju said that not allowing patients to Hyderabad is not only injustice but also a violation of their right to live as a citizen of this country.

He appealed to the Telangana Chief Minister to give instructions to the officials concerned to immediately allow the Covid patients from AP to come to Hyderabad without any restrictions for better treatment. In another letter to Chief Min-

- Says it is unjust to stop patients from the neighbouring Telugu State from getting treatment in Hyderabad while allowing those from other states

- PCC chief Sailajanath too criticises the move and suggests that CMs of both States sort out the matter through discussions

ister of Telangana, APCC president Dr S Sailajanath said it was grossly unjust to stop the Covid patients from coming to Hyderabad for better treatment. He appealed to the Telangana Chief Minister to allow the patients on humanitarian grounds to get better treatment. He said that Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy should also be consulted on the issue. Both the Chief Ministers should hold discussions on the issue and solve the problem amicably, he suggested.

Tokens for vaccination to prevent overcrowding

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

THE state government is planning to distribute tokens with different colours for different age groups for Covid vaccination to prevent overcrowding at vaccine centres. As part of the action plan to streamline the vaccination, the vaccination programme was suspended at several places in the state on Monday.

As prior information was not provided at the vaccination centres, including health centres, people are seen waiting in queues at several centres. A septuagenarian Venkata Rao is seen waiting in queue at urban health centre, Durgapuram, Vijayawada for second dose. Speaking to the Hans India, he said that he is waiting in the queue from 6 am to get vaccine but there was no information about it. He is not alone as several others including women are also seen waiting for vaccination at the health centre.

It is learnt that the state government is planning to fix time slots for vaccination and distribute the tokens at door steps to prevent overcrowding which is feared to further fuel spread of Covid.

According to officials, Covishield vaccines were administered to 43,99,802 persons as first dose and the vaccines were administered to 16,87,315 persons as second dose. Covaxin first dose was administered to 9,23,296 persons and second dose to 2,90,047 persons so far.

Ex-DGP Prasada Rao dead

HYDERABAD

Former police chief of undivided Andhra Pradesh, Dr B Prasada Rao passed away in the US on Monday, his family sources said.

Rao complained of chest pain and wanted to be taken to hospital but by the time the ambulance reached, he breathed his last. He was 66 and survived by wife Sowmini and son Vikas.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy and his Telangana counterpart K Chandrashekar Rao condoled the death of Prasada Rao.

Jagan Mohan Reddy expressed grief over the demise of Prasada Rao and conveyed his condolences to the bereaved family members.

Prasada Rao served as the police chief from October 2013 to May 2014. He was the last DGP of undivided AP and had taken over when Rayalaseema and coastal Andhra were witnessing protests against the Centre's decision to carve out a separate Telangana state. After bifurcation, he

served as principal secretary, home, Government of Andhra Pradesh. He had served as police commissioner of Hyderabad and Visakhapatnam and as superintendent of police of Nizambad, Karimnagar and Nalgonda districts.

Rao did his M.Sc. (Physics) from IIT (Madras) in 1977, and continued his interest in physics even after joining Indian Police Service (IPS) in 1979.

An expert in physics, he was awarded a PhD for his research on 'Wave-Particle Duality of Light' by Sri Krishnadevaraya University in 2014. After retirement, he worked as a visiting faculty of AU, Visakhapatnam, JNTU, Kakinada and Hyderabad, Sri Krishnadevaraya University.

Hailing from Guntur district of coastal Andhra Pradesh, he had the reputation of an officer who goes strictly by the rule book. He also authored a book *Word power to mind power*, a unique method of learning and memorising English vocabulary applying visualisation and contextualisation.



Dr B Prasada Rao

TODAY'S QUOTE

Consumers opting for digital fin services

INDIA is seeing an increasing digitization of financial services, with consumers shifting from cash to cards, wallets, apps, and UPI. Technology has been transformational, providing greater and easier access to financial services. Digitizing land records will also provide a major boost to the sector.


—Rajiv Kumar, Vice-Chairman, Niti Aayog



FUND RAISING

Sona Comstar to float ₹6,000 cr IPO

AUTO component maker Sona BLW Precision Forgings (Sona Comstar) has received capital markets regulator Sebi's approval to raise Rs 6,000 crore through an initial share sale. The IPO comprises a fund-raise via fresh issue amounting to Rs 300 crore and an offer for sale aggregating up to Rs 5,700 crore.

