

Govt gets bouquets, brickbats for total unlock decision

HYDERABAD
THE Telangana government's decision to unlock completely has drawn mixed reactions from people. While a few appreciated the decision, many opposed calling it a hasty one. The State cabinet on Saturday announced the lifting of lockdown curbs completely from Sunday. Sharing their views on social media, a Facebook user Omung Jain called it a very bad decision and said it would be big invitation to the third wave of the pandemic. Another user, Mohammed Abdul Aleem, also echoed a similar view. "There should have been at least a night curfew from 8 pm to 5 am the next day," he opined. Venkateshwaran Swamy, a social media user, said, "Looks like there was pressure from traders to lift the lockdown. Not a good thing. It should have been closed till the end of this month. Learn from Odisha."

Even the government's decision to open schools from July 1 has also drew flak from the citizens. Sonia Mond questioned the deci-

sion stating, "How can the schools be opened? I really don't understand this because kids are still not vaccinated and with the government orders, the schools will pressurise the kids to get back to school." Another social media user, Rekha Rao, said, "Seven hours in a mask in school? Low oxygen levels obviously... new issues will crop up." Another user Ali Asgar too expressed a similar view and urged the Municipal Administration Minister, KT Rama Rao, to reconsider the decision.

However, there were a few who welcomed the government's decision. One Bhaswathi Nelutla, a native of Warangal, questioned as for how many days the hunger should continue. "I think whoever needs a lockdown might be with a filled stomach, but many more are there who want to get back to work. People are ready to go on trips and parties, but not ready to go to schools and workplaces. It is very easy to comment and hard to follow," she said.

TS protests against AP irrigation projects on Krishna

To ensure optimum utilisation of available water, the State cabinet ratifies proposal to take up a slew of projects on Krishna river to address irrigation and drinking water needs in the southern Telangana districts

**HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD**

THE State Cabinet on Saturday registered a strong protest against the construction of Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Scheme and RDS (Rajolibanda Diversion Scheme) by the Andhra Pradesh government. To ensure optimum utilisation of available water, the cabinet ratified the proposal to take up a slew of projects on River Krishna to address irrigation and drinking water needs in the southern Telangana districts.

Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao discussed the status of ongoing irrigation project works and also the AP government's fast moves to complete the projects without approval from



the Central agencies and the Telangana government. The cabinet expressed displeasure over not allocating Telangana share from Krishna waters despite making several pleas to the Union government. The TS government already approached the

Supreme Court and National Green Tribunal against the illegal projects by the neighbouring state. The Telangana government also withdrew petitions against the AP projects in Supreme Court to make easy for the Centre to ad-

dress the long-pending water disputes between the two Telugu States. The cabinet demanded the Centre to constitute interstate water disputes tribunal immediately. The cabinet also ratified to construct Jogulamba barrage in old Mahbubnagar district to utilise 60 to 70 tmc ft of flood water from Krishna, Pulichintala left canal, Bhima flood canal, lift scheme at Nagarjunasagar tail pond and another lift scheme at Sunkeshula reservoir. The officials were asked to finalise the DPRs for all new projects. The cabinet also gave its nod to utilise the power generated from hydel power generation projects to run lift schemes like Kaleshwararam, Devadula and other lift projects in the State.

Cabinet gives nod for 4 multi-specialty hospitals in GHMC

While the TIMS and Chest hospital will be up upgraded, the other two hospitals, one at Gaddiannaram fruit market and another between Alwal and ORR, will be established soon

**HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD**

THE State cabinet on Saturday gave nod for the establishment of four new multi-specialty hospitals in Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation limits. These hospitals will come up at Telangana Institute of Medical Sciences (TIMS), Chest Hospital, Gaddiannaram fruit market and one Medchal-Malkajigiri district.

The TIMS, which has been providing treatment for Covid patients, would be upgraded as multi-specialty hospital, while the Chest hospital is already under renovation to promote as the high-end hospital.

The available land at the Gaddiannaram fruit market in the city would be utilised to open the hospital and the fourth hospital would be established between Alwal and ORR (Outer Ring Road).

The government had taken the decision to set up four multi-specialty hospitals in 2016. Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao in the meeting explained the government's priorities to strengthen the medical and health sector in the State. The cabinet also ratified government's decision to modernise the existing vegetable market in Kothapet and convert into integrated veg and non-veg market.

BOOK RELEASED



Governor Joint Secretary J Bhavani Shankar presenting the book titled "Pushpa Haseeyam" penned by him to the Chief Justice of India Justice NV Ramana at Raj Bhavan on Saturday.



GMC alumni gesture to ENT hospital

**HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD**

GANDHI Medical College Alumni which has initiated a slew of community service programmes in the past, has handed over 'Endoscopic surgical blades' worth Rs 10 lakh to Dr T Shankar, Superintendent of Government ENT Hospital on Saturday. District Governor-elect Lion M Vidyasagar Reddy presented

the equipment to the ENT Hospital Superintendent in the presence of PDG Lion Dr G R Linga Murthy, Secretary Gandhi Medical College Alumni, Dr PV Nanda Kumar Reddy, Joint Secretary Gandhi Alumni. FUDGE Lion Kamal Kishore Agarwal and Lion Sardar Harbinder Singh. The ENT Hospital Superintendent thanked the Gandhi Medical College Alumni for their kind gesture.

Four die after car tyre bursts

**HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIKARABAD**

IN a fatal road accident, four people were killed on the spot and one was seriously injured when two cars collided head on in the premises of Kodangal of Vikarabad district on Saturday. The accident occurred after tyre burst of the car travelling from Karnataka to Hyderabad.

According to the police, the deceased were identified as Abdul, Rasheed, Amir, Malaan Begum residents of Yousufguda in Hyderabad. Police said that the deceased were travelling from Karnataka to Hyderabad and the accident took place when the tyre of an Innova car busted. Police said that the bodies were shifted to the hospital. A case had been registered and investigation is under process, said the police.

Uttam calls Rahul Gandhi a visionary and man of masses

- The Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee president and party workers celebrate the AICC chief's birthday at Gandhi Bhavan
- Slams the Centre for keeping aside the suggestions of Rahul to address Covid crisis in the country

**HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD**

TELANGANA Pradesh Congress Committee president and Nalgonda MP N Uttam Kumar Reddy on Saturday stated that former president of All India Congress Committee Rahul Gandhi was a visionary and man of the masses.

Speaking at Gandhi Bhavan on the occasion of birthday celebrations of Rahul Gandhi, which were held in a simple manner, Uttam said that as Rahul Gandhi was a visionary, he had warned the Central government about the present crisis nearly 15 months ago. But, the Bharatiya Janata Party leaders made light of him. He (Rahul Gandhi) gives preference to well-being of people and not to the posts.

"Though Rahul has been offered Prime Minister and Union Minister posts, he had refused them and engaged himself in the service of people. Even though he was born in a family which had occupied higher of-



TPCC president Uttam Kumar Reddy overseeing the Covid vaccination programme held on the occasion of AICC chief Rahul Gandhi's birthday celebrations at Gandhi Bhavan in Hyderabad on Saturday

fices, he did not show interest in them and dedicated himself to the service of the nation," Uttam added.

He said when Covid pandemic hit the country, Rahul Gandhi had set the politics aside and gave several advices to the Central government. But, the Centre did not follow them leading to the second wave due to their callousness.

He said Rahul had advised Prime Minister Narendra Modi about the importance of vaccination, which would prevent the spread of the pandemic, one year ago. But the Centre did not heed to the advice. Due to the delay in taking up the vaccination programme, thousands of people had lost

their lives. He made it clear that Prime Minister should take responsibility for the Covid deaths in the country.

He said that due to rampant unemployment and economic slowdown, the country was in utter distress. For the hapless Indians, Rahul Gandhi was a ray of hope and he was happy to work under his leadership.

Meanwhile, NSUI, the student wing of Congress organised a free vaccination camp and Other Backward Classes Cell and Minority Cell organised a free rice and groceries distribution programme at Gandhi Bhavan, which were inaugurated by the TPCC chief on the day.

Nama refutes allegations in money laundering case

**HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD**

REFUTING the allegations against Madhucon, Telangana Rashtra Samithi floor leader in Lok Sabha Nama Nageswara Rao on Saturday said that it was National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) which had assured to compensate for delay in the Ranchi Expressway project and later terminated the contract.

Addressing a press conference here at his residence, Nama said that after his entry into public life, he had stayed away from the company and gave it to his brothers. He said that the Ranchi Expressway was a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV). The 160-km project was taken on the Build, Operate and Transfer (BOT) model in 2011. As per the contract, 80 per cent of the site should be handed over to the agency at the com-

- The Khammam MP says NHAI terminated the Ranchi Expressway project contract after the company completed 60.24 per cent works
- Adds that there is no scope for withdrawal of money by the company from an 'escrow account'



mencement of work and 100 per cent within three months. The NHAI did not hand over the entire site even after seven years, he said.

Nama said that the company completed 60.24 per cent of the work and at this stage, NHAI terminated the contract. The cost of the project is Rs 1,655 crore of which Rs 463 crore should be

given by the company and Rs 1,190 crore by the bank. The banks gave Rs 652 crore and because of the delay, they collected Rs 378 crore as interest, said Rao. He said that the NHAI assured to give 50 per cent funds because delay was on their part but later withdrawn.

Nama said that there was no scope for withdrawal of money by the company from an 'escrow account' because the money was released after verification of works by the three consultants. He claimed that there was no complaint or petition against the company and it was only because of involvement in a PIL (in a case related to cutting of trees in Bihar). He refused to talk further on this stating that the case was in Arbitration Tribunal.

Objection, Hon'ble CJI, Sir: You're 'Telugu Muddu Bidda,' but...!

DR HC UPADHYAY

TRUE, it is a happy occasion for the people of both Telugu States to see their beloved son of the soil occupying the coveted post of the Chief Justice of India (CJI), and there is every reason for them to rejoice and celebrate this occasion. It is equally a happy occasion for all countrymen to welcome the new CJI. Further, there is nothing wrong in the newly-appointed CJI visiting the places of pilgrimage or meeting privately his kith and kin and friends in close circles.

Obviously, up to this stage nobody should have any objection. But the matter gets really serious when the celebrations in the form of felicitations cross all limits of maintaining 'aloofness' by a Judge. Without any intention to belittle the importance of the incident or showing disrespect to the august post of the CJI or the person concerned, Justice NV Ramana, it is, however, necessary to remind not only the CJI, but all other judges of the country that such a show of public appearance could have been avoided.

Going by the 16 points 'Restatement of Values of Judicial Life', first adopted by the Supreme Court on May 7, 1997, and later made applicable to all the ju-

dicial officers in the country, clearly lays down that "Every Judge must at all times be conscious that he is under the public gaze and there should be no act or omission by him which is unbecoming of the high office he occupies and the public esteem in which that office is hailed."

Further, the said document also states: 'a judge should practice a degree of aloofness consistent with the dignity of his office.'

Among others, there are also restrictions on mingling with people in general and keeping close association with individual members of the Bar besides restrictions on joining a club, refraining from entering into public debate or expression of views in public etc., which form the part of the self-driven 'Lakshman Rekha' for judges.

In course of his about a week's sojourn to the Telugu States, the CJI chose to meet scores of people from different walks of life such as politicians, bureaucrats, practicing lawyers and businessmen. Had he kept the concept of 'aloofness' in mind, he could have avoided such a worthless public show of aggrandizement easily. Among the visitors, who knows how many of them have their cases pending before the



LEGAL CIRCLES

Supreme Court or other courts? But it is for certain that among the top brass of Telangana police, which included the DGP and 3 Commissioners, one is a subject matter of the Supreme Court ordered enquiry headed by the former judge of the same Court Justice VS Sirpurkar and the Committee is yet to submit its report to the apex court on the allegations of fake encounters by the concerned police commissioner. Such meetings go against the very

first point of the code which says: 'Justice must not merely be done, but it must also be seen to be done... any act of a judge...weather in official or personal capacity, which erodes the credibility of this perception, has to be avoided.' Applying this measuring rod, the Hon'ble CJI seems to have may be inadvertently though crossed the self-drawn Lakshman Rekha and set a bad precedent of allowing one and all for his felicitations.

Still what is worse is the mysterious silence by the leaders of the legal profession and their associations leave alone the politicians and media Moguls, who at the slightest opportunity come out in open in support of morals, ethics and values in judiciary.

Plea for SC regional benches

The demand for the establishment of regional benches of the apex court at Kolkata, Chennai/Hyderabad and Mumbai has been raised once again by the South Indian Advocates Joint Action Committee. A representation to this effect was submitted to the Chief Justice of India NV Ramana during his recent sojourn to Andhra Pradesh and Telangana by the Convener of the Joint Action Committee S Nagender.

