



THE HANS INDIA

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WINDOWS

India records 60K recoveries in a day

Indian on Wednesday saw its total number of corona virus recoveries reach 20,37,870 after 60,091 recoveries in the last 24 hours, the highest in a day so far. The total cases have increased to 27,67,273 after a single-day spike of 64,531 cases. While corona virus death toll in the country has surged to 52,889, active cases stand at 6,76,514.



Colonel-Major Ismael Wague, spokesman for the soldiers identifying themselves as National Committee for the Salvation of the People, announces that they have assumed control of Mali, and vow to install democracy and security for the people. Malian President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita appeared on State television earlier to announce his resignation with immediate affect late Tuesday Aug 18 following a military coup

Mali coup soldiers promise handover

Bamako (Mali): The Malian soldiers who forced President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita to resign in a coup promised early Wednesday to organise new elections after their takeover was swiftly condemned by the international community. In a statement carried overnight on state broadcaster ORTM, the mutinous soldiers who staged Tuesday's military coup identified themselves as the National Committee for the Salvation of the People led by Col. Maj. Ismael Wagué. "With you, standing as one, we can restore this country to its former greatness," Wagué said, announcing that borders were closed and that a curfew was going into effect from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. The news of Keita's departure was met with jubilation by anti-government demonstrators in the capital, Bamako, and alarm by former colonial ruler France, and other allies and foreign nations.



SC orders CBI probe into Sushant death case

Asks Maharashtra Govt to assist

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Wednesday ordered for a CBI investigation into Sushant Singh Rajput's death case, and directed the Maharashtra government to render all assistance. A bench of Justice Hrishikesh Roy made it clear that it was court-ordered CBI probe and that there is no room for the Maharashtra government to challenge

this. It also clarified that registration of the FIR at Patna was legally valid and adhered to the principles of the Criminal Procedure Code. Therefore, the court added, the recommendation made by the Bihar government for a CBI investigation was also proper and valid. Reading out the operative part



of the 35-page judgment, Justice Roy also said that Maharashtra government must comply with



the orders since it is a court-ordered probe. About the inquest proceedings

conducted so far by the Mumbai Police, the court directed that all pertinent documents must be handed over the CBI henceforth.

The top court delivered the verdict on a plea of actor Rhea Chakraborty who had sought transfer of FIR lodged against her at Patna to Mumbai. Rajput, 34, was found dead inside his apartment in suburban Bandra in Mumbai on June 14 and since then Mumbai Police had been probing the case keeping in mind various angles.

Incessant rains 'drown' Delhi

New Delhi (IANS): Incessant rain lashed the National Capital Region (NCR) for hours on Wednesday, deluging the arterial roads of Delhi-NCR and resulting in traffic snarls and chaotic scenes at many places.

Vehicular traffic moved at a snail's pace due to waterlogging on key road stretches. According to the Delhi Traffic Police, two buses, including a DTC bus, broke down near the Taj Hotel while one mechanic motor vehicle broke down near Dhaura Kuan on Wednesday.

Waterlogging was also reported on the Bhairon Road, Ring Road, MB Road, the area from Civil Lines to Mall Road, beneath the Munirka Metro station, Mathura Road, Chandigarh Akhara Ring Road, and Loni Golchakkar, among



Men push a car stuck at waterlogged Hero Honda Chowk near Delhi-Gurgaon Expressway after heavy rain, in Gurugram on Wednesday

other places. Early on Wednesday morning, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) had warned that continuous rain could result in water accumulation in the low-lying areas, traffic disruption, and increased chances of vehicle accidents. It had re-

quested people to step out only after checking the weather advisories.

According to the data with Delhi's Regional Weather Forecasting Centre, the Safdarjung observatory -- which provides representative figures for the city -- recorded a rain-

fall of 22.4 mm since 11.30 am. Lodhi Road, Ridge, Palam and Ayanagar weather stations recorded 16 mm, 34 mm, 44 mm and 60 mm precipitation, respectively. The weather bureau said that it will continue to rain till August 22.

Continued on Page 5

Nod for National Recruitment Agency

One exam for all Central govt jobs

New Delhi (PTI): The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the creation of National Recruitment Agency (NRA) for conducting a common eligibility test for central government jobs, initiating a "landmark reform" in the recruitment process.

Briefing the media on the Cabinet meeting, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, I&B Minister Prakash Javadekar said it was a historic decision that will allow job-seekers take one common test and save costs and time spent on writing multiple exams. This has been a major demand of the youths for many years

which has been fulfilled, he said. Union Minister Jitendra Singh termed it a revolutionary and landmark reform in the history of the country. It will lead to ease of selection, ease of job placement and ease of living, especially for those sections of society that are considered disadvantaged, he said.

This will also help the poor and women who have to travel long distances for taking exams for various jobs, he said. The NRA will conduct a Common Eligibility Test (CET) to screen/shortlist candidates for the Group B and Group C (non-technical) posts.

Continued on Page 5

Pranab's health deteriorates, lung infection detected

New Delhi (IANS): Former President Pranab Mukherjee's health condition deteriorated on Wednesday as he developed lung infection, the Army Research and Referral Hospital said. He has been hospitalized for the past nine days and been on ventilator support following a brain surgery.

The hospital authorities said, "There has been a decline in the medical condition of Hon'ble Shri Pranab Mukherjee as he has developed features of lung infection." The authorities also stated that the former president continues to be on ventilator support and is currently being managed by a team of specialists.

Earlier in the day, the former president's son Abhijit Mukherjee said that his father's condition continued to be stable. "With all your good wishes and sincere efforts of the doctors, my father is stable now! His vital parameters continue to remain under control and manageable! Positive signs of his improvement is noticed! I request you all to pray for his speedy recovery," Abhijit Mukherjee tweeted at 8.33 a.m.

AP EFFORTS PAY OFF

Centre eases borrowing cap for Discoms

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh government's efforts to seek special liquidity infusion scheme to revive the financially-distressed DISCOMs and its protest to the Centre over high charges it was paying for buying power from the Central agencies paid off on Wednesday when the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved a one-time relaxation to the Power Finance Corporation (PFC) and Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) for extending loans to the Distribution Companies (DISCOMs).

The relaxation is above the limits of working capital cap of 25% of last year's revenues under Ujwal DIS-

COM Assurance Yojana (UDAY). The one-time relaxation would help in providing liquidity to the power sector and ensure payments by the State governments to DISCOMs.

Following the outbreak of the pandemic COVID-19, revenues of the power distribution companies have nosedived as people are unable to pay for the electricity consumed.

Last month, Ajay Kallam, Principal Adviser to the Government, criticised the Centre's policy which made it mandatory for the States to purchase power at Rs 9.44 per unit from NTPC plants. On an average, NTPC was selling power at Rs 4.50 to Rs 5 per unit. "This apart, grid connectivity and transmission and distribution charges are being levied," he

added. The Andhra Pradesh government was paying Rs 5.50 lakh per month for drawing power from the Central transmission lines, which was higher than the price in the remaining States.

Following protests from AP and also requests from Rajasthan and Punjab, the Centre has now decided to revive financially distressed power distribution companies (discoms).

The three States had sought, cumulatively, Rs 14,664 crore from state-owned lenders -- Power Finance Corporation (PFC) and Rural Electrification Corporation (REC).

In addition, the Centre is looking into the request to extend loans to clear pending dues of the DISCOMs.

Jaipur, Guwahati & T'puram airports for lease

New Delhi (PTI): The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the proposal for leasing out airports at Jaipur, Guwahati and Thiruvananthapuram through public-private partnership (PPP).

Adani Enterprises had won the rights to run six airports - Lucknow, Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Mangaluru, Thiruvananthapuram, and Guwahati - through the PPP model after a competitive bidding process in February 2019.

In July 2019, the Union Cabinet had approved the proposal for leasing out the other three airports - Ahmedabad, Mangaluru and Lucknow - to Adani Enterprises.

Currently, the aforementioned six airports are owned and managed by the government-run Airports Authority of India (AAI). Eight months after the Cabinet approval, Adani Enterprises signed the concessionaire agreement with the AAI on February 14 this year for operation, management and development of airports at Ahmedabad, Mangaluru and Lucknow.

In June this year, the AAI gave three more months to the Ahmedabad-based company to take over the management of these three airports due to the COVID-19 situation.

a roll call because Biden's remaining rival, the self-proclaimed socialist Bernie Sanders officially remained a candidate despite having formally thrown his support for Biden, who received a total of 3,558, giving him more than a majority.

Biden celebrated the announcement with his family at his home in Delaware with confetti, glitter and balloons. Without delegates and supporters massed at a convention site as in the past, pre-recorded scenes of celebrations around the country flashed on the screen in the live telecast of the convention.

Continued on Page 5

PM likely to open TiE Global Summit

HANS BUSINESS

Hyderabad: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to inaugurate virtual TiE Global Summit to be hosted by the Hyderabad Chapter of The Indus Entrepreneur (TiE Hyderabad) from December 8 to 10 this year. Announcing the details on Wednesday, Mahavir Sharma, Chairman, TiE Global, said, "The TiE Global Summit 2020 is very special initiative, perhaps the largest and most diverse gathering of entrepreneurs and investors on a virtual platform. It aims at bringing together students, startups, entrepreneurs, global leaders

including heads of countries, successful business leaders, investors with a strong intent to invest in startups and noble laureates". Global leaders such as Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella, Google CEO Sundar Pichai, Candian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Mahindra Group Anand Mahindra, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the Crown Prince of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, and a host of other global corporate and political leaders are expected to address the three-day global summit. Continued on Page 5

It's official: Democrat Biden to take on Trump

ARUL LOUIS

New York (IANS): Former US Vice President Joe Biden has formally been nominated the Democratic Party's candidate to take on President Donald Trump in the November election, winning the majority in a roll call of states in which a young Indian American student, Bianca Shah, delivered Maryland's votes for him.

With 76 days left as of Tuesday for the November 3 election, the party has officially anointed Biden to battle Trump with Kamala Harris at his side setting the stage for the final showdown and ending his roller-coaster ride to the nomina-

Kamala Harris readies for acceptance speech

Washington (PTI): Indian-origin Senator Kamala Harris will deliver her acceptance speech on Wednesday as the Democratic vice-presidential candidate to become the first-ever American of Indian and African descent to be nominated by a major party for the top post. Harris, 55, is the first Indian-American to be selected for the second-highest elected



office of the United States after that of the president. She is also the first-ever Black and first-ever African American to be nominated as a vice-presidential candidate by a major political party. If elected in the November 3 presidential elections, Harris, whose mother is from India and father from Jamaica, would be the first-ever women vice president of the United States.

tion with wildly fluctuating support in the primaries that at one stage almost wrote him off.

At the virtual convention, a formal tally of delegate votes from the primaries had to be taken through

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Womenia



Spurthi Kolipaka

2 years on: Her crusade for women panel chief continues

TEJAL SINHA

It has been two years when Spurthi Kolipaka, a city-based activist started a campaign #WomComMatters seeking a chairperson to head the Telangana State Women's Commission and take up the responsibilities. The campaign was started on August 15, 2018.

The Women's Commission is a de-personalized institution and thus guarantees the continuity of women's rights. This constitutional body vested with powers of a civil court has great potential for intervention.

Sadly, if such structures that are purveyors of change remain dormant, defunct, or dysfunctional according to the purpose for which they were created then we continue to hold up victims in places of further marginalization and crimes.

Sharing about her campaign, Spurthi shares, "#WomComMatters addresses this by spreading public awareness and changing the narrative from victim-blaming (or not) to questioning the functioning of such institutions. We have been in this cause over the past two years."

The campaign aims to ensure the fully-functional Women's Commission, starting with Telangana State. They engage in raising citizen awareness and advocating for gender, climate,

socio-economic and political justice. The campaign purports to enable and hold accountable institutions like the Women's Commission and stump for a gender-sensitive governance process.

From this point forward, they wish to rephrase our description by prioritizing action along with advocacy. Although they have been involved in various short-term projects, their aim is to generate principled campaigners (25 women and 15 male) by December 2020 to run campaigns that are in coherence with the vision of #WomComMatters, utilize the existing network, and contribute to long-term projects. They are opening up fellowship applications in September, for which interested campaigners can join their campaign.

The need of Women's Commission

Unfortunately, the limited understanding among citizens reduces the importance of such an important body to mere grievance redressal. The Women's Commission is bigger, it has a larger mandate. It is the only body responsible to look into policy matters, investigate unfair practices, monitor functioning of schemes, recommend remedial legislative measures. There is literally so much the Commission can do and recommend to be done.

As per the Women's Commission Act, section 15, there are 15 functions of Women's Commission. The first one reads "Inquire

into any unfair practice, take decision thereon and recommend to the government the action to be taken in that matter". This function itself shares about the scope of work of the Women's Commission.

To drive home the importance of the commission, Spurthi refers to the Nirbhaya Fund, a Rs 103.52 crore was announced by the Government of India. She states that only a small percentage of it has been received and spent on Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) which is the pan-India emergency number, 112. There is a lack of awareness related to the helpline.

Referring to the Disha rape case that shook the country, she has raised few questions on the need of a Women Commission in the state.

What are the steps we are taking to empower our women and to tackle such rapist thoughts? What kind of awareness and sensitization campaigns have we launched? Are we empowering our women to call the help lines? Are we ensuring the help lines function smoothly? Are we doing our bit in building trust in the system? Are we engaging with men and smashing misogyny?

