

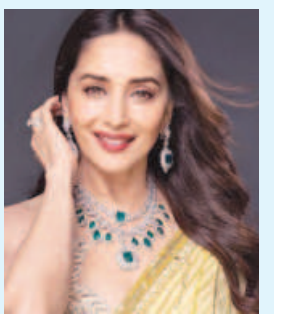
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Womenia

TWEET PATROL



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 & birthday wishes from
 everyone
#ThankYou



Remarkable journey of women entrepreneurship over decades

TEJAL SINHA

Due to the growing industrialization, urbanization along with the spread of higher education and awareness, the emergence of Women owned enterprises are highly increasing in the economies of almost all countries.

Women entrepreneurs are fast becoming a force to reckon with in the business world and are not only involved in enterprises for survival but to satisfy their inner urge of creativity and to prove their capabilities. With the spread of education and awareness, women have shifted from the kitchen, handicrafts, and traditional cottage industries to non-traditional higher levels of activities. The Government has also laid special weight age on the requirement for conducting special entrepreneurial training programs for women to enable them to start their own ventures. WE Hub, and initiative of Government of Telangana is one such example who has Financial institutions and banks have also set up cells to help women entrepreneurs.

The Pandemic had a disproportionate impact on women all over the world. In India, which has a vast gender gap, women are even more vulnerable. South Asia has as many as 16 million women-owned businesses, fewer than 20% of all enterprises, with most of them largely single-person operations, and making survival crucial. Women-owned businesses saw a sharp decline in revenue: 73% reported being negatively impacted by the pandemic, and almost 20% were nearly wiped out.

Start-ups from various sectors are addressing their pandemic-related challenges, and then extensively mapping solutions with the prime goal of keeping their business afloat. Re-strategizing and Reconnect with the market are the way to go for start-ups during these tough times.



According to the Women's Global Entrepreneurship study conducted in US, UK and India, commissioned by Dell, it has been found that the ideal country for a woman starting a business could well be India. Access to resources and availability of knowledge for women entrepreneurs has improved drastically over the years

Depth Ravula, CEO of 'WEHUB' shares, "As an enabler for Women Entrepreneurs, WEHUB's focus during this time of a global pandemic is entirely on ensuring that the start-ups we work with can sustain during this period. We are doing this by working with our start-ups 1-1 to guide them with interventions needed in organizational management, financial remodelling, financial Linkages including debit and credit linkages, Government liaising, new customer acquisition,

product diversification, ideation including pivot on a few of our start-ups. With the steps being taken by the State and Central Government to contain the COVID-19 scenario, we as WEHUB are extending our support to Women led enterprises to sustain and scale and be prepared for the post lockdown scenarios."

In 2021, WEHUB has been working with different state governments in India to create avenues to support women entrepreneurs across states like Gujarat, Jammu & Kashmir and Assam. We have also started our International startup exchange programmes, built a stronger VC ecosystem so that more Women entrepreneurs can benefit from access to funding.

Rupal Mehta, founder and CEO of MedMarvel Software Solutions Pvt Ltd shares, "During my journey I met Dr Nilesh Kurawale, India's esteemed Epilepsy Neurosurgeon. He introduced me to the challenges faced by Neurophysi-

cians and surgeons in treatment and surgical planning of their patients. In my journey it was very exciting to meet many women entrepreneurs some with brilliant ideas fresh out of college, few have accelerated their pathways in large corporates offering support to other startups, however its very thrilling to meet many more women with expertise and experience in science and technology, returning to the industry as entrepreneurs and leading deep technology start-ups in the field of Healthcare, Education, Agriculture, Ocean Technology and many more.

Prathibha Kunda, managing director of Surendrapuri shares that since the turn of the 21st century, women entrepreneurs in India have progressed from a phase of aspiration to one of ambition.

She adds, "With the widespread awareness and access to education in the Digital Age, women are increasingly involving in businesses of their choice. Families are also more open to women working in different fields. Other than personal front the Government-led policies and schemes, as well as NGO-led initiatives, have helped transform the landscape for women entrepreneurs over the past few years.

Women-oriented entrepreneurial training programs, mentorship support, networking platforms, incubators, and accelerators, among others, have enabled the women entrepreneurship ecosystem to grow in prominence and generate more employment opportunities in the country. While historically, there were numerous societal restrictions and barriers for women to enter and manage enterprises, the conversation about women in leadership roles is undoubtedly changing for the better."

Challenges faced by women entrepreneurs

Considering that support from those around you is crucial to successfully establish an enterprise, plenty of aspiring women entrepreneurs struggle with family conflicts and the non-cooperation of their close family members as many still manage to perform the dual roles of a homemaker and an entrepreneur.

As property owners in the past were predominantly males, women are less likely to have access to such properties that can be used as collateral for obtaining business loans/funds from banks and other financial institutions, making the arrangement of finances and support of bankers more difficult. Additionally, the lack of education and know-how, and prevalent levels of illiteracy amongst women as compared to men is the root cause of these gender-based socioeconomic barriers. Regardless each woman has to overcome obstacles, her own limiting beliefs, break the glass ceiling by staying focused on her goals in a gender-neutral manner while respecting the biological cycles.

A few questions like 'Is this your hobby project?' or 'Are there any fulltime male co-founders as backup' does not really fly well with today's empowered woman entrepreneurs.

Currently estimated less than 2% woman led startups get funded, hence more support in this area is extremely desirable.



Over half of India's employees feel their best work happens outside office: Survey

SIDDIHI JAIN

The nationwide Covid-19 lockdown has given rise to what is, in fact, the largest 'work from home' experiment in global history. The pandemic has impacted an individual's preferences of where they want to work, as a new report reveals that more than half of the employees in India feel they do their best work when not in office.

'A New Sense of Place' report by Script - A Godrej Venture ratifies that be it at home and living spaces like bedroom, garden, India has become 'location agnostic' and a new sense of 'workplace' has emerged.

Inspired by the concept of 'Freedom of Living', Script which creates furniture and accessories that celebrates fluid and an evolutionary way of living, conducted this research to understand how the role of 'physical spaces' in the lives of Indians has evolved especially in the current context. It surveyed more than 2000 individuals belonging to the 18-45-year age group across four metros.

Even when comparing cities, employees are leveraging technology and responding to work related queries. 85 per cent employees in Mumbai claimed to respond to work related messages (WhatsApp, SMS, Emails) at home, more often than any other metro city. In Kolkata, 65 per cent employees respond to work related messages often followed by 60 per cent in Delhi and 59 per cent in Bengaluru.

Mumbai prefers the office set-up, while Bengaluru employees claim to do their best work when they are not in office

Rajat Mathur, Business Head, Script, says, "The power of technology has made work more 'location agnostic' which is further facilitated by the ongoing lockdown. The lines between working from home and office spaces has clearly diminished. 'The New Sense of Place' report by Script highlights our new-age workplace habits, as well as our changing preferences. The inferences picked up from city to city would enable employers to recognise a freedom of living devoid of any physical absolutes, and institute better measures for their employees through these challenging times."

With the rising number of zoom calls and the incessantly high individual screen time amidst exhaustive working hours, India's workforce is split between going back to office or not. When employees eventually return to the workplace, the report reveals that 41 per cent plan to maintain working from home best practices they picked up during the lockdown.

Work from Home Day

Not to be confused with 'remote work' where an employee is working from home all the time, nor 'Freelancing' where the individual is an independent contractor running their own business from home.

Work from Home Day celebrates those days where office workers get the opportunity to avoid the commute and work from home for a day.

The idea of the day is also to demonstrate that giving people the freedom to work from home from time-to-time can benefit both employer and employee. In short it is saving office costs, helps ease transport congestion and encourages people to manage their workloads more effectively.

How one celebrates Work from Home Day has a lot to do with the position they hold in their company. If you're the person in charge you may want to take some time to examine the way your company and industry works and see if there's an opportunity to allow some of your employees to work from home on occasion.

If instead, you're an employee at such an institution, perhaps try speaking to your leadership and fellow employees to see if it would be possible to institute such a program at your business.

Work from Home Day's provides an opportunity for flexibility that can help raise the morale of your employees, avoid lost productivity, and provide solutions for those going through temporary hardships.



Tisca Chopra works for transgenders, widows during Covid crisis



Actress Tisca Chopra is doing her bit to help transgenders and widows, who have been affected by the Covid pandemic.

The actress has started an initiative with chef Vikas Khanna called #IndiaForMothers, to help support these groups deal with the crises.

Tisca shares, "When Vikas Khanna and his team approached me for this specific campaign #IndiaForMothers to support widows and transgenders in India who have lost their livelihood due to the pandemic, it was

an instant yes from me. These mothers are not just nurturers, but also providers. Similarly, the transgender community is also in need -- many are currently jobless and in desperate need of support."

The actress had started an initiative last year called At Tisca's Table, which she reinvented to help people during these troubled times.

"Tisca's Table is a monthly table where we bring creative minds to facilitate conversations between the brightest minds, and I have been doing that since last year. We reinvented the Table for the pandemic seeing that it is what is most needed right now. It started with us sending out food to nurses and ward boys at Covid wards at Nanavati and Cooper hospitals, to show them love for their absolutely selfless work," she says. The actress says the situa-

tion around is bad, and the needs of people are changing every day.

"The situation was terrible mid-April and stayed that way till about the 10th of May. The epicenters kept changing -- first it was Mumbai and Delhi, then Kolkata and Bangalore. Now UP is in pathetic shape. The need of the hour keeps changing, it was oxygen and ICU beds to start with, then plasma and now it's ECMO machines and Amphotericin medicine for Black Fungus is what is needed the most right now," she says.



NEWS ROUNDUP

Shweta Tiwari flaunts perfect abs in new photo-op

Television star Shweta Tiwari showcased her perfect abs in a new photograph she shared on social media on Sunday.

Shweta posted a picture on Instagram. The mother-of-two, is seen wearing a white and red crop top, and jeans. The 40-year-old actress is seen showcasing her well-chiseled abs as she poses for the camera.

"Bring it on," she wrote as the caption.

Shweta is currently in Cape Town, where she is shooting for the Season 11 of the stunt-based reality show, 'Khatron Ke Khiladi'.

Others who will be seen in the show include Abhinav Shukla, Divyanka Tripathi, Nikki Tamboli, Anushka Sen, Rahul Vaidya and others will be seen competing with each other.

Yoga guru Anand Giri expelled for being in touch with family

PRAYAGRAJ

YOGA guru Mahant Anand Giri of the Bade Hanuman temple from Baghambari Math and the Niranjani Akhara has been expelled by the Shri Panchayati Akhara Niranjani for being in constant touch with his family which is against the traditions of 'sanyas'.

