

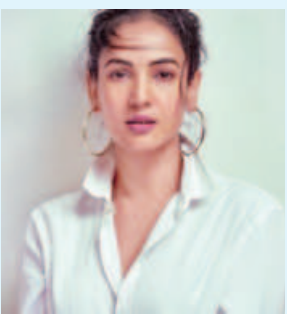
Around 9.30 am, the Max Healthcare said it was awaiting more supplies. "Update: We have received emergency supplies at Max Saket and Max Smart which will last another 2 hours. We are still awaiting more supplies," it said. Indian Spinal Injuries Centre in Vasant Kunj also posted on Twitter at 4.20 pm that it was left with only one hour of oxygen and asked for help at the earliest. "Indian Spinal Injuries Centre, Vasant Kunj, with 160 #Covid19 patients, are left with another 1 hour of Oxygen cylinder stock. We have been waiting for the supply since last night, but no luck so far.

Womenia

TWEET PATROL



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**SUSTAINABILITY
AND
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Detachable sleeves; to slay all day

TEJAL SINHA

Hearth Up My Sleeves is a clothing brand that fabricates transformable clothing. In modern times with social media, frequent social gatherings, and the constant need to wear something new, this sister duo bring you a unique concept of detachable sleeves. The brand was started by Riya Khattar and Chandni Khattar.

Riya shares, "At Heart Up My Sleeves, we aim at minimalism and sustainability. Our reusable and detachable sleeves are all you need to transform your day fit into the night. With the idea to create a fashion accessory that could be reused to create multiple outfits; something that is trendy yet affordable and exclusive, our intent is to instantly raise the glam quotient of your obsolete and unexciting everyday outfits. Every design is curated keeping the modern-day fashion trends in consciousness. These statement pieces promise to elevate your basic look into stunning new attires."

From sequins to frill and balloon to flair, the sleeves are available in every size, cloth, and colour for a holistic & wholesome choice. We also go that extra mile with customisation options & round-the-clock support for a more refined outcome.

Riya adds, "We have a family business of Women's ethnic wear. Therefore, we were always very passionate about Women's fashion & wanted to create something different & unique. Amidst the pandemic we learnt about the importance of sustainable lifestyle & how fashion should be a part of it. I believe the pandemic really helped us realise that the world is changing and so is the fashion. During this time period, we were truly able to understand the environment and the uncertainty it holds. We started our brand amidst the pandemic. The idea was inspired by the current situation itself. Now, many people advocate and buy clothes from sustainable brands to reduce waste from our already over polluted planet."

To support the same idea, they fabricated something that could change the look without buying many articles every time. Since many people were unemployed during the pandemic, to reinforce the Indian textile, they source all their materials from various states of India. This burdensome time has been both a boon and a bane for us.

Being a women's fashion brand, they had to make their customers aware of the unique concept, make them understand what we are trying to convey, what are the benefits of the product and why they should choose sustainable fashion.

"The continued lockdown has immensely affected our business since there was shortage of workers, the price hiked up. From the material to the wages and couriers the prices went up while the product demand went down as the people were focusing on savings rather than buying fashion related stuff since they weren't moving out. We also had to put in a lot of efforts to sanitize the product, keep in check every employee's health due to which we incurred additional costs during the pandemic," adds Riya.

In recent days, their sleeves have been styled by Hansika Motwani in one of the Tony Kakkar's music video.

Riya shares that some immensely talented creators like Komal Pandey, Niki Mehra and Bandagi Kalra have also been loving their statement sleeves. They are also getting their designs featured in the upcoming music videos of Honey Singh and Tony Kakkar.

Styling these statement sleeves

These sleeves compliment every outfit be it ethnic or western. Turn your day outfit of a basic white tee and jeans into a party look just by adding any of the sleeves and a pair of heels. To reuse any of your old sarees, throw a pair of dazzling sleeves and your favourite jewellery to look glamorous in seconds! Accentuating your monochrome outfit can simply be done by including some contrasting statement sleeves. While some sleeves are eye-catching, others also magnify elegance. Bodycon sleeveless dresses look exceptional with our lace variants. To style with pants and work outfits, add a pair of neutral-coloured sleeves and you are good to go!



Make your wardrobe effective

In creating a more sustainable wardrobe, it can be useful to explore creating a capsule wardrobe for yourself. This can be helpful in disrupting your desire to consume and always have more or new things to wear. It can also help you to learn how little you really need to own to order to look good and have outfits to wear for all the occasions you need to dress for. If you care about the health of our planet and the people who inhabit it (present and future), then you should totally care about your own personal carbon footprint which includes your clothing. The fashion industry is one of the most harmful industries to planet Earth taking a whopping 10% responsibility for the world's annual carbon emissions. That is more than all international flights and sea shipping combined.

Wash Your Clothes Less And Avoid The Tumble Dryer

Research by the Energy Saving Trust has shown that laundering accounts for 60% to 80% of a garment's total environmental impact, so you can significantly reduce your impact even by washing your clothes after every few wears. To further save energy, wash your clothes at 30° and dry them naturally. Saving energy means reducing the burning of oil and gas and, ultimately, a reduction in the contribution to the rise in global temperatures causing climate change.



Organise Your Wardrobe

Organise your wardrobe and look after what you have so you can celebrate the pieces that you love. If you can actually see what's in your closet, you're much more likely to be inventive when styling outfits, meaning you're less likely to buy new pieces. There is so much value in having less. With less, our minds are calmer and our headspace clearer.

The Ex Test

One of the most conscious ways to shop is simply to buy things you only intend to wear time and time again that you will value and make last. One of the silliest but most effective ways to consider how to do

this is to ask yourself, 'Would you want to run into an ex in the garment? Would you feel confident and assured and good about yourself?' If not, don't buy it. Simply cutting down on what we buy allows us to have a small, considered and hopefully more sustainable wardrobe.

Try to Always Buy Organic Cotton

Try to avoid fabrics that use microfibres, these fabrics often end up polluting the oceans and are difficult to clean up because the particles are so tiny. Alternatively, choose an organic or GOTS certified cotton. GOTS certified cottons are monitored from the point of growth and monitor the fair trade of the farmers and the consumption of water; regulate pesticides used; and, on a whole, monitor the full supply chain. Ensure you always do your research, but try to ensure fabrics are taken from a source that can be replenished, and always, always recycle.

Veterinary Day



Whether you're a cat person, a dog person, a rabbit person or a horse person, there's one thing all animal lovers can agree on, and that's the fantastic work carried out by veterinarians.

Celebrate with your pet on Veterinary Day by buying them a treat or a new toy to show them how much they mean to you as you appreciate the work veterinarians do to keep pets healthy.

Veterinarian Day was created in 2000 by the World Veterinary Association to highlight and promote the lifesaving work performed by veterinarians around the globe. Each year, a different theme is chosen which helps pet owners to remember the importance of various aspects of animal care, and how vets can help, for example ensuring your pet's vaccinations are up to date.

On this special day, why not raise a paw, hoof or claw to say thank you to our veterinarians.



We've been raised to 'save for tomorrow, not experience today': Kubbra Sait

I think it's very important to be in a state of Zen so that you can allow the future to unfold. My Zen is keeping me busy, Sait tells in an exclusive interview.

For 'Sacred Games' actor Kubbra Sait, the idea of success is much beyond 'gaadi, bhangla and bank balance' (car, house and bank balance), the concept of success is purely based on the larger emotion of happiness. In a new Audible podcast, the quirky actor revealed her three secrets to success - one of them being, 'get lots of sleep!'

"My 3 Secrets to Success" is available exclusively on Audible, produced by FirstAction Studios, a Rainshine Company. It reflects on Kubbra's journey to success and her mantras that have led to it. It is a series that features prominent personalities from various fields speaking about success, its definitions, evolution, and the three principles that have led them to what they are today. Catch Kubbra being funny, philosophical, and downright crazy as she shares her insights on success and the importance of gratitude, on the podcast.

Kubbra Sait reflects on the podcast in an interview with:

In the Audible podcast, you mention the concept of success has largely been rooted in personal happiness for you, since childhood. What are your thoughts on this cookie-cutter idea of success installed from a young age?

I think the concept of success is purely based on the larger emotion of

happiness. I think that happened to me when I grew much older and when I started doing things that I actually loved, but until that point of

time it was always the cookie cutter idea of success. We've been raised as a subcontinent to be people who save for tomorrow, and not who live to experience the today. Everything's always been based on a settlement of value that has been instilled in us since the time we were babies. Throughout the podcast, I tried to just have fun and talk about my experiences, rather than focus on what the "idea of success" is. I've tried to talk about small things that make a difference, like my gratitude jar, and it's all available on the episode for everyone to listen to.

It's only when we look back at it, that's when you discover that one moment where you literally go "Damn, that's funny I actually enjoyed that". That's when it clicks that what if I could make money, live a decent life or live doing what I love to do. Or what if I have limited resources but hey, at least I really love doing what I do. I think the minute you tweak your mind to think that way, automatically success comes your way.



And in the new age, we've got people like Vijay Varma, Taapsee Pannu who encapsulate that. They love what they do and they've worked so hard to get to where they are, that you actually look at them and see a quality career based out of doing what you love. Even me for that matter, now that I know what I love to do, I want to work harder towards what I love to do rather than chasing the money. That is always a byproduct so if success is

directly correlated to money, then I think that's the short game that you're in, not the long term solution.

You decided to give your life the Bombay spin at the age 27. Give us a glimpse of your mind back then, what were you thinking?

I was thinking of burning bridges with what I was doing at that point. I was pretty clear that if Bombay doesn't work out, and isn't kind to me, which it truly was, then I would have said that I'm going to drop everything and go look for another job in some other part of the world. But it would not have happened if I would have said that "Oh, I'm still going to have my safety net in Dubai, then I probably would not have been able to do what I'm doing in Bombay". So yes, there was a little bit of fear of failure but there was also breaking out of the fear knowing that it's only beyond this fear that I will truly discover what I want to do in life.

"In life, you should appreciate the lows as much as the highs. Like in Music," were your inspiring words on the podcast. Why is acknowledging and accepting low points so important?

I was trying to tell my story. I think each person's story is so unique and storytelling is so important. Accepting highs and lows truly define who you are. I think the character of a person comes through how you can be when you are

going to the lowest of your lowest phase. I think it's the true test of character is when you're at your lowest low because you tend to hold other life rafts to yourself, which are beyond your success... which are beyond what you do, and it all starts coming down to who you are, and the tenacity of you as a person. Which is why it's really important to appreciate the lows when they come to you. I don't mean it's easy to appreciate your lows, but it's just about going through them as you would go through the highs, but if you think life is all about the highs then we wouldn't be living life, then we would be playing a game, and even in games you have to lose a couple of lives.

Has the lockdown, in any way, shaped or changed ideas of happiness or success for you?

Oh my god, yes. In a gazillion ways. I think you look around you and learn to be appreciative of the many things that you have and what you can do for your immediate circle. I'm not saying this is a Miss World answer where you go and say, I want world peace, but I'm just trying to see as an individual, if I can impact even one other life. I think that for me it has been life altering to be able to sit in one place without being edgy about yourself. I've come close to meditation during the lockdown so that's helped me a lot. So in many ways it's been a personal journey for me.

NEWS ROUNDUP

Debina Bonnerjee urges all to donate plasma

Actress Debina Bonnerjee encourages her fans to donate plasma, since plasma therapy is proving to be an effective way to combat Covid-19.

"I urge everyone who has recovered from Covid-19, to check with their doctors and then go ahead and donate your plasma. Plasma donation has proven to be an effective way to combat Covid-19, as many patients who are in critical stages are benefiting from plasma from Covid-recovered patient. This is the least we can do to salvage the current situation and every donation counts. So, please go ahead and donate your plasma," shares Debina. The actress says that she and her husband actor Gurmeet Choudhary have also donated plasma. She adds, "Post recovering from Covid, my husband and I visited our local clinic and we donated our plasma. While there are millions of people getting affected, there is also a large chunk of the population that is recovering and has been able to fight Covid 19. Since I am a plasma donor, I have the donor card and I found out that there is no plasma available as of now and there is an acute shortage of the same. People should come ahead and donate plasma, just like they donate blood."





Specially abled AIIMS staff helping patients in testing times

NEW DELHI

SANTDEV Chauhan is an employee in AIIMS for the last 25 years and is working day and night to help the poor during this pandemic. He is facilitating the treatment of the people coming to AIIMS from far flung areas.

Santdev is running a community kitchen, feeding about fifty people daily and also helps people in lodging.

While talking to IANS, he said, "I am working in AIIMS for many years but it is now that I get satisfaction when I help people who are in distress, sometimes financially also. I

have also donated my one year's salary to PM-Cares fund."

Santdev hails from Mau in UP. He said that he got the passion for social service from his grandfather. Santdev is the head of AIIMS Disabled Employees Federation which has around 2,000 members including some doctors, nurses and other staff.