"Women's Commission can look into these, carry investigations, commission studies, and recommend policy framework and legislative measures to ensure Telangana truly becomes a safe space for all women," concludes Spurthi.

TWEET PATROL



Last 2months have been extremely restless with everything being so blurry. Supreme Court's order to let the CBI investigate Sushant's case is a ray of hope that the truth will finally shineCrossed fingers🙏 Lets all have faith, stop speculating & let the CBI do their work now!🙏 #CBIForSSR 🇮🇳

KRITI SANON
@KRITISANON

Girls can put on gloves and pack a punch

RANI DEVALLA

Two-time silver medallist in the World championships and a gold medallist in the Asian championship, Nagisetty Usha, feels overwhelmed to secure the Dhyan Chand Award.

"Though I could not bag the Arjuna Award last year, Dhyan Chand Award makes up for what I missed. Having said that, the award sets a new standard for me and helps train future boxers to make a mark in the international championships," she asserts.

Working as a Grade-I technician at Diesel Loco Shed of Waltair Division, East Coast Railway, the 36-year-old boxing champion in the 57-kg category is Indian Railways women's boxing coach. Currently, Usha is training 20-30 boxers in multiple camps. "When I was getting trained, girls rarely opted for the sport. The scenario is gradually changing now. However, there is still a long way to go for girls to consider boxing a serious sport," she opines.

Usha says that boxing is not a tough sport for girls.

"Most girls feel that they are not cut for the sport. But actually, they can go for it provided their parents extend their support to them. It is a self-defence technique and every girl should learn to put on boxing gloves, pack a punch and hit the heavy bag," says Usha, who's mentored by renowned boxing coach I Venkateswara Rao. Her father was a sub-junior national boxer.

Elaborating about women following their passion, Usha says, "Women have come a long way and are now keen on breaking stereotypes, aligning their passion with the line of

Boxing is not just about the stamina that one possesses but it is more of a technical sport that requires a substantial degree of endurance, alertness and quick reflex, says N Usha, who bagged Dhyan Chand Award

work they choose. All they need is a little bit of encouragement and guidance to reach greater heights."

The boxing champion dedicates the award to her parents – NV Ramana and Uma Maheshwari and her husband – S Ganesh, a railway employee and a football goal-keeper.

"Fortunately, I have a supporting family because of which I could realise my dreams," says the mother of two kids and the six-time national champion.

Sharing her disappointment in her career with The Hans India, she says that she missed 2012 London Olympics because of her knee surgery and neck injury then.

Usha says that hard work is the key and that's the only path to follow to march towards success. She joined Waltair Division in 2008. The champion says she wants to train aspirants, infuse confidence in them and help them make it to the Olympics.

MAKE FOOD YOUR FERTILITY FRIEND

From undodly work hours, nutrient dead foods, socializing late into the night, lack of sleep and disregard to health – the millennials truly have a lot on their plate. These factors can lead to obesity, irregular menstrual cycle, Poly Cystic Ovarian Disorder and in some even infertility. Late marriage, reduced family time and fatigue too play a role in infertility. Include my simple suggestions in your daily routine to combat infertility.

Seed the way: Let me tell you pumpkin seeds are a wonderful source of B Vitamins, Zinc and Essential Fatty Oils which support normal sexual function in both genders. Along with this, sunflower seeds too have a positive effect in boosting fertility due to the trifecta of zinc, magnesium and vitamin E. Flax seeds contain anti-andro-



Naini Setalvad

gen factors that maintain menstrual health in women suffering from irregular periods.

Fat check: I advocate consuming good quality fats like desi cow's ghee, coconut oil, omega-3 and 6 rich walnuts, over trans and unsaturated fat. So fear not the fat as it supports insulin sensitivity as

insulin plays a major role in maintaining and balancing hormones and weight.

Herbs and spices : I often find myself looking towards the Indian herbs and spice box for natural remedies. Ashwagandha, Saffron, Tulsi, Nutmeg, Garlic and Saffron all have individual properties that

increase blood flow to the sexual organs. Ashwagandha is specifically known to cure infertility.

Pulses and dals: I guide my clients to include plant based proteins like beans, moong, masoor, toor, chickpea in their fertility promoting diet. These are proven to be more effective in regularizing the menstrual cycle and are rich in folic acid which plays an integral role in conception.

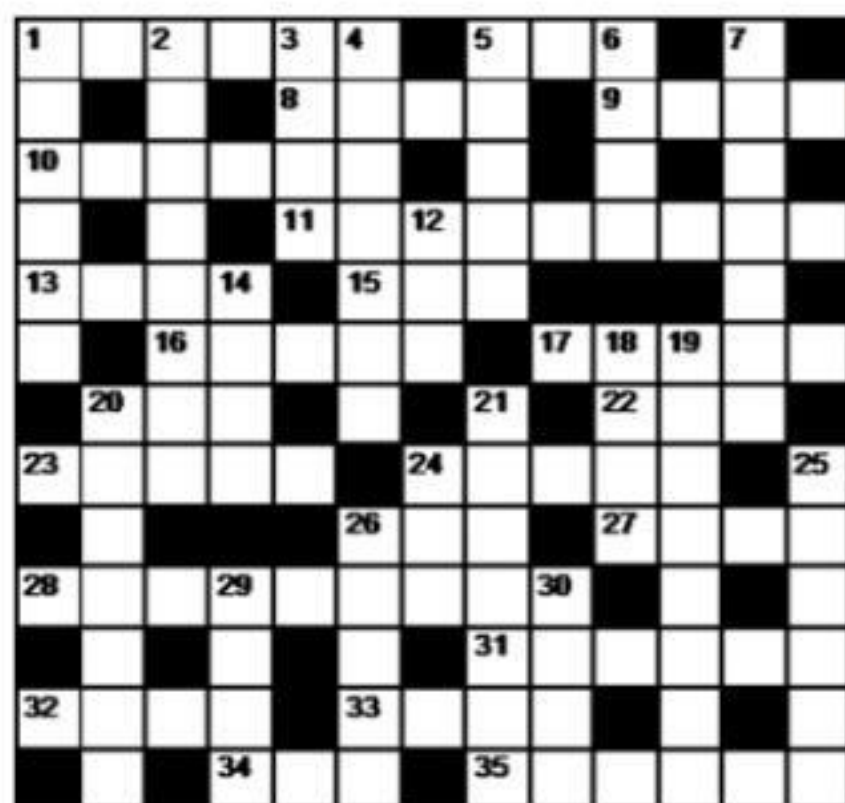
Roasted cocoa bites: My favourite way to get my cocoa fix is in the form of roasted and unsweetened whole cocoa pieces! Cocoa is rich in magnesium which promotes sexual health.

Honey: Consuming organic raw honey in small amounts is an age old cure that has been scientifically proven to boost sperm and egg quality count. So I say replace your refined sugar with honey sweet-

ener, but remember to limit to a small quantity.

Eating fresh: I strongly support consuming fresh produce in all your meals to help keep you fertile. Eating fresh and seasonal fruits, vegetables and grains restricts intake of pesticides and other chemicals which when eaten in excess may put the body under undue physical, biological and mental stress.

Nothing in excess: Excessive consumption of caffeine and alcohol has linking to female infertility. Swap these for herbal teas like chamomile, ginger and tulsi that also help de-stress. I advise you to believe in the simple 'K.I.S.S.' method when it comes to choosing fertility boosting foods that is- Keep It Simple Silly! We simply do not need to look anywhere but our kitchens as Indian foods can make your love life healthy.



SOLUTION TO AUGUST 19

CROSSWORD

Across

- 1 Impious (6)
- 5 Move through the air (3)
- 8 Shout (4)
- 9 Sight (4)
- 10 Transgressor (6)
- 11 Superior age (9)
- 13 Turn over (4)
- 15 It's measured in c.c. (3)
- 16 Local rule (2-3)
- 17 ___ on : encouraged or abetted ? (5)
- 20 Average (3)
- 22 Staff (3)
- 23 Stories (5)
- 24 Re-arrange (5)
- 26 Swindle (3)
- 27 Mild and humble (4)
- 28 Young roosters (9)
- 31 Foot part (6)
- 32 Handle roughly (4)
- 33 Extent of space (4)
- 34 Convent dweller (3)

Down

- 35 Reserves or saves (6)
- 1 Perilous (6)
- 2 Carthaginian general (8)
- 3 Alkaline slurries ? (4)
- 4 Capital of Armenia (7)
- 5 Beat with a threshing tool? (5)
- 6 Wine list datum (4)
- 7 Blemished (7)
- 12 At this moment (3)
- 14 Funeral bonfire (4)
- 18 Harsh (4)
- 19 An aggressive person (2-6)
- 20 Oriental temples (7)
- 21 Answers (7)
- 24 Cereal plant (3)
- 25 "Ok, Pa is" anagram for giraffe-type animals (6)
- 26 Moan in pain (5)
- 29 Furnace (4)
- 30 Break (4)

SUDOKU



SOLUTION TO AUGUST 19

NEWS ROUNDUP

Twinkle Khanna gives a glimpse of her bookworm self on Instagram

Actor-turned-author Twinkle Khanna is happy with her bookworm life along with daughter Nitara, and she gave us a sneak peek on Instagram. On Tuesday, the author posted a picture of the mother and daughter duo seen deeply immersed in reading.

"The little one and I read together, while the teenager who is also meant to have his nose in a book, takes pictures instead! #bookworm life," she captioned the image. The teenager she mentioned was her son Aarav. Earlier, Twinkle took to Instagram to share her way of finding peace, and that is thread therapy.

"Moving hands still the mind and my Mumbai 'Tai' lives up an old white shirt. #ThreadTherapy #HoopGirl," she shared while sharing her work of embroidery on a white shirt. Twinkle and her actor husband Akshay Kumar, along with their children, are currently in the UK. Akshay will shoot for the first international schedule of the upcoming film "BellBottom" in Glasgow, Scotland, amid the Covid-19 pandemic. Inspired by true events, the film is set in the 1980s.



Chocolate snow covers Swiss town after malfunction at factory



Zurich(IANS): Residents of a town in Switzerland saw to their disbelief snowing flakes of chocolates after a ventilation system in a world-famous chocolate factory malfunctioned.

The company, Lindt & Spruengli, confirmed that its factory located in Olten emitted small particles of roasted, crushed co-

coa bean pieces as a ventilation system was not working properly, German-language newspaper Oltnar Tagblatt reported on Tuesday. The official Twitter account of the town also confirmed the incident as it posted a picture of a car bonnet covered with co-coa dust.

The so-called "chocolate snow-

ing" that occurred last week triggered hardly any alarm as the company said that the particles are harmless to humans and the environment. The company also said one car was found lightly coated with chocolate dust.

However, the company offered to do the cleaning caused by the plumes of cocoa dust. Production

in the factory did not suffer due to the incident and the company has now fixed the ventilation system to stop the excess release of the particles, according to media reports.

Commonly known as Lindt, the Swiss chocolatier and confectionery company was founded in 1845 and known for its chocolate

truffles and chocolate bars, among other sweets.

Lindt & Spruengli has 12 factories and has opened over 410 chocolate cafes and shops all over the world. Lindor is a type of famous chocolate produced by Lindt, which is now characterised by a hard chocolate shell and a smooth chocolate filling.

Sushant verdict: Pawar's kin says 'Satyamev Jayate'

Mumbai: 'Satyamev Jayate', Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar's grandnephew Parth Pawar said on Wednesday after the Supreme Court upheld the transfer of Patna Police's first

information report in actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death case to the Central Bureau of Investigation.

Parth Pawar, who was publicly censured by the NCP patriarch

recently for seeking a CBI probe into the case of Rajput's death, tweeted the remark, which means truth shall prevail, without making any reference to the

case. He is the elder son of Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister and NCP leader Ajit Pawar, who is the nephew of the party president.

'Congrats to SSR warriors'

Mumbai: Actors Akshay Kumar, Kangana Ranaut, Kriti Sanon and others welcomed the Supreme Court's order that said the CBI will investigate actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death. Numerous Bollywood actors had joined the growing social media chorus in the recent days for a CBI probe into the actor's death.

"May the truth always prevail," actor Akshay Kumar tweeted. Congratulating "SSR warriors", actor Kangana Ranaut said she felt "such strong force of collective consciousness" for the first time. "Hope the truth comes out soon; for the sake of his family, fans, and above all, for his soul to rest in peace. Folded hands may justice prevail," Shilpa Shetty tweeted. Veteran actor Shekhar Suman called the verdict "a victory of justice, faith, hope and democracy".



Guj ATS arrests man sent by Shakeel to kill BJP leader

Ahmedabad: The Gujarat Anti-Terrorist Squad has arrested a 'sharp shooter' who was allegedly sent here by gangster Chhota Shakeel to kill a BJP leader, a senior ATS official said on Wednesday. The man, who was staying in a hotel on Relief Road in Ahmedabad, fired one round at the ATS team during the late Tuesday night operation following which he was nabbed, the official said.

"Based on a tip-off that Chhota Shakeel has sent a sharp shooter to kill a BJP leader, our team raided the hotel late last night. The accused fired one round at us when we tried to catch him. Luckily, no one was hurt. We eventually overpowered him," he said.

Two pistols were recovered from the possession of the man, whose identity will be revealed after completion of preliminary questioning, he said. According to the hotel manager, a Mumbai resident booked a room there on Tuesday and was later caught and taken away by the ATS team.