Sri Mahant Ravindra Puri, secretary of Niranjani Akhara, said that Giri has also been accused of financial irregularities.

The action was taken af-

ter a complaint was lodged by Mahant Narendra Giri, president of Akhil Bhartiya Akhara Parishad.

Anand Giri, being a disciple of Mahant Narendra Giri, wielded a lot of clout within his fraternity and among devotees, but differences between the guru and disciple cropped up a few months back.

Anand Giri hails from a village in Bhilwara district in Rajasthan.

He had met Narendra Giri around 18 years ago and became his disciple. He

learnt Sanskrit, Vedas, and Yoga along with English at the akhara.

"Anand Giri called his entire family to Nashik, Ujjain, Prayagraj, and Haridwar Kumbh, whereas, according to the tradition of our akhara, family relations cannot be maintained," Mahant Narendra Giri said.

"Parents should be respected, but there is a tradition of the akhara. He was breaking the rule even after several warnings and was thus first removed from

Baghambari Math and then expelled from the akhara," he added.

There were also complaints of misuse of funds at the Bade Hanuman temple by Anand Giri.

The complaints were inquired by Panch Parmeshwar of Niranjani Akhara and the accusations were found to be true.

When asked, Anand Giri said his guru, Narendra Giri, has the right to take action against him and that he would continue to respect him and honour his

words.

However, Anand Giri has written a letter to the UP and Uttarakhand police expressing his apprehension about his murder.

He said that he could be murdered at any time. He said that he has been implicated and stripped of his protection as part of a larger conspiracy.

On the question of expulsion, Anand Giri said that he does not know on what basis this removal has taken place and would wait for the right time to speak.



Punjab extends Covid restrictions till May 31

CHANDIGARH

WITH Punjab continuing to report high Covid positivity, Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Sunday ordered extension of all the existing restrictions up to May 31, with directions for strict enforcement of all curbs.

The Deputy Commissioners will continue to determine opening of shops in a staggered manner and enforce other restrictions to check spread of Covid, especially in rural areas, Amarinder Singh said, adding that they can also make suitable amendments based on local condition as long as these do not dilute the state's overall restrictions.

The district authorities shall continue to ensure strict implementation of all directives on Covid appropriate behaviour, including social distancing norms, regulating crowds in market places and public transport, and imposition of penalties prescribed for violation of norms and restrictions. Reviewing the state's Covid situation at a high-level meeting, the Chief Minister said while the restrictions so far had shown results, with some decline in day-on-day positivity and cases coming down from around 9,000 to 6,000 in this period, there was need to extend the same in view of the



high positivity of 13.1 per cent as of the May 9-15 period, with CFR standing at 2.4. He also directed the district administrations to investigate complaints of fleecing of patients by some private hospitals, warning that these would be shut down if they continue to indulge in such practices. Such cases have to be strictly dealt with, he said, directing the police to crack down on those found indulging in hoarding or black-marketing of any Covid-related essentials or medicines.

Lockdown in Haryana till May 24

CHANDIGARH: The Haryana government on Sunday announced to extend the statewide lockdown till May 24 to contain the coronavirus pandemic, Home Minister Anil Vij said.

"Mahamari Alert/Surkshit Haryana extended from 17 May to 24 May. Stringent measures will be taken to implement the alert," he said in a tweet. The development

comes as Haryana continues to report a steady decline in Covid-19 cases, reporting 9,676 new infections officially on Saturday. The state's health bulletin also reported 144 deaths on Saturday.

A day earlier, the state saw 9,676 cases with the total active cases rose to 84,870. According to the health bulletin, the state reported 6,546 deaths till Saturday.

Punjab CM: Need to propagate Guru Tegh Bahadur's ideology

CHANDIGARH

PUNJAB Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Sunday underscored the need to propagate the ideology of the ninth Sikh master, Guru Tegh Bahadur, around the world to promote the values of peace, harmony, secularism and coexistence, which Guru Sahib upheld through his supreme sacrifice.

Taking part in the deliberations during a webinar organised by the K.S. Raju Legal Trust on Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur -- the Epitome of Resistance against Genocide and Conversion of Hindus and Sikhs under Islamic Rule in India, the Chief Minister said the secular character enshrined in the Constitution of the country was a shining example of 'unity in diversity' -- a deep-rooted philosophy of 'Hind Di Chadar' Guru Tegh Bahadur.

"Guru Sahib preached the concept of 'Sarbat Da Bhala' to create a harmonious society, where people, regardless of colour, caste, creed, race and religion, can live together in peace and harmony," he said.

Singh said he was blessed to have been personally associated with the celebration of several momentous occasions related to Sikh history, including the 400th



anniversary of the installation of Guru Granth Sahib at Sri Harmandir Sahib in 2004, followed by the 350th Prakash Purb of Guru Gobind Singh, the 350th birth anniversary of legendary Sikh warrior Baba Banda Singh Bahadur, the 550th Prakash Purb of Guru Nanak Dev and now the 400th Prakash Purb of Guru Tegh Bahadur during his present term as Chief Minister.

Noting that while the government had released a commemorative postage stamp on Guru Tegh Bahadur's birth Anniversary, the Chief Minister said the state had sent a detailed memorandum to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for a grant of Rs 938.37 crore for infrastructural

projects as a part of the historic celebrations.

The Chief Minister spoke about the various events planned by his government to commemorate the 400th Prakash Purb of Guru Tegh Bahadur, which had to be shifted to virtual mode to the Covid pandemic.

Further, his government had initiated several infrastructural and development projects, including the conservation and development of Old Jail at Bassi Pathana where the ninth Guru, along with his supporters, was imprisoned by Noor Mohammad Khan Mirza for 40 days while he was reportedly on his way to meet Emperor Aurangzeb, he added.

Railway commissions Wi-Fi at 6,000th station

NEW DELHI

INDIAN Railways has commissioned Wi-Fi at 6,000th railway station in Jharkhand's Hazaribagh district, the Ministry of Railways said on Sunday.

"With the commissioning of Wi-Fi at Hazaribagh Town falling under Hazaribagh district of Jharkhand in Dhanbad Division of East Central Railway as on May 15, Indian Railways commissioned Wi-Fi at 6,000 Railway stations," said the Ministry.

Indian Railways have started its journey by providing Wi-Fi facility at 1st Railway station Mumbai in January 2016. Thereafter,



provided 5,000th Railway station, at Midanpore in West Bengal and reached 6,000th Railway station in Hazaribagh on Saturday. "Also, on the same day Jarapada station in Angul District of state of Odisha was also provided with Wi-Fi." The Wi-Fi facility at

Railway stations meets the objectives of the aspiring Digital India Program of Government of India. This will bridge the digital divide between the rural and urban citizens thereby increasing the digital footprint in the rural villages and also enhance the user experience.

rience.

"Wi-Fi facility is being provided by Indian railways at 6000 stations now."

Provision of Wi-Fi facilities at Railway stations on self sustainable basis with no cost to the Railways, said the Ministry, adding this facility was provided with the help of RailTel, a PSU under Ministry of Railways. This task was carried out in partnership with Google, DOT (under USOF), PGCIL and Tata Trust.

"Indian Railway is continuing to extend the Wi-Fi facility at far flung stations to connect the passengers and the general public with digital systems."



VARANASI/KUSHINAGAR

WOMEN in the villages of Varanasi and Kushinagar have now deified the Coronavirus and have started worshipping 'Corona Mai' to lessen her fury and save people from dying.

The women, on Sunday, lined up to offer prayers to 'Corona Mai' in Kushinagar district.

In Varanasi, women are coming together in groups on the

Ghats to offer prayers and appease the Corona Mai.

Surili Devi of Kushinagar said that they would offer prayers for 21 days to appease the Corona Mai and were confident that the pandemic would recede.

When asked who prescribed them this spiritual method to check the deadly virus, she said, "A number of pandits have said that we should offer prayers to

stop the Corona virus."

She said that everyone was confident that the prayers would work and Corona would go away from their villages.

Women who are lining up to pray for hours, are not maintaining social distancing.

"When we are praying to Corona Mai, there is no need for anything else. The 'Corona Mai' will bless us and cure people," said Ishwari, another devotee.

Punjab Min Singla launches 100-bed Covid facility

CHANDIGARH

PUNJAB Education Minister VijayINDER Singla on Sunday launched the 'Zimmewar Sangrur' campaign by setting up a 100-bed facility equipped with oxygen concentrators and vital measurement monitors in his hometown Sangrur. He has set up a Covid war room to provide round-the-clock assistance relating to the bed status, availability of oxygen concentrators, plasma donors, vaccine and medicines.

"Sangrur is prepared to defeat Covid as we are procuring the vaccine at large scale and this 100-bed facility has been created to accommodate and treat mild to moderate patients. Medical staff will be available here round the clock," Singla told reporters at the care centre inauguration.

He said the facility would assess

the severity of the infection, the health condition of the patient and his/her treatment.

"We are also launching three Covid medical vans fitted with oxygen concentrators. Medical oxygen is the most sought-after thing these days, and we are in process to set up an oxygen plant in Sangrur to meet all medical requirements," Singla said, adding, "It is our responsibility to serve the people in this hour of crisis." The Min-



ister said a team of volunteers will resolve Covid-related issues. The local administration is expanding the medical infrastructure ahead of the third wave of the coronavirus. As per government figures, more than 1.28 lakh people have been vaccinated in Sangrur. Currently, the active patients were 1,829. In all 12,009 got infected by the virus while 9,639 got recovered and 549 succumbed to the pandemic.

NEW DELHI

UNION Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' has been honoured with "International Invincible Gold Medal" of 2021.

In a statement to the media, Tony Nader, president of Maharshi Organisation world-wide and various Maharshi Universities, said that Nishank has been recognised for his extraordinary commitment and outstanding service to humanity through his writings, social and illustrious public life.

The decision was made after due deliberations by a high-powered committee duly constituted under the leadership of Nader, who is the global head of the organisation.

The statement further

praised the relentless efforts and great commitment of Nishank to propagate ancient Vedic values, wisdom and traditional knowledge in the most scientific manner.

Nader lauded Nishank for his continuous support and commitment to world peace through Veda and world peace programme.

The honour was announced at a two-day virtual session which was attended by representatives from over 110 countries. The award will be formally presented to the Minister on Guru Purnima this year.

Nader also congratulated the Minister for the most innovative, creative, scientific and inclusive New Education policy.

He added that the new education policy crafted by the gov-



ernment will go a long way in establishing human values globally as the base of modern education.

Accepting the award, Nishank said that he was grateful to the selection committee.

He dedicated his award to all the corona warriors who are

risking their lives to save the patients in this difficult time.