When asked about his experience, he said that he has helped hundreds of people and today also I have paid for a patient's tests. He is also helping the specially abled community to get vaccinated as soon as possible.

The country is facing tough times during the pandemic and many people are running away

from their responsibilities and some are indulging in illegal activities like black marketing and other means to make money. In this situation, a person like Santdev is a hope for the society.

Santdev says most of the people who are coming to AIIMS are from poor background and

they are in distress because of the load in the hospital and his small help provides them solace. He said that he sometimes arranges free lodging facility for those who are not from well-to-do families, in the neighbourhood.

The Federation also pools resources for such people.

Oxygen to be sold in UP on doc's prescription only

LUCKNOW

THE Uttar Pradesh government has now made a doctor's prescription mandatory for buying oxygen or refilling cylinders.

Additional chief secretary (information) Navneet Sehgal said, the decision was taken to curb hoarding of oxygen cylinders in homes.

"While we are continuously taking steps to ensure oxygen supply and it will not be possible to meet the rising demand, if people begin hoarding oxygen at home in anticipation of an emergency. Oxygen will now be sold only if one presents a doctor's prescription, even if it's on WhatsApp," he said.

Officials have been deployed to oxygen filling centres to ensure there is no black-marketing.



Chief minister Yogi Adityanath has said that police should also be deputed at filling centres.

Sehgal said, 31 hospitals in the state are also setting up an air separator to manufacture oxygen

from the air, thus curbing dependence on liquid oxygen supply.

The plant will be operational in two weeks. The centre has allocated 1,500 oxygen concentra-

tors to Uttar Pradesh for distribution in hospitals.

Each concentrator is meant for one patient and will ensure they do not require further intervention.

The chief minister has also ordered to set up a control room to monitor availability of oxygen in the state. The food safety and drug administration department and home department have been directed to monitor the control room.

Industrial units using oxygen for manufacturing have been given the nod to convert the supply for medicinal purpose.

Those factories which manufacture medical oxygen and have been lying shut will also be revived. Private hospitals are also being encouraged to set up their own oxygen plants.

4 held for black marketing of Remdesivir in UP

LUCKNOW

FOUR persons, including two doctors, were arrested in Uttar Pradesh for black marketing and hoarding of Remdesivir, a key drug used in the treatment of Covid patients.

The four were arrested from Thakurganj area in Lucknow on Thursday night from near the Era Medical College where they had planned to deliver the consignment.

The police have also seized 34 vials and Rs 4.90 lakh from their possession.

Two accused were identified as Athar Rashid and Samrat Pandey, who have done Bachelor of Ayurveda, Medicine, and Surgery (BAMS), while the other two, Tehzeeb Hasan and Vipin Kumar, worked as their aides.

ACP, Chowk, IP Singh said acting on a tip off about black



marketing of Remdesivir drug in Thakurganj.

"We have trapped a member of the gang by posing as a customer and after meeting the gang, the price of one vial was fixed at Rs 20,000," said the officer.

"The gang members re-

vealed they used to receive the consignment from Kanpur," added Singh. Police are now tracing the main supplier in Kanpur.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Director Town & Country Planning, Haryana, Chandigarh has granted In-Principle approval vide memo no. LC-4222/JE (DS)/2021/10232 dated 20-04-2021 for change in Beneficial Interest as per policy no. PF-51A2015/2708 dated 18-02-2015 for change in developer from M/s Emmar India Limited (Formerly known as Emmar MGF Land Limited) to M/s Sternal Buildcon Private Limited for developing Affordable Plotted Colony (DDJAY-2016) over land admeasuring 11.9778 acres under license no. 7 of 2021 dated 05-03-2021.

While according the said in-principle approval, the Director Town & Country Planning, Haryana, Chandigarh has directed the company to inform the general public about the change of the developer through public notice in the leading newspapers and accordingly the notice is hereby issued for their information and if any objection, the same may be sent to the office of STP Gurugram within 30 days from the date of publication of this notice. The said permission granted is also being uploaded/ hosted on our website www.signatureglobal.in

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Regd off- 13th floor, Dr. Gopal Das Bhawan,
28 Barakhamba Road, New Delhi-110001
Place: Gurugram Dated: 23.04.2021

Punjab to recruit 400 nurses, 140 medical technicians

CHANDIGARH

TO strengthen the state's healthcare capabilities amid the Covid surge, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Friday ordered immediate recruitment of 400 nurses and 140 technicians to the government medical colleges, while directing the department to expedite the medical college projects approved.

The Chief Minister, who also raised the issue during the virtual meeting earlier with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, said he will be writing soon to the latter seeking a direction to PGI Satellite Centres and Military Hospitals in Punjab to provide Covid beds to citizens. Pre-fabricated structures could be used for this purpose, he stressed.

Virtually reviewing the functioning of the Department of Medical Education and Research, particularly against the backdrop of the Covid crisis, he also approved amendment to rules for re-designating the department faculty members in a time-bound manner to bring them on a par with their peers on this count.

On the recruitment drive, the Chief Minister said that of the 900 posts sanctioned after the department restructuring, 400 should be filled immediately in phase one with hiring of nurses.

In hiring of technicians, reasonable weightage should be given to those who are already working on contract with the state government, he said.

Medical Education Minister O.P. Soni shared details of the various hospitals and medical colleges that are coming up in Mohali, Hoshiarpur and Kapurthala.

Centre supplying drugs in biased manner, alleges Rajasthan govt



JAIPUR

THE Rajasthan Government has come out openly accusing the central government of adopting a biased attitude in supplying life saving drugs to the desert state as the COVID numbers surge each day, raising the demand for Remdesivir and oxygen in the state.

The Rajasthan ministers released a few figures to showcase the alleged biased attitude of the central government and said that Rajasthan is getting 205 metric tonne of oxygen while the Gujarat government is getting much more oxygen when the active cases are low there compared to Rajasthan.

The state government received just 28,500 Remdesivir injections while Gujarat got 1.63 lakh injections and MP received 92,200 injections despite the fact that Rajasthan has a much

higher number of active cases than these two states, said the ministers.

Going with the distribution percentage, it is clear that Rajasthan has received just 27.50 pc of injections as compared to active cases while Gujarat has been given 194 pc and MP has been given 112%, they added.

Earlier, state health minister Raghu Sharma alleged that the supply of Remdesivir by Cipla to Rajasthan was stopped with the interference of the Goa government and later its supply by other companies was stopped due to interference by the Karnataka Government.

Rajasthan, till Thursday, has 107157 active cases. A total of 14468 cases were registered on Thursday while 59 deaths were reported taking the cumulative death figures to 3389, said health officials.

Virtual celebrations of 400th Prakash Purab in Punjab

CHANDIGARH

THE Punjab government has decided to hold virtual celebrations to kick off the 400th Prakash Purab of Guru Tegh Bahadur from April 28 amid the uncertain situation resulting from the continuous surge in Covid-19 cases, Chief Minister Amarinder Singh said on Friday. Online 'kirtans' will be organised by the government on television and social media channels, with people being urged to offer 'ardas' for 'sarbat da bhal' from their homes, he said, adding that he will speak to SGPC chief Bibi Jagir Kaur to shift all celebrations

to the virtual mode in view of the crisis situation.

While he and the whole state had been looking forward to celebrate the great event in a befitting manner in memory of Guru's sacrifice for Hindus, the situation was not conducive to grand celebrations, noted the Chief Minister.

All programmes will be held as scheduled now, but through virtual medium, with no physical gatherings, an official spokesperson told the media after a meeting of the executive committee set up to oversee the historic celebrations.

Amarinder seeks Centre-State parity on vaccination for 18+ group

CHANDIGARH

TERMINING the new vaccination policy for the 18-plus age group as unfair to the states, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Friday sought Centre-state parity in vaccination for that age group from May 1, while calling for urgent steps to ensure adequate oxygen supply.

While the Punjab government has adopted all measures to minimise demand for oxygen, given its criticality as the most essential drug for the treatment of serious Covid-19 patients, the government of India must ensure that all commitments with regard to its allocation are complied with by the liquid oxygen manufacturers in the other states, the Chief Minister demanded.

Punjab's supplies come from Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, and there are reports of supplies being 'hijacked', Amarinder Singh said at the virtual conference held by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday to discuss the Covid situation with the CMs of the worst hit states. On the vaccination front, the Chief Minister said that the new rates announced by one of the manufacturers will cost the Punjab government over Rs 1,000 crore.

He sought Central government funding for vaccination, with permis-



sion to make the cost a fit charge on the SDRF funds in the interim.

Regular vaccine supply must be ensured to maintain the supply chain to the last vaccination booth, he said, adding that due to supply shortage, vaccinations in the last one week have been slightly low, i.e., around 75,000-80,000 a day.

While Punjab received fresh supplies on Thursday, the current stocks can last only three days as demand for vaccine is increasing, he stressed.

Amarinder Singh also expressed concern over lack of clarity on the quantity of vaccine to be made available by the Centre after May 1, and how the manufacturers will regulate supplies to different states and private

purchasers.

The state government, on its part, has constituted an experts' group under virologist Gagandeep Kang to advise on the vaccination strategy for those in the age group of 18-45 years, whom the states have been allowed to vaccinate at their cost, he said.

The Chief Minister also pointed to the shortage and blackmarketing of medicines like Remdesivir, which he said is creating great panic among the general public.

Though the Central government is making efforts to increase its supply, a clearer message is required to inform the public that it is not a magic wand, and also about the available substitutes, he stressed.





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Stardust blown away in Dravidian bastion

IN less than 10 days, the nation would have known who would rule the five States which had gone to polls in the last week of March, stretching on to the last week of April. It is anybody's guess whether there would be upsets in the form of new political formulations taking over the reins of administration affirming the widely-held belief that anti-incumbency would have affected the fortunes of the existing rulers in these States.

Tamil Nadu is one among them which would be keenly watched for the outcome it is likely to throw up. The point of interest would be whether the 10-year rule of AIADMK would get another five-year term, extending the goodwill the party seemed to have sustained during the four-year tenure it held power under Edappadi Palaniswamy after the demise

of the earlier CM, the powerful J Jayalithaa.

This is not likely to be the first of notable highlights that the State had seen during the campaigning phase, which was acrimonious and abrasive at best. For a region weaned on cine power, stocked to the brim with stars and starlets on both sides of the Dravidian parties, this election saw it showcasing this USP in the least glamorous manner. Barring Kamal Haasan, who seems to have almost quit his celluloid avatar to turn a full-time politician, other filmi personalities like Vijayakanth, Sharath Kumar, Radhika etc were missing in action.

The BJP leader, Khushbu does not join this list as she has been in politics for a longer time and has stayed away from cinema, by and large, during the past few

years, making her more of a 'neta than an abhineta'. DMK's Udayanidhi Stalin too is not known as a highly successful hero in Tamil cinema and this time around, he too was content playing the understudy to his CM-aspirant father Stalin, rather than use his movie masala to attract the audiences.

Thus if full-time politicians travelled the length and breadth of Tamil Nadu to woo voters, they were not depending on their individual or ideological power alone to win over public support. Stalin's handing over of the political campaigning assignment to Prashant Kishor and his I-PAC team and his rival Edappadi K Palaniswamy requisitioning the services of a political strategist Sunil Kanugolu were clearly indications of a larger game plan of both these leaders to go for a comprehensive approach. An assorted set of

campaign techniques which included soft Hindutva and hard Dravidian re-assertion of its identity and exclusivity added spice to the war of words which was relentless on both online and offline media.

With exit polls being banned, the social media channels were content spinning out astrological predictions, secret reports of intelligence agencies and data analysis of voting patterns over the past 10 elections in Tamil Nadu. Almost all of them are predicting the return of the existing government, while conceding that the DMK alliance would give them a tough fight. The icing on the cake is the prediction of a grand re-entry of BJP into the Tamil Nadu Assembly where it had no presence for a long time, since making its debut a few decades ago. Speculators say the saffron party may win anywhere between 3-6 seats. Well, all this will be in public domain in just a short period as the 2021 polls is expected to herald winds of change in Tamil Nadu politics.



On the trail of mother of rivers: The Saraswati

TEJ SINGH KARDAM

THE first civilisation formed on the banks of rivers. The early civilisations began to form around the time of the Neolithic Revolution. Rivers were attractive locations for the first civilisations because they provided a steady supply of drinking water and made the land fertile for growing crops. Moreover, they were useful for transportation of goods from one place to another. Additionally, those lost in the wilderness could return to civilisation by travelling downstream, where the major centres of human population tend to concentrate. Rivers are the backbone of human civilisation, without rivers, life will come to a halt. In India, early civilisation like Mohenjo-Daro and Lothal flourished on the bank of river Saraswati and has significant part in their development.