'Flushing public toilets can spread Corona'

Beijing (IANS): Chinese researchers have recently reported that flushing public restroom toilets or urinals can spew clouds of particles carrying viruses, including Covid-19. The study, published in the journal 'Physics of Fluids', found that Covid-19 particles from a flushing urinal can rise to two feet in the air in less than six seconds "potentially infecting the unsuspecting urinal user". The researchers' work shows public restrooms can be dangerous places for potentially becoming infected with a virus, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. Other studies have shown that both faeces and urine-based virus transmission is possible.



17 BSF personnel among 49 fresh cases in Meghalaya

East Khasi Hills: Forty-nine more people, including 17 Border Security Force personnel, have tested positive for COVID-19 in Meghalaya, taking the northeastern state's tally to 1,506 on Wednesday, a health official said. Forty-seven fresh COVID-19 cases were reported in East Khasi Hills district and two in North Garo Hills district, Health Services Director Aman War said. "Seventeen BSF personnel are among the new patients," he said. Nine more people have been cured of the disease and were discharged from hospitals, taking the total number of recoveries to 694, the official said, adding six patients have died in the state so far. The fresh infections have pushed the number of active cases in the state to 806, he said.



Global cases surpass 22 mn

New York (IANS): The number of global Covid-19 cases has surpassed 22 million, according to the Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) at Johns Hopkins University. The global case count on Wednesday reached 22,046,135, with a total of 778,557 deaths worldwide, the CSSE data showed, Xinhua reported. The US has suffered the most from the pandemic, with 5,480,487 cases and 171,687 fatalities, followed by Brazil with 3,359,570 cases and 109,888 deaths. India has confirmed more than 2.7 million cases. Countries with more than 400,000 cases also include Russia, South Africa, Peru, Mexico and Colombia, while other countries with over 30,000 deaths include Mexico, India, Britain, Italy and France, according to the CSSE.



Goa Secretariat staff protest spike in cases

Panaji (IANS): Goa government employees posted at the state Secretariat here on Wednesday staged a protest, accusing the authorities of not taking adequate steps to check the coronavirus spread, which they said had led to a spike in cases in the main office block. More than 100 employees participated in the protest at the main building, during which they complained that repeated requests to the authorities to act on the issue had no result. "Covid-19 cases are rising day by day. Today, it has come to light that there are around a dozen cases within the Secretariat itself. And yet the government has not done anything for our safety," Sukarna Pai, a Revenue Department employee and the protesters' spokesperson, said.

Rahul: 2 crore jobs lost in last 4 months

New Delhi: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday alleged that around two crore people lost their jobs in the last four months amid the coronavirus pandemic and asserted that the "truth about unemployment" cannot be hidden from the country.

Citing a media report, he said in a tweet in Hindi, "In the last 4 months, around 2 crore people have lost their jobs. The future of 2 crore families is in the dark. The truth about unemployment and destruction of the economy cannot be hidden from the country by peddling fake news and hatred on Facebook."

The news report cited by Gandhi



claimed that around 1.89 crore jobs were lost due to the coronavirus pandemic from April onwards.

A massive political row broke out after a report by the Wall Street Journal last week alleged that senior Facebook executives had opposed applying hate speech rules to posts by certain BJP leaders, with the BJP and the Congress engaged in a bitter war of words over the issue.

"We cannot allow any manipulation of our hard-earned democracy through bias, fake news and hate speech. As exposed by WSJ, Facebook's involvement in peddling fake and hate news needs to be questioned by all Indians," Gandhi tweeted on Tuesday

2 strong earthquakes shake Indonesia

Bengkulu: Two powerful and shallow undersea earthquakes shook western Indonesia on Wednesday, causing panic but no immediate reports of casualties or damage.

The US Geological Survey said the magnitude 6.8 earthquake occurred at a depth of 10 kilometres under the sea. It was centered in Bengkulu province on Sumatra island, 144.5 kilometres west-southwest of Bengkulu city, USGS said. It also was felt in several provinces on the island.

Similar earthquake with 6.9 magnitude jolted the province six minutes later, but no tsunami warning was issued for the relative shallow quakes. "We were awakened by repeated strong shaking of quakes at dawn," a Bengkulu resident wrote in Twitter, "Forcing us to run out of our house."

Indonesia, a vast archipelago of 270 million people, is frequently struck by earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and tsunamis because of its location on the "Ring of Fire," an arc of volcanoes and fault lines in the Pacific Basin.

5 Manipur MLAs who resigned from Cong join BJP in Delhi

New Delhi (PTI): Five ex-Congress MLAs of Manipur, who recently resigned from the state assembly and the party, joined the ruling BJP on Wednesday in the presence of Chief Minister N Biren Singh.

Welcoming them in the party, BJP general secretary and the party's pointsman for the northeast Ram Madhav said there is no threat to the Biren Singh government in Manipur now.

It will not only complete its

tenure but will be reelected, he said.

Henry Okram, nephew of former Chief Minister and senior Congress leader Ibobi Singh, Panoram Broken, Oinam Lukhoi Singh, Ngamthang Haokip, Ginsuanhau Zou were inducted into the BJP by its vice president Bajajant Jay Panda.

Madhav also said the state government has support of 34 MLAs in the assembly, which has effective strength of 47 as there are 13 vacancies.

Facebook will junk Trump posts for violations: CEO Sandberg

San Francisco (IANS): In a first direct challenge to US President Donald Trump in the run-up to the November presidential election, Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg has said the platform would remove Trump posts if they violate company standards.

Speaking on MSNBC on Tuesday, Sandberg said: "When the president violates our hate speech standards or gives false information about voter suppression or coronavirus, it comes down".

In a bid to protect election integrity, Facebook last week announced dedicated voting information centres that will connect US voters to accurate and easy-



to-find information about voting ahead of the 2020 polls.

The social network giant which earlier faced flak for failing to keep foreign players with malicious intentions away from its platform during the 2016 US presidential election said that the "Voting Information Center" will be available on Facebook and Instagram. Facing an ad boycott

from more than 400 advertisers and unrest from its own employees, Sandberg earlier said that the company is working to remove hate speech on the platform not for financial reasons or advertiser pressure, because it is the "right thing to do".

Last month, the social network working giant started adding labels to Facebook posts from federal politicians discussing voting so that people have easy access to the latest official election information.

Facebook said it has built some of the most advanced systems in the world to combat election interference, and it is always working to improve them.

TERRORIST KILLED IN ENCOUNTER

Pak resorts to firing, shelling at LoC

Srinagar (IANS) : A terrorist has been killed in an ongoing encounter at Chitragam in south Kashmir's Shopian district on Wednesday, officials said.

Police said the security forces had received a specific input about the presence of terrorists in the area, following which a joint operation was launched by the Army, CRPF, and police to flush them out.

As the security forces zeroed in, they came under heavy fire from the militants that triggered the encounter.

Pakistan resorted to unprovoked firing and intense shelling on the Line of Control (LoC) in J&K's Rajouri district on Wednesday.

Colonel Devender Anand, defence ministry spokesman, said at about 4.30 p.m. on Wednesday, Pakistan initiated an unprovoked ceasefire violation with small arms fire and intense shelling with mortars along the LoC in Keri Battal area of Sunderbani sector in Rajouri district.

"Indian army is retaliating befittingly," the spokesman said.

India building new road to Ladakh

New Delhi: In an effort to rush troops and tanks to the Pakistan and China front in Ladakh without being observed by the enemy, India is working on making a new road from Manali to Leh, which will provide the third link between the high altitude mountainous Union Territory (UT) and the rest of the country. India is also working on providing alternative connectivity to the strategically important Sub-Sector North including the Daulat Beg Oldi and other areas there for the last three years and work has already started from the world's highest motorable road Khardung La pass. "Agencies are working to provide alternative connectivity from Manali to Leh through Nimu-Padam-Darcha axis which will help in saving a lot of time in comparison with the existing routes passing through Zojila pass from Srinagar and the other route from Manali to Leh through Sarchu," government sources told ANI.

The road will save almost three to four hours' journey time while travelling from Manali to Leh and will also not leave any scope for the Pakistanis or other adversaries to monitor the movement of the Indian Army while deploying troops and heavy weaponry like tanks and artillery guns to the Ladakh area from other locations, they said.

The route mainly used for transportation of goods and men is the one from Zojila, which passes through Drass-Kargil axis to Leh. The same route was targeted heavily by the Pakistanis during the Kargil war in 1999 and was subjected to frequent bombing and shelling by their troops from positions in high altitude mountains alongside the road.



How Covid smell loss differs from the common cold

London(IANS) Researchers have shown how smell loss associated with the Covid-19 infection differs from what you might typically experience with a bad cold or flu.

The main differences found are that, although Covid-19 patients also lose their sense of smell, they can breathe freely, do not tend to have a runny or blocked nose, and they cannot detect bitter or sweet tastes.

These findings, published in the journal Rhinology, lend

weight to the theory that Covid-19 infects the brain and central nervous system.

"The loss of smell and taste is a prominent symptom of Covid-19, however, it is also a common symptom of having a bad cold," said study lead author Carl Philpott from the University of East Anglia in the UK.

"We wanted to find out exactly what differentiates Covid-19 smell loss with the kind of smell loss you might have with a cold and blocked-up nose,"

Philpott added. The research team carried out smell and taste tests on 10 Covid-19 patients, 10 people with bad colds and a control group of 10 healthy people -- all matched for age and sex.

They wanted to see if their smell and taste test scores could help discriminate between Covid-19 patients and those with a heavy cold.

"We know that Covid-19 behaves differently to other respiratory viruses, for example by causing the body's immune sys-

tem to over-react, known as a cytokine storm, and by affecting the nervous system," Philpott said.

"So we suspected that patterns of smell loss would differ between the two groups," he added.

The researchers found that smell loss was much more profound in the Covid-19 patients.

They were less able to identify smells, and they were not able to identify bitter or sweet tastes. In fact, it was this loss of true

taste which seemed to be present in the Covid-19 patients compared to those with a cold.

"This is very exciting because it means that smell and taste tests could be used to discriminate between Covid-19 patients and people with a regular cold or flu," the study authors wrote.

This research also shows that there are altogether different things going on when it comes to smell and taste loss for Covid-19 patients, compared to those with a bad cold.

Individual phone tapping sets a bad precedent

In the wake of the telephone tapping charges in Andhra Pradesh and the subsequent litigation which has begun in the AP High Court, it would be appropriate to know what the law states in this regard. Is the government empowered to intercept communication between two individuals? Yes. The Central and the State governments can intercept communication including letters, telephone (mobiles and land-lines) and internet communication (e-mails, chats etc.). But there are certain conditions; for example, during the occurrence of any public emergency, or in the interest of the public safety or tranquillity; in the interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States or public order or for preventing incitement to the commission of an offence. But in case of the present controversy in Andhra Pradesh, no such situation

is visible in the State. What is more, there are allegations that the telephones of even Judges were tapped. This raises the fundamental question of whether phones can be tapped, and can the conversation be recorded passively? Experts say that technology available today makes it very easy to intercept and record phone conversations passively without the callers or the telecom operator noticing. The ease and cost-effectiveness of passive interception technologies available today have tremendous implications. So far it was felt that this passive recording could be a threat to corporate data security. But there is every possibility that any government can use it for surveillance on opponents affecting the basic fabric of democracy. The latest technology in tapping phones consists of a device called an 'interceptor' which can be either handheld or packed in a suitcase. The device acts as a duplicate cell site, which intercepts mobile phone conversations. In India about 80 percent of the population uses GSM technology. Equipment for interception of GSM technology is easily available. They are even available online and will be shipped anywhere in the world and some of them even offer customised surveillance system for the user, experts say. Though

most of the apps used by the mobile phone users say that they are end-to-end encrypted, still the interceptors can have access to the users' messages and mails. Pegasus is one such malware which can even listen in to encrypted audio and text files on your device that makes all the data on your device up for grabs. They can take control of all aspects of digital life. This easily available technology has all the potential of being used for political purposes. These days every political party has its own teams for social media and under its guise they can tap the phones of opponents. If anyone seeks legal remedy, the government can duck saying that they have not indulged in phone tapping. Since such tools are useful for ruling parties, it now remains to be seen whether the Centre would focus attention on this and find a way to protect the privacy of the phone users or not. If it does, it would earn the appreciation of large number of people including the corporate sector which is at greater risk. Till then, it would be advisable for the companies which are managing WhatsApp and other apps available on play stores to give a note of caution that though the calls and text are encrypted, it is not fool-proof and can be intercepted.



Lessons nation should learn from Rajasthan crisis

DR GUMMADIDALA PADMAJA

The political crisis in Rajasthan may have blown over with the truce worked out between the rebels and the Congress, but the lessons this crisis taught us must not be forgotten. If we refuse to learn from our mistakes, we tend to repeat them. In our country, we have the habit of following negative examples far more spontaneously than positive examples and that is one of the reasons for the decline of values in our public life.