In his emotional address, Nishank said that he has just come out of Covid infection. He has felt the pain and closely observed the dedication, struggle, duty, service of our doctors, nurses, health workers.

In order to save the lives of others, they put their lives in danger. He said, "We will definitely win on the strength of our Corona warriors."

Nishank said that he is very happy that his writings, social and public service have been appreciated.

He said he was committed to promote scientific research on Indian traditional knowledge and India's eternal life values of life so that it can benefit humanity.

Govt must stay alert as black fungus looms large

Don't know why the central and State governments continue to blink at the impending danger which they are likely to face if they don't wake up immediately and take necessary steps to save the country from another catastrophe - black fungus.

As AIIMS Director Randeep Guleria and many other doctors say, mucormycosis, also known as 'black fungus', is not any new infection but the number of cases has increased due to Covid-19 and we are on the verge of facing shortage of antifungal drugs. The reason is sudden surge

in black fungus cases and shortage of drugs in the market which is already being felt. The production of some antifungal drugs has gone down due to shortage of raw material.

Dr Randeep Guleria rightly warned of the spread of mucormycosis and recommended that with Covid-19 cases increasing, it's of paramount importance that proper protocols of infection control are followed at hospitals. But the problem is that the medical staff is already grappling with Covid and now this new problem from old fungus is going to prove to be

another major headache for them.

Experts say that doctors should see that use of excessive steroids should be avoided as they increase the chances of black fungus infection. What was a rare fungus is now becoming a dreaded disease.

Despite all this no serious measures seem to be forthcoming from the State government here. Only a few guidelines were issued on Saturday but no review of the measures that need to be taken to address likely shortage of beds in hospitals and availability of drugs etc has not been

made. If the government blinks as it did in case of Remdesivir, we are in for another heavy black marketing of antifungal drugs. Experts say if the black fungus is not detected early, it may necessitate surgery and that requires some injections which are already in short supply.

It's time the political executive learns to stop patting its own back day in and day out saying we are the best or better than others in Covid management and focus on the danger bells that are ringing louder. Wake up and don't let more lives be lost.



OBSTRUCTION OF TRADE LAWS IN OUR HEALTH SOVEREIGNTY

THE WAY AHEAD



Dr Bharat Jhunjunwala

THE Multi-national Companies (MNCs) had two-thirds of the domestic drug market of India in 1970. Then the government annulled the "Product Patents" and allowed Indian companies to manufacture drugs that had been patented by MNCs by alternate processes. This resulted in a fast increase in domestic drug manufacturing and not only Indian, but the world drug market came to be dominated by Indian companies. The dominance of Indian companies in the drug market, known as "formulations," is maintained as of date. The trajectory of the "active pharmaceutical ingredients" or APIs that are the raw materials for the manufacture of the drugs followed a different course. Only one percent APIs were imported in 1991 and 99 percent were made within the country. This has increased steadily after the opening of the economy in 1991 and today 70 percent of the APIs are imported—mostly from China. The unavailability of formulations required to treat Covid patients in India can be traced to the unavailability of the imported APIs.

The present dominance of Indian companies in the formulations market is also under threat. According to Shaktivel Selvaraj of Public Health Foundation of India, China may enter the formulations market of India in the next 5-6 years and oust Indian companies just as they have done in the APIs.

The government has announced that Rs 6,940 crore will be spent in the next six years to strengthen medical manufacturing infrastructure in the country. Further, 19 medical devices have been earmarked for purchase from domestic manufacturers. These steps are in the right direction but too feeble given the emergency we are facing. As said above, Chinese formulations are likely to take over the Indian market by the time the government builds this infrastructure. More is needed. Especially because the Chinese are able to produce APIs at a lower cost despite the wages being five times more. We need to get our act together even if we want to save our formulations market.

The first step to be taken is regarding import duties generally, of which the APIs are a part. Our negative "trade balance," that is, the excess of imports over exports was (-) 1.91 percent of GDP in 1999. It reduced marginally to (-) 1.79 percent in 2004 during the reign of the Vajpayee Government. Then, it increased dramatically to (-) 2.99 percent in 2014 during the reign of Manmohan Singh. It has reduced marginally to (-)



The present dominance of Indian companies in the formulations market is also under threat. According to Shaktivel Selvaraj of Public Health Foundation of India, China may enter the formulations market of India in the next 5-6 years and oust Indian companies just as they have done in the APIs.

2.72 percent in 2019 during the first stint of the Modi Government. Once again, this reduction is feeble given that the trade balance was only (-) 1.79 percent in 2004 at the end of the Vajpayee Government. The negative trade balance means that the cost of manufacturing of goods in India is more than the imported goods hence businesspersons prefer to import rather than manufacture them. The immediate step to be taken to jumpstart manufacturing in the country is to increase the import duties so that imports become expensive and domestic manufacturing is given a fillip. That has been elusive though. Coming to the medical sector, Rajiv Nath of the Association of Indian Medical Device Industry has said that he is disappointed with the Budget for 2021-22 for not having increased the import duties on medical devices. Therefore, we need to increase import duties and bear the burden of high cost of domestic manufacturing for a while, at least, if we have to manufacture the APIs and medical devices like ventilators and oxygen concentrators in the country.

The second step is that of investment in frontline medical technologies. The strength of Indian companies today lies in the manufacture of generic medicines that are outside the writ of the Patents Act. The inventions are made by MNCs. They earn huge monies for the first 20 years during which Patents protection is available to them—just as AstraZeneca is charging 50 percent of the sale price of Covishield vaccine that

Serum Institute is manufacturing in India under their license. We need to invest huge monies in the invention of new drugs. Reportedly, Pfizer and AstraZeneca have received huge monies that helped them invent the Covid vaccines while India's Bharat Biotech got a measly Rs 65 crore. Thus Himanshu Baid of Poly Medicare has said that the Budget of 2021-22 does not provide any encouragement in this direction. Similarly, according to Satish Reddy of Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance the government needs to give grants for the innovation of new molecules, automation and digital technologies.

The third step is to invest in the infrastructure needed for jumpstarting manufacturing in the health sector in India. The government has announced in March 2021 that Rs 6,940 crore will be spent in the next six years to build this infrastructure. But, as said above, Chinese formulations may take over the Indian market by that time. Again, Himanshu Baid of Poly Medicare says this investment should have been front-loaded and done in the next three years.

The fourth step is to make available capital for investment. The cost of borrowing for capital investment in China is about 5 percent against about 12 percent in India. Further, countries are providing huge assistance to build their health sovereignty. For example, the United States Government has provided an assistance of US dollars 765 million or Rs 5,700 crore repayable in 25 years to Eastman Kodak to build API manufacturing capacity in the United

States. It is to be noted that this assistance has been provided under the Defense Production Act. In other words, the US Government believes that domestic manufacture of APIs is necessary to defend the country.

The government must plan for the future. The Covid virus may mutate and jump the presently available vaccines. New viruses and pandemics may be in the coming because the rapid change of environment that has been unleashed by man. Therefore, the government must immediately take four steps. One, make a sharp and quick increase in import duties on all goods necessary for our economic sovereignty including formulations and medical devices. We must be ready to face the ire of the developed countries just as the United States had stopped giving imports from India under the Generalized Preferences applicable to developing countries. Two, the government must give big contracts to private innovators like Bharat Biotech for making frontline innovations; and it must issue compulsory licenses to manufacture essential drugs. We must not forget that Vajpayee developed the nuclear bomb; and Manmohan Singh stood up to protect preferential purchases of food grains from our farmers in the WTO. Modi Government must similarly stand up to Western pressure and increase import duties and issue compulsory licenses to protect our economic- and health sovereignty.

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

1 in 2 manufacturers facing lack of skilled workers: Survey

More than 1 in 2 manufacturers around the world feel their organisation lacks skilled workers to support smart manufacturing digitisation plans, according to a new survey.

Organisational complexity, integration and process reengineering are the most prevalent challenges for executing smart manufacturing initiatives.

Combined, these challenges reflect the largest change management obstacles, according to the survey by market research firm Gartner.

In total, 439 respondents were interviewed across North America, Western Europe, and APAC regions.

"Our survey revealed that manufacturers are currently going through a difficult phase in their digitisation journey toward smart manufacturing," said Simon Jacobson, vice president analyst, with the Gartner Supply Chain practice.

"They accept that changing from a break-fix mentality and culture to a data-driven workforce is a must. However, intuition, efficiency and engagement cannot be sacrificed," Jacobson added.

Connected factory workers leverage various digital tools and data management techniques to improve and integrate their interactions with both physical and virtual surroundings while improving decision accuracy, proliferating knowledge and lessening variability.

Across all respondents, 83 per cent agreed that their leadership understands and accepts the need to invest in smart manufacturing.

"However, it does not reflect whether or not the majority of leaders understand the magnitude of change in front of them - regarding technology, as well as talent," Jacobson said.

In the long term, it is important to establish a data-driven culture in manufacturing operations that is rooted in governance and training - without stifling employee creativity and ingenuity, the findings showed. IANS

Covid deaths in Canada linked to dementia, Alzheimer's

DEMENTIA and Alzheimer's disease were the most common medical conditions linked with all Covid-19 deaths reported in 2020 in Canada, the media reported.

The brain disorders were the most common comorbidity among women (41 per cent), while among men, it was the second most common comorbidity at 31 per cent, CTVnews.ca reported citing a new report from Statistics Canada.

"Of all Covid-19 deaths in 2020, dementia or Alzheimer's was reported on 36 per cent of Covid-19 death certificates," the report said.

Further, of the nearly 15,300 people who died of the virus between March and December 2020, 65 per cent had two or more comorbidities and 46 per cent had three or more comorbidities, according to the report.

"These results, along with the specific conditions listed on the death certificate, highlight some of the populations in Canada most vulnerable to severe outcomes of Covid-19. Although individuals had pre-existing conditions, it does not imply that they were at risk of dying if there had been no Covid-19 infection," the report said.

The other most common comorbidities linked to Covid-19 death included pre-existing cardiovascular and respiratory conditions, including hypertension (15 per cent), heart diseases (14 per cent) and chronic lower respiratory diseases (11 per cent).

Diabetes, Parkinson's, and obesity was the common comorbidity associated with Covid deaths in the younger population.

Diabetes was a common pre-existing condition among 15 per cent of Covid deaths among the 45-to-84 age group and 9 per cent among those below 45.

Nervous system disorders, such as Parkinson's or amyotrophic lateral sclerosis diseases (excluding Alzheimer's) was most common at 13 per cent among those who died of the virus in the 45-to-64 age group and 12 per cent among those younger than 45.

There were fewer than 100 deaths due to Covid in people below 45 years in 2020. But, among those who died, obesity was the most commonly observed comorbidity, the report said.

