

"It could've been another Jaipur Golden tragedy, perhaps of a bigger size... All this time, the families were there, helping us," Chawla said. At present, there are over 100 patients at the hospital, majority of them on oxygen support. The owner thanked Kaur for helping them, saying it was "mainly because of her we could achieve what we did". Kaur likened the whole incident to a horror movie. She said the tanker, which went to another hospital, was taking time to return and all the ventilators had gone completely empty.



Womenia

TWEET PATROL



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Heena Panchal: Working with Saroj Khan ji was itself an achievement

TEJAL SINHA

Heena Panchal, an Indian film actress is known for her works in Hindi and Marathi language films. She is most famous for her item songs "Balam Bambai" and "Bevda Bevda Zalo Mi Tight". In 2019, she participated in Bigg Boss Marathi and was also a part of the dating reality television series Muihse Shaadi Karoge.

Sharing about her journey, Heena shares, "My journey has been very simple. I do not come from the family that has an industry background. My mother is a house wife and my father had a business. I was a mechanical student studying in Navi Mumbai in a Polytechnic college. Suddenly my father's business collapsed and that's how I decided to start working. I joined Ganesh Acharya as a background dancer and for almost 6-7 years I did that.

He asked me to do an item song for Anees Bazmiz movie. That was with John Abraham and was titled 2020. I was assisting Ganesh Acharya for the song and they had a requirement for a female dancer. They found me very photogenic on the screen and suggested that I should do more of Television and music videos. I then did a Bengali song and from there Piyush Mundhda, the producer of the film Raag offered me this

item song in the movie. It was the first Bollywood item number that I did as a known actor." Heena shares that Raag happened to her 4 years ago and at that time the movie was titled Babuji Ek Ticket Bambai.

She adds, "I was a background dancer then. It was my first dance performance in the film and it was to be choreographed by Late Saroj Khan Ji. For me, it was epic and legendary as I was to work with Saroj Khan Ji who had choreographed the likes of Madhuri Dixit, Sridevi, Kajol and many more. For me, it was an opportunity that I did not want to miss.

I was super excited when I came to know that the song was to be choreographed by the legendary Saroj Khan ji. Working with her was in itself an achievement for me and at that time I did not care whether the song would see the light of the day or not. Although I was scared a lot as I did not wish to commit any mistake in front of her. As we all know that Saroj ji was a perfectionist and she was very quick to pinpoint even the minutest of mistake on the set. As a dancer she always wanted the other dancers to give their 100 % to the art and she did not take any kind of lacuna in it. She did not take anything for granted and gave her 100% to everything. This is what she expected out of others as well."

As a dancer Heena was al-

ready aware of this trait of Saroj Khan as she had also worked as a background dancer for her.

Challenges as an outsider in the industry

Heena shared that her parents are very chilled out and they always supported me in all my endeavours, but the relatives opposed my decision to join the industry since they come from an orthodox background.

She shares, "My father however is a broad-minded person and he supported me a lot. Although even he faced a lot of resistance from the other family members. But after the popularity that I gained after Big Boss Marathi, that changed their perspective. They were convinced that although I had joined the film industry but I was still connected to my roots and the values that my family holds. I have learned a lot through the struggles and the ups and downs I have faced in my life. Even when I was working for Big Boss Marathi, I had a lot of disagreement with the people in the house but that was only because they failed to understand my point of view and it was pointed out by Mahesh Manjrekar as well.

He always told the housemates that 'Aap log Heena ka point of view kabhi samajh hi nahi paye'. I make sure that I apologies for the things where I

Heena Panchal known for her works and item songs like "Balam Bambai" and "Bevda Bevda Zalo Mi Tight", in an exclusive interview with The Hans India talks about her experience of working with the legendary choreographer Late Saroj Khan and body shaming women has become a common thing for trolls

go wrong."

She further shares that she does not hesitate from the struggles that she has gone through to make my mark in the industry. Most of the dance numbers that she has done are purely done on the basis of reference as she does not come from a film background.

"Although I was launched by Ganesh Acharya but that did

not mean that I did not have to struggle. Many of my dance numbers are not released yet. All of them are very catchy numbers and will instantly be a hit amongst the people. But they are yet to see the light of the day. I would have been on a different platform had those songs released timely," adds Panchal

Trolling and body shaming women has become a common thing for trolls

Adding about trolling and body shaming, Heena shares that as a child, she faced a lot of body shaming due to her imperfect skin or the way she smiled. She shares that, "This also led me to a lot of self-esteem issue but my family has always been very supportive and they have accepted me the way I am. They helped me love myself and increase the positivity in me. To the women out there I would

just like to say that love yourself the way you are. Do not fall into the trap of trolls. Rather surround yourself with people who help you grow and help you love the way you are." On work front, Heena currently has a Marathi music video lined up for the release by next month, which would be released by Tips. She ends saying that a lot of other things are there in the pipeline but due to the pandemic, they are on hold at present but hoping for the best.

Get Organised Day



Do you find yourself lost in an absolute sea of clutter? Is your filing cabinet more of a three story garbage can? Does your desk require an archaeological team to find? Do you often find yourself lost in a sea of 'was that appointment today or sometime next week?' only to find out it was last week? Then Get Organised Day may wind up being your salvation. The one thing you can never get back is time, and organisation can save you

absolute mountains of it by making sure you know where things are, how to find them, and where to put them back for next time.

History of get organised day

The History of this holiday isn't hard to imagine, though if you know the sort of people that desperately need a day like 'Get Organised Day' in their lives, it probably took a while to get started. I mean first you had to find out where you left all the notes on getting organised, then you had to spend a day organising as you realised that finding it was going to be impossible in your current organisation system. Then you'd find yourself exhausted after all the time you took to get organised, and when you were finally rested, you'd realise you'd have to get started all over again. That's kind of what the life of a disorganised person is like, precious time is wasted not by performing actual work, but by trying to find out what happened to all the things you need to get started in your work-

day. Organisation comes in many forms, but one thing is known beyond question, that if you have all of your things sorted and organised where you can find them before you ever set down to work, everything from there on out is going to be a cinch.

How to celebrate get organised day

Dig out all of your old "filing" systems that really amount to nothing more than a place to put things, and sort out what's in there. We know you're thinking that the time it takes to find everything and sort it is time you need spent on other, more important things. News Flash! The amount of time it takes you to get organised is going to be exceeded, by far, by the time savings you get from being organised in the first place.



FASHIONISTA

Hello summer!

Summer started and we can feel the heat in many parts of the country. Sun shining bright and mercury soaring high, we have started looking for weather proof fashion and fabric plays and important role.

Cotton based fabrics are no doubt the preferred ones due to its natural comforting properties, absorbing qualities and durability factor. Consumer is aware of these qualities and prefers cotton and other natural yarns over man-made. In fact the fabric blends we use today have major quantity of cotton in it. Blends are good for fashion fabrics, they have different kinds of fall and fit based on the composition of the blend, but cotton and natural fibers are always the base component of fabrics. Cotton rich t-shirts are good for summer. They do use advanced technologies to enhance the fashion quotient, whether it is fabrics, finishes or styling.

Linen is a very good summer fabric. Being a natural fiber, which are extracts of flax plant, it is skin-friendly. Linen is cool and very absorbent, which makes it great for summer wear. It is also extremely durable and strong, the strongest of all natural fibers. Spykar gives a wide range of linen shirts to its consumers in most trendy colours for the season.

Bamboo fabric is hypoallergenic, anti-microbial and thermal regulating naturally. It is also resistant to mould. Fabrics made out of bamboo fibers breathe and wicks moisture away due to its porous nature. It also has an excellent drape and a silky-cashmere feel. Bamboo is one of nature's most sustainable resources; it's 100 per cent biodegradable and is naturally regenerative and grows extremely fast.

Hemp fabric is a natural textile made of fibres of a very high-yielding crop in the cannabis plant

family. Historically used for industrial purposes, like rope and sails, hemp is known as one of the most versatile and durable natural fibers. Hemp plants grow quickly and densely which makes it difficult for weeds to hold on, hence no pesticides or herbicides needed. Hemp is an extremely durable fabric. It is also very insulating, absorbent and improves over time with washing and wearing.

Lyocell is a new all natural fiber. It is made with wood pulp cellulose from the eucalyptus tree. Lyocell is extremely absorbent, irritation free and smooth on skin, naturally prevents the growth of bacteria, and is biodegradable. These qualities make it a preferred fabric for hot summer.

Denim being a cotton rich fabric is a good option for summer. It is tough and durable having good wicking properties. Coarser cotton yarns absorb perspiration well. Prevents sunlight to penetrate deep into skin and acts as a skin coolant. Being a natural fiber it is the best option for being close to the skin. Denim is a versatile fabric used across multiple product categories like jeans, shorts and cargo pants for bottoms, shirts and truckers for top wear. Being cotton as the main content, denim can be worn across the globe in any kind of weather conditions. A pair of jeans made out of denim fabric is a staple fashion product in the wardrobe as it can be worn at multiple occasions. It can be clubbed with any kind of top wear and easy to pair. Some people are allergic or they dislike wearing synthetic materials. Fabrics made out of natural fibers have all the properties like breathability with added softness and drape. They feel better against the skin. Organic and eco-friendly fabrics are good for summer and also contribute to the sustainability.

(Abhishek Yadav (design head) Spykar)

Daisy Shah: Vaccination is our best shot at eliminating Covid

Bollywood actress Daisy Shah has been encouraging her fans to get vaccinated for Covid-19 infection as soon as possible. The actress says that the vaccinations will go a long way in helping people fight the virus. "Vaccines as a concept are introduced for the citizens to fight the virus and given Covid, it is the only option we must resort to, to be safe. People can be infected by the virus in general so taking the vaccination surely diminishes the effect and the chances of someone contracting the virus. It is our best shot at eliminating Covid-19 and we must promote the vaccination drives across the globe," she told. The actress says that it is important to spread as much awareness as possible about Covid-19 so that people can be careful. "The more we talk about Covid-19 and the situation outside or how it is harming us as a country; the more we will create awareness and educate people. Through this awareness, people will be more thoughtful while stepping out of the house, taking care of themselves following all the precautionary measures, etc. Once they start taking care of themselves, they automatically take care of their loved ones and the people around them," she says. The times are tough and talking about how she is coping with the stress, the actress says, "One needs to understand that it is not time that defines you. It is you that defines time. No matter how tough the situation is outside, always remember that you are tougher than any situation that erupts. Once you put yourself down and surrender to your fear to the situation, the game is over. This is how I deal with stress. I do not let stress take over my mental state and I fight it to make sure it doesn't get into me," she says.



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We still have a chance to bend the Covid-19 curve

STUDIES by Indian scientists and Indian-American biostatistician, data scientist, professor and researcher Dr Brahmar Mukherjee of Michigan University indicates that the worse is yet to come. The experts who assessed the current rate of infections and deaths in India a week back said that the pandemic in India is going to get worse in the coming weeks. The results of the study are scary. According to Dr Mukherjee, a peak in the number of new cases reported daily could be around 8-10 lakhs. Daily coronavirus deaths will peak in the second half of May.

