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WINDOWS

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

Milk prices have gone up, ma'am. See, even water is costly these days!

AIIMS docs among 4 injured in scuffle NEW DELHI: Four people, includ-

ing two doctors working at AIIMS here, were injured during a scuffle in south Delhi's Gautam Nagar, police said on Thursday. The incident took place on Wednesday, they said. According to police, a few doctors from the AIIMS went to the shop of Bhagat Singh Verma Paranthe Walla in Gautam Nagar and allegedly consumed alcohol there. "A heated argument broke out between the doctors and the shop-

keeper following which both the sides allegedly assaulted each other," Deputy Commissioner of Police (south) Atul Kumar Thakur said. Two doctors and shopkeeper Bhagat Singh Verma and his son Abhishek sustained injuries in the incident, police said.

FIR lodged against **UPCC** chief

LUCKNOW: Infighting in the UP Congress is now out in the open. **Expelled Congress leader Konark** Dixit has now lodged an FIR against Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee President AK Lallu and Sandeep Singh, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's personal secretary, at the Hussainganj police station here. The FIR has been lodged over an incident that took place at the state Congress headquarters here on June 29 when Dixit and some other Congress leaders had staged a protest against the state leadership.

In the FIR. Dixit said that he was accosted by some supporters of with bricks and rods.

Two held in honour killing case

NEW DELHI: Two men were arrested for allegedly killing a man and injuring his wife in a suspected honour killing case at Dwarka a week ago, police said on Wednesday. The accused were identified as Rohit Dahiya alias Vicky (22) and Ritik (22), both residents of Sonipat in Haryana, they said. At around 9 pm on June 24, police received information regarding shots fired at Ambarhai village in Dwarka.

Vinay Dahiya (23) and his wife Kiran (19), both residents of Gopalpur village in Sonipat, were shot at by some people inside their rented accommodation in Ambarhai. Vinay was hit by four bullets and succumbed to the iniuries, while his wife sustained three bullet injuries and is presently undergoing treatment at Dwarka's Venkateshwar hospi-

tal, police said.

HEAT WAVE OVER NORTHERN PLAINS IN NEXT 2 DAYS: IMD

ORTHERN India is unlikely to get any relief from the sweltering heat as the India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Thursday said heat wave conditions are likely over Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, north Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh in the next two days.

It said heat wave to severe heat wave conditions were observed in isolated places over Jammu on Wednesday. The weather office added that heat wave conditions were recorded in

Chandigarh, Delhi, west Uttar Pradesh, northwest Rajasthan and northwest Madhya Pradesh, with severe heat wave conditions at isolated areas in the region. Severe heat wave conditions were observed at isolated places over northeast Rajasthan as well. it said.

"Due to likely dry westerly/southwesterly winds from Pakistan to northwest India at lower levels, heat wave conditions in isolated/some pockets over Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh and Delhi, north Ra-

Madhya Pradesh (are likely) during next two days," the IMD said. Temperatures across the plains have crossed 40 degrees Celsius in the last few days. The southwest monsoon has covered the entire country but has eluded Haryana, Delhi, parts of Punjab, west Rajasthan and west Uttar

Pradesh. The IMD on Wednes-

day said conditions are unlikely to be favourable for further advance of the monsoon in these re-

Earlier, a severe heatwave swept the national capital on Wednesday with the mercury settling at 43.5 degrees Celsius, the highest so far this year, the India Meteorological Department said. A respite from the heat is unlikely anytime soon as the monsoon is at least a

week away, according to the IMD. The maximum temperature recorded at the Safdarjung Observatory, the official marker for the city, was seven notches above normal, weather officials said. Most of the monitoring stations in the national capital recorded a severe heatwave with their respective maximum temperatures remaining at least seven notches above the average. A severe heatwave seared Lodhi Road (43.7 degrees Celsius), Ayanagar (44.2), Ridge (44), Mungeshpur (44.3), Najafgarh (44.4), Pitampura (44.3) and Narela (43.7), the officials said.

India to share vax tech with 50 countries

9 EU nations clear Covishield amid 'Green Pass' row

INDIA is all set to share 'free of cost' its Covid-19 vaccination technology with more than 50 countries from Latin America, Africa and Asia.

CEO of National Health Authority Dr R.S. Sharma made the revelation while addressing the 2nd Public Health Summit 2021 organized by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) here.

Sharma said that CoWIN portal for vaccination is unique in the world in terms of portability, scalability and inclusivity and it is a citizen-centric platform, and that 300 million plus registrations and vaccinations with granular details of each individual are available on the portal with a very simple process of registration.

"More than 50 countries from Latin America, Africa and Asia have shown interest in our vaccination system and we will share the technology with them free of cost," Sharma informed. In his address, Dr Randeep Guleria, Director, AI-IMS, Delhi called for a robust health care system in India with about 2.5 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as health budget. He also underlined the need for close collaboration between the



Beneficiaries not adhering to social distancing norms, wait in queues to receive vaccine dose at a slum area in Gurugram on Thursday

Centre and the states on health issues despite health being a state subject.

Nine European nations are accepting Covishield vaccines for travel to their countries, sources said on Thursday. Austria, Germany, Slovenia, Greece, Iceland, Ireland and Spain are among the countries allowing travel by people who have taken Covishield vaccines, the sources said. Separately, Estonia has confirmed that it will recognise all vaccines authorised by the government of India for the travel of Indians to that country, the sources said.

Voicing concern over many countries failing to vaccinate their people, WHO chief Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus called for vaccinating at least 10 percent of the population of every country by September as he warned that "until we end the pandemic everywhere, we will not end it anywhere."

Hoisting of religious flag at Red Fort: Court grants protection from arrest

New Delhi

A Delhi court has granted interim protection from arrest to a man who hoisted a religious flag at the Red Fort during the farmers' protest rally violence on the Republic Day this year.

Additional Sessions Judge Neelofer Abida Perveen granted protection to Jugraj Singh from any coercive action till July 20 and directed him to join the investigation. "Interim protection granted to accused subject to the condition that the accused shall join investigation in the case on July 8, July 11, and July 15 and as and when called upon by the IO,"

the judge stated in an order passed on June 30. Fearing arrest, Singh had moved Delhi's Tis Hazari court seeking anticipatory bail in two cases related to the violence. Singh had climbed one of the flagpoles on the rampart at the Red Fort, a restricted area of the protected site, and hoisted Nishan Sahib, a religious flag of the Sikh community, the police said. "The Red Fort is a National heritage site and by hoisting the Nishan Sahib humiliation and embarrassment has been caused to the nation at Red Fort on Republic Day," the police told the court while opposing his pre-arrest bail plea.

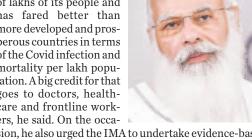


PM Modi lauds doctors for saving lives in pandemic

New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday hailed the contribution of doctors in saving lives from coronavirus and said his government has given maximum thrust on augmenting the healthcare infrastructure in the country. Losing even one life is saddening, Modi said in his address at an Indian Medical Association event on National Doctors' Day and then empha-

sised that India saved lives of lakhs of its people and has fared better than more developed and prosperous countries in terms of the Covid infection and mortality per lakh population. A big credit for that goes to doctors, healthcare and frontline workers, he said. On the occa-



sion, he also urged the IMA to undertake evidence-based studies on the benefits of yoga in "mission-mode" and commended the medical fraternity for spreading awareness about its helpful role in dealing with post-Covid complications.

The Prime Minister said work for its propagation that should have been done in the last century is being done now. He also suggested that studies on yoga could be published in international journals.



LPG prices hiked by ₹25

NEW DELHI: From Thursday, 1 July, the prices of Liquified Petroleum Gas (LPG) have been increased by Rs 25.50. This hike comes after the LPG prices remained unchanged in the month of June.

The 14.2 kg domestic cylinders can now be purchased for Rs 834.50 in Delhi and Mumbai as well. The price of a domestic cylinder weighing 14.2 kg in Chennai is Rs 850.50 while a cylinder is going to sell for Rs 835.50 in

In Ahmedabad, the cylinder costs Rs 841.50 while in Lucknow, it is going to be priced at Rs 872.50 per cylin-

Along with the 14.2 kg of cylinder, the price of 19 kg cylinder has also increased by Rs 76. The price rise which will be implemented from today has increased the price of 19 kg cylinder to Rs 1,550 in Delhi.

Debt of doctors can't be repaid, says Kejriwal

NEW DELHI: The debt of doctors who served people day and night during the coronavirus pandemic cannot be repaid, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said on the National Doctors' Day on

The National Doctors' Day is observed in the honour of noted doctor and former West Bengal chief minister Bidhan Chandra Roy, whose birth and death anniversaries fall on July 1. "Our doctors served people day and night during the pandemic. We cannot repay their debt throughout or lives. Salute to all the doctors on National Doctors' Day who saved lives of lakhs of people and prevented their families from crumbling, "Keiriwal tweeted in Hindi.

As many as 730 doctors have succumbed to the novel coronavirus infection during the second wave, according to data available by the Indian Medical Association (IMA) in mid June. Bihar saw the maximum number of 115 such deaths, followed by Delhi at 109, Uttar Pradesh 79, West Bengal 62, Rajasthan 43, Jharkhand 39, and Andhra Pradesh 38, the data

India can prevent 3rd wave: Dr Guleria NEW DELHI: All India In-

stitute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Director Dr Randeep Guleria on Thursday said if people are careful and India is able to vaccinate a large number of population, then the third wave of Covid-19 pandemic may not even come.

"That depends on how we behave, if we are careful and we have good vaccination coverage, then the third wave may not come, or it will be very little," Guleria told ANI while talking about the third wave of Covid-19.

Sharing his view on the mixing of vaccines, the AI-IMS director said, "More data is needed on the mixing of doses.

Studies have come which says that it may be effective but with more than usual side effects. We need more data before we can say that this is a policy that should be tried.



AIIMS Director Dr Randeep Guleria and BJP MP Gautam Gambhir at a mega blood donation camp in New Delhi on

CS assault case: SC rejects police plea against High Court order



HE Supreme Court on Thursday dismissed the police plea against the Delhi High Court order asking it to supply the copy of statement of a witness to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Deputy CM Manish Sisodia and others in a case of alleged assault on the then chief secretary Anshu Prakash in 2018, saying it may be a "hot potato" politically but there was nothing much

A bench of justices DY Chandrachud and M R Shah said the high court's order supports liberty and "we support it" and moreover, as per the basic principle of natural justice, there must be a robust common sense that the accused must It rejected the vehement submissions of Additional Solicitor General Aman Lekhi, appearing for police, that if the high court order was not set aside, it will have some serious repercussions. "Not worth it. It may be a politically hot potato, but in a legal sense it is nothing at all," the apex court said.

At the outset of the hearing, the bench said that the police must abide by the duty of being fair and the copy of the statement must be given to the accused. "It is a statement of a person which was there in the case diary," the bench said, adding that such a statement must be given. The Delhi High Court on October 21 last year set aside a sessions court order rejecting the plea of Kejriwal and Sisodia to provide the statewho was also an adviser to the Chief Minister, saying the police cannot pick and choose what evidence will be placed on record. The high court had set aside the order of the trial court and had directed the trial judge to consider the plea of the accused and grant them the access to a copy of the statement of Jain at the time of passing the order on charge.

"The investigating agency has no power to appreciate the evidence, it rests with the court. Consequently, the impugned order is hereby set aside," the high court had said. Kejriwal and Sisodia, in their plea before the high court, had alleged that the prosecution withheld Jain's statement recorded on February 21, 2018 as it did not suit the prosecution case and helped in falsely implicating the petitioners.

They had contended that a copy of the statement ought to have been supplied to them.

The criminal case relates to alleged assault on Prakash during a meeting at Kejriwal's official residence on February 19, 2018 and besides CM and his deputy, 11 AAP MLAs were also roped in as accused in the case. Kejriwal, Sisodia and nine other AAP MLAs were granted bail in October 2018. The other two MLAs, Amanatullah Khan and Prakash Jarwal, were granted bail earlier by the high court. The alleged assault had triggered a bitter tussle between the Delhi government and its bureaucrats.

SET PATROL

MADHURI DIXIT NENE @MADHURIDIXIT

Wishing the real-life superheroes, our dear doctors a very #HappyDoctorsDay. Huge respect & gratitude to them for helping us all during these dire times & saving lives every single day. Dil se thank you



Keep your skin in safe hands during pregnancy

ou're pregnant" are a few beautiful words that can make a woman dance with joy. The nine months of pregnancy are referred to as the most beautiful in every

woman's life.
As soon as you find out you're expecting pregnancy, your whole world changes. And that might include your skincare line-up, too.

Those nine months of waiting for your new baby are full of wonder and joy, but can also spring a few unpleasant surprises on your face and body. Pregnant women face many skin issues such as frequent breakouts of acne, itchy skin, and pigmentation that are caused by hormonal changes. Research suggests that some ingredients in your regular beauty products can be potentially harmful to your health and your baby's health as well. Certain ingredients can be absorbed into your body, and therefore, your baby's body, too.

Some ingredients are unsuitable to use while carrying a child; put simply, some ingredients and/or treatments can penetrate into your bloodstream, having a systemic effect on the body; which may pose a threat to a developing fetus, and others have to be avoided postpartum since they can pass into breastmilk.

While all
women respond
differently to
skincare ingredients depending on individual factors like
skin type and
sensitivities,
there are some

hard and fast rules about what to avoid during pregnancy.

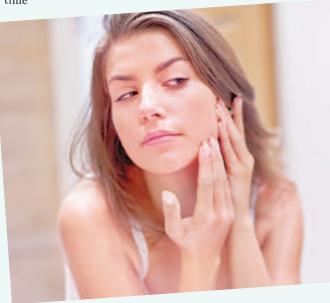
Many ingredients can be absorbed by the skin and can cause an accumulation in our system. This is of particular danger when we consider certain stages in a woman's life and one of the most important is pregnancy. The

pregnant woman should be aware of the ingredients that can harm her and her unborn child. Chemicals in many cosmetics harm the skin and scalp. Chemicals disrupt the pH balance (acid-alkaline balance) of the skin and scalp, cause allergies, itching, rashes and eruptions. As already mentioned, they also cause a build-up of toxins in the system over a period of

oil should be avoided during pregnancy, especially for those late in pregnancy or those with an increased risk of miscarriage.