LETTERS

It's no time to spread calumny

THE article "Not pandemic, it's the infedomics that is hurting" analysed the facts in a pragmatic manner. The anti-Modi narrative generated by political frustration ultimately led to a pandemic of information. During the time of frustration, anxiety, fear due to the health emergency caused by the SARS-Cov-2 pandemic, it is the responsibility of everybody including politicians, media and also people at large to mitigate the problems faced during the critical period. Instead, the way the lies are being spread is a matter of great concern for the country. It is high time for those who spread calumny to realise that they are doing more harm to the country than to an individual.

Prof M.V. Jagannadham
Hyderabad

Let us stay united, fight Covid

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat during a lecture series has rightly said that rather than pointing fingers at each for the miseries caused by the second wave of Covid-19, the country and its citizens along with State governments and the Centre should stay united and work as a team in

these challenging times. He also said that complacency and come-what-may attitude after the first wave was one of the factor that pushed the country into the present grim state which could have been otherwise avoided.

The Indian mindset is not one that can be made to bow or kneel before such catastrophes and now it is time to stay positive and proactive to fight the pandemic rather than getting stupefied at the current situation.

As there is a possibility of a third wave, as medical experts and scientists have cautioned, let us not commit yet another mistake like we did during the first one but be prepared and face the problems with positive solutions and determination. Let us not lower the guard and take the third wave, if at all one such arises, head on. Let us listen to our medical experts and move ahead according to their advice. Leaders must understand it is high time they utilised all the resources at their command for serving the common man.

M Pradyu, Kannur

US, UK failed to learn from India's mistakes

RECENTLY, US President Joe Biden asserted that all such persons who have been vaccinated need not wear masks and the rule of social

distancing won't to them. UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson also made it clear that his government is going to relax the rules of social distancing in the entire country from May 17.

A few months ago, India's attitude towards Covid-19 also changed. Be it the central and state governments or the people of India, all began to think that India has conquered the pandemic when we witnessed a continuous decline in the new cases of Covid-19. Some people even said that Indians are special.

People started enjoying holidays, the Election Commission of India held elections, we started to celebrate festivals on a large scale, we threw basic precautions to the winds. Our carelessness cost us dear as the second wave shook the entire India.

There was a shortage of beds, oxygen, hospitals, vaccines etc. Parents lost their children, children lost their parents, a brother lost his sister, a sister lost her brother etc. Had we been alert, such tragedy could have been prevented.

Now, the US and the UK are committing the same mistakes. In fact, they are committing bigger mistake than India. At least, Indian government advises the people who have been fully vaccinated to continue to wear masks and maintain social distance. And USA, which has seen double the number of deaths from Covid-19 as compared to India, is not learning anything from India's mistakes. Even the World Health Organi-

sation advises countries to follow Covid appropriate behaviour, even if they are witnessing a continuous decline in new cases.

Kartikey Upadhyay, Vadodara

Live telecast of SC proceedings a welcome move

CHIEF Justice of India said he was "actively considering" the proposal to telecast live the proceedings of the Supreme Court. And concrete steps would be taken only after seeking a general consensus among his colleagues. Transparency is a time-honoured principle when it comes to the judicial process in our country. The role of the media assumes importance in the process of disseminating information as he himself was a journalist for a brief time.

Yash Pal Ralhan, Jalandar

Dispassionate scientific discourse needed

DISPASSIONATE scientific discourse is the need of the hour as 18 scientists from universities of US, Canada, UK and Swiss have called for it in their letter published in journal, Science (THI Edit page, 15 May). They well quoted the comment of WHO Director General, Tedros that SARC-COV-2 emergence as laboratory accident

is insufficient and Chinese scientists' reveal to the world facts of this disease at their personal loss is literally a grave risk given the Chinese psyche. Now, the whole world is reeling under the aura of the venomous corona and it's apt that the vibrant leap by the said 18 scientists and backed by their vibrant universities/enterprising countries should move coherently like all of the universe moved forward like in HIV/AIDS and CDC like pioneering scientific bodies and fund gives like Gates' since simian SIV for centuries not causing AIDS due to protective factors unique to simian, here also cross species' study is a must.

Dr T. Ramadas, Visakhapatnam.

Good news on Covid front

THE second wave of Covid-19 showing signs of weakening must bring cheer. Recoveries surpassed the fresh cases, and the overall test positivity rate headed south to 19.8 per cent from 21.9 per cent last week. On Saturday, the active Covid cases dropped by 31,091 compared to Friday. This is the fifth day in succession that active infections have plateaued. The government also said that the current decline rate is faster than was the case in the first wave, which augurs well.

N J Ravi Chander, Bengaluru

thehansreader@gmail.com

Private hospitals warned against fleecing

HANS NEWS SERVICE
WARANGAL

THE government wants all the hospitals, State-run and private, equipped with proper facilities, to save the people from the coronavirus pandemic, Minister for Panchayat Raj Errabelli Dayakar Rao said. Reviewing the Covid-19 situation here on Sunday, he said that to monitor the coronavirus situation in private hospitals, a committee consisting of District Collector, DM&HO, RDO, DCP, DPO and drug inspector has been constituted.

The committee not only monitors the supply of Remdesivir and oxygen supply, but also looks into the fee structure for the treatment of coronavirus in private hospitals, he said. "Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao had made it clear that supply of oxygen and Remdesivir injections should be made proportion-



Minister for Panchayat Raj Errabelli Dayakar Rao reviewing the Covid-19 situation in Warangal on Sunday. Chief Whip D Vinay Bhaskar and Mayor Gundu Sudharani also seen

ately. Based on need, Hyderabad to get 40 per cent, Warangal 30 per cent and the rest for other districts," Errabelli informed. The Minister said that the government would supply 1,000 bulk oxy-

gen cylinders and 1,650 Remdesivir injections a day to private hospitals. He said that the Covid-19 situation would be reviewed once in every three days. Referring to the diagnostic centres' decision to

offer scanning tests for Rs 2,000 each, the Minister lauded the managements for responding to the government's call. Referring to the supply of coronavirus vaccines, the Minister alleged

that the Central government was not cooperating with the State. However, the State government has plans to procure vaccines by calling global tenders, he added.

"Instead of raising hue and cry over the Covid-19 situation, the BJP leaders need to ensure supply of vaccines to the State from the Centre," Errabelli said.

The Minister told the officials to take action against the millers if they create any obstacles in the paddy procurement.

Chief Whip D Vinay Bhaskar, MPs Pasunuri Dayakar and Banda Prakash, Mayor Gundu Sudharani, legislators Peddi Sudarshan Reddy, Challa Dharma Reddy and G Venkatramana Reddy, Urban Collector Rajeev Gandhi Hanumanthu, Rural Collector M Haritha and Commissioner of Police Tarun Joshi were among others present.



The outgoing In-charge Superintendent Dr K Nagarjuna Reddy greets his successor Dr V Chandrasekhar at MGM Hospital in Warangal on Sunday

MGMH gets new chief

HANS NEWS SERVICE
WARANGAL

AMID chaos over the functioning of Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Hospital (MGMH), the Director of Medical Education Dr K Ramesh Reddy late on Saturday night issued orders appointing Dr V Chandrasekhar, Professor of General Medicine, as the In-charge Superintendent of the MGMH. He took charge from

the outgoing In-charge Superintendent Dr K Nagarjuna Reddy on Sunday. It may be recalled here that Dr K Nagarjuna Reddy was appointed as the In-charge Superintendent on August 5, 2020. Dr Chandrasekhar has in the past worked as the principal of Kakatiya Medical College. He also worked as the Covid-19 In-charge in the MGMH during the first wave last year.

Non-veg lovers left disappointed



People lined up at a chicken shop in Hanamkonda on Sunday

HANS NEWS SERVICE
WARANGAL

IT was a disappointing Sunday, the first in the lockdown, for the non-vegetarian lovers. There was a mad rush at all the chicken, meat and fish stalls. With majority people turning to markets after 8 am, the sellers had a tough time in managing

the queues. "A large number of people love to relish non-vegetarian food on Sundays. Literally, half of the customers went back home without purchasing chicken. With the lockdown hours beginning at 10 am, it became a herculean task for us to cater to customers," a shop owner in Kumarpally market said.

"Taking advantage of the lockdown, the sellers have increased the price of chicken," Sampeta Sudhakar, a private employee, said. After 10 am, some shopkeepers sold the chicken and meat at higher prices, he added. On the other hand, vegetable prices have already skyrocketed since the imposition of lockdown.

Pvt centres to charge ₹2,000 for scanning

Minister and Collector prevail upon the private scanning centre owners to bring down the charges to help all sections of people to avail the facility

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NIZAMABAD

DISTRICT Collector Narayana Reddy said that the owners of the scanning centres have agreed to charge only ₹2,000 for scanning in Nizamabad district. The Collector informed that they had promised not to charge patients a fee of Rs 4,000 or Rs 5,000 for scanning from now on during the Covid pandemic. At the suggestion of Legislative Affairs Minister Vemula Prashant Reddy, the Collector on Sunday arranged a meeting in his chambers with IMA representatives and owners of scanning centres. Speaking on the occasion, Narayana Reddy said that laboratories and hospitals are providing good services to the people in view of prevailing corona. The Collector said that scanning is very important to verify the severity of Covid disease and the details of other diseases. However, Narayana Reddy pointed out



Collector Narayana Reddy addressing IMA representatives and owners of scanning centres during a meeting held at Collectorate office in Nizamabad on Sunday

that there were complaints that the owners of the scanning centres were charging Rs 4,000 to ₹ 5,000 per scanning.

The Collector urged the scanning centres to revise the charges so that all the people, especially the poor and middle class people, irrespective of the regulations and govern-

ment orders can opt for scanning facility. He said the charges should be fixed at Rs 2,000. The Collector also demanded that both the film and the report be provided to the patients without charging extra. To this, the scanning centre owners and doctors agreed. They said they would

do the scanning for only Rs 2,000 as suggested by the minister and the collector. Similarly, we are taking steps to ensure that Remdesivir injections and oxygen supply in the district are adequate and there is no shortage of these in the district, said Collector Narayana Reddy. He suggested that the owners of the hospitals concerned provide all the details on their use and take them intended.

Similarly the Collector asked the hospitals not to charge excessive fees when placing patients on a life-saving ventilator. He said the fee should also be taken fairly for patients who have been provided with oxygen.

The meeting was attended by District Medical Health Officer Dr Bala Narendra, IMA State President Ravinder Reddy, District President Jeevan Reddy, Representatives Rabindranath Suri, Deputy DM&HO Tukaram DEMO Gangadhar and owners of scanning centres.