On the face of it, there is nothing exceptional in the demand of lawyers considering the factors such as distances from different parts of the country to the seat of the Supreme Court of India at New Delhi and litigation costs involved. However, there is a strong opposition to the idea of setting up regional benches of the apex court by some of the Delhi-based Supreme Court lawyers who think that their monopoly would end if the demand for establish-

ment of regional benches is conceded.

A compendium of ST laws

There is no much literature available on Adivasis, meaning the 'first inhabitants or aborigines' with official name of 'Scheduled Tribes'. Most of them are concentrated in central, eastern and north-east regions. These regions are witnessing a variety of ethnic and socio-political conflicts. Scheduled Tribes (STs) are one of the few sections of society in India who do not shy away to rebel against those in power whenever their rights are violated and there is a threat to their culture and self-governance. The book entitled, 'Fifth Schedule to the Constitution' by veteran scholar, practicing lawyer and a former legislator Dr Jai Prakash Gupta provides an insight into the development of ST-related laws in the country. The Fifth Schedule to the Constitution of India, as the author puts 'is a Constitution within the Constitution'. The said Schedule determines the political and constitutional arrangements of over 108 districts in 10 States.

Published by Satyam Law International, New Delhi, the book would be of immense use, particularly to lawyers, law makers and researchers.

Kumbh mela was biggest super spreader event: AICC official

PANAJI

ALL India Congress Committee general secretary Dinesh Gundu Rao, on Saturday, said that the Kumbh mela organised in Uttarakhand amid the second Covid wave, was the "biggest super spreader event in the world", even as he blamed Prime Minister Narendra Modi for not doing enough to rein in the rapid spread of infections earlier this year.

Addressing a press conference in Panaji, Rao also said that despite being the largest manufacturer of vaccines in the world, India was worse off than its South Asian neighbours.

"The biggest super spreader event in the world was the Kumbh mela," Rao told reporters at the state Congress headquarters in Panaji.

"People throughout the country lost their lives and livelihood, they are suffering.



Why? Because the central government did not bother to address the situation. It did not bother to purchase the vaccines. It did not bother to warn the people that the second wave of Covid has already started, let us be care-

ful," Rao said.

"Instead of that, he was doing election rallies, even though he knew that the second wave had come. Never in the history of Indian politics, has a PM behaved so irresponsibly... And he does not

care. He does not bother," Rao also said.

"The PM was busy congratulating himself. Why is the situation not the same in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, our own neighbours," the AICC official asked. (IANS)

Regional parties can never do good for the state: Jitin Prasada

LUCKNOW

AFTER joining the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) earlier this month Jitin Prasada, who visited the BJP headquarters in Uttar Pradesh's capital Lucknow for the first time, hit out at regional parties and said they can never do good for the state.

Prasada in a conversation with the media on Saturday said those who were once regional 'satraps' in Uttar Pradesh and formed regional parties, today their very existence is under threat. Smaller parties were formed by big leaders but now it revolves only around a particular individual. The priority given to the country and the state comes a distant second for such parties. BJP is the only party that always thinks first about the country.

Speaking about his role in the BJP, he said whatever work the BJP's state leadership, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath give me, I will do it with full devotion and honesty.

Prasada said he will work as an ordinary BJP worker. "I want my work to speak for itself." As far



as the BJP is concerned as well as its central and state leadership, it is this leadership which is the real national party in the true sense. Here the policy decision is in line with the sentiments of the party organisation and the party workers. This is the only party where even people from an ordinary family can reach the top leadership. A great example of this is Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

He said, "I do not want to speak anything right now, my work will speak for itself in the

coming times." On reaching the BJP headquarters in Lucknow, Prasada first went to the temple built in the party office and bowed his head and then spoke to the media. He was welcomed at the party office by Uttar Pradesh BJP President, Swatantra Dev Singh.

Jitin Prasada recently left the Congress and joined the BJP. He was a part of the Congress for a long time and was also a central minister during the United Progressive Alliance government. (IANS)



Mumbai again takes lead in active Covid caseload

MUMBAI

WITH the Covid-19 situation improving in Pune, Mumbai has again taken the lead in terms of active Covid cases in the state, accounting for 18,764 of the state's 134,747 ill patients, health officials said here on Saturday. Pune comes next with 17,888 active cases, followed by Thane (13,970), Kolhapur (11,453) and Sangli (10,545) in the list with 10,000-plus active patients. In the 5,000-plus range, Ratnagiri and Satara figure

below the top five with 7,766 and 7,149 cases, respectively, followed by Sindhudurg with 5,372 active cases. Districts that figure at the bottom with less than 500 active cases are Gondia (197), Yavatmal (232), Gadchiroli (303), Buldhana (313) and Nandurbar (395). The state's current Covid-19 toll is 116,674 with the overall Covid tally stands at 59,54,508. With a recovery rate of 95.73 per cent, 56,99,983 patients have been fully cured and discharged till date. (IANS)

BJP demands attempt to murder case against Vijayan

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

JOINING issue in the ongoing war of words between chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan and new Congress president K. Sudhakaran, on Saturday, Union Minister of State for External Affairs V. Muraleedharan demanded that an attempt to murder case against Vijayan be lodged.

On Saturday, at Sudhakaran's press conference, his party colleague K. Gopi, who hails from Vijayan's village in Kannur, recalled an old incident, that in 1977 when 26 beedi workers were terminated from a society, they led a protest. "I was leading the protest and then Vijayan with a sword led a group of people and he brandished his sword and it hit my hand and the injury mark is still there," said Gopi showing his hand and adding that despite his complaint to the local police then, there was no further action in the case.

Muraleedharan told the me-



dia in the state capital that if the Congress party is serious in the allegation, they should register a police complaint.

"There is no time limit to an attempt to murder case and hence, Sudhakaran should ask Gopi to go forward and register a fresh complaint," said Muraleedharan.

He also pointed out that in the past two days both these leaders have been revisiting

their college days at the Government Brennen College and have been saying about their deeds then and it shows that both of them were goons and criminals.

"My appeal to both of them is not to portray a great institution like Brennen College by distorting its greatness, and lowering it as a place of goons," said Muraleedharan. (IANS)



Software to help identify patients who may require ventilator support

NEW DELHI

A software can now identify whether a patient will require ventilator support in an ICU or referral, and will make necessary arrangements before emergency sets in.

At a time when sudden ICU and other emergency requirements during the pandemic have been a challenge for hospitals to manage, timely information about such situations would help manage the health crisis better.

The software called 'Covid Severity Score' (CSS) consists of an algorithm that measures a set of parameters. It scores each against a pre-set dynamic algorithm multiple times for each patient and allocates a Covid Severity Score (CSS) mapping it in a graphical trend.

The technology is being used in three community Covid care centres at Kolkata and suburbs including a 100-bed government mandated Covid care centre at Barrackpore, Kolkata.

The Foundation for Innovations in Health, Kolkata, with support from the Science for Equity, Empowerment and Development (SEED) division of the Department of Science and Technology in collaboration with IIT Guwahati, Dr Kevin Dhaliwal, University of Edinburgh and Dr Sayantan Bandopadhyay, formerly WHO (SE Asia Regional Office), have developed an algorithm that measures symptoms, signs, vital pa-

rameters, test reports and comorbidities of the Covid positive patient and scores each against a pre-set dynamic algorithm, thus allocating a Covid Severity Score (CSS).

This technology has been made available at primary care e-Health clinics in resource poor settings through SEED Project support.

Frontline Health Workers trained in National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF) aligned model and certified by National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) are trained to record all these parameters in a tablet computer which has the software loaded in it.

The 'CSS' is regularly monitored multiple times by 'remote' specialist doctors thus reducing the doctor's consultation time per patient and reducing the doctors travel requirement.

The software can help early identification of patients likely to require ventilator support in an ICU and referral, reduce hospital referral for those unlikely to require critical care support, thus releasing more hospital beds in circulation.

It will also help in providing monitored medical support to those patients who cannot afford treatment or cannot isolate at home due to poor housing conditions. The facility can be a huge support for 'Covid Care Centres' with beds and oxygen support only but no facility for invasive ventilation. (IANS)

Punjab CM announces Milkha Singh Chair in Patiala sports varsity

CHANDIGARH

PUNJAB Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Saturday announced a Milkha Singh Chair at the Maharaja Bhupinder Singh Punjab Sports University in Patiala in memory of the legendary athlete who passed away on Friday night due to Covid complications at the age of 91.

The Chief Minister, who visited the 'Flying Sikh's' residence in Chandigarh to pay his last respects, said the Punjab government will ensure that Milkha Singh's memory continues to inspire the younger generations.

Amarinder Singh, who earlier announced a state funeral for Milkha Singh, besides announcing a state holiday as a mark of respect to the former Olympian, said the legacy of the great Indian sprinter would continue to live on in the hearts of the people.

Milkha Singh's death is a mammoth loss to the entire nation and a sad moment for all, he added.

Recalling the declaration of a national holiday by then Prime Minister late Jawaharlal Nehru after Milkha Singh defeated champion Pakistan sprinter Abdul Khaliq in Lahore in 1960, the Chief Min-

ister said that he wished he could have also declared a national holiday today.

But Punjab would mourn the legend with a state holiday, with flags flying at half mast, he added.

The 1960 win in Lahore was a momentous occasion for Milkha Singh, who had lost his family in Pakistan at the time of Partition.

It was after that victory that then Pakistan President General Ayub Khan had nicknamed Milkha Singh as 'Flying Sikh', said Amarinder Singh while interacting informally with the media outside the athlete's house in Sector 8 here. (IANS)



BENGAL TEEN KEPT BODIES BURIED IN GODOWN FOR 4 MONTHS

KOLKATA

A shocking incident has come to light at Kaliachak in West Bengal's Malda district, where a 19-year-old youth allegedly killed his parents, sister and grandmother and kept the bodies buried in the godown of the house for the last four months.

The police recovered the bodies on Saturday and are questioning the accused teen, who has been identified as Asif Mohammed, and his elder brother Arif to seek details about the motive behind the murder.

The incident came to light after Arif, who stayed away from his home, lodged a complaint with the Kaliachak police station on Saturday morning, alleging that his brother had killed four members of his family and buried the bodies under the floor of the godown located adjacent

to the house.

The police immediately rushed to the spot and arrested Asif. Later, in the presence of a magistrate, the floor of the godown was dug and the four bodies were recovered from there. The bodies have been sent to the Malda Medical College for post-mortem.

"The accused has admitted that he had killed all the four persons in February end. He confessed that he had mixed drugs in their drinks and made them unconscious. After that, he pushed them into a well to confirm their death. The bodies were then pulled out of the well, buried to the godown where they were taken one after another. The police are also interrogating Arif because we don't want to leave anything to chance," said Alok Rajoria, Superintendent of Malda Police.

The police have also recovered Rs



one lakh in cash from the house.

Sources in the police said the gate of the godown was close to the en-

trance and there was no gate that could open inside and so he had dug a tunnel to bring the bodies inside

the godown.

"The tunnel was made so that the local people didn't get to know anything," a senior police officer said.

The police have also come to know that the teen hardly stepped out of his house, and none -- not even the maid servant -- was allowed inside the house. The teen used to order food online.

However, the police admitted there are still some grey areas in the case. According to senior police officers, it seems unlikely for a 19-year-old to kill four persons and bury them singlehandedly, and it is possible that there was some accomplice in the case.

Moreover, it is also unlikely that Arif didn't get any information about his family for four months.

"Asif confessed that he told his neighbours that his family had shifted to Kolkata in a newly-pur-

chased flat, but what was Arif doing? Why didn't he have any suspicion? Why didn't he come to the police before? These are some questions that need to be answered and that is the reason we are also questioning Arif," the officer said. As the news of the murders spread, a huge crowd gathered near the house.

According to the neighbours, Asif had passed his Class X board exams reportedly from a private school in Kaliachak, not far from his village. They said that after passing the exams, he had run away from his home because his parents refused to buy him a laptop.

After he came back, his parents reportedly bought him an expensive computer and other gadgets. He had told his parents that he was developing an app that would make him "very rich", the neighbours said. (IANS)

All set for Big Vax drive today



- Principal Secretary, Health, Anil Kumar says people over the age of 45 years and mothers with children below five years are the main focus groups during the Big Vaccine Sunday
- Districts collectors have been told to inoculate 8-10 people in a day
- 14 lakh vaccine doses, both Covaxin and Covishield, have been sent to all the 13 districts

AMARAVATI

THE state is all set to carry out a huge vaccination drive on Sunday, June 20, targeting about eight to 10 lakh people a day.

Though officially no target has been announced, the top health authorities told all 13 district collectors that the objective is to vaccinate 8-10 lakh people in a day.

“We have already showcased our capacity to vaccinate more than six lakh persons in a day. This time we are aiming to inoculate more people,” principal secretary (health) Anil Kumar Singhal said on Saturday.