But unfortunately, neither the Centre nor respective State governments have opened their eyes yet. They continue to show sheer negligence and blow their own

trumpet. Many governments, including the two Telugu States, claim that they are working to the maximum extent for public welfare and have embarked on innovative ideas and have gained an understanding of immediate decisions that rulers must make for public good in difficult times on a war footing.

But, at the ground level one notices a sheer negligence on the part of governments and the public. There is nothing like accountability or responsibility. This trend crept in from January, 2021 when Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan declared that the country was in the endgame of COVID-19 pandemic. He lauded the leadership of Prime Minister and said it would be an example to the world. This kind of unbridled optimism both by the Centre and States has pushed the country into being the worst affected one by second wave and India is now in the grip of public health emergency. What we see now is long queues of ambulances, frantic calls for beds, patients gasping for oxygen, drugs sold in black market, crowded cemeteries and shortage of vaccine.

Agreed, second wave was inevitable but its impact could have been lessened if India had followed the international practice of genomic surveillance in January instead of prematurely claiming victory over the

scourge. Most epidemiologists project more waves and it is time the governments and the people wake up to the reality and learn to follow self-discipline till everyone gets vaccinated.

Statistics clearly show that self-discipline can reduce the number of cases. We had seen how the curve dipped during the first wave when there was sense of panic among people and strict use of masks and social distancing and lockdown not allowing entry of outsiders into housing complexes was implemented. Even now there is hope of beating back the virus if 95% of people wear masks till the end of April (just five more days left).

Despite the second wave and increase of cases by 71 percent and deaths by 55 percent due to non-adherence to Covid-appropriate behaviour by participating in massive gatherings and refusing to wear face masks, people are non-serious about fighting the pandemic. Added to that there is under-reporting of cases and the restrictions announced by State governments are mostly confined to papers. Though scientists warn that new variants are being found, there is no cogent or clear public health action. It's time the political executive and the people wake up instead of leaving their future to fate.



Revisiting Quad: Time for India to mend fences with China

KRISHNA RAO IYR

IT was only a month back when the heads of state of the QUAD countries met virtually and released a joint statement. One of the main programme of action agreed upon was to assist Indian company based out of Hyderabad, Biological E.Ltd, in production of a billion doses of COVID-19 vaccine. Funding is to come from Japan and USA, and logistical support for distribution will be provided by Australia. However, Brahma Chellany, a strategic affairs expert, commented that the Quad vaccine initiative just demonstrated how with media help a PR gimmick can be spun into a summit success since the summit initiative in no way added to the already existing production capacity of Biological Evans to produce a billion vaccine doses per year. In any case the funding requirements were already tied up.

A month later India is grappling with the second wave of coronavirus which is devastating the country. Serum Institute has the capacity to produce critically needed vaccine in large quantities but is constrained by its inability to access important inputs which are available only in USA. All requests for the same fell on deaf ears, and America has put forward this perverted logic that it is essential to vaccinate everyone in USA for the world to remain safe and refused to lift the ban. One of the worst public health crises facing India has just shown how insensitive and narrow-minded USA can be when there is greater need for cooperation and understanding.

Till now the theme that is floated by USA and the west is that China is an unreliable clog in global supply chain and there is a need for China plus one policy. But, when the crucial test came in a crisis situation world is realising that more than China plus one policy the world today needs USA and the west plus one policy.

Only a week back the seventh fleet not only crossed into our exclusive economic zone, but thought it fit to publicise it through an unusual press report. These actions of America raise a serious question how far India should go with the Quad initiative of the USA.

Underlying presumption of Quad is that China is expansionist by nature and there is a need for a group of nations to contain it. But, when there is a crisis how reliable are these partners is a big question mark. Any such defence cooperation not backed up by economic cooperation of preferential access to the Western markets has no great relevance for India. It may serve the purpose of America in strategically containing China, but may not be of great relevance to India.

It is time India really looks for an alternative to this in terms of an improved relationship with China. If serious attempt can be made on both the sides the border problem is not unsurmountable, and once both nations put this problem behind them it opens up new avenues for cooperation in different fields in a mutually advantageous manner. A possible Russia-China-India partnership can offer to the world multipolarity which is suffering from unipolarity since the collapse of USSR.

All the three Nations can take serious initiative to bring long-term peace and stability in that part of the world which is most unstable -- Pakistan and Afghanistan. This is also crucial for all the three countries in terms of securing their supply chains and encouraging commerce and trade. On trade side there are definitely going to be issues since cheap Chinese imports can wreak havoc on the manufacturing sector in our country. While concentrating on ways of safeguarding our industry from this onslaught, we can meaningfully co-operate with China along with Russia on all other fronts.

There is no way for a long time we can come anywhere near China as an economic power. China's crude steel production is 1000 million tonnes per year as against India's 100 million tonnes. The sooner we realize the better for us.

(The writer is former Chief Secretary of Andhra Pradesh. Views expressed are personal)

The rise of Islamists in Pakistan

THE Islamic Republic of Pakistan, a country formed on the basis of freedom of religious rights for its citizens, is a Muslim majority state, where religious groups and organisations play a pivotal role in the country's democratic system and political setups.

It is common in Pakistan for political parties to seek allegiance from various conservative and headline religious groups to attain political power.

Hardline religious groups have been supported, facilitated and protected, giving them the leverage to practice and spread their narratives of the religion among the masses.

However, while many such religious groups have made headways and have challenged the country's democracy in the past, the recent surge of popularity and intensity of the Tehreek-e-Labaik Pakistan (TLP) has certainly raised serious questions over how the country's democratic setup and government operate. TLP, a hardline religious organisation, which was part of the political race during the last general elections, was declared as proscribed by the Imran Khan-led government after the former had detained security officials and unleashed mayhem in the country.

TLP's popular identity is its aggressive reaction to any activity or action by any person or country that targets Islam and Prophet Muhammad.

TLP's protests have seen violence, blockages, killings and vandalism, chocking the whole country through its widespread massive support across the nation. It has certainly demonstrated that its public presence and violent reaction to issues related to religion has time and again brought the sitting government and the authorities to their knees.

TLP's demand for expulsion of the French Ambassador from Pakistan and severing relations with France in protest against the 'blasphemous' caricatures of Islam and Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) has put the Imran Khan government in a difficult position as the premier has stated that the country cannot afford to sever ties with France or with Europe at large.

However, the government, succumbing to the pressure from the Islamist group, has tabled a resolution in the Parliament, seeking its vote on the expulsion of the French Ambassador.

Such Islamist hardliner elements have also enjoyed support from the country's establishment, which has in the past supported them in their protests.

In 2017, TLP had staged a sit-in in Faizabad, the connecting bridge between the capital Islamabad and its twin city Rawalpindi, demanding the resignation of the then sitting law minister over his alleged role in proposing changes to the wording of the oath taken by the parliamentarians, as they deemed it to be blasphemous.

The demand back then was met as the law minister had to resign, even after repeated clarifications that he had never intended to commit any blasphemy. What is shocking to see is that these Islamist hardliners have been able to dictate terms to the government, both in terms of foreign policy and parliamentary agenda. This has now become a serious concern for the Imran Khan-led government.

THE WAY AHEAD



Dr Bharat Jhunjunwala

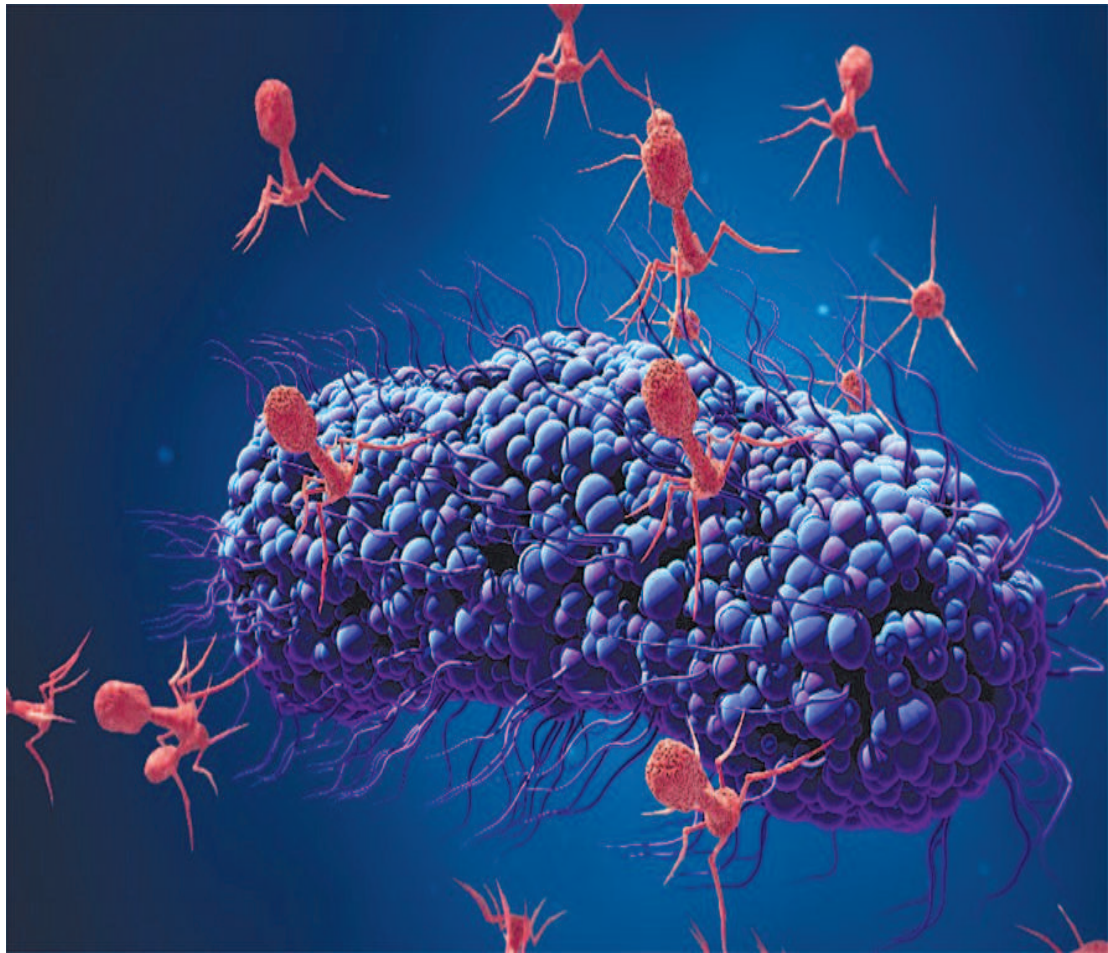
The government was driving the economy till March as if the coronavirus pandemic was a one-time catastrophe that will get abated with vaccination of large numbers of our people. As it has happened, the second wave has come perhaps two months before the widespread vaccination could be done. The government has avoided imposing lockdown that is being asked for by the medical fraternity as it has to choose between the devil and the deep blue sea. The economy will collapse more and people will die less if lockdown is imposed. The economy will collapse less and people will die more if lockdown is not imposed. The bigger issue is that this second wave may not be the last; and the present vaccines may not quite work against the future variants of coronavirus.