Whenever a government, be it at the Centre or in the States, faces a question of its majority, it is incumbent upon the President or the Governor concerned to direct the head of the government to prove the majority on the floor of the House. This is a well-established constitutional custom in our system. Therefore, when the Rajasthan government appeared to be facing questions about its majority, the Governor should have asked the Chief Minister to prove his majority in the Assembly. That is what the Constitution says and that is also what anyone with common sense would expect to happen. For this to happen, the Assembly needs to be convened by the Governor as the House was prorogued following the conclusion of the last session as is the practice. But what happened in Rajasthan is just the contrary! Instead of asking the Chief Minister to face a floor test, the Governor refused to convene the Assembly, despite a specific request made by the State Cabinet to that effect. It is a classic example of the fence eating the crop. The Governor who is supposed to uphold the Constitution sought to derail it in Rajasthan! How else can we explain the reluctance of the Governor to convene the Assembly?

It must be noted here that the Constitution gives wider powers to the Governor than to the President. Article 74 says thus: there shall be a Council of Ministers with the Prime Minister at the head to aid and advise the President who shall, in the exercise of his functions, act in accordance with such advice. The corresponding provision for States, Article 163 says thus: There shall be a Council of States with the Chief Minister at the head to aid and advise the Governor in the exercise of his functions, except in so far as he is by or under this Constitution required to exercise his functions or any of them in his discretion! Compare these two parallel provisions: the President who is an elected entity and for whose removal there is a specific procedure in the Constitution has to go by the advice of the Cabinet, while the Governor, not an elected entity and to remove whom there is no procedure at all, is provided with much discretion vis a vis the Cabinet.

The original Constitution did not say that the President 'shall act in accordance with such advice' in Article 74. These words were inserted by the 42 Amendment. But the Governor's position is what was written in the original Constitution. We cannot imagine governance in our States without a Governor because it would lead to a no holds barred situation, given the propensity of Chief Ministers to act according to the political expediency than on principles of governance! Governors are vested with these powers to uphold the Constitution and to ensure constitutional governance and to curtail centrifugal tendencies on the part of the States. The identity of the States was, and is, very strong, the notion of nation being in its rudimentary stage at the time of independence. We cannot imagine States without Governors. But, the framers of the Constitution may never have imagined that these wider powers and discretion would be used by the Governors to derail the constitutional process in the States. Alas, that is where we have reached since 1950!

In our polity, it is a settled convention that the elected body, be it Parliament or the State Legislature, would be convened at the instance of the government. Though the Constitution ordains that the gap between two sessions should not be more than six months, we have three sessions of our legislative bodies in a year known as the Budget session, Monsoon session and the Winter session. This is followed by the Union and the States uniformly. In between, there are occasions when a sitting of the House is convened if the situation demanded. The President and the Governors would summon the Houses to meet in a session, but they have no discretion in this matter. They are expected to respect the decision of the Cabinet. But that did not happen in Rajasthan! Instead of summoning the Assembly and asking the Chief Minister to prove his majority on the floor of the House, the Governor of Rajasthan refused to go by the Cabinet decision, thereby provoking the Legislators to sit on dharna on the lawns of the Raj Bhawan! While the legislators begged the Governor to convene the Assembly, the Governor begged to differ! This is an ironical situation. There are any number of examples when a sitting was convened just to have a floor test to verify the majority. Even otherwise, it is the prerogative of the Government to call for a session of the Legislature the role of the Governor is to sign the summons and allow the Assembly to meet and carry on the business of the government. Summoning the Assembly is a routine constitutional function of the Governor and by refusing to do that, a confrontational situation was created by the Governor. This is fraught with dangerous possibilities for the relations between a Governor and his government. This shows how in our country constitutional institutions function based on political expediency than constitutional principles of governance. Another Governor can take a clue from this episode and cite this as a precedent to play politics.

Why do Governors act as stooges of the Centre than as constitutional dignitaries supposed to uphold the Constitution in the States? In most of the cases, active politicians belonging to the ruling party at the Centre are appointed as Governors. The Constitution does not provide any specific procedure for their appointment nor a method for their removal. While a Governor has a term of five years, this is subject to the pleasure of the President. Article 156 (1) says that the Governor shall hold office during the pleasure of the President, while 156 (3) says that 'subject to the foregoing provisions of this Article, a Governor shall hold office for a term of five years. The President's pleasure precedes the term of five years. When there is no procedure for appointment except a Presidential order and no procedure for removal except the President losing his pleasure, how do we expect the Governors to function independent of political compulsions?

The debate regarding the role of the Governor is not new. Several Chief Ministers, including NTR, have demanded the abolition of the institution of the Governor. We cannot visualise States in India without a Governor. There is a need for an authority above the elected government for a balanced functioning of the polity based on constitutional principles. Therefore, abolishing the office of Governor is like throwing away the baby with the bath water. That is not the solution. The appointment should be based on the consent of the State government concerned and there should be security of tenure. Then, it is possible for Governors to act conscientiously than based on convenience. This calls for a reform of the institution that its removal from the Constitution. Another institution that has come under considerable political strain is the office of Speaker, be it the Lok Sabha or the Assembly. That needs to be dealt with separately as it is a different subject.

(The writer is Assistant Professor, Dr BR Ambedkar Law College, Hyderabad. Views expressed are personal)

A tiny planet gobbled by greed, violence

TALKING OF MANY THINGS



Dr Mohan Kanda

Cosmologists tell us that, according to what is known as the 'standard model', the universe in which we live was created by a 'big bang' some 13.7 billion years ago. Space, as well as time, were created during that event. Therefore, there were no such things, as 'earlier' than that event or 'what' existed before.

Ever since its birth, the universe has been expanding in all directions at the rate of the velocity of light which, as most of us know, is 3x10 10 kms per second. In other words, the universe, today, has a radius of 13.7 billion light years.

Against the picture we have just described, let us put our own lives in the proper context in terms of space and time.

In terms of cosmological time, the average life expectancy of a human being is less than a blink of the eye, as compared to the age of the universe. Likewise, the planet we inhabit (described by Carl Sagan as the "Pale Blue Dot" in his book by the same name) is but a grain of sand in a beach. Compared to the Solar System, a tiny bit of the Milky Way Galaxy, which, in turn, is but a spot of space in the universe.

Let us leave aside, for the moment, the question whether the creation of the universe was the inevitable result of the interplay of the laws of nature, or the creation of a Supreme Being. All religions accept the latter to be true and have their own way of recognising and describing the infiniteness of space and time and the place humanity is accorded in it. They also have their own way of describing the omnipo-

tence and omniscience of the Supreme Being. In one Shloka of a Stotra in Hindu prayers, for instance, God is described as being 'aadyantha soonyam avyayam...', or as being without beginning, without end and forever unchanging. Islam, on the other hand, describes God as the 'creator of everything' in the universe, while Christianity says that God is 'omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent'.

In other words, both in terms of time and space, we are less significant than the spark that we see in a sparkler on Diwali day or the 4th of July. Given this transient, and insignificant, space time capsule in which human life is ensconced, should there be any time at all for negative feelings, and actions, such as conflict, war, anger, hatred or intolerance? Similarly, is it not wrong, and wasteful, to indulge in any activity other than that which is directed towards enhancing the quality of life of the downtrodden and excluded in this world of today?

Further, for the elected political leaders of our country today, the period of five years in office, and the attendant trappings, are much less significant than a whole human life and the experiences that go with it.

While, in a span of over 70 years, our country has made significant progress on several fronts - economic, social and political - it can hardly be gainsaid that much remains to be done. India has excelled in several areas, from the exploration of space and the Arctic to sports, literature and the performing arts. It has produced Nobel laureates and sent out her doctors and engineers to make significant contributions to the growth and development of various countries from Australia to the United States. On the other hand, poverty, deprivation, exclusion and iniquity persist. From the trading in children to ill treatment of women, and from Naxalism to terrorist activities, the country faces many challenges in internal security. And neighbours across the northern and western borders continue to threaten the territorial integrity



Both in terms of time and space, we are less significant than the spark that we see in a sparkler on Diwali day or the 4th of July. Given this transient, and insignificant, space time capsule in which human life is ensconced, should there be any time at all for negative feelings, and actions, such as conflict, war, anger, hatred or intolerance? Similarly, is it not wrong, and wasteful, to indulge in any activity other than that which is directed towards enhancing the quality of life of the downtrodden and excluded in this world of today? Further, for the elected political leaders of our country today, the period of five years in office, and the attendant trappings, are much less significant than a whole human life and the experiences that go with it

of our nation. Food and nutrition insecurity, climate change and the alarming threats posed by pandemics are only a few among the many other challenges that are testing our abilities. Is it not, therefore, wrong, if not outright criminal, for political leaders to spend their time, and energy, on anything other than the betterment of the quality of life of the common man and the deprived? Is there, in particular, any place in the scheme of matters for things such as conflict and intolerance?

This is a good time for the world to recollect how Swami Vivekananda began his speech to the delegates of the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893 - "Brothers and Sisters

of America", were soul-soothing words which had a magnetic impact on the audience.

All over the world, while the development in the world in physical terms has no doubt take place in an impressive way, it is regrettable that the Swami's call for brotherhood among peoples and nations has yet to materialise. Perhaps there is something in human nature which propels the forces of greed, violence, and oppression of the weak.

After the World War-I, it was hoped that humanity had learnt its lessons and would live in harmony with others. But, then, World War-II started, this time fought more brutally causing greater loss of lives and property. Now World War-III looms, with

conflicts raging in Vietnam, Korea West Asia, Africa etc.

The Swami's vision for universal peace and brotherhood is timeless and universal. It is imperative to revive his vision of universal brotherhood and peace to make for a better future for mankind.

The Santi mantra 'Om, Santi, Santi, Santi', which is often quoted in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism signifies a call for universal peace. Likewise, the Bible extols the qualities of "peace, love and joy, while the Islamic greeting "Salam Alaykum" literally translates as "peace be upon you".

(The writer is former Chief Secretary, Government of Andhra Pradesh)

The Telangana government should take a fast decision about schools.

T V S Suchitra, Khammam.

Nature's fury: Telangana farmers at receiving end

Catastrophes continue to batter rain-hit Telangana State. Hundreds of acres of paddy, cotton, red chilli and many other crops have been damaged in the downpour. Telangana Kisan Congress chairman Sunketa Anvesh Reddy said, 'there used to be confidence among farmers that the crop insurance scheme will save them from calamities like this.' But now farmers are losing their confidence as Rythu Bandhu and Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana are lacking providing funds and unable to provide benefits to the farmers. Farmers lost 37,300 acres of paddy in Warangal Urban and 72,000 acres of paddy in Warangal Rural.

Sreelakshmi Peri, Hyderabad

Corruption rampant in every segment

Covid-19 pandemic may not be that much rampant, but the corruption is omnipresent wherever there is air. It is not necessary to name a particular field that corrupt and corrupted are not existing. But the amounts of bribe differ depending on weight of the case. Though many corrupt officials are caught red handed, the menace continues all in its velocity. A dismissed Tahsildar in Hyderabad, a big fish in the net of ACB is the latest example. It would be the right thing if the photographs of all these corrupt persons are displayed in police stations, railway stations and other important locations.

Dr NSR Murthy, Secunderabad

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LETTERS

International migration policy need of the hour

This refers to the article 'Heart of business in times of pandemic' (August 19). Not just domestic migration, it is time to have a proper and well discussed international immigration policy for the country. In this populous country, international immigration to eke out livelihood is imperative, and it demands a national policy to suit the moving workforce. It not only ensures livelihood for the people but also ensures uninterrupted source of employment and continuity of business and industry.

DSVL Prasad, Uppal, Hyderabad

TRS' criticism of Governor unbecoming

It is nonsensical and rather silly that the TRS leaders are pouncing on Telangana Governor Ms Tamilisai Soundararajan for slamming the State government for their failure in containing coronavirus in the State. The TRS is indignant and irate of the Governor's criticism. They can't expect the first citizen of the State to be a puppet in their hands and to act like a rubber stamp like EAS Narasimhan who, throughout his tenure, behaved like a bigoted person completely inclined towards the TS, ignoring his due and equitable commitment for AP as the Joint Governor for both the Telugu States. The TRS should not forget how much biased Narasimhan was to TS and how, on the other hand, how indifferent he was towards the new AP. His then behaviour made an indelible damage to AP in many ways and the TRS and the TS unduly benefitted at the cost of AP. Instead of correcting themselves and debugging the lacunae, the TRS leaders are indulging in offence.

K Sai Prasanna, RR Pet, Tadepalligudem, AP

Expedite distribution of house sites to poor

This is with reference to your report 'Don't use government school land for house sites, State told' (Aug 18). The interim orders given by the honourable High court are highly welcomed, schools and universities where our students are nurtured are the fundamentals of development as students are future citizens of the country. At the same time, the decision of the State government to distribute sites to the homeless is historic and cannot be found fault with. A piece of land and own house is still a lifetime dream of many poor people in our country. The High Court postponing the next hearing by eight weeks is something which many poor are worried about. I hope the judicial process is completed as soon as possible where the controversial sites are exempted, and remaining land is reached to the poor.

Sai Krishna Kadiyala, Vijayawada, AP

TS govt should take a call on school reopening immediately

Because of the coronavirus, schools have been closed. In Andhra Pradesh, the government is reopening the schools from September 5 (Teachers Day). But in Telangana, the government does not tell anything about reopening of schools. If not physical classes, at least online classes have to be conducted regularly. Doordarshan Saptagiri channel is telecasting all subjects for all classes on television. It is easy to learn from it. The Telangana government said they would also conduct the classes in Yadagiri channel. But they have not done it yet. Listening and watching to smart phones for a long period leads to many problems like poor eyesight, back pain etc. The A P government has fixed a date to reopen schools. First, the Telangana government said that teachers have to come to schools for taking online classes from August 17. But again, it has been cancelled.