Jagan betrayed unemployed youth: TDP

HANS NEWS SERVICE AMARAVATI

TDP AP president K Atchannaidu on Saturday demanded the Jagan Mohan Reddy government to explain why it failed to release its much promised job calendars in the first two years of coming to power and why it was not creating lakhs of jobs for the youth every year.

Atchannaidu recalled how the Chief Minister had raised the expectations of the unemployed youth on the DSC teacher jobs at the time of the elections. But now, the gov-

ernment has not been filling up the 25,000 teacher jobs and these were not even mentioned in the last calendar.

In a statement here, the TDP leader asserted that the Chief Minister and his advisors owed an explanation to the people why they wasted two precious years to release the job calendar. Even this was nothing but a calendar of lies and false hopes. Jagan Mohan Reddy shouted during his elections that he would fill up 2.3 lakh jobs immediately after coming to power. He got 151 MLAs and formed the Government with a massive majority. Now,

AP sees 5,674 new cases, deaths fall below 50-mark

AMARAVATI

FOR the first time in more than two months, the number of daily Covid-19 fatalities in the state fell below 50 as 45 people succumbed in 24 hours ending 9 am on Saturday.

The state registered 5,674 fresh cases from 1.03 lakh tests in 24 hours, at the rate of 5.5 per cent, a drastic drop from the high of 25 per cent a month ago.

Also, 8,014 recoveries were reported in a day, according to the latest health department bulletin.

The number of active cases has reduced to 65,244.

After 2.10 crore total sample tests so far, the overall infection positivity rate came to 8.7 per cent, while the recovery rate improved to 95.6 per cent.

The mortality rate remained constant at 0.66 per cent, according

to the health department data.

The prime hotspot East Godavari district reported 1,068 fresh cases, Chittoor 854 and West Godavari 758, while the remaining ten districts added less than 500 each.

East Godavari's coronavirus graph, however, has witnessed a sharp fall from a high of 37.5 per cent (positivity) in the second week of May to just about 12 per cent now.

Chittoor had nine fresh fatalities, East Godavari, Guntur and Krishna five each, Anantapur, Srikakulam, Visakhapatnam and West Godavari three each, Kadapa, Kurnool, Prakasam and Vizianagaram two each and Nellore one in a day.

Only East Godavari district now has 14,139 active cases while the remaining 12 districts have less than 10,000 each.

Anantapur and Kurnool have less than 2,000 active cases each.

to get the second dose of Covaxin and Covishield this month.

More than 12.7 lakh mothers with children under five years also have to get the coronavirus vaccine jab.

Over 40 per cent of the 1.33 crore persons over 45 years of age have not yet taken even the

Jagan released a calendar of lies, alleges Atchannaidu

he released a belated calendar only to fill just 10,000 government jobs.

Atchannaidu deplored that the Chief Minister and his ministers made it a habit to betray the people and they were cheating the people with their false promises before and also after the elections. The YSRCP leaders should answer to the public why their government was filling up just 10,000 posts as against its grand promise of 2.30 lakh jobs. There were over 7,000 vacancies in the police department but the notification was issued for just 470 posts, he pointed out.

TTD TRUST BOARD MEET

Only organic Naivedyam to Lord

HANS NEWS SERVICE TIRUMALA

TTD Trust Board which met here on Saturday took many important decisions regarding Tirumala development and also non-permanent employees' benefit.

Briefing media after the meeting, TTD chairman Y V Subba Reddy said that the board resolved to set up a committee to go into the regularisation in a phased manner of all the eligible employees working in TTD as contract and outsourcing employees.

This will be good news to more than 15,000 employees working

- A committee will be set up to go into the regularisation in a phased manner of all the eligible employees working in TTD as contract and outsourcing employees

as contract and outsourcing employees in various departments.

Another significant decision is to remove all the unauthorised shops in Tirumala within a week which is bound to create a flutter. Sources said there are 400-500 unauthorised shops, mostly in the areas where pilgrim movement is high for free movement of pilgrims.

It also decided to use only or-

ganic grains and cereals for preparation of daily Naivedyam for Swamy Varu under Govinduni Go Adharita Naivedyam programme on a full scale.

The other decisions approved include launching SVBC Kannada and Hindi channels, SRI-VANI Trust funds utilisation for construction and renovation of temples in backward areas and extending pilgrim allowance to retired pensioners of HDPP on par with TTD retired employees.

The meet expressed its nod for construction of 13 more Kalyana Mandapams and also resolved to invite Chief Minister for laying foundation stone to TTD children's hospital, to develop An-

janadri, near Akasaganga, the birth place of Hanuman in Tirumala and extending Garuda Varadhi from Kapilatheertham to Alipiri from TTD funds.

He said RTC will introduce electric buses to Tirumala soon and begin with 80 buses which will be operated for ferrying pilgrims while TTD also operate 20 electric buses for free transport for pilgrims on the hills.

Subba Reddy, whose two year term ends on Monday, took the occasion to thank Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy for giving him the opportunity to serve as TTD chairman, board members, officials and employees for their cooperation.

DUES TO FARMERS

NANI HITS OUT AT NAIDU OVER LETTER

- Says the YSRCP govt cleared Rs 4000 cr dues left by the TDP govt to farmers
- States only Rs 1,637 cr is to be paid to paddy farmers
- Lashes out at the TDP chief for betraying one crore farmers by promising to waive Rs 85,000 cr farm loans before 2014 polls but not clearing even 20% of that amount in his five-year rule

HANS NEWS SERVICE AMARAVATI

MINISTER for civil supplies Kodali Sri Venkateswara Rao (Nani) on Saturday flayed TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu for falsely claiming that payments for paddy procurement was done within 48 hours during TDP rule.

Speaking to the media, the minister stated that the YSRCP government led by Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy had cleared Rs 4,000 crore towards the dues kept pending by the TDP government to farmers, within three months after coming to power in 2019. He said both state and Centre have procured 28 lakh metric tonnes of paddy and paid Rs



1,637 crore to farmers by the time Chandrababu wrote a letter to the Chief Minister. With directions from the Chief Minister, the government is paying within 21 days of crop procurement and as on date, only Rs 1,619 crore is yet to be paid.

Kodali Nani said that Centre has to release the arrears of about Rs 3,229 crore to the state, and although there has been a delay in clearing those dues, the government has been paying the farmers from the state treasury. He said that Chandrababu Naidu doesn't even know the difference

between bran and grain and is afraid of writing a letter to the Centre fearing about his cases. He slammed Chandrababu for betraying one crore farmers by promising to waive Rs 85,000 crore farm loans during 2014 elections and not even clearing 20 per cent of the promised amount in his five-year rule.

Meanwhile, the minister rejected Nara Lokesh's allegations against the Chief Minister being vindictive towards opposition and said that he was screaming like a madman confined to his house and Zoom app. He warned Lokesh to mind his tongue while making allegations or addressing the Chief Minister.

He stated that many YSRCP leaders were assassinated during the TDP regime and it was not reasonable to attribute such incidents in the villages to the government. It was Chandrababu who backstabbed his father-in-law NT Rama Rao to gain power and the same Chandrababu had brought the law to prevent the CBI from entering the state just to safeguard himself, said the minister and questioned the TDP chief whether any CBI inquiry has been ordered in 14 years of his ruling.

Kodali's insults will not help farmers, says Uma

- Referring to harsh comments by Civil Supplies Minister Kodali Nani against TDP chief Naidu and his son Lokesh, former Minister Devineni Uma Maheswara Rao says instead of looking at ways to end woes of farmers who are waiting for their dues from the govt, the Minister is foul mouthing the Oppn leaders just to please the CM
- Asserts that Rs 3,670 cr dues are still to be paid to paddy farmers



ister Nara Lokesh.

Uma Maheswara Rao termed it as shameful on the part of the minister to divert the people's attention by using abusive language against the opposition leadership. Kodali Nani was only trying to see joy and happiness in the eyes of Chief Minister Y S Jaganmohan Reddy but not those of the farmers who were waiting for their dues payment for over 3 months, he remarked.

Addressing a press conference here, the TDP leader said that over 2.44 lakh farmers sold 28.35 lakh metric tonne (MT) paddy at the 1,777 paddy purchase centres. For this, the government needed to pay Rs 5,308 crore but over Rs 3,670 crore was still to be paid to the farmers. The minister was telling lies on the timely payments. Also, Kodali Nani was lying that just Rs 1,637 crore was to be paid. The minis-

ter should publish a white paper and resign immediately because of his unchecked lies, he demanded.

Uma Maheswara Rao asked the YSRCP government whether it was doing anything to prevent exploitation when middlemen and traders were looting the farmers in the villages. While the 75 kg bag paddy was costing Rs 1,416 in the market, the middlemen were buying the same at Rs 800 to Rs. 1,000 in villages. Farmers' eyes were filled with tears and blood under the Jagan regime, he said.

The TDP leader deplored that over 6.48 lakh MT paddy was still with the farmers. The government left field open for the middlemen and millers to cheat the innocent farmers. The minister should realise that abusing Naidu and Lokesh would not bring solutions to the farmers, he said adding Rythu Bharosa Kendras have turned into Rythu Bogus Kendras.

Uma Maheswara Rao said the farmers of all crops were suffering for lack of support and remunerative prices. The tomato, banana, pulses and other crops brought losses to the farmers. The government did not do anything to save them from the debts. “The Sanna Biyyam (fine rice) promise has gone down the drain. The e-crop and on-line services are of no help to the farmers in any manner,” he said.

Sirisha decries destruction of Vizag in the name of capital

HANS NEWS SERVICE AMARAVATI

TDP state secretary Gouthu Sirisha on Saturday accused the YSRCP government of adopting a negligent policy leading to a massive rise in the coronavirus cases in the three districts of north Andhra.

Sirisha deplored that two of the three North Andhra districts found a place in the worst-hit seven districts in Andhra Pradesh. The ruling party leaders' indiffer-

ence and super spreader events were responsible for the high incidence in the Vizag and Srikakulam districts.

Addressing a press conference here, the TDP leader slammed the YSRCP leaders for 'black marketing' the corona medicines and injections at a time when the common public were suffering and dying because of the pandemic.

Sirisha said that all the ration card holders and poor families should be given an immediate special financial assistance of

Rs 10,000. The TDP leader deplored that a lot of destruction was going on in the name of Executive Capital in Visakhapatnam.

The anti-development policies of Jagan Reddy were driving away all investments and industries from the commercial capital of Andhra Pradesh. The Chief Minister should explain to the public why not a single international flight was landing in the port city these days, she said.

During the TDP rule, many foreign

flights ran services to Vizag and it was bustling with industrial and business activity at that time.

Sirisha said that of the total 18 lakh corona cases in the state, nearly 3.40 lakh were reported only in the North Andhra districts. The records were showing that over 70 per cent of the rural people in the Vizianagaram district got affected. All those deaths occurred due to lack of oxygen supply should be treated as Government murders, she said.

10 red sanders logs seized

HANS NEWS SERVICE TIRUPATI

TASK Force sleuths seized 10 red sanders logs along with a Toyota car and arrested one smuggler at Anjaneyapuram check post on Koduru-Tirupati highway in Renigunta mandal on Saturday.

According to Task Force DSP Muralidhar, acting on a tip-off, the team conducted vehicle check up at Anjaneyapuram check post in the wee hours on Saturday and spotted a car proceeding towards Renigunta from Koduru. When the team tried to intercept the car, the car driver did not stop the vehicle. After chasing the vehicle, the cops stopped the car and found 10 red sanders logs in the vehicle and arrested the car driver.

Bengaluru pips Delhi as most liveable city in India

Continued from P1

“The Ease of Living Index 2020 included citizen's feedback for the first time. It is interesting that despite faring poorly on almost all development parameters, the capitals obtained high scores in the citizens' feedback section. We need to understand why urban citizens think so highly of their clearly poorly performing cities,” Richard Mahapatra, Managing Editor of Down To Earth said. This is the second edition of the index, originally launched in 2018. The current index has seen a significant change from that of last year, the most noticeable being the inclusion of citizens' feedback to establish the liveability of Indian cities.

Telangana unlocked

Continued from P1

The Cabinet has instructed the Education Department to reopen all categories of educational institutions in the state from July 1 with full preparedness. The Cabinet has instructed the Education Department to prepare guidelines on compulsory attendance of the students, online classes, and other related issues and release the same at the earliest. Meanwhile, it is learnt that the Education department would opt for continuing with online classes for primary classes. Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao told his cabinet colleagues that continuing lockdown with some relaxations would be of no use. The Chief Minister felt that total unlock would help the trade activity to pick up fast and it would improve the state economy which was adversely affected due to the lockdown since May 13. This being the wedding season, the Chief Minister said unlock will

help various sectors like cloth, jewellery, hospitality to get back into the business. The tourism and hospitality industry which was one of the worst affected would also be able to start their operations, he said. Hence it was decided to reopen clubs and restaurants. However, the government cautioned the people that unlock does not mean that corona has left us. The cabinet made it clear that wearing masks, maintaining physical distance and use of sanitisers and other self-regulatory methods to curtail the spread of the virus was very important.