Firstly, second wave may not be the last. Countries have faced third and even fourth waves. More importantly, the Covid virus is mutating. Even Callaway writes on nature.com website that in January 2021 "biotech firm Novavax released data from clinical trials showing that its experimental vaccine, designed to combat the original virus, was about 85% effective against a variant identified in the United Kingdom — but less than 50% effective against 501YV2," which is known as the South Africa variant. This means that the vaccines that are effective against the present strains may not be effective against new mutated strains. Callaway explains that it is normal for viruses to mutate. The influenza virus, for example, mutates frequently. The World Health Organization has established a Collaborating Centre for Reference and Research on Influenza in Melbourne, Australia. This center monitors emerging flu strains for genetic changes that might influence the effectiveness of presently available vaccines for influenza. They continuously assess whether the mutations are "widespread". They stand back and wait and watch if a new strain is localized to one region or country. They start the process of making a new vaccine if they find the new strain to be widespread.

Coronavirus is similarly likely to mutate continuously requiring continuous production of new vaccines. The present vaccines against coronavirus might have to be updated periodically, as they are for influenza. We do not know how much time it may take to update the vaccines and how much damage they may perpetrate before a vaccine is made to combat the new strain. We should not, therefore, be under the impression that we will become free of COVID-19 if the entire population of the country is vaccinated.

An alternative approach to combating the COVID pandemic is to use Phage Therapy. Phages are viruses like coronavirus. However, they are beneficial. They kill disease-creating bacteria in the body. That increases the immunity of the body and makes it possible to face the attacks by coronavirus. Professor Andrez Gorski of Poland has said that the beneficial phages can additionally block the pathways of the disease-creating virus. Let us say, coronavirus has entered a person's lungs. It is trying to enter the cells of the lungs. It would not be able to enter the cells of the lungs if the beneficial virus has already entered the lungs and blocked the cells through which coronavirus would have wanted to enter.

S. Mert Selimoglu of Pak Group of Companies of Turkey says on the Capsid & Tail Newsletter that one way of dealing with the problem is to administer a mixture of phages as a vaccine. Such mixtures are called "cocktail" in medical parlance. He says that administering a cocktail would enable the vaccine to self-select which bacteria are present in the body. It is like the farmers sowing a mixture of seeds. Those that suit the particular weather grow well; and others die. Similarly, administering a cocktail of phages enables the phages to select the viruses present and attack them. A vaccine made of such cocktail of phages has the advantage that it may be effective against a number of mutations of the



An alternative approach to combating the COVID pandemic is to use Phage Therapy. Phages are viruses like coronavirus. However, they are beneficial. They kill disease-creating bacteria in the body. That increases the immunity of the body and makes it possible to face the attacks by coronavirus

COVID virus. The prime requirement for the development of such a cocktail vaccine is the availability of a variety of beneficial phages.

We have an especial advantage here. The National Environment Engineering Institute, Nagpur, has undertaken a study of the Ganga River. They found that the water of upper Ganga river has more than 200 types of phages. In comparison, Yamuna and Narmada have only 20-50 types of phages. Thus, we have available with us cocktail of phages that can be used to make a cocktail vaccine.

The Ganga Today Trust based in Uttarakhand has supplied the Ganga water to hundred-odd persons across the country. They have found that 67 percent of those facing mental health problems got relief. The percentage of persons who got relief in other diseases were as follows: neurological problems 56%, digestive problems 55%, dermatological or skin problems 54%, urological problems 50%, arthritis 45%, diabetes 40%, cardiological problems 36% and respiratory problems 33%. These results are based on small numbers, less than 25 patients of each disease. Nevertheless they provide a prima facie evidence for the efficacy of the phages of Ganga river against a number of diseases.

The Maryland, USA based Adaptive Phage Therapeu-

tics has already made a phage-based vaccine and is conducting Phase I trials.

We must not be under the impression that all will be well after large numbers of our people have been vaccinated. The virus can mutate and the vaccinations can be rendered ineffective. We must plan for the worst.

We have already lost much time. Even now we are running after foreign vaccines that are effective against specific strains. One elderly person told me that he was waiting for the Pfizer vaccine to become available. Only then he would get vaccinated. We must immediately launch a massive program to make a cocktail phage based vaccine for COVID.

The government must not run on business-as-usual mode. The policy of the government is to borrow heavily and continue its "consumption"—salaries and perks—as previously. The hope is that the bad times will pass, economy will bounce back, and the borrowings made will be repaid. That may not happen. The second wave may be followed by a third wave; and the third may be followed by a new strain. No one knows how the situation will play out. But we must plan for all eventualities.

(The author is formerly Professor of Economics at IIM, Bengaluru)

will carry forward his good work and bring credit to the high office he holds. We are fully hopeful that he will uphold democratic values and protect the image of the Supreme Court of India.

M.V.Gona Reddy, Former president of State Principals Association, Nalgonda

Give jobs to kin of deceased cops

In Nalgonda district five police officials took voluntary retirement on medical grounds since 2014 and four of them died due to various chronic diseases.

As per GO (MS No 661, dated 23-10-2008), one of their sons/daughters are eligible for compassionate appointments, as all of them retired from service five years before superannuation and fulfilled the condition of the GO. As per the GO, 5% of vacancies are reserved for compassionate appointments.

But, the legal heirs of the deceased police personnel

have been waiting in vain for jobs since 2014 in the district.

The SP of Nalgonda has even written to the DGP for clearance to the appointments on compassionate grounds. The DGP wrote a letter on 15-11-2020 to Principal Secretary, Home, and requested for relaxation of rules. Accordingly, the file was cleared by GAD and also approved by the Home Minister for relaxation of rules as per file No.9487/Services-2/2020.

The chairman TSLC & MLA, Nalgonda, also sent a letter to the CM for relaxation of rules. We request the CM to solve their problem and ensure speedy clearance to provision of jobs to the kin of deceased police personnel on compassionate grounds as they have been suffering hardships for the last 7 years.

Dasari Yadagiri, Nalgonda

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LETTERS

Justice Ramana's appointment as CJI a moment of pride for Telugus

JUSTICE N. V. Ramana's appointment as 48th Chief Justice of India is a moment of pride for Telugu people and, his batchmates in Nagarjuna University in particular. He happens to be the only second man from Telugu States to reach the pinnacle in legal profession. As Justice Ramana's batchmate as well as his roommate during 1979-82, we feel proud of his success. His friends recall how Mr Ramana was very active as a law student and students' union leader in those days. During his illustrious career, Justice Ramana has earned popularity for speedy disposal of pending cases and delivering landmark judgments. There is no doubt that Justice Ramana

Yogi government to bear cost of treatment of Covid patients

LUCKNOW

THE Yogi Adityanath government on Sunday announced that it will now bear the cost of treatment of Covid patients even in private hospitals.

Additional Chief Secretary, Information, Navneet Sehgal said that hospitals have been asked not to turn away patients.

"In case there are no beds available in government hospitals, the patients will be sent to a private hospital and the state government will bear the entire cost of treatment," he said.

According to a government release, the last rites of every Covid casualty will be done as per the religion of the

patient and the state government will bear the cost.

Directives in this regard have been sent to officials in rural and urban areas in the state.

Adityanath has said that the state government will conduct an audit of the life-saving gas, oxygen, in collaboration with various institutes.

"There is no shortage of oxygen in any Covid hospital, be it private or government. The problem is black marketing and hoarding, which will be tackled with a heavy hand. We are going to conduct an oxygen audit in collaboration with IIT Kanpur, IIM Lucknow and IIT BHU for proper monitoring of medical oxygen. The



system of live tracking of oxygen demand, supply and distribution will be implemented," the chief minister said in a virtual meeting with editors of various newspapers on Saturday evening.

The chief minister has also launched a digital platform for monitoring oxygen supply.

Asserting that there is no shortage of oxygen in any private or public Covid hospital in Uttar Pradesh, he urged people not to let their guard down against Corona virus.

Yogi Adityanath also said that oxygen is not in short supply, provided only the needy use it.

"Every infected patient does not

need oxygen, cooperation is expected from the media in increasing awareness about this," he said.

He acknowledged that there were some initial problems in increasing the number of hospital beds in the state, but they have been quickly overcome.

Yogi Adityanath said, "It would be a huge mistake to take Corona as normal viral fever. I am also in its grip. I have been following all Covid protocols since April 13 while in isolation."

The number of infections in this Covid wave is about 30 times more than the last time, he added, but also claimed that the state government's preparation is better than before.

Night curfew clamped in 4 Himachal dists till May 10

SHIMLA

KEEPING in view the sharp surge in number of Covid cases in the state, the Himachal Pradesh government on Sunday imposed night curfew in the four districts -- Kangra, Una, Solan and Sirmour -- from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. from midnight of April 27 to May 10.

This was decided at a high-level meeting held here under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur.

It was also decided to make RT-PCR tests within 72 hours mandatory for all visitors visiting the state.

It was decided that in case the visitors have not undergone the RT-PCR test, they would have to remain in home quarantine or isolation at the place of their residence for 14 days.

They would also have the option of getting themselves tested after seven days of their arrival, and in case the test comes negative, they do not require to remain quarantined, an official statement said.



It was also decided that local bodies, both in urban and rural areas, would be closely involved in effective enforcement of all the health protocols and guidelines in their respective areas and empowered to initiate legal

action against the violators so as to check spread of this pandemic.

Also a decision was taken to constitute the Special Task Force at the local level for effective enforcement of SOPs

during all the religious, social, political and cultural gatherings.

It would be empowered to initiate strict action against the people violating the Covid-19 guidelines.

Mistaken identity: 'Dead' woman comes alive

JHANSI

IN a bizarre situation, a 65-year-old woman, who had been declared dead due to Covid by Jhansi medical college authorities, was found alive a day later.

According to reports, the woman Rajkumari Gupta, 65, was declared dead on Friday by the hospital authorities due to Covid.

As per reports, Rajkumari had been admitted to the hospital on April 23 and 'died' on the same day. She was having a sore throat,



fever and cough with breathing problems.

The matter came to light on Saturday after some people contacted her relatives at her house.

Later, a video clip also went viral in which Rajkumari was seen standing in the balcony of her house saying that she had recov-

ered and was quite fit.

Dr Narendra Singh Sengar, the principal of the Jhansi medical college, said that it was a matter of mistaken identity as a woman of similar name had died of Covid on late Thursday night.