We must use natural oils and moisturisers, like aloe vera, honey, flowers, date etc on skin during pregnency. Aloe Vera is a powerful natural moisturizer and seals off loss of moisture. It also softens dead skin cells and helps their removal, leaving the skin smoother and brighter. In fact, it helps the normal functions of the skin by improving its capacity to retain moisture. The Aloe Vera gel or juice can also be applied directly on the skin to moisturise it and relieve dryness, without any harmful effects.

Parabens are chemical preservatives used in the cosmetic



damage internal organs. Medical experts say that daily application of certain ingredients and even some perfumes in cosmetics can lead to skin sensitivity and allergic reactions, which may need heavy medication and even steroids that pregnant women cannot take.Fragrances are mostly made of harmful chemicals like aldehydes, benzene derivatives, parabens, and other chemicals that are linked to can cer and nervous system issues. They can cause irritation and redness to the skin. Hence, use a fragrance-free beauty product.

Mineral oil is a very common ingredient in skin care cosmetics. As we know, mineral oil is derived from petroleum. It may not cause any immediate reaction, but over a period of time, it can give rise to allergic reactions and irritation. Camphor, peppermint extract, and

dustry. Recently, there has been a great deal of research concerning parabens and their harmful effects. The controversy is that the chemical structure of parabens actually mimics the estrogen hormone and may increase the risk of cancer and reproductive problems in women. It is absorbed by the skin and repeated use of parabens can cause a build- up in the body lead to allergic reactions and health issues. They are toxic to a certain extent and are considered harmful to the environment too, as they can accumulate. The concern

is also with skin irritation and skin sensitivity. Many cosmetic companies are opting for Paraben-free cosmetic products now a days.

The pregnant woman should also see that there is no mercury in the products she is using. cury is a fast bleaching agent. It can damage the skin and can damage internal organs. Now-a-days various herbal cosmetic companies use natural ingredients like saffron, turmeric, almonds, bearberry, carrot

seed, powder of pearls and others in anti-blemish and creams to remove tan.

Hydrogen peroxide is also a skin bleaching agent. It can cause skin irritation on the area where it is used. In high concentrate, it can even cause burns. The pregnant woman should excid using

can even cause burns. The pregnant woman should avoid using chemical skin bleaches. Many natural ingredients, like lemon, turmeric, ripe papaya, yogurt, cucumber and saffron can help to remove tan and lighten skin colour.

Although we are talking of skin care ingredients, we need to consider chemical hair dyes. The scalp is an extension of the skin and can also absorb harmful ingredients. Chemical hair dyes contain coal tar, ammonia and other ingredients that not cause an accumulation of toxins in the system, but can also lead to severe allergic reactions and even damage internal organs. Ammonia is chemical dyes can also cause damage to the scalp and even the hair.

Therefore, the pregnant woman should stay away from chemical dyes. Natural colours that are 100% free from chemicals are available. we must prefer natural hair colour which contains blackish brown, brown and burgundy colours. If you wish to get your hair coloured, opt for a no-ammonia formula. Fortunately, there are plenty of options available.

Today we can look at nature with enlightened eyes, and make herbal and organic choices for skin and hair care, as well as make-up.

Skincare essentials everyone needs this season

The rains are here and have L brought us some respite from the soaring temperatures of the summer. The cool breeze, pleasant weather and delightful fragrance uplifts our mood as we curl up in our corner and listen to the relaxing sound of the rain. However, even though the rainy season brings a sense of freshness in the air, our skin may not be immune to the charm of the weather. Acne, patchiness, breakouts and unexpected oiliness can prove to be a nightmare for your skin. Prepare your skin to stay clear and beautiful as you follow these important steps to be at the top of your beauty game.

Keep the protector by your side

A cloudy sky does not mean you should bid goodbye to your sunscreen. Think again! Whether it is summer, monsoon or winter, the harmful UV rays emitted from the sun can cause catastrophic damage to your skin. Never step out of your home without a sunscreen! Apply a light, non-sticky lotion that has an SPF 50 and offers maximum protection to your skin and reduces its susceptibility to skin damage.

Wash your face frequently

Use a revitalizing face wash to wash of the grime and dirt that can clog up the pores of your skin which cause breakouts. The excessive humidity can make us feel uncomfortable; washing your face 3 to 4 times a day can make your skin look healthy and squeaky clean.

Toner

Using a toner, post-cleanse, helps set the stage for the rest of your skincare routine. Toners can also calm your skin, visibly reduce pores, and keep your skin refreshed and hydrated. The Lakmé 9 to 5 Moist Matte Mattifying Face Toner enriched with green extracts and witch hazel helps tighten pores for a refreshed matte look.

Keep a serum handy

A hydrating face serum in the rainy season can prevent acne and set the base for smooth skin before applying a moisturizer, as it locks the moisture in your skin and ensures supple skin. A few drops of a light - weight serum can accentuate the beauty of your skin and transform it from drab to fab!

Don't forget to moisturize

Moisturizing is vital in all seasons, as your skin needs to feel nourished and hydrated at all times. The weather can dry out your skin and make it look dull, to ensure your skin does not become a victim of dehydration, oil free moisturizer is the need of the hour. Don't avoid moisturizing because

of the monsoon!

The solution to pure skin – A Face Mask

The itching and oiliness in the skin caused by the extreme humidity can be controlled with a clay mask! Use a mask that caters to your skin type and gets rid of oily skin. The Lakmé 9 to 5 Matte Moist Clay Face Mask has pure green extracts that rejuvenates the skin and Kaolin & Bentonite clay that absorbs the impurities and excess oil. Let the mask work wonders on your skin as you lay down after a hectic day!

Use a lip balm

Dry and chapped lips require your much needed attention this monsoon! As we pamper our skin with moisturizer and serums, we should not neglect our lips. A lip balm forms a protective layer around the lips and keeps it moist and nourished. Pick the shade of your choice and pout away your worries!

ANISETTE DAY

here's a delicious flavor that not quite everyone appreciates, but most people are decidedly familiar with, and that's the flavor of anise.

Have you ever consumed black licorice?

Do you despise black jelly beans? Are you a fan of absinthe? Then you know the flavor that is absinthe

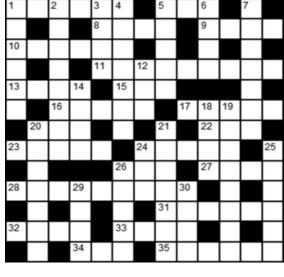
that is absinthe.
But have you ever heard
of a delicious drink called
Anisette? Anisette Day celebrates this sweeter cousin of absinthe
that finds its popularity in the
Mediterranean, and it's definitely a
must try for anyone who has ever

drunk absinthe and enjoyed it. Cele-

brating Anisette Day is
both delicious and
simple, you just have

to get yourself a bottle of this delicious drink and start sampling the different drinks it can be mixed in. For truly quality anisette you should look for brands that are produced in Spain or Italy, and then simply begin enjoying the drink. Remember you don't want to imbibe this straight, its anise and licoriceflavor is simply ably strong straight from the bottle. start experimenting by mixing it in

unbearably strong straight from the bottle. Instead, start experimenting by mixing it in with your favorite drinks, especially those that you think may be served by a delicious full-bodied sweet flavor.





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- way (6)
 5 TV World News Service
- (3)
- 8 One of the USA (4)
- 9 Milky gem (4)10 Immature insects (6)
- 11 Language of Kerala (9)13 Allowance made for weight of hox etc. dur-
- weight of box etc. during transport or packing (4)
- 15 King (3)
- 16 Sleeper's woe (5)17 Started or commenced
- (5)
- 20 Bird: prefix (3)22 1051 in Roman numerals
- (3)
- 23 Small spot (5)
- 24 Unusual item (5)26 Ultra High Frequency (3)
- 27 Emperor of Russia (4)28 Person suing the defendant (9)
- 31 Silky wool source (6) 32 Young dogs (4)

- CROSSWORD
- 33 Girl's name (4)34 Crew member (3)
- 35 Complied (6)

Down

- 1 Water down (6)
- 2 Hereditary German title
- (8) 3 Wander (4)
- 4 Cut off (7)
- 5 A white crystalline compound or mineral (5)
- 6 End piece (4)
- 7 Game resembling hand-
- ball (3,4) 12 Meadow (3)
- 14 Heroic (4) 18 Give off (4)
- 19 Short dictionary (8)
- 20 Commend audibly (7)
- 21 Large wild oxen (7)
- 24 Letter before psi (3)
- 25 A trip to carry a message (6)26 Say or pronounce, com-
- plete (5)

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30 Bodybuilder's bane (4)

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SUDOKU

SOLUTION TO JULY 1	2	5	8	4	3	6	1	9	7
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Padma Lakshmi opens up on struggles behind stunning photo shoot

Indian American model, TV host, author and activist Padma Lakshmi has shared the true story of struggle behind an old stunning photo shoot that had turned heads when it was launched.

The 50-year-old star posted the throwback photograph on Instagram, of a jewellery campaign shoot, and quoted Oprah Winfrey in the caption.

"You can have it all, just not all at once," she captioned.

"This is me in our jewelry campaign for 'The Padma Collection'. I'm exhausted here, not only from doing top chef, losing the weight and running a jewelry company on the side but from all of the stresses that come with being a sole business owner. A year from when this picture was taken I had to make the difficult decision as a new mom to close my company, my lover

was dying of cancer, and I just couldn't handle it all," she says.
"I learned so much about my priorities during that time," wrote Padma. In the photo, she is seen wearing a



13 U'khand hospitals served notices for late reporting of Covid deaths

THE Uttarakhand Health Department has served notices to 13 government and private hospitals for late reporting of 218 Covid deaths, many of them dating back to even January and February.

The notices were issued to these hospitals on Wednesday on the direction of Director

General Health Tripti Bahuguna for late reporting of Covid deaths, the state control room for Covid cases here said. The notices have also been

cers (CMOs) concerned, it said.

The hospitals that have been served notices include Baba Neem Karoli Hospital, Nainital, Base Hospital, Almora, Covid Health Centre, Lamgara, State Allopathic Dispensary Dhaulchina, Base Hospital, Kotdwar (Pauri), DCHC Koteshwar, Rudraprayag, District Hospital Pithoragarh, District Hospital, Bageshwar, Government Doon Medical College Dehradun, Military Hospital, Pithoragarh, Sai



Hospital, Nainital, STHG, Haldwani and Vinay Vishal Healthcare, Haridwar, it said.

Maximum 47 backlog Covid deaths have been reported from District Hospital, Pithor-

deaths from Base Hospital, Almora and 32 backlog deaths from Base Hospital, Kotdwar. Base Hospital, Almora on Wednesday also reported Covid deaths, which occurred from January 21 to February 21. When a private hospital in Haridwar reported 65 Covid deaths late by over a fortnight in May, Health Secretary Amit Negi had written a stronglyworded letter to all hospitals asking them to stick to the drill of regularly furnishing the state control room with

the figures or face action. Death summary of Covid patients should be sent to the state Covid control room daily by hospitals or else tough action will be taken against the guilty under the Epidemic Act, he had said in the letter. However, the practice appears to have continued. "I express my deep despair at the sheer callousness being displayed by our hospitals and authorities.

This deserves absolute and unequivocal condemnation," Dehradun-based social activist Anoop Nautiyal said.

"With addition of the backlog Covid deaths reported on Wednesday, the total number of such deaths in Uttarakhand reported on 47 different days has shot up to 1,210," he said. Nautiyal said all the 13 districts of the state have reported backlog Covid deaths.

"It is alarming to note that 88 per cent of the 218 backlogs reported on June 30 are from hill districts," he said citing data published by his organisation called Social Development for Communities Foun-

First drive-in **Covid testing** centre in HP

DHARAMSHALA

HIMACHAL Pradesh's first drive-in Covid testing centre was inaugurated along Dharamshala-Chandigarh national highway here on Thursday, officials said.

After inaugurating the centre, Deputy Commissioner Nipun Jindal said similar drive-in testing facilities would be opened in all major tourist places and cities of Kangra district in a phased manner.

Samples will be collected at these centres from 9 am to 1 pm, and results will be given out in 15-20 minutes, he said. "Along with vaccination, regular testing is also necessary. A special Covid testing campaign was launched in Kangra district today. A plan has been prepared by the Health Department to test all people associated with the tourism business. Shopkeepers and taxi drivers will be tested too," Jindal said.

He said the drive-in testing centre has been set up along the main road so that people passing through this route in vehicles can use the facility. The official said random sampling would be done at the village level so that the infection can be stopped from spreading. Various officers of the Health Department, including ADM Rohit Rathore and CMO Dr Gurdarshan, were present on the

Health services hit as Punjab docs go on strike

CHANDIGARH

HEALTH services were hit in Punjab government hospitals on Thursday again after doctors went on a daylong strike over the state's Sixth Pay Commission recommendations, delinking non-practicing allowance from the basic pay.

It is the third time in a week that government doctors went on a strike. Earlier, they had abstained from work on June 25 and 28.

Health services, including outpatient department (OPD) services, elective surgeries and online consultations remained suspended, said protesting doctors. However, emergency and Covid-related services continued, they said. The call for the strike was given by the Joint Punjab Government Doctors' Coordination Committee.