FOREX (buy rates in ₹)				
US Dollar	74.65	South		
Euro	89.71	African Rand		5.89
UAE Dirham	20.72	Hong Kong Dollar		10.94
Thai Baht	2.61	Japanese Yen		0.78
British Pound	103.89	New Zealand Dollar		53.69
Australian Dollar	57.78	Saudi Riyal		21.67
Canadian Dollar	60.83	Swedish Krona		10.02
Swiss Franc	81.69	Singapore Dollar		56.47

DELHI TUESDAY 11 MAY 2021

BIZ BRIEFS

Isuzu unveils new range

Isuzu Motors India has launched BS-VI compliant versions of V-Cross and MU-X SUV range in the country. The company said it has also introduced a new model Hi-Lander, tagged at Rs 17.04 lakh. The V-Cross trim with automatic transmission and two-wheel drive system is priced at Rs 20.06 lakh, while the four-wheel-drive variant with manual transmission is tagged at Rs 21.07 lakh. The four-wheel-drive version with automatic transmission is priced at Rs 24.59 lakh. "India is a key market for us, and we will continue to bring in the best technology and engineering that Isuzu has to offer globally. Isuzu is globally renowned for making tough, reliable and fuel-efficient vehicles and our new BS-VI range embodies these characteristics," Tsuguo Fukumura, Managing Director, Isuzu Motors India

Dabur enters spray mkt

Ayurveda company Dabur India Ltd has announced its entry into the pain relief spray market with the launch of Ayurvedic Dabur Rheumatil Spray. The spray gives fast and long-lasting relief from pain and strain of the muscles, backache, neck pain, shoulder, knee pain and effective in treating pain from arthritis, fibrositis, stiff neck, lumbar spondylitis, frozen shoulders etc. Dr Durga Prasad of Dabur India said: "Dabur Rheumatil Spray is a unique blend of time-tested Ayurvedic ingredients like turpentine, eucalyptus, peppermint, gandhapura, etc. for rapid and effective relief from muscle pain. This not only marks our entry into a new category but further boosts our Ayurvedic healthcare products portfolio."

Bharatam app launched

India's new social networking platform Bharatam has been launched for its iOS and android users. Indians can securely post, chat and share their moments. The app is designed by Neeraj Singh Bisht known as Mister Singh under Make in India initiative. The application allows one to connect with friends, family, meet new people with common liking, post pictures and videos, play games and go live. It gives freedom to write your heart out with blogs and helps in buying and selling on Bharatam marketplace. Mister Singh said: "We are launching this app to facilitate our users with a fast, easy-to-use, and more secure app. This will allow our users to interact more often with their friends and family. The main motive of launching this platform is to ensure data security, and employment generation within our country."

Virtusa unveils portal for staff

Virtusa Corporation has introduced its 24/7 Covid-19 care portal with personalised features designed to help ensure the safety of employees during the pandemic. The initiative includes its 24/7 live support and assistance, the portal and call centre tracks all queries logged and the data of team members as it relates to vaccinations. In addition to the portal, the company has created a war room to dispense a range of Covid-19 care and services, including pre- and post-Covid-19 care in hospitals, homes and quarantine centres. Sundar Narayanan, Chief People Officer, Virtusa, said: "Every day, we review the dashboard with our goal being to create a perfect model that introduces more offerings over time to be certain every Virtusan and their family is taken care of."

More Covid waves may hit India: Fitch

Says just 9.4% of the population received at least one vaccine dose as of May 5

NEW DELHI

FITCH Ratings on Monday said the shock to economic activity from the latest wave of Covid-19 pandemic will be less severe than the one in 2020, but recovery is likely to be delayed as economic activity dropped in April-May.

The global rating agency said there are growing indications that the latest wave of Covid-19 infections will add to risks among financial institutions (FIs) and anticipates that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) may introduce additional measures to support the financial sector if indications of economic stress mount.

"We expect the shock to economic activity from the latest wave of the pandemic in India to be less severe than in 2020, even though caseloads and fatalities are much higher. Nonetheless, indicators show activity dropped in April-May, which is likely to delay the country's recovery, and the number of newly recorded cases remains extremely high," Fitch Ratings said in a report.