In recent years, a number of scientists have come out with the comprehensive studies on geomorphological, sedimentological, geochronological, hydrological and remote sensing aspects of the Saraswati River. A majority of scientists have come to the conclusion that it was a large river that had abundant discharge and brought voluminous quantity of sediments from the Himalayan province. A growing number of scientists and archaeologists believe that the Ghagghar does represent the Saraswati River of yore. The Ghagghar of Haryana is known as Hakra, in Cholistan and the Nara, in Sindh (both in eastern Pakistan). The great width of channel, coupled with thickness as much as 30-50 m of the fluvial (rock fragments entrained - fine particles, in a stream of water) - alluvial sediments deposited by the river implies that it once carried voluminous discharge of water. That mighty river at present is reduced to the Ghagghar - Hakra - Nara river in which only flood water flows. The drainage of two rivers that once constituted the two branches of the legendary Saraswati River of prehistoric antiquity encompassed three radically different physiographic-geological provinces. One of the branches, Sutlej (earlier called Shatadru) arose in southern Tibet beyond the Himalaya, other the Tons (earlier called Tamasa) emerges in the ever-snowy Himadri or Great Himalayan domain, and the third the Chautang (Drishadvati) drained the southern foothill belt of the western Indo-Gangetic Plains. In its middle reaches the river traversed the large swathe of alluvial plain, and then passed through the dreary landscape of sand dunes of the Thar Desert, before ending in the Rann of Kutch once a part of the realm of the Arabian Sea.

A number of scientists dealing with the tectonic and seismic activities have observed that the vast expanse of land traversed by the Saraswati and its tributaries have more than once experienced tectonic convulsions and also severely shaken by earthquakes of large magnitude, resulting in displacement of ground. Some parts of it rose and the others sank along the fault that dissect it. This indeed happened to the Saraswati and its branches that followed a path riddled with active faults.

The changes that took place considerably modified the landforms so much so that it is not the same today when the Saraswati flowed during the prime of its life. Due to tectonic upheaval, entailing fissuring, sinking and uplifting of the land through the eastern branch of the Saraswati (the Tamasa River) flowed, bringing dramatic change in the drainage. As the tectonically resurgent Aravalli Orogenic belt slowly rose up, the Saraswati and its tributaries shifted progressively westward. The uplifted and displaced block impeding its flow, the Tamasa found crushed and the weakened rock of fault zone cut and formed a new channel. Flowing south westward, the Tamasa branch of the Saraswati joined Drishadvati River which then the upland of Haryana.

By joining Tamasa Drishadvati became a major river. Sometimes later land in the foothills to the east of Paonta Sahab Fault (Yamuna Tear) sank. The sinking of the ground forced the then south-westward flowing river to deflect southward towards the then Yamuna, which was a tributary of Chambal - a tributary of Ganga. The Tamasa branch of Saraswati now joined the Yamuna, which became carrier of Tamasa branch of the Saraswati water and delivered to the Ganga at Prayag - a confluence of Ganga and Yamuna, now Saraswati also joined through its channel of Yamuna, it became Triveni. The Winter Westerlies - strongest wind in winter blow from west to east, continued to provide precipitation and pile snows in the mountainous catchment of the two branches of Saraswati. The melt water sustained the flow of Saraswati in the period Harappan lived. The Harappan left their abode, when the river lost all its water due to capture of its eastern branch by Yamuna river and of its western branch by the Vipash (Beas) river, wholly depriving the Saraswati of its water discharge.

The river Saraswati had such a fascinating history, supported geological, hydrological and archaeological evidences as well as the records of the most modern tools, such as remote sensing and GIS. With the aid of remote sensing through orbiting satellites, the mystery of the river is almost solved. Rajasthan government has been doing a lot of work since the 1990s, to trace the ancient network of channels. The Rajasthan Ground Water Department (RGWD) is assisted by Central Ground Water Board (CGWB), Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), Bhabha Atomic Research Center (BARC) and National Physical Laboratory, Ahmedabad. The RGWD is investigating site of channels, CGWB is carrying out drilling activities for water and soil samples by carbon dating. The team is of the opinion that the Saraswati river enter Rajasthan in Ganganagar district and tail ends in Bikaner and Jaisalmer districts near Rann of Kutch. The extensive study has shown that there are big Paleochannels 60-70 meters underground and water was moving slowly towards the sea. The presence of Alluvial sediment points out towards existence of fresh water flow source along palaeochannels. These palaeochannels are present in all 10 districts of western Rajasthan and pertain to the ancient river Saraswati.

Mythologically, the Saraswati was a highly venerated river in the times it watered the vast expanse of the land known as Saptasindhav - the land of seven rivers - Saraswati, Sutlej (Satadru), Beas (Vipasa), Chenab (Asikani), Ravi (Parosni), Jhelum (Vitasta) and Sindhu (Indus) - (Rigveda 8.24.27). The Rigved describes the river Saraswati as 'nadi-tama' - the best of all rivers (R 2.41.16), surpassing all other rivers in splendour and benevolence 'mahimanamahinar' (R 6.61.13). It was mighty river 'mahoarnah' (R 1.3.12), abounding in water that was pure in the source of mountains to the sea, 'shuchiriyatigiribhya a' - samudrat (7.95.2). It was most impetuous of all rivers 'apasamapastama' (R 6.61.13) that descended with roar 'charatiroruvat' down the slope, it's fierce current gurgling (R 6.61.7) through its canyon course. In SkandPuran, the Saraswati is shown as originating in the snowy Himalayas and flowing down to the foothills. In its way down to the plains, the river cuts through multitudes of mountain ranges, after watering Kurukshetra region the Saraswati turned westward and flowed through forests such as Sitavan 'Aditivan' Dvaitvan etc.

Further downstream, the Pandavas during their exile and later Balram - brother of Krishna, along Saraswati river noticed that at a place Vinashan the river disappeared under the mass of sands (Mahabharata Van Parv 25.1). Balram had started his journey from the place where the 'river met the sea' (Mahabharata Shalya Parv 35.77). This makes clear that as per Rigveda the Saraswati originated in Himalayas and as per epic Mahabharata the river degenerated into middle reaches and went under the pile of sands in the lower reaches. In the sand desert, the Saraswati has become subterranean - an underground (antahsalila) river. The prehistoric, scientific and mythological evidence show that the Saraswati river was not a mystery. It had abundant discharge and was a venerated river. But subsequently, due to natural upheaval it got fragmented and eventually became waterless.

We are part of this Earth and should behave so



THE World Earth Day passed off without much significance. All that one could see was articles available on various websites of various newspapers and other news portals, few tweets by celebrities which sounded more like moral lessons in schools. Neither the central government nor the respective state governments have taken any initiative to make it into a major event despite the fact the relationship between man and nature has reached a stage of imbalance and overuse.

Everyone speaks about it but no one has done anything significant to create awareness or even kindle some kind of thinking among the people that human beings need to be in tune with their surroundings and follow the ebb and flow of seasons.

The only silver lining is that some schools have played some video clips and told the students on the importance of protecting the nature and gave some simple tips to protect mother earth. If it were some other day like Valentine's Day or Halloween's Day or some other such Day, a lot of commercial activity would have been there and people too would have come forward with all kinds of ideas to celebrate it but in case of Earth Day everyone conveniently ignored it.

As we have distanced ourselves from nature and continue to do so in the name of development and economic activity, we have forgotten our role and responsibility and now we don't even recognise that we have a close relationship with nature. In the name of trade and creating a sustainable economy, we have become greedy and have resorted to greed and exploitation of the earth and its resources.

In India Earth is considered as mother. But just as we are seeing the society as to how mothers

are neglected and dumped in old age homes and how the children have distanced themselves from parents in the name of work pressure, Mother Earth too has been exploited and ignored. We refuse to admit that if planet is in danger we cannot be safe.

With advancements in technology and agriculture though, humans began to find more efficient ways of sustaining themselves. These advancements allowed for more permanent settlements, which led to rapid population growth and a distancing from nature.

As society evolved, populations grew and more and more resources were required to fuel the expansion. With breakthroughs in agriculture, settlements became more permanent and cities began to take shape. This shift to city life inadvertently led to a distancing from nature.

While many people were still in-tune with nature on a subsistent level, the need for more and more resources began to change our regard for nature.

Although our distancing from nature began several thousand years ago with advancements in agriculture and social order, it is the age of industry to which we owe our modern regard for nature. The growth of cities allowed for a separation between people and nature and our obsession with convenience and efficiency beckoned a new perspective on the environment. With technological advancements, nature became something we were no longer apart of and entirely subject to, but something that we could control and profiteer from. The growth of industry enabled humans to truly dominate the landscape and disrupt the natural systems that have been in place for billions of years.

I am not talking about ecology. I am talking about how the life

of mankind is badly affected by ignoring the planet. Just as we aspire for best in the world for ourselves the planet too craves for nurturing it. But our greed and selfishness has ruined the planet. We have exploited the mineral wealth beyond reasonable limits.

It is time that we realise that the fanciful ideas we have about life, economy, and the world cannot get us sustainable life or economy. We need to show greater maturity in our level of thinking and do something in a more matured manner and this maturity needs to come not just from the common man but from the Government's central and

far and this offers the hope that if all countries work together on such important issues the climate and other related crisis can be effectively tackled.

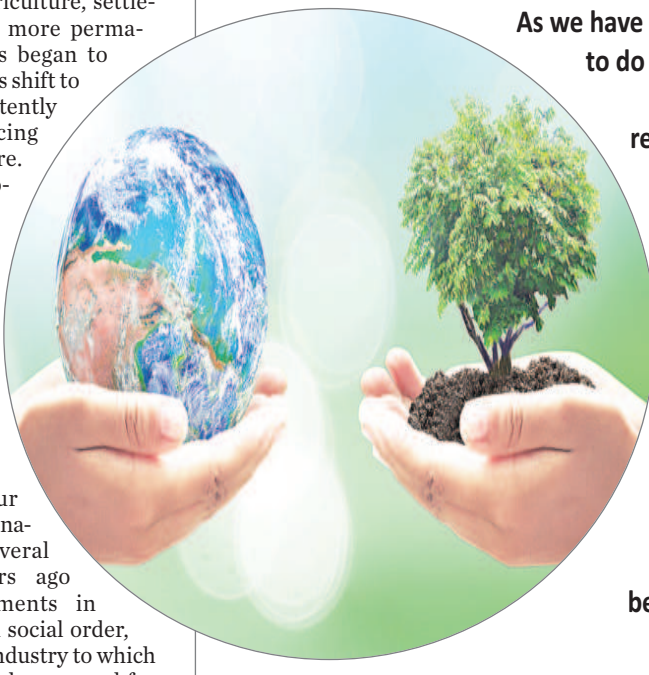
This year's Earth Day lands upon a shaken world: As mankind seeks a return to a form of normalcy, simply going back to business-as-usual is not an option. The pandemic has reminded us of the fragility of the world, our societies and economies, and the need to protect ourselves from disasters including climate change and ecosystem destruction.

The first and foremost thing we should do is to forget that only April 22 is Earth Day. Ef-

grammes and leaders use it for photo option. Systematic planning and planting of different kinds of trees which have medicinal value should be planted so that we can have better air quality. Similarly, global clean up should be taken up jointly by all countries and as much waste as possible should be removed.

Mother Earth is clearly urging a call to action. Let's remind more than ever on this International Mother Earth Day that we need a shift to a more sustainable economy that works for both people and the planet".

Mystics say it is audacious that we can even think we can allot a day for the Earth! Both



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In India Earth is considered as mother. But just as we are seeing the society as to how mothers are neglected and dumped in old age homes and how the children have distanced themselves from parents in the name of work pressure, Mother Earth too has been exploited and ignored. We refuse to admit that if planet is in danger we cannot be safe

states, the industry which keeps exploiting mother more than anyone else and all those who are involved in destroying it.

For the second consecutive year, the Earth Day falls amidst sorrow and hope arising from the Corona pandemic and this reminds one of the first Earth Day in 1970. That was the time when the Earth was facing pesticide disaster. Climate change and overuse of natural resources promise to turn in to super wicked of all problems and further disrupt the health systems. The Covid-19 has forced the otherwise divided world to work together to fight the pandemic so

forts should be made to see that we don't destroy Mother Earth, day in day out. We should first be made to understand that we are part of the earth and behave responsibly. Just as we show great interest in decorating our house and protecting it from fire, theft and other such hazards, we need to protect the planet from senseless exploitation. In fact the political leaders and political executive needs to be sensitised more about the need to protect the planet.

Steps like massive afforestation activity should be taken up. This does not mean that fancy names are given to such pro-

day and night happen only because the earth revolves. Our very body is an extract from this planet. For human beings who have forgotten that they have just temporarily come out of the womb of this earth and one day will be sucked back into this earth, this day is a reminder that you are a part of this earth. If humanity has to live for a long time, you have to think and act like the earth and be the earth because that is what you are.

To quote from the message of Sadhguru, "If the planet is in danger, we are in danger. If planet is healthy, we will be healthy."