The Government made it clear that lifting of lockdown should not lead to negligent behaviour and urged people to extend their full cooperation to curtail the spread of the virus. Similarly, all offices, restaurants, shopping malls, and shops will have to follow Covid norms. Not wearing masks would lead to slapping a fine of Rs 1,000, officials said.

Covid 3rd wave ‘inevitable’

Continued from P1

Third wave is inevitable, and it could hit the country within the next six to eight weeks... may be a little longer,” Dr Guleria said. “It all depends on how we go ahead in terms of Covid-appropriate behaviour and preventing crowds,” he added. Nearly 5 per cent of the country's population has so far been vaccinated with two doses. The government aims to vaccinate 108 crores of over 130 crore people in the country by the end of this year. “That (vaccination) is the main challenge. A new wave can usually take up to three months, but it can also take much lesser time, depending on various factors. Apart from Covid-appropriate behaviour, we need to ensure strict surveillance. Last time, we saw a new variant - which came from outside and developed here - and led to the huge surge in the number of cases. We know the virus will continue to mutate. Aggressive surveillance in hotspots is re-

quired,” the AIIMS chief said.

“Mini-lockdown in any part of the country, which witnesses a surge and a rise in positivity rate beyond 5 per cent, will be required. Unless we're vaccinated, we're vulnerable in the coming months,” he underlined, stressing that “testing, tracking, and treating” should be the focus in hotspots. “We have to factor in human behaviour while unlocking, which needs to be done in a graded manner,” Dr Guleria stressed.

On the spread of the Delta variant in the United Kingdom, which is now facing a third wave, he said, “Virus is still mutating, we need to be careful”. The highly transmissible variant first identified in India is now making up 99 per cent of fresh Covid-19 cases in the UK. The gap between the new waves is shortening and it's “worrying”, Dr Guleria said. “During the first wave (in India), the virus was not spreading that rapidly... all that changed during the second wave, and the virus became much more infec-

tious. Now the Delta variant that's spreading is much more infectious. Faster spread is likely,” said the AIIMS chief.

A debilitating second wave had led to the shortage of hospital beds and medical supplies in various parts of India. SOS messages on social media had caught the world's attention with many nations coming forward to help. Several states have now eased the restrictions after weeks of strict curbs; however, preparations are on against the third wave.

In Maharashtra, experts have now warned that at its peak, the third wave of the virus could cause 8 lakh active cases in the state, which currently has around 1.4 lakh patients. “When there is a huge increase in the number of cases, shortage of (hospital) beds follows. The strategy should be multi-pronged - we have to make sure fresh cases don't rise. Any healthcare system globally will tend to collapse with the unprecedented rise in the infections,” Dr Guleria said.

‘Baba ka Dhaba’ owner in ICU, still critical

Continued from P1

Prasad's wife, Badami Devi, said he had closed their new restaurant in Malviya Nagar which opened in December last year and was back to his old roadside stall as the cost of running the new establishment was around Rs 1 lakh. Prasad's income was only around Rs 30,000.

Last year in November, Prasad had lodged an FIR complaining of cheating against YouTuber Gaurav Wasan for alleged misappropriation of the funds that were raised to help the old couple.

THE 'FLYING SIKH' HAS TAKEN OFF FOREVER...

Milkha Singh was one of the of the India's biggest sporting icons of the century. Having lost his parents during Partition, he struggled for survival. He was a legendary Indian sprinter for whom his track was his God. He evinced a great interest in athletics. He was a four time Asian games gold medalist. He clinched the gold in the 1958 British Common Wealth games in the 440 yards race. His timing in Rome Olympics remained a national record for 38 years, though he came fourth in the event. He clocked 45.6 seconds. He just missed the bronze by a single second. It was a moment of pride for the nation. He was conferred Padma Shri in 1959. He had won 77 times in his 80 event career. It is great indeed. He was rightly being called the 'Flying Sikh'.

Unfortunately he lost his wife a few days ago due to covid related complications. He too followed suit is hard to gulp. His death is an irreparable loss to the sporting community. It is end of an era. He will be the best remembered athlete for generations. India is yet to a person of his caliber in the recent times.

— Sravana Ramachandran, Chennai

II

It is disheartening to know that the 'Flying Sikh', Milkha Singh is no more. Representing a country in an international event itself is a great achievement. In such a scenario, representing India in the Olympics in 1956, 1960, and 1964; and winning gold medals in Commonwealth Games held in 1958, and the Asian Games in 1958 and 1962 are stupendous achievements. His life story inspired millions of people in India as well as the rest of the world. He remains to live in the hearts of Indians forever. His dedication, hard work, commitment, and perseverance are very inspiring. If we can imbibe some of these qualities, that would be a great tribute that we can pay to our legendary sprinter.

— Dr Mejjari Mallikarjuna, Nadi-gadda, Chittoor Dt

III

The demise of great athlete of India, Milkha Singh has left a void in the sportsworld. He has been an inspiring figure for previous, present generations and generation to come in India with his qualities of grit, integrity and patriotic zeal.

His life as a whole and sports career in particular have great moments that can be taught as lessons for the younger minds. He has given utmost importance to discipline and physical fitness till his last breath. The flying Sikh has finished the sprint of life with flying colours. The nation mourns his death.

— Dr D V G Sankararao, Nellimarla



IV

It is very sad to know that the deadly virus engulfed the Indian legendary athlete Milkha Singh who was popularly known as Flying Sikh. He was 91. It is very unfortunate that his former volleyball captain wife Nirmal Kaur also succumbed to the same ailment last Sunday. He is survived by his golfer son Jeeva and three daughters. To his credit he won four gold medals in Asian Athletics and a gold medal in 1958 Asian Games. He lost gold in 1960 Olympics in 400 mts running event narrowly. The government honoured him with Padmasri in 1959. He strongly believed in the words "one must always be humble irrespective of the position one enjoys". The film "Bhag Milkha Bhag" the biopic of Milkha Singh gives inspiration to the budding athletes. To become a sprinter he practised vigorously in sand dunes and competed with running trains. He was an athlete who was different from others as he handed over all his medals to Jawahar Lal Nehru University instead of displaying in his living room. He is really a guiding light to the up coming athletes in particular and sports persons in general.

— Pratapa Reddy Yaramala, Tiruvuru

V

The passing away of iconic Milkha Singh a title which he won from none other than the then Pakistan President Gen Ayub Khan is indeed a great loss to Indian sports. He was a runner who walked every day 10 km not for learning running as sports but out of necessity to and from his school. At that time he did not know that running is a sports event. His childhood was so pathetic that he saw his own parents being butchered in front of his eyes during Partition and no wonder he refused to represent India

in the Indo-Pak Sports meet in Lahore. It was India's first PM who called him and made request to represent and win laurels for the country which he when he won gold medal by defeating another iconic Pakistani runner Abdul Khaliq who was then Asia's fastest runner having won Gold medal in 1958 Asian Games in Tokyo. Imagine if he had not participated, probably world would not have known him as the "Flying Sikh".

When he was practicing running, he had only will power and aspiration with no facilities running barefoot, no track, or dresses etc. Strangely, here is a runner who spent a few days in Tihar jail for having traveled to Delhi without a train ticket. May he live forever in the hearts of sports enthusiasts.

— N Nagarajan, Hyderabad

VI

What Sir Don Bradman is to cricket applies to Milkha Singh in the field of Indian sports. Honorary Captain Milkha Singh, also known as The Flying Sikh, was an Indian track and field sprinter who was introduced to the sport while serving in the Indian Army. The only athlete to win gold in the 400m race in the Asian as well the Commonwealth Games in 1958, Milkha Singh had been part of Chandigarh's folklore since he settled in the City Beautiful in the early 1960s. His dedication towards a fit and healthy lifestyle post his retirement was phenomenal. In many ways, his death is the end of an era.

Milkha was always very competitive, be it on the athletics field, golf greens or at the table playing cards. He frequently travelled to Jammu and Kashmir, and Delhi for golf tournaments and had even played against former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Farooq Abdullah. As a stand

out sporting personality, he showed his character on and off the field. And his exemplary behavior was an object lesson for the young and upcoming sportsman. His and his sweetheart wife's loss is a double blow for the sporting fraternity within a space of one week.

A foreign journalist asked "Are you relaxing?" "No, I am Milkha Singh" quipped the flying Sikh. Alas now he has gone for his eternal relaxation. His was a great life that inspired thousands of aspiring athletes and he, a proud son of Bharat Mata. RIP Milkha Singh!

— C K Subramanian, Navi Mumbai

VII

The passing away of decorated sprinter Milkha Singh has saddened millions of sports lovers. The nonagenarian, popularly known as 'Flying Sikh', breathed his last in the Intensive Care Unit of the Chandigarh's Post-Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), after a long battle with Covid-19. A three-time Olympian, 1958 Commonwealth Games champion and a four-time Asian Games gold medalist, Milkha Singh's finest hour was the fourth-place finish in the 400m final at the 1960 Rome Olympics, where he led the pack for nearly half the race but missed a podium finish by the proverbial cat's whisker. He held the National Record in the event for 38 years. His incredible legacy will continue to inspire generations to come.

— N J Ravi Chander, Bengaluru

VIII

The legend of Milkha Singh has survived more than five decades and continues to be one of the most inspiring stories in Indian sports. For the record, the legendary athlete Milkha Singh started his Olympic journey at the 1956 Olympics in Australia but it was his second appearance at the Games in Rome where the world took note of him and applauded the Indian sprinter.

In his third and final Olympic in Tokyo, Milkha Singh only participated in the 4x400m relay race in which he and his teammates were eliminated during the heat stages. The sports fraternity took notice of Milkha Singh after the 1958 Asian Games in Tokyo, Japan where he bagged two gold medals in 200m and 400m races.

In the very next Asian Games in Jakarta in 1962, Milkha Singh won the 400m race and also bagged gold medal in 4x400m relay race with Daljit Singh, Jagdish Singh and Makhan Singh. Milkha Singh won India's first individual gold medal at the Commonwealth Games back in 1958 in Wales, a record that stayed with him for over five decades.

— Kolluru Raju, Godarigunta, Kakinada Dt



Yoga Day or show-off day?

The age-old Yoga under various names has been practiced in India for ages. The Yoga gurus like B.K.S Iyengar and many others not only practiced Yoga, but spread it all over India and even rest of the world. Iyengar's exercise is well known across the world. The books authored by him such as Light on Yoga, Light on Pranayama, Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali in English and many Indian and foreign languages are still considered as classics. Many may not be aware that his followers include the world famous violinist Yehudi Menuhin who transformed him from being an unknown Indian Yoga teacher into international Yoga Guru.

Even the former Prince of Aundh and Diplomat has spread

Surya Namaskar to many other countries outside India. His book Surya Namaskar in English, Indian and foreign language has many takers even now. In 2014 UN General Assembly gave International recognition and 21 June in turn was observed as "International Yoga Day".

PM Modi started using this for self promotion and then it was free for all. Every Minister around him and all his chums whether they were capable of performing Yoga started doing in the glare of Camera to get attention. If this was not enough, the Ministry of Education made CBSE take it to the level of jam-boree. The board in turn ordered schools to observe International Yoga Day and share the reports.

Naturally the school Principals used this to impress their higher ups in turn made teachers and students to perform Yoga at odd times with no proper environment and then shared the report and photos with Management and CBSE. Even during the lockdown the children were made videography and shared. Teachers as old in their late fifties with assortment of ailments are being forced to perform Yoga just for show. Yoga needs to be practiced at the right time, place and proper environment and should be turned into an event to please Prime Minister Narendra Modi as others at least in India, we cannot call it International Yoga Day but "National Show Off Day".

— S Natarajan, New Delhi

Is Twitter acting too defiant?

Krishna Saagar Rao's write-up made an interesting read. At the outset, when other social media outfits had fallen in line to comply by the new IT rules, defiance displayed by Twitter to comply with the country's new IT rules is simply not understandable. Despite the amount of detailed explanation and providing several opportunities to revise its stand, Twitter still adamant and unwilling to comply not only amounts to showing scant respect for Indian laws but also reveals its intention to deliberately avoid compliance of new laws.

Further, by taking a hard line on the new rules initially then trying to dilly-dally by coming up with excuses even when it failed to comply with intermediary guidelines is baffling. What is more surprising is Twitter cared less to address the grievances of users by refusing to set the process as mandated by the law?

Shockingly, its arbitrariness in fighting fake news and inconsistency in fighting misinformation



which have led to hatred and violence time and again in India on account of fake news circulation, one fails to understand as to why Twitter is showing reluctance to follow Indian laws even when it follows local laws in other countries without hesitation. Twitter must understand that to stay in the business in India, merely stating that as a flag bearer of free speech in India, it cannot comply the new rules is ridiculous and unacceptable by any yardstick. Though government may find

hard to revoke the intermediary status of Twitter in case of non-compliance with the new IT rules as they are protected by section 79 of the IT act, still it is paramount for social media to keep in view the culture of India which vastly varies from the west to follow the new rules of IT framed taking into account the cultural geography of India in order to fight the menace of fake and false news effectively.