It said currently authorities are implementing lockdowns more narrowly, and companies and individuals have adjusted behaviour in ways that cushion the effects. "There is a risk that disruption could persist longer and spread further than our baseline case as-



We expect the shock to economic activity from the latest wave of the pandemic in India to be less severe than in 2020, even though caseloads and fatalities are much higher

— Fitch Ratings

sumes, particularly if lockdowns are introduced in more regions, or nationwide," it added.

India is facing the world's worst outbreak of Covid-19 cases with more than 3 lakh new daily Covid-19 cases being reported for two weeks now and the new cases reached more than 4 lakh new daily cases over the weekend. Over 2.46 lakh people in India have died from the virus infection. Public health system is buckling under the weight of surging infections and deaths with several parts of the country reporting shortage of hospital beds, medical oxygen, medicines and vaccines.

"India's slow pace of vaccination means that the country could remain vulnerable to further

waves of the pandemic even once the current surge subsides. Just 9.4 per cent of the population had received at least one vaccine dose as of May 5, according to figures from Our World in Data," it added.

Fitch had last month said that the surge in Covid-19 cases could add to headwinds facing India's banks and non-bank financial institutions (NBFIs) if it led to a resurgence in asset quality pressures. The latest data suggest that this risk is mounting, the agency said.

"There are growing indications that India's latest wave of Covid-19 infections will add to risks among FIs by sapping near-term momentum from the economic recovery," it said. The measures announced by RBI on May 5 will

provide some relief to financial institutions in the next 12-24 months, but largely at the expense of postponing the recognition and resolution of underlying asset-quality problems.

Among the RBI's measures, the reintroduction of a restructuring scheme for individuals, small businesses and MSMEs (micro, small and medium-sized enterprises) may be significant for financial institutions. It covers those which have not previously taken up restructuring, but also allows flexibility to extend the period of moratorium and/or the residual tenor by up to two years for previously restructured amounts.

The scheme, available end-September 2021, may provide borrowers with additional time to resolve repayment stresses and allow financial institutions to spread credit costs over a longer period and the take-up under the last scheme, which ran to March 2021, was modest.

"However, the economy at the time was posting a strong post-lockdown recovery. Since then, we believe risks to small businesses have risen, particularly as many would have balance sheets that have weakened since 2020. Meanwhile, many individuals face medical bills that will add to strains on their income and savings," Fitch added.

RELEASE OF IMPORTED STOCK



Centre expects edible oil prices to fall

NEW DELHI

THE Centre on Monday expressed hope that retail prices of edible oils would soften following the release of imported stock that was stuck at ports due to clearance issues.

According to the government data, retail prices of edible oils have shot up by 55.55 per cent in over a year and are adding to the woes of consumers already reeling under the economic distress induced by the Covid-19 pandemic. Responding to a query on steps taken to contain the rise in edible oils prices, Food Secretary Sudhanshu Pandey said the government monitors edible prices closely. The secretary said that the industry mentioned recently there was some holding of some stock at Kandla and Mundra ports because of clearances related to tests done by various agencies as part of the general risk analysis in view of the Covid situation.

"That problem has been addressed along with customs and FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India). With that stock

Retail prices of edible oils have shot up by 55.55% in over a year and are adding to the woes of consumers already reeling under the economic distress

getting released in the market, we hope to see the softening impact on the oil prices," he told in a virtual press conference. The Secretary further said that India is dependent on imports to meet the shortages of edible oil. Annually, the country imports edible oils worth Rs 75,000 crore.

According to the government data, retail price of vanaspati has increased by 55.55 per cent to Rs 140 a kg on May 8 this year, from Rs 90 per kg in the year-ago period. Similarly, retail price of palm oil has risen by 51.54 per cent to Rs 132.6 per kg from Rs 87.5 per kg, soya oil by over 50 per cent to Rs 158 per kg from Rs 105 per kg, while that of mustard oil by 49 per cent to Rs 163.5 per kg from Rs 110 per kg in the said period.

Hyd startup delivers diesel at doorstep

BB BUREAU HYDERABAD

TO ease the lives of the end-consumers without the hassles of diesel procurement, City-based fuel startup Kumar Auto Care has started the facility of door-step diesel delivery through their mobile petrol pumps. It is a cost-effective solution for the ever-growing need for diesel. Fuel is required for the smooth functioning of heavy machinery on construction sites, generators in hospitals and civic bodies.