LETTERS

Form a 'national' govt to handle Covid

SHORTAGE of oxygen, beds, drugs, vaccines and also space in mortuary clearly proves that apex court is right to term the situation as national health emergency (Situation like national emergency : SC, April 23). It is suggested to form a national government with the participation of all parties and keep away elections, blame games and criticisms to tide over the current crisis. Such a move fixes responsibility on political parties and unites the nation, which is the need of the hour to win over this strong enemy.

Kshirasagara Balaji Rao, Hyderabad

Centre should do better on vaccination

IT would be appropriate to have one nation and one vaccination policy for India in the midst of Corona pandemic onslaught. The centre should acquire different candidates of vaccine, maintain pool and supply them to the people through States at free of cost. If the market is allowed a free run in deciding price and supplies of such precious commodity, the thing of profit making come in to play inadvertently, leading to derailment of real programme. The citizen's right to life and right to health can only be guarded well by the government at leading position. It can-

not abdicate its responsibility in war like situation. The cash strapped States and poor people should not be left in lurch at crucial stages of fight against Corona.

Dr D V G Sankararao, Nellimarla

II

IT is an irony that in parts of our country, people are dying for want of oxygen supplies in hospitals and in some parts, erratic handling of oxygen supplies is blowing off hundreds of lives! No doubt that the deadly pandemic is the biggest challenge that our nature has thrown before us in recent times. Almost all Governments have failed their people when they have bungled things in facing and handling the challenge in its entirety.

First of all the Centre has messed up the distribution of the vaccine to different states and secondly it has miserably failed in fathoming the fatal effects of the second wave of the pandemic. Containing the spread of virus, and ensuring of immediate medical attention and supply of enough life supporting equipment are the two pressing issues before all Governments. To handle the problem on a war footing, steps should be taken to create war rooms in all states, to recruit emergency medical staff and health workers on a large scale.

M Somasekhhar Prasad, Hyderabad

A big loss to Hindi cinema

IN music composer Shraavan Rathod's demise the Indian film music world has lost one of its greatest and finest music directors. Shraavan along with music com-

poser Nadeem Saifi, popularly known as the Nadeem Shraavan duo created history way back in the 1990s taking Hindi film music to greater heights and creating some of the greatest songs, with their music albums creating records in sales.

The duo created melodies and tunes that redefined film music and created an era of soul lifting and ear soothing songs that are timeless. The songs from movies like Aashiqui, Saajan, Dil Hai ke Manta Nahin, Hum Hain Rahi Pyar Ke, Pardes, Raja Hindustani, Deewana, Dhadkan, Phool aur Kaante to name a few from an infinite number of magical hits shall remain as evergreen musical pieces that remain as a panacea soothing the ears and the hearts. The name of shraavan and his creations will remain as long as music and music lovers are there for music never dies.

M Pradyu, Kannur

Great honour for Telugu States

THE elevation of Justice NV Ramana as the 48th Chief Justice of India is a matter of great privilege and a wonderful honour to all Telugus across the globe. His journey from a poor agriculture family in the erstwhile undivided AP to the CJI of the ultimate court of record in the country is truly inspiring. A man of good integrity and high calibre, he has pronounced various path-breaking judgments in the history of independent India.

Unfortunately, in recent times more than his personal credentials certain minuscule issues like his caste and domicile

have occupied the front row. He also had to confront a direct verbal attack by none other than the CM of a State and yet stood strong and thus sent the resounding message that the truth alone will prevail at the end. Let the new CJI usher in a new era of justice delivery mechanism in his own way.

Satish Reddy Kanaganti, Tipparthy

Impose uniform WFH strategy

THE IT companies have switched to alternate working options including staggered working hours and enabling work from home (WFH) option for almost all its employees owing to the COVID-19 outbreak and its restrictions due to curfews. The move to encourage to work from home is a welcome move at a time when the pandemic is affecting public health and safety. It should further be explored not only in such a crisis but also to combat air pollution and everyday traffic chaos prevailing in an urban ecosystem.

A people-friendly policy should be now framed to mandatorily impose work from home options even at government workplaces; as most of the government departments now rely on the internet through e-office rather than the paperwork to execute work. The government thus will go a long way to improve the productivity of its employees through the implementation of an effective work from home strategy.

Varun Dambal, Bengaluru

thehansreader@gmail.com

Last journey of Covid patients too expensive, moan kin

MEGHNA NATH
HYDERABAD

THE kin of the deceased who succumbed to Covid-19 face difficulty in performing the last rites as crematoriums are now charging hefty amounts. Normally it is around Rs 500, but now they are being charged manifold. There are instances when people have to spend around Rs 80,000.

Aggravating the pain of the kin, who lost their dear ones, crematoriums in the City are making money. Despite the huge amount being charged, the relatives of the deceased have alleged that they are not provided with proper facilities considering Covid norms and the family members are forced to wait for hours.

On the condition of anonymity, a friend of the Covid-19 deceased said, “On April 22 one of my friends succumbed to Covid-19. When we reached a crematorium at Miyapur we were asked to pay Rs 80,000 and having no option we were forced to pay.”

Even the charitable organization Feed the Needy, which has been performing the last rites for those who succumbed due to Covid has expressed disappointment over the way people were being fleeced.



“Almost all the crematoriums in the city that include ESI crematorium, SR Nagar crematorium, Hindu Smashana Vatika, Chanda Nagar and several others are overcharging. This extra charge is burning people's pockets. As per the rule for the last rites, graveyards should charge Rs 500 to Rs 600 but now they are charging manifolds,” alleged

Sai Teja, a member of Feed the Needy.

In a fuming tone, a relative of the Covid deceased, said, “Apart from charging more and there is no proper sequence maintained. Last week my uncle passed away due to Covid and in the crematorium at SR Nagar, we were forced to wait for two hours for performing the last rites and then the charges are also too high; they charged us Rs 20,000.”

“In a day, last rites for 10 to 15 bodies are performed for the past few weeks. Also finding labourers for performing the last rites for Covid deceased has become difficult. Since no workers are ready to touch the Covid bodies some crematoriums in the city are charging double and triple, we are hiring private labourers to help in last rites,” said a staff of Hindu Smashana Vatika, Chanda Nagar.

Sangam Dairy chairman Narendra arrested for graft

HANS NEWS SERVICE
GUNTUR

ANTI-CORRUPTION Bureau (ACB) officials on Friday arrested former MLA and Sangam Dairy chairman Dhulipalla Narendra Kumar for allegedly committing irregularities in Sangam Dairy at his residence at Chintalapudi village under Ponnur mandal in the district. The incident created a sensation in the district as TDP cadres raised a hue and cry over the early morning arrest.

The angry TDP supporters tried to prevent the police vehicles while they were passing through the village with him. More than 100 police personnel went to Narendra Kumar's residence at about 6.30 am and informed his wife that they would arrest Narendra in connection with the irregularities that took place in Sangam Dairy under Prevention of Corruption Act and Sections 408,409,418 of IPC.

The ACB officials conducted searches in the Sangam Dairy unit at Vadlamudi and verified the several records and books. The searches continued till evening.

The ACB officials also took Sangam Dairy managing director Gopala Krishnan into custody for questioning.

They also arrested Gurnatham, who earlier worked in cooperative department in Guntur city, in connection with the cases in Ongole. The ACB



ACB officials bring former TDP MLA Dhulipalla Narendra Kumar to ACB court in Vijayawada on Friday

- ACB accuses the former TDP MLA of committing irregularities in the milk cooperative
- Over 100 police personnel reach his home in early morning, take him into custody
- Sangam Dairy MD Gopala Krishnan, a cooperative department employee have also been arrested
- TDP leaders and cadres staged protests over 'illegal' arrest

ACB court imposes 14-day remand

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

TDP senior leader and former MLA Dhulipalla Narendra Kumar, who was arrested earlier from his residence in Guntur district, was produced in ACB court in Vijayawada on Friday evening. The court sent him on 14-day remand.

The ACB officials brought him to the ACB office in Gollapudi

for questioning. After more than three hours of grilling, Narendra was taken to the government hospital for the medical examination before being produced in the ACB court at Governorpeth.

Earlier, tight security was posted near the ACB DSP office in Gollapudi and police prevented the TDP leaders and activists from reaching to the ACB office. Even the lawyers of Narendra were denied entry to

the ACB office. The TDP leaders slammed the attitude of the police stating that the police were resorting to harassment of TDP leaders at the behest of the YSRCP government.

The TDP leaders condemned the arrest of Dhulipalla Narendra stating that the YSRCP government is trying to promote Amul Dairy in the state and has been levelling allegations on the other dairies in the state.

arrest and YSRCP government. Hundreds of TDP workers staged dharnas demanding his immediate release.

State crosses 1 million Covid cases mark

- Reports 11,766 new infections in a single day
- Stands in 5th place after Maharashtra, Kerala, Karnataka and TN in the country in total number of cases

AMARAVATI

RIDING on the second wave to a new peak, Andhra Pradesh on Friday crossed the one million Covid-19 cases mark as a new record 11,766 were added afresh in a day.

The state became the fifth in the country, behind topper Maharashtra, Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, to aggregate over 10 lakh coronavirus cases so far.

The states cumulative positives now stands at 10,09,228 from over 1. 58 crore tests, a health department bulletin said. The last lakh cases came in 24 days after the state logged nine lakh on March 30 this year.

It took 158 days for the state

One more Secretariat employee dies of Covid

AMARAVATI

ONE more Covid death reported in AP Secretariat as an employee of labour department succumbed to the pandemic on Friday. With this, the number of corona-related deaths in the Secretariat

climbed to five.

Against the backdrop of increasing number of cases, the Secretariat employees' associations are demanding work from home facility to staff and 50 per cent attendance on alternate days.

to reach nine lakh total cases after it touched the eight-lakh mark on October 23 last year, the longest period since the outbreak of the pandemic.

It took 137 days for AP to log the first one lakh Covid-19 cases from March 12, 2020 when the first case was reported.

The second and the third lakh came in a span of 11 days each and the next three lakh cases came in intervals of 10 days each.

The state went from six to seven lakh cases in 14 days and from seven to eight in the next 22 days, when the first peak hit

in August-September last year.

But the pace of the contagions spread slowed considerably after November last year and at one stage in February, the state appeared to be heading towards a nil balance sheet with the overall active caseload dipping to a low of about 300.

On February 15, the state added only 30 fresh cases, the lowest in a day in more than 10 months. But the infection rate started peaking from March as the second wave hit the state, along with other parts of the country.



Industries Minister tests positive

AMARAVATI

INDUSTRIES Minister Mekapati Goutham Reddy tested positive for coronavirus on Friday. “I have shown mild symptoms and upon testing, my report came as Covid positive,” said Reddy. Following the positive report, the minister has isolated himself and started taking treatment.

He asked all those who met him in the last one week to get themselves tested and follow all the Covid protocols.

“Those who met me in the last one week, please follow Covid protocols, get tested and please take care,” the minister said.

SEC curtails campaign time to 72 hours before polls

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

SIGHTING the flouting of Covid-19 norms by the political party leaders and star campaigners, the State Election Commission (SEC) on Thursday curtailed the campaign time. The campaign time would end at 5 pm on April 27 that is 72 hours before the commencement of polls.

Elections in Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation, Khammam Municipal Corporation and also in the municipalities of Siddipet in Siddipet district, Atchampet in Nagarkurnool district, Nakrekal in Nalgonda district, Jadcherla in Mahabubnagar district, and Kothur in Rangareddy district are to be held on April 30 and results would be announced on May 3.

The Commission has taken note of several instances of election meetings and campaigns wherein norms of social distancing and wearing of masks have been flouted in blatant disregard to the Commission's Covid-19

- The campaign time would end at 5 pm on April 27 in the two corporations and five municipalities, directs SEC
- Elections to be held on April 30 and results would be announced on May 3

guidelines. Taking serious note of the repeated violations by star campaigners, political leaders and candidates who are supposed to be torch bearers for campaign against Covid-19 the SEC directed that the campaign time would end at 5 pm on April 27 in the two corporations and five municipalities. Generally the election campaign ends 48 hours before the poll. The elections would be held on April 30 and results would be announced on May 3.

The announcement was made after SEC Chairman, C Parthasarathi held a meeting with senior officials over conduct of election especially after

the requisitions from the political parties and High Court.

Furthermore, the Commission asked all the campaigners and voters to wear face mask, maintain social distancing. He also asked the officials to ensure that sanitisers are made available at entry of polling stations, large halls should be identified and utilised for election purpose to ensure social distancing norms are followed and that adequate vehicles are available for polling staff.

He also directed the election staff to have Aarogya Setu application in their mobile phones. “A Nodal officer should be designated at district/municipal Corporation, mandal level and staff training should be taken up in big halls and can also give virtual training, there should be markings at every six feet distance to maintain physical distancing,” the Commissioner directed. He also said that it is the responsibility of the political parties which organises meetings to provide masks and sanitisers at public meeting sites.