— K R Srinivasan, Secunderabad

Implement value-based education

Referring to the article "Has reexamination system failed the education system" (June 19) explaining various methods that are required to be altered in the existing curriculum, I would like to share my views since I am in teaching field. Syllabi must cover vividly, factually and precisely on contemporary topics besides past events to lay the foundation for a strong structure in the minds of students. There should be fiduciary relationship between the teacher and taught. Teachers also should learn how to impress the young minds by following digressive method in their approach on study material.

For example the sentence "women cannot keep secrets in them". Dharmaraja surprises and questions his mother Kunti why she is crying by keeping the head of dead Karna, she reveals the secret of his birth which fact Pandavas are not aware. Then Dharmaraja curses the women-folk as stated in the cited quotation.

The role of teacher is not only restricted to teaching but to shape the students as responsible citizens. Therefore it is said "A teacher tells, a good teacher explains, a very good teacher



demonstrates, and an excellent teacher inspires". It is for the students also to assess the capability of their teachers.

During earlier years, question papers were set with bit and big questions with maximum three hours duration to answer. This system is still in vogue. In the advent of artificial intelligence and computerisation all set examinations are filled with only objective questions which system cannot elicit the calibre of students as in subjective system.

Students should also be advised to read newspapers and journals not only for updating current affairs but also enlarging their brain power. Car company owner Ford was asked the secret

of success - he replied "hard work, hard work and hard work". Students must know that there is no substitute to hard work which pays high and rich dividends throughout journey of life.

Former President Abdul Kalam in all his messages to students, he used to say "have sound sleep to get good dreams and in order to realise those dreams, spend sleepless nights". This needs no explanation. "vidya leni vadu vinta pasuvu" is a Telugu adage. Value based education is need of the hour. There are three main priorities before the government viz., education, education and education only.

— N Padmavathi, Hyderabad

LOOMING PRESENCE OF THE 'FAMILY' IN INDIAN POLITICS

India is the only country among world nations wherein family rule has been a phenomenal success. The concept of "family rule" has deeper roots in India ever since the latter had attained Independence in 1947. Hence, during the past 74 years of India's history of Independence, there have been several families which had the opportunities to rule at the States and also at the Centre. In fact, people of no other country except India has had the uninterrupted opportunity to adorn the seat of power in political field, thanks to the legacy availed to the members of the same family due to voters' choice of franchise and support in favour of the latter in our biggest democracy.

Though, family rule has not been a constitutional right or a compulsion, it all has set to exist as a part of our political mechanism ever since the days of Independence when Nehru was the first Prime Minister. Family rule adopted by some politicians in the past as well as in the present is none the less a practice of nepotism whereby instances of power transferred from certain prominent leaders into the hands of their progeny is not uncommon. When two or more mem-



bers of the same family acquire / share power in politics, it sets to provide an undeterred privilege for the former to amass huge wealth during the time of their clinging to power. Thus it is a traditional activity for certain people to not only benefit out of power they hold but also consolidate their wealth base in no uncertain terms. Thus family rule is a collective effort of the same family to achieve political gains as well as acquire influence and affluence to the optimum possible level as ordained by virtue of their political power secured through the process of democratic elections.

The leaders of political parties

in case of getting opportunity to field their own members of family in elections and get elected can only have the privilege to indulge in family rule made possible through people's mandate. A family rule adopted by certain ruling parties of States often becomes an eyesore for the opposition party leaders who commonly launch criticism and tirade against the former on the contention that they have been looting public property collectively being part of one single family.

While despotic rule is confined to a single traitor, family rule is similar to dictatorship in so far as the governance is concen-

trated in a single person who is basically responsible for roping in power and authority at his own whims and fancies. It is a shot in the arm for many politicians to indulge themselves in this most gainful activity as there is no provision to dispense away with this advantage legally and constitutionally in our democracy wherein the people have no scant disregard for the same. It was during the erstwhile congress rule and all other regional party governances of the present times in the States or at the centre that family rule had prevailed, but during current BJP ruled governance family rule is seldom conspicuous in the political arena.

Since family rule is the politics of convenience adopted by some politicians with an aim to spread their political base and popularity to satiate their selfish goals, it is high time that on similar lines with the BJP, a legislation was brought about to deal with the aspect of family rule and curtail the freedom of politicians in entertaining their family members to take part in family rule which is a trend widely prevalent now in the political scenario of our nation.

— Bh. Indu Sekhar, Hyderabad

THE PANDEMIC GIFTS A NEW NORMAL

D C PATHAK

COVID is a human crisis affecting everybody, directly or indirectly, and creating an uncertainty for many about what lies ahead in terms of continuity of work, personal finances and family welfare. Any natural disaster comes unannounced and this is true of the corona pandemic as well -- its new wave of mutation was suspected but was never easy to size up.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, it may be recalled, repeatedly warned the country during the unlock phase last year to take all Covid precautions. That many people chose to ignore them, for lack of understanding of the threat or because of an attitudinal flaw, was one factor that contributed to the severity of the 'second' wave. Herd mentality drove people to aggregating together on religious occasions 'for strength' even when the situation demanded keeping away from crowds. Once a fresh wave broke out the Prime Minister himself lost no time in launching a nationwide effort to mop up needed resources and equipment with the help of experts and senior officials.

Considering the nationwide spread of the virus, it was logical for the Centre to encourage the states to feel free to explore avenues of producing oxygen, procuring hospital equipment and accessing medical stock, to supplement the central initiatives. Because of the huge variations in the intensity of the affliction across the country, the Centre authorised the states to determine the policy of lockdown and containment zone on their own. The Prime Minister's emphasis on the indigenous manufacture of a Covid vaccine proved to be of great help -- the Centre took the import of vaccines in its own hands when decentralisation of procurement did not produce satisfactory results. There is no doubt that the Modi government worked proactively through the crisis. The prospects of vaccination picking up has made the general public in urban centres optimistic -- people appreciate a government that at least tries hard to deal with a challenging situation. In their eyes, Prime Minister Modi's leadership qualities remain undiminished.

Social scientists and economic experts are trying to figure out what long-range impact the crisis would have on individuals, organisations and nations but any observer can pick up at least some pieces to reconstruct a framework of learnings and course corrections that is going to delineate what the 'new normal' would be in the times ahead. A few things stand to reason in the areas of personal domain, organisational coherence and the larger understanding of life itself. These together can be taken as a 'gift' of the pandemic and accepted as an 'upgrade' for future living in general. Of prime importance is the healthy attitude of 'compliance' that Covid lockdowns created among the people in regard to acceptance of some curtailment of 'freedom' and 'choice' one was used to enjoying in the normal course of life. At home or at 'work' -- the concept of the workplace itself had changed -- the environ pushed everybody towards a new awareness of 'self' and a 'rediscovery' of one's role both as an 'observer' and as a 'doer' in the period of crisis. In the new normal that the pandemic is setting for all, three things are happening in particular.

First, a new kind of camaraderie has been created that unites the colleagues and family members who were not able to meet physically, much like 'friends in distress' sailing in the same boat. There are fewer complaints and expectations. Secondly, an understanding of how immunity gained from good health was a basic safeguard against the virus, created a willingness to incorporate some exercise regimen, both physical and mental, in the lifestyle. This is an upshot of the recognition of 'self' referred to earlier.

And finally, the experience of 'work from home' may have produced different kinds of impact on different people but at a deeper level it has enabled an employee to get a fairly good idea of where he or she stood in terms of adding value to the organisation. Earlier, in the rush of work, evaluation of performance was done mostly by third parties but now 'self-assessment' would become an important new normal -- providing a higher level of personal confi-



dence to all members.

Beyond the individual, the pandemic has materially affected business management and organisational working in a manner that is setting in new norms for the future. It was generally said that a leader was tested in a crisis but what the health emergency, with its indeterminate time frame and the nature of risks involved, has done is to redefine leadership as also its mandate for the times ahead. Issues of human resource development, delegation of decision-making, boss-subordinate

body were conditioned also by his or her emotional state at the time.

Working from a remote location and with communication limited to a virtual medium make it necessary and normal to decentralise decision-making to the extent possible and this puts credibility of the leader on test considering the fact that normally a senior was reluctant to delegate this power due to a lack of willingness to share responsibility for the step taken by a subordinate in exercise of the latter's own judgement.

Another feature of the 'new

The pandemic has proved to be a great equaliser on account of shared vulnerabilities and has brought back the indefatigable spirit of man to retain positivity through an overpowering spell of adversity, on the one hand and to be prepared to render some possible help to others out of compassion, on the other. This would enhance the quality of life the world over as the pandemic becomes part of a historical memory embracing the entire humanity. People would realise how even from a distance some service could be provided to others in difficulty -- like offering a link for communication and 'messaging', helping in the search for some medicine or equipment and arranging delivery of food for the needy

relationship, emotional intelligence and importance of 'nurtural' leadership have all been opened up afresh compelling businesses and organisations to course correct on a whole lot of prevalent practices. A leader must know enough about the persons working for him -- including the stresses in latter's life outside of the workplace -- and must appreciate that the responses of any-

normal' is the return of the old practice, that had fallen into disuse, of the productive organisations having a system of feedback from below for their own advancement. In the post-pandemic revival of economy, it will be crucial to maintain quality of product or service, evaluate demand and remove bottlenecks of the supply chain and delivery. Internal and external feedback is part of the

of mankind and enriching the future of humanity. The disaster has induced a higher thinking on 'life' itself. Since the pandemic has presented an entirely new kind of health threat, attention of experts has all been focused on how to mitigate the 'fear of the unknown' by spelling out whatever was getting known about the virus so that people faced the crisis with a little more calm. As a well-known philosopher said 'understanding is the end of the problem' for it defines the best precautions one could take without running into a panic. It is for lack of adequate briefing that people rushed to a hospital on testing Covid-positive -- running into the hazards of an overrun establishment -- instead of benefitting from home isolation.

People cannot be blamed because public education and communication from medical experts took some time catching up. A positive result of the pandemic is the restoration of the importance of 'public health' and 'primary care' as part of the normal life. These were nearly forgotten earlier. The emergency produced an overriding priority for 'disease centric' approach to the neglect of preventive measures. A mix of personal hygiene, physical and mental exercises and an attitude of extending help to others is likely to emerge as the lifestyle paradigms of the new normal -- hopefully pushing us towards a better society.

Perhaps the most important transformational impact of the prolonged Covid emergency is on an entire generation of young students who were put in segregation and deprived of an interactive life they were so much adapted to. They could not comprehend the screen substitute of a classroom and a teacher -- the online format came too suddenly and took the demand for strict compliance of the homework to a new level of enforcement and joylessness. The education system and infrastructure could not devise an acceptable via media -- in India even classroom education was beset with 'authority' and one way instruction. It called for innovative redesigning of curriculum and personalised communication. The plus side of online education, how-

ever, had made a mark and even on the resumption of all that was happening before, the new practice will be perfected and assimilated in the classroom protocol.

A healthy mix of face-to-face interaction with a teacher in the classroom and an online backup of the 'tutorial' with a small group at a time, will evolve for the good of both students and teachers as daily visits to school may not be required any more. The staffing pattern may be made cost effective through the induction of part-time teachers, reduction of bus movement and putting teachers in turn on duty in fixed hours for consultation by students online for any urgent guidance -- much like doctors were being made available for 'calls'. Education of children certainly can do with a switch to an improved 'new normal' that would be more rewarding for all concerned.

The pandemic has devastated the nation's economy and pending its meaningful revival put a large population under distress and even destitution. All over the world it has deepened the divide between the rich and the poor. A democratic dispensation has the onus of a welfare state too and the policies of helping people pushed below the poverty line have to be swift, purposeful and unflinching in reaching the doorstep. The administrative machinery of the state has learnt its lessons in micro-management and the best strategy of post-Covid governance would be to launch Centre-state joint schemes to be implemented essentially at the district level where a strong team of senior officers led by the DM-SP combine is perfectly placed to make a success of both 'survey' and 'delivery'. The Modi government has already pushed digitisation of governance in service of the common man and will therefore be able to handle the challenge of reaching out to the citizens in distress in cities and villages alike -- through the combination of digital and human resources. This task has no political tint and the opposition therefore should be on the same side as the Centre in redressing the human suffering in the period of recovery from the Covid crisis.

(The writer is a former Director, Intelligence Bureau)

Managing energy

JYOTHI GOSALA

ENERGY management needs to be handled deftly. Managing time, tasks, people or groups rests on the energy we possess and how we use it efficiently. We need to know how to maximize energy levels and time to improve high end efficiency. We must understand the factors causing low productivity and the way energy is managed. How we use our energy rests on our mental dynamics. We need to understand our body clock, evaluate peak and downtime, mapping goals to enhance energy levels.