The fuel startup is run by a couple Kunal Kumar Sonthalia and Poonam Sonthalia who already have a petrol pump since 2016. With doorstep diesel delivery their main target is to deliver diesel to the construction sites within Telangana.



They have acquired a double-dispensing mobile fuel pump, which will go around the city to meet the demand for diesel by various end-users at their doorstep.

"I have been in the hospitality industry for many years. Since I have taken over a petrol pump I always look forward to expanding it in an innovative way and doorstep diesel delivery is a very efficient way to provide service to the people" Kunal said.

Doorstep diesel delivery is approved by the government and is a new-age concept of effective distribution of diesel. It allows fuel startups to maintain quality and creating availability of fuel for the consumers. It will hugely benefit the agricultural sector, hospitals, housing societies, heavy machinery facilities, mobile towers and others.

Sebi move to prevent misuse of client collateral

NEW DELHI

MARKETS regulator Sebi on Monday comes out with a fresh proposal for segregation and monitoring of collateral at client level amid instances of misuse of client collateral by trading members. Also, it has proposed to build a mechanism for reporting, dissemination and usage of information pertaining to collateral other than securities collateral received by way of pledge or repurchase mechanism. Issuing a consultation paper, Sebi said that the proposed framework is aimed at ensuring protection of client collateral. The proposal comes in the wake of Karvy Stock Broking crisis where clients' shares had been pledged illegally as collateral against loan.

Segregation of client collateral refers to the procedures that enable identification and protection of client collateral from misuse by trading or clearing member and protection from default of such member or other clients.

Market rises on strong buying in pharma, banking stocks

Sensex gains 296 pts, Nifty jumps 119 pts amid positive global cues

MUMBAI

EQUITY gauges Sensex and Nifty rallied for the fourth straight session on Monday on hectic buying in mainly pharma, power and banking shares as investors brushed aside concerns over rising coronavirus cases amid positive global cues.

At the closing bell, the 30-share BSE index quoted 295.94 points or 0.60 per cent higher at 49,502.41. Over the last four sessions, the Sensex has gained 1,248.90 points or 2.58 per cent. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty jumped 119.20 points or 0.80 per cent to 14,942.35 – taking its total gains to 295.94 points over the four days to 445.85 points or 3.07 per cent. On Monday, L&T was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rallying over 4 per



cent, followed by Dr Reddy's, Sun Pharma, NTPC, PowerGrid, IndusInd Bank, ONGC and M&M. On the other hand, UltraTech Cement, Infosys, Reliance Industries, HCL Tech and Axis Bank were five losers among the 30 shares. Sectorally, BSE metal, capital goods, healthcare, power, utilities and industrials indices rose up to 3.53 per cent, while IT was in the red. Broader midcap and smallcap indices rallied up to 0.97 per cent.

"Domestic equities continued to defy concerns of rising Covid-19 cases and extended mobility restrictions by several states by extending gains for the fourth consecutive trading day," said Binod Modi Head-Strategy at Reliance Securities. Favourable global cues, steady March quarter earnings

along with favourable commentary, liquidity support announced by the RBI and absence of nationwide lockdown have aided domestic equities to shrug off rising Covid-19 cases in the country, he further noted. Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said, "Domestic bourses continued to ride on its optimistic wave mirroring strong across-the-board buying with metals, auto and pharma stocks leading the rally."

Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Shanghai, Tokyo and Seoul ended on a positive note, while Hong Kong was in the red. Stock exchanges in Europe were largely trading with losses in mid-session deals. The Indian rupee ended 16 paise higher at 73.35 against the US dollar on Monday. Meanwhile, international oil benchmark Brent crude was trading 0.53 per cent higher at \$68.64 per barrel.

Organic mangoes in demand as Covid surges

DINESH MACHARLA HYDERABAD

ORGANIC mangoes are grown naturally without the use of the synthetic fertilisers. They are tastier than the other mangoes available in the market. This category of the fruit everyone cherishes to taste as the sweetness of this class of fruit is not found in the fruit grown using the regular chemicals and synthetic fertilisers.

Despite the ban by the government on ripening the fruit using chemicals, most of the mangoes available in the market are ripened using variety of chemicals. But those who are health conscious seem to be interested in naturally grown and naturally ripened fruits, such as organic mangoes. So, the demand for organic mangoes is increasing every year. This time, the demand for these fruits is much higher as people turned health conscious in the wake of raging Covid-19 pandemic.