Naidu demands immediate release of Narendra

AMARAVATI

TDP supremo and former Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Friday demanded the immediate and unconditional release of party leader and former minister Dhulipalla Narendra Kumar.

“There was zero development in the last two years but suppression of the opposition leaders and former ministers was going on unabated,” alleged Naidu.

He condemned Kumar's arrest and said that the latter was picked up from his home at Chintalapudi village in Guntur district without any prior notice.

Naidu termed the arrest as ‘illegal’ and part of a larger conspiracy to destroy ‘Sangam Dairy’ for which Kumar rendered valuable services as its chairman.

“It was clear now that Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy-led state government was hell-bent on handing over Sangam Dairy to the Amul company. The local dairies in Andhra Pradesh were being crippled deliberately in order to benefit the Gujarat-based company,” alleged Naidu.

The former chief minister alleged that there has been a systematic attack on all state companies and dairies ever since Jagan Mohan Reddy became the Chief Minister in 2019.

“The YSRCP government had some secret deals with an outside dairy like Amul in order to damage the long established dairies in the state. Local farmers were shareholders in the Sangam Dairy but the current state government was not hesitating to crush it,” he said.

Naidu alleged that the arrests of TDP leaders was a part of the YSRCP government's tactics to divert the attention of people from the massive corruption.

“K. Atchannaidu and Kollu Ravindra were wrongfully arrested in the past. Devineni Umamaheswara Rao was also targeted in the name of false CID cases,” he alleged.

According to Naidu, the state government should set aside its political agenda and protect the Sangam Dairy and the thousands of farmers dependent on it.

TDP national general secretary and the party's second-in-command, Nara Lokesh also slammed the YSRCP government for allegedly targeting and harassing TDP leaders, rather than focusing resources on saving

the people from the second Covid-19 wave.

“The current Andhra Chief Minister was deriving diabolical pleasure at the expense of the opposition leaders and coronavirus victims. The Dhulipalla family was known for its unflinching services to the local people in Guntur district,” claimed Lokesh.

He alleged that Jagan Mohan Reddy's family is notorious for hoarding illegal wealth and asserted that Dhulipalla Narendra Kumar is being targeted just because he dared to expose the utter inefficiency of the state government.

“The former Minister has uncovered the false drama of YSRCP leaders whose baseless insider trading charges were revealed through a sting operation. The YSRCP failed to realise that Dhulipalla holds the record of winning as an MLA consecutively for five times,” said Lokesh.

He spoke to Kumar's wife Jyothirmayi, who narrated the whole incident to Lokesh.

She alleged that nearly 100 policemen swooped on their home and took away her husband and warned that she would not sit quietly if Kumar contracts coronavirus.

‘Companies that uphold ethical standards to get support’

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

Dr Philip Kotler, ‘Father of Modern Marketing’, while addressing the graduating class of 2021 via an online interactive session, talked about the company's leadership and responsibilities in modern times and the role of marketing in business and society. This interactive session, which was moderated by ISB faculty Professor S Arunachalam was organised on Wednesday by the marketing club of the Indian School of Business (ISB). Stressing on the importance of shifting the focus from creating shareholder value to stakeholder value and integration of social causes to the company goals, he shared some powerful insights. Dr Kotler explained the basics of purpose-driven marketing and encouraged all future managers to truly understand that the new age consumers want to get behind the companies that uphold the ethical standards, that are responsible and care about the social impact, as much as they care about making profits. “Business growth depends on two things: innovation and marketing”, he underlined. Dr Kotler went on to explain that the purpose of an organisation should be to increase the stakeholder value and the role of marketing should not be to just generate profits but to generate more consumers for the organisation. He lauded the thought leadership of companies like Unilever, Starbucks and Nike, which are some of the leading players in their field. He highlighted that, they are

pose-driven marketing and encouraged all future managers to truly understand that the new age consumers want to get behind the companies that uphold the ethical standards, that are responsible and care about the social impact, as much as they care about making profits. “Business growth depends on two things: innovation and marketing”, he underlined. Dr Kotler went on to explain that the purpose of an organisation should be to increase the stakeholder value and the role of marketing should not be to just generate profits but to generate more consumers for the organisation. He lauded the thought leadership of companies like Unilever, Starbucks and Nike, which are some of the leading players in their field. He highlighted that, they are

driven by innovation and a higher purpose. In doing so, these corporate moguls have further increased their value by serving the twin purpose of product excellence and consumer obsession, through social and sustainability commitments.

He talked about “The Giving Pledge”, an initiative by Bill Gates, Warren Buffet and 214 other billionaires across the world, pledging to donate half their wealth to social causes. The world needs more leaders like them to join the force. As the corporate world ushers in mor coins, some of it needs to circle back to restore a healthy balance in society. He made a compelling argument about business leaders understanding and embracing corporate social responsibility as the only way forward.

SOARING CORONA CASES

Steep fall in pilgrim rush to Tirumala

HANS NEWS SERVICE
TIRUPATI

THE nationwide soaring Corona cases, which hit various sectors, and also the people did not spare Tirumala, the abode of Lord Venkateswara, which is witnessing a steep fall in the pilgrim flow now. Till March-end, the hill top temple town was teeming with devotees with more than 50,000 devotees on an average had darshan daily, came down to about 40,000 with the TTD slashing the issuance of free darshan tickets from 22,000 to 15,000 as precautionary measure to check Covid from April 1.

The pilgrim rush dipped further with the TTD totally suspended the free darshan from April 12 coupled with the increase of Covid cases all around particularly in the two Telugu states, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and

Maharashtra, the worst hit state in the second wave of the pandemic from where more than 25,000 to 30,000 devotees arrive daily to have darshan of Lord Venkateswara.

With the alarming spike in cases since a week saw the pilgrim rush coming down day after day resulting in number of pilgrims who had darshan daily fell to below 25,000. On April 20, the number of pilgrims who had darshan was 23,636 which came down to 21,265 on April 21 and on April 22 to 16,412 which is the lowest in the past six months.

Under advance reservation, TTD had already issued 25,000 tickets of Rs 300 special entry darshan and also another 5,000 Arjitha seva tickets (virtual) till this month end while the TTD also allowing darshan under VIP break and also to Srivani trust donors taking the total number darshan ticket hold-

ers now to 32,000-33,000 daily against which only 16,412 that is 50 per cent only revealing the adverse impact of fast spreading infection in the country.

It is needless to say that the shopkeepers and hawkers particularly in Tirumala and also down the hills Tirupati where the hotels and private vehicle operators are worst hit with the drastic fall in the pilgrim rush due to Covid.

An elderly shopkeeper Venkatramana in Tirumala said they have never witnessed such a downfall in the business in Tirumala history. “After the pilgrim rush picked up in December last year when the Corona cases came down to minimum, we hoped that things would return to normal, but all our hopes dashed to grounds. This time it is difficult for most of us to withstand,” he said.

Survivors face increased risk of death, serious illness: US study

India's graph may peak at 33-35 lakh active cases by May 15: Indian Institute of Technology scientists

NEW DELHI

Covid-19 survivors -- including those not sick enough to be hospitalised -- have an increased risk of death in the six months following diagnosis with the virus, according to the largest comprehensive study of long COVID-19 to date.

The research, published in the journal Nature, reveals the massive burden this disease is likely to place on the world's population in the coming years, they said. The researchers at Washington University School of Medicine in the US also have catalogued the numerous diseases associated with COVID-19, providing a big-picture overview of the long-term complications of COVID-19. They confirmed that, despite being initially a respiratory virus, long COVID-19 can affect nearly every organ

system in the body. The study involved more than 87,000 COVID-19 patients and nearly five million control patients. "Our study demonstrates that up to six months after diagnosis, the risk of death following even a mild case of COVID-19 is not trivial and increases with disease severity," said study senior author Ziyad Al-Aly, an assistant professor of medicine at Washington University School of Medicine.

"Physicians must be vigilant in evaluating people who have had COVID-19. These patients will need integrated, multidisciplinary care," Al-Aly said. The researchers were able to calculate the potential scale of the problems first glimpsed from anecdotal accounts and smaller studies that hinted at the wide-ranging side effects of surviving COVID-19. These side effects include breathing problems, irregular heart rhythms,



mental health issues and hair loss, they said. "This study differs from others that have looked at long COVID-19 because, rather than focusing on just the neurologic or cardiovascular complications, for example, we took a broad view and used the vast databases of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) to comprehensively catalogue all diseases that may be attributable to COVID-19," said Al-Aly.

The researchers showed that, after surviving the initial infection --beyond the first 30 days of illness -- COVID-19 survivors had an almost 60 per cent increased risk of death over the following six months compared to the general population. The researchers noted that at the six-month mark, excess deaths among all COVID-19 survivors were estimated at eight people per 1,000 patients.

The ongoing second wave in India may peak between May 11-15 with 33-35 lakh total active' cases and decline steeply by the end of May, according to a mathematical module devised by IIT scientists. The scientists also said Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan and Telangana may see a high of new cases by April 25-30, while Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh might already have reached their peak in new cases, Manindra Agrawal, professor at the Department of Computer Science and Engineering, IIT-Kanpur, told PTI. The scientists in the as yet unpublished study said there are several novel features in the SUTRA model. Whereas previous papers divided the patient population into asymptomatic and Infected, the new model also accounts for the fact that some fraction of asymptomatic patients could also be detected due to contact tracing and other such protocols.

WINDOWS

NIA arrests one more cop

Mumbai: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested Mumbai police inspector Sunil Mane in connection with the recovery of an explosives-laden SUV near industrialist Mukesh Ambani's residence in Mumbai and the murder of businessman Mansukh Hiran. The official said, "Mane was called by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) for questioning on Thursday for his alleged role in the Ambani security scare and Mansukh Hiran murder cases."



A relative reacts after the death of a family member due to Covid-19 at LNJP Hospital in New Delhi on Friday

Nine killed, many missing

PATNA: Nine persons were killed after a jeep plunged into the Ganga river from the Pipa bridge in the Danapur police station area adjacent to state capital Patna on Friday. Many persons are reported to be missing. A police official said a group of people were returning to Danapur in a jeep on Friday morning after attending a wedding. Suddenly the person driving the jeep lost control over the vehicle at Pipa bridge and it fell into the Ganga.

Danapur police station in-charge A. K. Sah said, "Nine bodies have been taken out of the river. However, a search is on to rescue eight to nine persons reported to be missing. The rescue operations are on with the help of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) teams."

Open Vedanta plant, people are dying: SC

'Tamil Nadu government should take over it for oxygen production'

NEW DELHI/LUCKNOW

THE Supreme Court on Friday expressed its dissatisfaction with Tamil Nadu government's stand that the Vedanta's oxygen plant cannot be reopened due to potential law and order problem.

A bench headed by Chief Justice S.A. Bobde said: "When people are dying, Tamil Nadu cannot say it cannot open because of law-and-order issue. It is not about Vedanta or any other company. State government can't make such an argument."

The bench also comprising Justices L. Nageswara Rao and S. Ravindra said if Vedanta cannot be allowed to run the plant, then the Tamil Nadu government should take over it for oxygen production amid the COVID-19 crisis.

The United States has advised its citizens to avoid travelling to India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and the Maldives due to the sudden surge in COVID-19 cases in the region.

"Do not travel to India due to COVID-19, crime, and terrorism," the State Department said in its latest travel advisory on India, days after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued a similar warning for India.

Amid reports of shortage of oxygen in the hospitals during the second wave of COVID-19 across the country, the Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS) has decided to import oxygen generation plants and containers from Germany to cater to the shortage.

The Defence Ministry informed on Friday that 23 mobile oxygen generation plants are being airlifted from Germany. These will be deployed in AFMS hospitals catering to COVID patients. These oxygen-generating plants are expected within a week, the ministry said.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi slammed the central government. In a tweet, he wrote, "Corona can cause a fall in oxygen level but it's #OxygenShortage & lack of ICU beds which is causing many deaths. GOI, this is on you." The Congress has been attacking the government over its management of the Covid-19 situation in the country. Uttar Pradesh BJP MLA Ramesh Chandra Diwakar succumbed to Covid-19 in Meerut on Friday. He was 56.

Diwakar, who represented the Auraiya Assembly seat, was admitted to a hospital in Meerut four days ago and his condition was stated to be serious for the last two days.

3,32,730 new cases; 2,263 dead



A Covid positive patient gets primary treatment inside an autorickshaw as she waits to be admitted in a hospital in Ahmedabad on Friday

India to import oxygen making units from Germany

Americans advised to avoid all travels to India

Oxygen tanker goes missing

SIRSA: A tanker carrying liquid oxygen, which was travelling from Panipat to Sirsa in Haryana, has gone missing after which police have registered a case and launched investigations. Panipat police said on Friday a case has been lodged on the complaint of district drug controller. After being filled with liquid oxygen from Panipat plant, the truck had left for Sirsa, but it did not reach the destination, SHO, Matlauda, Manjeet said. "We are investigating the matter," he said. The demand for medical oxygen has escalated due to a surge in coronavirus cases. In another incident, Haryana minister Anil Vij had alleged that a tanker carrying medical oxygen which was going from Panipat to Faridabad, was "looted" by the Delhi government.