Organizations scout for employees who have a great buoyancy with complete engagement and measurable results. People across all streams are the force who build and enhance the growth value. Individuals with wholesome energy work and grow in value proposition. Working overboard due to demands at work takes a toll on the health. This has a reverse cascading effect on the deliverables and work productivity. Our practices can be expanded and reinforced through corrective measures, practices and behaviors. Organisations should take charge to keep the workforce motivated and rejuvenated, to bring out the best. Recharging individuals will enable them for greater work charge and enhancing outcomes.

Thanks to technology, we are spending most of our time around computers. We can't keep going around at high speeds for long. We need to be rhythmic in using our energy efficiently for all our activities. This leads to consistently sustainable productivity, top notch performance and inclusiveness along with impactful engagements. The unique framework for fueling productivity through energy management is an essential ingredient. We need to explore



teams with greater success and toning the potential of the workforce.

Let's examine how we spend our energy qualitatively, the number of hours we spend constructively on a daily basis by engaging ourselves with dynamic time metrics. Prioritising tasks to meet our energy levels and balancing them evenly in the performance of tasks is required. End results will be based on energy management and is not limited by time. Energy management will tune up one's achievements whatever the area. When emotions are balanced & positive it's enhanced with the quality of energy irrespective of any pressures.

To work on goals that require high end performance, it's essential to know your path. Energising ourselves and others is no doubt a gift and a morale booster to others. Let's draw a line between positive and negative energy. Managing energy is a core discipline at work and encouraging others to do the same. Identifying the team's strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities will open up new vistas with performance shooting up.

Energy has a direct impact on growth. If clear of how energy will be utilised, one gains an edge as a leader. One should have a road map of one's direction, to adjust the sails accordingly. Identifying the tactical approaches, and focusing on complex elements are crucial. Energy is contagious, be it positive or negative.

One must take care to shun negative energy which has a toll on one's well being. Positive energy has a positive vibrancy. Negativeness hampers growth.

Individuals need to become aware of their own energetic ebbs and flows, including how to match their work output to these and learn techniques. The essence of life is energy. When enthusiastic, one brings in more passion. Energy creates more energy, the ebb and flow of energy is a true beacon to explore and attain one's true potential.

Skills

- Managing time
- Sustainable high results
- Behaviour patterns
- Work life balance

Objectives

- Energy management
- Improving performance metrics
- Avoiding emotional drain
- Examining span of attention
- Striking a balance between care for others and oneself

A roadmap for ecological restoration in India

RAMESH VENKATARAMAN

WE are one of the most bio-diverse countries in the world. However, most of our unique ecosystems stand degraded to varying degrees today. Not just forests, many other ecosystems like wetlands, rivers, estuaries, grasslands and deserts, are damaged. Restoring them is a mammoth task, but one that will yield major benefits for our biodiversity and citizens. The question, then, is how we go about it. The first step should be to identify priority areas for restoration. A pre-requisite for this is a reasonably robust inventory of degradation of different ecosystems at a national level. We could then build a restoration strategy around the three top priorities for the country.

The announcement by the United Nations terming 2021-30 as the Decade of Ecosystem Restoration could not have come at a more appropriate time.

The rapid expansion of global economies over the last 60 years, along with an increase in development-led human pressures, have resulted in over-exploitation and degradation of natural resources at a pace that far exceeds their natural ability to recover.

Increased movement of people and goods has led to a rise in the invasive alien species all around the world, which heavily impact the biodiversity. Degradation has also impaired ecosystem service capability across the board.

There is an urgent need to reverse this trend and assist ecosystems to recover at a rate faster than their degradation. This calls for a shift from the traditional model of endangered species-focused conservation to a new one of ecosystem restoration. This applies to India as well.

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Identifying restoration priorities

The first step should be to identify priority areas for restoration. A pre-requisite for this is a reasonably robust



inventory of degradation of different ecosystems at a national level. We could then build a restoration strategy around the three top priorities for the country.

This would help direct policy-making, project identification, resourcing and implementation towards these key priorities. Projects that can deliver benefits across more than one priority may receive greater attention.

The first priority should be restoration aimed at enhancement of ecosystem services. A good example would be water security, which requires attention to our catchment areas, freshwater lakes, rivers, etc.

The degradation of Shola grassland ecosystems in the Nilgiris has been a cause for major concern in this context. Activities like sand mining and unsustainable mini-hydel projects have made many of our rivers a sad shadow of their past. The provision of fresh air in our cities is another urgent need that calls for restoration of urban green spaces.

The second restoration priority would be enhancement of biodiversity. Many of our forests have lost much of their native plants due to invasion by alien species. As a result, they are legally protected, but ecologically unprotected. Development pressures like roads, railways and tourism have led to degradation of multiple ecosystems, including coastal and high altitude ones.

The third priority of restoration would be prevention of natural disasters. Although this by itself is an ecosystem service, identifying this as a separate priority is warranted by the scale and breadth of natural disasters that we have been facing in the last two decades.

Landslides in several parts of the country have shown us the damage denuded hills can do. In the absence of

healthy mangrove forests, cyclones are leaving a trail of lost life and property even in the hinterland areas. We need to urgently revive our natural disaster prevention mechanisms.

Developing a policy framework

An ecological restoration policy at the national level is needed. The policy has to strike a balance between the needs of climate change, biodiversity conservation and ecosystem integrity.

Research findings indicate that bio-diverse ecosystems are far more efficient in sequestering carbon and providing ecosystem services, and this should help us move away from putting excessive focus on tree-planting drives.

The policy also has to include aspects like goal setting, monitoring, leveraging diverse streams of knowledge, public-private partnership, funding, etc. The policy should recognise that the primary responsibility for restoration lies with the State and communities and private sector organisations can at best play an ancillary role.

Building capacity for restoration

Unlike other geographies like North America and Australia, ecological restoration is a relatively new discipline in India and hence our restoration capacity is quite limited. The discipline has grown rapidly around the world in the last 30 years, with well-defined principles and protocols.

Best practices for restoration of many ecosystem types are available. Adapting these to Indian conditions would benefit our restoration initiatives significantly.

Ecological restoration is a specialised discipline with a high focus on sciences dealing with restoration, plants, soil, hydrology, geology, etc. Hence, there is an urgent need to create dedicated graduate and post-grad-

uate courses on ecological restoration as part of our academic curriculum, using courses offered by universities overseas as reference.

Training models also need to be designed for forest departments, who are key stakeholders managing many of our ecosystems. Short-term training programmes for field supervisors will also be essential.

Scaling up

Most restoration projects in India are small in size. In comparison, projects in countries like Australia are planned and implemented on a large scale. Scaling up needs many enablers in place. Knowledge sharing and collaborations, where successful projects serve as guidance for new ones, will help reduce the learning curve.

Developing low-cost, replicable restoration models will enable restoring larger areas with same funding. Integrating various restoration projects within a landscape could help derive greater synergies and scale.

Restoration research needs to focus on finding scalable solutions to field challenges. Leading institutions like Indian Institutes of Technology need to focus their environmental engineering studies on ecological restoration.

Accessing funds for grassroots restoration work is currently challenging. Funding agencies, including corporate CSR, need to allocate larger resources for this crucial activity.

Ensuring stakeholder engagement

The success of large scale restoration efforts needs involvement of a wide range of stakeholders including local communities. This can by itself be a driver of livelihoods. Many countries have public-private partnership models for restoration where accredited organisations participate in the process, both on non-profit and for-profit models.

Developing metrics for assessing the economic value of restoration will help generate greater appreciation among the wider public, and the evolution of a greener GDP model.

Accomplishing all of the above may take the initial few years of the decade of restoration. But having these building blocks in place will ensure that our restoration program is targeted and effective. Otherwise, we run the risk of continuing to witness adhoc and dispersed efforts on a small scale.

(Courtesy: Down to Earth)

Hyundai Alcazar for ₹16 lakh, now in India



Seon Seob Kim, MD & CEO, Hyundai Motor India, with Hyundai Alcazar

Hyundai Motor India has expanded its SUV range in the country with the launch of new model – Alcazar – priced between Rs 16.3 lakh and Rs 19.99 lakh. The country's second largest passenger vehicle maker is looking to further consolidate its position in the fast-growing SUV segment with the introduction of Alcazar which comes with six and seven seat configurations.

Hyundai already leads the SUV space in the country with models like Venue, Creta, Tucson and Kona Electric. The company said it has invested about Rs 650 crore on the development of the new model which would compete with the likes of Mahindra XUV500 and recently launched Tata Safari and Hector Plus. The SUV comes powered with two engine options of 2-litre petrol and 1.5-litre diesel with choices of six-speed automatic and six-speed manual transmissions. The petrol trims are tagged between Rs 16.3 lakh and Rs 19.84 lakh while the diesel variants are priced between Rs 16.53 lakh and Rs 19.99 lakh. As per the company, the manual petrol trims deliver a fuel efficiency of 14.5 kmpl, the automatic variants 14.2 kmpl. The diesel manual trims come with 20.4 kmpl while the automatic versions deliver 18.1 kmpl.

"This year we have embarked on a new journey as we complete 25 years of excellence in India. Hyundai has entered a new segment and we aim to redefine premium travel experiences for our customers across the country," Hyundai Motor India MD and CEO SS Kim stated.

The model will fortify the company's leadership position in the SUV segment and perfectly complement its line-up of Venue, Creta,

Kona Electric and Tucson, Kim added. India has seen a robust increase in SUV sales over the last few years. In 2015, the SUV segment contributed only 13.5 per cent to the overall passenger vehicle sales. This number became about 26 per cent in 2019 and further rose to 29 per cent in 2020. Hyundai currently leads the SUV segment in the country with a market share of 23.3 per cent in the January-May period this year.

The company's market share in the segment has consistently grown over the years. From 11.3 per cent market share in 2015, the company's share rose to 22.7 per cent in 2019 and to 25.5 per cent in 2020. Currently, the share of SUVs in Hyundai's overall sales stands at around 42.5 per cent. In 2015 the, share stood at 9 per cent and rose to 33 per cent in 2019. In 2020 it touched 42.5 per cent. "We expect this contribution to increase to 50 per cent going ahead with the launch of Alcazar. There exists a niche area in the market which we would be able to cater to with the model," Hyundai Motor India Director (Sales and Marketing) Tarun Garg said. He noted that the company is witnessing great response for the model with it having already received 4,000 bookings over the last ten days.

"We have loaded all the three trims with features. Even the entry level variants come with sunroof and connected features. Of the 4,000 bookings received so far, 55 per cent customers have opted for the diesel trims," Garg said. When asked about the production scenario at the company's Chennai-based manufacturing plant, he noted that the automaker is already in the process of ramping it up with Covid situation easing a bit around the country.

'IPO WILL ADD VALUE TO LIC BRAND IN LONG RUN'

Insurance giant LIC is bullish on the Indian mkts as it believes any corrections as minor blips in a long-term growth: MD Mukesh Gupta

KUMUD DAS

How much net profit booked by LIC on sale of equities as on March 31, 2021? Kindly give Y-o-Y comparative no and the variation in percentage?

As per provisional figures, we have booked a record profits of about Rs 37,000 crore, on sale of equities, this year as of March 31, 2021, as compared to profits of about Rs 18,400 crores made in last year thereby showing a growth of 100 per cent over the year.

What were the reasons behind this? Do you think FY22 is going to be the best year for LIC in that term? If so, kindly give the reason behind that?

We believe that FY22 will also be a good year in terms of booking equity profits. Though these are times of uncertainty due to second wave of Covid-19, which has not only affected the life of individuals even more than what it did during first wave, but businesses too have got impacted due to lockdown like conditions imposed by various State governments, however, due to strong economic recovery after the Q1 meltdown in year 2020-21, businesses have picked up from its lows and we see that lot of companies having strong fundamentals poised for growth, across all sectors. Our Contrarian approach will ensure good profits along with building a good equity portfolio for long term.

How much of the equities had been purchased by LIC during FY21? How much for FY22?

During FY21, we have bought equities of about Rs 94,000 crore. For FY22, the quantum of purchases will depend on the market movement and opportunities available. As said earlier, we tend to take contrarian approach and use the available opportunities.

LIC has registered a 100 per cent growth in profits from sale of equities in FY21 by tapping market opportunities and adopting contrarian approach.

"We believe that FY22 will also be a good year in terms of booking equity profits.

Businesses have picked up from its lows and we see that lot of companies having strong fundamentals poised for growth, across all sectors," says **Mukesh Gupta**, Managing Director, LIC, in an exclusive interview with Bizz Buzz



Mukesh Gupta, Managing Director, LIC

What is your view on term life which is set to get costlier in the current fiscal? How much is the hike in reinsurance rate for the same? Kindly explain in case of LIC's term plans?