AP tops in making use of e-health platforms

- Union Health and Family Welfare Ministry says State leads in utilising Ministry's eSanjeevani digital platform in Doctor-to-Doctor consultations with 24,487 interactions while TN tops in OPD services
- AP is among top 5 States in making use of e-health services offered by
- The eSanjeevani platform proved its usefulness and easy access for the caregivers and the medical community and those seeking healthcare services amid Covid

HANS NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi: Andhra Pradesh not only is a part of the top five states in utilising the 'eSanjeevani' digital platform of the ministry of health and family welfare but also tops in the health and wellness programmes under the scheme. This was disclosed by the Union ministry of health and family welfare at a review here on Wednesday. AP leads in having the most Health and Wellness Centre-med-



ical college interactions with 25,478 consultations while Tamil Nadu leads in the OPD services with 56,346 consultations.

Holistic approach adopted by the AP government, particularly in the wake of Covid-19 situation and the emphasis laid on daily reviews and a free hand given to the medical personnel helped AP achieve this distinction, it is said.

This milestone was achieved in a short time period of 10 days only since the August 9 when Dr Harsh Vardhan, Union minister for health and family welfare presided over a meeting to mark the completion of 1.5 lakh tele-consultations.

In what can be seen as a big push for the 'Digital India' initiative of the Prime Minister, the e-Sanjeevani platform has proved

its usefulness and easy access for the caregivers and the medical community, and those seeking healthcare services in the times of Covid.

eSanjeevani platform has enabled two types of telemedicine services viz. Doctor-to-Doctor (eSanjeevani) and Patient-to-Doctor (e-Sanjeevani OPD) tele-consultations.

eSanjeevani has been implemented so far by 23 states and other states are in the process of rolling it out.

The top five states which have been utilising the e-health services being offered through this platform are Tamil Nadu (56,346 consultations), Uttar Pradesh (33,325), Andhra Pradesh (29,400), Himachal Pradesh (26,535) and Kerala (21,433).

Several areas in AP still under water

- It is likely to take two more days for the floodwater to recede
- Vasista, Vrudda Gowthami and Vynateya rivers are still in spate
- 2nd warning will be withdrawn at Cotton barrage today

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Rajamahendravaram/Amara-vati: As many as 160 lanka areas in Konaseema and tribal habitations in the agency are still reeling under floodwaters. It is estimated that it will take two more days for the floodwater water to recede as rivers Vasista, Vrudda Gowthami and Vynateya are still in spate on Wednesday.

According to an official of water resources department, third warning has been withdrawn at Sir Arthur Cotton Barrage and second warning will be withdrawn on Thursday morning. At Bhadrachalam too, second warning has been withdrawn.

The water level at the barrage is 15.73 feet and 12.40 lakh cusecs of water is being discharged from the barrage.

However, heavy rain due to a low-pressure area in Bay of Bengal has been forecast in two Godavari districts and, as such,



Villagers travelling on boats in floodwater in Kunavaram mandal in East Godavari on Wednesday

the state Disaster Management Commissioner K Kanna Babu asked the collectors and official machinery to be on alert.

In a statement, Kanna Babu asked people residing in low-lying areas and lanka villages to stay alert and take necessary precautions in view of the situation. Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy directed authorities concerned to enumerate the crop losses quickly and extend succour to the affected farmers.

He also directed the authorities to take up repair of roads damaged due to the flood.

According to agriculture department deputy director Rama Rao, crops in 3,295 hectare have been submerged in floods in East Godavari as per preliminary estimates.

Of this total extent, paddy crop accounts for 2,840 hectare, cotton in 255 hectare and maize in 20 hectare. The crop loss will be assessed after floods receded.

Horticulture department assistant director Devavnanda said crops such as banana, papaya were marooned in floodwaters, mainly in Ravulapalem, Atreyapuram and Kapileswara-

puram and other mandals.

Meanwhile, the inflow into Srisailem reservoir on River Krishna increased to 3.48 lakh cusecs on Wednesday, improving the water storage by about 10 tmc ft to 195.97 tmc ft.

Water resources authorities are discharging 1.01 lakh cusecs into the downstream Nagarjunasagar. Prakasam Barrage downstream in Vijayawada saw a significant reduction in inflow with just 68,552 cusecs reaching it, mainly from the Munieru rivulet. Consequently, 56,004 cusecs was being discharged from the barrage.

AP reports 9,742 fresh cases

86 new deaths take total number to 2,906

Amaravati: Maintaining the steep ascent, state's Covid-19 tally touched 3.16 lakh on Wednesday as 9,742 more cases were added in the last 24 hours.

The coronavirus toll mounted to 2,906 as 86 fresh casualties were reported.

The latest bulletin said 8,061 Covid-19 victims got cured and discharged from hospitals across the state in the last 24 hours.

After showing a declining trend for three days last week, the number of active cases once again saw a spike and now stood at 86,725 after 2,26,372 patients had recovered.

After crossing the three lakh mark in the number of coronavirus cases, AP on Wednesday crossed the 30 lakh mark in the total tests, aggregating 30,19,296, with an infection positivity rate

of 10.47 per cent.

East Godavari district continued to show a worsening trend, adding 1,399 fresh cases in the last 24 hours and pushing its aggregate to 43,999.

It has the highest number of 15,767 active cases in the state after reporting 295 deaths as well.

Anantapur also added 1,123 new cases, taking its gross to 31,630, but it has only 5,590 active cases.

West Godavari (919), Visakhapatnam (835), Chittoor (830), Kurnool (794) and SPS Nellore (755) were the other districts to report a large number of cases in the last 24 hours.

Chittoor and Nellore also reported 15 more deaths each, Anantapur eight, Guntur seven, Prakasam and Srikakulam six each.

VINAYAKA CHAVITI

No processions will be allowed

- Endowments Minister Srinivas appeals to people to worship Vinayaka in their homes
- Temples should allow only 10 devotees at a time for worship keeping with SOP for controlling Covid

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Amaravati: Endowments minister Velkampalli Srinivas urged the people to follow the Covid-19 Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) while celebrating Vinayaka Chaviti in order to prevent spread of Covid-19.

The government has already instructed temples on procedures to be adopted on darshan



and other rituals. He said in a statement on Wednesday that the physical distancing norms must be followed during the Chaviti celebrations. No processions will be allowed at any point of time, even during the immersions. The government

already instructed the officials concerned to ensure that there were no processions and mass gatherings in the name of festival, he added.

Srinivas suggested that people celebrate the festival at homes for this year, as the pandemic had affected the lives of everyone. He also asked devotees to worship idols below 2 feet and immerse them on the festival day itself the nearest water bodies.

According to the minister, both endowments and private temples will allow only 10 persons at a time into the temple for worship, even on festival day. At the same time, he announced that the government would celebrate the festival at all the temples as per regular practice.

JC Prabhakar Reddy to be released today

Kadapa: Former TDP MLA of Tadipatri, who has been diagnosed with coronavirus in Kadapa central prison will be released on Thursday. The SC, ST atrocities special court in Anantapur granted him bail on a petition moved by his lawyers on Wednesday. Prabhakar Reddy was arrested 24 hours after being released for allegedly insulting a Dalit police officer during a procession taken out by his supporters after his release earlier. SC, ST atrocities special court sent him in remand for 14 days following which he was shifted to Kadapa central prison on August 17 where he was tested positive for Covid-19.

CENTRE REITERATES IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH CAPITAL

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Nelapadu (Amaravati): The Central government on Wednesday filed a counter affidavit which was nothing but 'copy and paste' of the earlier version of the affidavit in connection with the writ petition that challenged the CRDA Repeal Act.

The Ministry of home affairs said this in a counter-affidavit filed in response to a High Court notice while hearing petitions challenging the state government's move to trifurcate the state capital. The court was hearing a writ petition filed by

Union Ministry of Home Affairs files a counter petition in HC in a writ petition challenging the APCRDA repeal Act

Done Sambasiva Rao.

The counter-affidavit filed by under secretary Lalita T Hedao submitted that the Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority Repeal Act, 2020, was introduced and passed by the state Assembly.

"While framing the Act, the state has not consulted the Central government. The subject matter purely concerns the state government and the Centre has no part therein. Further, the state's capital is decided by the respective state government whereas the Central government has no role to play in it," the affidavit read.

Jr colleges not to sell books, uniforms

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Guntur: Board of Intermediate Education (BIE) secretary V Ramakrishna made it clear that managements of private junior colleges should not force the students to purchase textbooks, study material and uniforms in the college. He issued orders to this effect.

In statement, he urged the parents could complain on portal ourbieap@gmail.com if managements force the students to make any such purchases. They can also complaint through WhatsApp to 9391282578.

Incessant rains 'drown' Delhi

Continued from P1

Being a working day, the continuous rain created problems for two-wheeler riders, with many waiting under flyovers to escape the downpour.

"I have been waiting for more than two hours for the rain to stop, but to no avail. The road is now filling up with water," lamented Tejas Singh, stuck near the Delhi-Noida Expressway.

People also took to Twitter to share pictures and videos of their rainy experiences. Many shared pictures of waterlogged lanes and traffic snarls, others thought it was a perfect time to relish piping hot 'chai' and 'pakodas'. #DelhiRains and #Gurgaon-

Rains trended on Twitter.

One user wrote: "Going to the office after 5 months. World may have changed since then, but the Delhi-Gurgaon border hasn't," with pictures of waterlogged streets.

Another person posted a video of a car submerged in water in Gurugram. One person based in Gurugram posted a video to seek help after rainwater gushed into his house.

The Gurugram Traffic Police alerted that there is heavy waterlogging on certain stretches of roads but assured that police officials are on the spot to facilitate the flow of traffic.

Waterlogging was reported

from areas like the Old Delhi road in front of Maruti Gate-1, Unitech Cyber Park, Sector 4 and 5 roundabout, Jawala Mill Road and Golf Course Road in Gurugram.

The silver lining, however, is that the rainy morning brought down the mercury in the national capital. The maximum and minimum temperature hovered over 32 and 27 degrees Celsius, respectively.

The air quality is in the 'good' category, with the particulate matter with a diameter of 2.5 and 10 microns, which are too small to be filtered out of the body, mounting to 23 and 49 micrograms per cubic metre.

Bus hijacked with passengers on board in Agra

Continued from P1

A total of 34 passengers were on board the bus, according to the police. SSP Kumar said the episode started around 10:30 PM on Tuesday when the bus was near Raibha toll plaza at Dakshin bypass and eight-nine young men in two SUVs intercepted it. These men claimed they were from the finance company and asked the bus driver to get down but he ignored them and continued the ride, he said. "The men in SUVs then chased the bus and overtook it at Malpura area. They got into the bus and forcibly brought down the driver and the conductor.

They also told the passengers to not scream and assured them that no harm will be done to them," he added.

Later, four of these men boarded the bus and sped away on the Delhi-Kanpur highway, Kumar said. He said the driver and the conductor of the bus were taken in one of the SUVs and dropped off in Kuberpur area on the highway around 4 am after which they approached the local police for help. Police personnel, including the district police chief, then reached the spot and a search operation was launched to track the bus, he said.

Lokesh blames Jagan for JC's infection

Amaravati: TDP general secretary Nara Lokesh held Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy and his politics of vendetta for TDP former MLA J C Prabhakar Reddy contracting Covid-19 at Kadapa central prison.

In a statement on Wednesday, Lokesh said Prabhakar Reddy was arrested within 24 hours after being released and put behind bars. He demanded that quality medical treatment be provided to the senior party leader. "Jagan's criminal mentality and his conspiratorial tendency is the reason for Prabhakar Reddy getting Covid infection now. The Chief Minister is solely responsible for the this," he said.

Lokesh wondered if Jagan pleased with people for 'One Chance' only to indulge in unbridled harassment of opponents. The ruling party was not following the people's agenda in any aspect since coming to power in 2019, he added.

PM likely to open TiE Global Summit

Continued from P1

The summit based on the theme of 'Entrepreneurship 360', will focus on issues faced by entrepreneurs, provide a platform for funding, insights into strategies to grow and scale business with focus on new startup ideas.

A total of 20,000 entrepreneurs, over 200 investors, over 50 star speakers, successful celebrities, sports persons and spiritual and wellness gurus will

be attending the summit. Representatives from 25 TiE chapters from Americas, Europe, Africa, India and APAC will take part.

Sridhar Pinnapureddy, president, TiE Hyderabad, said: "The Covid-19 situation has offered us an opportunity to engage 20,000 entrepreneurs on a virtual platform due to social distancing norms. We plan to make the summit very enriching from networking, learning, and funding perspective".

It's official: Democrat Biden to take on Trump

Continued from P1

While Governors, Senators and other leaders represented their states in the roll call where they announced the votes from their states, Shah was selected to represent her state of Maryland. Shah, 20, is the leader of the Biden campaign's youth outreach for South Asians and was elected a delegate to support Biden in the primary, the intra-party election for selecting the party candidate.

One exam for all Central govt jobs

Continued from P1

The NRA will have representatives from the Ministry of Railways, the Ministry of Finance/ Department of Financial Services, the Staff Selection Commission (SSC), the Railway Recruitment Board (RRB) and the Institute of Banking Personnel Selection (IBPS). It is envisioned that the NRA would be a specialist body bringing the state-of-the-art technology and best practices in the field of Central government recruitment, an official statement said.