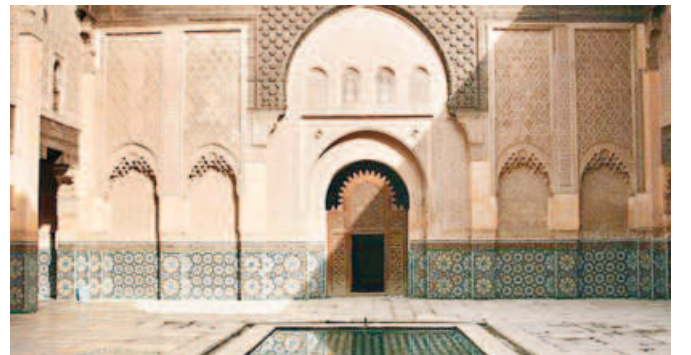
"The family members of the deceased entered the hospital's ICU ward and started creating ruckus. They even manhandled the medical staff present at that time for which an FIR had been lodged. During this scuffle, the files got mingled which created this confusion", he said.

Madrasa offer to turn into Covid facilities

LUCKNOW

THE Islamic Madrasa Modernization Teachers Association of India has written to Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath seeking conversion of all of the state madrasas into Covid facilities. They have offered the services of teachers as corona warriors in the field. The letter states that the decision was taken in view of the bed crisis for Covid-19 patients in the state and country.

"There are several madrasas in each district which can be converted into Covid facilities. Madrasa teachers are also ready to work as Covid warriors too, so their services can be used for the state and the country,"



the letter stated. The teachers' association has said that madrasa teachers are also ready to work as Covid warriors to save lives of people and be of any other use in the crisis to

the government. The request sent to the chief minister is awaiting a response but the association is hopeful the space and service from them can be helpful to society at large.

Amid oxygen shortage, Jaipur Golden Hospital denies more admission requests

NEW DELHI

THE Jaipur Golden Hospital in Delhi continued to scramble for a continuous oxygen supply and denied admission requests from more patients on Sunday, a day after it reported 20 deaths amid shortage of the life-saving gas.

The hospital currently has around 205 patients, out of which 60 are in a critical condition. Twenty-five patients need high flow oxygen.

"We are having to send SOS admission requests for COVID patients requiring hospital care," it tweeted. "Erratic oxygen supply means we are struggling to ensure our current patients get the care they need. Ensure Oxygen supply so we can help all Delhiites in need."

Around 6 pm, Medical director D K Baluja said he had been assured by officials that a tanker would reach within half an hour. The number of deaths that "could be linked to oxygen shortage" remains at 20. No more such fatality has been reported since Saturday morning, Baluja said.

Gautam Singh, the head of Shri Ram Singh Hospital and Heart Institute, also posted a video message on social media, requesting an oxygen refill for his 100-bed healthcare facility in east Delhi.

Centre doing politics on vaccination: Congress Health Ministers

NEW DELHI

AHEAD of vaccination for those aged above 18 beginning next month, Health Ministers of Congress-ruled states on Sunday accused the Central government of "doing politics".

Addressing a joint press conference, Health Ministers T.S. Singh Deo (Chhattisgarh), Raghu Sharma (Rajasthan), Banna Gupta (Jharkhand) and Balbir Singh Sidhu (Punjab) said that there should be uniformity of vaccine prices and also drugs and oxygen should be allotted as per number of cases.

"The Union government is doing politics... Vaccination can be done if vaccines are available but if there is no vac-



cines, then how it will be done. We have the vaccination sites ready and can complete the vaccination in 30-40 days," Singh Deo said.

Sharma said that when they contacted the Serum Insti-

tute, the maker of Covishield, "we were told by them that it may take them till May 15 to fulfill orders placed by Government of India, and they will not be able to deliver vaccines to Rajasthan before it".

Singh Deo also said that with the vision to make government hospitals oxygen independent, the Chhattisgarh government, over the past year, has installed 25 new PSA oxygen generating plants placed in the hospital premises.

"These plants have a cumulative production of 2,57,96,000 litres/3,685 Jumbo cylinders equivalent of oxygen per day. These plants can provide uninterrupted oxygen to 601 ICU beds 24x7. 16 of the 21 plants imple-

mented by the state government are operational today whereas of the four plants that were given by the Centre in November, only one is operational and three are yet to see construction begin.

"Chhattisgarh is also installing 9 new cryogenic oxygen (liquid oxygen) tanks in its government hospitals. These plants have a installed capacity of 106 KL and are capable of supplying uninterrupted oxygen to 717 ICU beds round the clock. Over the past year, 15 industries have been permitted to produce medical grade oxygen in Chhattisgarh. They have a cumulative capacity of 73 MT/day of medical oxygen, which is mainly used to refill oxygen cylinders," he added.

Don-turned-MLA Mukhtar Ansari tests positive

LUCKNOW

JAILED strongman and MLA Mukhtar Ansari who was recently brought from Ropar jail in Punjab to Banda jail Uttar Pradesh has tested positive for Covid-19. Ansari and other prisoners were tested for Covid-19 by the jail authorities on Saturday. Three of them, including Ansari, tested positive. He has now been isolated in and is being treated on the advice of doctors. As per information, Ansari

tested positive in antigen testing, while his RT-PCR report is awaited. Ansari, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) MLA from Mau who is wanted in Uttar Pradesh for various cases, was recently brought in an ambulance to a Mohali court from Rupnagar jail in connection with a 2019 case of extortion. Amid tight security



arrangements, Ansari was taken to the court on a wheelchair. He was sent back to the Rupnagar jail, where he was lodged since January 2019, in the ambulance after the court appearance. However, after an application in the apex court, Ansari was finally allowed to be brought back to Banda jail in UP.

Ordered 1.75L doses of Remdesivir but received only 28, 350 : Rajasthan

JAIPUR

THE Rajasthan government on Sunday said that the state has only received 28, 350 injections of Remdesivir when it had placed an order of 1.75 lakh doses in April.

In a state-ment, Rajasthan health minister said that for the period from April 21 to April 30, a total of 26,500 Remdesivir injections have been allocated to Rajasthan by the Centre. He said after efforts of the Rajasthan government, the Centre allocated another 67,000 injections to the state.

The Health Minister said 250 metric tonne (MT) of oxygen is required in the state in view of the ongoing coronavirus situation.

The Centre has allocated 140 MT oxygen to the state. Currently, 23 tankers each having a filling capacity of 4 to 6 MT are available for liquid oxygen transport in

the state, the Rajasthan Health minister said.

An additional requirement of six tankers, each with a capacity of 30 MT oxygen, has been made, Sharma said.

He said a continuous rise in screening facilities for the prevention and treatment of the coronavirus infection in the state is being made and the number of oxygen beds is also being increased continuously according to the requirement.

"Rajasthan is among the leading states of the country (in terms of vaccinating people). Every effort is also being made to supply oxygen and other drugs, including Remdisivir, to the needy" he added.

So far, 4.95 lakh people have been found infected with the coronavirus in Rajasthan and 3.67 lakh of them have recovered from the infection, while the state has an active case count of 1.27 lakh.



Groom cycles his way to bride's house to spread Covid norms

PRATAPGARH

A ten-kilometre journey has been his ticket to fame and Vinay Kumar is now being hailed as a hero in his Bojhi village in Pratapgarh district of Uttar Pradesh.

Vinay Kumar, along with his friends, took his baraat to Rajgarh village on Friday.

What made the 'baraat' different was the fact that all 'baraatis' went on cycle, wore face shields and face masks.

"I wanted to give a clear message that social distancing is important. This would not

have been possible in a car or bus so we cycled to the bride's house. This is my way of fighting against the second wave of Corona," he said.

Vinay works in a private factory in Pratapgarh and actively participates in environment awareness campaigns.

When the groom reached the bride's village on the bicycle along with the limited 'baraatis', the local people praised him instead of ridiculing him. Locals were also seen clicking photographs and shooting videos of the unique 'baraat'.

Vinay's family members said, they took the decision to check unnecessary expenses during the pandemic and create awareness about environment conservation. They invited limited number of guests to adhere to social distancing.

Ajay Krantikari, head of Paryawaran Sena, an organization working for environment protection, said, "We have been constantly promoting the concept of 'green weddings' in villages, blocks and cities across the country. In the Corona wave, a limited

number of 'baraatis' peddled from one village to another to spread the message of social distancing and wearing of masks."

All the baraatis were wearing masks and maintaining adequate distance from each other while cycling from Bojhi village to Rajgarh.

In fact, it was Krantikari, who convinced Vinay and his family members to ride a bicycle to the bride's home.

Krantikari said that more and more people are joining the Harit Vivah campaign across the state.



India failed to prepare for second coronavirus wave: IIM prof

CSIR survey reveals that smokers and vegetarians are less likely to contract infection

NEW DELHI

Indian Institute of Management-Ahmedabad professor Chinmay Tumbe on Sunday said India failed to prepare for the second Covid-19 wave due to the complacency of the government and society, and failure to keep track of the different strains of the virus.

Tumbe, who recently authored the book titled 'The Age of Pandemics: How They Shaped India and the World', further said India will have to be alert for at least two more years to the possibility of a repeated wave of this crisis.

"I think there are two major factors (India's failure to prepare for the second wave). One is, of course, complacency from the government level, from the society level where everybody assumed that the pandemic is

over, but serious pandemic rarely gets over in a few months, so that was a big mistake.

"Second is failure to keep track of the different strains of the virus, it's clear that this particular strain that is right now is quite different from the first one," he said.

India is grappling with a spiralling number of Covid cases as well as related deaths, forcing many state governments to put in place restrictions on the movement of people.

Asked what India could have done differently to fight covid-19, Tumbe said if you see what countries like New Zealand and Australia have done, they have been very very slow to go back to full economic activity.

"The fact that a lot of focus on the science behind the pandemic was forgotten in India. For example, Kumbh



Mela should not have been allowed because we were not completely out of the woods of pandemic," he said.

A recent survey conducted by CSIR (Council of Scientific Industrial Research), Government of India, has revealed that smokers and vegetarians are less likely to contract Covid-19 infection. The survey suggested smoking may be protective, despite Covid-19 being a respiratory disease, due to its role in increasing the mucous production that may be acting as the first line of defence among the smoking population. It indicated that vegetarian food rich in fibre may have a role to play in providing immunity against COVID-19 due to its anti-inflammatory properties by modification of gut microbiota.

The pan India survey was conducted by an eminent team of 140 doctors and research scientists to study the

presence of antibodies against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19, and their neutralization capability to infer possible risk factors for infection. The study assessed 10,427 adult individuals working in more than 40 CSIR laboratories and centers in urban and semi-urban settings spread across and their family members. These people voluntarily participated in the study.

Earlier, two studies from France and similar reports from Italy, New York, and China reported lower Covid infection rates among smokers. A study by America's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which examined over 7,000 people who tested positive for COVID-19, also vindicated the above findings. Interestingly, the study found that only 1.3 per cent of survey participants were smokers, compared to the CDC report that 14 per cent of all Americans smoke.

WINDOWS

Oxygen from US in next 2 days

NEW DELHI: Air India will bring around 600 oxygen concentrators on its two US-India flights in the next two days, aviation industry sources said on Sunday. These oxygen concentrators have been ordered by private entities, the sources mentioned. Various hospitals across the country continue to grapple with a severe shortage of medical oxygen on Sunday even after receiving emergency supplies. Twenty people died at Delhi's Jaipur Golden Hospital on Saturday amid a shortage of oxygen.