The committee has members from the Punjab Civil Medical Services' Association and is supported by the Punjab State Veterinary Officers' Association, Rural Medical Officers' Association, Punjab Dental Medical Officers' Association and the



Punjab Ayurveda Officers' Association. Punjab Civil Medical Services' Association president Dr Gagandeep Singh said they were upset with the Sixth Pay Commission, which recommended delinking non-practicing allowance (NPA) from the basic pay, which would adversely hit their salary and pension ben-

Protesting doctors said the commission had recommended reduction in the NPA from 25 per cent to 20 per cent. The Punjab government had announced to implement a majority of the recommendations of its Pay Commission with effect from January 1, 2016, a move that will benefit over five lakh serving and retired employees. However,

several associations of government employees have been protesting against the recommendations.

They were objecting to the formula used in the calculation of an increase in pay. The Punjab government had set up an oversight committee of ministers to resolve grievances of the state government employees.

9 out of 33 Raj districts got below-normal rainfall in June

THE average rainfall in Rajasthan in the month of June may have been above normal, but 19 out of the state's 33 districts received below-normal downpour for this

time of the year. According to the Meteorological Centre in Jaipur, overall rain-

fall recorded in Rajasthan from June 1 to June 30 is 53.1 mm, which is six per cent

higher than normal. But, rainfall was not normal in many districts during this period, especially in east Rajasthan.

Normally, east Rajasthan records 66.7 mm rainfall in June, but the actual rainfall this time around was recorded at 56.7 mm, which is 15 per cent less. On the contrary, the usually dry districts of western Rajasthan like Jaisalmer, Ganganagar, Bikaner, Jodhpur and Churu

recorded 50.2 mm rainfall, which is 36 per cent more than the normal for June.

As per data issued by the weather office, 19 districts, including Jaipur, Jhunjhunu, Kota, Tonk, Baran, Sirohi, Sikar, Sawai Madhopur,

Bundi and Bharatpur, received below-normal rainfall during the month. Among these districts, Bundi received 60 per cent less

rainfall, Alwar 58 per cent and Kota 44 per cent. Radheshyam Sharma, director of the Meteorological Centre, said the weather will

be mainly dry in most parts of the state for the next four to five days because the monsoon is not moving further from where it was 11 days ago. The department has said a heat wave is likely at isolated places in the districts of Bikaner, Bharatpur and Kota divisions during the next 48

Ex-UP Minister booked for taking zila panchayat member hostage

A case was registered against three persons, including former Uttar Pradesh minister Ambika Chaudhary, for allegedly taking a zila panchayat member hostage, police said.

The case was registered at the Bansdih police station. SHO of Bansdih police station Sunil Lamba said on a complaint from Mangala Verma, a resident of Aktahan, the case was registered against Chaudhary, Amit Yadav and Dinesh Ya-

In his complaint, Verma said on June 17, Chaudhary and the two other accused took away his son Ramesh, who won the zila panchayat polls from ward number 10. Since then, the whereabouts of Ramesh are not known, the SHO said and added that the matter is being probed.

District BJP chief Jaiprakash Sahu accused Samajwadi Party (SP) leaders of indulging in anarchy and

submitted a memorandum to the district magistrate and the superintendent of police on Wednesday. In the memorandum, Sahu said SP candidate (for the post of zila panchayat chairman) Anand Chaudhary, former Uttar Pradesh ministers Ambika Chaudhary and Narad Rai, Dinesh Chaudhary (Anand's uncle) and their supporters, on the pretext of convening a meeting of the zila panchayat members at their house, took the elected zila panchayat members hostage and took them to Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan. Meanwhile, Chaudhary told reporters that he has urged the DM to ensure free and fair polls.

He alleged that the BJP is trying to influence the polls using money power, muscle power and the administration. Zila panchayat chairpersons are elected from among the elected members of zila panchayats of various districts. The four-phase panchavat polls concluded in the state last month.

Scribe not expected to dramatise incident: HC

LUCKNOW

THE Allahabad High Court has rejected the bail plea of a reporter accused of abetting a suicide, saying a journalist is not expected to dramatise sensational incidents and create news by putting a person's life in danger. A Lucknow bench of Justice Vikas Kunvar Srivastav made the observation while rejecting the plea of city journalist Shamim Ahmad, co-accused of abetting a man's suicide and filming it outside the Uttar Pradesh assembly complex last year. In an order, the judge said, "A journalist is not expected to dramatise a sensational and horrifying incident and make news by putting his actor in pitiable condition and in danger of death."

The journalist keeps an eye on anticipated or sudden events happening in society and brings them to the information of all people through various news media without any tampering. This is his business, the judge observed on June 21. The order in the case was uploaded on the court's website on Thursday. Journalists Shamim and coaccused Naushad Ahmad had allegedly contacted a man who was facing eviction from his house and induced him to set himself ablaze in front of the state assembly so that they could film the incident and telecast it on television as it could save him from being thrown out of the premises where he was staying. The man allegedly poured oil and set himself on fire, while the accused scribes were filming it. He died at a hospital on October 24 last year.

Ensure vaccine supply keeps pace with speed of vaccination: Gehlot

CHIEF Minister Ashok Gehlot on Wednesday said the Censhould be able to keep pace with the speed of vaccination in the state so that people can be given the second dose on

He said it is the state government's endeavour to vaccinate the maximum number of people at the earliest. Gehlot was speaking at a meeting held to review the Covid vaccination drive in the state.

He said nearly 75 lakh people in Rajasthan will be eligible for the second dose of Covid vaccine in July but only 65.20 lakh doses are being allotted to the state by the Centre in the first fortnight of the month. The Centre should ensure that the supply of vaccines to Rajasthan is according to the pace of vaccination in the state so that people can be given the second dose on time, he said. Gehlot also held a meeting to review the relining work of the Indira Gandhi Canal Project (IGNP).



Due to the continuous efforts of the state government, the historic work of relining the Indira Gandhi Canal system has been completed, the chief minister said.

This will prevent the wastage of water. It will also ensure that more water is available for irrigation and drinking, he said in a statement.

Gehlot directed officials to ensure a smooth water supply in all the 10 districts connected to the IGNP.

He said farmers of the tail area of the canal will benefit from the 70-km relining work. He also thanked the Punjab government for its cooperation in completing the long-stalled

RSS condemns graft allegations against senior leader Nimbarama

JAIPUR

THE Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) on Thursday condemned allegations against one its senior leaders of demanding Rs 20 crore "commission" from a firm engaged in door-to-door garbage collection here.

The allegations levelled against regional pracharak Nimbaram are efforts to present misleading facts to assassinate his character, RSS leaders said.

"We refute these false allegations and slanders being made out of ideological malice, and all options are open for us to take legal action," RSS leader Hanuman Singh Rathore said in a statement. An attempt has been made to present distorted facts even though no exchange of money has taken place, he said, likening it to character assassination of a respected person by accusing them of being involved in corruption.



Being a responsible person in society, the RSS leader is ready to support any kind of investigation, Rathore said. The statement said BVG company executives had met the RSS leader with a proposal to contribute for the development of the Pratap Gaurav Kendra in

Udaipur through CSR funds. The leader had asked them to visit the centre and contribute accordingly.

The company officials set a date, but never visited the centre and so, the question of CSR funding or any other assistance does-

n't arise, the RSS statement said. The April 20 meeting between the garbage collection company executives and the RSS leader was a courtesy meeting, it added. The state's Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) had on Tuesday arrested suspended Jaipur Greater Municipal Corporation Mayor and BJP leader Somya Gurjar's husband Rajaram Gurjar and a representative of BVG company on corruption charges in the case.

A case was registered on the basis of a video clip that surfaced on social media, in which Rajaram Gurjar and the company representative are allegedly seen engaged in conversation related to the Rs 20 crore "commission" from the firm for getting its payment released from the municipal body. RSS regional pracharak Nimbaram was also seen sitting with them in the video on the basis of which the ACB registered a

case against him as well.

VIRTUALSOFT SYSTEMS LIMITED

(Figures Rs. in Lacs

		Standard	10	Consolidated			
Particulars	Quarter Ended (Audited)	Year Ended (Audited)	Quarter Ended (Audited)	Quarter Ended (Audited)	Year Ended (Audited)	Quarter Ended (Audited)	
	31.03.2021	31.03.2021	31.03.2020	31.03.2021	31.03.2021	31.03.2020	
Total income from operations (net)	32.35	155.21	59.62	146.35	278.62	161.94	
Net Profit / (Loss) from ordinary activities after tax	(37.36)	(55.50)	6.15	(85.76)	(320.70)	(105.22)	
Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax	NA.50000000	LTT-ACTION	2000	7.000000000	#20000 ACC	10.000 (0	
(after Extraordinary items)	(37.36)	(55.50)	6.15	(85.76)	(320.70)	(105.22)	
Equity Share Capital	1029.76	1029.76	1029.76	1029.76	1029.76	1029.76	
Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve as	0.000000	THE STATE OF	*********	739 000 000 000 000 000 000 000 000 000 0	Onesia Constanti	10000000	
shown in the Balance Sheet of previous year)	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	
Earnings Per Share (before extraordinary items)							
(of ₹ 10/- each) Basic : Diluted:	1007700					7 or 100	
Basic :	(0.36)	(0.54)	0.06	(0.83)	(3.11)	(1.02)	
Diluted:	(0.36)	(0.54)	0.06	(0.83)	(3.11)	(1.02)	
Earnings Per Share (after extraordinary items)	11.55.12.4	7.8.115.1.5					
(of ₹10/- each)							
Basic :	(0.36)	(0.54)	0.06	(0.83)	(3.11)	(1.02)	
Diluted :	(0.36)	(0.54)	0.06	(0.83)	(3.11)	(1.02)	

The above is in extract of the detailed format of the Standalone and Consolidated Quarterly/Yearly Audited Financial Result for the

Quarter/Year ended March 31, 2021 filed with the Stock Exchange under Regulations 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly Financial Results are available on the Stock Exchange websites www.besindia.com and on the Company websites www.virtsoft.com.







New threat perceptions confront India

RONES have been sighted in the DRONES nave been signed.
Union Territory of Jammu every day this week since the drone attack at the Indian Air Force (IAF) station in Jammu in the early hours of June 27 forcing the authorities to rethink counter-terror strategies. Drones were spotted at three places on the outskirts of Jammu city on June 29 night and in the early hours of June 30, keeping the police and other security agencies on tenterhooks. On June 28, the Indian Army claimed to have spotted drones flying over Kaluchak and Ratnuchak military stations and opened fire at them, making them fly away. This is the first instance of deployment of drones to strike at vital installations of our country by terrorists guided by Pakistan.

The banned Lashkar-e-Taiba terror outfit is suspected to have been behind the sensational drone attack, director General of Jammu and Kashmir Police Dilbagh Singh said. The drones were commercially available quadcopters. There were no casualties in the attack but everyone is aware of the potential. A drone monitoring and jammer system has now been installed at the IAF station in Jammu. Officials said that the anti-drone system, established by National Security Guard, will soon be installed at all vital installations of security forces in Jammu.

The Prime Minister who reviewed the situation arising out of the new development directed the authorities to look into anti-drone systems deployment as a deterrent at the earliest. Indian authorities in recent years have raised the possibility of drone attacks by rebels in the region, especially after repeatedly accusing Pakistan of using China-made drones along the frontier to drop weapons packages for militant groups since last year.

While the Jammu attack was the first such instance in India where a drone was weaponised. The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has been asked to develop an anti-drone system by the Prime Minister sometime back and it is evolving a comprehensive system to counter the enemies. In fact, one such system was deployed in Delhi for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's safety last year during the Republic Day Parade.

According to the DRDO, this technology can bring down micro-drones through either jamming of command and control links or by damaging electronics of drones through laser-based directed energy weapons. "The comprehensive solution is to tackle the problem that drones may pose to national security agencies," DRDO said in a statement.

In addition, this anti-drone technology can detect and jam micro-drones at a distance of up to 3 km and lase a target 1-1.25 km far depending on the wattage of the laser weapon. The DRDO said that this solution can be an effective counter to increased drone-based activity in India's western and northern sectors. Recently, the Armed Forces proposed arming its 100 Heron drones with missiles to carry out offence.

The Indian Navy has also been cleared to upgrade its existing Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and buy 10 new surveillance drones to closely monitor Indian waters. New age warfare is a must to tackle new age terror tactics. India has to guard itself double against the two major external enemies China and Pakistan who work in tandem always.

Sri Lanka morphing into 'Xi-Lanka'?

N C BIPINDRA

 $S\,the\,Communist\,Party\,of$ China (CPC) celebrates 100 years of its founding today, much has been said and written about Communist China's infrastructure and development activities in Sri Lanka. While commentaries have waxed eloquent on how Sri Lanka's landscape is being transformed, precious little has been done to critically examine whether the average Sri Lankan on the street has actually benefited.

CPC-funded projects in Sri Lanka are executed by Chinese entities and undertaken using equipment, machinery, and material from China. A significant proportion of labour and most of the top management is also from China. In effect, while Sri Lanka pays for the project, plough-back is into Chinese coffers.

Chinese infrastructure projects have also been associated with a steep rise in Chinese imports into Sri Lanka and reduction of exports to China. This has resulted in a growing trade deficit with China, putting tremendous pressure on the Sri Lankan Rupee.

The only way to offset this trade deficit is by substantial export-oriented Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flowing into Sri Lanka from China, which is unfortunately not in the Chinese scheme of things.

Chinese projects have also not provided any significant benefit to the average Sri Lankan. More often than not, these are vanity projects, which have been used by powers-that-be for enrichment of self, kith, and kin.

The Lotus Tower, cricket stadium and port at Hambantota and Mattala airport have had no impact on the citizens, who are left struggling with rising prices

and dropping income. The \$104 million Lotus Tower was inaugurated in September 2019 with much fanfare. Yet, as with other Chinese projects, it was mired in controversy, with then President Maithripala Sirisena claiming that Chinese contractors were absconding with US\$11 million.

The \$20 -million airport built at Mattala is now infamous as the 'Worlds Emptiest Airport'. Sri Lanka's Strategic Enterprise Management Agency had opport and recommended that Colombo airport be expanded instead.