Centre sets up panel to allot oxygen

DELHI: A Coordination Committee will ensure that as soon as there is allotment of oxygen from the centre, it can deliver oxygen as per requirement in different hospitals of the state immediately.

PM Modi stated that Centre is working on all possible options to reduce the travel time and turnaround time of oxygen tankers. For this, railways has started Oxygen Express. Empty Oxygen tankers are also being transported by the Air-Force to reduce one way travel time.

The defence ministry said 23 mobile oxygen generation plants are being airlifted from Germany. These will be deployed in AFMS hospitals catering to COVID patients. These oxygen generating plants are expected within a week.

Drone trial to deliver vaccine

NEW DELHI: The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has granted permission for conducting feasibility study of Covid-19 vaccine delivery using drones in collaboration with IIT Kanpur. The Ministry of Civil Aviation said that DGCA has granted conditional exemption to the ICMR for conducting feasibility study of Covid-19 vaccine delivery using drones in collaboration with IIT Kanpur. "The permission exemption is valid for a period of one year or until further orders," the Ministry said. The conditional drone use exemption has been granted to Nagar Nigam of Dehradun, Haldwani, Haridwar and Rudrapur for preparation of GIS based property database and electronic tax register for a period of one year or until further orders.

What's the urgency?: Sumitra Mahajan reacts to fake report of her death

BHOPAL

FORMER Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan has become the latest victim of death hoax on social media. Rumors about her death started doing rounds after senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor mistakenly sent out a condolence message for the family of the former Lok Sabha speaker.

In a tweet late on Thursday night, Tharoor said, "Saddened to learn of the passing of former Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan."

"I remember many positive interactions with her, including when she and the late Sushma Swaraj asked me to lead a Parliamentary delegation to BRICS in MOSCOW. My condolences to her family and prayers: Om Shanti!" he added.

Now, reacting to the tweet of the Congress MP, Mahajan said, "my niece refuted Tharoor on Twitter but what was the urgency in announcing without confirmation?" She also pulled up news channels for telecasting report without cross-checking with the administration.

Police here registered an offence on Friday against an unidentified person for spreading rumours on social media about the death of former Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan, an official said.

Even as Covid cases in Kerala continue to surge, the state authorities under pressure from various quarters decided to allow 180 weddings scheduled at the famed Guruvayoor Sree Krishna Temple near Thrissur district on Saturday and Sunday amid strict Covid-19 protocols.

Following the massive surge in Covid cases across the state, night curfew has been put in place during which all people must remain indoors from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. Saturday and Sunday will be almost similar to a lockdown.

Consequent to the nod given on Friday by the Thrissur district administration, 40 weddings planned on Saturday and 140 scheduled for Sunday would take place but with all prescribed Covid protocols. Though the weddings have been allowed, only 12 people would be permitted at each wedding.

Mango museum to come up in Lucknow

LUCKNOW

MANGO, the king of fruits, will soon have its own museum. The Mango Museum is coming up at the Central Institute for Sub-tropical Horticulture (CISH) office at Rehmankhura in the Kakori block of Lucknow. It is likely to be ready by the end of the mango season.

The museum will help the visitors learn about the varieties, medicinal value, products, history and other little-known facts about the fruit.

According to Shailendra Rajan, CISH Director, "The museum will have more than 800 varieties as a model or a photograph with interesting descriptions. Not only Indian, but also the varieties dominating the international market will be displayed at the museum."



The institute has one of the largest live collections of mango varieties, but one cannot see them after the fruiting season.

The museum will have over 800 varieties as models or photographs with interesting descriptions so that people can know more about them.

"Mango (tree) is considered to provide certain anti-viral, anti-bacterial, anti-carcinogenic bioactive compounds and a few of them have been found to be reported effective in immunity-boosting against the Corona virus," he said.

"A database containing details of the medicinal properties of phytochemicals can be accessed in the museum. A description of important products made from mango and the nutritive value of the

king of fruits will also be depicted," Rajan said.

42-yr-old rain record in Shimla broken

SHIMLA

A severe hailstorm and thunderstorm accompanied by intermittent heavy rain lashed Shimla and its surrounding areas today, disrupting normal life. Shimla received 86 mm of rain in the past 24 hours, breaking the 42-year-old record of heavy rainfall in one day in April. The temperature in the capital city fell to 4°C. Earlier Shimla had received the maximum rainfall of 111 mm on April 15, 1979.

The thunderstorm disrupted power supply, uprooted trees and blew off roofs of kaccha houses at several places. Dodra Kwar was cut off from the rest of the state. As many as 179 roads in the state were blocked. The highest number of 140 roads was blocked in Lahaul and Spiti district, followed by 16 each in Chamba and Kinnaur, seven in Kullu, and one in Shimla. Tribal areas received another spell of fresh snowfall; Keylong witnessed 18 cm of snow, followed by Kalpa 16 mm and Kothi 3 mm. Widespread rain lashed the region. Manali received 74 mm of rain, followed by Jogindernagar 71 mm, Dalhousie 66 mm, Kothi 65 mm and Baijnath 56 mm.



This librarian walks 4 km a day for doorstep delivery

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

K.P. Radhamani, a 64-year-old woman, works as a librarian at Mothakkara in Kerala's Wayanad district. What makes her unique is that she walks 4 km everyday for home delivery of books.

The "Walking Librarian" as she is fondly called lives in Mothakkara, Vellamunda in Wayanad which is dotted with lush green forests and hilly terrain. She delivers books on fiction, history, politics, travel, movies, in a shopping bag.

She works as the librarian at Prathiba Public Library in Mothakkara which boasts of around 11,000 books but after the flow of people to the library decreased owing to their commitments in farm, domestic work and other livelihoods, Radhamani decided that she would take the

books to them. She keeps a regular register of the books being delivered and manages according to the guidelines of the Library Council of Kerala.

In a shopping bag, the frail woman with the passion to deliver books, carries 25-50 books and gives two books to a family and takes them back after eight days.

The registration fee to join the library is Rs 25 and the monthly fee is Rs 5. Radhamani feels that by delivering books to people with various reading tastes, she herself is getting hooked to these books.

She recalled, "I used to narrate stories to my father when I was a child and used to read anything which I could get my hands on including the paper which was used to cover clothes or provisions and there is no life for me without letters. After getting this job with the library, I became an avid and voracious reader taking books



from all sections and increasing my knowledge."

Wayanad being a backward district with a huge population of tribals, Radhamani has delivered books at the doorsteps of many tribal homes and kindled the passion for reading among their children and women.

She recollected how the tribal children used to call her after finishing reading the books she had delivered within a few days and waited for her next visit.

In the shadow of Covid, the number of books being delivered in a month has come down to around 350 from 500.

She has also doubled up as a tourist guide as several tourists flock to the hilly terrain. For being a guide, she has devoured books related to travel, history and society of Wayanad so that she can properly guide the tourists.

Radhamani, who studied only upto the 10th standard,

said that some books suggested by her readers have remained imprinted in her mind for life.

An example is one of the bestsellers in Malayalam literature, "Adujeevitham" by noted writer Benyamin. As she said, "The character Najeeth in that book will always be inside me and will always give one determination and high spirits as how he scripted his own return from an alien land from a remote desert in Saudi Arabia."

The books being delivered by Radhamani are of use to several aspirants for civil service examinations. Sajini Damodaran, a housewife in Wayanad who has benefited from the books being delivered by the "Walking Librarian" said, "I took books which are for competitive examinations and thanks to her, I have written a few public service examinations of the Government of Kerala and am confident of making it."

TODAY'S QUOTE

Never look down on anyone

“The razor blade is sharp but can't cut a tree; the axe is strong but can't cut hair. Everyone is important according to their own unique purpose. Never look down on anyone unless you are admiring their shoes.”

— Harsh Goenka, Chairman, RPG Enterprises



RBI ORDER

American Express can't on-board customers

The Reserve Bank has restricted American Express Banking Corp and Diners Club International Ltd from on-boarding new domestic customers onto their card networks from May 1 for violating data storage norms. The order will not impact the existing customers of these two entities, the central bank said in a statement on Friday.

FOREX (buy rates in ₹)

US Dollar	75.79	South	
Euro	91.4	African Rand	6.04
UAE Dirham	21.4	Hong Kong Dollar	11.11
Thai Baht	2.63	Japanese Yen	0.8
British Pound	105.16	New Zealand Dollar	54.4
Australian Dollar	58.68	Saudi Riyal	21.97
Canadian Dollar	60.68	Swedish Krona	10.25
Swiss Franc	82.78	Singapore Dollar	57.59

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BIZ BRIEFS

Realme's 5G device

Realme, a smartphone manufacturer, has unveiled its first 5G smartphone 'Realme 8 5G', which is equipped with MediaTek Dimensity 700 5G processor. The smartphone features like super slim design, ultra-smooth display, dual 5G dual standby, and battery with smart 5G power-saving. It also comes with a new Dynamic RAM Expansion Technology (DRE) that converts storage/ROM into virtual RAM to address the drawbacks caused by insufficient RAM. The smartphone is available in blue and black colours. "Realme 8 5G series is just one step towards realizing this vision, we have big plans to make 5G-enabled smartphones widely available. Realme will keep on democratizing 5G models to various price segments to make it affordable for a massive number of users," said Madhav Sheth, Vice President and Chief Executive Officer, Realme India and Europe.

MediaTek to expand

MediaTek, a semiconductor company, has announced plans to further strengthen its India footprint by enabling the smart device ecosystem through OEM collaborations in technologies like 5G, IoT, Wi-Fi routers. The company showcased its latest technologies at the eighth edition of the MediaTek Technology Diaries titled "Incredible Technologies empower Incredible Experiences." The company also reiterated its commitment to spur innovation in the smart devices segment across a wide range of products. "MediaTek has been ambitiously pursuing the vision of creating incredible technologies and delivering exceptional 5G solutions to everyone. We have strengthened our R&D in India to further advance our product portfolio," said Anku Jain, Managing Director, MediaTek India.

FY22 GDP

SBI cuts growth forecast to 10.4%

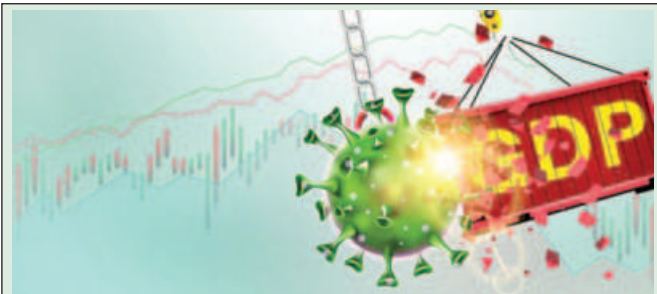
SBI Ecowrap's business index shows decline in activity in April due to Covid surge

KUMUD DAS
MUMBAI

WITH Covid cases rising steeply fuelled by the second wave and many States imposing curbs, Ecowrap, the research wing of the country's largest lender SBI, has slashed real GDP for the current fiscal to 10.4 per cent from 11 per cent earlier and the nominal GDP to 14.3 per cent (15 per cent).

"Given the current circumstances of partial, local and weekend lockdowns in almost all the States, we are revising downwards our growth forecast to 10.4 per cent real GDP and 14.3 per cent nominal GDP in FY22," Soumya Kanti Ghosh, Chief Economic Advisor, SBI, who wrote the report, said. Total loss arising from the limited lockdowns is estimated at Rs 1.5 lakh crore; of which, Maharashtra, MP and Rajasthan account for 80 per cent and Maharashtra alone at 54 per cent, he explained.

According to the report, SBI business activity index showed decline in activity in April 2021 with the latest reading for the week ended April 19, 2021 of 86.3. This



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—Soumya Kanti Ghosh, Group Chief Economic Advisor, SBI

is the lowest in 5 months. All the indicators have shown a dip with maximum decline in Apple mobility, weekly food arrival at Mandis and RTO revenue collection.

The SBI report also suggested that faster vaccination is cheaper on the economy than complete lockdowns, pointing out that the total cost of vaccination is much lower at 0.1 per cent of GDP while the lockdowns has already cost 0.7 per cent of GDP. Now that States are free to buy vaccines directly from the manufacturers from May 1, our estimate for 13 large States

shows that the cost of vaccine to inoculate will be only 0.1 per cent of their collective GDP. This is significantly lower than the economic loss in GDP due to lockdown which is already at 0.7 per cent of GDP, it said.