Teachers seek postponement of SSC examinations

V PRADEEP KUMAR
TIRUPATI

THE decision to go ahead with SSC examinations scheduled to be held from June 7 is drawing flak from teachers and parents. Though they were not against the examinations but they have been seeking postponement by 2-3 months as the spread of Covid is so rampant at this juncture.

While the students are a worried lot about facing the examinations during these turbulent times as their preparation was inadequate due to various reasons, the parents are expressing concerns about the safety of their wards.

In fact, teachers were saying that they could not complete the syllabus this year and no revision of syllabus was carried out. Study hours could not be conducted. Due to the long gap, students might have lost touch with their subjects. The government should consider cancellation of examinations. Last year also grading was not done and the same may be continued for this year, they opined.

MLC Y Sreenivasulu Reddy told The Hans India that they have represented to the government asking for postponement of examinations to some later period after cases witness a downward trend. It is better to start the next academic year from September. As there is a huge surge in Covid cases, the State government should rethink on conducting the examinations.

Health and safety is more important than education in these difficult times. He said that they were not seeking cancellation of examinations but postpone them till the Covid situation comes under control.

United Teachers Federation



Deputy DEO K Vijayendra Rao giving tips to SSC students at Kuppam Badur ZP High school of RC Puram mandal in Chittoor district (File Photo)

- They say that since Covid infections are rampant now in rural areas there is risk to their lives
- Students are also a worried lot as their preparation is inadequate due to various reasons
- Teachers also say that they could not complete the syllabus this year and no revision of syllabus was carried out

(UTF) district president K Muthyala Reddy said that they too have submitted a representation to the DEO seeking the postponement of examinations. UTF State leaders have first demanded cancellation of examinations but since the government was firm on its decision to hold the examinations, they are now demanding for postponement.

As of now the cases are at a peak stage in almost all districts which will push the teachers and

- MLC Y Sreenivasulu Reddy says the exams can be conducted after the Covid cases witness a downward trend and it is better to start the next academic year from September 2021
- UFT and FAPTO demand that teachers should be vaccinated on priority basis before holding the SSC exams

students into risk if the examinations are held now. Muthyala Reddy said that many teachers were tested positive for Covid after they participated in the election process during local body elections and Tirupati bypoll.

About 60 teachers and their family members have lost their lives so far while many others are undergoing treatment now. Since the virus spread is now more in rural areas where examination centres are located it is not at all

safe to conduct examinations. If any student gets infected after the examinations begin, his future will be at stake, he pointed out.

As the entire situation is creating panic among students, parents and teachers, SSC examinations need to be postponed to August. Before that, all teachers and their family members are to be vaccinated on priority basis immediately, he demanded.

Meanwhile, Federation of Andhra Pradesh Teacher's organisations (FAPTO) also sent a representation to Education Minister Audimulapu Suresh on Sunday requesting him to conduct SSC examinations only after all teachers are vaccinated. While supporting the government's decision to go ahead with examinations, its chairman G V Narayana Reddy and secretary general K Narahari have mentioned that about 400 teachers died of Covid during the second wave so far.

In view of this, teachers should be included in the list of frontline warriors and complete vaccination to them immediately.

AP records highest single-day surge of 24,171 cases

AMARAVATI

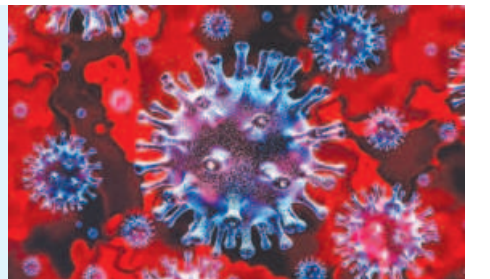
ANDHRA Pradesh on Sunday registered a record 24,171 fresh cases of coronavirus, the single largest in a day since the first case was reported on March 12, 2020.

For the second time this week, the daily Covid-19 toll crossed the century mark as 101 people succumbed to the infection while 21,101 had recovered in 24 hours ending 9 am on Sunday, the latest bulletin said.

From 1.79 crore sample tests so far, a total of 14,35,491 coronavirus positives turned out in the State, at an overall positivity rate of about 8 per cent. The total recoveries increased to 12,15,683 and toll to 9,372 while the active cases rose to 2,10,436.

Anantapur district reported

- Active cases in the State rise to 2,10,436
- 101 deaths reported in 24 hrs and toll increases to 9,372



the highest 3,356 fresh cases in 24 hours.

Chittoor 2,885, East Godavari 2,876, West Godavari 2,426 and Visakhapatnam 2,041 while five other districts added between 1,500 and 1,800 cases each. Three districts logged between 700 and 1,000 new cases in a day.

Kurnool crossed the one-lakh total cases mark, joining seven other districts in the list. However,

it has the lowest number of 7,568 active cases in the State now.

Anantapur also reported the highest number of 14 fresh Covid-19 fatalities in 24 hours. Visakhapatnam recorded 11, Chittoor 10, East Godavari, Guntur, Krishna and Vizianagaram nine each, SPS Nellore seven, Kurnool, Prakasam and Srikakulam six each, West Godavari three and Kadapa two coronavirus deaths in a day.

APCC condemns attack on MP

- Says it is nothing but suppressing the freedom of expression
- PCC chief S Sailajanath points out that earlier there has never been an incident wherein a people's representative was injured in police custody
- Seeks intervention of the judiciary and Governor to set things right

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VJAYAWADA

ANDHRA Pradesh Congress Committee strongly condemned the filing of criminal cases and using third degree methods against Member of Parliament K Raghurama Krishnam Raju stating that this was nothing but attack on the freedom of expression.

APCC president Dr S Sailajanath said in a

statement from the party headquarters Andhra Ratna Bhavan here on Sunday that the State government did not do justice to the Dalits who were attacked in various incidents during the last two years of YSRCP rule. "It is not good governance to file criminal cases against the opposition leaders and news channels," he added.

He wondered as to what kind of administration is that which harassed the opposition leaders and who opposed them by using the police force. There have been umpteen incidents wherein the Dalits were attacked and harassed by the police when they lodged complaints of injustice. The attacks on Dalits be it a doctor, judge, a farmer, an agriculture labourer or an employee are still continuing unabated and nobody was punished, he said.

The PCC chief said that there had never been an incident wherein a people's representative was injured in police custody.

This was nothing but attention diversion at a time when the second wave is wreaking havoc in the State, he said.

Sailajanath appealed to the judiciary and the Governor to intervene and set things right to allow the freedom of speech and expression in the State.

UP's 'cylinder waali bitiya' delivers oxygen on her scooty

Arshi has so far distributed 20 O₂ cylinders for free and is helped by her two bros and some other associates

Breathing hope into the lives of people in need of oxygen amidst the Covid-19 pandemic, 26-year-old Arshi has earned the sobriquet of “cylinder waali bitiya”—the daughter with the oxygen cylinder. What began as a struggle to procure the life-saving gas for her coronavirus positive father, who managed to beat the viral disease, has now turned into a mission to save as many lives as possible in this district and those around it including the neighbouring state of Uttarakhand.

Perched atop her trusted companion—a scooter—the young woman, a resident of Madaar Khel locality in Shahjahanpur, has so far distributed around 20 oxygen cylinders for free and is helped by her two brothers and some other as-

sociates. Recalling the beginning of her philanthropic journey, Arshi said on the first day of Ramzan, the condition of her father Mashoor, who was not keeping well, began deteriorating, and her worst fears came true when he tested positive for Covid-19. While in-home isolation, his oxygen levels started falling and the doctor asked me to arrange an oxygen cylinder.

However, when I approached the authorities, I was told that patients in home isolation cannot get oxygen cylinders and was advised to get my father admitted to a hospital, according to Arshi.

“Despite moving from pillar to post, I was not able to arrange a cylinder. As desperation grew, I somehow managed to get one from the office



of the city magistrate,” Arshi told PTI. “I then came in contact with a social organisation based in Uttarakhand through WhatsApp which provided oxygen for my father, and he subsequently recovered from the illness,” she added.

After this incident, I realised what families of Covid patients needing oxygen must be going through, she said. “Ever since, anyone who sought oxygen either through phone or WhatsApp was helped. I have provided oxygen to several people in Shahbad and Hardoi (UP) and Uttarakhand,” the 26-year-old said, adding that she does not charge any money.

The young woman has received many laurels for her heroic actions not only from those whom she has helped but also from the state's politi-

cians. Shahjahanpur district president of Samajwadi Party Tanveer Khan said Arshi has embarked on a mission to provide oxygen cylinders to those who need it.

“Amidst the COVID-19, Arshi is doing a historic work, without caring for her own life,” Khan told PTI. Showering praises on Arshi, local resident Syed Naved said the woman provided him with three oxygen cylinders for his COVID-19 positive father. “May Allah fulfill all her wishes,” he said.

Meanwhile, Shahjahanpur Chief Medical Officer S P Gautam said there was no shortage of oxygen in the district and stressed that the life-saving gas was being provided to Covid-19 patients who are in home isolation.

WINDOWS

Covid patient sexually abused

Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala police have arrested an ambulance assistant in Malappuram district on charges of sexually assaulting a 38-year-old Covid patient in the ambulance. The arrested person has been identified as Prashanth of Pullamantole in Malapuram district.

The offender was arrested on Saturday by the Perinthalmanna police after the woman told her doctor about the incident which had taken place on April 27. The woman said that as she was too weak following Covid related complications and pneumonia, was not able to lodge the complaint earlier



A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket lifts off from Kennedy Space Centre. The rocket is carrying a fleet of Starlink communications satellites

Suspected Pak drone spotted

SRINAGAR: A suspected Pakistani drone was seen hovering along the International Border (IB) in Jammu, prompting security forces to launch a massive search operation to check if it had dropped anything inside the Indian territory, officials said on Sunday. However, nothing suspicious was found during the search operation, they said. This comes two days after a Pakistani drone dropped an AK-47 rifle, a pistol and some ammunition along the IB in Samba district of Jammu and Kashmir. The suspected Pakistani drone was seen hovering in Kanachak sector here late on Saturday night.

Farmers lathi-charged in Khattar's Covid event

HISAR

HARYANA Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Sunday inaugurated a 500-bed COVID hospital here and said his government is committed to expand the healthcare facilities in the state amid the raging pandemic. Earlier, a group of farmers tried to move towards the venue where Khattar was to inaugurate the hospital but they were dispersed by police by using force and lobbying tear gas shells. Khattar said with the inauguration of the Chaudhary Devi Lal Sanjivani COVID hospital, not only the coronavirus patients of Hisar district but the people of nearby districts

would be able to get the required treatment at the facility. On April 26, Khattar had visited Hisar and identified the campus of Jindal Modern School adjoining Jindal Stainless Limited unit and after completing all the necessary procedures, the hospital was constructed in a record 17 days time, an official statement said. “In this difficult time of COVID-19 pandemic, this hospital is certainly a boon for COVID-19 patients as it has adequate availability of beds and oxygen,” it said “The hospital will directly get about eight metric tonnes of oxygen supply from Jindal Stainless Limited, which will be available at 7.1 liters per minute per bed.”