For now, the scores of the common test will be used by three major recruitment agencies, but other agencies would be included over a period of time. In the long run, the CET score could be shared with other recruiting agencies in the Central government, state governments/ Union Territories, Public Sector Undertakings and Private Sector, Singh said.

TODAY'S QUOTE

Digital investments must for sustained growth

“Deployment of innovative and contact-free processes across verticals in the post-Covid-19 era, thrust on fixed broadband, fibre-to-home and massive investments into digital infrastructure, will enable India to reap full benefits of digital technologies

– Trai Chairman R S Sharma



AT HOME

India tablet mkt shipments grow 23%

The strong demand during the lockdowns as work and learning shifted to homes fuelled the shipment of tablets in India by 23 per cent in the June quarter. The shipment of tablets with Wi-Fi capabilities grew a whopping 98 per cent (QoQ), according to a CMR's market report

FOREX (buy rates in ₹)			
US Dollar	79.31	South	
Euro	93.76	African Rand	4.99
UAE Dirham	22.4	Hong Kong Dollar	11.1
Thai Baht	2.75	Japanese Yen	0.82
British Pound	102.82	New Zealand Dollar	52.2
Australian Dollar	57.09	Saudi Riyal	21.94
Canadian Dollar	59.75	Swedish Krona	9.96
Swiss Franc	86.13	Singapore Dollar	57.6

DELHI THURSDAY 20 AUGUST 2020

BIZ BRIEFS

CBDT assures on new norms

New Delhi: The government has assured income tax officials that implementation of the new faceless and contactless tax administration would not cause any large-scale movement of officers or officials and all the changes would be done within the existing manpower preferably at the existing locations. Prime Minister Narendra Modi last week launched the platform for 'Transparent Taxation - Honouring the Honest' that aims to ease tax compliance with faceless assessment, faceless appeal and a tax payers' charter. The new system has raised fears that wide scale digitalisation of tax administration may result in scaling down manpower and job cuts. Sources said that the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) held an online meeting on Tuesday with officers and officials of the income tax department to discuss the national rolling out of the Faceless Assessment and Taxpayers' Charter.

HCCB launches new initiatives

Hyderabad: Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages (HCCB), an FMCG company, has introduced several virtual employee engagement initiatives to keep its workforce motivated amidst the ongoing pandemic and prepare them for the long haul. With most of its employees scattered across geographies and remote locations, HCCB has designed customised online programmes to keep employees engaged. The virtual employee engagement programmes assume special significance for the HCCB employees who have adopted and adapted to new ways of working when physical proximity is ruled out during the current pandemic. For instance, 'The Learning Hour' that includes webinars with digital activities to be carried out in groups or pairs with an aim to help employees gain new insights. Other initiatives include 'The Wellness Hour', 'The Talk Shows', and virtual training sessions.

Credit report in Telugu unveiled

Hyderabad: Paisabazaar.com, a digital lending marketplace, has introduced its credit report initiative in three regional languages. Consumers can now read and download their free credit report from Paisabazaar in Marathi, Telugu and Kannada, in addition to English and Hindi. A customer survey last year conducted by the portal revealed that over 60 per cent of customers preferred to have the option of reading their credit reports in their regional language, along with English. It began offering free credit reports in Hindi in December 2019. Naveen Kukreja, CEO & co-founder, Paisabazaar.com, said, "Introduction of the credit report in Hindi last year was a step in that direction and we have witnessed a tremendous response. We now want to take this initiative deeper across diverse geographies."

HCC-DBL JV wins order

New Delhi: Hindustan Construction Company and Dilip Buildcon Limited's joint venture has been awarded a Rs 1,335 crore contract by Rail Vikas Nigam. Accordingly, the contract is for construction of tunnels, bridges and formation works under package-9 of the new broad gauge rail line between Rishikesh and Karanprayag in Uttarakhand. HCC in a statement on Wednesday said its share in the JV is 60 per cent (Rs 801 crore). "This is an item rate contract for construction of 8.04 km long rail line involving 6.4 km main tunnel and 6.3 km escape tunnel, 2 major bridges and one minor bridge, 2.2 km long yard and a station at Karanprayag," the statement said.

World Bank sees bigger dent to GDP

Says Covid spread will slow economic recovery; In May, it forecast FY21 GDP fall at 3.2%

New Delhi: The World Bank on Wednesday indicated that it may further lower its growth projections for India and said critical reforms in key areas such as health, labour, land, skills and finance are needed to come out stronger from the Covid-19 crisis.

The World Bank had in May projected that the Indian economy will contract by 3.2 per cent in FY21 and rebound slowly in the next financial year.

"Further challenges have emerged in recent weeks which are likely to weigh on the prospects in the near term. These risks include the virus continuing to spread; further deterioration in the global outlook; and additional strains projected on the financial sector. Keeping these factors in mind, a steeper contraction may be projected in the revised outlook that will be available in October 2020," it said in its India Development Update released on Wednesday.

It projected India's fiscal deficit to rise to 6.6 per cent of GDP in FY21 and remain elevated at 5.5 per cent in the following year. "The pandemic has afflicted India at a

Critical reforms in key areas such as health, labour, land, skills and finance are needed for India to come out stronger from the Covid-19 crisis

– World Bank in its India Development Update

time when its economy had already been decelerating," the World Bank said. Defying a long-term accelerating path, real GDP growth moderated from 7.0 per cent in 2017-18 to 6.1 per cent in 2018-19 and 4.2 per cent in 2019-20.

"The pre-Covid-19 growth deceleration was perceived to be due to long-standing structural rigidities in key input markets; continuing balance sheet stress in the banking and corporate sector, which was compounded more recently by stress in the non-banking segment of the financial sector; increased risk aversion among banks and corporates; a decline in rural demand; and a subdued global economy," it



said.

While India took several policy actions, including a reduction in the corporate tax rate, regulatory forbearances for small business, reduction in personal income tax rates and business regulatory reforms, the pandemic cut short any hope that these actions would yield the expected payoffs.

"The outlook has now changed substantially, and the economy will likely contract in the current fiscal year," it said. The economic impact

of the pandemic will be felt in a direct decline in domestic demand and supply disruptions triggered by the containment measures, resulting in near collapse in certain service activities such as trade, transport, tourism and travel.

Also, there would be a second round of consumption and investment slowdown, compounded by (and ultimately driving) distress in the financial sector and financial markets, it said. "India needs to

Netmeds to complement RIL's digital consultation

Reliance Retail acquires e-pharmacy Netmeds for ₹620 crore

New Delhi: Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd making its second acquisition in the e-pharmacy space in form of a majority stake in Netmeds for Rs 620 crore will complement its digital consultation and diagnostic tests offering, analysts said on Wednesday.

RIL through its subsidiary Reliance Retail late on Tuesday night announced the acquisition of a 60 per cent stake in Indian digital pharma market place Netmeds for Rs 620 crore. The acquisition gives RIL 60 per cent equity stake in Vitalic Health and 100 per cent direct ownership in subsidiaries (collectively known as Netmeds). Netmeds operates an online pharmacy in India for prescription products, OTC, and health and wellness products.

Morgan Stanley said this is the company's second acquisition in the e-pharmacy space, an area it has highlighted would be of focus as it builds its digital-plus e-commerce ecosystem.

Over the past three years, RIL has announced \$3.1 billion in acquisitions with 13 per cent in retail, 80 per cent in telecom, media and technology, and 6 per cent in energy. Netmeds is pres-



ent in 670 cities and towns and offers more than 70,000 prescription and lifestyle drugs and thousands of non-prescription goods for wellness, health, and personal care.

Netmeds promoters have a long history in pharma retailing and manufacturing and had about \$1 million in revenues in FY2018, it said. Its app also offers doctor consultation services as well.

In 2019, RIL acquired C-square, which offers software for distributors/retailers in the pharma sector and handles 1 million-plus transaction daily. "Currently RIL offers digital consultation and diagnostic tests on its online app JioHealth Hub and the acquisition of NetMeds completes the offering with medicine delivery as well," Credit Suisse said.

Pharma market expected to grow 12% to 14%



Mumbai: India's domestic pharmaceuticals market is expected to grow by 12 to 14 per cent in the next three years while the export market may grow by 8 to 14 per cent, according to a new report by professional services firm KPMG. Backed by a \$41 billion pharma industry, the country ranks as the third-largest market globally by volume and 13 largest by value. The epidemiological transition from communicable diseases to noncommunicable diseases in the country is driving the pharma market.

Dr Reddy's launches Covid tablets in India

To offer free home delivery service in 42 cities across the country

HANS BUSINESS

Hyderabad: Dr Reddy's Laboratories On Wednesday announced the launch of Avigan (Favipiravir) 200 mg tablets in India. The launch is part of the global licensing agreement with Fujifilm Toyama Chemical Co. Ltd. that granted the Indian drug maker the exclusive rights to manufacture, sell and distribute the tablets in India, said M V Ramana, Chief Executive Officer of Branded Markets (India and Emerging Markets), Dr Reddy's Laborato-



ries. Avigan (Favipiravir) has been approved by the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) for the treatment of patients with mild to moderate Covid-19 disease. Ramana said: "We are pleased to bring this important innovator medicine to the patients in India. The need for high quality and efficacy, affordability and better disease management are key priorities for us. We believe that Avigan would provide an effective treatment option to the Covid-19 impacted patients in India."

Low vehicle demand hits auto parts sector

New Delhi: Subdued vehicle demand along with slowdown in key export markets, amongst others dented the year-on-year financial performance of the country's auto component industry in FY20. According to data, the turnover of the automotive component industry stood at Rs 3.49 lakh crore (\$49.2 billion) for the period April 2019 to March 2020, registering a de-growth of 11.7 per cent over the previous year. The data was fur-

nished by the Automotive Component Manufacturers Association of India. Besides, the ACMA Annual Industry Performance Review for 2019-20 showed that exports of auto components witnessed degrowth of 3.2 per cent to Rs 1.02 lakh crore in 2019-20 from Rs 1.06 lakh crore in 2018-19. "The automotive industry faced a prolonged slowdown in FY 2019-20 with vehicle sales in all segments plummeting significantly,"

Deepak Jain, President, ACMA was quoted as saying in a statement. Subdued vehicle demand, investments made for transition from BSIV to BSVI, liquidity crunch, lack of a clarity on policy for electrification of vehicles and slow-down in key export markets, among others, had an adverse impact on the performance of the components sector in India as also on its expansion plans, he said.

Centre unveils debt scheme for MSMEs

MSME Ministry issues guidelines for the scheme announced under Aatmanirbhar Bharat

New Delhi: The Union government has launched the Credit Guarantee Scheme for Subordinate Debt for MSMEs, thereby operationalising the Rs 20,000 crore distressed assets fund.

On Wednesday, the Ministry for MSMEs issued guidelines for the scheme which was announced under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat economic package.

In a tweet, the ministry said that all public sector banks along with some private banks are on board. "Govt has given yet another facility for financially stressed MSMEs. The sub-debt scheme has been launched. All preparation is done. All PSU Banks and some Pvt Banks are on board," it said.

The scheme would be applicable to all credit facilities sanctioned under CGSSD for a maximum period of 10 years from the guarantee avallment date or March 31, 2021 whichever is earlier, or till the amount of Rs

20,000 crore of guarantee amount is approved. As per the guidelines, the scheme is applicable for those MSMEs whose accounts have been standard as of March 31, 2018 and have been in regular operations, either as standard accounts, or as NPA accounts during financial year



2018-19 and financial year 2019-20. It will be valid for MSME units which are stressed, which are SMA-2 and NPA accounts as on April 30, 2020 who are eligible for restructuring as per the RBI guidelines.

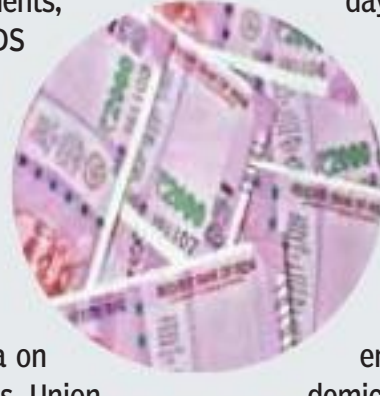
"Under this arrangement, promoter(s) of the MSME unit will be given credit equal to 15 per

Now, MSMEs loans against govt dues via TReDS

New Delhi: The Cabinet on Wednesday allowed all non-banking financial companies to provide discount loans to MSMEs against dues from government departments, through the TReDS platform.

So far only a selected NBFCs and banks were on the platform and could give the discount loans to MSMEs.

Briefing the media on the cabinet decisions, Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar said that the decision has been taken to improve



cent of his/her stake (equity plus debt) or Rs 75 lakh whichever is lower," said the guideline.

Any guarantee approved under the scheme shall be over and above the existing loan/guaran-

tee sanctioned by the trust. Post-restructuring, NPA classification of these accounts shall be as per the extant income recognition and asset classification (IRAC) norms for banks.

European cos to expand Chinese biz operations

Beijing: Many European companies in China that emphasised global collaboration are deciding to further tap into the Chinese market and expand their investment in the country in spite of repeated US attempts to build an European alliance against China.