People give swab samples for Covid test at Ram Manohar Lohiya Hospital, in Lucknow on Sunday

Merkel: Mission to support India

NEW DELHI: German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Sunday said her government is "urgently" preparing a "mission of support" for India as it battles a massive spike in coronavirus cases that has triggered a severe shortage of medical oxygen in several states.

In a message, Merkel said Germany stands in solidarity with India in the "common fight" against the pandemic. "To the people of India I want to express my sympathy on the terrible suffering that COVID-19 has again brought over your communities," Merkel said. "The fight against the pandemic is our common fight. Germany stands in solidarity with India and is urgently preparing a mission of support," added. Her message was shared on Twitter by German Ambassador to India Walter J Lindner.

India logs 3.49L cases, 2,767 dead

Trinamool Congress leader Kajal Sinha dies; ex-Sashastra Seema Bal chief Arun succumbs

NEW DELHI/MUMBAI/KOLKATA

INDIA continues to report more than 3 lakh Covid cases fourth day in a row. The country logged a total of 3,49,691 Covid cases and 2,767 deaths in the last 24 hours, a new single-day high since the pandemic began last year.

The active cases in India stood at 26,82,751 on Sunday, while the total Covid-19 cases registered so far reached 1,69,60,172.

A total of 2,17,113 Covid infected people were recovered in the last 24 hours, taking the total recovery so far to 1,40,85,110.

A total of 1,92,311 have lost their lives in India since last year.

Maharashtra Minister Nawab Malik announced that the State will vaccinate its residents for free.

Saying that the move has been discussed in the state Cabinet, Nawab Malik said global tenders will be floated.

Maharashtra, the worst hit state in the country by Covid, has been reporting over 60,000 daily cases of coronavirus over the last few days.



A Covid-19 positive patient on oxygen support wait for admission at Patna Medical College and Hospital; (Right) Family members mourn the death of a virus victim, in Patna on Sunday



Women can take Covid jabs during menstruation

NEW DELHI

WOMEN can take Covid-19 vaccines during their periods, the government has clarified in wake of various reports on social media platforms against taking the jabs at such a time.

A social media post, being circulated widely, said that women should not take Covid-19 vaccines five days before and after their period cycle as their immunity is very less during the time.

"#Fake post circulating on social media claims that women should not take #Covid19Vaccine 5 days before and after their menstrual cycle. Don't fall for rumours! All people above 18 should get vaccinated after May 1," a government tweet stated. Many reports have emerged in the US claiming that periods change after they got their coronavirus vaccines. However, "so far, there's no data linking getting vaccinated to changes in menstruation", Alice Lu-Culligan and Randi Hutter Epstein at Yale School of Medicine were quoted as saying to the New York Times.

A 104-year-old man, who fought for India's independence against British rule, has recovered from virus in Madhya Pradesh's Betul.

Birdhichand Ji Gothi had tested positive for coronavirus on April 5, his grandson, Shreyans Gothi said, adding that he lives by Mahatma Gandhi's principles.

He was treated at his home with the help of a doctor, who is also a family member. He is still given oxygen for 2-3 hours a day, his grandson said.

Meanwhile, Indian-American Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi called on US President Joe Biden's administration to release doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine to countries, including India, currently experiencing massive and deadly surges in the spread of COVID-19.

"We are currently sitting on close to 40 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine in the US stockpile, a stockpile which we're not using and which we've already opened to combat COVID 19 in Mexico and Canada," Mr Krishnamoorthi said.

Maha Govt to vaccinate all citizens free of cost

Union Min Supriyo tests positive for 2nd time

GURUDWARA runs 'Oxygen langar'

GHAZIABAD: Coronavirus patient Vidhya Devi, 70, should have been in emergency care at a New Delhi hospital, but instead she lay on the backseat of a car outside a Sikh temple, battling for breath, as she was connected to an oxygen tank on the street.

At the Sikh gurudwara (temple) in Ghaziabad city on the outskirts of the capital Delhi, the humanitarian tragedy is visible on the street. Sikh aid group Khalsa Help International has been buying small quantities of oxygen as and when it becomes available to help those in urgent need.

Cars, vans and rickshaws ferrying COVID-19 patients and their families choked the street outside the temple on Saturday, as volunteers holding black oxygen cylinders spread out to help.

Top court judge dies at 62

NEW DELHI: Supreme Court judge Justice Mohan M Shantanagoudar died at a private hospital in Gurgaon, sources said on Sunday. He was 62.

Justice M Shantanagoudar was admitted to the Medanta hospital due to a lung infection and was in the ICU, the sources said.

His condition was stated to be stable till late Saturday night but around 12.30 am, the doctors attending him broke the sad news to the family, a court official told PTI.

The sources did not confirm or deny whether the judge was suffering from Covid-19. Justice M Shantanagoudar was elevated as a judge of the Supreme Court on February 17, 2017.

'Can't vaccinate 18-45 group'

NEW DELHI: Four states ruled by the Congress and its allies accused the Centre of "hijacking" vaccine stocks from manufacturers, and expressed doubts they would be able to launch the inoculation drive to cover those between 18-45 years of age from May 1. They also accused the Centre of meting out "step-motherly" treatment to them, and urged the Union government to provide them free vaccine doses to vaccinate all adults.

Addressing a virtual joint press conference, the health ministers of Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Punjab and Jharkhand (ruled by Congress-JMM alliance) asked as to how they will vaccinate all adults when the Centre has already "taken away the stocks" and shots are not available to them.



Dr Randeep Guleria

Covid is mild disease, don't panic: AIIMS chief

NEW DELHI

COVID-19 is a mild disease and there is no need to panic, said AIIMS Director Dr Randeep Guleria on Sunday while addressing issues related to coronavirus with Chairman of Medanta Dr Naresh Trehan, Professor and Head of Department of Medicine AIIMS Dr Navet Wig and Director General Health Services Dr Sunil Kumar.

"If we talk about the current situation of Covid-19, there is panic in public. Due to this panic, people are putting injections in their houses, hoarding of the Remdesivir drug and oxygen cylinder

has started with this. And because of this, we are facing a shortage of supply and unnecessary panic is being created," Guleria said. He further said, "The infection is a normal infection. 85 to 90 per cent of people are witnessing normal symptoms like fever, cold, body ache, and cough and in these cases, one doesn't need Remdesivir or other large numbers of medicines. You can take medicines for these normal infections or treat yourself with home remedies and yoga. You will back to normal and get well within seven or 10 days. You don't need to put Remdesivir or oxygen in your house."



ISRO to launch data relay satellite to track Gaganyaan

NEW DELHI

THE Indian Space Research Organisation will launch a data relay satellite that will help maintain contact with the Gaganyaan mission throughout after the launch, sources said. The satellite will be launched before the final leg of the Gaganyaan mission, which will send astronauts to the Lower Earth Orbit (LEO). The first leg -- the unmanned mission -- is to be launched in December. "We're planning to launch our own satellite, which will act as a data relay satellite before going for the first human space flight," the sources said. The Rs 800-crore project has been approved and work has been going on, they added. Satellites in orbit cannot pass along

their information to the ground stations on Earth if the satellite does not have a clear view of the ground station. A data relay satellite serves as a way to pass along the satellite's information. The NASA, with a robust human space mission programme, also has its own data relay satellite. Its Tracking and Data Relay Satellite allows it to have global coverage of all the satellites round the clock without having to build extra ground stations on Earth. The ISRO uses several ground stations spread across the globe -- Mauritius, Brunei and Biak, Indonesia. Last month, ISRO Chairperson K Sivan had said the space agency was also in talks with the Australian counterpart to have a ground station at the Coco Islands for the Gaganyaan mission.

'Vaccine makers allowed to make profit of ₹1.11 lakh crore'

NEW DELHI

Attacking the Central overnment over its vaccine pricing policy, the Congress on Sunday said "One Nation, Five Vaccine Prices" is unacceptable and demanded "vaccine profiteering" end.

Addressing a press conference, Congress General Secretary Randeep Surjewala asked if the Modi government is complicit in vaccine profiteering of Rs 1,11,100 crore.

"Vaccine development and mass immunisation were neither 'events' nor 'PR exercises', but are important milestones in the service of the people. Corona vaccination is an important public service and can never be a business opportunity for profiteering at the cost of our people in the middle of the pandemic," he said.

Alleging that the Modi government has introduced the

"most discriminatory and insensitive vaccination policy in the entire world", he said it is guilty of permitting "brazen profiteering" from vaccination.

"The Modi government is also guilty of abdicating its responsibility and abandoning the young of India between the ages of 18-45 years," Surjewala claimed, contending that the Modi government's vaccination policy has abandoned this segment by clearly stating that the Centre takes no responsibility for their vaccination.

"They have to get themselves vaccinated or the onus lies upon the state governments to do so from their own resources," he said, noting India's population below 45 years is 74.35 per cent of total population, or at least 101 crore. "Modi government's vaccination policy has, therefore deregulated 50 per cent production of the two vaccine manufacturers i.e. Serum Institute of India (Cov-



ishield) and Bharat Biotech (Covaxin) as free from price regulation all together.

"The vaccine policy has permitted the two vaccine manufacturers to fix the prices for supply to state governments and to private institutions by their own volition. The two vaccine manufacturers have now released an absolutely discriminatory pricing policy," he said. "Serum Institute of India, producer of Covishield, has fixed the price per dose for supply to Central government at Rs 150, to state governments at Rs 400 and to private hospitals at Rs 600. Bharat Biotech, the producer of Covaxin, has fixed an entirely different range of prices i.e. price per dose to Central government Rs 150, to state governments at Rs 600 and to private hospitals Rs 1,200.

"Needless to add that the cost will be doubled as two doses of vaccines are required for every person. The

population below 45 years of age is 101 crores. To vaccinate them, we need 202 crore doses. Cost of these will have to be borne by the states or the individuals themselves," Surjewala said

"Based on this and assuming that states will provide 50 per cent of the vaccination and individuals will bear 50 per cent of the vaccination cost, the profit of the two vaccine manufacturers -- the Serum Institute of India and Bharat Biotech will be Rs 1,11,100 crore," he said, sharing the calculations.

The Congress leader called on the Centre to realise that 81.35 crore people are eligible for subsidised ration under Food Security Act, as per a government press release of July 2019, as he asked if the SC/STs, OBCs, BPL, poor and underprivileged sections get the vaccine free or not.

“Buy a stock the way you would buy a house. Understand and like it such that you'd be content to own it in the absence of any market”
-Warren Buffet



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THE HANS INDIA
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Things to know before investing in cryptos

Whenever we make any investments, we look at the underlying asset or rationale in each of those. But, when discussing about crypto investing, most people are interested in their speculative side i.e., to make quick money with least understanding on how they operate. This article attempts a lowdown on the cryptos and how to approach investing in them. While trying to be concise, I'm not trivialising the complexity involved in these instruments.

Traditionally banking has evolved from visiting the bank for cash deposit/withdraw to use internet/mobile banking to do the same and at all these instances, we are using the bank's facilities (physical/virtual) to complete the transactions. Think of solution where people transact and securely too, without a bank or any centralised system. Crypto is the medium for this decentralisation and aptly called as Decentralised Finance (DeFi).