ALL scheduled commercial banks (ASCBs) saw decline in credit to a 59-year low of 5.6 per cent in 2020-21, compared to 6.1 per cent growth in 2019-20. On the other hand, deposits have increased to 11.4 per cent in FY21, compared to 7.9 per cent growth in FY20, the report pointed out. In FY21 Apr-May, huge monthly

incremental increase in deposits was observed (particularly time deposits) as people had fewer options to spend due to nation-wide lockdown. This time also we expect large traction in time deposits as most of the States imposed partial lockdown, Gosh said. Meanwhile, early trend of around 45 listed entities suggests 10 per cent growth in top line for listed entities while EBITDA and PAT too grew by 16 per cent and 26 per cent per cent in Q4FY21 as compared to Q4FY20. Entities with turnover of less than Rs 100 crore reported 6 per cent growth in net sales and negative PAT despite cut in employee expenses by 10 per cent. In commercial paper market, yield continue to be below 4 per cent and decreased to 3.71 per cent in April against 4.35 per cent in March. On the Covid pandemic, the report said the injection to infection ratio showed that India made rapid improvement this year, but it is still below Israel, Chile and UK. The 'Vaccine Hesitancy Index' calculated as doses administered per 100 available shows that all N-E States and in States like Goa, Jharkhand, Assam, Delhi, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, there is a vaccine hesitancy, the report said.

Markets fall as Covid-19 woes pile up

MUMBAI

Equity benchmarks wilted under selling pressure on Friday as the steady stream of grim news surrounding the Covid-19 crisis in the country sapped risk appetite and raised concerns over the economic recovery forecasts.

A depreciating rupee, which slumped below the 75-mark versus the US dollar, and a negative trend in global equities added to the gloom, analysts said. After a volatile session, the 30-share BSE Sensex ended 202.22 points or 0.42 per cent lower at 47,878.45. Similarly,

the broader NSE Nifty dropped 64.80 points or 0.45 per cent to close at 14,341.35.

M&M was the top loser among the Sensex constituents, skidding 2.63 per cent, followed by Dr Reddy's, Tech Mahindra, HUL, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, Titan and Infosys. On the other hand, PowerGrid, NTPC, Axis Bank, IndusInd Bank, HDFC and Bajaj Finserv were among the gainers, climbing up to 3.51 per cent. During the holiday-truncated week, the Sensex slumped 953.58 points or 1.95 per cent, while the Nifty tanked 276.50 points or 1.89 per cent.

Ambani buys \$79-mn resort in UK

NEW DELHI

BILLIONAIRE Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd has bought Britain's iconic country club and luxury golf resort, Stoke Park, for \$79-million (about Rs 592 crore). The acquisition adds to Reliance's current stake in Oberoi hotels and hotel/managed residences in Mumbai that it's developing. Over the past four years, Reliance has announced \$3.3 billion in acquisitions with 14 per cent in retail, 80 per cent in technology, media, and telecom (TMT) sector, and 6 per cent in energy.

The UK-based firm, which owns a hotel and golf course in Buckinghamshire, UK, will add to Reliance's consumer and hospitality assets, the firm said in a filing late on Thursday.

Hospitals facing acute shortage of oxygen: Sangita Reddy

NEW DELHI

HOSPITALS are suffering from acute shortage of oxygen despite strict government orders to ensure uninterrupted production and supply of medical oxygen, Apollo Hospitals Joint Managing Director Sangita Reddy said on Friday.

She was responding to a tweet from rival Max Healthcare which said that Max Smart Hospital and Max Hospital Saket were left with less than one hour's oxygen supplies. "Hospitals continue to gasp for breath despite govt orders being issued. It's now becoming an hourly challenge for many



hospitals. Every minute of delay on commitments made can cost lives!," Reddy tweeted tagging union ministers, Delhi Chief Minister and other state ministers. Earlier Max Healthcare

tweeted: "SOS - Less than an hour's Oxygen supplies at Max Smart Hospital and Max Hospital Saket. Awaiting promised fresh supplies from INOX since 1 am. over 700 patients admitted, need immediate assistance."

Centre has directed states to ensure uninterrupted production and

supply of medical oxygen and its transport along inter-state borders and said the district magistrate and superintendent of police of the district concerned will be held responsible if there is any violation of its order.

On Thursday, Reddy had asked the government to tag oxygen tanks as ambulances and enable quick green corridor movement across states. As India continued to record a huge number of new Covid-19 infections, hospitals in the national capital and other major cities complained of 'dangerously low' levels of oxygen that is needed for critically ill patients.

REAL CORNER

NET ABSORPTION IN OFFICE SPACE MARKET DECLINES 33%

Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Delhi NCR accounted for nearly 80% of net absorption

MUMBAI

THE overall office market in India witnessed a net absorption decrease of 33 per cent in Q1 2021 quarter-on-quarter (Q-o-Q), with 5.53 million sq. ft leased during Jan to March 2021, according to JLL Office Market Update-Q1 2021. On a year-on-year (Y-o-Y) basis, net absorption in Q1 2021 stands at 64 per cent of the levels witnessed in Q1 2020.

Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Delhi NCR accounted for nearly 80 per cent of the net absorption during the quarter. Moreover, Bengaluru and Delhi NCR were the two markets which witnessed an increase in net absorption when compared to Q4 2020. Net absorption dips after a two consecutive quarter rally

"While 2020 ended on a relatively high note, there was still uncertainty in the market with respect to resumption of business as usual. Occupiers continued to adopt a cautious approach and focused on reassessing their real estate portfolios and long-term commitments. To add to the woes, increasing fears of a spike in Covid-19 cases in the second half of March further pushed the occupiers to press pause again and postpone their real estate decisions," said Dr-Samantak Das, Chief Economist and Head of Research and Real Es-



In the first quarter of 2021, 31% of the new completions during the quarter was already pre-committed. Maximum pre-commitment levels were observed in the southern markets of Bengaluru (51 per cent of the new completions) and Hyderabad (45 per cent of the new completions)

tate Intelligence Service (REIS), JLL India.

"As the vaccination drive is gaining momentum and occupiers remain cautiously optimistic, the year 2021 is expected to witness close to 38 million sq. ft of new completions, while net absorption is likely to hover around the 30 million sq. ft with a marginal downward bias. This will be at par with the average annual net absorption levels seen during 2016-2018," he added.

In the first quarter, 31 per cent of the new completions during the quarter was already pre-committed. Maximum pre-commitment levels were observed in the

southern markets of Bengaluru (51 per cent of the new completions) and Hyderabad (45 per cent of the new completions). At the same time, it is important to note that the leasing momentum in some of the larger markets have remained promising in the first quarter of 2021.

The quarter witnessed gross leasing volumes of 7.5 million sq. ft across the top seven markets. Interestingly, the larger market of Mumbai saw a massive jump in leasing volume from 0.5 million sq. ft in Q4 2020 to 1.6 million sq. ft in Q1 2021. This was majorly driven by select large pre-commitment deals in upcoming spaces within

the BFSI space. Further, Delhi NCR saw a marginal increase in leasing volumes from 1.9 million sq. ft in Q4 2020 to 2 million sq. ft in Q1 2021.

New completions during Q1 2021 were recorded at 13.43 million sq. ft, a marginal increase of 5 per cent q-o-q. In sync with net absorption, the markets of Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Delhi NCR accounted for nearly 80 per cent of the new completions during the quarter. On a Y-o-Y basis, new completions across the top seven cities jumped by 56 per cent from the 8.6 million sq. ft recorded in Q1 2020. Interestingly, new completions even surpassed the average quarterly levels of 13 million sq. ft witnessed during the historic year of 2019.

Occupiers continue to review their real estate portfolios and are adopting consolidation and optimisation strategies in order to rationalise space required while minimising costs. The subdued net absorption levels could not keep pace with new completions. This resulted in overall vacancy increasing from 14 per cent in Q4 2020 to 14.9 per cent in Q1 2021.

Despite the rise in vacancy levels, Bengaluru, Chennai and Pune continued to hover in single digits. Rentals across markets remain stable. Office rents in Q1 2021 remained stable across the major office markets in India.

Demand for housing not pent-up but structural: HDFC

MUMBAI

THE recent surge in demand for housing is not pent-up but structural in nature and it will continue to stay, HDFC Chairman Deepak Parekh said. The lower interest rates, stable property prices and continued fiscal benefits on housing loans have aided the growth in home loans over the past few months.

"The strong demand that one has seen for housing in the recent period has certainly surprised on the upside. I firmly believe that this demand is not pent-up. It is structural demand and that is here to stay," Parekh said at a virtual proptech summit.

He said the pick-up in demand is a combination of first-time homebuyers and customers moving up the property ladder by shifting to larger homes or acquiring a second home in another location. With the work from home (WFH) option, the proximity to one's workplace is less compelling, and homebuyers have wider options in terms of locations while buying the property, he said.

Parekh also said the construction industry is one of the least digitised sectors in the world. "It is estimated that the real estate sector spends less than 1.5 per cent of its revenue on technology. One would tend to agree that real-time data on real estate is hardly ever available," he said. He believes technology can bring in much-needed transparency and accountability in the real estate sector, and also improve cost



Deepak Parekh

efficiencies. "For instance, progress of projects can be monitored through digital dashboards, with data driving key decisions. Funding for projects based on achieving construction milestones can be better monitored online," Parekh said. He added that there is so much talk about fintech, healthtech and edutech, but property technology or proptech is still in its infancy.

"Proptech companies can play a big role in accelerating the government's Smart City Mission as well help local-level bodies and municipalities in terms of facilitating online approvals of building projects," he said. For the developers, proptech can help in better vendor supply management chain and bring in price efficiency. He said there is no dearth of funding for startups that have good business plans.

Parekh further said that after the massive contraction in the global GDP due to the outbreak of the pandemic in 2020, countries across the world are getting into recovery mode.

Realty jobs witness steady recovery: Report

MUMBAI

EVEN as there was huge impact on the hiring activities in the real estate and construction sectors during initial months of lockdown last year, there has been gradual improvement since the easing of restrictions that resulted in slow and steady recovery in the sectors, according to a report.

The real estate and construction sectors, which are mass employers and prime indicators of the country's growth and development, were brought to a halt by lockdowns. However, the recent GDP data, released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) for the third quarter of 2020-21, indicated recovery in the sectors, thus reflecting a boost in hiring opportunities, according to a report by global job site Indeed. Indeed's data revealed that interests for real estate jobs jumped 22 per cent while postings for these jobs also increased by 3 per cent in March 2020-March 2021. Hiring activity in the construction sector for the same period indicated that while interest for related jobs declined 18 per cent, the postings grew marginally by 0.3 per cent, it noted.

Indian Premier League

Struggling Rajasthan Royals, Kolkata in crucial faceoff

MUMBAI

BELEAGUERED Rajasthan Royals (RR), who are stuck at the bottom of the points table, will face Kolkata Knight Riders in an Indian Premier League (IPL) match at the Wankhede Stadium on Saturday night.

While RR have managed just one win in four matches and have the worst net run rate among all teams, their opponents KKR too have been finding the going tough. They also have one win in four games but are ahead of both RR and Punjab Kings on net run rate.

KKR's net run rate could, however, have been poorer had their lower order not clicked in the last match against Chennai Super Kings (CSK). The batting performance of Andre Russell and Pat Cummins would have given KKR a lot of confidence ahead of their match against RR.

Cummins on Thursday had said that the fightback against CSK, that saw KKR recover from 31/5 to reach 202 i.e. 18 runs short of CSK total, has given the team the belief that they can come back from any position.

If KKR's top-order batting clicks as well, then RR bowling will find it really difficult.

The Sanju Samson-led side is coming off a very poor outing against RCB on Thursday night. Although RR managed to put up a strong 177-run total, the performance of the bowlers was insipid as they couldn't pick a single wicket allowing Devdutt Padikkal and Virat Kohli to share an unbeaten 181-run partnership and win the match by 10 wickets.

RR are missing key England players, all-rounder Ben Stokes and pace bowler Jofra Archer who both have returned home due to injury.

In their absence, the onus has been on Chris Morris and Mustafizur Rahman to perform.

Prior to the last game, batting all-rounder Liam Livingstone also left the RR camp and departed for England citing

bubble fatigue.

The only good thing for RR in Thursday's 10-wicket loss to RR was the runs uncapped

POINTS TABLE

Team	Played	Won	Lost	Tied	Net RR	Pts
1 RCB	4	4	0	0	+1.009	8
2 CSK	4	3	1	0	+1.142	6
3 DC	4	3	1	0	+0.426	6
4 MI	4	2	2	0	+0.187	4
5 SRH	4	1	3	0	-0.228	2
6 KKR	4	1	3	0	-0.700	2
7 PBKS	4	1	3	0	-0.824	2
8 RR	4	1	3	0	-1.011	2

LONDON

THE England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) on Friday announced that star fast bowler Jofra Archer will not play in the ongoing 14th Indian Premier League, compounding his franchise Rajasthan Royals' misery. The 26-year-old Archer returned to bowling this week with higher intensity, and the ECB and Sussex medical teams will continue to monitor his progress.