The Mattala airport, located in then President Mahinda Rajapaksa's home constituency, was built anyway, while Colombo airport continues to burst at its seams. Was it a coincidence that Mattala airport was financed by a loan from EXIM Bank of China while expansion of the Colombo airport was to be financed by Japan?

Similar issues have dogged Hambantota Port, which was built at a cost of \$1.4 billion. Sri Lanka was forced to lease out the port for the long-term to the Chinese since the revenue generated by the port was not even enough for repayment of the interest component of the project's Chinese loans.

In 2017, the port earned only \$2 million, whereas the annual loan repayment was in excess of US\$70 million. Even at an annual growth rate of 20 per cent, the port would not have been able to cover its interest payments for the next 30 years. Clearly, this port was never intended to be viable in Sri Lankan

Notwithstanding pronouncements to the contrary, the Sri Lanka Ports Authority has an extremely limited role in running and controlling operations at Hambantota. The Sri Lankan Navy also has to plead with the Chinese to berth their own ships at the port.

The Chinese authorities are now pushing for acquisition of 15,000 acres of land around the port to set up an export zone, claiming that the port does not make economic sense without

Pushed by Communist China, government officials are forcing families to part with fertile agricultural land. This is a standard Chinese tactic seen all over the world and particularly evident in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Maldives. However, violent protests by locals have stalled creation of this zone, for now,

The much-publicised US\$1.5billion Colombo Port City being built by CHEC (China Harbour Engineering Company) has also seen its share of controversies. One of the members for the Environmental Impact Assessment of the project was also a consultant for the parent company of CHEC.

When the project was initiated, it was decided that dredging would be done at least five km away from the coast to prevent erosion and damage to local fishing activity. Due to sustained protests by local fishermen who stood to lose their livelihood, dredging was shifted to 10 km away from the coast.

This was subsequently quietly re-established to 8 km, under pressure from CHEC. Dredgers were, thereafter, observed to be operating as close as 3 km from the coast, due to connivance of local authorities and CHEC.

CHEC has also subverted the political and bureaucratic apparatus to ensure that the project is executed in accordance with Chinese requirements. It is being claimed that 83,000 jobs would be created for locals and investment of up to \$15 billion would flow into the country.

These claims by the Chinese seem unrealistic and it is likely that the project would only bring gains to a select few. Contrary to assertions being made of the overall benefit of the Colombo Port City project, the livelihood of fishermen along the coast to the North and South of Colombo has already been affected by the

project. Large-scale sand mining and quarrying for granite being undertaken for the project will also impact Colombo, Gampaha and Kalutara, the three most populous districts in the country and

Chinese entities and undertaken using equipment, machinery, and material from China. A significant proportion of labour and most of the top management is also from China. In effect, while Sri Lanka pays for the project, plough-back is into Chinese coffers

home to a quarter of the country's population.

The malignancy of Chinese infrastructure projects is not restricted to economic and environmental domains but is beginning to have a societal impact as well since Chinese projects have not resulted in any job opportunities.

The Port City Project is estimated to have 22 per cent Chinese workers. An average Chinese construction worker is paid 1,000 LKR a day compared to 1,500 LKR that has to be paid to a Sri Lankan. In addition, the Chinese worker is also expected to work longer.

This has obviously made Chinese labour more desirable. Whilst official estimates state that there are 15,000 Chinese workers in Sri Lanka, the unofficial figure is closer to 100,000.

There is also no transfer of skill and knowledge to the local labour force. In a telling indication of the Chinese stranglehold on the local labour market, most major projects came to a standstill when Chinese workers, who had gone home for the Chinese

New Year, could not return due to Covid-19 crisis.

Sri Lankan fishermen also face the brunt of poaching by Chinese IUU fishing vessels. IUU stands for Illegal Unreported and Unregulated. Recently, Chinese fishing vessels were found to be operating just outside the territorial waters of Colombo, but government authorities, unable to confront the Chinese, let these vessels off on a technicality.

The tourism sector has also not been spared. A controversy erupted when it emerged that Chinese nationals were moonlighting as unauthorised guides for visiting Chinese tourists.

It is also commonplace to see Chinese symbols and signage on business establishments. The mushrooming of Chinese shops throughout Sri Lanka had reached such alarming proportions that former president Sirisena had raised this issue in

There is indeed a strong case to examine whether Sri Lanka has actually benefitted from Chinese projects. While some projects have proven to be beneficial, such as the China International Container Terminal and expressways, a vast majority have only benefited the Chinese at the expense of the common Sri Lanka citizen. Word on the street is - Sri Lanka will soon be called Xi-Lanka.

(N C Bipindra is Chairman, Law and Society Alliance, and Editor, Defence. Capital magazine)

one of his Cabinet Meetings.

CPC-funded projects in Sri Lanka are executed by

Build consensus soon KRISHNA water dispute between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh is unfortunate but pitiably Modi government maintains studied silence over the issue and try to fish in the troubled waters to gain politically (KCR to take water war to Delhi, July 1). When Indus water treaty could end periods of conflict between arch rivals countries-India and Pakistan, can't Telugu states, which were together for five decades, arrive at a consensus and resolve the issue amicably?

Kshirasagara Balaji Rao, Hyderabad

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reaved families. They have been suffering the Covid victims at the earliest. It will be great and noble initiative and rare gesture at the hands of the Central government. Zubair Khan, Hyderabad

Apt editorial

THE editorial 'Will our children lose the ability to learn'? (June 30) aptly stressed many brownie points that is shaping our children to be indolent on class work and active on browsing the mobiles for games and other unusual and unnecessary activities. Attending physical classes makes the students busy from dawn to dusk and very less time or no time is left to handle the mobiles. The skills - Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (LSRW) have been reduced on account of online learning and spectacles have become an added attraction since corona pandemic made its entry.

Dr NSR Murthy, Secunderabad

thehansreader@gmail.com

Fertile Crescent



The dawn of ancient civilisation

TEJ SINGH KARDAM

 $T^{
m HE}$ word civilisation is etymologically connected to city - it presupposes urban transition. The ancient civilisation is the earliest segment of ancient history. The span of earliest history began with the invention of writing about 3000 BC. In addition to written records, the knowledge about ancient people is derived from the work of archaeologists. The significant archaeological findings have been made in the last two centuries. After development of agriculture in Middle East about 6500 BCE, the human settlements became sedentary in the fertile river valley and people started to domesticate animals. It is believed that the first ancient civilisation emerged in the Middle East in an area called 'Fertile Crescent' (JH Breasted in 1916) fed by waterways of Euphrates, Tigris and Nile Rivers. Mesopotamian (meso - middle, potamos-river) civilisation is the most ancient civilisation recorded in the human history. The Fertile Crescent region of Mesopotamia is referred as "Cradle of Civilisation" - location where civilisation has developed independently. This civilisation was formed on the banks of Tigris and Euphrates rivers, today's Iraq and Kuwait, began to form around the time of the Neolithic Revolution - Agricultural Revolution, beginning of the present geological epoch, the Holocene.

The history of Mesopotamia can be looked in; Neolithic Age - the Stone Age (10,000-7000 BCE): There is archaeological confirmation of crude settlements during this time with a shift from hunter-gatherer culture to an agrarian one. As per scholar Stephen Bertman, during this era, stone tools and weapons became more sophisticated. The economy was primarily based on food production through farming and animal rearing. Chalcolithic Period - Copper Age (5900-3200 BCE) - Owing to the transition from stone tools and weapons to that of Copper. This era includes the Ubaid period, named for Tell al Ubaid, the location in Iraq where large number of artefacts are found, first temples and unwalled villages were developed. These villages then gave rise to urbanisation during Uruk period (4100-2900 BCE).

This period saw the invention of Wheel (3500 BCE) and writing (3000 BCE) by Sumerians, first war of the world recorded between Sumer and Elam (2700 BCE), use of personal seals, cylindrical-seals to denote ownership of property. Bronze Age (3000-1100 BCE) - the rise of city-state laid the foundation of economic and political stability. The Akkadian Empire of Sargon the Great was the first multi-national realm in the world. The expansion of Assyrian Kingdoms and rise of Babylonian dynasty - created an atmosphere conducive to trade. Hammurabi King of Babylon ruled for four decades, later sacked and looted by Hittites and rise of Kassite Dynasty. Most Mesopotamian States were either destroyed or weakened following the Bronze Age Collapse 1250-1150 BCE. Mesopotamia was a collection of various cultures whose real bonds were their script, their gods and their attitude towards women. Sumerian civilisation first took form in Southern Mesopotamia around 4000 BCE - the first urban civilisation in the region. Mesopotamians are noted for first written scripts around 3000 BCE; wedge-shaped marks pressed into clay tablets - the Cuneiform Script - deciphered by scholar George Smith in 1872 CE. Cuneiform is also the script that one of the world's first great works of literature, "The Epic Of Gilgamesh," was written in.

The incredibly important invention of the wheel is also credited to the Sumerians, the earliest wheel dates to 3500 BCE. Sumerians built ship, their religion was polytheistic - worshipped multiple gods - many of which were anthropomorphic. Temples of gods were constructed atop massive Ziggurats -raised area, broad at bottom, pyramid shaped buildings, had two to seven tiers and each ascending tier smaller than the one under it. In the Akkadian Empire, around 3000 BCE, the Sumerians had significant cultural interchange with a group in Northern Mesopotamians known as Akkadians. The Akkadian language is related to modern languages of Hebrew and Arabic. Around 2334 BCE, Sargon of Akkad came to power and established the world's first dynastic empire and ruled over both Akkadian and Sumerian.

Babylon was a minor city-state in central Mesopotamia, Hammurabi was an efficient ruler of Babylon's, established centralized bureaucracy with taxation. Hammurabi conquered the whole Southern Mesopotamia and gave the name Babylon to the region. One of the most important works of Babylon was compilation of a code of laws, around 1754 BCE, called the code of Hammurabi, was improved upon earlier written laws of Sumer, Akkad and Assyria. Hammurabi's code is one of the oldest deciphered writings of significant length in the world.. The Code was written on stone stale-slabs and clay tablets, consisting of 282 laws. The developments/inventions credited to the Mesopotamians include, but are no means limited to, agriculture, irrigation, domestication of animals, common tools, sophisticated weaponry and warfare, the chariot, religious rites, the sailboats and legal codes. Orientalist Samuel Noah Kramer in ['fact has listed 39 firsts, from Mesopotamia in his book "History begins at Sumer", in human civilisation that originated in Sumer. To cite few

referred as "Cradle of Civilisation" developed independently. This civilisation was formed on the banks today's Iraq and Kuwait, began to form around the time of the

Neolithic Revolution - Agricultural

geological epoch, the Holocene

Revolution, beginning of the present

Mesopotamian (meso - middle, examples - (all prefix first) - the histopotamos- river) civilisation is the rian, the farmer's almanac, the moral most ancient civilisation recorded in ideals, the proverbs and sayings, the the human history. The Fertile library catalogue, man's golden age, Crescent region of Mesopotamia is the literary portrait, the aquarium etc. With the development of wheel and location where civilisation has sail, Mesopotamian trade became easier for transportation of goods. Heavy bulk goods could travel by Ox-Cart or of Tigris and Euphrates rivers, $\ \$ be loaded on to riverboats. Most longdistance trade was carried by caravans using donkeys as animals. Trade goods comprising textiles, pottery, leather goods, jewellery, ivory carvings, grains, dates etc were exported. They

established trade all up and down the Tigris and Euphrates into Anatolia - Turkey, over Zagros mountains - Iran and Afghanistan, Sea routes went through Persian Gulf across the Arabian Sea to Indus Valley -Northern India and Pakistan. Mesopotamians were polytheistic as they worshipped several gods. In Sumerian religion, the most powerful and important deities were, the seven gods -An (heaven), Enlil (air), Enki (sea), Ki (earth), Nanna (moon), Utu (sun) and Enanna (goddess of love and war). Religion was central to Mesopotamians as they believed divine affected every aspect of human life.

Looking at Vedic-Ancient Mesopotamian Interconnections - synchronization has been done by Stephen Hillyer Levitt et al. To cite an example: in general, in both the Vedic and 3rd millennium BCE, Sumerian traditions, aspect of nature are deified. In both, the deification proceeded from deification of natural forces significant in the culture to the anthropomorphic deification of these. In both, the chief god-Indra in the Vedic and Enlil in Sumerian traditions, is god of air and storm, which has been attributed in both traditions by western scholars to the importance of rain and storm. Mesopotamia was important to Europeans because of the references to it in the Old Testament, the first part of Bible. For instance the Book Of Genesis refers to 'Shimar' - meaning Sumer, as land of brick-built cities. The Legacy of Mesopotamia endures today through many of the most basic aspects of modern life, such as, urbanisation, the wheel, wind power, sixty-second minute and sixtyminute hour. Helen Chapin Metz writes, the Sumerian believed that each of gods was represented by a number. The number sixty sacred to the god An. Mesopotamia generally, and Sumer specifically, gave the world some of the most enduring cultural aspects, even though the cities and great palaces have long gone, that legacy continued in the

(The author is a retired IFS officer)

Compensate kin of Covid victims

LETTERS

Tam not sure that the Supreme Court has taken into consideration the various aspects surrounding Covid deaths while directing NDMA to come out with a policy for compensating these deaths.

- The pandemic affected the entire nation, though in different proportion, the states and UTs.
- · Many sought treatments at private hospitals resulting in huge medical
- · Autopsy/post-mortem was not included in the protocol which could have defined these deaths. Almost all deaths have been routinely classified as Covid deaths.
- The number of regular deaths due to health issues, accidents and others like suicides and murders were not revealed.
- The states and UTs also had their own ways of classifying and identifying the deaths. There was a huge mess up in reporting deaths in the state level.
- Many Covid infected were disowned by their kith and kin either during the hospitalisation or after death. Invariable the valiant frontline workers took upon the task of performing the final

- The question of identifying the legal heirs is going to be a gargantuan problem for the governments and a racket may come up in the offing.
- We should not forget the fact that in spite of governments repeated appeals through every kind of medium to adhere to strict Covid protocol, a good number of people went around violating all kinds of norms ensuring swift spread of Covid infections. Are they not answerable for their contribution to Covid deaths? We have seen massive crowd in markets with no concern for Covid.