As a result, there is a surge in the sales of the organic mangoes in the market in Hyderabad and

Farmers, traders choose online channels to push their produce in these trying times



other locations. "Earlier, our sales in Hyderabad accounted for around 40 per cent. This year, we are expecting the city's share in our sales to increase to 70 per cent as there is an increase in demand for organic mangoes," Rafi, founder, AR4agroInternational, told Bizz Buzz. The company used to export to the US, Singapore, Japan, etc., but Covid had halted

the exports. But increase in demand from different areas of Hyderabad and other cities helped it generate good sales.

"We used to have above Rs 1 crore turnover during the fruit season, but due to Covid, we are expecting a turnover of around Rs 50 to 60 lakh now", he explained.

The company started plantation in 2008 by using natural manure

and from 2012 the production started. But with no platform available to sell its exclusive product, it turned to selling through online channels. The offline stores are also getting huge demand from the customers. Farmers say growing organic mangoes is a difficult process. But persistence pays dividends, they say. As a consequence, availability of organic mangoes has increased in the market.

However, organic mango farmers and traders are finding it difficult to sell their produce through physical outlets due to Covid-19 pandemic. Hence, they are selling through online channels such as websites and apps besides direct delivery to the customers. The sellers put a minimum weight limit for ordering online.

"The foothall at our stores around 50 in a day and through online orders we sell more than 300 kgs in a day. Overall, we sell around 30 to 40 tonnes of organic mango in a season", Guru, Man-

ager, Daman Organic Living said. Nagendra, founder, OnlineOrganicStore.com, is expecting very good sales this year.

"We started selling through both offline and online channels, but for online orders we set a limit of 5 kg. We expect around 400 tonnes of production from 92 acres farm in this season. We have forgone one year's crop for shifting from chemical based farming to organic method. Last year onwards we have started selling. There is a good response from the customers this year," he said.

Customers are also scouting for tasty organic mangoes. "Though organic mangoes are a bit expensive, we are opting for them as they are good for our health. More so this year due to Covid problem," a customer said. A few startups are stepping into the organic mango business. They want to build the ecosystem with both online and offline sales. Most of these startups are founded by small group of farmers.

WLF holds Covid awareness drive

HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

WAGHRAY'S Lung Foundation (WLF) Chairman Dr Pradyut Waghray has taken an initiative to bring awareness about Covid pandemic to sarpanches and villagers by organising webinars in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh States. Dr Pradyut Waghray is senior pulmonologist from Hyderabad and Professor at SVS Medical College, Mahabubnagar. He is also an honorary consultant pulmonologist to the armed forces. Dr Waghray speaks in the webinars about Covid and the preventive strategies including vaccination and the importance of following the Covid protocol- correct way of using mask, social distancing and hand washing. This initiative is taken to prevent the rural areas from being ravaged by the pandemic. He also plans to make this a regular feature once a fortnight.





Battled depression, anxiety after wrist injury at '08 Olympics: Sania

NEW DELHI

INDIA'S tennis ace Sania Mirza battled depression after she had to pull out of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games due to a wrist injury.

The injury, which kept the six-time Grand Slam winner in doubles out of competitive

tennis for a year, left her a mental wreck, unable to 'come out of my room to even eat a meal for over a month'.

In an interview to YouTube channel, Mind Matters, Mirza said, "That day -- when I had to pull out of the 2008 Beijing Olympics because of a bad wrist injury -- I went into depression for 3-4 months. I remember crying for no reason. I mean, I used to be absolutely fine and then I would just burst into tears. I remember not coming out of my room to even eat a meal for over a month.

"I felt I will never be able to play

tennis again. I am a bit of a control freak, so for me not being able to do something not on my terms was very difficult to digest," said Mirza, who recently was part of the Indian contingent which competed in the Billie Jean King Cup in Latvia.

The 34-year-old said that for a 20-year-old, on the threshold of making it big, it was a major blow.

"It's a lot for anybody at any age, but for a 20-year-old to handle that kind of pressure, to handle that kind of emotion and to read every day that you're finished and you're never going to come back to not knowing if you'll ever be able to

compete at another Olympics, is devastating," said the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna awardee.