A tree falls due to strong winds during the formation of cyclone Tauktae, in Panjim on Sunday

Killing of 3 inmates in UP jail

Plea in SC for CBI probe

NEW DELHI

A plea has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking direction for a CBI or NIA probe, supervised by the top court, into the alleged killing of three under-trial prisoners in Uttar Pradesh's Chitrakoot district jail. The plea filed by Supreme Court lawyer Anoop Prakash Awasthi has also sought fixing accountability and taking appropriate action against those found responsible. Direction for a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) or the National Investigation Agency (NIA) into all extrajudicial killings that took place since March 18, 2017,

in Uttar Pradesh after Yogi Adityanath took over charge of the state as chief minister was also sought by the petition. On May 14, three under trial prisoners, including a member of BSP MLA Mukhtar Ansari's group, were shot dead inside the Chitrakoot district jail after which the Uttar Pradesh government suspended two jail officials, police had said. The three inmates gunned down in the district jail at Ragauli were identified by police as Anshu Dixit, Merazuddin alias Meraj Ali and Mukeem Kala, belonging to Sitapur, Ghazipur and Shamli districts, respectively, in Uttar Pradesh.

Are hospitals prescribing unscientific Coronil to patients?

In the middle of the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, reports are emerging that hospitals, including Indian Army institutions, are prescribing a product as a cure that the Indian Medical Association (IMA) has called out as a “falsely fabricated unscientific product”.

Coronil, a ‘herbal’ product released by Baba Ramdev's Patanjali FMCG group, was released with much fanfare, nationalist chest-thumping, and media blitz as an Ayurveda cure for SARS-CoV-2 on June 23, 2020, claiming patients recover from COVID-19 within 14 days of its use, according to The Outlook report.

Since then, despite repeated dismissals by the medical and scientific community, it has received official endorsements at a time when the healthcare system has collapsed from the unavailability of doctors, nurses, equipment, drugs, and even oxygen. “The Ministry of

Ayush itself has recommended only Ayurvedic drug AYUSH 64 and Sidha drug Kabasura Kudineer as immunity boosters. No other drug has been officially recommended by either the Health Ministry or the Ministry of Ayush. It is an established fact that for the usage of any ayurvedic drug, it should have recommendation from Ayush Ministry which Patanjali's Coronil doesn't have,” said Prof. Dr. J.A. Jayalal, national president, IMA.

On April 7, 2020, 66-year-old Neela Sinha, a resident of Sasaram, Bihar, and her two sons aged 40 and 29, started showing mild symptoms of Covid. Another son, Ashish Kishore, a salesman with a private firm who lives in Delhi, suggested that his mother and two brothers take Coronil, based on repeated endorsements he had seen on TV. The family followed his suggestion.

But a week later, neither of his brothers showed any signs of improvement. Instead, they now had bruised



throats causing difficulty in swallowing. Eventually, on April 14, they tested positive. Then, the mother's condition began to deteriorate, with SpO2 level reaching 85. “From 7th to 16th they were only dependent on Coronil,” says Rohin Kumar, Neela's grandson who is an independent journalist in Delhi. Appalled and dejected, the family admitted her to Narayan Medical College and Hospital in Dehri-on-Son, but it was too late to save her.

Anuradha Prasad, a journalist with AltNews, had a similar story. “One of my childhood friends tested positive On April 13, 2021, we got him admitted to Sonia Hospital in Nangloi, Delhi. The doctor asked his brother to arrange for plasma from Covid-recovered patients, the intravenous antiviral Remdesivir and a Coronil kit.” She added, “Infuriated, I told him to warn the doctor that if he prescribed an uncertified treatment, I'd file a complaint against him.” But for the relative of a person

battling life and death, any remedy suggested by a doctor is a glimmer of hope. Anuradha added, “I later found out they were forced to buy and use the Coronil kit because the doctor insisted on it.”

Earlier, in September 2020, Rakesh (name changed), a Naib Subedar in the Indian Army posted in Nashik, Maharashtra, contracted Covid. He was admitted to Military Hospital, Deolali. Within a few weeks, he was discharged.

Afterwards, when his cousin Apoorva (name changed), an army officer's daughter, called him, Rakesh told her, “Unlike what people believe, the treatment I received at the Army Hospital was unexceptional, except for the Coronil course I was prescribed.” A shocked Apoorva said, “Since Army hospitals don't hand over prescriptions to patients, we can't even question or nail them.”

“The most dangerous poison is the feeling of achievement. The antidote is to every evening think what can be done better tomorrow”
—Ingvar Kamprad, founder of IKEA



HANS INVEST

Stocks.MFs.Bonds.Commodities



Aptus files papers for ₹3,000-cr IPO

NEW DELHI: Aptus Value Housing Finance has filed preliminary papers with capital markets regulator Sebi to raise up to Rs 3,000 crore through an initial share sale.

The initial public offer (IPO) comprises fresh issue of equity shares aggregating to Rs 500 crore and an offer for sale of up to 6,45,90,695 equity shares by promoter and existing shareholders, draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) showed.

The net proceeds from the fresh issue will be utilised towards augmenting the company's capital base and to meet future growth requirements. According to merchant banking sources, the IPO is expected to fetch Rs 2,600-Rs 3,000 crore.

Aptus Value Housing Finance has a strong capital sponsorship by marquee investors like Westbridge, Malabar Investments, Sequoia Capital, Steadview Capital and Madison India. Since the inception of the company in 2010 till date, the company has pristine asset quality with very low NPA (non-performing assets) and as of December 2020, the firm's asset under management stood at Rs 3,791 crore of which 72.50 per cent were loans to self-employed customers while the balance 27.50 per cent accounted for salaried individuals.

As on December 2020, the company had 1,844 personnel and a network of 181 branches catering to 56,430 active loan accounts across Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Telangana.

After successfully growing its presence outside its home state Tamil Nadu to other major markets in southern India, Aptus Value Housing Finance is now intending to expand its branch network in large housing markets in the states of Maharashtra, Odisha and Chhattisgarh.

ICICI Securities, Citigroup Global Markets India, Edelweiss Financial Services and Kotak Mahindra Capital Company have been appointed as investment bankers for advising the company on the public issue.

Covid, global cues will weigh on stocks

Market players expect stock-specific action to continue given quarterly earnings season

CHERUKURI KUTUMBA RAO

Spooked by continued high number of Covid cases, increased number of States going for lockdown, fears of higher US inflation and interest rate hike in the US due to increasing commodity prices; markets corrected during the week ended.

After rising around 3 percent in previous two consecutive weeks, the Sensex corrected 473.92 points to close at 48,732.55, and the Nifty declined 145.35 points to 14,677.80. The broader markets corrected less than frontline counters. The BSE Midcap index declined 0.49 percent and the BSE Smallcap index was down 0.08 percent.

After selling nearly Rs 12,000 crore in April, FIIs are net sellers to the tune of Rs 8,700 crore in the month of May till date. Buying from DIIs was also subdued with purchases of just Rs891 crores till date in May against the buying of Rs 11,360 crore in April. Indecisiveness among the institutional players and inflation worries from US dragged sentiment.

Volatility due to inflation fears and uncertainty over the second wave of Covid-19 kept market participants on their toes in the week ended. After a gap of more than six months the next Goods and Service Tax Council meeting is being convened on May 28.

As per GOI projection, the shortfall was expected to be Rs 1,56,164 crore in 2021-22, without taking into consideration the impact of Covid Wave-2. IIP rose by a sharp 22.4 per cent in March after two months of contraction, helped by the year-earlier low base due to the first Covid wave. Retail inflation eased to a three-month low in April to 4.29 per cent from 5.52 per cent in March due to softening food prices.

The latest pandemic wave is expected to significantly moderate the sharp rebound in GDP growth that was expected in the first quarter. Most high-speed indicators such as automobile sales, mobility indices and e-way bills have shown a decline in economic activity. Former RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan indicated that Covid-19 pandemic is probably India's greatest challenge since independence and added that in many places the government was not present to help the people for various reasons.

Economy observers expect GoI to come out with a "new" stimulus package to annul the impact of Covid second



wave on economy. Important companies that will release their earnings in the

coming week are Bharti Airtel, Tata Motors, Hindalco Industries, State Bank of India, Shree Cement, Indian Oil Corporation, HPCL, Federal Bank, Aarti Industries, Canara Bank, Zee Entertainment Enterprises, JSW Steel, United Spirits, Amara Raja Batteries, and Amber Enterprises India. Market players expect the stock-specific action to continue given the quarterly earnings season, and feel the market will closely watch Covid-related updates, progress of the vaccine drive, global cues and movement in commodities.

Futures & options / sector watch

On the back of earnings, derivative

segment continued to witness sharp stock specific moves. Nifty closed below 14,700 levels while Bank nifty managed to take support at its 100 days exponential moving average and ended the week above 32,000 levels. Option segment witnessed maximum Call open interest at 15,000 strike, followed by 15,300 and 14,900 strikes; and maximum Put open interest was seen at 14,000 strike, followed by 14,500 and 14,600 strikes.

Call writing was seen at 15,000 strike, followed by 14,900 and 15,300 strikes, while Put writing was seen at 14,600 strike, followed by 14,400 and 14,700 strikes. The Implied Volatility (IV) of calls closed at 18.64 per cent while that for put options closed at 19.75 per cent. The Nifty VIX for the week closed at 20.08 per cent. PCR OI for the week closed at 1.52 indicates more puts writing than calls. Option data indicates a wide trading range for the Nifty between 14,400 to 15,000 levels for coming sessions.

Spooked by fears of impact of rising Covid cases on business and economy, banking stocks witnessed selling pressure. State Bank of India would be reporting earnings on May 21. It is expected to report strong earnings growth for the March 2021 quarter on the back of decline in provisions, and strong net interest income & pre-provision operating profit. Punters expect rebound in bank counters. Buy ICICI Bank, SBI, PNB, Canara Bank and BOB. Stock futures looking good are DLF, ICICI Bank, PidiliteInds, Powergrid, REC, Tata Consumer and Zee Entertainment. Stock futures looking weak are Cholamandalam Finance, Indus Tower, Muthoot Finance, PEL and Naukri.