"Archer will now step up his training regime starting next week and will be in full training with Sussex. It is expected that he will return to cricket in the next fortnight if he can continue to bowl and prepare pain-free. The ECB will confirm which matches he is expected to play in due course," the ECB said in a statement.

Last week, Archer was given the all-clear by his hand consultant to resume training as his right hand continued to heal following his operation on March 29. His IPL franchise RR was desperately hoping that he would be available at least during the back-end of the tournament. Archer suffered a cut to his hand while cleaning at his home in January shortly before flying to India to prepare for the Test series earlier this year.

The ECB's medical team managed the injury throughout the tour, and it did not impact his availability. A fragment of glass was removed during the operation to his middle finger on his right hand.

Rajasthan Royals Director of Cricket Kumar Sangakkara had admitted that missing Archer was a "big blow" and hoped that he would be "available at some point of time".

Archer thus becomes the second England player with RR to be ruled out for the season after all-rounder Ben Stokes returned to

Bad news for RR as ECB rules

SQUADS

Rajasthan Royals

Sanju Samson (captain), Jos Buttler (wicketkeeper), Riyan Parag, Shreyas Gopal, Rahul Tewatia, Mahipal Lomror, Kartik Tyagi, Andrew Tye, Jaydev Unadkat, Mayank Markande, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Anuj Rawat, David Miller, Manan Vohra, Robin Uthappa, Shivam Dube, Chris Morris, Mustafizur Rahman, Chetan Sakariya, KC Cariappa, Kuldeep Yadav, Akash Singh.

Kolkata Knight Riders

Shubman Gill, Nitish Rana, Tim Seifert (wicketkeeper), Rahul Tripathi, Rinku Singh, Dinesh Karthik (wicketkeeper), Eoin Morgan (captain), Andre Russell, Sunil Narine, Varun CV, Kuldeep

Yadav, Pat Cummins, Lockie Ferguson, Kamlesh Nagarkoti, Shivam Mavi, Sandeep Warrier, Prasidh Krishna, Shakib Al Hasan, Sheldon Jackson, Vaibhav Arora, Karun Nair,

Match starts at 7.30pm

Bengaluru FC's AFC Cup playoff tie indefinitely postponed

NEW DELHI

INDIAN club Bengaluru FC's AFC Cup play-off match, scheduled to be held on April 28, has been indefinitely postponed as the preliminary game to decide their opponents is yet to take place due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

BFC, runners-up in 2016, were drawn to play the winners of the match between six-time Bangladesh Premier League champions Abahani and Maldives' Eagles.

Abahani were scheduled to host Eagles on April 14 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium in Dhaka but the countrywide lockdown due to the pandemic forced the hosts to suspend the match. The match was then scheduled for April 21 in Kathmandu but travel restrictions came in the way.

"As of now you can say that BFC's next match stands indefinitely postponed. BFC can't play till the other game is played as they are supposed to meet the winner of that game," a source close to BFC told PTI on Friday.

"Their match was rescheduled for April 21 but today is April 23, two days have passed and we don't know the status of that game. So it's not possible for BFC to play on April 28," he added.

BFC's match stands postponed, as per the fixtures in the website of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC).

According to leading Bangladesh newspaper Daily Star, the AFC has asked Abahani if they can play their preliminary stage match against Eagles in India. In their last outing, BFC thrashed Nepal's Tribhuvan Army FC 5-0 in Bambolim, Goa.

The fixture was new coach Marco Pezzaiuoli's first competitive game in charge of the Blues, since his appointment as head coach in February. Bengaluru FC have been in Goa for little over four weeks, living in a bio-secure bubble. (PTI)

Padikkal has class and ability to play all formats: Gavaskar

MUMBAI

ROYAL Challengers Bangalore opener Devdutt Padikkal has the ability to play for India in all formats of the game, said former India captain Sunil Gavaskar.

Padikkal, 20, has become a mainstay at the top of the order for RCB and scored his first Indian Premier League (IPL) century on Thursday. Gavaskar also pointed out Padikkal's record in domestic cricket in India.

"I won't be surprised if he plays for India in any of the formats because he has got the class and the ability to do that. He is a heavy scorer in first-class cricket

and Ranji Trophy as well gets big hundreds.

In 50-overs cricket, he gets lots of runs and hundreds. Here, in the T20 domestic tournaments, he got lots of runs. So, I won't be surprised if he is there sooner rather than later," Gavaskar said on Star Sports.

Gavaskar said that Padikkal is just the latest in a long line of great batsmen to have come out of Karnataka which includes Punjab Kings captain KL Rahul. However, Gavaskar said that Rahul seems to not believe in himself as much as he should.

"Karnataka has always produced a terrific line of batsmen.

Gundappa Vishwanath, Rahul Dravid, then KL Rahul. And if KL Rahul, you know, some of the stars need to believe in themselves a little bit more. Sometimes you get the feeling that he doesn't believe in himself. He is such a talented player And there is Mayank Agarwal, there is Karun Nair who got a triple hundred, he also needs to get his act together. It's a terrific batting line-up Karnataka have," Gavaskar added.

"And Devdutt Padikkal is another one in that long line of batsmen who have delighted the Indian cricket lovers," he said. (IANS)

Guardiola thanks Kohli for RCB jersey

MUMBAI: Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola said that it may be time for him to learn the rules of cricket after being sent a Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) jersey by the Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise's captain Virat Kohli. "It's time to finally learn cricket's rules. Thanks to my friend @virat.kohli for the shirt. Now is your turn to use your Man City shirt @pumaindia @pumafootball #PUMAXRCB," said Guardiola in an Instagram post along with a video of him holding up the jersey. (IANS)



Devdutt Padikkal of RCB celebrates after scoring a hundred during the IPL match against Rajasthan Royals at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on Thursday

Bilbao, Dublin dropped as Euro 2020 hosts, Seville added

GENEVA

BILBAO and Dublin were removed as host cities for this year's European Championship on Friday because they could not guarantee having enough fans in stadiums, and the games were moved to Seville, St. Petersburg and London.

The changes to the 12-city hosting plan for Euro 2020 come only seven weeks before the 24-nation tournament kicks off in Rome on June 11. The decision was first revealed by Poland soccer federation president Zbigniew Boniek, who posted it on his official Twitter account while he was attending a UEFA executive committee meeting. Poland, Spain, Sweden

and Slovakia were scheduled to play their Group E matches in Spain and Ireland. UEFA selected Bilbao and Dublin in 2014 but their places were at risk because authorities there could not give guarantees about fans attending amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The three games in Bilbao will move within Spain to Seville. St. Petersburg, which was already set to host four games in the tournament, now gets the three Group E games from Dublin. Dublin's game in the round of 16 was moved to London, giving Wembley Stadium an eighth match. Both semifinals and the final will also be played at Wembley. Munich, which had

also been at risk, was reprieved by UEFA, the German soccer federation said in a statement.

The federation said Bavarian state officials ruled a minimum capacity of 14,500 would be "realistic" for Euro 2020 games. That is just over 20% of stadium capacity in its configuration for the tournament. UEFA set each city a goal of at least 25% of stadium capacity for the tournament. Still, leaving out a key country like Germany, which will host Euro 2024, and a stadium like the one in Munich, which will host the 2023 Champions League final, always seemed unlikely. Russia gained more matches despite a Court of Arbitration for Sport ban on being se-

lected to host world championships.

UEFA, which is a European body, is not bound by December's ruling at CAS. The 60,000-capacity Estadio La Cartuja in Seville is not used by either of the city's two big clubs, Sevilla and Real Betis, but has hosted Spanish national team games and the 2003 UEFA Cup final.

UEFA said regional authorities promised 30% of the stadium can be used for Euro 2020, including all three of Spain's group games and a match in the round of 16. UEFA said it wanted "simply to allow fans (in Spain) to attend the games after a year of not being able to watch live football in stadiums." (AP)

ARCHERY WORLD CUP STAGE 1

Atanu, Deepika make individual semis, India in hunt for five medals

GUATEMALA CITY

COUNTRY'S top archery couple Atanu Das and Deepika Kumari battled heavy winds to storm into their respective semi-finals of the recurve section as India continued to make giant strides in the World Cup Stage 1 here.

Returning to the World Cup after almost two years, Das and Deepika, who got married last year, also paired up to advance to the bronze playoff in the recurve mixed event on Thursday night to keep India in the hunt for five medals.

Defying severe winds at the Sports Complex Los Arcos here, Deepika, who qualified as the number three seed, displayed some incredible shooting to down German archer Michelle Kroppen in straight sets. The former world number one drilled volleys of 29, 30 and 30 points.

While the rest of the field struggled with the breeze, Deepika shot fast and confidently on her way to an easy win. "I had too many thoughts in my mind, and all I wanted to do was to concentrate, to focus and control my mind. I know I can do better. My first match wasn't that good, and I feel like I didn't give it all," she said.

"I feel so nervous still, but good as well. I'm happy because I'm finally competing. We waited one-and-a-half years for this, and we're finally here," she added.

The world number nine, who is the highest seed remaining in the draw, will next face Alejandra Valencia of Mexico in her quest for a gold medal on Sunday.

The sole archer to qualifier for the Olympics so far, Deepika has won two stages of the World Cup -- once in

Antalya, Turkey in 2012 and the other in Salt Lake City, USA in 2018 -- besides making the podium thrice at the World Cup Finals.

Deepika had earlier defeated Kelsey Lard of the USA 6-0 in round two and overcame London Olympics silver medalist Aida Roman of Mexico in the shootoff 6-5 (10-9).

Meanwhile, Das was a bit lucky in the quarter-final as his Candian rival Eric Peters had a miss in the last set as the Indian wrapped it up 6-4 to keep himself in line for his first ever individual podium. His previous best was a fourth-place finish in Antalya in 2016. He will face Alvaro in his first match on Sunday for a chance to contest for gold.

Das, who qualified straight to the round of 32 after finishing second in the rankings round, defeated Oscar Ticas of El Salvador 6-4 first up before ousting his teammate Pravin Jadhav by an identical scoreline to make the last-four.

"I'm feeling good because everyone was wondering when international competition was going to start. It has started and for me it is a good start. I'm working on myself, on my mental side and I think this is helping me a lot to perform well," Das said.

Seeded second in the mixed pair event, the duo of Das and Deepika defeated Spain in straight sets to make the semifinal but only to falter against Mexico in the shootoff after the scores were tied 4-4. They will take on the top-seeded USA duo of Brady Ellison and Casey Kaufhold in Sunday's bronze playoff.

There was a heartbreak in store for Ankita Bhakat in the recurve quarter-final as the second seed Indian lost to Alejandra 6-2. India also remain in the hunt for medals in the men's and women's team events after advancing to the quarterfinals in both. India are playing in the World Cup circuit for the first time after their appearance in the Stage 4 in Berlin in July 2019.

(PTI)



Axar recovers from Covid-19, joins DC squad

MUMBAI

SPINNER Axar Patel has recovered from Covid-19 and joined the Delhi Capitals (DC) squad in Mumbai, the Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise said on Friday.

Patel said that finally joining the squad after recovering is the best moment of his life since his Test debut.

"It has been really great to come out of quarantine after 20 days and meet my teammates. This is the best moment in my life after my Test debut. I was alone in my room for 20 days and I didn't have anything to do," said Patel.

"I was watching the matches and one good thing was that our team won most of the matches, so I got even more motivated to re-join the side. It's been great to start practicing with the team and I am happy about my preparations," he said.

Patel had tested positive for Covid-19 on April 3, ruling him out for the first few matches of the season. He had a breakthrough season with the Indian team before the IPL, as he made his Test debut during the home series against England and took 27 wickets in three matches. (IANS)

H FC goalkeeper Kattimani's contract extended



HYDERABAD

INDIAN Super League (ISL) side Hyderabad FC on Friday handed a one-year extension to their experienced goalkeeper Laxmikant Kattimani. The Goan-born custodian's contract will run till the end of the 2021-22 season.

The 31-year-old has been with Hyderabad FC right from their first season in the league in 2019-20 and became their first choice under the bar in the recently concluded ISL season.

"I have now spent two years with the club and I am really happy here. I know the club and the people involved pretty well and it was an easy decision for me to extend my time with Hyderabad FC," said Kattimani, after signing the contract.

Hyderabad FC head coach Manuel Marquez said, "Katti-

mani is a very good keeper. He is not just good with his shot-stopping but is also very calm with his feet. He is confident playing out from the back and is a really good fit for our system."

With 59 ISL appearances to date, Kattimani was a crucial member of the Hyderabad FC squad that finished fifth in the league last season, and Marquez believes that his experience will be key next season.

"We have a really young squad at Hyderabad FC and we need players with experience like Kattimani. He is an excellent keeper, a great person and is happy to help youngsters out in the team and we are happy to retain his services for another season," said Marquez.

During the 2020-21 ISL, Kattimani kept six clean sheets in 14 games, conceding less than a goal a game. (IANS)