As of now, LIC is not considering any revision in its term insurance rates. They will stay the same.

What was the message for the LIC and how did it change the tack to ensure that its equity portfolio continue to shine?

LIC has continued to follow its strategy of being a Contrarian investor. We followed a two-fold strategy (a) Taking advantage of emerging market opportunities to buy or sell shares keeping in mind the company's financials, industry outlook, share price movement and other relevant factors (b) simultaneously identifying fundamentally strong companies in all sectors and buying into such companies for building a strong long term equity portfolio.

The lockdown had triggered a panic that earnings would collapse as businesses shuttered. So, what did

LIC do once the announcement was made? How was the year FY21?

In March/April 2020 when lockdowns started LIC started taking initiatives to enable our people to work from home, digital outreach for customers was increased, we started initiatives for digitalising sales process through app called 'ANANDA' and became more active in the investment functions to take advantage of emerging investment opportunities. FY21 was good as we got best ever First Year premium income of Rs 1,84,175 crores and are maintaining our topmost position among Life insurers with a market share of 66.18 per cent. During FY21 we made gross investments of more than about Rs 5 lakh crore thereby showing a growth of more than 15 per cent over last year.

What is the status of LIC IPO and how will it change the scenario for LIC? What will be the impact on its policyholders?

The IPO process is on and is being undertaken by DIPAM, GoI. We believe that IPO will add value to Brand 'LIC' in the long run. It

will not have any impact on policy holders as our focus and commitment to policy holders will stay the same.

LIC was supposed to double its profit in the year gone by. What is the status? How do you see the scenario in the current fiscal?

We have booked profits of about Rs 37,000 crore, on sale of equities, this year as compared to profits of about Rs 18,400 crore last year thereby showing a growth of 100 per cent over last year. We believe that FY22 will also be a good year in terms of booking equity profits. Though difficult times, there are green shoots visible which point to strong economic recovery, businesses have picked up from lows of March 2020 and we see a lot of companies having strong fundamentals poised for growth, across all sectors. We see a lot of opportunities for investment and profit booking.

Govt has hiked the FDI cap to 74 per cent in insurance. How do you see this development?

We see this a very positive de-

velopment for Insurance sector. Insurance by nature is very capital-intensive industry and this will help strengthen the sector and spur a new round of high growth.

How do you see the things going forward as correction may happen in the market?

We are bullish on the Indian story and believe any corrections as minor blips in a long-term growth. Through a challenging environment, we see a number of green shoots in the economy and across sectors with large no of Companies, across sectors, showing resilience and potential for high growth over long term.

What is the target for the current fiscal on various parameters?

As previous fiscal year has just ended, we are in the process of performance review and target setting.

Equity comprises a small portion of the total investment portfolio for LIC. Do you think the strategy may change for the current fiscal?

As a matter of asset allocation, normally our equity investment is within 16 to 18 per cent of incremental investment and we believe that there will be no change in current fiscal.

Do you think LIC will be able to shed its stake from IDBI Bank as the share price of the bank has come down than the level when LIC had bought the majority stake into it?

Investment in IDBI bank was a strategic decision and while giving permission to invest the Regulatory authorities had put some deadlines for our reducing the stake. Any decision to divest will be taken at an appropriate time keeping in mind best interests of the policyholders and the regulatory requirements.

We need global development through collaboration

If development has been here for a while and is here to stay, why has everyone not developed and why does the promise of general well-being still seem distant?



Viiveck Verma



Development is a term that enjoys widespread popularity and currency in today's times and yet, what it is supposed to mean remains unclear. It is defined variously based on where one comes from and by whom it is used - for some, it might mean infrastructural advancement, for others, social progress and for others, alleviation of inequalities and so on. A universal understanding of development remains elusive and it is hard to fathom who benefits from the innumerable projects undertaken in the name of development. If development has been here for a while and is here to stay, why has everyone not developed and why does the promise of general well-being still seem distant?

To start unpacking this quandary, it is safe to assert that development often becomes a programme of self-serving at the hands of people who champion, advocate and carry on several endeavours to develop our societies. As a buzzword that leads us to expect large-scale progress, happiness and enhanced standards of living, it is often unquestioned and accepted without remark. However, as several instances point out, development does not mean the same thing for all.

The Narmada Bachao Andolan juxtaposed itself against an eminently promoted development project, which promised great infrastructural strides, but at the same time dispossessed countless villagers of their land. A 2019 World Wildlife Fund found over

509 dams being constructed or planned in environmentally sensitive areas, causing threats of habitat destruction and pollution. Clearly, then, for the benefit of a select section of the society, resources and lives are being put at risk under the umbrella of development.

There needs to be a critical reflection and re-evaluation of what development entails and who it benefits. Projects in the name of a noble cause to the detriment of large numbers of people cannot be allowed to run without significant checks being placed on the methodologies employed and without cost and benefit analyses. To start with, we can streamline the idea by engaging with the concepts of sustainable and equitable development.

Sustainable development means achieving human development without giving short shrift to future generations and without compromising the integrity and ability of natural systems to sustain our existence in the long term. Equitable development, on the other hand prioritises social equity and advocates that the fruits of development must also be made available to vulnerable and underserved communities. Both these organising principles ensure that neither people nor the environment bears the brunt of human greed. Deriving from these ideas, it can be stated that development

as economic growth must not benefit just a few. It should not mean the destruction and manipulation of natural resources and social relations to create more goods and services. In an ideal sense, it should create outcomes that can be fairly shared among all members of the community. For this, development needs to become, in one word, collaborative. If people at all levels in the socioeconomic pyramid are engaged in the imagination and implementation of schemes for development, it is likely to benefit everyone regardless of their backgrounds and origins. For this, development must be democratized.

For instance, before setting up a factory in a rural location, responsible authorities can consult inhabitants of villages and assess whether the project is likely to derail the ways of life of the community and whether, with deft planning, it can generate better life chances and economic prospects for the people concerned. Local representation must be made compulsory for such appraisals to take place. Similarly, another general goal should be attempts to alleviate economic disparity and counter poverty, by making financial rewards available to everyone, by endorsing and invigorating a development project.

Any infrastructural endeavour that aims to serve people in privileged constituencies at the cost of

impoverishing and jeopardising the vulnerable is a gigantic ethical concern and can be countered with relative ease through holistic planning. For example, as a report by Harvard University notes, in the 1970s, city officials in Cleveland began representing the interests of low-income and minority city dwellers in their city's plans, a radical departure from the earlier practice of considering only the welfare of downtown businesses and affluent taxpayers and planners such as Norman Krumholz called for "equity planning" in American cities. Similar efforts can be made across the board for making development truly deliver the promises it offers.

In India, for instance, Goonj is an organization which aims to build an equitable relationship between the cities and villages using the under-utilized urban material in a bid to make development inclusive. Under its 'Dignity for Work' initiative, Goonj discussed building a bridge across the river Kaljani with the locals and once the community members were taken on board, a group of 99 enthusiastic villagers built a 350-metre-long bamboo bridge. Many more such stories are part of Goonj's journey. Worthy models for inclusive development are thus, not hard to find.

On the whole, it is time to move away from the widely accepted myth of development and put it through hard enquiry. Development should be actualised, democratised and made sustainable and beneficial for people across socioeconomic divides for it to be a goal worth pursuing in modern society. This can be realised through our relentless questioning and engagement with all endeavours of development and we must live up to the responsibility it takes to develop.

(The author is Founder, Upsurge Global, and Senior Advisor, Telangana State Innovation Council)

TTK Prestige unveils e-com website

HANS BUSINESS

HYDERABAD: TTK Prestige Ltd has launched its e-commerce network to include its leading UK cookware brand Judge, which was launched in India in 2017.

The brand is part of the TTK Prestige-owned Horwood Homeware company and is targeted at value-seeking customers, who are in the market for quality kitchen solutions at competitive price points.

Chandru Kalro, Managing Director, TTK Prestige, said: "We are pleased to launch the e-commerce platform for Judge Kitchenware and Appliances. This is an opportune moment for us to accelerate the company footprint by catering to a new segment of value seeking consumers, who might be seeking lower price points. Now consumers across the country can avail of high quality and affordable products that can transform their kitchens and their cooking experience."

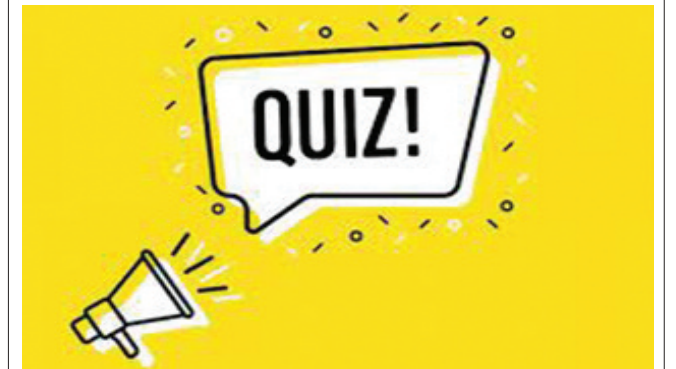
The Judge portfolio includes a vast array of products such as pressure cookers, cookware, gas-stoves, bottles and flasks, mixer grinders, dinner sets as well as small appliances. Judge's new e-commerce site is judgeappliances.com, where consumers can find the entire collection for purchase.

The company's 100-year legacy in the UK, Judge's innovative products are renowned for their quality and craftsmanship. The brand offers consumers functionality and performance, with attractive price points ranging from Rs 225 to Rs 7,995. All products are backed by the after sales network of TTK Prestige. The e-commerce platform has very attractive discounts and offers on almost all products range from 20 to 30 per cent.



177 HANS BIZ QUIZ

'Events Happened on June 20'



1. When King William IV died in June 1837, Victoria ascended to the throne on 20 June 1837 at age 18, and she served until her death at the age of 81 on January 22, 1901. In which year Victoria became Empress of India?

a) 1845 b) 1877
c) 1888 d) 1900

2. On June 20, 1840, Samuel FB Morse received a US' patent for telegraph signals, known to the world as Morse code. When was Modern International Morse Code introduced?

a) 1951 b) 1911
c) 1889 d) 1851

3. Which busiest railway station in India opened on 20 June 1887?

a) Victoria Terminus
b) Bori Bunder
c) Old Delhi railway station
d) Kolkata railway station

4. Which Asteroid was discovered on 20 June 1990?

a) Asteroid Eureka b) Ceres
c) Hermes d) Eros

5. The Medal of Freedom, America's highest civilian decoration, was presented on 20 June 1985 by President Ronald Reagan to which of the below?

a) Pope John Paul II
b) Nelson Mandela
c) Mother Teresa
d) Diana, Princess of Wales

6. Which Industrialist was born on 20 June 1869 in Belgaum District?

a) Jammalal Bajaj
b) Laxmanrao Kashinath Kirloskar
c) Nowrojee Wadia
d) Pirojsha Burjorji Godrej

7. Which famous Indian novelist was born on 20 June 1952?

a) Amitav Ghosh
b) Vikram Seth
c) Salman Rushdie
d) Arundhati Roy

8. World Refugee Day is observed on 20 June each year to raise awareness of the plight of refugees throughout the world. When was the day first established?

a) 1987 b) 1992
c) 2001 d) 2013

9. Which celebrity Actress was born 20 June 1967

a) Jodie Foster
b) Lionel Richie
c) Nicole Kidman
d) Tom Cruise

10. On 20 June 1990, British Chancellor John Major proposed a new European currency that would circulate alongside existing national currencies. What did Major call the currency?

a) Euro Pound
b) Hard Ecu
c) ENG-EUR Pound
d) Magic Dollar

The Hans Biz Quiz has been compiled by **Sunil Dhavala**, CEO, The Third Umpire Media. He had held senior management roles at Bertelsmann, NGC, Fox Broadcasting, Star TV and others. He is an alumnus of Indian Institute of Foreign Trade

KEY

1B 2D 3A 4A 5C 6B 7B 8C 9C 10B

Kohli takes India to 120/3 at tea

SOUTHAMPTON

VIRAT Kohli's watchful effort in challenging conditions helped India reach 120 for three at tea on day two of the World Test Championship final here on Saturday.

India, who had reached 69 for two at lunch, was only able to add 51 runs in the afternoon with the loss of Cheteshwar Pujara (8 off 54). Kohli (35 not out off 94) had the company of his deputy Ajinkya Rahane (13 off 54) when early tea was taken due to bad light.

Compared to the morning session, New Zealand's all pace attack showed much more discipline to not allow the batsmen any easy runs. With the Dukes ball moving around, Kohli paid due respect to the bowlers including Colin de Grandhomme, who bowled three successive maidens to the India skipper. He was happy leaving anything outside the off stump and was quick to pick up runs when bowled into the pads. Such was Kohli's intent that he did not hit a single boundary in the session.