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

STOCK PICKS

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Balancing investment portfolio key

The only true measure of investment benchmark should be the goal and how an avenue performed against your investment

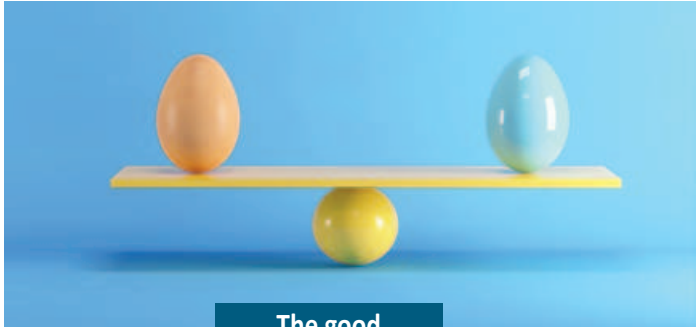


K Naresh Kumar

These days with the advent of social media, it's very hard for us to remain concentrated and disconnected. While it's great to remain connected most of the time, if not all the time, it also brings in loads of distraction to our mundane living. It becomes extremely difficult when you are part of a social network which talks about investing ideas and even sharing their experiences. It's a two-edged sword as both their positive and negative responses only firm up our biases further, rarely helping to ease their influence on us.

While there's no secret for success in investing, reams of paper are dedicated on how our mentality makes the cut for investing or how our psychology or behaviour impacts our investing results. Like prescribing for good health, the good investing workbook contains small measures of improvement, deriving a plan, sticking to a routine, being flexible, bouts of moderation and keeping balanced views. Most of good health advice is either boring or tasteless. Same is the case with good investing advice.

The past one year has been a trying one for most of the humanity with the pandemic raging across the world, imposition of lockdowns, grinding down economic activity, hospitalisation, much more, losing loved ones but the asset markets



The good investing workbook contains small measures of improvement, deriving a plan, sticking to a routine, being flexible, bouts of moderation and keeping balanced views

have been on a marvellous ride with no parallel from the past. Doubts were cast on how we approached investing and while we constantly were questioned about our assumptions, estimations of our future, the markets defied every parameter of the past.

At such times, when we see a post or message from our social network on how one has made phenomenal returns through investing in a particular avenue, it would dishearten us for not having taken such an exposure. At these instances, we're very much tempted to make changes to our investment strategy to accommodate these avenues which found success in others. It'll be grueling especially when the outperformance continues as we remain contemplating on the execution.

When you're stuck in a traffic jam, you see cyclists peddling their way out of the jam and moving ahead of you. Would you not then like to junk the car off and get on a bike to your destination? But your larger sense prevails over your initial enticement as you understand the limitations of a bike to your context. Even in investing, there would be multiple such instances when we're tempted to discard our philosophy or style to get on to a new fad to ride the short-term profits. While stating that, I'm not suggesting remaining dogmatic in our investment strategy and lose out on making money.

So, how do we bring the balance, particularly when the returns are exponential and too tempting to stay side lines, like in cryptos. One critical aspect of investment to be considered is the kind of avenue

chosen i.e., one must understand what the investment is based on, how it's structured and top of all is the possible risks involved.

One should be clear on why one is investing and to what extent one could take the hit or risk of losing the invested money. Alternatively, one could have a bucket for such speculation and live with peace. There's nothing wrong in playing part of the money that's purely ticked as speculation if one is aware of the consequences of it and to what extent it would affect their portfolio or wealth. It's when the continued outstanding returns gives fear into greed is when the trouble begins.

The biggest key to success hence has been minding the 'mind' part of the investment. All investments are rational i.e., they're built on certain premises which could be rationally explained but most investment decisions are emotional. So, when making investment decisions one needs to see how a particular investment would serve the investor's objective. At all times, the only true measure of benchmark should be the goal and how an avenue performed against it. That allows us to stay rationale in why we chose an investment and how we evaluate its performance.

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

Small caps to outperform indices

THOVITI BRAHMACHARY

Market has given up the initial gains last week. The benchmark index, Nifty closed at 14,677.8 with 145.35 points or 0.98 per cent loss. BSE Sensex lost one per cent during last week. The broader indices Nifty Midcap-100 declined by 0.7 per cent, and the Smallcap-100 index up by 0.3 per cent.

Nifty-500 declined by 0.72 per cent. PSU bank index advanced by 3.7 per cent, and media up by 2.4 per cent on the sectoral front. Nifty metal declined by 4.6 per cent. FIIs sold Rs 8713.25 crores and DIIs bought just Rs 891.20 crores worth of equities during the current month. India VIX declined by 2.67 per cent and settled at 20.27. Overall market breadth is not so great.

The Nifty formed the dark cloud cover on a weekly chart. An optimistic opening with a breakout failed to maintain the momentum and missed the follow through days. As on Tuesday, the Nifty opened with a sizeable gap down, Monday's candle has turned as an evening star. It added distribution days and drifted below the 50DMA once again on Friday. The 100DMA support is just 100 points away. Historically 100DMA worked as support.

As the distribution day count is at three, any increase will change the market status to a confirmed downtrend. In fact, the weekly resistance line still an arduous task for the market



to cross. 20 weekly average worked support but, let us wait and see this level 14,620 level will hold for next week. In any case, the Nifty closes below this level, which will be another sign of a bearish zone.

As mentioned earlier, the weekly RSI at 58.53 and a move below 55 zone, will create another swing low. With all probability, if the RSI falls below by the next weekly close, the Nifty will resume or continue the minor trend down, will the test the recent low of 14,191 quickly. On a daily chart, the price and RSI divergence are clearly visible. RSI faced resistance exactly at the channel resistance line. It must take support at 45-46 level, which is currently 49.74.

The MACD histogram shows that the initial bullish momentum is waning. The positive directional indicator +DMI and the trend strength indicator ADX are falling. Even on the weekly chart, the same trend is visible. Overall, all technical parameters and the pattern analysis shows the inherent weakness in the market.

For the next week, things may not change towards the positiveness. The Nifty may face resistance 14,880-15,000 zone, and

similarly may decline towards, 14,469-14,264-14,191 zone of support. The defensive sectors like FMCG turned positive last week, and the pharma, IT sector, will play an important role in

protecting the market from the big crashes. These three sectors are in the leading quadrant and moving towards the leading quadrant. As suspected last week, the metal sectors seem to be in overbought and witnessing the profit booking. The energy sector losing momentum and failed to move into the leading quadrant. All the other sectors are avoidable for now as all of them are in a lagging quadrant.

The Covid curve started trending down and may ease lockdowns from the next two weeks in some states. The vaccine drive also may gain momentum as the new vaccine arrivals and the supply improvements.

Importantly, about eight Nifty companies to announce financial results next week, and over 170 companies will release the Q4 results. This may cause a stock-specific activity more. As the benchmark indices trading in sideways, and the out-performance of small caps will continue. Focus on smallcap, Pharma, IT and FMCG stocks, which are in a suitable set up to trade.

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

DERIVATIVES OUTLOOK

DASARI SREENIVASA RAO

The NSE Nifty couldn't sustain above 15,000 points as it closed below 14,700 points in the truncated last week (Eid-ul-Fitr holiday on Thursday) amid global weakness. The Nifty has been largely in a broader range during the past few months, while stock-specific trading was witnessed amid ongoing earnings season. Nifty may continue its range bound bias with intermediate pivot levels of 14,700 level.

For the week ahead, sustainability of 14,700 seems crucial for fresh positive bias from a trading perspective. From the options perspective, continued

FIIs net sellers in index futures, stock futures, and buyers in index options

writing was seen at ATM Calls and Put strikes suggesting range-bound bias to continue with significant activities seen at OTM Call strikes. Derivatives analysts hold the view that sustainability above 14,700 is expected to trigger closure among Call writers, which may pull the Nifty towards the higher band of the consolidation. On down-sides, levels near 14,500 would provide support to the index.

Even mid-cap and small-cap stocks recorded some profit taking in the last couple of sessions and both indices lost almost three per cent from highs.

After remaining at 16,000 strike for two consecutive weeks, the resistance level eased by 500 points to 15,500 strike, while support level continued to be at 14,500 level for three weeks in a row.

The 15,500 strike, which also recorded maximum addition of Call OI, has the highest Call OI followed by 15,300/ 14,800/ 14,900/15,400 strikes. 15,300/ 15,100/ 15,000/ 14,900/14,800 strikes witnessed significant Call OI build up. Coming to Put side, the 14,600 strike has maximum Put OI followed by 14,500/ 14,400/ 14,700/ 14,100

F&O TRADING			
Product	Contracts	Turnover (Rs/cr)	Premium (Rs/cr)
Index Futures	2,98,812	28,330.91	--
Stock Futures	10,42,088	81,791.30	--
Index Options	2,31,00,832	22,00,230.88	14,212.49
Stock Options	28,42,987	2,29,825.00	4,762.70
F&O Total	2,72,84,719	25,40,178.09	18,975.19

Bank Nifty

NSE's banking index Bank Nifty fell 734.95 points or 2.23 per cent to 32,169.55 points from 32,904.50 points. The Bank Nifty for a fourth consecutive week traded in a range with stock-specific action. Short Strangle strategies continue to make money, which is pointing towards further consolidation being possible.

Banking and technology stocks were the major draggers and ended the week near lows. Metal space also saw some cool-off after a sharp surge was seen in the last couple of months. However, heavyweights like Reliance Industries and FMCG stocks came to the rescue as the Nifty was able to close in the vicinity of

14,700. It expects the banking space to take the lead for the Nifty movement towards 15,000 in coming sessions.

Bank Nifty recorded offloading of positions as nine per cent closure was observed in Open Interest. However, lack of formation of short positions is indicating limited down-sides.

IVs remained choppy on a weekly basis due to which option premiums also fell sharply. Analysts forecast that unless there's any major spike in IVs, the current leg of consolidation in the Bank Nifty should continue.

Major support for the index is placed at 31,000 whereas on upsides, last week's high should act as a supply zone. Hence, short Strangle of 1,000 points OTM strikes could be the strategy for the week, according to ICICI Direct.com.

Coach creating match situations for me in training: Sindhu on gearing up for Olympics



NEW DELHI

THE lack of competitions before the Olympics is a major concern for Indian shuttlers but not so much for PV Sindhu, who trusts her Korean coach Park Tae Sang to create match situations for her in training. Owing to the raging COVID-19 pandemic, the

Badminton World Federation has been forced to cancel the remaining three Olympic qualifiers in India, Malaysia and Singapore. These were to be the last

set of events before the Tokyo Games in July-August.

Asked if cancellations will affect her preparations, Sindhu said: "Well, we were thinking that Singapore will be the last event before Olympics but now we don't have another option, so I am playing matches against different players and my coach Park is trying to create match situations for me in training.