Cryptocurrency takes the form of tokens or coins and exists on a distributed (decentralised) ledger. In a traditional setup, when a transaction happens between the parties, the bank ratifies the identity, the type, the quantum of the transaction, etc. also finally settle, reconciles and records the transaction. In the new tech, each of these transactions are bunched together to call as blocks, represented by hash (#), a unique identification of the data which is a series of alphanumeric garble or code. This also contains the data of previous block and thus a series of blocks put together into a blockchain, excepting in a genesis block which is the first block in the chain.

Thus, whenever a change is done in the block, it has to be ratified by the other blocks in the entire chain contrary to a centralised system to complete the transaction. This would be done by various 'nodes' - the live computers, through the algorithms employed by the platform. When someone tries to alter the block unauthorizedly, the next block invalidates and so it becomes difficult to tamper or hack. Though by engaging higher computing power (a rare feat) could be achieved, however it is being patched (corrected) with newer updates.

Every blockchain attempts to solve a problem and have a difficulty target, a hexadecimal value which could be converted into human understandable value, adjusted every 2016th block. Miners (programmers) use their computational power to unearth the collective hash value less than this difficulty target value. To ensure security in the blockchain, everyone in the block has a copy of the single main ledger and so any change should be ratified by all the nodes in the chain. With each new block arrival, everyone is intimidated and validated while whoever does first get incentivised through a token, in other words, a currency.

The entire blockchain is based on a trilemma of Security, Scalability and Decentralisation. It's a trilemma, though not a law stating all the three aspects can't be achieved. But till date, no solution achieved maximising all three aspects resulting in Bitcoin (BTC), the first and most popular currency lacks scalability i.e., it has limited number issued while that of the next



K Naresh Kumar

cousin, the Ethereum (ETH) has compromised security over scalability. Here, security doesn't mean the safety of the blockchain or their derivatives but the code or algorithm is open-sourced. BTC is closed source while ETH allows its code to be accessible so that multiple offerings could be built (scalable) using its platform. Efforts are being done to get all attributes to be included and thus multiple evolutions (solutions) are being created.

The idea is to ensure decentralisation of the various functions that could run without any downtime, fraud, control or interference from a third party. This is achieved through 'smart contracts', the automated part of the settling, record keeping, etc. and Decentralised Applications (DApps). So, each attempting to find a solution or better the existing system (using ETH, etc.) launches a new variant and thus a new token or coin is issued. It's estimated that there are over 4,500 cryptocurrencies available currently. How to choose the right one among them?

Ideally, one could start with stable coins i.e., those coins which have lesser volatility, price stability and are backed by a reserve asset. They attempt to peg their market value to some external reference like a currency (\$) or a commodity (like Gold, etc.). They achieve the price stability via collateralization (backed with) or through algorithmic mechanism of buying and selling the reference asset or its derivatives. Then there're options like Polkadot (DOT) which delivers interoperability between blockchains while Chainlink bridges gap between smart contracts and data outside of it.

For buying any of these, one needs a marketplace and crypto exchanges are the via media. Again, there are multiple exchanges and the choice of exchange depends on the anonymity or privacy of the user, safety, security and costs of using the platform. There's a trade-off at each of these parameters to arrive at the right one for any investor. While exchanges (like coinbase, etc.) offer the transaction facilities they again replicate a centralised system and so now we even have a decentralised exchange in Uniswap.

When investing in these alternatives, the most important consideration beyond the risk appetite should be about Liquidity, Taxation and Regulatory framework. With the price of BTC is over Rs 40 lakh, one could opt for fractional investing i.e., to invest a fraction of a coin (BTC was designed with foresight to be divided up to 10 decimal points due to its scarcity), but is at the discretion of the exchange. Taxation becomes a critical concern as very little clarity and consensus is achieved among the tax officials and experts alike. Moreover, the news of outright ban or restrictions in trade or transaction of these instruments leaves a shadow on the domestic investors. Also, using international exchanges could lead to FEMA irregularities leading to further trouble. An ideal allocation not exceeding 5 per cent across the stable and other coins (diversification) could provide for better risk adjusted returns.

(The author is a co-founder of "Wealocity", a wealth management firm and could be reached at knk@wealocity.com)

CHERUKURI KUTUMBA RAO

Nervousness over the rising Covid cases and increased restrictions in several State governments, weak rupee and continued FII selling dented sentiment; and market corrected for the third consecutive week during the week ended.

The Sensex fell 953.58 points, or 1.95 per cent, to close the week at 47,878.45, and the Nifty declined 276.50 points, or 1.89 per cent, to 14,341.35. However, speculative buying ahead of Q4 earnings in several midcap and small-cap counters was seen. Outperforming the benchmark indices, the BSE Midcap index was down 1 per cent and Smallcap index dipped 0.06 per cent. After robust buying in previous six months, FIIs have been net sellers to the tune of over Rs 7,500 crore till date in April.

Despite DIIs playing a supportive role for the market with net buying of nearly Rs 8,000 crore in April, uncertainty gripped the market. Travel bans from India being imposed by several countries further dampened sentiment. India's giant second wave of Covid is a disaster for it and the world also, say trackers of global developments. The government's distraction of politics and complacency has amplified the surge. Ways must quickly be found to ramp up vaccine production. There is no telling how much worse India's current Covid-19 wave will get, or how long it will last.

Apart from largecaps like Tech Mahindra, Axis Bank, Bajaj Finance, Britannia Industries, Maruti Suzuki India, Bajaj Finserv, Bajaj Auto, Hindustan Unilever, Titan Company, IndusInd Bank, Reliance Industries, SBI Cards and Payment Services, HDFC Life Insurance Company, HDFC Asset Management Company and ABB India: several active midcaps and smallcaps like

Delta Corp, AU Small Finance Bank, IndiaMart InterMesh, Zen Technologies, Equitas Small Finance Bank and others will release their Q4 earnings. In the near term market direction will be dictated by Covid developments, Q4 earnings, FII activity, rupee-dollar movement and US Fed meeting commentary in the two-day meeting - April 27-28.

Stock-specific movements based on results can be expected in the market.

Heard on the street

Major companies are sitting on a mountain of cash: a decade-long buildup was given another sharp lift by precautionary measures taken during the pandemic. Those balances are worth monitoring, because they have important implications for investment returns in the future. There are nearly sixty companies having more than Rs 25,000 crore of currency and deposits as reserves, about twice the level of a decade ago. What they all have in common is that they have risen considerably, and not just due to last year's extreme circumstances. Cash balances of several corporations in different country were climbing for a decade before the pandemic began, defying repeated suggestions that they would be deployed for buybacks or investment. Corporate treasurers then went on a borrowing spree last year building up precautionary cash piles. It is worth looking to Japan to see what the consequences might be. Its cash buildup began in the 1990s, during the country's famous lost decade. The cash mountain has weighed down returns on equity for shareholders, since companies are asset heavy and cash assets yield little to nothing.

In every country, large corpo-



rate cash balances are often eyed hungrily by analysts who wonder how the pile might be deployed. On account of activist investors, corporate governance has become more shareholder friendly in recent years in most countries. But the overall cash buildup still effectively means that companies have looked at the investment options available and found them wanting. When a company determines that sitting on near zero-yielding assets is the best use of their funds, it paints a very dim picture of their collective view of the economy's future. If the economy recovers rapidly, companies will hopefully instead decide that capital spending is a better use for funds. Buybacks and dividend will probably recover, but their considerable growth during the decade after the global financial crisis wasn't enough to prevent the accumulation of cash. Investors should keep a close eye on where overall levels settle; if they stay up here where the air is thin, that will be a dispiriting signal about the future.

Futures & options/sector watch

Ahead of the settlement week, the derivative segment witnessed volatile trading. The April futures and options contracts will expire on Thursday. Punters expect heightened volatility due to settlements of trade. Keep a watch on the rollover of positions in

different counters. True to predictions rising Covid numbers have put Pharma counters back in limelight. Largecap pharma counters like Sun Pharma, Cadila, Dr Reddy's and Aurobindo look good for further gains from current levels. Sharp decline in rupee has triggered renewed interest in technology stocks.

Q4 results of major IT companies reveal robust order additions and good visibility of earnings. Use corrections to buy TCS, Infosys, HCL Tech and Wipro. Auto stocks will also be in focus in the coming week as the monthly sales data for April will be released by companies. Industry observers expect modest decline in numbers in several companies. Add on declines Tata Motors, Hero Moto Corp, Maruti Suzuki, Eicher Motors and TVS Motor.

Stock futures looking good are Apollo Hospitals, Cadila Health, Granules, SBI Life, SAIL, NavinFlouro and UBL. Stock futures looking weak are Ashok Leyland, Bharti Airtel, Britannia, Biocon, Escorts and Ultratech.

Stock picks

Time Technoplast Ltd (Time Tech) is a multinational conglomerate with operations in Bahrain, Egypt, Indonesia, India, Malaysia, UAE, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam, Saudi Arabia & USA is a leading manufacturer of polymer products. The company's portfolio consists of technically driven innovative products catering to growing industry segments like, industrial packaging solutions, Lifestyle Products, Automotive Components, Healthcare Products, Infrastructure / Construction related products, Material Handling Solutions & Composite Cylinders. Manufacturing Polymer drums / barrels, Jerry cans and Pails for varied packaging requirements for over 900 insti-

tutional customers, the company is the largest manufacturer of Industrial Packaging in Asia and MENA Region. With increasing strategic tie-ups with MNCs across different countries due to significant presence in the Asia and MENA Region, the company is market leader in 8 out of 11 countries in Industrial Packaging. The company is 3rd largest manufacturer in the value added products like Intermediate Bulk Containers and has 2nd largest capacity worldwide in Composite Cylinders. The company has developed Air tanks for vehicle air brake system and Diesel Exhaust Fluid (DEF) dispenser tanks that are designed to ward off the harmful impact of corrosion for commercial vehicles. The company is looking at increased business opportunities from Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam where various chemical companies are opening up a second base post-US-China trade issues and Covid-19 related supply disruptions.

Why we are recommending the stock

- Supply of newly launched new generation multilayer PE pipes for power / communication cable duct with silicon in-lining continues is giving overwhelming business. The pipes/ducts have substantial business potential especially in Smart Cities.
- Innovative new applications of the MOX films. The Company is launching new products in the market like Truck covers, Pond Liners, Mulching Film & Poly house Films.
- Diversification into automotive segment.
- The company is world class player in several of its products. Buy between Rs70-75 for price target of Rs150 in next twelve months. Prefer a stop loss of Rs60 in the event of a sharp correction in markets.

(The author is a stock market expert. He is former vice chairman of AP Planning Board)

Nifty to correct, at least 20% from lifetime high

THOVITI BRAHMACHARY

On the volatile week, the Indian stock market ended with a negative for the third consecutive week. The rise in Covid cases, local level lockdowns and increasing restrictions in major metro cities spoiled the investor sentiment. The benchmark index, the Nifty, lost 276.5 per cent or 1.89 per cent during the last week. The BSE Sensex declined by 2 per cent. During April, the FIIs sold Rs 7,583.11 crore, and DII bought Rs 7,960.71 crore. The market breadth is mostly negative during the week.