Let us formulate a sensible policy involving all the stake holders and a suitable set of guidelines for such situations be formed. Even the Parliament can discuss and enact a suitable law in consultation with the Supreme court.

J Kannan, Hyderabad

 \prod AS of now, we know nearly four lakh people died (official figures) for no fault of theirs with the spread of first and second-wave pandemic quite unexpected and these innocent people are victims of

the Covid-19. The government should understand as they are saying it will not come under natural disaster but in reality, the biological pandemic also comes under natural disaster as it has devastated life and no

Kanagiri SN Prasad, Hyderabad

one ever visualised its intensity.

The Supreme Court on June 30 further

directed the National Disaster Manage-

ment Authority (NDMA) to issue fresh

guidelines for providing a minimum stan-

dard of financial help to families of those

The State and central governments

should realise the loss of the individuals

governments, to safeguard their families

paid by both and central governments in

four instalments. Let's hope due justifi-

cation will be done as per the court di-

in their families and it's the duty of the

if not paid the lump sum and it can be

who lost their lives due to Covid-19.

THIS refers to 'SC orders govt to frame ▲ fresh norms '(THI July 1). The Central government must ponder over the plight of the families of Covid victims to extend fiscal relief and succour to the beexcruciating fiscal crisis since they lost their bread winners. The bereaved and penury stricken families have been finding it difficult and cumbersome to survive. The Centre must decide and speed up to initiate to provide pecuniary aid to

Farmers caught in water war

Water released from Pulichintala by TS goes waste as kharif operations yet to begin

Krishna delta farmers have not even started sowing of seeds. But, Telangana started to release water from Pulichintala which goes waste into the sea now. As per the original schedule, water from Pattiseema was to be released on July 5 followed by the release from Pulichintala

P KRISHNA RAO **A**MARAVATI

THE ongoing water between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh has become a bane for the farmers in the State.

Hydel-power generation by Telangana from Srisailam and Nagarjuna Sagar and Pulichintala power projects has created new problems for the Irrigation department.

Telangana had released water from Pulichintala without informing the State officials which is the normal protocol and practice. As a result this water which would be reaching Prakasam barrage ahead of schedule will go waste as kharif operations in Krishna district are yet to begin.

Farmers of the Krishna delta have not even started sowing of seeds and plantation of nurseries. As per



Rural SP Vishal Gunni addressing the media at Nagarjunasagar dam in Guntur district on Thursday

CM want PM to rein in TS over water sharing

HANS NEWS SERVICE **A**MARAVATI

IRKED by the refusal of Telangana Government to stop hydel-power generation from Srisailam, Pulichintala and Nagarjuna Sagar, Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy wrote a letter to Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh **Shekawat and Prime Minister** Narendra Modi seeking their immediate intervention. The CM urged them to direct the Telangana government to stop illegal drawal of water for power generation. He said the TS government had not taken any permission from the Krishna River Management Board before resorting to

power generation. The CM

the original schedule, wa-

ter from Pattiseema was to

be released on July 5 fol-

asked the Centre to notify the jurisdiction of KRMB and take over all offtakes of common reservoirs with the CISF protection and safeguard the interests of Andhra Pradesh.

In his 5-page letter, Jagan said the Telangana Government has issued a GO RT No 34 energy (Power II) dept Dt June 28, to generate hydro power to hundred percent of its installed capacities. This means that Telangana can utilise 4 tmc feet, 3 tmc ft and 1.8 tmc ft per day from Srisailam, Nagarjuna Sagar and Pulichintala respectively. This would be in utter disregard to the orders issued by KRMB to stop power generation, he said. The CM said though there are instructions from

lowed by the release from Pulichintala. Meanwhile, security has

been tightened by both the States at Nagarjuna Sagar and Pulichintala projects.

KRMB not to draw water for

Telangana was unilaterally

power generation, the state of

drawing water for power gen-

eration violating standard op-

Telangana are not in the inter-

tions and are adversely affect-

Pradesh. It will put the drink-

ing and irrigation needs of

four Rayalaseema districts,

Nellore and Prakasam dis-

tricts and drinking water re-

quirement of Chennai city in

said. The Chief Minister also

enclosed the copy of GO and

serious trouble, the letter

other relevant documents

with his letter.

erating protocol and agree-

est of good inter-state rela-

ing the interests of lower

riparian state of Andhra

ments. Such actions of

ployed armed police personnel at dams and power plants across the Krishna river. Guntur rural SP Vishal Gunni visited the Nagarjuna Sagar Dam site and reviewed the situation. He said the TS government had deployed heavy police forces on

Meanwhile, on Thursday the Telangana police sent back a team of AP officials who had gone to give a memorandum to the Chief Engineer of Nagarjuna Sagar, Telangana. They wanted to urge him to stop power generation immediately.

Gurazala Revenue Divisional officer J Pardhasaradhi said that AP officials were not allowed to submit memorandum to Telangana state officials. He said AP officers were stopped at the bridge on the borders of T-state. He said the water levels at Nagarjuna Sagar were low and power generation would lead to wastage of water.

According to officials, the water level at Srisailam was 823 feet. Power generation can be taken up only when the water level reaches 834 feet. Hence, they urged the TS to stop hydel power generation immediately. The move of TS would result in 28,000 cusecs of water go-

DOCTORS UP IN ARMS AGAINST GO64

They are against decision of **empowering Joint Collectors** with service and other matters

They boycotted Doctor's Day celebrations and wore black badges in protest against the GO



By forming state and district-level JACs they chalked out an action plan to bring pressure on the government

HANS NEWS SERVICE **TIRUPATI**

THE State Government's decision to delegate certain powers in the Department of Health, Medical and Family Welfare to Joint Collectors has not gone well with the doctors' fraternity.

Various unions of doctors like the Government Doctors' Association (GDA), AP Private Hospitals and Nursing Homes Association (APNA) and Indian Medical Association (IMA) are strongly opposing the GO MS No 64, dated June 21, 2021 and protested against it by wearing black badges by boycotting Doctor's day celebrations on Thurs-

The doctors say that empowering the Joint Collectors (village, ward secretariats and development) with service matters and empowering the Joint Collector to monitor and review the daily activities of Superintendents who are of additional director cadres will affect the day-to-day functions of technically qualified DM&HOs and DCHS in the districts. Also, entrusting the service matters

and day-to-day technically monitored functions of DM&HO and DCHS to JCs is being objected to by the doctors.

Making JCs as reporting authorities for all annual confidential reports of sub-district level officers of health will make the role of district medical officers redundant. They argue that DM&HOs and DCHS will know the problems of doctors and technical issues better and can take decisions accordingly. Some senior doctors have commented that in several districts revenue officials have been involved in decisions on patients' oxygen requirements, Remdesivir injections and instructing the doctors to follow their orders.

The doctors are questioning the very intention of GO No.64 which does not exist anywhere in the country.

They suggest that an advisory committee with senior doctors be appointed to take decisions on various matters.

Chairman of Chittoor District JAC Dr Paul Ravi Kumar told The Hans India that their

united fight will continue till the controversial GO is withdrawn. At a time when the doctors have been extending Covid services putting their own lives at risk, such GOs are creating additional mental agony for them.

Various associations have come together and formed state and district-wise JACs to fight against the GO. After deliberating in detail through a virtual meeting they have chalked out an action plan to bring pressure on the government. Accordingly, the doctors are wearing black badges on July 1 and 2 which will be followed by lunch hour demonstrations during the next two days.

On July 5 and 6 they will stop sending any reports to the government and from July 7 onwards the doctors want to stop all work until their demand is heard by the government. Convenor of APGDA Dr D Jayadheer wrote a letter to CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy stating that the GO has created a lot of uproar among the doctors' community and mentioned various

AP CM launches revamped YSR Bima

HANS NEWS SERVICE **A**MARAVATI

CHIEF Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy on Thursday launched the YSR Bima scheme with new guidelines, where the government itself will directly pay the insurance amount to the family of deceased to make the insurance claims easier.

In order to support 1.32 lakh families through YSR Bima scheme, the state government allocated Rs 750 crores for the year 2021-22. In the last two years, the state government had spent Rs 1,307 crore for YSR Bima.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said that the government has prioritised public health care, thus soon after forming the government, the annual ceiling for Aarogyasri has been raised to Rs 5 lakh and increased the number of treatments to 2,450. Similarly, as promised during elections, the government had brought YSR Bima, an insurance scheme to support those families who lost their breadwinner. About 1.30 lakh families have been brought under the insurance coverage. Under the scheme, an insurance amount of Rs1 lakh will be paid if the beneficiary aged between 18 to 50 years, who is a breadwinner of the family, dies of natural causes. A sum of Rs 5 lakh will be paid if the beneficiary in the age group of 18 to 70 years dies in an acci-

The Chief Minister explained that the Union government had withdrawn from the insurance



Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy, along with officials, launches YSR Bima with new guidelines, at his camp office in

State govt directly pays claim amount to the family of deceased person

allocated for for 2021-22 for the implementation of the welfare measure

▶ As per new guidelines, the | ▶ An amount of Rs 750 cr is | ▶ Task of screening insurance applications has been entrusted to village/ward secretariats, to be monitored by joint collectors

scheme from April 2020, which was earlier paying 50 per cent of premium. After the Centre's withdrawal, the entire premium was paid by the state on humanitarian grounds to provide security for those families in need. However, the Centre has put

more clauses, closing the existing group insurance system and making a mandatory bank account for every person in the family. The Centre had put another clause of a 45-day lien period from the day of account opening, where if someone dies within 45 days, the insurance will not be paid.

He said that the state government had brought 1.2 crore families under the insurance coverage and paid premium to the banks. However, only 62.5 lakh accounts were opened and the remaining accounts were not opened by the banks though the

state government has credited

the insurance premium.

Banks are required to follow up with individual insurance claims with insurance companies to process the registration and banks are unable to perform these follow-up activities. With this there was a severe delay in the receipt of claims, where also after enrolment, with the 45 day lien period, no claim amounts were given to those 12,039 families who died in the meantime. In that scenario, on humanitarian grounds, the state government came forward and paid for all those 12,039 claims at a cost of Rs 254 crore.

The Chief Minister said that after witnessing all the chaos, the government took the entire responsibility of the scheme and shall clear the claims within one month of receiving the application. In regard to this, he said that the responsibility for screening of insurance applications has been given to village/ward secretariats monitored by the joint collectors.

Further, the Chief Minister said that any eligible person who was left out from YSR Bima can call tollfree number 155214 for getting registered or to resolve



AP SEES 3,841 NEW CASES, 38 FATALITIES

AMARAVATI

ANDHRA Pradesh reported 3,841 fresh cases of coronavirus, 3,963 recoveries and 38 deaths in 24 hours ending 9 am on Thursday.

The cumulative positives climbed to 18,93,354, recoveries to 18.42.432 and deaths 12,744, according to the latest bulletin. The number of active cases slid to 38,178, it said.

East Godavari district reported 760, Chittoor 616 and West Godavari 504 fresh cases. The remaining 10 districts added less than 400 new cases each, with Kurnool logging the lowest 45.

Krishna district saw eight fresh Covid-19 fatalities, Chittoor, East Godavari and Guntur five each, Srikakulam and West Godavari three each, Anantapur, Kadapa and Vizianagaram two each, Kurnool, Nellore and Visakhapatnam one each in a day. (PTI)

Pilot project on energy-efficient street lighting in 12 ULBs

K CHANDRASHEKAR HYDERABAD

State government has decided to implement the Energy Efficient Street Lighting systems in urban local bodies in the State and selected 12 Municipalities and Corporations as a pilot project. According to the officials, the government wanted the municipalities to achieve greater energy efficiency and go for replacement of the existing street lights with energy efficient LEDs on pilot basis.

The official said that 12 urban local bodies including five Municipal Corporations and seven municipalities were selected under the pilot project. The ULBs include Karimnagar, Nizamabad, Khammam, Ramagundam and Warangal Corporation. The municipalities include Gajwel Nagara Panchayat, Siddipet Municipality, Siricilla Municipality, Mahabubnagar Municipality, Mancherial Municipality, Nalgonda Municipality and Tandur Municipality.

The municipal commissioners of 12 selected ULBs have been asked to discuss in the standing committee/council meeting

on the pilot project of re-

ventional street lights with energy efficient street lights (LED) in the already furnished selected stretches and pass a resolution. Meanwhile the commissioners have been given instructions on the pilot project. They have been asked to hand over selected stretches to the EESL for the entire agreement period, ensure 100 per cent Electrical Meters in working condition in selected stretches to measure the accurate energy consumption, and replacement damaged cables and junctions boxes if any with immediate effect, ensure 100 per cent glowing of lights in the selected stretches, so as to arrive at accurate energy consumption in that area before replacement with LEDs, extend cooperation with EESL in planning, operation and maintenance during the project period.

placement of existing con-

As per the agreement, the concerned ULB should pay the monthly electricity bill to the escrow accounts to be opened separately during the agreement period for selected stretches only, ULB should nominate the Electrical Engineer/DE/AE concerned as liaison officer for the pilot project.

Ration cards from July 5, pensions to eligible: KTR

HANS NEW SERVICE HYDERABAD

MUNICIPAL Administration Minister KT Rama Rao on Thursday claimed that only Telangana is doing its best to expand greenery.