"Different players have different styles like Tai Tzu (Ying) or Ratchanok (Intanon) have different styles of play but Park is there to guide me, to prepare me for it," Sindhu told PTI.

"Obviously, we will be playing each other after a few months and there will be something new in our games, so I will have to prepare for that."

Sindhu doesn't train with the rest of the Indian Olympic-bound team. She has been training at the Gachibowli indoor stadium in Telangana and does her fitness training at Suchitra academy. The 25-year-old endorsed BWF's decision to cancel the events, saying while it is sad that competitions could not take place but life is more important than sports.

"It is sad that the whole world has come to a standstill but before sportspersons, we are human beings and life comes first," Sindhu said. "If tournaments happen, we don't know if we will be safe, we might think we will be but we can't be sure because we don't know from where this virus will come. For the moment, events are being cancelled and I know sportspersons are sad but I think it is good for the people...Organisers take a lot of measures and keep

us in a bubble but still we need to be careful."

Sindhu, the reigning world champion, said it will be a tough task for organisers and athletes to adhere to the COVID-19 protocols in a showpiece event like the Olympics and everyone has to brace up for the challenge.

"Every country has their own COVID-19 rules. In Thailand, we were tested every 2-3 days, in All England an entire contingent had to pull out for one case in their flight but we have to deal with it," the Hyderabad shuttler said.

"Even in Olympics, I have heard that every day they will be testing us. Before we take off, we have to clear an RT-PCR test and after getting down we do a test again, it is definitely a tough task."

There was a lot of chaos in some of the international badminton events early this year when a few false positives

forced some of the top players, including Saina Nehwal and B Sai Praneeth, to withdraw. Sindhu hoped that such instances do not happen during the Olympics.

"...it is the Olympics and there will be so many athletes from so many countries but they also have to be very careful. As an athlete we have to prepare and just hope that everything is fine in the next few months," the world No.7 said.

"...unless you take care of yourself, it can spread anytime, anywhere. So it will be tough," Sindhu, who had reached the finals of Swiss Open in March after returning to action following a long break, said she is improving as a player. "It has been a good campaign so far this year. I have been improving as a player. My coach has analysed my game, so really looking forward to the Olympics. My dad also helps me a lot," she said. (PTI)



India's Tejaswini wins consecutive high jump titles in USA

NEW DELHI

REPRESENTING Kansas State University, India's Tejaswini Shankar won back-to-back men's high jump titles in the Big 12 Outdoor Track and Field Championships in Manhattan, USA.

Shankar, 22, cleared the bar at 2.28m to win high jump gold on Saturday, but his efforts fell short of Tokyo Olympic Games qualification standard of 2.33m. Shankar had also won the men's high jump title in the 2019 edition of the Big 12 Outdoor Track and Field Championships while the 2020 edition was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Delhi-based national record in men's high jump is studying business administration at Kansas State University. He is on a four-year athletics scholarship since 2017.

Shankar had skipped the Federation Cup Athletics Championships in March as the dates clashed with his National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) indoor season. He won the high jump bronze by clearing 2.24m in the NCAA meet.

Shankar is the third Indian to compete in the highly competitive USA circuit, the breeding ground for many US track and field Olympians.

Triple jumper Mohinder Singh Gill, India's leading jumper in 1970s, and discus thrower Vikas Gowda are the other Indians to compete in the NCAA. (IANS)

FA Cup Final

Tielemans stunner helps Leicester win 1st ever title

LONDON

YOURI Tielemans scored a wonder goal and the video assistant referee (VAR) then came to the rescue as Leicester City beat Chelsea 1-0 to win a first FA Cup title in their 137-year club history.

Tielemans fired into the top left corner from some 25 metres in the 63rd minute in front of a crowd of around 21,000 fans, allowed into the famed arena as coronavirus restrictions are being eased in England, DPA reports.

But victory was not theirs until an 89th-minute equalizer from Chelsea was nullified by VAR because Ben Chilwell was deemed offside by the smallest of margins in the build-up.

It was Leicester's first FA Cup trophy after four lost finals in the past, the last one 52 years ago in 1969, and their second major title after a sensational Premier League success in 2016. They also have three League Cup crowns.

Captain Kasper Schmeichel also made key saves for the team of manager Brendan Rodgers late in the game before received the trophy out of the hands of Britain's Prince William, the FA president.

"So happy I can't begin to describe it. What a day. Indescribable. It is what dreams are made of. I have dreamt of this since I was a child," Schmeichel told the BBC.

"We have talked about wanting to win trophies, and the performance today with the grit and the determination - I am so



Leicester City's goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel (right) and Wes Morgan hold the trophy aloft at the end of the FA Cup final soccer match against Chelsea at Wembley Stadium in London, England late on Saturday. Leicester won the match 1-0

proud of everybody." Chelsea were not as strong as in the past weeks under their new manager Thomas Tuchel who had won the German Cup 2017 with Borussia Dortmund and the French Cup last year with Paris Saint-Germain.

The Blues eliminated Premier League champions Manchester City in the semi-finals but fell short of a ninth FA Cup title in their 15th final.

Chances were sparse in a rainy first half with Chelsea's Mason Mount and Timo Werner aiming wide, and Cesar Azpilicueta unable to meet Thiago Silva's cross from point-blank range after Werner had also gone for the ball.

Leicester gained more possession as the sun came out after the break, and the goal then came in the 63rd when Chelsea lost the ball in their half and Luke Thomas set up the Belgian midfielder Tielemans for the sensational strike high into the net past Kepa Arrizabalaga.

Tuchel brought more attacking power plus Chilwell which set

up a frantic finale.

Chilwell's 78th-minute header was kept out by Schmeichel with a little help from the left post, and the Danish keeper made another sensational save against Mount's fierce volley in the 87th.

It all seemed to no avail when Chilwell beat him for a long punt and the ball deflected into the net but Chelsea's wild celebrations turned into agony when the goal was disallowed - and it was Leicester and their fans who celebrated wildly a few minutes on.

"The performance today, the grit and determination, I'm so proud of everybody, everybody contributed to get to the final everyone has played and been sensational," Schmeichel said.

The two sides meet again on Tuesday in a crucial Premier League date at Stamford Bridge where the loser could miss out on a place in the next Champions League.

Chelsea have another chance for silverware when they meet City again in the Champions League final in a fortnight on May 29 in Porto. (IANS)

Iga demolishes Karolina to win Rome Open title

ROME

WORLD No.15 from Iga Swiatek of Poland was in ruthless form as she routed No. 9 seed Karolina Pliskova of the Czech Republic 6-0, 6-0 in just 46 minutes to clinch the Italian Open title here on Sunday.

Iga, 19, dropped just 13 points in all -- four in the first set and nine in the second -- and faced only four game points against her. This was the Polish player's third career title following the French Open last year and the Adelaide title in February.

Iga raced out of the blocks and never let up, striking 17 winners to only five unforced errors in the match. By contrast, a slow-starting Karolina served two double faults in each of her first two service games, and did not find a winner until she was set point down after 19 minutes.



Iga's combination of heavy spin and pace allowed her to exploit Karolina's movement throughout the match, and she sealed victory as the Czech sent a forehand wide.

The result on Sunday ensured that Iga would break into the top-10 for the first time when the WTA rankings are released on Monday.

It was the first-ever double bagel to decide the Rome title, and the most one-sided Italian Open final since 1983, when Hungarian Andrea Temesvari defeated American Bonnie Gadusek 6-1, 6-0. The last double bagel in a WTA final was Romanian Simona Halep's victory over Latvia's Anastasija Sevastova at Bucharest 2016.

Iga had never before scored a double bagel win at the pro level, though she had notably defeated Karolina's twin sister Kristyna 6-0, 6-1 to reach her first WTA final in Lugano 2019.

Ex-Saurashtra player Rajendrasinh Jadeja dies

RAJKOT

FORMER Saurashtra pacer and match referee Rajendrasinh Jadeja passed away on Sunday due to Covid-19. He was 66. The Saurashtra Cricket Association (SCA) said that Jadeja died early Sunday morning.

"Everyone at Saurashtra Cricket Association are deeply saddened by the untimely demise of Rajendrasinh Jadeja, one of the most remarkable yesteryear cricketers of Saurashtra. He left for heavenly abode today early morning after fighting a hard battle against Covid-19," it said in a statement. Jadeja played 50 first class matches and took 134 wickets. He also played in 11 List A games and took 14 wickets and also scored 1,536 runs in first class cricket, with 104 runs in List A. He served as the Board of Control for Cricket in India's (BCCI) official referee in 53 first-class matches, 18 List A games and 34 T20s.

"Rajendrasinh Jadeja was the man with quality, style, ethics and great cricketing capabilities. His dedication and contribution to Cricket shall be remembered forever," said BCCI and SCA secretary Niranjan Shah. (IANS)



Paralympic Games: Trials to pick Indian athletics team in June

NEW DELHI: The Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) will conduct national selection trials next month to select the Indian track and field team for the upcoming Tokyo Paralympic Games. The trials will be held at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium here on June 15 and 16, PCI secretary general Gursharan Singh said on Sunday. "We will conduct the trials in June to select the national team. In case we aren't able to hold the trials due to pandemic, we will find an alternative to pick the athletes for the Paralympic Games," Singh told IANS. The Paralympic Games are scheduled to be held from August 24 to Sept. 5. According to Singh, the International Paralympic Committee will allot 16 to 20 Tokyo Paralympic quota places to India in track and field.

'India women's cricket team to tour Aust in September'

SYDNEY: India women to tour Australia for a bilateral series in September, Australia fast bowler Megan Schutt has said. Interestingly, neither the Indian cricket board nor Cricket Australia (CA) has made an official announcement on the tour that was postponed in December due to the raging Covid-19 pandemic. "We have got a tour against India in mid-September," Megan said on No Balls: The Cricket Podcast, hosted by Kate Cross and Alex Hartley. "So, there's a couple of camps. I believe we are doing one in Darwin, which will be really cool...and then the tour against India. And then pretty much from there things get crazy with Big Bash, WNCL, Ashes, World Cup, and, hopefully, the Commonwealth Games." (IANS)

North Korea withdraw from World Cup football qualifiers

PYONGYANG: The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) on Sunday confirmed the withdrawal of North Korea from the Asian qualifiers for the 2022 FIFA World Cup and the 2023 AFC Asian Cup. In a brief statement, the AFC said the matter will be referred to the organising committee for FIFA competitions, and that further details on the standings of the Asian qualifying Group H, which includes North Korea, will be announced in due course, reports Xinhua. Prior to their withdrawal, N Korea ranked fourth in Group H after five matches, just one point behind group leaders Turkmenistan. The group also includes South Korea, Lebanon and Sri Lanka. The group's remaining matches will be played in South Korea in a centralised manner in June.

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