On the weekly chart, Nifty formed another indecisive, long-legged Doji. Three consecutive Doji candles on a weekly chart mean a definitive weaker market. As Nifty forming lower highs and decisively below the channel support line and 20 weekly moving averages is not a good sign. At the same, momentum on the downside is increasing. As I mentioned last week, the market is in a confirmed downtrend. The weekly range was lower than the previous two weeks. But, the Nifty price structure is damaged



as it has broken down the key levels. Since March 2020, the current consolidation is the longest one and breached several supports for the first time.

On a daily chart, Nifty formed a shooting star-like candlestick pattern. Even on Friday last, it formed a similar candle. Nifty opened with a huge gap down on last two Mondays. In this scenario, Nifty must close above 14,468 to get positive strength, and closing above 14,700 is a short-term reversal. If Nifty opens at least one per cent above, and closes above 14,400, it will be a positive sign. If it falls below 14,265 support, there will be severe bearish implications. However, it is time to be bullish, definitely. Nifty once again closed below the 100DMA. During last

four trading sessions, it closed below the 100DMA on alternate days. Earlier, this kind of oscillation was seen at 50DMA. Before a decisive close below the 50DMA, it oscillated for two weeks. For the last four days, the 50DMA is trending down, indicating weakness. Once the 100DMA also trends down, then the market will decline further.

Currently, the consolidation range is limited to 14,880-14,265. Within this range, Nifty further consolidating between 14,700-14,191 for the last eight trading sessions. Unless Nifty moves above 14,700 in the short term, the short-term trend will be negative. On the indicators front, the weekly 14 periods RSI has made a fresh low at 55.68, and almost near to the 20th Sep-

tember low. It is not showing any divergences. It is below the historical support of 45 and starting at the bearish zone on a daily chart. If the RSI fall below 40 on a daily closing basis, the market will decline further. Nifty may underperform the broader market in the near term.

The earnings report is failing to cool down the Price-Earning ratio. Nifty PE ratio is still much above 32.07. The lack of pleasant surprises in the earnings is one of the reasons for the sluggish market. Covid surge and the lockdowns are becoming real concerns for the economy now. Suddenly, situation across the nation has become grim. Let watch for demand growth in the near future. Unless a smart and early recovery, we can't be bullish for at least the next two quarters. It is difficult for Nifty to cross recent top of 15,431. I still believe that the market will correct at least 20 per cent from the lifetime high. Or at least it will test the 2020 high of 12,430.

(The author is a financial journalist and technical analyst. He can be reached at tbchary@gmail.com)

Gold prices firm amid Covid surge

DR HC UPADHYAY

Amidst generally favourable global ageo-political situation notwithstanding and the 'Tandav' of Covid-19 pandemic, major economies of the world not only stood like a rock, but also recorded positive results. This optimism has been the motive power for most of the market-oriented economies. Consequently, New York gold closed at \$1,777.20 (per Ounce) while silver followed the suit and closed at \$25.97 (per Ounce). Platinum and palladium closed at \$1,226 (per Ounce) and \$2,764 (per Ounce) respectively. Other economic parameters remained stable. Brent closed at \$66.11 (per barrel) while Crude MCX oil was quoted at Rs 4,657 (per barrel). Similarly, Gold MCX stood at Rs 47,560 (per 10 grams), MCX Silver closed at Rs 68,710 (per kg), Copper MCX closed at Rs 734.50 (per kg). Leading foreign currencies' exchange rates on the closing day were: \$: Rs 74.93, British Pound: Rs 103.95, Euro: Rs 90.64, Singapore \$: Rs 56.47, Swiss Franc: Rs 82.00, Australian \$: Rs 58.01, Saudi Riyal: Rs 19.98, New Zealand Dollar: Rs 53.88, Kuwaiti Dinar: Rs 249.87, Omani Rial: Rs 195.45 and UAE Dirham: Rs 20.40, Japanese Yen: Rs 0.69 and Hong Kong Dollar: Rs 9.66.

DERIVATIVES OUTLOOK

DASARI SREENIVASA RAO

As per the latest options data available on NSE after trading hours on Friday (April 23, 2021), the resistance and support levels remain at the previous week's levels of 15,000 strike and 14,000 strike respectively.

The 15,000 strike has the highest Call OI followed by 14,800/14,500/14,600/14,700/15,200 strikes, while reasonable addition of Call OI is seen at 15,000/14,800/14,700/14,900 strikes.

Coming to the Put side, the maximum Put OI build-up is at 14,000 strike followed by 13,500/14,200/14,500/14,400/13,700 strikes. 14,000/14,300/14,100/13,800/13,700/13,400 strikes

Options data holds caution amid volatility

Call writing shifting to lower bands; Nifty VIX at 23.03%; Put-Call Ratio of OI at 1.14 indicates more Put writing

recorded considerable addition of Put OI.

On the data from ICICI Direct.com, the NSE Nifty has major Call base at the 14,500 strike for the settlement week, while the VWAP levels for the series are placed near 14,600 level. In case of continued recovery, analysts believe 14,600 should act as an immediate hurdle for the index. At the same time, recent lows near 14,200 are likely to provide immediate support to the indices on the lower side, below which declines may extend towards the highest Put base of 14,000 strike.

Dhirender Singh Bisht, senior research analyst (derivatives) at SMC Global Securities Ltd, said: "From the derivatives side, Call writers were seen shifting to lower bands and added hefty Open Interest at 14,400/14,500 and 14,600 strikes and this should limit any sharp upside in the index, whereas on down side, the 14,150 level would act as major support for Nifty."

The continued rising number of Covid-19 cases led to underperformance of Indian equities last week. Global markets are also reeling under pressure. However,

F&O TRADING			
Product	Contracts	Turnover (Rs/cr)	Premium (Rs/cr)
Index Futures	4,27,838	38,940.63	--
Stock Futures	9,02,078	82,411.19	--
Index Options	2,30,57,187	21,17,191.80	18,281.68
Stock Options	21,23,614	2,02,458.56	2,666.95
F&O Total	2,65,10,717	24,41,002.18	20,948.63

the NSE Nifty consolidated largely above 14,300 strike, after witnessing a decline of 276 points and closed the week on a negative note. Meanwhile, mid-cap and small-cap indices closed the week within the green amid significant sectoral churning.

"Sideways moves were witnessed in Indian markets during the week as Nifty hovered in the range of 14,150 to 14,525 levels on the back of mixed cues from

global and domestic front," added Bisht. For the week ended April 23, 2021, BSE Sensex closed at 47,878.45 points, a net fall of 953.58 points or 1.95 per cent, as against 48,832.03 points. NSE Nifty further declined by 276.50 points or 1.89 per cent and closed at 14,341.35 points from 14,617.85 points.

"On technical front, below 14,150 levels, we could witness further selling pressure and it may drag

the nifty towards 14,000-13,900 levels going forward," forecasts Bisht.

The Implied Volatility (IV) in the stock market edged up last week and moved towards 23 level. Current levels of volatility suggest a cautious sign, going ahead, and continued divergence from VWAP may bring further pressure in the market during settlement.

"The Implied Volatility of Calls closed at 22.61 per cent, while Put options closed at 23.79 per cent. The Nifty VIX for the week closed at 23.03 per cent. Put-Call Ratio of OI for the week closed at 1.14 and this indicates more Put writing than Calls," remarked Bisht.

FIIs in the F&O space were net buyers as they bought Rs489 crore in index futures, Rs2,028-crore stock futures and index options worth Rs8,055 crore.

Bank Nifty

The NSE's banking index Bank

Nifty closed at 31,722.30 points, a net loss of 255.15 points or 0.79 per cent from 31,977.45 points. The highest Call base for April series is at 32,000 strike, whereas the second highest base is at 32,500 strike, which remains the strong

hurdle zone. Major support for the index is at 30,500 points. This level is violated if the index fails to move above 32,500 strike.

Sectorally, the market recorded some short covering in the heavily beaten down stocks from the BFSI space. The banking space is to take a lead from here onwards in case of any recovery. Moreover, it may continue to witness some more consolidation in technology stocks in the coming sessions.

Underperformance in the banking space could continue due to which the current price ratio of Bank Nifty-Nifty may reach 2.16 level from 2.21.

Jadeja heroics land CSK 69-run win

Indian Premier League

SCOREBOARD

Chennai Super Kings
R Gaikwad c Jamieson b Chahal.....33
Faf du Plessis c Christian b Patel.....50
Suresh Raina c Padikkal b Patel.....24
A Rayudu c Jamieson b Patel.....14
Ravindra Jadeja batting.....62
MS Dhoni batting.....2
Extras (lb-1, w-3, nb-2).....16
Total (For 4 wkts, 20 Overs)191
Fall of Wickets: 1-74, 2-111, 3-111, 4-142
Bowling: Mohammed Siraj 4-0-32-0, Kyle Jamieson 3-0-31-0, Yuzvendra Chahal 3-0-24-1, Navdeep Saini 2-0-27-0, Harshal Patel 4-0-51-3, Daniel Christian 2-0-12-0, Washington Sundar 2-0-13-0.

Royal Challengers Bangalore
Virat Kohli c Dhoni b Curran.....8
D Padikkal c Raina b Thakur.....34
WSundar c Gaikwad b Jadeja.....7
Glenn Maxwell b Jadeja.....22
AB de Villiers b Jadeja.....4
Daniel Christian run out.....1
Kyle Jamieson run out.....16
Harshal Patel b Tahir.....0
Navdeep Saini c Raina b Tahir.....2
Extras (lb-3, w-5).....8
Total (For 9 wkts, 20 Overs)122
Fall of Wickets: 1-44, 2-54, 3-65, 4-79, 5-81, 6-83, 7-89, 8-94, 9-103
Bowling: Deepak Chahar 2-0-25-0, Sam Curran 4-0-35-1, Shardul Thakur 4-0-11-1, Ravindra Jadeja 4-1-13-3, Imran Tahir 4-0-16-2, Dwayne Bravo 2-0-19-0.

MUMBAI

THE irrepressible Ravindra Jadeja blasted an IPL record-equalling 37 runs in one over and then grabbed three big wickets in an outstanding all-round display as Chennai Super Kings crushed Royal Challengers Bangalore by 69 runs here on Sunday.

Jadeja pummeled 62 off 28 balls and lifted CSK to 191 for four after skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni opted to bat in a top-of-the-table clash. Then, with his slow-left arm spin bowling, the star all-rounder picked up the important wickets of AB de Villiers and Glenn Maxwell to derail RCB's run chase on a sluggish Wankhede pitch.