He participated in seventh phase of "Haritha Haram" and "Palle and Pattana Pragathi" at Pedda Amberpet Kalan with Ministers Indrakaran Reddy, Sabitha Indra Reddy, and officials and local leaders. Planting a sapling on the occasion, he called upon people to grow greenery. He said the government will give ration cards and pensions to all eligible persons."Now 41 lakh of people get pension. We will give ration cards from July 5 and pensions to other

eligible people". "Rythu Bandhu, Rythu Bhima • Participates in seventh phase of "Haritha Haram" and "Palle and Pattana Pragathi" at Pedda **Amberpet Kalan along with** Ministers Indrakaran Reddy, Sabitha Indra Reddy

• Govt spending Rs 5,900 crore for planting 220 crore saplings in State." It achieved its goal by expanding greenery to 28 per cent from 23.6 per cent



given by the KCR government pushed the Modi government to launch the Kisan help program, he claimed. "Our State is making big efforts to expand greenery", KTR said. The government is spending

a whopping Rs 5,900 crore for planting as many as 220 crore plants in the State." The government achieved its goal by expanding greenery to 28 per cent from 23.6 percent and is still working,

"During Corona pandemic we faced a lot of problems and suffered financial losses", he said. Plants give us oxygen we need to grow more. Time is for expansion of greenery", he stressed. Though many people lost lives to Coronavirus due to lack of oxygen in other States, Telangana did not face such problems, KTR pointed out. "This can be attributed to the foresight and steps by the State government. No other State in the country is able to take up such a pious programme of green drive and expansion", he said.

"Our government aims to provide a pollution-free and conducive environment for our children. For this people's involvement is key at all levels in towns, villages and cities as well.'

3 ex-MLCs petition Legislative Secy for tenure continuation

THREE former members of Legislative Council on Thursday petitioned the Legislature Secretary seeking that they be continued in their posts till August 11 in accordance with the notice of the Election Commission of India.

The three belonging to the opposition TDP had originally retired, along with five others, on June

18 upon expiry of their six-year tenure. What prompted their petition to the Legislature Secretary was a communication the ECI sent to the State Chief Electoral Officer on June 7 indicating that eight members, including one of the ruling YS-RCP, elected from the Local Authorities Constituencies, were due for retirement on August 11, 2021. The ECI sought relevant information from the CEO for conducting the Council elections from the LACs in seats that fall vacant on August 11. Based on this, the TDP members Reddy Subrahmanyam (who was the Council Deputy Chairman), Y V B Rajendra Prasad and D Jagadeeswara Rao petitioned the Legislature Secretary that their retirement on June 18 was contrary to the ECIs declaraRaiendra Prasad and Jagadeeswara Rao want to be allowed to be members till Aug 11, citing the letter by ECI on June 7 which mentioned their date of retirement as Aug 11





They were retired on June 17 along with five others, including one YSRCP member

"The orders of retirement are in contravention to the Election Commission's declaration and it is nothing but illegal, arbitrary and unconstitutional. Therefore, the appointment of pro-tem Chairman is also invalid," the three contended. They, hence, requested that they be allowed to continue in office till August 11. Subrahmanyam wanted him to be continued as Deputy Chairman of the Council.

"In any case it is not possible (to continue), you are further requested to give a letter with valid reasons regarding the retirement on June 18," the TDP members requested the Legislature Secretary.

No lifer to kidnapper if he treats victim well: SC

Top court was hearing an appeal filed by Telangana resident Shaik Ahmed challenging HC order

New Delhi

f an abducted person is not assaulted or threatened to be killed and treated well, then the kidnapper cannot be sentenced to life imprisonment under Section 364A of Indian Penal Code, the Supreme Court has said.

A bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan and R Subhash Reddy made the observation while setting aside the conviction of an auto driver in Telangana who had kidnapped a minor and demanded a ransom of Rs 2 lakh from his father. The top court said that there are three essential ingredients to convict an accused under Section 364A (kidnapping for ransom) which need to be proved by prosecution. It said the three essential

ingredients are -- kidnapping or abduction of any person or keeping him in detention; threatening to cause death or hurt to such person, or the kidnapper's conduct gives rise to a reasonable apprehension that victim may be put to death or hurt in order to compel the Government, foreign State or any Governmental organization or any other person to pay a ransom. Referring to the punishment of life or death sentence provided for convictions under Section 364A, the top court said, "In addition to the first condition either condition (ii) or (iii) has to be proved, failing which conviction under Section 364A cannot be sustained." The top court was hearing an appeal filed by Telangana resident Shaik Ahmed challenging a high court order. The



high court had dismissed his plea against conviction and sentence of life imprisonment under section 364 A of the IPC. Ahmed, an auto driver had kidnapped a Class 6 student of St Mary's High School on the pretext of dropping him

The child was rescued by police when the child's father went to pay the ransom. The child, who was 13 years old at the time of incident in 2011, and his father had told the lower court that Ahmed never threatened to kill or harm the boy. The top court set aside the conviction under section 364 A of the IPC. "From the evidence on record regarding kidnapping, it is proved that accused had kidnapped the victim for ransom, demand of ransom was also proved. Even though offence under Section 364A has not been proved beyond reasonable doubt but the offence of kidnapping has been fully established to which effect the learned Sessions Judge has recorded a categorical finding.

"The offence of kidnapping having been proved, the appellant deserves to be convicted under Section 363(Punishment for kidnapping). Section 363 provides for punishment which is imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to seven years and shall also be liable to fine," the bench said.

The apex court said that it is satisfied that the appellant deserves to be sentenced with imprisonment of seven years and also liable to pay fine of Rs 5,000.

WINDOWS

Godse's biography set for 2022 release

MUMBAI: The first-ever biography of Nathuram Godse, Mahatma Gandhi's assassin is slated to release in 2022.

Nathuram Godse: The True Story of Gandhi's Assassin was acquired at an auction by Teesta Guha Sarkar, Head of Editorial at Pan Macmillan India, from Anish Chandy, Founder of Labyrinth Literary Agency.

Steeped in research and fieldwork, and both primary and secondary source material, this investigative account will bring to light hitherto unknown aspects of Godse's life and times, his ideologies and motivations. This book will examine these questions in significant detail while revealing the complex fac-

Gulshan murder: HC upholds Taurani's acquittal

tors that led to an assassination

that would permanently alter the

course of India's history.

MUMBAI: Nearly 24 years after the crime that shocked the Hindi film industry, the Bombay High Court on Thursday upheld the acquittal of film producer and Tips Industries co-founder Ramesh Taurani in the 1997 murder case of music baron Gulshan Kumar, but confirmed the conviction of co-accused Abdul Rauf Merchant.

A division bench of Justices S S Jadhay and N R Borkar also quashed the acquittal of Rauf's brother and another accused in the case, Abdul Rashid Merchant, and sentenced him to life imprisonment noting that Rashid was one of the persons who shot at Kumar.

Gulshan Kumar, known as 'Cassette King', was shot dead outside a temple in suburban Andheri on August 12, 1997.

The high court in its judgment noted that it was "a cold-blooded murder". "We have no doubt whatsoever that the prosecution has proved that the appellant (Rauf) has caused the homicidal death of deceased Gulshan Kumar by firing and causing bullet injuries beyond reasonable doubt," the HC said.





Doctors celebrate National Doctors' Day at Masina Hospital in Mumbai; (Right) A closed Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) vaccination centre due to shortage of vaccines in Mumbai on Thursday

Massive shortage of vax in Assam

GUWAHATI/NEW DELHI/MUMBAI

THE BJP-led Assam government could vaccinate only 16.63 lakh people in the last 10 days, almost 45 per cent less than Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's target of inoculating 30 lakh people, due to a massive shortage of Covid-19 vaccines, a senior health official said on Thursday.

As per the bulletin issued by the National Health Mission under the state Health Department, a total of 16,63,405 people were inoculated across the state from June 21 to June 30. This figure is way below the ambitious 30-lakh target set during Sarma's meeting with all the stakeholders of the districts on June 19.

Mumbaikars expressed unhappiness over the suspension of the vaccination drive at civic and government-run centres in Mumbai on Thursday due to shortage of vaccines doses, and raised questions over the management of the inoculation programme.

Some residents also wondered if this was a bid to "divert people to private hospitals" for paid jabs rather than getting free vaccine doses at government centres.

Last month also, the inoculation drive was suspended once due to unavailability

of sufficient number of vaccine doses. "Private hospitals have got thrice their normal quota for tmrw whereas the free

NSG official assaults cops on mask issue

AURANGABAD: A 34-year-old man posted in the Special Rangers Group of the NSG allegedly assaulted some policemen when they stopped him for not wearing face mask in a public place as per COVID-19 protocols here in Maharashtra. An assistant police inspector and two other security personnel were injured in the incident that took place on Wednesday, he said. In the wake of fresh restrictions enforced across the state earlier this week amid fears of a third wave of COVID-19, a team of personnel from Cantonment police station was checking vehicles at the Nagar Naka square. The accused, resident of Adgav Bhumi in Phulambri taluka, was on way to his village along with his brother when the police team stopped him as he was not wearing a face mask, the official said.

vaccination centres are shut. Scam to divert people to private hospitals,"citizen Azmina Kotadiya tweeted.

After states like Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Delhi have asked for more supplies in July, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan hit out on Thurs-

India logs 48,786 new cases

NEW DELHI: India added 48,786 new cases of coronavirus taking the total tally to 3,04,11,634, while the national recovery rate improved to 96.97 per cent, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Thursday. The Covid-19 death toll rose to 3,99,459 with 1,005 fresh fatalities. According to the data published at 7 am, cumulatively 33.57 crore vaccine doses have been administered so far under the Nationwide Vaccination Drive. The active cases have further declined to 5.23.257 comprising 1.72 per cent of the total infections, while the national COVID-19 recovery rate has improved to 96.97 per cent. As many as 19.21.450 tests were conducted on Wednesday taking the total cumulative tests conducted so far for detection of COVID-19 in the country to 41,20,21,494.

day, saying states should stop playing "shameless politics" and focus on governance rather than create panic.

He said 12 crore doses would be sent to the states in July, apart from the 25% supply that is reserved for private hospitals. This would mean about 15-16 crore doses

Memorial for

warriors in K'taka

BENGALURU: A first-of-its-kind grand COVID Warrior Memorial in honour of doctors and paramedical staff who 'martyred' themselves in the fight against coronavirus would be built in Bengaluru, Karnataka Health Minister Dr K Sudhakar said on Thursday.

"We will build a memorial to pay homage to those doctors who laid down their lives due to COVID while rendering their services on our Arogya Soudha premises. I believe this is the first memorial in the country," Sudhakar said during a function to celebrate National Doctors' Day.

Stating that about 800 doctors died due to COVID in the country during the second wave of COVID, Sudhakar said many of them left behind their families including children in the line of duty.

in all in July, which should be enough for daily vaccinations of 50-60 lakh this month. A senior central government official said the real issue was of supplies, which are expected to be moderate in July and could see a quantum increase only August onwards.

Delta variant greatest threat to US, says **Dr Fauci**

WASHINGTON: The highly contagious Delta variant of the coronavirus is the "greatest threat" to America's attempt to eradicate the Covid pandemic, the country's leading infectious disease expert and White House Chief Medical Advisor Dr Anthony Fauci has warned.

The variant, which was first detected in India, is more contagious and causes more severe disease than other circulating variants, he said on Tuesday during a White House Covid-19 response team briefing.

Fauci said the Delta variant now makes up more than 20 percent of all new cases in the US, nearly doubling from nearly 10 percent two weeks ago.

'Similar to the situation in the UK, the Delta variant is currently the greatest threat in the US to our attempt to eliminate COVID-19." Fauci told reporters during a virtual news conference.

However, the "good news" is that the US vaccines are effective against the Delta variant, said Dr Fauci, the head of the National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID).

Meanwhile, an expert panel of India's central drug authority recommended against granting permission to the Serum Institute of India to conduct the phase 2/3 trial of vaccine Covovax on children aged two to 17 years, sources said. The SII applied to the Drugs Controller General of India on Monday seeking permission for conducting a trial of Covovax on 920 children, 460 each in the 12-17 and 2-11 age groups, at 10 sites.

The Subject Expert Committee (SEC) on COVID-19 of the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation, which deliberated on the application, noted that the vaccine has not been approved in any country," a source said.

"It also recommended that the Pune-based company should submit the safety and immunogenicity data (of Covovax) from the ongoing clinical trial in adults for considering the conduct of a clinical trial in children," the source



MLA from Sibsagar and RTI activist, Akhil Gogoi being brought to the special National Investigation Agency (NIA) court in Guwahati on Thursday

Akhil walks out of jail after 2 years

GUWAHATI: Assam legislator Akhil Gogoi on Thursday walked free after more than a year-and-a-half in captivity as a special NIA court cleared him of all charges under UAPA for his alleged role in the violent anti-CAA stir in the state in December 2019. Gogoi, an Independent MLA from Sivasagar constituency, walked out of the Gauhati Medical College and Hospital. where he was being treated

for various ailments, after the

special NIA court sent the re-

lease order to the Guwahati

Central Jail. "Truth has finally

were spared to keep me behind the bars." the Raijor Dal chief told reporters after his release. Gogoi said that after keeping his bag at home, he will visit the parents of "first CAA martyr" Sam Stafford at their residence in Hatigaon area of Guwahati, "From there, I will visit the offices of Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti and Raijor Dal today. I leave for my constituency Sivasagar tomorrow early in the morning and thank people for electing me while I was in prison," he

prevailed, though no efforts

LONDON: AirCar, a dual-mode car-aircraft vehicle

moved closer to production this week, fulfilling a key development milestone in a 35-minute flight from the international airport in Nitra to the international airport in Bratislava

After landing, at a click of a button the aircraft transformed into a sports car in under three minutes and was driven by its inventor, Professor Stefan Klein and co-founder, Anton Zajac to downtown Bratislava, cutting the typical travel time by a factor of two.

The AirCar Prototype 1 is equipped with a 160 horsepower BMW engine with fixed-propeller and a ballistic parachute. Under the supervision of the Civil Aviation Authority, the AirCar has completed over 40 hours of test flights, including steep 45 degree turns and stability and maneuverability

AirCar Prototype 1 has flown at 8200 ft and



The AirCar Prototype 2, the pre-production model, will be equipped with a 300 horsepower engine and receive the EASA CS-23 aircraft certi-

Flying car completes 1st ever inter-city flight

fication with an M1 road permit. With its variable pitch propeller, the Prototype 2 is expected to have a cruise speed of 300kmph and boast of a range of 1000km.