"My wrist was so bad that I wasn't even able to comb my hair. I had lost complete motion. And, after the surgery, it got worse. I felt that I had let my family down, myself down. I have left my country down because I had to pull out of the Olympics."

Battling that intense anxiety, her family was the pillar of strength, which helped her win back her confidence to hit the courts again.

"My family helped me see the right direction. I came back from

that a year later. I didn't play tennis for 6-8 months. After that, I came out of that hole, so to say. That was the year of the Commonwealth Games in India and I won two medals. That goes to show you that when you are mentally in the right space your success follows."

Her advice to professional athletes is to 'keep your mind in the right place every time you compete'.

"If you don't, it is very difficult to be the best athlete that you can be. I knew that if I did not pay attention to my mental health, did not speak to my psychologist that will affect me." (IANS)

Delhi Police issue lookout notice for wrestler Sushil

Indian wrestling's image tarnished due to accusations against Olympic medallist : WFI

NEW DELHI

DELHI Police have issued a "lookout notice" for well-known wrestler Sushil Kumar, a double Olympic medallist, connected to the murder of a former junior international wrestler at Chhatrasal Stadium in north-west Delhi. According to Delhi Police, Sushil is absconding.

Delhi Police are looking for Sushil, employed with the India Railways, as he is posted as an Officer on Special Duty at Chhatrasal Stadium, with the sports wing of the Delhi Education sports department.

"A lookout notice has been issued for Sushil Kumar," Dr Guripal Singh Sidhu, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (North-West Delhi), told IANS. He said he is currently on leave, and that he cannot say anything more on the issue.

At the peak of his prowess, Sushil Kumar single-handedly lifted Indian wrestling to unprecedented heights but as police looks for him in relation to a murder case, the sport's image has taken as much a beating as that of the trailblazing grappler.

Sushil's international success triggered a revolution and created an inspirational legacy. The reserved grappler from Najagarh's Baprola village is till date India's only world champion (2010) in the sport. He is also the only one to claim two individual Olympic medals, an exceptional feat for a country which has seen very limited success at the Games.

The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) is concerned that the good reputation built over the years with stupendous international performances, many of them given by Sushil himself, has been ruined.

"Yes, I must say that the image of Indian wrestling has got hurt badly by this. But we have nothing to do with what wrestlers do away from the mat. We are concerned with their on-mat performance," WFI Assistant Secretary Vinod Tomar told PTI.

Sushil's bronze medal at the 2008 Beijing Olympics ended India's 56-year-long wait for an Olympic medal in wrestling. The achievement had a tremendous impact as Indian wrestling witnessed the rise of Yogeshwar Dutt, Geeta and Babita Phogat, their cousin Vinesh, Rio bronze medallist Sakshi Malik and World medallists Bajrang Punia, Ravi Dahiya and Deepak Punia after that.

However, the fraternity is now shell-shocked as the police on Monday issued a 'Look-out Circular' (LoC) against the cham-

pion wrestler.

The incident has come at a time when Indian wrestling is celebrating its highest number of quotas -- eight -- for the Olympics. The anticipation of a best ever performance at the Tokyo Games is hard to miss.

The police are ascertaining the role of Sushil in a May 4 brawl that led to the death of former international Greco Roman wrestler Sagar Rana, 23, outside the Chhatrasal stadium after being beaten by a group of wrestlers. A couple of people sustained injuries and were admitted to a hospital.

"Not only this, the incident that happened in February had also tarnished the image of Indian wrestling. The sport has struggled hard in earning a reputation because for long wrestlers were known only as a bunch of goons," Tomar lamented.

The WFI official was referring to coach Sukhwinder Mor's involvement in the murder of five people, including a fellow coach Manoj Malik, in Jaat College in Rohtak district of Haryana. Sukhwinder had allegedly gunned down five people due to his personal enmity with Malik and was arrested from New Delhi in a joint operation by Delhi and Haryana police.

Asked if WFI will remove Sushil from the annual contracts list, Tomar said they "were not mulling any such move as

onship in Nur Sultan.

The image of Chhatrasal stadium, which has given India its finest wrestlers like Sushil, Yogeshwar, Bajrang and now Tokyo-bound Ravi Dahiya and Deepak Punia, has also taken a beating.

A source at the stadium said prominent wrestlers like Yogeshwar and Bajrang left the facility because "they were targeted by Sushil's camp for not toeing their line."