After a cracking start that saw them cross 50 in five overs, RCB were stopped at 122 for nine in 20 overs. The immensely-talented Devdutt Padikkal top-

Left hander hits record-equalling 37 in final over vs RCB

scored with a blazing 34 off just 15 balls. Veteran South African leg-spinner Imran Tahir (2/16) picked up two wickets for CSK while giving away very few runs. Jadeja began the final over of CSK innings by clobbering four consecutive sixes off Harshal Patel before adding another off the fifth ball. He smashed the last ball over square leg for four as Harshal, who had figures of 3 for 14 going into the final over, finished with 4-0-51-3. Jadeja, batting at No.5, was yet to open his account when he was dropped by Dan Christian off Washington Sundar.

Playing for RCB, Chris Gayle had also scored 37 runs, against Kochi Tuskers Kerala in the 2011 edition, the bowler being Prasanth Parameswaran on that occasion. The left-handed Jadeja made full use of the reprieve to ruin what was turning out to be

an excellent outing for purple cap holder Harshal, Patel, with his brutal last over onslaught.

With CSK placed at 154/4 when Harshal was handed the ball, Jadeja hit the first four balls for towering sixes and followed them with another maximum and a boundary in the seven-ball final over. Skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni remained not out on 2. Jadeja's assault came after the RCB bowlers -- Patel and Mohd Siraj (0/32) -- had kept CSK in check.

Earlier, a second straight half-century for Faf du Plessis (50 off 41 balls) propelled CSK before Harshal delivered a double blow for RCB in the 14th over, getting rid of Suresh Raina (24) and the former South

POINTS TABLE

Team	Played	Won	Lost	Tied	Net RR	Pts
1 CSK	5	4	1	0	+1.612	8
2 RCB	5	4	1	0	+0.096	8
3 DC	4	3	1	0	+0.426	6
4 MI	5	2	3	0	-0.032	4
5 PBKS	5	2	3	0	-0.428	4
6 RR	5	2	3	0	-0.681	4
7 SRH	4	1	3	0	-0.228	2
8 KKR	5	1	4	0	-0.675	2

Ravindra Jadeja of Chennai Super Kings plays a shot during the IPL match against the Royal Challengers Bangalore, held at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on Sunday



Punjab Kings face lowly KKR

SQUADS

Punjab Kings

KL Rahul (captain/wicketkeeper), Mayank Agarwal, Chris Gayle, Man-deep Singh, Prabhsimran Singh, Nicholas Pooran (wicketkeeper), Sarfaraz Khan, Deepak Hooda, Murugan Ashwin, Ravi Bishnoi, Harpreet Brar, Mohammed Shami, Arshdeep Singh, Ishan Porel, Darshan Nalkande, Chris Jordan, Dawid Malan, Jhye Richardson, Shahrukh Khan, Riley Meredith, Moises Henriques, Jai Singh, Utkarsh Singh, Fabian Allen, Saurabh Kumar.

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, Harbhajan Singh, Ben Cutting, Venkatesh Iyer, Pawan Negi.

AHMEDABAD

PUNJAB Kings (PBKS), who are placed fifth in the points table, will take on bottom-placed Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) in an Indian Premier League (IPL) match at the Narendra Modi Stadium here on Monday.

This will be the first match in Ahmedabad after the initial 20 matches of the tournament were played in Mumbai and Chennai. PBKS, led by KL Rahul, scored a surprising nine-wicket win over Mumbai Indians on Friday while KKR, who lost to Rajasthan Royals by six wickets on Saturday night in Mumbai, have only a day to recover from their defeat.

The biggest concern for KKR will be their top-order batting that has been failing to put up big scores.

KKR skipper Eoin Morgan has been failing miserably. He aggregates just 45 in five matches and averages nine in the tournament so far. He was a bit unfortunate on Saturday as he fell to a duck without facing even a single ball.

Morgan said after Saturday's game that KKR's batting has failed to show intent. Team head coach Brendon McCullum concurred with Morgan.

KKR's bowling too has a lot to worry about. Australia pacer Pat Cummins has failed to do anything of note and he could be replaced by New Zealander Lockie Ferguson in Monday's game.

The Punjab franchise, however, seems to have gone got back to winning ways. While their bowling has been good throughout the tournament, their batting performance has been a bit inconsistent.

The inclusion of leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi has helped. His spell of two for 21 in four overs helped the franchise to restrict Mumbai Indians on Friday. Mohammed Shami too bowled well, including in the death overs, returning with figures of 2/21 in his four overs.

The biggest positive for PBKS, however, has been the return to form of Chris Gayle and Mayank Agarwal who has begun to get starts. Gayle did well in the last game against MI. Skipper Rahul too has been among the runs. (IANS)

CSK Chairman Sabaretnam dies

CHENNAI

CHENNAI Super Kings Chairman and Director L. Sabaretnam passed away here on Sunday following a massive heart attack. He was 80.

Survived by two daughters and two sons, he headed the Chettinad Cement Corporation and was an independent Director on the board of Indian Oil Corporation and Chennai Petroleum Corporation Ltd.

He was President of Madras Chamber Of Commerce and Industry and was also associated with the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.

He joined as a consultant of India Cements Ltd before taking over the reins of the Chennai Super Kings Cricket, the CSK. (IANS)

English soccer to unite in 4-day social media boycott

LONDON

ENGLISH soccer is uniting to boycott social media for four days in response to relentless online abuse of players.

The blackout of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram will begin next Friday and last until Monday, covering a full round of games in the men's and women's professional leagues.

It will be undertaken by the FA, Premier League, English Football League, Women's Super League, Women's Championship as well as player, manager and referee bodies, and anti-discrimination group Kick It Out.

"The boycott shows English football

coming together to emphasise that social media companies must do more to eradicate online hate," a joint statement read, "while highlighting the importance of educating people in the ongoing fight against discrimination."

The bodies are concerned about the "relentless flow of discriminatory messages" and are calling for "real-life consequences for purveyors of online abuse across all platforms."

Two second-division clubs, Birmingham and Swansea, and Scottish champion Rangers have held weeklong social media boycotts recently, while former Arsenal and France striker Thierry Henry has removed himself from social media because of racism and bullying.



FC Goa hope to get back to winning ways against Al Rayyan

PANAJI

INDIAN Super League (ISL) 2020-21 semi-finalists FC Goa will look to start afresh after their crushing defeat at the hands of Iranian giants Persepolis FC, when they take on Qatar's Al Rayyan SC in their penultimate group E match of the AFC Champions League here on Monday.

After starting their campaign in the premier tournament with consecutive goalless draws against Al Rayyan and UAE's Al Wahda FC, the Goan outfit lost successive games to the Iranian powerhouse (1-2 and 0-4) at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Fatorda, Goa. FC Goa head coach Juan Ferrando, forced by heavy workload and injuries to key players, had made eight changes to the starting XI, which lost 0-4 to Persepolis FC. But most of the rested star players - Dheeraj Singh, Brandon Fernandes, Glan Martins, Jorge Ortiz, Saviour Gama, Adil Khan, Seriton Fernandes -- are expected to start against Al Rayyan SC on Monday night.



The key takeaway for FC Goa when they last played Al Rayyan on April 14 was their defensive display.

However, against Persepolis

FC, their defence fell by the wayside, especially in the second match, where they crashed to a 0-4 defeat. FC Goa captain Edu Bedia, who missed the last match on account of suspension, may not take the field on Monday because of injury concerns. Ivan Gonzalez could also miss out due to an injury suffered in the last game.

Al Rayyan SC, on the other hand, are worse off than Ferrando's men having lost their last three matches. After their 0-0 draw against FC Goa, the Qatari club conceded thrice in 10 minutes to lose 1-3 against Persepolis FC. This was followed by a 3-2 loss to UAE's Al Wahda.

In their last game, which was again against the UAE club, Laurent Blanc's side lost 0-1 courtesy of a second-half penalty converted by Omar Khribin. The match also saw two Al Rayyan SC players -- Ahmed Abdel Maqsood and Franck Kom -- receive red cards, meaning the duo won't be seen in action against FC Goa.

Olympics' fate should be decided by medical experts: IOC official

LAUSANNE

A top International Olympic Committee (IOC) Athletes' Commission member has said that the global sports governing body should not take a call on whether the Tokyo Olympics should be held or not, and that the decision should be left to medical experts.

Canadian Hayley Wickenheiser, a four-time Olympic ice hockey gold medalist, told the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) that "this decision needs to be made by medical and health experts, not by corporate and big business".

"A very clear and transparent explanation needs to be given if the Games are going to go ahead. You almost need someone else outside with less invested than you to say it is or isn't worth it. It shouldn't be the IOC making that call," she said.

"That should be the experienced doctors and physicians who have dealt with pandemics and people with nothing to gain or lose from this."

Due to a spike in Covid-19 cases, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga has decided to issue another state of emergency in Tokyo and three other prefectures -- Kyoto, Osaka and Hyogo.

Osaka reported 1,162 new cases on Friday, exceeding 1,000 infections for the fourth straight day, and Hyogo confirmed a record 567 new cases, while Tokyo had 759 new infections.

"In the prefectures of Osaka and Hyogo, new variants account for more than 80 per cent of their infections, while constituting 30 per cent in Tokyo," Suga said. The measure, which came into force today, will continue till May 11. (IANS)

Nadal sets up Tsitsipas title showdown in Barcelona

BARCELONA: Spanish World No.2 Rafael Nadal made it to his 12th Barcelona Open final with a 6-3, 6-2 win against countryman Pablo Carreno Busta and set up a title clash with World No. 5 Stefanos Tsitsipas of Greece. The 11-time champion landed 13 forehand winners and claimed four service breaks to extend his unbeaten ATP head-to-head record against Carreno Busta to 8-0 on Saturday night. Nadal, the winner of 69 Grand Slam titles, made quick starts to both sets and reached his 69th clay final after 89 minutes. "I am very happy to be back in a final here at an historic event, a home event and an important one for me," Nadal told the ATP Tour website. "I think I did things well today, better than the other days. I have been improving every single day a little bit more." Nadal is chasing his 12th title at the ATP 500 event. The 60-time clay-court titlist is the only player to lift 12 or more tour-level trophies at the same tournament, having claimed 13 titles at Roland Garros.

Russian Karatsev shocks Djokovic in Serbia Open semis

BELGRADE: Russian third seed Aslan Karatsev clinched the biggest win of his career when he defeated world No. 1 Novak Djokovic 7-5, 4-6, 6-4 in a three-hour, 25-minute slugfest to reach the Serbia Open final. The 27-year-old Karatsev will take on Italy's Matteo Berrettini who defeated American-born Japanese Taro Daniel 6-1, 6-7(5), 6-0 in the other semi-final. Taking on the top seed at his namesake Novak Tennis Centre in Belgrade, Karatsev stayed calm in the decisive moments to save 23 of the 28 break points he faced against Djokovic on Saturday. The Russian stuck to his aggressive strategy to survive a second-set comeback and record a memorable win, which turned out to be the longest ATP Tour match of the year against Djokovic. "It was a long, tough match against a tough opponent," Karatsev said on the ATP Tour website. Karatsev improved to 1-1 in his ATP head-to-head against Djokovic, avenging his straight-sets defeat in the 2021 Australian Open semi-finals.

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