Pujara at the other end took 36 balls to open his account, a cut shot off Wagner that went for a boundary. Like Shubman Gill earlier in the day, Pujara too was hit on the helmet but the blow from Wagner did not seem to bother him much. Soon after, the gritty batsman was trapped in front by another left-armer, Boult, who swung it back enough

sharply to beat the batsman.

Earlier, Rohit Sharma (34 off 68) and Shubman Gill (28 off 64) staved off the initial swing threat posed by the opposition pace attack with disciplined batting before New Zealand fought back to leave India at 69 for two at lunch after day one was rained out, cool and overcast conditions at the Hampshire Bowl on day two made it a no-brainer to bowl first and Kane Williamson did just that.

India decided to stick to the playing eleven they announced two days ago despite change in conditions while New Zealand went in with a four-prong pace attack at the expense of a specialist spinner with all-rounder de Grandhomme being the fifth seam bowling option.

Opening for the first time in England, Rohit and Gill came into the middle with a clear gameplan and applied themselves brilliantly against the potent pace duo of Boult and Tim Southee to share a 62-run stand.

As he often does, Rohit batted with an open stance to negate left-arm pacer Boult's trademark inswinger while Gill stood outside his crease to tackle Southee's outswinger.

There were times when Gill was not afraid to come down the

track. Gill, who had played the short ball extremely well in his debut series in Australia, pulled Boult off the front foot for India's first boundary of the final.

Rohit got going with a couple of fours off Southee in the following over, one a cut through point and the other a thick edge past the slip cordon. Gill welcomed Kyle Jamieson into the attack with a lovely straight drive off an inswinger.

The New Zealand bowlers were struggling to keep things tight as India reached 41 for no loss in 11 overs without a maiden over being bowled. No runs were scored for the next three overs with the openers doing a fine job to survive the first hour of play.

The young Gill took a nasty hit on his helmet grilly after Jamieson caught him by surprise with a sharp

bouncer. The lanky pacer was the one who provided the much needed breakthrough by having Rohit

caught at third slip with Southee taking a terrific catch.

Wagner sent Gill back in his very first over with the one angling away and straight into the hands of wicketkeeper B J Watling, scripting New Zealand's late fightback in the session.

Brief scores (Tea, Day 2): India 120/3 in 55.3 overs (V Kohli batting 35, Ajinkya Rahane batting 13, R Sharma 34, S Gill 28, K Jamieson 1/14, N Wagner 1/19, T Boult 1/29).



India's captain Virat Kohli bats during the second day of the World Test Championship final match against New Zealand at the Rose Bowl in Southampton, England on Saturday

Wickets tumble but India reach 243/8 at tea, lead by 78 runs

BRISTOL

INDIAN women suffered yet another batting collapse before their lower-order lifted them to 243 for 8 at tea as the one-off Test against England headed for a tense finish here on Saturday.

India lost four quick wickets for 28 runs after lunch but debutant Sneha Rana (27 not out) and veteran Shikha Pandey (18) kept the visitors afloat with a crucial 41-run partnership for the eighth wicket.

The duo batted for almost 17 overs before Pandey was caught behind off N Sciver's bowling in the 91st over. At the tea break, Taniya Bhatia (3 not out) and Rana were at the crease with India leading by 78 runs with two wickets in hand. A minimum of 40 overs still remain in the match. Resuming the second innings at 83 for one, India were 171 for

One-off Women's Test

three at lunch with Deepti Sharma producing a resolute 54. Sharma shared 72 runs with Punam Raut (39 off 83 balls) but was dismissed at the stroke of lunch.

After the break, England dealt two quick blows, dismissing skipper Mithali Raj (4) and Raut cheaply to leave India at 175 for five. While Raj completely misread an Ecclestone delivery only to see it clip the bails off, Raut, who was looking good till then, ended up giving a straight catch at square leg.

Pooja Vastrakar (12) then smashed three boundaries off Ecclestone in the 68th over before being cleaned up by Heather Knight in the 71st over. Vice-captain Harmanpreet Kaur, who had scored just 4 in the first innings, too couldn't last long in the middle as

she got out playing a slog sweep to become the fourth victim of Ecclestone. Pandey and Rana then stemmed the rot as the duo hit eight boundaries between them.

Earlier, India lost opener Shafali (63) Verma early when she was caught by Katherine Brunt off Ecclestone in the 30th over. The India prodigy could add just eight more runs, which included a six off Ecclestone, to her overnight score of 55 as India slipped to 99 for 2. Smacked for a straight six in the first ball of the over, Ecclestone came back to dismiss Verma in the last delivery with Brunt taking a spectacular catch at long-on.

Sharma then produced a dogged half-century to keep alive India's hopes of forcing a draw. Joining hands after losing Verma, Sharma and Raut showed great resilience as India took a lead of six runs with seven wickets in hand at lunch.

Euro 2020

Czech, Croatia keep qualifying chances alive after 1-1 draw

GLASGOW

THE Czech Republic and Croatia drew their European Championship Group D match 1-1 in Hampden Park in a game that was always tense, but never quite caught fire in the penalty areas.

The result means the Czechs have almost assured a place in the last 16, while Croatia need to beat Scotland in their final group game to qualify.

The key moment in the game came in the 33rd minute when Dejan Lovren caught Czech striker Patrik Schick in the face with a swinging arm as the pair jumped for a corner. The incident left Schick bleeding badly from his nose and after consulting with the VAR, referee Carlos del Cero Grande pointed to the penalty spot.

Schick picked himself up, wiped some of the blood from his face and sent Dominik Livankovic the wrong way from the penalty spot to give his side a lead.

Ante Rebic had the chance to draw Croatia level moments later when he found space to the left of the Czech area, but he sliced his effort well wide.

Croatia made two changes at halftime with Luka Ivanusec and Bruno Petkovic coming on, with Rebic one of the players replaced and they were soon level. Andrej

Kramaric took a free kick and Ivan Perisic cut inside from the left before fizzing a right foot shot past Tomas Vlacic in the Czech goal.

Nikola Vlasic came on to give more bite for Croatia, for whom Luka Modric was belying his 35-years with a busy display, which at times saw him more involved in defence than in attack.

Vlasic volleyed over after Perisic had chested the ball down for him, but with the clock ticking down, there was a feeling that neither side considered a draw to be a bad result, as it would leave the Czechs with four points and Croatia with one, but a relatively accessible match against Scotland still to play.

England held goalless draw
England were held to a goalless tie with their oldest rivals Scotland in the second-round Group D match at the Euro 2020 at Wembley.

England and Scotland met for the 115th time since 1872. Their previous meeting at a major tournament came in the group stage of Euro 1996, with England winning 2-0.

On the rain-soaked pitch at Wembley late on Friday, the two teams fought hard in the midfield with England pressing to the front more frequently, reports Xinhua.



Croatia's Ivan Perisic celebrates after scoring his side's first goal during the Euro 2020 soccer championship group D match against the Czech Republic at the Hampden Park stadium in Glasgow on Friday

Milkha Singh cremated with full state honours



Sand artist Sudarsan Pattnaik creates a sculpture as a tribute to athlete Milkha Singh, who died of COVID complications late on Friday, in Puri beach Saturday

CHANDIGARH

ICONIC sprinter Milkha Singh was on Saturday cremated with full state honours here, marking the end of an era in which his pioneering accomplishments on the track galvanised a newly-independent India. Milkha, who was 91, was bid a tearful adieu in the presence of his family members and several dignitaries, including sports minister Kiren Rijiju.

'The Flying Sikh', as he was fondly called, died on Friday night due to COVID-19 related complications. His son and ace golfer Jeev Milkha Singh lit the funeral pyre. Punjab Governor and Chandigarh Administrator V P Singh Badnore, Punjab Finance Minister Manpreet Singh Badal, Haryana's Sports Minister Sandeep Singh were among the other dignitaries who attended the last rites. Prof Jagat Ram, Director of PGIMER where Milkha was admitted, was also present.

A police contingent reversed arms and sounded the last post in the sprinter's honour. Milkha was also given a gun salute. The Punjab government had declared a one-day state mourning and a holiday as a mark of respect to the legend. Chief Minister Amarinder Singh had earlier in the day said the Punjab government will accord state funeral to Milkha Singh. The funeral procession started from Milkha's Sector 8 residence. His body was carried in a bedecked vehicle, with common people turning up along the short route to the Sector 25 cremation ground to pay their last respects to the legend.

The Milkha died on Friday night after a month-long battle with COVID-19. He had lost his former national volleyball captain wife Nirmal Kaur to the same ailment on Sunday.

The Padma Shri awardee, who was nicknamed 'The Flying Sikh' for his achievements, is survived by Jeev and three daughters.

The legendary athlete was a four-time Asian Games gold medalist and the 1958 Commonwealth Games champion but his greatest performance remained the fourth-place finish in the 400m final of the 1960 Rome Olympics. His timing of 45.6 sec at the Italian capital remained the national record for 38 years before Paramjeet Singh broke it in 1998. He also represented India in the 1956 and 1964 Olympics and was bestowed the Padma Shri in 1959.

Milkha wanted to see an Indian win Olympic athletics medal

NEW DELHI: Sprint king Milkha Singh, who missed an Olympic medal by a whisker 60 years ago, wanted to see an Indian win an Olympic medal in athletics -- a dream that remained unfulfilled.

Even in his 70s, Milkha, who passed away at the age of 91 in Chandigarh on Friday night, would often turn up and encourage athletes at Chandigarh's Sector 7 Sports Complex, a hub of athletics in the city.

"Marnay se pehle Milkha Singh ka ek sapna hai -- Hindustan ko Olympic mein medal mile (Before I die, I wish to see an Indian athlete win a medal at the Olympics)," he had told young athletes in one such interaction.

India, however, haven't got any medal in track and field at the Olympic Games. At the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, India's PT Usha came close to winning a medal in women's 400m hurdles. She finished fourth.

Milkha too had finished fourth in the 1960 Rome Olympics but shattered the world record and was in sight of a medal before a momentary lapse in concentration cost him. He had clocked 45.73 seconds.

India's star javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra is considered as one having potential to win a medal at the rescheduled Tokyo Olympic Games that start on July 23.

Chandigarh's seven-lane cinder track within the sports complex in Sector 7 is still home to aspiring as well as seasoned athletes.

"He used to visit the stadium once or twice a week and often discussed training methods with coaches. His house was close to the sports complex. We also went to meet him as he was the president of Chandigarh Athletics Association (CAA) from 1978 to 1999," Shiv Kumar Joshi, an athletics coach, told IANS from Chandigarh.

Milkha would regularly give pep-talk to youngsters. "I had trained very hard for the Rome Olympics. I often vomited blood after hard training sessions. I was confident of winning a medal. But it was not my day. What I failed to achieve in my life you should make efforts to win glory for India," he often told budding athletes.

In his leisure hours, he would spend time at Chandigarh's golf course, playing nine holes and then relaxing at the clubhouse. (IANS)

Japan imposes stricter regulations on India's Olympic-bound; IOA says 'unfair & discriminatory'

NEW DELHI

THE Indian athletes and officials travelling for the Tokyo Olympics have been asked by the Japanese government to undergo daily COVID-19 tests for a week prior to their departure and not interact with anyone from another country for three days on arrival, strictures that have left the IOA fuming.

Stricter regulations have been put in place for all travellers -- including athletes, coaches and support staff -- who have resided in 11 countries, including India, where different variants of COVID-19 have been identified, within 14 days of their arrival in Tokyo.

"The unfair and discriminatory" rules have drawn sharp criticism from the Indian Olympic Association. India's COVID-19 situation has improved considerably after a catastrophic second wave with daily cases declining from more than 3 lakh a few weeks back to just over 60,000 right now.

India has been clubbed in group 1 alongside Afghanistan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

"Before you travel: You must be tested every day, for seven days, prior to your departure to Japan," the advisory stated for the Group 1 countries.

"Physical distancing: For seven days prior to your departure to Japan, you must keep your physical interaction with all others, including from another team, delegation or country, to an absolute minimum," it added.

On arrival, athletes and officials will also not be allowed to interact with anyone else apart from their on delegation for three days. "At the Games. You will be tested every day as is the case for all athletes and officials.

"For three days after your arrival in Japan, you will not be able to physically interact with anyone from another team, delegation or country."

Athletes have been asked to check into the Games Village five days before their competition begins. IOA president Narinder Batra and secretary general Rajeev Mehta, in a joint statement, questioned the new regulations.

"Athletes are allowed to arrive in the Games Village only 5 days before their event. Now 3 days will be wasted, this is the time the Athletes need to be moving towards their mode to Peak. Highly unfair for Indian Athletes," the joint statement read.

"Where and when will the Athletes have their Breakfast, Lunch Dinner etc during these 3 days, as everyone has food in the Games village food hall where all Athletes and officials of other NOCs are present all the time.