The 1982 Asian Games champion Satpal Singh, Sushil's coach and father-in-law, was in charge of the stadium till 2016 before he retired as additional director. After that Sushil was appointed an OSD and it is believed that the move was aimed at keeping the stadium in the tight grip of the family.

"Sushil, who is employed there on Railways' deputation, calls the shots. If you won't listen to him or do as he suggests, he would quietly start harassing you," the source said.

"People are scared to say anything. They come to make a career, not to indulge in politics. So they found it convenient to leave than tolerate the stadium politics," the source said.

PTI made an attempt to reach out to Sushil, his family members and friends for their version of the events but their mobile phones were switched off. The gravity of the current situation is enormous but Sushil is no stranger to controversy either.

In 2016, when WFI had chosen Narsingh Pancham Yadav to represent India at the Rio Games. He later failed a dope test and accused Sushil of having a role in spiking his food, a charge which was found to be false.

During the 2018 Commonwealth Games trials when Sushil beat Praveen Rana in the final, the supporters of the two camps traded blows outside the stadium. Rana had later alleged that the bout

was interrupted many times at the best of Sushil and the officials were also threatened and finally it was awarded to the 2010 World Champion.

Sushil is also the President of the School Games Federation of India (SGFI), which was in news for all the wrong reasons. He had alleged that SGFI secretary had forged his signature to change the by-laws of the organisation and also committed irregularities. He filed an FIR against the secretary in December last year and was re-elected President of the body in March after fresh polls were held on the direction of the Sports Ministry. (IANS/PTI)

of now."

Sushil was handed an A grade contract in December 2018 along with four others for an annual financial support of Rs 30 lakh. However, he has not participated in any international event since his first round defeat in the 2019 World Championship.

1962 Asian Games gold medallist Franco passes away



NEW DELHI

FORTUNATO Franco, the former football player who was part of the Indian team that won gold at the 1962 Asian Games in Jakarta, passed away in Goa on Monday. Franco is survived by his wife, son and daughter.

Playing as a midfielder, Franco was an integral part of the Indian team that beat South Korea 2-1 in the final at Jakarta. He was also part of the team that finished second in the 1962 Asian Cup, and played in the 1960 Olympics as well.

Additionally, Franco was also part of the Indian team that fin-

ished runners-up in the 1964 Merdeka Cup in Kuala Lumpur, and third in the 1965 edition of the tournament.

Making his debut against Pakistan in the Asian Cup Qualifiers in Ernakulam in December 1959, Franco went on to make 26 international appearances. He played for Tata Sports Club and also captained Maharashtra in the Santosh Trophy from 1959 to 1966. He led the team to victory in the 1963-64 season of the Santosh Trophy.

"It is devastating to hear that Mr. Fortunato Franco is no more. He was a member of the Indian Football's golden generation who played a stellar role in helping India win the Gold Medal in 1962 Asian Games. His contribution to Indian Football can never be forgotten. I share the grief," said All India Football Federation (AIFF) president Praful Patel. (IANS)

Bamboo instead of willow for cricket bats? UK researchers say idea worth exploring

LONDON

CAN the willow be replaced by bamboo to manufacture cricket bats? If a University of Cambridge study is to be believed, it can and it should for "economic sustainability" and a "larger sweet spot."

Traditional cricket bats are carved out of English or Kashmir willow but bamboo presents a cheaper option, according to a study by Darshil Shah and Ben Tinkler-Davies from the University of Cambridge.

"The sweet spot on a bamboo bat makes it much easier to hit a four off a Yorker for starters, but it's exciting for all kinds of strokes," Shah was quoted as saying by 'The Times'.

According to the Guardian newspaper, "there are problems with the supply of English willow. It takes about 15 years before a tree can be harvested, after which new trees must be planted. Between 15 per cent and 30 per cent of the wood is also wasted during bat production."

Shah, believes that bamboo is "cheap, plen-

tiful, fast growing and sustainable material. Shoots are able to grow from previous stumps, and maturity is reached after seven years." "It is also very prevalent in countries that are taking up cricket such as China, Japan, South America as well," he said.

In their published article in the journal of 'Sports Engineering and Technology', the duo reveals that their prototype bat blade was made from strips of bamboo shoots stuck together with a resin adhesive and formed into layers.