TN government should fix prices of fish, just like crops: Fishermen

CHENNAI

√ishermen's association leader Jesu Raja, heading the association of Rameswaram, Mandapam and Thangachimadam, has said that the state government must fix the prices for fish just like fixing the price for paddy and other produce. He said that export firms were procuring fishes like pomfret, seer and prawns at a paltry rate from the fishermen ranging from Rs 300 to Rs 600 a kilo and selling them in foreign markets at 3 to 4 times the price they buy.

He said that even as the exporters are making huge profits the fishermen who are braving rough weather in the sea and hard conditions get a paltry sum. While admitting that the export market has provided the fishermen with regular buyers, the benefits are very less.

Saju John, who is the president of the All Tamil Nadu Fishermen Welfare Association, told IANS: "Fishermen are always in difficulty. We venture into the sea, catch fish braving rough weather, rough seas and we end up being paid

The government can take the initiative and fix the prices for fish just like prices are fixed for paddy and other crops. Of course, if there is a huge catch, the prices will come down but even then the government can fix a price range and not allow exploitation in this field, oth-



erwise, the labour will go waste."

The association of Tamil Nadu Marine Products Exporters however said that they are making average payment to the fishermen and most important there are regular buyers. Sivashankaran .M of the exporters association told IANS, "At present, there is a proper balance between the fishermen community and the exporters. We are regular customers and we are paying for the fish according to our means. For a catch to be exported it requires a lot of other paraphernalia and hence we need to balance that also. I can vouch that the exporters and fishermen are having a symbiotic relationship."

He added, "If there is any issue, we can dis-

cuss and iron out these differences.'

The fishermen of Tamil Nadu ventured into the sea only on Tuesday night even after the 61 day annual ban ended on June 14 as they had taken time to repair the boats, fishnets etc. Things got delayed as most of the fishermen had not taken even the first jab of the Covid-19 vac-

Jesu Raja said, "We ventured into the sea only on Tuesday night as the annual maintenance of fishing nets, mechanical work on the boats, and other necessary maintenance work was not done as Covid-19 has created major problems for the fishermen community. Several of the fishermen were yet to take even the first dose of the Covid



TODAY'S QUOTE

Telecom industry under tremendous stress

THE telecom industry is under tremendous stress. I hope the government will ensure that India's digital dream remains intact through the provision of at least three operators. Telecom tariffs need to go up — Sunil Mittal, Chairman, Bharti Airtel



AUTO SALES Honda Cars reports 4-fold increase in sales

HONDA Cars India Ltd (HCIL) on Thursday reported a four-fold increase in its domestic wholesales last month at 4,767 units as compared with 2,032 units in May this year. The company exported 1,241 units last month as compared with 385 units in May. The automaker expects that this positive momentum

FOREX (bu	n ₹)		
US Dollar	75.37	South	N IIA
Euro	89.27	African Rand	5.51
UAE Dirham	20.67	Hong Kong Dollar	10.07
Thai Baht	2.44	Japanese Yen	0.77
British Pound	103.96	New Zealand Dollar	52.64
Australian Dollar	56.43	Saudi Riyal	21.82
Canadian Dollar	60.75	Swedish Krona	9.2
Swiss Franc	81.29	Singapore Dollar	56.27

BIZ BRIEFS

Big Bazaar's new offer

Big Bazaar announced monthly discounts offer -Sabse Badi Savings. Under this, customers get a chance to save big on monthly groceries and daily essentials by shopping from their nearest Big Bazaar store or shopping online at shop.bigbazaar.com, the Big Bazaar App, and even through WhatsApp. With discounts across food and other important categories, the offer will continue till July 11, allowing the customers to get groceries, juices, fruits, and vegetables at low and affordable prices. "We have perfected the promise of giving the best value to our customers. Our offer is a value promise created for every Indian household, understanding their requirement, and giving them biggest saving on their monthly budget, said Pawan Sarda, CMO - Digital, Marketing, E-commerce, Future Group.

Udaan sells Covid essentials

Udaan has sold 15 million Covid safety essentials on its platform, catering to over 23,000 orders from over 400 sellers across 5,000 pin codes. The platform witnessed a 5X surge in the demand for items like protective masks, face shields and PPE suits. It has supported retailers with regular and uninterrupted supply of Covid safety essentials across the country. The retailers on the platform benefitted from door-step delivery by placing orders on the udaan app. Uday Bhaskar, Head, Lifestyle, Electronics, General Merchandise (Non-food business), Udaan said: "As a result of restrictions imposed during the second wave of Covid-19, the supplychain and distribution ecosystem of retailers were disrupted. We ensured regular, uninterrupted, and timely delivery of Covid safety essentials."

Kotak Mahindra's new initiative

otak Mahindra has announced an offer for its customers in a tie-up with Metropolis Healthcare Limited. Kotak debit and credit cardholders can avail the Coviprotect Spike antibody blood test at a 30 per cent discount at all Metropolis diagnostics centres in Mumbai and in over 90 cities across India. The test which costs Rs 1200 will be available at a reduced price of Rs 850 for all Kotak customers. Puneet Kapoor, President, Products. Alternate Channels, Customer Experience Delivery, Kotak Mahindra Bank said: "As India slowly starts to unlock and we begin to resume our everyday lives, it is extremely important that we take the necessary precautions. Through our tie-up with Metropolis, we are pleased to offer this essential test at a 30 per cent discount to our Kotak

Vivo records 1 lakh sales

customers."

Vivo has announced that it has successfully delivered one lakh smartphones between 10th May and 10th June 2021 through its unique Vivo Smart Retail Initiative (VSR). The first of its kind click-tomortar model allows the customer to experience and buy Vivo products and services from the safety and convenience of their homes. Reiterating its continued commitment towards mainline retail and enabling business continuity through an agile solution which helped bridge the gap between retailers and consumers in the post-pandemic world, has benefitted retail partners with an average increase of 10 per cent in business (in value terms). Nipun Marya, Director- Brand strategy, said: "Vivo Smart Retail has been a successful customer-centric innovation, and we are delighted to witness such an overwhelming response.'

Uncertainty pulls mfg PMI below 50 mark

HANS BUSINESS

INDIA's manufacturing sector activities contracted for the first time in 11 months in June as rise in coronavirus cases and strict containment measures adversely impacted demand as well as resulted in job losses, a monthly survey said on Thursday.

The seasonally-adjusted IHS Markit India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) declined to 48.1 in June from 50.8 in May. The index fell below the critical 50 mark for the first time since July 2020. In PMI parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

The latest reading highlighted renewed contractions in factory orders, production, exports and quantities of purchases. Moreover, with business optimism fading over the month, job shedding continued, the survey said. Covid-19 restrictions also curtailed international demand for Indian goods and new export orders decreased for the first time in ten months.

"The intensification of the Covid-19 crisis in India had a detrimental impact on the manufacturing economy. Growth of new orders, production, exports and input purchasing was interrupted in June as containment measures aimed at bringing the pandemic under control restrained demand," Pollyanna De Lima, economics associate direc-

India's manufacturing sector contracts to 48.1 in June, first time in 11 months: Survey



tor at IHS Markit, said.

Lima, however, noted that in all cases, rates of contraction were softer than during the first lockdown. Business confidence was dampened in June by uncertainty over when the pandemic can be brought under control. Companies were at their least optimistic for almost a year.

"As a result of subdued optimism, jobs were shed again in June," Lima said. On the price front, input costs increased further in June, with firms reporting higher prices for chemicals, electronic components, energy, metals and plastics.

Additional cost burdens were again transferred on to clients, with goods producers hiking their fees for the tenth straight month, the survey said. Out of the three broad areas of the manufacturing sector monitored by the survey, capital goods was the worst affected area in June. Output here declined at a steep rate due to a sharp fall in sales. "The sector also saw the fastest contraction in buying levels and was the only to post job shedding," Lima said.

LIC launches Saral pension plan

HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

LIFE Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India has introduced LIC Saral Pension plan, a nonlinked, non-participating, single premium, individual immediate annuity plan. The annuity plan is as per the guidelines of Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI), which offers same terms and conditions across all the life insurers

The policyholder has an option to choose type of annuity from two available options on payment of a lump sum amount. Life annuity with a return of 100 per cent of purchase price and Joint Life Last survivor annuity with return of 100 per cent of purchase price on death of the last survivor. The plan can be purchased offline as well as online directly through LIC website.

The minimum annuity is Rs 12,000 per annum and minimum purchase price shall depend on the annuity mode, option chosen, and age of the annuitant. There is no ceiling on maximum purchase price. The modes of annuity available are yearly, half-yearly, quarterly, and monthly. An incentive for purchase price above Rs 5,00,000 is available by way of increase in the annuity rate. The plan is available for ages from 40 years to 80 years. Loan shall be available at any time after six months from the date of commencement of the policy.

Economy recovering since late May: RBI

THE second wave of the pandemic took a 'grievous toll' on India, but the dented economic activity started recovering from late-May, Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das said on Thursday. In a first, Das flagged the rising data breaches and cyber-attacks as a risk facing the economy, along with others like firming global commodity prices. The recovery that had com-

menced in the second half of 2020-21 was dented in April-May 2021, but with the wave of infections abating as rapidly as it had set in, economic activity has started to look up in late May and early June," Das wrote in his foreword to the bi-annual Financial Sta-

bility Report prepared by the The report said the gross nonperforming assets of banks have been stable at 7.5 per cent in March 2021 -- the same level as six months ago -- but are expected to go up to 9.8 per cent in March 2022, as per its baseline scenario. Das said the dent on balance sheets and performance of financial institutions in India have been much less than what was projected earlier but was quick to add that a clearer picture will emerge as the effects of regulatory reliefs fully work their way through. He also said capital and liquidity buffers at fi-

Rising cyber-attacks, firming global commodity prices posing risk, says Das, while asking banks to watch retail, MSME credit; shore up capital buffers. **RBI** extended interest subsidy for post and preshipment export credit by three months till September

> nancial institutions are "reasonably resilient" to withstand any future shocks. The financial system is on the front foot to aid recovery, but the priority is to maintain and preserve financial stabil-

ity, he said. Domestic financial markets are also boosted by the strengthening signs of the pandemic's abatement, the growing pace and breadth of the vaccination drive and renewed hopes of the economy clawing back lost ground as it unlocks, he said. "...while the recovery is underway, new risks have emerged on the horizon and these include the still nascent and mending state of the upturn, vulnerable as it is to shocks and future waves of the pandemic; international commodity prices and inflationary pressures; global spill overs amid high uncertainty; and rising incidence of data breaches

HARITHA HARAM AT TSIIC-TIF MSME PARK



Gvadari Balamallu, Chairman, TSIIC, on Thursday inaugurated Haritha Haram initiative at TSIIC -TIF MSME Green Industrial Park at Dandumalkapur near Hyderabad. Karne Prabhakar, ex-MLC, TIF president K Sudhir Reddy and others are also seen

Automakers back on recovery track

New Delhi

MAJOR automakers, including Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai, Tata Motors, M&M, Kia, Toyota and Honda, on Thursday reported healthy growth in passenger vehicles (PV) sales in June, recovering from the disruptions induced by the second wave of Covid-19.

India's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) posted total sales of 1,47,368 units in June, up from 46,555 units in May. Its domestic dispatches to dealers last month stood at 1,30,348 units, up from 35,293 units in May, as easing of Covid-related restrictions helped the auto major dispatch more units to dealerships. The company's sales of mini cars, comprising Alto and S-Presso, rose to 17.439 units in June from 4.760 units in May this year. Similarly, compact segment vehicles, including Swift, Celerio, Ignis, Baleno and Dzire, increased to 68,849 units last month from 20,343 cars in May.



BHEL supplies medical oxygen plant to SLG

HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

BHARAT Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) has ventured into the manufacturing of medical oxygen plants and the first indigenously built oxygen plant was handed over to SLG Hospitals. The plant was delivered in a flagging off ceremony in presence of BHEL CMD, senior officials and as well as SLG Hospitals at BHEL's Hyderabad unit.

The plant was delivered in a record time of less than 35 days from receipt of order. The 500 litres per minute medical-grade oxygen generating system has been designed, developed and manufactured by BHEL in association with the CSIR-Indian Institute of Petroleum, Dehradun. Notably, the entire process from signing of transfer of technology agreement to manufacture of prototype was accomplished by BHEL's Hyderabad unit on war footing in 40 days.

Hesa raises \$2mn in seed funding

and cyberattacks," he said.

HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

HESA, a Hyderabad-based tech startup, has secured \$2 million as part of its seed funding round led by Venture Catalysts and also from nine unicorns. The investment is to scale up its operations in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka States and also to scale up the technology.

The startup is a commerce platform that provides physical, digital and social connect to rural India. It unifies value chains in rural India by enabling local brands and businesses to come together as a community. Hesa is one-stop-solution for corporates, agritech and fintech startups, SMEs, banks and financial institutions, government and NGOs who want to access 850 million people in rural India, for their goto-market and buy-sell propositions including brand promotions and social responsibilities.

4 YEARS OF GST REGIME

Enhanced GST mop-up **Gadkari agrees** on problems. sees room for now a 'new normal': FMimprovement New Delhi

WITH the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime completing four years, Union minister Nitin Gadkari on Thursday said "this tax reform was very essential, while observing that there is a room for improvement in the indirect tax regime."

Gadkari, who holds MSME portfolio along with road transport, further said "there is a need to build consensus with states to bring petroleum products and alcohol under the GST regime as the country has a federal structure. This tax reform (GST) was very essential... though we have completed four years of GST, I feel there is room for improvement, and we can make it better with support of stakeholders." Speaking at an event organised by the Institute of Cost Accountants of India (ICAI) on GST Day, Gadkari said: "And in the government, particularly with the MSMEs, there are a lot of problems, their delayed payments are a big problem for us. And all small MSMEs

FINANCE Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday said taxpayer base has almost doubled to 1.28 crore in four years of rollout of the historic tax reform and the enhanced GST mop up in the recent months should now be the 'new normal'.