European company representatives said that their businesses will not succumb to US pressure or play the US' political game. Representatives of several German companies in Taicang, Suzhou, East China's Jiangsu Province - dubbed the Chinese town for German enterprises - told the Global Times they would not follow American companies to move their production out of the Chinese mainland, and instead would strengthen their business partnership with Chinese counterparts as they highly value China's huge market and promising economy.

Emin Guemes, Division Manager of Kern-Liebers Taicang company, the first German company established in Taicang in 1993, said what the US is doing in



Europe is stupid, as European companies, especially German companies will not listen to the Trump administration.

"As an automotive company, we value markets and China has a huge automobile market compared with the US and Europe. China produces around 25 million cars each year, while Europe only produces 5 million," he said.

The company supplies to global automotive, textile and consumer goods industries and it is building a new factory in Taicang as part of its long-term development strategy for the next 10 years. He said German companies will not move out of Chinese market, as the huge Chinese market offers jobs amid economic downturn in Europe.

UDAN plan in TS runs into rough weather

The Airports Authority of India (AAI) has sought the details of the threat of submergence to the proposed new airports in case the specific airport zones are hit by heavy rains before taking up the construction work

- Required lands were already identified for the new airports in the six locations and clearances from the Air Force, Union Ministry of Environment and other authorised agencies are awaited
- On the insistence of the AAI, the State Roads and Building department has taken up the study of high flood levels in the surrounding areas of the proposed airstrips
- Officials say that the airport locations will be altered if they are prone to floods and submergence

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad: Fresh spell of heavy rains cast a shadow on the development of new airports in the Telangana State.

The Centre has reportedly put the brakes on the proposed development of airports in the identified six places including the flood-hit Warangal city and



asked the State government to submit a report on the High Flood Level (HFL) in those selected towns before taking up the construction of new airports.

The Ministry of Civil Aviation had recently announced development of six airports at Mamunuru (Warangal), Basanth Nagar (Peddapally), Khanapur (Adilabad), Jakranpally (Nizamabad), Kothagudem and Devarakadra in old Mahabubnagar district. The new airports were being developed under UDAN (Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik) - Regional Connectivity Scheme launched by the Centre to improve connectivity between the two tier cities in the country.

In the wake of reports that the

heavy rains submerged many areas surrounding the new airports, top officials said that the Airports Authority Of India (AAI) has sent an official communication to the State government seeking the details of the threat of submergence of proposed new airports in case the specific airport zones are hit by heavy rains.

On the insistence of the AAI, the State Roads and Building department has taken up the study of high flood levels in the surrounding areas of the proposed airstrips. Required lands were already identified for the new airports in the six locations and waiting for clearances from the Air Force, Union Ministry of En-

vironment and other authorised agencies.

"The safety of airports has been the top priority. Hence, the AAI was seeking the details of canals, water reservoirs, irrigation projects and flood threat to the proposed mini airports during the monsoon season," officials said, adding that under the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Scheme, big reservoirs-Ramappa, Pakala and Ghanpur tanks came up in and around Warangal.

Whether the safety of the airport in Warangal is in danger will be known in the report to be prepared by R & B engineers in consultation with the Irrigation department soon. It may be

mentioned here that the Warangal was the worst-hit district by the recent heavy rains. The entire city and surrounding areas marooned due overflow of water bodies and tanks developed around the second big Municipal Corporation in Telangana.

Officials said that the proposed airports in Kothagudem, Peddapally, Nizamabad and Adilabad were close to river Godavari which has been transformed as a hub of reservoirs under Kaleshwaram Project recently. The flood threat from the reservoirs to the airports will be taken as main criteria before finalising the construction plans. The proposed airport in Devarakadra was also located close to the ongoing Palamuru Rangareddy Lift Irrigation scheme taken up on river Krishna in the dense Nallamala forest region. The project is also required clearances from the Environment Ministry before the works kick starts.

Officials said that the airport locations will be altered if they are prone to floods and submergence. The report will be finalised in a week or ten days and submit the same to the Airport Authority of India.

Congress questions AIMPLB's silence over Sectt mosques' demolition issue

- Says the Board should have approached the court
- Demands the Board to take a clear stand on the matter
- Some AIMPLB leaders are holding official posts in the TRS government and therefore are trying to dilute the issue to protect the secular image of CM, alleges Congress leader Sameer Waliullah

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad: Congress on Wednesday demanded that the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) take a clear stand over the demolition of two mosques on the premises of the State Secretariat. It stated that the Board did not even lodge a police complaint against the demolition of mosques nor approached the court till now.

Hyderabad City Congress Committee (HCCC) minorities department chairman Sameer Waliullah, in a media statement, said that a few members of the AIMPLB are holding official

posts in the TRS government and therefore are trying to dilute the issue to protect the secular image of CM. "The AIMPLB's present stand on the demolition of the Secretariat mosques - Masjid Dafaatir-e-Muatamadi and Masjid-e-Hashmi by the Telangana government has created confusion within the Muslim community. Despite knowing the fact that demolition of the Secretariat mosques was illegal, unethical, immoral and unconstitutional, the AIMPLB appears to be in some confusion over taking a firm stand against the TRS government headed by KCR," he felt.

The Congress leader asked as to why the AIMPLB did not take up the case on suo moto basis. He said that the AIMPLB's meeting, which was held in Hyderabad on August 16 to discuss the issue of demolition of the Secretariat mosques, was completely hijacked by some individuals associated with the ruling party. "All members of AIMPLB should refrain from acting as tools in the hands of any political party, including TRS, MIM or Congress. They should remain independent and loyal to the community and not to any particular party or parties," he said.

COVID WASTE DISPOSAL

MAUD wants hospitals to stick to CPCB norms

Says urban local bodies are responsible for ensuring safe collection and disposal of biomedical waste

Municipal Commissioners are to ensure

- Special arrangements for disposal of waste from hospitals, quarantine centres
- Separate bins and trolleys for segregating Covid wastes

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad: With corona positive patients undergoing home quarantine and the Covid waste not being properly segregated even by the hospitals in districts, the Municipal Administration Department has directed the municipal commissioners to ensure the guidelines prescribed by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) are followed in handling the Covid waste.

As per the CPCB, certain guidelines have to be followed by the hospitals for the disposal of waste. With most of the corona positive patients being advised home quarantine, the segregation has become a challenge for the municipal authorities in the towns. The director of municipal administration recently issued orders to the commissioners of municipalities and corporations to ensure the guidelines of CPCB are followed for the disposal of Covid waste.

As per the revised guidelines, the municipal adminis-



tration department has asked the commissioners to ensure special arrangements in place for disposal of waste from hospitals, quarantine centres and Covid sample collection centres. The officials were asked to maintain different bins and trolleys for segregating the Covid wastes from other waste. The hospitals should write 'Covid waste' on the bins and make sure that these do not get mixed with other wastes. Keep the waste at a separate place till it is taken up for disposal, the guidelines read. The details of disposable material should be uploaded in the mobile application of CPCB. The used PPE kits, gloves, masks and other material should be kept in a paper bag for 72 hours and later be cut into pieces so that they are not used again, it di-

rected. The dedicated staff should only collect waste from the houses and not mix the garbage with Covid waste.

As per the official records, the Covid waste was increasing in the State with the rise in the number of positive cases. The average waste generated during the month of May was around 650 kgs and it increased close to three tonnes in July. The DMA said that the urban local bodies are responsible for ensuring safe collection and disposal of biomedical waste. The ULBs should create a separate team of workers for doorstep waste collection, ensure only designated staff collects biomedical waste, should designate a nodal person who would be responsible for waste management for a specific quarantine centre.

Two more fuel outlets started by TSRTC

RTC intends to provide quality, pure and right quantity of the fuel to the customers which will improve the mileage and also enhance the life of the vehicle engine

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad: TSRTC has started two more fuel outlets including at Birkoor and Bichkunda from August 17. With an aim to increase commercial revenue of TSRTC, the Corporation had entered into MoU with HPCL and IOCL for commissioning and operation of retail fuel outlets on mutually agreed terms and conditions. In the initial stage, 92 fuel outlets were proposed to be started. These were to be operated by service providers at Greater Hyderabad, Hyderabad and Karimnagar Zones appointed through open tenders. The service provider of Karimnagar Zone has withdrawn prematurely after completion of one year.

The Corporation has decided to take over and operate the six fuel outlets located at Jangaon, Birkoor, Bichkunda, Asifabad, Hanamakonda and Mahabubabad of Karimnagar Zone, with its own employees. In this direction, first outlet was inaugurated at Jangaon by the Transport Minister P Ajay Kumar through video conference from Transport Bhavan in the city on August 6.

The RTC officials said that remaining outlets are also proposed to be operated with RTC employees only. With this, RTC intends to provide quality, pure and right quantity of the fuel to the customers which will improve the mileage and also enhance the life of the vehicle engine. The officials have called upon the people of Telangana, especially Birkoor and Bichkunda and surrounding areas to utilise this facility and support the organisation.

TRAFFIC GOES FOR A TOSS



Vehicles stranded on the bustling Ranigunj in Secunderabad due to rain and woeful state of road.

PHOTO : Adula Krishna

Youth Congress protests outside Facebook office

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad: As a part of the ongoing nation-wide campaign, the Telangana Youth Congress members held a protest outside Facebook office at Raheja Mindspace IT Park in Madhapur. Alleging Facebook's 'egregious association' with BJP to promote hate and disharmony in the nation, they held placards and resorted to sloganeering before being picked up by Madhapur police.

Led by State president Anil Kumar Yadav, the activists held a demonstration at the Facebook office in the morning hours and demanded the removal of the top employee of social media giant, Ankhi Das for allegedly having connections with BJP and its ideological parent, the RSS.

"We demand the Facebook administration, Facebook CEO to



not hurt the sentiments and play with the emotions of people. Also, not to promote the low-level leaders of the BJP and RSS on its platform," he said.

Scores of Youth Congress activists including Lalith Yadav, Manohar Yadav, Shyam, Rakesh Yadav, Venkat, Gokul, Sukesh

were among others who took part.

It may be mentioned here that the Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had tweeted on Tuesday that Facebook's alleged involvement in peddling fake news on the social media platform needs to be questioned.

HYD COULD BE HAVING 6 LAKH ACTIVE COVID CASES: STUDY

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad: While the actual Covid-19 cases in GHMC limits are just under 50,000 so far, a joint study by CCMB and IICT predicted the infected number could be more than ten times the actual figure.

The study estimated that the overall number of potentially infected people in Hyderabad (including symptomatic and asymptomatic) could be around 6 lakh, which is 6 per cent of the city population. A conservative estimate of the number of active cases who are shedding the virus maybe around 2.6 lakh. Since an infected person sheds viral material in faecal samples for up to 35 days, this study is expected to provide an overall estimate of the situation in a window of one month.

Individuals who are infected with coronavirus shed not only through nasal and oral routes but also through faeces shed virus. This provides an op-

portunity to use sewage/wastewater samples to estimate the spread of the infection in a given locality or area. The SARS-CoV-2 in sewage samples is non-infectious, thus making sewage samples suitable for epidemiological studies. Estimating the spread is very important in identifying the affected areas, and controlling the pandemic. Since an infected person sheds viral material in faecal samples for up to 35 days, these studies will provide an overall estimate of the situation in a window of one month.

In a collaborative effort, CCMB and IICT researchers harvested the sewage samples to estimate the number of potentially infected individuals in the city. Sewage samples from major STPs were processed for detecting presence of SARS-CoV-2 viral RNA. Of the 1800 million litre water used daily in Hyderabad, 40% is processed at different sewage treatment plants (STPs). While viral RNA is detectable in the inlet sam-

- Covid-19 surveillance using sewage samples predicts infected cases in State capital could be ten times more than the government figures
- CCMB and IICT teams did this joint study
- The study, that covered about 80% of the STPs in Hyderabad, reveals that there are around 2 lakh people who are shedding viral materials
- Since only 40% of the Hyderabad sewage reaches STPs, which means that the overall number of potentially infected people, turns out to be approximately 6 lakh, which is around 6% of the city's population



ples, the outlet (after treatment) samples of STP were largely clean (free from viral RNA) indicating efficient treatment practices at STP.

This study, that covered about 80% of the STPs in Hyderabad, revealed that there are around 2 lakh people who are shedding viral materials. Since only 40% of the Hyderabad sewage reaches STPs, this data can be used to extrapolate the overall number of potentially infected people, which turned out to be approximately 6 lakh, which is around 6 per cent of the city's population, which includes symptomatic, asymptomatic, and also recently recovered individuals in a time window of about 35 days. A conservative estimate of the number of active cases who are shedding the virus, maybe around 2.6 lakhs. The findings are posted on the preprint server for health sciences, MedRxiv, which is yet to be peer-reviewed.

"Our finding clearly indicates that a large proportion of the affected in-

dividuals are asymptomatic and did not need hospitalisation. This is also in agreement with the observation that hospitalisation rush or mortality is way lower than otherwise expected with such a large infection rate at a given time. It explains why our healthcare system has been able to handle reasonably well the situation during the pandemic," Dr. Rakesh K Mishra, Director, CCMB said.

"Such studies if carried out in coordination with civic bodies to identify the hotspots in the city and monitor the dynamics of the infection rate can assist the system in taking necessary measures", he added. All the experiments were conducted at the CCMB COVID-19 testing facility and the teams included Hemalatha Manupati, Kopperi Harishankar and S Venkata Mohan from IICT and Uday Kiran, C G Gokulan, Santosh Kumar Kuncha and Rakesh K Mishra from CCMB.