According to the researchers, they found that the bat was "stiffer, harder and stronger than those made of willow, although more brittle. It also had a similar vibration performance, meaning it sounds similar when striking a ball."

"It is heavier than a willow bat, and we are looking to optimise that," said Shah. The bam-

boo bat is supposed to have a larger "sweet spot, closer to the toe of the bat."

While the idea of bamboo bats could be a novel one for starters, whether it could be used in the international market is still not clear as ICC's regulations allow only bats made out of wood. And there was a counter-view as well on whether such a move is actually plausible.

Prof Mark Miodownik, an engineer and materials scientist and director of the Institute of Making at University College

London, said: "...just because bamboo is more plentiful than willow does not mean bats made from it would be more sustainable. "The whole life cycle of production, including the manufacture of the laminating resins and their disposal, needs to be considered. Do these resins biodegrade for instance? If not, this could be LBW for this new material." (PTI)



Babar, Healy win ICC Player of the Month awards

DUBAI

PAKISTAN skipper Babar Azam and Australian women's team wicket-keeper Alyssa Healy were on Monday declared the ICC players of the month for their stellar performances during the month of April.

Azam won the award for his consistent and outstanding performances across all formats in the recently concluded series against South Africa and was chosen as the April winner by fans and the ICC voting academy.

His match-winning 82-ball 94 in the third ODI against South Africa helped Azam gain 13 rating points to reach a career-best 865 points. He also hit 122 from 59 balls in Pakistan's successful chase in the third match of a T20I series against the same opposition.

"The world bats in two ways in white ball cricket. One way is to destroy attacks with muscle and force and then there is the Babar Azam

way, like conducting a batting symphony with punch, panache and flair, and he deserves to win this award," Ramiz Raja, representing the ICC Voting Academy, said in a release.

From the Southern Stars, Healy was deservedly chosen for her dominant show against all types of bowling in the recent series against New Zealand. Healy played three ODIs against New Zealand, scoring 155 runs at an average of 51.66 and a strike rate of 98.72.

She finished as the leading run-scorer in Australia's series victory over New Zealand that extended their record-winning streak to 24 ODIs.

Commenting on Healy's performance, Ian Bishop representing the ICC Voting Academy said, "Healy deserves to win the ICC Women's Player of the Month - April as she added the runs at the top consistently and at a good tempo to help set up Australia's scoring in chases and target setting across all three games of their record-breaking series." (PTI)



IPL: Practice options in Delhi, Ahmedabad may have led to breach

NEW DELHI

THE Indian cricket board's decision to host the second phase of the Indian Premier League (IPL) matches in cities with no alternate T20-specific practice facilities may have caused the breach in Covid protocols, it has emerged.

Delhi and Ahmedabad -- cities with rapidly increasing Covid cases -- hosted the second phase and the positive cases among players and staff that led to the postponement of the tournament emerged during matches in those cities. Besides, the two cities struggled for alternate practice facilities for teams.

"There is a belief within many Board of Control for Cricket of India (BCCI) and state officials that the decision to take the second phase to Delhi and Ahmedabad was wrong. There were four teams in each city and except for the main ground, which is an international-level facility and hosted matches, the alternate facilities meant for practice were open to exposure to Covid-19," an official in the know of things told IANS.

While in Delhi, teams like the Chennai Super Kings used the Roshanara Club grounds for practice, those in Ahmedabad were forced to use Gujarat College ground. Both venues are in congested or old parts of the city. The practice facility at the Motera ground in Ahmedabad has another problem. Since the construction of annexe grounds and full facilities isn't complete, the available facility is not suited to practice big shots needed in T20 cricket.

Pakistan clean sweep series 2-0

HARARE: Pakistan on Monday crushed Zimbabwe by an innings and 147 runs on Day 4 and made a clean sweep of the two-Test series at the Harare Sports Club here.

Zimbabwe were bundled out for 231 in their second innings, after adding only 11 runs to the overnight score of 220 for nine wickets. Pakistan had defeated the hosts by an innings and 116 runs in the first Test.

Brief scores: Pak 510 for 8 decl in 147.1 overs bt Zimbabwe 132 in 60.4 overs & 231 in 68 overs (Regis Chakabva 80, Brendan Taylor 49, Luke Jongwa 37; Nauman Ali 5-86, Shaheen Afridi 5-52) by 147 runs. Player of the match: Abid Ali and Player of the series: Hasan Ali.