In a written message to tax officers on the fourth anniversary of GST rollout, she said implementing any reform of this scale in a large and diverse country like India can be highly challenging, but GST has brought about ease in taxpayer compliance and reduced common man's tax burden.

For eight months in a row, Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenues have crossed Rs 1 lakh crore mark and touched a record Rs 1.41 lakh crore in April 2021. "Commendable work has been done in the year gone by both in the area of facilitation and enforcement with numerous cases of fraudulent dealers and ITC being registered. The enhanced revenue collection in recent months should now be the 'new normal'," Sitharaman said. In the last four years, Banking on GST to reach \$5-trn mark by 2025

India registers record ₹1.41-lakh cr **GST** collections in Apr Revenues crossed ₹1L cr for

8 mths in a row

Number of GST taxpayers increased from 6.5 mn to 12.8m in 4 yrs

• 6% tax on service provider with turnover up to ₹50 lakh under composition scheme

A nationwide GST, which subsumed 17 local levies like excise duty, service tax and VAT, was rolled out on July 1, 2017

Commendable work has been done in the year gone by both in the area of facilitation and enforcement with numerous cases of fraudulent dealers and ITC being registered. The enhanced revenue collection in recent months should now be the 'new normal'

> – Nirmala Sitharaman, **Union Finance Minister**

bled to 1.28 crore from 66.25 lakh. Minister of State for Finance Anurag Singh Thakur, in his message on GST Day.

said in the past year a balance has been struck between trade facilitation and enforcement.

GST turns colonial taxation system in 4 years: CAIT

New Delhi

ON completion of four years of GST implementation in India on Thursday, the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) said much against the declared spirit of GST as Good and Simple Tax, the GST has become a 'colonial taxation system' not compatible with the ground realities of business conducted in India and available resources with the traders. Various amendments and introduction of rules

under GST in the recent past have made the taxation system much complicated and put more compliance burden on the traders. It is not alone the Central government but largely the State governments are more responsible for distorting GST taxation system and bringing disparities and anomalies in GST making it a more complex system and a big headache for the traders, said CAIT. CAIT said that even after four years of GST implementation in India, the GST portal is still struggling with many challenges. The rules are amended but the portal fails to update with said amendments timely. So far, no national appellate tribunal has been constituted. No central advance ruling authority has been constituted giving a free hand to States to interpret the law in their own way distorting the fundamentals of 'One Nation-One Tax'. The

GST Authorities are more interested in GST compliance but never thought that a large chunk of traders in the

country are yet to adopt computerization in their existing business format and no step has been taken to equip the traders with computers, etc.

CAIT said that in the recent past, the GST Council has thrown all canons of natural justice by empowering the authorities to cancel GST Registration of any trader without giving him any notice or an opportunity of hearing. Unfettered and arbitrary powers are given to officers without realizing the misuse of such powers which may lead to corruption.



Sania-Bethanie stun sixth seed in doubles opener

SANIA Mirza and her American partner Bethanie Mattek-Sands knocked out sixth seeds Desirae Krawczyk and Alexa Guarachi to move to the second round of the women's doubles event at the Wimbledon Championships, here on Thursday.

Sania and Mattek-Sands were a bit rusty at the start but once they got their rhythm they dominated the match and won 7-5 6-3 against the American-Chilean combination in one hour and 27 minutes.

Pressure was put on the Indo-American pair early in the match when Mattek-Sands served the third game that featured seven deuce points. The American served three double faults in a slow start but eventually held the game after saving three break points.

Sania and Mattek-Sands too had two opportunities to break their rivals but the American fluffed a volley from the net before left-handed Desirae served extremely well to eventually hold.

Guarachi hit a forehand wide at 15-30 to hand two set points to their rivals in the 12th game. It was the chance that Indo-American pair did not squander with Sania finishing off the set with an overhead smash. In the second set, Sania and Mattek-Sands opened up a 3-1 lead when they broke Guarachi again.

Matte-Sands' low backhand return was hit back uppishly and Sania latched on to that with an unreturnable smash. With a 3-1 cushion at hand, Sania and her partner never looked back.

With Ankita Raina taking the court later in the day with American partner Lauren Davis, there will be a bit of history for Indian tennis at the Championships as for the first time, two women players from the country are competing in the main draw of a

For Ankita, it will be her third successive appearance at a tennis major, having made her debut at the Australian Open this year. Sania has been the lone Indian competing at the biggest stage of the game since 2005.



Before that, Indian-American Shikha Uberoi had qualified for the US Open women's singles in 2004 and also won her first round against Japan's Saori Obata before losing to Venus Williams.

Shikha never could make the Grand Slam main draw again and after that it was Sania who kept India represented on the WTA tour. Way back, Nirupama Vaidyanathan was the first to crack a singles Grand Slam main draw in 1998 at the Australian Open, while Nirupama Mankad played the 1971 Wimbledon mixed doubles with Anand Am-

Murray enters third round after a five-setter

LONDON

HOME favourite Andy Murray, who had been practicing with Roger Federer ahead of the Wimbledon Championships, won a marathon five-setter 6-3, 4-6, 4-6, 6-4, 6-2 against German Oscar Otte to reach the third round here. Murray, 34, was granted a wild card for this year's Wimbledon as the three-time Grand Slam champion had been suffering setbacks while trying to return to the tour after hip surgeries. The former world No. 1 spent three-and-a-half hours

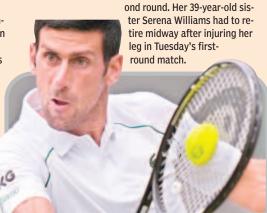
to see off 24th seed Nikoloz Basilashvili in the first round on Monday and needed to fight 20 minutes longer on Wednesday against Otte, who played at the grass-court Grand Slam for the first time, Xinhua re-Murray will lock horns with Canadian 10th seed

Denis Shapovalov as the 22-year-old advanced to the third round at Wimbledon for the first time following a walkover from Spanish veteran Pablo Andujar.

Earlier, men's singles reigning champion Novak Djokovic cruised into the third round by beat-

ing Kevin Anderson from South Africa 6-3, 6-3, 6-3. Women's singles second seed Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus came from one set down to defeat home player Katie Boulter 4-6, 6-3, 6-3.

The 41-year-old Venus Williams was ousted by Tunisian Ons Jabeur 5-7, 0-6 in straight sets in the sec-



Sophia powers England women to series win over India

ALL-ROUNDER Sophia Dunkley, who earlier this month became the first Black woman to play Test cricket for England, hammered un-

beaten 73 off 81 deliveries and shared an undefeated 92-run partnership for the sixth wicket with Katherine Brunt (33 not out) to help England women's team beat India by five wickets in the second ODI here. The win helped the host take an unassailable 2-0 lead.

England women had won the first ODI by eight wickets. India, who were all out for 221 in 50 overs after being put into bat, began well by reducing England to 92 for four. They managed to remove the stars of the first match Tammy Beaumont (10) and Natalie Sciver (19) early. However, Sophia pow-

ered them to the target, hitting five fours and a six as the Indian bowlers struggled to get rid of her. Earlier, England pace bowler Kate Cross took five

wickets for 34 runs to help bowl Indian women out

Indian skipper Mithali Raj scored a half-century

Brief scores:

Harmanpreet Kaur (19) and Mithali (59 off 92 balls) then added 68 runs for the fourth wicket before Harmanpreet fell. As wickets kept tumbling around

The visitors had got off to a flying start with open-

ers Smriti Mandhana (22) and Shafali Verma (44)

adding 56 before a loss of three quick wickets, in-

cluding the close stumping of Shafali, put them on

the back-foot at 77 for three.

before developing neck pain.

her, Mithali remained the lone batter standing. Towards the end, Jhulan Goswami (19) and Poonam

> India past 200. Left-arm spinner Sophie Ecclestone took

Yadav (10) added

28 for the last

wicket to take

three wickets for

India Women 221 all out in 50 overs (Mithali Raj 59, Shafali Verma 44, Kate Cross 5/34, S Eccleston 3/33) lost to England Women 225/5 in 47.3 overs (Sophia Dunkley 73 not out, Katherine Brunt 33 not out, Lauren Winfield Hill 42, Poonam Yadav

Hyderabad FC signs kit deal with hummel

HYDERABAD

INDIAN Super League side Hyderabad FC have entered into a partnership with Danish sportswear brand hummel who joined as the club's Official Team Kit Partner for the upcoming 2021-22 season. HFC, who impressed everyone with their entertaining brand of football during the seventh season of the ISL, have now come together with hummel who share a century-long history in football. The global sports brand is looking at this partnership as an avenue to invest in Indian football and further explore new paths to develop the sport in India. The legendary Danish brand has a proud sports history and is one of the most recognised team sports brands in the world with roots in football and handball, and has previously been worn by iconic football teams such as Real Madrid, Tottenham Hotspur, Aston Villa, Benfica and the Denmark national team. Today, hummel continues to sponsor clubs and players within handball and football, along with English Premier League teams Everton and Southampton to name a few.

Lord's to host full capacity crowd for July 10 ODI

LONDON

ENGLAND will see a return of full capacity crowd in an international game for the first time since September 2019 on July 10 when the hosts play Pakistan in the second One-day International at Lords. Lord's, which has a capacity of 30,000, was included in the Event Research Programme (ERP) of the UK government which is looking to open up sports venues to crowds after Covid-19.

The government had allowed limited capacity in grounds. As many as 17,000 fans attended the first three days of the second Test against New Zealand at Edgbaston last month.

Earlier this week, it was decided that the third and final ODI between England and Pakistan on July 13 in Birmingham will be played in front of 80 per cent crowd capacity.

"Birmingham's Edgbaston Stadium has again been confirmed as part of the Government's Events Research Programme (ERP) and will operate at 80 per cent capacity for the Royal London International (ODI) between England and Pakistan," a statement from Warwickshire County Cricket Club

"Taking place on Tuesday 13 July, Edgbaston will be able to accommodate around 19,000 fans, including under 16s, in the stadium bowl and hospitality lounges without social distancing as part of the research study," it had added. (IANS)

Praneeth, Srikanth nominated for Khel Ratna

NEW DELHI: Olympic-bound shuttler B Sai Praneeth and Kidambi the Badminton Association of India, which has also recommended three players for the Arjuna award. Praneeth, who won a bronze medal at the 2019 World Championship, is the only men's singles shuttler to have qualified for the Tokyo Games. Srikanth has been struggling of late but won four titles in 2017. The Badminton Association of India (BAI) nominated HS Prannoy, Pranav Jerry Chopra and Sameer Verma for the Ariuna honour. The federation also sent applications of S Muralidharan and PU Bhaskar Babu for the Dronacharya award. Muralidharan is already a recipient of Dronacharya Life Time achievement award. Leroy D'sa and PVV Lakshmi have been nominated for the Dhyanchand award. PTI

AICF nominates Humpy for Khel Ratna award

CHENNAI: Reigning women's world rapid chess champion Gandhi Khel Ratna award by the All India Chess Federation (AICF). The 34-year old Humpy, currently ranked number three in the world, has qualified for the FIDE Women's Candidates event next year and was also part of the Indian squad which won the Online Chess Olympiad in 2020. Humpy is already a recipient of the Arjuna award and Padma Shri. Also, seven other players -- Vidit S Gujrathi, B Adhiban, S P Sethuraman, M R Lalith Babu, Bhakti Kulkarni and Padmini Rout have been nominated for the Ariuna award. AICF honorary secretary Bharat Singh Chauhan said. (PTI)

BELGIUM TAKES ON ITALY FOR SPOT IN EURO 2020 SEMIS

only goal in the team's 1-0 victory over Portu-

"It's an advantage that we didn't have to

"We must continue to believe in ourselves,"

Italy midfielder Jorginho said. "The most seri-

ous mistake would be to think that we've al-

ready done something great." Neither De

gal in the last round.

BELGIUM'S leading scorer at the European defenders. They all play in Serie A. Romelu

goals in his team's four victories so far. And with Kevin De Bruyne and Eden Hazard both doubtful for the game. Italy captain Giorgio Chiellini and teammate Leonardo Bonucci - both defenders at Juventus - will know just who to focus on. "It's a quarterfinal. It will be decided on small details." Belgium midfielder Youri Tielemans said.

"I think one phase can turn the game in our favour, or against us. We have to be concentrated from the first minute and finish strongly. It's going to be very, very tough, very, very physical.

Belgium, which is trying to win its first major soccer tournament three years after a thirdplace finish at the World Cup, hasn't lost in 13 games and is the top-ranked team in the

were taken to extra time by Austria in the round of 16.

"It's a nice challenge to beat them after a run of 31 unbeaten games. I estimate the odds 50-50." said Belgium midfielder Thorgan Hazard, Eden's younger

Championship is no stranger to Italy's veteran play extra time." Both teams won all three of their group matches, and with France, Portugal, the Netherlands and Germany all elimi-Lukaku will likely be the main attacking threat when Belgium takes on Italy in Munich on Frinated from Euro 2020, the winner in Munich day in the Euro 2020 quarterfinals. will certainly be among the favourites for the The Inter Milan forward has scored three

world.

The Italians haven't been beaten in a national team record 31 matches, though they

brother and the scorer of the

the latest problem is a bruised left ankle sustained after a tackle from Portugal midfielder Joao Palhinha in the round of 16.

"I don't know if De Bruyne will play in the game, but he's definitely a player who makes the difference, with a higher-than-average football intelligence," said Jorginho, a Chelsea midfielder who plays against De Bruyne in the Premier League.

The injury-prone Hazard was also taken off early against Portugal with a hamstring issue. Belgium coach Roberto Martínez said Monday that both Hazard and De Bruvne