BCCI willing to host a farewell match for Dhoni, says official

New Delhi (IANS): The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is willing to host a farewell match for former India captain MS Dhoni, who recently announced his retirement from international cricket.

Speaking to IANS, a senior BCCI official said the board will speak to Dhoni, during the upcoming edition of the Indian Premier League, and plan accordingly.

"There is no international series right now, maybe after IPL we will see what can be done because Dhoni has done a lot for the nation and he deserves all the respect. We always wanted to have a farewell match for him but Dhoni is a different player. He announced his retirement when nobody was thinking of it," the official said.

Asked if they had any word with Dhoni as of yet, the official said, "No, but surely we will speak to him during the IPL and that would be the right place to get his opinion about a match or series. Well, there will be a proper felicitation ceremony for him no matter if he agrees on it or not. That will be our honour to felicitate him."

Former Indian cricketer Madan Lal, too, agreed on holding a proper farewell match for the veteran wicketkeeper-batsman.

"I would be really happy if the BCCI hosts a match for Dhoni. He is a legendary player and you can't let him go just like that. His fans would want to see him again in action," Lal told IANS.

"IPL is happening in the UAE and everybody will be glued to their screens to watch him play. But the board can host a series in India too, so that people can see him live in the stadium (obviously after this pandemic gets over)," he added.

Earlier, Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren had also



PM Modi may request Dhoni to play 2021 T20 WC: Akhtar

Lahore (IANS): Former Pakistan speedster Shoaib Akhtar believes Prime Minister Narendra Modi might request MS Dhoni to come out of retirement and play in the T20 World Cup slated to be held in India next year.

Dhoni, on August 15, announced his retirement from international cricket, thus bringing an end to an illustrious career spanning 16 years.

"I think he (Dhoni) could have gone on to play the T20 World Cup. The way India supports its stars, the way they love them, and recognises them, they would have played him in T20s. But it was his personal choice," Akhtar said in an interview with YouTube channel



'Bol Wasim'.

"But again he has won everything, a person from Ranchi has rocked the whole of India, what else do you need. At the end of the day, the world should remember you. And a nation like India, they will never let you get forgotten."

Akhtar said that the 39-year-old might make a comeback to international cricket on the request of Prime Minister Modi.

"You never know, the Prime Minister may call him and request him to play the T20 World Cup. It is very much possible. Imran Khan was asked by General Zia-ul-Haq not to leave cricket after 1987, and he played," he said.

"You cannot say no to the Prime Minister."

"I think Prime Minister of India should request him to lead India in the 2021 T20 World Cup," he added. The 'Rawalpindi Express' also said that India owes Dhoni a grand farewell.

"India will be geared up to give him a farewell game, trust me. If he doesn't want it, it is a different thing, but India will be ready," the 45-year-old added.



Love comes from cricketing fans for your cricketing achievements, but respect comes by the way you have conducted yourself, by the way you carried yourself. And I always felt that captaining the Indian team is probably the toughest challenge for anyone, you know, because there's so much of expectation from everyone around the world. All the Indians around the world want the Indian team to do well, so there's a lot of responsibility on the Indian team captain. But MS Dhoni has always been emotionally detached from the results. He has inspired millions of Indians, not only the sports fans, but millions of Indians on how to conduct and how to become an ambassador of your country, how to carry yourself in the public domain. And that's why he's so respected,"

— VVS Laxman, Former cricketer

The former Indian cricket captain did not play competitive cricket after the 2019 World Cup defeat to New Zealand and he put an end to all the speculation over his international future on August 15. However, Dhoni, like quite a few India cricket greats, has bowed out without a farewell match at the international level.

Dhoni, who is currently in Chennai, is all set to continue playing for Chennai Super Kings (CSK) in the IPL, starting from September 19.

Dhoni turned up for India in 350 ODIs, 90 Tests and 98 T20Is, affecting a staggering number of 829 dismissals behind the stumps.



PSG's Neymar is sent flying in a challenge during the Champions League semifinal soccer match between RB Leipzig and Paris Saint-Germain at the Luz stadium in Lisbon, Portugal

Neymar destined to be world's best: Mbappe

PSG OUTPLAY RB LEIPZIG TO REACH 1ST CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL

Lisbon (IANS): Paris Saint-Germain forward Kylian Mbappe has backed teammate Neymar to be named world's best player by FIFA this year.

Neymar has struck a rich vein of form in 2020, guiding PSG to a domestic treble and to within one victory of their first UEFA Champions League triumph.

"It's very enjoyable to play with a guy like Neymar. He is one of the best in the world," Mbappe told reporters as the French team progressed to their first UEFA Champions League final after defeated Leipzig 3-0 in their semifinal on Tuesday, reports Xinhua news agency.

"If we win the Champions League, he will certainly be in a position to win the award. He is destined to win this type of trophy." The surprise was the presence of striker Kylian Mbappe from the beginning of Tuesday's match, after the Frenchman's return from injury, but the evening belonged to Argentinian midfielder Angel Di Maria, who returned after suspension to score one goal and assist the other two, reports Xinhua news agency.

Despite not being on the score-sheet in PSG's past two matches,

Neymar has shone in a playmaker role that has showcased his fine passing skills. His back flick to set up Angel Di Maria's first-half goal on Tuesday put in him in the top 10 for all-time Champions League assists.

PSG captain and fellow Brazilian Thiago Silva also said Neymar deserved to be recognised as the world's pre-eminent player.

"Whether we win the final or not, I believe he can win it," Silva said. "We know it's his goal. He is an excellent player and this year he has done incredible things. He has been motivated since we came back from the pandemic. I think his time will come. He just has to keep working hard like he's doing."

Neymar has made no secret of his desire to be named the world's best player. The former Santos and Barcelona star finished third in the FIFA award in 2015 and 2017. PSG looked to dominate the game from the outset with an early effort from Brazilian striker Neymar cannoning off the post. RB Leipzig tried to challenge, but never offered any real threat to PSG goalkeeper Sergio Rico, deputizing for the injured Keylor Navas.

HI to provide ₹1 lakh/year to State units for website maintenance

New Delhi (IANS): Hockey India has said that it will be providing a grant of Rs 1 lakh per annum to its state member units for them to establish and maintain their websites.

Hockey India said that the state units are required to adhere to its guidelines while pertaining to the websites which includes updated information on their executive boards and office bearers and of their state level championships, among others.

"The grant will be disbursed through four quarterly payments of Rs 25,000 each to the eligible permanent state member units who have a functional website with all relevant details and is also updated on a regular basis," said Hockey India President Gyanendra Ningombam in a notice to all presidents and secretary generals of the state units.

In its guidelines that were attached with the notice, Hockey India said that the details of state-level championships are required to be included in the Annual Calendar for Training and Competition (ACTC) which it has to submit to the Sports Ministry every year.

"Further, as a part of the good governance in sports, every state member unit is expected to have a website wherein they should disseminate/update the information on a regular basis including the details of their state level championships," said Hockey India.

The clause in the National Sports Development Code 2011 which pertains to National Sports Federations (NSFs) hosting national championships in all categories for men and women was one of several points on which the Indian Olympic Association earlier expressed its reservations to the Sports Ministry. The IOA had said that this point may not be considered while providing annual recognition for 2021 as tournaments could not be held this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dream11 wanted three-year deal, but BCCI sticks to one

New Delhi (IANS): The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and Dream11 have finally agreed to a conclusion after a long meeting on Wednesday that the fantasy sports platform will be the title sponsor of IPL 'for this year only'.

According to sources, Dream11 wanted to have a three-year deal with IPL but the board was 'uninterested'.

"BCCI had said that this will be a one-year deal but Dream11 wanted to have it for three years. Dream11 has offered Rs 222 crore for this year, Rs 240 crore for the next year and Rs 240 crore for the third year," sources said.

"But the BCCI said that after the Covid-19 pandemic gets over, they are expected to get a good amount next year, so can't commit for the future. The board also said if Vivo backs out again, then Dream11 will be given the first preference." There was discussion going on and that's why the official announcement got delayed. But now everything is sorted out and



they both have agreed to one year only. BCCI may soon issue the statement," the source added. Dream11 emerged as the highest bidder for the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2020 title rights on Tuesday. Already a partner of the BCCI, Dream11 outbid education-technology platforms Byju's and Unacademy to win the race.

The IPL 2020 title sponsorship fell vacant after Vivo, which had signed a Rs 2,000 crore-plus five-year deal (2018-2022) with the BCCI, withdrew due to the Boycott China campaign which gathered steam in the wake of the India-China standoff in the Galwan Valley in eastern Ladakh in June.

Knight Riders, Tridents register winning starts at CPL 2020

Trinidad (IANS): Brilliant all-round performances dominated the opening day of the Caribbean Premier League (CPL) 2020 as Sunil Narine for Trinbago Knight Riders, followed by Rashid Khan and Mitchell Santner for Barbados Tridents gave their teams a winning start.

While Knight Riders ended Guyana Amazon Warriors' 11-match winning streak beating them by four wickets in a match reduced to 17 overs, Tridents edged aside St. Kitts & Nevis Patriots by six runs at the Brian Lara Academy at Tarouba on Tuesday.

In the opening match, Narine's 50 in 28 balls with four sixes and two fours, after taking two for 19 in his four overs were the key for Trinbago, though in the end they needed Bravo brothers, Darren (30) and Dwayne (six not out), to see them through with two balls to spare against Guyana Amazon Warriors, for whom Shimron Hetmyer's scored 63 not out off just 44 balls.

Batting first, Warriors managed to register 144/5 which Knight Riders chased down with two balls to spare.

Brief Scores: Trinbago Knight Riders 147/6 (Narine 50, Darren Bravo 30; Naveen 2/21) beat Guyana Amazon Warriors 144/5 (Hetmyer 63*, Taylor 33; Narine 2/19) by four wickets.

In the second match of the day, Santner (20 and 2 for 18) and Rashid (26 and 2 for 27) carried the day for Barbados Tridents and helped them to a winning start over St Kitts & Nevis Patriots in their title defense. Tridents put up 153/9 in their stipu-



lated 20 overs and they then restricted Patriots to 147/5 to win the game.

Brief scores: Barbados Tridents 153/9 (Holder 38, Mayers 37; Emrit 2/16) beat St Kitts & Nevis Patriots 147/5 (Da Silva 41*, Dunk 34; Santner 2/18, Rashid 2/27) by 6 runs.

Sindhu, Ghosal, Rasquinha team up with Mindhouse to talk about mental strength

Gurugram (IANS): Meditation-based mental wellness start-up Mindhouse has rolled out a campaign titled 'Winner's Mindset' to emphasise the role of mental strength. The campaign features some of India's leading sports icons talking about the importance of mental strength and its impact on their on-field performance.

The campaign aims to highlight that traits such as physical fitness and training are easily visible and applauded, however mental strength is often overlooked and is pivotal to a person's success irrespective of the field of accomplishment.

PV Sindhu, ace Indian shuttler, said: "I have had my fair share of failure and success in tough situations. I have learnt that the importance of mental strength is as high as that of my physical fitness. I attribute a lot of my own wins and improvement to my focus on my mind, and am truly glad to work with Mindhouse in this campaign."

Commenting on the campaign, Viren Rasquinha, former captain of the Indian



men's hockey team said, "Mental strength and conditioning are very important to in-

corporate in an athlete's training, right from the beginning. As physical capabilities are similar at the top, I have seen how the strength of the mind wins you those crucial battles."

"I am really happy that Mindhouse is bringing this to the forefront, and hope more athletes in India take this aspect seriously."

In the film, the athletes address the tremendous pressures and challenges that they face on a regular basis, and how it's their mental strength and resilience that helps them to keep moving forward.

Pooja Khanna, Co-founder, Mindhouse, said, "We believe mental strength is a critical asset that everyone can develop, with correct and regular mind training."

We are proud to partner with some of India's leading sports icons to highlight and bring out the importance of mental strength, and its role in creating winners. We hope this inspires people to make mental fitness a priority."

IPL 13: Will have a chat with Ashwin about 'Mankading', says Ponting

Sydney (IANS): Former Australia skipper Ricky Ponting is not in favour of 'Mankading' and has said that he will have a chat with off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin when he plays for the Delhi Capitals in the upcoming edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL).

England batsman Buttler was 'Mankaded' by Ashwin at a crucial moment in last year's IPL season during a match between Kings XI Punjab and Rajasthan Royals. The manner of the dismissal had created ripples across the cricketing fraternity and beyond, with many former greats of the game lambasting the Indian off-spinner for breaching the 'spirit of the game'.

"I'll be having a chat with him (Ashwin) about (mankad), that's the first thing I'll do," Delhi Capitals head coach Ponting said while speaking on The Grade Cricketer Podcast.

"Obviously, he wasn't in our squad last year, he's one of our



players that we tried to bring in this year.

"Look, he's a terrific bowler, and he's done a great job in the IPL for a long period of time now, but I must admit watching that last season, as soon as it happened and he did that, I actually sat our boys down and said 'Look, I know he's done it, there'll be others around the tournament who'll think about doing this well but that's not going to be the way that we play our cricket. We won't be doing that'."

Ashwin, who was bought by the Delhi Capitals at the IPL 2020 held last year, had defended his decision to run out Buttler, saying his "conscience was clear".